

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
BENCH AT AURANGABAD

WRIT PETITION NO.15616 OF 2025

1. Saurabh Jagdish Jaju,
Age: 39 Years, Occu.:
R/o.: Guruvar Peth, Ambejogai,
Po. Ambejogai, Dist. Beed.
2. Saroj Jagdish Jaju,
Age: 68 Years, Occu.:
R/o.: Guruvar Peth, Ambejogai,
Po. Ambejogai, Dist. Beed.

...Petitioners

VERSUS

1. State of Maharashtra
Through its Principal Secretary,
Department of Co-operative,
Marketing and Textile Madam Cama Marg,
Hutatma Rajguru Chowk
Mantralaya, Mumbai-400032
2. State Cooperative Election Authority,
Pune Through its Secretary.
Ground Floor, Old Central Building,
B.J. Road, Pune 411 001.
3. The District Deputy Registrar Cooperative Societies/
District Cooperative Election Officer, Beed
Sahakarshakti Bulding,
Jalana Road, Beed-431122.
4. Assistant Registrar, Cooperative Societies,
Ambejogai, Mahek Building,
Prashant Nagar, Ambejogai,
Taluka Ambejogai, District Beed.
5. Ambejogai Taluka Kharedi Vikri Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit,
Through its Administrator,
Taluka Ambejogai, District Beed.

..Respondents

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Mr. A.N. Sikchi, Advocate for petitioners.
Mr. S.N. Kendre, AGP for Respondent/State.

Mr. V.H. Dighe, Advocate for Respondent Nos.2 & 3.
Mr. R.P. Adgaonkar, Advocate for Respondent No.5.

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CORAM : S. G. CHAPALGAONKAR, J.
DATED : FEBRUARY 16, 2026

FINAL ORDER :-

1. Present writ petition is filed for following reliefs :

“A. The Hon'ble High Court may be pleased to issue appropriate writ, order or direction in the nature of writ and thereby quash and set aside the impugned order dated 18.12.2025 passed by the Respondent No. 3 rejecting the objection of the petitioners to the provisional voters list published vide election program for finalization of the voter list on 27.11.2025.

B. The Hon'ble High Court may be pleased to issue appropriate writ, order or direction in the nature of writ and thereby direct the Respondent No.3 to include the name of the petitioners in the final voters list of Respondent No.5 for the elections to be conducted to the Respondent No. 5 society.

C. The Hon'ble High Court may be pleased to issue appropriate writ, order or direction in the nature of writ and thereby direct the Respondent No.5 to include the name of the petitioners in the membership register of the society as per the order passed under Section 23 of the Maharashtra Cooperative Societies Act by the Respondent No.4.”

2. Mr. Sikchi, learned advocate appearing for petitioners submits that respondent no.5 is a Co-operative Society which has been formulated to facilitate farmers and other allied institutions to carry on agricultural activities and marketing goods and facilitate its storage.

3. The petitioners had applied for membership of society in terms of Section 23(1) of Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act, 1960. In absence of response of society, petitioners approached respondent no.4 who vide order dated 07.10.2020 pleased to allow

petitioners appeal and declared petitioners to be members of respondent no.5 – society and directed society to include their names in list of members. On 20.12.2021, petitioners represented respondent no.4 to direct society to comply order dated 07.10.2020 and incorporate their names in membership register of society. Eventually, respondent no.4 vide his communication dated 24.01.2022 directed respondent no.5 to include petitioners names in register of membership and report him compliance. Unfortunately, neither directions were complied with nor order passed by respondent no.4 was complied.

4. On 27.11.2025, respondent no.3 issued notification declaring election of respondent no.5/co-operative society and issued directions to prepare provisional list of voters. When petitioners noticed that their names are not appearing in list of voters, they approached respondent no.3 for necessary directions. However, respondent no.3 rejected petitioners objection/representation observing that they do not possess jurisdiction to direct inclusion of petitioners names in voters list, as their names are not recorded in membership register of society.

5. Mr. Sikchi would submit that undisputedly, in the year 2020 as per directions issued by respondent no.4, petitioners acquired deemed membership of society. If society fails to comply directions

for political reasons, they cannot be deprived right to participate in election by refusing to include their names in voters list.

6. Per contra, Mr. Adgaonkar, learned advocate appearing for respondent no.5 submits that at present, Administrator is appointed on respondent no.5 – society and he is not empowered to take policy decision. The society has maintained statutory membership register as per Section 38(1) of Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act. The petitioners names do not find place in membership register on cut-off date i.e. 01.01.2025. Therefore, petitioners cannot claim inclusion of their names in voters list. He would submit that although there were directions under Section 23 by Assistant Registrar conferring membership upon petitioners, unless there is compliance of by-laws and conditions contemplated for acquiring membership, petitioners cannot seek automatic inclusion in membership register and consequential voters list.

7. Mr. Dighe, learned advocate appearing for respondent no.3 submits that they have acted as per information provided by society, particularly register of membership maintained under Section 38(1) of the Act and in absence of entry of petitioners names in membership register, Election Officer is not empowered to direct inclusion of petitioners names in voters list.

8. Having considered submissions advanced by learned advocates appearing for respective parties, it can be observed that

petitioners have submitted their applications for membership under Section 23(1) of Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act. Section 23 contemplates that no society shall, without sufficient cause, refuse admission to membership to any person duly qualified therefor under the provisions of Act and its by-laws. Sub-clause (1A) of Section 23 prescribes that if a society refuses to accept the application from an eligible person for admission as a member, or the payment made by him in respect of membership, such person may tender an application to the Registrar, who shall forward such application to the society concerned. If society fails to communicate any decision after receipt of application from Registrar within 60 days, such application shall be deemed to have been allowed and applicant shall be deemed to have become a member of such society. Sub-clause (2) of Section 23 prescribes that if society refuse to admit a person as a member and communicates refusal for admission, such a person is entitled to approach Registrar who is empowered to decide the application.

9. In present case, it has been observed that on refusal of acceptance of petitioners application for membership, application were forwarded through registered post, however, society refuses to accept same. Subsequently, Office of Assistant Registrar forwarded application of petitioners to society. However, society failed to take decision. Thereafter, appeal filed by petitioners was heard by Assistant Registrar and after giving sufficient opportunity to

respondent/society, directions were issued with declaration that petitioners are deemed to be member of respondent/society and their names shall be included in record/membership register. The aforesaid order is passed on 07.10.2020 and it has been communicated time to time to respondent no.5 – society by petitioners as well as office of respondent no.4. Evidently, respondent no.5 avoided to act upon directions issued by respondent no.4 for no good reason.

10. The fact remains that in view of specific directions given by respondent no.4, petitioners have acquired deemed membership from date of order passed by respondent no.4. In that view of matter, it was mandatory for respondent no.5 to include petitioners names in register of membership maintained under Section 38 of Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act. This Court therefore holds that petitioners have acquired membership of respondent no.5 – society from date of deemed declaration of their membership under order passed by respondent no.4 in exercise of appellate jurisdiction under Section 23. Undisputedly, order passed by respondent no.4 has attained finality and same was never challenged by society or anyone else.

11. In that view of matter, writ petition succeeds. Hence, same is allowed in terms of prayer clause (A), (B) and (C).

12. Respondent no.5 shall forthwith incorporate petitioners names in membership register in terms of order passed by respondent

no.4. Thereupon, respondent no.3 shall include petitioners names in voters list.

(S.G. CHAPALGAONKAR, J.)

Mujaheed//