

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CIRCUIT BENCH AT KOLHAPUR
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION NO.16/2026

Mrs. Seema Ramdas Patil and others

... Petitioners

Versus

The State of Maharashtra and others

... Respondents

.....
Mr. Saklen Mujawal, a/w Ms asim Sarode, Advocate for the Petitioners
Mr. A.A. Naik, AGP for the Respondent - State.
.....

CORAM : MADHAV J. JAMDAR &
PRAVIN S. PATIL, JJ.

DATE : 29.04.2026.

P C. :

1. By the present Public Interest Litigation, the petitioners, who claim to be working to bring change by eradication of superstitions and implant scientific temperament in the Society, have sought following relief :

“A. Direct the Respondents/State Government to immediately frame and notify the Rules under Section 11 the Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Act, 2013.

B. Issue a Mandate for the immediate appointment and training of Vigilance Officers in every district, specifically trained to handle cases involving the sexual exploitation of women under the guise of spiritual rituals.

C. Formulate a 'Victim Protection Protocol' within the Rules to ensure that survivors of "Godmen" (like those in the Ashok Kharat case) receive immediate psychological counselling, legal aid, and protection from intimidation.

D. Directions may be given to the Respondents to remove, delete the videos of various women and girls with Ashok Kharat from all social media platforms.

E. Directions may be passed to frame proper Rules considering the definition of victims mentioned in Section 2(1) (y) of the BNSS 2023.

F. Directions may be issued to the Respondents to declare that all cases under the Anti-Superstition Act will be tried in Special Courts or in the Special Human Rights Courts.

G. Launch a State-wide Awareness Campaign (as envisioned in the said Anti-Superstition Act's preamble) to educate the public about the fraudulent tactics used by self-styled Babas to prevent further social and financial exploitation.

H. Pass any other order or direction that the Respondents/Government Authorities as the Hon'ble Court deems fit in the interest of justice and public Safety.”

2. Mr. A.A. Naik, learned AGP tenders order dated 18.04.2026 passed by this Court (Aurangabad Bench) in Public Interest Litigation No.01/2019 in the case of ***Ganpat Devrao Bhise Vs. State of Maharashtra and others.***

3. By the said order dated 18.04.2026, this Court has issued following directions:

“i] The Public Interest Litigation is partly allowed.

[ii] The State Government i.e. Respondent Nos. 1 and 2 shall appoint Vigilance Officers throughout the State of Maharashtra, as contemplated under Section 5 of the Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and Other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black

Magic Act, 2013, within a period of two (2) months from today, if not already appointed.

[iii] The State Government i.e. Respondent Nos. 1 and 2 shall also proceed to frame Rules as contemplated under Section 11 of the Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and Other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Act, 2013, within a period of two (2) months, if not already framed.

[iv] The PIL stands disposed of.”

4. Thus, it is clear that relief sought by the petitioner in prayer Clauses (A) and (B) are worked out in terms of order dated 18.04.2026 passed by this Court in PIL No.01/2019.

5. As far as other prayers are concerned, we grant leave to the petitioners to submit appropriate representation to the respondent No.5- the Secretary, Social Justice and Special Assistance Department of the Government of Maharashtra. If such representation is submitted, the same be decided within a period of eight weeks.

6. The petitioners are granted liberty to file a fresh PIL, if their grievances are not addressed by the State of Maharashtra.

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[PRAVIN S. PATIL, J.]

[MADHAV J. JAMDAR, J.]

R.S. Sahare