

AS INTRODUCED IN THE RAJYA SABHA
ON THE 13TH MARCH, 2026

Bill No. IX of 2026

THE KOLHAPURI LEATHER CRAFT (PRESERVATION AND
LIVELIHOOD SECURITY) BILL, 2026

A

BILL

*to provide for the promotion, development, preservation, and protection
of the Kolhapuri leather craft and for securing the livelihood
of registered artisans engaged in such craft and
for matters connected therewith or
incidental thereto.*

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-seventh Year of the Republic of
India as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

- 5 1. (1) This Act may be called the Kolhapuri Leather Craft (Preservation and
Livelihood Security) Act, 2026.
- (2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by
notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Short title and
commencement.

Definitions.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) “Board” means the Kolhapuri Leather Craft Development Board constituted under section 3;

(b) “Fund” means the Kolhapuri Artisans Welfare Fund constituted under section 16;

(c) “geographical indication” shall have the meaning assigned to it in clause (e) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999;

(d) “Kolhapuri leather craft” means the traditional handcrafted leather products historically associated with the Kolhapur region, including Kolhapuri *chappals* and allied products;

(e) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

(f) “registered artisan” means,—

(a) an individual artisan;

(b) an artisan household; or

(c) an artisan cooperative, producer organisation or other collective body of artisans, engaged in the production, processing, finishing, design or embellishment of Kolhapuri leather craft and registered under section 11.

(g) “regulations” means the regulations made by the Board under this Act.

CHAPTER II

THE KOLHAPURI LEATHER CRAFT DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Establishment and incorporation of the Board.

3. (1) **The Central Government shall, within six months from the commencement of this Act, by notification in the Official Gazette, establish a Board to be called the Kolhapuri Leather Craft Development Board, to perform such functions as may be laid down under this Act.**

(2) The Board shall be a body corporate by the name aforesaid, having perpetual succession and a common seal, with power to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, and to contract, and shall, by the said name, sue or be sued.

(3) **The headquarters of the Board shall be at Kolhapur in the State of Maharashtra.**

Composition of the Board.

4. The Board shall consist of the following, to be appointed by the Central Government in such manner as may be prescribed, namely,—

(a) a Chairperson, who shall be an eminent academician, scientist, or industrialist from leather sector;

(b) two Members representing artisan cooperatives;

(c) two Members having expertise in leather craft and design;

(d) a woman Member representing women artisan cooperatives;

(e) a Member representing the Government of Maharashtra to ensure coordination between the Centre and the State;

(f) an officer from the Union Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, of such rank as may be prescribed;

(g) an officer from the Union Ministry of Textiles, of such rank as may be prescribed; and

5 (h) a Member-Secretary having such qualification and experience as may be prescribed.

5. (1) The Chairperson and every Member of the Board shall hold office for a term not exceeding three years from the date on which they enter their office and shall be eligible for reappointment for a further term not exceeding three years:

10

Provided that no person shall hold office as Chairperson or Member for more than two consecutive terms.

(2) **The salaries and allowances payable to, and the other terms and conditions of service of, the Chairperson and Members shall be such as may be prescribed.**

15

(3) The Chairperson, or any Member, may, by notice in writing under his hand addressed to the Central Government, resign his office, and such resignation shall take effect from the date of its acceptance.

(4) The manner of removal of the Chairperson and the Members shall be such as may be prescribed.

20

6. (1) **The Central Government shall provide the Board with such number of suitable officers and employees, as may be necessary for the efficient performance of its functions under this Act.**

(2) **The method of recruitment, salaries and allowances payable to, and the other terms and conditions of service of, the officers and employees, so appointed for the purposes of the Board shall be such as may be prescribed.**

25

7. No act or proceeding of the Board shall be questioned or shall be invalidated on the ground merely by reason of any vacancy in, or any defect in the constitution of, the Board.

30

8. The Board may, for efficient discharge of its functions, constitute Committees in the districts, which shall be chaired by the District Magistrate.

9. (1) The Board shall regulate its own procedure for the transaction of its business, subject to the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder.

35

(2) The Board shall meet as and when necessary and at such times and places as the Chairperson may deem fit for the efficient discharge of the functions assigned to it under this Act.

(3) All orders and decisions of the Board shall be authenticated by the Member-Secretary.

40

CHAPTER III

FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD

10. Subject to the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder, the functions of the Board shall be to—

45

(a) **identify, register and maintain a database of registered artisans, engaged in the Kolhapuri leather craft;**

Term of office, conditions of service, resignation and removal of the Chairperson and Members.

Officers and employees of the Board.

Vacancies etc., not to invalidate proceedings of the Board.

Committees of the Board.

Procedure to be regulated by the Board.

Functions of the Board.

(b) promote, preserve and safeguard the authenticity and traditional character of Kolhapuri leather products produced by registered artisans, including by ensuring compliance with the norms of geographical indication registration and certification;

(c) facilitate training and skill development programmes, including modern design, quality improvement, value addition and capacity building for registered artisans; 5

(d) establish or assist in the establishment of common facility centres, artisan clusters, and infrastructure hubs for production, testing, branding, storage and marketing for the benefit of registered artisans; 10

(e) implement welfare measures including insurance, pension, health coverage, credit facilitation and educational support for registered artisans and their dependents;

(f) facilitate access for registered artisans to institutional finance, government procurement platforms, domestic and international markets, exhibitions and trade fairs; 15

(g) ensure the prevention of unauthorised usage of the "Kolhapuri" name or GI tag and to coordinate with the authorities under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 for enforcement thereof; 20

48 of 1999.

(h) collaborate with institutions, industry bodies, government agencies, and non-governmental organisations for the integrated development of the sector;

(i) undertake or sponsor research, surveys, documentation and publicity relating to the heritage, techniques and market potential of Kolhapuri leather craft and the livelihood security of registered artisans; 25

(j) advise the Central Government on policy matters relating to the development and promotion of Kolhapuri leather craft and livelihood security of registered artisans; and 30

(k) perform such other functions as may be assigned to it by the Central Government or as may be prescribed by or under this Act.

CHAPTER IV

REGISTRATION

35

Digital registration and certification.

11. (1) The Board shall establish a digital platform for online registration, certification, and renewal of registration.

(2) No person or entity shall engage in the production, processing, finishing, design or embellishment of Kolhapuri leather craft without obtaining a certificate of registration from the Board by making an application in such form, manner and on payment of such fee as may be prescribed. 40

(3) On receipt of an application under sub-section (2), the Board shall, after making such inquiry as may be prescribed, issue a certificate of registration, in such form as may be prescribed, to the applicant, who shall thereupon be deemed to be a registered artisan for the purposes of this Act. 45

5	<p>12. (1) Every person or entity engaged in the production, processing, finishing, design or embellishment of Kolhapuri leather craft immediately before the commencement of this Act shall, within one year of its commencement, apply for registration in the same manner as may be prescribed under section 11:</p>	Registration of existing artisans.
	<p>Provided that pending disposal of the application by the Board, the person or entity shall be deemed to be registered for the purposes of this Act.</p>	
10	<p>(2) Where any person or entity referred to in sub-section (1) fails to apply for registration within the period specified under that sub-section, the Board may, after giving a reasonable opportunity of being heard, declare such person or entity to be ineligible to engage in the production, processing or marketing of Kolhapuri leather craft under this Act.</p>	
15	<p>13. The certificate of registration issued under sections 11 and 12 shall be valid for a period of five years and may be renewed in such manner and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed.</p>	Validity of certificate of registration.
20	<p>14. (1) The Board shall appoint a Registrar to supervise the process of registration, who may, for reasons to be recorded in writing, refuse to grant registration:</p>	Appointment of Registrar.
	<p>Provided that any such refusal shall be subject to confirmation by the Board.</p>	
	<p>(2) The method of recruitment, salaries and allowances payable to, and other terms and conditions of service of, the Registrar, so appointed shall be such as may be prescribed.</p>	
25	<p>15. (1) Whoever contravenes the provisions of sections 11 and 12 shall be punishable with—</p>	Prohibition and Penalty.
	<p>(a) a fine which may extend to fifty thousands rupees for the first offence; and</p>	
30	<p>(b) in the case of a second or subsequent offence, with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to one lakh rupees or with both.</p>	
	<p>(2) No court shall take cognizance of any offence punishable under this section except on a complaint made by an officer authorised by the Board in this behalf.</p>	
35	<p>CHAPTER V</p> <p>THE KOLHAPURI ARTISANS WELFARE FUND</p>	
40	<p>16. (1) With effect from such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint in this behalf, there shall be established for the purposes of this Act, a fund to be called the Kolhapuri Artisans Welfare Fund.</p>	Establishment of the Fund.
	<p>(2) The Central Government may, if it considers it necessary, constitute a separate fund to promote innovation, sustainable production, research, and eco-friendly tanning technologies in the Kolhapuri leather sector.</p>	
45	<p>(3) The Fund shall be administered by the Board in consultation with the Union Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises and the Union Ministry of Textiles.</p>	

(4) There shall be credited to the Fund—

(a) grants made by the Central Government; and

(b) such other sums as may be prescribed.

(5) The Fund shall be utilised for the implementation of programmes and schemes aimed at skill development, capacity building, livelihood security and welfare of the registered artisans. 5

Environmental sustainability.

17. The Board shall promote environmentally responsible practices, including eco-friendly tanning, water conservation, and waste management in the production process, and may prescribe regulations in consultation with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. 10

CHAPTER VI

MISCELLANEOUS

Central Government to provide funds.

Accounts, Audit and Annual Report.

18. **The Central Government may, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, provide adequate funds to the Board, as may be necessary for the performance of its functions under this Act.** 15

19. (1) The Board shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts in such form as may be prescribed by the Central Government in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

(2) The accounts of the Board shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General at such intervals as may be specified by him and any expenditure incurred in connection with such audit shall be payable by the Board to the Comptroller and Auditor-General. 20

(3) The Board shall prepare, in such form and at such time, for each financial year, as may be prescribed, its annual report, giving a full account of its activities during the previous financial year and forward a copy thereof to the Central Government. 25

(4) The Central Government shall cause the annual report together with a memorandum of action taken on the recommendations contained therein, in so far as they relate to the Central Government, and the reasons for the non-acceptance, if any, of any of such recommendations and the audit report to be laid as soon as may be after the reports are received, before each House of Parliament. 30

Power to make rules.

20. The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act. 35

Power to make regulations.

21. The Board may, with the previous approval of the Central Government, make regulations consistent with this Act and the rules made thereunder.

Laying of Rules and Regulations.

22. Every rule made by the Central Government and every regulation made by the Board under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament while it is in session for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or regulation or both Houses agree that the rule or regulation should not be made, the rule or regulation shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule or regulation. 40 45

23. If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order published in the Official Gazette, make such provisions not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as may be necessary for removing the difficulty.
- 5 24. The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of the provisions of any other law for the time being in force and, in case of any inconsistency, the provisions of this Act shall have overriding effect on the provisions of any such law to the extent of the inconsistency.

Power to
remove
difficulties.

Act not in
derogation of
any other law.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The Kolhapuri leather craft, particularly the Kolhapuri *chappal*, represents a heritage art form of immense cultural and economic significance to the Kolhapur region and the country at large. Known for its distinct craftsmanship, traditional tanning techniques, and indigenous design, the Kolhapuri *chappal* has over the decades acquired national and international recognition and has been granted protection as a Geographical Indication under the provisions of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

However, notwithstanding such recognition, the craft sector remains largely unorganised and the artisans engaged in the manufacture of Kolhapuri leather products continue to face systemic challenges relating to market access, formal registration, skill upgrading, welfare support, and enforcement of their intellectual property rights. The recent instance of a leading international fashion house marketing footwear under the label of “Kolhapuri” without substantial involvement of or benefit to traditional artisans has highlighted the urgent need for a dedicated legal and institutional framework to preserve the authenticity of the craft and secure the livelihood of its practitioners.

At present, there exists no standalone legislation for the promotion, development, and regulation of the Kolhapuri leather craft sector. While certain schemes exist under the Ministries of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises and Textiles, the absence of a statutory Board or Authority to oversee coordinated development has resulted in fragmentation, economic insecurity, and the risk of cultural dilution of the craft. The proposed legislation seeks to address these issues by establishing the Kolhapuri Leather Craft Development Board as a statutory body tasked with the registration of artisans, enforcement of GI usage, establishment of common infrastructure, implementation of welfare schemes, and facilitation of national and international market access.

The Bill seeks to provide a comprehensive institutional mechanism for preservation of this intangible cultural heritage, ensure the authenticity of the GI label, and promote sustainable livelihood for the traditional artisan communities of Kolhapur and adjoining regions. It also seeks to prevent commercial misappropriation of the Kolhapuri name and restore rightful recognition and economic returns to the registered artisan cooperatives and individuals.

Hence, this Bill.

DHANANJAY BHIMRAO MAHADIK.

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for establishment and incorporation of the Kolhapuri Leather Craft Development Board. Clause 5 provides for the appointment and terms and conditions of service of Chairperson and Members of the Board. Clause 6 provides for appointment, salaries and allowances of officers and staff of the Board. Clause 10 provides for various functions to be performed by the Board including maintenance of database, facilitating training and skill development programmes, etc. Clause 11 provides for establishment a digital platform for online registration, certification, and renewal of registration of artisans and artisan cooperatives as well as appointment of a Registrar under clause 14. Clause 16 provides for establishment of the Kolhapuri Artisans Welfare Fund for funding the programs and schemes intended to hone the skills of the artisans registered under the Board. Clause 18 makes provision for grant of funds to the Board by the Central Government.

It is estimated that recurring expenditure on salaries, infrastructure and schemes would be approximately rupees ten crore per annum. Non-recurring expenditure towards establishment of physical infrastructure and one-time institutional grants may involve an expenditure of up to rupees thirty crores in the first three years.

The Bill, therefore, if enacted, would involve both recurring and non-recurring expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India.

MEMORANDUM OF DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clauses 20 and 21 provides for Central Government to frame rules and the Board to frame regulations, respectively, for implementing the provisions of this Bill. Clause 23 provides that the Central Government may make such provisions, by order, as may be necessary for removing any difficulty in giving effect to the provisions of this Bill.

As the rules, regulations and orders will relate to matters of procedural and administrative details only, the delegation of legislative power is of a normal character.

RAJYA SABHA

A

BILL

to provide for the promotion, development, preservation, and protection
of the Kolhapuri leather craft and for securing the livelihood
of registered artisans engaged in such craft and
for matters connected therewith or
incidental thereto.

(Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao Mahadik, M.P.)