

## 5-level scrutiny to verify caste credentials

Neha Madaan, TNN | Jun 10, 2014, 10.02 AM IST

PUNE: The government plans to bring in more transparency in the process of issuing caste validity certificates by implementing a five-level scrutiny process to weed out bogus applications.

The new verification method suggested by the Babasaheb Ambedkar Research and Training Institute (BARTI) includes forensic fingerprint identification and verification by customized automated fingerprint identification system, facial recognition through image matching authentication and special watermarking of the paper used for caste certificate, among others. An electronic chip in the certificate will prevent fraudsters from issuing bogus certificates.

The BARTI's initiative has been supported by C-DAC and forensic labs. BARTI, which has been appointed as chief coordinator of the 15 committees across the state for caste certificate validation, estimates that about 5% of the lakhs of applications that pour in every year for caste validity certificates are pseudo-claimants. The applicants falsely claim that they belong to a backward caste to grab government benefits. Some of them procure and submit bogus caste certificates to get the caste validity certificates.

The state has 15 scrutiny committees that verify the caste claim of an applicant and issue certificates. Any person desirous of availing benefits and concessions provided to the Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Caste converts to Buddhism, denotified tribes (Vimukta Jatis), nomadic tribes, other backward classes (OBCs) or special backward categories (SBCs) has to submit several documents as well as his caste certificate to the scrutiny committee for verification of his caste claim.

A caste certificate is considered the lifeline of an individual to avail of constitutional benefits including jobs in government, admissions in educational institutions and for contesting elections from reserved seats.

D R Parihar, the director general of BARTI, said, "The new system will ensure complete check on the use of fake validity certificates." The BARTI recently discussed the details of the proposal with C-DAC officials, IT experts and other stakeholders.

As per the new system, the applicant will first have to register online by placing his/her fingerprint on a live scan, which will be followed by uploading high-quality photo. These security details will be incorporated in the certificate.

Former director of Directorate of Forensic Science Labs, Rukmani Krishnamurthy, had suggested the steps to BARTI.