

# Kerala govt's extreme poverty-free declaration a poll stunt: Adviasi Mahasabha

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Kozhikode: Adviasi Gothra Mahasabha has said that the move by the state govt to declare Kerala 'extreme poverty- free' on Nov 1 was part of election strategy and meant to deceive the public.

In a statement, Mahasabha along with office-bearers of Adishakthi Summer School said the govt has roped in actors like Mohanlal, Mammooty and Kamal Haasan for the programme to lend legitimacy to what it called an announcement being made with elections in mind and urged the actors to withdraw from the programme.

The Mahasabha said poverty, hunger, landlessness, homelessness, unemployment, disease and the lack of adequate social security

remain Kerala's most serious socio-political problems, and the Nov 1 declaration seeks only to mask this grim reality for political gain.

According to govt data, 64,000 families have been identified as belonging to the "extremely poor" category, of which only 5% are adviasis, 20% dalits and 75% others. "Even a cursory look reveals how false these figures are," said the statement by Adviasi Gothra Mahasabha state coordinator M Geethanandan along with Reshma K R and Jishnu G of Adishakthi Summer School.

"The so-called 'extreme poverty eradication' campaign is an attempt to divert attention from real poverty alleviation measures. The govt should instead conduct a comprehensive survey of socially and economically backward groups and implement concrete programmes to uplift them," they said.