

Tribal organisations to field independent candidate from paniya community in Mananthavady

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Kozhikode: Various adivasi and dalit organisations have decided to field an independent candidate from paniya community in Mananthavady constituency.

Leaders of adivasi collective in Wayanad said that in the upcoming assembly election they will field an independent candidate from paniya community. They said the move has the backing of several organisations including Adivasi Gothra Mahasabha (AGMS), Adivasi Vanitha Prasthanam, Paniya Samajam, Kattunaickan-Adiyan-Paniyan-Vettukkuruman Welfare Society, Adivasi Kshema Sangham, Adishakti Summer School, Muthanga Rehabilitation Committee, various paniya community

organisations, Scheduled Caste Samaj Koottayma and Ambedkarite Democratic Front.

Speaking at a news conference, AGMS general convener M Geethanandan and other leaders said communities such as paniya, adiyas, kattunaickan and vettukkuruman have historically been excluded from democratic and political processes.

Although slavery was abolished a century ago, Left and Right political fronts still want these communities to remain political 'slaves', they alleged.

"Even though there are two reserved constituencies in Wayanad district, Left and Right fronts prefer that only certain relatively advanced communities get representation in assembly," they said.

"Political fronts operate under the mistaken belief that these communities will continue to remain their fixed vote banks," Geethanandan said.

The leaders said such discrimination continuing in constituencies represented by national leaders like Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra should become a matter of public debate. They said fielding an independent candidate from paniya community would challenge what they called the caste discrimination practised by LDF and UDF.

Leaders who attended the news conference included Adivasi Vanitha Prasthanam president Ammini K Wayanad and executive member Kamala Echom, and Manikandan C and Suresh Mundakkolli of Paniya Samajam.