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thiruvananthapuram

## Adivasis pick up areas that need urgent attention

*for interventions to ensure ecological balance of Western Ghats*



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By Express News Service

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: At a time when political parties are finalising their election manifesto, tribal activists have placed an Adivasi manifesto that focuses on issues faced by various tribal communities in the state in public domain. The tribal manifesto by a panel chaired by P V Rajagopal of Ekta Parishad proposes various measures that require urgent attention.

Going by the 2011 Census, tribals constitute about 1.45 per cent of the total population. Wayanad district with 31.24 per cent has the highest tribal population while Alappuzha with 1.36 per cent has the lowest. The scattered presence of tribals across the state in a decentralised manner has been a major factor when it comes to addressing socio-political and economic issues. About 10,0897 families stay in 4,645 colonies.



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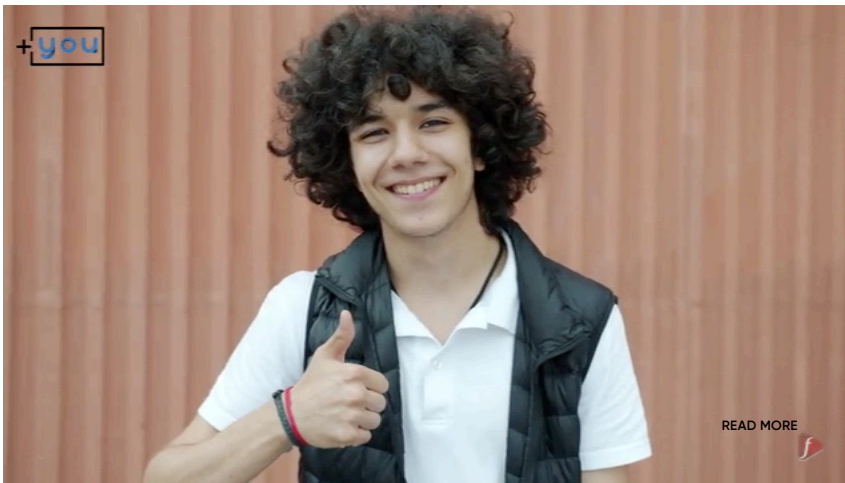
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“Tribal-Dalit issues have not been addressed as part of a common political agenda and one of the issues of mainstream society. To some extent, local self-government institutions have succeeded in ensuring basic infrastructure facilities for Scheduled communities.

### A NEAR-TOTAL REVAMP

- The manifesto aims for a new development perspective for tribals based on 2007 Universal Declaration on Tribal Rights
- Setting up an ST Commission
- Amending PSC rules to ensure better representation for tribals in appointments
- Giving legal recognition to the existing hamlet system



There’s an urgent need to address various issues, including health and substance abuse, faced by tribal communities. There should be necessary interventions to ensure ecological balance of the Western Ghats region,” pointed out Rajendraprasad of the Centre for Tribal Education Development and Research.

The manifesto puts forth a slew of measures for the uplift of the tribal community. Bringing in a new development perspective for tribals based on the 2007 Universal Declaration on Tribal Rights is the most important one. At a time of intense land struggles across the state, the manifesto underscores the urgent need to address land issues.

Implementing the Forest Rights Act 2006 in its full spirit has been pointed out as a solution to land issues. A tribal land policy should be brought in to earmark land for various purposes and issue title deeds for the same. A social auditing of the tribal hamlet project at Attappady should be carried out. Setting up a Scheduled Tribes Commission and reconstituting the ST development department are some of the important aspects raised in the manifesto. Amending PSC rules to ensure better representation for tribals in appointments are other major recommendations.

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