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Tribals will make or break fortunes

MYSORE: With the countdown to the voting day having begun already, the tribal population in the twin districts of Mysore and Chamarajanagar that has been denied its rights, this time forms a sizeable chunk of voters and can make or break the chances of the candidates.

The tribals have joined hands and have come out with a charter of demands.

They have kept the political parties guessing. The inclusion of H D Kote Assembly segment, earlier part of Mysore seat, has been brought under Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha seat. This has added 20,000 votes to the constituency.

Tribal forums that had boycotted polls in the past to protest against the politicians and parties for denying them their rights or not meeting their demands have come together, and will support a party that will meet their demands.

The tribals votes will be decisive if there is a keen contest or a triangle contest.

Though the tribals in the past had by and large supported the Congress, the exposure to civil society, political awareness and increase in literacy rate have enlightened them about the 'power of vote.' The tribals want the implementation of the Tribal Forest Rights Act, passed by the Parliament.

They have also demanded that it should be ensured that the reservation meant for tribals should not be misused by giving the same to non tribals. They also want proper rehabilitation of the displaced tribal families in Bandipur and Nagarhole National Parks.

The adivasi population wants parties to nominate a tribal to legislative council.

They want the netas to clarify their stand on collection of minor forest produces.

"We will decide on the candidate that we will support based on the response from political parties and their candidates to our demands," said Sreekanth, co-ordinator of Deed, an organisation working for tribals.

The tribals feel that they would prefer leaders who will protect their social, political and economic interests.

Tribals are spread in H D Kote, Kollegal, Yelandur, Virajpet, Somwarpet, Madikeri, Periyapatna and Hunsur in the Mysore and Chamarajanagar constituencies.

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