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News / India / Karnataka / Siddaramaiah becomes first-ever Karnataka Chief Minister to visit Kerehadi tribe

Siddaramaiah becomes first-ever Karnataka Chief Minister to visit Kerehadi tribe

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah made a historic visit to HD Kote's Kerehadi tribal village, pledging urgent solutions to long-standing issues like electricity, water, and land rights. He is the first chief minister ever to make such a visit.

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Siddaramaiah becomes first-ever Karnataka Chief Minister to visit Kerehadi tribe.

Nagarjun Dwarakanath Bengaluru, UPDATED: Nov 13, 2024 09:12 IST Written By: Afreen Hussain

In Short

- Siddaramaiah assured Kerehadi tribals of urgent action on water and electricity access
- He addressed complex land issues, to review forest restrictions on tribals
- He encouraged education among tribal youth, to review ashram schools expansion

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah made a historic visit to the Kerehadi tribal village in Heggadadevana Kote (HD Kote), where he spent two hours with the tribal community, becoming the first chief minister to do so.

During his visit, Siddaramaiah listened intently to the tribals' longstanding concerns, addressing issues on the spot and promising action. "Appropriate action will be taken soon regarding the establishment of Adivasi/Aranyavasi Development Corporation," he assured. Siddaramaiah's engagement comes as part of his administration's broader efforts to address the needs of marginalised communities and rectify their longstanding challenges with government

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ADDRESSING DECADES-LONG ISSUES

The tribals, some of whom have been without electricity and sufficient drinking water for decades, spoke directly with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. He instructed officials to expedite water and electricity services, while he sat on the ground with tribal leaders Ganesh and Ramesh.



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District Collector Laxmikant Reddy confirmed plans to address the hurdles and said, "We will solve the problem of drinking water and electricity connection of Kerehadi and eight other villages within a month."

COMMITMENT TO TRIBAL RIGHTS AND RESOURCES

The meeting also focused on complex land issues. Some tribals reported that although they have legal rights to farm land they've cultivated for decades, they face resistance from forest officials and limitations on using farm equipment like tractors. "The tribals are part of the forest. They do not cause any trouble to the forest, so there should be no unnecessary harassment," said Siddaramaiah. He promised to discuss these issues in an upcoming Wildlife Board meeting, emphasising a balanced approach between tribal rights and forest conservation.

Siddaramaiah, also the chairperson of the Wildlife Board, pledged to examine how policies could better support tribal development without compromising environmental protections. He reassured the community that "appropriate decisions will be taken in the Wildlife Board" to address their concerns.

PROMISES SEPARATE ADIVASI DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Kerehadi tribals requested a dedicated Adivasi Development Corporation, separate from the Nomadic Development Corporation. "We are adivasis living in one place in the forest. So don't include us in the Nomadic Development Corporation," one tribal member said.

In response, the Chief Minister affirmed his commitment to establishing an independent body.

CM ENCOURAGES EDUCATION, EXTENDING ASHRAM SCHOOLS

Interacting with tribal children, Siddaramaiah encouraged them to pursue education, noting how his own perseverance led him from a rural background to the Chief Minister's office. He shared a personal story, "My father also sent me to learn folk dance. I became the chief minister today because I did my law degree with perseverance." He emphasised education as a means to uplift tribal communities, saying, "You should also get education without stopping school halfway."

Responding to another long-standing request, Siddaramaiah committed to reviewing the current ashram school system. Tribals asked for an extension of

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ashram schooling to the Pre-University College (PUC) level, noting that current offerings only go up to Class 8. Siddaramaiah said he would consider this expansion, potentially providing more opportunities for tribal students.

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Siddaramaiah's visit was celebrated by the Kerehadi tribal community, who praised him as the first Chief Minister to reach out directly to them. Two generations of Kerehadi tribals joined in singing and dancing in honour of his historic visit, expressing optimism that the promises made will bring long-awaited changes.

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