

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- # 2705
TO BE ANSWERED ON- 18/12/2024

ENSURING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL STUDENTS

2705 # DR. SUMER SINGH SOLANKI:

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken steps to remove educational disparities faced by Tribal students to ensure equitable access to quality education; and

(b) if so, the strategies and initiatives taken to enhance the quality of education for Tribal students in view of their specific needs and cultural backgrounds?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI. DURGADAS UIKEY)

(a) and (b): Tribal population faces special challenges due to relative lack of access to facilities due to poor physical and digital connectivity, lack of interest of teachers to work in the remote tribal areas, infrastructural gaps and comparatively low socio-economic status. To take care of these specific needs, Government launched Central Sector Scheme of Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) (2018-19) to set up 440 EMRSs, one EMRS in every block having more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons (as per census 2011). With 288 schools sanctioned under Article 275(1) (before 2018), Ministry has set the target to set up total of 728 EMRSs across the country. Being in vicinity of their habitations and villages, these schools are aimed to provide infrastructural facilities and quality education at par with Navodaya Vidyalaya in their own environment to tribal students. These schools having classes VI to XII, are totally free and Govt has recruited teachers Centrally for these schools. It is compulsory for teachers and student to stay in school and school has separate hostels for boys and girls and accommodation for teachers. An amount of Rs. 28,0000 crore has been budgeted for these schools for 5 years (2021-26) with Rs 1.09 lakh per student per annum for recurring expenditure and Rs 48 cr and 38 cr for construction in hilly and plain areas respectively. Provision of Smart classes has been made in these schools.

As on date, 715 schools have been sanctioned, out of which 476 EMRSs are functional benefiting 1,33,929 students. As reported by National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS), the autonomous body under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to manage and implement the scheme of EMRS, the following activities have been introduced in EMRSs :-

- I. Uniform curriculum and educational standards across all schools on CBSE pattern.
- II. Integration of modern technological interventions such as Direct-to-Home (DTH) education.
- III. Online tutoring for competitive exams like IIT, NEET etc.
- IV. Provision of Smart Classes for interactive learning.
- V. Regular health check-ups and medical facilities.
- VI. Provision of skill development programs tailored to enhance the employability and practical skills of students.
- VII. Development of infrastructure facilities for both indoor and outdoor sports and sports training to nurture athletic talent.
- VIII. By setting up “Poshan Vatikas” in EMRSs efforts are made to preserve the local varieties of plants and harness knowledge of medicinal and nutritional plants in the remotest areas.
- IX. Adventure initiative by sending 58 students from 8 states to undergo a 26-day Basic Mountaineering Course at ABVIMAS in Manali.
- X. NESTS has also collaborated with NITI Aayog and established Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) labs in 16 EMRSs.

2. Ministry of Tribal Affairs is implementing following Scholarship Schemes to promote and encourage basic and higher education amongst ST population:-

- i) **Pre-Matric Scholarship for ST students (For Class IX and X):**
- ii) **Post Matric Scholarship for ST students (For Class XI and above):**
- iii) **National Scholarship Scheme for Higher Education of ST Students (earlier known as Top Class Scholarship Scheme):** Scholarship is provided for pursuing Graduate/Post Graduate courses in the 265 top-class Government and Non-Government Institutes in professional fields such as Management, Medicine, Engineering, Information Technology, Law etc.
- iv. **National Fellowship Scheme for Higher Education of ST Students:** Scholarship to meritorious ST students for pursuing M.Phil or Ph.D in India
- v) **National Overseas Scholarship for ST students:** Scholarships are given to the meritorious Schedule Tribe (ST) students for pursuing higher education abroad.

Pre and Post matric Scholarships scheme are open ended and every ST student with income upto 2.5 lakh can take benefit of these schemes.

3. Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) envisions saturation of critical gaps in social infrastructure including education sector. To improve infrastructure of residential schools and hostels in tribal areas, under Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) there

is provision for upgradation and renovation of these schools. An amount of about Rs 7500 cr has been provisioned by Ministry of Tribal Affairs with 100% grants to States

3.1. Under DAJGUA Dept of School Education and Literacy, Govt of India has provisioned for construction of 1000 hostels for tribal children to facilitate access to education.

4. Under PM Janjatiya Adivasi Nyaya MAha Abhiyan (JANMAN), Department of School Education & Literacy is supporting construction of 500 hostels for facilitating access to education of students belonging to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

5. Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), is also implementing Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, aimed at bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education. The scheme also focuses on the identified Special Focus Districts (SFDs) on the basis of adverse performance on various indicators of enrolment, retention, and gender parity, as well as concentration of SC, ST and minority communities. A total of 109 ST SFDs, having population of more than 25% and above ST population have been identified. The major interventions of Samagra Shiksha include RTE entitlements under which two sets of uniforms for all girls, and children belonging to SC/ST/BPL families' in Government schools up to class VIII are provided and provision is also made for textbooks to all children including SC/ST in Government/Local Body and Government aided schools.

5.1. Under Samagra Shiksha, there is a provision of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) which are residential schools for girls (class VI to XII) belonging to disadvantaged groups such as SC, ST, OBC, Minority and Below Poverty Line (BPL).

6. Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), an autonomous body under Ministry of Education, has informed that ST students in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) are provided equitable access to good quality modern education. There are 10 Special JNVs for Scheduled Tribe (ST) concentrated districts of the country. There is provision of Reservation for SC & STs as per actual population in the district concerned subject to a minimum of national average (i.e. 15% for SCs and 7.5% for STs) but subject to a maximum of 50% for both the categories (SC & ST) taken together.
