

**PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT**

**Review Of The Functioning Of The Eklavya Model Residential Schools
(EMRS)**

THIRTY FOURTH REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs was set up in the year 1999 with the objective of providing a focused approach on the **cultural and the socio economic development of the Schedule Tribes**, in a well planned manner. In the process of development, providing quality education to ST students has been one of the main objectives, as education is one of the most effective instrument in the process of social and economic development.

Therefore, as a first step, the concept of **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** was introduced in the year 1997-998 to **provide quality upper primary, secondary and senior secondary level education to Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) students (Class 6th-12th) in tribal dominated areas**, alongwith extra curricular activities in order to bring them at par with the general population. Initially the scheme was funded under a Special Area Programme Grants under the Article 275(1) of the Constitution of India. Under the scheme, 288 schools were sanctioned wherein the state was responsible for providing land, construction of schools, recruitment of teachers and management of schools.

With the emerging importance of the EMRS, the Government announced in the Union Budget 2018-19 of its commitment to provide the best quality education to the tribal children in their own environment and with that mission, it had been decided that by the year 2022, every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons will have an EMRS which will be at par with the Navodaya Vidyalayas and will have special facilities of preserving local art and culture besides providing training in sports and skill development. Along with the Budget

announcement, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), approved the revamping of the EMRS Scheme.

A revamped scheme was proposed with the following salient features:

- Set up schools with a capacity of 480 students each, catering to students from class VI to XII in every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons.
- Setting up Eklavya Model Day Boarding Schools (EMDBS) in sub districts with 90% or more ST population and 20,000 or more tribal people.
- Minimum land of 15 acres in case of EMRS and 5 acres in case of EMDBS to make available for infrastructure building for academic institutions and extra curricular activities.
- Construction cost of Rs 37.80 cr per school for plain areas and Rs 48 cr for schools in North East, hilly areas, difficult areas and areas affected by Left Wing Extremism.
- Recurring grant of Rs 1.09 lakh per student per annum in case of EMRS and Rs 0.85 lakh in case of EMDBS.
- Establish National Education Society for Tribal Students as an autonomous society under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to establish, endow, maintain, control and manage schools.
- Set up Centre of Excellence for sports in tribal majority districts with all related infrastructure including specialised state of the art facilities for two identified sports (including one group and one individual sport) which will be common for a State.
- Utilisation of upto 10% seats by non-ST students. Priority shall be given to children of EMRS's staff, children who have lost their parents to Left Wing Extremism and insurgencies, children of widows, children of divyang parents.
- Reservation of 20% seats under sports quota for deserving ST students who have excelled in the field of sports.

ESTABLISHMENT OF EMRS

As per Ministry of Tribal Affairs, under Article 275(1) of the Constitution of India, prior to the revamp of the scheme, 244 schools out of the sanctioned 288 schools could be made functional. The construction work of 202 schools has been completed till date. The pace of the construction work is relatively slow despite the Scheme being in existence for more than two decades. The routine issues relating to tendering process, land transfer, finalisation of construction agency etc. cannot be kept lingering for months and delaying the work inordinately when a target completion data is set.

The Ministry was recommended to take dynamic **measures to make all the 288 schools functional**, take steps towards the completion of construction of 66 schools in a stipulated time and begin the construction of the schools. There is an urgency for the tribal children to resume their education and school facilities must be provided to them as online mode of education is not feasible in remote tribal areas.

On evaluation of the work progress, the original target which aimed at 452 new Eklavya Model Residential Schools, including 12 EMDBS that should have been established in the remaining 462 sub-districts by the year 2022 is incomplete and the target year stands revised as 2035 now. It was also noted that the construction of only 100 schools could begin till date, whereas the construction of 332 schools is yet to begin by March, 2022. Also, according to the Report, only 20 schools were functional from their buildings. According to the Ministry, the establishment of National Educational Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) would improve the results substantially but the estimates drew a contrasting picture. Therefore, the Ministry was suggested to aggressively take up the work of **construction of schools in order to make the EMRS/EMDBS functional from their own building and to take up measures in order to ensure that there are no more deviations from the target.**

LAND REQUIREMENT OR CONSTRUCTION OF EMRS

A minimum of 15 acres of land required for establishing EMRS in a sub district having 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons and a minimum of 5 acres of land was required for establishing EMDBS in a sub district having 90% ST population. The criteria of minimum area of 15 acres of land in a sub-district having 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons for construction of EMRS was impractical as a single piece of 15 acres of land may not be easily available in hilly areas. Apart from this also the North East, hilly areas and the Left Wing Extremism(LWE) affected areas also face other discrepancies such as land not found, land under forest area etc. and since the clearance of these discrepancies takes time it delays the procedure of land aquisition. Furthermore, the criteria of 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons for sanctioning of EMRS and 90% ST population for sanctioning of EMDBS makes the land acquisition more cumbersome. There was a need for the policies to be reviewed on an immediate basis so that the delay in acquisition of land could be prevented without compromising on the infrastructural needs of the EMRS/EMDBS. In conclusion, the construction work of all the proposed and **under construction EMRS/EMDBS should be completed in the stipulated time** and necessary steps be taken to **encourage/sensitize the States/ UT's to submit speedily, proposals for construction of EMDBS so that maximum Tribal students are able to get quality education.**

NATIONAL EDUCATION SOCIETY FOR TRIBAL STUDENTS

The **National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS)**, an autonomous body, established in 2019, to plan, construct, establish, endow and administer the EMRS was expected to execute actions necessary to provide good quality modern education to tribal students, common core curriculum of NCERT, CBSE affiliation of schools, training/ capacity building programmes for teaching and non teaching staff, review the existing MOU's signed by the state/UT EMRS societies or the state governments etc. Certain posts in the NESTS laid vacant therefore no further delay could happen in recruitment of the sanctioned strength of NESTS. It was suggested that **NESTS ensure the establishment of EMRS societies in all the states/ UTs** urgently and MOU with States/UT's should be signed/ reviewed without any further delay or the smooth functioning

of schools. Given the wide role played by NESTS, it was recommended that the **sanctioned strength of NESTS be increased** in order to ensure the smooth functioning. There was a need to ensure that the number of experts be kept adequate to **effectively monitor and supervise the pre and post construction activities of EMRS** societies. The increasing roles of the Project Monitoring Units in both pre and post construction activities was observed, therefore it was recommended that the number of experts should be kept adequate to effectively monitor and supervise the pre construction and post construction activities of EMRSs.

RECRUITMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES (TEACHING AND NON TEACHING STAFF)

A special drive at the Central level in association with the State Governments was initiated to fill up the vacancies of teaching staff at EMRSs with an objective to recruit quality human resources, technically equipped and motivated in order to maintain the quality standards of EMRSs. **The recruitment of the teaching staff for EMRSs shall be state specific, in accordance with the recruitment rules of the respective State and only eligible candidates having domicile certificate of the State can apply**

The teachers appointed for EMRS societies by the states were not in accordance with a uniform criteria for the appointment of teachers for schools despite the existence of the scheme since 1997-98 as the Ministry did not have control over the schools except for giving grants to the states to establish EMRSs. A recruitment examination, formulated on the pattern of Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas will be conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) in order to fill a total of 3400 vacancies across 16 states/ UT's. It was observed that due to a discrepancy of the States the recruitment process had suffered, thus, it was recommended to complete the formalities at the earliest, also a follow up with states/UTs who haven't notified recruitment rules must be conducted and ensure that these states notify the rules in a specific time period. Necessary action for the **recruitment of non-teaching staff** for the efficient management of EMRS must be taken up as well.

CONSTRUCTION COSTS AND BUDGET

After the revamping of the EMRS scheme, the responsibility of construction of 452 new schools sanctioned from 2018-19, was entrusted to Public Sector Unions (PSU) and Central Public Works Department (CPWD). A budgetary provision for capital cost of Rs 2,146.50 crore was made for 2024-25 and Rs 210 crore for 2025-26. It was observed that the budgetary provision for the construction of schools was insufficient and could result in targets not being realised. Hence, The Ministry was recommended to **review the financial allocation**, to avoid a situation of a financial crisis. It was noted that the pace of construction work did not progress as only 43 locations out of the administrative and expenditure sanction issued for 104 EMRSs to PSUs or construction. The committee therefore advised the ministry to regularly **review the status of work** as only 43 out of the sanctioned 104 EMRS had been constructed and strive to **remove all bottlenecks** to complete the work within the set period.

CHAPTER- VII CAPACITY BUILDING OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

The Ministry organised a capacity building programme in school leadership for EMRS Heads and was attended by 50 school principals. Several training programmes have been organised for teachers and Principals in the last two years. However it was observed that the participation of school principals and teachers was limited. Teachers need to be a pivotal part of the programs which could NESTS to **conduct exchange programmes on both national and international level** in order to impart skills and squint them with the advanced training programmes. Along with the established collaborations with national institutions like NCERT, NITI Aayog, NIEPA etc., more collaborations between NESTS and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to initiate vocational education courses to benefit students and teachers in developing skills, hence, necessary actions may be taken for **vocational education courses across EMRS**. Concrete steps need to be taken to increase the number of programmes, thus it was recommended that an **annual calendar for professional capacity development programmes should be prepared** and should be shared with all EMRSs and EMDBSs so that maximum participation could be ensured.

CHAPTER- VIII SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

The EMRSs need to comply with the provisions of the Right to Education Act, 2009 as prescribed by the CBSE and the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti. The facilities in schools would include State-of-the-art infrastructure, study materials, preparatory classes for competitive examinations, medical assistance(including telemedicine), uniform, extra-curricular activities, study tours and students to partake in school level competitions in various spheres.

Smart (Establishment of Intelligent Educational Infrastructure) Class implemented in EMRS in 2021, initiated to enhance the learning and productivity of students in-coordination with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) through ERNET India, an autonomous body of MeitY, 48 schools were covered in the year 2021-22.

Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) have been established in EMRS since 2018. Currently 13 schools in 6 states have established Atal Tinkering Labs.

The need for an effective **EMRS- Management Information System (MIS)** arose for the effective monitoring of the schools. A detailed document for capturing implementation status of EMRS and documents on reporting formats have been developed in accordance with EMRS Guidelines, Bye laws & Rules of NESTS, School Performance Index of NITI Aayog, UDISE document etc. Module designing and website development and advancement are in progress. **MIS could be an effective tool for monitoring of the schools**, particularly those set up in far flung areas, should be developed in a time bound manner without further delay.

The recommendations included **establishing online learning systems, Smart classes and Atal tinkering labs and also to procure the mobile tablets and educational kits within the laid down timeframe**. As the tribal students belong to remote areas and do not possess resources to voice their requirements vigorously, it is the duty of the Ministry to recognize and fulfill their educational requirements well in time.

CHAPTER- IX PERFORMANCE OF EMRSs

Admission guidelines developed by NESTS must ensure uniformity and transparency for admission in EMRS. Certain extant guidelines have been mentioned below :

- The number of seats for boys and girls will be equal.
- Maximum sanctioned strength of a school shall be 480 students
- 90% of the seats will be reserved for tribal students

To gauge the performance of EMRS students, The Ministry of Tribal Affairs stated that 92% of the 8233 students cleared the class-X examination, of which 53% secured First Division. For class XIIth, 88.3% of the 6333 students passed the exam, of which 58% secured First Division.

NESTS, State EMRS societies and District Level Committees function as mechanisms used to maintain the quality of education and standards of living in the EMRSs.

Apart from this a dedicated online portal is under development where details of the facilities, teachers and infrastructure of schools will be made available. EMRSs focus on both academic and extracurricular activities, and the performance of EMRS students was recognised at National and International level of competitions, cultural and sports activities.

Necessary action needed to be taken by NESTS to **frame admission guidelines in a time bound manner** such that they are uniformly applied by State/UT Governments across EMRSs. The Committee desired that the online portal be expeditiously developed so that the details of the facilities be made available to students, infrastructure in schools, details of the teachers with their qualification are made available by the respective schools on portal for the benefit of the prospective students/teachers.

CHAPTER- X CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (CoE) FOR SPORTS

Centre of Excellence for Sports (CoE) with State-of-the-Art facilities, equipment and scientific back up along with specialized training, boarding and lodging facilities, insurance, medical expenses etc. as per norms of Sports Authority of India and in consultation of the Authority are

proposed to be set up in tribal majority districts with all related infrastructure, as sports was an inherent component of EMRSs. **Fifteen Centres of Excellence** were proposed out of which two have been sanctioned and an advance amount of 127 lakh was released. The Centres are being established in consultation with the Sports Authority of India. The CoEs would be located with an existing or proposed EMRS, the facilities being made available to both EMRS and other students. Some of the sports offered to students in EMRSs include volleyball, badminton, Kabaddi, Kho- Kho, archery, hockey, table-tennis, football, basketball etc.

The interrogations with officials discussed the cost and time required to establish the CoEs, certain concerns of delay in sanction process were also brought up. Therefore, it was recommended to take the necessary action to **complete the modalities in consultation with Sports Authority of India, States/UTs to fix the timeline for the completion of work**

CHAPTER- XI AFFILIATION OF EMRSs TO CBSE

As per the norms all the EMRSs need to be affiliated to CBSEs, and MOUs have been signed between NESTs and EMRS societies in 25 states/UTs. The states of **Bihar, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal** hadn't signed an MoU with EMRS and insisted on continuation of State Board Curriculum in the schools set up in these states. NESTs being responsible for ensuring compliance made efforts to encourage MOU agreements, to bring uniformity in education across all EMRSs. The Committee recommended **vigorous pursuance of agreement to MOUs with the states, at the highest level in a time bound manner, for the students to receive standardised education, which is established across all EMRSs in the country.**