

6. Eklavya Model Residential School – Governance/Scheme

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addresses the Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas programme, marking the 150th Birth Anniversary celebration of Dharti Aaba Bhagwan Birsa Munda, in Dediapada, Gujarat. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated new Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) to bridge the educational gap in tribal hinterlands. Managed by NESTS, these schools aim to provide quality, free, CBSE-based residential education to ST students in blocks with over 50% tribal population.

1. Context

Recent Development – Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated a wide array of projects aimed at tribal welfare, education, mobility, and infrastructure.

Key Projects – The inauguration included new Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) and community centres designed to uplift tribal communities.

2. About Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)

Overview and Launch

Inception – The scheme was launched in the year 1997–98.

Nodal Agency – It is implemented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA).

Target Audience – The schools provide free, quality, residential education specifically to Scheduled Tribe (ST) students.

Grade Levels – Education is provided from Class VI to XII.

Geographic Focus – Schools are established in remote and tribal-majority regions to ensure accessibility.

Aims and Objectives

Holistic Development – To enable ST children to access higher and professional educational courses and secure better employment opportunities.

Bridging the Gap – To bridge the educational divide between tribal and non-tribal populations.

Curriculum Blend – The schools follow a CBSE-based curriculum, integrated with –

1. Sports training.
2. Skill development.
3. Preservation of local tribal culture and heritage.

3. Evolution, Expansion, and Governance

Funding and Evolution

Initial Phase – Originally, funding was provided under Article 275(1) grants to State Governments to cover school construction and recurring expenses.

2018–19 Revamp – The scheme was revamped to accelerate expansion with specific location criteria.

New Criteria – An EMRS is to be established in every block that satisfies two conditions –

1. The block has more than 50% ST population.
2. The block has at least 20,000 tribal residents.

National Target – The government aims to establish 728 EMRS across the country by 2026.

Governance Structure

Implementing Body – The schools are established and managed by the National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS).

Status – NESTS operates as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

4. Key Features of EMRS

Educational Model – These are fully residential, co-educational schools designed on the model of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas but with a specific focus on tribal needs.

Cost to Student – Education is provided free of cost, covering –

1. Boarding and Lodging.
2. Uniforms.
3. Textbooks.
4. Other amenities.

Capacity – Each school is designed to accommodate 480 students.

Gender Parity – The intake is managed to strictly maintain an equal ratio of boys and girls.

Admission and Reservation Norms

General ST Students – Primary beneficiaries.

Non-ST Quota – Up to **10% of seats** may be allotted to non-ST students if vacancies exist.

Sports Quota – **20% reservation** is dedicated to outstanding ST sportspersons.

5. Comparison – EMRS vs. EMDBS

To understand the nuance in the government's approach to different tribal demographics, a comparison of the two school models is presented below –

Feature	Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS)	Eklavya Model Day Boarding School (EMDBS)
Nature	Fully Residential	Day-Schooling (Day Boarding)
Target Area	Blocks with >50% ST population & >20,000 tribal residents	Areas with ≥90% ST population
Purpose	For scattered tribal populations needing lodging	For dense tribal populations not requiring residence

6. Supporting Initiatives

Eklavya Model Day Boarding Schools (EMDBS)

Location Criteria – Proposed specifically for areas with a very high concentration of tribal population (≥90% ST population).

Objective – To offer quality education without removing the child from their home environment, as residential facilities are not required in such dense settlements.

Centers of Excellence for Sports (CoE for Sports)

Concept – Dedicated state-of-the-art sports hubs are being supported in each State.

Specialization Structure – Each CoE focuses on –

1. One Individual Sport.
2. One Team Sport.

Facilities –

1. Scientific training methods.
2. Specialized boarding and equipment.
3. Insurance and medical support aligned with Sports Authority of India (SAI) norms.

Goal – To nurture high-performing tribal athletes and enhance their opportunities for sports-based careers.

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