

TALASH: NATIONAL

NEWS: Centre, UNICEF to provide career counselling for Eklavya tribal school students

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

TALASH, launched by NESTS in collaboration with UNICEF India, is a national programme aimed at enhancing the aptitude, life skills, and self-esteem of tribal students in EMRSs through psychometric assessments, career counselling, and digital teacher training. It aligns with NEP 2020 to promote inclusive, holistic, and future-ready tribal education.

Context

- The **National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS)**, in collaboration with **UNICEF India**, launched **TALASH (Tribal Aptitude, Life Skills and Self-Esteem Hub)**.
- This is a **national initiative** aimed at the **holistic development** of tribal students enrolled in **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)**.

About the TALASH Initiative

1. Meaning and Scope

- TALASH stands for **Tribal Aptitude, Life Skills and Self-Esteem Hub**.
- It is a **pioneering programme** that combines **psychometric testing, career counselling, and life skill training** for tribal youth.
- The initiative is aimed at over **1.38 lakh tribal students** across **28 States and 8 Union Territories**.

2. Vision and Objectives

- Help tribal students develop **self-awareness, confidence, and clarity** about their career paths.
- Promote **personal growth, resilience, and emotional well-being**.
- Aligns with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, which emphasizes **holistic, inclusive, and learner-centered education**.

Key Components of TALASH

1. Psychometric Assessments

- Based on NCERT's '**Tamanna**' initiative (Try and Measure Aptitude and Natural Abilities).
- Helps identify a student's **interests, strengths, and cognitive preferences**.
- Generates **Career Cards** that provide **customised career suggestions** and learning pathways.

2. Career Counselling

- Offers **one-on-one and group guidance sessions** to students.
- Helps align their **educational goals with career aspirations**.
- Informs them about **diverse career options** including higher education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship.

3. Life Skills and Self-Esteem Modules

- Focuses on **social-emotional learning (SEL)**, including:
 - Communication
 - Problem-solving
 - Conflict resolution
 - Emotional regulation
- Enhances **self-worth, confidence, and psychological resilience** among tribal students.

4. E-Learning for Educators

- A **dedicated digital portal** is developed to train EMRS teachers.
- Includes **mentoring modules, interactive resources**, and best practice guides.
- Enables teachers to become **academic mentors and emotional guides**.

Implementation Strategy

- The initiative is being **rolled out in phases**, beginning with select cities and EMRS clusters.
- So far, **189 teachers from 75 EMRSs** have been trained for initial implementation.
- Target: **Full-scale deployment in all EMRSs across India by end of 2025**.

Significance of TALASH

- **First-of-its-kind** national programme **exclusively for tribal students**.
- Leverages **technology and data-driven tools** to ensure effectiveness even in **remote areas**.
- Addresses the long-standing **tribal education gap** by ensuring **career guidance, emotional support, and skill development**.
- **Fosters inclusive, equitable, and future-ready education** in line with NEP 2020 goals.

Complementary Initiatives and Strategic Partnerships

1. Exam Coaching and Career Support

- **MoU with Ex-Navodayan Foundation:**

- Provides coaching for **IIT-JEE, NEET**, and other competitive exams.
- Builds on the success of **600+ EMRS students** who have cleared national exams.
- **MoU with Tata Motors:**
 - Offers **vocational training, apprenticeships, and employment support** for EMRS graduates.
 - Helps bridge the gap between **classroom learning and workplace readiness**.

2. Educator Empowerment

- A **centralised e-learning platform** enables teacher training and knowledge sharing.
- Teachers become **facilitators of social-emotional development** in addition to academic learning.

Adi Karmyogi Programme – A Parallel Initiative

- Launched by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, separate from TALASH.
- Aims to build a **cadre of field-level tribal officers** with **citizen-focused delivery orientation**.
- **Target:** Capacity-building for **20 lakh tribal stakeholders**.
- Implementation Structure:
 - **180 State-level Master Trainers**
 - **3,000+ District Trainers**
 - **15,000+ Block Trainers**

Institutorial Background

1. NESTS (National Education Society for Tribal Students)

- **Established:** 2019 under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- **Mandate:** Operates and manages **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)** across India.
- Provides **quality education, skill development, and career support** for tribal students.

2. UNICEF India

- **UNICEF** (United Nations Children's Fund): A global organisation working in **190+ countries**.
- **Established:** 1946 in the aftermath of World War II.
- **Headquarters:** New York City, USA.

- **Honours:**
 - **Nobel Peace Prize (1965)**
 - **Indira Gandhi Peace Prize (1989)**
 - **Princess of Asturias Award (2006)**
- **Major Reports Published:**
 - *State of the World's Children*
 - *The Progress of Nations*
 - *Every Child Alive*

Conclusion

TALASH is a **transformative step toward empowering tribal youth** through structured assessments, skill-building, and emotional development. By combining **career counselling, psychometrics, and digital learning**, it ensures that tribal students are not just literate but also **life-ready, confident, and future-driven**.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/education/centre-starts-career-counselling-platform-for-eklavya-students-in-partnership-with-unicef/article69797032.ece>