



Initiative for Digital Transformation of Tribal Schools

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MTA)** inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Microsoft** to support the digital transformation of schools such as **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** and **Ashram Schools**, among others under the Ministry.

- It is aimed at building an inclusive, skills-based economy.

Key Points

▪ About the MoU:

- **Artificial Intelligence** curriculum will be made available to tribal students in both English and Hindi at all EMRS schools to skill educators and students in next-generation technologies.
- In the **first phase, 250 EMRS schools have been adopted by Microsoft**, out of which 50 EMRS schools will be given intensive training and 500 master trainers would be trained in the first phase.
- **Teachers across states in India will be trained in a phased manner** for using productivity technologies like Office 365 and AI applications in teaching.
- The program will also offer opportunities for **teachers to earn professional e-badges and e-certificates** from the Microsoft Education Centre.
- Students from schools under the Ministry will be mentored on projects that involve AI applications for **societal good** and the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

▪ Expected Benefits:

- This program will ensure that tribal students get a chance to **change their future, their environment, their village, and overall community**.
- The initiative will also enable the **professional development of educators, enabling them to use technology in classrooms**.
- It will help in the success of **digital India Mission**.
- It will be able to **bridge the gap between the tribal students and others**.

▪ Other Educational Schemes for Tribals:

- **Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Scheme (RGNF)**: RGNF was introduced in the year 2005-2006 with the objective to encourage the students belonging to the ST community to pursue higher education.
- **Vocational Training Center in Tribal Areas**: The aim of this scheme is to develop the skill of ST students depending on their qualification and present market trends.
- **National Overseas Scholarship Scheme**: It provides financial assistance to 20 students selected for pursuing higher studies abroad for PhD and postdoctoral studies.
- **Pre and Post Matric Scholarship Schemes**.

Eklavya Model Residential Schools

- **EMRS** started in the **year 1997-98** to impart quality education to **Schedule Tribes** children in

remote areas.

- The schools focus not only on academic education but on the all-round development of the students.
- The **objective** of EMRS is to provide quality middle and high level education to ST students in remote areas, not only to enable them to avail of reservation in high and professional educational courses and as jobs in government and public and private sectors but also to have access to the best opportunities in education at par with the non ST population.
- Each school has a capacity of **480 students, catering to students from Class VI to XII.**
- These are being set up by grants provided **under [Article 275\(1\) of the Constitution.](#)**
- These are **funded by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.**
- In order to give further impetus to EMRS, it has 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.
- Eklavya schools are on **par with Navodaya Vidyalaya** and have special facilities for preserving local art and culture besides providing training in sports and skill development.
 - **Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) scheme** envisages setting up of one Navodaya Vidyalaya in each district of the country. It is under the **Ministry of Education.**
 - These residential schools impart **good quality modern education to rural talented children** irrespective of their socio-economic background including ST children.

Ashram Schools

- Ashram schools are residential schools, in which **free boarding and lodging along with other facilities and incentives are provided to the students.**
- Apart from formal education, there is emphasis put upon **physical activities, meditation, sight-seeing, play, sports, games, and other.**
- **The Ministry of Tribal Affairs** provides construction costs and the **State Government** is responsible for running and overall maintenance of these Ashram schools including selection of medium of instruction.
- So far, the Ministry has funded **1,205 Ashram Schools** across the country for quality education of ST children.

[Source: PIB](#)

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