

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS  
**LOK SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO- \*291**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON- 20/03/2025

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR ST**

**\*291. SHRI SUKHDEO BHAGAT:**

Will the Minister of Tribal Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that there has been low literacy rate among Scheduled Tribes (STs) despite various initiatives taken by the Government and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the specific measures undertaken by the Government to address the low literacy rate among Scheduled Tribes;
- (c) the steps taken to resolve challenges/bottlenecks in the Ashram Schools Scheme including the lack of infrastructure and staffing which have left over forty percent of sanctioned schools non-operational;
- (d) the manner in which the Government is ensuring timely disbursement of funds under the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme, which supports over twenty-two lakh tribal students; and
- (e) whether the Government has implemented concrete measures to rectify these failures and ensure efficient implementation of tribal education programmes and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS  
(SHRI JUAL ORAM)

**(a) to (e):** A statement is laid on the table of the House.

**Statement referred to in reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No.\*291 for answer on 20.03.2025**

**(a)** The literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes remains lower than that of the overall population. However, there has been a significant improvement in ST literacy over the years with the gap gradually narrowing, as shown in the table below:

(In percent)

Year	ST	All
2001	47.10	64.84
2011	59	73
2017-18	67.7	76.9
2023-24	73.40	80.90

Source: Census for 2001 & 2011 and for 2017-18 & 2023-24 - Periodic Labour Force Survey, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation

**(b)** The Government is implementing various schemes to increase the literacy rate among Scheduled Tribes. Department of School Education and Literacy is implementing Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan since 2018-19. Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of the scheme. The Scheme reaches out to girls, and children belonging to SC, ST, Minority communities and transgender. 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 have been identified.

Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL) is also implementing PM POSHAN Scheme for providing hot cooked meal to eligible children in Government and Government – aided Schools. One of the objectives of the scheme is to encourage poor children, belonging to disadvantaged sections, to attend school more regularly and help them concentrate on classroom activities.

The Department of Higher Education (DoHE), Scholarship Division, is implementing two scholarship component schemes under the PM-USP Yojana namely (i) Central Sector Scheme of Scholarship (CSSS) for College and University Students and (ii) Special Scholarship Scheme for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (SSS for J&K and Ladakh) which benefits all students including STs

The Government has approved a centrally sponsored innovative scheme called Nav Bharat Saksharta Karyakram, popularly known as ULLAS: Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society. The scheme aligns with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and aims to empower those adults aged 15 years and above who could not get due schooling.

The Scheme ‘National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme’ is being implemented by DoSEL, with the objective to award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to arrest their drop out at class VIII and encourage them to continue their education at secondary stage.

Further, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is implementing the following schemes / programmes/interventions to increase the literacy rates and education level of STs:

(i). Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS): To provide free and quality education to tribal children, the Government has decided to establish 728 Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) in every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons as per 2011 census. Accordingly, in addition to the existing 288 schools sanctioned under Grants under article 275(1) of Constitution, 440 new schools (cumulatively 728 EMRSs) are scheduled to be established in the blocks fulfilling the criteria and provision of suitable land by the State to enroll around 3.5 lakhs ST students. As on date, a total number of 719 locations have been approved out of which 477 schools have been made functional. To ensure quality education and holistic development for tribal students following facilities are being provided in these schools:-

**1. Educational Infrastructure:**

- Well-equipped classrooms with modern teaching aids.
- Science and computer laboratories.
- Libraries with diverse learning resources.

**2. Accommodation and Amenities:**

- Residential facilities for students and staff.
- Separate hostels for boys and girls with essential amenities like bedding, furniture, and hygiene facilities.

**3. Sports and Extracurricular Facilities:**

- Playgrounds and sports equipment.
- Facilities for extracurricular activities like music, art, and sports

**4. Health and Nutrition:**

- Regular health check-ups and medical facilities.

**5. IT and Digital Learning:**

- Smart classrooms for digital education.
- Computer labs with internet access.

**6. Vocational Training:**

- Skill development and vocational training programs to enhance employability.

(ii). Scholarship Schemes: The Ministry is implementing five scholarship schemes for delivery of better educational opportunities.

- i. Pre-Matric Scholarship for ST students (Class IX and X)
- ii. Post Matric Scholarship for ST students (Class XI and above)
- iii. National Fellowship for Higher Education for ST students.
- iv. National Scholarship for Higher Education for ST students (Top Class)
- v. National Overseas Scholarship for ST students.

(iii). Grants in Aid to Voluntary Organizations: Under the scheme, fund is provided to Voluntary Organizations to run residential, nonresidential schools and hostels and also support educational complexes for ST girls in low literacy districts (as defined in Census 2011).

(iv). Under Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN): The PM JANMAN launched on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 is targeted at the 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). One of the interventions under the Abhiyaan is construction of 500 hostels in underserved areas under Samagra Shiksha which is being implemented by the Ministry of Education.

(v). Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan: Under DAJGUA, one of the interventions is construction of 1000 hostels under Samagra Shiksha which is being implemented by Ministry of Education. Further, upgradation & improving infrastructure of Hostels, Govt./State Tribal Residential schools is also covered under the Abhiyan which is to be considered by Ministry of Tribal Affairs based on the proposals from State Governments.

(vi). State Governments also run their independent programmes. For instance , state Tribal Welfare Departments run Ashram schools specifically for Scheduled Tribes.

(c) Ashram schools target remote rural areas which are low on educational resources, and where mainstream schools are difficult to be established . They are an exclusive initiative for tribal students. Ashram Schools serves to check the problems affecting tribal education namely non-enrolment, drop-out and poor quality of students. State Governments are responsible for running and overall maintenance of these Ashram Schools and undertaking quality checks.

Earlier, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) was running a separate scheme “Establishment of Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub-Plan Areas” under which funds were provided to State Governments for construction of Ashram schools. The intervention of construction of Ashram School was subsumed in the scheme of ‘Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme (SCA to TSS)’ and Grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution of India during 2018-19. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs provided construction cost to the State Governments and State Government was responsible for running and overall maintenance of these Ashram schools.

The Government has launched a new Abhiyaan namely the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan on 2nd October 2024 for all villages with at least 50% STs and having a minimum of 500 ST persons along with aspirational blocks with at least 50 STs. Keeping in view the need for improvement in the infrastructure of Ashram schools, one of the important components under Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan is improving infrastructure of Ashram schools, hostels, Govt./State Tribal Residential schools. The requirements such as additional classrooms, toilet blocks, hostels, furniture, major works in the school, teacher & staff hostel are considered for funding under the scheme based on the proposals submitted by the State Governments in terms of scheme guidelines.

The tentative rates for various requirements taken for estimating the funds required for improving infrastructure of Ashram Schools is given below:

Particular	Maximum amount to be sanctioned (in Rs. lakhs)
Classroom (50 students)	35
Toilet Block	20
Hostel (50 students)	275 (in line with PM JANMAN norms)
Furniture (per additional class room)	2.75
Major works in the school	75
Teaches Hostel in residential school (Upto 12 studio apartment with bathroom and common kitchen)	175

**(d)** In case of Post Matric Scholarships, the scholarship division (MoTA) conducts regular meetings with state governments and follow up is undertaken to ensure that the scholarship proposals are obtained on time from the respective state governments for timely processing and release of funds.

Also, the process of release of funds under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Post-Matric Scholarship for ST students is done as per the Single Nodal Agency Model. The scholarship is disbursed to the eligible beneficiaries under the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme in DBT mode from the SNA account. The flow of the fund in SNA account and expenditure from it can be monitored through PFMS reports. This model ensures that the allocation of funds to States for the CSS is made in a timely manner and after meeting various stipulations. Effective implementation of this Model has brought about greater efficiency in CSS fund utilization, tracking of funds, pragmatic and just-in-time release of funds to the States.

**(e)** The Government is taking various measures to ensure efficient implementation of schemes including tribal education programmes. Some of them are as under:

- i. Meetings/ Conferences are convened at the Central level with State officials for ensuring timely submission of proposals, speeding up of implementation of the scheme, and reviewing the physical and financial progress.
- ii. Release of funds to States/UTs in the scheme is made through Public Financial Management System (PFMS) platform.
- iii. Utilization Certificates are insisted upon as a pre-requisite for further release of funds as per the norms of GFR.
- iv. Progress reports regarding the status of implementation of scheme is obtained.
- v. Officers while visiting States/UTs also ascertain the progress of implementation of the scheme.
- vi. Scheme/programme-wise progress and utilization of funds are also monitored through dedicated online portals and performance dashboard.
- vii. Besides, evaluation of the schemes is conducted from time to time.

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