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Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)

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Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)

A scheme to give tribal-majority blocks their own residential school began in 1997–98. It is still growing, and it is a favourite for exams.

This lesson covers what EMRS are, who runs them, which states lead and what is new in 2026.

What are Eklavya Model Residential Schools?

What do EMRS do?

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) give quality schooling to Scheduled Tribe (ST) children in remote areas. They cover Classes VI to XII.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs says the schools are meant to be on par with Navodaya Vidyalayas. They are free, CBSE-affiliated schools.

The name comes from Eklavya, the tribal archer of the Mahabharata.

Sources: static.pib.gov.in

When did the scheme start, and who paid for it?

The scheme was introduced in **1997–98**. Grants under **Article 275(1)** of the Constitution paid for it.

That article gives grants-in-aid from the Consolidated Fund of India to States for tribal welfare. The grants cover school buildings and running costs.

For years EMRS had no scheme of its own. It was funded under a Special Area Programme.

Sources: static.pib.gov.in

What changed in 2018?

The Union Budget of 2018–19 promised the best quality education for tribal children in their own environment.

A separate scheme was created for EMRS. The target became one school in every block with **over 50% ST population** and **at least 20,000 tribal persons**.

The first plan was to reach this goal by 2022.

Sources: static.pib.gov.in

How big is each school?

A new EMRS stands on about 15 acres. It is built for **480 students** in Classes VI to XII.

Each campus has separate hostels for boys and girls, a dining hall and kitchen, and staff quarters.

The government has sanctioned 31 teaching posts and 21 non-teaching posts for each school.

Sources: pib.gov.in

1997–98 First EMRS under Article 275(1)
2018–19 Block-level target announced
2022 Original deadline
2026 499 schools working

> **Quick check 1.** EMRS began in 1997–98 under Article 275(1) of the Constitution. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Who runs the schools, and how many are working?

What is NESTS?

The National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) is an autonomous society under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

It sets up, manages and runs the schools. The ministry created it for exactly this job.

Sources: static.pib.gov.in

How many schools is the target?

The target is **728 schools**. That is 288 older schools sanctioned under Article 275(1), plus 440 new ones proposed in 2018–19.

As on 28 February 2026, **723** had been sanctioned. Of these, **499** were functional.

For 400 schools the building was complete. Another 323 were still under construction.

Sources: static.pib.gov.in

How many students study there?

PIB reported 485 functional schools in 2024–25, with 1,38,336 students enrolled.

As on 6 March 2026, 499 schools were operating with **1,56,564** students.

That is over 18,000 more students in a short span.

Sources: static.pib.gov.in; pib.gov.in

How are teachers hired?

NESTS held its first direct recruitment drive through the EMRS Staff Selection Exam (ESSE) 2023. It covered **10,391** posts.

State societies also engage guest teachers when vacancies arise, so classes do not stop.

Sources: pib.gov.in

> **Quick check 2.** NESTS runs EMRS on the ground through TRIFED. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Which states have the most EMRS?

Which states lead on working schools?

Chhattisgarh leads on functional schools. All 75 of its sanctioned schools are working.

Madhya Pradesh has 63 working out of 71. Jharkhand has 51 of 91. Odisha has 47 of 111.

These are figures as on 28 February 2026.

Sources: static.pib.gov.in

Where is the gap biggest?

Odisha has the most sanctioned schools, 111. But only 47 work. That leaves a gap of 64.

Jharkhand has a gap of 40. Several states have no gap. Andhra Pradesh (28), Rajasthan (31), Telangana (23) and Karnataka (12) have every sanctioned school working.

Sources: static.pib.gov.in

> **Quick check 3.** As on 28 February 2026, Odisha had the most sanctioned EMRS, but Chhattisgarh had the most functional ones. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Why did the scheme take so long?

How slow was the climb?

EMRS existed from 1997–98. Only after 2018 did it get a block-level target and a scheme of its own.

The 2022 deadline has passed. By 28 February 2026, 499 of 723 sanctioned schools were working. That is about 69%.

Sources: static.pib.gov.in

Why does a school take years to open?

A school opens only when its land, building and staff are ready. The status table shows the gap. In early 2026, 400 campuses were complete and 323 were still being built.

Recruitment also takes time. The first direct drive for staff ran in 2023.

Sources: static.pib.gov.in

Why build residential schools for tribal children?

The aim is quality schooling in remote areas.

Many tribal habitations are far apart and have few good schools nearby. A residential school brings teaching, food and safety under one roof. Children can then stay in class instead of dropping out.

> **Quick check 4.** By 28 February 2026, all 723 sanctioned EMRS were functional. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

What is new in 2026?

What is the Medha AI tie-up?

On **5 June 2026**, NESTS signed an MoU with CoGrad. It will support more than 9,000 teachers across the 499 functional EMRSs.

In time, over 1.5 lakh students may benefit.

CoGrad gives free access for two years to a tool called Medha AI. It can make quizzes and lesson plans.

Sources: pib.gov.in

Quick check 5. In June 2026 NESTS signed an MoU to give EMRS teachers an AI teaching tool. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Which exam mix-ups should you avoid?

What should you not confuse?

Do not confuse 728 and 723. The first is the target. The second is the number sanctioned on 28 February 2026.

Do not confuse sanctioned and functional schools. Functional was 499.

NESTS runs the schools. TRIFED does not.

What should you remember?

Keep five anchors. EMRS began in 1997–98 under Article 275(1). The 2018 rule is over 50% ST and 20,000 tribal persons per block.

NESTS runs the schools. The target is 728, and 499 were functional in early 2026.

Chhattisgarh leads with 75, then Madhya Pradesh with 63.

Quick check 6. The 728-school target includes 288 older schools sanctioned under Article 275(1). *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Practice MCQs

1. Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) were originally launched in which period, under Article 275(1) of the Constitution?

A. 2004-05

B. 2014-15

C. 1997-98

D. 2018-19

See answer ↓

2. Since the 2018 revamp, one EMRS is envisaged for every block meeting which criteria?

A. Over 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons

B. Over 25% ST population and at least 5,000 tribal persons

C. Any block with a functioning Ashram School

D. Over 75% ST population, regardless of size

See answer ↓

3. Which body was given charge of running EMRS schools on the ground, after the 2018 revamp?

A. UGC

B. NCERT

C. National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS)

D. TRIFED

See answer ↓

4. Which state has the most functional EMRS schools, as of 2024-25?

A. Odisha

B. Chhattisgarh

C. Madhya Pradesh

D. Jharkhand

See answer ↓

5. How many students is each new Eklavya Model Residential School designed to hold, across Classes VI to XII?

A. 240

B. 360

C. 480

D. 720

See answer ↓

6. As on 28 February 2026, how many of the 723 sanctioned Eklavya Model Residential Schools were functional?

A. 723

B. 400

C. 323

D. 499

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **C.** EMRS was launched in 1997-98, under Article 275(1) of the Constitution, for residential ST education. ↑ Q1
2. **A.** Since 2018, one EMRS is envisaged for every block with over 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons. ↑ Q2
3. **C.** The National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) took over EMRS school management after the 2018 revamp. ↑ Q3
4. **B.** Chhattisgarh has the most functional EMRS schools of any state, with 75, ahead of Madhya Pradesh (63), Jharkhand (51), and Odisha (47). ↑ Q4
5. **C.**
   Each new EMRS is planned for 480 students in Classes VI to XII. It stands on about 15 acres. It has separate hostels for boys and girls.
   ↑ Q5
6. **D.**
   The state-wise table shows 499 schools functional. Another 400 had finished buildings, and 323 were still under construction. So the sanctioned total was not yet working.
   ↑ Q6

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** The scheme began in 1997–98 and was funded through Article 275(1) grants. ↑ 1
2. **False.** NESTS, an autonomous society under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, runs the schools. ↑ 2
3. **True.** Odisha had 111 sanctioned. Chhattisgarh had 75 functional, ahead of Madhya Pradesh with 63. ↑ 3
4. **False.** 499 were functional. 400 had finished buildings and 323 were still under construction. ↑ 4
5. **True.** NESTS signed the MoU with CoGrad on 5 June 2026 for the Medha AI tool. ↑ 5
6. **True.** 288 older schools plus 440 proposed new ones make 728. ↑ 6

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