



# Tribal education in Eastern India specifically focusing on the Eklavya model residential schools

Prasenjit Nemo<sup>1</sup> and Prof. (Dr.) Swami Tattwasarananda<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Research Scholar, Swami Vivekananda Centre for Multidisciplinary Research in Educational Studies, University of Calcutta recognized Research Centre under Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, Belur Math, Howrah-711202

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Ramakrishna Mission Sikshanamandira, Belur Math, Howrah-711202

**Abstract:** Education is crucial for building human resources and addressing the needs of the backward classes, particularly children from the Scheduled Tribe community. India has the largest tribal population in the world, accounting for 8.6% of the total population. According to the 2011 Census of India, this accounts for 8.6 percent of the total population of the country. The Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) scheme aims to establish and run qualitatively good schools for children from scheduled tribe societies. These schools enrolled children in the sixth grade, with admission based on selection or competition approved by local authorities, parents, and teachers. Education in EMRSs is entirely free, similar to Navodaya Vidyalayas. This study aims to assess the functionality of Eklavya model residential schools in Eastern India, focusing on various aspects of the school system. It aims to identify prevalent problems and potential solutions, as well as the educational provisions provided to help students achieve higher education and future placement in various states. The study was qualitative in nature, using a case study method. The data was collected through open-ended questionnaires, interviews, observation by the researcher, and official documents from the Government of India's Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Despite existing problems, the EMRS of Eastern India can be considered to have a very good prospect in tribal education. However, there is room for improvement in the facilities provided in all EMRS. For example, in Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Tripura, the school environment is very good, and the hostel facilities of eight out of sixteen institutes are very good.

**Key Words:** Tribal education, Eastern India, EMRS, Scheduled Tribe

## Introduction

Education is crucial for the development of a nation and aims to build human resources. It should be available to all members of society, especially those who are socially and financially disadvantaged. In India, it is important to give more importance to the education of the backward classes, particularly children belonging to the scheduled tribe community, as they belong among the most marginalized sections of society. India's central and state governments have implemented various initiatives and schemes to address the issue of education for scheduled tribes, but their functionality and running status are not up to the mark. The Scheduled Tribes in India are the economically poorest and most socially marginalized groups, with populations nearing 10.45 crores. The government of India has taken the initiative of establishing Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) at localities where the scheduled tribe population is higher. The EMRS scheme aims to establish and effectively run qualitatively good schools for children of scheduled tribe societies. Children from scheduled castes are enrolled in these schools for the sixth grade, with admission based on selection or competition approved by local authorities, parents, teachers, and others. Education in EMRS is entirely free, similar to Navodaya Vidyalayas. The State Governments or Union Territory Governments get support from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for setting up these residential schools provided that they can ensure smooth management and efficient running of the schools including timely fund flows, recruitment of teachers in required numbers, medical facilities for students and staff, nutritious and hygienic food, and generally a happy, healthy environment. Sufficient land for constructing such a school is made available by the concerned State or Union Territories free of cost. The scheme provides for a holistic and generous building lay-out, which includes all the features expected in a good quality school. Eklavya Model Residential School funding is governed by liberal norms, both in terms of capital as well as recurring costs (Geddam, 2015). In the midst of the conflict between a very noble initiative by the government which is reportedly running successfully and the reports and research outcomes on the same which reflects a different story it is essential to point out the actual case and explore into that case.

## Objectives of the Study

- To find out if the objectives stated by Ministry of Tribal Affairs for Eklavya model residential school are being attained by the schools under this program situated in different states of Eastern India.
- To assess the functionality of the Eklavya model residential schools situated in eastern region of India taking in consideration different aspects of a school-system, namely;- Teaching-Learning-Evaluation, Infrastructural Facilities, Human Resources, Student Progression, Co-curricular Activities and any other important aspect presented.

- To find-out the prevalent problems these schools are facing at present and the probable solutions for the problems at hand.
- To know how far the educational provisions provided by these schools help their students in attaining achievement in higher education or placement in future life in the concerning states.
- To study how much these schools help their students to be acquainted with their tribal culture in all the states under review.
- To know the status & performances of EMRSs in different states of Eastern Indian with respect to different aspects of EMRSs system mentioned earlier.
- To identify the problems and prospects of tribal education in Eastern India with reference to EMRSs.

## Methodology

The case study method was adopted by the researcher for this particular study. The study was qualitative in nature.

## Target Institutions

Sl. No.	State	EMRSs	Sl. No.	State	EMRSs
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	0	6.	Nagaland	1
2.	Assam	1	7.	Odisha	4
3.	Jharkhand	2	8.	Sikkim	2
4.	Manipur	0	9.	Tripura	2
5.	Mizoram	0	10.	West Bengal	4
<b>No EMRSs Bihar &amp; Meghalaya</b>					

## Participants

- Students of secondary and higher secondary level of the above mentioned institutions (Male & Female- 328)
- Teachers of the above mentioned institutions (Male & Female- 328)
- Heads of the above mentioned institutions (Total- 16)
- Resource persons belonging to EMRSs in Experience of different states (Total- 16)

## Sources of Data

- Data obtained through observation by the researcher.
- Data obtained from feed-back of above mentioned participants.
- Data obtained from official documents of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. Of India.

- Data obtained from official documents of the institutions.
- Leaflets, pamphlets, programme schedules, other documents and news associated with the institutions mentioned above.

### **Tool**

- Observation as a Tool:
- Information Blank for HOI
- Open-ended Questionnaire for the Teachers
- Open-ended Questionnaire for the Students
- Interview Schedule for the Resource Person

**Sampling Procedure:** In choosing the students to obtain feed-back, purposeful maximal sampling procedure was used.

### **Techniques of Data Analysis**

Collected data in the form of data information blank with the help of observation was analyzed by data obtained from institutions and presented in Table & Chart forms.

All other data collected in written form using an open-ended questionnaire or interview-schedule was analyzed by qualitative content analysis.

### **Discussion**

Eklavya Model Residential School is a central government scheme run by state governments in India that has the potential to provide students from the Scheduled Tribe community with proper all-round development. In this particular research work, the researcher tried to find out the present running status of these schools in Eastern India. He has given importance to the objectives of the EMRS scheme, as described by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs as the model with respect to which the condition of these schools was evaluated.

The present researcher physically visited the schools and collected data from teachers and students as well as an experienced person involved in the working of EMRS in Eastern India. The analysis of these data presented the condition of EMRS very well. The outcomes of these results show that:

- i. The EMRS of Eastern India are aiming to follow every objective of the scheme as much as possible but are failing in many aspects due to problems related to the mentality of the stakeholder groups, the condition of the human resources involved, problems regarding resources, etc.
- ii. The problem with funding and the salaries of the people involved is eminent.
- iii. Infrastructural facilities have polarised conditions. Either it is too good and well maintained or it is in a sorry state due to indifference regarding maintenance.
- iv. In most cases, the teaching and learning at these schools face hindrances due to a lack of proper infrastructure, good quality teachers, or a proper approach.
- v. The evaluation system, especially the CCE and remedial measures that follow it, needs some rethinking.
- vi. As the EMRS scheme aims at the progression of the ST community through the proper education of the children belonging to that community, it is important to take measures to look after the progression of students beyond school level. These measures are not being observed in the numbers required.
- vii. The condition of co-curricular activities in these schools is very good. Although the state of the facilities in every school is deplorable in this regard,

There were many texts studied concerning the education of the tribal society or various institutions that are solely involved in the education of the tribal children. But the research work of Geddani (2015) is the only work concerning Eklavya Model Residential Schools that is available in the public domain. The findings of these studies revealed that the EMRS are not being run in accordance with the scheme's guidelines. The findings of the present study contradict this work. Despite the fact that, in the previously mentioned study, Geddani revealed several issues with the available infrastructure's maintenance. It is similar to the findings of this study.

As research studies related to the EMRS scheme in India are very few, the importance of this present study is huge. The findings are in-depth and exclusive. But still, there was a need to match the findings with some kind of reference frame. The present researcher, after collecting data through observation and administering tools to teachers and students, interviewed a government officer directly related to the functioning of EMRS. Data obtained from him matched with the data from previous sources, which established the credibility of this research.

## Conclusion

The magnitude of tribal education is not at all limited by providing the tribal children with a formal education. It expands beyond the field of formal education. The true aim of tribal education is to make children belonging to Scheduled Tribe communities capable of earning their livelihoods, ensuring their overall development, and nurturing their skills.

The EMRS programme conceived by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs of the Government of India is such a path along which the aim of tribal education described in the previous paragraph can be achieved, if the programme is run properly. Yet, at the time of study, many problems were found to exist concerning the running of these schools.

In spite of the existing problems, the EMRS of Eastern India can be considered as having a very good prospect in the field of tribal education. In these institutions, ST children not only from this state but also from neighbouring states get the opportunity for a good-quality education up to the higher secondary level totally free of charge. There is always room for improvement for any institution, but at present, the facilities provided in all the EMRS are not average or bad. For instance, in Jharkhand (Torsindri), West Bengal (Paschim Medinipur and Jalpaiguri), and Tripura (Khumulwng), the school environment is very good. The hostel facilities of eight out of seventeen institutes are very good, six institutions have average hostel facilities, and the remaining three institutions need lots of improvement in the aspect of hostel facilities. Institutions must improve in terms of teaching and evaluation. But it can never be said that the teaching and evaluation system at present is awful. Students require much more exposure and guidance in order to succeed in the future. Although instances of success for ex-EMRS students in competitive examinations and work-sectors are not very rare,

Hence it can be concluded that although the present condition of EMRSs in Eastern India exhibits many problems in different aspects of school education and administration, these institutions, upon which the institutional case study is performed, also show the potential to excel in the field of tribal education.

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