

TALASH Initiative Set to Foster Holistic Excellence Among Eklavya Model Residential Schools Students

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The National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS), an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in partnership with **UNICEF India** launched **TALASH (Tribal Aptitude, Life Skills and Self-Esteem Hub)** — a national- program to support the all-round development of students in Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs). TALASH aims to improve both the education and personal growth of tribal students across India.

The name **TALASH**, reflects a focused search for self-awareness, life skills, and career clarity among tribal youth.

The **first initiative of its kind in India** is aimed specifically at tribal students. It is expected to benefit over **1,38,336 students** enrolled in **EMRSs across 28 States and 8 Union Territories**, making it a truly national movement for inclusive education.

TALASH is an innovative digital platform designed to equip EMRS students with essential tools for self-discovery and career planning. It promotes self-awareness, helps students make informed career choices, and builds essential life skills. By focusing on both academic and personal development, TALASH prepares students to face the challenges of a competitive world and aims to create a strong foundation for their future success.

The initiative offers:

- **Psychometric Assessments:** Inspired by NCERT's '**Tamanna**' initiative, TALASH offers a common aptitude test to help understand each student's strengths and interests. Based on the test results, students receive Career Cards that suggest the best career options suited to their skills and abilities.
- **Career Counselling :** The platform guides students toward informed career decisions, helping them align their aspirations with their aptitudes.
- **Life Skills & Self-Esteem Modules:** TALASH has special sections that help students learn important life skills like solving problems, communication skills, and handling emotions. These build confidence and self- value of students.
- **E-Learning for Teachers:** A specialized portal equips educators with resources and training to effectively mentor and support students in their academic and personal journeys.

The national rollout of the TALASH initiative will follow a phased rollout across select cities for a smooth and inclusive implementation.

So far, 189 teachers from 75 EMRSs have been trained and are now leading training sessions in their own schools under the initiative.

By end of 2025, TALASH will be active in all EMRSs to support tribal students in discovering their strengths, building life skills, and gaining self-confidence.

Speaking on the initiative, **Mr. Ajeet Kumar Srivastava**, Commissioner, NESTS, said,

“TALASH is a testament to our commitment to providing tribal students with opportunities to realize their full potential. Through this initiative, we aim to bridge gaps in education and empower the next generation of tribal leaders.”

The partnership between NESTS and UNICEF reflects a shared commitment to inclusive and equitable education. Through the use of technology and evidence-based tools, the TALASH initiative will enable tribal students, even in remote areas, to have access to quality resources. Aligned with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, TALASH focuses on holistic development and equal learning opportunities for all.

TALASH will continue to evolve by incorporating feedback from students, teachers, and stakeholders, while regular evaluations and updates will help tailor the platform to the specific needs of EMRS students, ensuring its long-term success and relevance.

Note:

About NESTS: The National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, dedicated to providing quality education to tribal students through Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) across India.

About UNICEF: UNICEF works in over 190 countries to promote the rights and well-being of every child, with a focus on education, health, and protection for the most vulnerable communities.

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