

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2338
ANSWERED ON 03.08.2026

Limited Access to Higher Education among Tribal Students

2338. Dr. Kirsan Namdeo:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any assessment regarding the low Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), high dropout rates and limited access to higher education among tribal students in the Gadchiroli-Chimur Lok Sabha Constituency, particularly in remote and Left Wing Extremism-affected areas, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of Central Government-funded educational institutions, including Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs), Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, degree colleges, hostels, digital learning centres and skill-based higher education facilities established or sanctioned in the said Constituency during the last five years, year-wise;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to establish additional higher educational institutions, tribal hostels, coaching centres for competitive examinations, digital libraries and career guidance centres to improve access to quality education for tribal and rural students in the Constituency; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof along with the timeline fixed for its implementation and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR)

(a): Education being in the Concurrent List, enhancing educational facilities is the responsibility of both the Central and State Governments.

As per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2023-24, the number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are 7,893 and the enrolment of Schedule Tribe students is 2.25 lakh in the State of Maharashtra, out of which 426 HEIs and 19.6 thousand enrolments are in 3 districts of Maharashtra (Chandrapur, Gadchiroli and Gondia districts). The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in the state of Maharashtra for Schedule Tribe students has increased to 19.1 in 2023-24 from 15.7 in 2019-20.

(b) As per AISHE 2023-24, there are 9 Centrally Funded HEIs in the State of Maharashtra and there are 311 colleges and 114 hostels in the 3 districts of Maharashtra (Chandrapur, Gadchiroli and Gondia).

In the state of Maharashtra, there are 39 sanctioned Eklaya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) out of which 9 EMRSs are sanctioned/functional in 3 districts of Maharashtra (Chandrapur, Gadchiroli and Gondia).

As per Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2025-26, there are 2 Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) and 3 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) in 3 districts of Maharashtra (Chandrapur, Gadchiroli and Gondia).

The major initiatives of Central Government to ensure equitable digital access of education in all States are as under:

Under Samagra Shiksha, financial assistance is provided to States/UTs, including rural, tribal and economically backward areas, inter-alia for setting up of ICT labs and Smart Classrooms in Government and Government Aided Schools having classes VI to XII.

(c) & (d) The government has launched the third phase of RUSA in June 2023 in the form of Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA), with an outlay of Rs.12926.10 crore for the period 2023-24 to 2025-26 to cater to needs of educationally unserved/ underserved areas. The scheme has been further extended till 31 st March, 2028. Under the Scheme, support is provided to States/UTs for strengthening infrastructure, including research facilities, construction of hostels, academic and administrative buildings, laboratories, and other facilities required for improving access and quality in higher education.

Since the inception of the RUSA in 2013, a total of 144 projects amounting to Rs. 1431.31 crore have been approved to the State of Maharashtra; including approval of 61 projects under PM-USHA for an amount of Rs. 814.24 crore. Further, under the scheme, in the Gadchiroli–Chimur Lok Sabha Constituency, 6 projects for an amount of Rs. 126.98 crore have been approved including approval of Rs. 100 crore to Gondwana University, Gadchiroli under Multidisciplinary Education and Research University (MERU) component.

In order to improve the quality, equity and institutional governance in Technical Education, the MERITE (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education) scheme has been approved with a total outlay of Rs. 4200 crore for a period from 2025-26 to 2029-30. All States/UTs including Maharashtra are covered under this scheme.

The UGC has undertaken several initiatives to promote digital education and implementation of the National Education Policy for all students including rural and tribal students; the details are as follows:-

- SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) is a programme initiated by the Government of India available on the SWAYAM Platform (www.swayam.gov.in) can be accessed by anyone who is desirous of learning, at any time, and from anywhere.
- UGC Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Portal: Archived SWAYAM Non-Technology Undergraduate and Postgraduate MOOCs Courses are available on the UGC MOOCs Portal.
- E-PG Pathshala: Non-technology postgraduate e-content is available at e-PG Pathshala (<https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/>) and freely accessible at one place for Students/Faculty Members/professionals/ lifelong learners.

- UGC has notified the University Grants Commission (Credit Framework for Online Learning Courses through Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) Regulations, 2021, which allows universities to take up to 40% of the total courses in a semester through online learning via the SWAYAM platform.
- UGC e-resource portal: The UGC e-resource portal has been integrated with the Digital Seva Portal (<https://digitalseva.csc.gov.in>), a platform operated by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) for the delivery of digital services in rural areas through the Common Service Centres (CSCs) network. Through this integration, students can access digital learning resources, including the UGC e-resource portal (<http://www.ugceresources.in>), e-content available under UGC e-PG Pathshala, which hosts e-content in 67 postgraduate subjects (<https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/>), and the UGC Archived SWAYAM MOOC Portal (<https://ugcmoocs.inflibnet.ac.in/>). This integration enables students in rural areas to access higher education e-content through CSCs, thereby improving digital connectivity and learning opportunities. In addition, the UGC e-resource portal also hosts 27 SWAYAM Non-Technology Postgraduate MOOCs, translated in eight regional languages, namely Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Bangla, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and Telugu, to promote multilingual access to digital learning resources and support inclusive education for learners across rural regions.
- DTH Channels (Swayam Prabha): 24/7 educational content delivered through direct-to-home channels, ensuring reach in remote areas. It ensures access to lectures, tutorials, and study materials in multiple disciplines. Available free of cost via the GSAT- 15 satellite, SWAYAM Prabha is especially beneficial for students in remote and underserved areas, bridging the digital divide and enhancing access to quality education.
