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Government's special focus on tribal villages



Ahead of assembly elections in nine tribal-dominated states over the next two years, the Centre is set to start a phased transformation programme across 1.45 lakh tribal villages to convert them into model villages.

The new programme – Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana – will be initiated across India in multiple phases. The first phase will include 36,428 villages, with at least 50% tribal population. Over the first five years, the Centre will give funds to districts to develop health, education, livelihood opportunities, roads, vocational training centres, drinking water and electricity supply, and provide mobile and internet connectivity in these villages.

The tribal affairs ministry has begun the spadework for the programme, which would be initiated in this fiscal itself. According to sources, the ministry has written to states to identify villages in different districts and ascertain the development gaps where the Centre's intervention is required. States' tribal welfare departments have been asked to analyse village-wise development gaps and prepare detailed action plans. The states are conveying to the ministry a list of villages that should be included in the first phase from 2021-2026.

The programme will gradually go down to all villages with over 25% of ST population. A government source told ET: "This programme will facilitate tribals to have access to basic services and infrastructure facilities by covering 14 sectors of development." The ministry has conducted a gap analysis based on Census 2011 and Mission Antyodaya data of rural development ministry and has found that there are about 1.45 lakh villages with over 25% of population where there are development gaps.

The ministry expects to converge resources from state tribal sub-plan, Schedule Tribe Component with central line ministries (which remains unutilised or has notional expenditure) and District Mineral Fund.

The initiative will be a massive tribal outreach ahead of elections in at least nine tribal-dominated Schedule V and VI area states in 2022 and 2023. These include Gujarat, Himachal next year and Meghalaya, Tripura, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Mizoram, Telangana and MP in 2023.

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