



By Express News Service

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478 hostels for SC/ST students in five dists

BHUBANESWAR: The State Government has decided to construct 478 hostels for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students in five Maoist-affected districts.

Official sources said that Centre has provided Rs 198 crore for the implementation of the project. Hostels will be constructed in Left-wing extremist (LWE) affected districts of Deogarh, Sambalpur, Gajapati, Malkangiri and Rayagada.

Of these, 190 hostels will be exclusively for girls. The rest will be for the boys. Each of the hostels will be constructed on 5,000 square feet land at an expenditure of Rs 41.4 lakh. There will be 10 bathrooms and one entertainment hall for every hostel.

The hostels will be supplied with drinking water and solar power. The project will be funded by the Centre, sources said, adding that it will be completed in the next two years.

Construction of the hostels will be entrusted to the Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs). If necessary the Works Department will also take up construction of some of the hostels.

Construction of the hostels is aimed at wooing more tribal students from the Maoist-affected districts to schools.

Sources said that spread of education among the tribal and dalit students in the backward districts will cut into the recruitment base of the Maoists.

Priority is being attached by the State Government as well as the Centre on development of the backward tribal districts so that the youths do not join the extremist outfits at a time when both the governments are readying to launch multi-state operation against the ultras.

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