



# OPINIONS WITH VEDANTA

## Govt spends ₹85K on each Vidyalaya student annually

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New Delhi: The excellent results of Navodaya Schools and the remarkable performance of their students in competitive examinations are proof of the government's ability to run good schools and provide quality education when it puts its mind and more importantly, its money into it.

Consider the budget allocated for the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti in 2014-15, Rs 1905 crore to run 589 schools with over 2 lakh students. The per capita spending on a student annually works out to be roughly Rs 65,000. Similarly the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan which runs 1,689

### THE MATH

schools with over 11.7 lakh children studying in them get a budget allocation of Rs 3,190 crore. That works out to roughly Rs 27,150 spending per student.

Students studying in Navodaya and KV put together are less than 1% of total number of students studying in regular government schools, over 14.7 crore. Now consider the entire budget allocation for 12.2 crore students studying in government-run elementary schools (Class I-VIII) in 2013 — just Rs 37,150 crore. This works out to just over Rs 3,000 per student for the whole year. A similar calculation for students studying in government-run secondary and higher secondary schools (Class IX-XII) shows that the allocation amount is less than Rs 4,000 per student annually.

However, the Centre bears only one fourth of the total government spending on education whereas the rest of the amount comes from the state governments. Hence, the total public expenditure on each student in a govern-

## THE CHANGE AGENT

PUSHED BY RAJIV, THE SCHOOLS HELP RURAL KIDS ACCESS QUALITY EDUCATION

**Rajiv Saroj** (in white shirt) tutoring children in his village in Pratnagarh, UP. Son of a daily-wager at a Surat Mill, Rajiv scored 16th rank in JEE. His elder brother was ranked 410. A day after IOJ reported their father didn't have the money for their admission, HRD minister Smriti Irani waived off the fee.

- National Policy on Education, mooted by then PM Rajiv Gandhi, includes a mission of residential schools to nurture rural talent, 1985
- Schools to be called Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas
- Target rural kids and the most backward and provide them quality education on par with best
- The fully residential schools have classes from VI to XII
- JNVs tasked with picking talented children from govt schools in rural areas irrespective of family's socio-economic condition
- The chosen ones are tutored, groomed,
- JNVT is conducted by CBSE, for students completing Class V
- Second rounds of intake are in Classes IX and XI
- Here the selection is done by the JNV samiti's teachers, in regional rounds

Navodaya students have been joining the Civil Services, cracking the IIT Entrance and medical tests too

The Samiti has tied up with coaching institutes and tutorial centres for free-training modules

Around 2010, the JNV made a target of 10,000 students who they would help crack the competitive entrance examinations annually, guaranteeing admission to professional courses

The scheme was tentatively called 'Mission-Ascribed Career', that would help the competitive entrance from coaching to loans at concessional rates

JNVs have been set up all over India except Tamil Nadu

There are today 589 JNVs, the idea one school per district

## 29 years & 589 schools later, Rajiv brainchild a rural hit

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New Delhi: Far from the Navodaya Vidyalaya Sangathan headquarters (NVS) in Noida, an ex-bureaucrat is thinking himself and his colleagues in the HRD ministry of the 1990s who worked to make NVS a success, and within three years knew it had caught the imagination of rural India.

He says in the January of 1986, then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi called an unusual meeting in his office.

HRD minister P V Narasimha Rao was asked to come with his officials. "As expected Rao was nervous and irritated. He was among the senior-most in the cabinet and could not fathom why Gandhi would like to meet his officials also," he remembers.

Two minutes into the meeting, it was known to all that the HRD minister had the flak his new education policy was getting. "He made it clear that there should be a definite outcome of the new policy and the document should not gather dust. Various suggestions were made. But he had already made up his mind and asked us to think of problems outside Delhi. Seeds of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya were

Govt Service 29.2  
Business 16.7  
Private Service 10.8  
Unknown 10.4  
Agriculture 8.8  
Public Sector Service 6.8  
Teaching/Research 4.9  
Engineering 4.5  
Self Employment 3.0  
Medical 2.2  
Others 2.7

Qualified Candidates' Father's Educational Qualification (%)

Qualified Candidates' Father's Occupation (%)

Source: Report of the JEE 2014

Integrating Bharat with India

After 29 years, 589 operational schools and thousands of students belonging to rural areas in the district — is being celebrated. "What worked for NVS is its strategy, to stay focused on rural India. Few attempts were made to dilute

its vision. Within few years we know rural India has more talent whose imagination needs to be fired," says an NVS principal from Haryana.

According to him what also helped is the policy of teaching in the mother tongue till class VIII and subsequently in either English or Hindi. Science and mathematics is taught in English in class VI, when they join. I have seen troubled students with their own idea of school. Seeing others speak in your language breaks the first barrier. It is unbelievable that few of my students are now teaching English in universities," he says.

In case of IITs, NVS officials say, "When the format of IIT entrance changed we realized our students will need some help. Dakshina Foundation came in to help without any financial liability to us. Since 2007 our students are coached by them. Few who can afford go to other coaching institutions."

So far, Dakshina has coached 170 NVS students out of which 620 have made it to the IITs. This year alone, 230 will be joining IITs not to mention many more who would be getting into NITs and other institutions.

# 'If not for this school, I would not have studied at all'

**Amulya Gopalakrishnan** @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: While any boarding school of 12-18 year olds is likely to evoke emotion, the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya seems to inspire fellowship and loyalty of a different kind. For most Navodaya students, the school is the first foothold of success. It is a place where children from diverse, largely rural, backgrounds live with each other and learn to steer themselves in their later lives.

Navodaya consistently outranks other schools in competitive exams, but many of the students are first-generation learners.

Ratub Ali, an engineer at General Motors in Bangalore, says he first heard of Navodaya when a doctor at a local primary health centre brought his parents the form. The exam included some maths, but the bulk of it tested for general ability and logical reasoning — in order to separate innate academic ability from social background and early schooling received. "If I had not gone to Navodaya, I would not have studied at all, most likely," says Ali.

Kausal Vidyardhoo, a Navodaya alumnus who was born in a village in Madhep-

ura, Bihar, calls it a unique model of affirmative action. He is an IITs scholar from Oxford and development specialist who now works with Rahul Gandhi.

**ALUMNI SPEAK**

From 5 am to 10:30 am, the students are taken through a regimen of study, sports, and co-curricular activity and there are remedial classes for children who need it, says Usha Kumar, IIT, who has been a principal at several Navodaya schools across MP and Kerala. While it does offer a central government job, the remote location and the lack of schools and medical facilities for their own families of ten doctors teachers, she says.

But most students would describe Navodaya as a turning point in their lives. The school gave them a setting that motivated learning, and a peer group of other talents, smart kids sharpened their ambition.

"When I was coming back from IIT Kharagpur, a local acquaintance asked me where I studied. I told him, he said, 'The IIT industrial training institute in Manikpur would have been better. Most people had not even heard of

of the students are girls, and scheduled castes and tribes are represented according to their proportion in the area.

Navodaya is a student has to learn another regional language, and about a third of them spend a year in exchange programmes with other countries. "This made it easier for everyone to blend in," says Shanta Kumar, who went to IIT Bombay and is now doing community work in Sonbhadra, UP. Social mixing across backgrounds was one of the explicit aims of the Navodaya project — most students are from rural and low-income backgrounds, a third

## WORKING IN THE HEART OF RURAL INDIA, THE PROGRAMME HAS SCRIPTED INNUMERABLE SUCCESS STORIES

### 'Don't want to burden my family, so applying for loan'

**Pavan M V** @timesgroup.com

Bangalore: A few years ago, **Bittu Kumar**, a Dalit from Bairi village in Bihar, persuaded his family to let him go to a government school as he was unwilling to work in the half-acre land his father cultivated there.

Today Bittu has secured an all-India ranking of 15 (in the Scheduled Caste category) in IIT JEE Advanced. A student of JNV, Begaluru near Bengaluru, Bittu says one day he'll own a mobile phone.

Bittu studied at his village school until he was five and then moved to the JNV, Kaimur, in Bihar, for Class VI. "That happened only because some of my father's friends and a few relatives convinced me to go to school," Bittu told TOI.

He moved to JNV Begaluru, which provides free coaching for JEE exams through a coaching centre. Today he has secured an all-India ranking of 15 (in the Scheduled Caste category) in IIT JEE Advanced. A student of JNV, Begaluru near Bengaluru, Bittu says one day he'll own a mobile phone.

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### UP's badlands to IIT campus, 18-yr-old visually impaired dares to dream big

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Lucknow: About the same time India's gaze was ready to get with cricket, **Indrajeet Singh** (18) clicked into the World Wide Web for the first time to look for, he says, sample question papers of the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), the gateway for his entry into an IIT. A year later, he secured the 6th rank in the OBC (person-with-disability) merit list in IIT JEE Advanced.

Indrajeet's father, Kakesh is a marginal farmer in Sonbhadra's backward regions. Sonbhadra hovers around rock bottom on almost all parameters that determine a district's backwardness: dismal incomes, high poverty rates, poor education.

Despite the odds, and a partial visual impairment, Indrajeet managed to excel. In his school, he says, had a large role to play. "I was admitted to Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Class VI. Teachers encouraged us to branch out into various activities. Through interactions with older boys, I also learnt about the IITs," he says.

His teacher at JNV, Neelam Srivastava, says Indrajeet excelled at JNV after a slightly slow start. "He finished with a 10 CGPA in Class X, and 88% marks in Class XII. We encouraged him to prepare for a year for the engineering entrance test then sit for the exam," she said. Indrajeet after 11 months of rigorous coaching at a private coaching institute in Varanasi, India set his sights to pursue electrical engineering at IIT-Kanpur or Mumbai. "I want to do well for myself. I want to be an engineer," he says. Indrajeet's father, a Class X pass-out, is waiting for this to unfold. His three big bangs of land yield an annual income of Rs 2 lakh, and he has three more persons, his father, wife and daughter who studies in Class VIII, to care for. But Singh is undaunted. He said, "I plan to make her study."

Indrajeet's coaching institute has gifted him a laptop for his performance. He'll use it for the first time. "I'm confident I'll be able to use this," he says.

### He's a mason, never seen a bank, his son now in IIT

**Ashish Gaur** @timesgroup.com

Indore: Daily wage earner Kulu Ram Goyal of Mandawara village in MP's Darwani district is yet to fathom his son's achievement. His son, Mahesh Goyal (18) cracked the JEE Advanced and secured an all-India rank 298.

Kalu works as a mason and barely manages to run his family of five. After the euphoria, it's a nightmare as he can't arrange the fees for his son's IIT admission.

When Mahesh shared the news, Kalu did not even know what IIT means. Now he has little idea how to secure a bank loan to realize his son's dream.

"It's a big achievement for the family. I failed in Class VIII and dropped out of school. I didn't even know what IIT means. We're now looking for options to arrange his fees. I have never had to engage in any bank formalities before," Kalu Ram told TOI.

Mahesh completed primary schooling from Mandawara and later studied at JNV Oshra in Barwani. After completing class X with a CGPA 9.2 score, he was a little confused. "My physics teacher Sachin Negi once asked in class what we wanted to achieve. None of us named IIT. He helped us dream big. I then went to Bundi town in Rajasthan for two years of free coaching," he says.

### 'My eyes going bad, used a magnifying glass to study'

**Sarang Dastane** @timesgroup.com

Pune: Chinmayya Sahoo, blind in one eye and only 60%, stood first in the country in the OBC non-creamy layer category in the IIT JEE Advanced exam. His father is a primary teacher in a government school in Odisha, earning barely Rs 54,000 a year and looking after a family of four. Chinmayya will soon decide which IIT to join but said that

he prefers Bhubaneswar as it is closer to his village. "I will be able to meet my family often if I am studying there. My father's dream has been fulfilled as he encouraged me to study well and get into IIT," he told TOI after the results were out. A student of JNV, Pimpri Jagtap, in Pune district, Chinmayya scored 4% marks in his Class XII CBSE exam this year. Due to his visual impairment, he had to use a special magnifying glass to study.

### Left home for the 1st time

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Punaji: Till last year **Shubham Pagl**, a fisherman's son who studied in JNV Canacona taluka in South Goa had not stepped beyond the state borders. That changed after he emerged the second highest score in all of Pune region that comprises Goa, too, in the Class XII CBSE exams in 2014.

For JNV's students, Shubham's a role model of who's beaten poverty and his father's chronic kidney ailment to qualify for admission to the premiere Birla Institute of Technology, Shubham did not have Rs 1.25 lakh to pay the tuition fee at BITS. After TOI published a story chronicling his struggle, an NGO came to his help. "When I was sent by my school to the first time I ever set out of my outside of my home," he says.

### Banks shut doors, moneylender helped

**Rageshri Ganuguly** @timesgroup.com

Bhopal: Nandan Ruhela, a farmer's son, is the first boy in the remote Nipaniya village in MP's Raigarh district to have cracked the IIT entrance exams, securing 1,084 rank in OBC category and 3,960 in general. Nandan's father, Kashiram, does not have a pucca house as whatever he earns goes to fund the studies of his three sons.

Nandan recounts how he couldn't get a bank loan as his father couldn't get a PAN card made. Kashiram then took loan from his tuition money from a moneylender in his village.

"My father was a good

student in his school days but dropped out in Class 11 after my grandfather's death. But he'd always inspire us. Never once did he say anything to him in the field," says the former JNV, Bhopal, student who scored 94.4% in PCM stream last year.

Nandan dreams of studying chemical engineering from IIT Mumbai so that he can do something for his father in agriculture back in his village.