

The Vibrant School Library: where dreams comes true

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Abstract

The school library is the birthplace of dreams and fantasies. The stories heard from the grandmother, mother, aunts and uncles get a reality when the children touch and smell the books, and feel the color of the pictures. The pulse of the students is probably felt in the best way in a school library. In this paper, the real situations in the libraries of the Navodaya Vidyalaya India (boarding schools supported and subsidized by the central Government) have been discussed. These network of school libraries are scattered all over India, with a special purpose to reach the unreached. These libraries are always buzzing with a lot of activities—be it book exhibitions, library quiz, discussion forum etc. From the simple of the simplest of exploring a journey through a book, to searching information through e-granthalaya (the software used), the students are beaming with ocean of information. The book week program, story hour period, library quiz are only some of the activities mentioned. The paper will also discuss the dynamic effort of the librarians of these schools in trying to cater to fulfill the dreams of the students. The special effort of the librarians in training the students to love books is stated. Taking care of books by making special book covers, environment friendly book supports and book stands etc. are also explained in this paper. Last, but not the least, the paper brings into forefront the ways to harness a cordial relation between the librarian and the students.

Keywords: Book exhibition, book week, national integration.

Introduction

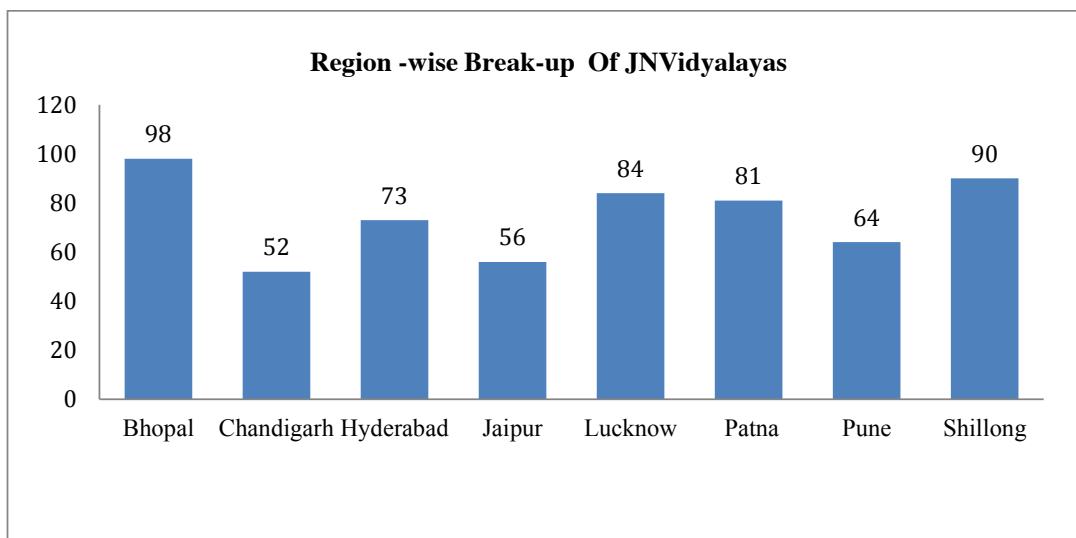
The school library is the birthplace of dreams and fantasies. The stories heard from the grandmother, mother, aunts, and uncles get a reality when the children touch and smell the books, and feel the colour of the pictures. The pulses of the students are felt in the best way in a school library. In India, the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) in each district of the country are residential schools, supported and subsidized by the central government, and having a very good library. These networks of school libraries are scattered all over India, with a special purpose to reach the unreached. These Vidyalayas are mainly entrusted to

provide modern education for rural talented children, and also to inculcate cultural values to them. The vibrant school library is exemplified by the recent steps taken by the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) in transforming the libraries from passive repositories to active hubs.

Modus Operandi

Jawaharlal Navodaya Vidyalayas are run by the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samity, an autonomous organization under the Government of India. For each vidyalaya, there is a vidyalaya advisory committee and a Vidyalaya management committee for the general supervision of the vidyalaya. There are in total 598 JNVs in India, scattered over eight regions. The special purpose of these schools is to reach the unreached, and the JNVs do this in a very bold way. These residential schools are comparatively new ones in India. There are eight regional offices, and a total of 598 JNVs fall under this scheme. The Regional offices of Jawaharlal Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti are at Bhopal, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Patna, Pune, and Shillong with jurisdiction over different states and Union Territories State (UTs).

‘Navodaya Vidyalayas provide all types of facilities, at a suitable stage, for instruction through a common medium, viz., Hindi and English, all over the country, and offers a common core-curriculum of ensuring comparability in standards, and facilitates an understanding of the common and composite heritage of our people, tries to progressively bring students from one part of the country to another in each school to promote national integration, and enrich the social content. It also serves as a focal point for improvement in quality of school education through training of teachers in live situations and sharing of experience and facilities. The prime aim of Navodaya Vidyalayas is inculcating values of national integration through migration scheme. Migration is an inter-regional exchange of students between Hindi and Non-Hindi speaking districts of India.



The Library of JNVs

The role of libraries of JNVs is to provide education, entertainment, competencies in three languages (English, Hindi and Regional language), promoting adventure spirit, national integration, and holistic growth, thus stressing on the personality development of the

children,. This infotainment (as we may call it) function is a very important function of these libraries. Since these libraries follow three languages system, so the libraries are stocked with sufficient number of books in different subjects in these different languages. The books are supplemented with non print materials, like CDs., DVDs, and E-books too. The main functions of JNV libraries are:

- a) To provide printed and non-printed documents according to the requirement of students, and staffs.
- b) To provide current, relevant and adequate information according to their need.
- c) To provide a lot of reading materials for developing the reading habit among the students, as well as teachers,
- d) To provide guidance to the students as to how to search for information, and overall how to use the library.

Library Activities:

The libraries are always buzzing with a lot of activities – be it book exhibitions, library quiz, discussion forum etc. From the simple of the simplest of exploring a journey through a book, to searching information through e-granthalaya, (the software used), the students is encompassed with ocean of information. Apart from the regular lending and reference activities, the JNV libraries are active in other modes too. Being a part of the conglomerate of schools running under Central Board of Secondary Education, these libraries house a large number of books, and subscribe to a large number of journals and magazines, ranging from very simple recreational ones like Readers' Digest, Sport Star, G.K. Today, Science Reporter, Computer dot com, Discovery, India Today etc. Daily newspapers in three languages are subscribed too here. The types of activities the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya libraries usually provide are:

- **Organization of story hour:** Children always enjoy listening to stories. An organized story hour for the students makes them motivated, and there is an increased tendency of reading books. Story telling helps to attract children towards the book, and to the libraries. This is done during the library class.
- **Reader's Advisory Service:** It is concerned with providing reading guidance to the students. Often the students are confused as to what type of book to choose for a particular purpose. The trained librarians guide him in this process. For this purpose, a good stock of books and thereby proper selection is very much necessary.
- **Developing the Reading Habit:** The development of reading habit is very essential for the school students. This habit must be formed at the school age. The librarians and teachers of every JNV'S try their best to develop the reading habit among the students. Providing every child his/ her book, and initiative from the teachers' end, also helps in the process.
Education being a lifelong process, a school library serves as a stepping stone in this process. A child goes to school at a very early age, and his/her mind remains afresh. Once he is able to form the habit of using library, there is a great probability that he/she would continue the same throughout his/her life. If good reading habit is developed at the early stage, then it will continue later too. For this purpose, JNV'S librarian adopts a variety of methods to attract the students to the library.
- **Book Review:** This is very helpful to the students to know the summary of a book. JNVs librarians assign students to prepare book reviews of the books read by them. The best

book reviews are circulated to other students to motivate them for reading. Awards are also being given on this matter.

- **Library Quiz:** Quizzes are excellent for school students. A library quiz tests students' knowledge of what resource is available in the library, and helps to develop their library skills. Quizzes encourage students to use a variety of information sources – dictionary, atlas, magazines, and encyclopedia- and match up specific subjects to understand how to use a library properly. Students are actively participating in these schools in library quiz programmes, and express their interest about the library.
- **Book Exhibition:** A large number of libraries arrange book exhibitions during Annual Book week celebration. It is a must to attract the students as well as other staffs of JNV. Students become aware of the new books added to the library through this exhibition. Browsing old, new arrivals, 'not to be issued' books are all very fruitful for users.
- **Wall magazine:** Wall magazines are a medium within the institutions, for the students to express their creativity. Students and other members of the school can post their articles, poems, drawing and other such compositions to share with each other. It also helps them in developing their positive and latent qualities. The wall magazines in these school libraries are a sort of print form of social media, and help the students to socialize, and increase their harmonious attributes.
- **Annual Book Week Celebration:** The library programmes goes on throughout the year in these libraries and many schools organize 'Book Week' every year to focus the attention of the whole school- the Principal, the teachers, the students and parents-on the value of books and the habit of reading, and to make the school community more library-conscious. During the 'Book Week', a whole variety of programmes take place, catering to the interests of each age group of students. The programmes include talks and lectures, discussions, book reviews, book exhibitions, visits to local libraries, screening of films etc. The 'School Book Week' often coincides with the 'National Book Week', organized by the National Book Trust, or the Indian Library Association during 14th- 20th November every year.
- **Paper Clipping Service:** Paper clipping service is one of the important services being provided by the JNV's library for the students. It was started to serve the special information needs of the teachers and students of the school. The main objective of this service was a speedy glance of reference on current topics. The main topics covered under paper clipping collections are- International relations, natural disasters, environment, poverty, women studies, elections, education health and government policies, and other news related to national and international area, pertaining in and out of the syllabus.
- **Career Guidance Programme:** Career guidance is a process in which a qualified and experienced career counselor helps the students to learn about selecting a program of studies, and preparing for a career. Career guidance for students in the schools is an important programme to guide the students in an appropriate direction. The JNV'S maximum students hail from rural communities, who progress to Higher Studies and often do not find proper direction in choosing the best career options. The students are confused as to which course to choose. There is an absence of information mediaries in the community, who can be role models and guide the students in this direction. As a consequence, in many cases, the interested and aspiring students cannot achieve their ambition. So JNV's librarians take the initiative to navigate the students of higher standards in this task. This program helps

- To uplift and strengthen the children mentally, and to explore various learning experiences;
 - To make them aware of choosing the right career option, or the appropriate course according to their aptitude;
 - To identify their values, aspirations and goals;
 - To keep and preserve the dignity of the children with the academic proficiency.
- **Book Cover Making:** An unique endeavour on the part of the JNV libraries is to make an appropriate book cover, environment friendly book stands, and book supports. The children are being trained to do this, and this helps in protecting each and every book. So the students not only learn to take care of the books, but the books are not damaged, and get longevity by this method.

Librarian in JNV'S

The role and responsibility of Navodaya Vidyalayas' librarians in the development of resource based programs ensures that all the young learners in these schools have the opportunity to learn the skills that will enable them to become complete users of current information. The librarians here are well qualified, and well trained in their profession. Every year special orientation courses are organized for the librarians to train them in recent technological and pedagogical development in the field of information organization and dissemination for the school children. This training helps them to bring out the imagination of the child, glimmering with manifold interests, and also inculcates in them an independent point of view. The librarians in the JNVs emphasizes that visiting the library is not only a part of the curriculum of the students, but it adds to their recreational activity too. An open minded, skillful, cordial, caring resourceful librarian, with a very much humanistic touch is the resource of all JNVs in India. The time spent by the librarian in the involvement with the children is really amazing. For them the words of Shakespeare "What thou wilt Thou must rather enforce it with they smile, than hew to it with thy sword" is really appropriate.

Conclusion

Navodaya Vidyalaya inculcates a cordial atmosphere, where all teachers and librarians work together to plan, implement and evaluate resource based units, which helps in the overall development of the children. This active and advisory service provided by the teacher-librarians is inspiring, and need to be followed by each and every school. An open minded librarian is the best for each school, and the JNVs usually see to this at the time of recruitment. Creating the love for the books, promoting the children's involvement by interacting with them through books, and communicating with them in their own style, makes the JNV libraries an active, cosy, living platforms.

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Biographical notes

Dr. Swapna Bnaejee is presently working as Associate Professor in the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Calcutta. An MSc. in Botany, and Mlis. Ph.D., she is in this profession for the last sixteen years, and has a lot of publications including books and research articles. She has visited USA in 2010 under the IVLP program. Four students have been awarded Ph.D. under her guidance and many more are pursuing research under her. She has guided 15 students in M.Phil till date.

Sudin Kr. Sardar is the librarian of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Howrah., Holding a Masters in Library and Information Science, He has been in this profession for nearly 8 years. He has written a number of articles in library related journals.