Pitfalls in Navodya Vidyalaya Model

What is the issue?

\n\n

Navodya Vidyalayas once considered to be a major innovation has now lost its purpose.

\n\n

What was the significance of NV schools?

\n\n

\n
- Union government launched the Navodaya Vidyalayas (NVs) in the mid-1980s, they were presented as a major innovation in social policy in that they were intended to serve rural children.
\n
- They are run by Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, New Delhi, an autonomous organization under Ministry of Human Resource Development.
\n
- JNVs are fully residential and co-educational schools affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi, with classes from VI to XII standard.
\n
- JNVs are specifically tasked with finding talented children in rural areas of India and providing them with an education equivalent to the best residential school system, without regard to their families' socio-economic condition.
\n

\n\n

How NV’s revolutionized rural education?

\n\n

\n
- Enrolment to NV’s Grade 6 was based on an entrance test, with 80 per cent reservation for children belonging to villages located in a district.
\n

- NCERT conveyed its doubts about the reliability and validity of a selection procedure dependent on a test among 11-year olds.
  \n
- The government went ahead and started setting up NVs across the country
  \n
- NVs were promoted as “pace-setting” schools, implying that they would serve as a model for other schools in the district.
  \n
- Soon after the scheme was launched, coaching centers sprang up in every district to help children succeed in the NV enrollment test.
  \n
- NVs offered a congenial institutional ethos where policies could be showcased.
  \n
- The implementation of the three-language formula in NVs included exchanging the entire Grade 9 cohort across linguistic regions for the entire session.
  \n

\n\n

What are critical administrative pitfalls in NV?

\n\n

\n
- NV’s facilities and funds were way ahead and they were not governed by the state directorate.
  \n
- After a few years of inception, the NVs faced a big dilemma, should they serve as models of child-centered education in rural areas or prepare village children for national-level contests for seats in prestigious institutions of medicine and engineering.
  \n
- A decade ago, the pressure to follow the latter route began to increase within the bureaucracy.
  \n
- Proposals to provide coaching to the senior secondary level students were mooted.
  \n
- NGOs like Dakshana were given permission to select children with the best potential and coach them.
  \n
- Grilling the selected round the year without break bore fruit, exacerbating

the familiar stress of exams on children and teachers.
\n
- From the beginning, NVs had emulated the urban public school model and there was little concern to develop a new vision for rural children.
\n

\n\n

What are the consequences of this?

\n\n

\n
- The one-size fits-all template of secondary education in India has exacerbated the pressures that adolescents routinely face and feel, leading many to feel lonely, depressive and suicidal.
\n
- Suicides before and after higher secondary exams are reported every year across India, coaching institutions have also joined this trend.
\n
- In the NV case, nearly half of the reported 49 cases over the last five years are from marginalized groups.
\n
- The administration places the blame on teachers who are themselves overburdened, the absence of trained counsellors adds to the problem.
\n
- Most schools justify putting children under pressure by referring to parental pressures.
\n
- The recent reports about suicides in NVs demonstrate that they no longer exemplify the search for an alternative.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express

\n

