

# THE ECONOMIC TIMES

## CATCHING THEM YOUNG

# These Students Earn More than Their Teachers

A majority of students at Jain school come from biz families or are already businessmen

### Our Bureau

**Bengaluru:** Harsh Kedia keeps his annual income under the wraps. The 20-year-old student of Class 12 makes sure his peers are unaware that he earns ₹20 lakh. He is in the business of trading construction materials. From product launches, making business plans to managing family-run businesses, many students like Harsh, studying at the Jain International Residential School (JIRS), are doing all things that a typical MBA student does.

Harsh's first venture was coal trading at the age of 17. He quit schooling after Class 10 to do business, but resumed schooling later. "I'm now involved in the trading of construction materials such as steel rods, electrical switches, tiles, bathroom fittings and so on. I work mostly over the phone and email," Harsh says. Disappointed initially for the lack of time, Harsh's school allows him to attend business meets in Bengaluru without any qualms.

Dhanush Srinivas of Class 11 belongs to the family that runs a chain of Nandini Deluxe restaurants which specialize in Andhra cuisine in Bengaluru.

All of 16, he has been asked to look after the Banashankari and JP Nagar branches. "I'm not a boarder, so I head out during weekends and holidays and look after accounts and stocks of these two branches." He plans to move to Singapore for higher studies. "My family wants to set up a branch there. So I can look after it," he says.

A significant majority of the 750 students at the JIRS come from business families, and many students from classes 9-12 here have taken up the Family Business Management (FBM) value-added course that the school started in 2007. The co-education school itself is located on a sprawling 350-acre campus about 50 km from Bengaluru on Kanakapura Road. Every Saturday, students get cracking with business plans and launch products before a panel of judges, acquiring key skills to further their entrepreneurial motives. "Over 500 business ideas are discussed in the module. They're ready to take loans, raise capital and ask us for expert advice. This is truly a business school," says JIRS chief executive KL Ganesh Sharma.

The FBM idea came from Chenraj Roychand, chairperson of the Jain Group of Institutions. His own story—a class 7 school dropout who now runs 85 institutions all over the country—is often used to motivate students. "I believe it is important that we cultivate entrepreneurial spirit in students, right from the school level where their minds are uncluttered and free to accept new ideas, and when they have the courage to take big risks," he says.

While lauding this "new experiment that involves stuff even postgraduate students aren't taught," Bangalore University's commerce and management dean MK Sridhar has a reservation. "There is one very important school of thought that says you shouldn't bring too much of vocational studies in high school. If you start building entrepreneurs or managers unless building a personality after a minimum years of knowledge gaining, you'll have to keep your fingers crossed."



**ADDING VALUE**  
**Students from**  
**classes 9-12**  
**have taken up**  
**the Family**  
**Business**  
**Management**  
**course**