

Twenty four-year-old **Sujay Jairaj** has big plans for the education sector

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WHEN you've got hipper, cooler jobs making inroads into the country, following the conventional route seems to have become a non-option for India's young and restless. Which is why, Sujay Jairaj comes as a pleasant surprise.

Just 24, with a Masters in International Marketing from the UK and already the vice-president of his family-run chemical company, this part-time educationist has made a strong impact in the one and a half year that he's joined Mumbai's prestigious Jamnabai Narsee School (JNS) as trustee.

He's played a pivotal role in expanding the infrastructure of the school and has spearheaded the introduction of an IB section (a Geneva-based programme), a well-designed activity centre for pre-primary kids, an airy amphitheatre and new laboratories etc.

But first, ask him the obvious - why a guy whose credentials would secure him a top spot in Corporate India would invest so much time in this school and he explains, "I've watched my family (the well known Thackers of JVPD scheme) giving back to society since a young age. I want to fol-

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low in their footsteps. Besides, the education sector has gotten more creative today."

Of course, he agrees education has become a cut-throat business, with corporate houses setting up world class schools. "No doubt, our country needs more schools today and yes, healthy competition is a good thing. But in all this, our Indian values and ethics shouldn't be forgotten. There should be globalisation, but with localisation," says the young patriot.

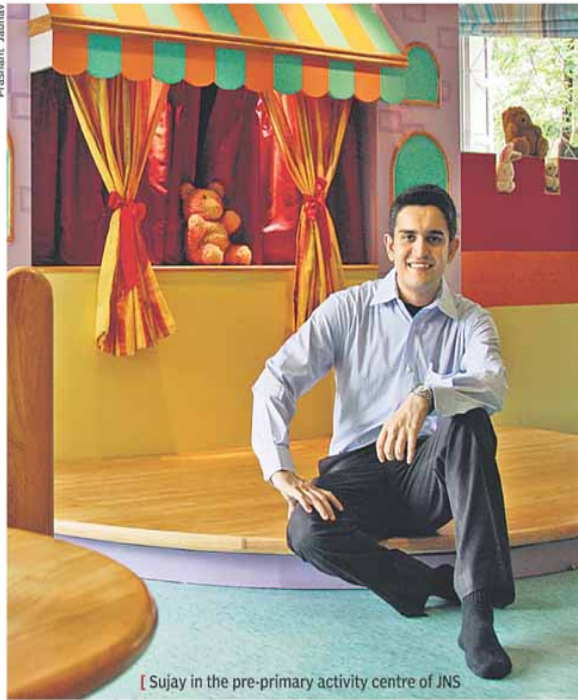
What's the need for kids to have mobile phones?

Ask him if schools today, with their top-end facilities, are spoiling kids today and he says, "Kids are being spoon-fed. I mean, what is the need for AC classrooms or for kids to have mobile phones?"

JNS, too, has often been accused of housing 'spoil brats'. Sujay defends, "We have over 4,200 students; there are bound to be a few stray incidents. But look at the overall results of our school - be it education, sports, extra-curricular activities or community service, we've excelled in all four."

As for the future, the young educationist hopes to take JNS to the outskirts of Mumbai and also set up management courses.

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[Sujay in the pre-primary activity centre of JNS