

## This govt school in Jaipur's Alwar runs classes in a plane

*One class for all students is held in this special classroom inside the plane.*



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Most students studying in government schools in India have never seen a plane, leave alone travelling in one. For 406 students of Government Senior Secondary School in Rajasthan's Indargarh village, too, it was a dream to sit in an airplane. A government engineer made this possible a few months ago by erecting a replica of a plane for a classroom in Alwar district. One class for all students is held in this special classroom inside the plane. The students feel so thrilled sitting in a plane that they don't want to go home even after school gets over.

"It has become a major attraction in the village," says principal Pushpa Meena. "Even people from outside the village come here for posing in front of the plane. It has become a selfie point in the village," she adds.

Meena said recently after a wedding, the bride and groom came to the school for a photo shoot near the plane.

Until six months ago, the Indargarh government school, 16km from Alwar city, had a dilapidated building, broken classrooms, ceilings that leaked and an unattractive facade.

According to 2016 Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) survey of schooling and learning levels in rural India, Rajasthan is among the top three states with highest dropout rate in children of 11 to 14 years. Against the all-India average of 3.5%, Rajasthan has 5% dropout rate in this age group.

Unattractive schools are a major reason for high dropout rates.

The district unit of Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) took up the renovation of the Indargarh school six months ago. SSA junior engineer Rajesh Lawania prepared a proposal for developing facilities at the school and constructing an airplane for a classroom. He approached Sehgal Foundation, a non-profit organisation that has developed 30 government schools in the district, with the project.

In six months, the foundation has spent Rs 45 lakh on the development of the Indargarh school, said foundation official Mahipal Singh.

The classroom inside the plane is fitted with an internet-enabled LED screen where senior students get YouTube lessons and the juniors watch cartoons and hear stories, said the principal.

“The school is already drawing new students. This year, we have had 22 new admissions. The plane classroom has started only this week. We hope to reap its benefits in the next academic session,” she added.

*“Kabhi nahi socha tha ki hawai jahaz me baithkar padhenge, yeh kisi sapne se kam nahi hai (We never thought we will ever sit in a plane. This is nothing short of a dream),”* said Priyanka Saini of Class 11. Her friends, Kanchala and Anju, couldn’t agree more.

The villagers are happy with the development and feel a sense of ownership. “We will look after the school. It has changed our vision towards a school,” said Jatan Singh, a local.

Former sarpanch Ramjilal Meena said the gram panchayat was fortunate to have a school like this.

The plane has two entries with stairs to climb. There’s pathway from the classrooms to the stairs with trees on both sides. “We planted 1,100 plants to improve the landscape and make the campus children friendly,” Lawania said.



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The SSA engineer had earlier got classrooms of a government school painted like the coaches of a train. “I am constantly thinking of innovations to make the schools attractive to increase enrolment and to check dropouts,” he said.

Lawania said he has also never been inside a plane. He looked at YouTube videos to see the insides before designing the classroom.