

# NIAS fellowship scheme for SSLC, class 12 students

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**The National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) on Friday launched a prodigy fellowship programme that provides talented SSLC and class 12 students Rs 50,000 and five-year mentoring from experts in India and the United States.**

In addition, each prodigy fellow will participate in workshops and counselling sessions where their interests and needs are studied by experts. Later, they will be guided for five years by two mentors – from India and the US. S S Iyengar of the Florida International University and adjunct professor at NIAS will select mentors from the United States.

B K Anitha, dean, School of Social Sciences, explained that the selection process involves an essay-writing competition and an interview by eminent personalities. “We ask students questions for which there are no answers in textbooks. Only those who are passionate and imaginative will be selected by the expert panel,” she said.

She said NIAS was specifically focussing on students from rural areas and marginal communities for the scholarship. “We found out that the essays written by students from rural backgrounds were high in quality compared to those in urban centres,” she added.

Food entrepreneur Sadananda Maiya, who sponsored the financial aid, said that even if the potential in 1% of the Indian population is tapped, there will be one crore talented people who will help build a better future.

Prof C N R Rao, who inaugurated the fellowship, lauded the selection criteria adopted by NIAS that gives importance to the students’ ability to think and imagine rather than consider their scores. He gave examples of many great scientists – from Jagadish Chandra Bose to Michael Faraday — who stood out because of their imagination. Isro chairman A S Kiran Kumar was also present.