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QUANTUM BOOM OR DOOM? NEWSLINE DIGS IN. PART-II

Maths lab: City students just lovin' it

One year on, teachers say interest and marks are up; students subject more like a game now

Anupam Bhargia

Ludhiana, October 3: NOT long ago, the joke doing the rounds in most city schools was "5/2 of people don't understand fractions".

But gone are the days of such gags, say students and teachers. The reason? The Mathematics laboratories, introduced in all CBSE-affiliated schools last year to make the subject more interesting.

Yesterday, the first part of this Newsline series said most old-timers in the teaching community are still apprehensive about the laboratories' effect, but most students, and Maths teachers who are part of the labs, say the system has had a tremendous impact. Partly, they say, because the practical lessons have made it more interesting, and partly because teaching with models help clear the concepts better.

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Vatika Bhardwaj and Anmol Devgan — Class 5 students of DAV Public School, are "enjoying learning fractions", because it was taught through models.

Class 3 students Zaenia Sood and Abhineet Nayyar call the subject more like a "game" — "We learnt odd and even numbers through a game of 'tambola' in the Maths lab. The winners even got prizes."

Their teachers Shabina Sehgal and Chander Rekha say teaching with models, and through games, make oral calculations easy. Plus, "students enjoy the subject, too".

Mamta Aggarwal, in charge of the Maths lab for primary and middle classes at Kundan Vidya Mandir (KVM), says: "Much of the Maths phobia is now gone. We hope students will improve more by this year-end."

Vandana Dhuria, Maths lab in-charge of the senior section at KVM, says post-lab, there's a "definite impact" on the children's mind. A trio from the school's Class 10 says the lab helped fetch 10 per cent more marks. "We do not have to cram things any more. All concepts are cleared in the practical class."

At GGN Public School in Rose Garden, Mandeep Kaur has been teaching Maths for 15 years now. She finds a "remarkable improvement, especially in the junior classes".

Malinder Singh, head of Maths department at Guru Nanak Public School, says: "Our marks (in the subject) are up 10 to 20 per cent in just one year. We have two consecutive maths periods every week and we prepare our practical files only after doing them."

But the brightest impact of the new Maths lab was seen at Saraswati Modern School, located on the city's outskirts, where marks have gone up by 20 to 30 per cent over the past academic year.

Class 9 student Rohan Makhija says his Maths marks jumped from 60 to 85 per cent, thanks to the method of teaching through models at the laboratory.

Tomorrow: What schools do to make labs more interesting

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