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NEWS

A new angle to allay maths phobia

Using low-cost material such as rubber and plastic, NGO helps nearly 500 schools set up mathematics labs.

Neha Sinha

New Delhi, January 21: FOLLOWING the National Curriculum Framework's (NCF) recommendations on compulsorily setting up a mathematics laboratory in each school, a city-based NGO is showing the way on making interactive, activity-based mathematics a reality.

Jodo Gyan has helped nearly 500 schools in the city to set up maths labs, and educate teachers in interactive maths for the primary-middle level.

"The idea of a mathematics lab is to evolve teaching learning material that extends and challenges a student's imagination. In India, primary mathematics is a neglected area, still clerk-centric in its approach. Students are merely taught to add and subtract. We aim to bring in the latest developments in international labs to India. A good mathematical lab helps create an entrepreneurial bent of mind," says Shaji who runs Jodo Gyan.

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Using low-cost material like rubber and plastic, the NGO plans to hold workshops and display its kits on realistic mathematics education in NCERT next week.

Two main clauses in NCF 2005 emphasised on making learning "fun and relevant", and on reducing "maths-phobia" by extending it outside the confines of the classroom.

"This has to be implemented as soon as possible, as the aim is to remove the fear of maths," says CBSE Academic Director G. Balasubramanian.

And educationists reiterate the need to keep evolving in the education field. "We've had a maths lab for seven years and have noticed that an activity-based approach clarifies concepts," says Bharti Sharma, principal, Amity International School, Saket.

Currently, government schools following the CBSE directive, are in the process of setting up maths labs. Officials, however, admit it will take time.

The Jodo Gyan maths kit

Available in five shapes—squares, triangles, hexagons, trapezia and rhombus—in six colours to enforce ideas of symmetry, angles and patterns. Straws and nexors (pegs) to create 3-D structures

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