

Activity based teaching learning to Remove Math Phobia

In mathematics numbers and symbols are abstract concepts. Introduction of numbers using concrete objects are better for young children, as they are familiar with tangible objects around them. To learn mathematics, it is essential to know the ten digits, from 0 to 9. Then, based on logical progression, children need to build an understanding of two-digit, three-digit, and larger numbers, along with various numerical concepts. It is beneficial to deal concepts like addition and subtraction through hands-on activities.

The same problem arises during learning of algebra and geometry. Therefore, it is important to provide opportunities to learn these topics through hands-on activities using tangible materials as much as possible. Without understanding the concepts children try to memorize one rule after another and based on this try to solve problems. As a result, most of them fail. If this issue is addressed with learning through activities in the upper primary grades, mathematics becomes understandable to students. This process strengthens their ability to think abstractly. Moreover, children also begin to apply their logical sense more effectively while learning other subjects.

Foundational steps of mathematics education can be taught to children through playful, hands-on activities, which is well illustrated in the math textbooks of West Bengal. Inspired by this approach, the teachers of Radhanagar Board Primary School in Bankura district, have been engaging their students in meaningful activities based methods. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when classes began airing on television, Samar Bagchi, former Director of the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum, stepped forward to support this initiative. Not only did he conduct classes for students himself, but he also praised the methodology outlined in the mathematics textbooks in West Bengal. For several years the school has been successfully organizing Math Fairs, and the impact is clearly observed among both students and parents.

To spread this teaching methodology across various schools throughout Bankura district, the Samagra Shiksha Mission, Bankura in collaboration with the District Inspector of Schools (Secondary) and other agencies launched a pilot project. A two-day workshop was held on March 25 and 26, 2025, at DIET, 2nd Campus, Aylakandi. The workshop brought together 54 teachers from both primary and secondary levels, representing nearly all circles of the Bankura Sadar sub-division in Bankura. The training was supported by Jeevan Shiksha Parishad, especially in creating teaching-learning materials (TLMs).

The following plans were adopted:

- Training of teachers on selected core topics from the foundational mathematics content of the textbooks from Classes I to IX. Total 18 main units and more than 30 sub-units were identified for activity-based tasks. The training provided hands-on practice as shown in the textbooks.
- Simple materials such as paper, scissors, cards, pebbles, and graph paper were used to teach addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, LCM, HCF, fractions, and even algebraic formulas like $(a+b)^3$.
- Samagra Shiksha Mission, Bankura, along with Jeevan Shiksha Parishad, will help in producing and distributing low-cost TLMs to schools



The workshop was graced by the presence of the District Education Officer of Bankura Samagra Shiksha Mission, the District School Inspector, the Education Officer of Bankura Zilla Parishad, the Teacher-in-Charge of DIET 2nd Campus, and other dignitaries.

Topics covered in Workshop:

Day 1:

- [Self-assessment](#)
- [The decimal system](#)
- [Hands-on subtraction](#)
- [Concept of decimals using units of length](#)
- [Hands-on understanding of decimals](#)
- [Concept of 1 Newton force through activity](#)
- [Visualizing and understanding 1, 10, 100, 1,000, 10,000, 1,00,000](#)
- [Bhaskar Ray's experience: A student came for research without knowing what 1 meter is](#)
- [Practical applications of division](#)
- [Understanding percentages as decimals](#)
- [Measuring circle circumference and diameter to derive \$\pi\$](#)
- [Rules of multiplication](#)
- [Techniques for learning multiplication tables](#)
- [Visualizing LCM \(Least Common Multiple\)](#)
- [Reflections and feedback from participants](#)



Day 2:

- [Teaching children hands-on math and its application](#)
- [Understanding algebraic formulas hands-on](#)
- [Algebraic Identity – \$\(a + b\)^2\$](#)
- [Algebraic Identity – \$a^2 - b^2\$](#)



- [Volume concept and related algebraic expressions](#)
- [Positive and negative numbers hands-on](#)
- [Addition and subtraction using main and slide scales](#)
- [Hands-on method for operations with positive and negative numbers](#)
- [Bhaskar Sir's hands-on algebra application](#)
- [Multiplication with positive and negative numbers \(real concept\)](#)
- [Deriving \$\pi\$ through measurement and understanding circle area](#)
- [Activity challenge: How many hands-on applications can you do?](#)
- [Remarks and planning from the DPO and other attendees](#)



Student Reactions:

Students are excited to learn addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and even algebra through hands-on activities. Feedback from several schools confirms their enthusiasm.

Parents' Views:

Parents observed math and science teaching through hands-on methods. At home, children were also practicing math with sticks, stones, and cards. To see meaningful engagement of their wards parents appreciated the impact on their children.



Key Achievements of the Workshop:

- Teachers experienced globally recognized methods in math can be easily done using

simple materials.

- Teachers began using hands-on methods in their own classrooms, helping students to develop a love for learning.



