

EDUCATION

Relevant for all times



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A recent three-day seminar on Vedic Maths, opened up an exciting world of ancient mathematics that has gone missing from modern classrooms

When a mathematics problem is presented to students, they immediately get down to writing, rather than working it out in their minds. “This tendency cuts down on the multiple ways by which a problem can be solved,” observed Vedic Mathematicians gathered at the third International Vedic Mathematics Conference held at R.V. College of Engineering, Bangalore recently.

Vedic Maths is an outcome of such observations made for hundreds of years by ancient mathematicians in India, expressed in the form of vedic ‘sutras’. “The sutras are overarching principles that are applicable in a given set of situations in Mathematics and are spread across topics,” explained James Glover, co-founder, Institute for the Advancement of Vedic Mathematics (IAVM), a UK-based trust for the international dissemination of Vedic Maths. “As sutras furnish links to varied subjects of mathematics, it permits us to connect even disassociated topics which leads to a broader view of the subject,” he added.

About IVAM

Teachers gathered at the conference observed that most mathematics students are unable to relate one topic to another let alone the

- Institute for the Advancement of Vedic Mathematics (IAVM) was instituted in 2016 by James Glover and Swati Dave in the UK. The first two International Vedic Conferences were held at Calcutta and Delhi with the aid of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and St. Stephen's College respectively.
- The institute has been active in collaborating with Vedic Mathematicians from around the world and bringing them together at its conferences regularly. It conducts free webinars to spread awareness among the masses. It has recently collaborated with the Palawan State University, Philippines to work on their maths modules.

application of maths. Responding to the observation, Syed Sahameer, Registrar, R.V. Group of Institutions said, "Vedic Maths, known for its connectedness and coherence becomes all the more relevant in the current scenario to enable students to relate and apply." He also urged educational institutions to set up math-labs for a deeper understanding of concepts and to debate different approaches to solve problems.

Explaining the applicability of Vedic Maths, Suresh Babu, Professor, Chaitanya Bharati Institute of Technology, said, "that which holds good even after the time (kaala), region (desha) and situation (paristiti) in which it was created, can be termed as 'eternal truth' (satyam). Vedic Maths is one such truth, hence relevant for all times to come."

Beyond boundaries

Reciting a series of shlokas in Sanskrit effortlessly Babu said: "Vedic Maths shows how in earlier days literature was closely connected with maths unlike in the modern times where maths hardly engages with literature." The poetic rhythm of ancient literature, he said, came from strict adherence to numeric rules. And the mathematics sutras were conveyed through poetry.

Gowri Ramachandran who develops ethnicity based curricula for children, presented how rangoli patterns represent some of the concepts of mathematics such as area, symmetry, ratio, shapes, cyclic graphs, infinity etc. "With a set of dots or by doodling out patterns, maths can be taught to children. This approach not just provides (ethnic) context but makes the act of learning enjoyable for children."

Taking it to schools

"Children in schools need to be taught of the concept of numbers instead of mere symbols. If one can understand a number, it becomes easy to conceive the statement of a problem. It even enables one to do maths without having to mug up tables," said Nitika Gupta, a Vedic Maths practitioner, who has made a detailed list of recommendations studying the NCERT textbooks from class 1 to 12. Nitika claimed that Vedic Maths concepts can be introduced in Indian schools without affecting the regular curriculum. "But government authorities are sceptical of the idea," she informed.

However, this does not stop introductions and experiments at the school level. Teaching just a few concepts of Vedic Maths has equipped students of engineering at Shree Buddha Engineerig (SBE), Puttoor, Kerala to get better employment opportunities. Anil A.R., Associate Professor, SBE, informed “basic training has enhanced their speed of computation, reasoning, logical thinking, communication skills etc. that are crucial for a corporate job.”

Vedic way

While Geeta Ghormade engaged with highschool children who had gathered from across the State on the final day of the conference, others held separate workshops for primary school students and teachers. Many stood dumbfounded to see ‘all hands go up’, when Geeta asked how many of them could multiply two four digit numbers in half a minute.

Kuldeep Singh, Founder, Mind Mantras illustrated how HCF and LCM of large numbers can be found out without having to resort to the long hand method.

James Glover demonstrated how Vedic Maths would eliminate many steps that we follow in conventional Maths. Vedic Maths would bring down the length of calculations, however, he cautioned, “its scope is not restricted to mere tricks.” For him, Vedic Maths is a world of perennial knowledge, yet to be explored in its entirety.

Besides showering light on how to assimilate maths, the three-day International conference demonstrated that the association of a knowledge system with a religious or cultural belief does not prevent it to move across disciplines, region and culture and it in fact, further enhances its own validation and chances of survival.



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