

## **Making learning fun: Science Toys Workshops and towards deeper utilization of the resource centers, during 2010-11 by QUEST**

QUEST started the Science Toys programme in Wada, Sonale, Thane District and in Dhadgaon, Nandurbar, District after attending a workshop at the Inter University Center for Astronomy & Astrophysics (IUCAA).



IUCAA's children's science centre has had a strong popular science outreach programme from its early years. It holds around 80-90 workshops reaching around 22,000 students/ teachers every year, conducts rural outreach programmes and undertakes training for SRTT's partners as well. The workshops teach how to create science toys using trash. It also disseminates excellent educational material via its website (<http://www.arvindguptatoys.com/>) and youtube. Around 10 partner organizations have received this training and QUEST has been one of them.

QUEST made an attempt earlier to conduct these workshops in the districts resource centers, but as the children found it difficult to come, regular workshops have been started in 3 schools in Wada and 2 schools in Dhadgaon.

Schools got enthusiastic and open to the idea of regular workshops on their premises as a Science Toys workshop was held at Swami Vivekanand Vidyamandir, Wadawas on 28<sup>th</sup> February to celebrate the Science day. 77 students from classes 5-8<sup>th</sup> attended and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Since August, 5 batches in Swami High School, Adarsh Pathshala, Tusa High School in Wada and 7 batches in Z.P. School, Z.P. Urdu School in Dhadgaon have been taught. Each workshop is organized for 20-30 students. They are taught 2 toys daily, for a period of three days. In the past 4 months, 250 students have experienced the joy of creating toys and learning the science concepts behind them.

Toys taught in the workshops include: Spiral snake, Paper helicopter, Rampuri knife, Flying fish, Fun Fountain, Trumpet Thunder, Straw Flute, Straw Spinner, Woodpecker Bird, Paper Butterfly, Straw Centrifuge, Paper star, Balloon Rocket etc. The children enjoy making the toys and are especially happy because they could take the toys home and show their parents.

However, to maintain the programmes sustainability and get maximum benefit from it, challenges like dependency on the school's schedule, unavailable material in the rural areas and low clarity on science concepts behind the toys need to be tackled.

QUEST also introduced the concept of Science toys to 63 D.Ed. students who visited the resource centre in Dhadgaon on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, for the first time. They were accompanied by 4 of their professors. QUEST also gave them a presentation on the available material (fraction/currency kits etc), its work in Nandurbar including math remedial and the library programme along with administrative procedures for issuing material from the resource centre. Brain-storming on future engagement with the D.Ed. college students led to opening up of new avenues for working



together. The QUEST team shared their willingness to help these students with material for their lessons as well as arranging supplementary material, if required for the resource center. There is also a lot of enthusiasm from D.Ed. College's professor's to engage with the resource center.

The resource centers as well as the science workshops are slowly but steadily attracting students from different schools as well as creating a space for greater inter-disciplinary learning. Students from adjoining schools from the 8<sup>th</sup> standard used resources from here for preparing their presentation on the topic of

'Daily Life and Mathematics' for the district level Science Exhibition held in December in the Dhadgaon School. These students won the first prize in secondary section!