

Bathroom tiles turn edu aids in ceramic hub

Teacher Employs Ceramics To Teach Morbi Primary Kids

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Ahmedabad: Gujarat is known for its jugaad – finding ingenious solutions to day-to-day problems. A teacher in Morbi, Asia's second largest ceramic tile manufacturing hub, has done just that to raise the standard of education of primary students in government schools.

The teacher, Jitendra Panchotiya, has converted tiles, available in all shapes and sizes in this ceramic town, into educational spa-



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ces where students can learn basics of language and maths, the fun way like urban children would do on compu-

ters.

Panchotiya, teacher in the Nava Makansar Primary School situated 10 km from

Morbi, has mounted large tiles measuring 2 x 1 feet on classroom walls where students can be seen happily circling numbers or matching words with visuals. Once a student is done, he wipes off the sketch pen mark with a piece of cloth to ready the board for another child.

"Many of my associates are involved in tile production; even I have sound knowledge of tile design process. When I saw toddlers struggling to learn from textbooks, I decided to make 'educational tiles' as part of state government's Pragma Initiative to make learning fun," says Panchotiya. Currently, 90 students of class 1 and 2 are taught using these educa-

nal tiles.

Once installed, the tiles are easy to maintain and the students can work using ordinary sketch pens. Unlike expensive educational aids, it can be re-used for a long time. The tiles include addition and subtraction, matching items, calculating items, colouring space and so on.

"The idea has clicked with other schools too. In past one year, about 100 schools have either evinced interest or have already placed orders for the tiles. We have collaborated with a local tile manufacturer to provide these tiles at concessional rate," said Panchotiya.

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Turning waste into teaching aids

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The innovation has been recognized and documented by the Ravi J. Matthal Centre For Educational Innovation (RJMCEI) at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A).

Panchotiya has penchant for thinking outside the box to attract students with low attendance to not miss school. "To build a strong foundation, I devised ways to make simple toys from domestic and discarded goods to understand concepts of mathematics and science," he said, adding that many of his toy designs are widely used by the school



Jitendra Panchotiya at Nava Makansar Primary School with his students

teachers across Gujarat as school projects.

Kishor Rathod, principal of Nava Makansar Primary School said the innovation has helped improve class 1 and 2 results

and well as concentration of students.

"Panchotiya has penchant for thinking outside the box. Earlier, he had made simple toys from waste to help students understand concepts of mathematics and science," Rathod said. Mannan Buddhdev, principal of Shantivan Primary School in Morbi, said his school got Panchotiya's innovative tiles in his school. "It is one time investment that can give long term results than employing expensive educational aids," Buddhdev said.