

Beyond Just Numbers

“Go down deep enough into anything and you will find mathematics.” It was precisely this spirit that was captured by ‘Math, Me and the Milky Way’, the ninth video in the Stimulation series, presented by Mrs. L Kalpagam of PSBB Nungambakkam. It was a deep dive into the prevalence of mathematics in diverse fields, from astrophysics to politics.

The video began by showing how mathematics was so much more than just a distant set of numbers and figures. These numbers and figures were the language of the universe, they were brought to life when explaining phenomena and developing technology. The video explained how mathematics plays a role in our life even when we aren’t aware of it, like when we hit a cricket shot such that the ball follows a certain trajectory, or how much effort we put in when climbing a steep hill. Everything we do on a daily basis, from the time it takes to reach school, which is covered by calculus, to the way our time table is arranged, among all the possible permutations, are all just real world expressions of mathematics.

The video goes on to explain how mathematics is used in science and engineering, especially in aerospace, where calculus plays a major role. Highly complicated measurements and predictions, like in meteorology, cannot even be thought of without mathematics. Although not normally spoken about, it also plays a huge role in the functioning of society. This becomes very evident during elections, where the permutations and combinations, and the probabilities are keenly followed by people across the country. Finance is another field where mathematics plays such a large role. In fact, as the video very clearly shows, the idea of money itself is based on mathematics.

Towards the end, we were exposed to how mathematics helps us observe the beauty of nature so much better. We find expressions of the Fibonacci sequence and the Golden Ratio in places we would not expect, the number of petals on a flower, for example. The concept of fractals, which are not only breathtakingly beautiful, but also extremely interesting mathematically, can also be observed in snowflakes. The wide range expressions of mathematics can be found all around us is astounding.

This video not only exposed us to the wide variety of applications mathematics has, but also showed us that mathematics was so much more than the dry subject it is made out to be. Overall, it was enlightening, enjoyable and stimulated our curiosity, making us ready to explore the world of mathematics.

Ashwajit Singh
11 A1
PSBB Siruseri