

Creativity + Trash = Children's Fun Bash!

18 Sep 2012 | [Children](#) [1] | By Anu M



Arvind Gupta shares his ideas on trash-based toys for children!

“Give a child some hi-fi commercial toy and he will be bored in a day or two. Give him a cardboard everyday and he will have fun and use his ideas too!” With ideas and creativity all around us, let's make best use of it by turning trash and useless things into playful toys and products for children. Not only would it serve the environment; but also enhance our ingenuity.

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“And somewhere there are engineers helping others fly faster than sound. But, where are the engineers helping those who must live on the ground?”

What use is our education if it does not teach us how to think creatively in our day-to-day life?

From [Albert Einstein](#) [5] to [Thomas Alva Edison](#) [6], all big names of science and technology believed that real education is the one that helps you think ideas and solve real-life problems. Rote learning of classrooms just produces academicians; it's the might of mind and creative thinking that makes you a true scientist.

Education should not be limited to theorems and principles; rather it should be about ideas and originality. Imagine the fun in a classroom where children are given a few straws and then asked to apply their mind to make something useful. Some child would be making

necklaces out of it by cutting it into pieces and stringing them onto a shoelace. Some one might be pasting it one above another in the form of a circle to make a pen stand. Or some child might end up thinking of a newer application of straw which neither of us have been able to conjure up in our minds! For sure, all of them will have an incredible gleam in their eyes and they would never forget the properties of straw and some other related rules.

This actually is the right way of education. **A sound education promotes application of mind. And such an alert mind ends up doing altogether different things like turning trash into children's toys!**

India has its share of such great thinkers and creators who have made the whole world look up to them for their sheer brilliance. Earlier it was Nek Chand [7], who created Chandigarh's famous 'Rock Garden' out of waste materials and trash. In this garden, one can see amazing creations out of urban and industrial waste like ceramic tiles, pots, glass materials, shattered china and electrical sockets. His brilliance in using trash to turn out wonders has made the whole India proud!

After Nek Chand, the next name that comes to our mind in using trash brilliantly is of Arvind Gupta. An IIT Kanpur pass-out; he is best known for his out-of-the-box ideation and creativity in turning out simple and fun-oriented toys out of waste materials.

The best part about his art is that even a child can design such toys himself, that too without incurring much expense! **The man has earned millions of smiling appreciations when he spends time in schools tucked away in slums teaching the children how much fun ice-cream sticks or empty juice tetra packs or even dead ballpen refills can be!**

He is a real scientist who helps the kids learn and understand the mysterious laws of motion or some difficult to pronounce theorems with the help of simple tools or by making something really entertaining out of trash!

In spite of such great ideas and applications, Arvind Gupta has not been able to popularize this art to nooks and corners of India. The real benefit of his ideas can only be achieved when children are actively involved in this, either in their schools or with their parents. Arvind Gupta was kind enough to be with Halabol to talk about this art. **Let us ask the maestro in person how we can popularize the 'Trash-based' toys commercially as well as socially.**

Many of our traditional toys were made from recycled materials - left over scraps of cloth, card sheets, old wire, paper and with home made glue. They are slowly dying out or are available at a very high price in exclusive boutiques. There is a dire need for commercializing them - emphasizing the "hand-made" as compared to "mass-produced" toys. I really don't know anyone who has made it a commercial success but certainly some NGOs are trying to create a market so that some people can earn a livelihood.



Talking about what support he expects from media in popularizing this kind of creative thinking, he candidly expressed his desire,

Media, as the mirror and moulder of society can play a major role in shaping up people's beliefs and attitude towards these toys. But in actuality, media has been busy promoting consumerism - BUY MORE, THROW MORE! But today's conditions require a more ecologically sensitive media – which can promote recycling, reuse etc. Going forward, they can also suggest and guide people towards sharing or even REDUCING THEIR NEEDS.

There is an amazing film titled 'STORY OF STUFF^[8]' which has set benchmarks for environmental activism in the world. Our small group dubbed it in Hindi and Marathi. This wonderful film needs to be shown on the MAINSTREAM MEDIA. It has been totally sidelined despite 15 million viewers on the internet. Giving the message of using less goes against the very nature of modern media, which has been depending on its very existence on glitzy ads. Only a very enlightened media house like NDTV has taken up ecological campaigns. Rest all will happily show game shows to promote new and glittering toys rather than these trash-based ones.

Arvind Gupta also shared his views on reforms needed in our education system to fuel creativity with a cause.

Instead of engaging with a cut and dry curriculum, let children engage with real life issues. Let them go and mix with communities, understand their problems and then try and solve them with the help of the community. In the 1970's, there was a political slogan - GO TO THE PEOPLE, LIVE WITH THEM, LOVE THEM, START FROM WHAT THEY KNOW and BUILD ON WHAT THEY HAVE. I believe children are great learners and deeply sensitive. They need

to be exposed to real people - go into slums and bastis and see how the other half lives and dies. It's only after that; the creativity with a cause will blossom.

Indeed, well said Sir. If all of us appreciate the efforts of this master, let's take a pledge to expose our children to real-life fun and problems. Rather than buying them expensive toys, if we can spend some time with them making such toys, that too with waste or left-over materials – won't that be more fun!

Halabol urges its enlightened readers to at least try once – turning trash into a toy for one child – and give him a big reason to smile!

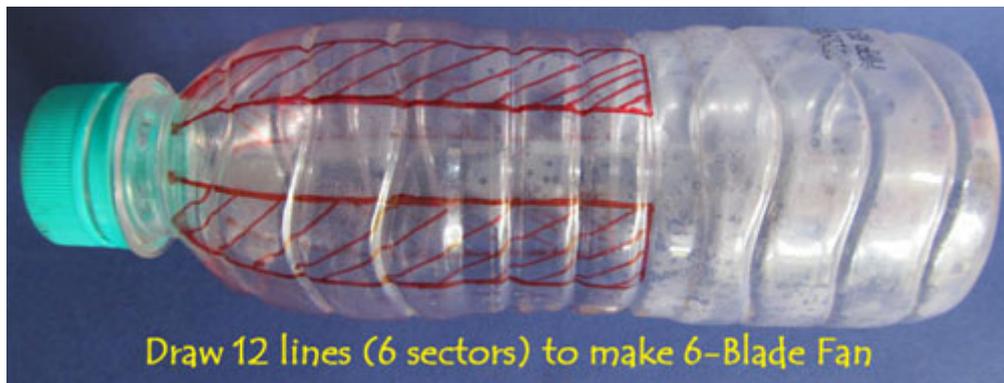
Arvind Gupta's special sharing with Halabol -

There was a seminar in one IT company and one friend gifted us with 600 used plastic bottles. We have made over 30 toys using them. This Super Spinning Bottle was designed and uploaded last month. It just needs a plastic bottle and a cycle spoke and it spins beautifully.

Here's how to make the 'Super Spinning Bottle' yourself. Do try it.



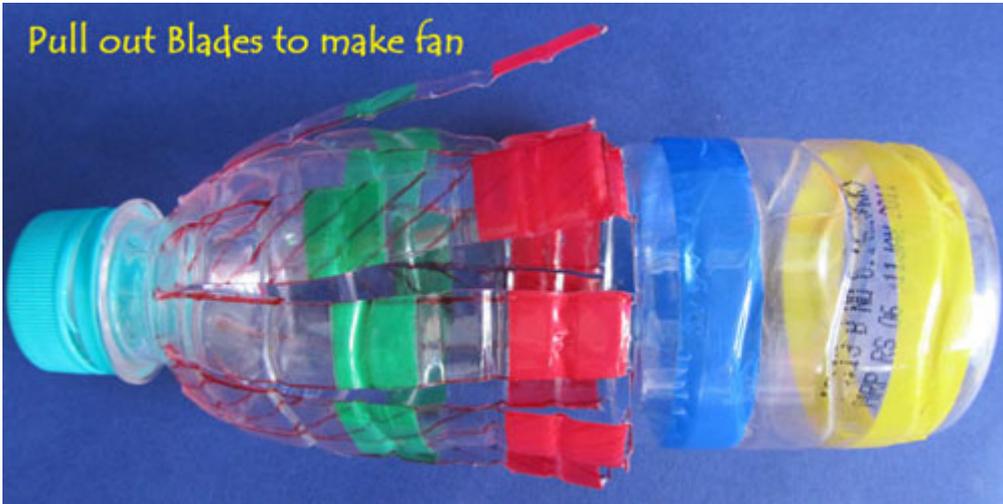
MATERIALS

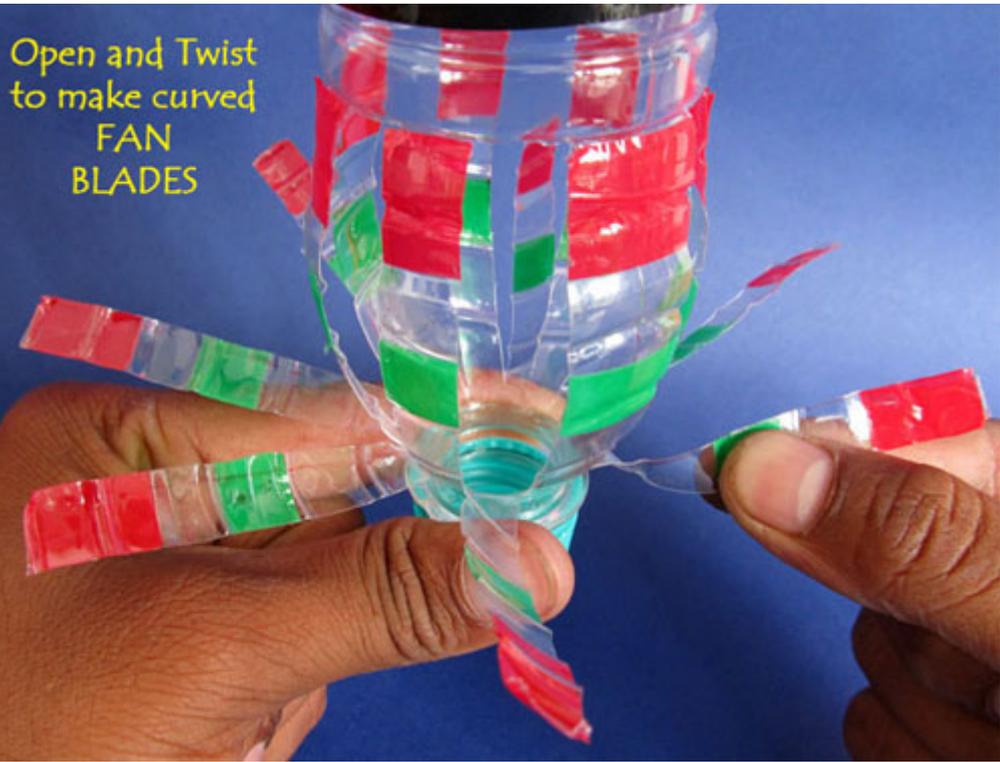


Cut 12-lines to make 6 Blades



Pull out Blades to make fan





BOTTOM
VIEW



Make hole
in base of
Bottle



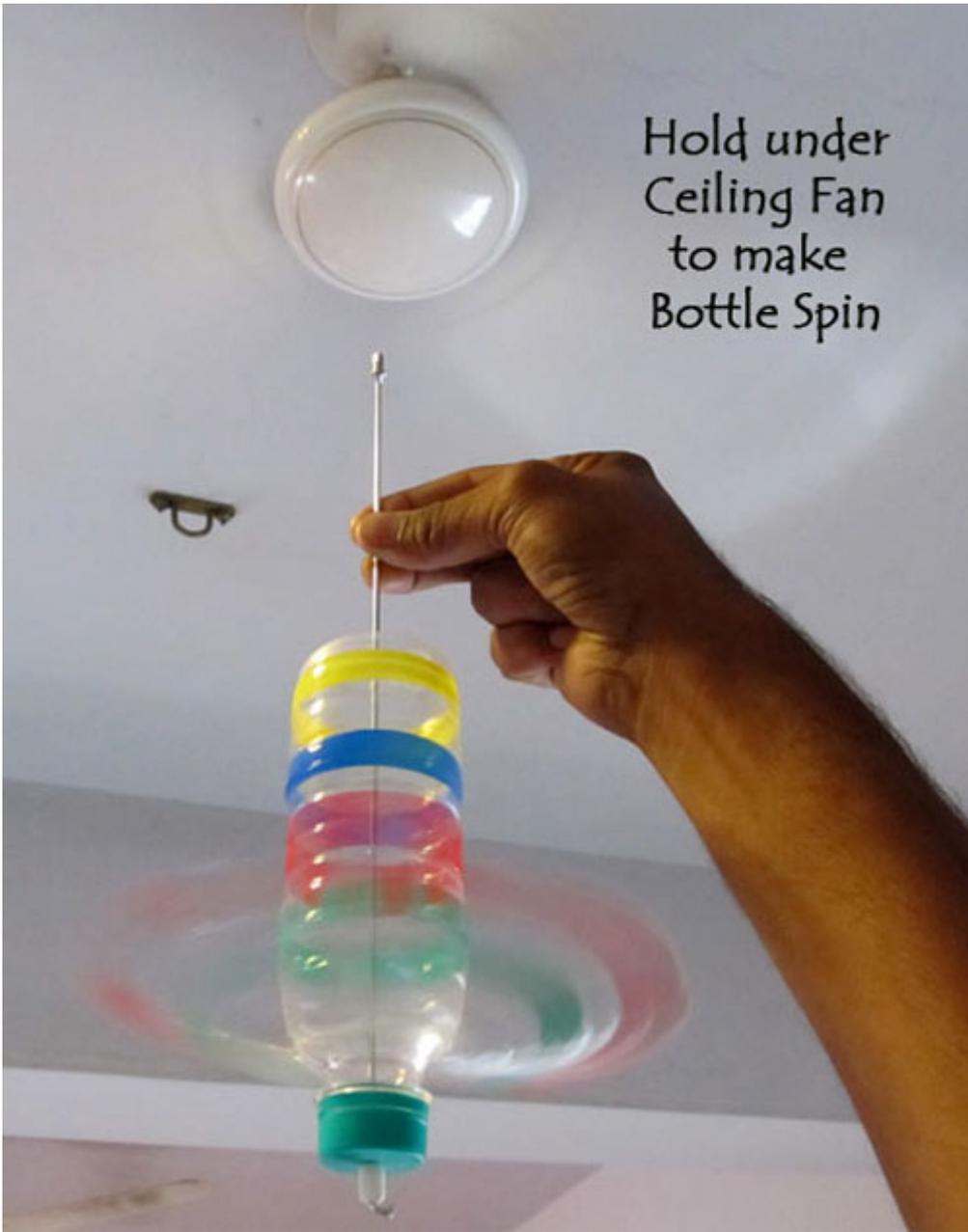
NIPPLE
NUT

Weave
Bicycle
Spoke
through
holes

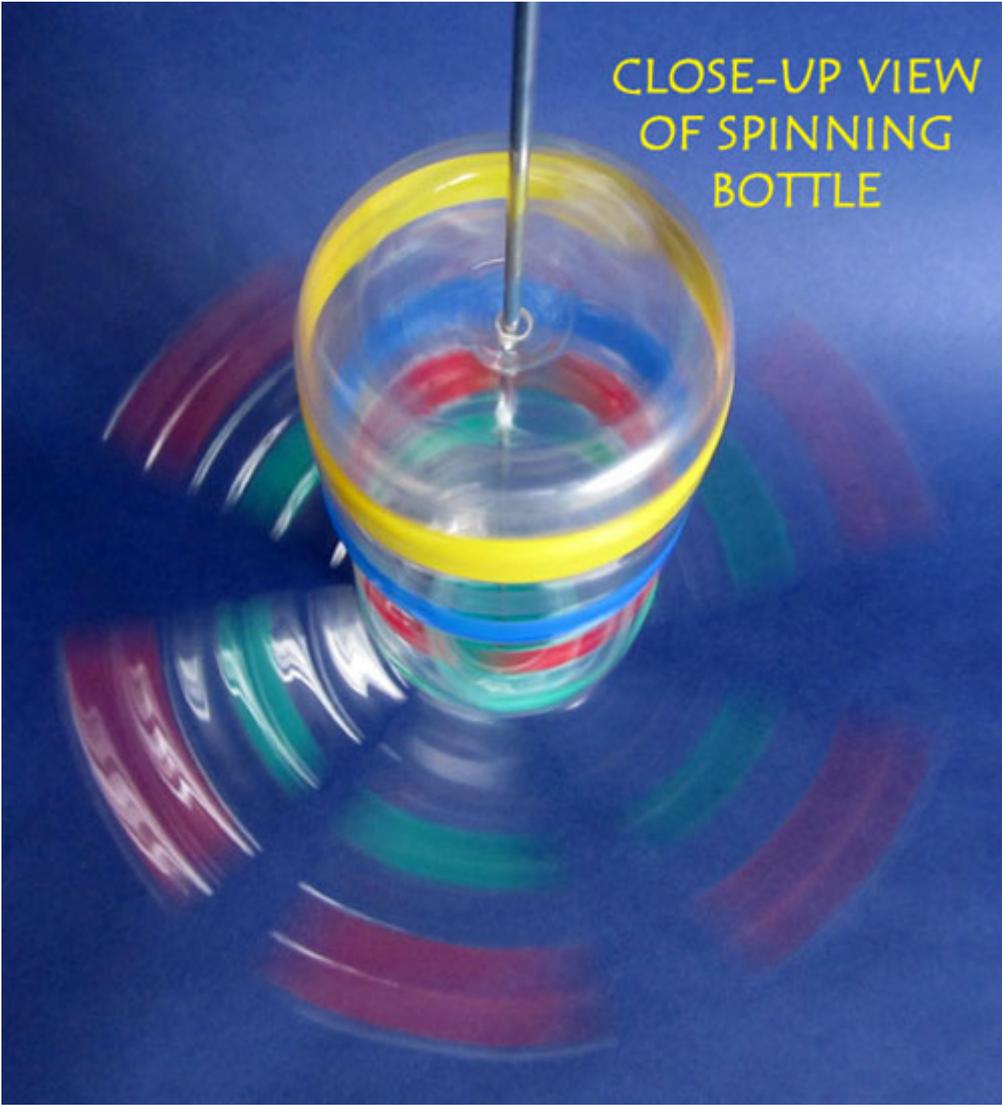
SMOOTH
BEAD

BICYCLE
SPOKE

Hold under
Ceiling Fan
to make
Bottle Spin



CLOSE-UP VIEW
OF SPINNING
BOTTLE





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