



Let's Make a Difference Annual Report
2018-2019



'Let's Make A Difference' 24th Youth Conference
Asia Plateau, 1 - 8 June, 2018



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Message from the LMAD Team

Starting as a youth camp way back in 1994, and having conducted over more than 70 conferences and workshops at AP and across India, LMAD has emerged as a formidable institution, for the Youth of India.

LMAD has built a strong network of individuals transcending borders, cultures, genders, age and ethnicities. All of LMAD's conferences have attracted young women and men over the years and through its tailor-made content, has tried to address the needs and aspirations of the participants.

This year, our objective was to move from the cities to other unexplored small towns and villages - the opportunity was presented to us in the form of Mahoba and Tamar.

Connecting and engaging with the people of these regions was a first for the team that comprised mainly young women and men living in big metro cities, and many of whom had little idea about life in these villages, let alone their existence.

In order for us to carry out this work, the LMAD team received rupees 11 Lakh from AgriCore Commodities Pvt Limited for CSR activities.

At the onset of LMAD's 25th year, we aim to work harder to connect and engage with more number of young people of the country and contribute towards spreading the message and knowledge of IofC and LMAD.

The National Youth Conference (01-08 June 2018)

The 24th edition of the Let's Make a Difference (LMAD) Youth Conference, experienced the largest number of participants, who arrived at Asia Plateau. More than 300 young people participated and they came from more than 43 different cities and towns across India.

Prior to the Youth Conference, 34 volunteers participated in the Volunteers Workshop that was conducted from 27th May till 31 May 2018. This workshop set the tone for the conference; and the volunteers learnt the importance of being very professional and fulfilling their responsibilities together to work as a team.

This workshop prepared the team to conduct and run the show.

The participants of the conference actively participated in every session and also shared their experiences during the progress of the conference continually. The sessions of the conference and the group discussions only helped the participants absorb more and learn more.

For most of the audience, Quiet time was an alien concept. But as they began to really focus and understand it, they really liked the idea and many were amazed at how happy

they felt being quiet. Every participant began to crave for more quiet time during each day of the conference.

Quiet time helped them in their sharing during the relationship session.

A participant spoke about how her mother is the only support she has in her family. Her father never expressed love towards his daughter and she had this feeling of emptiness which she found very hard to cope with. It was especially hard because her brother was loved and cared for, while she was ignored. Other members of her family did not bother spending much time with her either. She did not give up on them even after all of what they had made her go through. She started spending a lot of time with her grandfather and taking care of him which created a special bond between them. The feeling of emptiness had reduced slightly and she expressed how she would make efforts to create this bond with her father and others in her family

For the very first time in LMAD, the 3rd of June was celebrated as womanhood day. Back in the day, women's place in most societies was not only dictated by male prejudice; it was also dictated by the needs of the society. This fact might have been diluted to quite an extent over the years but there is no denying that it still exists. The course convener spoke about how men take women for granted in today's world and pointed out how men usually only approach the women in our lives in times of need.

From being a mother, teacher, provider of the house, an employee to a business organization, to being an entrepreneur, women have donned various hats and made a difference in the lives of their families and to the lives of others around them. A house remains a house. But it takes a woman to make a house a home, educate the child and raise a family. They have fought through various obstacles, defied all the odds and achieved great things. Every woman is a role model for all of us. Thus, at LMAD 2018 and going forward, we will celebrate 3rd June to honor the women in our lives and of the world.

All the girls and women were welcomed into the auditorium in a grand manner. Red carpets were laid out for them and the men presented one rose with a note on it to all the ladies. The note contained a message that stated how very much they mean to everyone in their lives. Their faces lit up as they read the messages and this brought joy to all the men present there.

The occasion of the Womenhood day was also celebrated by inviting two women speakers to address the audience – Mrs Shital Mahajan and Dr Ritu Biyani.

Mrs Shital Mahajan is a Padma Shri Awardee and a professional sky diver. She performed the first parachute jump of her life without any practice, over the geographic North Pole Arctic Circle in a freezing temperature of minus 37 Degree Celsius.

Dr Ritu Biyani Joseph – is a breast cancer survivor and has helped spread awareness about breast cancer across India.

In 2006, with the goal of spreading awareness, she travelled 30,220 kms with her daughter, conducting breast cancer awareness camps.

For the very first time, LMAD also witnessed two people from the transgender community address the audience.

Amruta Alpesh Soni and Madhuri Sarode Sharma shared their struggles with the audience and how they later defied all odds to establish themselves as independent individuals in the Indian society.

Even with over three hundred people, the conference was conducted without any hiccups. There was no shortage of food for any meal, nor was there any medical emergency. Every session started and ended on time with full attendance which was remarkable considering that this was the first time LMAD experienced a full house in terms of housing. One of the biggest takeaways was how the participants stayed harmoniously with discipline for eight days in a completely gadget-free environment. Not one person complained regarding this aspect. This made the participants realize that not only is it possible to live a life without this silly toy in their hands, but it also brings out the best in them.



The Participants writing during a Quiet Time session



Mrs Shital Mahajan and Dr Ritu Biyani Joseph addressing the audience



Amruta Alpesh Soni on the left and Madhuri Sarode Sharma on the right.



The Volunteering team of the 24th National Youth Conference.

The Delhi Meeting (20-22 July 2018)

The LMAD team has changed over the years, with many new members getting added and many other senior members choosing to pave way for more youngsters to take the reins.

Therefore, it was deemed necessary for the team to get together after the youth conference and meet in the month of July to discuss the programs ahead and set the tone for future work.

The meeting was attended by 11 people from across India, and over the course of two days we discussed in detail, the planning of the 2019 National Youth Conference and the upcoming 25th Year Gathering that is scheduled to be held in December 2019.

During the brain storming session, many ideas poured in and long intensive and focused debates dominated our discussions.

From the speakers, to the time table, to the sessions - every detail was discussed and work was allocated amongst the members.

It was also during the Delhi Meeting, that a senior volunteer, Abhiram Bhise, had shared with the team about the possibility of conducting a one day road-show in Mahoba – Uttar Pradesh.

Abhiram felt that it was imperative for the team to spread the message of LMAD to the rural parts of India, as the people over there have limited opportunities in attending other LMAD programs.

The team was enthusiastic about the idea and everyone jumped in to discuss and build on this opportunity.

Armed with the responsibilities and a desire to work towards a common goal, the team reaffirmed its commitment towards fulfilling their duties and working to conduct bigger and impactful conferences and workshops.



The LMAD team group photograph of the Delhi Meeting.

The Mahoba Roadshow (4th October 2018)

The LMAD team attempted something that it had never done before – to conduct a day-long gathering for the youth and citizens of Mahoba, a small town in the district of Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh. Mahoba is associated with the Chandela kings who ruled Bundelkhand between the 9th and 12th centuries.

Mahoba is considered to be the smallest district in Uttar Pradesh by population. In spite of that, it was brought to our notice that it's responsible for generating maximum revenue for the State through mining activity.

But today, like all other small towns and villages of the state, Mahoba is characterised by poverty, very little development, illiteracy and social and economic backwardness. Hence, many of the participants were young women and men who had dropped out of their colleges, and had little or no exposure to life outside the walls of their village.

The team also rose to the challenge and leave the comfort of their city life to spend one day with these people and learn more about their life and their aspirations. **The road show was conducted entirely in the Hindi Language.**

Abhiram Bhise connected the dots and played the role of a perfect bridge between Bundelkhand Yuva Niti Samvad, IofC and LMAD in helping us conduct this conference.

With a majority of the country's population living in places like Mahoba, the youth potential remains untapped and unless we as a country engage with them, and include them in our development, only then can India emerge as a powerhouse of human capital and dynamic educated young individuals.

Thus, the involvement of the people of the rural parts of India is essential to progress. And the solution lies in bridging the gap between the big metro cities and the villages.

With less than 3000 people attending the gathering, it was the biggest crowd LMAD has addressed so far. The venue of this conference was a ground, on which a shamiana was put up with a seating capacity of nearly 5000 individuals.

More than 40 people travelled from more than 20 cities to help make this road-show a success.

The schedule and the content was tailor made to suit the audience and spread the message as effectively as possible. The volunteers took charge by sharing their experiences in order to help the audience form a connection with their past experiences, relate to the volunteers and derive lessons from these shared stories.

One of the volunteers spoke about how his life took a wrong turn when he left the comfort of his home. He got influenced by his friends who indulged themselves in unnecessary habits. He did not realize this change in his life until his

mother pointed it out when he was back home for a break. This was when he attended the Youth Conference of LMAD in Panchgani. The people and the teachings that the conference offered made him realize his mistakes. Over the next few months, he brought himself back to the path of purity. This wasn't very easy as the company he was in continued on their path of impurity. The gathering seemed to relate to and agree with what was being shared.

The participants also engaged in group discussions and spoke at length about how they would like to improve Mahoba. Towards the end of the group discussion, the topic had shifted from the problems that they were already facing, to what they could do to make a difference and overcome these problems. Everyone present, then wrote down the answer to the question that was given to them earlier on sheets of paper that were distributed. The level of positivity and mindfulness that the people had was clearly reflected in their writings.



The women participants of the road show engaging in a discussion with the LMAD volunteers.



The male participants of the roadshow engaging in a discussion with the LMAD volunteers.



Members of the LMAD team who helped shape this program and bring about its realization.

The Tamar Conference (26-28 November 2018)

In the month of November, the team was invited to do a program in Eklavya Model Residential School, which is located in Tamar, a backward region close to Ranchi, Jharkhand. This school is one of many such schools all over India. It is a boys-only residential school that is reserved for the Scheduled Tribes (ST). The students not only receive free education, but the stay and food are also taken care of for them. The government of India allows a certain amount annually to maintain the school and take care of the needs of the students. LMAD, through its three day program aimed to motivate the students and make them realize that external factors such as money are not the deciding factors in a person's career.

The program was attended by 535 people including 504 students and 17 teachers. And 12 volunteers from across India helped organize this.

This conference was also conducted in the Hindi Language and the young students were introduced to the concept of Quiet Time. The participants listened with genuine interest as this was something that they had never heard of before. Quiet Time - the process of being with oneself, introspecting the many choices that one makes in life was quite well received by the participants.

Three students built up the courage and shared their experience of Quiet time with the larger crowd. One of them spoke about how he felt torn between his father wanting him to become a bank manager and his mother not giving him enough attention. He realized that he did not want to depend on them at all and would not receive anything for free from then on. He went on to share that he had decided to work very hard in the few months that he has left in the school, do something worthwhile and make his parents proud.

One of the sessions also revolved around career development and making the most of opportunities that was available for them outside. The students were told stories of individuals who had lifted themselves and later lifted their families and contributed to the development of society.

The students were asked to write on a sheet about where they saw themselves in five years and how they would go about achieving their goals. The students thought about this long and hard after which they came up with goals and means to achieve them. These sheets were put up for everyone to see.

The conference ended on a strong note and the LMAD team was requested to come for a follow up in the future. A follow up was conducted in the month of February 2019, to inspire the student's community to take interest in academics and build careers foundation through education.



A Section of the Tamar Audience listening intently during a session.



The LMAD team received a standing ovation from the students of the school.

The Jamshedpur Conference (29 November -2 December 2018)

The Conference was organized by with the invaluable support of Mr. Sharat Chandran, Director of Kerala Public School, Kadma and the school staff. The JYC was started in 2011 by the local residents of Jamshedpur who are a part of LMAD Youth Conference at the center of IofC, Asia plateau, Panchgani. The conference is conducted annually for the youth in Jamshedpur under the guidance of Mr. Rajiv Agarwal and Mrs. Shraddha Agarwal for the past 8 years.

The organizing team consists of volunteers from Jamshedpur and other parts of the country. A total of 22 volunteers joined the conference. More than 700 school children in the age bracket of 15-18 had attended this program.

Like every year, the students were exposed to Four absolute standards of LMAD, the importance of goal setting and career, family, quiet time among other important aspects of life.

A student shared how rude he has been to his mother for stopping him from going to late night parties. He realized during his quiet time that it is time that he apologizes to this mother.

One of the students shared her story. She had travelled far from home for her studies. She shared with a heavy heart

that since her birth she was looked upon for being a girl. That was one of the reasons why she wanted to leave home and go away. The misunderstanding and lack of communication caused her to drift further from home and she has not been able to share or have a quality relationship with her family back home.

A session also touched on topics of infatuation and lustful behaviour. In an age of Internet it has become easier for students to get distracted from studies and being infatuated towards the opposite sex. There were instances where student shared how such distractions had affected their studies and they had failed to perform in their exams. Students end up misunderstanding the concept of love and derail from their path.

The closing ceremony was graced by the presence of Mr Sourabh Roy TATA steel Urban Services (CSR) was the chief guests.

Conferences like this surely bring about a positive change not only in the academics of a student but also their social life. Here, with the help of the Sponsors, KPS school staff, volunteers and teachers the Jamshedpur Youth Conference was a successful conference in its true sense.



The Students of Kerala Public School listening during a session



The students engaged in a group discussion with the LMAD volunteers.



The students participating actively in a session.



The volunteering team of the Jamshedpur Youth Conference

The December Workshop (26 December 2018- 01 January 2019)

LMAD conducted its annual intensive December Workshop for selected volunteers of the LMAD team.

There were 12 participants in this year's workshop who came down to Asia Plateau from different regions of India to mark their presence. The cities covered were Pune, Thane, Mumbai, Nagpur, Kolkata, Indore, Jamshedpur, Ahmednagar, Ankleshwar and Katni. It was a diverse participation of young women and men all under one roof.

To those familiar with the December Workshop, it does not come as a surprise that the code of conduct is strict, and that this workshop is characterized by long intense quiet time and in depth group discussions and sharing by all participants.

One also comes with the mind-set that she/he is alone and has come to this workshop for herself/himself and not any other person or friend.

The sessions revolve around all aspects of our day to day life such as habits, time management, finding one's purpose and lifting oneself to another level of excellence and class.

For only if one lifts herself/himself to become a benchmark citizen, only then can he help those around him.



The participants of the December Workshop 2018



The team with Mr Rajmohan Gandhi.

The December Meeting (01 January - 02 January 2019)

The LMAD team met once again during the first two days of the year to discuss the work for the upcoming programs for the year 2019.

This meeting was attended by 21 people in total. During the meeting, a lot of focus was given to planning the 25th Year LMAD Annual Youth Conference and the 25th Gathering.

Discussions revolved around the sessions, the speakers, the budget of the 25th LMAD gathering, the website, the time table and also the new ideas to be implemented in both the programs.

A thought was given to target a full house at Asia Plateau for this years' Youth Conference. In addition, roles and responsibilities were allocated for work before the commencement of the conference.

The discussions went on throughout the day and with a lot of information and ideas being exchanged within the group.



The Volunteers in the December meeting at Asia Plateau.

Conclusion – Vision 2019

LMAD youth conference is a successful running youth gathering at Asia Plateau for last 24 years and this year is our silver year and we expect a full house of more than 400 students representing diversity of India which will immerse in the crucible of ethical and moral learning for eight days from 1-8 June 2019.

The youth team of LMAD will try and reach out to many parts of India which has not been represented due to resource constrains. Kashmiri youth from the valley, displaced youth of Kashmir Pandits who are homeless, children's of farmer suicide, rescued female child, riot affected region, children's of martyred soldiers who gave their life protecting our borders and those who are willing to learn new things but constrains keep them away from such gatherings.

The year 2019 is the 25th year of LMAD. The goal for this year is to continue our mission of engaging with the youth across India with a strong focus on conducting conferences in small towns and villages.
