



REPORT OF AFAA NEWAGE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

A 4-day experiential and inspirational immersive event

June 19 - 22, 2025

Organised by

Advertising Council of India (ACI)

(A Division of STACA Trust)

a distinguished member of AFAA



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ASIAN FEDERATION OF
ADVERTISING ASSOCIATIONS

Report of our New Age Leadership Programme

The Asian Federation of Advertising Associations (AFAA) successfully concluded the 3rd edition of its four-day New Age Leadership Programme (NALP) on 22nd June 2025. This one-of-a-kind immersive leadership development experience was curated by Mr. Manish Advani under the chairmanship of Mr. Srinivasan Swamy, Chairman of the R K Swamy Group and Chairman of the Asian Federation of Advertising Associations — a visionary leader on a mission to create a pool of socially responsible leaders. This year's programme brought together 26 participants who traveled across three cities — Mumbai, Pune, and Nashik — where they interacted with over 30 speakers and worked in groups on five assignments, supported by five diverse advisors.

The programme commenced on 19th June 2025 with an electrifying talk by Mr. Srinivasan Swamy, who urged participants to take the programme seriously and pay close attention to every lesson shared by the speakers, who came from various walks of life. This was followed by a short address from Mr. Bharat Avalani, Secretary General of AFAA, who had traveled from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He encouraged participants to “turn every lesson into a story, and exchange your stories with others so that collectively, these stories can become part of your life.” The inaugural session concluded with insights from Mr. Janak Sarada, Global Vice President of the International Advertising Association, who remarked, “The people involved in organizing this event have put their credibility at stake. I urge you to take full advantage of their efforts.”



Mr. Srinivasan Swamy setting the stage for 4 Days New Age Leadership Programme

Day 1



Mr. Bharat Avalani, Secretary General, AFAA



Mr. Janak Sarda, Global VP, IAA



Mr. Hrishikesh Mafatlal Chairman Arvind Mafatlal Group in his Key Note Address shared how fearlessly expressing his vulnerable situation helped in solving some of the most complex problems in his life.



Mr. Manish Advani, 8-time TEDx Speaker, CEO of MIMO Potentio, and Course Director of AFAA's New Age Leadership Programme, shared insights from his signature programme based on the WOLF to SMILE framework, which fosters inner clarity, personal excellence, and social collaboration. He guided participants on how they can conquer the WOLF—representing Worries, Obsessions, Limitations, and Fear.

This was followed by a Lunch and Learn conversation, during which participants, in smaller groups, had the opportunity to interact with the diverse leaders mentioned below:



Mr. Yogesh Shelar, Sr. Officer, Mumbai Fire Brigade



Dr. Anuj Shrivastav, Cardiologist



Mr. Samir Paleja, Senior Journalist, Chitrallekha



Mr. Nayan Bheda, Senior Leader, Hashtech Ventures

After the Lunch and Learn conversations, participants departed for Pune. En route, they experienced a virtual tour of the newly established factory of the German company Kern Liebers, followed by a brief interaction with Mr. Dattatray Nagale, Managing Director of Kern Liebers. The day concluded with interactive and engaging sessions on enhancing productivity through health and wellness, led by Mr. Gaurav Nijhon, Strength and Conditioning Coach for Olympic and Wimbledon players, and Mr. Tushar Jagdale, a Hasya Yoga and Tratak expert from India's oldest naturopathy centre.



Mr. Gaurav Nijhon Strength & Conditioning Coach



Mr. Tushar Jagdale, Hasya Yoga Expert

Day 2

Day Two began with Breakfast and Learn conversation in which participants in smaller Groups got the opportunity to interact with diverse leaders from Pune mentioned below:-



Mr. Kamal Rai, CEO, Malpani Estates



Mr. Vikrant Lokhande, CEO, ChainIQ



Mr. Nishi Kant, Founder, TblSpace



Mr. Mansih Adwani, CEO, CemeCon Coating Pvt. Ltd.

After breakfast participants left for Tata Central Archives and Tata Management Training Centre where they interacted with diverse leaders from Tata Group such as Mr. Zubin Mistry, Mr. Sanjay Nayak and Mr. Philip Mathew who gave them insights in to the Philosophy of Tata Group Companies.



Participants then visited India's oldest NGOs The Bombay Mothers & Children Welfare Society (BMCWS) where they had the opportunity to interact with Dr. Madhav Sathe renowned Doctor and TEDx Speaker



Day Two ended with Dinner and Learn conversation in which participants in smaller Groups got the opportunity to interact with diverse leader mentioned below: -



Mr. Rajesh Deshmukh, Head Operations, Cooper Corp.



Mr. Parikshit Teldhune, Wine Maker, Moet Hennessy

Day 3

Day Three began with visit to Sahyadri Farms where participants also got the opportunity to interact with Mr. Vilas Shinde Chairman Sahyadri Farms who has single handedly aligned over 40,000 farmers for greater good of Nashik simply by following in the footsteps of Dr. Verghese Kurien who is known for building AMUL: -



Participants then had lunch at the G- Namaste Restaurant run by revolutionary leader Dr. Sonam Kapse who is driven by vision of dignity and employment for people living with disabilities, G Namaste is India's first fully commercial, self-funded restaurant staffed by individuals with disabilities—including visual, hearing, speech, cognitive, and locomotive impairments.

After being inspired by Dr. Sonam Kapse's talk, participants placed the order in the restaurant using Sign language, almost every participant was touched by the personalized service offered by specially-abled staff.



On Day 3 Participants also visited Moët Hennessy's Winery in Nashik where they had sensory and educational experience in which they got insight on Wine tasting technique and winemaking heritage.



This year we also had Mr. Tirth Patel, a young vocalist from Ahmedabad and a student of commerce who also supports his family by working as a Rapido bike taxi driver, he added soul to the 4 Days event. His story of humility and perseverance deeply touched participants and enhanced the experiential nature of the programme through the selected songs he sang to re-iterate the learnings of the programme.



Day 4

On Day Four, the programme concluded with presentations made by five participant groups, each focused on job creation and revenue growth in five different cities:

- Nashik – through greater grape market penetration
- Solapur – by creating global appeal for locally made bedsheets
- Nagpur – by enhancing the quality and supply chain of oranges
- Dahanu – through increased promotion and usage of Golwad chickoos
- Pune – by leveraging its reputation to promote the principles of naturopathy with support from Nisargopchar Ashram, India's oldest naturopathy center, located on the outskirts of the city

Conclusion

The 3rd edition of the New Age Leadership Programme was a resounding success, offering not just leadership lessons but also actionable blueprints for personal and regional transformation. It stood out for its cross-sectoral collaboration, deep personal engagement, and community impact orientation. Under the visionary curation of Mr. Manish Advani, participants didn't just learn about leadership—they experienced and lived it. The diversity of leaders involved ensured that participants were exposed to a 360-degree view of leadership—from boardrooms to grassroots, from industry to innovation, and from personal growth to public service. During the 4 days Participants also played a role of Advisor to multiple startups part of IIT Bombay – SINE.

This event reaffirmed the belief that the future of leadership lies in mindful action, purpose-driven innovation, and empathetic collaboration. AFAA and all partners look forward to building on this momentum in the upcoming editions. Lastly, our sincere gratitude goes to Mr. Gopal Narang, Managing Director of Windsor Realty, who has graciously opened the doors of Windsor BKC—providing us with the iconic venue and warm hospitality on both the first and last day of the programme for the past three years—without ever expecting anything in return.

Feedback from the Participants

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This wasn't just a leadership programme, it was a real-life experience in value-based leadership. Unlike typical corporate training that focuses on extracting output, here we saw how courage, empathy, and purpose can drive societal change. It showed me that leadership isn't just about managing teams, its about uplifting lives. This programme helped me understand what I had, what I lacked, and where I needed clarity in execution. It also gave me a genuine network of people I can reach out to.

Lastly, I am especially grateful to Manish Sir, his humility and wisdom make him a living resource for young leaders like us. And I truly thank AFAA for sponsoring such a meaningful experience.

Kartik Mishra,
Founder, Clever Creative Studio

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The AFAA New Age Leadership Program was a thoroughly enriching experience, insightful sessions, diverse perspectives, and meaningful peer interactions made it a standout learning journey. The content was well thought through and highly relevant.

Paritosh Aulakh,
Dentsu Advertising & Media Services Pvt Ltd

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The New Age Leadership Program was truly beyond expectations. Over four days across Mumbai, Pune, and Nashik, I had the chance to meet 24 incredible young leaders” each inspiring in their own way. Being part of this cohort was an honour.

Karishma Raheja,
iProspect

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It was an eye opening experience to see people work towards making an impact, and actually enjoying what they do. It was amazing to meet people from different areas and learn about their life. Although, would have loved to interact with more women leaders.

Diksha Iyer,
BlinkX by JM Financial

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Feedback from the Participants

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The program was an incredibly enriching experience. It provided me with valuable exposure to industry leaders, offering a deeper understanding of how they think, strategize, and drive impactful change. It also gave me the opportunity to collaborate with team members from various advertising agencies, which was both insightful and enjoyable. A heartfelt thank you to Manish Sir and Taruna Ma'am for organizing the program so seamlessly. Your efforts made the entire experience smooth, engaging, and memorable.

Alrina Alvares,
R K Swamy Ltd

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Overall, it was a good learning experience for me as I got the opportunity to interact with varied leaders that is not possible in your normal daily life. Interacting with them and fellow participants opened my mind to many new things. The experts shared their thoughts, real life experiences and what it takes to be a not just a good but a social responsible leader yet remain grounded.

This cannot happen over virtual sessions and when we meet face to face its more interactive and personal. I am taking home with me memories filled with insights, fun learning, values and knowledge that I will try my best to impart and practice in my life.

Dimple Tara,
Madison Communications Pvt Ltd

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The programme helped me get out of my comfort zone & understand how effective communication can inspire radical change. NLP also helped me tap into empathetic and visionary leadership. "A simple way to put it an incredible journey. While I have been part of other programs before, this one stood apart. It wasn't about teaching in the conventional sense. It was about opening your eyes and ears to the world around you.

Deiptimaan Chowdhury,
Fractal Ink Design Studio

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It was really amazing, I specifically learned how to be down to earth, by maintaining high level of competencies.

Keshav Shivhare,
Hansa Research Group Pvt Ltd

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Feedback from the Participants

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This four-day cross cities New age leadership program was more than what I had expected. It was once in a life time experience, meeting 24 young leaders who are doing great in their respective fields, interacting with them, being one of them was a privilege. I believe the program was built upon four key pillars: Educate, Experience, Explore, and Experiment. It went beyond the confines of traditional classroom learning, encouraging participants to delve into the real world, gaining hands-on experience, exploring learning opportunities, and experimenting to contribute positively to our world. A big shoutout to the organisers for making this journey so comfortable and smooth.

Chirag Maheshwari,
Lodestar UM

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Yes! it was really amazing and empowering program

Rahul Govalkar,
MSCI Service Pvt Ltd

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It was a great opportunity to meet people from the industry and actually form a community that can help each other. The leaders we met had really good experiences to share and also the model made by Manish Sir to have conversations over meals with smaller group is very effective. Big shoutout to Taruna Ma'am. She was a mother figure to the entire group.

Akansha Rawat,
Dentsu Creative Isobar

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It's was a great explorer , got to meet the new leaders from different field which helped me to change my mind that don't limit your self. Thanks to AFAA team for this opportunity. Where we have met the leader from different agency and learned a alot things. Special thanks to Manish sir and Taruna for keeping us engaging throughout the workshop. Love to have a more workshop like this in future

Mahesh Poojari,
Hansa Customer Equity Pvt Ltd

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Feedback from the Participants

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I honestly didn't know what to expect, even after receiving the itinerary. But I am left stunned at the level of sophistication that I have experienced this weekend - the people we met, the conversations we had, the interactions and engagements as well. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and also am left feeling very very inspired.

Preet Shah,
Fractal Ink Consultancy

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As someone from Kerala, I was honestly unaware of so much happening in this rural part of India. This experience was humbling and energising in equal measure. My biggest takeaway? Take the first step and truly listen to your heart. Once you do that, everything else will start falling into place and if it doesn't, you will find a way to make it happen.

Rahul Menon,
Maitri Advertising Works Pvt Ltd

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It was a highly engaging programme. Gave us the opportunity to meet renowned individuals from various walks of life. It was a practical forward program where we got real life experiences and could really have 1 on 1 conversations with real leaders from various industries. Really happy with the overall exposure, added immense value to my personal and professional growth.

Rowena Rodrigues,
Starcom Worldwide

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It was truly an enriching experience. Meeting and interacting with inspiring leaders, and learning how they navigated different phases of life, was incredibly insightful. However, I did feel that the extensive travel during the programme led to exhaustion, which impacted our ability to stay fully focused.

For future sessions, perhaps limiting the programme to a single city and maximizing activities there could help create a more immersive and less tiring experience.

Chriselle Picardo,
R K Swamy Ltd

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