

# Taking Strides Towards Better Mental Health—Manipal Marathon 2019

On 17th February, at the crack of dawn, the streets of Manipal were taken over by a sea of blue. Thousands of participants ran together as a part of Manipal Marathon—organised by Manipal Academy of Higher Education, in association with Manipal Runners' Club and Udupi District Amateur Athletics Association.



Credits: The Photography Club, Manipal

The event which was based on the theme of Mental Health Awareness witnessed a footfall of 8500 people, giving it the distinction of the largest marathon in India to be organised by a student body. The marathon was divided into four main

categories—namely 21K, 10K, 5K and 3K run. The 3K race was further divided into Corporate, High School, Primary School, and Open category. The Open category witnessed the highest participation, as families and individuals, young and old, ran side-by-side. The marathon was flagged off by guests of honour such as Sri Laxman Nimbargi, the Udupi Superintendent of Police, and Commander Abhilash Tomy, the first Indian to complete a non-stop solo circumnavigation of the world under sail.

Following the run, a carnival was organised at KMC Greens. The children engaged in games such as sack races and Tug of War. The adults, on the other hand, took part in Zumba sessions and laughter exercises. All the runners were provided with breakfast and refreshments. In keeping with the theme, students from various colleges such as MCH, WGSHA, and MCOPS had set up stalls to spread information regarding this increasingly pertinent issue. “Mental Health is as important as physical well-being. There is no shame in seeking professional help if necessary,” said Mehdiya Pyardi, a School of Allied Health Sciences student.



Credits: The Photography Club, Manipal

The event came to an end with the distribution of prizes and medals to the participants. The team of 400-strong volunteers from the Volunteer Services Organization ensured that the proceedings ran smoothly. “Manipal is a student town, and this demographic is highly susceptible to mental health issues. If the marathon brought about a change in attitude even for one person, I believe, the event was a success,” said Rahul Konapur, the President of Manipal Runners’ Club, speaking about the importance of the event. Overall, the marathon was reasonably successful, considering it drew a massive number of participants and started a conversation about mental health.

*Featured Image Credits: The Photography Club, Manipal*