

[Home](#) > [National](#) > [Grooming 'em young: Eighth AWIM National Olympics concludes in Chennai](#)

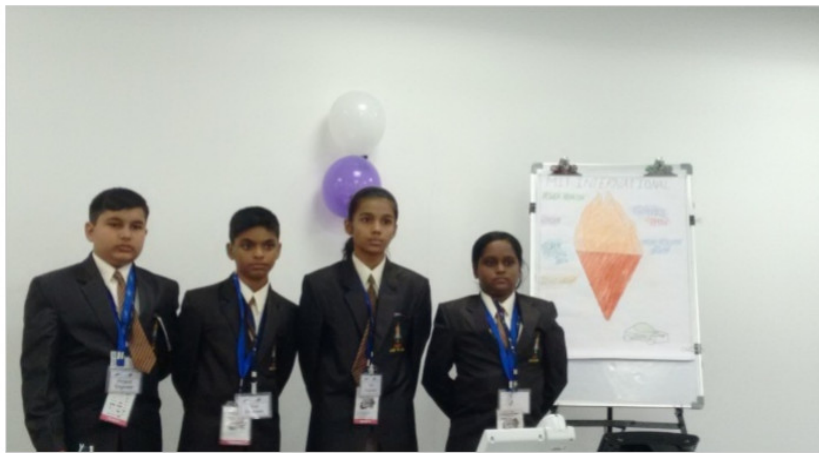
Grooming 'em young: Eighth AWIM National Olympics concludes in Chennai

INDUSTRY

by Kiran Bajad Jan 25, 2016

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7 OF 13



It's a project with a mission. Begun with an aim to nurture an interest in automobiles at a very young age, A World in Motion (AWIM), which is a teacher-administered, volunteer-assisted programme that brings science, technology, engineering and mathematics education to life for students in grades 5 to 9, concluded at the Mahindra Research Valley in Chennai on January 22-23. The event was organised under the umbrella of SAE India.

In its eighth edition, AWIM has been gaining ground in India and this year over 20,000 students from 22 cities participated at a regional level. Nearly 48 schools from 21 cities qualified for the national level championship.

Interdisciplinary in nature, the programme helps students learn to make meaningful connection among disciplines. AWIM was first held in the United States by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) International in 1990. AWIM was brought in India in 2007 and the first championship was organised in 2008.

AWIM India currently has two sets of challenges for fifth and sixth standard students, who are 11-13 years old. They comprise Skimmer Challenge and Jet Toy Challenge. For the Skimmer Challenge, fifth standard students had to construct sailboats of paper and test the effects of different sail shapes, sizes and construction methods to meet the specific performance criteria. Friction, force effects of surface area and design are some physical phenomenon that students face in this contest. The Jet Toy Challenge for sixth grade students includes a balloon-powered toy car that meets performance criteria like distance of travel, travel time, weight, speed, accuracy and design.

Inaugurating the event, Aravind Balaji, joint managing director, TVS-Lucas, said, "My interest for engineering started right from the moment when I made my first engine model using Lego in the fifth standard. Competitions like this help students get their first exposure towards engineering."

Dr Aravind Bharadwaj, president, SAE India, who interacted with students, said that this championship was initiated in the US with an aim to develop interest in mechanical engineering at the age of 11. He also encouraged participating students to win not just the national but AWIM international trophy for India.

He said, "10-15 years from now, these students will become India's future generation engineers and will help create Make-In-India automobiles. The country will benefit from such initiatives."

The organisers of this year's event were enthused with the response to the championship. While the first edition in 2008 saw only two schools participate, the past seven years has seen schools from 22 cities being part of AWIM. Now, SAE India wants take this contest to every district of the country and enable more schools to participate, thereby giving students an exposure for engineering. In 2012, the Indian team representing a school from Delhi won the first international trophy.