

Jamshedpur Regional Conference 2019

In the last week of November 2019 Initiatives of Change - Let's Make A Difference organised one of its regional outreach programs in Jamshedpur, in the state of Jharkhand. This regional conference has consistently been organised every year since 2011, in association with all the Kerala Public Schools in the city. The support of Mr. Sharat Chandran Nair, and the local coordinators Mrs. Shraddha Agarwal and Mr. Rajiv Agarwal towards the organisation of this conference since the very beginning has been crucial.

The conference was organised for students of the Kadma, Burmamines, NML, Gamharia and Mango branches of Kerala Public School (KPS), Kerala Samajam Model School(KSMS), D.B.M.S. English School, Hill Top School and Beldih Church School in Jamshedpur and over 12 volunteers from across the country along with the 14 local volunteers and the course convener came together to run the program. The conference took place from 28th of November to the 1st of December. In the course of the conference, the participants were provided with all the necessary conference material. Healthy vegetarian food in breakfast, lunch and tea each was served once every day of the conference.



First day of the conference began late in the afternoon on the 28th of November, when all the participants from different branches of KPS assembled in a magnificent dome, created especially for the program in KPS for the inauguration. The Lamp Lighting ceremony was done, along with an ethnic welcome dance performed by the students of the school. Then a very iconic song "It's Better to One Candle" of IofC, was performed by the volunteers for the guests and participants, which emphasized the importance to take action and bring about -

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- change, starting from oneself which set the right tone for the beginning of the program. After this Mr. Sharad Chandran Nair, the direction of Kerala public school trust, addressed the gathering about the previous

programmes organised by LMAD in KPS and their results. The chief guest for the program, Mr. Tarun Daga, who holds the position of Managing Director in Jusco, spoke about his association and history with KPS and also shared his thoughts about being empathetic. Dr. Amit Mukherjee was the next to address the participants present. He expressed his experience and association with IofC and how the values at its core greatly affected his personal life, especially his relationship with his brother, he finished his address on a positive note with a poem, "Kaun hai Zimmedar".



Thereafter, Mr. Rajiv Agarwal spoke about his first experience along with his journey of a youth conference at Asia Plateau, Panchgani in the year 1995 and also about how he was motivated to give his time for the cause of LMAD, particularly in all of the Jamshedpur Youth Conferences.

Following this, volunteers from the team spoke about the change they experienced in their lives, because of their association with LMAD, one of them also spoke about the beliefs of IofC, inner listening and helping each other and how this impact one's life. One other volunteer spoke about the effect of listening to his inner self on his career, he shared about how he found out his passion for writing in his quiet time and how it changed his life. The inauguration ceremony therefore concluded with a vote of thanks by the hostess and Singing of the National Anthem.

Further on, all the participants were instructed about the do's and don'ts of the whole conference. The course convener also highlighted the importance of the certificate of this nature, the discipline necessary to earn it and how it has played a vital role in the lives of many who have one.

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All the participants were divided into groups and went into their respective group discussion spots as a final activity for the day where they introduced themselves to the other participants in the group.

The second day began early; it started with the course convener introducing himself, specifically his association and development with the ideas of IofC-LMAD, he spoke about how his mentors associated with the same concepts of Purity, Honesty, Unselfishness and Love groomed him in his life. Further on he also spoke about how the silence of Asia Plateau and his first Quiet Time itself made an unforgettable impact on him. After this all the participants dispersed for their Quiet Time around the campus.



After breakfast, the course convener spoke about the crux of what IofC -LMAD is all about; its values. He shared experiences from his own life, about how he realised in his Quiet Time that he had been selfish earlier and after realising, he made things right and lifted the weight that was on his conscious.

One of the biggest concerns that today's youth is their career, for which a lot of them are highly confused or for some they are even clueless. To help the participants acknowledge and address this issue, post lunch, one of the volunteers presented a highly interactive session which began with a couple of inspirational videos based on what simple human beings with mere willpower and dedication can do in their lives. The session was intended to help the participants with a vision for their future based on their interests and other similar aspects which were highlighted by apt questioning from the volunteer to all the participants. The session was proactively participated by a high number of participants with many different perspectives which made it even more effective and beneficial to all.



The course convener, in the next session did a case study with two of the participants. He questioned them about their daily routine and schedule and how they used their time. This session was highly enriching and impactful as two of the participants and many others like them realised where their time was actually spent. Many decided to save time henceforth and utilise it for better purposes. This turned out to be a really crucial session as youth these days have a habit of spending a large amount of time on their phones on social media and games which was highlighted in this session.

For the last part of the day all the eight groups had healthy time of sharing at their respective group discussion spots. All of the participants were asked about their opinions and gains from all the plenaries since morning. Many of the participants opened up and shared their thoughts.

The next kicked off early in the morning. The participants were already introduced to the concept of quiet time, today was the day to take it further ahead and look deep into ourselves, to introspect and measure their lives against the four absolute standards.

Humans are born pure. As we grow, we start adding habits; both good and bad. We start building relations and with the passage of time our egos grows and we start abusing a lot of these relations. So this time of silence was a speed breaker for one to look into oneself and introspect where change was required in order to become a better person. After a small demonstration, the participants were sent to observe their quiet time which was followed by a sharing.

The participants listened very intently and patiently. They also had a lot of questions, such as:

“What is the difference between self-respect & ego?”

“Why do we share everything with our friends but not with our family? ”

While answering these questions, the course convener also touched upon a very relevant issue of early teenage relationships in schools and how it affects a person of that age with all the unnecessary pressure they go through. He insisted on them concentrating in academics and co-curricular activities instead.

Family is something to be celebrated. One may run away from it but will come back because it holds one together; family makes us feel safe, secure and it is where love never runs out. There are a lot of instances where we abuse the unconditional love given by our family or even friends who do become a part of an extended family. This session was open for participants to share experiences with their families.

One of the participants shared how he ran away from the house after arguing with his mother and didn't return home until his father called him in the evening to inform him that his mother was ill. He felt very regretful and apologized to his mother. Another participant shared how he hated being in the hospital for a relative who had a road accident. He felt he was called to sit in the hospital because he was free. He didn't like being around sick people and watch them all the time. After listening to everyone present there, he felt the need to reach out to that relative and be there for him.

There were a lot of people who wanted to express themselves and wanted to bring a positive change within them.

Post lunch, some more voices were heard of those whom wanted to share. They then dispersed into their groups for group discussion about the whole day and family session in particular if anyone wanted to share in a smaller group.

The last day of the conference started early with a quiet time in groups. The quiet time was focused on the inner voice, conscience, ego and the mind. Students shared the positive changes that came about during the past few days, the amendments that they needed to do to improve broken relationships and the habits that pulled them back. Every participant was then handed over a chit where they wrote down one bad habit they had that they wanted to get rid off . The students then proceeded outside to burn the chit that contained their bad habit.

Post breakfast, the students wrote one positive commitment they made during the conference that they will take with themselves after the conference. The commitment is a personal choice that one has and believes in.

Another short session was taken about anger management and how can one control their anger. A question was put forward, “Who all feel they have anger issues ?” and almost all the students raised their hands agreeing and accepting that they faced this problem of anger. Everyone listened intently as the course convener spoke about his experience with the issue and various ways of solving it.

The certificates of all the deserving participants were awarded to them by their group leaders. The day concluded with the closing ceremony and the National Anthem . This entire conference was concluded on a high energy amongst the participants as well as the organizing team.

Conferences like these slowly but 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 another conference was successfully delivered to the youth of Jamshedpur for a better and a bright future.



Annexure

The following are a few of the positive commitments by the students who attended:

- I will bring unity in my family.
- I will do quiet time every time everyday and listen to my inner voice.
- I will respect all my elders and family members.
- I will not waste time and study hard for my 10th board exams.
- I will express my love towards my parents.
- I will control my anger and will try to stop abusing.
- I will reduce the time I spend on my phone.
- I will always follow my conscious.
- I will never cheat on anyone.
- I will respect my sister and all girls.
- I will try my best to follow the path of the four values - Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love.
- I promise not to cheat in my SSC exam and score marks by my own potential and hardwork.
- I will not lose focus and do what makes me happy, and what is good for me.
- I will try to be more active and rescue my laziness.
- I will always respect my teachers.
- I will try to be a good human being.
- I will try to spend more quality time with my mother and respect her.
- I will heal all my broken relations as soon as possible.
- I will grab all the opportunities I get to speak on stage and build my confidence and speaking skills.
- I want to leave behind my ego and be kind to everyone.
- I will quit smoking and drinking and make good friends.
- I will not steal from my mother and will tell the truth.
- I will stop watching porn from today.
- I will stop abusing my sister and mother.
- I will not waste time on my phone and spend more time in playing sports.
- I will drop my attitude and ego and be kind to all.
- I will always try to make others happy and make them smile.
- I will work hard and score more than 95% in my 10th examination.
- I will not hurt my mother anymore and will not make her cry.