

# Katni Regional Conference 2019

In October of 2019, for the very first time, a regional conference of Let's Make A Difference was held in a town called Katni in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The Katni Youth Conference or KYC went on for a period of four days from 10th to 14th October, 2019. A staggering number of 380 students took part in this edition of the conference which was held at the JPV DAV Public School. 25 volunteers (majority of them from Katni) helped conduct the conference along with the course convener.

On the first day, the students gathered outside the venue, knowing little about what was in store for them. They were divided into groups and the first group discussion took place where the students met their group mates for the first time and a quick round of introduction ensued. Every program of LMAD is incomplete without the ceremonial inauguration. The inauguration started with a dance of the traditional Maori song of New Zealand, "Haere Mai". The local volunteer team also performed a skit that the audience quite enjoyed. The sponsors of the conference along with the parents of the participants and volunteers were also present.



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The program formally commenced with the traditional and customary lighting of the lamp. The host & hostess welcomed the guests with an introduction about the idea and philosophy of the LMAD movement.

The guest(s) invited were: Mr R. Kurvanshi (Vice Principal, JPV DAV Public School); Mr Prem Batra; Mr. Vijay Mohnani; Mr. Ritik Rajlani; Ms. Chanchal Jasuja; Mr.Amit Kotwani; Mrs.Kashish Rohra; Mr. Manoj Panjwani; Mr. Ashish Chelani; Mr. Sumit Balani and Mr. Pratap Motwani.

The Guests shared their thoughts on moral values and ethics. One guest highlighted about how hard it was to find moral values in the outside world today and why it was really important for the youth to learn about them and also apply it as part of their daily life. One parent also stressed that one can learn everyday by being a student for life, no matter how old we grow.

LMAD has played a crucial role in changing the lives of many volunteers. The volunteers play a crucial role during the conference to help participants understand the teachings and also support them and encourage them to surrender to the program. Many volunteers shared their stories of change with the audience. Some of the volunteers who are still students also shared; how their learnings from LMAD has helped them academically and also and made them work harder to achieve their goals.

A standing testament to the impact that LMAD has had on the lives of people lies in Katni itself! Katni - a small town located miles away from Panchgani has not only welcomed the teachings of the LMAD conference, but has also responded with greater enthusiasm and vigour. It all began when one participant attended the Youth Conference back in 2017 and later; this participant not only encouraged many young girls and boys of Katni to attend the Youth Conference(s) in Panchgani; but also decided to work hard, build a team and later work towards organizing a program for the people here - this conference. From one participant to more than three hundred participants - this is a clear example of how when one individual is inspired to bring about a difference, even the society at large can also be benefited because of that one person.

The idea of LMAD has touched many lives across the country and the objective of having a regional conference was to make people aware of the idea as much as possible. The Inauguration ended with a Vote of thanks to the panel and sponsors.



The parents were also impressed after having listened to the ideas and moral values that LMAD is working on for such a short time period. They also showed interest in subscribing for such conferences and asked the convenor to consider conducting a program to benefit parents as well.

After a short tea break, all the participants were gathered in the auditorium and were introduced to the volunteers by Kusum and Komal. They were also told about the Do's and Don'ts to be followed by the participants during the entire conference. A strong emphasis was also laid on the certificate and its value. The participants were told that the certificates had to be earned and in addition, they were told about the value that the certificate holds for an individual in their lives.

The crux of what LMAD is all about - Quiet Time - was spoken about by the course convener in the early hours of the day. He emphasized how important it was to take a step back and reflect on one's actions. He also spoke about how the morning hours after dawn were the most effective to do this. He spoke about his journey with quiet time over the past twenty five years and gave numerous examples of how quiet time changed aspects of his life that he was ever-grateful for.

The participants were then asked to spread around the campus and experience quiet time for themselves. They were seen to be deep in thought and wrote in the diaries that they were given. They

then gathered in the auditorium to listen to a few participants who went on the stage to share their first ever experience of quiet time. Some expressed how they felt calm and relaxed by sitting quiet, some spoke about how they realized their mistakes, many shared honestly about how they were still quite confused about the whole concept.

After breakfast, the course convener spoke about the four standards that lofC LMAD is based on. Often called the ABC of lofC, these four values provide the foundation of what takes place in the remaining sessions of the conference. The four values being Purity, Honesty, Unselfishness and Love. The volunteers helped the course convener explain the four values by narrating incidents from their lives that showcase a value that they connected to the most.



Post lunch, the course convener took a session on concentration that's designed to help focus. Especially as in this day and age, we have so many means to distract ourselves with. With the help of a small exercise, the participants were made to realize just how fickle their minds were. The course convener emphasised on how the level of concentration towards a particular task can be improved by practicing this exercise on a regular basis.

Another impactful session about one's career was taken that emphasised on various aspects ranging from the little habits that we form knowingly or unknowingly to the long term goal that we have set for ourselves. Every single participants roadmap would be different and this exercise helped crystallize aspects that aren't so clear. This was received in a positive manner by the participants.

The participants then got divided into their groups and discussed about the many things that were introduced to them over the course of the day. Many participants who didn't have the courage to share their thoughts on the stage were given a chance to share in their respective groups.

After having been introduced to the idea of Quiet Time; it was time for the participants to deep dive and introspect more about themselves. Quiet time must be an anchor in everyone's life. Humans mostly tend to focus on their outward self but during Quiet Time, one must look within and listen to her/his conscience.

This session helped the students to take a step forward and see if they could find something within their conscience. Consistently they were all improving in their Quiet time as many participants shared their experience in the auditorium. They felt much more relaxed compared to the Quiet Time they had done previously.

Some of them spoke about their past mistakes, their behaviour and how it has hurt other people, and other past misdeeds that they still carry deep within them. They also vowed to take corrective action. Quiet Time was becoming intense by every passing day. The convenor also reiterated that this ritual was not only for the conference. It is something that should be practised daily in our lives. The idea to organize such a conference in Katni was also born during someone's Quiet Time; and the end result is that the message is being spread to many people.



The human mind is like clean water. When we are young our conscience was clean. But as the days passed by; we began to see the outer world and we start interacting with people and things. We eventually start taking many ideas and habits with us. Some things that we get from others might be good but what makes our conscience contaminated is the bad habits that we develop over time. It is possible to clean our conscience at any point of time but the quality that keeps one from doing this is our ego. The bigger the ego is, the lesser the chance that change is going to happen in our life.

Students earlier had shared about the addictions that they had developed over time. A number of students are addicted to smoking and drinking and watching pornography. Many students had troubled relationships with their parents, family and friends. Though one needs to change for betterment, but it is always the ego that stops us from making amends and taking steps to overcome our addictions.

In order to clean up the dirt inside us, we must constantly focus on clean thoughts and actions. And through consistent actions with the application of Quiet Time, we can overcome all the negative habits and addictions. With strength; we can make the necessary changes.

Family is an anchor that keeps one's life grounded and stable. These days we are not connected with our families unselfishly. We have become so selfish that our terms with our family members are limited to give and take. Family is our real thing. They always support us if we are correct and are there for us during times of trouble. The lack of empathy towards our family members drives us to ignore them, be rude and sometimes hurt them. Only a loss of a loved one shows us the importance of family.

The convener shared his story about his family and his bond with his mother. This made many participants cry their hearts out. Many students shared their personal relations with their parents, friends and family members and acknowledged that how this session has made a great impact on them and made them realise the importance of the people in their family. Many students realised that some relationships were clouded due to miscommunication and ego barriers that was built over the years. The participants pledged to bridge the gap that they have created with their family members.

Many people expressed their emotions and had deep realisations. The conference convener spoke about how valuable relations get destroyed because of ego and how ego can cause tremendous turmoil in life particularly with people with whom we have a close relationship.

The participants were now clear and determined to let go off their bad habits. In order to move forward and leave their negative habits, mistakes and bitter experiences behind, they wrote it all down on a piece of paper and burned it. Their energy changed and there were smiles around as they saw it all burn in front of them.

The course convener, on the final day of the conference spoke about how it's important to follow this habit of quiet time with discipline. He spoke about how the many important things that the participants had experienced in the course of the conference was extremely powerful and needed to be acted upon at the earliest. The participants then spread around the campus to spend time in silence and reflect what was spoken about. The participants shared on stage and it was clear that they had progressed as far as their comfort with quiet time was concerned.

In today's fast moving world, we often talk about how little time we have to do things. The next session was focussed on making the participants realize how much time is available to us if only we utilized the twenty four hours we have to the fullest. This exercise proved to be very fruitful as many expressed their realization of the number of hours they seem to have "found" in their daily routine that they vowed to spend productively.

We often take things that are available to us in abundance for granted. We do not realize that what is abundant for us might not be for most people. Resources that are limited in this world should be used with care. The next session was all about this. The students who felt they should lead a life of sustainable living signed a pledge stating the same.

The deserving participants received a certificate each. The four days in Katni brought smiles to the faces of those who began appreciating the ones in their lives, tears to the eyes of those who realized they had been taking their families for granted, everyone left with a feeling of satisfaction. Most importantly, every participant had started an inner conversation with themselves that revolved around the four morals.



## Annexure

The following are some of the positive commitments that the participants had written down during the exercise:

- As soon as possible, I'm gonna express my feelings in front of my parents, I will tell all those things which I was never able to tell them, I will try to do things with the permission of my parents.
- I will try not to lie to my parents and be honest to myself and parents too and will not be possessive about anything and yes I will stop fighting with my parents and stop being jealous.
- Work hard on my studies.
- Learning from this conference, I commit myself to extract out all the evils from me and make myself a better person. No matter how tough it gets, I'm gonna keep pushing myself.
- I want to end my anger and stay happy always and I will definitely do it.
- I will learn how to cook.
- I will try to forgive people who have done wrong to me.
- I will not fight with anyone, will forgive everyone and will be honest to everyone. Also I'll try not to fight with my sister too.
- I will study hard for the next five years of my life to make my coming 40 years prosperous. I Will be real me and will not fake to anyone.
- Will always be honest.
- I will never again fight with my mother. I will never ever hurt anyone, I will always respect my brother.
- I will not expect anything from anyone and not abuse.
- I will not allow negative thoughts to come in my mind.
- I want to change myself as I always fight with my friend due to my ego.
- Not to argue with my family.
- I will not use my mobile phone for a long time. I will read books in the morning.
- After this conference, I promise that will never ever lie to my parents, friends and I will love unconditionally. I was very dishonest towards my parents, but after this conference I will never do the same.
- I will control my anger.
- I will never expect too much from others. I will be unselfish.
- I will remove ego from my life.
- Will become the world's richest entrepreneur before the age of 25 years.
- I will not argue with my parents.

- I want to make a healthy relation with my dad which I don't have now. I love him so much but I don't talk to him, I always run away from him.
- I will be disciplined and punctual in life.
- I want to leave all my bad habits and want to help needy people and will try not to repeat mistakes.
- I will never fight with my mother and will never do anything inappropriate which I cannot share with my parents.
- I will not let myself get depressed and will work hard for my career.
- I will stop cheating others and will become an honest person after this conference. I will not abuse anyone.
- I will never hurt anyone because of my anger and bad mood.