

TEDxJMC ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT 2024

The 6th edition of the annual TEDx event at Jesus and Mary college, TEDxJMC, took place with grandeur on the 13th of April, 2024. The event boasted the theme “Agni: Igniting Passion, Forging Purpose”. This year's theme represents the intrinsic drive and fervour within every individual to strive for their goals, and seeks to stoke the flames of passion within individuals through the fiery words of the stellar lineup of speakers; Hasleen Kaur, Naman Narnolia, Pradeep Krishnan, Aparupa Dey, Suhail Nayyar, Guari Varma and Dr Anupriya Goel, and through the blazing performances by Stavva Kaila, Girl Crush and Kurien Sebastian.

The day commenced with the unfurling of the event banner at 9.15, as final preparations were underway amidst the gradual influx of the audience. The official proceedings began at 10.15 with an introductory segment on the TED organisation, followed by a brief homage to Jesus and Mary College, where the first TEDxJMC event was organised 51 years since the inception of the institution back in 1968. Dr. Prashasthi Joshi, the convener of the society and the keynote speaker for the event, shedding light on the event's theme and its growing relevance in the present context. The principal's support was recognised followed by a heartfelt expression of gratitude from the event organisers Sai Stuti Mittal and Isha Anthony, who shared their personal insights and experiences with TEDxJMC.

With the lights dimmed, and the TEDxJMC logo shining brightly on the stage, the first speaker for the day, Hasleen Kaur, former miss india earth, established actor and blossoming entrepreneur took over the spotlight. Being a JMC alumni, she reminisced about her time at the college and expressed the nostalgia she felt after being back. Kaur is of the belief that reciting one's dreams aloud is the first step in achieving them. Irrespective of the scepticism that one may face, one should practise the art of refocusing on one's goals and prove oneself right. Kaur believes that satisfaction is failure, an individual should always move from one dream to the next, just like she moved from being a miss india to an actor to now being an entrepreneur. The mantra of her success is simple, consistency, respect, dedication, ethics and focus. These values that she has imbibed in her life be it being an all rounder in school or college or being an actor today, drawn from her upbringing is what has always helped her stay passionate and chase her dreams. After her talk she was felicitated by the organisers with a small token of gratitude.

The next speaker, Aparupa Dey was welcomed onto the stage. She is an acclaimed wildlife photographer being featured in the likes of BBC, Natgeo etc. She started her talk with an experience that was all too familiar for many in the audience, the pressure of studying hard and getting a government job. Like many in India, Aparupa too had to face the immense pressure of focusing on one's study alone and sidelining any and all passions which were always dismissed as hobbies. She talked about how she always had a passion for nature and wildlife in particular, something she believes she inherited hailing from a biodiverse rich village like Dehati, West

Bengal. However what she also inherited was the small town aspiration to make it big by getting a government job. Despite this all, she continued to pursue her passion along with her academics and started posting the pictures she had taken. One such image of an asian palm civet, she took changed her entire outlook. That picture helped bring awareness to a previous sceptic in her village about the creature, which helped validate her passion. Soon several of her art went viral and she journeyed from being a birdwatcher to the ambassador for Nikon India. She ended her talk, by requesting the audience to never give up on one's dreams irrespective of the societal pressures that may burden us. She too was felicitated by the organisers with a gift of appreciation.

The third speaker of the event, Mr Naman Narnolia, came onto the stage. He was recently awarded as the model of the year, male and had one of the biggest fashion debuts, with his first walk as a model being for Hermes. He talked about his entire journey from being a kid in Jamtara to now being a renowned model. He always knew he was too passionate to be contained in Jamtara and soon convinced his parents to send him up to a boarding school in Delhi, where he felt he was made feel different from the rest and he redirected his attention to academics to cope with the feelings of being a bit detached from the others. Like many Indian kids he too was sent to Kota but he left soon after he experienced an environment way too toxic for him. As he went to pursue his MBA, participating in beauty pageants led to his flair for fashion being ignited and he relentlessly started pursuing this industry, hunting for agents and agencies. The journey wasn't easy with countless rejections and intense transformations and hard work until finally by luck or by chance he was discovered and signed by an agency to walk his first ever runway for Hermes. Naman sincerely believes in the power of manifestation and putting in the work behind to achieve it. He ended his talk by quoting Shah Rukh Khan's famous quote from the blockbuster film Om Shanti Om, and urged the audience to always dream and to be dedicated and work towards their dreams so much so that that makes it happen. His talk was followed by a refreshing melody of melancholy by Stavva Kaila, who took to the stage with a refreshing rendition of fan favourite songs.

The fourth speaker for the day was Dr. Anupriya Goel, with a speech urging the audience to stand out from the crowd and create your own identity. Emphasising on the role of societal and family norms, Dr. Goel narrated her own life story about how, coming from a conventional Baniya family, she too was expected to follow the norms, do well in academics, pursue Science despite not liking the subject and become a doctor. Talking about the challenges she faced while pursuing her MBBS degree, Dr Goel said that she realised that success in life cannot just be measured by the marks you score but by your happiness and confidence which stems from stability of mind, clarity, self belief and the sense of development of character. A national trainer for anti-aging procedures and international trainer for special hair growth techniques, she became the first doctor to introduce Autologous Microcraft Treatment in North India. Further defying the norms of society, she embraced motherhood while also taking a new leap in her career by writing a book which was then published on her children's first birthday. Owing to the support of her family, Dr. Goel stepped

into the world of social media creating educational videos and today boasts an impressive follower count. Dr. Goel concluded her speech with a reinvigorating and passionate cheer, asking the audience to believe in themselves, embrace the beauty of life, learn from the disappointments and live an extraordinary life standing out from the crowd. Dr. Goel was then felicitated by lead organiser of TEDxJMC, Sai Stuti Mittal and co-organiser Isha Anthony.

Giving his first TED talk, actor Suhail Nayyar spoke to the audience about the importance of perseverance, hard work and belief in oneself. An introvert raised in a conventional business family of Delhi, Mr. Nayyar shared his struggles in school with the audience where he was an under confident and shy kid who was forced to choose Science to pursue a career as a pilot rather than take up history and literature which he wished to study. In the hopes of missing class and getting a free period, Mr. Nayyar took up his first character in a school play- a gate. Seeing his peers laugh and enjoy seeing him on stage, it gave Mr. Nayyar a renewed sense of validation and from then on he actively participated in school dramas. Mr. Nayyar reminisced about how his friends and family lost faith in him after he struggled with academics and he started to feel like an outcast. Struggling with the taboo demon of depression and imposter syndrome, Mr. Nayyar didn't let these setbacks hold him back in life and worked hard to get into one of the most esteemed and competitive acting institutions of the country- FTII, where he got to work with renowned actors like Mr. Irfan Khan and Mr. Pankaj Kapur. But his struggles didn't stop there. Entering the film industry he had to give thousands of auditions and face countless rejections till he finally bagged a role in Uda Punjab. Mr. Nayyar concluded his speech with a profound message on daring to dream. He believes life to be a marathon, not a race. Run, walk or crawl, you will win in the end because no dream is too lofty. All you have to do is have faith in yourself and take the first step.

The conference then dispersed for lunch, which was a vibrant affair as the attendees explored the various stalls set up. The Polaroid stall saw attendees 'framing their flames' and creating memories which will last a life time. Not only that, the attendees also grooved to the beats in the two challenges set up- Soundscapes Challenge and the Hookstep Challenge.

Refreshed after lunch, the audience gathered again in the Thevenet Hall for Chef Gauri Verma's speech. A baker by profession, Chef Gauri retraced her long journey filled with speed bumps along the way. She worked hard and not only did well in academics but also became a national level swimmer, gaining a spot in the prestigious institution of Lady Shriram College to pursue B.Com Honours. Always striving for more, Chef Gauri not only excelled in her academics but also became the president of the western dance society of the college. Faced with the pressure of marriage by family, Chef Gauri went to Oxford University for further studies and then worked at Deloitte for five years before coming back to India. Getting a disastrous wedding cake while getting married in Vegas, Chef Gauri realised that she wanted to bake, but her family wasn't ready to accept it and termed it as a 'mid-life crisis'. Taking a leap of faith, she pursued her dreams and apprenticed under several French chefs while accompanying her husband, a fashion designer, to Paris Fashion

Week. A changing point in her career was when a customer of her wanted a fondant cake, and Chef Gauri realised that despite being the second largest exporter of sugar in the world, India exported all its confectionary products. Unhappy with this, Chef Gauri worked to create her own fondant and, despite failing in her first attempt, did not give up, persevered, and in 2018 presented her product at the largest food exhibition in India. Finding light in the bleak times of COVID, Chef Gauri used the time to curate even more products, and today, she is the only Indian who exports sprinkles to America and runs her business globally. The message of her speech was simple- have no regrets in life, experiment, and try new things. It is okay to fail; learn from your failures, and never stop taking bets on yourself.

Girl Crush, a K-pop dance trope soon was welcomed with a round of applause and hoots as they performed multiple songs ranging from K-Pop music to Bollywood beats and left the entire crowd in awe of their mere talent. They kept the theme of the conference alive as they set the stage on fire.

Next up was Captain Pradeep Krishnan, whose journey was a testament to resilience and determination. Initially ridiculed for his struggles with English, he faced taunts that he couldn't achieve his dream of becoming a pilot. Rather than succumb to discouragement, he embarked on a relentless pursuit of fluency in the language. Even as he encountered criticism and challenges during his training in South Africa, Captain Krishnan refused to let setbacks define him. Instead, he devoted himself to practice, using a joystick and flight simulator to improve his skills. However, fate dealt him another blow when an accident threatened to derail his aspirations. Undeterred, he refused to give up, pushing through adversity to fulfill his training requirements. As he returned to India, he remained unemployed for 9 years. During this time, he began teaching students, and began working out as a way of discipline and self improvement. His perseverance paid off when he finally landed his dream job, proving that hard work and unwavering belief in oneself can overcome even the most daunting challenges. He firmly believes that negative comments can serve as catalysts for personal growth. Reflecting on his own journey, he shared how negativity fueled his determination. He emphasized that allowing others' skepticism to deter one from pursuing their dreams is simply not an option.

As the speaker line up concluded, Kurien Sebastian, a young singer, won the hearts of the crowd with his music. Performing soulful melodies by Anuv Jain, the lights of the Thevenet Hall dimmed as attendees illuminated the space with their torchlights.

With that, TEDxJMC's 6th Annual Conference: Agni, Igniting Passion, Forging Purpose came to an end. The editorial heads gave the closing address thanking everyone who made the event a success with a promise to return next year. The platform of TEDxJMC was a witness to the call of the inner agni and the passion it evoked in the speakers. The smouldering embers of passion and desire that each of us embodies, burnt brightly on 13th April, as the conference paved a fiery path

of motivation and zeal among the attendees. As each attendee left the hall feeling enlightened, there was one sentiment burning bright- now it's my turn to unleash my inner agni and set the world alight.

