HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION VIRTUAL CONCLAVE, RAJASTHAN : EDUCATORS CALL TO CREATE QUALITY E-CONTENT FOR STUDENTS

PROF. ANIL D. SAHASRABUDHE
Chairman
All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)

Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. Over 1.5 billion students and youth across the globe are affected by school and university closures. These nationwide closures are impacting over 72% of the world's student population. Governments around the world are making efforts to mitigate the immediate impact of school closures, particularly for more vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, and to facilitate the continuity of education for all through remote learning.

Once the world opens back up again, educational institutes should keep the value added to the education provided by online tools and work towards developing 'blended models' of learning which provide the right balance of both. While only time will tell the lessons the world learned from these truly extraordinary times, digital learning has made it clear it's here to stay in the mainstream for good, in one form or another.

Elets Technomedia and digitalLEARNING Magazine organized a Higher and Technical Education virtual conclave, Rajasthan which was first of its own kind in the country. The conclave was graced by Dr Shuchi Sharma, Higher and Technical Education secretary, Govt of Rajasthan and many other eminent speakers. In the conclave over representatives of over 20 universities in India and outside presented their views over the ongoing crisis.

The conclave was opened by Elets Technomedia Editor in chief Dr Ravi Gupta, who welcomed all the esteemed speakers. Dr Shuchi Sharma hailed Elets Technomedia for organizing such a conclave in this Corona pandemic. She even said the conclave is first of its own kind. She emphasized the use of technology in the education sector. She also asked faculty members to create quality e-content for students across the globe. She even went on to laud the AICTE for its new

DR. PANKAJ MITTAL
Secretary General
Association of Indian Universities

curriculum and said it is more focused on employability. The challenges are admissions and conducting exams for students. Ed-Tech firms to be included in the system, she added.

AICTE Chairman Prof. Anil D. Sahasrabudhe said "Everything cannot be taught online. Colleges will have to adopt blended learning after the crisis. Internships can be done online mode. We have an internship portal for students as industries are not allowing students in his pandemic. New curriculum has been introduced for students."

He also said institutions must try to bridge the digital divide within students.

Hemant Sahal, Founder and CEO, Collpoll emphasized on the blended learning and it's a solution for institutions in this crisis. He even said Collpoll will provide assistance to educational institutions in every way including assessments, study materials, data and many more. He even said the technology will play an important role in the education sector in the coming days.

Dr Pankaj Mittal, Secretary-General, Association of Indian Universities said "There will be a new normal in every sector after the Corona crisis. Many of our teachers embraced technology. To tackle the crisis, universities must develop digital infrastructure, training teachers to teach online, choosing a learning platform, assessment and evaluation online tools."

She also said students must keep in mind, knowledge will be important not a degree in the coming days.

She also said "teachers must learn to develop unique content. Varsities need to

improve higher education for students. The Corona crisis has created many opportunities for higher education. "

In the second session was on "Academia to Leverage Technology to Engage Students "was graced by various VC from the state.

Prof (Dr) Arun Patil, Academic Dean, Victorian Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Australia said "The students are missing the campus. The situation has forced us to take up technology so we must focus largely on the engagement of students. The priority is exams and how to assess students but there are many grey areas in assessments. We

PROF. (DR) ARUN PATIL
Academic Dean
Victorian Institute of Technology
Melbourne, Australia

are working new ways to assess students online."

He also said "students are going through much stress and they require counselling in this crisis. Students may feel uncomfortable with online exams as it is new for them. "

He also said universities must conduct feedback sessions to understand how students are adapting the online classes.

Rahul Singhi, Co-Founder, Poornima University & Director, Poornima Group said

RAHUL SINGHI
Co-Founder
Poornima University & Director
Poornima Group

R A GUPTA
Vice Chancellor
Rajasthan Technical University

"There is a quick adoption of technology in academia. People who will adopt the change will survive in coming days. There is a huge surge in video sessions in last two months. Survival of the fittest will be the new norm."

He also said things are going to be changed in the coming days.

RA Gupta, Vice-Chancellor, Rajasthan Technical University said "There is a complete transformation from classroom learning to digital learning. Students have a huge time to adopt the technology. Offline classes cannot be completely substituted by online classes. Rural students cannot connect with

PROF. DR. HN VERMA
Vice Chancellor
Jaipur National Univeristy

colleges due to internet issues."

He also said "The quality of content is a huge issue. We need to identify good teachers who all can provide quality content. We need to have a panel of teachers who can tap the quality of content."

He also said "In the month of July, University will conduct the exams. We will increase the weightage in next year."

H N Verma, Vice-Chancellor, Jaipur National University said "All the teachers have adopted the technology gracefully.

There were some issues with students with internet connectivity but most of them adopted very well. We conducted two mock tests online and have hired an agency to conduct exams."

He also said "The students are having some mental stress so we need to take care of these issues. We need to mentor our students regularly. The online classes and assessments will be the new normal in coming days."

HD Charan, Vice-Chancellor, Bikaner Technical University said "We were eyeing to

HD CHARAN
Vice Chancellor
Bikaner Technical Univeristy

complete the pending syllabus and provide summer internships to students in next few days. Online classes cannot be replaced by offline classes. The AICTE has asked to have 20 pc studies through online mode. Our teachers are ready with presentations to provide study materials to students. "

He also said we can also start counseling online on Happiness. We have counselled students for one week in the crisis.

In the third session, the panel discussed "Tackling the Innovation in Admission, Enrolment, Assessment & Accreditation."

Dr Abhay Kumar, Vice Chancellor, IEC University, Himachal Pradesh said "We have installed online process and targeted the local students. Accreditations can be done through virtual labs. Online exams can be done through a hybrid process. Online teaching is an innovation, which will stay with us. We have arranged metal health wellness classes. We need to reach all the students in rural students."

Prof (Dr) K P Yadav, President/Vice Chancellor, Sangam University, Bhilwara, Rajasthan said "There must be university

DR. ABHAY KUMAR
Vice Chancellor
IEC University
Solan, Himachal Pradesh

app and portal for admission and there must be flexible admission test. Around 30 pc students come from rural areas in our university. We need to apply an alternate way for the admissions of students. We need to embrace technology for teaching. We have to provide education at the doorsteps of students."

We need to improve the quality of education. The virtual labs can be used in assessments. With govt's support we can use this crisis to opportunity, he added.

Dr S Srikanta Swamy, Academic Consultant - Research & Analysis Wing,

PROF (DR.) K P YADAV
President/Vice Chancellor
Sangam University
Bhilwara, Rajasthan

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) said "Our technology has reached the urban areas, not the rural ones. Technology can be used to make admission effectively. We need to focus, how to minimize the time frame and to make transparent our admission process."

Online teaching cannot be compared to offline teaching and a good teacher cannot be replaced, he added.

DR. S. SRIKANTA SWAMY
Academic Consultant
Research & Analysis Wing National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

He also said the evaluation will be more compressive in coming days. A paradigm

DR ASHOK GADIYA
Chairperson
Mewar University

shift is witnessed in education.

Technology and innovation must be given more focus, he said.

Dr Ashok Gadiya, Chairperson, Mewar University said "The admission will be huge challenge for many universities. The govt must permit us for online admissions and counseling. Online teaching is an issue in rural areas so govt must allow us to provide study materials through radio also. Every

PROF O P CHHANGANI
Vice Chancellor
Apex University, Jaipur

university must build a radio station within its campus. We need to provide study materials to students in rural areas. "

He also said universities must bring new innovations in their way of teaching in coming days.

Prof O P Chhangani, Vice Chancellor, Apex University, Jaipur said "Admissions are done through a digital platform and physical footfall. There is an issue with assessment with students. Assessment is the silent killer of learning. We have to create something for higher level of learning. We need to take the help of technology to capture of data for future usage. "

He also said things will change drastically in coming days for universities and students.

In the next session, the panel discussed on "How Higher & Technical Education Institutes dealing with COVID19 Pandemic."

Dr. Panckaj Garg, Founder & Adviser, Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's University, Jaipur said "The Covid crisis has forced us to think, why we were established. Except Higher Education sector, every other sector is contributing to the govt in this crisis. We need to bring innovative ideas and provide

DR. PANCKAJ GARG
Founder & Adviser
Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's UniversityJaipur

recommendations to the govt in this crisis. We need to identify the needs of the society and provide research-based solutions. We need to support the govt in this pandemic."

He also said we need to have e-notes for every programme. In the next five years, we need to map the supply and demand in human power. The data is not organized in our country. Trained human resources is the most important for the country, he added.

He also said there is a gap in demand and

supply and we need to fill the gap.

Ashish Mathur, Deputy Director - Training & Placement and Public Relations, NIMS University said "Corona is a blessing in disguise. Online classes were the only solution in this crisis. We have also sent PDF and other materials to students. We have tied up with many firms for online internships for our students. The next challenge is conducting exams and we are working on it."

AASHISH MATHUR
Deputy Director
Training & Placement and Public Relation Nims University Rajasthan,Jaipur

He also said adopting the new technology was not easy for all of us. Training faculty members to teach online was also a huge challenge.

We must adopt hybrid learning in coming days. Placement is a very dynamic thing and need to start internships every year. We need to add skill sets every year, he added.

Prof. MK Ghadoliya, Vice Chancellor, Shri Khushal Das University said "We started 'College band hai knowledge nahi'. We started online classes on Facebook live. Initially, we took up spoken English, confidence building, public speaking for students. These sessions were attended by many students. Faculty

PROF. MK GHADOLIYA
Vice Chancellor
Shri Khushal Das University

SCOTT DAHL
Master's Program Director, Les Roches Global Hospitality Education

members were directed to make e-content so that classes can be taken."

He also said we need to reduce the timings of online classes. Online delivery is a big issue for varsities. There is no readymade solution with the govt and need to coordinate to prepare one. A new definition of distance education will emerge in coming days, he added.

Scott Dahl, Master's Program Director, Les Roches Global Hospitality Education - Switzerland said "We started online classes when the lockdown announced. The transition was seamless and formed small

DR PARAG SANGHANI
Vice Chancellor
P P Savani University, Surat

groups to teach our students. The govt was very clear over its policies. Most of the institutions were not prepared. We will be not bringing students back soon. "

He also said Swiss govt is very supportive and it took many preventive measures to curb the virus.

He also said there is huge opportunity in this crisis. It is important to learn new things in this crisis, which can be a blessing in disguise.

In the second half of the conclave, the

panel discussed over "Survival Strategies of Institutions in Covid19 crisis: Emergent Resource & Implementation."

Dr. Parag Sanghani, Vice Chancellor, P P Savani University said "Higher educational institutions will be impacted due to the Corona. Universities are struggling to provide quality e-content. All the higher education institutions must think to optimize

SURJA RAM MEEL
Chairman
Swami Keshvanand Institute of Technology, Management & Gramothan, Jaipur

the resources. We need to optimize our resources well to tackle the crisis."

He also said mobile phones can be the new classroom for students. We need to provide quality e-content to students.

Surja Ram Meel, Chairman, Swami Keshvanand institute of Technology, Management and Gramothan, Jaipur said "There is huge challenge everywhere. We have to accept these challenges and have to deal with it. Students in rural areas are learning through mobile. This crisis I expected till July. There is an opportunity with every challenge."

He also said a change in mid-set is required and varsities must make all the required changes for future.

DR. NARENDRA SINGH RATHORE
Vice Chancellor
Mohanlal Sukhadia University and Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology, Udaipur

DR VIKAS MISRA
Campus Director
Geetanjali Institute of Technical Studies
Udaipur

Dr Narendra Singh Rathore, Vice-Chancellor, Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology said "We need new resources in our institutions. Our traditional way of teaching will be affected. There are lots of issues we need to address them all. We need to change our ways as it is the need of the hour. Most of the students will not go for the traditional way of teaching. We need to bring change in the curriculum."

Dr. Vikas Misra, Campus Director, Geetanjali Institute of Technical Studies, Udaipur said "Corona has affected every

PRADEEP KUMAR BORAD, IAS
Commissioner, College Education,
Special Secretary, Sanskrit Education,
Government of Rajasthan

sector. We have achieved huge progress in online learning in last two months. Now, the virtual classroom is a reality. We must adopt blended learning. We must develop digital infrastructure."
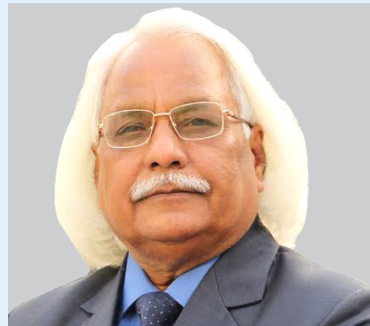
He also said firms will have to go for virtual placements.

In the closing session, the panel discussed over "Mental & Social Wellbeing of Students, Teachers & Parents during COVID19 crisis."

Pradeep Kumar Borad, IAS, Commissioner, College Education, Special Secretary, Sanskrit Education, Government of Rajasthan said "We have been working on how to improve the quality of education.

We need to focus on skill training and sessions for students. We have created a new calendar for colleges. We have started College Community programme as PTMs in schools. We have started creating e-content from the month of September."

He also said people are looking towards govt colleges and will try to improve education in colleges. The govt colleges have set a benchmark in the crisis and progressing well.

PROF PB SHARMA
Vice Chancellor
Amity University, Gurugram

Prof PB Sharma, Vice-Chancellor, Amity University Gurugram said "The crisis is a blessing in disguise. It will be a great advantage for industries. We have second-largest Higher Education sector in the world. We must understand the deeper meaning of learning. Digital learning is an interactive one; it's not just jotting down notes in the class. We need to bring innovativeness and new things to the classroom".

He also said students' community need to understand the usage of technology in

AAKASH CHAUDHRY
Director and CEO
Aakash Educational Services Limited
(AESL)

DR. PANKAJ GUPTA
President
IIHMR University, Jaipur

their studies.

Aakash Chaudhry, Director and CEO, Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) said "Teachers are facing huge challenges in delivering content. Teachers need to change their mid-sets. They need to understand the difference between offline and online teaching. Content designing is very important for students. With online classes, parents are more involved."

He said the crisis will bring lots of benefits for students and must focus on quality content and blended learning.

Pankaj Gupta, President, IIHMR University said "The 'joy of giving' must be implemented well. Money to meaning is more important. Teachers have to transform themselves to Gurus. Teachers cannot be replaced. Online learning is the need of the hour. "

While concluding the session Dr Shuchi Sharma said "Over 20 lakh college students will have to mandatorily volunteer for social cause from the coming academic session. Cleaning their campuses or teaching slum children will fetch students' academic credits under the state higher education department's programme "Anandam" aiming to sensitize students towards social service. "

She also said this programme will develop a great sense of understanding towards social issues which will remain with them forever. The panel discussed the opportunities and challenges, the Universities are facing in this pandemic. The discussion was elaborate and many of them provided the solutions for the students and teachers in this crisis. The speakers also emphasized on the new role of technology in the education sector. The panel also discussed the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, and potential solutions when the campus will be re-opened. **DL**