

# WEBINAR REPORT

by

**Elets Technomedia  
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# ELETS EXCLUSIVE | HIGHER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION VIRTUAL CONCLAVE: EDUCATORS CALL FOR NEW REFORMS

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak universities and other tertiary education institutions in 190 countries and communities are closed, affecting over 230 million students. While many institutions moved their classes to online and distance education platforms, many others struggled. In some places, this lack of preparedness resulted in delays in moving the courses online; in others, governments have halted higher education completely for an indefinite period of time.

Distance learning has been on the rise for the past several years, even prior to the outbreak of COVID-19.

Virtual degree programs may become the new normal or at least a component of the new normal in the aftermath of the



**DR RAVI GUPTA**  
Founder, CEO & Editor-in-Chief  
Elets Technomedia Pvt Ltd

pandemic. Virtual degree programs are becoming more commonplace, particularly at the graduate level where many students may already have careers and families and are thus far less likely to be able to uproot themselves to attend an on-campus program.

Higher education is very likely to emerge from this pandemic a changed industry. The crisis shines a light on both the necessity of distance learning, as well as on the challenges that still must be overcome in order to accelerate adoption. Higher education institutions would do well to pay attention to the lessons this crisis presents, and plan for a future that puts digital innovation at the forefront.

Keeping the various challenges for higher education in view, Elets Technomedia and digitalLEARNING Magazine organized "Higher & Technical Education Virtual Conclave, West India". Many eminent speakers from government and private institutions took part in the conclave.

During the inaugural session, Dr Ravi Gupta, CEO and Editor-in-chief of Elets Technomedia welcomed all the speakers. The session was inaugurated by Dr Shuchi Sharma, Higher and Technical Education secretary, Govt of Rajasthan. She hailed Elets Technomedia for organizing such a conclave in this Corona pandemic. She even said the conclave is first of its own kind in Higher Education. She said "We need to look into the fundamentals of the education sector. We have to think about solutions in the sector. Education is really meant for liberation but we have taken

it for livelihood. Education is one of the basic needs after food, shelter and clothes. We have started a programme named 'Anandam', which is joy of giving. It's a part of the curriculum in Rajasthan higher education."



**SUPREETH NAGARAJU**  
Head - Education  
Digital Media Adobe India & South Asia

She even said E-content is necessary as students can study through them anytime. She even said all the e-content must be in vernacular languages so that most of the students can get benefit from them.

Supreeth Nagaraju, Head- Education, Digital Media, Adobe India & South Asia said "The situation has challenged everyone in the society. Now, it's not learning, it's mentoring, we learn a lot from each other. Around 30 pc of our population is under 30-years-old. They are using mobile phones



**ABHISHEK BALLABH**  
Co-Founder  
ExtraEdge

to learn new things. Students are learning in a different way.”

He also said online medium has become an important source for education.

Due to lack of infrastructure and resources many students were not able to study but with internet mode lakhs of students are able to take advantage of education, he added.

Content democratization is the main issue, the visual medium is largest content consumed. Language is a huge barrier which needs to be addressed, he added.

Hemant Sahal, Founder & CEO, CollPoll gave a presentation on “Campus



**HEMANT SAHAL**  
Founder & CEO  
CollPoll

Automation for Safe Campuses in Post-COVID19 Era.” He emphasized on the usage of technology in the education sector.

Abhishek Ballabh, Co-Founder, ExtraEdge gave a presentation on “Admission 2020 - Innovations & Future in the times of Covid-19”. He said best institutes are re-inventing in two core areas. Ways of admission in universities will need a strategy change. We help teams with admission in higher education.

The first panel discussed on “Virtual is the New Normal: Preparing the Future Institutes”.

Prof. V.N. Rajasekharan Pillai, Vice-Chancellor, Somaiya Vidyavihar University, Maharashtra said “Only 3 pc students complete online classes. This is an opportunity to transform our education sector. Still, we don’t offer one-degree



**PROD. V.N. RAJASEKHARAN PILLAI**  
Vice Chancellor, Somaiya Vidyavihar  
University, Maharashtra

course online. We need to have a subject and disciplinary pedagogy for the education sector.”

On use of technology, he said technology can be used as a supplement not a complement. The physical classroom cannot be replaced by virtual ones. We have to make use of technology to the best, he added.

Dr Mahendra Sharma, Pro-Chancellor and Director General, Ganpat University, Gujarat said “The crisis has created Coronization of higher education. Universities migrated to online classes in

no time. We have adopted virtual classes, virtual labs, virtual teachers, and virtual schools. We have conducted virtual exams

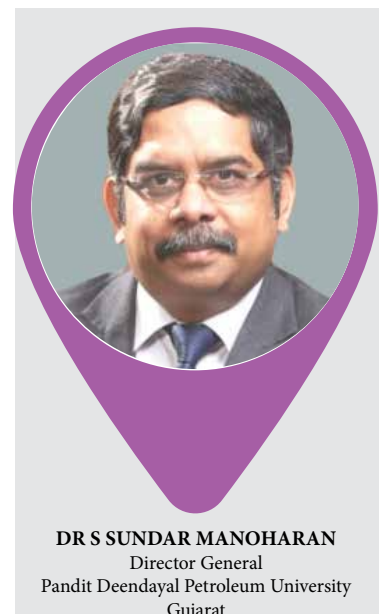


**DR MAHENDRA SHARMA**  
Pro Chancellor and Director General  
Ganpat University, Gujarat

to ensure our calendar continues. With virtual classes, there is no backbencher. “

He also said there are many questions arising in this epidemic. The students’ and parents’ roles will increase and teachers will act as mentors.

Dr S Sundar Manoharan, Director General, Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University, Gujarat said “Virtual is a staggering proposition. Several collaborations are happening because of



**DR S SUNDAR MANOHARAN**  
Director General  
Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University  
Gujarat



**DR NIRANJANI HIRANANDANI**  
Provost, HSNC University & President  
Nardeco, Co-founder & MD, Hiranandani  
group Mumbai, Maharashtra

COVID-19. No amount of learning will replace a teacher as nothing can replace the physical classrooms. The COVID has created an unprecedented halt in the sector.”

He also urged to find positives from the epidemic. This should not stagger the education process. Higher Education will come in a very new way.

Dr Niranjani Hiranandani, Provost, HSNC University & President Nardeco, Co-founder & MD, Hiranandani group Mumbai, Maharashtra said “Physical classroom pedagogy is far more superior. But, the learning pedagogy is changing a lot as COVID crisis has shown it. The pedagogy will change, the quiz and cartoon methods will also change.”

He also emphasized on education for all post-COVID. Can we build lifelong learning institutions and can we have education for all, these are the questions we must ask. The physical classrooms will always be there. The COVID will open new dimensions for the education sector, he added.

Disruption in new learning, space is coming up. Continuous learning will be the new thing. The challenges are many and availability of technology is huge and we must use it wisely, he added.

Prof Dr Mangesh T Karad, Executive President, MIT-ADT University, Pune said “The virtual will be the new normal for classrooms. Numbers of universities are on

verge of offering degrees through online courses. Virtual is the new reality and we must adopt the next best practice. There will be a disruption in the education sector. Virtual schools will be also the new normal and need to change the perspective.”

There will be more transparency in the education sector. Technology will be the utmost important thing in the sector. The



**PROF DR MANGESH T KARAD**  
Executive President  
MIT-ADT University, Pune  
Maharashtra

govt has to adopt new policies and change the norms. Technology is for humanity and to adopt next and best practice, he added.

We need to develop our schools and



**DR AVINASH JOHRI**  
Associate Director  
MAXHUB

colleges to prepare our students for the future, he added.

Hemant Sahal, Founder & CEO, CollPoll said “Institutions must focus on the quality of education provided during the online classes. The quality of teaching has improved a lot. Technology will play an important role to help students grow beyond marks. The competition is increasing as more universities are coming up.”

He also hoped that online degrees will be very soon a reality for students.

Avinash Johri, Associate Director, MAXHUB gave a presentation on use of technology in schools and higher educational institutions.

The second panel discussed “Tackling the Innovation in Admission, Enrolment, Assessment & Accreditation”.

Prof Dr M.M. Salunkhe, Vice-Chancellor,



**PROF DR M.M. SALUNKHE**  
Vice-Chancellor, Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed  
University, Maharashtra

Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, Maharashtra said “We should communicate to students in this crisis. Online exams will be the new normal in next few days. In the future, institutions have to provide online programmes. We have to select online programmes very carefully. Quality of education is the important thing which we must follow.”

Dr Anup K Singh, Director General, Nirma University, Gujarat said “The technology is a savior in this crisis. Firstly,

we should identify which technology is good, secondly, is it user friendly and thirdly, the maintenance cost must be low. We have invested lot in hardware. We are available for parents and made interactions seamless for them.”

He also said “It will be difficult for



institutions to manage the courses in this crisis. We have divided the curriculum. The Online part will be covered in August and September and rest in October, November and December.”

He also said there will be jobs in new sectors in coming days as traditional ways are going to be changed a lot.

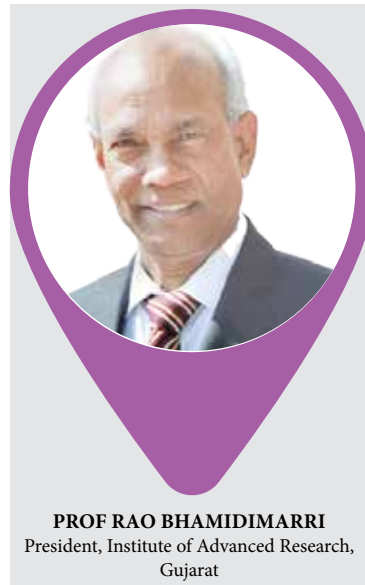
Prof (Dr) Navin Sheth, Vice-Chancellor, Gujarat Technological University, Gujarat said “Around 17,000 teachers have adopted the new online teaching. There are huge crisis with students in exams. We have maintained all the norms given by the govt to conduct the online exams. We have resolved the exam issues which many are facing. The admission will be a huge challenge for colleges as mobility of students has been restricted. There is a huge paradigm shift in education.”

The online classes and exams will be the new norm in coming days and institutions have to adopt the new way of learning, he added.

Prof Rao Bhamidimarri, President, Institute of Advanced Research, Gujarat said



“We have also adopted online teaching with lockdown announced. We have conducted an online survey and most of the students wanted to come back to campuses. Online systems have their limitations. We have to



lot of things to catch up.”

He also said “We will address many challenges in coming days over the safety of students. The feedback to students is most important. We are trying to adopt new technologies.”

Bharat Agarwal, President, Vishwakarma University, Maharashtra said “The pandemic has created a new

dimension for education sector. Admissions and enrollments will be huge affected. The entire system has been shifted to online. There will be more and more online things coming up, so we need to document all the things.”

The higher education has been reshaped. It has been sacrosanct as the fun and collaborative part is lost during the online classes, he added.

In the afternoon, the panel discussion was conducted on “Technology Penetration: Advancing Education & Employability”.

Dr Kartik Jain, Provost, Swarnim Startup & Innovation University, Gujarat said “We need to improve the mind-set of students and parents over online education. There are three layers of students and we need to address their issues. Technology can be used for development of students.”

The mind- set of parents is very important to use technology in Higher Education in future. There is a digital divide in urban and rural India and govt need to address it, he added.

Dr Ashwini Kumar Sharma, Pro-Chancellor, Vijay Bhoomi University, Maharashtra and Ex DG, NIELIT, MeitY, Gol said “India has got youngest population and we must use it to our potential. We cannot compare ourselves with other countries over basic tools. Online assessment is a major challenge as many of the subjects cannot be done online. We must use





**DR KARTIK JAIN**  
Provost, Swarnim Startup & Innovation  
University, Gujarat

blockchain technology to understand the progress of students.”

He also said there is no substitute to personal touch of teachers and technology cannot provide empathy to them.

We must use Artificial Intelligence in our education sector. We need change in policy change to grow in education, he added.

Supreeth Nagaraju, Head - Education, Digital Media Adobe India & South Asia said “We need a clear road map for content creation. Technology penetration has got larger thing. Social education has got



**DR ASHWINI KUMAR SHARMA**  
Pro-Chancellor, Vijay Bhoomi University,  
Maharashtra and Ex DG, NIELIT, MeitY  
GoI

bigger thing. There are three sector, Urban, rurban and rural. The Rurban part is more developed.”

Technology is not the solution for all the issues. Blended learning will be the new normal in coming days, he added.

Prof Prabhat Ranjan, Vice-Chancellor, DY Patil International University and Former ED -TIFAC said “We will be optimizing personal education. The COVID has given a push to the use of technology in education. Language is a barrier, which technology can penetrate in a country like India. We need to reach out to large number of students. “



**SUPREETH NAGARAJU**  
Head - Education, Digital Media Adobe India  
& South Asia

Over role of teachers he said “The role of teachers are changing; it’s like mentoring to students. We need to identify the strength of the child. We need to convert the classrooms to keep students in virtual classes. “

Prof Dr Venkatesh A. Raikar, Vice-Chancellor, Sanjay Ghodawat University, Maharashtra said “We should educate students to have medium-sized gadgets. We must understand the effectiveness of e-content which is provided to students. These days students are bombarded with huge e-content. Universities have to adopt the change to survive. We must focus on online internships in this epidemic. Through online mode, we can get access of education



**PROF PRABHAT RANJAN**  
Vice-Chancellor, DY Patil International  
University

from the best in the industry.”

He also said teachers have to be trained to provide online classes to students.

Dr B B Ahuja, Director, College Of



**PROF DR VENKATESH A. RAIKAR**  
Vice-Chancellor  
Sanjay Ghodawat University

Engineering, Maharashtra said “Industries are looking for skill sets. The industry is very ruthless and it needs jack of all trades. We must prepare our students for the future. We need to change our mind-set of teachers and students. We need to change our exam systems also. Blended learning is the need of the hour. We are in a digital

age.”

He also said things are changing very drastically and we need to provide every possible help to students.

In the evening the panel discussed on “Mental & Social Wellbeing of Students, Teachers & Parents during COVID19 crisis”

Dr Rajan Saxena, Former Vice Chancellor, SVKM’s NMIMS University, Mumbai said “There is an element of uncertainty. There are times, when students share things with teachers. We need to address their issues and make them emotionally strong. The teacher must focus on the positive side of the student rather than the negative one.

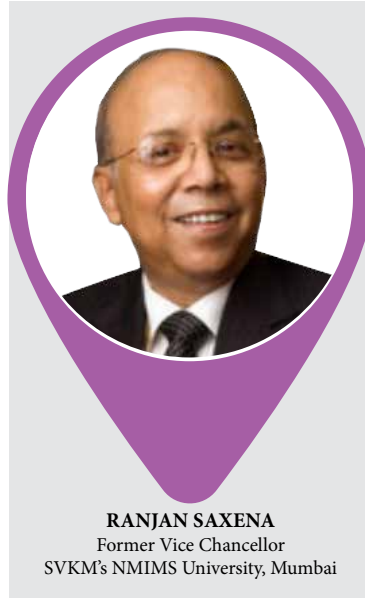


We need to bring best resources to the classroom. The value of degree today has to be re-imagined.”

He also said social distancing is not social isolation in this crisis.

Dr Parag Sanghani, Provost, P P Savani University, Gujarat said “The epidemic has a huge impact on education sector. There are job losses and economic setbacks. The situation is very grim. These days’ students are more connected and we must not relate online classes to mental illness. Most of the students are lacking emotional strengths. We need to provide the right kind of counseling to the youth”.

Dr Neha Patel, Director, Som-Lalit Education and Research Foundation, Gujarat said “There are many students who

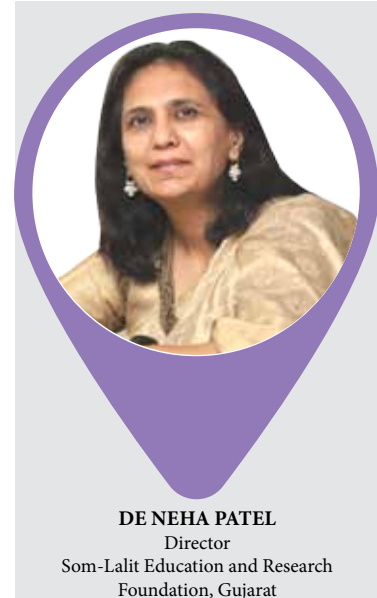


are mentally weak. Students need emotional mentoring as they are trying many things in their lives. There is a change in dynamics witnessed in the sector. We started a mentor-mentee programme for students. We have been learning a lot of new things in this pandemic.”



She emphasized on providing proper mental health care facilities to students.

Dr Bigyan Prakash Verma, Director, SIES College of Management, Navi Mumbai said “Things will be normal in coming days. Students are under stress but there are



many new opportunities coming up. Many firms are coming up with new jobs. Every student has some kind of talent and we need to bring it out through mentoring. It’s time students must be mentored time and again.”

The last panel discussed on “New Vision for Higher Education in Large, Well Resourced Multi-disciplinary Institutes.”

Dr Akhil Shahani, Managing Director, The Shahani Group, Maharashtra said “The is a digital divide is witnessed across the sector. We need to shift to flip classroom mode. The biggest barrier is to shift teachers from the traditional mode of teaching to digital mode.





**DR AKHIL SHAHANI**  
Managing Director, The Shahani Group,  
Maharashtra

Teachers can be seen as mentors. Students must understand to work 24/7, with the help of technology. We must understand students to learn in their own way.”

Every year there will be disruptions, we need to tackle it, he added.

Dr Sunil Shukla, Director-General Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Ahmedabad, Gujarat said “The institutions must review the types of programmes they offer to students. Technology has come as a rescue for all universities. Over 1.5 million students have not seen their campuses from the last three months. There is huge mental stress among



**DR SUNIL SHUKLA**  
Director-General Entrepreneurship  
Development Institute of India,  
Ahmedabad, Gujarat

the students. There will be a huge impact as admissions and enrollments will be affected.”

There will be a qualitative difference between both virtual and physical classrooms. There will be certain apprehensions. The learning behavior will also change, he added.

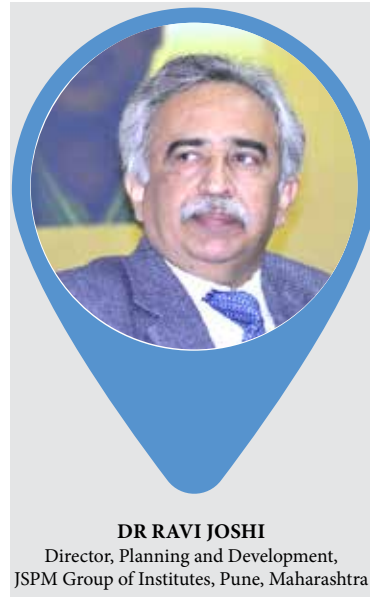
Every epidemic has an opportunity and this has taught us many a lesson, he said.

Dr Ravi Joshi, Director, Planning and Development, JSPM Group of Institutes, Pune, Maharashtra said “There will be academic challenges as from teaching it will be self-learning process. There will be a social challenge as students might not travel to bigger cities. There will be administrative challenges for institutions. We are preparing our campus for students, post-COVID.

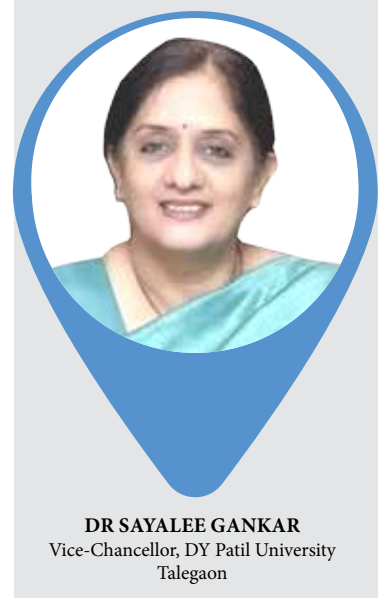
The online classes cannot replace the physical ones. Almost 60 pc of classes will be offline when things will be normal, he added.

Dr Sayalee Gankar, Vice-Chancellor, DY Patil University, Talegaon, Pune said “There are challenges including academic, administrative and placement. There will be an issue of mobility of students post COVID-19. Online and classroom education has different flavours. There is a paradigm shift witnessed in the sector. We must focus to engage the students during the virtual classes.”

We have tied up with Coursera for online classes. MOOCS, MPTL are available for



**DR RAVI JOSHI**  
Director, Planning and Development,  
JSPM Group of Institutes, Pune, Maharashtra



**DR SAYALEE GANKAR**  
Vice-Chancellor, DY Patil University  
Talegaon

students. Faculty members and students are in one platform, he added.

Dr Sameer S Sahasrabudhe, Director, EMRC Pune said “Teachers must focus to curate not only the creation of content. Teachers can keep videos short and insert reflection spots to engage students. Provide diverse resources to cater to different students and feedback is also important. There must be experience interaction with teachers and students.”

He also said it's a phase and will pass. We all need to work together to deal this crisis. **DL**



**DR SAMEER S SAHASRABUDHE**  
Director  
EMRC