

Protecting Academic
Interest of Students During
COVID-19 Pandemic
Sharing Best Practices



Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi

**Protecting Academic
Interest of Students During
COVID-19 Pandemic
Sharing Best Practices**

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CONTENTS

Foreword	VI	THE ICFAI UNIVERSITY, DEHRADUN	110
Preface	VIII	JAGAN NATH UNIVERSITY, JHAJJAR	112
Amity University, Jharkhand, Ranchi	2	JAIN University, Bengaluru	116
AMITY UNIVERSITY, KOLKATA	7	KAVIKULAGURU KALIDAS SANSKRIT UNIVERSITY, RAMTEK	129
ASSAM DON BOSCO UNIVERSITY, SONAPUR	11	MIT WORLD PEACE UNIVERSITY, PUNE	130
AURO UNIVERSITY OF HOSPITALITY AND MANAGEMENT, SURAT	18	NARSEE MONJEE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES, BENGALURU	141
BHARATI VIDYAPEETH, PUNE	27	NORTHERN UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH*	143
BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE, PILANI	30	O P JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY, SONEPAT	145
CHHATRAPATI SHAHU JI MAHARAJ UNIVERSITY, KANPUR	41	POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT COLOMBO, SRI LANKA*	149
DAFFODIL INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, DHAKA, BANGLADESH*	46	ROYAL INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, THIMPHU, BHUTAN*	153
DESH BHAGAT UNIVERSITY, FATEHGARH SAHIB	49	RAVENSHAW UNIVERSITY, CUTTACK	155
DR APJ ABDUL KALAM TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, LUCKNOW	55	SATHYABHAMA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, CHENNAI	162
DR B R AMBEDKAR NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, SONEPAT	57	SHARDA UNIVERSITY, GREATER NOIDA	165
DR BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY, AHMEDABAD	59	SHRI VISHWAKARMA SKILL UNIVERSITY, HARYANA	174
EAST WEST UNIVERSITY, DHAKA, BANGLADESH*	66	SIKKIM STATE UNIVERSITY, GANGTOK	176
GALGOTIAS UNIVERSITY, GREATER NOIDA	68	SHREEMATI NATHIBAI DAMODAR THACKERSEY WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY, MUMBAI	179
Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi	73	SRI DEVARAJ URS ACADEMY HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, KOLAR	186
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN TRADE, NEW DELHI	76	SWAMI VIVEKANAND SUBHARTI UNIVERSITY, MEERUT	189
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TEACHER EDUCATION, GANDHINAGAR	77	UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES, RAICHUR	192
INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, NEW DELHI	79	VEER NARMAD SOUTH GUJARAT UNIVERSITY, SURAT	196
IIMR UNIVERSITY, JAIPUR	89	VELLORE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, VELLORE	198
ICFAI UNIVERSITY, JHARKHAND, RANCHI	95	VIKRAMA SIMAHAPURI UNIVERSITY, NELLORE	203
IMS Unison University, Dehradun	100	VIGNANA JYOTHI INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT	206
INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, KARACHI, PAKISTAN*	106		
THE ICFAI FOUNDATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, HYDERABAD*	108		

FOREWORD

In only a few months, the corona virus pandemic has upended the higher education system across the world. Millions of students were sent on compelled isolation to stay in the safety of their homes. The universities and its teachers are grappling with enforced online teaching, which some are enjoying and some are not. But one thing which everyone understood is that COVID19 lockdown will prove as a watershed for higher education bringing newer models of delivery of higher education into the vogue which will define the higher education of future. This shift would entail a new model of universities for which we have to start preparing now. In India, so far the educational institutions are closed but soon they will be reopened. Some universities have already their plans for the year and some are still under planning stage. At this juncture, when the universities are in transition, the initiative of AIU to bring out the publication, 'Protecting Academic Interest of Students During COVID-19 Pandemic : Sharing Best Practices' is commendable.

The Book contains write-ups on best practices shared by many Indian universities and some overseas universities. These write-ups underscore the impact and implications of technology and innovation on higher education both, for today and for the future when the biological crisis of this deadly corona virus gets over. The best practices shared by the universities have not only covered many possibilities of effective

tech-enabled teaching learning processes but also other dimensions like Assessment and Evaluation; Online Placement and most importantly, the measures taken by the universities to deal with the emotional distress of students caused due to deprivation of social side of their university education. Some of the universities which have served the COVID 19 victims have proudly mentioned about their initiatives. The best practices featured in this book are a positive proof that we can leverage technology to protect academic interests of our greatest assets ie. the students.

Overall, the book provides a blue print for the policy makers as well as practitioners of higher education to impart ceaseless higher education to the students even during crises like COVID-19. While there are many books on sharing best practices, the unique feature which makes it different from others is refreshing optimism perspective which they give for the future of higher education .

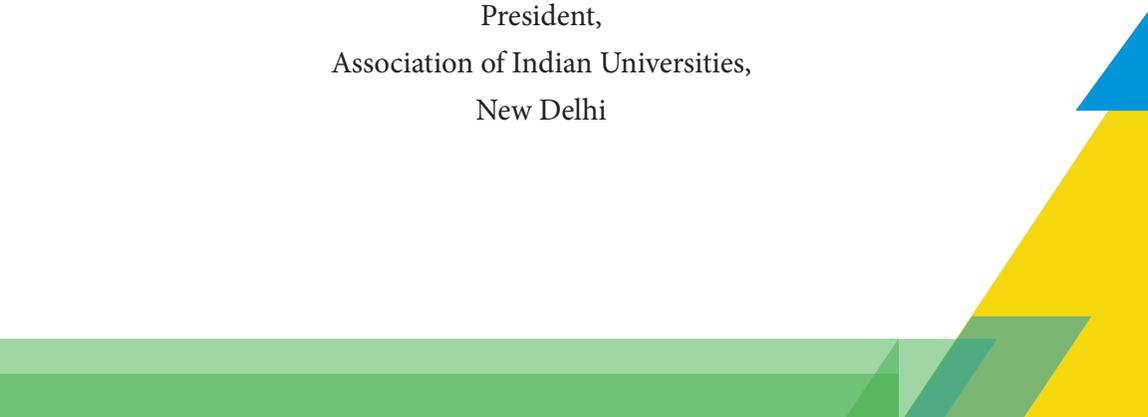
Truly, this book inspires us to be optimistic and make the universities better places for our present and future generation students.

Tej Partap

President,

Association of Indian Universities,

New Delhi



PREFACE

The year 2020 will leave an indelible mark in the history of mankind due to the uncertainties caused by the Corona Virus Pandemic leading to the emergence of a “New Normal”. The Virus has literally ‘gone viral’ across the continents along the pathways of trade, commerce, health, education and what not. It has locked all of us down in our countries, in our cities and in our homes. The end of the pandemic does not seem to be anywhere near, as the virus is continuing to infect more and more people everyday. There are no indications that the situation is going to regain the pre-covid normal even after this phase passes away. We therefore, have to learn to live with the virus.

The devastating effects of the lockdown on the world economy are felt virtually in all spheres of life. One of the sectors which is worst hit by the virus is the higher education sector where the students and staff are confined in their homes and educational transaction among them is completely dependent on technology. The capacity of diverse Higher Education Institutions, especially in rural and remote areas, in adopting and adapting technology is leading to further divide and complexities. Many institutions do not have the required paraphernalia like devices, networking, connectivity with adequate bandwidth etc. for imparting online education. While some universities have strong online systems, many universities are struggling under the weight of the demands leading to uncertainty and unpredictability in continuity of higher education in the institutions. The Indian higher education system laden with diversities and extremities of different kinds -- geographical, economical

and social are the most affected in this VUCA world. However, it is heartening to see that the Indian universities are trying their best in demonstrating their best capabilities in a very meticulous way to tackle the situation.

Opportunities to find deeper powers within ourselves come when life seems most challenging. History has taught us how disruptions are frightening at the beginning but how they transform into something better at the end. We have also seen that many a time, disruptors have become the shapers of history. It is therefore, our responsibility to shape the world taking clues from the positive and negative aspects of disruption while using new technologies that have subsequently taken hold of our lives. Our educational institutions have to transform themselves into virtual Institutions offering admission, teaching, conducting practicum, assessment, and declaring results through online mode. We can even have virtual sports through ICT. There are possibilities galore. Lest they are explored with prudence and caution.

Seven is the number of completeness and perfection (both physical and spiritual). It derives much of its meaning from being tied directly to nature's creation of all things. There are 7 oceans, 7 continents, 7 colours in rainbow, 7 sound notes, 7 directions, 7 days in a week, 7 deadly sins, 7 virtues, 7 classical planets and so on. The number 7 is much more prevalent in nature than most of us realize. The number 7 is equally pious for all cultures, traditions and religions. In India, marriage is solemnized only when the couple takes seven steps together along with seven promises to each other. This is called Saptapadi. The bond between the students and the university is equally pious and significant. In view of this, a seven pronged strategy is proposed for the universities to marry the "New Normal" and to protect the academic interest of the students during and after COVID-19. This will also ensure a positive bond between the university and the students vis a vis society. The steps involved are presented here.

I Step: Strengthening of Infrastructure

Strengthening of infrastructure needs to be done in terms of:

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(a) Information Technology (IT) Equipment: The revolution that COVID-19 had brought in may set many new norms and several new trends in the world. Online education may become the new way of imparting education. For online teaching-learning and various other activities including e-governance, management, assessment and evaluation, student counseling, recreation etc., IT Devices, Network, Wi-Fi, Connectivity with adequate Bandwidth and such other things which can facilitate smooth, fast and comfortable functioning need to be arranged.

(b) Physical Infrastructure: Consequent to social distancing which is an essential preventive step which both students as well as university need to take once campuses are physically opened, many things may require new look. The architecture of classrooms in universities, colleges and schools may need changes in view of physical distancing. May be new desks, new chairs have to be designed. Extra spaces and furniture need to be created to allow physical distancing of students especially in common places like classrooms, library, hostels, mess, toilets, recreation activities etc. including facilities for sanitizations, distribution of masks and maintenance of hygiene.

(c) Digital infrastructure: Offering just online education may not be sufficient for completing whole syllabus of a course. In such condition, a blended learning approach or flipped classroom model with combination of Open Education Resources (OERs), MOOCs etc along with online content will be required. The universities need to identify OERs in advance and provide links to the students in advance to help them to start the new academic session without hiccups. .

II Step: Capacity Building of Teachers

Online teaching is highly specialized and scientific. It is not the same as traditional face to face classroom teaching. It requires different kind of teaching skills and orientation to technology and platforms being used. The teachers need to be thorough with theory and practicum of online teaching. In India, the number of teachers trained to teach online is almost negligible. Compelling all the teachers to teach online without providing training is unprofessional and unethical. It is therefore, essential for the institutions to offer training to the teachers before they adopt online teaching permanently.

For effective training of teachers to teach online and to develop online resources for the students, many institutions offer specialized courses. A self-paced free course on how to become an online practitioner is arranged by AIU also in association with QASPIR which is available on AIU website.

III Step: Evaluate Various Online Platforms Available

Now a days, a large number of platforms are available for Online Teaching-Learning, Assessment and Evaluation and various other activities. Each university should therefore evaluate the suitability of the available platforms for their purpose and choose the ones which are best suited and cost effective. This process needs to be done well in advance so that when the academic session opens, the teachers as well as students are aware of available platforms in their university. A number of webinars on different platforms were also arranged by AIU to help the member universities.

IV Step: Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation or examination system constitute the core of university education. . The university should discuss in their Academic and Executive Councils on the alternate ways to assess and evaluate the students in a continuous manner, throughout the semester comprising of many ways like assignments, projects, activities, quizzes, face-to-face interviews, discussion forums etc. The methodology to be used including the facility of using online proctored examination available on various platforms may be explored in advance.

V Step: Internships and Placements

The success of a university depends upon the employability of the students graduated from the university. Every university should ensure that online internships are available to the students along with the opportunities for online placements. The universities have to identify online platforms available for internships and placements of students and guide the students in using these platforms effectively.

VI Step: Collaborations

One of the threats apprehended from COVID 19 lockdown was its impact

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on collaborations and tie-ups particularly at international level. But it is increasingly being felt that both national and international collaborations can now be done effectively in a cost-effective manner through virtual mode. The universities can invite overseas/Indian professors from reputed institutions for online teaching and research at almost minimal costs. The ways to go ahead in collaboration should be explored effectively.

VII Step: Counselling of Students

During COVID-19 Pandemic, the students are under compelled isolation. They are forced to stay at home which makes them miss the campus life. The university should ensure that the students do not miss campus life by organising online cultural events and other programmes relating to youth affairs. This phase may be quite distressing for many students due to uncertainty and unpredictability of situation. In this scenario, it becomes the responsibility of the universities to guide the students and prepare them for new norms and complexities. It has to provide personal, psychological, academic and professional counselling to the students and nurture personal qualities such as breadth of mind, courage, self reliance, flexibility, adaptability, and resilience in students so that they understand the complexities, deal with them, cope with them and respond to them in a healthy way. This constitutes the most important task of the universities.

Association of Indian Universities, a ninety five year old organization has withstood many a crisis and has always come out successfully with much brighter colours. This time also we are making all efforts to re-energise AIU in this grim period of COVID 19. As a matter of fact, we have never let AIU to get into lock down in real sense of term. We are continuously active with one activity or the other to keep the spirit of AIU vibrant. We have organized several webinars and collaborated in the webinars organized by several national and international organizations.

In the meantime, through media and various other sources, we were hearing about the efforts of universities to continue their activities so that the academic interests of students is protected. It is heartening to see that our universities have taken it upon themselves to combat the COVID challenge

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and minimize its impact on students through online platforms , SWAYAM, Remote Digital Teaching Tool (RD TT), e-PG Pathshala, ND LI and such others. Each university has adopted unique set of strategies to effectively communicate with the students and to keep them engaged. Every university is having its own best practices to realize this onerous task in best possible way. This gave an idea to us at AIU to provide a common platform to the universities to share their best practices so that the best practices adopted by one university can be emulated by others if they are more advantageous to the university and the students. Secondly, a compendium of best practices during this crisis may prove to be a very useful document for the future generations to help them to cope up with the similar situations should they arise in future.

Emboldened by these ideas, we have set in to bring out this compendium entitled 'Protecting Academic Interest of Students During Corona Pandemic: Sharing Best Practices' wherein we can indicate the multiple ways adopted by the universities through various strategies, action plans, innovative methods for engaging the student community, and continue their assessment and evaluation with the aim of protecting the interests of our students. We have identified three core areas, Gainfully engaging the student community, Assessment and Evaluation and Online placements-- for collecting the best practices of universities.

Cooperation and enthusiasm of the universities to share their initiatives has enabled us to present this compendium to you all. Now this is an international document which will reach out to the universities in India as well as other countries. We express our gratitude to all the contributors to this compendium.

Hope this document will act as a guiding light for all of us.

Pankaj Mittal
Sistla Rama Devi Pani

AMITY UNIVERSITY, JHARKHAND, RANCHI

Amity University a Ranchi. Jharkhand understands the importance of all-round development of students and thus, has accepted the challenges in entirety which was posed by lockdown in the helm of its academic and co-curricular activities. The report is an attempt to give an account of the Academic / Co-curricular Activities / Quality Control Mechanism / Personality Orientation / Awareness towards Surroundings / Opportunities amidst Lockdown and Défense against Possible Threats, etc. for Amity University, Jharkhand. The following steps were taken by AUJ to protect the academic interest of the students during COVID-19.

Daily Online Classes

With the declaration of lockdown, Amity University Jharkhand (AUJ) resorted to online interactive classes using MS Teams and its own ERP Amizone for scheduling of classes and disseminating information about scheduled classes amongst students and faculties. The classes were being scheduled from 9:10 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Saturday. Due care was taken to have a gap of at least one hour between two consecutive classes of 50 Minutes each, keeping in mind, the stress on eyes due to constantly viewing on Laptop or Mobile Screen. During the classes, students were made to understand the topic and class notes / handouts, etc were being shared with them. Even though, very few technical glitches or poor network problems were encountered, IT support team was able to win over the problems and thereby ensured minimal loss. The team of all Program Leaders, Coordinators, Registrar, Director and Vice Chancellor were continuously supervising the online classes. The attendance, IT related issues, etc are understood and analysed hourly to ascertain the quality of academic delivery.

Weekly Progress Report by Academic Coordinators

Academic Coordinators were assigned to track classes on daily basis and keep an eye on requisite frequency of classes and number(s) of sessions held. The frequency of classes was regulated every week, in order to ensure that none of the course is lagging behind or has got a frequency beyond the acceptable limit. On the debit side, some of the courses were lagging behind due to late

start of those courses and eventually ended up with high frequency of those classes in last two /three weeks of academic semester.

Research Papers by Students

During the lockdown period from April, 2020 to second week of July, 2020 students under the guidance of Head of the Institute and the faculty members of AUJ have worked on 58 quality research papers which have been either accepted or published in Conference proceedings or Scopus/UGC Care listed journals.

Online Academic Competitions

To motivate students to be creative, and to showcase their hidden talents, online competitions on slogan writing, poster making competition and essay writing competition was held. 60 participants had sent the entries and the best three in each category was awarded e-certificate.

Special Lectures

‘Day of Belongingness’ was celebrated by organizing a discourse by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji on Blending Modernity with Tradition, and a Special Lecture by Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy, Chairman, Defence Research and Development Organisation and Secretary, Department of Defence R&D, Government of India on ‘Innovation during COVID-19’. The webinar provided a great opportunity to thousands of Amityans from India and across the globe to rejoice and further strengthen the bond of love and togetherness through the virtual platform this year as the world is grappling with social distancing amidst this growing pandemic.

Online Cultural Events

Amity University Jharkhand is organizing a series of cultural competitions like Dance, Poetry, Painting, etc where the students will be capturing the photograph/videos and sending online. The competition is named as ‘*Indoor Kalakaar*’. This will enable the students to explore their hidden talents and also help in overall development and involve them in nurturing their hobby/passion.

Online Amity Youth Forum, 2020

Online Amity Youth Forum 2020 (AYF-2020) organized a series of online events from May 8-11, 2020 for student engagement in activities which tests their competitive abilities, creativity, innovativeness and other higher order

cognitive skills that make them think out of the box. AYF-2020 will be a perfect platform for all young students of HEIs from all over the country, to display their talent and participate in various competitions, technical, cultural, literary, art and theatre. It would be an experience to remember and an opportunity to form new bonds while celebrating our cherished cultures, heritage and values. More than 100 grueling on-line competitions were conducted to stay connected with students so that they do not suffer the feeling of anxiety, confusion and isolation.

Yoga and Meditation Workshop

Amity University Jharkhand in association with the heartfulness team organized a 'Yoga and Meditation Workshop' for the students, faculty, and staff of Amity University, Jharkhand in a program titled- 'Heartful Living', Meditation will keep good physical health and good psychological wellbeing to achieve peace and happiness. To promote positive health among students and faculty, online yoga classes are being organized every day in the morning. Yoga & Meditation can be beneficial to enhance immunity and can be practiced to prevent and manage COVID-19 or any other high risk diseases. Yoga & Meditation is not only helpful in building immunity system but also keep us away from the stress and anxiety. Thereafter a few *asanas* were taught by the yoga instructor followed by a 10 minutes meditation session.

Conducting Motivational and Inspirational Guest Lecture through Online Portal

Various experts from widespread domain are delivering motivational lectures for the students to overcome any kind of stress and keep their spirits high.

Conducting Virtual Fun based Activities

Fun based activities Online Puzzle/Quiz/Antakshari etc are being done by the mentor's every day for recreation of the students. This enables to reduce the stress amongst the students and build a strong relation with their class mates and mentors.

Conduction of Regular Virtual Mentor-mentee Meetings

Online mentor-mentee meetings are being conducted by the University. The class mentors are interacting through Microsoft Teams with their mentees to understand and tackle any kind of stress amongst their mentees. This was a

regular offline feature, which has been extended to online space as well specially required at this hour of crisis. We have reached out even to their parents and extended our services to the extent possible. Most cases need soft counseling and confidence building.

Amity Counseling Service

Students can contact the newly formed Committee of Experts at HO with representatives from all universities. The professional Counseling Committee consists of Psychologists and faculty for Communication Skill and Meditation clearly to understand any serious case reported and discuss their detailed concerns with them at any point of time from anywhere including from their homes. Counselors have been appointed to respond to the incoming calls on the Toll Free Helpline Number from students during the day and as well as night.

Personalized Meets of Vice Chancellor with all Class and Faculty Representatives

The Vice Chancellor himself conducts daily informal meeting with the Class Representatives and discusses academic, emotional, personal or psychological issues. Crisis situation intervention is provided instantly wherever required. e.g. He made the gaps after two consecutive classes compulsory to make students relax between sessions. He has been conducting regular meetings with Faculty Representatives also for various university requirements.

Media Appearances and AUJ Scholars' Contribution

The BA(J&MC) students along with Faculties of Media Committee, AUJ, contributed in ensuring media appearance of the activities of the University.

Conclusive Remarks

AUJ has put the best of its endeavour to ensure that Scholastic and Co-curricular activities were not compromised despite all Odds. The transparency is maintained through out the activities and its communication has been smooth between Government's Regulatory Agencies Such as MHRD/ RUSA/ UGC and between the Quality Control Department of University's Chancellor's Office. University is committed to bring manifold qualitative change in the state of Jharkhand and set higher Benchmark every subsequent day. The dialogues between Parents and university authorities or the reports coming in media, talk very high about the performance of the University and reinforce their deep

faith and trusts with all the best of expectation from the Leading Educational Group from India and Abroad that's is Amity Education Group in General and Amity University Jharkhand in particular. University has done its best to re-establish the fact that Amity Education Group is Zero tolerant when it comes to ensuring quality education in all circumstances and Situations.

Though, a few non-significant shortcomings were witnessed while operating online classes for the entire educational activities, over all the university's progress report reflects a positive value and leaves the scope for further improvisation. Amity University Stands committed and inspired to live the dreams of its Founder President to translate best of thoughts of India into action and its best of actions for making India once again the centre of knowledge for the world.

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AMITY UNIVERSITY, KOLKATA

Amity University, Kolkata was established in 2015 vide the Amity University Act, 2014 (West Bengal Act, XXIV of 2014). It is the eighth university to be established by the Amity Education Group. Within a span of five years, the University has leaped into the number one position amongst private universities in the state of West Bengal (Education world Ranking 2020-21). The vision of Amity University of *'Building the nation and the society through providing total, integrated and trans-cultural quality education and to be the global front runner in value education and nurturing talent in which Modernity Blends with Tradition'* transpires in its efforts of maintaining excellence in all its spheres, be it academics, research, or welfare of its student. The corona pandemic was a novel situation with no precedence in recent past on how to tackle it. Immediate steps to stop its spread led to nationwide closure of schools, colleges and universities and suspension of physical classes. But the university took no time to accept this unique challenge and continue its efforts to protect the welfare of its students. A number of steps were taken to ensure that academic calendar was not hampered and students do not feel themselves in any vacuum.

Briefing Sessions

While online lectures gradually became a norm, the change from real to virtual had some challenges. The university was quick in adapting to online delivery of classes, thanks to its IT infrastructure. The process was new to faculty and students both, so briefing sessions were made to ensure this change was smooth.

Recording of the Sessions

To counter the issues of network connection, as well as monitoring the active participation of the students during online lectures, they were recorded by the faculty, and accessible to students through their own portal for later viewing too.

24 x7 Technical Support

All round efforts were made from the IT Department and faculty to ensure smooth conduct of classes. The IT department provided remote troubleshoot facility to faculty in event of any technical snag in their office laptops.

Online Access to Journal

In order to ensure that students do not miss on their research activities online access was ensured for journals from Taylor & Francis, Oxford University Press and IEEE Explore, etc.

Virtual Labs

Temporary closure of the campus also meant closure of the labs. However, the institutes facilitated the students by providing virtual labs to students. The virtual labs facilitated students to cover the practicum aspects in domains of IT, mass communication, architecture, physical sciences, language, etc.

Webinars

Webinars are being conducted on daily basis to ensure that learning never stopped. As the formal classes ended by last week of April, 2020; webinars were conducted by different institutes of Amity University, where eminent industry experts and academicians from across the world shared their expertise. Conducted over reliable web platforms, these webinars were attended by students of the whole Amity education group across the world. There were series of guest lectures, which saw beyond capacity registrations and were live telecast on YouTube. Amity University takes pride in hosting not one but three Nobel laureates in these series of lectures including (His holiness Dalai Lama, Professor Muhammad Yunus and Shri. Kailash Satyarthi).

Lectures by International Speakers

There were a series of guest lectures by renowned international Industry experts and senior Professors from Universities abroad in domains of Management, Architecture, Engineering, Hospitality, Mass Communication, Social Sciences to name a few and still continuing. Students use the opportunity to interact with these international speakers and gain new insights

24x7 Counseling Helpline

24x7 counseling helpline was started to help the students cope with the academic, personal and any other stress. Already in effect in other campuses for past several years, the service was initiated at Amity University Kolkata considering the psychological impact of the situation. The service will continue

as a regular and permanent service of the university to help its students improve their emotional well being and guide them in times of distress.

Online Yoga Classes for Mental and Physical Well Being

To safeguard the physical and mental wellbeing of students, online yoga classes were also scheduled for students, where trained yoga professionals taught the nuances of yoga to students as well as faculty.

Club Activities

The corona pandemic could not beat the spirit of the students who utilized the web platforms not only for academics but also to pursue their club activities. All the clubs of the university had been active in successfully organizing different event online like quiz, debates, dance and drama, photography, culinary skills to name a few. The efforts ensured that student did not felt any dull moment during the lock down period.

Parents Interaction Forum

It is a proud practice being followed at Amity University which gives a scope to share feedback and discuss progress of students with their respective parents. The practice continued during the lockdown period also using online platforms. Because of the prevailing situations majority of parents expressed their concern about the resolution of the situation and were patiently attended by respective mentors.

Online Summer Internship Projects

Every year, the students undertake summer internship projects in odd semesters. This gives a very valuable learning experience to students to have hand on experience of the industry and meet their potential employers. Due to the lockdown situation the number of internships secured by students through the industry interaction cell got limited to certain extent, but this challenge was turned into another opportunity, when the industry interaction cell secured online internship opportunities for many students. Other students had option to opt for online research projects and assignments.

Non Teaching Credit Courses

Non teaching credit courses are integral part of the curriculum for all University programs. The courses gives the student a free hand to explore and

apply theoretical inputs into practical, to research their ideas, and study real cases within prescribed guidelines under expert supervision of the faculty. The pandemic situation gave a window to the students to start early on the courses, and benefit from the time they saved at home. Online platform is in use where students can interact directly with faculty to update their progress and get feedback.

Placement Activities Continued

The period when most people talked about the financial impact of the pandemic and economic downfall; the Industry Interaction Cell (IIC) of the university silently worked on its placement activities, preparing students for online pre-placement training on personal interviews and grooming sessions. Industry experts in different domains were invited for guest lectures, instilling confidence in students. The sessions have been a regular feature of Amity University and continued on virtual platform during lockdown.

A Robust Mentor Mentee System

Mentor mentee system is integral part of Amity Philosophy where students are under able guidance of allotted faculty mentors. The pandemic though restricted face to face contact, but the mentors have been available all the time through online platform to guide their mentees regarding their doubts and concerns.

Conclusion

The corona pandemic could only restrict physical movement of people. It was a challenge turned into opportunity, where faculty and students tested their resilience, learned new methods of learning, turning Virtual into Real.

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ASSAM DON BOSCO UNIVERSITY, SONAPUR

The Assam Don Bosco University, Sonapur has been set up as a response to the felt educational needs of the people of North-East India and offers relevant study programmes with a focus on research and social commitment through the Schools of Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences, Life Sciences, Applied Sciences, Commerce and Management. The University Centre for Online and Distance Education (CODE), called DBU Global, offers a variety of study programmes in Management and Information Technology. Currently the University offers 19 graduate programmes, 18 postgraduate programmes, 23 doctoral programmes and 11 programmes under CODE. The University has also entered into a number of collaborative agreements with universities from around the world for student and staff exchange programmes and for joint research studies.

In the wake of the crisis faced by the teachers and the students of the University due to the global pandemic caused by the novel corona virus infection, COVID-19, Assam Don Bosco University adapted to face the challenge of the crisis, and provide resilient academic environment. An Online Teaching and Learning Strategy framework was developed for providing active and personalized education for all the students to complete the University curriculum planned for this academic session.

The University gives utmost importance to holistic development of students beyond classroom through co-curricular, extra-curricular and field based activities, which are well planned ahead and are made available in the academic Calendar. Already, the University has a provision for few programmes where students are allowed to obtain credits for the MOOCs courses undergone. The University also has in place a repository of online video lectures, e-books, e-journals from various reputed agencies and is made available to be used by teaching members, students and research scholars. However, to meet the need of the hour, the university has come up with the teaching best practices to be captured in the form of a framework so that later, it may be standardized as an interactive Web-based material and be developed into sophisticated course-management software.

Online Teaching and Learning

During the period of Lockdown, the university had set out to achieve three major goals so as to provide uninterrupted educational service. They are

Completion of Curriculum: To engage students actively with online lectures, video lectures, study materials, project works, dissertation thesis work, tests and assignments.

Extra Support for Learning: To encourage students to join online courses, remedial classes, online webinars, seminars and internships.

Counselling: To constantly communicate with the students in order to lessen their mental stress and to make them active in academic learning.

In order to achieve the goals setup, the *Online Teaching and Learning Strategy* framework was developed which involved:

1. Methods of Teaching
2. Engaging Students in Learning
3. Types of Assignments
4. Modes of Evaluation
5. Support during COVID-19
6. Feedback on student participation and teaching-learning experience

Methods of Teaching

Various methods were adopted for teaching different theory based courses as well as lab based courses by the faculty members of all the departments in the University.

Theory based Courses

- The platform of Google classroom used for the optimum utilization of teaching.
- Programme and course wise WhatsApp groups created for doubt clearance session.
- University ERP used to share notes and research articles.
- Google forms used to organize various Assessment tests and Google Sheet used to share the scores.

- Audio lectures in mp3 files given out.
- Slides prepared on the basis of the texts and lectures shared to facilitate critical explanations.
- Core texts and Notes circulated.
- E-resources such as research articles shared.
- Relevant online videos from YouTube, Self-made YouTube Lectures, vidya-mitra, e-pgpathshala, NPTEL shared.
- Skype Classes
- The lectures delivered through various platforms are in simple language and conversational style to give the students appropriate understanding of the subject and the concepts.

Lab based Courses: For the lab based courses the method adopted for teaching was with help of online videos of Virtual laboratories.

Engaging Students in Learning

- **Providing access to course materials within the University:** Course materials were made available through University's ERP Portal - ADBU ERP portal, YouTube and other online videos created by teachers.
- **Use of an array of online platforms provided by MHRD, UGC and external agencies:** Course contents were shared through NPTEL video lectures, SWAYAM Online Courses, National Digital Library, Shodhganga, e-Shodh-Sindu, Virtual laboratories, etc.
- **Use of real-time text-based communication spaces:** Google class rooms, Google meet, Teamlink, Zoom app, Google hangouts, Piazza, etc.
- **Asynchronous group and individual messaging:** Audio and video calls (sometimes conference calls), WhatsApp class room groups were used for interaction between students and faculty for discussions and doubt clearing.
- **Real-time interactive events:** Students were encouraged to contact through departmental Facebook page and emails.

Types of Assignments

1. Individual assignment sent through mails.
2. Online Assignments - circulated via Google Form.
 - a. The pattern of assessment in the form of Objective and Essay Type questions.
 - b. Upload images of handwritten answers.
3. Interactive course materials used where students are self-assessed.
4. Onlinemock tests and Quizzes.
5. Video assignments. The students were asked to submit video assignment of 5 mins on the assigned topic.

Modes of Evaluation

Non-formal Evaluation

- a. Assessments based on the responses of the students to the online face to face lectures.
- b. Discussions on certain topics were shared beforehand by teachers and online evaluation was carried out.
- c. After watching the NPTEL videos students are asked to send in theirself-evaluated assignments. The students are made to watch the videos again the second time and resend again after adding the missed points of their self-evaluated first round of assignment. Finally both are compared and evaluated by the teachers.

Formal Evaluation

- a. Evaluation of individualised test papers to assess the level of understanding of online lecture and notes.
- b. The video presentations were evaluated and the scores along with certain remarks for improvement were given using Google Sheet.
- c. Evaluation is also done through video assignment. The students were asked to submit video assignment of 5 mins on the assigned topic.
- d. The long answers were evaluated and the marks along with some comments were added in the Google Classroom itself.

- e. One of the criteria for evaluation was to include, references used by the students to complete the assignment.

Lab Courses and Project Work evaluation

- a. Based on the available videos for certain lab courses, tasks are assigned and online presentation, viva voce were conducted.
- b. Regular progress on completion of Project work by students was followed by assigned Project supervisors.

Support during COVID-19

All official notifications related to COVID-19 given by the University, Government, UGC, WHO, etc. were circulated on time and updated in the University's Website. The Department of Psychology and Counseling of the University, having faculty strength of 3 Clinical Psychologists, 3 Counseling Psychologists/ Psychotherapists and a Special Education Trainer (Ph.D) promoting mental wellness are actively involved in providing mental health services beyond the campus apart from being available for own staff and students. Collaborating with our Alumni who are excellent practitioners in reputed platforms, M.Sc. final year students and Faculty Members, the Department is providing tele-counseling through DHARA HELPLINE, receiving calls from the COVID-19 frontliners' fraternity. The tele-counselors have also attended training and discussion sessions on tele-psychology and tele-counseling hosted by Global Pandemic Response Forum under eminent psychologists and psychiatrists like Mythili Hazarika, Lita Hazarika, Sushil Agarwal, Suniti Baruah, Barnali Das and many other experts. Currently there are 15 counselors who provide individual and community psychological services to both in house and outside population.

Apart from providing psychological support, students and staff are encouraged to carry out continuous efforts in Research and Innovation to come up with solutions. A Website cum dashboard covid19assam.in has been launched that features latest news articles, related to COVID-19 in Assam. The website gives information on the status of the pandemic, Testing Centres, Home Quarantine Tracker and a Symptoms Checker. The website is specially meant for the people of Assam, and so can be viewed in English or in Assamese for the benefit of the common people of the State.

Some departments have taken initiatives to circulate and discuss new research findings, new scientific papers and articles published on COVID-19 structure, mode of transmission, potential drugs, etc. with the students.

Feedback on Student Participation and Teaching-learning Experience

Student Participation: Feedback on Student Participation is given in Table-1.

Table-1 Feedback on Student Participation

Mode of Delivery of Content	Percentage Aailed
Uploaded videos	100% students opted to watch
Google meet, Zoom classes, Teamlink, Pizazza	65% -100% attended (some students had network issues)
Study material, Lecture notes and PowerPoint presentations shared on Google classroom, Google hangouts, personal mails, WhatsApp	100% shared by teachers to students
Assignmentssshared on Google classroom, through mails	100% students participated
Virtual laboratories	100% students participated for those available
Hands on Experiments –Wet Labs	Not available

Teaching-learning Experience

The overall experience on Teaching-learning shared by Teachers and students include the following;

- During this time of crisis, the online teaching and learning experience enabled much flexibility in issues of time and place for both teachers as well as students.
- Both teachers and students got opportunityto explore new and innovative online resources.
- Online classroom platforms were found to be effective in giving assignments and sharing of study materials.
- For the laboratory courses, students got to learn about some of the advanced instruments via simulations.

- Some departments lacked full participation. Slow or bad internet connectivity became a hurdle in online teaching especially for students from rural sector with poor connectivity.
- Virtual labs courses were available only for a few laboratory courses.

Recommendations

Following recommendations were brought up by the students and teachers for improving the online teaching and learning

- Greater consistency in academic practice that builds on accumulated knowledge about improving quality.
- Necessary infrastructure will have to be provided to the teachers and students to ensure assessments without any plagiarism. Besides, data is expensive, and it may not be economically convenient either for the faculty or for the students to continue in this manner.
- Inclusion of a common strategy to record students' attendance, centralized evaluation strategy.
- Provide motivation to students - finding incentives for students to participate actively, providing some synchronous events to maintain their interest and enthusiasm, supporting them in taking responsibility for their learning.
- Improve online learning experience for general, discipline specific courses and laboratory courses which lead to different types of engagement and learning.

Conclusion

Assam Don Bosco University made coordinated effort by providing opportunities for both teachers and students to make learning more effective and relevant for protecting academic Interest of students during Corona Pandemic. It may be useful to conduct in depth-study to have robust course-management system in place as catering to educational learning and teaching experience varies from programme to programme.

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AURO UNIVERSITY OF HOSPITALITY AND MANAGEMENT, SURAT

As COVID-19 hit India, 1,000 odd universities and other institutes had to re-invent the way education was imparted. Distance education became the mainstream. The pandemic introduced a new pedagogy, based on digital learning! Based out of Surat, AURO University decided to turn this adversity into an opportunity – to lead the way in transformation of learning facilitation.

Founded in 2011, AURO stands on robust pillars of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's Indian philosophy of integral education that transforms learners into future leaders. Rising to the occasion was natural for everyone at AURO as the ability to transform and hence align to the rapidly changing times lies at the core of this philosophy. The University has seven Schools – School of Business, School of Hospitality, School of Law, School of Information and Technology, School of Design, School of Journalism and Mass Communication and School of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and the newly established School of Sciences.

The pandemic changed the way we perceive 'teaching' and 'learning'. It opened up new possibilities and opportunities. The Government of Gujarat declared a lockdown on March 16th, 2020 and this led to newer challenges. But as Socrates' famous dictum goes, "The unexamined life is not worth living." The University decided to examine the challenge and found out an opportunity to re-invent.

Our goals were very clear: Keep the students and faculty members safe, continue teaching to support learning, keep the students engaged meaningfully at home and keep them active to avoid psychological duress in these depressing times.

With the state-of-the-art learning systems already in place at AURO, experimenting with and realigning to learning demands even in the time of technological disruption was never an issue. Teaching process at AURO underwent a seamless transition from physical classroom to an online one, from March 24, 2020. The real and the virtual class-room merged and the virtual has become the new norm ever since.

But AURO took a different path and did not stop at webinars and digital lectures but made students also work on online projects, a breathtaking arts exhibition (<https://aurolockdowngaller.wixsite.com/website>), writing reflections journal, blog writing, story writing and many other activities continue even today.

The 'doing' aspect of education is catered to vertically and horizontally, and in so doing, AURO University has retained and even heightened its focus on the experiential knowledge. It takes pride in the way students respond to new ideas and many a times they take a lead in displaying their artistic merit. It not only reflects the indomitable spirit of our students and faculty members, but also points to the fact that best Universities in the world are those, which are able to align and update itself with the change of time.

AURO University, in a very short span of time, has successfully highlighted and practiced the iconic quotients of vitality, creativity, physicality, and spirituality. The same spirit continues, albeit in an online mode. Below is a detailed report of the teaching, academic events and pedagogical innovations done during the lockdown period.

Online Classes

Total teaching during lockdown: Over 5100 hours!

A total number of over 5100 hours of online teaching was conducted during the lockdown period. Considering the sudden disruption brought about by the pandemic, it is of great significance that the number of teaching hours assigned to each module were not compromised, but in fact improved!

Auro University used online learning platforms and tools such as Coursera, SWAYAM, EdX, YouTube, MIT Open courseware, webinars, and invited online, interactive talks. Additionally, the Virtual Learning Environment and Learning Management System were already at place so they provided the scaffolding to distribute learning resources, evaluate students' performance in class, internal assessments and end term exam and integrate with the University system.

- Even courses in Hospitality and Design, which mostly consist of practical classes left an impressive mark, for they continued through virtual platform in designing innovative online classes and guided students to prepare the assigned tasks such as food preparation and artworks at home.
- Culinary and bakery exploration done by the School of Hospitality Management students were posted regularly on social media through pictures and videos.

- School of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences students prepared an online artwork on the theme of COVID19, which received good appreciation when it was put up on Facebook.
- It also started an online Global Learning Series with a view to cater to the MHRD's initiative on BHARAT PADHE ONLINE, which provided an opportunity to students to interact with leading figures from different parts of the world.
- School of Law students came up with well-researched papers, Group Projects, Assignment, Case Study, Case-analysis and online quiz to make the learning more interesting.
- Going a step ahead, School of Journalism students made several short films including those on the theme of "Life in COVID Times", which generated a lot of interest. And provided video editing support to others schools in preparing and circulating their own videos.
- School of Information and Technology students continued with their software learning programs at home.

Teaching and Communication Support

Each School followed the regular time-table, except for a few changes to accommodate connectivity issues. The model of School of Business is representative enough to understand how all the schools functioned:

- All the faculty members were oriented to the changes so that all of them can get involved in the process.
- A WhatsApp group was formed for coordinating the classes. Daily reports of the classes held were sent to the Dean's (Academic) office by the end of the day.
- A monthly report of the total teaching hours done by each School, was also sent to the Registrar's office for record and documentation.
- Each School held Program Review meeting, which was attended by all the faculty member and the Class Representatives to take up any difficulty faced due to the online teaching.
- Minute attention was paid to the smooth conduct of the classes and to maintain the satisfaction level of students and parents.

Though it was a daunting task for few members, not very tech savvy, to overcome the disruption and cater to the needs of students, it was decided that rather than forcing one software for all, we would use what was convenient. The best available platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, Cisco Webex, Google Classroom were used. At the same time, faculty members were readily available to their students on phone and WhatsApp to clear any doubts.

The 'doing' aspect of AURO's learning methodology proved useful and it was reflected in the way students outdid their teachers in the 'technology department' and were very well adapted for the crisis. Multiple channels of communication had to be adopted as some students had moved with their families to their interior areas of towns and villages, where internet was scarce.

Teaching was competently backed up by the rich University library. To pursue research and learning from home, the University library, with its already existing rich resources and digital platform, gave access to users with thousands of eBooks, journals, databases. Access to rare books were also shared through the INFLIBNET to the users.

All Academic resources are always available to students online in virtual learning environment (VLE) which is in place at Auro University (<http://vle.aouruniversity.ac.in/>). Students can view the reservoir of curated learning material like presentations, e-books, videos and other learning materials. They can also upload their assignments on the same platform. This advanced preparedness of the University ensured that faculty and students remain connected from remote areas despite the pandemic crisis.

Innovations for Assessment and Evaluation of Online Learning

Online teaching brought newer challenges. Online assessment that would ensure sanctity of the exams and fair practice, while being conducted from students' homes, was a daunting task. But AURO University successfully conducted online examinations and assessment.

- The Exam Office came up with the idea of structuring the End Term exam in three categories, all online though: Openbook, MCQs and Short-Answer type format. This was successfully executed by the faculty members and matched up by the students, which resulted in a very smooth conduct of the exam.

- School of Information Technology faculty members coordinated with students from across the University for installation of “Oftee” app and smooth conduct of exams.
- As a technical support for the students, a team of faculty members coordinated and got the app installed.
- The team also supported students to overcome any challenges faced during the online examination.
- For the purpose of the End Term exam, the University provided the best mode of assessment to its students. Auro University has given its students access to the LMS.
- As a part of assessments students have submitted their assignments, project work, synopsis, internship reports and open book examination in the already existing platform VLE (virtual learning environment)

124 Webinars Reaching Out

The University decided to disseminate learning to common people in this tough times. Webinars, marketed well on social media, helped it to reach students and go beyond them as well. A total number of 124 webinars were organized by AURO University during the lockdown period. Each School did its best and to get aboard the best resource persons from India and abroad.

- School of Information and Technology led with mammoth number of webinars 30
- It was followed by the School of Business with 21
- School of Journalism and Mass Communication held 13 webinars and a 3-day training program to teach mobile video editing to all the students of the University so that they can express their creativity with videos.
- School of Hospitality hosted 13 webinars
- School of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences with 11
- School of Design with 8 and School of Law with 10.
- Centres such as Sri Aurobindo Integral Life Centre (SAILC) and Physical Education, organized 06 and 05 respectively.

The webinars saw the presence of scholars, writers, thinkers of great eminence, ranging from the University of Oxford (UK), University of Idaho (USA), Trinity College Dublin (Ireland), University of Sydney (Australia), University of Southern Denmark, University of Aarhus (Denmark), University of Linnaeus, Stockholm University (Sweden), and University of Rome tor Vergata (Italy). See the link for the list of greatly appreciated webinars organized by the University: <https://aurouniversity.edu.in/webinar/>

It also featured entrepreneurs from companies such as AMUL (<https://www.facebook.com/AuroUniversityIndia/videos/1603017656514727/>) and SAPIO Consultant.

International Conferences and Workshops

Four International Conference and Workshops for Faculty members and students, which were attended by 34 International Luminaries from the field of Academics, Theatre, Music, Literature, Business & Philosophy among other allied areas.

They include Former Under Secretary General of the United Nations and Lok Sabha member Dr Shashi Tharoor, Prof Pramod Nayar (President Award winner for the Best research in Humanities, 2018) from Central University of Hyderabad, Prof Janet Wilson from University of Northampton, internationally renowned writer, Tabish Khair (Denmark), Discovery Channel documentary maker, Prof Douglas Vakoch, Prof Elisabeta Marino from University of Tor Vergata Italy, Prof Kim Do Young from Jamia Milia Islamia to name a few.

They appreciated the setup of Information Technology Infrastructure support from Cisco & Microsoft provided by the University during the various events. The link to the Conference is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPYVoI-Gxcs> The popularity of the conferences organized by AURO University can be gauged from the fact that it generated plenty of views on the University's YouTube channel.

To touch upon one of the most vital and disconcerting issue arising due to the pandemic, the School of Business organized a very important webinar on "Impact of Corona on Indian Economy" The talk was delivered by the famous Indian economist, Prof Vaidyanathan (Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkubK7Se4dI>) and "Market Outlook and Investment Strategy" (Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZjKo10oy0k>)

- Among several other webinars organized by the School of Business, few worth mentioning are “Cognitive Neuroscience of Emotional branding & Subliminal Messaging” (Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHElkyVs_eQ) and “Women Warriors: Roles & Contributions -During and Post Covid19”
- (Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5lX16HHUcs>)
- Staying motivated during Coronavirus can be difficult especially when there is a lot of uncertainty, confusion and panic. As we all work in a remote mode, most of us feel it extra challenging to engage work and sometimes feel less positive. Hence, to motive and cheer up all in these hard times, a short video on Covid Awareness was made by the Legal Aid and Community Development Centre of the School of Law’s students.
- (Link:https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2981249658608344&id=1234990773234250)
- Physical well-being constitutes one of the important elements of learning at AURO University and it has always been taken care in the integral education that the University provides. To cater to the physical fitness of AURO family and members of the society, the University held online *Suryanamaskar Festival*, which was attended by 2,142 people from different corners of India :
- (Link:<https://docs.google.com/forms/>
- The lockdown was undoubtedly a period of great uncertainty and hence stress level cannot be ignored. To ensure a stress free learning and living environment of students, their family members and faculty members too, the Sports Centre organized an awareness programme, *SMILE is the Mantra Against the COVID 19*
- (Link:<https://www.facebook.com/AuroUniversityIndia/photos/a.397091370355570/3126594457405234>)
- The Centre organized a national level Quiz Contest , which received a great response and enthusiastic participation from across India.
- (Link: <https://forms.gle/uXCAPCYs5kj4yTFGA>)

- An online session on “Stay Active and Injury Free With Physiotherapy”, was attended by 3,349 people. Further, the Physical department put up an excellent online conference on “Sports Culture in India” on June 5th, 2020, which was attended by 3,250 people.

Students’ Activities

The University’s engagement of students in the DOING aspect of knowledge creation continued during the lockdown. Students were given exciting opportunities to interact with international figures, curate journal reflections, poetry event, story competition, culinary competition. They also came up with two scintillating art exhibitions and acted as the MCs during the online international conference on “Imagining the Post-Coronavirus World” organised by the University in collaboration with the University of Linnaeus (Sweden), Scottish Centre for Tagore Studies, University of Edinburgh, and the University of Hyderabad.

It provided students to interact with Speakers from 5 continents and 20 countries. The conference was reached to 8,143 people, and got good attention in leading national newspapers. Another very interesting competition was conducted in collaboration with Monin&Madhushala School of Beverage. It was a Beverage Mixology Competition organized for the Students, Parents & Relatives of AURO University.

The competition required the participant to prepare a mocktail/smoothie/shake and send the picture to the organizer with a picture of participant with the drink. They also had to send the recipe of their drink. Top 20 participants were awarded certificate of appreciation. Top 8 participants got the chance of sending their drink video to the judges which were featured on the social networking pages. Top 3 participants were awarded by the gift hampers and online bartending certificate program by the organizers.

Two Online E-Theme Dinner were also conducted during the lockdown.

1. **ZEN Theme Dinner 18 March 2020** - Great Pan Asian flavors created by the School of Hospitality Management 4th Year Students. Students worked hard to create these virtual events. They came up with an idea of delivering entire package with all the raw material in a box, delivered at the door steps to be prepared from scratch at home and an online session was conducted by Zoom to teach the attendees.

- 2. Online Mexican Theme Dinner 27 May 2020** – Online Mexican culinary session for culinary enthusiasts and food lovers. A fine dine Mexican experience organized online by the School of Hospitality Management 4th Year Students.

Virtual interactions between the industry experts and the AURO Alumni were conducted for guiding the students regarding career options, CV Building (Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1106053656418931>) and internship opportunities. School of Information & Technology organized timely webinars on “How Content Writing can be a part of Career Building”

(Link: <https://www.facebook.com/AuroUniversityIndia/videos/239306754038744/>) and “Deep Dive Into The Front End Technologies”

(Link: <https://www.facebook.com/AuroUniversityIndia/videos/593098398291632/>)

During all the competitions the biggest challenge in front of the participants was COVID 19 because they had to give their best with limited ingredients and resources. It made the student's realize they can achieve happiness with small gestures of humanity, gratitude, courage and progress and also get the best out of them with whatever available resources they had during the period of crisis.

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BHARATI VIDYAPEETH, PUNE

(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented uncertainty for Universities and institutions of higher learning throughout the country. As a result, teaching and assessment were shifted to completely online mode for the remainder of the academic year. Students may reconsider their decisions of enrolling in higher education due the alarming situation. The top cause of concern for institutions is about enrolment and the unpredictability as to when campus life will resume. The University engaged in a contingency plan to ensure educational continuity. Some steps that have been taken as a response towards this include:

- Confidence building mechanisms aimed at the parents and the prospective candidates about the safety measures undertaken by the institution in terms of frequent sanitization of the campus, doctor on call, availability of sanitisers, contactless processes, regular check of staff members and students, compulsory wearing of masks, reminders regarding safety instructions to be followed. This The University also envisages to provide insurance for students.
- Guidelines regarding safety conduct for students at campus, which is made available at the website. The safety guidelines also comprise of content made available from WHO.
- Offered payment of fees through installments as income of parents may be affected due to the pandemic.
- Ensured personalized learning experience to current students during the pandemic situation so that a clear positive message is carried out by them as brand ambassadors of the institute. Faculty members are assigned small groups of students to be in constant touch and serve to clear any doubts/ requirements by the students. Hence communities of faculty, students and their parents were created to address concerns and difficulties.
- Student to student touchpoints were developed through the conduct of webinars wherein prospective students were in contact with current students and alumni to answer queries and concerns.
- Created Virtual engagement for prospective students offering all

information online, virtual office hours wherein they could contact the staff, live video chats with faculty, engagement in social media with an ultimate aim of making them a part of the community.

- Online webinars by faculty on topics of interest and those that are in vogue so that prospective students realise the capabilities available and raise curiosity for deeper knowledge in the particular domain. This displays the institute's unique value proposition in career preparedness of the prospective students.
- Ongoing training for all those involved in admission related work regarding answering Frequently Asked Questions, to be compassionate and polite with parents and students and be prepared to answer questions clearly.
- Conduct of the entire admission process through computer based and online mode such as entrance tests, video based interviews, online admission process for counseling and fee payment.
- Communication of plan of action regarding initiation of teaching through online mode for the initial months to the prospective students. The necessary technology platform has been developed to support conduct of high quality online education.

Teaching and Assessments

Steps that have been taken to handle the Teaching and Assessments for current students include:

- Due to the outbreak and following government guidelines, the University suspended face to face teaching to protect health of students and staff. With its commitment to ensure that students complete their coursework in time and without disruptions, extensive use was made by implementation of in-house learning management system (moodle based) as part of remote learning that was in practice for several years in the University. Alternatively, open source digital learning solutions were also utilized for conduct of live online teaching and learning. The concern regarding quality of educational instruction through online mode was dealt with regular training of the faculty members.
- Oral examination and viva were conducted through video conferencing mode.

- Blended tools were utilized for teaching and learning both for synchronous and asynchronous learning.
- Online tests (MCQ), written test (through emails), based on Blooms Taxonomy were conducted for students as part of the evaluation process.

Contribution to the Local Community

The University has a medical college and hospital at Pune, hence the hospital accepted COVID-19 patients and affordable treatment was provided with the help and expertise of its doctors and other medical staff. Some of the staff and students from the Nursing College also volunteered as Corona warriors by helping NGO's and government agencies in their fight against the pandemic and were resourceful to help spread the message of taking precautions and adhere to safety measures.

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BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE, PILANI

A few months back, hardly had anybody imagined that our rambunctiously fast-paced world would come to a grinding halt like this. This outrageous outbreak has challenged our health care system, has somersaulted our economy, of course has put lives of billions across the globe in danger and has forced all organizations, including the academic institutions, to adapt and calibrate.

During this tumultuous time, BITS Pilani, like other renowned universities, has demonstrated exceptional resilience in ensuring a smooth completion of the academic calendar. We were amongst the first few universities in India to cancel the in-person classes and shift entirely to online mode of instruction following identical schedule for each course. This improvising initiative was deemed necessary keeping in view government guidelines and the safety of our students, faculty and staff members. It is because of our prompt and decisive action early on that till date all our campuses remain corona free. In the process, we also completed the teaching delivery exactly as per the original schedule on April 29.

This report in your hand offers you an insight into the way the BITS Pilani administration, faculty, staff, and students have responded to Covid-19 and have remained steadfast, focused and creative in their approach. Essential services were ensured during this period across all our campuses; most institute tasks were continued and in some of them business was even better than usual. Faculty hiring processes, doctoral student milestone approvals, and all academic governance processes including Senate meetings, etc. were continued in the digital and online mode.

Sending a large number of students home as a preventive measure and moving to online classes was our first formal initiative. Starting from 20th March, we have been holding online classes, webinars, pre-submissions, PhD viva-voce examinations, Student Union and senate student member meetings and regular Campus Response Team (CRT) meetings to ensure a smooth completion of our academic and administrative responsibilities.

As mentioned, it is a concerted effort; together every single BITSian has responded to the call gracefully.

Proactive Measures at BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus

Steps Taken from the First Week of March

- Health center of the institute alerted all the BITSians about the spread of the pandemic and advised everyone to be extra cautious if symptoms such as flu, cough and cold persisted after a journey.
- Reinforcing UGC's advisory, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures were taken to contain the virus (March 4 - 6).
- All the BITSians were advised to use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and sanitizers as countermeasures against exposure to COVID virus.
- Cancelled all institute-sponsored student events on campus
- Students were asked to leave hostels in the next four days, and arrangements were made for safe evacuation and travel (March 14 -17).
- Made a transition to Work from Home
- Formed a Campus Response Team (CRT) to extend help to the residents and to communicate guidelines in line with government directions.

Administrative Decisions for Students' Safety

Special Buses : Special buses to Jaipur, New Delhi and Loharu were arranged for all the FD & HD students to leave for homes. Transportation was arranged on all four days, from 14th March to 17th march .

Limited Mess Facilities : PhD students were given the option either to continue their research from their hostels or from homes. From 18 March 2020, limited mess facilities have been provided for 197 PhD research scholars and faculty members.

Accommodation for staff : 13 mess workers and several staff members have been provided with accommodation in the institute hostels to minimize movement and contact from people outside the campus.

Thermal Scanning : All the hostel superintendents and chowkidars have been deployed at the main gate (24 hours, shift-wise) for thermal scanning and sanitization of vehicles.

Campus Response Team (CRT) Activities)

- A Campus Response Team (CRT) was constituted on 24 March 2020 to look after the well-being of the campus residents.
- Arrangements for home delivery of grocery items, fruits and vegetables to all residents were made available by BITS Cooperative society.
- Comprehensive sanitization of the entire campus, from the main entrance to all offices, roads and staff housing have been taken up by Institute's Estate Management Unit, with the help of Vidya Vihar Nagar Palika.
- 60 sanitization workers and security personnel were provided with temporary housing on the campus to maintain high standards of cleanliness on the campus.

Medical Facilities

- Arrangements were made to provide masks, sanitizers and other required medicines to all the students while they were leaving for their homes.
- A medical surveillance team was deployed at the main entrance to screen people for signs of fever, cough, and other COVID 19 symptoms.
- Telephonic and e-mail-based consultations were initiated for the staff and faculty residing on the campus.
- An ambulance service (24X7) was arranged to take patients to the referral outside the campus safely
- At the chemist outlet counter, at the reception, and inside the consultation chamber, transparent plastic barriers were erected to protect the front-line force.
- An attendant was arranged exclusively to fetch medicines for outside so that people with comorbid issues were protected from being exposed to the virus.

The Campus Premises

- BITSians were provided with the required information as to how they could protect themselves, their friends, and family members.
- Only the main entrance gate remained open for the campus residents, essential service providers, and students during this lockdown period.

- Every person entering the campus premises needed to undergo a quick and routine health check.
- Campus residents were to remain strictly home-quarantined and maintain social-distancing.
- BITS Coop Akshay supplied groceries, fruits and vegetables at the doorstep of homes of residents at affordable prices.

Academic Initiatives

- Lectures/Tutorial classes were conducted through platforms such as Google Meet, Google Classroom and Zoom from 20 March to April 29, 2020 as per timetable of the Second Semester 2019-20.
- Instructors were advised to record their classes and share them for future reference by the students.
- The Instructor In-charges(s) (ICs) were asked to revisit their course evaluation schemes and submit their revised handouts for DCA's approval.
- Operational guidelines for the offering of Summer Term (2019-20) courses were prepared. Each Campus was asked to identify essential requirements to offer these courses, keeping in view the timely graduation of backlog students and Dual degree students so that they become eligible for double semester PS (by offering a few discipline electives).
- Practice School 1 through online mode was operationalized from 17 May.
- Continuous webinars were organized by leading professionals from industry and, academia for the benefit of students on relevant topics. These webinars received overwhelming response from both students and faculty members.

Library facilities

- The Pilani campus library responded on time to the situation and took several initiatives to ensure that the BITS Community are not inconvenienced in terms of getting information to meet their academic, research and project related needs.
- Library provided remote access to articles and e-books from reputed publishers such as Elsevier, Springer, IEEE, Taylor and Frances, IOP, Wiley,

Pearson and EBSCO. For remote access platform such as Shibboleth & quot were installed in collaboration with INFLIBNET.

- A master list of 1662 e-books was procured from various reputed publishers and shared through Google Drive root link with students, research scholars and faculty members.
- The Library also organized a webinar on Web of Science and EndNote in Research under User Awareness Program (UAP) on 1st May 2020 for faculty members, research scholars and HD students.

Beyond the Classroom

With an urge to keep the intellectual ball rolling, the Student Alumni Relations Cell (SARC), BITS launched its weekly webinar series, PlugIn, on every Saturday exclusively for the BITS community. So far, the series has featured some of the globally acclaimed BITS alumni who are known for their pioneering work in various domains. Featured speakers include:

- Dr. Ramanan Laxminarayan, Director at Centre for Disease Dynamic, Economics & Policy (CDDEP) and Senior Research Scholar and Lecturer at Princeton University
- Mr. Vishnu Chundi, Co-founder and CEO at AssetVault;
- Prof. Milind Tambe, (Professor of Computer Science at Harvard University and Director of 'AI for Social Good' at Google India)
- Mr. Amit Marathe, Director of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Inseego Corp
- Mr. Puvvala Yugandhar, who is currently the Head of Global Supply Chain and is also a Member of the Management Council at Dr. Reddy's Laboratories

Plugin has received tremendous amount of positive feedback from the participants.

Experience Sharing from Students and Faculty

Shagufta Gurmukhdas, ME Computer Science, CSIS Department

We were timely informed about going back to our homes for our safety. We were also kept updated on decisions about the remaining semester via emails.

Besides, there were frequent emails about how we can take care of ourselves and the symptoms to look out for. On the academic front we received ample support, extended deadlines, adjusted requirements, and professors were also available for clarification of doubts online, apart from online lectures.

Aayushi Malhotra, Research Scholar, HSS Department

Around mid-March when only a few cases of Covid-19 were reported in India, BITS Pilani took timely measures to send the students home and arrange all essential services for the people who decided to stay back on campus. Thereafter, the Crisis Response Team is continually ensured that all necessary arrangements including mess services, regular cleaning of hostel washrooms, sanitization of the common areas and regulation of crowd at grocery stores are in place.

Rahul S, BEElectronics and Instrumentation Engineering

"The situation was handled quite well at BITS Pilani. All arrangements were made especially for our safe return to homes. Transportation facilities to all the major cities like Delhi and Jaipur were arranged to facilitate smooth travel. Most medical facilities and administrative departments worked overtime to ensure a hassle free Covid-19 response. The situation on campus is very good due to the phenomenal efforts of both the students and the management."

Dr. Pankaj Arora, Assistant Professor, EEE Department

Our flexible and student-friendly atmosphere, where students attend the courses out of their interest and not merely for completing attendance requirements, has now proven its worth. At BITS Pilani, using the swift leverageto technology, the online classrooms helped to mimic traditional classrooms in all forms to achieve a positive response by engaging the students in interactive sessions. This lockdown has never locked our efforts down, and with the collective efforts of both the faculty and the students, this "Online Teaching" initiative proved fruitful.

*Dr. Kaushar Vaidya, Assistant Professor, Department of Physics
Faculty In-Charge, Teaching Learning Centre*

Covid-19 caught most of us completely off our guards! Teaching students in the online mode was a challenging and yet a very exciting experience. It

meant a lot of meticulous planning, of every minute detail, for each lecture. Two of my biggest concerns were, interaction with students during the online lectures and feedback in the absence of continuous evaluation. I found the use of Google forms quite informative during the lectures to assess students' learning.

Research for Impact in News

Considering the fact that the detergents and soaps have managed to disrupt the surface spike protein of the deadly virus, a team supervised by Senior Professor Suman Kapur, Promoter of Xcellence in Bio Innovations (xBITS) from Hyderabad Campus, has come up with an edible nutraceutical formulation, which can be tested in a 14-day period clinical trial for efficacy. This AYUSH approach “ seeks to wash off the virus in the mouth and the throat of an infected person within the first few days of its presence” and help half a million people who are under quarantine in the state-run facilities. Read More @ <https://bit.ly/2XFUHtn>

Dr. Syed Mohammad Zafaruddin from EEE Department, BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus, along with students from BITS Pilani and VIT Vellore has developed CoviSafe: COVID-19 Tracking app. This app alerts people who may have encountered an infected person and guides the authorities to identify the places where the virus might have spread.

Social Responsibility

BITSAA

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, BITSians across the globe have been contributing through BITSAA to ameliorate the dire circumstances of those in need. So far, they have received around Rs 15 Lakhs and the help continues to pour in. The amount received has been utilized in distributing ration and food packets to needy people across all the three campuses of BITS-Pilani - Pilani, Hyderabad and K K Birla Goa campus. Also, ration has been distributed to 125 Maids serving to BITS staff houses and campus.

PARC

Pilani Atmanirbhar Resource Centre (PARC) contributed Rs 2 lakhs for the distribution of ration packets to the migrant labors, construction workers, daily wagers and other needy persons in and around Pilani campus..

Student Union

BITS Student Union has also come forward to extend a helping hand to the needy in these difficult times. They have collected funds and supported 8 Redi Walas, 7 auto drivers, 64 dhobis and 2 newspaper vendors by giving them Rs. 10, 000 each.

Staff Assoc

Staff Association managed to gather Rs 6.62 lakhs in the form of donations by 02 April, and distributed groceries and food packets to the underprivileged and daily wage workers. So far, they have been distributed 100 food packets a day.

They are also helping a local community kitchen, which is committed to feeding the underprivileged class, with groceries, cooking supplies, and LPG cylinders. They wish to continue their services until the lockdown is completely lifted.

BITSian COVID 19 Initiative

RS Mani, DDG, NIC, Project head, Aarogya Setu App (Pilani, '87)

He is leading the team of India's Covid-19 contact tracing app "**Aarogya Setu**". Under his leadership the App was developed in just 15 days. It's the fastest app to reach 100 million downloads and helping government to connect essential health services with the people of India in their fight against COVID-19.

Chandradeo Arya, Founder, Callzy (Pilani, '17)

Chandradeo has built an all Indian 27*7 voice AI essential services helpline for COVID 19. Just by calling on +91790165293 anyone can get essential help from Govt authorities and NGOs. He is also engaged in building data analytics and sharing with Govt to increase the effectiveness of essential services across the country.

Aditya Ruia, Co-Founder, BECO (Pilani, 17)

BECO has designed innovative hands-free sanitizing stations, and already installed 1050 units in Mumbai. BECO has been producing eco-friendly tissues, ear buds, toothpicks and others commonly used lifestyle products.

Rakesh Kumar Prajapati, Deputy Commissioner Kangra, HP (Pilani, 09)

"Real Action Hero" covered in the latest issue of India Today for making outstanding contributions as Deputy Commissioner to combat COVID 19 in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh.

***Sarthak Sethi, IoT Developer & STEM Trainer
Student, BITS Pilani Dubai Campus, '21***

Sarthak has built a WiFi-enabled app control UV sterilizer called "Obilizer". With its help, we can sterilize items used every day. The process is completely transmission free. Things can be free of infection without using any liquid. It is highly useful in sanitizing electronic items.

Anand Madangopal, Founder and CEO, Cardiac Design Labs (WILP, '03)

He has developed a unique wearable device which can reduce health workers exposure to COVID-19 patients by taking their vitals remotely. The device can check on multiple patients simultaneously, from a remote location. It has already been built, and ready to be dispatched to hospitals in Bengaluru and beyond.

Respimatic 100 - A Low Cost Respirator

Govind Bhandari (1975-80) and his brother, Gopal Bhandari (1971-76) founded Clearpack Group in 1991, a big name in making Best-in-Class Packaging machines for Primary, Secondary and End of line packaging needs at optimal cost. In order to bolster India's health care system, using their technical prowess and the design processes, they have come up with RESPIMATIC 100 - a low cost respirator. Vijay Simha, another BITS alumnus (1974-79), a ventilator expert and Ajay Nayak (1975-80), Retiredsenior IAS officer also joined the team and contributed in developing the device.

Abhinav Asthana, CEO and Founder, Postman (Pilani, '10)

During this difficult time health care professionals, researchers, and government experts—need quick, easy access to real-time critical data. This type of information exchange is what APIs do best, and as an API-first company, Postman have put together set of API resources to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic. They have also given free Postman licenses to nonprofit bodies that are involved in this critical effort. They can now easily share their data to other platforms with real time update.

Chaitanya Kumar Reddy, Trainee officer, Indian Forest Service (Pilani, '10)

During the lockdown he has offered to work at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19 in his hometown. Acknowledging his request, District Collector of Anantpur, Andhra Pradesh, Gandham Chandrudu appointed Mr Chaitanya to assist District Forest Officer R. Jagannath Singh in containment activity at Hindupur, which has been declared a COVID-19 hotspot in the district.

Alphonse Reddy, Founder & CEO, Sunday Rest (Pilani, '01)

His company is working with Indian gov to set temporary hospital facilities for COVID 19 patient. He has provided thousands of mattresses set up isolated beds in hospitals across the company.

BITS2K Helping Migrant Families in Extreme Poverty Rebuild livelihoods

BITS 2000 Batch is helping migrant families in extreme poverty and chart a sustainable resurgence from the horrific effects of Covid-19. The program in Jharkhand works with the most vulnerable women in extreme poverty and with poor literacy rate to take them from less than INR 20,000 annual income to INR 60,000 by building sustainable income generating livelihoods for these women and her family.

They are currently working with 1200 families across 3 districts in Jharkhand with support from the State Rural Livelihood Mission.

Ramana Telidevara & Ravi Sekhar, Founder & Co-Founder, CodeTantra (Pilani, '00)

In response to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to develop apps that can compete and replace Zoom, their company CodeTantra has developed a video conferencing platform, especially for virtual teaching. Company has also signed an MoU with MHRD for virtual teaching platform. The platform provides a holistic platform for institutions that helps in attendance tracking, enabling student participation, ranking student performance, recording facility for classes and also an interactive board for teachers for explaining different concepts. Security points are also well taken. It encrypts all files and data shared during the meeting along with logging in again in order to hear the recording of the meeting

Prof. Seshadri Vasan, Head, CSIRO Australia (Pilani, '91)

He has got a major breakthrough in developing a vaccine for coronavirus (COVID-19). The Dangerous Pathogens team of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) in Australia, headed by Prof. Vasan has grown the first batch of coronavirus outside China. His team has grown the virus in sufficient quantity needed to conduct preclinical studies. The development has brought the world closer to a coronavirus vaccine. Before moving to Australia, he was the senior business development manager for Public Health England, London. He is also Adjunct Professor of Preventive and Social Medicine at Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research GOI.

Initiative by BITS Pilani, Alumni and NLS Bangalore

Alumni of BITS Pilani & National law school Bangalore have joined hands together to help and provide food for the migrant workers heading back to their homes owing to COVID-19 pandemic on shramik special trains. They have partnered with the Akshaya Patra Foundation to serve 1,00,000 passengers as they board the trains at Mumbai and Delhi from 3rd June onwards. They started with providing food and water to the passengers on the Gurgoan to Balasore train. Ground-level volunteers ensure that the food reaches the migrant workers. Dry food is being given considering that cooked food may spoil faster during the travel. Apart from providing food and water, they are also working to arrange two trains for migrant workers, bearing the costs involved in the same. These trains will ply stranded migrant workers from Mumbai to Ranchi, Jharkhand and from Mumbai to Villupuram, Tamil Nadu.

Institute is led by:

Prof Souvik Bhattacharyya

Vice Chancellor, Birla Institute of Technology and Science,
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CHHATRAPATI SHAHU JI MAHARAJ UNIVERSITY, KANPUR

With the directives of the Government, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU), Kanpur has adopted online learning for its semester students. The University has remained strongly committed towards creating quality teaching-learning strategies through the use of modern tools and technology to meet the broader range of learner's needs during the aforesaid crisis. Some of the major initiatives taken will help in maintaining the learning rhythm during these difficult times.

- The Vice Chancellor and the Registrar of the University have ensured regular communication with all stakeholders through video and text messages, which has improved the bond between authorities, faculty, staff and students.
- The University is trying to address this extraordinary situation by involving different stakeholders in the system.
- The university has advised faculty members to use on-line group learning platforms like Google meet/ Google class /Microsoft team/Zoom, etc to conduct on-line classes as per their schedule in regular time table.
- All the faculty members engaging theory classes are uploading on the University website or any other learning platform like Google class, a detailed unit wise schedule including sub topics of the units in syllabi along with references/resource materials to be referred/book's chapter/ online lecture/any other pedagogy through their Departmental Home Page.Faculty members are also uploading the topic-wise lecture notes / supplementary study material (PDF class lecture notes/ pdf from books/ ppt available on-line / other online recourses) for each unit of syllabi not covered so far.

The University has taken an initiative to track the syllabi completion report from all its departments. Time limit has been given for uploading of study material for the benefit of the students. The faculties are interacting with students using different meeting apps. The study content has been posted on emails and google classroom for class and teacher-student interactions.

Whatsapp and email groups have been created for efficient transfer of knowledge and group discussions. The study material onwhatsapp also helps in registering the attendance of the participating students.

The University is also making students aware about MOOC platforms. SWAYAM platform launched by the Government of India hosts many subject-wise online courses,some of the online courses are:

The important online resource sites being utilised are:

- SWAYAM
 - NPTEL
 - Udacity
 - Udemy
 - Skillshare
 - Harvard University
 - Ted
 - Web Development
 - Digital Marketing
 - IOS app development
 - Open Learn
 - Future Learn
 - Tuts Plus
 - Open Culture
- The University has collaboration with IIT, Kanpur and Spoken Tutorial, IIT, Mumbai for access to online content.
 - Assignments/ Tutorials/worked-out problems on each units of syllabi are prepared and uploaded on the University website or Departmental Home page or any other learning platforms like Google class.
 - FaceTime is making it easier to deal with student queries.

E-Learning Library Facilities at CSJM University, Kanpur

- The faculty can access library resources from anywhere with the help of passwords provided to faculty members using remote services.
- Plagiarism services are being provided by emails
- Library website is operational on the university website where links are

provided to access e-books, e-journals and other free resources

- Web page has been created to access e-resources from outside the campus, username and passwords for all Heads have been created and circulated.
- CSJM University can access McGraw Hill e-books remotely, Taylor and Francis resources for free, Wt e-books, Bibliotex e-books, All e-news etc.
- A page has been specially designed for library users on the university website where all links are provided (Fig. 1).

Other Initiatives

Vice Chancellors' Motivational Series

At this time of distress, confusion and panic amongst students, the Vice Chancellor of the University is regularly addressing the students through print and electronic media. She is delivering Motivational Lecture Series to boost the morale of students. Her topics include '*Examination Information*', '*Time Management*', '*Preparation for Examinations*', '*About Corona virus*', '*Coping with Corona virus*', '*e-learning methods*', '*Duties for the society during Covid pandemic*', '*Preparing for the Future*' etc.

Counselling and Motivational Cell

A Counselling and Motivational Cell is operative to deal with stress, anxieties and other queries of students and staff as psychosocial well-being is a significant antecedent to learning. A four-member committee regularly addresses to stress-related issues/queries of students, parents, women and elderly people who approach the Cell.

Entrepreneurship and Incubation Cell

The university has launched an Entrepreneurship and Incubation Cell in collaboration with Srijan Sanchar innovation challenge to facilitate crowd sourcing of ideas, solutions for ameliorating the current situation. This is an attempt to contribute to the goal of fighting corona by organizing an innovation challenge for different problem/opportunity areas of pandemic. Topics for Ideas include (but are not restricted to):

- Ideas for creating, maintaining, monitoring social distance in closed/

open spaces /offices /public buildings especially in densely habituated areas like slums.

- Open source design, manufacturing, third party quality assurance of life support systems like ventilators.
- Ideas for repurposing by modification/addition of existing available equipment, consumer durable to life support equipment / ventilator.
- Monitoring including remote of indicative parameters like temperature etc for detecting probability of corona.
- Add on devices to monitor indicative parameters and obtaining patterns from aggregation on cloud.
- Ideas for creating, maintaining, monitoring social distances especially while the under privileged seek access to disrupted supplies of food, medicine during the lockdown.
- Low cost Logistics for arranging supplies.
- Maintaining health and positivity of care givers, doctors, paramedics and others at front line in fighting corona.

Online Yoga Classes

To keep the mind and body healthy and to improve the immunity, the University has initiated online Yoga classes which is facilitating in removing the stress caused due to Corona pandemic. The classes are very popular and students from other universities have shown their interest to attend the classes.

Medical Counseling

A panel of doctors regularly attends to health issues raised by students, faculty, the sick and the diseased and elderly persons.

Lecture Series

A lecture series on Covid-19 has been arranged in which renowned academicians are delivering lectures on COVID-19 on youtube. The first lecture on '*COVID-19 and Immunity*' was delivered by the Vice Chancellor. Other lectures are '*COVID-19 Pandemic*', '*Positive Thinking and Mental Health to Fight against COVID-19*', '*COVID-19 and Nutrition*', '*Care and Concern during Pregnancy in*

time of COVID-19 Pandemic', 'Genome organization and Life Cycle', 'Therapeutic Strategies against COVID-19'.

International Webinars

An International Webinar on '*Exploring and Understanding the COVID-19 pandemic*' was hosted by CSJM University, Kanpur on 2nd May, 2020 with Speakers from USA and UK. Registrations are on. Talks were on '*COVID-19: Coping with Present Day Challenges*', '*Combat Anxiety and Stress due to COVID-19*', '*The Effect of COVID-19 on IT Industry*' and '*Sectors for Startups Post COVID-19 and Planning Finances*'.

- The various NSS units of the University are regularly updating students about how to remain safe.
- Besides, academic support, the University has offered isolation centres in its hostels and is providing accommodation for doctors in its guest houses to support the government.
- The university and its affiliated colleges have provided financial support to the tune of Rs. 1 crore so far to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund and the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. The collection is still going on.
- The university regularly distributes lunch packets to the poor labour working in the campus.

Conclusion

CSJM University, Kanpur is continuously thriving to cope up with the prevailing situation, adopting the best practices in teaching-learning and nurturing students in such a manner that they develop into competent citizens, confident in handling times of distress and maintaining high academic standards.

University is led by:

Prof. Neelima Gupta

Vice Chancellor

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DAFFODIL INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, DHAKA, BANGLADESH*

Understanding current threat of COVID-19 global pandemic towards the education sector, Daffodil International University (DIU), Bangladesh has taken the necessary initiatives for uninterrupted study flow and to support all the students, faculty members and employees virtually. As the situation required, DIU has taken several initiatives not only for continuation of academic and administrative activities, but also for spreading awareness and mental support during the challenging times. Some notable initiatives by DIU are as discussed here.

DIU Blended Learning Centre (BLC) for all Academic Activities

DIU, as one of the top universities in Bangladesh, successfully conducted online classes during this pandemic COVID-19. From Summer-2020 Semester, the university started utilizing Learning Management System, Moodle through Blended Learning Center (BLC), DIU for all academic activities. Currently, DIU is having 1647 courses available for Summer-2020 where around 29,000 users including a few alumni are using BLC. In total, more than 90% students are using BLC as the platform.

SmartEdu for All Administrative and Academic Employees

Through the SmartEdu module under SAAS Education Solution, DIU ensured all employees and faculty members to work from home safely and smoothly with regular online interaction, activity, task management, update and maintain workflow.

Financial Aid on Tuition Fees to the Needy Students

With existing waiver facilities, DIU has also increased the amount of financial aid in the form of special waiver to help maximum number of students during the COVID-19 outbreak. Depending on the financial crisis, it will continue until the situation is resolved or till the degree completion.

50% Waiver to new students & Laptop to cope up with new normal

DIU is providing a minimum 50% up to 100% tuition fee waiver for the newly admitted students in the Fall 2020 Semester. To support the students to attend online classes, DIU ensured early distribution of 2500 Free Laptops for the students during Summer-2020 semester.

Virtual Regular Events to Ensure Students Engagement

The regular initiatives of DIU during this pandemic are Online Learning Summit, CoronaThon: a Hackathon on combating COVID-19, Online summer fest, Virtual Job Fest, virtual trainings, e-talks, e-master classes, virtual internships, webinars, online debates, free mentorship programs, awareness seminars and providing numbers of video documentaries focusing automation, awareness, and handling situations successfully.

Providing Hand Sanitizer, Hand Wash, Mask and More Safety Materials for Community

The Department of Nutrition and Food Engineering along with the Department of Pharmacy of DIU prepared Hand Sanitizer and hand wash and distributed it to its students and staff for free. DIU also distributed hand sanitizer to some local hospitals, institutions and community as part of its social responsibility.

Activate Social Media Platform for Effective Use

DIU created an online forum to discuss, share and educate on COVID-19 news, statistics, scientific instruction, WHO guidelines etc. COVID-19 dedicated website with relevant important information, resources and emergency numbers in local language.

International Mobility Initiatives

DIU is organizing the Virtual International Social Business Summer Program (ISBSP) during 20-25 July which is 6 days long world's first summer program on social business. Students from different departments are attending summer schools, students participation in COIL projects, Virtual workshops, Online Student Exchange program in the partner's universities of DIU globally. DIU invited international faculty members and experts for lectures and e-workshop/ e-Master Class on academic and current topics. With continuous globalization planning DIU received memberships of Association of Economic Universities of South and Eastern Europe and the Black Sea Region (ASECU), University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF) and Asia Technological University Network (ATU-NET).

*The Article has been provided by Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA) Hyderabad.

International Conferences

DIU is organizing an Online International Multidisciplinary Conference ‘On Transformation and Survival of business: Challenges and Opportunities after COVID-19’ that will be held between 14-15 Oct 2020. At the same time, HRDI has taken an initiative of arranging Asian Conference along with the university of India and Nepal.

Partnership with GoEdu and Coursera for the free courses to all

DIU provided Online courses dedicated to international universities, professionals, students and graduates from GoEdu and also sponsored Coursera courses. DIU introduced online Employability Skill Test <https://skill.jobs/employabilitytest/> for the graduates and students.

The University is led by

Prof. M Lutfar Rahman

Vice Chancellor, Daffodil International University,

Dhaka, Bangladesh

DESH BHAGAT UNIVERSITY, FATEHGARH SAHIB

As Corona virus is spreading rapidly across world and countries have taken swift and decisive actions to mitigate the development of a full-blown pandemic. There have been multiple pronouncements suspending attendance at universities and schools. These risk-minimizing decisions have led millions of students into temporary 'home-schooling' situation and in a matter of weeks corona virus (COVID-19) has changed how students are educated around the world. These changes give us a glimpse at how education could change for the better in long term. These changes have certainly caused a degree of inconvenience, but they have also impelled new examples of educational innovation.

Amid this global challenge, we at Desh Bhagat University, Fatehgarh Sahib a member of Association of Indian Universities (AIU), a multi-faculty, multi-lingual and multi-dimensional prestigious state private university in Punjab, have put in untiring efforts to combat this situation where students are going through the state of anxiety, fear and uncertainty. DBU proactively worked on the engagement of students to keep them intact with studies and tried to transform the teaching methodologies for the protection of their academic interest.

Remote teaching is always posed a big challenge among us to keep our student engaged in academic activities but in situation like this it is imperative to invent creative ways to engage students gainfully. DBU team successfully countered the situation and adopted innovative online teaching learning practices.

FACULTY RESILIENCE & SKILL TRANSFORMATION

The rapid spread of COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of building resilience to face various threats, from pandemic disease to rapid technological change. DBU always work on resilience of faculty and we prepared our faculty to adjust and transform their skills according to present needs. A three day workshop from 13th to 15th March, 2020 in anticipation of complete lockdown was organized on 'E Learning and MOOCS Content Generation and Delivery' in anticipation of complete lockdown. The workshop aimed at equipping faculty members with online teaching skills like creating online course content in PDE, PPT, Video lecture format, teaching through Google classroom, developing MOOCS courses

and using Learning Management Systems. This endeavor resulted in boosting morale and develop positive attitude of faculty about online teaching and content delivery.

Engaging Student Community

DBU adopted a set of innovative and productive practices to engage student community in academic as well as for their well being and mental health during COVID-19 pandemic period.

Online Teaching

Protecting students' academic interest is considered as the foremost important aspect of education and DBU is committed to safeguard this right of students. Online classes for all courses started immediately as preparations were already made and faculty was all set to transform from classroom to teaching to online teaching. Students were engaged through various online platforms.

Google Classroom

Classes were created for all courses and faculty members engaged students very actively in the Google classes. Course content was delivered through Google classroom portal and students were trained to prepare and submit assignments through Google Doc. Each student has their individual Google Drive folder that can be accessed by students as well as teachers. The tool facilitates paperless communication among teachers & students. Students shared their ideas and resources with fellow students and participated online classroom discussions.

Blended Learning

DBU is using Blended Learning methodology for many years as it helps in building better engagement of students. It has a mix of traditional classroom and online material is used to deliver course content where student listen to a online lecture at their place and make their points and discuss with instructor in classroom. It helps in getting more active participation from students.

SWAYAM & MOOCS

DBU always promoted SWAYAM initiative of Indian Government and students have been registered on SWAYAM portal and they are enrolled in the course of their field and interest. Faculty members of DBU are developing their own MOOCS courses to help students and develop their digital teaching skills.

In this situation when students are away from classes, our faculty is closely monitoring their progress in the enrolled course and further more it is helping them in preparing their regular courses.

Webinars

Cloud based video conferencing is proving to be very effective to tool in online teaching and DBU has equipped its faculty members with skills to utilize these technologies for the benefit of students. We are using Zoom, Goto Meeting, Google Meet, Microsoft Team, etc. applications to interact face to face with students. Teachers organizing webinars on regular basis which enables all students to attend the lecture together and discuss their queries. Apart from faculty members, webinar of external experts are also organized to enrich the knowledge base of students. Given below is the list of some of webinars organized by the university.

- ✓ Webinar on ‘ Digital Marketing’ by Mr. Shankar Dyal, Digital Marketing Expert.
- ✓ Webinar on ‘Retail Management’ by Mr. SumitWason, Marketing Expert.
- ✓ Webinar on ‘Artificial Intelligence’ by Mr. Munish, Corporate Trainer.
- ✓ Webinar on ‘CAD & CAE’ by Mr. Ayush, Technical Trainer .

Learning Management System LMS

DBU has its dedicated Learning Management System which provides student anywhere anytime access to their academic courseware, assignments, timetable, attendance,fee related information, results and notices. Faculty members are regularly updating course material on LMS to engage students’ with their studies. Departments keep in touch with students and messages for their well being and health.

Online Research Dissertation Submission

To protect the interest of Research Scholars during lockdown period university started the process of online submission of thesis and synopsis, seminar. Scholars were facilitated to submit their research work in soft copy format to curtail the delay in evaluation of M.Phil/Ph.D. thesis and further sent to examiner through mail and presentations of synopsis, pre-submission seminar, viva-voce are conducted through cloud based video conferencing.

Digital Library

University library has provided online library access to our students, research scholars and faculty members. Library's operation and services at DBU are fully computerized with SIM ERP multi-user Integrated Library Automation Software. Bibliographic records of Desh Bhagat University Library's holdings can be accessed through the SIM ERP Web OPAC (On-line Public Access Catalogue). Database of library books is being updated on a day-to-day basis with details of recently acquired books.

Assessment and Evaluation

Evaluation and assessment is always a challenging task and it plays a significant role in teaching learning practice. In this situation where we are forced to adopt online teaching it becomes more challenging to evaluate and assess students. Students were given interactive & collaborative work assignments to increase their interest & develop creativity along with focus on their academic growth.

Assignments

Engaged students in individual and group assignments related to their course objectives.

Quiz

Quizzes were designed to encourage students to look beyond their textual knowledge and build a relationship among theory and application of learnt concepts.

Presentations

Topics related to the course field were given to students and presentations were done through webinar. These presentations provide students a platform where they can express themselves and learn the art of presentation.

Test

Students were given tests including Multiple Choice Questions and Long Answer Questions.

Placements

DBU has a dedicated and dynamic Training and Placement Department that works proactively on providing internship and placement opportunities to

students. Most of the students were given placement & internship opportunity before COVID-19 pandemic. As placements process is rolling and continuous in nature and T&P cell is in regular touch with prospective companies and developed a scope of online placement process. Companies are provided with profiles of students and an online placement process is specifically designed for present situation. Companies are invited to conduct interviews through video conferencing and students are given ample opportunities to secure an internship or placement offer. T&P cell is arranging interviews of the companies offering to work from home job profile.

Efforts towards well being & Mental Health

In this situation when world is struggling to counter the global challenge of COVID 19 pandemic, it is important to stay positive and keep the morale boosted. Keeping this in view Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Campus and Human Resource Development Center of DBU started a novel venture in the form of an Online Web Series where experts from various fields shared their valuable knowledge and experience. Given below is the list of some of the webinars organized by the university.

- ✓ Webinar on 'Mental Well Being in the times of COVID' by Ms. Navjeet Grewal, Psychological Coach, United Kingdom.
- ✓ Webinar on 'Discover Your Passion' by Dr. D.R. Dhaliwal, Ex-CEO Thirumali Chemical, Birla Paricase (Aditya Birla Group)
- ✓ Webinar on 'Importance of Nutrition and Immunity' by Dr. Raj Bhandari, Member, National Technical Board of Nutrition and Health, NITI Aayog.
- ✓ Webinar on 'Stress Management through Music' by Dr. Anurag Joshi, Thapar University.
- ✓ Webinar on 'Spiritual Values from Scriptures in the time of Covid' by Manishi Sant Vinay Kumar Ji Aalok and Dr. Zora Singh, Chancellor, Desh Bhagat University.
- ✓ Webinar on 'Role of Spirituality and Yoga in Education, youth, Professional & Personal Development' by Dr. Param Parmeshwaram, Gujarat National Law University.
- ✓ Webinar on 'Personality Analysis and Self Improvement through Grapho Analysis' by Mr. Naveen Toshniwal, Grapho Analysis Specialist.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement is the collaboration between educational institutions and other stakeholder of the society to have mutually beneficial exchange of resources and knowledge. As a part of its responsibility towards society DBU always encourage its students and staff members to work for betterment of society and underprivileged. In the epoch of Corona spread we have put in maximum efforts to help community to fight against COVID – 19 and many activities were conducted for this novel cause.

- ✓ Sanitization: 5 villages were sanitized by University School of Ayurveda and Research.
- ✓ Mask Manufacturing & Distribution: 1500 masks were manufactured and distributed among villagers of surrounding area.
- ✓ Awareness Camp: Awareness camps regarding COVID-19 infection and safety organized in the surrounding villages and cities.
- ✓ Quarantine Centre: 40 bedded hospital in University School of Ayurveda is provided to be used as quarantine centre.

Conclusion

COVID-19 pandemic is a bitter reality and world is forced to face uncertainty and instability in every sector and academic landscape is no different from rest of segments. We are bound to face challenges and this situation may prove to be a paradigm shift where we rely more on virtual reality and embrace online teaching. We at Desh Bhagat University believe in change and always want to be a torch bearer to show path that is unexplored and inspiring.

University is led by:

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DR APJ ABDUL KALAM TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, LUCKNOW

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow is an affiliating university in the state of Uttar Pradesh having 756 plus colleges and more than 2.5 Lac students studying in various professional courses. The University took many innovative initiatives for strengthening academics, preparing students for prospective placements, extending Online placements and internship opportunities, engaging students and faculty members in creative challenges, hosting webinar series focusing teachers knowledge sharing. In addition our University made a contribution to the society in many ways in this time of pandemic crisis. Some of them are enlisted here:

1. AKTU accelerates the drive to increase the Online Teaching-Learning during Lockdown; 3200+ e-Lectures were shot and pushed through ERP to students' digital account for the subjects they were enrolled in.
2. Constituted Virtual Lab Cell, mapped the University curriculum, and, initiated teacher induction webinars
3. Three round Online Weekly Ideathon; Best ideas were being acknowledged in grand e-award ceremony
4. Online PhD defense was initiated in addition to Mid-Term review of research progress
5. Meditation & Yoga sessions for college leaderships
6. Weekly FB live for students focusing "Understanding oneself", "mastering Lockdown", "Upgrade Oneself" and "Becoming Productive"
7. Students & teachers developed 3D printed "Multi-Channel ventilator adopter" in collaboration with SGPGI, Lucknow, And, "Face Mask Shield" in collaboration with RML Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow
8. Invited Technical interventions from faculty & Students based on e-consortium (A conglomeration of world class Journals like IEEE, Springer, Elsevier Science Direct, ASME, ASCE and many more)
9. Conduct of Midterm exams with support of various digital platforms including Google classroom etc.

10. Digital assessment of re-evaluation of approx. 30K examination sheets
11. Regular digital dialogue with students, Faculty members, Directors & Chairmen of the colleges, University officers and staff.
12. Extending Online Job placement and Internship opportunities to the students
13. Under various MoUs initiated work for direct skill building of students for prospective placements and launched Train the Trainer programs
14. Timely Online payment of around 8 Crore 85 Lac Rupees to around 25,000 AKTU faculty, staff, Class III, Class IV and security persons for doing various duties in the previous Examination
15. University was being appreciated by Hon'ble Chancellor, and, formed a committee (comprising of seven Vice Chancellors of the Major Universities of U.P.) under chairmanship of AKTU Vice Chancellor Prof. Vinay Kumar Pathak to propose the plan of action to complete the academic syllabus, conduct of examinations, finalization of admissions and academic calendar of the next academic session in view of the lock down because of ongoing pandemic crisis
16. More than 2.75 faculty and students installed the Arogya Setu App
17. All faculty and staff donated 02 days salary and University contributed Rs. 21 Lacs to the Chief Minister's COVID CARE fund
18. On the call of our University our colleges donated more than 1.0 Cr in Prime Minister COVID CARE Fund
19. Understanding social responsibilities, University formed a "KALAM Ann Chetra", a community kitchen to feed fresh readymade cooked food to around 1500 poor people daily around the area with the help of district administration, starting from first week of April
20. Regularly conducting seminars to make people aware of the methods of prevention and hence protection against the deadly COVID-19.

University is led by:

Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak

Vice Chancellor, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Technical University

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DR B R AMBEDKAR NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, SONEPAT

Dr B R Ambedkar National Law University Haryana has adopted various measures to protect the academic and professional interests of its students in the current pandemic situation which has arisen due to COVID-19. Some of the steps are elaborated below:

Gainfully Engaging the Student Community

This University is running B.A. LL.B. (Hons.)-Five Year Integrated programme from academic session 2019-20. The students of this programme are in Second Semester now and teaching learning process is being carried out through online mode by adopting various electronic means and social networking apps such as Google Meet, ZOOM platform etc. by the faculty members. The students are being encouraged to participate in various online quiz competitions organized by different Colleges/Universities/Deemed to be Universities and Institutions of National importance. One student namely Mr. Raghav, who participated in online quiz competition secured 8th position, which is a matter of pride for the University.

Psychological Counseling of Students

The teacher mentors have conducted. Online sessions for counseling of students about tackling the pandemic of COVID 19. Also, telephonic conversation and interaction are also being held with the students by the teachers/mentors so as to ensure that there is no academic loss to students due to this global pandemic of students and Parents-Teachers meet are being conducted on regular intervals through various electronic means. The Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor held various round of interactions/counseling with the parents of students in groups consisting of 20 members in each group in which various issues raised by the parents were addressed.

Assessment and Evaluation

The Mid Term Examinations of B.A. LL.B. (Hons.) students were conducted online wherein the question papers consisted of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) keeping in view the COVID-19 pandemic. These examinations were conducted in multiple shifts w.e.f. 25.04.2020 to 30.04.2020 and as per the feedback given by the teachers and the students, the examinations

were conducted smoothly. The students have submitted their subject-wise Assignment to their respective teacher. The Language Teacher recommended classical documentaries, short films and movies to enhance their language capabilities and reading material like classical novels and writings of freedom fighters. Other subject teachers are providing national and international articles related with topics and video links, if available.

Online Placements

This University is running B.A. LL.B. (Hons.)-Five Year Integrated programme from academic session 2019-20. Presently, students of this programme are in Second Semester. Hence, no online placement drive is required at this stage as the students are yet to complete their course.

Conclusion

The University is trying its level best to carry out its academic and administrative work through various electronic means and social networking apps in light of the advisories issued by various agencies. All the files and cases are being processed by adopting online mode in order to ensure smooth functioning. Further, the meetings are conducted through video conference using various social networking apps such as Google Meet, Zoom App, etc. during COVID- 19 pandemic. The teachers are also participating in various Faculty Development Programmes organized by different Colleges/Universities/ Deemed to be Universities and Institutions of National importance through online.

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DR BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY, AHMEDABAD

The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19 Pandemic) is declared by World Health Organization as World Health Emergency and Social Emergency. This infectious case was first diagnosed in November 2019 as Coronavirus Disease and by April, 2020 it has adversely affected 212 countries across the globe, with 1,395,136 confirmed cases and 81,580 deaths worldwide (World Health Organization, 9th April, 2020). The Government of India took swift and timely measures to ensure the safety of citizens; it announced nationwide 'lockdown' allowing only essential services to function on regular basis. This resulted in entire close-down of educational institutes, schools, colleges and universities.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University is no exception, so complete 'lock-down' was implemented in the University to ensure health and safety of its employees. In the words of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, "Purpose of education is to moralize and socialize people." This statement establishes that an educational institute has higher responsibilities to fulfill than just providing education in the four walls of a classroom. It is a moral and social duty of every educational institute to mould a character of a man. In these challenging times, educational institutes have a vital role to play in ensuring academic interests of its students, and with a surge of technology and humanistic concerns; Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad, is satisfyingly fulfilling its roles by walking extra miles for its students and stakeholders.

Gainfully Engaging Students

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat is the university known for being student centric university as expected in 21st century. In this COVID-19 crisis, in order to ensure that the students and staff members can stay at home safe and focus on their studies and duties, the university has initiated various special initiatives through its various Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enabled platforms. In these unexpected, inevitable, and challenging times, University has taken further steps to ensure benefits of all the stakeholders in its purview.

E-Study Material on Website (OMKAR-e)

Open Matrix Knowledge Advancement Resource for Empowerment is an initiative by University to provide study materials in digital form. Due to the pandemic when students are not able to visit study centres, they can easily access and download entire study material for all the courses and programmes as well as recorded lectures of subject experts from the website; this fulfils the academic interests of students in this pandemic.

Video Lectures TV/Online

A special schedule of broadcasting of educational lectures has been prepared and shared of various courses and programmes of the university on University's educational TV channel Vande Gujarat -16 allocated to our university by state government so that learners can avail its maximum benefits. In University's 'Chaitanya' Studio, faculties have conducted video lectures, which are accessible to students from the website.

Web TV and Radio

All the Lecture series of various courses and programmes of the university are made available on University's Web Television "Swadhyay TV" and Web Radio "Swadhyay Radio" platform, so that learners may visit to avail great learning experience visiting desired Video / Audio Lecture on demand which are video conducted by respective subject-experts of University as well as other senior faculties from academia.

Indigenous MOOCs Platform

In order to give continuous learning experience to the learners in the time of distance too; various courses and programmes of the university are made available on its indigenous MOOCs platform with four quadrants 'approach' i.e.

Quadrant-I i.e. e-Tutorial that contains - Video and Audio Contents
Quadrant-II i.e. e-Content that contains - Portable Document Format or e-Books
Quadrant-III i.e. Web Resources, that contains - Related Links, Open Content on Internet
Quadrant-IV i.e. Self-Assessment, that contains - MCQ, Problems, Quizzes, Assignments and solutions, etc.

Five Mobile Applications

Further above all the courses and relevant materials are made available on university's 5 mobile apps specially launched for students and made available on Google play store also. University uses its ICT platforms and Social Media very effectively to spread message among students and society, to continue the same university is effectively using its ICT Platforms and Social media platforms to create awareness among the students and stakeholders.

ICT Enabled Pre-submission Viva of Students

In order to ensure unhindered learning of its students, with a special concern for researchers, University has undertaken pre-submission viva of its PhD and Mphil students, so that their education and degree does not get delayed in these testing times.

Round-the-year Online Admissions

Open university is not bound by conventional methods of enrolling students to courses and programmes. University has provided online admissions to citizens of Gujarat who want to pursue higher education.

Innovative Methods for Academic Advancements

International Partnership of Open and Distance Learning

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University has participated in Commonwealth of Learning's initiative of Open and Distance Learning for COVID-19; so as to extend its boundaries and reach a learner in every corner of the world to provide higher education in a wide range of subjects.

Virtual Induction Programme

Faculties are preparing 'induction programs' for all the courses and programmes offered by the University, these virtual induction programs will be broadcast on internet to introduce students regarding the procedures of admission, examinations, and provide overview of the course.

BAOU-Social-Connect Telegram Channel

University has created its own telegram channel, which is a single point social media platform to reach out to all needs of students; where students can connect with University. Students across Gujarat will be linked with their

respective faculties; this initiative will benefit students as their concerns shall be directly addressed.

Ensuring Academic Interest of Students

Work from Home

As per directives of the Government, University follows complete lockdown, all the employees of the universities are informed to stay at home. The teaching and non-teaching staffs are informed to work from home for the betterment of the student and community at large and stock of various activities are taken through Video Conferencing. Faculties, while staying at home have engaged themselves in academically enhancing activities to serve the students better, such as:

- Preparation of Self-Learning Material
- Preparation of On-line Content
- Preparation of Assignments
- Preparation of Exhaustive Question-Banks
- Recording Subject-related Audio Lectures
- Engaging in Research work relevant to the present times
- Research projects for 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' Initiative

Zoom Application

The authorities and directors of University hold meetings to discuss the important issues with zoom application. The staff with various groups and core team meets virtually on uniform frequency through zoom application; they work for Self Learning Material, preparing question bank and NAAC work.

National Webinar on 129th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Ji

The eponymous Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, only State Open University of Gujarath as a culture of celebrating BharatRatna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Birth Anniversary, consistently, since last four years. Today, when the world is facing Covid-19 challenge, India is fighting it with a complete 'lockdown'; University has realized this opportunity to continue this auspicious tradition; by fulfill in gall the safety measures and optimal utilization of ICT tools. University has organized 'Webinar' - a Virtual National

Conference on “*BharatRatna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkarji’s Life, Thoughts and Social Harmony*” on 14th April, 2020.

Hon’ble Education Minister of Gujarat, Shri Bhupendrasinh Chudasamaji virtually inaugurated the webinar; congratulating and appreciating the innovative and academically stimulating efforts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University. University’s first ever Webinar was organized in the flagship of Hon’ble Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Ami Upadhyay ji; symbolic of herald in ganewera in academics. An expert panel of speakers, namely, Hon’ble Member of Rajyasabha, Dr. Narendra Jadhav; senior educationalist, Prof. Aniruddh Deshpande; eminent columnist and speaker, Shri Kishor Makwana; shared their valuable thoughts on the subject.

This webinar witness edanenthus iastic response with an online and active participation of as many as 23293 viewers; 1100 registrations of speakers, subject-experts, researchers, students, and representative from across the nation. A midst the challenges, this web in arproved to be a fitting tribute to a propagator of humanity– Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar ji.

Fulfilling Public and Social Responsibilities

With all concern for the society, realizing the responsibility of an educational institute, University also walked few miles more as mentioned below:

Public Awareness Measures on COVID-19

In the earlier months before ‘lockdown’ was announced by the Government; University took measures of social safety. Extension Activities Cell of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar University, Ahmedabad organized awareness programs at Dantali and Jaspur Villages of Gandhinagar district specially adopted by university under its Welfare Policy. The people living in the village were informed regarding symptoms of the virus, the necessary care and measures to be taken as well as avoiding getting panicked by taking preventive measures. The staff under this cell also visited schools of nearby villages, C.H.O and *Anganwadi* workers. The posters prepared by the university regarding ‘COVID-19 Awareness’ were also pasted on various locations in the village.

Monetary Contribution

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University has contributed salary of one day of every employee to Chief Minister Relief Fund.

Grocery Distribution

Vice Chancellor distributed grocery kit to more than 250 people comprising of class-4 employees, peons, sweepers, security staff, etc.

To ensure health and safety of people, University has prepared attractive and informative posters for COVID-19 Awareness and displayed them on the notice board of various learner support centres, on the university website and its social media platforms.

During working days in the university, various precautionary measures were taken to protect the health and sensitisation of the people. All the departments of the university were sanitised properly as well as enough amount of sanitizer bottles were placed at entry gate, different schools, departments for directors, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, students and other visitors of the university.

University uploaded message from Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble Chief Minister of the State regarding COVID-19 focusing on the responsibility of citizens of India. For the same we shared those things on social media account of the university.

University uploaded various guidelines related to COVID-19 and its awareness on University website as well as Social Media Platforms. University published guidelines and directives published by Government of Gujarat, Government of India and World Health Organization on Social Media accounts of the University. University sends SMS regarding COVID-19 awareness to all the Students of the university making them aware 'to stay at home to be safe taking precautions to make their family safe' University and its officials are working from home to spread awareness about COVID-19 among students and society.

Thus, be it be continuous support through learning mechanics or COVID awareness, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat is completely aware about its responsibility. University has implemented all the mandates of the Government of India, Government of Gujarat and University Grants Commission which are in the purview of an educational institution; further University has also with its vision and concern for society employed innovative methods to reach out to student in the times of Covid-19. It is standing tall and strong with robust channels which provide incessant flow of knowledge to its students, not only that but all the other related services through digital platforms. It was meant to 'reach the unreached' and shall

continue to do so in all its capacities, in testing times as COVID-19 and otherwise, forever.

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EAST WEST UNIVERSITY, DHAKA, BANGLADESH*

Before the outbreak of Corona Virus, university teachers both at private and public universities in Bangladesh did not have the experience to teach online. Universities, especially private ones, have started teaching online out of fear that the students will become uninterested in studies if they stay away from studies for a long time and a part of students may not return to university when the situation is normal. Because public universities follow the semester (bi-semester) system, university authorities have not shown interest in online teaching in the belief that the closure will not last long and students will have time to finish the semester when they come to the campus. But unfortunately, we do not know when the universities will reopen. Public universities are now showing interest in online teaching. A sudden shift from classroom teaching to online learning creates challenge for both teachers and students in adjusting the mindset.

Learning online teaching and assessment platforms in a short period of time is really a difficult task for teachers. They will face how to protect cheating in exams in the state of poor internet connection of students moving from city to village. We know that with a few exceptions, universities are not equipped to operate online platforms. So, what about the rest? We must not forget that learning online platforms with tools is not only the requirement. In addition to that teachers must acquire the skills to translate classroom teaching materials in ways so that students can understand in the online environment because they cannot rely on eye contact or other facial cues to determine whether students are understanding and showing interest in a lesson.

Some universities are actively thinking of using Management Learning System (MLS) or Content Management System (CMS) and also Canvas instead of Zoom or Google meet with extensions.

Some intrinsic changes can be predicted in teaching and learning: shifting from teaching centered learning to student centered learning and inductive methods from deductive methods will be the result of online teaching. Universities will conduct some courses online when normal situation will return.

* The Article has been provided by Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA) Hyderabad.

Recently, University Grants Commission, Bangladesh (UGC-B) has asked universities to introduce a new education system called Outcome Based Education (OBE). Not only developed countries but also many developing countries have adopted this system. It is different from our existing system in terms of teaching and performance evaluation of students. The experience in using software help teachers in successfully implementing OBE. MLS or CMS type software is needed for Mapping different activities and performance of students such as Program Educational Objectives (PEOs) with Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Measuring performance of the students against Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) threshold for each course, and finding out the strengths and shortfalls of the learning taking place. As a teacher and administrator, it is my opinion that universities and UGC-B should organize multiple workshops on online teaching and learning. In future use of e-learning in teaching and business sectors will definitely be increased in Bangladesh.

University is led by:
Prof. M. M. Shahidul Hassan,
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GALGOTIAS UNIVERSITY, GREATER NOIDA

As the Nation headed towards lockdown and social distancing, wherein many people were engaged knowingly and unknowingly in wasting internet bandwidth for forwarding messages, creating rumours, panic etc., Galgotias University responded immediately with the advances in technology to bring the classes online for effective Learning. From 18th March, 2020, the classes are being conducted through online mode effectively. For a University that caters to 15000+ students in an academic session, going online was not an easy task. But with a strong Integrated LMS system in place the tedious task could be done easily. Teaching, learning and assessment of learning outcomes were all conducted online. First time in the history that an elite, traditional, campus-based university has moved classes totally online, the faculty members deliver their lectures or teaching through an online learning platform – the Moodle. Galgotias already adopted this pedagogy using our own Learning Management System (LMS-moodle), which is one of the open sources learning management system which we have configured as per our requirements. We are running almost 120 programs with 1428 courses, 13700+ students and 600+ faculty members already trained and enrolled in LMS mapped to courses and students), and video conference platforms ZOOM, Webex, Google Classroom and have tried out many different technologies to enable better interaction with students and accessing their learning outcomes. The process adopted by Galgotias for online teaching pedagogy is as follows:

- We have asked all the faculty members to upload all the rich contents in the form of videos, e-resource such as pdf files, e-books and other e-contents on LMS and ERP.
- For virtual class rooms, we have used our LMS with inbuilt features for conducting virtual class rooms like Bigblue Button, Congrea and Zoom for video conferencing with students available in lms courses which requires less internet bandwidth.
- For laboratory based courses, we have used Virtual Programming Lab (VPL) for computer science students. This platforms enables us to create a problem statements and allows students to write their programming source code in any programming language(C,C++,JAVA, Python etc) as per demanded by IT sectors. All the assessments are based on Test cases

and automatically graded, when students write their code properly and matches the test cases.

- For few non- programming lab, we have also provided simulations incorporated
- within our LMS.
- We have also adopted blended mode learning, in which faculty teach a topic scheduled for that day and upload related videos, e-content for their references. After completion of reading the resources students were asked to attempt Quiz(MCQ, Short answer, match the following, true/false etc) and Assignment to upload for grading, which are part of their Internal Assessment components. The quizzes and assignments are time bounded and secured with various security features.
- For tracking students presence, faculty used to take attendance by capturing their log reports, which provides them each information's like time spent for the activity and all necessary information like ip capturing, mode of browsing etc with video conferencing based attendance.
- We have shared all the training modules in the form of videos to train the faculty members for utilizing Google Classrooms and its features such as Hangout meet for 250 students virtual class rooms, Microsoft Team for education, Zoom, Skype etc for virtual class rooms as well.
- For UG and PG students undergoing internships, project evaluations and reviews were also conducted online by professors and conducted various different seminars for how to write research paper, book chapters and patents. So that students can utilize this time for publishing research papers in scopus/sci/esci and other indexed journals and conferences.
- Students were time to time encouraged for enrolling online courses provided by NPTEL/SWAYAM/UDEMY/COURSERA etc.
- For placement, prospective point of view students were asked to take online challenges on hackerrank, hackerearth to compete with other students across the world and their star rankings were captured by skill and training team for their progress and performances.

As a result after adopting this teaching pedagogy, faculty have shared and uploaded following contents till 27th March for students.

1. 9237 e-contents like pdf, PPT, word files for student.
2. Around 1600 virtual class room instances.
3. Number of Assignments closed to 2817 and Number of Quizzes around 2843 and 900 url and videos.
4. 238 Virtual Programming Labs by School of Computing Science.

E-Resource Virtual Class rooms Assignments Quizzes Videos/url

Virtual Programming Lab Counts 9237 1600 2817 2843 900 2380

2000

4000

6000

8000

10000

Count of resources on LMS

Resource Uploaded

A total of 10019 lectures have been conducted across 18 different Schools of the University, between 18th March and 27th March, in which 90.01% of Galgotias University Students attended the lectures and participated in the assessment. So far the entire online teaching programme has gone smoothly, thanks to the efforts made by the faculty, Support staff and the Administration of the University.

Figure 1: Day Wise Statistics

Methodology adopted

Like class room teaching, Learning and assessment were carried out simultaneously. Various online platforms like ZOOM, LMS (MOODLE), Google Classrooms, Google Hangout, Skype , Virtual Labs were effectively used for content delivery. Social Networking tools like whatsapp were effectively utilized. Details of various tools are listed in Figure 2.

0

10000

20000

30000

40000

50000

60000

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

No of Students Registered 53543 53710 51722 49005 54504 54345 54211

No of Students attended 48430 48453 45571 44649 48730 48158 48332

No of Students Registered \ Attended

Students attendance in Lectures 54211 48332 from Day 1to Day 7 of Lock Down

Figure 2: Methodology adopted for effective content delivery

ZOOM

Students are connected via ZOOM, where Faculty delivers lecture online and students interact directly with students similar to face to face class room.

MOODLE

Faculty post the Lectures / Assesment / Pre Recorded videos in Moodle, Students will go through the video and assesment were conducted at pre defined schedules to access the learning

Google Class room

Course Materials were sent to the students using E-mail / Whats app and students were connected through Google Hangouts / Skype / Whats app for interaction with the faculty aand finally assesment was conducted through google classroom

Group Disussions / Debates

In subjects were case studies / discussions were involed, students were connected through XOOM and GDS/Debates/Case Studies were conducted and students were accseed

Seminars / Project Presentations

Seminars for courses (Self Study), PG Desertations and UG Project reviews were taken through Skype / Google Hngout / ZOOM and grading was done as per predefined rubrics

Virtual Labs

Whereever possible, VIRTual Labs were conducted and students were accessed based on Hakerreth, and other online assesment platforms

The student experience

The most important factor in teaching is accessing the learners experience and their ability to access the understanding of learning outcomes. According to the student satisfaction survey, and grievance handling mechanism, students have reported very positive learning experiences. Students also reported that they were relaxed and not distracted much by the other students .

Around 50% of the students felt that Online teaching is better compared to traditional face-to-face teaching, 50-55% students were of the opinion that Both online and offline teaching was bale to transfer the objectives equally and around 15% students were of the opinion that traditional teaching was better.

Most importantly, online teaching has helped students to learn in a different environment and has motivated the students for Self-Learning, which is a very important skill, required for Life Long Learning. With ICT tools, the confidence of students in using the latest technology trends and platforms, has improved, which will help them to excel in the future. In order to build the team sprit, Group exercises such as case studies, Group Puzzle/ Problem solving techniques were used to access the learning outcomes.

Experience of teachers

Although it takes a lot of time to prepare and deliver the content online, most faculty were exited and made themselves involved, to ensure that the learning becomes interactive and informative.

Apart from regular class room teaching, the other activities of the university including Provost, Deans Council, Class Representatives meeting , Research council Meeting, Upskilling of faculty in AIML were conducted during this period through various ICT tools. This helped the faculty and students to stay in positive fame of mindset and stay focused at the time when the entire Nation needs the youth to be motivated and stay in focus.

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GULBARGA UNIVERSITY, KALABURAGI

Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi established in 1980 by an Act of Karnataka State has been strictly complying to the guidelines and directions issued by MHRD-UGC, Government of India and Government of Karnataka at regular intervals to protect the academic community against the Corona Pandemic and conducting the academic and administrative activities using Online Technologies on the principle of Stay at Distance and using Masks as a mandatory. To protect the academic interest of students during Corona Pandemic, following Best Practices are carried out.

Gainfully engaging Student Community

- The Vice Chancellor, Registrar and Registrar Evaluation soon after declaring lockdown due to COVID19, organized meeting with faculties of various departments, Academic, Syndicate and principals of affiliated colleges using ‘GotoMeeting’ Online app to ensure to adhere to the guidelines of government of India and Karnataka and conduct the remaining syllabus using Internet, Online and social networking tools.
- All the departments of the University have created separate “Whatsapp” Group of their respective department and further by Semester-wise whatsapp groups are also created to have regular interactions, posting Lecture notes, assignments, useful links of videos and updating the health safety measures and education policies.
- Regular online classes were conducted by the respective Faculty of the departments to complete the remaining (left out) syllabus (30-40%) using Online Tools like ‘GotoMeeting’, Zoom, Cisco Webex, skype and Google Meet.
- The Learning Course Materials for the benefit of students have been uploaded on the University website @ <https://gug.ac.in/load?page=Notes%20for%20Departments> for easy access to help the students to prepare for their assignments.
- Remote access facility (<http://14.139.156.110:2048/login>) has been enabled to the students, research scholars and faculty to access e-resources

especially available under e-shodhsindhu consortia of Inflibnet Centre to support their learning, teaching and research activities (<https://www.inflibnet.ac.in/ess/eres.php?memID=71>).

- Using the existing Official whatsapp group of the university, the IQAC-NAAC has been regularly updating the government policies, MHRD-UGC forms and announcements regarding the conduct of academic programmes.
- Online webinars are conducted to the academic community especially on Indian Citation Index and Scopus Database with the support from the e-publishers.
- Students, Research scholars and faculty were encouraged to make use of online learning course materials, video lectures and short term certificate courses available through Swayam, NPTEL, Youtube, EPGPathashala, MOOCS, Eshodhganga, MIT OCW and the list of useful e-resources are compiled and accessible at <http://guglibrary.net/useful-links.aspx> and <https://gug.ac.in/> and also posted in different whatsapp groups, email and on the institutional website.

Impact on Students

The best practice is interacting with different colleges and getting feedback not only from principals and but also from students using online tools and through email and mobile to evaluate the success of online classes, status of syllabus being covered and difficulties faced. As a whole, 75-80% of the students are happy in this critical situation of COVID19 with the facilities extended by the university through whatsapp, online classes, learning materials available on the Institutional website, remote access facility and virtual contact with their faculty. About 20-25% of the students especially those residing in the rural/ remote areas, could not be reached properly due to lack of Internet connectivity or slow speed of connectivity and non-availability of smart phones owing to their economic conditions. Efforts are made to contact these students by the respective faculty and helping them to ensure to get the lesson plans. As a whole, the new venture in online technology has created a “Technology Culture” in true spirit to support the academic and research for the overall development of the university.

Assessment and Evaluation and Online Placements

The revised Calendar of events in the light of directions received from UGC, New Delhi would be followed and exams will be conducted offline after giving minimum one month time after lockdown to get the students prepared for exams.

Conclusion

The Gulbarga University foreseeing the future perspective of online education and delivery to reach the students, shall develop and use robust Indian based online platform and in this direction, TCS iON Digital Glass Room has been registered and will develop effective learning managing system (Moodle) and move towards implementation of egovernance for smooth and effective functioning of educational system in the university system.

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN TRADE, NEW DELHI

We are a small university and have faced limited problems due to the closure. As far as the main flagship MBA program is considered, all classes had been completed prior to the lockdown as is usual under the trimester system and second year students are going to proceed to PPA internship in April, 2020 or as and when companies open up. Examinations are now likely to be delayed and we expect that the next year session might well be on time. We are however ready for a couple of weeks delay. As far as the entrance exam for the 2020-22 MBA batch is concerned, the results have been collated and will be declared as soon as the lockdown is lifted and prospective candidates informed. So admission too may well be on time or may be delayed by a week or so. The other program is the MA (Economics) program which works on the two semester system. Here classes are ongoing on the Zoom platform and we expect the exams would be held as normally scheduled in May, 2020 or thereabouts. Similarly, all part time and weekend programs like the MBA (3yrs) and the Executive Management programs are being run in the online mode. Teachers are conducting classes from their homes as per arranged time table schedules. Administration is also working on the online platform and all issues are dealt by mail and then the answers to queries etc. are either filed or replied to. Assuming the lockdown is lifted at least partially by middle soon we don't see too much disruption in our main teaching and research programs.

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TEACHER EDUCATION, GANDHINAGAR

Indian Institute of Teacher Education (IITE), Gandhinagar, Gujrat being exclusively dedicated institution to the teaching-learning and training discipline of Teacher Education, has Vision, Mission and Objectives justifying its role in the academia and society in general. During the critical times of COVID-19 outbreak also, our approach was to strive for and find out best conducive progress possibilities of maintaining the normalcy in routine teaching-learning and evaluation practices, establishing new mediums of maintaining the dialogue with the students and society in general, by maintaining social distancing and all other required amount of precautions as suggested by the guidelines issued by the Central Government of India as well as the State Government of Gujrat.

While COVID-19 was emerging as a threat in the early stage of its diagnosis in India, we recorded lectures of more than seven different subjects through a local facility of BISAG, based in Gandhinagar. The recorded lectures were telecast through TV Channel, Vande-Gujarat-I and Jio TV, ensuring the successful curriculum transaction. Remaining portion of teaching was successfully carried out through online platforms like Zoom, Google Classroom and other facilities of convenience to students and parents.

A successful attempt to bring about versatile dialogue on various subject disciplines through webinars, conferences, workshops and creative activities was offered by five different centres of IITE's multifaceted structure. Being an institute dedicated to teacher education discipline, we ensured our role as to deliver through the New Normal means of transaction. Our attempts were well-received by the members of the society, student community and well-backed by the academic fraternity in general. Senior Professors, well-known academicians and also the education department of the state endorsed and welcomed the meticulous arrangement of academic discussions as healthy and encouraging practices of IITE.

We did find times as challenging, in terms of conducting exams and assessments. In that regard, we did oblige to the guidelines of the central and the state governments. As there was due scope, we conducted a hundred percent successful preliminary exam through google classroom, as open book assignment submissions with calculative measures. With the participation of students, parents and teachers, the whole arrangement turned out to be very

successful in respective reference. In order to provide enough facility in terms of stationery to the students, the examination department parcelled the exam stationery to all its students of the Centre of Education at their residence through Indian Postal Services.

Along with many other practices, it was also important to maintain the progress of recruitment as going. We issued advertisement for the post of permanent and contractual teaching staff, as well as non-teaching staff. Two of the permanent teaching posts of Associate Professor were successfully filled, with few other non-teaching contractual vacancies. The letter of appointment were issued to the appointed teachers through the Education Minister of the State of Gujarat, Shri Bhupendrasinh Chudasama.

Recently, through the notification of the state Government of Gujarat, the Education Department rested the responsibility to affiliate the Government and Grant-in-Aid colleges of Education with IITE. We are proud to announce that, we also completed the process of affiliation successfully by maintaining all precautionary measures of social distancing.

The idea of identity and belongingness is well-acquainted with the foundation day, and the whole of IITE family celebrated its 10th Foundation Day on June 30, 2020. In the graceful presence of Hon'ble. Education Minister, Gujarat State, Shri Bhupendrasinh Chudasama, and Shri Arun Dave, an eminent Scientist, prominent Educationist and the Managing Trustee of Lok Bharati, Sanosara, IITE declared its resolution for the future plan as immediate and long term.

A pre-synopsis viva of a Ph.D. scholars was also organized online in the presence of the Vice Chancellor. It was conducted as soon the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued the new guidelines for viva conduct.

We also scheduled our plan to conduct the entrance test for the upcoming semester in all versatility of the courses we offer. We have also scheduled examination through online mode.

The new semester proceedings have started from our side to make sure we don't compromise on the part of our responsibility in any manner of conduct.

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INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, NEW DELHI

COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted almost all walks of our life including the teaching-learning system both at school and higher education level. Because of the country wide lockdown all the educational institutes are closed down and the students as well as the teachers are stranded in their homes. In spite of that, educational institutions including the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Maidan Garhi, New Delhi have devised new and innovative ways of teaching their students and providing them all kinds of support services. In fact, the technological interventions and innovative initiatives by the university authorities, faculty and staff have made this period highly productive from teaching-learning point of view. During COVID-19 pandemic, IGNOU has taken several innovative initiatives for protecting academic interests of the students even in this period of exigence. Right from the stage of admission to imparting instructions, providing study material and other support services, students have been provided all kinds of support and facility for effective learning while being at their homes. A brief description of such innovative initiatives by the university is given here.

Gainfully Engaging the Student Community

IGNOU imparts education to the learners through open and distance education mode. Normally, the distance learners are provided academic and administrative support through a network of 67 Regional Centres and large number of Study Centres spread all over the country and also in some of the overseas countries. Academic Counsellors at the study centres provide them discipline-wise counselling which is supplemented by various kind of technology-based instructions and support by the faculty from Headquarter. But during the COVID-19 lockdown the face to face support provided by the study centres and the Regional Centres has been disrupted badly. In such a situation, university has taken up several important technology enabled initiatives to reach out to the students and teach them at their homes. These initiatives include programme wise web based academic support, online support guide, online video counselling by the teachers, organizing Facebook Live sessions, e-counselling, online induction and orientation programmes, etc.

Online Induction Programmes for Newly Admitted Students

After completion of each admission cycle, the Regional Centres and Study Centres normally organize face to face induction programmes for the newly admitted students in different programmes. But because of COVID-19 lockdown, it was not possible to organize such programmes in the usual traditional way. Even then the university teachers and faculty at the Regional Centres organised online induction and orientation programmes for the newly admitted students by using the video conferencing tools like Zoom, Google Meet, Cisco WebEx and Microsoft Teams, etc. Various Regional Centres of IGNOU are organizing such induction programmes regularly and guiding the students about their programme structure, instructional system at IGNOU, counselling sessions, process of submission of assignments, etc. In this process of interaction, the students can ask any question, clarify their doubts. Students have found this quite effective and useful.

E-Counselling of the Learners During Lockdown

Because of the country wide lockdown, students cannot go to their study centres to attend the counselling sessions. In that case IGNOU faculty including senior professors in different subjects are regularly conducting interactive video-based counselling from their homes or from the IGNOU studio. These video counselling sessions include two-way video counselling as well as one-way video counselling.

Face Book live sessions have been very extensively used for conducting one-way video counselling, in which teachers are taking live classes regularly mainly from IGNOU Headquarter and students are able to interact through text-based chat and ask their questions. IGNOU Facebook Live has become quite popular among the students. The information about various sessions is publicised well in advance through various social media including Official Twitter account and university website. Facebook live sessions have been conducted by many senior professors of the university including the Pro-Vice Chancellors. Even the Vice Chancellor, IGNOU has also conducted few motivational sessions on Facebook Live. In some cases, teachers are conducting Facebook Live sessions from their home also. During this lockdown period, more than 100 sessions have been conducted for different courses. Another important and useful way of conducting one-way video counselling used by IGNOU is YouTube

Live. Though, the use of YouTube live was started last year for some of the low enrolment programmes under Web Enabled Academic Support (WEAS) scheme at NCIDE, it has picked up great momentum during the lockdown period.

But now with the availability of two-way video conferencing tools like Google Meet, Microsoft Team, Cisco WebEx and Zoom, two-way video counselling is being used for low enrolment programmes. Every day two-three interactive video counselling sessions are being organised by various faculty members for several programmes from their homes. The innovative features of these video sessions include live interactivity through video, text chat, inclusion of power point presentation and recording of the video sessions. The recorded sessions are made available immediately after the session on the WEAS portal of the respective programme. In two-way video counselling, teachers and students are able to interact with each other and also see each other. The increasing number of students attending these sessions indicates their usefulness and importance. It is a very successful experiment by the university during COVID-19. It is also being used by various study centres of the university.

e-Counselling sessions through Facebook Live, Twitter and YouTube Live are being organized by the various Regional Centres also covering different issues and problems of the students related to exam, assignments, online classes. Small video clips focusing on various day to day problems and issues faced by the learners have been prepared by the Regional Centres and placed on the YouTube channels for wider circulation among students. Online video counselling sessions are also conducted by different Academic Counsellors at various Learner Support Centres to resolve academic difficulties of learners on spot.

Web Enabled Academic Support to the Learners

During the COVID-19 lockdown period, the distance learners of different programmes, particularly low enrolment programmes have extensively used the Web Enabled Academic Support (WEAS) platform for different types of online resources and interaction with their teachers and peers. WEAS is an interactive one-stop programme portal for providing academic support to the distance learners, with components like learning content in the form of digital self-learning material, learning resources like audio books, videos, articles, OER,

weekly quiz, and FAQs related to the programme. E-mentoring, collaborative learning through discussion forum, and interactive virtual classroom are some other useful components of the portal. Though, WEAS was launched last year with three programmes, today it hosts 18 courses/programmes. During the lockdown period, the portal has also facilitated the students of the programmes with large enrolments like BSc. programme of School of Sciences. It caters to the learning needs of thousands of learners and has a pool of learning resources including links to available virtual labs. The WEAS portals also hosts the recorded sessions of web-counselling conducted for various programmes by the faculty members from their homes

Similarly, School of Gender and Development Studies has developed an innovative platform- WGS-Forum for engaging the learners in teaching-learning process. It's an asynchronous e-platform open for registered learners that provides access to study material (water marked) and audio-video material supplementing the study material. Assignments are also uploaded. There is an interactive window where the faculty as well as the registered learners can post their queries regarding any concept or theory that any learner asks for clarification or needs additional readings. Faculty also posts new articles and texts that substantiate the discussions in the SIM. Further, any current event that needs to be looked at from a gendered understanding are also opened for interaction for learners. This also helps peer to peer interaction. There is a provision of uploading original creative work by the learners and many learners have posted their art work and poems on this platform. During lockdown period, all the University notifications for the learners were posted on the forum. It has a very good impact factor as the learners get direct access to all the course coordinators at one place and all the study material, programme guide and assignments, audio-video material is available at one platform. Also, it provides platform for peer to peer learning and interaction.

Live Video Counselling Sessions on *Gyan Vani* and *Gyan Dhara*

In order to reach out to the learners in the remotest parts of the country, Door Darshan and radio has always been a powerful media. During COVID-19 pandemic, IGNOU has extensively used this media to provide live counselling to the learners by organizing live programmes through the Gyan Darshan TV Channel and *Gyan Vani*, FM Radio station will jointly telecast the live teleconference/Live Radio Interactive sessions from 21st April, 2020 onward

daily. The live sessions are taken by the subject Professors including the Pro-Vice Chancellors. Daily four to five live sessions have conducted by the subject experts. A series of special awareness programme on COVID-19 issues has been organized by the faculty of School of Health Science (SOHS) on daily basis by Prof. T K Jena, Director, SOHS and Dr. Biplab Jamatia, Assistant Professor, SOH. Similarly, Prof. Saryakam, PVC, IGNOU has been regularly taking live sessions on Suno Kahani. Prof. Nageshwar Rao, Vice Chancellor, IGNOU has also interacted with the learners through these joint live sessions. The innovative feature of this initiative is that the students can watch the live programme through Direct to Home service through various disc operators or cable operators and they can directly interact with their teachers through dedicated telephone service. The programmes are being viewed through television and are being listened through radio without depending on the internet connectivity. It has proved to be a very effective mode of teaching distance learners during this COVID-19 period. Through these sessions, faculty is offering guidance regarding the courses, the study material, assignments and other aspects of various programmes offered by the university.

Apart from this all the GV Delhi programmes were broadcast through relay mode through various Regional centres also and are made available to all the learners. Details of various Teleconferencing sessions / IRC schedules and all other important information are posted on the RC Websites and the same is informed to the learners through SMS and Email.

Availability of e-Resources for Learners

During the COVID-19 pandemic period, various other resources of the university were also made available to the learners through internet in online mode including a large repository of video programmes in its YouTube Channel, 21 courses available on SWAYAM platform, six courses of the three online IGNOU programmes and ten courses of SWAYAMPARBHA. IGNOU SWAYAM PRABHA Channels at channel numbers 23, 24, 26 and 32 were also freely available to all the learners during the lockdown period. The Channel 23 covers courses on Liberal Arts and Humanities; the Channel 24 covers courses on Agriculture, Vocation and allied Sciences; Channel 26 covers programmes of the State Open Universities and the Channel 32 covers the NIOS courses and Teacher Education programmes. School of Computer and Information Sciences, IGNOU has created an Online Support Guide for their students. It

consists of a reservoir of curated material in the form of OER, Quick Reference Cards, e-books, virtual labs, PPTs, and Videos of SOCIS faculty etc. This is a unique initiative in providing a variety of learning material to the learners.

Online Availability of the Study Material

In Open and Distance Learning system, the Self Learning Material (SLM) plays a pivotal role in teaching-learning and it is considered to be the teacher in print. In order to make the SLM available to the students immediately after the admission, university has allowed the learners to access the SLM of their programme from the online repository named as e-Gyankosh. Digitised Self Learning Material available on eGyan Kosh, is freely accessible to all the students through IGNOU website at <http://egyankosh.ac.in>. and also, through mobile app which can be downloaded from the Google Play store. In some of the distance mode programmes which are supported by Web Enabled Academic Support (WEAS), the SLM can be accessed through their WEAS portal also.

Technology Mediated Learner Support and Grievance Redressal

The Student Support Centre at IGNOU is very actively addressing the problems and grievances of the learners during the lockdown period through its online portal iGRAM portal. At the same time, the Regional Centres of IGNOU are also very effectively engaging the learners by providing soft copy of Study Materials and encouraging them for self-study activities. The Regional Centres are arranging web-enabled counselling classes for clearing learners' academic doubts and providing them academic supports. The learners' grievances are also being sorted out by the Regional centres through online platform iGRAM, Email, Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter and over Phone. Timely Academic Support and proper guidance by the RCs has resulted in to substantial reduction in students' queries and grievances.

Some of the Regional Centres are organizing E-Grievance Redressal drive through Facebook Live session on Assignments, Examination, Re-registration, Online Counselling sessions and Project/ Synopsis for the benefit of the students regularly. Strengthening SMS services for RCs to reach out to Learner's more frequently through messages regarding COVID-19 awareness, general wellbeing, inspirational quotes to academic alerts, has been very effective and useful.

Innovative Initiatives in the Field of Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation are very important component at IGNOU. As a part of formative assessment, learners are required to submit their tutor marked assignments project work, synopsis, internship reports, etc. at the study centres or at the Regional Centres before registering for the Term End Exam. But, because of the sudden declaration of the lockdown, it was difficult for the students to submit the same at the RCs or SCs in person. As a solution to this problem, firstly the university allowed the students to submit their hand written scanned assignments through email to the concerned RC. But there were some problems in sorting out of so many emails. Therefore, several RCs have devised of an innovative way of collecting assignments through Google Forms. The learners are advised to submit their assignments through Google forms. At the same time, evaluation of assignments is also being arranged through online mode. Some of the Regional Centres have also provisioned for online submission and evaluation of synopsis, projects, internships, etc. It has helped students in submission and evaluation of assignments, synopsis, projects, and internships on stipulated time. Several thousands of assignments have been received at the various RCs so far through Google form. Thus, handling of online submission of hand written assignments, developing Google Form to collect Assignments from the learners and developing e- feedback form to collect feedback as well as marks/grade in e-award sheet developed in spreadsheet are some of the innovative initiatives in the field of assessment and evaluation.

Similarly, a provision has been made by some of the schools at IGNOU for online submission of the Project Proposals for various courses through email which are evaluated by the faculty, approved and sent back with comments. In the absence of postal and courier services, this provided maximum online assistance to the learners. It also helped in speedy processing and feedback.

Some of the Regional Centres like RC, Kolkata have organized online reorientation of counselors and evaluators for more innovative strategies of assessment delivery for online learners. The reorientation focuses on devising strategies to assess online learners through innovative workplan, learner communities' interactive exchanges, problem solving strategies, etc. RC is also in the process of coordinating a brainstorming with counsellors to devise a consolidated strategy for continuous assessment of online learners based on a performance sheet for every counseling session. The performance sheet

will reflect the learner's internalization of the proceedings delivered on that particular counseling session along with a feedback for the counselor to plan the next session according to learners needs.

In order to encourage and guide the IGNOU students about their concerns and anxiety related to examination, Prof. R. R. Kanhere, Pro-Vice Chancellor has also conducted a special live session on Facebook Live.

Placement Drive through Online Mode

Strategies are being worked out for conduct of online placement drive and creating the job opportunities for distance learners by the university and well as the Regional Centres of the University. IGNOU Regional Centre, Trivandrum has taken initiative in this regard. Regional Centre, Kolkata has initiated towards enhancing employability and capacity management of online learners. For this purpose, they are preparing a monthly open letter that accumulates information regarding opportunities available for learners to upgrade their skills for job market, and employment options. Besides, they have created an online page including Newspaper collage of current affair related information, call for papers, seminar and conference alerts, skill building workshops, employment bazaar and other relevant opportunities for learners. They have created an online platform for IGNOU achievers and a webpage dedicated to their CV, special talents, achievements, awards for dissemination and outreach to potential employers and other job headhunting communities.

Other Innovative Initiatives

In addition to the above-mentioned innovative practices, IGNOU has taken several other initiatives for gainfully engaging the learners in teaching-learning process during the lockdown period. Some of them are described in brief here.

Empowering Faculty for Innovative Use of Technology

During lockdown period, teachers and other staff of the university wanted to use the available technological tools for teaching and interacting with their students. But many of them did not have proper skills for using such tools. In that case, the teachers from different schools were imparted virtual training for using the various ICT tools and techniques like Google Meet and Zoom for video counselling and YouTube Live streaming from home. The faculty of School of Science was trained about conducting online discussion forums, uploading their

learning resource on the web portal of their programme. As leaders in ODL system, IGNOU through the School of Health Sciences organised an Online National Workshop for faculty in the medical, dental, and nursing colleges and faculty of allied health professionals as prospective Academic Counsellors.

Providing Remote Access to Cloud Based E-Resources to the Faculty and Students

Cloud based service adopted to provide publishers' copyright e-contents (subscribed and consortia based) such as American Physical Society, EPW, ISIS, JCCC, JSTOR, Oxford University Press, Project Muse, Springer Link, Taylor and Francis, World e-book Library, etc, through Ez-proxy (an OCLC, UK software) for Remote Access To E-resources (RATE) on 24X7 basis from anywhere. It supported University's students, faculty and academics to pursue their learning and research from home in the times of lock-down while staying safe at home. They can access thousands of e books, journals and databases through this service.

In addition to the above-mentioned initiatives by the IGNOU for gainfully engaging the learners, the university encouraged them for maximum use of the various initiatives and e- resources of MHRD, UGC and other such organizations like National Digital Library of India (NDLI) for online learning during COVID-19 pandemic.

Encouraging Students towards Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

During COVID-19 period, National Centre for Innovations in Distance Education (NCIDE) at IGNOU has taken several new initiatives to engage the interested students in the creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship by organizing different types of online and virtual activities. For this purpose, a one-stop portal called as ऋVRIETI has been developed for IGNOU students who are interested in innovation, start-ups and entrepreneurship. It has sections like IGNOU Schemes, Resources, Inspiring Stories, Events/Workshop and Important Websites. The section on IGNOU Schemes highlights the various schemes of the university for its learners related to innovation, start-ups and entrepreneurship. The Resources section has links to a few online courses and learning resources on innovation. Inspiring Stories highlight the stories of successful entrepreneurs. The Events/Workshop page highlights the latest events organised by NCIDE, IIC etc. The login page provides a link to the student

portal of **NEVRIETI**: which is password-protected and has additional facilities like a variety of educational resources like documents, web resources, video resources etc, links to online courses, besides asynchronous and synchronous modes of communication with the registered learners of IGNOU.

Besides it, a special talk series on 'Being Your Own Boss' is being organized virtually for the shortlisted students for Idea to Start-up scheme of the university. The talk series includes talks on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Business Plan Development, setting up your Enterprise, Setting up Start-ups, etc.

In order to foster the culture of creativity and innovation among the learners and IGNOU fraternity during this period; NCIDE has started a series of online Creativity Challenge for IGNOU students and fraternity from May, 2020. The first challenge focuses on Innovative ways of addressing the Problems This first Challenge aims at understanding how innovative the IGNOU students and fraternity are in solving the day-today problems in emergency situation and how creatively they describe that innovative solution. The problems areas may be related to health, food, studies, office work, connecting with students/ teachers or any other household problem. All the participants will be provided e-Certificate of Participation and the best five responses will be awarded Certificate of Merit. The next Creativity Challenge in the series will be upcoming in the following week.

Besides it, the Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) at IGNOU has been encouraging the students and faculty to watch the online Leadership Talks and Webinars on various topics on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Start-up, Intellectual Property Rights and Policies, being organized by the MHRD 's Innovation Council (MIC) through Twitter Live, Facebook Live and YouTube Live during the COVID-19 Lockdown period. Thousands of IGNOU students across India are watching these talks regularly and interacting through twitter and emails. Teachers, academics and staff members of IGNOU headquarters and Regional Centres are also watching these talks.

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IIHMR UNIVERSITY, JAIPUR

COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world sooner than we knew for IIHMR University. Remote meetings and online teachings have become the default mode of learning for all of us, and it has radically changed us. This tech shift was initially a terrible shock, frustrating, mind-boggling, as we all are from across generations had to be digital native overnight, but we soon grappled the new norms of tech mediated learning and teaching. Over the last 35 years in university, this crossover was happening to us in bits and pieces, but today we all are engaged in blended learning. We at IIHMR University, Jaipur always believe in remaining relevant to the masses at the same time continually innovating and evolving ourselves. We believe the workplace of tomorrow must innovate or perish.

Our team has shown high resilience and commitment to adapt and lead by example quickly. Digitized exams, online mentoring, course discussion meetings, online teaching, training programs, webinars, virtual internships, virtual seminars, group discussions almost all aspects of teaching and learning currently we are managing online. For this, we are using new virtual tools of project management, to meeting tools like Microsoft team and Skype for business, and GotoWebinar. Of course, it does not come easy, but amidst all this, we all are keeping the morale of our students high through constant connect and mentorship during this uncertain time. We are enjoying a significant class of students online and teaching with more personalized competency-based courses.

We are armed with innovative programs with a ground-breaking pedigree. In the post-pandemic scenario, we have created an ecosystem of students, industry, and alumni who are researchers, visionaries, and innovators spanning disciplines and industries. We are using this time to build our techno education system and driving changes seamlessly and making our students ready to face the challenges. We are quickly attuned to new programs and providing more significant emphasis on analytics, leadership, and career development.

The good news is we are out of our inertia, more confident and optimistic, and quickly changing our habits and working towards some of the new waves of digital problems. However, we shall overcome it soon. We are putting fairness at the heart of delivering, just not falling into the rat race, as an institution we were prepared to tackle this innovatively. Yes, we had scrambles, and improvisations during the process, but that virus was quite short-lived.

In these modern and uncertain times, as we negotiate what this pandemic means personally and globally, we crave and need access to timely, credible, and clear information to help us understand and manage risk. As the dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to evolve, we felt it is essential than ever to ensure people have up-to-date information, contextualized to their needs and environment. Their learning needs and wellbeing are not compromised. COVID-19 urged us to stay even more focused. To follow the social distancing, we began the institute lockdown on March 20, 2020, and initiated the Work from Home for our team. We initiated our EdTech journey keeping in mind six aspects-

Examine the readiness and choose the most relevant tools

We decided to use high-technology and low-technology solutions based on the reliability of local power supplies, internet connectivity, and digital skills of our faculty and students. We are working on building video lessons; this could range through integrated digital learning platforms, MOOCs, etc.

Protect data privacy and data security

We realized that we need to assess data security when uploading data or educational resources to web spaces, as well as when sharing them with other organizations or individuals. We ensured that the use of applications and platforms does not violate any data privacy. Also, in times of increased online uses and surge in cybercrime, we have worked on strengthening our systems.

Prioritize solutions to address psychosocial challenges before teaching

We decided to mobilize available tools to connect with parents, faculty members, and students with each other. Through emails, virtual meetings, messages, we are reaching out to them and having constant interaction and addressing possible psychosocial challenges that students may face when they are isolated.

Plan the study schedule of the new academic year

Organized discussions with stakeholders to examine the possible duration of university closures and working on how our program should focus on teaching new knowledge or enhance students' knowledge of previous lessons. We are planning the schedule depending on the situation of the affected zones, level of studies, needs of students.

Provide support to faculty and students on the use of digital tools

We have formulated an online program review committee, and we are organizing brief handholding sessions for our faculty members. We are helping our faculty members to prepare for live streaming of lessons. Similar support to connect and learn online was provided to our students.

Blend appropriate approaches and limit the number of applications and platforms.

We are blending tools or media that are available for most students, both for synchronous communication and lessons and for asynchronous learning. We are integrating Microsoft Teams into our learning system. It will avoid overloading students by asking them to download and test too many applications or platforms.

Our Initiatives

- Automatic Shifting to Online teaching Institute shifted all its classes in online mode. It supported large class and enabled a safe environment, interaction, and launching of discussion forum. Microsoft Teams was used by the faculty to conduct classes from home. We are working on further strengthening our learning management system.

• Webinar

IIHMR University is organizing a variety of webinars for all stakeholders. The webinars will address different topics, but all will consider strategies to maintain the continuity of learning, especially for students. Each webinar can be accessed online and includes several expert presenters from different parts of the world. A moderator facilitates the discussion between the presenters and the audience.

• MOOC Courses

Our students are also engaged in pursuing guided value-added courses on various MOOC platforms such as SWAYAM, Udemy, Coursera, edx etc. More importantly, our campus recently got approval for the 'Coursera for Campus' program, thus increasing the bandwidth of online learning for our students with a flexibility to choose from an exhaustive list of 3800+ courses offered by the top universities across the world.

• Work from Home Internship

Further, most of our students continue to pursue their summer internship programs on 'work from home' (WFH) basis with some of our partners. Further,

for a few of those partners having logistics challenges to engage our students for scheduled SIPs, we are engaging them in a guided research project involving faculty mentors to produce a publication in SCOPUS/ABDC journals or listed case folios. Field experience will be provided to students as and when time permits and if it is conducive to do so. Faculty mentors are constantly engaged with them, and providing them mentoring support online,

- ***Work from Home Faculty Engagement***

All our faculty members are engaged in WFH pursuing research, teaching, evaluation, guiding students online for SIP and working with Ph.D. research scholars, developing new courses and digital content for existing courses, get trained on new pedagogical tools for blended learning through our IT training department and various MOOC platforms. Most importantly many of them are actively engaged in active research and we are working on bring out a special issue of our journal on health management on COVID-19 soon.

- ***Access to Digital content***

Access to digital content, e-learning material through remote access to our digital library platform, various databases, and research content is made available to all students, faculty, staff, and Ph.D. scholars. Daily digital newspaper and latest news can also be accessed by the staff, students, and faculty members.

- ***Continuation of admissions and placement activities***

The placement of batch 2018-20 is almost over, with less than 10% of students remaining to be placed. Admissions are almost halfway, and we are apprehending that admissions may slow down in view of the COVID-19 situation. Nevertheless, continuous addition to applications is happening. We conducted online group discussions, and interviews for ten students during the period of lockdown, as well as our UMAT exam, was also conducted online. We have almost replicated our offline process online with a better conversion rate. Before initiating the process mock drill was organized and also complete support was provided by the IT team to aspirants.

- ***Online Examination Platform***

In response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are moving our centre-based examination to online delivery. We are doing this to balance

the wellbeing of our candidates and their families with the desire of many students to complete their current studies despite these unprecedented global circumstances. In view of present uncertain COVID scenario it is proposed to conduct the examinations online. To maintain the sanctity and integrity of examination following measures will be adopted:

a. Use of an online platform/service provider that allows multiple checks for student identity and online support so that the students can be proctored during examinations.

b. The questions papers to be framed in such a manner that the questions are more conceptual, and application based. It will force a student to think and answer rather than just read and cheat.

• *Online Executive Education Programs*

IIHMR University has been one of the foremost training partners for leading corporates in India. It has consistently offered customized MDPs (Management Development Programmes) for top companies in India based on their requirements. The programs on offer are both long term and short term. We have planned our forthcoming training programs online.

• *Online Convocation for graduating batch*

University is planning to organize E-convocation. The degree will be conferred on students of the pass out the batch, and the same will be made available to them through email as well as uploaded on ERP. Similarly, the Grade Sheets, Diploma Certificates, and Merit Certificates are being uploaded on ERP, which our students can access. The original copies will be sent to them on the next day of the convocation by post.

• *Continuous mentoring for creating an atmosphere of trust*

We have a robust system and culture of mentoring, wherein faculty and students share a bond that transcends beyond learning. Nothing could have worked more effectively for students than the assurance shared by mentors. It was vital for us to tell our students that their learning is taken care of, and the academic calendar is adhered to. Our system of mentoring also helped to keep in touch with students and parents to address their concerns. Mentors regularly planned virtual meetings with students online as well as WhatsApp sessions.

- ***Customized surveys/feedback forms***

We have completely automated our feedback mechanism and supporting our faculty and students to conduct online surveys and customize them using Jotform.

- ***Virtual work meeting***

We are meeting in various smaller and larger groups every day to discuss and plan for students wellbeing, monitoring our progress, redesigning our curriculum, integration of technology and smooth sailing this journey.

- ***Worst scenario planning and SoPs for post lockdown opening***

Planning for the post lockdown opening is extremely important. In all possibilities, the lockdown opening for educational institutions will be subject to a lot of protocol and restrictions. We are also prepared for worst-case planning and has started the process of preparing ourselves for post lockdown working. The worst-case planning has taken into account five different scenarios of time of starting of academic activities, which extend up to the end of December 2020. The planning has been done on all fronts—academic delivery, campus safety, sanitization and hygiene norms, and budget. We have heard about flipping our classroom, but this pandemic has made us think of a new way of learning using technology. Jose Bowen has beautifully illustrated in the book "Teaching Naked." Bowen's practical advice on engaging students with new technology while restructuring classes into more active learning environments sounds so accurate and helpful today.

Given the wholehearted participation of our students, faculty, staff, and research scholars, we are already witnessing some very progressive trends ever since we took up the initiatives mentioned above during this lockdown. We are also experiencing that the current crisis is helping us become more creative, adaptive, agile, and resilient as we teach ourselves newer and better ways of academic and research engagements. Salute to academic warriors!

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ICFAI UNIVERSITY, JHARKHAND, RANCHI

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, regular classes at the ICFAI University , Jharkhand had to be suspended since 3rd week of March 2020. Because of the lock-down restrictions and physical distancing norms, students could not move about freely. Added to this, as the number of COVID-19 positive cases have been rising , with no signs of abatement, future has been looking uncertain. Consequently, most of the students have been feeling uncertain about their future and have been feeling isolated, though they have been staying with their parents. Understanding the situation, ICFAI University Jharkhand formulated a multi-pronged strategy to address the underlying issues. Key objectives of the strategy are to ensure continuity of learning of the students and divert their attention from negative zone to a positive zone so that they are destressed.

Launch of *Swaadhyay*, Self-Learning Digital Learning Management System

On the day, the lock-down was announced, Vice Chancellor of the University had a brain storming session with the faculty team on the challenges faced and on how to continue studies of the students, who were in the midst of the semester . After considering various alternatives, it was decided to launch Digital Learning Management System (LMS) uniformly across all of its disciplines, Management, Engineering, IT and Law . Within 10 days of the lock-down, the University launched Online Digital Learning Management Platform , “SWAADHYAY” so that students can continue their studies , staying safely at home. The University quickly trained and motivated its faculty members to upload a variety of digital study materials , like PPTs, Videos, Video Lectures, Assignments, Quizzes, Case Studies etc for all the courses of the programs onto Swaadhyay, Students were happy to go through the study material , at their convenience.

On a survey of the students , it was noticed that 56% of the students accessed it through Smart Phones and the balance through Lap Tops and Desk Top computers, Analysis of the survey results showed that 83% of the students studied using Swaadhyay for 2-3 hours per day and 73% felt that it was very easy to use . While 53% of the students liked the PPTs , 33% liked the videos and video lectures by the teachers. When asked about the benefits derived from Swaadhyay, 35% mentioned convenience , whereas 27% liked the facility

to go through the study material repeatedly and the balance students liked the features of self-tests and additional study material like e-Books and articles. The biggest challenge faced by 66% of the students was issue with speed of internet. In a nutshell, it is the ease of use and the benefits that motivated the students to adopt the new learning platform, Swaadhyay.

Conduct of Online Classroom Sessions

The University also arranged interactive and engaging classes for 3 hours per day through video-conferencing. Prior to that, all the faculty members were trained on Digital Educational Technology Tools like Poll, Mentimeter (Polling), Quizziz (forQuizzing) and Testmoz (for creating interesting tests embedding images and videos and grade the students automatically) and Break-out groups (for conduct of group discussions) . The University adopted Flipped-Class Room model, wherein students are expected to go through *Swaadhyay* Study material before attending online sessions, during which students actively participate in discussions and quizzes. The students were assessed through continuous evaluation, using formative and normative assessments .When a survey on pedagogical tools was conducted among the students, it was found that 90% of the students liked the Quizziz the most , as it was very interesting, followed by Mentimeter (55%) and Poll (25%), Class attendance varied from 72% to 85%. A few students residing in the rural areas faced challenges with regard to Internet bandwidth. For the benefit of the students, all the online classes were recorded and the videos were posted on *Swaadhyay* so that the students that missed the classes could go through them, at their convenience. Students that attended classes also accessed the online session videos as they helped in refreshing the learning during the classes.

Evaluation of Students and Declaration of Results

Evaluation of the final year students (graduating in 2020) was completed by 2nd week of June 2020 and results were declared by 30th June 2020 and provisional completion certificates were issued. It helped them to pursue their careers , in industry or higher studies . Online Examination was conducted for the intermediate students (other than final year students) and their results are expected to be declared by first week of Aug 2020.As their careers were not affected, stress levels of the students came down.

Campus Placements

The University arranged for campus placements by way of interviews through Video Conferencing. Besides, the University also persuaded the companies that offered placements prior to COVID-19 not to withdraw the campus placement offers given earlier.

Virtual Internships

In the normal course, as a part of the program structure, students of all programs and batches are required to undergo Internships in Industry so as to acquire hands-on skills. As it is not possible to visit organisations physically, the University organised Online Internships in Industry in Management, IT and Law Programs, whereas Engineering students had to take up in-house projects. Reputed companies like Larsen & Toubro, Sterlite Industries, Shriram Finance group and a number of practicing advocates and Law firms offered Online Internships to the students. Prior to allocation of the projects, students were imparted Digital Skills (like conduct of online surveys , online tools for analysis, conduct of meetings using Video Conferencing etc). Ms Shobhana Samarth, MBA students of the University received the award for the 'Best Virtual Internship in India' from Shriram Life Insurance Company .

Utilisation of Time by the Students

ICFAI University also encouraged the students to utilise the time to pursue MOOC Courses in the areas of their interest. A number of students participated in various Quiz programs and received awards. The University has also taken the initiative to organize Online Panel discussions, as a part of Charcha Manchseries, to update the students on the recent developments in technology, industry and society. In the last two months, six webinars were conducted with global industry experts on topics like Employment Opportunities in COVID-19 times, Digital Transformation of Business, Cyber Security , Artificial Intelligence, Legal Protection during COVID-19 , Developments in Mining Industry etc. A number of students and faculty members ,not only from the University but also other Institutions across India , participated actively in them.

De-stressing the Students

Due to the prolonged physical distancing restrictions , students are unable to socialise physically and some of them have been feeling isolated. Besides,

as number of cases have been on the rise continuously, students are feeling uncertain about the future. In order to destress the students, the University adopted a number of measures. “Express Yourself “ competition was held wherein students sent sketches, cartoons, poems etc. Select entries were posted on Social Media. A Virtual Music competition was conducted ,which received excellent response , Faculty members of the University have been in continuous contact with the students and counselled the students appropriately. Vice-Chancellor of the University interacted with the students through Video Conferencing and addressed them through You Tube .

Social Outreach Activities

The University has also undertaken a number Social-Outreach activities to help the underprivileged sections of the society , who lost their livelihood during the crisis . The University ,under the leadership of Vice Chancellor, launched “*Bhojan Patra*”, scheme wherein Food Kits (Rice, Pulses, Oil, Sugar, Salt, Spices etc.) along with soap & masks were distributed to the needy families in 16 villages in the neighbourhood the University. The villagers were also educated on Spatial Distancing Measures, Sanitisation and Hygiene. These activities received good press coverage from the leading news papers and enhanced the image of the University.Details of the activities taken up the University are posted on its website (www.iujharkhand.edu.in) and Face Book page ([icfajharkhand](https://www.facebook.com/icfajharkhand)).This has motivated the students and gave them a sense of pride.

Going Forward

As the COVID-19 times tend to get extended , the University is smartly adapting itself to the New Normal , by digital transformation of its operations , including admissions and academic delivery during 2020-21 academic year. Research Aptitude Test for admission to PhD Program (part-time) in Management was conducted online ,wherein candidates could take the test online from home but with remote proctoring, driven by Artificial Intelligence. Personal Interviews were conducted using Video Conferencing. Selected students joined the Course Work-I online *Swaadhay*-II classes, which commenced in Second week of July 2020. The University plans to start academic year from 2nd week of August 2020 for senior students and early September 2020 for newly admitted students.Academic sessions will be conducted using flipped-classroom model using *Swaadhay*-II, which incorporates Outcomes

Based education. In order to enable the Engineering and IT students to conduct Laboratory Experiments from home, the university tied up with IIT, Delhi for Virtual Labs and trained its faculty members on the same . Faculty members of the University are allowed to work- from- home. A COVID-19 cell was constituted to take all requisite steps to ensure hygiene in the campus and redress the grievances of the students and staff , if any. All efforts are being made to conduct academics and other operations of the University in the New Normal Environment , without compromising on quality .

Conclusion

While COVID-19 has wrought unprecedented damage to day-to-day life and livelihood, it is possible to contain the damage by formulating an appropriate strategies and implement the same , by effective communication and motivation of all the stakeholders - students , faculty members and staff. Besides, it presents an excellent opportunity for digital transformation of an Institution, which can bring in substantial tangible and intangible benefits , in the immediate as well as distant future.

The University is led by:

Prof O R S Rao,

Vice Chancellor,

ICFAI University, Jharkhand

(orsrao.icfai@gmail.com)

IMS UNISON UNIVERSITY, DEHRADUN

IMS Unison University in pursuance of excellence in education, has set a remarkable precedent by enhancing academic quotient through series of progressive efforts in this direction and by changing dynamics of continuous learning with a smooth transition to online mode during this unprecedented situation. When, during a pandemic, smooth conduction of online classes seemed difficult, the university has set records by establishing an accurate and regular academic delivery to students. Beyond this, when the academic fraternity was debating whether and how to conduct examinations, IUU has adopted an efficient platform for successful conduction of examination and making e-examination a ground breaking reality in the field online learning.

E-Teaching Learning at IUU

Learning does not end at the lecture rooms alone. At IMS Unison University we are continually investing in technology & facilities to ensure that the students are able to access the high-quality education. Online learning has become saviour in these testing times of such a pandemic. In these testing circumstances due to impromptu closure, the biggest benefactors and the blessings in disguise are the online learning platforms. During the time of lockdown, University has made tremendous efforts in successfully conducting Online Classes through G-Suite. Online end-term examinations of semesters and trimesters for all our programs were conducted through Artificial Intelligence based Proctored Software.

During initial days of lockdown in the month of March 2020, most of our faculty members were not aware of how to conduct classes online. Our students were also not clear how to absorb online learning. However, sometimes such challenges also bring many opportunities. Our faculty members who were earlier not conversant with online delivery, have since learned through our inhouse training programs and developed their competency in online delivery of learning. The key areas for success of our effective teaching-learning experience was none other than training. We had conducted three training programs in campus for all our faculty members before lockdown on 25th March 2020 on both Google G-suite and later on Microsoft Teams. Similar programs were also conducted for all students through online mode. Also, to reduce the anxiety among students for appearing online proctor examination,

we had conducted three to five times mock test for each of our program. To ensure maximum participation and good attendance of students, we had also introduced weekly evaluation in the form of quiz, case analysis and assignments. A detailed MIS was also developed in Excel and circulated to faculty members for daily reporting and accordingly corrective measures were taken from time to time, based on the MIS. Individual students were contacted for feedback and counselled accordingly.

During COVID-19, our online courses gave students full control over their own learning, and the freedom to learn at their own speed. The most important development was that these classes, as per original class timetable did not leave any scope for idle ruminations on the COVID anxiety, and focused their complete attention on the learning process. This also helped the parents in seeing the academic delivery to their children right in their presence, without any break during the lockdown. Through the feedback on individual subjects, the teachers realized that not all courses were straight way amenable for online delivery. Different efforts and methods needed to be adopted for different subjects.

The classes were conducted through online platform via. Google Classroom and Google Meet. The remaining classes after lockdown were taken up on Microsoft Teams. This also made it convenient for the faculty members to conduct classes without any distortion.

In a short span of time, Google Classroom, Google Meet and later, MS Teams have become viable platforms to manage online teaching-learning for both students and teachers.

In the initial days, we faced bandwidth issues owing to students scattered across different geographies, including remote villages and hilly areas. The university made every possible effort by aligning technical facilities to touch the lives of the students. In addition to maintaining regularity in classes, students were given online graded assignments and quizzes on weekly basis as part of their continuous evaluation process.

Despite of our all proactive decisions and possible efforts, this "forced" online learning has its issues! While learning continues, it cannot replicate the teacher-student connect and the peer-to-peer learning that happens in a face to face classroom. There are technological options, but they cannot supplant tacit

learning of physical classrooms. Also, students with dated technology may find it difficult to keep up. This is not easy for many of the students scattered across the country. Some students unfamiliar with online learning or low-income students with issues like housing and food insecurity, lack of access to Wi-Fi and the internet and lack of laptops/desktops are finding it difficult to cope.

E-Proctored Examinations at IUU

The prime objective was to minimize the loss of academic time and enable the students to graduate on time. With this in mind, University quickly equipped itself to conduct the assessments and exams online, when due to lockdown, students were not able to come to the campus to appear for exams.

When it comes to conduct of examination, it is vital that the quality of the question paper is set in congruence to the high academic standards of the institution. To address this, the format of the question paper was drawn by external subject experts. As the mode was online, it was crucial to analyse whether an average student would be able to complete the examination within the stipulated time. For this reason, for each of the subjects, the junior lecturers of the respective subjects were asked to take the examination and analyse the difficulty level and time required. Accordingly, modifications like reducing questions for the given time were introduced. Further, each question was moderated for graded scale of difficulty and categorized in different sections of the question paper.

One of the chief concerns of the university was the poor bandwidth available to students in some remote and hilly areas. Uninterrupted internet connectivity for longer duration is a reasonable apprehension for such locations. To address this issue, the software used was customized and flexible enough to facilitate exams on desktop, laptops and even mobile phones with the lowest possible bandwidth.

After registration, each student was provided a unique ID and a link for the purpose of taking examination through AI Based Software. The student would only be able to access the paper after filling the required credentials and prescribed verifications. The software finally used was customized after exhaustive efforts from the service providers in collaboration with the university IT team. Also, the software had other important smart features like keeping tab on new browser tabs/windows being opened, students would be able to navigate

between the questions(forward and backward). Further, they can mark the questions as 'done/to-review' with set colour coding to help them hit only the questions to be reviewed when they have lesser time left. Another smart feature was also inbuilt to take care of sudden power outages/other technical issues the students might face. The student would be able to resume from the same point as the software auto-saves the content, the student need not think about keeping extra minutes to submit the answer sheet.Also, the software auto-submitted the answer sheet as soon as the allotted time was over.

The biggest challenge for the university was to foresee and overcome every possible technical issue and ensure time bound resolution of all such problems. For this purpose, the university had constituted a Technical Support Team,consisting of faculty andIT staff members, who worked round the clock to mitigate all possible contingencies that could arise during the conduct of examination. Additionally, we had identified student representatives from each batch for the purposes of maintaining effective communication, identifying problems and their redressal in the best possible way.

It was a well-planned proctored examination wherein every practice was monitored with due compliance to regulations set by university norms. Fairness, an indispensable parameter, was ensured during the examination by setting of question papers by external experts of the subjects. All answer sheets were mandatorily run through Anti-plagiarism Software – Turnitin. The evaluation was done only after satisfactory report of anti-plagiarism software.

The students were provided with supplementary instructions, the “dos and don'ts” of the examination, detailed guidelines for taking Online examination, general instructions as well as special Instructions for mobile users making the online examination as examinee friendly as possible. Faculty members created small videos on necessary steps to be followed during examinations.

Training and mock drills of faculty from both, the standpoint of examination as well as evaluation was conducted. There was a complete revamping of the technical facilities including desktops, software, bandwidth support etc. so as to enable plagiarism check and evaluation of answer sheets of all the subjects of difference schools of the university.

After having conducted online classes on Google Classroom/ Meet, the university set out on its mission of taking examinations online so that our

students were in no way adversely affected. And for this purpose, we had to ensure that we bring out the best balance of synergies- technology as well as due-compliance to ethical standards at par with offline paper-based examination. As we moved ahead, at every step we were faced with unforeseeable constraints and the university with its 24*7 Technical Support Team, regular mock drills with students and active support and cooperation from students turned online examinations into a reality. After having tested various platforms and their compatibilities at several bandwidths, the Mid-Term Examinations were conducted from 27th April 2020 to 2nd May 2020 in online mode using the software 'G-Suite for Education'. A whopping 99% of students appeared in the examination. What is remarkable is the spirit of the University! In furtherance of its goal of academic excellence, the pattern of question was kept unchanged. The nature of question paper was still subjective with modifications to equip itself to the new platform and suit the requirements of different subject areas of different schools of studies. To ensure sanctity of the Mid Term Examinations, the answers submitted by the students were run through URKUND plagiarism software, on a pilot basis.

The End-Term Examinations were conducted from 1st June 2020 to 10th June 2020 in online mode. These examinations being the most crucial examinations for the entire semester required an even better platform to be conducted on and therefore a state-of-the-art software that was Artificial Intelligence enabled examination software with proctorial features. This software was provided by a trusted, reputed software agency with a pan-India presence. The software made sure that the students did not have any kind of disadvantage due to sudden power outages, network/internet related issues as they would be able to start the examination from the same point and would be given extra-time as deemed fit. Over five mock tests were conducted to familiarise the students with the pattern of the questions and test the online platform, as it was a big transition for them as well. A dedicated Examination Help Line was set up, manned by faculty and IT staff, to help students before and during the examination for any problem, whether related to the question paper or IT and technical issues. Close to 100 percent students appeared for the examinations. The question paper was a subjective with application-based questions. For maintaining quality, they were set by internal faculty as well as external subject experts. The end term examination answer books were run through anti-plagiarism software Turnitin.”

The students and faculty both were satisfied with the manner in which the examinations were conducted. Again, the conduct of online examination was a source of continuous learning for the teachers as well and it uncovered scope for improvement in both conduct and technical issues. Based on the cooperation of and support of all stakeholders, IMS Unison University was able to complete its Academic Session 2019-20 on time and also start the Academic Session 2020-21 on time.

The University is led by:

Prof Gautam Sinha

Vice Chancellor

IMS Unison University,

Dehradun

INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT, KARACHI, PAKISTAN*

Lockdown has crash-landed all educational institutions into the 21st century education paradigms with a bang. Universities have been forced to understand, adopt and implement paradigms that may have otherwise taken at least two decades to adopt. Many universities have taken on the challenge. This roller coaster drive has enabled many of the universities to survive the "avalanche" of digital disruption and has made even some "elephants to dance" which a gradual transition may have led to a gradual agonizing perish like the one witnessed by Encyclopaedia Britannica or Encyclopaedia Americana in the face of wikipedia type challenge.

The suddenness of this transition has enabled acquisition and adoption of digital learning platforms by universities. These platforms have served as a great equalizer in bridging the North-South digital divide. Going over the webinars of Harvard Business School and other such universities, I found that the Moodle like LMS resources available to us are offering similar pedagogical activities that seem to be available to those industry leaders. They are talking about the same issues in pedagogy that our faculty are discussing using our platforms. I think the preceding observation is more true for our private sector universities as compared to the big public universities with outdated campus management systems. Moreover, we in the South don't seem to be encumbered by the resource constraints arising from the revenue models of big universities there that have a major component coming from dorms, dining halls, gyms, sports stadiums, and campus student facilities. Last but not the least, the suddenness of this transition has thrown the field wide open and our local entrepreneurs are evenly poised to develop their own technologies and platforms to rival those available in the West.

The emerging consensus is suggesting that the use of online education platforms is here to stay. These platforms provide ease of managing a large number of courses, better delegation, ease of monitoring of the classroom engagement, ease of managing Assurance of Learning (AoL), and ease of linkage with industry and alumni. These efficiencies coupled with virtual existence

* The Article has been provided by Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA) Hyderabad.

during lockdown has transformed all the educational processes of universities into paper-less operations. This transformation has made universities more scalable and now offer them a tremendous opportunity for spreading their access to poor areas and even beyond their catchment region.

Online education has also unleashed out of the box thinking from faculty and students. On one hand, faculty members' creativity can be seen in the explosion of innovative ideas that they are implementing and new ways of organizing pedagogical activities. On the other hand, laggard faculty members and those just clocking in their times have been exposed. This shakeup promises a better configuration of the portfolio of our faculty members.

The bureaucratic regulators of higher education in our countries have also gone through a cultural shock. Most of their assumptions for evaluating the quality of universities have been exposed. They have gone through a radical shift in the reassessment of the underlying assumptions behind the measures of conventional quality such as the area of university campus and buildings, size of covered area per student, physical labs, secrecy of papers and examinations, size of lecture halls etc. They have understood that there are other parameters of educational quality which they were reluctant to consider earlier, or not give them enough weightage.

Overall, I see a positive impact on the management of education, delivery of education and learning of students. There is a great potential for universities to truly become Peter Senge's "Schools that Learn".

The Institute is led by:

Dr. Syed Irfan Hyder,

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THE ICFAI FOUNDATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, HYDERABAD*

(DEEMED-TO-BE-UNIVERSITY),

In the current testing times, when social distancing is the most-effective way to stop the spread of COVID-19, we at The ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (IFHE) stay committed to providing a continuous learning environment for our students. Ever since the classes were suspended on 16th March 2020, we have been sending PPTs to students and also using real time learning communication systems (Zoom, Google hangout), SWAYAM, MOOCs, NPTEL, LMS, YouTube and other online teaching platforms. The faculty members are constantly in touch with the students to clarify their doubts on phone and through chat-rooms and WhatsApp. The library has provided online access to the students and faculty. The doctoral students are constantly in touch with their supervisors online to ensure good progress in their work. We have conducted FDPs to our faculty to teach and conduct examinations online.

We have started conducting online MBA classes for both first and second year students from June 2020. There are about 1200 students in each year from all over the country. The internal and final examinations will also be conducted online. End semester examinations for B.Tech and BBA students have also been conducted online. Our Strategic Management committee, Academic council and Board of Management meetings are conducted online. We plan to conduct our Planning and Monitoring Board and Board of Management meetings online. All other meetings are also conducted online. We have a practice of conducting weekly departmental seminars which immensely help in promoting research. This practice is now being continued online.

For our flagship Management program we already have a flipped classroom by virtue of using case method of teaching. This is a great advantage for us as we can now use active learning approaches using real life cases developed by our world-class Case Research Center in our online teaching, rather than just passive approaches like just taking the classes online. This leads to better engagement of the students being taught in the online program. Our Case

* The Article has been provided by Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA) Hyderabad.

Research Center offers more than 6000 cases, that are being used across the world for online learning during this fight against Covid-19.

Having said that, we believe the future of higher education lies in blended learning or hybrid learning – a combination of online and classroom teaching. After normalcy is restored we plan to go for a blend of online and face-to-face classroom teaching. The interaction between the faculty and the student, the human touch and above all the collaborative peer group learning is extremely important. There is no substitute for it. Apart from interaction among the students which is curriculum-based, collaborative learning happens in a classroom and through the multiple student clubs at IFHE campuses especially in professional courses such as business management, law and science and technology. We have 50 clubs (eg., Yoga, Environment, Samavesh to promote cultural integration) through which students take an active part in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. These clubs help students develop team spirit and leadership. Living on campus creates a strong bond among students which goes a long way in making them better alumni. Needless to say, the contribution of alumni in the development of the institution is immense.

To summarize, in order to circumvent the Covid-19, we will go the whole hog with online teaching employing active learning approaches that will keep the students engaged. Subsequently, we want to get back to a mix of online and face-to-face classroom teaching as each has its own advantages and is ideal for quality education. We will reassess what part of teaching delivery should be done in person and what part should be offered online.

The University is led by

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THE ICFAI UNIVERSITY, DEHRADUN

In view of COVID 19 and the subsequent closure of the Universities and in order that the Teaching Learning process is not hampered but is carried on smoothly during this period and the syllabus is completed on time, ICFAI UNIVERSITY DEHRADUN decided that the students be taught through Flipped Learning mode during this period starting from 16th March 2020 till date.

Flipped Learning has come to the forefront in education in recent times. It's a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space in an interactive learning environment where the educator guides students by means of PPT presentations, video lectures, pdf files notes etc using various online tools. The students are taught to apply these concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter. It maximises learning by moving content delivery on line.

Thereafter the students are given assignments based on the content provided and even though the teachers and students are not physically present before each other, this pedagogical approach can help to assess and evaluate the students effectively.

- The respective subject teacher will identify the topics to be covered which were submitted starting of semester (e.g: session plans) and provide learning materials (Course handout: Power Point presentation, lectures and names of reference books pertaining to that particular topic) .
- There will be assignments at the end of each topic to evaluate the students on the comprehension of that topic.
- Students are required to submit those assignments on the deadline date stated by the Faculty during this period.
- Assignments should be duly completed and mailed on or before the said date.
- **Two faculties were nominated as coordinators from each school to submit summary reports subject wise, faculty wise by every week end.**

- Vice Chancellor with Registrar and HOD's were monitoring the progress every week and online meetings were conducted every 15 days during the lockdown till date.

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JAGAN NATH UNIVERSITY, JHAJJAR

COVID-19 pandemic, a highly infectious disease caused by new virus, has had an increasing impact on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) around the world. Corona virus has significantly disrupted the higher education sector, which is crucial determinant of country's economic future. It is likely to have an impact on country's competitiveness and their ability to foster advanced skills and development. The bigger concern on everybody's mind today is the effect of the disease on the employment rate. Recently, graduating students fearing jobs crunch and withdrawal of offers by corporate. As per the CMIE estimates, the unemployment rate shot up from 8.4% in the mid-March to 23% in April and urban unemployment rate to 30.9%.

Since the pandemic has transferred the old chalk-talk teaching model to one driven by technology, this disruption is pushing HEIs to work out on e-learning solutions, A large number of open source digital learning solutions and learning management software need to be adopted so that faculty can conduct teaching online. These are number of issues involved in it, which need to handled strategically at national and institutional levels.

COVID-19 pandemic has posed many serious challenges for HEIs in delivery of their programs. Since March, 2020, when it was almost the mid of the current semester, the conduct of classes and other academic activities in institutions have been disrupted due to announcement of lockdowns and shutdown of institutions. To mitigate the loss of studies, the HEIs adopted various short-terms measures by way of organising online classes, holding webinars and student interactions online, using digital resource materials, student assignments, online assessments of performance, etc. But, all these steps were taken hurriedly as the outbreak of the pandemic was so sudden that it did not provide any preparatory time and put to test the abilities of faculty, students and administration to adjust to the new situation. Every institution tried its best, keeping in view the resources available and other local realities, to mitigate the academic loss while following the UGC, State Government and Local Authorities guidelines with regard to health safety and social distancing.

For HEIs perhaps it was the first and the most challenging phase ever experienced earlier. Since the nature of virus and realities of COVID-19 pandemic are quite different from crises the world experienced previously, like

financial crisis of 2008, which were more related to business and not health, but this time coronavirus threatened the life of people and therefore its solution required different strategies to deal with it.

COVID-19 has affected all the countries of the world whether rich or poor, socialistic or capitalistic and big or small as well as all the sectors of the economy including higher education. IMF report says that there is going to be a drastic drop in economic activities in the world and the pain of this pandemic is going to be more serious and widespread as compared to any previous world crisis. The disruption caused could potentially de-globalize the world at a faster pace as its origin is perceived to be one of the negative consequences of globalization. In view of all this, the HEIs need to adopt both short-term and long term innovative strategies to mitigate coronavirus negative effects and protect students' academic interests during this period.

Initiatives at the University

The University adopted a multi-pronged strategy to mitigate the effect of corona on delivery of education, which includes online classes, students' webinars, digital academic resources, students' assignments, online assessment tests, student feedback system and online End-term examinations. For conducting online classes open softwares like zoom, goggle meet, goggle classes, micro soft team, etc. were used by the faculty and classes were hold regularly as per the time table. Since the semester duration was extended, some of the faculty members even conducted revision classes to ensure effective learning by students. Every department of the University organized atleast one webinar on emerging issues in the discipline which was attended by all the students and faculty, in addition to outside participants. Every teacher shared the study material with the students as per the syllabus. The students also submitted assignments online and appeared in assessment tests as part of the internal assessment evaluation. Towards the end of the semester students' feedback on content delivery and general experiences on online education was collected. Though the students gave positive feedback about coverage of syllabi, but they also shared their experiences about some difficulties in respect of access to technology and digital infrastructure availability. In view of the above experiences the various issues and future strategies for effective online education are discussed under the following heads.

Teaching and Learning

During COVID-19, teaching and learning process has continued in a distance mode using online technologies. Switching to online classes revealed several challenges that majority institutions are facing right now. These issues include access to internet, internet speed and connections, and absence of hardware facilities that support online teaching and learning. Further, many teachers and students have some psychological resistance and not all staff members were prepared for switching to online mode of curriculum delivery. To overcome all these difficulties, institutions need to strengthen digital infrastructure and training faculty in online pedagogy as well as developing sufficient learning material. Student digital support system also needs to be strengthened. Jagan Nath University has taken initiatives to support effective teaching learning process.

Examination and Admissions

Face to face examinations are not possible in the present situation. The UGC has issued detailed guidelines regarding the conduct of online examinations. All the universities need to take immediate steps to conduct online examinations. Since COVID -19 has impacted administrative procedure also, admission process for next session need to be initiated through online applications. Prospective students need to be supported in the process of submission of applications and final admissions. Further, the student support system needs to be strengthened for placements of graduating students to navigate the uncertainties of job market. JNUB has already initiated for the conduct of online examinations and admissions for the next session.

Faculty and Supporting Staff

There are many issues with the staff as they were required to work from home during this period. JNUB ensured that the services of all the staff remain intact. There are regular meetings with staff to ensure their engagements. The Deans and Head of Departments (HoDs) have been delegated powers to take all routine decisions as they know best the students problems and the complexities of day to day operations.

Infrastructure

As the demand for improved digital infrastructure have increased for online and blended learning models, the University has ensured to provide better

connectivity and equipments to the faculty. However, the students are required to make their own arrangements. The experience shows that some steps are needed to be taken at rational level also to strengthen the overall availability of digital infrastructure to ensure effective conduct of online education throughout the country for ensuring equity and access to all.

Financing

Institutional financing and students financing support system are also two important areas which need attention at national level because COVID-19 is going to affect the economy and availability of funds for higher education, which is expected to shrink further. Self financing institutions will suffer more during this phase because they mainly depend up student fees as source of their revenue. Alternative sources of financing the higher education need to be explored. Students will also feel financial impact of the crisis, which could affect admissions in institutions.

Quality Assurance

Given the need of HEIs to move towards online education, one of the major challenges administration facing is quality assurance of such education delivery. The regulating environment is not yet aligned with online learning. National Quality Assurance agencies like National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), National Board of Accreditation (NBA), etc. can play important role in it.

Conclusion

To conclude, it may be said that various measures adopted by HEIs to mitigate corona effect were with short term objectives presuming that it is going to end soon. Now institutions need to work on medium term and long term strategies to deal with challenges of coronavirus and revamp systems to convert challenges into opportunities. There are certain issues which need to be handled at national level like strengthening digital infrastructure, financing of higher education and regulatory framework for quality assurance in online education. Effective online education requires student centric approach with individual attention to each student by faculty to compensate for holistic concerns which are missing due to social distancing.

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JAIN UNIVERSITY, BENGALURU

(DEEMED-TO-BE UNIVERSITY)

COVID 19 pandemic brought about an unprecedented impact on the lives and institutions worldwide. The nature of impact that it created has both short and long term implications to the mission of universities and this very challenge had been generating creative responses to overcome the crisis and to minimise its impact. Through this paper, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University) endeavours to share its experience of evolving multifaceted responses during the national lockdown period for continuing the learning process of students, the purposeful engagement of faculty members and progressing the research pursuits.

Strategic Dimension to the Response

Even prior to the lockdown was announced, all senior members of faculty and the topmost authorities connected with overall governance of the university began collective discussions and analysed the possible scenarios and implications of the unfolding pandemic situation to the functioning of the university. This participative process and the inspirational leadership brought about a strategic perspective and shared view of treating this unprecedented situation as also an opportunity to accelerate technological solutions and enhancing the competencies of the faculty members. This early participative process supported and guided by the top level also brought about better motivation and awareness to overcome the possible psychosocial consequences of the crisis among the faculty, the students and other stakeholders as well. Yet another perspective shared during this process pertained to the consciousness for utmost economy and coping with the economic constraints.

Educational Communications About COVID-19

At the outset, the university developed a web page for the purpose of wider communication with students, faculty and community at large to provide information relevant to prepare for and mitigate the impacts from COVID-19. The top priority was to support the health and wellbeing of the university community. This website provides answers to frequently asked questions, as well as information about health, and other University resources. It also provided a window to view the counselling services available at Jain (Deemed-

to-be University) virtual mental health platform "Manas" to combat stress and psychological health challenges during the COVID-19 outbreak.

COVID 19 web page of the university provided menu driven access to information in user friendly fashion. FAQ menu covered separate sections for information relevant to (i) current students, (II) prospective students, (iii) current faculty and staff, and (iv) prospective faculty and staff. The menu on CORONA Virus information provided access to relevant resources from World Health Organisation, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, National Centre for Disease Control. There is also a section on Myth busters considering information explosion in public domain on this crisis. A separate menu addressed access to various advisories and instructions from the government including the guidelines and instructions from UGC/MHRD, MHA, and the state government. Emergency contact details are also included. Thus this serves as a dynamic facility for the benefit of the university community including its stake holders

Preparations for Online Instruction on a Large Scale

Even at a stage when lockdown was being pondered over in the country as an imminent measure, the university sprang into action by the second week of March 2020, to consider the continued engagement of students under such circumstances, for minimising the impact on ongoing activities in different faculties/departments/research centres of the university.

After assessing the detailed status of various UG and PG programmes for the current semester, contingency plans were discussed among all senior members of different faculties/ centres. Under the overall guidance and direction of the Vice Chancellor and other senior officers, strategies were evolved for (i) ensuring safety, (ii) implementing the government instructions and (iii) safeguarding the interests of students and faculty. This enhanced motivation among the faculty to overcome this challenge by seeking solutions through augmented use of online technologies and collective sharing of experiences.

A participative process was also implemented for timely choice of platforms and technologies with involvement of Deans, Directors and other experts in the university and external experts in the field under the overall guidance of the Registrar. This could ensure the balance of solutions from long and short term considerations including costs, reliability, bandwidth efficiency and flexibility for upgradation.

As regards content, all faculty members were communicated through issue of guidelines, interactive sessions, and training at departmental levels. The members of faculty started in the right earnest to adapt the curricular content to new pedagogical methods involving online/ digital technologies and connect to with their students for teaching and learning as the national lockdown became a reality.

Due to this solid approach guided by the highest level of management the university could implement delivery of classes online for all programs including conduct of remedial classes for slow learners and the internal assessment tasks using “Zoom” platform (with multiple licences). Thus virtually no gap in the student-learning process had resulted since the suspension of classes initially by the university from 14 to 28th March, 2020 and subsequently during national lockdown.

During the period beginning 23 March 2020 to the 15th of May 2020, 11535 classes were held for different courses including UG, PG and Ph D/M Phil related courses averaging 245 classes a day. Average number of students logged per class was 58. Forty five percent of the classes were devoted to engineering and technology courses while others were distributed among the courses under the faculties of science, commerce, management, humanities and social sciences mainly.

Guidelines for Online Teaching

In order to promote teaching practices which are effective in an online environment, a document for guiding faculty members on best practices for online teaching was prepared by the Office of Communications and Human Resources. This provided detailed guidelines to faculty members on how to prepare their own space, the method of presenting an online lecture, use of online collaborative tools, tips for effective student engagement and commitment towards continuous improvement. In general, the following aspects had been emphasised

A. Focus on the pedagogy, not just the platform

The message that the time spent now thinking about how faculty members want to teach using this technology will be time well spent.

B. Taking advantage of interactivity

Students are digital natives who already use remote technology for their meetings and gatherings. Faculty can take advantage of these possibilities.

C. An opportunity to innovate

Take advantage of this time to experiment with new teaching methods and tools.

Collaborative Learning and Research

Faculty of Jain (Deemed-to-be University) have been using this disruptive lockdown phase to explore hitherto unexplored dimensions of pedagogy. In a feedback, one of the Deans remarked that he was pleasantly surprised to discover that it is possible to generate a higher order cognitive discourse with his Ph.D. students on an online platform. He further said that he had always assumed that face to face interface was a must to interact with learners on abstract topics like 'personality'.

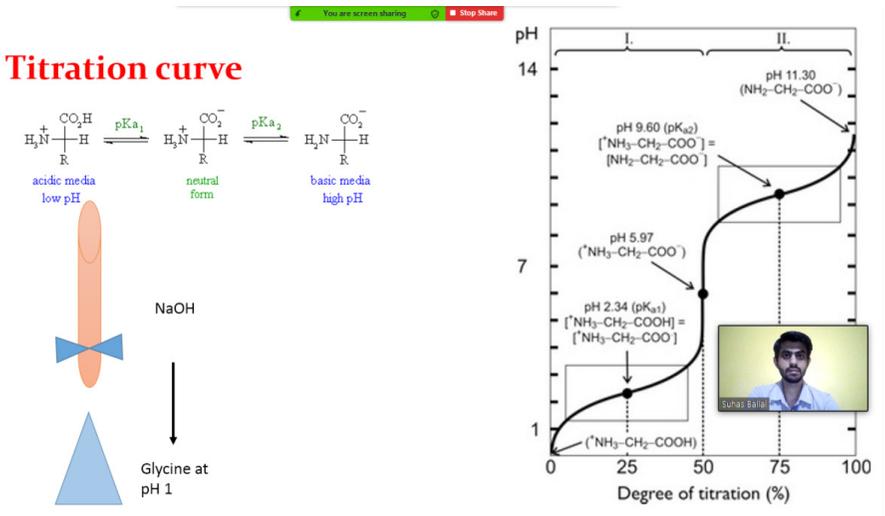


Fig. 1

A screen shot of online lesson in screen share mode

At the school of Computer Sciences and IT, the faculty members have used a mix and match approach of not only online platforms like Google Classroom, Zoom, Hangout and so on, but also of methodologies to promote interactive learning through demonstration, to replicate the learning experience in a classroom. For instance, while making students learn about security features as part of the module on Cloud Computing, the faculty members share tools beforehand with learners and then interactively explore the security

features of multiple platforms like AWS, CISCO and Microsoft during a video conference. Eventually the learner will write code and share the screen shot of the output through Google Classroom. The teachers then evaluate the output and interact with students.

Students from the School of Commerce have been learning stock investing online. They spend the first week to learn the basics of stock investing through videos. They then trade on a mock terminal provided by trakinvest.com for a period of three months. If they show four weeks of continuous trading profits, they are awarded a certificate.

Students and faculty of the Post Graduate School of Sciences (CPGS) collaborated online on a research project pertaining to COVID 19. A paper, authored by Ms. Dipti and Dr. K.V. Ramesh titled: "Binding site analysis of potential protease inhibitors of COVID-19 using AutoDock" from the bioinformatics domain has been accepted for publication in a Web of Sciences indexed Springer Journal, "VirusDisease" (formerly Indian Journal of Virology). As part of Springer's commitment towards sharing knowledge with the whole world about the outbreak, the research findings and the paper have been shared by them with the World Health Organisation. The Director of the School of Sciences (Centre for Post Graduate Studies) expressed her happiness that Faculty members and Research Scholars from Jain (Deemed-to-be University) have contributed their bit towards alleviation of the suffering that people from all over the world have been through in the last few months.

From the Centre of Nano Material Sciences of the university, a perspective article on "Use of Ozone to combat corona virus" was prepared by Faculty through online collaboration with a scientist from Pharmacology division of the US Research Laboratory. In addition, through a concerted effort of faculty to collaborate online, a Project titled "Development of Inexpensive Antiviral and Antibacterial Face Masks by using Conformal Coating of Cu_2O , CuO and ZnO onto the Wearable Fabrics, Polymers and 3D Carbonaceous Materials" has been submitted to the Nano mission Wing of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

In conclusion, the faculty and students, with support and guidance from the top leadership, have constantly innovated and found new ways of achieving

outcomes through online collaboration using a repertoire of 'fit for the purpose' tools and platforms.

Societal Interface–Student and Faculty Initiatives

A significant contribution to societal interface resulted from their initial participation in awareness, training programs and later their engagements with society to spread message and supportive roles

As many as 500 students participated in the commitment pledge for safety against corona virus, a program co-sponsored by a company named Delgon technologies. Further, Janata curfew and stay at home pledge undertaken as per the guidelines of Ministry of electronics and Information Technology drew much larger participation.

Students had created two videos on Awareness to fight COVID 19. A student had directed a musical video on Shanti Mantra for calming the mind during COVID crisis –which became very widely viewed video on the web. Further, they took active part in the 'Spitting skills campaign, Training and awareness' joining hands with 'Narayana Health' chain of hospitals. Students and faculty have also taken training guided by UNICEF for post lockdown activities for Department of youth and sports Government of Karnataka. Many similarly got certified by Apollo Med skills in the field of awareness and prevention training. All such awareness and training sessions have resulted into students engagement into societal service such as their distribution of food and ration to the needy at metro stations in Bengaluru, which was featured in PMs Mann ki Baat on 26th April 2020. These student initiatives were ably complemented by the faculty members, who have given many talks on awareness of COVID and related topics in Webinars at both national and international level.

Counselling and Guidance

A. Vishwas centre and the creation of mental health platform MANASA

Jain Deemed-to-be University has been proactively working on helping the stakeholders (mainly the students and faculty members) to remain calm and productive during the lockdown period using technology and social media to reach out to the needy. MANASA is the mental health platform created by the university's student guidance and counselling unit, Vishwas. This aims to help

the stakeholders to cope with psycho social challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown in India. Manasa pamphlets were sent through electronic media with contact numbers of the psychologists and their area of expertise so that the needy can seek help. A 24/7 help line number was also included in the pamphlet. Ten short videos of relevant topics were made available to students during lockdown period to provide information on challenges that one faces during these situations and methods to overcome them. Videos included: Dealing with anxiety, Technology addiction, handling withdrawal symptoms, staying focussed on education, Self-care, Stress management and Leveraging emotional intelligence. Manasa caters to the mental health needs of all concerned, ensuring that during the times of lockdown and social distancing, students can be virtually connected to the expert counsellors and remain mentally healthy and strong as a sound mind in a healthy body is essential to fight the deadly virus.

B. Vishwasgram- Social media handles

Vishwas - the Student Guidance and counselling cell has always prioritised the mental health and wellbeing of its stakeholders. VISHWASGRAM is a social platform umbrella where all the campuses of Jain (Deemed-to-be-University) come together to talk about the importance of Mental Wellbeing.

To promote Mental Wellness of stakeholders, VISHWASGRAM uses different social media handles like Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn to connect to the technology savvy youth. Mental health awareness, general facts about the mental wellbeing are discussion points in this platform. It provides an elaborate gallery of all events of Vishwas and notification of upcoming ventures and activities.

C. Videos for Different Facets of Mental Health

A segment in India Today' news channel reported a short video of Dr Uma Warriar of JAIN Deemed-to-be University on importance of Mental Health on April 22nd, 2020, as can be found in the following link: https://www.instagram.com/p/B_bru7tJpv2/?igshid=8e59hrmwdim

Further, the following videos are posted on the Instagram handle of Vishwas, curated by the campus counsellors of Jain Deemed-to-be University from their homes during the lock down:

Video title	Link details
Coping strategies during Covid 19	https://www.instagram.com/tv/BmIE8rJ9Yw/?igshid=1v5octndwusqx
Grounding strategies for stress & anxiety management	https://www.instagram.com/tv/CADMg-7ptPz/?igshid=1hj8keky2n5j5
Curbing Stress of Withdrawal during Covid 19	https://drive.google.com/open?id=1NDaA7Vd0AdyWYOqcZRtR8bNzkNYYDCRc
Reduce Gadget Addiction during COVID-19	https://www.instagram.com/tv/BXnBIIJ0g_/?igshid=1mr3cv9uwuvha
Keeping yourself motivated and focused during a global pandemic	https://www.instagram.com/tv/CADReHHjeJK/?igshid=14n6drgn3m5cu
How to safeguard your mental health during quarantine	https://www.instagram.com/tv/CADNCueAkFP/?igshid=83n2mgad9252
Coping strategies during Covid-19	https://www.instagram.com/tv/BVZtzHpS0_/?igshid=fbaobrg34zbw
“Why is it important to take care of ourselves, why not start now in this quarantine, we have time and mental space?”	https://www.instagram.com/tv/CADYTxNj1d1/?igshid=101cceku6argr
Stress Management Covid-19	https://www.instagram.com/tv/CADYquzpOhA/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

D. To Do's during Covid-19 - Poster Activity on 5th May 2020

During these tough times of adjusting to the new norms created by the lockdown, positive affirmation can make a difference in one's life. Realising the potential of positive affirmation, the digital mental health platform of Vishwas- Manasa created a digital collage of positive affirmations, contributed by all the campus counsellors of JU- Vishwas .This activity was initiated to promote mental wellbeing during Covid-19. Team Vishwas came up with an

idea of making a digital collage of positive affirmations and activities that could help in making the lockdown period less stressful. The poster consisted of 10 ideas/ affirmations students can follow during Covid-19 to handle the situation in a better way and keep themselves calm and mentally healthy. The details can be seen by following the link below. https://www.instagram.com/p/B_wVfg_pWDt/?igshid=11u4cmhn45e1

E. Psycho-educative Session on Stress and Anxiety Management

A Psycho-educative session was conducted by a campus counsellor on the 5th of May, via an online platform, with the objective of providing the students with the ability to manage the stress and anxiety that they might be facing during this global pandemic. The interactive session involved the participants in engaging activities that helped in understanding their feelings of stress and anxiety, locate its causes and find effective and simple methods to handle them.

F. Vishwas - 30 day Mental Wellbeing Challenge: 11th May 2020

Social media challenges have also been in the centre amidst the Covid-19 lockdown quarantine. Interesting and healthy challenges like drinkingwater challenge, workout challenge and numerous other challenges where focus on physical health and leisure are constantly seen on TV channels and social media platforms. Taking a cue from this, a 30 days mental health challenge was kick started by Manasa. The benefits accrued from the 30 days challenge is two-fold:

a) Individuals tend to perform a task with ease when it is broken down into Specific, Manageable, Attainable, Realistic and Time bound steps (SMART).

b) It is scientifically proven that when a task is performed consistently for 21 days it becomes a habit. Hence, members for Manasa – Vishwas brainstormed to develop a set of simple yet effective tasks and carefully scrutinised 30 enjoyable tasks that would make the stakeholders calmer, happier and give a sense of productivity. Further, it was circulated to the Centre heads through Manasa's virtual platforms. The details can be accessed through the link that follows.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CAArPLaJ4PS/?igshid=pfvaalbq6iuf>

G. Research projects relevant to COVID environment – In wellness and behavioural sciences area

The fact that research is the future for any academic institution progress and sustainability is well acknowledged at the Counselling unit of the university. Research is a tool that can be leveraged for knowledge building and sharing,

efficient learning, understanding new issues and challenges and exploring possible solutions for the same. The counsellors of Vishwas are encouraged to do research during the lockdown period to come up with useful research finding that helps the university to function better with respect to mental health of the stakeholders as well as general public. Topics of research are identified by the counsellors of Vishwas, vetted by chief counsellor for the relevance and usefulness of the research output. Research Guidance and handholding are done to help the counsellors use different research methodologies to explore the topic of their choice. The following are some of the current research topics that are at varying stages of completion. Following table summarises the topics and themes of research.

Research Title	Research faculty	Remarks
Role of Emotional Intelligence to foster learning and development in Higher Education Institution's (HEI) during Covid 19	Dr Uma Warriar	Results under review for publication. Highly relevant in the context of OBE.
Leveraging Mindfulness to combat Organizational Role Stress- An Indian perspective	Dr Uma Warriar	Paper submitted and under review. Relevant for improved stress coping
Leveraging Emotional intelligence in Computer Mediated communication during and post Covid-19 era - An exploration	Dr Uma Warriar	Ongoing research
Identity Crisis in Massively Multi-player Online Role Playing Gamers (MMORPG)	Pallavi Prahlad	Ongoing research on addiction behaviour to Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games in COVID constrained environment.
Dealing with examination anxiety with Emotional intelligence as coping mechanism.	Manaswini.M	Ongoing research
Moderating effects of gender on internet addiction and psychological well-being of Scholars of HEI-A conceptual study	Jeba Shanthilin	Ongoing study
Effect of emotional labour on job satisfaction and turnover intention	Vaishnavi	Ongoing study on aircraft crew
Do next generation engineers learn differently?	Midhun	Ongoing study to assess preferred learning style

Webinars Involving Industry

Amidst the Lockdown, the university had been able to continue engagement industry through Online Webinars and Virtual Roundtable Conferences. These events were attended by the Students, some of their parents and also external stakeholders. These events were promoted through our university's web and social media channels to raise awareness on various topics including the impact of the COVID pandemic and how one should be prepared. The university had organized over 20 Webinars and cumulative participation exceeding several thousands of student community and faculty. The table that follows provides information on the topics and the affiliation of experts from industry.

Date	Topic	Industry associated
16.04.2020	Campus preparedness for campus placements	Wipro
20.04.2020	Talent in Uberised World	Inspirage
23.04.2020	“Decoding the economics in Covid 19, an era of new finance transformation “	Accenture
24.04.2020	Civil services as a Career	Government of India
28.04.2020	Jobs vs Higher Education vs Entrepreneurship	TALERANG
01.05.2020	Life after Covid - Future world	Greenlam Industries Limited
04.05.2020	IT Skills of the Future	Corbus
05.05.2020	To be future ready - The TCS way!!	Tata Consultancy Services
06.05.2020	career opportunity post Covid-19	Wipro
07.05.2020	how covid 19 will be impact people practice in organisation	berkadia(Berkshire hathway)
08.05.2020	“AI – Creating a Paradigm shift”	Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP
09.05.2020	Employment vs Employability	Mazars – Transformation, Automation & Outsourcing
09.05.2020	Impact of Covid 19 on IT Sector and the way forward	Cognizant Technology Solutions
11.05.2020	Advantages of learning an additional foreign language	Inlingua

12.05.2020	the impact of Covid 19 on retail and employee	PUMA RETAIL
13.05.2020	Billion people Impacted through Innovation	Azooka life sciences
14.05.2020	Developing the Art of Focusing in these Distracting Times	Loangini
12.05.2020	NLP (Neuro-Linguistic programming)	Freelancer
15.05.2020	Clinical Research, Trials on COVID19 & Healthcare Lifestyle.	Symetric
16.05.2020	The intelligent automation revolution	Genpact Digital
18.05.2020	Roadmap to your Masters Abroad	inspirededucation
19.05.2020	Career prospects and skills required for Industry	Biocon

Personality And Skill Development

Recognising the need for reinforcing the skill development aspects, the university organized about 30 hours of Online Personality Development Training Programs for the pre final year students of the University. 3000 students had been undergoing training program where 65 industry experts are delivering programs through online classroom mode. The programs focus on a variety of skills demanded in contemporary environment industry, business as well as other organisations. The University has also been pro-active in its outreach to the recruiter community to motivate them to organize virtual interviews for campus placements and internships. The placement cell has been organising online sessions with the students for orienting them on virtual interviews. Notwithstanding a very challenging environment for placements, the university has accomplished a substantial placement offers for students prior to the national lockdown and has been working with the corporates for on boarding the placed students on completion of the final semester examinations. During the pandemic, the MBA Students were also encouraged to take up virtual internships. Twenty five companies had come forward with 140 offers for internships with online engagements. This trend is further likely to grow.

PREPARING FOR POST LOCKDOWN ENVIRONMENT

Since the post lock down environment is going to be equally challenging if not more, the university is rapidly progressing to ensure continuity of academic,

research and essential extension activities through short, medium and long term road maps as well as standard operating procedures (SOPs) These address particularly the challenges of extensive sanitisation of spaces on daily basis, sanitary booths and checks for humans, physical distancing in the campuses, staggering the presence of student groups, blended and online instruction coupled with face to face instruction, new guidelines on student activities including projects/internships, adaptation in evaluation methods, placement challenges, new architectures of catering and hostel services, transportation related planning, healthcare/ medical emergency handling, students participation in planning and implementation measures as well as communications with parents.

In conclusion, the COVID environment has brought major challenges for higher education institutions, but they also had altered the perceptions and practices of learning and research activities, involving increased use of technologies while maintaining or improving the quality of learning process. The learning and adaptation phase for the changed environment is yet to mature and will continue for considerable time. The sharing of experiences among different institutions will not only be relevant but also will motivate greater focus on outcomes relevant to the students and our society.

University is led by:

Dr N Sundararajan

Vice Chancellor, Jain (Deemed to be University),

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KAVIKULAGURU KALIDAS SANSKRIT UNIVERSITY, RAMTEK

COVID-19 Lock-down at Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Ramtek started from 23rd March, 2020.

Some highlights of the activities during Lock-down are following:

1. All preventive measures have been taken by the University to observe lockdown.
2. The Academic Calendar of the University is prepared with All precautions.
3. All the examinations have been postponed till the lockdown period is over.
4. The teaching fraternity of the University is continuing teaching work online.
5. Teachers are engaged in online activities under ICT
6. System of Work from home is strictly followed.
7. One day salary of all the employees is donated to the CM relief fund.
8. The employees have donated to the disaster relief fund of the University.
9. The university has donated Rs.10 Lacs from its general fund to the University disaster relief fund.
10. The online help desk is created by the Yoga dept to guide the public on health issues and immunity during covid-19 and Post Covid period.
11. The Yoga experts of the University and it's affiliated Yoga Institutes are guiding the society through live discussions online.
12. The yoga protocol is prepared and uploaded on the University's website.
13. NSS cell of the University with the help of its volunteers and employees is actively serving the public during the covid-19 pandemic. Masks, food pockets ,grains and necessary help is extended to needy persons.
14. Community kitchen is started in the university campus at Ramtek to provide food to Police and other volunteers engaged to control the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

University is led by:

Prof Shrinivasa Varkhedhi , Vice Chancellor

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MIT WORLD PEACE UNIVERSITY, PUNE

The lockdown imposed in the country since March 2020 due to the pandemic of COVID- 19, has not only been challenging for all teachers and students, but has also opened a window of opportunity for all. We, at MIT WPU, started from taking online lectures, arranging webinars to conducting online UG PET and interviews. Work from Home added a new dimension for the faculty. Similarly, our important stakeholder “student” has also gone through a lot with this change process. MIT-WPU has supported students actively in this critical time.

All the faculties are in regular touch with the students through e-mail, WhatsApp or phone calls and are answering their queries, concerns and problems from time to time. All the faculties are playing the role of Mentor in a real sense in the period of lockdown to keep the moral of the students high. To ensure that no academic losses are incurred and to facilitate academic engagement of students, Faculty members have taken online lectures of students and most of the students attended the same. A detailed report of each faculty member has been kept in record for easy reference. At times when online live teaching learning was hampered due to technical issues, a recorded video of the module and Assignments was sent to the students on the same day. The students clarified their doubts through email /phone calls. Since the time of lockdown, MIT WPU geared up its administrative and IT infrastructure to work and fight the crisis on different fronts as follows.

(a) **Awareness and Preparation:** Awareness campaign for protection against COVID 19 was conducted through posters, banners and lectures. Students from other places were facilitated to go back to their native places. Where required the permission passes for their movement was obtained from City administration. Students from abroad were asked to stay indoors and contacted on regular basis. When the flights were arranged by their governments, necessary arrangements were made for their passage to the Mumbai airport. Meetings of all CRs and LR of all years were conducted to understand the issues in conducting online lectures. MIT WPU, within no time switched over to virtual platforms using online software like ZOOM, YouTube Live Platforms, Impartus, Webex portal and other platforms to communicate with the students as well as their parents and started conducting regular classes on these platforms.

(b) **Lectures and Sessions:** To continue with its primary aim to impart quality professional education to all the students without any break with the help of online technology so that students do not lose on education front. Faculty and students were trained to use various online platforms for lectures, meetings, viva, etc. Use of any particular platforms was kept flexible according to available band width, familiarity, licensed software etc. However, to be consistent, care was taken that the platform used for online course was maintained for a particular faculty, school or a program.

(c) **Lectures and Sessions:** To continue with its primary aim to impart quality professional education to all the students without any break with the help of online technology so that students do not lose on education front. Faculty and students were trained to use various online platforms for lectures, meetings, viva, etc. Use of any particular platforms was kept flexible according to available band width, familiarity, licensed software etc. However, to be consistent, care was taken that the platform used for online course was maintained for a particular faculty, school or a program.

(d) **Practicals:** Practical were recorded in stages and videos were shared with the students. This was followed with explanations and discussions.

(e) **Tutorials and Case discussions:** In some cases where discussion was required on the subjects, the students were divided in smaller batches and online discussions were conducted.

(f) **Placement Opportunities:** Internships, campus interviews and placement for passing out students were arranged online where possible. Where internships could not be completed online by the companies, projects were given to the students which could be done from home. Where placement was not feasible, MITWPU approached the companies to defer the offer and got the future dates for joining. Where companies wanted to get the final results, online examinations were conducted as per the UGC guidelines and students' were facilitated to join the companies for final placement.

(g) **Study material:** Notes, study material, presentations and related web links for better understanding were shared through MITWPU institutional ERP with the students on regular basis. This was to ensure proper engagement of the students during lockdown period. Faculty members also shared prerecorded sessions, AV clips and resource material through ERP.

(h) **Online Conference:** Four Day Online conference for Elimination of Biological and Chemical Weapons was conducted to make students aware about their danger in the light of COVID 19. 21 Day Yoga Challenge practical webinar is under way.

(i) **Extra-Curricular and Co-curricular activities:** Celebrations like Yoga Day, Environment Day, 'Guru-pournima', and other festivals were conducted online.

(j) **Final Examinations:** Although MITWPU has procured software for online examination with proctoring through AI, it was used only for internal assessment. Final examination was not conducted and averaging formula for Grades was used as per the directions of UGC and Government of Maharashtra.

Administration

Following administrative services were kept operational

(a) **Care & Maintenance:** To protect, care and maintain its assets inside campus with the help of minimum essential security staff and their protection as well.

(k) **Administration:** To continue all of its services viz, administrative functions, academic functions, meetings etc. through online systems.

(l) **R & D :** To promote research to fight Covid-19 in terms of development of sanitizers, PPEs, ventilators and other essentials under Engineering, Product Design as well as Pharmacy Faculty.

(m) **Assistance :** Measures to assist city administration to combat the crisis
Contribution to society: Initiatives and contributions by individual staff members and students.

(o) **Campus medical facility:** Medical facility inside the campus has been kept operational to provide required emergency medical help.

(p) **Campus Security:** All the security staff has been trained to handle emergency situation in case any, besides precautions to be taken in respect of corona prevention such as social distancing, washing hands frequently etc.

Research and Innovation

Such time of crisis provides an opportunity for the innovative and genius

minds to come up with appropriate solutions which can help the society to overcome the crisis.

(a) The Vice Chancellor appealed to the Engineering Faculty to think of designing low cost Ventilators which is a need of the hour to protect the COVID victims in the hospitals.

(b) The Pharmacy Faculty was asked to look into manufacturing of low cost sanitizers for using in the campus. Pharmacy Faculty has taken up the task of providing lab made sanitizers.

(c) The Design Faculty was asked to think over development of masks with required micron capacity to protect the face and they have offered their 3D printing facility to manufacture masks and shields for doctors. So far as the assignments are concerned, after the completion of module, the students give an Online viva on the completed modules which shall be marked out of and submit it through ERP. With regard to the written assessment, topics have been given to the students through ERP.

Online Tools for Engagements of Students

1. Online Lectures through Zoom, WebEx and Impartus
2. Recorded Video of faculty members
3. PPT
4. Movies
5. Assignments through ERP
6. Law Quiz/ MCQ's

Academic initiatives taken by the faculty members to ensure proper engagement and learning of the students in these days:

1. Faculty members conduct online lectures using Zoom, WebEx, Impartus and YouTube Live Platforms and ensured uninterrupted learning of students.
2. Received positive feedbacks from the students and parents about these online engagements of students by the faculty members.
3. Given online assignments, Case studies and other evaluations to students and also ensured correction of the same. Shared feedback with students about the assessment, shared notes, study material and presentations.

4. For the Project Guidance of the students of Engineering, Management, Pharmacy, Liberal Arts, Science, Commerce, Economics, Governance and Sustainable Studies; faculty members arranged several zoom meeting sessions with the students and discussed on various important points related to projects

5. For conducting online academic session for the new A.Y, 20-21, all the faculty members have undergone the training of MS Team, the platform that will be used for conducting online lectures. All the faculty members are students were given access to this platform by activating their accounts.

6. Direct engagement with the students through mentor-mentee sessions: MIT World Peace University has put a great emphasis on directly engaging the students through our established mentor-mentee system in which the designated faculty members regularly have a one-to-one interaction with every student to know about their mental perspective during the Covid-19 pandemic. During these sessions, the faculty members guided the students about the approach towards learning and academics, about life and coping skills and reassured them regarding their studies and career prospects. A report in this regard was generated and kept in record.

7. Quality monitoring of the Online sessions: Licenses for Microsoft Teams, Google Suite and WebEx were acquired by the University for the smooth conduct of the online lectures. A methodical approach was taken up by the University authorities wherein the lecture links were circulated among the entire University staff to ensure transparency and quality control. The senior officials of the University were able to enter in an online class, whenever they wanted to see the proceedings and observe the standards of teaching practices adopted by the faculty members. Regular feedback and reports regarding this were generated on a daily basis.

8. Flipped classrooms and Asynchronous learning: To foster interactivity, various social media platforms were incorporated including WhatsApp, Discord, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc. to encourage participation from the students.

This was apart from the mainstay of using WebEX and Microsoft Teams for the teaching process. Flipped learning was incorporated for projects, team work and class discussions. During classes, maximum emphasis was given on using illustrated teaching aids like PPT with a lot of visual cues and less textual

information was used. We were able to engage the students for the same number of classes as during regular times, attendance figures were invariably above 80 percent and were able to complete our allotted number of lectures within the stipulated time for the trimester.

9. Feedback and improvement: Since online learning was an abrupt and new process, it evolved into a more stable version after a period of some time. For this, regular feedback from students was collected on a regular basis about the efficacy of the online teaching process. Their concerns about bandwidth, internet connectivity, ease of understanding the concepts through online lectures were addressed and extra notes were sent to those who missed out on lectures due to connectivity issues.

10. Assignments for continuous evaluation submitted through ERP or E-mail (Formative/ Internal evaluation) during the lockdown period.

11. Few faculties have also conducted MCQ online Tests.

12. The Project/ Internship Viva have been conducted online through various platforms like Zoom and Google Meet for proper evaluation of the students.

13. Online Orientation Programme has been conducted for Faculty of Commerce to welcome the senior batch.

14. The Orientation Programme consisted of online sessions by Experts in Stress Management and Cyber Security.

15. MIT WPU has made free registration available for various courses on platforms like Coursera. Faculties and students are encouraged to complete MOOCs on these platforms to enhance their skills.

16. Designed and developed Short-Term Training Certifications Program.

a. Certification Courses in Big Data and Analytics.

b. Certification Courses in XR: VR, AR, and MR with Business Applications.

c. Certification Courses in Cyber Security Management.

17. All the faculty members facilitated as well as participated in Online Skill Development Interactions with experts from leading industries and corporate houses.

18. The faculty members coordinated & distributed EdX5000 Coupons for the MITWPU Students and Staff online : EdX Remote Access Program -Digital

Welcome Kit along with 5000 unique enrollment codes from EdX for MITWPU.

19. We organized more than 150 webinars on important and relevant topics such as New Learning Development Program, Hands-On Workshop series on Hackathon, Innovation Connect, External World and Future of Education, Implementation of Value Based Universal Education System, Education and Career Education Abroad, 5-G Wireless an Imperative for IOT and so on. As per the MIT-WPU method, all faculties are mentors for our students and are in touch with their mentees through call or WhatsApp or other social media. Besides, academic leaders have taken meetings of Student Council of all departments and have conducted CR/ LR meeting on regular basis in lockdown and on that basis they have organised some activities for students such as:

1. "7 Days Yoga Challenge" activity was initiated to keep students, faculties and others fit and active in this lockdown period. Along with MITWPU students and staff members, non-MIT-WPU people also participated in it through YouTube, Facebook, etc. in big numbers i.e. more than 1000 participants. This session was conducted from 9th April to 15th April 2020.

2. One week Session "Yoga for Better Health" was conducted by to address the increasing stress, frustration, depression among students which was reported. This session was opened for all staff and students of MITWPU. Daily 30 - 40 minutes of the session on Mudra Dhyana and Pranayama / Deep Breathing was conducted from 27th May to 2nd June 2020. A very good and positive response was received for this initiative. Total 95 participants [MIT WPU Students + Faculty] benefitted from this activity.

3. One Faculty member is counselling the students who are facing some psychological issues at a personal level. It is done through normal calls, video calls, messages etc. as well as she is in contact with few parents. Dealing with a lot of critical issues which students are facing staying at home. She inspired students and they formed a group name "Happiness Mantra". On the group they keep on doing positive talks, discussions, activities which are helping the students to stay happy. 2 hours NO MOBILE Usage challenge is one such activity which she has started and it's working very well. Students are doing digital detox on their own.

4. Google link of Students achievement and Innovation has been created and shared with all students to motivate them.

5. Students have participated in various activities such as Preparing a Monograph on various topics like Mumbai, Banaras, Delhi, Swami Vivekananda, Ayurveda, etc , they have written articles on the topics like Case Study of Yes Bank, e - Vehicles, HUL and GSKCH Merger, Impact of COVID on Indian Economy, Projecting Social Reforms through Advertisements, etc. under the guidance of a faculty member.

6. As all the students are at home, either they are attending online Certification Programmes or learning some life skills from their parents. An appeal was made to submit a write-up and photographs for sharing their experiences and learnings with others.

7. One Faculty initiated Instagram Page and Facebook Page so that students' activities during academic year could be showcased by then creating awareness campaigns for the Program, Experiential Learning opportunities to students, Internships and Placements.

8. Students and alumni whom all are facing issues at a personal and professional level were counselled through calls and messages as well creating interactive video conferencing sessions and connecting students to each other for helping each other have similar difficulties and issues could be resolved by talking to each other and staying connected.

9. One Faculty organised 4 webinars of Event industry experts as well as networking with industry experts. The webinars were co-ordinated by the faculty and the students. The webinar series was a great success and was attended by approximately 100 students every time.

10. Our Theatre Society took part in an Online Poetry Competition and their submission relating to the hardships faced by the healthcare workers, the migrant labourers, etc. and for this poem submission, Theatre Society won the Special Mention in the Online State Level Poetry Competition.

Faculty members have written blogs on various topics such as Career after 12th and Road Ahead.

12. One Faculty member has written a newspaper article on Key takeaways from COVID 19.

13. Along with this, students were given virtual internship during the lockdown period. FY students were engaged with a pre-internship training module and TY placement registered students were given online grooming session as well as new placement opportunities.

14. Students have also actively participated in various webinars organized by Center for Industry Academia Partnerships and have expressed their satisfaction towards MIT-WPU for organizing the same. Students have also thanked MITWPU for making platform like Coursera available for them to pursue online certifications.

15. Many faculties have also enrolled and completed various online courses on different platforms which will be useful for effective teaching.

Admission for the A.Y. 2020-21

1. Faculty members conducted Admission Interviews for various streams using online platforms such as Google duo and Whatsapp Video Calling, in all over India. 2. Conducted webinars to brief the aspirants about MIT WPU and various programs offered at MITWPU

3. Conducted counselling sessions for admission process

Communication with students-

1. Using various online platforms, faculty members are constant in touch with students for guiding and counselling them on various issues like examination, SIPs etc. and are trying to manage anxiety of students and parents as well

2. In every 15 days, meetings of student council (CRs and LRs) of all the years have been conducted by the HOS and Academic Head of the school of understand and resolve student's problems during lockdown period

3. Through the Mentor Mentee platform, every faculty member contacted a group of 15-20 students and asked about their well being

4. Report of daily interaction of mentor mentee is also maintained by respective program head and CR / LR of respective division

Social Awarness Initiatives

1. Students have taken the initiative to spread awareness about CORONA in following innovative way. They shared this through facebook, instagram and

other social media sites.

2. Mr. Suranjan Mukherjee a student of MBA HHM has distributed masks, food

items to poor families at Kolkata. Ms. Swastika Kachore has donated Rs. 2000 to PM Care Fund. Aishwarya Rawat has distributed masks and food grains 5kg rice 5kg dal to the poor n needy people and Also hand sanitizers.

3. Dr. Aayushi Ghael and Dr. Sakshi Pawar, students of MBA - Hospital and Healthcare management have registered themselves as volunteer for COVID 19 under NITI Ayog.

4. A student Ms. Urjita Falnikar has taken initiative for distribution of lunch to underprivileged living on streets in Manjalpur, Vadodara Gujarat. They collected the food from the families, made food packets and distributed to people living under Lalbaug Bridge in our locality on 1st April 2020 (Wednesday)

5. A student Ms. Nisha Nandhini was a part of a team that has spread social awareness messages through advertisements. She translated the advertisement from Hindi to regional language Tamil and given dubbing for voice over of the speaker. Ms Nisha, under her father's guidance helped draft a script about the efforts taken by Tamilnadu police during this epidemic as another social message on behalf of the police force under the commissioner' orders.

6. Kewal Shah Student of law distributed over 5000 masks and donated 5 Lakh's in the name of Shah Foundation. All the major distribution was done near the Airport are slums of Mumbai, India.

7. Atharv More student of FY along with his friends has started a donation drive in his home town i.e. Aurangabad. They have donated food kits to 60 families till now and will continue to do so in the future. The food kit distributed by them consisted of: 2.5kg Wheat, 2kg Rice, 750gms Daal, 100gms each of Haldi, Lal mirch and salt, 250gms Oil. These are the basic food needs which they provided to the needy and poor people in Aurangabad.

8. Ayushee Subhadarshini, an FY Student donated money to the PMs fund from her personal savings.

9. Shivam Balwadkar, a student of SY distributed 200 masks to senior

citizens of Pune city also he is providing fruits and vegetables facilities to the needy members of Baner and Balewadi.

Institute is led by:

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NARSEE MONJEE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES, BENGALURU

Progress of our academic operations at Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) post the pandemic started off from where we ended the Academic Year (AY) 2019-2020. While AY 2019-20 was completed under pressure in the wake of the lock-down, we have begun AY 2020-2021 with the full knowledge that this is the new normal and On-line Teaching-Learning process (OLTLP) is here to stay. Consequently, we have impressed upon faculty and administrators that they have to continuously improve with the ultimate objective of rendering the OLTLP as lively and engaging as face-to-face (F2F) classes. In this effort, the university initiated special sessions by people experienced in the OLTLP including our Vice Chancellor as well as experts from outside. We organised mock sessions in small groups so that faculty learn from each other. Further, we are motivating faculty to collaborate with colleagues with whom they are comfortable, to walk into each other's classroom and give feedback on the class proceedings, the effectiveness of use of online tools such as polling, and breakout rooms as well as their areas of strength and improvement. We believe that this peer feedback will benefit every faculty enormously.

We have given faculty the freedom to choose the online platform from amongst MS Teams, Zoom and Google Meet. While, initially Zoom was lauded as being more user friendly, MS Teams has gained ground as it is more robust and conducive for the collaborative teaching learning process. Youngsters these days are technology savvy and although there are challenges for students in terms of the monotony of looking at the screen for long hours, technical glitches etc. they have come round and accepted OLTLP as the new normal.

We believe that even though lockdown restrictions will be gradually removed, social distancing norms are here to stay. This would warrant a blend of online and F2F classes and therefore, blended learning is the mode of the future. We are preparing ourselves for the same across postgraduate and undergraduate programs. Regarding assessment and examination, there is an

* The Article has been provided by Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA) Hyderabad.

emphasis on continuous low stake feedback in the OLTLP and open book Take Home Exams (THE) that will test critical thinking and responding to ambiguity which are key to Masters level learning.

The Institution is led by

Dr. Suresh Mony,

Director,

Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies

(NMIMS), Bengaluru

NORTHERN UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH*

The scenario has changed dramatically and apart from the human and economic costs of this pandemic, I see many positives emerging from this disruption specifically for academic institutions.

- Engaging in immediate, instantaneous connectivity with students by the teacher through online. Instant communication possible for university administrators with faculty, officials and staff.
- Flexibility in class routine scopes for 100 per cent students attendance in online classes and the scope for the students to look to the recorded classes.
- Rapid rise in the number of webinars being held by the departments which go live broadening the horizon globally.
- Information of holding of classes, attendance of students and monitoring the quality of classes are now easily available to University administrators.
- All official documents being transformed in e file are being processed with incredible speed.
- Covid-19 has provided a level playing field for all universities as the role of big, gorgeous and spacious campus not required as of now.
- It has expedited the transition to virtual classes and virtual administration freeing the individuals involved a huge chunk of time.
- The administrators can now achieve more in less time.
- Universities can now downsize their staff and or re-organise for broader work spectrum commensurate with their broader goals. The substantive savings of the universities in terms of rental, transportation and other related costs are being passed on to students by reducing their tuition fees substantially and investing in infrastructure for online connectivity and networking devices.
- Reduced transport pressure on roads augmenting the environment and incidence of road accidents.

* The Article has been provided by Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA) Hyderabad.

- Provides scope for transparent appraisals of faculty, officials, and staff.
- Has realised family friendly status of universities by providing everyone the scope to work from home.
- Allowed Universities to enlist students beyond their traditional catchment area, leveling the urban rural disparity.
- Provided the universities a global opportunity to go global.
- May ensure holding of virtual classes even in post pandemic period.

At Northern University Bangladesh, we are now fully online so far classes are concerned.

The University is led by:

Prof. Anwar Hossain,

Vice Chancellor,

Northern University Bangladesh

O P JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY, SONEPAT

COVID-19 has been one of the most unprecedented and unfortunate crises of our times. Amongst many other sectors, higher education has also been significantly impacted. However, O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU), a private, not-for-profit, philanthropic and global university in India realized that to ensure that we live up to our commitment to our students and the community, and create a sustainable way forward for the Indian higher education landscape, we will have to show adaptability, agility and innovation. While academic continuity planning was of prime importance, we also understood the need for emotional support, healthcare infrastructure, building awareness, and creating new opportunities for learning. Therefore, amongst multiple initiatives JGU developed during the last few months, below is a summary of the 10 key reform initiatives undertaken at JGU to build resilience, ensure continuity, and create an impact within the higher education sector of India in times of COVID-19.

Academic Continuity: Transition to Online Classrooms

JGU transitioned to online classrooms in less than a week after the official announcement of an emergency national lockdown in India. The Information Technology (IT) department at JGU worked closely with Microsoft India to utilize MS Teams as the chosen platform for online classrooms. Since then, JGU has successfully delivered over 400 courses in which over 5000 JGU students participated. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, and an IT taskforce allowed for efficient support to the continuity of classes. Additional infrastructure was enabled to provide residential faculty members additional internet bandwidth and uninterrupted power supply for critical devices. This initiative culminated in the completion of over 8500 online classes. After a detailed audit conducted by **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)**, JGU became the first Indian university to receive the **‘E-Learning Excellence for Academic Digitisation (E-LEAD) Certification’** from the coveted QS IGAUGE for E-learning excellence.

Knowledge Creation: Webinars

As a part of JGU’s institutional goals to continue to engage in dialogues which could create a wider social impact, and also create awareness, JGU has

conducted over 300 webinars since April. The webinars covered a wide range of topics from law, to environment, which are very pertinent to these times of the pandemic. Keeping in mind the current socio-economic and political issues in India, and global issues around the world created by COVID-19, special dialogues were created with important stakeholders from within the Indian community as well as other parts of the world on areas such as the impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education in India and across the world, the transition of Universities to online learning, and the role of the Indian Government, Judiciary and Journalism in times of the pandemic.

Emotional Wellness–Building Strength, Support and Awareness

‘COVID-Anxiety’ has been directly proportional to the COVID-19 cases in India. Therefore, furthering our pursuit to ensure the emotional wellness of everyone at JGU, in addition to our existing activities at JGU’s Centre for Wellness and Counselling Services (CWCS), we collaborated with YourDOST, one of India’s leading online mental health and emotional wellness platforms. They support the JGU community with access to 24x7 counselling through psychologists, counsellors, career coaches, audio/video sessions, access to the discussion forums and multiple articles dealing with relevant issues, and access to a discussion forum for JGU. Additionally, the Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences in collaboration with the JGU Centre for Wellness and Counselling Services conducted a weekly webinar series on Mental Health and Wellness.

Launch Of Online & Blended Learning Mode Degrees-Upgrad

Given the continuous state of lockdown across the world, especially in India, JGU worked on creating more online education opportunities. JGU partnered with upGrad, India’s largest online higher education company. As a part of this initiative JGU launched two online programmes - LL.M. in Corporate & Financial Law, and an MBA degree in Digital Finance and Banking (DFB).

Learning and Development–Access for JGU Community to Online MOOCS and E-Resources

As members of JGU transitioned into studying and working from home, we wanted to enable them with opportunities to learn and improve skills that would make them more effective in their day to day tasks. JGU in collaboration with Coursera provided the students, faculty and administration of JGU access to

approximately over 4000 online courses with no charges to them. To offer a wider range of learning and development, JGU also collaborated with EdX to offer approximately 650+ online courses to the JGU community. Also, the JGU Library collaborated with external stakeholders to enable the JGU faculty and staff with easy, and in many cases free-of-cost access to e-resources and the stakeholders include Bloomsbury/Hart publishers, HBR publications, University Press Online, and Springer Nature.

Healthcare Infrastructure Upgrade

JGU has health care services headed by an eminent consultant surgeon and an experienced retired civil surgeon, and a team of well experienced residential medical officers are available 24/7 for providing health services to the JGU community with care, compassion and commitment. JGU also has an on-campus pharmacy. Further, it has upgraded the infrastructure to have Indoor and Flu wards which are fully equipped with Medical Gas Pipeline System (MGPS), Multipara Monitors, ECG Machines, Ventilators and Defibrillator to handle any emergency at the JGU campus. There are also referral services to Multispecialty hospitals.

Scholarship Opportunities – Created Research Scholarships

To provide the students of JGU an opportunity to advance their research skills and experience, JGU developed the Graduate Research Immersion Programme (GRIP) Scholarships. GRIP Scholars will be selected through a competitive process from among JGU students graduating in 2020 and the programme will provide a unique opportunity to these GRIP Scholars to work closely with our most experienced and highly qualified global faculty. These Scholars will be provided with comprehensive support from the university to further develop their intellectual competencies, academic and professional capacities, and entrepreneurial skills.

Global Immersion – Expanded International Collaborations

Given the restrictions imposed on international mobility due to the pandemic, JGU focussed on innovating new ways to expand collaborations in order to provide the students of India an opportunity of continued international exposure. JGU collaborated with the University of Arizona to create the 'Global Immersion Fellowship for Talent & Educational Development' to enable Indian students with an opportunity of international exposure without

leaving their home country during the COVID-19 pandemic. The GIFTED Programme is an innovative way of promoting excellence in international higher education and could profoundly impact the future of knowledge creation, collaborative learning and global engagement. It is a flexible option to allow students in India to earn a full U.S. degree, or U.S. transfer credits, with full access to the JGU facilities.

Admissions Mobility – Adopted AI-Enabled Jsat

To alleviate the anxiety of students of India regarding their pursuit of higher education, JGU transitioned to a fully online system to conduct the admission process for all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. JGU adopted an AI-Enabled home proctored examination held under the aegis of the Jindal Scholastic Aptitude Test (JSAT). The test will be administered by Pearson Virtual University Enterprises (VUE).

Established Office of Digital Learning & Online Education

Given the transition to online education demanded by the current pandemic, JGU established an Office of Digital Learning and Online Education. This new office aims to build an institutional vision for the future of education through innovation, teaching, research, and experimentation in new modes of online education and blended learning. The ultimate objective of this office is creation of high quality global online education through collaborations with leading online learning platforms, university and industry partners.

University is led by:

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POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT COLOMBO, SRI LANKA*

The Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM) being the largest state sector postgraduate entity in Sri Lanka, identifies itself as the “nation’s management mentor”. Having been a “leader breeder” with over 30 years of existence in producing over 300 CEOs, over 3000 senior managers and over 30,000 training professionals, the PIM acted promptly. It was a clarion call for the learning community of PIM to collaborate in the name of humanity. This note describes fifteen academic activities of PIM that move steadily ahead amidst COVID-19.

Flexibility in Blended Learning

There was an encouraging response from the students in variety of ways. The key was the adaptability of the changing context, which was essential. Instead of physical sessions, all learning involvements have to be converted to on-line. With a proven online learning management system (LMS), named Prajna (Wisdom in Sanskrit), it was an easy transfer (<https://prajna.pim.sjp.ac.lk/>). We also have a locally developed platform with the collaboration of a communication provider, Mobitel and the “M-learning” through that has been found to be very useful. The way students positively responded to getting involved in sessions using Zoom webinars and lecture recordings using Loom technology has been encouraging. They were regularly guided by a series of messages.

Shift from Online to Hybrid Sessions

We conducted online sessions for an entire term and resorted to hybrid sessions, in becoming the first state sector higher education entity in Sri Lanka to take such an initiative. There is a sample representation of each batch physically participate in sessions at PIM while the rest of the batch synchronously connect through a live Zoom platform as virtual participants. The recording of the entire session is uploaded to Prajna (our learning portal) for future reference.

MBA Final Projects Tailored for Post-COVID-19 Issues

The final year project of the MBA programme of PIM is an invitation for the participants to apply what they have learnt in a practical and value-creating manner. The faculty of PIM who are the project supervisors are much geared

* The Article has been provided by Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA) Hyderabad.

to work with their respective “learning partners” in identified areas such as business revival, organizational re-structuring, etc.

“PIM Genesis” Providing Advice for SMEs

PIM Genesis, our business incubator, has started providing advice for the affected Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SME) for their survival and success. There is a dire need to offer such guidance as the SMEs contribute to over 52 percent to the Sri Lankan economy. With the involvement of PIM alumni in financial and other relevant sectors, this has become very demanding and highly appreciable.

Management Research on Multi-faceted Elements of COVID-19

Each faculty member is asked to develop a study framework in his/her respective specialization, with emphasis of key managerial challenges in the post-COVID-19 era. They are supposed to work with an assigned student or a pair of students with a solid literature review and a sound theoretical underpinning.

Doctoral Deliberations on Post-COVID-19

It is expected to have a deep dive into Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) to understand the now common VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity). This will be a vital part of a series of virtual discussions.

Compilation of Case Study Collection

Plans are underway to deploy research students to explore cases of transformation from survival to success amidst COVID-19. With the guidance of the PIM Research Centre, several cases will be documented, presented and published as a PIM case study collection.

Contribution to Social Media

There was a need to switch over to online learning platforms and to conduct assessments through take-home mode. There was a high degree of adaptability demonstrated by the faculty. They did much more.

Linked-in has become a popular platform for the faculty to have constructive discussion on managerial aspects of post-COVID-19. Moving beyond mere posting of facts and figures, value adding conversations have been initiated by several faculty members.

Print Media Presence Through Regular Columns

It was heartening to note the contribution of PIM faculty through regular columns in the print media such as Daily Financial Times (www.ft.lk) and Sunday Observer (www.sundayobserver.lk). Despite the limitations of printing the newspapers and circulating among the entire island due to lockdown, the complementary e-papers became popular. The appreciations received by the business community and the applications highlighted were very encouraging.

Participation in Complementary Webinars

Despite the proliferation of webinars of varying standards of quality and relevance, the PIM faculty contributed in an impactful manner through their participations. There were four such webinars organized by the PIM Alumni (PIMA) with the involvement of PIM faculty together with other PIM “products” who are proven business leaders.

Take home exams with reflections on COVID-19

As the first response to the island wide lockdown, we decided to convert all sit-down exams planned for the end of the term to be take home exams. With the guidance provided by the faculty, it was a very satisfactory performance with due adherence to plagiarism avoidance requirements (through the similarity index monitored by Turn-it-in software).

Involvement of Alumni in National Level Task Forces

The COVID-19 Task Force appointed by the President of Sri Lanka, the apex body that take key strategic decisions in tackling the pandemic included several PIM alumni such as the current Director General of Health Services. The economic revival task force appointed by the President of Sri Lanka also have key business leaders who are PIM alumni.

Professional Manager – Special Issue

The flagship publication of PIM targeting the practicing professionals, will have a special issue published containing a collection of comprehensive articles discussing a variety of managerial dimensions in the post-COVID-19 progress. The faculty and alumni of PIM have both shown interest in contributing such informative and insightful articles. It will be an issue similar to what we did after Tsunami titled, “Tsunami Challenged”.

Sri Lankan Journal of Management – Special Issue

Based on the research findings, comprehensive collection of research papers will be published as a special issue of the Sri Lankan Journal of Management (SLJM). Being the only Sri Lankan management journal hosted by EBSCO, it will have a wider reach to share the authentic insights of COVID-19 challenge. This will highlight the salience of success practices such as the use of tracing method to identify virus contacts with the use of military intelligence and healthcare personnel.

PIMARC Symposium in Post-COVID-19 Era

The annual research conference of PIM (PIMARC) will be done in a different manner focusing on the research findings related to COVID-19 in reaching a wider audience of research scholars, learning managers, administrators, decision makers and implementers. Based on the progress of faculty and student research, it is planned to be held in January 2021 as a collaborative effort with the National Science Foundation (NSF) of Sri Lanka.

Conclusion

Time has come for us to shift from “locking down” to “looking up” in search of novel opportunities with fresh initiatives. The above fifteen initiatives highlight the need to strengthen the leadership development with right competence and confidence. It requires the coveted role of contributing as the “nation’s management mentor” in continuing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The University is led by

Prof. Ajantha Dharmasiri

Director and the Chairman of the Board of Management

Postgraduate Institute of Management

Colombo, Sri Lanka

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, THIMPHU, BHUTAN*

Evolving Academic Environment with COVID-19

On March 6th 2020, all schools and institutions in the country closed as per the notification received from the Prime Minister's office. Following the notification for 4 months, the schools and institutions remained closed. Commencing with July 1st 2020, institutions such as RIM and tertiary educational and higher level classes were given instruction to resume classes.

Immediate Response To Institute Closure

To ensure continuity of education, the Royal Institute of Management developed and implemented a 'Contingency Plan for continued service delivery'. The contingency plans provided clear step-by-step guidance on the way forward and identified the prioritization of activities and the implementation of a schedule for faculty and staff.

An e-learning program was launched bringing faculty and resource persons to the recording studio established in the RIM campus to carry out recording of the classroom session and to be uploaded in the RIM website for students to access and refer based on their convenience.

In addition to the e-learning tool, a variety of online tools were also used such as Google classrooms, Zoom meetings and discussion groups including the enhanced use of RIM Moodle for dissemination of students learning materials, assessments and discussions.

Professional Support and Training

The delivery of class modules from face to face lectures and interactions to virtual classrooms caused a lot of disruptions and unexpected demands to cope with the new reality. For some faculties, these challenges meant that they had to learn navigating on the net to post their lectures and interact with the trainees.

A support IT Team under the Registrar was formed to provide hands on training and support to all faculty and resource person needing support and

* The Article has been provided by Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA) Hyderabad.

training on use of RIM Moodle and managing technology which was the main channel for delivery of services and dissemination of learning materials and communication between the trainees and the faculty. However, the professional support and training was primarily focused on the faculty since it was not feasible to reach all trainees although online support was available if required.

Curriculum Revision

Without the physical presence of the students, it was challenging to complete the entire curriculum so there was revision of the curriculum. Within each department, prioritization of units/modules was carried out and units condensed to include only key themes since in a virtual classroom it is challenging to keep the attention of the class for longer hours.

In addition, non-credited but mandatory programs especially pertaining to personal development of the trainees and others like speakers series, assemblies were all removed from the year's academic calendar and focus was put on the academic content of the curriculum. Exam based assessment was modified to meet the new normal and assessment featured more of assignments and quizzes instead of sit in exams.

Increased Spending on ICT and ICT Related Activities

To cope with the increased time and resources spent on online teaching and learning, the institute provided data packages to enable faculty and staff on remote work mode to provide seamless delivery of services and guidance to the trainees and the institute.

Further, trainees who fall under the category of private trainees (not under government supported trainees and therefore not eligible for stipend) were provided data packages based on mobile numbers submitted to the management. However, this could be provided only at a later date.

For deployment of online and distance teaching technologies, the institute invested in purchase of proper lighting, cameras and other equipment for setting up of the lecture recording studio, mixing and editing studio.

The Institute is led by
Ms. Sonam Pelden Thaye,
Director

RAVENSHAW UNIVERSITY, CUTTACK

When the state government of Odisha declared corona lockdown starting 22 March 2020 (Odisha was the first state in India to call for corona lockdown), Ravenshaw University was approaching the end of the even semester and a few departments were in the middle of the mid-semester exams. But hostels had to be vacated immediately, and the university entered lockdown, with little time for planning. In spite of the disruption, all functionaries of the university, while adhering to social distancing norms, tried their best to offset the impact of the disruption.

The Vice-Chancellor held periodic review meetings, online with faculty via Google Hangouts / Zoom to identify student priorities during the lockdown period. It was unanimously decided to focus on:

1. Course Completion and Student Counseling (by way of gainfully engaging the student community)
2. Assessment and Evaluation
3. Student Placement

1. Course Completion and Student Counseling:

- i. Faculty-student connect (Fig. 1a, 1b, 1c)
 - q. Teachers initiated student contact, in the first week, through whatsapp chat groups and phone calls, and gradually held focus group discussions on zoom. A few of these sessions were recorded and circulated in student groups for those who could not join because of unsteady internet connectivity.
- b. Several teachers used G-Suite Google classroom for scheduled hours.
- c. Teaching learning materials, including references, handwritten notes, video lectures, audio notes prepared by teachers have been uploaded on Youtube in the public and unlisted categories, circulated in groups, as well as uploaded on the university website. (Fig. 1d; GALLERY)
- d. Students were encouraged to call or get in touch by all electronic means available. This was to enable engagement with students who used the opportunity to engage in long informal conversations regarding their

difficulties in approaching course units as well as doubts and anxieties related to the corona pandemic and post-lockdown plans for their final semester exams, and fears about their career plans.

- e. Teachers recommended enrolment for short online courses and attendance at public webinars to hone their skills and learn new skills.
- f. All students including research scholars were guided on remote access to research databases such as JSTOR & ProQuest.

II. Counseling

- a. The Vice-Chancellor reached out to students with a well-being message via the official Facebook page of the university.
- b. Students were duly notified of the activities being undertaken such as sanitisation of the campus and the hostels for their safe return to the campus, post-lockdown.
- c. The phone numbers of faculty and staff of the university counseling centre 'Sambhab' and other functionaries were duly circulated for counseling help.

Observations:

- i) Students appreciated faculty efforts for online teaching and got in touch intermittently to apprise the faculty of their problems and to seek guidance. Despite being led to the large corpus of learning materials available on online portals such as SWAYAM and NPTEL, students preferred teacher notes and TLMs prepared by their teachers.
- ii) Students called to express their sense of pride and belongingness to the university after coming to know of small but significant attempts made by faculty and staff, specifically the production of 'RAV-Sanitiser' by faculty of the Department of Chemistry, and a faculty research paper on "Digital Forensics Using Drone", to maintain the tempo of university life during lockdown period.
- iii) Students also appreciated the media presence of their teachers who had published informative and analytical articles on COVID19 matters in the local dailies.

2. Assessment and Evaluation:

While some departments had completed the mid-semester exams prior to lockdown, a few more were in the middle of the mid-semester exams when the first corona lockdown was announced by the government of Odisha, 22 March 2020. For the latter, it has been decided to conduct online examination following due procedures for prior notification of exam time-table, pre-set time limit for the examinees, and timely assessment of the answer scripts. The following mode of operating has been decided:

i) Exam time-table to be notified on the website 7 days in advance; not more than two exams to be conducted in a day.

ii) Question paper to be prepared such that answers are not easily searchable on the net

iii) Question paper to be flashed on the website and / or sent on whatsapp 5 minutes prior to schedule.

iv) Student to send scanned answer script in pdf / jpg format within 30 min after the end-time via whatsapp or e-mail (A margin of 15 minutes may be allowed by the teacher concerned for submission, after duly considering the situation of the student)

v) All answer scripts to be evaluated and score sheet sent to COE by e-mail by 31 May 2020.

vi) The Students, who fail to take the test as per schedule, may be allowed to take the examination again, but with a different question paper.

vii) Ph.D. scholars due to submit thesis during lockdown would be allowed 6 months extension; Viva-voce to be conducted through virtual platforms, with due checks and permissions.

3. Student Placement:

The student placement cell has been tracking the continuity of the sessional placement drive through virtual meetings and regular follow-up. (Fig. 2)

i) One Online Campus Placement organized for Wipro Technologies for two profiles:

a) WILP (Online Test, Online Technical Interview and HR interview)

b) StepUp(Online Test, Online Technical Interview and HR interview)

The Technical test for some students are still pending. However, five students, who took the tests during lockdown, have received their Letter Of Intent.

ii) Virtual Pre joining Formalities:

a) Pre-joining Programme, including uploading of relevant documents such as Pan Card, UID, Passport, Mark sheets, etc., has been started for all Wipro recruits. Both faculty and students are coordinating the programme with the Wipro Recruitment Team in the virtual mode.

b) A few more companies are scheduled to initiate virtual pre-joining programme.

iii) Follow-upActivities:

a) The Placement Cell coordinator (PCC) is in touch with HR of the companies regarding the status of the offer letter and possibilities of virtual joining.

b) The PCC, while resolving pre-joining glitches, has spoken to the HR of Zee Entertainment towards internship of second year students of under-graduate course

4. Research

Faculty continued to be actively involved in own research as well as guiding student research from the undergraduate to the doctoral level. The lockdown period has been used by faculty to finalise pending research papers as well as to plan and publish new research. (Fig. 3a, 3b)

5. Admin-Faculty Convergence(Fig. 4)

A series of six live webinars were conducted by Vice-Chancellor Prof. Ishan Patro, beginning 8 April 2020, as part of the university's Online Lecture Programme to encourage synergy among the various administrative and academic units in matters of work from home. The objective of the webinars was to support the teaching and research needs of faculty and students in the time of corona as well as to plan teaching and examination schedules in post-lockdown situation in line with government advisories. The virtual interactions, in an interesting simulation of normal practices of substantive interactions, helped faculty not only to stay connected but also to take lessons for similar models of interaction with their students.

Fig.

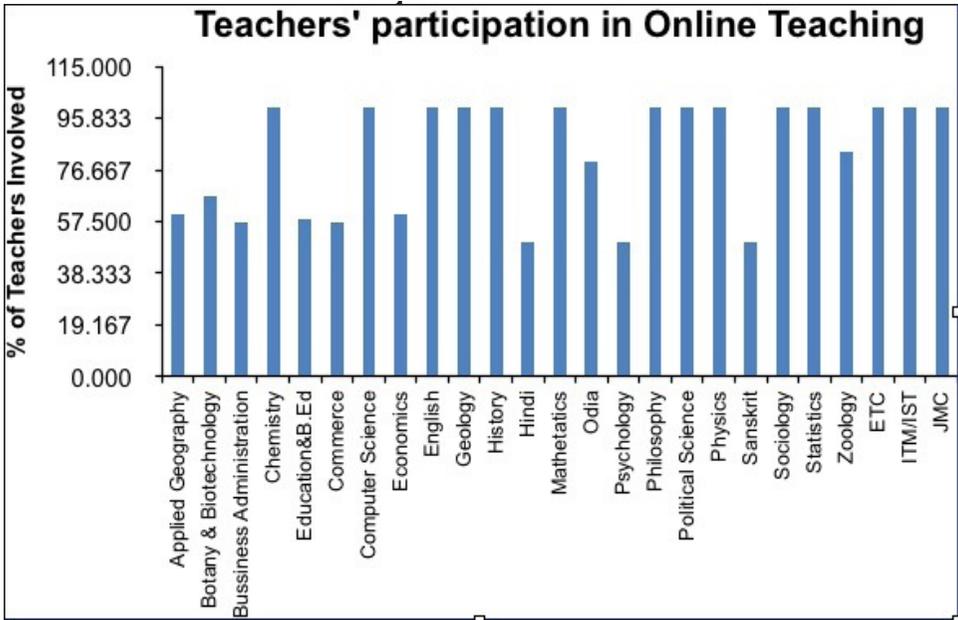


Fig. 1c

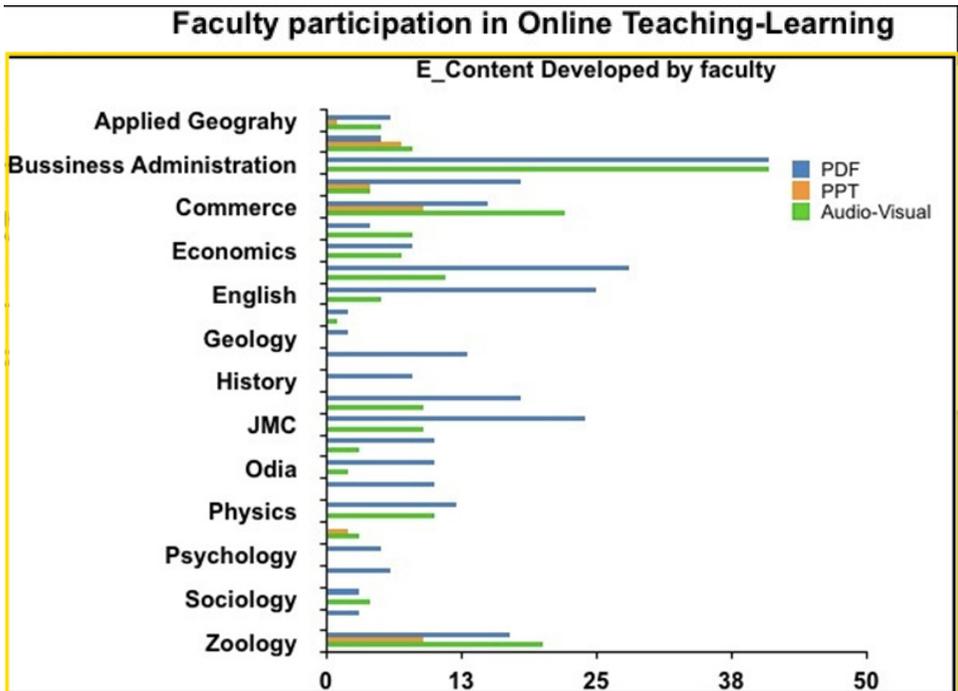


Fig. 2a

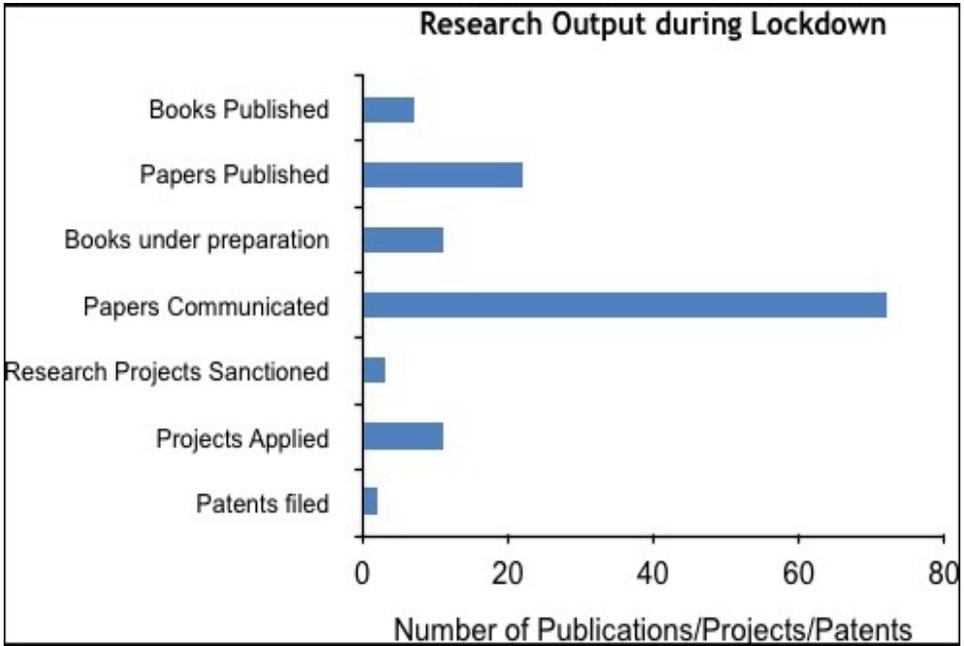


Fig. 2b

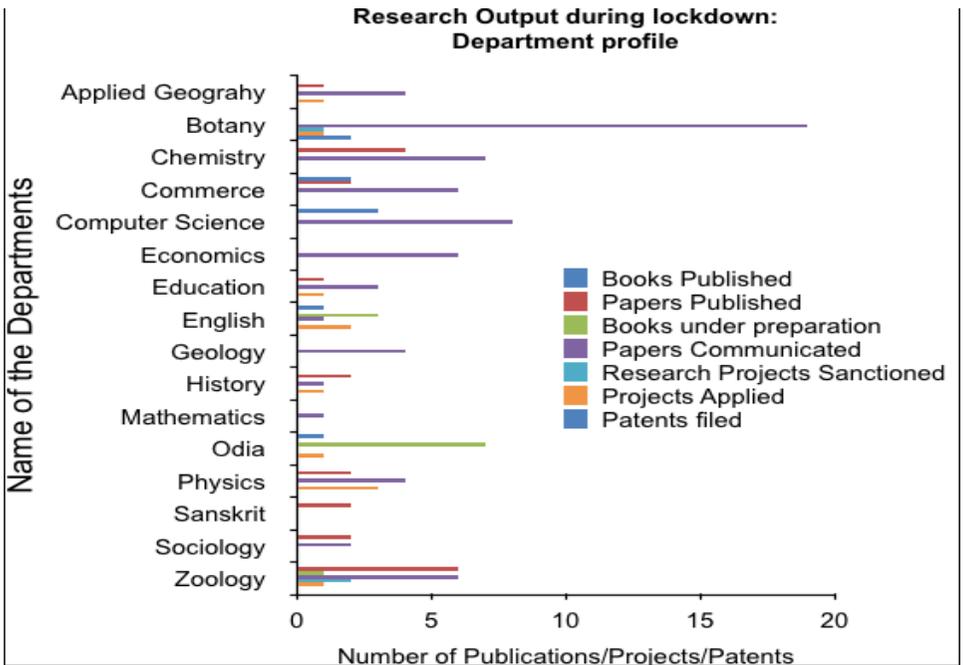


Table 1

RAVENSHAW UNIVERSITY						
ON/OFF CAMPUS RECRUITMENT DRIVE FOR THE SESSION 2019-20						
PRE-LOCKDOWN (STARTING FROM AUGUST 2019 TO MARCH 2020)						
SL.NO.	COMPANY NAME	ON/OFF CAMPUS	STREAM/DEPARTMENT	NO. OF SELECTED STUDENTS	PAY PACKAGE	NATURE OF JOB
1	DELOITTE INDIA	ON	B.SC - ITM, IST & CS	14	3.82 LPA	ASSOCIATE ANALYST
2	PAYTM	OFF	MBA	1	2.4 - 2.8 LPA	MARKETING EXECUTIVE
3	ATMECS INC.	OFF	B.SC - ITM, IST, CS, MATH., STATISTICS & PHY.	4	2.5 LPA	TRAINEE SOFTWARE ENGINEER
4	CAPGEMINI	OFF	BA, B.SC, B.COM & BBA	57	2.5 LPA	SOFTWARE TRAINEE / INFRA (SD) / INFRA (IMS)
5	SUNDARAM FINANCE	ON	MBA & IMBA	4	4 LPA	ASST. MANAGER CUSTOMER SUPPORT
6	INFOSYS	OFF	MCA/M.SC (MATH., PHY., STATISTIC, CS, ITM & ETC)	1	3 LPA	SOFTWARE ENGINEER
7	JUST DAIL	OFF	MBA	1	1.8 LPA	MARKETING EXECUTIVE
8	SPANDANA SPOORTY	ON	BBA, MBA & MA - RURAL DEVELOPMENT	2	5.38 LPA	BRANCH MANAGER
9	INFOSYS	OFF	B.SC (ITM/CS/IST/PHYSICS/MATH. & STATISTICS)	57	2.19 LPA	OPERATIONS / TESTING EXECUTIVE
10	GENPACT	ON	ALL UG	29	1.5 - 2.7 LPA	PROCESS ASSOCIATES
11	COGNIZANT TECHNOLOGIES	OFF	B.SC - IST, ITM & COMPUTER SC.	18	2.52 LPA	PROGRAMMER TRAINEE
12	CUE LEARN PRIVATE LIMITED	ON	ALL UG & PG	2	4.2 LPA	DIGITAL MARKETING / INSIDE SALES
13	CONCENTRIX	ONLINE	B.SC , B.COM, BA, BBA, MA, M.SC, M.COM	96	2.19 LPA	ASSOCIATES
14	SAKROBOTIX LAB	ON	M.SC - ETC, ITM, CS, MCA & B.SC - IST	26	1.8 LPA	ROBOTICS SYSTEM ENGINEER
15	PEOPLE'S FORUM	ON	MA - PSYCHOLOGY	6	1.5 - 1.8 LPA	COUNSELLOR
16	CENTROXY SOLUTION	ON	MCA & M.SC - COMPUTER SC.	6	1.8 LPA	INTERNSHIP
17	CHO LIFE INSURANCE	OFF	BBA, B.COM, BA, B.SC & MBA	6	2.8 - 3 LPA	SALES OFFICER
18	FEDERAL BANK	OFF	MBA, M.SC, M.COM, MCA & MA ECONOMICS	1	7.3 - 10.2 LPA	JUNIOR MANAGEMENT GRADE - 1
19	DRUBUS TECHNOLOGIES	ON	B.SC - IST, ITM & CS	1	2.4 LPA	SOFTWARE TRAINEE
20	INDUSIND BANK	OFF	MBA & IMBA	2	3 LPA	MANAGEMENT TRAINEE - SERVICE DELIVERY MANAGER
21	AZIM PREMJI FOUNDATION	ON	MA & M.SC - ENGLISH, HINDI, POL.SC, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY	FINAL ROUND PENDING	3.72 LPA	ASSOCIATE
22	BRITISH TELECOM	OFF	B.COM, B.SC, BA & BBA	2	2.3 LPA	TRAINEE ASSOCIATE
23	FEDERAL BANK	ON	BA, B.SC, B.COM & BBA	10	4.16 - 4.25 LPA	ASSOCIATE IN NON-OFFICER (CLERICAL) CADRE FOR BRANCH BANKING
24	CAPGEMINI TECHNOLOGIES	ON	M.SC - MATHEMATICS & STATISTICS	2	6.8 LPA	ANALYST
25	LIDO LEARNING	ON	UG & PG	1	5.6 LPA	TRAINEE - BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
26	COGNIZANT TECHNOLOGIES	ON	BA, B.SC, B.COM & BBA	8	2.52 LPA	GRADUATE TRAINEE
27	WIPRO TECHNOLOGIES	ON	B.SC - MATH, STATISTICS, PHYSICS, ITM, IST & CS	74	1.88 LPA	WILP - WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAM
28	TECH MAHINDRA BPM	ON	ALL UG & PG	FINAL ROUND PENDING	1.5 - 1.7 LPA	E-COMMERCE TECHNICAL SUPPORT
29	TATA AIG	OFF	MBA	3	3 LPA	CHANNEL SALES MANAGER
30	ICICI BANK	ON	ALL UG	32	2.2 - 2.57 LPA	PHONE BANKING OFFICER
31	ANNAPURNA MICRO FINANCE	ON	MA RURAL DEVELOPMENT	FINAL ROUND PENDING	1.5 LPA	SUPERVISOR
32	RAMKEY	OFF	M.SC - CHEMISTRY & ANALYTICAL CHEM.	2	2.5 LPA	POST GRADUATE ENGINEER TRAINEE
33	ZEE MEDIA	ON	MA - JMC	FINAL ROUND PENDING	2.4 LPA	TRAINEE JOURNALIST
34	SBI LIFE INSURANCE	ON	MBA & IMBA	4	3 LPA	EXECUTIVE TRAINEE
DURING LOCKDOWN (APRIL 2020 - TILL DATE)						
35	WIPRO TECHNOLOGIES	ONLINE	B.SC - ITM, IST, CS, MATH., STATISTICS & PHY.	5	1.88 LPA	WILP - WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING PROCESS
36	WIPRO STEPUP	ONLINE	B.COM & BBA	FINAL ROUND PENDING	2.5 LPA	FINANCIAL ANALYST/PEOPLE AMBASSADOR

University is led by:

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SATHYABHAMA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, CHENNAI

(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

The COVID -19 Pandemic has made all of us to think innovatively to manage the crisis situation. Technology came to our rescue and we were able to come out with constructive solutions for every problem. We did respond to the situation in a very short span and quickly embraced the technology to ensure uninterrupted learning to the students. We believe that, to endure the situation of uncertainty triggered by the Pandemic, it is the responsibility of the Institution, to provide adequate information and give proper direction and reassurance to all the stake holders. We ensured that adequate information reach everyone at the right time to avoid any confusion.

The following are the working arrangements or 'Best Practices' of our Institution to continue with the teaching, learning and research and to protect the academic interests of the students during COVID-19.

Online Classes

The first and the foremost problem was syllabus coverage for the courses left incomplete as the result of lockdown. As an immediate measure, we have scheduled online classes for students through online platforms including Zoom, Google meet, Google Classroom and Microsoft Team. The students were informed about the schedule and the Department made sure that every student participated in the classes. The entire syllabus was completed within the time frame of the semester. The students were assessed through online assignments and quizzes and were given grades for the semester. The project viva for the final year students were scheduled in priority over other examinations to enable them to complete their course and earn their degree within the stipulated time.

Webinars and Student Development Programmes

Webinars on topics like higher studies opportunities post COVID-19 at National and International Universities, Crisis Management and Entrepreneurial development were organized to keep the students engaged and motivated during the lockdown period. Aptitude training and Personality Development Programmes were organised online to improve the placement opportunities for students post COVID-19.

Free MOOC Courses

Sathyabama has tied up with Coursera to offer free online courses to the students and faculty. This has given an opportunity to our students to enroll in courses offered by renowned Universities across the world at free of cost. This is a very good initiative which keeps our students and faculty members engaged and enable them to utilize their time productively.

Dissemination of information about Programmes happening around the world

The students were informed about all the Events and Programmes happening around the world in which they can participate.

Centre for Continuing Education

Sathyabama has established a Centre for Continuing education through which Online courses and degree programmes are planned from this academic year. We have tied up with Top Industrial organisations to offer market oriented courses to students. The students can pursue these courses as a part of their curriculum to fulfill their credit requirement for their programme. Sathyabama has also launched courses in Moodle platforms in varied disciplines of Science, Arts, Engineering, Technology and Management.

Virtual Mobility Programmes at International Universities

Sathyabama provides opportunity for the students to enroll in virtual mobility programmes at International Universities. Sathyabama has more than 200 partnering Institutions across the world and have tied up with the partnering Universities to offer Virtual semester abroad programmes and summer schools for the students. The International office facilitates the virtual exchange mobility programmes, which offer courses involving transfer of credits with no additional fees.

Col. Dr. Jeppiaar research Forum

This forum has been established to facilitate knowledge sharing on the thrust areas of research. The forum creates awareness on the advances in research and development activities happening around the world and to develop interest in various fields of research. The forum also provides opportunities for the students to discuss their research ideas with the Scientists of our University to convert

their ideas into technological development. The research forum educates the students on publications and helps them in writing research articles and converting them into publications. Research Seminars are conducted every week for Research Scholars in which they make presentation on the latest innovations and technological developments taking place in their field across the world.

Virtual/Online Programmes

- **Virtual cultural Programmes:** The students were deprived of nothing including the fun element which they will experience if they are physically present in the campus. Virtual cultural Programmes were organized in which students performed dance (named as dis-dance) drama (named as Pan-dramatic) and many more programmes creatively named relating to the COVID 19 situation.
- **Virtual Alumni Meetings:** Alumni Meetings were conducted virtually in which our alumni working and settled across the world have enthusiastically participated. These meetings connected the alumni who are interested to support and give back to the Institution.
- **Online Hackathons:** Hackathons were conducted in which students across India participated and offered creative solutions to the practical problems faced by various sectors.
- **Online Quiz Programmes:** Quiz programmes open to all students across the world were organized in various subject area.
- **Online Quiz Programmes to School Children: To motivate and encourage** School Children Quiz Programme named 'BRAINIAC' was organized and top three winners were given prizes and others are provided with participation certificate.
- **Design competition:** Online Design Competition was held for students of Civil Engineering studying across the world.

Institute is led by:

Dr S Sundar Monoharan

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Website: www.sathyabama.ac.in

SHARDA UNIVERSITY, GREATER NOIDA

Amidst the countrywide lock-down to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, Sharda University, Greater Noida, UP has undertaken various initiatives and adopted best practices possible to tackle the crisis. The University has adopted a multi-pronged strategy- first which ensured non-disruption of the teaching-learning process and timely completion of course curriculum as well as maintaining social distancing. This has been possible by switchingover to anonline platform through the use of the University's strong ICT enabled study environment and Learning Management System (LMS). Second, it has been engaging and giving wide exposure to students through a host of educational webinars and online training programmes organised by various Schools/ Departments. It is also ensuring the timely completion of summer internship programmes as well as placement of its students through online mode. Besides, the University is not only taking care of the academic interests of the students but also the health care of students, their families and the community at large. Amidst this pandemic, Sharda School of Medical Sciences is playing a prime role in the fight against COVID-19. Highlights of the best practices adopted by the University are given below: -

Teaching-Learning Process amidst COVID- Best Practices

a) The University which offers 150 programmes through its 14 schools to over 12000 students from India and abroad has been successful in ensuring timely completion of the course curriculum without any disruption. Ever since March 20, 2020 (commencement of lockdown), the syllabus/courses have been duly and properly completed as per schedule (April 24, 2020) via online teaching by our highly qualified faculty. The students were also imparted lecture/study material through digital means. Besides quizzes were conducted on a regular basis along with assignments to keep the students engaged and in rhythm with the classes in an online mode. The students were not only engaged properly by their respective teachers, mentoring of slow/advanced learners has also been done in an online mode. They have also been given access to old question banks, to help them in their preparationfor examinations. As per the UGC directions, students have also been provided links to their subject resources available on Swayam Prabha platform. Above all, to ensure the emotional well-being of the students (as well

as staff and parents), the University has provided free tele-counselling facility to them by trained and professional Psychologists/Counsellors.

b) The smooth conduction of teaching-learning process has been enabled by the University's strong ICT enabled study environment with Sharda Tech initiated PeopleSoft, V-Attendance, TED Monitoring Portal, LMS and smart ERP system. Through the use of its high-end software, iCloud EMS, it has been successful in maintaining online time-table, attendance, assignments, lecture materials etc. In this moment of crisis, the use of University's online e-resources, with platforms like J-STOR and reputed journals like Springer etc. has undoubtedly come handy in ensuring unhindered research work by students and faculty. Besides this, students have also been advised to download the AarogyaSetu App for COVID awareness. A fact sheet substantiating the teaching learning-process during COVID-19 is given in the following paragraph.

c) Teaching-Learning at Sharda University: Amidst Lockdown

A factsheet on teaching and learning activities- online classes, including theory, tutorials, interaction with research students and research work carried out during the lockdown period is given below: -

- i. Lab classes on Virtual Platform and Server-based Coding Experiments- 976 activities conducted in laboratory experiments/studios/simulation.
- ii. Project/Internship Guidance to UG/PG students- 1727.
- iii. Community study specifically in survey and data analysis-based projects on COVID-19 perspectives-195.
- iv. PhD Scholars engaged in research by respective guides- 248.
- v. Digital lecture & study materials through ERP, mails and WhatsApp – 18016.
- vi. Digital material in the form of recorded video lectures-7896.
- vii. Scanned Notes/PPT in soft files -10120.
- viii. Total assignments given to students by the faculty- 4433.
- ix. Total Mentoring activity done - 2756 using TED platform and 831 Slow Learners given academic guidance by respective faculty.

- x. Total number of Counselling done- 76 students/people through mentors and helpline for major issues.
- xi. Number of Quiz conducted- 764.
- xii. Group/ discussion/seminar/ viva/ presentation/ interaction/ etc - 2272.
- xiii. Total seminars conducted (with students' participation)- 270.
- xiv. Faculty enrolled in online advanced courses in SWAYAM /NPTEL/ MOOCs- 225.
- xv. Total questions uploaded by the faculty -15,00,00.
- xvi. Total sample questions given to students for practice purpose- 800.
- xvii. Total number of publications (by faculty) in research papers/ books/ articles/ chapters-156 (Many papers are co-authored, with the involvement of students).

d) Assessment and Evaluation

In line with its efforts to follow best practices with respect to student evaluation/assessment during the lockdown period, the University has taken various initiatives. Since continuous assessment has 20% weightage in a course evaluation the faculty members have conducted online quiz sessions, given assignments as well as conducted online internal tests as part of the continuous assessment. Almost 85-90% of the students have successfully participated in internal tests conducted by the faculty members. However, there were some limitations as 10-15 percent students could not attend all assessment tests due to network issues, similarly hardware-based lab experiments could not be completed. Moreover, students could not complete internships, where they were physically connected with industry/organizations but students who had already collected sufficient data could complete their projects on time. Prior to the lockdown, the university had already conducted the Mid-Term Examination (MTE) which carries 30% weightage in total evaluation of the courses. Therefore, the University is already through with 50% (MTE+CA) of their student evaluation despite the difficult pandemic conditions.

e) Engaging and Enriching Students through Webinars

A host of webinars and online training programmes have been/are being organised by various Schools and Departments in order to enhance the

knowledge and skill of the students and give them ample exposure. Some of them are mentioned below: -

- i. School of Agricultural Sciences organised a webinar on Food Security and Sustainability in the time of COVID-Prospects and Challenges on April 22, 2020.
- ii. School of Law organised a webinar on 'Access to Justice' on April 18, 2020, Emotional Intelligence during Pandemic on April 27, 2020.
- iii. Sharda Skills organised webinar and Online Training Programme on Public Speaking and Presentation Skill.
- iv. School of Media Film and Entertainment organised webinar on Role of Mass Media in Shaping Public Opinion, another on Future Prospects and Opportunities Available in the Animation Industry on April 25, 2020.
- v. School of Dental Sciences organised a webinar on Dental Practice during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- vi. School of Pharmacy organised webinar on Current Scenario of Pharmaceutical Marketing on April 29, 2020.

Sharda School of Medical Sciences in service of students/ community

Sharda School of Medical Sciences with 200 bed facility exclusively for COVID patients has been declared a COVID hospital by the State Government. The University is providing free of cost medical facilities to all COVID patients, including medicines. Around 39 COVID patients have been discharged as on May 01, 2020. A team of 300 people including doctors, nurses and medical staff are on round the clock duty to serve the community during this pandemic. Besides providing free medical services, the School is also engaged in spreading awareness among the students through webinars such as 'Duties & Responsibilities of Citizens towards COVID-19: Global Pandemic.

Placement Initiatives

A disruption in the normal course of business brings in new opportunities to explore, rethink and innovate on the delivery of services offered. As far as placement activities are concerned, most regular recruiters have almost completed their recruitment cycle by the month of March and over 90 percent

of eligible students have already been placed. However, companies which have started their recruitment process late are on their job in an online mode (online tests and Skype interview). Below is a list of companies conducting online recruitment for the remaining students of Sharda University.

Batch: 2019 - 2020

S.No.	Company Name	Branch
1	Oncquest Lab	Biotech
2	Nagarro Software	CSE, IT, ECE
3	Ishida India	CSE, IT
4	Crystal Hues	B.Tech All branch
5	Ginger Science	Biotech, Pharma, Mech & EEE
6	Successive Software	CSE, IT
7	Unicorn Denmart	M.Tech/ B.Tech Biotech, MSc./B.Sc
8	Premas Lifesciences	M.Tech/ B.Tech Biotech, MSc.
9	FIS Global	B.Tech All branch
10	Indus Valley Perner	B. Tech CSE/IT
11	HCL Technologies	B. Tech CSE.IT/ECE/EEE
12	WNS Global Services Pvt. Limited	B. Sc./M.Sc. (Clinical Research)
13	Think & Learn Pvt. Limited (BYJU'S)	B. Tech All branches/MBA/BBA/B. Com
14	Ginger Spice Pvt. Ltd.	B. Tech ME & M.Tech ME
15	White Panda	MBA
16	World Phone	MBA
17	Hippo Innovations	B. Tech CSE/IT
18	Moolchand Hospital	MBBS, MS

1. A virtual CODEVITA program (coding challenge) with Tata Consultancy Services has been organized for 252 B.Tech students. Based on the scores of CODEVITA, Tata Consultancy Services will provide internships and full time opportunities to the participating students.
2. CODUSULE, a coding challenge by Naggaro Software and Coding Blocks has been organized for CSE/IT and MCA students. The best programmers can showcase their coding skills. The prize money is Rs.1.00 Lakh per month.
3. MOU with HCL Technologies for providing virtual Cyber Security training to all B.Tech and MCA students is in the process.
4. Utilized the services of www.internshala.com for providing virtual internships to the students. 39 students have got paid virtual internship through the online platform with a stipend of Rs.5,000 – Rs. 15,000 per month.
5. Conducted the entire recruitment process of Byju's Learning through Skype and 6 students got job offer at a package of Rs. 10.00 Lakh Per Annum.
6. Conducted the selection process for summer internship of Career Launchers by making video resumes of students.
7. Arranged virtual internships for 23 students of MBA batch through www.letsintern.com.
8. Placed 15 students of MBA batch through www.firstnaukri.com in ICICI Bank at a package of 4.25 Lakh Per Annum.
9. Organized a one month virtual job readiness training program for all the students by our faculty on various technologies like C Programming, DBMS, Java, Data Structures and Algorithms, IC Engine, Fluid Mechanics, Thermodynamics, Robotics, STAAD, Advanced Bioinformatics, Embedded Systems, VLSI etc.
10. Conducted a 15 days virtual training program for pre final year students on Professional Communication, Personality Development and Soft skills with the help of Sharda Skills (training department of Sharda University).

11. Work from home opportunities have been arranged for students with the help of **TechConfer Technologies** where the students will be mentored by an individual company mentor, having more than 10 year of experience.
12. A half day webinar on “Career guidance for pursuing higher studies in foreign universities” was conducted for all the students with the help of School of Business Studies on 30th April, 2020.
13. Half day webinar on “Digitalization: A tool to enhance employability” was conducted for all the students with the help of School of Business Studies on 1st May, 2020.
14. A one day webinar on “Current Scenario on Pharmaceutical Marketing” has been organized for Pharmacy students 29th April, 2020
15. A 5-day webinar on “Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)” has been organized from 11th – 15th May, 2020 in collaboration with Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) and Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Governm ent of India.
16. A one day webinar on “Dental Practice During and After COVID-19 Pandemic” by Prof (Dr.) Ashish Kakar, Senior Consultant, Apollo Indraprastha Hospital was conducted on 27th April, 2020 for all dental students.
17. A half day webinar on “Skills required to succeed in Legal Profession post Corona Pandemic” by Col. Atul Tyagi (Retired Advocate) was conducted on 17th April, 2020 for law students.

Summer Internships for Students of 2020-21 batch

Summer internships play a vital role in career development of a budding professional, be it technical or a non-technical course. It helps the student to enhance their skills as per the requirements of the industry and gives the student an opportunity to acclimatize with the industry conditions/environment. Prior to the lockdown, the University had already arranged internships for over 200 interested students in over 30 companies, with a monthly stipend. Since most of the students have returned to their hometown due to the COVID-19 situation, some of these companies have given virtual internship projects to the students (which can be done from their hometowns as well). Some companies have

postponed the internships to July 2020, hoping to take the students on a full-time basis, depending on the situation.

The University has also sought services of online internship portals like internshala.com, virtualinternships.com, letsintern.com, weintern.in etc. for arranging virtual internships for the remaining students. Besides, it has also taken some inhouse initiatives in this regard. The School of Engineering and Technology has plans to initiate an in-house internship program for its students. Online student internship programs have been initiated in collaboration with National Productivity Council (NPC). Apart from this, the University is utilising this (lockdown) period for skill enhancement of students. It is organizing a month-long virtual training program in technologies like C-Programming, DBMS, Java, Algorithms, Fluid Mechanics, Thermodynamics, Robotics, STAAD, Advanced Bioinformatics, Embedded Systems, VLSI etc.

Further Focus

The university has already issued a circular to the students pertaining to online classes, internal assessment, tentative examination plan, evaluation and declaration of results. As per the UGC directives, the university has set up a COVID-19 cell to resolve issues and problems of the students related to academic activities, academic calendar and examination, including evaluation and results. The Cell shall ensure smooth operation of the university's helpline numbers/e-mail ids for students. It may use the mail id, COVID_19@sharda.ac.in for any correspondence with the students in this regard. Based on the COVID-19 scenario, requirement of social distancing and UGC guidelines, the Cell shall plan an implementable calendar, recommend the mode of assessment, examination and evaluation for the Even Semester of Academic Year 2019-20 as well as finalise an academic calendar for the Academic Year 2020-21. Students have been advised to work on projects at home on the basis of secondary data, case study, analytical modelling, etc. which do not require campus laboratory facilities. The Cell shall also formulate appropriate methods for assessment of such projects works.

The University is dedicatedly working towards a Research and Development Strategy. It aims to set up five Centres of Excellence and two high-end testing laboratories very soon. A Tasks Force has been constituted to develop implementable plan for enforcement/implementation of UGC quality mandates.

The university is also utilising this time in rigorous review of the system and processes and revising 15 major Standard Operating Procedures. On the infrastructure side, the University is already working towards upgradation/enhancement of the following facilities-digitization of library, including more quality e-resources, provision for readily available plagiarism check software, integration of LMS with library digitization, lecture capture facility and Smart Classes. The University has also constituted a team to improve automation on data management for calculating the Course Outcomes and Program Outcomes(COs/POs) as a part of the Outcome-Based Education (OBE).

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SHRI VISHWAKARMA SKILL UNIVERSITY, HARYANA

Shri Vishwakarma Skill University (SVSU) is India's first Government Skill University set up by Government of Haryana. The University is conducting around 31 programmes at the levels of Diploma, D.Voc, B.Voc, M.Voc, PGD programmes and short-term courses in association with industry partners. The university has been working for past 03 years towards developing highly skilled human capital through its Skill Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Management, Agriculture, Applied Science and Humanity.

The University kept its academic activities intact during the lockdown emerging due to outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. Whole class room activities of the university were immediately transferred on digital platform. In phase –I, 10 licences were procured for running 10 parallel sessions which was further extended to 30 by the IT Cell of University. All teachers were allocated ID to conduct their classes as per the schedule, as a result the university could continue its uninterrupted academic work while staying at home. All classes are regularly being monitored by the university administration through a dashboard. This is to inform that till date 546 online sessions are conducted through the digital platform. The average attendance in these sessions are up to 75% - 80%. Average duration of these sessions are around 50 minutes. This is also to bring to your notice that up to 415 logins are reported in one of the expert lecture conducted by the university during this period.

To mitigate the challenge of student's involvement in digital mode of teaching, the teachers of university has adopted various innovative pedagogies, some of them are as under:

1. Group Learning: Group learning activity by creating groups of students on social media and presentation of learning outcome on the digital platform of the university.
2. Interactive Online Quiz: During the lecture, the interactive online quiz on the platforms such as Mentimeter, Slido, Quizwhizzer etc. were conducted to track learning and understanding by asking questions and downloading results. The awards of points are based on accuracy of answer as well as speed of answering the question.

3. Video Caselets: In this method, the students are given/shown a video related to context of the lecture and before starting it, the students are given instructions to watch and understand the content of the video. After which the faculty and students discuss over the content.
4. Virtual Labs: The university has also explored possibility of conducting experiments as per the syllabus on the available virtual lab platforms

In addition to the regular classes, every day lecture by experts from Industry and Premier Academic Institutions are being organized for overall personality development of the students. The University has not restricted its activities for its own students but is also organizing Webinars from eminent speakers for the benefit of whole academic fraternity and students.

Another unique initiative of the University is to directly connect with students through a unique programme – “Meet your Vice Chancellor in SVSU Town Hall”. In this programme, the Vice Chancellor of university interacts with students to understand their learning experience through digital mode. Such one to one interaction of Vice Chancellor with students has instilled confidence amongst them that in such a situation of crises, the whole university is standing to support them to eliminate any possible academic loss.

This is to bring to your notice that, Shri Vishwakarma Skill University has also conducted all its meetings (through Digital Platform) including statutory bodies of the University by 31st March: All meetings were successfully conducted and concluded.

- 1 Meeting of the Court
2. Meeting of the Executive Council
3. Meeting of Finance Committee of the University
4. Meeting of the Skill Council

By taking all such initiatives, the university could transform this challenge into a new opportunity of learning.

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SIKKIM STATE UNIVERSITY, GANGTOK

Students of Sikkim State university spread over the entire state of Sikkim, mostly in the geographically hilly terrain inaccessible to internet facilities have been gainfully engaged by means of a humble digital WhatsApp Class by creating a WhatsApp group for exchanging 'virtual class room notes'. For this, a subject- wise WhatsApp Coordinators have been appointed whose WhatsApp nos. have been circulated to all the students for query and availing virtual class notes if desired by students during specified period of the day almost similar to the normal day of routine class room.

As the smart mobile phones are possessed by all the students, they enjoy the routine class room 'subject notes' at their disposal through the designated coordinators. Subject coordinators collect notes from other colleagues and circulates the same to students connected to the WhatsApp Group by name "SSUSWAG". Students are happy with this 'survival arrangement' designed for the lockdown period. Students are even allowed to contact the coordinators and other class teachers over phone if they so desired during the specified period of the day. Coordinators have been requested to make themselves available at their residences as if they are in the real class room routines day to provide the service of teachers to the needs of students. Students, not only avail the exchange of notes, they have also been directed to make a query to get the answer of their questions over phone. In addition, students have been requested to glue with the Free Educational Channel arranged by the Government in order to enhance their general knowledge besides their subject matters. They are also requested to Install Google Classroom and create Google Account to avail the benefit of free web service useful for the submission of dissertation works/topics allotted to them by respective class teachers through WhatsApp Group.

Web links of relevant OER too are provided to students to complete their dissertation works assigned to them as and when Corona lockdown opens. Further, extracts from a number of down loaded files related to the subject matters along with their Web links compiled by respective teacher-coordinators are being provided to students to facilitate the completion of their courses during lockdown period. Furthermore, they have been asked to write a general essay on COVID-19 as to how pandemic could be overcome only through self-quarantine and strict adherence to guidelines provided by government. Thus,

our best practice includes primarily to lockdown down the students and confined them engaged for the WhatsApp Class Room through WhatsApp Group with a strong word of caution that they should maintain social distancing in their routine activities while they are at home to overcome CORONA pandemic through self-quarantine and isolation. With the passage of time, our teachers have started a Google Class Room platform to engage the students and the new arrangement found that Google Class Room App was more effective over WhatsApp based learning. With the new arrangements, three Sessional Tests for each subjects have been successfully completed using Google Form and MS Form.

However, questions were of short answer and multiple choice type unlike that of normal classes. Conduct of theory classes using the Google Class Room App was effective as long as internet connectivity provides good service. However, many complained that they could not avail the benefit of online classes due to poor internet connectivity and low bandwidth.

Moreover, many poor students did not have opportunity of possessing smart mobile gadgets, computers and other digital appliances to avail of the internet based education. Given these constraints being faced in theory classes, students could not be engaged for practical classes unless a kind of Virtual Lab get established for imparting the practical class based knowledge. Thus, practical class is a problem for internet based learning to address the students' requirements as was managed for theory classes.

Development of quality e-contents and placing the same in the students accessible digital platform like YouTube, WhatsApp, fBook, etc. have become a serious challenge to teaching communities as the e-learning depends on e-quality and ICT. Second challenge being faced by university is about the conduct of Examination whether to hold the exam physically or through internet in view of COVID situation. Corona in Sikkim is relatively less as compared to other states, university is planning to conduct the exam physically with due permission from the Government.

Sikkim State University being a new university with less number of departments and students, our dedicated teachers have successfully managed the students and protected their interest through the internet based teaching-learning process. Constraints being faced by university, teaching communities

and students are being improved and made sustainable as the pandemic COVID-19 has compelled to alter the conventional mode of education to online mode during COVID situation.

However, In the post COVID situation, Blended Learning or Flipped Learning Model seemed to be the future Model of Education under HEIs in India. Thanks to our learned teachers for converting harsh COVID crisis into an opportunity in making this happened.

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SHREEMATI NATHIBAI DAMODAR THACKERSEY WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY, MUMBAI

Gainfully Engaging the Student Community

Here are the main efforts by the faculty members of the University in keeping the student community- ranging from Junior College to Doctoral scholars of their respective Department/College/Institution:

1. Online Classes and Guidance

Teachers undertook online classes to complete the syllabi, for doubt clearing, problem solving, practice sessions and internal projects/assignments. WhatsApp and Emails were extensively used for these interactions. LMSs like Moodle, Edmodo, Google Classrooms, Canvas were used by teachers for discussion forum activities, assignment submission and online quizzes. Zoom, Skype, WizIQ, BigBluebutton, Duo and Google Hangout were used for synchronous sessions. Screencast videos and podcast were developed by teachers. Other tools like Google forms, Socrative quizzes, Buble.us, ezTalk, Kutuki, Open Matlab, Online Octave and LTspice simulation tools were also used by teachers. Resources from SWAYAM, NMEICT and ePG-Pathashala were also used.

2. Workshops, Seminars and Webinars

Numerous Seminars, Workshops, Webinars were organized for Students. For example, Online Workshops on topics like “Digital Communication: Platforms, Contents and Tools, statistical analysis, Blended Learning (Mind mister, Padlet, Jamboard, Kahoot, IdeaBoardz). Over 13 webinars were conducted during the month of May and June 2020.

Many departments conducted online webinars for spreading information about the programs on offer at SNTWU. To name a few P V Polytechnic, Department of Lifelong Learning, Department of Educational Technology, Department of Special Education, Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension and its Pune Sub-centre, etc. Such webinars were well-received by the students as well as by their teachers and parents.

3. Coursera on Campus

Under this initiative SNTDWU was given 10,000 licenses for free access to their selected programmes. This enabled the UG, PG students, PhD scholars, faculty members to avail over 4200 courses under a variety of domains like business, computer science, arts and humanities, personal development, information technology, data science, language learning, health, math, logic and social sciences. By July 17, total of 817 learners within the University have enrolled for 2927 Coursera MOOCs spending 4369 hours of learning for 6145 lessons. The student feedback clearly indicates that they are enjoying this golden opportunity and seem to be using it to enhance their knowledge and skills.

4. Exposure to National and International speakers

Subsequently being part of the disciplinary networks, the details of the thousands of webinars conducted by outside institutions were shared with the students providing them exposure to national and international speakers of their own and other disciplines.

5. Online Examinations and Viva Voce

Most Postgraduate Departments and number of Undergraduate Colleges (Conducted as well as Affiliated) conducted a variety of online examinations starting with Google form, online MCQ, WhatsApp submission of assignments, Google Meet Seminar Presentations, Zoom Viva Voce and so on. All the teachers made sure that they support the students in their time and space to perform to the best of their abilities.

6. Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) Programme

SNTDWU and Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar carried out many activities starting from slogan writing competition, poster making competitions, preparation of quizzes, videos, song audios and comparative research. Students learnt various skills such as preparation of videos and its technicalities, review of literature and collecting secondary data, coordinating with fellow classmates, teamwork, time utilization in fruitful manner, communication and many more skills.

7. Psychological support to students- Helplines and Let's talk, tele-samvaad:

SNDTWU created Webpages under Mission Fight Covid-19 with lot of resources for students on the URL: <https://sndt.ac.in/covid-19/stay-fit>.

SNDTWU recognized the need for support during challenging times of Lock Down. Faculty of Psychology provided phone in tele-counselling for the University Students. Department of Education Management created *Let's Talk* initiative to provide psychological support to their own students. Covid-19 helpline Google form was created on the webpage for students to write down their queries which were addressed by the staff. Lot of information and engagement was created on <https://sndt.ac.in/covid-19> even by Department of Physical Education and NSS Cell of the University.

8. Value Addition Activities

Activities like awareness quiz, Rangoli Competition, Quarantine Well Being and Adaptability Assessment Test, National Covid-19 Awareness programme on Women's Health and Wellness, lecture series on relevant topics (Dept. of Education Management), Tree Plantation, Yoga Day celebrations, etc kept the students occupied yet helped in coping with the pandemic.

9. Research and Internships

Students also undertook research studies in a similar way. For Example, Student of Resource Management took up Survey of ergonomics of Work from Home for women. Many students undertook Work From Home (WFH) Internship for digital marketing, research consultancy, marketing and promotional firms. Some students wrote articles on internship experiences, which were published in Krushival and local newspapers.

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation have been always a sensitive issue and became more sensitive and debatable in pandemic. There was a lot of thought put into how assessment and evaluation could be done without putting students through any risk, and yet to evaluate whether they have adequately mastered the skills and knowledge they were supposed to.

Various strategies were used by the teachers to assess and evaluate students. The emphasis was on using combinations of traditional means of assessment,

and more online-friendly devices which would nevertheless remain student-friendly. Two examples are cited here, one drawn from theoretical domains, and the other drawn from field-based work.

In the former domain, students were asked to access the various online library resources available to them, and write literature reviews for various issues pertinent to their field of study. Wherever possible, faculty members used this evaluation device to make it relevant to possible dissertation areas which the students would work on, and also to domains they need to review for the curriculum. This methodology in fact gave the faculty members a good platform to make students aware about plagiarism and various means of carrying out plagiarism checks.

The field-based domain was in fact more challenging to work with during the pandemic, since there could be potential assignments wherein students had to go in the field and conduct interviews of teachers, students, principals etc., or work with various patient populations, or people from the community. This process was duly modified and telephonic interviews were carried out and participants were requested to permit recordings. Further the transcripts were prepared and analysis carried out and the reports are submitted. The students conducted sessions online. They conducted quizzes for school students. Wherever required, the information was collected using google forms.

What's app was also used to collect the raw data for assignments. Group work was carried out online wherein the members of group distributed topics and then prepared videos of group presentation. Faculty members found that students were very comfortable with this modality, and supported each other when online presentations by small groups were taken up, on their work on pre-assigned topics. In fact, students possibly learn more from peers during such exercises, which push them to interact among themselves.

Additionally, collaborative tools like Google slides, Padlet, Jam board were used to assess collaboration. The discussions were also carried out in Google classroom. Also, Concept maps, Mind maps were used as learning as well as assessment tools. The assignments were uploaded on Moodle platform or shared through Google drive, or email.

Discussion forums were created in Moodle platform to assess learning of students. Also, using Google Meet, various discussions cantered around role

plays of relevant cases. Adaptive assessment was used as per the need of the situation and bringing flexibility in assessment. Questions ranging from MCQs to short answers were asked on Google forms.

Further, audio visual platforms were used to conduct interviews and viva voce, and students were put face to face with examiners, who could ask various questions based on the students' work. Students were also encouraged to make PowerPoint presentations based on their work in front of examiners, who had already read the written report submitted by the students, since a soft copy had been sent to them in advance.

Discussion threads were created in Google classroom and the evaluation of student is being done on the basis of the way discussion is carried out by student, the depth of content shared and initiation taken in the discussion. The points were also noted wherein the students tried to be cooperative rather than competing.

Rubrics were used to evaluate the student's ability of convincing others, respecting others views and putting forward own points and responding group members rather than reacting.

Adaptive assessment was used as per the need of the situation and bringing flexibility in assessment. During internship this flexibility was brought wherein students were allowed to do internship in two different institutes.

Flexibility was also bought in terms of conducting activities during internship such as workshop, seminars online, sharing lesson plans, and planning lessons for online teaching learning.

Dissertation and internship vivas were also conducted online using different meeting platforms like zoom, etc. If some students did not have good connectivity, they were allowed to fall back on a conference call. All in all, students were allowed to use a modality with which they were comfortable.

Finally, all the faculty members who had been speaking on various webinars, or had colleagues from the field speaking on national and international webinars, allowed the students access to such webinars, so that a lot of incidental learning could take place for the students. This gave the students a peek into the real world outside, pertinent to their own discipline of study.

Placement Processes of Recruiting Companies

Accenture, TCS and Infosys are mass recruiter organizations associated with SNTDWU from the last 15 years. These organizations have adopted a new method for the recruitment Process. Last year Accenture, TCS and Infosys has made their online portal for recruitment where

- i) Colleges have to register for the recruitment Process.
- ii) The students' details are uploaded with all academic performance.
- iii) Portal after verifying eligibility criteria, shortlisted students received SMS from Accenture portal.
- iv) Online test is conducted at Institute using Procture like aspiring mind, E-litmus.
- v) Technical Interviews and HR interviews are conducted offline and results are uploaded on their portal for final selection.

The corporates like HSBC, Barclays, Colgate IT, Neebal are sectors from consultancy firms follow the process as the IT technology firm with the main criteria of Group Discussion.

After Covid situation, these firms are changing their pattern and are planning to conduct online test like aptitude and Programming test remote methods. We propose to use online portal Like Aspiring Minds, E-Litmus or Reference globe for training students. These portals provide online aptitude and programming test. They provide detailed analysis of performance of individual students where students will be able to understand the area in which she has to improve. They also provide study material online that will help students to learn and prepare in such Covid situation.

Examples for 2020 batch recruitment:

Accenture/Barclays/Capgemini/Colgate etc.

Recruitment Process:

The process consists of three rounds.

Round 1 - Aptitude Test and Coding Round

- It includes general aptitude questions with numerical, logical reasoning and verbal and technical coding

- Optional Round. You can appear for this round if you are interested for the position of Full Stack Developer.

- There were 2 Coding questions and if cleared both then the students were eligible for full stack developer position's interview.

Round 2 – Technical Interview and Group discussions

- It included group discussion as well as HR interview.

- The gd was mostly technical. You may or may not be given current affair topics.

- The interview was based on students' mini-projects and their achievements throughout the 4 years.

Round 3 - HR Interview

- In HR the non-technical things are asked based on location, salary attitude, knowledge about company etc.

- Due to Covid situation there is strong probabilities to have the placement activities fully online and full proof. As mentioned earliest the the portals are available to have

placement activities online with all the databases available at centralized location or multinationals have their own platform to conduct these activities. Now students are being trained to have the knowledge and know-how of the technologies involved and also trained how to perform better in the interviews.

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SRI DEVARAJ URS ACADEMY HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, KOLAR

Higher education has been facing an unprecedented situation in the face of the corona pandemic that has thrown up challenges of a new kind necessitating change in curriculum delivery. Administrators, faculty and students are orienting themselves to communicate in spite of isolation imposed to ensure there is no break in education.

Sri Devaraj Urs Academy of Higher Education & Research has students from Programs offered by Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Allied Health and Basic Sciences

Gainfully engaging the student community: The Academy has a Learning Management System (LMS) which is an online learning platform for student engagement beyond classroom and has enrolled all the faculty and students. During this unexpected period of student isolation, LMS is being used effectively to engage students during class hours too.

Schedule of classes prepared by departments along with mode of delivery is circulated to student community through class representatives & WhatsApp. Timely upload of e contents as per teaching schedule is practiced which is monitored by concerned HODs. Feedback is obtained by students regarding effectiveness of the e content uploaded and suggestions by students are incorporated during further delivery.

The time table prepared by each department is shared with faculty and students, so that they are aware of the classes in that particular month. The various modes of delivery of e content are audio & video lectures, PowerPoint presentations, and video recording of lectures, pages and weblinks to resources. Faculty prepare their Power point presentations/with or without voice recording and upload on this platform. They also give links which the student can access. The students can go through these slides before the online class for better understanding. Flipped class rooms are used by faculty during online sessions by case based discussions and application exercises to encourage participatory learning.

Since LMS is primarily being used for asynchronous classes, online classes are engaged using Google meet, Zoom, Skype and Big blue button are being used

for synchronous classes. Classes are scheduled as per time table and intimated to student representatives and one hour classes are being conducted. Due to lack of access of few students to internet, the recordings are uploaded on LMS.

Some of the applications have restriction on number of students and also duration. Students' expressed online teaching and PPT with audio is helping them to understand better. They can ask queries directly or through the chat option in the applications, thus sessions can be made interactive as well.

Academic mentoring is taking place through WhatsApp where mentors clarify doubts and administer assignments to small groups of mentees. Faculty share articles related to topics in curriculum and post analytical questions related to the article to encourage self-directed learning. Some of the Teachers are in touch with students on WhatsApp to clarify their doubts individually and also counsel them if required, this may make them feel that they are in touch with the subjects and not lagging behind.

Research supervisors are monitoring the progress of research scholars through google hang out meetings and WhatsApp discussions. PG departments are active on Skype and zoom meetings for case based discussions & journal club. PG departments are active on Skype and zoom meetings for case based discussions & journal club.

University hosted events and kept students engaged by conducting online competitions in painting/sketching, photography, storytelling & poetry which allowed students to take part in extracurricular activities and beat the boredom of isolation.

Students have prepared college with messages regarding precautions to be taken during this period to stay safe.

The common problems encountered are access of internet, speed of internet & technical problems leading to loss of connectivity. Faculty are gearing up for this new role of online delivery of classes and by training the faculty in acquiring this new skill, University has overcome the main hurdle for transition from traditional teaching to online teaching. It is interesting to note that students being tech savvy have adapted to the online delivery of curricular content with least resistance.

Links to authentic information regarding the ongoing pandemic have been provided to students to combat misinformation due to fake news peddling by

non-verified sources. Psychological stress due to lockdown and isolation with social distancing has been addressed by sending Video of counselling that boosts their morale and improves their psychological health.

Various learning platforms are being offered for free use for a specific period and Institutions can avail these services to facilitate online learning

Assessment and Evaluation: Learning Management System has provision for posting assignments and test papers including objective questions & essays. The assignments are being uploaded on the Learning Management System platform in the form of questions (long essay, short essay and short answer). Students have to complete the same and submit online, Learning Management System has provision for posting assignments and test papers including objective questions & essays which is evaluated and the students can access LMS for grades and feedback.

The other forms of assessment are Objective questions in the form of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs), extended matching, drag & drop, true or false and fill in the blanks which are administered along with e lectures to assess learning. Google forms are also used for assessment.

Online placements: Anxiety in students due to delay in examinations & placements are being allayed by proper communication with students, University office, placement cell & employers.

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SWAMI VIVEKANAND SUBHARTI UNIVERSITY, MEERUT

Wellness- A Holistic Loom

“A healthy mind resides in a healthy body”. Our nation of 1.3 billion people, is earning a dubious distinction of moving towards many firsts and to quote a few, Indian youth is leading worldwide in terms of stress levels. We are the Diabetes capital of the world and India is also there at top when it is about the cancers of the human body etc. These disabling and debilitating disorders can be easily prevented effectively by imparting knowledge regarding wellness and sharing ‘hands on’ experience of following ‘Simple Health Tips.’

The primary objective of this healthy practice was to effectively deliver health care, by acknowledging the changing disease burden, in order for timely interventions. This can prevent the high proportions of morbidity and mortality thus reducing out of pocket expenditures.

Wellness During COVID Times

Swami Vivekanand Subharti University is a health promoting University and the healthy practice of “Wellness- A Holistic Loom” has been running successfully since past two years. However during these unforeseen, testing and trying times, it was the need of the hour to create awareness with regard to modifications of lifestyle with simple techniques on an everyday basis so as to cope up with the wellness of heart, mind and soul. The University went one step ahead with including Happiness as an integral part of wellness loom. The dedicated teams have been delivering didactic lectures and online practical demonstrations in all the constituent colleges of the University keeping in mind the health care needs of individual as well as the society.

The Wellness Centre kept working tirelessly for everyone irrespective of the hierarchy of the University. The program catered to the overall Wellness of the individuals with a combination of body services, such as fitness services, personal training, counselling and nutrition consultancy along with alternate services such as chiropractic, acupuncture etc.

The stress was laid on how to keep oneself happy and healthy by online demonstration of techniques like Pranayama, Relaxation Techniques, Meditation, etc. Wide array of topics of Social relevance were included

like Modification of Lifestyle & Stress related Health issues, Natural holistic approaches for Health & Well Being, Lifestyle Modification for Healthy Living, Inculcation of Healthy Habits, Stress Management, Intoxicants & their ill effects & coping strategies to addictions (Tobacco/Alcohol/ Drugs etc), Oral Hygiene & Dental Health, Yoga – Breathing Techniques/ Pranayam/ Kriya/ Meditation/ Vipassyana etc, Mental Health promotion activities and many other such health promoting activities as per the need of individual.

The wellness centre has seen a steady rise in the number of individuals registering in the wellness program. The digital records for all the individuals visiting the wellness centre during these unprecedented times are maintained so that their follow-up treatment needs are easily accessible as and whenever required.

Responsibilities Foremost : Rights Later

Fundamental Rights and Social responsibilities of an individual are an integral part of the developed as well as developing countries. Rights provide an equal opportunity to all irrespective of the cast, creed or religious background. We all are well versed with our rights but are never forthcoming on the issue of our responsibilities.

At Subharti, Responsibility isn't just another word; it is the way of life. The principle objective behind this healthy practice, is to make the students understand their responsibilities, so that their rights are invariably taken care of. As Subhartians, we inculcate the essential responsibilities like saving on the National resources, following law and order, being aware and helping people to make them aware about their rights, caring for weaker and underprivileged sections, helping fellow beings at the time of calamities and natural disasters and being loyal citizens towards Country, so that these habits become part and parcel of their day to day lives.

Healthy Practice During COVID-19 Times

During these testing times of COVID, as the students and faculty were not supposed to report to the University, the University went to their doorstep by way of conducting online lectures via webinars and video mode. The most challenging feature of this practice during these times was the sustenance while integrating the core values of the University.

The faculty members were sensitized regarding their responsibilities. The Mentor-Mentee program which has come to be known as the support system for all the students was running successfully. The mentees could contact their mentors regarding their problems and the problems were sorted. Even the Buddy program for the foreign students where a foreign student is tagged with an Indian student who is meant to make the foreign student feel at home was too running successfully. The students from various parts of India were also given a common platform in the form of Microsoft Teams so that the students can get in touch with their facilitators.

Online webinars were organized by the University on 'Responsibilities First-Rights Later' where stakeholders were made aware about their responsibilities towards the society, culture, environment and the Nation. Videos were uploaded on Subharti University Website and YouTube with open access for one and all.

Our faculty and students were sensitized regarding their responsibilities which automatically took care of the rights of one and all. Our students were made aware about the values of sacrifice and forgiveness, respect for elders, honesty and truth, thinking about others before self etc. The responsibilities towards opposite gender, towards environment, towards self and society were highlighted upon which, in turn, took care of the rights of an individual.

By responsibly participating in resolving the issues plaguing our society, we as a University have set a good example by applying and adhering to socially responsible practices, such as improving the quality of lives for individuals and their families, volunteer energy and time towards improving and benefiting society.

With this healthy practice a seed of change has been sown and the blossoming of tree might take some time but we have to wait patiently for it. It is a continuous process, some results are already visible, but it will take a consistent effort on the part of individuals.

Reinventing, Reinforcement and the Prioritization of communication were foremost and have helped in the efficient and effective application of this healthy practice.

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UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES, RAICHUR

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the first case of COVID-19 in the state of Karnataka was confirmed on 9 March, 2020. Two days later, the state became the first in India to invoke the provisions of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, which are set to last for a year, to curb the spread of the disease. With the first case reporting and instructions from the Department of Higher Education, Karnataka measures were taken to see the health and safety of the students at all the campuses of UAS, Raichur. The students were given orientation about the safety during the pandemic and possible impact on the academic matters like classes, examinations, research etc. Subsequently when holidays were announced, all the students were sent to home on 23.03.2020. The post graduate students who were in the middle of their research were asked to stay back and continue with their research with strict social distancing norms at the hostel and mess halls. All the students who were leaving hostels were asked to carry the course materials, laptops and other audio-visual aids related to the courses of the current semester.

Strategies for Online learning at UAS, Raichur

When AIU announced the online workshop on '*Online Learning for Faculty: What you need to know and prepare for a successful transition of your curriculum*', a team of teachers attended this workshop on 31.03.2020. All the teachers who attended this workshop convened a meeting on 03.04.2020 with the officials of the University and chalked out strategies to conduct online classes, student engagement and evaluating online learning. On 04.04.2020 a committee was constituted to start and monitor online learning classes at University level. This committee has nodal teachers from all the four campuses under chairmanship of a senior faculty.

The committee has the following objectives:

- Planning for online classes and delivery
- Student engagement for online learning through apps such as Zoom and WhatsApp (wherever connectivity problems are there)
- Orientation on Tools for online learning such as laptops and smart phones
- Weekly assessment of online learning across all the campuses

- Educating the faculty and students facing difficulty in online delivery of classes

The students were instructed to download Zoom app on laptops and smart phones and more than 90% of the students were ready for online delivery of the courses by the evening of 04.04.2020. The teachers started taking courses online as per the time table of the regular classes.

Weekly assessment of online learning across all the campuses:

The online classes were monitored every Monday and all the teachers were asked to submit a report of classes taken to the respective Deans of the colleges who in turn submitted a report to the Online Classes Evaluation Committee. The details of the classes taken and assessment during April-2020 (four weeks) is presented in Table.1.

1.3 The Experience of University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur

- a. A great moment for learning:** The corona pandemic provided an opportunity for learning, all the restrictions that keep learning away are gone and people are looking for solutions that in the past they did not want to see. With online learning and delivery of classes, students will take ownership over their learning, understanding more about how they learn, what they like, and what support they need. They will personalize their learning, even if the systems around them won't. During the online delivery of classes >90% student attendance was recorded.
- b. Bracing technology and Independence in learning:** The pandemic gave insights in to possibilities of using ICT tools and other technological tools for allowing a potentially shift from classroom teaching to augmenting relationships with teachers, personalization, and independence. Though some of the students of UAS, Raichur live in remote areas with limited internet connectivity, more than 90% of the students responded to the initiatives taken by the University.
- c. A new role play for faculty of UAS, Raichur:** All the teachers embraced the new technological tools without much training and swiftly adapted to the desperate times and engaged classes regularly. More than 95 % teachers engaged in classes online with at least two classes per teacher.

Many teachers may well continue to associate with e-learning and online classes even after the lock down.

Table.1: The progress and assessment of online classes at UAS, Raichur

Sl. No.	Class	Teachers	Sessions conducted	Students attended-(Average)	Strength of the class	Attendance (%)	Mode
1	I B.Sc.(Hons.) Agriculture/ I B.Tech. (Ag. Engg.)	126	303	1376	1500	91.73	Zoom, Google Meet, Cisco-Webex WhatsApp and Email
2	II B.Sc.(Hons) Agriculture/ II B.Tech. (Ag. Engg.)	133	492	1265	1431	88.39	
3	III B.Sc.(Hons) Agriculture/ III B.Tech. (Ag. Engg.)	107	223	1181	1344	87.87	
4	IV B.Sc.(Hons) Agriculture/ IV B.Tech. (Ag. Engg.)	21	51	582	620	93.87	
5	M.Sc.(Agri.) / M.Tech.(Ag. Engg.)	189	424	393	403	97.51	
6	Ph.D. (Agri.) / (Ag. Engg.)	149	305	117	118	99.15	
	Total	725	1798	4914	5416	90.73	

- d. **The future of learning and other opportunities:** The pandemic has changed the learning of Agriculture education and become transformational for teachers and students. UAS, Raichur in coming days will invest more on technology and online delivery of the classes. Apart from the regular academic programmes, UAS, Raichur will formulate “massive open online courses” – or Moocs for the benefit of students

wherever they are and short-intensive courses for educated youth who want to take agriculture as profession. Since most of the youth have a smart phones, this will be a strategy for UAS, Raichur in attracting educated youth to take up Agriculture as a profession and livelihood on scientific principles in future.

- e. **Future plans on online learning:** University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur planning to have its own software for online learning or custom software developed by leading agencies with secured features hosted on its own server. This will ensure safety of personal data of the learners (students, farmers, youth etc) and complete control on the process of learning.
- f. **Digital divide and other issues in online learning:** New shifts in education approaches could widen gaps in terms of learning since it requires minimum technology and gadgets. UAS, Raichur is aware of these things and for learners who have a limited internet connectivity and resources to buy a smart phone will be addressed through conference call via mobile and a toll free telephone number (1800-425-0470) is provided to educated youth who have taken Agriculture recently to cater their needs of learning modern agriculture techniques for profitable farming. Also. UAS, Raichur is planning to measure the impact of online learning in future days to come.

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VEER NARMAD SOUTH GUJARAT UNIVERSITY, SURAT

University has prepared academic calendar in accordance to the common academic calendar circulated by Education Department, Government of Gujarat. Accordingly there is a season of examination. The academic work in terms of teaching has been completed before we have close down due to the pandemic of COVID 19. However few initiatives taken at our university are as follows:

1. Supplementary reading material provided in PDF formats. (Department of Human Resources Department)
2. Using Google classroom for assigning assignments to students. (Department of Computer Science)
3. Using Google classroom for assigning assignments to students. (Department of Computer Science)
4. Teachers evaluate assignments submitted by students online on google classroom. (Department of Computer Science)
5. Conducting online classes on Zoom application. (Department of Computer Science)
6. Some of the teachers use WhatsApp for academic communication with students (Department of Computer Science)
7. Students who are on final semester project for last three months are instructed to do their project work through 'work from home' (Department of Computer Science)
8. To encourage and engage students, they are advised to join mooc. Circulated AICTE circular of availability of free of cost mooc. (Department of Computer Science)
9. For students of Sem-4, LL. M.(H. R.), Dissertation work is going on. Students are carrying their assignment in consultation with allotted Guide. (Department of Law)
10. Students were given revision through zoom app. What's app group is used to guide students with respect to any queries. Students are working

at home for their term paper and dissertation. Which they will submit online. (Department of Journalism)

11. For any query students are using whatsapp. (Department of Mathematics)
12. Made a whatsapp group to solve difficulties. (Department of Aquatic biology)
13. Made whatsapp group. Recorded lectures and copies of articles are being sent to students to utilize time. (Department of Gujarati)

In a nutshell, in most of the programs, syllabus and internal examination have been over. However, teachers are using whatsapp, Zoom App and Google classroom for two way communication for various queries of the students. Teachers are sending various study materials to students through the app/software.

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VELLORE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, VELLORE

VIT with its well established digital infrastructure and practices continued its activities un-interrupted even during lock down in various spheres. Many events were organised and the very important feature is that VIT has involved many experts from many reputed foreign Universities; and at the height of it a Nobel Laureate [Dr Andre Geim Nobel Prize Winner for Physics in 2010 from University of Manchester, UK] also gave a key note speech in one of the International Conferences organised during pandemic.

Academics

Winter semester leftover classes were conducted in online mode from 1st April to 31st May 2020, using Microsoft Teams and it was observed that about 98% of the students were able to attend the classes. Classes were also recorded for the benefit of students who could not attend the classes and for those who could not follow up the classes.

Project reviews, both capstone and as course component, were conducted in online mode.

Arrear examinations were conducted in online mode as per guidelines so as to facilitate student progression and to honour Industry recruiters request in placements.

VIT Online Learning (VITOL) Institute –A synchronous courses

VITOL offered 22 courses completely online (Asynchronous Mode) through vitol.ac.in customized in Open Edx Platform to 20,202 students of all campuses of VIT with more than 43,000 Registrations. The courses included Intro to Bio-Inspired Design and 21 other courses for our students.

These are add-on additional courses offered to student to keep themselves engaged productively during pandemic and also add value to their degree.

The platform had inbuilt provision for Continuous Assessment using MCQs and Student assignments and online programming lab sessions.

The courses were offered Asynchronous mode and therefore the students had the convenience of learning at their convenience.

Research Activities Continued

The office of Academic Research has initiated measures to conduct meetings such Viva-voce, Synopsis, and DC meeting completely online (Microsoft Teams). This has been a great boon in the current situation as all the external DC members, Guide, Scholar, and internal DC members can attend the meeting completely online.

Till today, a total of 45 Oral exams, 39 Synopsis meetings, and 110 DC meetings have been held online. All the meetings are recorded and kept in the repository for future reference.

Besides, this office has been functioning from May 20, 2020 (Monday to Saturday) with 50% staff members between 10 AM and 4 PM.

Academic Staff College

A series of Online Faculty and Staff training programmes and Faculty Orientation programmes were organised during the last few months during the lock down period. The complete details of the same are given under the Academic Staff College activities in the VIT website.

Student Club Activities

During this pandemic period office of Students' Welfare conducted various virtual events through clubs & chapters.

More than 400 Online events were conducted in 70 days, these events included webinars, demos, workshops, Stress management programs, live dance music art classes. International Yoga day was also celebrated thro live telecast of yoga sessions by expert teachers and more than 900 students, faculties and staff participated in this event.

Several knowledgeable renowned experts, celebrities across the globe gave live webinars, workshops.

Admissions

March to June every year is the peak time for admission. Fortunately **majority of our admission processes are digital in nature without the need for direct human interaction.** The all applications are available in the internet with document upload facility pre-empting the need for handling physical materials and human interaction viz. copying mark sheets, sending by post or courier,

receiving posts, etc. The online applications is also available as Android and iOS apps with transitions for counselling and then to VIT student app.

Any support required for applying to VIT is provided by multiple platforms. The first is a toll free telephone line. 1800-102-0536 are managed by 6 counsellors 24 x 7. An online chat support is also available through web.

Social media support through WhatsApp Number 9566656755 is also provided with specific chat facility. Offline support is available through email support (ugadmission@vit.ac.in). Any staff/ visitor entering our office are thermally scanned and hand-sanitized. Daily sanitization of office space and contact areas is performed. All guidelines of GoI are followed.

We are planning to adopt social distancing during of entrance examinations by doubling the required seating, sanitizing the examination hall and equipment every session. We are exploring the options to conduct the counselling and admission process from the comfort of home.

Placement of our students (PAT)

PAT (Students Placement) Centre trained more than 5000+ 2021 graduating batch students for campus placements remotely using MS Teams.

We have done the PG internship placements remotely for the 2021 graduating batch. As of date, 40 companies have completed the recruitment drives and 340 students have been offered.

We have also helped our alumni in lateral hiring recruitments done remotely. 5200 alumni have registered for the lateral hiring and 31 companies are interviewing them remotely.

Campus placements season for 2021 graduating batch will start remotely from 13th July, 2020 and 8 companies will be sharing the SLOT-1 for the Super Dream placements, each offering more than 25 Lakhs per annum,

PAT Centre has facilitated an International remote Internship(Canada) for 40 students of 2021 graduating batch.

PAT Centre is also facilitating Certification and hackathons for 7500 students who will be graduating in 2022, through NASSCOM FUTURE SKILLS initiative.

More than 14000 students have enrolled for Coursera courses facilitated by PAT.

Finance and Purchases Departments

The services departments like purchases and Finance were enabled to **work from home and emergency purchases** were made through Online. The same way the Finance department worked from home to disburse salaries to Faculty and Staff members and also to make emergency payments.

Human Resources Department

Recruitment process – Faculty and Staff

Faculty and Staff selection interviews were held through online. Further processes are in progress. Interviews were held during April'20-June'20.

A total of 188 Faculty members were selected during pandemic and they under went 1 month Virtual Training Program and completed it on 1st July 2020.

Confirmation appraisal process was completed for faculty members who were on their probation through digital inputs/approval.

Non-teaching staff training (coordination)

Non-teaching staff members were given training in MS-Office and English/Hindi languages through MS-Teams. The training was held in multiple batches during May'20-June'20.

Contribution to Society

School of Mechanical Engineering has developed 3D printed face shields for doctors, nurses, technicians, polices and other health-care professionals involved in treating the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) patients and donated more than **1500 masks** till date. Three sets of ventilator splitters, and limiters to the Vellore Medical College Hospital.

Administration

In addition, **all official meetings** of VIT core management, Deans and Directors, other supporting offices are being conducted Online.

During the pandemic, faculty members did at least one MOOC course/how to prepare MOOC courses training online. Professors worked for review papers during this period when access to experimental lab was limited.

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VIKRAMA SIMAHAPURI UNIVERSITY, NELLORE

His Excellency the Honourable Governor has given valuable advice a week ago (Reported in News Papers) that the Universities shall play an important role in creating awareness among the general public about COVID-19 and help the needy people at this hour of crisis. Understanding this deep concern expressed by Hon'ble Chancellor for the society in general and for the poor and destitute in particular, Vikrama Simhapuri University Nellore has taken a few initiatives. No doubt the Central Government, State Government and the District administration have been putting their best efforts in the containment of the spread of this Pandemic. The University desires to put its humble efforts as a matter of its social responsibility to create awareness, containment of COVID-19 and to undertake some relief operations through its NSS Unit. What follows is a Quick Report on the activities initiated by the University.

Pre-lock Down Period

- Created awareness among Students, Research Scholars and Staff by displaying posters and posts through Social Media and advised to take precautionary measures for the prevention of spread of COVID – 19 disease.
- The Coordinator of NSS Cell of University has distributed Arsenic Album-30 Homeopathic Pills (Prophylactic drug for prevention of Corona Virus infection) which was confirmed with the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, to the University Staff and Students in the month of February, 2020 as a primary preventive initiative and also encouraged the 110 Units under its jurisdiction to do the same in its Colleges in Nellore District.
- The University has procured limited number of surgical masks from DMHO Office and DFIT, Nellore and distributed to the students who are having cough, cold or flu like symptoms.
- Organised awareness meetings at Department / Office / Hostel Level.
- NSS volunteers made small number processions in the city with banners, Posters and placards and displayed the same at its adopted villages of the University NSS Units.

- In response to our Honourable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's call, wide publicity was given in Nellore city for Campaigning on "Janatha Karfu" in the University jurisdiction and the Vice-Chancellor made an appeal to the Staff, Research Scholars, Students and general public to observe Janata Karfu in the local press and electronic media.
- The University has created awareness and sensitizing University staff, NSS Programme Officers and NSS Volunteers to mitigate the problem mainly by prevention methods like good hygienic practices, self/community quarantaining and social distancing. The university through its NSS Unit, distributed masks and sanitizers within the University.

During Lock Down Period

- Feeding Homeless people and migrant labourers and distributed food to beggars at six locations in Nellore City, mainly at temples.
- Bringing the health issues of some homeless people to the notice of District Medical and Health Office, Nellore.
- Distributed fruits, biscuits, water bottles and tea to police department personnel who are On Duty on 29th March 2020.
- The Vice-Chancellor made an appeal to the students, staff of affiliated colleges and to the general public to cooperate with the District administration in the strict implementation of lockdown in the State and in the City.
- The University gave its willingness to handover the students' hostels (both Men and Women) at Main Campus, Nellore and at PG Centre, Kavali to the district administration to use the same as Isolation Wards.
- Deputed Head of the Department of Computer Science, V. S. University, Nellore to the Central Control Office, Nellore District on request of the District Administration.
- The Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, some of the staff, students and Sri Krishna Chaitanya College Management, Nellore contributed their mite to supply rice and necessary provisions adequate for at least for 15 days to about hundred poor families (those who are not having Ration Card) on dated. 7-4-2020

- The Vice-Chancellor sent an Advisory to the faculty members regarding the protocol suggested by the Ministry of Medical, Health and Family Planning, Government of India and other instructions and guidelines given by State Government from time to time to combat the pandemic COVID-19. The faculty members were also advised to utilise the lockdown period to prepare Research Proposals, Research Papers for Publication and to motivate the students to learn On-Line. Heads of the Department and Faculty were suggested to facilitate On-Line teaching and learning by connecting to students Department-wise.
- Vice-Chancellor sent an appeal to all College Managements, Faculty, Non-Teaching Staff and students to contribute their mite to the Chief Minister Relief Fund, Government of Andhra Pradesh to express their solidarity and to support financially at this critical time.

The students of department of Statistics, Vikrama Simhapuri University, Nellore distributed rice, groceries and masks to 50 families of daily wage earners in Padakandla and Gandlaveedu Villages in Atmakuru Mandal on 07.04.2020 besides creating awareness about the COVID – 19.

This budding University, with its limited resources sincerely resolve to stand by the nation in its own way in containing the spread and combating COVID-19.

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VIGNANA JYOTHI INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT

Pandemic was a word that was less known until late January 2020 before WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic and the entire world wriggled under the damage that the microscopic virus was creating. Governments across the globe began declaring lockdowns. Lockdown became another commonly used term. Nations, economies, industries were all struggling. Educational institutions were not left behind. Managements of educational institutions were grappling over many issues, the primary one being that academic continuity.

By mid-March, governments across the world, imposed lockdowns to restrict the movement of people and practice social distancing to control the rapid spread of the contagion. Indian government also followed suit and on 24th March 2020 it swiftly enforced the strictest and most comprehensive lockdown in the world leaving very little time for individuals and organizations to plan for a prolonged shutdown. Vignana Jyothi Institute of Management was no exception.

Here is a glimpse of the various initiatives taken by VJIM, most of them developed on the fly, to maintain continuity and mitigate the impact of the disruption on faculty and students.

End-term examinations for the I-year and II-year students

The unprecedented closure of the educational institutions did not allow VJIM to conduct the final examinations of the I year(Trimester III) and II Year(Trimester VI) in the campus as scheduled. Understanding that the lockdown was going to get extended and any further delay in conduct of examinations and closure of the academic year would affect the students who had to either join their final jobs or their internships, VJIM decided to conduct the end-term examinations online. The institute conducted 31 online open book examination in trimesters III and VI with the help of an online examination platform. In addition, online viva-voce examination for terms V and VI were conducted by faculty panels on Microsoft Teams for the second-year PGDM students (Class of 2020) who could not attend regular classes since they had already joined companies by then.

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Academic Delivery to Maintain Continuity

The next important task was to avoid disruption in the programme schedule. Since it was uncertain when the lockdown would be lifted, the Director and team after wide-ranging deliberations decided that the entire Teaching-Learning-Evaluation process had to be shifted online to ensure minimum disruption in the schedule. This major step was fraught with risk and posed immense challenges ranging from rapid adoption of new technological tools to adjusting to new norms of behaviour rapidly by all stakeholders. Microsoft Teams was chosen because of its security features, video and audio quality, ease of operation and its ability to scale up and accommodate large classes. Classes for Trimester IV was commenced in the end of April. A set of guidelines for conducting sessions was conveyed to the faculty including marking attendance for the sessions, uploading course content including reading material and power point slides, briefcases, etc. The idea of flipped classroom was mooted as an effective pedagogy since it encouraged students to prepare for engaging online discussions.

Knowledge Dissemination

Committed to the values set by the mentors of this institution, VJIM has taken this opportunity to contribute to the society as well. The institute organised webinar and workshops for the academic and corporate fraternity.

Webinar: VJIM LRC organized webinar on COVID-19: Challenges and Opportunities for Libraries to discuss topics such as Enhancing Online Learning facilities, Increasing productivity among Library Work Force, Digital Transformation (e-resources), Challenges and Opportunities.

Management Development Programme: Python for data analysis: An MDP was conducted during May 2020 to June 2020 for a group of managers. This curriculum is aimed at imparting skills to curate the data, observe underlying structure and apply machine learning algorithms to predict and classify the data. Currently there are various tools in the marketplace to do the above mentioned, but in this course Python, an open source programming language is used along with the complementing environments like Jupyter notebook, Pycharm, REPL etc. Several packages like Numpy, Pandas, Matplotlib are also introduced which would enable the learner to apply the techniques offered by the packages to the given business requirement.

Faculty Development Programme: Data visualization using Tableau: An FDP was organised for the faculty from various institutions under HMA in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in the month of June 2020. This FDP covered the data visualization techniques using Tableau's various features. Faculty have learned how to import data into Tableau environment and understand the various data types. Also, the visualizations appropriate for a given situation was also explained to the faculty group. Various ways to present the data using the available techniques and then building dashboards to present the data in a story format was also taught in this FDP.

Workshop: A workshop on mental health names "Appreciative August" is being organised in the month of August. "Appreciative August" is a foundational workshop to understand the basics of mental health and tips to rejuvenate oneself. The workshop shall discuss the basics of mental wellbeing, an understanding into Life Positions of oneself, discuss the philosophy (and science) of happiness and small bites of how one can work towards improving their happiness. The workshop will also help the participants chalk out a plan for improving the happiness quotient.

Skill Enhancement of the Faculty

Faculty is the pillar of any institution. The institution has taken necessary steps to expose the faculty to upgraded technology through trainings and online meetings. They have also been successfully participating in webinars and training programmes for skill development conducted by prestigious external organisations.

Safety Protocols

The institute remained closed from 16th March 2020 to 4th June 2020 as per the decision of the central and state governments. The college reopened for the faculty and staff on 05th June 2020 after following the necessary safety protocols of the government. All the government guidelines and safety precautions are being followed by the institute. Social distancing is also ensured.

The Institute is led by :

Dr. Ch. S. Durga Prasad

Director

Vignana Jyothi Institute of Management, Hyderabad"