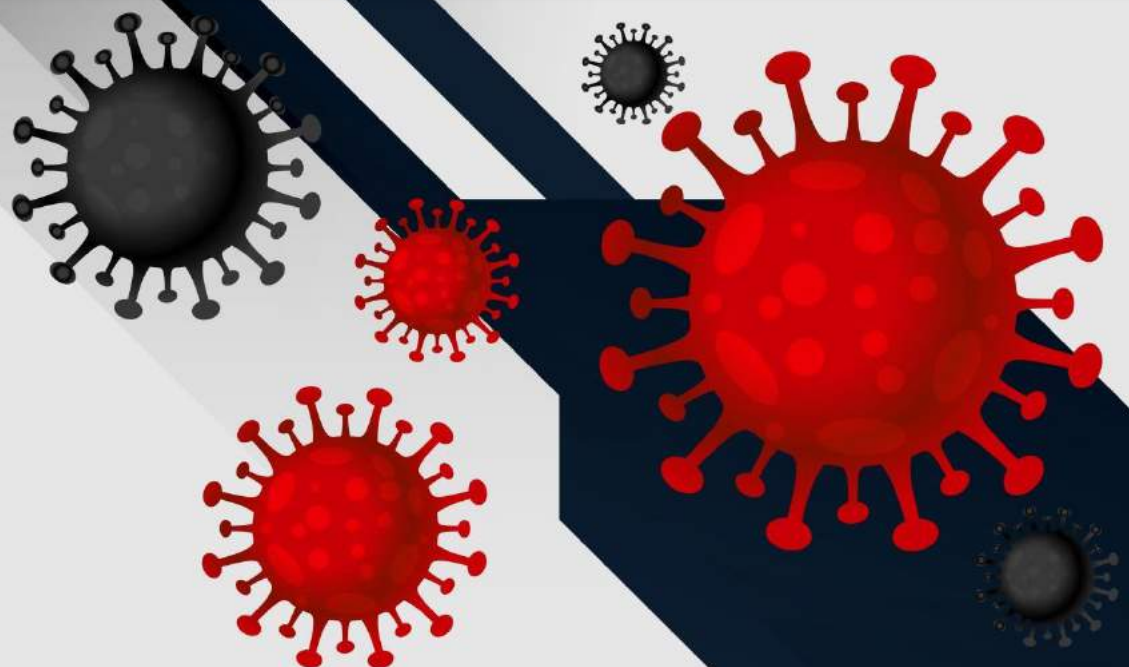


AMDISA Network

**Experiences & Practices
in
Teaching-Learning and Academic Interactions
amid
COVID-19 Disruption**



**Association of Management Development
Institutions in South Asia
(AMDISA)**

A SAARC Recognised Body



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ABOUT AMDISA

AMDISA - Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia - is a **SAARC Recognised Body**. It is a network of Management Education and Management Development Institutions in South Asia. It has 298 members from the SAARC region. Its mission is to *“Promote management education and management development activities in South Asia, taking into account the economic, social and cultural context of the Region, with the firm dedication to world-wide exchange of experience and ideas in the fields concerned.”*

AMDISA is the only Association which networks management development institutions across the eight South Asian Nations through exchanging information, facilitating inter-country research initiatives, conducting regional conferences, workshops, colloquia and programmes, and thereby providing a forum for interaction among academics and business leaders.

AMDISA launched the global benchmark quality assurance and accreditation system for Business Schools - **SAQS**. SAQS is the quality assurance scheme run by AMDISA as a service to the management education profession worldwide. SAQS emerged in an **EFMD** - AMDISA cooperation through a European Union funded Asia - Link project in 2003-04. It is inspired by EFMD's **EQUIS** criteria guidelines and is designed as an international accreditation system. It is a globally benchmarked system for mentoring, quality improvement, quality assurance and accreditation. SAQS accreditation processes lead to improvement through highlighting the need to meet internationally accepted quality standards. SAQS Quality Label is a recognition to the institution's commitment to Quality and Quality Assurance through continuous improvement. SAQS accreditation is institutional. Institution being defined as the organisational unit providing business and management education. So far **26** schools have been granted Accreditation - 23 from India and 3 from Pakistan; and **10** schools have been granted Re-Accreditation - 9 from India and 1 from Pakistan. **13** schools are currently under Accreditation/Re-Accreditation - 1 from Bangladesh, 7 from India, 1 from Nepal, 3 from Pakistan and 1 from Sri Lanka. More schools in the region are expected to seek the academic guidance and strategic audit provided by SAQS in the near future.

AMDISA publishes a **Newsletter** three times a year and the **South Asian Journal of Management**, a quarterly double blind refereed journal. The South Asian Journal of Management (SAJM) is a prestigious publication and is indexed by internationally acclaimed database services, **EBSCO & ProQuest, USA** and **J-Gate, India**.

Since its inception, AMDISA has organized fifteen biennial South Asian Management Forums (SAMFs) by rotation in all the South Asian (SAARC) countries. The 15th SAMF on the theme "Challenges of Inclusive Growth and Sustainability: The South Asian Context" was organized by Sukkur IBA University, Sukkur, Pakistan in September, 2019.

AMDISA's administrative structure includes the General Assembly of members held every two years, which elects an Executive Board. It has eleven members representing all member nations. The current President of AMDISA is Prof. Nisar Ahmed Siddique, Vice-Chancellor, Sukkur IBA University, Sukkur, Pakistan and the Vice President is Prof. Syed Ferhat Anwar, Director, Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Presidents of National Networks in South Asia, Past Presidents of AMDISA and Vice Chancellor, University of Hyderabad are Ex-officio Permanent Invitees to the Executive Board.



AMDISA Secretariat

The permanent Secretariat is located in the University of Hyderabad Campus, Hyderabad, India, and is headed by an Executive Director. The Secretariat is built on 2 acres of land, obtained as a generous gesture from the Central University of Hyderabad on its campus. The design of AMDISA's secretariat complex is representative of the SAARC spirit and is conceptualized with seven rooms networked into a central dome. While the Secretariat serves the membership and initiates activity plans, its activities are hosted by member institutions in different countries of South Asia.









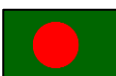





AMDISA'S SOUTH ASIAN MANAGEMENT FORUMS (SAMFs)

S. No	Date	Place	Theme
1	February 26-28, 1990	Hyderabad, India 	Challenges of Management Development in South Asia
2	May 1992	Kathmandu, Nepal 	Innovations in Management for Development
3	February 4 – 7, 1994	Dhaka, Bangladesh 	Management of Change in South Asia
4	April 24 – 26, 1996	Colombo, Sri Lanka 	Innovations in Asian Management
5	April 19 – 21, 1998	Thimphu, Bhutan 	Management of Development : Growth with Equity
6	March 23 – 25, 2000	Pune, India 	Advantage South Asia: Opportunities and Challenges in Management Development
7	April 15 – 17, 2002	Male, Maldives 	Breaking Dawn – Towards South Asian Economic Renaissance – Role of Management Development in Promoting Trade and Technology
8	November 28 – December 1, 2004	Lahore, Pakistan 	Developing Synergies : Facing Management Challenges Together
9	February 24 – 25, 2007	Dhaka, Bangladesh 	Management for Peace, Prosperity and Posterity
10	April 9 – 10, 2009	Thimphu, Bhutan 	Change and Continuity: Management Prospects and Challenges
11	May 16 - 17, 2011	Kathmandu, Nepal 	Managing Change for Sustainable Development in the SAARC Region
12	February 14-16, 2013	Pune, India 	Developing South Asia as a Global Hub of Management Professionals – Role of Management Education
13	March 26-27, 2015	Colombo, Sri Lanka 	Management and Sustainability – South Asian Perspective
14	April 24-26, 2017	Male, Maldives 	Governance and Public Policy – Role of Management Development
15	September 27-29, 2019	Sukkur, Pakistan 	Challenges of Inclusive Growth and Sustainability: The South Asian Context

Founder AMDISA

Dr. Dharni P. Sinha
Principal, Administrative Staff College of India (1985 - 1991)

Past Presidents, AMDISA

Country	Year	Name	Institution Represented during Presidentship
INDIA 	1988-1991	Dr. Dharni P. Sinha	Principal, Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Hyderabad.
NEPAL 	1991-1994	Mr. G. B. N. Pradhan	Executive Director Nepal Administrative Staff College Kathmandu.
PAKISTAN 	1994-1996	Dr. Khawaja Amjad Saeed	Director, Institute of Business Administration, University of the Punjab Lahore.
BANGLADESH 	1996-1998	Prof. Abdur Rab	Director, Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka Dhaka.
BHUTAN 	1998-2000	Dasho Kunzang Wangdi	Director, Royal Institute of Management Thimphu.
INDIA 	2000-2002	Prof. Y. K. Bhushan	Director General, Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) University of Mumbai, Mumbai.
MALDIVES 	2002-2004	Dr. Mohamed Latheef	Minister of Education, Republic of Maldives, Male'.
PAKISTAN 	2004-2007	Prof. Syed Zahoor Hassan	Vice Chancellor, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore.
BANGLADESH 	2007-2009	Dr. Hafiz G. A. Siddiqi	Vice Chancellor, North South University Dhaka.
BHUTAN 	2009-2011	Mr. Karma Tshering	Director General, Royal Institute of Management, Thimphu.
NEPAL 	2011-2013	Mr. Punya Prasad Neupane	Executive Director, Nepal Administrative Staff College, Kathmandu.
INDIA 	2013-2015	Dr. Ashok R. Joshi	Director, Indian Institute of Cost and Management Studies & Research (IndSearch), Pune.
SRI LANKA 	2015-2017	Prof. Lakshman R. Watawala	President, Institute of Certified Professional Managers, Colombo.
MALDIVES 	2017-2018	Mr. Shathif Ali	Dean, MNU Business School, The Maldives National University, Male'.
	2018-2019	Mr. Abdul Rahman Mubaarique	

AMDISA EXECUTIVE BOARD 2019-2021

President

Prof. Nisar Ahmed Siddiqui

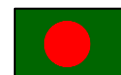
Vice Chancellor, Sukkur IBA University, Sukkur,
Sindh, Pakistan



Vice President

Prof. Dr. Syed Ferhat Anwar

Director, Institute of Business Administration,
University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh



Members

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Director, Royal Institute of Management, Thimphu,
Bhutan



Prof. G. Raghuram

Director, Indian Institute of Management
Bangalore (IIMB), Bengaluru, India



Prof. Rajan Saxena (up to 29-02-2020)
Prof. Ramesh Bhat (from 01-03-2020)

Vice Chancellor, SVKM's NMIMS (Deemed to be
University), Mumbai, India



Prof. R. K. Mishra

Director, Institute of Public Enterprise, Hyderabad,
India



Mr. Abdulla Nafiz

Dean, Faculty of Business Management, Villa
College, Male', Republic of Maldives



Prof. Bijay K.C.

Dean, Kathmandu University School of
Management, Lalitpur, Nepal



Prof. Naukhez Sarwar

Dean, NUST Business School, National University
of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan



Prof. Dr. Ajantha Dharmasiri

Director, Postgraduate Institute of Management,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Colombo,
Sri Lanka



Immediate Past President and Permanent Invitee

Mr. Abdul Rahman Mubaarique

Dean, MNU Business School, The Maldives
National University, Male', Republic of Maldives



Permanent Invitees – President of National Networks in South Asia

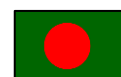
President, AMDIP, Pakistan -
Prof. Nisar Ahmed Siddiqui

Vice Chancellor, Sukkur IBA University, Sukkur,
Sindh, Pakistan



President, AMDIB, Bangladesh –
Prof. Dr. Syed Ferhat Anwar

Director, Institute of Business Administration,
University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh



President, AMDIN, Nepal -
Prof. Bijay K.C.

Dean, Kathmandu University School of
Management, Lalitpur, Nepal



AMDISA EXECUTIVE BOARD 2019-2021 (contd..)

Permanent Invitee – Vice Chancellor, University of Hyderabad, India

Prof. Appa Rao Podile

Vice Chancellor, University of Hyderabad,
Hyderabad, India



Reciprocal Invitee - President, AIMS, India

Dr. Sujata Mangaraj

Director cum Dean (Academics), Bhavan's Centre
for Communication and Management,
Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India



Past Presidents - Invitees

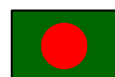
Mr. G. B. N. Pradhan

Former Executive Director, Nepal Administrative
Staff College, Kathmandu, Nepal



Prof. Dr. Abdur Rab

Vice Chancellor, International University of
Business Agriculture & Technology (IUBAT),
Dhaka, Bangladesh



Dasho Kunzang Wangdi

Former Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan,
Thimphu, Bhutan



Prof. Y. K. Bhushan

Former Senior Advisor and Head, ICFAI Business
School, Mumbai, India



Dr. Mohamed Latheef

Former Chancellor, The Maldives National
University, Male, Republic of Maldives



Dr. Syed Zahoor Hassan

Professor & Former Vice Chancellor, Lahore
University of Management Sciences, Lahore,
Pakistan



Mr. Karma Tshering

Director General, Department of School Education,
Ministry of School Education, Thimphu, Bhutan



Mr. Punya Prasad Neupane

Executive Director, Nepal Administrative Staff
College, Kathmandu, Nepal



Dr. Ashok R. Joshi

Director General, Indian Institute of Cost and
Management Studies & Research (IndSearch),
Pune, India



Prof. Lakshman R. Watawala

President, The Institute of Chartered Professional
Managers of Sri Lanka, Colombo, Sri Lanka



Mr. Shathif Ali

Faculty & former Dean, MNU Business School,
The Maldives National University, Male',
Republic of Maldives



Ex-Officio

Mr. C. Ramakrishna

Executive Director, AMDISA, Hyderabad, India



AMDISA Local Management Committee

Name		Institution
<u>Chairman</u>		
Dr. Ashok R Joshi	Director General Indian Institute of Cost and Management Studies & Research (IndSearch) Pune, India	
<u>Members</u>		
Prof. Y.K. Bhushan	Former Senior Advisor & Head ICFAI Business School Mumbai, India	
Prof. G. Raghuram	Director Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) Bengaluru, India	
Prof. R.K.Mishra	Director Institute of Public Enterprise Hyderabad, India	
Prof. Rajan Saxena (up to 29-02-2020)	Vice Chancellor, SVKM's NMIMS (Deemed to be University) Mumbai, India	
Prof. Ramesh Bhat (from 01-03-2020)		
Prof. Appa Rao Podile	Vice-Chancellor University of Hyderabad Hyderabad, India	
<u>Special Invitee – President, AMDISA</u>		
Prof. Nisar Ahmed Siddiqui	Vice Chancellor Sukkur IBA University Sukkur, Sindh, Pakistan	
<u>Ex-Officio</u>		
Mr. C. Ramakrishna	Executive Director AMDISA Hyderabad, India	


AMDISA Value Proposition



AMDISA's Quality Assurance Programme



International Quality Assurance Label for B-Schools

- **SAQS** Quality Assurance Programme is an initiative of AMDISA.
- **SAQS** emerged in an EFMD – AMDISA cooperation through a European Union funded Asia – Link project in 2003–04. It is inspired by EFMD's EQUIS criteria guidelines.
-  Quality Label is a recognition to the institution's commitment to Quality and Quality Assurance through continuous improvement.
- The programme involves an overall review of the entire institution and SAQS accreditation is institutional. Institution being defined as the organizational unit providing business and management education.
- SAQS is designed as an international quality assurance programme for mentoring, quality improvement, quality assurance and accreditation.
- SAQS looks for a balance between high academic quality and professional relevance through close interaction with the corporate world.
- It is a voluntary, non-governmental process for a comprehensive review of a business school's ability to provide quality programmes of international standards.

Institutions desirous of being BENCHMARKED with international quality standards in management education may enroll themselves for accreditation under **SAQS.**

For more information, please visit www.amdisa.org or write to Executive Director, AMDISA at execdir.amdisa@gmail.com.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The world is a better place if people share, learn and evolve. This facilitates a quicker and more effective way of becoming aware of developments, evolutions and related happenings. What makes the whole experience even better are people who spare the gift of their time to share their experiences. This e-book owes its coming into being to member institutions who spared time to share their academic experiences amid COVID-19 pandemic lockdown disruption. A very big THANK YOU to all member institutions who have spared the time and shared their experiences.

This exercise which has as its objective ‘**Share – Evolve - Stay Relevant**’, owes its origins to a telephonic discussion between Prof. R. K. Mishra, Director – IPE & Member – AMDISA Executive Board and me in the very early days of the lockdown. Thereafter, it was implemented with the encouragement, support and guidance received from Prof. Nisar Ahmed Siddiqui, President and Dr. Ashok Joshi, Chairman - Local Management Committee & Past President. Profound thanks are due to all AMDISA Board Members for their wholehearted support to this cause through overt encouragement and proactive support by sharing their institutional experiences to cope with and overcome the challenges posed by the disruption during the lockdown.

At AMDISA Secretariat, the staff on ‘work from home’ mode during lockdown, have risen to the occasion by enthusiastically doing assigned tasks. Special mention is to be made of the extraordinary efforts of Mr. S. Saravanan Bhavan, Associate – Network Administration, who literally burnt the midnight oil during lockdown to keep the mailers flowing to the network within pre-determined timelines. Thanks are also due to Mr. T. Ganeswara Rao, Manager – Membership Services and Programmes for his professional proof reading and overseeing production of this book.

C. Ramakrishna
Executive Director
AMDISA

FOREWORD

Greetings!

As President-AMDISA, it gives me great pleasure to write the Foreword to this unique compilation of the experiences and practices of member institutions. It is a commendable initiative from the AMDISA Secretariat to have called for the sharing of experiences. The member institutions have been equally encouraging and inspiring in the spontaneity of their responses.

The disruption of normal life and economic activity due to the Corona virus has undoubtedly impacted us all over the world. We are compelled to think and act differently. In these turbulent times when everything is shut everywhere, the AMDISA Secretariat productively utilized the time, through this unconventional initiative to write to the Heads of Institutions in the AMDISA network and request them to share their experiences and practices amid COVID-19 disruption. It is pleasing to note that the AMDISA network has responded enthusiastically and shared their respective experiences to overcome this pandemic's disruption and perhaps look ahead to newer methods of working even after the pandemic.

The enthusiastic response of the AMDISA member network is evidenced by the responses received from member institutions in the SAARC region. The comments and observations received to this initiative that are placed at the end of this compendium, bear ample testimony to this creditable effort.

This compendium is being complementarily circulated to the entire AMDISA network in the hope that it will serve as a good beacon of collaborative sharing vindicating the objective behind this initiative of '**Share – Evolve – Stay Relevant**'.



Nisar Ahmed Siddiqui
President-AMDISA

INTRODUCTION

After an announcement over the television network by Prime Minister of India, India suddenly entered national lockdown on account of COVID-19 pandemic, from 25th March, 2020. Our world turned upside down then and we entered into a realm hitherto unknown, unprecedented and unfathomed. The lockdown, which appeared to be initially up to 31st March, 2020, kept getting extended as the pandemic took a vice-like grip on our lives and working environments.

With periodic extensions in the lockdown and people being confined to their homes, the natural thought that emerged was to ask how institutions are coping with the disruption to which there seems to be no end in sight. Arising out of this thought and the disruption in normal life and economic activity due to the Corona virus which has undoubtedly impacted all of us the world over, we thought that it would be a good idea to write to the Heads of Member Institutions in the AMDISA network and request them to share with us actions and plans contemplated/being contemplated to stay relevant in these times. Such ideas/thoughts/actions could then be shared across the AMDISA network by collating the responses received. The underlying objective behind this initiative being **'Share – Evolve – Stay Relevant'**.

Accordingly, a beginning was made by forwarding a mail received from Prof. R. K. Mishra, Director, Institute of Public Enterprise, Hyderabad, containing a Note titled *'IPE during the times of COVID-19'*. A request was made to all the members of the AMDISA network to share their experiences in these unconventional times. What followed were responses from several AMDISA members sending their experiences and practices amid COVID-19 disruption of regular teaching-learning and academic interactions. These were forthwith shared with the AMDISA network. All responses, numbering 60 received up to 29th May, 2020 have been communicated to the AMDISA network.

The entire response to the call for information was overwhelming and encouraging. Having gathered such a collection of responses, we are motivated to bring out a collated soft copy of all the responses as received and circulate the same to the network.

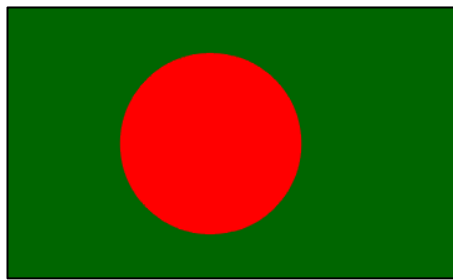
This compendium contains all responses as received from member institutions who have met the challenge and coped with the disruption by adopting alternative digital methods of academic interaction. The member institution's experiences have been arranged country-wise alphabetically. A separate section of responses from the network on this initiative is also included.

C. Ramakrishna
Executive Director
AMDISA

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BANGLADESH



**AMERICAN
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY-
BANGLADESH**
where leaders are created

AIUB GOES VIRTUAL: CLASSES SHIFT ONLINE

The worldwide pandemic of the Covid-19 virus is a major concern for several countries at present. With the situation still instilled with uncertainty and instability across borders, it has enforced changes in the way we work, interact, and live in general. And the academic landscape is no different. Keeping the global concerns of the current circumstances in mind, the American International University – Bangladesh (AIUB) has gone virtual.

The classes of all 4 Faculties of the institution has been shifted online, enabling students and teachers to conduct and undertake their classes within the safety of their homes. From the 20th of March 2020, AIUB has successfully initiated all its classes, for both undergraduate and graduate programs, online through the Microsoft Teams Application. Since 2008, AIUB has been affiliated with Microsoft live.edu, currently known as Microsoft 365, making it one of most long-standing and strong collaborations, with the technology giant, in the country till date. As a result of this collaborative affiliation, AIUB students, faculty members, and officials get unlimited user access to many of its applications, including the Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams is a unified communication and collaboration platform that combines persistent workplace chat, video meetings, file storage, and application integration. Being one of the first private universities in Bangladesh to make the move within days of the initial outbreak in the country, AIUB is now gone fully virtual with its classes with the licensed MS Teams App that students and faculty members can access through their own university email IDs. With its dynamic interface and diverse features, students and faculties can now participate in a unique teaching-learning experience, that not only ensures the health and welfare of both, but also encourages the continuity of academic activities in these difficult times. In its ongoing Spring 2019-20 semester, approximately 11000 active student users along with around 650 faculty members and officials of AIUB are accessing this online platform, utilizing it to its full capacity for online class lectures and team-based work projects. Faculty members are delivering lectures through video conferencing with embedded PowerPoint presentations, whiteboard incorporations, and desktop sharing options. Students can communicate with them through video, audio or message boards for queries, clarifications, and class participation, as required and appropriate. They can also participate in the quizzes and assignments through this platform.

The platform enabled an interactive and versatile set-up as an alternate medium to conventional in-class teaching and learning environments, augmenting another layer of advanced digitized education in the modern world today. The initiative safeguarded the students from incurring the loss of the semester, giving them, their parents, and guardians the peace of mind.

It is worthy to note here that, AIUB has been affiliated with Microsoft live.edu, currently known as Microsoft 365, since 2008, making it one of most long-standing and strong collaborations, with the technology giant, in the country till date. Being one of the first private universities in Bangladesh to make the move within days of the initial outbreak of COVID 19 in the country, AIUB has gone fully virtual with its classes with the licensed MS Teams App that students and faculty members can access using their own university email IDs. AIUB is among the few global universities that enjoys unlimited user access license in the Microsoft 365 platform. In its ongoing Spring 2019-20 semester, approximately 10000 active student users along with around 650 faculty members and officials of AIUB are accessing this online platform, utilizing it to its full capacity for online class lectures and team-based work projects.

109TH ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEETING OF AIUB HELD VIRTUALLY

The 109th Academic Council Meeting of the American International University – Bangladesh (AIUB) was held on Friday, April 3, 2020 at 11 AM through the online platform of Microsoft Teams.

In the meeting, discussions were held regarding the final assessment methodologies and successful completion of the on-going Spring semester 2019-20.

44TH SYNDICATE MEETING OF AIUB HELD VIRTUALLY

AIUB achieves yet another milestone! On Saturday, April 4, 2020 at 11 AM, the 44th Syndicate Meeting of AIUB was held virtually on the Microsoft Teams online platform. Dr. Carmen Z Lamagna, Vice Chancellor of AIUB presided over the virtual meeting in presence of other members of Syndicate.

The syndicate members appreciated the exemplary initiative taken by AIUB to keep academic operations uninterrupted while the whole world has come to a stand still due to COVID 19 virus.

Prof. Dr. Md. Rafique Ullah and Prof. Dr. Md. Selim, the nominated Syndicate members of the University Grants Commission and the Ministry of Education, overwhelmingly appreciated their affiliation with AIUB and expressed that to the best of their knowledge AIUB is only university of the country who has successfully shifted all of its academic operations virtually. They were pleasantly surprised to see AIUB's usage report of Microsoft Teams during the online classes which showed the highest range of inclusion that AIUB has achieved after being virtual

Dr. Carmen Z. Lamagna
Vice-Chancellor
American International University-Bangladesh
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Bangladesh University of Professionals

Online Learning Initiatives of Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP) amid Covid-19 Lockdown Situation

Bangladesh University of Professionals is a unique education rendering institution in the country. It stands unique firstly, for its administration completely run by Armed Forces and secondly, for its wide range of faculties and degrees conducted by both in house departments/faculties and affiliated institutions. BUP terminated all educational activities following the government's instruction on March 19, 2020 as a response to likely Covid 19 outbreak. From March 22, 2020, BUP started conducting online academic curriculum after approval from University Grant Commission (UGC). The purposes of such initiative were to:

- Ensure timely delivery of the knowledge/lessons to the students for avoiding any term loss or academic session jam
- Maintain the orientation of student's mindset towards study
- Maintain a constant link with the students for providing psychological and if necessary any kind of support during the pandemic period

This quick transition was possible due to the sincere preparation of course kit covering course materials, lectures, references, presentations and assignments by the faculties and timely uploading the same in the BUP UCAM i.e. University Comprehensive Academic Manager (a customized academic management web application developed for BUP). The students with their individual UCAM account provided by BUP can access these materials from any part of the globe. For the conduct of the classes, the faculties are using different web based platforms/applications namely You Tube, Google Class Rooms, ZOOM, Face Book etc. The faculties are maintaining their intra collaboration using UCAM. Utilizing all these platforms and

applications both delivery of the knowledge and conduct of online tests, deposition of assignments, presentations by students are being done. For facilitating the online classes BUP is providing complementary mobile data to all faculties and to the students with special need. Same platforms are also being used by MPhil and PhD researchers for attending course work and maintaining constant communication with the supervisors. It is mentionable that BUP ICT Centre is constantly supporting entire initiative. The major affiliated institutes are also conducting the programs with same tempo.

The pandemic has created severe psychological pressure in all corners of the society. As such, conducts of online academic Programs are kept very flexible. Regular online meetings are being conducted with the BUP leadership and deans to match the delivery of the lessons and mental strength of the students. If felt necessary, such program will be conducted with planned holidays between sessions, rescheduling the dates of assessments, exams or even rescheduling the semesters.

BUP believes in 'Excellence Through Knowledge', that underlines the fact of providing quality service to the society. On that point, all our students and all the members of the society are equally important to us. Beside the academic programs BUP has already donated in the Honorable Prime Minister's Relief Fund, conducted essential ration and relief distribution to the people in need in the areas around BUP localities.

Covid 19, the pandemic that has not been experienced by the human race before. Surely, the end of this pandemic will present a new social structure in future. Being an academic institution, BUP will make all the endeavors using the faculties and the professionals to outline the shape of the future society in a post pandemic situation and find out the appropriate tools for serving the same.

Major General Ataul Hakim Sarwar Hasan, SBP, SGP, ndc, afwc, psc, PhD
Vice Chancellor
Bangladesh University of Professionals
Dhaka, Bangladesh



BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology

Excellence through Education

Nishatnagar, Turag, Dhaka, 1230, Bangladesh

BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology (BUFT) Launches “E-Learning Platform” to Continue Academic Activities under COVID 19 Lockdown

BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology (BUFT) is one of the leading specialized private universities in Bangladesh. It was established by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) in 2001 with the aim to produce technically competent human resources for all field of the Ready Made Garments sector of the country. At present more than 5500 students are studying in nine undergraduates, three postgraduates, a post graduate diploma, and several certificate programs at BUFT.

On March 16, the government of Bangladesh has declared all educational institutes shut to avoid spread of the COVID-19 in the country. A prolonged suspension of academic activities is a concern for students, teachers and university administration. In this context, the UGC of Bangladesh suggested all universities of Bangladesh to continue their academic activities via online platform. The commission also came forward to provide support to all universities for conducting online classes through Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BdREN) services.

BUFT has responded very promptly to the initiative of the UGC and decided to start its online classes from 2nd of April 2020. Initially, BUFT has started to conduct online-based classes through ZOOM application free version and then switched to the ZOOM services located at BdREN provided by the UGC. Following the incessant guidelines from the honorable Chairman, members of BOT and other concerned, several online meetings have been conducted with the faculty members and class representatives of different batches,

sections and courses to make them acquainted with the online teaching system. A dedicated IT support team has also been formed to provide necessary supports to students and faculty members.

However, the most significant initiative that BUFT has taken to cope up with this CORONA breakdown is launching its own online teaching and learning platform called “E-learning-BUFT” (<http://e-learning.buft.edu.bd/>). This is a fully dedicated online learning platform where students and faculty members can share their video tutorial and lecture notes. Moreover, the usual online based student’s management software “UCAM” has also been integrated to count online attendance and students’ evaluation. Currently, the online-based teaching and learning has been conducting smoothly by more than 150 faculty members for around 6000, UG, PG and PGD students at BUFT. The students’ participation rate is quite satisfactory and stays in between 75% to 80%. Alongside the virtual class lectures, faculty members are providing handouts, notes, lecture audio, videos and also upload these materials with UCAM learn dash for onward use.

In addition, other online platforms such as Google classroom, facebook messenger and YouTube also have been using by both the faculty members and the students to share teaching materials and resources. In spite of getting many advantages of classes online during this challenging time, lack of standard devices like computer or laptop, poor internet speed in remote areas, and interrupted electricity supply sometimes cause less class attendance and poor class performance. Moreover, students are also a bit worried about the proposed process of their performance evaluation, examination and overall academic assessment via online. Finally, students and guardians are very much positive towards such type of initiative taken by the university during COVID lockdown in the country even though some of them have mix perceptions of online-based teaching and learning.

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No “business as usual” – Brac University turns challenges into opportunities

Introduction

In a visionary manner, Brac University (BU) has dedicated itself to be an international, student centric and impactful research university. Focusing on those objectives has ensured an immediate reaction to the current COVID-19 situation. As a member of the Open Society University Network, BU is able to actively exchange knowledge and experiences internationally with renown institutions like Bard College in the United States. With this advantage, the student’s needs can be anticipated and met. BU’s efforts are directed at ensuring its continuity, while simultaneously planning and taking decisive action to limit the spread of COVID-19. The James P. Grant School of Public Health (JPGSPH) and the Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) are only a few who rapidly responded to face the challenges caused by the crisis.

The future may be uncertain, but BU is determined to lead the community through this situation and to be a leading example in higher education.

Immediate response in early March

As the situation has been closely monitored before the official lockdown, Vice-Chancellor Professor Vincent Chang has requested “everyone to avoid large social gatherings like workshops, seminars, meetings etc. and also put a limit to travelling overseas, unless essential”, as early as March 10, 2020. During the following days, until the closure of BU, various precautionary measures were taken:

- awareness posters were distributed all over campus
- WHO guidelines were communicated
- at any entry point, security staff measured temperature using infrared thermometers and provided disinfectant
- defence behaviour like hand washing was promoted and strongly encouraged
- increased cleaning of labs, washrooms and other facilities
- cancellation of all large-scale meetings and gatherings, and minimizing the need for physical meetings by encouraging virtual meetings
- following IEDCR guidelines, etc.

Following the government directives, the university has been closed since March 16, 2020. The leadership promptly prepared to move classes online to ensure the continuity of BU. Aware that even after the lockdown things will not resume back to normal, several virtual meetings were summoned to discuss the measures that need to be taken going forward.

Initiatives following the lockdown

Many students suffered from anxiety and stress after the university was closed. To insure their wellbeing, it was only fair to end the semester early.

The Office of Student Life has generated a hotline for students to inquire and seek support. The team keeps in touch with the community and monitors their needs and demands closely. The uncertain future leaves many with anxiousness and worries and every unit at BU contributes to provide aid.

BU is continuously monitoring the latest government advice about the virus, and the broader situation. The designated University-wide COVID-19 Information website informs about the activities across BU and provides updates regarding the crisis.

Community Engagement

The daily wage earners and the ultra-poor have been hit hard by the economic ramifications of the lockdown. BU donated the equivalent of one day's staff salary to BRAC's emergency cash assistance programme to ensure emergency food sustenance of the affected families. Extreme poverty has risen and average incomes have dropped, resulting in low-income families not being able to afford food.

The BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health is taking an active role in carrying out urgent research focusing on the most vulnerable groups in Bangladesh along with aggregating and sharing useful resources from local and global sources to better combat the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The School's efforts are being undertaken in collaboration with colleagues, networks, practitioners, research and academic partners, health care organizations, civil society and policymakers nationally and globally. It is hoped

that through this collaboration the lives and struggles particularly of the poorest communities are better understood so as to inform immediate interventions and policies being implemented to address this unprecedented modern-day pandemic.

Another early initiative was the Rapid Research Response to COVID-19 by BIGD. In partnership with other research institutes, they are doing rapid actionable research and active communications with policy and program actors working on a COVID-19 response. Their primary source were phone surveys, to understand how micro, small, and medium enterprises—Bangladesh's economic lifeline—are dealing with the crisis. BIGD is partnering with organizations having presence and activities on the ground. The aim is to generate rapid and actionable research-based insights to policy and program actors, on the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our lives, focusing on the poor and vulnerable population of Bangladesh.

The Centre for Peace and Justice has undertaken a rapid survey with the emerging youth leadership in the Rohingya camp to understand the preparation around COVID-19 and what kind of roles need be played by youth leadership in the camps. Their team has also published various op-eds in national newspapers as a response to the pandemic in Bangladesh (<https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/news/defeating-the-four-horsemen-the-apocalypse-1892029>, <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/news/when-will-bangladeshs-curve-peak-1896697>).

In the early stages of the pandemic in Bangladesh, hand sanitizers were short in supply. The BU Department of Pharmacy started making hand rubs/hand sanitizers from mid-March 2020. They were distributed free of cost to BU maintenance staff, public authorities, government hospitals, private clinics and underprivileged people around Dhaka city and Chittagong. The distribution of the hand sanitizers was prioritized to the most impacted and high-risk communities, and the underprivileged people. Later, to continue this initiative, in collaboration with BRAC's Skills Development Programme, an additional 500 liters of the hand sanitizers was made at the Department of Pharmacy, BU.

Students are particularly engaged in developing ventilators, as there is a vast scarcity of the lifesaving machines in Bangladesh (<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/prototype-huge-potential-1888285>, <https://www.observerbd.com/details.php?id=253877>). They mainly focus on inventing devices that are affordable and can be produced with locally available materials. The ventilator developed by the team of three BU students can be manufactured for 14,000 BDT (circa 161 USD), while a conventional machine is estimated by almost 1,000,000 BDT (circa 11500 USD).

Several Webinars were held and are planned. They all touch on current matters such as: The Response to COVID-19 in South Asia, Emotional & Mental Wellbeing during COVID-19: Learning from Diverse Perspectives, Social Dimensions of a Pandemic: Stigma, Gender and COVID-19 and Targeting Covid-19 relief payments in Bangladesh.

University Continuity

The faculty and staff of BU is working remotely to ensure the continuity of the university. Teachers are virtually available for the students, while BU prepares for any decision made by the government about the continuation of educational institutions. Measures are taken in order for students and teachers to smoothly transition into the new situation. That includes guidelines, financial support and more.

While there is hope for a vaccine and/or a cure to control the pandemic, it will have a lasting impact on education. Using this opportunity to explore the advantages of this new situation is crucial. Entire online degree programs are already available. In the future, classes could, for example, be spontaneously brought together across the globe. New advanced technology and programs will be developed that can transform research and teaching activities. Education may be more accessible for those who were not able to afford it financially or physically so far. The Internet along with technology will be expanded to the next level, and that will elevate higher education.

Prof. Vincent Chang
Vice Chancellor
BRAC University
Dhaka, Bangladesh



Department of Business Administration
Faculty of Business and Entrepreneurship

The Department of Business Administration of Daffodil International University (DIU), Bangladesh has taken a good number of steps to operate current online learning management process in order to continue academic activities smoothly in this lockdown period stemming from the pandemic of corona virus. Some of the measures taken in this regard are mentioned below:

1. The teachers have been using Google classroom and Moodle since 2017 with a clear integration of both in-person classroom sessions and virtual classroom activities to teach all the courses to the students. All the teachers and students have been developed with continuous training to become progressively opt in to the virtual platforms from the very beginning. So, shifting entirely into virtual platforms has been much more convenient and comfortable for all the teachers in this lockdown period.
2. One of the significant features of our online classroom is Google meet. From the beginning of this lockdown period, all the classes have been taken through Google meet where all the students and teachers have participated actively. All the classes have been recorded and uploaded later in the Google Drive to access anytime from anywhere. The material and class links are shared in Google classroom, Moodle and private social media groups.
3. As most of the students are very active in social media, the department has given importance to the integrated social media in the teaching and learning activities. For instance, a teacher creates a closed group on social media (Facebook), circulates announcements, goes live from the group, takes interactive Q&A, posts the recorded class links for students' analytical discussion to carry through and takes some formal and informal sessions to make the lessons interesting and worth learning. Afterwards, students are assigned problem solving or analytical tasks which are simultaneously circulated on social media, Google classroom or Moodle.



4. Students have appeared in quizzes and tests through Google form which is a regular practice by the department way before the lockdown. And, they have submitted assignments and solved case studies in Google classroom or Moodle and got their evaluations back through the pre-stated evaluation rubrics.
5. All the course materials have been precisely uploaded and stored in all virtual platforms including social media and Google Site and as course repositories through LMS platforms as mentioned above.
6. Besides, a number of training sessions are also being constantly introduced so that teachers can engage the students better through online platforms and ensure their learning which are being facilitated by trained resources led by Honorable Vice Chancellor, Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI) and DIU Blended Learning Center.

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IBA Fighting Covid19 Pandemic

The Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, is the pioneer in rendering business education in Bangladesh. It is also the leading business school in the country. The University of Dhaka decided to close down on the 18th of March amidst concern that Bangladesh will be soon affected by the deadly COVID19. However, the university along with UGC allowed online classes to ensure that students do not lose time and at the same time remain busy. IBA actually started to prepare for the impact on the 3rd of March and decided to start online classes once the University announced closure. The primary purpose was designed to address three major objectives, first usual knowledge dissemination; second keeping students busy; and third motivate the students to act as local ambassadors to build awareness regarding this deadly pandemic.

Our online platform is luckily tailored for real time lecture along with white board presentations and other administrative support such as attendance, exams, routine management, faculty support, etc. Thus, as far as our regular class is concerned, we are practically on track and hope to complete this semester on due time, i.e. mid May. However, the academic committee of the Institute decided to take the final exams, offline, once the University is open. Furthermore, the faculty members are also involved in online research, along with students (Graduate and Doctoral), focusing on the impact of the present crises.

In the mean time, we are also running our Management Development Program (including ACBA) to ensure that the corporate managers continue with their academic pursuit while working from home. The institute is also holding faculty meetings as well as other administrative meetings along with financial transactions online. The faculty members are involved in national events such as Blockchain Olympiad, which has been designed on the online platform to ensure that students from all over the country can remain indoors and also undertake innovation based activity that is relevant under the present lockdown scenario as well as, has long term business opportunity for the future entrepreneurs.

Bangladesh being one of the most densely populated country; having a large population is expected to be severely affected. Bearing this in mind, IBA has launched a disaster preparedness program in association with IBA Alumni Association to raise disaster fund. We have also set up a research cell in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Office, IBA Alumni Association, major Trade Bodies and Dhaka City Corporation, which is monitoring both global and local status and developing short term, medium term, and long term plan for

Bangladesh Business to combat the aftermath of COVID19. Since the IBA Alumni are socially connected, they along with the faculty members are also undertaking motivational campaigns in the mass media to psychologically boost the society at large and to give one single message; we are all in it, TOGETHER.

There is no doubt that the WORLD will be totally different once the cloud of COVID19 lifts. It is imperative that we as business academics immediately start working on the future academic pursuits which no doubt will be the new norm. Our learning during this crisis has touched not only business and economics, but even more, social and behavioral dynamics. It has taught us to put emphasis on individual behavior while at the same time has shown how individual behavior influence a large population. It has forced us to communicate over the technological platform but again, has shown how important is the human bondage to keep the world together. The lessons go beyond the typical pyramid concept; where poor are at the bottom and minority rich at the top. It is so interesting to note that the entire pyramid is so similar and how the entire world is reacting like human beings connected through one similar DNA strand. It proves beyond doubt that the world of tomorrow, must look at globalization as a *human value chain*, where every actor has something worth to contribute for one single cause, betterment of humanity. Thus, let us initiate, using the online platform, the first online conference from our home, spearheaded by AMDISA. This will be a typical socialization forum, exchanging experience, in this unique setting. Here, unlike typical academic conferences, discussions will not be in terms of how different economies tackle various problems; rather, it will focus on how all have worked as human beings having similar needs and wants.

Prof. Dr. Syed Ferhat Anwar
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International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT), Dhaka, Bangladesh

We have been using Moodle class room learning management system and it was very easy for us to go for on line teaching just after campus was closed. IUBAT started on line teaching immediately after lock-in and completed the remaining period of the Spring semester successfully on 07 April. The class attendance was satisfactory ranging from 60% to 100% but most courses had 75-80% attendance. Most of the absenting students had poor or no internet connections. They were provided with teaching/reading materials by email/Facebook and were contacted over mobile phone.

We have completed the classes and now preparing for holding on line exam. We also designed on line final exam, and were about to publish the exam schedule when the University Grants Commission issued a circular to all the Universities instructing them not to take on-line exam. The Association of Private Universities is trying to convince the UGC and we are waiting for a positive outcome.

It is now obvious that there is no alternative to on line teaching in the abnormal situation like one the world is now facing.

Prof. Dr. Abdur Rab
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International University of Business,
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Northern University Bangladesh's finest response towards the pandemic of COVID-19

The flights are grounded, the malls are closed, the park benches are lonely and the entire world is at stagnant. The world has not seen something so vicious than this since time immemorial. The COVID-19 with its spiteful affect, has already exceeded the damage done by all the world wars combined. During this hazardous epidemic, Northern University Bangladesh, a leading local home of learning, has responded rapidly with utmost awareness and precaution.

During the time of pandemic of COVID 19, Northern University Bangladesh has not stopped its operations. They are using the blessings of technology in order to fight this global epidemic situation. All the classes have been shifted to online and students are trained on the uses of classes directly through their faculties and/or the class representatives. The teachers and students are all working together as a team in order to make the online classes work.

All the students, who have access to the internet, have joined the Google Classroom. The business has a total of 800 students which includes BBA and MBA. There are 40 courses in BBA while 20 in MBA. The lecture notes, slides and assignments are uploaded in the Google Classroom under each course titles. To help some students, who cannot access them in the Google Classroom, the same contents are uploaded in the messenger groups. The curriculum has not stopped though the flow during the beginning of online classes was a bit bumpy. Through dedication and love for education, the faculties and students are able to make it work. The assignments, class assessments, quizzes and Q&A sessions are all conducted online. From 25th of March, when the university was shut according to the announcement of the Prime Minister, 100% of the faculties involved themselves in online classes. The classes are been conducted via a number of different methods. Google Classroom, Zoom, Facebook Live and Skype are the main ways by which the business department faculty members are conducting classes. Students are actively participating in the online classes; for the BBA program the attendance ratio is 88 per cent while in the MBA, the attendance is 76 per cent.

All the faculties and administration of NUB have donated one day's salary to the Prime Minister's Relief and welfare fund in the fight against spread of the COVID 19. Not just that, during the time of crisis, the faculties of NUB are trying to spread positivity and keeping the hope alive to the students and community through their write ups and counselling. To fight the COVID 19, awareness is important and the faculties are trying their best to spread it.

The faculty meetings are taking place every fortnight using the Zoom app, while the business school faculties are in continuous connection in the WhatsApp groups where ideas are being shared.

Maintaining academic works are never easy in a situation when the entire country is at risk of getting infected from a deadly virus, nor is it easy when every other institute has been ordered to stay in lock down until the situation improves. Even then NUB is attempting to manage everything at its best. Things it has made possible could have been executed by its employees so far due to effective prior planning and strategies. Despite making solid plans, the organization had to modify its strategies when it started implementing the policies online. The institute also has further plan for all its members and with its dedicated workforce it will not be that difficult to execute those plans as well. NUB is not just an educational institute but, as everyone says, it is more like a family of its employees and students and this collective force of NUBians are trying however they can to defeat the COVID-19, to keep the economy, the educational system secure through their dedication and hard work. If everyone starts working as per their capabilities and through efficient policy making like the NUB people, nothing in this world will be able to damage any sector of our nation for sure.

Prof. Dr. Anwar Hossain
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Dhaka, Bangladesh

Date: April 9, 2020

Southern University Bangladesh Goes Virtual Shifted Classes Online

The Corona virus COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertainty and instability all around the world, including in Bangladesh. It has forced us to make changes in the ways we work, interact, and live in general. The academic landscape is no different. Indeed, everyone new in this self isolation situation. It has been challenging for all of us to concentrate on learning and teaching.

We understand the barrier to complete the semester on regular classroom session.

Keeping the current circumstances in mind, to manage this lockdown period at Southern University Bangladesh we have taken numerous measures to improve the student learning process and complete the academic semester.

Southern University Bangladesh has been working virtually and shifted classes online for learning & teaching, and content sharing methods. We have successfully initiated most of our classes since March 20, for both undergraduate and graduate programs, online through the Southern Software Information System (SIS), Google Classroom, Google Hangout, and Google Meet Application to carry on with these methods of learning until the end of the semester as per the academic schedule. All departments are encouraged to participate in this process. Since 2007, Southern has been affiliated with Google, making it one of the longest-standing and strongest collaborations with this technology giant. Southern gets unlimited user licenses access to many of its applications. Southern University is fully Virtual with its classes, meaning that students and faculty members can access these through their user IDs. With its vibrant interface and diverse features, students and faculties can participate in a unique teaching-learning experience that encourages the continuity of academic activities in these difficult times.

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SHIFTING TO FULL ONLINE TEACHING: The ULAB Experience

On 16 March 2020, amidst fears related to the coronavirus outbreak, the Bangladesh government issued a directive decreeing all educational institutions under the Ministry of Education to close from 18 to 31 March. Later, in the wake of an increasing number of deaths and confirmed infections, the Ministry of Education extended the school closure - first from 31 March to 9 April and again from 9 to 25 April. To minimize possible academic losses, the University Grants Commission (UGC) declared on 23 March that all universities introduce online education to run academic activities. It likewise suggested use of the Zoom Application, which can be accessed under the license of the Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BdREN).

In light of all these directives, the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) authorities officially announced on March 16 the shift to online learning. At this time, the university was in the first half of the term with the mid-term period scheduled to take place in the last week of March. The authorities also instructed faculty to give assignments, written take home exams and viva voce exams in lieu of synchronous online written examinations. The authorities had to think of online teaching and assessment strategies given the levels of Internet accessibility of its students. Based on a recent survey administered by the university's Student Affairs Office (SAO), 60 percent of the students had reliable Internet access, 30 percent had intermittent Internet access, and 10 percent had no Internet access. The students without Internet access could not participate in the online sessions and therefore, special policies needed to be formulated and executed once the lockdown is lifted. For now, the university needed to focus on students falling in the first two levels.

It should be noted that based on a Quacquarelli Symonds Limited (QS) survey conducted among 16,000 students and 400 university administrators, 54 percent of university respondents have shifted to online teaching and 63 percent of student respondents expected their universities to move towards teaching online. The data were gathered from February to March 2020. ULAB is only one of the several universities that have shifted to full online teaching due to the pandemic. Most ULAB students likewise expected the university to move to full online teaching.

ULAB Profile. As of Spring Semester 2020, the university has 4,477 undergraduate and 662 graduate students. It has four schools – School of Business, School of Arts and Humanities, School of Social Science and School of Engineering. The university has 187 full-time and 155 part-time faculty members. More than one-third of its full-time faculty have doctorate degrees.

ULAB is a private liberal arts-based University located in Dhanmondi, Dhaka City. Founded in February 2002, it was granted permission to open from the UGC in November 2003, pursuant to the Private University Act 1992. ULAB was formally launched at a ceremony on 1 October 2004. ULAB believes in developing young minds to their fullest potential through the free and creative pursuit of knowledge. It is firmly committed to helping young men and women to become responsible and

caring citizens of their nations and the world. ULAB fulfils these aims by adopting an array of traditional and innovative academic and extracurricular programs, and by bringing to its students the best that has been thought and accomplished in the arts and sciences throughout the world.

Foundations in Online Teaching. ULAB authorities started floating the idea of the learning management system, or LMS, Moodle, during the Spring Semester of 2014. Moodle is a free and open-source learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a single robust, secure and integrated system to create personalized learning environments. It is used for blended learning, distance education, flipped classroom and other e-learning projects worldwide.

After obtaining approval from the ULAB Syndicate, the late Prof. Brian Shoesmith (then Dean for Academic Development) announced in February 2015 the official adoption of the Moodle Learning Management System. Training, however, had begun from Spring 2014 with those faculty members who were interested and willing to experiment. Prof. Shoesmith assigned Arifa Ghani Rahman, currently Associate Professor of English and Humanities at ULAB, to conduct the training as she had many years of experience in teaching online. Prof. Shoesmith made it clear, when Moodle was officially adopted, that the platform would serve as an additional support to teaching and “not as a replacement for classroom teaching.” The system has since been used as a supplement to teaching where teachers can upload helpful or additional course materials, distribute and collect assignments, record grades, take attendance, chat with the students, and so on.

Official completion certificates in Moodle training were given to faculty members from April 2015. By February 2016, around 90 percent of the faculty had been trained in Moodle. As shown in a survey on Faculty Usage of Moodle, many teachers had made use of the system to complement their physical classroom teaching. However, they found it more convenient to communicate with students using other online platforms such as Facebook messenger or groups when off-campus.

In September 2018, ULAB formed an Online Education Study Group to recommend measures on how to move forward with online teaching and learning at the university. The group suggested the following strategic directions:

- Assess the impact of online education practiced at ULAB and in other universities;
- Prioritize online education strategies that build upon the strength of a liberal arts university;
- Limit online education engagements to those instances that yield clear benefits to students and relevant stakeholders; and
- Undertake broad consultation with faculty regarding online learning strategies.

Given these, various departments and centers in the university have made inroads in conducting online learning. Much of these have been instrumental in facilitating the shift from face-to-face classroom to online class teaching during this time of the pandemic. However, the familiarity with an online LMS among faculty and students could be considered the most important factor in facilitating this shift.

Inclusion of Other Learning Platforms. ULAB authorities have specified Moodle as its main online learning platform. However, to complement Moodle, authorities encouraged faculty to utilize other online platforms to facilitate teacher-student interactions. The goal of this directive was to prioritize the delivery of the course content, rather than focus on the platform used. For video conferencing, the faculty has utilized Zoom, Google Meet, and Google Hangouts. For speedy communication with students, faculty use WhatsApp and Facebook groups or Messenger. For students with intermittent access to Internet, faculty have uploaded documents and other materials to Moodle, and to Google Docs, Facebook groups, or sent them via email. Some faculty have recorded their synchronous lectures and uploaded them to the course-related Facebook private group so that students who could not login for any reason could view them later.

Collaboration with Coursera. Back in 2018, the MBA Program Director Asif Uddin Ahmed, in his Integrated Marketing Communication course (MKT505), asked his students to register for a course offered jointly by Edx.org and Curtin University of Australia called “Digital Branding and Engagement.” The course was free unless the students wanted a certificate from Curtin University. Finishing this course carried 20 percent of the assessment grade in the course MKT505. At the end of the course, Edx.org sent the result directly to the teacher.

From the success of this initiative, Asif wanted to make available to ULAB students more online courses. In April 2020, he announced that Coursera has agreed to offer more than 4,600 courses for 1,000 ULABians for free for the next six months. Coursera is an American online learning platform founded in 2012 by Stanford Professors Andrew Ng and Daphne Koller that offers massive open online courses, specializations and degrees. The agreement with Coursera is beneficial not only to business students but to all ULAB students and faculty, especially for those who want to learn more during the lockdown.

Conducting Webinars. In 2018, the Center for Enterprise and Society (CES) and EMBA Program Director Sajid Amit initiated a partnership with the Startup Dhaka Online School (rechristened as “Upskill”). The partnership allowed CES/EMBA program to acquire experience and capability in developing online learning content. With this experience, the EMBA program facilitated two webinars. The first webinar was conducted via Zoom on 5 April. Facilitated by Sajid, it covered the COVID-19 situation in the country and how to cope with it professionally and mentally. The second webinar, also held via Zoom on 13 April, was entitled “Impact of COVID-19 on Startups of Bangladesh.” The following panelists participated: Tina Jabeen (ICT Division, GoB), Fahim Ahmed (Pathao), Maksudul Islam (Shohoz) and Rubaiyath Sarwar (Innovision Consulting).

The Media Studies and Journalism Department conducted the following webinars during the lockdown period:

- PR Project Planning and Implementation. 2 April. Iffat Nowrin Mallik (Instructor)
- Basic and Advanced Cinematography. 21 March. Asraful Alam Rubel (Instructor)
- Basic Learning of Adobe Premiere Pro. 19 March. Ishtiaq Ahmad (Instructor)
- Covering Live Events. 2 April. Manwar Hossain (Instructor)

Two more webinars are planned this month. School of Engineering Assistant Professor, Dr. Nafees Mansoor will conduct on 23 April a tech talk on “The Art of Clean Code.” Media Studies Senior Lecturer Muhammad Aminuzzaman, together with Instructor Mohammed Mozammel Huq Tetu, will hold via Zoom a Basic Photography course on 17 and 18 April.

e-Learning Faculty Facebook Group. During the lockdown, a Facebook group called eLearning Experience of ULAB Faculty was established to serve as a platform where faculty can exchange notes regarding online teaching and learning. In this group, faculty narrate their experiences in transiting to online teaching. They also present their practices with regard to student management, assessment, pedagogy, course syllabi writing, online learning platforms, cyber security and other concerns. In a sense, the platform is a community of practice. So far, 74 full time faculty (from the four schools and General Education Department) have joined the group.

Online Class Accomplishments and Further Improvements. The University has achieved great success in transiting online. Based on the 10 April Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) Report, there were a total of 520 required midterm exams across the various academic departments. Of these, 99.6 percent were completed. Moreover, there were a total of 2,799 required online classes. Of these, 83.7 percent were held. The University authorities have declared 13 April as the last day of classes for Spring 2020.

Since this is the first time the University has conducted full online teaching, it needs to gather data in order to examine ways for improvement in the future. Herein, the university has adopted three strategies.

First, through the SAO, it is gathering initial feedback from students regarding the conduct of their online courses.

Second, through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), it is surveying its faculty regarding their physical wellness, psychological wellness, financial wellness, online class response, and support needed to improve online class response.

Third, the IQAC has requested students to complete their course and teacher evaluations online through the University Resource Management System or URMS. Every term, faculty are evaluated in terms of subject matter knowledge, teaching pedagogy, learning assessment, professional behavior and student development. Courses are investigated in terms of content/organization, learning environment, learning resources, teacher contribution and student contribution.

From the results of these feedback systems, ULAB’s practices relating to online teaching and learning will improve in the future.

Prof. Dr. H. M. Jahirul Haque
Vice Chancellor
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BHUTAN



E-LEARNING

Impact Analysis Report

Gedu College of Business Studies
07-04-2020

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1. Background

The college has been using educational technology, Moodle-Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) since 2012 mainly to facilitate technology mediated learning activities in addition to usual face-to-face classroom method. With the increasing severity of the COVID-19 becoming Pandemic around the world, the Royal Government of Bhutan directed the closure of all schools and educational institutes. Consequently, Royal University of Bhutan decided to close the colleges and send students home on 18th March 2020 as precautionary measures against COVID-19. This emergency response made the college to shift the teaching, learning and assessment to completely go online. The Office of Dean, Academics Affairs immediately led the discussions and held meetings with module tutors for planning to keep students academically engaged. It was then consultatively decided that VLE will be used as primary means of sharing and reaching all teaching learning resources to students since students were already familiar in using VLE. Additionally, tutors were asked and supported with technical skills to use other means of content delivery such as *Zoom* cloud meeting, google classroom including *Hangouts*. Recognizing the importance of online learning environment and the optimal use of VLE, college ICT section integrated additional features such as *Zoom*, *Interactive contents (H5P)* and *Big Blue Buttons* into VLE. Such online space facilitates students to interact and engage with friends, the tutors and share learning resources. The tutors also resorted to using alternatives such as social networking apps to reach out to the students and sharing important information.

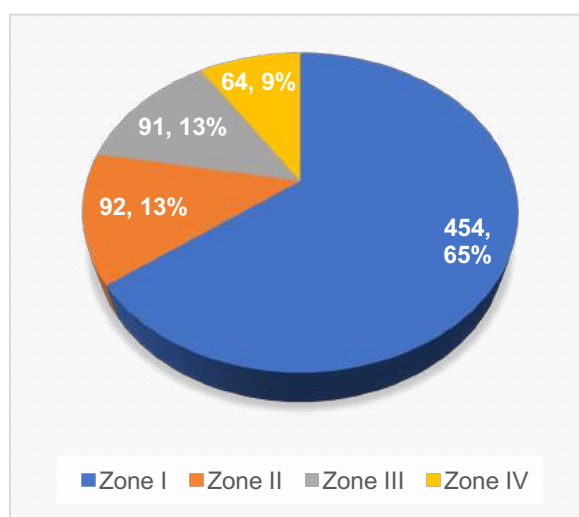
The positive impact of e-learning on students' achievement and learning has been recognised by many researchers. According to Nora (2009), association with instructional technology enhances learning and would become self-directed learner. Further, Al-Fadhli (2009) emphasizes the benefits of e-learning at higher education institutions in terms prompting independent learning, better learning quality, ease of teaching process and flexibility. Other impacts according to Olson and Codde (2011) from Michigan State University, are shift of pedagogy from a teacher-centered to a more learner-centered approach, positive effects on economic growth due to spillovers of technology and knowledge, and societal impact in terms of potentially reducing the gap in access to education though it may lead to 'digital divide'. However, the success of e-learning program depends on three qualities: system, information and instruction (Kim, Trimi, Park & Rhee, 2012). Furthermore, the developing countries are usually faced with challenges while implementing e-learning programs (Khaing & Aung, 2015; Tarus, Gichoya & Mummba, 2015). These challenges include lack of technical skills on e-learning and e-content development, inadequate network infrastructure and ICT knowledge, limited internet bandwidth etc. Bhutan, particularly the college (GCBS) is no exception to these challenges. It must be noted that these challenges must be overcome to reap the benefits that e-learning programmes offers.

At GCBS, to minimize the challenges, and for timely intervention and support, the tutors are required to submit a weekly report reflecting online activities conducted, participation of students, and any related issues. Analyzing the VLE report statistics for last three weeks, show a drastic increase in usage rate (in terms of updating learning materials, assessments, discussion, and feedback) is observed particularly after closure of the college (19th March 2020). The statistics indicate that tutors are leading in terms of using VLE to facilitate online teaching and learning. Therefore, the study is conducted to understand the impact of the overall online learning facilities and e-learning system put in place. The impact in terms of student learning outcomes cannot be ascertained through this study, within just two weeks of the full online teaching and learning exercise. Therefore, the study results may not be generalizable and only indicate how online courses are perceived to be effective by the staffs and students in terms of learning assessments, content/resources sharing, and content delivery. The study also identifies challenges and opportunities along with some international best practices in terms of making E-Learning more effective.

2. Method

Impact study was conducted using structured questionnaire including open-ended questions (both quantitative and qualitative approach employed). Additionally, the weekly monitoring reports submitted by the module tutors were analysed. A total of 701 out of 1,595 students registered for current semester and 43 out of 60 tutors have participated for the survey pertaining to assessment of impact of e-learning. The students are spread over all the districts with majority of the students currently staying at Thimphu, Chukha, Paro, Wangdi-Phodrang and Sarpang. And more than 40 percent of student's parents work in farms (farmers).

Student participants were categorized into four zones based on their current location provided in the survey (**Zone I:** Thimphu, Paro, Haa, Chhukha, Samtse; **Zone II:** Gasa, Punakha, Wangduephodrang, Dagana, Tsirang; **Zone III:** Bumthang, Trongsa, Zhemgang, Sarpang; **Zone IV:** Trashigang, Trashiyangtse, Pemagathshel, Mongar, Lhuntse, and Samdrupjongkhar). As reflected in the graph, maximum number of student respondents (65%) are under Zone I while only 9% of students are at Zone IV.



3. Findings

3.1. Assessment

Tutors' Perspectives	Students' Perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assessment through diverse techniques and tools is essential part of the teaching and learning. Around 76% of module tutors claim that Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) serves a good platform for continuous assessment components for most of the modules, however, some assessment approaches such as presentation and practical components are likely to be compromised as reported by 63% of tutors.Recognizing the importance of timely feedback to the learners, tutors provide online feedback for improvement and to ensure the quality of assignments.Most of the tutors are comfortable using online platform assessment tools. Online quizzes on number of modules are conducted successfully, however, there has been network problem (technical errors) during the quiz hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In terms of the online assessment, students agree that the quality of assignment does not get compromised and are of the view that the assessment schedule can be managed well online. There is also indication that students get required feedback and comments from module tutors. Another good expect of online assessment is the effectiveness of the quizzes conducted.However, certain components of assessment seem to be ineffective doing online. Majority of the respondents (students) do not agree on conducting presentation online, while many do not even feel relevant. Also, simulation, roleplay and practical assignments do not go well online. Thus, it can be concluded that except a few components of assessment such as simulation, role play and presentation, the rest of the assignments are assessed effectively.

Further, assessment of students' work and understanding of the lesson, the tutors' use of online assessment techniques were analysed. The analysis revealed that quizzes, multiple choice questions and short answer questions provided to the students on online platforms were helpful in assessing their understanding of theories, and concepts. However, these techniques were found less relevant for the modules that require sound, critical thinking and hands-on-practice to solve the problems. Therefore, there is a need to look for better assessment techniques which ensure honest participation from students and fair and comprehensive approach of assessment from tutors.

3.2. Learning Facility

Tutors' Perspectives	Students' Perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The online teaching/learning environment, is important for independent learning. While tutors do have access to internet, they reported of having inconsistent internet connection and break downs in online host server (VLE). In order to address the issue, ICT section has arranged another VLE server machine with higher capacity. However, there are still a few (20%) tutors who are not happy with the support received from ICT section. • Most of the tutors have required devices for online teaching and learning. They have been trained on VLE with integrated additional features such as zoom (real time teaching or discussion), creating Interactive Content (H5P). Majority of them found <i>Zoom</i> cloud meeting user-friendly and easily accessible for online participation. • In order to create favorable online learning environment, all required learning resources for the modules are made available online so that the students get to read and prepare for the discussion or online classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learning facilities in the college includes accessibility of internet, the VLE, interactive learning software (<i>Zoom</i> is used currently), the availability of learning resources, and support from ICT. Generally, students expressed that they have access to internet. However, the opinion on stability and reliability of internet is divided; only around half of the respondents seem to have stable internet connection. Similarly, perception on accessibility and user-friendly features of <i>Zoom</i> for real time interaction is debatable for the students. A little more than half of the respondents agree on these features. • While the majority of the students have necessary device (laptop/computer), there are at least 15% of student respondents who lack any of the devices. Among these students, majority are on government scholarship and their parents are farmers. • The support from ICT office seems to be satisfactory. However, there are opportunities that they can support more, as there are more than 20 percent of students who are not happy with ICT support. And less than half of the student respondents indicated that the host server (VLE) is not so reliable or stable. This may be because of the frequent disruption in the VLE last few weeks experienced by students. This issue has been solved, as ICT office have replaced the earlier server.

3.3. Content Delivery

Tutors' Perspectives	Students' Perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learning outcomes and objectives of the modules are conveyed to the students. All tutors work online in trying to achieve learning outcomes and also to cover the subject content of the modules adequately without compromising the standard. However, nearly half of the tutors expressed concerns on achieving the expected learning outcomes on time. • It is reported that most of the tutors are comfortable in technical aspects of online teaching and learning. Of the two techniques/tools used for content delivery, recorded videos seemed more effective than <i>Zoom</i> cloud meeting. At this point of time, <i>Zoom</i> meeting is used for real time interaction with students, but according to tutors it has not proved effective for participative learning probably due to large number of students and network disturbance. • In order to supplement or clarify the content, online discussion forum is used frequently. Additionally, adequate online learning activities are developed and shared for students to keep engaged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although students tend to agree the accessibility and user-friendly characteristics of real-time online interaction platform (<i>Zoom</i>), it does not help much in students' learning as it is felt that this does not allow effective participation. This may be attributed to the fact that students are not comfortable in the technical aspects of the online learning, as 40 percent have expressed. • On the other hand, students are happy with the offline materials, especially recorded videos. Almost 70 percent of students would like to have their module tutors post the recorded videos online. In addition, the VLE seems fairly effective in terms of making content related resources available online. Students use this online learning platform for class content discussion and clarification seeking. Every student is comfortable interacting with tutors through VLE.

Additionally, content analysis results on content delivery revealed mixed responses on the impact it has on the faculty and students. However, majority of the responses support ineffectiveness of online teaching and learning in delivering the contents. Majority of the students are of the view that VLE and zoom as techniques used by the tutors for online teaching is not very effective. Tutors also shared the ineffectiveness of the use of VLE and zoom classes as a result of internet connectivity problem for students and faculty and frequent breakdown in the server. The quality can be enhanced if improvements are made on the college network speed, consistency and coverage. Similarly, students are also of the view that e-learning can become impactful if tutors look for alternatives (beyond VLE and Zoom) to engage students with or without strong internet connectivity and network coverage at minimal cost.

3.4 Learning Experiences

Tutors' Perspectives	Students' Perspectives
There are positive parts of going teaching and learning online fully. There is greater flexibility, visit to subject specific websites (e-searching skills) by faculty has increased, helped to develop new teaching strategies and discovery of new educational technology. However, according to tutors, it has not resulted in improvement of students' participation in the learning. Probably, students take time to adapt to new way for learning.	It is clear that online method is not so effective as face-to-face interaction. It is evident from the students' responses that online learning compromises participation for learning, and understanding of module contents. However, for many, e-learning helps in learning at their own pace independently. The noticeable advantage of online learning is the incorporation of useful feedback and comments provided by tutors for assignment, and the opportunity to increase exploring relevant subject websites resulting in e-learning skills.

4. The Challenges of E-Learning Implementation

- Most of the tutors and students agree that the college encourages and also provides necessary support for e-learning. On the other hand, they believe that e-learning requires greater time commitment and result in loss of interaction between students and tutors.
- Accessibility of online teaching and learning by the students is seriously hampered by the problems related to network coverage, clogging and connectivity. Internet connection and network coverage was pointed out to be the most serious issues of e-learning by both faculty members and students.
- Cost incurred on online teaching and learning is observed to be another problem for both faculty members and students. However, the problem is found more severe with the students. Moreover, some self-financed students are impacted negatively by the online teaching and learning while government scholarship students are provided with stipend to meet the online learning expenses. Cost of online teaching and learning remains the second most serious challenge with the students. There is, thus, a need to explore for strategies to reach the lessons to the students and engage them fruitfully with less financial burden on them.
- Support and Management: An inadequate support from the college and IT personnel in terms of providing wide network coverage and optimum internet speed is found to be hampering the delivery of online lessons besides the lack of compatible gadgets and software to run the sessions. In addition, to actively conduct online classes and keep students engaged, network connectivity beyond academic buildings was felt necessary. Similarly, PD programmes for faculty and familiarization programmes for

students are felt necessary to ensure quality online teaching and learning. Online classroom management also remains a challenge. Difficulty in accessing online classes as a result of distraction and noise were reported both faculty and students. Moreover, it is found difficult to evaluate whether students are engaged productively on online classes. Thus, there is a need to monitor the sessions to ensure active student participation.

- Though there is a marginal increase in faculty workload with the online teaching and learning scheme in place, students' workload has increased significantly as a result of extended learning activities across the modules. Thus, there is a need of scheduling work timetable by the faculty for the students.

5. Opportunities

Online teaching/learning allows faculty and students to access the classroom and resources at anytime from anywhere. Moreover, as it encourages both guided and independent learning, a proper online lesson planning and preparation of activities by faculty members would help in ensuring quality conduct of online teaching and learning that benefit the students. For many tutors, it is first time handling online teaching and learning particularly in development of e-content and its delivery. The current experiences provide opportunities for exploration and to embrace educational technologies practiced by international universities. There is also a possibility of uploading recorded lessons on the college's official YouTube link to ease the current e-learning facility.

6. The Best Practices in Developing countries (e-learning program)

*Technical Report by Olson and Codde (2011),
Michigan State University*

There are specific programs that integrated e-learning into education systems in developing countries.

1. **Algeria:** *International project support to develop and implement the program to address the issues of infusing technology into education system. It was learned that teacher is the key to success in e-learning.*
2. **Lebanon:** *International project supported in training in-service teachers on both how to use and how to teach with technology.*
3. **Pakistan:** *With support from International project, it was focused on pre-service teacher education – upgrade skills of teacher educators, standardization of curricula, upgrade infrastructure.*
4. **Chile:** *National ICT program as a part of education reform program. Two key strategies were used: teacher training, and building national infrastructure support system*
5. **Malaysia:** *As a part of the government's vision 2020, a number of ICT initiatives have been implemented including the Malaysian Smart School.*



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Royal University of Bhutan
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GCBS Report on Online Teaching and Learning

1. How the Colleges have prepped the students to study remotely?

Soon after the students were sent home mid-March after the Government declared that educational Institutions will be closed, the college had several meetings held at different levels. The Office of the Dean, Academic Affairs together with Office of the Programme Leaders took the lead in discussing how the online teaching-learning can be implemented effectively. Meetings with ICT section, Library staff and module tutors were arranged. The following decisions were made for the online learning for the students:

- The ICT to take care of continuous availability of internet and VLE stability
- Module tutors to be trained on the use of real-time meeting software such as Zoom and effective use of VLE
- Tutors to prepare video-record of Lectures
- Upload all the necessary reading materials through VLE (as VLE was made the main platform for providing assignments and collecting the student's academic work)
- Time table for online real-time interaction to be made available to students

Hence, before students were asked to involve in online learning, these factors were taken into consideration. Most importantly, module tutors were made responsible to communicate to their own students and class sections how to proceed. For instance, individual tutors provided the meeting ID to students through Class Representatives. The Students were given the new time table for Zoom Meeting (interactive real-time online learning) by the Office of Programme Leaders through Academic Representatives. Students were asked to prepare for the Zoom meeting following based on the schedule provided by the college. The module tutors also used social media such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Email and even through Call to respond students' queries.

The use of Virtual Learning (VLE) platform was never an issue for students. Students and tutors have been using this long before the COVID-19 pandemic. Lecturers used social media such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Email and even through Call to respond students' queries.



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2. What kind of supports are the colleges providing for smooth sailing of online learning and teaching?

Base on the meeting decisions, module tutors were trained on the use of Zoom for interactive meeting. They were taught on how to schedule Zoom meeting, and use various features of Zoom. For instance, about controlling the sound of participations thorough ‘mute all’ during the lecture, using the ‘Screen share’ to teach the lesson, and recording the meeting/interaction procedure.

On top of this, a few tutors who are not confident about the VLE usage, they were also trained on the use of important VLE features such as ‘interactive content’, creating ‘discussion forum’, and ‘Creating Groups’ for the Class sections.

Tutors were also informed that the Library can help in downloading the useful resources and reading materials if they wish.

In order to manage the smooth sailing of online learning and teaching, module tutors’ weekly teaching activities are monitored. Tutors are required to submit the report, including the content delivered, assignments provided and the evaluation of assignments. Most importantly, feedbacks are collected from both students and tutors on the challenges they face while taking online teaching learning sessions. In fact, the comprehensive report was prepared and even submitted to the Office of the Vice Chancellor.

3. Which software or apps are being used? Is it a zoom or google classroom?

Almost every module tutor uses Zoom Cloud Meeting application. Although many express the user-friendliness of the software, there are certain issues associated to the use of Zoom. Students state that online meeting through zoom to be very expensive as it uses huge internet data package. On the other hand, the tutors are of the view that Zoom is not very SECURE software owing to the recent news coverage accusing Zoom as interfering with the personal privacy.

Apart from zoom, the module tutors also use VLE for uploading the reading materials and online resources for the students as per the work load. Engaged the students in problem solving task (Lab Sessions on Matrices and Determinants task) was given to the students. google classroom for sharing all heavy E learning materials, video recording and You Tube channel were also used for the students.

Overall, the Zoom session with the students found to be effective, where the students listen to the lectures and they clarified their doubts. Students were satisfied through online learning. Feedback and suggestions were given to students regarding the problem-solving task in VLE through appropriate format.

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4. How are the Colleges assisting the Government during the crisis? I heard some colleges have provided their campuses for De-sunng training; some colleges are offering their campuses to be used as a quarantine facility?

Given below are some ways in which the college, GCBS is assisting the government during the Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis:

- The College staff who have completed De-sunng training programme were relieved to provide volunteers service in the community.
- College Guest house provided and designated as quarantine facility
- Boys Hostels GType is also identified and designated as quarantine facility
- Boys Hostel HType identified and prepared as Isolation facility
- GCBC indoor complex, Auditorium, Incubation Center, Happiness and Wellbeing Centre are readied for storage of essential food items.
- Two college vehicles fully committed as standby for the Ambulance and/or the transport needs of the dzongkhag for services related to Covid-19 precautionary measures.
- College staffs both academic & non-academic have been providing voluntary services for the mass cleaning, advocacy and sensitisation on the good habits of containing Covid-19 in the vegetable markets, community and nearby market led by De-sunng members.
- Task Force member in the Dzongkhag level and community level Covid-19 emergency relief readiness and implementation.
- Supported the community and highway travellers with the hand washing soaps and water on the highway by the college gate.

Qualitative Data Analysis (Analysis of Responses for Open-ended Questions)

Student participants were categorized into four groups (referred here as zones, figure 1) based on their current location provided in the survey (Zone I: Thimphu, Paro, Haa, Chhukha, Samtse; Zone II: Gasa, Punakha, Wangduephodrang, Dagana, Tsirang; Zone III: Bumthang, Trongsa, Zhemgang, Sarpang; Zone IV: Trashigang, Trashiyangtse, Pemagatshel, Mongar, Lhuntse, and Samdrupjongkhar). The objective of categorizing the participants into zones is to examine their participation in the survey.



Figure 1. Classification of Zones (Source: Wikipedia)

As reflected in the bar graph below (Figure 2), maximum number of students (454 out of 701) under Zone I participated in the impact survey conducted online while only 64 students took part in the online survey from Zone IV (least number of participation).

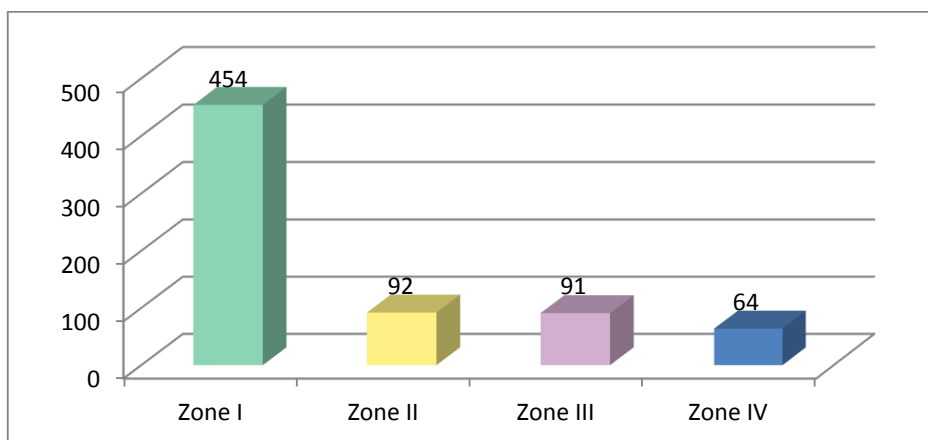


Figure 2. Zonal Distribution of Student Participation

Analysis of the Open-ended Responses and OnlineTeaching-Learning Report

Included in the survey questionnaire are the following open-ended questions provided to faculty and student participants to collect significant information that reflects participants' views which might not have been collected from other questions in the questionnaire. In addition, online teaching and learning activity reports were collected from the faculty to corroborate the findings on the impact of online teaching and learning.

Open-ended Questions for Students

- Specify the reasons that have made online learning challenging
- Amount of time spent with online materials (hours/week)?
- What aspects of online learning do you like the most? Why?
- What aspect of online learning do you dislike the most? Why?
- Any other comments related to online learning

Open-ended Questions for Faculty

- Specify the reasons that have made online teaching challenging?
- Do you use online-self assessment activities for students (to assess their understanding level of the content)? Specify.
- What aspects of online teaching do you like the most? Why?
- What aspect of online teaching do you dislike the most? Why?
- Any other comments related to online teaching and learning

Content analysis technique was used to analyze the data collected from the open-ended responses. The responses under each question were categorized under different themes and sub-themes after evaluating the responses. These responses were then coded (labeled, compared, contrasted, and grouped into categories). As there were numerous overlapping themes and sub-themes, the following common themes were adopted and put under related themes as captured in figure 3 below.

Core Themes and Sub-themes for the Impact of Online Teaching and Learning

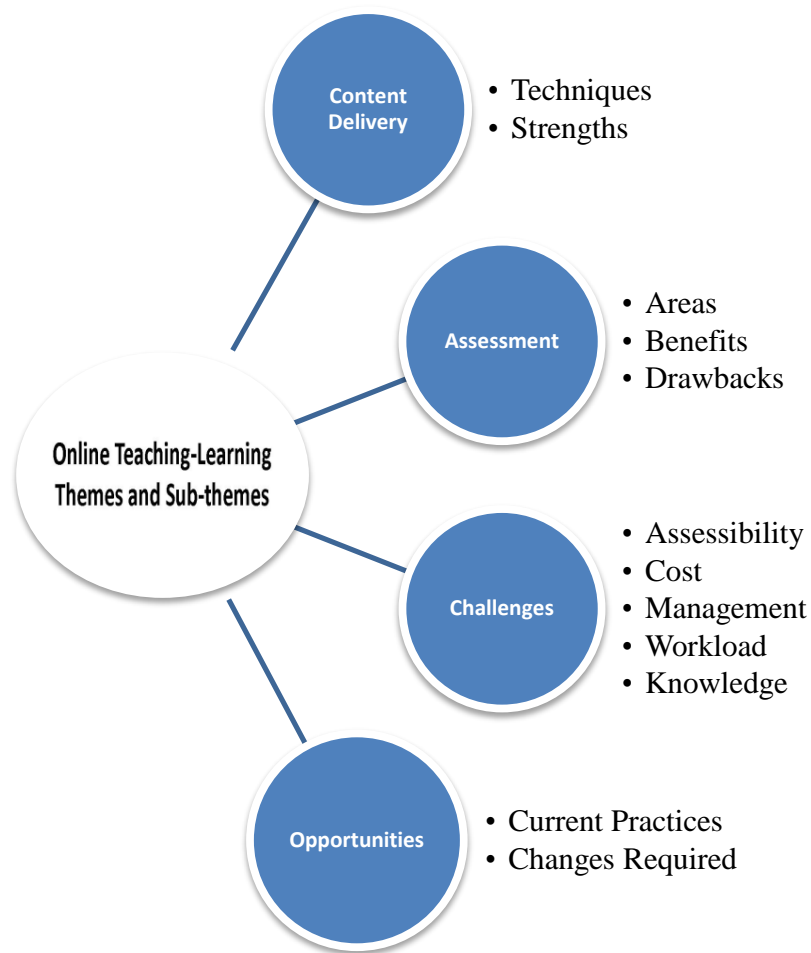


Figure 3, Core Themes and Sub-themes

Content Delivery through Online Platform

The figure below (figure 4) represents the sub-themes under content delivery as a core theme. There are four sub-themes: techniques, time, strengths and challenges. Under techniques, faculties' use of online teaching methods is analysed. The next sub-theme under content delivery is the strengths of online teaching and learning. Under this theme, the positive aspects of online classroom as indicated in the responses provided by the faculties and students are discussed. Similarly, the next sub-theme "challenges" discusses on the difficulties experienced by the faculties and students.

Content Delivery through Online Platform

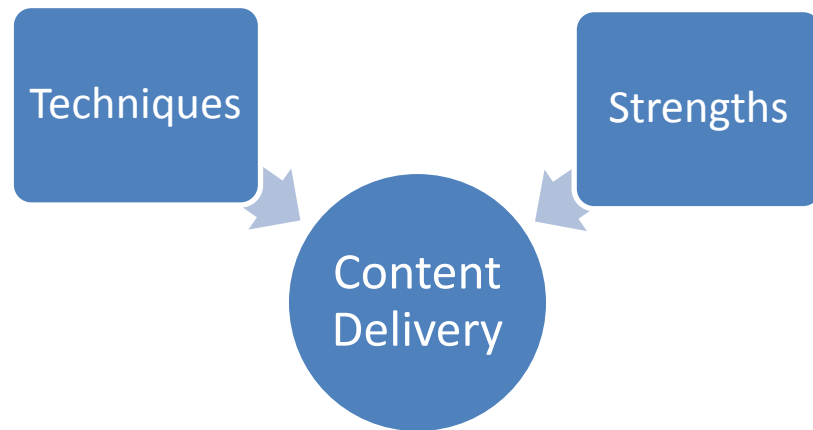


Figure 4, Content Delivery and Sub-themes

Techniques and Strengths:

Most of the faculty members used quizzes as activities. Quizzes provided real time assessment and were expressed as one of the most convenient online assessment methods. Faculty members also used activities such as MCQ, audio slides, problem solving activities. Most of them also used discussions to clarify doubts of the students. Students left doubts on the platform and the faculty members left responses; both at the convenience of their own timing. Some responses from faculty members are provided below.

We provide Problem Solving Task (individual task) to the students to assess their level of understanding of the content

I have scheduled quiz, and have thought of conducting quiz for every unit

Quizzes are conducted to check their understanding on concepts and theories. Assignments are provided to check their in-depth knowledge on the topic assigned.

I provide students with audio explanation of the concepts using Camtasia. Then we have vlc forum discussion regarding the topic that I have sent to them. After listening to the audio slide then if they have any doubts or insights that they want to share, the discussion remains open till I give them the next slide. Not only doubts, I sometime provide activities.

However, most of the students expressed their concerns related to some of the techniques being employed by the faculty members. These concerns can be observed in the following statements:

Zoom application is very time consuming and only little lesson could be conveyed.

A similar message can be found in the statement provided by one of the student respondents:

I don't like Zoom because I don't find it much effective. I don't understand much through zoom so it is better to upload slides with audio which is very much convenient.

Most of the student respondents are of the view that VLE as one of the techniques being used by the faculty members for online teaching is ineffective. In the words of one of the the respondent,

Attempting vle quiz is more challenging because when we all attempt at one go, we face problems and we do not complete the quiz on a given time.

Similar responses are provided by other respondents:

Whenever we are asked to take quiz or download notes from vle, it seems to have some problem and we can't log in. Vle does provide lots of information and notes; however, it becomes harder when we take quiz or test through vle.

Some assignment questions and quiz cannot be to open on Vle. And most of the time, Vle is not working. So, if tutors could fix that we would be grateful.

Teaching through video is not an effective way for the students who are staying in the places with poor internet connectivity. Instead, a teacher could make a video of him or her teaching and upload on vle so that the students can download and watch again and again. The zoom teaching is not that effective.

I basically dislike the high internet traffic caused in the online learning environment since it interrupts smooth connections for some situations like our online quiz. When everyone uses the vle simultaneously, we feel difficulty in solving the quiz as the website fails to load and it hampers our academic performance.

There are some (although very few) respondents in appreciation of the online teaching techniques used by the faculty members:

I was astonished that the students who were quite during face to face interaction we had in class are the ones who are asking more doubts and sharing their insights

online in discussion forum. I am thinking once the normal classroom teaching learning resumes, I will continue to incorporate technological platform to cater to students who are shy and silent to voice their queries (Faculty Respondent).

It is very convenient and easy for students like us to keep in touch with our tutors and our lessons. The app (zoom.us) is far better than other meeting apps yet it is too expensive for poor students. I have also suggested my tutors that it could be great if our lecturers could record their teachings of a particular lesson and send us via VLE instead of conducting live classes on zoom every day.

I enjoy online classes since I am able to ask my doubts where as in class I feel shy to ask in front of all my mates.

I enjoy online learning as it is a good experience. We can help our parents as well as study from home. The best thing is, I feel like Bhutan has become an advanced country, our teachers are exploring their ideas and we students are also having new experiences. Most of the time we depend on our teachers but now we are tensed and we try to explore ourselves.

Although there are mixed responses on the impact content delivery and techniques adopted by the faculty members, majority of the respondents are of the view that the quality can be improved if improvements are made on the college network speed, consistency and coverage. Similarly, students are also of the view that online teaching-learning can become impactful if faculty members look for alternatives (beyond VLE and Zoom) to engage students with or without strong internet connectivity and network coverage at minimal cost.

Assessment of Students' Work and Understanding

Under assessment of students' work and understanding of the lesson, the tutors' use of online assessment techniques were analysed. The content analysis performed on the core theme "assessment" generated the following sub-themes (figure 5). Under "area" as a sub-them, faculties' use of online assessment techniques and areas to evaluate students' understanding and work is discussed. Benefits and drawbacks of online assessment techniques are discussed separately.

Assessment of Students' Work and Understanding

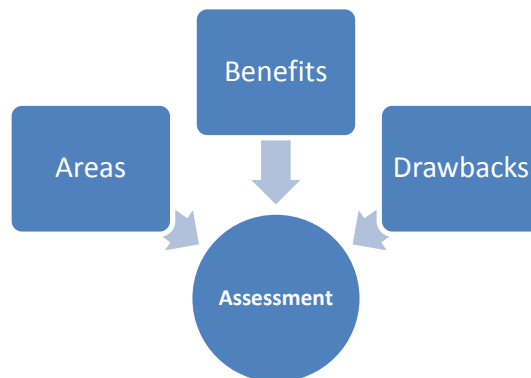


Figure 5, Assessment and Sub-themes

Areas

Content analysis performed on the e-learning reports submitted by the faculty members revealed that they have used quizzes, multiple choice questions, and assignments to assess students' work and understanding of a particular topic or concept. However, assessing students' work and understanding varied across the modules. Assessing modules requiring demonstration or solving numerical problems were found difficult to reach the lessons to students first and assessing their understanding later.

Benefits/Drawbacks

Providing quizzes, multiple choice questions and short answer questions on online platforms were found important and manageable if the purposes were to assess the understanding of theories, definitions, and concepts. However, these techniques were found less relevant for the modules that require sound, critical thinking and hands-on-practice to solve the problems.

In addition to the responses gathered from faculty members, students have the following statements to make.

I personally feel that online learning is not that much effective because we are not able to understand practical subjects.

Online learning is not effective and the amount of assignments that we get when we are at home is more than the assignments we get when at college. Also, some tutors continuously send questions and we cannot cope with them because we have assignments to be attended and forums to be discussed. Plus, practical modules are becoming tougher and we cannot understand. Also, our eyes hurt from checking the phone all day.

The thing I don't like about online learning is that we can't interact with our tutors lively like we do in classroom. Though feedbacks and directions on assignments are provided, it becomes confusing at times and we can't clarify the confusions.

Students are not serious about learning through online. Online learning is not at all comparable to classroom learning.

I think quizzes are not an effective method to check our understanding. Moreover, students who are staying together can discuss and copy the answers.

Students copy and paste information from internet on online discussion forums.

In summary, faculty members have tried various online assessment techniques with the students so far. However, there is a need to look for better assessment techniques which ensure honest participation from students.

Online Teaching and Learning Challenges

To elucidate on the reasons that have made online teaching and learning challenging, a thematic structure containing five sub-themes were identified through content analysis from the responses. In addition, these sub-themes were generated after evaluating the e-learning reports of the faculty members. The core theme and sub themes are presented below (figure 6).

Challenges of Online Teaching and Learning



Figure 6, Challenges and Sub-themes

Accessibility as a sub-theme evaluates the network/internet coverage and accessibility, whereas “cost” as a sub-them reflects the expenses incurred while taking the online classes and exploring the online resources using internet or other online teaching/learning methods. “Management” as a sub-theme under online teaching-learning challenges discusses the online classroom management problems faced by the faculties and students as well as the support received from the college management while “workload” as another sub-theme analyzes the online teaching-learning work pressures faced by the faculties and students. The last sub-theme “knowledge” relates to faculties and students online teaching-learning competency. Here, the skills and knowledge required by the faculties and students to undertake online teaching and learning is discussed.

Accessibility:

Almost all the faculty members expressed the difficulties of using online teaching/learning. To have effective and uninterrupted classes, the inconsistency in network connectivity is severely condemned. The following statements from faculty solidify the above claims.

Net connectivity is the main issue. Students are disconnected often during the meeting and loose continuity.

The problem is from the students' side. They have limited access to internet or limited access to means to internet and they are not participating as expected or required.

Other challenges reflected were to compulsorily use vle and zoom. Vle could not be used proficiently most of the time as uploading a file takes a long time, many a time resulting in not being able to upload. This may be due to the internet speed or due to congestion in the system because of huge access/usage. Some faculty suggested that the use of delivery modes of convenience to them would enable them to fulfill the objective of keeping students 'engaged' provided that they maintain evidences of having done so. The responses recorded below substantiate the aforementioned claims.

Most heavy files and folders cannot be uploaded on vle. And the VLE and college wifi/internet breaks down often, hindering the online teaching-learning sessions.

VLE is not stable, and the system is too slow. Internet is very slow and often zoom doesn't load.

The compulsion made on the use of VLE creates network congestion. VLE breaks down quite often.

Similarly, although most student respondents shared about them having access to internet, the problem of weak network connectivity hindering the online teaching and learning is a great concern to all the students. Internet connectivity issues have made some students miss the college and teaching environment. Following statements crystallize the problems and challenges faced by the students while accessing the online classes and resources.

Online classroom is otherwise a beautiful learning opportunity if we do not have network connectivity issues and breakdown.

In my area, internet connection is poor and due to that I skipped many lessons which may have great impact on my grade. We would be grateful if we can stay at college hostel and learn. If we have doubts, we can directly consult lectures and clear our doubt. Being at home makes us lazy and loses interest in learning. Being at college gives us the feeling to learn.

Online classrooms and resources are accessed using mobile phones by most of the students. At times, the cell phone is not supporting applications, and on

other times, our screen resolution capacity spoils the online lesson appearance and it becomes difficult to learn.

The network is poor and voices keep cracking when around 43 students are together in one site and participating. Therefore, the productivity comes to zero.

All in all, internet connection and network coverage was pointed out to be the most serious issues of online teaching and learning by both faculty members and students.

Cost

While teaching/learning remains questionable, the process is also found to have incurred huge expenditures on data charges for faculty as well as students. Managing the expenses of online teaching and learning appears to be another challenge for both faculty members and students and some of their responses relevant to this sub-theme are stated below. (The first three responses are from the faculty and the rest are from the students.)

It is challenging as we do not get to meet students like we do in the class and another thing is because of the slow internet connectivity in the college. They claim it to be high, but while conducting Zoom meeting, we need to use our own 4G as the internet supply of college is very erratic and fluctuating.

My only concern is that some students may be finding it difficult/expensive to learn online (Faculty respondent)

Internet problems are most disturbing besides network congestion and high data charges while using our own internet data package.

I experience unstable network with huge data cost while conducting the online classes.

Online teaching is good approach but data consumption is the pressing problem the college should keep in mind. We have to recharge a minimum of Nu 199 data package every day. The net-pack is consumed quickly and it is financially very difficult to recharge every day.

Online learning seems bit harder than we thought it would be. We have to stay online 24 hours so we won't miss any information and the expenses charges become high as well on it. The learning doesn't seem to be effective as well as many disturbances comes in as well.

I want to request the management that we self funding students need some help regarding data packages because after paying thirty five thousand to college we are not getting anything. Again we are paying for our e-learning and that is not fair for the poor students like me.

If lectures could make and upload the videos it would be much easier. We can refer the videos anytime we want. Or the college management could give some voucher allowance to the self-financed students, it would benefit us.

I would be very happy if students on government scholarship and self-funding students are not discriminated and paid equal voucher allowances for our online education till COVID-19 ends.

We have long hours of online classes (around 2 hours per module) and sometime network fails to work properly. We the self funding students are facing hard times with data package.

Data consumption is at the highest when classes are taken for two hours. Self-finance students face difficulty in recharging the data because we don't get stipend.

Although cost incurred in online teaching is observed to be of a less problem to the faculty members, accessing online classes, resources and taking quizzes and tests by the students is found as a serious challenge. Moreover, some self-financed students are impacted negatively by the online teaching and learning while government scholarship students are provided with stipend to meet the online learning expenses.

Management

This sub-theme generated from the content analysis is approached from two different angles: support from the Management in online teaching and learning, and online classroom management.

Support from the Management

Lack of adequate support from the college management and IT personnel in terms of providing wide network coverage and optimum internet speed is found to be disheartening when faculty members are mandated to conduct online teaching as expressed below:

College need to fix network coverage issues first. I feel there's no progress in network management and efficiency amongst our IT personnel.

It is high time that we should have network connectivity beyond academic buildings.

They also iterated the need for infrastructural support from the college management:

Despite being connected to internet, the old desktop computers we have at present do not support video calling facilities, nor do they have the audio options.

My college didn't provide me with laptop yet. My personal laptop doesn't have enough capacity to effectively support Camtesia or other video recording software.

In addition, the need for PD programmes for faculty and familiarization programmes for students on online teaching and learning should have been done by the college. Being unskilled and inexperienced in using technology and lack of facilities for effective online teaching/learning were also expressed as hindrances for effective teaching/learning. The problems related to the adhoc application of online teaching without proper training as reported by the faculty members are presented below.

We have limited skills in Video Recording and Editing.

We lack the experience in e-learning-teaching, lack knowledge and skills in tackling the online assessments and are challenged in technical areas as we have to prepare all contents in the digital format.

Getting acquainted with the software and technology is a challenge for those who have not undergone refresher course/training.

Online Classroom Management

Management of online classrooms remains a difficult task to handle. The analysis of responses from the open-ended questions shows both faculty and students having difficulty in accessing online classes. These responses are stated below.

Zoom meeting is not effective, rather it consumes so much time. And teaching through zoom app doesn't seem effective at all. Some students just sign in and they don't really listen to the teaching.

Students are not serious about online learning

Zoom meeting doesn't seem to be effective as there seems to be lot of disturbances from the other class mates.

Workload

This sub-theme under the core theme “Online Teaching and Learning Challenges” presents the analysis of the online teaching and learning workload of faculty members and students.

Many faculty members pointed out that preparation of online lessons take a lot of time. As the situation compelled them to use varieties of activities and assessment techniques with little or no experience in using new technology (use of zoom, video recording/editing etc), it poses an additional stress. The difficulty faced in gathering all the students for the scheduled class is also a barrier to effective online teaching and learning. This problem is captured in the statement provided by one of the faculty responders:

Out of 40 students in a section only 3 or 4 students are active.

The faculty also expressed concerns about having to work at off/odd hours which consumes lots of time.

Preparing the lecture notes in typed format PPT/Word/Video consumes lot of time.

On workload, students have more to say. A common problem for all the students was the number of assignments assigned for all the modules without proper schedule. The following responses from the students portray the assignment related problems that make their online learning heavy and tiresome.

If the module tutors could come together and discuss about how to go about with the assignments and the timing, it would ease our work. Moreover, assigning works across the modules as per the schedule and having gaps in between would help in giving enough time to do our assignments and home works effectively.

Teachers are giving so many assignments as if we are studying one subject only. It is so stressful.

We need proper schedule for assignments and quiz because we all are really pressurized by assignments and quizzes and it will hamper (decrease) our CA. We are not getting enough time each assignment and quiz.

Sometimes classes for two or three modules are taken on same time and also assignments are given on same time and letting us to submit on same date

On the serious tone, there are some students of the view that online teaching reduces faculty workload and increases students' workload. Here is one of the statements.

Online teaching is overloading learners and reducing the workload of lecturers...would be grateful if management could make the timetable for assignments since the entire module tutors give assignments at the same time.

In a nutshell, though there is a marginal increase in faculty workload with the online teaching and learning scheme in place, students' workload have increased significantly as a result of unregulated assignment of works and extended learning activities across the modules. Thus, there is a need of scheduling work timetable by the faculty for the students.

Opportunities of Online Teaching and Learning

To maintain positive impact of online teaching and learning on faculty and students here after, following sub-themes under opportunity as core theme were generated from the responses. The responses related to how online teaching and learning is performed at present and what can be done to assure quality and positive impact on teachers and learners are discussed (figure 7).

Measures to be Taken

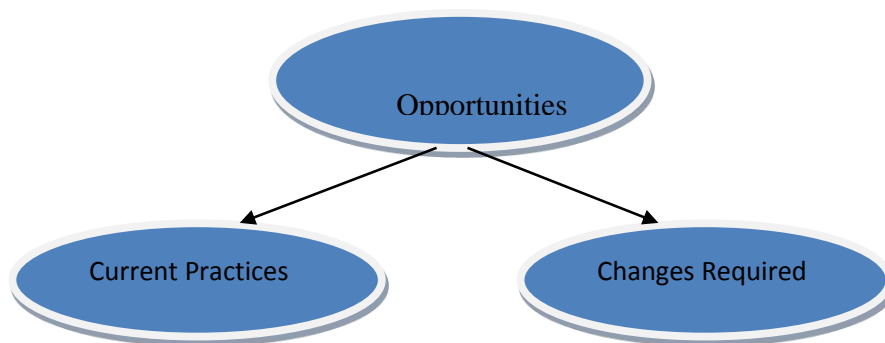


Figure 7, Opportunities and Sub-themes

Despite the challenges, faculty found online teaching/learning flexible allowing themselves and students to access it anytime anywhere. Independent learning is also embraced by many faculty members as well as students as the process required them to upkeep with new technologies and new teaching/learning strategies. Moreover, live session with students and recording it helped the faculty for self-reflection on teaching styles

An interesting thing noted by few faculty members and confirmed by students is that students who were quiet in the normal classes became interactive during online lessons as noted below:

The students who were quite during face to face interaction that we had in class are the ones who are asking most of doubts and sharing their insights online in discussion forum

There are few instances of faculty reflecting on their workload.

It has made us work more in making our video presentation which I think will be with us long period of time and students also liked this concept of us sharing the slide presentation to them where they can refer to it time and again unlike teaching in class...

Making use of other multimedia and online teaching-learning platforms (in addition to vle/zoom) would provided an added advantage in achieving quality online teaching and learning.

If the very purpose of going online is to keep our students engaged, the college must not make VLE as a compulsory online platform for online teaching/learning. As long as individual tutor is conducting his/her teaching and keeping students engaged using other online measures, I feel making VLE as one of the options would be acceptable (provided tutors submit the E-learning reports with evidences).

One of the students enrolled on self-finance scheme remarks:

We need all the module tutors to be mindful in taking effective classes. We being self funded students are not able to afford data and our available data are also getting exhausted in ineffective classes. We need full support for an effective online learning.

There are students suggesting on the suspension of the online teaching-learning along with the semester owing to its ineffectiveness.

It is better not to learn through online as it is ineffective. What if we continue our studies when the pandemic is gone?

I think online classes are not worth attending as we don't learn anything. It is just a waste of our time and data...I hope we can learn after this crisis are over with a peaceful mind.

In short, online teaching/learning being flexible in nature allows faculty and students to access the classroom and resources at anytime from anywhere. Moreover, as it encourages both guided and independent learning, a proper online lesson planning and preparation of activities from faculty

members' end would help in ensuring quality conduct of online teaching and learning that benefit the students.

Discussion

Content Delivery

Content analysis results on content delivery revealed mixed responses on the impact it has on the faculty and students. However, majority of the responses support ineffectiveness of online teaching and learning in delivering the contents. Majority of the students are of the view that VLE and zoom as techniques used by the faculty members for online teaching is ineffective. Faculty members also shared the ineffectiveness of the use of vle and zoom classes as a result of internet connectivity problem for students and faculty and frequent breakdown in the server. The quality can be improved if improvements are made on the college network speed, consistency and coverage. Similarly, students are also of the view that online teaching-learning can become impactful if faculty members look for alternatives (beyond VLE and Zoom) to engage students with or without strong internet connectivity and network coverage at minimal cost.

Assessment

Under assessment of students' work and understanding of the lesson, the tutors' use of online assessment techniques were analysed. The analysis revealed that quizzes, multiple choice questions and short answer questions provided to the students on online platforms were helpful in assessing their understanding of theories, definitions, and concepts. However, these techniques were found less relevant for the modules that require sound, critical thinking and hands-on-practice to solve the problems. Therefore, there is a need to look for better assessment techniques which ensure honest participation from students and fair and comprehensive approach of assessment from faculty members.

Challenges

Accessibility of online teaching and learning by the students is seriously hampered by the problems related to network coverage and connectivity. Internet connection and network coverage was pointed out to be the most serious issues of online teaching and learning by both faculty members and students. Similarly, cost incurred on online teaching and learning is observed to be another problem for both faculty members and students. However, the problem is found more severe with the students. Moreover, some self-financed students are impacted negatively by the online teaching and learning while government scholarship students are provided with stipend to meet the online learning expenses. Cost of online teaching and learning remains the second most serious challenge with the students. There is, thus, a need to explore for strategies to reach the lessons to the students and engage them fruitfully with less financial burden on them.

Support and Management: An inadequate support from the college management and IT personnel in terms of providing wide network coverage and optimum internet speed is found to be hampering the delivery of online lessons besides the lack of compatible gadgets and software to run the sessions. In addition, to actively conduct online classes and keep students engaged, network connectivity beyond academic buildings was felt necessary. Similarly, PD programmes for faculty and familiarization programmes for students are felt necessary to ensure quality online teaching and learning. Online classroom management on the other hand remains a challenge. The analysis shows both faculty and students having difficulty in accessing online classes as a result of distraction and noise. Moreover, it is found difficult to evaluate whether students are engaged productively on online classes. Thus, there is a need to monitor the sessions to ensure active student participation.

Though there is a marginal increase in faculty workload with the online teaching and learning scheme in place, students' workload have increased significantly as a result of unregulated assignment of works and extended learning activities across the modules. Thus, there is a need of scheduling work timetable by the faculty for the students.

Opportunities

Online teaching/learning allows faculty and students to access the classroom and resources at anytime from anywhere. Moreover, as it encourages both guided and independent learning, a proper online lesson planning and preparation of activities by faculty members would help in ensuring quality conduct of online teaching and learning that benefit the students.

Dr. Sonam Choiden
President
Gedu College of Business Studies
Royal University of Bhutan
Thimphu, Bhutan

ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF BHUTAN

Meeting on RUB COVID - 19 Response Plan

Minutes of the Meeting

Date: 9 April 2020

Time: 2 pm – 5:30 pm

Venue: ZOOM Meeting from respective offices / residences

Chairperson: *Nidup Dorji, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan*

List of Participants:

1. Lopen Lungtaen Gyatsho, President, CLCS
2. Mr. Lhato Jamba, President, GCIT
3. Mr. Tshering Wangdi, President, Sherubtse College
4. Dr. Dorji Thinley, President, PCE
5. Dr. Andu Dukpa, President, JNEC
6. Dr. Cheki Dorji, President, CST
7. Dr. Phub Dorji, President, CNR
8. Dr. Sonam Choiden, President, GCBS
9. Dr. Rinchen Dorji, President, SCE
10. Dr. Phangchung, Director, DRER
11. Dr. Samdrup Rigyal, Director, DPR
12. Dr. Sonam Tobgay, Offtg. Director, DAA
13. Dr. Ganeshman Gurung, HoD, SCE
14. Mr. KinleyRinchen, Chief, Planning Division, DPR
15. Ms Tshering Choden, Chief, External Relations, DRER

Address by VC

Based on the broad Guidelines for Response Plan for RUB towards the COVID-19 crisis shared with the Presidents of the Colleges, a zoom meeting was held with the Presidents and staff of the Colleges to work out the way forward for the University Contingency Plan.

The meeting agreed to set the following objectives for the Response Plan for teaching, research and service in the University:

- a) Continuously explore ways to respond to the emergency situation of COVID 19 to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of staff and students;
- b) Ensure that all staff (teaching and administrative) will continually support students' learning online and ensure that no student is left behind in terms of their learning needs and level of engagement and participation;
- c) Ensure that all academic, research, and service activities of the Colleges continue uninterrupted (e.g. programme development, validations, reviews,

IWPs, capital activities, online professional meetings, others), which will keep the students engaged in meaningful learning;

- d) Provide teaching and learning resources to the students according to the online learning and teaching schedules set up by each College and ensure that the students take full ownership of their learning;
- e) Set up strategies for all academic staff to deliver their programmes tapping the dynamic features of Moodle and adapting to other digital tools; and
- f) Contribute to the national efforts to overcome emergency situations.

Guided by these objectives, the following outputs were generated at the meeting:

Key Decisions

1. Under the **Institutional Arrangements**, the following decisions were made:
 - 1.1. The University Strategic Response Committee shall meet on a fortnightly basis. However, emergency meetings could be held on short notice as and when required. It was noted that some Colleges have already established Task Force that meets on weekly basis to discuss the response plan on teaching, learning and research;
 - 1.2. A University-wide Academic Task Force (Committee of Deans of Academic Affairs) will be established comprising of Deans of Academic Affairs led by the Director of Academic Affairs at the OVC. The Academic Task Force shall, among others, carry out the following activities:
 - 1) Formulate broad guidelines related to online teaching-learning, assessment, examinations and attendance. The guideline should be broad to suit the diverse needs of all the Colleges and harmonize and synergize practices across Colleges to the extent possible. It should also enhance creativity and innovation that allows flexibility and suppleness from College to College at the time of implementation;
 - 2) Recommend RUB's overall direction of teaching-learning in case the situation does not abate as expected including situational decisions and long-term plan for any crisis in the future. *(The meeting noted that in the case of MoE, the current classes conducted through BBS were not meant to be part of the regular curriculum. It is only to engage students meaningfully until the situation improves. However, MoE intends to design a new curriculum if the situation does not improve beyond 2020);*
 - 3) Assess the situation of student online learning as some of the students may not have access to computer and internet and suggest how assessments would be carried out. The meeting noted that even in India, there have been similar issues of students not able to attend online classes due to limited access to computers and internet;

- 4) Assess the impact of online learning system and the ability to achieve learning outcomes by students. It was raised that some students are not taking the online classes seriously as they took the Government's announcement of online learning as only a way of keeping them engaged during the COVID-19 situation. However, the meeting felt that it could be applicable with schools as there is no infrastructure in place and students are also not familiar with the online learning system. RUB has a very robust system for online teaching-learning with VLE introduced almost 10 years ago, which is being used and can be enhanced if required for optimum utilisation;
- 5) Explore possible alternative solutions such as readjusting the academic calendar by adjusting April and May as summer break, as being planned with IIT-Bombay, for example;
- 1.3. The Academic Task Force (for online learning) shall be formed URGENTLY to set the direction immediately;
- 1.4. The meeting also noted the formation of ICT Task Force, which will work very closely with the Academic Task Force, whose focus would be on the technicalities of connectivity issues;
- 1.5. Since the President will be the focal point for the response plans of the College, the President will form special groups (if required) for any other parts of response plans outside of teaching, learning and research. Therefore, the proposed University Strategic Response Sub-Committee will not be formed;
- 1.6. The Colleges/OVC will develop Incident Command System at the College and University levels based on the matrix proposed at Annexure 1 of the Response Plan with clear flowchart on each response activity including line of command and responsibility;
- 1.7. The Colleges may also appoint any focal point in place of administrative section based on their convenience to support the President in implementing the Response Plan;
2. With regards to the **response strategy**, the following decisions were made:
 - 2.1. The students have been asking the Colleges if they could serve as volunteers also to join *Desuup* training, as per the recent announcement made by the Government. The meeting noted that the understanding is that the announcement was made for the civil servants. However, if the situation worsens, the national need should take precedence;
 - 2.2. As the self-financed students who have already paid their tuition fee, it was decided that they will be supported with a monthly data package of Nu. 1199 by all the Colleges to help them continue with online classes with effect from 1 April 2020;
 - 2.3. The Colleges will get the student phone numbers and provide them with data package. The payments will not be made directly;

- 2.4. The data package will not be provided to students who have not paid their tuition fees;
- 2.5. The Colleges may initiate dialogue with service providers to get data package concessions if possible;
- 2.6. This support will be provided only for the Spring semester 2020. The continuation of support in the following semesters will require a separate discussion;
- 2.7. The Vice Chancellor has received the impact analysis reports from the Colleges. The reports will be compiled and shared for comments, which will then be submitted to the Government;
- 2.8. It was decided that all international events that are approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (conferences and seminars) on the ground will not be cancelled but suspended until further notice;
- 2.9. The Colleges will decide on their own modalities regarding the work-from-home system as part of their response plan;
- 2.10. It was raised that few students have decided to remain in the campus as they could not go home for various reasons. These students should observe physical distancing protocols and may use college WiFi for internet. However, their access to library and laboratory facilities will not be granted as Colleges have officially closed down until further notice. It will also ensure fairness among all the students. It was also decided that students who have already left for home will not be allowed to return to the Colleges until further notice;
- 2.11. International students' services will be provided to both to those who have remained back in Bhutan and who have left Bhutan for their own countries. Further, online teaching-learning support will be provided based on the request made by the home universities;
- 2.12. There are some RUB students studying currently in Universities abroad on exchange programmes for which information is missing at OVC. The concerned Colleges will provide the information of students sent abroad to DRER to make it ready for submission to the Government as and when required;
- 2.13. All academic activities such as validation, programme reviews, submission of papers to the APRC, PQC, RIC and RDC should continue uninterrupted either online or physically by maintaining physical distancing protocol. The meeting noted that it has been difficult to get panel members for validation or programme review due to the current situation. The meeting agreed that consideration may be made on case-by-case basis based on the situation;
- 2.14. The same practice may be applied to research activities. Wherever possible, the online discussion and facility will be used to continue research activities. Physical visits and meetings, if required, shall be carried out by maintaining proper physical distancing protocol;

- 2.15. It was raised that implementation of some of the APA and Strategic Plan activities were not possible due to the current situation and because of increased workload due to online teaching and learning. It was suggested that the Colleges submit the list of activities that needs to be suspended to SMT for formalization. However, the Colleges should try and continue to implement the activities in whatever way possible. Activities that are not possible by any means could be considered at the time of assessment by the IRT. The Colleges should justify with evidences. The IRT should make judgement and consider based on the justifications provided by the Colleges for activities that were cancelled due to extenuating circumstances;
- 2.16. It was also raised that JNEC and SCE campuses have been used for *Desuup* training and the Colleges have been bearing the utility costs for the training. The meeting agreed to capture this part in the Response Plan. The meeting directed the Colleges to keep tab of the expenses so that proposal for funding support from the Government may be made later, if possible. Otherwise, it could still be mentioned as part of our contributions. The meeting noted that Rinpung Campus was offered as the first quarantine facility in Paro;
- 2.17. The meeting also discussed on the hostel rents for students. It was decided to charge room rents as the hostels should be booked and made available to students anytime the situation abates. As discussed among the Finance Officers, all the Colleges will deduct hostel rents uniformly;
3. The Department of Information Technology and Telecom (DITT) had stated that the proposal to provide internet support to students was being reviewed to expand the beneficiaries to the whole of nation. The MoE has also proposed for 30,000 tablets to support online learning for school students. Accordingly, the Colleges are requested to provide lists of students in dire need of devices for online learning as soon as possible. The OVC will submit the consolidated list to the DITT for support;

The Vice Chancellor informed that draft minutes will be shared soon for comments. After finalizing the minutes, the Response Plan will be revised based on the decision of the meeting and will be circulated to all the Colleges for implementation.

The Vice Chancellor thanked the participants for their active engagement in discussing the response plan thoroughly. He also expressed anticipation of similar meetings frequently.

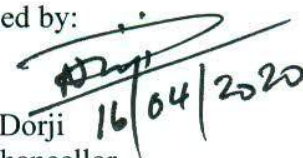
Minutes recorded by:

Kinley Rnchen / Samdrup Rigyal



Endorsed by:

Nidup Dorji
Vice Chancellor



16/04/2020



PLAN FOR CONTINUING SERVICE DELIVERY

**Royal Institute of Management
Semtokha: Thimphu**

March 27, 2020

Plan for Continuing Service Delivery for Royal Institute of Management (RIM)

Following the meeting held on 24 March 2020, chaired by the Chairperson, Royal Civil Service Commission with Heads of Agencies, the Royal Institute of Management has developed the plan for continuing service delivery in RIM as hereunder:

I. CATEGORIZATION OF SERVICES

In accordance to our mandate, RIM provides three main services to our external clients (public and private sector):

1. Teaching/Training Services
 - a. Regular Programs
 - b. Short Term/Ad-hoc Programs
2. Consultancy Services
3. Research Services
4. Test Center Services (IELTS/CPA/CIPS etc)

In order to support the fulfillment of above-mentioned activities, staffs in RIM also provides the following services for our internal clients:

1. Common Services
 - a. AFD/Procurement
 - b. HR Services
 - c. Planning Services
 - d. Library Services
 - e. Server Management/Internet
2. Estate Management Services
 - a. Electricity
 - b. Plumbing/Water
 - c. Security
 - d. Others (ESP/GSP Services)

As per the standard requirement of RCSC, RIM has categorized the above listed services in RIM into the three categories

Services Category	Description	Service Type
Critical Services	Requiring physical presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estate Management Services Server management/Internet – critical for access by faculty and students
Essential/Routine Services	Can be offered through remote working (wholly or partially)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching services for regular programs such as PG Diploma/Master's/Diploma Consultancy Services Research Services (desk reviews and analysis) AFD/HR/Planning Services
Services that can be deferred	Not critical/feasible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Services (conduct of surveys, site visits) Short term/ad-hoc training programs Test center services (IELTS etc)

The details of the service categorization are presented in Annexure 1.

II. AGENCY SERVICES COORDINATION TEAM (ASCT)

For the purpose of the Agency Services Coordination Team, it is proposed that the Management and Advisory Committee (MAC) in the Institute will take on the additional responsibilities of the ASCT, with the addition of the Mr. Jigme Wangdi, HRO and Sonam Wangmo, Accounts Officer.

Contact Details of members:

Sl. No.	Name Designation	Contact details	Email Address
1	Sonam Pelden Thaye, Director	17930076	sp_thaye@rim.edu.bt
2	Thinley Namgyal, Registrar	17681660	thinley_namgyal@rim.edu.bt
3	Karma Pema Loday,	17607626	karma_p_loday@rim.edu.bt

	HOD, DFB		
4	Jit Tshering, HOD, DRC	17612445	jit_tshering@rim.edu.bt
5	Indraman Chhetri, HOD, DMD	17606058	indraman_chhetri@rim.edu.bt
6	Palmo Thinley, HOD, DICT	17533508	palmo_thinley@rim.edu.bt
7	Sonam Wangmo, Finance Officer	77225112	sonam_wangmo@rim.edu.bt
8	Jigme, Planning O.	17980285	jigme@rim.edu.bt
9	Jigme Wangdi, HRO	17392870	jigme_wangdi@rim.edu.bt

Terms of Reference for ASCT

The ASCT shall:

- Validate the categorization of services
- Institute proper monitoring and reporting mechanism on the implementation of the activities categorized under critical services and essential services
- Conduct regular meetings and ad-hoc meeting on the summon of chairperson
- Ensure that the required resources are provided to staff especially those working remotely or from home such as internet access etc. based on assessment of criticality of services.
- Ensure as far as possible parity/equity of job responsibilities and physical presence in office for critical services.
- Develop a roster for staff involved in providing services, which requires physical presence/partial remote working.
- Work to provide reassurance and confidence amongst their staff members
- To ensure that protocol /guidelines for remote working and staying at home are implemented.
- Identify communication plan for dissemination of crucial information and for receipt of grievances/concerns pertaining to the current crisis.
- Carry out any other task given by the Government and RCSC related to managing the COVID-19 situation.

In addition, to the overall terms of reference, the members of the ASCT shall also fulfill the following specific responsibilities.

Sonam Pelden Thaye	Chairperson and over all coordinator
Thinley Namgyel	Deputy Coordinator, Responsible for delivery of common services
Karm Pema Loday	Responsible for development of contingency plan for department and regular monitoring and reporting
Jit Tshering	Responsible for development of contingency plan for department and regular monitoring and reporting
Indraman Chhetri	Responsible for development of contingency plan for department and regular monitoring and reporting
Palmo Thinley	Responsible for development of contingency plan for department and regular monitoring and reporting
Jigme	Welfare and Coordination Officer. Responsible for keeping track of wellbeing of all staffs/faculties of RIM and reporting to ASCT
Jigme Wangdi	Communication Officer. Responsible for identification and proposing to ASCT for adoption of appropriate communication channel and dissemination of information)
Sonam Wangmo	Treasurer. Responsible for maintenance of record of expenses pertaining to data charges and other ad-hoc payments made on the approval of ASCT for management of COVID 19 in RIM)

III. STAFFS CATEGORIZATION

The details of staff for remote working and physical attendance have been annexed in Annexure 2.

A. Stay at Home

B. Working Remotely

Protocol/guidelines for those staffs working remotely

1. Respective Departments must prepare a list of staff working remotely and must be submitted to the management before the actual work commences.
2. Staff, who are assigned with the responsibility of compiling the work progress report must ensure proper compliance and timely submission of the reports to respective HoDs with a copy to the Director/chair of the ACST.

3. Staff must practice and adhere to all the safe practices and measures as advised by the Ministry of Health and at the same time ensure proper work ethics.
4. Official email shall remain as a reliable source for data sharing relating to official work.
5. Staff should refrain from engaging in any additional work or part-time job during the period (lockdown).

Guidelines for those staffs who stays at home

1. Must ensure that they remain home all time during the lock down period
2. Any movement of the staffs during the Lock down period should obtain prior approval from the chairperson of ASCT.
3. Staff should refrain from engaging in any additional work or part-time job during the period (lockdown).
4. Staff found guilty shall be dealt with as per the BCSR 2018 or as per the existing laws of the land.
5. During the lockdown period staff must make an effort to serve the country in their own capacity.
6. Staff must refrain from mass gathering and maintain the etiquette of physical distance.
7. For timely information sharing, staff must ensure that their mobile phone remains active at all times.
8. Office email shall remain as reliable source for data sharing relating to official work
9. Staff must remain prepared as and when their attention is required by ASCT.

Ms. Sonam Pelden Thaye
Director
Royal Institute of Management
Thimphu, Bhutan

Annexure 1

CATEGORIZATION OF SERVICES-Department wise

1. Department of Management and Development (DMD)

Critical services that require physical presence	Services			Staffs for physical attendance and Remote Working		Monitoring	Remarks
	Remote working	Partial remote working	Services that can be deferred	Staffs for physical attendance	Remote Workers		
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online lectures or Online Classes for the PGDs • Assessment of the coursework including the assessment for exams • Meetings 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDPs and other training workshops • Modular programs • Consultancies • Teaching system-based 		All the members of the faculty in the Department including the Program Assistant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring to be done through the Moodle (LMS)/ email correspondences and weekly reporting by the Course Coordinators (CC) on work progress relating to online delivery. • Use of social media to correspond with the trainees and maintaining of documents by the CC. • HoD to monitor the weekly progress report as and when submitted by the CC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit convener to submit the progress to CC and HoD on weekly basis. • <i>Will require strong internet bandwidth for online programs.</i>

2. Department of Finance and Business (DFB)

Critical services that require physical presence	Services			Staffs for physical attendance and Remote Working		Monitoring	Remarks
	Remote working	Partial remote working	Services that can be deferred	Staffs for physical attendance	Remote Workers		
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online lectures or Online Classes for the PGDs and Diplomas • Assessment of the coursework including the assessment for exams • Meetings 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching system-based • Consultancies • Modular programs • Training workshop 		All the members of the faculty in the Department including the Program Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring to be done through the Moodle (LMS)/ email correspondences and weekly reporting by the Course Coordinators (CC) on work progress relating to online delivery. • Use of social media to correspond with the trainees and maintaining of documents by the CC. • HoD to monitor the weekly progress report as and when submitted by the CC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit convener to submit the progress to CC and HoD on weekly basis. • <i>Will require strong internet bandwidth for online programs.</i>

3. Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT)

Critical services that require physical presence	Services			Staffs for physical attendance and Remote Working		Monitoring	Remarks
	Remote working	Partial remote working	Services that can be deferred	Staffs for physical attendance	Remote Workers		
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing modular programs • Students assignments and assessment • Online student engagement 	No	International tests (Pearson VUE, IAC, etc.)		All the members of the faculty in the Department including the Program Assistant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modular program will be monitor by HoD via email correspondences and online working. • Monitoring to be done through the Moodle (LMS)/ email correspondences and weekly reporting by the course coordinators on work progress relating to online delivery. • HoD to monitor the weekly progress report as and when submitted by the CC. • Use of social media to correspond with the trainees and maintaining of documents by the CC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case of a network breakdown and if required, Mr. Wangdi to attend. • <i>Will require strong internet bandwidth for online programs.</i>

4. Department of Research and Consultancy (DRC)

Critical services that require physical presence	Services			Staffs for physical attendance and Remote Working		Monitoring	Remarks
	Remote working	Partial remote working	Services that can be deferred	Staffs for physical attendance	Remote Workers		
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual researches Study based consultancies 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research conference Research workshop for faculty Eminent talk series Inspiration sessions Training consultancies (Eg. RCSC) 		All the members of the faculty in the Department including the Program Assistant.	Online via email correspondences	<i>Will require strong internet bandwidth for online programs.</i>

5. Learning Resources and Documentation Center (LRDC)

Critical services that require physical presence	Services			Staffs for physical attendance and Remote Working		Monitoring	Remarks
	Remote working	Partial remote working	Services that can be deferred	Staffs for physical attendance	Remote Workers		
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online resources downloading for students, faculties and staffs Books renewal 	Borrowing of books and other learning materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading challenge Authors invitation IELTS exams 		4	Record tracing through email/written record/ keeping records of the work done by the official responsible for the job.	<i>Will require strong internet bandwidth for online programs.</i>

6. Administration and Finance Division (AFD)

Division/ Unit	Critical services that require physical presence	Services			Staffs for physical attendance and Remote Working		Monitoring	Remarks
		Remote working	Partial remote working	Services that can be deferred	Staffs for physical attendance	Remote Workers		
Finance	No	Pay and allowances disbursement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing of vouchers and verification • Verification of bills • Accounting of RIM funds as and when required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill payment upon the consent of other party • Salary advances payment 	1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounts officer to monitor through system for government accounting. • Accounts assistant to verify the bills • Physically present in the office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIM Fund accountant to be physically present as and when required. • Physical attendance required. • <i>Will require strong internet bandwidth for online programs.</i>
HR	No		HR services: Online issuance of orders through CSIS and to be physically present in the office whenever required for documentation and correspondences.			2	Email correspondences or through the use of CSIS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical attendance whenever required • <i>Will require strong internet bandwidth for online programs.</i>

General Admin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone operations • Letter dispatching • Transport service 	Procurement	Store in-charge to be physically present whenever needed		8 (on rotation basis)	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email correspondence/ record keeping to be done by Admin officer. • For transport service, it can monitor through issuances of movement orders by TO and record maintained at the security gate. 	Drivers to attain duty on rotation basis as and when required or called upon by MTO.
Registration	No		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking services • Student services (information) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproduction unit • Audiovisual and DTP 	2	4	Whenever there is complaint/services are required, supervisor to oversee and maintain record of the work.	As and when required
PPD	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPD services or services related to the conduct of in-house programs. • Correspondences with the outside agencies such as GNHC. 	Urgent and ad-hoc meetings	Board Meetings and other in-house meetings		1	Email trail/ correspondences/ meeting minutes/record	<i>Will require strong internet bandwidth for online programs.</i>

Estate	Security services				4		Report to Estate Manager (EM) after completion of their duty.	Normal security routine
	Janitorial services				3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to EM after completion of assigned work. • Report compilation by EM • EM to be present whenever required for monitoring. 	Rotation basis and as and when called upon by EM.
	Gardener				3			Their physical presence is required as and when required.
	Plumber/ electrician/ carpentry				4			As and when required (site visit) and called upon by the EM.
	Site supervisor				1			
			Cooks			3	Report to Estate Manager (EM) after completion of assigned work.	Physical present required as and when required

Annexure 2

STAFF CATEGORIZATION

Department/Unit	Staff Category		Remarks
	Remote Workers	Stay at Home	
Department of Management and Development (DMD)	1. Indraman Chettri/HoD 2. Dorji Pem 3. Mani Tshering 4. Guden Pelzang 5. Tashi Wangzin 6. Jangchub Dema (PA) 7. Thinley Namgay	No	
Department of Finance and Business (DFB)	1. Karma Pema Loday (HoD) 2. Chonga Zangpo 3. Namgay Dem 4. Sonam Penjor 5. Thinley Penjor 6. Pema Dorji 7. Pema Drupchen 8. Delma (PA) 9. Karma Tshomo (PA)	No	
Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT)	1. Palmo Thinley (HoD) 2. Ugyen Tshering 3. Phurba 4. Wangdi 5. Kuenga Yangki 6. Kesang (PA)	No	

Department of Research and Consultancy (DRC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jit Tshering (HoD) 2. Tshering Wangchuk 3. Karma Yangzom (PA) 4. Jigme 	No	
Learning Resources and Documentation Center (LRDC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kesang Dechen (Principle Librarian) 2. Dawa Zangmo 3. Ugyen Sonam 4. Kinley Tshomo 	No	
Administration and Finance Division (AFD)	<p>Estate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pema Thinley (Estate Manager) 2. Ugyen Namgay <p>HR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jigme Wangdi 2. Tenzin Dorji <p>Finance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sonam Wangmo 2. Chandra Kala Gurung 3. Padam Narayan Pradhan <p>General Administration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tashi Wangzin 2. Jigme Loday 3. Telephone operator and dispatcher 4. Drivers 	<p>Estate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sweeper 2. Security guard 3. Plumber 4. Electrician 5. Carpenter 6. Gardener 7. Cooks <p>Registration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tashi Phuntsho 2. Deki Lhamo 3. Yeshi 4. Yadhu Ram Pokhrel 5. Karma 6. Kinley Dorji 7. Chimi Om 	Those employees staying at home will need to attend to duty physically as per the rooster and as and when required.

	Registration 1. Thinley Namgay (Registrar)		
	PPD 1. Jigme		



**ROYAL THIMPHU COLLEGE
(RTC)**

Community Updates - From the President's Desk

Dear Royal Thimphu College Community,

I hope this update finds you well. We've all been busy! In these times when we are scattered and not able to be together at the campus day-to-day, it's important to keep ourselves updated on the latest happenings so that we are all on the same page. Our updates are also posted and archived on the RTC website at the [Updates on campus operations](#) link.

Students: as a reminder, these are your contact points for support:

- Academic matters: academics@rtc.bt; student phone line for academic matters: 77333848 during office hours.
- Library services: library@rtc.bt
- Counselling support: Amanda Nelson, Counsellor: amnelson@rtc.bt or 17413956.
- Other student services: registrar@rtc.bt
- International relations office: iro@rtc.bt
- IT support: <https://www.facebook.com/RTCITSupport/> 77457548 (mobile, whatsapp, telegram) | email: itadmin@rtc.bt | Visit my.rtc.bt (RTC Intranet Portal): IT Help Desk
- Learning Resource Centre (Virtual LRC) is accessible through the VLE for all students needing extra support in Maths, English, and Dzongkha
- Students' appointed academic advisers can always be contacted for any learning support needs or issues

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic all educational institutions around the world have had to make changes to the teaching-learning experience, and most have suspended traditional in-person classes. As tertiary education institutes in Bhutan confront these unprecedented challenges, this is also an opportunity to innovate and embrace new modes of learning that are more resilient to such future pandemics or other disasters. While the closure of on-campus teaching, and adoption of online modes of delivery poses significant challenges, we must continue our work to develop strategies for managing the continuity of the tertiary education programmes.

On our end, one of the key assessments made by RTC early on was to recognize that the pandemic was likely to permanently alter the landscape of higher education and that it would be a long time for things to go back to 'normal' again. While this pandemic has been unprecedented and exceptional, a resilient system needs to incorporate the likely occurrences of such future pandemics as being a 'new normal'. With this in mind, RTC decided to embrace online and remote learning options as a vital part of its approach, rather than as a stop-gap measure.

The programmes' transition to fully remote learning was strengthened through (1) establishment of a task force to intensively work on RTC's short- medium- and long-term adaptations to the closure forced by the pandemic; (2) immediately strengthening the online teaching-learning infrastructure; (3) reallocation of human resources towards academic support for faculty and students; (4) developing an adapted quality framework for monitoring the online teaching-learning; and (5) communicating frequently and openly with our stakeholders. The efforts have been effective in giving us the confidence to continue moving forward.

The following lays out some of the specific plans and activities happening:

RTC COVID-19 Task Force

- The College constituted an interdepartmental Task Force with 9 members to work directly on rapid information sharing and addressing issues related to the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force met 21 times so far between March 19 and April 17, and continues to do so at least thrice a week. It has been leading interventions and actions to get the teaching-learning back on track, coordinate immediate preparations for possible mobility restrictions, and generate long-term strategies for resilience and growth in the face of a changed educational landscape.

Our Human Resources

- Driven by the desire of many of our employees including faculty, staff, management, and support staff to contribute to the nationwide response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a combined Nu. 250,000 of voluntary contributions was doubled from the college side to Nu. 500,000 to represent all our constituents. This amount was handed to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bhutan on 16th April 2020 on behalf of the entire RTC community for the government's COVID-19 response fund, and an acknowledgement for the same was received immediately. It was apparent that once again the RTC family came together as one, measuring up in our own humble manner to support the efforts of the Royal Government of Bhutan in fighting this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Such an act of volunteerism, solidarity and generosity will go a long way in the nation's overall effort in overcoming the challenge and also allow us to share this moment of precious peace in light of the unfortunate toll resulting from this pandemic around the rest of the world. We are extremely fortunate to be in Bhutan at this time.
- The College's reaction to the closure of institutions in Western Bhutan was swift. RTC had no notice, but was required to discontinue in-person classes from March 6th for two weeks. Given the lack of time for advance planning and the concern over studies falling behind, the programmes shifted to online teaching-learning in an expedited manner. It is apparent now that this led to difficulties for the faculty and students, though at the time it was anticipated that classes could reopen in less than two weeks. After the indefinite extension of the closure from 18th March, there was again urgency to complete more training and coordination so that the work could be planned properly in case of a complete lockdown. The urgency was extremely stressful for all. In retrospect only, it was clear that a few days or week gap to allow faculty and staff to look after themselves, then return for systematic training and work planning prior to

deploying the full online teaching-learning would have been useful. By the end of March, the situation had again calmed a bit and further reflection could be done. The College has been deeply appreciative of the hard work put in by the faculty and staff to keep the operations going for the benefit of all our stakeholders, particularly the learners.

- The transition to online teaching-learning required extensive time and effort to monitor and support the academic programmes. As such, many staff from other departments were pulled in to create a pool of Programme Leader Assistants assigned individually to each programme to help with the conduct and monitoring of the online teaching-learning from both the teaching side and the student side. All other offices were likewise restructured to shift focus wherever possible on efficient use of the human resources to support the continuity of the academic semester. At this point, roughly half of RTC's 195 employees are working under substantially adapted capacities and workplans.
- A work-from-home readiness plan was prepared and trials were conducted over the past several weeks. The College has gained confidence in being able to continue operations even if level red lockdowns occur, though remote working is not being widely applied at this time.

Academics

- Use of all the online teaching-learning infrastructure had to be expanded quickly since March 6th, and several rounds of refresher training for our 83 faculty members were organized, working fully through an additional weekend (March 21-22) to avoid losing time during the critical transition. The situation provided a wonderful opportunity to teach and learn from colleagues. The College is attempting to meet the training and mindset challenges as best as possible, both with tutors and learners.
- There have been difficulties, not just the initial internet access challenges, but especially in keeping the teaching-learning organized for the students. RTC recognized that there is a risk that students can be bombarded with many self-directed tasks to carry out such as readings, videos, exercises, assignments, etc., and some have found it so overwhelming that they lose sight of the main concepts they are expected to grasp. Hence, a key part of the refresher training for faculty members was emphasizing the importance of going beyond just posting materials for student consumption to actually providing detailed instruction on how to organize their learning in each topic, and making clear what learning outcomes they were expected to achieve.
- For students, it's important to keep in mind that our credit system of 12 credits per module and 5 modules per semester translates to effort required worth 600 hours per semester (roughly 40 hours a week at least, on average) to achieve minimum pass marks.
- Tutors are now all very engaged and constantly improving the quality of their online instruction. Engagement of both tutors and students regularly monitored in the VLE and at regular programme committee meetings. The committees met once a week

since the start of class closures, and continue to do so every two weeks. Programme leaders and the rest of the College Academic Committee also met in early April to reflect on the progress thus far and work on areas for improvement. One of the decisions was to move partially towards more of a routine weekly schedule with specific timeslots for different modules that would help keep everyone with time management and staying organized.

- There are a variety of active teaching-learning engagements and assessments happening in the Virtual Learning Environment such as voice-over powerpoint presentations, online discussion forums, assignment submissions, and even self-recorded student presentations. Several faculty members have started using Google Meet or Zoom to meet the students and engage them in discussions directly. The Library staff have provided support in uploading e-copies of all required reading materials. The Learning Resource Centre (LRC) is fully available for Maths, English, and Dzongkha tutoring online on the VLE for all students.
- For systematic data gathering on the student experience, the RTC Task Force initiated a phone survey of random students to assess their experience and target further interventions. Data could be collected from 104 respondents out of 120 randomly selected students (Appendix G). Key stats are: 82% found the VLE to be user friendly. 88% indicated they were provided with the opportunity to participate in VLE Discussion Forums. 88% indicated the resource materials on VLE were enough for their reference and understanding. The respondents also had a variety of suggestions and feedback on academic and technical aspects. Some common critical feedback was: VLE is not always user friendly, uploads are all over and not always organized. Students suggested more VLE guidelines. Provide options to resubmit assignments. Not enough discussion - difficulty in understanding online classes. Suggestion: Stagger the assignments from different modules. Notify students on any new upload on VLE. Students also mentioned that they are using Google classroom, WeChat, Messenger, and WhatsApp (frequently). The video conference was not always so user friendly as there were network issues; it felt crowded and voices break up. The feedback was disseminated to the Programme Leaders and the IT Office for follow ups. Action plans are now being reformulated keeping these feedbacks in mind. Further, more comprehensive mid-semester feedback will be collected from all students.
- Numerous other staff members at the officer level are now redeployed to assist and support the academics to ensure that there are no compromises made in terms of learning by the students and the required progress of the semester. Specifically, to facilitate the programme leaders' extensive work of managing and monitoring the tutors and the online teaching-learning, officer-level non-teaching staff members were allocated individually to each of 11 programmes as assistants to the PLs.
- Three rounds of monitoring were done in March to evaluate tutor activity on the VLE, the first within March 11-16th, the second on March 23rd, and the third on March 30th, and this has continued since. The monitoring system looked at a variety of aspects of the online teaching-learning: VLE issues (amount of info, language/wording), level of value addition from tutors (e.g., clear instructions, tutor-added notes, audio, or video guidance), clarity and organization of materials and assessments, clear timelines,

provision of readings, lesson coverage up to date, use of jargon-free personal and smooth instructions for students to follow, level of assignments (challenging and not only directly out of textbooks, more applied and with reference to Bhutanese context), making more direct connections between essential readings and assignments, use of formal and informal 'check-ins' and feedback gathering to check students' comprehension and progress. The first evaluation checked each of 194 module sections for minimum presence and activity on the VLE; the next two evaluations went beyond to checked all posts / activities / links / files for each module and generated individual feedback for the concerned tutors and respective PLs for further follow up where necessary.

- On the student side, the monitoring system also involved directly contacting students who were not active on VLE/ online classes as reported by tutors and PLs. Till 10th April, around 157 students were individually contacted. Participation in the VLE is checked several times a week in terms of simple online activity, but tutors also follow up individually with students and are supported in doing so by the monitoring team. Over 90% of the students are doing their best to stay on track and did not require individual follow-ups. Those individually contacted were reminded about the importance of keeping up with their studies and queried about any challenges they may be facing in doing so. The team found that these challenges range from logistical/practical difficulties (like internet connectivity and computer access, access to resources, home circumstances) to learning difficulties related to the new style of teaching-learning (difficulty in staying organized, keeping up with schedules and deadlines, adapting to the online system, managing reading and studies more independently, challenges in seeking peer support). The monitoring team and all the programmes' management committees will continue their efforts to address these challenges and ensure that each student has the opportunity to keep up with his/her learning.
- The programme committees have organized plans for midterm exams, and these are set to roll out in the first week of May. The remainder of the academic calendar for the Spring semester is also being revised, and will most likely have the semester closing delayed by a matter of weeks. This will be announced and circulated as soon as it is finalized in consultation with wider stakeholders and considering the nationwide scenario.

Student Services

- Counseling support is available for anyone that needs it. Complete information can be found [here](#).
- For boarding students, the reopening of residence halls has been uncertain since the need to close them a few weeks ago. A possibility remained that the semester closing dates might be extended, and so an extended period of time in the residence halls would be required for students when they moved back. However, with the prolonged closure, a revised academic calendar is being formulated to fix the new semester end dates whether or not there is a resumption of in-person classes. Boarding students may note that from end of March onward, the portion of unused room and dining

remains credited to the students for their use towards next semester's fees or as prorated refunds once it is clearer whether or not there will be reopening of residence halls in the coming months.

Information Technology

- The major teaching-learning systems (VLE@RTC and rtcCloud) were upgraded (hardware and software) and performance tuning was done. Three rounds of live load testing were completed to ensure that performance was actually improved. Simultaneous (concurrent) connections should not be a problem, though there are still some indications of difficulty in simultaneous file access (downloading files and especially uploading files by many users at exactly the same time). Students are advised not to wait until the very last minute of the deadlines for uploading assignments.
- Two external outages occurred that affected access to all RTC systems: On April 11th, from approximately 4 pm until 9 am on April 12th, a power problem in the region around RTC resulted in power problems around campus which resulted in all servers remaining offline. On April 17th, between approximately 3:15 - 4:05 pm there was an outage of the campus network uplink to Bhutan Telecom due to fiber cable disruption somewhere towards the area of Thimphu Tech Park.
- Remote access solutions have been deployed for those staff and faculty that may be working from home, while good on-campus facilities for recording have been made available for the tutors.
- Beyond the mobile data topups rolled out by the College to all students at the end of March, the College is continuing to follow up with the telecom companies and the government on any possible plans for robust internet data packages for education. We will keep everyone informed on progress with this.

Around campus

- A hazard hunting pertaining to the COVID-19 situation was conducted on 14th March 2020 which identified 56 precautionary measure for general safety and to help avert possible spread of infection at the Mess, Gym, Hostels, Executive Centre, Cafeteria, offices (Eg: Arrangements in mess, proper cleaning, providing notices, providing hand sanitizers, soaps, hand washing stations etc).
- As part of RTC's preparedness plan for COVID-19, the Administration and Finance Department has implemented few changes pertaining to the cleanliness of the RTC facilities including offices. The changes adopted include training all our cleaners on the usage of new sets of chemicals and disinfectants starting 22nd March, 2020 which also includes sanitizing all the facilities twice a day. Support staff are equipped with better safety gears and supplies have been purchased in bulk in case the country enters 'Code Red'.

- The college also initiated in-campus yoga sessions and nature treks to help boost well-being and de-stress the overworked community.

Finally, I would like to let you all know that the management delivered a Report on RTC Response and Adaptations to the COVID-19 Pandemic to the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) Vice chancellor, Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan (KGUMSB) President, Department of Adult and Higher Education (DAHE) Director General, His Excellency the Minister of Education (Sherig Lyonpo), and His Excellency the Prime Minister. The stakeholders commended the proactive and exemplary efforts taken by RTC thus far and were encouraging of the College's efforts to keep moving ahead. I thank each one of you for your hard work and cooperation in keeping us on track with our primary mission of providing our learners with a good education. Stay safe and healthy.

Mr. Tshewang Tandin
President
Royal Thimpu College,
Thimphu, Bhutan



INDIA



**Bharati Vidyapeeth
(Deemed to be University)**

Institute of Management & Research, New Delhi

A Grade Status Awarded by MHRD, Govt of India, Reaccredited with Grade A+ by NAAC, Ranked among Top 75 B-Schools in India by NIRF 2017

An ISO 9001:2015 14001:2015 Certified Institute

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Changing Paradigm of Learning in the Times of Covid 19 Pandemic

When you are working for an educational institution, everyday brings a new challenge. Usually it is a challenge because every pupil is different and needs to be taken care of as they are still looking up towards their faculties, mentors and friends to help them shape their life. One such institute in New Delhi popularly known as BVIMR, is an education hub which completely believes and follows its University vision -

“To be a world class management institute for social transformation through dynamic excellence”

March, 2020 came with yet another challenge for this institute which was gearing up to bring the academic session to an end when COVID-19 hit all and changed our lives forever.

The corona virus is not only a health crisis of immense proportion—it also resulted in an imminent restructuring of the Indian education sector apart from economic turbulence. We are forced to alter the nuance of daily life but together we will have to sail through these difficult times. It is all happening unfortunately at a crucial time, the transition period of the end of the Academic Year 2019-20 and commencement of session 2020-21.

As soon as Government released directives to take precautionary measures, BVIMR campus, its entire management, faculty fraternity, staff and students geared up for yet another challenge like always and started taking account of resources that can help us go on.

Maintaining its world class working by accepting the world’s dynamism

At BVIMR-New Delhi everyone is trying to find an alternate path to the next normal in student life. We assure that although college is shut but learning is on.

The time in hand is getting compressed with every passing moment, making us limited in terms of efforts and resources but student being the most important stakeholder, BVIMR – New Delhi has challenged limits and has brought step by step effective implementation of e-learning procedures, e-assessment and e-administration. The process is challenging and naïve but the fraternity is working towards Discover, Decide, Design and Deliver for student satisfaction.

High Technology usage, elimination of data dependency and technologically enhanced teaching-learning has been a regular feature for all at this campus. BVIMR-New Delhi has incorporated the usage of following e-resources for effective delivery:

1. **Use of technology in Teaching-Learning & Assessment-** Online Classes through ZOOM application in the initial days of lockdown which was later shifted/switched to more secure platforms like Microsoft Teams and Cisco Webex for content delivery

for student engagement. Security and privacy has been an important concern of users and Government all across the globe and the institute too has been acknowledging and preparing for all such challenges. Hence, E-assessment through Moodle (online examinations through MCQs), Online Assignments and E-Projects whose viva-voce would be conducted through Google Duo and Microsoft Teams software has been a key feature during this crucial time.

2. **Administration & Information Dissemination-** At BVIMR, E-administration is being carried out through ERP Software of the Institution, PTMs have been conducted through Video Conferencing to keep parents in loop and through Zoom Meetings and usage of whatsapp and e-mailers. Feedback and active participation has been ensured by involving parents through their parental login on ERP software to ensure all stakeholders are updated and addressed to.
3. **Documentation & record keeping-** For practical implementation of concepts learned during classroom, preparation of projects based on market/actual problems of the society is done. During regular learning at classrooms students of different UG and PG courses prepared such projects under the guidance of faculty and industry mentors. These minor and major projects of students as per policy undergo plagiarism check before proceeding for viva-voce which in such social distancing scenario was conducted through Google Duo and Zoom app. Idea behind this was that student's academics and learning should not suffer and they realise . A sort of virtual time table has been prepared for clearing doubts and even assignment submission is done through Google Forms for effective record keeping and access. The Research Department of the Institution is also working round the clock and has conducted numerous meetings through Microsoft Teams and Zoom software for effective scrutiny of Research Proposals submitted by PhD students. The scholars too are providedn with and are encouraged for using online resources for research such as Shodganga etc.
4. **Counselling & Administration-** Several counseling sessions are being conducted to keep students positive and competitive while they are also tested and evaluated in several innovative ways so they are prepared for everything and can emerge as a true management leader.
5. **Continuous Value enhancement at all level-** Several meetings, seminar and conferences were attended by the Director, faculty members, staff members and students to understand how best this time can be utilized for value enhancement.
6. **Dissemination of important links for skill enhancement of students like:**
 - o National Digital Library (www.ndl.iitkgp.ac.in) which is a project under MHRD, India and serves as a digital repository containing textbooks, articles, videos, audio books, lectures, simulations, fiction and all other kinds of learning media. The NDLI provides free of cost access to many books in English and the Indian languages.

- o Swayam Online Courses and other ICT initiative like e-books, learning robotics, programming, utilizing open access software of education & DTH TV educational tools.
- o NPTEL (National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning) – Nptel.ac.in is an initiative for Computer Science students which provides web based supplements and 100 complete video courses.
- o Infoport - infoport.inflibnet.ac.in (INFLIBNET Subject Gateway for Indian Electronic-Resources) - The InfoPort covers Internet resources of Indian origin such as electronic books, electronic journals and reference sources including dictionaries, directories, maps etc.; Institutional repositories, resource gateway, etc. Wikis, blogs, etc.; Teaching and learning website; Lecture Notes, Magazines, Portals; Audio, video and other multimedia learning resources; Libraries, archives and museums; News and media services including newspapers, online news services.
- o UG/PG Moocs - ugcmoocs.inflibnet.ac.in/ugcmoocs - SWAYAM is a programme initiated by Government of India and designed to achieve the three cardinal principles of Education Policy viz., access, equity and quality. The objective of this effort is to take the best teaching learning resources to all, including the most disadvantaged. SWAYAM seeks to bridge the digital divide for students who have hitherto remained untouched by the digital revolution and have not been able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy.

At the end it can be said that this global pandemic situation has created a better and a stronger team BVIMR which will continue achieving greater heights, accepting all challenges that comes its way.

Dr. Vikas Nath

Director

Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Management & Research

New Delhi, India



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Lock Down – Coping Strategies of BULMIM –
Objective: Efficient and Effective Knowledge Transfer
Dr. M. Durgamohan – Director BULMIM

BULMIM, Bhavan's Usha & Lakshmi Mittal Institute of Management is an initiative of the Delhi Kendra of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi. BULMIM offers a full time ASIC accredited and AICTE approved 2-year, full time PGDM course with dual specialization of equal weight. BULMIM has been accredited by ASIC, UK, as a premier institution and are ranked 60 as per MBA Universe survey 2019 of Business Schools.

There are three key activities that BULMIM its students and faculty are regularly involved in. They are:

1. Knowledge Transfer & Assessments
2. Placements – Summer Internships and Permanent Placements
3. Beyond the Classroom

All the above are key activities, satisfactory completion of these will automatically lead to good student experience.

In the following paragraphs I am giving the details of the strategy used by BULMIM to cope with the effects of the pandemic and the consequent lockdown on the institution and its students, but also make BULMIM and its students future ready.

With the initial order for closure of educational institutions till 31-03-2020 announced by the Government of NCT Delhi and the subsequent country-wide lockdown, BULMIM faced an unprecedented crisis – that is, all the above enumerated activities came to an abrupt stop. The first step BULMIM took is with regard to faculty and staff. All the faculty members and staff were shifted to “Work from Home” mode and email was made the main means of communication with additional support from WhatsApp and the age-old voice telephony. BULMIM had to quickly find solutions to see that these three key activities are restarted at the earliest and no time was lost in formulating a strategy and implementation of the same. The basis of this strategy is to categorize three key activities into controllable and uncontrollable and resources have to be allocated depending on the category. Knowledge transfer and beyond the classroom activities are controllable as they are internal to BULMIM whereas placements is uncontrollable as it is external.

Controllable:

We had to think of an alternative strategy to see that our objective of “Efficient and Effective Knowledge Transfer” is achieved, we worked out a twin pronged approach. Each of the

faculty was asked to identify online courses from Coursera, that largely match with the subjects being taught and students were asked to enroll for these courses as an audit course, so that the students get the requisite inputs in the intervening period, before we come out with an online delivery solution. This worked and gave us a breather to work out the online delivery model. Each faculty member was asked about his / her preferred way of delivery – “Zoom” or “Google Classroom” and then we announced a schedule of classes that will be held on “Zoom” or “Google Classroom”. There was an enthusiastic response from the students for these online classes and the attendance was monitored.

Feedback was taken on the online classes from the students to see that mid-course corrections can be done. However, the learning curve for both the faculty and students was short that helped all of us.

In the meantime, we changed the mode of assessment from pen and paper mid-term examinations to assignment-based assessment, so that the mid-term exam component is also completed on time.

The result is that many of my students have obtained certifications on successful completion of online courses – they went beyond our brief of doing these courses in an audit mode. This also proved that BULMIM students are efficient in the “Work from Home (WFH)” mode too, which may be the new industry standard post COVID 19. It has made them future ready to an extent. As far as final terms examinations are concerned, we will be following the guidelines of AICTE.

The “Beyond the Classroom” activities were also shifted to online mode. The students with their faculty mentors organized a webinar titled “The 3Rs of COVID 19. The conceptualization, planning and executing this webinar was done by our students. It was a great success filling 90% of the webinar capacity. We have planned two more webinars during May and June 2020.

In order to shield the BULMIM students from the aftereffects of COVID 19 (not from a medical perspective, but from skill perspective, post COVID19) BULMIM is introducing two new specializations – Business Analytics (BA) and Digital marketing. Till now BA was taught as a core subject and Marketing Analytics, Finance Analytics and HR Analytics, apart from Digital marketing were taught as electives in the respective specializations. Analyzing the present situation and taking inputs from various stakeholders, it was decided to advance the introduction of BA and DM as two new specializations from July 2020 itself, so that BULMIM students possess the necessary skills in the post COVID19 era and are job-ready.

Uncontrollable:

Simultaneously we had another mammoth task on our hands – that is Summer Internship Program for students starting from 1st May 2020. By the time lockdown came into effect all over India, we had confirmed internships for all the students and these internships were in “onsite” mode. However, these onsite internships cannot take place due to the lockdown.

In order to establish effective and fast communication to all the students, a WhatsApp group was created consisting of the Director, Placement Manager and the members of placement

committee. Each member of the “Placement committee” was allocated a group of students. This resulted in our strengthening the hands of the placement manager, as they were extra hands of placement committee members, who helped him. This also resulted in establishment of fast and efficient communication channels at the peer level.

All these internships were to be changed to “online” mode, but when the companies are willing to do it. As many of the internships were in the domains of “Analytics” and “Digital marketing”, we could easily convert them to online (WFH) mode. But we had to find alternative internships for others. Here we used social media, apart from the traditional means of telephoning, emailing to reach out to companies.

Lastly the management of BULMIM started looking at another aspect that is, how to mitigate the financial burden of the students in these days of the pandemic keeping in view our motto of quality education at affordable cost.

After deliberations, a decision was taken, that has two facets – reduction in fees payable in 2020 and also distributing the fees payable:

1. A BULMIM studentship of Rs. 25,000 is offered to each enrolled student resulting in a fee reduction of Rs. 25,000 during 2020. This resulted in an 8% reduction in fees payable by the student during 2020.
2. The payment of fees, which was paid in two installments was changed to three instalments – Payable in July, October, and December, instead of July and December. This will help the students and their parents to manage their cash flows better.

This helped in boosting of the morale of the students, BULMIM’s most important stakeholder. The feedback of the students – “caring institution”.

As far as starting of the new academic year, BULMIM will be strictly following the guidelines issued by AICTE to stand-alone PGDM institutions.

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INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS IN LIGHT OF COVID 19 **AT BHAVAN'S CENTRE FOR COMMUNICATION AND** **MANAGEMENT (BCCM)**

INTRODUCTION:

Coronavirus outbreak is first and foremost a human tragedy of its kind in this century, affecting thousands and lakhs of people and having a growing impact on the global economy. As the number of cases continues to grow, concerns are simultaneously growing about the current and long-term effects this will have on certain demographics — specifically, the youth, migrant workers, and many employees around the world as many countries closed their national borders during the past month, the movement of people and trade flows have come to a screeching halt. Currently an estimated 3.6 billion of the world's population remain without connectivity, which means they may not have access to education, health information and, digital access. Internet connectivity is key at this time in order to ensure communication among communities. Higher education system is also affected due to this economic downturn.

COVID 19 & TEACHIN-LEARNING PROCESS:

In a matter of few weeks, Coronavirus (COVID-19) has brought a significant change in the teaching and learning process across the globe. These changes provide us a glimpse of how innovation in creation and dissemination of knowledge can bring the best possible alternatives for achieving excellence. Although it is too early to judge how the proactive measures initiated by educational institution during lockdown due to COVID-19 will affect education systems, there are indications that digitalisation becoming the greatest facilitator suggesting that it could have a lasting impact on the trajectory of learning innovation.

With technology becoming more prevalent, we can see learners and solution providers truly embracing the 'learning anywhere, anytime' concept of digital education in a range of formats. Traditional in-person classroom learning has been complemented with new learning modalities - from live broadcasts to 'educational influencers' to virtual reality experiences.

PROACTIVE MEASURES TAKEN BY BHAVAN'S CENTRE FOR COMMUNICATION AND MANAGEMENT (BCCM), BHUBANESWAR:

With the coronavirus pandemic rapidly spreading across the state of Odisha and the declaration of the lock down in the state, educational institutions have suspended campus learning in order to curb the spread of the virus. In the wake of the lock down, our institution Bhavan's Centre for Communication and Management,(BCCM), quickly adopted to online mode of teaching to ensure continuity of its academic process. At our institute we are using technology enabled virtual learning and online tools. This includes a mix of online platforms for sharing files, conducting meetings and lectures in association with online services & resource providers.

Online learning plans covers the teaching strategies, communication rules, devices, solutions, and policies supporting online, blended learning that makes the expectations clear for learners. BCCM has adopted the following innovative online resources to enhance the quality of its teaching learning process in light of COVID 19:

- **ONLINE CLASSES:** With the sudden lockdown announced by the Government, BCCM switched to online mode of teaching with a motto to keep the students engaged in academic activities. A proper schedule for the smooth conduct of the classes for the PGDM first year students has been prepared and the routine is circulated among the students and faculty. The classes are conducted through Zoom / Google Duo / WhatsApp / Skype as they are handy apps with exceptional quality and user focused. In order to make an assessment of the learning outcomes of the students, online assignments and examinations are also conducted by the faculty from time to time. This not only keeps the students on their toes but also helps the faculty to make an assessment of the analytical skills of the students and their ability to apply theory into practice. The classes are scheduled in the first half of the day and during the second half they are engaged in a live project on COVID 19.
- **COVID 19 PROJECT:** All the PGDM first year students are engaged in live project where they are studying the impact of COVID -19 on major sectors like Finance & Stock Market, Health Care and Hospital, Banking & Insurance, Agriculture, Business and Trade, Hotel, tourism, Entertainment, Labour Market, Economy and the technological impact. The background study is completed and the review of literature is in progress. Dr Madhusmita Mohanty and Prof T N Shukla, both the faculty members of BCCM are actively engaged in this project and providing necessary guidance and support to the students.

ALL THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS ARE ENGAGED IN THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

- **CAPSTONE PROJECT:** Keeping in view the guidelines given by AICTE to include capstone project as a part of PGDM curriculum, BCCM has introduced capstone project in the sixth trimester. The capstone project is undertaken as a case study and eight major sectors were identified such as Aviation, Banking, Transportation, Hospitality, E-commerce, Education, Hotel and IT sector. Students and Faculty members are working online hand in hand to develop case studies in these sectors on specific topics along with the teaching notes and possible questions. It is further proposed to get the approval of Indian Case Clearing House and publish these as a Compendium of Case Studies which can be referred not only by the students and faculty members of BCCM but also can be used by students and faculty of other business schools of the country.
- **SOCIAL SENSITISATION PROJECT:** BCCM believes that a student's learning is not about the grades and passing the examinations. Students who are socially aware and realize that one of their prime responsibility is to serve the society. To imbibe in them a basic sense of social responsibility and sensitise them about the various social causes and

issues, make them feel engaged, create a positive and productive environment, a group of students from the second year along with the faculty in charge Prof Sushree Sangita Mohanty, are engaged in the social sensitisation projects. They closely observe the community around them, identify the topics of research, sensitise the community about the same. Once in a week the faculty mentor and the students meet online to review the progress of the project and seek suggestions. The survey questionnaire is administered online, analysed and finally at the end of the semester they present a report on the same.

- **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT:** In order to make the students aware about the various problems in a community, provide them with the knowledge and about the main causes that affect the social life, the Community Development Project is offered to second year students in areas of education, health, recreation and employment. By undergoing this project the students will have a better understanding about the changing pattern and style of community of people seeking opportunities for the better standard of living, to help one another and stand on their own feet with the available resources. It helps to create the acquaintances and positive thinking about the people. Prof Swarup Pradhan along with a group of Second year students are actively engaged in these projects. As and when required the faculty mentor and students interact with each other, discuss about the project. The survey questionnaire is administered using various online resources, the requisite data is collected relating to the project and a comprehensive report on the various community development activities undertaken by each student is presented.
- **RURAL INNOVATION PROJECT:** In rural communities, there are number of aspects that need to be developed. These include education, employment opportunities, agriculture and farming practices, administration and management, infrastructure, civic amenities, health care and medical and environmental conditions. A group of second year students along with Prof T Sridevi are involved in these Rural Innovation projects. Rural innovation is defined as the introduction of something new (a novel change) to economic or social life in rural areas. The students engaged in this project first do the background study of the village, then identify any one particular aspect of the village where they would like to bring a change, which adds new economic or social value to rural life. The data collected is presented in the form of a report at the end of the sixth trimester. The students refer to various online resources for collection of data relating to the project and as and when required they consult their faculty guide online for suggestions and proper guidance.

ZOOM MEETINGS AND AUDIO CONFERENCING: All the academic activities and admission activities are reported on daily basis through regular audio conferencing, WhatsApp. Zoom meetings are organised on every alternative day with the management, faculties and members of admission team, to make an assessment of the progress made, discuss on various academic issues and plan for the future course of activities of the Institution.

ONLINE COURSES: Besides the regular PGDM course work, all the students of BCCM and faculty members are encouraged to register for various free online courses offered by Harvard

University, Swayam, Swayam Prabha, Coursera etc., to enhance their skills and knowledge. It also helps them understand the subjects better and assists them in preparing for their future career.

ACADEMIC / STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: BCCM has the practise of conducting student Career Counselling, Personality Development, Communication, Leadership, etc., sessions for undergraduate students of various colleges in the state. Prof R N Patnaik, Prof Abhishiek Sinha, Prof Swarup Pradhan, Prof Sushree S Mohanty are now actively conducting these programs for students of various colleges with the help of Zoom app.

CONCLUSION:

BCCM has implemented changes in its teaching and learning process in response to the novel coronavirus. The institution will analyse the steps already taken, understand what has worked, what hasn't worked and will take cues from others and provide students with easy access to continue their studies online in the future also. In the coming weeks a series of webinars, Faculty Development Programs, Research Activities and Student Development Programs shall be organised using digital platforms. With strong leadership and steady direction, BCCM will create a sense of purpose to unify work teams and set priorities and demonstrate personal characteristics that can guide the institution through this storm. The higher education sector has withstood turbulent economic times in the past, and it will withstand them again in this digital age.

Dr. Sujata Mangaraj
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Dr. Gaur Hari Singhania Institute of Management & Research

GHS-IMR: A Shift from Brick and Mortar to Virtual Class Rooms in response to Covid-19 crisis

About GHS-IMR:

Dr. Gaur Hari Singhania Institute of Management & Research, popularly known as GHS-IMR, is a NAAC B+ accredited management institution approved by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Ministry of HRD, Government of India. Located in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, GHS-IMR is one of the oldest and premier management institutes established in 1995 by J.K. Organization, one of India's leading and respected industry conglomerates.

GHS-IMR is working towards academic excellence and development of management skills through its flagship 2 Year Full-time Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) programme, duly approved by the AICTE. With the glorious legacy of 25 years in management education, GHS-IMR has successfully contributed in the multi-dimensional development of future professionals with a clear focus on positive thinking and self-confidence to cope with the transformation, challenges, and qualms of corporate life.

So far 23 batches have successfully passed out from the institute and more than 1900 alumni are serving at senior managerial and leadership positions in reputed MNCs & Indian Corporates.

Institute Vision and Mission:

Vision Statement

To be an institute engaged in creating thought leaders through innovative research, consulting and by being alma-mater of next practices.

Mission Statement

To be a management institute where today's students become tomorrow's management leaders, who are driven by a passion to discover, innovate and create opportunities in the environment not only for self-development but also for the society. It is aimed at creating managers, with holistic approach, synthesizing conventional and modern management thinking with global outlook and having capabilities of adapting to the changing requirements of business.

PGDM Program of The Institute:

The structure of the PGDM programme endeavours to combine insights from a number of academic disciplines and functional areas. Students are equipped with various tools to effectively analyse multidimensional facets of business. It balances between conceptual and practical skills and also focuses on developing competencies essential for today's environment. During the two-year programme, students receive academic inputs in two parts, namely, the Compulsory package and the Elective package. The electives offered in the programme are Marketing, Finance, Human Resource Management, International Business, Operations Management, Information Technology and Entrepreneurship and Family managed Businesses. The compulsory and elective courses, which are based on industry requirements and research, are delivered by well qualified and experienced faculty.

PGDM Program Outcome:

- **Managing Diversity:** Students should be able to work in diverse teams and roles in diverse business setting under dynamic business environment to solve critical problems that requires cross functional and cross-cultural inputs, that will help them to take up challenging leadership positions.
- **Critical Thinking & Problem solving:** Student should be able to analyze complex business problems with multiple dimensions by analyzing each dimension with its prospects and consequences and can generate alternative scenarios and then through problem-solving skills provide innovative solutions within the given resource constraints.
- **Developing Global Mindset:** Programme aims to develop Students with sufficient knowledge and application to operate in global business settings by exposing them to global business environment, practices and facilities through innovative pedagogical tools and practical exposure to prepare them to work efficiently in a Multinational corporation or in an overseas cross-cultural environment.
- **Application Orientation:** Program aim to enhance the Students application orientation by creating simulated business situations where the students can apply the concepts learned in the class and come up with original and innovative business ideas and thereby possess the capability to create entrepreneurial opportunities.
- **Industry Ready Managers:** To make the students industry ready professional in a dynamic and evolving national and international business environment through continuous feedback from all the stakeholders and implementing the desired changes on a continuous basis through a systemic process in program structure and content.

Adaptability of GHS-IMR as an academic institution in response to Covid-19 crisis by shifting from Brick and Mortar to Virtual Class rooms:

In the wake of Global pandemic covid-19, GHS-IMR as a leading management institute adapted to the unforeseen challenges by swiftly shifting from traditional form of class room delivery to online classes. Initially Director and faculty members worked on the nuances of online teaching and IT infrastructure needed to conduct these sessions. Subsequently few demo sessions with students were also conducted to weed out any technical glitches. A number of online meeting platform have been used to deliver sessions that include Google meet, Zoom, Microsoft Team etc.

- GHS-IMR was probably among the very few management institutions in India which responded at the outset to Global pandemic, Covid-19 crisis by shifting from physical class rooms to online sessions by using robust IT infrastructure for both first- and second-year PGDM students.
- In these testing times institute in his own way strived to prepare the academic fraternity to adapt to the fast-changing technology driven shift in higher education towards online meeting portals. In order to fulfil this objective Institute hosted a weeklong E- faculty Development program and successfully conducted. E-FDP focused on new and innovative teaching methods which can captivate educators in new mode of virtual learning.
- Continuous industry exposure is one of the key facets of Management education. Keeping its promise of providing every possible opportunity of industry and business exposure to its students, GHS-IMR organized three days E-Seminar on Changing Management Paradigm in Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) world as the theme of the e-seminar where industry experts across geographies were invited to deliver the talk.
- Keeping in mind the guidelines issues by regulatory body AICTE, institute has started Summer project to students from home with project assigned by faculty mentors to each student. An e-summer project meeting is being scheduled twice a week by each faculty to guide the students through an e-platform. Besides students also receives continuous interaction from industry mentors related to the area of their project through web based online meeting platforms.
- In order to inculcate research acumen, second year students are required to do Final Research Project as a separate course. In the wake of current crisis institute has shift to e-FRP guidance instead of traditional guidance through student's physical presence. Besides An E-FRP presentation session has been organized for FRP report presentation where students get evaluated by an expert panel in an online environment.

- In these unprecedented times conducting exams are key challenge across institutions. GHS-IMR has accepted this challenge and planning to host E-Examination by using its IT setup.
- GHS-IMR faculty and students also tried to convert this challenge in to an opportunity for their self-development by attending Massive open online courses (MOOC) courses from leading national and international institutions.
- Technology knows no barrier. True to this spirit, GHS-IMR faculty went for knowledge dissemination not only to Indian Educator but also overseas educator as well in the niche areas of Innovative pedagogy and Management games.

The Global pandemic Covid-19 has changed the way societies live, the way business operates and has created a major social and economic disruption across the world and so as in India as well. Kanpur an industrial city based in Uttar Pradesh; a key Indian state is no exception to it. GHS-IMR as a management institute is fully aware of its responsibility in this crisis situation, therefore the institute continues to strive further to adapt and excel in this new reality of new normal along with all its stake holders.

Dr. Prof. Rakesh Premi

Director

Dr. Gaur Hari Singhania Institute of Management & Research

Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India



DIGITAL DISRUPTION TO HANDLE 'NEW NORMAL': COVID-19 EXPERIENCES

Human race has always been challenged in many ways since evolution, but human resilience has always enabled us to survive and overcome any challenges. COVID-19 is one such event, which has affected hundreds of countries, economic systems, businesses and people. Those, who are resilient, innovative and stay ahead of the curve will come up trumps during these challenging times. Great Lakes is a technology savvy business school and a contemporary IT infrastructure saw us through the initial challenges posed by COVID related to academic calendar. As the uncertainty related to returning to normalcy is prolonging, we are gearing up to handle the 'new normal' through digital innovation. Here's a list of few things that has prepared us to meet the challenges.

PROACTIVE DECISION MAKING

The leadership team was closely monitoring the emerging COVID situation in India. March is a busy month as the academic calendar of the two year program draws to a close, the curriculum of one year program continuing and the admissions process in full swing across different cities. The campus was closed and vacated on 20th March, 2020, four days before the national lockdown was implemented. This proactive measure enabled students to safely reach their homes without undergoing hardships.

ACADEMIC SESSIONS & EXAMS

Great Lakes adopts synchronous blending mode for limited sessions in the part time programs. Due to this experience, the institute was able to quickly and seamlessly use the experience to complete the classes for the one year program. The LMS of the institute is equipped to handling online exams and all exams were completed.

CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT

Many of our clients used the lockdown period to train their executives. Our faculty members with prior experience with online teaching and training were able to design and execute short term training courses for our valuable clients.

ADMISSIONS

Admissions process was cancelled in three cities due to COVID-19. Interview process and evaluation was completed online, making it a completely paperless digital process. This is a valuable learning and could be adopted in a larger scale next year.

RESEARCH SEMINARS & REPOSITORIES

Access to research and other repositories have been made available to faculty members to effectively spend time on research during the lockdown period. Additionally, the institute has subscribed and made available, many international research seminars for the faculty members to attend and gain expertise.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The institute is organizing ten eminent academicians from leading US and European universities to interact with students, provide the state-of-the-art in their respective areas and share their perspectives. Such engagement is expected to enrich the students and provide them ideas to pursue empirical studies and projects.

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has issued guidelines on the commencement of new academic year for full time programs. Full time programs are expected to commence on August 1, 2020. Great Lakes Institute of Management will be adhering to the guidelines issued by AICTE. The institute has already taken action to ensure that the Platinum rated 'Green Campus' is maintained in a pristine condition ensuring highest level of health and sanitation.

Dr. Suresh Ramanathan
Dean & Principal
Great Lakes Institute of Management
Chennai, India



ICFAI BUSINESS SCHOOL HYDERABAD

Blended Learning during the lockdown

In the current difficult times, we at ICFAI Business School, stay committed to providing a continuous learning environment for our students, research scholars and faculty members. We have taken appropriate measures to manage the current lockdown period by providing various online learning activities. Even before the Covid -19, our faculty members have been using blended learning methods using videos from Swayam, NPTEL etc. These video links have been shared with students by each faculty member through course handout/session plan and are being used as a supplementary material. Hence, students have already been trained for blended learning. Similarly, most of the faculty members have already been in constant touch with their students through digital modes, such as WhatsApp and Hangouts while conducting the sessions.

Ever since the classes were suspended due to national lockdown, our faculty members have been sending PPTs, Videos, Audio clips etc. directly to students through e-mail and through Student Information System. Most of our faculty members are conducting their online classes either through Google Classroom and other digital platforms. Connectivity issues at students end especially in remote rural areas is a challenge faced while using such online platforms. However, our faculty members are also constantly in touch with the students to clarify their doubts on phone, through e-mail and WhatsApp.

In addition to teaching online, we are conducting internal evaluations such as tests, presentations and other assignments online using real time learning communication system such as Google Classroom. The remaining internal evaluations for undergraduate students are being planned through digital platforms.

Our faculty members are having regular communication with Summer Interns and supervising their work through online platforms. The companies are helping the interns by giving them work from home assignments. Additionally, faculty members are continually interacting with them by providing assignments that can be done using secondary data. It has been planned to take their project presentations through online mode.

IBS Hyderabad also stay committed to providing a continuous learning environment for our faculty members and research scholars. The university library has provided online library access to our students, research scholars and faculty members. Faculty remain focused on writing research papers and editing books during the lock down period.

We have also motivated our students and research scholars to enroll for online courses by reputed agencies and institutes worldwide. Many of our students have already enrolled for Coursera to upgrade their skills.

The progress of academic operations are monitored digitally through e-mail, phone calls, and by conducting video conferencing. These meetings are attended by the Director, Dean, HODs, other Coordinators and Academic office staff.

Dr. C.S. Shylajan
Dean - Academics
ICFAI Business School
Hyderabad, India



IESMCRC: Covid19 Experiences and Practices

IESMCRC, a premier B-school in Mumbai, is utilizing the Corona times to re-vision-reimagine-reinvent itself. We are using the lockdown period to ask difficult questions and gather insights to best serve the students and corporates. We understand that we are in the midst of a cataclysmic change that is set to alter the known paradigms of living and doing business across sectors. In such a dynamic and evolving scenario, IESMCRC is following a two pronged strategy. We are continuously exploring and sharpening our long term strategy of converting our college into a campus of tomorrow that offers the blended mix of on-line and off-line services. Simultaneously, we have rolled out digital alternatives of as many traditional offerings as possible. Some of our key initiatives are summed up below:

- **Virtual Classrooms:** We have successfully transitioned to digital lectures to ensure timely completion of syllabus.
- **Online Evaluation:** Continuous assessment being a key part of our pedagogy, we have taken the digital route to conduct tests, quizzes, group assessments and individual presentations. Mixed panels comprising of faculty members and industry experts have conducted viva voce for management projects and summer internships.
- **Placement Preparation:** We are continuously organizing special online sessions related to group discussions, psychometric tests and tips on how to face interviews.
- **Knowledge Updation:** Be it the crude oil crises or the business uncertainty confronting the aviation and hospitality sector, we are ensuring that our students are regularly updated on current events, through regular discussions and debates on chat groups. We have also organized an intercollegiate competition on ranking the initiatives of Governments, Corporates and NGOs to ameliorate the impact of Covid-19, against a backdrop of stakeholder capitalism.
- **Skill Enhancement Workshops:** Our students have received skill based training through virtual workshops conducted by our alumni and senior professionals on a diverse range of topics like digital marketing, Google advertisements and LinkedIn Talent Solutions.
- **Industry Webinars:** Our strong industry linkages have given our students access to some thought provoking sessions organized by prestigious industry bodies and associations like CII, FICCI, IMC and TAITRA.
- **Research based Internships:** In order to optimally engage the students whose internships haven't yet started or are in a state of limbo due to the prevailing

uncertainties, we have curated a set of interesting industry relevant topics and asked the students to work on them under the guidance of our faculty.

- **Digital Mentoring and Counselling:** In order to help our students to cope with the current situation, we have reinforced our strong mentoring system by allowing them online access to counselling services. Thus between faculty mentors and a qualified counsellor, we have ensured that help is just a click away for any issue ranging from academic queries to relationship stress to placement related apprehension.
- **Virtual engagements for Admission:** We are in continuous conversations with our applicants through a variety of modes like mails, messages, WhatsApp seminars and webinars conducted by our faculty and industry experts. We are answering their questions, allaying their fears and encouraging them to use this time to upskill themselves.
- **Faculty Development:** We have ensured proper support to our faculty in conducting synchronous web sessions and organizing assessment modules. In addition, our faculty members are attending various skill development sessions on online instruction and evaluation. Some of them are invited as resource persons for various webinars by industry bodies.
- **Digital Library Services:** Our library provides remote access to all e-resources subscribed to. This has ensured smooth access to e-newspapers, databases, repositories and research portals like EBSCO, ProQuest, E-Brary, to name a few, to our faculty and students, anywhere, anytime.
- **Continuous Communication:** We are keeping our communication channels open with all our stakeholders, including staff, faculty, corporates, alumni, applicants and current students. We have also reached out to parents and assured them of our continuous support to their wards in terms of online lectures and assessment.

Given that the lockdown was sudden and unplanned, our response has been quick and effective. Right from admissions to examinations to placement, we have been able to offer e-versions to the satisfaction of our applicant pool, existing student body and employers. We hope to come out stronger as the situation normalizes.

Dr. Dinesh Harsolekar
Director
IES Management College and Research Centre
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Introduction

Established in 1995, IFIM Business School, Bangalore, is the 6th Business School in India to be awarded the AACSB accreditation in 2018. Besides, IFIM is also accredited by National Board of Accreditation (NBA), South Asian Quality Assurance System (SAQS), and is ISO 9001:2008 certified. IFIM Offers the following programs:

- (1) PGDM 2 Year Program
- (2) PGDM in International Business
- (3) PGDM Executive
- (4) PGDM Online
- (5) PGDM-Data Science
- (6) MBA 4.0
- (7) BBA – LLB (5 year – Integrated)
- (8) 3 Year BBA

IFIM has an elite set of international academic partners including leading institutes such as ESCP-London, Darden Business School (University of Virginia) and McCombs Business School (University of Texas at Austin). The total student strength at IFIM is over 1200 across all courses, with 90 faculty members and 40 + non -teaching staff.

Lockdown post Covid 19

Lockdown in India, a country of more than 1.3 billion people has enormous impact on individual lives, corporates, and institutions. Most of the establishments were caught unaware to timely initiate an appropriate business recovery and continuity plan.

Rapid Action following COVID 19 Advisory

The leadership team at IFIM however anticipated an impending lockdown, drawing lessons from the countries where Covid 19 first broke out, and took some measures to ensure a smooth transition to the new normal.

The following actions were taken:

- Enabling Faculty and non-teaching staff to work from home by providing them with computing devices as required.

- Decided to buy the license of Mettl platform to allow students take proctored exams to ensure continuity of the academic process while maintaining the sanctity of the examination process.
- The Institute chose Microsoft Teams as the platform for all virtual collaboration and meetings. MS One drive is made use of, for sharing large data files.

The time IFIM took to respond to the COVID 19 triggered lock down was very minimal considering that it already had a business continuity plan in place with remote learning facility Impartus Live and previously purchased LMS. IFIM had to just add an additional layer of Mettl Platform for conducting regular examinations.

Besides technology, one key element of response is creating awareness. Much before the lockdown IFIM started internal campaign for using hand sanitizers with free distribution of hand sanitizers, urging everyone to use masks, avoid handshakes and maintain social distance.

Business Continuity

All the faculty are working from home today, taking regular classes, modifying the delivery of their courses to align better with technology. IFIM has experienced a high level of student-faculty engagement in academic delivery much like the way it is on the campus in a real-life situation.

In addition, the students have shown admirable dedication to adapt to the new system. All content including the recorded classes are available online for the students for references. They are even doing the live physical fitness program with the trainers from the confines of their homes. As many as 15 sessions have been conducted so far with an average of 320 students per session.

This lockdown period saw the first-year students completing their Term-3 examination under faculty invigilation by using a digital platform for the first time. All the question papers were modified to accommodate an open book online proctored exam. Infact, the platform is able to detect possible malpractices during remote examinations quite efficiently. This form of examination saved time for the faculty to evaluate answer papers, besides saving stationeries, making the process more environment friendly.

A few statistics can reveal the impact of the team's efforts. A large numbers of 1172 unique exams were held for which 1118 number of students appeared. A number of 694 classes have been conducted since the lockdown across all three institutions of IFIM. The Business School has conducted 94 classes with an average of 66 students per class. IFIM college has conducted 524 sessions with an average attendance of 54 students per session and the law school has conducted 76 sessions with a participation of 43 students on an average per session.

Incidentally, this COVID 19 phase coincides with the admission process. IFIM continues to conduct the admission process virtually without compromising the set process and rigor.

It is commendable to note that the faculty is having weekly faculty meetings using Microsoft Teams. It has led to a greater engagement than what it used to be on a non-virtual mode. There are several individual committees at IFIM that also regularly conduct meetings virtually.

Knowledge Asset Creation

During this time IFIM has launched a series of webinars on varied topics. A total of 45 webinar sessions have been conducted so far and many more are in the pipeline. IFIM intends to bring out a compilation of the same post Covid 19 for a wider dissemination to a larger audience as a part of a thought leadership series.

Community Engagement

IFIM constantly keeps engaging with the community through many initiatives. One such initiative is an online learning session conducted by an in-house faculty titled 'ABCD with Pravin Mishra', Pravin Mishra being the faculty conducting the session.

ABCD is an abbreviation for 'Anybody Can Draw'. One may ponder how can some one have an online session on how to draw, but the response to these sessions has been overwhelming. In fact, in one of the sessions there were more than 400 participants, all drawing from the safety of their homes. One of the esteemed participants during one of these sessions was the activist and dancer Ms. Mallika Sarabhai. So far 11 such sessions have been conducted.

Industry Engagement

A lockdown cannot deter IFIM's effort in its constant industry engagement. This is the time when 295 students are undergoing their Industry Internship Programs (the final stage of their PGDM program). The professors are in constant touch with the industry mentors, encouraging them to continue mentoring the students virtually.

IFIM is conducting the first stage of the IIP Viva in which 263 students are presenting their final report. Over 100 corporate mentors are supervising the viva and final presentation and are delighted by the way the students have presented over the MS Teams platform so far.

Social Responsibility

Social Responsibility is the cornerstone of all initiatives at IFIM. It is no surprise that during these tough times, when most are in the confines of their home, IFIM is reaching out to the community outside to extend any possible help. A team of Faculty and students recently visited Kolar, a district in the state of Karnataka (after obtaining necessary permissions and being equipped with protective gears) to distribute food items to 500 families. Drawn from funds created by Kanyathon 2020, IFIM's flagship annual marathon run (with the purpose of Saving

the Girl Child), the institute also transferred an amount of INR 2000/- to the accounts of 200 daily wage women workers in Electronic City Industrial Township Authority, Bengaluru. IFIM has also offered its campus to the Government as a quarantine facility, if required, during this difficult period.

This is the time to stay together, to keep the morale high for all the stakeholders. A 24x7 helpline has been created to address any escalation. A dedicated social group has been created for constant engagement.

To conclude, it is business as usual at IFIM Business School. There is nothing that got disrupted. IFIM just adapted fast to the new normal: new pedagogy mix, remote delivery on virtual mode, and a rapidly activated IT architecture with 24x7 helpline.

Prof. Rakesh Mediratta
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IFIM Business School
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IndSearch

IndSearch

Indian Institute of Cost And Management
Studies & Research (IndSearch)

(An autonomous Institute affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University)

Experiences and Practices amid COVID 19 disruption – Indian Institute of Cost and Management Studies & Research (IndSearch) Pune, India.

The crisis – The COVID 19 pandemic has affected normal life around the World and India is no exception. On 23rd March 2020, Honourable Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi announced a nationwide lockdown allowing only essential services. Overnight, the scenario changed and the daily routine of going to work became nonexistent. To add to this was fear of being infected by the Corona virus and the uncertainty surrounding this all.

Effect of the Lockdown - The lockdown was put in place with immediate effect and this meant that students, faculty and staff were not allowed to come on campus. Students, faculty and Staff were asked to work from home and outstation students were asked to return to their respective hometowns. This was an unprecedented situation and one where there was no end in sight.

Concerns Regarding Education - This sudden lockdown was cause for concern. Faculty were worried about how they would complete the syllabi of various courses taught by them. There was worry about a few internal evaluations and Mid Semester examinations that were scheduled in the first week of April 2020 as well as the final examinations. But beyond all this one major concern was to ensure that during the period of lockdown, students remained gainfully engaged, their physical and mental well being was taken care of and the Institute continued to remain true to its Vision and Mission even in these trying times.

Initiatives taken by IndSearch - The faculty and staff of IndSearch was quick to rise to the occasion.

Shift to Online Mode of Teaching – Without any further delay, all faculty members shifted to online mode of teaching by using a software Free Conference Call. Students were informed to log in to the sessions

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using their cell phones or laptops and start attending classes as per the scheduled time table. This enabled formation of a virtual classroom which also facilitated live two way communication. So it was just as if the students were attending the actual physical classroom, albeit from a remote location. This helped to keep the morale of students high and also enabled faculty to continue with their teaching assignments

Online Tutorials and Mid Semester Examinations – IndSearch has a wonderful Learning Management System developed by our own in-house faculty. This enabled conduct of internal evaluations as well as Mid Semester Examinations and result declarations in time.

Online Feedback – The Institute also collected online feedback from students to understand the probable issues faced by them in attending online sessions and appearing for online evaluation.

Activities of the Career Development Cell - The current scenario is nothing less of a nightmare for the outgoing batch. News about many organizations closing down and retrenchment of staff only added to their fears. Students who had already secured placements were worried if the organizations would honour their word and those who were still looking for placements were worried if they would find any. It was as if they were totally in the dark. To allay their fears and to give them insights into how things would turn out, IndSearch arranged a series of online guest sessions with Senior HR executives from the Industry like Ms.RinitaLaskar Director HR Emerson and Ms. NeetaVaidya – Sr. Director HR TIBCO to name a few. Nevertheless, Faculty members working in the Career Development Cell continued to keep in touch with the industry through emails and calls and the placement process was on.

Summer Internships -Given the unusual situation, field internships were not possible for the students. The Institute formed a group of faculty members along with Industry mentors to design work from home summer internship topics for the students . These internships primarily involve desk research

Continuous Interaction with Students – In addition to the online classes, the Director, Deans and faculty interacted with students on online platforms from time to time, to resolve any issues that they may be facing and to give them reassurance that they will be taken care of.

Faculty Development Programme - Maharashtra is the worst hit state in this Pandemic. Considering the uncertainty of the situation, and not knowing when the lockdown will be lifted, another initiative that was taken was the conduct of a Faculty Development Programme to train Faculty in use of software to record their lectures at home. After the training all Faculty Members have started recording their lectures for various subjects so as to help students to go ahead with their academics.

Application Based Online Workshops - True to its vision and mission and with the aim of giving back to the society, IndSearch launched a series of online application based workshops. These were two day workshops in important areas like Power of Six Sigma, Quantitative Techniques for Business Research, Econometrics made simple, Strategic Cost Management for improving profitability of MSME, Importance of Cost Profit Volume analysis post COVID 19 scenario, Effective methods of Training and Development and Recent amendments to Income tax Act affecting individuals, totally free of charge. These workshops saw huge participation from Industry and Academia.

Courses on SWAYAM and other online learning portals - Although our faculty and students have already been using the SWAYAM platform for self learning, we identified several useful modules for the students and urged them to undertake those courses. Most of the Students and Faculty have undertaken courses to enhance their skills and competencies. In a way this helped to utilize the lockdown period in an effective manner.

Attending Webinars - COVID 19 also resulted in many institutes conducting Webinars on several important issues. Our faculty members and students have enthusiastically participated in these webinars.



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Online Review Meetings - The Institute conducted several online review meetings with faculty to keep a track of syllabus completion and timely conduct of evaluations to ensure that all academic activity was progressing as per the schedule

Implementation of several initiatives as per UGC and AICTE guidelines- IndSearch continued with various initiatives like the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Abhiyan as directed by the AICTE. Also as per the UGC guidelines, IndSearch set up a helpline giving phone numbers of two senior faculty members who counselled students to ensure their mental well being. As instructed by AICTE and UGC, we also informed students about access to various online libraries.

Research - The Institute encouraged faculty members to use the Lockdown time to produce good research. Accordingly a few faculty members came up with some good research papers and case studies. Many of the faculty members also took to writing blogs.

Admissions - Admission work also continued in online mode, with online admission forms and interviews being conducted on online platforms.

Social Responsibility - As an educational Institute, one main objective is to create socially responsible citizens while we ourselves exhibit social responsibility.

Two of our students who have started their own enterprise under the auspices of the Entrepreneurship Development Cell, realizing the need of the hour sifted off manufacturing of PPE kits and are supplying them at nominal rates.

The Institute has donated one day salary of all faculty and staff to the PM CARES Fund

Academic Planning for Post Lockdown Scenario - The Institute has put in place a standard procedure for resuming operation once the lockdown is lifted with all safety precautions and following all norms of social distancing. Tentative Academic plans and Academic Calendars for commencement of activities post the Lockdown have been prepared.

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These plans are taking into consideration different probable commencement dates.

Welfare of faculty and staff - Keeping in mind the welfare of the faculty and staff the Institute has not initiated any salary cuts for the permanent as well as the ad-hoc employees.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going!



Dr. Ashok Joshi
Director General, IndSearch

Dr. Aparna Tembulkar
Director, IndSearch

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IIMB's Response to COVID-19

The Covid issue started emerging in India in February 2020, and further caused a serious concern from early March 2020. The Central and State Governments issued guidelines to control the spread of Covid-19. Based on the various travel advisories received from the Government of India and Government of Karnataka, IIMB imposed restrictions on the visitors to the campus. Some of the events were cancelled and visits by foreign dignitaries were postponed. Faculty/Staff/Students of IIMB who travelled abroad were properly screened by institute medical staff and asked to self-quarantine. People with any symptom similar to that of Covid were sent to Government hospitals for detailed check-up before permitting entry into the campus. With these initial set of measures, the Institute was able to get control over the initial Covid issues and develop a framework to handle the evolving Covid situation.

IIMB was lucky in some ways since all the degree granting programmes, which were mostly residential, got completed by end February 2020. Most of the students had left campus by early March 2020, but would have returned in anticipation of the Convocation which was due to be held on March 20, 2020.

One of our first major decisions was to postpone the physical celebration of the Convocation, while yet conducting it as an E-Convocation, an historic first for IIMB. The Chairman was part of the proceedings, but online. Medals were awarded to those toppers who were present as symbolic of the event. The proceedings were telecast to all the graduating students.

A Steering Committee, constituting the Director, Dean (Programmes), Dean (Administration), the Chief Risk Officer, the Chief Administrative Officer and the Resident Medical Officer was formed to look at all actions pertaining to Covid-19. The committee met thrice a week to review and monitor the activities in the Institute. The implementation on ground was done by appropriate Working Committees constituting the Dean (Administration), the Resident Medical Officer, and other relevant functionaries.

Administrative Measures

Some of the administrative measures instituted are as under:

1. Work from home was implemented and minimum employees were permitted to come to the campus.
2. Students who needed to collect their belongings were permitted to come in a staggered manner until before the lock down which began on March 25, 2020.

3. Essential staff, including for maintenance, estate, security, food services and, IT and programme support were encouraged to stay in the campus and free accommodation and dining facilities were provided.
4. The staff canteen which would have functioned only for two meals and on working days was made to function for all three meals on all days.
5. Quarantine facility was created in the campus.
6. Social distancing norms were implemented. Face masks were provided by the institution to all residents and made compulsory.
7. Common facilities like gym, sports facilities, and other service areas were closed, to reduce maintenance effort.
8. Physical access to library was closed and online access was encouraged.
9. Supplies with institutional oversight were organised to the two retail outlets on campus, for the residents' needs.
10. Essential deliveries from outside were permitted up to the gate from where residents had to collect the same.
11. Spouses of residents who were employed in essential services like hospitals and banks, were required to go out of campus for duty. When they returned, they were subject to protocols for assessing symptoms.
12. Special Finance Committee meetings were held to analyse the financial situation and plan the way forward, keeping in view revenue risks.
13. Faculty and Staff who were to join the Institute during this period, were digitally onboarded. This was again an historic first.
14. Along with the easing of certain aspects of the lock down, faculty and support staff living outside campus and not in confinement zones, will be allowed to come to campus on a need basis, with protocols.

Academic Programmes:

An empowered group (constituting the Internal Executive Committee, Programme Chairs, and Admissions and Placement Chairs) was created to take decisions pertaining to various programmes at IIMB.

Even as we decided on the Convocation, we also decided that the second year of our two-year weekend MBA Programme (Post Graduate Programme in Enterprise Management), which was due to begin on March 21, 2020, would go online. There were a few long durations Executive Education Programmes whose modules were yet to happen. It was decided that these would also go online. The IT support ensured the facilitation of additional IT infrastructure and support, internet bandwidth and the digital platform on which the online courses will be run.

The start of three degree granting programmes which were to begin in April 2020, were postponed. The admissions process for two of them (Executive Post Graduate Programme and Post Graduate Programme in Enterprise Management) with student acceptances had

already been completed. It was decided to start these programmes in the first week of May 2020, on an online mode. Since we were deviating from the programme format, the students were given the option of administrative fee free withdrawal and deferment. A few took this option, while at the same time we could offer to those in the waiting list to bring the batch size to its full complement.

The admissions process for the third programme (Post Graduate Programme in Public Policy and Management) had to be postponed. It was decided to be held online towards the end of April 2020, with programme start postponed to the third week of June 2020. While we were lucky that the admissions process for the incoming new batch of the Post Graduate Programme was complete by mid-March, we still had to do the admissions process for the PhD Programme and the to be launched Post Graduate Programme in Business Analytics. It was decided that the admissions process for these programmes would also be done online in May 2020.

To enable a well thought out transition to a quality online mode of delivery for these programmes, a committee for 'Driving Digital Learning' was set up in mid-April. This committee has been working on a mission mode to ensure that the faculty, staff, software and hardware, and the students are all brought up to speed to ensure effective online learning.

The following was undertaken to enable transition to digital mode of learning:

1. Decision on the appropriate software, examining various criteria like features, user friendliness, security, and privacy.
2. Training for faculty.
3. Mock sessions were held with the students and their feedback was obtained before the start of the course.
4. Training of support staff.
5. Existing digital infrastructure was upgraded, and new equipment was added.
6. Regular feedback is taken from all the participants for improving the learning experience.
7. Based on experience from the ongoing programmes, plans are being made for programmes that have to begin in June, July and August.
8. This experience will also feed into launching online Executive Education Programmes.

There were many issues that needed to be considered for our two-year full-time degree programmes. The summer internships post first year were getting impacted, since companies were getting affected by the lock down. Academic decisions were taken as to what extent we would be willing to accept changes to the summer internship in this unprecedented scenario, while retaining the learning value. To provide more flexibility, the start of the second year has been postponed to mid-July 2020.

For the incoming first year students, there are a significant number who would still have to complete their undergraduate final exams. On the current premise that this would happen by July 2020, the start of the programme is scheduled to be August 2020.

Going online for these programmes would have an additional variable of the infrastructure and bandwidth availability for the students, especially if they were in relatively small towns and/or remote areas. Plans are being made to see how best to compensate for this.

Should we be in a position to bring students on to campus (which we would ideally like to do at the earliest feasible time), social distancing in classes and for dining would be essential. For classes, the thought is to break a section of 75 plus students into two cohorts, and alternate in class and online between the two. For dining, the thought is to stagger the timings of cohorts of students.

Conclusion

The leadership at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore has been closely monitoring the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. As the situation continues to change rapidly, IIMB's top priority remains the health, safety, and well-being of its community, both on and off campus. IIMB has planned for several contingency scenarios and has been taking decisive, informed action to ensure the continuity of its teaching and research mission.

Our faculty have been at the forefront of thought leadership on the pandemic and have published articles in the country's leading newspapers and news portals. Faculty, with support from the administration, have established effective virtual and digital ways of communication that helps them stay connected with students.

The decision to transition to online instruction until further notice also aligns with our goal to reduce the number of interactions on campus and protect our community. To a large extent, the pedagogical, logistical, and technological challenges to these extraordinary measures is helping IIMB to further evolve as a robust institution, including developing its capability as a digital teaching and research-oriented institution.

May 14, 2020

Prof G Raghuram, Director, IIM Bangalore, Bengaluru, India
with inputs from our Chief Administrative Officer

Crisis or Opportunity – Views from Indus Business Academy (IBA) Bangalore

A little less than ten years back, Clayton Christensen spoke about the then existing models of higher education being ‘expensive and outdated’ - models that prevented a large percentage of the population from getting benefited by the knowledge shared by the top institutions in any country. Despite a lot of work happening in that direction, a lot more needs to be done to realise the dream of Professor Christensen. Some forced movement in the forward direction, albeit, has taken place in recent times. The movement though, is at the level of individual colleges trying to cope up with the sudden changes in the demand for the completion of their semesters/trimesters. But, this provides, colleges with an opportunity to relook at the three enablers that the late professor has been talking about since 2011, when his book *The Innovative University* co-authored with Henry Eyring hit the shelves.

In the recent times we have witnessed a paradigm shift from what institutions have been doing for years – physically engaging students in instructional learning in the traditional settings that the institutions are so used to. With the crisis hitting among others, educational institutions as well, a more flexible way of teaching and learning through the dismantling of geographical locations, and the requirement of physical infrastructure to conduct classes got addressed immediately through intelligent use of online teaching and learning modes. At IBA we have had our academics going through seamlessly despite students being at different geographical locations within the country.

1. **Regular Classes:** IBA has been using the Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment, commonly known as MOODLE for providing blended learning, flipped classrooms, and other e-learning based assignment and assessments for some time now. In addition to that, we quickly shifted over to the Zoom platform for conducting our regular classes. Classes are being conducted every day as they would be conducted in the more traditional way inside the campus. There has been no change in the regular timetable, and teaching and learning is continuing in the similar manner with the only

change being the geographical dispersion of the students, and faculty's reliance on the technology platform.

Our professors also quickly realised the need for a changed instructional design to maximise student's learning through this platform. Platforms like Edmodo are used to conduct quizzes and assignments. Multiple resources of Google are also being used for undertaking collaborative problem solving exercises. Some professor's website is used as a customised LMS for working with small group of students in doing case analysis. On the lighter side, some of our students did not realise that these classes will have the similar academic rigour that they have during the regular classes in the campus. As a result, we have also been receiving comments from our students in terms of the high academic rigour, and how they continue to work in the same manner till late at night even now.

2. **Industry Interaction:** A PGDM course does not meet its objectives when students are not able to connect theory with practice. IBA is addressing industry interactions in two ways:
 - a) **Panel Discussions:** During these times, when students are not able to go out to work on a field assignment, we approached senior industry practitioners for experience sharing sessions. Two such sessions with the panel comprising of two CEOs and four senior executives was conducted. More such sessions are planned for the next couple of weeks.
 - b) **Market Research Projects:** Each of our students is involved in an individual Market Research project. This project is a full-fledged primary survey based research paper. Students have identified topics that are contemporary and relevant. Since they cannot go out to talk to respondents and collect data, students have been encouraged to go for online surveys.
3. **Mentoring:** IBA follows the unique practice of guiding and mentoring students till they graduate. Individual attention is given to all students in the unique mentoring program at IBA. Each student is assigned to a faculty mentor right at the beginning of the program and is given academic support throughout the two years of PGDM program at IBA. This allows them to get all their academic problems addressed. The personalized attention helps students gain confidence. The Mentoring program of IBA is also getting conducted without any break during this period. Through some intelligent scheduling we are able to ensure that all mentors get the opportunity to conduct mentoring sessions with their mentees in the same manner in which they would do in the campus. This is also helping

students discuss the problems that they are facing, with their mentors in the same manner as they do while they are in campus.

4. **Faculty Interviews:** We had scheduled a series of faculty interviews during this period, which had to be initially called off. We took advantage of the technology platform to reschedule the interviews, and all the steps that are followed for the selection process including the seminar session with senior professors, and the three rounds of interviews.

There has been a commendable effort on the part of students and professors at IBA to ensure that the academic rigour that IBA is known for is met despite the sudden disruption.

However, going back to the original statement made in this note, maybe it is time for some of the progressive institutions to work together towards not just overcoming the present crisis, but working towards creating the three enablers of disruption in higher education that Clayton Christensen had been advocating for almost a decade now, and that would be a true tribute to the guru.

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Sharing of Experiences & Practices amid COVID-19 Disruption

Institute of Management, Nirma University,
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<https://management.nirmauni.ac.in/>



Associate
Member

Overview:

Covid-19, pandemic caused by Corona Virus, has had catastrophic impact in all spheres of human lives in last few months. This includes complete spectrum i.e. political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal (PESTEL) across the globe. The virus which originated in China has gripped almost all countries (*developed or developing, large or small*) in some or other way. Number of fatalities, toll of infected patients and severe economic losses are only some of the tangible evidences of disaster caused by Covid-19. At global level, efforts have been at frenetic pace to contain its impact and to bring back normalcy. Lockdown announced by many countries, including India is one such measure.

Under this backdrop, information and communication technology (ICT) has proved to be a boon. ICT in form of the online teaching and assessment tools is one of the growing trends in all facets of education, as it has prompted the educators to refine their course delivery mechanisms and overall engagement with stakeholder. (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2010; Seethamraju, 2014).

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a unique scenario, which has mandated educational institutions to reconsider how the teaching learning process needs to be undertaken

Strategies for maintaining the quality of online teaching, include maintaining open communication with students, ensuring online courses are as rigorous as their traditional counterparts, using various teaching methods to attract students with different learning styles (Gaytan & McEwen, 2007).

Online engagement by the Institute:

Institute of Management, Nirma University (IMNU) has also embraced ICT for overall engagement with its stakeholders. To complete the remaining classes, IMNU Faculty community adopted a blend of synchronous tools (*ZOOM, Google Meet, Live Streaming on YouTube and Facebook, Google Hangout, Live discussion forum on Piazza platform*) and asynchronous tools (*PPT with recorded audio and video case driven sessions*) for online teaching. Overall students' response across the programmes through above-mentioned tools was found to be positive. However, each tool had its pros and cons.

Due to continuous lockdown, students' assessment was also conducted through online mode. Institute wide, MOODLE Learning Management System (LMS) tool was adopted for conducting the final exams. Many Faculty members had used this earlier too for conducting their CEE. The open assignment model through MOODLE was used for conducting the end- term evaluations for the graduating batches of IMNU.

In absence of physical supervision, the institute had issued guidelines to all faculty members which stated that the question paper designed should include cases (*that don't have ready solution on internet or books*), application oriented questions and/or analytical questions. Additionally, the question paper was to be vetted by the respective area, before it was uploaded onto the LMS platform. Additionally, at the undergraduate level, an online viva-voce session is also being planned to compliment the open assignment assessment. Students were given two days (after uploading) to submit their assignment. Largely, the process went smooth but in certain cases, where the students found some problem in MOODLE, they submitted the assignment by email.

Admission team of IMNU utilised various ICT tools for different aspects of admissions process for the MBA programme and currently the admission process is ongoing for MBA (Family Business & Entrepreneurship). Personal interview rounds for the shortlisted candidates are being conducted via online platforms. Faculty members have also started online mentoring by providing intellectual, instructional and psychological support to their respective mentees. WhatsApp as a tool has been one of the most effective tool used for this interaction. Continuous faculty (and staff) engagement also takes place through online platforms like ZOOM and Google Meet, for which intimation and web-link are sent in advance. Corporate Relations Cell (CRC) of the Institute also made appropriate use of ICT platforms for resolving various placement related issues (*including summer placements*).

Programme committees and different academic areas have also conducted online meetings for resolving various academic matters for current and next year. Centre of Excellence (COE) work has also been facilitated due to tools like Google Drive. Statutory Faculty of Management (FOM) meeting (*having multiple external experts*) also took place using ZOOM. ICT tools also paved the way for selection of specialisation electives for Second Year of MBA Programmes. Some Faculty members have also delivered Webinars while many others have started utilizing online tools for reskilling.

Faculty engagement with students

Immediately after the teaching activity was suspended around mid-March, the faculty members brainstormed and designed a strategy to engage students for covering the remaining course contents and also conduct evaluations through online platforms. Faculty members conducted internal training sessions to share their practices and experiences on teaching through digital mode. For a business management student at Nirma University, a lot of learning happens beyond the classroom through various digital and online platforms like course blogs, online chat podcasts & discussion forums, self-paced tutorials, Google Classrooms, Learning Management Systems (like Moodle), Piazza, YouTube to list a few. After allowing our students to reach home and settle down, the faculty members shared a weekly schedule for online sessions through platforms like Google Hangouts Meet and Zoom Video Communications. Faculty members also prescribed cases, articles and other reading materials that the students must read before attending the online sessions. Faculty members also created WhatsApp groups for their courses to share reaching materials with the students. All the faculty members and students of Nirma University have remote access facility to use online and digital resources of our Library like e-journals and databases.

Recommended students online educational resources

Yes. In its natural course, teaching and learning business management concepts and practices requires reference to a lot of contents from the real world. We have been encouraging our students to take up online courses to supplement learnings. SWAYAM On-line Courses, UGC MOOCs, e-PG Pathshala, Swayamprabha, National Digital Library, Shodhganga are the platforms prescribed to students. Additionally, faculty members have also shared cases, presentations, articles etc. to the students through google drive, Piazza, LMS-Moodle and emails. After the lock-down, we shifted our Learning Management System – Moodle to a cloud based server so that faculty members and students can access the same from anywhere through internet.

Student online-assignments and monitoring

Students are assigned specific task(s) for every online session. These tasks include completing specific readings, case analysis, problem solving, preparing presentations & reports, preparing answers to set of questions assigned etc. Students have also been assigned assignments that they can submit through online platforms like LMS-Moodle, Piazza. The nature of the assignments depends on the courses. For a foundation course like Industry Analysis, students have been assigned specific industries and have been asked to prepare detailed report on these industries by applying the theories, models and lessons learnt in the classroom sessions. For an elective course like Brand Management, students have been asked to compare, contrast and analyze brands and their strategies. Similarly, for an elective course like Financial Statement Analysis, students have been asked to prepare a report on financial analysis of 2-3 comparable companies. All the information and data required for completing these assignments is available on the internet and/or University's Library which is accessible by student through their remote access connections.

Student Internship 2020 via Work-From-Home (WFH) mode

During this lockdown period which coincided with the scheduled Summer internships of students, the Institute decided that no field based internship is to be carried out, based on the directives of the government and keeping in mind the health & safety aspects of students.

Instead, Work-From-Home virtual internship model was proposed to the recruiters. The response from the recruiters were very positive, around 95% of them agreed to the suggestion and eight weeks of internships (between April to June) is underway in virtual mode. Of course, monitoring by the faculty through phone calls, video calls and WhatsApp is now the new normal.

Future Challenges and Opportunities

Most of analysis predicts that Covid-19 may take some more time to subside in India, therefore, we need to quickly adapt ourselves to face this unprecedented challenge. While Nirma University is exploring an appropriate licensed tool for teaching-learning and assessment process, IMNU is also preparing hard for it. Moreover, the admissions of our Integrated BBA-MBA Programme, Integrated B. Tech-MBA Programme and PhD Programmes are going to take place shortly. Due to geographical, logistical and psychological challenges; technology tools will act as an enabler in our upcoming admission process. If government and regulator do not allow us to start classes as per our regular schedule, we intend to initiate next year's classes through online mode.

Covid-19 is surely a new paradigm and everyone needs to accept it as quickly as possible. We at IMNU are optimistic that despite challenges; our people, processes and technology will allow us to maintain our academic rigor, market position and overall image.

For any further information please write to director.im@nirmauni.ac.in

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RESILIENCE FOR A NEW NORMAL – DIGITAL INTERVENTIONS AT IMT GHAZIABAD DURING COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically shaken the world that was. Suddenly governments, business and society are clamoring to meet the immediate challenge of survival. In this situation there is no option but to start a new normal to save the society and the economy, which is at the brink of great depression, and to provide livelihood to those who are engaged with the institute. The pandemic has created a new normal for the higher education sector, revolutionizing the online learning landscape, reshaping application processes, and refreshing crisis management strategies.

IMT Ghaziabad(IMTG) is taking all measures to protect the health of its community and acting in line with government regulations and recommendations. Our Executive Committee has established a cross-departmental working group that meets regularly, monitors the situation and takes action with health and safety as a top priority. This includes advice on how to maintain productivity, collaboration, and learning among teams that may need to work remotely during this crisis.

We remain committed to providing world-class education on a personal scale, even in these challenging and uncertain times, and we've taken significant measures to uphold that commitment to our students.

We know very well that we all are going through an unprecedented predicament due to Covid-19. Each one of us is affected in some way. Still, pandemic has prompted us to gain a heightened self-awareness with innovative interventions.

The following is a compilation of initiatives based on courses of action that we have implemented:

IMT GHAZIABAD PROACTIVENESS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Because of the closures mandated by governments in an attempt to contain the spread of *COVID-19*, digital technology is now being implemented across the spectrum of necessary activities including education. Educational institutions have modified the teaching and learning practices by deploying digital tools to facilitate the continuity of education and meaningful delivery to students. Academicians and industry experts have affirmed that online education is the new normal. During this time, we are in regular touch base of all our stakeholders such as employees, students, alumni and corporate partners through virtual mode because we believe they are our asset and their safety is our prime most concern.

We at IMTG are following all Government advisory and AICTE guidelines for executing our institutional process. We are also maintaining social distancing and hygiene by sanitizing the institute premise at regular intervals, providing support staff necessary items like- sanitizer, hand gloves, mask, infrared thermometer etc.

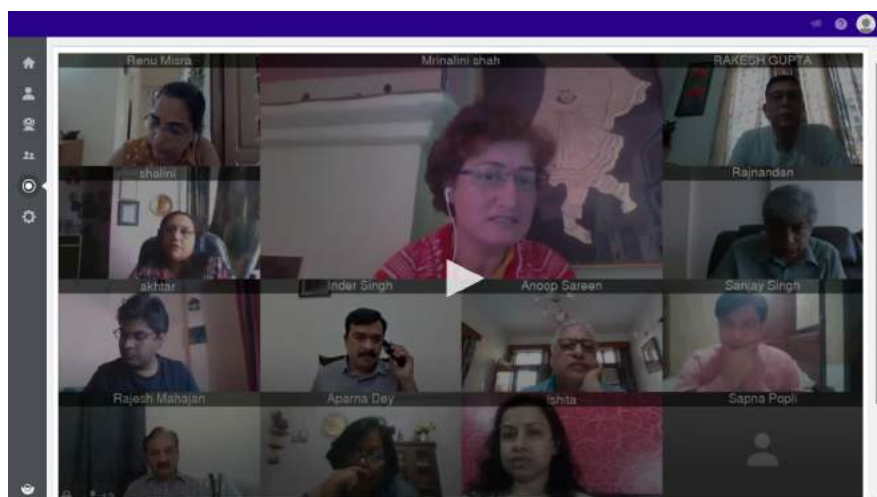
DIGITAL INITIATIVES FOR THE IMT GHAZIABAD COMMUNITY

IMT Ghaziabad is very keen to optimize the usage of its resources and services during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The digital initiatives are adopted by the IMT Ghaziabad to support teaching, research, and learning needs during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown period to the IMT community.

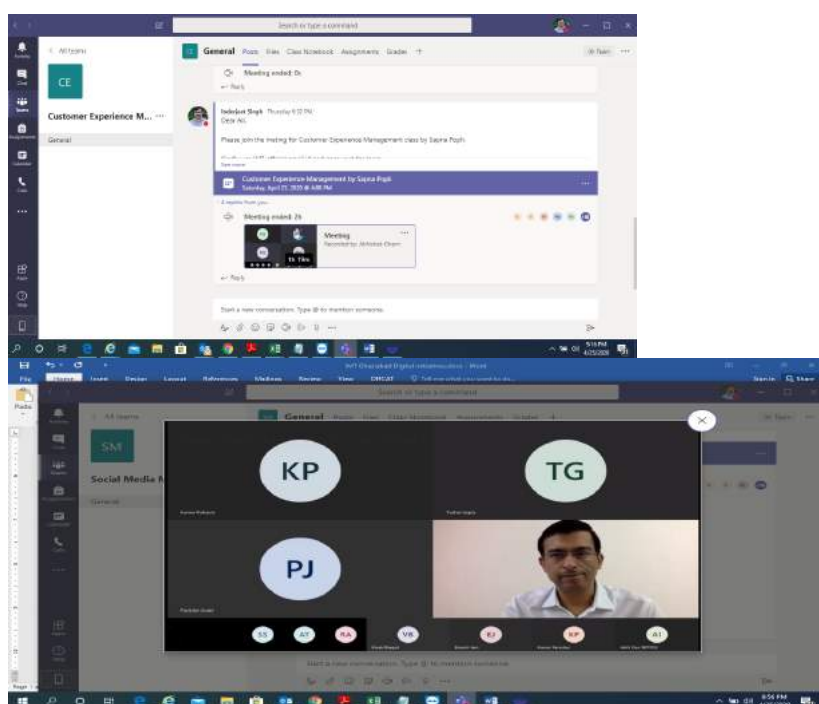
The acceptance of the market in terms of online access and delivery of education has become global. When virus rocked our physical world, we moved online. Going online has made both the dissemination of education and learning, flexible. We at IMT Ghaziabad have made an early head start into building flexibility in our curriculum and our teaching-learning process. Our hybrid model of delivery has amply equipped us to cope with the situation.

During this lockdown period, IMT Ghaziabad is using highly secure **Lifesize Cloud**, a global innovator of video communications and collaboration platform to handle all the online meetings of various committees, project presentations and video conferences.

We are conducting classes of our flagship PGDM program and PGDM Part - Time program, which is specially designed for working executives, entrepreneurs and professionals using Microsoft Team.



Microsoft Team is a unified communication and collaboration platform that combines persistent workplace chat, video meetings, file storage, and application integration. We have already conducted more than 175 online sessions using the online platform.



IMT uses ERP system for managing academic and non-academic functions. The system is in use by students, faculty, academic administrators, and staff members. The web-based application can be accessed by all authorized users from campus and outside campus. The portal maintains all the relevant data related to all academic and non-academic activities. Students can access academic performance related data through the portal. Access to all relevant information to authorized leadership team helps in the process of planning and decision-making.

IMT Ghaziabad has exclusive subscription of **Coursera** during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The Coursera is one of the most trusted online certification platform with more than 3,700 online courses. All the courses are available for the students of the IMT Ghaziabad free of cost. Currently there are 1,154 enrollments in the various courses. More than 3,100 learning hours have already been spent in the appx a month.

Access to Digital Resources

- All of our e-books, e-journals, databases, and other electronic materials available via [Remote Access Services](https://ezproxy.imt.edu). ([Https://ezproxy.imt.edu](https://ezproxy.imt.edu))
- Embedded URL created for the access of EBSCOHost Resources (e-journals, e-books, e-newspapers, and educational videos, etc.) remotely.
- Embedded URL created for Discovery Services all-inclusive search solution for e-journals databases that makes in-depth research easy via single-point searching.

Complimentary Access to Digital Resources

The IMTG library coordinated with major publishers and digital platforms to provide expanded and complimentary resources for remote teaching, learning, and research. Following online resources accessible on complimentary basis.

- Sage Research Method
- Sage Business Cases
- EBSCO Faculty Select
- HBR Ascend
- e-Books Collection of Harvard Business School Publishing
- Refinitiv Eikon
- Factiva.com
- **APA PsycArticles**
- Reilly for Higher Education
- Alexander Street (Academic Video Online)

Harvard Business Publishing Support Services

Harvard Manage Mentor (HMM)

These interactive online courses are great for remote students during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Students are filled with tons of videos, polls, quizzes, and reflections to keep students engaged. List of the module is shared below:

- 41 courses available in all disciplines (Marketing, Finance, Operations, Strategy, HR, OB, etc.)

- 2.5 to 3 hours long: Include videos, exercises, quizzes, HBR articles, podcasts, etc.
- Each course has an assessment & certificate of completion from HBP
- Professors can track students' progress and facilitate a lecture/discussion through Zoom or Web-ex using the slides and Teaching guides that come with the courses

Harvard Business Publishing Online Resources and Webinars

Some resources and upcoming webinars to help faculty adapt to teaching online and move existing activities like case discussions to virtual environments. Check out the following [PAGES](#) for a compilation of all the resources.

- [Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter](#)

Today's e-Newspaper Services

Today's e-newspapers services is being provided to IMTG Community via email on a daily basis for general reference and awareness.

e-Textbook and e-Course Pack

With reference to term exams and online classes, the library provides relevant subject **e-Textbooks and course packs** for reading and learning purposes.

e-Research Papers, e-Articles, e-Books and e-Reports

The library is sharing e-research papers, e-articles, e-books and e-reports on relevant topics with the academic community regularly for their academic research, teaching and consultancy. The library fulfilling all teaching, research, and learning needs of faculty and students daily via email and web based information services.

Database Training via WebEx

Online Customer Engagement Services, training session and webinar organized by the service provider for the faculty and students during COVID-19 to learn how to use online resources for best out of academic research, teaching, and learning.

Online Certification Courses

Library compiled list of online certification courses (national and international) and shared with IMT Community for utilization of time by engaging with online certification courses for broadening the horizon of learning.

Open Educational Resources (OERs)

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are the resources available in the public domain with a free license. Due to COVID-19 lockdown, many stakeholders of education across the globe, including universities, publishers, etc. have opened the door to OERs. These OERs though many in numbers, are scattered, and IMTG library making an effort to organize and place them on one page to save the time and energy of IMTian. The list will be shared soon.

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

Many of our clients used the lockdown period to train their executives. Our faculty members with prior experience with online corporate training were able to design and execute training courses for our valuable clients. We take pride in stating that we are a solution-oriented institute to our corporate partners during the time of crisis.

RESEARCH & REPOSITORIES FOR IMTG FACULTY

Access to research and other repositories have been made available to faculty members to effectively spend time on research during the lockdown period.

Compilation of Information and Resources on COVID-19 for Research

Several publishers are providing content access in full or partial as a support for students, research scholars, and academics on COVID-19. A list of online resource and materials are available from the publishers. The same is available at IMTG library portal as well.

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has issued guidelines on the commencement of new academic year for full time programs. Full time programs are expected to commence on August 1, 2020. Great Lakes Institute of Management will be adhering to the guidelines issued by AICTE. The institute has already taken action to ensure that the Platinum rated 'Green Campus' is maintained in a pristine condition ensuring highest level of health and sanitation.

ADMISSIONS WEBINARS

Recognizing the extraordinary challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic poses, we are making adjustments to our admissions processes to better serve prospective students and protect the health and safety of our entire community. We are promptly addressing to the crisis emerged and following AICTE guidelines to frame the actions. As part of Admissions Outreach Program, we are planning a series of activities, including webinars to engage our prospective students to benefit their learning. The webinars are planned around various contemporary topics with the support of IMTG leadership team, IMTG faculty, engaging other IMT campuses like IMT Dubai, IMT Nagpur and IMT Hyderabad.

In these webinars we are also engaging our senior Alumni to answer prospective students queries and have continuous touch base with them.

Webinar topics are as follows:

- Most Important Skills Required for the new-age MBA jobs
- Responsive Management Education
- Mayhem in Global Financial Markets and Risk Management.
- Marketing in the Digital Age
- COVID-19 Pandemic & B-School Education/IMT's Response to the Crisis
- The BFS program at IMT Ghaziabad: Plan and Expectations.
- MBA Journey to 2022: Challenges & Opportunities.
- The Dual Country Program of IMT Ghaziabad: Plan and expectations
- Leading with Uncertainty: Challenges and Opportunities.
- Enterprising Student Committees and Clubs at IMT Ghaziabad: Making Best use of Peer Learning.
- Leading with Uncertainty: Challenges and Opportunities.
- Contemporary Skills for Excelling MBA and Management Career.
- Entrepreneurship in Crisis Times.

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IPE during the times of COVID-19: The story of transformational change in learning and teaching

The threat of COVID-19 across the world has impacted every one of us. Many institutions are experiencing disruption of scheduled work and academic activities due to extended and indeterminate campus closures. Institute of Public Enterprise (IPE), Hyderabad has taken a two-pronged approach to ensure that the learning for the students continues without any disruption. The institute has implemented a) Asynchronous method of teaching and learning and b) Synchronous method for face-to-face instruction.

IPE's asynchronous approach is based on creating and distributing content like PowerPoint presentations, course materials, assignments, e-learning resources and e-library links etc. developed by the faculty members to the students through e-mails, chat applications etc. to ensure student interaction. The synchronous approach is using a video-conferencing tool to achieve faculty-student interaction in a live mode. IPE has utilised the services of Zoom platform and moved its entire offline time-table to online where faculty and students can hear, see, and interact with each other at the same time and can have a "in person" class experience.

IPE has armed itself with these initiatives primarily because of the foresightedness of its Board of Governors, faculty, staff and its investment well ahead of the present times in information technology by way of putting in place the requisite hardware, software and trained manpower well versed in the latest techniques of learning. The faculty, staff and students have been provided with laptops, desktops, printers, wifi and other related facilities. This is how the most recent meetings of its Board of Governors, Executive Committee, Finance Committee and Annual General Body were conducted through Zoom endorsing fully the Prime Minister's frequently made appeal to defeat and banish COVID-19 through social distancing, IPE has permeated in itself the stakeholder theory.

IPE prides itself on providing high quality learning experience and with seasoned faculty members in its fold the business is as usual in the institute and the learning for the students never stops.

Below we describe how teaching and learning is undergoing a transformational change in India in various universities:

1. DIGITAL TEACHING-LEARNING INITIATIVES AT ASSAM ROYAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY, GUWAHATI

The Assam Royal Global University (RGU), a State Private University in Guwahati Assam, has taken prompt steps to resort to the digital platforms on March 21st 2020 -the day HRD ministry issued notification about work from home before the Lock Down.

As all heads and faculty members were part of different Whatsapp group so necessary guidelines were given and we started preparing for online classes and sharing study material with students. It is worth mentioning that many faculty members started online interaction with students from 16th march itself.

The University management issued operating guidelines on 23rd march as Assam state was not under lockdown, IT team of university worked whole day and checked that all faculty members are provided with class wise/ subject wise group id's of students they also provided training of google classroom and other platforms to faculty members. ROYALNet the digital platform of the University where we manage attendance, upload lesson plans and study material became very helpful as students are receiving relevant material, assignments, videos, video links on this platform while studying from home. All faculty members are in constant touch with their students through the respective WhatsApp Groups as well as through the mass student e- mail network, ROYALNet and google classroom.

The faculty members are very actually and enthusiastically using digital platforms and frequently using Google Classroom and began uploading learning materials, useful links, youtube video lectures, assignments and also some of their own video lectures as per the scheduled classes and reporting on daily bases.

Examinations were also conducted online in some e-classes, Some other examinations are being planned for the coming days. The students have started submitting their completed assignments through e-mail.

The students are regularly motivated and directed to be responsive to the digital transactions by each teacher. The senior officers, right from the VC, Chairperson (Academic), the Deans of Schools and the HoDs and Coordinators are regularly monitoring the progress of the pedagogic exercises of the University in the digital ecosystem.

The University has already developed few video lectures and demonstrations by the faculty members. The process shall now be accelerated so that we achieve best results during lockdown period. As of now, as an emergent exigency the response from the digital mode is very encouraging and effective to a great extent too. Stay home, stay safe- work from home and take this opportunity to learn more is current focus of Royal global university.

2. NMIMS faculty is now delivering lectures, and assessing students online. Even the attendance records are maintained as students login. Multiple technologies like Zoom are being used.
3. In the wake of the nation-wide lockdowns, TCS is offering schools and colleges, access to the TCS iON Digital Glass Room, a virtual learning platform, free of cost, so students can continue learning at home through this unprecedented period.
4. The TCS iON Digital Glass Room is a mobile and web education platform for schools and colleges, that empowers educators to engage with students in real time by sharing lessons, videos, worksheets, assignments and assessments, using interactive methods like polls,

debates, quizzes, surveys and many more tools. As an add-on, the platform also provides an embedded live classroom, which simulates live classroom teaching.

TCS iON Digital Glass Room is available to educational institutes of all types, irrespective of the medium of instruction, Board/University affiliation, or size. Interested schools and higher education organizations can register for the platform by going to <https://learning.tcsionhub.in/hub/glass-room/>

Pls forward to anyone who might find this useful.

5. <https://www.livelaw.in/news-updates/covid-19-nlud-introduces-free-online-e-pg-pathshala-courses-for-law-students-to-avail-study-at-home-facility-153938>

We had put up this for students of law on 19th now working to organise online classes through Zoom.

6. Presently Zoom happens to be one of the best for online course instructions, conferencing and sharing. Requesting all to take care in these difficult times,
7. BITS Pilani has gone Live online for all its UG and PG classes following its entire Time Table for all the subjects since March 19. This is happening across all its campuses, namely Pilani, Goa, Hyderabad and Dubai. Dubai started it on March 8. The campus shutdown happened on March 9 in Dubai. Connectivity issues at the student end is a challenge. Attendance in online classes is high, the experience so far. We appreciate this opportunity to share our narrative.
8. For Jain University Kochi Campus we are starting online classes through zoom from Friday onwards Already students have been shared with learning material and ppts So we hope that this situation will not lead us into more crisis.
9. At Symbiosis, we are conducting online classes using Zoom and similar tech. Faculty members are delighted with the results! Access to online databases is also helping faculty to devote time to research.
10. Good Day to everybody! I greet the Aiu' idea of forming the group and congratulate. In pursuance of the UGC guide lines, I have assigned academic tasks (research articles/ editing/ commentary/ translation...) for the lockout period to the teachers of our University.

Prof. R. K. Mishra
Director
Institute of Public Enterprise,
Hyderabad, India



Engagement Continuity Plan (ECP) at International School of Management Excellence (ISME), Bangalore amidst COVID-19 pandemic crisis.



Introduction

The world is going through the most challenging times in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Just like every sector in the economy is in deep waters, education sector is no exception. The abrupt shutdown of educational institutions due to security and health consideration and the pause in their routine functions caused a major disruption in the traditional education model in India. While the uncertainty of the crisis looms large and continues to pose a challenge to the education sector, it has led to a paradigm shift in the sector backed by the foundations of strong technological support.

ECP at ISME

The International School of Management Excellence (ISME), like many of the early movers, proactively put its **Engagement Continuity Plan (ECP)** in place to ensure that the institute functioned seamlessly through the lockdown period without any compromise on the safety and security of its stakeholders (the students, faculty and the staff). The institute's objective has

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been to maintain the schedule and continuity of the activities with the support of its students and its entire team, working from home.

ISME offers a 3-year BBA program affiliated to Bangalore University (BU) and a AICTE approved, NBA certified PGDM program. The institute designed its engagement continuity plan for the BBA course and the PGDM course separately.

BBA Program

Online Classes

The BBA students are being engaged through online classes as per their regular schedule. They have tests and continuous sessions to make them exam ready so that they are in line with the schedule of BU. Students have been regular in the class.

Adoption and Effectiveness of Online Classes

Technology has ensured that their attendance can be monitored. The students' adoption of technology and class involvement has been commendable. The online classes are as interactive and interesting as they would be in sessions in the classrooms back in the campus. The online mode of internal evaluation and assignments submissions clearly reflect the students' and faculty's commitment and enthusiasm. Despite the difficult times, the students have been supportive.

Projects on COVID-19

In order to broaden their horizon of thoughts, faculty have assigned the students to work on various projects which relate to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant situations within their respective subjects.

App for Preparing for Exam

ISME has developed an app known as Get100Marks for all Bangalore University BBA students to prepare for the BBA exams.

Exams

ISME is gearing up to conduct the 2nd internal exams for BBA students online through the exam.net portal.



PGDM Program

Internship

Under normal conditions, the PGDM students take up Summer internship assignments in various companies at this time of the year. The crisis began just at the time, when they were to begin with their assignments. Some corporates allowed the students to work from home but many others had to unfortunately cancel their internship projects. For the latter set, to give the students an internship like experience and to ensure that they did not miss out on the hands-on learning, the institute planned individual “Challenging Assignments” for them. The challenging project requires a good deal of data assimilation and analysis, all from the confines of home. They have faculty guides to assist them through their projects. The faculty have a one- to- one supervision time with the students every week.

Online Certifications

Simultaneously, while the students are at home, they are using their time productively by getting online certifications and learning more about their subjects.

Webinars

ISME has facilitated webinars with Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC), National HRD Network (NHRD) Bangalore Chapter and leaders in the industry for the students and faculty.

Team ISME

The management, the faculty, the students and the entire team at ISME is not leaving any stone unturned to make the most of the unprecedented times that we are all facing.

Online Admissions and Placements

As a proactive team at ISME, the faculty, the admissions and the placement teams have been working tirelessly to make the institution ready for the future.

e-Learning Videos

The faculty is oriented towards e-learning and is preparing online lectures and e-learning videos to facilitate blended learning which according to many well-known educationists is the way ahead.

Continuous efforts and lot of innovative ideas are going into making the next academic year better for the existing students and for the new batch of students who will be joining us.

Mr. Nitin Garg
Director
International School of Management Excellence
Bengaluru, India

www.isme.in

Explore > Experience > Excel

Experiences & Practices amid COVID-19 Disruption - Jaipuria Institute of Management, Jaipur

The outbreak of COVID-19 has created unprecedented crisis in human history. India could not remain isolated for long and it all started surfacing slowly but steadily. Government announced complete lockdown of educational institutions across the country and it equally happened in Rajasthan. Since then, it has been more than a month. It quickly started affecting almost all aspects of our functioning, including admissions, summer internship, placement, and regular educational delivery. Nevertheless, Jaipuria Institute of Management, Jaipur responded fairly quickly, rather in no time and started delivering on all aspects.

Living up to its mission which incorporates the pursuit of 'stakeholders' wellbeing', 'continuous improvement', and 'student centricity', the institute started responding with the following twin-principles in mind:

- There should be no loss of wellbeing
- There should be no loss of learning

Lockdown effected fairly quickly

In order to keep the wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff, the institute put in place all the measures related to sanitization, cleanliness, and avoidance of big gathering. Students' farewell party was cancelled. Online classes started from the campus and students were asked not to come to the institute. Holi celebration was organized only symbolically to avoid any physical contact. Eventually, the institute was locked down from 20th March, 2020 and 'Work from Home' was declared.

Automatic shifting to online teaching

Institute shifted all its classes in online mode. Fortunately, Jaipuria already had the needed IT support in place which made the transition fairly swift and automatic. Our 'Impartus Lecture Capture System' installed in classrooms enables recording of lectures which can be accessed by Jaipuria students through Jaipuria-One App and from anywhere-anytime. This is part of Jaipuria's post-learning reinforcement program. The Impartus System supported online livestreaming from home also. It supported large class and enabled safe environment, interaction, and launching of discussion forum. Zoom platform was also used by faculty for conducting classes from home.

Online examinations and results

The End Term Hall Examinations were shifted to online mode. The question papers were amended to suit open examination system. The login and logout timings were put on auto-mode using Jaipuria LMS-Moodle System. All submissions were subject to auto-run similarity test using Turnitin Software. Similarly, improvement examinations were also conducted online and term results were declared in

time as per academic calendar. Both for classes and exams, detailed guidelines, in terms of Work-From-Home (WFH) guidelines and steps to follow, were issued.

Online Convocation for graduating batch

E-Convocation is planned on 15th May, 2020, which is likely to be addressed by Hon'ble Defense Minister, Government of India, Shri Rajnath Singh as the Chief Guest and Ms Anuranjita Kumar, MD, Royal Bank of Scotland as Guest of Honour. The diploma will be conferred on students of the pass out batch and the same will be made available to them through email as well as uploaded on Moodle. Similarly, the Grade Sheets, Diploma Certificates and Merit Certificates are being uploaded on Moodle, which our students can access.

Continuous mentoring for creating atmosphere of trust

Jaipuria Institute of Management has a strong system and culture of mentoring, wherein faculty and students share a bond which transcend beyond learning. Nothing could have worked more effectively for students than the assurance shared by mentors. It was important for us to tell our students that their learning is taken care of and academic calendar is adhered to. Our system of mentoring also helped keeping in touch with students and parents so as to address their concerns.

Substituting summer internship with Work-From- Home (WFH) Projects

Work-from-home Projects were designed taking student, alumni, industry mentor on board. Students were provided with alumni and industry mentors along with faculty mentor. Weekly meetings are being held. Many students received work-from-home assignments from their respective Companies where they were placed for training, which they preferred to continue along with WFH Projects. Field experience will be provided to students as and when time permits and if it is conducive to do so.

Continuation of admissions and placement activities

The placement of batch 2018-20 is almost over with less than 10% students remaining to be placed. Online process for final placement is on and about 20 odd companies are lined up for online process. We have seen just one deferment in joining, however, 3 students also received new placement offer during lockdown period. Admissions are more than half-way, and we are apprehending that admissions may slow down in view of COVID-19 situation. Nevertheless, continuous addition to applications is happening. We conducted 64 online interviews during the period of lockdown during which 25 admissions materialized. Institute will follow the new session starting schedule as declared by the government. However, continuous learning program and online live classes are being conducted. Students have also been suggested to complete MOOCs courses with certification. Our online modules on iJaipuria is being offered to students for learning and certification (<https://beta.ijaipuria.com/courses/>).

Welfare engagement and support

Some steps taken by Jaipuria Institute of Management towards supporting the society and the government in this difficult time are briefed below:

- One day salary by faculty and staff was donated to PM CARES Fund
- Rs 15 lakhs were donated to PM CARES Fund centrally by Jaipuria Institute of Management
- Rs 10 lakhs were donated to CM Fund, Rajasthan
- All fee generated from selling of admission forms this year has been donated to PM CARES Fund
- More than 12000 Food Packets have been distributed till 30th April 2020 to needy, poor and migrated labourers.

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 protocols and restrictions. Jaipuria Institute of Management has also prepared worst case planning and has started the process of preparing SoPs for post lockdown working. The worst scenario planning has taken into account 5 different scenarios of time of starting of academic activities, which extend up to end of December 2020. The planning has been done on all fronts—academic delivery, campus safety, sanitization and hygiene norms, and budget. Cost-cutting and deferment of capital expenses have been planned. In all probabilities, it has been decided that faculty and staff salary will be the last one to see a cut. Further, even in the worst scenario, there will be no cut in salary for staff earning below a cut-off income. It is to be noted that Jaipuria Institute of Management has not resorted to any pay cut so far.

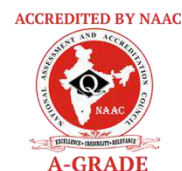
Video messages released by Jaipuria Institute of Management, Jaipur can be accessed at:

1. "How learning continues at Jaipuria, in this uncertain time" by Dr Prabhat Pankaj, Director:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30II_XAFbMw&t=3s
2. "How learning continues at Jaipuria, in this uncertain time" by Dr Anurag Singh, Dean:
(Academics)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjDx7z0vazg>
3. Address by Dr Prabhat Pankaj, Director, Jaipuria Institute of Management, Jaipur to new batch of admitted students on "MBA Journey":
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPI2tZZ9EXU>



Dr Prabhat Pankaj
Director

Phone: Cell: +91-8008103810
Web : www.jntuh.ac.in
E Mail: smsdir@gmail.com



SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY HYDERABAD
(Established by Govt. Act No. 30 of 2008)
Kukatpally, Hyderabad – 500085, Telangana, India.

Prof. A Prabhu Kumar
B S(Hons) M Tech, MBA, PhD

DIRECTOR

Sharing of Experience and Practices amid COVID-19 Disruption

JNTUH School of Management Studies has taken concrete steps to minimize the academic disruption during the lock down period. The following measures are taken:

- Students are provided with self explanatory notes, PPTs, Videos, links of NPTEL, Coursera.
- Online classes are being conducted through Zoom and Skype. Students are showing keen interest in online learning.
- Final year students projects are being guided through e-mail, WhatsApp, and other means.
- Students are attending webinars and online sessions conducted by other academic institutions.
- Students are submitting the assignments through e-mail and WhatsApp.
- Faculty members are attending online workshops, seminars and webinars conducted by UGC HRDC and AICTE.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Prabhu Kumar", is written over a faint, circular watermark of the university's logo.

DIRECTOR



Teaching – Learning Most Minimally Impacted at JKLU during COVID-19

R L Raina*

Staying home is the only way, at this juncture, to stay safe and well.

At **JK Lakshmipat University (JKLU)**, this mantra has been implemented in letter and spirit. Without, in any way, compromising on 'quality', JKLU has continued with its academic activity-mix, particularly its 'teaching-learning process' across all its programs, offered by its Institute of Management, Institute of Engineering & Technology and the recently established Institute of Design.

Assessing the onset of an extraordinary situation, and following government advisories, all on-campus academic and co-curricular activities were suspended on March 14 till March 31 (initially), advising the resident students to return to (and reach) their homes by March 17. Students were advised to use the time for revision, assignment completion and doubt clarification with their faculty members through online interactions and faculty were asked to meaningfully engage with their students similarly. Knowing Students, Faculty, the IT infrastructure in place and its access the faculty and students could have from their residences, JKLU's faculty started online interaction with students from as early as March 16 Re-assessing the situation, post the announcement of the national lockdown, and in keeping with its commitment to minimize the impact of COVID- 19, the university leadership decided to continue with online teaching in all the courses.

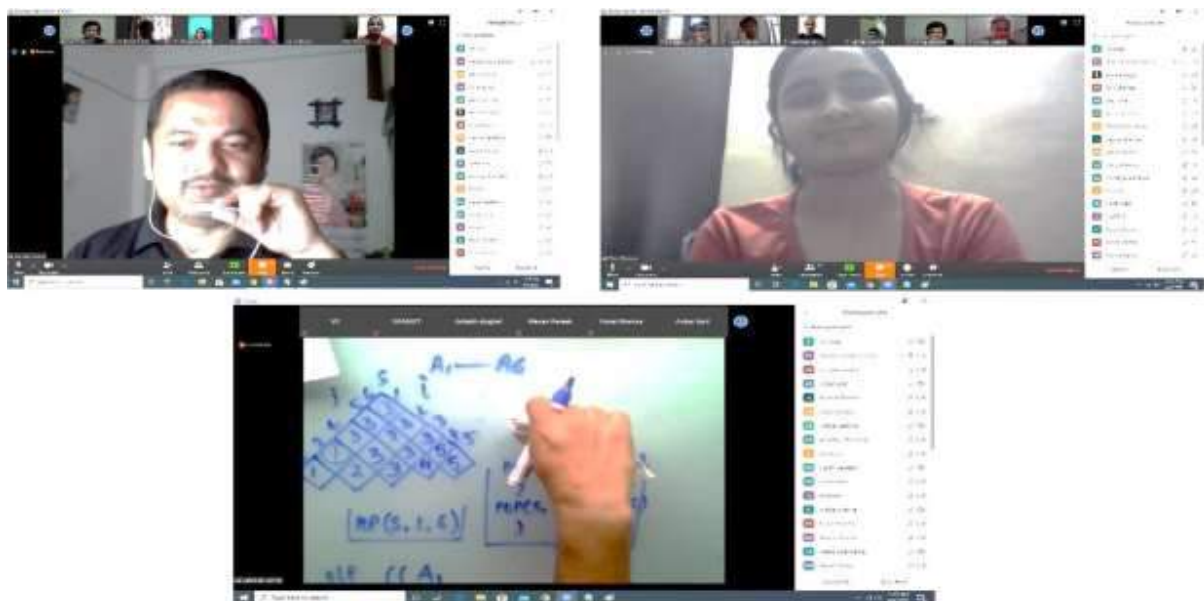
Today, all students are safe at their residences and teaching and non-teaching staff are operating tirelessly under WFH norms. Operating from home, faculty have come out with innovative ways to deliver content to students in a very engaging and impactful manner. Faculty are now working on fine-tuning assessment and evaluation mechanisms.

As part of the master plan of the University, the JKLU campus has been fully Wi-fi enabled with high-speed Internet connectivity from day one. This forethought is now immensely facilitating faculty and staff residing on campus to rise to the occasion and keep on performing amidst present situation in WFH mode. Campus life at JKLU is totally safe, secure and serene with round-the-clock support from administration.



JKLU stays committed to minimize the impact of COVID-19 like situations on its activity-mix. While, Faculty are richly engaged on their academic (teaching/research) agenda, Technical (Computing & Learning Resource) staff are busy in providing uninterrupted support to the faculty and Administration is busy in keeping life at campus safe. Career Services Division (CSD) of the University is keeping both employers and students (on one to one basis) constantly engaged to ensure that jobs, practice schools, and internships of recently placed (but not yet on boarded) students are protected, convincing some companies to onboard students online during the lockdown period.

The Chancellor and Vice Chancellor recently had a two and half hour zoom review meeting with all faculty members across the three Institutions of the University and the experiences shared by all the faculty members were very encouraging. Faculty's admission that they themselves had come a long way and become more proficient and confident on this mode of delivery from their first online session on March 16. Response from some of the students and their parents/guardians was luke-warm to begin with, citing network access issues and home disturbances as the reasons. However, once the sessions got going, with some interactions, in between, with such students and parents/guardians, the response has now really been quite encouraging and motivating for us to continue with online teaching, with greater thrust and impetus. Regular feedback interaction with students on their involvement and responsiveness (over a period of now almost four weeks) both faculty as well as students are now looking ahead on this mode of teaching-learning as a new normal with a great sense of satisfaction and enthusiasm, which shows through their almost 100% attendance. Upskilling of all faculty and staff through a series of video conferencing sessions by experts from their respective fields has helped in minimizing the disruption to the teaching-learning process. Faculty members are better prepared and realizing that on-line teaching is here to stay, have already started incorporating and integrating online components in their scheme of things.

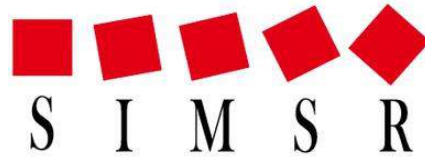


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The way the faculty and academic leadership at JKLU have learnt and come out with innovative ways of delivering the content, ensuring student presence, interest and engagement in the online teaching sessions, giving and evaluating assignments, quizzes, and exams, and simultaneously students overcoming issues like network access, etc, has really been phenomenal. All these approaches have ensured the most minimal impact on regular classroom teaching-learning process without compromising on **quality**.

***Dr R L Raina**, Vice Chancellor of JKLU mentioned, “While, personally, I believe that there is no substitute to the regular classroom teaching-learning process, particularly in some subjects and courses, there can be a robust support to it. This online mode of delivery is increasingly getting embedded in our teaching-learning process, going forward as the New Norm, whether COVID-19 or not”. **Online teaching is here to stay.**

Dr. Roshan Lal Raina
Vice Chancellor
JK Lakshmipat University
Jaipur, India



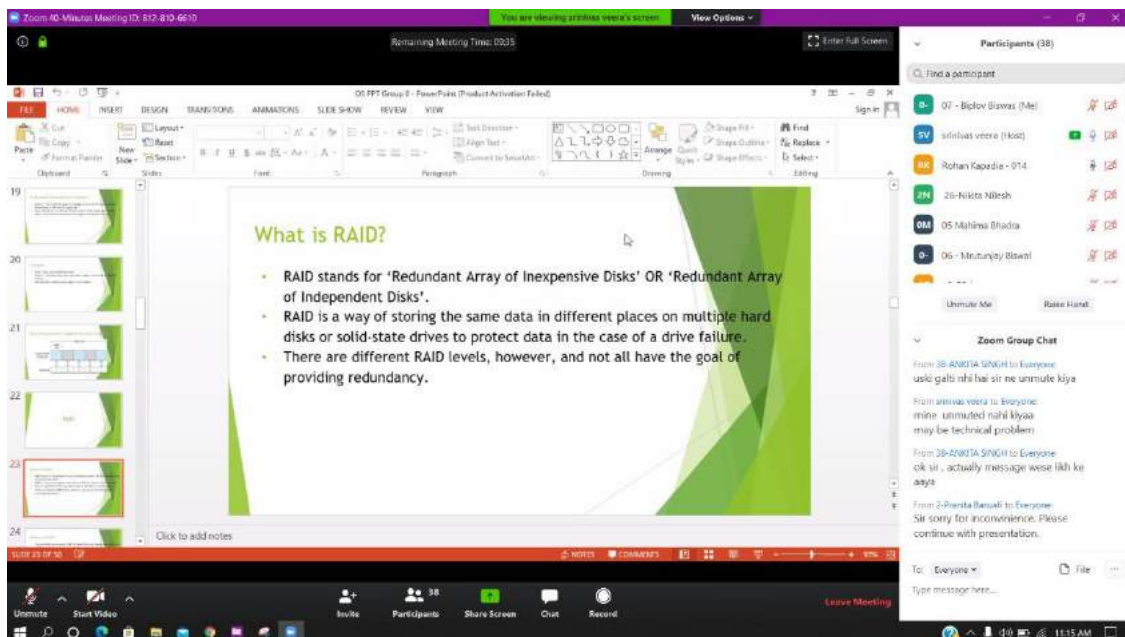
K J Somaiya Institute of Management, Mumbai – Crisis Management

The outbreak of the Coronavirus disease or COVID-19 has affected every angle of human life. The virus has spread globally within a very short span of time. Activities across the world came to a standstill due to this pandemic, and the fear has spread more than the virus itself. Proper sanitization and social distancing remain the only ways to stop the spread of these viruses.

As the first case was recorded in India, K J Somaiya Institute of Management started explaining the need for social distancing and installed sanitizers at all the entrances of the institute. Canteen and Hostel mess staff were provided with masks. As the situation became more critical and after the W.H.O declared the situation as a pandemic, the institute followed the government directive and closed the institute.

Online Lectures:

Though the institute was closed, Faculty & Staff members continued to work from home. The institute management took a call to switch to e-learning mode overnight. The pending syllabus of every class was completed via online learning platforms like Zoom, Google Hangouts, Google Classroom, etc. The institute also decided to evaluate the students on internal assessments through different methodologies. Group presentations were converted into practical work from home assignments. All the faculties put extra effort to complete their subjects. Pedagogy was modified so that the students could understand the concepts without the physical presence of a faculty. Special doubt clearing sessions were arranged online. WhatsApp groups, Google Classrooms, and emails were used for formal communications, to send out notes, submissions and various other academic purposes. As the situations worsened all the trimester exams were postponed to ensure the safety of the students.

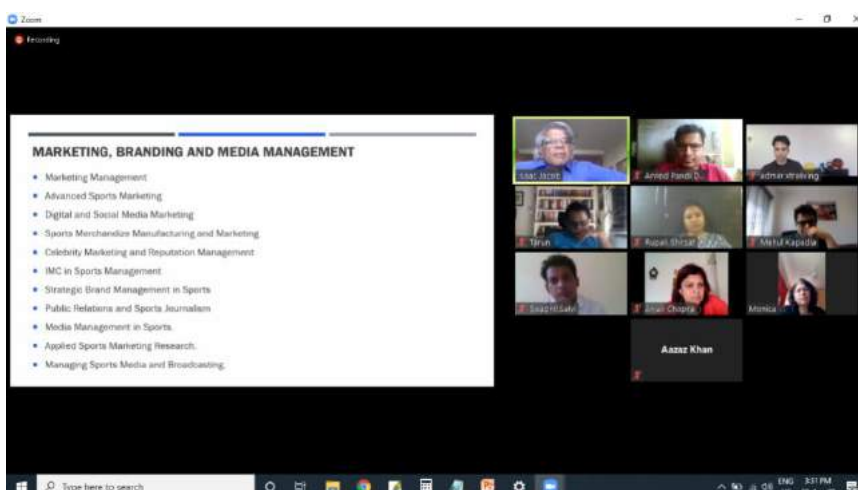


Summer Internships:

Post the AICTE's advisory suggesting students to pursue their internship work from home/virtual internships, few organisations onboarded students virtually, some deferred the internship time period and many internship offers were rescinded since organisations wanted on-field internships. The Career Management & Corporate Relations Cell started looking for newer opportunities for students. The Alumni Relations Team also reached out to alumni for offering live projects/internships. As an alternative, the institute also proposed that first-year students will have to compulsorily register for a certificate course of their choice on Coursera and will be evaluated based on it.

Meetings & Brainstorming Session:

The management and various departments organized multiple meetings to take stock. Brainstorming sessions were held to evaluate and plan the way forward. Board of Studies meetings were held online with participants logging in from across the globe.

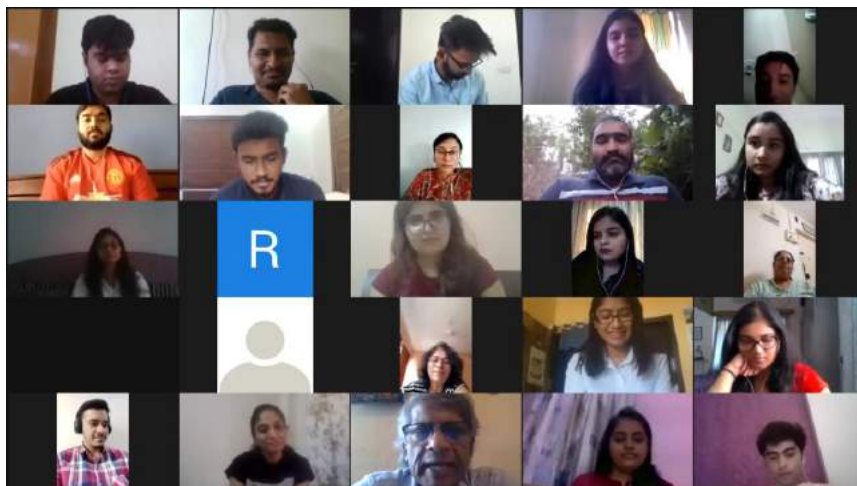


Online Exams:

Considering the second-year students will have to join their respective organisations sooner or later, the institute conducted the online exams successfully.

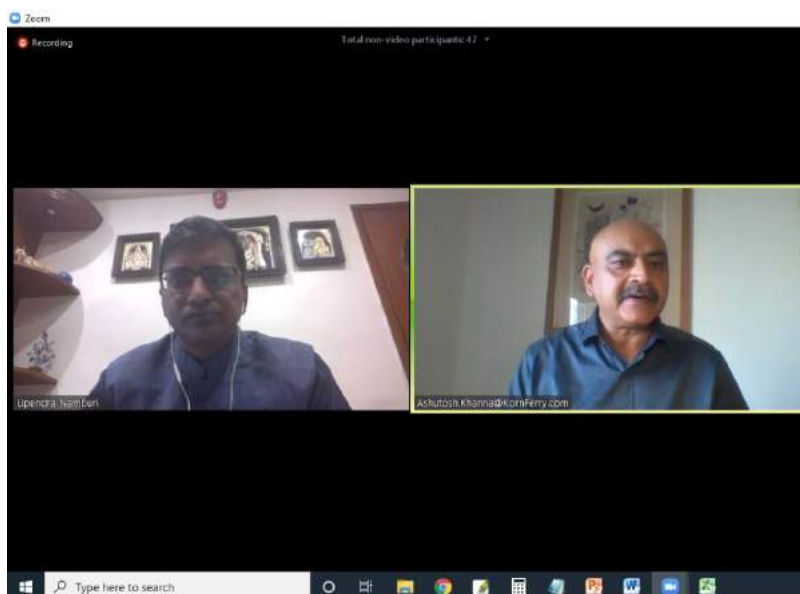
Students' Committee Handovers

The institute has 28 students' committees and clubs and most of the committees handed over the baton to the next team online. Committees presented their annual report and work done during the past one year to the faculty heads and the student committee members.



Other Activities:

In order to make use of this lockdown, the Alumni Committee & SIMSR Alumni Association started organizing online knowledge sharing session for the alumni and students. They kicked off with an Interview series called 'AlumSpeaks On the Go' with the topic 'Jobs & Career Post COVID-19'. Based on its success, the team organized a new series of panel discussion called 'Ask the Alums', a series of Q&A sessions with the Alumni Experts evaluating the Impact of COVID-19 on different business dimensions. Five sessions were conducted that thoroughly analyzed the impact of COVID-19 on HR, IT, Operations, Finance & Marketing and also talked about the way forward. An additional session on New Sandbox & New Business Models saw eminent global Alumni Experts from London, California, Abu Dhabi, Singapore and Mumbai joined to discuss on what's in store for the future to power businesses and careers with new insights. They also organized an online mentoring session for alumni entrepreneurs. The Guest Lecture Committee also organized a webinar for students on Opportunities post COVID-19. In spite of the lockdown, the Alumni Committee & Finstreet Committee have been consistently publishing their newsletters on time.





Hostel:

From the time lockdown was announced, i.e. 20th March 2020, all the international students were informed about the pandemic situation and they were instructed about the measures and precautions to be taken. Hostels and food mess have been regularly sanitized. Each of the hostel entrances has a sanitizer bottle stationed. The hostel security guards scan temperatures of incoming students at the entrance and make sure students are following the rules of lockdown. Students who came back to the hostel were tested for COVID-19 and were kept in isolation.

The food arrangement in the hostel mess is operational in the same way as before the lockdown, students are provided with 4 meals a day i.e. breakfast, lunch, snacks & dinner, at the same time, social distance during meal hours is also practiced. Hostel and mess staff is ensuring the comfort of the students and the provision of meals are not compromised. For instance, once the gas pipeline broke during the lockdown, the hostel management rented resources in order to make sure food arrangements were not hampered. This being the month of Ramadan, the hostel mess has been providing breakfast to students as early as 3:00 am. All the necessary items are available in the hostel mess in order to avoid unnecessary movement of students outside the campus.

For years, the campus has numerous stray pet dogs, and they are usually fed by students. During this lockdown, the students at hostel have taken up the responsibility of feeding these stray dogs. Students and hostel staff take turns to refill the feeding bowls.

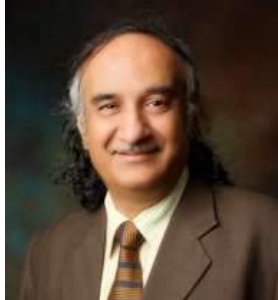
The administration is putting in extra effort to ensure the students do not feel any discomfort or panic during this lockdown. Satellite Hospital in Maitreya Hostel is operational 24*7 with the provision of a doctor and a nurse. An operational ambulance has been stationed on campus, which is available 24*7.

Mentors of international students schedule video calls twice a week to keep their morale high. They counsel students on various online courses they can do during this lockdown. To maintain a sense of community, students come together once a week to offer global prayer in the amphitheater.

Dr. Monica Khanna

Director

**K.J. Somaiya Institute of Management Studies & Research
Mumbai, India**



Dr. N M Kondap – Director General, Kohinoor Business School – KBS Mumbai.

Brief Profile of Dr. N M Kondap:

Dr. N M Kondap, is associated with Kohinoor Business School – KBS Mumbai, as Director General. He was Vice Chancellor of SVKM's NMIMS University, and also Western Region Chairman of AICTE (2011 – 2017). He is an academican and administrator with experience in Industry and Academia. He is member of AMDISA.

COVID-19: An opportunity for Educational Institutions

We are all passing through turbulent times – a never before crisis that has unsettled the entire mankind across the globe. The corona virus has not only impacted the Geo-Political System of the world, industries, and also various sectors of society, including Education. Pandemic has forced us to remain indoor, completely isolated with the world outside, which once, till recently use to be an inseparable part of our existence. Such are the vagaries of life.

In times of distress, and misery, educational institutes look up to our own students around. It is for Educational Institutes to respond to the crisis positively and be in touch with its stake holders namely students, faculty, staffs and recruiters.

Kohinoor Business School – KBS, as is known, like most proactive and responsible institutions of India, was quick enough to convert the challenges into opportunity.

Kohinoor Business School, moved on to digital mode of teaching & learning. The process was quite challenging both for the teachers and the students, since the whole process of digitization was new and it was something that they had never ever tried.

Let me confess, the response from the students, faculty and recruiters has been positive and encouraging. Today, Kohinoor Business School, has implemented LMS for Teaching and Learning. Faculty members have undergone training and are conducting online classes for the students. Through LMS students can access the contents at any time, they can carry out assignments as well as go through online mode of assessment as well as feed-back. The unique aspect of digital way of

communication has been networking through online. KBS is in constant touch with recruiters for Summers and final placement. Response is quite encouraging.

We at KBS feel that Digitization has come to stay and will be an integral part of our education system and are preparing our self to meet the new challenges.

Unique Initiative at Kohinoor Business School – KBS:

ISR (Institutional Social Responsibility): DAYITVA: A Societal Commitment towards service to the community.

Under ISR a new model is being developed which is a fabric of academic and field work. The classroom will focus on:

Patience, Perseverance, Emotional stability, Risk Management, Risk Mitigation & Collective Wisdom

Field work will focus on live projects.

We would like to follow the guidelines of Government and Regulatory Authorities and respect **SOCIAL DISTANCING**.

Let us work together to Transcend Horizon Together

Dr. N M Kondap
Director General,
Kohinoor Business School
Mumbai., India



REPORT TO AMDISA REGARDING THE ACTION TAKEN DURING LOCKDOWN

The following measures/plans were in put place in order to manage this COVID - 19 lockdown situation at Loyola Institute of Business Administration, Chennai:

1. Before the lockdown due to COVID-19 was announced, fortunately, as per our calendar, we completed all our classes for the PGDM – Full-time programme as we had scheduled our term examinations from 23rd March 2020 to 30th March 2020. Because of the lock down and sudden evacuation of students from the campus, we couldn't conduct the examinations.
2. Since, our faculty members were using Moodle-Learning Management system for the past couple of years to conduct formative assessment and therefore, the students were familiar with the online assessment and hence we conducted the terminal examination for the outgoing batch (final year) through online using MOODLE platform from 2nd April 2020 to 8th April 2020.
3. As for as the first years are concerned, we have planned to conduct the examinations as soon as we commence the next academic year and the students were asked to make full use of these lock down period and come well prepared for the examinations.
4. All our first year students were placed for summer internship placement (SIP) well ahead of time. Unfortunately, due to the lockdown, few companies cancelled / some of them started late by a week or two. Many corporates had requested us to extend the time due to delayed start and we extended the date of completion of summer internship to 15th June 2020. All our students do the internship from home and monitored by our faculty.
5. We could foresee the scenario and as a proactive step, we asked our faculty to guide our students on an independent project, just in case if the internship is cancelled and few students to whom the employers had cancelled the internship are doing faculty guided project work from home.
6. We have scheduled classes for PGDM-part-time programmes through Webex from 26 March 2020 to 03 May 2020 and examination for the outgoing batch through online is being conducted through MOODLE platform from 27 April 2020 to 01 May 2020. Of course, the 1st and 2nd years, we have decided to conduct the term examination at the beginning of the next academic year. Similarly, we have scheduled classes online for one year Executive Diploma courses and corporate programs and we are likely to complete the examinations by first week of May 2020.
7. All our faculty members were asked to work from home and they utilize this time to write papers, attend online courses and our Director regularly shares important links on contemporary topics. Some of us give online webinar and online refresher courses for teaching fraternity.

8. Regular meetings are conducted using ZOOM, Microsoft Teams and Webex for Officials, Faculty council, Staff and Research Associates to update the current status and to prepare for the next academic year.
9. After initial face to face interviews in March, we are continuing interviews online to complete the process.

Dr. P.C. Lakshmi Narayanan
Dean-Academics
Loyola Institute of Business Administration,
Chennai, India



COVID 19: Use of ICT in Education for Online and Blended Learning at Faculty of Management Studies, Parul University

About Parul University

Parul University came into being during April-2015 vide an Act of State Legislature viz., Gujarat Private Universities Act, 2009 and Gujarat Private Universities (Second Amendment) Act, 2015 and has made long strides in the field of education in Gujarat. The fact that the University offers more than 160 different undergraduate , post graduate and doctoral degree programmes through 34 institutions across 21 wide ranging Faculties such as Medicine, Engineering, Pharmacy, Homoeopathy, Ayurved, Management, Law, Fine Arts, Design, Arts, Commerce etc....is a testimony to the commitment of the University for expanding in the area of higher education and the dedication of all stakeholders in providing a package of best managed delivery system. The campus also boasts of excellent facilities for co-curricular activities of the students such as playground, gymnasium, swimming pool etc... There are about 28,000+ students studying in the University which reflects the popularity of the University among the student community.

ABOUT FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES-MBA PROGRAMME-PARUL UNIVERSITY

The Faculty of Management Studies-MBA , BBA and IMBA Programme

The Faculty adopts a practical learning approach- pedagogy combine's fieldwork, case studies and instrumented feedback with a strong emphasis on concepts and theory.

- The intent is to encourage intellectual curiosity and holistic perspective to the adventure of ideas.
- The two-year full-time MBA programme, spread across four semesters and offering specializations in Marketing, Human Resource Management, Finance, International business and Information technology, Operations Management, Agri Business Management, Pharma Management, Business Analytics.

MBA PROGRAM OUTCOMES

1. **BEDK – Business Environment and Domain Knowledge:** An ability to demonstrate a critical awareness of current issues (e.g., diversity, social responsibility, sustainability, innovation, knowledge management, etc.) in business and management which is informed by leading edged research and practice in the field.
2. **PI – Problem Solving and Innovative Solutions:** Students should be able to apply the perspective of their chosen concentrated area of study to develop fully-reasoned opinions on such contemporary issues as the need for innovation, integrity, leading and managing change, globalization, and technology management.
3. **BA – Business Analysis:** Students should be able to conceptualize, organize, and resolve complex business problems or issues by using the resources available under their discretion.
4. **CT – Critical Thinking:** Students will be able to acquire in-depth knowledge of Management discipline, including wider and global perspectives, with an ability to discriminate, evaluate, analyze and synthesize existing and new knowledge, and integration of the same for enhancement of knowledge.
5. **CBPI – Critical Thinking, Business Analysis, Problem Solving and Innovative Solutions:** Students will be able to analyze complex business problems critically, apply independent judgment for synthesizing information to make intellectual and/or creative advances for conducting research in a wider theoretical, practical and policy context.
6. **GECCU – Global Exposure and cross cultural Understanding:** Students will be able to think laterally and originally, conceptualize and solve managerial problems, evaluate a wide range of potential solutions for those problems and arrive at feasible, optimal solutions in the core areas of expertise at the national and international levels.
7. **RSEC – Research Skills and Effective Communications:** Students will be able to extract information pertinent to unfamiliar industry issues through literature survey and experiments, apply appropriate research methodologies, techniques and tools, design, conduct survey, analyze and interpret data, demonstrate higher order skill and view things in a broader perspective, submit a report about the study in management.
8. **LTE – Leadership, Teamwork, Entrepreneurship, Life skills:** Students will establish themselves as effective professionals by solving real problems through the use of management science knowledge and with attention to team work, effective communication, critical thinking and problem solving skills that prepare them for immediate employment and for life-long learning in advanced areas of management and related fields.

INSTITUTE VISION:

“Our vision is to prepare young leaders for innovative, creative & successful careers in Globalised Market.”

INSTITUTE MISSION:

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. We, at our institute, sharpen the edges of your weapon and make you competitive for global world. At our institute we help you efficiently climb the ladder of success so that you can lean against the right wall of career. For which we provide project work, classroom interaction with experts, and interaction with industry experts, on field work. The pool of education at our institute comprises of experts from varied field.

COVID 19- ERA OF VIRTUAL ONLINE LEARNING:

During the time of pandemic of COVID 19, FMS Parul University has not stopped its operations. We are using the blessings of technology in order to fight this global epidemic situation. All the classes have been shifted to online and students are trained on the uses of classes directly through faculties and the class representatives. The teachers and students are all working together as a team in order to make the online classes work.

- In view of COVID19, the University has adopted online learning. In Faculty of Managements studies, in view of the upcoming situations, it was decided that the faculty members shall convert the current units/topics into the individual assignments based activities and provide reading material in small capsules as well as maintain the interaction with the students through online platform Google class rooms, Google meet and Zoom meeting.
- Hence technology that was going to be an opportunity across the world was one of the environmental challenges for us.
- Some of the specific steps taken in dealing with challenges by the Faculty of Management are as below:
- **Use of Technology for Reachability:** Decision based on the resolution was taken to reach out to the students and not to let the chain of learning break. All possible means of reaching out to the students were explored, including Zoom, Google Meet, WhatsApp groups, Messenger, even tele-calling. Thus a mixed-method /Blended learning approach was applied for learning outreach.

- For Continuous Learning: The faculty members created Google classroom groups and the reading material in files of small sizes were circulated with quiz questions. The students followed submission based on Google classroom modes.
- **Webinar Online Resource Support:** Certain open source lectures from platforms such as Webinars in the diverse areas by eminent experts from the industries are also invited for the sessions.
- Online platforms were used for completing the Final year Project viva of the students. Various Project guidelines made available to the students through online platform. For a small group of class of dissertation even WhatsApp video call/ conference call is being used by the faculty members. Online viva was conducted by Zoom Meeting for Graduate and PG students
- E-books resources such as Ebsco Host, Springer, etc. are being made available to the students and Faculty members
- Faculty of Management studies also stay committed to providing a continuous learning environment for our faculty members and students. The university library has provided online library access to our students, research scholars and faculty members. Faculty remains focused on writing research papers and editing books during the lock down period.
- We have also motivated our students and research scholars to enroll for online courses by reputed agencies and institutes worldwide. Many of our students/Faculty members have already enrolled for online courses to upgrade their skills.
- All different types of online platforms have been using by both the faculty members and the students to share teaching materials and resources.
- Finally, students and guardians are very much positive towards such type of initiative taken by the university during COVID lockdown in the country even though some of them have mix perceptions of online based teaching and learning.
- All the students appeared for Online mode of End semester examination based on World Assessment Council at Parul University
- The Corona virus COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertainty and instability all around the world, including in Baroda State of Gujarat. It has forced due to make changes in the ways we work, work together, and live in general. The academic landscape is no different. Indeed, everyone new in this self isolation situation. It has been challenging for all of us to concentrate on learning and teaching in virtual Environment

Dr.Bijal Zaveri

Director-PIET/PIMR MBA Programme

Dean-Faculty of Management Studies

Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat, India



ADDRESSING THE NEW NORMAL: THE PSGIM EXPERIENCE.

Dwight D. Eisenhower famously once remarked that “In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.” This is a battle which happened with a short notice. The event was academically timed in such a manner that the second year curriculum and evaluation was completed, two cycles for admissions were over and a balance of 6 weeks left to complete the first year of the management programs. . Coimbatore district was one of the worst affected in Tamil Nadu and the city has 10+ containment zones. Hence “normalcy” as we know it, will take more time.

At PSGIM, over the years, there has been a shift to technology enabled processes both in the academic and administrative areas.

- ❖ The use of LMS (Moodle) as a backbone to deliver content and teaching material helps create a proactive approach to learning and a foundation to scale up in the event of any contingency.
- ❖ Our admission process is fully online and manageable off-site.
- ❖ Most of the standard operating procedures are embedded to our portal and this ensures continuity and reporting.
- ❖ As a part of national and international accreditation requirements and ISO, technology enablement has been a hall-mark at PSG.
- ❖ Already faculty and students had embraced MOOC courses . This event has further enabled its adoption.

PSGIM has taken several proactive steps from mid-March itself to ensure continuity and to mitigate the academic impact this entails.

The rapid deployment of Zoom and the ability to deliver content through WhatsApp meant that the students could access learning readily and thus faculty and the students could interact in real-time and collaborate. To strengthen this interaction further, Avaya Spaces has now also been deployed.

These provide multiple online and video conferencing opportunities for all our stakeholders. For students it meant virtual training sessions and engagement for placement and soft skills training by professionals and alumni. For faculty it meant accelerating and refining their online repository and updating the evaluation tools and thus creating a better assessment process for assurance of learning outcomes through online quizzing, blog assignments and

virtual presentations. It also now creates a gateway to create our own e-learning programs in the coming months

Like other b-schools placement cycles were completed and summer internship offers made. These remain a challenge. Summer internship in May-June looks difficult if not impossible and there is uncertainty as to the final placement for the 2019-20 session and start of the 2020-21 final placement cycles. These are being addressed.

For internships, our network provided several online projects and virtual internships. We have also tapped into our alumni database and are planning to have each-one-take-one internship in the businesses our alumni lead or manage. A further initiative is being taken by the launch of a special Business Entrepreneurship Module (BEM) a, unique virtual platform where teams will work on business plans and execute and full business model which will be vetted by entrepreneur alumni and prizes given to the best teams.

Realignment of the semester schedules which is now a given, means that we can re-focus on core areas better now. For example research and intellectual contributions:

- ❖ The final year projects which students will undertake now will have a better rigor, domain focus and faculty involvement will be enhanced. Work has already begun from this month which helps in topic refinement and creating relevant and out-of-box research.
- ❖ Faculty members have also, over the past 4 weeks, collaborated to expedite their research, create new research ideation and enhance the publication count in terms of both quality and quantity. In addition, several studies of the economic and social impact of COVID are planned and five proposals have been prepared and industry-linkages are being finalized. For example. The impact on MSMEs with CODISSIA (the professional body) , Realignment of operations in the context of a crisis at PSG Hospital and Impact on HR in terms of WFH for IT sector. These will be helpful for research grants and enhanced intellectual contribution: Our mission pillar being Academic and industry research relevant to the region.
- ❖ A “bonus” is that faculty can also allot quality research time over this period. Several faculty colleagues had collected substantive primary research data and undertaken several field studies but could not effectively analyze it and take the research further.

This new normal also has given us an impetus to re-define our strategy and to re-invigorate our MBA syllabus which is due for a major review later this year and to be implemented in 2021. It has also identified areas for improvement at the institute and has brought to the fore the need to become proactive as management learning is now going beyond classrooms and the Gen Alpha students will demand this new normal as the norm.

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**Rajalakshmi School of Business
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Coping with Disruption by Being Technologically Agile – COVID-19 in the Academic Environment

**By Dr. Ashok Natarajan, Professor-Finance and Accounting
Head-PGDM Programme**

The Rajalakshmi School of Business (RSB), Chennai, is part of the Rajalakshmi Institutions, a 21-year old Chennai-based premier educational foundation, and a highly respected group of institutions in the technical and professional educational fields. RSB has been conferred the prestigious award of being in the Times of India 2016 list of Top-Emerging B-Schools.

RSB has always leveraged the use of technology as part of the academic process. In its flagship PGDM programme, every course has a presence on the ElearningLounge, a portal set up by RSB based on the Moodle platform. Every course uses the ElearningLounge (EL²) to distribute course material, conduct on-line evaluations, and provide a feedback mechanism to the students on their progress in the PGDM programme.

While EL² provides a stable environment as an LMS, it does not provide a means of having on-line classes and tutorial sessions. When the lock-down was announced and the quarantine started, our Director, Prof. Gautam Ghosh, and the faculty decided that alternate arrangements were required so that RSB's academic mission could continue even during the lock-down. All of the faculty arranged whatever sessions they required using Zoom and Google Meet. These sessions were scheduled in such a fashion that the students' network usage did not exceed 1 GB a day, as most students were on a network plan that capped their usage at that number. Accordingly, first year students had sessions in the following courses: Supply Chain and Operations Management – II, Legal Aspects of Business, India and the International Business Environment, Marketing and Business Research Methodology, Organizational Processes and Communications - II, etc. Similarly, our second year students had online sessions in Lean Management, Corporate Budgeting and Financial Decisions, Training and Development, Organizational Development, and Integrated Marketing Communications.

A neat feature of these on-line sessions that emerged was the ability to have tutorial sessions and conferences with student groups. This permitted the faculty to provide immediate feedback to students on their progress in course projects, assignments, and allowed faculty to provide guidance to students who were getting ready to make presentations in various courses. The shared whiteboard in Zoom and other apps proved vital in facilitating this. Students were able to get a better rapport with the instructors on-line, perhaps even better than in a face-to-face situation.

One important component of a quality PGDM programme is the learning that takes place outside the classroom. To make sure that this continues even during the lock-down period, RSB faculty instituted a major initiative that required every student to obtain certifications in at least three courses that may supplement the school curriculum, or may be in a wholly different area of interest. Students responded enthusiastically, taking courses in Python and R, Data Science, Supply Chain, Human

Resources Management, Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Blockchain, etc., to name a few. These on-line certifications are provided by various organizations that conduct MOOCs such as Udemy, edX, and the like, and including home-grown providers such as NPTEL and SWAYAM. In addition, faculty kept students aware of various webinars conducted by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Madras Management Association (MMA) on various aspects of the Indian economy, and the impact of COVID-19 on various sectors of the Indian economy. Students have also taken upon themselves the onus of making the availability of these resources known to their cohorts, and are encouraging each other to participate in these webinars.

Knowing too well that when normal life resumes, students will start focusing on placement, specially as it will be a difficult time for recruiters and candidates alike. RSB is fortunate that all of its second year students were placed by the 4th of February, 2020, and more than half the cohort had started working for their firms by the time the lock-down was put in place. However, the first year students have to cope with the uncertainty of summer internships as well as restrictions on travel and meeting clients and customers. To help the first year students deal with the expected questions on what they did during the lock-down period, RSB asked all the instructors teaching first year courses in the third trimester to make assignments for students to get them better prepared for this process. For instance, for the Human Relations Management course, students were asked to prepare discussion papers on the impact of COVID-19 on the HR function. Similarly, in the Marketing and Business Research Methodology course, students were asked to develop a project that would try to estimate the impact of COVID-19 on various aspects of the general public, such as use of social media, consumption of OTT entertainment, and the like. In the soft-skill courses, viz., Current Issues in Business and Society, and Organizational Processes and Communication, students were asked to make presentations on the impact of COVID-19 on their lives and on the society they are part of, and also make video presentations on what they achieved on their own during the lock-down, and how it has helped in their learning process. These assignments thus help the student become prepared for group discussions, personal interviews, and other aspects of the placement process.

One of the most important aspects of getting all the inter-connected elements that we have talked about to work smoothly is to use new channels of communication. RSB faculty have held faculty meetings using Zoom, on a weekly basis. These Zoom meetings have helped to make sure that there are no scheduling conflicts for online classes. They have also enabled the faculty to offer a coordinated system of assignments that helps the student deal with the multiple tasks assigned, as well as make the student focus on getting the online certifications that they are interested in.

In conclusion, what has RSB learned from this experience? The first lesson is that faculty have to be agile in learning to cope with disruption, and indeed to make use of these kinds of disruption to innovate their teaching pedagogy. The second lesson that we have learned is that going forward, all business programmes will have more of an on-line presence, and that the curriculum has to be adapted to take this into account. The ability of an educational institution to provide a quality business education will depend on how successfully it can meld the learning that takes place in the classroom with the on-line learning experience. The third lesson that we are still trying to come to grips with is the new evaluation methods that need to be developed in the future to complement the on-line learning experience that educational institutions have to provide. It is no use to talk about on-line exams and take-home exams as a panacea for the fact that on-campus examinations are likely to be difficult to enable in a lock-down situation. The truth is that we will need to develop

alternate evaluation methods that can measure the progress of the student in the new environment that we will be in, and that requires innovation in not just evaluation methods, but also curriculum development and course pedagogy.

(For more information, please contact the Director, Prof. Gautam Ghosh, Rajalakshmi School of Business, at director@rsb.edu.in, or at +91 9655944093, or the Corporate Relations office at Rajalakshmi School of Business at corporaterelations@rsb.edu.in or at +91 9578615000)

Prof. Gautam Ghosh
Director
Rajalakshmi School of Business
Chennai, India



ROORKEE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, ROORKEE (U.K)

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

In order to manage this COVID- 19 lockdown period at our Institute we have taken certain measures to connect with the students through online classes and complete the academic semester.

Some of the measures/initiatives taken are discussed below:

1. Before this COVID 19 pandemic , we used to inform the students regarding notices, additional classes, guest lectures through mails, whatsapp groups and ERP. Now we are using the platforms like google classroom and web based sessions through ZOOM efficiently so as to provide live sessions to the students. At our institute, we have a dedicated e-learning center to support the these platforms.
2. During this lockdown period, we are emphasizing the students to complete and submit their assignments through the google classroom/ whatsapp groups or email. Faculty members are having regular communication with the students through Whatsapp and email.
3. For some of the courses like Financial management and Production & Operations management the sessions were conducted through offline mode initially which were then converted through pre-recorded videos. Now the offline sessions are replaced by live web-based sessions through zoom and google classroom.
4. Apart from the above initiatives, SWAYAM, NPTEL and other online courses for which the details as well as the links are provided by the director of our institute are highly preferred and referred by the faculty members to further improve the learning process of the students and some of these courses are already completed by our faculties in last semester and some students have registered in this semester.
5. In some of the courses, open educational resources are referred to the students. The students are being informed regarding the new initiatives by HOD and the concerned faculty incharge so that they are updated with the latest resources available in the institute.
6. For taking up online FDP by our faculties, the links as well as the details are being shared on whatsapp groups and through mails so that the interested faculties can register and take advantage of these online FDPs.

These activities are being practised in RIT School of Management, Roorkee (U.K).



RASHTREEYA SIKSHANA SAMITHI TRUST

R V INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT

CA 17, 26 Main, 36th Cross, 4th T Block, Jayanagar
Bengaluru, Karnataka 560 041

Sharing of Experiences and Practices amid COVID-19 Disruption

R V Institute of Management (RVIM) was started in the year 1999 and has completed 21 years of its existence. R V Institute of Management, a unique B-School is a part of Rashtriya Sikshana Samithi Trust (RSST) and carries the flag of RV's Academic Excellence in all its activities.

RSST was started during pre-independence era i.e., in the year 1940. The sapling planted 78 years ago is today a MIGHTY TREE which is reflected in the establishment of 25 premiere Institutes with over 1800 staff members and around 20,000 students, offering education from Nursery schooling to Doctorate level.,

In the year 2019, RVIM was accredited by NAAC with 'A+' Grade.

True to its motto, RVIM prepares its students for life. Our dedicated and experienced Faculty with industry background, state-of-the-art infrastructure, student focus, 100% placement support and a robust industry - Institutional linkages are some of the salient features of RVIM.

The Institute aims to provide quality Management education to aspiring MBAs and impart value based, culture driven and quality oriented education in management.

RVIM also offers many Value Addition programmes and has International Collaborations for extended programmes and research.

The past few weeks saw us live and work through an unforeseen crisis and unprecedented circumstances. However, the use of technology and our creativity has allowed us to continue with our mission of imparting quality education even during the lockdown period.

Pleased to inform your good self that we at R V Institute of Management have been engaging students virtually since last few weeks through following means;

- Taking classes as per time table using ZOOM and other similar platforms like google hangout and Microsoft teams

- Providing complete study material of all the subjects on our learning management system
- Taking quizzes and assessments on Quiklrn, LMS
- Conducting tests & submission of assignments using google forms
- Frequent meeting of the faculty (weekly meetings) on zoom to discuss their engagement and to learn from one another.
- Frequent meeting of the student council members to know and address their problems
- We are also arranging expert talks using zoom to break the monotony and give students an opportunity to interact with industry experts.
- Mentoring groups are also formed and the mentors have been guiding their mentees on dissertation (4th sem students) and accordingly synopsis have been finalised and submitted.
- We have been offering MOOCs along with the regular subjects to give the students a broader perspective. Every faculty member is floating a MOOC in their respective subjects in order to facilitate better learning for the students.
- We are organizing many webinars for the faculty members on very relevant and thought provoking themes from eminent resource persons from industry and academia.

We have formed subject wise and section wise whatsapp group and is used as discussion forum. Similarly, we have created section wise email groups to maintain seamless communication.

Presently, everybody (students and faculty) have got used to it and the response is getting better day by day as we all are learning newer ways of engagement (online). We are encouraging students to adapt to virtual platforms and are very meticulously monitoring the subject wise attendance.

Dr. Purushottam Bung
 Professor & Director
 R V Institute of Management
 Bengaluru, India



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Unlocking the Continuity of Learning and Connecting the Minds during COVID19

The business and the professional organizations have been confronted with the most crucial challenges of modern era i.e. COVID 19 pandemic. Covid 19 pandemic has been one of the biggest disruptions that have posed a challenge for human existence. COVID19 pandemic scenario has warranted for the innovative and out of box thinking for educational institutions, particularly the higher education. The challenge is to maintain the continuity of learning, effective utilization of time, management of anxiety level among the young minds, and nurturing the enthusiasm. The administrative side of the learning systems also have been asking the questions regarding the management of schedule, availability of infrastructure, evaluation mechanism, and deliverables, meeting the program objectives and providing for the efficient and effective teaching material to the students. The opportunity hidden in the COVID19 situation is to reflect how the education system can be transformed into the learning-based and self-learning based systems. It has provided an opportunity to bring experience-based learning and design thinking into the higher education system. It also provides an opportunity to bring in innovation in the evaluation system that could unlock the imagination of students rather than restrict them to the boundaries of the curriculum. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), established in 2005, in the Jammu province of Jammu and Kashmir, Union Territory of and the State of India.

Disruptions have not been a new experience to the process of higher education in Jammu and Kashmir. Since 1990's there have been political imbalances that have posed a challenge for the education system and delivery in this state. Therefore mentioning that COVID19 brought in some new challenge is a half-truth. Specifically for the SMVDU, since it is a completely residential University, with state of the art infrastructure, where the students are provided complete attention by the residential staff and faculty members. The students are provided with the experience of life, skills, social values, knowledge, and full personality development with the proximity of faculty members during working hours as well as extended hours. Therefore for the University students and faculty members, it was more of a disruption in regular delivery and contiguity. The University had introduced the learning management system (LMS) such as MOODLE in 2016, and has also introduced ERP to enhance the learning experiences. The National Programme on Technology

Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) through Swayam platform has been introduced as a part of pedagogy and learning in 2016. But the continuity of understanding and exchange of NPTEL experiences with the faculty members enriched the learning and also brought in a certain discipline among students.

In view of COVID19, the University had instructed to vacate the hostels by 11th March 2020 and all the students were sent to their respective homes, safely. In the School of Business, in view of the upcoming situations, it was decided that the faculty members shall convert the current units/topics into the individual assignments based activities and provide reading material in small capsules as well as maintain the interaction with the students through LMS/ online platform. However, the situation was challenging due to the restrictions of mobile broadband connectivity in the state of J&K. The issues confronted by students and faculty members included, the remote locations where the connectivity is poor, availability of 2G network within the state specifically with some of the students and faculty members, who were stuck at their native places in Jammu province. Hence technology that was going to be an opportunity across the world was one of the environmental challenges for us. Some of the specific steps taken in dealing with challenges by the School of Business are as below:

➤ **Use of Technology for Reachability:**

- Decision based on the resolution was taken to reach out to the students and not to let the chain of learning break. All possible means of reaching out to the students were explored, including Zoom, Google Meet, WhatsApp groups, Messenger, even tele-calling. **Thus a mixed-method approach was applied for learning outreach.**

➤ **For Continuous Learning:**

- The faculty members created WhatsApp groups and the reading material in files of small sizes were circulated with quiz questions. The students would reply to the quiz on WhatsApp only.
- Small video lectures are prepared with the help of software's such as screen-o-matic and OBS Studio and other open-source software's by the faculty members and circulated to the students on google classroom as well as other online platforms
- The AICTE's intervention with the Coursera platform had come handy in supporting the learning supplement. The faculty members selected the relevant courses and recommended the students for certification. The scores of the course era shall be considered as one of the evaluation parameters.
- The student groups are created where the student with the availability of resources would act as a hub for all the spokes i.e. other students in the group.

➤ **Online Resource Support:**

- Certain open source lectures from platforms such as YouTube are also recommended by the faculty members.
- Online platforms were used for completing the dissertations of the students. The database subscribed by the University such as CMIE-Prowess was made available by the company. The statistical softwares such as Statcraft were also made available to the students through online platform. In many cases, the faculty members have been mining the data and literature and providing support to the students. For a small group of class of dissertation even WhatsApp video call/ conference call is being used by the faculty members.
- E-books resources such as McGraw Hill, Sage, IEEE-Wiley Books Library; EbscoHost etc. are being made available to the students

➤ **Assessment and Evaluation**

- The online quiz, assignments, practical questions and use of google classroom with dashboard for the case analysis had been experimented with.
- The University shall under the guidelines of UGC and AICTE for examination and evaluation of the students, considering the local viabilities.

➤ **Summer Training and Placement**

- Before the lockdown about ninety percent of the placements had already been completed with reputed companies. The online placement opportunities have been made available via telephonic interviews and virtual modes by the training and placement cell
- The students shall be provided the summer training with distance mode under the mentorship of faculty and industry member. They would be required to work on specific industry issue.

➤ **Positive Engagement and Motivation**

- Alumni members of SMVDU have been supporting the learning endeavor and motivation of the students in these times. Their short video messages and words of encouragement had been instrumental in connecting the minds.
- The students were also encouraged to participate/ attend the webinars and online workshops to maintain continuity.
- Weekly meeting is conducted with the students in order to understand the issues and disruptions. They are counselled for any anxiety issues by the faculty mentors.

The weekly meeting of representative students is also conducted on platforms such as Zoom and Google platform with the Head, for the feedback.

The online, distance education has immense possibilities and opportunities for self-learning, and the COVID19 has provided the insight to use the technology intensively for enhancing the learning experience. The experiences narrow down to the dynamic role of the teacher and his meaningful contribution in crafting the learning modules and delivery options for the students. The role of a teacher will be to design innovative challenges to connect the students with socio-cultural, economic, and ecological realities. The academic fraternity shall require to have an appetite for unexplored dimensions of learning and accepting the non-conventional means of learning. Today we have to acknowledge that the definitions of time and space have been redefined. The experiences of lockdown have reflected upon the requirement to adapt the academic systems to cultivate sensibilities, unlock the mind for continuous and meaningful learning and connect the minds for new understandings.

With regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Saurabh', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Dr. Saurabh

Head, School of Business

Faculty of Management,

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra,

Jammu & Kashmir, India



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LEARNINGS @SSIM – POST ERUPTION OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC

The outbreak of COVID 19 at global level has imposed a major challenge(s) to all the sectors of the economy including education sector and now we are living amidst crisis of our lifetime. India has over 37 million students enrolled in higher education. Educational institutions are forced to stall their classes and learning process of the students has come to pause. An interruption in the delivery of education could cause long term disruption. This gigantic educational crisis has posed many challenges to all stakeholders in the education sector and at the same time provided an opportunity to think out of box. Traditionally Indian education model is physical or face -to-face transmission of knowledge since ages. Technology and its penetration in educational sector have provided many opportunities to reach the student community and can engage in the learning process. Post COVID several educational platforms usage increased many folds. Usage of audio-visual tools in the learning process was introduced long ago by many of the institutions in both public and private sectors.

Technologically SSIM is way forward in having IT infrastructure at institute level in terms of having Wi-Fi and other facilities. SSIM provides laptop to each student who joined in the institute. We have learning system in place which enable the students progress can be monitored by all the stakeholders like Parents, Faculty, students and Management etc.

In the present crisis situation to recover the loss of learning to students at SSIM, faculty members have adopted innovative teaching techniques. Faculty members identified self-learning topics in their respective courses and advised the students to go through the open source content including videos apart from sharing Power Point presentations. To engage the students in the learning process assignments/Projects are given to students with detailed guidelines. As SSIM is having e-learning resources and e-library links students are advised to refer the online resources to do assignments, projects and learning topics etc.

Faculty members at SSIM have conducted review sessions through online platforms and to assure the assurance of learning periodical tests are conducting using our student learning system(online) at place in the institute. Students are guiding and providing instructions through WhatsApp groups where in faculty members are also part of it even before the present crisis. A WhatsApp group was created for Management committee to take policy related discussions and lot of deliberations happened and happening depending on the need in the group before arriving decision(s). Periodically conference call is taking place to arrive decisions crucial in nature among the faculty groups and management committee.

Dr. S.V. Ramana Rao
Director
Siva Sivani Institute of Management
Secunderabad, Telangana, India

E-LEARNING BY STUDENTS DURING LOCKDOWN

FIRST YEAR MBA

- The **teaching learning process** for the courses of First year MBA is facilitated on the black board. Every student can access the Blackboard on their desktops/ laptops and mobiles.
- PPT, videos, cases, articles, online links of **NPTEL, coursera** etc are shared on the **Blackboard**. The blackboard content is updated by the faculty from time to time to ensure that the learning outcomes are met.
- The students are provided with the facility to access proprietary **databases like EBSCO, Proquest, Prowess** etc from their home to facilitate their learning.
- Assignments, Mini Projects, Quizzes and online internal assessments are conducted at appropriate intervals with faculty intervention.
- **Technology platforms** like **ZOOM / GOTOMEETING** are used to disseminate the knowledge to the students.
- **Students** are attending some **Webinar** sessions.

SECOND YEAR MBA

- The Second year MBA students are currently on **capstone (project work)** and are doing their capstone using the platforms like **Google forms** and **survey monkey** to collect data.
- The students are provided with the facility to access proprietary **databases like EBSCO, Proquest, Prowess** etc from their home to facilitate their research work.
- Due to the lockdown the students are permitted to do a **desk research**.
- Some students have registered with **Internshala** and working as per their guidelines.
- The students are monitored through emails, WhatsApp, phone calls and Zoom Meetings.

FACULTY

- Zoom Meeting is conducted on daily basis for the faculty.
- The faculty are reviewed for their **course coverage** and students monitoring.
- Faculty randomly make **cold calls** to the students to ensure learning, identify their difficulties and solve them.
- Faculty are **working on the research papers** and have been instructed to convert student's projects into research papers.
- At least 10 percent of the students' project should be **on effects on COVID 19** and faculty are working accordingly.

Placements

14 of the unplaced second MBA students resumes were already collected, and being sent to companies from time to time. Online tests are normally conducted by companies which students can write with a webcam facility and net connection. Personal Interviews are conducted by companies through ZOOM/ SKYPE.

Dr. Swarup K. Mohanty

Director

Sona School of Management, Salem, Tamil Nadu, India



Faculty of Management, SRMIST

Kattankulathur, Chennai

Tamilnadu, India

The Faculty of Management, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, is one of the top ranked B-Schools in India, in terms of student strength, faculty strength, academic performance, research publications, citations and infrastructure. Faculty of Management is offering BBA, MBA and Ph. D programmes in Management. Being a research centre since 2005, we have produced more than 70 doctorates in management and majority of the scholars are executives working in corporate. Our Ph. D (Part time) provides this opportunity to working executives.

At SRMIST, leveraging the technology is a continuous process. Technology is effected in plays a vital role in all the academic activities, viz., the admission process towards various program including MBA, framing and scheduling time table, marking the attendance of the students by faculty members, capturing the evaluation of the students on a continuous basis throughout the semester, valuation of the end semester examination, placement related, alumni related etc.,

Expertise gained by the faculty members and supporting staff members, futuristic mind set of the MBA students help us to utilise the opportunity, thrown open by COVID 19, quickly and effectively. We are taking all necessary steps to minimise the shortfall /loss in the teaching learning process. Necessary in house training is given to the faculty members for effective use of Google Class Room, Zoom classes and other online resources.

Effective Use of Google Class Room (GCR):

We have created Google classroom for every course of MBA. The learning materials in the form of word document or PDF and power point presentations are shared periodically by the course teacher. MCQ's are given to test the understanding level of the students and it is evaluated and communicated to them periodically. Assignments are given and the reports are collected and evaluated. Case studies are also discussed. Our faculty members record videos on the important topics / concepts and upload for the benefit of the students. The students find it very useful. The first year MBA students are trained to collect secondary data from on line resources to complete mini project, as part of the curriculum.

Zoom Classes:

Zoom class rooms (both free and licenses version) are also conducted to supplement the efforts taken in the GCR. Real time interface with the faculty members enable the students to get the doubts clarified in analytical courses in financial management and operations management courses. The classes are customised to cater to the needs of the students considering the availability of bandwidth, internet accessibility.

Other Online Resources:

Further, SRMIST library is equipped with many e-resources. The students and faculty can get on free access through RemoteX platform. Further, the students and faculty members are advised to make use of the resources available through SWAYAM portal, NPTEL, Coursera, Udemy to study courses online courses. The students, research scholars and faculty members are benefitted by attending webinars conducted by Madras Management Association (MMA), CII etc.

Dean interacts with the faculty members in small groups, with common functional responsibility, frequently at a pre-specified time. The experience of the faculty members, challenges faced by the students and faculty members are deliberated and appropriate feasible solutions are found wherever required.

Students and faculty members are locked in the home due to this pandemic situation, which is the highest priority. However we are confident that SRM students and faculty members are engaged in many ways, as briefed. Our immediate priority is to explore the possibility of paperless end semester examination for the MBA program.

Dr. V. M. Ponniah,

Dean - Faculty of Management,

SRM Institute of Science and Technology,

Chennai, India

TRANSFORMING DISRUPTIVE ADVERSITY INTO OPPORTUNITY

By Dr. Suresh Mony, Director, NMIMS, Bangalore

Introduction

The Academic community has traditionally been staid in its approach and there have not been significant, innovative developments for decades. The face to face (F2F) teaching-learning process has continued to dominate despite the advent of online learning. Educators and Faculty prefer the F2F mode from the viewpoint of convenience in responding to questions from a mass of students, carrying out interactive discussions and explanations/derivation/solving problems on the white board. Further, in regard to executive education, in India, most participants emphatically state their preference for the F2F mode of learning especially since they return to academics after a break and would like to leverage F2F faculty inputs. Around 5 years ago, during our Strategy Retreat, we had identified 'blended learning' as the future and had exhorted faculty to incorporate 'Massive Open Online Courses' (MOOCs) or modules from MOOCs in their curriculum. However, this did not take off, largely on account of the human psychology of comfort with status quo and consequent resistance to change. If one tries to analyse why the F2F mode is still popular, by and large, the answer seems to lie in the expressive power of good teachers/ faculty who with their communication skills are able to logically explain, convince and energise learners to not only learn from them but also from their peers in class. It is often said that teaching is a performing art. Consequently, the class performance of a good exponent of the art of teaching is a joy to behold and would naturally enthuse and elevate students to a higher state of knowledge absorption. Thus, the imprint left by the performing artist on the teaching floor has over the years ensured that the F2F mode of learning retains its primacy. However, the recent COVID-19 crisis has brought about a paradigm change in the outlook of educators and students.

Our Response to completion of class schedules

The Government of Karnataka's notification of March 13, 2020 announcing the closure of schools and colleges, followed by similar announcements from other states made it quite evident that it will be a long drawn out affair and it would not be possible for us to complete the academic curriculum in the normal F2F mode.

Immediately, the university leadership decided to complete the balance portion of the syllabi through the online mode of learning. On 16th March, we had a faculty meeting to discuss the challenges thereon and took a decision that some demonstration online classes using the WebEx and Zoom platforms would be held the next day. The consensus among the faculty was that Zoom was more user-friendly and accordingly it was decided to purchase about 20 Zoom licenses for a month to complete the remaining classes. Since then, we have been conducting on an average 75 to 85 online classes per day across our post graduate and undergraduate programs. By April 11, 2020 we have completed 1,720+ online sessions in 4 weeks. This mammoth task would not have been possible without the judicious use of technology, and the combined efforts/cooperation amongst faculty, students, academic coordinators and IT administrators. The term Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is commonly used in regard to the operations of the IT industry but scarcely mentioned in the academic world. Nonetheless, without so much as having a BCP, we were able to commence online delivery of classes within 3 days of the Government's notification to close down educational institutions and send students home. This is a tribute to proactive decision-making and the human response during times of crisis/adversity. Whereas in the past 5 years, despite recognising the benefits of online learning, there was no wholehearted attempt to embrace it, the COVID-19 crisis provided us a perfect opportunity to radically transform ourselves into agents of change to meet our academic calendar deadlines. One of the acknowledged principles of 'change management' is that organisational change requires one or two champions to lead the effort. At NMIMS Bangalore, all the faculty including core and visiting became champions and put their best foot forward to ensure that the teaching-learning (T-L) process did not stop.

As a result, our academic schedules are being maintained except for a delay of two weeks in regard to the PGDM program where despite the academic delivery having been completed and examinations scheduled from March 24, 2020, students could not be asked to present themselves for exams following the Prime Minister's call for 'Lock Down' on March 24, 2020. The calendar of all the undergraduate programs is being scrupulously adhered to.

Quality of the T-L process:

The ODC platform equipped with Word and Excel sheets and white smart board apart from chat box, facility for raising hands is versatile. Use of shared Excel

worksheets online and whiteboards provided by the ODC software make delivery of concepts and problem solving almost equivalent to the F2F mode. The chat box in the software enables interaction and raising of questions by students. Thus, some of the faculty opine that engagement and class participation is better in the ODC mode.

In regard to the case method of teaching which is one of the pillars of pedagogy in most B-schools, the less personalised mode of the T-L process enjoins that Faculty are more structured and beforehand assign specific sections of the case or questions for pre-class preparation which are dutifully addressed by students. Faculty are also in a position to use the facility of polling for specific questions by using websites such as StrawPoll.com and Kahoot.com. This has facilitated greater engagement in the class. As a result, whereas earlier, the considered view of faculty was that ODC is not amenable for the case method of teaching, our recent experience seems to suggest that the universality of this contention might be in question.

Pathway to blended learning?

Quality of teachers: The success of the ODC mode has so to say bridged the gap between the very good and average teachers. In ODC, the very good teacher does not have a stage to exhibit his/her skills as the online platform is somewhat indifferent to stage presence of teachers and hence cannot be as much of a performing artist as in the F2F mode. To draw a cricketing parlance, in test matches the gap between the very good and average players can be considerable which is significantly reduced in a 50 overs ODI. This is encouraging for the education sector where there is a dearth of high quality F2F teachers.

Differential pace of student learning: If every course has an online module which students can complete at their own pace and soil their hands by solving problems/exercises and get tested at every stage, their fundamental concepts would be strengthened. This facility reinforced by making available recordings of lectures would reduce the gap between slow learners and fast learners.

The foregoing thoughts throw up an entirely different dimension to the T-L process where use of technology helps to not only bridge the gap between very good and average teachers but also between fast and slow learners. In view of the foregoing factors, there is every reason to believe that blended learning with F2F and ODC in equal measure might be superior to the conventional F2F and could be the answer to

constraints such as shortage of quality faculty, prior class preparation of students, hands on practice for numerical exercises etc.

Innovative response to conduct of end-term examination

Once the challenge of completing the T-L process was overcome the next challenge was the conduct of the end term examination given the constraint that it could not be done in situ at campus. This ruled out the conventional pen and paper exam. The option of Online exams with proctoring by an IT service provider was examined. This had an inherent demerit in that students were spread across the length and breadth of the country and those who were from non metro/ semi-urban areas would have to contend with power outages and band width issues that would render the time bound online exam environment not entirely fair to everyone. As a departure from the conventional time bound examination, the university leadership team opted for Online exams or Take Home Exams (THE) that are open book and not time bound but may require data collection and collation, analysis, evaluation of options and are aimed at testing critical thinking and creativity skills of students. The backdrop to this decision was a research conducted by Lars Bengtsson (2019)¹ that concluded that *"THE may be the preferred choice of assessment method for higher order taxonomy levels because they promote higher order thinking skills and allow time for reflection"*. Accordingly, faculty were advised to design THE in a manner that apart from application of concepts and analysis, it was possible to assess students' critical thinking skills and creativity. Now that all THE have been designed, the consensus among faculty is that this is superior to the traditional time bound exams and would stand students in good stead in their corporate careers.

Conclusion

If we were to assess our experience during the past few weeks and its impact on education/academia and society it would be thus:

1. The Online teaching -learning process in higher education is certainly effective. In some ways, such as making T-L more structured; promoting self-learning and prior class preparation among students and thereby reducing spoon feeding; it is perhaps more effective than the F2F mode.

¹Bengtsson, L. Take-Home Exams in Higher Education: A Systematic Review. *Education Sciences*, 6 November 2019.

2. Examinations need not be in situ on campus or even online; Open book Take home Exams designed to assess higher order thinking skills or Online exams are more effective, at least at the postgraduate level.
3. Blended learning as a pedagogy appears superior to the conventional F2F process both from the faculty perspective where there is a shortage of high-quality teaching talent, and from the student perspective to equitably cater to fast and slow learners.
4. Blended learning with a fair share of pre-recorded lectures could also release more time for faculty to do research.
5. On the societal front, life is not normal yet. Yet, the teaching-learning process has gone on without loss of productivity and no interpersonal issues in the day-to-day working. These are pointers to a larger debate on “how can the workforce be made more productive”.
6. The larger dimensions relate to substantially lower energy consumption and minimal pollution. This raises questions on the way we have been conducting our lives so far and what is a more appropriate solution from environmental and social cost perspectives.

We believe that the COVID-19 crisis in general and the response mechanisms put in place by NMIMS and other leading institutions will bring about a paradigm change in the way higher education is conducted in future and that the teaching-learning process will become more effective.

Dr. Suresh Mony

Director

SVKM's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS)

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SYMBIOSIS INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT HYDERABAD CAMPUS

Sharing of Experiences and Practices amid COVID-19 Disruption

Amidst of this COVID crisis and lockdown situation, we at **SYMBIOSIS INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT (SIBM) - Hyderabad campus** has taken several initiative to ensure continuity of teaching-learning process and also improve research and corporate engagement.

1. The usage of various digital meeting platforms such as Google meets, Airmeeets, Zoom etc have increased exponentially in the last one month with all our students and faculty members being engaged in online assessments through digital assignments, viva voce, gamification of test components etc.
2. Our students are also engaged in pursuing guided value add courses on various MOOC platforms such as SWAYAM, Udemy, coursera, Edx etc. More importantly, our campus recently got approval for ‘**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.
3. Further, most of our MBA students continue to pursue their summer internship programs on ‘work from home’ (WFH) basis with 20+ corporate partners. Further, for a few of those corporate partners having logistics challenge to engage our students for scheduled SIPs, we are engaging in guided research project involving faculty guide as well as corporate mentor with an aim to produce publication in SCOPUS/ABDC journals or listed case folios.
4. All our faculty members are engaged in WFH pursuing research, teaching and evaluation, guide students online for SIP and working with PhD research scholars, developing new curses and digital content for existing courses, get trained on new pedagogical tools for blended learning through our staff training department and various MOOC platfroms and with active collaboration with international professors (esp with our partner institutions abroad) wherever possible.

5. To facilitate constructive engagement for our non-teaching staff during this lock down period, we have designed a dozen short module productivity improvement programs to be delivered online in a synchronous mode by our staff training department. All staff members are mandated to take up atleast 3 courses out of these. Further, adding to this, we have also identified several functionally relevant courses on various MOOC platforms and issued an advisory to all staff to take up and complete atleast one course (typically 10-15 hours) per week in an asynchronous mode.
6. Access to digital content, e-learning material through our own LMS, remote access to our digital library platform, various databases and research content is made available to all students, faculty, staff and PhD scholars.

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

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Director

Symbiosis Institute of Business Management

Hyderabad, India



The ICFAI University, Tripura

(Established under section 4(2) of the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India University, Tripura Act 2004)

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**ACTIVITIES OF THE ICFAI UNIVERSITY TRIPURA FOR PROTECTING
ACADEMICS INTEREST OF THE STUDENTS DURING COVID19
PANDEMIC**

- The ICFAI University, Tripura is a Pioneer University established in 2004 under the provisions of an Act (Tripura Act No. 8 of 2004) passed in Tripura Legislative Assembly and it is situated in Kamalghat, West Tripura, India. The University is offering World class, Innovative, Career oriented UG, PG, M.Phil & PhD programs in the field of Management, Rural Management, Healthcare Management, Commerce, Education, Special Education, Physical Education, Yoga, Clinical Psychology, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Technology, Law, Allied Health Sciences, Nursing, Liberal Arts, Library Science etc.
- In view of the situation prevailing in connection with the worldwide recent outbreak of Corona virus, COVID-19 as well in our country and memorandum issued by Central & State Government, the University has suspended all classes from 17th March, 2020 which will continue till the Government of India declare normalcy in the country. But the University is very much concerned for protecting academic interest of the students the University gone for using virtual platforms. The University ordered to all its employees to stay at home and to carry out their essential jobs from home using electronic means w.e.f :20/03/2020.
- Faculty members updated their teaching courses marks upto Mid-Term Examination on ERP and submitted statement of marks upto Mid-Term examination for their respective teaching courses.
- Everyday faculty members shared lectures notes, PPT, course materials, assignments, e-learning resources and e-library links etc among students by email, WhatsApp in Asynchronous mode.
- Faculty members also conducted lecture sessions by using LMS and shared Course materials through video conferencing platforms like Zoom, WebEx, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Skype etc in Synchronous mode. However, the students who are all residing in remote places have felt difficulties due to internet related issues.
- The Faculty Members also forwarded selective lectures, learning materials from various online ICT platforms like SWAYAM, NPTEL etc to the students.
- All the departments of the University are organizing National and International Webinars by inviting reputed Professors, Working Professionals, High Court Judges etc from across the world.

- Counsellors and Faculty members of the University maintained electronically a very close contact with the students for maintaining their good mental health & well being. They advised students to remain calm and stress free during the lockdown period. We have shared some video links, audio and textual tips for maintaining well minding mind during the period.

Prof. Biplab Halder

Pro - Vice Chancellor

The ICFAI University, Tripura

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Karjat, Mumbai, India
www.universalbusinessschool.com

COVID-19 RESPONSE – Experiences & Practices

“It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change.”

— Leon C. Megginson

Universal Business School (UBS) is established by CEOs, who have headed multi-billion dollar MNCs in 100+ countries and **Endorsed by 60 CEOs**. The founders have studied in Michigan Business School-USA, Tuck Business School-USA, IMD-Switzerland and IE Business School-Spain and have brought the global best practices to India. UBS has joint Degree collaborations with leading universities in USA, UK, France, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria and Mexico. The UBS PGDM program is approved by **AICTE** and Accredited by **National Board of Accreditation (NBA)**.

Student, Faculty and Staff Safety

An emergency meeting of the Academic Board was called on Sunday, 15th March and it was decided to shut all classes, postpone all examinations and evacuate all students from the campus, as we have students from 26 states and wanted to ensure that they reach their respective homes safely. Our Program Directors tracked each and every student and talked with their parents to ensure they are safe at home. This was an absolute masterstroke as by Friday, 20th March every student had reached their home safely prior to the Sunday, 22nd March, ‘Janta Curfew’ announced by the Hon’ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Campus and all 10 staff offices were shut by Wednesday, 18th March and every one was asked to work from home.

Overall Strategy

We set up 2 War Rooms to construct the strategy.

1. Academics and Placements War Room focussed on student impact which had all the Academic leaders and the Corporate Relations team.
2. Business Continuity, Organisation Impact, Infrastructure, Financial Sustainability, Student Recruitment & Human Resources focussed on long term sustainability of the organisation and had leaders from Finance, HR, Facilities, Strategy and Marketing.

Both teams presented their ideas which were put into action along with a detailed communication strategy and Implementation plan.

Online Academic Delivery & Faculty Readiness

The Goal of UBS was to ensure that there is academic continuity in order to ensure that there is absolutely no delay in progression of our students.

Of the are two models for online learning: synchronous learning — in which classes are held in real time via livestreaming — and asynchronous learning, which is self-guided learning using pre-recorded videos for consumption within a stipulated time. We decided the majority would be synchronous live teaching as Live classes provide an opportunity to have real-time engagement and conversation, while experimenting on asynchronous learning.

The academic delivery went online and we employed two platforms, Google Meet for internal meetings and the GoToMeeting platform for classroom delivery.

To enable us to do this effectively, it was essential that our Faculty was ready to delivery under a constrained environment. Faculty training sessions were held and faculty was encouraged to use Harvard Business School material for online delivery and online case study teaching.

We are also taking the AICTE guidelines to use 20% of the Online courses on Swayam and other platforms like Corsera, Udemy etc.

Regardless of the teaching method, we realised, we will need to collect regular student feedback to improve the learning experience and conduct frequent formative assessments to understand learners' reception of the content. The Module descriptors were changed to incorporate these new tools of learning and the change in assessments.

Students have access to our global partner online libraries as well as our Online eLibrary with access to videos and books to support their learning.

Learning Management System (LMS)

We redeployed our LMS with more features, which has all module descriptors, academic calendars, lesson plans populated. Student feedback is regularly captured and polls run to get the student pulse. The LMS is linked with the online teaching platforms to allow for playback of online sessions. This was the first time anyone would have deployed an enterprise wide ERP system without any physical contact and completely virtually.

Student discussions & engagement

Traditional classroom education involves more than just content delivery. Student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions are an integral part of education. To promote regular interaction, our LMS allows for several discussion rooms to be deployed for a class, a module, a club activity, an event to facilitate dialogue through online discussion groups.

Faculty is encouraged to conduct short quizzes, polls and practice questions continuously to ensure student engagement. Rewarding class participation in discussion boards or live video sessions by making it a component of the final grade and basing exam questions on classroom discussions or some form of gamification, such as by creating a leadership board, can serve as motivation for students to actively participate.

Communications is Key (With Parents, Students & Staff)

In times of uncertainty the mantra is to communicate, communicate and communicate. So we have multiple layers of communication to ensure we are constantly listening, evolving and adapting to the changes in the environment.

From the moment of the outbreak, we have been constantly emailing students, parents and our staff on the big decisions and its impact. We started having fortnightly Town hall meetings where in the overall direction of the institution with every member of staff present with a Q&A session. The Program Directors have fortnightly Town hall meetings (earlier this was monthly) with all their students and parents. There is a weekly Management Meetings, Academic Review Meetings, Examinations Team Meetings, HR Committee Meetings, Finance & Admin Meetings, HOD Meetings, Marketing Meetings and Corporate Relations Team Meetings.

Examinations Strategy & Feedback

We have followed these paths:

1. Some subjects which had end term examinations were converted to Assignments using Turn-it in and Urkund software to ensure minimal plagiarism
2. Some subjects, we used the mid-term examinations as a base along with internals to extrapolate marks
3. We are considering innovative exam designs such as open-book tests and reducing the gravitas of final exams by adding essays, projects and thesis papers.

Financial Support for Students

It was felt that in such times we need to be sensitive to the economic loss and potential loss of livelihood of the parents of our students and hence we came up with these solutions:

1. A Instalment facility was introduced
2. We tied up with a consortium of banks to provide education loans
3. Subvention to ensure that even those not eligible for loans
4. Students were required to pay only 15% of the Fees due
5. Students were given staggered payment plans
6. The Boarding & Lodging Fees was reduced in proportion to their stay on campus for the coming academic year

Virtual Mentoring & Co-curricular Activities

The weekly mentoring have continued online and all career developmental activities are virtual. When the academic calendar resumes, time will be built for the co-curricular activities and clubs to function in this new virtual environment. Some of the clubs have already commenced online activities like UBS Big Boss as each one of us are in virtual quarantine and lockdown.

Financial Sustainability & Business Continuity

In times of crisis financial stability is critical to the long term survival of institutions. We took the following decisions to ensure we are able to ride the storm

1. On 31st March, 2020 we secured a significant credit line from our bankers.
2. We negotiated with our Bankers to reduce our Interest rates and use the DSRA if required
3. We reduced our Capex, Opex and cut back on all non-essential expenditure

Psychological Support & Student Well Being

A student Helpline was created and students had the ability to have counselling sessions with our experienced Counsellor to support their mental well-being. We also introduced online Zoom classes on Pranac Healing for our students, staff, faculty and alumni.

Society & Community Support

In times like these it is essential for those less fortunate are taken care off. We have done two things:

1. We employ over 100 staff from neighbouring villages. We ensure that they are fully taken care off
2. We are going to the neighbouring villages and using our canteen to distribute food every week to all the villagers
3. We were asked for ration by one of the villages, so we have transported 10 kg packets (Rice, Wheat, Oil, Salt, Sugar & Dal) from Pune to be delivered to all the houses in the village.

Virtual Internships

The Corporate Relations team was able to pull off a miracle. 90% of the Internships offered to our students were cancelled by the companies as these were physical internships. Overnight the team went into overdrive and in 30 days was able to secure a virtual internship for each and every students. Our Faculty is linked to each of the reporting manager of our students and ensure that the student is contributing to the company. We are confident many of these internships will result in PPOs.

Research Output

Invest in Research was our mantra. We continued recruiting Senior Research professionals to further strengthen our Research output.

Our students and Faculty have published a record 15 papers during lockdown. To put this in perspective this is the highest research output by UBS in its entire history in 45 days.

Conclusion: Plan for the Future

The COVID-19 outbreak's resounding implications on pedagogical operations will have to be managed in the short term with vigour to combat any gaps in learning whilst maintaining continuity and academic integrity. As we know nothing is constant, even COVID-19 and so we are setting up internal teams to focus on the future direction of UBS. From an Academic standpoint it is clear that Online learning does work in trying times but is not a substitute for classroom learning and peer-to-peer learning. Provision of virtual operations will be the crux of this effort, but these operations must be carefully planned and effectively managed, taking into consideration current best practices and using information gained from stakeholder feedback.

At UBS, our focus is to ensure the learning is of the highest quality with academic integrity while using these technological platforms and the mental well-being of our students. We want to ensure that our students thrive on immersive and experiential learning tools which have been designed to ensure that when they do come to campus they will have an enjoyable and fulfilling learning experience.

As an Academic institution, we are proud to say that this crisis has allowed us to rapidly adapt to the "NEXT NORMAL" by rallying around the students whilst ensuring quality in everything we do and provide them with the right tools and ensure that they are connected to their alma mater and most of all they are safe.

Mr. Tarun Anand
Chairman & Founder
Universal Business School
Karjat, Maharashtra, India



School of Management Studies University of Hyderabad

To manage this lockdown period at our school we have taken numerous measures to improve the student learning process and complete the academic semester.

Some of the measures/activities are given in the following points:

1. Before this COVID 19 issue, we used to offer our courses through Moodle and Google classroom platform. Even now we are using both of the platforms efficiently. At our university, we have a dedicated e-learning center to support the Moodle platform.
2. During this lockdown time, we are emphasizing the students to complete and submit their assignments through the LMS platform or email. Faculty members are having regular communication with the students through Whatsapp and email.
3. For some of the courses, we are conducting Live sessions through ZOOM/ Skype. For example, we are running a **two-year executive MBA program**. Usually, the classes are conducted during the weekends. Now also we are conducting the classes during the weekends by conducting live web-based sessions through ZOOM/Skype. Even some of the courses are already offered through blended learning mode. For example, a Business research method course is offered through blended learning mode. Initially, we have planned to conduct a few offline sessions and the rest of the topics will be converted through pre-recorded videos. Now the offline sessions are replaced through live web-based sessions.
4. For some of the MBA courses, we are sharing the e-materials through LMS and email. We are also sharing the pre-recorded videos for the students learning process. In some of the courses already we have created pre-recorded videos and now those videos are helping the faculty members and students to complete their academic semester.
5. Apart from the above initiatives, SWAYAM, NPTEL and other online courses are highly preferred and referred by the faculty members to further improve the learning process of the students.
6. In some of the courses, open educational resources are referred to the students.
7. Ph.D. scholars are regularly communicating with their respective supervisors through video conferencing mode/telephonic mode/email.

The above activities are currently practiced by the school of management studies, University of Hyderabad.

Prof. Dr. P. Jyothi

Dean

**School of Management Studies, University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad, India**



Teaching Innovations at VJIM During Covid-19 Lockdown Crisis

Context

When reports of the outbreak of pneumonia of unknown cause in Wuhan city, capital of Hubei province in central China started trickling in during early January of 2020, everyone across the world including India viewed it as a local health issue which is not likely to impact them. Even when the World Health Organization declared the outbreak as a public health emergency of international concern on 30th January 2020, very few people across the world ever imagined that it will eventually turn into a global pandemic capable of wreaking havoc of epic proportions on their health and livelihoods. The pace at which the disease spread has caught the governments of even the most advanced nations completely off guard eventually overwhelming their much-vaunted healthcare systems resulting in thousands of their citizens losing their lives.

By mid-March, governments across the world have 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. The third and sixth terms of the Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) were in progress with almost 75-80% of the syllabus of various courses completed by mid-March with the remaining syllabus scheduled to be completed by end of March followed by end-term examinations. The management had to act quickly and before the situation goes out of control.

This report, prepared on the request of AMDISA, provides 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. It also provides information on the contingent planning process, challenges and operational issues in moving from traditional to online mode of teaching & evaluation and impromptu & creative solutions devised to overcome them. The document also includes the reactions, experiences and feedback of faculty and students on the online teaching, learning and evaluation process and planning for the near, medium and long-term to provide quality PGDM program to the students in the new 'social distancing' regime which is expected to continue for some more time. Information about the institute in brief is given below for the benefit of readers.

About Vignana Jyothi Institute of Management (VJIM)

Vignana Jyothi Institute of Management, located in Hyderabad, Telangana, India, was founded in 1993 to provide management education to local youth and develop them into business professionals. It is an autonomous institute offering two-year full time Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) approved by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). The institute was accredited by NBA in 2014, reaccredited in 2018 and accredited by NAAC in 2015. The PGDM program is also recognized by AIU (Association of Indian Universities) as equivalent to the MBA degree. Students from across the country and especially from the neighbouring states enrol every year attracted by the quality of the programme, qualified and experienced faculty, state-of-the-art facilities, learning resources and the lucrative and rewarding career opportunities that awaits them after graduation.

Contingent Planning to Maintain Continuity

Though there were some reports in the media in mid-March suggesting that the central government was planning to implement measures to control the emerging health crisis, very few people had any inkling of its decision to enforce a nation-wide comprehensive lockdown. Many organizations were completely caught unawares by the sudden decision and were left scrambling to manage their operations from spiralling out of control. VJIM was particularly concerned about negative fallout of cancelling or postponing classes on the students and mainly on the careers of the graduating students, many of whom had already accepted job offers. The following sections provide information on the timely and innovative actions taken by management to ensure that the class schedules were not derailed due to lockdown.

A major concern of the Director and the management was to ensure the safety of all its students, faculty and staff. Hence, as soon as the official directives were received from MHA and AICTE, the management asked all the hostel residents to vacate their rooms and return home with immediate effect. This was done to ensure that no student was stranded in the hostels during the lockdown period. The faculty, staff and the rest of the students were also asked not to report to the campus till further notice and strictly follow government directives. The next important task of the Director was to avoid disruption in the programme schedule and complete the rest of the syllabus of courses in progress. He convened a series of meetings with the programme coordinator, examination coordinator and faculty members to know the status of the courses. Two academic council meetings were held to share updates and brainstorm on ways to deal with the situation. A faculty WhatsApp Group was also created which quickly evolved into a discussion forum. 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.

That momentous decision triggered a series of actions by the academic administrators to migrate the entire TLE seamlessly from classroom to virtual mode. 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. As soon as the decision to go online was taken, a search for a suitable technology platform and vendors was carried out and after weighing the costs and benefits of each platform, 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.

The programme coordinator was entrusted with the task of communicating the class schedules to the students and the faculty teaching in the IV term and setting up the online sessions. 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.

Since Microsoft Team did not have feature to conduct examinations online, a third-party vendor was identified and after a demonstration of the online test software, the vendor was asked to set up online examination system. Though there were a few deficiencies in the software, it was able to meet the requirements such as maintaining confidentiality of the question papers, capacity to administer and collect the answer scripts from students, reliable and user-friendly software, etc. The examination coordinator provided detailed guidelines to all the faculty on setting up question papers for open book examinations and scheduled the end-term examination for all the courses. All the question papers were reviewed by external experts to check whether they met the criteria for open book examinations. The faculty were asked to focus on testing students' ability to '*apply*', '*analyse*', '*evaluate*' and '*create*' (higher orders of learning of the Bloom's Taxonomy) using conceptual knowledge rather than testing lower order levels of learning such as 'recall' and 'understand'. Both the delivery platform (Microsoft Teams) and assessment platform (outsourced to third party vendor) were seamlessly integrated with the existing Academia ERP to digitally record attendance, schedule online sessions and examinations, announcing the grades, etc.

Challenges in Implementation

There were a few challenges that the stakeholders had to face, which were inevitable considering the fact there was a sudden and major shift in the mode of teaching and evaluation. Though there were apprehensions initially about quality of internet connectivity including uninterrupted internet connectivity and bandwidth of local networks and frequent power interruptions in small towns and rural locations upsetting class schedules, most of these issues could be sorted out with minor trouble shooting. However, students accessing online classes using mobile phones faced many problems using Microsoft Teams and other platforms since these were not designed for viewing the content on small screens. In fact, many of the standard features of the platforms configured for laptops were not available for mobile phone users.

Allaying the apprehension of faculty and students about the efficacy of the online mode and getting everyone onboard was an important issue in the change process. Adapting to a completely new mode of online education for academic administrators such as scheduling sessions and examinations and communicating them to the faculty and students remotely proved to be a challenge initially. The Examination Coordinator had to repeatedly remind the students of the dos and don'ts of online examination so that they were able to appear for the examinations without major hiccups.

Faculty and students had to also learn quickly to use new and unfamiliar technology to complete the sessions on time and as per schedule. Designing and delivering lessons had to be planned carefully keeping in mind that establishing personal and emotional connect between faculty and students and between peers and replicating classroom experience is difficult online. Therefore, new combinations of interesting and engaging content and pedagogical tools had to be used to overcome this handicap. It is worth mentioning here that all the faculty members rose to the occasion with aplomb and demonstrated admirable adaptability and resilience in putting the courses back on track. The enthusiastic participation, active involvement, and the discipline in adhering to the norms of online etiquette demonstrated by the students were also contributed to the success of this initiative.

Online Sessions and Examinations

Classes for a dozen elective courses in the functional areas of Marketing, HR, Finance, Operations and Business Analytics were conducted online. A schedule of online sessions was prepared for all the courses with specified dates and time slots, which was then communicated to the students and faculty so that they could log into Microsoft teams and start sessions on time. Some faculty members extended the sessions beyond the allotted time for case discussions, exercises, and tutorials. The faculty also shared e-books and power point presentations and other documents on the screen while explaining the concepts and guided students in exercises using Excel. Audit courses in Python and other areas were also offered online for the benefit of students. Students could register for courses on Coursera, SWAYAM courses (offered by Ministry of Human Resources Development, GOI) and other sources and earn credits which will be counted towards overall credit.

The Examination Department conducted a total of 31 online open book examinations in terms III and VI courses which include:

- End-Term Examination for Term VI for students of second year PGDM students (Batch-26)
- End-term Examinations for Term III for students of first year PGDM students (Batch-27)
- Supplementary Examinations of Terms III and IV for students of second year PGDM students (Batch- 26)
- End-term Examination for Business News Analysis for students of first year PGDM students (Batch- 27)

Except for two core courses in Term VI and the Business News Analysis course for which objective type questions were set, the examinations in all other courses followed open-book pattern. A set of guidelines was provided to faculty for setting and assessing open book examinations. The end-term examinations for 3-credit courses of Term VI were set for 100 marks, while it was set for 50 for all 3-credit courses of Term III. 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 (Batch-26) who could not attend regular classes since they had already joined companies by then.

The summer internships scheduled to commence in mid-April for the students of first year PGDM were shifted online as per AICTE directives. The Placement Office was in touch with the companies to request them to let students work from home on their internship projects. The faculty and company mentors started interacting over email and other digital platforms to work on ways to guide students regularly in carrying out secondary research and wherever possible, data collection online for primary research. Research projects and other activities were planned for students who are not able to get online internship projects.

Insights from Survey and Feedback from Faculty, Students and Academic Administrators

To understand and improve online systems and processes implemented in response to the Covid crisis, formal and informal feedback was collected from the faculty, students, and academic administrators. The analysis of the feedback provided some very interesting insights on how they perceived online education. An online survey was conducted to know how students perceived online education. A google document with nine questions was sent to all the students of first and second year PGDM asking them to rate the nine parameters in the survey.

The following questions were asked:

- 1) whether they had ever anticipated such a major shift in mode of education.
- 2) whether they faced any IT issues such as uninterrupted access to internet, bandwidth issues, interruptions in power, etc.
- 3) effectiveness of online sessions
- 4) how online sessions compared with regular classroom sessions in terms of their engagement and involvement
- 5) whether management of time and flexibility in schedules were better in online mode
- 6) whether they felt more relaxed and comfortable and less self-conscious while interacting with faculty and peers online
- 7) whether they were comfortable with online examinations

8) whether they are ready for blended learning after this experience and finally

9) whether this experience will be helpful in future.

They were asked to rate each of the parameter on a 5-point scale (with 1- 'Strongly Disagree', 2 – Disagree, 3- Neither Disagree nor Agree, 4-Agree and 5- Strongly Agree).

Around 35% of the students (156 students) responded to the survey.

- The analysis of the data revealed that the students felt that learning in a classroom setting is more effective than learning online (Average Score 3.78). They also felt more engaged and involved in learning in a regular classroom setting with face-to-face interaction with faculty and peers compared to learning in virtual setting.
- This was on expected lines since the students are used to classroom teaching which facilitates personal and emotional connect with others present in the classroom (Average Score was 3.78).
- Interestingly, they preferred virtual classes because of the convenience and flexibility they offer (classroom lectures and discussions can be recorded and viewed anytime they choose) and because it helps them manage their time better (Average Score 3.69).
- The students felt that they are now more comfortable with blended learning models after their recent experience with online learning (Average Score 3.61) and that this experience has prepared them for self-learning and life-long learning in the future (Average Score 3.60).
- They were ambivalent when they were asked whether they faced IT issues such as not having proper internet access and adequate broadband and problems with IT hardware and software (Average Score 3.03). The results show an overall student satisfaction with virtual learning, but classroom is certainly a better and preferred learning mode.

The faculty were asked to provide their experience of online teaching. An email was sent to the faculty who taught online courses in term IV and the programme and examinations coordinators eliciting their views on this subject. They were asked to respond to a set of generic questions to capture their insights and observations on a broad range of issues related to online classes. Some of their interesting observations and opinions are summarized here.

Some faculty felt that online teaching provided a better work-life balance since they could conduct classes from the comfort of their homes and avoid spending long hours in rush hour traffic and traffic jams which could be used for spending more time with their families. They also added that time saved (and effort as well) in daily commute reduced their stress and gave them more time to work on research and professional development. A few faculty members noticed that students who were diffident and shy and who were reluctant to participate in classroom discussions appeared less self-conscious and more self-assured in virtual settings. Maintaining

proper class control and discipline was an issue flagged by all the faculty since students can log in and switch off the video and mute the mike making it difficult for them to monitor their presence. However, the faculty members quickly devised their own techniques to overcome this problem.

A general observation was that the interest and involvement of students cannot be easily gauged in the absence of face-to-face interactions and at times the sessions turn into a monologue with only the faculty speaking most of the time. To overcome this problem, faculty members had to create engaging content and pedagogy to capture students' attention and active involvement. Some faculty members felt that the pace of the session was hampered to some extent due to the large number of queries in the chatroom. In quite a few cases, malfunctioning of the audio-visual features of the platform posed problems and rectifying them took up a large chunk of class time. Faculty members also expressed their reservations on the effectiveness of power point presentations for online lectures, especially in courses such as finance, since explaining an application exercise was not possible on the computer screen. Most faculty agreed that the enthusiastic participation of most of the class mitigated many of these problems to a large extent.

Even though the faculty and the students expressed many concerns in shifting to online classes, everyone expressed their satisfaction with their online experience and commended the management and academic administrators for their quick response and timely implementation of various innovative measures in a seamless manner and preventing the current crisis from overwhelming the system and derailing the term schedules. The goal of ensuring that students do not suffer due to postponement of classes was successfully achieved by switching online.

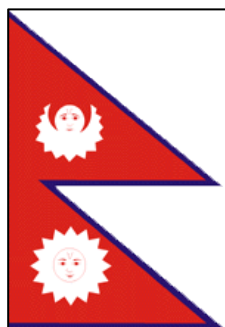
Future Course of Action

The COVID infection continues to rage and the future of the communities and societies are still very uncertain at this point of time. Experts predict that everyone must adjust to a situation which will be vastly different from what we were used to just a few months ago. Realizing that it will not be business as usual, the institute has drawn up plans for the future.

AICTE has indicated that next academic session can commence from July for the second-year student and August for the incoming first-year students of the PGDM program. The institute has already prepared the schedule for both I and II-year PGDM while ensuring proper social distancing norms are strictly followed. The institute has decided that it will follow blended learning model with roughly 60% of the syllabus to be covered in the classroom and rest in virtual mode. The institute is also gearing up to offer blended learning courses by developing engaging content and pedagogical tools for online sessions. Regular classes and online classes for I-year and II-year students will be held on alternate days and on different days of the week. This is to ensure that only 50% of the students will be present in the campus at any given time. Moreover,

each classroom will use 50% of the capacity so that sufficient distance is maintained between the students. It will be mandatory for everyone to wear masks, use sanitizers, maintain social distancing practices, and follow all the instructions mandated by the government authorities. Many lessons have been during the recent experiment with online education which will be used to make required changes and deliver high quality programs to the students. While the current crisis has caused immense damage to the health and livelihoods of the citizens across the world, it has also opened new vistas for many organizations and VJIM is no exception. The institute has successfully experimented with a new model of teaching-learning-evaluation which will hold it in good stead in times to come.

Dr. Durga Prasad
Director,
Vignana Jyothi Institute of Management
Hyderabad, India



NEPAL

COVID 19 Redefines Learning

Nepal celebrates its new year as per the Bikram Sambat (B.S.) Vedic calendar. This year the much-awaited new year 2077 B.S. corresponding to 12th April 2020 came as a silent one. No parties, no rushing around, no dancing and merry making. The Covid-19 had succeeded. The Nepal government had made the closure announcement in time like its neighboring countries. Silence all around. Not a single person on the road or even in their gardens, the first few days. Last minute rush hours were there, for the basic shopping and I admired my countrymen, specially the Kathmandu lot as they shopped with dignity.

My institute, College of Applied Business, better known in short as CAB, was preparing itself for it, since we were updated with the rumors and, as expected, the SARS experience was already being revived. As anticipated, the Ministry of Education sent out a circular to all academic institutions to close down till 15th Baisakh 2077 (27th April 2020). Along with the general public, the students were consigned into their homes during the imposed nation-wide lockdown which has been subsequently extended for the third time up to 7th May 2020.

i-Learn: CAB has its own online learning platform called the i-Learn or Virtual Learning. All the faculties have access to their respective subject control panel where they uploaded all the materials. The materials contained the slides prepared by the faculties, pdfs files and links to the other useful online resources. Assignments were also given, collected from the students and evaluated on ilearn. The students were directed by their lecturers to update themselves on the revision modules, since the finals (board exams) were just round the bend. This Covid closure was a good time for the students for revisions – the time to interact with their lecturers on chapters and topics not understood. At times in a class room atmosphere it is the good students who get the maximum attention, and the lazy but intelligent and weak ones are ignored. However, with the i-Learn classes, the lecturers have had an experience to interact with all. For many of my lecturers and students, it has been a self-reflection time. A time to get to know each other better, clear academic misunderstandings as well as personal misconceptions. i-learn

ZOOM / Google / Microsoft : CSIT and BIM classes for all semesters are being conducted through the ZOOM platform for CAB undergraduates. In the beginning, it took time to start off because of intermittent internet, disturbances and scheduling issues at home, but finally, they are managing. The feedback from my team mates are great. This form of online learning has bridged the gap between the good and slow learners especially in

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mathematics. This online platform was initially preferred due to its free access. But it has time limitation of 40 minutes per session. Online classes were conducted and recorded. Google Meet, Initially this was not free platform. Later when it was made free we shifted towards it. It has no time limitation but its features are quite limited in comparison to the ZOOM. Online classes were conducted and recorded using this platform in later part. Microsoft Team, our college has signed the MOU with Microsoft so we have access to the resources provided by the Microsoft. Initially it was quite tedious to migrate all the students in the Microsoft platform due to the limited number of license available to us. But after managing all such issues, we are all now enjoying this platform. It is currently being used by our faculties.

Youtube

All the recorded session of the online classes were uploaded in the youtube; so that students could revise if anything went just above their heads during the online session. On the other hand students this enabled students who had missed their classes; to grasp the content they had missed.

The link for the *Computer Architecture* online classes

is <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLILp7dUsYAIFkc3onzoKgfFe-L5Mdrkja>

The link for Xilinx ISE tutorial is

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLILp7dUsYAIEgKGGPTlwFI5PNN5C6h24i>

Social Media/ Face Book: Since this is the most popular social media, we had used it to collect the students who were scattered in various parts of Nepal. Our first step started from here. We created the appropriate groups as per their semesters'. The main purpose of this was to disseminate the information and guide them towards the online classes. Further regular updates were also provided to them through the official page of our college.

On a number of occasions, when some students have missed their scheduled online classes, they have made the best use of the college Facebook site which updates them on what is happening administratively. Students have availed of Chat groups to share contents and exchange opinions with both their lecturers and classmates.

As a matter of fact, students now are more into academics with their cell phones and laptops than when they were in the college prior to the Covid crisis. It appears that all this learning through the social media and online platforms has made learning more accessible. This shows that online learning and IT life-style is here to stay, and educational institutions should encourage this form of learning not just in the cities but also in the villages and remote areas.

Government Realization: This Covid-19 is a blessing in disguise. It has challenged the Ministry of Education to take academics one step further, within the reach of students at



College of Applied Business (CAB)

(Affiliated with T.U., and HSEB, Kathmandu, Nepal)



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their households. This calls for the Government to formulate and implement appropriate policies to promote IT-based teaching-learning environment in schools and colleges, and support the development of pedagogies to complement such an environment. Of course, in the post-Covid, mask wearing will be part of the school and college uniforms, while physical-distancing will be imposed in the classes, and school/college buses. Institutions will be required to apply various other health and safety measures for the students, faculty and non-faculty staff. However, one should not be surprised if education now becomes online for some semesters. Let us be prepared for the changes. This is another huge step forward though it will be economically, physically and emotionally exhausting, but for the better.

Self-learning has definitely improved, and since CAB inculcates research-style of learning right from the first semester, the internet search engine has been gate crashed by our students. It is heartening to know that the lecturers will be on their toes once the college commences which everybody is highly looking forward to. It is amazing that students keep asking as to when the college is opening. The Covid-19 has indeed induced a great learning experience with self-reflection.

Ramesh Pandey

Principal

Estd. 1998



COVID 19- Response of Kathmandu University School of Management, Kathmandu, Nepal

Education system around the world is passing through a very precarious moment brought by the pandemic Covid19. Almost all major activities of the economy are badly affected by it. Yet, thanks to the technological development, education sector has not come to stand still like some other sectors e.g. aviation, hospitality, transport, construction, agriculture etc. Many academic institutions have gone online for teaching and interacting with the students.

Programmes at KU School of Management:

Kathmandu University School of Management offers programmes at post-graduate and undergraduate levels:

1. Ph. D.
2. M.Phil. in Management
3. MBA
4. MBA (Executive)
5. Master's in Public Policy and Management
6. BBA (Honours)
7. BBA (Emphasis)
8. BBA
9. Bachelor in Business Information System
10. Bachelor in Hospitality Management

The School follows semester system and has about 1000 students, including those in the affiliated campuses. Teaching and learning is done through face to face interaction with the students in the classroom settings.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic growing at a fast rate around the globe, the Government of Nepal imposed lockdown in the country on March 24, 2020. Most of the universities had called off classes around March 15, 2020. In that situation the priority of KU School of Management was to ensure safety of students, faculty and staff. Obeying lockdown and keeping physical distance among faculty, staff and students was very important to contain the spread of Covid19. When we at KU School of Management suspended classes as a precautionary measure to contend Covid19 pandemic effects classes of Spring semester and trimesters were in progress. Considering the complexities of the situation the School made this decision in the interest of the students so that they can complete their study within time.

Although we hope that things will come under control and return to near normalcy soon, we are not in position to predict how long this situation will continue. Considering this KU School of Management decided to give continuity to its classes through online so that we can complete the

current term and semester as per its academic calendar without significant delay. During the lockdown period we have made encouraging progress in delivering courses online using different platforms such as Google hangout or meet, zoom etc. The Academic Council of KU also passed a policy regarding the online delivery of courses and instructed all schools to go online to the possible extent.

Online Classes:

In KU School of Management the use of electronic means is not a new phenomenon. Faculty frequently use Moodle, LMS and some form of virtual classes in delivering courses and giving assignments and tests to the students. With the COVID-19 pandemic their use has been extensive. Faculty use Google meet, Google classrooms, Zoom etc. in the delivery of courses. In the beginning some faculty members who were not much familiar with these methods faced some problems. However, with the technical support provided by the School and help from their colleagues they overcame these problems. Currently, almost all the courses are run online smoothly by the faculty.

Students' Participation:

When we started online delivery of the courses, we were somewhat sceptical about the students' response, particularly with the undergraduate students who come from different parts of Nepal. However, this did not appear as a major issue since almost 90 per cent of the students participated in the online classes. One of the problems facing these students was the access to internet facilities in their home district. The Schools contacted them through their mobiles and kept them informed about the progress made in the classes. Faculty members also encouraged them to be in touch with their classmates.

Tests Administration:

One of the major challenges facing the school was to administer tests and examinations. As the semester is nearing completion, this became more urgent and serious. We need satisfactory basis for the evaluation of student's academic performance without sacrificing the quality. We formed a committee comprising senior faculty members and IT persons. The recommendations made by the committee have been very valuable to the School. One of the policies which KU School of Management has been traditionally following is to give full academic autonomy to the faculty which also includes the autonomy to conduct tests. In the present context, faculty members can decide on the modality of tests considering the nature on the courses they are teaching. The School helps them to technically and administratively to conduct such tests.

Weekly Faculty Meeting

The School holds faculty meeting every week to discuss on the issues facing them. The Directors of the Programs are in constant touch with the students and their Class Representatives though the coordinators who are the faculty members of the school. These weekly meetings have been very fruitful as they bring the problems at the grassroots to the surface and identify solutions on time.

Problems and Future Plans:

Although the School has been using virtual class room teaching, it has never been at the current scale. As such it faced many problems in making extensive use of online teaching. First, it's existing IT

infrastructure is not adequate to handle online classes in a massive scale. Second, the course design is made to facilitate traditional face to face classroom setting and not quite adoptable for online teaching. Third, all the faculty members are not familiar with the online teaching methods and do not feel comfortable with them. Fourth, the students are not used to online learning and some of them lose interest and seriousness towards it.

Experience regarding online teaching so far has revealed that this cannot be a perfect alternative to the face to face classroom settings. It lacks social experience which the students get from face to face contact and interaction. In the present situation faculty members are continuing with the online delivery of the courses, have remote face to face interaction with the students and supplement the interaction by sharing resource and providing assignments to measure learning outcome through our virtual class platform. In the future it is expected that online delivery of courses will continue complementing the face to face classroom teaching in the KU School of Management.

Dr. Bijay KC
Professor and Dean
Kathmandu University School of Management
Kathmandu, Nepal



Nepal Administrative Staff College

Jawalakhel, Lalitpur

Web page: www.nasc.org.np Email: info@nasc.org.np

Learning Experiences in COVID-19 Pandemic Situation

Introduction

Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC), constituted by NASC Act 1982, is the leading public sector capacity building institution of the country and think tank of the Government of Nepal. We aspire being a Center of Excellence in developing managerial competencies and organizational capabilities of public sector enabling them to provide quality service to the people. We primarily offer competency based training programmes, consulting services for institutional development of public organizations and conduct policy research works. Apex body of NASC is Governing Council headed by Minister of Federal Affairs and General Administration and Executive Director is the Chief Executive Officer appointed by the Government of Nepal. Mr. Punya Prasad Neupane is leading the institution as Executive Director for about a decade.

Our Major Programmes

NASC has been organizing range of competency-based capacity building programmes to the government officials and officials of public organizations including,

- Colloquium for the Secretaries of Government of Nepal in contemporary policy and strategic issues of the nation
- Senior Executive Development Programme for the Joint Secretaries of government organizations having modular design of six month duration with action learning
- Advanced/Professional Course of Management and Development for the in-service career officers of government organizations, Under Secretaries and Section Officers having modular design of one month's duration with innovative learning components like Connecting to Community (C2C) and Engaging with Local Governments (ELG)
- Basic Administration Training for the newly appointed Section Officers of the government of Nepal to enhance their functional and behavioral competencies and well prepare for meeting changing requirements of civil service. The programme is residential with six months duration with various co-curricular learning activities.
- Short Courses in the area of management, development, policy and governance as per the changing needs of public organizations with customized learning components

Federal System in Nepal: New landscape of Capacity Building

Nepal entered into the new era of governance upon formulation of the new constitution with adoption of federal system. Federal, province and local level governments are in operation within the new constitutional framework. We are at the stage where structural reform has significant accomplishments in terms of institutional and legislative frameworks whereas journey of cultural reform, which is obviously more complex, is continued. In this context, building capacity of the elected representatives and bureaucrats is the next key imperatives to bring about cultural shift that

facilitates effective implementation of the federal system in the days to come. NASC has some major initiations to address these needs in the following ways:

- We have customized our regular capacity development programmes incorporating the changing learning needs of the public officials at all levels of the Government pertaining to the administration and governance challenges to implement federal system
- We have established Center for Federalism Studies within NASC, a Center dedicated to contribute in knowledge economy of federalism through conducting research, provide training programmes, sharing learning experiences and expanding knowledge base in the area of federalism.
- We have been carrying out capacity needs assessment of the provincial and local governments, creating organizational designs, formulating policies and implementing frameworks. We recently implemented project in supporting selected local governments through trained facilitators by NASC in development planning with strategic alignment of national priorities and localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- We are conducting capacity needs assessment of elected representatives at federal and subnational governments to design appropriate capacity building interventions immediately
- We have been continuing a regional policy research forum- Conference in Public Policy and Governance in South Asia- with joint efforts of management development institutions in South Asia
- We are planning for expanding our residential learning infrastructure nearby Kathmandu Valley with state-of-the-art learning facilities in global standards to meet the future needs of government. The DPR and EIA is in progress to be completed by Mid-July.

COVID- 19 Pandemic: Living with Difficulties and Exploring Opportunities

Our generation is quite fortunate in many terms of contemporary world. However, COVID- 19 pandemic has become one great challenge for human being around the world. Nepal has been suffering with the similar challenge as in the region although the number of infections and fatalities are relatively low. Lockdown is continued, government is doing its best with available resource strength and public support is encouraging. Amidst of uncertainty, we should keep hope that we will soon overcome from this pandemic.

Our major programmes including executive development programme, secretary colloquium, Conference in public policy and governance in South Asia, parliamentary conclave and many other programmes planned for the last quarter of this fiscal year. In the first few weeks, it was difficult for joining staff together and continuing discourses for the ways forward. However, management team continued meetings through virtual medium and took initiatives for continuation of possible business despite these difficulties.

- We, all the staff of NASC contributed to the COVID- 19 Control and Prevention Fund of the Government of Nepal from our salary in this difficult time.
- Faculties continued to practice Work from Home in ongoing programme design, management consulting and research projects.
- Management decided to initiate online presentation and modular design for the incomplete programmes due to COVID- 19 pandemic situation and lockdown. In effect, the team conducted needed preparation and conducted online presentation of the In-service training programmes of

Under Secretaries and Section Officers in two different group. They shared their learning experiences during their involvement in community level- C2C programme for Under Secretaries and ELG for Section Officers. Feedback of the participants is quite encouraging and we realized that learning components like presentations could be conducted online without compromising its essence.

- Modular teams are now involved to design new approach of the modules in aforementioned programmes for conducting online within June 2020. Initial frameworks have been prepared.
- One another milestone in the area of policy research, comprehensive review of employment policies of the Government of Nepal has been continued.
- We have initiated preparing knowledge products in pertaining issues of federalism implementation including Inter Governmental Fiscal Relation, Coordination in Development Planning, Role of Fiscal Commission, and Designing Capacity Building programmes in Federalism online.
- Virtual forums like NASC Discussion Series is planned for this month in contemporary issues of management development and governance.

Progression to Online: Initial Observations

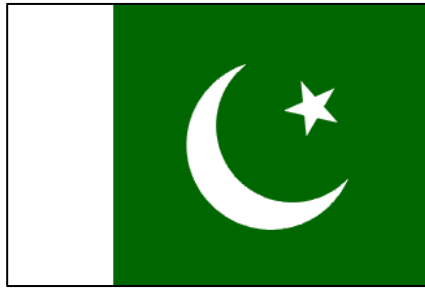
As in many other spheres of economy, capacity-building sector has now been compelled to inculcate strategic thinking in altering its operational framework, formulate long-term strategies in fulfilling its institutional mandates, and meet the needs of learner community. In this light, we have just initiated to think about, make habit and prepare ourselves in reframing our capacity building approaches to meet expanded capacity development needs of the governments at all level and public institutions at large.

For the purpose, we have internalized that progressing online is even more tripartite effort- the capacity building institutions, Learners and their work organizations- to create effective learning environment. Among them, role of the capacity building institutions is immense because they lead the learning processes and create learning environment. Therefore, we need to focus on reframing learning needs, detailing design contents and aligning properly with learning resources, preparing learning resources in advance and adequately, and enriching ICT infrastructure as core enabler in all these processes. For the purpose, there is no other way than preparing ourselves, developing competencies and enhancing readiness.

Collaboration is the Key

NASC, as founder member of AMDISA, always believes in collaborative efforts that add value in building capacity of individual institution and expand knowledge base through sharing of our own learning experiences in the entire network. In the ever-challenging situation created by COVID- 19 pandemic, such cohesion is even more pertinent to learn and grow together in the regional and global arena. As a committed member institution of AMDISA, we will always put our sincere efforts to add value in this regional learning network. Let us explore the possible avenues of collaboration in capacity building efforts with innovations- key agenda for all of us- to bring improvements in our governance system in the days to come.

Mr. Punya Prasad Neupane
Executive Director
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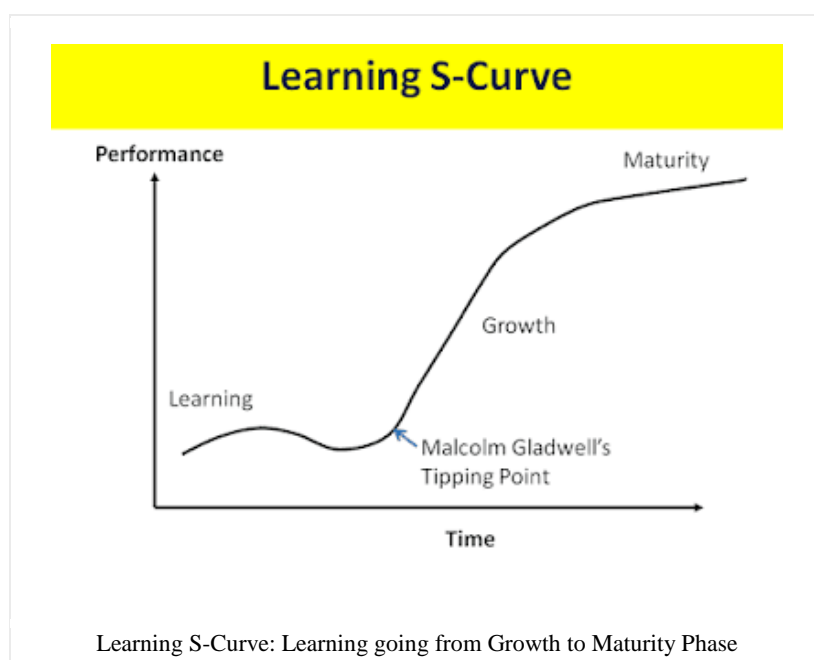


PAKISTAN

Understanding the Four Critical Stages of LMS Technology Assimilation- A Case Study of a Pakistani University

At IoBM, we crashed into the use of LMS at a breakneck speed. However, our assimilation of LMS (Learning Management System) which is just another technology is following the well known critical stages of assimilation of technology [1]. We had started our implementation in Fall 2019 and by the time the lockdown happened we had around 50 faculty members who were using the LMS. However, the lockdown propelled us into cramping the 2-3 year roll out of the LMS implementation project into a 5 day roller coaster crash implementation. The adoption of technology happened vigorously and soon everyone was using Zoom and LMS. However, the stage of rapid growth appears to be barging into a saturation stage where the initial euphoria of early adopters and vigorous users of technology is transiting into a stage of fatigue and disillusionment. I can see many vigorous early adopters facing this. This post describes these stages in detail, and how to use this in your LMS dissemination strategy. Individual emergencies and issues that were dealt with in going from 70 sections using LMS to 500 sections using LMS in 15 days, and adding another 430 sections in the next ten days. These will be part of another case study. This post is written for our faculty who are already aware with the happenings of the issues at IoBM, their resolution and the future plan of action.

The assimilation of technology is often described by a technology assimilation curve or the "S-Curve" which is also known as the Sigmoid Curve. See Figure 1 :



"The S-Curve depicts the way many new technologies, new products, and new ideas grow in the marketplace; they typically begin slowly, and then if they are successful they reach what Malcolm Gladwell dubbed the *Tipping Point*, followed by rapid, almost out-of-control growth. Inevitably, however, even the most successful products/ideas eventually experience slowing growth, which is often followed by decline as even newer technologies and products begin their own new growth curves" [2]. This was seen by the social networking site Orkut starting in 2004 and reaching its zenith around 2008 and was thereafter overtaken by Facebook propelled by its savvy app starting in 2006 and eventually becoming the king in around 2010. Please see the following figure 2 :

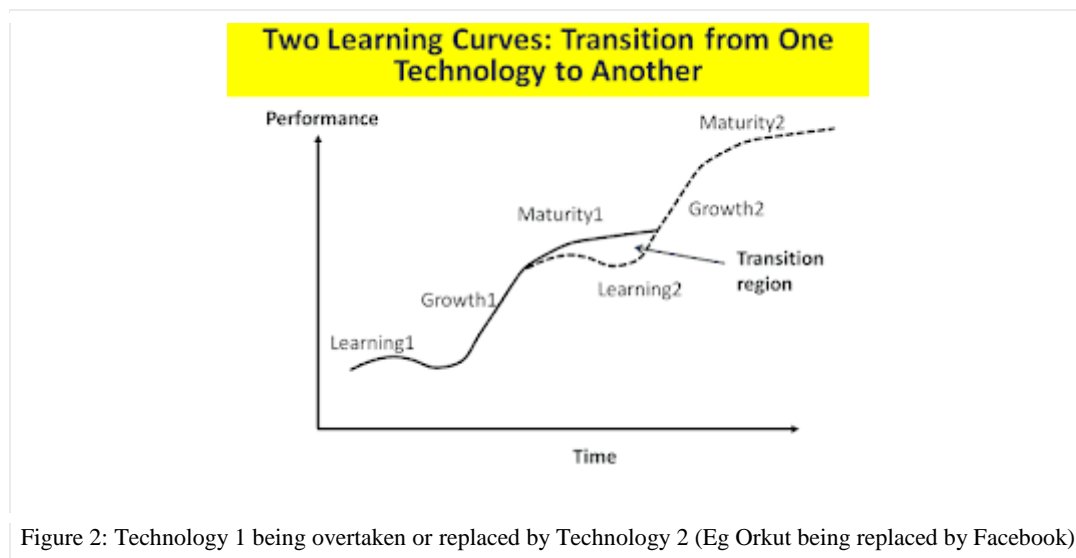


Figure 2: Technology 1 being overtaken or replaced by Technology 2 (Eg Orkut being replaced by Facebook)

As the original article [1] suggested, there are at least four critical stages along the growth curve:

Stage 1: Learning and experimentation

Stage 2: Rapid (and often uncontrollable) growth

Stage 3: Maturation (slowing of growth, often turning into decline)

Stage 4: Transition (the death of an old technology, accompanied by the adoption of a new one)

Stage 1: Learning and Experimentation

This is the beginning, where the technology is unproven, and there are aspects that provide an initial exhilaration. People often apply a simple technique to satisfy a more complex demand. This is what we are seeing with the use of Zoom or Google Meet which are just online meeting applications that are simple to use and can be quickly used for conducting a synchronous class session. Some provide a classroom session experience much better than others. Given the emergency and the lockdown several people latched on to whatever they could find. However, as it turns out learning management is much more than conducting a synchronous classroom meeting session.

Even an online class session requires facilities for tracking of assignments, quizzes, class participation, examinations, and grading. It requires quality assessments through course audit files, HoD supervision and centralized assurance of learning. This becomes necessary for quality inspections by regulators like HEC and CIEC; and national accreditation bodies such as NBEAC, NCEAC, NACTE and PEC; and international accreditation bodies such as AACSB and ABET.

This is where the LMS comes in. Hence, users of Zoom/Teams/Meet would eventually have to move to LMS or use LMS in conjunction with technologies like Zoom, Google Meet, MS Teams etc. The use of the two technologies in tandem requires another S-Curve for LMS with Zoom as given in Figure 2 above. Learning requires management systems, and universities require elaborate subsystems such as registrations, add-drops, fee charging and receivables, scheduling, grading systems and progression systems and transcripts in addition to convening synchronous sessions. LMS enables integration with Campus Management Systems (CMS).

"The most dangerous aspect of Stage 1 is that organizations become accustomed to slow rates of improvement and a low return on their investments and effort. Often a new idea dies before it becomes successful, not because it's a bad idea but because it is smothered by inappropriate monitoring systems, or because it simply takes too much effort to achieve visible success." [2]

Stage 2: Rapid Growth

"But when things do succeed, and you reach Gladwell's Tipping Point, the pace of change turns "north" quickly, and everything gets crazy. The ability to manage rapid growth often can't keep up with the demand" [2]. This is what we first saw with Big Blue Button, and soon it was replaced with Zoom, and now with Google Meet or Microsoft Teams. However, the growth of alternate medium is also creating several problems such as the concern about security features, unauthorized access, integration with LMS, and automatic creation of classes from CMS and transfer of grades back to CMS.

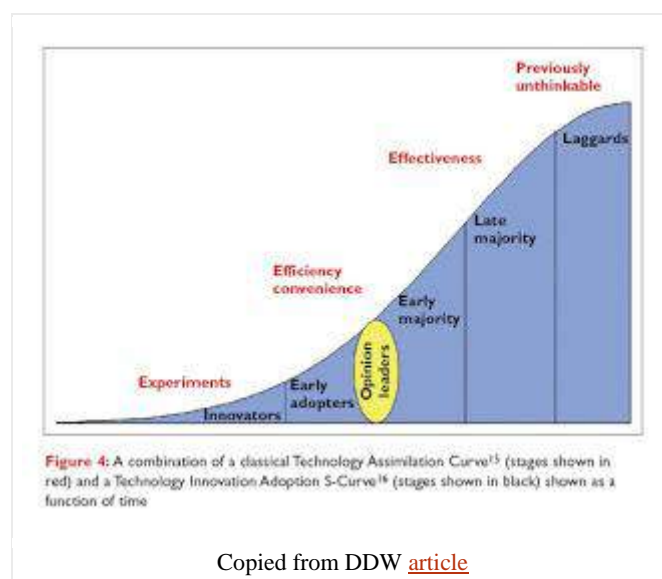
There is scrambling to obtain resources in terms of greater IT power and hiring of expert staff. This is what happened when we had to go to Google Cloud and obtain more resources. It solved the processor power and memory resources issue. If you are fortunate you may have some staff who already had expertise and they could be quickly put in position to leverage the responsibility. New resources from the faculty can be identified who are already techy and who can help us out of this crunch. We were fortunate in both of these areas and had wonderful resources already with us, who quickly updated their knowledge and latched on to this opportunity. Kudos to our team of experts.

However, things get frantic as you launch one project after another to leverage the opportunity or fix the problems that are being discovered every day. The problems of this stage involve managing the growth through monitoring systems, and controlling systems. Satisfying the queries of the users, understanding their connectivity issues, and resolving their issues. This also requires flexible handling of the policies related to attendance, grading, examination, and conducting of class room sessions. At times new policies need to be designed and put in place quickly. This is how the higher management at IoBM is promptly responding to many of these changes and adapting quickly and adopting new policies and systems. Key determinant of this flexibility is the higher management's ability to understand the conceptual differences and diametrically opposite assumptions underlying the synchronous approach and the asynchronous approach. See for example [Ten Assumptions of Conventional Exam vs Assumptions of LMS Based Online Exam](#).

Please note that in the growth stage budgets become almost irrelevant.

Efficiency and Effectiveness Sub-stages of Growth Phase

Figure 4 highlights that there are two sub-stages of the growth stage. These are efficiency and convenience stage (doing the thing right) and the effectiveness stage (doing the right thing). Initially, the features of LMS may inspire people to use many of them and over use them. But, then when the requirement for assessments come in, the faculty may realize that they are now overworked. Their initial euphoria and exhilaration now over, many faculty members are now complaining that they seem to be working round the clock. They now need to understand that they need to select activities according to the learning goal.



Effectiveness stage is represented by the concerns of learning outcomes and assurance of learning outcomes. The activities and resources of an LMS are like a carpenter's tool box. A saw is only good for cutting, where is a drill machine can only make a hole, and a hammer is for driving the

nail in. We may be tempted to use a hammer for cutting with the help of a chisel, but it will do lesser of cutting but more of destroying. The saw is better for cutting (and of course the right kind of saw). Similarly, the faculty need to realize that forums are good for certain heavy duty discussions and chat is useful for smaller interactions. Assignment is good for reflections and homework but is not good for taking quizzes. Quiz activity is more appropriate for taking exams, it has all types of exam formats. One activity can't be a substitute for another.

The concerns for this phase relate to implementation of competences (learning outcomes) and connecting them with the activities in the LMS environment. Assurance of learning goals are met through attainment targets of competences linked to the LMS activities and resources.

The issue to beware in the growth stage is that initial success breeds both arrogance and carelessness, and it feels as if the sky is literally the limit. There is a tremendous learning that needs to take place not only by the students and faculty but also the HoDs, Deans and in all the supervisory and execution departments related to operations of online learning. Past experiences may not be able to help to sustain the growth, unless accompanied by massive awareness and hands on training.

Stage 3: Maturation

Stage 2 can be frantic, but it's also energizing and fun and adrenaline pumping. However, inevitably, reality sets in. Limits of the existing systems and the tediousness of existing methods start taking a toll. Growth slows down. Suddenly your Adrenalin is no longer pumping. Drudgery starts setting in.

If there isn't a new technology sneaking up on you, Stage 3 can actually last for many years. However, it's a much more stable, slow-growth period of time. Management systems settle down, but they often become ossified and bureaucratic. You need a different kind of managerial skills in Stage 3; where Stage 2 is typically filled with younger, high-energy, entrepreneurial types, Stage 3 requires more formal-training who understand metrics and are focused on effectiveness. This is the stage where HoDs need training, where the academic managers need training, where the examination department needs training, where all other ancillary departments need training. Policies would become more formal and move from more individual discretion to more systematic implementations. Assurance of learning through LMS competencies' structure becomes the criteria for measuring the effectiveness of courses.

Stage 4: Transition

This is the stage where we require immense flexibility, extensibility, and maintainability in the infrastructure. How soon one can adapt the product to different features, add new features,

customize existing features, add new bespoke applications, connect to different clients and different target markets. Moodle LMS that we are using has been customized for schools, colleges, universities, learning organizations, training organizations, think tanks, consulting organizations, and in areas where the underlying system is hidden and the system only appears as a generic website.

- Declared Registered Sites: 161,000 (there are many that have not yet registered like ours)
- Courses: 23,000,000
- Teachers/Students/Users: 196,000,000
- Course Registrations/Enrolments: 977,000,000
- Forum posts: 406,000,000
- Resources: 198,000,000
- Quiz questions: 2,171,000,000
- Countries: 238
- Ref: This data was pulled from <https://stats.moodle.org/> on April 10, 2020

It is here that the versatility of LMS has proven itself since its inception in the early 2000s. Starting from a conventional web application it quickly morphed itself to an app based interface. It is an open source environment that allows for immense customization and extension testifying to its usage. It is also free, and allows integration with the other systems and customization. If you can think of a feature, you will find that it is already there because of the open source contributions by thousands of very techy universities. There are currently 1678 plugins, 944 devs, and 429.5K recent downloads [<https://moodle.org/plugins/>]

We hope that the incorporation of new plugins and the promise of new generations and new versions of Moodle would provide for us a path for continuous improvement and customization due to its open structure. We have embarked in further development of our own LMS enhancement project and its integration with LMS to join the open-source movement and provide plugins that would help other universities.

References:

- [1] See the now-classic *Harvard Business Review* article “[Managing the Four Stages of EDP Growth](#)” (January, 1974).
- [2] Credit: This post is inspired by Jim Ware's post on [Understanding the Four Critical Stages of Technology Growth](#) and has been completely rehashed in the context of technology assimilation and implementation of LMS Technology in the current context of Pakistan and our current requirements.

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NUST Business School

Experiences & Practices amid COVID-19 Disruption – NUST Business School (NBS), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad, Pakistan

We are navigating uncharted waters — if there has ever been a time for that phrase to ring true it is now. These are incredibly trying and experimenting unfamiliar days. It is also in such times that we see the immense power of information access and community to spur action. The uncertainty surrounding the impact of COVID-19 has put nearly all schools, colleges, and universities on unsteady ground. The education industry is likely faced with a "new normal" as it relates to the campus work environment and support of institutions for their campuses / departments.

Consequently, different forms of online learning and collaboration have become the focus of attention in an effort to ensure continuity of learning. NUST Business School being one of the best and leading business schools in Pakistan, has quickly adapted to the online learning environment and taken corrective actions of fulfilling the needs of this unprecedented time, in the following ways:

i. A consistent, school-wide approach

While flexibility was needed to ensure different learning outcomes could be achieved in different programmes, consistency across the School was important in this time of crisis. Across NBS, all classes switched to online learning and it was not left to individual departments to decide on how to implement a consistent approach of social distancing across the school.

Licences or access to technology such as Microsoft Teams were made available to all support staff, teaching staff and students which allowed lecturers to choose what worked best for them and their students. It also allowed training and guides to be provided based on the key tools that were available. The key tools provided some consistency so that students were neither confused nor rushed into learning different tools.

ii. Ensuring learning outcomes were uncompromised

Flexibility while ensuring accountability was important. As certain assessments could no longer take place as planned (e.g. primary data collection etc.), alternative methods were

needed to assess the same learning outcomes. As we ride out the crisis, the degree programme must be recognised and therefore, all learning outcomes must still be achieved and demonstrated despite contingency measures that were in place. A policy was designed and implemented to introduce flexibility with faster approval routes for changes that were needed to ensure that all assessment changes were reasonable.

It was emphasised that online platforms were to be viewed as learning environments, like classrooms that enabled effective learning to take place. Despite the rush, it remained important to engage learners. While in the first two weeks of April, 2020, our lecturers utilized asynchronous lecture recordings that were uploaded via NUST Learning Management System (LMS – a tool already in use for years at NUST). Later, all the academic staff were informed to conduct live streaming classes (synchronous lectures) and encouraged to learn and adopt its various tools like polls, experiential exercises, assignments, and quizzes to engage learners. Many academic staff were using live streaming for the first time, but they were willing to take the risks and, in return, received compliments for the positive learning outcomes.

iii. Remaining student-centric

It was important to consider the students living in remote areas of Pakistan who could not participate in online sessions due to poor or no internet connectivity and others who did not have access to digital learning tools. NUST-NBS communicated that such students were to be supported with alternative learning plans. All the academic staff were asked to record the live lectures and then upload these onto LMS on a weekly basis, so that students with difficulty attending synchronous lectures may continue to participate in assessments in a timely manner.

Instead of expecting them to catch up with their classmates on what they had missed, teaching staff made arrangements to ensure they could receive the learning content and have questions answered. All lecturers were required to offer students with a 90-minute Q & A session. Having technology on hand to allow them to participate in discussions whenever possible helped. Discussion forums via LMS, and online groups such as WhatsApp etc., were also formed so that students could discuss with their class fellows and teachers where appropriate and required. While the assumption was that most students have a laptop for e-learning, there would always be a small number who would not so, NUST-NBS made arrangements for them as well.

iv. Having clear, frequent communication between stakeholders to close the learning loop

It was key to understand concerns at different points in time. A university-wide survey was done just before e-learning replaced all large classes. Students' feedback was consolidated and communicated to all teaching staff. Common concerns included

effectiveness of online lectures, changes in assessment, and self-discipline when learning online.

We did pulse checking through student feedback, and weekly reports from academic staff, two weeks after the online replacement of all large classes. This enabled further tweaks to improve the experience. Online meetings were conducted with Programme Directors and teaching staff to share experiences and rectify common mistakes that were made. Regular meetings are being conducted with the Senior Management of the school, including Dean, Heads of Departments, Program Heads, and IT, Examination, and Admin staff to assess and monitor the quality of online learning.

More communication channels were important, ensuring that despite not physically seeing each other, concerns and experiences were shared. The feeling that “we are in this together”, or “if I make a mistake in the online learning platform, I am not the only one,” helped to support everyone in the journey. It was also important to check in with students with special needs, as well as those who were academically weak, to see if they were transitioning smoothly into a different mode of learning.

v. Making training available in all shapes and forms

We rushed into creating many types of training for lecturers to provide online learning, including face-to-face workshops, walk-in consultations, online training and self-help guides. The topics covered how to create narrated slides, how to run effective live streaming classes, how to design alternative assessments, and the use of online proctoring tools for assessments. Lecturers requiring additional gadgets for online teaching like digital pens and digital tablets for instance were also facilitated.

Apart from teaching staff who needed training, students were also provided with guides to use the tools, and getting themselves ready to learn in an online environment using platforms like MS Teams, LMS, and CMS. Academic Advisers also spent time talking to students on topics such as time management, managing procrastination and recognising that the online learning environment could be distracting for some students.

vi. It's not perfect, but it's going well

At NUST Business School, all face-to-face activities have been halted and social distancing measures are in place, since 16 March 2020. We are also discovering the joys of online teaching and learning, and improving pain points along the way. Staying united and learning together through times of crisis has been our biggest lesson from this experience. Finally, *‘where does all this leave us?’* As the government is just beginning to acknowledge, it's going to be a bumpy ride, both for students and universities and quite likely something different, unique and perhaps innovative will emerge from this.

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MERIT | QUALITY | EXCELLENCE



Sukkur IBA Coronavirus Response



Sukkur Institute of Business Administration University

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to grow at an alarming rate, resulting in numerous infections and fatalities across the globe. The impact on education has been devastating, with UNESCO reporting that over 1.5 billion students had been affected due to school closures in 165 countries as of 26 March 2020; this is more than 87 percent of all registered students. Over 63 million teachers and large numbers of education support personnel have also been affected by the pandemic. Given these unprecedented developments, the COVID-19 crisis has become an education crisis.

The 1st case of Coronavirus reported in Pakistan on 26th February 2020, and after then with the lockdown decision of Government of Sindh, we suspended our academic activities from 2nd March 2020 till further notice as a precautionary measure against COVID-19. The current situation has led to a drastic shift in school and work hours due to the suspension of classes and restrictions imposed by the current health quarantine. In times of crisis like the one we are currently experiencing, teachers make invaluable contributions to education through teleworking and the use of digital resources. Technology can be an important tool to facilitate distance learning in the short term, however, it is essential to understand that it is a temporary solution that can never replace classroom teaching and learning and the invaluable face-to-face interaction between the teacher and student and among students.

However, closing down campuses is an important step to control the spread, and since the advent of the crisis, HEC's policies have been driven by two imperatives. Support the government's efforts to halt the spread of the disease, and start the effort to minimize academic disruption. Fortunately, online interaction provides a vehicle for doing so. Accordingly, HEC has asked universities to prepare themselves to transition to online classes and online interaction as quickly as possible.

Before proceeding with online classes it is necessary to understand six key elements of “online ready”: (a) **University Readiness**, i.e., an effective and operational learning management system (LMS) as well as an oversight body responsible for certifying courses as online ready; (b) **Faculty Readiness**, i.e., faculty members have gone through training in online teaching before allowed to teach such a course; (c) **Course Readiness** i.e., all key information about a course is available on the LMS; (d) **Library Readiness** i.e., all course readings and assignments are available through online means; (e) **Technology Readiness** i.e., the technology needed for delivering online classes is ready for deployment; and (f) **Student Readiness** i.e., students are assisted in overcoming any obstacles they may have in accessing the classes and materials.

HEC has introduced a 4-point program to address connectivity: (1) Taleem Bundle is being negotiated with Telcos to arrange subsidized Internet access for students; (2) Delivery Modes to caters to diverse needs of students, including shorter duration classes, data-light options, and both synchronous and asynchronous modes (i.e., placement of all course content on the Internet); (3) Offline Mode i.e., a system under which course materials can be distributed locally through CDs or other storage mediums; and (4) Student Facilitation Committees at each university to address connectivity problems faced by students from remote areas.

Online classroom practices during Covid-19 outbreak

From Traditional to Online Classes:

We at IBA have executed a two-dimensional technique to guarantee that the learning for the students keeps unsetting impact. The institute has executed an) Asynchronous strategy for educating and learning and b) Synchronous technique for up close and personal guidance. The need to move away from relying on face-to-face meetings is a constant, and perhaps now, with COVID-19, critical pressure, as institutions look for increasingly adaptive and responsive ways to work. As we have recently seen, there are times when meeting students, faculty, and ever staff face-to-face is simply not feasible. We need an effective alternative that can give us the presence during simulation training, lectures, course design, faculty/staff meetings/training, and other situations. Fortunately, the institute has such tools that we can use in these circumstances. With these tools, we are connecting with students in video chat via using zoom technology, store documents via LMS, and discuss projects/assignments through email/WhatsApp. Currently, our asynchronous mode is based on developing course content like PowerPoint lectures, assignments, e-learning resources, creating YouTube links and e-library links, etc. The faculty members have developed all relevant course materials online, future assignments and exams and placed on the LMS platform, to ensure student interactions. The synchronous method (i.e. online or distance education that happens in real-time) is using by faculty members to complement the material available on LMS, by using video conferencing tools such as the Zoom Meeting application to ensure faculty and student interaction in a lively mood. Also, the live lectures are being recorded that are helping faculty to create content that can be used for future courses and offline access for those students that are absent at the time of delivery. In the time of lockdown, faculty is underlining the students to finish and submit their assignments and quizzes through LMS platform or email, and ensure this by having regular communication with students through WhatsApp, email, and other social media platforms.

The faculty members are very true, enthusiastic, and committed to using digital platforms and frequently using the Zoom lecture room and started out importing useful links, YouTube video lectures, assignments and additionally some of their very own video lectures as per the scheduled timings and reporting on each day bases. The scholars/students are regularly encouraged and directed to be responsive to the virtual transactions and to be cooperative with the faculty and management of the institute.

The senior officials, right from the VC, HoDs, and Coordinators are often tracking the progress of the pedagogic sporting activities of the institute within the digital surroundings by arranging online conferences with HoDs, coordinators, and faculty via using Zoom platform.

Also, nationwide, Higher Education Commission (HEC) is assisting universities in several ways, including arranging software and connectivity packages, curating online materials and training programs, building a data repository, providing guidance on quality enhancement, and setting up and adapting monitoring and evaluation systems.

Online Thesis Defense/Presentations:

Thesis/defenses are conducted for MS and PhD programs by involving faculty and external examiners and resources via electronically using zoom technology. As far as research and publications are concerned research group faculty members are active and interacting via zoom for their research work, and are come up with strong publications during these hard days.

Employee's Safety Measures during Covid-19 Outbreak and Staff Working from Home via Online:

In the meantime, our professional staff also continue with their job, while working from home, and another essential staff is assigned duties on a rotational basis by providing flexible working hours. But, safeguarding the health, safety, and well-being of students, faculty and education support personnel must be the number one priority. In the campus, for the safety for all, we have introduced specific measures. Such measures include the provision of water and sanitation by installing a sanitizing gate at the main gate of the university. safe and healthy teaching and learning environments and personal protective equipment such as face masks. Also, HEC has strictly advised the following categories of faculty/staff members should be exempted from duty or allowed to work from home.

- a. Non-essential staff.
 - b. Faculty/staff over 50 years of age, and a serious co-morbidity, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, etc.
 - c. Female employees (faculty/staff), who are pregnant or lactating.
 - d. Faculty/Staff with any symptom of illness or susceptibility to disease.
 - e. Staff/faculty with travel history to or residence in a country/area or territory reporting local transmission of COVID-19 or having contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case.
- They should be asked to self-isolate themselves for two weeks, and allowed to work from home

Community Services “Mission of Sukkur IBA University”**Community Services for People Affected by Covid-19:**

The COVID-19 outbreak has affected all segments of the population and is particularly detrimental to members of those social groups in the most vulnerable situations, continues to affect populations, including people living in poverty situations, older persons, persons with disabilities, youth, and indigenous peoples. One of the major goals of our university is community services. Sukkur IBA always has played a major role in contribution towards the community services, which leads to its mission. It would be worth mentioning here that our Alumni and students have started to spread awareness sessions employing video messages, pictures, and writeups which explains the preventive measures of the COVID-19 outbreak. Along with this, Alumni and students have established a COVID-19 Funds. Donations from the fund are supporting the needy people by distributing rations among deserving people of Sindh, Pakistan.

Covid Safe Moving Application:

An application i.e. **CovidSafeMoving** is developed by Sukkur IBA Computer Science Department Team, which could detect any suspicious Covid-19 cases in specified radius area, and also traces potentially infected people's movements vis GPS and track the spread of the corona virus cases easily. An application has also other main features as well, like application shows the current number of cases in Pakistan including recovered, critical and deaths as well. Apart from this it has online corona test, A test which tells you if you have a current infection or not. Also, application has other icons such as **apply for relief fund, donate funds, and report cases.**

Designed and Produced Personal Protective Equipments for frontliners fighting against Covid-19:

Along with this. Institute has also joined hands with the Government of Sindh, Pakistan in the fight against COVID-19 Pandemic. By taking advantage of its Fab Lab, designed and produced reusable 3D printing masks and face shields to be used by paramedical/frontline professionals treating the patients of COVID-19. Engineers at Sukkur IBA University at Fabrication Lab have also designed the integrated parts of respiratory ventilator such as mouth guards and filters, pumping mechanisms and complete casing of ventilator and design to support more than one patient using a single ventilator. Engineers at the Fabrication Lab have also designed and produced thermal scanner casing which can be used remotely to check the momentary temperature of the people.

As governments worldwide step up to combat the COVID-19 outbreak, educators and their unions are doing their part to support each other, their students, their communities. All education International staff will have transitioned into teleworking arrangements, to give our health systems a chance to focus on those who need their assistance most. Today our members are demanding that all children and young people as far as possible have access to inclusive, quality and well-supported learning education even when school buildings are closed as in the case in many countries right now where governments are making difficult decisions to contain to spread of a global pandemic. At this very moment, teachers and education support personnel are supporting parents and communities in making sure children feel as safe as possible and that they understand how they can protect themselves and others with information and knowledge; not fear and prejudice. It is impressive and appreciable as to how education professionals are adapting and finding new solutions as to how education can be kept going. Recorded lessons, podcasts, shared lesson plans. The profession is demonstrating their dedication, their creativity and their willingness to share through establishing online hubs that are open to all. Researchers are working around the clock towards a vaccine.

We hope the situation will get better very soon.

Dr. Mir Muhammad Shah
Director - International Accreditation
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Sukkur, Pakistan



University of Central Punjab

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SHIFT TO VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (VLE)

Introduction:

The Covid-19 pandemic has imposed forced suspension of activities in every sphere of life. The education sector in Pakistan has been combating this situation through offering online/remote/virtual teaching. Education, throughout the history, has demanded a balance between continuity and change, but the ongoing crisis made us realize how abrupt a change could be: almost overnight. The technological leaps and the consequences thereof have led to a major educational paradigm shift, and new concepts have emerged in the world of learning.

University of Central Punjab, at present, has nine faculties, catering to 14000 students, offering programmes, which are demanding, broad, and relevant to today's professional needs. UCP has a well-equipped IT department with highly trained professionals, that competently caters the technological needs required in this era. The team is available round the clock to resolve issues promptly. Furthermore, the university has advanced technological facilities and a robust Learning Management System (LMS). The LMS, accessible on and off campus, facilitates the students and staff to track all the official record: from attendance to result declaration, from course registration to student-teacher interaction. Our faculty, staff and students were well trained and well aware of the system before the pandemic started.

Response to the COVID 19 Pandemic—Virtual Learning Environment:

With the inception of countrywide lockdown, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) issued guidelines dated 28 March 2020, for promoting online teaching in the current scenario. UCP with its fully functional LMS met all the HEC criteria of the category of Advanced Universities. With the intention of minimizing possible academic loss of the students, UCP has adopted Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for its graduate and undergraduate degree programmes. Besides the LMS, UCP adopted **Microsoft Teams** as its online learning/teaching platform. The IT department conducted sessions to train the faculty and staff to utilize online teaching/learning tools effectively, they also uploaded video tutorials for reference.

Online Governance:

A dedicated system for online governance was put in place immediately. UCP shared a complete policy, in keeping with HEC requirements, for online teaching, focusing on remote/online classes and learning for students, programme delivery, course completion, and assessment mechanism. Online classes are being held regularly with over 90% student attendance. The faculty members provide Class Held/Unheld report after every session to ensure the smooth running of online teaching.

Online Meetings:

UCP kept an open channel of communication and shifted all the meetings online on Microsoft Teams. All inter and intra departmental meetings are held online successfully where challenges



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are discussed, and solutions provided. Recently, 17th Academic Council meeting was held online without any delay.

Online Teaching and Assessment:

All relevant course material was uploaded on both the LMS and Microsoft Teams for student access. Students are facilitated through synchronous remote sessions, constructive feedback, peer discussions, question and answer sessions. Asynchronous discussion forums and email responses are also part of the instructional design. In addition, assignments and quizzes are being held for summative assessment purposes. Moreover, Thesis defence for graduate programmes are conducted using the same platform and external examiners are taken on board.

Instructional Design Refinement:

A number of steps were taken for quality assurance and continuous improvement.

- UCP has a Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) in place, which established a Quality Assurance mechanism to ensure the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) of the VLE education, teaching and help to resolve the academic and administrative issues raised by the students at UCP. The QEC also helps in devising new strategies, action plans and improvements based on feedback received through the quality assurance mechanism.
- Quality Assurance Committees have been established to monitor, assess and evaluate the overall delivery of online education, provision of course material and online resources to the students and teachers by the library.
- Senior Team members regularly monitor classes through Online Classroom Observations and provide constructive feedback to the teachers as well as identify the areas of improvement for further professional growth.
- The observation form also serves as a need analysis tool to identify the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) requirements of the faculties. Webinars and other training sessions are then organised by the administration to address the identified needs.

Student Response:

The success of any online programme depends on strong positive student response to it. UCP ensures that all student concerns are resolved efficiently. Students can email their concerns/issues regarding online classes to the VLE team. Prompt response to technical issues by the IT Team, to administrative problems by the management, to academic queries by the faculty members helped the students overcome the challenges of the almost overnight transition to their mode of instruction. Deans/ Directors, Teachers made themselves available and counselled students for their academic and emotional well-being. Keeping in mind internet connectivity issues in the remote areas, all sessions are recorded by the teachers and uploaded for student access at a convenient time. Besides the course material, library resources have also been made available for them.



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Conclusion:

UCP believes that how universities in the region respond to and change this unprecedented threat into an opportunity to develop their technological systems, and the need of technological advancements, will bring a transition in the Higher Education from On Campus Learning to a much higher blend of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Keeping in mind the current scenario where intermittent lockdown is highly possible for a while, our future instructional design should cater to a smooth shift to online mode if required.

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University of Central Punjab
Lahore, Pakistan



UMT: From Conventional to Virtual-The most successful transition

Covid19, the worldwide pandemic, has affected almost all the countries of the world. Lockdowns and restricted mobility due to this prevailing situation have resulted in businesses facing shutdowns or finding alternate ways to operate. The situation is no different for academic landscape including schools, colleges, institutes, and universities.

UMT a university that is all about transforming innovative ideas into tangible solutions under the mentorship of some of the finest faculty in the region. It is a great time to be in UMT as the University is all set to embark on a new chapter in its 27-year enviable journey of progress and excellence in academic innovation. During the transition caused by the COVID – 19 pandemic UMT took no time in transitioning from conventional to virtual and perhaps with the best processes and outcome.

A diligently worked weekend for the UMT family made it possible for us to shift every single class of all schools and faculties online with absolutely no time wastage, no quality compromise and no exposure to Covid19 threats for any stakeholder. Government of Pakistan announced the closure of all academic institutes w.e.f. March 16, 2019. The announcement was made on March 14, Saturday when our whole team started working on possibilities and came with the solution of using 'Zoom', the most widely used meeting tool in the world right now for online education and virtual meetings. The faculty was already using UMT's LMS (Learning Management System), an online tool for putting all learning material and assessments in electronic form together. Faculty were trained on using Zoom in nano-training sessions all day, the Sunday. The support teams made sure that they work 24/7 to assist faculty with their queries, and to design the medium of delivery for them keeping in mind the best possible solution that maximizes the learning process for participants. UMT was the first Pakistani university to respond to this unforeseen situation with the most effective plan. The licensed version of Zoom has opened avenues for faculty where they can keep lectures on zoom cloud and share the link on LMS from where students can access lectures and resources even after the online instruction, in addition to pulling different reports of their sessions. This ensures both security and effectiveness of the online system that may stay for a while in the prevailing situation. In the ongoing Spring 2020 term, about 23,000 active students along with about 814 faculty and 1505 staff use these tools to interact with each other for academic and administrative purposes. During these sessions, resources are shared through screen sharing option that allows participants to share any e-resources including PDF's, PPT's, whiteboard, images, simulation tools, development and design software, ERP's and Accounting Software, etc. Faculty offers counseling hours to students through Zoom and WhatsApp groups where they can interact with each other outside the virtual classrooms for special needs and individual coaching. E-assessment tools are developed and faculty are trained to conduct using those through LMS or otherwise during this hour of distant learning. S.T.A.I.R.S., in-house technology and e-learning support wing of UMT provide 24/7 live sessions for faculty in order to train them on different tools at their convenient times. Recorded training sessions are also available electronically, just in case someone cannot join a session or wants to refer back to them in the future.

The digitized platform is helping all stakeholders at UMT to a seamless transition to this current medium of learning where other universities had to take a break to understand and implement the new medium. This has helped our students to continue their learning without any break and wastage of resources including time, money and energy.

Not to miss here, UMT has offered two great initiatives to their students just in case they are in any kind of situation that is beyond their control. First of all, the institution offered students from remote areas to freeze their semester free of cost if they have high-speed internet connectivity issues. Just a few percentages of the student body availed this offer and saved their resources that could have been wasted otherwise. Secondly, due to the prevailing lockdown situation, a lot of families are facing financial distress. UMT's ILM fund, in addition to merit and need-based scholarships, offers interest-free loans to such students so they complete their degrees and follow their dreams without any delay during this specific pandemic situation. These funds are payable in nominal installments after the students graduate and start earning. This is the biggest financial assistance available by any private sector university in Pakistan.

Research groups and Thesis Defense

All the faculty research groups are active and interact on Zoom for their research activities and publications. Additionally, thesis defenses are also conducted for MS and PhD programs electronically involving external examiners and resources.

University, School & Department and University Management Offices' meetings

At the University of Management and Technology, starting from the top management to support staff, everyone is trained to use online mediums of communication. The most common and official tool used for meetings is Zoom where documents can be circulated, and issues can be discussed and decided upon. UMT has not rescheduled even a single meeting due to the prevailing lockdown. Instead, all meetings with top management, deans and directors of schools and institutes, academic departmental meetings, university management offices, support staff's academic planning meetings etc. are conducted using the electronic medium. All decisions are made and implemented effectively with no difficulty or backlog at all.

Business Schools Faculty Council meetings and Special 106th Dean's Committee Meeting held Using Zoom Platform

Business school's faculty council meeting held online using Zoom Platform to discuss the agenda of midterm exams for students taking classes on zoom. Deliberation was done on all major points and recommendations were forwarded in the Special 106th Dean committee meeting held next day with all stakeholders including Registrar Office, Office of Controller of Examination and University Management Officers (UMOs). The meeting was chaired by the Rector UMT. All decisions made were circulated and implemented.

All business school's committee meetings held online using the Zoom platform and each committee discussed way forward for all internal and external stakeholders and short- and long-term targets and mechanisms for achieving those targets.

UMT alumni department has also invited many renowned people to web sessions.

Engaging ONLINE Platforms for Staff Coordination and Meetings

Staff members are using multiple platforms to connect i.e. zoom meetings, What's app groups, google drives were created to share documents with all and providing flexibility for staff members to work anytime and update records. All mediums were used to have instant communication and response from all faculty and staff members. Since everybody was staying at home all members were working day and night to provide support and facilitate faculty and students in dealing with their queries, filling online application and responding to their problems. Our journal secretariat is fully functional in performing their duties and applications for journal recognition are being submitted online on HEC portals as well.

As we hope that the coronavirus will be contained soon and the tragedy of infections and deaths will end soon, we should not forget the lesson that the virus has taught us. In this globalized world, we have to tune ourselves as per new demands in digital learning, UMT has shown the talent and competencies involved to turn it around altogether for students' facilitation. It is important to mention that our students have responded with great zeal and commitment. When UMT turned to online classes, UMT received a healthy response from students coming online and attending classes with very high attendance percentage while faculty were involved in transforming course outlines suitable for online teaching with more interactive sessions, question-answer sessions and presentations from students to engage them with a new learning environment. Faculty also had to play the role of counselor to address the psychological pressure on students due to lockdown and financial stress their parents are facing. The current lockdown and corona pandemic have altered the lifestyle and social norms of our society. It has brought the attention that each individual in our society is important no matter they are rich or poor. This is evident that humanity is more important than personal benefits and goals.

Pakistani government has taken a cautious approach in dealing with corona pandemic, The initial two weeks were gone in 80% lockdown and all numbers were carefully being monitored at national and provincial levels. Being the densely populated country and developing country it is important to care for those who are unable to have food during these lockdown periods. Now a partial lockdown is being observed in the country with few industries are allowed to operate while government departments and welfare organizations are helping poor with financial support and food items. We pray they we come out of this pandemic as a Nation and show the world that Humanity is above everything.

Dr. Naveed Yazdani

Dean, School of Business and Economics

University of Management and Technology

Lahore, Pakistan



SRI LANKA



NIBM WORLDWIDE

A TOTAL SOLUTION FOR ONLINE TEACHING

NIBM Worldwide LMS: Key Findings and Learning Points

A google survey was conducted to obtain the views of online learners of NIBM worldwide LMS. A segment of 622 out of 3008 online learners responded, of which 80% are in the age group of 18-24 years. Findings of the survey regarding the performance of LMS have been summarized in to six points.

65%

Overall Happiness on Administration and Help Desk Services

77%

Satisfaction on Course Materials

70%

Overall Learner Satisfaction Level of Online Courses

55%

Functionality of Online Library

86%

Quality of Teaching

56%

Free Learning Environment for Engagement

Online courses have become an incredibly popular way for students and employees to continue their educational or professional development. NIBM worldwide provides both the faculty and learners a very productive learning experience whilst staying at home due to COVID-19. Going online with NIBM worldwide teaches us the following key points to make our future online courses a rewarding experience for the learners.

- Learner's Active Engagement** : It is vital that the teacher establishes a strong virtual presence at the very beginning of the course to establish professional relationships with the learners to make their experience more personal and memorable.
- Supportive Learning Environment** : At the start of the online course, it is vital to get the ball rolling with a personal introduction and create an open forum or discussion board where learners can post, requesting help and assistance from each other.
- Right blend of Learning Tools** : The best online teachers use a combination of online and offline blended learning tools with a mixture of activities to make the content more interesting and exciting.
- Ongoing Feedback and Assessments**: Feedback is an essential component of all effective learning environments inclusive of the online experience. Feedback should be continuous during the e-learning process and specially constructive feedback should be provided for assessments. Gaining knowledge and skills and following the online course, have to take place simultaneously, rather than having a series of examinations in the end.
- Making e-Learning Content Mobile**: Mobile learning holds key advantages for learners, allowing them to access up to date course materials and relevant content anywhere, anytime. It is vital to use e-learning apps, so that the learners can easily access the courses via smart phones, laptops and ipads to maximize learning.

THE SETTING

The disruption in our lifestyles, economic and social activity due to COVID-19 has undoubtedly impacted all of us all over the world. It is forcing us to rethink and relook at our strategic approach, to enable us to stay relevant in our own domains. With the outbreak of COVID-19 being declared as pandemic by the World Health Organization, people worldwide are facing a major challenge. This situation calls for Schools, Universities and learning and developmental professionals to shift rapidly from in-person to online learning.

Furthermore, we are forced to be quarantined at home by COVID-19. Hence, we must react with different ways of working, shopping, learning and communicating. Online shopping and social networks are not new to us, and it is same with distance learning. However, COVID-19 is reviving the need to explore online platforms with a total solution for teaching and learning.

GROWTH OF GLOBAL ONLINE EDUCATION

The global online education market is projected to witness a 9.23% annual growth during the forecast period to reach a total market size of USD 319.16 billion in 2025, increasing from USD 187.87 billion in 2019. Increasing penetration of internet in many regions across the globe is a major factor driving the market growth. Growing adoption of cloud-based solutions coupled with huge investments by major market players towards enhancing the security and reliability of cloud based education platforms, are further increasing its adoption among the end users (<https://www.researchandmarket.com>, Feb 2020).

ONLINE EDUCATION TRENDS IN SRI LANKA

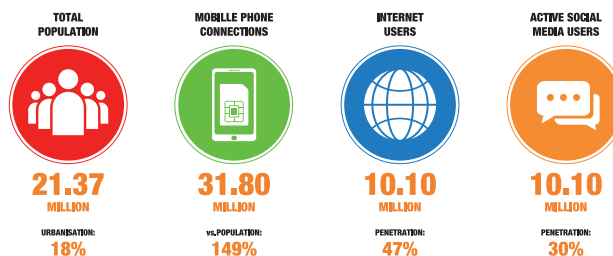
The education sector is responding to COVID-19 with a sudden shift to online learning. Nevertheless, online teaching requires careful thinking about how learners and teachers are equipped for the shift and serious consideration should be paid to the fact, whether the teaching style is still effective, when transformed from the classroom to technological devices. Moreover, inequalities are aggravated when it comes to access to technology and digital devices. Many learners suffer a form of digital inequality, whereby they lack the connections and devices to learn remotely. In fact, this outbreak widens the gap between those able to access digital learning opportunities and those who are shut out. Access is always not equal, and we see inequality growing in some sections of the society as well as in some regions of the country.

DIGITAL LIFESTYLE IN SRI LANKA

A rapid growth is observed in the digitalization process in Sri Lanka and penetration of mobile and internet on the rise at an exponential rate. In 2020, there are 10.10 million internet users and the number of internet users in Sri Lanka has increased by 399,000 (+4.1%) between 2019 and 2020. Mobile connections stood at 31.80 million in January 2020 in Sri Lanka and it is equivalent to 149% of the total population. Social media penetration was around 30% in January 2020 in Sri Lanka and it shows an annual growth rate of 8.3%. Hence the issue of digital gap is steadily moving away from the society.

However, in providing most of the facilities, the concentration is on the western province and other major cities in Sri Lanka. This is the real challenge being faced by Higher Educational Institutes (HEI) in introducing a common online learning platform in Sri Lanka.

Traditionally most of the parents and students feel in class teaching brings in human compassion as a compelling quality of education. However, time is the key factor and both learners and teachers have to face the current teaching and learning process. Further, online learning, facilitates learning without constraints as, when the learner is interested in a course, he may connect online. This has prompted all stakeholders to move in to the best alternative available for teaching and learning, which is none other than the online platforms.



NIBM WORLDWIDE: A total solution for Online Teaching and Learning

NIBM World Wide is the global initiative of the National Institute Business Management of Sri Lanka to provide education and learning opportunities to students and professionals worldwide. NIBM Worldwide education approach may break traditional education monotony and open a new era of digital education. The tailor-made programmes of NIBM will indulge the students who are in a busy lifestyle. NIBM has decided to commence online teaching using NIBM worldwide (LMS) for its students due to the close down of its operations as a result of COVID-19. All the students of NIBM are given free data to access NIBM worldwide in which all the other learning facilities are also embedded. After completing one month of online teaching, NIBM conducted an online survey to assess the quality of teaching and effectiveness of the online teaching platform.

Experiential Analytics on Online Teaching

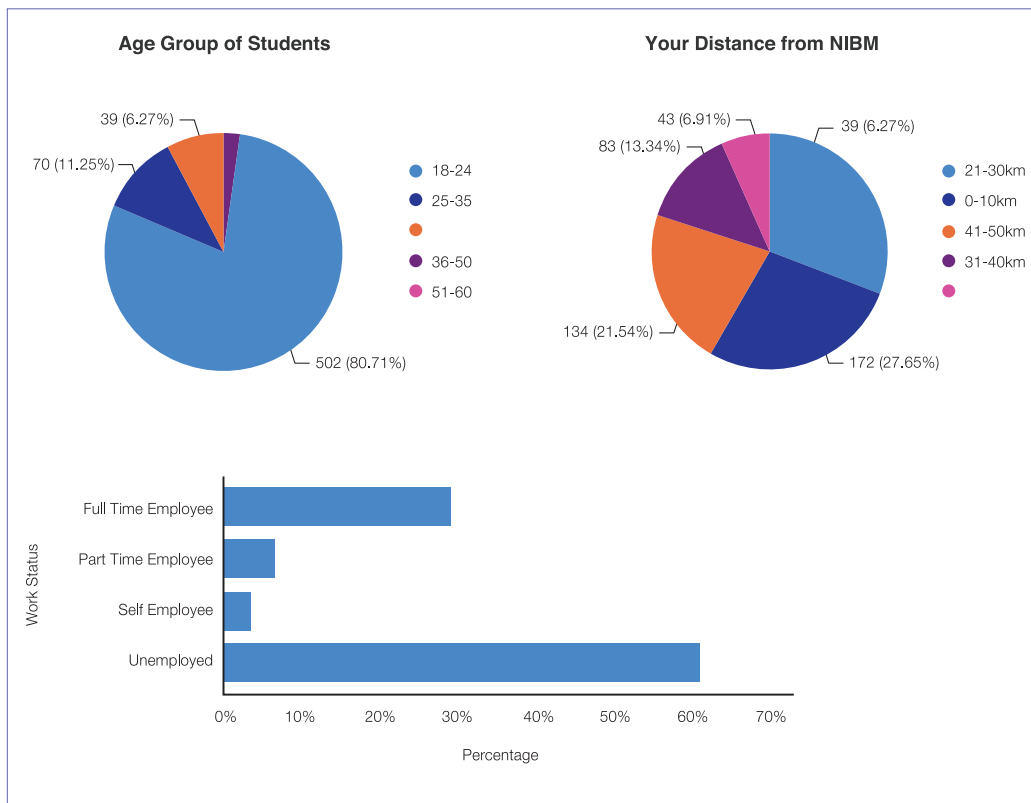
NIBM worldwide is featured with a google based online survey to track the experiences of the online learners and the same analytics are visible for its administration and module facilitators in the system itself. The following analytics were taken from 620 responses of the students (21%) out of nearly 3000 online population currently in the system.

a) Demographics of the Online Learners

The sample consists of Gen Z and Millennials with a small percentage of Baby Boomers. Majority (81%) Genzers (see figure 01). In terms of distance, 28% live in Colombo and 31% are from suburbs of Colombo. Nearly 40% of the sample are from outside of the western province.

The Location where students come from is important as far as the power of internet connectivity is concerned. It was found that nearly 7-12% of students are deprived of online learning due the fact of having poor or no internet facility. NIBM is thinking of alternative solutions for the above-mentioned segment, to be implemented, once NIBM is reopened. The majority (60%) of the learners are unemployed while 35% of them are full or part time employees.

Figure-01 Demographics



NIBM has two major kinds of learners. School Leavers represent 65% as the unemployed segment and the balance 35% represents the professionals who are already employed in different sectors in the industry.

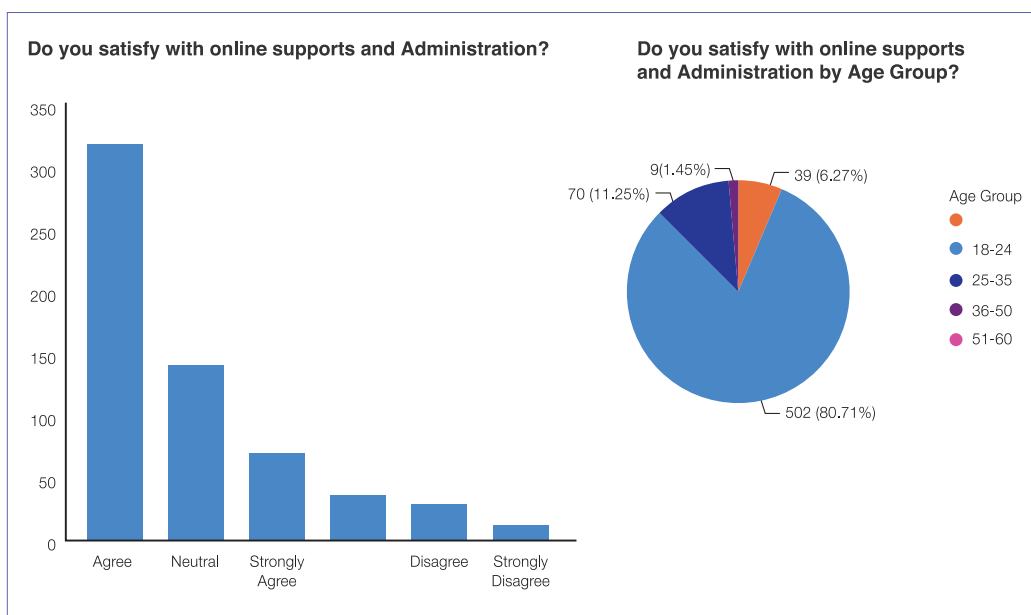
b) LMS Help Desk Support and Administration

In order to efficiently and effectively use a Learning Management System, an organization should have a competent administration that will be able to deal with all important processes including technical support as well as daily online support to learners and to the faculty.

Nearly 65% of the learners are happy with the administration of NIBM worldwide and 25% of them are in neutral mood, without making a comment on the matter (see figure -02). It's a great achievement as most of the learners of the sample are making use of the online platform for the first time for their higher studies. The Head of the Consultancy Unit of NIBM was assigned the task of managing NIBM worldwide and he is a tech savvy person with a solid background in the field of online learning management systems.

Further, NIBM is supporting its learners with a free data package to join NIBM worldwide which is one of the major motivating factors for the students.

Figure -02 Administration and Help Desk Support Service

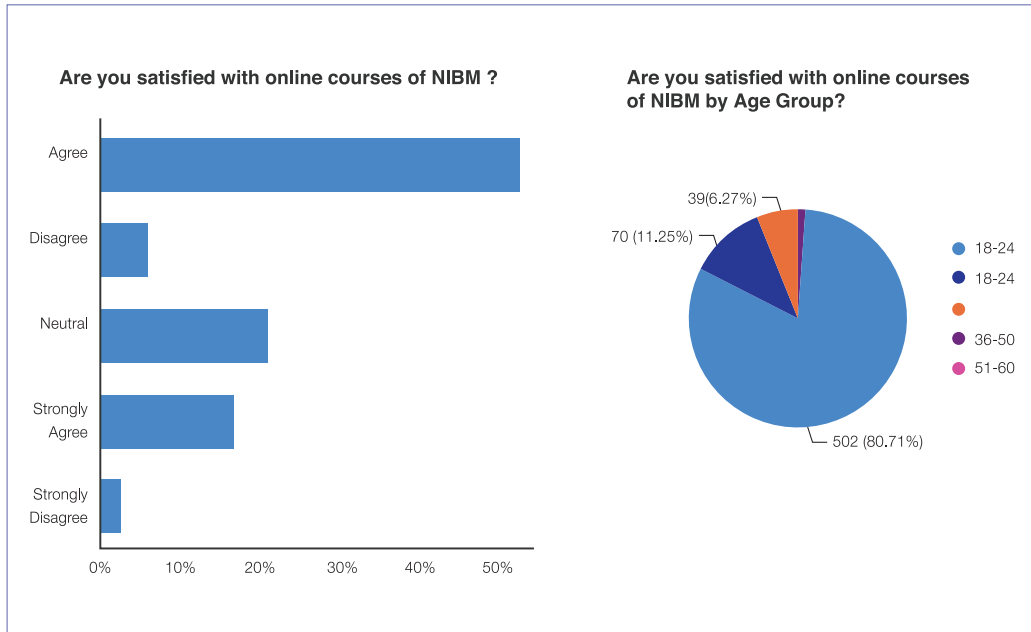


c) Learner Satisfaction Level (LSL)

There are many ICT tools that teachers can use to support teaching and learning. However, the critical factors are the acceptability and satisfaction levels of the LMS users (Learners) with the teaching process. The Findings of the survey have shown a high satisfaction level regarding LMS by the learners.

Nearly 70% of the learners are satisfied with the LMS and this is very high (80%) in the category of Genzers. (see figure -03). It is interesting to note that Genzers are really happy (80%) to be with their class mates online. It is a fact that most of the young learners tend to use a lot of online tools in their learning process than that of the adults in our country.

Figure -03 Learner Satisfaction Level



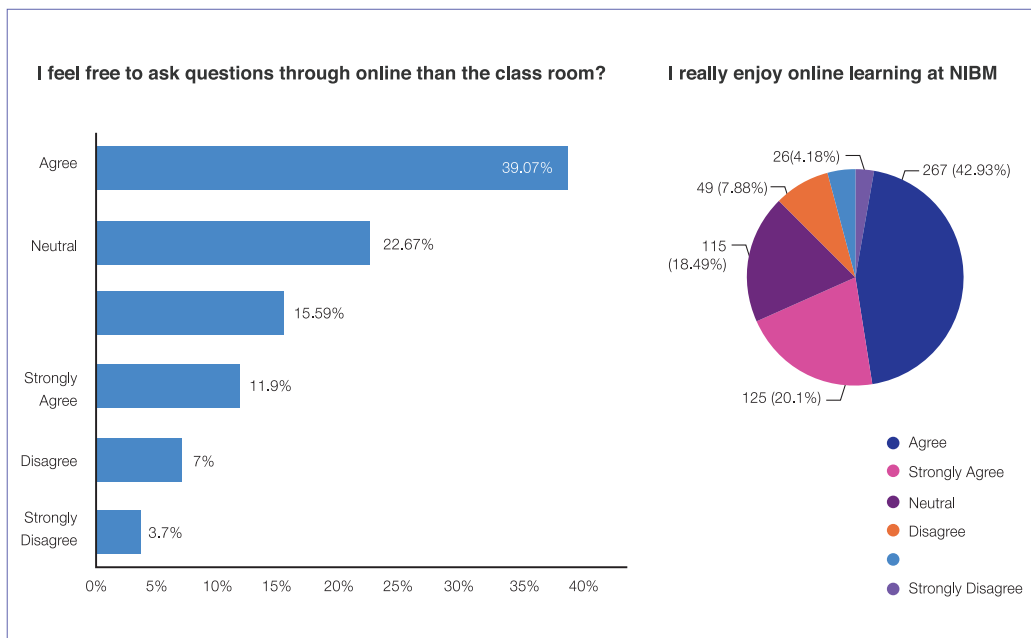
d) Free Learning Environment

Educational approaches have changed rapidly due to technological developments in the teaching and learning process. New technologies bring new methods, concepts and techniques to Open and Online Learning systems in particular. Learner centered systems have started to become popular in Open and Distance Learning because these systems are more personalized and collaborative. While learner centered systems gain attention, traditional and teacher centered systems have diminished in reputation (Mehmet Kesim, 2013)

Findings of the survey show that 56% of the learners strongly agree or agree with the fact that they are free to ask questions online, than when they are in a traditional class room, while 22% disagree with the same premise. However, 22% are neutral on the same (see figure -04). Findings indicate that 53% of the learners are really enjoying online learning while 18% are neutral in their responses. Nearly 29% disagree with the statement indicating that they enjoy in-class training.

This shows that online learning is a learner centered platform than that of the traditional class room and it gives more flexible learning environment while keeping the teacher in action to answer many questions posed by the learners.

Figure -4 Free Learning Environment

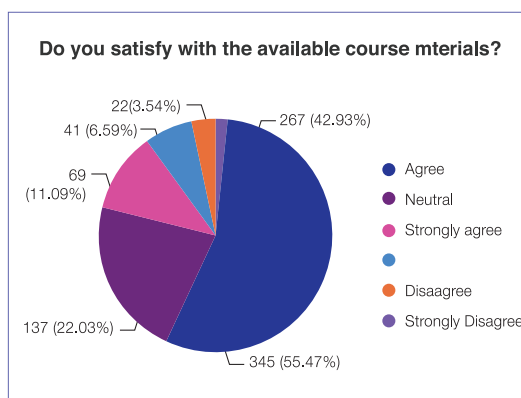


e) Online Learning Materials and Online Library

A key feature of effective teaching is the selection of instructional materials that meet the needs of the learners and the ability to fit the constraints of teaching and learning environment accordingly. In addition, the ease of electronic communications between an instructor and learners, and among learners, provide new opportunities for sharing questions, answers, and discussions in forum. At the same time, there remains a major role for students to visit the online library to refer to e-books and research papers, videos, slides etc.

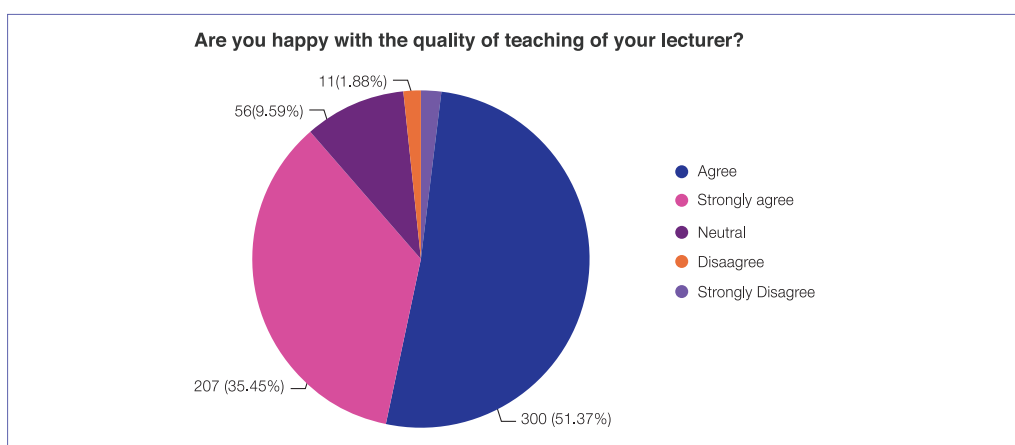
Findings indicate that 77% of learners are happy with the materials uploaded for online teaching.

However, only 55% are happy with the online library as learners cannot access some of the facilities available in it and this is an area where improvement is necessary.



f) Quality of Teaching

Fundamentally, good teaching requires the teacher to be in the classroom with the students. When teaching in person, a teacher does not leave the students to their own devices. The teacher is with them, engaging in any number of teacherly activities: explaining, guiding, asking, illustrating, answering questions etc. In contrast, online teaching forces the teacher to plan, design and incorporate strategies to encourage active learning, interaction, participation and collaboration in the online environment. This is the biggest challenge that the faculty members are encountered with.



It is encouraging to note that 86% of the learners are more or less happy with the quality of teaching with the lecturers involved in different modules of courses offered online by NIBM. Since most of the learners are new to online teaching, it seems that they are enjoying the new learning environment, whilst staying at home due to COVID -19.

FIVE KEY POINTS TO PONDER

Online courses have become an incredibly popular way for students and employees to continue their educational or professional advancement. NIBM worldwide provides both the faculty and learners a very productive learning experience, whilst staying at home due to COVID-19. Going online with NIBM worldwide teaches us the following key points to make our future online courses a rewarding experience for the learners.

- Learner's Engagement :** It is vital that the teacher establishes a strong virtual presence at the very beginning of the course to establish professional relationships with the learners to make their experience far more personal and memorable.
- Supportive Learning Environment :** At the start of the online course, it is vital to get the ball rolling with a personal introduction and create an open forum or discussion board where learners can post requesting help and assistance from each other.
- Right blend of Learning Tools :** The best online teachers use a combination of online and offline blended learning tools with a mixture of activities to make the content more interesting and exciting.
- Ongoing Online Feedback:** Feedback is an essential component of all effective learning environments inclusive of the online experience. Feedback should be continuous during the e-learning process and specially constructive feedback should be provided for assessments. Gaining knowledge and skills have to be done within the course duration, rather than having a series of examinations in the end.
- Making e-learning Content Mobile:** Mobile learning holds key advantages for learners, allowing them to access up to date course materials and relevant content anywhere, anytime. It is vital to use e-learning apps, so that learners can easily access the courses via smart phones, laptops and ipads to maximize learning.



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A Note to AMDISA Community from PIM

Continuing with COVID19 Pandemic: Initiatives, Involvements and Insights

Introduction

This brief document entails the details of the ongoing response towards COVID19 pandemic by the Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM). It discusses a range of contributions at national and institutional levels with diverse involvements of the learning community. The PIM being the largest state sector postgraduate entity in Sri Lanka, identifies itself as the “nation’s management mentor”. It is interesting to share how PIM fulfilled its obligations during the current crisis.

Overview

Much has been said about the rapid spread of Covid19 which has become almost like the third world war. Nature has stricken back. It has not spared any cast, creed or country with cruel implications associated. It was a clarion call for the learning community of PIM to collaborate in the name of humanity. Needless to stress the mature adult response that has to be demonstrated in taking care of oneself and others with sound hygienic practices.

The PIM is conscious about the dire economic downturn globally, regionally and locally with its associated multiple social impacts. 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. The initiatives taken, involvements happened and insights learnt so far can be described as given below.

1. Initiatives

Several initiatives by the PIM can be categorized as financial, professional and intellectual, with the involvement of PIM’s staff, faculty, students and alumni. The details are as follows:

1.1 Financial Contribution

It was an opportunity for us to pay our tribute to our motherland. We acted accordingly.

1.1.1 Donation to COVID19 Fund

There was a need to show a rapid response as a sensible corporate citizen. The PIM was the first state sector higher education entity to contribute Rs. 5 million from its self-generated reserves to the COVID19 Healthcare and Social Security Fund established by the President of Sri Lanka. Figure 1 contains the handing over by the said donation to Dr. P. B. Jayasundara, Secretary to the President by Prof Ajantha Dharmasiri, Director, PIM.

Figure 1. Financial Contribution from PIM for COVID19 Fund



Prof Ajantha Dharmasiri (left) handing over the donation to the Secretary to the President

1.1.2 Reaffirming the Non-dependence on Treasury

The PIM has been the only state sector higher education entity that does not get any funds from the treasury neither for its recurrent expenditure nor for its capital expenditure for over the past twenty years. Despite the fact that the PIM is having an ongoing building expansion project, self-reliance by itself has shown a significant signal to other state sector educational institutions to have a different revenue model.

1.1.3 Strengthening the Remittances from Overseas Programmes

With the presence of MBA study groups in Dubai (UAE), Doha (Qatar), Muscat (Oman), Kuwait City (Kuwait) and Dhaka (Bangladesh), the PIM is the most global higher education entity in Sri Lanka. Despite current setback with regards to air travel restrictions, the PIM has built a solid financial base for the post-Covid19 era with a healthy blend of local and overseas programme offerings.

1.2 Professional Contribution

The COVID19 pandemic offered several key opportunities for the PIM. Somewhat parallel to the post-Tsunami era, where the PIM professionally contributed to *restoration, reconstruction* and *rehabilitation*, we started working on multiple fronts.

1.2.1 Comprehensive Project on Supply Chain Management

There was an invitation from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to involve for a nation-wide project on food related supply chain management. The main aim was to utilize the collective wisdom in providing a clear set of practical recommendations for the government with regards to improving the existing systems. This we consider as a key opportunity in contributing to the national wellbeing. The initial concept paper was sent for necessary approvals.

1.2.2 MBA Final Projects Tailored for Post- COVID19 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 to work with their respective “learning partners” in identified areas such as business revival, organizational re-structuring etc.

1.2.3 “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.

1.3 Intellectual Contribution

Post COVID19 era will offer a plethora of intellectual prospects in the area of management. We have already started working on multiple fronts, despite being home-locked.

1.3.1 Management Research on Multi-faceted Elements of COVID19

Each faculty member is asked to develop a study framework in his/her respective specialization, with emphasis of key managerial challenges in the post-COVID19 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.

1.3.2 Doctoral Deliberations on Post-COVID19

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.

1.3.3 Compilation of Case Study Collection

Plans are underway to deploy research students to explore cases of transformation from survival to success amidst COVID19. With the guidance of the PIM Research Centre, several cases will be documented, presented and published as a PIM case study collection.

2. Involvements

Having discussed the initiatives, the next logical extension of it is the involvements. Let me zoom into faculty, students and others in particular.

2.1 Faculty Involvements

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.

2.1.1 Contribution to Social Media

Linked-in has become a popular platform for the faculty to have constructive discussion on managerial aspects of post-COVID19. Moving beyond mere posting of facts and figures, value chain-conversations have been initiated by several faculty members.

2.2.2 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.

2.2.3 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. Figure 2 is an example of such a webinar organized by the PIM Alumni (PIMA) with the involvement of one PIM faculty together with other PIM “products” who are proven business leaders.

Figure 2. A Webinar Featuring PIM Faculty (One Among Many)



PIMA
PIM Alumni

Shifting from
Survival to Success:
**Leading the
Transformation**
Webinar on Zoom

Focusing on being brilliant on basics in continuing with Covid 19, we share authentic hands-on experiences and practical thoughts to revive the ailing enterprises.

Date : 22nd April 2020
Time : 7.00pm - 8.30pm
Registration FREE
Link: <https://bit.ly/34Ks6q1>

Join the Zoom session now:

Get the insightful inspiration from **Proven Business Leaders**

Mr. Sujeewa Rajapakse
Chairman - People's Bank and People's Leasing and Finance P.L.C.

Mr. Ravi Edirisinge
Group CEO - GAC Group Sri Lanka

Mr. Aravinda Perera
Chairman - Singer Finance PLC

Mr. Suranga Herath
CEO - English Tea Shop

Professor Ajantha Dharmasiri
Director PIM (Moderator)

Do not miss the opportunity to virtually interact with us in collectively constructing our future.

PIMA POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT ALUMNI

Daily FT

For inquiries:
0779 966 541

2.2 Student Involvements

There was an encouraging response from the students in variety of ways. The key was the adaptability of the changing context, which was essential.

2.2.1 Flexibility in Blended Learning

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. Figure 3.1 & 3.2 contains two such messages sent through the learning portal.

Figure 3.1. Director's First Message to the Learning Community

Sharpening the Saw

Dear PIM Learning Community,

We are going through a challenging time where Corona Crisis has affected all walks of life. With much reluctance, the PIM was compelled to resort to self-learning for the next two weeks. I would suggest to make it a productive period with knowledge seeking in a true spirit of "sharpening the saw".

Needless to stress the mature adult response we need to demonstrate in taking care of ourselves and others with sound hygienic practices. We need to be socially conscious about the dire economic downturn globally, regionally and locally. Let's endeavour to empathize with suffering thousands around the globe and energize ourselves to sustain our spirit during a challenging era of VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity). Perhaps, as Bill George suggests, its high time we embraced VUCA 2.0 (Vision, Understanding, Compassion and Agility).

It reminds me what Victor Hugo observed. "Nations, like stars, are entitled to eclipse. All is well, provided the light returns and the eclipse does not become endless night. Dawn and resurrection are synonymous. The reappearance of the light is the same as the survival of the soul."

Let's move ahead with confidence, in tackling one day at a time.

Yours in service,

Prof. Ajantha Dharmasiri

Figure 3.2 Director's Second Message to the Learning Community

Igniting Self-learning Passion

Dear PIM Learning Community,

We are witnessing an unprecedented uncertainty. Further to my previous mail on "sharpening the saw", the disturbing events around the globe would have distracted you from your focus on self-learning continuously. Despite the Covid19 doom, let's ignite the passion of continuous learning. Stay in touch with study material and as I often mentioned, *read, reflect and relate*.

As Eckhart Tolle expressed in his bestseller, *A New Earth*, "when faced with a radical crisis, when the old way of being in the world, of interacting with each other and with the realm of nature doesn't work anymore, when survival is threatened by seemingly insurmountable problems, an individual life-form, or a species, will either die or become extinct or rise above the limitations of its condition through an evolutionary leap." It is an invitation to awake to our life's purpose. Use the extra free time to ponder on your purpose.

I have no better example than Victor Frankel, a Jewish physician, who survived in a concentration camp during the second World War. "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." As he stated, we need to have the right response during this prolonged home-stay for a protective and a preventive reason.

Remember, life is all about *loving, learning and leading*. Do take care of yourself and all your loved ones. Do help others in dire need. Whilst doing all these, ignite the passion of self-learning.

Yours in service,

Prof. Ajantha Dharmasiri

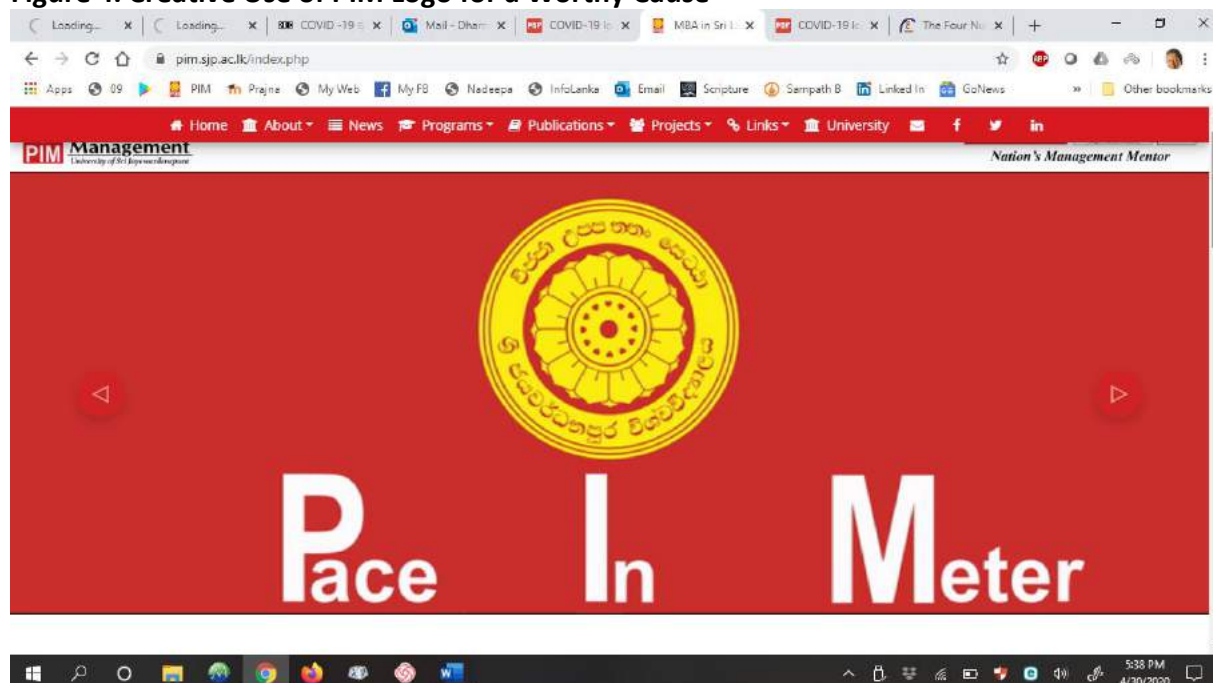
2.2.2 Take home exams with reflections on COVID19

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).

2.2.3 Social Service Through Organizations

Despite restrictions for physical movements, the student community got involved in various service initiatives such as financial contributions, working with their respective organizations in distributing essential items to needy and creative contributions in the social media platforms. Figure 4 is such an illustration of an animated video made by a group of students highlighting the physical distancing required to avoid the spreading of the virus.

Figure 4. Creative Use of PIM Logo for a Worthy Cause



2.3 Other Involvements

It was heartening to see some eminent and prominent personnel who play an active role in the COVID19 task force in Sri Lanka are PIM alumni. Also, we must not forget the dedicated non-academic staff who provide the backbone of running the institution uninterruptedly.

2.3.1 Featuring as Eminent Business Leaders in Webinars

There was a high number of webinars featuring proven business leaders who are prestigious PIM alumni. It included institution heads such as Chairman of the largest state bank, the Director General of Health Services, entrepreneurs, senior government secretaries etc. who really kept the PIM flag high.

2.3.2 Telecommuting by Staff

Rising up to the occasion, the non-academic staff of PIM responded committedly by attended to assigned tasks from home. Desktop publishing of Professional Manager, the flagship publication of PIM and managing the *Prajna* learning portal are two such examples. It was an acid test for us to see how effective telecommuting could be.

2.3.3 Involvement of Alumni in National Level Task Forces

The COVID19 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.

3. Insights

Having discussed the initiatives and involvements, the key insights being captured are worth noting.

3.1 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-COVID19 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”.

3.2 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 COVID19 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.

3.3 PIMARC Symposium in Post -COVID19 Era

The annual research conference of PIM (PIMARC) will be focusing on the research findings related to COVID19 in reaching a wider audience of research scholars, learning managers, administrators, decision makers and implementors. Based on the progress of faculty and student research, it is planned to be held in 2021.

Conclusion

The discussion so far demonstrated the initiatives, involvements and insights related to PIM in Sri Lankan COVID19 context. As we realized by now to a great extent, it is a forward march we need to carry on in a holistic manner, with continuous learning as the norm. As a Sri Lankan economist recently said, “people first and economy next”. This is a crisis of civilization and for an economy to exist, there should be healthy human beings. They should be well educated with right leadership and managerial competencies. It requires the coveted role of contributing as the “nation’s management mentor” in continuing with the COVID19 pandemic.



Prof. Ajantha Dharmasiri

Director and the Chairman of the Board of Management
Postgraduate Institute of Management, Colombo, Sri Lanka
www.pim.sjp.ac.lk

01 May 2020



Novel strategies and practices adopted by Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka to face the fatal COVID-19 Pandemic Victoriously

About University of Sri Jayewardenepura

University of Sri Jayewardenepura is a leading university in Sri Lanka, its roots can be traced back to Vidyodaya Pirivena established in 1873 by Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thero and in 1956 converted as “Vidyodaya University” headed by Ven. Welivitiye Soratha Maha Thero. Time pass by due to political changes happened in the county in 1978, Vidyodaya University was designated as “University of Sri Jayewardenepura” under Universities Act No 16 of 1978. Owing a proud history of long years University of Sri Jayewardenepura had a fair growth in its activities result in standing with eight strong faculties; Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Technology and its latest addition Faculty of Allied Health Sciences. University is home to over 12,000 undergraduates and over 1000 postgraduate students doing its duty by serving the society as one of the largest universities in Sri Lanka. Having the

vision of “Prosper lives through education” University of Sri Jayewardenepura has contributed to generate a substantial number of graduates over its long history, lighting up their lives through world-class academic experience.

Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC)

Having a great history of 60 years of academic excellence Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce has been the gateway to success for over 50,000 students. FMSC possesses 12 academic departments offering 12 undergraduate degree programs in Management and Accounting disciplines. MBA, MSc, and PhD programs, are the key postgraduate programs as well as external general degree programs, certificate courses, and diploma programs are conducted by the faculty in the fields of management and accounting. FMSC provides greater learning experience together with extensive research and innovation edge and practical experience which allow students to uplift their teamwork, communication, and leadership expertise. All programs offered by the faculty are updating accordingly when needed to meet the needs of Sri Lanka’s economy and of its business managers.

Living with COVID – 19: Strategies and Practices adopted

The world is currently experiencing an unpredicted an unfamiliar period due to COVID -19 outbreak. Due to the severity of this pandemic scientists predict this COVID-19 pandemic is likely to last around two years which reflects eradicating this fatal virus seems to be impossible at the moment instead people need to get ready to live with COVID-19, by getting used to it and perform their daily routines. But life would never be the same before as it was to the pandemic, rather certain changes are expected when engaging in daily activities. Similarly, adjustments in the education system have been done to continue academic activities without getting highly attacked by this deadly virus. Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce in University of Sri Jayewardenepura has already initiated a number of steps to protect and maintain the academic interest of students during this fatal pandemic.

Many universities and institutions around the world currently facing interruptions to academic activities due to stoppage of academic work and university closure, to hold on with the activities and to explore solutions for the contemporary situation as a leading university, University of Sri Jayewardenepura has taken significant efforts apart from academic activities to support to relieve the current situation, as follows;

- Funding to develop prototype technologies which have immediate effect on ease the current situation due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Start Webinar discussions related to the concept of COVID-19 pandemic to let people aware about the situation. <https://www.sjp.ac.lk/event/online-webinar-impact-coronavirus-crisis-economy-financial-manufacturing-sectors-perspective-sri-lanka-india/>
- Uplift innovation by appraising innovative efforts done related to COVID-19.

As the legendary faculty of the university, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC) will continue to be fully committed to provide standard learning facilities without any disruptions. To achieve that purpose faculty have implemented the following;

- **Establish COVID-19 response committee at the faculty level**

University has established COVID-19 response committees at the faculty level, these committees comply with WHO guidelines and guidelines given by the Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka to assure the health and safety of both employees and students and take necessary actions accordingly. Committee will meet time to time, when needy. This committee has presented a “University preparedness plan” which includes overall guidelines on protecting the health and safety of staff members and students. University preparedness plan: <https://www.sjp.ac.lk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Covid-19-preparedness-guideline-USJ-7th-May.pdf>

- **Adopt digital learning strategy**

As this deadly virus has taken custody of the physical world, the university quickly adopted the digital learning strategy in order to continue the academic activities without getting disrupted. University initiated to use digital technology platform “Zoom” to conduct daily lectures and provide students and lecturers with free access to zoom to get the interaction of all students towards lectures: <https://www.sjp.ac.lk/news/usj-academics-can-conduct-online-lectures-using-zoom-corona-outbreak/>

MBA programs have already started conducting lectures through zoom while undergraduate students are being already registered for online learning and plan to start undergraduate academic activities from early June. Similar to the physical lectures online lectures also planned and conduct with the highest commitment of staff members in an absolutely effective way ensuring that the learning outcomes are achieved successfully. These lectures are

planned to conduct with the highest student to student as well as student to lecturer interaction to minimize the dullness of the learning environment.

- **Continue to have student-centered learning strategy**

University compromise with students all around the country both urban as well as from rural areas. Due to this pandemic, a complete shift of university online learning might not be possible for students in remote areas. Giving due consideration for this matter as a prerequisite, faculty has conducted a comprehensive survey among undergraduates of FMSC to examine the availability of ICT facilities among undergraduates of the faculty. Through this analysis faculty was able to identify the accessibility of students to online platforms and recommend the most suitable methods and identify issues to overcome in this regard. This was a great move taken by the faculty to ensure the student centric learning strategy to assure that students will gain the benefit of the online learning amidst of this fatal pandemic.

- **Active Learning Management System (LMS)**

LMS is a common platform used by our university students in their traditional learning environment. But, during this COVID-19 outbreak, faculty reinforces the LMS to allow students to easily access the academic resources through LMS. Lecturers are asked to share course materials, ppt and e-learning resources and update LMS regularly to keep up with a continuous learning environment. This will allow students to easily access to lecture materials and resources to progress with their academic activities during this COVID-19 eruption. <https://www.sjp.ac.lk/news/usj-online-e-learning-resources-corona-virus-outbreak/>

- **Strengthen the access for digital learning sources**

Accessing to digital resources isn't novel in our university culture as university library consist of rich digital resource database. But, many essential resources are given access only within the university, due to the sudden pandemic situation attacked both staff members and students by restricting to access these significant resources, as a solution university has given the access to significant digital resources so that both staff members and students can reach a wide range of knowledge in the lockdown period and can make that time more fruitful. Following are some key sources which access granted newly;

- Off-campus access for more than 350 e-books published by Pearson.
- Remote access to "Taylor & Francis Online database" on the Emerald publishing database.

- Provide free access to Bloomsbury Publishing e-books until the end of May 2020, which covers more than 9000 DRM format free titles that cover multiple fields of study.
- Grant access to more than 500 textbooks and e-resources on Springer Nature's e-book collections for free.

Conclusion: The Best is Yet to Come

Due to the COVID – 19 outbreaks, as the whole world is experiencing an unaccustomed situation, faculty of management studies and commerce (FMSC) have taken immediate steps to limit the negative consequences which attack normal learning routine of students. As the priority of the university is to provide world-class academic experience for our students' staff members are willingly committed to allow the shift to digital learning strategy more familiar and interesting to the students while assuring the achievement of learning outcomes. Further, priority has given to ensure the health and safety of both staff members and students while planning to continue academic activities in the timely appropriate way. Tough times never last, until we see the healthy light again, we do continue our best to allow our students to continue with their academic activities as best as possible.

Prof. P. D. Nimal

Dean

Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

RESPONSES

BANGLADESH



Prof. Abdul Mannan, Former Chairman, University Grants Commission Bangladesh, Currently Professor of Business, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Thanks. It surely is a good initiative.

You are doing an excellent job.

Prof. Dr. Abdur Rab, Vice Chancellor, International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT), Dhaka, Bangladesh

Thank you for your mail and the attachment from IPE.

Fortunately, we have been using Moodle class room learning management system and it was very easy for us to go for on line teaching just after campus was closed. We have completed the classes and now preparing for holding on line exam.

Prof. Dr. Anwar Hossain, Vice Chancellor, Northern University Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Thanks a lot for your mail. Delighted to see the experiences of fellow AMDISA members.

I am forwarding here with response of Northern University Bangladesh towards Covid 19.

We are doing our best to fight this menace and our spirit is high.

Wish all our fellow members well.

Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Ataul Hakim Sarwar Hasan, Vice Chancellor, Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), Dhaka, Bangladesh

Greetings!

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to meet you in this platform as the New VC of BUP. Recently, I have taken over the enterprise replacing my colleague Gen Emdad.

Thank you very much for your highly appreciating emails regarding the sharing of Experience and Practices amid COVID – 19 Pandemic situation. The practices of different reputed partners are praiseworthy.

Today I would like to share the practices of BUP with you. Our practices are mentioned in the attachment.

Prof. Dr. H. M. Jahirul Haque, Vice Chancellor, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), Dhaka, Bangladesh

Thank you very much for your email. Actually, ULAB is using a whole range of modalities to facilitate online teaching and learning: These include relatively low tech and widely accessible asynchronous Electronic Learning Management Systems (Moodle); Email; and social media platforms such as Email, WhatsApp, Facebook to communicate and transmit class content (PowerPoint presentations; PDF's of all reading material, links to relevant articles, videos). In addition, faculty members are exploring synchronous/ live platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom to interact with colleagues and students.

There is a steep learning curve, but we have moved very quickly. The response from students and faculty/ management colleagues has been excellent so far.

There is still a lot of fine tuning to do, but we have made exemplary progress.

Dr. Md. Kamrul Hasan, Associate Professor, Faculty of Business Studies & Head, Department of Business Administration, BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Noted with thanks. It's a good initiative for sharing the experiences.

Dr. Mir Muhammad Shah, Director International Accreditation, Sukkur IBA University, Sukkur, Sindh, Pakistan

Hope you are doing well. We from Sukkur IBA University are sharing our experiences during this pandemic situation of COVID-19. The attached file is a brief about our online teaching and community services. The university is also contributing to the country by developing an App "CovidSafeMoving" to track covid affected people that will help to track and to test those contacts who met them in the last days.

Prof. Dr. Mohammed Masum Iqbal, Dean, Faculty of Business and Entrepreneurship, Daffodil International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Greetings from Daffodil International University (DIU), Bangladesh!

I trust this mail finds you safe and sound in this crisis stemming from coronavirus. You know DIU is one of the leading private universities in Bangladesh. We would like to share our experiences of how we are managing academic operations amid this disruption stemming from COVID19. The summary of our practices is attached herewith.

Prof. Dr. Syed Ferhat Anwar, Director, Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh

For me it is a learning, which is unfolding as I write this email, not just an experience. A few lines for you to think of and share. Let us believe and understand that we are no more individual nations or institutes but a single unit called humanity. Thank you for the initiative.

Dr. Syed Saad Andaleeb, Distinguished Visiting Professor, Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka, Former Vice Chancellor, BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Greetings! It was wonderful to hear from you. Hope you are doing well in this new and uncertain pandemic era.

Thank you for sharing these valuable insights from different institutions. This is great knowledge-sharing!

BHUTAN



Mr. Karma Tshering, Director General, Department of School Education, Ministry of Education, Thimphu, Bhutan

Thank you for sharing rich experiences and practices of COVID-19 Education in Emergency of the various renowned institutions in the region. Certainly helping us cope better to help students continue their education now and beyond COVID-19 situation.

Dr. Shiva Raj Bhattarai, Dean (Academics), Royal Thimphu College, Thimphu, Bhutan

Royal Thimphu College has taken several steps to address the issue. Most importantly we have transitioned into online teaching quite successfully. A report from our President's desk, in the link here gives all the details. I hope this will be useful information for other institutions.

Dr. Sonam Choiden, President, Gedu College of Business Studies, Royal University of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan

Thank you for keeping in touch and sharing experiences among the members. Trust all is well at home and at work.

Ms. Sonam Pelden Thaye, Director, Royal Institute of Management, Thimphu, Bhutan

In order to cope with the disruption caused by COVID 19 and also in accordance with the instruction of the Royal Civil Service Commission to come up with a contingency plan, we have developed a detailed contingency plan that is being followed at the moment to deliver the services of RIM.

INDIA



Dr. A. Prabhu Kumar, Professor & Director, School of Management Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India

It is highly appreciable the initiative taken by AMDISA for the development of Management Education during this pandemic COVID19. I am herewith attaching a file stating the academic measures taken during this lock down period.

Dr. Amit Bhadra, Dean, Woxsen School of Business, Hyderabad, India

Many thanks for sharing the experience of other institutes.

It is thought provoking. I really appreciate it.

Dr. Aruna Bhat Kaul, HoD, School of Management, Roorkee Institute of Technology (RIT), Roorkee, India

Greetings from RIT Roorkee!

As per your mail regarding experiences to be shared amid COVID 19 at RIT Roorkee, PFA the details regarding the learning experiences and the initiatives taken at our institute so that students can complete their academic session with the online classes provided to them.

Prof. Biplab Halder, Pro-Vice Chancellor, The ICFAI University, Tripura, India

Thank you very much for sending mails sharing with us the experience of various AMDISA members during the lockdown period.

Dr. (Capt) C. M. Chitale, Chair Professor, Shantanurao Kirloskar Chair & Director-Skill Development Centre (Addl. Charge), Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India

Great initiative. If lock down continues for some more time (may be a possibility) then in that case educational institutions may come up with diff modules of teaching. Lot many reforms are expected. Teachers to Students ratio which is the main concern of most of the institutions may also change in due course.

Experiences sharing of all these Management Institutes are really fantastic. In the difficult times how to manage your Academics is a very good learning. After all these management institutions know how to manage. Great to know. I Congratulate all the Directors for their leadership and also other faculty members for their contributions.

Thanks for sharing good material to read.

Dr. Dinesh Harsolekar, Director, IES Management College and Research Centre, Mumbai, India

Thank you for sharing the COVID 19 experiences of different business schools.

I am happy to attach herewith our experiences and practices during COVID 19 lockdown period. You may kindly share with the member institutions.

Dr. Durgamohan Musunuri, Director, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Usha & Lakshmi Mittal Institute of Management, New Delhi, India

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you for taking this initiative, wherein member institutions are sharing their experiences and practices amid COVID-19 disruption. It is a great learning for me personally and at the same time it validates some of the steps we have taken at BULMIM.

Dr. N. M. Kondap, Director General, Kohinoor Business School, Mumbai, India

Greetings from Kohinoor Business School, Mumbai

Please find attached the document Beyond Academics.

Dr. Prashant Gupta, Professor, Operations & Strategy, Jaipuria Institute of Management, Jaipur, India

We thank you for Sharing of Experiences & Practices amid COVID-19 Disruption of different Institutes/ Universities.

Prof. R. K. Mishra, Director, Institute of Public Enterprise, Hyderabad, India

My congratulations for comprehensive approach formulation to banish Covid-19. I have all admiration.

Dr. Raj Agrawal, Director, Centre for Management Education All India Management Association, New Delhi, India

Good

Dr. Rajan Saxena, Former Vice-Chancellor, NMIMS (Deemed to be University), Mumbai, India

Great initiative Mr. Ramakrishna.

Dr. Ravi Kumar Jain, Professor & Director, Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Hyderabad, India

PFA a write on Sharing of Experiences and Practices amid COVID-19 Disruption. Hope you and your family are doing well during this lock down.

Dr. Roshan Lal Raina, Vice Chancellor, JK Lakshmipat University, Jaipur, India

Trust and pray you with all your family members are staying home to stay safe and well.

Thanks for sharing one more interesting experience.

PFA JKL U experience for further needful at your end. Hope you find it in order.

Dr. S. V. Ramana Rao, Director, Siva Sivani Institute of Management, Secunderabad, India

Greetings from Siva Sivani Institute of Management

In the present crisis situation SSIM has adopted a unique way of reaching students and engaging the students in the learning process.

Dr. Saurabh, Head, School of Business, Faculty of Management, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra, Jammu & Kashmir, India

I thank AMDISA for taking this initiative and enable us to reflect on our actions and future plans.

Prof. Dr. Subhendu Dey, Program Director, Indus Business Academy, Bengaluru, India

Greetings from Indus Business Academy Bangalore.

We wish to share our experiences during this period of extreme uncertainty, with a firm belief that this period of uncertainty too provides us with its share of opportunities.

Request you to share our experience with other member institutes, and thank you for taking this initiative.

Dr. Suresh Mony, Director, NMIMS (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, India

Trust this finds you fit and safe.

Am attaching an article on NMIMS' response to the Covid crisis and my thoughts on the teaching-learning process in higher education for circulation in the AMDISA network.

Dr. Suresh Ramanathan, Dean & Principal, Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai, India

Thank you for sharing best practices from around the region on how institutions are dealing with the current pandemic.

Dr. T. G. Vijaya, Director I/C, PSG Institute of Management, PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore, India

Congratulations on starting this initiative where institutions are sharing their experiences and in the process we learn from each other.

Dr. V. M. Ponniah, Dean, Faculty of Management, SRM Institute of Science & Technology, Chennai, India

Thanks for your mail. It is a learning experience during this period of COVID19.

We will share our experience shortly. We are thankful for this opportunity.

Dr. Vikas Nath, Director, Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Management and Research, New Delhi, India

Greetings!

Thanks for your mails regarding practices of other institutes in India. Motivated by your mails, we at BVIMR, New Delhi would like to share our practices with you.

Inputs received from other institutes are highly appreciated. This practice of sharing best practices of other Institutions during lock down is also well taken by our institute. We have all praise for you and this practice.

MALDIVES



Mr. Abdulla Nafiz, Dean, Faculty of Business Management, Villa College, Male, Maldives.

Thank you so much for sharing this information.

I hope all is well with you and your close circle.

As soon it was announced by the health authorities, we started making contingency plans to move our classes online.

We are now fully online carrying out our operations remotely.

Many thanks and stay safe.

NEPAL



Mr. Basanta Raj Sigdel, Director of Studies, Nepal Administrative Staff College, Lalitpur, Nepal

Greetings from NASC !

Hope, you are fine and safe with your family in this difficult situation. We appreciate your efforts in bringing the learning experiences of all the institutions together in this situation. It is quite helpful to learn from others' valuable experiences.

On behalf of the Executive Director, Mr. Punya Prasad Neupane, I am sharing our recent initiatives and specific learning experiences in this pandemic situation for sharing among valued institutions in the network.

Prof. Hari B. Khadka, Dean, Faculty of Management Studies, Pokhara University, Pokhara, Nepal

Namaskar/good morning from Pokhara Nepal.

Thank you so much the executive director respected C. Ramakrishna.



Dr. Faisal Mustafa, Provost/Dean Faculty of Management Studies, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Thank you very much for this initiative as it will help all business schools to share best practices and to learn from others experiences.

Mr. Ibrahim Hasan Murad, President, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Thank you very much for sharing this.

Dr. Ijaz Qureshi, Rector, National College of Business Administration & Economics, Lahore, Pakistan

Trust your good offices are doing well. Many thanks for keeping me in the loop for the COVID-19 preparation by the member institutions.

Prof. Muhammad Amanullah Khan, Dean, Faculty of Management Studies, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan

Thanks. Riphah International university has also shifted to on-line classes. We are mostly using Zoom for interactive sessions and Mualim (adapted version of Moodle) and WhatsApp groups for assignments, projects, take home exams etc.

Dr. Muhammad Zaki Rashidi, Director, Iqra University, Karachi, Pakistan

Thank you for sharing it. Iqra University, Karachi is also taking measures to avoid disruption and have adopted a similar approach.

Dr. Naukhez Sarwar, Principal & Dean, NUST Business School, National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan

I hope this email finds you safe and well! AMDISA like always has taken a very timely initiative to share knowledge and best practices amongst institutions in South Asia. Kindly find attached the experiences and practices adopted at NUST Business School, National University of Sciences and Technology, Pakistan.

Dr. Naveda Kitchlew, Associate Professor/Associate Dean Academics, School of Business and Economics (SBE), University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

I hope and pray that you and your family are keeping well during this strange time in our lives. It is always good to hear from you. Thank you for keeping us updated with AMDISA activities.

Dr. Naveed Yazdani, Dean, School of Business and Economics, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Thanks sir for sharing

SRI LANKA



Prof. Dr. Ajantha Dharmasiri, Director, Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Thank you for sharing. Very useful indeed.

Thank you for the excellent initiative. Hope you and your colleagues are safe in Hyderabad.

Dr. D. M. A. Kulasooriya, Director General, National Institute of Business Management, Colombo, Sri Lanka

I attach here with experience of NIBM on teaching during the COVID -19 and please arrange to publish this as well.

Dr. (Mrs.) Udayangani Thalaspitiya, Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resources Management, Faculty of Management Studies & Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

Thanks for sharing. I will share this with my colleagues.

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