

Press Release

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Chairman-AICTE elucidated the changing scenarios of the education sector in the Post COVID era

The Tenth edition of the University Distinguished Lecture (UDL) Series, organised by SRM University-AP, expounded on a pertinent problem of the current time, "Higher Education in India in the Post-COVID-19". Prof Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman of All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), delivered the Distinguished Lecture, and Shri Satish Chandra, IAS, Special Chief Secretary, Higher Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh, gave a special address.

In his welcome address, Prof D Narayana Rao, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of SRM University-AP, set the context of the event, emphasising on how the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis has resulted in the temporary closure of about 1000 Universities and about 40,000 Colleges in the country, severely disrupting the teaching and learning process and research activities. The transition to "Learn From Anywhere (LFA) happened overnight and people had to get used to it. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognises the importance of leveraging the advantages of technology while acknowledging its potential risks and dangers. Online education calls for carefully designing and appropriately scaled studies to determine how the benefits of online/digital education can be reaped while addressing or mitigating the downsides. There is a need to establish a "Digital and online Wing" in the Departments of Education in different states of the country.

Prof Anil Sahasrabudhe in his Distinguished Lecture, delineated that the use of technology in the education environment has been initiated in the Pre-COVID days. Platforms such as Swayam, National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) came into existence to digitally bring quality education to everyone. Digital education carries a boon that no one can ignore, i.e. making physical distance irrelevant in education. Digital education has the ability to reach students anywhere and everywhere provided they are equipped with gadgets and internet connectivity. Thus, the Government of India has undertaken a nationwide project under, Bharat Net, Unnat Bharat Abhiyan to connect every corner of India through the internet. Prof Sahasrabudhe accepted that all subjects cannot be taught online, especially lab-based practical courses that will have the need to attend physical classes. Music, Drama, sports, other performing and fine arts, which are an essential part of a pedagogical system, cannot be studied online. Moreover, a digital class can never replace the bonding humans tend to develop while working in close proximity. However, it cannot be debated that the education system as we know it has changed. The future of education comes with a blended environment. Fortunately, National Education Policy-2020 envisioned the change long ago and introduced a relevant policy to ensure the educational growth of the country. Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (*MERU*), Academic Bank of Credits, National Academic Depository are some of the revolutionary changes that are going to benefit the next generations in the post COVID days. The government has already established National Research Foundations to support mega research projects, which may need several crores of rupees. Prof Anil Sahasrabudhe emphasised that studying in one's native language is an essential requirement that NEP looks into. Prof Sahasrabudhe asserted that proper administration, governance and autonomy are some of the deciding factors for the education sector in the coming days. While concluding his speech, he further elucidated

AICTE's initiatives towards the advancement of the education sector-Curriculum Revisions, Project-Based Experiential Learning, Faculty Training, Industry Internships, Students Internship Programmes are soon to be inseparable aspects of the changing education sector.

Shri Satish Chandra highlighted the challenges associated with online education in respect to the state of Andhra Pradesh. 3000 colleges and 17 universities with 12 lakhs students in Higher Education Sector have got affected because of the pandemic. However, the future of education brings a blended environment with both online and offline teaching-learning options. He opined that LMS, Online Platforms, gadgets such as desktops, laptops or tablets are going to be a part of the new normal of the education sector. The Government of Andhra Pradesh strives to help economically backward students by providing the gadgets at an affordable cost under various scholarship schemes.