

MKSSS's Smt. Hiraben Nanavati Institute of Management and Research for Women (HNIMR)

National Conference 2026

“Catalyst of Change”: Multidisciplinary Pathways to Innovation and Sustainability

Hybrid - Friday, 24th April 2026

Venue: Smt. Hiraben Nanavati Institute of Management and Research for Women

Date: 24/4/26

The conference commenced at 10:30 AM with a solemn and patriotic opening marked by the National Anthem, followed by MKSSS's Ashram Geet, reflecting the institution's cultural heritage and values.

The Director Dr. Priyanka Singh delivered the opening address, highlighting the vision and significance of the conference. The conference witnessed the participation of academicians, researchers, industry leaders, and professionals, with 125+ research papers received across multiple domains. The event focused on integrating innovation, sustainability, technology, ethics, and indigenous knowledge systems for future-ready development.

Inaugural Session



The inaugural session was graced by Chief Guest Padma Shri Dr. Sanjay Dhande-Chancellor, Avantika University, Ujjain, Mr. Dinanath Kholkar-Director, Pune International Centre (PIC), and CA Shri Abhay Kulkarni, Trustee Member, MKSSS whose addresses set a visionary tone for the conference.

Chief Guest's Address by Padma Shri Dr. Sanjay Dhande-Chancellor, Avantika University, Ujjain

Dr. Sanjay Dhande emphasized that “Innovation is a mindset of efficiency”, extending beyond technology to include cultural and intellectual sustainability. He highlighted that environmental sustainability can reduce costs, while human sustainability must focus on preventing burnout, supporting mental health, and balancing work with life. Stressing the role of creativity as the foundation of innovation, he noted its importance in sustaining future progress. He also spoke about leadership in a hybrid world through ethical and economic progress. His address underscored that innovation and sustainability must be broadened to include long-term legacy building and enduring impact.

Keynote Insights by Mr. Dinanath Kholkar – Director, Pune International Centre (PIC)

In his address, Sir described innovation as a blend of creativity, curiosity, and collaboration, emphasizing that meaningful ideas emerge from questioning and exploration. He encouraged participants to focus on the value they can create through innovative thinking and action. Highlighting the importance of data points in research, he noted that sound decisions and impactful innovation must be rooted in evidence and analysis. His address inspired the audience to see innovation as a mindset shaped by curiosity, creativity, collaboration, and data-driven thinking.

Address by CA Shri Abhay Kulkarni-Trustee Member, MKSSS

In his address, Abhay Kulkarni Sir mentioned the mission of the management to empower women through education, leadership, and opportunity. He emphasized the role of institutions in fostering inclusive growth and nurturing women to become future leaders and change-makers.

The inaugural ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks, and the inaugural session was followed by lunch.

Scholars Arena: Research Paper Presentations

After lunch, the conference continued with multidisciplinary research paper presentations conducted across four tracks with one onsite track and 3 online tracks providing a platform for scholars to present their ideas and findings. Each presentation was structured with 8 minutes for presentation followed by 2 minutes for questions and discussion. The session showcased multidisciplinary perspectives on innovation and sustainable development, fostering academic exchange and insightful dialogue among participants. A total of about 160 registrations were received with 43 participants presenting offline and 31 presentations online. The presentations

were examined under the guidance of Dr. Komal Singh, Dr. Sonali Parchure, Dr. Aparna Saraf, Dr. Suvarna Dhamdhere, Dr. Ashok Pawar, Dr. Archana Pradhan, Dr. Kamlakar Munde, Mrs. Ranjana Gogate. The Best Paper Award was presented to Vinod Gaikwad -Neivelle Wadia Institute of Management Studies and Research Pune. The title of his paper was “Strategic Pricing and Promotional Practices as Determinants of Economic Sustainability in Urban Cloud Kitchen Models- Evidence from Pune and Mumbai” and Best Paper Runner-Up award was presented to Anup Hiwarkar-Dept of Management Sciences SPPU. Title of his paper “Demographic Influences on Sensory Branding in Passenger Cars” for their outstanding research presentations. All participants were also awarded certificates of participation.

The Thought Leader’s Forum (Panel Discussion)



Time: 3:00 PM onwards

Moderator

Mr. Milind Mutalik -
Manufacturing, ITES & IT Services

Panellists

- Mr. Hrishikesh Dhande -
Dy. Director, PIC
- Ms. Pritam Deshmukh -
Head of HR, Kimberly Clark India GCC
- Ms. Pooja Kulkarni -
Persistent Foundations

Dialogues of Tomorrow: Innovation and Sustainability

The panel discussion, *Dialogues of Tomorrow: Innovation and Sustainability*, brought together diverse perspectives on sustainability as a strategic driver across functions, emphasizing the need to move beyond compliance toward conscious and long-term action. Discussions highlighted the importance of aligning all organizational functions through shared sustainability goals, fostering continuous learning, and building resilient cultures where innovation thrives through experimentation and collaboration. Panellists also explored how the synergy between technology and human values will be essential in shaping sustainable futures, stressing responsible innovation and the role of people in guiding technological progress.

Another major focus was the integration of indigenous knowledge systems, green competencies, and community impact into modern management practices. The discussion emphasized ethical leadership, future-ready talent, and sustainability as a collective journey involving education, empowerment, and social responsibility. A powerful concluding insight emerged from the session that beyond intention, what is needed is an architecture for transition capturing the spirit of innovation and sustainability as central to building the future.

Conclusion

The conference ended with the valedictory ceremony, featuring a presentation of conference highlights, followed by the closing vote of thanks and Vande Mataram. The conference successfully created a platform for meaningful dialogue between academia, industry, and policymakers on innovation and sustainability. Through keynote addresses, research presentations, and thought-provoking panel discussions, the event reinforced that sustainable progress requires ethical leadership, collaborative action, and long-term systems thinking. The conference was coordinated by Dr. Mihika Kulkarni and Dr. Mansi Javadekar and Team of Faculty and staff members under the guidance of Dr. Priyanka Singh. The Student Volunteers managed the event through various committees; Ms. Pranjal Bhalekar, Ms. Sayali Sawant, Ms. Siddhi Dhumal, Ms. Sayali Bhoyar were Student Coordinators.