# SAPIENCE

IMNU'S ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

# CHANGING TIMES A Special Edition





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#### Navigating through the lockdown (and the virus)

Alumni Article

Author: Mr. Sapan Oza

Batch: 1999-01



Dumbledore in his soothing tone tells Harry, "Dark and difficult times lie ahead, Harry. Soon we must all make the choice between what is right, and what is easy." These are dark and tricky times that we are navigating right now. Probably, this is the first time in recorded history that the entire world has shut down for a common cause, a common enemy, a slimy enemy (not Voldemort but equally diabolical) about whom we don't know much in terms of a line of defence except "social distancing" and "personal hygiene".

The "lockdown" announced as an attempt to "flatten the curve" and "break the chain" challenged a lot of organizations, institutions and individuals to change the way they operate and adopt to the "new normal" (more on this later). It also provided an opportunity to debunk a lot of set beliefs, self-imposed theories and some extremely ridiculous myths about us and the world around us. And it is a common knowledge that an externality, uncertainty brings out the best and worst of human behaviour. I am sharing some of the behavioural aspects which I have observed through first level contacts, contacts of contacts and social media exposure.

#### All are "pandemic" experts

Just like demonetization made everybody an economist, this pandemic has made everyone a medical, scientific and disaster management expert with suggestions ranging from the virus doesn't survive high temperature, it doesn't survive on such and such surface, X medicines kill it, and the planetary positions after a particular day will make the virus go away. Ask any of these "so called" experts to define what a pandemic is and what exactly is a virus and how does it spread. The answers, if at all provided, would be fascinating. And add to that the WhatsApp University executive education certification; you have a deadly carrier of the virus of Infodemic. Also the millennials and the digital natives now really know, what going viral means in the physical world.

#### On being Oracles

"This is the new normal" - this phrase has been so abused over the last 3-4 weeks that I have made it a habit to speak this 25 times a day as a mark of reverence to the so called Oracles / pundits.

The issue is, we seem to over-react or under-react to situations. But we never seem to respond to the situations the way it should be. If pundits of any shape, size or variety, can predict that this is the new normal, then where were they in December 2019 that they could not predict that the normal would not be normal in March 2020? I don't even have an idea of what the new normal would be, if at all it would be a new normal. All I know is that this externality has taught us the importance of agility and adaptability. So, my take, rather than being oracles predicting doomsday prophecies, let's keep it simple and say, I don't know what's in store but I am sure that I am agile and adaptable to embrace whatever situation comes my way.



#### The Time kaha hai time nahi milta...Myth

Somewhere we all have been a part of making a bigger myth out of this by hiding behind the convenient veil of *time nahi milta*. As Sachin Tendulkar proved in the IPL that even 120 balls (20 overs) is a lot of time to build an innings, we need to understand that 24 hours is a lot of time. The issue is not paucity of time; but that of discipline, priorities and planning. The lockdown flipped these excuses on their head and now we have all the time at our disposal along with the family. So did the bucket lists, 10 things to do before I die, 10 things to do post retirement – come out? All you had was time. So, what happened?

So next time someone says time nahi hai, you know what to do...!!!

#### Relationships in a new light

Zindagi tere gham ne hume rishtey naye samjaye... wrote Gulzaar in the iconic song 'Tujhse Naraaz Nahi' from Masoom. All relationships have emerged in a different context because the time variable assigned to each of them changed. Some new bonds were formed albeit through different modes. Some old bonds which we thought important turned out to be otherwise. Some totally unexpected bonds took prominence. And last but not the least, the family...!! I rest my case and yes, Gulzaar was right.

#### **Change Management and Coping Mechanisms**

It's extremely easy sermonizing change management in classes/trainings but when it comes to implementing, all these fundamentals go out of the window and we behave exactly contradictory to the way we should. The adjustment to the "new normal" was quite a challenge and I am sure a lot of the readers would have felt it. Just a word of advice, it's perfectly fine to accept that everything is not fine and it is ok to seek help. The best help, at the cost of sounding clichéd, is picking up the phone and talking to someone whom you can trust. Believe me it helps.

#### Science makes a comeback

This is more of a macro change that we have been observing. The good old science is making a comeback and the population across the globe is pinning their hopes on science – research and medicine to cure people and make a vaccine / drug to prevent the spread of this. This is heartening that rationality comes back into popular culture (how long, is a question) and the much-abused science (the accusation often is science heals in retail but kills in wholesale) is coming back as a saviour.

To end on a positive note, yes, we are in the midst of a crisis. Yes, we are not sure when this will end. Yes, this will leave a scar on our minds which will at least take some time to heal. But, I am sure that our resilience will pull us out and put us back on track. When, I have no idea and I don't want to hazard a guess. But we humans have lived on through the Black Death, the Spanish flu, the world wars, the AIDS, SARS, MERS, Ebola, earthquakes, famines & many such disasters. And with our resilience, science and God's grace, we shall live on...!!!



# Covid-19 brings an inevitable change in ways of working

Alumni Article

Author: Mr. Manu Pratap Singh Solanki

Batch: 2006-08



At Unilever, we believe that Brands with Purpose Grow, People with Purpose Thrive and Companies with Purpose Last.

One of the key goals of Unilever is sustainable growth. With the current situation of COVID-19, every day is a challenging time for every salesman to sell and every employee to enable the selling in every possible way. With just in time innovation, Unilever is changing this as an opportunity to serve more.

At the Bangalore centre, all the employees and partners are working from home with business continuity plan (BCP) activation. With a vision "Happy, Healthy, Focused & Connected People" under the Well Being initiatives, we are engaging employees and partners through various means like Virtual Meditation Series and Virtual Dance series along with Virtual Chai sessions to reinstate the bond, boost the energy levels, increase their enthusiasm and rejuvenate them.

So, in a nut-shell, relevant innovation to create an opportunity and providing inner strength to each person is the key for a future fit organization.



## History in the making

Student Article

Author: Ms. Rashi Virmani

Batch: 2018-2020



On 14th April 2020, I sat on my windowsill and thought to myself, in an ideal scenario, today would be my graduation day. To my dismay, that didn't happen.

As teary-eyed that it left me, I knew it wouldn't have changed anything. This may sound overstated but truly, Covid-19 may have taken my graduation ceremony away from me, but it can't take those two beautiful years away. They compensate for this setback, and also, help me smile when uncertainty dawns on me late at night.

I realize when we think about our own personal fancies, the greater good for the world is lost. Here's a thought – can we take a step back and calm the unrest that dishevels our minds? Can we realize that we're fighting one of the most tragic and perilous wars in history? Can we recognize that our contribution lies not in picking up swords and armours, but in staying home? And lastly...can we take a moment to appreciate that we're safe and healthy?

In my perspective, it's tough staying put when I'm a young-blood, waiting to experience the first whiff of independence. Paranoia hits now and then. To top it all, I have questions imploding as to why am I being left hanging? Unarguably, I'll get it all, all that I've wanted and dreamt about, in good time. That's the belief that helps me sail through. That's also the thought that helps me channelize my excess energy. I'm fortunate to be with my family in these testing times, and thankfully, we have the resources we need to be comfortable. To my greatest surprise, I've been working on myself in this quarantine, trying out things I've always wanted to do, but never got the time for. It's amusing how much we can learn with a Coursera and HBR subscription. That's not all, I have also come to recognize that maintaining a good diet for those six pack-abs isn't easy. Pilates kills me every day, but seeing myself in shape gives me the greatest pleasure of all time. I have learnt to acknowledge and accolade art because while I'm alone in my room, I wonder what people back in the day did without music, books and films. To wrap it up, I'd want to take a moment to appreciate those fine artists, entertainers and bakers in the house, my birthday will definitely be incomplete without the cream and icing on the cake.

We'll see better times. Hopefully when we look back, we will be able to proudly say, we were part of history in the making.

Stay home, stay sane and stay healthy!



### Accepting the Unexpected

Student Article

Author: Ms. Priya Kunhivalappil

Batch: 2018-2020



A population of 1.3 billion under lockdown, over 136 million jobs involving non-contractual workers at risk, a projected GDP growth rate of 1.9% for FY21, with pollution levels below 100 AQI level across India and a million other impacts follow; all due to a 0.125-micron virus! Who knew that once a pint of celebration on late Friday nights, Corona (virus) could also be declared a worldwide pandemic? Indians and people worldwide are resorting to a virtual escape through zoom meetings, following social media trends turning social distancing into social media proximities. There is an increase of 87% in social media usage with Indians spending an average of 4 hours daily on Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc.

These are desperate times and industries are struggling to keep up. Our jobs might be at risk. The junior batch might just continue with virtual internships by their employers. This is a time to bring out the best in us and help companies cope up with the steep losses. There is still dynamism within industries, companies, staff and jobs. The quest is to be different and capable to help revive the productivity from jobs. Plethora of free online courses by Harvard University and on Udemy are helping people to stray away from monotony and be productive. A lot of my peers are pursuing certifications from Google, BCG, Forevision, Udemy, etc. and honing their skills during lockdown. LinkedIn is being used extensively to propose job offers and highlight industry trends. Companies too are posting their decisions regarding pay cuts for better awareness of the industrial happenings.

As a final year student of MBA in IMNU, I'd like to account the topsy-turvy caused when suddenly we received an email that ordered termination of all physical classes and postponement of exams. Sitting in our classrooms, we didn't even realize that that lecture was our last one of MBA. Clueless of how our hostel life and probably student life was ending we started packing up and sending it off back to our homes. Goodbyes and promises to "stay in touch" floated through the campus like hopeful lanterns. Friends asking one another "Kab nikal raha hai?" was the most painful to hear and was even more hurting to listen to the answers. Back home now, we connect with our friends through video calls, 'Houseparty' games and social media. With our end term exams due this week, I feel overwhelmed looking back at how things went so out of course but that is how life is.

It is important to stay updated in times of this pandemic and even more important to choose our sources of information. Media reports and WhatsApp messages are vulnerable to spreading misinformation at the cost of people's lives. Awareness regarding prevention of coronavirus spread trends on all social media platforms. It is wise to adopt social distancing and a choice to embrace the virtual world.

While it is tempting to gobble our favourite food and relax but this is also a time to introspect our wants and needs directing us towards the purpose of our careers. They say our only limit is the mind and I have started to believe that it is true. This lockdown is an opportunity to explore ourselves, evolve us as beings and stay positive. It is a tough period in terms of mental health, jobs, social interaction and physical health but has alleviated the stress on our natural resources, reduced pollution and improved air quality. These tough times too shall pass and our students will be out there soon assisting companies through the revival, eventually contributing to pumping up the nation's economy.

Every cloud has a silver lining and every line is made of infinite dots. We are definitely those dots, bringing out the beauty in every cloud.

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### Let's see how it Ads up

Student Article

Author: Arnab Ghosh

Batch: 2019-2021



At the time of writing this article, the total number of coronavirus cases stood at 23.5 lakhs worldwide and the death toll crossed over 1.6 lakhs. Two days back IMF chief said that the 'Great Lockdown' recession will drag global GDP lower by 3% in 2020. In this article I'm going to talk how the advertising industry is coping up with the pandemic. No, this is not a post-apocalyptic fiction. Now, first things first. The rudimentary of marketing requires us to know the difference between wants and needs. You must be wondering what they are. Look around yourself, the shops that are open are those who deal in your needs and the shops that sell wants are closed. And however improbable it may sound the economy which is staring at an impending recession functions on your wants. This is because, we, the consumers, spend the major chunk of our incomes on things that we could do without. But the industries can't. They want us to buy their products. With the outbreak the situation has changed, the car that your parents were thinking to buy could wait. With uncertainties around businesses looming large, no one would like to indulge in impulse buying. If people don't come out of their home and buy then why would companies bother marketing it? There's a crunch in demand worldwide. Industries can't operate in the usual way and many of them are managing with half the workforce. And with the travel restrictions in place across the globe the supply chain is facing massive disruption. People are saving up money, preparing themselves for the uncertain times lying ahead. You may think it's the wisest thing to do. Now let me explain it with an example how closely things are intertwined with each other, if you stop buying a product 'A' then there will be little or no sale of product A (as you're not the only one coming up with that idea). If the product is not selling well, then the factory will be running under a loss and will eventually decide to stop making it. If they stop making the product, they don't need the raw materials used in it anymore. The supplier of raw materials has to shut shop next and it continues. It is the domino effect in motion. In these tough times, as products are not selling much, the industries need to cut down costs to survive. And companies start it by cutting on marketing and advertising spends. What use in advertising a product when people won't buy it anyway? This is the reason why the advertisement industry is under fire. And the industry that lives on ads is also deeply impacted like news and media industries.

Several news agencies have already started to lay off their employees. It should be mentioned here that a generous amount from the government treasury goes to newspaper and television ads, but now with the outbreak governments around the world is directing all their resources to fight the pandemic. So, what should brands do? Have they stopped making ads altogether? No, they haven't and you could vouch for it. While scrolling your social media feed you've noticed more than once that brands starting from your finger lickin'

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(now they don't, you must wash your hands) KFC to BMW have come up with creative to make the people aware of social distancing. Dettol has even gone so far as to start a hand washing TikTok challenge. It saw a lot of Bollywood stars endorsing it. This is the wisest thing to do. If you don't find it worthwhile to advertise products then invest on building the brand. People are going to remember only those who have empathized with them during this tough time. It is worth mentioning that the heart and mind share after all gets converted to market share. This pandemic saw a lot of companies going online with their ads. But many companies would still prefer to lie low during this time. Before concluding, I'd say that a consumer sees around 4000 ads daily on an average. But he could recall only a handful. The clutter is less now, there couldn't exist a better time to advertise your brand. I must admit more than one thing is going viral right now – the first one wiped out 17 lakh crores from the Indian economy and the other being Amul's causevertising!





### Unlock the "Distance"

Student Article

Author: Arya Dhamorikar

Batch: 2019-2021



It is the unexpected that changes our lives. Meera would have never thought that the "social butterfly" would be locked on account of "social distancing".

Every morning, after making the cup of tea, Meera Tyagi switches on the news anticipating a ray of hope. The 24-year-old has been working in Mumbai and is unable to go back to her hometown due to the lockdown. Sitting idle, she awaits the doorbell to ring but fear has a stronger hold on the neighbours to come out and exchange pleasantries. If she ever hears a noise, she peeks through her safety door to find someone, exchanges greetings, asks about the condition outside and asks them to stay safe. The one-minute talk is the only human interaction Meera has had for over a month now.

Being inside the home is the only thing safe right now, but how does one ignore the fact that one doesn't have anyone to interact with, face to face. Phone and Video calls can't always be the best substitutes.

The enclosed walls and the inability to be outside and the uncertainty, are all making it difficult for us to sustain sanity. However, we have the luxury to get into the comfort of our loved ones and share our feelings, apprehensions and anxieties. But, think of people like Meera, where do they go for finding some solace amidst the testing times? There is no denial to the fact that COVID19 has significantly affected us in all spheres but the lockdown undertaken to curb the further spread of the pandemic is taking a psychological toll on several people. For the first time in decades, millions of us are facing exactly the same health worries.

For many young adults (especially those living alone), teenagers and children this is one of the most difficult situations to deal with, as they have never experienced something of this scale before. Wars, disease outbreaks and its implications were only known as stories but now they are living a part of what will become history. And this uncertainty is leading to anxiety. Anxiety about losing jobs, cascading effects in their careers, paranoia for the loved ones' safety.

The lockdown has given rise to an era of isolation and fear among many which are resulting in escalating nervousness. It is not only having an effect on the pre-existing conditions like OCD and depression but also is impacting the cohorts who are struggling with greater levels of helplessness and loneliness.

While all this is true for most of the world, it is the basic psychological aspect and the survival instinct of the human race that has pushed many to not just search for but thrive in the positive aspects and the opportunities that the current scenario presents. While it is definitely time for social distancing, people have started to grow the long-lost emotional bonds with the most important yet neglected parts of their lives i.e.; family and their own inner selves.

As the saying goes "when the going gets tough, the tough get going", with history in the making we are all presented with a choice of either going down with the world or showing it how amazing human spirit can be.

It's time to stand together by maintaining distance- only physically. Distancing must not be interpreted as emotional disengagement rather in such times foster a sense of togetherness-through phone, acts of altruism by helping the community under given guidelines, facilitating online interaction, it is essential at this time.



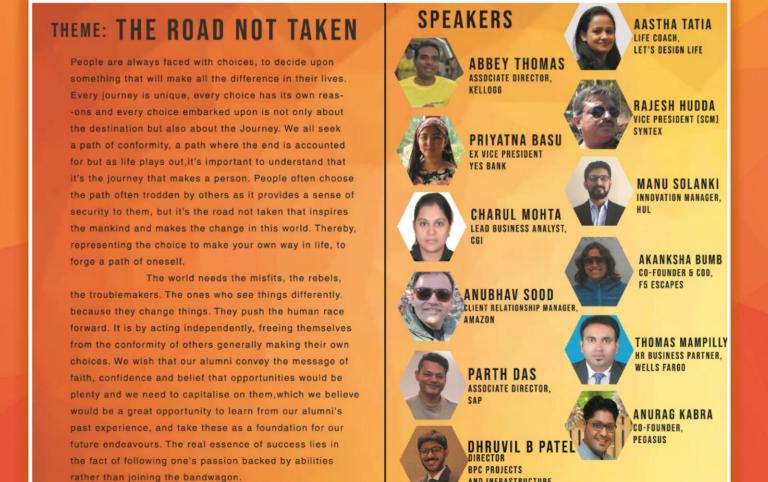
#### GLIMPSE OF THE EVENTS

#### **PRATIDHWANI**

Kaizen – The Alumni Relations Committee of the Institute of Management, Nirma University organized **Pratidhwani 2020** – The 7<sup>th</sup> Alumni Conclave celebrating the contributions of its alumni in various fields across industries. The theme for this year's conclave was The Road not Taken. The Alumni Conclave is an endeavour by IMNU to bring together its alumni on a common platform to share their experiences and industrial insights with the current students. The Institute hopes to encourage industry interaction and prepare its students for the gruelling corporate world. The conclave commenced at 10:00 am on the 1st of February 2020. The conclave was inaugurated by Dr. M. Mallikarjun (Director), Institute of Management, Nirma University.

The conclave is scheduled in the month of February as the esteemed alumni can guide the students in the first year, with respect to learnings they should imbibe during their summer internship and the second-year students, who are already placed by then and are in the process with areas they need to focus and work upon.

The Alumni Mentorship is an important aspect in any students' life as they can gain vicarious experience through their seniors.



AND INFRASTRUCTURE



#### Our Esteemed Panel - Pratidhwani 2020

We always try and make sure that we invite our beloved Alumni to their Alma Mater to address the current students who can learn immensely from the rich experience of our very own Alumni. We invite the Alumni from varied backgrounds like Finance, Marketing, HR, Operations, IT and those who run their own enterprise. Thanks to the Alumni, we get tremendous response to our requests of addressing the current batch and share their experiences. We are delighted to say that this was our 7<sup>th</sup> year of conducting Pratidhwani and getting an opportunity to interact with these stalwarts from the industry.

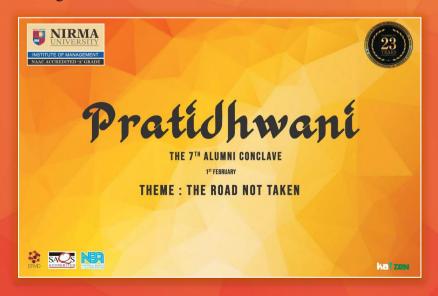
This year the **Entrepreneurship Panel** was graced by *Ms. Akanksha Bumb* from the class of 2009, *Mr. Anurag Kabra* from class of 2015 and *Mr. Dhruvil B. Patel* from class of 2008. Ms. Bumb is the co-founder and COO of F5 Escapes, Mr. Anurag is the co-founder of Pegasus and Mr. Dhruvil is the Director of BPC Projects and Infrastructure.

The **Operations and the IT Panel** consisted of *Ms. Charul Mohta* from the class of 2007 currently working as a Lead Business Analyst in CGI, *Mr. Manu Pratap Singh Solanki* of class 2008 currently working in HUL as an IT Innovation Manager, *Mr. Rajesh Hudda* from the class of 2006 working with Sintex Industries and *Mr. Parth Das* from the class of 2012 working as an Associate Director into Customer Management at SAP.

*Ms. Priyatna Basu* who is our Alumni from the class of 2007 shared valuable insights inn the **Finance domain.** She has served as a Vice President of Yes Bank for 4 years.

The **HR Panel** discussions were made very informative and interesting by *Ms. Astha Tatia* from the class of 2006 and *Mr. Thomas Mampilly* from the class of 2008. Ms. Tatia is a Wellness Coach at 'Let's design Life' while Mr. Mampilly is an HR Business Partner at Wells Fargo.

Another very enlightening discussion was delivered by our **Marketing Panel**. It consisted of *Mr. Anubhav Sood* from the batch of 2007-09 working at Amazon Internet Services Private Limited as a Client Relationship Manager and *Mr. Abbey Thomas* from the class of 2002 working at Kellog Company as an Associate Director in Integrated Business Planning.





#### **ADMISSIONS 2020**

We want to extend our gratitude to all our Alumni who have significantly contributed to the admission process in the month of February. We appreciate the time our beloved alumni could spare for the institute. Every year, admission interviews are conducted across the country to screen suitable applicants. As a practice, the institute has alumni members on the interview panels. Alumni member brings in the crucial assessment of 'employability' and 'aptitude' of a candidate and thus adds critical value to the selection process. This year we had a significant number of alumni who took part in the admissions process.

This year the admissions were conducted across 7 cities and 61 alumni came forward with their contribution in the TDPI process and joined us as the panellists. We hope that such enthusiasm and contribution continues from you. It's always a pleasure to have you with us.

Below is a list of Alumni who were a part of Admissions 2020:

Sr. No.	Name	Batch	Sr. No.	Name	Batch
1	Sunil Singh Rana	1996-98	32	Akshita Bhatnagar	2008-10
2	Keyur Jathal	1997-99	33	Kapil Jagdale	2008-10
3	Sameer Dwivedi	1997-99	34	Amlan Ray	2008-10
4	Anupam Aggrawal	1997-99	35	Simant Bhargava	2008-10
5	Sharad Kumar	1997-99	36	Pratish Nair	2008-10
6	Aashish Juneja	1997-99	37	Manojkumar Maheshwari	2009-11
7	Nishit Modi	1998-00	38	Ronak Shah	2009-11
8	Poussin Punnose	1998-00	39	Pradipta Saha	2009-11
9	Farookh Rusi Bharucha	1998-00	40	Saurabh Sharma	2009-11
10	Naveen Kejriwal	1998-00	41	Atul Goyal	2009-11
11	Meenu Bagla	1998-00	42	Siddharth Udani	2010-12
12	Sapan Oza	1999-01	43	Manali Burman	2010-12
13	Parthiv Jhaveri	1999-01	44	Aastha Dhingra	2010-12
14	Mukesh Goyal	2001-03	45	Padmavathi Srinivasan	2010-12
15	Divyanshu Shekhar	2001-03	46	Shivani Arora	2010-12
16	Gaurav Ahuja	2002-04	47	Ankit Mathur	2010-12
17	Anjan Shah	2002-04	48	Arjun Sharma	2010-12
18	Nidhi Jain	2002-04	49	Isha Shah	2011-13
19	Ashish Sethi	2002-04	50	Anuj Goenka	2011-13
20	Dharmendra Surana	2004-06	51	Arpit Jain	2012-14
21	Divyanka Verma	2004-06	52	Sujeet Sethi	2012-14
22	Arvind Jalan	2004-06	53	Smit Mehta	2012-14
23	Priyatna Basu	2005-07	54	Pankush Kapoor	2012-14
24	Joe Koshy	2006-08	55	Kashyap Rao	2012-14
25	Puneet Taneja	2007-09	56	Bipasha Sarkar	2012-14
26	Arnav Sharma	2007-09	57	Gunjan Jain	2012-14
27	Rohit Sahni	2007-09	58	Vinay Mantri	2013-15
28	Anupam Garg	2007-09	59	Soumitra Tiwari	2014-16
29	Ankur Goyal	2007-09	60	Vipul Agarwal	2016-18
30	Mayank Kaushik	2007-09	61	Preet Shah	2017-19
31	Nikhil Aggrawal	2007-09			

# Thank you

from
The Sapience Team

Arya Dhamorikar
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In case you wish to contribute to our next edition, Kindly get in touch with us at kaizen.im@nirmauni.ac.in

Hope you liked the changes we have made in the special edition of Sapience.

We would love to hear your feedback and suggestions on kaizen.im@nirmauni.ac.in

To be in touch with the current happenings at IMNU & stay connected with us, Kindly register yourself on Alma-Connect

https://imnu.almaconnect.com

