

# Academics stress on skills, education beyond theories at TOI conclave

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**Pune:** Indian education must grow beyond the theoretical approach, Symbiosis Society founder-president S B Mujumdar said while addressing the Times of India Vice-Chancellor's Conclave here on Thursday.

Eminent speakers from various universities spoke on the importance of skills and the local-to-global roles of the universities in India. Panel discussions with the university heads were also held at the conclave.

Mujumdar, who was the chief guest at the conclave, spoke about the trends in education abroad and how all that could be replicated in India. He said, "I have spent decades in education and realized that education is like oxygen for the development of a country."

Mujumdar said that considering India was at an advantage because of its total population of 1.34 crore, around 67 crore (50%) were between in the 17-24 the age group of 17 to 24.

He said, "We need to tap this population at the earliest. I feel we can achieve that only through education. India needs more col-



Left to right: Symbiosis Skills and Open University pro-chancellor Swati Mujumdar, Symbiosis Society founder-president S B Mujumdar, Vishwakarma University president Biret Agarwal and Ajeenkya D Y Patil University director Hemdaysh Deshpande at The Times Of India Vice Chancellor's Conclave on Thursday

to skills development as opposed to traditional education. That will transform our country."

Swati Mujumdar, pro-chancellor of the Symbiosis Skills & Open University (SSOUI) said "I

ver: Skills training should be taken up on the national platform. South Korea has 80% skilled work force. But India has a very low percentage of people in skilled jobs. One of the reasons for the

skill-based education. Society has not yet accepted it. Students still prefer to go to medical or engineering courses."

Ajeenkya D Y University director Hemdaysh Deshpande addressed the issue of globalization in education in his lecture. "Higher education is not an option but a must to land a respectable corporate job. But just a degree is not enough. We need to reform higher education with new regulations. In changing times, we need to be prepared for a transformation in higher education," he said.

Vishwakarma University president Bharat Agarwal said that, "The vice-chancellor is one of the most important leaders in the education systems. A vice-chancellor can change the course of education. The industry expectations are now getting more demanding. The education system must cater to these expectations. It is important to bridge the gap between the industry and the academia."

After the inaugural session, the conclave saw three panel discussions with participation from various eminent academicians from different universities in the