

THE NEWSLETTER

Vol. 10 No. 1 January 2023



CEMCA

COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia

From DIRECTOR'S DESK

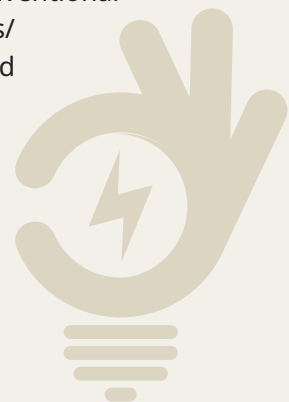
While reviewing the activities of CEMCA during the last year, it is indeed remarkable to note that despite the slowdown experienced all around due to the Pandemic, the organisation, in fact, engaged with a greater number of learners and partnered with many institutions in building capacity in Open, Distance and Technology-enabled practices. Workshops on blended learning were carried out in many universities across the region, and skill-related short courses and training programmes were offered to artisans, carpenters and entrepreneurs in Brunei, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka. Awareness programmes on Virtual Labs reached Africa through online and face-to-face workshops in Kenya for educators from Sub-Saharan Africa. 2022, indeed, was a very productive year for CEMCA!

Members of CEMCA's Advisory Council and officials from governments of Asian Commonwealth nations, who gathered in the last week of December in Delhi, while appreciating CEMCA's efforts in the

region, sought to invigorate the ongoing activities in the New Year as well. In addition, they recognised the need for faculty development programmes in the use of technology, open educational resources and blended learning to enhance learner-centred practices in education and skill development. The recognition for the use of latest technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality content and simulation techniques were also highlighted by our stakeholders. In addition, the need for climate literacy and the integration of STEM concepts at all levels of education were expressed by these esteemed members.

As we look forward to a brighter and fruitful 2023, CEMCA shall strive to work towards improving skills among teachers and trainers of vocational and trade sectors, especially in the use of technology and blended learning techniques in their day-to-day practice. CEMCA shall work towards enhancing teachers' skills, making open learning resources more accessible, promoting innovation in curriculum design and assessment techniques, and demonstrating models to help our institutions develop flexible pathways. Further, CEMCA will work towards highlighting the importance of technology integration in learning beyond our conventional classrooms and enable our teachers/trainers to use facilitation and engagement techniques to attract 21st century learners, who are equally comfortable with learning online.

Dr. B Shadrach



EDUCATION



Uttarakhand University Offered First Cycle of MOOC on 'Developing Online Courses for SWAYAM'

CEMCA has developed a two-week Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on 'Developing Online Courses for SWAYAM', India's national MOOC platform. The first cycle of this course was offered by Uttarakhand Open University from 01 September to 15 October 2022. In total, 877 learners (409 males and 468 females) enrolled in this MOOC. They found the course very informative, engaging, and productive for their professional development and competency enhancement.

CEMCA and AIU Sign MOU to Develop a National Policy on Blended Learning

CEMCA and Association of Indian Universities (AIU) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 11 November 2022 to develop a National Policy on Blended Learning in Higher Education with special reference to the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). Under this MOU, AIU would constitute a national level Expert Committee by identifying a group of twenty experts from various stakeholder groups in consultation with COL-CEMCA. AIU would also schedule lead sessions on Blended Learning in select Vice Chancellors'/Senior Leadership meetings.

CEMCA Supported Vidyasagar University in Creating OER and Drafting Institutional OER Policy

CEMCA supported Vidyasagar University, West Bengal, India, in adopting Open Educational Resources (OER) for better teaching and learning. In this regard, CEMCA conducted a workshop on OER for the university teachers, followed by the development of institutional OER policy from 09 to 12 November 2022 at Vidyasagar University campus, located in West Medinipur District of West Bengal.

The objective of the workshop was to support the teachers in achieving conceptual clarity on the intricacies of OER, searching for OER resources, creating OER content and attaching appropriate open licenses to them, and also drafting the institutional OER policy for the University. In total, 38 (20 Male and 18 Female) teachers participated in the workshop and 14 (10 Male and 3 Female) policy level staff (Registrar, Librarian, Deans, Heads of Departments, IT Professionals, Directors) engaged in drafting the OER policy for the University. Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi, Senior Programme Officer, CEMCA and Dr. Barnali Roy Chaudhury, Assistant Professor (Library & Information Science), Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata, facilitated the workshop.



OER Workshop in Progress at Vidyasagar University



BRAOU Faculty Members who Attended the Training

The draft institutional OER policy was reviewed by CEMCA and sent to the University authorities for formal approval after which it would be implemented by the University.

CEMCA and CRDP Collaborated to Develop Micro Course on Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Schools

The Centre for Research and Development Policy (CRDP), Jammu and Kashmir, India, in collaboration with CEMCA, conducted a course curriculum design workshop on 12-13 November 2022 to develop a micro course on Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Schools. A panel of experts from industry and academia participated in the workshop and discussed the curriculum and course framework. The course aims to teach school students the basics of innovation and entrepreneurship, and its types, forms and framework with examples and stories.

The workshop adopted short lectures, presentations and group discussions to develop the modules. The contents selected for the course were scrutinised across various aspects, such as age group and level of understanding of 9th to 12th standard students. The workshop resulted in the finalisation of the content, delivery mode, and scale-up and TOT strategies for nine modules.

Sri Lanka's Higher Education Teachers Trained in Using 'Virtual Labs' for Experimentations

Virtual Labs are an effective alternative in situations when science and engineering teachers and students cannot access physical labs due to resource and/or mobility constraints. To train Higher Education teachers from Sri Lanka in using these labs, CEMCA



Inaugural Session of Training on Virtual Labs in Sri Lanka

organised an online workshop on 22-23 November 2022 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka. It was facilitated by Dr. M C Rasmin from Centre for Media and Information Literacy (CMIL), Sri Lanka, and conducted by Mr. Saneesh P F, Project Manager, Virtual Labs, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kerala, India.

The training aimed to enhance the capacity of higher education teachers to effectively integrate Virtual Labs for practicals and experimentations in the teaching of science and engineering subjects. The virtual training was attended by more than 700 participants. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, CEMCA, stated, "CEMCA can provide support to Sri Lankan government to replicate Virtual Labs, perhaps in local languages such as Sinhala and Tamil. This is only a beginning, but we are looking forward to collaborate with Sri Lankan partners in bringing the benefit of Virtual Labs to teachers across the country."

CEMCA and IIT-BHU Organise Essential Life Skills MOOC Launch

CEMCA collaborated with the Indian Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU) to develop a six-week MOOC on Essential Life Skills. It included topics such as critical thinking, problem solving, informed decision making, and social and inter-personal skills. Dr. Ajit K Mishra, Associate Professor, Department of Humanistic Studies, IIT-BHU, led the project as the Lead Instructor. He and his team developed, designed and executed the MOOC.

The MOOC was launched virtually on 25 November 2022 by CEMCA and IIT-BHU, and the learners were formally inducted into the programme. The course attracted more than 1700 learners from 40 countries.

In his special remarks, Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, CEMCA, stated that the six-week MOOC, available free of cost, would impart critical life skills to students, graduates, and professionals. It would help them to succeed in their life and career; acquire skills beyond technical skills; and strengthen their relationships with colleagues and team members. It would enable them to become leaders in their own right.

BRAOU Faculty Members Trained in Integrating OER in ODL Courses

CEMCA and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU), Telangana, India, have collaborated for the 'Implementation of Open Educational Resources and Online Education'. Under this project, the first workshop on Integrating OER in Open and Distance Learning Courses (ODL) was organised from 24 to 26 November, 2022, by the Centre for Online Learning and Education (COEL), BRAOU. The workshop was attended by 51 participants (30 males and 21 females).

This capacity building workshop aimed at providing the needed training and support to BRAOU faculty members, course writers and other stakeholders in utilising OER for developing and revising ODL courses. The participants were trained in understanding OER and open licenses; search for quality OER in multiple media; explore CC license compatibility for remixing OER; build attribution in the Title, Author, Source, License (TASL) format; integrate OER with BRAOU Self Learning Material (SLM); and creating and publishing OER in text, video and HTML5 Package (H5P) interactive content. The technical sessions were conducted by Dr. Indira Koneru, CEMCA Consultant. She detailed the action plan for CEMCA-BRAOU collaborative workshop and the techno-pedagogical learning skills that the participants were expected to acquire with her support in the first workshop and the follow-up workshop scheduled in February 2023.

CEMCA Supported Blended Learning Session during East Zone Vice Chancellors' Meet

CEMCA supported Technical Session II on Blended Learning during the East Zone Vice Chancellors' Meet held on 13-14 December 2022 at Gangtok, Sikkim. The Meet was organised by the Association of Indian



Blended Learning Session during East Zone Vice Chancellors' Meet

Universities (AIU) and hosted by ICFAI University, Sikkim. The theme for this Meet was 'Pedagogies and Use of Technologies for Transformative Higher Education'.

The technical session on Blended Learning was chaired by Dr. P. Ajith Kumar, Vice Chancellor, Apex Professional University, Arunachal Pradesh and the speakers included Prof. Marmar Mukhopadhyay, Director, Educational Technology and Management Academy (ETMA), Prof. K Srinivas, Head - ICT and Project Management Unit, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) and Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, CEMCA. In his presentation, Dr. Shadrach provided an overview of COL and CEMCA's areas of work, with special focus on blended learning as the emerging approach to impart education. In addition to training Higher Education institutions in adopting blended learning, CEMCA also helps them prepare and implement institutional policies to support it. To streamline the process, CEMCA has created templates for formulating blended learning policies.

Faculty Members from Vidyasagar University Trained in Developing ODL Courses

CEMCA supported a project, 'Adoption of OER at Vidyasagar University, West Bengal'. As a part of this project, the University organised a workshop on 'Course Development for ODL' from 27 to 29 December, 2022. This workshop intended to build capacity among VU's faculty members to develop online and ODL courses. It was conducted by CEMCA's consultant, Dr. Niradhar Dey, Associate Professor, IGNOU. He helped the workshop participants to develop four different courses during the workshop, which was a great achievement.



SKILLS

CEMCA and Annamalai University Conduct 'Introduction to Block Chain' Course

CEMCA, in association with Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu, India, conducted a five-week course, 'Introduction to Blockchain,' from September to November, 2022. The course helped the learners gain an understanding of the concept, technologies, applications and impact of Blockchain at the industry as well as societal levels. This course was offered on the mooc4dev platform and attracted 2438 learners

In his opening remarks, Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, CEMCA, noted that the curriculum to enhance pedagogical capacity amongst vocational educators in Universities and Higher Education institutions would provide greater insights into instructional design and their application in classrooms as well as workplace-based learning and teaching contexts. He also highlighted that the course is aimed at enhancing competencies of vocational educators in facilitation skills and to reinforce learning in classroom settings.

Consultative Meeting on Validation of Skill Pedagogy Curriculum for Vocational Educators

CEMCA and Bhartiya Skill Development University (BSDU), Rajasthan, India, organised a Stakeholders' Consultative Meeting for Validation of Skill Pedagogy Curriculum for Vocational Educators of Indian Universities on 10-11 November, 2022. Thirty-three stakeholders (26 males, 7 females) from the vocational domain, such as subject matter experts, educationalists and eminent professors from various universities and industries attended the consultation.

During the workshop, the experts reviewed and validated the skill pedagogy curriculum designed by CEMCA and gave their input in redesigning the overall course structure. Based on the revised course outline, CEMCA will develop an online course for vocational educators to upskill their teaching and training methods.

Faculty Development Programme for Higher Education Teachers in Andhra Pradesh

CEMCA, in association with Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE),



Consultative Meeting on Validation of Skill Pedagogy Curriculum for Vocational Educators



Signing of MoU between CEMCA and APSCHE



Participants at Faculty Development Programme for Higher Education Teachers in Andhra Pradesh

Government of Andhra Pradesh, organised two Faculty Development Programmes (FDP) in Tirupati and Vijayawada districts of Andhra Pradesh in December 2022 on '21st Century Skills and Teaching Methodologies'. This workshop was attended by 102 faculty members (54 males, 48 females) from various engineering colleges of Andhra Pradesh. During the inauguration ceremony, Prof. K. Rama Mohana Rao, Vice Chairman, APSCHE, noted that the capacity-building programme for faculty members would help in sharpening their teaching techniques.

CEMCA is supporting APSCHE to upskill 200 higher education faculty members from Andhra Pradesh by organising a series of such FDP workshops across the state. In this regard, an MOU was signed between CEMCA and APSCHE in New Delhi.

Course Development for Improving Teaching Techniques of TVET School Teachers

CEMCA and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) organised a National Consultation on Course

Development for "Improving Teaching Techniques of TVET School Teachers" on 19-20 December 2022 in Delhi, India. The consultation aimed at understanding the key challenges and requirements in the delivery of vocational courses/programmes from the perspective of vocational school educators. It would help in creating an online self-learning programme to upskill them with relevant skills to improve their teaching techniques and pedagogy.

In his welcome address, Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, CEMCA, highlighted the transformation that vocational education would undergo with the implementation of NEP 2020. Dr. Biswajit Saha, Director, CBSE, also endorsed NEP 2020 in providing a platform to recognise vocational subjects and educators. The consultation was attended by 52 TVET teachers (34 males and 18 females) from various states across the country. It was highly participatory in nature using open house and group discussion formats. It provided opportunity to the participants to contribute to the development of course outline.



Participants Attending the National Consultation on Course Development for Improving Teaching Techniques of TVET Teachers

COMMUNITY MEDIA

Workshop on Proposal Development for Listeners-to-Learners Action Research Pilot

CEMCA organised a workshop on 'Proposal Development' for the Action Research Pilot Project on 'Listeners-to-Learners' (L2L) at CEMCA Office, New Delhi. It was attended by four representatives from S M Sehgal Foundation, Indian Society of Agribusiness Professionals (ISAP), and Search for Truth and Return To Science (START), who are the key project stakeholders.

The objective of the workshop was to understand how to establish a model to prove that knowledge, attitude and practice of learners can be enhanced through non-formal and informal learning. It focused on how audio based learning, when blended with social capital, need-based vertical learning, horizontal learning and interventions, improves their learnability, and paves the way for life-long learning.

22nd CEMCA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

CEMCA held 22nd meeting of its Advisory Council in New Delhi, India, on 26 December 2022 to review progress and generate new ideas in collaboration with the members.

COL President and CEO, Professor Asha Kanwar chaired the meeting. The participants included official representatives of the Education Ministries in Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Maldives, and Sri Lanka, as well as Vice Chancellors of Open Universities in India and Bangladesh.

For the benefit of new members, Prof. Kanwar shared a brief account of CEMCA and CEMCA Advisory Council (CAC). She informed that the CAC functions as an advisory body of COL on CEMCA affairs for broad policy formulation for its programmes and for monitoring and evaluating CEMCA's progress. Speaking on COVID-19 related learning loss, inequality, and climate change, she underscored the importance of Open and Distance Learning and Blended Learning in the present and future education system.

Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, CEMCA, presented the Actions Taken Report based on the Minutes of last CAC meeting held virtually on 09 December 2021 via the Zoom platform, Annual Report 2021-22 (Available online at: <https://www.cemca.org/annual-reports#.Y7VQBH1ByUI>) and Achievement Report (Available online at: <https://www.cemca.org/other-reports#.Y7VUKH1ByUn>). He outlined key programme activities in Education and Skills sectors and Community Media. He reported that despite the challenges confronted during the pandemic, CEMCA engaged with significantly more learners. Further, he underlined the increasing importance of Blended Learning, a strategy for enhancing the Gross Enrolment Ratio, as stressed in NEP 2020.

In the ensuing discussions, Council members noted CEMCA's contribution to ODL in the region and outlined the priorities for the future. Professor (Dr.) Syed Humayun Akhter, Vice Chancellor, Bangladesh Open University, spoke about the importance of Blended Learning, which would be the trend in future Distance Education. Mr Mrutyunjay



Behera, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Education, Government of India, encouraged CEMCA to develop awareness programmes to conserve the environment and to promote Climate Literacy in the Commonwealth countries.

Mst. Rokhsana Begum, Ministry of Education, Bangladesh; Ms. Noor Jismin, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia; Mr. Ahmed Mausoom, Ministry of Education, Maldives; and Mrs. Hasini Thalagala, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, applauded the contributions of CEMCA while highlighting their

country specific requirements at the meeting. Professor K Seetharama Rao, Vice Chancellor, Dr B R Ambedkar Open University, India, highlighted the need for a Consortium of Universities to build Virtual Labs in the country. He further suggested the integration of courses on Climate Change and Action in Biological Sciences.

The Meeting concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Mr. T K Kaul, Head – Administration and Finance, CEMCA.

REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS MEETING – ASIA

CEMCA organised the Regional Focal Points Meeting – Asia in New Delhi, India, on 27-28 December 2022. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Asha Kanwar, President and CEO, COL. Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director – Education, COL, and Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, CEMCA, facilitated the meeting that aimed to engage the Focal Points in identifying three key priorities of their respective countries in the Education and Skills sectors where COL and CEMCA would support them.

As it was the first face-to-face meeting post the COVID-19 pandemic, joined by some new Focal Points, the meeting also intended to get them acquainted with the role of Focal Points, COL Strategic Plan 2021-27, COL Monitoring and Evaluation system, Open Educational Resources and the Green Learning Agenda. It also provided them an opportunity to understand Education and Skills related activities in the region, and the digital transformation brought about in these sectors as a result of the pandemic.



The Focal Points present on the occasion included Mst. Rokhsana Begum, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Education, Govt. of People's Republic of Bangladesh; Ms. Rosimah Sumaimah binti Haji Matassim, Executive Secretary, Secretariat of Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council, Negara Brunei Darussalam; Mr. Mrutyunjay Behera, Economic Adviser, Ministry of Education, Government of India; Mr. Ahmed Mausoom, Education Development Professional, Ministry of Education, Government of Maldives; and Mrs. Hasini Thalagala, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka. Ms. Noor Jismin binti Mohd Yusoff, Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, represented the Malaysian Focal Point, YBhg Datin Noorazah binti Omar, Under-Secretary of International Relations Division, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

Ms Siti Nabilah binti Haji Abu Nipah, Special Duties Officer – Lifelong Learning, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam and Dr. Mohd Azmir Mohd Nizah, Associate Professor, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia also participated in the meeting as government representatives.

The meeting began with Prof. Asha Kanwar welcoming participants from six Asian Commonwealth countries. She provided an overview of Focal Points meeting and COL, focusing

on how technology related emerging trends and practices were shaping Education and Skills in the post-COVID world. According to her, the Blended Learning practice would be the norm in the coming years. The Commonwealth countries should integrate the Green Learning Agenda in their education system to tackle the crisis resulting from climate change. Prof. Kanwar summarised COL purpose and activities as: i. Promoting learning for sustainable development; ii. Supporting innovation for affordable and accessible technologies; and iii. Serving the last person at the last mile.

The meeting adopted an interactive and participatory approach to engage all the Focal Points in discussions around their countries' priorities. Dr. Sanjaya Mishra elucidated the Results-based Management (RBM) and the 'Theory of Change' approaches adopted by COL for implementing and monitoring its programmes. Dr. Shadrach provided an overview of CEMCA and its activities in the region, and presented the country reports shared by the Focal Points. The key national priority areas identified by the participants were: i. Teachers' capacity building; ii. Embedding Blended Learning in their respective education systems; and iii. Skills for livelihood, while a few countries also mentioned Life-long Learning for Farmers and skill building for Blue Economy as priorities. The participants

appreciated the support extended by COL and CEMCA to their respective countries.

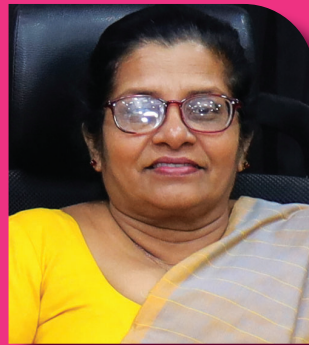
Prof. Kanwar concluded the Meeting by highlighting the role of Focal Points as COL's Ambassadors. They are responsible for informing their higher authorities about COL activities in the region and justifying their countries' contributions to COL. In addition, they have an important role to play in the Green Learning Agenda as Climate Change Champions.



CEMCA UPDATES



CEMCA would like to place on record its sincere appreciation of Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi for his valuable contributions during his long tenure as Senior Programme Officer – Education from May 2014 to December 2022. We convey our best wishes for his future endeavours.



CEMCA welcomes Mrs. Hasini Thalagala, Director of Education (Foreign Agencies & External Affairs), Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, as the new Regional Focal Point from Sri Lanka.



CEMCA would like to place on record its sincere appreciation of Dr. Madura M. Wehella, Additional Secretary, Planning & Performance Review, Ministry of Education (Higher Education), Sri Lanka, for her valuable contributions during her term as Regional Focal Point.

CEMCA PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL EVENTS

9th Convocation, Padampat Singhania University, 09 November 2022

Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, CEMCA, was conferred Honorary Professorship of Management for his three-decade long contribution in the field of development at the 9th Convocation of Sir Padampat Singhania University, Rajasthan, India, on 09 November 2022.

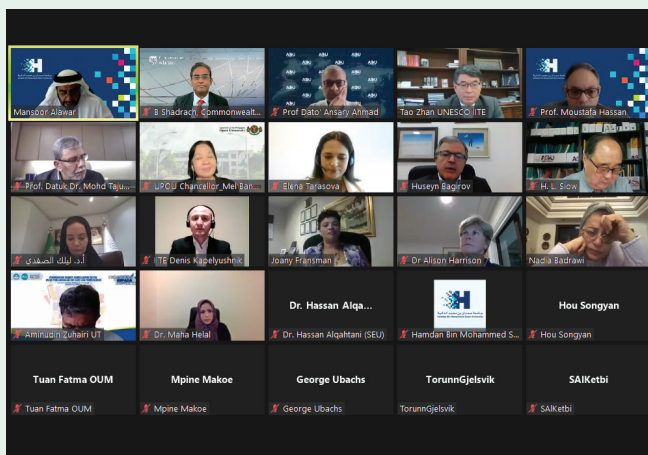


Integration of Digital Technology for Enhancing the Competencies of Educational Administrators and Teacher Educators, 01 December 2022

Dr. B. Shadrach delivered the inaugural address at NIEPA's national event on 'Integration of Digital Technology for Enhancing the Competencies of Educational Administrators and Teacher Educators' held on 1 December 2022. He provided an overview on how educators can effectively use digital technologies to stimulate active learning processes among students.

Presidents' Meeting of the Consortium for Benchmarking Framework for Online, Open and Smart Technology-enhanced Higher Education, 6 December 2022

CEMCA Director, Dr. B. Shadrach participated in the Presidents' Meeting of the Consortium for Benchmarking Framework for Online, Open and Smart Technology-enhanced Higher Education, organised by Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University, UAE, on 06 December 2022. The meeting helped to establish a common understanding and criteria for quality in online learning and the mechanism to benchmark excellence in higher education.



Meeting with Hon'ble Minister of State for Education, Smt. Annpurna Devi

On 07 December 2022, Dr. B. Shadrach called on Hon'ble Minister of State for Education, Smt. Annpurna Devi at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi, India.



Dr. B. Shadrach Greeting Honorable Minister of State

He took this opportunity to brief her on CEMCA's activities in the Asian region.

Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, 14 December 2022

Dr. B. Shadrach addressed the faculty members of Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology as the Guest of Honour on 14 December 2022. He spoke on the importance of blended learning in higher education and the provisions made in NEP 2020.

'We CARE' – 13th International Film Festival on Disability, 16 December 2022

CEMCA Director, Dr. B. Shadrach was invited as the Chief Guest at 'We CARE' – 13th International Film Festival on Disability, organised by Apeejay Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, India, on 16 December 2022.



UPCOMING EVENTS

1. **National Consultation for the Finalisation of Programme Curriculum on Building Excellence in Teaching for Diploma Faculty Members**

Date: 12-13 January 2023

Venue: DELNET, New Delhi, India

2. **Faculty Development Programme (FDP) for Engineering College Faculty Members of Andhra Pradesh on Teaching Methodologies and 21st-Century Skills**

Date: January 2023

Venue: To be decided

3. **National Consultation for the Finalisation of Programme Curriculum on Developing 21st Century Skills through Sports**

Date: March 2023

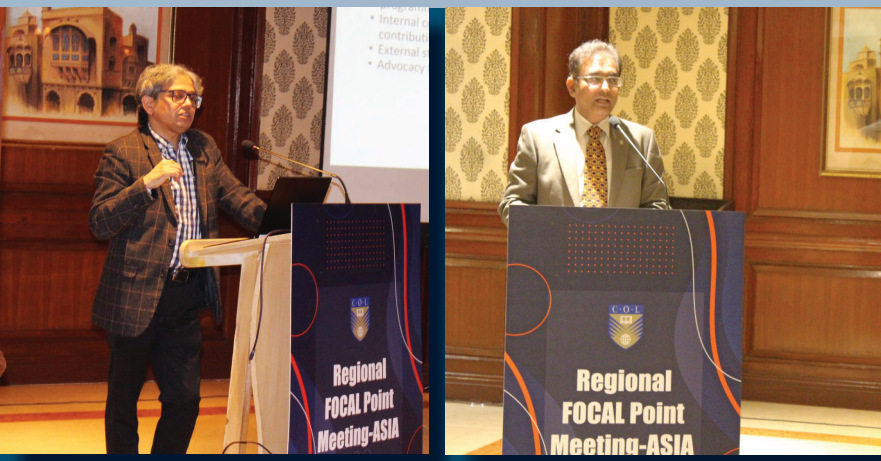
Venue: To be decided

4. **CEMCA Partners' Meeting**

Date: March 2023

Venue: To be decided

MOMENTS



ISSN No. 2582-1695
RNI No. DELENG/2018/77005

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is published quarterly by Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA).

CEMCA, a Regional Office of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Vancouver, Canada, is an international agency.

CEMCA's mission is to promote the meaningful, relevant and appropriate use of ICTs to serve the educational and training needs of Commonwealth Member States of Asia.

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Printed and Published by

Mr T K Kaul, Head, Admn. & Finance
7/8, Sarv Priya Vihar New Delhi - 110 016, India

For and on behalf of

Commonwealth Educational Media
Centre for Asia

Designed by:

Colorcom Advertising

Printed by:

Colorcom Advertising at Poonam Printers
C-145, Back Side, 1st Floor, Naraina Indl. Area,
Phase-I, New Delhi-110028

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