

COL-CEMCA UPDATES

December 2024



COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING
Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia

EDUCATION

Bridging Education and Employment: The Graduate Employability (GE) Project Launched in India

Focusing on strengthening graduate employability within higher education, the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)—a regional centre of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL)—recently partnered with Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University (MPBOU) to convene a pivotal workshop in Bhopal, India. By bringing together academic leaders and practitioners, this workshop aimed to ensure that future graduates acquire the necessary skills aligned with the demands of a rapidly evolving job market.

Guided by experts from COL and CEMCA, the workshop marked an advance in bridging the gap between academic learning and industry needs. This approach aligns closely with the employability priorities outlined in the Ahmedabad Declaration – adopted by all 16



open universities (OUs) in India – reaffirming a collective resolve to produce graduates who are more readily prepared for meaningful employment. Participants from these OUs were oriented on the integration and implementation process for higher education. Shri Inder Singh Parmar, Honourable Minister of Higher Education and Technical Education, State Government of Madhya Pradesh, in his remarks as the Chief Guest on the concluding day of the workshop, commended the project as the need of the hour.



Dignitaries and participants posing for a group picture with Shri Inder Singh Parmar, Honourable Minister of Higher Education and Technical Education, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

Dr B. Shadrach, Director, CEMCA, underscored the timeliness of the project and the need for capacity building and sensitisation among OU educators. He referred to the flexibility offered by India's National Education Policy 2020, which provides a unique opportunity to adopt and adapt the COL Employability Model to the Indian context. Dr Shadrach encouraged the participants to become GE champions in each of the four phases of the project, starting with assessment and sensitisation, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The GE project at the OUs aims to equip the faculty members to embed skills and competencies essential for employment into curricula, aligning higher education with the needs of the workforce.

COL-CEMCA was ably supported by Professor Sarojni Choy, Senior Fellow of Higher Education, Griffith University, Australia; Dr O.P. Goel, Former Advisor, NSDC, and Dr Ashish Awadhiya, Assistant Director, Training and Development, IGNOU, New Delhi, India, who led the discussions with the participants. The experts suggested adopting a holistic approach by embedding employability across existing courses rather than offering it as a standalone programme. The participants discussed the challenges of tailoring the GE model to India's diverse cultural and employment landscape. Strategies like localising solutions, fostering industry-university linkages, and creating "baskets of courses" for learners with varied profiles were proposed. The workshop acknowledged the transformative potential of NEP 2020 in widening employability horizons.

During the group discussions on GE project, the key recommendations included developing strong industry partnerships, promoting financial literacy, and entrepreneurship/business acumen, and introducing industry-

based internships and apprenticeships in final year of graduate programmes. The participants highlighted the need for comprehensive faculty training, modular and outcome-based course designing, and leveraging alumni networks for mentorship. The workshop advocated replicating successful vocational models, and aligning curricula with India's NEP 2020. Emphasis was placed on training students in accessing government schemes, and promoting indigenous industries. The workshop underscored collaborative, student-centred approaches to enhance employability across diverse learner profiles in open universities.



Participants presenting during a group work exercise at the workshop.



Dr Jane-Frances Agbu, Adviser-Higher Education, COL addressing the participants at the workshop.

COL-CEMCA Participation in Regional Events

AI in Agriculture Green Transition and Climate: Transforming Practices for the Future, GPAI Summit 2024, Belgrade, Serbia, 3-4 December 2024

Director, COL-CEMCA, participated in the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) Summit 2024 held in Belgrade, Serbia, on 3-4 December 2024. On 4 December, he delivered the keynote address and participated in a panel discussion on "AI in Agriculture Green Transition and Climate: Transforming Practices for the Future." [Read more.](#)

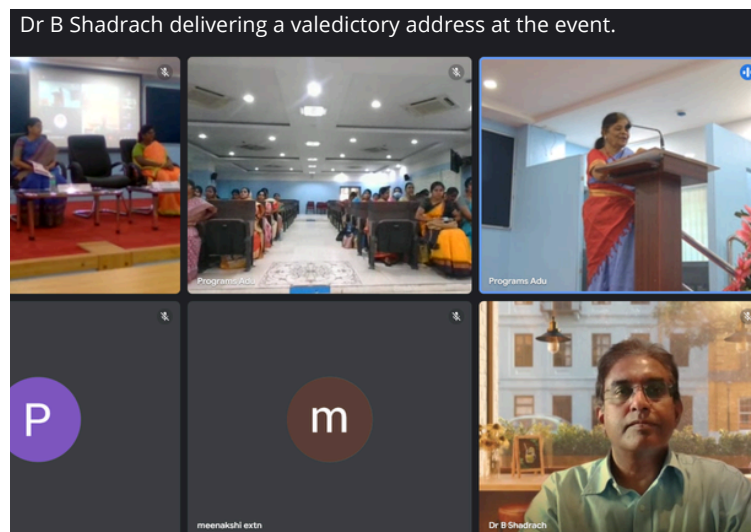


International Conclave on Generative AI and the Future of Education 2.0, Nishagandhi Auditorium: Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India, 8-10 December 2024

Director, COL-CEMCA, was invited to speak on Insights on AI in Education and Skill Development: Transforming Teaching, Learning, and Workforce Dynamics at the International Conclave on Generative AI and the Future of Education 2.0 organised by the Institute of Human Resources Development, Government of Kerala, on 9 December 2024.

Guru Dakshta 2024-25: Valediction of Seven-day Faculty Induction Programme for newly recruited teaching faculty, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Tamil Nadu, India, 2-9 December 2024

Director, COL-CEMCA, delivered the Valedictory Address on the occasion of Seven-day Faculty Induction Programme for newly recruited teaching faculty, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Tamil Nadu, India, on 9 December 2024. [Read more.](#)



COL-CEMCA Participation in Regional Events

Enabling AI for All, By All, India Internet Governance Forum (IIGF) 2024, New Delhi, India, 9 December 2024

Director, COL-CEMCA, participated as a panellist in the Session on "Enabling AI for All, by All, organised by the India Internet Governance Forum in New Delhi, India, on 9 December 2024. He advocated for the integration of open education systems and AI to empower marginalised communities. He highlighted how AI literacy driven initiatives could enable the excluded in using this technology for their benefit. [Read more.](#)



Dr B Shadrach panelling a session on 'Enabling AI for All, by All' at IIGF 2024.

STC on Development of Online Course/ Programme organised by MMTTC, Tezpur University, Assam, India, 16-20 December 2024

Director of COL-CEMCA addressed educators as the Special Guest at the inauguration of a Short-Term Course (STC) on Development of Online Course/Programme at Tezpur University in Assam, India. It was organised by the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centre (MMTTC) at the University from 16-20 December 2024. [Read more.](#)



Dr B Shadrach addressing the participants via Google Meet.

Resources

Course Launch: AI for Informal Sector Workers



This course is designed to familiarise farmers and informal sector workers with the game-changing possibilities of AI in agriculture and related fields. Spanning nine interactive modules, the programme covers the basics of AI, its practical applications in everyday activities, and the role of generative AI in farming. Participants will gain hands-on knowledge about using AI tools for tasks like data collection, market evaluation, and ethical decision-making. The course equips learners with strategies to incorporate AI into farming practices, enhancing efficiency, productivity, and sustainability. Additionally, it provides practical guidance on adopting AI solutions and links participants to essential resources and support networks. The course will be formally launched in the last week of January 2025.



HAPPY *New Year!*

As we step into another year filled with new opportunities and possibilities, the team at COL-CEMCA extends our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones.

The team at the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia extends our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones. May 2025 bring success, happiness, and innovation in all our endeavours. Together, let's continue to transform education and empower communities through collaborative efforts and impactful initiatives.

Thank you for your unwavering support and partnership. Let's make this year extraordinary!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Name: Webinar: Empowering Higher Education Institutions Through Technology Enabled and Blended Learning

Date: 6 to 10 January 2025

Venue: The NorthCap University,
Gurugram, Haryana, India (Hybrid)

Name: Webinar: Empowering Higher Education Institutions Through Technology Enabled and Blended Learning

Date: 13 to 17 January 2025

Venue: Somaiya Vidyavihar University,
Mumbai, India (Hybrid)

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

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

visit us at:
7/8, Sarv Priya Vihar
New Delhi - 110 016, India

please call us at:

Tel: +91-11-45871061/45771113

Visit our website:

<https://www.cemca.org>

e-mail: [admin\[at\]cemca\[dot\]org](mailto:admin[at]cemca[dot]org)

Editorial team:

Dr. B. Shadrach
Ms. Shipra Sharma
Mr. Aflaq Ahmad Shah

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