

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA, NEW DELHI

Minutes of the 18th Meeting of the CEMCA Advisory Council held on Wednesday 12, 2018 at New Delhi, India.

The following were present:

Prof. Asha Kanwar President and CEO, Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, Canada	Chairperson
Dr. K. Balasubramanian Vice President, Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, Canada	Member
Prof. Dr. M. A. Mannan Vice Chancellor, Bangladesh Open University, Bangladesh	Member
Dr. (Mrs.) Madura M Wehella Additional secretary, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka,	Member
Dr. Syed Ali Reja, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Bangladesh	Member
Ms. M. Nithiya Ruby Munusamy, Principal Assistant Director, Department of Higher Education, Malaysia. (Deputed by the Government of Malaysia to represent YBhg.Datin Paduka Ir. Dr.Siti Hamisah Binti Tapsir)	Representative
Prof. Nageshwar Rao Vice Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, India	Member
Prof. Ashok Ogra Adviser,	Member

APJ Group of Institutions,
New Delhi, India
Dr. Shahid Rasool
Director, CEMCA,
New Delhi, India

Member

Mr. Dalip Kumar Tetri
Adviser, Admin. & Finance,
CEMCA,
New Delhi. India

Secretary

Regrets:

Mr. Madhu Ranjan Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi and Prof. Shahid Siddiqui, former Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan could not attend the meeting.

Item No. 1: Chairperson's introductory remarks

The Chairperson welcomed the members to the meeting. She congratulated Prof. Nageshwar Rao, an existing member of the CEMCA Advisory Council, for taking over as the Vice-Chancellor of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi, the largest university in the Commonwealth. She also welcomed Prof. M. A. Mannan, Vice Chancellor, Bangladesh Open University (BOU), on the Advisory Council. She expressed her profound thanks to the Govt. of Sri Lanka and the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), for hosting the 17th meeting of Advisory Council in December 2017. She briefed the members about the meeting of Focal Points from Asia held in New Delhi on December 10-11, 2018, where some Focal Points from the African, Pacific and Caribbean countries, who could not attend the meetings held in their own regions, participated.

The Chairperson apprised the members of the two important meetings held in the recent past:

- i. The 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM), held in Fiji in February, 2018, flagged pivotal issues relating to education for sustainable development and building resilience through education to face problems arising out of climate change.
- ii. The 25th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in April, 2018 in London, in which the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh also participated, focused on the theme of 'Our Common Future' which included some of the pressing challenges such as: Cyber Security; Climate change; Sustainability and Issues concerning Refugees, Youth and Older People.

The Chairperson also briefed members about the COL's Board meeting held in June 2018, in which emphasis was laid on: (a) Innovation in Education and; (b) Education and Resilience to deal with natural disasters.

She exhorted CEMCA to explore the possibilities of working with the Governments of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India for disaster management in coastal areas.

The Chairperson extended a warm farewell to Dr. K. Balasubramanian, the outgoing Vice President, COL, for his extraordinary qualities, for being one of the finest Vice Presidents the COL had and the values he brought to his role. The members overwhelmingly endorsed the views and extended their best wishes to him. It was suggested that we find ways to use his immense expertise, guidance and support. The Chairperson also informed about the selection of the new Vice President, Dr V Balaji, scheduled to join on January 01, 2019.

After a brief introductory remarks, the agenda items, as detailed below, were taken up for consideration:

Item No. 2: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the Advisory Council held on December 17, 2017.

The Advisory Council was briefed that no comments were received on the minutes from any member. The minutes were confirmed by the Council.

Item No. 3: Action taken on the decisions in the 17th meeting.

The Action Taken on the decisions of the 17th CAC meeting was reported and resolved as under:

3.1 To replicate the existing projects in other institutions and countries to enlarge the base and to scale up the activities to achieve the targets.

The action taken in the matter was noted with satisfaction by the Advisory Council.

3.2 Consolidate information from member countries and explore the possibility of preparing draft guidelines for linking the skill programmes with Academic programmes.

The Advisory Council was briefed of the action taken in the matter. The members suggested that the recommendations of the expert committee be placed on the CEMCA website and a 2-3 page summary with actionable plan be prepared and circulated. CEMCA should seek information on skill programmes being offered by the Universities, ODL institutions, other stake holders and also take into account the experience of New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and COL's Tansnational Qualifications Framework (TQF). Dr. Bala termed it to be an interesting area and suggested to incorporate the experience of Sri Lanka and Malaysia, who are far ahead in the matter. He briefed that the OUSL is the only open university offering engineering programmes through ODL system. Prof. Nageshwar Rao informed that the Ministry of Health, Govt. of India has signed MOUs with the IGNOU extending financial support of Rs.2 million to train health workers through ODL mode, which reflects acceptance

of ODL mode for skill development. Ms. M. Nithiya Ruby Munusamy offered to use her good offices to provide information about the skill programmes being offered in Malaysia.

3.3 Support creation of Consortium of ODL institutions for resource sharing leading to Creation of Commonwealth Educational Media Repository for Asia.

The action taken was noted. The Advisory Council was apprised that the idea of Networking was proposed in the recent meeting of the Vice Chancellors held in Hyderabad, India. Prof Nageshwar Rao suggested COL/CEMCA to consider involving the Government as the Ministry's intervention could help in effective co-ordination with other institutions. He added that the idea of sharing resources should also be extended to the entire Commonwealth Asia. Dr. Bala informed that at the 20th CCEM, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India had agreed to share the content of SWAYAM platform with Commonwealth countries. The Director, CEMCA, informed about CEMCA's plan to go ahead with HEINSER and establish a platform for sharing of resources starting with India, which may be extended to other Commonwealth countries of Asia later. Prof. Nageshwar Rao informed that the existing OER policy of IGNOU is being revised. The Chairperson remarked that the COL could consider supporting such initiatives.

3.4 Replication of ORMAS type projects in other states of India and other countries.

The action taken in the matter was noted with satisfaction by the Advisory Council. Dr. Bala informed that ORMAS programme is also being replicated in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

3.5 To continue implementation of MUSFAE hypothesis in CR stations of North East India and 5 CR stations in Bangladesh. Also explore possibility of extending it to other stations/countries.

The action taken in the matter was reviewed. The Chairperson desired that the data of the people who learnt and benefitted from the program be listed and analysed under three categories viz. Awareness created, Youth Skilled and Youth Employed.

3.6 Explore the possibility of organising Educational Media Festival for Commonwealth Asia during 2018.

The action taken in the matter was noted. The Director, CEMCA, apprised that the idea behind the initiatives is to recognise the work in technology blended learning and create visibility of CEMCA and the COL. The Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) have offered collaboration while the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and UNESCO have been approached for collaboration. 52 entries have been received and the jury meeting is scheduled in the first week of January 2019.

3.7 Conduct evaluation/impact study of CEMCA initiatives.

The action taken in the matter was noted and appreciated. The Chairperson suggested to conduct more such evaluation studies for all the CEMCA initiatives.

3.8 Develop a proper Management Information System (MIS) for all the initiatives.

The action taken in the matter was noted. The members were informed of the MIS being in place, the data being uploaded and tested. The process will be completed in the next 2/3 months. The Chairperson desired the task to be speeded up and completed early.

3.9 Development of CEMCA APP for all CEMCA initiatives.

The CEMCA Mobile APP. available on google play store, was demonstrated by the Director. He informed that CEMCA is fine tuning the APP. and also considering the IOS version. He also demonstrated the mobile friendly CEMCA Website.

Item No.4 and 5: CEMCA Annual Report 2017-18 and CEMCA Activity plan 2018-19.

With the permission of the Advisory Council, item No. 4 and 5 were taken up together. The Director, CEMCA made a detailed presentation based on the Annual Report for the year 2017-18 and CEMCA's Plans for 2018-19. He explained the range of activities conducted by CEMCA during the past one year, the ongoing programmes and the fresh initiatives being considered for the future.

The salient features of his presentation were as under:

Activities conducted during 2017-18

- I. Implemented Higher Education Integrated Model in four higher education institutions viz. the University of Hyderabad (UoH), the Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU), Kolkata, the Uttarakhand Open University (UoU), in India and the University of Peradeniya (UoP), in Sri Lanka.
- II. Designed, developed and offered a mobile enabled MOOC, on Life Skill for Engineers (Level-I) to enhance employability of engineering students.
- III. Designed and developed a CPD-MOOC on OER and OEP for teachers, educational leaders and learners.
- IV. Created self-learning materials for courses in different formats i.e. text, Audio-Visual, etc.
- V. Supported Capacity building of educational leaders, technical staff, and academic staff through hands on training workshop on the areas such as online facilitation, eContent development, instructional design, MOOC development, etc.
- VI. Organised 4 outreach programmes at study centres of NSOU to enhance the enrolment of marginalised learners and provide access for learning opportunities.

- VII. Conducted Job-Melas for networking the institutions, industry, banking and learners.
- VIII. Commissioned the following studies to find out the impact of some of CEMCA's chosen interventions:
- OER Policy Implementation and Use in Open and Distance Learning System.
 - Comprehensive Study of OER in NSOU and OSOU.
 - Media Enabling Pedagogy and curriculum in Open Distance Learning System in Commonwealth Asia.
 - Media enabled learning for power sector.
 - Building the capacity of vocational trainers-ORMAS model.
 - Impact of ITAC Certificated Vocational Trainers on the employability of learners.
- IX. Developed a Flexible and Blended (FaB) model for "Counselling and Training" in three different realms namely, Counselling & Training for Pedagogy, Counselling & Training for Livelihoods and Counselling for Life Skills & Generic Employability Skills.
- X. Continued with the capacity building of vocational trainers in the state of Odisha through collaboration with Odisha Rural Development Marketing Society (ORMAS).
- XI. The CEMCA-ORMAS intervention was piloted in the State of Chhattisgarh with support from the State Planning Commission. 75 Vocational Trainers were trained and assessed for International Trainer's & Assessor's Certification (ITAC).
- XII. CEMCA in collaboration with UNDP created India's first Activity Based Career Guidance kit which helps increase awareness amongst young adults about career choices available through Vocational Training
- XIII. CEMCA started an innovative intervention, in collaboration with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), across 3 urban slums of Delhi for training of youth on life skills and specific trades.
- XIV. To promote "English for Employability" amongst youth of Bangladesh, CEMCA supported an NGO, iPrimed, to provide eLearning solution to marginalised students of RISDA, an NGO based in Bangladesh.
- XV. CEMCA engaged 5 CR Stations & facilitated establishment of 1 Web Radio station in Bangladesh for increasing awareness among youth about the avenues of developing skills for sustainable livelihoods.
- XVI. Raised Additional Funding to the tune of INR 32.86 million from DST, MIB, UNDP, EU and ORMAS.

XVII. Published four issues of CEMCA Newsletters, besides other reports. All CEMCA publications are accessible online through its website and social media channels.

XVIII. To encourage participation of women in Graduation/PG programmes in Media & ICT through ODL, CEMCA continued the initiative and awarded 18 students for the best performance in Media ICT related academic programmes.

XIX. Achieved the highest ever utilisation of 97% of budget allocation on programme activities.

Plan for 2018-19

- To continue COL/CEMCA Integrated Higher Education Model with UoH, NSOU, UOU (India) and University of Peradeniya (Sri Lanka) for the 2nd year.
- Started Integrated Higher Education Model in the OSOU, the KKHSOU & the Bilaspur University (India) and also initiated at the BOU (Bangladesh)
- Life Skills for Engineers, (Level II), started in collaboration with IIT Kanpur and the UoH.
- A Scenario based CPD-MOOC on OER & OEP for educators developed in association with the OUSL Sri Lanka and being offered by the University.
- To continue project with ORMAS and Chhattisgarh state in India
- Toolkit for Training Vocational Trainers (TTVT) created with text and videos for helping VTs
- Telangana State being approached for improving the capacity of Vocational Trainers.
- VTASL, Sri Lanka has been approached for replication of ORMAS.
- Skilling & Upskilling of Bamboo workers for using Bamboo in Construction, Lifestyle products & Handicrafts taken up with financing from European Union.
- Support for Recognition of Existing Skills for Traditional Artisans & Upskilling of Integrated Fisheries, Aquaculture & Food Processing continued.
- Converting the existing Career Guidance kit for Vocational Careers into an online Web Application and Mobile App.
- 10 CR Stations to be supported under MUSFAE model for Skills and made available on Web Platform.
- 5 CR Stations to be supported for Swachh Bharat Mission using the MUSFAE model.

Future Plans

- To identify the Dark Areas of Commonwealth Asia, understand their requirements and attempt customised solutions through online courses and multimedia.

The chairperson expressed her satisfaction and happiness over the Annual Report and Annual Plan. The remarks were endorsed unanimously by the members.

The chairperson, while appreciating the utilization of 97% of the budget allocation, exhorted CEMCA to speed up operations to achieve 100% budget utilization and to increase the outcomes during the current year.

Item No.6 Any Other Business (AOB). Trends and Priorities.

The members were request for their views and priorities.

The Director, CEMCA, apprised that access to quality higher education, improving skills of youth, employability of graduates and sustainable development are the common key issues concerning Commonwealth Asian countries. CEMCA is striving to make best educational resources available to all, make interventions to skill youth and create visibility of the COL/CEMCA in the Commonwealth Asia. He sought support of the members, especially from Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Bangladesh to identify partners for replication of CEMCA initiatives in their countries. Dr. Bala appreciated the move adding it to be for the first time that a block chain certificate, having a very good market value, was issued for the CEMCA course, “Life Skills for Engineers (level 1)”. There is a need to evaluate the impact of the course on the employability of students and how far it has improved their skills?

Prof. Mannan informed that many technical/soft skill courses are available online in BOU. There is a need to create awareness among students about the availability of OERs for various programmes and skills. A large number of teachers are still not involved and comfortable with the use of new technology for teaching and learning. This needs to be addressed. He also requested for replication of “Mobile Handset repairs programme” at BOU. Intervening in the discussion, Dr. Bala suggested to also link NSOU and BOU materials. Prof. Ashok Ogra and the Director, CEMCA, added that the course can be translated into local languages and contextualised wherever required.

Prof. Mannan also requested to organise CRVC/EMFCA festivals in Bangladesh for which he assured support from the BOU. The Director, CEMCA, endorsed the idea as it will also increase the visibility of COL/CEMCA in the country.

Dr. Madura. M. Wehella sought intervention for Professional Development of School Teachers and COL’s L3F programme. She apprised how Sri Lanka TVET programme helped in bridging the gap between Skills and Higher Education. She also sought help for the TVET programmes.

Dr. Bala highlighted the need to integrate Counselling with Higher Education which is a bigger challenge. Blending of Life Skills and Higher Education is missing. Many universities face challenges and COL/CEMCA are willing to share OER materials and help to translate/contextualise the materials as per their requirements.

Prof. Ashok Ogra mentioned that Uber and Ola are the biggest employers and Ola have an arrangement for skill development of drivers in local languages. Similarly, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, which employs a large number of staff throughout the country, could be the potential source for counselling to improve the staff skills for public interaction. The Chairperson also expressed the need for such initiatives. Prof. Ashok Ogra also suggested to develop courses for Genset Repair Technicians and Tractor Drivers in rural areas etc. He also suggested to take CEMCA festival out of Delhi to smaller cities and increase traffic to CEMCA website and Social Media site.

Prof. Nageshwar Rao informed that the accreditation mechanism exists for conventional universities only and the UGC, India has constituted a committee for Distance Education institutions, which is likely to recommend parameters for recognition and equivalence by March 2019. He termed the approach by the Govt. of India for online education and ODL as very proactive in which COL/CEMCA may have a role.

He added that the misconception that the Skill development programmes cannot be implemented successfully by the Open Universities seems to be fading away slowly as the MHRD, Govt. of India involved the IGNOU in skill development programmes. The MHRD and UGC, India are keen to involve ODL mode for integrating Skill and Online education. He appreciated the need for proper regulations for integrating skills with the Higher Education, and added that the regulations should not impede initiation of technical programmes. COL could help push the idea. He felt that the Govt. is willing to approve ODL courses through digital mode, to improve the scale and employability and CEMCA/COL could play an important role. CEMCA should send details of teaching/training resources available at CEMCA/COL to ODL institutions in other countries. The Chairperson added that COL had brought out two publications on research and professional degrees offered through ODL and these can be shared.

Prof. Mannan stressed the need for accreditation of the ODL mode institutions and involvement of policy makers in such initiatives. He informed of the recent law passed by the Bangladesh Parliament relating to the accreditation of the conventional system only with no mention of ODL system. The ODL system must have an accreditation policy and COL/CEMCA could play a role to convince Governments/bureaucrats of the immense potential of the ODL system for improving skills and employability. Skill development courses need practical short videos and such videos can be translated into local languages.

Prof. Mannan suggested that CEMCA could help the BOU in development of joint courses, for neglected disabled girls, mobile repairs, hacking, rural waste management, beautician course for rural women, dress making for girls, first aid in rural areas, health issues for Govt. workers, certification of farmers to become consultants, solar light and domestic violence etc., for which, there is a huge demand. He also suggested to include married women in "Girls Inspire" programmes of COL. Dr Bala added that CEMCA has already developed a course in cyber security which can be adopted/adapted by the BOU and the Girls Inspire project includes young married women in Bangladesh.

Ms. M. Nithiya Ruby Munusamy expressed her happiness to know about CEMCA and the recently launched initiatives. She stressed the need to humanise Higher Education and strengthen self-learning through MOOCs. There are lots of success stories in Malaysia with better visibility and expressed her willingness to use her good offices to serve as a bridge for extending the reach of CEMCA and to share the Malaysian experience.

Syed Ali Reja expressed concern over female drop-out of school in Bangladesh that happens mostly because of marriage as husbands and in-laws do not usually encourage continuation of their education. These school drop-out married women also need to be given special emphasis in COL and CEMCA initiatives.

Millions of youth are enrolled in religious institutions, which provide free education, accommodation and food. They remain unemployed or under employed for lacking the proper skills. Madrassa education, therefore, needs linkage with skills development programmes. He further informed that OER Policy has been cleared at the Ministerial level and is being sent to the Hon'ble Prime Minister for approval. The chairperson appreciated the move.

Dr. Madura. L. Wehella apprised that teacher development programmes, Life Long Learning for Farmers and providing food to the children in needy areas, are some of the priority areas for which the Sri Lankan Govt. has increased budget allocation from SLR 3 million to SLR 6 billion. She was interested to know how L3F programme could be integrated to organic farming reducing need for chemical fertilisers and how school programmes can be made need based to become model for replication. There is a need to link TVET programme with Higher Education and to upgrade the skills of women.

Concluding the discussion, the Chairperson advised CEMCA to continue with the existing initiatives in Higher Education and Skills and replicate them in other institutions. She advised CEMCA to take up the key priorities already identified for dark areas and start making attempts to bridge them with quality educational resources for early results. CEMCA needs to become the 'go to' organisation for the Ministry and other stakeholders in the region for matters related to educational technology and as such must demonstrate its expertise in this domain.

The Advisory Council also placed on record its appreciation for the immense contribution made by Mr. S. U. Wijerathne, Additional secretary, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, Mrs. Shahnaz Samad, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Education, Bangladesh and Prof. Madhu Parhar, IGNOU, India, the outgoing members.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair and the members.

Action Items:

Based on the discussion, the following action items emerged.

1. To continue and scale up current activities roping in new institutions for replication.
2. To develop a brief three-page note with action plan for linking skills with higher education and circulate among members of think tank and stake holders. Keep the revised draft on the website and seek comments. Consolidate the information and submit the final draft to the Governments and Institutions.

3. To seek opinion from all the ODL Universities and the Directorates of Distance Education for HEINSER and move forward in a systematic manner. Also try to seek help of the MHRD.
4. To identify 2/3 Dark Areas as a pilot, and try to make interventions for timely results.
5. To explore the possibility of holding CRVC festival outside Delhi and also in Bangladesh in collaboration with the BOU.
6. To speed up the utilization of grants to achieve maximum utilisation, targets and outcomes.
7. To explore the possibilities of working with the Governments of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India for disaster management in coastal areas, seeking support of the Focal Points.
8. To Compile and Analyse Data of the people, who learnt and benefitted from the MUSFAE program under three categories; Awareness created, Youth Skilled and Youth Employed.
9. To conduct more evaluation/impact studies for all the CEMCA initiatives.
10. To share information about COL/CEMCA courses with ODL Institutions in the Commonwealth Countries.