



# Newsletter

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## From The Director's Desk

### Envisioning a University

Vision, as they say, is for mystics; academics must have a plan. A plan that takes imagination, judgment, commitment, wisdom and understanding as elements. The idea of a university cannot be ideal; it has to be practical. Consequently, its demands are practical. It's not just about how we think, but how we apply that thinking and expect results on the ground. In G.K. Chesterton's words, 'There are no rules of architecture for a castle in the clouds.' This applies in any situation where the ideal clashes with the real. Here we are not fancying a heavenly seat of learning where knowledge is revealed and transmitted through some invisible medium. What we aim at is an establishment where besides disseminating knowledge, jobs too are generated. Though converting universities into a veritable employment exchange may not be a good idea, but we need to have plans to bridge the disconnect between knowledge as art and knowledge as applied art. In that sense, our vision of a university may look ordinary. Ordinary for being practical, workable and result-oriented. It's the idea of a university where ideal meets real, mind meets matter.

In a university diversity must flourish. Not just diversity of disciplines, but diversity of thoughts. The idea of a university, to me, is that of a school where minds are unchained to do the thinking. It's a lab where experiments are made and change is not feared, but invited. So with job-generation, idea generation makes university the real attraction for those who live in the world of ideas, for whom an idea has the power to change the world. With academic development, this will ensure intellectual growth of a human mind. That is what a university stands for.

In a world where education sells like any other commodity in the market, it is crucial to restore scholarship the dignity it has lost to degrees. Seeking a mere degree must not define the idea of a university. University shall not be confined to an academic research that fetches a mere certificate. It must focus on the level and the quality of research that takes industry as necessity but creativity as fuel.

University, I see, as a huge canvass where liberal arts enjoy the liberation they demand. In a university sciences and social sciences shall not be fixed in curricular compartments. Let subjects collide to create the warmth that knowledge means. Let streams leak into each other. That is what inter-disciplinary approach calls for.

In any academic institution, eligibility matters and it must matter. The scene of a university is an institution where excellence figures first, eligibility follows. The eligibility shall be confined to a requirement only; the rest must be performance. Imagine a place where a certificate will work only as a license that validates the candidature, not a document that reflects worth. That place only shall qualify as a university.

To conclude, as Stanford University in the 1940s believed, "To be the Harvard of the West Coast", I wish every University in Commonwealth Asia strives to become Harvard of the east sooner than later. That, I believe, must be a dream and vision for the university and it is possible with dedication and hard work.

*With best wishes*  
**Dr. Shahid Rasool**



## In Search of a New Normal for Higher Education

By Prof. A.K. Enamul Haque



If I remember well, it was 1994, the World Congress of Distance Education Institutions was being held in Hong Kong. Delegates from Open Universities across the world gathered to discuss the future of distance education. The challenges were many— how to reach the students with the right kind of tools? How to motivate them to study at home? How to mainstream distance education in higher studies?

### Distance Education Challenges were many:

- How to reach the students with the right kind of tools?
- How to motivate them to study at home?
- How to mainstream distance education in higher studies?

It was also my first introduction to distance education. At the time, I was in charge of developing study materials for the first Diploma in Management at the Bangladesh Open University – I was a new recruit in this arena – I was used to give lectures in classes – face to face. As such, it was a new domain for me. I was

keen to learn about this new mode of education. Princes Anne was speaking in her inaugural speech she said, “by the middle of the next century most of the universities will not find students in their campus”—it struck me by surprise! Is it going to be true? Then she explained—people will find it hard to stay on campus rather they will use distance mode of education to learn. Educators must prepare for this change.

As days gone by, innovations in technology starting from video to audio chatting, webinar facilities, MOOC and other technological advances have made it possible for people to consider a campus-less education more actively and probably it is not the end. Almost every mainstream universities have begun to deliver their education in dual mode— offline (face to face) and online. Virtual classroom, virtual whiteboard, virtual pen, are no longer something that we imagine but we also use them actively in our courses. Educational technology has made it possible to change our attitude towards education.

However, what kept me wondering is not the mode of delivery of education rather what we teach in our classes. Education and particularly higher education must change to fit to the new needs of the society. We must ask few fundamental questions to ensure that the education is valuable to human society.

What is the purpose of education? Is there a macro and a micro purpose of education? How the curriculum shall be designed? How shall we select our faculty members etc. etc.? I do not have answers to all these questions but I have my

thoughts on this and I will share them with you in this piece of writing.

**Firstly**, after the end of colonial era, the newly independent countries used education (primary and secondary) to integrate their nation. Many of these new countries were not created by their King and hence their boundaries were not based on any principle of culture, language, religion, race, tribe, etc. It was the theory of convenience of the colonial rulers who drew our boundaries based on how best to administer the colonies. As such, the biggest challenge for these new countries was to use education to create nationhood. In doing so the challenges were many. Choice of language for education was a big bottleneck. Countries ruled by colonial masters were not used to use their own language in offices. English became an effective alternative in many countries given their difficulties in communication with each other. History was a contentious matter. Hundreds of years of colonization destroyed our pride, our thought process and our politeness. Asia and Africa after the colonial era became synonymous for poverty, hunger, and illiteracy. We began think the West as the savior – a different kind of savior. During the colonial era they were the masters, now they are the source of our knowledge!, our dream and our aspirations. Let us accept that this is what a 'foreign' education system can provide. Mind you, I am not calling them 'western' education system. Have you ever wondered why Messi, Maradona, Kaka, Neymar, Suarez, and many others from Nigeria, Egypt, Senegal never planned to migrate to Europe leaving their country behind! This is also true for our cricketers, and many other players, musicians of the region but it is not true for most of our highly intellectual and meritorious students! They all seem to plan for an exit route to leave their respective countries as soon as an opportunity arises!

**Secondly**, education has both a purpose of self-fulfillment as well as a purpose of contribution towards nation building.

Clearly, when meritorious students leave en-masse the nation-building purpose has failed. The remaining question is – whether our education has contributed to the self-fulfillment prophecy? To answer this question, we need to ask few more questions? Did the education help me to achieve my goals of life? Can I take a detour in case I find that the current route is not what I want? Mind you, we have only one life – shall I die without fulfilling my aspiration?

An education system based on 'rules of prohibition' cannot serve our aspiration. Imagine that I want to be a doctor and an engineer at the same time. Can I do it? Answer is no. Imagine a situation when I became a doctor and then realized that I should have been a Professor of Philosophy. It is where I have my comparative advantage – where I can contribute. In our education system it is simply impossible. I believe the education system shall be free from such draconian rules. It shall be flexible and accommodative to help us become what we want to be and not to tell us what we should be.

**Thirdly**, what is education? Is it fulfillment of credit hour requirements? Is it completing a check-box of courses? It should not be and yet it is how we have developed our system. Education shall be based on outcomes – not based on a process like how many courses? How many credit hours? At the end when I obtain a degree shall I be half qualified? When we pass with 50% marks what does it mean? Shall we consider that we have learned 50% of the prescribed knowledge? Shall I call myself a half-economist because I got 50% marks in the exam? Or a three-quarter-economist when I get 75% marks? A process based education cannot be a complete education. It has to be outcome based. The best example of such outcome based education that exists today is in medical colleges. Have you ever seen a 'first class' doctor and a 'third class' doctor? The answer is no – because medical education is still an outcome based education. You will also see this outcome based education in religious

schools. You will never find a half-Moulvi or half-Hafeez-al-Quran in Islamic education system which is very old.

In absence of outcome based education the difficulty comes during the process of cross-recognition. National education schemes, which were developed to integrate nations failed to provide a pathway to develop cross-recognition of these degrees across the boundaries.

The twenty-first century is a globalized century. It is a century where people are no longer separated by language, culture, religion, or other technology barriers. It is a century where mobility across the globe will increase much more than any other centuries of the past. Therefore, our education system must create a new norm to fulfill the aspirations of today's generations.

**Fourthly**, the process based education system has also corrupted the complete system. Our teachers are no longer interested to solve a social problem for which they are historically respected in the society. Their primary goal is to 'publish' and publish topics which are in most cases useless in nature, repetitive, repackaged the existing knowledge and rarely creates any new knowledge.

Our primary method of quality assurance is to use 'impact factors' to 'judge' our research quality. We are now blind in terms of what the real problem of the society is or what the needs for research in the society are where we live. We are praised, raised and even rewarded for publishing in many useless 'journals'.

Let me list a few articles from some of the top journals in the region – “Philips curve in a small economy – a time series exploration”; “Factor substitution and Technical Change in Agriculture”; “An empirical analysis of Q-factor model–evidences from stock exchanges”.

There are many similar articles published and rewarded by the system but they fail to take account of the real problem of the society. As such many of our educated youths are now unfit for jobs. The real world (who are private employers) are looking for a person who is productive in terms of knowledge and skills which our education system has not fully addressed yet. We need students to develop ability to solve problems of the society, not to provide a memorized version of the problem and solutions!

**Finally**, we are still debating – is it an online degree or not? We are not asking whether he or she 'knows' his/her subject? We are saying xx credit hours are important – convert your education into credit hours. We do not want to see whether it was taught in the class or not. We are still working on an education system to exclude people and not to include them to become a good citizen, a thinker and a philosopher so that they help make our society a better one.

The twentieth century education must be based on a new paradigm. It is an education system to develop our human capital (not human graduates) who will help Asia and Africa to compete with the rest of the world. It has to be an education system which is flexible to help individuals fulfill their dreams. This is a new century where Asia is again going to be the center of the universe and so we need to create our ability to sustain it. The new education system shall be global in nature to create good global citizens so that we live a world where racial, cultural or religious hatred is part of past history, the new education system must be ready to ensure mobility of people across boundaries and to pursue innovation and creation of new knowledge. It is based on set of educational outcomes recognized by all, not a set of process where the graduates are half or quarter educated.

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## Banasthali Vidyapith: Redefining Indian Women through its unique 'Five-Fold Education'

By Dr. Ajay Surana



**“Banasthali is enshrined in my heart”**

- Mahatma Gandhi (1946)

**“If I had been a girl I would have come to Banasthali for my education”**

- Pandit Nehru (1945)

The progressive civilizations recognize the importance of the both genders in the development of humankind. Development of societies depends upon contribution of male as well as female race. Education plays a critical role in the development of a nation whether it is social or economic growth. A nation can be educated in the real sense of the term, when its entire population is educated.

Although in the Vedic period women had access to education in India, they had gradually lost this right. In the medieval period, the practices of purdha system, dowry and sati came into being. It was thought that the right place for woman in the home. The number of women who

could read and write in year 1921 formed only 1.9 percent of the female population in British India. Thus, women had been deprived of their rightful place in society. In the rural India, at that time hardly anyone can think about enrollment of girls in educational institutes. In these circumstances an institution for women education begins in remote rural area of Rajasthan.

### Unparalleled origin

Banasthali Vidyapith is the world's largest residential institute for women, located in the midst of rural surroundings in the desert state of Rajasthan. Establish way back in 1935 when the concept of education for the girl child virtually didn't exist in the area. To realize a dream which he had cherished since his boyhood, Pandit Hiralal Shastri, the founding father of Banasthali Vidyapith, resigned his prestigious post of Secretary in the Home and Foreign Department in the erstwhile

Jaipur State in 1927 and selected the remote village of 'Banthali' (as Banasthali was originally called) as the centre of his life's work. His plan was to organize a programme of rural reconstruction on the lines laid down by Gandhiji and also to train public workers through constructive service of the people. While so engaged in his work Shastriji also wanted to train his promising daughter Shantabai as a social worker dedicated to the cause of women's upliftment. But destiny ordained otherwise. All of a sudden, after a brief illness of a day, Shantabai bade farewell to Banasthali on 25th April, 1935 at the tender age of only 12 years. The loss seemed irreparable at the moment, but soon the mood of despondency gave way to a new hope. 'If one Shantabai had departed there were others who could be trained likewise'. This idea gave solace and opened the path of action. To complete the unfinished task of his daughter, the Shri Shantabai Shiksha Kutir was started in October 1935 in the mud huts, with about half-a-dozen girls.

The founders went door to door to recruit girls and to collect donations for the avowed cause of girl education, a completely neglected social issue. The name 'Banasthali Vidyapith' was adopted only in 1943. This also happened to be the year when undergraduate courses were first introduced. An ingenious mix of pioneering spirit, dedication to a cause, unmatched vision and unique educational ideology made Banasthali a distinct name in women's education, not only in India, but in the world. It is nothing less than a miracle that the Vidyapith survived the most difficult of the situations and by late 70's and early 80's emerged as a prominent institution for women's education. The Vidyapith was thus notified by the Government of India, on the advice of University Grants Commission, as an "Institution Deemed to be University" vide its Notification in 1983.



## Unique Ideology

Banasthali Vidyapith has been conceptualized to materialize the ethos of nation-building and Indian Culture. Banasthali's whole architecture stands upon the twin foundation pillars of Nationalism and Indian Culture. Since its inception, Banasthali Vidyapith has had a clear perspective about its educational efforts and has possessed a vivid picture of the form and pattern of educational programme to be adopted.

Synthesis of spiritual values of the East and scientific achievements of the West is a key feature of the Vidyapith's educational programme. Simple living, self-reliance and khadi wearing are hallmarks of life at Banasthali. The Banasthali Vidyapith believed that an educational programme should be able to promote the development of a balanced and harmonious personality of the students. Hence, the educational programme of the Vidyapith was distinct from the form of education prevalent at that time which emphasized book learning to utter neglect of all other aspects of education. The institution firmly believes that the personality consists of interdependent components, each being equally important requiring equal attention and can only be developed through a wholesome education. Banasthali Vidyapith's aim of a complete and balanced development of students' personality got concrete expression in the form of 'Five-Fold Education' (Panchmukhi Shiksha) which evolved out of initial experimentation.

## Five-Fold Education Policy

A pioneer in women's education, the Vidyapith is well-known for its comprehensive educational ideology; Panchmukhi Shiksha - The Five-fold Education Policy which has proved its relevance in the modern era as well. Five-Fold Education attempts a balance of the five aspects of education, namely Physical, Practical, Aesthetic, Moral and Intellectual and aims at all round harmonious development of personality.

**Physical:** This aspect of education includes physical education programme, various activities like parade, shooting, horse riding, flying, girl guiding, bulbul, swimming, yoga and various modern and traditional sports like kabaddi, kho-kho, hockey, basket ball, badminton, long jump, high jump etc are included. Students who have to be compulsorily opted for a physical activity under the Five-Fold Education programme.

**Aesthetic:** Students learn fine art (drawing, painting etc), performing art (music, dance etc) as a part of five-fold education. They can choose either music (vocal or instrumental) or painting. Dance education namely Kathak, Manipuri, Rajasthani are an integral part of art education. Vidyapith have a full-fledged orchestra of classical instrumental music.

**Practical:** Under practical education sanganary printing & dying, batique, bandhej, tailoring, embroidery, craft, papermache etc. are included. Under domestic education, students are supposed to perform cleaning and washing and collective Shramadan.

**Moral:** The aim of moral education is to develop the personality of the student. Respect for all the religions by means of collective prayers, all the religious and national festival celebration and talk by guest speakers based on moral stories are regular features. The unique feature of imparting moral education is through morning and evening prayers held by relay system, which includes Ramayan path, recitation of mantras from Vedas, slokas from Gita, preaching from Quran and Guru Grantha saheb along with Bhajans.

**Intellectual:** Other than languages and mathematics, natural and social sciences are taught right from the beginning. Knowledge of world history also occupies a key position in the teaching of history. Educational tour, festivals and fairs, one act plays related to different subjects use of charts models, multimedia presentation and educational games are some of the ways of imparting knowledge to students. The system of imparting knowledge is not exam oriented but focused on the development of overall personality of a child.

Where value based education is a passé, Banasthali has created a niche for itself by never deviating from value inculcation in women. Women's education should be looked at from women's perspective only. Banasthali Vidyapith has evolved a gender sensitive education ideology keeping in mind the inherent strengths, capabilities and psychological make-up of women. Indian higher education is at crossroads. Whereas the enrollment in higher education is increasing, the graduate employability is decreasing. The educational process of this university has had due emphasis on experiential learning, which empowers the women students with the most needed professional and personal skills and has thus stood the test of time.

## Educating Fine Arts to Artificial Intelligence

Banasthali Vidyapith has grown from a school catering to only 6 students to the only residential women institute in the country that offers education to girls, a variety of programmes from non-formal to



The Vidyapith is also developing a unique world class start-up ecosystem to promote entrepreneurship among youth in general and women in particular. Vidyapith has partnered with Atal Innovation Mission, Niti Aayog to establish Atal Incubation Centre (AIC) at Banasthali Vidyapith. It is one of its kinds Incubation Centre with a strong focus on women-led startups. With support from Ministry of human Resource Development, Government of India, Banasthali Vidyapith established a 'Faculty development centre' to serve the teaching fraternity of the country.

Thus even with the advances and growth in its educational system, infrastructure and research, as the founder's original motive was Rural Reconstruction and Social Work the avowed mission of community development has indeed been on the forefront. Fortunately the Institutional Social Responsibility (ISR) has caught attention of intellectuals and policy makers, but the journey of Banasthali Vidyapith over the last eight glorious decades has been full of innovatively creating value for the community, particularly for the women.

### The Mission Continue

The journey of Banasthali Vidyapith over the last eight decades has been full of innovatively creating value for the community, especially the women. The institution is known world over for its dedication to the noble cause of women education. When India is far below in world indices on women's education, women's empowerment, Banasthali Vidyapith has it still a lot to contribute and its dedication to the cause of women has sustained it for 83 years and will sustain it till the world celebrates equality of genders.

From 5 girl students in 1935 to 13,000 in 2018; from thatched huts to advanced infrastructure, from basic education to over 55 degree programmes and from a humble beginning to being ranked amongst the top 350 Institutions in the BRICS countries and obtaining QS 4 Star and Diamond rating, the highest for any Indian institution, the Vidyapith has had a



glorious journey of over eight decades. Banasthali Vidyapith has been accredited and re-accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with 'A' Grade.

Through this ongoing journey of excellence, the society and the alumnae will fuel the process by its never ending faith in our avowed spirit of women's education, as they have always done. The Vidyapith has always been blessed to receive public support for its noble mission and runs in a self sustaining mode.

The Institution is recognized as a Nation Builder by India Today in 2008, ranked at all India 64th position & No.1 women's university by NIRF in 2018. The Vidyapith has received prestigious awards like University of the year 2015 by FICCI, India Skills Report Award 2015 and 2016 by CII-Wheelbox, Best University for Value Based Education Award and Financial Literacy Thought Leadership Award by Principal Mutual Funds, QS 4 star and QS Diamond rating etc.

In a country where lower enrollment of girls in schools still stands as stumbling block for women empowerment, Banasthali Vidyapith overcame all odds to bring girl child to school and higher education. The institution nurtured them with gender sensitive unique five-fold education to instill courage and leadership qualities in them.

*All my life, I have tried to follow the ideology "Saada Jeevan Uchch Vichaar" which I learnt at Banasthali and I am happy that I could follow such high philosophy. I learnt from Banasthali Vidyapith to love all beings and live as brothers & sisters, as a family; irrespective of caste, creed or religion and, hence, I had zeal to serve the society. I try to teach students the philosophies of Banasthali Vidyapith and fight the social evils ...Binni Yanga (Padam Shree - Social Worker at North-East area of India)*

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## Ten Years of MOOCs, One year SWAYAM: Where do we go?

By Dr. Dhaneswar Harichandan



The first decade of the century saw two landmark development in the field of education. One is Open Educational Resources in 2002 and a decade later Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in 2012. The University of Manitoba, Canada first used the term MOOC for a course “*Connectivism and Connective Knowledge*” in 2008. Two thousand two hundred members globally were enrolled into the course online & it was free. The Pedagogical style of this course called cMOOC, was based on a Philosophy of connectivism and networking. However this new trend in higher education is poorly reported in press until elite institution in the United States adopt then in 2012 when Harvard University & the MIT founded edX to offer university level courses in a range of disciplines to a worldwide audience at no charge and Coursera was founded by Stanford University.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is a type of online course aimed at large

scale participation and open access via the web. MOOCs are a recent development in the area of open and distance learning, and a progression of the kind of open education ideals suggested by OER. Massive refers more to scale than to a particular number of learners who can participate; Open refers to access, anyone irrespective of his background & experience etc. Online refers to web/internet based learning and course is a single set of topic on a particular subject.

United Kingdom Open University has started its Open Learn which is now popularly known as Future Learn Open Universities Australia reached a remarkable milestone in 2013 when it announced that its free online learning platform Open2Study had 1,00,000 enrolments undertaking one or more of its MOOCs

Asia's first MOOC on “*Science, Technology & Society in China*” was launched on the Coursera platform by Hong Kong University of Science & Technology in 2013.

### SWAYAM is India's MOOC

SWAYAM is Studying Webs of Active learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM). It is an instrument for self-actualisation providing opportunities for a lifelong learning. Here learner can choose from hundreds of courses. Virtually every courses that is taught at the University/College/School level and these shall be offered by best of the teachers in India and elsewhere. If a student is

studying in any college, he can transfer the credits earned by taking these courses into their academic record. If you are working or not working in school or out of school, SWAYAM presents a unique educational opportunity so expand the horizons of knowledge.

SWAYM is a programme initiated by Govt. of India and designed to achieve access, equity and quality. The objective of this effort is to take the best teaching learning resources to all including the most disadvantaged. It started on 4th July 2017. It seeks to bridge the digital divide for students who have hitherto remained untouched by the digital revolution and have not been able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy.

In a bid to promote affordable education the Human Resources Development Minister Shri. Prakash Javdekar said the government aims to offer about 2000 online courses within one year through SWAYM an indigenously developed platform. About 60,000 students have already completed their courses through this affordable platform. It makes knowledge available any time anywhere like ATM offers cash, it can also be termed as Any Time Learning (ATL)

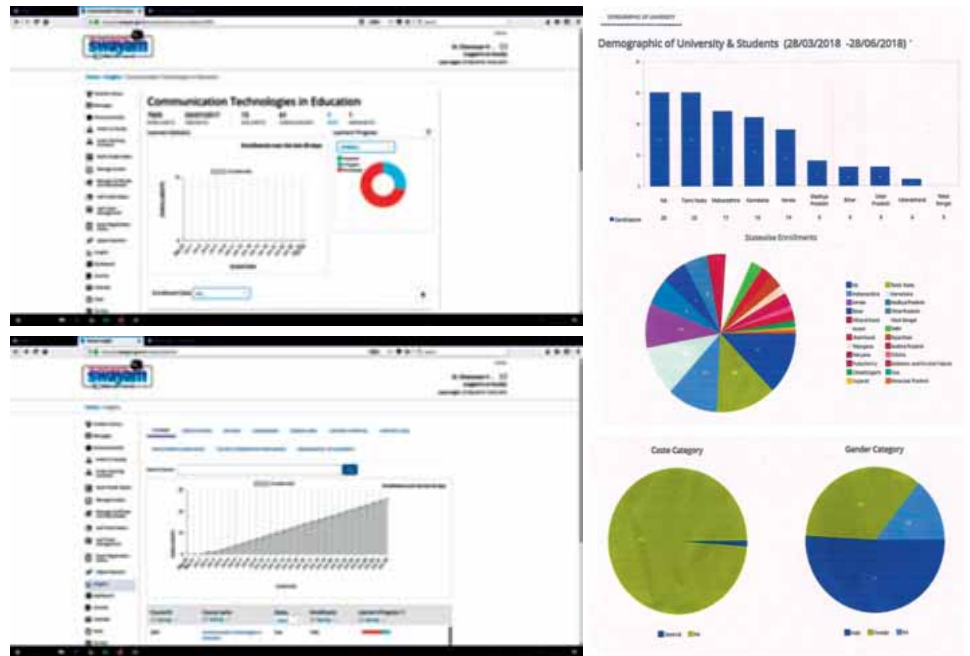
This is done through an indigenous developed IT platform that facilitates hosting of all the courses, taught in classrooms from 9th class till post-graduation to be accessed by anyone, anywhere at any time. All the courses are interactive, prepared by the best teachers in the country and are available, free of cost to the residents in India. More than 1,000 specially chosen faculty and teachers from across the Country have participated in preparing these courses

The courses hosted on SWAYAM are in 4 quadrants – (1) video lecture, (2) specially



prepared reading material that can be downloaded/printed (3) self-assessment tests through tests and quizzes and (4) an online discussion forum for clearing the doubts. Steps have been taken to enrich the learning experience by using audio-video and multi-media and state of the art pedagogy / technology. In order to ensure best quality content are produced and delivered, nine National Coordinators have been appointed: They are AICTE for self-paced courses, NPTEL for engineering, UGC for post-graduation education, CEC for under-graduate education, NCERT & NIOS for school education, IGNOU for out of the school students and, IIMB for management studies.

Courses delivered through SWAYAM are available free of cost to the learners, however students wanting certifications shall be registered, shall be offered a certificate on successful completion of the course, with a little fee. At the end of each course, there will be an assessment of the student through proctored examination and the marks/grades secured in this exam could be transferred to the academic record of the students. UGC has already issued the UGC (Credit Framework for online learning courses through SWAYAM) Regulation 2016 advising the Universities to identify courses where credits can be transferred on to the academic record of the students for courses done on SWAYAM. SWAYAM platform is indigenously developed by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) with the help of Microsoft and would be ultimately capable of hosting 2000 courses and 80000 hours of learning: covering school, under-graduate, post-graduate, engineering, law and other professional courses.



## A MOOC on Communication Technologies in Education

A Certificate course on Communication Technologies in Education was offered by the author in the SWAYAM portal in 2017 which was one of the most popular course with 7,605 learners enrolled into this course. The completion rate of this course also was quite satisfactory with 403 (5.29%) learners getting the certificate by fulfilling the requirements of the course which included submission of assignments and final test at the end of the course. Many learners joined the course out of curiosity and many joined to know about the course and view some of the videos which are relevant and useful to them. Very few students reach to the last week of the course which demands going through the online final test. There are also many learners who enrolled into the course but

failed to log in even a single time once the course starts. Learners use MOOCs as learning resources and many of them are it in different ways for different reasons. It is heartening to know that more than 4024 learners were actively participating in the discussion forum and there was lot of active participation in the discussion forum.

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## National Youth Summit 2018 organised by Sri Lanka Development Journalists' Forum, Sri Lanka



“For a development in any country, it needs a sustainable peace and an equality brotherhood which should come from the policy of the government or it needs good governance,” Dr. Kandiah Sarveswaran Minister of Education, Cultural Affairs, Sports and Youth Affairs – Northern Province said at the Inauguration session of the second National Youth Summit (NYS) 2018.

The second NYS 2018, convened by the Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum (SDJF) concluded successfully in Colombo on Saturday (21). The Summit which emphasized the Summit theme 'Sustainable Peace and Development' for a better nation, has proposed the Ministry of National Co-existence, Dialogue and Official Languages to develop a cohesive and dedicated minority inclusive youth and peace building policy in line with the National Youth Policy 2014. The proposal is an outcome of the active engagement of nearly 500 young leaders from across the country belonging to different backgrounds and ethnicities, who participated in the dialogue.

The two day National Youth Summit held at the BMICH and at the Department of Government Information respectively, was an endeavor of SDJF along with its partner organizations including Ministries, Embassies, Universities, INGO's and local NGO's, aimed to create a platform for youths to reflect on the Summit theme, and to encourage youth from different ethnicities to meet, learn and be part of a wider peace building network,

demonstrating their shared missions, showcasing innovative and creative solutions towards peace building and reconciliation.

Speaking about the engagement of youth in peace and reconciliation, His Excellency David McKinnon – High Commissioner to Sri Lanka said “Youth are equal stakeholders in the state and they have a lot to contribute.” Youth are often seen as activists and not much in policy development process, he added.

Ms. Paula Bulancea, Deputy Representative for UNICEF Sri Lanka; Mr. M. Y. S. Deshapriya, Secretary of the Ministry of National Coexistence, Dialogue and Official Languages; Prof. Shahid Rasool, Director, Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) India; Dr. Saumiya Liyanage, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of the Visual and Performing Arts and Mr. Waruna Alahakoon, Deputy Director of Education (Drama and Theatre), Ministry of Education also addressed the gathering. Representatives from the U.S Embassy in Colombo also attended the Summit.

During the Inauguration Day, two learning manuals focusing on Forum Theatre and on Youth and Peace building were launched. The first copies were handed over to the Chief Guest and other guests by Mr. Waruna Alahakoon. The manuals were developed to help young people to understand pluralistic values through arts and culture.

The Chief Guest for Day 2, Ms. Ritsu Nacken, Representatives of UNFPA Sri Lanka and the Head of UN Youth Agenda in Sri Lanka in her speech highlighted that youth have so much of energy, new ideas and goodwill to contribute to the country. “We believe unlocking this youth potential

is the key to sustainable peace and development,” she said.

The sessions showcased youth involvement in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), through 7 parallel sessions under four broader themes; Youth Innovation in Peace building and Promoting Equality; Youth as Peace Allies; Youth Peacebuilding Networks and Role of the Youth in Peace Building & Promoting SDGs.

Prof. Shahid Rasool, Director, Commonwealth Educational Media Center for Asia (CEMCA) – India, addressed the gathering on the importance of skill building of youth for inclusive development and peace building agenda and overcome unemployment issues in Sri Lanka.

During the sessions youth shared their peacebuilding experiences and came up with innovative strategies to transform the nation into a peaceful place with their involvement in various peacebuilding mechanisms. The Summit concluded with an awards evening recognizing the efforts of those youngsters who contributed for SDJF's peacebuilding programs.

The feedback gathered from partner organizations and participants stressed on ways to take forward the UN2250 resolution, in which the UN Security Council urges its member states to consider ways to give youth a greater voice in decision-making at the local, national, regional and international levels.

The U.S. Embassy in Colombo, Canadian High Commission, Neelan Thiruchelvam Trust, World Vision Sri Lanka, WUSC Sri Lanka, and Commonwealth Media Educational Centre for Asia (CEMCA) supported the second National Youth Summit 2018, financially.



## CEMCA Higher Education Project Review



Commonwealth Educational Media Centre (CEMCA) for Asia held a “Higher Education Project Review Meeting: on 19th and 20th June 2018, in Hotel Royal Plaza, New Delhi, with the following objectives:

- Understanding Higher Education integrated projects of partner institutions
- Share 1st year project outputs and outcomes and discuss the challenges
- Share and discuss the innovations and achievements along with value for money through the project
- Help partner institutions establish and scale up the integrated model
- Share follow-up actions for next year and further through current project

Eight partner institutions viz. University of Hyderabad, Open University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya University, Bangladesh Open University, Netaji Subhas Open University, Uttarakhand Open University, K K Handique State Open University,

Bilaspur University participated in the project review meeting and presented the progresses of the project.

The meeting began with an introduction by Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi, Programme Officer for Education, CEMCA, who defined the objectives of the meeting, Dr. Shahid Rasool, Director, CEMCA, who welcomed the guests and gave a brief overview of CEMCA's objectives, with focus on how it is CEMCA's aim is to help the youth of the Commonwealth Asian countries that are scattered and out of reach, be better educated.

Dr. B. K. Bhadri, MHRD, Govt. of India representative was invited to give a few remarks. He noted that CEMCA has been working as a real catalyst in the field of education to bring technology to the field of higher education. In the current scenario, ICT learning is extremely important, and CEMCA can be used as a reagent to propagate it to the greater masses.

Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi took the opportunity to talk about the new

publications that are being released by CEMCA for wider dissemination and invited Dr. Shahid Rasool, Dr. B. K. Bhadri, Prof. G. D. Sharma and Prof. Shironica P. Karunanayaka to unveil the new content.

The final aspect of the meeting was to have a round of reflection and remarks by the expert, Prof. Karunesh Saxena, who looked at the 5 on-going projects and the 3 project proposals in great details. Reflecting back on the proceedings of the two days, he stressed on the fact that there is still resistance towards giving a degree to a dropout, and this is the mindset that needs to be changed. Overall, the common problems faced by all projects according to Prof. Saxena was that if a tool kit can be developed to measure the quality of ODL and OER, most of the problems faced by universities at this point could be avoided and this tool kit could be adopted and adapted by all partners in the future. He also suggested that proper project management guidelines can be followed by all, and they can create their own reviews to update CEMCA about the projects. Resource management is also necessary, and CSR funding can be explored and exploited to augment CEMCA funding. The next important aspect is effective delegation and team building, which can vastly improve the way projects are worked on. He also suggested that the 80-20 could be followed by all participants, where 80% is the trivial part of the work and the real focus should be on the 20% of work that is truly important.

The meeting concluded with remarks by Dr. Shahid Rasool, Director, CEMCA, followed by a vote of thanks by Mr. R. Thyagarajan, Head Admin and Finance, CEMCA.

# Launch of International Training of Trainers Programs in Chhattisgarh

The launch of the International Training and Assessment Courses (ITAC) in Chhattisgarh on 18th June 2018 is a significant initiative in empowering the vocational trainers and assessors with relevant skills. The program, a collaboration between Chhattisgarh State Skill Development Authority (CSSDA), QSEC Australia and Commonwealth Education & Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), is initially being piloted to a cohort of 75 trainers.



The International Training and Assessment Courses (ITAC) are a set of internationally-relevant courses developed by the Australian Government in collaboration with the NSDC. They are designed to help meet the global demand for skilled trainers and assessors. These courses leverage Australian expertise to assist in building capacity of trainers and assessors around the world; a foundation of any successful skill development ecosystem.

## Highlights of the International Training and Assessment Courses (ITAC)

- Pilot Program The pilot is sponsored by CEMCA, with QSEC Australia implementing the program with CSSDA coordinating and scaling up the program to all affiliated trainers.
- The pilot batches will see 75 trainers from 26 sectors and 21 districts in Chhattisgarh receive 2 weeks of training and complete on-the-job assessments.

- It is intended that the pilot will be expanded to train up to 3,000 trainers affiliated with CSSDA programs.

CEMCA is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to assist governments and institutions to expand the scale, efficiency and quality of learning by using media in open, distance and technology-enhanced learning.

QSEC Australia is a group of high performing institutes from Australia. The Consortium was established to deliver a wide range of high quality programs that impact positively on the lives of job seekers in India. The primary focus of the Consortium is to deliver industry relevant skills programs that lead to employment.

Sam Freeman, Director of QSEC Australia said “We are delighted to be working with

CSSDA & CEMCA on the rollout of ITAC to all trainers associated with CSSDA, enhancing their skills and helping them to deliver training at an international standard.”

Successful participants will receive an international certificate co-branded by the Australian Government & NSDC, giving the Trainers greater recognition of their efforts and pride in their work. Additionally, the program will benefit the students of CSSDA as the enhancement of trainer skills is expected to improve the ability for trainers to engage students in industry relevant training, producing better placement outcomes.

“We see this program as a part of our contribution to the Hon Chief Minister Raman Singh's vision of 'Right to Skill in Chhattisgarh' as it will uplift the trainers who are providing skill training to the youth under state government schemes,” said Mr Freeman.

## COL supporting Srilankan Universities for Gender Mainstreaming through UGC Sri Lanka



Commonwealth of Learning organised a workshop on “Workshop on Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education in Sri Lanka” in a Train the trainer mode through UGC Sri Lanka from 5-7 June 2018 at Colombo, Sri Lanka to help Universities in Sri Lanka linked to University Grant Commission develop an effective draft action plan to strengthen gender mainstreaming in their Universities. The objectives of the workshop are Recapture important gender concepts and relate it to higher education in Sri Lanka, Familiarize themselves with gender analysis frameworks to assess gender issues in higher education, Familiarise themselves with international tools and good practices to mainstream gender in Universities, and adapt them to Sri Lankan Context, Evolve draft action plan for facilitating a similar process in

the participants' Universities, and mainstream gender in participant universities, identify future steps and interventions that may be required at the collective level, and support expected from the University Grant Commission.

Around 26 participants (17 Female and 09 Male) from 7 Universities of Sri Lanka were nominated by the respective universities to participate in the workshop. The workshop was facilitated by Ms. Ranjani K. Murthy, Researcher and Consultant for Gender and Development from Chennai.

Workshop began with an ice breaking session to introducing each other and all participants listed their expectations from this workshop which helped resource persons to understand the gap where they will put filler. Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi

from Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) participated in the workshop and introduce the COL and its work with the participants. Professor Uma Coomaraswamy, Director, Center for Gender equality and equity, University Grant Commission of Sri Lanka welcomed all the participants and resource persons to the workshop. In her introductory presentation shared role and status of the center at UGC. Appreciating the support of COL she also informed how this workshop will help to the universities for gender mainstreaming in higher education level. The business sessions started with the Ms. Ranjani K. Murthy presentation on gender concept and relationship with higher education reflecting on Sex and Gender, formal and substantive gender equality, gender division of labour, gender division of resources and gender and leadership. Followed by her presentation, the participants engaged in the groups to discuss the situation in higher education given to them, and analyse which gender concept it relate with their context and reflection. Similarly the participants engaged to learn different gender analysis frameworks and tools like change matrix, 12 box framework, Harvard framework and Moser framework using Sri Lanka Case Study on Higher Education. The groups presented their work for further discussion.

## Awareness of Counsellors and Trainers on NSOU LMS and OER Repository

The School of Vocational Studies, Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata has undertaken a project supported by Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) titled “Increase Access and Improve Institutional Capacity for

Sustainable Development through Vocational Education and Training”. The objective of this three year project is to increase enrolment in different vocational courses of the university so that the disadvantaged rural people can get access

to skill development programmes of this university. The students may take the advantages of skill enhancement programme by which they can increase their skills and competencies in a particular trade. As a part the project the

School has already organized workshop on e-content development for teachers, baseline survey and four Outreach Programmes at different districts in the State of West Bengal. For the first time, the School organized a Job Fair at its Kalyani Campus. Recently, the School organized one day workshop/ training on LMS for the academic Counsellors/ trainers of five selected vocational courses viz. i) Needlework and Knitting, ii) Travel & Tourism, iii) Export-Import Management, iv) Modern Office Management and v) Fire Safety & Security Management. Under the project, the A/V lectures have been developed as per guidelines and the question bank for each course has also been developed and providing access to the learners through NSOU LMS. NSOU also developed an OER repository for better learning for the university learner.

An Awareness Programme for Counsellors and Trainers on NSOU LMS and OER Repository was organized on 28th May 2018 with an objective to train the trainers/academic counsellors so that they can guide the learners to access the e-contents through LMS and OER repository. Around 30 women participants out of 45 of different subjects (as stated infra) attended the programme. The entire programme was divided into three parts viz. Introduction of the theme, functionality of the LMS and usefulness of OER Repository of the University.

Professor Anirban Ghosh, the Project Director in his introductory speech mentioned the broad objective of the project which is going on in association with CEMCA. He also opined that the academic counsellors/ trainers play an important role in ODL system who actually bridge the gap between the



learners and ODLI. They can interact with the learners at the study centres during the F2F counselling. So it is their responsibility to motivate the learners to access the on-line academic content available on the LMS and OER Repository. The trainers can also guide the learners how they can increase the accessibility to the academic content available in the on-line environment. Dr. Ghosh also appraised the House that the university is providing number of ICT support services to its registered learners. But they are not aware of these services. Dr. Ghosh requested all the participants to train the other trainers who are engaged at their respective study centre and to inform about the ICT based support services. It will increase the awareness among the trainers as well as among the learners.

During the hands on training session, the step by step process was demonstrated about functionality and procedures of LMS e.g. with the user ID and Password, how a learner can access his or her academic content (A/V lectures, e-text, question bank etc.). The trainers/counselors practiced themselves. Some A/V lectures on the above

mentioned subjects were also screened before the house. The participants appreciated the initiatives that the University is taking for the benefit of its learners. They also informed that the learners will be very happy to access the content at their home for better learning.

Mrs. Barnali Roy Choudhury, Co-Project Manager in her presentation, described the usefulness of the NSOU OER Repository where one can access the A/V lectures and course materials anywhere any time free of cost. She also pointed out that the difference between the LMS and OER Repository is that the learners need user ID and P/W to access the content on the LMS which are not required in case of OER Repository of the University. Other than the registered learners, any person can access the academic content which are made available with an open license, CC-BY-NC-SA. Mrs. Choudhury made a live demonstration on the said Repository to give an idea about the functionality of the same. In the programme the trainers and counsellors prepared a plan of action to replicate the same strategy in their respective study centers.

## CEMCA & QSEC Australia collaborate to facilitate vocational leadership workshop and Lunching of Life Skills MOOC



The session was designed as a conversation starter, for a topic which is currently in a nascent stage in the ecosystem. Whilst much focus is given to making skills aspirational for the learner, very little time is spent identifying how to attract, retain and grow the best talent to teach the future workforce.

During the workshop participants discussed vocational models from around the world, including Singapore, Australia, Switzerland, Germany and others, along with how to engage industry in the

On 14th May 2018, Commonwealth Education Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in collaboration with Queensland Skills and Education Consortium (QSEC) conducted a workshop on building a model for vocational leadership in India.

CEMCA is an intergovernmental international organization committed to the cause of “Learning for Sustainable Development”. CEMCA, the only regional office of Commonwealth of Learning headquartered in Canada, works through its partners in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in the areas of formal, informal and non-formal learning by using suitable media and technology.

QSEC Australia is a group of high performing Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), based in Queensland, Australia. The Consortium was established to deliver a wide range of

high quality programs that impact positively on the lives of job seekers in India. The primary focus of the Consortium is to deliver industry relevant skills programs that lead to employment.

Director CEMCA, Dr. Shahid Rasool set the tone of the workshop by his opening remarks by reflecting on the areas of concern related to Skill Development which identified “Capacity Development of Vocational Trainers” as one of the most important areas to focus.

The workshop was facilitated by Ms Sarojni Choy, Associate Professor School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University. The select group of participants represented a unique cross section of the skills ecosystem in India including Government Officials, Industry Associations, Sector Skill Councils (SSCs), Consulting Firms, Think Tanks, Training Organisations, Universities and many others.

professional development of trainers & assessors and how to build aspirational career pathways for professionals in the sector, amongst other things.

The parties agreed to take the conversation forward and are planning additional workshops and roundtables around India to engage a wider audience and begin to identify detailed solutions in this space.

During the workshop participants were joined by special guest, Prof. Ashok Ogra, Director AIMC for the formal launch of CEMCA's latest product “A MOOC for Life Skills for Engineers”. The MOOC is designed to develop the much needed skill set amongst young engineers whilst also being a tool which can help engineering trainers to grow their own skills. The program is free and available online, having already achieved more than 3,000 enrolments.

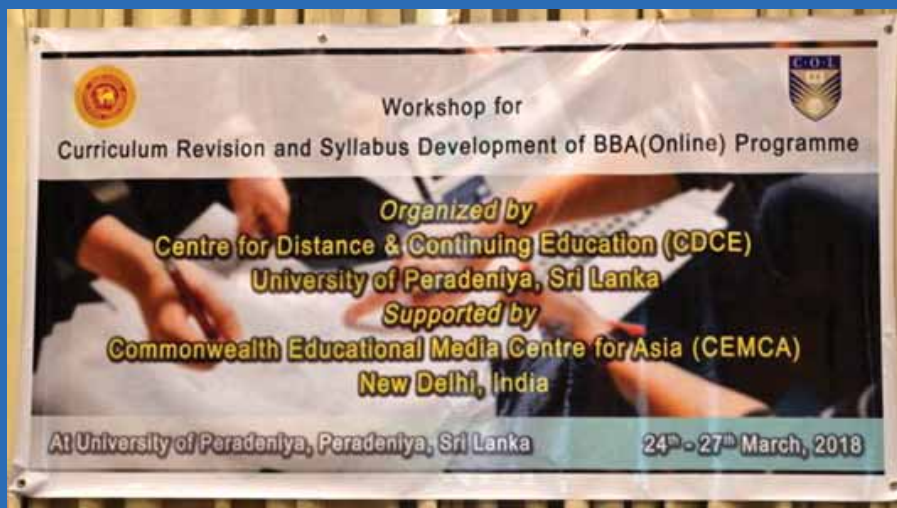
# Curriculum Revision and Syllabus Development of Online BBA Programme for Quality Learning

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in collaboration with Centre for Distance and Continuing Education (CDCE), University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka conducted a workshop on Curriculum Revision and Syllabus Development of Online BBA Programme for Quality Learning from 24-27 March 2018 at Centre for Distance and Continuing Education (CDCE), University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. The objectives of the workshop were:

- To develop capacity of Content Writers and Experts
- To revise the existing course structure of BBA (Online Program) to bring it in harmony with the contemporary and relevant needs of the Society and Industry.
- To help develop the detailed curriculum for the courses through active involvement of participants.
- To increase participants' awareness about the use of Open Educational Resources (OERs) and help them integrate the same in their e-contents.
- To develop a future Roadmap with established deadlines to facilitate the timely completion of project activities.

The inauguration of the workshop was held on 23rd March 2018 at 6.00 pm at Hotel Oak Ray Regency Kandy. Vice Chancellor of the University Prof. Upul B. Dissanayake presided over the inaugural function. Main Resource person of the workshop Prof. Karunesh Saxena, Director, IQAC, ML Sukhadia University

Udaipur Rajasthan India, presented the bird's eye view of the contents to be covered and activities to be conducted during the 4 days workshop. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dissanayake was very happy to note that CEMCA decided to support his University in this noble venture. He exhorted all the participants to gain maximum benefit from the workshop and work with full devotion and



dedication to make this project a great success. In the end, vote of thanks was given by Dr. W. D. Chandrsena, Deputy Director Learning Resources, who left no stone unturned for organizing this workshop.

Professor Karunesh Saxena made the 4 day workshop a major takeaway of learnings. He motivated all the participants to become an active partner in the development and delivery of Online BBA Program of University of Peradeniya. He made the participants familiarized with the terminology of open and distance learning. Also, the participants were given practical exposure to the art of writing Self Instructional Material (SIM). Specific instructions in terms of Do's and Don'ts of content writing was also a part of give away from Prof. Saxena. A practical session in which

the participants learnt how to develop videos for the courses they are going to develop and how to prepare educational videos for the same was conducted by the trainer, Prof. Saxena. In the motivational lecture on Stress Management practical and doable tips for managing stress both at physiological and Psychological levels were given.

Trainer delivered a capacity building of 21 Content Writers and 03 Content Experts through rigorous training spread over 4 days. Existing Course structure of BBA (Online Program) was revised for the entire 3 years Program i.e. Certificate, Diploma and Degree level. Strategy was formulated for the development of e-Contents for 1st year courses. To interact and create one to one

connection with the participants a template was designed by Prof. Saxena which was given to the participants for presenting the Instructional Design of the course allotted to them.

Before the valedictory session the participants were asked to fill up the Feedback form. The valedictory session was presided by Vice Chancellor Prof Dissanayake. Ms. Heshani presented the workshop report. Prof Saxena in his speech personally acknowledged the efforts of many persons for making this workshop a grand success. He motivated all the participants to march forward with full confidence so that they can develop an excellent quality curriculum contents for online BBA Program particularly for first year. Prof. Mallika Director CDCE and Dr. Tilak Deputy Director also spoke on the occasion.



## Workshop on Design and Development of the Project on “Impacting Education and Open schooling through OER- Making a difference among the learners”



Bangladesh Open University (BOU) in collaboration with the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) organized a training Workshop on Design and Development of the Project on 23–26 April 2018 at BOU Seminar Hall, Gazipur. This workshop was organized to design the framework of the project on 'Impacting Education and Open Schooling through OER- Making a Difference among the Learners by BOU' from July 2018. Prof Santosh Panda, an internationally renowned distance educator from IGNOU-India, provided expertise support to all participating faculties to design the 3-year project to take BOU to the next phase of development by reforming its pedagogy and quality, include OER and MOOCs in all its programmes, reform the teacher education programmes including developing E-MEd, bringing VET to the main focus of the Open University specifically for open schooling. In addition, Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi - Program Officer, CEMCA – was also a resource person in the workshop. Dr. Manas said, in his address, “CEMCA

entered into a contribution agreement with BOU for a preparatory phase between February and June 2018 to assess the strength and weaknesses, and to identify the strategies which should be converted into an outcome oriented full-fledged proposal with results-based management (RBM) framework by June 2018 for implementing the project from July 2018 for three years. As a part of this preparatory phase, BOU needs to identify certain capacity building programs and project development procedures. The output of this phase would be capacity building and finalizing integrated proposal. On the basis of this proposal of the project can be launched during July 2018”.

In this workshop School of Education had nominated 18 (13 faculties + 5 Study Center Coordinators) and the Open School nominated 15 (10 faculties + 5 Study Center Coordinators) and they were trained on integrating approach to uplift the quality of the existing courses of studies of the open schooling and teacher education programs through open and distance learning (ODL) leveraging open

educational resources (OER) at BOU and the vocational education and training (VET) program through open schooling.

In this 4-day-extended workshop, participants were given exposure in the area of pedagogic integration and features of OER as well as designing and developing of project. On the first day participants were oriented with the higher education (HE) and results-based management (RBM) framework of the project. Dr. Panigrahi presented the COL-CEMCA's Integrated Higher Education model and RBM framework which is more concentrates on the impact rather outputs. The tentative project will be implemented from July 2018 and passing the preparatory stage which concentrated on couples of research activities. In the first day, Mr. Mizanoor Rahman, Assistant Professor at the Open School presented the results of the studies (i.e. SWOT analysis, policy analysis, and questionnaire survey) as a part of the Needs Assessment Survey (NAS) to fit the project as per the result-based management framework.

Second day, Professor Panda oriented participants with theories and practices of the framework of the project and day-3 and day-4 concentrated on designing the framework for the project on implementation of the VET and education programs through ODL. The workshop, finally, came out with a fruitful framework and strategized the outcome oriented full-fledged proposal. Professor Sufia Begum, Dean, School of Education; Dr. Sabina Yeasmin, Dean, Open School and Dr. Md. Shafiqul Alam, Joint Director, Training patronized the workshop from beginning to end.

## CEMCA and NSOU organized Outreach Programme for Higher Education



The School of Vocational Studies, Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata has undertaken a joint project with Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia entitled “Increase Access and Improve Institutional Capacity for Sustainable Development through Vocational Education and Training”. The objective of this three year project is to increase enrolment in different vocational courses of the university so that the disadvantaged rural people can get access to skill development programmes of this university. The students may take the advantages of skill enhancement programme by which they can increase their skills and competencies in a particular trade. As a part the project the School organized two Outreach Programmes in Jalpaiguri district at the North Bengal.

The 3rd Outreach program was held on 7th April, 2018 at Vivekananda Educational Institute, Moynaguri. 55 students attended this program out of

which 39 were women. Two team members from NSOU and Project Adviser along with the Secretary of the Organization were present during the interaction with the participants. Dr Anirban Ghosh, Project Director elucidated the

vision of vocational courses as a whole and acquainted learner about different types of courses being offered by NSOU. He also elaborated various scope and coverages of different courses. So that present learners may spread the awareness regarding said courses. Dr Manas Panigrahi from CEMCA and the project adviser stressed upon the need of the vocational education in present day context for the purpose of sustainable development. Mrs. Barnali Roy

Choudhury, Co-Project Manager in her deliberations pointed out three pillars of ODL system viz., Study materials, PCPs, and evaluation procedure. She also elucidated educational resources available in on-line mode and offline mode. She also highlighted NSOU OER repository. In this program NSOU team met all the participants individually to make them understand the accessibility of ICT and NSOU-OER repository.

The 4th Outreach Programme was held at Ananda Chandra College, Jalpaiguri on 08th April 2018. 170 participants out of which 130 girls students attended the programme. The Project Adviser, Project Director met the students and discussed the importance and prospects of vocational training in 21st century along with the Project Manager. The Principal and Coordinator of the study centre were also present in the programmes and shared their views on vocational training. Ms. Barnali Roy Choudhury deliberated on the on-line resources specially on NSOU OER Repository.

A structured questionnaire was circulated among the participants to get their response on different aspects of ODL, on-line learning, A/V lectures etc. for the feedback of the participants.



# Advanced Workshop on Moodle enabled e-Course Development at University of Hyderabad

The e-Learning Centre, University of Hyderabad (UoH) and Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), New Delhi have jointly conducted Advanced Workshop on "Moodle enabled e-Course Development" during 06-07 April, 2018 for 15-20 UoH faculty. It was conducted under COL-CEMCA-UoH project on "Designing Integrated Education Model for HEIs in India: An Action-Outcome Study of UoH (2017-2020)". This workshop is continuation to the four-day workshop on "e-Course Development using OER for Quality Learning" which was conducted during 06-09 December, 2017 for 30 faculty of UoH which has enabled them to develop e-Content for some of the courses and encouraged some of the faculty to use technology in their pedagogy.

The present workshop is advanced training programme (Workshop)

conducted for 20 faculty from different disciplines to equip the teachers of University Hyderabad with the skills required to develop and deliver eCourses with multimedia content; individual and collaborative learning activities; and assessments through Moodle. It was conducted in hands-on training mode and learning by doing. The faculty have actively participated in the workshop. The workshop dealt with the topics such as finding OER in multimedia, Question Bank and Question types, creating MCQs, creating and awarding badges and managing grade book.

Inaugurating the workshop Prof. B. P. Sanjay, Pro Vice-Chancellor has mentioned on the conflict between traditional and technology enabled pedagogy. He also said that in view of the shift in paradigm of teaching and learning,

there may be required to bring changes in the University system also. Welcoming the participants Prof. J. Prabhakar Rao, Director, e-Learning Centre has narrated the latest initiatives and future activities of the Centre. Dr. Indira Koneru, Faculty Member, e-Learning Department, IFCAI was the main resource person for the workshop.

It was decided that each of these trainees will train the faculty in respective Schools/Departments/Centres apart from designing Online Courses. Prof. J. Prabhakar Rao, Director, e-Learning Centre had distributed the certificates to the participants.

Integrated Open and Distance Learning (ODL) through ICT for Sustainable Development at Uttarakhand Open University



## Open Educational Practices (OEP) in Bangladesh – Potentials and Commitments!

By Professor Mostafa Azad Kamal

Traditionally, the educational resources produced and distributed by the publishers are usually copyrighted as “All Rights Reserved (ARR)” by the publisher or the creators. Due to this rigid nature of the resources, ARR documents cannot be reused, revised, remixed, redistributed or retained by the users without the permission from publisher or the concerned copyright holder. However, we know educational resources are not the Fit-For-All type materials that they can be adopted anywhere as it is. Depending on the learners' readiness, context, culture and affordability, the educational resources must need to be customized to fit best with the learning design. Therefore, ARR-type copyrighted educational resources lost their applicability or usability by a wider population in the world or even in a particular country. As a result, OER was born to fill out the gaps in accessing, reusing, revising, redistributing and retaining the educational resources. In fact, OER is considered as the biggest innovation in education, especially in open education (David Porter, 2017). By definition, OER (Open Educational Resources) are the educational resources that are free and can be reused, revised, remixed, redistributed and retained depending on the permission type or license provisions. That means, OER=Free + Permissions (Wiley, 2017, para. 2).

The developing countries like Bangladesh can exploit huge benefits through open sharing. This case study highlights some key facts that admit the essentiality of creating and using OER in teaching learning process, especially in higher education. With a population of 163+



million (UNPD, 2017), Bangladesh is passing a demographic dividend period at the moment. However, to reap the best of the demographic dividend, the country requires a higher percentage of its citizens have a higher education. Existing education system here still remains

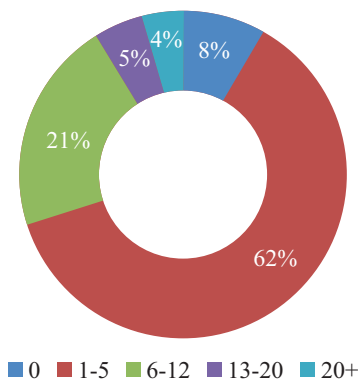


Fig. 1 - COL Survey 2017

expensive at tertiary level. In a recent study by Commonwealth of Learning (COL) found that almost 62% university students can use 6-12 textbooks on average (Fig 1) which is much lower than

the number of recommended textbooks by the teachers. About 68% of the students borrow 1-5 books on average from library or friends (Fig 2).

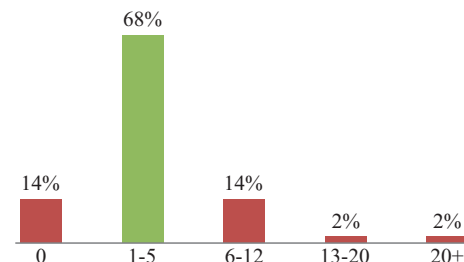


Fig. 2 - COL Survey 2017

Even though the students anyhow manage to get the textbooks, unfortunately the textbooks they buy or collect are not the original textbooks. About 73% of the students buy Nilkhet print (photocopied) books, only 7% students buy original brand new books that are supplied by the publishers, 17% students collect chapter photocopies available at the photocopy shops, only 3% students buy the old books that are available at some book stores especially in the Nilkhet area (Fig. 3).

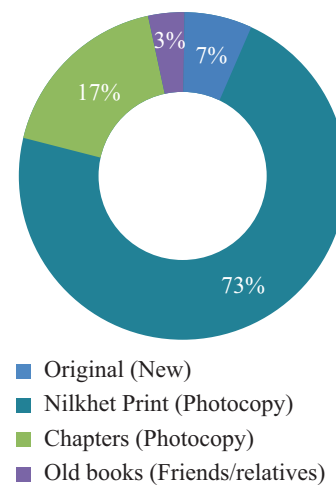


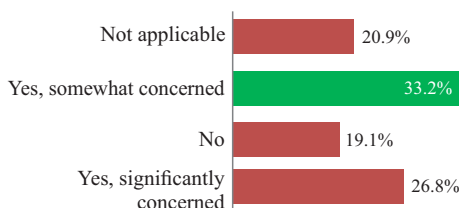
Fig. 3 - COL Survey 2017

The reason behind the students' preference to Nilkhet books is their unaffordability of the original books. Almost 68% students do not afford the original textbooks (Fig. 4). Also few students think that the original books are not available in the local market.



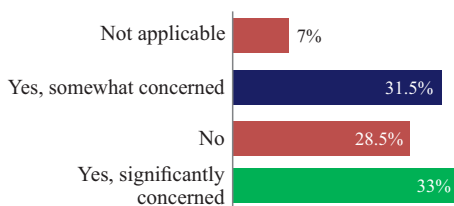
**Fig. 4 - COL Survey 2017**

Therefore, the students learning is affected significantly and their grades become low. In the study, it was found that the almost 64% students at tertiary level are concerned that lower access to textbooks affects their grades (Fig 5). 33.2% of the respondents mentioned that they were somewhat concerned that not purchasing books would hurt their grades, while 26.80% said that they were significantly concerned, and 19.10% told that they were not concerned (Fig. 5).



**Fig. 5 - COL Survey 2017**

Cost of textbooks affects the students' decision to choose the study discipline. Study shows that 64.5% of the university students in Bangladesh are concerned or somewhat concerned about the cost of textbooks while deciding their study discipline (Fig. 6). It was also found that almost all students at university level in Bangladesh use internet and download educational materials from web. However, in the case of awareness of legal permissions or copyright provisions, students are not that much careful. About 36% of the students are not concerned or aware of the copyright issues.



**Fig. 6 - COL Survey 2017**

The access to textbooks by the students at primary and secondary levels in Bangladesh is much better. Government provides free textbooks to all the students in the beginning of every year. However, for enhancing efficiency in using public

funds for producing textbooks, open sharing of these resources should be ensured. Repeated use of public funds for the creation of similar educational resources by the separate departments/ institutions made the use of public fund not only inefficient, but also the quality of resources cannot be improved.

Given the realities above, adopting open licenses on the publicly funded education and research resources can create a positive shift in the access to educational resources. However, the journey toward openness is not so easy in an environment where policy makers and other stakeholders are still lagging behind in terms of the knowledge about the practice and benefits of being open. On the other hand, the growth of access to ICT in Bangladesh and several initiatives and the policy of the Government of Bangladesh provides an enabling environment for Bangladesh to adopt OER in its teaching and learning strategy. Bangladesh has ICT in education Masterplan that focusses on strengthening access to quality learning materials for all. There are several websites for teachers to share educational contents, and these could be easily converted into OER by developing appropriate policy and providing training to the teachers.

Realizing the potentials of creating, repurposing and sharing the educational resources openly, a number of steps have already been taken at institutional as well as national levels. Some of the major steps are as follows:

1. Bangladesh Open University developed an OER Policy in 2014 with the support from COL. The policy has already been implemented. With further support from Commonwealth Educational Media Center for Asia (CEMCA), BOU developed a OER Repository within the framework of the approved OER policy.
2. With the support of COL, a National OER Policy for Bangladesh has

already been drafted and submitted to the Ministry of Education for final approval. The policy followed a series of activities, such as a Baseline Survey, National Consultation Workshop, and individual meetings with the key stakeholders.

3. A number of universities and institutions developed the online repositories of journals and research reports that can be openly accessed. Few examples are: Daffodil International University Institutional Digital Repository, DSpace at BRAC University, EWU Institutional Repository, IUB Library Digital Repository, Eastern University Digital Library, International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research Digital Repository, National Library Digital Repository, Dhaka University Institutional Repository, IUT Digital Library, etc. However, these repositories are still copyrighted. By simply putting open licenses, these repositories can add more value to the scholarly works locally and globally.

Implementation of National OER Policy is expected to create a big shift in the creation and adaptation of OER in Bangladesh. It will bring the existing government educational portals under open licenses and a culture of open educational practices will start soon.

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## Assistive Devices and Technologies for Learners with Visually Impaired

By Dr. Papiya Upadhyay and Dr. Parimal Sarkar

Any adaptive device or service that increases participation, achievement or independence for a learner with a disability may be considered assistive technology (AT). Assistive technology helps learners who are differently abled, increase their access to the general curriculum and improve their academic performance. It is important to thoughtfully consider what devices, tools and technologies will be appropriate to meet the learner's individual and unique learning needs. Assistive devices should not give learners an unfair advantage, but instead, should provide them the independence to compete effectively with peers in the school.

The subsequent section of this article discusses some of the supportive/assistive devices for learners with disabilities. Not all disabilities are covered here but some more often occurring disabilities in educational institutions have been discoursed.



Figure: Various kinds of devices for the learner with low vision

(Source: <http://www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/orientation-mobility.html>)

LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT	
Assistive devices & technologies	Functions
<b>Tactile key-boarding instruction</b>	<i>Tactile keyboarding instruction is the foundation of technological instruction. Typing without looking at the keys improves learners speed, accuracy and also minimizes the need for the learning to shift their gadget between the source, screen, and keyboard.</i>
<b>Braille code</b>	<i>Braille code is a system of raised dots arranged in cells. The number and positions of the raised dots represents a particular letter, word, number, or symbol. For reading and writing of language arts the Braille that is used is known as literally Braille. Mostly in school two standardized grades, (grades I &amp; II) are used in literally Braille.</i>
<b>Word processing shortcut</b>	<i>These are a kind of shortcuts in computer with a Win Logo Key on the key board which provides reference to instruct a VI learner. Learners can be instructed in using windows key strokes for needed applications and use word processing software to complete written assignments.</i>
<b>Audio books</b>	<i>Auditory books are very effective tool for learners who are blind or visually impaired though it cannot replace instruction in reading, print and / or Braille. It is helpful in reading long passages. Pairing of books (Braille) with audio supported learning fruitful strategy to build listening skills.</i>
<b>iPods as instructional tool</b>	<i>This wonderful device can be used for accessing information, music, videos, books etc., for the learner with visual impairment.</i>
<b>Note taker instruction</b>	<i>This is a kind of electronic Braille note taking device. It is a small and portable device. Notes may be taken by using a Braille (featuring six large keys that correspond to the six dots in the Braille cell), standard (QWERTY) keyboard, or both.</i>
<b>Video magnifier instruction</b>	<i>This tool is a best option when a learner needs greater magnification while reading print material. The video magnifier allows access to regular print materials with an ability to enlarge and write on work sheets.</i>

**Magnification:** There are four types of magnification: relative-size (large format, bigger manipulative), relative-distance (material presented closer to the student), angular (lens-based magnifiers), and projection (camera-based electronic magnifying devices).

**Specialized lighting:** Lamps and lights with various types of illumination may enhance the visibility of the working surface. Material positioning devices—page holders, book holders, or book stands, and slant boards enable better positioning of the material to decrease distance, angle or glare.

**Audio support:** Software or hardware gives information through auditory channel in addition to the primary channel whether it may be visual or tactile. Text-to-speech-software converts digital text into audio. It is implemented in talking programs, like word processors, or is part of read aloud imported text.

**Portable reading devices:** Hardware supports various formats of audio text. Information may be stored either as audio files on media cards, or as soundtracks on CDs.

**Large key calculators:** Oversized numbers to accommodate vision needs.

**Audio graphic calculator:** Software and hardware give VI learners an auditory access to graphing capability. Large print keyboard stickers in order to make the keyboard labels more visible stickers with large print characters can be used. They come in two colour versions white on black, or black on white. Built-in magnifier (PC), Zoom (Mac) computer operating systems come with magnification accessibility features. Third party magnification software is a full-fledged application that increases the size of screen content. High contrast (20/20) pen is a simple writing tool that makes letters more visible due to the high contrast ink. Third party combo magnification and screen reading software combines features of screen magnifying software and speech output software giving dual-mode access to computer information. Hardware screen magnifiers monitor-mounted screens with magnifying screen used less than software magnifier.

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## **Open University International Research Sessions 2018 (iOURS 2018): Re-imagining the Future through Research and Innovation**

**Venue:** The Open University of Sri Lanka, Colombo

**Date:** 29th, 30th November 2018

**For More Information:** <http://www.ou.ac.lk/ours/>



## **PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION CONFERENCE, 2019: Nation, Nationalism and the question of Education**

**Venue:** Azim Premji University, Bangalore, India.

**Date:** January 10 – 12, 2019

**For more information:** <http://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/SitePages/school-of-education-conferences-philosophy-of-education-conference-2019.aspx>



## **The 6th Global Higher Education Forum 2018 (GHEF6.0)**

**Venue:** Le Meridien Hotel, Putrajaya, Malaysia

**Date:** 08-10 October 2018

**For more information:** <http://www.gheforum.usm.my/>



## **14th FICCI Higher Education Summit 2018: A Global Conference & Exhibition**

**Venue:** Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, India

**Date:** 30th October 2018 - 1st November 2018

**For more information:** <http://www.ficci-hes.com/speakers.php>



## **IAU 2018 International Conference: Higher education partnerships for societal impact**

**Venue:** University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia

**Date:** 13-15 November 2018

**For more information:** <https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ehome/iau2018/558383/>