

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE FOR ASIA, NEW DELHI

Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the Advisory Council of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) held on Monday, 11 December, 2017 at the Open University of Sri Lanka, Colombo.

The following were present:

Prof. Asha Kanwar President and CEO Commonwealth <i>of Learning</i> (COL) Vancouver, Canada	Chairperson
Dr. K. Balasubramanian Vice President, Commonwealth <i>of Learning</i> (COL) Vancouver, Canada	Member
Mr. Madhu Ranjan Kumar Joint Secretary, Joint Secretary, Department of Higher Education Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India, New Delhi India	Member
Mrs. Shahnaz Samad, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Education Government of Bangladesh Dhaka, Bangladesh	Member
Mr. S. U. Wijerathne, Additional secretary, Planning and Performance Review, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka,	Member
Prof. Madhu Parhar STRIDE Indira Gandhi National Open University Maidan Garhi New Delhi, India	Member
Mr. L. Chandra Mohgun, Under Secretary Department of Higher Education, Malaysia (Deputed by Government of Malaysia in the place of Y. Bhg. Dato' Professor Dr. Asma Binti Ismail)	Member

Prof. Nageshwar Rao
Vice Chancellor
Uttarakhand Open University,
Haldwani (Nainital)
Uttarakhand, India

Member

Prof. Ashok Ogra
Director,
APJ Institute of Mass Communication,
Sector 8, Dwarka,
New Delhi, India

Member

Dr. Shahid Rasool,
Director, CEMCA
New Delhi, India

Member

Mr. R.Thyagarajan
Head, Admin. & Finance
CEMCA
New Delhi. India

Secretary

Apologies:

Prof. (Dr) Shahid Siddiqui, Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), Islamabad, Pakistan, could not attend the meeting due to some other pressing engagements.

Item No. 1: Chairperson's introductory remarks

Prof. Asha Kanwar, President and CEO COL and the Chairperson CEMCA Advisory Council (CAC) welcomed the members to the 17th CAC meeting. While welcoming Mr Madhu Ranjan, Jt. Secretary MHRD on the CEMCA Advisory Council, Prof Kanwar placed on record the appreciation for the contributions made by his predecessor Mr. S. P. Goyal, former Joint Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India (GOI) as a COL focal point and as a member on the CAC. She further said that the COL is grateful to Government of Sri Lanka, Mr. S. U. Wijerathne and the Vice chancellor, Open University of Sri Lanka, who hosted the meeting at the University.

Prof. Kanwar thanked all representatives from the Asian Member States for their continued financial and intellectual contributions. . The member states of Commonwealth are guided by a common charter; such as Rule of law, Good governance, Democracy and Development of aspirational youth. She pointed out that the Advisory Council is mandated to review the progress of Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), New Delhi, during 2016-17 and suggest ways and means for further improvements. The representatives from different countries could express their expectations and strategies to be adopted for achieving the targets

Prof. Kanwar, while briefly tracing the history of Commonwealth of Learning (COL), expressed that media enabled learning plays a significant role in teaching, learning process

especially in Open and Distance Learning. Therefore, the COL established CEMCA as its regional centre for Asia.

Prof. Kanwar informed the members that COL's strategic plan, 'Learning for Sustainable Development', is aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, which aims to promote inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all. The learning for sustainable development aims at social inclusion, economic improvement and environmental conservation. She informed the members that COL focuses on two key areas: education and skills development, while gender is the crosscutting theme underpinning all activities.

While briefing the activities of COL during 2017, Prof. Kanwar further informed that COL has organised six regional consultations on OER, including one in Slovenia. The Global OER report based on survey conducted in 105 countries has been released. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation generously contributed for this activity. OER is gaining importance world over. At the national level, Antigua, Barbados and Mauritius have adopted OER policies facilitating access, equity and quality of learning. In India, many institutions, with the help of CEMCA, have adopted OER policies. The COL and CEMCA also developed a draft National OER Policy for higher education in India.

Prof. Kanwar informed the members that women and girls' projects aiming at preventing child marriage and promoting entrepreneurship leading to profitable employment are being carried out in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India.

Prof. Kanwar also said (Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) is gaining currency at the level of higher education and COL is supporting development of MOOCs. COL and CEMCA are collaborating with Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IITK) for launch of MOOCs. Use of mobiles for learning helps in bridging the gap of technology divide.

After brief introduction of the members, Prof. Kanwar invited question and comments:

Prof. Nageshwar Rao said that youth could reach technology much faster than the old people and no technology is formidable for them. COL may develop an App containing all the resources and the activities undertaken by it so that people can download and use as per the individual needs. Further he desired to know whether the focus of learning is employment oriented or for seeking knowledge.

Prof. Kanwar responded that employability is a major issue for youth. The institution should combine the academic skills and cognitive skills to tackle the employment aspects. Learning should be made more interactive and if not, the students get bored. The "chalk and talk" technology is out dated. She agreed that COL could look into the viability of an App or other appropriate platform for sharing its resources. She said that its website and platform such as Oasis are focusing on sharing the resources of COL.

Prof Ashok Ogra informed that the University of Seychelles has produced the audio programmes with the support of COL as OER and all other countries can use these audios for free.

Ms. Shahnaz Samad said that the Bangladesh economy is embracing emerging blue economy and COL/CEMCA can do a lot for the Maritime University in their country. She

appreciated that the COL and CEMCA have done a lot for the Bangladesh Open University. **Dr. K. Balasubramanian** responded by saying that environmental engineering and environmental management developed by the Indian Institute of Science with the support of COL would be suitable to meet the challenges of blue economy.

Mr. Madhu Ranjan Kumar stressed that the Academic programmes should be aligned with skill qualification framework so that those who have done skill courses can have lateral entry to higher programmes. **Dr. Balasubramanian** responded that CEMCA has helped the Netaji Subhas Open University to align its existing vocational courses with the National Skills Qualification framework. Similarly, the courses are offered in Bangladesh Open University too. **Prof. Asha Kanwar** added that recognition of prior learning stands on a different footing. Mobility between two streams, skills and academics, would provide a world of opportunity for skilled workers.

Prof. Nageshwar Rao said that linking of skills framework with higher education has not yet been done. While National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) is making some efforts the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India needs to look at the regulatory framework for this purpose. He requested that the MHRD, GOI, should help the higher education institution in this regard. **Mr. Madhu Ranjan Kumar** suggested that the experience of other countries with regard to linking of Skills with higher education may be of use before India explores the possibility. **Prof. Asha Kanwar** responded that COL and CEMCA will try to give models adopted by Canada and other countries for further examination and adoption by India.

Mr. Madhu Ranjan Kumar informed that PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) has documented the skills required for Data analysis. The delivery aspect should be matched with what we need. Automation has created a dynamic ever-changing scenario and the skills which one learns today may be of no relevance tomorrow due to technology advancement. New curriculum should be developed to overcome the obsolescence of technology and skills. **Prof. Ashok Ogra** added that the sets of skills required by anyone are almost universal. The methodology for data collection, analysis and their interpretation is universally applicable. All the academic programmes at school level should give focus on incorporating digital literacy. The Oxford University says that by 2020, the nature of jobs will change. The learned should constantly relearn new skills for remaining employable.

The discussion concluded with **Prof. Asha Kanwar** thanking the members for their valuable comments and sought the consent of the members to take up the other agenda items.

Item No. 2: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 16th Meeting of CEMCA Advisory Council held on December 5, 2016.

The minutes of 16th Meeting of Advisory council were placed before the members with the information that the responses received from the members on the draft minutes were incorporated. Prof. Kanwar asked if the minutes could be confirmed.

Prof. Madhu Parhar proposed that the minutes could be confirmed and **Prof. Nageshwar Rao** seconded the proposal in favour of confirmation of the minutes. The minutes of the sixteenth meeting were, therefore, confirmed unanimously.

Item No. 3: Action taken on the decisions in the 16th meeting

Mr. R. Thyagarajan, Head Administration and Finance CEMCA and Member Secretary CAC, presented the “Action Taken Report” on the decisions of the 16th CAC meeting as under:

i. Draft National OER policy for MHRD, GOI, in consultation with MHRD.

The draft National OER policy for higher education for India was finalised and submitted to the MHRD on 21st March 2017. The policy was drafted, with the active support of COL and CEMCA.

ii. Draft regulations and guidelines for Ph.D. and Engineering programmes applicable to ODL institutions.

The action on this item was initiated. However, CEMCA was informed by MHRD that the University Grant Commission of India have come out with regulations for Ph.D in distance mode. As regards engineering courses through Open and Distance Learning institutions, the council suggested that while in India, the regulation and guidelines can be postponed due to the legal and judicial reviews, the scope of integrating engineering programmes in ODL institutions in other countries could be looked into.

iii. Encourage and impress upon Universities for implementing OER practices.

With the intervention of CEMCA, Institutional OER policies were developed and implemented in Bangladesh Open University, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU), Kolkata and Odisha State Open University (OSOU), Sambalpur, Odisha. OSOU also developed an OER repository titled: “*e-gyanagar*”. CEMCA also assisted Bangladesh Open University to repurpose and transform the existing Open Access website into an Institutional OER repository.

iv. Making available all OER materials in one portal with a catalogue for guiding the students for easy navigation.

The activity could not be completed as the proposal for establishing a Consortium of ODL Universities for this purpose is under consideration. Efforts are on to create a Consortium for Educational Media Resource sharing for Commonwealth Asia (CEMRA). CEMRA will host teaching learning material in digital text and videos, duly catalogued/ categorised, customised and contextualised for the Asian region.

v. Initiate research on effects of OER on students.

Research on Impact of OERs on students has been initiated. The study will be completed by the end of June 2018.

vi. Scaling up Skills activities to reach the students at large scale.

Negotiations have commenced with the Ministry of Rural Development to replicate (Odisha Rural Development And Marketing Society (ORMAS) type projects in other states. Three

projects targeting underserved youth in Kashmir, Rajasthan and Jharkhand have been started. More projects are in pipeline.

vii. Monitoring and evaluation activity to assess the impact of activities.

CEMCA is in third year of six-year plan. As per the requirements of result based management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) activities have been initiated engaging external agencies. M&E is to assess the effectiveness of CEMCA's interventions in Higher Education, TVSD and Community Media. Based on the recommendations given by the external agencies CEMCA will make mid-course corrections to achieve targets and get value for money.

Members expressed their satisfaction and appreciated that CEMCA has mostly complied with the recommendations of the council as suggested in the 16th Meeting of Advisory council of CEMCA.

Item No.4 and 5: CEMCA Annual Report 2016-17 and CEMCA Activity plan 2017-18.

With the permission of the chair and the members Item No. 4 and Item No. 5 were taken up together. Printed copies of the Annual Report 2017, were placed before the council. **Dr. Shahid Rasool**, Director CEMCA, made a detailed presentation based on the Annual report for the year 2016-17 and CEMCA's plans for 2017-18. He explained the range of activities done by CEMCA during the past one year, informed the council about the ongoing projects and shared thoughts about fresh initiatives under active consideration of CEMCA.

The salient features of his presentation are as under:

- i. CEMCA developed draft National OER policy for higher Education in India and finalised institutional OER policies for OSOU and NSOU.
- ii. CEMCA helped in developing Institutional OER repository for NSOU, OSOU, Bangladesh Open University.
- iii. Assisted in creating learning materials, with multimedia inputs, for e-Learning and blended learning courses, such as: **Masters in Business Studies** for BOU, **Inclusive Education** and **Tailoring and Dress Designing** for NSOU,
- iv. Developed COL-CEMCA higher education model focusing on employment, entrepreneurship, environmental awareness, better teaching practices and increase in Gross Enrolment Ratio with stress on women and marginalised groups. Besides, this model will take care of inclusivity and provide community based learner system. This model will be implemented in University of Hyderabad, Uttarakhand Open University, Bangladesh Open University, through a three-year project.
- v. With the collaboration of Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IITK) and Central University of Hyderabad, CEMCA has initiated development of a mobile-based MOOC on **Life skills for Engineers** which will be offered through mookIT Platform of IITK.
- vi. A project, sponsored by ORMAS, Odisha, is under progress. The project aims at Training and International certification of vocational trainers followed by field mentoring. 235 Master Trainers have undergone the process. They in turn trained another 23,500 trainees with improved skills for better employability. This model will be replicated in Haryana and Chhattisgarh.
- vii. Started a project for recognition of prior learning integrated with education for Auto mechanics in West Bengal.

- viii. Conducted baseline study, capacity building and content creation in 14 Community Radio stations for the Science for Women's health and Nutrition project of Department of Science and Technology. Also conducted two community radio awareness programmes for Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- ix. CEMCA has initiated skill training to promote traditional livelihoods leading to income generation in Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Kerala and Jharkhand.
- x. In collaboration with UNDP, CEMCA started Career Guidance and Career Counselling for school children in Haryana and Delhi NCR.
- xi. With the support of European Union CEMCA is in the process to launch a major project for sustainable consumption of bamboo in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh
- xii. MUSFAE Hypothesis -Transition from listeners to learners (TL2L) has been applied to 3 CR stations in northeast states in India and 5 CR Stations in Bangladesh for skilling of youth.
- xiii. CR awareness workshops, with support from Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), Govt. of India, were organised at Guwahati, Bengaluru and Puducherry.
- xiv. Community Radio Video Challenge 2017 (CRVC-17) for students was conducted on the theme Community Radio for Sustainable Development. The CRVC-18 has been launched on the theme: "CR for women empowerment".
- xv. Promotional videos on the digital flagship programmes of MHRD, GOI, such as, SWAYAM, SWAYAM PRABHS, NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY and NATIONAL ACADEMIC DEPOSITORY are being produced.
- xvi. The programme expenditure during 2016-17 stood at 83%. However, the efforts are on for achieving 100% during the current year.
- xvii. During 2016-17 CEMCA raised INR 11.10 Million as additional funding. During the current year the figure is expected to cross INR 23 Million.
- xviii. The future plans of CEMCA include:
 - a. Creating Management Information System (MIS) for all CEMCA projects to track learners and partners.
 - b. Support establishment of Consortium for Educational Resources Sharing (CERS) and develop Commonwealth Educational Media Repository for Asia (CEMRA).
 - c. Promote the idea of Consortium for community Radio Stations for resource and expertise sharing.
 - d. Organise Educational Media Festival for Commonwealth Asia (EMFCA)
 - e. Work on the concept, "IDEAS for DARK AREAS", to make best quality teaching learning material available to disadvantaged students across the Commonwealth Asia.

After the presentation, the chairperson opened the floor for further discussion and suggestions. The following observations were made by the members:

Mr. Madhu Ranjan Kumar, desired to know whether the mandate of the Open Universities is limited to offer programmes in distance learning mode only or they can offer courses in face to face mode also. Dr Balasubramanian said that many Open Universities adopt a blended learning approach. Some of the Open Universities in other countries are offering engineering courses. **Mr.Chandra Mohgun** informed that in Malaysia, there is some resistance for offering engineering and medical programmes in distance mode and efforts are being made to overcome the hurdles. **Ms. Shahnaz Samad** informed that engineering programmes are not taught in distance mode in Bangladesh. However, if any such regulations

are available, they could be used in Bangladesh also. **Mr.S.U.Wijerathne** said, in Sri Lanka the undergraduate programmes on engineering are offered through Open and Distance Learning. **Dr. Balasubramanian** pointed out that since OUSL has labs, it offers the engineering programmes in blended mode. **Mr.Madhu Ranjan Kumar** suggested that the hours for distance learning for engineering courses and practical sessions should be specified for providing synergy.

Prof. Asha Kanwar informed the members that COL website hosts a repository of Open Educational Resources called Directory of Open Educational Resources (DOER). Learning materials on Teacher Educations, Skills and various programmes of Open Schools are available to all free of charges.

Mr. Madhu Ranjan Kumar wanted to know if it is appropriate for institutions to use OER material of other institutions. If BOU, for example, desires to improve an Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) course, should it take permission from IGNOU. Moreover, if one University makes improvement, does the course belong to that University or not. If this is what OER is going to do, then it is welcome. **Dr. Balasubramanian** responded that each university is free to tweak the OER materials and the creative common license provides enough flexibility. **Prof. Asha Kanwar** added that COL goes by CC-BY-SA version of license. It allows others to adopt and share. Even Non-commercial license allows others to adopt the materials as they are open.

Prof. Nageshwar Rao pointed out that as CEMCA is engaged in various programmes through media enabled learning, it would be better to revisit the vision statement and incorporate all the activities. The Six Year Strategic Plan (SYP) is a rolling strategy. If any institution enters CEMCA during its fifth year of plan, should it exit within the two years of the plan? The institutions that enters in the first year of SYP, will have opportunity to work with CEMCA for six years and whereas other will not have such an opportunity. He advised that CEMCA should expand and should not be confined to two or three universities only. He appreciated the success achieved by CEMCA during the last one year and advised that successful programmes should be replicated in other places. CEMCA must extend support to all open universities. ODL system at present is expected to find out the ways and means to integrate the skills programmes with regular academic programmes. Prof Rao also wanted to know how CEMCA will achieve the targets set for the 2021.

Prof. Ashok Ogra, while appreciating efforts of CEMCA emphasised the need to develop more educational TV programmes and adopt a multimedia approach. CEMCA being an educational media centre must take the lead in making proper use of media technology for teaching and learning. He informed that states of Haryana and Rajasthan in India have Skill Universities having close coordination with the industry. CEMCA may think of developing a synergy with these institutions.

Mr.L.Chandra Mohgun informed that in Malaysia, the MOOCs are vastly used in Community colleges and currently they target the undergraduate programmes. He sought support of COL and CEMCA to help in development of MOOCs for community colleges in Malaysia.

Prof. Madhu Parhar, appreciating the work done on OER by CEMCA during the last one year at BOU, NSOU and OSOU, suggested that it should be disseminated so that others can also use them. Three or four open universities can be brought together so that a strong

resource base could be created. Advocacy, she said, is important to make people aware about OER repositories. The OER repositories of NSOU or OSOU are not well known outside their institutions, therefore proper publicity of these repositories may be done to increase their utilization. CEMCA may also design a ranking system that could be used for all the ODL Institutions in the region. In the skill part a lot of work has been done for organised and unorganised sectors. However, the forward looking curriculum should be thought of for taking advantage of technology. Prof Parhar also pointed towards the number of beneficiaries and sought to know how CEMCA will bridge the gap.

Prof. Nageshwar Rao said there is a need to relook at the blanket ban of engineering courses in ODL institutions. He pointed out that the UOU has collaboration with industries for training of students in technical areas. The students are provided stipend and subsequent placement. The ODL institutions should be allowed to do engineering programmes with limited intake so that the quality is not diluted.” “

Mr. Madhu Ranjan Kumar said that Artificial Intelligence and Electronic Media programmes are becoming popular and much needs to be done to support such programmes. Efforts should also be made for linking the skills programmes with regular academic programmes. The local language should be used for extra penetration.

Dr. Balasubramanian informed the members that the number of learners shown in the presentation is lower than the learners actually reached as per the reports of partners. The reason is that CEMCA and COL lay stress on the evidence before putting up the numbers. CEMCA has initiated studies to collect proper evidence. It is also focusing on impact study of OER on students. A research study is under progress on CEMCA’s interventions on creating OER policies for different institutions and use of OER repositories created so far.

Responding to the comments of members, **Dr. Shahid Rasool** thanked the members for their valuable comments and assured that efforts will be taken to implement all the suggestion. He said that multiplier effect will propel CEMCA to reach the targets before 2021. Initially much effort was on finding right partners, developing courses and training modules. Now that CEMCA has launched many programmes in Higher Education and TVSD it is easier to replicate them at other places and extend the base. The idea of establishment of consortium of ODL institutions will bring universities together to share their resources for better utilization. CEMCA will therefore try to support this idea and create a common repository for resource sharing.

Concluding Remarks by Prof Asha Kanwar:

While appreciating the efforts of CEMCA during the current year, Prof. Asha Kanwar, the Chairperson of CAC, congratulated the Director for providing proper leadership and creating a healthy team spirit at CEMCA. She directed CEMCA to scale up its activities in a coordinated and systematic manner for promoting sustainable development. She assured the members that CEMCA will work more on models and implement the same in a project mode for longer engagement with partners. This will lead to better sustainable learning resulting in improved living.

Prof. Kanwar thanked the members for sparing their valuable time and participating actively in the deliberations. She assured that CEMCA would pay attention to all the suggestions made by the members.

She also informed that the 20th Commonwealth Ministers' Round Table is scheduled to happen in early 2018 and Malta will chair a round table on skills for development. In addressing the issues of quality, COL and CEMCA will be organizing high level leadership meeting in Kuala Lumpur in collaboration with the E-Asia University. She sought cooperation and participation of all the member countries.

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

Action Items:

Based on the discussion during the 17th CEMCA Advisory Council meeting, at Colombo on 11th December, 2017, following action items for CEMCA are drawn:

1. To replicate the existing projects in other institutions and countries to enlarge the base. To scale up the activities to achieve the targets.
2. Consolidate information from member countries and explore the possibility of preparing a draft guideline for linking the skill programmes with Academic programmes.
3. Support creation of Consortium of ODL institutions for resource sharing leading to Creation of Commonwealth Educational Media Repository for Asia.
4. Replication of ORMAS type projects in other states of India and other countries.
5. 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.
6. Explore the possibility of organising Educational Media Festival for Commonwealth Asia during 2018.
7. Conduct evaluation/impact study of CEMCA initiatives.
8. Develop a proper Management Information System (MIS) for all the initiatives.
9. Development of CEMCA APP for all CEMCA initiatives.
10. Develop a ranking system for all ODL institutions in the region.