Report on A five-day Faculty Development Programme

On

Empowering Higher Education Institutions in Technology-Enabled and Blended Learning

April 21, 2025 to April 25, 2025

Jointly Organised by

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (COL-CEMCA)

and

The Association of Indian Universities (AIU)

under

Academic and Administrative Development Centres (AADCs) initiative

at

Dayalbagh Educational Institute (Deemed to be University), Dayalbagh, Agra

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

A five-day online Faculty Development Programme focused on empowering higher education institutions through technology-enabled and blended learning was held from April 21 to 25, 2025. The programme was jointly organized by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (COL-CEMCA) and the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) under the Academic and Administrative Development Centres (AADCs) initiative at Dayalbagh Educational Institute (Deemed to be University) in Dayalbagh, Agra.
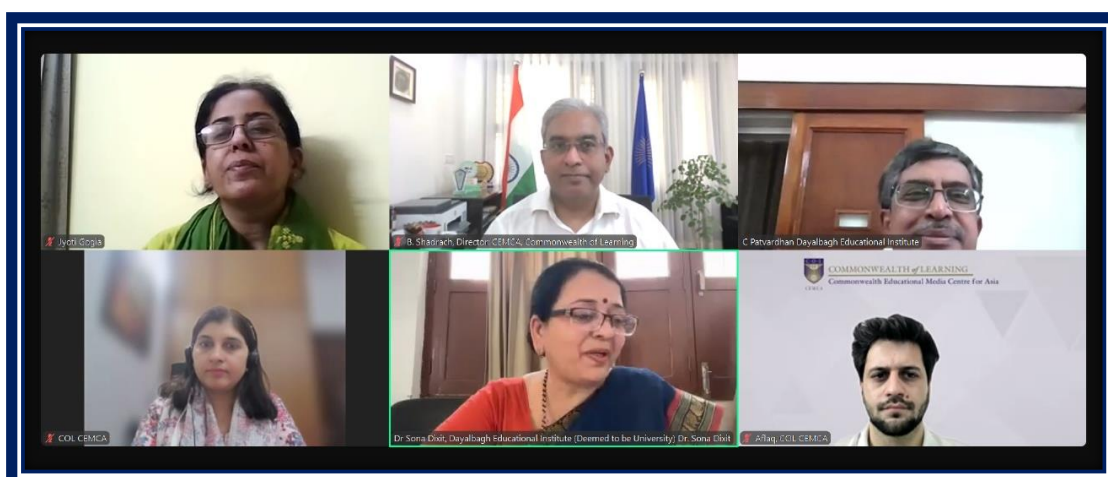
Empowering higher education institutions through technology-enabled and blended learning involves integrating digital tools and innovative teaching methods to enhance the educational experience. This approach combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning, offering flexibility and accessibility to students. It aims to enhance learning outcomes, increase accessibility, promote lifelong learning, and improve efficiency. This initiative seeks to modernize education, making it more adaptable to the needs of students and the demands of the global workforce. Key discussion points of the programme included:

- Introduction to the Salient Features of NEP 2020
- Understanding Technology-enabled Learning (TEL)
- Introduction and Role of Blended Learning within TEL
- The IBLP Template
- Practical TEL Applications
- Challenges and Solutions to integrating TEL
- Strategies for scaling TEL

Through collaborative dialogue and expert insights, the programme aimed to equip participants with the knowledge and tools necessary to implement technology and blended learning practices effectively. The programme also provided a comprehensive overview of the IBLP template, its framework, benefits and strategies for successful implementation.

The inaugural session on April 21, 2025, began with a warm welcome by Prof. Jyoti Gogia, Nodal Officer of AIU-DEI-AADC. Prof. C. Patvardhan, the Director of Dayalbagh Educational Institute (DEI), delivered the keynote address, focusing on the critical role of technology in modern education. He underscored the necessity of human intervention to ensure that technological advancements are effectively integrated into teaching and learning processes, highlighting that while technology can greatly enhance education, the human element remains indispensable.
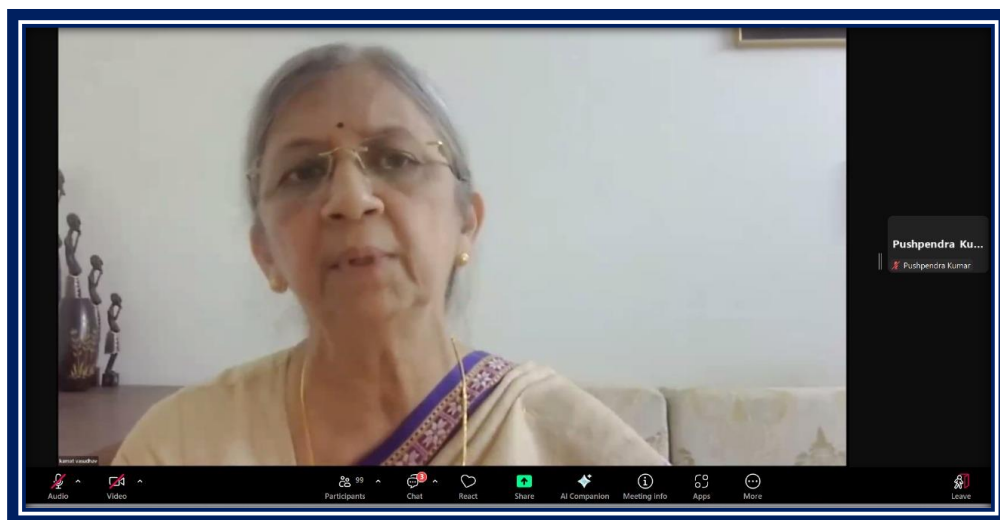

Following Prof. Patvardhan's address, Dr. B. Shadrach, Director of Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (COL-CEMCA), spoke about the objectives of the Faculty Development Programme. He emphasized the importance of collaborative learning and blended learning approaches, which combine traditional classroom methods with online education to create a more flexible and effective learning environment. Dr. Shadrach also discussed the potential for future collaborations between DEI and COL-CEMCA, aiming to further advance educational practices and technologies. Mrs. Ranjana Parihar, Joint Secretary of Publication and Sales at the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), addressed the

audience next. She highlighted the urgent need for technology in education, a need that became particularly evident during the pandemic. Mrs. Parihar stressed that the integration of technology in education is not just a temporary solution but a long-term necessity to ensure that educational institutions can adapt to changing circumstances and continue to provide quality education. The session was chaired by Dr. Sona Dixit from DEI.

PROGRAMME SESSIONS

Following the inaugural session, the participants engaged in a focused exploration of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) through a meticulously structured approach. A video presentation by the esteemed Prof. Vasudha Kamat, a Consultant at COL-CEMCA and the Chairperson of the Governing Board at the Consortium of Educational Communication (CEC), Inter University Centre of UGC, New Delhi, served as a foundational element, offering a comprehensive overview of the policy's key tenets and underlying philosophy.
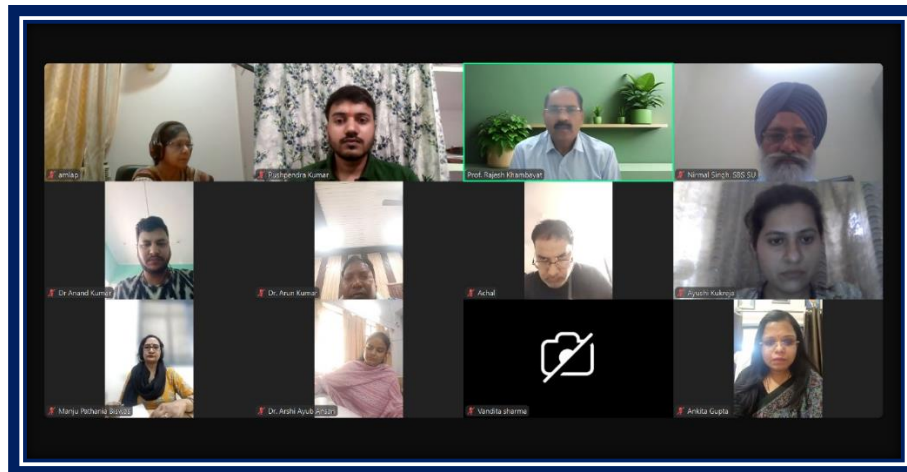

To facilitate deeper engagement and personalized study, participants received direct links to the various NEP 2020 modules. Subsequently, the attendees were divided into twelve distinct groups, with each group tasked with a focused discussion on a specific module of the NEP 2020.

This arrangement fostered a granular level of analysis. The insights generated from these group discussions were then synthesized in a subsequent collective discussion, providing a platform for cross-pollination of ideas and a more holistic understanding of the interconnectedness within the NEP 2020 framework. The session was expertly coordinated by Ms. Monica Sharma, the Programme Coordinator of COL-CEMCA, whose adept management ensured a seamless flow of activities and a highly engaging and productive learning environment for all participants.
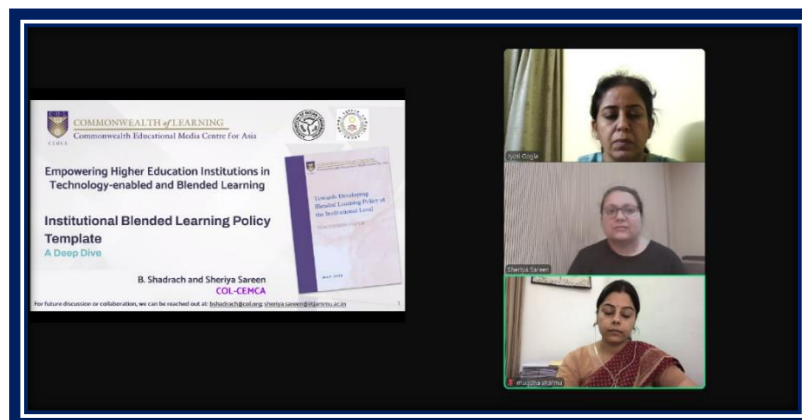

On the second day, the focus shifted towards the practical implications and transformative potential of Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL) under the guidance of Dr. Rajesh P. Khambayat, a distinguished Consultant at COL-CEMCA and Professor at the National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training and Research (NITTTR), Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India. His session delved into the fundamental Concept and Scope of TEL, and its crucial Role in Blended Learning (BL) approaches. Dr. Khambayat's discourse underscored TEL's pivotal role in supporting educational innovation and ushering in a new revolution in teaching and learning methodologies. A key aspect of his presentation addressed the critical question of how graduates can be effectively prepared for the demands of the future workforce, emphasizing the necessity of integrating technology seamlessly into the educational experience. He illuminated the ongoing digital transformation and its intrinsic link to the effective utilization of TEL. Furthermore, Dr. Khambayat highlighted the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

technology in bridging existing gaps in education and aligning with the NEP 2020's recognition of the emergence of the digital era. He also acknowledged the inherent challenges associated with the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in educational settings. To provide practical insights, Dr. Khambayat elaborated on a range of ICT-based tools and digital resources for effective teaching.
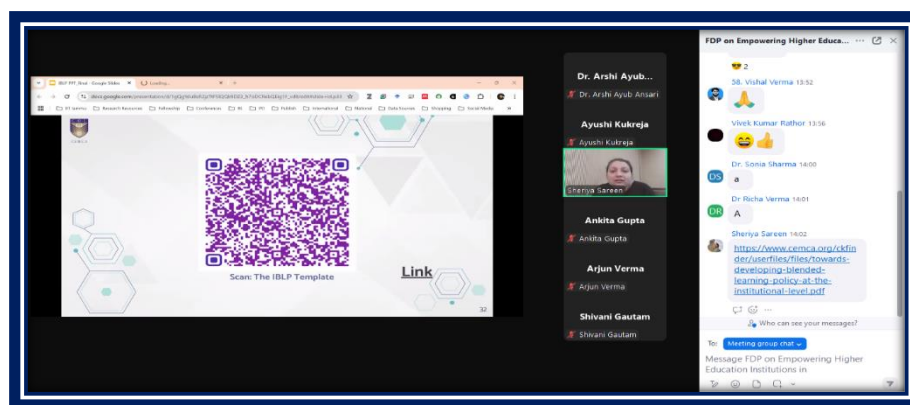

To foster hands-on application, the session included an exercise encouraging participants to explore the potential use of any of these tools in their teaching practices and demonstrate in front of other participants. The session was chaired by Dr. Amla Chopra from DEI.

The third day commenced with Ms. Sheriya Sareen, a Consultant at COL-CEMCA and a Ph.D. Scholar at IIT Jammu, and co-author of the IBLP Template, Jammu, India, taking the lead to illuminate the critical aspects of the Institutional Blended Learning Policy (IBLP). Ms. Sareen
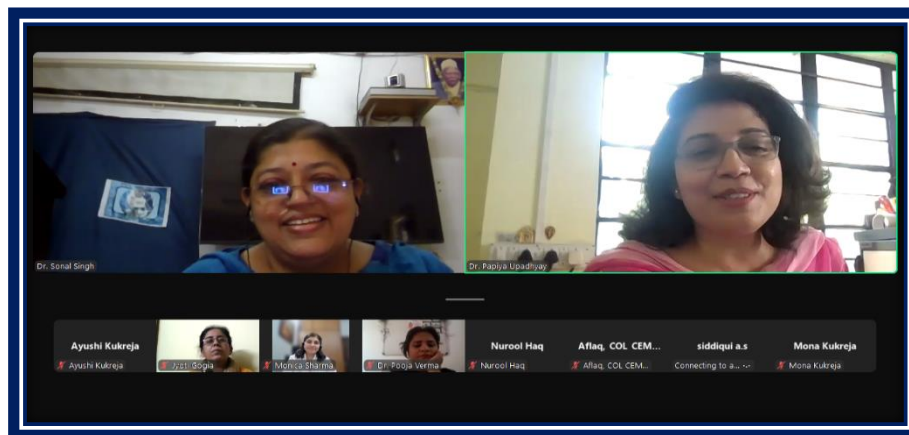
initiated the session with an engaging ice-breaking activity, effectively fostering a comfortable and interactive environment among the participants. Her presentation centered on a detailed discussion of the IBLP template, emphasizing the policy's fundamental thrust towards the adoption and effective implementation of blended learning methodologies. She meticulously outlined the inherent merits of establishing a well-defined blended learning policy, particularly within the context of higher education institutions. Furthermore, Ms. Sareen addressed potential barriers that institutions might encounter while implementing blended learning approaches, providing valuable insights into strategies for overcoming these challenges. To provide a structured framework for understanding and application, she also presented relevant models of blended learning.

To facilitate practical application and contextualization, Ms. Sareen divided the participants into smaller groups, tasking them with a focused study of the IBLP template. Each group was then challenged to discuss and envision the practical application of this template within the specific context of their institutions. To gather immediate feedback and assess the potential impact and usability of the template, the session concluded with participants responding to a concise survey on the anticipated application of the IBLP template within their respective institutional settings. The session was chaired by Ms. Mugdha Sharma from DEI.

Day four's session, led by Dr. Papiya Upadhyay, Consultant at COL-CEMCA and Assistant Professor of Education at Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India,
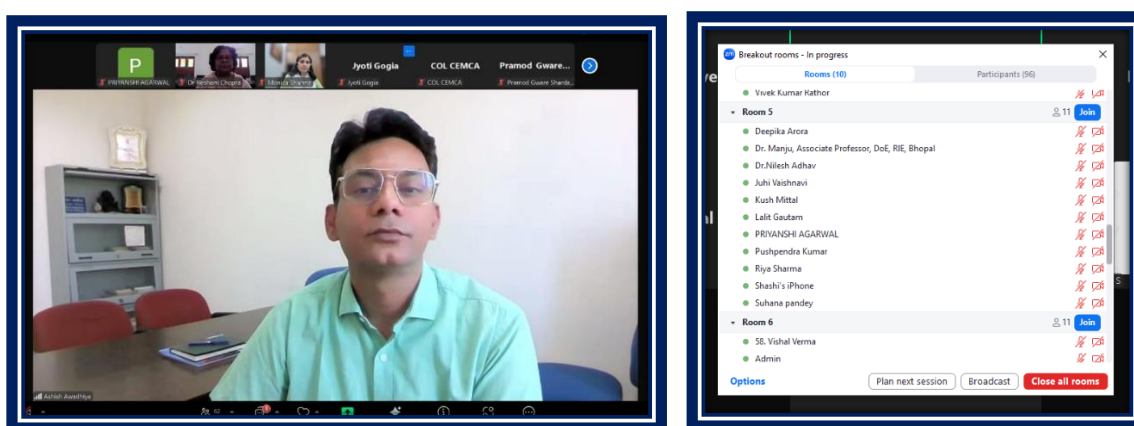
centered on the practical Use of OERs, MOOCs, and LMS in Teaching and Learning. Dr. Upadhyay began by tracing the evolution of ICT in education, setting the stage for understanding the "drivers for digital pedagogy" that are shaping modern educational practices. She differentiated between online learning and blended learning, providing a foundational understanding of these approaches. A significant portion of her presentation was dedicated to Open Educational Resources (OERs), including a detailed explanation of Creative Commons rights under the CC license. Dr. Upadhyay also addressed the potential challenges of using OERs. Moving further into digital learning platforms, she provided insights into MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and India's own MOOC platform, SWAYAM.

The session also covered LMS (Learning Management Systems), including a discussion on the types of LMS available and their functionalities. Dr. Upadhyay eloquently articulated the role of online learning in democratizing education, emphasizing its potential to broaden access and equity. To ensure practical understanding and skill development, the session incorporated hands-on training for the participants, enabling them to engage directly with the discussed tools and platforms. The session was chaired by Dr. Sonal Singh from DEI.

The fifth and final day of the program focused on the crucial theme of Skilling and Graduate Employability, led by Dr. Ashish Awadhiya, Consultant at COL-CEMCA and Assistant Director of Training and Development at IGNOU, New Delhi. Dr. Awadhiya's session

commenced with an exploration of UNESCO's four pillars of education towards employability, providing a foundational framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of preparing graduates for the workforce. The discussion then extended to the essential 21st-century skills that are increasingly in demand in today's dynamic job market. Dr. Awadhiya further elaborated on the key guiding forces of employability in higher education, providing context for the evolving landscape. A significant portion of the session was dedicated to the NEP 2020 and employability, highlighting the policy's emphasis on skill development and vocational training.
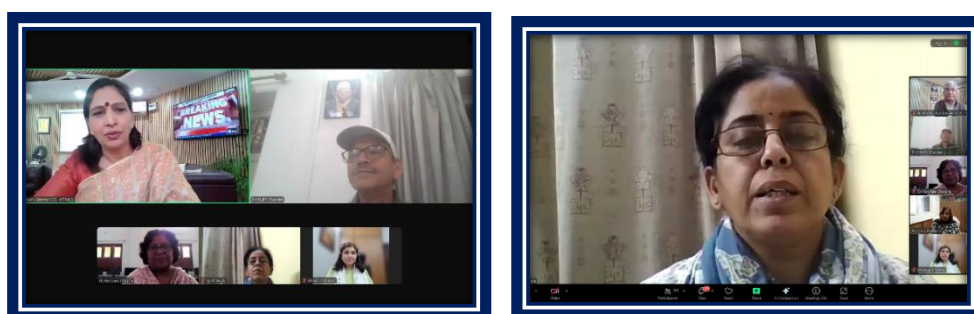

He also shed light on relevant national frameworks such as the "National Credit Framework (NCrF)," the "National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)," and the "Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)," explaining their roles in enhancing graduate mobility and employability. Furthermore, Dr. Awadhiya connected "NAAC frameworks and employability" and "NIRF ranking and employability". He also presented "The COL's employability model," offering a specific framework for understanding and addressing employability challenges. The session concluded with engaging "group activity and discussions," allowing participants to collaboratively explore strategies and share insights related to skilling and enhancing graduate employability within their respective contexts.

The valedictory session marked the formal conclusion of the program, bringing together key figures to reflect on the FDP's discussions and insights. Dr. NPS Chandel, Dean of the Faculty

of Education at DEI (Dayalbagh Educational Institute), delivered the concluding remarks, summarizing the key takeaways and emphasizing the significance of the topics covered over the five days. During the special address segment of the valedictory session, Dr. B. Shadrach, in his capacity as Director of COL (Commonwealth of Learning) CEMCA (Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia), likely provided a perspective on the path forward, highlighting key action points and takeaways for the participants to implement in their respective institutions following the program.

Dr. Pankaj Mittal, the Secretary General of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), would have offered a broader institutional perspective, potentially emphasizing the role of universities in embracing the discussed educational reforms and the AIU's commitment to supporting these endeavors. Dr. Ranjana Parihar, serving as the Joint Secretary for Publication and Sales at the AIU, focused on the dissemination of knowledge and resources related to the program's themes.

The formal proceedings were brought to a close with a vote of thanks delivered by Prof. Jyoti Gogia, the Nodal Officer of AIU-DEI-AADC (Association of Indian Universities - Dayalbagh

Educational Institute - Academic Audit and Accreditation Cell), who expressed gratitude to the speakers, organizers, and participants for their active engagement and contributions throughout the program. The session was chaired by Dr. Resham Chopra from DEI. The FDP ended with an assessment test.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Patrons
Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, COL-CEMCA
Dr. Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities
Prof. C Patvardhan, Director, Dayalbagh Educational Institute
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