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Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia

Three-Day North East Regional Workshop-cum-Sensitisation Programme

Graduate Employability and Career Readiness in Higher Education

4-6 June 2026

Report

Three-Day North East Regional Workshop-cum-Sensitisation Programme

On

"Graduate Employability and Career Readiness in Higher Education"

Organised by

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) – Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), New Delhi



4-6 June, 2026
Guwahati

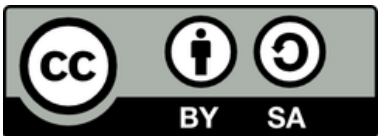
REPORT

2026

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Executive Summary

The Three-Day North East Regional Workshop-cum-Sensitisation Programme on "Graduate Employability and Career Readiness in Higher Education" was jointly organised by Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU) and the Commonwealth of Learning-Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (COL-CEMCA), from 4–6 June 2026 at KKHSOU, Guwahati. The programme was conceived in response to growing concerns regarding the mismatch between higher education outcomes and labour market expectations. Despite increasing graduate output, employers continue to report shortages of job-ready candidates equipped with relevant competencies, soft skills, digital capabilities, and professional attributes required in contemporary workplaces. The workshop sought to strengthen institutional capacity and support Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in developing sustainable and context-specific strategies for enhancing graduate employability and career readiness.

The workshop brought together 41 faculty members and academic administrators representing 19 Higher Education Institutions from Assam, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh. Participants represented diverse academic disciplines, including Education, Economics, Political Science, Commerce, Chemistry, Biotechnology, Computer Science, Mathematics, English, Sociology, and Library and Information Science. The multidisciplinary nature of participation enriched discussions and enabled the sharing of diverse institutional experiences and best practices. The programme adopted a participatory and practice-oriented methodology combining expert lectures, hands-on activities, group discussions, institutional self-assessment exercises, curriculum mapping activities, and pre- and post-workshop surveys. This approach facilitated active engagement, reflective learning, and the development of institution-specific action plans for employability enhancement.

The workshop highlighted the urgency of reimagining higher education in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and emerging labour market needs. Speakers emphasised that employability extends beyond securing employment and encompasses the development of lifelong learning capabilities, entrepreneurial mindsets, socio-emotional competencies, critical thinking, and digital skills. The COL's Graduate Employability Framework and Employability Scorecard were introduced as strategic tools for institutional transformation.

A major focus of the workshop was Outcome-Based Education (OBE) as a foundation for enhancing graduate employability. Sessions led by Prof. Pranab Saikia emphasised learner-centred education, measurable learning outcomes, competency-based curriculum design, and alignment among Programme Outcomes (POs), Programme Specific Outcomes (PSOs), and Course Outcomes (COs). Participants explored the application of Bloom's Taxonomy and the Anderson-Bloom Matrix for designing teaching-learning activities and assessment strategies that foster higher-order cognitive skills and workplace competencies. The sessions highlighted that employability must become a central objective of curriculum design rather than an incidental outcome of higher education.

Several sessions facilitated by Prof. Anirban Ghosh, Consultant COL-CEMCA, focused on understanding graduate employability within the context of the changing world of work. Participants examined contemporary labour market challenges, including skills shortages, skills gaps, and skill underutilisation. Discussions emphasised the importance of developing 21st-century competencies, including critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, adaptability, leadership, digital literacy, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving abilities. Special attention was given to preparing AI-augmented graduates capable of thriving in technology-driven workplaces while retaining strong human-centred competencies.

A significant outcome of the workshop was the introduction and application of the COL's Employability Model and Employability Readiness Score Card. Participants conducted institutional self-assessments across four dimensions: Sensitisation and Career Awareness, Career Counselling and Career Fostering, Evaluation of Employability Interventions, and Career Support for Learners. The exercise revealed that while a few institutions demonstrated strong employability practices, the majority required substantial improvement in career support systems, employability integration, and institutional planning. The assessment process enabled participants to identify strengths, gaps, and strategic priorities for future interventions.

The workshop further explored strategies for integrating employability attributes within academic curricula. Sessions led by Dr. Indrani Kalita, KKHSOU, introduced the Quintuple Helix Model and systematic approaches to curriculum design, mapping, and competency integration. Participants examined how employability skills can be embedded through learning outcomes, pedagogical strategies, experiential learning pathways, and assessment mechanisms. Practical demonstrations illustrated how employability-oriented curriculum frameworks can be developed and adapted within institutional contexts.

Digital learning and technology-enabled education formed another important component of the programme. Participants were introduced to MOOCs, Open Educational Resources (OER), blended learning models, Learning Management Systems (LMS), and national digital education initiatives such as SWAYAM, SWAYAM Prabha, DIKSHA, e-PG Pathshala, and the National Digital Library of India. These discussions highlighted the role of flexible learning pathways and digital platforms in enhancing access, lifelong learning, and employability-oriented education.

The final day focused on institutional implementation. Participants engaged in discipline-specific job role mapping, identification of required soft skills, and the development of draft Graduate Employability Frameworks tailored to their institutions. Through collaborative exercises, institutions identified employability priorities, implementation strategies, monitoring mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement approaches. Participants were encouraged to refine these frameworks and submit them to COL-CEMCA for further review and guidance.

The valedictory session underscored the need to address the challenge of "jobless growth" through stronger alignment between higher education and workforce requirements.

Overall, the workshop successfully enhanced awareness, knowledge, and institutional capacity regarding graduate employability and career readiness. It provided participants with practical frameworks, assessment tools, curriculum strategies, and implementation roadmaps that can support the transformation of higher education institutions into learner-centred, competency-based, and employability-oriented ecosystems aligned with the aspirations of NEP 2020 and the evolving demands of the global workforce.

Background

Graduate employability has emerged as a critical concern in higher education due to the growing mismatch between academic qualifications and labour market requirements. While higher education institutions produce a large number of graduates annually, employers increasingly report shortages of job-ready candidates possessing the skills, competencies, and attributes required in contemporary workplaces. According to recent national reports, only a limited proportion of graduates are considered employable, highlighting the urgent need for curriculum reforms, competency-based learning, industry engagement, and career development support mechanisms.

Recognising this challenge, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), through the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), has developed the Graduate Employability Model and Employability Scorecard to assist higher education institutions in assessing and strengthening their employability ecosystem. The model provides a structured framework for integrating employability into institutional policies, curricula, teaching-learning processes, and student support services.

In this context, KKHSOU, Assam and COL-CEMCA, New Delhi jointly organised the Three-Day North-East Regional Workshop-cum-Sensitisation Programme on "Graduate Employability and Career Readiness in Higher Education" from 4–6 June 2026. The workshop aimed to build institutional capacity, promote employability-oriented educational practices, and support higher education institutions in developing context-specific strategies to prepare graduates for a dynamic and rapidly evolving world of work.

Objectives of the Workshop

The Workshop-cum-Sensitisation Programme sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of graduate employability concepts, frameworks, and models among higher education stakeholders.
2. Enable educators to align curricula and learning outcomes with industry requirements, emerging occupations, and future-ready skills.
3. Build institutional and individual capacity to design skill-based, outcome-oriented, and career-focused academic programmes and courses.
4. Strengthen competencies in integrating soft skills, life skills, digital skills, and professional skills within academic curricula and co-curricular activities.
5. Facilitate the preparation of Graduate Employability Action Plans at the institutional level to promote sustainable and measurable improvements in graduate outcomes.

Methodology

- The workshop adopted a participatory, learner-centred, and practice-oriented approach to promote active engagement and meaningful learning among participants from higher education institutions across the North-Eastern region.

- A Pre-Workshop Survey was administered through Google Forms to assess participants' baseline knowledge, awareness, and perceptions regarding graduate employability, career readiness, and institutional practices. The findings helped shape the focus and delivery of the workshop sessions.

- A Post-Workshop Survey was conducted at the end of the programme to evaluate learning outcomes, assess changes in participants' understanding of employability concepts, and collect feedback on the effectiveness and relevance of the workshop.

- Experiential learning activities formed a key component of the programme. Participants engaged in employability skill identification exercises, curriculum mapping activities, institutional self-assessment using the COL Employability Scorecard, and preparation of institutional graduate employability framework drafts.

- Group work and collaborative learning were extensively used to encourage peer interaction, knowledge sharing, and collective problem-solving. Participants worked in multidisciplinary teams to identify employability gaps, propose interventions, and develop institution-specific strategies.

- Reflective discussions and plenary presentations enabled participants to share institutional experiences, present group findings, and receive feedback from resource persons and peers.

- The workshop also employed constructivist learning approaches, allowing participants to contextualise employability concepts within their own institutional settings and develop practical action plans for implementation.

- The integration of surveys, expert inputs, hands-on activities, collaborative exercises, and reflective practices created an interactive learning environment that facilitated capacity building and supported the development of actionable strategies for enhancing graduate employability and career readiness.

Participants

The workshop witnessed the participation of 41 faculty members and academic administrators (23 male and 18 female) representing 19 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from Assam, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. The participating institutions included leading universities such as Gauhati University, Cotton University, Mizoram University, Madhabdev University, Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University, Assam down town University, Birangana Sati Sadhani Rajyik Vishwavidyalaya, and Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), along with a few provincialised colleges.

The participants represented a wide range of academic disciplines, including Education, Sociology, Political Science, Economics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Commerce, English, Philosophy, Biotechnology, Computer Science, and Library and Information Science. This diverse institutional and disciplinary representation enriched the deliberations, collaborative activities, and knowledge-sharing sessions throughout the workshop. It provided participants with opportunities to exchange experiences, discuss employability-related challenges and opportunities from multiple perspectives, and explore innovative approaches for strengthening graduate employability and career readiness within their respective institutions.

The multidisciplinary nature of the participant group significantly contributed to the quality of discussions and facilitated the development of context-specific strategies for enhancing employability outcomes in higher education.



Photo 2. *Group Photograph of the participants*

DAY 1 | **4 June 2026, Thursday**

INAUGURAL SESSION

The workshop commenced with the opening remarks by Dr. Indrani Kalita, Programme Coordinator, who extended a warm welcome to the distinguished guests, resource persons, and participants. In her opening remarks, she highlighted the relevance of the workshop in strengthening graduate employability and enhancing career readiness within the higher education sector.

The formal welcome address was delivered by Prof. Pranab Saikia, Registrar, KKHSOU and Programme Director of the Workshop. He underscored the growing imperative for higher education institutions to respond proactively to evolving workforce requirements and changing labour-market dynamics. He emphasised the critical role of universities and colleges in equipping graduates with the knowledge, skills, competencies, and dispositions required to navigate an increasingly complex and rapidly changing employment landscape. He also acknowledged the support and collaboration of COL-CEMCA in promoting and advancing employability-focused initiatives in higher education.

The inaugural address was delivered by Prof. Nripendra Narayan Sharma, Director, Maniram Dewan School of Management. Reflecting on the challenges surrounding graduate employability, he observed that workforce expectations vary considerably across industries and sectors, necessitating a more responsive and flexible approach to higher education. He emphasised the need for institutions to continuously review and update their curricula, pedagogical approaches, and academic practices to ensure greater alignment with emerging industry requirements. He also appreciated the Graduate Employability Framework developed by COL-CEMCA and encouraged participating institutions to examine its applicability and explore opportunities for integrating the framework into their institutional planning and practices.



Photo 2. *Inaugural Session -Dr. B Shadrach Addressing Participants via Zoom*

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, COL-CEMCA, who situated the discussion on graduate employability within the broader transformation of higher education envisaged under NEP 2020. He highlighted the need to reimagine the purpose and outcomes of higher education beyond the conventional emphasis on the acquisition of academic qualifications. He emphasised that employability should be understood as a continuous and lifelong process of developing, adapting, and applying competencies, rather than being limited to securing an initial employment opportunity.

Dr. Shadrach further highlighted the growing importance of critical thinking, socio-emotional competencies, digital capabilities, adaptability, and entrepreneurial mindsets in preparing graduates for a rapidly evolving world of work. He introduced participants to the COL Graduate Employability Framework, outlining its four interconnected phases —Assessment, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation—as a structured approach for institutions seeking to strengthen their employability ecosystem. He also elaborated on the Institutional Employability Scorecard and key employability indicators, explaining how these tools can support institutions in assessing their existing practices, identifying areas for improvement, tracking progress, and developing evidence-informed strategies for enhancing graduate employability.

An overview of the workshop was subsequently presented by Prof. Anirban Ghosh, Professor, Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU), Kolkata. He outlined the objectives and expected outcomes of the initiative and emphasised the important role of higher education institutions in addressing the persistent gap between graduate capabilities and evolving industry and workforce expectations. He stressed the need to move beyond conventional curriculum-based approaches and systematically embed employability-oriented skills and competencies across academic programmes and institutional practices. He also familiarised participants with the participatory design of the workshop, which incorporated demonstrations, facilitated discussions, experiential activities, and collaborative exercises to encourage active engagement and institutional reflection.

The inaugural session concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Indrani Kalita, Programme Coordinator, who expressed her appreciation to COL-CEMCA and KKHSOU, the distinguished guests and resource persons, participating institutions, organising committee members, and support staff for their valuable contributions and support towards the successful commencement of the workshop.



Photo 2. *Inaugural Session -Dr. Indrani Kalita Addressing Participants*

Technical Session I

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) for Enhancing Graduate Employability

The session commenced with a comprehensive presentation on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) delivered by Professor Pranab Saikia of KKHSOU. The presentation highlighted that India's higher education system is currently at a critical juncture, driven by the transformative vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The policy envisages achieving a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 50 percent by 2035, which would require accommodating approximately 86.11 million learners within the higher education system. Drawing upon contemporary global market trends, the speaker emphasised the ongoing transition from traditional qualification-based education towards competency-driven learning ecosystems. Given that more than 65 percent of India's population comprises youth, the session underscored the urgency of implementing systemic educational reforms to effectively harness the nation's demographic dividend and avoid the risks associated with inadequate workforce preparedness.

To contextualise these developments, the session elaborated on the foundational principles of the UGC Quality Mandate (2018) and the key provisions of NEP 2020. The UGC Quality Mandate is anchored in three broad objectives: enhancing teaching and learning through dynamic, learner-centred pedagogical approaches; fostering institutional environments that promote research and innovation; and strengthening employability alongside social responsibility to produce competent and socially conscious graduates. These objectives are reinforced by the five pillars of NEP 2020—access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability. Together, these frameworks advocate a paradigm shift from a rigid, teacher-centred system to a flexible, learner-focused model in which instructional practices are tailored to diverse learning needs and educators assume the role of facilitators guiding students toward discovery, engagement, and practical application of knowledge.

The presentation further explained that Outcome-Based Education is fundamentally a learner-centric approach that focuses on clearly defined student outcomes. It emphasises what learners are expected to know, understand, and be capable of doing upon completion of a course or programme. Effective implementation of OBE requires the formulation of measurable learning outcomes that guide curriculum design and instructional practices. It also necessitates the incorporation of diverse and engaging learning activities that foster deeper understanding and skill acquisition. The OBE framework follows a systematic four-stage process: adopting a holistic systems approach in which all educational components function cohesively; defining explicit and measurable learning outcomes; designing effective teaching-learning transactions to facilitate achievement of these outcomes; and developing robust assessment mechanisms to verify that graduates possess the intended knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies necessary for real-world application.

The session highlighted four fundamental questions that educators must address to ensure successful implementation of OBE and continuous improvement in student learning. These include determining what learners should know and be able to do, understanding why those outcomes are important, identifying the most effective instructional strategies to achieve them, establishing appropriate methods for assessing achievement through tools such as rubrics and performance-based tasks, and devising mechanisms to bridge gaps between expected and actual outcomes through feedback and curricular refinement.



Photo 2. *Session I -Professor Pranab Saikia leading the session*

At the operational level, OBE is supported by the systematic mapping of learning objectives across three major domains of learning. The Cognitive Domain focuses on intellectual development, progressing from remembering and understanding to analysing, evaluating, and creating, while integrating factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive forms of knowledge. The Affective Domain addresses values, attitudes, and emotional development, progressing through stages ranging from receiving and responding to organising and characterising. The Psychomotor Domain emphasises physical skills, coordination, and manual proficiency, advancing from imitation and manipulation to precision, articulation, and naturalisation.

To facilitate the practical application of these principles in curriculum development, the session introduced the Anderson-Bloom Taxonomy Matrix as an effective tool for aligning learning outcomes, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. The session further emphasised that assessment should function as an integral component of the teaching-learning process and serve as a continuous feedback mechanism rather than merely a final evaluative exercise. Traditional written examinations were identified as insufficient for assessing higher-order cognitive processes such as evaluation and creation. Consequently, the Professor Saikia advocated the adoption of diversified and continuous assessment methods, including practical exercises, case studies, field-based activities, and live projects, to more accurately measure complex competencies and real-world performance.

The presentation concluded by positioning employability as a central objective of curriculum design rather than a secondary outcome of higher education. In an era where labour market demands are evolving rapidly and nearly 40 percent of core job skills are expected to change by 2030, educational institutions must proactively redesign learning experiences to align with emerging workforce requirements. By adopting standardised curriculum frameworks that conform to the guidelines of regulatory bodies such as the UGC and AICTE, universities can systematically develop graduates who possess not only strong academic knowledge but also essential employability skills. These include emotional intelligence, effective communication, teamwork, time management, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and ethical awareness, all of which are indispensable for professional success and responsible citizenship.

Technical Session II

Technical Session II: Pre-Workshop Survey Report

The second session of the workshop featured the presentation of the Pre-Workshop Survey Report by Dr. Indrani Kalita, Programme Coordinator and Assistant Professor of Education who shared the findings of a baseline survey conducted among the participants prior to the commencement of the technical sessions. The survey was designed to assess participants' demographic profile, existing understanding of graduate employability, awareness of labour market requirements, and familiarity with institutional employability frameworks. The findings provided valuable insights into the preparedness of participants and helped contextualise the subsequent workshop deliberations.

The survey received responses from 38 participants representing various higher education institutions in the North-Eastern region. Analysis of the responses revealed that Assistant Professors constituted the largest group of participants (57.9%), followed by Professors (23.7%), while the remaining respondents comprised academic administrators and directors. Gender-wise, the respondents included 26 male participants (68.4%) and 12 female participants (31.6%).

Presenting the findings, Dr. Kalita highlighted that the majority of respondents rated their knowledge of graduate employability concepts, labour market expectations, and institutional employability frameworks at an average level on a five-point scale ranging from Very Low to Very High. Only a small number of participants reported either low or high levels of awareness, while none indicated a very high level of expertise in these areas. The findings suggested that although participants possessed a basic understanding of employability-related issues, there remained considerable scope for capacity building and institutional sensitisation.

Dr. Kalita emphasised that the survey findings clearly reflected the need for structured interventions to strengthen graduate employability within higher education institutions. Referring to the provisions of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, she highlighted that higher education must move beyond traditional degree-oriented approaches and focus on developing competencies, skills, values, and professional attributes that enhance learners' employability and career readiness. She further stressed that NEP 2020 advocates multidisciplinary learning, Outcome-Based Education (OBE), experiential learning, internships, entrepreneurship, and skill integration as key strategies for preparing graduates for a rapidly changing world of work.

The session concluded with a discussion on the importance of aligning curriculum, pedagogy, assessment practices, and student support services with employability goals. Dr. Kalita noted that the workshop would provide participants with practical frameworks and tools to strengthen employability initiatives within their respective institutions and contribute to the realisation of NEP 2020 objectives.

Technical Session III

Introduction to Graduate Employability and Identification of 21st Century Skills

The session was facilitated by Professor Anirban Ghosh, Professor of Commerce & Director, CIQA, Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata & Consultant, COL-CEMCA, who focused on emerging challenges and opportunities related to graduate employability within higher education. The session examined the need for systemic reforms in curriculum design, pedagogical practices, and skills assessment to bridge the widening gap between academic learning and labour market expectations. He introduced participants to the ongoing three-year national initiative (2024–2027), *"Strengthening Institutional Effectiveness for Graduate Employability: Pilot Case of ODL Higher Education Institutions in India,"* launched by COL-CEMCA in collaboration with 17 State Open Universities and IGNOU. The initiative seeks to strengthen institutional capacity and align educational outcomes with employment generation, income enhancement, and career readiness.

Highlighting the urgency of addressing employability concerns, Prof. Ghosh referred to recent reports indicating that graduate employability in India remains relatively low. He noted that the Economic Survey of India 2023–24 reported graduate employability at 51.25 per cent, while the India Graduate Skill Index 2025 (Mercer Mettl) estimated it at 42.6 per cent. These figures underscore the persistent mismatch between graduate competencies and employer expectations.

Professor Ghosh identified three key workforce challenges: skills shortage, referring to the lack of adequately qualified candidates in the labour market; skills gap, which arises when graduates possess qualifications but lack the competencies required for specific job roles; and skill underutilisation, where individuals are employed in positions that do not fully utilise their knowledge and capabilities.



Photo 2. *Professor Anirban leading the discussion during the session*

To address these challenges, Prof. Ghosh introduced a comprehensive framework for curriculum development built around three interconnected dimensions of lifelong learning: Foundational Literacies, Competencies, and Character Qualities. Foundational Literacies include literacy, numeracy, scientific literacy, ICT literacy, financial literacy, and cultural and civic literacy. Competencies focus on the development of the 4Cs—Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, and Collaboration, while Character Qualities encompass attributes such as curiosity, initiative, persistence, adaptability, leadership, and social awareness.

The session further classified employability competencies into three broad categories: Learning Skills, Life Skills, and Literacy Skills. Learning Skills emphasise the 4Cs; Life Skills incorporate Flexibility, Leadership, Initiative, Productivity, and Social Skills (FLIPS); and Literacy Skills focus on Information, Media, and Technology Literacy (IMT). Various pedagogical strategies were discussed to integrate these competencies into higher education curricula, including open-ended questioning, role-playing, brainstorming exercises, debate competitions, community engagement projects, essay writing, simulations, and experiential learning activities.

Professor. Ghosh also discussed the implications of technological transformation and the future of work. He highlighted projections indicating that a significant proportion of existing workplace skills may undergo substantial change by 2030 due to technological advancements, particularly in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. In this context, he emphasised the importance of developing “AI-augmented” graduates who possess not only digital competencies but also strong human-centred skills such as critical thinking, communication, leadership, creativity, and adaptability.

To support institutional adoption of employability-oriented practices, a three-stage roadmap was presented. The first stage focuses on identifying institutional strengths and gaps through diagnostic assessment and skills mapping. The second stage involves contextualising and implementing the COL Employability Scorecard to evaluate institutional readiness and curriculum relevance. The final stage emphasises the preparation of institution-specific employability frameworks and action plans to guide long-term implementation and continuous improvement.

As part of the session, participants were divided into six groups and engaged in an activity to identify essential employability skills required by graduates. The discussions generated several recommendations, including strengthening communication skills, emotional intelligence, leadership, teamwork, crisis management, digital literacy, financial literacy, ethical behaviour, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities. Participants also emphasised the need for practical interventions such as mock interviews, debate clubs, community engagement programmes, resume-writing workshops, entrepreneurship initiatives, vocational training opportunities, and the integration of Artificial Intelligence as a life skill. The activity enabled participants to reflect on emerging workforce requirements and explore strategies for embedding employability competencies within academic programmes and institutional practices.

The session concluded with a discussion on the critical role of higher education institutions in preparing graduates for a rapidly changing employment landscape. Prof. Ghosh emphasised that employability should be viewed as a core outcome of higher education and that institutions must adopt a holistic, learner-centred, and future-oriented approach to curriculum design and delivery in order to develop competent, adaptable, and industry-ready graduates.

Technical Session IV

Learning Strategies for Developing Employability Skills

The fourth session of the workshop was facilitated by Prof. Anirban Ghosh, who focused on identifying practical and effective strategies for integrating employability skills into the teaching-learning process. The session emphasised the role of higher education institutions in fostering workplace-relevant competencies through innovative pedagogical practices and experiential learning approaches. To encourage active participation and collaborative learning, participants were divided into groups and tasked with identifying suitable interventions for developing employability skills among students.

The group discussions highlighted a range of strategies for nurturing critical thinking skills, including the use of case studies, brainstorming exercises, problem-solving activities, debates, and opportunities for students to question assumptions and analyse complex situations. Participants noted that such approaches encourage analytical thinking, informed decision-making, and reflective learning.

In relation to creativity and innovation, participants suggested activities such as idea-generation exercises, innovation challenges, hackathons, industrial visits, and exposure to successful projects and best practices from different sectors and regions. These interventions were considered important for stimulating originality, innovation, and entrepreneurial thinking among learners.

For strengthening collaboration and communication skills, the groups recommended the incorporation of group projects, institutional collaborations, student exchange programmes, discussions, role plays, public speaking activities, youth parliament initiatives, and community engagement programmes. These activities were viewed as valuable opportunities for students to develop interpersonal skills, teamwork, and effective communication.

Participants also emphasised the importance of developing leadership, flexibility, and initiative through rotating leadership responsibilities, event management opportunities, peer-learning activities, group assignments, and participation in academic and co-curricular programmes. Such experiences were considered essential for building confidence, adaptability, responsibility, and decision-making abilities.

The discussions further underscored the growing significance of information, media, and technology literacy in contemporary workplaces. To enhance these competencies, participants recommended current affairs discussions, report-writing exercises, digital content creation, workshops, student-led learning initiatives, and the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence and digital technologies. These strategies were viewed as critical for preparing students to navigate an increasingly technology-driven world.

To strengthen productivity and social skills, participants suggested interventions such as time-management training, networking opportunities, educational tours, field visits, community outreach activities, and experiential learning programmes. These initiatives were considered effective in helping students develop organisational abilities, social awareness, and professional competencies.

Concluding the session, Prof. Ghosh emphasised that employability skills are best developed through experiential and practice-oriented learning approaches. He highlighted the importance of internships, field exposure, industry engagement, community-based projects, and collaborative partnerships between higher education institutions and external stakeholders. He further stressed that stronger academia-industry linkages are essential for reducing the gap between classroom learning and workplace expectations and for preparing graduates to become competent, adaptable, and future-ready professionals.



Photo 2. *Professor Anirban Ghosh leading the session*

DAY 2 **5 June 2026, Friday**

Technical Session V

COL's Graduate Employability Model and Employability Scorecard

The fifth session of the workshop was facilitated by Professor Anirban Ghosh on the theme *"Strengthening Graduate Employability and Career Readiness in Higher Education."* The session focused on introducing the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Employability Model and the Employability Readiness Score Card as strategic tools for assessing and enhancing graduate employability within higher education institutions.

At the beginning of the session, Professor Ghosh outlined the expected learning outcomes, which included developing an understanding of the COL's Employability Model, assessing institutional employability initiatives through the Employability Readiness Score Card, contextualising the framework to suit institutional requirements, and identifying curriculum-based interventions for skill development in alignment with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Professor Ghosh explained the four phases of the COL's Employability Model, namely Assessment and Sensitisation, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation, Reflection and Planning. He emphasised that institutions must systematically assess their existing employability initiatives, formulate evidence-based strategies, implement targeted interventions, and continuously review outcomes to enhance graduate employability, entrepreneurship, and career readiness. The model promotes a culture of continuous improvement through institutional commitment, strategic planning, and alignment with labour market needs.

The session also introduced participants to the COL's Employability Readiness Score Card, a self-assessment framework designed to evaluate institutional preparedness for promoting student employability. The score card assesses institutions across four major dimensions: Sensitisation and Career Awareness, Career Counselling and Career Fostering, Evaluation of Employability Interventions, and Career Support for Learners. Collectively, these dimensions help institutions assess how effectively they prepare, support, and guide students towards meaningful career pathways and successful employment outcomes.

As part of an interactive group activity, participants were provided with the Employability Readiness Score Card and were asked to assess the employability readiness of their respective institutions. Professor Ghosh guided participants through the assessment process and clarified various indicators and parameters included in the framework. The activity encouraged participants to critically examine existing institutional practices and identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring improvement.

Following the self-assessment exercise, participants presented their findings and engaged in discussions on the strengths, challenges, and gaps within their institutional employability initiatives. The activity promoted peer learning, knowledge sharing, and critical reflection on institutional approaches to career development and graduate readiness.

Based on the assessment findings, Professor Ghosh discussed the development of institution-specific employability strategies. He highlighted several key recommendations, including the adoption of competency-based curricula, integration of soft skills and employability competencies within academic programmes, strengthening alumni engagement, enhancing career counselling and placement services, and expanding opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training. He emphasised that employability enhancement should be embedded within institutional planning processes and implemented through collaborative efforts involving academic departments, industry partners, employers, alumni, and other stakeholders.

The session also highlighted the significance of the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) and Outcome-Based Education (OBE) under NEP 2020 in promoting employability-oriented learning. Professor Ghosh emphasised the need to develop graduate attributes such as critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, teamwork, communication, and professional ethics through curricular and co-curricular interventions. He further discussed the role of Value-Added Courses (VACs), Ability Enhancement Courses (AECs), Skill Enhancement Courses (SECs), and Multidisciplinary Courses (MDCs) in strengthening student competencies and enhancing employability outcomes.

Particular emphasis was placed on competency-based curriculum design, where programme objectives, learning outcomes, teaching-learning strategies, and assessment practices are aligned with industry requirements and labour market expectations. Such an approach, he noted, would enable institutions to produce graduates who are better prepared to meet the challenges of a dynamic and evolving employment landscape.

The session concluded with another group activity in which participants identified potential job roles associated with different academic disciplines and mapped the soft skills and competencies required for those roles. Participants also suggested appropriate teaching-learning strategies for developing these competencies among students. The exercise enabled participants to explore stronger linkages between academic programmes, skill development initiatives, and employment opportunities, thereby reinforcing the importance of integrating employability within the broader framework of higher education.



Photo 2. *Proceedings at the workshop*

Technical Session VI

Revalidating Graduate Employability Score Card

A major focus of this session facilitated by Professor Anirban Ghosh and Dr. Indrani Kalita, was the COL's Employability Readiness Score Card, a comprehensive self-assessment tool developed to assist higher education institutions in evaluating their preparedness for promoting graduate employability. The resource persons explained that the Score Card serves as a strategic framework for assessing institutional strengths and gaps, planning employability interventions, and monitoring progress toward improved graduate outcomes.

The Employability Readiness Score Card evaluates institutional practices across four key dimensions: Sensitisation and Career Awareness, Career Counselling and Career Fostering, Evaluation of Employability Interventions, and Career Support for Learners. Collectively, these dimensions provide a holistic understanding of how effectively institutions prepare students for successful transitions into employment, entrepreneurship, higher studies, and lifelong learning. The framework encourages institutions to view employability enhancement as an ongoing process involving systematic assessment, evidence-based planning, implementation of targeted interventions, and continuous review.

The resource persons emphasised that graduate employability should be embedded within institutional policies, academic programmes, and student support services through strong leadership, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with labour market needs. Institutions were encouraged to adopt a strategic approach to employability by integrating employability goals into their academic and administrative systems.

Summary of the Employability Readiness Score Card

Stage	Focus Areas	Parameters
Stage 1	Sensitisation and Career Awareness	14
Stage 2	Career Counselling, Intensified Career Awareness and Career Fostering	22
Stage 3	Evaluation Drills	22
Stage 4	Career Support (Pre- and Post-Graduation)	19
Total Parameters		77

The scoring framework categorised institutions into three levels of employability readiness:

- **0–38 points (0–49%)**: Employability Not Met / Poor (Score below 2.5)
- **39–54 points (50–69%)**: Employability Partially Met / Average to Good (Score below 3.5)
- **55–79 points (70–100%)**: Employability Fully Met / Very Good to Excellent (Score above 3.5)

Activity: Institutional Self-Assessment Using the Employability Readiness Score Card

To promote experiential learning and institutional reflection, participants were engaged in a hands-on group activity using the Employability Readiness Score Card. Representatives from different higher education institutions assessed their institutional practices against the prescribed indicators and parameters. The exercise enabled participants to critically examine existing employability initiatives, identify institutional strengths and weaknesses, and recognise areas requiring strategic intervention.

The activity was followed by guided discussions and presentations, during which participants shared their assessment findings and institutional experiences. The exercise facilitated peer learning and encouraged the exchange of good practices related to employability enhancement.

Based on the self-assessment results, participating institutions were categorised according to their employability readiness status. The findings revealed that while a few institutions demonstrated strong employability practices, the majority required substantial improvement in several dimensions of employability development.

Institutional Self-Assessment Status

Employability Readiness Status	Number of HEIs
Employability Not Met / Poor (0–38 points)	9
Employability Partially Met / Average to Good (39–54 points)	6
Employability Fully Met / Very Good to Excellent (55–79 points)	4

Following the assessment exercise, institution-specific employability strategies were discussed to address the gaps identified through the Score Card. Participants were encouraged to prepare action plans based on institutional priorities and areas requiring improvement. Key recommendations included strengthening competency-based curricula, integrating employability competencies and soft skills across academic programmes, enhancing career counselling and mentoring services, fostering stronger alumni engagement, and expanding opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, industry projects, and experiential learning.

The session concluded with a strong emphasis on embedding employability initiatives within institutional planning processes and implementing them through collaborative partnerships involving academic departments, employers, alumni, industry representatives, and other stakeholders. The resource persons highlighted that sustained institutional commitment and continuous monitoring are essential for achieving meaningful improvements in graduate employability and career readiness.

Technical Session VII

Enhancing Courses with Employability Attributes and Skills

The session was facilitated by Dr. Indrani Kalita, who presented a comprehensive framework for strengthening institutional effectiveness and enhancing graduate employability through curriculum integration. The session introduced participants to the Quintuple Helix Model, a multi-stakeholder approach that emphasises collaboration among universities, industry, government, society, and the broader environment to ensure that higher education remains responsive to contemporary socio-economic needs.

Under this framework, universities function as knowledge generators responsible for analysing emerging scenarios, designing relevant curricula, collaborating with industry partners, and monitoring implementation processes. Industry stakeholders contribute by supporting innovation, facilitating commercialisation, aligning curricula with workforce requirements, and providing practical learning opportunities through internships, case studies, and industry engagement. At the policy level, government agencies play a vital role by establishing accreditation standards, regulatory frameworks, and funding mechanisms that support quality enhancement and employability-oriented education. The collaborative interaction among these stakeholders helps ensure that academic programmes remain relevant, responsive, and aligned with societal and labour market demands.

Dr. Kalita explained that operationalising this framework requires institutions to follow a systematic process referred to as “Working the Pathway.” This process is built around two fundamental components: Situation Analysis and Curriculum Design and Mapping. The Situation Analysis phase involves a comprehensive assessment of four critical dimensions, namely the learners’ context, learner characteristics and profiles, societal and labour market needs, and the institutional learning support system. This stage provides the foundation for informed curriculum planning and programme development.

Once the situational context has been established, institutions proceed to the Curriculum Design and Mapping phase. This stage serves as a detailed blueprint for programme development and includes the identification of programme titles, programme objectives, core themes, learning outcomes, required competencies, employability skills, learning content, learning activities, learning resources, assessment strategies, and modes of delivery. The objective is to ensure that all elements of curriculum design are systematically aligned with desired graduate outcomes and employability requirements.

The session further explored the integration of employability competencies within teaching-learning processes through a structured competency framework covering multiple skill domains. Within the cognitive domain, competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and analytical reasoning were linked to specific pedagogical approaches and assessment methods. For instance, critical thinking can be developed through Socratic questioning, case studies, and reflective discussions, while assessment may involve open-ended problem analysis and reflective writing. Similarly, problem-solving skills can be nurtured through scenario-based learning, design thinking exercises, and practical challenges, with evaluation carried out through situational judgement tests and applied tasks.

Decision-making competencies were associated with strategies such as decision-tree analysis, risk-benefit assessment, and role-playing activities, while analytical reasoning was linked to data interpretation exercises, comparative analysis, and research-based tasks. The framework demonstrated how learning outcomes, pedagogical strategies, and assessment mechanisms can be aligned to support the development of employability-oriented competencies.

Dr. Kalita further emphasised that the successful integration of employability within academic programmes requires a structured implementation cycle. Institutions must first identify the programme and determine an appropriate employability integration model and experiential learning pathway. Faculty members are then required to align targeted employability attributes and skills with programme objectives and learning outcomes. This alignment guides the selection of suitable teaching-learning strategies, assessment techniques, and learning resources. The process remains dynamic and iterative, with continuous feedback informing further curriculum refinement and improvement.

Towards the conclusion of the session, participants were introduced to a practical example of curriculum design and mapping. A sample course template developed for a KKHSOU programme implemented in collaboration with COL-CEMCA was presented by Dr. Dola Borkatoki and Dr. Sarmistha Rani Baruah. The example illustrated how employability skills, learning outcomes, competency requirements, teaching-learning activities, and assessment strategies can be systematically integrated within a course design framework. The demonstration provided participants with a practical model that could be adapted and implemented within their own institutions.

The session concluded with discussions on the importance of adopting structured curriculum planning processes and multi-stakeholder collaboration to ensure that higher education programmes contribute effectively to graduate employability, career readiness, and lifelong learning.



Photo 2. *Dr. Indrani Kalita leading the session*

Technical Session VIII

Exploring the Integration of Skill-based Courses in Existing Curriculum (NEP 2020)

The session was facilitated by Professor Anirban Ghosh, who delivered a comprehensive presentation on Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), e-content development, Open Educational Resources (OER), blended learning, and the evolving digital learning ecosystem in higher education. The session focused on the conceptual foundations, development processes, and practical implementation of digital learning resources and online education within contemporary higher education systems.

Professor Ghosh introduced MOOCs as structured, open-access online learning programmes designed to promote lifelong learning and expand educational opportunities beyond geographical and institutional boundaries. He emphasised the underlying principle of MOOCs as providing learning opportunities to "Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere." Distinguishing among various forms of digital learning resources, he explained that e-content refers to digital teaching-learning materials developed for instructional purposes, while Open Educational Resources (OER) are freely accessible learning materials distributed under open licenses, such as Creative Commons, that permit reuse, adaptation, and redistribution. MOOCs, in contrast, offer structured learning environments that integrate multimedia resources, learner interaction, assessment mechanisms, and certification opportunities.

The session also explored different modes of teaching and learning, including traditional face-to-face instruction, synchronous online learning, and asynchronous learning environments. Professor Ghosh highlighted the growing importance of blended learning approaches, which combine online and face-to-face learning experiences to enhance flexibility, accessibility, learner engagement, and educational effectiveness.

Discussing the benefits of digital learning resources, he noted that MOOCs and OER provide learners with opportunities to access courses offered by eminent educators, pursue micro-credentials, earn certificates, and engage in self-paced learning. For educators, these platforms offer greater academic visibility, wider dissemination of knowledge, opportunities for collaboration, and professional recognition.

Professor Ghosh emphasised that the successful development and implementation of MOOCs require the integration of subject expertise, pedagogical knowledge, instructional design principles, and technological support. He explained that the content development process involves several systematic stages, including the identification of learning objectives, course planning, storyboarding, script writing, content recording, editing, and final deployment. Effective MOOC development, therefore, requires collaboration among subject matter experts, instructional designers, media professionals, and educational technologists.

The session further highlighted the role of Learning Management Systems (LMS) in organising and delivering online learning experiences. Professor Ghosh explained that open-source LMS platforms facilitate course management, learner engagement, assessment, and resource sharing while contributing to the democratisation of knowledge and wider access to education.

A significant component of the presentation focused on major Government of India digital education initiatives. These included SWAYAM, which follows a four-quadrant model comprising video lectures, e-text materials,

discussion forums, and self-assessment activities. Other initiatives discussed were SWAYAM Prabha, DIKSHA, e-PG Pathshala, the National Digital Library of India (NDLI), and VIDWAN, all of which contribute to expanding access to quality educational resources and supporting digital learning across the country.



Photo 2. *Participants presenting their group activity during the session.*

The session concluded with an explanation of the SWAYAM credit transfer mechanism, including the roles of host institutions and parent institutions in managing course delivery, learner workload, assessment, accreditation, and credit recognition. Professor Ghosh highlighted the significance of these mechanisms in promoting flexible learning pathways and strengthening the integration of online learning within higher education. The session provided participants with practical insights into the design, development, and implementation of digital learning resources and reinforced the importance of technology-enabled education in enhancing access, quality, and lifelong learning opportunities.

DAY 3 | **6 June 2026, Saturday**

Technical Session IX

Preparation of Outcome Based Learning Activity in Collaboration with KKHSOU

The first session of Day 3 was conducted by Professor Pranab Saikia, who started his discussion from Outcome-Based Education (OBE) with a particular focus on its relationship to graduate employability. He began by emphasising the significance of the higher-order levels of Bloom's Taxonomy—analysis, evaluation, and creation—and highlighted the necessity of aligning teaching-learning processes and assessment practices with clearly defined learning outcomes. The session elaborated on the hierarchical structure of learning goals, illustrating the connections among broad Programme Outcomes (POs), discipline-specific Programme Specific Outcomes (PSOs), and measurable Course Outcomes (COs). Professor Saikia advocated a stakeholder-centric approach to curriculum development, stressing that higher education institutions should actively engage employers, industry associations, alumni, faculty members, students, and government agencies in curriculum planning to ensure that academic programmes remain responsive to contemporary labour market demands.

A major focus of the session was the COL–CEMCA's Graduate Employability Model, which was presented as a comprehensive framework designed to bridge the gap between higher education and workforce requirements. The model integrates employability directly into curriculum design, learner support mechanisms, and institutional practices. It promotes competency-based learning and places strong emphasis on digital and technical literacy, soft skills such as communication, leadership, and teamwork, as well as practical learning experiences through internships, field projects, and experiential learning opportunities. The framework further encourages entrepreneurship, innovation, and flexible learning pathways, including the use of micro-credentials. Professor Saikia outlined the model's key pillars, namely curriculum integration, job readiness, entrepreneurial readiness, employer engagement, alumni involvement, and work experience, all of which contribute to the development of adaptable and market-ready graduates.

The session concluded with an institutional roadmap that highlighted the importance of curriculum revision, industry partnerships, graduate career tracking, and quality assurance mechanisms, thereby synthesising Outcome-Based Education, curriculum design, and stakeholder collaboration as the fundamental pillars of quality higher education.



Photo 2. *Professor Pranab Saikia leading the session.*

Technical Session X

Identifying Discipline Wise Job Role and Soft Skills with Strategies

The second session of the day was delivered by Mr. Ghosh and focused on the practical execution of the Graduate Employability Strategy and Framework within Higher Education Institutions. Building upon the strategic concepts discussed in earlier sessions, the presentation concentrated on translating policy frameworks into actionable institutional practices. Central to the discussion was the HHH Model, which aligns Head, Hands, and Heart as the three dimensions of holistic learning. The "Head" represents knowledge acquisition through thinking, analysis, and reflection; the "Hands" signify practical engagement through skill development and productive work; and the "Heart" embodies professional values, attitudes, and ethical commitment. Through an effective combination of online learning opportunities and offline mentoring support, the model seeks to address socioeconomic challenges by promoting skills that enhance upward mobility, create opportunities for decent work, expand educational outreach, and respond to evolving market needs.

The operationalisation of this framework is guided by the 3Es Framework—Empower, Engage, and Excel—which serves as a strategic mechanism for preparing students to successfully navigate the complexities of the contemporary labour market. The framework emphasises learner empowerment through skill acquisition, meaningful engagement with professional environments, and continuous pursuit of excellence in both personal and professional domains.

To connect broader institutional goals with discipline-specific implementation strategies, the session incorporated a practical activity focused on the Identification of Job Roles for Different Disciplines, along with the mapping of required skills and corresponding instructional strategies. While the conceptual basis of this activity had been introduced during the previous day's discussions, the current session adopted a hands-on workshop format. Participants representing twelve distinct academic disciplines—Philosophy, History, Economics, Political Science, Library and Information Science, Biological Sciences, English, Commerce, Mathematics, Biotechnology, Computer Science, and Chemistry—actively engaged in curriculum mapping exercises using a standardised template.

The practical mapping framework categorised professional preparation into three key areas: Job Role Identification, Soft Skills Mapping, and Instructional Strategy Selection. Across disciplines, the most frequently identified career pathways included teaching, research, civil services, and legal professions. Participants from Commerce and Economics additionally highlighted opportunities within the financial sector, while those representing science disciplines identified industrial careers alongside traditional professional roles. The exercise enabled participants to systematically align curriculum components with relevant employment opportunities and skill requirements.

The session concluded by emphasising the importance of clearly defining expected graduate outcomes and aligning academic activities with employability objectives. Through the establishment of a circular delivery model that integrates student-centred mobility initiatives, employability conferences, capability-gap analyses, and active alumni tracking, the framework creates a dynamic and responsive feedback mechanism. This continuous feedback loop supports institutional improvement and ensures that graduates are equipped with the competencies, skills, and attributes necessary for successful participation in an evolving workforce.

Technical Session XI

Developing Graduate Employability Framework

The session, facilitated by Dr. Anirban Ghosh, focused on Group Activity, where participants worked institution-wise on developing draft Graduate Employability Frameworks using the template provided by the COL-CEMCA. The template covered key components such as the institutional preamble, vision, mission, core values, employability concept, existing policies, rationale, employability indicators, implementation risks, monitoring mechanisms, and action plans.

Participants from the same institution collaborated to contextualise the framework according to their institutional vision, priorities, and local requirements. As the exercise was conducted within a limited timeframe, institutions were encouraged to prepare preliminary drafts rather than complete frameworks. Selected institutions, including Sati Sadhani University, Assam down town University, Guwahati University, Nirmal Haloi College, and Cotton University, presented their progress and shared how they had adapted the template to their institutional contexts.

The presentations highlighted the importance of aligning employability initiatives with institutional missions, integrating skill development and entrepreneurship, strengthening industry partnerships, enhancing internship opportunities, promoting alumni engagement, and developing structured mechanisms for monitoring graduate employability outcomes. Several presenters noted that the exercise had provided new perspectives on employability planning and emphasised the need for broader institutional discussions before finalising the framework.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Anirban clarified that the drafts prepared during the workshop were preliminary documents intended to initiate institutional deliberations. He advised participants to further refine the frameworks through consultations with colleagues, institutional leadership, and relevant statutory bodies before seeking formal approval. He also emphasised that employability frameworks should remain dynamic documents subject to continuous review and improvement. The participants were encouraged to prepare a more comprehensive draft within the following week and align future institutional activities with the employability indicators and action plans discussed during the workshop.

At the end of the session, Dr. Indrani Kalita, instructed all participating institutions to submit their draft employability frameworks within ten days so that the compiled documents could be forwarded to COL-CEMCA for further review and feedback.

Valedictory Session

The valedictory session of the Three-Day Regional Workshop-cum-Capacity Building Programme on "Strengthening Graduate Employability and Career Readiness in Higher Education" was conducted in the presence of distinguished dignitaries:

- Dr. B. Shadrach, Director, COL-CEMCA (online)
- Professor Joydeep Baruah, Director, Surya Kumar Bhuyan School of Social Sciences, KKHSOU (Guest of Honour)
- Professor Nripendra Narayan Sarma, KKHSOU
- Professor Pranab Saikia, Registrar, KKHSOU
- Professor Anirban Ghosh, Resource Person

The session commenced with a keynote address by Professor Joydeep Baruah, who reflected on one of the most pressing challenges confronting contemporary higher education, namely the phenomenon of "jobless growth," wherein rapid economic expansion does not necessarily translate into adequate employment opportunities for educated youth. He identified four major deficits among graduates that contribute to this challenge: inadequate domain knowledge, deficiencies in soft skills, limited adaptability to technological disruptions, and a lack of commitment to lifelong learning. According to Professor Baruah, these persistent gaps have significantly influenced the development of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which seeks to integrate skill development within the mainstream higher education system. However, he emphasised that curriculum reforms alone are insufficient to address the employability crisis. Instead, a supportive socio-economic ecosystem capable of generating meaningful employment opportunities is equally essential. He concluded his address by expressing appreciation to the participants, KKHSOU and COL-CEMCA for their efforts in translating these ideas and frameworks into meaningful action.

Following the keynote address, Professor Anirban Ghosh presented a statistical analysis of the workshop outcomes based on feedback collected from the participating faculty members. The findings revealed a substantial improvement across five key dimensions: Graduate Employability Knowledge and Confidence, Labour Market Understanding, Awareness of Emerging Soft Skills, Integration of Employability Skills into Academic Programmes, and Awareness of Graduate Employability Frameworks.

Professor Ghosh observed that the workshop had successfully facilitated a visible transformation in participants' understanding and competency regarding employability-oriented higher education. At the same time, he emphasised that the valedictory session should be viewed not as the conclusion of the initiative but as the beginning of a larger process. The responsibility now rests with the participants to implement these frameworks within their respective institutions with the active support of institutional leadership and management.

Participants were advised to undertake detailed discussions of the proposed frameworks with their colleagues and institutional authorities, finalise their respective institutional employability documents, and submit them for further consideration. These documents will subsequently be forwarded to COL-CEMCA for review, appraisal, and guidance.

To address this challenge, participants strongly recommended that future workshops incorporate dedicated sessions focusing on organisational change management, leadership engagement, institutional openness, and strategies for securing stakeholder buy-in. Such interventions, they suggested, would strengthen the practical implementation of employability frameworks within higher education institutions.

Delivering the concluding valedictory address, Dr. B. Shadrach, COL-CEMCA, highlighted the major takeaways from the three-day programme and challenged participants to make three important commitments. First, he encouraged participants to build lifelong professional friendships that would facilitate continuous peer learning and collaboration. Second, he urged them to become employability ambassadors within their respective institutions by actively disseminating the concepts and practices learned during the workshop. Third, he called upon them to finalise and implement the institutional employability frameworks that had been developed during the programme.

To support the transformation of universities from traditional degree-granting institutions into future-oriented centres of learning and innovation, Dr. Shadrach emphasised the importance of a "6 Cs" strategy. These include collaboration with industry leaders, integration of classroom technology, continuous curriculum enhancement, capacity building for faculty members, seamless connectivity across academic systems, and compliance with rigorous quality assurance standards such as the Commonwealth of Learning scorecard.

Looking ahead, he stressed that meaningful institutional transformation requires a departure from rote learning practices and a transition from lecture-dominated teaching approaches to proactive industry-engaged models that incorporate micro-internships, experiential learning opportunities, and authentic assessments suited to the era of artificial intelligence. He also reaffirmed the continued support of COL-CEMCA in advancing graduate employability initiatives and emphasised the shared commitment to bridging the growing supply-and-demand gap in the labour market by preparing learners to compete successfully in a global environment.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Indrani Kalita, Programme Coordinator, who reflected on the success of the workshop in bringing together representatives from twenty institutions across three states, including KKHSOU. She expressed her sincere appreciation to all participants, resource persons, organisers, and institutional leaders for their contributions to the programme. The workshop formally concluded with the distribution of certificates to all participants.

Conclusion

The Three-Day North East Regional Workshop-cum-Sensitisation Programme on "Graduate Employability and Career Readiness in Higher Education" successfully achieved its objectives of enhancing awareness, building institutional capacity, and equipping higher education stakeholders with practical frameworks for promoting graduate employability. Through expert deliberations, interactive activities, institutional self-assessments, curriculum mapping exercises, and collaborative learning, participants gained a comprehensive understanding of Outcome-Based Education, employability-oriented curriculum design, competency development, and institutional planning.

The workshop highlighted the urgent need for higher education institutions to align academic programmes with evolving labour market demands and the aspirations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The COL-CEMCA Graduate Employability Model and Employability Readiness Score Card provided participants with practical tools to assess institutional readiness, identify gaps, and formulate evidence-based strategies for improvement. The development of institution-specific employability frameworks marked a significant step toward translating workshop learning into actionable institutional practices.

Feedback analysis from 35 participants demonstrated significant improvements in employability awareness, labour market understanding, soft skills integration, and institutional readiness for employability-focused reforms. Participants expressed strong appreciation for the workshop while also identifying challenges related to institutional acceptance and implementation of change initiatives. The programme concluded with a call for participants to serve as employability ambassadors, strengthen peer learning networks, and actively implement institutional employability frameworks within their respective institutions.

The positive transformation observed among participants demonstrates the effectiveness of the programme in strengthening employability-focused thinking and planning. Moving forward, sustained institutional commitment, stakeholder collaboration, curriculum innovation, industry engagement, and continuous monitoring will be essential for creating learner-centred, future-ready higher education ecosystems. The workshop has laid a strong foundation for advancing graduate employability and career readiness across higher education institutions in the North-Eastern region and beyond.



Photo 2. *Inaugural Session - Professor Joydeep Baruah Addressing Participants*

Recommendations and Way Forward

Based on the deliberations, institutional self-assessment exercises, curriculum-mapping activities, participant feedback, and the development of draft Graduate Employability Frameworks during the Three-Day North East Regional Workshop-cum-Sensitisation Programme, the following recommendations and way forward are proposed

1. Institutionalise Graduate Employability as a Strategic Priority

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should position graduate employability and career readiness as an integral component of institutional planning rather than as an isolated activity of placement or career cells. Employability objectives should be reflected in institutional policies, strategic plans, academic programmes, student support systems, and quality assurance mechanisms.

2. Finalise and Implement Institution-Specific Graduate Employability Frameworks

The draft Graduate Employability Frameworks prepared during the workshop should be further refined through consultations with faculty members, institutional leadership, statutory bodies, students, employers, and other stakeholders. The final frameworks should clearly articulate the institution's vision, objectives, employability indicators, implementation strategies, responsibilities, timelines, risks, and monitoring mechanisms.

Institutions should move from preparation of frameworks to implementation through time-bound Graduate Employability Action Plans with clearly identified institutional responsibilities and measurable outputs.

3. Strengthen Competency-Based and Outcome-Based Curriculum Design

HEIs should systematically review their curricula to ensure alignment among Programme Outcomes (POs), Programme Specific Outcomes (PSOs), Course Outcomes (COs), teaching-learning strategies, assessment practices, and emerging labour-market requirements.

Employability attributes should be explicitly mapped within courses and programmes, with greater emphasis on competency development rather than knowledge acquisition alone. Value-Added Courses (VACs), Ability Enhancement Courses (AECs), Skill Enhancement Courses (SECs), and Multidisciplinary Courses (MDCs) may be strategically utilised to strengthen employability competencies.

4. Integrate Employability Skills Across the Curriculum

Employability skills should not be treated as stand-alone or add-on components. Critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, leadership, adaptability, emotional intelligence, problem-solving, digital literacy, financial literacy, ethical behaviour, and entrepreneurial capabilities should be embedded across academic and co-curricular experiences.

Institutions should use discipline-specific job-role mapping to identify the competencies required for different career pathways and subsequently align these competencies with appropriate learning activities and assessment methods.

Recommendations and Way Forward

5. Expand Experiential and Practice-Based Learning

Institutions should provide greater opportunities for students to learn through practice and authentic workplace experiences. This should include internships, apprenticeships, micro-internships, field projects, industry projects, community engagement, industrial visits, simulations, live projects, hackathons, and entrepreneurship initiatives.

Authentic and performance-based assessment should complement conventional examinations so that students can demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge and competencies in real-world situations. The workshop specifically emphasised internships, field exposure, industry engagement, community-based projects, and collaborative partnerships as important mechanisms for strengthening employability.

6. Strengthen Career Counselling, Mentoring and Placement Support

HEIs should strengthen institutional career support systems across the entire student lifecycle, beginning with career awareness and extending to career counselling, mentoring, placement, entrepreneurship, higher education, and post-graduation transition support.

Career services should move beyond placement-oriented activities and provide structured support for career exploration, employability skills, resume development, interview preparation, professional networking, entrepreneurship, and lifelong career development.

7. Establish Stronger Industry and Employer Partnerships

Institutions should develop sustained partnerships with industry, employers, professional bodies, government agencies, civil society organisations, and other relevant stakeholders. These partnerships should extend beyond occasional guest lectures to include curriculum review, job-role identification, internships, apprenticeships, live projects, mentoring, industrial visits, skill development, recruitment, and feedback on graduate competencies.

8. Develop and Strengthen Alumni Engagement

Alumni should be systematically integrated into institutional employability initiatives. HEIs may establish structured alumni mentoring networks through which graduates can support students with career guidance, professional mentoring, industry exposure, internships, networking, entrepreneurship, and employment opportunities.

Institutions should also strengthen alumni tracking systems to generate information on graduate destinations and career progression.

9. Promote Digital, AI and Future-Ready Competencies

In view of rapid technological transformation, institutions should prepare students to become AI-augmented and digitally capable graduates. Digital literacy, information and media literacy, responsible use of Artificial Intelligence, digital content creation, data-related competencies, and technology-enabled problem-solving should be integrated into academic and co-curricular learning.

Recommendations and Way Forward

10. Strengthen Faculty Capacity for Employability-Oriented Education

Faculty members should receive continued professional development on Outcome-Based Education, competency-based curriculum design, curriculum mapping, experiential pedagogy, authentic assessment, career mentoring, digital learning, AI-enabled education, and employability integration.

Institutions may establish internal communities of practice or employability working groups to facilitate peer learning and the sharing of successful practices across departments.

11. Strengthen Leadership Engagement and Change Management

A major challenge identified by participants was the difficulty of securing institutional acceptance and administrative support after returning from professional development programmes. Therefore, employability initiatives should receive active support from institutional leadership and management.

12. Establish Institutional Employability Monitoring and Graduate Tracking Systems

HEIs should develop mechanisms for regularly monitoring employability interventions and their outcomes. Key indicators may include student participation in internships and experiential learning, career counselling utilisation, skill-development participation, employer engagement, placement and entrepreneurship outcomes, alumni engagement, and graduate progression.

13. Create a Regional Peer-Learning and Employability Network

The participating institutions should be encouraged to establish a North-East regional network of employability practitioners, faculty members, career service professionals, and institutional coordinators. Such a network can facilitate regular exchange of good practices, peer mentoring, collaborative projects, sharing of resources, and joint engagement with employers and industry.

The network could also support institutions with lower employability-readiness scores through peer mentoring and institutional collaboration.

14. Establish a Structured Post-Workshop Follow-Up Mechanism

The workshop should be followed by a structured implementation and review process rather than being treated as a standalone capacity-building event. Participating institutions should submit their refined Graduate Employability Frameworks and Action Plans to COL-CEMCA for review and feedback, as envisaged during the programme.

A suggested follow-up cycle is:

- **Within 10 days:** Submission of refined institutional Graduate Employability Frameworks.
- **Within 1 month:** Institutional consultation and approval of the framework/action plan.
- **Within 3 months:** Initiation of priority interventions and curriculum/employability activities.
- **Within 6 months:** Progress review using selected Employability Score Card indicators.
- **Within 12 months:** Institutional self-assessment and reporting of progress, outcomes, challenges, and good practices.

ANNEXURE 1 – PROGRAMME AGENDA

Three-Day North East Regional Workshop-cum-Sensitisation Programme
On Graduate Employability and Career Readiness in Higher Education

4 – 6 June 2026 | City Campus, KKHSOU, Khanapara, Guwahati

Day 1: 4 June 2026		
Time	**Session / Description**	**Speaker / Facilitator**
9:30 – 10:00 AM	**Registration of Participants**	
10:00 – 11:00 AM	**Inaugural Session**	Prof. Nripendra Narayan Sarma, KKHSOU Dr. B. Shadrach, Director COL-CEMCA; Prof. Pranab Saikia, KKHSOU
11:00 – 11:45 AM	**Session I: Outcome Based Education for Enhancing Graduate Employability**	Prof. Pranab Saikia, KKHSOU
11:45 AM – 12:00 PM	***Tea Break***	
12:00 – 1:30 PM	**Session II: Report of the Pre-Workshop Survey**	Dr. Indrani Kalita, KKHSOU
1:30 – 2:15 PM	***Lunch***	
2:15 – 3:30 PM	**Session III: Introduction to Graduate Employability Concept and Identifying Core and Soft Skills to be employable in 21st Century job market (Presentation and Group activity-1)**	Professor Anirban Ghosh, NSOU
3:30 – 3:45 PM	***Tea Break***	
3:45 – 5:00 PM	**Session IV: Learning strategies for Dveloping Employability Skills (Activity-2)**	Professor Anirban Ghosh, NSOU Dr. Indrani Kalita, KKHSOU

Day 2: 5 June 2026		
Time	**Session / Description**	**Speaker / Facilitator**
10:00–11:30 AM	**Session 5: COL's Graduate Employability Model and Scorecard (Distribution of COL's Employability Scorecard)**	Professor Anirban Ghosh, NSOU
11:30–11:45 AM	***Tea Break***	
11:45 AM –01:30 PM	**Session 6:Group Activity -3 (Scorecard Questionnaire)Revalidating Graduate Employability Scorecard for individual institution**	Professor Anirban Ghosh, NSOU Dr. Indrani Kalita, KKHSOU
01:30–02:15 PM	***Lunch Break***	
02:15–03:15 PM	**Session 7: Enhancing Courses with Employability Attributes and Skills**	Dr. Indrani Kalita
03:15- 03:30 PM	***Tea Break***	
03:30–05:00 PM	**Session 8: Exploring the integration of skill-based courses in existing curriculum (NEP 2020)**	Professor Anirban Ghosh, NSOU

Day 3: 6 June 2026		
Time	**Session / Description**	**Speaker / Facilitator**
10:00–11:00 AM	**Session 9: Preparation of Outcome based learning activity in collaboration with KKHSOU as future activity**	Professor Pranab Saikia, KKHSOU
11:00–11:15 AM	***Tea Break***	
11:15 AM –12.30 PM	**Session 10: Identifying Discipline wise job role and soft skills with strategies (Activity-4)**	Professor Anirban Ghosh, NSOU Dr. Indrani Kalita, KKHSOU
12.30-2.00 PM	**Session 11: Developing Graduate Employability Framework (for Individual Institution)Presentation of Graduate Employability Framework by Participants**	Professor Anirban Ghosh, NSOU Dr. Indrani Kalita, KKHSOU Professor Pranab Saikia, KKHSOU
2.00-2.30 PM	***Lunch Break***	
2.30-3.30 PM	**Feedback, Valedictory & Way Forward**	Professor Joydeep Baruah, KKHSOU Dr. B. Shadrach, COL-CEMCA (Online) Dr. Indrani Kalita Professor Pranab Saikia, KKHSOU

ANNEXURE 2 – List of Participants

Three-Day North East Regional Workshop-cum-Sensitisation Programme On Graduate Employability and Career Readiness in Higher Education

4 – 6 June 2026 | City Campus, KKHSOU, Khanapara, Guwahati

S No	Full Name	Gender	Designation	Institution/Organisation
1	Dr. Biswajit Deb	Male	Associate Professor	Birangana Sati Sadhani Rajyik Vishwavidyalaya, Golaghat, Assam
2	Dr. Yuvaraj Gogoi	Male	Assistant Professor	Department of Physics, Birangana Sati Sadhani Rajyik VishwavidylayaGolaghat
3	Dr. Manas Das	Male	Associate professor	Gauhati University
4	Dr. Nandita Khakhlary	Male	Assistant Professor	Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University, Nalbari
5	Mr. Lalfakmawia Sailo	Male	Section Officer, IQAC, MZU	Mizoram University, Aizawl
6	Dr. Eeshan Kalita	Male	Professor, Department of Molecular Biology & Biotechnology	Cotton University
7	Dr. Hiten Choudhury	Male	Associate Professor	Cotton University, Panbazar, Guwahati - 781001
8	Dr. Arpana Ramchiary	Female	Assistant Professor	Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University
9	Ms. Indrani Kalita Choudhury	Female	Assistant Professor	Karmashree Hiteswar Saikia College, Sixmile, Panjabari Road, Guwahati - 781022, Assam
10	Dr. A. Byhnarona	Male	Section Officer	Pachhunga University College, Mizoram University, Aizawl, Mizoram
11	Mr. Dibas Chakrabarty	Male	Assistant Professor	K.R.B. Girls' College, Fatasil, Ghy-9
12	Dr. Marie Kalita	Female	Associate professor and HOD, Department of English	Paschim Guwahati Mahavidyalaya Dharapur 781017
13	Mr. Babul Hoque Choudhory	Male	Assistant Professor	Karmashree Hiteswar Saikia College Sixmile, Panjabari Road
14	Dr. Saurav Kalita	Male	Assistant Professor	Madhabdev University, Narayanpur, Lakhimpur, Assam

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15	Dr.Ramala Sarma	Female	Associate Professor	Department of Philosophy, Nagaon University, Nagaon Assam
16	Dr. Raktim Abha Saikia	Male	Assistant Professor	Department of Chemistry, Madhabdev University, Narayanpur-784164, Assam
17	Dr. Nabanita Goswami	Female	Assistant Professor	S. B. Deorah College, Bora Service, Ulubari, Guwahati - 07
18	Dr. Geeta Upadhyaya	Female	Assistant Professor	Arunachal University of Studies, Namsai
19	Mr. Rupam Hazarika	Male	Librarian	LTK College, North Lakhimapur
20	Mr. Chandan Patgiri	Male	Assistant professor	Bir Raghab Moran government model college,Doomdooma, Tinsukia
21	Dr. Karabi Goswami	Female	Associate Professor	Raha College. Raha Nagaon
22	Dr. Tapan Kalita	Male	Associate Professor	Nirmal Haloi College, Patacharkuchi, Bajali-781326, Assam
23	Dr. Archana Adhikary	Female	Assistant Professor	Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, Resham Nagar, Khanapara, Guwahati Assam
24	Dr. Juri Hazarika	Female	Assistant Professor	Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, Khanapara, Guwahati -781022, Assam, India
25	Dr. Dola Borkataki	Female	Assistant Professor	K.K.Handiqui State Open University, Resham Nagar, Khanapara, Guwahati- 781022
26	Dr. Devajeet Goswami	Male	Assistant Professor	Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University
27	Dr. Rahmot Ali	Male	Asst professor	Agia college,Agia
28	Dr Harekrishna Deka	Male	Assistant Professor	Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University,Khanapara,Guwahati

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S No	Full Name	Gender	Designation	Institution/Organisation
29	Dr Biswa Prasun Chatterji	Male	Professor	Assam down town University
30	Dr.Sangeeta Kakoty	Female	Associate Professor	Arya Vidyapeeth College(A),A.K Azad Road,Arya Nagar, Guwahati 781016,Assam
31	Dr. David C. Lalfakawma	Male	Assistant Professor	Mizoram University
32	Dr. Bhaskar Sarmah	Male	Assistant Professor	KKHSOU
33	Professor Rajeev Sarmah	Male	Professor	Assam Down Town University
34	Dr. Angana Barua	Female	Associate Professor	Pandu College
35	Dr. Sukmaya Lama	Female	Assistant Professor	KKHSOU
36	Dr. Chayanika Senapati	Female	Assistant Professor	KKHSOU
37	Dr. Sarmistha Rani Baruah	Female	Assistant Professor	KKHSOU
38.	Dr. Sruti Sruba Bharali	Female	Assistant Professor	KKHSOU
39	Begum Fatima Ahmed	Female	Research Scholar	KKHSOU
40	Gyandip Saikia	Male	Research Scholar	KKHSOU
41	Kangkana Devi	Female	Research Scholar	KKHSOU