Section 1: Template

Workshop Title

Envisioning Tomorrow's University: A Transdisciplinary Dialogue on the Future of Education

Kolkata, WestBengal | 13th September | Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Suresh Neotia Centre of Excellence for Leadership

1. Overview (Short Intro Block)

The conference is being organized at a time when higher education in India is undergoing a paradigm shift, guided by the transformative vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Universities are expected to move beyond traditional disciplinary silos and embrace transdisciplinary approaches, innovation, and global engagement. It brings together stakeholders from academia, policy, and industry to collectively reflect, envision, and strategize on how Indian higher education can adapt to the emerging needs of the nation and the world. We had the privilege of hosting an enriching conference with around 29 distinguished attendees representing academia, industry, HR, scientists, and alumni. The participants came from diverse domains including Criminal Justice, Artificial Intelligence, Telecom, Material Science, Engineering, Healthcare, Management, Pulmonary Medicine, Sports, Finance, and Instrumentation.

2. Key Highlights

1. Reposition Higher Education to Address Evolving Societal and Stakeholder Expectations
· Reflect on the transformative role of universities in advancing global citizenship, social equity, sustainability, and peace.
· Reimagine education as a catalyst for ethical leadership, intercultural understanding, and lifelong learning.

2. Foster Transdisciplinary, Future-Ready Curriculum, and Pedagogy
· Promote curriculum innovation that bridges disciplines, integrates values, and nurtures real-world problem-solving.
· Advance blended, experiential, and vocational learning pathways aligned with emerging global and national frameworks.

3. Leverage Emerging Technologies and AI for Academic Transformation
· Examine the role of AI in teaching, assessment, research, and administration, ensuring ethical integration and equitable access.
· Explore human-AI collaboration, to enhance learning outcomes and institutional efficiency.

4. Strengthen Institutional Governance, Quality Assurance, and Collaborative Ecosystems
· Reinvent governance structures to support academic freedom, diversity, and responsive leadership.

· Build quality cultures that enable transdisciplinary education, internationalization, and research co-creation.

5. Advance India's Global Academic Footprint through Innovation and Partnerships
· Develop globally benchmarked models for assessment, student mobility, and academic collaboration.
· Enable international internships, start-up incubation, and ethical engagement within higher education ecosystems

3. Objectives of the Workshop

Standard across all workshops:

- Reposition higher education for evolving societal expectations
- Advance transdisciplinary curriculum and pedagogy
- Integrate technology & AI for academic transformation
- Strengthen governance and academic ecosystems
- Expand India's global academic footprint

4. Participants & Institutions

- Mr Arijit Sen, Director and Business Unit Leader, PwC
- Dr. Sitendu Mandal, Honorary Secretary CSIR-Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute
- Prof. Dr. Sarfaraz Ahmed Khan, Professor, The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences
- Sayan Bhattacharyya, Professor, Indian Institute of Science Education & Research (IISER) Kolkata
- Anirban Chakraborti Professor Research & Development TCG CREST
- Ratna Ghosh Professor Jadavpur University
- Sribesh Beltharia, Senior Vice President Human Resources, Shyam Steel Industries Limited
- Dr Jayanta Chakraborty, Vice President- Strategy & Technology Neo Metalks Ltd.
- Dr. Arindam Biswas, Dean (Academic) ,Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology
- Prof. Debashis De, Professor, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University Of Technology, West Bengal
- Prateek Agrawal Founder / Investor Ivy Knowledge Services Pvt Ltd.
- Nandita Sanyal, Head, B. P. Poddar Institute of Management and Technology Kolkata

- Diganta Mukherjee Professor Indian Statistical Instiute, Kolkata
- Brishti Mondal VP & Head HR Nomura Research Institute Fintech
- Nandini Banerjee Lead - Talent Management, Corporate HR Tata Steel Downstream Products Limited
- Sabyasachi Biswas Chief Executive Officer VIKI.AI (Vikram Solar AI)
- Dr. Sahabul Alam Associate Professor Brainware University
- Tanika Chakraborty Professor IIM Calcutta
- Dr. Abhishek Das AU Head of the Department Aliah University
- Dr. Sudhindra Roy Head of the Department University of Burdwan
- Dr. Kuladip Jana Principal Scientist Bose Institute
- Dr. Asit K. Chakraborti Former Professor and Head National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER)
- Mr. Aritra Ghosh Secretory, IET (UK) YPS Kolkata local chapter B. P. Poddar Institute of Management and Technology
- Dr. Chitranjib Dutta HoD GuruNanak Institute of Technology Department of Computer Applications
- Dr. George Biswas Assistant Professor Persidency University Department of Geology
- Debalina Roy General Manager - HR Vodafone Idea
- Dr. Dhirman Ganguly MD, FRCP, FCCP, Senior Pulmonologist The Calcutta Heart Clinic & Hospital Society
- Dr. Shuvijyoti Chakrabarati Deputy Director at Confederation of Indian Industry Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
- Dr. Amit Adhikari "Assistant Professor at Technology campus, " University of Calcutta

Total delegates: 29

5. Thematic Insights

4 Themes – Standard Across Website

Theme 1: Evolving Higher Education Ecosystem & Stakeholder Expectations

- **Key Focus Areas**
    - Bridging the persistent gap between **academia and industry** in India.
    - Achieving **NEP 2020 targets** for enrollment while ensuring quality education across states.
    - Enhancing **employability and job-readiness** of graduates by integrating subject expertise with problem-solving, communication, and life skills.

- Building stronger **industry–academia partnerships** with outcome-oriented collaborations.
- Leveraging **AI and technology** for adaptive learning, assessment, and employability without compromising academic integrity.
- Addressing **stakeholder expectations**—students (quality and employability), parents (ROI of education), and industry (job-ready graduates).
- Developing **life skills, resilience, and mental wellness** alongside academic knowledge.
- Promoting **sports, extracurriculars, and holistic development** for Gen Z learners.

Theme 2: Transdisciplinary Curriculum Development & Pedagogy

- **Key Focus Areas**
  - **Interdisciplinary Curriculum Development** – combining majors/minors across fields (e.g., engineering with humanities, social sciences, and management) to address complex real-world problems.
  - **Pedagogical Innovation** – moving from rote/content-heavy teaching to flipped classrooms, project-based and experiential learning, and mentorship-driven approaches.
  - **AI in Education** – using AI for curriculum design, adaptive learning, personalized assessment, and innovation, while ensuring **AI ethics, fairness, and responsible use**.
  - **Bridging Academic–Industry Gap** – aligning curriculum and pedagogy with practical, industry-relevant skills; strengthening internships, capstone projects, and Professor of Practice roles.
  - **Holistic Development & Purposeful Learning** – helping students understand the "why" of their education, fostering critical thinking, creativity, resilience, and well-being.
  - **Inclusive Education** – addressing rural–urban divides, infrastructure gaps, and accessibility issues through policy, technology, and mentoring.

Theme 3: Institutional Governance for Transdisciplinary Education

- **Key Focus Areas**
  - **Governance & Implementation of NEP 2020** – Moving from policy vision to practical execution in universities.
  - **Transdisciplinary Education** – Governance systems to support flexibility in faculty recruitment, student choice, and interdisciplinary collaboration.
  - **Industry–Academia Collaboration** – Need for active industry involvement in curriculum design, internships, and boards of studies.
  - **Ethics & Research Governance** – Addressing predatory journals, responsible faculty practices, and ethical review processes.
  - **Assessment & KPIs** – Shift toward formative, suggestive (not punitive) assessments; use of Key Performance Indicators to monitor institutional and learning outcomes.
  - **Equity & Accessibility** – Addressing challenges of first-generation learners, tier-2 institutions, and use of regional languages and digital platforms.

- **Holistic Development & Student Autonomy** – Encouraging spiritual learning, extracurricular activities, and flexibility in career choice beyond parental/peer pressure.

Theme 4: Roadmap for a Global Indian University

- **Key Focus Areas**
  - Building global universities with strong international collaborations while staying rooted in the Indian context.
  - Industry–academia collaboration to ensure future-ready skills and employability.
  - Startup incubation and entrepreneurial pathways for Ph.D. graduates.
  - Curriculum integration of Indian knowledge systems (e.g., Ayurveda) along with interdisciplinary flexibility.
  - Mental health, parent counseling, and overall student/faculty well-being.
  - Research orientation at the undergraduate level and promotion of transdisciplinary research.
  - Sustainability, renewable energy, and SDG-focused curriculum and projects.
  - Strengthening placements, reducing administrative hurdles, and ensuring timely Ph.D. completion.
  - Encouraging foreign campuses in India and Indian universities abroad, with foreign language clubs to enhance global mobility.
  - Embedding internships into curricula as per NEP 2020.

6. Key Takeaways

Theme 1: Evolving Higher Education Ecosystem & Stakeholder Expectations

- **Key takeaways**

o **Employability gap** remains critical—42–43% of graduates are not industry-ready.

o NEP's **flexible entry-exit system** will force universities to focus on retention through quality delivery.

o **Industry partnerships** must go beyond MoUs—should involve internships, adjunct faculty, and co-designed curricula.

o **AI should be integrated** as a tool for brainstorming, analytics, and adaptive learning; academic integrity can be preserved through oral assessments.

o **Outcome-based education** with continuous assessment and practical exposure works better than content-heavy syllabi and single high-stakes exams.

o **Life skills, communication, and resilience** are as important as technical knowledge for leadership readiness.

o **Sports, extracurricular, and mental wellness** contribute significantly to holistic student development.

Theme 2: Transdisciplinary Curriculum Development & Pedagogy

- **Key takeaways**

  - **Curriculum must integrate depth and breadth**: NEP's vision of major-minor flexibility is vital, but implementation must balance disciplinary rigor with interdisciplinary exposure.
  - **Pedagogy is shifting** from teacher-centric delivery to **mentorship, facilitation, and experiential models**.
  - **AI is a tool, not a replacement**: needs ethical guidelines, integration into learning, and student clubs/initiatives for responsible adoption.
  - **Industry involvement** must go beyond token guest lectures—requiring real collaboration, capstone projects, and mentorship.
  - **Students need clarity of purpose**: education must answer "Why am I studying this?" to build motivation and career sustainability.
  - **Rural and underprivileged students** face systemic challenges; mentorship, data-driven interventions, and government support are critical.
  - **Holistic growth** through projects, sports, mentorship, and well-being initiatives is as important as academics.

Theme 3:

- **Key takeaways**
  - Governance is the **critical enabler for** transdisciplinary education—flexibility, decentralization, and context-specific policies are essential.
  - Ethical governance in **research and publications** is urgently needed to protect quality and integrity.
  - **Industry participation** must be institutionalized, not symbolic, with real contributions in boards and teaching.
  - **Assessment must evolve** into formative, developmental tools instead of punitive measures.
  - **NEP 2020's vision** is promising, but implementation requires granular detail, institutional autonomy, and experimentation.
  - Equity and inclusivity in governance should prioritize **first-generation learners, regional language access, and spiritual/holistic development**.

Theme 4

- **Key takeaways**
  - Universities must balance global competitiveness with Indian values and contexts.
  - Industry partnerships are critical for employability, research, and real-world learning.
  - Research and entrepreneurial skills should be nurtured from the undergraduate level.
  - Student and faculty well-being, especially mental health, is central to institutional reputation.
  - Sustainability and SDG-linked initiatives should be embedded in curricula.
  - Policies must address stakeholder needs and reduce administrative hurdles.

7. Outcomes / Action Points

- Curriculum & Pedagogy: Move towards transdisciplinary frameworks, integrating AI, sustainability, and real-world problem-solving, supported by collaborative learning methods.
- Governance & Policy: Adapt institutional governance structures to allow flexibility, decentralization, and interdisciplinarity. Stronger monitoring of research ethics and quality publications is required.
- Industry–Academia Collaboration: Deepen partnerships through long-term internships, live projects, hackathons, structured mentorship (including reverse mentoring), and faculty orientation programs.
- Global Competitiveness: Strengthen exchange programs, incubation centers, and placement opportunities. Improve PhD/postdoctoral fellowships, international research collaborations, and global-standard accreditation practices.
- Student-Centric Focus: Early research orientation, mental well-being initiatives, broad-based education before specialization, and parental awareness were emphasized.
- Cultural & Sustainability Dimensions: Introduce spiritual learning, promote humanities, foreign language clubs, and align education with SDGs (climate action, renewable energy, water sustainability).

7. Photo Gallery (Optional)

3 images with captions.