

# Enhancing Student Wellbeing in Alignment with NEP 2020

P. Padmambika<sup>1</sup>, Dr. P. Lavanya<sup>2</sup>, B. Sai Soujanya Kumari<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor & Head, Department of Education, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning

## ABSTRACT:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant shift in India's educational landscape by emphasizing a holistic and multidisciplinary approach that integrates cognitive, emotional, and social development. This policy underscores the critical role of student well-being alongside academic achievement and advocates for educational environments that support mental and emotional health. To align with NEP 2020's vision, this study explores pedagogical strategies to enhance student well-being, focusing on teacher-student relationships, school climate, innovative teaching methods, and engagement in creative and physical activities. The study reviews the literature on socio-emotional learning, inclusive practices, and the impact of physical and creative activities on emotional regulation. It also examines methods to promote well-being, including life skills education, mental health curricula, wellness clubs, teacher capacity building, and student support services. By integrating these strategies, educational institutions can address rising mental health issues, foster a supportive learning environment, and contribute to students' holistic development. This paper provides insights into practical approaches for implementing NEP 2020 objectives and improving overall student well-being.

**KEYWORDS:** Pedagogical strategies, NEP 2020, innovative teaching methods

## INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a landmark shift in India's educational framework, emphasizing a holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary approach to education. This policy is designed to nurture students' cognitive, emotional, and social development, thereby equipping them for the complexities of the 21st century. The *National Education Policy (NEP), 2020* envisions the 'aim of education will not only be cognitive development but also building character and creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with key 21st-century skills. It also instills in students qualities and life skills that aid in their growth, self-preservation, and sustainable development. The NEP 2020 underscores the importance of student wellbeing alongside academic achievement, recognizing that the two are intrinsically linked. It advocates for an educational environment that not only focuses on intellectual growth but also the mental and emotional health of students. To take forward the vision of NEP, *Manodarpan*, an initiative of the Ministry of Education (MoE) as part of *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan* has been initiated to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers, and families for mental health and emotional well-being during the times of COVID-19 and beyond. To study the importance of affective components in a child's learning, a mental health survey of school Students by *Manodarpan* Cell revealed that at the secondary stage, students reported higher levels of anxiety related to studies,

examinations, and results. They also reported higher levels of difficulty in concentration and experiencing intense mood swings.

### **NEED OF THE CURRENT STUDY:**

Childhood and adolescence, the stages of development, that are majorly spent in school, are critical periods when students develop a long-term mindset towards personal well-being and lifestyle choices. Anxiety, depression, and stress among students are on the rise in present-day students due to academic and social pressures. These mental issues significantly impact their academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being. The National Education Policy 2020 of India recognizes the importance of mental health in the overall well-being and development of students and emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to education that includes attention to mental health. As educational institutions grapple with the rising mental health issues among students, the NEP 2020 provides a timely and necessary framework for addressing these challenges. The policy states that mental health and emotional well-being are critical components of holistic development, and schools should ensure that they are integrated into the curriculum. NEP 2020 has emphasized that promoting student wellbeing is of vital importance as students with good wellbeing are less likely to engage in disruptive behaviour. They tend to exhibit better self-regulation and are more likely to respect school rules and norms. Sound mental health and well-being of students create the foundational base for the holistic development and nurturance of students; and are an important precursor for ensuring optimal performance, both, in and outside school life. This article explores various pedagogical strategies that can be employed to enhance the wellbeing of school children, in alignment with the objectives of NEP 2020. This paper explores various pedagogical strategies designed to promote student wellbeing within the NEP 2020 framework.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The current study is aimed to study with following objectives.

- To analyse the recommendations of NEP 2020 in line with wellbeing of students
- To study the influence of pedagogical strategies in developing positive and inclusive school environment.
- To review the role of school climate in promoting positive outcomes among students

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:**

**Teacher-pupil relationships:** Bear, G. G. (2020) highlighted that fostering respectful and trusting relationships among teachers and students has improved student outcomes. According to Durlak et al. (2011), students who participate in Socio-emotional learning (SEL) programs demonstrate improved classroom behaviour, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school. Murray-Harvey, R. (2010) study revealed that the quality of the relationships between teachers and students which, when compared with that of family and peers, exert the strongest influence, on well-being.

**School climate:** A study by Jennings and Greenberg (2009) emphasizes the importance of positive teacher-student relationships in fostering student engagement and academic achievement. A supportive learning environment, characterized by trust, respect, and positive interactions, can significantly enhance students' motivation and learning outcomes. Study by Murray Harvey Rosalind (2010) revealed that the quality of the relationships between teachers and students which, when compared with

that of family and peers, exert the strongest influence, on well-being.

**Innovative and inclusive teaching methods:** Zheng, L., Bhagat et.al (2020) study revealed that the flipped classroom approach had a moderate effect size for learning achievement and learning motivation. Inclusive education practices and differentiated instruction have been shown to benefit all students, particularly those with diverse learning needs (Tomlinson, 2014). By adapting teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles and abilities, educators can create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

**Engagement in creative and physical activities:** The literature review reveals that emotional intelligence and resilience are important in human development and expressive art therapy is widely used as an intervention among people with specific problems. Studies by Ratey (2008) and Malchiodi (2013) demonstrate that physical activity and engagement in creative arts can improve cognitive function, reduce stress, and enhance emotional regulation.

In summary, fostering positive teacher-student relationships, a supportive school climate, and innovative teaching methods significantly enhance student outcomes. Incorporating socio-emotional learning, inclusive practices, and engagement in creative and physical activities further supports student well-being and academic success.

## **INITIATIVES BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO PROMOTE STUDENT WELLBEING**

### **Promoting life skill education**

The National Education Policy 2020, places great emphasis on the holistic development of learners and to achieve this CBSE has integrated Life Skills, Health, and Wellbeing Education as a curricular practice. This initiative aims to foster self-confidence, eco-sensitivity, and a lifelong learning mindset among students

### **Mental health curriculum**

The policy emphasizes “basic training in health, including preventive health, mental health, good nutrition, personal and public hygiene, disaster response and first-aid will also be included in the curriculum, as well as scientific explanations of the detrimental and damaging effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. The policy advocates for the inclusion of mental health education in the school curriculum to promote mental health literacy among students.

### **Health & Wellness Clubs in schools**

CBSE has recommended establishing wellness clubs in school which can favourably influence the habits, attitude and knowledge relating to an individual and community. These clubs can modify our behaviour towards the attainment of optimum health. Physical Education caters to provide physical fitness which an important component of wellness. Schools can also introduce clubs like Dance club, Aerobic club, yoga, swimming, obesity, weight gain club, wellness, cuisine clubs, laughter club, Nutritional Educational club etc.

### **Capacity building programmes for teachers:**

The policy emphasizes the need for capacity building of teachers and other educational personnel to address mental health issues in students. Equip teachers with the tools and knowledge to facilitate through professional development programs. This includes understanding child psychology and effective communication techniques. The difference in the learning styles (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles) of students. Diversity of the background of students in terms of the discipline of study, the social, economic, cultural and educational background. The difference in the pace of learning.

**Learning mode centric pedagogy:** The key modes of learning, viz. physical or offline, online, hybrid or blended modes, and flipped classroom necessitate varying pedagogies suited to the channel/s of communication characteristic to each mode of learning. Therefore, appropriate pedagogy needs to be devised and adopted accordingly to avoid gaps in the teaching and learning process through these modes.

### **Student Support Services**

The National Education Policy 2020 also emphasizes the importance of counseling systems in educational institutions to manage stress and emotional adjustments. Schools should provide access to mental health professionals, including counsellors and psychologists, and ensure that they are trained to provide effective support to students. Schools should also develop and implement mental health promotion programs, including awareness campaigns and mental health literacy programs for students, teachers, and parents. Regularly conduct workshops and sessions on stress management and resilience-building.

### **Creating a Supportive Learning Environment**

Positive School Climate fosters a positive and inclusive school culture where every student feels valued and respected. Implement policies that promote diversity and discourage bullying.

### **Innovative and Inclusive Teaching Methods**

There is a need to recognize the diverse learning needs and styles of students. Using varied teaching methods such as project-based learning, collaborative activities, technology-enhanced instruction, flipped classroom pedagogy etc can cater to different learners. School should also ensure that students with special needs receive appropriate support and accommodations. Implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to make learning accessible to all students.

### **Emphasis on Physical and Creative Activities**

According to NCERT, wellbeing of students can be promoted by developing physical fitness and good bodily posture of students. This can be done by giving importance to games and sports in every school and also integrating physical education in all the school subjects. Integrate regular physical activity into the school routine to promote physical health and reduce stress. Activities like sports, yoga, and dance can be included. Students need to be encouraged to participate in creative arts such as music, drama, and visual arts. These activities can enhance emotional expression, boost confidence, and provide a therapeutic outlet for students.

## **SUGGESTED STRATEGIES**

- To promote sound mental health and wellbeing, mindfulness sessions, relaxation techniques can be employed in schools. In the school, a supportive and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and respected needs to be encouraged by removing all sorts of discrimination.
- Academic stress needs to be reduced through tutoring, study groups, and resources to help students manage their academic workload and reduce stress.
- Implementation of regular check-ins with students to gauge their well-being and address any potential issues.
- Teachers and school administrators can be provided with workshops and resources on mental health awareness, stress management, and coping strategies.

- Student wellbeing can be attained through the collective endeavour of the entire school/institution by working collaboratively and integrating a multi-faceted approach that addresses academic, emotional, and social needs.
- By embedding well-being into every aspect of school life—from curriculum design to extracurricular activities, institutions can create a nurturing environment that supports the holistic development of each student.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a transformative approach to education in India, emphasizing a holistic development framework that integrates mental health and well-being with academic growth. To align with this vision, schools must adopt pedagogical strategies that foster positive teacher-student relationships, supportive school climates, and innovative teaching methods. Incorporating life skills education, mental health curricula, and wellness clubs, alongside capacity building for teachers and robust student support services, can significantly enhance student well-being. Furthermore, embracing diverse learning modes, creating inclusive environments, and promoting physical and creative activities will support the overall development of students. By integrating these approaches, educational institutions can effectively address the mental health challenges faced by students and contribute to their comprehensive growth, by NEP 2020's objectives.

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