



NEP 2020: Fostering psychological well-being in Indian education

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Abstract

Education is the cornerstone of a nation's progress since it shapes people's intellectual, social, and emotional development. Education systems change over time to meet the demands of society, advances in technology, and global issues. India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant shift toward a more adaptable, multidisciplinary, and all-encompassing approach to education. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, a landmark reform to India's educational system, aims to expand the transdisciplinary, adaptable, and all-encompassing aspects of learning. It takes the place of the NEP 1986 and brings education into line with the demands of the twenty-first century by emphasizing skill development, cognitive development, and psychological well-being. The NEP recognizes the psychological elements affecting learning, motivation, and the general psychological health of students by moving away from rote memorization and high-stakes tests. This article reviews key aspects of NEP 2020 for psychological well-being. The purpose of this study is to examine impacts of NEP 2020 on students' psychological well-being, also examine the benefits of fostering psychological well-being in Indian education.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), Psychological well-being, Student development, Educational reform

Introduction

A strict curriculum, high-stakes tests, and rote learning have long been the mainstays of India's educational system. Although this structure has resulted in a large workforce, it has also created a number of difficulties, such as: Lack of conceptual comprehension as a result of the concentration on memorizing, insufficient attention to creativity and critical thinking, High academic pressure that causes stress and mental health issues, as well as differences in the quality of education between urban and rural communities.

Restructuring the Indian educational system to meet the changing demands of students in the twenty-first century is the goal of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. NEP 2020 prioritizes students' overall development, which inevitably incorporates psychological well-being as a crucial educational pillar, in addition to its structural and curriculum improvements. The policy promotes a learner-centered culture that fosters self-awareness, resilience, and mental wellness at all educational levels in recognition of the close relationship between academic achievement and emotional, cognitive, and social well.

NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on a multifaceted approach to education, shifting away from rote memorization and toward pedagogies that are inquiry-based, experiential, and activity-oriented. Such instructional changes aim to foster self-efficacy, lessen academic stress, and encourage positive emotional outcomes in addition to improving intellectual competencies. The goal of the policy is to establish learning settings where students feel heard, respected, and psychologically safe by

incorporating elements such as tailored support systems, socio-emotional learning (SEL), and a balanced assessment framework.

De-stigmatizing mental health and establishing institutional frameworks that facilitate psychological care are essential components of this approach. In schools and higher education institutions, NEP 2020 requires the installation of counseling cells, qualified mental health providers, and frequent psychological therapy sessions. The goals of these support systems are to spot early indicators of distress, encourage flexible coping mechanisms, and close the gap between students' mental health requirements and academic demands.

The strategy also emphasizes the role that educators and educational leaders play in promoting wellbeing. Teachers should be able to identify emotional difficulties, use inclusive teaching methods, and cultivate strong teacher-student connections that promote trust and a sense of belonging through continual professional development and capacity building.

NEP 2020 essentially views psychological well-being as an inherent goal of the Indian educational system rather than an optional extra. The strategy has the potential to change educational experiences, encourage lifelong well-being, and enable students to flourish intellectually, socially, and emotionally by coordinating curriculum innovations with mental health awareness, supportive infrastructure, and community engagement. However, successful execution, sufficient funding, and ongoing dedication from all parties involved are necessary for this vision to become a reality.

Key features of NEP 2020

A ground-breaking framework for reforming India's educational system is introduced under the National Education Policy 2020. The new 5+3+3+4 curriculum design, which covers ages 3 to 18, replaces the conventional 10+2 structure and emphasizes an emphasis on fundamental literacy and early childhood care. The approach promotes bilingual education, holistic learning, and the abolition of rigid boundaries between the professional, extracurricular, and academic domains. In order to ensure a flexible, inclusive, and learner-centric system, the policy promotes the use of digital tools at all educational levels and embraces technology through the establishment of the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF).

A number of reforms are introduced in NEP 2020 with the goal of raising educational standards and putting the needs of students first. This policy emphasizes the significance of cognitive and emotional development, which is in line with psychological aspects of education. An understanding of various learning styles and psychological needs is shown in the use of adaptable curriculum, vocational training, and holistic evaluation techniques.

Key provisions of NEP 2020 for psychological well-being:

- **Socio Emotional Learning (SEL):** In order to foster self-awareness, emotional control, empathy, interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making, NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on integrating social and emotional competencies within the curriculum. This illustrates the transition from rote memorization to comprehensive education based on emotional intelligence.
- **Trained counsellors & wellness support:** The policy requires that wellness teachers and certified counselors be stationed in schools to offer counseling and socioemotional support. It is the responsibility of these experts to create welcoming, safe spaces where students can freely talk about stress, worry, or personal struggles.
- **Curriculum for life skills and mental health:** Critical thinking, problem solving, digital literacy, and self-management are among the life skills that NEP 2020 includes as mandatory curriculum elements. on addition, early schooling incorporates fundamental instruction on mental health awareness and preventive health.
- **Reduction of academic stress:** The NEP seeks to lessen excessive academic pressure that fuels students' anxiety and burnout by reorganizing assessments (e.g., removing or reducing high-stakes board exams and formative, competency-based assessments).
- **Creating supportive ecosystems:** In order to foster psychological safety for all students, the policy advocates for inclusive settings, grievance redressal procedures, safe places, and anti-bullying frameworks.

Benefits of fostering psychological well-being

For the education system

- A holistic learning climate supportive of diverse learners.
- Improved school culture promoting wellness and inclusivity.

For students

- Improved mental health and reduced stress.
- Better self-regulation and emotional competence.
- Enhanced engagement and academic success.
- Greater preparedness for future challenges and careers.

For teachers

- Increased professional satisfaction and reduced burnout.
- Better rapport with students and enhanced classroom environments.

Role of teachers in fostering student's psychological Well Being NEP per 2020

By fostering conditions that encourage students' emotional resilience and holistic development, teachers play a crucial part in NEP 2020. Through their everyday contacts, teachers are positioned by NEP 2020 as facilitators of well-being, with a focus on early mental health issue detection, advice, and emotional support.

- To lessen student stress and increase participation, they must create safe learning environments, incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL), and cultivate connections based on trust.
- Teachers' duties include identifying behavioral shifts and promptly offering interventions or referrals.
- Using enjoyable, activity-based pedagogies, life skills like problem-solving and emotional control are promoted.
- Working together with parents and counselors to provide all-encompassing support.
- To prepare instructors, the policy requires ongoing professional development, including courses on inclusive practices, positive psychology, and mental health.
- In line with NEP's goal of well-rounded development, strong teacher-student relationships reduce anxiety, increase academic motivation, and enhance social-emotional results.
- Good teacher actions have a cascading impact, fostering empathy among peers and lowering behavioral problems.

Impacts of NEP 2020 on students' psychological well-being

Though their impacts will depend on how well they are executed, a number of elements in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 are anticipated to have a favorable impact on students' mental and psychological well-being. Many of the pressures typically connected to the Indian educational system are addressed by NEP 2020, which encourages flexibility, holistic development, and less academic pressure. First of all, the shift from rote learning to experience and competency-based learning, which encourages creativity and critical thinking, makes learning more engaging and less stressful. By eliminating the strict divisions between the arts, sciences, and commerce, the flexible curriculum framework enables students to investigate a variety of subjects. When kids are forced to choose a certain stream too early without sufficient self-awareness or enthusiasm, this can lessen the anxiety they experience.

Second, students' anxiety of failing or losing academic years a major cause of stress is lessened by the Academic Bank of Credits and the provision of various entry and exit points in higher education. In addition, the policy encourages vocational training and acknowledges a range of abilities, rewarding accomplishment in areas other than academics. In order to ensure that children develop strong academic confidence from the beginning, which is essential for long-term mental health, NEP 2020 also places a high emphasis on basic literacy and numeracy in the early years. For young students in particular, encouraging mother-tongue instruction in the early grades might make learning more approachable and less daunting. Moreover, the policy seeks to foster in pupils resilience, empathy, and emotional intelligence by including life skills, social-emotional learning (SEL), and counseling services within the curriculum (as suggested). NEP 2020 has highlighted the importance of establishing counseling services to manage stress and emotional adaptation among students in order to address their mental health needs (Patil, 2022).

"Professional academic and career counseling will also be available to all students, as well as counselors to ensure physical, emotional, and psychological well-being," the policy makes clear (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). Sports and extracurricular activities are vital components of the curriculum that encourage mental and physical equilibrium. By creating a flexible, inclusive, and encouraging learning environment, NEP 2020 has enormous potential to improve the mental health of students. It acknowledges that for students to succeed and grow, mental health is just as important as academic accomplishment.

Challenges and implementation issues

Despite its progressive outlook, NEP 2020 faces challenges:

- **Mental health integration:** Despite NEP's emphasis on wellbeing, it is still difficult to institutionalize mental health care.
- **Teacher training:** Teachers need to be trained in new teaching techniques.
- **Resource allocation:** Infrastructure is necessary for experiential learning in schools.
- **Assessment reforms:** Systemic adjustments are necessary to transition from traditional grading to competency-based evaluation.
- **Parental mindset shift:** Change may be resisted by parents used to traditional evaluation.

Bridging urban-rural gaps

Access to high-quality resources and technology may be a problem for rural schools.

Conclusion

By emphasizing psychological well-being in addition to academic knowledge, NEP 2020 represents a significant shift in Indian education. The psychological concepts of learning, motivation, development, and well-being have a significant impact on the NEP 2020, which goes beyond simple

educational reform. Its emphasis on life skills, stress-reduced assessments, counselor deployment, and socioemotional learning reflects a contemporary view of education as a comprehensive process of human development. It recognizes that knowing how kids think, feel, and develop is the foundation of an effective education.

This strategy emphasizes the psychological needs of students throughout their academic journey, taking a student-centric approach. It seeks to establish an atmosphere that is more inclusive, adaptable, and conducive to learning by integrating cognitive, emotional, motivational, and social aspects. current policy realignment and structural support mechanisms point to a bright future for student well-being in Indian education, notwithstanding current implementation issues. However, resolving issues with infrastructure, mental health assistance, and teacher readiness is essential to successful adoption.

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