

# Catalytic Effect of NEP 2020 towards Emotional Well-Being

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## Abstract

*The present paper probes the role of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in achieving students emotional well-being within the context of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The paper will explore how NEP 2020 can contribute to the enhancement of emotional well-being while emphasizing the role of social and emotional learning (SEL). It will discuss the principles and provisions that aim to promote emotional intelligence and overall mental health that will help in creating an educational atmosphere supportive to the cognitive growth and well-being of students. NEP 2020 envisions a holistic education system that focuses on the development of both academic and emotional abilities by integrating SEL into its educational framework. It focuses on various important aspects, such as providing mental health resources, and fostering the development of socio-emotional skills. This paper explores how these provisions contribute to creating a supportive learning environment that promotes resilience, empathy, and self-awareness among students.*

**Keywords :** NEP 2020, emotional well-being, emotional intelligence, HEIs, socio-emotional learning, holistic education.

## **Introduction**

Worldwide, education policy have been undergoing a period of transition in response to societal and economic demands. The New Education Policy (NEP), which was introduced in 2020, is among the most noteworthy educational changes that have taken place in India recently. Its principal objective is to bolster developmental imperatives in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seek to guarantee all people have access to high-quality education and encourage them to continue their education throughout their lives by the year 2030. This policy's primary objective is to modernize and improve the educational system to meet student's needs in the modern world. One of its main goals is to replace an exam-centric inflexible system with one that is more inclusive and adaptable, emphasizing overall development. This article will examine the NEP and what it means for the growth of social and emotional competencies. This article will examine the NEP and what it means for the growth of social and emotional competencies.

## **Emotional Literacy**

The capacity to articulate how we really feel is fundamental. The ability to express and comprehend one's own emotions, as well as those of others, is the foundation of emotional literacy. This skill is fundamental for developing emotional intelligence, which is defined as the capacity to manage one's own emotions constructively.

Helping students develop emotional literacy skills will allow them to cope with and constructively control their feelings. This as a result will increase their ability to empathize with others, exercise self-control, and self-awareness which are components of emotional intelligence. Therefore, it is imperative to emphasise this in the early grades.

In order to support student's overall development, the NEP 2020 stresses the significance of social and emotional learning. According to NEP 2020, schools should strive to produce students who are not only empathetic and compassionate but also competent to think and act rationally.

## **Highlights of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**

In line with NEP 2020, a number of policies are being developed to address the unique requirements of diverse student groups at all educational levels, including higher education and school level.

### **Higher Education:**

A number of systemic changes are proposed under NEP 2020 to raise educational standards to a higher level. To start with, it plans to add 3.5 crore additional seats to the current capacity by 2035, which would raise the Gross Enrollment Ratio by 50%. Second, it seeks to make available a heterogeneous undergraduate curriculum that covers a wide range of topics. In addition, it implies a three- or four-year undergraduate programme with several exit points. Third, it proposes the establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), the governing body for all Indian higher education institutions with the exception of those offering degrees in law and medicine. In addition to governing, regulating, and accrediting public and private educational institutions,

the HECI will be responsible for investigating the operation and standardization of higher education. Fourthly, it seeks to improve the educational infrastructure by giving students access to high-quality instruction and sufficient resources. Its ultimate goal is to boost autonomous colleges alongside research-intensive and teaching-intensive ones. As a fifth point, it suggests a transparent hiring process, using interdependence to develop courses, and encouraging faculty to improve their performance by developing their skills. Sixth, it seeks to construct, in cooperation with NCERT, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE 2021), which will examine the requirements and minimal credential status of educators. Additionally, it intends to form a nationwide mentorship mission comprised of veteran educators [1].

In addition to the aforementioned goals, this policy aims to establish a National Scholarship Portal to administer scholarships to students from ST, SC, OBC, and SEDGs. It also includes expanding access to high-quality open and distance learning courses, boosting virtual learning, promoting educational opportunities for adults, utilizing emerging technologies in academic settings, and promoting local Indian languages.

The Foundations Of Socio-Emotional Learning :

The term "social and emotional learning," (SEL), describes how people grow in areas such as self-awareness, emotional intelligence, social competence, and well-being. In today's working environment, when the importance of teamwork, flexibility, and empathy is growing, these abilities are priceless.

### **Emotional Intelligence and Well-being**

Emotional well-being is a crucial component of holistic education, highlighting the significance of fostering students' emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and mental health. Holistic education acknowledges the interdependence of emotional well-being with other facets of an individual's growth, such as cognitive, social, and physical dimensions. A holistic approach to education fosters a nurturing and inclusive atmosphere that prioritizes students' sense of worth, dignity, and emotional well-being. Developing strong connections with classmates and teachers is crucial for fostering a sense of belonging, which plays a vital role in promoting emotional well-being. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs are frequently incorporated within holistic education curricula, according to one FGD participant. These programs help students develop key life skills that contribute to their emotional health, including how to control themselves, build healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions [19].

Goleman (1995) discovered that holistic education fosters emotional intelligence through the inclusion of exercises that improve self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal abilities. Engaging in this activity has the potential to enhance mental health and promote a sense of well-being.

## Enhancing Well-Being with Emotional Intelligence

There has been a shift in focus towards topics like positive emotions, positive qualities and strengths, and how they contribute to well-being since the advent and rapid growth of positive psychology in the past 20 years. Recent studies indicate a significant link between emotional intelligence and overall well-being [9,10, 27]. In particular, studies have demonstrated that emotional intelligence has a positive influence on important psychological aspects, including self-esteem, life satisfaction, and self-acceptance. This emphasizes how developing emotional intelligence is crucial for better wellness. Results from studies showing a correlation between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being show that those with higher emotional intelligence are less likely to suffer from depression, more likely to be optimistic, and report better levels of life satisfaction [13].

## Connecting Emotional Intelligence to Emotional Well-being

Emotional intelligence is the capacity to effectively identify, recognize, manage, and utilize emotions in oneself and others [24; 26]. Experts often argue that having a vital emotional intelligence can significantly enhance one's likelihood of accomplishment in various aspects of life, including education, job performance, and interpersonal connections [8; 24]. Several authors have put forth theories suggesting that individuals with high emotional intelligence may experience heightened emotional well-being [8; 23; 24; 25]. Individuals who possess the ability to recognize and manage their emotions tend to have a greater sense of optimism in life and enjoy improved emotional well-being. Researchers have found evidence linking emotional intelligence to emotional well-being, which comes from studies showing a correlation between EQ and reduced rates of depression [13; 26], greater optimism [26], and greater life satisfaction [3; 13]. Thus both theories and prior studies indicate an association between emotional intelligence and emotional well-being.

## Linking NEP And SEL Principles

- **Emotional Resilience:** Emotional well-being is recognized to be essential by the NEP. The ability to identify and control one's emotions is a critical component of emotional resilience, which SEL programs aim to instil in pupils. Emotionally resilient students will have an advantage when they join the workforce and face various individuals and situations.
- **Collaboration and Communication:** The NEP encourages Collaboration and seamless interaction as part of its holistic approach to development. Students learn to get along with others, resolve conflicts amicably, and articulate themselves appropriately via the SEL principles. Effective communication and teamwork are often the deciding factors in professional endeavors, as these skills are essential in every field.
- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:** People with strong analytical and problem-solving skills are highly desirable in today's dynamic employment market. The NEP promotes the development of students' critical thinking skills. SEL supplements this by fostering the capacity to consider other viewpoints and make logical choices.

- **Self-awareness and Goal Setting:** SEL programs assist students in gaining a deeper understanding of their abilities, flaws, and values. Having a strong sense of self-awareness is crucial for establishing meaningful career objectives and making well-informed decisions. People who are emotionally and ambitiously in tune with themselves are more likely to choose professions that fit with their beliefs and passions.
- **Empathy and Cultural Sensitivity:** NEP highlights the significance of an extensive education that encompasses awareness of various cultures and perspectives. By teaching students to empathize with others and be sensitive to different cultures, SEL equips them to thrive in multi-ethnic workplaces.

### **Mental Health & Emotional Well-being Provisions in NEP 2020**

NEP 2020's mental health directives highlight the crucial necessity to integrate students' overall well-being into educational policy. These are an essential step in creating a classroom setting that supports students' emotional and mental well-being alongside their academic success. NEP 2020 has highlighted the importance of counselling systems for students to cope with stress and adjust emotionally, which will help with their mental health needs [20]. The policy clearly states, "There will also be professional academic and career counselling available to all students, as well as counselors to ensure physical, psychological and emotional well-being [15]." This clearly indicates that the educational institution will be offering all students a full range of support services, including academic and career counseling. In addition, there will be enough counsellors designated to ensure that students' mental, emotional, and physical health is well-cared for. The goal of this initiative is clear: to provide a secure environment where students at HEIs may feel comfortable seeking help for issues related to their emotional well-being, academic stress, and personal difficulties. The policy also acknowledges the challenges and demands that students face while pursuing degrees. This is why the policy is pushing for a change to a more adaptable and multidisciplinary curriculum. By reducing the emphasis on memorizing and rigorous examinations, the strategy aims to alleviate tension and anxiety among students. The goal of this change is to give students greater freedom to explore other areas of academic interest and to allow them to reflect on their academic achievements more deeply. The policy stresses the significance of a thriving campus environment to raise educational standards. In such a situation, students will have several options for extracurricular activities, including athletics, groups devoted to ecological clubs, cultural events, and community service. The goal of these varied pursuits is to help students' mental health by giving them opportunities to relax, communicate with others, and develop as individuals. Essentially, a vibrant campus life enhances academic aspirations and fosters emotional well-being. Additionally, it provides students with several opportunities for personal growth, which depends on their opportunities to connect with others, learn to work together, and acquire practical skills outside of the traditional classroom setting. Since there is a need for specific initiatives to help students thrive academically and emotionally, the policy takes into account the unique needs of disadvantaged student groups, such as those from low-income families or those with special needs.

## **A New Approach to Education Based on Psychological Foundations**

The psychological pillars play a crucial role in linking the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023, enabling the transformation of education in India. The pillars that are associated with emotional well-being of students are:

- **Cognitive and Socio-Emotional Development:**

In terms of cognitive and socio-emotional development, the NEP 2020 and NCF 2023 are closely aligned, suggesting an essential link between the two. There is a strong focus on fostering critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the capacity to interpret and assess information in cognitive growth as it promotes inquisitive learning. Emotional intelligence, empathy, and social skills are acknowledged as crucial for socio-emotional development [17]. The objective is for students to establish substantial connections, emotional well-being, and a sense of belonging. This pillar emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment that fosters social-emotional growth. The seamless integration of these elements allows for a holistic educational approach that encompasses both the intellectual and social-emotional aspects of student growth and development.

- **Well-being and Mental Health:**

This fundamental aspect underscores the importance of placing students' well-being and mental health as a top priority. It recognizes the significance of creating a practical, encouraging, and supportive learning environment. It highlights the importance of integrating practices that enhance well-being, strategies for managing stress, and mindfulness into education to improve students' mental and emotional well-being [16]. The integration of NEP 2020 and NCF 2023 ensures that the education system acknowledges and endorses the overall needs of students, fostering their well-being and creating an enjoyable learning experience through the implementation of these principles.

## **Conclusion**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant milestone in India's journey towards educational transformation. The NEP 2020 presents a comprehensive framework for transforming the education system. This policy serves as a foundation for educational institutions to establish a comprehensive framework that encourages student-centered education, holistic development, inclusivity, interdisciplinary learning, and integration of technology. The psychological aspects of educational transformation, as outlined, highlight the significance of considering individual differences and promoting inclusivity, motivation, and engagement. It also emphasizes the importance of nurturing well-being and mental health while encouraging critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, and lifelong learning.

The NEP 2020 signifies a paradigm shift in India's perspective on higher education and has significant implications in regard to students' mental health. By including SEL in its framework, NEP 2020 acknowledges that a student's emotional and psychological well-being is fundamental to their academic and personal growth.

Increasing the policy's focus on SEL is one way to systematically work toward building resiliency, emotional intelligence, and mental health awareness. The goal of NEP 2020's integration of SEL into the curriculum is to create classrooms where students' emotional needs are met alongside their intellectual pursuits. This is a holistic approach to preparing the next generation to deal with the complexities of modern life.

The policy's emphasis on mental health services and support networks draws attention to the fact that it will address students' emotional issues in the institutions. Moreover, students' resilience, social skills, and emotional well-being can all be bolstered by the NEP 2020's push for a more empathetic and encouraging educational environment.

Ultimately, the catalytic effect of NEP 2020 on the emotional well-being of students will be seen through the change in the policy of education. A more holistic and supportive environment for all students would emerge in higher education, where students' mental health is valued for its contribution to their emotional well-being.

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