

## **A STUDY ON MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS IN RELATION TO IMPLEMENTATION OF NEP 2020**

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### **Abstract:**

*The New Education Policy (NEP) announced after 34 long years has taken many steps in this positive direction, and is expected to transform the education system. This new policy of education is still in its budding stage but the very thought of monitoring the psychological well-being of the students is to be appreciated. Education is not about loading a child with information but to develop the body and the mind to the highest possible capability. Mental health and well-being are directly linked to the educational outcomes and the success in the lives of students. Mental health during childhood means reaching developmental and emotional milestones and learning healthy social skills and how to cope when there are problems. Mentally healthy children have a positive quality of life and can function well at home, in school and the society at large. Mental health gives an individual the feeling of worth, control and understanding of internal and external functioning. Since the students spend most of their active hours in school, it gives schools the power to enhance the nature and scope of mental health interventions, fill the gaps, enhance effectiveness, address problems early, and reduce stigma around mental illnesses. In this research the author has emphasized the importance of mental health and well-being and need of counselling to address the issues. Teachers can significantly contribute to the schools counselling programme by giving their full support and encouragement, and creating a motivating environment.*

**Keywords:** *Mental Health, Implementation, Physical Health, Counselling.*

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### **Introduction:**

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, announced after 34 long years has brought about a monumental change in the new educational policy of our country. It has placed high priority and high importance for physical and mental health for students. Even though the policy is in the budding stage it is our duty to appreciate the policy framers and developers to think of student's health holistically. In addition to regular school schedules, there are also several new programs that have been put down by the policy to holistically take care of health. Good health is vital to human happiness and well-being that contributes significantly to prosperity and wealth and even economic progress, as healthy populations are more productive, save more and live longer. For a healthy life style, we need a healthy and balanced diet, good hygiene habits, staying in a proper shelter and getting enough sleep. In addition, physical activities, weight management, and stress management activities are essential. Health is the body's functional and metabolic efficiency and ability to adapt to the physical, mental, and social changes

in the surrounding. It means the safety of the body from physical, social, and mental disorders.

A physical health means body without any diseases or disorder while mental and social health is the ability of a person to accomplish social tasks entrusted to him without defect or error. A healthy person is able to serve himself, his nation and his community and unhealthy person sees him/her weak and merger, unable to carry out the duties and responsibilities properly and become dependent on other and also affects his psyche as well due to sense of helplessness and weakness. Psychologically healthy people feel comfortable and happy in their lives and enjoy life well in all endeavours. While a healthy person enjoys happiness establishing his relationships with people and showing love, kindness, and intimacy. The global pandemic COVID -19 is the challenging time for everyone in the world not only in terms of physical but mental well-being also. The serious concern the world is facing today is psycho-social stress for many individuals, particularly children in their early ages.

#### **Objective:**

1. To study the role and emphasis of NEP on mental health of students.
2. To identify various areas of mental health students and teachers.
3. To study the importance of mental health counselling program and interventions.
4. To study the role of teacher as a counsellor in addition to the traditional roles.

#### **Delimitations of the Study**

- The study is limited to 100 students.
- The study is limited to Dombivli area.
- The study is limited to mental health

#### **Research Methodology:**

The present study is mainly analytical in nature as the secondary data has been collected from various sources to obtain real and detailed image of the present theme of mental health and emotional well-being as well as counselling. The research methodology adopted is a combination of qualitative and descriptive type. The secondary data was collected from various sources such as websites, journals, articles and other online and offline publications. It also takes into account, the extraction of summary of various documents on education policies, their importance, statistical records, historical background, analysis of the drafts and documents related to the education and mental health policies.

#### **Results:**

##### **The Status and Emphasis on Mental Health in NEP 2020:**

The human mind thinks both emotionally and rationally. Right from birth, until adulthood, a child undergoes progressive stages of development with cultural, social, genetic and environmental factors contributing towards his/her mental development. Many schools in the developed nations check for the psychological well-being of the students periodically and the same is reported back to the parents. It's difficult for children to explain what they're going through but psychologists observe how a child interacts with their parents, teachers and themselves. The psychologists or counsellors can identify unusual behaviours early and can help the child express their emotions in a healthy, positive way. An educator's mental health is as important as the student's health. This is

definitely a difficult task but however it is the duty of all organizations to take good care of their faculties. The children must have ample breaks between their study hours and the time they spend on other activities. As always, they must have balanced food, good sleep and socialize not through applications but through people. It is also highly important as parents and teachers to pay heed to our children and notices even the slightest bit of changes in their behaviour and spend quality time with them. Hence, we can address the issues of the children and counsel them appropriately. In order to address this issue of huge burden of mental health disorders and huge shortage of mental health workforce Government of India launched the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) in the year 1982.

#### **The Initiatives by the Government of India:**

In India, there is no separate comprehensive policy to deal with child mental health issues. The existing policies such as National Health Policy, Integrated Child Development Scheme and National Mental Health Programme for India stress the need for developing comprehensive child mental health programme and services at various levels (GOI, 2018). Appointment of a psychologist or counsellor as a permanent staff in the school rather than a visiting faculty would yield the best results because students need not wait to discuss their issues until their next visit. It is important to educate the children early in life, about their health and the right behaviours, so that they lead a healthy life and realize their full potential. These educated, healthy and productive adults will form the base of resilient, prosperous and sustainable communities (GOI, 2018). The Ministry of Education has undertaken a proactive initiative, named, “Manodarpan”, covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing during the COVID outbreak and beyond. A Working Group, having experts from the fields of education, mental health and psychosocial issues as its members, has been set up to monitor and promote the mental health issues and concerns of students and to facilitate providing of support to address the mental health and psychosocial aspects during and after COVID-19, through counselling services, online resources and helpline.

#### **Contributions of Schools in Mental health of students:**

Schools afford a great opportunity not only to identify and support children who are experiencing emotional difficulties but more importantly to promote overall emotional well-being and social and moral development. Schools are imperative in mental health promotion and prevention. School experiences are vitally important in both children’s intellectual development and their psychological well-being, and evidence increasingly illuminates the close connection between emotional health and academic achievement; hence, schools enhance school achievement by attending to issues such as self-esteem and social well-being (Rutter, 1991). School-based interventions possess a great potential in reducing the risk factors and increasing the protective factors to promote the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents. Thus, conducting mental health activities at school level improves the chances of children’s access to mental health or any other services. Their families too feel more comfortable seeking help in a community setting as it minimizes the problems related to transportation, accessibility, affordability, and a perceived stigma associated with it. School settings provide additional opportunities to observe children and intervene directly in school setting if required. This results in

clinical efficiency and productivity as long as mental health services are concerned.

#### **Teachers' role in Mental Health Counselling:**

Teachers can help in improving the mental health status of students by detecting preliminary signs of mental health concerns, making appropriate referrals to health professionals, and also by creating awareness on mental health problems among adolescents. The role of teachers' in promoting mental health is related to early detection of children at risk for mental health problems. School-based counselling interventions can contribute to mental health promotion. Teaching socio-emotional skills, such as emotion management, conflict management, problem solving skills can strengthen students' socio-emotional competence and enhance their psychological resilience. Teachers have a significant responsibility for educating their students, and teaching can be both rewarding and challenging at the same time. Teachers often report that they need support in fostering wellness in their classroom and in identifying and supporting students with mental health challenges.

#### **Necessity of School Counselling:**

Counselling as a profession is definitely a child of the western countries. The Indian society with its strong family bonds and a warm community feeling and spiritual essence has been providing the shock absorbers in times of crisis and a support system to deal with the various psychosocial issues. Counselling as a profession is still in its nascent stage in India as common man is yet to understand the concept of approaching a professional to sort out his problems. The role of school counsellor is to essentially aid in identification of learning disabilities and also assist children with behaviour problems while also working on prevention of inculcating problem behaviour. To solve and develop our education system in such a way that it becomes more inclusive and incorporate in mental well-being, a lot of it depends on mental health literacy among both, educators and students, a proper framework that includes preventions and interventions, and awareness/ directed education- for breaking down the stigmas and promoting mental Health.

#### **Conclusions:**

Education is not about loading a child with information. It is just to develop the body and the mind to highest possible capability. The New Education Policy (NEP) announced after 34 long years has taken many steps in this positive direction, and is expected to transform the education system in all myriads. The government's initiative to improve and enhance the mental health of the students would be fulfilled only with the keen involvement and participation of the schools. Every school at the state, district, sub-district, and block level has to take the ownership. School counselling would lead to the adoption of a school curriculum promoting not only intellectual development but also personal and psychological development. It must be noted that children, especially those going through puberty are extremely vulnerable mentally and the parents/guardians need to tread with caution while listening to their children's problems. Offering mental health services in school makes it easy for students to access help, and they can avail help in an environment that they find safe and comfortable. Psychologists stress the need to prioritize the needs of our kids as mere human beings first; we need to look at the students as human beings, who struggle daily with emotions, insecurities, and anxieties. The best way to help them is by having qualified counsellors on-premises who can understand their problems and help them arrive at

a rational conclusion. This would not only help the students stay mentally healthy in their school years, but it will also equip them with the tools to deal with problems in the future. The stakeholders should think about inclusivity in classrooms and not just based on socio-economic backgrounds. Attention to the girl child can require more than just incentives to show up in school. It also matters what it's like for her to be regular to school. Hence, thinking of the above-mentioned possibilities is essential.

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***Cite This Article:***

**Mrs. Jadhav P.V. (2024).** *A Study on Mental Health of Students in Relation to Implementation of NEP 2020.* In Educreator Research Journal: Vol. XI (Number I, pp. 88–92). **ERJ.** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10754486>