

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020, MENTAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION

*Augustine Borge,
Assistant Professor,
Division of Arts and Social Sciences*

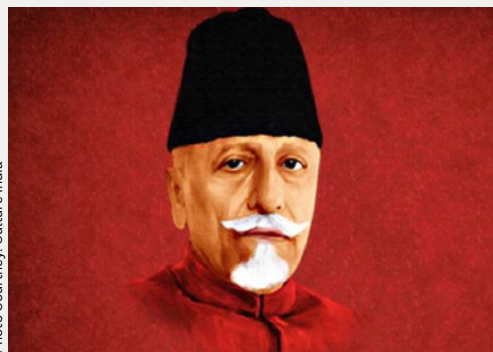


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"Educationists should build the capacities of the spirit of inquiry, creativity, entrepreneurial and moral leadership among students and become their role model."

—Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad



In India, National Education Day is celebrated every year on the 11 th of November to celebrate the Birthday of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, the first Minister of Education of Independent India. The New Education Policy (NEP, 2020), which was revamped after almost 34 years, this new policy is expected to transform the educational system. Some of the few highlights of the New Education Policy, 2020 include allocating almost 6% of the GDP towards education, emphasizing vocational programs, and integrating Indian Sign Language (ISL); the most intriguing part is that students' mental health screening will be a part of routine physical checkups, which makes it appealing. The new educational policy is in the budding stage, but the idea of monitoring each student's psychological well-being is welcome because mental health is an important component of overall well-being. Every stage of an individual's development right from conception to adulthood is important, and factors such as environment, genes, and cultural and social interactions can influence how a child thinks and

behaves factors such as environment, genes, and cultural and social interactions can influence how a child thinks and behaves.

Students can find it difficult to express themselves, but psychologists can identify it by observing how a child behaves when they are with their parents, teachers, and classmates. Sophisticated emotions, such as anger, happiness, hope, guilt, and pride, can be prominent as the child grows older and develops. Therefore, it is imperative to teach children how to manage their emotions.

Students can experience problems ranging from sleeping issues and performing badly on examinations to serious issues such as violence and physical abuse. Many schools in Western countries assess students' psychological health and inform their parents of the results. In this way, the students were regularly monitored. If put into practice, this can be a deal breaker because the psychologist can identify the issues faced by the students, and they can be provided

with appropriate guidance.

The government's initiative through NEP 2020 to improve and promote students' mental health can only be successful with schools, colleges, and universities' ardent cooperation. This initiative must be undertaken by schools, colleges, and universities at various levels. Schools can host online workshops. The best result can be attained by hiring a full-time psychologist or counselor instead of a visiting counselor or psychologist, as this can allow students to talk about their issues freely, and psychologists or counselors can follow up with them on a regular basis.

Education level can be associated with a lack of perseverance and a poor sense of direction. Individuals who are not educated can lack psychosocial resources (such as communication skills, self-control, and emotional intelligence), and can be exposed to everyday stressors such as unemployment and inadequate finance, which can have a strong association with the onset of depression.

An individual with better education and wages can be spared from various stresses that come long with financial adversity, economic adversity, etc. Individuals with little or no education have less or no resources, such as social support, financial support, and control over life, to overcome the consequences of stress.

Individuals with a proper education are more likely to learn about better lifestyles and are well equipped for a better life and career. Educated individuals tend to react well in times of adversity, such as a medical emergency, follow guidelines,

understand medical needs, and interact with medical personnel in an effective manner.

The techniques used by psychologists/school counsellors are as follows:

1. Parent-teacher meetings: Educating parents on the difference between normal and abnormal behavior. Explaining how parents communicate and connect with their children is the most suitable option. In addition, parents and teachers should be guided in recognizing and addressing children's needs.

2. Educating students: Teaching students to acknowledge and respect their bodies. Students should be educated about the difference between good and bad behavior to prevent harassment.

3. Students should be informed of their child's helpline number 1098. Students should also be told about various acts, such as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) and The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2018 reports, approximately 109 children are sexually abused daily in India.

4. Explaining students that it is okay to make a mistake or fail in an exam or project and committing suicide is not a solution.

5. Spreading awareness about the importance of self-defense by learning martial arts, karate, etc.

6. Promoting team-building activities among students to enhance positivity, compliance, creativity, and communication.

7. Therefore, education on

menstruation must be provided.

8. It is quite natural to develop an affinity towards someone or having a crush and make students realize that psychologists or counselors can better handle students' feelings without judging them.

9. Thus, alcohol and drug prevention programs should be organized.

10. It is imperative for students to understand that we live in a diverse community and teach them to respect differences in opinions.

11. Teaching self-management, time management, and social skills.

12. Assisting students in shaping their behavior, personality, thought process, and instilling obedience, respect, and patience.

13. We live in a world where we have access to the Internet, technology, AI, and so on. However, if we want to live a high-quality life, we should prioritize happiness, emotional well-being, and mental well-being. We can achieve greater heights in the field of education, and if we all rise to the occasion by working together, we are certain to witness and be part of an amazing transformation.

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