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## Need To Study Subject Well-Being In Upper Primary-Level School Education

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### Abstract

The current paper explores the Mental health issues among children and adolescents globally and in India as well. The statistically growing rate of mental health issues is a matter of great concern, as it gives rise to various other issues in society, family, or at the national and global level. Mental health issues overall impact a person's physical, psychological, and social well-being. Well-being includes psychological, subjective, and emotional dimensions. The paper emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to promote well-being in schools. Additionally, it outlines the efforts of several nations such as USA ,Bhutan, Japan, Korea, and Singapore, to integrate well-being into their education system. Further, the significance of curriculum in promoting well-being is discussed

The role of the school curriculum in promoting well-being is explored, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach beyond textbooks to encompass classroom activities and experiences.

The paper concludes by emphasizing the transformative power of education in achieving individual holistic development. . In order to achieve individual holistic development, it emphasizes the power of the curriculum, encompassing curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, to shape a child's personality. For achieving holistic development, a relevant and more sensitive education policy is needed.

The concept of subjective well-being (also referred to as "SWB") originates from the ancient Greek philosophies, especially notions such as "hedonia". Hedonism prioritises profound satisfaction with one's life, SWB and "general happiness"; it is frequently referred to as "feeling well," signifying leading a fulfilling life, and is concreted as happiness (Huta and Ryan, 2010; Adler and Seligman, 2016). SWB is both broad and complex, a concept which includes people's cognitive and emotive perceptions, insights, experiences, and assessments of their lives (Diener, 1984, 2001). Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to a person's "overall subjective experience" of both the positive as well as the negative emotional reactions along with global and specific cognitive assessments of their level of life satisfaction (Proctor, 2014, pp 6437).

Andrew and Withey (1976) posited that SWB comprise three main components: i) "positive affect, ii) negative affect, and iii) overall life satisfaction" (Proctor, 2014, pp. 6437). It has been demonstrated that people have high SWB if they experience high life satisfaction and have a positive affect rather frequently (e.g., happiness, optimism, etc.), and occasional negative affect (say, in the form of anger or sadness). Conversely, people have low SWB if they frequently experience negative emotions like anger or worry, are generally unsatisfied with life, and find little joy (Diener et al., 1997).

Subjective well-being can be understood from various perspectives. For this research, subjective well-being has been understood using three perspectives: sociological, economical, and psychological. Additionally, the theoretical frame work includes the comparison of the concept of subjective well-being as understood in the Indian and the western contexts.

### **Psychological Construction of SWB:**

SWB involves the sum total of an individual's perceptions and experiences of both favourable and unfavourable emotions and reactions, and both general and domain-specific assessments of overall satisfaction with life made cognitively. Both cognitive and emotive assessments of one's life fall under the "SWB umbrella" (Diener, Oishi & Lucas, 2002, p. 63). This, SWB is a person's appreciation of one's QOL (overall quality of life); the two constructs have a significant overlap.

Diener (1984) coined the then-nelogism "SWB" as a notion in psychology that seeks to encompass people's self-assessment of their QOL, comprising both one's cognitive judgments and appreciation of emotional states (Diener, Oishi & Suh, 1997). The definition emphasises SWB's cognitive and affective dimensions. Feeling is the emotional/affective component (EMO) of SWB, where higher SWB is produced when positive emotion outweighs negative emotion. Thinking is the analytic component (EVA) of SWB, wherein higher SWB is achieved through evaluating people's lives primarily favourably.

Diener has also related the construct of SWB with personality dimensions of extraversion and neuroticism and found them to have the strongest correlations with SWB (Johns, 2008) Pertinently, the more active reward system in individuals scoring high on extraversion greatly influences overall SWB (Pavot, Diener & Fujita, 1990). Apart from correlating personality with SWB, Diener and Chan (2011) also note the objective benefits of SWB and that high SWB facilitates better health and longevity. SWB has also shown to promote higher income, enhanced creativity and productivity and better job performance (DeNeve, Diener, Tay & Xuereb, 2013)

Another way of looking at SWB is through the lens of the threefold structure of it comprising high life satisfaction, presence of positive affect, and the absence of negative affect as its

determinants, which have been validated by various studies (Bryant & Veroff, 1982; Lucas, Suh, and Diener, 1996).

From the point the view of utilitarianism and theorists like Mill and Bentham, SWB or happiness has been perceived as the only desirable end, and as the presence of pleasure and a concurrent absence of pain; thus, human happiness has been regarded as the final utility (Neff & Olsen, 2007). Crucially, this perspective has also influenced the work of Diener (2000) who along with Seligman (2004) has also proposed a national index of well-being and argues that the definition and meaning of quality of life is essentially subjective in nature and shall be democratic.

Researchers have established that SWB theories frequently have psychological roots and concentrate on the mechanisms by which a person's SWB is at the intersection of and is, therefore, influenced by both personal (internal factors) and social (external factors) "environment" (Das et al., 2020).

#### Mental Health issues and SWB

Growing health problems among individuals is one pressing social and economic concern. There are several illnesses, including physical, psychological, as well as psycho-somatic, which are plaguing humanity. According to UNICEF (2021), 13% of teenagers worldwide are affected by mental problems. At least one in five individuals (approximately 21% of the population) under 15 suffer from at least one mental health concern (Zubrick et al., 2014). In India, the figures are in no way lower. The Indian Journal of Psychiatry (2019) estimates that at least 50 million Indian youngsters (below 18 years of age) suffered from mental health problems when the total population was about 1.3 billion, with 26.14% below 14 years of age and about 30% (approx. 390 million) were below 18 years of age (data interpolated from [worldpopulationreview.com/countries/India-population](http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/India-population)). Data from UNICEF (2019) suggests that 80–90% of the kids are devoid of any psychological, psychotherapeutic or psychiatric help. Almost 15% of children and adolescents worldwide suffer from mental health issues (UNICEF, 2019). Child and adolescent mental health have become a global issue due to the realization that 50% of mental health illnesses start by the age of 14 and 75% by the age of 24 (Bruha, Valentini, Spyridou, Forth, & Ougrin, 2018). It is evident from data that mental health problems do not affect only adults; children and adolescents deal with them on a daily basis in a variety of contexts and settings, including in their families, schools, and other institutions.

Alarmingly, mental health problems are becoming more prevalent. Well-being has, therefore, become one of the most talked-about topics today, spawning immense literature and attention in families, schools, colleges, workplaces, and other institutions. Being well and preserving one's state of being are more important than simply being free from disease or illness (WHO, 2022). Well-being, in the words of Guttman and Levy (1982), is "...a specific

instance of attitude." Eudaimonia, sometimes taken to connote as "the good, meaningful, purposeful life," and meditation on what is truly important in life are the main contributors to a happy existence (Guttman and Levy, 1982). "The excellent life," according to Martin Seligman (2011) is defined as "using your trademark qualities to create true happiness and abundant fulfilment every day." Corey Keyes (2008) claims that Carol Ryff's (2008) definition of mental health includes three elements: (i) psychological well-being, (ii) hedonic or subjective well-being, and (iii) emotional or eudaimonic well-being.

Recently, more extensive school health programs have been created, such as the USA's "Coordinated School Health Program" and the WHO's "health-promoting school" concept (Parsons et al., 1996; WHO, 1998; Turunen et al., 1999; Allensworth & Kolbe, 1987; Marx and Wooley, 1998). Along with promoting several other objectives and aims, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also encourage overall well-being. SDG4, which is focused on providing high-quality education, has numerous elements that are quite pertinent to the idea of "happy schools," a framework introduced by the U.N. for student well-being in the Asia-Pacific region. The government of the state of Delhi, India, also introduced a curriculum for happiness in 2018 for pre-primary, elementary, and upper primary school education from nursery to grade 8 (Sisodia, 2019).

In many countries, happiness and well-being have become embedded in governmental policies. Bhutan, which is known for its Gross National Happiness (GNH) programme, created a GNH index in 2010 that includes measures for many facets of education and psychological welfare (MEXT, 2011). By 2010, in Japan, the School Education Act Revision of 2007 had already marked significant shifts in the emphasis of education, many of which are highly relevant to the idea of happy schools (MEXT, 2011).

Korean 15-year-olds reported being the least happy among all participating countries in the 2012 PISA results, despite the fact that the Republic of Korea is one of the top-performing nations economically (OECD, 2013). Recognizing these problems, the government of the Republic of Korea created the "Happy Education for All: Creative Talent Shapes the Future" policy, which included initiatives to improve student happiness and well-being, such as the "exam-free" semester, personality development programs, and a multi-pronged approach to ensure violence-free schools (Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea, 2013).

High-stress levels among students have also been noted in Singapore; some inhabitants frequently refer to the education system as a "pressure cooker of stress" (Hill, 2010). Additionally, a recent addendum to the 2016 President's address emphasized the priorities for education, which included the necessity to foster among kids "a passion for learning" and to "reduce the excessive focus on academic results" by delivering a more comprehensive education that takes into account all needs and backgrounds (Ministry of Education of Singapore, 2016b).

According to the nation-state of Vanuatu (2010), sustainability and peace seem to be the main indicators of happiness and well-being. Vanuatu, which was ranked as the world's happiest nation in 2006 in the Happy Planet Index, has created a National Curriculum Statement that encourages happiness in educational settings and aims to develop a variety of skills that form the basis of a "learning to live together" ideology, which, in turn, helps in sharing the planet responsibly and fostering collective wellbeing.

### **"Positive Education" in Schools**

A recently developing concept, "positive education," broadly refers to the use of positive psychology in educational settings (Green et al., 2011). According to Seligman (2011), positive education is traditional education that emphasizes the development of academic skills but is supplemented with methods that emphasize the promotion of well-being and sound mental health. Norrish et al. (2013) conceptualized an applied framework created during five years of implementing Positive Education as a "whole-school strategy" in the "Model for Positive Education." This framework was created in response to a 2005 initiative at Geelong Grammar School, an Australian school. One of the ground-breaking foundations of positive education, this initiative has received worldwide recognition and acclaim.

The initiative has been acknowledged as one of the founding foundations of positive education, a theoretical system that integrates the fundamental ideas of positive psychology with educational activities in their broadest meaning (Norrish et al., 2013). The objective of the initiative is to help students feel more positive emotions and motivate them to use their talents for both personal and communal purposes. The five dimensions that operationalize this model are (i) positive emotions, (ii) positive engagement, (iii) positive accomplishment, (iv) positive purpose, and (v) good relationships, all five of which are crucial to well-being.

### **Nature and Function of School Curriculum**

The curriculum of schools at all levels serves the objectives of education (Goodlad et al., 1979). A well-designed curriculum is a sine-qua-non for providing students the experiences that will help them to develop their personalities to the fullest, which is the very goal of education (Goodlad et al., 1979). A curriculum offers a goal-focused education with a deadline for finishing the educational and instructional program. A curriculum is typically dynamic in character and updated frequently in response to advancements in the relevant subjects and demands of the external environment.

### **The Need for Developing Well-being Through Education**

The high rates of depression among young people worldwide, a modest increase in life satisfaction over the past fifty years, and the complex, interactive dynamic between learning and positive feelings are, in Seligman's opinion (Seligman et al., 2009), the most significant factors that create a need for fostering well-being through education. Besides, many nations have low levels of school satisfaction. According to Linley et al. (2006), school psychology

may establish a link between positive psychology's advocacy of ideal human development and schools, which serve as the primary institutions for such development. Children spend the majority of their teenage years in school, where they interact with the teachers and a peer group, a reality that makes school a crucial component for a child's healthy development. (Baker, Dilly, Aupperlee, & Patil, 2003).

High levels of well-being have been linked to a variety of favourable outcomes, including successful learning, productivity, creativity, healthy relationships, pro-social behaviour, and longer lifespans (Chida & Steptoe, 2008; Diener et al., 2010; Huppert, 2009; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Happy individuals are more inclined to exercise self-control, are friendlier to others, and are less materialistic (Fishbach & Labroo, 2007; Otake et al., 2006; Polak & McCullough, 2006). Positive affect and life happiness, according to Lyubomirsky et al. (2005), predict work success across a wide variety of occupations.

### **Governing or Guiding School Activities in Indian school system**

The Indian government's educational policies have provided a graphic representation of every school activity (the entire curriculum), with one of the most major advisory organizations in the field of education, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), also making significant suggestions on the issue of values, national, and emotional integration (National Education Policy, MHRD, 2020). Regarding wellbeing in school, the National Curriculum Framework (2020) has provided further germane details. In order to meet the purpose of education, it is important to assess whether curriculum implementation takes those suggestions into account. By paying close attention to the activities, processes, technologies, and pedagogies in classrooms, latent elements of the curriculum may be illuminated. The observations may be used to facilitate the instructors to become more sensitive and to establish protocols for "appropriate" classroom behavior, behavior that maximizes learning that takes place at multiple levels.

In line with this, a critical analysis will enable us to find whether existing curricula facilitate wellbeing and the concept of wellbeing among children. There are many analyses of curriculum studies but very few of those have deployed a "wellbeing lens" in sufficient depth in India. Crafting an effective pedagogical intervention is futile without a clear understanding of the structure, methods, contexts, and specific needs of a given system.

The "VUCA" world engenders emotional upheaval. Disease-specific prevalence rates for nocturnal enuresis, pica, conduct disorders, and developmental disorders were 4.16 percent, 2.38 percent, 1.78 percent, and 1.26 percent, respectively, according to a research done in Lucknow, a city in Northern India (Hossain & Purohit, 2019).

Similar findings, albeit with some significant differences in rural and urban statistics, were seen in data from other cities. Nearly 1,64,033 Indians died of suicide in 2021 with the national suicide rate being 12 (per lakh of population) (Narayana, 2022). Data suggests that

around 11,396 children below 18 years of age died of suicide in 2020 (NCRB, 2020). Thus, multi-pronged interventions by educational institutions are vital in stemming the malaise. As a result, numerous colleges have launched their own wellness initiatives, centres, and programmes. They were followed by studies on happiness, health, and other cognate domains. Researchers have come to understand that education is a potent tool for promoting human wellbeing (White, 2015). These facts and trends also indicate that the study of well-being in the classroom must be included in the curriculum.

Violence, sadness, and aggressive behaviour have increased in schools, which has inspired teachers to emphasise education at all levels and the necessity of including a well-being viewpoint in the curricula (Leahy et al., 2016). Broadly, the perspective of well-being in education of children has so far been neglected which is worrisome. Youth who graduate from high schools and universities without a formal training in well-being are ill-equipped to handle problems in the real world. Regardless of whether they are in the house, office, or in community settings, they may exhibit increased anger, despair, and anxiety (Kertyzia & Standish, 2019). They are less knowledgeable concerning how to live in harmony with themselves and others. While there are many ways in which international organizations like the UN, governments, NGOs, and corporations are striving to promote well-being, one compelling way in which well-being can be fostered and sustained for a long time is through educational vehicles (White, 2015).

The school curriculum should include well-being, not just in the written curriculum (textbooks) but also in the classroom activities (taught and learned curriculum). In the curriculum, there are words like "happy," "joy," "mental well-being," and others that help promote well-being. In the opinion of educationalists, teachers, administrators, and potential employers, the curriculum determines how schools operate. Understanding what constitutes the official, intended curriculum and assessing its gap with what is taught and learned is essential.

Studies reveal a close relationship between the curriculum, instruction, and student learning results (Barlett, 2008; Kertyzia & Standish, 2019; Demeril, 2009). The current study aimed to look at the framework for happiness and how textbooks and the curriculum are used in Delhi's Government schools to promote happiness. It is crucial to remember that the happiness curriculum should not be a general orientation that we introduce in addition to the current syllabus, textbooks, and instructor discourses in the present educational system.

The importance of elementary and upper primary education cannot be overstated. In order for children to develop their personalities and abilities in ways necessary to sustain their well-being, the foundation can be laid during the pre-high-school stage. Schools must actively keep up with ongoing changes and exacting demands from the environment to function effectively. They cannot operate in isolation or as passive bystanders. Their organizational structure should accommodate the need to create holistic well-being. It is

crucial to consider the learning experiences offered in curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities at the pre-primary, primary, and middle school levels and determine whether these correlate with well-being and harmony. Over 1,000 schools from kindergarten to class eight now offer the "Happiness curriculum," according to the Delhi government. The student's timetable will include a 45-minute session when they study skills that will aid in their self-improvement, skills such as mindfulness, problem-solving, connection building, etc. Periodic evaluations are conducted, which do not involve tests; instead, a happiness index is used (as an outcome measure). A tightly structured curriculum may not be able to improve students' well-being. Future readiness may be ensured with a curriculum prioritizing well-being from the beginning.

### **Need for well-being education in the school system.**

According to a Times of India report, in 2019, at least one student committed suicide every hour in India. With escalating economic instability, high unemployment, and poverty on the one hand and rising consumerist tendencies on the other, the pressure on students has been mounting. Furthermore, Indian students have not been faring too well academically as well. India ranked 72nd out of the 74 countries participating in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009 (Financial Express, 2018). While the quality of content and teaching are likely to contribute to student outcomes, much more must be done to ensure that students are willing, eager, and happy to learn.

Daniel Goleman, in his revolutionary work on child psychology titled Emotional Intelligence (1995), has drawn attention towards the urgent need for our education system to shift its focus solely from IQ building and divert attention towards the pressing need for emotional literacy or subjective wellbeing in school. Goleman (1995) clarifies that this requirement is not merely to deal with deviant behaviour or troubled children, but for preparing all children to be better equipped to deal with real-life challenges. In his words, "We've gone too far in emphasising the value and importance of the purely rational – of what IQ measures – in human life. For better or worse, intelligence comes to nothing when the emotions hold sway" (Goleman, 1995).

The Educational philosophies of several Indian modern thinkers and educators, including Rabindranath Tagore, J. Krishnamurti, and Mahatma Gandhi, advocate holistic development and education for "heart, mind, and hand." "The Gandhian aim of education is human transformation rather than simply to acquire information" (Gandhi, 2020). However, this has not been formally included in the curriculum in India so far. The larger problem that the study focuses on concerns the limited scope of the current policy and the need to reorient its focus to achieve the goals of holistic development through education via emotional learning of the students. In schools to ascertain the impact of



emotional learning on student well-being as well as their academic performance, many programs are being implemented. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, we zoom out and take a broader lens to place the curriculum and its intended objectives in the context of the National Education Policy (NEP, 2020). The study aims to identify the need and scope of including subjective wellbeing in the revised education policy. To achieve that, we will also examine the Happiness Curriculum as one such intervention.

Sufficient gaps exist today while studying the scope and relevance of emotional /subjective wellbeing in primary/upper primary education in India. The largest gap is a dearth of formal state-backed interventions focusing on emotional wellbeing, and no more than a passing mention of the issue in the National Education Policy (NEP, 2020). In addition, there is growing support for integrating subjective wellbeing into educational curricula globally. This opens up an opportunity to revamp the goals and objectives of primary and upper primary education and come up with more sensitized and relevant future policies and interventions.

## **Conclusion**

A good education is key to a person's complete success and holistic growth; education makes a person feel accomplished and liberated. Education is also a key tool for bringing about societal change. Education demonstrates how to eliminate the factors that lead to dominance and alienation. People can and should take purposeful action to modify their circumstances in their and communities' interests. Given the significant role that education plays in advancing both societal and individual development, it is essential to review and evaluate all factors linked to the delivery of education, particularly the curricula at all levels of education.

We may develop an understanding of how the gaps in education can be filled through deliberate effort while delivering well-being education by looking at the many components and procedures involved in the education delivery process. The curriculum and how it is exchanged in the educational setting are essential factors. The concept of a curriculum is reduced to a list of topics and/or bodies of information (Smith, 1996, 2000). In actuality, the curriculum considers the full range of experiences that a student gains from the numerous activities in the classroom, library, laboratory, and playground at school. Responsible community living should also be integrated into the curriculum.

Curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities are the vehicles through which a child's personality is shaped. The educational policies developed by a government must provide a visual representation of the concepts regulating or directing every school activity.

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