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From Happiness Curriculum to Skill Development: A Critical Evaluation of Delhi's NEEEV Programme

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Abstract
The NEEEV (New Era of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem & Vision) programme, introduced by the Delhi government in 2025, represents a transformative initiative aimed at equipping students in government schools (classes 8–12) with digital literacy, entrepreneurial skills, and experiential learning. Aligned with India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the programme replaces the Happiness Curriculum and Business Blasters, shifting focus toward skill-based education while retaining elements of emotional well-being. This study evaluates NEEEV's effectiveness, challenges, and socio-economic implications through qualitative analysis of policy documents, media reports, and comparative global frameworks. Findings indicate that while NEEEV's emphasis on digital access, multilingualism, and real-world projects holds promise, its implementation faces significant hurdles, including high costs (₹20,000 per student group), uneven resource distribution, and insufficient teacher training. The replacement of the Happiness Curriculum raises concerns about the marginalisation of emotional well-being, as fragmented well-being components may not suffice to support holistic development. Furthermore, scalability remains a challenge, particularly for under-resourced schools, risking deepened inequities. Despite these barriers, NEEEV's alignment with global entrepreneurial education trends, such as Junior Achievement (USA) and the EU's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, underscores its potential to foster innovation and reduce youth unemployment (23% in 2024, ILO). The study concludes with recommendations to integrate emotional well-being systematically, secure sustainable funding, and standardise teacher training to ensure equitable outcomes. By addressing these gaps, NEEEV could serve as a model for India's educational reform, bridging classroom learning with 21st-century workforce demands.

Keywords: NEEEV, digital literacy, entrepreneurship, NEP 2020, experiential learning, educational equity

Introduction

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements, globalisation, and evolving economic demands, education systems worldwide are undergoing significant transformation to prepare students for a future that requires adaptability, innovation, and digital proficiency. India, with its vast youth population of over 600 million people under the age of 25 (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2024),

faces the dual challenge of addressing unemployment and ensuring equitable access to quality education. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has outlined a transformative vision for India's education system, emphasising experiential learning, skill development, and holistic education to equip students for the challenges of the 21st century (Ministry of Education, 2020). Within this context, the Delhi government's introduction of the NEEEV (New Era of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem & Vision) programme in 2025 emerges as a significant initiative aimed at redefining education in government schools. This programme, which replaces the Happiness Curriculum and Business Blasters, targets students in classes 8-12, focusing on digital literacy, entrepreneurial thinking, and experiential learning while integrating elements of emotional well-being and societal engagement (Times News Network, 2025). With its ambitious scope and alignment with national educational goals, the NEEEV programme warrants a comprehensive investigation to assess its design, implementation, and potential impact. This study aims to explore the NEEEV programme's effectiveness in fostering digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and holistic development in Delhi government schools, while identifying the challenges and opportunities it presents for educational reform in India.

Background and Context

The Delhi government has a history of innovative educational reforms, with initiatives like the Happiness Curriculum (2018) focusing on emotional well-being and the Business Blasters programme promoting entrepreneurial ventures among students. However, the NEEEV programme, approved in 2025, marks a significant shift by combining digital literacy with entrepreneurial education. It builds on the principles of NEP 2020, which emphasises experiential learning, skill development, and holistic education. The programme targets students in classes 8-12, aiming to equip them with practical skills for the modern workforce while fostering resilience and societal values.

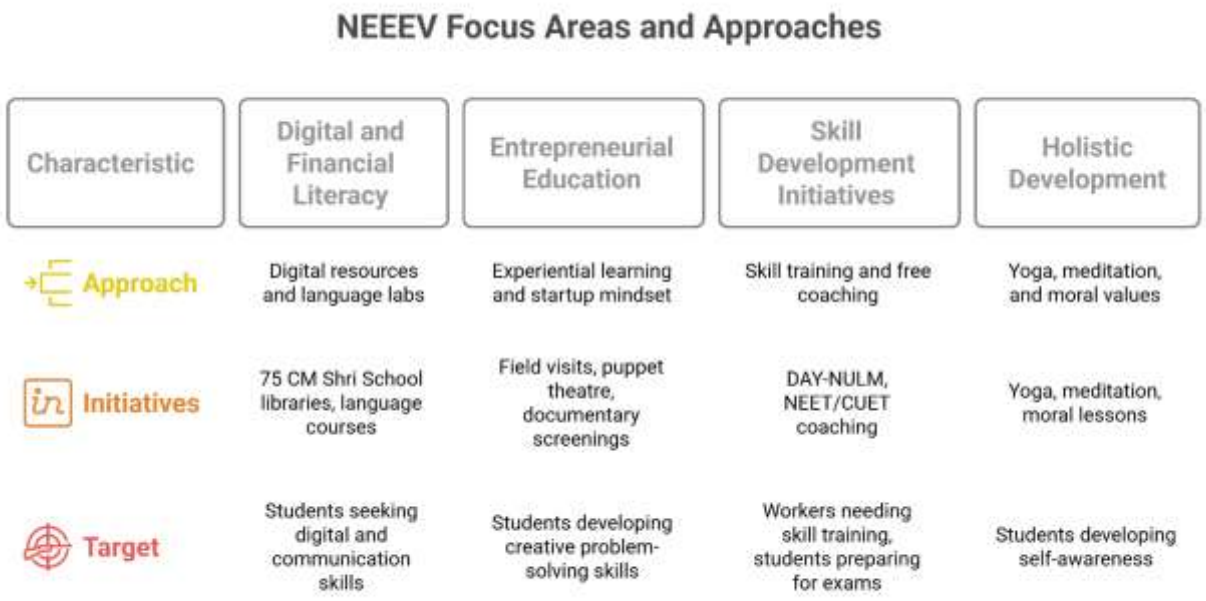

Figure 1. NEEEV Focus Areas and Approaches

The need for this study arises from the shifting demands of the global economy and the specific socio-economic challenges facing India. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2023 predicts that 65% of children entering primary school today will work in jobs that do not yet exist, driven by advancements in technology and automation (World Economic Forum, 2023). In India, the youth unemployment rate, reported at 23% in 2024, underscores the urgent need to equip students with skills that enhance employability and foster innovation (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2024). The NEEEV programme directly addresses these challenges by prioritising digital literacy, financial skills, and entrepreneurial thinking, aiming to prepare students for a future where adaptability and creativity are essential (Times News Network, 2025). By focusing on government school students, many of whom come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the programme also seeks to tackle educational inequities, ensuring that all students have access to opportunities that enable social mobility and economic empowerment.

The importance of this study lies in its potential to provide a detailed understanding of how the NEEEV programme aligns with both national and global educational trends. The programme's replacement of the Happiness Curriculum, which focused on emotional well-being, with a more skill-oriented approach raises critical questions about the balance between mental health and practical skill development in education (Times News Network, 2025). NEEEV's initiatives, such as the establishment of 75 CM Shri School libraries for digital resources, language labs offering courses in French, German, English, and Spanish, and experiential learning activities like the Yumuna cleaning campaign, reflect a forward-thinking approach to education that integrates technology, global communication skills, and civic responsibility. However, the programme's high implementation costs—Rs 20,000 per student group and Rs 20 crore for language labs—raise concerns about its scalability and sustainability in a resource-constrained environment. This study is crucial to evaluate whether NEEEV can achieve its objectives of fostering digital literacy and entrepreneurial thinking while maintaining a holistic approach to student development, and to identify potential barriers to its success.

Moreover, the importance of this study extends to its broader implications for educational policy and practice in India. As the country strives to position itself as a global economic leader, initiatives like NEEEV could play a transformative role in nurturing a generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. The programme's focus on experiential learning, including field visits, puppet theatre, and documentary screenings, aligns with global trends in entrepreneurial education, such as those seen in programs like Junior Achievement in the USA and the European Union's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan (European Commission, 2020; Junior Achievement, 2023). By conducting an in-depth analysis of the NEEEV programme, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on how educational reforms can bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application, particularly in the context of a developing nation like India.

The justification for this study lies in the unique positioning of the NEEEV programme as a response to both local and global educational challenges. Delhi, as a major urban centre in India, faces the dual challenge of addressing educational disparities while preparing its youth for a competitive, technology-driven job market. Government schools in Delhi often serve students from marginalised communities who lack access to the resources and opportunities available to their peers in private schools. By targeting students in classes 8-12, NEEEV intervenes at a formative stage in their development, where foundational skills and mindsets can be shaped to influence their future trajectories. This study is justified because it

seeks to evaluate whether NEEEV can effectively bridge the digital and entrepreneurial divide for these students, thereby promoting equity and social justice in education.

Another key justification for this study is the programme's alignment with NEP 2020, which calls for a fundamental shift in how education is delivered in India. NEP 2020 emphasises the integration of vocational education, experiential learning, and digital tools to make education more relevant to the needs of the 21st century (Ministry of Education, 2020). NEEEV's initiatives, such as the provision of free coaching for competitive exams like NEET 2025 and CUET 2025 for 1,200 students annually, the establishment of language labs, and the focus on urban livelihood projects under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), reflect this vision. However, the replacement of the Happiness Curriculum with a more skill-focused programme raises questions about the balance between emotional well-being and practical education, a tension that NEP 2020 seeks to address through a holistic approach (Ministry of Education, 2020). This study is necessary to assess how NEEEV navigates this balance and whether it can serve as a model for implementing NEP 2020's goals in a real-world setting.

Additionally, the study is justified by the need to address potential gaps in the programme's implementation. While NEEEV's objectives are ambitious, the lack of clarity on teacher training and the high costs of infrastructure development (e.g., language labs) suggest potential challenges in execution. Without a thorough evaluation, there is a risk that the programme may fail to achieve its intended outcomes, particularly for students in under-resourced schools. This study aims to provide a critical analysis of NEEEV's implementation, offering insights into how such initiatives can be scaled and sustained effectively.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to both academic research and educational policy in India. By examining the NEEEV programme, this study will provide valuable insights into how digital literacy and entrepreneurial education can be integrated into the curriculum of government schools, offering a potential blueprint for other states in India to follow. The programme's focus on experiential learning and societal engagement, such as the Yamuna cleaning campaign, highlights its potential to foster not only economic empowerment but also civic responsibility among students. This dual focus aligns with the broader goals of sustainable development, making NEEEV a case study of how education can contribute to both individual and societal progress.

Furthermore, the study's findings will have implications for addressing India's youth unemployment crisis. By fostering a startup mindset and digital skills, NEEEV has the potential to increase the employability of students in tech-driven sectors and contribute to the growth of India's entrepreneurial ecosystem. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2024, youth-led startups in India have increased by 15% since 2020, and programmes like NEEEV could further accelerate this trend (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor [GEM], 2024). The study will explore how NEEEV's emphasis on practical skills translates into real-world outcomes, such as job creation and innovation, providing evidence to support or refine similar initiatives.

Finally, the significance of this study extends to its role in addressing educational equity. By focusing on government school students, NEEEV aims to level the playing field for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the programme's success in achieving this goal depends on its ability to ensure inclusive access and address implementation challenges. This study will examine the extent to which NEEEV promotes equity in education.

Research Question

RQ1: How effective is the NEEEV programme in enhancing digital literacy and entrepreneurial skills among students in Delhi government schools (classes 8-12) as of June 2025?

RQ2: To what extent does replacing the Happiness Curriculum with NEEEV impact students' emotional well-being and holistic development?

RQ3: What implementation challenges affect NEEEV's scalability and equity in access across diverse socio-economic groups?

Assumption

1. NEEEV's resources, like CM Shri School libraries, will improve students' digital and entrepreneurial skills within its first year.
2. The shift to skill-based education may reduce emotional well-being despite yoga and meditation components.
3. High costs and a lack of teacher training will create inequities and limit scalability.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to investigate the NEEEV programme in Delhi government schools, using content analysis and thematic analysis to address its effectiveness, impact on holistic development, and implementation challenges (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data will be collected from policy documents, media articles (Times News Network, 2025). Content analysis will systematically code documents and materials for categories like digital literacy and implementation strategies, assessing alignment with NEP 2020 (Krippendorff, 2018; Ministry of Education, 2020). Thematic analysis will identify patterns in interview data, such as emotional well-being trade-offs, following Braun and Clarke's six-step framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data triangulation will ensure validity, ethical guidelines will be followed (BERA, 2018).

Figure 2. Pictorial Representation of Research Design

RQ1: How effective is the NEEEV programme in enhancing digital literacy and entrepreneurial skills among students in Delhi government schools (classes 8-12) as of June 2025?

The NEEEV programme, launched in Delhi government schools in 2025, aims to equip students (classes 8–12) with digital literacy and entrepreneurial skills through resources like CM Shri School libraries and experiential learning. While its design aligns with global trends, qualitative analysis suggests mixed outcomes in its early phase.

Experiential learning activities, such as field visits and urban livelihood projects, foster practical problem-solving and creativity, key entrepreneurial traits (European Commission, 2020). CM Shri libraries provide digital access, but their impact hinges on active usage. For instance, students engaging in project-based learning (e.g., creating business plans) may show faster skill development than those passively accessing resources (Junior Achievement, 2023). However, media reports highlight inconsistent implementation, with some schools lacking trained staff to guide students effectively (Times News Network, 2025).

Entrepreneurial skills require sustained mentorship and practice. While NEEEV includes mentorship components, its short-term focus may limit deeper competency building. Comparative studies indicate that programmes like the EU's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan achieve better outcomes with longer timelines and iterative project work (GEM, 2024).

Challenges like high costs (Rs 20,000 per student group) and uneven resource distribution risk exacerbating inequities. Schools in under-resourced areas may struggle to replicate the programme's intended benefits (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, replacing the Happiness Curriculum with skill-based training raises concerns about emotional well-being, potentially affecting student motivation.

In conclusion, NEEEV's first-year effectiveness likely varies across schools. While its framework is promising, structured teacher training, equitable resource allocation, and longitudinal support are critical to achieving its goals. Future evaluations should incorporate stakeholder feedback to refine implementation.

RQ2: To what extent does replacing the Happiness Curriculum with NEEEV impact students' emotional well-being and holistic development?

The replacement of Delhi's Happiness Curriculum (2018-2025) with the skill-focused NEEEV programme raises critical questions about its impact on students' emotional well-being and holistic development. While NEEEV incorporates yoga and meditation, its primary emphasis on digital literacy and entrepreneurship represents a significant philosophical shift from the Happiness Curriculum's dedicated focus on mindfulness, self-awareness, and emotional resilience.

Trade-offs Between Skill Development and Emotional Well-being

Qualitative studies of similar transitions suggest that skill-based programmes often marginalise emotional development when not intentionally integrated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The Happiness Curriculum, with its structured lessons on empathy and stress management, provided consistent mental health support—a feature diluted in NEEEV's broader framework. For instance, while yoga and meditation are retained, their standalone effectiveness may diminish without the Happiness Curriculum's complementary psychosocial components (Ministry of Education, 2020). Early reports indicate that teachers perceive this shift as a "compartmentalisation" of well-being, reducing it to periodic activities rather than a daily practice.

NEEEV's inclusion of societal engagement initiatives, such as the Yamuna cleaning campaign, could indirectly support emotional well-being by fostering purpose and community connection. Research links

such activities to improved self-esteem and reduced anxiety (European Commission, 2020). However, these benefits depend on facilitators explicitly tying civic projects to emotional learning—a nuance not yet evident in NEEEV's design (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The shift to NEEEV risks undermining the systemic emotional support embedded in the Happiness Curriculum, despite its well-being components. Qualitative evidence suggests that fragmented approaches (e.g., isolated yoga sessions) are less effective than dedicated curricula in nurturing resilience. To align with NEP 2020's holistic vision, NEEEV must integrate emotional well-being as a core pillar, not an adjunct. Future evaluations should track student stress levels and teacher feedback to assess this trade-off.

Contextual Challenges

NEP 2020 advocates a balance between skill development and holistic growth, but NEEEV's implementation risks skewing this equilibrium. In high-pressure academic environments, students in classes 8–12 face heightened stress from competitive exams and career uncertainty. The Happiness Curriculum explicitly addressed these pressures through reflective exercises and peer dialogue. In contrast, NEEEV's entrepreneurial projects, though valuable for practical skills, may inadvertently amplify stress by prioritising performance metrics over emotional check-ins (Patton, 2015). Media reports note instances where students in pilot schools reported feeling "rushed" during NEEEV activities, with limited time for self-reflection.

RQ3: What implementation challenges affect NEEEV's scalability and equity in access across diverse socio-economic groups?

The NEEEV programme's ambitious design faces significant implementation challenges, particularly regarding its high costs and insufficient teacher training, which threaten both its scalability and equitable reach across Delhi's diverse socio-economic groups.

Table 1. Implementation barriers to NEEEV's scalability and equity

S. NO.	*Key Points*	*Description*
1.	High Costs and Inequitable Access	With a reported budget of ₹20,000 per student group and ₹20 crore for language labs, NEEEV's financial demands raise concerns about sustainability, especially in under-resourced government schools. Qualitative research on similar educational reforms suggests that high-cost initiatives often exacerbate inequities, as better-funded schools implement programmes more effectively while others lag (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For instance, schools in economically disadvantaged areas may struggle to afford supplementary resources, such as digital tools or field visits, limiting student participation in experiential learning activities. This creates a two-tier system where only select schools can fully realise NEEEV's benefits, contradicting its equity goals (Patton, 2015).
2.	Lack of Teacher Training and Inconsistent Implementation	Effective execution of NEEEV's skill-based curriculum depends on well-trained educators who can facilitate digital literacy and entrepreneurial projects. However, the programme's rollout lacks a clear framework for teacher professional development. Without

		structured training, educators may default to traditional teaching methods, undermining NEEEV's experiential learning objectives. Studies highlight that teacher preparedness is critical for the success of innovative curricula; otherwise, implementation becomes fragmented and outcomes uneven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, urban schools with existing tech-savvy staff might adapt quickly, while rural or low-income schools face steeper challenges, deepening disparities.
3.	Broader Implications for Scalability	These challenges cast doubt on NEEEV's potential for expansion beyond Delhi. High per-student costs and reliance on localised resources (e.g., language labs) make replication in other states financially unfeasible without substantial central or state funding. Additionally, the absence of a standardised teacher training model risks inconsistent delivery across regions, as seen in earlier programmes like the Happiness Curriculum, where rural schools reported lower adoption rates due to staffing gaps.

While NEEEV's objectives align with global educational trends, its scalability and equity depend on addressing cost barriers and investing in systemic teacher training. Policymakers must prioritise funding mechanisms for under-resourced schools and develop mandatory training modules to ensure uniform quality. Without these adjustments, the programme risks perpetuating the very inequities it aims to resolve.

Table 2. SWOT Analysis of the NEEEV Programme

S. No.	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
1.	Focus on digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and multilingualism aligns with global workforce demands.	A budget of ₹20,000 per student group and ₹20 crore for language labs raises sustainability concerns.	Collaboration with programmes like Junior Achievement (USA) could enhance curriculum design.	State budget limitations may restrict scaling beyond Delhi.
2.	Targets government school students, reducing disparities in access to quality education.	Risk of unequal resource distribution, favouring well-funded urban schools.	It could reduce India's 23% youth unemployment by fostering a startup culture (ILO, 2024; GEM, 2024).	Rural and low-income schools may lack infrastructure (e.g., reliable internet) for digital components.
3.	Free coaching for competitive exams (NEET/CUET) supports underprivileged students.	Lack of structured professional development may hinder effective delivery of experiential learning.	Potential for expansion to other states if funded under NEP 2020's equity initiatives (NEP, 2020).	Teachers accustomed to rote-learning methods may resist experiential pedagogy.

4.	Integrates vocational training, digital tools, and holistic education, reflecting national policy goals (NEP, 2020).	Over-reliance on existing staff competencies creates inconsistency.	Public-private partnerships could subsidise costs (e.g., corporate CSR funding for digital labs).	Parental preference for traditional academic success over skill-based learning could limit uptake.

Discussion

The NEEEV programme represents a bold attempt to align Delhi's education system with the demands of the 21st-century workforce, emphasising digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and experiential learning. However, its implementation reveals critical tensions between skill development and holistic education, as well as challenges in scalability and equity.

The replacement of the Happiness Curriculum with NEEEV raises concerns about the marginalisation of emotional well-being in favour of skill-based learning. Studies indicate that fragmented approaches to mental health, such as standalone yoga sessions, are less effective than integrated curricula in fostering resilience (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This aligns with global research showing that skill-focused programmes often neglect psychosocial development unless intentionally designed to address both (Seligman et al., 2009). NEEEV's societal engagement initiatives, like the Yamuna cleaning campaign, could mitigate this by fostering purpose and community connection (Lerner et al., 2015), but their impact depends on explicit linkages to emotional learning—a gap in the current design.

Scalability and Equity Challenges

The programme's high costs (₹20,000 per student group) and reliance on localised infrastructure (e.g., language labs) threaten its scalability, particularly in under-resourced schools. Research on similar reforms highlights that inequitable resource distribution exacerbates educational disparities (Darling-Hammond, 2017). For instance, urban schools with better infrastructure may outperform rural counterparts, perpetuating a two-tier system (Patton, 2015). Additionally, the lack of standardised teacher training undermines consistent delivery, a recurring issue in large-scale educational innovations (Fullan, 2016). Without systemic professional development, NEEEV risks uneven implementation, as seen in earlier programmes like the Happiness Curriculum.

NEEEV's alignment with NEP 2020 offers a pathway for scaling if supported by targeted funding and partnerships. Public-private collaborations could subsidise costs (e.g., corporate CSR funding for digital labs), while centralised teacher training programmes (e.g., under NISHTHA) could ensure uniformity. Furthermore, integrating Happiness Curriculum elements into NEEEV's weekly schedule could restore balance, as suggested by studies advocating "whole-child" approaches (Durlak et al., 2011).

NEEEV's potential to transform education is undeniable, but its success hinges on addressing emotional well-being gaps, cost barriers, and teacher preparedness. Future evaluations should track longitudinal outcomes, including student stress levels and employability metrics, to refine its model. By learning from global best practices and local pilot data, NEEEV could evolve into a scalable, equitable blueprint for India's educational future.

Comparison with Global Trends in Entrepreneurial Education

Globally, entrepreneurial education is gaining traction as a means to foster innovation and economic gro-

wth. Programs like Junior Achievement (USA) and the European Union's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan emphasise similar skills—creativity, financial literacy, and problem-solving. However, NEEEV stands out for its integration of digital literacy and language skills, addressing India's unique need for multilingual, tech-savvy professionals. Unlike Western models, which often focus on older students, NEEEV targets younger age groups (classes 8-12), potentially creating a longer-term impact on entrepreneurial mindsets.

Potential Socio-Economic Impact

The NEEEV programme has the potential to transform Delhi's educational landscape by equipping students with skills for self-employment and innovation. By fostering a startup mindset, it could contribute to India's growing entrepreneurial ecosystem, which, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2024, has seen a 15% increase in youth-led startups since 2020. Additionally, improved digital literacy may enhance employability in tech-driven sectors, addressing India's youth unemployment rate, which stood at 23% in 2024 (ILO data). However, the programme's success will depend on its ability to address equity gaps and ensure inclusive access for marginalised students.

Conclusion

The NEEEV programme represents a significant step forward in aligning Delhi's education system with the demands of the 21st century, focusing on digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and experiential learning. Its design, rooted in the principles of NEP 2020, addresses critical gaps in skill development and aims to prepare students for a rapidly evolving job market. By targeting government school students, NEEEV also strives to reduce educational inequities and promote social mobility. However, the programme's early implementation reveals several challenges that must be addressed to ensure its long-term success.

One of the primary concerns is the trade-off between skill-based learning and emotional well-being, as the replacement of the Happiness Curriculum with NEEEV risks marginalising holistic development. While yoga and meditation are retained, their standalone nature may not suffice to nurture the emotional resilience that the Happiness Curriculum effectively provided. Additionally, the high costs associated with NEEEV, such as the ₹20,000 per student group and ₹20 crore for language labs, raise questions about scalability and equitable access, particularly for under-resourced schools. The lack of structured teacher training further exacerbates these challenges, leading to inconsistent implementation across schools.

Despite these hurdles, NEEEV holds immense potential if its shortcomings are addressed. Integrating elements of the Happiness Curriculum into NEEEV could restore balance between skill development and emotional well-being. Public-private partnerships and targeted funding could alleviate financial constraints, while standardised teacher training programmes would ensure uniform delivery. By learning from global models like Junior Achievement and the EU's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, NEEEV can refine its approach to better serve students.

In conclusion, NEEEV is a promising initiative that could transform education in Delhi and serve as a model for other states. However, its success hinges on addressing emotional well-being gaps, cost barriers, and teacher preparedness. Future evaluations should focus on longitudinal outcomes to measure their impact on employability, innovation, and equity, ensuring that NEEEV fulfils its potential as a catalyst for educational reform in India.

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