

Nurturing Young Minds: The Educator's Role in Fostering Student Mental Wellness

Grismika Neog¹, Manaswini Buragohain²

^{1,2}M.Ed. Student, Dibrugarh University

Abstract

In today's modern world, the mental wellness of children and teenagers is a highly popular concern. Learning achievement in the classroom is greatly affected by mental health. Despite the fact that there are numerous readily available mental health therapies, many people are reluctant to seek assistance, which leads to many cases going undetected and undiagnosed. This is an essential issue since mental health concerns that young kids and teenagers encounter may negatively impact their development as adults. Teachers and students are in immediate contact in a school setting. This paper explores the role of educators for fostering mental wellness among students which includes creating a good relationship with students, encouraging mental wellness in the classroom, celebrate student achievements, encouraging teamwork and cooperation, fostering supportive environment etc. This paper also identifies the challenges while fostering mental wellness in students such as workload of educators, lack of mental support in the classroom, difficulty in handling student diversity, lack of training, lack of awareness etc. Moreover, the study finds the strategies to overcome the challenges which includes enhancing positive relationship between educators and students, by promoting mental health in the classroom, applauding students' achievements, adopting specific instructional practices, promoting sense of empathy etc. Teachers who emphasize mental health in parallel to academic progress help their students have better futures.

Keywords: Mental Wellness, Mental Health, Educators, Students, Emotional support, Positive Relationship, Empathy

1. INTRODUCTION

Children's and teenager's mental wellbeing is an extremely popular issue in today's modern society. First and foremost, it must be acknowledged that children have had to experience pandemics, conflicts, loneliness, and a lack of awareness of their needs and problems. The mental wellbeing of not only adults but also adolescents and teenagers may be significantly impacted by the new sociological, demographic, political, and health-related issues that are emerging in the modern world (Kozłowska 2023). In recent years, the problem of student mental health has come to focus as a crucial element of both academic achievement and general well-being. In addition, schools not only serve as educational settings but also serves for the social, emotional, and psychological growth of their pupils. Mental health issues including behavioural problems, depression, and anxiety significantly influence student's performance in the classroom (Fei, C. and Oyam, D. M. 2024).

The term "Wellness" is referred to person's level of pleasure and satisfaction with their social, professional, or personal lives (Wang 2023). Mental wellness is the state of being emotionally, cognitively, and behaviourally well. It all goes around to an individual's thought process and how it shapes their emotions

and behaviour. The term "mental wellness" is frequently used to indicate the absence of mental illness. Mental wellness is equally essential as physical health (Kalita 2023). Even while mental health treatments are readily available, many people are reluctant to ask for help, which results in many cases going unreported and untreated. People with mental health issues frequently face stigma and prejudice, which makes it difficult for them to get mental health care and widens the treatment gap. Due to social stigma, the majority of people in India are reluctant to seek therapy or have an open conversation about mental health issues. This is a major worry since mental health problems that young children and adolescents face might hinder their growth into adulthood. Due to the apparent discrepancy between the increasing demand for mental health care and the scarcity of professional services, there is a rising understanding of the critical role that other members of the community can play in bridging this gap. In a school context, students and teachers are in close proximity. Teachers are more likely to notice pupils' behaviour, comprehend their difficulties, and spot mental health issues because of their relationship with them. They can effectively create educational environments that promote mental health if given the necessary guidance and assistance (Siraj et al. 2024). In order to implement the new strategy of education that supports mental health and well-being, schools have had to reconsider the ways to operate the role of the professionals who work with the students to accomplish this new goal, and how to build a supportive community. Therefore, even while the role of teachers has always been essential in education, it is now necessary to investigate their students' requirements in other areas. Therefore, it is essential to reconsider the role, consequences, and opportunities that teachers provide to assist their students with academic matters as we rethink the role that schools play in the mental wellbeing of students (Díaz, N. and Catalina, 2020).

This paper explores the role of educators for fostering student's mental wellness. This paper also includes a challenges face by educators while promoting mental wellness and strategies to overcome the challenges.

2. Review of literature

Diaz, N. And Catalina (2020), in their paper "Students' Mental Health: The importance of the teacher's role and training" mainly explores on mental health of students. It also emphasis on the roles of teachers in students' mental health which includes the teacher- student relationship, the promotion of mental health in the classroom and the detection of mental health problem. Additionally, this paper includes teachers' training in students' mental health issues.

Tual, C. H. and Omandam, M. J. B. (2023) in their paper "Teachers' Challenges and Coping Strategies in Conducting Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Activities" focus on Mental Health and Psychological Support, Teachers' experiences, Wellbeing and Challenges faced by Teachers in promoting mental wellbeing as well as how they address strategies in coping the challenges faced by them. This study also helps practitioners in identifying the areas where educators require help in protecting learners' mental health and wellbeing.

Connolly, A and co-authors (2024) in their paper "Barriers to supporting children's mental health in Australian primary schools: Perspectives of school staff" mainly focus on mental health condition and wellbeing of students in classroom environment. This paper also discusses about the barriers encountered by educators in supporting the mental health of students.

Saxena, D. (2024), in her article "Fostering Social and Emotional Well-Being in The Classroom" mainly focus on social and emotional wellbeing and teachers' strategies on social and emotional wellbeing of students. It also explores that students' academic, professional, and personal success are influenced by

their social and emotional health. Since social and emotional development of children has traditionally been seen as the responsibility of parents and family members, this element has not received much attention in traditional classroom instruction. The article also explores that the topic has gained relevance in the current situation because children's exposure to technology is having a social and emotional impact on them, and growing competition has made them more stressed. Young pupils are having a difficult time right now because of their exposure to social media and the internet.

Bushra, Z. (2025), in her article "Teacher as Mentors: Guiding Students through Emotional Challenges in Conflict Ridden Areas" mainly focuses on mental health, teacher student relationships, resilience - building, trauma and emotional support. This article also explores the emotional challenges faced by students in conflict zones. Additionally, its emphasis on the role of teachers beyond academia which includes Emotional Support and Stability, Empathy and Active Listening and Mediation of Peer Conflict and Social Skills. It also includes challenges encountered by teachers and strategies used by teachers to guide students.

3. Objectives

- To explore the role of educators for promoting mental wellness among students.
- To identify challenges while fostering mental wellness among students.
- To find the strategies to overcome the challenges.

4. Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature. The required secondary data was gathered from a variety of sources, such as the Indian government's website, journals and other publications. The conclusion was then attained after the secondary data was reviewed and analysed.

5. Role of educators for promoting mental wellness

Children who have emotional support are more likely to do better in their academics, and acquire essential life skills. The school community can contribute to the development of a supportive atmosphere that guarantees students' social and emotional well-being. Teachers are also accountable for developing young individual's potential and producing constructive individuals who will eventually create a welfare society (Saxena 2024)

• Create a good relationship with students

An immeasurable strength is in the daily interactions between students and their teachers: they have the ability to build a relationship that may be crucial to the development of the students' mental health. Over the past few decades, scholars have been investigating the potential impact of this relationship on students' lives (Díaz, N. and Catalina, 2020). Teachers should value each student's unique identity, preferences, and skills. They should support to foster the pupils' aptitudes and competencies. Students should be valued, evaluated, and given confidence by them (Saxena 2024).

• Encouraging mental wellness in the classroom

One of the most important roles of teachers in schools is to create environments and activities that promote students' well-being. The school community plans to work together on this topic. Therefore, fostering and preserving a healthy classroom environment would be linked to supporting student's mental health in the classroom. Students had positive thoughts and perceptions as a result of teacher behaviours that promoted mental health in the classroom. It contained activities that gave students emotional support, a feeling of

community, and the potential to reinforce ties among peers (Díaz, N. and Catalina, 2020).

- **Celebrate student achievements**

Creating a welcoming and motivating learning environment requires recognising students' successes. Students gain confidence, self-belief, a sense of success, and a positive attitude towards learning when their achievements are recognised and appreciated. Secondly, this raises the level of motivation. Recognising achievements promotes positive conduct and academic achievement. It supports the idea that tenacity, diligence, and commitment are worthwhile. Overall, it contributes to the development of a positive learning environment since the children are treated with respect. Additionally, it fosters healthy competition (Saxena 2024).

- **Provide emotional support**

Teachers are essential in providing emotional support to students and a sense of security, particularly in difficult or uncertain situations. In addition to their academic duties, teachers frequently serve as mentors, offering direction, compassion, and support to students who might be struggling with social, emotional, or personal issues.

Teachers may greatly enhance students' mental wellbeing by creating a safe, encouraging environment where they feel appreciated and understood. Students benefit from this consistency by being able to concentrate on their studies, feel more confident, and overcome obstacles both inside and outside of the classroom. Teachers' emotional support is even more crucial during times of crisis or instability since they are frequently a dependable and consistent source of care for their students (Zarin 2025).

- **Mediation of social skills and peer conflict**

In the classroom, teachers are essential in settling disputes amongst peers, creating a supportive atmosphere, and helping pupils develop their social skills. Their participation helps to create a secure environment in which students can resolve conflicts harmoniously. Students engaged in a dispute are encouraged to speak openly with one another by their teachers. They assist children in expressing their thoughts and feelings by encouraging polite conversation, which promotes understanding. Additionally, during the problem-solving process, teachers assist students in determining the underlying causes of the disagreement and considering potential solutions. Students are empowered to take charge of their disputes and hone their critical thinking abilities as a result (Zarin 2025).

- **Encourage teamwork and cooperation**

Teachers must encourage teamwork and collaboration in the classroom to set up students for success in a collaborative and connected world. Since teamwork and collaboration foster the development of practical skills, educators should actively promote them. Collaborative activities in the classroom help kids comprehend and value diversity, which enhances their ability to think critically and solve problems. Additionally, this aids in the development of conflict resolution and communication skills. Students can assign tasks based on their individual skills and capabilities when they operate as a team. This not only facilitates faster task completion, but also helps team members develop a sense of shared responsibility and ownership. Working in groups also fosters the development of critical thinking since it increases everyone's ability to analyse information, and make well-informed decisions (Saxena 2024).

- **Fostering Safe and Supportive Learning Environments**

By building a culture of trust, respect, and understanding, educators and other school personnel may provide settings where students feel emotionally safe. Clear boundaries, constant support, and open communication can help achieve this (Bhattacharya 2025).

- **Encouraging Parent-Teacher Collaboration**

Consistent interaction between educators and parents ensuring that mental health issues are handled effectively. Teachers can collaborate with parents to create techniques that assist students' emotional development while also educating parents on how to offer emotional support at home (Bhattacharya 2025).

6. Challenges faced by educators while promoting mental wellness

- **Workload of Educators:** The pervasive nature of excessive demands within the profession like classroom responsibilities, administrative tasks and extracurricular duties which make teachers exhausted and overloaded with work. This hampers the mental wellbeing of the educators which in turn reduce effectiveness in classroom, affect the quality of education and student outcomes (Choezin, T. 2024).
- **Lack of classroom support:** It has become difficult for the educators to balance the demands of the students with significant mental health and behavioural difficulties without losing their focus on the educational and emotional needs of the students. It is a continual challenge for teachers to manage a classroom satisfying the needs of the students without additional classroom support (Connolly et al. 2024).
- **Difficulty in handling students' diversity:** Students from different socioeconomic and cultural background are present in a classroom and they show different behaviours. So, it is a challenge for the concerned teacher to manage the students together in the classroom and promote mental wellbeing among them (Tual et al. 2023).
- **Negative impact of social media:** Students are easily influenced by social media as they are too dependent on cell phones which results in students having suicidal thoughts. So, in this era of technology it is a challenge for teachers to keep students in track and promote mental wellness among students (Tual et al. 2023).
- **Mental Health Issues of Students:** The most common mental health issues present in students are anxiety, depression, ADHD and behavioural issues. It is a challenge for the teacher to identify the mental issues of individual students and find immediate strategies to encourage mental wellness (Gunawardena et al. 2024).
- **Lack of training:** There is varying levels of preparedness among teachers in identifying and addressing student mental health issues. Some teachers expressed concerns about their training adequacy as they find it challenging in identifying early signs of mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression. Teachers handling acknowledged the need for supplementary training in therapeutic techniques and effective communication strategies with students (Fei, C. and Oyam, D.M. 2024).
- **Lack of resources:** For continuous professional development there are specific needs of additional resources and support mechanism like practical training modules, access to mental health tools and resources, and ongoing direction and mentoring to increase confidence and competence in encouraging student mental health. Lack of resources is a major challenge in promoting mental health (Fei, C. and Oyam, D.M. 2024).
- **Lack of Awareness:** Student wellbeing and academic success are directly correlated with teachers' awareness of mental health. Teachers with inclusive understanding of mental health can establish conducive classroom environments favourable to optimistic mental health outcomes for students. Awareness of mental health among teachers can help improve the adversative academic effects of mental health issues. Lack of awareness among teacher is a challenge for promoting mental wellness

(Goswami P. 2024).

7. Strategies to foster mental wellness

- **Enhancing Positive Relationship:** To build positive relationship the teacher needs to respect individual's identities, abilities and choices. Teachers should encourage the skills and abilities of the students by appreciating them and make them confident (Saxena D. 2024).
- **Boosting of teamwork and collaboration:** Teacher should teach teamwork and collaboration as it helps in developing real world skills in the students like conflict resolution, decision making, problem solving, communication skill, critical as well as creative thinking. In order to prepare students to live interconnect with society, educators should encourage teamwork and collaboration among the members (Saxena D. 2024).
- **Promoting mental health:** Teachers should provide the opportunity to practice the theoretical knowledge taught by them in classroom in real life through which students would be able to relate the benefits classroom teaching in their real life. In the educational institutions, one of the crucial functions of teacher is creating spaces to enhance students' practice of well-being by fostering collaborative work with community (Diaz et al. 2020).
- **Applauding Students' Achievements:** Acknowledging students' achievements makes them feel more confident, grow self-belief, promotes sense of accomplishment, and nurtures constructive outlook on learning. It also helps in rise motivational level and encourages desirable behaviour and academic performance. Altogether, it helps to create a Positive Learning atmosphere as the students feel respected. This also leads to mental wellness among students (Saxena D. 2024).
- **Adopting specific instructional practices:** Adopting specific instructional practices may benefit students in terms of motivation, learning and wellbeing. Giving high stress, students reported experiencing academic workload and research shows the negative impacts of high workload, so educators should be mindful about course and assessment design to avoid generating unnecessary stress or irrational workloads (Boman et al. 2025).
- **Promoting sense of empathy:** Educators need to promote the sense of empathy among students. Empathy is the skill to understand the feeling of others and plays an important role in social and emotional development, which helps students to understand their own emotions and those of their peers resulting in better social connections, understand others perspectives, build positive relationship and communicate effectively (Saxena D. 2024)

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, Teachers are essential mentors who guide pupils through their emotional difficulties. Teachers foster a supportive environment where students feel comfortable sharing their emotions and anxieties, in addition to offering academic teaching. Teachers assist students in processing their experiences by cultivating trust and understanding, which is crucial for their resilience and emotional recovery. Teachers' mentoring has a transforming effect. They give kids the fundamental coping mechanisms they need to face and control their emotions when faced with hardship. With the help of this advice, students are able to cultivate a sense of support and are inspired to look beyond the problems they are now facing. In addition to improving students' mental wellness, the relationship between teacher and students makes the classroom feel more like a community. Beyond just helping individual students, this mentorship makes society more robust and able to endure the consequences of conflict. Additionally,

teachers' mentoring roles are essential in conflicts for helping students to deal with their emotional difficulties. Despite the challenges they face, their devotion and hard work can have a profound impact on students' lives, enabling them to recover, develop, and eventually flourish their mental wellness. Teachers foster a better future for their students by emphasizing emotional support in addition to academic success.

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