

Social Well-Being as Envisaged by National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 signals a groundbreaking change in India's educational landscape by prioritizing holistic development and social well-being. It recognizes that education is vital for promoting social cohesion, equality, and overall well- values like compassion, morality, and civic engagement. The National Education policy envisions social well-being as a multidimensional concept that encompasses emotional, mental, and physical well-being, as well as social being, and stresses the importance of and emotional learning. This study analyses the Provisions of NEP 2020 for integrating social well-being into the educational framework, and also outlines the ways in which NEP 2020 can help in promotion of the desired social well-being. This study employed a documentary research approach and analysed the key policy documents, reports and academic articles related to NEP 2020.

Keywords: Social well-being, National Education policy (NEP)2020.

Background

The NEP 2020 is a far-reaching education initiative launched by the Government of India to overhaul the country's education system, with the objective of delivering world-class education to all citizens, from early childhood to higher education, and positioning India as a leading player in the global knowledge economy. The NEP 2020 is the third national education policy in India, after the National Education Policy of 1968 and the National Policy on Education of 1986. The policy was drafted by a committee headed by late Dr. K. Kasturirangan, a renowned scientist and educator, and was approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

India is a notable name in the world in reference to the education system form ancient time. The Gurukul system of imparting education is very well known to all of us. ([Pawan Kalvani, 2020](#)). As the time changes there are some changes in the Indian education system. The policy intends to promote a holistic and inclusive education system that focuses on the development of the entire child, including cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development ([NCERT, 2020](#)). The NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of equity, quality, and accessibility in education, and aims to create a vibrant and distinctive education system that caters to the needs of all learners ([Ministry of Education, 2020](#)). Its principal objective is to developmental imperatives in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), which seek to guarantee all people have access to high-quality education and encourage them to continue their education throughout their lives by the year 2030 ([Shreemayee Patiz, Sthitaprajna, Shreemayee Pati](#)). NEP 2020

recognizes that education plays a vital role in shaping individuals' social well-being, and that schools have a responsibility to create supportive and inclusive environments that foster social and emotional growth. The policy's emphasis on social well-being is rooted in the understanding that education must prepare students for success in all aspects of life, not just academically. By prioritizing social well-being, the policy aims to cultivate a more compassionate, inclusive, and equitable society, where individuals can grow and thrive.

Social well-being

Social well-being has been identified by the ([WHO](#)) World Health Organization ([1948](#)) as a central component of individuals' overall health. According to the NEP 2020, social well-being encompasses emotional, mental, and physical well-being, as well as social and emotional learning ([Ministry of Education, 2020, p. 10](#)). Social well-being is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of human life, including social connection, mental and physical health, human rights and economic security ([WHO, 2019](#)). It is a critical component of overall well-being, influencing an individual's quality of life and ability to thrive ([Diener et al., 2010](#)). Social well-being is an important dimension of health along with physical and mental aspects. It plays an effective role in improving the quality of life, social efficacy, and social performance ([World Health Organisation](#)). World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) describes well-being as 'a resource for healthy living' and 'positive state of health' that is 'more than the absence of illness' and enables us to function well: psychologically, physically, emotionally and socially. Social wellbeing can be broadly defined as a state in which humans can coexist peacefully in communities with opportunities for advancement.

Social well-being is the quality of a person's relationships and interactions with others, as well as their sense of belonging and connection to their community. Social well-being is subjective quality of life. It includes high living of life standard, education and skill development, social security, good living conditions, environmental protection, opportunities to express their emotions, sentiments, cultural trades etc. social well-being is an important dimension of health along with physical and mental aspects. It plays an effective role in improving the quality of life, social efficacy, and social performance.

According to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), social well-being is a critical component of overall well-being. The SDGs acknowledge that social well-being is critical to achieving sustainable development and improving the quality of life for all. By aligning NEP 2020 with the SDGs, India can not only advance its educational objectives but also contribute significantly to the broader goals of poverty eradication, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion ([Owaise jan kirmani et al., 2024](#)).

Significance of the study

Childhood and adolescence, critical developmental stages, primarily spent in educational settings, where students develop essential social skills and values. During this time, students develop a mindset that influences their relationships, behaviours, and overall well-being. Social well-being as a crucial component of human development, emphasizing its role in creating a balanced and inclusive society, with increasing social complexities and emotional challenges among learners, it becomes essential to explore how the NEP 2020's vision of holistic education can promote social well-being as an integral part of the educational process. Although the NEP 2020 highlights the importance of social-emotional learning, this study aims to investigate how social well-being envisaged by NEP 2020. Study on social well-being, as

proposed by NEP 2020, is critical for assessing the policy's effectiveness in fostering a balanced and inclusive educational environment. This study will help to shape the next generation of responsible, empathetic, and socially conscious citizens.

Objective

To analyse the provisions of NEP 2020 in promoting social well-being among students in India.

Methodology

In this paper the research methodology adopted is a combination of qualitative and descriptive type. The present study is mainly analytical in nature. This study relies on secondary data sources to examine how NEP 2020 envisaged on social well-being. The secondary data was collected from various sources such as policy (NEP 2020), websites, journals, articles and other related online and offline publications. Analysing documents, policies and archives, are social and crucial research tools.

Analysis

The goal of education is to promote the holistic improvement of learners and prepare them to become socially, physically and mentally healthy individuals. Inclusion and equity are principles of quality education that should be set in all aspects of education policy ([UNESCO, 2017](#)). Education provides opportunities for socialization, which helps individuals in making and maintaining social connections ([Hartup, 1999](#)). The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 underlines that, “Education is the single greatest tool for achieving social justice and equality” which has implications for development of an inclusive community and society as a whole ([NEP 2020, section 6.1, p.24](#)). Social well-being is an important aspect of a student's overall development, which includes their emotional, social, and psychological health ([World Health Organization, 2019](#)). Educational institutions are one of the key pillars for enhancing social well-being in our contemporary society. With the help of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the Indian government strives to promote social well-being among students. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 identify the importance of social well-being and proposes several strategies/Provisions to promote social-wellbeing among students, including-

1. **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):** Early childhood care and education (ECCE) has a profound impact on social well-being in young children ([NEP 2020, section 1, p.7](#)). High-quality ECCE programs can have a positive impact on children's social development, including their ability to form and maintain relationships, cooperate with others, and develop emotional intelligence ([Webster-Stratton, 1999, Goleman, 1995](#)). NEP 2020 prioritizes ECCE by emphasizing the development of social capacity, sensitivity, good behavior, courtesy, ethics, personal and public cleanliness, teamwork, and cooperation ([NEP 2020, section 1.2, p.7](#)). ECCE Centres will be strengthened with high-quality infrastructure, play equipment, and well-trained workers/teachers. Every centre will have a well-ventilated, well-designed, child-friendly and well-constructed building with an enriched learning environment ([NEP 2020, section 1.5, p.7](#)). ECCE will also be introduced in tribal-dominated areas ([NEP 2020, section 1.8, p.8](#)). ECCE programs that focus on social-emotional learning can help children to develop essential life skills, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation, which are critical for social well-being ([Hirsh-Pasek, 2016](#)). Overall, the evidence suggests that early childhood care and education (ECCE) is an important component in promoting social well-being in

young children, and that high-quality ECCE programs can have a long-term impact on children's social development and well-being.

2. **Equity and Inclusion:** The NEP 2020 highlight the importance of equity and inclusion in Indian education system, recognizing that all students, regardless of their background, abilities or disabilities have the right to quality education. Equity and inclusion are important for social well-being because equitable treatment or inclusivity enhance individuals' likelihood of achieving favourable outcomes in the field of education or other sectors of the society and it also improved socio-emotional well-being. The education system must aim to benefit India's children so that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of circumstances of birth or background ([NEP 2020, section 6.1, p.24](#)). The policy recognizes children with special needs and believes in including them in mainstream education systems ([Dr. Mohan Kumar, 2021](#)). NEP 2020 also recommends providing equitable and quality higher education to all students, with a special emphasis on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) ([NEP 2020, section 14.1, p.41](#)).
3. **Lifelong Learning:** NEP 2020 gives importance on lifelong learning ([NEP 2020, Section 2.1, p.8](#)). Lifelong learning is inextricably linked to social well-being because it encourages personal development, social connections, and community involvement. Lifelong learning can help individuals to develop coping skills and strategies for managing mental health, including anxiety and depression ([Bandura, 1997](#)). NEP 2020 gives flexibility in choosing individual curricula, certain subjects, skills, and capacities that are essential to become good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings in today's rapidly changing world. The policy emphasizes lifelong learning by introducing scientific, evidence-based thinking, creativity and innovation, communication, physical education, wellness, vocational education, ethical and moral education, etc ([NEP 2020, Section 4.23, p.15](#)). The policy also discusses sports learning to help students to adopt fitness as a lifelong attitude and achieve the related life skills along with the levels of fitness as envisaged in the Fit India movement ([NEP 2020, Section, p.12](#)).
4. **Inclusive Infrastructure:** Inclusive infrastructure plays an essential role in enhancing social well-being of students by creating an environment in which everyone feels respected, valued and supported. The National Education policy emphasizes creating an inclusive infrastructure that is physically accessible to all, ensuring that educational institutions are designed to accommodate individuals with different abilities ([Anerave et al., 2020](#)). Inclusive spaces promote positive social relations, collaboration, and mutual respect among students and reduce feelings of loneliness or disparities. NEP 2020 ensure adequate and safe infrastructure, including working toilets, clean drinking water, clean and attractive spaces, electricity, computing devices, internet, libraries, and sports and recreational resources will be provided to all schools to ensure that teachers and students, including children of all genders and children with disabilities, receive a safe, inclusive, and effective learning environment ([NEP 2020, section 5.9, p.21](#)).
5. **Scholarships and Financial Assistance:** Scholarships and financial aid have a strong correlation with students' social well-being, it's not only helping students succeed academically, but it also improves their social and emotional well-being. The NEP 2020 proposes scholarships for students from underprivileged backgrounds, such as SC, ST, OBC, and economically disadvantaged groups. it seeks to provide financial assistance to students from low-income families for educational expenses and also aims to create a national scholarship portal that will streamline and make the scholarship application process more accessible for students ([NEP 2020, section 12.10, p.40](#)).

6. **Gender-Inclusion Fund:** The National Education Policy 2020 recommend Gender Inclusion Fund (GIF) to enhancing social well-being by promoting equal access to quality education for all genders, particularly girls and transgenders. This approach involves partnering with states and local community organizations to ensure equitable access to quality education for all students, particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs), including female and transgender individuals ([Ministry of Education, 2023](#)). The Indian government plans to establish a 'Gender-Inclusion Fund' to improve education quality for girls and transgender students. The Central government will allocate funds to States to support female and transgender children in gaining access to education, including sanitation, toilets, bicycles, and conditional cash transfers ([NEP 2020, section 6.8, p.26](#)). Ultimately the Gender Inclusion Fund (GIF) promotes equity, inclusion, and empowerment which are critical factors of health society.
7. **Skill Development and vocational training:** The 2020 National Education Policy (NEP) emphasizes the importance of skill development and vocational training in promoting social well-being. The policy recommended that vocational education will be included in mainstream education into all school and higher educational institution ([NEP 2020, Section 16.3, p.44](#)). In alignment with sustainable development goals 4.4, NEP 2020 makes targets to provide 50% of vocational education by 2025 ([NEP 2020, Section 16.5, p.44](#)). The policy says that each child will learn at least one vocation during their academic journey ([NEP 2020, section 16.4, p.44](#)). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 implements a flexible and multidisciplinary undergraduate degree program enabling students to obtain vocational or professional certificates alongside their degree ([NEP 2020, section 11.9, p.37](#)). By acquiring vocational skills, individuals can enhance their employability, increase their earning potential, and contribute to their communities, ultimately promoting social inclusion and cohesion ([Cedefop, 2019; OECD, 2019](#)). Vocational training can also foster community engagement, social responsibility, and civic participation, leading to increased social capital and well-being ([Wenger, 1998](#)). Overall, the policy highlights the value of vocational education and training in promoting social inclusion and welfare ([NEP, 2020](#))
8. **Experiential Learning:** Experiential learning is closely related to social well-being, because it provides individuals with hands-on, practical experiences that enhance their understanding of theoretical concepts and promote social skill development. Experiential learning also fosters social connections and community engagement, promoting collaboration, teamwork, and civic responsibility ([Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Wenger, 1998](#)). NEP 2020 mentioned that in all levels of education, experiential learning will be provided, including hands on learning, arts integrated and sports integrated education, etc ([NEP 2020, Section 4.6, p.12](#)). the policy suggests that NEP 2020 seeks to create a more holistic, inclusive, and student-cantered learning environment by incorporating experiential learning into the educational system ([NEP, 2020](#)).
9. **Digital and Technological Education:** Digital and technological education are closely interconnected with social well-being. the widespread adoption of technology has transformed the way people interact, communicate, and form relationships, ultimately impacting their social well-being ([Best, P et al., 2014](#)). The National Education policy (NEP) 2020 recognizes that technology plays a crucial role in shaping educational process, outcomes, learning experience and students' overall well-being ([NEP 2020, section 23.1 p.56](#)). Digital and technological education equip individuals with skills that are essential for the modern workforce, enhancing their employability and socio-economic well-being ([Terwel, J., 2000](#)). NEP 2020 emphasis on educational software which are available in all major

Indian languages and will be accessible to a wide range of users including students in remote areas and disabled student ([NEP 2020, section 23.6, p.37](#)). The policy aims to leverage ICT to enhance the quality of education, increase access to education, and promote inclusivity ([NEP 2020, section 24.1, p.58](#)). The NEP 2020 recommends some key initiatives regarding digital and technological learning, such as Online teaching platform and tools, digital infrastructure, content creation, digital repository, and dissemination, virtual labs, blended models of learning, etc ([NEP 2020, section 24.4, p.59-60](#)).

10. **Value-Based Education & Ethical Development:** The NEP-2020 aims to promote ethical, human, and constitutional values among youth and citizens through educational reforms and its crucial for social well-being. Research suggests that ethical education enhances civic responsibility and helps in building inclusive communities where cooperation and trust thrive ([Nucci, 2017](#)). The policy recognizes that education is not just about acquiring knowledge and skills, but also about developing character, ethics, and values that can guide students to become responsible citizens and leaders ([Prajapati & singhai, 2023](#)). NEP 2020 focuses on character development and developing holistic, well-rounded individuals equipped with 21st-century skills ([NEP 2020, Section 4.4, p.12](#)). By promoting linguistic diversity and inclusion NEP 2020 emphasis on the sense of belonging, social cohesion, value, respect and national unity ([NEP 2020, section 4.11- 4.22, p.15](#)). The policy also emphasizes the importance of traditional Indian values which are essentials for moral/ethical or value development ([NEP 2020, section 4.28, p.16](#)). NEP 2020 recommended that quality higher education must enable individuals to develop character, ethical and constitutional values ([NEP 2020, section 9.1.1, p.33](#)). By introducing holistic and multidisciplinary education, NEP 2020 focuses on moral education, ethic of social engagement, etc ([NEP 2020, section 11.3, p.36](#)). Value-based education will include the development of humanistic, ethical, constitutional, and universal human values of truth (satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (shanti), love (prem), nonviolence (ahimsa), scientific temper, citizenship values, and also life-skills; lessons in seva/service and participation in community service programmes will be considered an integral part of a holistic education ([NEP 2020, section 11.8, p.37](#)). The NEP 2020 offers a comprehensive framework for the promotion of ethical development and value-based education, which is essential for the development of responsible and engaged citizens who can make a positive impact on society.

11. **Inclusion of Indian Knowledge System (IKS):** Indian knowledge system highlights the holistic understanding of the oneself, nature, and the universe, and seeks to create harmony and balance in social life. The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is one of the significant aspects of the NEP 2020 curriculum for promoting social harmony as well as social well-being. Indian knowledge system (IKS) encompasses diverse and rich heritage knowledge of India that covers various domains such as science and technology, medicine (ayurveda), culture, yoga, literature, philosophy, etc ([Chandel et al., 2024](#)). For the purpose of social harmony and social well-being NEP 2020 give a significant importance on Indian Knowledge system. The NEP 2020 has emphasized that IKS will be part of the curriculum and will be incorporated scientifically ([NEP 2020, section 4.27, p.16](#)). The policy also includes value-based education which is important for social harmony, its focuses on the development of Humanistic values such as truth (Satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (shanti), love (prem), nonviolence (ahimsa), scientific temper, citizenship values, and life-skills, as well as lessons in seva and community service, will be integrated into a holistic education ([NEP 2020, section 11.8, p.37](#)). Integrating Indian arts, culture into the curriculum at all levels of education, from preschool to higher education, is critical for promoting students' happiness, well-being, intellectual growth and cultural identity ([NEP 2020,](#)

[section 22.3, p53](#)). By thoughtfully integrating IKS into the modern curriculum, India can create a more inclusive, holistic, and innovative educational environment that benefits individuals and society as a whole ([Shailja Gaur, 2024](#)). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has notable impact on social well-being by integrating Indian knowledge systems into educational sector. By emphasizing the relevance of Indian knowledge system, NEP 2020 can foster a sense of national identity and pride, as well as cultural revitalization and social cohesion. Inclusion of Indian knowledge system into education can also promote community engagement, bridge the gap between different communities, promoting social harmony. It also focuses on cultural homogenization, balancing traditional and contemporary knowledge. Through Indian knowledge system NEP try to promote social harmony, inclusivity, diversity and overall well-being.

Discussion

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 offers a comprehensive and transformative framework in India's educational perspective, emphasizing overall improvement and learner-oriented approaches. one of the major purposes of this policy is the focus on enhancing social well-being of students by Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), value-based pedagogy, inclusivity in education, learner centred education, and flexibility in education. The inclusion of socio-emotional learning, ethical reasoning, and life skills within the curriculum is a deliberate effort to nurture interpersonal relations, resilience and empathy among students. This study highlights that NEP 2020 emphasis on vocational training, skill development, experiential learning, digital learning, enhancing learners' engagement, develop Indian knowledge systems. Through inclusivity NEP 2020 focuses on bridging gender, disabilities, socio-economy, and regional inequalities which is crucial for social well-being and social harmony. This policy emphasises on sound mental health, supportive atmosphere, wellness programs and counselors which is directly contribute to the students physical, mental and social well-being.

Conclusion

Social well-being has been recognized as a vital force in the holistic development of students. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizing a holistic development framework that incorporates social well-being. In accordance with this vision, educational institutions must adopt pedagogical strategies that promote healthy teacher-student relationships, positive environment, and digital learning methods. Including lifelong learning, physical education, mental health curricula, and wellness programs, can substantially boost student well-being. Those strategies of NEP 2020 depend on effective implementation, adequate teacher training, and sustained policy support. By integrating these approaches, educational institutions can effectively enhance students' social well-being.

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