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and Way Forward for School Administrators in Indian Context  
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Brief of Sushasan Mahotsav 2024



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Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini

# Indian Journal of Democratic Governance

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# Editorial Note

In recent years, the Indian government has emphasized the importance of inclusive and equitable growth, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership underscoring the need for holistic development across sectors. This vision of governance is intricately tied to the principles of democracy, where the well-being of every citizen, particularly in education and mental health, is paramount. The articles featured in this edition of RMP's **Indian Journal of Democratic Governance** reflect this commitment to fostering environments that support holistic development—mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—echoing the goals outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and other governmental initiatives.

As India moves forward on its journey of progress and innovation, the role of governance in nurturing an informed, healthy, and value-driven society becomes even more crucial. The current release of the RMP's IJDG features meticulously researched articles from esteemed scholars, authors, and policy analysts from diverse backgrounds. A core principle guiding the RMP's IJDG is the publication of high-calibre articles that intricately link to key policy domains and government priorities, thereby maintaining a commitment to scholarly excellence. This edition offers profound insights into the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in creating a society where education is not just about academic excellence but also about nurturing well-rounded individuals. From mental health in schools to value-based

education rooted in the Indian Knowledge System, these contributions align with the broader vision of transforming India into a global leader in holistic and inclusive governance.

Dr. Sushmita Chakraborty in her academic article "Mental and Emotional Well-being in Schools: Challenges and Way Forward for School Administrators in Indian Context" explored the significance of mental and emotional well-being in students' holistic development. Drawing on the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the role of schools in fostering environments that promote students' mental health, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper highlights the importance of a supportive school ecosystem involving all stakeholders—teachers, administrators, parents, and the community—in nurturing students' well-being. Key challenges addressed include widespread misconceptions about mental health, such as equating it solely with mental disorders, and the mistaken belief that mental health issues require only curative solutions. The paper calls for a shift towards proactive, preventive approaches and debunks the myth that mental health support is the sole responsibility of counsellors. Systemic issues like dual roles for psychology teachers and the ad-hoc nature of counsellor appointments are also discussed. The article advocates adopting a Whole School Approach (WSA), where mental well-being is integrated into the school's mission, with comprehensive

teacher training, awareness programs, and wellness resources aimed at creating a safe and supportive environment for all students.

Dr. Ankur Arun Kulkarni and Dr Raghvendra Dubey in their paper "Essentials of Value Education for Holistic Development: A Perspective from the Indian Knowledge System," emphasizes the role of the Indian Knowledge System in value education, as recognized by India's National Education Policy 2020. It integrates knowledge, wisdom, physical, spiritual, and mental practices to promote holistic development. The paper discusses the need for value education that addresses existential realities, fostering human happiness and well-being based on principles like truth, renunciation, righteousness, and tranquility. The article advocates replacing the colonial Macaulay education system with Indian holistic education, which prioritizes physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. This value-based education encourages individuals to understand their participation in existence, reality, and truth. The holistic approach aims to transform individual consciousness, fostering peace and harmony at personal, familial, societal, and ecological levels. Ultimately, the paper underscores the transformative potential of value education in guiding individuals toward happiness, peace, and contentment.

Another article by Dr. Swati Amrale-Jadhav, "Beyond the Classroom: Teachers as Gatekeepers of Child Mental Well-being," highlighted the pivotal role of educators in nurturing students' mental health beyond their academic responsibilities. Acknowledging the interconnectedness of mental well-being and educational success, the paper explores how teachers act as first responders to students'

mental health concerns. It delves into the complex challenges teachers in India face, such as insufficient mental health training, large class sizes, and stigma around mental health, which hinder their ability to provide adequate support. Through an examination of existing literature and empirical data, the paper highlights effective strategies like mental health literacy programs, social and emotional learning initiatives, and school-based mental health services. These interventions equip teachers with the necessary tools to foster positive mental health outcomes in classrooms. Additionally, the article touches on the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which encourages holistic development, teacher training, and inclusive education, positioning educators as central figures in promoting mental well-being. Ultimately, the paper advocates for policy reforms and professional development initiatives that empower teachers to address the mental health needs of students, emphasizing a collaborative approach involving educators, mental health professionals, parents, and communities.

Twinkal and Prof. Jagdish Jadhav's article "Mental Health Issues among Caregivers of Children with Special Needs: Understanding Social Worker's Role" highlights the significant psychological challenges caregivers face when caring for children with special needs (CwSNs). These caregivers often deal with stress, depression, anxiety, and social isolation due to the demanding nature of their roles. The article emphasizes that social workers are crucial in alleviating these burdens by providing counselling, emotional support, and guidance to caregivers. Social workers also facilitate access to necessary services and advocate for caregivers' rights in various systems, including

healthcare and education. Drawing from field experiences with the Rajasthan Mahila Kalyan Mandal (RMKM), the article discusses how social workers can empower caregivers through family counselling, crisis intervention, and collaboration with other professionals. The article advocates for integrating social workers into government and community institutions to ensure sustainable support for caregivers. Additionally, it suggests establishing social work departments in hospitals and special schools, enhancing policy services, and utilizing technology to provide virtual support for caregivers. The article underscores the importance of comprehensive support structures to improve the mental health and quality of life of caregivers, proposing that social workers play a central role in this process.

Mrs. Anita Ajay Ghatnekar, in her submission "Need and Impact of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Centre", discussed the Seva Sahayog Foundation's Chetana Rehabilitation Project. The foundation, a volunteer-driven organization in Maharashtra, focuses on empowering children with disabilities and their caregivers through early intervention and community-based rehabilitation. Chetana, launched in 2017, provides therapy, education, and support to children aged 3 months to 13 years with disabilities like cerebral palsy, autism, and ADHD. The paper emphasizes early diagnosis and intervention, parental education, and creating awareness in underprivileged

communities. The paper highlights the foundation's journey, from identifying the need for a community rehabilitation centre to establishing Chetana. The project began with five children and has since expanded to over 13 communities, providing physiotherapy, special education, and other services. It addresses gaps in government initiatives and aims to improve the quality of life for disabled children. Chetana also supports corrective surgeries and school readiness programs. The paper concludes with a call to expand community-based rehabilitation efforts across Maharashtra, emphasizing the importance of early intervention and inclusive education for children with disabilities.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who has contributed significantly to this issue. This includes our esteemed reviewers, mentors, publisher, and dedicated editorial team of RMP's Indian Journal of Democracy and Governance (IJDG). We are also grateful for the vital role of our team in ensuring the journal's wide distribution to discerning readers like you and for the generous grant support from the ICSSR. We trust this edition's thematic content and research papers will meet and exceed your expectations, providing valuable insights into Indian democracy and governance. We eagerly anticipate your active participation in our upcoming issue and encourage you to engage with us through feedback and research paper submissions.

# Mental and Emotional Well-being in Schools: Challenges and Way Forward for School Administrators in Indian Context

Sushmita Chakraborty<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Mental and emotional well-being is an essential catalyst in students' holistic development. The NEP 2020 reiterates this and has envisioned a transformative education system that encourages nurturing of students to not only develop as individuals with high cognitive capacities but also possess 21st-century skills, along with the competencies of being empathic, resilient, and compassionate. The school-going years in students' lives are crucial when they develop in physical, cognitive, psychomotor, and, most importantly, socio-emotional domains. These developments are shaped by interactions in their physical, emotional, and social environment and contribute to their ability to perform optimally in academic life, maintain healthy relationships with self and others as part of their personal and social life, and develop an overall sense of satisfaction towards' ones' life. Maintaining positive mental health and well-being is essential to achieve this goal. A supportive environment in school plays a pivotal role in nurturing this state of positive mental health and emotional well-being in students. Therefore, schools must recognize, understand, and proactively promote positive mental health and well-being among students, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. This can be made possible when all stakeholders in the school ecosystem, including teachers, students, school staff, administrators, parents, and the community at large, come together and, with a feeling of 'oneness,' join hands to create a

supportive environment for students as leaders in school ecosystem school administrators play the role of effective facilitators in bringing all stakeholders together and becoming partners in nurturing and strengthening students' mental and emotional well-being. Also, they need to equip themselves so that, as school leaders, they are able to identify and strategize ways to overcome the challenges of schools taking proactive and preventive steps to ensure students' mental and emotional well-being. The present article highlights a few challenges, such as misconceptions about mental health and well-being, systemic issues related to the functioning of mental health and well-being in schools, etc. It also puts forth some strategies to overcome such challenges, such as adopting a whole school approach, designing and implementing proactive strategies to deal with misconceptions, and promoting adequate support to teachers for providing socio-emotional support to students in school.

**Keywords:** *Mental and Emotional Well-being, myths and misconceptions, systemic issues, challenges for school administrators, whole school approach*

## Introduction

'Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to contribute to his or her community.' The World Health

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Organization, in its mental health action plan, mentioned that mental health and well-being concerning children are placed on the developmental aspects, such as having a positive sense of identity, the ability to manage thoughts and emotions, as well as to build social relationships, and the aptitude to learn and to acquire an education, ultimately enabling their full active participation in society. (Mental Health Action Plan, 2013-2020, WHO, 2013).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 as an urgent step towards ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity, have brought in mental health as a priority to manage non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The 17 goals emphasize that development must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability to bring peace, happiness, and prosperity to every human being. Among the 17 goals, goal 3 puts explicit focus on 'GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING' and aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all across all ages. It goes on to say that health and well-being are essential at every stage of one's life. This goal addresses all major health priorities, including child and adolescent health. Specifically, the target of 3.4 (goal 3) focuses on non-communicable diseases and mental health. It states it aims to 'reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.' Mental health and well-being, therefore, are globally accepted as essential factors for holistic development and overall well-being, particularly among school-going students. In order to perform optimally, maintain healthy relationships with self and others, and develop overall satisfaction towards life, it is pertinent to maintain a positive state of mental health and well-being. Among school-going students, such a state facilitates them to deal with everyday stressors and challenges such as peer pressure, bullying, discrimination,

stress, and anxiety related to academic aspects, etc.

## **National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 and its Standpoint on Mental Health & Well-Being in School Education**

The National Educational Policy (NEP, 2020), the recent visionary policy document by the Government of India, also understood the significance of mental health and well-being and its role in facilitating optimal learning and holistic development among students. In alignment with the SDGs, the document highlights the need to take proactive measures in addressing the mental health of students. It states that the nutrition and health (including mental health) of children need to be addressed through healthy meals and the introduction of well-trained social workers, counselors, and community involvement into the schooling system" [NEP 2020, Para 2.9]. Students, especially children and adolescents, are in a critical developmental phase; thus, their being healthy and well-nourished becomes even more pertinent for optimal learning and growth. The policy emphasizes early education for students to understand the significance of health, including mental health, making the right decisions, and promoting tolerance, equality, and empathy. It also advocates for essential training in health topics, including preventive health measures, mental health awareness, maintaining good nutrition, personal and public hygiene, disaster response, and first-aid skills (Para 4.28). The policy adheres to fundamental principles, including ethics, human, and constitutional values, emphasizing life skills such as self-awareness, creativity, critical thinking, cooperation, resilience, and effective communication (Para 4.5, 4.6 & 4.8). The policy also emphasizes interactive teaching methods, fostering critical thinking, and incorporating experiential learning (Para 4.5).

The Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH) framework is introduced to assess students' overall development, encompassing academic achievements and socio-emotional concerns.

Students in their school years go through crucial stages of development. During these stages, they undergo development in all the physical, cognitive, psychomotor, and, most importantly, socio-emotional domains. Furthermore, these developments are shaped by interactions of various physical, emotional, social, and environmental factors. During the school years, which approximately correspond to the childhood and adolescence stages it is a crucial developmental goal that they can perform as per their optimal capacity in academic life, maintain healthy relationships with self and others as part of their personal and social life, and develop an overall sense of satisfaction towards' ones' life. To achieve these goals, it is essential to maintain a positive state of mental health and well-being. A supportive environment at home and in school plays a vital role in nurturing a state of positive mental health and emotional well-being during this period.

### **Role of Schools in Mental health and well-being of students**

- **Role of Schools as an Ecosystem** - All schools aim to provide education. However, every school has its uniqueness and an environment of its own, which is shaped by its members, i.e., students, teachers, support staff, etc. Schools differ in terms of the environment created by teaching-learning practices followed in the classrooms, the relationship between the teachers and students not only within the classrooms but also in other unstructured spaces in the school premises, etc. Even though the 'stated' formal curriculum content may not differ much, schools differ in terms of their culture, which is based on the beliefs, norms, and

values of the school, expectations that influence the way teachers and administrators interact, think, feel and perform, the physical and emotional safety of students in school which can be stated as the hidden curriculum. Students' attitudes towards themselves and others, their role in the school, and their sense of responsibility are all shaped by the school environment and affect what students learn and how they learn. In other words, schools are an essential setting for not only imparting knowledge about different disciplines and facilitating cognitive development in students but also equipping them with knowledge, skills, and competencies that will nurture their mental and emotional well-being.

- **Role of Stakeholders in School** – To take care of the school-going students in the country, schools must recognize, understand, and thus actively promote positive mental health and well-being among students, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. This can be made possible when schools take the initiative and lead the efforts towards bringing together all stakeholders in school education, including students, school staff, administrators, parents, and the community at large to create a supportive environment for students. The role of school administrators in this direction is paramount. As leaders in the school ecosystem, the school administrators need to play the role of effective facilitators not only in leading the way of bringing all stakeholders and becoming partners in nurturing as well as strengthening students' mental and emotional well-being but also equipping themselves to identify and strategize ways to overcome the challenges which are sure to come in the way of achieving this mission. A proactive and preventive step by the schools, with school administrators taking the lead in this direction, will go a long way toward creating

an environment where all students feel cared for, trusted, and valued and thus work towards performing optimally with a positive mental and emotional well-being.

## Challenges and Gaps in Implementation of Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools

However, there are many challenges in fulfilling the vision of NEP (2020) and promoting an environment in school where mental and emotional well-being is nurtured in all students. School administrators, as leaders, need to be equipped to overcome these challenges and forge ahead.

The core challenges that need immediate attention are:

1. Misconceptions about mental health and well-being
2. Providing support to mental health and well-being issues is a counselor's role and responsibility, and other stakeholders in school do not have any role.
3. Systemic issues related to functioning of mental health and well-being in schools

## Misconceptions about Mental Health and Well-being

### 1.1 Mental Health and Mental Disorders are the Same

A common understanding that any concern related to mental and emotional health is an indicator of the onset of mental disorder is one of the most common misconceptions. This misconception often has led to the stigma associated with it. Along with this misconception, the social taboo associated with it further restricts an individual (student/parent/teacher) in school. Because of the stigma, students, parents, and other school stakeholders hesitate to reach out to seek help and express the need to seek help. This lack of scope, which is primarily due

to fear of being ridiculed/rejected/isolated by society and the taboos attached to mental and emotional health, often leads to denial of any such concern and not seeking timely help. Both of these strategies do not provide any help in restoring the concern; on the contrary, suppressing a mental health concern for a long duration and not attending to it or suppressing it may lead to severe mental health disorders requiring psychiatric/clinical treatment. The stigma associated with counseling is still a significant issue.

### 1.2 Mental Health Needs Only Curative/Remedial Approach

The understanding that behavioral problems and emotional and mental health issues can be dealt with effectively only through a curative/remedial approach is another common misconception. This understanding leads to the notion that mental health-related issues are to be dealt with only when such issues affect an individual's everyday functioning.

However, as mentioned earlier, mental health and well-being are related to the different domains of development and the socio-cultural milieu of one's living. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to nurture positive mental health and well-being as one progresses from one stage of development to another, particularly during the school years. To ensure this, a proactive and preventive approach is necessary for attaining and maintaining positive mental and emotional health and well-being among school-going students.

### 1.2 Problems/Issues of Mental Health Needs Immediate ('Quick Fix') Solutions

Along with the above misconceptions, the belief that further adds to the challenge caused by the misconception is that mental health and well-being do not require special attention, and when such a need arises, it can

be treated immediately like a 'quick fix', and the issue/concern will be solved. Simultaneously, the thought and belief that concerns related to one's mental and emotional well-being are not an essential catalyst in students' overall development is of utmost importance for their optimal learning aids in viewing mental health and well-being needs casually. Such an understanding often leads to ignoring the warning signs of compromised mental /emotional well-being. Furthermore, such ignorance also stops the students and their stakeholders from focusing on strengthening different protective factors and simultaneously reducing/diffusing different risk factors that lead to mental health issues. In other words, the belief that mental health and well-being do not need attention and, if required, can be 'treated' forces us to focus on a curative approach rather than a preventive and protective approach, which is a necessity not only for dealing with problems/issues of mental health but also for promoting and maintaining mental and emotional well-being.

**2. *Providing Support to Mental Health and Well-Being Issues is a Counsellor's Role and Responsibility, and Other Stakeholders in School do not Have any Role.***

Another commonly believed conception by members of the school ecosystem is that students' mental health concerns are the sole responsibility of counselors and that only a counselor or mental health professional can provide support to students in case they experience any mental health and well-being-related concern. Such a belief leads to shunning away the responsibility of all stakeholders in school who are involved in the teaching-learning process of students and their all-round development.

During school years, students not only gather knowledge about different curricula and

undergo cognitive development but also, through their social interactions and knowledge of various disciplines, learn various social and personal skills such as cooperation, collaboration, underlying one's own and others' perspectives, problem-solving, conflict resolving, decision making, etc. All this facilitates their development in the affective domain and thus contributes to their mental health and emotional well-being (Sibia & Mishra, 2013). Emotional and behavioral engagement is a precursor for cognitive engagement among students (Chakraborty, 2016, 2020). As partners in learning, all members of the school play a significant role in facilitating every student's learning process and thus contribute to their all-round development, including social and emotional development, which is crucial for their mental health and emotional well-being; hence, when members of the school who are also a partner of students in their learning wash hands off from taking responsibility of nurturing /facilitating students mental and emotional well-being, it creates a stumbling block for students' all-round development. Furthermore, in most cases, counselors in school are visiting members who do not interact with all students daily.

On the contrary, other school members, such as teaching and non-teaching members, interact with students for a more prolonged duration and regularly, increasing students' familiarity with them. Therefore, when experiencing any emotionally turbulent or exuberant situation, it is natural for students to be those members of the school with whom they are more familiar. It is also essential to recognize that such familiar members understand the students. Therefore, if and when there is any change in behavior patterns or expression of thoughts/emotions, they are able to catch the

shift promptly. Such early identification is often a helpful step in proactively dealing with the mental health concern being experienced by a student because of this, the shift in behavioral pattern and change in thought/emotion is observed.

### **3. Systemic Issues Related to Functioning of Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools**

Another challenge in ensuring the nurturing of the mental well-being of students in school is related to a few glaring gaps in the functioning of the school system.

**3.1 Dual responsibility of psychology teachers (PGT psychology)** - One such gap is the dual responsibility assigned to the personnel appointed as PGT Psychology for 'the counseling of students. Psychology teachers who usually are Postgraduates in Psychology and are not necessarily always trained in guidance and counseling skills are assigned the responsibility of ensuring the mental and emotional well-being of all students. The skills required for providing guidance and counseling services to students so that their mental and emotional well-being is facilitated by professional training. In doing so, such personnel are unable to do justice in reaching out and connecting with all students on a regular basis, and thus, interaction with students is purely based on incidences/ occurrences that require attention.

**3.2 Counsellors appointed on ad-hoc and expected to do multiple roles** - On the same line of deliberation, when counselors are appointed, even as ad-hoc, they are often assigned multiple tasks, including teaching and engaging students as a stop-gap teachers in such classes where the subject teacher is on leave or the regular teacher has been assigned to attend to some other urgent work of the school. Such unplanned responsibilities cause hurdles for the trained counselors to work in a well-planned manner to foster and facilitating an environment in

school that is conducive to everyone's mental and emotional well-being, particularly students.

**3.3 Issues are extended need-based intervention** - Further, some of the concerns related to students, such as bullying, substance abuse, addiction to social media, body image issues, low confidence and low self-esteem, etc., are dealt with need-based interventions aiming to attain quick results and thus dealing with the concern for the time being only. Instead, such issues can be dealt with effectively through a proactive and preventive approach. Such an approach towards providing support to the students through different group guidance and counseling strategies throughout the academic year can go a long way in managing several such behavioral and health concerns and also help creating a trusting environment for all students. In such an environment, students feel valued and psychologically safe and, hence, feel empowered to make positive health decisions for themselves and by themselves.

**3.4 Intervention is needed only for Critical issues** - Another systemic issue that creates a hurdle is that the mental health of students is given due attention only when a critical situation arises. Such situations are usually intensely sensitive and require therapeutic/psychiatric support. To avail such support, the students in concern require referral to clinical psychologists or psychiatrists, which anyways bears a social taboo, and thus, the students in concern and their families are further traumatized by the fear of being labeled and socially isolated.

Besides the above, emphasizing high academic performance and achieving excellence often leads to allotting more time for achieving the above. In the process, such activities and interactions that may ensure students' the mental and emotional well-being are neglected. However, research

does reveal that when students are in a state of well-being – in terms of physical, mental, and emotional- their performance in all aspects, including academic life, is optimal, and they feel satisfied. Hence, a balance between activities that strengthen not only students' cognitive functioning but also their socio-emotional and physical well-being is an utmost necessity, which can go a long way in ensuring students' holistic development.

**3.5 Resource allocation** - Related to the above issue is the concern of allotting resources in terms of physical, infrastructure, and financial as well as the availability of counselors in the school for promoting and strengthening mental and emotional well-being not only for students but also for others stakeholders in the school. ccess, as underscored by the OECD in 2011.

## Ways Forward

Understanding the challenges in promoting and strengthening mental and emotional well-being in schools, we need to delve into ways to address the challenges. Some such strategies that the school as a system and specifically school administrators as school leaders can take forward are:

1. We are adopting a Whole School Approach (WSA) in nurturing and strengthening the mental and emotional well-being of all students in school.
2. Design and implement proactive strategies to eliminate misconceptions about mental health concerns among students.
3. Provide adequate support and encouragement to teachers for providing socio-emotional support to students.

## Steps in Adopting a Whole School Approach (WSA) by School Administrators

- Align the vision and mission of the school

with the target of reiterating its commitment to ensuring the mental and emotional well-being of all students.

- School administrators and leaders become well versed not only with the concerns and issues related to student's mental and emotional well-being but also aware of the ways and strategies to promote them.
- Provide adequate opportunities for teacher capacity building so that all teachers can function as caring and reflective facilitators in creating a psychologically safe, trusting, and engaging environment in the school as in classrooms for students.
- Extend support to the school in preparing a cadre/team of professional counselors, special educators, and social workers wean partner with teachersrtner for students' mental and emotional well-being.
- Encourage opportunities for creating awareness and sensitivity of other members in school (such as non-teaching staff, support staff – guards, cleaners, mid-day meal members, etc.), parents, and community members on the critical role of mental and emotional well-being, particularly of students. Also, involve them as partners in fulfilling the school's the mission to ensure the ry student's mental and emotional well-being.
- Facilitate the creation of wellness spaces in school and ensure opportunities for students to voice their concerns about well-being without the fear of being labeled.
- Assist in creating a guidance cell/committee in school with the representation of all stakeholders so that they not only develop a comprehensive guidance program for the entire school (across all the stages of education) but also monitor and evaluate the planned guidance program regularly, thus ensuring its effectiveness.
- Ensure that mental well-being concerns and

actions taken to deal with them are integrated with assessment and appraisal at all levels of schools' functioning

## **Strategies for elimination of misconceptions related to mental health concerns among students**

- Conduct sensitization and awareness programs regularly to increase understanding among all stakeholders in school about the importance of mental and emotional well-being in everyone's life, particularly among students, different concerns related to student's mental and emotional well-being, ways of supporting and partnering with each other for nurturing and strengthening students mental and emotional well-being.
- They are creating adequate opportunities in school as well as ensuring access to such opportunities so that all members of the school become aware of these opportunities and also are sensitized to the significant role that mental and emotional well-being play in students' optimal performance both in academics and their personal and social lives.
- In order to fulfill the above, it is of utmost importance to develop/collate/display/ provide resources in schools for nurturing and strengthening mental and emotional well-being. Resources such as creating designated wellness areas in the school premises, putting up wellness boxes, developing posters and other advocacy materials on different aspects of mental and emotional well-being, widely disseminating among different stakeholders, and displaying them in different areas of the school such as corridors, notice boards, staircase landings, etc. for all members to read, etc. They also share essential helpline numbers for students. Teachers and other school members should seek help in case of any mental and emotional well-being concerns, which is

another way of dealing with misconceptions. These can be shared on the school's webpage, notice board, school diary, etc.

- Partnering with parents and community members is another critical strategy in dealing with the misconceptions related to mental and emotional well-being. By establishing and ensuring adequate linkages with parents and community members through building their sensitivity, creating awareness, and participating in various activities related to the promotion and strengthening of the mental and emotional well-being of students in school, it will be possible for them to carry forward the vision and mission of the school beyond the school boundary and into the student's home and neighborhoods.
- Adequate allocating of resources and funds for undertaking the above activities, creating opportunities, developing and disseminating resources such that the challenges can be prevented holes equal if not more important.

## **Teacher Preparation for Socio-Emotional Support**

- The NEP 2020 reiterates teachers' role in creating an inclusive and caring environment for all students. Along with providing subject knowledge so that students develop their cognitive abilities, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making, teachers, according to NEP 2020, will also ensure student socio-emotional development. In other words, every teacher must be able to extend emotional support to students as they traverse various issues in their personal, social, and academic lives during the school years.
- To achieve the above, teachers must be provided with opportunities to build their capacities to function as first-level counselors.

- Along with the capacity building of teachers on knowledge and skills for providing guidance and counseling, it is crucial to include these in the assessment and appraisal of teachers.
- Lastly, teachers as first-level counselors also need to be exposed to their role as partners with school heads, parents, and community members and support professional counselors to establish a warm, caring, stress-free, and supportive learning environment for all students in the school.

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# Essential of Value Education for the Holistic Development: A Perspective from Indian Knowledge System

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## Abstract

The Indian Knowledge system is a highly integrated and comprehensive system that's a unique perspective of understanding and practicing the natural, realistic, and holistically. The National Education Policy 2020 has recognized the Indian Knowledge System as an essential component of value education, which is widely discussed as Gyan (Knowledge), Vignan (Wisdom), Yog (physical, spiritual, and mental practice), and Jeevan darshan (divine Sight). The present article has highlighted the need, process, and impact of value education from Indian Knowledge in the current education system. The need for value education highlights the education about the existential realities which enables humans to understand 'what is valuable for continuity of human happiness.' It highlights his participation in a larger order for the overall wellbeing of humanity (Vasudheva Kutumbhukam). The Indian Knowledge system is vast and highly enriched and teaches Satya (truth), tyaga (renunciation), damya (restraint), dharma (righteousness), tapas (austerity), Daya (mercy), dana (charity) and shama (tranquility). The specific content, abstracted for the value of universal, rational, and verifiable education, is included in education as Mulya Pravah 2.0 by the University Grant Commission 2023. All India Council of Technical Education has incorporated the model curriculum, induction program, and mandatory three-credit

course since 2022. The process of delivering value education is in the form of a proposal, which the individuals can verify by self-exploration. As an outcome, the verification of value education empowers the proper understanding of human beings toward holistic wellbeing, which enables transformation to live in human consciousness and bring mutual happiness to family and society. The proper understanding of individuals can be developed only with the proper proposal of values; hence, the education system needs to restrengthen to provide a holistic education for developing the full human potential. The current education system needs to adopt the value of education, which can describe the knowledge of actuality (i.e., understanding the participation in existence), reality (i.e., understanding the thing as it is), and the truth (i.e., understanding coexistence, cause, and ultimate cause). The education reform will bring the attention of individuals toward identifying and assessing their behavior, action, practice (including health practice, i.e., yam, niyam, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharna, dhyana, samadhi), realization, and participation at larger order. The Macaulay education system must be replaced with Indian holistic education, highlighting the values and holistic practice for human beings' physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing.

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## Introduction

The 'NEP 2020' aims for the individual's holistic development to create an equitable and just society. The Indian knowledge system helps achieve this by imparting the value of education, which significantly impacts understanding human behavior and human-human relationships. The University Grant Commission has incorporated the value of education and professional ethics as Mulya Pravah 2.0 since 2023. The All-India Council of Technical Education has incorporated value education in induction programs and as a mandatory three-credit course in all programs. The aim of introducing the value of education is to develop the proper understanding in individuals, which will improve human-human and human-nature interaction and bring conscious awareness about human goals and their fulfillment. It will also help build human attention to remain peaceful and happy.

The values education as per the Indian knowledge system will help in the holistic wellbeing of individuals and has significant breakthroughs in metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, axiology, ethics, cognitive science, and brain theory. The value of education is based on 'Co-existential philosophy,' which relies on natural laws and reality and not on any differentiation such as caste, religion, or sect. Education is a way that every human can understand in his/her own right and live with this understanding, resulting in simplicity, generosity, kindness, and benevolence. The holistic value of education will help us understand ourselves as humans and fulfill our relationships in family, society, and nature. The value education practice will help properly assess, observe, and analyze individuals' behavior, action, practice, realization, and participation and thus has a universal resolution to our current existential, personal, familial, social, and ecological dichotomies.

Holistic education in individual life will help in significant changes observed in their behavior, actions, and practices, including health practice, realization, and participation in a larger order. All human conduct aims to have harmony and peace at all four levels, i.e., self, family, society, and nature. Humans have always strived to understand everything since its inception, but humans cannot live meaningfully without understanding ourselves, our world, and our relationship with this world. We as humans undergo education and study because we want to 'understand' and live with 'humanness.' We want to be happy, peaceful, contented, etc. The outcome of the human study is 'consciousness transformation' or awakening. When awakened, we can 'see' the natural order of everything. We thus have a resolution (samadhan) for all states we live in. This is happiness. We thus live in 'human consciousness,' expressing our awakening, happiness, and humane conduct. This is the ultimate human goal.

The Indian knowledge system has a systematization of knowledge fields, known as Sastra, which clearly defines the purpose of Vyavahara. The value education in the Indian knowledge system means valid knowledge (Pramanas), Perception (Pratyaksha), Inference (Anumana), and Textual Tradition (Agama). Hence, there is an utter need for holistic value education as a practical, harmonious tool or practice that can solve the opposition and anger in individuals' thoughts. Modern education is still unable to guide humans to overcome unhappiness, anxiety, stress, fear, and sadness. The result of the same is observed as three critical problems in humans, i.e., regrets of pasts, opposition, and denial of the present, and worries of the future. Holistic value education is a significant solution for transforming human consciousness with freedom from all illusions and wrong mentality to attend and experience happiness, peace, contentment, and joy.

The present paper has emphasized understanding the need, content, and process of the value education to deliver in the current education system. The paper has also highlighted the impact of education's value on individuals' holistic development.

## Need of Value Education in the Current Scenario

The value of education is the ultimate need of human beings; however, the value of education is broadly needed by human beings for the following reasons.

- a. Identification of the fundamental aspiration: Value education enables the proper understanding and clear visualization of our life goals, which helps identify the human need for and importance of relationships. The value of education helps bring harmony to human beings by reducing confusion and contraindications.
- b. To set the program for the fulfillment of fundamental aspiration in continuity: the value education brings clarity to our thoughts, behaviors, and actions, which is highly valuable to the human race. Understanding desire, thought, and expectation based on natural acceptance clarifies the program for definite conduct and fulfilling a happy and harmonious life.
- c. Understanding the complementarity of values and skills: Value education highlights the need of human beings in both domains, i.e., skill and values. The value domain helps identify 'what to do in the right direction', and the skill domain helps understand 'how to do with optimum techniques. Both domains are necessary, and it is essential to have complementary skills and values for the success of the human endeavor. The value domain helps in understanding the needs of the human body and its health,

while the skill domains help achieve the body fit and healthy.

- d. To understand nature, existence, and their law: the value education helps in understanding nature, existence, and the laws governing existential realities. Understanding brings clarity about participation at all levels for mutual fulfillment and enrichment.

## Content of Value Education

The value education content has definite guidelines, which include:

- a. Universal: The value of education should be universal for all times and regions. It should apply to all beings irrespective of caste, religion, creed, or nationality.
- b. Rationale: The value of education should be logical and appeal to human reasoning. It should not be based on dogmas or unquestioning beliefs.
- c. Verifiable: The value of education should be verifiable when practiced in the living. It should lead to harmony and happiness. The practice of value education leads to mutual happiness.
- d. Leading to harmony: The value education should cover all the dimensions at all levels (individual, family, society, nature, and existence). The practice at all levels and all dimensions (thought, behavior, work, and realization) leads to mutual happiness.

## Process of Value Education

The value education content is delivered as a proposal and is explored only by self-explorations, i.e. looking inside the self. It will help identify the solution that is innate to all human beings.

-The beings will help in self-actualization and

will help in answering why, what, and how, which is called resolution or Ramadhan. Inhuman, the resolution is possible via transformation to human consciousness and awakening those results in happiness, peace, satisfaction, and bliss

-The process of self-actualization helps in identifying the solutions to problems such as depression, anger, stress, chronic pain, metabolic disease, and lifestyle disorders from attention and holistic practice. The process will help build individuals' awareness of mental, psychological, physical, and social well-being.

The process of self-exploration will help in finding a simple path to move from inhumanness to humanness, help in living resolutely with righteous wealth (having only what is rightfully one's own), righteous marital-relationship and work behavior with kindness, Fulfilling one's responsibilities in undivided-society and universal-orderliness.

-Self-actualization brings awareness to every moment through existence-centric contemplation, making key solutions to depression, anger, anxiety, and stress and approaching holistic health.

## Impacts of Value Education

Over the past 18 years and since 2017, nationwide impact testing has been conducted by the All India Council of Technical Education, New Delhi, at over 40 universities across ten states in India. Since 2022, the University Grant Commission (UGC) has also begun working on this strategy. Additionally, Rajya Anand Sansthan, Madhya Pradesh government, is undergoing extensive testing at more than 300 CM Rise Schools in the state.

The All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), New Delhi, and the Universal Human Values (UHV) foundation have worked on the

training and implementation of value education. The impact study was done using feedback from faculty members of professional institutions and students—the studies on the post-training feedback received from the participants who have expressed appreciation for the concepts. The participants realized that the value of education should enable them to lead fulfilling lives and unlock their full human potential.

The outcome of holistic education is 'consciousness transformation' or awakening. When awakened, we can 'see' the natural order of everything. We thus have a resolution (samadhan) for all states we live in. This is happiness. We thus live in 'human consciousness' and express our awakening, happiness, and humane conduct. This is the ultimate human goal. The understanding of this goal is recognized and acknowledged by participants; they have realized that education should go beyond personal development to inculcate the competence, willingness, and dedication necessary to actively contribute to the benefit of one's family, community, country, and environment.

## Conclusion

The value of education is an utter need to be incorporated into the current education system. The National Education Policy NEP2020 has highlighted education as a fundamental instrument for achieving the full human potential for developing an equitable and just society and promoting nation-building. The University Grant Commission (UGC), New Delhi, All India Council of Technical Education, New Delhi, Universal Human Values (UHV) foundation, and Rajya Anand Sansthan, Madhya Pradesh government are becoming instrumental to training and imparting value education in the current education system to nurture the individual to exhibit rational thinking and

behavior, along with qualities such as compassion, empathy, and strong ethical principles. The value education helps to identify, assess, analyze, and bring the impact of education on attention and holistic wellbeing of humans by analyzing their behavior, action, practice, realization, and participation in a larger order. This will help identify the universal resolution to our current existential, personal, familial, social, and ecological dichotomies. The value education will provide a “grand unified view” of our cognitive experience, external reality, and human living, enabling coherence in our spiritual, intellectual, behavioral, and material aspects via consciousness-awakening

The impact of establishing and expressing value will have a significant contribution to the feeling of belongingness, trust, respect, gratitude, and love within the family. This will improve the harmony within the family. Understanding human relationships and social and natural laws will help understand the feeling of fulfillment and prosperity, which will lead to decreased domination, deprivation, and fear in society. Harmonious practice will develop the understanding that will evaluate the need for physical facilities to live happy and prosperous lives. This will bring significant change in thought processes, and there will be a decrease in inclement accumulation of wealth. A proper understanding of nature and existence will help to clear the harmonious participation in nature, and improve the mutually fulfilling environment participation of humans.

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# Beyond the Classroom: Teachers as Gatekeepers of Child Mental Well-being

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## Abstract

This academic paper explores educators' crucial role in promoting students' mental well-being, going beyond their routine academic duties. There has been a growing acknowledgment of how mental health significantly influences educational achievements and overall growth. The present paper investigates how teachers act as primary responders in identifying and assisting students with mental health issues. While thoroughly examining existing literature and empirical data, the study reveals the various complex obstacles teachers encounter in recognizing and dealing with mental health problems in schools. It also discusses effective methods and recommended practices that enable teachers to establish a supportive classroom environment that fosters positive mental health outcomes by emphasizing the vital function of teachers as supporters and facilitators of student mental well-being and overall development. This paper guides policy measures and professional development endeavors that enhance support mechanisms in educational environments.

**Keywords:** *Teachers, school-aged children, mental well-being, development*

## Introduction

In contemporary Indian educational discourse, there has been a notable shift in focus from solely academic achievements to encompassing broader aspects of student well-being, particularly mental health and socio-emotional

development. This evolution reflects an acknowledgment of the interconnectedness between mental health, educational progress, and the understanding that nurturing students' holistic well-being is essential for their growth and flourishing.

Teachers are central to promoting and safeguarding mental well-being among school-going children and serve as frontline responders within the Indian school environment. Teachers in India are crucial in shaping students' lives through academic instruction and their influence on socio-emotional development and well-being. As such, they are uniquely positioned to observe and respond to the mental health requirements of their students. Recognizing the significance of their role, numerous studies in the Indian context have highlighted the importance of understanding the challenges teachers face in identifying, addressing, and effectively supporting students' mental health needs.

One of the vital challenges faced by educators in India is the prevalence of mental health issues among school-aged children. Research conducted in India indicates a concerning rise in mental health concerns, including anxiety, depression, behavioral disorders, and trauma-related symptoms, among students of various age groups (Kaur et al., 2019; Malhotra et al., 2020). Contributing factors to these challenges are multifaceted, including academic pressure, peer relationships, family dynamics,

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socioeconomic disparities, and exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) within the Indian context (Malhotra et al., 2020; Sagar et al., 2018). Moreover, the disruptions caused by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic have further exacerbated existing mental health challenges in Indian schools, amplifying feelings of isolation, stress, and uncertainty among young learners (Rajkumar et al., 2020).

In addition to the extensiveness of mental health issues, teachers in India encounter various barriers that hinder their ability to support students' mental well-being effectively. One significant challenge is inadequate training and resources in mental health literacy and support mechanisms within the Indian education system. Many educators report feeling ill-equipped to recognize the signs of mental distress or provide appropriate interventions (Ranjan et al., 2019). Furthermore, the stigma surrounding mental health issues and the lack of a coordinated approach within Indian educational systems often result in a reluctance to address mental health concerns openly (Sathyanarayanan et al., 2018). Moreover, the overwhelming demands of the Indian education system, including large class sizes, administrative duties, and standardized testing pressures, can further strain teachers' capacity to prioritize and address students' mental health needs effectively (Kaur et al., 2019).

Despite these challenges, there is growing recognition in India of the importance of empowering teachers to play a proactive role in promoting positive mental health outcomes among their students. Practical strategies and best practices have emerged within the Indian context to support educators in this endeavor. Comprehensive mental health literacy programs provide teachers in India with the knowledge and skills to recognize early signs of distress, engage in supportive conversations, and make appropriate referrals to mental health professionals when needed (Rajkumar et al.,

2019). Creating a supportive classroom environment characterized by trust, empathy, and inclusivity is paramount in promoting students' emotional well-being and resilience within the Indian context (Jain et al., 2017). Collaborative efforts between schools, mental health professionals, and community stakeholders further enhance the capacity of educators in India to address students' mental health needs comprehensively (Malhotra et al., 2020).

In light of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities surrounding teachers' roles in promoting student mental well-being in India, this research paper seeks to delve deeper into this critical area. By examining existing literature globally and within the Indian context, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges educators face in India and identify effective strategies and best practices to empower teachers in fostering positive mental health outcomes among their students. Through this exploration, valuable insights can be gained to inform policy initiatives, professional development efforts, and support systems aimed at enhancing the capacity of educators in India to support the holistic well-being of school-aged children.

## Objectives

1. Assess the landscape of mental health challenges in school-aged children.
2. Explore teachers' roles, challenges, and support mechanisms regarding student mental health.
3. Identify effective strategies for educators to promote positive mental health outcomes in the classroom.

**Interventions Strategies:** Interventions aimed at promoting the mental well-being of school-going children and supporting teachers in addressing mental health needs encompass various strategies, programs, and initiatives. These interventions create supportive environments, enhance mental health literacy,

facilitate early detection and intervention, and promote stakeholder collaboration. In this discussion, we will explore various interventions and their effectiveness in promoting positive mental health outcomes among school-aged children and supporting teachers in their roles as frontline responders.

## **1. Mental Health Literacy Programs:**

Mental health literacy programs are designed to enhance educators' knowledge and skills in recognizing, understanding, and responding to mental health issues among students. These programs typically provide training on identifying signs of distress, engaging in supportive conversations, and making suitable referrals to mental health professionals when needed. Such interventions are often delivered through workshops, seminars, or online training modules and may include components on stress management, self-care, and building resilience.

For instance, the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program offers educators and other community members evidence-based training to identify mental health problems' signs and symptoms, provide initial support, and guide individuals to appropriate resources. Studies have shown that MHFA training can improve participants' confidence in identifying and responding to mental health issues and increase their willingness to seek help for themselves and others (Kitchener & Jorm, 2008).

Similarly, the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) program equips educators with the skills to intervene effectively in situations of suicidal crisis. By providing practical tools and strategies for assessing risk, engaging with individuals at risk of suicide, and developing safety plans, ASIST empowers educators to play a proactive role in suicide prevention within the school setting (Jobes, 2016).

## **2. School-Based Mental Health**

## **Services:**

School-based mental health services bring mental health professionals directly into the school environment to assess, counsel, and support students in need. These services may include individual or group therapy, crisis intervention, psycho-education, and consultation with teachers and parents. By offering timely and accessible support within familiar and comfortable surroundings, school-based mental health services help reduce hurdles to care and promote early intervention.

In India, initiatives such as the School Health Programme (SHP) and the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) aim to integrate mental health services into school health programs and promote positive adolescent mental health outcomes. These programs provide services, including counseling, health education, and referral to specialized care, to address the mental health needs of school-going children (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, 2013).

## **3. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs:**

Social and emotional learning (SEL) programs are designed to evolve essential skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These programs promote a positive school climate, enhance students' social and emotional competencies, and reduce the risk of mental health problems.

For example, the Second Step program is a research-based SEL curriculum that provides educators with lesson plans, activities, and resources to teach social-emotional skills in the classroom. By incorporating topics such as empathy, emotion regulation, and conflict resolution into daily instruction, Second Step assists in creating a supportive learning environment where students feel valued, respected, and connected (Committee for Children, n.d.).

Similarly, the PAX Good Behavior Game is an evidence-based intervention that promotes positive behavior and social-emotional skills among students through cooperative learning, behavior management strategies, and reinforcement techniques. By fostering a sense of belonging and community, PAX encourages prosocial behaviors and reduces the incidence of disruptive behaviors and emotional problems (Embry et al., 2013).

#### 4. Peer Support Programs:

Peer support programs harness the power of peer relationships to provide social and emotional support to students experiencing mental health challenges. These programs pair students with trained peer supporters who offer empathy, validation, and practical assistance in navigating difficult situations. Peer support programs promote a sense of belonging, reduce feelings of isolation, and empower students to seek help from their peers.

In India, initiatives such as the Youth Red Cross (YRC) and the National Cadet Corps (NCC) promote peer support and leadership development among school-aged children. These programs engage students in community service, leadership training, and peer mentoring activities to foster positive relationships, resilience, and well-being (Indian et al.; Ministry of Defence, Government of India, n.d.).

#### 5. Parent and Community Engagement:

Parent and community engagement initiatives involve parents, caregivers, and community members in promoting mental health and well-being among school-aged children. These initiatives provide opportunities for parents to learn about mental health issues, develop supportive relationships with educators, and participate in school-based activities and events. Parent and community engagement initiatives create a supportive care network around students by strengthening connections between home, school, and community.

In India, programs such as the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) and the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme involve parents and caregivers in maternal and child health services, early childhood education, and nutrition support. These programs emphasize the importance of holistic development and family-centered care in promoting the well-being of children from infancy through adolescence (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, 2013; Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, n.d.).

#### The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Early Childhood Care and Education

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India outlines several points related to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) that emphasize the role of teachers in promoting the mental well-being of students:

1. **Holistic Development:** The NEP 2020 emphasizes holistic development, recognizing that education should not only focus on academic learning but also on the social, emotional, and physical well-being of students. Teachers are encouraged to adopt a holistic approach to education, which includes supporting students' mental health and emotional development from the early years.
2. **Early Childhood Education:** The policy underscores the importance of early childhood education in laying the foundation for lifelong learning and development. Teachers in early childhood settings play a crucial role in creating nurturing and supportive environments that promote children's social and emotional development. This includes providing opportunities for play, exploration, and positive social interactions, essential for building resilience and coping skills.

3. **Teacher Training and Professional Development:** The NEP 2020 highlights the need for comprehensive teacher training and professional development programs to equip educators with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to support students' mental well-being. This includes training on child development, social-emotional learning, and strategies for promoting positive mental health outcomes in the classroom.
4. **Inclusive Education:** The policy emphasizes the importance of inclusive education, ensuring that all children, including those with diverse learning needs and abilities, have access to quality education. Teachers are expected to create inclusive learning environments where every child feels valued, respected, and supported, regardless of their background or individual differences. It includes recognizing and addressing the mental health needs of students with disabilities or special needs.
5. **Collaboration and Partnership:** The NEP 2020 encourages collaboration and partnership among schools, families, communities, and other stakeholders to support children's holistic development. Teachers are encouraged to work closely with parents, caregivers, and community members to create a supportive care network around students, promoting positive mental health outcomes inside and outside the classroom.

By incorporating these points from the NEP 2020 into early childhood education practices, teachers can play a proactive role in promoting the mental well-being of students. This includes creating nurturing and inclusive learning environments, providing social-emotional support, and collaborating with families and communities to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

### Scope for Further Studies:

The scope for further studies on teachers' roles in promoting the mental well-being of school-

going children is vast. It encompasses various aspects that warrant further exploration. Some potential avenues for future research include:

**Effectiveness of Interventions:** There is a need for further research to evaluate the effectiveness of different interventions to support teachers in promoting positive mental health outcomes among students. Studies could examine the impact of mental health literacy programs, school-based mental health services, social and emotional learning programs, peer support initiatives, and parent and community engagement efforts on student well-being and academic achievement.

**Teacher Training and Professional Development:** Research could focus on identifying the critical components of practical teacher training and professional development programs in promoting mental health literacy and supporting teachers as frontline responders. Studies could explore such programs' content, delivery methods, long-term outcomes, and the barriers and facilitators to implementation in diverse educational settings.

**Contextual Factors:** Further research is needed to explore how contextual factors, such as school culture, organizational climate, community resources, and policy frameworks, influence teachers' capacity to promote student mental well-being. Comparative studies across different socio-cultural contexts could provide insights into the contextual factors facilitating or hindering practical mental health promotion efforts in schools.

**Innovative Approaches:** There is a need for research on innovative approaches to promoting mental well-being in schools, such as using technology-based interventions, mindfulness-based practices, arts-based therapies, and community partnerships. Studies could explore these approaches' feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness in enhancing student resilience, coping skills, and emotional regulation.

**Longitudinal Studies:** Longitudinal studies could examine the long-term impact of early

interventions on students' mental health outcomes, academic achievement, and life trajectories. By following students over time, researchers can assess the sustained effects of interventions and identify critical periods for intervention and support throughout the developmental continuum.

**Teacher Well-being:** Research could also focus on the relationship between teacher well-being and student mental health outcomes. Studies could investigate the impact of teacher stress, burnout, and job satisfaction on classroom climate, student engagement, academic performance, and strategies for supporting teacher well-being within educational systems.

**Intersectional Approaches:** There is a need for research that adopts intersectional approaches to understanding the mental health needs of diverse student populations, including marginalized and vulnerable groups. Studies could explore how factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and disability intersect to shape students' experiences of mental health and well-being in educational settings.

The scope for further studies in this area is broad and multidisciplinary, requiring collaboration among researchers, educators, mental health professionals, policymakers, and community stakeholders. By addressing these research priorities, scholars can contribute to developing evidence-based practices and policies that promote the mental well-being of all school-going children.

## Discussion

The discussion section of the research paper on the role of teachers in promoting the mental well-being of school-going children is an opportunity to interpret and analyze the findings in light of the broader literature, discuss implications for practice and policy, and identify avenues for future research. The critical findings from the literature review are synthesized and discussed, affecting educators, policymakers, and researchers.

One central theme from the literature review is teachers' multifaceted role in supporting students' mental health. Teachers serve as frontline responders within the school environment, interacting with students daily and playing a crucial role in identifying, addressing, and supporting students' mental health needs. However, the literature also highlights various challenges that educators face in fulfilling this role effectively, including limited training and resources, overwhelming workloads, stigma surrounding mental health issues, and systemic barriers within educational systems.

Despite these challenges, evidence suggests that teachers can significantly promote positive mental health outcomes among students through evidence-based interventions and supportive practices. Mental health literacy programs, school-based mental health services, social and emotional learning programs, peer support initiatives, and parent and community engagement efforts effectively enhance students' social-emotional development, reduce mental health stigma, and improve access to support services.

Moreover, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India provides a framework for promoting the mental well-being of school-going children and supporting teachers in their roles as frontline responders. By emphasizing holistic development, early childhood education, teacher training and professional development, inclusive education, and collaboration and partnership, the NEP 2020 underscores the importance of creating nurturing and supportive learning environments that prioritize students' mental health and well-being.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the research paper highlights the critical role of teachers in promoting the mental well-being of school-going children and supporting their social-emotional development. By adopting evidence-based interventions and supportive practices, educators can create

inclusive and nurturing learning environments that foster positive mental health outcomes among students. However, addressing the mental health needs of students requires a multifaceted and collaborative approach that involves educators, policymakers, mental health professionals, parents, and community stakeholders. Efforts to enhance teacher training and professional development, improve access to mental health services in schools, reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues, and promote collaboration among stakeholders are essential to creating supportive care systems for students. It is imperative to continue research in this area to understand better the complex interplay of factors that influence student mental health outcomes and to identify innovative approaches to promoting positive mental health in educational settings. By working together, we can create school environments that prioritize the mental well-being of all students and empower teachers to fulfill their roles as agents of change in promoting student health and well-being.

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# Mental Health Issues among Caregivers of Children with Special Needs: Understanding Social worker's Role

Twinkal<sup>1</sup>, Jagdish Jadhav<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

The intricate interplay between mental health and caregiving often remains overlooked, particularly in the context of India where such issues are not accorded due seriousness. It is imperative to acknowledge that a substantial proportion of caregiver's grapple with heightened levels of stress, burden, depression, anxiety, and various other psychological challenges. This underscores the pivotal role played by professionals, with social workers emerging as key facilitators in assisting caregivers through the provision of counseling, guidance, awareness initiatives, and the facilitation of access to essential services. The central focus of this research endeavor was to delve into the specific contributions of social workers in empowering caregivers to effectively manage their mental health concerns. This study is based on the researcher's field experiences during visits, with the Rajasthan Mahila Kalyan Mandal (RMKM). Through a comprehensive exploration of their roles, it becomes evident that social workers are instrumental in addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by caregivers. Their interventions, encompassing counseling, guidance, and awareness campaigns, play a crucial role in enabling caregivers to navigate the complexities of their mental health. It emphasizes the imperative of integrating social workers into governmental institutions and community frameworks to foster a more cohesive and sustainable developmental paradigm.

**Keywords:** social workers, mental health issues, children with special needs, caregivers

## Introduction

The family serves as the fundamental social unit fostering social cohesiveness. The arrival of a new family member is an eagerly anticipated event for caregivers and other family members. This is particularly significant and emotionally charged for caregivers, who often hold high expectations about their parenting abilities before the birth of a child. Every parent envisions their child as healthy and progressing through developmental phases at the expected pace. However, if a child is identified with a disability or long-term health concerns, these expectations may be disrupted. Many children experience both short-term and long-term health issues in their early years. While some health conditions resolve quickly and do not impact developmental stages, others require extended treatment and inadvertently affect these stages. In the case of children with special needs (CwSNs), they necessitate long-term care and varying degrees of dependency on others, depending on the severity of the disability.

In Indian culture, the primary responsibility of caring for children lies with the parents, a practice observed globally since ancient times. The caregiving process demands significant time and resources from family members. In cases where a family has a CwSNs, the

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responsibilities of its members intensify, requiring heightened attention to the child's needs. Parents often find themselves managing these responsibilities alone. It is crucial to recognize how parents balance the care of both themselves and their children. Various factors, including challenges in handling daily tasks, family dynamics, and managing family responsibilities, could contribute to this impact. Such circumstances can lead to substantial changes in the lives of family members, who often prioritize their children's well-being while neglecting their own needs. Parents, therefore, require both formal and informal support to address these challenging issues. The long-term effects of having a child with a disability can profoundly influence individuals, families, and parents.

The intricacies surrounding the management of disability, both within hospital settings and at home, present a nuanced challenge within contemporary Indian society. This complexity arises from factors such as prevailing social stigma, inadequate care facilities, and a notable absence of support from both familial and governmental institutions. In the realm of caregiving, individuals tasked with the responsibility, including biological parents, grandparents, or any designated caregiver, shoulder the exclusive duty of ensuring the well-being of CwSNs. This duty, however, is fraught with challenges, as caregivers frequently contend with obstacles in providing optimal care for CwSNs. The limited accessibility of therapies and rehabilitation services for CwSNs places an additional burden on caregivers. These individuals are compelled to invest supplementary efforts, resources, and time in the care of these children. Therefore, there is need for attention to healthcare and social work professional to work with caregivers to enhance their well-being and quality of life.

This paper draws upon the researcher's field experiences during visits by using observation

skills, where they accompanied community-based rehabilitation workers and social workers employed by Rajasthan Mahila Kalyan Mandal (RMKM) in Ajmer, Rajasthan. RMKM is a voluntary organization dedicated to the comprehensive development of individuals with disabilities, employing professionals such as psychologists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, counselors, community-based rehabilitation workers, social workers, and community health workers. The organization offers essential services to individuals with disabilities and their families through home-based intervention strategies. Over the past three years (2021-present), the researcher has observed the significant contributions of social workers in the disability field and the care sector. With a background in medical and psychiatry and community development, the researcher's is actively engaged in disability research within the care sector. This study focuses on the crucial roles that social workers can play to improve the specific society, examining two main themes: mental health concerns among caregivers of children with intellectual disabilities and the role of social workers in addressing these issues.

## **Mental Health Concerns and Psychosocial Problems among Caregivers of Children with Special Needs**

Caring for children with special needs places caregivers at the forefront of a complex and demanding set of challenges, encompassing both mental health issues and psychosocial problems. The continuous demands of caregiving can lead to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, while cognitive challenges further intensify the mental strain. Caregivers of CwSNs grapple with psychological, emotional, social, and economic challenges, primarily stemming from a lack of support within the family and from other individuals (Ambikile et al., 2012). In terms of mental well-being, a significant number

of caregivers experience frustration, anxiety, anger, feelings of helplessness, and hopelessness. They also encounter cognitive issues, such as difficulties with memory and focus on tasks. Concerns about the child's medications, treatment, potential side effects, and anxiety about the child's future and the impact of the child's condition on other family members are prevalent (Caicedo, 2014). From a social perspective, caregivers often find themselves isolated, feeling that others fail to comprehend their family situation. Communicating with family members and healthcare professionals becomes challenging (Caicedo, 2014). Hung et al.'s study (2010) reveals that caregivers of children with physical disabilities commonly experience poor mental health, with perceived parental distress emerging as a pivotal factor influencing their mental well-being. The study further suggests that compromised motor functionality in children with disabilities not only detrimentally affects caregivers' mental health but also impacts the children's psychosocial well-being. Parenting a child with special needs is associated with markedly lower self-rated mental health and higher levels of depressive symptoms compared to caregivers of children without special health needs (Smith et al., 2014). Such caregivers may face enduring health consequences, including increased restrictions in daily activities and heightened depressive symptoms. Another study conducted by Teague et al., (2018) reported that children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) had high level of anxiety and stress compared with children with other developmental disabilities. The child's behavioral and emotional impairments predicted the caregiver's overall level of distress, including stress, tension, anxiety and depression (Firth & Dryer, 2013). The same results were given by Junior et al., (2016) stated that severe behavioral symptoms in the child also increase the likelihood of severe anxiety and depression symptoms in the caregivers. The child's social

impairment severity also predicts parenting-specific stress. The influence of ASD symptomatology on the mental well-being of the caregivers and emphasizes the importance of assisting caregivers to cope with the behavioral and social impairments of their child (Firth & Dryer, 2013). Addressing these multifaceted issues is imperative to provide comprehensive support for caregivers navigating the unique demands associated with parenting children with special needs

## Role for Social Workers

Social workers assume a vital and diverse role, working tirelessly to enhance the well-being of individuals and communities. Their responsibilities encompass a broad spectrum of tasks, beginning with comprehensive assessments aimed at understanding the distinct needs, challenges, and strengths of individuals. They are active in health-care program such as delivering services to poor people, dealing with sick person with special needs. Medical and psychiatric social workers are backbone of health care system as they play the role of enabler, mediator, and facilitator between the hospital administration and children with special needs and with their caregivers. The holistic approach of social workers to provide treatment is essential. There are various roles and responsibilities of social workers in health care system such as:

### 1. Assessment and Identification of the Problem

In this phase, social workers engage in comprehensive assessments to pinpoint the mental health needs of caregivers. This involves evaluating the repercussions of caregiving responsibilities, stressors, and any pre-existing mental health conditions. Following the assessment and the identification of significant issues among caregivers, social workers can strategize rehabilitation activities and design intervention programs. These initiatives are

tailored to address the identified issues, providing caregivers with the necessary support and resources to navigate their unique circumstances. This proactive approach not only acknowledges the complexities of caregiving but also underscores the importance of individualized and evidence-based strategies in enhancing the mental well-being of caregivers within the context of their responsibilities.

## **2. Emotional Support and Counseling**

Social workers provide emotional support through both individual and group counseling sessions, creating environments where caregivers can openly discuss their experiences, explore coping mechanisms, and cultivate resilience in the face of adversity. Collaboratively, social workers and caregivers identify strengths, empowering the latter to navigate the emotional challenges tied to caregiving. Counseling sessions also facilitate the exploration of effective communication strategies, stress management techniques, and the development of a self-care plan. Additionally, social workers frequently integrate therapeutic modalities aligned with caregivers' specific needs, fostering emotional well-being and improving overall quality of life. Empowering caregivers involves aiding them in recognizing and building upon their strengths. Social workers implement preventive strategies by working with caregivers to identify and address stressors before they escalate. This may involve developing coping strategies, setting realistic expectations, and establishing a routine that supports the mental health of caregivers.

## **3. Education and Information**

Social workers provide caregivers with insights into the unique requirements of their children and furnish them with details regarding accessible resources, services, and support groups. Additionally, social workers conduct psychoeducational sessions covering aspects like disabilities, behavioral modifications for

CwSNs, stress and anger management, social security schemes, and various therapeutic approaches. By implementing skill-building initiatives, social workers impart practical techniques for handling stress, enhancing communication, and nurturing resilience amid difficulties. This empowers caregivers to make informed decisions and gain a deeper comprehension of their children's conditions.

## **4. Advocacy**

Social workers save the rights and requirements of caregivers across diverse systems, including educational institutions, healthcare environments, and community organizations. They empower caregivers to comprehend and assert their rights within these frameworks, tirelessly striving to secure essential support and accommodations for both caregivers and their children. Social workers are dedicated to addressing concerns like discrimination, inequality, and service provision gaps, aiming to foster a more compassionate society. Through their steadfast commitment to advocacy, social workers play a pivotal role in challenging and dismantling barriers that hinder the well-being and rights of caregivers of CwSNs.

## **5. Collaboration with Other Professionals**

Collaboration is indispensable for providing thorough care. Social workers collaborate with various professionals, including healthcare providers, special educators, and therapists, to establish a well-coordinated support system for caregivers and their CwSNs. They can aid these professionals in overseeing and implementing intervention programs within their respective disciplines. Additionally, social workers assist professionals in establishing rapport with caregivers to ensure effective access to services.

## **6. Crisis Intervention**

Social workers undergo training in crisis intervention techniques, enabling them to offer immediate support during periods of heightened stress or crises. They assist caregivers in

navigating challenging situations and facilitate connections with the appropriate services. During financial crises, social workers can aid caregivers in accessing funds from non-profit organizations or government bodies. Additionally, they play a crucial role in ensuring access to all necessary medical facilities during difficult times. Social workers are instrumental in equipping caregivers with suitable and sustainable resources for the care of their children.

### **7. Family Counselling**

Acknowledging the interdependence of family dynamics, social workers embrace a family-centered approach. In the intervention process, they actively engage the entire family, cultivating a supportive environment that positively impacts the mental well-being of both caregivers and children with special needs. Social workers concentrate on providing support to caregivers from personal and professional perspectives. Their roles encompass therapeutic, educational, advocacy, and support functions with the objective of fortifying family relationships and addressing underlying issues. They play a pivotal role in helping families identify and resolve conflicts through the implementation of effective communication and problem-solving techniques.

### **8. Cultural Competence**

Social workers consider the cultural backgrounds of caregivers in their approach to caregiving. They exhibit sensitivity to cultural nuances, beliefs, and practices, ensuring that interventions are culturally competent and respectful. Social workers assist caregivers in dispelling superstitions linked to the disability, providing education on the stigma and practices associated with it.

### **9. Follow-Up and Long-Term Support**

Social workers offer continual assistance by conducting regular follow-up assessments to monitor the mental health of caregivers. Long-

term support entails adapting interventions based on evolving needs and circumstances. Intervention programs may include the involvement of family members and CwSNs to provide ongoing support to caregivers. These activities aim to empower caregivers, instilling strength and confidence in their ability to care for their children. The activities may center around behavioral management, parenting styles, coping strategies, and stress management.

### **10. Parent Support Groups**

Social workers have the capacity to establish a support group for parents to gather diverse experiences, expectations, resources, and information about CwSNs. They initiate the formation of these groups by identifying common needs and challenges among parents and then coordinate the logistics of meetings, ensuring a welcoming environment. This networking goes beyond formal support group sessions, creating a supportive community that caregivers can rely on for assistance and companionship. Support groups provide a secure space for caregivers to express their feelings, share challenges, and receive understanding and empathy from those who can relate to their experiences. Within these groups, caregivers can exchange practical advice and tips on managing day-to-day caregiving tasks.

In summary, social workers serve as advocates, educators, counselors, and coordinators in addressing the mental health issues of caregivers of children with special needs. Their holistic approach recognizes the complex interplay of factors affecting caregivers and aims to enhance their resilience and overall well-being.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

The caregiving process is a prolonged endeavor that adversely impacts the mental health of caregivers. Engaged in continuous caregiving activities, caregivers often encounter challenges in their daily life activities. The lack of consistent social support from family members compounds

the caregiver's burden, leading to heightened stress levels and other mental health issues. The sustained nature of caregiving can exacerbate the difficulties faced by caregivers in maintaining their own mental well-being, underscoring the need for effective support structure. According to above mentioned needs and roles of social workers, they play role to improve the mental health of caregivers. The following suggestions are offered for the government and social workers.

- The establishment of social work department and full-time appointment of social workers in hospitals, administrative buildings, special schools and community can provide continuous support to the caregivers and CwSNs.
- Social workers can play the role of researcher in the care sector for finding the major issues in caregiving, their needs, their potential solutions. It can enhance the policy services and monitoring at the community and national level.
- Non-profit organization need to focus on care sector. They can closely work with caregivers and offer home-based intervention activities.
- Government should offer rehabilitation programs for the caregivers struggling with clinical mental health issues. It can reduce their burden, and able to improve their quality of life. They should also help caregivers in technology to offer virtual support, telehealth services, and educational resources. This can make it easier for caregivers to access information and assistance

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# Need and Impact of the Community-Based Rehabilitation Center

Anita Ajay Ghatnekar<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The paper is based on observations and the ongoing project design developed by the Seva Sahayog Foundation. Seva Sahayog Foundation, a volunteer-based organization registered in 2009, was established in Pune, Mumbai, and some cities in Maharashtra. Seva Sahayog has many flagship projects. Chetana is a project designed and developed by the Seva Sahayog volunteers. The project aims to empower children with disabilities and their caregivers, like parents and family members. Overall, birth disabilities need to be diagnosed as early as possible. Parents' acceptance as early as possible develops the child's milestones at an early age and allows him to cope with the mainstream or at least do his basic activities. Chetana is a project that helps the parent accept the child's disability, provides information about the disability, and explains the government's rules and facilities. Chetana organized the events to motivate the parents and improve the social interaction of the kids. Chetana focused on 3- to 13-year-old children with special needs. The paper discusses how ideas lead to project execution and how the established project design has been developed.

**Keywords:** *Disabilities, Early Intervention, Parents, Therapy, education support*

## Introduction

The Seva Sahayog Foundation runs the Chetana Rehabilitation Project. The Seva Sahayog Foundation is a volunteer-based organization working in the urban communities of Pune and Mumbai. Now, they are expanding themselves to Maharashtra's other cities. Their aim is to engage socially conscious individuals, groups, and corporations with interventions that match their interests. This noble collaboration collectively adds value to society at large. After working with the underprivileged sections of society for over a decade, they have recognized the gaps and areas for improvement at the individual, institutional, and community levels. Their competent staff and volunteers at the grassroots and in-office have a reliable mechanism for their work, taking it to the next level. It is observed that corporations and individuals have a purpose they wish to support but lack resources that connect them to their preferred beneficiaries. It acts as a bridge between the two and matches them to interventions closer to their hearts.

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Figure 1 (SSFoundation, n.d.)

Community-based Rehabilitation is a program for a group of people with disability. It is the holistic approach to the disability. “ It is a strategy within general community development for the Rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of all people with disabilities. The primary objective of CBR is the improvement of the quality of life of people with disability / marginalized persons. Key principles relating to CBR are equality, social justice, solidarity, integration and dignity (Physio, 2010)”.

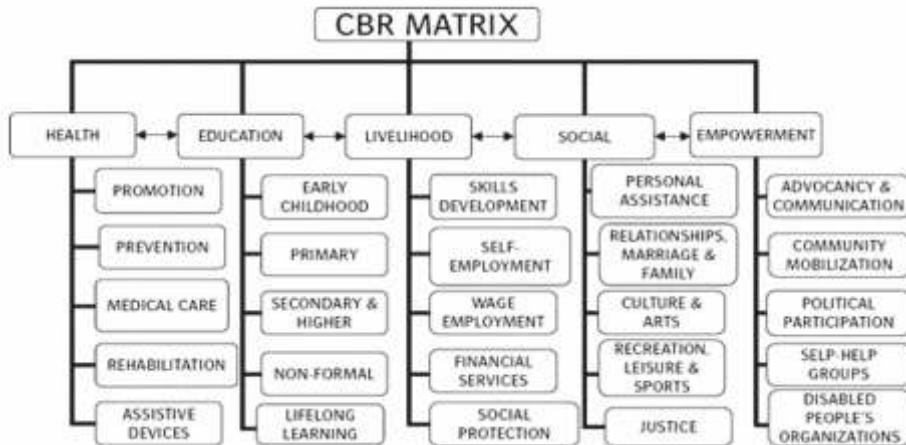


Figure 2 (CBR et al., 2019)

The above CBR matrix explains the CBR concept. The report explained the facts about the world's disability statistics. The Chetana CBR program may not include all components of the CBR matrix. However, it is a rehabilitation program for people with disabilities in the age group of three months to thirteen years old.

## Chetana Rehabilitation Project

Seva Sahayog focuses on the community and individuals within the community. Seva Sahayog is a volunteer organization. The projects are usually ideated, designed, and developed by the volunteers. One of Seva Sahayog's projects is the Chetana Rehabilitation Project. In one of the surveys for the women's empowerment initiative in 2014, we discovered one child in Pune who had a physical and intellectual impairment. Volunteers of the Seva Sahayog Foundation took the initiative to research and study the needs of families with disabled members within these communities.

The Chetana initiative serves children with neurological problems and congenital disabilities. Cerebral palsy, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down syndrome, ADHD, delayed developmental milestones, Intellectual Disability, and various disabilities are among them. The Chetana project begins with community-based home visits for physiotherapy sessions. In 2017, they began with five local children. The project's objective was to offer therapy while maintaining a connection to the organization that deals with disabilities. As Seva Sahayog, they lacked the skills and experience necessary to manage the project for individuals with impairments. The central concept of Seva Sahayog's social justice philosophy is to serve the underprivileged across society. Seva Sahayog approaches society from an integrated perspective. Many caregivers approached the organization at the beginning of the initiative, through which it was realized that the community required therapy setup. In 2017, they started the project with five kids in the community hall. In 2018, it was named the project Chetana Rehabilitation Centre. During the lockdown, they received equipment costs from one of the CSR (Cooperate-social Responsibility) funding sources, and we moved ahead. The core objective of Chetana is early intervention. They covered a wide range of topics, including early

intervention, women empowerment, family engagement, inclusive education, guidance for corrective surgery, school guidance, supportive gadgets, homeopathic treatment, and much more.

The primary research was based on various government initiatives, international papers, National Trust schemes, census studies, and numerous books written by caregivers of special needs children. Most of these books are in Marathi. Seva Sahayog has the Samutkarsh project for underprivileged school-going kids from the community. The project aims to reduce the dropout rate and assist them in their studies. The idea was discussed with the Seva Sahayog team to help special children with physiotherapy within the community. Research papers and government studies documented the complete theory and the need for early intervention centers at government hospitals. One of the critical references is the "Portage Guide to Early Childhood Education," developed by the CBR Network (South Asia) and published in Bangalore, which explains all developmental stages for children from birth to six years. It covers developments through infant stimulation, self-help, socialization, cognitive, language, and motor functions (Rao, 1993). National Trust schemes provide detailed information about the school readiness program in books and on their website. The detailed requirements, including manpower, financing, location, and infrastructure, are outlined in their reports (GOI, Act 44 of 1999). Visits to CBR projects in Bangalore and Hyderabad provided a clear understanding of these initiatives.

According to the 2011 census data, 23% of disabled children (0-6 years) have hearing disabilities, 30% have vision disabilities, and 10% have movement disabilities. Additionally, 7% of disabled children have multiple disabilities. A similar pattern is observed among male and female disabled children (Census, 2016). Furthermore, the census data shows that

54% of disabled children with multiple disabilities and 50% of children with mental illness have never attended educational institutions (Census, 2016). The gap identified through primary and secondary research led Seva Sahayog to initiate a program to bridge the gap between government initiatives and the needs of persons with disabilities.

## Methodology

According to data from the 2011 census, 1.24% of all children aged 0 to 6 have a disability. Male disabled children make up 1.29% of all male children; female impaired children make up 1.19% of all female children (Census, 2016). Only eight forms of disabilities are listed in the report based on data from the 2011 census; however, in 2016, the government's GR consisted of twenty-one types of disabilities. In 2014, the organization recognized the first child. After doing the primary research, conclusions were drawn. Chetana addresses children up to 13 years old for defects in birth and neurological disorders (PIB, 2016). Interviews and visits to various institutes in Maharashtra, Hyderabad, and Bangalore were used to gather secondary data.

Additionally, several training courses, seminars, and workshops on congenital disabilities were attended to comprehend the problems and ways to treat them. The governments of Telangana and Karnataka took a thoughtful and personable approach to CBR. We can apply the School Readiness program, developed by the National Trust Programs for Disability Studies (GOI, 1999; Handicapped, 2003). For kids aged 0 to 10, the National Trust of India's DISHA program is an early intervention program that helps them prepare for school. Chetana works in the community, and the caregivers are ignorant of their child's developmental stages. The family's elderly members served as the primary source of parenting expertise. The milestone delay was only discovered much later. Treatment delays are sometimes observed with home cures, much to

the dismay of family members. It was observed by the organization for up to 13 years. The Chetana initiative seeks to establish early intervention for people with disabilities (PwD) using counseling, educational programs, and family support. As per the government program, there should be a Special Educator, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, Counsellor, Caregiver, and Aaya in the centre.

## Findings

We discovered some information when researching the issues that need to be covered in the article. Parents did not need to be made aware of Pune's facilities or the availability of special education; only 1 or 2 percent of the children attended conventional schools or received special education. The fact that it was expensive and out of reach for the community's parents was the second and most significant factor. The children were unprepared for school because they needed to practice basic self-help skills like using the restroom, dressing, identifying possessions, making eye contact, or having patience when sitting down. Most of the parents are ignorant of everything regarding physical disabilities, learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, delays in reaching milestones, and all of the above conditions.



Figure 3 (Developmental Disabilities)

Congenital disabilities can occur for a variety of causes in the prenatal, postpartum, and delivery phases. Pregnancy-related factors include maternal sugar, blood pressure, family addiction, and parental mental stress. After delivery, if the child had a fever, seizures, or any other cause, or if the delivery was critical or the child did not cry at the moment of delivery.

Therefore, Chetana aimed to increase local public awareness in underprivileged communities. They were teaching a group of people who can teach the community how to identify a child's disabilities. Children should receive early intervention, medication advice, and access to a different medical facility. Help with every facet of the disability. The Chetana Rehabilitation Project was established in 2017. They completed a 6-year journey. They started with 5–6 kids from one community. Now, they have developed and reached more than 13 communities.



Figure 4 (Chetana Goal and objective)

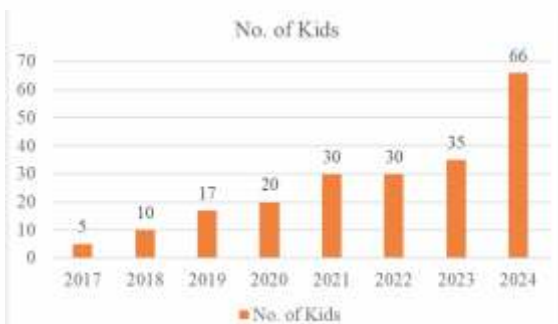


Figure 5 (year-wise distribution of children with special needs)

No. of Kids with disability

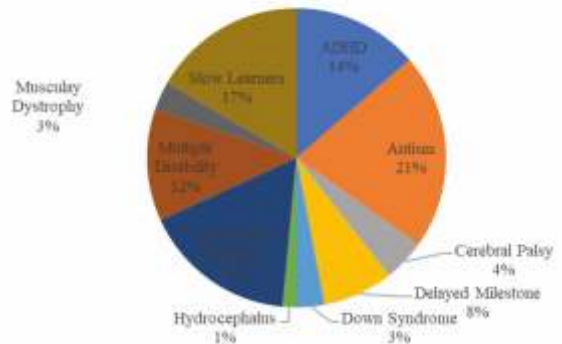


Figure 6 (Disability-wise distribution)

The program was started with Cerebral Palsy children, and now we are observing that autism, ADHD, and intellectual disabilities are increasing. Parents need parenting support in the daily care of the child, language development, speech development, fine motor development, and occupational development. Five children attend normal school, and six attend special schools. Though our focus is up to 13 years, we supported six kids for the 10th examination of the NIOS board and one kid for the 12th examination of the NIOS board (National Institute of Open School). Organizations have supported parents in deciding to undergo corrective surgery. They also supported the parents in their community, supporting them with two heart surgeries and one correction surgery because they were genuinely ignorant of medical terminology and doctor consultations. In 2017, the program was self-funded by the Seva Sahayog Foundation. In 2020, the first donation for the equipment of the therapy center was received. Now, we have observed that much of CSR is focused on disability. The importance of inclusive education, parent assistance, and therapy increased.

## Technology Support

The undertaking is expanding. The project's

objectives are qualitative rather than quantitative. The number of goals the therapist has reached should be counted to measure the qualitative goals, such as the kids' assessments and goals created by the assessments and under the CSR of Prismatic Software Pvt Ltd., a program to evaluate children's goals and accomplishments.

## Case Studies

### Overall support for kid

A 15-year-old boy from the Panda Nagar community joined Chetana in 2017. He has cerebral palsy and is a diplegic, with one limb damaged. He is partially blind and has multiple disabilities. When he joined, he was unable to walk or stand. Chetana worked on his motor function and posture development. Chetana helped his parents with his admission to Hutamta Rajguru School for fifth grade near their residence. He was allowed an hour off school for physiotherapy and special education sessions. Teachers and the headmistress assisted him with his studies. Chetana conducted numerous interventions, including taking him to the doctor for an eye examination, resulting in a prescription for glasses. Dr. Rajendra Pawar recommended that Jankalyan assist with his eyeglasses. Yashovahini helped record his lessons, and he was given a small speaker to listen to them. In 2020, Chetana supported his parents' decision for corrective surgery, and with physiotherapy, Samarth began walking independently. Now that he is 15, he no longer receives benefits from Chetana due to policy but will be supported next year for his 10th examination.

### Physiotherapy

A 10-year-old child diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) joined us in May 2023. At that time, he was having difficulty breathing, was unable to get up on his own from a lying position, and had reduced muscle strength. As is typical with DMD progression, his lower

limb ability was hampered. His physiotherapy treatment began with breathing exercises, teaching him to use a spirometer, core strengthening exercises, upper and lower limb strengthening exercises, and lower limb stretching. Static balance exercises were performed on a wobble board with reach-outs, ball catch and throw activities, and more to activate his core muscles. Lower limb weight-bearing activities, like kneeling with the support of a physioball, were also included. Activities to improve fine motor skills, such as clay molding, pincer grip, pulling, and beading, were incorporated. As a result, he can now get up independently, his upper limb range of motion has increased, and his fine motor gripping is maintained.

### Special Education Support

A 4.5 years old joined the organization in June 2023. He had behavioral and speech issues at the time of admission. He could only say 2-3 words and relied heavily on finger-pointing for communication. He only stayed in one place for 2-3 minutes and frequently jumped from one activity to another. In special education, the initial goal was to help him sit in one place. Activities such as animal boards, vegetable boards, numbers, and alphabets were introduced. Making animal sounds and introducing new words were also part of his program. Now, he can sit in one place for activities, attempt word formation, and communicate well with speech. His peer play has also improved.

### Way forward

After running the project for seven years, we believe Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is essential. CBR is a program focused on persons with disabilities, particularly on early intervention. The disabilities we focus on require early treatment and intervention. CBR programs include preschool learning initiatives. By creating awareness among schools,

Anganwadi centers, government hospitals, and community health care centers, we aim to expand the CBR program. We have observed that the overall focus in Maharashtra on congenital disabilities and the needs of parents and children is insufficient. Such programs must be designed, developed, and implemented at the district, taluka, and village levels.

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# Brief of Sushasan Mahotsav 2024

## Inaugural Ceremony

Sushasan Mahotsav began with opening remarks from Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, Vice Chairman of Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini (RMP), underlining the crucial importance of Good Governance. He emphasized the significance of this inaugural event, describing it as a groundbreaking initiative. The core ethos driving this gathering is the recognition that governance should transcend mere rhetoric confined to government circles. Our Prime Minister has consistently stressed its need to evolve into a people-driven movement. This transition can only occur when ordinary citizens are well-informed about the individuals steering governance, objectives, abilities, and skills. This two-day event was dedicated to achieving that goal. The presence of several ministers from various departments and other esteemed leaders provided invaluable insights into governance and its practical implementation. While governmental policies and party manifestos may sound promising, their true effectiveness is scrutinized when implemented at the grassroots level. Enhancing literacy on governance-related issues is imperative, with individuals recognizing themselves as stakeholders in pursuing good governance. The invitation extended to JP Nadda Ji was not merely due to his position as BJP President but also in recognition of his successful tenure as Health Minister and his notable environmental initiatives in Himachal Pradesh. His accomplishments, including securing carbon credits for Himachal Pradesh and spearheading improvements in Shimla City, stand as exemplary contributions. Furthermore, acknowledging the presence of the Deputy CM underscored the importance of responsible leadership.

In his opening remarks, Shri Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy CM of Maharashtra and Chairman of RMP, added that our Prime Minister had instilled a governance culture at every level and adorned it with exemplary models. The concept of governance in India stretches back through time, from the narratives of Ayodhya Kand to the teachings of Mahabharata and the wisdom bestowed by Chanakya. Chhatrapati Shivaji's governance model stands as a beacon, where even justice for the last person in society was meticulously ensured. Atal Bihari Vajpayee set an illustrious example of good governance, and under the leadership of PM Narendra Modiji, our nation has undergone a transformative journey. Over 25 crore people have been lifted above the poverty line, and India is steadily emerging as a global superpower. So, what exactly constitutes good governance? It's akin to oxygen in the air – its presence often goes unnoticed, but its absence can be detrimental. There were times, from 2004 to 2014, when our society experienced the ramifications of poor governance. Therefore, we must celebrate the strides we've made towards good governance under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi. Moving forward, we aim to promote this culture of celebrating good governance throughout our nation.

Shri J.P. Nadda's inaugural speech at the Sushasan Mahotsav encapsulated a vision of Good Governance as a governmental responsibility and a collective endeavour, resonating with a People's Movement ethos. He highlighted the historical significance of governance in India, drawing parallels from the epochs of Ram Rajya and Chhatrapati Shivaji's rule to underscore the

indigenous roots of Good Governance, emphasizing its resonance with inclusivity, justice, and public welfare. Shri Nadda positioned this legacy as a timeless pursuit embedded in the nation's collective consciousness. Central to his address was the conceptual reframing of Good Governance as a "Jan Aandolan" or People's Movement, advocating for a shift in mindset from viewing it as a governmental entitlement to embracing it as a societal imperative. This entails policymakers adopting Good Governance principles and citizens actively participating and taking ownership. By democratizing the discourse on governance, Shri Nadda emphasized shared responsibility rather than a top-down imposition. He addressed the challenges of Good Governance, such as self-serving agendas, vested interests, and vote bank politics that undermine transparency, accountability, and equity. However, he identified digitalization as a key opportunity to enhance these principles, positing it as a potent tool for bridging the gap between rhetoric and reality, transforming Good Governance from a lofty ideal into tangible outcomes. A significant portion of his speech was dedicated to elucidating transformative policies and initiatives under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi, such as Ayushman Bharat, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and Jan Dhan Yojana, showcasing them as exemplars of Good Governance in action. He highlighted the participatory and consultative approach in policy formulation, enhancing legitimacy, ownership, and efficacy. Reflecting on the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Shri Nadda emphasized proactive measures, digital interventions, and citizen-centric policies, citing direct benefit transfers, digitization of public services, and

healthcare infrastructure development as key initiatives demonstrating the government's commitment to public welfare. Through these initiatives, the government prioritized public welfare even amidst unprecedented challenges. In conclusion, Shri Nadda reiterated the commitment to fostering inclusive and accountable governance, stressing the importance of continuous engagement, dialogue, and feedback mechanisms to ensure responsiveness and adaptability. He emphasized the role of citizens as active stakeholders, advocating for grassroots mobilization and participation, reframing governance as a tangible reality shaped by collective action and civic engagement. Shri J.P. Nadda's inaugural speech at the Sushasan Mahotsav compellingly articulated Good Governance as a transformative force and a People's Movement. He underscored the imperative of transcending rhetoric to achieve transparency, accountability, and equity in governance under PM Modi's leadership through historical insights, contemporary examples, and visionary rhetoric. His address served as a clarion call for citizens, policymakers, and stakeholders to strive to foster a culture of inclusive, responsive, and accountable governance in India. As the nation navigates complex challenges and opportunities, PM Modi's vision of Good Governance as a shared endeavour offers hope and inspiration for a brighter future.

Dr. Jayant Kulkarni, Executive Director, RMP, delivered the vote of thanks and expressed his gratitude to the dignitaries and acknowledged the tireless efforts of the organizing committee in making the Sushasan Mahotsav a resounding success.

## Insights From Public Interviews

Public Interview of **Shri Mohan Yadav, Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh** was held on February 9, 2024. Very unique and innovative ideas of governance are being followed by the hon'ble minister in Madhya Pradesh. The key highlights of his narration are as follows:

**Sushasan (good governance)** is envisioned as a system where everyone has access to all resources and services, delivered transparently and efficiently, with accountability to the public. The Chief Minister believes this ideal has been present in India since ancient times. **The Chief Minister's journey** started with student activism and has led him to become the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. He emphasizes the importance of hard work and dedication regardless of the position held. **Training for the Council of Ministers** was undertaken by him to bridge the gap in knowledge and experience when transitioning into leadership roles. The Chief Minister shared his own experiences to highlight the need for training. **The vision for Madhya Pradesh** focuses on utilizing the state's diverse resources and geographical features to improve the lives of all citizens, particularly the underprivileged, in line with the ideals of Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. **Examples of positive change** include resolving a long-standing issue related to cotton mill workers' payments and reviving the ancient knowledge of Ujjain by establishing a research centre. **Transitioning through different roles** has been facilitated by the Chief Minister's dedication to serving the people, regardless of his specific position. **He narrated that Inspiration from Prime Minister Modi** comes from his dedication to duty, decisive leadership, and commitment to the well-being of the nation. **He Advised for the youth** is to be passionate about good governance

and public policy, as they are the future leaders of India. **According to him good governance** include establishing new colleges, empowering police to tackle repeat offenders, implementing food safety regulations, and enforcing noise pollution regulations. **He mentioned that Coordination with the bureaucracy** is achieved through honest leadership, dedication to public service, and holding officials accountable for their actions. Overall, the Chief Minister Shri Mohan Yadav ji emphasized the importance of good governance, lifelong learning, public service, and decisive leadership in fulfilling the needs of the people and the state.

Public Interview of **Shri Tejasvi Surya, Member of Parliament and National President BJYM**, was held on February 9, 2024. The perspective of a young Indian politician on good governance, Modi Government, youth and politics from a young and energetic politician is as follows: He discussed about Breaking Dynasty Politics. He believes the Modi government has broken away from the tradition of favoring political dynasties, allowing individuals like him from non-wealthy backgrounds to enter politics. Further he differentiated Sushasan and Kushasan and contrasts "good governance" (Sushasan) under the Modi government with the "bad governance" (Kushasan) of the previous government, highlighting economic development, technological advancements, and fairer legal systems as positive outcomes. He presented his ideas from Youth's Perspective and presented an optimistic view of Indian youth, who are empowered by globalization, a just legal system, and positive national identity developments. They also value cultural heritage and support initiatives like mother tongue education and the

construction of the Ram Mandir. Mentioning about Global Perception of India he acknowledged past negative stereotypes about India but believes the Modi government's achievements in space, pandemic management, and technology are changing the narrative and gaining international recognition. The speaker claims the opposition privately acknowledges the Modi government's achievements but avoids publically praising them. He highlighted PM Modi's Vibrancy and shared personal anecdotes highlighting PM Modi's personal touch, empathy, and efforts to break away from traditional hierarchical norms in politics. He answered Why Vote for PM Modi and encouraged voting for PM Modi based on the perceived positive changes experienced during his tenure and the belief that he represents good governance for the future. He advised aspiring young politicians to enter politics with a service-oriented mindset, be prepared for challenges, prioritize personal and professional stability first, and consider joining the BJP party for its potential to foster personal growth.

Overall, he presented a positive perspective on the Modi government and its impact on youth and politics in India. It is important to note that this is a single perspective and may not represent the views of all Indian youth or the entire political landscape.

Public Interview of **Shri Mansukh Mandviya, Union Minister of Health**, was held on February 9, 2024. Hon'ble Health Minister of India shared his experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and the broader healthcare reforms undertaken by the Modi government. Sharing his experiences of COVID-19 Pandemic, hon'ble minister highlighted India's success in manufacturing and supplying vaccines to other countries, even while facing domestic challenges. He emphasized the importance of scientific guidance and clear communication in managing public confusion and panic. He criticized the opposition for politicizing the pandemic response. He mentioned about

Healthcare Reforms and initiatives taken like building Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres, increasing medical college seats, and establishing AIIMS hospitals across the country. Telemedicine, organ donation awareness, and blood donation initiatives were presented as achievements. The government's efforts to increase vaccine manufacturing capacity and promote drone technology in healthcare were mentioned. Discussing about India's Healthcare Model, the minister emphasized the unique aspects of India's healthcare system, including charitable contributions and a large workforce, which contributed to the country's COVID-19 response. He argued that India should build its future healthcare system on this unique model rather than simply replicating models from other countries. Highlighting Fertilizer Sector, he briefly mentioned the book he authored on fertilizer self-sufficiency and links it to the "second agricultural revolution" happening under the Modi government.

Overall, the discussion presented a positive perspective on the Modi government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and its healthcare reforms.

Public Interview of **Shri Devendra Fadanvis, Deputy Chief Minister, Maharashtra** was held on February 9, 2024. In this interview, the interviewee, often referred to as a "water man," discusses the transformative changes and initiatives undertaken during Prime Minister Modi's leadership. He always pays attention to Detail and Coordination. He emphasizes the importance of a leader coordinating various departments to avoid silos and increase efficiency. Attention to detail is presented as a crucial aspect of project management and execution, ensuring seamless collaboration among stakeholders.

The minister discussed the attitudinal Change and Public Perception. The interviewee observed a shift in India's attitudinal landscape, attributing it to success stories and changing perceptions through initiatives like "Road Green

Field Road." The importance of transparency in government projects, public consultations, and addressing historic mistrust in land acquisition processes is highlighted. He further explained the meaning of suhasan and communication. Sushasan (Good Governance) is likened to oxygen, essential for the functioning of the government. Clear communication, transparency, and public participation are emphasized as key elements. The interviewee discusses the "Andolan Jeevi" concept, where those opposing development projects often end up funding them. He highlighted the goals for Viksit Bharat (Developed India). Bottom-up approach, check and balance systems, digitalization, technology, accountability, and decentralization are cited as the pillars of achieving Viksit Bharat. The hon'ble union health minister underscored the importance of PM Modi's involvement in policy launches, ensuring effective implementation, and the need for people's participation. Discussing about Transformation at the Village Level, the hon'ble minister shared the success story of Jalyukt Shivar in Maharashtra, a water conservation initiative that transformed villages. The convergence of policies and active participation of villagers led to economic benefits, improved water availability, and enhanced living conditions. Examples like Sangola showcase the positive impact of such initiatives. Encouraging youth to understand their roles and responsibilities, the he emphasizes the universality of Sushasan across various fields. The importance of collaboration with stakeholders and the scope for contributing to good governance is highlighted.

In summary, the interview paints a picture of transformative leadership, efficient project execution, attitudinal shifts, and grassroots initiatives that contribute to the vision of a developed and inclusive India under Prime Minister Modi's leadership.

Public Interview of **Shri B.V.R. Subrahmanyam**, CEO, NITI Aayog, was held

on February 10, 2024. This interview portrayed the differences between Yojana Aayog (Planning Commission) and NITI Aayog, the role of NITI Aayog in various government schemes and initiatives, and its vision for India's future development. NITI Aayog replaced Yojana Aayog in 2014. NITI Aayog is seen as a more flexible and advisory body compared to the centralized planning approach of Yojana Aayog. Discussing about the NITI Aayog's Role, he mentioned that it promoted Minimum Government, Maximum Governance: It facilitated coordination between different government departments for smoother implementation of policies. Through Government Schemes and Projects, It helps design, implement, and monitor various government schemes and projects. Innovation and Land-to-Lab initiatives are promoted; it supported initiatives like Atal Innovation Mission to promote innovation at various levels. Urban and Economic Planning focused on holistic and integrated economic planning for cities, considering factors like existing economic activities and future potential. He further specified the future vision of NITI Aayog that it is working on a roadmap for "Viksit Bharat 2047" (Developed India by 2047), and focusing on areas like: Demographic Dividend: Utilizing the potential of India's young population through education, skill development, and healthcare investments. Science, Innovation, and Technology: Promoting these areas as key drivers of future development. Public Participation: Encouraging public participation in policymaking, like the "Voice of Youth on My Gov" initiative.

Overall, the interview highlighted NITI Aayog's role as a key player in India's development journey, aiming to achieve a developed and prosperous nation by 2047.

Public interview of **Shri Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir**, was held on February 10, 2024. He shared his views on Good Governance in

Jammu and Kashmir. His views acknowledged the initial skepticism surrounding the topic of good governance in Jammu and Kashmir due to the region's historical challenges. He mentioned about positive changes under current administration like Abrogation of Article 370 and its impact on dynastic politics, improved security, education, and job opportunities, advancement in digital governance and inclusivity and Economic progress and industrial development. He pointed out Initiatives like Back to Village and Self Help Groups promoting community engagement and women's empowerment, Focus on education (NEP 2020) and startup ecosystem and Increased digital integration under the Transformative leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Modi. J & K is following future-driven governance approach with Emphasis on technology, including Meta Verse, Big Data, and Artificial Intelligence, Aiming for a "future-driven, tech-assisted, and human-driven" framework, Reimagine, Redesign, Reform, and Refreeze model for achieving positive outcomes and Transitioning towards an exponential pace of development. Overall, his views highlighted the significant progress made in Jammu and Kashmir under the current administration, emphasizing the importance of good governance, inclusivity, and technology-driven development for the region's future.

Public Interview of **Shri Temjen Imna Along, Minister of Tourism and Higher Education, Govt of Nagaland** was held on February 10, 2024. The discussion covered various issues related to governance, development, and the impact of the Modi government on the Northeast region of India. He began with defining Sushasan or good governance. Good governance is ensuring people receive all services and benefits, and actively involving them in the process. The Modi government's initiatives like Ayushman Bharat and direct benefit transfers are seen as examples of Sushasan. He mentioned about the changes happened in the North East like Significant reduction in rebellion activities,

improved access to services, and a stronger sense of national identity are highlighted as positive changes since 2014. He praised Modi's leadership, emphasizing his dedication to national development and inclusivity. He is credited with breaking barriers and fostering unity across the nation. Digital governance has increased use of the internet in rural areas is seen as a positive development, empowering villagers with information and access to services. It also played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic. He acknowledged the challenges faced by the Northeast in the past and emphasizes the positive impact of the National Education Policy (NEP) on improving access to education and skilling the youth. He pointed out Social harmony one of the key of good governance. He criticized the past government for neglecting the Northeast and promoting division based on caste, religion, and tribe. He commended the BJP government for treating all citizens equally and promoting "Satya Sushasan" (truthful governance). He encouraged young people to focus on good deeds and strive to influence others positively, regardless of the scale.

Overall, the views presented a positive perspective on the progress made in the Northeast region under the current government, attributing it to improved governance, leadership, and focus on development and inclusivity.

Public Interview of **Dr. Vinay Sahastrabudhhe, Vice-Chairman, RMP** was held on 10.02.2024. He shared his views on various areas including leadership, governance, social media, and advice for young people. Through RMP training programmes a multifaceted training for effective political engagement and leadership roles, focusing on motivation, skill-building, and resilience is being provided. He discussed about Transformational Changes which includes success of a village development project, emphasizing breaking down social barriers and

empowering individuals. He further advocated for integrating art into political discourse and governance, highlighting its potential to inspire, provoke thought, and foster social cohesion. He shared challenges and achievements while working on the cultural committee of Maharashtra, including addressing the impact of AI on art and overcoming bureaucratic hurdles. Talking about BJP Chief Minister Conclave, he described the significance of the conclave in facilitating exchange of experiences and best practices among BJP-led states, promoting "saturation" (ensuring everyone receives benefits) and collaboration. He pointed out Good Governance with a Difference by sharing approach of BJP government. He emphasized accountability, performance-driven results, innovation, ethical leadership, and zero tolerance for corruption as key aspects of BJP's governance approach.

He shared his Insights from Foreign Visits by highlighting the global demand for Indian professionals, the importance of soft power in shaping global perceptions, and the need to address misrepresentations of India in foreign educational materials. He shared personal experiences with Prime Minister Modi, emphasizing his impactful leadership, coining of powerful terms, and commitment to meaningful engagement. He encouraged mindful and intentional use of social media, focusing on positive connections, critical evaluation of content, avoiding "fear of missing out", maintaining a healthy balance, and not letting social media define self-worth. According to him youngsters should start YouTube channels as a way to share their experiences, interests, and expertise, fostering transparency, authenticity, and community building. He acknowledged the value of learning from influencers, gaining diverse perspectives, understanding the responsibilities of influence, and staying informed about digital trends. He anticipated significant changes in politics due to technology, demographics, and societal norms. Young people are advised to be prepared for challenges,

develop strong communication skills (including multilingualism), embrace digital tools, and cultivate global awareness.

Overall, he shared an optimistic view of the future, urging young people to get involved in shaping a better society through active participation, leadership, and responsible use of technology.

**Shri Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh**, joined virtual session of Sushasan Mahotsava 2024 on February 10, 2024 during the ongoing budget session of the Uttar Pradesh state assembly. Despite his virtual presence due to assembly commitments, the Chief Minister demonstrated a commitment to engaging with stakeholders. The summary highlights Shri Yogi Adityanath Ji's endorsement of the vision of "Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat," emphasizing the government's dedication to fostering national unity and integration. The inclusion of the Kumbh Mela in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2017 is cited as a testament to India's rich cultural heritage and spiritual legacy. Shri Yogi Adityanath Ji's emphasis on initiatives like the "har ghar tiranga" campaign and the Ayodhya Ram Mandir foundation-laying ceremony reflects the government's efforts to instil national pride and unity among citizens. The abrogation of Article 370 is highlighted as a bold step towards addressing challenges to national unity and territorial integrity. This decision symbolizes the government's commitment to promoting equality, justice, and unity while fostering peace and prosperity in the region. The focus on effective governance underscores the government's dedication to ensuring policies translates into tangible benefits for all sections of society. The introduction of the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme and the Chief Minister's Internship Scheme are lauded for their positive impact on economic development, employment generation, and skill enhancement. The ODOP scheme's success in revitalizing MSME clusters and creating a ripple effect of economic activity

is noted, while the Chief Minister's Internship Scheme is recognized for bridging the gap between theoretical learning and practical experience among students. The provision of interest-free loans for new entrepreneurs, coupled with comprehensive support including mentorship and training, highlights the government's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and inclusive economic development.

In summary, Shri Yogi Adityanath Ji's leadership and the Uttar Pradesh government's initiatives reflect a holistic approach to promoting national unity, preserving cultural heritage, addressing challenges, fostering economic development, and nurturing a sense of pride and belonging among citizens.

Public interview of **Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, Union Minister of Civil Aviation** was held on February 10, 2024. In the provided interview excerpts, the Minister of Civil Aviation in India discussed key aspects of good governance, transformative decisions in civil aviation, and shared insights from his interaction with Prime Minister Modi. The Minister emphasized the historical roots of good governance in India, highlighting Prime Minister Modi's revival of age-old concepts for a progressive Vasudheva Kutumbakam. Good governance, according to the Minister, is achieved when every individual across the nation benefits from government policies. He underscored the spiritual and religious responsibility of public servants to serve the people, portraying them as problem solvers rather than mere regulators. The Minister

discussed a transformative decision in the civil aviation sector, focusing on the reduction of VAT on Air Turbine Fuel (ATF). By engaging with state governments, he successfully lowered VAT rates, leading to a significant boost in the airline industry, greater economic growth, and enhanced connectivity. The Minister also highlighted his process-oriented approach, implementing dashboard systems and advisory groups to foster collective responsibility and accountability. The Minister shared his experience of interacting with Prime Minister Modi, emphasizing Modi's unique leadership quality of attentive listening. He described an hour-long, uninterrupted meeting where the Prime Minister actively discussed ideas and personal experiences, leaving a lasting impression on the Minister. He recognized the importance of leaders being effective listeners, considering it an innate trait rather than a learned skill. Drawing inspiration from his ancestors, particularly Mahadji Scindia, the Minister highlighted lessons in humility, administrative acumen, and commitment to unity. Mahadji Maharaj's role in restoring Maratha rule after the Third Battle of Panipat, modernizing the army, and fostering a sense of national unity served as a timeless example. The Minister emphasized the relevance of these traits in contemporary times.

In summary, the Minister's insights reflect a commitment to principles of good governance, transformative decision-making, collaborative processes, and drawing inspiration from historical figures to shape a more prosperous and united India.



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