

## Efficacy of SEC-Skill Enhancement Courses under NEP 2020 amongst College Students - A Review

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### ABSTRACT

The Government of India proposes many rising developmental requirements of the 21st century to achieve Vision 2047. The National Education Policy of India 2020 aims to ensure that these goals are reached in the education sector. It states that students must develop higher-order cognitive capacities like critical thinking, decision-making, and problem solving, along with social, moral, ethical, and emotional capacities, values, and temperaments through education. One of the foundational principles of the NEP 2020 is to develop life skills such as communication, creativity, stress management, cooperation, self-awareness, teamwork, time management, and resilience (NEP 2020). Keeping in mind the aims and objectives of NEP, educators must recognize the importance of skill development in achieving the desired outcomes. This can be achieved by implementing practical and hands-on learning experiences and designing the syllabus accordingly for students. In the present review study, the effectiveness of such skill development programs has been discussed through reviewing the literature of various research papers, articles, and books. This paper further highlights the necessary vocational and life skills for college students under the guidelines of National Education Policy 2020 and the potential impact it can have on students' successful career development.

**Keywords:** NEP 2020, SEC, Skill Enhancement Courses, Students

Education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals into well-rounded and empathetic human beings. It aims to cultivate critical thinking skills, compassion, courage, resilience, and a scientific and creative mindset, all while instilling strong ethical values. Ultimately, the goal is to produce responsible and proactive citizens who will contribute to the establishment of a fair, diverse, and inclusive society, in line with the principles of our constitution. The visionary National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform India's education system, focusing on the development of holistic individuals equipped with the skills, knowledge, and values necessary to thrive in an interconnected world. As India strives to achieve its Vision 2047, the effective implementation of NEP's guidelines holds the key to unlocking the country's human potential. This paper explores the critical role of skill development in achieving the objectives of NEP, with a particular emphasis on the vocational and life skills essential for college students' career development.

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New trends in education have focused on inculcating skills in students. Therefore, many different skill enhancement courses have been introduced. It has become necessary to understand the effectiveness of such skill enhancement courses (personality development programs) under NEP. Taking into account the local and global needs of the country and its youth, it is important to identify skills that are in high demand and align with the goals of the NEP while taking the mental health and wellbeing of students into consideration. This will ensure that the youth are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed in the ever-changing world of work. Therefore, in this study, the researchers have identified significant life skills such as resilience, self-esteem, and self-concept, with dimensions like emotional intelligence, sociability, physical, intellectual, moral, and educational. These skills are crucial for the overall development of students and will play a key role in the successful implementation of the NEP.

For years, researchers have been interested in investigating the importance of the psychological health of students and its impact on their careers. Many recent studies under NEP are highlighting the essential role of curriculum in incorporating such skill development courses through training and intervention programs for students. However, it has been observed through a literature review that very few researchers have investigated the skills necessary for personality development and building resilience among college students.

#### ***Students' coping mechanisms and resilience***

Bettencourt, Charlton, Eubanks, Kernahan & Fuller (1999) conducted research on college students. They compared students' personality traits, coping mechanisms, and mental symptoms to resilience. The findings validated theories concerning the correlation between resilience, personality traits, and coping mechanisms. Neuroticism and resilience were found to be negatively correlated, while extraversion and conscientiousness were positively correlated. Beyond the contributions of these personality factors, coping methods also predicted diversity in resilience. The goal of this study was to better understand how personality traits, coping mechanisms, and psychiatric symptoms relate to resilience in young adults. The outcomes are displayed as follows: (1) resilience's absolute and relative strength of correlations with the "Big Five" personality factors; (2) personality and coping style contributions to the prediction of resilience; and (3) resilience moderating effect on the relationship between psychiatric symptoms in the present and maltreatment in childhood.

Balgiu (2017) assessed young adult students' ability to bounce back from challenges (resilience), confidence in themselves (self-esteem), and basic personality traits. It was found that emotional equilibrium and self-worth promote individual resilience, but people who experience negative emotional states and emotions of guilt or worry would find it difficult to handle stressful situations.

#### ***Personality Development and NEP***

Dumrongstithum and Wongleedee (2019) conducted a study to understand how students' personalities develop and what are the strategies for determining how they would carry on with their process once the training was over. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this survey investigation. One hundred students participated in the personality training program and were questioned using a questionnaire. The study's conclusions highlight a few important details, including the participants' students' notable improvements in confidence and personality. Students' improved personalities included being very upbeat, being more conscious of how they dressed and carried themselves,

picking up more crucial social skills, and continuing to have high self-esteem. The goal of NEP 2020 is to go beyond conventional methods and adopt a holistic approach to education that develops each student's unique personality and promotes overall development.

The BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha has suggested the Integrated Personality Development Course (IPDC) to give college students a more holistic development. In order to evaluate the impact of the Integrated Personality Development Course (IPDC) on a range of aspects of an individual's life, including values, attitudes, and interpersonal relationships, as well as investigate any relationships with gender, age group, family structure, socioeconomic status, and other variables, the current study was carried out on university students enrolled in the program. The purpose of this study is to evaluate how much this course has affected the students' overall development and satisfaction levels. The survey findings make it clear that both student happiness and the course's quality are quite good. This course has a big impact on students' civic virtues, family values, professional development, and overall well-being. Additionally, it was discovered that the students who took this course as part of their university curriculum gave IPDC a high recommendation. These findings imply that, when adopted by higher education institutions in accordance with the National Education Policy, IPDC has the ability to offer college students an efficient holistic development (Vanparia, Dholariya, Rsearher & Gheewala, 2022).

### ***Impact of Self-esteem on Adjustment***

Research has been conducted on the relationship between college adjustment, self-esteem, and mental health status among Chinese undergraduates (Zhang, Ding, Lau, Wang & Yang, 2021). It suggests that helping students adjust to college and building self-esteem can have long-term benefits for mental well-being. Thus, effective interventions are needed to boost low self-esteem and to improve adjustment.

Similar study investigated the relationship between self-esteem and adjustment to college in freshmen students (Hernandez, 2017). It has been observed how self-esteem affects freshmen students' ability to adjust to college life. Students with high self-esteem tended to adjust well to college, and that there's a positive link between the two. To help new students settle in and build their confidence, the study recommends that colleges and universities organize activities and support systems to promote adjustment and self-esteem development.

### ***Developing Interpersonal and Life Skills***

Campbell (2006) investigated the effects of life skills training on teenagers' adjustment, empathy, and self-worth. Test results were collected in the post-condition following a five-month training period. The findings demonstrated that the subjects' post-condition scores on self-esteem, emotional adjustment, educational adjustment, overall adjustment, and empathy all considerably improved. Subjects improved on all but one of the post-condition measures, indicating that the training was highly effective overall in changing the attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors of adolescents by creating a supportive atmosphere. The results showed that because interactive educational programs were very engaging and participatory rather than didactic, they were "statistically superior" to non-interactive interventions in avoiding drug misuse. A related study by Yadav and Iqbal (2009) also showed that interactive programs that improve the development of interpersonal skills have a better impact than non-interactive, lecture-oriented programs.

Mishra and Vashishtha (2012) conducted a study on students who participated in a seven-day special Model National Integration Camp, selected from 13 state universities in Uttar

Pradesh (n = 150). Following the camp, the children were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding how the camp impacted their process of developing life skills. The results, which were based on student replies, were quite positive and showed that these kinds of camps, when included in NSS activities, do contribute significantly to the development of different life skills in undergraduate students.

### ***Religious Approach and Personality Development***

Ahmady (2014) investigated the effects of intervention (training for communicative skills through a religious approach) on the mental health of male students. The use of religion in communication skills training proved beneficial in raising students' self-esteem and mental well-being. This study looked at how personality traits, self-confidence, and ability to bounce back from challenges are connected in a specific group of young adult students who are in a unique stage of life. The results demonstrate a strong positive correlation between extraversion and resilience, as well as between resilience and self-esteem. It also demonstrates the detrimental relationship between neuroticism and resilience.

Adnan, Abdullah, Embong, Talib, Yaacob & Ismail (2017) carried out an investigation to evaluate a methodical, specially designed module for improving holistic personality that will be used in a unique curriculum for students in Malaysia. Three methods—Tadabbur that is thinking of the consequences in the long term, Tafakur that is thoughtfulness, reflection, meditation, cogitation, and Taqwa that is God consciousness or piousness and self-restraint"—have been identified and comprise this module. The study employed a variety of qualitative research techniques as well as the design and development of modules utilizing the developmental research method. In order to examine the document data, the study also employed the contemplative approach and the content analysis method to examine the Qur'anic verses. In addition, methods such as observation, interviews, and questionnaires were employed to gather information in order to evaluate the suitability and efficacy of the programs and modules. The government's goal of producing high-caliber human capital and a holistic approach to address the difficulties of globalization makes the creation of modules for strengthening holistic personalities more pertinent. It also aids in achieving the objectives of Islamic education and educational philosophy.

### ***Impact of NEP 2020 on education system***

Nageswararao (2023) examined the opinions of one hundred secondary school teachers on how the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 affected the personalities of the pupils. The goal is to learn more about the particular NEP components that secondary school instructors believe would positively influence students' personality development. The results show that teachers have distinct perspectives, underscoring the importance of several domains in developing students' well-rounded personalities. According to the findings, experiential learning is highly valued, as indicated by the fact that 75% of teachers acknowledge its significant influence. This research highlights the value of practical experiences in helping students develop as individuals. Life skills education is closely behind, as indicated by the 64% of teachers who recognize its importance in providing children with basic life skills. Additionally, 59% of educators acknowledge the importance of personal and social development, highlighting its significance in creating well-rounded people. These results imply that teachers regard real-world exposure and the acquisition of life skills as essential elements of comprehensive personality development. These findings can be used by stakeholders, educators, and policymakers to improve the implementation of NEP and establish an atmosphere that supports the holistic development of secondary students' personalities. To ensure that NEP is continuously improved and refined for the holistic

development of students, more study is necessary to examine the experiences of parents and students, regional variances, and long-term repercussions.

Singh and Baghel (2020) tried to examine NEP in general and its effects on the existing educational system from a broader global viewpoint. Using basic random sampling, primary data was gathered from 225 academicians of higher education colleges and institutions in order to comprehend it at the grassroots level. The findings showed that NEP has had a major influence on changing higher education. The general consensus that emerges is that the new system would foster students' overall growth and inventiveness, giving them stronger knowledge and enhanced skills that would enable them to compete on a global scale.

In order to accomplish the objectives of NEP 2020, an attempt has been made to determine what changes in future teachers' soft skills are anticipated (Macwan, 2022). The content analysis method has been used to identify areas where instructors' soft skills need to be strengthened. Author's justification is that, should there be a discrepancy between the activities that prepare teachers and those that are anticipated of them while implementing NEP, the policy will be exposed as little more than an ambitious plan to overhaul Indian education. Following are the short-listed idea units, associated keywords, and resulting interwoven soft skills:

- Education should focus less on memorizing facts and more on teaching students how to think for themselves, solve problems, be creative, and adapt to new ideas and situations. (NEP 2020, P:3) - Goal setting, critical thinking, decision-making, reflective thinking, communication skills, and collaboration.
- Classrooms will become more hands-on and collaborative, with students and teachers working together and sharing ideas in a more dynamic way. (NEP 2020, P:12) Interactive teaching, experiential learning Interpersonal skills, Communication skill, Time management
- Incorporating sports into education is important because it helps students develop physically, emotionally, and mentally, leading to overall well-rounded growth and better health. (NEP 2020, P:12) physical and psychological well-being, critical thinking, creativity, decision-making, conflict resolution, and mentoring.
- Basic human and constitutional values (NEP 2020, P:16) Development of ethics, communication skills, building cultural awareness, emotional intelligence, and negotiation
- Most importantly, educators mustn't forget about the kids in school. We need to make sure they're safe, protected, and treated fairly - especially girls and teens who often face tough challenges. (NEP 2020, P:33) Safety and Rights of Children, Sensible listening, communication skills, interpersonal skills, empathy, conflict resolution, crisis management, and emotional intelligence.

Shenoy and Shailashri (2023) conducted a review study to analyze the impact of skill enhancement training programs and the role played by the corporate sector in skill development under NEP. The study also highlights the prior discrepancy between academic standards and industrial demands, which made skill development initiatives necessary, and the effect that these training programs had on graduates' quality of work lives. The significance of qualified human resources, the benefits of skill development for worker performance and job satisfaction, and organizational success are also mentioned in the study. The importance of skill upgrading for the economy, industry, and individual employees has

been identified. The report also notes that employee work happiness and performance can both be enhanced by skill improvement training and there is a lot of room for investigation into how training and skill enhancement programs affect QWL-Quality of Work Life.

Kashyap, Dabral, Sahu, Tripathy, & Vishvakarma (2024) conducted a comparative study to explore the impact of NEP 2020 on eight psychological dimensions among students, including anxiety, stress, depression, regression, fatigue, guilt, extraversion, and arousal, utilizing a sample of 140 undergraduate students that was split into cohorts that were NEP and non-NEP. The results imply that NEP may have wider effects on personality traits, even though it may not directly affect students' psychological well-being in the majority of aspects. The need for more study to fully comprehend the complex consequences of educational policies on student behavior and wellbeing is highlighted by these observations, which have significance for practitioners and policymakers in the field of education. This study adds to the current conversation about educational reform in India and emphasizes how critical it is to establish inclusive and supportive learning environments.

In an effort to solve a number of issues and raise the standard of education across the board, the NEP 2020 was proposed. Some of the major objectives of NEP are as follows:

1. Overall development through promoting interdisciplinary thinking and integrating extracurricular activities into the educational program. It aims to develop students' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills.
2. Skill Development: The importance of skill development and vocational training is recognized by the NEP. In order to equip students with the skills they need for employment and entrepreneurship, it places a significant emphasis on hands-on training, internships, and apprenticeships. In an attempt to reduce the emphasis on memory, it promotes a more immersive and holistic approach to education.
3. Research and Innovation: In the classroom, NEP promotes a culture of inquiry and experimentation. It seeks to establish hubs for innovation and research, encourage collaboration between academic institutions and business, and pique students' curiosity and inventiveness.

Kumar & Bhakuni (2024) outlined some potential outcomes of the NEP 2020:

1. Holistic Development: The comprehensive development of students—their mental, emotional, social, and physical well-being—is highly valued in the NEP. This approach can help develop well-rounded individuals who can overcome challenges in the real world.
2. Flexibility and Choice: The tactic promotes curriculum flexibility and topic selection, encouraging students to pursue their areas of interest. Students' originality, creativity, and love of learning may be fostered by this.
3. The NEP combines vocational education with a heavy focus on practical skills in an effort to increase employability and better prepare students for the needs of the labor market. This focus on skill development can help close the gap between industry and academia and reduce unemployment.
4. Multilingualism and Cultural Integration: The NEP supports multilingualism in recognition of the importance of regional languages in maintaining cultural diversity. This can strengthen the ties between local culture and education and encourage diversity.

Devi and Sreedevi (2024) highlighted the fundamental ideas of NEP 2020, its outcome-based and comprehensive approach to education. The NEP seeks to support learners' overall

development by bringing about a paradigm shift away from rote memorization and toward experiential learning and competency-based evaluation. Influenced by well-known Indian philosophers who promoted holistic education, such as Jiddu Krishnamurti, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Aurobindo, the NEP places a strong emphasis on integrating the social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual aspects of learning.

### CONCLUSION

The new education policy included various reforms in the education and skill development domains while emphasizing the development of an individual, encompassing all facets of personality growth. The comprehensive vision of Skill-Enhancement Courses revolves around deep training, skills in 'applied' interpersonal relationships, habits, values, a career, and skills for improving one's mental well-being like resilience, self-esteem, coping, etc.

The present study aimed to review the literature and research on the effectiveness of skill enhancement courses, especially personality development programs, under NEP 2020. The findings revealed that these courses positively impact students' overall development and employability. Further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of these programs on students' career and personal growth. It has been observed that there is a gap in the literature for many studies. Some fail to consider the guidelines of NEP, while others focus only on the theoretical aspects of personality development and neglect the practical implementation and real-world outcomes. Taking into account the aims and objectives of NEP, it is necessary to bridge that gap by conducting comprehensive research to design and build such short courses (skill enhancement courses) which will mainly focus on overall personality development from a psychological perspective and behavioral changes to interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence.

It is important to understand the impact of these courses on the overall development of students. These courses play a crucial role in shaping the students' personalities and preparing them for future challenges in the world of work. However, it has been observed in the present review study that there is a lack of empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of these skill enhancement courses. This suggests that more research is needed to completely understand the effect of such courses by providing interventions or training programs for personality development. Furthermore, the findings from this study can inform policymakers and educators on the best practices for implementing effective skill enhancement courses.

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