

Re-engineering holistic student support model beyond conventions

Students are the purpose of a Higher Educational Institution (HEI). Sustained success of the HEIs lies in building a sustainable relationship with the students. Hence, it is important to develop a holistic student support model that addresses complete well-being of a student. A model that is not just confined to their professional well-being but also addresses social, psychological and financial well-being of the students is need of the hour.



Effective learning requires comprehensive approach for appropriate curriculum, engaging pedagogy, continuous formative assessment, and adequate student support. The vision of the New National Education Policy (NEP-2020) includes revamping of student support for enhanced student experiences. Initiatives are required to ensure that learning environments are engaging and supporting.

NEP-2020 envisions complete engineering of the educational system is aimed at developing the students holistically i.e. by nurturing their intellectual, emotional and spiritual quotients. Students in a Higher Educational Institution must inculcate following attributes: S- Self-confident, T- Talented, U- Understanding, D- Diligent, E- Empowered, N- Nationalist, - Tenacious.

To infuse the STUDENT attributes among students, a comprehensive student support model can be contemplated and culminated in the culture of higher educational institution:

Students coming to a higher educational institution belong to different economic, social, educational, personal and geographical background. This difference in the background should not create differences in their learning. Hence, special care is required by HEIs. The most important aspect of a student's life in the institution is the academic learning which if goes beyond class, leads creates holistic learning. Students can be mentored in two ways, one, by their subject teachers, other by their departmental seniors. Teacher-student mentor-mentee relationship helps the student find a guardian away from home who he/she can discuss personal and professional issues with. Student guardian can certainly provide advises on several practical issues confronting the institutional life of the student. Not all students who join a higher educational institution come with resources adequate enough for institutional living. In a country like India where resources are limited, it is the institutional responsibility to provide financial support to those in need. A robust mechanism is needed to help deprived students to meet expenses towards fees, education, living and lodging.

Symbiotic initiatives to develop students as valuable human resource to augment the Institutional framework can be a game changer. "Earn while Learn" programmes encourage students to take up part-time jobs at the institution itself. Students involvement in HEIs functioning learn hands-on experience, prepare them for future jobs, adds value to their skill set, perpetuates dignity of labour and channels energy positively along with providing

them an opportunity to meet their expenses. A ceiling should be stipulated so that jobs do not hinder studies. Another initiative to provide financial support to students could be schemes like "Own a student" by teachers, non-teaching staff, alumni and society. Under this scheme, different stakeholders of the institution may take responsibility of a student by bearing partial or complete financial expenditure through an open and transparent process. It can bestow a sense of satisfaction to the adopter and a sense of gratitude in the adoptee. Such schemes may play a catalytic role in the education of bright needy students.

NEP-2020 has also proposed a monumental change in our education system by cultivating the student's mental health, stress and emotional adjustments. HEIs should support students to maximise and realise their potential, boost psychological immunity, health and skills to thrive in life challenges. Psychotherapy and counselling services may help address the issues of anxiety, anger, improper sleep, relationships, fear, depression and neurosis management. Through this, students can manage their emotions. Therapists and psychologists can identify unusual behavior and help students express their emotions effectively. A Happy Thinking Lab with the intent of assessing the psychological status of the student and suggest corrective course of action could be created.

Choosing a suitable career is very important. HEIs should help the students in scientific exploration of self-interest, strengths, goal setting, and options available may facilitate students

towards a conscious career decision. Counsellors can assist in developing impressive CVs, communication and soft skills, exploring career opportunities, and guide in facing competitions.

HEIs should also introduce student healthcare support on the premises. Activities can include regular health check-up to diagnose any infectious disease, a gymnasium to help maintain body-mass index and regularly test haemoglobin levels, especially of female students.

Personality development requires balance between academic growth and creative acumen. NEP 2020 stresses upon overall grooming of the students. Institutions, therefore, are supposed to create student platforms to showcase talents. The student evolves while participating in groups and identifying their innate strengths. This improves their leadership, interpersonal skills and self-confidence. The youthful energy can be harnessed through cultural and sports opportunities. Creating clubs where students enroll according to their interests and talents are invaluable in inculcating team feeling.

HEIs should hence essentially strive to develop a structured and sustainable framework to build synergistic relationship with students. A proactive student friendly approach is the need of the hour and sooner HEIs understand their responsibility in building a resilient new generation. To contribute in the drive of strengthening Indian higher education, such initiatives may prove to be meaningful. After all our nation is envied worldwide for its youth power.

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