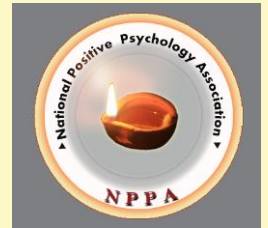


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The Scholarly Nook

The Scholarly Nook brings to you articles written by scholars either on some of their own research or regarding the latest ongoing research in the field of Positive Psychology. In this edition we present an article on promoting student well-being in the education setting. Read ahead to know more!

Educating for Happiness & Well-being

*Imagine a world where children,
Get education for the heart and mind.
Where along with academics and sports,
They also learn to be kind.
Along with learning
to read, write, dance and sing,
Schools focus on their well-being!*

If one were to ask anybody about the best phase of their lives, there is a high likelihood that most people would recall their school days. Looking

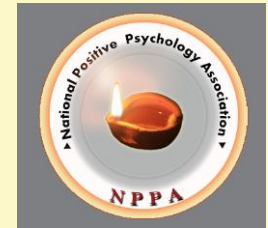
down the memory lane, most people reminisce about their school days as being full of fun and frolic and without any baggage of stress and anxiety (despite heavy school bags!)

Yet, one look at the statistics is enough for us to realize that school students in present times suffer from a multitude of problems, including stress, peer pressure and depression. Many of them meet with the unfortunate finality of suicide. Disturbing cases of school violence, academic stress and related challenges often mar what is otherwise regarded as an innocent, happy phase of learning. These trends are true of both the global as well as Indian scenario.



Consequently, the need for mental health promotion and preventive steps is a real one. Besides the need to step in for early intervention or crisis management, steps to enhance student well-being, boost their character strengths, resilience, and social-

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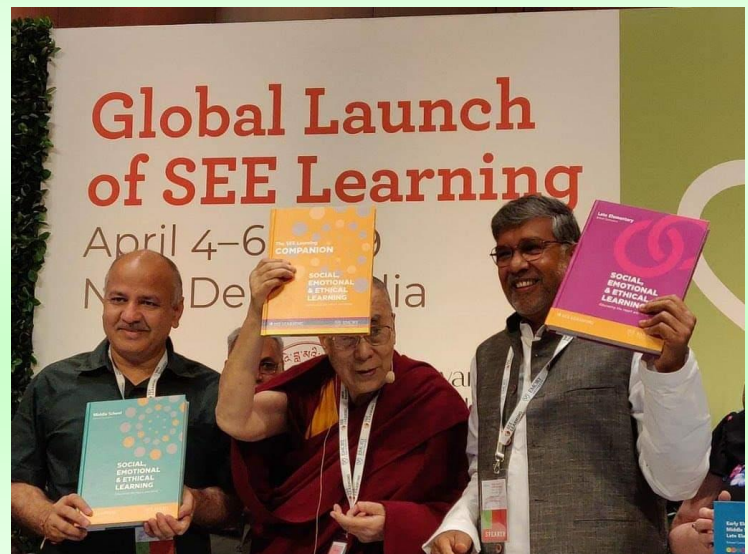


emotional competencies can hold them in good stead to handle the challenges that pervade current times. While the movement towards positive youth development, student well-being and happiness has existed in some Western countries, whether in the form of social emotional learning or diverse Positive Psychology interventions; there is emerging research and practice in this area in the Indian context as well. It is encouraging to see large-scale projects such as the Delhi Government's Happiness Curriculum, National Council for Educational Research and Training's (NCERT) Adolescence Education Program (AEP) as well as other localized initiatives and empirically backed research aimed at boosting holistic well-being among children.

The scope is tremendous, as are the benefits associated with the evidence-based practices to enhance happiness and well-being in schools. The rest of this piece looks to examine some contemporary and prominent initiatives (and is by no means an exhaustive compilation) aimed at student well-being, particularly in the Indian school setting.

Social Emotional Ethical Learning (SEE Learning): A curriculum created at Emory University and launched in April 2019 by His Holiness Dalai Lama is perhaps the first of its kind to be launched globally and simultaneously in multiple languages. This curriculum is designed in developmentally

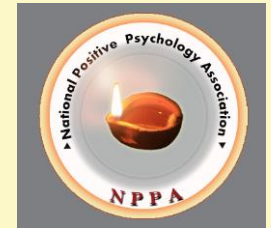
appropriate versions for use among K-12 classes. It offers a rich, cutting edge and secular ethics-based curriculum that is designed to be flexibly adapted across diverse cultural contexts.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Global Launch of SEE Learning held at New Delhi from the 4th to 6th of April, 2019



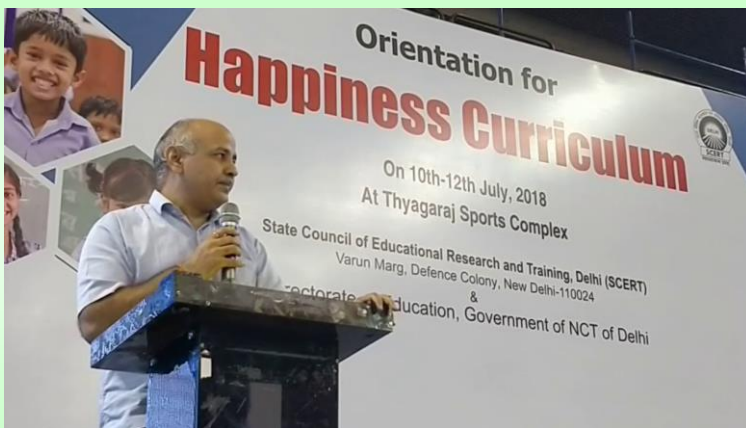
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Delhi Government's Happiness Curriculum: In July 2018, the Delhi Government launched its unprecedented and widely publicized 'Happiness Curriculum' across Government schools in Delhi. This program reaching out to large numbers of students is anchored around interventions like mindfulness, storytelling, and group discussions. It is novel and unique in terms of its sheer scale and approach and is garnering an enthusiastic response. Subsequently, empirical evidence for this program remains to be seen.

statistically significant gains in mental and emotional health among participants. Similarly encouraging results have been reported from this project implemented in Gujarat (Leventhal & Sachns, 2011), and Bihar (Leventhal et al., 2015). CPRG also presents a wonderful story of empowerment of the local community.

NCERT AEP: NCERT- the leading education and research body in Indian school education, put forth the AEP in alliance with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) in 2005. This program is specially meant for 13-18 year old students and emphasizes issues including sexuality, gender, relationships, and substance abuse among others (NCERT, n.d.).

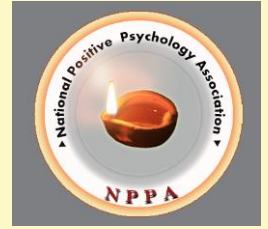


Manish Sisodia, Deputy CM of Delhi, at an Orientation event of the Happiness Curriculum in 2018.

CorStone's Children's Resiliency Program for Girls' (CPRG): CorStone (an international organization) initiated a resilience program among marginalized adolescent girls across different states in India. Based on an intervention in a new Delhi slum school, Leventhal and Sachs (2011) reported



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Project Zindagi by District Administration of Gurugram (Haryana): Keeping in mind the skyrocketing stress levels among students, the District Administration of

Gurugram (Haryana), initiated 'Project Zindagi' to facilitate students in emotional expression, better emotion management and relationship building.

Project जिंदगी

गुरुग्राम के 15 सरकारी विद्यालयों में Pilot Project के आधार पर होगा संचालित

संचालन हेतु चयनित Schools में बनाया गया है धनक (इंद्रधनुष) नामक कमरा

उद्देश्य

- > पढ़ाई में ध्यान नहीं लगा पा रहे बच्चों पर विशेष ध्यान देना
- > बच्चों को तनावमुक्त वातावरण देना
- > Learning Disabilities दूर करना

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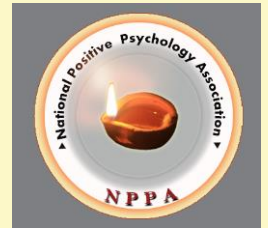
NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences) model of Life Skills Education (LSE). This program was put forth by Bharath and Kishore (2010) among school students in South India. Role-plays, games and group discussions were some of the strategies employed in this program. Program participants were found to benefit on indicators of

self-esteem, self-efficacy, coping skills among others.

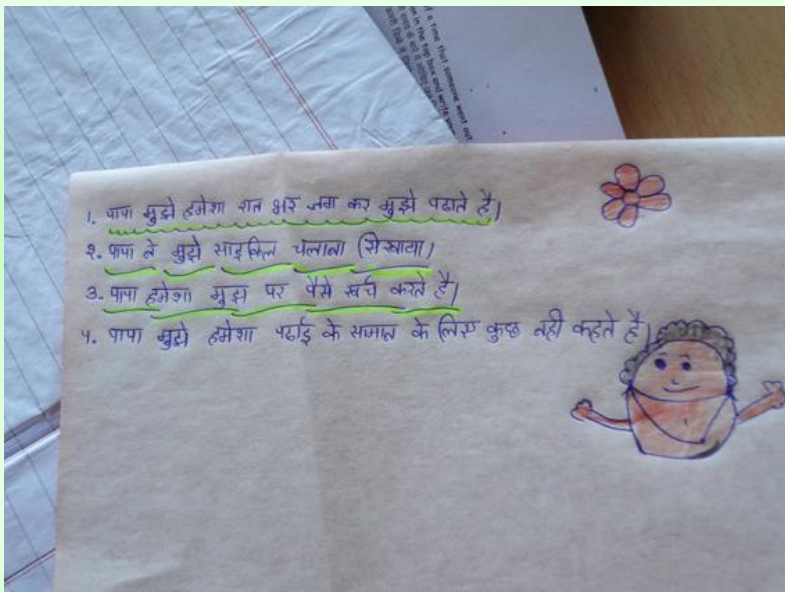
Positive Psychology Interventions replicated in North Indian schools: A series of independent interventions were delivered to students as part of a broader research project. Khanna and Singh (2016) reported the effectiveness of a gratitude building intervention originally created by Froh et al. (2014) in fostering life satisfaction, positive affect and well-being among students. Khanna (2016) also found promising findings from the use of 'Strength Gym' (Proctor & Fox Eades, 2009) – a character strengths intervention for school students. In another study Khanna (2016) studied the impact of a stress management and gratitude journaling curriculum (originally proposed by Flinchbaugh et al, 2012) and found limited effectiveness for this program as assessed on a variety of well-being indicators. Interestingly, Khanna and Singh (2019) shed light on the fact that not all positive psychology exercises work for everyone, underscoring the need for cross-cultural testing as replication as well as customization of existing programs to offer better utility for the target group.

While it is heartening to note the developments in this area, one must also be mindful of the challenges and constraints that are bound to be met along the way. Constraints of time, manpower,

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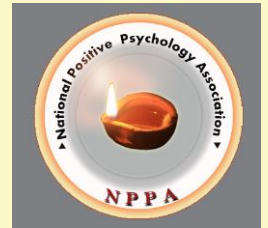
and finances are all real and pragmatic obstacles. Nevertheless, small, consistent, and well-planned initiatives can succeed despite these challenges. Resource –efficient, inexpensive curricula delivered by teachers, mentors and other who are already part of the education system offer a promising and sustainable path to make a meaningful impact in this direction. Ultimately, each one of us has just two hands and a limited capacity if we work in isolation. If different stakeholders join hands, together we could work towards this common goal and bring about greater change in the world. Every effort may not show instant results. However, seeds of positive education and happiness sown in early years certainly promise a bountiful harvest in the future!



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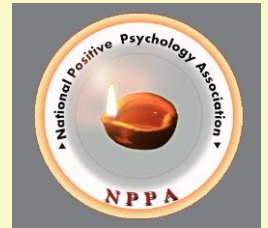
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The Oracle: Interview Series with Esteemed Professors

In our third issue, we introduce all NPPA Members to **Professor Antonella Delle Fave**. She is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Milano, Italy and holds an MD specialization in Clinical Psychology. Professor Delle Fave has an illustrious body of research work to her credit. She has held Office of many prestigious positions including President of IPPA, ENPP & SIPP, as well as Editor in Chief of the Springer group's Journal of Happiness Studies. Team NPPA is grateful and privileged to have Professor Delle Fave as part of the Advisory



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Committee. Please read on to know more about her enriching journey in the field of Positive Psychology.

- **What had stimulated your interest in Psychology?**

Since my high school years I have been interested in mind and thought processes. I joined the Medical School of the University of Milano with the aim of becoming neurologist or psychiatrist. After attending an academic optional course on basic psychological processes, I started an internship at the Institute of Psychology of the Medical School, where I could participate in experiments and research project which further strengthened my interest in the discipline, leading me to specialize in Clinical Psychology after the MD degree.

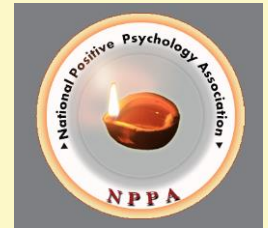
- **How did your association with Positive Psychology begin?**

During my internship, in the early Eighties, I had the privilege to meet Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the father of Flow Theory, who visited our Institute after a very intensive correspondence exchange with Fausto Massimini, my mentor. I was introduced to the study of flow and of the daily experience fluctuation, topics that I developed in my MD dissertation. In the following years I repeatedly visited the University of Chicago, where I met many enthusiastic PhD students

investigating flow. In those days nobody used the term “positive psychology”, but concepts such as self-efficacy, hardiness, sense of coherence and resilience started gaining the attention of researchers and practitioners around the world. The study of well-being was still in its infancy, and I was able to share this exciting time, not without difficulties and resistances from the academic milieu in my own country.



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- **What do you feel about the way Positive Psychology has been developing in India, and where do you see Positive Psychology in India, in the next 5 years?**

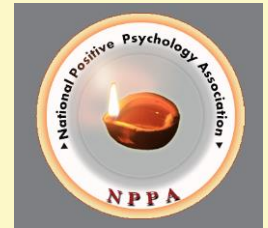
The current theories of well-being are grounded in the western view, and therefore they are not necessarily exhaustive of all the possible well-being conceptualizations and components. In particular, they see well-being as the presence/ absence of specific dimensions, neglecting the concept of balance, usually attributed to the Eastern philosophical traditions. To this purpose, it is important that Indian scholars look at the positive psychology models through a critical though constructive lens, informed by the wealth of psychological and philosophical knowledge developed in India across the centuries. This broadening of the perspective to include indigenous models could represent a crucial contribution of Indian researchers to the state of the art in positive psychology. Some researchers are working in this direction, but it is important to promote this approach across research teams as well as practitioners in India, and to share related findings through publications in international journals: original contributions to positive psychology from Indian scholars should be more visible.

- **What would you say, is the value of Positive Psychology to the general population?**

Positive Psychology can represent a precious resource, if used wisely. By giving children the possibility to become aware of their strengths and potentials, it may guide them in study and work choices; by giving adults the opportunity to experience the inevitable life hurdles as challenges to be faced through competences and abilities, rather than problems to passively endure, it may mobilize resources and generate a constructive outlook. Unfortunately, simplification and trivialization of well-being concepts are very popular nowadays, leading to skepticism toward positive psychology by scientists, and abuse by unskilled and improvised coaches and trainers.



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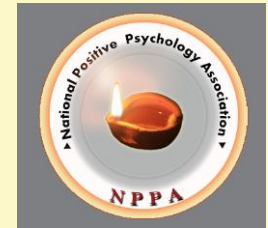
- **As someone who has been teaching, training, and guiding scholars in Psychology for several years, what kind of training would you suggest for students of Positive Psychology?**

As I said above, today there are a number of low-quality books, courses and initiatives that offer a dangerous, simplified and distorted view of positive psychology. We are currently obsessed by health, well-being and happiness: this “fashion” does not help students. In order to become a serious practitioner or researcher in positive psychology, one should first learn psychology as a full-fledged discipline in its various branches. Positive psychology is one of the many approaches to the study of human mind and behavior, and it cannot be disjoined from a deep understanding of mental processes as a whole. It is also important not to transform positive psychology into an ideology or to consider it “the” truth. In some cases or situations, positive psychology is not the right approach. Only a balanced and dispassionate attitude may help avoid this absolutistic view.

- **How can Positive Psychologists contribute in a better way towards greater community benefits?**

Some scholars argue that governments should aim at increasing their citizens’ happiness. Other researchers however argue that the goal of increasing citizens’ happiness can generate a spiral of rising expectations that are impossible to fulfill. Government actions and citizens’ levels of happiness and life satisfaction should be considered as two distinct and not necessarily overlapping indicators, which cannot be used to assess governments’ overall performance. Moreover, the needs of the citizens reporting low levels of satisfaction are prominently material or social in nature, and they can be readily and directly addressed by policy-makers. On the other hand, high levels of satisfaction reported by people living under difficult circumstances are prominently related to psychological resources or strengths that are not directly observable, and thus cannot be easily implemented by policy programs. This evidence implies that governments should be more concerned about the minimization of misery rather than the maximization of happiness; at the same time, governments should involve psychologists and mental health professional – even at the institutional, policy making level - to deal with issues related to collective happiness. Finally, in order to benefit communities well-being should not only be measured as life satisfaction (as usually happens in surveys), but as

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a complex construct including eudaimonic and social dimensions as well. Overall, the variety of approaches adopted by scientists and professionals to address well-being issues reflects the complexity and articulation of the topic. It raises further questions, rather than suggesting straightforward solutions. Again, different countries and societies may find different strategies to improve community well-being: this cultural diversity must be studied and carefully taken into account by scholars, practitioners and policy makers who aim at applying positive psychology principles in their intervention.

Latest Updates

Upcoming Conferences & Workshops:

1. Fortis Third Annual Psychology Conference 2019, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurgaon, 13th to 15th of September, 2019.
2. 56th Annual Convention of the Psychological Association of the Philippines, Davao, Philippines, 18th to 20th, September 2019.
3. Monsoon workshop on experimental neuroscience ([MonsoonWEN](#)), Center for Neuroscience, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, 21st to 25th July, 2019.

4. Six Months Certificate Course in Psychotherapy: This course centers around providing in-depth knowledge of various forms of psychotherapy.

It is recognized by Jadavpur University and is conducted at Caring Minds, Kolkata. For more details check: <http://caringminds.co.in/six-months-certificate-course-psychotherapy/>

5. Fostering Strengths: A Certificate Course in Psychosocial Skills for Working with Adolescents and Young People

This training program is initiated by iCALL, TISS in collaboration with Vishakha. It aims to equip helping professionals who work with adolescents and young people, with knowledge, perspectives and skills that are contextualized, evidence-based and multi layered.

The last date to apply is 10th April 2019. Please refer to these links for more details:

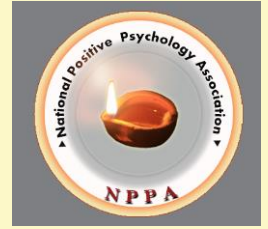
<http://icallhelpline.org/fostering-strengths/>

<https://admissions.tiss.edu/view/10/admissions/stp-admissions/short-term-programme-in-fostering-strengths/>

Members Section

Team NPPA looks forward to hear from you about your ideas, thoughts and research work in the area of Positive Psychology.

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We welcome original contributions in the form of brief write-ups about your research and practice initiatives focused on Positive Psychology in India.

Mail us your articles at admin@nppaassociation.org

- Contributions should be **upto 200 words only** and include appropriate citations wherever required.
- Each issue will carry **selected contributions** covered under the section 'NPPA Members Section'

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