

# COMMENTARY: REVISITING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Students often consider the classroom as a site of intellectual competition, and every success fuels their drive to excel further. However, there have been mixed views regarding the role of competition in motivating students in the classroom (Cropper, 1998). Extrinsic motivation driven by a scheme of rewards and incentives can lead to mental stress and even be detrimental to the expression of ingenuity. Parents, in their quest for getting the best out of their children, generally resort to making comparisons, and unintentionally aggravate mental pressure in the process. Rather than merely egging students on to obtain higher grades than their peers, a shift to a more holistic approach involving all-round development of their personality is the need of the hour.

In this context, it is very interesting to note that the National Education Policy-2020\* emphasises on the adoption of alternate approaches to make the learning process "holistic, integrated, enjoyable, and engaging."

Research has shown that schools can be ideal sites for delivering mental health interventions (Shoshani and Steinmetz, 2014). The role of a teacher as a facilitator serves to kindle the intrinsic motivation of a student by involving them in activity-based and problem-solving approaches to learning. Additionally, participation in co-curricular activities can de-stress students to a great extent and make a positive contribution to their subjective well-being (Vetter et al., 2019).

Rather than mechanically preparing students to secure high-paying jobs, thrust should also be given to imbibing and practising human values that would equip students with self-confidence and the capacity to manage themselves better. Striving to create intelligent students with a sound body and a sound mind would be a more sustainable roadmap towards a bright future for our country. There is a lot to ponder over the statement – 'Education must be for life and not merely for a living.'

## References

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\*The original reference was Draft NEP-2019 but by the time of publication of this issue, NEP-2020 was published and hence modified accordingly.