Student Well Being Policy, Measurement and Implementation Readiness

Analysis of current Policy Outlook and System Readiness Framework

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Introduction

In India, the interest in the discourse on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and student well being has seen a recent uptake[1]. Linked to this has been the concern in child and adolescent well-being in pandemic and post pandemic scenarios. Where student's across age groups and geographies have reported increased levels of stress, anxiety and depression[2]. The pandemic highlighted the key role that schools play in determining student well-being; for many students schools are a primary site of social and emotional support and development. In a 2020 study on school closures in Maharashtra, parents and teachers reported concerns about students' emotional wellbeing, with as many as 91% of parents reporting their children have become increasingly restless at home (LFE, 2021). Several studies show that children and young people are among the most susceptible to crises (such as the pandemic) because of their "lack of agency and, more importantly, because of the sensitive developmental milestones they must achieve during those years."(Lundberg et. al., 2012)However, even before the pandemic and subsequent school shutdowns began, another source highlighting the urgent need to address student wellbeing was the ASER 2019 report[3] where we see low levels of SEL competencies among children in 4-8 age groups.

The recently released National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) and National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat emphasize the importance of developing life skills among students. Recommendations across multiple reports on education and the pandemic have urged decision-makers in schools and governments to acknowledge the role social and emotional health and wellbeing will have on students' learning in the short term and near future. Thus, ensuring that students have support for their mental wellness or non-academic support is an important action area[4].

Comprehensive understanding on social emotional skills, policies, its competencies, indicators, assessments and current status, could prove crucial at this juncture for government bodies as well as NGOs to make important program and policy decisions. Hence, there is a need to understand the current policy position and known frameworks to integrate it in practice and to study the current state of students' emotional well-being and to check for SEL competencies that could enable students to sustain a sense of well-being. The recent discussion among leadership drawing from national policies, and concerns among parents and teachers have all been factors resulting in heightened relevance of this domain. We feel efforts need to be concentrated on building a shared understanding and better documenting the current scenario to support effective action in the near future.

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[1] As is evidenced by a plethora of discussion and opinion based articles on various platforms like this one by Tiwari (2019)

[2] For more details see this report for global data, this report and this paper for India specific data, and LFE's work for Maharashtra specific insights.

[3] Pratham released the Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2019 'Early Years', in January 2020. Find the report here. For students between the ages of 4 and 8, data was collected on a number of indicators including social and emotional abilities. Find a brief summary here.

[4] See discussion presented here for more details.

This policy brief, provides an overview of existing policies, and summarizes the current understanding and recommendation for integration of well being goals in state programs. Here as recommendations we present practical tools Firstly we briefly present a student assessment tool adopted from the CASEL framework and developed in the context of public schools of Maharastra. We provide a brief glimpse into the insights that can be provided with the existing tool. Secondly, we also present a readiness framework to be used to assess readiness to implement student well-being programs and provide strategic direction in moving ahead. Through this document we aim to describe the current conditions with respect to policy and policy recommendations in literature. Our aim is to comment on the current scenario, to provide background that can suggest directions for immediate future work, for improvement in implementation practice and support, where civil society organizations can work together with the public sector.

This report is divided into two sections:
Part I: Analysis
1. Overview of SEL and other overlapping terminologies, frameworks in literature
2. Current Policy stand - NCF 2005, NEP 2020, Nipun Bharat 2021
Part II: Recommended Tools for Implementation
3. Student assessment of well being
4. Readiness framework

Framing Social Emotional Learning in Policy

What is Social Emotional Learning?

Social emotional learning and its competencies
Social and emotional learning (SEL) as defined by CASEL's framework is 'the process through which children and adults develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.' (CASEL, n.d.). SEL is constituted of competencies and as Singh and Duraiappah (2020) explain, SEL is the ' process of acquiring the competencies, skills and/or attitudes to recognise and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions and handle challenging situations'.

Beyond this framework, SEL frameworks can also include competencies concerning emotional processes (regulating emotions, displaying empathy); interpersonal skills (social competency, social perspective taking); cognitive regulation (cognitive or mental flexibility); inter-cultural competencies (understanding others, connectedness to others, social responsibility) (Berg et. al., 2017). For instance, empathy, compassion and taking the perspective of others constitute social emotional skills (Singh and Duraiappah,2020). Further these skills can be nurtured by appropriate social environments, they can be learned and are durable (Singh and Duraiappah,2020) .

As evidence summarized by Singh and Duraiappah (2020) show, behavioral tools of SEL like competencies of emotional regulation, and attention regulation can help students redirect rage and aggression towards peaceful and constructive action, and also contribute towards academic success, nurturing empathetic and compassionate individuals dedicated to building peaceful and sustainable societies. Evidence also indicates that SEL competencies predict success 'in a range of important outcomes in late adolescence and adulthood, including high school graduation, postsecondary completion, employment, financial stability, physical health, and overall mental health and well-being.' (Singh and Duraiappah,2020). The benefits of SEL in promoting success in school, work and life remains undisputed, as evidenced by the quantum of research regarding its frameworks and measurements.[5]

A plethora of definitions
A multitude of conceptualizations of SEL and its competencies exist (for example see the study by Berg et. al., 2017 of 50 different frameworks[6], meta analysis of SEL intervention outcomes by Durlak et. al., 2011 or work done under the Taxonomy Project[7]). For instance in

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[5] For more detailed evidence on contributions of SEL competencies Berg et. al. (2017) mention reviews conducted by Bedwell, Salas, & Fiore, 2011; John & De Fryut, 2015; Lippman, Ryberg, Carney, & Moore, 2015; Nagaoka et al., 2015; PRA, 2013; National Research Council, 2012) Osher, Kidron, Brackett, Dymnicki, Jones, & Weissberg, 2016
[6] Berg et. al., (2017) contributions in defining, and measuring SEL examine frameworks in the domains of mental health, mindfulness, psychology, public health, resilience, workforce etc.
[7]The taxonomy project, http://exploresel.gse.harvard.edu/frameworks/

a study on Life Skills Measurement, a comparison of competencies in CASEL framework with those mentioned by the partnership for 21st century skills, life skills definition by the Wold Bank among others, show that, SEL competencies are often confused with other terms and used interchangeably (Talreja et. al., 2018). This includes terms like life skills, non-cognitive skills, non-academic skills, social skills, 21st century skills, soft skills, social and emotional learning (SEL), vocational and/or employability skills, among others. Closer examination of their underlying conceptual frameworks reveal how they include competencies that are overlapping and clustered differently under each framework[8]. The multiplicity in conceptual frameworks has led to ambiguity in understanding and assessment of these competencies. Furthermore, these are often discussed in the context of well being and mental health.

For better understanding, and clarity of discussion ahead we briefly establish some differences with other key concepts:

Mental health: As the UNCF (2021) report points out, mental health is the underlying capacity that enables us to think, feel, learn, work, build meaningful relationships, and contribute to communities. SEL and mental health are closely connected. Mental health is the overall term and can be understood as the outcome of SEL. Mental health conditions can be broad including depression, anxiety, attention disorders etc. Mental health involves the capacity to apply essential social, emotional and cognitive skills to navigate life and world effectively (UNCF, 2021).

Well being: Wellbeing is a broad concept that can include domains of health, economics, nutrition and psychology. Well being can be understood in three broad categories across frameworks: (1) Emotional well-being: positive, happy, calm, peaceful, interested in life; (2) Social well-being: ability to function in the world combined with a personal sense of value and belonging; (3) Functioning well-being: the capacity to develop skills and knowledge that help a person make positive decisions and respond to life challenges. Mental health can be understood as a positive state of well being (UNCF, 2021).

Life Skills: The World Health Organization (WHO) defines life skills as "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life".

While we recognise the debates on SEL and its definitions, for the purpose of this document we will adhere to CASEL's definition of SEL.

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[8] (Bapna, Sharma, Kaushik, & Kumar, 2017, p.1). as referenced in Taleja et.al., (2018)
Talreja, V., Krishnamurthy, K., Sanchez, D.J.W., & Bhat, V. (2018). "Mapping Life Skills in India: Research, Policy and Practice." Dream a Dream.
http://www.dreamadreamorg/reports/mappinglifeskillsinindia.pdf

Policy Inclusions of Social Emotional Learning

Definitions in the National Education Policies (NEP)

The **National Education Policy 2020** is broad in its directives, but its emphasis on the need to adopt SEL competencies as part of the education is loud and clear throughout the policy document. However, Social Emotional learning is not clearly defined as a construct and can be confused with various other terminologies broadly used. NEP itself uses a plethora of terminologies that can be interpreted as linked to SEL - psychological well-being, cognitive abilities, mental health and 21st century skills etc.

This is in contrast to the focus of the previous **NEP 1986** and Programme of Action (PoA) 1992[9], where mentions of student well-being, inclusion of life-skills, or social emotional competencies are absent. Responding to the national needs in the 80s, NEP 1986 focuses on strategies for universatization, improving access, retention, infrastructure, and structure of education as per the recommendations of the Kothari Commission. The only mention of holistic development of children appears in the context of ECCE, where social, moral and emotional development needs have been recognized along with physical, motor, nutritional and health related needs of students[10]. Similarly with PoA 1992, where the quality of education, universalization of elementary education, secondary education, technical education among others was a key focal point.

However, the **National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005[11]** in comparison mentions various competencies related to SEL. NCF 2005 suggests learner centric pedagogical approaches, and details a framework to guide teachers and stakeholders in instructional delivery. However, NCF does not explicitly mention a definition for SEL as a construct, but does recognise its importance for learning and includes many competencies as part of its goals.

 NCF locates its aims in the landscape of social values, many of which directly align with the SEL competencies discussed above. This includes concern for others' well-being, secularism, respect for human dignity and rights, independence of thought, a rational commitment to values, responding to new situations in a flexible and creative manner, and enhancing creative expression etc (pg 10-11). NCF opens with various factors in the existing education system that are detrimental to the well being of students, as well as society and nation. This includes the focus on the child's 'future' over the child's present (pg 2). The NCF does recognise that the curriculum must have a holistic approach that sees the interconnectedness between physical and mental development.

NCF also includes mental health as part of physical education. "This curriculum area adopts a holistic definition of health within which physical education and yoga contribute to the physical, social, emotional and mental development of a child." (Sec 3.6, pg 56) NCF explicitly

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[9] Find the NEP 1986 here and PoA 1992 here.
[10] As mentioned here
[11] Here NCF 2005 has been referenced. After the release of NEP 2020, the Ministry of education and NCERT have mandated the development of a new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) in line with the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP). The mandate document can be found here.

mentions basic capabilities that curriculum must aim to develop as they help achieve educational aims - these include language, forming and sustaining relationships, and capability for work and action. The description of 'forming and sustaining relationships comes closest to the above mentioned definition of SEL "Forming and sustaining relationships with the social world, with the natural world, and with one's self, with emotional richness, sensitivity and values. This gives meaning to life, providing it with emotional content and purpose. " (Sec 2.5.1, pg 26). Further NCF mentions that these capabilities are crucial for meaning making, expression, communication, forms the basis of ethics and morality, and ability to organize things and experiences.

It suggests this framework with a differentiated focus on needs for students across various stages. For instance, ECCE should provide opportunities and experiences that develops students from physical, mental, social, emotional and school readiness perspectives. Within its framework it recognises that adolescents need additional support. " It is important to recognise that adolescents need social and emotional support that may require reinforcement of norms of positive behavior, acquisition of skills essential to cope with the risky situations that they encounter in their lives, manage peer pressure and deal with gender stereotypes. The absence of such support can lead to confusion and misunderstanding about these changes, and affect their academic and extracurricular activities." (sec 2.3.3, pg 16)

NEP, 2020
Even in its introduction, NEP highlights the key principle that underscores the current policy,
> "*Education must develop not only cognitive capacities - both the 'foundational capacities 'of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions.*"

 NEP recognises the importance of integrating SEL in education as "Education must build character, enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring". NEP also roots this perspective in the education traditions from ancient India, where education goals included preparation for life beyond school, complete realization and liberation of self (pg 4) NEP clearly states that "The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution." (Pg 4-5)

NEP loosely identifies 22 principles to guide the education system at large. Of these the following SEL competencies have been mentioned explicitly
1. Creativity and critical thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation;
2. Ethics and human & Constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice;
3. Life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience;
4. Respect for diversity and respect for the local context in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject;

Overall, NEP takes a very broad approach towards SEL, in particular it emphasizes focus beyond the traditional academic domains to include life skills, holistic development, incorporating 21st century skills, student well being as well as mental health. These domains are complementary and present comorbidities (Balow, 2018). This is also evidenced in the manner they are discussed in NEP, where terms are overlapping and do not have specific definitions.

- The **term 'social-emotional learning'** as it is has been referred to only in one instance. (Sec. 5.14, pg 22) in the context of providing teachers more autonomy, allowing them to focus on SEL. Here SEL has been recognised as a 'critical aspect of any student's holistic development' but has not been defined beyond that.

- **Overall NEP 2020 recognises SEL competencies** as part of larger goals of education. "A holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings -intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner." (Sec 11.3, pg 36)

- Recognises emotional well being and mental health, as an extension of **health** itself (sec 2.9, pg 9).

- **Emotional well being of students** as a concern has been mentioned in multiple instances, particularly in the context of support provided to students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Sec 12.4, pg 39), for stress and emotional management with the provision of counseling (sec 12.7, pg 40) and mentoring in higher education institutions (sec 14.4.1, pg 42). In particular, NEP recognises student wellness and psycho-social well-being as critical for high quality learning in higher education institutions (Sec 12.1, pg 38). NEP has also linked cultural awareness and expression as key competencies that create a sense of identity, belonging and appreciation of other identities, as key contributors to individual and societal well-being (Sec 22.2, pg53).

- Development of SEL competencies have been emphasized for **students of all ages**. Starting from identification of ECCE outcomes to be not only limited to physical, motor and cognitive development, but also include "socio-emotional-ethical development, cultural/artistic development, and the development of communication and early language, literacy, and numeracy." (Sec 1.2, pg 7). NEP also mentions "For the purpose of developing holistic individuals, it is essential that an identified set of skills and values will be incorporated at each stage of learning, from pre-school to higher education." (sec 9.1.2, pg 33). To the inclusion of community engagement and service, environmental education and value education in HEIs (Sec 11.8, pg 37). To inclusion of life skills[12] education as part of the adult education framework (sec 21.5, pg 51)

- NEP also recognises the role of **Sports integration** and art-integration as

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[12] Here NEP specifies life skills as "(including financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, health care and awareness, child care and education, and family welfare)". However as part of life skills it also identifies " such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience" (pg 5)

cross-curricular pedagogical approaches, in promoting psychological well being and enhancing cognitive abilities (Sec 4.8, pg 12). Specifically, it identifies how sports identification can lead to "in pedagogical practices to help in developing skills such as collaboration, self-initiative, self-direction, self-discipline, teamwork, responsibility, citizenship, etc." (Sec 4.8, pg 12)

- NEP also specifies, various **components of value based education** to include " the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal human values of truth (satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (shanti), love (prem), nonviolence (ahimsa), scientific temper, citizenship values, and also life-skills; lessons in seva/service and participation in community service programmes will be considered an integral part of a holistic education. " (Sec 11.8, pg 37)

- NEP also provides a broad set of **competencies concerning life skills.** For instance when discussing adult education NEP specifies life skills as "(including financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, health care and awareness, child care and education, and family welfare)". However as part of life skills it also identifies " such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience" (pg 5)

- NEP also includes 21st century skills as part of its vision for holistic and well rounded individuals (sec 4.4, pg 12), to its inclusion in higher education with the 'aim of preparing well rounded learners (sec 18.6, pg 47), to inclusion in assessments using education technologies (Sec 24.4.h, pg 60)

- NEP also discusses **curricular integration** of subjects, skills and competencies in detail. As part of this section it clearly states *"Students will be taught at a young age the **importance of "doing what's right",** and will be given a logical framework for making ethical decisions. In later years, this would then be expanded along themes of cheating, violence, plagiarism, littering, tolerance, equality, empathy, etc., with a view to enabling children to embrace moral/ethical values in conducting one's life, formulate a position/argument about an ethical issue from multiple perspectives, and use ethical practices in all work. As consequences of such basic ethical reasoning, traditional Indian values and all basic human and Constitutional values (such as seva, ahimsa, swachchhata, satya, nishkam karma, shanti, sacrifice, tolerance, diversity, pluralism, righteous conduct, gender sensitivity, respect for elders, respect for all people and their inherent capabilities regardless of background, respect for environment, helpfulness, courtesy, patience, forgiveness, empathy, compassion, patriotism, democratic outlook, integrity, responsibility, justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity) will be developed in all students."* (sec 4.28, pg 16) NEP also discuss integration of values though an inclusive school culture such that " school curriculum will include, early on, material on human values such as respect for all persons, empathy, tolerance, human rights, gender equality, non-violence, global citizenship, inclusion, and equity. It would also include more detailed knowledge of various cultures, religions, languages, gender identities, etc. to sensitize and develop respect for diversity. Any biases and stereotypes in school curriculum will be removed, and more material will be included that is relevant and relatable to all communities."(Sec 6.20, pg 28). NEP also makes a strong case for promotion of Arts, Culture and Indian Languages as part of the curriculum for students at all levels to promote happiness/ well-being, cognitive development and cultural identity of all

individuals. (Sec 22.3, pg 54)

Integration of SEL in value education can help develop attitudes and skills for responsible citizenship, however it is important to not reduce the dimensions of SEL to values and civics education (Dobia et. al, 2018). However, some critiques have also linked these statements and their effects on cultural politics with the current debates on nationalist agenda[13].

NCERT has been given the onus of developing curriculum frameworks and identifying mechanisms to ensure that these skills and values are delivered as part of the teaching and learning. (sec 4.4, pg 12)

NIPUN Bharat
While NEP provides broad vision of integrating SEL into education, via multiple competencies, NIPUN[14] Bharat document is more direct in specifying definitions and competencies. NIPUN Bharat covers only students in the 3-9yrs age group (Preschool to grade III) only.

However it is worthwhile noting that Personal, Social and Emotional Development is part of its definition of education in the early years (pg 63). The policy document defines this as "Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Development of self-concept; selfcontrol; life skills / self-help skills; habit formation; initiative and curiosity; engagement and persistence; cooperation; compassion; social relationships; group interaction; prosocial behavior; expressing feelings, accepting others' feelings."

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[13] For one such critique see [this article](#).
[14] NIPUN Bharat, or National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading, with Understanding and Numeracy, is the National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy set up by the Ministry of Education. The goal is to ensure that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27. The implementation of this program will be under the aegis of the centrally sponsored scheme of Samagra Shiksha and a five-tier implementation mechanism will be set up at the National- State- District- Block- School level in all States and UTs.

Developmental Goal 1:
Children Maintain Good Health and Wellbeing (HW)

a. The foundational years are of critical importance for laying the foundation for optimal physical, socio-emotional, and psychological health and well-being of children for life. These are the years when children, given the right opportunities and encouragement, are developing the five senses, strengthening their larger and finer bones and muscles, and refining their eye hand coordination, which is also one of the prerequisites for being able to write in later years.

b. Alongside, their sense of identity and social skills are developing, as they initiate and engage in more and more play activities with other children, initially in pairs and then gradually in smaller and then larger groups. Thus, they learn to play, work, and live with others in harmonious ways.

c. They also begin to appreciate how each one of them is different and how these differences need to be not only accepted but respected.

d. Most important of all, children need to experience a sense of autonomy and confidence in their own growing abilities and achievements and develop healthy habits leading to a good physical health and development of self-esteem and a positive self-concept, which if appropriately nurtured, will stay with them for life.

e. This goal continues to provide experience for health and well-being, socio emotional development, health, nutrition, hygienic practices, and safety from FY1-FY6 which covers age group 3 to 9 (Pre School to Class III - consisting of 2 years of Anganwadi/pre-school, one year of Balvatika and 3 years in primary school)

The first of three development goals as discussed in NIPUN Bharat, (Pg 106)

Further the policy document is very clear in identifying knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for early grades, by specifying life skills and further encapsulating these in Integrated and Holistic Development through 3 Goals[15]. The health and well being goal directly relates to SEL competencies, and this includes - Life skills, Decision making skills, organizing skills, communication skills, and encouraging curiosity. The document recognises how foundational years are important in laying the groundwork for SEL competencies. For each of the goals competencies and learning outcomes have been clearly defined. However, NIPUN Bharat limits its focus to students upto grade 3 and not beyond. Due to this policy push, we run the risk of directing efforts and resources away from students in other grades.

Conclusion

All three policy documents the NEP 2020, NIPUN Bharat and the erstwhile NCF, very clearly align with integration of SEL and its competencies in the curriculum and classroom. NIPUN Bharat, sets the national benchmarks for programs under the NEP 2020, that each state contextualizes and runs its own programs. For instance, Maharastra government's most recent government resolution (GR)[16] FLN also includes a component for well being and recognises it as a key goal, and directs teachers to nurture relevant social emotional skills. However, beyond its directive, how SEL related goals will be achieved and monitored is not clear. Green and Clara (2022) studied 13 innovations across 10 countries and found that an explicit reference to SEL in national or local curriculum helps encourage SEL interventions.

Policy can outline a direction to embed SEL initiatives in education, but policy alone is not enough to derive outcomes (Dobia et. al., 2020). Furthermore, even with the recent push

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[15] The three goals mentioned are - Goal 1-HW (Health and Well-being), Goal 2-EC (Effective Communicators), Goal 3-IL (Involved Learners)

[16] GR dated 27th October 2021, GR no 'क्रमांक: संकीर्ण-2021/प्र.क्र.179/एसडी-6'

towards adopting SEL based programs, its proven interventions (Pearson et. al., 2021), its application has been limited. This has been attributed in part due to lack of mention or dedicated curriculum for SEL skills. Discussions among practitioners have highlighted some blindspots within the current debates. For instance, often the objective of SEL based interventions can reflect behavior management efforts over development of cognitive, emotional, and social life skills. SEL interventions in India have more recently been critiqued for not taking into account the marginalization and discrimination as part of the lived realities. A need for intersectional SEL interventions have been highlighted as well, where cultural differences, social tensions are accounted for. This will determine the extent to which students are able to take social emotional skills developed in classrooms outside it.[17]

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[17] Discussion on the lack of SEL curriculum can be found here and here. Analysis of appropriate objectives of SEL strategies can be found here and inclusion of various contexts can be found here and here.

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Frameworks: SEL policy integration & implementation

Framework for SEL integration

The extent to which Policy benefits of SEL are realized will depend on how well it is implemented. Thus Dobia et. a., (2020) break down four key aspects from conceptualization to delivery:

1. Policy frameworks
2. National and subnational curricula
3. Specific programs
4. Whole school approaches.

When analyzed against this framework, we find that a broad policy approach has been identified in NEP, but other three components of - national curricular, identified programs and whole school approaches are missing at the national level. Even when compared against CASEL'S District Framework[18], the current national situation only satisfies the initial strand of building a shared vision. **Steps in the future will have to be taken to strengthen adult competencies and capacities, promote SEL among students and reflect data for continuous improvement.**

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[18] Find CASEL's district framework here.

	Policy for SEL	National Curricula	Identified Programmes	Whole School Approaches
Form	Overarching educational objectives	Curriculum standards	Explicit staged lessons	Multi-level, curriculum, school-wide ethos & practices
Function	Sets priorities and goals for education	Informs schools and teachers regarding guidelines & outcomes for SEL Sets assessment standards	Provides structure, content and resources to enable effective delivery of SEL	Supports systemic implementation of SEL practices to enable generalisation across school & home settings
Breadth (Complexity)	Establishes frameworks for inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration	Guides integrated and sequential learning across schooling levels	Emphasises sequenced in-depth teaching of explicit skills	Multi-component approach involving schools, families, community
Flexibility	Reviews progress and adjusts settings based on evidence	Educators develop and adapt content for their settings	Fidelity to programme guidelines supports effectiveness	Tailors implementation for identified school needs
Focus	Education system as a whole, policy makers, education directorates, all education stakeholders	Education system, schools, teachers, evaluators	Student learning Teacher professional development	Brings all school staff, parents, community together to support student learning & development Targets intensity of intervention according to need

Four aspects of SEL implementation as presented by Dobia et. al., (2020)

The NEP 2020 recognises SEL as a priority in many different overlapping terminologies, but its specific goals have not been identified. As Dobia et al (2018) point out, SEL needs to explicitly identify as the objective of education and its practice. There are various priorities identified in national policy statements globally. For instance, from the perspective of economic and social outcomes, SEL implementation can enhance labor market readiness. On the other hand mental health and well being has also been a significant drive of SEL interventions, as has been done in Australia and Korea, where SEL has become a method for improving mental health and addressing behavior issues. NEP however touches on both aspects, but re-iterates the aspects of holistic development of individuals. As Dobia et. al., (2020) point out that broad guidelines in policy or curriculum, as NEP does, is insufficient to ensure teachers are able to teach SEL skills. Here they point out that depth and frequency of professional development, where teachers address both the curriculum and their skill for delivering SEL, will be a prerequisite for effective implementation.

Factors for implementation effectiveness

Explicit identification of SEL competencies will help drive accountability and formulate

effective learning goals. Given its nuances, SEL interventions should not be translated from one setting into another, ensuring its cultura fit and riour are important for any implementation. Further to ensure a robust implementation, will need a collaboration across sectors like education, health, community and social service (Dobiah et. al.,2020). Further, Dobia et al (2020) draw on the work of Durlak (2016) and Humphrey (2018), to show various factors that have determined implementation effectiveness, as presented in the table below. Here we also present insights from Barton (2021), that are presented based on international student well being reforms.

Table: Factors for effective implementation of student wellbeing reforms

	Dobia et al (2020) **Key Factors for Implementation Effectiveness**	Barton (2021) **Enabling Actions**
1	**Fidelity (Adherence)** To what extent has the intended delivery model been adhered to?	**Defining And Aligning Collective Values** Using participatory design methodologies
2	**Dosage (Exposure)** How often and for how long is the programme being delivered?	**Demonstrating Reform Practicality** Building evidence, Modeling practice and Showing alignment
3	**Quality** How well are the programme components delivered?	**Cultivating Local Agency** Developing leadership capacity and Empowering educators as classroom experts
4	**Responsiveness** How fully do participants actively engage with the programme or initiative?	
5	**Programme Differentiation** Does the programme provide clearly distinguished aims and methods?	
6	**Monitoring** Is there an effective system for monitoring quality and progress?	
7	**Reach** How well does the programme reach its target participant group/s?	
8	**Adaptation** What adaptations, if any, are required to fit the context?	

However, in the case of fidelity, they point out how delivery has to strike a balance between adherence to programme guidelines and cultural adaptation of intervention. (Durlak et. al., 2020). Green and Clara (2022)[19], have also shown, national contexts are important in determining how SEL interventions are understood, frame and implemented, where culture,

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religion, political history, crises, social diversity etc. have been key determinants.

Common Implementation Barriers

As discussed above, we draw on the work of Jones & Bouffard (2012) and Barton (2021) to highlight barriers to change.

Table: Barriers to student wellbeing reforms

	Jones & Bouffard (2012) **Ways that SEL implementation is weakened**	*Barton (2021)* **Barriers to Change**
1	**Insufficient dosage, duration, and effectiveness** This occurs when lessons are shortened, provided at less than the recommended frequency or offered sporadically. Lack of continuity limits effectiveness.	**Values Misalignment** "This isn't what school is about" Misalignment between a reform's perceived value and the educational goals and priorities held by each educational actor.
2	**Fragmentation and marginalization** This occurs when SEL is not seen as core curriculum and is consequently given a low priority. Inconsistency of teaching undermines learning outcomes.	**Dominant Logic** "Why change what works?" Refers to deeply held beliefs about how things work best. A professional self-narrative that the current model was the one that worked best – because it was the one that had endured.
3	**Sole focus on classrooms** Restricting the focus on SEL to classroom lessons only limits valuable opportunities to generalize and apply learning to other contexts, and reduces skills development	**Practicality** "How can this ever work?" When administrators and teachers have no idea how it looked and felt to teach for the nebulous notion of "wellbeing", hence rejecting the reform on the whole
4	**Limited staff training** Teaching SEL skills requires specialized understanding and effective support. Without appropriate training, staff competence and confidence for teaching SEL will be limited.	**Capacity** "This, too, shall pass" This can be a matter of teacher and educator burden; Where overworked educators sensed that innovative, whole-child pedagogies demanded unavailable time and expertise.
5		**Time** "There's too much to do" Educational change takes years to sustainably plan, implement, and assess, yet reform timelines often span just one electoral term.

Many of these also apply to program implementation in general - like engagement of stakeholders in preparation, building buy-in across school community, professional learning and guidance support to teachers for implementation though professional learning, adoption and monitoring of SEL programmes, the commitment of school leadership to support a team based approach, and mitigating challenges of competing priorities, overcrowded curricular,

innovation fatigue and staff turnover etc.   Dobia et al (2020)

As studies across various countries by OECD (2015) show SEL has been integrated in the national curriculum in many different ways, ranging from traditional methods like physical and health education, civic and citizenship education, moral or religious education or even dedicated subjects. However, success of program implementation will depend on multiple factors. Often, the SAFE approach[20], has been cited as appropriate to assess outcomes of student wellbeing intervention (Durlak et. al., 2011). This approach requires activities to be
- connected and co-ordinated sequenced set of activities
- Use of active forms of learning
- Thats has specific focused components
- Explicitly targets specific skills.

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[20] For a practitioners perspective on the SAFE approach see here.

Measuring Student Well Being

Introduction

While multiple approaches on SEL and its conceptualizations exist, its measurement remains a challenging aspect, particularly in the context of public education systems[21]. In order to tackle this challenge we partnered with expert faculty at FLAME University to develop an appropriate tool that can document students' well being and provide data-based insights to support systemic efforts that combat the adverse effects of COVID-19 related school closures. The team of experts included (1) Dr Shalaka Shah, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, School of Liberal Education, FLAME University, Pune; (2) Dr Shivakumar Jolad, Associate Professor, Public Policy, School of Liberal Education, FLAME University, Pune; (3) Prachi Nawathe, Child Psychologist.

SEL competencies are usually measured through observation of parents/ families and educators along with self reported data, that is collated over multiple points in time. However, given the need for a large-scale low cost dipstick assessment, the tool developed attempts to quantify and measure the competencies through student's self reported data. Many other existing tools focus on life skills, but tool developed here attempt to measure psychological constructs.

Approach and method

The initial tool was developed by experts, verified by a review board, and piloted[22]. As part of this exercise, a pilot study was also conducted that aims to measure students' emotional well-being in light of recent school closures in the Indian context, especially among students from low-income households. Further, it seeks to assess levels of specific SEL competencies in students as per the CASEL framework. The initial round of data was collected with 1564 students of grades 6,7,8 from ZP and TDD schools. The responses were collected on a three point scale, and indexed for ease of interpretation. Against each domain, sum domain and competency, students were graded on a scale of very low, low, high and very high. The charts below discuss its current findings.

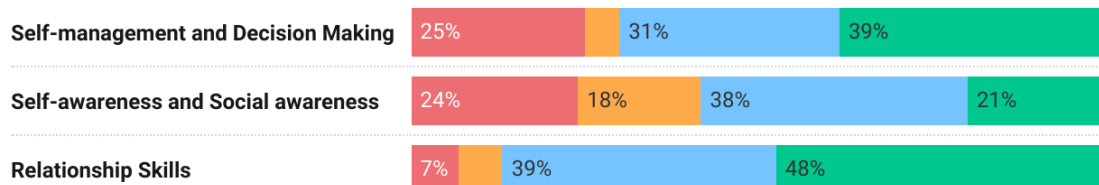[21] For examples of various students assessments see Berg et. al. (2017)
[22] For more details on the process or the tools kindly contact the team or authors of this document.

SEL Key Domains

Percentage Students by Index Categories, Zilla Parishad Schools
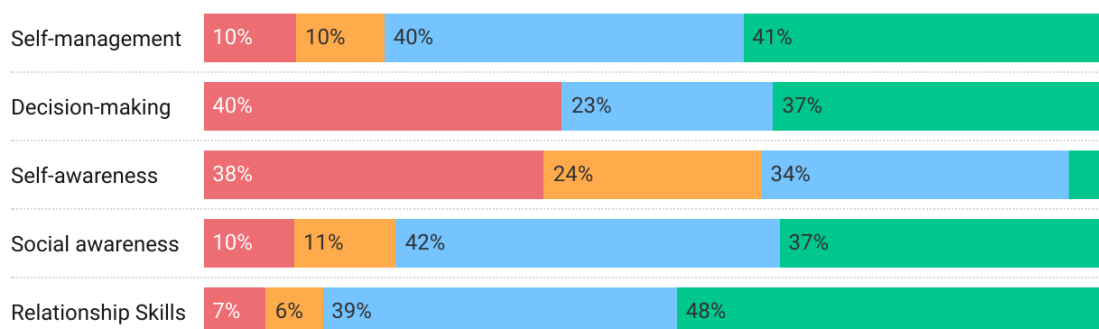
■ Very Low ■ Low ■ High ■ Very High

Domain	Very Low	Low	High	Very High
Self-management and Decision Making	25%	31%	39%	
Self-awareness and Social awareness	24%	18%	38%	21%
Relationship Skills	7%	39%	48%	

Numbers in the charts above represent percentage students in each category . A total of 1894 students were tested from grades 6, 7 and 8. Data shown here was collected from Akola, Pune, Nashik districts and Nagpur Municipal Corporation and Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation

Created with Datawrapper

SEL Sub Domains

Percentage Students by Index Categories, Zilla Parishad Schools

■ Very Low ■ Low ■ High ■ Very High

Sub Domain	Very Low	Low	High	Very High
Self-management	10%	10%	40%	41%
Decision-making	40%		23%	37%
Self-awareness	38%	24%	34%	
Social awareness	10%	11%	42%	37%
Relationship Skills	7%	6%	39%	48%

Numbers in the charts above represent percentage students in each category . A total of 1894 students were tested from grades 6, 7 and 8. Data shown here was collected from Akola, Pune, Nashik districts and Nagpur Municipal Corporation and Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation

Created with Datawrapper

As can be seen from the charts above, students seem to be struggling the most in the domains of decision making and self awareness. While domains of relationship skills, self management and social awareness remain core strengths of students in this population group.

Readiness Framework

As part of this exercise, we look through literature to identify an appropriate framework to better understand public systems readiness to implement an SEL or student well being policy. While multiple frameworks were identified in literature, we were bound by the constatins of the current context.

Firstly, the work on SEL is still as of yet a policy directive and no concrete action plans have been formulated, as of writing this report. While 'readiness' has been conceptualized for all stages of implementation in literature, we are more specifically interested in understanding readiness prior or at the initial stages to program design and implementation (Vax et. al., 2021). Hence readiness can only measure attitudes and willingness to implement future programs.

Secondly, this is written from the perspective of advocates for SEL and student wellbeing, and who may or may not receive explicit consent to gather data from public sector officials. Hence the resulting data collection blueprint has been prepared to allow for flexibility of use cases from within and without the public system. Here data can be gathered from multiple stakeholders, who are directly participation the process of program design and implementation or even associated in any proximate roles. Third, many of these frameworks have been developed in the context of private sector organizations and hence have limited applicability.

Once an appropriate framework was identified, broad thematic questions were identified. The approach used here was similar to the approach used by Vax et.al. (2021). Within literature there are various different frameworks that can capture organizational readiness for change, innovation and implementation challenges for new programs. However, we have aligned to 'Readiness = org capacity (general, specific) + motivation' and the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) for organizational readiness. Within this framework board questions have been identified for data collection and presented below.

Measuring Organizational Readiness
Understanding organizational readiness has been identified as an important factor in implementation of evidence based interventions[23], to identify and understand gaps and factors that can influence outcomes. As Saccia et. al. (2015) define it "Readiness refers to the extent to which an organization is both willing and able to implement a particular innovation." Readiness is understood as an important precursor to successful implementation of innovation and organizational change.

The literature on organizational readiness is vast, and draws from domains of change management, implementation sciences, health, clinical and organizational psychology. Readiness has been recognised as a multidimentiaonal and multi level construct (Holt and Vardaman 2013), for instance where readiness includes capacities, resources and motivation and that it can be examined at the individual, organizational and community level (Saccia et. al., 2015).

Within the domain of implementation sciences, organizational readiness has emerged as a core construct and has been expanded in many frameworks. For instance, as part of the Interactive Systems Framework (ISF) for Dissemination and Implementation that distinguish

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[23] See: Walker et. al., (2020),

three different systems engaged in implementing evidence based interventions. While the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) includes a wide range of components from processes, inner setting, outsetting, intervention characteristics and individual characteristics. Similarly, the Context and Capabilities for Integrating Care (CCIC) framework developed for healthcare practitioners integrates organizational readiness with leadership approach and clinician engagement and leadership.

However given that the current exercise attempts to measure readiness to implement a policy directive and not necessarily an program or intervention within the public sector setting, much of the existing frameworks do not apply. Given that public sector organizations can function very differently when compared to private sector organizations, and that action on existing polices are limited. We draw on two key approaches to better understand existing scenario around SEL in Maharashtra's public education system. The following two approaches have been selected:

1. R=MC2 heuristic. Readiness = org capacity (general, specific) + motivation
   This framework identifies three key components of readiness (1) an organization's motivation to adopt an innovation, (2) general organizational capacities, and (3) innovation-specific capacities. This framework has been well developed, and expanded into a larger implementation and support framework - Interactive systems framework for Dissemination and Implementation (ISF). For the purposes of this exercise we are referring to a model developed by Saccia et. al. (2015) that has been further expanded from the work of Weiner (2009). Each of its components can be measured independently, with validated tools, however given the limited applicability of the existing framework, these definitions have been used as a broad guide to summarize comments. The table below provides definitions and details the approach taken as part of this exercise.

2. Transtheoretical approach - used for interpretation of data The transtheoretical Model provides us with stages of readiness development, and has been recommended here as an organizing framework, to provide strategies and actions to support different readiness needs in organizations.

The benefit of structuring our findings in a framework are that, it can allow multiple stakeholders to gain a practical lens and identify specific factors that can make an org ready for implementation or further identify support areas, as a result trailering strategies that can make organizations more ready (Saccia et. al., 2015). We can point out areas of improvement and understand strengths that can be leveraged in the future.

Components	Sub components	Definition *(Walker et al 2020) (Dymnicki et al 2014)*	Thematic Questionnaire
General capacity	Innovativeness Org innovativeness	Openness to change in general *General receptiveness toward change; i.e., an organizational learning environment.*	– Is the current leadership team open to implementing innovative programs? To what extent is this dependent on intervention directives from above? – identify the leadership style

	Resource utilization	Ability to acquire and allocate resources including time, money, effort, and technology. *How discretionary /uncommitted resources are devoted to interventions.*	- Has the leadership been creative in re-routing funds in the past? - How likely are they to provide funds to such interventions?
	Culture	Norms and values of how we do things at our site. *Expectations about how things are done in an organization; how it functions*	
	Climate	The feeling of being part of this site *How employees collectively perceive, appraise, and feel about their current working environment.*	Will special training/ support be required during implementation?
	Leadership	Effectiveness of our leaders at multiple level *Whether power authorities articulate and support organizational activities.*	Does the current leadership - plan for support - plan for proactive communication of any policies or programs
	Structure	*Processes that influence how well an organization functions on a day-to-day basis.*	What efforts are made to embed Collaborative/ participatory nature in programs
	Staff capabilities	Having enough of the right people to get things done. *General skills, education, and expertise that staff possess*	Do you feel the leadership and Middle managers have the required knowledge and skills to implement a program on SEL?
Innovation specific capacity	Innovation-specific knowledge and skills	Sufficient abilities to implement the innovation. *Knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for an intervention, such as an understanding of the EBI's theory of change or skills being taught in curricula.*	How skilled are current officers on SEL - what is their current understanding - why is it considered important - why are they interested in SEL

	Supportive climate *Specific Implementation Climate Supports*	Necessary supports, processes, and resources to enable the use of the innovation *Key stakeholder(s) who support an intervention through connections, knowledge, expertise, and social influence.*	How supportive do you find the climate for implementation?
	Program champion	A well-connected person who supports and models the use of the innovation. *Key stakeholder(s) who support an intervention through connections, knowledge, expertise, and social influence.*	Are there any visible champions for SEL?
	Inter-organizational relationships Interorganizational Relationships	Relationships between our site and other organizations that support the use of the innovation. *Relationships between (a) providers and the training and technical assistance (TTA) support system and (b) between different provider organizations that are used to facilitate implementation.*	Any communication/ existing programs among different staff members?
	Intra-organizational relationships	Relationships within our site that support the use of the innovation	
Motivation	Simplicity *Doability*	The innovation seems simple to use. *Degree to which intervention is perceived as relatively difficult to understand and use*	**How confident are administrators in creating a policy/ program on this?** - I am confident about developing SEL related program and implementing it in the future? - I understand SEL well enough - we have a vision for SEL (rate on a scale of 1-5)
	Priority	Importance of the innovation in relation to other things we do. *Extent to which the intervention is regarded as more important than other interventions.*	**Why is SEL important for my jurisdiction currently?** - to mitigate the pandemic related stressors specifically for students experiencing difficulty - to help improve academic performance of students - to develop 21st century skills not otherwise developed via classroom instructions

			- students need to feel happy, improve student well being - SEL program can be useful but not currently
	Relative advantage	The innovation seems more useful than what we have done in the past. *Degree to which a particular intervention is perceived as being better than what it is being compared against; can include perceptions of anticipated outcomes.*	**Current classroom level interventions done by teachers are enough to meet SEL needs of students ?** Current SEL practices need to be met with programs at scale? (rate on a scale of 1-5)
	Compatibility	The innovation fits with how we do things *Degree to which an intervention is perceived as being consistent with existing values, cultural norms, experiences, and the needs of potential users.*	**Which of the following works best for students and the education system at present?** - SEL as a separate program with separate activities (with a one time program) - SEL as integrated component as part of the classroom teaching (framework for classroom based instruction)
	Trialability	Degree to which the innovation can be tested and tried out. *Degree to which an intervention can be tested in a pilot fashion before going to scale*	
	Observability	Ability to see that the innovation is producing outcomes. *Degree to which outcomes that result from the intervention are visible to others.*	SEL is a set of practices, students will generally benefit from it, so its progress need not be monitored on specific indicators (rate on a scale 1-5)

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