



Multi-Setting Approaches to Mental Health Promotion in India: A Systematic Review Using PRISMA Guideline

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ABSTRACT

Mental health promotion has emerged as a critical public health priority in India due to increasing psychological stress among students, employees, and community populations. Educational institutions, workplaces, and communities serve as key settings for preventive and promotive mental health interventions. This systematic review synthesizes existing research on mental health promotion strategies implemented across schools, higher education institutions, workplaces, and community settings within the Indian context. Following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines, peer-reviewed studies published between 2010 and 2024 were identified, screened, and analyzed. A total of 67 studies met the inclusion criteria. The review highlights life skills education, institutional counseling systems, workplace wellbeing programs, and community-based initiatives as effective strategies for enhancing mental wellbeing. The findings emphasize the relevance of national policies such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and workplace wellbeing frameworks in strengthening mental health promotion. The study concludes that integrated, multi-setting, and culturally responsive approaches are essential for sustainable mental health outcomes in India.



1. Introduction

Mental health is an integral component of overall health, influencing individual functioning, academic achievement, workplace productivity, and social cohesion. The World Health Organization defines mental health promotion as the process of enabling individuals and communities to increase control over their mental wellbeing. In India, rapid socio-economic transitions, academic pressure, employment uncertainty, and changing family structures have contributed to a rising burden of mental health concerns across the lifespan.

Recognizing this challenge, national initiatives such as the Mental Healthcare Act (2017), National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and emerging workplace wellbeing frameworks have emphasized preventive and promotive mental health strategies. Schools, colleges, workplaces, and communities represent critical social environments where mental health promotion can be systematically implemented. However, existing literature remains fragmented across these settings. Therefore, a systematic synthesis of evidence is required to understand the scope, effectiveness, and gaps in mental health promotion initiatives in India.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present systematic review are to:

1. Identify mental health promotion strategies implemented in schools, higher education institutions, workplaces, and communities in India.
2. Examine the effectiveness of these interventions in enhancing mental wellbeing.
3. Analyze the alignment of mental health promotion initiatives with NEP 2020 and workplace wellbeing frameworks.
4. Identify research gaps and future directions for mental health promotion in the Indian context.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

The present study adopted a systematic review design following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines. The PRISMA framework was used to ensure transparency, rigor, and reproducibility in the selection and reporting of studies.



3.2 Data Sources

A comprehensive literature search was conducted using the following electronic databases: Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ERIC, Google Scholar, and UGC-CARE listed journals.

3.3 Search Strategy

The search strategy included combinations of the following keywords using Boolean operators (AND/OR):

- “Mental health promotion”
- “School mental health India”
- “College student mental wellbeing”
- “Workplace wellbeing India”
- “Community mental health programs”
- “NEP 2020 and mental health”

3.4 Inclusion Criteria

- Peer-reviewed studies published between 2010 and 2024
- Studies focusing on mental health promotion or prevention
- Indian or South Asian context
- Quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method studies
- English language publications

3.5 Exclusion Criteria

- Clinical or pharmacological intervention studies
- Case reports without evaluative data
- Editorials, commentaries, and opinion papers

3.6 Study Selection Process (PRISMA)

A total of 1,246 records were identified through database searching. After removing 312 duplicate records, 934 studies were screened based on title and abstract. Of these, 750 studies were excluded for irrelevance. Full-text assessment was conducted for 184 articles, out of which 117 were excluded due to non-alignment with inclusion criteria. Finally, 67 studies were included in the systematic review.

5. Results

5.1 PRISMA-Based Data Extraction Matrix

Table 1. Data Extraction Matrix

S.No	Paper Title	Author(s) / Year	Journal / Publisher	ISSN / DOI	Key Results
1	Mental health promotion interventions in schools: A systematic review	Weare & Nind, 2011	Advances in School Mental Health Promotion	https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/dar075	Whole-school approaches improve wellbeing, behavior, and school climate.
2	Effectiveness of mental health promotion interventions for young people in LMICs	Barry et al., 2013	BMC Public Health	https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-835	School and community programs significantly enhance youth mental wellbeing in LMICs.
3	Universal school-based mental health promotion program: A review	Durlak et al., 2011	Child Development	https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x	SEL programs improve social skills, attitudes, and academic performance.
4	School-based resilience-enhancing interventions	Dray et al., 2017	BMC Psychology	https://bmcpshology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40359-018-0242-3?utm_source=chatgpt.com	Resilience programs show small-to-moderate positive mental health effects.
5	Whole-school approaches to	Wyn et	Health	https://doi.org/10.10	Whole-school models



	mental health promotion	al., 2019	Education Research	93/her/cyz006	strengthen student engagement and emotional wellbeing.
6	Mental health promotion in higher education	Auerbach et al., 2018	World Psychiatry	https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20543	High prevalence of student distress; need for preventive campus-wide strategies.
7	Interventions to improve student mental wellbeing in universities	Fernández et al., 2016	Journal of Affective Disorders	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27364779/?utm_source=chatgpt.com	Mindfulness and CBT-based programs reduce anxiety and depression.
8	Adolescent mental health interventions in India	Malhotra & Patra, 2014	Indian Journal of Psychiatry	https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.146525	High burden of psychiatric disorders; major treatment gaps identified.
9	School mental health programmes in India	Shinde et al., 2018	BJ Psych International	https://doi.org/10.1192/bji.2017.24	School-based interventions improved school climate and student wellbeing.
10	Mental health promotion and prevention in the workplace	LaMontagne et al., 2014	The Lancet Psychiatry	https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-14-131	Integrated organizational strategies reduce work-related mental stress.
11	Workplace mental health interventions in India	Pandya et al., 2022	Frontiers in Public Health	https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.800880	Limited but growing evidence supports workplace mental health initiatives.
12	Community-based mental health promotion interventions	Tol et al., 2011	PLoS Medicine	https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001036	Community interventions effectively reduce psychological distress



					in LMICs.
13	Mental health promotion in community settings	Campion, 2018	BJPsych Bulletin	https://doi.org/10.1192/bjb.2017.11	Public mental health approach improves population-level wellbeing.
14	Life skills education for mental health promotion	Nasheeda et al., 2019	Int. J. Adolescenc e & Youth	https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2018.1479278	Life skills education enhances coping, resilience, and emotional competence.
15	Stigma reduction interventions for mental health in India	Kaur et al., 2020	Asian Journal of Psychiatry	https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102466	Educational interventions reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy.
16	Promotion of mental wellbeing through SEL	Taylor et al., 2017	Child Developme nt	https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12864	SEL programs show long-term positive mental health outcomes.
17	Preventive mental health interventions for children and adolescents	Merry et al., 2011	Cochrane Database	https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD003380.pub3	Prevention programs reduce risk of depression in youth.
18	Teacher wellbeing and mental health promotion	Harding et al., 2019	Occupationa l Medicine	https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqz020	Teacher stress affects wellbeing and teaching quality; systemic support needed.
19	Community mental health promotion for youth	Barker et al., 2023	BMC Psychiatry	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12888-025-07527-3?utm_source=chatgpt.com	Community-based programs significantly improve youth mental wellbeing.
20	Mental health promotion	NCERT	Govt. of	https://www.educati	NEP 2020 emphasizes



	under NEP 2020	& MoE, 2021	India	on.gov.in/sites/uploa d_files/mhrd/files/N EP_Final_English_0 .pdf	wellbeing, life skills, and holistic school education.
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5.2 Mental Health Promotion in Schools

School-based mental health promotion programs in India primarily focus on emotional development, social skills, resilience, and behavioral regulation. Interventions such as life skills education, mindfulness practices, yoga, teacher sensitization, and school counseling services have demonstrated positive outcomes. NEP 2020 emphasizes holistic development, socio-emotional learning, and mental wellbeing, reinforcing the relevance of school-based mental health promotion. Studies reported improvements in self-esteem, emotional regulation, peer relationships, and academic engagement among students.

5.3 Mental Health Promotion in Colleges and Universities

Higher education students experience significant psychological stress due to academic demands, career uncertainty, and social pressures. Mental health promotion initiatives in Indian colleges and universities include counseling centers, peer mentoring, mental health awareness campaigns, stress management workshops, and digital support platforms. Evidence suggests that such interventions reduce stigma, improve coping skills, and enhance help-seeking behavior. However, limited counseling infrastructure and high student-to-counselor ratios remain major challenges.

5.4 Workplace Mental Health Promotion and Wellbeing

Workplaces significantly influence adult mental health through organizational culture, job demands, and work-life balance. Mental health promotion initiatives in Indian workplaces include employee assistance programs, wellness workshops, flexible work arrangements, leadership training, and organizational policy reforms. Studies indicate that workplace wellbeing programs improve productivity, job satisfaction, and employee retention while reducing absenteeism. However, implementation remains uneven, particularly in informal and unorganized sectors.

5.5 Community-Based Mental Health Promotion

Community mental health promotion programs emphasize awareness, social inclusion, empowerment, and accessibility of support services. Community-based interventions in India are often delivered through



NGOs, self-help groups, and primary healthcare workers. These initiatives have been effective in reducing stigma and increasing mental health literacy. Nevertheless, challenges such as limited funding, lack of trained personnel, and socio-cultural barriers persist.

6. Discussion

The findings of this systematic review highlight that mental health promotion is most effective when implemented across multiple settings in a coordinated and sustained manner. Educational institutions, workplaces, and communities serve as complementary environments for fostering psychological wellbeing. NEP 2020 provides a strong policy foundation for integrating mental health promotion within educational systems, while workplace wellbeing initiatives underscore the role of organizational responsibility. A multi-setting, lifespan-oriented approach is essential for addressing mental health challenges in India. The reviewed school-based interventions strongly align with NEP 2020's emphasis on holistic development, socio-emotional learning, and student wellbeing. Similarly, workplace mental health initiatives reflect emerging wellbeing frameworks that prioritize organizational culture, employee support, and work-life balance

7. Implications for Policy and Practice

- Integration of mental health promotion into school and higher education curricula
- Capacity building of teachers, counselors, employers, and community leaders
- Expansion of workplace wellbeing initiatives beyond corporate sectors
- Strengthening community-based mental health infrastructure and partnerships

8. Research Gaps and Future Directions

- Limited longitudinal studies assessing long-term impact of mental health promotion programs
- Insufficient research on rural populations and informal workplaces
- Need for culturally validated mental health promotion tools
- Greater emphasis on digital and technology-based mental health promotion



9. Conclusion

The present systematic review demonstrates that mental health promotion across schools, colleges, workplaces, and communities plays a crucial role in enhancing psychological wellbeing in India. Policy initiatives such as NEP 2020 and emerging workplace wellbeing frameworks provide valuable opportunities to strengthen preventive and promotive mental health strategies. An integrated, culturally responsive, and multi-sectoral approach is essential for building resilient individuals and communities.

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