

Record of Discussion of Online Session of Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing, held on 12.03.2026 at 10:00 AM

1. An online session of the Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing was conducted on 12th March 2026 as part of the Ministry of Education's fortnightly series of capacity building sessions under the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme. The session was organised for nominated members from centrally funded Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). A total of 56 participants joined the session out of which 47 were faculty members. The initiative continues to support the development of institutional ecosystems that are sensitive to student wellbeing, aligned with objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

2., Mr. D. K. Sharma welcomed participants on behalf of the Department of Higher Education. He noted that this interaction was part of a continuing series of faculty engagements, with the present meeting marking the 39th online session held under the initiative. He emphasised that the objective of the platform is to exchange dialogue, build awareness, and create a space where faculty members can collectively reflect on emerging challenges and share insights on student mental wellbeing on campus.

4. Mr. Sharma introduced the resource persons and institutional practitioners who would share experiences and evidence during the session. The following resource persons were part of this session:

- ❖ Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist and Programme Director, Expressions India
- ❖ Dr. Aprajita Khanna, Moolchand Medicity & Expressions India
- ❖ Prof. G. Amba Prasad Rao, NIT Warangal
- ❖ Dr. Neha Hejaz, NIT Warangal
- ❖ Prof. Shailender Swaminathan, Sapien Labs, KREA University

5. The session was then handed over to Prof. Kumar Suresh, NIEPA, for his opening remarks. Prof. Suresh highlighted that such initiatives align with the goals of the National Education Policy 2020, particularly its emphasis on equity, inclusion, and the creation of supportive academic environments. He observed that concerns related to mental health have become increasingly visible in higher education institutions, particularly in technical institutions, where pressures associated with performance and expectations can be intense. He noted that faculty members play a central role in shaping the institutional ecosystem and can contribute significantly to fostering a supportive and positive learning environment for students. Referring to national level efforts, he mentioned the organisation of two wellbeing conclaves hosted at IIT Hyderabad and IIT Bombay, which helped expand dialogue and awareness on student wellbeing.

6. Prof. Suresh further emphasised that issues of student mental health must be understood in the broader societal context, including rising performance pressures and a growing tendency among students to equate success primarily with salary packages rather than learning outcomes. Stressing the need for a shift in institutional culture, he encouraged faculty and institutional leaders to promote a learning-oriented ecosystem grounded in meaningful academic engagement, balanced expectations, and the values embedded in India's knowledge traditions.

7. In his address, Dr. Jitendra Nagpal framed the session as an open dialogue rather than a lecture, emphasising that discussions on mental health must extend beyond institutions to the wider social ecosystem. Referring to the NEP 2020, he observed that education should be understood as a process of holistic human development rather than merely the pursuit of degrees, employment, or financial success. He highlighted that India has one of the largest youth populations in the world, which represents a significant opportunity for national development but also requires careful attention to the wellbeing and emotional development of young people.

8. Dr. Nagpal engaged faculty participants in discussion on the changing attitudes and behaviours of students, including issues related to values, communication styles, and the growing influence of digital media. He noted that research indicates a substantial proportion of young people experience mental health challenges, and that emotional regulation and resilience often do not keep pace with high academic achievement. Referring to the updated definition of mental health by the WHO, he explained that mental wellbeing is not merely the absence of illness but the ability to cope with life's stresses, realise one's abilities, work productively, and contribute to society.

9. During the interaction, faculty members shared concerns about declining stress tolerance among students and the influence of family environments and social media on student behaviour. Dr. Nagpal acknowledged these perspectives while emphasising that families, schools, and universities all share responsibility in shaping young people's resilience and life skills. He also drew attention to emerging lifestyle-related health concerns among youth such as obesity, hypertension, and stress-related conditions, which are increasingly linked to behavioural and mental health factors. Concluding this segment, he emphasised the need for institutions to develop supportive campus ecosystems through counselling services, faculty mentorship, student leadership, and early identification of distress signals among students.

10. Dr. Aprajita Khanna initiated an interactive discussion with faculty members, emphasising the importance of identifying early warning signs or 'red flags' of psychological distress among students. She invited participants to reflect on behavioural indicators commonly observed in their institutions. Participating faculty members noted issues including student isolation, introverted behaviour, sleep disturbances, and challenges arising from financial background or language barriers, which can lead to feelings of inadequacy and social withdrawal. Dr. Khanna highlighted that such factors often affect both emotional wellbeing and academic engagement, and stressed the need for early identification and supportive responses from faculty.

11. During the discussion, faculty members also shared observations on broader pressures faced by students, such as parental expectations, dissatisfaction with chosen academic paths, employment-related anxieties, and lack of family support. They also emphasised the importance of trust, effective teaching-learning practices, Dr. Khanna underscored that teachers play a critical role in shaping the psychological climate of institutions by modelling respectful communication, encouraging participation, and recognising behavioural changes in students.

12. In her concluding remarks during the interaction, Dr. Khanna emphasised that mental health concerns often emerge gradually through signs such as withdrawal from activities, irritability, irregular attendance, or disengagement from peers. She highlighted the importance of empathetic listening, timely referral to counselling services, and creating supportive campus environments that promote communication, respect, and compassion among all members of the academic community. The discussion concluded with a shared understanding that promoting student wellbeing requires collective effort from faculty, administrators, and support staff, alongside strengthening peer support and mentoring systems.

13. The session was then handed over to Prof. G. Amba Prasad Rao and Dr. Neha Hejaz from National Institute of Technology, Warangal. Dr. Hejaz presented the initiatives undertaken at NIT, Warangal to promote mental health and wellbeing among students, faculty, and staff. She explained that the institute established a Centre for Mental Health and Wellness in 2024 in alignment with the NEP 2020. The centre aims to create a compassionate campus environment where emotional wellbeing is valued alongside academic achievement. Activities include workshops, awareness programmes, peer-support circles, and mentoring initiatives designed to build emotional resilience and encourage open dialogue around mental health.

14. Dr. Hejaz also discussed factors that contribute to stress among students in residential technical institutions, such as adjusting to life away from home, sudden freedom after highly structured exam preparation, parental expectations, uncertainty about career choices, and exposure to diverse social and ideological environments. In response, the institute has implemented several support mechanisms, including a mentor-mentee programme in which faculty regularly guide small groups of students, departmental faculty advisers for mental health, and counselling initiatives for both students and staff. The centre collaborates with external organisations to conduct meditation and wellbeing programmes, while also organising training workshops like barefoot counselling for faculty and national level engagements to strengthen institutional capacity for student wellbeing.

15. Finally, Prof. Shailender Swaminathan gave a presentation of his team's work at Sapien Labs. He focused on the importance of systematically tracking and measuring student mental wellbeing in higher education institutions. He suggested that wellbeing initiatives should extend beyond the campus years and include longitudinal tracking of students even after they become alumni, as this could provide valuable insights into how mental health evolves over time and how life experiences shape long term wellbeing.

16. Mr Swaminathan highlighted research indicating that youth mental wellbeing has declined over the past decade. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives like neuroscience, psychiatry, psychology, and economics, he emphasised the need for comprehensive measurement approaches aligned with the definition of mental health proposed by the WHO, which considers not only emotional wellbeing but also individuals' ability to learn and work effectively. Data comparisons suggested a concerning shift: whereas earlier patterns showed higher wellbeing among younger individuals, recent trends indicate that people aged 18-24 now report the lowest mental wellbeing levels.

17. He further discussed potential drivers of this decline, including reduced family closeness, early smartphone exposure, unhealthy diets, and lifestyle factors affecting sleep and daily routines. To address these challenges, he proposed continuous data collection systems that allow institutions to monitor mental health trends, evaluate the impact of interventions, and identify which initiatives are most effective. Such data-driven approaches, he argued, can help universities tailor support strategies and provide timely feedback to students and institutions to strengthen overall wellbeing and academic performance.

18. The session concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Shivakumar Kandekar from NIEPA.

**List of Attendees
Faculty Members**

S. No	Name of Institution	Faculty Nominated	Attendees	Absentees
1	Central University of Jammu	No faculty nominated Attended by Registrar, CU Jammu		
2	Nagaland University	No faculty nominated		
3	IIIT Sri City Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amilpur Santhosh 2. Bheemappa H 3. Bulla Rajesh 4. K. Divyabramham 5. Kamalakanta Sethi 6. Lokendra Chouhan 7. Piyush Joshi 8. Priyambada 9. Selvi R 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bheemappa H 2. Piyush Joshi 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amilpur Santhosh 2. Bulla Rajesh 3. K. Divyabramham 4. Kamalakanta Sethi 5. Lokendra Chouhan 6. Priyambada Selvi R
4	IIIT Tiruchirappalli	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. G. Seetharaman 2. M. Harsih Adhithya 3. N. Renugadevi 4. R. Dhanalakshmi 5. R. Krishnamurthy 6. Ravi Banoth 7. T. Sugirtha 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. G. Seetharaman 2. M. Harsih Adhithya 3. N. Renugadevi 4. R. Dhanalakshmi 5. R. Krishnamurthy 6. Ravi Banoth 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T. Sugirtha
5	IIIT Pune	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anagha Uday Khiste 2. Chandrakant Narayan Guled 3. Dipen Bepari 4. KM Divya Chaturvedi 5. Mahesh Joshi 6. Mohammad Akhlaqur Rahman 7. Priyank Jain 8. Shrikant Salve 9. Shubham Shukla 10. Sonam Maurya 11. Sumit Kumar Gupta 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anagha Uday Khiste 2. Chandrakant Narayan Guled 3. KM Divya Chaturvedi 4. Priyank Jain 5. Shrikant Salve 6. Sonam Maurya 7. Sumit Kumar Gupta 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dipen Bepari 2. Mahesh Joshi 3. Mohammad Akhlaqur Rahman 4. Shubham Shukla
6	Sardar Vallabhbhai National Institute of Technology, Surat	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Banti A. Gedam 2. Basant Kumar Sethi 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Banti A. Gedam 2. Basant Kumar Sethi 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yogesh D Patil

		3. Biranchi Narayan Sahoo 4. Chandra Prakash 5. Dipikaben Baldevbhai Patel 6. Gangireddy Sushnigdha 7. Ketan Kuperkar 8. Mulay Amrut Shrikant 9. Naveen Kumar 10. Nitesh A. Funde 11. Nithin Chatterji 12. Sanjay Tolani 13. Shruti Shukla 14. Shweta Shah 15. Siba Sankar Sahu 16. Suman Deb 17. Tamizharasi G 18. Vaishaliben Samir Dhingra 19. Vineet Kumar Rathore 20. Yogendra Vasantryao Kuwar 21. Yogesh D Patil	3. Biranchi Narayan Sahoo 4. Chandra Prakash 5. Dipikaben Baldevbhai Patel 6. Gangireddy Sushnigdha 7. Ketan Kuperkar 8. Mulay Amrut Shrikant 9. Naveen Kumar 10. Nitesh A. Funde 11. Nithin Chatterji 12. Sanjay Tolani 13. Shruti Shukla 14. Shweta Shah 15. Siba Sankar Sahu 16. Suman Deb 17. Tamizharasi G 18. Vaishaliben Samir Dhingra 19. Vineet Kumar Rathore 20. Yogendra Vasantryao Kuwar	
7	National Institute of Technology, Delhi	1. Anidev Singh 2. Ankur 3. Anuj Sharma 4. Gunjan 5. Kapil Kumar 6. Karan Malhotra 7. Rahul Pandey 8. Sandeep Kumar 9. V S Pandey 10. Vipin Pal	1. Anidev Singh 2. Karan Malhotra	1. Ankur 2. Anuj Sharma 3. Gunjan 4. Kapil Kumar 5. Rahul Pandey 6. Sandeep Kumar 7. V S Pandey 8. Vipin Pal
8	IIM Bangalore	No faculty nominated		
9	IIM Rohtak	No faculty nominated		
10	IIM Udaipur	No faculty nominated		
11	IISc Bangalore	No faculty nominated		
12	NITTTR Chennai	1. E.S.M. Suresh 2. G. A. Rathy 3. G. Kulanthaivel 4. K.S. Giridharan 5. K.S.A. Dinesh Kumar 6. M. Senthilkumar 7. P. Malliga 8. P. Sivasankar 9. R. Santhakumar 10. S. Somasundaram	1. E.S.M. Suresh 2. G. A. Rathy 3. G. Kulanthaivel 4. K.S. Giridharan 5. K.S.A. Dinesh Kumar 6. M. Senthilkumar 7. P. Malliga 8. P. Sivasankar 9. R. Santhakumar 10. S. Somasundaram	-

Affiliation Details	Name of the Attendees
Ministry Officials, Resource Persons, Officials from NIEPA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. D. K. Sharma, Director, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education 2. Prof. Kumar Suresh, NIEPA 3. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist & Program Director, Expressions India 4. Dr. Aprajita Khanna, Moolchand Medicity & Expressions India 5. Prof. G. Amba Prasad Rao, NIT Warangal 6. Dr. Neha Hejaz, NIT Warangal 7. Prof. Shailender Swaminathan, Sapien Labs, KREA University 8. Dr. Shivakumar Kandekar, NIEPA 9. Ms. Richa Shrivastava, Consultant, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education