



Department of Higher Education
Ministry of Education
Government of India



भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान मुंबई
Indian Institute of Technology Bombay

2nd NATIONAL WELLBEING CONCLAVE

**Integrated Approach for Promoting Positive
Mental Health, Resilience & Wellbeing**

Report



Department of Higher Education (MoE) , Govt. of India
&
Indian Institute of Technology Bombay
22-23 Nov 2025

Acknowledgements

This report documents the proceedings of the 2nd National Wellbeing Conclave 2025, organised by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India, and hosted by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay.

The Conclave was made possible through the guidance and leadership of the Ministry of Education, the institutional support of IIT Bombay, and the contributions of participating higher education institutions, faculty members, students, mental health professionals, and wellbeing practitioners from across the country.

Executive Summary

Aligned with the Ministry of Education's *Integrated Approach to Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing*, the 2nd National Wellbeing Conclave 2025 was hosted by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay in collaboration with the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education. Organised on 22–23 November 2025, the Conclave served as a national platform to advance dialogue, learning, and action on student mental health and holistic well-being in Indian higher education. Building on the momentum of the inaugural Conclave held in 2024, this second edition sought to deepen national conversations and accelerate institutional efforts toward integrated, system-wide wellbeing frameworks. The Conclave reflected a growing national recognition that well-being is integral to academic excellence, personal development, and long-term societal progress.

The two-day Conclave brought together 79 higher education institutions, including 20 IITs, 6 IIITs, and 8 IIMs, with active participation from 141 faculty members and 130 students representing diverse regions and institutional contexts across India. The scale and diversity of participation underscored the collective commitment of the higher education sector to strengthening wellbeing ecosystems. A total of 43 institutions showcased their initiatives through exhibition stalls, while 48 institutions contributed to the national compendium titled *Emerging Practices of Wellbeing*, documenting evidence-based and scalable institutional efforts.

The conclave was designed to move beyond awareness toward implementation, and included symposia, thematic panel discussions, faculty capacity-building workshops, student participatory sessions, and an exhibition of best practices. Discussions addressed policy translation, early identification and ethical intervention of psychosocial concerns, curriculum-integrated wellbeing education, faculty preparedness, and collaborative institutional frameworks.

A distinguishing feature of the Conclave was the integration of structured student engagement, enabling learners to actively apply life skills and wellbeing concepts through experiential, inter-institutional group work. This participatory approach reinforced the understanding that sustainable wellbeing in higher education must be co-created by policymakers, institutions, faculty, and students.

The Conclave also featured an extensive Exhibition of Emerging Wellbeing Practices, with 43 institutions presenting their campus initiatives through interactive stalls. The exhibition fostered rich peer learning, student-faculty engagement, and cross-institutional knowledge-sharing, demonstrating the diversity and creativity of wellbeing efforts across India.

Overall, the initiative concluded with a strong consensus that embedded wellbeing within academic, administrative, and community structures is essential for nurturing resilient, empathetic, and future-ready campus environments. The outcomes of the Conclave make a meaningful contribution to the evolving national roadmap for holistic well-being in Indian higher education.

Introduction

The 2nd National Wellbeing Conclave 2025, hosted at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, marks an important milestone in India's ongoing efforts to weave mental health and holistic wellbeing within higher education ecosystems. Organised under the aegis of the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, the conclave reflects a growing acknowledgement that academic excellence and human flourishing are deeply interconnected.

Higher education institutions today face increasing challenges arising from academic pressures, social change, digital overload, transition-related stress, and evolving student aspirations. In response, the Ministry of Education has championed an integrated approach that encompasses prevention, early intervention, community engagement, and capacity building across stakeholders. The conclave was envisioned as a national platform to share institutional practices, strengthen cross-campus collaboration, and align campus-level efforts with national priorities.

As the second edition of the National Wellbeing Conclave, the 2025 gathering aimed not only to review progress made since the foundational event at IIT Hyderabad but also to deepen policy-to-practice alignment and encourage sustainable adoption of wellbeing frameworks across institutions.

Objectives of the Conclave

The 2nd National Wellbeing Conclave 2025 was organised with the following objectives:

- To advance national dialogue on student mental health and holistic wellbeing within higher education institutions.
- To examine how national policies and guidelines can be effectively translated into institutional structures, curricula, and support systems.
- To build capacity among faculty, administrators, and institutional leaders to recognise, respond to, and prevent psychosocial distress.
- To promote early identification and ethical intervention for mental health concerns among diverse student populations.

- To encourage collaboration among institutions through the sharing of evidence-based practices, research, and implementation models.
- To provide a platform for student participation, enabling learners to engage actively with life skills, wellbeing concepts, and institutional challenges.
- To facilitate national-level knowledge sharing through an exhibition of institutional well-being practices, enabling campuses to learn from diverse models and successful implementations
- To contribute toward a shared national framework for embedding wellbeing as a core element of quality higher education.

Overview of the Programme

The Conclave was structured over two days, combining symposia, panel discussions, faculty workshops, student participatory sessions, and an exhibition of emerging practices. The programme design ensured balanced engagement across policy, academic, institutional, and student perspectives.

Key academic components included two symposia addressing the future of wellbeing in higher education and early identification and intervention of psychosocial concerns, along with three thematic panel discussions focused on lifelong wellbeing, policy frameworks, and collaborative wellbeing ecosystems. These sessions facilitated an in-depth exploration of conceptual foundations, governance models, and practical strategies.

Faculty workshops were conducted to strengthen educators' capabilities in responding to student distress and promoting digital wellbeing, recognising faculty as critical stakeholders in campus wellbeing ecosystems.

An important component of the programme was the Exhibition of Emerging Wellbeing Practices, where 43 institutions showcased their wellbeing models, student-led initiatives, and implementation strategies. The exhibition served as an active learning space, encouraging dialogue, reflection and adaptation of practices among participants

Student workshops formed an integral part of the programme, with mixed inter-institute groups engaging in experiential presentations that applied life skills such as problem solving, empathy, resilience, communication, and collaboration to higher education contexts. This participatory design reinforced student voice and validated the relevance of wellbeing education at the learner level.

Together, the programme reflected a comprehensive and inclusive approach, aligning national vision with institutional practice and stakeholder engagement.

Profile of IIT Bombay & Student Wellness Ecosystem

The Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay), established in 1958, is one of India's premier institutions for education, research, and innovation. Alongside its academic

excellence, IIT Bombay has been a national leader in recognising the critical importance of student mental health and holistic wellbeing as integral to institutional success.

Central to this commitment is the Student Wellness Centre (SWC) at IIT Bombay, established in 1987, which has served as a cornerstone of campus mental health support for over three decades. The SWC provides comprehensive services spanning counselling, early intervention, preventive initiatives, awareness programmes, and skill-building workshops. The Centre is supported by a multidisciplinary and multilingual team of ten counsellors with diverse therapeutic expertise, a clinical psychologist, outreach counsellors, administrative staff, and content support personnel. Counselling services are offered both at the SWC office and across select hostels, ensuring accessibility through self-referral as well as referrals from faculty members, mentors, and other stakeholders. In addition, round-the-clock crisis support is provided in coordination with the IIT Hospital and Quick Response Teams.

Through its sustained outreach efforts, the Student Wellness Centre has engaged over 5,700 students, creating safe and inclusive spaces for dialogue, support, and healing. Initiatives such as Peer Connect, Soulcial, Vartalap, and Harmony Hangouts extend wellbeing support beyond traditional counselling by fostering community connection, creative expression, and shared experiences, contributing to stigma reduction and help-seeking behaviour on campus.

Building on a strong foundation, IIT Bombay expanded its wellbeing ecosystem with the launch of the Flourishing Hub in March 2025 – an initiative under the Student Wellness Centre supported by the Alumni Batch of 1998. The Hub marks a shift from reactive mental health support to proactive, curriculum-integrated wellbeing education. For the first time, structured wellbeing learning was introduced into the first-year curriculum through the NOCS01 Wellness Course, reaching 1,397 students across 140 workshops and earning an average rating of 4.64/5.

Alongside this, the Mentor Training Course, delivered through 76 workshops, has prepared 895 student mentors with skills in empathy, active listening, early identification, and peer support, receiving a rating of 4.61/5. The ecosystem is further strengthened by Wellness Wednesdays, Flourishing Fridays, Yoga and meditation sessions, and immersive wellbeing retreats. The Flourishing Retreat (Mind Gym), which combines scientific brain-function assessments with mindfulness, nature immersion, and reflection, achieved a rating of 4.70/5.

Together, these initiatives have reached over 2,400 students within six months, contributing to improved emotional resilience, stress management, and a stronger sense of belonging.

As host of the 2nd National Wellbeing Conclave 2025, IIT Bombay brings to the national platform not only long-standing counselling expertise but also a demonstrable, scalable model of integrated wellbeing that combines policy alignment, curriculum integration, and community-based practices.

Inaugural Session

The Inaugural Session of the 2nd National Wellbeing Conclave 2025, held on 22 November 2025, formally marked the commencement of the two-day deliberations on integrated wellbeing in higher education and underscored the Government of India's commitment to advancing holistic mental health and wellbeing frameworks within academic institutions. The session began with a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony, symbolising the collective commitment to knowledge, awareness and wellbeing. The ceremony was led by Smt. Rina Sonowal Kouli, Joint Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education; Prof. Shireesh Kedare, Director, IIT Bombay; Shri Devendra Kumar Sharma, Director, Higher Education; Prof. Deepak Marla, Vice-Chairperson, Student Wellness Centre, IIT Bombay; Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Director, Expressions India; Prof. Suryanarayan Doolla, Dean of Student Affairs; and Prof. Ravindra Kumar Gudi, formally inaugurating the Conclave.



Lamp-lighting ceremony : (L to R) Prof. Rekha Santhanam, Ms. Geeta Mehrotra, Ms. Ila Sinha, Dr. Sunita Sivach, Smt. Rina Sonowal Kouli, Prof. Shireesh B. Kedare, Prof. Suryanarayan Doolla, Prof. Ravindra Kumar Gudi, Mr. Chintamani Joglekar, Prof. Deepak Marla, Ms. Hima Anareddy

This was followed by the welcome address delivered by Prof. Deepak Marla, Vice-Chairperson, Student Wellness Centre, IIT Bombay. In his address, Prof. Marla expressed his gratitude to the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, for placing its trust in IIT Bombay to host the Conclave. He emphasised the significance of the initiative and its larger purpose of integrating wellbeing into every aspect of campus life, moving beyond isolated interventions toward institution-wide engagement.

Prof. Marla highlighted that the Conclave was intentionally designed as a shared learning platform for both students and faculty, offering institutions an avenue to collectively explore how mental health and wellbeing can be prioritised within higher education. He underlined the value of bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders, including psychologists, psychiatrists, policymakers, academicians and wellbeing practitioners, enabling meaningful interdisciplinary dialogue and knowledge exchange.

The national compendium titled *Emerging Practices of Wellbeing* was formally released. The compendium is a collective national effort capturing wellbeing practices adopted by

institutions across the country; 48 institutions have contributed to the compendium, reflecting a growing nationwide commitment to strengthening student mental health and wellbeing.

Following the welcome address, Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Director, Expressions India, addressed the gathering and reflected on the significance of institutions and educators coming together at a national scale to advance the wellbeing agenda. He observed that the presence of a large number of institutions and professors symbolised a collective responsibility, with educators “holding the torch of wellbeing” for the nation’s youth. Emphasising India’s rich educational heritage, Dr. Nagpal referred to the Guru–Shishya Parampara, noting that wellbeing and mentorship have long been integral to the country’s learning traditions.

He highlighted that India is home to one of the largest youth populations in the world, alongside one of the highest numbers of universities, underscoring the urgency of prioritising student wellbeing within higher education systems. Drawing upon the words of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Nagpal reminded the audience that if we seek to build a better world, we owe it to our children to return it to them in a better shape – one that enables them to live, learn and thrive with dignity and purpose. He emphasised that institutions bear a moral responsibility to create environments that nurture not only academic excellence but also emotional safety, guidance and holistic development for future generations.

Addressing the gathering, the Director, IIT Bombay, Prof. Shireesh B. Kedare, highlighted that an educational institution’s role goes far beyond placement outcomes. He noted that students spend some of the most formative years of their lives on the campus, where learning extends well beyond academics to include personal growth, resilience, relationships, and self-discovery. He outlined several initiatives undertaken by IIT Bombay to address student stress and promote well-being, including the recent establishment of the Flourishing Hub under the Student Wellness Centre. He also emphasised the influence of family expectations on student stress and highlighted the institution’s efforts to engage parents through sensitisation sessions, recognising parents as key stakeholders in the student wellbeing ecosystem.



Inaugural speech by Prof. Shireesh B. Keda

Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur, Director, IIT Jammu, addressed the conclave on institutional approaches to cultivating wellbeing, emphasising leadership responsibility, campus culture, and sustained commitment to creating environments where students can thrive emotionally, socially, and academically.

The Inaugural Session was further enriched by an address from Dr. Vineet Joshi, Secretary (Higher Education), Ministry of Education, Government of India, who joined the conclave as the Chief Guest. In his address, Dr. Joshi emphasised the need to integrate India's age-old wisdom traditions with contemporary educational and wellbeing practices. Drawing upon the Indian knowledge system, he reflected on the progression from *Annamaya Kosha* to *Anandamaya Kosha*, highlighting wellbeing as a layered and holistic human experience. He underscored that educational institutions must create environments where students feel safe, heard, and supported – spaces that allow for open dialogue, peer connection, and emotional expression.

Dr. Joshi further referred to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which advocates a holistic, multidisciplinary approach to education, placing equal emphasis on cognitive development, emotional well-being, life skills, and character-building. He noted that higher education institutions must equip students to navigate diverse life stressors and underscored the influential role of teachers, stating that faculty interactions and language can have a lasting impact on students' mental and emotional health.

The Inaugural Session concluded with a Vote of Thanks delivered by Smt. Rina Sonowal Kouli, who expressed appreciation to all faculty members, students, experts and institutional representatives for their active participation. She acknowledged the efforts of the organising team and extended special thanks to those involved in compiling the *Emerging Practices of Wellbeing* compendium.

Smt. Kohli encouraged participants to continue engaging as learners and collaborators, sharing insights and best practices across institutions. She also expressed the hope that the National Wellbeing Conclave would continue as an **annual national platform**, fostering sustained dialogue and collective action toward advancing wellbeing in Indian higher education.



Release of the compendium for the 2nd National Wellbeing Conclave by Hon'ble, Joint Secretary, Department of Higher Education, MoE, Smt. Rina Sonowal Kouli (3rd R-L), Prof. Shireesh B. Kedare (4th L-R), Dr. Jitendra Nagpal (2nd L-R), Prof. Deepak Marla(1st R-L).

Exhibition of Emerging Wellbeing Practices

A major highlight of the Conclave was the Exhibition of Emerging Wellbeing Practices, where 43 higher education institutions established interactive stalls showcasing their initiatives, programmes, and innovations in student wellbeing. The exhibition provided a vibrant, dynamic platform for cross-institutional learning, enabling faculty, administrators, and students to understand how well-being is being implemented across diverse campuses in India. Each institution presented posters, case studies, implementation models, and high-engagement visual documentation—including photographs from events, workshops, peer-led activities, and community-building programmes—illustrating both the scale and the emotional impact of their work.

The stalls brought to life a wide array of initiatives ranging from counselling innovations, peer-support frameworks, mentoring systems, and preventive wellbeing programmes to yoga, meditation, and creative student-led activities, with dedicated stalls showcasing art therapy, pet therapy, and interventions by Mind Gym and Manashakti. Many institutions displayed interactive elements, such as wellbeing games, reflective activities, quick stress-relief tasks, and demo modules of their life-skills programmes. These features drew strong participation from visiting students and faculty, creating a lively space for dialogue, curiosity, and experiential understanding of wellbeing concepts.

The exhibition served not only as a showcase but also as a national knowledge-exchange forum. Visitors engaged directly with institutional teams, asked questions, discussed challenges, and explored possibilities for adapting or scaling effective approaches in their own campuses. Several institutions expressed that the exhibition format helped them articulate their wellbeing philosophy more clearly and provided inspiration for future programming.

By bringing together varied institutional practices in one space, the exhibition contributed significantly to the Conclave's objective of building a shared national ecosystem of wellbeing. It demonstrated the creativity, commitment, and diversity of wellbeing efforts already underway across India and encouraged institutions to move toward evidence-based, collaborative, and student-centred wellbeing models.





Glimpse of Exhibition stalls

At the outset of the Symposium I on “The Future of Wellbeing in Indian Higher Education” during the 2nd National Wellbeing Conclave, Ms. Rina Sonowal Kouli, Joint Secretary, MoE warmly welcomed all participants and resource persons. In her opening remarks, she outlined the objective of the conclave as creating a national platform for dialogue, reflection, and action on student wellbeing in higher education institutions, in light of the growing mental health challenges faced by young people. She highlighted that the transition to higher education is a critical phase in students’ lives and stressed that campuses must actively foster a sense of belonging, community, and care. Drawing attention to the strong policy and judicial emphasis on mental health, she drew attention to the National Education Policy 2020, the National Suicide Prevention Strategy, UGC and Ministry of Education guidelines, recent budgetary support for Tele-MANAS, and the Economic Survey of India (2023–24 and 2024–25), which underscores the link between good mental health practices, youth wellbeing, and a robust national economy. She also noted the Supreme Court’s interventions, including the constitution of a National Task Force and landmark guidelines for HEIs, and concluded by setting the tone for deliberations, urging stakeholders to adopt a whole-institution, inclusive, preventive, and student-centric approach to building safe, supportive, and stigma-free campuses where every student can thrive.

Symposium I: The Future of Wellbeing in Indian Higher Education

Moderator:

Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Director, Institute of Mental Health & Life Skills Promotion, Expressions India, New Delhi

Panelists:

Dr. Rajendra Barve, Visiting Consultant Psychiatrist, IIT Bombay

Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur, Director, IIT Jammu

Dr. Meera Padhy, Associate Professor, Centre for Psychology, University of Hyderabad



Symposium I : (R- L) Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Dr. Rajendra Barve, Smt. Rina Sonowal Kouli, Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur and Dr. Meera Padhy

Session Discussion

Symposium I focused on repositioning student wellbeing as a foundational element of higher education, integrating cultural wisdom, clinical evidence, and institutional practice. Moderated by Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, the session brought together diverse perspectives to explore how universities can develop structured, preventive, and compassionate wellbeing ecosystems rather than relying on episodic or crisis-driven responses.

Dr. Rajendra Barve grounded his presentation in Indian philosophical thought, drawing from the *Taittirīya Upanishad* to describe the ideal youthful mind as energetic, socially skilled, resilient, emotionally intelligent, and purpose-oriented. He distinguished clearly between *mental health*—which focuses on alleviating distress and illness—and *mental wellbeing*, which enables growth, meaning, fulfilment, and resilience. Citing national and global data, he emphasised that mental health disorders affect approximately one in eight people in India, and that the 18–25 age group represents the most critical window for the onset of anxiety, mood disorders, attention-related challenges, and suicidality. He highlighted that universities are therefore positioned “at the epicentre of both risk and opportunity.” Dr. Barve stressed that mental well-being cannot be outsourced to counsellors alone; rather, families, faculty members, peers, and institutional culture all function as critical stakeholders in shaping student resilience and emotional safety. He further cautioned against pathologising normal distress, advocating instead for environments that actively cultivate strengths, belonging, purpose, and positive engagement.

Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur presented institutional learnings and implementation outcomes from IIT Jammu, building upon insights from the first National Wellbeing Conclave. Through detailed case studies, he illustrated how the absence of early screening, limited counselling capacity, and delayed intervention can lead to academic decline and behavioural escalation. He explained how IIT Jammu responded by introducing mandatory psychometric assessments for all incoming students, structured mental health capacity building for academic and non-academic staff, and regular hostel-based outreach to increase accessibility and trust. He highlighted the necessity of professional counsellors as core campus resources and cautioned against placing counselling responsibilities solely on faculty members. A notable intervention described was the introduction of parent-oriented wellbeing sessions, acknowledging the critical role families play in either amplifying or alleviating student stress. These measures, he reported, enabled earlier identification of red flags, improved continuity of care, and better student outcomes.

Dr. Meera Padhy expanded the discourse by presenting a strength-based and resilience-oriented model for universities, arguing that well-being must be embedded across curricula, faculty development, governance structures, and campus culture. She emphasised moving away from deficit-focused evaluations towards recognising student strengths, fostering psychological safety, and integrating wellbeing into academic life. Dr. Padhy highlighted the role of Indian Knowledge Systems, mindfulness practices, and meaning-centred education, and stressed that faculty wellbeing and compassionate leadership are essential enablers of healthy student ecosystems. She positioned wellbeing not as an add-on, but as a measurable institutional outcome supported by physical, digital, human, and policy infrastructure.

Key Takeaways and Action Points

- **Early intervention saves lives:**
The symposium emphasised that the university years fall within a critical developmental window where early recognition of emotional distress can prevent long-term psychological harm. Timely Psychological First Aid, peer support, and swift referral pathways were highlighted as essential safeguards against escalation into severe mental health crises.
- **Well-being defines the purpose of higher education:**
Higher education institutions were positioned as formative life spaces, not merely credentialing centres. Universities shape identity, values, resilience, and emotional maturity, making student wellbeing a fundamental educational outcome rather than a peripheral responsibility.
- **Mental well-being is more than the absence of illness:**
The discussion clarified that well-being includes the ability to experience meaning, joy, purpose, and inner stability. Institutions must actively cultivate emotional intelligence and positive mental states, not only respond to diagnosable disorders.
- **Cultural grounding strengthens wellbeing frameworks:**
Indian knowledge systems and philosophical traditions were recognised as valuable, contextually relevant foundations for framing wellbeing education in Indian campuses.



The felicitation of the moderator and panellists by the Joint Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Union Ministry of Education, Smt. Rina Sonowal Kouli.

Panel Discussion I: Thriving Minds – From Academic Growth to Lifelong Wellbeing

Moderator:

Ms. Vishakha Punjani, Clinical Psychologist and Head, Department of Clinical Psychology and Counselling, Department of Psychiatry, LTMGH, Mumbai

Panelists:

Dr. Girija Mahale, Head, Symbiosis Centre for Emotional Wellbeing, Symbiosis International University, Pune

Prof. Deepak Marla, Vice-Chairperson, Student Wellness Centre, IIT Bombay

Dr. Abhijit Deshpande, International Institute of Sleep Science, Mumbai

Dr. Zubeda Tumbi, Healthwatch Nutrition Clinic, Mumbai



Panel Discussion I: (R-L) Ms. Vishakha Punjani, Dr. Girija Mahale, Dr. Abhijit Deshpande, Prof. Deepak Marla, and Dr. Zubeda Tumbi

Session Discussion

This panel explored wellbeing as a continuum extending from timely crisis response to sustained lifestyle practices, underscoring that academic success cannot be separated from emotional health. Moderated by Ms. Vishakha Punjani, the discussion brought together perspectives on clinical intervention, institutional frameworks, and the biological underpinnings of mental well-being

Dr. Girija Mahale anchored the discussion through powerful case studies demonstrating how early identification, peer-led intervention, counselling, and institutional coordination can prevent suicidal risk and enable recovery even in severe mental health conditions such as

Bipolar I disorder. The cases highlighted the value of Psychological First Aid, confidentiality, parental psychoeducation, and advocacy with academic authorities to ensure reintegration without stigma.

Building on institutional prevention, Prof. Deepak Marla detailed IIT Bombay's Flourishing Hub, through which wellbeing has been systematically introduced into the first-year academic curriculum and mentor systems. He described the Wellness Course and Mentor Training Programme as scalable preventive frameworks designed to equip students with skills in self-awareness, emotional regulation, growth mindset and help-seeking behaviour. Marking a significant shift from reactive mental health support to proactive, curriculum-integrated wellbeing education, the initiative has, for the first time, embedded structured wellbeing learning into the first-year curriculum through the NOCS01 Wellness Course, reaching 1,397 first-year students across 135 workshops, alongside 76 mentor training workshops.

During the panel discussion, Dr. Abhijit underscored sleep as a fundamental pillar of holistic wellbeing, linking both wellness and illness and emphasising that good physical health, emotional regulation and long-term productivity are deeply dependent on adequate sleep. He highlighted that sleep disorders are highly prevalent yet significantly underdiagnosed, noting that there are over 84 identified sleep disorders, many of which occur unnoticed during sleep but are largely treatable. He pointed out that nearly 70% of India's population is sleep-deprived, a condition closely associated with cardiovascular disease and reduced emotional quotient. Dr. Abhijit also reframed sleep as an active state of consciousness, essential for information processing, memory consolidation and emotional balance, and stressed that with nearly one-third of human life spent asleep, sleep is a non-negotiable component of overall wellbeing.

During the panel discussion, Dr. Zubeda highlighted the strong link between lifestyle, nutrition and mental health, noting that conditions such as anxiety, depression and other mental illnesses are influenced not only by psychological factors but significantly by daily habits and dietary patterns. She explained that sedentary lifestyles and diets high in polished carbohydrates lead to glucose spikes, fat deposition around internal organs and metabolic imbalance, all of which adversely affect mental wellbeing. Dr. Zubeda emphasised that excessive intake of saturated and trans fats impacts the gut-brain barrier and hormonal regulation, thereby influencing mood, cognition and emotional stability. She also cautioned that caffeine consumption, particularly in sensitive individuals, can disrupt sleep and exacerbate anxiety. Highlighting preventive nutrition, she recommended diets rich in whole grains, pulses, sprouts, nuts and a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables, underscoring that nutrient diversity supports brain health, emotional regulation and overall wellbeing..

Key Takeaways and Action Points

- Wellbeing must be addressed across the full spectrum:
The panel demonstrated that thriving campuses require both crisis-response mechanisms (counselling, Psychological First Aid, referrals) and preventive systems (curriculum integration, lifestyle education).

- Curriculum-embedded wellbeing enables scale:
Embedding wellbeing education into academic curricula, as demonstrated by IIT Bombay's Flourishing Hub, allows institutions to move from selective support to population-level prevention, equipping all students with life skills.
- Peer and mentor systems are critical access points:
Trained mentors and mental-health ambassadors are often the first point of contact during distress, especially in residential settings and night-time crises.
- Nutrition and sleep are mental health foundations:
Diet quality and sleep hygiene have a direct impact on mood, attention, memory, stress tolerance, and academic performance. Institutions must include nutrition literacy, conscious eating, and sleep education within wellbeing frameworks.
- Lifestyle disorders impact academic outcomes:
Sleep deprivation, emotional eating, and metabolic dysregulation contribute to absenteeism, burnout, reduced productivity, and higher attrition, linking well-being directly to institutional outcomes.
- Awareness precedes behaviour change:
The panel emphasised that sustainable habit change – whether in sleep, diet, or emotional regulation – begins with self-awareness, supported by structured education



The felicitation of the moderator and panellists by Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Director, Institute of Mental Health & Life Skills Promotion, Expressions India

Panel Discussion II: Policy Frameworks for Wellbeing – From National Guidelines to Campus Implementation

Moderator:

Dr. Sunita Siwach, Joint Secretary, University Grants Commission (UGC)

Panelists:

Prof. Nikhil Mehta, Organisational Behaviour & Human Resource Management, IIM Mumbai

Prof. Rekha Santhanam, Chairperson, Student Wellness Centre, IIT Bombay

Dr. Vikas Choudhary, Professor and Head, Centre of Excellence for Holistic Personality Development, NIT Kurukshetra

Prof. Santanu Misra, IIT Kanpur



Panel Discussion II : (R-L) Dr. Sunita Siwach, Prof. Nikhil Mehta, Dr. Vikas Choudhary, Prof. Santanu Misra, and Prof. Rekha Santhanam

Session Discussion

Moderated by Dr. Sunita Siwach, the panel offered a critical discussion on translating the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 into actionable institutional strategies. It examined how higher education institutions can build holistic, sustainable and responsive wellbeing ecosystems by aligning governance, curriculum and student support systems with national policy intent.

Prof. Nikhil K. Mehta set the conceptual foundation by highlighting that Indian education has historically prioritised subject content and cognitive outcomes while paying insufficient

attention to learning processes and emotional development. Referencing NEP 2020, he emphasised that education must develop social, ethical, and emotional capacities alongside literacy, numeracy, and higher-order thinking. He underscored that unprocessed emotions, emotional suppression, and lack of reflective spaces contribute significantly to student stress, disengagement, and burnout. He argued for a shift from content-heavy delivery to learner-centred, participatory approaches that strengthen emotional intelligence (EQ) and self-awareness.

During the panel discussion, Prof. Rekha emphasised that students often hesitate to seek help due to apathy and stigma surrounding mental health, making awareness and familiarity crucial. She explained that at the Student Wellness Centre (SWC), awareness is built through talks, workshops and training programmes, but the deeper challenge is enabling students to look inward and feel connected to support systems. She highlighted the importance of introducing mental health through engaging, informal and “fun” activities, which help normalise wellbeing conversations and make students more comfortable reaching out. Drawing on continuous feedback and student interactions, she noted that SWC initiated Peer Connect programmes for PhD, undergraduate and postgraduate students, providing moderated spaces for open sharing. Prof. Rekha also underlined the use of social media to reach students in familiar formats and described IIT Bombay’s comprehensive support network, including counselling services at the centre, in hostels and online, alongside mentor systems, gender cell support and local guardian mechanisms, all aimed at creating accessible and stigma-free pathways to care.

Dr. Vikas Choudhary offered a comprehensive policy-aligned framework for Holistic Personality Development, deeply anchored in NEP 2020. He emphasised that high-quality education is inseparable from student wellness, ethical grounding, and psychosocial stability. Dr. Choudhary outlined a multidimensional model encompassing Physical Quotient (PQ), Intellectual Quotient (IQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), Social Quotient (SQ), and Spiritual Quotient (Spiritual Intelligence). Drawing from institutional practices at NIT Kurukshetra, he showcased how well-being has been institutionalised through credit-based value-added courses, including NCC, NSS, Yoga, and Sports within the B.Tech curriculum. He highlighted the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for Holistic Personality Development (CHPD) and Thought Labs, along with residential workshops on mental wellbeing, as mechanisms that stitch wellbeing into formal academic and co-curricular structures. He concluded by reiterating that holistic development enables students to find identity, purpose, and meaning through connection with community, nature, and humanitarian values.

Prof. Santanu Misra focused on the operational and safety-critical dimensions of wellbeing implementation, particularly the role of faculty and administrators. He emphasised that engaging today’s students—especially Gen Z—requires understanding how they think, communicate, and experience distress. He outlined clear risk categories that faculty should be trained to recognise, including self-harm and suicidal ideation, risk of violence, severe psychological breakdown, substance-related crises, and disclosures of trauma or abuse. Prof. Misra stressed that faculty must neither minimise distress nor attempt diagnosis, counselling, or moral instruction. Drawing from his PPT, he clearly articulated do’s and don’ts for faculty

response, including staying calm, ensuring safety, moving students to quiet spaces, documenting facts, and activating counsellors or emergency systems when required. He strongly cautioned against handling violent or high-risk situations alone, emphasising institutional protocols, teamwork, and professional escalation.

Key Takeaways and Action Points

- Policy intent must translate into institutional architecture:
NEP 2020's vision of holistic education requires universities to redesign curricula, governance structures, and student-support systems, ensuring well-being is embedded rather than optional.
- Holistic personality development is central to quality education:
Institutions must address Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Social, and Spiritual dimensions together to create balanced, resilient learners capable of navigating academic and life challenges.
- Value-based, credit-linked courses enable scale:
Credit-based integration of NCC, NSS, Yoga, Sports, and wellbeing-focused courses ensures universal reach and long-term sustainability.
- Centres of Excellence and dedicated wellbeing infrastructure matter:
Institutional mechanisms such as CHPDs, Thought Labs, and structured residential programmes strengthen policy implementation beyond ad-hoc activities.
- Faculty preparedness is non-negotiable:
Faculty must be trained not as counsellors, but as early identifiers and safe responders, with clarity on boundaries, risk categories, and escalation pathways.
- Emotional intelligence drives engagement and retention:
Shifting from content-heavy to process-driven pedagogy enhances learner involvement, reduces stress, and aligns education with real-world emotional demands.



The felicitation of the moderator and panellists by Devendra kumar Sharma

Symposium II: Early Identification and Intervention of Psychosocial Concerns

Moderator:

Dr. Avinash DeSousa, Psychiatrist, HN Reliance Hospital

Panelists:

Dr. Jyoti Sangle, Visiting Consultant Psychiatrist, IIT Bombay
Ms. Heta Shah, Clinical Psychologist and Joint Founder, Astitva Mental Health Clinic, Mumbai

Dr. Chetna Duggal, Associate Professor, School of Human Ecology, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)



Symposium II: (R-L) Dr. Avinash DeSousa, Dr. Chetna Duggal, Dr. Jyoti Sangle and Ms. Heta Shah

Session Discussion

Symposium II, moderated by Dr. Avinash DeSousa, examined how campuses can build robust systems for early identification of psychosocial concerns, timely and ethical intervention, and long-term support. The discussion underscored the role of clinical expertise, inclusive institutional processes, and shared accountability in creating safe and responsive wellbeing environments.

Dr. Jyoti Sangle, drawing from over two decades of experience as a Consultant Psychiatrist at IIT Bombay, highlighted that the most commonly observed mental health conditions among students include anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, academic stress-related concerns, and adjustment difficulties, with PhD scholars forming a significant proportion of help-seekers. She emphasised that universities require dedicated, accessible psychiatry teams on campus working closely with counsellors to enable timely diagnosis, medication management

when needed, and continuity of care. Dr. Sangle underlined the importance of faculty sensitisation and multi-tier referral systems, noting that psychiatrists in academic settings must contribute not only through clinical care but also by guiding prevention strategies, crisis protocols, and institutional preparedness.

Dr. Chetna Duggal deepened the discussion by stressing that early identification must be followed by ethical, student-centred intervention, grounded in dignity and autonomy. She emphasised that campuses should be viewed as psychologically safe ecosystems where students feel supported rather than controlled. Drawing from research and practice in human ecology and education systems, she highlighted how institutional power imbalances, fear of disciplinary consequences, and overly paternalistic responses often deter students from seeking help. She pointed to the role of clear campus policies—including anti-ragging measures, grievance redressal mechanisms, and inclusive academic practices—in creating an enabling environment. Dr. Duggal stressed that intervention strategies must respect student choice, avoid coercive monitoring, and focus on empowerment rather than surveillance, especially for students experiencing psychosocial vulnerability.

Ms. Heta Shah focused on the early identification of Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) and neurodevelopmental conditions within higher education. She emphasised that many students with SLD enter universities undiagnosed, often mislabelled as disengaged or underperforming. Drawing from her clinical practice, she outlined academic and behavioural indicators that faculty can observe, such as persistent difficulties despite effort, inconsistent performance, avoidance behaviours, and heightened anxiety around assessments. Ms. Shah highlighted the importance of faculty awareness, non-judgmental inquiry, and structured referral pathways to psychological assessment. She underscored that timely identification enables appropriate academic accommodations, reduces secondary emotional distress, and supports equitable learning outcomes for neurodivergent students.

Key Takeaways and Action Points

- Early identification must lead to ethical intervention:
Screening and recognition are meaningful only when followed by respectful, student-centred care that preserves autonomy and dignity.
- Dedicated psychiatry and counselling teams are essential:
On-campus clinical teams enable appropriate diagnosis, coordinated care, and reduce delays associated with external referrals.
- Faculty sensitisation strengthens detection and support:
Faculty trained to recognise warning signs, academic distress patterns and learning differences can facilitate early, appropriate referrals without overstepping professional boundaries.
- Campuses must be psychologically safe spaces:
Trust-building policies, transparent grievance systems, and stigma-free support environments encourage students to seek help early.

- Neurodiversity inclusion is critical to wellbeing:
Early identification of learning disorders prevents academic marginalisation, reduces emotional distress, and supports equity in higher education.
- Institutional responses must avoid coercion:
Interventions should empower students rather than control them, balancing safety with consent, choice, and self-determination.



The felicitation of the moderator and panellists by Dr. Arvind Meshram

Panel Discussion III: Collaborative Frameworks for Holistic Wellbeing Ecosystems

Moderator:

Prof. Santabrata Das, IIT Guwahati

Panelists:

Ms. Ila Sinha, Head, Counselling Life Skills and Mental Health, ODM Group of Education Institutions, Bhubaneswar

Dr. Sucheta Dandekar, Professor, Era's Lucknow Medical College

Dr. Nivedita Shreyans, Heartfulness Institute and Director, PR Pillai Group

Dr. Shailender Swaminathan, Director, Sapien Labs - Centre for Human Brains, Krea University, Chennai



Panel discussion III: (R-L) Prof. Santabrata Das, Ms. Ila Sinha, Dr. Nivedita Shreyans, Dr. Shailender Swaminathan and Dr. Sucheta Dandekar

Session Discussion

Under the moderation of Prof. Santabrata Das, Panel Discussion III addressed the importance of building holistic wellbeing ecosystems through collaboration at individual, institutional, community, and policy levels. The session underscored that sustainable wellbeing requires integrated, coordinated approaches rather than isolated or ad-hoc initiatives.

Ms. Ila Sinha presented a neuroscience-aligned framework for designing university wellbeing architecture using Polyvagal Theory. She explained the role of the ventral vagal nerve as a biological regulator of calm, safety, and social engagement, emphasising that students learn best when their nervous systems are in a “safe and social” state. Drawing from her PPT, she

highlighted how campus structures—such as predictable schedules, safe spaces, peer regulation, mindful communication, biophilic design, and reduced stress-amplifying academic practices—can either regulate or dysregulate student nervous systems. She argued that well-being must be treated as a structural priority, embedded in leadership, governance, academic planning, transitions, and prevention systems.

During the panel discussion, Dr. Nivedita Shreyans emphasised the central role of meditation and yoga in building holistic wellbeing, describing them as foundational, evidence-informed practices that are accessible to all. She highlighted that these practices are cost-free, scalable tools that individuals can use independently to regulate emotions, improve focus and build inner resilience. Dr. Shreyans noted that meditation supports mental clarity, emotional balance and self-awareness, while yoga integrates physical health with psychological and emotional stability. She underscored that in increasingly stressful academic environments, such practices help students develop the capacity to respond rather than react to challenges. Dr. Shreyans advocated for the institutional integration of meditation and yoga, not as optional add-ons but as essential wellbeing practices that can be embedded into campus routines to support long-term mental health, personal growth and inner stability.

During the panel discussion, Dr. Shailender Swaminathan highlighted the importance of understanding wellbeing through a systems and brain-health lens, emphasising that mental health outcomes are shaped by the cumulative impact of social environments, learning ecosystems and daily experiences. Drawing from large-scale brain and mental health research, he underscored that cognitive and emotional wellbeing cannot be addressed through isolated interventions alone, but require sustained attention to how institutional structures, digital exposure, social relationships and lifestyle patterns interact over time. He emphasised the need for institutions to adopt evidence-informed approaches to wellbeing, using data and research insights to identify risk patterns, design preventive strategies and monitor outcomes.

Dr. Sucheta Dandekar articulated that effective wellbeing cannot be achieved through isolated efforts and must instead be built through collaborative frameworks spanning the individual, institutional and community levels. She explained that while individual coping skills are important, they are insufficient unless supported by organisational policies, campus cultures and community ecosystems that prioritise psychological safety and care. Dr. Dandekar emphasised that institutions play a critical role in shaping environments that either exacerbate or buffer stress, and therefore must consciously design systems that support autonomy, dignity and help-seeking. She highlighted the need for coordinated action among educators, counsellors, administrators, families and external stakeholders to ensure continuity of care and shared responsibility. Concluding her remarks, she underscored that holistic wellbeing emerges when institutions move beyond reactive responses and foster ecosystems rooted in compassion, inclusion and collective ownership.

Key Takeaways and Action Points

- Wellbeing requires ecosystem thinking:
Sustainable wellbeing emerges from coordinated action across individual behaviour, institutional design, community support, and broader social systems.
- Meditation and yoga are scalable wellbeing tools:
As low-cost, evidence-based, and culturally rooted practices, meditation and yoga support emotional regulation, focus, and compassion, and should be integrated institutionally, not relegated to optional activities.
- Data must inform action:
Measuring student mental wellbeing and sharing meaningful feedback empowers both students and institutions to address root causes rather than symptoms.
- Environmental and lifestyle factors matter:
Sleep, nutrition, digital habits, and social connection significantly influence mental health and must be addressed within campus wellbeing strategies.

Faculty Workshop I: Enhancing Basic Counselling Skills for Faculty and Students

Speaker:

Ms. Natasha Mehta - Psychologist & Founder at Positive Therapy, SWC, IIM Mumbai, Wellness Instructor- IIT Bombay



Faculty Workshop I: Ms. Natasha Mehta

Workshop Summary

This workshop focused on strengthening faculty capacity to respond effectively to student emotional distress, recognising faculty members as critical first points of contact within the campus wellbeing ecosystem. The session highlighted the rising prevalence of mental health concerns among students, alongside the significant shortage of trained mental health professionals, underscoring the need for faculty sensitisation and preparedness.

The workshop emphasised that students experiencing distress often present indirect signals such as withdrawal, academic disengagement, irritability, absenteeism, or frequent help-seeking without articulation of emotional difficulty. Faculty were guided to recognise these early indicators without pathologising behaviour. Central to the workshop was the concept that listening itself is an intervention. Through experiential discussion, faculty explored the principles of active listening, empathy, authenticity, and non-judgment, framed as foundational counselling skills rather than clinical techniques.

Practical response frameworks such as G.R.A.C.E. (Give attention, Reflect, Acknowledge, Connect, Encourage help-seeking) and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) were introduced to help faculty respond calmly and ethically during moments of distress. Emphasis was placed on maintaining clear boundaries – faculty are not expected to diagnose, advise or counsel – but to provide emotional containment and facilitate timely referral. The workshop also addressed suicide prevention, helping faculty understand appropriate language, risk recognition, and referral protocols.

Overall, the session reinforced that faculty preparedness can significantly reduce escalation of distress, foster psychological safety, and strengthen help-seeking behaviour when integrated within institutional support systems.

Key Takeaways and Action Points

- Faculty are crucial early identifiers:
Changes in behaviour, communication, and academic engagement are often first visible to faculty members.
- Listening is the first line of intervention:
Empathetic, non-judgmental listening builds trust and reduces isolation during distress.
- Boundaries preserve ethical engagement:
Faculty must avoid diagnosis, advice-giving, or crisis handling beyond their role.
- Structured response frameworks increase confidence:
Tools such as G.R.A.C.E. and QPR support calm, consistent, and ethical responses.
- Language matters in moments of distress:
Respectful, non-alarming communication prevents escalation and preserves dignity.

- Referral systems must be activated early:
Timely connection with counsellors and mental health professionals is essential.
- Faculty training strengthens campus safety:
Prepared faculty contribute to early intervention and suicide prevention.

Faculty Workshop II: Role of Faculty in Promoting Digital Wellbeing Among Students

Speaker:

Mr. Bala Kishore Batchu- Vice President - Better Living, Searce Inc.



Faculty Workshop II: Mr. Bala Kishore Batchu

Workshop summary

During the workshop, Mr. Bala focused on the impact of digital overconsumption on attention, brain health and interpersonal functioning, emphasising that modern technology has shifted from being tool-based to addiction-based. He explained that excessive exposure to “digital calories” fragments attention, fuels constant comparison and leads to emotional distress. Attention, he noted, is the most critical human skill – what we pay attention to shapes our experience, energy and growth. Describing the brain as a powerful filter, he highlighted that attention is its gate, and that frequent notifications and task-switching impose a “brain switching penalty”, consuming additional cognitive energy and reducing depth of work. He

emphasised that the human brain cannot perform two cognitive tasks simultaneously and therefore requires undistracted spaces to function optimally.

Mr. Bala cautioned that the modern world has become an “attention-slicing machine,” with mobile applications designed to manipulate usage patterns, leading to withdrawal-like symptoms similar to substance addiction. He clarified the distinction between relaxation and stimulation, explaining that screens stimulate rather than relax the brain, and that a constantly stimulated brain becomes weak and stressed. He also referenced research indicating that excessive screen exposure reduces learning outcomes, noting that some countries, such as Sweden, have restricted educational technology use.

The session further addressed interpersonal wellbeing, emphasising acceptance of individual uniqueness as the foundation of non-judgmental awareness. Mr. Bala explained that when uniqueness is respected in teams, psychological safety increases, conversations improve, diverse ideas are welcomed and collaborative innovation is strengthened.

Key Takeaways and Action Points

- Attention is the foundation of learning, emotional balance and productivity; what we attend to shapes our experience and growth.
- Digital overconsumption and constant notifications fragment attention and increase cognitive fatigue through “brain switching penalties.”
- Modern technology is increasingly addiction-driven, creating dependency patterns similar to substance use and impacting mental health.
- Screen-based engagement stimulates rather than relaxes the brain; true relaxation requires slowing thoughts and reducing cognitive load.
- The human brain cannot multitask cognitively, making distraction-free environments essential for effective learning.
- Accepting individual uniqueness and practising non-judgmental awareness strengthen psychological safety, relationships and team collaboration.

Student Engagement and Participatory Learning Sessions

Design and Objectives

Student engagement formed a central pillar of the Conclave, with carefully designed participatory workshops aimed at experiential learning rather than passive listening. Students from participating institutions were divided into 10 mixed inter-institute groups, ensuring cross-campus interaction, diversity of perspectives, and ice-breaking beyond institutional silos.

The objective was to help students apply life skills – such as problem solving, self-awareness, empathy, resilience, decision-making, communication, collaboration, and negotiation – to real higher education and wellbeing contexts. Each group was given a choice of format and creative expression, reinforcing ownership, accountability, and collaborative learning.

Overview of Group Presentations

All ten groups delivered their presentations on Day 2, with each team given ten minutes, which included interaction with observer groups as well as inputs from facilitators. Presentation formats ranged from talk shows, debates, street plays, documentaries, dramatizations, and policy simulations to creative exhibitions, music-based expression, and analytical presentations.

Rather than focusing on performance, the sessions emphasised reflection, dialogue, and meaning-making, enabling students to articulate how life skills intersect with mental wellbeing, academic pressure, institutional systems, and future readiness.

Thematic Highlights from Student Presentations

Across diverse formats, students explored how unresolved stress, lack of emotional awareness, and rigid academic structures affect mental health. Several groups demonstrated that resilience is not an individual trait alone, but is shaped by supportive environments, empathetic relationships, and flexible systems within higher education.

Creative presentations – such as street plays, dramatizations, and music-based discussions – helped normalise emotional expression and highlighted the value of calm, connection, and self-acceptance in managing stress. Analytical formats like debates, policy simulation, and performance metrics pushed students to think critically about institutional responsibility, measurable well-being outcomes and governance-level change.

Presentations consistently underscored that academic excellence without life skills is incomplete, and that skills such as empathy, communication, negotiation, and critical thinking operate together in real-life situations rather than in isolation.

Learning Outcomes and Collective Student Insights

Across all groups, several shared insights emerged. Students recognised that life skills are inherent but require conscious sharpening through practice and reflection. They acknowledged that mental well-being is influenced by both individual habits and institutional culture, and called for integration of life skills into formal curricula, rather than reliance on optional or one-time workshops.

The mixed-group structure fostered peer learning, collaboration, and respect for diverse institutional contexts, reinforcing that well-being challenges are shared across campuses. Overall, the student sessions demonstrated that when students are engaged as co-creators rather than recipients, they generate practical, empathetic, and system-aware solutions for wellbeing in higher education.





Activities presented by the participating students

Way Forward: Strengthening Wellbeing in Indian Higher Education

1. Embedding Wellbeing into Institutional Vision and Governance

The Conclave highlighted that well-being must be positioned as a central pillar of institutional identity and long-term planning. Higher education institutions are encouraged to integrate wellbeing commitments into mission statements, governance charters, and strategic roadmaps. This requires leadership oversight, policy articulation, and resource planning that explicitly prioritise holistic student development. Elevating well-being to a governance-level mandate ensures that all institutional units—from academic departments to residential facilities—operate with a shared commitment to student flourishing as an essential dimension of educational excellence.

2. Designing Robust Wellbeing Infrastructure and Service Ecosystems

Beyond crisis response, institutions require a structured well-being infrastructure that includes counselling centres comprising full time counsellors [Mental Health Professionals – counselling psychologist/clinical psychologist/Psychiatrist/Psychiatrist Social Worker], clinical services, wellness hubs, and coordinated support pathways. Such infrastructure must be designed to ensure accessibility, continuity of care, and integration with academic and hostel systems. Institutions should invest in dedicated wellbeing units, digital support channels, and multi-tiered service models that allow students to receive the right level of support at the right time. This system-building approach strengthens institutional readiness and ensures that well-being is supported through stable, long-term mechanisms.

In all future deliberations / Capacity Building the members of the Wellbeing team (full time) of the HEIs needs to be included.

3. Enhancing Faculty Competence in Supportive Academic Environments

Faculty members shape the everyday climate of learning, belonging, and psychological safety. The Conclave reinforced that faculty training should focus on creating inclusive pedagogies, recognising academic patterns that indicate distress, and fostering classroom environments that support engagement and motivation. This requires structured professional development programmes that enhance faculty competencies in communication, empathy-based interactions, and academically supportive teaching practices. Clear guidelines on role boundaries further empower faculty to contribute effectively without assuming clinical responsibilities.

4. Integrating Life Skills and Wellbeing Literacy into Academic Pathways

Institutions are encouraged to embed wellbeing literacy—such as emotional intelligence, resilience, ethical reasoning, interpersonal skills, and meaning-making—within formal academic pathways. This may include credit-bearing courses, mentor-led modules, reflective learning assignments, and experiential workshops. Such educational integration equips

students with lifelong human skills that complement technical knowledge, enabling them to navigate academic pressures, interpersonal dynamics, career transitions, and personal challenges with confidence and clarity.

5. Establishing Ethical, Student-Centred Care Models

A distinct priority discussed at the Conclave was the need to design wellbeing systems that uphold student autonomy, confidentiality, and dignity. Ethical care models emphasise trauma-informed practices, consent-driven decision-making, and culturally responsive support tailored to diverse student groups. Institutions should adopt clear ethical guidelines that govern assessment, communication, and intervention, ensuring that students feel safe accessing help without fear of stigma or punitive consequences. This student-centred approach builds trust and fosters long-term engagement with wellbeing resources.

Modern wellbeing models in HEIs should integrate Indian Knowledge Systems like Upanishad's Pancha kosha (5 layers of personality) and guru-shishya principles with evidence-based practices.

6. Creating Emotionally Supportive Campus Environments

Well-being also depends on the broader emotional climate of campus life. Institutions must shape environments that promote belonging, reduce unnecessary academic stressors, encourage balanced digital practices, and support positive peer cultures. This includes rethinking assessment models, workload distribution, residence hall dynamics, and communication norms. By cultivating emotionally attuned ecosystems – where students feel seen, supported, and valued – institutions can meaningfully influence mental and emotional health outcomes.

7. Empowering Students as Partners and Co-Creators

The Conclave demonstrated the value of involving students not merely as beneficiaries but as active contributors to well-being governance. Institutions are encouraged to establish student advisory groups, peer-support networks, ambassador programmes, and participatory design platforms. Student partnerships enhance the relevance and credibility of wellbeing initiatives, promote shared responsibility, and strengthen social connectedness – an essential protective factor in mental health.

8. Advancing National Synergy and Shared Innovation

To maintain momentum, institutions must engage in sustained national collaboration through platforms for knowledge exchange, joint research, cross-campus learning, and shared evaluation frameworks. National exhibitions, compendiums, and annual conclaves should continue to serve as hubs for documenting emerging practices and shaping policy evolution. By contributing evidence, innovations, and outcome data, institutions strengthen a collective

national movement that accelerates wellbeing adoption across the higher-education landscape.

9. Conclusion: Toward Flourishing, Compassionate, Future-Ready Campuses

The Way Forward calls for coordinated action across governance, academic structures, campus environments, and student partnerships. The 2nd National Wellbeing Conclave 2025 marks a pivotal moment in India's educational landscape, signalling a deepened commitment to building institutions where intellectual growth and emotional well-being advance hand in hand. By embracing systemic, ethical, and inclusive wellbeing frameworks, Indian higher education can cultivate resilient, compassionate, and future-ready graduates who enrich society and contribute meaningfully to national progress.