



NEP 2020 AND THE PROMOTION OF NUTRITIONAL AWARENESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

The study aims to explore nutrition awareness among college students and assess the impact of incorporating nutrition education into the curriculum. The data in this paper is derived from secondary sources. The National Education Policy 2020 outlines a comprehensive approach to health education that integrates multiple dimensions of health and well – being. Several researchers have also described the policy as focused on physical development, nutrition, emotional, social and mental development. This study also describes the challenges in the field of nutrition education that may hinder the successful implementation of the policy. Although the National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes holistic and integrated education, there are still gaps in implementation of the policy that need to be addressed. The main gaps include budgetary problems, lack of adequate attention, shortage of teachers, training programs etc. which need to be addressed for the successful implementation of the policy. Focusing on including nutrition education as an independent subject in the curriculum in India will lead to a better education system. Addressing these issues and using them in the right areas can lead to building a strong system to all.

Key Words: NEP 2020, Awareness, College Students

Introduction

Education and health are interrelated and together they create a prosperous Society. Through education, the society gets better information about health which people of the society can adopt in their lifestyle. Nutrition is a significant topic in India's young population, which includes people aged 15 to 29, making up a significant portion of the Indian population. There are many reasons for malnutrition among youth, such as poverty, inadequate nutrition etc. Nutrition is a crucial factor for the health of young people. Therefore, the government and everyone should make efforts to improve the nutritional level of all youth which includes awareness, proper health services, ensuring availability of nutritious food. Nutrition has been included as an important aspect of education in the NEP 2020. Nutrition, health and development are integrated in to education for children aged 0 to 6 through ECCE. Through NEP 2020, a better nutritional environment is being created in schools, which includes ensuring the availability of nutritious food through mid- day- meals. NEP 2020 recognizes nutrition education as a



subject to raise awareness among youth about the importance of nutrition and overall, well-being. through the policy, students will gain knowledge about nutrition, healthy eating habits and other essential skills to lead effective lives.

Objectives of the Study: -

1. To explore nutritional awareness among college Students.
2. How effective has the emphasis on nutrition and health been under NEP 2020.
3. How effective will it be to incorporate nutrition education in to the curriculum.

Conceptual framework –

Nutrition awareness is about developing an understanding of a balanced and correct diet and knowing what, how much and when each person should eat so that the human body can get all the essential elements like protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals.

Importance

1. Nutrition awareness is essential to keep the body healthy and active.
2. Malnutrition can reduce through nutrition awareness.
3. Prevents lifestyle related problems like – obesity, diabetes etc.
4. Nutrition awareness helps in physical development.
5. Nutrition awareness is essential for women’s health.

Nutrition awareness plays an important role in student life for physical development, mental development, prevention of diseases, discipline, concentration in studies, memory power and becoming a healthy citizen.

Role of Policies in Nutrition Awareness

- Education policies aim for holistic education that balances physical, mental and social development.
- These policies create healthy lifestyle among students through nutrition education.
- These policies identify problems like malnutrition.
- Under the policy, nutritious food is provided through mid-day meal, which is a practical form of nutrition education.
- It enables students to lead a responsible lifestyle.
- Under the policy, through nutrition education, students become responsible citizens and the nation develops.

NEP 2020: A Health and Wellness Perspective

The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes on the physical, mental, social and moral development of students and considers health and well-being as an important part of education so that every student can become a healthy and responsible citizen. The main objective of the National Education Policy is to ensure all round development of the students. It includes the body, mind, intellect and conduct of the students and their basis is health and well-being. Therefore, it has been included at every level of education for



this purpose. Right from the school level health education, yoga, exercise, nutrition, environmental awareness has been made an important part of the curriculum so that it proves useful for the students throughout their life.

The National Education Policy 2020 suggests establishing wellness centers in schools and colleges to address stress and anxiety among students. Teachers also play an important role in promoting nutrition and health awareness. Teachers are trained to identify students with stress, anxiety, malnutrition and provide positive guidance.

Role of Educational Institutions in nutrition awareness

Educational institutions play a vital role in spreading nutrition awareness, providing students with accurate information about a healthy lifestyle. Complete information on nutrition is provided by incorporating subjects like Home Science, Health Education, Physical Education, Environmental Studies in the curriculum. Nutrition experts regularly organize seminars, workshops, webinar etc. to enhance student's practical knowledge. Awareness can be spread through NCC and NSS programs.

Discussions, poster competitions, quiz can be organized on this topic by running health and nutrition club. Periodic medical checkups provide health information and suggestions. Counseling for mental health is provided at the college level for stress management and life style improvement. Health education can also be spread in society through nutrition awareness campaigns.

Challenges

- Nutrition education is not taken seriously as a subject at the college level.
- There is a significant difference between the policy suggestions and the ground reality.
- Teachers and educational institutions have a limited role in nutrition education and awareness.
- Community programs that are nutrition related are rarely offered at the college level. College administration also does not provide adequate budget and priority for such programs.
- Dietitian, counselors and trainers are not appointed in higher educational institutions.

Suggestions

- Health club should be opened in Higher Educational Institutions.
- Nutrition should be taken seriously as a subject.
- Workshops, seminars should be organized in the higher educational Institutions.
- A dietician or counselor should be appointed so that counselling can be provided from time to time.
- The role of teachers should be enhanced.
- Awareness programs should be conducted to spread community awareness.



- Medical camps should be organized and health and wellness information should be provided.

Conclusion

Nutrition education is crucial for the holistic development of youth. India's National Education Policy 2020 facilitates the development and well – being of children through nutrition education. Although students were aware of healthy lifestyles, their knowledge was still insufficient. They lacked sufficient knowledge about many facts. The National Education Policy 2020 plays a vital role in raising health and nutrition awareness among youth. Furthermore, the challenges in the areas of nutrition and well – being also require adequate attention to achieve the National Education Policy 2020's goal of holistic development. For this, nutrition education should be included in the curriculum as a separate subject in higher education and youth should be encouraged to participate in this field.

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