Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Students and Teachers in Telangana Social (TSWREIS) and Tribal Welfare (TTWREIS) Schools:
A Need Assessment Report

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF GRAPHS

ACRONYMS

TTWREIS – Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential Education Institutions Society

TSWREIS – Telangana Social Welfare Residential Education Institutions Society

TTW – Telangana Tribal Welfare

TSW – Tribal Social Welfare

SEW – Social Emotional Wellbeing

UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Education Fund

WHO – World Health Organisation

OECD – Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development

TSWRS – Telangana Social Welfare Residential Schools

TTWRS – Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential Schools

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education helps every person to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, enjoy learning without fear and feel valued and included irrespective of where they come from. The Telangana government strongly believes that education is the strongest weapon with which the lives of marginalised children can be transformed by providing a congenial atmosphere to excel academically and develop into ethically strong and morally elevated individuals. Children from marginalised sections of society live in rural and remote areas, lack access to health and education facilities, infrastructure and technology, and are vulnerable to abuse, violence, and crime (Narain. J.P 2019). This can affect their wellbeing and lead to a wide range of negative outcomes. Schools play an important role in children's wellbeing and academic success.

The purpose of this study is to assess the wellbeing (social, emotional, and personal) of the students at TSWREIS and TTWREIS schools. As teachers play a very important role in the wellbeing of students, the study tries to understand the wellbeing (social and emotional) of teachers teaching at TSWREIS and TTWREIS. The study is quantitative in nature and uses a cross-sectional survey design to assess the wellbeing of students. The study involved 1000 students studying in 7th and 8th grade from 10 schools (TTW and TSW schools).

The study's key findings show that more than 50% of the students had low or emerging wellbeing status in all dimensions (social, emotional, personal, social support and resilience), which indicated wellbeing risk among students. Female students had a better overall wellbeing score when compared to male students. The study results indicate 59.1% of teachers had low or medium wellbeing scores, which highlights the wellbeing risk among teachers. Effective classroom management strategies, teacher-student relationships and inclusive practices in the classroom were some of the factors that needed to be strengthened.

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations to enhance the wellbeing of students: introducing life skills programs in schools; building the capacity of teachers; integrating life skills-based approaches in classrooms and creating a safe and supportive learning environment. Through life skills, students learn and practice skills such as listening attentively, following directions, managing emotions, and cooperating with peers, which help them contribute positively to their classroom environment and thrive (Bailey et al., 2014, p. 20). The survey recommends the use of positive teacher-student relationships, effective classroom management strategies and inclusive practices by teachers to create a learning environment that makes every child feel socially, emotionally and physically safe and prepares them for life.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Education is the key to all-round human development. The nation's educational development is measured by the progress made by its citizens in the economic, social and cultural spheres. Quality education is a fundamental right of every child. Education helps every person to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, enjoy learning without fear and feel valued and included irrespective of where they come from (www.unicef.org/India). There is a widespread disparity in socio-economic parameters in a country like India, with a rich diversity of cultures, religions, and languages. Education, which is the most effective instrument of development, has the potential to uplift the marginalised, and the disadvantaged and facilitate their being on par with the rest of the citizens.

The Telangana government strongly believes that education is the strongest weapon with which the lives of marginalised children can be transformed by providing a congenial atmosphere to excel academically and develop into ethically strong and morally elevated individuals. The government believes that providing quality education to children can empower the child to use their own academic, physical, mental, spiritual and emotional potential and channel it for the welfare of the individual and society. Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential Education Institutions Society (TTWREIS) and Telangana Social Welfare Education Institutions Society (TSWREIS) work with this motto and are successful in their mission. The TSWREIS, under the patronage of the Ministry of Welfare, has been passionately rendering its services for the past 35 years to improve the standards of life of the scheduled caste students. The society has 268 institutions sheltering around 1,50,000 students (www.tswreis.ac.in). The TTWREIS, under the aegis of the Ministry of Tribal Welfare, Government of Telangana, has 160 residential institutions (telangana.gov.in). Both these educational institutions have been providing quality and sustainable education in the English medium up to graduation.

Children from marginalised sections of society live in rural and remote areas, lack access to health and education facilities, infrastructure, and technology, and are vulnerable to abuse, violence, and crime (Narain. J.P 2019). This can affect their wellbeing and lead to a wide range of negative outcomes. Schools play an important role in children's wellbeing and academic success. The life skills, knowledge, and behaviours that a young person learns in a classroom help them to manage their physical, social, emotional, and mental health throughout their life. For this, schools should support the overall development of children in addition to the enhancement of their academic and intellectual abilities, which at present seems inadequate and may affect their wellbeing. Developing a sense of wellbeing in students is difficult when the teachers, who play a very important role in a student's life, do not have a positive sense of wellbeing. Therefore, the wellbeing of teachers, as well as students, is of paramount importance.

Wellbeing is an important determinant for the positive development of a person, which enables him to achieve positive outcomes in school, work, and life (OECD, 2018). In recent years, the concept of wellbeing has grown and has extended to many areas of life. There are numerous definitions of wellbeing that are used interchangeably. The Programme for International Study Assessment (2015) defines

wellbeing as "a dynamic state characterised by students experiencing the ability and opportunity to fulfil their personal and social goals. It encompasses multiple dimensions of students' lives, including cognitive, psychological, physical, social and material. It can be measured through subjective and objective indicators of competencies, perceptions, expectations and life conditions (Govorova,2020). "According to Ruggeri et al. (2020), wellbeing is defined as a combination of feeling good and functioning well; the experience of positive emotions such as happiness and contentment; as well as the development of one's potential; having some control over one's life; having a sense of purpose; and experiencing positive relationships (Ruggeri et al., 2020). It is a condition that allows a young person to develop and thrive.

The World Health Organisation defines positive mental health as ''a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and can contribute to his or her community." The conceptualisation of wellbeing goes beyond the absence of mental ill health, encompassing the perception that life is going well.

The promotion of students' wellbeing is a key challenge for schools. Students' feelings of wellbeing in school are more important than formal academic achievements, but wellbeing is not as well achieved (Ramsey and Clark, 1990 as in Konu, 2002). School-based interventions have great potential for reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors to promote children's wellbeing, but they are not well received by school administrators or the community at large.

Studies show that the health and educational status of children in schools is not very promising and can be largely attributed to growing expectations, stress and confusion. They pose a series of challenges for children in both academic and real-life situations (Credé & Kuncel 2008; Deffenbacher et al., 1996; Rao et al.) which can affect their wellbeing.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the wellbeing of the students studying in TSWREIS and TTWREIS schools. The study assesses the social, emotional, and personal wellbeing of the students. Teachers play a very important role in the wellbeing of students. Therefore, this study tries to understand the wellbeing (social and emotional) of teachers teaching at TSWREIS and TTWREIS.

1.3. Operational Definition of Wellbeing

In the present study wellbeing of students encompasses multiple dimensions which include social skills, emotional skills, personal skills, resilience and social support.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study is quantitative in nature. A cross-sectional survey design was used to assess the wellbeing of students. The study involved 1000 students studying in 7th and 8th grade from 10 schools (TTW and TSW schools) in Telangana. The wellbeing of the students was assessed using a wellbeing tool, while the teacher's wellbeing was assessed using the social and emotional learning scale. Both tools were developed for the survey by Dream a Dream. The details of the tools used for this study are given below:

Sl. No.	Measurements used for the Study		
1	Wellbeing (social-emotional) tool	Designed to assess the level of student's social and emotional wellbeing. The tool measure 5 major dimensions social, emotional, personal wellbeing, resilience and social support	Consists of 36 items which are rated using a 5-point rating scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree	Internal consistency reliability for overall social emotional wellbeing (0.88), emotional wellbeing (.69), personal wellbeing (.75)-resilience (.61) and social support (.68) social, wellbeing (.84)
2	Teacher Wellbeing	Measures the overall teacher wellbeing which includes classroom management, school climate, teacher-student relationship and inclusive practice.	The teacher wellbeing survey is a 16-item scale measured using a 5-point rating scale with the following representations (1 = Never) to (2= Little) and (3 = not sure) to (4 = quite a bit) and (5= A great deal).	Internal consistency reliability for Overall Teacher Wellbeing (0.81), Classroom Management (.77), School Climate (.85), Teacher Student Relationship (.75) and Inclusive practice (.84)

2.2 Data Collection Process

The data collection for this study began after obtaining consent from the Telangana state and district level officials (TTWREIS and TSWREIS). The data collection commenced after obtaining the dates from the school principals. The data was collected from the 7th and 8th-grade students studying in 10 TSW and TTW schools. The wellbeing tool was administered by a team of assessors who were trained in assessments. The wellbeing tool was translated into Telugu (the regional language of Telangana) for easy understanding by students. To assess the wellbeing of the teachers, data were collected from 44 teachers teaching from 5 to 10th grade in TSW and TTW schools. The data was analysed, keeping in mind the purpose of the study.

III. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

3.1 Demographics

3.1.1 Gender of the Students

Male
47%

Female
53%
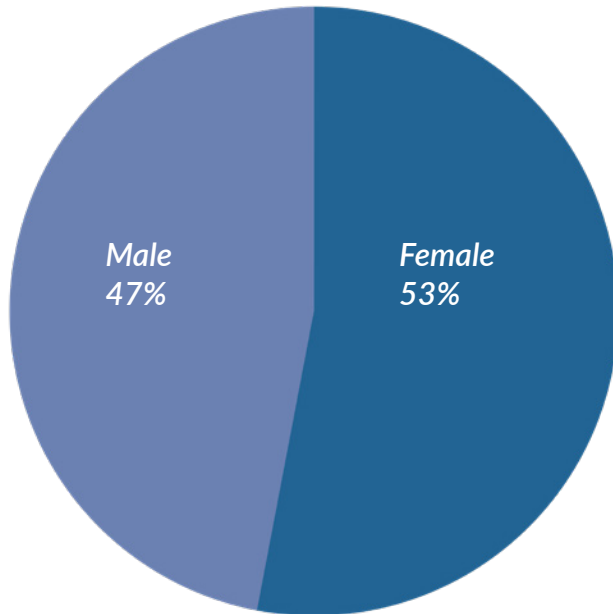
3.1.2 Grade of the Students

No. of Students

500

400

300

200

100

0

5   6   7   8

Grades
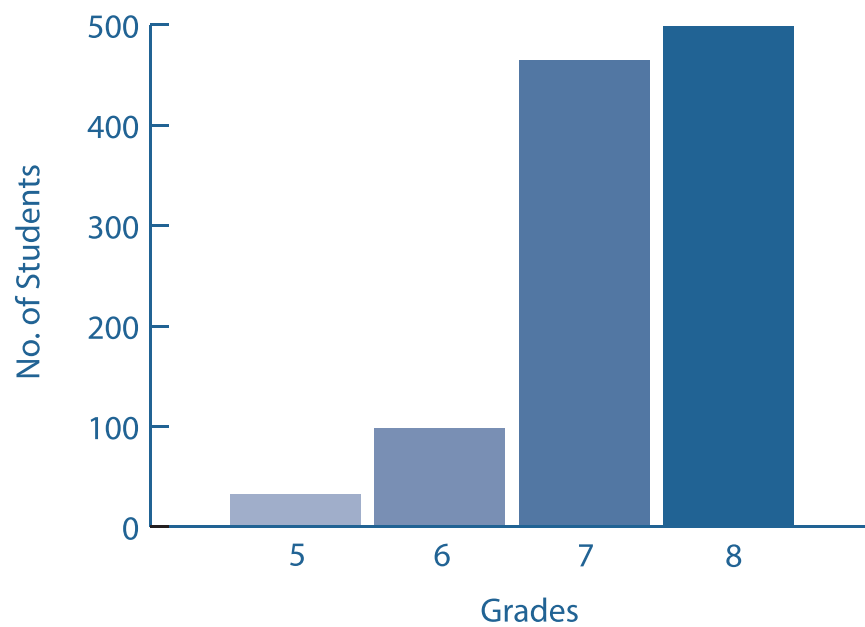
3.2 Gender of interviewed Teachers

Male
12

Female
32
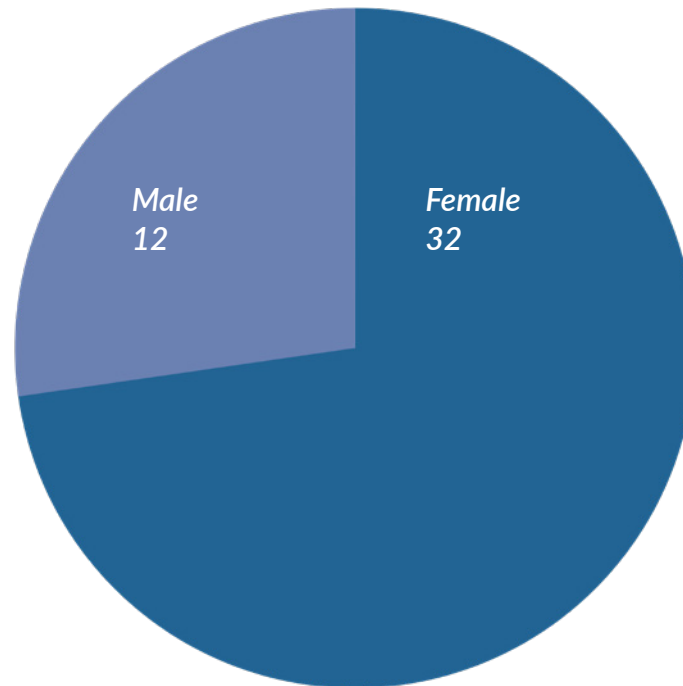
3.4. Overall Wellbeing of the Students

Table-1 Overall Social Emotional Wellbeing (SEW Global Score)	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Low	285	26.0
	Emerging	294	26.8
	Developed	272	24.8
	Highly Developed	244	22.2
	Total	1095	100.0

Table 1 represents the overall social and emotional wellbeing score of the students. Most of the students have a low (26%) and emerging (26.8%) social-emotional wellbeing score (Global score), which

collectively comes to 52.8%. Only 47% of the students have a highly developed or developed wellbeing status. This highlights that more than half of the student's wellbeing is at risk, which includes poor social and emotional wellbeing (e.g. problem behaviours, negative outcomes, poor relationship skills, etc).

3.4.1 Emotional Wellbeing

	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Table-2 Emotional Wellbeing	Low	284	25.9
	Emerging	306	27.9
	Developed	270	24.7
	Highly Developed	235	21.5
	Total	1095	100.0

Table 2 indicates the emotional wellbeing of the respondents according to the wellbeing tool. The majority of the students have emerging (27.9%) and low (25.9%) wellbeing levels. Only 46.2% of the respondents have either a highly developed or developed emotional wellbeing status. This indicates that the majority (53.8%) of the respondents have low or emerging emotional wellbeing and can often experience negative emotions, problem behaviors, feelings, and thoughts. They are more likely to have difficulties at home, with peers and at school.

3.4.2 Social Wellbeing

	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Table-3 Social Wellbeing	Low	288	26.3
	Emerging	307	28.0
	Developed	257	23.5
	Highly Developed	243	22.2
	Total	1095	100.0

Table 3 displays the social wellbeing status of the respondents, in which 26.3% of respondents scored low and 28% had an emerging wellbeing status. The table shows that the cumulative wellbeing of the respondents, which totals 54.3%, is either emerging or low. Only a quarter (22.2%) of the respondents have a highly developed wellbeing status. This emphasises that students should be encouraged to learn a variety of social skills (e.g. problem-solving, empathy, interpersonal skills, etc).

3.4.3 Personal Wellbeing

	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Table-4 Personal Wellbeing	Low	336	30.7
	Emerging	306	27.9
	Developed	195	17.8
	Highly Developed	258	23.6
	Total	1095	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The respondents' wellbeing, the third SEW dimension, is shown in Table 4. Less than 50% of respondents have a highly developed or developed wellbeing status. More than 58.6% of the respondents had a low or emerging wellbeing score, which raises concern about the necessity of improving respondents' wellbeing. (e.g. to be aware of their strengths and difficulties, to be aware of themselves, and deal with life challenges).

3.4.4 Level of Resilience among the Students

	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Table-5 Resilience	Low	355	32.4
	Emerging	300	27.4
	Developed	301	27.5
	Highly Developed	139	12.7
	Total	1095	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The resilience status of the students is shown in Table 5. 32.4% of respondents have a low resilience status. It is significant to note that when combining the emerging (27.4%) and low (32.4%) wellbeing status, around 60% of the respondents' resilience skill sets need to be developed, which is a source of worry. Only 12.7% of the respondents have a highly developed state, indicating that students need to work on building their resilience (e.g. to deal with failure, setbacks in life, etc).

3.4.5 Social Support Status

	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Table-6 Social Support	Low	354	32.3
	Emerging	280	25.6
	Developed	317	28.9
	Highly Developed	144	13.2
	Total	1095	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 represents the social support status of the respondents. 32.3% of the respondents have very low social support status. The table indicates that more than half of the respondents have either emerging or low wellbeing, the aggregate of which comes to 57.9%, which is an area that requires attention. Only 13.2% of the respondents have highly developed social support, which emphasises the need to improve social support for children. This indicates that children from disadvantaged backgrounds should be provided a supportive and enriching environment for their growth. (Schwartz, Cappella, & Seidman, 2015).

3.4.6 Gender and Wellbeing Status

Table-7 Wellbeing	Gender	Sample Count	Mean	Std. Deviation	P Value
Emotional Wellbeing	Male	518	19.03	2.905	.030
	Female	577	19.41	2.793	
Resilience	Male	518	18.68	2.684	.291
	Female	577	18.50	2.848	
Social Support	Male	518	21.01	2.972	.000
	Female	577	21.70	2.832	
Social Wellbeing	Male	518	35.43	4.378	.000
	Female	577	36.54	4.600	
Personal Wellbeing	Male	518	36.71	4.168	.150
	Female	577	36.34	4.339	
SEW Global Score	Male	518	130.87	10.444	.014
	Female	577	132.49	11.296	

Table 7 shows the gender and wellbeing of the respondents. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the wellbeing status of male and female respondents.

The statistical test results (independent sample t-test) conducted show significant differences between male and female respondents in SEW Global Score (significance at.01 levels), Social Wellbeing (significance at.000 level), Social Support (significance at.000 level), and Emotional Wellbeing

(significance at.03 levels).

There is no significant difference between male and female respondents for resilience and personal wellbeing. The analysis shows that the female respondents have a better SEW Global Score (Mean-132.49), Social Wellbeing (Mean-36.54), Social Support (Mean-21.70) and Emotional Wellbeing (Mean-19.41) when compared to the male respondents.

3.5 Teacher Wellbeing

Teachers play a very important role in the wellbeing of students. Teachers influence their students not only through academic subjects, but also through interpersonal relationships, role-modelling on social-emotional principles, and classroom management (Martinsone, B, & Damberga, I, 2017).

Understanding the teacher's wellbeing is always required to better comprehend the wellbeing of the students and is examined and interpreted below.

3.5.1 Teacher Wellbeing

Table-8 Teacher Wellbeing		Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Low	8	18.2
	Medium	18	40.9
	High	18	40.9
	Total	44	100

Table 8 represents the wellbeing of the respondents. 40.9% of teachers have a high wellbeing status. It is noted that only 18.2% of teachers have a low wellbeing status. However, the cumulative percentage of 59.1% (combining both low and medium scores of wellbeing) highlights that more than half of the teachers are at wellbeing risk. This includes social and emotional health risks (e.g., poor emotional health and weak social support), work-related risks (e.g., job dissatisfaction and poor supervisor support) and financial health risks (not being able to afford food, housing and health care) (Sears, Shi, Coberley, & Pope, 2013).

The following dimensions were used to measure the wellbeing (social-and emotional) of teachers.

3.5.2 Classroom Management

Table-9 Classroom Management		Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Low	1	2.3
	Medium	8	18.2
	High	35	79.5
	Total	44	100.0

Disruptive behaviour is a particular problem in classrooms of economically disadvantaged students (Kellam, Ling, Merisca, Brown, & Ialongo, 1998). Thus, the ability of teachers to prevent or address disruptive behaviour becomes especially important in the context of the TTWREIS and TSWREIS.

Table 9 indicates the classroom management among teachers. 79.5% of the respondents scored high, more than 3/4th of the total sample. However, around 20.5 % of the teachers scored either a low or medium score in classroom management skills. Even though this percentage is less, all teachers must develop effective classroom management strategies, such as elevating students' engagement while decreasing disruptive behaviour (e.g., behaviour-specific praise) in the classroom (Gage & Mac Suga-Gage, 2017; Larson et al., 2021).

3.5.3 Teacher Student Relationship

Table-10 Teacher-Student Relationship		Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Low	12	27.3
	Medium	12	27.3
	High	20	45.4
	Total	44	100.0

Table 10 represents teacher-student relationships; figures show 45.4% of teachers have scored highly in the teacher-student relationship dimension of the wellbeing scale. 27.3% have scored medium and 27.3% of the teachers have scored low in teacher-student relationships, which is a higher percentage as compared to other dimensions in the scale.

Positive teacher-student relationships enable students to feel safe and secure in their learning environments and provide scaffolding for important social and academic skills (Baker et al., 2008; O'Connor, Dearing, & Collins, 2011; Silver, Measelle, Armstron, & Essex, 2005). Students coming from vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds who have strong teacher-student relationships have higher academic achievement and have more positive social-emotional adjustment than their peers who do not have a positive relationship with a teacher (Murray & Malmgren, 2005).

3.5.4 School Climate

Table-11 School Climate		Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Low	6	13.6
	Medium	8	18.2
	High	30	68.2
	Total	44	100.0

Table 11 shows the dimension of school climate in which 68.2% of the teachers scored high, 18.2% scored medium, and 13.6 scored low. While combining the medium score and low score, it is important to notice that around 32 % of the teachers are moderately fostering the school climate.

Evidence suggests that a positive school climate means having meaningful and collaborative relationships between teachers and students, between teachers and administrators and among students. It lays a strong foundation for learning in an environment of mutual respect and responsibility.

3.5.5 Inclusive Practice

Inclusive practice is a teaching approach that recognises the differences between students and uses Inclusive practice to ensure that all students can access educational content and participate fully in their learning processes.

Table-12 Inclusive Practice		Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Low	12	27.3
	Medium	9	20.5
	High	23	52.2
	Total	44	100.0

Table 12 represents the inclusive practice in which 52.2% of teachers have scored high and 20.5% have scored medium. 27.3% of the teachers have scored low in inclusive practice, which is again a higher percentage as compared to teacher wellbeing and other dimensions in the scale.

47.8% of teachers scored medium or low in inclusive practices in the classroom, meaning that the teachers are not equipped with an integrated knowledge of the expected roles, functions and responsibilities to meet the diverse learning needs in the classroom.

IV. KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1. Student Wellbeing

- 53.8% of the students had low or emerging emotional wellbeing, which indicates the need to enhance the emotional competencies of students.
- Only 45.7% of the students exhibited highly developed or developed social wellbeing, indicating that interpersonal skills and pro-social behavior among students need to be strengthened.
- 58.6% of the students had low or emerging wellbeing scores, stressing the need to improve the personal wellbeing of students.
- Need to develop resilience skills among students to cope with failure and challenges in life as only 12.7% of students had highly developed resilience skills.
- 32.4% of the students had low resilience skills, much lower compared to other dimensions of wellbeing measured.

4.2. Teacher Wellbeing

- 59% of the teachers had low or medium wellbeing, which highlights that many of the teachers are at wellbeing risk.
- Need for the teacher to develop effective classroom management strategies to enhance students' engagement and reduce disruptive behaviour in the classroom.
- Strengthen teacher-student relationships so that students feel safe and secure in their learning environment.
- 47.5% of teachers score low or medium for inclusive practices in the classroom, which indicates that teachers must be equipped with an integrated knowledge of the expected roles, functions, and responsibilities to meet the diverse learning needs in the classroom.

The findings of the study, therefore, emphasise the need for enhancing the wellbeing of students, which includes social skills, emotional skills, personal skills, resilience, and social support. The results of the study indicate that students need to improve their social skills (interpersonal skills, foster relationship skills, problem-solving, empathy, etc.), emotional skills (manage emotions, emotion awareness, problem behaviour), personal skills, resilience (cope with challenges) and social support. The teacher wellbeing analyses indicate the need to improve classroom management skills, teacher-student relationships and inclusive teaching practices and foster a positive school climate for learning in an environment of mutual respect and responsibility.

Research evidence proves that cognitive, social, emotional and personal skills can be strengthened through life skills education, which provides individuals with strategies to make healthy life choices that contribute to their well-being (Parvathy & Ranjith, 2015). Life skills are adaptive and positive behaviours that enable people to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of daily life (WHO, 1997). Life skills training has been shown to play an important role in promoting the wellbeing of diverse populations and has a significant impact on individuals' happiness, and psychological and emotional wellbeing. They are also effective in developing personality traits such as resilience, self-efficacy and improving self-esteem (Kaur, 2021). According to Steptoe. A & Wardie. J, (2017), life skills are personal characteristics and capabilities that increase success and enhance wellbeing. The implementation of the Life Skills programme focuses on effective communication, interpersonal skills, goal-setting, and self-esteem. It helps tackle school students' mental health and substance abuse and decreases negative

coping behaviours (Maddah, 2021; Botvin et al., 2001; Meng et al., 2018; Menrath et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2012; Vicary et al., 2004; Weichold and Blumenthal, 2016). Based on the above research evidence and findings, the study makes the recommendations stated in the following chapter.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Enhance Wellbeing of Students through Life skills Programmes

The results of the study show that more than 50% of the students from TSWREIS and TTWREIS schools display low or emerging wellbeing status. Only 23% of students had highly developed wellbeing scores, which means the students' wellbeing is at risk and there is a need to develop personal, social, and emotional skills, which are the most key components of the life skills programme. The inclusion of life skills programmes as part of the school curriculum provides an excellent opportunity to improve the skills of these children. It can help them navigate smoothly through the challenging environments from which they come and thus move up the academic ladder.

5.2. Capacity Building for Teachers

The findings of the study demonstrate that 52.8% of the students have a low or emerging wellbeing status. The results of the study indicate the need to equip children with life skills that will enable them to face the challenges at school and later in life. But this is not possible unless we equip the teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them to take care of their wellness and that of the students. Therefore, there is a pressing need to build the capacity of teachers through life skills programmes that can help them mentor and teach students to embrace life skills and excel in their studies.

5.3. Integrate Life Skills Approaches in the Classroom

The study findings highlight the importance of life skills for students and the need to include them as a part of the school curriculum. Integrating life skills approaches permits students to engage in purposeful and pertinent learning. It helps students see the relationships between the theoretical aspects they learn and their application in the real world, rather than focusing on learning alone. Using life skills-based methods of teaching and strategies like discussion, brainstorming (where students can give many diverse examples of how a skill can be applied), simulation, role play, dramatisation (where the teacher and students perform a scenario to show skill in action), co-operative learning and problem-solving enable students to face challenges in real life.

5.4. Create a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment

Life skills comprise a wide range of skills that help an individual cope with various facets of life. Enhancing life skills helps students resist peer pressure, accept themselves as they are, and cope with difficulties. This can foster a reduction in behavioural problems and create a safe learning environment for students. Life skills training enables students to be more self-aware and socially aware that they must cooperate with their peers. It helps them to realise that though they may have differences of opinion, they can negotiate to come up with a solution to problems they encounter. Through life skills, students learn and practice skills such as listening attentively, following directions, managing emotions and cooperating with peers, which help them contribute positively to their classroom environment and thrive (Bailey et al., 2014, p. 20). Positive teacher-student relationships, effective classroom management strategies and inclusive practices by teachers create a learning environment that makes every child feel social, emotionally and physically safe.

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VII. ADDENDUM

Contextual Factors Affecting Teacher Wellbeing in Telangana Social Welfare Residential Schools (TSWRS) and Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential

To understand the contextual factors affecting wellbeing among teachers in Telangana Social Welfare Residential Schools (TSWRS) and Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential Schools (TTWRS), 13 teachers were interviewed from ten selected schools in the month of July 2022. Interviewees were assured of anonymity. The interviews were based on a semi-structured questionnaire and sought to elicit the main views and opinions of each respondent concerning the research questions.

From each school, teachers from middle school (grades 5-7) were interviewed based on their availability. Six teachers were from residential girls' schools and seven teachers were from residential boys' schools and seven of them were from TTWRS and six of them were from TSWRS respectively. Four of the respondents were male and nine of them were female. On average, respondents had 6.4 years of total teaching experience, and 3.2 years of work experience in Welfare Residential Schools. Subjects taught by teacher respondents are spread across Mathematics, Social Studies, Physical Science, English, Music and Arts.

Findings

a) School Accessibility Issues and Lack of Residence Facilities

Telangana Social Welfare and Tribal Welfare Schools are residential educational institutions located in most remote regions of the Telangana state ranging from 50-80 km from Hyderabad city. Many of these schools are not directly accessible by public transport. The majority of the teachers in the Social Welfare and Tribal Welfare schools have their residences in the city and they travel somewhere between 35-80 km to reach the school every day. Because of the hectic travel, some of them have rented buildings near the school premises, yet travel to the school is a key challenge for most teachers.

"It is very difficult as I travel 48 km each day. I take the metro, the bus and the auto to reach the school. If I miss a bus, I have to wait for a long time, sometimes hours for the next bus. I spend at least an hour and a half or two hours traveling to the school and returning home sometimes takes more than two hours because of the traffic."

Teachers who have rented out buildings reported safety concerns, specifically female teachers. *"Walking towards our rented house is sometimes unsafe after night duty. For one kilometer from here [the school], there are no street lights and it is risky, especially for our female colleagues. When we have schools in these remote locations, we should be at least provided with campus residence facilities."*

Few Social Welfare schools have staff quarters on the school premises but many of these schools function in rented buildings and they do not have accommodation facilities for teachers. In rare cases, students also use their classrooms as dorms because of the lack of space. Furthermore, teachers are required to stay on campus on a rotation basis for night student supervision.

"I have a family and a little son at my home. I am not able to take care of him because of the hectic travel and school timings and schedules. I am happy that I take care of children at school but I feel guilty that I am taking care of school students but not my child." Lack of staff residential quarters and hectic travel cumulatively are negatively impacting the wellbeing of teachers.

B) Non-Teaching Responsibilities

Besides teaching-related tasks, teachers in TTWRS and TSWRS ensure students' health and hygiene practices, which include inspecting nail length, cleanliness of shoes, uniform, and dormitory and examining hair hygiene. They also have to wake up students in the morning, especially those students in middle school. Additionally, they are also required to perform as wardens and caretakers on a rotation basis. *"Here, [in the school] other than teaching Social Studies, I am now the Deputy Warden. This means I have to take care of the kitchen stock, maintain records of it and supervise cooking for about 450 people. It is very hectic as I have to be available throughout and keep an account of how much vegetables, pulses, flour, etc. have been bought and used."* Here, it is to be noted that some of these residential schools have up to 1200 students including higher secondary students. Teachers across the schools reported that they are under extreme stress when they have to maintain the food stock record and according to them, it also affects their performance. *"I feel like I am never in my class when I have kitchen duty and I miss out on a lot of teaching hours, unfortunately."*

Teachers in TTWRS and TSWRS are also in charge of the distribution and maintenance of a stock of uniforms, books, bags, toiletry kits, etc., which are given by the government and they have to replace them when any of these items go missing. *"I always feel, as a teacher we need to spend more time with children but here we spend most of our time doing administration work due to the lack of caretakers and wardens."*

"If there is one thing you can ask the government, please ask them to appoint wardens and caretakers. We are unable to do justice to our roles as teachers because these allied duties are taking up much of our time." It is paramount to note that teachers from all the ten schools who participated in the study said that they are struggling with the kitchen duty and it will be significantly helpful if the management creates specific positions for warden and caretaker duties and appoint specific people to handle the task.

C) Mismatched Expectations on Teacher Performance

Most students in the residential institutions are first-generation learners, especially students who are from Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential schools. This increases their difficulty in getting adjusted to the schools and performing as per the grade level expectations when compared to their peers. "Most students from the tribal background do not know Telugu (the regional language), but we are to teach them subjects in Telugu and English." This takes more time than usual. "There is no consideration that they are first generation learners; the Society [school management] expects 100% results." Though it is desirable to have high expectations of the students, it adds undue pressure on students and teachers when goals are imposed without regard for the background of the students and their other ground realities.

The strain on teachers is aggravated by the fact they are graded by their students' performance.

Comparing class averages and school averages of tribal students with that of other schools and deciding the career progression of teachers based on how students perform is demotivating for the teachers.

Discussion

From the narratives, it is clear that teachers of TSW and TTW schools are stressed out due to various systemic challenges. These institutions being residential spaces for learning, the nature of the job comparatively tends to be more demanding. Though every challenge listed above cannot have immediate solutions, efforts need to be initiated at addressing them comprehensively. Creating roles for and hiring wardens and caretakers and building residential spaces for teachers are paramount in systemically promoting the wellbeing of teachers in TSWRS and TTWRS in the current context.

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