**HAPPINESS CLASSES IN DELHI SCHOOLS**

 In today’s so called modern schools, which earlier used to be called as “Temple of learning”, now have turned into dungeon of academic pressure , tension , competition , stress ,depression , anxiety and even suicides among students . Each and every student face a lot of academic pressure and stress. Not only they are focussed on getting high scores but also to get better grades than their classmates . Rather than getting knowledge , they gather stress and burden in schools .

A research conducted on suicides in India has revealed that in addition to the challenges of learning and achieving, students come to school with stresses arising from many sources including family disturbances, peer conflicts, socio-cultural components and vulnerabilities to physical and mental health risk factors.

The research revealed 26 suicides were reported every 24 hours due to issues including drugs, broken families, fights with friends and break-ups.

Prolonged exposure to such stresses leads to long term physiological and emotional disturbances, which severely hinders a child’s learning and development.

 But students are finally finding happiness in schools.

Delhi Government Schools have started conducting “HAPPINESS CLASSES” to reduce the stress , academic pressure , anxiety, depression and to change the attitude of students towards studies .

On 2nd July 2018 , Delhi government inaugurated its Happiness Curriculum .
A typical Happiness Class starts with students rubbing their hands and putting them on the eyes to relax. A little bit of meditation follows. Children are themselves feeling the sounds of their surroundings. At peace with themselves, they then go into discussions and exchange their own ideas about anything under the sun. The 45 minutes pass with happy faces all around -- and it is now time to take out books.

They meditate and focus on sounds -- like their heartbeat and sounds in nature . The period begins with a few minutes of mindfulness practice, followed by a story or activity and reflective discussions. Each one of the student is given a chance to reflect and express their thoughts about the story or activity.

They are asked to draw or write about whatever they are feeling or like. They are also asked to spend time with their friends and family and express their emotions to them.

The new and unique curriculum was launched by Delhi Education Minister Manish Sisodia with an aim “to develop self-awareness and mindfulness amongst students.”

“Its aim is to inculcate the skill of critical thinking and inquiry among the students ”.

Students indulge in joyful exercises, indoor games, active enquiry, reflective conversations, storytelling, guided practices for mindfulness, group discussions and situation based role-play and skits.

According to the Delhi government, the Happiness Curriculum Framework was designed following the guiding principles given by the National Curriculum Framework (NCERT, 2005).

**“ EDUCATION IS NOT MERE ABOUT MARKS**

 **BUT THE KIND OF MORAL CHARACTER WE ADOPT** . ”

Children in government schools come from different backgrounds , face different problems like of poverty , domestic violence or maybe having a single parent . Thus , special focus is placed on the child’s socio-economic development and well being .

And all these aspects are focused and are improved through these Happiness classes sessions , where the child gets an opportunity to interact, communicate and express his feelings and emotions .

Over 10 lakh students between Class 1 and 8 and about 50,000 teachers share the 45-minute Happiness Class.

The results may take some time but for development of students, these activities are important .

The reflections and discussions will encourage students to utilise the skills in their life, even the Curriculum moves a step ahead from the textbook based learning for an overall development of children.

The students have an active participation in the class as the methodology of instruction is through activities, stories and discussions.

The curriculum is designed to enable students to communicate effectively .

The classes also enable learners to apply life skills to deal with stressful and conflicting situations around them.

According to Delhi government , the teaching of the curriculum has made students more caring and responsible . The teachers have also seen students trying to solve problems by reasoning and thinking positively , and the curriculum has brought in emotional stability to students .

The schools have also noticed that students have become more helpful and cooperative .The communication skills have also improved and students talk freely and participate in class discussions . They are now able to express themselves fearlessly .

Importantly it has improved daily attendance in the school and even incidents of stealing has reduced gradually .

After seeing the positive changes in the students studying in Delhi government schools there has been a proposal to introduce classes for schools under municipal corporations as well.

In just one year into existence, the Happiness Curriculum has gathered attention from not just within India but also abroad.

Last year, after attending one Happiness Class, Afghanistan’s Acting Education Minister Mohammad Mirwais Balkhi wished to have a similar concept in his country.

Education Ministers and officials from several states in India too have visited the classes with a view to introduce similar classes.

The Delhi government is now even working on a certificate course for those interested to start the Happiness Curriculum in different parts of the country and the world . As India's position on the World Happiness Index has dropped from 118th to 140th our dream is to make India number one on this list .

Even the Juvenile Crime Rate has increased by 47% between 2011-2016. India also have the highest rates of teen suicides in the world . The need of the hour is make children happier than they are, mould them into a responsible , happy and optimist person who can lead towards bright future and this can be done by effectively implementating the concept of Happiness Curriculum .

Children are the future pillars of our nation , if they are happy then the nation would be .

JAI HIND !