A Holistic Approach to Learning under the National Education Policy

SDG focus

☒ Goal 3 - Good health and wellbeing
☒ Goal 4 - Quality education
☒ Goal 13 - Climate action

What did you do?

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2023-2024 emphasized sustainability in education through holistic student development and mandatory community engagement. Initiatives like Safai Bank promoted environmental responsibility, with stakeholders collectively collecting 1,05,099 MLPs. The "Earn while Learn" scheme supported economically disadvantaged students by enabling them to earn after study hours. A dedicated Reading Room Facility benefitted 251 students in 2024-2025, aiding both college and competitive exam aspirants. Faculty development was also prioritized, with 109 teachers completing training programs. Collaboration with Gully Classes Foundation engaged students in the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, enhancing civic responsibility. Internships and On Job Training (OJT) provided opportunities for students to teach underprivileged children, fostering empathy and social commitment. These initiatives created a sustainable, inclusive learning ecosystem, empowering students and educators alike.
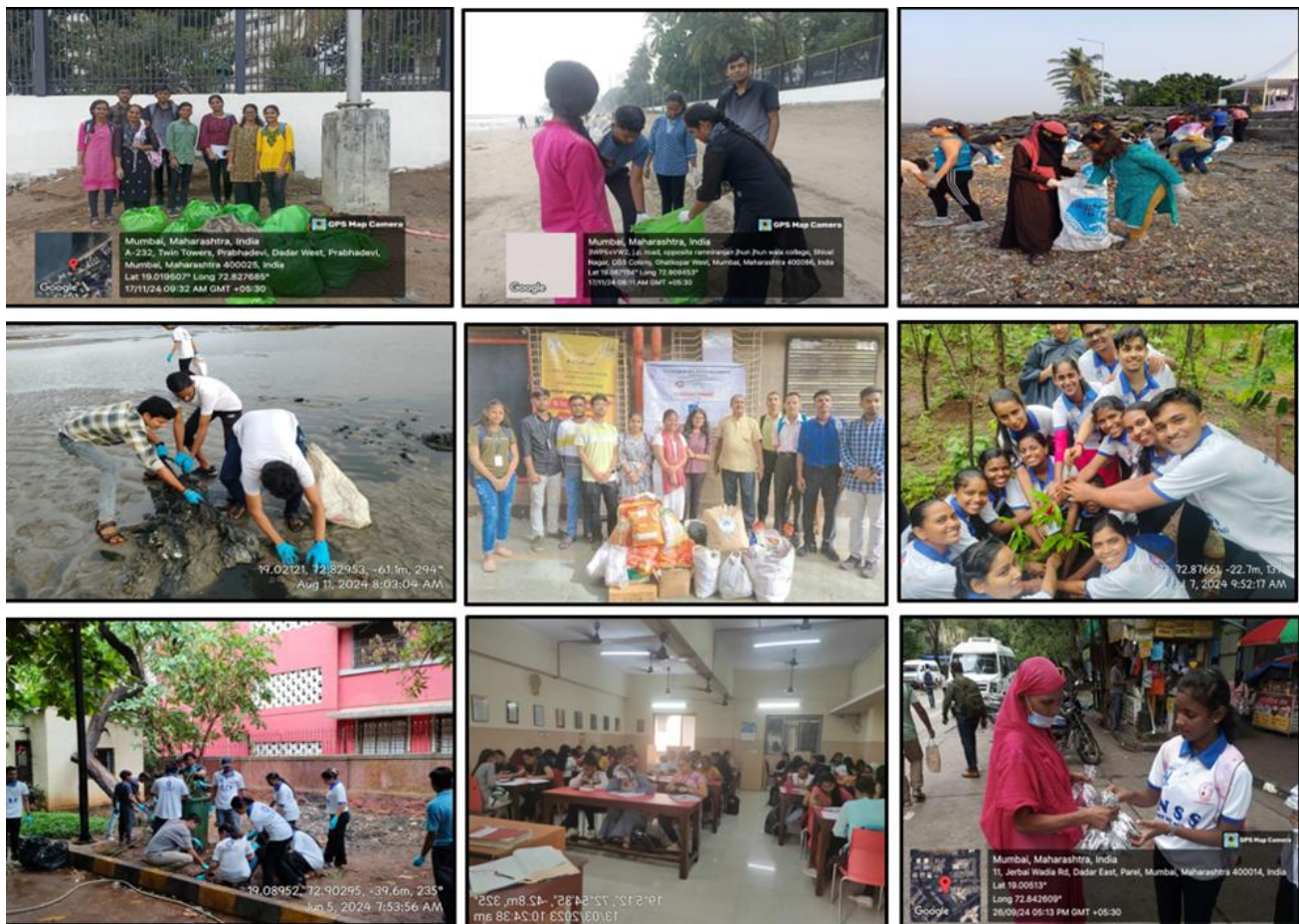
Image: The image showcases a series of social and environmental initiatives carried out by students. Activities include beach clean-ups, collection of MLPS, tree plantation drives, reading room facilities, food donation drive, and general cleanliness drives. These actions reflect active student engagement in sustainable practices and social responsibility, aligning with multiple UNSDGs

What were the benefits and outcomes?

The implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2023–2024 yielded significant benefits and measurable outcomes for students, staff, and the wider community:

For Students:
Holistic Development: Students developed leadership, communication, and social responsibility skills through community engagement.

- **Academic Support**: The Reading Room Facility supported 251 students in 2024–2025, improving concentration and performance in competitive exams.
- **Financial Empowerment**: Over 120 students benefited from the **Earn while Learn** scheme, helping them support their education without dropping out.
- **Skill Enhancement**: Through On Job Training (OJT), students gained practical teaching experience and exposure to real-world challenges.

For Faculty:
Professional Growth: 109 faculty members completed Faculty Development Programs, enhancing their teaching effectiveness and staying updated with modern pedagogy.

For the Community:
- **Environmental Impact:** Collection of 1,05,099 MLPs through Safai Bank reduced local plastic waste and raised environmental awareness.
- **Civic Engagement:** Collaboration with Gully Classes Foundation and participation in Swachh Bharat Abhiyan fostered stronger community ties and civic pride.

What barriers or challenges did you encounter in embedding sustainability into your learning and teaching practice and how did you overcome them?

1. Lack of Awareness and Initial Resistance to Sustainability Initiatives
Many students and staff were initially unaware of the importance of sustainability practices, such as waste segregation and community involvement. To overcome this, we organized awareness campaigns and workshops, educating everyone about the long-term benefits of sustainability. Collaborating with student leaders and faculty ambassadors helped gain wider acceptance, and gradually, active participation increased.

2. Financial Constraints for Economically Disadvantaged Students
Some students faced financial difficulties that hindered their participation in the Earn while Learn Scheme. To address this, we partnered with local businesses and organizations to fund the initiative. Additionally, we provided flexible working hours, allowing students to balance their studies with work commitments. The support from these external partners made the scheme more accessible.

3. Balancing Academics with Community Engagement
Integrating community engagement, such as internships and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan participation, into the academic schedule was challenging. We resolved this by adjusting timetables and incorporating community service as part of the curriculum. This ensured students could participate without compromising their academic performance.

What are your conclusions and recommendations for others?

The integration of sustainability into learning and teaching under NEP 2023–2024 proved highly impactful. It fostered **holistic student development**, **community engagement**, and **environmental responsibility**, while also strengthening **faculty capacity** and **institutional values**. Measurable outcomes—such as 1,05,099 MLPs collected, 109 faculty trained, and 251 students using academic support facilities—demonstrate the program's success. Importantly, these initiatives promoted inclusivity and empowered students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, by combining education with real-world relevance and purpose.

Recommendations for Others:

1. **Leverage Community Partnerships**
   Collaborate with NGOs, local bodies, and civic movements to enrich student experiences and maximize social impact with limited resources.
2. **Make Engagement Practical and Credit-Bearing**
   Link community work and sustainability efforts to academic credits or structured internships to encourage participation without overwhelming students.
3. **Invest in Faculty Development**
   Train educators regularly on sustainable teaching methodologies to ensure they can effectively guide students and lead by example.

4. **Ensure Inclusivity**
   Tailor support schemes (e.g., "Earn while Learn") for economically disadvantaged students to ensure that sustainability efforts are accessible to all.
5. **Track Impact**
   Use simple, quantifiable metrics (like MLPs collected, number of students supported, etc.) to measure progress and showcase value to stakeholders.

Web link to further information:

https://www.rjcollege.edu.in/un-sdg-accord