



# Holistic Pedagogy In Mining-Affected Regions: Evaluating The Impact Of Project Jibana Ullasa On Educator Competency In Keonjhar, Odisha

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*Abstract:* In the socio-economically complex district of Keonjhar, Odisha, approximately 44% of youth report significant mental health distress, exacerbated by the stressors of a mining-heavy landscape. This research evaluates Project Jibana Ullasa, an intervention across 19 PM-SHRI schools that integrates Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning with Physical Literacy (PL). Using a mixed-methods approach, the study analyzed data from 38 nodal educators. Quantitative results showed a 19.6% increase in trauma-informed pedagogical awareness and a 13.16 percentage point gain in Physical Literacy conceptual clarity. Qualitatively, the shift from "Received Knowledge" to "Embodied Understanding" was evidenced by the implementation of SEEL Corners and Gratitude Boxes. While interpersonal empathy improved, a 30.4% decline in systemic responsibility scores identifies a critical "Systems Thinking" gap. The study provides a scalable blueprint for operationalizing India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in marginalized contexts.

**Keywords-** *Holistic pedagogy, Project Jibana Ullasa, Social Emotional and Ethical Learning(SEEL)*

## I.INTRODUCTION

Keonjhar, Odisha, is characterized by its high tribal population and intensive mining activities. Research indicates that students in such regions face unique stressors that manifest as psychological distress, affecting nearly 44% of the youth population. Traditional academic models often fail to address these "invisible" barriers to learning. Project Jibana Ullasa (The Joy of Life) was conceptualized to operationalize the NEP 2020 and State Curriculum Framework (SCF) 2025 by creating "Active and Compassionate Schools." By combining the Emory University SEEL framework with Physical Literacy,

the project aims to stabilize students' nervous systems and build agency through a holistic mind-body approach.

## II. Review of the Related Literature

The discourse on Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning represents an evolutionary leap from traditional Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) frameworks.

- **Evolution and Critiques of SEL:** While traditional SEL models (CASEL) emphasize core competencies like self-awareness, critics such as Hoffman (2009) argue that early models lacked a focus on ethical discernment and systemic awareness. SEE Learning (Emory, 2019) addresses this by integrating "Biological Literacy." This connects directly to Keonjhar, where trauma is not just individual but systemic, rooted in the socio-economic displacement of mining zones.
- **Contrasting "Emotional Intelligence" with "Resilience":** Unlike Goleman's (1995) EQ, which focuses on cognitive management of emotions, the Community Resilience Model (Miller-Karas, 2015) prioritizes the physiological "Resilient Zone." By comparing these, we find that while EQ is cognitive, the SEEL framework applied in Keonjhar is somatic. This is a vital distinction; traditional cognitive SEL often fails if a student's nervous system is in a state of "Hyper-arousal" due to environmental stressors.
- **Physical Literacy (PL) as a Pedagogical Bridge:** Historically, Physical Education (PE) was critiqued for its "elite-performance" bias. Whitehead (2010) countered this by defining Physical Literacy as a holistic disposition. In connecting PL to SEEL, research by Donnelly et al. (2016) demonstrates that movement is a catalyst for neuroplasticity. The *Jibana Ullasa* model critiques the traditional siloed approach, offering an "intertwined implementation" that mirrors the NEP 2020 vision of integrated learning.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To study the impact of capacity-building on teachers' ability to identify biological stress responses.
2. To examine the transition from competition-centric Physical Education to holistic Physical Literacy.
3. To document the classroom-level integration of SEEL artifacts (e.g., Khushiyon ka Pitara).
4. To analyze the divergence between educator empathy and systemic accountability.

### III. Methodology of the Study

This research utilizes a Mixed-Methods Evaluative Case Study design.

- **Participants and Setting:** The sample consisted of 38 Nodal Educators (19 SEEL, 19 PL) from 19 PM-SHRI Schools in Keonjhar. The study was conducted during a 4-day workshop at DIET Keonjhar in December 2025.
- **Data Collection Tools:** \* **Situational Judgment Tests (SJT):** Primary quantitative data was gathered through Scenario-Based Questionnaires. These questions did not ask for definitions but presented classroom dilemmas (e.g., a student "freezing" during a question). Participants had to choose between punitive, traditional, or trauma-informed responses to measure "Embodied Understanding."
  - **Archival Documents:** The study analyzed a dataset of archival records, including the Jibana Ullasa Implementation Directive and Facilitator Reflection Reports. These documents were originally gathered in collaboration with the District Project Office, Keonjhar.
- **Gathering Process:** Pre-tests established a baseline of traditional pedagogical mindsets, while post-tests were administered after the "Science of Resilience" and "Holistic PL" modules to measure cognitive shifts.

### IV. Result & Discussion

- **From Discipline to Resilience:** The 19.6% gain in identifying "freezing" as a biological response indicates a shift away from punitive discipline. This aligns with Miller-Karas's (2015) resilience model, where teachers move from being "instructors" to "co-regulators" of the student's nervous system.
- **Physical Literacy Mastery:** Achievement levels rose from 47.55% to 60.71%. This improvement reflects a transition from "Sports for the few" to "Movement for all," fulfilling the NCF 2023 mandate.
- **The Systems Thinking Paradox:** A critical finding was the 30.4% decline in systemic responsibility scores. While the workshop successfully fostered Common Humanity (individual empathy), participants struggled to view school challenges (like attendance) as systemic issues. This aligns with Attribution Theory, where individuals attribute interpersonal success to their effort but systemic failures to external factors beyond their control.
- **Artifacts as Nudges:** The 100% development rate of SEEL Corners and Gratitude Boxes serves as an environmental "nudge" (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008), ensuring SEEL is a lived experience rather than a scheduled subject.

## V. Recommendation

- **Institutionalize Mentorship:** Shift from one-time workshops to monthly peer-learning circles at DIET Keonjhar.
- **Deep-Dive on Systems:** Future training must focus on "Interdependence" modules to help educators address structural issues like attendance and equity.
- **BALA and Circuit Implementation:** Use the school's physical infrastructure to make Physical Literacy a daily reality rather than a weekly period.
- **Scale the "Joy of Life":** Expand the model from 19 PM-SHRI schools to the wider district network to create a culture of compassion.

## VI. Conclusion

Project Jibana Ullasa has moved the needle for education in Keonjhar from theoretical policy to lived experience. By equipping teachers with the "Science of Resilience," the district is addressing the roots of student agency. While significant gains were seen in biological and physical literacy, the "Systems Thinking" gap remains a frontier for future research. This study underscores that for the **NEP 2020** to be realized, the classroom must first become a regulated, joyful, and compassionate space.

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