

Technology, Psychological Well-being and Human-Centered Education: Reimagining Higher Education in the Digital Era

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Abstract—The rapid digital transformation of higher education has fundamentally altered the ways in which students learn, teachers teach, institutions operate, and knowledge is created and disseminated. Digital learning platforms, artificial intelligence, virtual classrooms, learning management systems, online resources and data-driven educational technologies have expanded access, flexibility and opportunities for personalized learning. Nevertheless, technological advancement alone cannot guarantee meaningful education or psychological well-being. Excessive digital engagement, information overload, technostress, fragmented attention, reduced interpersonal interaction, privacy concerns and uncertainty surrounding artificial intelligence can create new psychological and educational challenges. This conceptual article examines the relationship between technology, psychological well-being and human-Centered education in contemporary higher education, with particular reference to the Indian educational context. The article further integrates the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and relevant perspectives from the Bharatiya Knowledge System (BKS). NEP 2020 advocates holistic and multidisciplinary education, flexibility, critical thinking, creativity, inclusion, ethical and human values, and appropriate integration of technology. The Bharatiya Knowledge System offers complementary perspectives concerning holistic human development, self-awareness, ethical responsibility, interconnectedness and the teacher–learner relationship. The article argues that technology should be regarded as an enabling instrument rather than the center of education. It proposes an Integrated Human-Centered Digital Higher Education Model (IHDHE) consisting of five interconnected dimensions: digital capability, psychological well-being, human-Centered pedagogy, Bharatiya knowledge and values, and the policy vision of NEP 2020. The article concludes that India's future higher-education system

should aim not merely to become digitally advanced but to become psychologically sensitive, ethically responsible, culturally rooted, inclusive and fundamentally human. The ultimate objective of digital transformation should therefore be the enhancement of human capability and well-being rather than technological adoption for its own sake.

Index Terms—Technology, Psychological Well-being, Human-Centered Education, Higher Education, NEP 2020, Bharatiya Knowledge System, Digital Education, Artificial Intelligence

I. INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has witnessed an extraordinary transformation in higher education. The traditional university, once primarily structured around physical classrooms, printed textbooks, face-to-face lectures and physical libraries, has gradually evolved into a complex digital ecosystem. Learning management systems, online courses, digital libraries, virtual classrooms, educational applications, cloud-based collaboration and artificial intelligence have become increasingly significant components of academic life. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this transformation considerably. Institutions that had previously treated digital education as an additional option were compelled to adopt online teaching and communication on an unprecedented scale. Although the emergency phase of online education revealed substantial technological and infrastructural inequalities, it also demonstrated the potential of digital technologies to maintain educational continuity during disruption. In the post-pandemic period,

however, an important question has emerged: What should the digital transformation of higher education ultimately achieve?

If digital transformation is defined merely as the replacement of physical processes with digital ones, its educational significance remains limited. The deeper objective should be to enhance learning, inclusion, creativity, autonomy, human development and well-being. This question becomes particularly important because technology is not psychologically neutral. Digital environments influence attention, motivation, social interaction, self-regulation, workload and perceptions of competence. A recent scoping review of digital well-being among higher-education learners identified interconnected dimensions including digital self-regulation, digital self-efficacy, digital intention, digital conduct, digital engagement, digital support, digital resources and digital safety (2026).

Thus, the digital university must be understood not merely as a technological institution but as a psychological environment. Technology can empower learners. It can also overwhelm them.

It can create flexibility. It can also create expectations of continuous availability. It can increase social connectivity. It can also produce experiences of isolation. It can personalize learning. It can also increase surveillance and performance pressure. It can support teachers. It can also generate technostress. These contradictions indicate that the central question is not whether technology is good or bad. Rather, the crucial question is how technology is designed, implemented and experienced by human beings. This perspective aligns with the emerging idea of human-Centered education. A human-Centered approach does not reject technology. Instead, it places human dignity, agency, psychological well-being, relationships, inclusion and meaningful learning at the center of technological decision-making.

The Indian context makes this discussion particularly significant. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides a transformative vision of education based on holistic development, flexibility, multidisciplinary learning, conceptual understanding, creativity, critical thinking, ethics and human values. The policy explicitly emphasises recognising and nurturing the unique capabilities of students and creating learning environments in which students feel welcomed and cared for. At the same time, renewed attention to the Bharatiya Knowledge System (BKS)

creates an opportunity to rethink higher education through culturally rooted perspectives. Indian intellectual traditions have historically addressed education not simply as information transmission but as a process connected with self-understanding, values, discipline, social responsibility and holistic development. Consequently, an important contemporary challenge is to integrate technological advancement with psychological insight, human values, Indian knowledge traditions and the transformative vision of NEP 2020.

The central proposition of this article is therefore:

The future of higher education should not be technology-Centered; it should be human-Centered and technology-enabled.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE ARTICLE

The present conceptual article has the following objectives:

1. To examine the changing role of technology in higher education.
2. To analyse the relationship between digital education and psychological well-being.
3. To explain the relevance of human-Centered education in the digital era.
4. To examine the relevance of NEP 2020 to technology-enabled higher education.
5. To explore the potential contribution of Bharatiya Knowledge System to holistic and psychologically meaningful education.
6. To develop an integrated conceptual framework connecting technology, psychological well-being, human-Centered education, NEP 2020 and BKS.
7. To propose practical directions for developing psychologically healthy and culturally grounded digital higher education in India.

III. CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

This article adopts a conceptual review approach. It does not present primary empirical data or claim causal relationships. Instead, it synthesizes established psychological perspectives, educational literature, policy documents and contemporary discussions concerning digital education, artificial intelligence and human-Centered learning.

The conceptual discussion draws particularly upon:

- psychological well-being theory,
- self-determination perspectives,
- digital well-being literature,
- educational technology research,
- NEP 2020,
- UNESCO's human-Centered approach to generative AI,
- and relevant perspectives associated with Bharatiya Knowledge traditions.

The purpose is not to argue that technology necessarily causes either positive or negative psychological outcomes. Rather, the article proposes that outcomes depend on the interaction between technology, individual capabilities, educational design, institutional culture and social context.

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Technology has transformed almost every major dimension of higher education. Students can access digital books, research papers, recorded lectures and international educational resources without being physically present in a particular institution. Teachers can use multimedia resources, online assessments, simulations and collaborative platforms.

Universities can facilitate communication and administrative processes through digital systems. One major advantage is flexibility. Students differ in their learning speed, interests, responsibilities and circumstances. Digital resources can enable learners to revisit material, select supplementary resources and participate in learning beyond conventional classroom hours. Technology can also facilitate personalised learning. Artificial intelligence and learning analytics can potentially identify learning patterns and provide adaptive feedback. Digital tools can assist students with writing, translation, accessibility and information organisation. However, the expansion of technology also changes the cognitive and psychological environment of education. Information is no longer scarce. Attention is. The educational challenge is therefore shifting from accessing information to selecting, evaluating, interpreting and meaningfully applying information. This is particularly important in the age of generative AI. UNESCO's guidance on generative AI in education argues for a human-

Centered approach that protects human agency, inclusion, equity and cultural and linguistic diversity. It also emphasises that AI should be used to benefit and empower teachers, learners and researchers rather than being treated as a solution to education's fundamental challenges.

Thus, the question is no longer simply:

“Can technology perform this educational task?”

It should become:

“Should technology perform this task, under what conditions, and what human capability should remain central?”

V. PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Psychological well-being is broader than the absence of mental illness. Ryff's multidimensional perspective includes dimensions such as autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life and self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989).

These dimensions are highly relevant to higher education.

A psychologically healthy student needs to experience some degree of:

- autonomy in learning,
- competence in academic tasks,
- meaningful relationships,
- personal development,
- purpose,
- and the ability to manage environmental demands.

Self-Determination Theory similarly emphasises autonomy, competence and relatedness as fundamental psychological needs that contribute to motivation and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Digital technology can influence all three.

Autonomy

Online resources and flexible learning can increase students' control over their learning. However, excessive monitoring, constant notifications and compulsory digital engagement can reduce perceived autonomy.

Competence

Technology can make learning easier through immediate feedback, demonstrations and accessible resources. However, excessive dependence on

automated tools may weaken students' confidence in their own ability to solve problems independently.

Relatedness

Digital communication can connect students across geographical boundaries. However, online interaction cannot automatically reproduce the psychological quality of meaningful human relationships. Therefore, technology may support psychological needs under some conditions while undermining them under others.

VI. DIGITAL WELL-BEING AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The emerging concept of digital well-being is particularly useful for understanding this relationship. Digital well-being can be understood as the condition in which individuals are able to engage with digital technologies in ways that support rather than undermine their cognitive, emotional, social and functional well-being.

Recent research in higher education suggests that digital well-being is multidimensional rather than reducible to screen time. The 2026 scoping review mentioned earlier identified self-regulation, self-efficacy, engagement, digital support, digital resources and safety among important dimensions.

This distinction is important.

A student who spends three hours using a digital library for focused research is experiencing technology differently from a student who spends three hours moving between notifications, social media, multiple tabs and academic platforms.

Therefore: Digital exposure $\neq$ digital experience.

Similarly: More technology $\neq$ better education.

The psychological consequences of technology depend upon how technology is used, why it is used, how much control the learner possesses, and what kind of social environment surrounds its use.

VII. TECHNOSTRESS, INFORMATION OVERLOAD AND DIGITAL FATIGUE

7.1 Technostress

Technostress can arise when individuals perceive technological demands as exceeding their ability or available resources to cope. For university teachers,

new digital platforms, artificial intelligence tools, online assessment systems and administrative technologies may create pressure for constant adaptation. Students may similarly feel compelled to continuously update their digital skills. The problem becomes more serious when technological change is introduced without adequate training or support.

A human-Centered university should therefore treat digital competence as an ongoing developmental process rather than assuming that all students and teachers are automatically technologically prepared.

7.2 Information Overload

Digital environments provide access to enormous amounts of information. However, information abundance can produce cognitive burden.

Students must determine:

- which source is reliable,
- which information is relevant,
- which argument is supported by evidence,
- whether AI-generated information is accurate,
- and how multiple sources should be integrated.

Higher education therefore needs to move beyond information delivery towards information judgement.

7.3 Digital Fatigue

Continuous digital interaction can contribute to cognitive and emotional fatigue. Long online lectures, prolonged screen exposure, frequent messaging, repeated notifications and multitasking can reduce the quality of attention. The solution is not necessarily to eliminate digital learning. Rather, digital pedagogy should be intentionally designed around human attention and cognitive limitations.

VIII. HUMAN-CENTERED EDUCATION

Human-Centered education begins with the recognition that education is fundamentally a human relationship. Technology can transmit information. Education transforms persons. This distinction is central. A human-Centered educational environment recognises students as whole human beings rather than merely users of educational platforms.

It values:

- dignity,

- autonomy,
- empathy,
- relationships,
- creativity,
- critical thinking,
- psychological safety,
- cultural identity,
- ethical development,
- and meaningful participation.

UNESCO's current approach to generative AI in education strongly supports this direction. Its guidance calls for a human-Centered approach that protects human agency and promotes ethical, safe, equitable and meaningful use of AI. Therefore, human-Centered education does not represent a rejection of technological innovation. It represents a criterion for evaluating technological innovation.

IX. THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Technology challenges the traditional image of the teacher as the primary source of information.

Today, students can obtain information from search engines, online courses, databases and AI systems.

Consequently, the teacher's role increasingly shifts towards:

- facilitator,
- mentor,
- critical-thinking guide,
- motivator,
- ethical educator,
- researcher,
- learning designer,
- and psychological support figure.

A teacher can recognise that a student is losing confidence. A teacher can contextualise information.

A teacher can challenge assumptions.

A teacher can encourage intellectual courage. A teacher can help students discover meaning.

These functions illustrate why the teacher remains central even in highly digital universities. The future does not require teachers versus technology.

It requires: Teachers + technology + psychological understanding + ethical judgement.

X. NEP 2020 AND HUMAN-CENTERED DIGITAL HIGHER EDUCATION

NEP 2020 provides a particularly relevant policy foundation for this approach. The policy emphasises the development of students' unique capabilities, holistic development, flexibility, multidisciplinary education, conceptual understanding, creativity, critical thinking and human values. This vision has several implications for digital higher education.

10.1 Holistic Development

Digital education should not focus solely on academic performance. Students require opportunities for:

- intellectual development,
- emotional development,
- social development,
- ethical development,
- creativity,
- physical well-being,
- and personal growth.

This is consistent with a psychological understanding of well-being.

10.2 Multidisciplinary

The problems created by technology cannot be solved by technology alone. Artificial intelligence requires computer science but also psychology, philosophy, law, sociology, education and ethics. Similarly, digital well-being requires psychological knowledge as well as technological design. NEP 2020's multidisciplinary orientation therefore creates an appropriate framework for understanding digital education as a complex human phenomenon.

10.3 Critical Thinking

The increasing availability of AI-generated information makes critical thinking more important than ever. Students need to distinguish: Information from knowledge, Knowledge from understanding, and understanding from wisdom. Technology can provide information rapidly. Education must help learners determine what that information means and how it should be used responsibly.

10.4 Ethics and Human Values

NEP 2020 explicitly incorporates ethics and human values, including empathy, respect, responsibility, equality and justice. These values are particularly

important in digital environments where anonymity, algorithmic systems and rapid communication can sometimes weaken interpersonal responsibility.

XI. BHARATIYA KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM: A HUMANISTIC DIMENSION

The integration of Bharatiya Knowledge System can provide a culturally grounded dimension to digital education. The purpose should not be to romanticise the past or replace modern science with traditional knowledge. Rather, relevant philosophical and educational insights can be critically examined and integrated with contemporary knowledge. A significant characteristic of Indian intellectual traditions is the broader conception of human development.

Knowledge is frequently connected with:

- self-understanding,
- ethical conduct,
- discipline,
- responsibility,
- social harmony,
- and the relationship between individual and larger existence.

These perspectives can contribute meaningfully to contemporary discussions of psychological well-being.

XII. SELF-AWARENESS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

One of the major psychological challenges of the digital era is that individuals are continuously exposed to external stimuli. Notifications, social media, digital comparison, online opinions and algorithmic recommendations constantly compete for attention. In such an environment, self-awareness becomes increasingly important. Education should therefore not merely teach students how to use digital tools.

It should also help them understand:

- how technology affects their attention,
- why they use particular platforms,
- when digital engagement becomes excessive,
- how comparison influences their emotions,
- and how they can consciously regulate their digital behaviour.

This creates a powerful connection between

psychological well-being and Bharatiya perspectives on self-awareness.

XIII. HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

A narrow understanding of education treats the learner primarily as an intellectual entity. A holistic understanding recognises multiple dimensions of human functioning.

The learner is simultaneously:

a thinking being, an emotional being, a social being, an ethical being, and a meaning-seeking being. Technology can support intellectual development extremely well. But it does not automatically provide meaning, compassion or wisdom. Therefore, a digitally advanced university should deliberately create opportunities for reflection, interpersonal interaction, ethical dialogue and holistic development.

XIV. GURU-SHISHYA RELATIONSHIP AND CONTEMPORARY MENTORSHIP

The traditional teacher-learner relationship offers another useful perspective. Modern higher education cannot simply reproduce historical educational structures. Nevertheless, the underlying importance of personal guidance remains relevant.

The contemporary teacher can function as a mentor who helps students:

- interpret knowledge,
- develop confidence,
- manage academic challenges,
- identify personal strengths,
- navigate ethical questions,
- and develop a meaningful educational identity.

Technology can strengthen this relationship by making communication easier. But technology should not replace the relationship itself. A digital platform can deliver content; mentorship provides direction.

XV. VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

The idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam often interpreted as viewing the world as one family offers a meaningful ethical lens for digital education. Digital

technologies have created unprecedented global connectivity. A student in India can participate in an academic discussion with learners from another continent.

A researcher can collaborate internationally. A university can disseminate knowledge globally. However, global connectivity also creates challenges involving misinformation, hate speech, exclusion, cultural misunderstanding and digital inequality. A principle of interconnectedness encourages students to understand that digital behaviour has consequences for others.

Digital citizenship should therefore include:

- respect,
- responsibility,
- empathy,
- cultural sensitivity,
- academic honesty,
- and awareness of consequences.

XVI. SARVE BHAVANTU SUKHINAH AND THE IDEA OF EDUCATIONAL WELL-BEING

The philosophical ideal expressed through “Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah” can be interpreted as an aspiration towards collective well-being. This perspective challenges an excessively individualistic model of educational success.

A university should not be judged only by:

- rankings,
- examination scores,
- employment statistics,
- research output,
- or technological infrastructure.

It should also ask:

Are students psychologically supported?

Do teachers experience meaningful professional lives?

Is education inclusive?

Does learning contribute to social well-being?

Does technological development enhance human flourishing?

These questions bring educational policy, psychology and ethical philosophy into a common framework.

XVII. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Artificial intelligence represents perhaps the most significant contemporary development in digital education.

AI can assist with:

- personalised feedback,
- language support,
- brainstorming,
- tutoring,
- translation,
- accessibility,
- research organisation,
- data analysis,
- and educational content development.

Yet AI also raises concerns concerning:

- academic integrity,
- hallucinated information,
- bias,
- privacy,
- intellectual property,
- dependency,
- assessment validity,
- and the erosion of independent thinking.

UNESCO's guidance specifically emphasises that GenAI should be integrated through human-Centered policies, ethical safeguards and capacity building.

Therefore, the educational question should not be:

“How can students avoid AI?”

Nor should it be:

“How can students use AI for everything?”

Instead:

“How can students learn to use AI without surrendering their intellectual agency?”

This distinction is fundamental.

XVIII. PROPOSED INTEGRATED HUMAN-CENTERED DIGITAL HIGHER EDUCATION MODEL

Based on the preceding discussion, this article proposes the Integrated Human-Centered Digital Higher Education Model (IHDHE Model). The model consists of five interconnected dimensions.

Dimension 1: Digital Capability

This includes:

- digital literacy,
- AI literacy,
- technological competence,
- information literacy,
- digital safety.

Dimension 2: Psychological Well-being

This includes:

- autonomy,
- competence,
- relatedness,
- emotional balance,
- self-regulation,
- resilience,
- purpose,
- psychological safety.

Dimension 3: Human-Centered Pedagogy

This includes:

- mentorship,
- empathy,
- collaboration,
- critical thinking,
- creativity,
- personalised learning,
- meaningful teacher student relationships.

Dimension 4: Bharatiya Knowledge and Values

This includes relevant principles such as:

- holistic development,
- self-awareness,
- ethical responsibility,
- interconnectedness,
- compassion,
- balance,
- respect for knowledge,
- social responsibility.

Dimension 5: NEP 2020 Vision

This includes:

- holistic education,
- multidisciplinary learning,
- flexibility,
- inclusion,
- critical thinking,

- creativity,
- human values,
- appropriate technology integration.

The model can be conceptually expressed as:

Digital Capability + Psychological Well-being + Human-Centered Pedagogy + Bharatiya Knowledge and Values + NEP 2020 = Human-Centered Digital Higher Education The model assumes that none of these dimensions is sufficient independently. Technology without psychological well-being can become overwhelming.

Psychological well-being without educational innovation can remain disconnected from contemporary realities. Human-Centered pedagogy without technological competence may limit possibilities. Technology and pedagogy without cultural grounding may lack contextual relevance. Policy without institutional implementation may remain aspirational. The integrated model therefore requires simultaneous development.

XIX. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The proposed framework can be translated into institutional practice.

19.1 Digital Well-being Policies

Universities should consider developing policies addressing:

- excessive digital workload,
- unnecessary notifications,
- online communication expectations,
- digital assessment pressure,
- privacy,
- responsible AI use.

19.2 AI Literacy

AI education should become part of higher education rather than being treated merely as an external technological issue.

Students should learn:

- responsible prompting,
- source verification,
- bias awareness,
- privacy,

- academic integrity,
- authorship,
- and critical evaluation of AI outputs.

19.3 Psychological Support

Counselling and psychological support should become integrated components of university life.

Digital systems can improve access to support, and research indicates that digital psychological interventions can produce modest improvements in psychological well-being among university students, although effectiveness varies and further evaluation remains necessary.

19.4 Faculty Development

Teachers require continuous training in:

- digital pedagogy,
- AI literacy,
- student well-being,
- inclusive education,
- online assessment,
- and ethical technology use.

19.5 Human Interaction

Institutions should deliberately preserve spaces for:

- face-to-face discussion,
- mentoring,
- collaborative learning,
- student communities,
- cultural activities,
- reflective learning.

The goal should not be digital replacement but digital enrichment.

XX. IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Students also have an active role in creating psychologically healthy digital learning environments. They can develop:

- digital self-regulation,
- attention management,
- information literacy,
- healthy technology routines,
- reflective practices,
- responsible AI use,
- and awareness of their own learning preferences.

The student of the digital era should ideally become

not merely a technology user, but a technology-conscious learner.

Such a learner knows when to use technology, when to question it, when to verify it and when to step away from it.

XXI. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Teachers should be encouraged to view technology as a pedagogical partner rather than as a replacement.

Effective digital pedagogy can involve:

- blended learning,
- discussion-based teaching,
- project-based learning,
- reflective activities,
- AI-assisted but human-evaluated assignments,
- collaborative research,
- experiential learning.

Assessment also needs reconsideration.

When AI can generate conventional essays, universities may need to place greater emphasis on:

- oral examination,
- project work,
- reflective writing,
- application-based tasks,
- presentations,
- problem-solving,
- and process-oriented assessment.

The objective is to assess what the student understands, not merely what text the student can submit.

XXII. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSED MODEL

The proposed framework is promising but not without challenges.

Infrastructure inequality: Not every student has equal access to devices, connectivity and digital resources.

Faculty preparedness: Teachers may require significant professional development.

Cultural tokenism: BKS should not be reduced to slogans or superficial references. Its integration must be intellectually rigorous and contextually appropriate.

AI uncertainty: Technological systems evolve faster than institutional policies.

Privacy: Digital learning generates data, making responsible data governance essential.

Resistance to change: Students and teachers may resist new pedagogical models when implementation is poorly planned.

Measurement: Psychological well-being and human-Centered education are multidimensional constructs and require careful assessment.

These challenges indicate that technological transformation should be gradual, participatory and evidence-informed.

XXIII. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The conceptual framework developed in this article can generate several empirical research possibilities.

Future researchers could investigate:

1. The relationship between digital well-being and psychological well-being among university students.
2. The relationship between technostress and academic engagement among higher-education teachers.
3. The role of digital self-regulation in student well-being.
4. The psychological effects of generative AI dependence on academic self-efficacy.
5. The relationship between AI literacy and critical thinking.
6. The effectiveness of BKS-informed well-being interventions in higher education.
7. The impact of human-Centered digital pedagogy on student engagement.
8. The relationship between teacher-student connectedness and digital learning satisfaction.
9. Differences in digital well-being across gender, discipline, socioeconomic background and urban-rural contexts.
10. Development and validation of an Indian Digital Well-being Scale for Higher Education Students.
11. Development of an IHDHE institutional assessment framework based on the proposed model.

These areas could transform the present conceptual discussion into measurable research programmes.

XXIV. DISCUSSION

The central argument of this article is that digital transformation should be understood as a human-development challenge, not simply a technological challenge. The increasing sophistication of technology creates both opportunities and risks. The opportunity lies in flexibility, accessibility, personalisation, collaboration and innovation. The risk lies in dependency, overload, inequality, reduced interpersonal interaction, surveillance and erosion of human agency. Psychological well-being provides an important lens through which these opportunities and risks can be evaluated. Human-Centered education provides the pedagogical direction.

NEP 2020 provides a national policy framework. Bharatiya Knowledge System provides culturally meaningful perspectives on holistic development and ethical living. Together, these elements suggest a distinctive possibility for Indian higher education. India need not simply imitate models of digital education developed elsewhere. It can develop a context-sensitive model that combines technological innovation with psychological knowledge, Indian intellectual traditions and contemporary educational policy.

Such a model would not reject global knowledge. It would engage with global knowledge while remaining culturally grounded. This is especially important in the context of artificial intelligence. UNESCO's human-Centered approach emphasises human agency, inclusion, equity and cultural and linguistic diversity. These principles strongly resonate with the broader educational vision represented by NEP 2020. The future therefore lies neither in technology versus tradition nor in human beings versus machines. It lies in meaningful integration.

XXV. CONCLUSION

The digital transformation of higher education is irreversible. Artificial intelligence, online learning, digital resources and emerging educational technologies will continue to reshape universities. The critical issue is therefore not whether higher education should become digital. It is what kind of digital higher education should be created.

A technologically advanced but psychologically unhealthy university cannot be considered genuinely

successful. A university that provides unlimited information but limited meaning cannot fully fulfil the purpose of education. A university that uses AI but weakens human agency risks confusing technological efficiency with educational progress. The alternative is a human-Centered digital university. Such a university would use technology to expand access, flexibility, creativity and learning while simultaneously protecting psychological well-being, human relationships, ethical responsibility and cultural identity.

NEP 2020 provides an important policy foundation through its emphasis on holistic development, multidisciplinary education, flexibility, critical thinking, creativity, inclusion and human values. Bharatiya Knowledge System can complement this framework by contributing perspectives on self-awareness, holistic development, ethical responsibility, interconnectedness and the meaningful relationship between teacher and learner. The proposed Integrated Human-Centered Digital Higher Education Model (IHDHE) brings these perspectives together.

Its central proposition can be expressed simply: Technology should not become the purpose of education; it should become a means through which human potential is enhanced.

The university of the future should therefore strive to produce individuals who are: technologically competent but not technologically dependent; globally connected but culturally rooted; academically capable but psychologically balanced; critically intelligent but ethically responsible; and professionally prepared while remaining genuinely human. Ultimately, the success of digital education will not be determined by how many artificial intelligence tools a university adopts or how technologically sophisticated its classrooms become.

It will be determined by a much deeper question: Does technology help education create better human beings?

If the answer is yes, technology becomes a powerful educational instrument.

If the answer is no, technological advancement may simply create a more efficient system without creating a more meaningful education.

The future of higher education, therefore, should not be imagined as a choice between technology and humanity. It should be imagined as technology in the service of humanity.

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