

Towards a Kerala-centric model of cognitive emotion regulation for students with learning disabilities: Synthesizing theory, policy, and practice

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Abstract: This paper examines the behavioral challenges faced by students with learning disabilities (LDs) in India, with a specific focus on Kerala. In Indian classrooms, learning impairments are becoming an increasingly recognised big problem. It is believed that between 10 and 12 percent of children who attend school have some form of learning disability. Students frequently struggle with behavioural disorders such as inattention, hyperactivity, hostility, impulsivity, and disengagement, in addition to the scholastic challenges they face. The classroom surroundings are disrupted, the stress levels of teachers are increased, and stigma and social isolation are contributed to as a result of these difficulties. The state of Kerala continues to struggle with recurrent behavioural challenges among kids with learning disabilities (LD) owing to academic pressure, family expectations, and poor teacher readiness. This is despite the state's strengths in literacy, inclusive legislation, and community engagement. The research makes use of a conceptual, review-based methodology, relying solely from secondary sources such as research that has been subjected to peer review, reports from the government, evaluations from non-governmental organisations, and policy papers. An method known as theme synthesis is utilised in order to compare and contrast global and Indian models of cognitive emotion regulation, as well as to analyse the existing framework in Kerala and to suggest a conceptual model that is centred on Kerala and is based on Self-Regulation Theory. A number of foreign methods, including school-based cognitive behavioural therapy, socio-emotional learning integration, and teacher-mediated interventions, are examined in this research. Additionally, Indian interventions in the states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Delhi National Capital Region, and Maharashtra are also discussed. When looking at the instance of Kerala, strengths, behavioural issues, and gaps in implementation are all taken into consideration. This study presents a model focused on Kerala that includes techniques for the classroom, teacher empowerment, the integration of social and emotional development, counselling for parents, and community sensitisation. The model's steps centre on evaluation, intervention, tracking, and reward. According to the results, in order to achieve full inclusion, it is necessary to deal with students' behavioural as well as academic issues, and Kerala is in a prime position to lead the way in India by developing a scalable approach. Some of the suggestions include conducting pilot tests and comparing results from other states to inform future study on topics such as parental awareness, school-level socio-emotional programming, teacher training, and policy change.

Keywords: Learning disabilities, cognitive emotion regulation, Kerala, inclusive education, self-regulation theory

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the Indian educational system, learning disabilities (LDs) are regarded to be a collection of neurodevelopmental problems that appear as difficulty in reading, writing, arithmetic, or other academic skills. These challenges occur despite the fact that the individual possesses normal intellectual ability and receives appropriate instruction. It is not inadequate instruction, sensory deficiencies, or intellectual abnormalities that are responsible for these problems; rather, it is variances in processing that are inherent to the individual (Joseph & Devu, 2022). Due to a lack of awareness, variations in linguistic medium, and a limited screening infrastructure, a significant number of children in India who have learning disabilities are either not detected or are given an incorrect diagnosis (Scaria et al., 2023).

Cognitive emotion regulation, which refers to the ability to control one's emotional responses via the use of internal cognitive methods, becomes especially significant for kids who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (LD). Students who are confronted with persistent academic challenges may experience feelings of irritation, anxiety, and emotional dysregulation, which can have a negative impact on their motivation, behaviour, and involvement in the classroom. Students who are able to effectively regulate their emotions are better able to keep their focus, persevere through difficult situations, and avoid disruptive behavioural manifestations that are frequently associated with emotional discomfort (Noraziyannah et al., 2021). Thus, integrating cognitive emotion regulation into educational support is critical for holistic intervention, rather than focusing solely on academic remediation.

It is common knowledge that Kerala has a very high literacy rate and educational programs that are considered to be progressive. Over a long period of time, the state has made investments in inclusive education, universal primary education, and community involvement in the educational process. In addition, Kerala has been a pioneer in the implementation of inclusive education frameworks and the incorporation of students with special needs into regular classes (Kerala State Higher Education Council, 2020). Due to its reputation, Kerala is an ideal venue for the development of a model that establishes a connection between cognitive emotion regulation and behavioural assistance in the context of learning disabilities.

The pooled prevalence of learning impairments in India is found to be around 10.70 percent, according to evidence derived from meta-analysis (Joseph & Devu, 2022). Other reviews focused on specific learning disorders report prevalence rates close to 8 percent (Scaria et al.,

2023). Despite the fact that many therapies target deficiencies in reading and numeracy, they frequently fail to address emotional and behavioural control, which can either completely negate or severely restrict academic progress.

Concerns about pupils with learning disabilities continue to exist, despite the fact that Kerala has implemented more sophisticated inclusion methods and has a comparably superior schooling infrastructure. It is possible that these problems are the result of high parental expectations, a culture that is focused on examinations, and deficiencies in teacher preparation to address emotional and behavioural factors. As a result of the possibility that generic national models may not adequately meet Kerala's one-of-a-kind socio-educational context, a model that is customised to the area is required.

Behaviour problems in kids with learning disabilities are made worse by a number of interconnected issues. Multiple instances of academic failure can result in emotional dysregulation, which can then lead to feelings of irritation or emotional reactivity. Additional strain is placed on social integration by stigma and isolation from peers. There are a lot of remedial programs that just concentrate on academic deficiencies, which leaves emotional and behavioural support undeveloped. The perpetuation of stress and negative feedback loops might be attributed to parental assumptions, which instead assume that the cause is a lack of effort or laziness rather than a neurodevelopmental factor. In addition, teachers find themselves under stress because they get inadequate training in behaviour management, which hinders their capacity to provide an appropriate response to pupils who are experiencing emotional difficulties.

(Rehabilitation Journal, 2024) The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places a major emphasis on inclusive education and socio-emotional learning as fundamental components of the curriculum. It also encourages flexibility, the development of teacher capacity, and assistance for students who have a variety of needs. Within the state of Kerala, there are several initiatives conducted by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and state programs that encourage inclusive classrooms and resource assistance. However, behavioural control is frequently neglected. A growing number of countries throughout the world are placing a greater focus on the incorporation of frameworks for emotion regulation, such as socio-emotional learning (SEL), into inclusive schooling models and special education programs.

The absence of region-specific models that facilitate the incorporation of cognitive emotion regulation into Kerala's inclusive education system is a fundamental deficiency. The majority of interventions that are now being implemented are often generic, meaning that they are derived from larger national or international frameworks without adequate modification to the cultural, policy, and social dynamics of Kerala. It is possible that students with learning disabilities in Kerala continue to have emotional and behavioural problems that are not addressed, despite the state's overall strengths in literacy and inclusiveness.

The purpose of this paper is to examine and synthesise global and national models and practices related to cognitive emotion regulation for students with learning disabilities, to conduct an analysis of Kerala's existing inclusive education framework, and to propose a conceptual model that is centred on Kerala and is rooted in Self-Regulation Theory. The purpose of this model is to facilitate the alignment of theory, policy, and practice in a manner that is congruent with the socio-cultural reality of Kerala.

On the basis of a conceptual and review-based methodology, this study was conducted. This study relied solely on secondary sources, which included publications from peer-reviewed journals, reports from government and non-governmental organisations, educational policy documents, and white papers that were released. One method that was utilised was a theme synthesis, which involved contrasting national and global practices with situations that were special to Kerala. A regionally adapted conceptual model was proposed as part of the analytical plan, which included the identification of best practices and models, the mapping of gaps in the context of Kerala, the incorporation of Self-Regulation Theory as the theoretical anchor, and the mapping of gaps.

2. GLOBAL AND NATIONAL MODELS OF COGNITIVE EMOTION REGULATION

Global Best Practices

Across many educational systems worldwide, authors have advocated for embedding cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques within school settings to foster emotional regulation in students. A school-based brief cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) program in Japanese secondary schools, for example, incorporated mindfulness, affect awareness, cognitive restructuring, and relaxation techniques. As a result of this intervention, the students were able

to better regulate their emotions and experience less symptoms of internalising and externalising personality disorders (Kato et al., 2022). In a similar vein, research from meta-analyses demonstrates that school-based mindfulness and cognitive behavioural programs for children aged 7 to 12 years lead to improvements in emotional awareness as well as reductions in negative behaviour (Pickerell et al., 2023).

Another framework is the socio-emotional learning (SEL) interventions, which are often applied all over the world as a component of the curriculum for the entire school. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relational skills, and responsible decision making are all areas that are emphasised in social development (SEL) programs. Evidence demonstrates that when social and emotional learning (SEL) is integrated with teacher training and supporting policy, kids demonstrate greater academic performance, higher levels of emotion control, and lower levels of aggressiveness (Pedrini et al., 2022). There are certain nations that employ teacher-mediated interventions, which requires instructors to acquire coaching in order to aid students in the process of emotion regulation in the classroom. In Europe and North America, for instance, there are programs that train instructors to scaffold students' cognitive emotion management methods (such reappraisal or problem-solving) while they are engaged in classroom tasks (School-based interventions, 2022).

The following are some of the characteristics that are shared by these worldwide practices: systematic skill building, incorporation into everyday school routines, training for educators, and continual reinforcement. They provide evidence that putting an emphasis on the management of emotions can improve both behavioural and educational outcomes (learning outcomes).

Indian Models beyond Kerala

There has been a lack of consistency in India's efforts to provide help for emotion control for pupils who have learning disabilities. Despite the fact that explicit cognitive emotion regulation material (reappraisal, problem solving) is frequently absent from published accounts, there were few pilot initiatives in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka that sought to combine remedial education with emotional coping modules. There are a few inclusive schools in the metropolitan Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) that have conducted trials of mental health counselling programs that involve instruction for kids to regulate their emotions. However, there are not many publications that document these efforts in the literature that has been peer-

reviewed. There are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Maharashtra that are working to improve the mental health of children by incorporating cognitive methods into after-school programs. However, these tactics are seldom tested in a systematic manner to determine their influence on behaviour or academic outcomes.

Where interventions do exist, the achievements are not particularly significant: anecdotal accounts suggest that classroom behaviour has improved and that there have been fewer referrals to disciplinary action; nonetheless, there is a lack of proof regarding persistent outcomes. There is a lack of scalability, poor teacher training, shallow inclusion of emotion regulation (typically confined to "stress management" modules), and a lack of follow-up. These are some of the limitations. By gaining knowledge from these experiences, Kerala may get an understanding of the need of including ongoing support, guaranteeing the ability of teachers, and aligning interventions with the cultural norms of the local community, rather than adopting external models in their entirety.

Comparative Insights

There are significant disparities between the global and Indian models in terms of the distribution of resources, the training, and the focus placed on policy. When it comes to the management of emotions, well-funded systems across the world often provide specialist counsellors, small class sizes, and ongoing professional development opportunities. Many Indian programs, on the other hand, are operating with little resources, which places further stress on instructors who are already working above their capacity. Within the context of teacher education in India, pedagogy and curriculum are typically prioritised, whereas emotional and behavioural techniques receive only a small amount of attention. In worldwide contexts, policies frequently include social and emotional learning (SEL) or emotional support as fundamental components. On the other hand, inclusion policies in India place a significant emphasis on academics and access.

Despite this, there is data from all across the world that suggests that putting an emphasis on emotion management frequently results in enhanced learning outcomes. It has been demonstrated via research that students who employ techniques such as cognitive reappraisal are not only better able to deal with stress, but they also have greater concentration, fewer behavioural disturbances, and superior test performance over the course of their academic careers (Putwain et al., 2023). These findings suggest that integrating emotion regulation within

learning support is not ancillary—it is central to enabling students with LDs to engage and benefit from instruction.

These comparative findings, when taken as a whole, emphasise the fact that Kerala's model ought to adopt best practices while simultaneously managing resource and training limits. This requires making certain that emotion regulation is included into the teaching process rather than being considered as an add-on.

3. KERALA'S INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

Kerala's Strengths

The state of Kerala is frequently noted as having one of the highest literacy rates in India, having a large number of students who enrol in school and continue their education. When compared to a great number of other states, the state's educational infrastructure is particularly robust, with a dense network of government and aided schools as well as larger teacher–student ratios. Since a long time ago, the state of Kerala has placed a strong emphasis on inclusive education, and the state has made significant efforts to incorporate children with special needs into regular classroom experiences (Anil & Mailthily, 2025). In accordance with the Samagra Shiksha program, the inclusive education policy of Kerala requires the identification of children who have impairments and the provision of aids and assistive equipment (Samagra Education, n.d.; Kerala Inclusive Education department, n.d.). In addition, the state of Kerala has a high level of social awareness, strong local self-government bodies, and active civil society organisations that advocate for inclusive practices. These factors have contributed to the relatively solid parent–school linkages and community engagement that are witnessed in the state.

Behavioral Issues in Kerala's LD Students

Students with learning impairments in Kerala experience substantial behavioural issues, even within the framework of an educational system that is highly sophisticated. It was discovered in a survey conducted in the Kollam region that 24.5% of teenagers who were attending school displayed emotional and behavioural problems. These problems included issues related to conduct, hyperactivity, problems with peers, and emotional challenges (Harikrishnan et al., 2021). According to the findings of several inclusive classrooms, children with learning

disabilities have a difficult time maintaining focus during the course of instruction. There have been cases of withdrawal, peer rejection, irritation, and sometimes violent responses in classrooms, particularly when there is a high level of academic stress, according to certain survey reports from the government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Students in Kerala are subjected to increased pressure as a result of the state's robust culture of healthy competition and achievement. Within the context of a high-stakes testing system, kids who struggle with learning may experience feelings of compulsion to underperform or to act out when they are under pressure. Anecdotal evidence from reports issued by non-governmental organisations suggests that some students with learning disabilities react with irritation or disengagement when they fall behind, which can result in behavioural displays that disturb the classroom.

Gaps in Implementation

Regarding the provision of behavioural and emotional support, the complete realisation of inclusive education in Kerala is hampered by a number of implementation gaps. The first thing to note is that the majority of the time, teacher training focusses on the delivery of the curriculum, pedagogy, and subject matter rather than on effective tactics for behavioural control or cognitive emotion regulation. It is possible that teachers will feel competent intellectually, but they may not be prepared to cope with emotional dysregulation or disruptive behaviours in children who have learning disabilities. Furthermore, in many schools, Individualised Education Programs (IEPs) are either not utilised to their full potential or are exclusively focused on academic accommodations rather than addressing the emotional or social needs of students. IEPs are only used in a restricted capacity, which limits the options for focused help in the area of behaviour management. Third, despite the existence of inclusive policies, societal stigma and peer exclusion continue to exist. Certain kids who have learning disabilities are viewed by their classmates or teachers as being inattentive, lazy, or less competent, which can result in exclusion or unpleasant relationships with their peers. Because of this stigma, emotions of inadequacy or dissatisfaction might become even more intense, which can lead to behavioural difficulties.

4. CONCEPTUAL INTEGRATION AND KERALA-CENTRIC MODEL

Theoretical Foundation

The Self-control Theory serves as the basis for the development of a model of intellectual and emotional control that is centred on Kerala and is intended for students who have learning impairments. The idea places an emphasis on three processes that are highly interconnected: goal setting, self-monitoring, and emotional management procedures. The process of goal planning helps students to identify academic and behavioural objectives that are within their reach. When someone is self-monitoring, they are examining their own behaviours, evaluating how far they have come towards achieving their goals, and making any required modifications. When it comes to managing impulses, reducing irritation, and adapting techniques when faced with problems, emotional control refers to the capacity to do all of these things.

These procedures are extremely important for kids who have learning disabilities. It is possible to alleviate the frustration that comes with frequent failure by setting objectives that are reasonable. It is possible for students to detect trends in their behaviour, such as periods of distraction or retreat, through the process of self-monitoring. It is possible to reduce impulsivity and hostility via the use of emotional regulation skills, which can also improve interactions with instructors and classmates. For the purpose of incorporating Self-Regulation Theory into the educational system of Kerala, it is necessary to adapt these components to the classrooms of the region, the cultural norms, and the dynamics of the family.

Kerala-Centric Conceptual Model

The Kerala-centric approach incorporates both national and international best practices, as well as customisation that is distinctive to the area. While acknowledging Kerala's strengths in areas such as literacy and community participation, it also tackles the state's deficiencies in areas such as behavioural control and socio-emotional assistance.

Core Components

- 1. Classroom-based cognitive emotion regulation strategies:** Teachers introduce structured activities like role-playing, guided reflection, and mindfulness exercises. Daily check-ins help students articulate emotions, while structured breaks allow for self-regulation.

2. **Teacher empowerment through localized training modules:** Professional development modules are designed with Kerala's unique context in mind. These include strategies for reappraisal, problem-solving, and conflict management. Modules are delivered in Malayalam and reflect cultural nuances of respect, discipline, and cooperation.
3. **Integration of socio-emotional learning in daily curriculum:** Schools embed socio-emotional learning into subjects rather than treating it as an additional activity. For example, literature lessons can include discussions about empathy, and math classes can incorporate collaborative problem-solving to build resilience and patience.
4. **Parent counseling and awareness programs:** Parents are guided through workshops to understand LDs and cognitive emotion regulation. Practical strategies are offered for creating supportive home environments, such as celebrating effort over achievement and modeling calm responses to stress.
5. **Community sensitization to reduce stigma:** Public campaigns and school-community events are organized to normalize learning differences. This reduces peer exclusion and fosters inclusive mindsets.

Flow of the Model: Assessment → Intervention → Monitoring → Reinforcement

- **Assessment:** Identify behavioral challenges and emotional needs of LD students using teacher observations and simple screening tools.
- **Intervention:** Apply cognitive emotion regulation strategies in classrooms, teacher modules, and family counseling.
- **Monitoring:** Regularly review progress through behavioral checklists and teacher-parent feedback sessions.
- **Reinforcement:** Provide positive reinforcement through recognition, awards for effort, and peer-support activities.

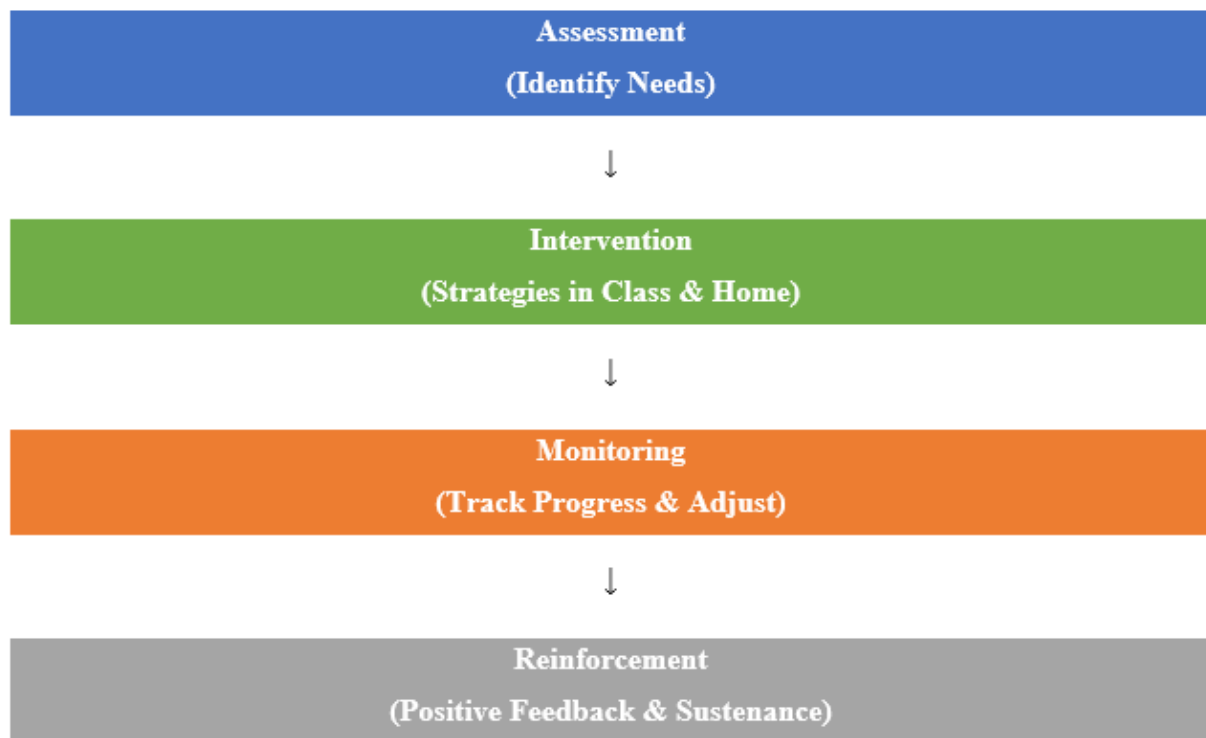


Figure 1: Flow of the Kerala-Centric Cognitive Emotion Regulation Model

The cyclical movement of the Kerala-centric paradigm is depicted here by this diagram illustration. Following the completion of the evaluation, interventions are implemented, monitored, and strengthened in order to guarantee their long-term viability. When new requirements come up, the cycle might begin again.

Customization for Kerala's Educational and Cultural Environment

Because of Kerala's emphasis on academic performance and its culture of participation, the state requires interventions that respect the dynamics of the society while also relieving the stress experienced by students. On the contrary, the approach integrates social and emotional learning (SEL) and emotion control into the curriculum that is already in place. The substantial parental engagement that exists in Kerala is orientated towards activities that are supporting rather than practices that are pressure-making. The ability of teachers to link theory to the issues they face in the classroom is ensured by training that is localised. Community campaigns contribute to the reduction of stigma, which is in line with Kerala's long-standing history of social awareness and engagement at the grassroots level.

Comparative Justification

Compared to general frameworks, this approach that focusses on Kerala is superior in three different respects. In the first place, it does not just concentrate on academic remediation but rather openly incorporates cognitive emotion control into inclusive education. The second benefit is that it puts teacher training and parental knowledge in the context of Kerala's linguistic, cultural, and social milieu, which results in increased student enrolment. The third benefit is that it addresses Kerala's stress-driven educational culture while capitalising on the state's assets, which include literacy, social involvement, and policy support. The state of Kerala is in a position unlike any other to be a pioneer in this paradigm because of its sophisticated infrastructure, its dedication to policy, and its participation in the society. In the event that it is successfully implemented, it has the potential to serve as a model for other Indian states who are experiencing comparable behavioural difficulties among kids with learning disabilities but do not have the same level of systems preparation as Kerala.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In spite of the existence of progressive inclusion policies, this article has brought to light the fact that kids in Kerala who have learning impairments continue to encounter substantial behavioural issues. Students continued to struggle with aggressive behaviour, disengagement, impulsivity, and concentration issues, despite the fact that the state maintained a good reputation for literacy and active community participation. These issues were connected not just to the difficulties they were having in their academic pursuits but also to the high-pressure educational atmosphere that was often seen in the area.

When it comes to preparing teachers to deal with behavioural management and cognitive-emotional requirements, it was discovered that teacher training places a significant emphasis on curriculum and academic instruction. This leaves gaps in the preparation of instructors. This lack of readiness frequently led to insufficient help for pupils with learning disabilities in the classroom. Furthermore, the academic stress brought on by examination-driven systems, in conjunction with the high expectations of the parents, further worsened the emotional and behavioural challenges that this individual was experiencing. An additional hurdle that

continued to exist was the social stigma that surrounded learning difficulties, which contributed to the marginalisation of peers and a decrease in self-esteem.

In light of the findings, it is clear that the incorporation of cognitive emotion control into educational practice is significantly important. Inclusion strategies ran the danger of being insufficient and less successful if they did not address the emotional and behavioural components of learning difficulties. Developing techniques to regulate emotions was highlighted as a crucial component in the process of achieving real inclusion, which would allow kids with learning disabilities to flourish not just intellectually but also emotionally and socially.

Recommendations

Policy Level:

At the policy level, there is a need to increase the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 with a stronger focus on behavioural and socio-emotional aspects of education. A particular allocation of resources ought to be made for the purpose of implementing emotion management programs within inclusive education frameworks. Enhancing the effects of policy would be accomplished by the allocation of specific money for behavioural treatments and socio-emotional learning curricula.

School Level:

Educators are obligated to incorporate social and emotional learning programs into the regular curriculum. These kinds of programs should not be kept as separate modules but rather should be included into all aspects of the educational process. The sharing of successful approaches and the maintenance of a constant emphasis on behavioural management can be facilitated through the use of regular workshops and professional exchanges for educators.

Teacher Training:

Not only should teacher training go beyond general knowledge, but it should also integrate Kerala-specific courses on cognitive emotion control. The training that instructors get should enable them to adopt tools for reappraisal, to model self-regulation, and to offer pupils with positive reinforcement. Contextualisation of these courses should be done in Malayalam, and they should be intended to reflect the cultural and educational reality of Kerala students.

Parental Support:

In the state of Kerala, parental participation is of utmost importance, and assistance programs should seek to positively capitalise on this strength. Reducing the number of misconceptions regarding learning disorders and replacing stigma with understanding can be accomplished through awareness programs. In order to assist families in developing realistic expectations, patience, and practical ways for enhancing the ability to regulate emotions at home, counselling sessions and parent support groups can be valuable resources.

Future Research:

It is advised that the prototype of the Kerala-centric cognitive emotion regulation model be put through pilot testing. It is possible to evaluate its performance, enhance its components, and obtain data that may be used to scale the model to other states in India through this type of study. It would be helpful to build a more comprehensive framework for inclusive education in India if comparative studies were conducted across different locations. These studies would also highlight components that are transferable and local modifications.

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