



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS: A NEED FOR INDIA TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

<sup>1</sup>Anudesh Gautam, <sup>2</sup>Dr.S K. Kulshrestha

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor

<sup>1</sup>Department of Economics

Vardhman Mahaveer Open University, Kota, India

**Abstract:** Maxim for maximization, happiness such notions been the center point of economic theories since years. The happiness movement represents a new paradigm where social, economic, and environmental systems are structured to encourage human well-being through traditional indicators towards sustainable development. Happiness indicators are being used throughout world to collect data and the government is starting to explore their application to policy. The Himalayan nation of Bhutan has been a leader in devising and promoting an alternative development paradigm called gross national happiness which aimed to be a holistic approach in determining what, should be prioritized in order to maximize happiness for both individual and society. As the idea of Gross National Happiness shapes up, it is important for Indian policy makers to engage with it in a pro-active manner. This Paper presents and suggests a new strategy, which aims to explore relation between sustainability and happiness in order to promote sustainable development in India. It may help to explore importance and relevance of GNH in incorporation of policy formation.

### INTRODUCTION

Happiness is the ultimate goal of humans because it is the only goal that is sought “for itself and never for the sake of something else” (Aristotle in The Nicomachean Ethics, 19-34). The Hindu philosophy of prarabdha karma amplifies the inter-temporal importance of happiness by stating that happiness is a consequence both of actions performed in the present and past lives (Srivastava and Misra, 2003). Since the introduction of the sustainable development concept various indicators have been introduced to measure sustainability, which implies a more balanced development of economy, society and environment in such a way that development of current generation leaves at least the same or better chances for development also to future generations. Gross national happiness introduces a new strategy which aims to explore relation towards sustainability and inclusive growth with happiness movement.

The responsibility of the nation is said to be looking after the happiness as well as welfare of its citizens through effective policies. The world that we are living today strives to achieve economic growth which is assumed to result in providing enough finances to the state to fund various welfare schemes and to develop more humane society on the principle of equity and justice. This is where economic growth model which dominates development thinking of the greater mass on this earth tries to provide solutions. However, it is experienced that once we keep focusing on economic growth and to improve economic parameters we tend to come within the grip of market and consequentially market forces start dominating all our decisions, then whether it is an individual or an organization or a nation all fall trap to the drive to achieve more and more, work harder and harder, earn more and more, contribute more and this spoil the social fabric of a nation. This is the cause of worry in nutshell.

We need to think of an alternative route to holistic development and not just economic development; we need to think better on human development and not just infrastructural development. The measure of Gross Domestic Product which is the differentiator is slowly losing its importance more so in the world where production based or economic growth approach has landed them with huge capital base but broken family ties.

### The concept of happiness in economics

Maxim for maximization, happiness such notions been the center point of economic theories. Happiness was once at the center of economic research. However, things changed dramatically with the evolution of welfare economics. From Adam Smith to Arthur Cecil Pigou (one of the founding fathers of contemporary welfare economics), Alfred Marshall, Paul Samuelson many economists has been giving importance to happiness in their theories, research or views.

Since the 1970s things have changed once more. Along with a greater optimism about the possibility of interpersonal comparison of utilities, an increasing number of economists are getting interested in happiness. Furthermore, moral philosophers have never ceased to be interested in happiness, and more recently, with a trend similar to that of economists, psychologists too have carried out intensive research on happiness. As a result, happiness is at the moment at the core of a comprehensive research programme which involves not only economists, but also philosophers, psychologists and social scientists in general

The economics of happiness is supposed to support the old wisdom according to which money, after all, is not that crucial to people's happiness. Happiness economics study the relationship between individual satisfaction and socio-economic conditions to help governments design better public policies.

However, Richard Easterlin was the first modern economist to re-visit the concept of happiness, beginning in the early 1970s. More generalized interest took hold in the late 1990s by various economists Bruno Frey, Richard Layard, Med Jones, Benjamin Radcliff, Amartya Sen, Blanchflower, Oswald, Stutzer, Graham and Pettinato.

The United Nations resolution 65/309 on happiness, which was co-sponsored by 68 countries, was adopted by consensus in July 2011. The *happiness resolution* stated that gross domestic product (GDP) alone is not an adequate measure of human prosperity and we need a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach is needed to promote sustainability, eradicate poverty, and enhance wellbeing.

### Components of Gross National happiness

Until the mid-1970s there was no formal policy, anywhere in the world, that placed happiness at the heart of a ruling philosophy. In 1972 the phrase *Gross National Happiness (GNH)* was coined by Bhutan's fourth Dragon King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck at a conference in 1972. Later in January 2010, Center of Bhutan Studies launches the Bhutan GNH Index furthermore GNH was accepted by 193 countries in the United Nations (2011) as the new economic paradigm.

GNH is premised on the belief that happiness is the ultimate desire of every individual, and by extension, the responsibility and purpose of the state is to create the necessary conditions that enable citizens to lead the good life. As such, GNH supports the notion that happiness pursued and realized within the context of the greater good of society offer the best possibility for sustained happiness of the individual. To this end, GNH stresses collective happiness to be addressed directly through public policies in which happiness becomes an explicit criterion in development projects and programmes.

GNH is based on the conviction that material wealth alone does not bring happiness, or ensure the contentment and wellbeing of the people and that economic growth and modernization should not be at the expense of the people's quality of life or traditional values. It is a holistic development philosophy which balances physical and spiritual wellbeing of the people and values both objective and subjective measures of progress. It takes into account both objective, quantifiable and subjective, non-quantifiable dimensions of development. Overall, GNH means the creation of a society or nation in which collective happiness is the goal of governance. The purpose of government is to create more collective happiness.

The original four pillars of GNH philosophy are

1. The promotion of sustainable development
2. Preservation and promotion of cultural values
3. Conservation of the natural environment
4. Establishment of good governance

**Good Governance** is considered pillars for happiness because it determines the conditions in which citizen thrive. While policies and programs that are developed in a nation are generally in line with the values of GNH, there are also a number of tools and processes employed to ensure the values are indeed embedded in social policy.

**Sustainable and socio-economic development** a thriving GNH economy must value social and economic contributions of households and families, free time and leisure given the roles of these factors in Happiness.

**Preservation and promotion of culture** happiness is believed to be contributed by preserving the culture. Developing cultural resilience, which can be understood as the culture's capacity to maintain and develop cultural identity, knowledge and practices, and able to overcome challenges and difficulties from other norms and ideals.

**Environmental Conservation** is considered a key contribution to GNH because in addition to providing critical services such as water and energy, the environment is believed to contribute to aesthetic and other stimulus that can be directly healing to people who enjoy vivid colours and light, untainted breeze and silence in nature's sound.

These are divided into nine general contributors. 9 areas further divided into 33 indicators which articulate the different elements of GNH in detail and form the basis of GNH measurement, indices and screening tools.

- Living standards
- Education
- Health
- Environment
- Community Vitality
- Time-use
- Psychological well-being
- Good Governance
- Cultural resilience and promotion

From 2007 to 2014 Thailand, Canada, South Korea, United Kingdom, Dubai, Seattle in Washington, Singapore, china, Canada, launched their happiness index. Many governments around the world are considering measures of happiness as alternatives to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the purpose of guiding economic policy making.

### INDIA: Practice of GNH and Policy

The understanding of GNH at present remains vague in India. Ideas do play an important role in informing policies. India is an ancient civilization and a reservoir of the world's major religions, cultures and environmental heritage. It also has tremendous scientific, technological and economic strength. As India transforms into a superpower, the changes that are likely to come in the next decades are unimaginable. When this happens, the use of traditional measures for progress and growth for a nation of such diversity, vast area and population may not be adequate. India may need its own version of GNH indicators that incorporates the unique character and composition of its people. Such a measure will help to ensure that India's immense diversity is addressed, so that the rewards of development will be shared equally, social capital preserved, environmental and cultural heritage strengthened and the nation becomes stronger and more united, even as it undergoes an explosion of rapid economic growth and change. We are still deeply rooted with many social problems like as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, child labour, population, lack of healthcare facilities and other issues like people are not happy with policies, a lot of anxiety, unhappiness, lack of inner peacefulness of people, the controversies, race to richness.

Loosing work culture, loosing identity, corruption, also ecological degradation many more such problems are here. Presently a few key initiatives are being taken in India towards happiness movement.

- ✓ Meghalaya govt. planned to adopt GNH concept
- ✓ While Goa govt. in their vision document 2035 decide to work on GNH concept with having four pillars as Cultured Goa, Sustainable Goa, Well Governed Goa, and Happy Goa.
- ✓ Indian government in their policy initiative towards environment cleanness, to present a better picture of India and to make it a good place to live, using different ways like Swachhata Abhiyan,
- ✓ Odd-Even Formula,
- ✓ Policies to avoid depression, suicidal behavior of students in coaching institutes in kota, where happiness has been placed centered in policies.
- ✓ In April 2016 Madhya Pradesh government also shown interest to work on gross national happiness concept and created an Ananda ministry.
- ✓ A few private spiritual organisations solely working in this directions like Paavan chintan dhara by Pawan sinha , Art of living, Patanjali yoga piitha, Ishayog foundation, brahmakumari university, Gandhian peace foundation, Jaipur peace foundation.
- ✓ The concept of Rajasthan Government “Of the people and for the people”, the very fascinating idea of “Sarkar Aapke Dwar” to fill the gap between the Government and people by letting the Government know what is not happening and what is required to make it done, is a step taken by government closer towards a happy state.
- ✓ Rajasthan C.M. Vasundhara raje initiates work in the direction of enhancing (khushhali) happiness index by adopting public friendly policies. Toy bank, cloth bank and food stores for the poor are a few initiatives in this direction by govt., also focuses on monitoring of development work in tribal and desert area to find whether people are happy with the progress or not.
- ✓ Rajasthan Govt. with high Khushhali index as primary objective wants to achieve the vision of a healthy, educated, gender sensitive, economically well-developed and prosperous Rajasthan.

While Venezuela, Ecuador, UAE, Bhutan has happiness ministries we officially haven't given priority on this important aspect. This is the right time to efficiently work on this for central government of India.

## Conclusion

While mainstream sustainable development framework focuses on environment and resource management or supply side, this happiness approach focuses on human behavior or consumption management which is the demand side of sustainable development. The existing framework of sustainable development emphasizing only on compromising needs of inter-generations may be difficult to achieve as long as individuals normally concern for their own happiness at low level. Unless people are developed to be able to enjoy their higher or inner happiness, they would not care for others or future generations. This new approach of happiness suggests that human beings can live happily with moderate consumption, cooperation and compassion, as well as harmony with nature. This type of development can increase subjective well-being of individuals with contagious effects, leading to societal happiness and sustainability.

Many governments around the world are considering measures of happiness as alternatives to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the purpose of guiding economic policy making towards growth and development.

This paper suggests holistic approach of happiness for development and inclusive growth through various measures that provides inner happiness as a foundation. As a result, this paper purposes the new concept towards sustainable development.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Ali, A. 2001. Macroeconomic variables as common pervasive risk factors and the empirical content of the Arbitrage Pricing Theory. *Journal of Empirical finance*, 5(3): 221–240.
- [1]. Aristotle. 2008. “The Nicomachean Ethics.” In *Happiness: Classic and Contemporary Readings in Philosophy*, eds. Steven M. Cahn and Christine Vitano. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 19-34.
- [2]. Diener, E., & Diener, M. (1995). Cross-cultural correlates of life satisfaction and self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 653-663.
- [3]. Easterlin, Richard. (2003). Explaining Happiness. Inaugural Articles by members of the National Academy of Sciences. *PNAS* 100(19): 11176–11183
- [4]. Ed Diener (2000). Subjective well being-The science of happiness and a proposal for the national index. *American Psychologist*, 55 (1), 34-43.
- [5]. Four Pillars and Nine Domains. (n.d.). Retrieved May 14, 2016, from <http://www.gnhcentrebbutan.org/what-is-gnh/four-pillars-and-nine-domains>
- [6]. Frey, Bruno S. and Alois Stutzer. (2002). *Happiness and Economics: How the Economy and Institutions Affect Human Well-Being*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- [7]. Giveli, M. S. (2015). Gross national happiness in Bhutan: political institutions and implementation. *Asian Affairs*, 46(1), 102-117.
- [8]. Gross National Happiness. (n.d.). Retrieved May 14, 2016, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross\\_National\\_Happiness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_National_Happiness)
- [9]. Happiness economics. (n.d.). Retrieved May 14, 2016, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happiness\\_economics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happiness_economics)
- [10]. Joshi, M. M. (2002). Happiness doesn't equal a Mercedes Benz. *The New Indian Express*, July 28.
- [11]. Myers, D.G. (2000). The funds, friends and faith of happy people. *American Psychologist*, 55 (1), 56-67
- [12]. Raju, P. T. (1992). *The philosophical traditions of India*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarasis Pub. Ltd.
- [13]. Relevance of charvak's philosophy in modern times - prj.co.in. (n.d.). Retrieved May 10, 2016, from <http://prj.co.in/setup/socialscience/paper5.pdf>
- [14]. Seligman, M.E.P., & Csikszentmihalyi M. (2000). Positive psychology: An Introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, (1), 5-14.
- [15]. Service, E. N. (2016). Make high 'khushhali' index your primary objective: Vasundhara Raje to DCs, SPs. Retrieved December 18, 2016, from <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/jaipur/make-high-khushhali-index-your-primary-objective-vasundhara-raje-to-dcs-sps-2784782/>
- [16]. Srivastava, A. K., and Misra, G. (2003). Going beyond the model of economic man: An indigenous perspective on happiness. *Journal of Indian Psychology*, 21(2), 1229.

- [17].Vasundhara Raje praises Bhutan Gross National Happiness ... (n.d.). Retrieved February 23, 2017, from <http://www.ohmyindia.com/vasundhara-raje-praises-bhutan-mountain-echoes-literary-festival>

