

## **Happiness as positive dialogue and development- an Indo-Chinese consideration**

We, human strive and act in pursuance of happiness. The pursuit of happiness has been one of the most prominent goals of humanity since time immemorial. However, understanding and experiencing happiness varies across cultures. This chapter attempts to present the concept of happiness from the ancient Hindu culture as well from the Chinese tradition. The chapter would try to take up the position that the conception of happiness is a critical aspect of subjective well-being.

Happiness is a desirable, positive, inner state of mind. Subjective well-being, satisfaction, happiness and quality of life appear to be conceptually related to each other. Overall happiness is the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his/her own life-as-a-whole favourably. In other words: it is how much one approves of the life one leads Veenhoven (1984, pp-22-25). [Veenhoven, R. (1984). *Conditions of happiness*. (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer (now Springer)

Mental well-being is a multidimensional construct, including hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Hedonic well-being is often operationalized as subjective well-being (SWB), consisting of three dimensions of life satisfaction, positive affect, and low negative affect. Eudaimonic well-being embodies positive skills that facilitate optimal functioning. Ryff's (1989) model of psychological well-being (PWB) posits that eudaimonic well-being consists of six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Joshanloo (2016) has shown that, despite being correlated, SWB and PWB are empirically distinct concepts. Research has documented various synchronic and diachronic benefits for both SWB and PWB.

The physical well-being (PWB) and social well-being (SWB) may influence one another with time. Certain theory like that of the self-determination theory envisages that activities and work associated with eudaimonic living leads to happiness and positive affect (Ryan 2014, p-40). Fredrickson's (2004) broaden and build theory holds that positive emotions enable personal resources and propels psychological resilience and succour and felicity. As a result, a bidirectional temporal association between the two variables was expected. When it comes to the relative strength of the prospective effects, the self-determination theory foresees that psychological well-being, on the other hand broaden and build theory predicts otherwise. Research study suggests that extremely high levels of SWB are associated with suboptimal functioning in important life domains, such as education and income (e.g., Oishi, Diener, & Lucas, 2007).

The Western and the Chinese and Indian account of happiness emphasizes upon well-being. However, the western account appear to uphold personal happiness as the supreme value of life, and blatantly assert individual agency against social restrictions. The cultural perspective assumes that psychological processes – in this case the nature and experiences of SWB – are thoroughly culturally constituted. Thus, culture and SWB are most productively analysed together as a dynamic of mutual constitution (Kitayama and Markus, 2000). Furthermore, a

cultural psychological approach does not automatically assume that all behaviour can be explained by the same set of constructs and measures, and enquires first whether a given construct is meaningful and how it is used in a given cultural context. In other words, a Western conception of SWB should not be superimposed on other cultures; instead, indigenous conceptions of SWB bred in particular cultural contexts should be unravelled and systematically mapped out. This is exactly what we attempted in our systematic examination of Chinese SWB-related concepts and ideas in the Tripartite of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, as well as our detailed description of people's lived experiences of happiness.

The word happiness did not appear in the Chinese language until recently. Fu, or fu-qi, is perhaps the closest equivalent of happiness in Chinese ancient writings. However, its definition, which is extremely vague, usually means "anything positive and good in life." Wu (1991) pointed out that longevity, prosperity, health, peace, virtue, and a comfortable death are among the best values in life (i.e., fu-qi). Thus, according to folklore, Chinese people's conception of happiness roughly includes material abundance, physical health, a virtuous and peaceful life, and relief of anxiety about death.

On the other hand, the Advaita Vedānta (non-dualist) school of the Indian philosophy proposes that nothing can be taken away or added to render the *jīva* blissful or miserable. Advaita is emphatic in its conviction that man is endowed with an innate quality of being (*sat*), consciousness (*cīṭ*) and pure bliss (*ānanda*). In the Tao Te Ching, the concepts and principles are not presented definitely or concretely, but symbolically or metaphorically. Laozi views the concepts of happiness as metaphysical and naturalistic perspectives. Thus, it is not easy to explicate the definite theory of Laozi's happiness. Happiness is man's innate quality and is not accrued from outside one's self. The embodied self is essentially the Supreme Self. Happiness sought outside the man's being is a mis-directed effort at seeking jouissance within.

### **Chinese sense of happiness**

To begin with the Chinese term xingfu 幸福, which is considered now the standard Chinese term translated into the English word happiness. The term is not a neologism; it was already used to indicate happiness back in the eleventh century. Becky Hsu (2016) distinguishes between three different components in relation to the meaning of happiness: good mood, a good life, and a meaningful life. While, in her view, the English term happiness refers mostly to the notion of good mood and a good life, she argues that the Chinese term xingfu implies a longer-term state of mind based on moral values, referring to a combination of a good life and a meaningful life. However, these aspects are certainly all present in recent Western studies on happiness (e.g., Layard 2005) and are taken into account in the many different questions used to measure people's life satisfaction, happiness, or subjective well-being. There are also other groupings of words denoting happiness in Chinese, notably variations including le 樂 (joy), which are not excluded from our study. Indeed, one of the important contributions of this chapter is to map the linguistic field of happiness and well-being in China today.

Happiness (xingfu) is a modern word derived from Japan's late imperial period that historically encompasses the early twentieth century (Chen 2014). 'Xingfu' which encompasses friendship, learning, virtue, self-knowledge and living in simplicity has a strong influence of Confucianism, Daoism and even Buddhism. The 'Fu' from Xingfu appeared as early as in bone inscriptions from Shang Dynasty. 'Fu' originally depicts worship of God, to express human

desires and prayers. The Chinese did not consider death as an absolute frontier, but as a change of rhythm of life, as night and day. Death and ancient burial gifts in Chinese civilization are some indicators of what constituted happiness at the beginning of the civilization. Happiness as interpreted in the ancient Chinese were blessings from the supernatural and pleasures in human society. So 'fu' as interpreted is something smooth and free of obstacles. Chinese happiness in folk wisdom includes material abundance, physical health, virtuous and peaceful living and free from death anxiety.

It is to be noted that in the ancient Chinese society the top of the societal pyramid were presided over by elites with power and prestige. The ideals they followed were recorded and passed down the generation through the scholarly writings and teachings of great philosophers and thinkers and the working group of people were ruled based on those ideals and by those principles. The Tripartite teachings of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism form the very backbone of the orthodox Chinese culture, and each has distinct views on human happiness.

Confucius teachings held that happiness does not lie in personal salvation or material accumulation, rather it is achieved through constant self-cultivation, maintaining a harmonious family, ruling a country wisely, and keeping peace in the world, each progressing to a higher level and greater degree of happiness. To ordinary being, Confucian philosophy assumes that the life of each individual is only a connection in that person's family lineage and that an individual is a continuation of his ancestors. Such a teaching has brought to core family in one's life and everyday existence. Confucian philosophy holds ancestor worship as ritual for the mass which are followed till date. Confucianism explicitly mentions that happiness is striving reservation and expansion of the prosperity and vitality of our loved ones.

Confucianism regards happiness as psychological state or spiritual upliftment of a living individual and not a set of living conditions. Happiness to this people of thought is not transient, shallow sensual pleasures, rather an eternal meaningful realm of ratiocination. Happiness to Confucians is spiritual not material, moral not circumstantial, and subjected to self-identification and not inflicted by chagrins and mortification by other. Confucianism stresses more on the collective welfare of the family or clan even extending to entire human race than on individual happiness. Chinese culture, Confucian happiness is achieved through knowledge, benevolence and harmony of the group as stressed by Wu (1992, p.31). Confucian philosophy stresses upon the collective welfare of the family, or group extending to social community and the entire human race. This collectivist orientation holds that Chinese culture emphasizes upon sharing the fruits of individual success with the group. Social contribution is happiness in true sense than the striving for happiness for hedonistic pleasure which are degraded and regarded as unworthy.

Taoism, on the other hand, not only is opposed to the idea of happiness yielded through material yearnings and pleasure but they are also opposed to the Confucian thoughts on happiness which are grounded upon constant self-cultivation as a path to moral greatness. Taoists hold that everything in the universe must follow "Tao", the great Natural force that starts everything in the first place. Taoism is termed the philosophy of "not-doing" ("wu wei"), for perfect glory is the absence of glory (Chiang 1996).

Happiness in Taoism is the personal liberation from all human desires, through following the Natural force, not doing anything, accepting fate calmly, and facing life with a peaceful mind. In so doing, one may reach the ultimate happiness of merging with the universe, termed "*tian*

*ren he yi*". Happiness in Taoism, therefore, is not an emotional feeling of joy, rather, it is a cognitive insight and transcendence. Taoists practice a lifestyle of withdrawal, isolation, and quietness. The main goal is to achieve anonymity, vanishing into the Nature, transcending the Nature, and merging with the Nature.

Buddhism, which has been another school of thought unlike Taoism and Confucianism cannot be incorporated as an indigenous Chinese philosophy. Buddhism has incorporated many of the Chinese philosophical thoughts and cultural traditions over thousands of years since its first introduction from India in *Tang* Dynasty. Buddhism holds that there can never be a lasting and absolute happiness in life. The doctrine of dependent origination or *pratityasamutpāda vāda* holds that certain conditions are present which give rise to subsequent conditions. They hold that suffering in life results from *māyā* or ignorance and the Buddhist noble truth highlights that the world is full of suffering. Everywhere there is unhappiness and that sufferings results from our yearning for more and out of our fear of losing what we possess. According to Buddhism the way to happiness demands us to stop yearning for more, to not fear losing what we possess and to remain mindful and be at peace with own selves. Buddhism seeks to isolate ourselves from desires and craving and create inner peace. Physical exercises, meditation, doing charitable deeds, eliminating all human desires, are all ways to lift up the soul to reach nirvana and eternal peace and happiness.

The scholars, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are different and even contradictory philosophical school of thoughts. To any lay man the thoughts merged and utilized to promote a good life. We all hope to be happy and live a 'good life'. The basic role of 'philosophy' is to question and think about the matter of human thought and the universe. A discussion of the philosophical enquiry into happiness in life is an examination of the very nature of happiness and what it means for the universe.

Happiness in the *Tao Te Ching* by Lao-tzu (Mitchell 1991) are mainly associated to the Way and virtue which pursuit inner peace, harmony and happiness. There are some hidden or metaphorical concepts and principles of happiness as underlying in the *Tao Te Ching*. The 'Tao' metaphorized as the Mother of all things (Ch-1), following the Way like water (Ch.8), repletion of emptiness (Ch.11), balancing Yin and Yang harmonizing the male and female principles (Ch-28, Ch-76) knowing others along with one own self (Ch-33), returning to the primordial nature (Ch-40), abstaining from doing anything (Ch-48). The Way of Heaven (Ch-81) mentions that the more a person gives to others, the more does he have to himself. In the *Tao Te Ching*, the concepts and principles are not presented concretely but symbolically. Laozi views the concepts of happiness as metaphysical and naturalistic perspectives. It is not easy to explicate the definition theory of Laozi's happiness. The principle of happiness is to achieve the Tao (Way), and the following principle is to achieve virtue (Te) as the active living or cultivation of the Tao. The differentiations between concepts and principles are following the nature like water, doing nothing, returning to the primordial nature, filling with emptiness, harmonizing between Yin and Yang related to Tai Chi (supreme ultimate), living rustic life, knowing the self and others, following the Way of Heaven.

There are certain similarities between the principles of happiness as found in the *Tao Te Ching* and in the *Bhagavad Gita*. The commonly significant principle of happiness of ancient India and China is that happiness is the right way and the best possible way for the ultimate goal in life. Absolute freedom, supreme peace or perfection is the core principle of *Bhagavad Gita* whereas that of the *Tao Te Ching* is the achievement state of the Way and virtue. The *Gita*'s absolute freedom seemingly has a close connection to the Way, following the way of Heaven

of the Tao Te Ching. The Gita views 'ultimate liberation', the highest happiness as the state of the liberation with absolute freedom in terms of religious and spiritual standpoint, the latter regards the Tao (Way) as the happiness state in metaphysical and naturalistic perspectives.

Both the Bhagavad Gita and Tao Te Ching presented purification of the total self, release from material nature itself, returning the original oneness, and attaining the state of great wisdom. The Gita provides several significant concepts and ways religiously and pragmatically.

### **The Indian sense of happiness**

The Indian scholars, gave prominence to the inner being or ontological stance when understanding happiness. The desire to attain happiness is actually symptomatic of the desire for self-discovery, for self-fulfilment. The desire to avoid is essentially a desire to eschew 'non-happiness' as foreign to our nature. It is man's interiority that lends meaning to external world. Rama (Rama 2014) asserted that the outside world can be mastered only when the inner potentials are systematically explored and organized as things takes place within before being expressed explicitly (p-3).

Human tirelessly seeks happiness in the world through action, emotion and knowledge. The quest for bliss is never-ending. Only the fewest of the few who delved deep within have been able to reach the State of supreme bliss. And it is through realization of the Self, we realise the supreme bliss. The ancient Rishis (sages) and scholars long realised that happiness dwells not in the outward charms of materiality. The external pursuit of happiness is fruitless. Yes, real happiness rests in the core of our inner essence. In this context we may study how the non-dualistic school of thought Advaita Vedanta analyse the pursuit of happiness.

### **Advaita Vedanta and sense of happiness**

Advaita Vedānta or non-dualism as propagated by Śrī Sankara holds that the Atman or the embodied individual self is non-other than the disembodied non-manifested Brahman or Supreme Self. The Real, that is the Brahman is one and is of the nature of consciousness and bliss

Advaita Vedānta propounds that Brahman (Supreme Self), is of the nature of Sat-Chit-Ānanda (Sat is Pure Being, Chit is Pure Intelligence/Consciousness and Ānanda – Pure Bliss) and Atman, which is ontologically same as Brahman, also is non-different in nature. In its ultimate analysis the non-dualistic perspective of Advaita Vedanta ontologically propounds that the individual self or Atman is the Supreme self or Brahman embodied in human frame and that Atman is non-other than Brahman. The Vedānta scholars hold that atman equals Brahman is valid from the ontological perspective, and we do not have the right to formulate this as long as we ourselves are living in one of the three states of manifestations like waking, dream and deep sleep (Siddheswarananda 2000).

The Vedic text reveals that Brahman is the efficient and material cause of creation and that Brahman is the efficient and material cause of creation and that Brahman is Sat-Cīt-Ānanda and non-dual in nature, the thought came to be identified as Advaita Vedānta. The Ultimate is experienced inside the depth of the soul, in the substance, or Centre of its consciousness, as the Source of its very being or Self (Ātman). God or Ultimate Reality is experienced as absolute being (sat), known in pure consciousness (Cīt), communicating absolute bliss (ānanda). This experience is an experience of self-transcendence, which gives an intuitive insight in Reality.

This is quite evident that the concept of happiness is not evidently stressed in Advaita Vedānta, instead the term Ānanda or what is closely interpreted as Bliss which is meant as unalloyed joy. Ānanda refers to That which is not susceptible to suffering or deprivation, on the one hand; and on the other, it designates transcendent Bliss as such, as opposed to such and such experience of bliss; to Bliss which cannot be, as opposed to blissful experience this contingent on worldly circumstances. According to German philosopher Deussan (1999), “in the Upanishads bliss appears not as an attribute or a state of Brahman, but as his peculiar essence...Brahman is not Anandin, possessing bliss, but Ananda, bliss itself (Deussan, 1999:p. 141)

The bliss as pointed out in the Upaniṣad is the not limiting happiness that is often the absence or the opposite of unhappiness. The bliss is not the object-related happiness one derives from the fulfilment of a need or a desire. The Taittiriya Upaniṣad bliss described is bliss par excellence which is many hundred fold more than the happiness one gets from worldly desire fulfilment (Loke 2005).

Advaita Vedanta emphasizes that the actions or activities undertaken by the embodied self is nothing but an innate urge to express its expanse and freedom and unfold its nature as supreme knowledge, supreme consciousness and supreme bliss. It believes that bliss is not capable of being pursuit or sought, as man, as an embodied self, is by nature blissful.

It conclusively asserts that Self (Atman) is enlightened and blissful by nature. It reiterates the concluding findings of the Indian revealed Vedas (scriptures) highlighting the non-dual nature of Brahman or Atman. Advaita Vedanta suggests that creation is the ultimate expression of Brahman which is inherently blissful, endowed with supreme knowledge and consciousness.

### **The Oriental view of subjective well-being**

In the present political scenario the Sino-Indian relationship is of significance. The relationship aim either toward greater accommodation or greater competition. Whatever the characteristics of the relationship between these two countries of Asia, their socially well-being ideas have close bearings. The Oriental view of the self, is in sharp contrast to the Western view, is of a connected, fluid, flexible, and committed being who is bound to others. The Eastern characterization of the self tries locating crucial self-representations not within unique individual attribute, but within her or his social relationships. Social customs, institutions they form the ‘relational’ way of being, emphasizing roles, statuses and in-group membership (Lu & Gilmore 2004, p-275). The family-style collectivism is depicted in the Chinese culture, they are fundamentally social oriented. In case of India, objective life circumstances have a negligible role to play in a theory of happiness. It has been observed that an upwardly mobile society that facilitates to achieve high level of material comfort does not ensure mental and spiritual succour. Individuals in a society can attain fulfilment, happiness and sense of achievement without even owning a luxury car.

Indian ancient seers believed that men could make conscious and deliberate effort to evolve further from whatever level or group they are born to. They conceived the main purpose of human existence as one of continuous self-refinement, the culmination of which is the ability to step aside from the birth and death cycles and attaining liberation. Liberation is understood as transcending all kinds of limitations, involve freeing oneself from various types of attachments, identifications and psychological conditioning not only to external objects and events, but even to one’s own mental states and body as well.

Well-being and good life were to be achieved more in terms of minimisation, restraint, and detachment from bodily need fulfilment rather than maximization, indulgence, and striving for need fulfilment. Such conceptions involved giving up and letting go rather than controlling, identifying and holding on. *Tusti*, contentment, was considered more important than *trpti*, pleasure, and *sukha*, happiness. The ultimate or ideal contentment espoused was to be contented within self, with the realization of transcendent Self. Hence, Self-realization was accorded greater prominence than self-actualization. Practises, which incorporated strategies of realising the transcendent Self, came to be known as yoga. Thus we have different systems of yoga suited to persons at different levels of evolution. In Indian thought the ideal well-being is understood as a resultant of the expansion of consciousness and realization of a transcendent Self whose very nature is bliss.

Diversity has influence on people's overall satisfaction with their lives. In addition, rather than limiting the analysis to one measure of diversity, this chapter helps in operationalize the concept of cultural diversity. The terms *hedonia* and *eudaimonia* themselves stem from ancient Greek philosophies. Nevertheless, happiness has been object of investigation in most cultures. Its definition and evaluation are largely influenced by cultural norms and values, which do not necessarily coincide with Western ones.

Cultural diversity and promotion is significant and happens when we single out particular kinds of activity, capability, or artefacts that have more than ordinary significance for wellbeing and are not already adequately promoted under other policy rubrics. This is an unavoidably residual domain that will therefore vary widely from one country to another. For example, indicative examples and specific usages are outlined using this concept in Gross National Happiness (GNH) as put forward by the Royal Government of Bhutan. We know culture is important for development, we dedicate academic, disciplines, budgets, targets, ministries and global organizations to studying and promoting it. But if we cannot agree on what it is, or on which aspects of it are 'good', we are ill equipped for improving the wellbeing and happiness of people through cultural promotion. We need a sense of how cultural processes matter before we try to improve some specific aspects of culture through policies and research.

For pragmatic as well as moral reasons, we must honour the fact that cultural process involve deeply-held attachments to symbolic forms of expression and to more intangible indigenous and spiritual beliefs. Though in the previous days culture has been 'essentialized' in the past but contemporary anthropologists and cultural sociologists treat culture as an ongoing fluid process (Moore and Sanders 2006). They are critical of the problematic way human differences were conceptualized as a diversity of separate cultures, each with its own coherently bounded culture containing shared meanings, values and beliefs. Culture is not chaotic but is patterned to some extent, but there is pretence of cultural coherence and consensus often comes from people with a powerful vested interest in this construction (Moore and Sanders 2006, p-10 & p-17)

Looking at cultural processes through a happiness lens means that we interpret the values, power relations, meanings and justifications underlying cultural processes with respect for how people experience them. A happiness perspective requires us to reject naïve fundamentalism, traditionalism, or modernism: cultural values, practices and beliefs are never valuable or virtuous simply because they exist, because of claims they are divinely inspired, or based on a

modernist zeal for cultural innovation. Creativity and culture-sharing, like indigenous practices, are not necessarily 'good' in themselves but need to be assessed in reference to people's subjective experiences and their contribution to wellbeing.

Humans prefer not only personal happiness but want to live in what many perceive to be a good society, and in order to fulfil these needs, both of these preferences require culture. Since we are uniquely 'cultural' beings, culture in this very diffuse sense has intrinsic value. We value the quality of our social and cultural environments more for their direct contributions to our quality of life and wellbeing than for any indirect benefits that might flow from them.

### **Cultural Diversity and Happiness lens**

It can be contended that cultural diversity is in general sense more benign preferably more than cultural homogeneity as it gives access to a wider variety of ways in which people can flourish. In any given cultural scenario, some people's personalities will 'fit' better (for optimizing their wellbeing) with dominant cultural traits and power relations than others' do. Culturally diverse societies and organizations effectively offer a wide variety of values and of valued occupations, are likely to perform better at facilitating wellbeing than more restrictive and homogeneous cultures in which a smaller set of values and valued occupations or products are dominant because in more variant societies more people will be able experience a sense of 'cultural fit', 'personality-cultural match' or 'cultural consonance'.

A variant of cultural options can make a person more resilient to the inevitable life shocks, at the same time constituting groups more resilient to major socio-economic or environmental problems. Diversities for instance in terms of language barriers, value confusions, intergenerational differences and other mutually exclusive norms often is accompanied by a price higher in terms of social harmony and personal sense of wellbeing or meaning. Culture is diverse in nature so what matters are its quality and its influences not its diversity per se. Cultural diversity must, however, be traded off against the benefits of shared cultural values.

Human existence are complemented through exposure to heterogeneous cultural practices, and knowledge and impoverished by restriction of such exposure. Our lives can be reinforced by such exposure even if they may be rejected as unappealing by some. Intercultural empathy is gaining importance in a culturally globalised world, so there is a need to understand, respect and appreciate diverse cultural practices even though we may not toe the line. Contrariwise, or wellbeing can be abused if others deliberately or even unintentionally disparage our cultural practices or restrict our freedom to express our sense of cultural identity.

We must, thus, respect two kinds of *qualified* cultural considerations: a) exposure to cultural diversity conditioned upon the fact that the benefits of the beliefs and practices must outweigh the costs, and b) freedom to express our cultural identity with the provision that in doing so we don't cause avoidable harm to others. Bearing in mind these crucial qualifications, we can expect that both the preservation of cultural heritage and facilitation of cultural diversification are better than allowing heritage to be lost, practices to wane, and global culture to homogenize. Exceptions to this default valuation of diversity would, of course, be cultural practices that are known to cause avoidable harm. As for instances, many cultural traditions engages in medical and ritualized treatments that may involve severe and unnecessary bodily mutilation and psychological harm. Now if such practices are recognized it would be disrespectful and dishonest not to question the morality of such practices, especially when we happen to be aware that vulnerable people are exposed to them.



Promoting happiness with a cultural lens must thus involve looking at people's diverse purposes, and considering carefully the cultural means, social processes and power relations through which they are learned and pursued. An instrumental approach must also ensure that the views, needs and realities of those being considered are at the crux of our efforts, including any unintentional harm that may result even from the well-intended cultural interventions.

Both China and India is home to many ethnic groups and there is complex multiculturalism in both these countries. A geocentric orientation acknowledging people's diversity ensures social wellbeing. Openness to diversity across promotes satisfaction and happiness. The acknowledgement of multifaceted, multiple identities could lead to a lesser urge to construct imagined cultural boundaries around ourselves. Our plural identities cannot be understated for peacefully coexistent but diverse social and political orders.

The conceptualization of multiple identities and complementary identities is a significant contribution that emphasises continuity and commonalities between cultures and individuals. This is a major direction in moving away from conceptualisations of culture as differences and boundaries. Multiple identities of the members of a society may not perfectly overlap, or be shared. It means that in the set of multiple identities, each individual will be characterised by differences as well as commonalities with others.

Rich cultural heritage provides the options and choices for us to select life plans. So not having a rich and intact culture is a diminishment of choices. A state which cannot its cultural richness is thus one where the choices of its citizens are constrained.

## **Conclusion**

Research suggests that the importance of paying attention to the complexity of policy making, implementation and the way development is negotiated and contested by variously positioned actors. The crucial message concerning the happiness lens is that it is a potentially very powerful and complex lens for cultural analysis and promotion.

Culture, like happiness, is recognized as elusive by some – based on the argument that it is barely if at all within the reach of deliberate policy manipulation. Further it is posited, if happiness is rarely an explicit policy goal, this is doubtless largely due to the belief that whatever influences policies may have on happiness, they are very indirect and mediated through a multiplicity of personal, social, and environmental factors that aren't directly submissive to practical control. The vital importance of culture has often been undervalued, downplayed and marginalized in dominant development approaches and organizations.

It is also worth keeping in mind that in a rapidly changing world, urgent research is needed to document and understand the way multiple drivers of change are impacting women's and men's ability to remain happy and not only maintain but improve their wellbeing within shifting circumstances and changing identities. Valuable cultural practices, languages, spiritual beliefs that are also scientifically and environmentally sound, indigenous peoples, ways of life and connectedness that contribute to wellbeing and happiness should not get lost at the cross-currents of such rapid change.

Wellbeing of people should be such that ensure people must not be merely adapting to change or barely improving lives, but their lives are being transformed in ways that improve their happiness and wellbeing in ways that are positive.

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### **Key Terms:**

*Xingfu*: This is a term found in Daoism refereeing to happiness. It encompasses friendship, learning, and virtue.

**SWB**: SWB is an acronym of the psychological term- Subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is a self-reported measure of well-being developed by Ed Diener. It refers to how people experience and evaluate their lives and specific domains and activities in their lives.

*Eudaimonia*: This is a Greek word which means to live a human life well. Eudaimonia is not a state of mind, nor is it simply the experience of joys and pleasures. This is an objective standard of happiness based on which humans have a flourishing life.

*Hedonia*: This is characterized by pleasure. Hedonia is striving to experience pleasure, enjoyment and comfort.

*Pratītyasamutpāda vada*: This is the theory of dependent origination. This is a particular teaching in Buddhism that deals with the phenomena or perpetual changes affected by our fruits of actions, the vicissitudes of life, all of which come from direct and indirect causes.

*Sat-cit-ananda*: This is an epithet and description relating to the subjective experience of the absolute unchanging reality as believed in the ancient Indian Philosophy. It is the experience of the truth, consciousness leading to bliss.

**GNH**: GNH is the short form of Gross National Happiness or Gross Domestic Happiness that included an index which is used to measure the collective happiness and well-being of a population.