

# Happiness - Non Economic aspect of well being

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**Abstract:** Present paper is aimed at to understand the causes of happiness other than money. Happiness is the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being; combined with it the happiness is the sense of one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile. Research studies show that happiness is not result of jumping from one joy to next rather it is state of satisfaction. Money buys freedom from worry about the basics in life-housing, food and clothing. It cannot bring happiness. There are number of contributing factors for happiness like genetic makeup,(health), life circumstances, achievements, marital status, social relationships and even our neighbors. India is ranked 50th on Happy Planet Index. Lesser developed countries like Costa Rica and Pakistan are higher on same index whereas highly advanced countries like Japan, Germany and France rank lower. The USA doesn't even feature in the top 50. Happiness does not come from outside. It is the state of mind. It comes when a person learns to live in harmony with himself, accepts his weakness and strengths adapts to his environment and remains calm in the face of difficulties.

**Key Words:** Happiness, Social, Happy Planet Index, Environment and Pro-social Behavior

## INTRODUCTION:

*Happiness is not in mere possession of money, it lies in joy of achievement in thrill of creative effort.*

Franklin. D. Roosevelt

Happiness is state of well being, that is living a good life with a sense of meaning and deep satisfaction. Research studies show that happiness is not result of jumping from one joy to next rather it is state of satisfaction. Achieving happiness sometime is result of considerable hardships and discomforts. Money is important for happiness, but to a certain extent. Money buys freedom from worry about the basics in life-housing, food and clothing. It cannot bring happiness. Money can buy beds but not sleep. There are number of contributing factors for happiness like genetic makeup,(health), life circumstances, achievements, marital status, social relationships and even our neighbors.

To understand the causes and effects of happiness, first we need to define it. Number of times researchers use the term happiness interchangeably with "subjective well-being," which they measure by simply asking people to report how satisfied they feel with their own lives and how much meaningful, and worthwhile." positive and negative emotion they're experiencing. Sonja Lyubomirsky in her book "The How of happiness" elaborates as "the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a , the happiness sense of one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile."

## If not Money what else can else bring for happiness:

India is ranked 50th on Happy Planet Index. Lesser developed countries like Costa Rica and Pakistan are higher on same index whereas highly advanced countries like Japan, Germany and France rank lower. The USA doesn't even feature in the top 50. This survey shows that money is not the sole criterion for happiness.

The most important factors for happiness are:

## Genetic makeup or Health:

From different studies it is very much evident that our preferences behaviors, emotions and our attitudes are affected to some extent by our biological inheritance. (Buss,1999 Nisbett 1990, Schmitt 2004). Health is a positive state of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being, not merely absence of disease and infirmity. Each of these components is interdependent and absence of any one leads to overall health deficits.

Health can be linked to a bank account where deposits and withdrawal take place everyday. If regular deposits are not made in each of components of health accounts then our health deteriorates as we age. So make regular deposits to protect the different elements of health. Health bank consist of four types of accounts physical, social, emotional and spiritual. In our physical account we should have deposits of fitness, cleanliness and good nutrition. Where as emotional account should have deposits of positive attitude and hobbies, in social account self confidence and interdependence, and spiritual account should have pro social behavior and self realization deposits. At the same time health withdrawals are also of four types. Bad habits, unhygienic living and illness are physical withdrawals, stress anxiety and mood swings emotional, low self esteem and poor interpersonal skills social and lack of direction are spiritual withdrawals. For remaining happy we should have least withdrawals and maximum deposits. For keeping good health or

positive health, one should try to reduce the health withdrawal beside this through maintaining major hygiene controlling lifestyle-related risk factors and watching our diet, we can take responsibility for our health. Regular exercise especially yoga helps to a longer extent for keeping us healthy. Healthy person means a more productive & efficient person. Productivity and efficiency are major contributing factors of happiness. Genetic makeup is also responsible for having a good state of health.

*"Genetics Load the gun, lifestyle pulls the trigger".*

(Dr. Dasan)

Metabolic syndrome (Syndrome X) makes Indians more susceptible to heart attack, hypertension & diabetes. But by following healthy life style we can prevent all these diseases. On the contrary, by adopting sedentary lifestyle and fast food, we are driving ourselves towards these diseases at a much younger age. A recent study on the genetics of happiness by Stacey Kennelly (2012), showed that there is strong positive relationship between genetic make up and happiness. The famous 50-10-40% formula is important work done by positive psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky. She argued that approximately 50% of variance in happiness is determined by genes, 10% variance is determined by circumstances. Automatically that would leave 40% which is influenced by our attitude, actions and the way we handle the situations.

### **Our attitude contributes to our happiness:**

Attitude is one of the most important words of English Language. It applies to every sphere of life, including one's personal & professional life. A study attributed to Harvard University found that when a person gets a job 85% of the time it is because of their attitude, only 15% of the time because of how smart they are and how many facts & figures they know. The foundation of our success & happiness is our attitude when our attitude is right or positive, we realize that we are walking on acres & acres of diamonds, i.e. opportunities are always under our feet. A person with positive attitude always sees half full glass of water rather than half empty glass, his this positive thinking makes him happy.

**Environment:** Environment consists of the following

- Home: positive or negative enhance
- School: peer pressure
- Work: Supportive or over critical supervisor
- Media: Television, newspaper, magazines, radio & movies
- Cultural background
- Religious background
- Traditional & beliefs
- Social environment
- Political environment

All these components of environment create a culture, every place be it a home, organization or a country has culture. In homes, where parents are well-behaved, honest, courteous, positive attitude and affectionate, the children of these families are much happier than the families where environment is less supportive and non congenial. Similarly in countries where government and political environment is honest, we generally find that the people are honest, law abiding & helpful. These countries having high happiness index.

### **Good personal and intimate relationships such as marriage, the family & friendships:-**

According to Carl-Jung (1960) there are five factors responsible for happiness where personal & intimate relationships are very important factor among these five factors.

Much of our life is spent interacting with other people and this tendency to affiliate, seems to have neurobiological basis (Row 1996). It is very much true since from our birth we need affiliation for our survival. For young ones it is mother in latter childhood peer group, in adulthood it is opposite sex partner. This bond of affiliation makes us happy when the affiliations needs are not met, people ignore you, this experience is unpleasant and makes you unhappy (Faulkner & Williams 1999). When we left out by others, it hurts and makes us sad & unhappy (Buckly, Winkel & Leary 2003). It has been proved by many studies that the individuals who have strong family support system committed friendship & faithful spouse are much and happy than those individual who lacks strong family support system.

Familial relationships & friendships affect happiness and can also be impacted by a person's level of positive affect. Our ability to make friends often affects our self esteem. A study of (Argyle Le 1990) has proved that people with extrovert personalities are more happy than introverts. A study across 17 counties found that marriage increases the levels of happiness. The study also emphasizes the secondary effects of matrimony, such as emotional & financial support provided by partner (stack and Esheman 1998).

**Pro-social behavior:**

It is behavior or actions by individuals that help others with no immediate benefit to the helper. The people who are engaged in pro-social actions are much more satisfied and happy than those persons who are non-empathetic to others. According to empathetic joy hypothesis (Smith, Keating & Stotland 1989) that a helper responds to the needs of a victim because they want to accomplish something and doing so is rewarding in and of itself. When we know that our actions had a positive impact on victim's life we feel good & joyful. Similarly empathetic & altruistic actions also give us lot of happiness and satisfaction (Empathy-altruism hypothesis - Batson, Duncan & Birch 1981). So if we want to stay happy arrange yourself in pro-social actions i.e. help others without expecting any benefit.

At the same time prosocial actions also reduces the unpleasant feelings. According to Negative state relief model (Cialdini, Baumann & Kenrick 1981) pro-social actions allow us to reduce our own negative unpleasant emotions. In other words we do a good thing to stop feeling bad. Where any one engaged in a pro-social act, it improves one's own negative mood.

**Other important factors affecting the happiness:**

- Work-life balance: Proper balance between work and leisure keeps the individual happy.
- Good working conditions, including impartial employer or higher authorities are also key factors responsible for happiness.
- Level of autonomy in various decisions making processes of one's life.
- Corruption free government: The countries which are at top of happiness index scale are having corruption free government (word happiness report).
- Generosity: The people who are frequently involved in social welfare work or doing charity are happier than non generous persons.
- Good mental health: In rich countries the biggest cause of misery is poor mental health.
- Self Realization: It holds a significant position in the life as it helps to realize the real cause of the life.

**Conclusion:**

The ultimate aim of life is happiness, we all are seeking happiness. But it is most elusive thing. The reason lies in people's wrong values interests and pursuits. They equate happiness with acquisition of worldly goods. But happiness does not come from outside. It is the state of mind. It comes when a person learns to live in harmony with himself, accepts his weakness and strengths adapts to his environment and remains calm in the face of difficulties. The inner state of satisfactions can be achieved by getting lot of money rather it can be achieved by accomplishing something difficult and useful for others. That is why sometimes even most wealthy people are unhappy whereas a poor worker who gets his wages in evening feels much happier and satisfied by getting the small thing he can buy with his wages. No man has a right to demand happiness unless he can radiate happiness to others. So let us work together to make a corruption free, sensitive and empathetic society for always remaining happy.

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