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## THE RATIONALE FOR HAPPINESS CURRICULUM IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** As we look around, we can see that the world is constantly changing, and this can be particularly challenging for young people. There are many stressors that can impact their well-being and development, including family conflicts, peer interactions, socio-cultural components, and physical and mental health risk factors. Unfortunately, the impact of these stressors can be severe and long-lasting, with research indicating that many young people struggle with depression, anxiety, and even suicide due to these challenges.

To address these issues, it is crucial that we rethink the purpose of higher education. Rather than just focusing on academic performance or job creation, colleges need to prioritize the well-being and happiness of their students. By implementing a curriculum that fosters emotional intelligence, we can create a more nurturing environment that promotes growth and development. This approach will help young people to not only succeed academically but also develop a deeper understanding of themselves and others.

As educationists, we can work together to create a better future for our young mass. By focusing on their well-being and happiness, we can create a more balanced and supportive environment that promotes growth and development. The implementation of the Happiness Curriculum in the higher education framework is one way to achieve this goal.

Keywords : Youth, Unhappiness, Happiness Curriculum

### Significance of the study:

It is concerning to note that India's ranking in the 2017 World Happiness Report is 122 out of 155 countries. However, this presents an opportunity for us to concentrate on improving the overall happiness and well-being of our citizens. By identifying areas of concern and implementing effective policies and initiatives, we can work towards creating a more fulfilling and content society for all. As a developing country, it is imperative that we provide our people with every opportunity to succeed, and this includes a curriculum that not only promotes academic excellence but also fosters happiness, confidence, and self-awareness among students. Education is a transformative process that can lead to meaningful change and enhance human potential in countless ways. Its purpose is to shape and influence individuals, creating a socially responsible and matured citizenry that is capable of achieving great things. At the heart of this process lies the pursuit of happiness, a universally cherished objective that can contribute to the well-being of both individuals and society. Through education, we can strive towards a brighter future, building a world that is more just, equitable, and fulfilling for all. The concept of the Happiness Curriculum is a positive step in this direction, and it is crucial that we implement this curriculum in higher education. A 'Happiness Curriculum' will offer students enrichment opportunities, self-learning, peer-learning, and group learning, and will ensure that they are better equipped to face the challenges of the future. The pursuit of happiness is a noble aim for any individual. It is also a worthy goal for education. This paper explores the ways in which education can contribute to the happiness of students and society as a whole. The paper in question takes a constructive approach to examining the relationship between happiness and education, with a focus on understanding happiness as a positive mental state. By drawing on a range of insights and research from

various disciplines, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of this topic, highlighting key insights that can help inform and shape educational practices.

The paper highlights the need for researchers, academicians, and government bodies to re-evaluate the curriculum in higher education and consider ways to promote a positive mindset among the youth. By doing so, we can create a more empowered and socially responsible citizenry, capable of achieving great things and contributing to the betterment of society.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The main objectives of the study are:

- 1) To understand the role of education in transforming the mind-sets of the Youths.
- 2) To study the factors that influence the Happiness Indicators/Unhappiness Indicators among the Youths of India
- 3) To ponder into the enthusiasm of understanding that how Happiness Curriculum can transform the pessimism among the youths to optimism in India

### **Review of Literature:**

- 1) **HAPPINESS AS AN AIM OF EDUCATION FROM THE JOURNAL HUMAN AFFAIRS**  
**[HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1515/HUMAFF-2021-0014](https://doi.org/10.1515/HUMAFF-2021-0014) :**

This paper explores happiness as an aim of education, particularly schooling. What role does happiness play in philosophy of education? How do critics view the aims of public schooling today and its relation to happiness? Is happiness embedded in the concept of education as an aim of education? The paper explores happiness—understood inclusively as a positive mental state—by examining the relevant literature from various disciplines. It looks briefly at critical views of current trends in public school practice and concludes that happiness is not a central concern in present public school practice. Turning to philosophy of education, the author finds that happiness has been considered in relation to the philosophical conception of the human self and consequently eudaimonia has been prioritized over hedonia. The paper concludes by proposing that happiness is an appropriate and valid aim of education and schooling based on the normative implications of the concept of education.

- 2) **THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS IN EDUCATION: A RESEARCH REPORT- IMPACT EVALUATION OF THE HAPPINESS CURRICULUM ON BUILDING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS OF STUDENTS** [https://scert.delhi.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-05/happiness\\_study\\_2022\\_v0.26\\_1\\_compressed.pdf](https://scert.delhi.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-05/happiness_study_2022_v0.26_1_compressed.pdf):

The study “The Pursuit of Happiness in Education: A Research Report by SCERT, Delhi and Dream a Dream”, has represented the evolution of the curriculum from its conception to the present, taking into account the challenging pandemic years. It provides empirical evidence of the impact of the curriculum on students’ well-being and teachers’ ability to help students develop their social-emotional skills. Also, it delves deeper into the experiences, and perceptions of the beneficiaries. It encompasses the observations made inside the Happiness classes to inform teaching practises and student engagement.

- 3) **INFLUENCE OF COLLEGE EDUCATION ON HAPPINESS: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY BASED ON HIGHER EDUCATION EXPANSION IN CHINA BY JUNFENG JIANG**  
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The Paper has documented a positive association between college education and happiness. Based on the Chinese General Social Survey data of 2017, the present study used the quasi-experiment of China's higher education expansion started in 1999 to construct a fuzzy regression discontinuity design to examine the causal association between college education and happiness. The study observes that college education indeed improved Chinese happiness, but this positive association was stronger in males than in females. Further, college education was observed to improve happiness by improving individual political status, perceived personal status, health and family social status, but not by increasing personal income. Accordingly, the government should continue to promote the development of higher education, and the fairness of higher education development deserves more attention to reduce population disparities in happiness.

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- 4) **PROMOTING WELLBEING THROUGH POSITIVE EDUCATION: A CRITICAL REVIEW AND PROPOSED SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL APPROACH**

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 AND RACHEL GOLDFARB VIEW ALL AUTHORS AND AFFILIATIONS :

The study explains that Youth wellbeing is a pressing international problem, and it is a key concern of educational institutions, considering the substantial amount of time that youth spend in school. Educators require empirically validated and theoretically sound methods to support students' wellbeing. This article critically examines the literature on youth wellbeing and interventions in positive education and proposes an innovative, social ecological approach to promoting wellbeing in education.

- 5) **KUMAR, S., VERMA, A. K., BHATTACHARYA, S., & RATHORE, S. (2013). TRENDS IN RATES AND METHODS OF SUICIDE IN INDIA. EGYPTIAN JOURNAL OF FORENSIC SCIENCES, 3(3), 75-80.**

This is a 5-year study done to evaluate the rates, trends, and distribution over a densely populated area of India. The most important problem in Lucknow is that there is no data bank for suicide cases. This causes the suicide problem to be underestimated and, thus, neglected by the government, although this problem seems to be universal. The last data found regarding suicide rates in Lucknow, according to the NCRB, were in 1994. The rate substantially exceeded the 3.2 per estimated midyear population (in lakh) reported by the NCRB for Lucknow in 1994.

### **The concept of Happiness:**

Education is a multi-faceted concept that involves a process and activity aimed at acquiring new abilities and characteristics deemed worthwhile, desired, or valued. In addition to acquiring knowledge and skills, education also involves fostering personal growth and development. Richard Stanley Peters' definition of education provides a framework for understanding the ethical considerations involved in education. According to Peters, education's aim must be justified and transmitted in a morally unobjectionable manner.

In recent years, happiness has been recognized as an essential component of a well-rounded education. It is a universally valued and desired state of mind that promotes personal growth and development. Economic productivity and academic skills are secondary aims to the pursuit of happiness. Happiness is a subjective measure of contentment, quality of life, and satisfaction with one's health, wealth, status, and achievement.

Various studies have explored the factors that govern the attainment of happiness. There seems to be little relationship between trust in institutions and a nation's reported happiness. However, people's perception of their social status, which is often tied to income, seems to matter. Religion also seems to make little difference, although those who are very religious are more likely to describe themselves as happy than those who are not.

O'Brien (2008) has developed a concept of happiness that contributes to individual, community, or global well-being without exploiting other people, the environment, or future generations. This definition highlights the importance of ethical considerations in the pursuit of happiness. In summary, the pursuit of happiness is an essential aspect of a well-rounded education, and its attainment is governed by various factors that must be considered in a morally unobjectionable manner.

The Happiness Index measures life satisfaction, the feeling of happiness, and other happiness domains: psychological well-being, health, time balance, community, social support, education, arts and culture, environment, governance, material well-being, and work (Happiness Alliance, 2014c). The qualities measured in the domains are as follows<sup>1</sup>:

- Psychological Well-Being: optimism, a sense of purpose and accomplishment;
- Health: energy level and ability to perform everyday activities;
- Time Balance: enjoyment, feeling rushed, and sense of leisure;
- Community: the sense of belonging, volunteerism, and sense of safety;
- Social Support: satisfaction with friends and family, feeling loved, and feeling lonely;
- Education, Arts, and Culture: access to cultural and educational events and diversity;
- Environment: access to nature, pollution, and conservation;
- Governance: trust in government, sense of corruption, and competency;
- Material Well-Being: financial security and meeting basic needs; and
- Work: compensation, autonomy, and productivity. (Happiness Alliance, 2014c)

### Why are the Youths unhappy today?

#### 1) Convenience:

The current generation has an abundance of choices that their parents could not even imagine. With the advent of technology, they have become accustomed to convenience in every aspect of their lives. However, this convenience has a flip side. It can either make or break things for the youth. Their approach to everything is convenient, and they tend to call it quits the moment they step out of their comfort zone. It is crucial to find a balance between convenience and perseverance to ensure a healthy and successful future for the youth.

#### 2) Relationships

The popularity of online dating has had a negative impact on relationships. Nowadays, many young people prioritize convenience over commitment, leading to a lack of interest as soon as things become complicated. They choose partners based solely on shared interests, resulting in fragile and short-lived relationships. The abundance of options available to them also makes it easier to stray from their current partner. In today's world, dating has become superficial, and commitment is often not a priority. It is important to recognize the value of commitment and make an effort to build meaningful relationships for a fulfilling future. When things get tough, many people give up and leave their comfort zone, but this approach may not lead to long-term happiness.



### 3) Career Issues:

In today's dynamic world, the meaning of a successful career has undergone a paradigm shift. People are no longer inclined to stick to a job that doesn't align with their goals or values. Instead, they prefer to explore different opportunities and switch jobs to find their true calling. This approach may seem alluring, but it often comes with a price. The cost of following your passion can be high, and it may lead to severed relationships and unfulfilled obligations. Therefore, it's crucial to strike a balance between pursuing your dreams and maintaining healthy relationships with your loved ones and colleagues.

### 4) Social Life:

It's true that today's youth have a vast social circle, but that doesn't always lead to genuine satisfaction. Despite having friends from work, college, and online, many young people still feel lonely. The pressure to maintain a certain image and behave in a certain way can be frustrating, and the pursuit of being "cool" can often lead to a lack of true happiness and love. While checking out new places and experiences can be enjoyable, it's important to prioritize genuine connections and relationships with others.

### 5) Economic challenges:

India has made tremendous progress in terms of economic growth, but poverty and financial instability are still major issues in the country. Many young people are struggling to find employment opportunities and access quality education, which can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction. It's important for the government and society as a whole to prioritize addressing these issues and creating a more equitable society where all individuals have access to opportunities and resources.

### 6) Education and employment:

India's education system has faced criticism for its outdated reliance on rote learning. This approach can hinder the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are increasingly crucial in today's job market. Additionally, the number of graduates far exceeds available jobs, leading to high rates of underemployment and unemployment. These are pressing issues that must be addressed to enhance the quality of education and expand employment prospects for the younger generation.

### 7) Social pressure and expectations:

India has made considerable progress in terms of economic growth, but poverty and financial instability continue to present significant challenges in the country. In particular, many young people face difficulties in securing employment opportunities and accessing quality education, which can lead to feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction. To address these issues and foster a more equitable society where all individuals have access to opportunities and resources, it is crucial for the government and society as a whole to prioritize and implement effective solutions.

In Indian society, there is a notable emphasis on academic and professional success, as well as significant personal milestones such as marriage and starting a family. This can create substantial pressure for young people, particularly when they face additional life challenges. It is important to recognize that everyone's path in life is unique and that there are numerous ways to define success and fulfillment. Therefore, it is important to encourage and support young people in finding their own paths and aspirations, rather than imposing societal expectations upon them.

### 8) Mental health stigma:

It's unfortunate that mental health issues are not openly discussed in India, and there is a lack of awareness and understanding of mental health concerns. This can be especially challenging for young people who may feel isolated and unsupported. It's important for society as a whole to prioritize mental health awareness and education so that individuals can receive the support and resources they need.

### 9) **Urbanization and changing lifestyles:**

The rapid urbanization process in India has resulted in a significant shift in the lifestyle patterns of the youth. For those who have migrated from rural areas to urban cities, the transition can pose a considerable challenge. The high cost of living, overcrowding, and environmental pollution are among the key issues that exacerbate the situation.

It is pertinent that policymakers and stakeholders in India take cognizance of the challenges faced by the urban youth and establish appropriate support systems to help them adapt to city life. Addressing these challenges will require a multi-faceted approach that includes the provision of affordable housing, the creation of job opportunities, and the implementation of policies that promote environmental sustainability.

Overall, the successful integration of the youth into urban living is critical for the development of the country as a whole. Therefore, it is crucial that all stakeholders work collaboratively to ensure that the needs of the urban youth are adequately met.

### 10) **Gender inequality:**

Although there have been some advancements made in recent times, it is disheartening to note that gender inequality still endures in India. Especially for young women, there are several hurdles to overcome in terms of education, employment, safety, and societal norms, which can lead to a sense of discontent and misery. It is crucial for society to strive towards a more balanced and equitable future, by extending support and opening up avenues for women to flourish and attain their utmost potential.

### 11) **Lack of access to resources:**

In India, it is important to acknowledge that young people may face challenges related to accessing essential resources such as clean water, sanitation, healthcare, and safe housing. These challenges can impact their sense of safety and well-being. While the root causes of unhappiness among young people are complex and multifaceted, it is crucial to understand these challenges in order to identify ways to support them and enhance their overall quality of life.

### **Way out for the youth unhappiness:**

#### 1) **Finding supportive listening:**

It's really important for teenagers to have someone to talk to when they're feeling down. Bottling up emotions can make things worse and lead to more serious problems. Parents can definitely play a crucial role in encouraging their teenagers to open up and seek help when they need it. It's also important for parents to help their teenagers understand that emotions can be powerful, but they shouldn't always guide decision-making. If a teenager is struggling and feeling overwhelmed, it's important for parents to be there for them and offer support to prevent any potential harm.

#### 2) **Using unhappiness as an instructor:**

It's true that when we face unhappiness, it's important to identify the underlying problem and work towards finding a solution. Sometimes, the loss of something that contributed to our happiness can suggest what we need to replenish. For example, if we feel bored, it may be time to develop new interests; if we feel lonely, it may be time to find new companionship; if we feel hopeless, it may be time to set new objectives to look forward to; and if we feel rejected, it may be time to find other dimensions of ourselves to affirm.

#### 3) **Positively reframing thinking:**

Attitudes impact emotions, and expectations can have a profound effect. Anticipating favorable outcomes generates hope, while anticipating unfavorable outcomes provokes worry. Parents need to be help-givers and hope-givers to their children. When feeling unhappy, it's helpful to ask, "What am I thinking, and how might changing those thoughts encourage me to feel better?" Young people can reframe their thoughts positively to affect their sentiments.

#### 4) Taking rejuvenating action:

It's important to remember that actions can have a significant impact on our emotions. Engaging in activities such as watching a funny movie, exercising, doing volunteer work, or simply smiling at oneself in the mirror can help improve our mood and make us feel better. If you're feeling down, it's essential to ask yourself, "What can I do to help myself feel better?" By taking small, positive steps towards improving your emotional well-being, you can make a big difference in how you feel. So, focus on the things that make you happy and take action to boost your mood.

#### Happiness and Education:

Education is not just about academic achievements. It is about developing well-rounded individuals who are capable of achieving great things and contributing positively to society. To achieve this, we need to provide a comprehensive and holistic education that does not omit emotional, social, moral, physical, spiritual, and aesthetic aims. Happiness, which is a humanistic value, can be attained through education that emphasizes the cultivation of humanity. Ethical, liberal, or democratic education can be the catalyst in developing individuals into responsible and well-rounded citizens. Therefore, it is crucial that we re-evaluate the curriculum in higher education and consider ways to promote a positive mind-set among the youth. By doing so, we can create a more empowered and socially responsible citizenry, capable of achieving great things and contributing to the betterment of society. Education is a complex concept that encompasses both a process and an activity that leads to productive and constructive change. It is generally aimed at acquiring new abilities and characteristics that are deemed worthwhile, desired, or valued. Learning is an integral part of education, and it is seen as an active process that intentionally induces learning. It is important to note, however, that the concept of education is multifaceted and can be viewed from different perspectives.

While there are many different aims of education, happiness is increasingly being recognized as a crucial aspect of a well-rounded education. This is because education is not just about acquiring knowledge and skills, but also about fostering personal growth and development. Happiness is an essential component of personal growth and development, as it promotes a positive mind-set, confidence, and self-awareness among students.

Richard Stanley Peters' definition of education provides a useful framework for understanding the aims of education. According to Peters, for the aim of education to be valid, it must be justified and transmitted in a morally unobjectionable manner. This means that education must be conducted in a way that is ethically responsible and aligned with societal values and norms.

In summary, education is a multifaceted concept that involves both a process and an activity aimed at acquiring new abilities and characteristics. The aim of education is an important consideration, and happiness is increasingly being recognized as a crucial aspect of a well-rounded education. Peters' definition of education provides a useful framework for understanding the ethical considerations involved in education.

#### Suggestive Curriculum:

Recently, the New Education Policy, 2020 has included the Value Based Education section in the Curriculum of the Higher education framework, so why not include the Happiness Curriculum as part of it?

The Happiness Curriculum if included has the potential to be a great addition to higher education, with syllabus components such as an introduction to positive psychology, mindfulness and meditation, emotional intelligence, relationships and communication, resilience and coping strategies, and personal growth and self-reflection. The following are the suggestive areas that can be included in the Happiness Curriculum for the college students:

- a) An introduction to positive psychology can be included to prioritize mental health and well-being over just treating mental illness.
- b) Mindfulness and meditation can be taught as practices that promote mindfulness, which can help students manage stress and anxiety and regulate emotions.

- c) Emotional intelligence can be taught as a course to help students understand and manage their emotions while empathizing with others' emotions.
- d) The course on relationships and communication can focus on developing healthy relationships and communication skills, which can reduce feelings of isolation and improve social support.
- e) The course on resilience and coping strategies can help students develop resilience and effective coping strategies to handle adversity and stress.
- f) The course on personal growth and self-reflection can encourage self-reflection and personal growth, which can help students identify their values and goals and make informed decisions.

### Conclusion:

Overall, the Happiness Curriculum has the potential to equip students with the skills and knowledge they need for a fulfilling life through its various components. The attempt to include the Happiness Curriculum will be an interesting initiative aimed at helping youths discover and experience happiness in its various forms, not just momentarily but also in deeper and more sustainable ways. By focusing on this aspect, learners will be able to understand happiness within themselves, their relationships, and society. This shift in perspective will help them move away from seeking happiness solely through external stimuli and enable them to cultivate it within themselves through learning and awareness, leading to the continuity of values.

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