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CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH BIHAR
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**CUSB
DEVELOPMENT
FORUM**

Theme No.1:
**THE WORLD
HAPPINES INDEX
2021**



"The *World Happiness Report* has proven to be an indispensable tool for policymakers looking to better understand what makes people happy."

Jeffrey Sachs, SDSN Director

A Bimonthly Publication from the Department of Development Studies



WORLD HAPPINESS INDEX - 2021

Introduction

Dissemination of information is the key to transformation of a knowledge society. With this end in view, *Development Forum*, the Bimonthly magazine of the Department of Development Studies @ CUSB, Gaya, in its Inaugural Issue, prepared by the Head of the Department of Development Studies, **Prof. Krishnan Chalil**, deals with the theme *World Happiness Index 2021* and its implications on the contemporary currents of socio-political thought, economic thinking and Development Planning. Especially in these times, when nations across the world are grappling to come to terms with a global pandemic like COVID-19, a swift repair of torn lives and crippled livelihoods, is the paramount need of the hour. Empathy for the misery of the multitude and a pro-active approach to enhance human capabilities, is crucial to enhance the cumulative happiness of the human race and needs immediate attention.

It is in this context, that these words of Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and author of the classic, *The End of Poverty*, "...when a society is economically dominant, it is easy for its members to assume that such dominance reflects a deeper superiority--whether religious, racial, genetic, cultural, or institutional--rather than an accident of timing or geography...", is both timely and instructive to help us understand the skewness in economic growth and lack of rise in happiness levels across the world.

The ultimate aim of every country is to ensure maximum happiness and welfare to its citizens. In that direction, several programmes and schemes are implemented and the growth of the country has been generally measured in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Per capita or general level of employment or consumption. However, these classical econometric indicators, have failed to capture the essence of people's happiness. Therefore a new concept called '*Happiness Index*' has been evolved over time. It is herein that Development analysts and policy makers have started prioritizing

happiness over other quantifiable, mundane factors like wealth, comfort or economic growth. For example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) committed itself "to redefine the growth narrative to put people's well-being at the centre of governments' efforts" in 2016. In February 2017, the United Arab Emirates held a full-day World Happiness Meeting, as part of the World Government Summit.

History

In July 2011, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution titled, '*Happiness: Towards a Holistic Definition of Development*' inviting member countries to measure the happiness of their people and to use the data to help guide public policy. On April 2, 2012, this was followed by the first UN High Level Meeting called '*Well-being and Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm*', which was chaired by the then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the then Prime Minister Jigmi Thinley of Bhutan, a Nation that adopted gross national happiness instead of gross domestic product as their main development indicator. The first World Happiness Report was prepared in support of that meeting and reviewing evidence from the emerging science of happiness. Accordingly, the first World Happiness Report was released on April 1, 2012 as a foundational text for the UN *High Level Meeting* drawing international attention.

Successive World Happiness Reports

The First Report outlined the State of World Happiness, causes of happiness and misery, and policy implications highlighted by case studies. In 2013, the Second World Happiness Report was issued, and in 2015 the third. Since 2016, it has been issued on an annual basis on the 20th of March, to coincide with the UN's International Day of Happiness. The Fourth World Happiness Report 2016 ranked 156 countries by their happiness levels. The Fifth Happiness Report was released in 2017. The Sixth World Happiness Report 2018, ranked 156 countries by their happiness levels, and 117 countries

by the happiness of their immigrants. The Seventh World Happiness Report 2019 focusses on happiness and the community; as to how happiness has evolved over the past dozen years, with a focus on the technologies, social norms, conflicts and government policies that have driven those changes. The Eighth World Happiness Report 2020 for the first time ranked cities around the world by their subjective well-being and digs more deeply into how the social, urban and natural environments combine to affect our happiness. The World Happiness Report 2021, the Ninth in the series, focused on the effects of Covid-19 and how people all over the world have fared. It ranks the world's 149 countries on "how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be".

Methodology of Happiness Index

The Happiness Index is calculated by averaging the survey results of the respondents. In the survey, the respondents were asked to rate their happiness on a scale from 0 to 10. In the 2012 World Happiness Report, the Happiness Index was defined as "...the weighted (by sampling weights) rate of respondents reporting 'Very happy' or 'Quite happy' less the weighted rate of respondents reporting 'Not very happy' or 'Not at all happy,' plus 100. The index thus ranges from 0 to 200..." The World Happiness Report has steered away from this definition ever since. The report now determines the same concept as that of a "Happiness ladder". The Cantril Ladder or the Happiness Ladder is used by researchers where the sample population is asked to rank their satisfaction with respect to their present living conditions. The ladder is assumed to be numbered from 0-10, where 10 represents the best possible life and living conditions whereas 0 presents the worst possible life and living conditions. More than a million samples have been taken in total from across various nations, and their answers have been used to create the yearly Happiness Index. The score lies between zero and ten.

World Happiness Report 2021 and the Gallup World Poll

The World Happiness Report is a publication of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), powered by data from the Gallup World Poll and Lloyd's Register Foundation, who provided access to the World Risk Poll. The 2021 Report includes data from the ICL-YouGov Behaviour Tracker as part of the COVID Data Hub. The Report is supported by The Ernesto Illy Foundation, illycaffè, Davines Group, The Blue Chip Foundation, The William, Jeff, and Jennifer Gross Family Foundation, The Happier Way Foundation, Indeed, and Unilever's largest ice cream brand, Wall's. The World Happiness Report sources its data from the Gallup World Poll. Gallup – the organization behind this enormous poll – interviews approximately 1,000 residents per country each year. Gallup interviews these people in over 150

countries around the world. These people are randomly selected, as long as they are registered civilians of the country (non-institutionalized) and aged 15 and older. Each respondent in this happiness survey is asked the same questions in his or her own language to produce statistically comparable results.

Key variables of the Happiness Index 2021

The authors of the World Happiness Report have determined 7 key factors that are correlated most to the Happiness Index. They are: GDP per capita, Social support, Healthy life expectancy, Freedom to make life choices, Generosity, perceptions of corruption and some unexplained variables.

Top 10 happiest countries with scores were as follows

1. Finland (7.842), 2. Denmark (7.620), 3. Switzerland (7.571), 4. Iceland (7.554), 5. Netherlands (7.464), 6. Norway (7.392), 7. Sweden (7.363), 8. Luxembourg (7.324), 9. New Zealand (7.277), 10. Austria (7.268).

Bottom 10 least happy countries with score were as follows

1. Burundi (3.775), 2. Yemen (3.658), 3. Tanzania (3.623), 4. Haiti (3.615), 5. Malawi (3.600), 6. Lesotho (3.512), 7. Botswana (3.467), 8. Rwanda (3.415), 9. Zimbabwe (3.145), 10. Afghanistan (2.523)

Where does India stand?

India is at the 139th position among the surveyed countries with a score of 3.819. While the rank of our neighbouring countries are; China (84), Nepal (87), Bangladesh (101), Pakistan (105), and Sri Lanka (129). Within the BRICS Nations, India is in the last rank compared with others like Brazil (35), Russia (76), China (84) and South Africa (103). A further dissection of India's performance, in terms of the key variables of the Happiness Index 2021 reveals that India has 102nd position in the natural log GDP per capita, social support (141), healthy life expectancy (104), freedom to make life choice (31), generosity (44), perception of corruption (75), ranking of positive effect (102), and ranking of negative effect (14).

Conclusion

The Happiness Report and its Index reminds Sovereign Governments that they can no longer assume that the lives of those in their respective countries can improve with a mere rise in GDP alone. In countries like India, the progress of the nation requires added policy emphasis on more inclusive metrics like GDP growth, social support, high life expectancy and perception on corruption.





ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

Established under the Central Universities Act, 2009 (Section 25 of 2009) as Central University of Bihar (CUB) and the name since changed by the Central Universities (Amendment) Act, 2014 to Central University of South Bihar (CUSB) is an institution of higher learning located in Gaya in the state of Bihar. With the motto, 'Collective Reasoning', the University has been conducting its academic and administrative activities in a campus which spans over 300 acres of land at Panchanpur in Gaya district. As stated in Section 5 of the Act, the objective of the university shall be: "... to disseminate and advance knowledge by providing instructional and research facilities in such branches of learning as it may deem fit; to make special provision for integrated courses in humanities, social sciences, science and technology in its educational programmes; to take appropriate measures for promoting innovations in teaching-learning process and inter-disciplinary studies and research; to educate and train manpower for the development of the country; to establish linkages with industries for the promotion of science and technology; and to pay special attention to the improvement of the social and economic conditions and welfare of the people, their intellectual, academic and cultural development..."

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

The Department of Development Studies (DVS) as a multi-disciplinary centre, which aims to equip students with critical, analytical and applied skills that they use in future either as academicians or as development practitioners. It provides opportunities to students to critically examine a relevant body of knowledge (theoretical perspectives and approaches) and current debates and learn research methods (qualitative and quantitative). Practicum, field-work, and internship experiences facilitate learning the process of development, policy planning and practicum in the real life settings. It is the first Academic Center of the University established in 2009. The vision of the Department is to "...Disseminate and advance knowledge to bring about social transformation by developing competent, committed and passionate development leaders..."

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