Psychol Stud (July–September 2015) 60(3):356–367
DOI 10.1007/s12646-015-0319-5

REFLECTIONS

# Understanding Happiness: the Concept of *sukha* as 'Excellent Space'

**Anuradha Choudry**[1,2,3] · **B. K. Vinayachandra**[1,2,3]

Received: 24 November 2014 / Accepted: 29 May 2015 / Published online: 2 July 2015


**Abstract** Happiness is recognised as a prime driver of development but studies have shown that there is no universal definition of the term which is moulded by its cultural context. In India, the Sanskrit word sukha is often used to denote happiness. This conceptual paper is an interpretative analysis of the word which literally means 'excellent space'. Basing itself on the premise that human life is comprised of several concomitant spaces, it explores the relationship between the feeling of happiness and the quality of the different dynamic internal and external spaces that form an intimate part of an individual's existence using the analogy of the spaces within a house. It further establishes that while happiness is determined by the nature of the internal space, it is significantly affected by her external circumstances due to the symbiotic nature of these spaces. It, therefore, briefly looks at the implications of sukha in connection with development and introduces the idea of self-architecture as a psychological process by which a person takes responsibility for designing, structuring and managing the different spaces in her life. Finally, this paper proposes the following 1) to examine the various dimensions of the term sukha, with respect to some prevailing notions of happiness 2) to explore happiness in terms of quality of spaces 3) to see its implications on development and thereby hinting at the possibility of evolving a measurement tool based on sukha or 'excellence' as a benchmark for a nation's progress.

✉ Anuradha Choudry
panditanu@gmail.com; centre4ip@gmail.com

[1] Development Foundation, Bangalore, India

[2] Centre for Indian Psychology, Jain University, Bangalore, India

[3] Development Foundation, c/o GlobalEdge Software Ltd. Global Village, IT SEZ, Pattangere, Mylasandra Village, RVcE Post Off Mysore Road, Bangalore 560059, India

**Keywords** Sukha · Happiness · Excellent space · Space management · Self-architecture

## Introduction

> "Well, O Narada, I tell you, nothing can be done unless it is propelled by happiness. Everywhere you will find happiness is the object of every kind of aspiration, activity, desire or enterprise. You will find, prior to everything conceivable, there is the presence of happiness. Everyone, irrespective of the character of one's individuality, tries to be, to act and to conduct oneself in different ways, because of this happiness. You must know what happiness is. It is this that is the propelling force behind everything in creation," says Sanatkumara.
> (Krishnananda, The Chhandogya Upanishad, 1984)

Happiness is one of the fundamental driving forces of human beings underlying most of their actions and aspirations (Krishnananda, The Chhandogya Upanishad, 1984). It has also being recognised as one of the most important factors that drives development and therefore has become a considerable focus of interdisciplinary study by economists, psychologists and social scientists who believe that it is now possible to do empirical research on this subject. Yet finding a universal definition for it has proved to be a challenging endeavour! People across the world, since ancient times, have tried to capture the essence of the experience in words based on their distinct philosophy of life and cultural value system but it continues to remain an elusive concept that has escaped being fully encapsulated in one word. In fact, what happiness means might vary considerably across cultures (Diener and Suh

2000; Kitayama and Markus 2000, cited in Uchida et al. 2004). The challenge, therefore, is to first identify the salient features of the prevalent discourse on the topic from a psychological point of view and to understand some of the common constituents of the experience of happiness itself. This paper analyses the popular Sanskrit term for happiness, viz. *sukha*, based on its etymological connotations signifying 'excellent space' and then attempts to see if it can aptly represent the multi-faceted experience of happiness in a comprehensive manner as being the consequence of an effective management of spaces. It then tries to understand its relationship with the concept of national development and hints at the possibility of evolving a measurement tool on the basis of happiness as *sukha* to assess the degree of excellence experienced by its citizens at personal and collective levels.

Western psychologists have generally left the question of 'what is happiness' to philosophers for debate, and gone on to study the perceived happiness and its correlates. In so doing, some researchers have achieved a general consensus to operationalize happiness in terms of (1) positive affect; (2) life satisfaction; and (3) absence of negative affect (Andrews and Withey 1976; Diener 1984; Argyle 1987; Li 1995 cited in Lu 2001). This view of happiness, identified as hedonistic happiness is technically referred to as Subjective Well-being (SWB). The hedonic approach to happiness with its roots in the ancient school of thought known as Hedonism, argues that pleasure is the only intrinsic good and therefore advocates a maximisation of one's happiness by maximizing one's pleasure and avoiding displeasures.

The other important approach to happiness, namely the eudaimonic perspective, bases itself on the Aristotelian philosophy of life. In his famous *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle deliberates on the nature of the happy man and then attempts to define happiness as the highest good that one seeks and one ought to seek as the end in itself and not as a means to any other end. According to him, it is said to result in virtuousness and contemplation (Aristotle 1999, cited in Banavathy and Choudry 2014).This corresponds to the characteristics of happiness associated with Psychological Well-being (PWB) that serves as a counterpart to SWB. Ryff defines PWB or eudaimonia as 'the striving for perfection that represents the realization of one's true potentials' (Ryff, 1995, cited in Banavathy and Choudry 2014) and associates it with six characteristics, viz. 1) self-acceptance 2) positive relations with others 3) autonomy 4) environmental mastery 5) purpose in life and 6) personal growth (Ryff 1989). While hedonistic happiness comprises of enjoying the pleasurable aspects of life and implies an inherent dependency on external resources for their gratification, eudaimonic happiness is more self-sufficient/independent and can be equated to the joyful experience of an individual concerned with the discovery of her innate capabilities and living life more holistically on that basis. The contemporary discourse on the subject in psychology, thus, primarily revolves around these two kinds of happiness and their corresponding notions of SWB and PWB. The following section will deal with trying to identify some of the significant characteristics of happiness as commonly experienced.

In English, the word 'happiness' comes from the root 'hap' (c.1200) which as a noun means "chance, a person's luck, fortune, fate," also "unforeseen occurrence," from Old Norse happ "chance, good luck," from Proto-Germanic *khapan (source of Old English gehæp "convenient, fit"), from PIE *kob- "to suit, fit, succeed" (cf. Old Church Slavonic kobu "fate, foreboding, omen," Old Irish cob "victory") meaning "good fortune" from early 13th century. As a verb, it signifies "to happen," from the mid-fourteenth century (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/hap). 'Happy' as an adjective has three broad meanings: (1) fortunate, lucky; feeling or expressing pleasure, contentment, satisfaction, etc.; (2) (in polite formulas) pleased; (3) (of language, conduct, suggestion) well-suited to the situation. 'Happiness' is used as a noun to convey the first meaning (Hornby et al. 1948, cited in Lu 2001). While, it is true that the feelings of being fortunate and happy are intimately connected and in some instances synonymous, the term does not cover the various shades of the actual experience itself, nor does it provide any significant insight into the psychological processes that accompany the state of happiness. However, in English, we find many other words like ecstasy, rapture, thrill, bliss, gladness mirth, glee, fun, ebullience, comfort, amusement, relaxation (Seligman 2002) contentment, joy, exuberance etc. that capture and reflect the different degrees and shades of the basic experience of happiness. Similarly, in Indian languages also, there are many terms used for it, like *bhoga*, *sukha*, *santoṣa*, *harṣa*, *ullāsa*, *ānanda*, *tṛpti*, *tuṣṭi*, *śubha*, *maṅgala*, *kalyāṇa*, *śreyas*, *preyas*, *śānti*, *ārogya*, *swāsthya*, *sthitaprajñatā* (Kumar 2006). Of all these, the word *sukha* is most commonly used to denote happiness. This is reflected in several invocations for general well-being in the Indian tradition, like '*lokāḥ samastāḥ sukhino bhavantu*' – 'may all people be happy', and in '*sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ*' - 'let all be happy'. In another context, *sukha* is also identified as one of the main motivating factors for all human action at a personal level as in '*sukhaṁ me syāt duḥkha me mā bhūt iti sarva-jana-pravṛttiḥ*' meaning 'let happiness be mine and not sorrow, thus (thinking) people act'. At the same time, it is regarded as a desirable basis for action directed towards others as in '*sarva-jana-hitāya sarva-jana-sukhāya*' – 'for the good of all people, for the happiness of all people'. The word *sukha* therefore plays an important role in the Indian thought/ethos and practice, and would be worth examining in greater detail.

It is interesting to note that the Buddhists use the term *sukha* to qualify authentic happiness (Dambrun and Ricard 2011). In this context, *sukha* has been defined as 'a state of flourishing that arises from mental balance and insight into the

nature of reality. Rather than a fleeting emotion or mood aroused by sensory and conceptual stimuli, *sukha* is an enduring trait that arises from a mind in a state of equilibrium and entails a conceptually unstructured and unfiltered awareness of the true nature of reality" (Ekman et al. 2005). This definition of *sukha*, thus, refers to a psycho-spiritual meaning of the term as understood and used by Buddhists.

In the Vedic tradition, however, *sukha* is conventionally used to represent ordinary happiness which is experienced in the context of dualities, whereby, it is usually accompanied by its opposite *duḥkha* or sorrow. But, the term has also been employed in the sense of the highest bliss in certain texts like the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (7.22). The word *sukha*, therefore, seems to cover a wide range of connotations of happiness starting from the experience derived from mundane sensory pleasures to the most sublime spiritual joys resulting from a mind in the state of equilibrium and full awareness.

Taking this into account, we will next do a deeper etymological analysis of the term to see a) whether it offers any new insights regarding the psychological state of being during the experience of happiness itself b) whether it covers the characteristics of happiness that have been briefly described above and thereby justifying the vast scope attributed to it and finally c) to evaluate its various implications at personal and collective levels with a special focus on the theme of development.

## Etymology of '*sukha*'

According to Monier-Williams (1956, 1960), the word '*sukha*' can be translated as 'pleasant, agreeable, gentle, comfortable, happy, prosperous, virtuous, pious'. It is composed of two morphemes '*su*' and '*kha*' (Monier-Williams 1956, 1960). The morpheme '*su*' is a prefix in Sanskrit generally indicating 'excellent, right, virtuous, beautiful, easy, much' (Monier-Williams 1956, 1960). Some of the important meanings of '*kha*', relevant to the context of happiness are 'space, cavity, air' (Monier-Williams 1956, 1960) etc. One needs to mention at this point that Sanskrit words often offer a variety of interpretations with associated connotations. An attempt to translate a word therefore from Sanskrit to English, firstly, requires an understanding of the specific context in which the word is being used and secondly, it can sometimes only be adequately expressed by a whole phrase in English to do justice to the amplitude of meaning embedded in a single word. The term *sukha*, therefore, literally means 'excellent, right, virtuous, beautiful, easy & much space' that also has components of being agreeable, comfortable, pleasurable, pious as well as prosperous. In addition, *kha* also refers to the senses in certain situations whereby *sukha* would imply 'pleasing to senses'. This meaning also represents a shade of happiness which can form part of the perception of happiness as 'good or excellent space'.

The idea of happiness as 'excellent space' lends itself to further questioning/investigation and interpretation. The paper proposes to take up some pertinent questions in this regard and look at different possible answers to them in the context of personal and collective well-being as well as of development.

## Locating '*sukha*'

On learning that *sukha* literally means 'excellent space',[1] one of the implicit suggestions that comes to mind is that our existence is made up of a dynamic composition of spaces. As a result, every individual operates in several kinds of 'spaces' at physical, psychological and social levels simultaneously. These can be categorized into individual spaces and collective spaces, professional spaces versus personal spaces which can further be qualified as excellent spaces or ugly or messy spaces and so on whereby each exercises a considerable influence on the others in varying degrees. For example, an unpleasant experience in one's office, which belongs to the professional space, can have its negative impact on the personal space of the individual, and affect the condition of her home and other social spaces as well. Besides this, everybody plays multiple roles in their life, as a human being, a parent or child, a professional, a relative, a friend, a citizen etc., where each corresponds to different dimensions of psycho-social 'spaces'. The way in which she manages these spaces, within and without herself, will determine her psychological and subjective states of well-being which will directly influence the degree of happiness she experiences.

In the context of happiness as envisaged by the term *sukha*, these multiple spaces can be broadly classified into two – on one side, the 'external space', consisting of every kind of space outside of the individual with which she interacts including the environmental and social spaces corresponding to the 'outside-in' determinants of happiness like income, satisfaction of needs and other material conveniences (Biswas-Diener et al. 2012), and on the other, the 'internal space', comprising of the physical, as well as the psycho-spiritual domains within her associated with the 'inside-out' factors that influence her levels of happiness through which she interprets and makes sense of their daily events (Biswas-Diener et al. 2012).

In a workshop titled 'Pathways to Happiness',[2] when discussing which of these two spaces has to be 'excellent' in order for one to experience happiness, most participants spontaneously replied that the feeling of happiness corresponded primarily to the quality of their 'internal space'. This admission was very significant because of its underlying

[1] The adjective 'excellent' henceforth will be used to represent all the other qualities mentioned in the definition of the term.

[2] Conducted by the authors at the Centre for Indian Psychology, Jain University, Bangalore, in April 2014

implications. For example, if one were to accept that happiness was dependent on the quality of the 'external space' being 'excellent', then one would feel happy if, and only if, all the external variables were conducive and regarded by one as 'excellent', thereby transferring the locus and cause of happiness entirely outside of oneself. As a result, the individual's state of happiness and well-being would be greatly dictated by the conditions of external circumstances.

On the other hand, if happiness is essentially defined by the positive quality of the 'inner space' of the individual, then, it would imply that it is entirely under her control and the responsibility of being happy would lie exclusively with her alone since no one else can ultimately determine the inner state of her being but herself. This supposition would further open up the possibility of the person being happy despite the nature of external circumstances. Following this line of argument, one can state that, happiness, as understood by the term *sukha* or 'excellent space', is an inherent potential of every individual but its experience depends on the effective designing, structuring and management of one's internal and external spaces through a conscious psychological process of self-architecture with a special focus on the quality of 'interior designing' one undertakes.

## Defining Internal 'Excellent Space'

The subsequent questions that come to mind are, 'What does "self-architecture" practically mean?' And more importantly, 'What is meant by "good or excellent space"? Can a space be qualified as "good" or "bad"?' If so, then 'What would be the characteristics of an "excellent" space versus those of a "bad" space?' and so on. The answers to these questions would probably be predominantly subjective in nature since the definition of 'goodness and excellence' is the prerogative of every individual. It is also likely that, exactly what constitutes the good and the valuable varies substantially across cultures (Diener and Suh 2000; Kitayama and Markus 2000, cited in Uchida et al. 2004). It would therefore, be a challenge to come up with a generalized definition of what exactly an 'excellent space' signifies.

However, there still seem to be certain commonly accepted features of a space that people could unanimously describe as 'good' or 'bad'. For example, when we take the analogy of a house and wish to ensure that it has excellent and beautiful spaces, there are a few factors that the architect as well as the inhabitants of the house would take into consideration. Firstly, spaces in a house consist of three essential components that serve to determine their quality: a) the nature of the structure that creates the space, b) the material objects in it and c) the living beings who inhabit it. If the physical structure is poorly maintained then, at the outset itself, it would be more difficult to describe the space it generates as 'excellent'. Therefore, the physical structure should be sturdy, well-designed, spacious, well-lit and aired as per one's choice, for it to generate a certain ambience of excellence. Next, if the material objects in the room are over cluttered, kept haphazardly, some straight and others broken and upturned, then too one would not consider the room as having 'excellent space' as the word excellent inherently suggests a certain degree of perfection, order and beauty. Thus, if the material objects in a room have to also contribute to the 'excellence' of the space, it is important that they are maintained in a proper condition and arranged in some order. Thirdly, the nature of the people or living beings inhabiting the spaces also plays a significant role in determining their quality. For instance, if they are amicable and kind to each other, optimistic in their thinking and living harmoniously together, they will contribute positively to the creation and experience of 'excellent spaces' in that house. On the other hand, if they are mean, full of resentment and negativity, and are constantly quarrelling amongst themselves, they are bound to generate negative or 'bad' spaces around them thus vitiating the quality of the spaces they inhabit.

In a similar manner, the physical as well as the psycho-spiritual spaces within the individual have certain features that could be likened to the different components of the house, viz., the physical space can be literally likened to the health of the individual which, when well-maintained, provides a firm structure that could allow the individual to focus unhampered on the quality of the space within it. Once the basic structure is strong, it is less likely to be affected by the circumstances outside of it and the person becomes less prone to illness and disease. As is often said, a healthy body is the basis for a healthy mind as well as emotions. Therefore, ensuring a healthy body is one of the first structural requirements for creating an excellent internal space within it. Next, the various 'objects' of a room could correspond to the different kinds of psychological 'stuff', viz., belief structures, memories, conditionings, attitudes, mental ruminations etc. It is worth noting that the way in which one manages these psychological 'objects' in oneself, not only influences the quality of one's 'inner space' but often serves to define it.

Similarly, the aspects within the person, which could be considered as the living entities in the house-space, are her thoughts and emotions which are relatively 'organic' and 'alive'. When these are of a positive nature and in harmony with each other, as well as unaffected by the conflicts arising in their surrounding circumstances, then an individual experiences relative degrees of happiness and well-being. Furthermore, the proper management of one's beliefs, thoughts and emotions would result in a state of positive affect, life-satisfaction, absence of negative affect, self-acceptance, purpose in life and personal growth which correspond to the characteristics of happy people as identified by SWB and PWB.

However, on a more practical note, to ensure that her internal space is 'excellent', the individual has to actively engage

in the process of self-architecture whereby she has to first identify the contents and workings of her conscious and unconscious mind-stuff and then, systematically organize them so that what remains can essentially be qualified as 'virtuous, beautiful and right', viz., the other connotations of '*su*' that help to bring more clarity on the qualities associated with the 'excellence' of space leading to happiness. Buddhists believe that the radical transformation of consciousness necessary to realize *sukha* can occur by sustained training in attention, emotional balance and mindfulness, so that one can learn to distinguish between the way things are as they appear to the senses and the conceptual superimpositions one projects upon them (Ekman et al. 2005). Vedic traditions also evolved several 'technologies of Consciousness' (Cornelissen 2000) based on *yogic* techniques, to enable people to engage in 'an honest process of self-enquiry' and develop the capacity for systematic observation and mastery of both mental and vital energies, *manas* and *prāṇa* (Choudry et al. 2013) to cultivate greater self-awareness leading to the generation of *sukha*.

## Ensuring *sukha* Within

Going back to the analogy of the space within the house, a further question that arises is the following: "If one managed to generate a certain degree of 'excellent space' inside the house by ensuring that its physical structures were strong and that the arrangement of the objects as well as the people inhabiting it were consciously contributing towards maintaining it as such but one kept all the doors and windows wide open, permitting anybody and everybody who was passing by, to enter it and do as they please inside, could one still ensure an excellent space in it?". The answer is probably 'No', because if an unruly gang of rowdies is passing by or if there are burglars in the vicinity who find all the doors and windows open, they are likely to take advantage of the situation and end up by damaging and looting the valuables of the house thereby wreaking havoc in that space. Consequently, in order to guarantee that the internal space of the house remains well protected and excellent, one would need to keep a constant vigil on its doors and windows.

Similarly, the internal space of the individual also has its 'windows' and 'doors' which are the senses and the mind (*Bhagavadgītā*, 5. 13, cited in Aurobindo 1993). What the person lends his mind and senses to, determines what would occupy his psychological spaces. For example, if the person is engaging in negative thoughts or is watching or listening to things that generate vile or unpleasant ideas and emotions, these would necessarily result in vitiating and damaging the quality of his internal space. Therefore, in the context of happiness, as understood by the term *sukha*, it follows that for a person to be truly happy, it is important for him to become aware and watchful about what he is lending his mind and senses to.

On this note, however, it is possible to argue that one cannot always be watchful of what one is lending one's mind and senses to, because one cannot be in full control of the environmental circumstances one has to function in. Even in such instances, what would determine the quality of the inner space is not what one perceives directly but one's 'apperception' or how one is interpreting what is being perceived. Viktor Frankl (1992) writes,

> To be sure, a human being is a finite being and his freedom is restricted. It is not freedom from conditions, but it is freedom to take a stand towards the conditions. As I once put it: "As a professor in two fields, neurology and psychiatry, I am fully aware of the extent to which man is subject to biological, psychological and sociological conditions. But in addition to being a professor in two fields I am a survivor of four camps – concentration camps, that is – and as such I also bear witness to the unexpected extent to which man is capable of defying and braving even the worst conditions conceivable (p. 132).

To highlight this point, Gordon W. Allport makes a poignant remark in his preface to Frankl's book *Man's search for meaning*: *An introduction to logotherapy* when he says,

> In the concentration camp every circumstance conspires to make the prisoner lose his hold. All the familiar goals in life are snatched away. What alone remains is "the last of human freedoms" – the ability to "choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances" (p.11).

Therefore, in this case also, the onus of determining the state of the inner space lies with the individual himself thus making him responsible for managing its contents and dealing with its impact in a way which is conducive to the creation of *sukha* and to the experience of happiness. This feature of a happy person corresponds to the two qualities identified for PWB, namely, autonomy and environmental mastery.

## *Sukha* and the Sense of the Sacred/Intimate

In addition to the notion of freedom that an individual possesses to define and manage the quality of his inner space, another fundamental aspect that helps in the maintenance of its 'excellence' is the idea of sanctity, or sacredness attributed to it, which is also suggested by the prefix '*su*' that includes the connotation of being 'pious'. For instance, in the case of one's house, one would not normally allow anyone and everyone to walk into the bedroom or the prayer-room which are regarded as sacrosanct and generally open only to those who are trusted and dear to the family. Similarly, if one regards one's inner space to be 'intimate' or 'sacred', one would be

more careful in guarding its entrances and allowing only those trustworthy 'beings' and 'elements' which would not defile its intimacy or sanctity in any way. Based on this, one could say that the keenness with which an individual keeps watch on the 'doors' and 'windows' of this internal space is directly proportional to the degree of 'sacredness' one attributes to it and consequently, it is proportional to the degree of happiness one enjoys in life.

### *Sukha* as *bhūma* or Expansion

In the commentary of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (7. 23–35) by Swami Krishnananda (Krishnananda 1984), we find another profound dimension to the word *sukha* which adds an important parameter in the definition of an 'excellent space'. In the dialogue between the disciple Narada and his *guru*, Sanatkumara, when the former seeks to understand what happiness really is, his teacher replies, 'That which is truly fullness, that is happiness. Not in the small is any happiness. Fullness alone is happiness'.[3] The Sanskrit word *bhūmā* is used to refer to 'fullness, plenum, vastness'. The teacher, Sanatkumar, therefore, tells his disciple that *sukha* is that space which is vast and full. Anything that corresponds to the narrow, the small and the limited cannot generate happiness and bliss. This definition of the word takes into consideration every kind of space that constitutes a person's existence, internal and external. Swami Krishnananda translates the same verse as 'Happiness is plenum, (happiness is completeness, happiness is the totality, happiness is in the Absolute), the finite things do not contain happiness. The Absolute, Fullness alone is Bliss', thereby including the idea of the Absolute in the word *bhūmā*. As the story goes, Sanatkumar then advises Narada with the following words, 'So I reiterate (O Narada), such which I regard as Bhuma, that is the real Bliss. So I say once again that Bhuma, the Fullness, is Bliss. How can you enter into this Bhuma unless you know what Bhuma is? You must, therefore, know what Fullness is.'[4] With the inclusion of the concept of *bhūmā* as a qualification of the spaces corresponding to happiness, the word *sukha* opens up the scope for a universal yet subjective quest for defining what corresponds to fullness in one's life at personal and collective levels. The ideas of fullness and vastness also entail other notions such as freedom that then opens up the possibility for a whole new discussion on the relationship between these concepts and the implications they would have on the psycho-social levels of a person's life. This would require another independent detailed work which is beyond the scope of this present paper.

The following section, therefore, will deal with the relationship between the inner and outer spaces of the individual with respect to the creation of *sukha*.

### Relationship Between Inner and Outer Spaces

A noteworthy aspect of maintaining an excellent inner space is this that it has some bearing on the person's external space as well in terms of her inter-personal relationships and interactions with the environment. Both these are often influenced by the individual's personality, speech and actions which in turn are determined by the tendencies of her conscious and subconscious minds. Therefore, if one consciously practised self-architecture and worked on ensuring that the internal psychological spaces that one is constantly creating are beautiful, harmonious, full of optimism, compassion and so on, it would play an important role in helping to generate a similar quality of space outside of the individual as well. This in turn, would help the individual foster positive relations with others which is another trait of happy people identified in PWB studies.

In this way, we see that the term *sukha*, understood as 'excellent space', can provide some pertinent insights into the actual psychological processes that lead to the experience of happiness. It also suggests some practical ways by which one can take stock of the spaces one inhabits and then systematically plan and cultivate the desired spaces within and, to a certain extent, without oneself by engaging in the conscious process of 'self-architecture'. This in turn, allows the individual the possibility of 'constructing' happiness for herself thus empowering her with the responsibility of her own experience in this regard. Furthermore, it indicates that by investing one's resources on maintaining *sukha* internally one can substantially influence one's surroundings in a positive manner which in turn would increase one's overall experience of happiness.

Based on the discussions thus far, if one were to ask, 'Is happiness an "outside-in" or an "inside-out" phenomenon?' (Biswas-Diener et al. 2012), there is much to support the view that the basis and secret of human happiness lies in cultivating individual mental state and spiritual-focused (Lu 2001) inner spaces. However, the outside-in element of happiness cannot be ignored as it can exert a significant influence on the overall happiness of a person. In this context, the developmental policies of a nation can play a critical role in determining the happiness levels of its citizens because they have a direct influence in defining the quality of the external spaces they inhabit. In *Toward Psychology of being* (Maslow 1968), while

[3] http://books.google.co.in/books?id=vJIpcv1U7uIC&pg=PA660&lpg=PA660&dq=yo+vai+bhuma+tat+sukham&source=bl&ots=OknzmAkUJa&sig=iWMZ1l4esAfc7ZsXbHEJLvXvA2U&hl=en&sa=X&ei=dr09UebGMsHorQeM9ICoBQ&ved=0CGEQ6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=yovaibhumatatsukham&f=false viewed on 11.3.2013

[4] http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/chhand/ch_3e.html viewed on 20.4.2013

discussing ways to promote individual health and growth, the humanist psychologist, Maslow says,

> How can we encourage free development? What are the best educational conditions for it? Sexual? Economic? Political? What kind of world do we need for such people to grow in? What kind of world will such people create? Sick people are made by a sick culture; healthy people are made possible by a healthy culture. But it is just as true that sick individuals make their culture more sick, and that healthy individuals make their culture more healthy. Improving individual health is one approach to making a better world (pp. 5–6).

This passage highlights the mutually interdependent nature of the internal and external spaces and therefore, there is a need to provide necessary civic as well as social environmental conditions for citizens to promote individual health and thus ensure a healthier and happier society. The Bhutanese model of Gross National Happiness (GNH) (Ura et al. 2012) is one such working model of a society that has made the happiness of its people the benchmark for measuring the well-being of the nation on a more holistic scale than the existing standard models of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which merely takes into account the economic prosperity of its citizens. Having identified that the happiness levels of its people was a priority of its national development programmes, the Bhutanese government has systematically drafted detailed policies and implemented them for all sections of their society to support their initiative so that, those who fall in the group of 'yet-to-be-happy' can be provided the necessary resources in order to belong to the group of 'happy' people. On similar lines, the next section of this paper attempts to explore what scope the concept of *sukha* can provide to the ongoing dialogue on development in the Indian context. In addition, the Bhutanese model which is based on an empirical index of domains and indicators of happiness can serve as an example for creating a *sukha* index that could measure the 'excellence' levels experienced by the people. Unlike happiness which seems to be the resultant experience of several factors, 'excellence' seems to offer a more 'objective' measurable criterion to assess than happiness, once one defines what one means by 'excellence' in the different areas of one's personal and collective lives.

## *Sukha* in the Context of Development

We have thus far seen the implications of the term *sukha* in the psychological context as primarily referring to an 'excellent' psychological space within the individual and also briefly discussed its relationship with her external world. The word *sukha*, however, is not restricted to the description of the quality of the internal space alone. It includes the possibility of cultivating the same kind of space outside of the person also. As a result, ensuring an excellent inner space covers only half the experience suggested by the word. In order to have a holistic experience of *sukha* or happiness, it becomes imperative to work on ensuring perfect spaces outside of the individual, at collective and environmental levels as well. However, unlike the case of the internal space, which is entirely in the hands of the individual herself, several factors come into play while attempting to create an excellent external space for her. It is in this framework that the concept of *sukha* is closely related to the theme of a nation's development agenda and the quality of excellence it provides its citizens' individual and collective co-existence.

## Three Aspects for *sukha* Without

When talking of the quality of the external space, some important aspects to be taken into consideration can be broadly classified as: 1) interpersonal and social relationships, 2) the individual's relationship with the environment and 3) the nature of the environment itself.

### *Interpersonal Relationships*

Of the three, managing interpersonal and social relationships rests largely in the hands of the person and is determined by her basic *svabhāva* or inherent nature as well as her inherited value systems with respect to relationships in particular. The last varies in individualistic and collectivistic societies which place different premiums on bonds shared in families, communities etc. (Lu and Gilmour 2004). Furthermore, the essential philosophy of life influences the person's worldview to a great extent. At a psycho-social level, individualistic societies often have clear demarcations between private spaces and public spaces because of a certain latent ontology that views the space of the 'other' as distinctly different from their own. Collectivistic societies like in India are significantly different in this respect where there is no fundamental distinction in the nature of the essential space comprising of the self of the person and that of the 'other' (Tyagananda 2008, cited in Choudry 2011). Therefore, fundamentally, there is no hard, rigid and uncompromisable or non-negotiable compartmentalization of private and public spaces in the Indian context. One can thereby observe that while the collectivity is subconsciously experienced as an extension of the individual's personal space, it is not necessarily actively pursued and nourished due to various socio-economic factors, thus, creating a very complex dynamics of spaces involving interpersonal relationships.

However, despite these cultural influences on the individual's conscious and unconscious perception of themselves *vis à vis* others, the manner in which a person eventually deals with others and relates to them depends on what kind of space

she has generated within herself. Therefore, effective management of her internal spaces once again plays a key role in defining a person's relationship with others.

*The Individual's Relationship with the Environment*

In the second instance, the individual's relationship with the environment which also includes her treatment of the natural environment, animals and so on, depends on a variety of 'nurture'-factors like education, financial status, cultural value system etc. that shape her attitude towards the world around her. But in this case also, her interaction with the external world, her approach towards it, is shaped to a great extent, by the way in which she integrates the 'nurture'-factors within her inner or psychological space and expresses them in her life.

Furthermore, the ontology one subscribes to can also influence one's perception and treatment of the external world. Those who divide the world into sentient beings and insentient things, adopt different approaches towards both categories of existence whereas those who regard the world with its animate and inanimate elements as being manifestations of a one supreme Consciousness, imbue everything with a sense of sacredness which in subtle ways could inform their interaction with them.

In either case, in the context of *sukha*, if the dealing with the environment, whatever its form, yields an 'excellent space', it would correspond to the experience of happiness for the individual. The other parameter that needs to be taken into consideration is the nature of the environment itself where the person is situated.

*The Nature of the Environment Itself*

This takes the discussion into the third important determinant of the quality of an individual's outside or external space which is the nature of the environment around her or the collective spaces in which she functions. A focus on this aspect brings into picture the role of the organization or the entire socio-economic and political system in creating 'excellent spaces' for her. The following section will briefly discuss some key points in this context and study their impact on the corresponding degree of *sukha* generated for the individual by them on the external level.

The organizational machinery plays a key role in determining the quality of external spaces enjoyed by its citizens. If the administration ensured a smooth day to day functioning for them by providing them with the 'outside-in' factors that contribute to their happiness and well-being like the basic amenities necessary for a good life, including sufficient unpolluted water and air, electricity, food, safe shelter, good sanitation, a well-organised transport system, just law and order and judicial systems, easily accessible and affordable medical services and educational institutions that provide value-based education to their wards, efficient and honest civil services, clean surroundings, a green environment and so on, it could add substantially in enhancing the overall experience of *sukha* for its citizens while keeping in mind that the full extent of their happiness is ultimately determined by the quality of their inner spaces. Having said this, in the absence of the proper civic facilities that have been enlisted above, there are greater chances for various types of conflicts to start breeding at individual and collective levels in the society, which in turn could 'vitiate' the atmosphere and affect the quality of shared spaces to which the person belongs. For example, if there is a shortage of potable water in an area, it could result in a conflict between different communities whereby the dominant community could oppress the others and spread disharmony and violence in the entire locality. Consequently, if the collective spaces are adversely affected, there are more possibilities that the quality of the individual's inner space would also be affected unless she is especially conscious of 'guarding its doors and windows' (as discussed in the previous section) and maintaining a positive space within.

From this we can state that, the system of governance and the policies of development adopted by it, exert a considerable influence in determining the kind of external spaces its citizens enjoy. A study titled 'Happiness of India' which sought to understand the relationship of living conditions and happiness in India affirmed that 'It is likely that poor conditions in which many Indians live take a psychological toll, and the research evidence suggests that wealthier individuals, and wealthier Indians specifically, experience significantly more happiness and lower rates of negative emotions. Thus, policies that help improve the material standards of life in India will likely be accompanied by some gain in aggregate happiness' (Biswas-Diener et al. 2012). This statement highlights the government's responsibility towards its citizens to provide them with adequate circumstances that will facilitate their experience of 'excellent spaces' or *sukha* leading to more happiness in their lives. This role was clearly envisioned and articulated in the Legal Code of Bhutan from the time of its unification as early as in 1729 when its Government boldly declared that 'if the Government cannot create happiness (*dekid*) for its people, there is no purpose for the Government to exist'. In 1972, the 4th Dragon King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, translated this vision into a concrete action plan by coining the term Gross National Happiness (GNH) to measure the development of his nation by the happiness levels of its citizens based on which the Bhutanese Government drafts its policies (Ura et al. 2012).

## The Role of *dharma* for *sukha*

Taking into account the significant role of the administrators and the government in contributing consciously towards the

happiness of the people they govern, law makers of ancient India conceived of the principle of *dharma* which they declared should form the basis of all individual and collective action and interaction. The next part will examine the relevance of the ideal of *dharma* in the context of happiness as *sukha* pertaining to 'excellent space'.

The term *dharma*, derived from the Sanskrit root *dhṛ*, meaning 'to uphold, to sustain, and to hold together' is a unique concept based on the Indic worldview that subconsciously influences the Indian psyche and its multiple expressions. Sri Aurobindo (Aurobindo 1997) gives it a holistic definition that highlights its psychological underpinnings:.

> Dharma in the Indian conception is not merely the good, the right, morality and justice, ethics; it is the whole government of all relations of man with other beings, with Nature, with God, considered from the point of view of a divine principle working itself out in forms and laws of action, forms of the inner laws and the outer life, orderings of relations of every kind in the world. Dharma is both that which we hold to and that which holds together our inner and outer activities. In its primary sense it means a fundamental law of our nature which secretly conditions all our activities, and in this sense each being, type, species, individual, group has its own dharma. Secondly, there is a divine nature which has to develop and manifest in us, and in this sense dharma is the law of the inner workings by which that grows in our being. Thirdly, there is the law by which we govern our outgoing thought and action and our relations with each other so as to help best both our own growth and that of the human race towards the divine ideal (p.184).

*Dharma*, thus, represents the fundamental order in social affairs and in moral life and is a principle, which maintains the stability of society. *Dharma* connotes precepts that aim at securing material and spiritual sustenance and growth of the individual and society (Kuppuswamy 1977, cited in Kumar 2003). It must be noted that this term has no single word translation in English and forms part of the list of 'Sanskrit Non-translatables' (Malhotra 2011). However, in simplified terms, *dharma* refers to a sense of duty that underlies all human interactions – personal, social, professional, with the environment etc. Applying *dharma* in social life would result in forming a society that would primarily be duty-based rather than rights-based as is prevalent today. Furthermore it is important to recognise that each approach conditions the different kinds of internal – psychological - and external - socio-politico-economic spaces in certain characteristic ways that influences how individuals interact with each other as well as with the organisation or the state.

The differences of a duty-based society versus one that is rights-based is an independent topic of discussion in itself and therefore is briefly touched upon in this paper to highlight the role of *dharma* in generating *sukha*. The following sections attempts to identify some salient features pertaining to the nature of the psychological spaces formed by societies which are based on rights versus those based on the ideal of *dharma* to indicate some essential differences between the two.

A society based on rights, suggests an implicit dependency on an external factor for the fulfilment of what the individual or group rightfully deserves. For example, a child's right to be educated would imply that it is dependent on its parents or the state to provide education for it. It also seems that if either party fails to educate the child then its rights are violated leading to discord in relationships and producing unhappy spaces between them.

In the case of a society based on *dharma*, the underlying thought is that of responsibility towards the other. Individuals and institutions are duty-bound towards their wards to act in ways that would spontaneously fulfill their needs or 'rights'. Regarding the same issue of education, the attitude of the government in an ideal *dharma*-based society would be the following. It is the duty of the governing body to ensure that its citizens are well-educated to thereby encourage an intelligentsia that will create a prosperous state. The *dharma* of those holding positions in the education system like administrators and teachers, is to ensure that the child is well educated to become a cultured and respected citizen of the land, and the duty of the parents is to make sure that the educational facility provided by the government is made best use of for the child's growth and development. In this whole equation, the child's *dharma* is to be a sincere student and take maximum benefit of the opportunities specially provided for her growth. In this way, it becomes a collective responsibility of the entire system, including the child's, to make sure that quality education is imparted and received, thereby, indirectly catering to the child's right to education. In this context, since every party in this process is seeking to do its best for the growth of the child in the larger interest of all concerned, it results in the creation of underlying interdependent psychological spaces that correspond to positive and pro-active thoughts and actions. This in turn, generates an ambience of 'excellence' and mutual concern for greater common good, leading to the experience of happiness for all those who are involved therein.

Another characteristic feature of the concept of *dharma* is its intrinsic demand for honesty and integrity from its adherents. The practise of *dharma* requires its practitioners to be fully sincere and committed in whatever they undertake with the intention of achieving a certain degree of excellence and perfection in it. Since systems and institutions are built on human resources, it is imperative that people, especially those in power practise a strict code of *dharma* in their personal and professional lives. Kumar (2003) in his

paper *An Indian conception of well-being* also discusses about the role of *dharma* in well-being. He says 'Manu the foremost ancient rsi who is considered to be the author of dharmashaastra (treatise on dharma) defines the characteristics of maanava dharma (humane ways of being), dharma of all human beings sans all kinds of distinctions, which is universal. It includes such qualities as contentment, forgiveness, self-control, abstention from unrighteously appropriating anything, (following the rules of) purification, disciplining the organs, wisdom, knowledge, truthfulness and abstention from anger' (Manu, VI: 92) (Kuppuswamy 1977, cited in Kumar 2003). He continues, 'Kautilya, the ancient Indian thinker well known for his magnum opus on economics and polity, Arthashaastra, lists harmlessness, truthfulness, purity, wisdom, freedom from spite, abstinence from cruelty, and forgiveness as the essential constituents of maanava dharma (human beings)' (Kuppuswamy 1977, cited in Kumar 2003).

Interestingly enough, all the qualities enlisted here are of a positive, psychological nature and point towards the need for individuals to develop them within themselves and improve the quality of their internal space first, in order to get reflected in their external spaces. Furthermore, ancient thinkers emphasized on the development of these uniquely human qualities and emotions, in spite of any economic hardship, poverty and even hunger and any adverse circumstances of life (Kumar 2003) thus suggesting that while the external happenings were beyond an individual's control, managing the resources pertaining to the inner spaces was very much in her hands and she could therefore, choose to experience *sukha* even in the midst of harsh external conditions as pointed out earlier in this paper.

## *Sukha* and Self-Architecture

Another important instance that highlights the unique nature of the term *sukha* in the Indian tradition is the oft-chanted Sanskrit verse which serves to summarise the discussion on this topic at personal and collective levels. It says:

> May everybody be happy or have 'excellent space'.[5]
> May everybody be without disease.
> May everybody see the good and the cultured.
> Let no one have any sorrow or 'bad space'.
> Om peace peace peace.

[5] *sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ,*
*sarve santu nirāmayāḥ,*
*sarve bhadrāṇi paśyantu,*
*mā kaścid duḥkhabhāg bhavet.*
*Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ*

Literally, understood this verse sounds like a prayer for collective well-being which includes components of psycho-spiritual 'excellent spaces' or happiness, a disease-free existence, a conscious effort to look for the good and positive in all, and the absence of any kind of sorrow. What renders these lines more meaningful is the scope it offers for another level of interpretation which substantiates the former literal sense given to it. This prayer also calls forth the *dharmic* nature of the individual who is chanting it. It demands of her a certain sense of integrity and responsibility in thought, speech and action *vis à vis* the different things she asks for. For example when it says 'May everybody be happy' it also implies that the individual has to practise happiness as a responsibility and ensure 'excellent spaces' within and without herself so that everybody around her at least can be happy. Similarly, when it says, 'May everybody be healthy', it entails that the concerned person has to be and stay healthy as a responsibility to ensure the good health of all in her vicinity. Next, for everybody to see the good, it becomes imperative for everyone to practise what is regarded as good and cultured, for it is only when each person lives according to those ideals that it would enable others around her to witness the good and be inspired to emulate the same. The last line of the verse says, 'Let no one have any sorrow or 'bad spaces' which can only come true if every individual consciously tried not to give sorrow or create any 'bad space' for all she interacts with. The verse ends with 'Om peace, peace, peace', thrice, because of the deep insight that there is a constant confluence of three levels of spaces in everybody's life, viz. the physical space that is perceivable by our senses, the subtle psychological space that is beyond the grasp of our senses, and the higher spiritual space related to a deeper level of our existential truth. Invoking peace thrice is acknowledging that it is only when these three layers of coexisting spaces are peaceful then there is greater cohesiveness and unity in the overall existential framework of the individual.

On the basis of this explanation, we see that this verse places a very big premium on the individual to design her life in a manner that it reflects an integrity of being corresponding to the practice of *dharma* at all levels. This in turn, will result in the creation of conflict-free spaces in her own life and facilitate greater harmony in the spaces of those around her. The call therefore, in this verse, is for her to engage in a conscious process of Self-architecture, to become a proactive architect of her inner and outer spaces by taking charge of structuring and managing it in a way that will generate 'excellent spaces' inside and outside of herself so that it will spontaneously result in a state of happiness for her and for others who come in contact with her.

## Conclusion

This paper has thus far discussed the various factors and attributes of happiness as understood and represented by the Sanskrit word *sukha* meaning 'excellent space' with its diverse connotations in the context of internal and external spaces as well as individual and collective spaces with a focus on the theme of development. In addition, based on the various implications of the word, it has tried to show that, as a term, it has the bandwidth to cover many of the different shades of happiness that form part of the contemporary discourse on the topic from the mundane to the sublime, be they of a hedonistic nature which deals with happiness derived from the gratification of the senses or eudaimonic in nature pertaining to the happiness that results from activities leading to self-growth, which, in turn, results in the fullness of being and in the expansion of her inner spaces. Furthermore, as *sukha* or 'excellent space' directly corresponds to a positive inner state of being which is reflected in the actions of the individual with respect to her environment, it has the scope of covering the different features identified by SWB and PWB as characteristics of happy people. To add to it, *sukha* as explained above can contribute significantly to the existing discussion on the subject by introducing the dimension of happiness as the outcome of the quality of spaces an individual creates within and without herself. Besides this, it also allows the possibility of systematically cultivating these spaces through self-architecture in one's life by first, becoming aware of their quality and then effectively managing them in order to generate excellence to whatever degree is possible within one's control. The main factors, therefore, that need to be taken into consideration to manage and maintain excellent internal and external spaces are 1) establishing quality structures, at personal and collective levels 2) regularly evaluating the contents and 'living entities' within those spaces and clearing up any unwanted elements 3) keeping a strict vigil on their entry and exit points to allow only whatever is conducive to enter 4) deciding the importance of these spaces in one's life in order to determine the intensity with which they are protected 5) becoming aware of the symbiotic nature of the internal and external spaces and recognising that focusing on the quality of the internal space (which is the only one that is fully in one's control) has a significant impact on the quality of the external space and lastly 6) understanding the nature of their boundaries to see whether they are rigid and narrow or flexible, accommodating and vast. An application of these practices will play a significant role in facilitating *sukha* for the person.

Finally, to end with a fitting analogy, the term *sukha* shares a very important fundamental principle with the field of architecture whose primary concern is the creation of 'good spaces' of all kinds. The underlying concept of *sukha* is built around the same principle. At a personal level, there is a notion of self-architecture where the individual is the absolute architect of her inner space and to some measure of her outer space as well. On the collective plane, with regard to development, governments become the chief architects of the various spaces for their citizens. In both instances, the planning that goes into designing the respective spaces will play a vital role in determining the degree of happiness that is experienced by the individual and the society as a whole. And subsequently, just as the GNH model uses happiness as the empirical criterion to measure the success of their national developmental policies, the degree of *sukha* or excellent spaces experienced by an individual, can also serve as an alternative measure for gauging the development of a society by assessing the degree of excellence enjoyed by its citizens at personal and collective levels.

## References


Andrews, F.M, & Withey, S.B. (1976). *Social indicators of well-being.* New York: Plenum.

Argyle, M. (1987). *The psychology of happiness.* London: Meuthuen.

Aristotle (1999). *Nicomachean ethics*. Kitchener: Batoche Books.

Aurobindo, S. (1993). In A. Roy (Ed.), *The Message of the Gita* (5 ed.). Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Aurobindo, S. (1997). *Essays on the Gita*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

Banavathy, V. K., & Choudry, A. (2014). Understanding happiness: a vedantic perspective. *Psychological Studies*, *59*(2), 141–152.

Biswas-Diener, R., Tay, L., & Diener, E. (2012). Happiness in India. In H. Selin, & G. Davey (Eds.), *Happiness across cultures: views of happiness and quality of life in non-western cultures*, *6*, 13–25. Netherlands: Springer Netherlands.

Choudry, A. (2011). Psyche east and west: The problem of identity and strangeness. In K. Gallagher (Ed.), *Multiculturalism: Critical and inter-disciplinary perspectives* (pp. 11–18). Oxford, UK: Inter-Disiplinary Press. Retrieved from http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/publishing/id-press/.

Choudry, A., Banavathy, V. K., & Kanasu, S. S. (2013). Life and experiences of ramana maharshi: An illustration of the emperical basis of Indian psychology. In A. Choudry, & V. K. Banathy (Eds.), *Perspectives on Indian psychology* (pp. 126–143). Bangalore: Jain Univeersity Press.

Cornelissen, M. R. (2000). The integration of psychological knowlege from the spiritual traditions into the psychology curriculum. *The Journal of Consciousness and Experiential Psychology*, *4*(1), 1–4.

Dambrun, M., & Ricard, M. (2011). Self-centeredness and selflessness: a theory of Self-based psychological functioning and its consequences for happiness. *Review of General Psychology*, *15*, 138–157.

Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin, 95,* 542–575.

Diener, E., & Suh, E.M. (eds). (2000). Cultural and Subjective Well-Being. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Ekman, P., Davidson, R. J., Ricard, M., & Wallace, A. B. (2005). Buddhist and psychological perspectives on emotions and well-being. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 59-63.

Frankl, V. E. (1992). Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy (4 ed.). (I. Lasch, Trans.) Boston: Beacon Press. Retrieved February 12, 2014, from http://www.spiritual-minds.com/philosophy/assorted/(ebook)%20Viktor%20Frankl%20-%20Man's%

20Search%20For%20Meaning%20(psychology,%20psychotherapy,%20philosophy)-o.pdf.

Hornby, A.S., Gatenby, E.V., and Wakefield, H. (1948). *The advanced learner's dictionary of current English*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Kitayama, S., & Markus, H.R. (2000). The pursuit of happiness and the realization of sympathy: Cultural patterns of self, social relations, and well-being. In E. Diener and E.M. Suh (eds), Cultural and Subjective Well-Being (pp. 113–161). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Krishnananda, S. (1984). The chhandogya Upanishad. Rishikesh: The Divine Life Society. Retrieved April 22, 2013, from http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/chhand/Chhandogya_Upanishad.pdf.

Kumar, S. K. (2003). An Indian conception of well being. (vi. (J. Henry, Ed.) European Positive Psychology Proceedings 2002. Retrieved from http://www.ipi.org.in/texts/kirankumar/kk-indian-conception-ofwellbeing.php.

Kumar, S. K. (2006). Happiness and well-being in Indian tradition. *Psychological Studies*, *51*(2–3), 105–112.

Kuppuswamy, B. (1977). Dharma and society - A study in social values. Delhi, India: The Macmillan Co. of India Ltd.

Li, L. (1995). The relationship between subjective well-being and psychological variables in Taiwan. *The Journal of Social Psychology 135,* 351–357.

Lu, L. (2001). Understanding happiness: a look into the Chinese folk psychology. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *2*(4), 407-432.

Lu, L., & Gilmour, R. (2004). Culture and conceptions of happiness: individual oriented and social oriented SWB. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *5* (3), 269–291.

Malhotra, R. (2011). *Being different*. India: Harper Collins Publishers.

Maslow, H. A. (1968). *Towards a psychology of being*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company.

Monier-Williams, M. (1956, 1960). A Sanskrit-English dictionary. London: Oxford University Press.

Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personaily and Social Psychology*, *57*(6), 1069–1081.

Seligman, M. E. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realise your potential for lasting fulfillment*. New York: Free Press.

Tyagananda, S. (2008). No One is a Stranger. In V. Kesari, & V. Kesari (Ed.). Chennai: Sri Ramakrishna Math.

Uchida, Y., Norasakkunkit, V., & Kitayama, S. (2004). Cultural constructions of happiness: theory and emperical evidence. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *5*(3), 223-239.

Ura, K., Alkire, S., Zangmo, T., & Wangdi, K. (2012). A Short Guide to Gross National Happiness Index. Thimpu: The Centre for Bhutan Studies. Retrieved November 18, 2014, from Gross National Happiness: http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/.