

WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT

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Happiness is the main goal which most people and policy makers seek to find. The idea of happiness is as old as human civilization. The concept of happiness has been the core of ancient Hindu and Greek cultures.¹ Definition of happiness can vary from person to person. Usually, happiness is defined as an emotional state characterized by feelings of joy, satisfaction, contentment and fulfillment. Multiple approaches by various researchers lead to numerous measures of happiness such as the PANAS scale, subjective happiness scale, Oxford happiness inventory and Seligman's PERMA model.²⁻⁵ Happiness correlates negatively with morbidity, mortality, stress and anxiety in contrast to a positive correlation with motivation, healthy behaviours and longevity.⁶ One should enjoy what they are doing rather than falling into the trap of endless accumulation of wealth.

On 28 June 2012, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/281, proclaiming 20 March as International Day of Happiness to be observed annually. Since 2013, the United Nations has been celebrating the International Day of Happiness on 20 March as a way to recognize the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world. It also helps to understand the need for a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes sustainable development, poverty eradication, happiness and the well-being of all peoples. The United Nations invites each person of any age, educational institute, business house and government to join this celebration. "Achieving happier societies" was the slogan of International Day of Happiness 2023.

The first World Happiness Report (WHR) was published in 2012.⁷ In 2013 and every subsequent year except 2014, the WHR, written by an expanding group of experts, was released on March 20th as a part of the international day of happiness celebration. The 2023 WHR was the eleventh in the series and was launched on March 20, 2023. It covers more than 150 countries and is gaining more and more recognition from governments and non-government organizations to frame policies using happiness indicators.^{7,8} Bhutan has pioneered the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) in 1972 and included the same in its constitution in 2008. The WHR has been based on two key ideas: that happiness or life evaluation can be measured through opinion surveys based largely on life evaluations from the Gallup World Poll and that we can identify key determinants of well-being and thereby explain the patterns of life evaluation across countries. The respondents rated their current lives on a Cantril 11-point ladder consisting of a score depicting worst (score 0) to best (score 10) possible imagined life. The scores were obtained from nationally representative samples and used the weights to make the estimates representative of the population. Six key variables contributing to

happiness scores were Gross Domestic Product per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom, generosity, and corruption. Each country in the survey is compared against dystopia. It is an imaginary country with the lowest happiness indicators in terms of each of the six key variables. In other words, no country can perform poorly than dystopia. The world happiness report 2023 surveyed 155 countries and ranked them by their happiness level. For the sixth year in a row, Finland is the world's happiest country, according to WHR rankings followed by Denmark, Iceland, Israel and Netherland. Nepal ranks at 78 and India ranks 126.

In addition to improving the economic standard of living, policy-makers should not only focus on improving economic standard but also look ways to increase the happiness. Both of these will help to improve health outcomes, reduce the disease burden and enhance healthcare performance.

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