



RISING ECONOMIES, FALLING INDICES- A RELOOK AT THE EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF VIKSIT BHARAT

Education

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ABSTRACT

India, having a burgeoning tech industry, knowledge-based economy, robust democracy and strong partnerships is emerging as one of the few fastest-growing economies in the world regardless of the grappling impacts of ongoing global conflicts, shocks of the pandemic and policy rate hikes across economies to tame runaway inflation. However on the other side of the continuum is the Happiness Index, a survey instrument assessing happiness and other aspects of sustainability and resilience of a country, which is a cause of concern as India ranks a dismal 126th positioning out of 143 nations in the World Happiness Report 2024. Historically, World Happiness Report is closer to Aristotle's conception of Eudaimonia. Aristotle strongly believes happiness as a goal by itself. Statistical exercises verify that complex factors contribute to the persistent unhappiness of the nation, including lack of social support, perceptions of corruption, social hierarchies, educational disparities, women's safety, poor mental well-being, environmental issues, political unrest, unemployment, healthcare challenges etc. The vision of Viksit Bharat that envisages bolstered progress and elevated Indian profile on the geopolitical landscape requires multifaceted efforts across various domains. An important facet requiring attention here is Education, the cornerstone of empowerment. Viksit Bharat needs a paradigm shift and a broader holistic perspective on Education. Likewise, inspired from Aristotle's Eudaimonia and the Danish Hygge, the additional model that the author wants to suggest is the SEL Model – 'Social and Emotional Learning Model' to be incorporated in the formative stages and ages of learning. The Social and Emotional Learning Model (SELM) focuses on developing the social and emotional skills of students.

KEYWORDS

Happiness Index, Eudaimonia, Danish Hygge, Social and Emotional Learning Model

INTRODUCTION- THE GROWTH ODYSSEY

Rationality presumes that flourishing economies are the objective generative of well-being and can contribute significantly to overall happiness of the populace. According to popular belief we are currently living the best version of India- Amritkaal, the golden age where the growth trajectory seems clear. It's well on its path of becoming the third largest economy. The announcement of Viksit Bharat, an initiative of NITI Aayog, the apex policy think tank of India, is a momentous occasion. Given the country's rapid progress, the vision of transforming India into a global leader by 2047, the 100th anniversary of India's independence, reflects verity. Concurrently this narrative also demands reviewing multiple indices that play significant role in gauging the South Asian giant's complex growth odyssey and facilitating its transformation into a fully developed nation.

The Growth projection by the Finance minister while presenting a ten year review of the Indian economy earlier this year predicted that **India's GDP** will grow close to **7% in 2024-25**, with the potential to go **"well above" 7% by 2030**

The country's remarkable growth showcased by the developmental model focusing primarily on economic growth under 'Viksit Bharat' undoubtedly solicits appreciation. However it overlooks some crucial aspects, the absence of which can be responsible for creating imbalances and contradictions. One of the potential flaw that limits the effectiveness of 'Developed India' is the exclusion of 'social indicators' of development. A dedicated index mirrored towards human development elevating overall life satisfaction aligning with the vision of 'Happy India' seems to be missing. Noteworthy is the logic that only if growth and development are in lockstep can a virtuous cycle of sustained advancement be established.

In the same vein, India ranks a dismal 126th out of 143 nations in the World Happiness Report (WHR) 2024. 'Happiness Index' is a survey instrument assessing happiness and other aspects of sustainability and resilience of a country.

India's ranking and the fall in happiness quotient cannot be completely dismissed as a conspiracy theory, instead calls for some careful introspections and explanations. Development and Viksit Bharat could remain a dream if we fail to take objective cognizance of the situation. Are there any flaws with the development model adopted herein focusing on economic growth under 'Vision India@2047'? Is the economic growth pursued, balanced and equitable enough to ensure long-term sustainability? Why India's economic boom story hasn't translated into uniform prosperity. Concerted efforts are required to review India's dropping metrics on overall life satisfaction despite its high economic growth.

The top 9 happiest countries in the world and India in 2024, according to the World Happiness Report.

Country	Happiness Score
Finland	7.344
Denmark	7.583
Iceland	7.525
Sweden	7.344
Israel	7.341
Netherlands	7.319
Norway	7.302
Luxembourg	7.122
Switzerland	7.060
India	4.054

World Happiness Report 2024

Six Variables	Findings
Per capita GDP	Finland topped the list 7 th time in a row
Social Support	Afghanistan was ranked as the least happy country
Healthy Life Expectancy	India ranked 126 th in the list
Freedom for life choices	
Generosity	
Corruption	

Post-Developmentalists argue that the current model is disruptive to the social structure of our highly diverse communities. Adopting a homogenizing strategy of national development could be hazardous. They contend that the historically dominating Euro-centric notion of development perpetuates the legacy and interests of the colonial powers leading to a skewed and narrowed understanding of global development. It can lead to the suppression of indigenous knowledge systems and impose a new social classification of the world population on a global scale. Eurocentricism has left seminal impact on India's growth. It's time to rethink "Viksit Bharat", that conveniently overlooks social and psychological well-being indicators. Consequently, this paper attempts to analyze what additional model can be employed under 'India 2047' to make it more growth oriented.

ARISTOTLE'S EUDAIMONIA

Statistical exercises verify that complex factors contribute to the

persistent unhappiness of the nation, including social hierarchies, educational disparities, women's safety, poor mental well-being, environmental issues, political unrest, unemployment, healthcare challenges amid others.

Historically, World Happiness Report is closer to Aristotle's conception of *Eudaimonia*, representing a positive and divine state of benevolence. Aristotle, one of the greatest thinkers and political philosopher **enshrines happiness as the central purpose of human life and a goal in itself**. A nation is capable of prosperity and overall life satisfaction only if its people are happy. Once happiness is accepted as the goal by the government, it inadvertently has profound impact on the institutional policies and practices. In today's rapidly changing world and an era marked by mental health challenges where uncertainty is often the only constant, the idea of *Eudaimonia* becomes highly relevant. It offers a holistic outlook towards well-being and the ability to navigate adversity with grace and resilience. This philosophy, 'Happiness is flourishing' is actually a complex and nuanced concept. It speaks of living a life of purpose and meaning and achieving one's full potential as a human being, bringing it close to the idea of Maslow's Self-Actualization. Cultivating virtues and character traits and living a life of balance and harmony. According to Aristotle, it is achieved through reason and wisdom (*phronesis*), virtue and character (*ethos*), friendship and social connections (*philia*), personal growth.

Furthermore, *Eudaimonia*, the science of happiness, has implications beyond the individual. It can assist in societal well-being and sustainable development by providing a timeless framework for reflecting on what truly matters and how to cultivate a sense of flourishing both for individuals as well as communities. Aristotle's *eudaimonia* offers valuable insights about living a rich, fulfilling and meaningful life, where one's actions and decisions align with their values and goals. According to Aristotle, aligning education to this viewpoint becomes relevant if we are to produce a society of happy and productive individuals.

THE DANISH HYGGE

In Denmark Hygge is a way of life, emphasizing the value of slowing down, appreciating the little things that life offers and creating your own happiness. It could be something like enjoying nature to practicing mindfulness to lending a helping hand. It's an inspirational lifestyle bringing joy and warmth not just to oneself but to people at large. It brings warmth and ingenuity to life. Related to the discussion, we observe a clear positive correlation between happiness and altruism in Scandinavian countries. The prime ingredient in their recipe for happiness seems to be "hygge", which is doing something good for yourself and others. Research proves that not only do people who receive altruistic help experience improved well-being, but helping behavior also increases the well-being of the individual helper. Experimental evidence also shows that when people's well-being increases, they become more altruistic in ways that creates a virtuous spiral. And this social connection and trust among citizens contributes significantly to the happiness of Nordic countries. By embracing Hygge in education, the state, the facilitators and the educators can not only create but ensure a more supportive and engaging learning environment that benefits students' holistic growth.

THE INTERFACE- VIKSIT BHARAT, EDUCATION AND SEL MODEL

The vision of *Viksit Bharat* that envisages bolstered progress and elevated Indian profile on the geopolitical landscape requires cautious and multifaceted efforts across various domains. The key objective of *Viksit Bharat* is to prioritize and ensure inclusive development. An important aspect deserving attention here is Education, the cornerstone of empowerment and the means to foster a progressive society. Sadly the current state of education in our country is not matched by responsibility, duty and moral obligation. Dr. Radhakrishnan once said, 'You cannot make or build the nation by just bricks; you have to establish the minds of the young people. Then alone can the nation building take place.'

The government needs to play a pivotal role in spearheading various initiatives where its policies have to be evaluated against the touchstone of wellness. **Viksit Bharat needs a paradigm shift, and a broader holistic perspective on Education. We need to invest in quality education that synergizes skill development with emotional intelligence.** Superior approaches and dedicated curricula that

integrate teachings of social cohesion and trust are of critical requirement. Likewise, inspired from Aristotle's *Eudaimonia* and the Danish Hygge, the additional model that the author wants to suggest is the SEL Model – 'Social and Emotional Learning Model' to be incorporated in the formative stages and ages of learning to build a potent Emotional Quotient (EQ). The Social and Emotional Learning Model (SELM) focuses on developing the social and emotional skills of students. The key components of such a model are-

- Emphasizes interconnectedness of societies
- Promotes understanding, tolerance, and respect for cultural diversity.
- Considers the well-being of oneself and others.
- Infuses sense of social responsibility and civic engagement
- Develops a growth mindset while addressing local or global challenges.
- Teaches social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- Inculcates teamwork, communication, and collaboration skills
- Develops a strong sense of character and ethical decision-making skills.
- Respect for social norms and ethical standards.
- Addresses gender and racial biases
- Ensures that all students feel valued and respected regardless of gender or caste.
- Helps to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts peacefully, and build strong relationships.

Successful Implementation of SELM requires some strategic prerequisites in the Educational Settings-

- Mindful integration of SEL activities and lessons into the standard curriculum
- Equip educators with the knowledge and skills to be SEL competent and effective.
- Creating a supportive environment that reinforces SEL principles throughout the school community.
- Involving families and community members to support and extend SEL practices beyond the classroom.
- Real-world incentive system as a tool to reinforce positive behaviour

Having a tangible reward system for altruistic behavior within the evaluation scheme of education is as important as rewarding high grades across academic subjects. This ensures consistent demonstration of positive attitudes. When students receive acknowledgment and rewards for their good behavior, they not only feel valued and appreciated they are also more likely to repeat those actions in future leading to habit formation. Such altruistic behavior has ramifications not only for the individual, but also for the community at large.

Prosociality triggers ripple effects. There is implicit emotional contagion to demonstration of kindness, respect, and consideration. Longitudinal outcomes of such acts reflect positive dispositions, healthy peer relations, and academic success (Fisk & Lombardi, 2021; Gülseven, Carlo, Kumru, Sayıl, & Selçuk, 2022; Speyer et al., 2022; Yao & Enright, 2021).

Just as good behavior needs reinforcement and better credits; bad behavior needs deterrence and redressals. *Viksit Bharat* has to foster, nurture and practice benevolence.

Overall, the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Model is a comprehensive approach to education that prioritizes holistic development of students, ensuring that they are equipped with essential life skills along with scholastic knowledge. By fostering a supportive learning environment, SELM not just aims to improve students' academic outcomes but also improved mental health and better social skills. SELM encourages responsible behaviors, reduces disciplinary issues, and promotes a culture of respect and inclusion. Skills developed through SELM are applicable beyond school, helping individuals succeed in their personal and professional lives. By incorporating such an approach into educational practices, schools can help nurture a generation of socially responsible citizens.

IMPLICATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL PHILANTHROPY

Swami Vivekananda expressed that -We hope education can build character, strengthen the mind, expand knowledge and make people self-reliant through education.

Once India creates an ecosystem that prioritizes welfare, Educational philanthropy can create a lasting legacy of positive change. Educational philanthropy recognizes the critical role that teachers and educators play in shaping the minds of future generations and cultivate philanthropic societies. Global best practices that promote altruism and wellness can be modeled. Nordic countries like Finland have strong social support systems and high levels of trust within their societies. Finland's education system is renowned for its high quality and equality. The high ranking on the happiness index can be attributed to a combination of social, economic, and cultural factors that prioritize the well-being of its citizens. Countries that invest in accessible and high-quality education and healthcare tend to have happier populations. These investments not only improve physical health and intellectual development but also contribute to a sense of security and fulfillment.

The New Educational Policy of India also envisages that Education should not just prep for gainful employment but must also build character, enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring. The aim of education is to foster the best skills in those who can think and act well, have compassion and insight, have courage and patience, can research and think scientifically, with a sound foundation. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and pluralistic society as foreseen by our Constitution. While the NEP 2020 sets forth an ambitious and comprehensive vision for transforming education in India, multifarious administrative challenges, inconsistencies and gaps in the execution of the policy have collectively contributed to its slow and uneven progress. Viksit Bharat needs to address these issues and establish robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating education

CONCLUSION

Education plays a pivotal and transformative role in the development of any nation, and by adopting systemic optimal methodologies India can invest in quality education to harness its demographic dividend and realize its full economic potential.

Recognizing, highlighting and celebrating instances of kindness and generosity can inspire others to follow suit and contribute to the well-being of the societies. So at the level of society, eudaimonia, good governance and responsible education go hand-in-hand. For Aristotle, this view of education is necessary if we are to produce a society of happy as well as productive individuals. Viksit Bharat has to cultivate country's happiness by revisiting the teaching-learning pedagogies and help policymakers understand the factors that need improvement. A developed India has to be built through collective efforts. Huge responsibility rests in the hands of academicians, students, and educational institutions during this era of nation-building. To quote Joyce Meyer- 'Teachers can change lives with the right mix of chalk and challenges'.

We must work on revolutionizing the current classroom teaching environment and empowering every citizen to be a catalyst for change. We have to bring that consciousness into society where even without surveillance, people behave responsibly. Education can contribute significantly to foster a cohesive unified and 'Happy India'.

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19. EQ is the ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions in positive ways.
20. Prosociality refers to behaviors that are intended to benefit others, including sharing, comforting, and helping others (Eisenberg, Eggum-Wilkens, & Spinrad, 2015).
21. A term used by Raphael Avraham Sternberg, a Jerusalem based entrepreneur