

# HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING

**DR GARIMA SINGH**

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
DEEN DAYAL UPADHYAYA GORAKHPUR UNIVERSITY

# Theories of Happiness

1. Need/ goal satisfaction theories,
2. Process/activity theories, and
3. Genetic and personality predisposition

# Need/ goal satisfaction theories

- ▶ The reduction of tension or the satisfaction of needs lead to happiness.
- ▶ We are happy because we have reached our goals.
- ▶ Such "happiness as satisfaction" makes happiness a target of our psychological pursuits

# Process/activity theories

- ▶ Engaging in particular life activities generates happiness
- ▶ Csikszentmihalyi's (1975/2000, 1990) work suggests that engagement in activity produces happiness.
- ▶ Other process/activity theorists (e.g., Emmons, 1986; Snyder, 1994) have emphasized the process of pursuing goals generates energy and happiness

# Genetic and personality predisposition

- ▶ Happiness as stable trait, whereas theorists in the happiness-as-satisfaction and process/activity camps view it as changing with life conditions
- ▶ Thereby lending credence to theories of personality-based or biologically determined happiness.
- ▶ **Lucas and Fujita (2000):** extroversion and neuroticism, two of the Big 5 factors of personality, were closely related to the characteristics of happiness.

# SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AS A SYNONYM FOR HAPPINESS

- ▶ Hedonic psychology :emphasizes the study of pleasure and life satisfaction: considers well-being to be the subjective evaluation of one's current status in the world.
- ▶ More specifically, well-being involves our experience of pleasure and our appreciation of life's rewards.

# Subjective well-being

- ▶ **Diener** defines subjective well-being as a combination of positive affect (in the absence of negative affect) and general life satisfaction. Furthermore, he uses the term subjective well-being as a synonym for happiness
- ▶ Subjective well-being emphasizes peoples' reports of their life experience

# DETERMINANTS OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

## 1. Financial Condition :

- ▶ Financial status was more highly correlated with satisfaction for students in poor nations than for those in wealthy nations (Diener & Diener, 1995).
- ▶ Moreover, the people in wealthy nations generally were happier than those in impoverished nations.

## 2. Marriage:

- ▶ Western samples indicate that married men and women alike report more happiness than those who are not married (never married, divorced, or separated; Lee, Seccombe, & Shehan, 1991).
- ▶ The link between subjective well-being and being married holds for people of all ages, income and educational levels, and racial-ethnic backgrounds
- ▶ Not surprisingly, marital quality also is positively associated with personal well-being (Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997).



# DETERMINANTS OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

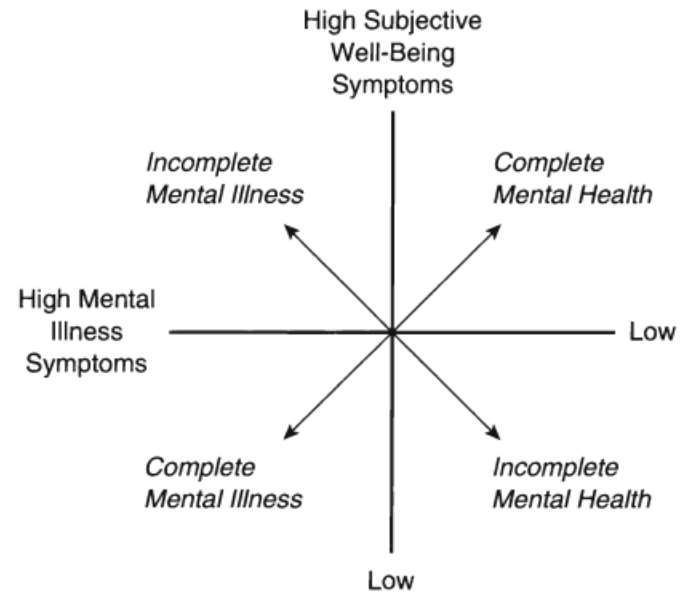
## 3. Mental Health Condition:

- ▶ Diener and Seligman (2003) found that the qualities of good mental health and good social relationships consistently emerge in the lives in the sample of happiest young adults.

# HAPPINESS AND WELL BEING

- ▶ Hedonic View: Subjective well-being = happiness
- ▶ Eudemonic view: well-being = happiness + meaning

# COMPLETE MENTAL HEALTH: EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING



**Figure 7.5** A Model of Complete Mental Health

Source: Keyes and Lopez (2002).

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