CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
"Happiness is the supreme object of existence"

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Happiness is the common goal of all mankind and it is also the most elusive one. But there is nothing absolute about the concept of happiness. It is an internal experience which is totally subjective and psychological. So, the word happiness is interchangeably used with subjective well-being and psychological well-being. Earlier, in most of the studies, happiness was not directly studied and the concept of happiness has been drawn from subjective well-being and psychological well-being to some extent.

Since sixth century B.C., happiness has been considered as a primary and necessary component of eudaimonia or the worthwhile life (Taylor, 1998). Living well is a combination of both a favourable objective evaluation of one's situation (i.e. reasoned) and a favourable subjective assessment of one's well-being. Subjective well-being emerged in the late 1950s in search for useful indicators of quality of life to monitor social change and improve social policy (Land, 1975). As milestones in this literature, books by Andrews and Withey (1976) and Campbell, Converse and Rodgers (1976) clarifies that although people live in objectively defined world, it is their subjectively defined world that they respond to, thus giving prominence to subjective well-being as a relevant index of quality of life. Cummins (2000) through meta-analysis reviewed several subjective well-being studies and argued that objective and subjective indicators of subjective well-being are fairly independent but their degree of dependency increases when the objective conditions of living are poor (Diener, et al.)
In addition, subjective well-being researchers believe that social indicators alone do not define quality of life (Diener and Suh, 1996). Other influential volumes at the time (Bradburn, 1969; Cantril, 1965; Gurin, Veroff & Feld, 1960) emphasized life satisfaction and happiness as component of life quality.

Today, this belief continues with greater emphasis on subjective-wellbeing or happiness. Growth in the field of subjective well-being reflects larger societal trends concerning the value of the individual; the importance of subjective views in evaluating life and the recognition that well-being necessarily includes positive elements that transcend economic prosperity. The scientific study of subjective well-being developed in part as a reaction to the overwhelming emphasis in psychology on negative states. Psychological articles examining negative states outnumber those examining positive states by a ratio of 17 to 1 (Myers & Diener, 1995).

Earlier the basic strategy of research was "bottom up" approach. First you study and understand the causes of human problems. Then, you find ways to eliminate or reduce them, happiness will surely result. The orientation of the psychology had been very negative. The major topics have been pain, hunger, mental illness, hostility, aggression, psychopathology, suicide, fear, anxiety, depression and so on. But the absence of all these, doesn't mean the presence of happiness. The person may not be suffering from any kind of mental or physical problem but at the same time, he may not be happy. So, it becomes very important to study happiness directly.
The literature on subjective well-being presents a diverse array of definitions (Diener, 1984; Veenhoven, 1991a, 1991b). Subjective well-being has been conceptualized for instance as psychological well-being (Ryff, 1995; Ojanen, 2000) or the balance between negative and positive affect (Bradburn, 1969), happiness (Veenhoven, 1991a) and global satisfaction with life (Diener & Emmons, 1984; Diener et al., 1991; Pavot, Diener, Calvin and Sandvik, 1991). More recent measures include success in achieving goals have also been identified (Cantor and Sanderson, 1999).

Positive psychology determines subjective well-being or happiness as an individual's affective and cognitive evaluations of their lives (Diener, 2000). The affective component is an individual's (actual or perceived) hedonic balance (i.e. balance between pleasant and unpleasant affect) and the cognitive component is an individual's life satisfaction (i.e. evaluation of one's life according to subjectively defined standards). Subjective well-being combines both the frequency and intensity of pleasant emotions and the absence of ill-being and considers both momentary and long term levels of affect and satisfaction (Grob, 1995b; Diener, 1998; Grob, et al. 1998). Veenhoven (1991a) pointed out that happiness in the sense of life satisfaction depends not only on the comparison but also the gratification of bio-psychological needs.

Watson (1930) stated, "No quest claim to be larger than happiness". According to him, the essentials of happiness for most people are among the stable elements of life (friends, work, nature), not among the stimulants (alcohol, clubs, charas, dancing, cards, automobiles or arts). Happiness is
associated with serious, deliberate, responsible, earnest, hardworking living.

Freud has stated that there is no doubt that man sought happiness above all other goals in life. He defined happiness as criteria of excellence in the art of living. Altson and Dudley (1987) proposed that happiness is the ability to enjoy one's experiences, accompanied by a degree of excitement. Argyle, Martin and Crossland (1989) believe that happiness is composed of three related components: a) positive affect, b) absence of negative affect and c) satisfaction with life as a whole.

Martin Seligman (2000) gave the positive psychological definition of happiness as consisting of both positive emotions (like comfort) and positive activities (like absorption). He presents three categories of positive emotions.

a) **Past:** feeling of satisfaction, contentment, pride and serenity.

b) **Present:** (e.g.) enjoying the taste of food, glee at listening to music, absorption in reading.

c) **Future:** feeling of optimism, hope, trust, faith and confidence.

These are three categories of present positive emotions:

a) Bodily pleasure, e.g. enjoying the taste of food.

b) Higher pleasure, e.g. glee at listening to music.

c) Gratification, e.g. absorption in reading.

The bodily and higher pleasures are "pleasures of moment" and usually involve some external stimulus. An exception is the glee felt at having an original thought.
Gratification involves full engagement, flow, elimination of self-consciousness and blocking of felt emotions. But when a gratification comes to an end then positive emotion will be felt.

Thus, these are the different views on happiness. So, it is probably impossible to objectively define happiness as we know and understand it as an internal experience which is subjective by nature. Happiness however is an internal experience – it is like a thought, a dream or an idea. We feel in our consciousness, it is a part of our awareness or a state of mind.

Happiness or subjective well-being is the focus of intense research attention (Diener and Diener, 1995). In most of the studies, it was found that people rank the pursuit of happiness as one of the most cherished goal in life (Diener & Oishi, 2000; Diener, Suh, Smith & Shao, 1995; Freedman, 1978; Triandis, Bontempo, Leung & Hui, 1990; Lyubomirsky, 2000). Furthermore, happiness appears to have a number of positive by products, which may benefit not only individuals, but families, communities and societies (Myers, 1992; Lyubomirsky, Kind and Diener, 2004, Fredrickson, 2001).

"A Human being is not one on pursuit of happiness, but rather in search of a reason to be happy".

(Frankl, 1984)

The pursuit of happiness is an important goal for many people. However, surprisingly, little scientific research has focused on the question of how happiness can be increased and then sustained.
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There are various genetic and environmental factors that determine the attitude or behaviour of an individual (Evas & Eysenck, 1974; Martin et al., 1986; McCourt, Bouchard, Lykken, Tellegen & Keyes, 1999; Olson et al., 2001; Posner, Baker, Heath & Martin, 1996; Scarr & Weinberg, 1981; Truett, Eaves, Meyer, Heath & Martin, 1992; Waller, Kojetin, Bouchard & Lykken, 1990) which leads to happiness. The children's pro-social behaviour has both genetic and environmental (shared and non-shared) effect (Deater-Deckard et al., 2001; Scourfield, John, Martin & McGuffin, 2004; Zahn-Waxler, Robinson & Emde, 1992; Zahn-Waxler, Schiro, Robinson, Emde & Schmitz, 2001). In one study using children's report of parents' behaviour from 707 siblings and twin pairs reported that genetic effects accounted for 49%-56% of the variance in parental positively shared environmental effects for 4%-20% and non-shared environment (and error) for 38%-66% of variance. Estimates of parental negativity were 23%-40% for heritability for shared environment effects and 46%-53% for non-shared environment (Plomin, 1994). Thus, this is the gene-environment correlation that affects children's behaviour (Neiderhiser et. al. 2004; Plomin, 1994).

But environmental factors play a very important role in determining happiness. People form association and connection with others from the moment they are born. The very survival of the newborn depends on their attachment to and nurturance by others over an extended period of time. (Baumeister & leary, 1995). Moreover, affiliation and nurturing social relationships are essential for physical and for psychological well-being across the life span (Cohen & Syme, 1985; Gardner, Gabriel & Diekman, 2000; Seeman, 1996). Evans et al. (1997) have also found that the effects
of shared and non-shared environment on social attitudes were overwhelming and the effect of genetics is negligible. So, it becomes important to study the environmental factors in terms of personality, family environment, parent-child relationship, social support, religion, culture and the most important attitudinal factors to find out the factors contributing to happiness.

On the basis of above mentioned studies, the role of nature & nurture seems to be equally important, hence, it would be in order, to determine the role of environmental factors in happiness disposition e.g. the contribution of Religio-Cultural factors in the determination of happiness amongst Bangladeshi & Bhutanese.

Human beings are always immersed in a social environment starting from family, which not only changes the very structure of the individual but also provides him a readymade system of signs. The infant at birth is primarily on a biological level. Its first contact by which it begins to become a social psychological being is in the family.

Inspite of radical changes that have taken place in the pattern of Indian life in recent decades, the family is the still most important part of child's social network. This is because the members of the family constitute the child's first environment and are the most significant people during the early, formative years.

From contacts with family members, children lay the foundations for attitudes towards people, things and life in general. They also lay the foundations for pattern of adjustment and learn to think of themselves as the member of their family think of them. As a result, they learn to adjust to
life on the basis of the foundations laid when the environment was limited largely to home.

The family environment is the psychological atmosphere of the family, varies markedly from family to family. Some families have good environment, some a poor and others a changeable climate. Even within the family, the climate may vary from time to time for anyone individual, it is certain to vary for children of the family. The kinds of family in which children grow up affect their development, attitude and behaviour by determining the kind of relationship they have with different family members. If the attitude of the members of the family is positive and favourable meaning thereby they are helping and supporting each other, they have freedom to express their views, participate in social, cultural and intellectual activities and lesser conflict and control results in happiness among the members of the family (Thapa, 2005). Earlier studies have found that home or family environment is the important source of happiness in life (Hall, 1976; Chiasson et al. 1996). A study by Mills and Grasmick (1992) revealed that satisfaction with family has a positive effect on psychological well-being among adults. Wolman et al. (1994) emphasized the strong association between family correctedness and adolescent emotional well-being.

Thus, we can say that one of the most important factors that may be the root cause of happiness is family and its environment. But there are various determinants of family climate like family composition, parental occupation, child rearing attitudes and practices, abuse families, structural demographic and personal factors that determine the happiness of an
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individual. Undoubtedly the interaction between parent-child has a significant influence. The interaction and emotional relationship between infant and parents will shape the child's expectancies and responses in subsequent social relations. The beliefs, values and attitude of the culture are filtered through parents and presented to the child in a highly personalized, selective fashion that determines the personality of the child. Nevertheless, the most important person in a child's life is his parents who can basically mould and modify the future in child's favour.

The contribution of the family to child's development comes from the type of relationship children have with different family members. These relationships, in turn, are influenced by the attitudes and behaviour of different family member towards the children of the family.

In family, parents share an influential space in individual's life. The importance of good parent-child relationship and healthy home environment in the healthy development of the individual in the later life has been well documented in literature. The quality of an adolescent's relationship with his/her parents is a key component to healthy adolescent development (Rueter & Conger, 1995).

Baumrind (1991) stated that important aspects of parent-child relationship is the style of parenting or pattern of child rearing which parents adopt for their children. Parenting practice is a basic factor of the parent-adolescent relationship. A number of studies have examined the correlation between various parenting styles and adolescent outcomes (Olson et al. 1989; Baumrind, 1991; Ambert, 1997; Fletcher et al. 1999; Ronka and Poikkeus, 2000) and parenting style has also been claimed to be
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associated with adolescent subjective well-being (Petito and Cummins, 2000; Ronka and Poikkeus, 2000; Kinnunen et al., 2001). Shek (2000) has also found that paternal parenting has stronger influence on adolescent psychological well-being.

Thus, family environment and parent-child relationship play a very important role in happiness disposition which further sow the seed for future happiness.

Keeping in view, the importance of these factors, the present endeavour aims to study and to find out the role of various factors of family environment i.e. cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, intellectual-cultural orientation, achievement orientation, active-recreational orientation, moral religious emphasis, organization and control along with the factors of parent-child relationship i.e. protecting, symbolic punishment, rejecting, object punishment, demanding, indifferent, symbolic reward, loving, object reward and neglecting as possible factors in happiness disposition. The factors of parent-child relationship will be studied separately for father and mother. The study will focus on children within age ranging from 13 to 16 years amongst different cultures of Kangra district i.e. Nepalese settlers and others inhabitants.

In the next section, the conceptual framework and review of studies regarding the family environment and parent-child relationship shall be presented.