CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Human beings are in search of well-being (Happiness) since the advent of men & women on this planet always putting efforts to improve it. They find happiness through different ways: like a spiritual seeker such as Gautam Buddha, Swami Vivekananda, Rajneesh Osho, Dalai Lama, etc., and some of the human beings are relating happiness with the wealth (materialism) and start running in the race of accumulation of wealth. Not only human beings, but countries are also running in the race of making more and more wealth as it is considered a source of happiness. The whole world focuses on the attainment of economic well-being. Economic well-being is measured in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth rates, the resultant majority of the countries of the world are measuring the well-being of nations in term of GDP growth rates. This has led to the classification of the world into three categories; underdeveloped nations, developing nations, and developed nations. The people of the developed nations are considered as a happy person in comparison with the rest of the two.

Somewhere in this race of wealth accumulation, the people as well as nations start ignoring their basic needs, i.e., feeling of satisfaction or happiness. In 1972, Bhutan had introduced the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) and started measuring well-being in terms of GNH instead of GDP. The GNH Index includes nine domains:

a) Psychological well-being;
b) Health.
c) Education.
d) Time use.
e) Cultural diversity and resilience.
f) Good governance.
g) Community Vitality.
h) Ecological diversity and resilience.
i) Living standards.

GNH attracted the attention of the whole world and put a question on the method of measuring the quality of life. In 1990, the UN launched its Human Development Report with Human Development Index (HDI). Education, Health, and Quality of Life were the three components of the Human Development Index (HDI) and accordingly assessment of
human well-being across the world was done. Objective indicators were used in measuring well-being. A few years ago, World Happiness Report (2012), introduced by United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, which was a good example of measuring the quality of life through a subjective well-being approach. Now, the World has considered happiness as the proper measure of social progress and the goal of public policy. On World Happiness Day, March 20, World Happiness Report 2017 was released publicly.

Researchers like Edward F. Diener, Robert A. Cummins, Martin Seligman, Ulrich Schimmack and Bruno S. Frey has introduced the world to the concept of subjective well-being (Happiness) and its measurement. This study is also based on a subjective approach to measuring well-being or quality of life of people in Gujarat. Gujarat is considered as one of the fastest growing and prosperous states of the country. As we compared HDI ranking then it comes out that Gujarat (HDI Ranking- 11, 2015) is far behind in the state called Kerala (HDI Ranking -1, 2015). On the other hand, Gujarat has better GDP data compared to Kerala, (nominal GSDP report-2017). These facts raised the question over the quality of life in Gujarat. This study has explored the overall quality of Life of people in Gujarat and also expounded on the domains of life satisfaction, which affects the quality of life.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The study is focused on measuring subjective well-being or perceived quality of life of people in Gujarat. By literature review, we came to know that Quality of life varies with different age groups and classes (adolescent, university students, working class, non-working class, senior citizens, etc.). This study is restricted up to examine the perceived Quality of life of people in Gujarat. The study has focused on only working persons, specifically who are doing jobs with an age group of 26 to 55 years, income level INR 1.2 lakhs to INR12 lakhs per annum, education level with minimum S.S.C. Pass, either married or unmarried and lives in urban or rural areas of Gujarat. Respondents from tribal areas of Gujarat are not included in this study. The study is based on the following key variables such as life satisfaction, subjective well-being and quality of life. The influence of demographic and socioeconomic factors (age, gender, income, education, and area of residence) on the key variables has been studied.
This study mainly finds out solutions to certain questions: 1) what is the overall life satisfaction of people in Gujarat. Thus the people of Gujarat are satisfied with their overall life satisfaction? 2) Whether overall Life-satisfaction varies with their demographic (age, gender, marital status) and socioeconomic variables (education, income, locality of residence). 3) Whether the quality of life remains the same in all four geographic zones/areas of Gujarat. 4) Whether the quality of life remains the same in urban and rural areas of Gujarat? 5) What are the factors (domains) which affect the quality of life of people in Gujarat? Also, what are the weights of these factors in terms of their impact on overall quality of life? Besides this, this study also tries to explore the sense of well-being of people in Gujarat. Thus, whether there is any difference between a sense of well-being (positive affect & negative affect) of people, which are highly satisfied compared, moderately satisfied and dissatisfied people?

This study is based on Diener’s (1999) theory of subjective well-being, where three components of subjective well-being have stated; a) positive and negative affect, b) life satisfaction, and c) satisfaction with specific domains. Key outputs of the study are 1) research design framework, 2) Life-domain satisfaction scale, and 3) findings of the study, i.e. a brief but clear idea about the factors which affecting quality of life of people in Gujarat has explored.

1.3 RATIONAL OF THE STUDY

Like most of the other countries in the world, India also depends on the objective indicators to measure growth and particularly gives more weight to GDP growth rate to examine the well-being of people in India. Yes, the USA and other developed nations did the same, but their public welfare policies and budgets are made in consideration with many other parameters. At the India GDP growth rate has projected throughout the year and its impact has measured by socioeconomic surveys, resultant economic budgets and public welfare policies are a frame out. Besides India is one of the fastest growing economies and the largest democracy in the world. However, after 70 years of independence, approx. 1/3 population lives in below poverty line and the rest are also having moderate to a poor quality of life as per HDI ranking (Rank- 131, HDR-2016). India’s HDI ranking is just ahead of the countries like Bhutan, Bangladesh, Pakistan,
Nepal, Myanmar and Afghanistan in SAARC countries. The country like Srilanka (Rank-73, HDR-2016) and the Maldives (Rank- 105, HDR-2016) having far better HDI ranking than India. Even in worse cases Iraq (Rank- 121, HDR-2016) and Vietnam (Rank- 115, HDR-2016) having better HDI ranking than India. Richer become rich and the poor become poorer because of weak socioeconomic policy frameworks in India. According to Global Wealth Report 2016, compiled by Credit Suisse Research Institute expounded that India is the second most unequal country in the world with the top one percent of the population owning nearly 60% of the total wealth.

The subjective approach to measuring well-being is based on people’s self-report judgment/assessment of life events. On the other side, an objective approach is based on a quantitative measurement of standard of living. Hence, an objective approach is comparatively less informative. Also, people participation is comparatively very less; resultant an actual problem will never come out and a gap between economic growth and public welfare increases. The only mediator between economic growth and the well-being of people is the policy framework of the nation. In India socioeconomic surveys conducted every year, where objective indicators of quality of life played a significant role and people self-report life judgments had got less space in it. Even countries like U.A.E (Rank- 42, HDR-2016) realized the importance of focusing on policy formation by considering subjective measurements of quality of life of people. Ohood bint Khalfan Al Roumi is the Minister of State for Happiness in the new UAE Cabinet; In February 2016, she said that the new ministry aims to promote the UAE’s plans, programmes, and policies to promote the happiness of the UAE society.

The subjective approach to measuring well-being is a multi-dimensional measure, where the quality of life has been assessed at 360 degrees. In India also, we have a strong need to put more focus on the subjective approach of measuring the well-being of people. This study is an attempt to demonstrate the methodology of measuring subjective quality of life/happiness of people where people’s self-report judgment about their quality of life reveals areas where the government needs to put a focus on and accordingly public welfare policies need to be crafted. Subjective approach is not only more informative, but also gives many useful solutions for various human development issues.
In India, a single standardized measurement of quality of life is used, irrespective of people belonging to the different socioeconomic class, genders, age groups, geographical areas, etc. Resultant the public welfare policies give support to only a few particular groups of people and a large number of people deprive of any kind of welfare measure. It not only creates differences in the welfare of people, but it also increases the gap among different social classes in society. In a subjective well-being approach, first categorized people into groups and accordingly factors have been decided to assess their quality of life. Subjective well-being approach will play a significant role to reduce the differences of well-being among various groups of Indian society and resultant uniform growth may take place. To make India as an ideal country, where all age group people, from children to senior citizen lives happily, all income level people lives a happy life, etc. The implementation of a subjective approach to measuring the well-being of people is much needed.

If we relate the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory with an objective approach and subjective approach of measuring well-being, then we found that an objective approach is restricted up to assess only lower level needs like physiological needs, which is its biggest limitation. On the other side, a subjective approach can measure human needs of each level like physiological needs, safety needs, social need to higher level needs like self-esteem need and self-actualization needs. So we can conclude that the subjective approach of measuring the quality of life is a complete measure of assessing the well-being of people.

1.4 OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Objectives

The study seeks to examine the sense of well-being /happiness in the Gujarat state. Specifically, it attempts to:

I. Assess the overall life satisfaction of people.

II. Study the sense of well-being among highly satisfied people, moderately satisfied people, and poorly satisfied people.

III. Examine whether the perceived quality of life varies with demographic and socioeconomic variables like sex, age, marital status, education status, income level and residential area.
IV. Ascertain the relationship between overall life satisfaction and different domains of life satisfaction, and

V. Comparing the life satisfaction with selected people of towns and villages in the State of Gujarat.

Research Hypothesis

1. People are not neutral towards their perceived quality of life.
2. There is a significant difference in perceived quality of life of males and females.
3. There is a significant difference in perceived quality of life of people with different age groups.
4. There is a significant difference in perceived quality of life of people with different educational status.
5. There is a significant difference in perceived quality of life of people with different marital status.
6. There is a significant difference in perceived quality of life of people with different income groups.
7. There is a significant difference in perceived quality of life of people of Central-Gujarat, South-Gujarat, Saurashtra, and North-Gujarat.
8. There is a significant difference in perceived quality of life of the people of rural and urban Gujarat.
9. There is a significant relationship between overall life satisfaction and different domains of life satisfaction.

1.5 NOMINAL DEFINITIONS

People

The members of a particular nation, community, or ethnic group.

Quality of Life

World Health Organization QOL Group (1994) defined Quality of Life as an individual’s perception of his/her position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which he/she lives and in relation to his/her goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It
is a broad-ranging concept, incorporating in a complex way the person’s physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, and their relationship to salient features of their environment.

**Well-being**

The state of being comfortable, healthy or happy.

**Subjective Well-being**

Schimmack et al. (2008) defined well-being as preference realization which can be measured with an affective and cognitive measure.

**Life Satisfaction**

Life satisfaction is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive. It is one of three major indicators of well-being: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. Hedonic level or balance refers to the pleasantness minus unpleasantness of one’s emotional life (Diener, 1984).

**Overall Quality of Life**

Overall quality of life is a composite assessment of the quality of the social, economic and physical environments.

1.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduces readers to this study by drawing a broad picture where the concern of this study has shown and describes how this study touches crucial elements of the society. Also, Researcher portrays his thinking and understanding of the societal issue and try to give it solution. Research problem identification is a major contribution of this chapter. The outlook of the research problem has picturized and then narrows it down to the specific research question. A research question on which the whole study is put focuses on. The rationale of the study has discussed in this chapter, where the need of this
study and its contribution has shown which justifies its meaningfulness to the society. As per a systematic study, Research question gets fractioned into points and accordingly to Research objectives are a frame out. Research hypothesis which are probable solutions of the research questions and which are going to be tested is get formulated in this chapter. Nominal definitions of the key terms are mentioned in this chapter. Overall, this chapter gives a preview of the research topic, its origin and its contribution to the society. A review of the literature chapter follows this chapter in the study.