CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Happiness is the ultimate blessing of life but there is nothing absolute about the concept of happiness. Happiness is an elusive yet all important subject. Generally, happiness is considered to be the ultimate goal in life. Its attainment has been focused by philosophers, psychologists and theologists since the dawn of record time.

In dictionary happiness has been stated in different ways as:

1. Good luck; good fortune; prosperity.

2. An agreeable feeling or condition of the soul arising from good fortune or propitious happenings of any kind; the possession of those circumstances or that state of being which is attended enjoyment; the state of being happy; contentment; joyful; satisfaction; felicity; blessedness.

3. Fortuitous elegance; unstudied grace; used especially in language.

According to Webster's Third International Dictionary happiness is "a state of well-being characterized by relative permanence, by dominantly agreeable emotion ranging in value from mere contentment to deep and intense joy in living, and by a natural desire for its continuation."

In French happiness is bonheur; German gluck; Latin felicitas; Greek eutychia, eudaimonia. The primary meaning of this term in all the leading European languages seems to involve the notion of good fortune, good chance and good happening.

The scientific study of happiness is new but, theories about the secrets of happiness are age old. The philosophers of ancient Greece pondered the happiness question intensely. Their answer: Happiness arises from a life of leisurely and intelligent reflection.
For Plato (427-347 B.C) happiness is harmonious functioning of man's soul. It is subordination of the lower to the higher, of the non-rational to the rational. Thus, for Plato happiness is inevitable concomitant of such harmony. It is the property of the whole soul and demand of any element of the soul for preferential treatment in the matter of happiness would be looked upon as unreasonable.

According to Encyclopedias, in Aristole's (384-322 B.C) ethical system, happiness is supreme good and is expressed by eudaimonia which is the central idea. For Aristole, nature is human nature as a whole. This is both rational and sensuous. His treatment of happiness is in closer contact with experience. The goal with which he concerns himself is that which is possible for man to reach in this life. This highest good is happiness. This must be true purpose of life; for we seek in it all our actions. Not in mere passive enjoyment, for this is open to the brute, but in action (energia), of the kind that is proper to man in contrast with other animals. This is an intellectual action. Not all kinds of intellectual action, however, result in happiness, but only virtuous action, that is action which springs from virtue and is according to its laws; this alone is appropriate to the virtue of man. The highest happiness corresponds to the highest virtue; it is the best activity of the highest faculty. Though happiness does not consist in pleasure; it does not exclude pleasure. On the contrary, the highest form of pleasure is the outcome of virtuous action. But; for such happiness to be complete it should be continuous during a life of average length in at least moderately comfortable circumstances and enriched by interaction with friends. Virtues are either ethical or dianoetic (intellectual). The latter pertain either to the practical or to the speculative reason. This last is the highest faculty of all hence, the highest virtue is a habit of the speculative reason. Consequently, for Aristotle the highest happiness is to be found not in the ethical virtues of the active life, but in the contemplative or philosophical life of speculation in which the dianoetic (intellectual) virtues of understanding, science and wisdom are exercised. Theoria or pure
speculation, is the highest activity of man and that by which he is most like unto the Gods because in this too happiness of Gods exists. It is in this sense, a Divine Life. Only few, however, can attain to it; the great majority content with the inferior happiness of the active life. Happiness (eudaimonia) therefore with Aristotle is not identical with pleasure (hedone) or even with the sum of pleasures. It has been described as the kind of well-being that consists in well-doing and supreme happiness is thus, well-doing of the best faculty. Pleasure is a concomitant or efflorescence of such an activity.

In the book 'The Pursuit of Happiness', Epicurean and Stoic philosophers offered variations on this song of happy contemplation. For Epicurus (342-270 B.C) happiness flowed from life's simple, sustainable pleasures such as tranquil peace of mind. He held that wise people remember the past with gratitude, take delight in present pleasures and regard the eternal future without fear. For the Stoics it signified: “Satisfy your reason which nature bids us to exalt by the entire suppression of our sensuous appetites.” Thus, happiness was less enjoyment of simple pleasures than the attainment of virtuous attitudes - the wisdom to know what is good and bad, what to fear and what not to fear and how to control one’s passions. Better to accept one’s situation than to convert something different.

Again, in the book 'The Pursuit of Happiness', Cicero (106-43 B.C) believes that happiness of life were more of the mind and less of the body. To be happy was to live serenely, above the world’s swings of passion and material future. “There is no fool who is happy and no wise man who is not”, echoed the Roman statesman Cicero.

Kant, however, describes the entire idea of happiness, as a self-centered act motivated by narrow considerations. As identification of happiness with sensuous pleasure and for this reason he is opposed of working for our own happiness.

In the centuries since, other sages have offered radically different ideas about the roots of happiness. They have told us that happiness
comes from living a virtuous life and that it comes from getting away with evil; that it comes from knowing the truth and from preserving illusions; that it comes from restraint and from purging ourselves of pent-up rage and misery. They also have told us that happiness comes from living for the present and living for the future; from making others happy and from enjoying our enemies misery; from being with others and from living in solitude.

In Indian mythology, according to Geeta, happiness is the very nature of the self; happiness and the self are not different. There is no happiness in any object of the world. We imagine through our ignorance that we derive happiness from objects. When the mind goes out, it experiences misery. In the states of sleep, samadhi, and fainting, when the object desired is obtained or the object disliked is removed, the mind becomes inward turned and enjoys pure Self-Happiness. Thus, the mind moves without rest alternately going out of the self and returning to it. For example, under the tree the shade is pleasant; out in the open the heat is scorching. A person who has been going out in the sun feels cool when he reaches the shade. Someone who keeps on going from the shade into the sun and then back into the shade is a fool. A wise man stays permanently in the shade. In fact, what is called the world is only thought. When the world disappears, i.e. when there is no thought, the mind experiences happiness and when the world appears it goes through misery.

Likewise, Srimad Bhagwat Geeta gives the concept of ‘Stitha Prajna’. In Geeta ‘Stitha’ means stationary and ‘Prajna’ means gain or knowledge. Thus, Stitha Prajna means stationary knowledge. The word ‘Prajna’ is derived from ‘Parthavas’ which means prithve. Thus, here Stitha Prajna means we have to be stable in every situation or condition that comes in our way of life. We should not express or feel extra happy or elated when we are happy and grief when we are in sorrow. We should remain stable like earth or prithve which remains still, cool and calm in every season. Likewise, we should also try to maintain a
balance in our lives, which is the ultimate basis of happiness in everybody's life.

Great Indian saint Swami Vivekananda echoed the Upanishadic truth that the goal of man should not be to seek happiness or avoid misery but to go at the roots of it and master the situation which is responsible for their creation. But, such a mastery can hardly be possible without the right knowledge.

It is undoubtedly true that happiness is the single most sought after thing in the world. It is valuable to everyone - no matter who they are, where they live or what their status is in life. Everybody wants happiness! It is one of the most fundamental aspects of human being and is ranked at the pinnacle of all human goals.

In psychology as well, the importance of happiness has always been paramount. Happiness has been cited as a psychological state and is an overriding goal of human behavior from the early days.

James observed that “....happiness is for most men at all times, the secret motive of all they do and all they are willing to endure.”

Watson (1930) stated, “no quest claim a larger following 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, churches, dancing, cards, automobiles, or arts). Happiness is associated with serious, deliberate, responsible, earnest, hardworking living rather than with impulsive, light, amusing dilettantism.

Another eminent psychologist Freud too has no doubt that man sought happiness above all other goals in life. Fromm put it, “happiness is the criteria of excellence in the art of living.”

In the chapter 'Personality and the Pursuit of Happiness' by Smith, happiness is viewed not so much a matter of how we see the world as a matter of how well we deal with it. It is good to see good but it is also good to see bad when it is there to harm us. Happiness in
other words, depends upon the ability to meet the realistic demands of situations.

While Eysenck (1983) clearly noted that "happiness is a thing called stable extraversion ... the positive affect in other people ... then it only makes sense that happiness can be associated with extraversion. Similarly, if worries and anxieties make up negative affect in happiness it can easily be seen that instability and neuroticism are also connected to unhappiness."

Happiness is not merely a transient emotional state short-lived and completely dictated of environmental events (Veenhoven, 1994), rather it is more often conceptualized as a personal trait (Costa and McCrae, 1980, 1984). Argyle, Martin and Crossland (1984) believe that happiness is composed of three related components: positive affect (joy); absence of negative affect (anger, anxiety, depression etc.); and satisfaction with life as a whole. Happy people seem to operate on a philosophy of positive thought, positive expectations and positive results. They always look at a half full not half empty glass. Happy people are not mired in the bondage of self. They are givers and believe in the saying-

"Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others cannot keep it away from themselves."

Unhappy people are consumed by anger and resentment. They are always critics of others, they blame people, events and situations for their misery, depression and sadness. They live in fear and worry, and wallow in self-pity. But, happiness is a choice developed through joyous struggle. A happy person sees all things as possibilities, not as dead ends and live with great élan, fully embracing everything.

On the basis of above contentions it may be deduced that the positive core of the psyche is composed of some personality predisposition which is composed of some stability that makes people disposed towards happiness. Studies also clearly indicate that some
personality traits are highly correlated with happiness and the traits - extraversion and neuroticism are most prominent among them. Both, these factors are partly inherited and the same is true about happiness itself. Neuroticism has a regular and strong association with happiness. Of the different components of happiness viz positive affect, absence of negative affect and satisfaction with life as a whole, neuroticism has the strongest correlation with negative affect (Costa and McCrae, 1980). Furnham and Brewin (1990) investigated the relationship between personality and happiness and reported negative correlation for scores on happiness with those on neuroticism. Thus, persons high on neuroticism are likely to be anxious and depressed which results in unstable behavior and are more vulnerable to negative affect. But, its negative correlation with happiness indicates that stable individuals are likely to be happy than unstable ones.

Extraversion is also found to be correlated with happiness but particularly with positive affect (Costa and McCrae, 1980). When extraversion is divided into sociability and impulsiveness, it is sociability which correlates more highly. Moreover, Gray (1982) proposed that because of differences in the brain structure, extraverts are more responsive to rewards and hence, are happier. Argyle and Lu (1990) explain the correlation between measures of happiness and extraversion and found that scores on happiness were correlated with those on extraversion, enjoyment and on participation in social activities. While Diener, Sandvik, Pavot and Fujita (1992) used subjective well-being (SWB) rather than happiness per se and found that extraverts were happier whether living alone or with others, whether living in cities or rural areas and whether working in social or non-social occupations. Extraverts were happier across racial, gender and age groups. Francis et al. (1998) called happiness as stable extraversion. In a series of studies Hills and Argyle (2001) have regularly found strong correlation between happiness and extraversion. Thus, through sociability, the support which one gets from their near and dear ones is a powerful insulator against unhappiness.
Another factor that may be the backbone of happiness is and may be social support. It provides assistance to depressed, unhappy people and even to stables with emotional, economic or instrumental support to make their lives happy and satisfying. Empirical evidences also show positive relationship between happiness and social support. Weiss (1973) found that to avoid loneliness people needed a single close relationship and also a network of relationships for support. The factor of quality and quantity of friendships correlated with happiness and it was found by Costa et al.(1985). Argyle and Henderson (1985) also found that network of friends is important and this social network forms an in group which is important for maintaining identity and providing social support. In another study Veenhoven (1994) found that satisfaction with friends correlates with happiness. Lu (1997) in a study shows that social support is an important mediator which has strongest association with happiness. In an interesting study Bangladeshis appeared to be the happiest lot despite poverty and backwardness. It is assumed that community living, their relationships at grass-root level and their strong belief in primary group bonding in addition to their absolute faith in religion is accounted for their happiness. Through support system they relate to each other and rely on them whenever in need which enables them to take rough with smooth. This psyche of taking rough with smooth is further related to locus of control.

Rotter (1966) thought that individuals have “generalized expectancies” to believe either that events are under their own control or that they are due to other people or fate or luck. Many studies have found a correlation between scoring high on internal control and happiness. Internal control has consistently been found to be a predictor of happiness (Lu et al., 1997). Thus, it builds strength within us which religiosity also provides.

The factor of religion has positive affect on happiness. There are empirical evidences to prove it. Witter and colleagues (1985) found that
the church attendance was consistently the strongest correlate of happiness. Pollner (1989) found that "closeness to God" correlated highly with happiness. While Ellison et al. (1989) found that "devotional intensity" (frequent prayer and feeling close to God) was the strongest religious predictor of life satisfaction which is one of the component of happiness. He also found that attendance and private devotions had their effect on well-being via their impact on beliefs. These beliefs are the most important source of happiness. This belief in God, is one of the answers of Bangladeshis being the happiest. Religiosity provides us the strength to be stable which is further expressed by personality hardiness.

It is assumed that because of strong sense of commitment, control and challenge hardy individuals might be happier than non-hardy personalities as latter are low in whatever they are doing, perceive change as threat and feel helpless in controlling things and all these make them vulnerable to stress thus, leading to illness, depression which consequently, results in unhappiness in life. On the top of that non-hardy individuals have low ego strength while hardy individuals have higher ego strength. Thus, disposition of hardiness bring forth happiness.

The present problem is an attempt to explore the personality variables in terms of neuroticism, extraversion, social support, locus of control, religiosity and personality hardiness as related to happiness in adolescents. There are empirical evidences regarding the role of undertaken variables. The present investigation is a step towards establishing the exact contribution of the role of personality dimensions in happiness disposition in students studying in private and govt schools, students having nuclear and joint families, rural and urban back ground, single-sexed and mixed-sexed families, working and non-working mothers and also among girls and boys.
RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

In this era of insatiable materialism and sophistication people yearn for happiness. Everybody in the world is after money so as to have material pleasures and thereby thinking that it might lead to happiness and tranquility. But in reality, material pleasures have crushed out inner sources, social institutions and faith which regulate our happiness up to a great extent. People think that they can buy happiness. But actually happiness is an attitude, it is not a condition. It does not depend upon who we are or what we have. It depends upon what we think and how we think. It is the positivity towards life - positive attitude, optimism in one's life. Thus, happiness is not something one finds, it is something one creates. Freedom to be ourselves, satisfaction, peace of mind, positive affect, joy, laughter, humour are rewards of life. They are available to all of us for the doing-not for wishing, asking or demanding.

In the present scenario adolescents are confused with the concept of happiness. They are so much burdened in this competent world especially in India due to population explosion and parents expectations that they merely get enough time to play with their peers. Play is the basis of a lot of happiness. Through play we learn about ourselves and about life. Most genius have knew that playfulness was a source of their genius. Albert Einstein played with numbers and concepts. Through his playfulness he created his theory of relativity. Playfulness, when occurs in relation to significant others it brings happiness. But due to the busy schedule of children now-a- days they hardly get enough time to play and thus, lack the basis of happiness.

Hence, the present study is an endeavor to explore the personality and social variables associated with happiness. The variables-neuroticism, extraversion, social support, religiosity, locus of control and personality hardiness are being studied in relation to happiness among adolescents.