

Indic Concept of Happiness

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ABSTRACT

The pursuit of happiness has been the axiomatic reference of all human endeavours across cultures and timelines. Aristotle argues that happiness is the central purpose of human existence and a goal in itself in his famous Nicomachean Ethics although his concept of happiness differs largely from the general notions of happiness based on pleasurable sensations. The Indic traditions also echo such a view as can be noted in statements like '*Sukham me syāt duhkam me mā bhūt iti lokapravrittiḥ*' ('Let me be happy and not sad', so is the intent behind all human actions). The need to seek 'happiness' and be 'happy' through all our actions is thus universally acknowledged as the main motivating force in the lives of people.

Happiness being a subjective phenomenon is largely influenced by cultural factors. Many recent researches point towards the significance of cultural factors like values, beliefs, traditions, etc., in influencing the perception and experience of happiness. Indic traditions, with a history of a few thousand years, have discussed and debated on the notion of happiness from various angles. Starting from *Ānandamīmāmsā* of Taittiriya Upanishad up to works of Alankarashastra the theme of happiness has been dealt in considerable detail. In this backdrop, the current paper attempts to understand the concept of happiness as present in various important Indic texts and traditions and also to explore and study various terms connected with the concept of happiness. Finally, it envisages to develop a meta-theory of happiness based on Indic traditions.