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Happiness profile of teachers of India: A comparative study of Punjab and Bihar

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Abstract

Happiness is the need of every living creature present on this beautiful planet, apart from the basic needs of food, water, shelter, family, neat and clean surroundings, and education. Almost every civilisation across the globe has highlighted the importance of happiness and well-being for all. The United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda primarily focuses on the happiness and well-being of our earth through various measures in the form of Sustainable Development Goals. Though happiness is very important and needful for all, in the present context, the researchers intended to find the happiness profile of the teachers of India, as they are considered the torchbearers for their students.

Purpose: This comparative study examined the happiness profile of teachers in India and to understand the variables that influence the happiness profile of teachers in the Indian states of Punjab and Bihar.

Methods: This study employed a survey research method, in which the investigator collected quantitative as well as qualitative data on happiness profile from teachers as respondents through a self-made questionnaire and interview schedule covering the dimensions of Social Support, Freedom, Health, and Income.

Findings: The findings revealed that while respect, acknowledgment, and student progress were universal indicators of teacher satisfaction, Punjab teachers placed more value on interpersonal harmony and lower levels of stress at work, while Bihar teachers placed more value on administrative effectiveness, financial stability, and adequate infrastructure. The various factors that contributed to the happiness of Punjab teachers were spiritual thoughts (40%), power (26%), social acceptance (20%), position (7%), and money (7%). However, Bihar teachers' happiness contributors were spiritual thoughts (20%), social acceptance (34%), power (20%), position (13%), and money (13%).

Keywords: Happiness, life satisfaction, well-being, Bihar teachers', power, position, money

Introduction

Happiness and well-being are complex and multifaceted concepts that have been widely studied across various fields, including psychology, economics, and philosophy. According to the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ), developed by Hill and Argyle in 2022, happiness is defined as "a state of well-being characterized by feelings of contentment, satisfaction, and pleasure" (Hill & Argyle, 2002) [3]. In this definition, they describe three components of happiness: contentment, satisfaction, and pleasure. Higher levels of satisfaction are considered equivalent to contentment, which means feeling fulfilled, while pleasure refers to experiencing positive sensations. The positive aspects of happiness include compassionate self-responding, self-kindness, mindfulness, and a sense of common humanity, whereas the negative aspects are called uncompassionate self-responding, which involves self-judgment, over-identification, and isolation (Neff and Germer, 2017) [4]. Additionally, a systematic study conducted by Singh *et al.* (2023) [5] examined the happiness construct through PRISMA analysis. Their systematic review found that happiness consists of several factors, based on research on happiness determinants over the last 90 years across 100 nations and 44 cultures. They discovered that all factors related to happiness can be grouped into three main categories: "health", "hope", and "harmony". These categories include mental, emotional, and physical health (health); a purposeful, holistic approach that incorporates work-life balance, fostering social relationships, and caring for oneself and others (hope); and being in harmony with one's culture, traditions, community, and environment (harmony), which is shaped by social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors.

Global Perspective of Happiness

The Annual World Happiness Report of 2025, sponsored by the United Nations, has named Finland the happiest country in the world for eight consecutive years. This report is based on global survey data where individuals assess their happiness according to their own social and economic circumstances. The World Happiness Report is

a collaborative effort involving Gallup, the Oxford Wellbeing Research Centre, the World Happiness Report's Editorial Board, and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). The report highlights the status of happiness and well-being in more than 140 countries worldwide. The following are the key factors on which the report is prepared.

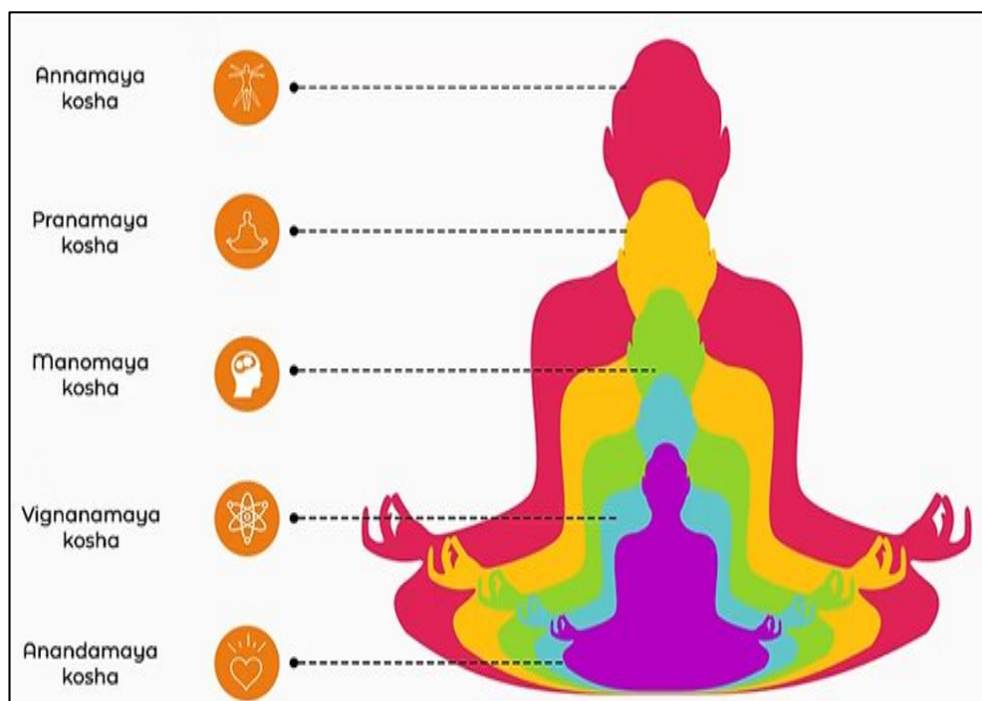


Fig 1: Author's conceptualization

The SDGs, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, aim to promote a comprehensive and sustainable approach to development, encompassing 17 goals and 169 targets. Several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are directly or indirectly related to happiness and well-being. Additionally, these goals and targets guide us toward a happy and sustainable future.

The Indian knowledge system proposed the Punch Koshas concept, which is in congruence with the Maslow hierarchy of needs, which represents the layers of the self. It starts with the physical layer (Annamaya Kosha) and ends with the Bliss Layer (Anandmaya Kosha). Here, the last layer emphasizes the highest level of happiness, which is bliss, where an individual experiences fulfillment within themselves.

Indian Prospective of Happiness



Source: <https://www.shvasa.com/yoga-blog/what-are-the-pancha-koshas-2>

Fig 2: The Pancha Koshas or five sheaths

According to the Indian Happiness Index Report of 2025 and a Survey by Happy plus Consulting in 2025, the top five states/UTs having the highest happiness indexes are Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Andaman and Nicobar, Punjab, and Gujarat. These agencies measure states' happiness on the parameters of perception of corruption, generosity, Freedom of choice, support group, emotional freedom, and life satisfaction. This report indicated that the happiest states in India excel in several parameters, such as quality of life, social support, cultural richness, environmental sustainability, and economic stability.

Significance of the study

The prevalence of mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety has increased significantly over the past few decades, with an estimated 300 million people worldwide suffering from depression alone. The world's happiness levels have declined over the past decade, with only 22% of the global population reporting being "very happy" (Helliwell *et al.*, 2020) ^[1]. Punjab faces serious issues with drugs, crime, and migration, despite ranking high on the Indian Happiness Index Report released in 2025. A review of related literature using keywords like happiness profile across various databases such as Google Scholar, Science Direct, ERIC, etc., revealed very few studies in India. Further it is universally accepted that the happiness profile of teachers is directly related to the teaching-learning process within educational institutions, and hence the present study aims to explore the happiness profile of teachers in Punjab and Bihar.

Objectives of the present study

To compare the happiness profile of teachers of Punjab and Bihar

Methods and Procedures

The Method

This study employed a survey research method, in which the investigator collected quantitative as well as qualitative data on happiness profiles of teachers (government school teachers) through a self-made questionnaire and interview schedule covering the dimensions of Social Support, Freedom, Health, and Income. The interview schedule consists of 10 questions covering the dimensions of the happiness profile of the teachers. Informed consent was taken from the respondents to ensure transparency and data privacy.

Population and Samples

This study was about the happiness profile of teachers in Punjab and Bihar. The present study's population included all the government school teachers who are teaching in Ghuddha village in the Bathinda district of Punjab and Korthu village in the Darbhanga district of Bihar. Here, the samples were chosen based on convenience sampling. The investigator selected samples of 15 teachers from both villages. The investigators personally visited all the study samples and collected qualitative data using an interview schedule, as well as quantitative data with the help of a self-made questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

Objective 1, to compare the happiness profile of teachers of Punjab and Bihar

Table 1: Analysis of happiness profile of teachers of Punjab and Bihar

Item No.	Items		Yes	No	Cannot say
1.	Are you happy?	Punjab	93.33%	6.67%	0%
		Bihar	100%	0%	0%
2.	Are you satisfied with your present profession?	Punjab	93.33%	6.67%	0%
		Bihar	100%	0%	0%
4.	Do you want to see others happy?	Punjab	93.33%	0%	6.67%
		Bihar	100%	0%	0%
5.	Does your happiness depend on others' happiness?	Punjab	73.33%	26.67%	0%
		Bihar	53.33%	46.67%	0%
7.	Do you have fun with your colleagues?	Punjab	93.33%	6.67%	0%
		Bihar	100%	0%	0%
8.	Do you feel happy when you get your expected salary?	Punjab	100%	0%	0%
		Bihar	93.33%	6.67%	0%
9.	Do you feel that your happiness depends on the happiness of your family members?	Punjab	100%	0%	0%
		Bihar	100%	0%	0%

Table 1 reveals that, both Punjabi and Bihar respondents are quite content and happy with their current careers. In Punjab, 93.33% of respondents said they are happy and content with their jobs, while only 6.67% said they are not. In Bihar, on the other hand, all respondents (100%) expressed happiness and satisfaction. All Bihar respondents confirmed that they wanted to see other people happy when it came to altruistic orientation, but 93.33% of Punjab respondents agreed, and 6.67% were unsure. There is a more noticeable difference in the dimension of reliance on the happiness of others. About half (46.67%) of respondents in Bihar stated that their happiness is independent of others, but 73.33% of respondents in Punjab admitted that their

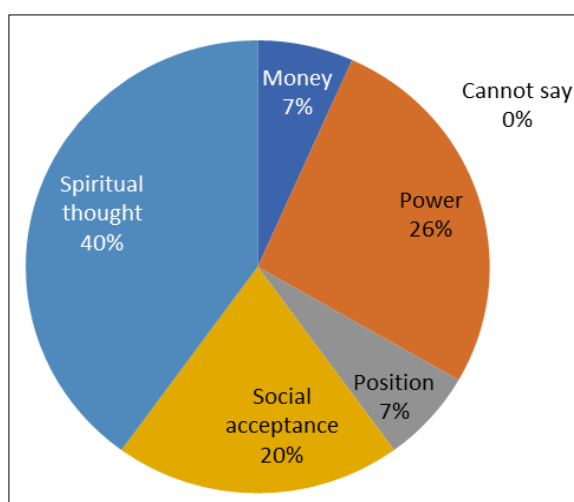
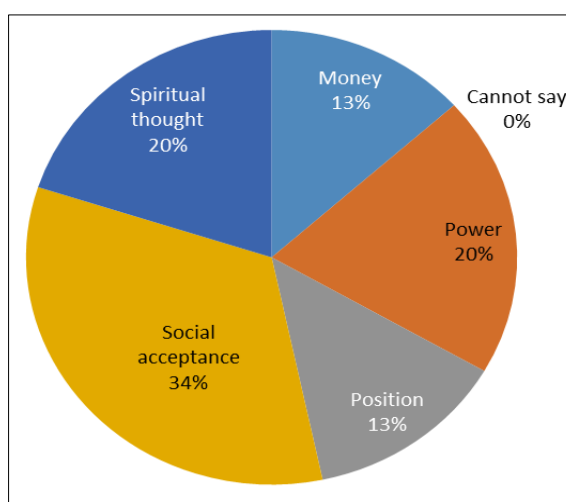
happiness is impacted by the happiness of others. Positive collegial ties were also observed in both situations; all Bihari respondents said they enjoyed engaging with their colleagues, however, just 6.67% of Punjabi respondents shared this opinion, compared to 93.33% in Bihar. Salary satisfaction was found to be a universal predictor of pleasure in Punjab, where all respondents said they were happy when they received their expected salary, compared to 93.33% in Bihar. Last but not least, both groups expressed total agreement in recognizing the importance of family, with all respondents 100% from Punjab and Bihar, agreeing that their happiness was directly correlated with that of their family.

Table 2: Analysis of happiness profile of teachers of Punjab and Bihar

Item No.	Item		Money	Power	Position	Social acceptance	Spiritual thought	Cannot say
3.	What makes you happy?	Punjab	6.67%	26.66%	6.67%	20%	40%	0%
		Bihar	13.33%	20%	13.33%	33.33%	20%	0%

Table 2 deals with the question "What makes you happy?" and the data obtained subsequently reveals differences between Bihar and Punjab. A sizable percentage of respondents in Punjab (40%) primarily linked spiritual thoughts to happiness, followed by power (26.66%) and social acceptance (20%). Participants were less likely to cite wealth and status as important factors in their satisfaction (6.67% each). On the other hand, the largest proportion of respondents (33.33%) in Bihar highlighted social acceptance as the primary driver of happiness. Equal preferences for

wealth and status (13.33% each) came next, while 20% of respondents each mentioned power and spirituality. According to the findings, teachers from Bihar seem to place a higher emphasis on social recognition and external validation, whereas teachers in Punjab seem to find more enjoyment in interior, spiritual orientations. Surprisingly, in all areas, no participant voiced a lack of confidence in their answers, suggesting a thorough comprehension of the elements that influence their happiness.

**Fig 3:** What makes teachers of Punjab happy**Fig 4:** What makes teachers of Bihar happy**Table 3:** Analysis of happiness profile of teachers of Punjab and Bihar

Item no.	Item		Very happy	Happy	Unhappy
6.	To what extent are you satisfied with what you have?	Punjab	26.67%	73.33%	0%
		Bihar	26.67%	66.67%	6.66%

Table 3 is about the item, "To what extent are you satisfied with what you have?" provides important information on respondents' satisfaction levels in Punjab and Bihar. While the vast majority of respondents in Punjab 73.33% reported feeling cheerful, 26.67% classified themselves as extremely happy. The respondents in this region were generally psychologically stable and content, as evidenced by the absence of responses in the unhappy category. On the other hand, Bihar's responses show that 66.67% of respondents found themselves cheerful, and a comparable percentage (26.67%) found themselves very happy. Nevertheless, in contrast to Punjab, a small but significant portion of Bihar's respondents (6.66%) expressed dissatisfaction with their situation. These results highlighted the fact that although satisfaction levels are generally positive in both states, Punjab seemed to have a better profile, as evidenced by the total lack of dissatisfaction. Given that Punjab respondents showed more consistency in their sense of contentment, whereas Bihar respondents showed a slight presence of discontent, it could be assumed that socioeconomic circumstances, cultural orientations, or regional support networks may be responsible for this discrepancy. These discrepancies call for more research to determine the

contextual elements influencing teachers' satisfaction levels in various sociocultural contexts.

Analysis of responses of the teachers of Punjab and Bihar pertaining to their happiness showed both similarities and differences influenced by institutional, personal, and professional circumstances. Punjab teachers have always emphasized the importance of relational but intangible aspects like affection, respect, and acknowledgement from pupils, colleagues, and family. They also emphasized how crucial it was to lessen administrative workloads, promote teamwork, and create a respectful and encouraging work atmosphere. Furthermore, it was determined that the creation of a cooperative, pleasant school climate and the improvement of infrastructure were crucial to their professional fulfilment. On the other hand, Bihar teachers' responses showed a greater focus on structural and systemic factors that affect happiness. They stressed the importance of regular wage payments, well-stocked libraries, state-of-the-art educational facilities, and efficient, well-planned task completion. The Bihar cohort expressed a more explicit desire for material provisions and institutional efficiency as necessary conditions for their pleasure, even though they also valued respect, cooperation, and student success

partially in line with the views of their Punjabi counterparts. According to this comparative analysis, while respect, acknowledgment, and student progress were universal indicators of teacher satisfaction, Punjab teachers placed more value on interpersonal harmony and lower levels of stress at work, while Bihar teachers placed more value on

administrative effectiveness, financial stability, and adequate infrastructure. These results highlight how institutional realities and sociocultural expectations interact to shape educators' professional well-being in various geographical areas.

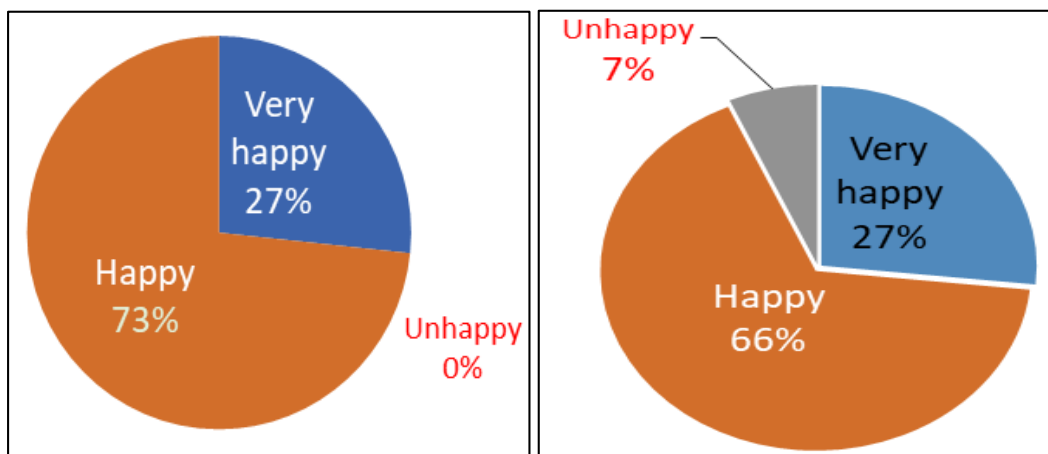


Fig 5: To what extent teachers of Punjab satisfied with what they have? **Fig 6:** To what extent teachers of Bihar satisfied with what they have?

Table 4: Analysis of happiness profile of teachers of Punjab and Bihar

Item No.	Item	Punjab Teachers	Bihar Teachers
10	What do you think needs to be done to keep you happy?	T1: I want more respect and recognition.	T1: I want like-minded people and a vacation to my favourite place
		T2: I think when students learn more and more and progress accordingly	T2: I think there must be a rich library in every school because every student must have habits of reading and learning.
		T3: I think when I have less administrative burden	T3: If there is richer and tech-driven infrastructure in schools for effective learning among students.
		T4: I think when I have more family support	T4: When I get my salary on time, I can teach my students effectively
		T5: When students give me respect and love, and parents show trust in me as a teacher.	T5: When students will learn more and more, and give me respect and love
		T6: When will students attend the class with full passion to learn	T6: All my work happens smoothly and on time.
		T7: When there will be more rich infrastructures and positivity among teachers and students to learn collaboratively	T7: When my children obey me and my students learn properly and complete my homework.
		T8: When I spend more time with my family members	T8: Things happen timely and according to my plan.
		T9: When I have supportive and cooperative colleagues	T9: When my family members and students understand and respect my opinion
		T10: If students learn very well and follow discipline adequately	T10: I wish that all schools had adequate infrastructure for productive teaching and learning
		T11: I think when my family members support me more, and my workplace is more productive, rather than a place of conflict and jealousy.	T11: When I accomplish any target in a timely and smooth manner
		T12: When my family and colleagues respect my dignity and potential.	T12: When my family and students cooperate and respect me
		T13: When my students give me more respect and love	T13: When my students and colleagues give me respect and love.
		T14: When there will be more rich infrastructures and positivity among teachers and students to learn collaboratively	T14: If my students succeed in their desired field of study
		T15: I think when there is a stricter and tighter administration, students as well as teachers will do productive work	T15: If students work according to my guidance

Major Findings of the Present Study

- According to this comparative analysis, while respect, acknowledgment, and student progress are universal indicators of teacher satisfaction, Punjabi teachers place more value on interpersonal harmony and lower levels of stress at work, while Bihar teachers place more value on administrative effectiveness, financial stability, and adequate infrastructure.
- In both states, Punjab and Bihar, more than 90% teachers were happy and satisfied with their profession, and they wanted to see others happy also.
- More than 70% teachers (73.33%) in Punjab believed that their happiness depended upon others' happiness, while in Bihar, 53.33% teachers' happiness depended upon the happiness of others.
- In both states, 100% teachers had fun with their colleagues, their happiness depended upon the

happiness of their family members, and they felt happy when they got their expected salary.

- The various factors that contributed to the happiness of Punjab teachers were spiritual thoughts (40%), power (26%), social acceptance (20%), position (7%), and money (7%). However, Bihar teachers' happiness contributors were spiritual thoughts (20%), social acceptance (34%), power (20%), position (13%), and money (13%).
- 73% of Punjab teachers were happy, and 27% were very happy with what they had. Conversely, in Bihar, 66% of teachers were happy, 27% were very happy, and 7% were unhappy with their situation.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of teacher happiness, revealing both shared values and distinct regional orientations. Across both states, respect, recognition, student progress, and family well-being consistently emerged as central determinants of happiness, underscoring the universal significance of socio-relational support and meaningful professional engagement. However, variations with regard to emphasis were evident. Teachers from Punjab prioritized relational harmony, dignity, collegial cooperation, and a reduction of administrative burdens, reflecting a stronger orientation towards interpersonal and psychological dimensions of happiness. Their outlook suggested that intangible factors, such as mutual respect, affection, and workplace positivity, play a decisive role in shaping their professional well-being. Conversely, teachers from Bihar highlighted structural and systemic needs, such as timely salaries, enriched libraries, technological advancement, and efficient institutional functioning, pointing towards a pragmatic approach grounded in material provisions and organizational effectiveness. Taken together, these findings indicated that while both groups value respect and student success, Punjab teachers link happiness more closely with social and emotional stability, whereas Bihar teachers connect it with financial security and infrastructural adequacy. Therefore, a balanced approach, addressing both relational and structural dimensions, is essential for enhancing teacher satisfaction and strengthening educational outcomes.

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