ABSTRACT

The current study evaluated the role of family environment and, personality hardiness in the development of happiness disposition among tribal students of Himachal Pradesh (N = 200, with 100 boys and 100 girls) through stepwise regression analysis. Results indicated that Personality hardiness, cohesion, intellectual - cultural - orientation and achievement orientation are significant predictors of happiness in boys and explaining 39% of variance. In girls personality turned out to be the only significant predictor, explaining 45% variance in happiness.

Key Words: Happiness, Family Environment, Personality Hardiness and Tribals.

There is nothing absolute about the concept of happiness. Most individuals look forward to living many years, experiencing happiness and contentment. They hope to live the life that they have dreamt, that which pleases and delights with simple pleasure and happiness. It is a person’s cognitive and affective evaluation of life in terms of well-being and contentment (Lyubomirsky, 2000). Happiness is a subjective well-being i.e. absence of negative affects and is one of the major goals and general concerns of all the people (Diener, 1998).

Human happiness has appeared again and again as the most valued of all human quests. It is the whole aim and end of human existence. In most of the studies, it was found that people rank the pursuit of happiness as one of the

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cherished goals in life (Freedman, 1978, Triandis, Bontempo, Leung and Hui, 1990, Grab, 1998, and Diener & Oishi, 2000). Despite this, the studies on happiness are sparse. Human happiness, the ultimate goal of all mankind is determined by many factors viz., family environment, culture, religion, social support and personality. Psychological studies have indicated that personality traits exhibit some of the strongest relations with subjective well-being (Diener, Sandvik, Pavot & Fujita, 1992 & 1999). Gopal (2005) also found personality to be the strongest predictor of happiness, but personality apart from genetics is the by product of family and its environment.

Family environment lays the ground work for the future behaviour and the development of attitudes, values and life style. Poor family environment in terms of parental hostility, rejection and inconsistencies can all contribute to psychological problems viz., anxiety, neuroticism, depression and many others (Wilsnack, Wilsnack, Kristijanson, Voseltanz-Holm & Harris, 2004 and Sharma, Thakur, & Malhotra, 2008).

A family with poor and unhealthy environment creates stress and anxiety among its members. Though life without stress cannot be imagined and up to a certain limit it may be necessary for personality development, but if non-congeniality prevails for a longer period of time, these stresses become too severe which may affect the psychic equilibrium producing maladaptive patterns of behaviour (Cherson, Harrison & Stall, 2003).

In spite of radical changes that have taken place in the pattern of Indian life in recent decades, the family is still the most important part of child’s social network. The family environment is the ‘psychological atmosphere’ of the family which affects the development of the children. Democratic and congenial atmosphere in the families pave the way for healthy and all round development of personality of the children whereas autocratic and incongenial environment provides a breeding ground for neurotic tendencies and unhealthy development (Chauhan, 2006).

The environmental aspects also affect the personality characteristics of the individual. Personality predisposes the individual to maladaptrn behaviour and environment precipitates the same. The happiness of an individual is determined by his/her family environment which affects his nature, personality and behaviour pattern. The genetic aspect is stable and cannot be changed, while the environmental factors could be variable. If an individual’s attitude is positive and look at the bright side then he will be happier than those whose thoughts are negative and pessimistic. Thus, attitude or personality of a happy/neurotic person depends upon his family environment, which plays a very important role in happiness disposition (Thapa, 2005).

The present investigation was based on the assumption that congenial and warm atmosphere in the family wards off anxiety and stress which in turn triggers happiness by making the individual hardy i.e. committed, challenging...
and full of control (Gentry & Kobasa, 1984) especially the tribals who share a common ancestry or culture having a common language and ideology based on togetherness.

Thus, the present study was primarily designed to observe the role of family environment along with personality hardiness in the development of happiness disposition among the tribal students of Himachal Pradesh in the Dharamshala and Chamba region.

METHOD

Design: A correlational design was used to find out the pattern of relationships between happiness, various factors of family environment and personality hardiness and predict the variance contributed by each factor of family environment and personality hardiness in happiness.

Sample: The study was conducted on 200 tribal students from different districts of Himachal Pradesh within the age range of 13 - 15 years with equal number of boys and girls. The sampling technique was purposive and random.

Tools: Following tools were used in the present study:

1) Family Environment Scale (Form-R) by Moos & Moos (1986): In the present study, Hindi version of family environment scale (Sharma and Thapa, 2007) was used. The test-retest reliability of family environment scale and its translated version was found to be 0.65 p <0.1 on adult bilingual sample (N =106). The scale was used to measure the family climate. It comprises of 10 subscales which assess the three domains or dimensions viz., the relationship dimensions, personal growth dimensions and system-maintenance dimensions. The relationship dimension is assessed by 3 subscales - cohesion, expressiveness, and conflict, the personal growth dimension is assessed by 5 subscales - independence, achievement orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation, active-recreational orientation, and moral religious emphasis, and the system-maintenance dimension is assessed by 2 subscales-organization and control. The scale consists of 90 items i.e. 9 items per each subscale. The scale measures the respondents’ perceptions of emphasis placed on different dimensions of family climate. The scoring was done as per directions in the manual. The test-retest reliabilities are all in the acceptable range varying from a low of 0.68 for independence to a high of 0.86 for cohesion.

2) Chinese Happiness Inventory by Lu & Shih (1997): In the present study, Hindi version of Chinese happiness inventory (Sharma and Thapa, 2007) was used. The test retest reliability of Chinese happiness inventory by Lu and Shih and its translated version was found to be 0.87 p <.01 on adult bilingual sample (N = 109). This is a newly developed 48 items measurement tapping general subjective experience.
of happiness for Indian people. These basic elements of happiness concept namely positive affect, absence of negative affect and overall satisfaction towards life was covered. Moreover, it also covers the distinctive sources of happiness of the Indian people based on extensive qualitative ground work. The Cronbach alpha of this inventory is 0.95, test-retest reliability with the sample of 46 undergraduate students was 0.66 and concurrent validity was evidence by its correlation of 0.62 with the life satisfaction scale (Diener, Suh, Smith & Shao, 1995).

3) **Personality Hardiness Scale by Kobasa (1974):** The scale was translated into Hindi for the purpose of the study (Sharma and Thapa, 2007). The test-retest reliability of personality hardiness scale by Kobasa and its Hindi version was found to be 0.77 p < 0.1 on adult bilingual sample (N = 102). This scale is a composite of commitment, challenge and control. Originally, it employed six scales. Negative indicators of commitment were the item from the self scales of alienation test (Maddi, Kobasa and Hoovers, 1979). The negative indicators of the challenge were the security scale of California life Goal Evaluation Schedule (Hahn, 1966) and the cognitive structure scale of the personality research (Jackson, 1974). The control was measured negatively by the external locus of control scale (Rotter, Seeman and Liverant., 1966) and Powerlessness Scale (Maddi et al., 1979). The scale consists of 36 items pertaining to attitude with which the subject may or may not agree. The reliability and validity of the scale is well established on Indian sample i.e. above .85.

**Note:** The use of translated version of all the scales are justified through the high correlational values between English and Hindi version as the tribal students do not understand English.

**RESULTS**

The main objective of the present study was to examine the role of family environment and personality hardiness in the development of happiness disposition among tribal (Gaddi) students. The individual raw scores on 10 subscales of family environment, personality hardiness and happiness were subjected to correlational analysis separately for boys and girls and the most contributing predicting factors in happiness disposition through stepwise regression analysis (Table 1 and 2).

Results depict that in Boys’ sample the scores on Chinese Happiness Inventory are positively and significantly correlated to cohesion (r = 0.39**, p<.01); expressiveness (r = 0.22*, p <0.5); intellectual - cultural orientation (r = 0.41** p < 0.01); active- recreational orientation (r = 0.32**, p <.01); Organization ( r = 0.25* p <.05) and personality hardiness (r = .52**, p <.01). On the rest of the factors, correlations are nonsignificant.
In Girls’ sample, scores on happiness are positively and significantly related to expressiveness (r = 0.33**, p <.01), control (r = 0.24*, p <.05) and personality hardiness (r = 0.67**, p <.01). On the rest of the factors, correlations are nonsignificant.

\[
\text{TABLE- 1} \\
\text{Stepwise regression analysis: Predictors of happiness of Boys}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Order of entry</th>
<th>Value of r</th>
<th>Regression coefficient</th>
<th>Beta weight</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>R² change</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality hardiness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>6.05**</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>36.59**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>2.92**</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>8.52**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual cultural orientation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>2.33**</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>5.43**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement orientation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-2.62</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>2.08*</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>4.33**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01

In Boys’ sample, regression analysis (Table 1) indicates that among the predictors of happiness disposition, personality hardiness explained the highest variance of 27% (r = 0.52**) followed by cohesion explaining the 6% of variance (r = 0.39**, p<0.01), intellectual-cultural orientation contributing 4% of variance (r = .41**, p<0.01) and achievement orientation contributing 2% of variance (r = .03) in the development of happiness disposition.

\[
\text{TABLE-2} \\
\text{Stepwise regression analysis: Predictors of happiness of Girls}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Order of entry</th>
<th>Value of r</th>
<th>Regression coefficient</th>
<th>Beta weight</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>R² change</th>
<th>F-ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality hardiness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>8.94**</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>79.92**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01

In Girls’ sample, an inspection of regression analysis (Table 2) reveals that among the predictors of happiness disposition, only personality hardiness has emerged to be the best and significant predictor explaining 45% of variance (r = .67, p<0.01).

**DISCUSSION**

The results of the present study implicate the contribution of personality hardiness and various factors of family environment in happiness disposition. In Boys’ sample, personality hardiness has turned out to be the best predictor of...
happiness followed by cohesion, intellectual-cultural-orientation and achievement-orientation. The hardy personality is a natural outgrowth of family environment which has not been investigated, but the present study confirms it. In Girls’ sample, only personality hardiness has emerged as the significant predictor of happiness disposition. In both the samples, personality hardiness is one of the strongest predictors of happiness that contributes 27% of variance in Boys’ sample and 45% of variance in Girl’s sample respectively. The rationale could be offered in terms of the fact that high commitment, high challenge and high control make an individual tough or hardy which is an offshoot of the family environment that makes the individual strong in buffering the stresses and strains of life and thus bringing happiness i.e. in turn, contributes to happiness. The findings are very much in line with the previous research (Robitschek & Kashubeck, 1999) which revealed that personality hardiness mediates the relation of family functioning with happiness. Similarly, Nathawat and Joshi (1998) have observed that subjects with high hardiness score, perceive their life events more positively than subjects with low hardiness score. The positive attitude towards life makes the person happy. Further, Yuval, Guttmann, Sarit and Levinovsky, (2005) have examined the associations among attachment styles, hardiness and mental health in intensive real life stress. The results indicated the positive and significant correlation of attachment and personality hardiness with mental health and well being.

To conclude, the present research indicates that tribal people are happier than normal because they are more controlled, self-contained and self-contended, have lesser desires which are the factors of personality hardiness. Not only this, tribal are cohesive groups, more focused and committed with optimal achievement orientation. Previous researchers by the present authors had revealed 20% of variance in happiness in normal population, whereas, in tribal, the percentage of variance ranges from that of 39% to 45% which is quite substantial and significant.

REFERENCES


Journal of Indian Health Psychology


