



Redefining Viksit Bharat

This editorial is based on [“The quest for ‘happiness’ in the Viksit Bharat odyssey”](#) which was published in The Hindu on 28/12/2023. The article discusses the concept of happiness induced model of growth and argues that mere achieving economic development is not a true meaning of development.

For Prelims: [Vision India@2047](#), [Human Development Index \(HDI\)](#), [World Bank’s Green Index](#), [Poverty Index](#), [Gender Equality Index](#), [World Press Freedom Index](#).

For Mains: Vision India@2047, Aspects of Viksit Bharat, Key Considerations for India's Development Beyond Economic Growth, Significance of Happiness-Induced Development model for India, Way to to incorporate Happiness Induced model of Development with Growth

The formal launch of Viksit Bharat marks a significant milestone. The prospect of elevating India to the status of a [developed nation by 2047](#), the 100th year of its Independence, is truly captivating. Given the rapid progress of the country, this ambitious goal seems within reach. This moment also provides an opportunity to evaluate the concept of intended development. The selection of development priorities and focus is both intricate and critical.

In Viksit Bharat, there is an excessive emphasis on economic development. However, post-developmentalists argue that this approach reflects a Euro-centric view of development.

Euro-centric View of Development:

- The term "Euro-centric view of development" refers to an approach to understanding and measuring development that is centred around European or Western perspectives. This perspective has historically dominated the discourse on economic, social, and political development, often framing the experiences and achievements of European societies as the standard or ideal for progress.
- It is criticised because it uses traditional economic indicators such as [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#) and industrialisation as primary measures of development.

What is Vision India@2047?

- [Vision India@2047](#) is a project initiated by the [NITI Aayog](#), the apex policy think tank of India, to create a blueprint for India’s development in the next 25 years.
- The project aims to make **India a global leader in innovation and technology**, a model of human development and social welfare, and a champion of environmental sustainability.

What are the Aspects of Viksit Bharat?

- **Structural transformation:** This refers to the shift of resources from low-productivity sectors (such as agriculture) to high-productivity sectors (such as manufacturing and services). This can boost economic growth, create jobs, and reduce poverty.
- **Organising labour markets:** This involves improving the quality and quantity of labour supply, enhancing the skills and employability of workers, and ensuring fair and efficient labour regulations. This can increase labour productivity, reduce informality, and promote social protection.
- **Increasing competitiveness:** This entails enhancing the efficiency and innovation of firms, improving the quality and diversity of products and services, and expanding the domestic and international markets. This can foster economic dynamism, increase exports, and attract investments.
- **Improving financial and social inclusion:** This implies expanding the access and affordability of financial services and social welfare schemes for the poor and marginalised groups. This can improve their income, savings, and consumption, as well as their health, education, and empowerment.
- **Governance reforms:** This involves strengthening the institutions and processes of governance, such as the rule of law, accountability, transparency, and participation. This can improve the delivery of public goods and services, reduce corruption, and enhance trust and legitimacy.
- **Seizing opportunities in the Green Revolution:** This refers to adopting and promoting green technologies and practices, such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate resilience. This can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate environmental degradation, and create new opportunities for growth and development.

What are the Key Considerations for India's Development Beyond Economic Growth?

- Seeking to become the world's largest economy won't satisfy all of India's aspirations. While material development is important, it's just one of many goals for India by 2047.
- Critics question traditional economic growth models, challenging ideas about progress and modernity.
- It's time to rethink the concept of "Viksit Bharat" and consider other important aspects of development for India.

What are the Other Aspects to be Considered?

- **Happiness ought to be the central pursuit in this journey.** Without achieving happiness, development has no meaning. Ironically, the nations have developed, but people are not happy.
 - Instead of 'Viksit Bharat', the theme ought to be **'Happy India-Developed India'** (Khushhal Bharat-Viksit Bharat).
- Rich nations are not essentially happy nations. Wealthy nations have only performed on GDP and per capita income but have failed miserably in the context of social and psychological well-being indicators.
 - This development scheme conveniently overlooks mental health and wellness.
- The [World Happiness Report 2023](#) shows many developed nations have poor happiness markers.
 - Some nations have attained both in a balanced way.
 - Countries such as Finland, Denmark, Iceland and the Netherlands are the happiest countries. They achieved development not at the cost of social disruption.
 - Instead, they have built up social connections and support systems.
- India's case is also crucial because it is **ranked 126 out of 137 countries** despite being the fifth-largest economy.
 - Development and the Viksit Bharat agenda will remain a dream if we fail to imagine how to rise in the happiness index.

What is the Significance of Happiness-Induced Development Model for India?

- A happiness-induced development model for India is highly pertinent as we are **significantly governed by social relationships** and cultural mandates.
- On the contrary, the **current model of mere economic development is highly disruptive** to our social order.
 - This form of development leads to disorders and crime. **All aspects of life in this development cycle do not change simultaneously**, creating imbalances and contradictions.
 - Such things are visible in our society, where industrial and economic developments are changing alarmingly, but quality aspects of life continue to lag.
- Happiness measures have already become the goals of public policy in many countries. Happiness is no longer a subjective matter.

How to Incorporate Happiness Induced Model of Development with Growth?

- **Integration of Human Development Index (HDI):** Assign weightage to the [Human Development Index \(HDI\)](#), which includes life expectancy, educational attainment, and income level. This provides a more comprehensive measure of well-being beyond traditional economic indicators.
- **Inclusion of Social Development Index (SDI):** Incorporate the UN Research Institute for Social Development's **Social Development Index**, which comprises 16 core indicators. This can offer insights into various social aspects, contributing to a holistic understanding of development.
- **Adoption of Green Index:** Utilise the [World Bank's Green Index](#), which evaluates a nation's wealth based on produced assets, natural resources, and human resources. This aligns with [sustainable development goals](#), reflecting a balance between economic progress and environmental responsibility.
- **Consideration of International Human Suffering Index:** Integrate the **International Human Suffering Index** to gauge a country's well-being based on parameters related to human suffering. This provides a nuanced perspective on the overall quality of life.
- **Incorporate Diverse Indices:** Include a variety of indices such as the [Global Innovation Index](#), Rule of Law Index, [Poverty Index](#), [Corruption Perceptions Index](#), [Gender Equality Index](#), and [World Press Freedom Index](#). Each of these indices addresses specific aspects of development and happiness, contributing to a more comprehensive evaluation.
- **Focus on Happiness and Well-being:** Establish a dedicated index or set of indicators that specifically measure happiness and well-being. This could include factors like mental health, social connections, and overall life satisfaction, aligning with the vision of a Happy India.
- **Regular Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the chosen indices regularly. This ensures that policies and interventions are aligned with the goal of fostering happiness and well-being in the long term.
- **Policy Alignment with Happiness Goals:** Align national policies and development strategies with the identified indices and goals related to happiness. This ensures that government initiatives contribute directly to the well-being of citizens.
- **Educational and Awareness Programs:** Implement educational programs and awareness campaigns to promote a cultural shift towards prioritising happiness and well-being. This can include initiatives to reduce stigma around mental health, promote work-life balance, and emphasise the importance of social connections.

Conclusion

By adopting a holistic approach that values happiness and well-being alongside economic growth, India can aspire to achieve a more sustainable and fulfilling development trajectory.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the significance of incorporating happiness as a key indicator in India's development model. How can a Happiness Induced Development model be Incorporated with Growth?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q1. Define potential GDP and explain its determinants. What are the factors that have been inhibiting India from realizing its potential GDP? (2020)

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