

Lecture - 01 : Introduction

Hello viewers, welcome to this NPTEL new course on Sustainable Happiness. So, we will be discussing about what does it mean, what is the concept of sustainable happiness and what are its definition, how researchers have defined it and what are its implication in our life. So, as you can see sustainable happiness is the happiness that contributes to the individual community or the global well being without exploiting other people environment or the future generation. So, here as you can see sustainable happiness it combines one sustainability and the happiness. So, sustainability as you know it is a it looks into our behavior our lifestyle our consumption how that means, how much resource resources were utilizing whether you are utilizing it judiciously or not and what are its impact on the environments. So, this is the sustainability lifestyles it is a kind of mindset and happiness as you can see happiness is that how we are enjoying our life how we are enjoying doing.

certain things, performing certain things, consuming certain things. So, these are the how these two concepts can be combined together, but with relevance with relevance to the social benefits, social advantage and without. So, now it is you know in post globalization and we are now it is we are facing lots of challenges starting from you know pollution to population overgrowth to you know climate change and all the natural disasters. All these are the outcomes of all these unsustainable behavioral patterns that we have been you We have been practicing over the years as a result of which now we are even experiencing all sort of things.

Hence, it has actually it has come up from the sustainable development goals as it has since its inception in 2015 and before that also sustainability, millennium development goals all these things are there, but now it is high time that we are realizing it. And we have we are it is we are in dire need of practicing sustainability. So, primarily as you as you as you can see sustainable happiness has emerged out of the concept of sustainability. And sustainability at is as it is reflected in our behavior in our lifestyle in our consumption in our you know industry in our business everywhere. So, sustainable happiness as you can say that it is the outcome variable is the outcome variable.

of the sustainability as a process, as a practice, as a you know learning process etcetera. So, Catherine O'Brien there are also other other definitions are there, but now here we are discussing the primarily Catherine O'Brien's theory. So, Catherine O'Brien also she has also tried to combine the sustainability, sustainable practices and with the happiness like with the sustainability ah ah lifestyle sustainable consumption etcetera, how can we make our self happy and how can we make the community happy, how can how can we ensure

the global well being etcetera. So, that is why she has actually coined this concept of sustainable happiness. So, combining sustainability and the happiness concept and she has also added some of the things from the positive psychology that we will be discussing later on.

So, sustainable happiness is the happiness that contributes to the individual to the community or it works for the global well being without exploiting the people not the environment or the future generation. So, here when we are using, we are consuming, we are living with sustainability. So, our focus is that not to exploit others, not to exploit the environmental resources and not to over exploit the people as well and how can we protect our environment, how can we restore and save our resources, conserve our resources for the future generations. So, these are the three things as you can see as per her definition. Not to exploit the people not to exploit the environment because whenever we are doing something doing running some business even on our day to day practices also.

So, we are we are consuming the things consuming the things we are extracting it from the environment from the natural environment, but to what extent we should not over exploit we should not overuse. So, we have to we have to keep in mind that it has natural resources are to be conserved So, be it the water, be it biodiversity or be it our forest, be it our and all other kinds of natural resources also how to use it, but in a sustainable way so that it will be conserved for the future generation. So, that is the basic idea. So, then that is the concept of sustainable happiness was developed by Catherine O'Brien only in 2005. So, in order to draw the attention of the attention to the consequences both positive and adverse, how the individuals and communities and nations pursue the happiness.

So, by observing she has actually started with the sustainability, sustainable development goals etcetera, but at the same time she was observing how the people are leading their life, how they are you know what is the what is the outcome of their activities, businesses etcetera, whether are they really happy or not or how do they that means, how do they enjoy this happiness. So, all these can that means, her goal was that simultaneously how can we practice sustainability at the same time we can make our self happy and the community happy. So, she was closely observing that impact of sustainable behavior and till now till that till that date we have been using the all the civilization all of us we are using unsustainable practices and she was observing closely how it has impacted the human happiness as well not to not just the environment and climate etcetera, but the human happiness only. So, she tried to focus on. That means, can we maintain sustainability as well as be happy because see things that that happiness happiness individual happiness community happiness these are very closely related to our environment.

So, hence our sustainable practices can definitely be related to our happiness and well

being. So, that by practicing sustainable lifestyle consumption etcetera we can be happy and we can make others happy at the same time we can also protect our environment. So, now in a globalized world everyone's action has the repercussion on distant land and the people that the thing whenever because you know environment, society and our economic system or business system. These are the triple bottom line three basic dimensions of sustainability like we are living in a society. People are important, society is important and we are also living in the environment, natural environment, ecosystem that is a ecosystem is also important and we are also engaged engaged in different kinds of business activities etcetera, hence our economy and economy is also important.

So, these are the major things domains. So, whenever we are interacting, so all these three ah dimensions or drivers when they interact with each other there are definitely bound to be some repercussions, some ah some impact some things. So, how we have not yet ah evaluated just evaluated. what is this what is the impact of these interactions repercussions on the environment or on the people or on the economy. So, we have never analyzed all these things.

So, that is the main purpose of you know offering this course that every moment whatever we are doing every moment we must be very much vigilant very much alert about what we are doing and how it is impacted on the others on others be the people be the environment be the economy etcetera. So, that means, it has to be it has to be actively put in our mindset, in our thought process, in our conscience, in our consciousness that what we are doing, how we are doing, why we are doing and what are its impact. So, so in the so definitely post globalization all of us we are we are we are interacting with each other globally virtually etcetera. So, automatically you know all the when the all the people across the globe they are interacting and doing their business etcetera definitely it is bound to have some impact on the on our planet on our ecosystem on our economy everything. So, some impacts are out of these repercussions or interactions some impacts are very quick and very immediately it is very much visible and we can we can observe it closely instantly with short span of time.

Some other kind of impacts are not are very long term are very long term instantly we cannot observe it, but it has a long term impact long term effect. enduring effect on our planet, on our lifestyle, on our economy in the long run. So, so instantly whatever it is happening that we can control we can be allowed, but when the impact is long term now whatever we are doing we are doing. So, we have been doing till now and now we are facing with the all the disasters and the climate change, you know heat and the climate change irregular not just the climates climatic conditions is abrupt and unpredictable, but also temperature is also the temperature is also rising day by day in the primarily in the lands in the coastal areas and there is a temperature is increasing and that has made our

lifestyle life very miserable. So, now it is the outcome now it is the high time that we are facing all these thing and it is the result of all the over over the years all our on sustainable practices etcetera.

Be it ah the age of industrialization, be it the business ah be it the housing, be it the development in the name of the development what I have been we have been doing since long now now we are facing the results. So, that is the main thing is that. Yes, but ultimately our goal definitely every society, every community, every country's name, aim is an ambition to make the people happy, to stay together, to live together peacefully, to save our planet, to save our society, for the future generation etcetera. So, that is a if when the ultimate goal is happiness. Then why not to behave, why not to act, why not to perform sustainably.

So, that all of us not only we will be happy, but we can make others happy. So, this is the basic philosophy of this course. Now, we will be we will be going discussing detail that have what does it happiness means, what is well being all the facets etcetera we will be discussing. Now, so the aim of so that is why these two terms have been combined that is the aim of the combining these two terms that is to link the happiness to sustainability in how and now and into the future. So, both are interdependent as you can see happiness is dependent on sustainability and sustainability is also dependent on the happiness.

Without sustainability we cannot be happy and to be happy we need to be sustainable ok. So, that is a to it emphasize the reality of our mutual interdependence and to generate the discussion regarding the potential for making the substantial contribution to the sustainability effort through research and from the study. So, in this direction like not just in sustainability, but and happiness well being and sustainable happiness, sustainable well being how to make the society happy ah. So, now, these you know annual you know you know annual ah ratings ratings of the you countries or the in that in the parameters of the global happiness index global gross national happiness index is that all the countries are being rated in terms of their happiness index ok performances. So, so research research is also going on not just in happiness studies, but in the sustainability in how both these two things can two concepts can be combined and how it can be manifested.

Through our behavior how we can achieve and moreover how to educate people how to spread that awareness among the people. So, that all the citizen all across all the citizens being the global citizens then we it we must perform it. So, therefore, sustainable happiness is the concept that it can be used by the individuals to guide their own action and decision at the same time it can also be used by the by the community as such. So, at the community level also it enforces the need to genuinely consider the social, environmental, economic indicators of well-being. So, at the community level also sustainability should be practiced,

so that they can focus on ah generally consider the social impact, environmental ah impact and the economic impact.

So, that is why the indicators are there, social indicators, environmental indicators and economic indicators of well being. So, in order to make the community, make a society ah enjoy the well being or possess the well being then they must follow certain parameters indicators. So, through the sustainable practices both at the individual level as well as the community level. However, we are meeting these guidelines we are meeting these parameters or not. So, that the community happiness and well being are sustainable.

So, if you can ensure that we are sticking to that parameters and indicators definitely it make the community happy as well as the sustainable. So, when the sustainability and happiness get together then we can say that well-being happens. So, well-being is again is futuristic. well being is again relatively permanent well being is again sustainable well being is not just temporary and well being does not focus only on the materialistic gain. So, when we well being is also in the you know mode of you know mode of sustainability only.

So, when we talk about well being means it is overarching it is more holistic and it is long term. And we have to ensure that whether we are achieving this well-being at the national level and as international level as it highlights the significance of the individual and community actions for the well-being of all. So, when we talk about the community well-being then we have to ensure that all the single all the individuals and the individual members of that community as well as the community as a whole they are practicing the sustainable behaviors and so that we can ensure that well-being for all. ah can happen ah that is the for the present as well as for the future. So, well being goes along with the sustainability.

So, now we will now we will further discuss about So, about the sustainable happiness takes into account that happiness is interconnected with other people, other species and the natural environment by a remarkable way for interdependence. So, when we talk about this talk about this sustainability sustainable behavior. So, we are not just individual practices and community practices, we are so, we all in all our practices day to day activities. We are not just connected to our self in the society with the members, but we are also connected to directly connected to the ecosystem or natural environment that is the species species the species of this planet. Then the even the species of the planet I mean the even the forest in the forest the greens and all the aspects of the we are well connected with all the aspects of a natural environment be it water, be it energy, be it forestry, be it you know greenery, be it marine life, be it life on land, lives on animals on land.

to every every single species we are connected. Hence we have to be very very careful about that. So, and automatically we are interdependent, we cannot be we cannot claim that now we are we are scientific we have made the advancement in science and technology so and so, we are no not at all. So, and so that is that we have to understand this wave of interdependence. So, sustainable happiness is the ultimate result, it is the ultimate outcome which we is very much dependent on all these all these interactions that is our connection our interaction with the natural environment all the species of that natural environment.

Similarly, sustainable happiness can lead to a more sustainable lifestyle and a greater life satisfaction and sometimes it is also right at your fingertips. As you can see if we wish if we want we can make our life more sustainable. So, we can adopt sustainable lifestyle and that can also gives us a greater life satisfaction. Provided we have actually embedded these things, we have actually absorbed, we have actually realized, we have actually inculcated these philosophies in our mind that no we have to We have to be sustainable not only in our house, in our environment, immediate environment, in our institute, in our home etcetera, but also at the same time whenever we step outside our home or our private space we have to be sustainable everywhere. So, if every individual thinks in that way then the community will be sustainable and the community will be sustainable then definitely it can be transformed from the happiness to well being.

So, happiness is more temporary. So, with the greater life satisfaction with the permanent kind of happiness and we can ensure that yes well being takes place. So, it is there in our fingertips means it is there in our control, it is there in our hand, but we have to determine and we have to move forward accordingly. So, hence it involves reawakening to the joy and to the come to and that comes from the simple pleasure and generating the options for a lifestyle change. So, simple it can start it can begin with a small choice simple choice and simple satisfaction that is self satisfaction life satisfaction, but it can go forward it can move ahead for a long term purpose from the simple pleasures to it can be it can create the generate the operations for the lifestyle change, it can bring the significant change in our lives. So, that is a now before moving away now this is a question, self question reflective question.

So, all of you can ask question is there one thing that I could change that would lead to sustainable happiness that lead to sustainable happiness. Often I often in my classes in the students Sustainability is a very broad concept and it is related to the global issues, global challenges how can we change, how can we make some improvement. So, that is the you know that is the question ambiguous question for every learner, every individual that it is such a such a vast area how can I bring this. But if that is the thing is that if every individual makes single effort. Simple effort in their own domain, in their own lifespan, in their own environment, in their work in their own workplace definitely this planet is going to be

changed.

So, here is that it is not just that means, not just we are focusing only on the global issues, but the global issues and challenges will be solved when the individual effort will be combined together. So, that is a all of us we must ask this question that is there anything that I could change that kind that could lead to the sustainable happiness. And mind it sustainable happiness is the ultimate result ultimate goal, but before that we have to come across we have to go through a long process of learning and practicing the sustainability. Now, coming to the individual perspective like sustainable sense of self. So, if I want to practice sustainability, if I want to you know embed sustainability in our in my lifestyle, in my consumption, in my practices, in my behavioral domain etcetera, then how So, automatically gives me a sense of sense of sustainability, sense of self self awareness, self self efficacy of you know yes yes I am sustainable because it gives me a reminder kind of an an alert that whatever we are doing I am doing a sustainability without wasting, without wasting the resources, without exploiting anything, but in a very very economic cost effective way sustainable way.

So, here two things are coming. So, self sustainability and self sufficiency. Self sustainability means I that means, whatever practices I am doing I am doing I am engaged in. So, these are all self sustainable. And self-sufficiency I am having the abundant abundant of resources sufficient to carry on my activities. So, self-sustainability and self-sufficiency are overlapping primarily these are overlapping states of being in which a person or the organization needs the little or no help from or interaction with others.

So, self-sustainability is that it has already developed a system that it can go on. independently self-sustainability. And self-sufficiency is that we have enough of resources to move on . So, these two concepts are complementary to each other. Self-sufficiency it entails thus entails that the self is being enough to fulfill the needs.

I have enough of resources, so that I can continue, I can I can live in, I can ah work. So, that is the self-sufficiency. And self-sustaining ah intend entity is that it can maintain the self-sufficiency indefinitely. If we are self-sustaining And if if you are self-sustaining it means that we are self-sufficient. So, self-sufficiency also it also instigates it a self-sufficiency along with sustainability can can also be can also be translated into self-sustaining.

If you have self-sufficiency enough of resources and you have the sustainability mindset, then you can become self-sustain self-sustaining entity entity. So, these two are interdependent very complementary to each other. So, these states represent the types of personal and the collective autonomy. Here it says that self-sufficiency and self-sustaining

self-sustain sustainability these are two concepts which are very much you know sometimes we can adopt personal as well as the collective autonomy. So, like individually we can be self-sufficient and self-sustaining and collectively in the community level also we can be.

We can be collectively we can also practice these things that collectively our community has enough of resources we have created generated and our community also practices the self-sustaining practices. So, these are some of the learning activity activities here given here and I can say these are the self check exercises. You discuss among yourself think you can you cannot like when we are suppose we are talking discussing we have started discussion about the resources in our community whether it is water, energy or you know agricultural or agricultural resources whatever resources we have then we start thinking discussing among ourselves. Then think what actually what that means, some cases some case study you can take up how he has prepared how suppose someone some some person in the community has become a very good farmer and agriculture land and farming she has set up a farm house etcetera then we have to explore how he has developed. Explore we have to explore further we have to observe and moreover it is very much important to reflect on to reflect on our own behavior to reflect that reflection helps us in understanding other other activities, other events, other outcomes in the environment.

So, how could you go about getting better at a skill? Who could help you? These are some of the self-check exercises that you can you can go through and you can think about yourself and reflect and analyze. Now, sustainable happiness and sustainability. So, as we have already discussed that these two concepts are very much integrated well integrated. So, sustainable happiness can be understood in a broader context by when we analyze the issues like the poverty, climate change, disaster, natural disasters and irregular you know weather condition, climatic you know syndromes you can say. So, and also by growing does it discontent since globalization.

So, globalization has benefited us in many ways in technology and business and everything, but it has also some side effects that we could realize of late. So, since the late 2000s it actually started the globalization started that 1990s onwards, but since late 2000s now and with the increasing number of people that they have started that in the name of development actually primarily with in the industrial stage all the primarily with the name of development were very much engaged in most of the mass production, mass consumption and with the severe pollution, resource depletion etcetera etcetera that has actually caused the unsustainable. unsustainable practices, unsustainable consumption in the large scale and for which now we are facing all these problems. Global warming was you know it was increasing greenhouse gases was increasing and now we are ultimately facing all these natural disasters result. So, so sustainable happiness tackles the very idea

that quality of life.

quality of life directly depends on the ah constant material expansions also. So, ah so, yes definitely as we are growing as we are progressing as we are making advancement in technology definitely our quality of life changes that is true. And we are ah we are we are we are also ah as we are ah discovering innovating new things new amenities new facilities new gadgets etcetera we are using it. But, that is good that is ok technology is good, distillation is good, business houses is good everything, but should be used in a sustainable way. So, in order to start any business definitely we depend on the environmental resources, natural resources, human resources etcetera, but yes we have to make use of it, but in a with a with a in a judicious may with a judicious way with a morality with the ethics and the values of not to overuse not to exploit rather we have to use it in a sustainable way.

And how and by using that how can we benefit, how can we get the maximum benefit to facilitate not just for our business purpose, but for the community development. So, how can we contribute maximally to the community development quality improving the quality of life and community development of the environment, natural environment all these things. But even though we are taking some of the resources, but how can we give it back maximally for the benefit of the society for the benefits of the community. So, though here the core consumption is that it is possible to combine sustainability in a large sense including economic, social and environmental aspects with the maintenance and even the enhancement and welding. So, the basic assumption is that for any activity, for any business, for anything we need to use the resources that is ok.

But how can we combine sustainable practices in practices with the resources that we are using for economic resources, social and environmental resources whatever resource are we using, but how can we combine with the possible practice of sustainability. So, that and sustainability can be in sustainability can be practices not just the resource utilization, but maintenance in enhancement of the resources from the enhancement. and and the natural resources and conservation of resources improvement of the quality of life everything. So, that ultimately we can we can reach a state of affair that is we can ensure that humanity human well-being, community well-being, individual well-being can be assured. So, this is about the basic theme of this basic philosophy of this course.

Now, in the next class we will discuss the other aspects activities how these are related to sustainability happiness and sustainable happiness and well being. Thank you very much.