

Lecture - 05 : Sustainable Happiness Process

Hello viewers, welcome back to this NPTEL course on Sustainable Happiness. So, today we will discuss about Catherine O'Brien's theory and sustainability as a process. So, sustainable as per the Catherine O'Brien's theory, sustainable development and sustainability have been fostering the interdisciplinary research and policy development for the last two decades ok. Sustainable development goals and sustainability as a concept of the concept of research for the interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and the policy development. research. So, positive psychology and happiness studies are stimulating also these interdisciplinary research with with implications for human behavior, human well being, mental health etcetera.

So, and it has also the implications for the policy and practices. Now, in this context Catherine O'Brien in 2005 defined that she has already she has she has been trying to embed the positive psychology concept in the framework of sustainable development and sustainable how to get the sustainable happiness and education plays a vital role and how. And she has embedded he has tried to input the positive psychology concept that is the positive character strengths that is the yesterday we have discussed about the optimism, resilience, then gratitude all kinds of the positive components positive character strengths how to how To embed it in the framework of education and how to educate sustainable happiness and how to ensure sustainable happiness and well being for the community through education. So, she defined that sustainable happiness as the pursuit of happiness that does not exploit other people, environment or the future generation.

That we have already discussed about this that she wanted to have the achieve wanted to have this sustainable happiness to be achieved by all the community people globally and country wise. across the across the culture that sustainable happiness to be achieved by the people without exploiting any of the resources neither people nor environmental resources nor the resources kept for the future generation that is her basic idea basic philosophy. So, bringing the sustainability and happiness together within the concept of sustainable happiness holds a significant possibilities. for the individual community and global well being. So, when we are focusing on not just sustainable development goals, but in the in the pursuit of sustainable development goals, we are also trying to achieve the global well being, community well being, individual well being all the.

all the well-being concepts. So, in this context if our target and goal is for achieving the global well-being for all, then both the concepts to be embedded that means, both the concepts to be integrated sustainability and happiness to be put together. And in the framework of sustainable happiness, but again here importance of education, positive

psychology that is positive character strengths and education are also very important role got the very important significant role in allowing us to achieve these things in making it possible for achieving the global well-being for all. So, now positive psychology has also influenced many disciplines since 1990s onwards it has influenced many discipline with a short span of time. Now it is more significant it has a more significant impact when it is applied to sustainability both locally nationally and as well as the internationally.

So, these kind of applications actually positive psychology it accelerates the shift in attitude because when we talk about the paradigm shift change in our attitude change in our mindset. So, this positive psychology plays a very vital role in accelerating that shift that transformation in our attitude and similarly a human behavior human attitude and also it also influences the policies and practices and the human behavior. So, specifically the opportunities for integrating positive psychology with the sustainable education are discussed including the work in the area of sustainable happiness, education for sustainable development and positive education. So, when Catherine O'Brien was trying to make the how to teach sustainable happiness ok. She has always tried to put the positive psychology concept in the framework of happiness.

And at the same time what should be the pedagogy of sustainable happiness, how to teach sustainable happiness to people. So, here education plays a vital very vital role. So, in this context therefore, education for sustainable development that is ESD, positive psychology, sustainability all these components interplay with each other interplay with each others too. make it a make it a successful successful model module to achieve to spread the awareness to make the people and public aware of practicing it to understand it to comprehend it to internalize it and to practice it. That is why sustainable happiness sometimes what happens it is some sustainable happiness underscores the interrelationship between the human flourishing and ecological resilience.

At the same time however, they are trying to They were trying to put together, integrate the education for sustainable development, positive education, positive psychology concept like positive character strengths, then sustainability as a concept. In this framework, actually they wanted to see Catherine O'Brien and her associates, they wanted to establish as a framework. as a you know as a very important component that is to be achieved by the community and the people. So, in this so, when we analyze the sustainable happiness, sometimes it ignores, sometimes it underscores, underplays the interrelationship between human flourishing and ecological resilience. So, that means, that is that is why here ecological resilience is very important.

We cannot be happy without our environment, without the without positive ecosystem. So, therefore, it has been emphasized properly that human that means, human flourishing

can be possible with ecological and ecological resilience, ecological or positive ecology, positive or positive environmental input. So, when unless and until we take the take care of our environment and we ensure the ecological resilience and biodiversity and environmental sustainability, then we cannot aspire we cannot aspire or try to achieve the human flourishing that people can flourish only in the context of an environment and economic prosperity. So, therefore, ecological resilience is important, environmental sustainability is important, economic viability is also important. So, in these two framework then only the people can flourish.

So, her primary target was how to make people happy, how to make the society happy, how to make the planet earth happy. a very happy place to live in, how to make the that means, how to make the individual also happy. So, come up with the new ideas, new pedagogy, new scientific way of achieving sustainability and then motivate the people to practice sustainability, sustainability then we can think of a new era of understanding and the political will to embrace sustainability. So, it is how to mobilize the human resources, but then how to mobilize the policy frameworks with the policy researchers, how to mobilize the government. So, all these things have to be put together and with an active effort and motivation that we should develop a integrated framework, we should develop a integrated framework to achieve this sustainability goals.

So, now, these are some of the scripts from the Catherine O'Brien's interview and her interviews that has happened in the past. So, Catherine O'Brien's original statements, the originated the term of sustainability, she has actually originated the term of sustainable happiness and she believes that that human happiness is a major ecological problem. So, she has also identified that that unless and until our environment ecology is ok, we cannot be happy. So, human unhappiness is a major ecological problem and that creating a sustainable world will also create a happier world. So, if you can take care of our environment and we can achieve a sustainable world or the planet to live in that can also create a happier world.

In other words, we do not lose anything when we live more mindfully and responsibly. So, we actually gain a different, but far greater from a form of faith. So, here as you can analyze here she is focusing more on eudaimonic happiness or eudaimonic well being or sustainable well being the sense that we cannot be humanity cannot be happy without the healthy without healthy environment or sustainable world around them sustainable environment they cannot be happy. And even and when we try to maintain the maintain the maintain our ecosystem and try to build it try to practice and build and build it in a sustainable way. So, we have to be very mindful we have to be very mindful.

behave, consume more responsibly, sustainably then we can make our planet earth and

environment more sustainable. And by doing so we are not we are not losing anything rather we are mindfully by doing mindfully we can get more. sustainable future, more wealth, more prosperity and we can make the humanity happier. So, why not to try for achieving the happiness along with the environmental sustainability and that is that was her primary aim, why cannot we maintain a sustainable world and make the people happy, because we are not separate from the environment, we are a part of the environment. mindfully do certain activities and responsibly behave and interact with the environment.

So, that our environment is well protected at the same time we can also ensure the community happiness or well being for all. So, here she says that I would say sustainably happy people are better for the environment those who practices sustainability and their minds set and attitudes are also sustainable practice they also not only they try for themselves they also educate others they motivate others to practice the same thing. So, these sustainably so, that is a sustainably happy people, they are better for the environment because they are they are thinking for the future, they are thinking for the future generation, they are thinking for making the environment sustainable and sustainable for future also. So, when we really understand that our happiness and well-being are intertwined with the ecosystem, then an ecosystem that sustain us I think that is hugely powerful it is transformative. So, in order to bring transformative change permanent change in our ecosystem and in our community and making the people happy in terms of the there is global happiness global well being.

So, which is more sustainable and long term then we have to bring this transformation in our mindset like you have to take care of our environment and make it more viable sustainable. So, and so that is why it is not a separate from our human happiness and well being is not separate from the ecosystem. So, here in this along with her statement we can also embed here the economic prosperity, because economic prosperity is also another vital component in making the people happy, because you know for our financial well being physical health and all kinds of well being holistic well being we need economic resources economic resource. So, we need engagement, we need work, we need empowerment. So, along with this we can say.

economic resources are also equally important to mobilize all these things. So, in this context Martin Seligman's positive psychology concept which has emerged in 90s 1990s, they began to look at and started asking these kinds of questions. So, in a positive psychology was advocated by Martin Seligman in 1990s onwards. Then let us then these questions arise among the researchers like for example, what could we learn from the people who are really flourishing and thriving. So, these are all like who are how the people become happy, what are the features special characteristics that makes the people happy.

So, how they are flourishing, how they are thriving. So, what can we learn from the happy people, what are the health benefits and other benefits of the happiness being. So, can you teach the happiness and so on and so forth these questions. are being arised by the researchers through the introduction of or through the beginning of the positive psychology, positive psychology era. So, now, there are different types of then with when positive psychology researchers they started actively doing research on happiness, human happiness, well being types of happiness and characteristic strengths for making the people happy.

So, all these things. So, they elaborate on the happiness concepts, the characteristic features, the personality attributes, how can we bring transformation, how can we educate people all these things. So, in this context they analyze the type of different types of happiness are there. First thing is that pleasant life, we have till now we have already discussed about the hedonic happiness and the eudaimonic happiness. Now, let us see what they say is that like for example, types of happiness one is the pleasant life. So, pleasant life of happiness is where you are engaged frequently consistently in doing the things that you that give you pleasure.

Like you are doing something something you love to do and while doing so we are also enjoying you are getting the happiness. So, in doing the things that give you pleasure. So, while it is great to indulge in the things that makes us feel good that is the pleasant life. I am leading a pleasant life because whatever I love to do I am doing I have been doing.

Like suppose the musicians. So, they love to do the practices in the music the instruments and they want to be engage them in the process of music singing all kinds of thing. So, that that that is a kind of that creates a kind of a indulgement and that that indulgement itself makes them feel happy. So, that is a pleasant life like for example, primarily the great indulgement in the things in the work in the job whatever we are doing and we get the maximum happiness from that that is the pleasant life. That means, I love to do and I am also getting the opportunity to do that and as because I become happy. So, those moments can sometimes be fleeting and there are also often different levels of satisfaction to be have.

So, in the long run when you do it continuously that also gives an immense satisfaction of like satisfaction in your life. Another is another type of happiness is that engaged life. Engaged life is that one step from the pleasant life. Here your primary thing earlier pleasant life means you are getting pleasure, because pleasure is become more important. Now, in the engaged life your engagement how you are engaging yourself that is important.

So, one step on form the pleasant life is what Seligman calls as an engaged life. It is not just pleasure is important is ok, but it is not enough now you have to be positively engaged.

So, what is that engagement? So, in engaged life is one where you are living in a way that cultivates that cultivates your virtues and the strengths. So, you have you have the skills and competencies, you have the potentialities etcetera when you are engaged in a particular work that becomes that you are that you know that cultivates that enhances your virtues, strengths, capabilities, self-efficacy etcetera and that also boosts your confidence, your self-esteem, your self-efficacy also increases. So, that is another is that engaged life.

Like for example, we are engaged in different kinds of jobs, works even at the household also. And that gives us that means, we are when we are actively engaged in that process not it utilizes our virtues, strengths, capabilities, etcetera, but it enhances it, nourishes it. So, being a person of good character, it seems that it is important part of living a more deeply fulfilling and happy life. So, earlier part was the pleasant life, because as because as because I love to do so, and I mean I am doing so, I am getting pleasure. Now, here it is more in engaged life is more meaningful in the sense that, Not only it enhances my virtues and strengths etcetera there are some positive outcomes.

Because when I am engaged in a work in the main activity in whatever I am doing that has the outcome and that outcome is more beneficial not only for me for others and it has it has an value, it has an added value, it improves the quality of life of others, it improves the business practices or and so it is more fulfilling, it is more fulfilling because I am contributing, it gives a sense of that I am contributing towards the society towards the community etcetera that is the engaged life. Then another type is that it is that meaningful life another third high this is of the highest category that is the meaningful life. Seligman's third dimension of happiness is the meaningful life one that is marked by the purpose and meaning. Like suppose whatever I am doing like eudaimonic happiness we have discussed. Eudaimonic happiness when it is looking beyond our own satisfaction own happiness and when we look at the others needs they are fulfilling their needs aspirations their requirements.

So, helping out them serving them it gives a kind of other way it gives a kind of meaning and happiness a sense of satisfaction life satisfaction. So, similarly so, third dimension is meaningful life. We are engaged in that mark by a purpose and meaning that it has a meaning which is beyond my own boundary, my own job satisfaction or my own happiness, my own family and it is for the community. It has some significance and social relevance.

So, it gives me a purpose. So, that is a meaningful life all the you know big all the statesman like you know Tagore or Gandhi all freedom fighters all the stalwarts who are very prominent in you know in the social contributions social contribution making them. environment, making the community, making the countries, making the states very much

more healthier and flourishing etcetera. So, that means, I have there enough of resources and if you can contribute and make others happy, do something for the society, make something good for the flourishing, for flourishment of nurturance of the communities of certain group of people etcetera, it gives me a meaning. Because, whatever resources I have got I am not just spending it for myself, but I am also utilizing it for specific purpose first and it has a meaning it adds value to me it adds value to my life satisfaction. So, it is the value addition it has a meaning for my happiness that is the eudaimonic happiness or you can say that is the in the stage of self actualization when the people think beyond their own interest they think for the global issues they think for the global They are very they are very compassionate about about the others you know worries, their worries, their tragedies, their you know their their causes of the unhappiness, their lack of you know they are in the poverty, they are in the they are in the shortage of the shortage of the sufficient resources.

So, they are worried for others and in this context if they have the immense resources they want to utilize it for others. in a very positive and constructive way that is more meaningful for them because it has a purpose and that is the call that can that in this process they think that they are leading a meaningful life. So, happiness in this respect comes from the taking the taking those virtues and strengths that make a person good character. Hence, here the positive psychology contribution is that how can you become a good person to contribute towards others to make others happy. And for the for that matter in order to be a good human being you have to acquire develop certain character strengths like like the optimism, then empathy, compassion, then gratitude.

So, these are the positive character strengths which have been advocated by positive psychologists Seligman and his team that in order to be happy in order to be to lead a meaningful life, then you must the individual must possess, must acquire, must develop this kind of positive character sense. So, here the question is how can we aim for a meaningful life. All of us we are doing job, we are we are earning our earning our financial resources, we are making our life comfortable, we are living in a comfort zone, we are making our life comfortable, we are also looking for our family, well being of our family etcetera. secure zone where our well being we can ensure our well being, but what about others what about others. So, when we think beyond your comfort your well being your satisfaction and think of others worries and you know deficiencies or struggles they are doing it then you go beyond that that in that way you become motivated to lead to a more meaningful life.

So, can you think of a cause of the bigger than yourself that is truly worth serving. So, all types of happiness are not equal, some give us fling moment, some happiness are temporary, some happiness are temporary, it can fly away, it can fly away quickly, it is a momentary pleasure, whereas others that lead to be more longer lasting, fulfilling level of

happiness and satisfaction. Suppose, if you keep on keep on educating some girl children, so poor girl children children from the poor families, those who cannot afford to educate their children. So, if suppose continuously you are financing, you are sponsoring some candidates in for the education, similarly for the health issues. for helping out the old is it old people poor people.

So, this is a when you are doing it long term it gives you everlasting long everlasting fulfilling sense of fulfillment and sense of happiness and satisfaction because I am improving the well being of others. I am trying to serve others and in this way improving their quality of life and ensuring their well being. So, that is a more meaningful life. Now, there these are some of the steps how to enhance happiness like suppose individually if you make conscious effort conscious effort how to practice certain things how to discipline myself. So, that I can achieve I can move towards that happiness.

First thing is that cultivate awareness that is the meta awareness. Awareness is that it is a heightened flexible attentiveness to our environment and internal cues. For example, for example, we are living in an environment. So, we must be very much aware about what is happening in and around how the environment how much greenery is that, how the environmental resources are being utilized, how we can protect our resources, how we can take care of an environment that is environmental alertness and what is within us, how we are behaving, how we are conducting ourselves that is the internal cues understanding our own thoughts, understanding our own activities, understanding our interactions with others, our interaction with people, interaction with the environment. So, because we as because we are living in the social context, we are the social being.

Constantly we are interacting with one or the other components, other stimulus like whether they are the animals, they are the plants, they are the environmental factors or the human factors. And similarly in the workplace also we are working with the organization that is the business context or the organizational goals etcetera. So, in this way what actually basically means our surroundings as well as our thoughts and feelings and the bodily senses. So, when we are working, we are staying at home, we are going for a job, we are living in a particular environment. While interacting with the environment and doing our jobs and activities, how do we feel? Do we really enjoy it? Do we really feel happy? So, what are our senses and what are the stories? stimulus that we are interacting with and what are the reactions or the responses that we are eliciting.

So, these kind of interactions. So, we have to observe closely. So, that is called and for that is the like awareness is that being a lot of, but when we analyze that awareness for the being aware of our awareness that becomes a meta awareness. that becomes a meta awareness. So, to be to cultivate that awareness and meta awareness, awareness is to be

aware of what is happening in and around. deeply analyze that analyze that awareness that
is meta awareness.

Second is the cultivate the connection cultivating the connection not just with the human beings or your close close friends etcetera, but with everybody even if it is a even if they are the stranger even if they are you are not familiar with, but the humanity to the humanity to the people to the to the people with whom you work in the environment. So, cultivate the and how can you connect with others. connect with others by cultivating the feeling of kindness, sense of connections. Like if you think that the whole world global world is one thing and we are globally connected and whole world is the one place where we live in together. So, that if you develop that holistic idea, holistic mindset that all of us are interconnected does not matter the distance does not matter how far we are staying.

but now the technology is advanced it now we are we are instantly connected. So, all of that how can we connect our self to all people all around to not only people, but also the you know animal world also and environment itself environment itself that gives a that for that that gives an immense satisfaction and for that matter in order to maintain it. we have to cultivate the feeling of kindness, compassion, empathy and to enhance to boost our sense of connection. The even though does not matter even though I am staying alone in my house, but I can instantly connect to anybody and everybody and I feel I am connected to or the people far away from me far away from me not just through technology and etcetera, but in the in the moment in the moments of emotions and thoughts also. So, regardless of whether the person on the receiving end knows you or not whether he is thinking of you or not, but I feel even though he is a stranger I feel I am connected with that person.

Third is the practice the insight. Now, the insight is having a self knowledge and we can we can get this insight or self knowledge about our self through practicing it through reflective practices, reflective thoughts, reflective analysis of our own thoughts action. If we start thinking about it in order to practice insight we need to develop the reflective thinking capability ability. So, the thoughts and beliefs that shapes our sense of who we think, what we think, what is and the person is being determined by you know what he is doing, what he is thinking, how he is interacting with others. So, that are his you know that are his you know. You can say these are the signature steps through which we can say that what type of person he may be with his activities, thoughts, expressions, behaviors, his dressing sense and his manners, etiquettes, taken together.

So, how to practice that insight by developing the reflective thinking practice. Every day we need to spend some time with our self. So, not only it helps us understanding our self, our strengths, our weaknesses, how to Then, how to overcome these, how to you know discipline our self, how to educate our self to adopt the new better practices that gives a

kind of insight that can empower us slowly empower us slowly and slowly and progressively. So, that you so, that in future we can challenge we can challenge any kind of we can we can So, we can face any kind of challenges and believe that we have hold about ourselves. So, that is not to be not to be biased not to be judgmental when we say that we should not be judgmental.

That means, we should not have any bias against anybody rather we have to we have to groom nurture ourselves in such a way that to be more scientific more objective more impartial more non non judgmental and for that we need insight and in order to achieve that insight we have to we have to we need to discipline our self and that can be possible only if we practice reflective thinking and self reflections on day to day basis. Now, the in the practical real world that you simply notice when the negative thought So, suppose when you are aware that means, you have already developed a meta awareness and meta reflective self reflections etcetera. The moment any negative thoughts comes to our mind it becomes it gives kind of a lot no no I should not think it, it dissuades us. So, it automatically comes in if you practice it to be inquisitive to stop and ask yourself Ask yourself whether where is the thought going or coming from, is it based on any assumption, is it rational, it is justified, is it ethical, is it value oriented. So, we need to ask many questions ourselves through self reflection, reflective thinking and analysis, then only we can achieve insight.

The next step is the practice with the purpose. So, practice with the purpose thinking about our deep core values like when we analyze our self deeply we are getting into our inner self or ideal self etcetera we can say what are what are the our core values and what are the our goals and aspirations in life. So, automatically we will find that oh I have some professional goals, I have some educational goals, I have some social goals etcetera. So, when we formulate frame the goals and analyze our goals, then we have to understand we have to analyze that deep purpose meaning out of it. I want whether I want to achieve it for myself, but what else I am also achieving. So, what is the purpose of my life only to satisfy my needs only to fulfill my needs or something else.

So, that it happens as a result of reflective analysis self reflection questioning self questioning and in this process we develop a kind of intrapersonal intelligence and say here intrapersonal intelligence means our real self and our ideal self what we want to be aspire to be that is our ideal self. So, when we practice this kind of self reflection insight insightful learning and thinking and self analysis and try to discipline try to monitor regulate our own behavior etcetera in a non judgmental way. Then that means, there is a constant interaction of an our ideal self and our real self. So, constantly when we are discussing we are reflecting on our own thoughts means we are there is a constant interaction between our what we want to be the ideal self and what we are actually. So, there is a reciprocation of

exchange of thoughts etcetera and in this process we empower our self to explore the purpose of life to explore the to lead a meaningful life and what What are the what are our strengths and weakness? How can we leverage our strengths? How can we overcome the hurdles? How can we so, how can how can we have a greater purpose in life? So, here all these things.

So, at automatically so, the per sense of purpose in life is also linked to the positive health outcomes. that is from the resilience in the face of trauma and over an overall risk of the thing. So, here some the most important positive characteristics are important optimism being the practical optimism, realistic optimism is good, but above all the resilience is very much required in the present day context, because everywhere we are facing n number of challenges. And here in this context challenging n world be it pandemic, be it natural disaster, be it climate change, be it you know floods, natural disaster all kinds of things how to be resilient to face this to face this trauma, traumatic experiences, traumatic situation which is unpredictable, which has emerged all of a sudden which is unpredictable.

So, we have now we are not. So, how to face the, how to build up that resilience in the face of trauma and overall how to reduce the risk of death and you know at risk of depression, risk of depression, risk of traumatic experiences, risk of agony and all kinds of thing, how to reduce, how to minimize it. And this is the you know we have already discussed a little bit about the gross national happiness, these are the domains of happiness gross national happiness. First thing you know we have already discussed there are 9 to 10 domains concept, first is psychological well being which primarily relates to emotional balance, spirituality all kinds of positive mental health, health again it has the health status physical health status and the facilities we are getting health we have the knowledge about our health own health, community vitality that it relates to safety, security, social support, socialization. So, community vitality, living standard that is the income, source of income, housing, food, food security all these are determines the living standard of the people of a community. Then governance of course, the government, government performance, policies, freedom, freedom and institutional trust.

These are the what type of governance the people are getting in their country, in their Then, the environmental diversity, how we are caring for ecological balance, ecological balance, how can we make it a forestation, how can we take care of our biodiversity that is environmental diversity, it exists and how are we are protecting it. Then the culture, culture includes you know all the language, communication, dialect and you know all kinds of value transmission, cultural activities and mutual respect, mutual that is the relationship or relationship and the cultural practices that strengthens our values and mental health. Then the education system, definitely education, Like the along with the that means, along with the technological and course content or subject content knowledge, we have to also protect

our traditional knowledge and how to increase the literacy and you know. scientific, scientific meant of mind all that it builds on the education. What is the education system of a of a state of a country and the time used time used time being used by the stakeholders how they are how much what is the working hour, what is the sleeping hour, what is the what how they are how the people are using the time.

So, these are the primarily a 9 significant domains of gross national happiness. So, when we talk about the Bhutan has been the most happiest country in the world. So, that means, in the state of Bhutan in the country of Bhutan all these they have taken care of all these parameters and ensures that their people live a good life. So, when that is the parameter and when the people are all the all the stakeholders they are reaching they are enjoying they are experiencing all these things in a very positive way. So, then we can say their total global national happiness index will be very high and then we say that or that is the gross national happiness is that and in this comparison Bhutan has become the has the world has been the world's most happiest country.

So, now for this week now up to there for this is enough. Now next time next week we will just start discussing about another topic related to sustainable happiness. Thank you very much, I hope you have understood and self analysis started reflective analysis, self analysis etcetera that will help you not only in your own in your own meaningful framing a meaningful life and leading a very satisfactory life and developing your subjective well being and life satisfaction that can also help you in feeling realizing other others problems and issues which is very much required for the global well being. Thank you very much. Now, I am just closing the session here. Thank you.