

**A PATHWAY TO HAPPINESS: BUDDHIST POINT OF VIEW**

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**Abstract**

*Buddhism teaches that happiness is not just a fleeting emotion; it is a state of inner peace and contentment that is cultivated by wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline. The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path are the foundations of the Buddha's teachings, which give the framework for the path to ultimate pleasure. Suffering (dukkha) is an inherent part of life, but it may be avoided by living wisely, expressing compassion, and letting up of worldly desires. Attachment and desire are the sources of sorrow. By practicing right perception, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration, individuals might attain a state of inner calm and ultimate freedom (nirvana). This abstract explains how Buddhist philosophy offers a practical and sustainable means to obtain lasting pleasure by stressing self-awareness, compassion, and mental clarity.*

**Keywords:** *Budhhist, Happiness, pathway***Introduction**

Happiness is something that everyone wants, yet the way it is defined and accomplished varies from one culture or ideology to another. Buddhism teaches that happiness is not only the presence of pleasure or the absence of sorrow; it is a deeper state of inner peace and contentment. Buddhism lays a larger focus on the value of self-awareness, wisdom, and ethical conduct than materialistic methods, which equate contentment with outer triumphs. Siddhartha Gautama, often known as the Buddha, taught a methodical approach to attaining happiness through the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The Four Noble Truths state that suffering (dukkha) is an inescapable part of life that is caused by attachment and desire. Nevertheless, it is possible to overcome suffering by following the Noble Eightfold Path, which consists of right understanding, right thinking, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This path will help you acquire moral discipline, mental clarity, and wisdom, which will finally lead you to a state of perfect tranquilly known as nirvana. In today's fast-paced and materialistic culture, when stress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction are ubiquitous, Buddhist principles provide a practical and timeless means to obtain true pleasure. This study looks at the Buddhist path to pleasure in order to demonstrate how mindfulness, ethical behaviour, and detachment from worldly wants may lead to lasting well-being and inner peace.

The eight noble paths that the Buddha described can be followed in this life to achieve nirvana, or joy. These routes are

1. Right views (samyagdrsti): The correct understanding of the four noble truths is considered to be the appropriate view.

2. Right resolve (samyagsankalpa): This is the second mark for right resolve. A person's knowledge is useless unless they also commit to living their life in accordance with their principles. So, we need the right kind of resolve to get out of agony.
3. Right speech (samyagvak): We should speak in a proper manner. Good judgement should direct and regulate our speech.
4. Right conduct (samyagkarmanta): What makes good conduct are the five vows of Panca-Sila: not to steal, not to be sexually explicit, not to lie, and not to drink too much.
5. Right livelihood (samyagajiva): Giving up destructive habits and speech is known as samyagajiva. One should earn a living in an honest way, not by taking advantage of other people.
6. Right effort (samyagvyayama): A person is making an acceptable effort when they try to improve their life in several ways, including by having the right beliefs, resolutions, words, and deeds.
7. Right mindfulness (samyaksmriti): Maintaining concentration is critical. Remembering and considering the body as a whole and emotions as sensations is crucial.
8. Right concentration (samyaksamadhi): Once a person has eliminated all traces of passion and negative thinking by following these seven steps, they are prepared to embark on the four more profound stages of focus that will bring them closer to their ultimate goal: the cessation of suffering. A person may achieve nirvana by following the eightfold path of Buddhism.

Everyone dreams of living a happy life. The Pali word "sukha" means "happiness" when used as a noun, but it may also mean "ease," "bliss," or "pleasure." When used as an adjective, it can mean "blissful" or "pleasant." To understand the nature of joy, a brief explanation of emotion is necessary. Feeling (vedana) is a mental component that is a part of all types of consciousness and is an intrinsic characteristic of all experiences. Making direct eye contact, ear contact, nose contact, and so on gives birth to a certain feeling. Emotions can be classified into three or five categories depending on the intensity of their tone. The tripartite division consists of three components: sukha vedana, which is the pleasant sensation; dukkhavedana, which is the unpleasant emotion; and adukkhamasukhavedana, which is the neutral feeling. There are two types of pleasant emotions: the physical kind, which is called "pleasure" (sukha), and the mental one, which is called "joy" (cetasika-sukha) or "somanassa." There are two varieties of unpleasant sensations: kayikadukkha, which means "pain" (dukkha) in the body, and cetasika-dukkha, which means "displeasure" (domanassa) in the mind. The Buddha provides a number of instances of the many types of mental bliss. Here are a few: the happiness that comes from living in a household as opposed to a monastic life, the happiness that comes from enjoying sensual pleasures as opposed to renunciation, the happiness that comes with attachments and taints as opposed to the happiness that comes without them, the happiness that comes from focussing on material things as opposed to the happiness that comes from focussing on spiritual things, the happiness that comes with concentration as opposed to the happiness that does not, the happiness that is not joyous, the happiness that is not aimed at joyous things, and the happiness that comes from a formless object. Spiritual happiness, which is also called niramisasukha or nekkhammasukha, is the joy that comes from giving up sensual pleasures and developing a more pure foundation. In order to feel the delight of Jhana, you must distance oneself from worldly pleasures and barriers (pavivekasukha). Another part of it is satisfaction via concentrate (samadhisukha). There are many different methods to obtain happiness. joy is the absence of suffering; contentment with whatever occurs is pleasant; merit is pleasant at the end of life; and friends bring joy in times of need. Everything is joyful in Brahman's state. Having a lifetime of morality, unwavering self-confidence, a desire to study, and the ability to choose good over evil are all things that create happiness. "The arrival of the Awakened Ones,

the preaching of the Good Law, group unity, and the austere life of the unified are all things to be celebrated."

Siddhartha Gotama is said to have achieved enlightenment while meditating under the Bo tree, according to historical traditions. The massive document known as the Thripitaka, Pali canons is a record of his words and actions. But with the usually pessimistic perspective of Buddhist philosophy, how can we expect to achieve happiness? According to Buddhist beliefs, every living thing has inherent value, and everyone is afraid of damage, suffering, and death. 3 Buddhist thought is seen negatively by many people. Goutama Buddha made it clear that nothing lasts forever. The world we live in is constantly changing. Ultimately, nothing is important. We should not become overly attached to material stuff since nothing lasts forever. In order to achieve lasting happiness, we must give up on the pursuit of physical pleasure. We should be able to see the path to happiness clearly. If you understand what loss really means, there is no reason for you to worry. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that only a select few extraordinary individuals, such as arahants, are able to experience joy. An arahant (Pali) is a person who has achieved both knowledge and perfection. A real Arahant is someone who has reached the highest level of enlightenment, which is the fourth and last degree of enlightenment as defined by early Buddhists. Because of this, they have been cleansed of all impurities forever. After renouncing all material luxuries, Arahants are satisfied animals. That being said, it does not mean that the average person cannot afford to be happy. Even those who are not experts can find enjoyment, albeit it may be a little more difficult for them. It requires more time and effort than simply listening to or reading a lot of Buddhist content.

**Pancasila:** If one does not adhere to the five precepts, also known as Panchasila, they would never be able to live a happy life according to Buddhist ethics. These consist of -

1. Don not kill,
2. Do not steal,
3. Do not commit adultery,
4. Do not tell a lie, and
5. Do not take intoxicating drinks.

A dedicated Buddhist must follow these five moral precepts, which are the five principles of Buddhism that guide their daily behaviours, in order to find happiness in life. This emphasises the relationship between a person and the outside world, which includes other people and objects, without any interruptions. These are the basic components that are necessary for getting along with other individuals in society. The five precepts that Lord Buddha has given to the householders are as follows: One scholar calls it the "virtue of man." From a technical standpoint, it is referred to as the Pancasila dialect of Pali. It is the simplest compilation of Buddhist moral precepts for the purpose of achieving happiness. Deep down, we all want to be happy. However, it is concealed under the horrible ideas that we experience, like anger, jealousy, stress, anxiety, worry, and many other negative mental states. We need to get rid of our negative beliefs in order to find out where pleasure comes from. We need to cultivate and strengthen the foundations of happiness. If someone has thoughts of killing another person and wants to be happy, would they ever be happy? In the same manner, if a person steals, engages in sexual misbehaviour, lies, and consumes intoxicating beverages and narcotics in order to gain pleasure, would they genuinely be happy? Naturally, a person cannot be happy while their mind is confused by their actions. It is impossible to feel happy by making other people sad. When someone does something wrong, it creates uncertainty in our brains about

what we did. How can a man who is consumed by hatred, greed, and delusion ever be happy? Buddha believed that a person cannot be happy if they are experiencing fury, hate, envy, or other comparable emotions. He said that being happy is not the same as being angry while you are in the middle of a fury. Living without pain while surrounded by those who do suffer is a wonderful thing. Living among ambitious individuals but lacking motivation yourself is a fulfilling way to live. Living without material belongings is a joyous way of life, comparable to that of the brilliant gods. As a result, Buddha remarked, "The mind is the master of all of our actions, and the mind is the creator of all of our actions." If you act or talk with a pure state of mind, happiness will follow you like a shadow that is constantly behind you. Our acts are what lead our minds to feel satisfied. However, we must clear our brains in order to be able to produce bliss. A mind that is not pure is incapable of creating happiness. We get delight in performing good things and doing constructive activities. In this context, he has given an example that says, "If a man does good, let him do it again and again and let him take delight in it; the accumulation of good causes happiness." He went on to say, "The wise man, who finds joy in giving, will be happy because of that in the afterlife." By giving up the search for sensory pleasure, one might achieve happiness. True happiness cannot be derived from sensual pleasure since it is always accompanied by more sadness. Consequently, "If a wise man sees a lot of happiness, he would give up a little pleasure in order to have that great pleasure." As a result, one may conclude from the teachings of Buddha that joy is defined as the entire absence of misery. He is known as the best surgeon (sallakattoanuttaro) and the most skilled doctor (bhisakko) because he examined our disease, discovered where it came from, assessed the results, and gave us a treatment to relieve our pain and suffering and to make us happy. He never considered physical pleasure to be a genuine kind of happiness. He said, "One should know how to judge what happiness is; having known how to judge what happiness is, one should be intent on inward happiness." "When a person is completely free from all forms of bondage, they experience true happiness, which is referred to as the happiness of calmness (Upasamasukha)." Happiness can be divided into two categories: experience (vedayita) and non-experiential (avedayita). The non-experiential type of bliss is considered the highest form of happiness since it stays the same. The experiential happiness is set at a lower level since it changes. The non-experiential contentment is attained after all of the contaminants have been eliminated. However, the experiential satisfaction is reached without causing any harm to them. The highest degree of satisfaction cannot be reached and is subject to change until all impurities, including impediments, have been removed. Naturally, the highest state of happiness is Nirvana, which is when all impurities are removed and you are free from misery. Nirvana is a state that is beyond suffering, death, and birth. Nirvana, which is the highest kind of bliss, is not considered to be a feeling (Vedana) that one may experience, because it is the emotion that causes desire. For instance, if the emotion is pleasurable, the mind would desire to feel that way repeatedly. Any feeling that generates happiness might also be the cause of unhappiness. When happiness turns into despair, we feel agony (dukkha). True pleasure, or Nirvana, is the bliss that comes from eliminating dukkha, which is the state of greatest happiness.

### **Classical Buddhist Texts on Happiness**

The Buddhist texts give important insights into the idea that pleasure is an inner state rather than something that is dependent on external conditions.

**The Dhammapada** According to the translation of Narada Thera (1959), genuine pleasure comes from not being attached to things, acting ethically, and having a tranquil mind. It emphasises that the want for

things and a lack of knowledge are the main reasons for suffering, and that stopping the desire for things brings about inner calm.

**The Majjhima Nikaya** The Noble Eightfold Path is presented in (Middle-Length Discourses of the Buddha) as a practical way to obtain enduring pleasure via wisdom, morality, and meditation.

**The Visuddhimagga** (The Noble Eightfold Path is presented in (Middle-Length Discourses of the Buddha) as a practical way to obtain enduring pleasure via wisdom, morality, and meditation.

The fundamental concepts of Buddhist happiness—detachment, ethical behaviour, and mindfulness—are established in these great writings.

### **Modern Interpretations of Buddhist Happiness**

Modern researchers and Buddhist instructors have built upon old teachings, making them applicable to living today.

**Thich Nhat Hanh (1998)** in *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching* discusses mindfulness as a key to happiness, emphasizing present-moment awareness and compassionate living. He argues that suffering is not an obstacle to happiness but a doorway to deeper understanding.

**The Dalai Lama & Howard Cutler (1998)** in *The Art of Happiness* blend Buddhist wisdom with modern psychology, asserting that happiness is a skill that can be cultivated through compassion, ethical living, and mental training.

**Matthieu Ricard (2007)** in *Happiness: A Guide to Developing Life's Most Important Skill* presents happiness as a state of mind developed through meditation, positive emotions, and self-awareness. He incorporates scientific research to support Buddhist concepts.

These modern interpretations highlight how Buddhist principles can be integrated into daily life to promote well-being.

### **Methodology**

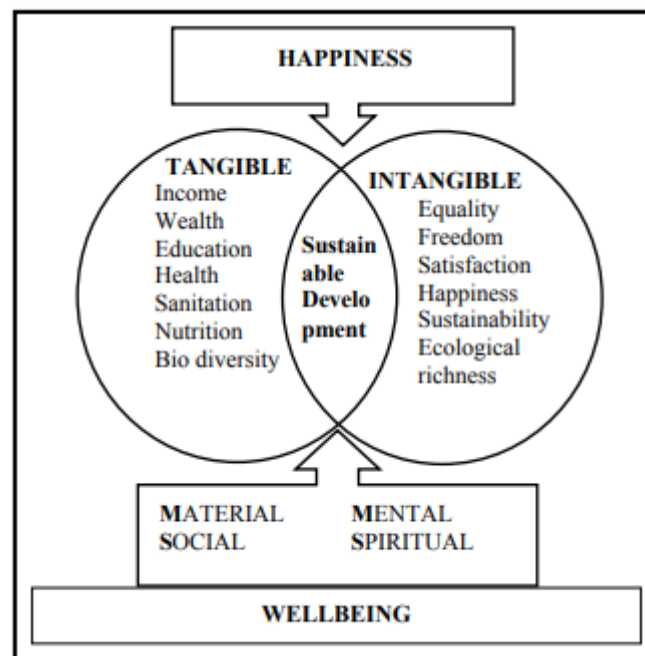
The study's conceptual framework was developed by taking into account the discrepancy between the factual and subjective realities of development rhetoric. The first step was to identify the tangible factors that can be used to measure wellbeing and happiness in the context of development. These include income, education, health, nutrition, sanitation, biodiversity, and environmental rules and regulations, among others. The next step was to identify the intangible factors that have a direct impact on people's happiness and satisfaction. These include equality, freedom, satisfaction, happiness, ecological richness, and sustainability. The identification of these factors was accomplished through the use of primary and secondary literature sources. The method of textual analysis was utilised to analyse the data in accordance with the framework described above, which was used to assess the relevance of Buddhist notions for improving well-being via happiness for development goals. In order to fulfil the main purpose of the study, the synonyms that were utilised in different lectures were combined and synthesised into a common indication.

## Research Questions

- How to narrow the divide between material and social growth?
- Are people content with the current system, and what can be done to make them happy??
- What are the most effective ways to encourage a comprehensive approach to development?
- How to improve methodological techniques in order to systematise excellent practices, investigate outcomes, and provide appropriate assessments of wellbeing?

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework has been developed with two elements of well-being and happiness: the measuring aspect and the interpretation component. It was first determined that sustained social development is dependent on both subjective and objective criteria. After that, an effort was made to establish the potential connections that contribute to societal sustainability by means of the idea of well-being and happiness (Fig. 01).



**Fig 1: Conceptual Framework**

Seeking possibilities to apply Buddhist concepts for promoting wellbeing as a development indicator for addressing the gap between subjective and objective happiness in the context of sustainable development.

## Results and Discussion

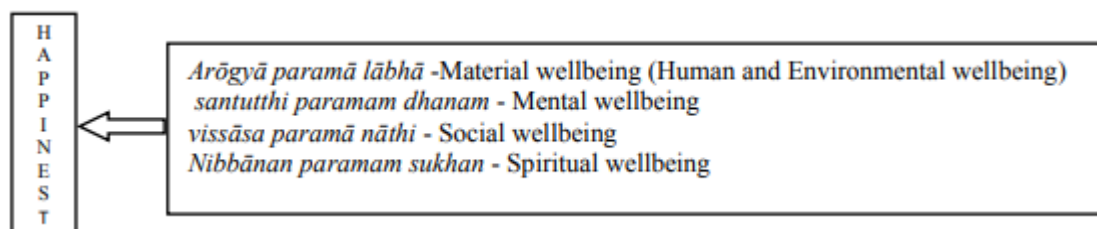
Aristotle used the term "eudemonia" to describe the nature of pleasure. He emphasised three components of happiness: happiness as a feeling, happiness as contentment with one's life, and happiness as a thriving and fulfilled existence that makes an imprint on society. The latter feature should be considerably more thoroughly explored in order to promote it as a social development policy. Since the late 1800s, there has been a lot of discussion on the importance of using pleasure as a metric of advancement. Arthur Pigou pointed out in 1920 that it would be very difficult to include the development indicators in addition to the

economic progress. In the 1980s, happiness became the primary focus of development literature, especially for the aim of quantifying social growth. In 1980, Kasma and Stones provided 22 factors that might be utilised to create a happiness scale that included the Life Satisfaction Index and the Philadelphia Geriatric Centre Scale. Happiness should not just be a state of mind or a characteristic; it should also be something you can learn to do. If people do not practise happiness, they will not feel it. Happiness is a way of living that can be taught, learnt, and passed on to others. It is important to develop the talent of continuously trying to maintain happiness by adopting diverse strategies, such as anger management methods like meditation. On the other hand, happiness can be viewed as a type of mental disease in people that results in their contentment. Buddhism emphasised that "Santutthi paramam dhanam," which means that the most important wealth is happiness (Dhammapada Verse 209). The term happiness in Buddhist chronicles uses as 'santutthi' or 'santutthatha' and its antonym 'asanthutthi' or 'asantutthatha'. Lokamitra (2004) discusses the significance of the Buddhist perspective on pleasure in relation to development. He provides instances of the key teachings that emphasise the physical and mental contentment and security of the people of society. Some of the guiding principles for achieving total satisfaction at the individual, community, and global levels include the essence of the common practice of the five precepts in Buddhist virtue, the four sublimes for Brahmavihara, the four means of sustaining a favourable relationship for Sanghavattu, the Noble eightfold path, and the concepts of compassion and loving-kindness. After taking into account the main focus of these teachings in connection to a sustainable society, it is apparent that all elements of well-being are dependent on happiness. Happiness may be described as "a state of wellbeing and contentment," according to Bracho (2004). The "wellbeing" component would have a more exterior aspect, while the "contentment" component would have a more inward one. As mentioned in the opening of this study, there has been a long-standing discussion over the shortcomings of the GDP in terms of quantifying social development. Robert Kennedy (2010) noted that the gross national product does not take into account the health of children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not take into account the beauty of poetry or the strength of marriages, nor does it consider the wisdom of public discourse or the integrity of public leaders. It does not assess people's intelligence or bravery, nor does it measure their knowledge or education, nor does it measure their compassion or loyalty to their nation. In fact, it measures everything except for what makes life worth living. Arthur Pigou (1920) introduced a new method for measuring social development in the field of modern welfare economics. He argued that this new approach should be very doubtful of the idea that long-term changes in the rate of growth of welfare can be estimated even approximately by looking at changes in the rate of growth of output. Hawkins (2010) proposes four different ways to measure the development of wellbeing in the present context. These include: adjusting GDP to make it more appropriate, replacing it with a "dashboard" of alternative indicators, weighting these alternative indicators to create a composite indicator, and using people's own assessments of their wellbeing. In light of the above, this work seeks to address the gap that might be observed among different techniques when well-being is measured in practice. The Buddhist perspective on well-being is more strong than any other definitions, as it emphasises four interrelated aspects: material, social, mental, and spiritual. The Dhammapada verse 204 provides a good explanation for this: Arōgyā paramā lābhā (material well-being), santutthi paramam dhanam (mental well-being), vissāsa paramā nāthi (social well-being), and Nibbānan paramam sukhan (spiritual well-being).

- Material Wellbeing – Satisfaction with the available resources

- Mental Wellbeing – Satisfaction with the freedom
- Social Wellbeing – Satisfaction with the relationships
- Spiritual Wellbeing – Satisfaction with the spiritual practices

Material well-being may be broken down into two categories: human well-being and environmental well-being. The availability of basic requirements and access to services give a satisfying stage for people who pursue independence, healthy relationships, and spiritual pursuits. To be more specific, complete satisfaction is determined by how well they are able to get the physical, human, social, environmental, and financial resources. A number of key indicators have been developed based on the existing research on happiness, however the majority of them are focused only on material well-being. Some of the indicators of happiness include: having access to food (both in terms of quality and quantity), being able to evacuate three times a day or as often as one eats (the body's ability to eliminate waste is a simple indicator of health), participating in food production or preparation for oneself or others, being able to produce as much as possible of what one consumes, having access to information, instruction, and training in ways to improve one's quality of life, having work that is enjoyable, being able to obtain a comfortable, spacious, and adequate place to live near one's workplace, receiving care and the possibility of a cure and compassion in the event of illness or death, feeling protected and secure in the society in which one lives, being able to enjoy nature without damaging it and caring for it, enjoying air (including proper breathing), water, light, and space in sufficient natural quality and quantity, and sleeping well and waking up feeling rested (Frank Bracho 2004). The satisfaction that comes from freedom may include some primary forms of contentment, such as the ability to express one's creativity, the ability to express one's feelings and thoughts freely, the ability to cooperate and share with others, the ability to respect others and be respected, and the possession of a personal ethical code (Keshawa Bhat 2012). A community cannot experience freedom unless it eliminates problems that make people vulnerable. If there were no freedom, it would not be possible to maintain decent relationships or practise spiritual beliefs. Ambetkar (1982) states that Buddhism teaches social, intellectual, economic, and political freedom. It promotes equality, not just between men and men, but also between men and women. It would be hard to find a religious teacher who could be compared to the Buddha. His teachings covered so many aspects of people's social lives, and his doctrines are so modern. His main concern was to provide salvation to people in their lives rather than promising it to them in heaven after they die. As a consequence, it is clear that pleasure is the outcome of the integration of all four of these well-being factors, which ultimately leads to the complete contentment of a community. One of the main discoveries of this research, the overall satisfaction framework, is illustrated in Figure 02.



**Fig 2: Total satisfaction framework**

The current development setting is missing the fulfilment that comes from positive relationships and spiritual pursuits. As mentioned above, the wellbeing component is closely related to health. According



to the World Health Organisation (WHO), "health" is defined as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This definition really emphasises the significance of the positive or preventative components of health, which is something that is often overlooked when discussing well-being. It is also overlooked in the current standard for measuring spiritual well-being and the advancement of contemporary cultures. As a result, the proposed framework in this research has addressed the gap by integrating a new facet of well-being: spiritual well-being. Mindfulness, virtue practices, tolerance, contentedness, loving kindness, uprightness, and prudence, among others, may be used to assess how satisfied you are with your spiritual activities. The primary goal of the spiritual activities is to satisfy the need for happiness. Happiness has two components: physical and mental. The mental experience, or inner force, is the more powerful of the two. According to Mahayana Buddhism, pleasure comes from having a compassionate or selfless mind. Because human minds are typically disturbed by painful emotions, the outcomes are generally negative acts, which then lead to misery. since a result, the core of Buddhism is to control, change, and defeat the human mind, since it is the source of everything; it is the source of both happiness and suffering (Wangmo and Valk 2014). This paradigm may explain all the dimensions of well-being and happiness that have been explored by many scientists and institutions in relation to social development. The system's sustainability is dependent on good practices at the individual, community, and global levels. These practices include dana, seela, samadhi, utthana viriya, appamada, allenatha, kalyanamittatha, samajeewakatha, subaratha, and refraining from the causes of downfall, as mentioned in the Parabhawa sutta (samyutta nikāya 1.6) and the four sources of destruction, as mentioned in the Vyagghapajja Sutta (Anguttara Nikāya 8.54).



**Fig 3: Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into the new framework**

According to the complete satisfaction paradigm mentioned above, one of the other results of this study article is that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have only addressed two dimensions of well-being. Figure 03 demonstrates that neither mental well-being nor spirituality has been taken into account by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its 17 objectives. However, there is still a significant difference between the perceived and objective reality of sustainable development. Out of the 17 development objectives, 11 were created with a focus on human and environmental well-being, while the remaining goals were geared towards social well-being.

## Conclusion

The Buddhist perspective on happiness offers a profound and lasting approach that transcends fleeting pleasures and external achievements. Buddhism lays a higher focus on inner peace, self-awareness, and ethical conduct as the foundation of true well-being than traditional approaches, which equate happiness

with financial riches, status, or fleeting emotions. Those who understand the Four Noble Truths recognise that suffering is a normal aspect of life, but it may be overcome by relinquishing attachment and desire. The Noble Eightfold Path is a practical guide that helps people gain knowledge, ethical conduct, and mental discipline, which can lead to a balanced and serene living. Practices such as mindfulness and meditation are vital because they help people become more aware of the present moment, establish emotional stability, and acquire clarity. In addition, reducing the desire for worldly possessions and cultivating compassion and loving-kindness helps people to experience a deeper and more comprehensive sort of pleasure. In today's fast-paced, consumer-driven world, where stress and dissatisfaction are prevalent, Buddhist teachings provide a solution that has proven to be effective over time for achieving lasting happiness. When individuals practise mindfulness, ethical conduct, and self-reflection in their daily lives, they can cultivate true pleasure and inner peace. This can eventually lead to nirvana, which is the greatest state of escape from suffering.

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