GNH-Time Use

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Abstract-Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross Domestic Product-4th king of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuk. The shortest statement with a profound significance. Its meaning can be inferred decrees, public addresses and proclamations, laws and policies etc. The article provides information on Time use and happiness, its indicator and value and practice in relating top Gross National Happiness.

Key words: Time use and happiness, Indicators, value and practice of Time use.

I. INTRODUCTION

The theory of Gross National Happiness (GNH) established by His Majesty the King of Bhutan in 1972, is the foundation for development in Bhutan. GNH is based on the ideology that the pursuit of happiness is found in all people and is the strongest force of desires. Included in GNH is a “middle path” approach in which spiritual and material pursuits are balanced. The four pillars of GNH are the promotion of sustainable development, preservation and promotion of cultural values, conservation of the natural environment and establishment of good governance. These four pillars specifically have nine domains namely psychological wellbeing, health, education, time use, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality, ecological diversity and resilience, and living standards, which were developed by Centre for Bhutan Studies in collaboration with a group of international scholars and empirical researchers (Thinley 2007; Ura & Galay 2004; Ura 2008). GNH indicators serve as evaluative tools to track developmental progress over time. GNH screening tool systematically assesses impacts of any policy and project on GNH, thereby simultaneously selecting GNH enhancing policies and projects and rejecting projects and policies that adversely affect key determinants of GNH. The eighth domain is time use and happiness. Time Use, will look into proportion of time accorded to work, travel, household chores, social, leisure and family vitalizing activities. It is an important resource for everyone. It is also a limited resource in that we have only 24 hours in a day to put to competing uses. How we use this limited resource is important and has implications for our economic and social well-being (CBS 2012). GNH is increasingly being discussed and developed in international platform like conferences around the world (Bates 2009). Many leaders and nations are now taking a pause and trying to understand GNH philosophy in order to orient their developmental plans in line with GNH pillars for increased sustainability not only for today’s generations but also for generations beyond. Besides, the United Nations has adopted Bhutan’s proposal to include happiness as the Ninth Millennium Development Goal (MDG) this year indicating the importance of considering happiness and well being of its citizens by every nation in the planet. The balance between paid work, unpaid work and leisure are important for one’s well being. Similarly, a flexible working life is vital for the well being of individual workers and their families and communities. Since the 1970s, there has been a growing awareness of how unpaid work both at home and in communities is obscured on national account and so effort have been made to include these activities, which are equally fundamental to well being.

Given this importance, the use or allocation of time has been studied by academics and policy analysts since the early twentieth century (Harvey and Pentland 1999). However, more systematic collection of time use data originated only in 1924, when significant quantities time use data were collected by Soviet Union (Juster and Stafford 1991). Since then, smaller “bits and pieces of information” on time use were collected with a focus on specific activities such as leisure and travel patterns, but it was not until 1960s that more systematic attempts was made to collect comparable data for large group of countries. The first such study was conducted by Alexander Szalai in 1963 for a group of 13 countries (Harvey and Pentland 1999). Eventually, as research progressed, academics formulated a theory of time allocation, providing a proper framework to study time. In 1965, Gary S. Becker introduced the theory of allocation of time in which time was considered to have a cost on the same footing as the cost of market goods. At the heart of his analysis were households which were seen as both producers and consumers. He suggested that households produced commodities by combining inputs of goods and time according to the cost-minimisation rules of the traditional theory of the firm. Quantities of commodities produced are determined by their utility maximisation function subject to prices and constraints on resources. In other words, time is seen as a scarce input which is allocated between alternative productive activities as determined by utility maximisation and its cost in relation to other factors. Since the 1960s, time use studies have been carried out in most of the industrialised countries and, lately, in developing countries as well, in five to ten year intervals (Juster and Stafford 1991). Much bigger multinational time use studies have been carried out recently; EUROSTAT conducted time use studies in 18

1. Time Use Indicator

1.1. The GNH index incorporated only two broad aggregated time use: working hours and sleeping hours.

![Time Use Diagram]

Working Hours

The definition of work hours in GNH is not completely congruent with definition used elsewhere and shows unusually long work duration in Bhutan. Some activities not usually defined as work elsewhere are included as part of work. In the GNH definition include even unpaid work such as child care, woola (labor contribution to community works and informal helps etc. in this indicator, all the following categories are classified as work: crop farming and kitchen gardening (agric), business, trade and services, care of children and sick members of household construction and repairs, craft related activities, processing of food and drinks, and quarrying. Eight hours is also the legal limit, applied to formal sector, set by ministry of labor and human resources of Bhutan for a standard work day since a main objective of the indicator is to assess people who are overworked, those who work for more than eight hours are identified as time deprived. The rationale for choosing time use as an indicator for Gross National Happiness, it provides useful information missing in conventional economic accounts. The system of National Accounts, which is used to calculate GDP, does not measure productive activities accurately. A national accounting system that fails to recognize the total of productive capacities could lead to a conception and implementation of policies that are useless and harmful. In addition to paid work, productive activities include a series of unpaid activities such as household work, childcare, care of the sick and old, and time allocated to various other activities for the upkeep of societies.

In addition to activities done for oneself and members of one’s household, productive activities also include voluntary activities carried out for members of the community or for people outside one’s community. These activities are fundamental to the well-being of both those who provide and who receive such services. A true picture of well-being can be obtained only if these activities are taken into account. Time use studies provide information on such activities that are fundamental to the well-being of society. The detailed nature of information collected by time use studies enables policy makers to understand the needs of special groups of people, such as the old or disabled. As people age, their demands for assistance and care increase. If these demands are not satisfied, the well-being of the old and sick will deteriorate (Andorka 1987). Similarly, it is important to have adequate information on the time parents devote to their children. The quality of care children receive is correlated with their cognitive development (Hill and Stafford 1980). Sound policies related to these issues can only be formulated with the help of such detailed information.

Time use studies give information on what people actually do in their lives and, therefore, provide information on work and labour allocation (including that of children) within households, both at a point of time and over a period of time. Time use studies are, therefore, very useful for understanding the overall transformation or change experienced by societies. Such information is useful for designing comprehensive and balanced economic and social policies; needless to say, the well-being of societies can only be improved by informed policy formulation. Time use studies provide information on the work-life balance of individuals in society. They provide information on the number of hours an individual spends on work and other activities, such as socializing with family and friends, sports, and other leisure activities. Imbalance in time allocation between work and other activities is caused by a number of factors among which the increased number of work hours is the most prominent. An increase in work hours, in turn, is, among other factors, caused by one’s desire to make more money. Money becomes the focus or the driving force behind long hours of work for many individuals. These individuals exaggerate the importance of money for their well-being, and they get into a situation of what has been called “focusing illusion”. As they devote more time to work they do not find time to do things that they enjoy. Such people are not happier but are much more stressed than others (Kahneman et al. 2006). The European Quality of Life Survey of 2003 revealed a strong correlation between time use and subjective well-being. In most of the countries covered by the survey, it was found that people who had long work hours and poor work-life balance generally had low subjective well-being (Böhneke 2005). Time use data enable academics, policy analysts, policy makers and policy implementers to understand poverty better. “A significant part of the survival of poor households in developing countries is through home production”, for which time available to their members constitutes the main resource (Ilahi 2000). The more time they spend at work, the less time they have for leisure and, to the extent leisure is important to well-being, it could be said that the poor not only suffer from economic poverty but also from time poverty and therefore low well-being.

1.2. Sleeping Hours
Sleep is clearly beneficial for person’s health and impacts nearly every area of daily life. In general, most healthy adults need an average of seven to eight hours of sleep for proper functioning (Kleitman 1963; Smith, Robinson and Segal 2011). But sleep requirement can vary substantially and some people, such as nuns and monks would prefer and find much healthier to devote more time to meditation and spiritual practices then sleeping. Eight hours is considered the amount necessary for a well-functioning body for everyone. Juster, Courant and Dow (1985) developed a concept called “process benefits” which refers to well-being derived from doing an activity independently of its end results. According to these scholars, “time plays a crucial role not only as an input into a variety of market and non-market production activities, including leisure, but that time use is equally important as a direct source of satisfaction. From this review of literature it is clear that time use studies provide critical information related to allocation of time (a scarce resource) and its distribution among different members of households. It provides data which could be used to assess the impacts of policies, compare cultures and societies, gauge lifestyle changes, and assess the needs of special groups of people such as the old and disabled. From the perspective of the present study, time use studies address several shortcomings of GDP-based measures of progress or development. They provide information on unpaid work, voluntary work and other community activities. These activities are all very vital to the well-being of individuals. More importantly, time use studies enable researchers to assess or understand the well-being of individuals directly.

3. Values of Time Use
3.1 Stress free
As individuals juggle to do so many things, they easily become stressed. Research has documented a series of stress related impacts on the health of workers. Workers in high-strain jobs have been shown to have a higher variety of disease than their fellow workers who are not or are less stressed. Cardiovascular disease, gastro-intestinal disorders, musculoskeletal problems, and the immune system are all affected by stress. Behavioural problems such as poor relations with colleagues, absenteeism, and loss of self-confidence and self-esteem are often caused by stress. All these consequences affect both the actual as well as the perceived well-being of individuals.

3.2 Serenity
Without serenity, even an extensive provision can become a source of anxiety and fear or envy and hate red, and it could be accompanied by deprivation (out of avarice or sickness) or by ruin. With serenity, wealth and power are a tool of reform, a source of security and a modality of saving the good deeds. Once the serenity is taken out, wealth and power turn out to be a source of anxiety, tyranny, despotism, abomination and hatred. They no longer allow their holder to reach a peaceful resort, and they become a means through which a huge place in hellfireis guaranteed. A serene soul is the first source of happiness; however, how could it be reached when it’s not the fruit of intelligence, knowledge, health, strength, money, wealth, celebrity, power… or anything else from the blessings of this worldly life.

3.3 Tranquility
GNH considers that “secure the blessings of liberty, to ensure justice and tranquility and to enhance the unity, happiness and well being of the people for all time.”

3.4 Bonding
It suggest that forging close bonds with people over mutually shared and meaningful interests might boost quality of life for anyone, religious or not. But there’s something about being part of a congregation in particular that seems to build a sense of community and lead to fulfillment for many people. Religious people tend to volunteer more, care more about their community and do more good in their neighborhoods, “said Chaeyoon Lim, a sociologist at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. "All of that can be explained by friendships in the congregation that seem to make people not only happier, but also nicer people and better citizens."

3.5 Healthy lifestyles
Bhutan’s strides in improving the health and happiness of its population, as suggested by various indicators, is commendable. The GNH indicator survey was taken when the country was in transition to full parliamentary democracy, and these baseline indicators can be used as a developmental yardstick. Despite the achievements, as indicated by both subjective and objective measures, much still needs to be done to improve GNH in Bhutan. This includes elimination of poverty, narrowing the socioeconomic gap, fighting emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, and halting the increasing trend of mental and lifestyle-related diseases. Therefore, the manner in which the health system is remodeled to address these challenging issues within the context of the growing expectations of the modern Bhutanese population will affect happiness indicators, and how Bhutan strives for economic growth without compromising the well-being of its people could epitomize the modern developmental paradigm.

4 Practice
4.1 Socialization
Socialization is the process by which human infants begin to acquire the skills necessary to perform as a functioning member of their society, and is the most influential learning process one can experience.

4.2 Work-life balance
The use of time is one of the most significant factors in quality of life, especially time for recreation and socializing with family and friends. A balanced management of time is
evaluated, including time spent in traffic jams, at work, in educational activities, etc.

4.3 Recreation and leisure satisfaction
The amount of spare time people have, as well as their control over how much spare time they have, correlates with happiness. Whereas leisure pursuits increase happiness, watching television is an anomaly, as it seems to correlate with lower happiness. This may be because people who watch a lot of television are lacking in better sources of happiness, such as relationships and other leisure pursuits; that is, people watch television if they don’t have anything better to do. “Leisure refers to activities that a person voluntarily engages in when they are free from any work, social or familial responsibilities.” Leisure satisfaction is the positive perceptions or feelings that an individual forms, elicits and gains as a result of engaging in leisure activities and choices. What can contribute to leisure satisfaction is to what degree an individual is currently satisfied with their leisure experiences and activities. An individual might attain positive feelings of contentment and happiness that result from the satisfaction of needs. Participation in leisure activities and leisure satisfaction are inextricably linked to an individual’s health. Caldwell (2005) suspects that that leisure activities may be associated with a number of defensive traits that enhance a person’s resiliency to negative life experiences. Some aspects of leisure activities that can act as protective factors include: “[the activity] being personally meaningful, intrinsically interesting and/or challenging; offering social support and friendships; contributing to a sense of competence and/or self-efficacy; offering a sense of personal control, choice and self-determination; and being relaxing and/or distracting the individual from negative life events.” Leisure activities, although ranging in types, have also proven to be beneficial to health cross-culturally.

4.4 Community service
The ultimate goal of development in Bhutan is to maximize happiness while balancing economic progress with the spiritual and emotional well-being of the people. This effort requires much more than just satisfying material needs. Public service/jimba can provide the “much more” by personalizing GNH for an individual, group, community, or organization. Jimba/public service is a natural complement to governmental initiatives based on GNH because such acts contribute to all four pillars of GNH:

- **Economic self-reliance:** If everybody contributed with jimba actions, working sincerely as a public servant or offering some form of public service, all would reap the benefit of economic progress. Not only would the poor be better off but the lonely would have company.

- **Cultural promotion:** Doing jimba is an integral part of Buddhist philosophy. Since the Bhutanese culture is essentially Buddhist, many customs are based on Buddhist ideals. Practicing jimba helps promote Buddhist values, therefore promoting national culture and traditions.

- **Good governance:** People who think about doing jimba/public service are guided by sound ethical principles and values like social responsibility. Those doing jimba/public service incorporate and support values and ethical principles by demonstrating accountability, honoring their commitments, and acting in the public interest. This value-oriented and conscious action helps prevent corruption and brings about good governance as they work for the benefit of the country and not for themselves. Jimba/public service has a strong role in all four components of GNH. Therefore, through jimba we provide meaningful public service and help realize GNH. Integrating the spiritual and the secular, jimba and public service further the common purpose of serving the social whole. They open new possibilities for harnessing the full goodness and resources of humanity as we grapple with the complex issues of the twenty-first century.

- **Environmental preservation:** Performing jimba/public service means taking a holistic view of things, which is thinking beyond ourselves and our time. It is thinking about future generations, about the animals, about the plants, and the environment they live in, or in other words, Mother Nature. Through this mind-set of jimba, we conserve our natural environment.
REFERENCE


