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Bhutan, happiness and development index

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in Happiness | Development Index | Gross National Happiness | Karma Phuntsho | History Of Bhutan |



Bhutan's unique formula of using happiness to measure the development index may have captured the imagination of many countries but the government's priority should be to create basic conditions for experiencing happiness, says a

leading scholar on Bhutan.

"Despite attempts to make Gross National Happiness (GNH) philosophically and econometrically tenable, the initiative is not without problems and criticisms. Most people argue that happiness is a state of the mind and an internal subjective experience," writes Karma Phuntsho's in his new book "The History of Bhutan", published by Random House India.

"What triggers the experience of happiness differs from person to person depending on their cultural background, individual interest and often on the point of comparison. Any attempt on the part of a state or government to provide, let alone impose, a uniform value or definition of happiness is futile," Phuntsho, who teaches Buddhism and Bhutan Studies in the Himalayan country and abroad, says. The idea of happiness and wellbeing as key points of development has been a part of Bhutan's political psyche. It was pursued as a deliberate policy goal when former king Jigme Singye Wangchuck introduced GNH to define the official development paradigm for the country.

Apart from the objectives of development that seek to increase GDP on a national level and incomes at the household level, development in Bhutan encompasses the achievement of less quantifiable but highly qualitative objectives. GNH is centred on the belief that happiness is the ultimate desire of every individual, and by extension, the responsibility and purpose of

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