Sukha, *Santosha*, and *Sampatti*: A Holistic Indian Approach to Flourishing and Resilience

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Abstract

Well-being transcends individualism and constitutes a collective phenomenon, grounded in social interdependence, cultural narratives, and communal values. Flourishing is not merely a personal endeavour but fundamentally rooted in the health and harmony of communities. In times of adversity, optimism, hope, and resilience are not merely personal traits but are cultivated through shared experiences and cultural frameworks, highlighting the importance of relational resources in fostering communal strength. Embracing well-being as a relational construct mandates inclusive approaches that prioritise interconnectedness, reciprocity, and communal emotional experiences—affirming that enhancing personal happiness is inseparable from fostering collective flourishing.

This study advances the theory that well-being is shaped through social interactions and communal cohesion. Drawing on the Indian collectivist tradition, where happiness emerges from group cohesion and shared experiences, it contrasts this with individualistic paradigms that emphasise autonomy and personal achievement. We investigate how a collectivist cultural framework, especially within Indian traditions, shapes both individual and communal conceptions of well-being, and examine how self-aware, purposeful individuals contribute to enhancing community harmony, engagement, and collective flourishing. We argue that individual awakening acts as a catalyst for community elevation: self-aware, purposeful individuals foster societal engagement, alignment, and forward-looking vision, thereby propelling collective flourishing.

Keywords: Well-being in the Collective Culture; Well-being and Flourishing; Resilience; Holistic Indian Approach

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Introduction

Well-being is a complex, multidimensional construct encompassing a wide array of human experiences, shaped by sociocultural, philosophical, and psychological paradigms. Scholarly discourse traditionally frames well-being through two dominant theoretical lenses: the hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives. The hedonic paradigm prioritises the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of suffering, whereas the eudaimonic framework foregrounds self-realisation, purpose, and existential meaning.

Within Indian philosophical traditions, the eudaimonic dimension finds profound resonance in the concept of *Atma Sakshatkara*, which denotes a profound, transformative self-awareness that transcends mere potentiality. This notion embodies a sustained journey toward spiritual and existential fulfilment, aligning closely with the Vedantic ideal of human flourishing.

Contemporary sociological thought increasingly conceptualises happiness as a phenomenon embedded within broader social, economic, and cultural matrices. Durkheim's seminal work (1951) underscores the role of social integration and collective cohesion in fostering emotional well-being. Cultural frameworks further nuance this understanding, positioning resilience as a communal construct forged through shared adversities and collective triumphs (Pulla, 2013). This perspective emphasises the importance of cultivating social bonds and intercultural empathy in promoting collective well-being—an ethos closely aligned with the concept of collective flourishing.

In the Indian philosophical context, well-being transcends individual gratification and is deeply anchored in spiritual realisation and communal interconnectedness. *Atma Sakshatkara*, or self-realisation, is not merely the actualisation of latent potential but an intense recognition of one's true essence. Traditional constructs such as *ānanda* (bliss), *sukha* (pleasure), and *dukkha* (suffering) illustrate the culturally embedded processes of meaning-making, particularly in the face of adversity. These concepts elucidate that resilience is not an exclusively individual attribute but one nurtured through collective struggle and mutual support.

In a prior examination of the nexus between spirituality and wellbeing, Pulla (2014) critically observes that Western cultural paradigms frequently marginalise the spiritual dimensions of happiness, privileging secular and materialist interpretations. This epistemological omission is particularly salient among helping professionals—such as social workers and counsellors—who often remain disengaged from the spiritual foundations essential for cultivating resilience. Pulla contends that spirituality constitutes a vital motivational force underpinning human coping mechanisms and resilience. Individuals who seek meaning, purpose, and relational connectedness inherently align themselves with pathways to wellbeing. By mobilising internal strengths and external resources to surmount personal and environmental adversities, they initiate a transformative journey toward resilience. The capacity for introspection and the ability to navigate crises with equanimity foster hope, which in turn fortifies resilience and equips individuals to confront future challenges (Pulla & Salagame, 2018).

The Vedantic notion of *Sat-Chit-Ānanda* (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) encapsulates *ānanda* as a transcendent state of consciousness, surpassing transient emotional states and external contingencies. Srinivas Arka (2003, 2006) articulates *ānanda* as a deep, abiding joy rooted in the realisation of one's interconnectedness with all life. Arka, posits that authentic happiness arises not from individual accomplishments but from the collective flourishing of communities (Arka in conversation with Vincent, 2019). Arka further contends that the pursuit of personal happiness is governed by the laws of both mental and physical existence, while the aspiration for others' happiness emanates from a spiritually attuned consciousness. He cautions against the ego-

centric inversion of this principle—where one assumes others must be happy only if they themselves are—thereby underscoring the ethical imperative of selflessness in attaining true *ānanda*.

The concept of collective flourishing extends beyond the emotional well-being of individuals to encompass the holistic development, health, and interconnectedness of communities. It integrates physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions, emphasising the importance of purpose, meaning, and relational bonds in fostering a thriving society. While communal happiness addresses the affective states of individuals within a group, collective flourishing offers a more expansive framework that includes the realisation of potential and the comprehensive well-being of the collective (see Francis, 2025).

Thus, integrating spirituality into our understanding of well-being is crucial, especially for helping professionals who may overlook these aspects. Recognising the role of *Ānanda* can enhance resilience and provide a more holistic approach to happiness, acknowledging that personal well-being is deeply intertwined with the well-being of others. Acknowledging the interconnectedness of life and engaging with its purpose enhances individual well-being and the collective flourishing of communities. Often, there is an emphasis that favourable living conditions, such as economic stability and social equality, are foundational to life satisfaction. Similarly, Diener (1984) highlights that subjective well-being encompasses affective and cognitive evaluations of one's life, underscoring the interplay between individual experiences and broader societal contexts.

Western Understanding

From a Western sociological standpoint, Durkheim's (1951) theory of social integration posits that emotional well-being is contingent upon robust social relationships and communal coherence. Individuals embedded within cohesive social institutions exhibit greater emotional stability (Durkheim, 1951). An extension of this idea is the concept of social capital—networks of trust, reciprocity, and mutual support—which is a critical determinant of life satisfaction (Putnam, 2000).

Micro-sociological perspectives, particularly those informed by symbolic interactionism, offer further insight into the social construction of happiness. Blumer (1969) argues that individuals actively construct their realities through social interactions, suggesting that happiness is not merely an internal psychological state but a co-created experience shaped by relational engagement. Diener and Seligman (2004) similarly emphasise the centrality of meaningful social relationships to subjective well-being, noting that such relationships provide a context for individuals to negotiate, affirm, and pursue their values and life goals within a communal framework. Cultural contexts have a significant impact on how people perceive happiness. According to Inglehart (1990), happiness in a collectivist society is often associated with social harmony and collective well-being, whereas individualistic cultures emphasise personal achievement and autonomy. Triandis et al. (1989) and Hofstede (1980) both agree that cultural norms influence how people seek and achieve happiness. Integrating these techniques indicates that happiness is a collective endeavour motivated by society structures, cultural norms, and interpersonal connections. This notion eminently describes variety of cultures that prevail in India. Society can improve its people's well-being by providing conditions that promote social integration, cultural understanding, and meaningful connections—all of which are valuable approaches to social work in the West.

Happiness is not merely an individualistic pursuit or a personal achievement; instead, it is deeply embedded in social, cultural, and relational contexts. From a Western sociological standpoint, Durkheim's (1951) theory of social integration underscores that emotional well-being is contingent upon robust social relationships and communal coherence. Individuals who are part of cohesive social institutions tend to exhibit greater emotional stability, as these structures foster a sense of belonging, shared purpose, and mutual support.

This foundational idea is expanded through the concept of social capital, which Putnam (2000) defines as networks of trust, reciprocity, and collective engagement. Social capital serves as a critical determinant of life satisfaction, illustrating how well-being is shaped not only by individual traits but also by the quality of one's social environment.

Diener and Seligman (2004) make a similar assertion in a similar context, stating that relationships provide the context in which individuals negotiate, affirm, and pursue their values and life goals within a communal framework. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) broader work in positive psychology reinforces this view, highlighting that well-being is multidimensional—encompassing positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA)—and that social connectedness is essential to flourishing.

Cultural contexts exert a profound influence on perceptions of happiness. As discussed above, Inglehart (1990) observes that collectivist societies tend to associate happiness with social harmony and communal well-being, whereas individualistic cultures prioritise personal achievement and autonomy. Cultural norms significantly shape how individuals seek and experience happiness. Synthesising these perspectives reveals that happiness is a socially embedded phenomenon, shaped by structural conditions, cultural expectations, and interpersonal dynamics (Hofstede,1980; Triandis et al., 1989).

Consequently, enhancing societal well-being necessitates the creation of environments that foster social integration, cultural sensitivity, and meaningful human connections. These elements are not only essential for individual flourishing but also represent critical pathways for advancing the scope and efficacy of social work practice in Western contexts.

Defining Hope

Hope is conceptualised as a motivational construct characterised by goal-directed energy and the capacity for strategic planning to achieve desired outcomes. It is further reinforced by the synergistic influence of resilience and optimism, which collectively empower individuals with the autonomy and psychological resources necessary to envision and pursue a better future, particularly in the context of adversity.

The interrelationship between hope, resilience, and optimism forms a robust foundation for psychological well-being. Resilience, defined as the dynamic capacity to recover and adapt in the face of adversity, is not a static trait but a process that can be cultivated through experiential learning and intentional practice. It enables individuals to respond constructively to challenges, thereby fostering a sense of competence, agency, and purpose.

Optimism, understood as a generalised expectancy of positive outcomes, functions as a protective factor against psychological distress, including stress and depression. It promotes proactive coping strategies that enhance resilience and facilitate adaptive functioning. When integrated, these constructs offer a comprehensive psychological framework that supports individuals in navigating life's complexities and achieving personally meaningful goals.

In well-being research, two dominant paradigms—hedonic and eudaimonic approaches—provide complementary insights into human flourishing. The hedonic perspective focuses on the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, defining subjective well-being (SWB) as the balance between positive and negative affect and overall life satisfaction. In contrast, the eudaimonic approach emphasises self-realisation, personal growth, and the fulfilment of one's potential. Rooted in Aristotelian philosophy, this perspective is reflected in Ryff and Singer's model of psychological well-being (PWB), which encompasses dimensions such as autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

Together, these paradigms illuminate the multifaceted nature of well-being. While hedonic wellbeing addresses immediate emotional states, eudaimonic wellbeing engages

with deeper existential dimensions, offering a framework for sustained life satisfaction through the pursuit of meaning and purpose (see also, Francis, 2025). The integration of these perspectives provides a more holistic understanding of wellbeing, recognising the interplay between pleasure and purpose in the pursuit of human flourishing.

Ryff's (1989) model of psychological well-being comprises six traits, as illustrated in Figure 1.
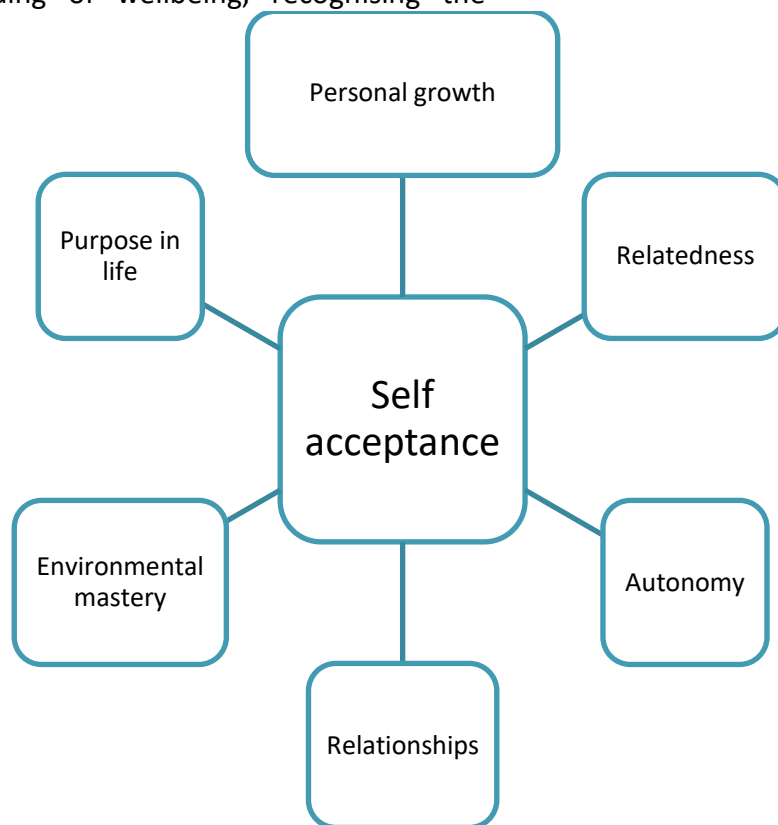
Figure 1: Ryff's (1989) Model of Psychological Wellbeing
Source: Recreated by the Authors

The above diagrammatic representation of Ryff's (1989) conceptualisation of psychological well-being, as interpreted by the authors, underscores the multidimensional nature of human flourishing. A comprehensive analysis of well-being literature reveals that hedonic pleasure is not entirely absent within eudaimonic frameworks; rather, the two paradigms exhibit substantial conceptual and experiential overlap. Contemporary scholarship increasingly challenges the binary distinction between hedonic (pleasure-oriented) and eudaimonic (meaning-oriented) well-being. Biswas-Diener et al. (2009) emphasise that these constructs should not be viewed as discrete or opposing experiences. Instead, they advocate for a more integrative approach that recognises the convergence of affective satisfaction and existential fulfilment in shaping holistic wellbeing.

The Indian Conceptions

Indian philosophical traditions offer a richly layered understanding of well-being, distinguishing between *sukha*—a transient, sensory-based experience of happiness—and *ānanda*—a profound, enduring state of bliss rooted in self-realisation and spiritual insight (Salagame, 2003; 2006). These distinctions reflect a deeper metaphysical orientation toward well-being, where the pursuit of happiness is not merely hedonic but intrinsically tied to spiritual evolution and existential awareness.

Ancient Indian thought presents three distinct perspectives on well-being, each contributing to a nuanced framework that integrates physical,

emotional, and spiritual dimensions. These perspectives are illustrated in Figure 2, which delineates the philosophical underpinnings of

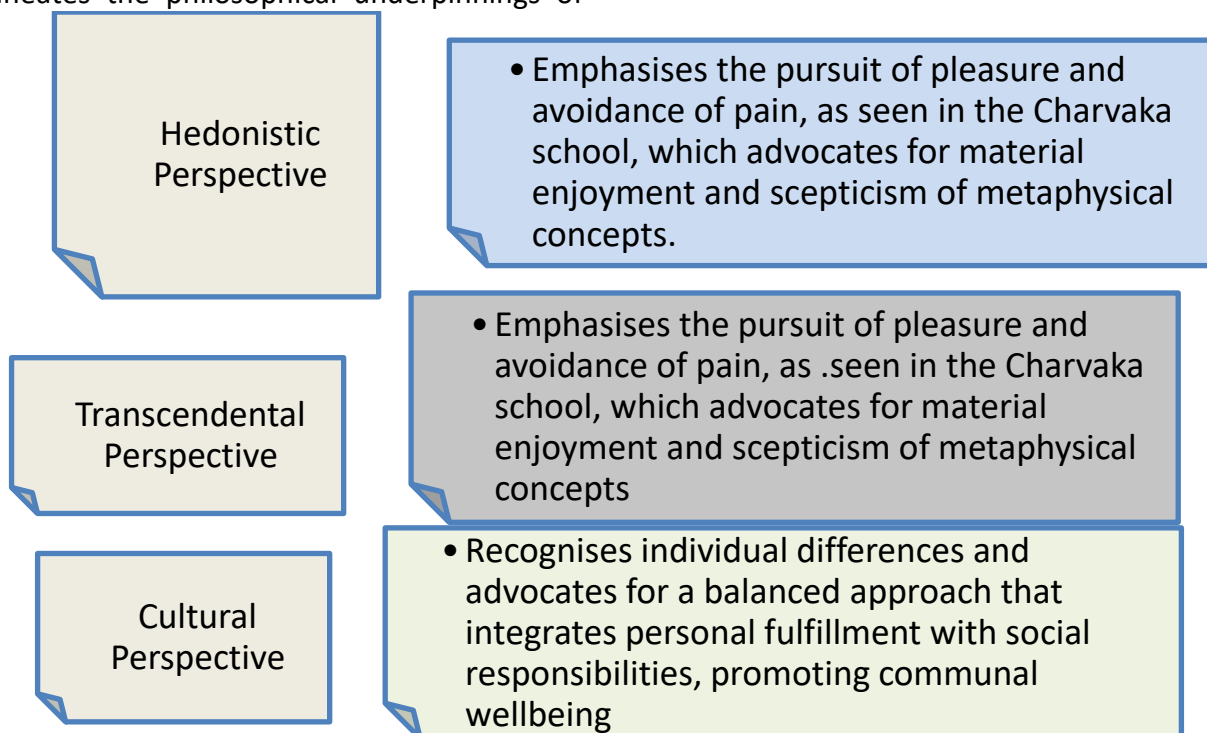*sukha*, and *ānanda*, and their relationship to self-realisation and collective flourishing.

Hedonistic Perspective	• Emphasises the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain, as seen in the Charvaka school, which advocates for material enjoyment and scepticism of metaphysical concepts.
Transcendental Perspective	• Emphasises the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain, as .seen in the Charvaka school, which advocates for material enjoyment and scepticism of metaphysical concepts
Cultural Perspective	• Recognises individual differences and advocates for a balanced approach that integrates personal fulfillment with social responsibilities, promoting communal wellbeing

Figure 2: Perspectives within Ancient Indian Thought
Source: A Diagrammatic Explanation by the Authors

The preceding perspectives underscore the imperative of aligning personal well-being with broader social, ethical, and spiritual dimensions. While subjective well-being (SWB) has traditionally been associated with hedonic principles—emphasising pleasure and the avoidance of discomfort—a more nuanced understanding recognises that SWB encompasses both affective experiences (positive and negative) and cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction. This complexity challenges reductive interpretations that equate SWB solely with happiness. Scholars such as Kahneman et al. (1999) and Ryan and Deci (2001) advocate for the integration of SWB within a broader eudaimonic framework, which foregrounds the actualisation of one's true nature and the cultivation of virtuous capacities.

The Indian Perspectives on Wellbeing

In contrast to Western paradigms, Indian philosophical traditions offer a transcendent view of well-being that extends beyond ordinary states of consciousness. While hedonic and eudaimonic models address everyday psychological experiences, they fall short of capturing the enduring and transformative well-being associated with transcendental states central to Indian thought. The tripartite framework of *artha* (material wealth), *kāma* (sensory enjoyment), and *dharma* (virtue) reflects both hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions. Yet, Indian philosophy introduces *moksha*—liberation from the cycle of birth and death—as a fourth and ultimate goal, often omitted in Western discourse. This omission limits the scope of well-being to empirical and secular domains, whereas Indian traditions advocate for a holistic framework rooted in self-awareness and spiritual evolution.

Purushārtha, fundamentally defines the intrinsic connection between human happiness, well-being, and the core aspirations that drive life. Rooted in the Sanskrit expression *Purushaih arthayate iti,* it translates as "that which man desires," and reflects the essential tendencies of human nature (Hiriyanna, 1975, p. 13). The four pursuits—*artha*, *kāma*, *dharma*, and *moksha*—

are clearly distinguished as either "lower" (empirical/secular) or "higher" (spiritual) values. The former embodies natural human desires, while the latter represent elevated, aspirational ideals. Crucially, both categories are recognised as human values because they are consciously and deliberately pursued (Hiriyanna, 1975).

The Indian philosophy highlights the intrinsic link between happiness, well-being, and the sources of these feelings, encapsulated in the term *purushārtha*. In Sanskrit, *purushārtha* translates to "what man desires" (*purushaih arthayate iti*), representing the fundamental inclinations of human nature (Hiriyanna, 1975, p. 13). Individuals pursue four primary goals: material wealth (*artha*), sensory enjoyment (*kāma*), virtue (*dharma*), and liberation from the cycle of birth and death (*moksha*). Consequently, well-being is closely tied to personal desires.

Indian philosophy asserts that humans possess an innate capacity for growth, guided by *mānava* dharma—the ethical and spiritual core of human existence. This path leads to the realisation of the deeper self, or *Ātman*, beyond conventional identities (Pulla & Salagame, 2018). It offers a transformative view of wellbeing that integrates material, ethical, and spiritual dimensions.

From Individual to Collective Flourishing

In her 2019 TV interview, Cath Vincent features Srinivas Arka, who identifies three key insights into human behaviour and explains how these recognitions actively guide and enhance collective flourishing.
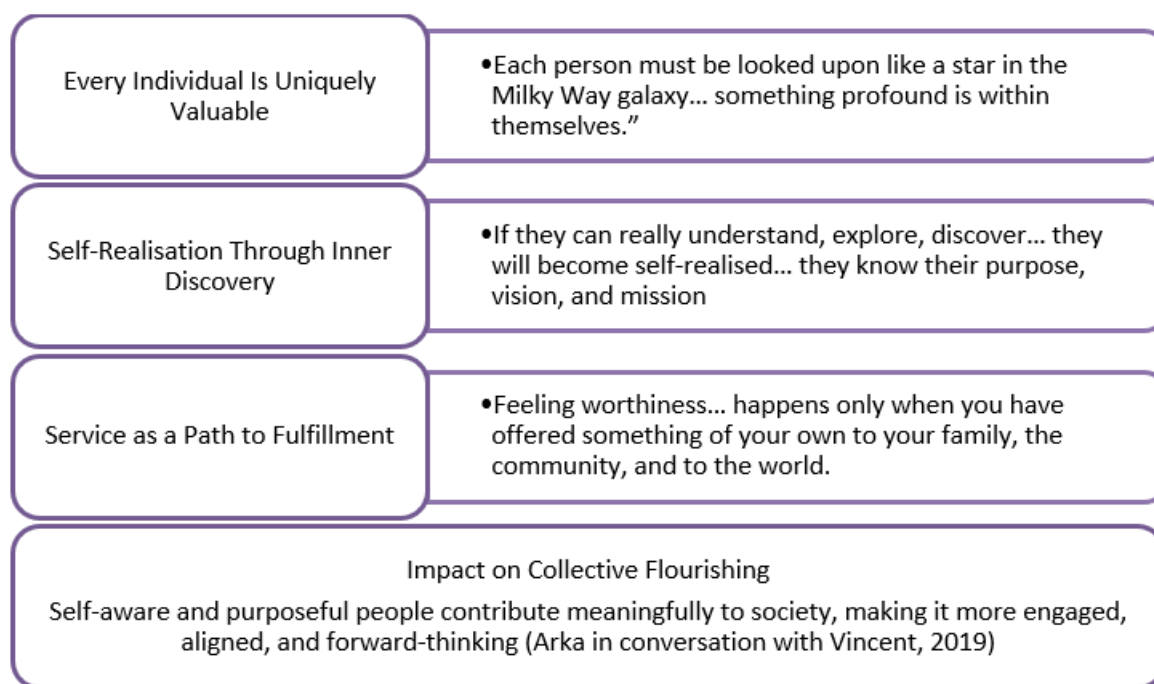

Figure 3: A Diagrammatic Representation of Collective Flourishing as a Step-Up Process
Source: Created by the Authors

Everyone is Unique and Valuable

Srinivas Arka emphasises the intrinsic physical, mental, and spiritual uniqueness of each individual, asserting that self-worth emerges from recognising and honouring one's distinct nature. This recognition not only fosters personal dignity but also cultivates appreciation for the uniqueness of others. When individuals authentically value themselves and one another, communities evolve into compassionate, diverse, and resilient collectives grounded in mutual respect and shared humanity (Arka Conversations, 2019).

Self-Realisation through Inner Discovery

Arka advocates for a process of experiential inner exploration as the foundation for self-realisation. This approach transcends theoretical understanding, encouraging individuals to

engage in intuitive introspection to uncover their purpose, vision, and mission. Such inner discovery fosters clarity, direction, and confidence, enabling individuals to live with intentionality and authenticity.

Fulfilment through Service and Collective Flourishing

True fulfilment, according to Arka, arises not merely from personal achievement but through meaningful contribution to family, community, and the broader world. Sharing one's unique gifts through service fosters a sense of purpose and belonging. This orientation toward giving, rather than a self-centred pursuit, catalyses collective flourishing. Arka posits that individual awakening serves as a transformative force for community elevation, with personal uniqueness forming the bedrock of collective wellbeing. Self-aware and purpose-driven individuals contribute to a more engaged, aligned, and forward-thinking society (Arka Conversations, 2019).

Self-Awareness through Conscious Awareness

Regular self-reflection and mindfulness are vital for aligning actions with ethical values (*dharma*) and life goals (*moksha*). Arka's concept of conscious awareness advances this process by shifting focus from intellectual analysis to direct experiential self-discovery. Through intuitive engagement—often cultivated in silence and meditative absorption—individuals connect more authentically with their inner guidance and unique purpose. This lived experience transforms self-awareness into a tangible sense of inner truth and integrity (Arka, 2013).

Balancing Worldly Pursuits through Inner Resonance

While remaining engaged in worldly life, human beings are naturally driven by the pursuit of *artha* (material success) and *kāma* (personal enjoyment)—both of which are valid and essential dimensions of human experience. Arka (2003) asserts that proper balance is not achieved solely through external moderation, but through inner resonance. His concept of conscious awareness empowers individuals to intuitively discern when their material and sensual pursuits are in harmony with their inner state, and when they become misaligned or depleting. This heightened awareness fosters a lifestyle rooted in inner harmony, ensuring that worldly pursuits do not overshadow one's dharmic responsibilities or the deeper aspiration for *moksha* (spiritual liberation).

Practice Pathways to Inner Connection

Practices such as yoga, meditation, and the cultivation of ahimsa (non-violence) are traditionally regarded as ways to foster *sattva* (mental clarity and purity). Through the lens of conscious awareness, these practices become more than tools for stress reduction; they become gateways to the inner sanctuary of consciousness, enabling individuals to access compassion, equanimity, and higher understanding intuitively. Arka emphasises that this inner connection can awaken a natural state of joy and reverence, enhancing both personal well-being and relationships with others (Arka, 2003).

A Holistic and Intuitive Framework for Wellbeing

Hindu philosophy offers a comprehensive and integrative framework for living a meaningful and flourishing life. By incorporating Arka's concept of conscious awareness (2003), well-being is redefined as a direct, intuitive experience rather than a purely theoretical construct. This approach transforms the pursuit of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *moksha* into lived realities that unfold organically from within (Upadhyay et al., 2024). In a contemporary context marked by external distractions and disconnection, conscious awareness reorients individuals toward a soul-centred approach to well-being—timeless, adaptable, and transformative.

Resilience in Indian Traditions: A Developmental Perspective

The study of resilience, hope, and optimism within Indian philosophical traditions offers a rich and dynamic discourse on well-being and human flourishing. Resilience is conceptualised not merely as survival in the face of adversity, but as a developmental process involving recovery, growth, and transformation. It is

distinct from invulnerability, which implies an unrealistic insulation from suffering. Instead, resilience is a fluid and adaptive process shaped by the nature of the adversity encountered (Smith & Pryor, 1995).

This developmental view of resilience emphasises the acquisition of coping skills and emotional competencies that foster psychological well-being over time (Pulla, 2014). Notably, resilience must be distinguished from stress tolerance. While stress resistance may involve bouncing back from hardship, the presence of robust social support systems which are essential for navigating life's challenges.

Research by Ryff (1989) has demonstrated that elevated levels of psychological well-being are positively correlated with improved neuroendocrine regulation and reduced cardiovascular risk. These findings substantiate the claim that resilience is not merely a theoretical construct, but a measurable determinant of physical health and overall well-being. Psychological resilience, therefore, must be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon with tangible biopsychosocial implications.

Incorporating Indian philosophical traditions into contemporary discourse on resilience offers a comprehensive and integrative framework that transcends conventional psychological interpretations. Sanskrit concepts such as *ārogyam* (freedom from disease), *nirāmaya* (freedom from affliction), *swāsthyam* (being established in the self), and *abhyāsa* (disciplined practice) reflect a sophisticated understanding of health and well-being that is both spiritual and empirical. These terms encapsulate centuries of philosophical inquiry and experiential wisdom, positioning well-being as a state of harmony between body, mind, and spirit.

Indian classical texts such as the Bhagavad Gītā and the Upanishads articulate suffering not as an anomaly but as an intrinsic aspect of human existence. These traditions advocate for a transformative engagement with adversity—encouraging introspection, self-inquiry, and spiritual evolution. Arka (2018) reinforces this perspective, suggesting that suffering can serve as a catalyst for transcendence rather than a source of despair.

In contrast to Western models that often emphasise personal fulfilment and material acquisition, Indian philosophical traditions prioritise *samskāra* (self-improvement), *dharma* (ethical living), and *satya* (truth-seeking) as pathways to authentic wellbeing. This worldview expands the definition of resilience to include not only recovery from adversity but also the potential for profound transformation through alignment with existential and spiritual principles.

The Indian Family as an Incubator of Flourishing

The Indian family structure serves as a foundational unit for cultivating *sampatti*—a concept that denotes holistic well-being at both individual and collective levels. Rooted in traditions of *santosha* (contentment), ethical responsibility, and spiritual interconnectedness, the Indian family fosters mutual care, shared purpose, and intergenerational growth. Unlike individualistic Western models, this collectivist framework ensures that personal fulfilment is inherently linked to the well-being of others, facilitating interwoven growth among all members.

Functioning as networks of emotional and practical support, Indian families align individual aspirations with communal well-being. This interconnectedness strengthens the emotional scaffolding necessary for resilience, enabling individuals to thrive within a context of shared values and responsibilities.

Indian traditions associate happiness with *ānanda* (bliss), which transcends material possessions and is cultivated through shared joy, meaningful dialogue, and emotional intimacy. *Shanti* (peace) is nurtured through intergenerational wisdom and respectful communication, fostering inner stability and clarity in decision-making. Familial ethics, grounded in *seva* (selfless service) and *dharma* (duty), reinforce the principle that individual achievements must contribute to collective flourishing.

The concept of *sampatti*—communal and spiritual prosperity—relies on values that promote interconnectedness and shared responsibility. Indian traditions emphasise that spirituality is not an isolated pursuit but a communal endeavour. Through ethical action and meaningful service, individuals become agents of societal well-being, affirming that personal fulfilment is inseparable from communal harmony.

Resilience as a Holistic and Transformative Process

Indian philosophical frameworks offer a comprehensive understanding of resilience that encompasses physical vitality, mental clarity, and spiritual depth. Health is not merely defined by the absence of illness but by a state of energetic balance, intuitive peace, and authenticity. Well-being, in this context, is achieved through alignment with one's true nature and the cultivation of conscious awareness (Arka, 2013).

Central to this approach is the concept of *abhyāsa*—regular, disciplined practice—which fosters stability, clarity, and continuous personal growth. Arka (2013) redefines resilience as more than endurance; it is the capacity to adapt with grace, remain grounded in one's inner being, and draw strength from deeper existential sources. This holistic perspective enables a sustained sense of flourishing, even amidst life's inevitable adversities.

Sanskrit Conceptions of Holistic Resilience: *Ārogyam*, *Nirāmaya*, *Swāsthyam*, and *Abhyāsa*

The Sanskrit concepts of *ārogyam*, *nirāmaya*, *swāsthyam*, and *abhyāsa* provide a comprehensive and integrative framework for understanding resilience as a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses physical, psychological, and spiritual domains. These terms reflect a sophisticated philosophical worldview in which strength is not merely defined by resistance to adversity, but by adaptive harmony, inner stability, and spiritual depth. Adopting this framework enables a more enduring and holistic understanding of human flourishing in the face of life's inevitable challenges.

Ārogyam

Derived from the Sanskrit roots (a+roga), a-(negation), and *roga* (disease), *ārogyam* is commonly translated as "freedom from disease." However, within classical Indian thought, this concept extends far beyond the absence of physical illness. In Ayurvedic philosophy, *ārogyam* denotes a state of dynamic equilibrium achieved through harmony with nature and alignment with one's inner self. It implies a proactive and balanced internal state that enables individuals to maintain health and withstand adversity. Thus, resilience, in this context, is not reactive but preventative and integrative.

Nirāmaya

Nirāmaya is often interpreted as "free from affliction or disorder," yet its deeper meaning encompasses holistic wellbeing across the body (*śarīra*), mind (*manas*), and spirit (*ātman*). Within Vedic and Ayurvedic traditions, *nirāmaya* signifies a state of undisturbed inner faculties, characterised by clarity, coherence, and tranquillity. It reframes resilience not as mere recovery or resistance, but as the sustained capacity to maintain internal harmony amidst external disruptions.

Swāsthyam

The term *swāsthyam* originates from *swa* (self) and *stha* (to be established) and is translated as "being established in the self." Unlike biomedical models of health, *swāsthyam* integrates spiritual and psychological dimensions. According to Ayurveda and Yoga, proper health is realised when the body is in balance, the mind is calm, the senses are functioning optimally, and the soul is content. In this framework, resilience is defined as the ability to remain anchored in one's authentic nature, regardless of environmental or emotional turbulence.

Abhyāsa

Abhyāsa, meaning "practice," "repetition," or "discipline," is a foundational concept in Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*. Sutra 1.12—*abhyāsa-*

vairāgyābhyāṁ tan-nirodhaḥ—emphasises the role of sustained practice and detachment in regulating mental fluctuations (Bryant, 2003). In the context of resilience, *abhyāsa* represents the disciplined cultivation of steadiness and equanimity. It underscores that resilience is not an innate trait but a cultivated capacity, developed through consistent and intentional effort over time.

Together, these Sanskrit constructs offer a profound redefinition of resilience—not as a static or reactive quality, but as a dynamic, cultivated state of being that integrates physical vitality, mental clarity, and spiritual depth. This holistic model of well-being offers a culturally rich and philosophically grounded perspective on promoting long-term well-being.
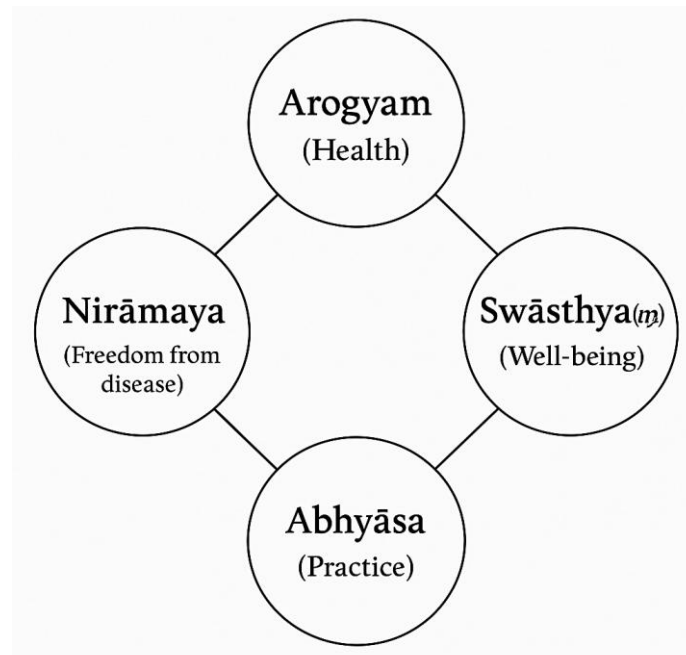

Figure 4: A Diagrammatic Representation of *Arogyam, Nirāmaya, Swāsthyam, and Abhyāsa*
Source: Created by the Authors

Positive emotions such as *sukha* (pleasure or happiness) serve as a critical bridge between resilience and human flourishing, reinforcing the understanding that well-being is a multidimensional construct encompassing both material and spiritual dimensions. The Indian philosophical tradition, which emphasises the harmonisation of these domains, offers a counter-narrative to Western materialist frameworks that often isolate well-being from its ethical and spiritual roots. Within this paradigm, resilience is not a singular pathway but a constellation of interrelated propositions that collectively foster human thriving:

- Coping through Crisis: Each encounter with adversity strengthens the individual, positioning resilience as a dynamic and developmental process integral to personal growth.

- Emergence of Meaning: Resilience facilitates the discovery of new patterns of meaning and value, deepening one's understanding of life and purpose.
- Spiritual Reflection in Adversity: Crises serve as catalysts for spiritual introspection, enabling individuals to transcend material concerns and engage with deeper existential questions.

The concept of *abhyāsa* (disciplined practice) as a spiritual exercise underscores resilience as a cultivated capacity. Insights from the Upanishads, which delineate both material and spiritual dimensions of happiness, enrich this understanding. Unlike Western perspectives, which often interpret material loss as a catalyst for spiritual reflection, Indian traditions promote equanimity and ethical engagement even in the midst of crisis (Nair, 1961).

Santosha and the Indian Family as a Site of Collective Flourishing

Indian traditions identify *santosha* (contentment) as a foundational principle of both individual happiness and communal stability. This value permeates familial relationships, shaping a cultural ethos in which emotional and spiritual well-being are prioritised over material success. Within the Indian family, *santosha* manifests through acceptance, gratitude, and mutual support, fostering emotional resilience and reinforcing a shared sense of harmony.

As discussed above, rooted in Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, *santosha* encourages individuals to find joy in the present moment rather than pursue external achievements. Indian families cultivate this principle by instilling appreciation for life's simple experiences, thereby deepening interpersonal bonds and sustaining mental peace.

In contemporary psychological discourse, the role of spirituality in fostering contentment and collective flourishing aligns with Western theories, such as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Theory of the 1970s and the concept of immersive engagement from the same era.[1] These frameworks suggest that deep involvement in intrinsically meaningful activities enhances well-being. Indian spiritual practices— such as meditation, yoga, and mindful living— facilitate such states, reinforcing the connection between purpose-driven engagement and inner fulfilment. Through spiritual immersion, individuals cultivate *santosha*, which in turn contributes to collective flourishing.

Sampatti and the Spiritual Ecology of Resilience

As previously discussed, we reiterate that the Indian family functions as an incubator for sampatti—a concept denoting holistic communal flourishing—where individual well-being is inseparable from collective harmony. Within this framework, resilience is not merely adaptive but also transformative.

Indian philosophical thought emphasises that enduring happiness arises from *ānanda* and *santosha*—states of inner peace and contentment—rather than transient material pleasures. Spiritual acceptance of life's impermanence cultivates emotional resilience and reinforces the view that true well-being is rooted in inner fulfilment.

Anecdotal Reflections: Aspirations and Adversity in Rural India

In *Blossoms in the Dust* (Nayar, 1961), researcher Kusum Nayar presents contrasting narratives from two villages—Halena and Dalena—that illustrate the emotional landscapes shaped by aspiration and adversity. A farmer from Halena gazes up at the sky with hope, expressing his longing for favourable weather and a good harvest, symbolising the connection between personal aspirations and the natural world. In contrast, a farmer from Dalena admires the beauty of the sky but is burdened by despair over crop failures and familial hardship.

These narratives underscore the complex interplay between resilience, environmental conditions, and emotional well-being. Halena embodies hope and communal strength, while Dalena reflects the weight of adversity and longing. Nayar's ethnographic insights reveal how *sukha*, as understood in Indian traditions, transcends Western interpretations of happiness, offering a more holistic pathway to collective flourishing.

By integrating Indian spiritual values with psychological insights, communities can cultivate environments of harmony, resilience, and enduring fulfilment. Spirituality, in this context, is not an individualistic pursuit but a foundational pillar of collective well-being. Practices such as yoga, meditation, and ethical living foster immersive states of engagement and inner peace, contributing to a resilient and flourishing society.

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Does not arise

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