

Emphasis on Family Vitality in GNH: A Study in Bangladesh Perspective

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Abstract

The article critically analyses how family value in Bangladesh is ignored for keeping its sole focus on gaining economic growth and reveals the relevance of the Bhutanese philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH) that suggests keeping a balance between development and value. In so doing, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies have been applied to collect the relevant data. A survey on twenty-five scholarly participants- teachers from universities and colleges, PhD and Mphil researchers, lawyers– has been conducted with structured questionnaires substantiated by qualitative interview of seven Social Science faculty members – five from Dhaka University and two from two different private Universities of Bangladesh- with semi- structured questionnaires. Moreover, a robust content analysis of the relevant secondary data i.e., books, articles, newspaper reports, have also been analyzed carefully to ensure the reliability and validity of the collected data. This study argues that Bhutan has been a glaring example of how both spiritual and material advancement can be ensured simultaneously that starts flourishing from a harmonious family relationship. And the study findings can be beneficial for the concerned policy makers of Bangladesh to adopt more effective and time-worthy policies to protect the country's declined social values in line with economic growth taking insights from Bhutan's GNH in different degrees.

Key Words: *Balance, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Family, GNH, Value.*

1. Introduction

Bangladesh, in recent years, has achieved advancement quite remarkably in different sectors and especially in economic fields. Moreover, the pace of economic growth amplified significantly when the country initiated a market-oriented economy (Ahmed, 2017, p.49) in the 1990s. The country's poverty rate and absolute poverty rate came down to 21.8 and 11.3 percent respectively (The Financial Express, 2019). This is, however, only one side of the coin of economic growth. In the midst of capitalist modernity, people seem to have turned their life into a machine where human beings, according to Marx, (1984, p.341) are used as mere parts of that machine. Material interest is now the base of developing any relationship. As such, social value is getting declined; family bondage is getting weaker and the alarming increase in the divorce rate in recent times is the immediate consequence of the disintegration of family values (Ahmed, 2017, p.50).

Western-based modernity is causing an adverse effect on our traditional values and we are going to develop a generation in whom individual contentment is the sole goal of their lives. Against the backdrop, we argue to look at the policies Bhutan has adopted to keep the pace of economic growth and preservation of indigenous values, especially family vitality, with parallel emphasis through its development philosophy of GNH. And this paper suggests policy-makers to include family harmony as a vital indicator in the state's development policy taking examples from GNH.

1.1 The rationale of the Research and Research Objectives

Family vitality is an inevitable part of community vitality. In GNH philosophy, family life is considered as of the most significant aspects to ensure the well-being of people. According to Aristotle, the ultimate goal of human life is happiness and human beings make a relentless journey to gain the desired happiness (Kesebir & Diener, 2008, p. 69). Family life promotes humanity among human beings and people learn the lessons of love, pity, sympathy, affection, and all the other humanitarian qualities like these from a harmonious filial atmosphere as Francis Bacon says:

“Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity” (Lall 1973, p.74)

Referring Gramsci who put emphasis family value highly, Michael Edwards (2004, p.49) considers family as the focal point of developing all sorts of values of life.

Development in economic capability is, no doubt, vital (Dreze&Sen, 2013, p.18) to meet the various needs of life. But the development of values and ethical practices are equally important (Tideman, 2011, p.141). Aristotle also opposes the search for infinite wealth (Karim, 2015, p.49). GNH puts utmost emphasis on this fundamental institution of human life. Research on GNH and its relevance on our social background, especially on strengthening family integration and its positive impact on every aspect of our life including the economic arena are absolutely relevant in the present context of Bangladesh. The study thus sheds light on the following objectives:

1. To understand GNH from human development perspective;
2. To analyze the effectiveness of GNH philosophy of family vitality in people's lives;
3. To demonstrate the present state of family disintegration in Bangladesh; and
4. To show the arguments for the relevancy of looking at the GNH policies of family vitality and practice them in Bangladesh to strengthen family value.

2. Literature Review

Reza & Molla (2019), in their research paper namely "BhutanerShamoshticJatioShukh: KalpakathaNakiVastabata"? have focused on the concept of happiness that Bhutan tries to ensure through its philosophy of GNH and analyzed the implication of GNH in uplifting the standard of living of people. The study shows that GNH is not an imagination but a reality that promotes people to advance economically and preserve their core values simultaneously. The continuous reduction of the poverty level bears testimony to GNH's effectiveness in Bhutan. The study, therefore, goes on arguing strongly to follow the principle like GNH in Bangladesh and emphasizes developing moral education of people and preserving social values. However, the issue of family value has remained almost untouched in the study whereas the family is first institution of providing moral education to children and as an institution, Tocqueville (1945) even considers the family as part of civil society (Edwards 2004,p.20).

Matin & Rahman (2018), in their research paper namely "Happiness in Readymade Garments Industry in Bangladesh: A Need Analysis" have focused on the state of life satisfaction of the workers of readymade garments in Bangladesh. The study tools were designed in the light of four pillars and nine domains of GNH and findings derived from the study provided a very poor picture of happiness of these

working people. The studied workers have exposed their dissatisfaction in terms of observing their traditional festivals, norms and values and are alienated from relationship and interaction within communities, family and friends. The study is however, conducted on a particular class of people and sheds light on various hardships that people belonging to this category suffer in their daily life. As such, the issue of family declination and the relevance of GNH policy of family vitality to strengthen family bondage along with economic prosperity is not touched in an expected scale.

R.Verma (2017), in her research paper namely “Gross National Happiness: Meaning, Measure and Degrowth in a Living Development Alternative” has considered GNH as a holistic development alternative that is not only congruent with degrowth, but a living example of it and with societal happiness as the primary lens for viewing human progress within planetary limits. GNH places socio-cultural, political-economic and spiritual-ecological wellbeing at the centre of national development. This paper, however, focuses mainly on challenges that GNH face in terms of globalization, geopolitics, and so on and suggests following the GNH philosophy to face the crisis in the modern era, especially ecological aspects. The discussion of how GNH policy of strengthening family integration should be evaluated as a development indicator is absent in this paper.

In their writings namely, “GNH – Community Vitality: Study of Growing Vegetables in Tabjee Village, DarlaGeog, Chuka, Dzongkhag, Bhutan”, K.T.Tshewang et.al (2013) have shown how the collective efforts like vegetable farming in Tabjee (a village in Bhutan) locality contributes in enhancing community vitality. The study shows that a harmonious relationship among community people that develops mainly from strong family relationships helps people to develop both intra and inter relationship, trust among the neighbors and the sense of belongings and this strong bondage promotes to raise their income level to improve their living standard. This study has surely been an encouraging one which indicates the importance of strengthening family bondage. But the study is conducted on the ground of Bhutanese atmosphere and the situation in Bangladesh is different to a large extent. More study is, therefore, needed on how Bangladesh can be benefitted taking lessons from Bhutan’s GNH in strengthening filial ties – the base of every development initiatives.

2.1 Concept of GNH and its Origin

The term “Gross National Happiness” though ‘was first coined by the 4th king of Bhutan J.S. Wangchuck, the concept has a much longer resonance in the Kingdom of Bhutan’ (Ura et.al. 2012, p.6). As per Mancall (2004), the root of GNH is inherent in the Buddhist philosophy of happiness that heartens people to enlighten inner self to overcome worldly miseries (Duncan, 2010, p.169). The obligation of the government to ensure happiness for every people is also mentioned in legal code of 1729 - the short constitution of Bhutan. In general, GNH is claimed to be coined by the king in the 1970s (Ibid); that became familiar on a large scale in the later decades. Specifically, in 1986, when the king’s philosophy ‘GNH is more important than GDP’ was captured in an interview in The Financial Times of London (GNH Survey Report, 2015). After that all sorts of development initiatives in Bhutan have predominantly been focused based on the philosophy of GNH (Ura et.al.2012, p.6). In 1999, the Centre for Bhutan Studies (CBS) was established and became the key promoter of GNH in academic discourse (Munro, 2016, p.79). Constitutionally GNH becomes the fundamental state policy in Bhutan.

There is however, no official definition on GNH but it usually signifies as development with value (Ura&Penjore, 2017). The definition as follows is widely used to manifest GNH: “Gross National Happiness (GNH) measures the quality of a country in more holistic way [than GDP] and believes that the beneficial development of human society takes place when material and spiritual development occurs side by side to complement and reinforce each other” (Ura, et.al.2012,p.7). In short, GNH refers to form a society that works collectively to achieve happiness (Ura, 2009) and aims at making balance between material prosperity and spiritual development.

2.2 Pillars, domains and indicators of GNH

GNH rested on four pillars initially – sustainable and equitable socio-economic development; environmental conservation; preservation and promotion of culture; and good governance (Tenth Five-Year Plan). Later it is rearranged into nine domains – psychological wellbeing, health, time use, education, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality, ecological diversity and resilience, living standard. Four earlier pillars of GNH are integrated with the later developed nine

domains (Ura, et.al.2012, pp.7-8). Each of the nine domains and their 33 indicators of GNH are interdependent and possess strong linkage and connectivity with each other and among themselves.

Community vitality is one of the most innovative domains of GNH (Ibid, p. 8) which keeps focus on how to strengthen the integration among people living in the society. The centre of attention here is to observe the state of bondage among family members; level of interaction among neighbors and practice of voluntary activities among them (GNH Survey Report, 2015). Community vitality refers to a state of bondage among people of a particular community where each one of them stands beside each other in a harmonious relationship (Ura, et.al.2012, p.28). There are four indicator of community vitality where family bondage is the most dynamic driving force (Kuensel,2018) and the rest three indicators are social support, community bondage, and perceived safety (Ura, et.al.2012,pp.28-30). A harmonious family relationship is the root of developing social capital (Fukuyama, 2000, p.99) that encourages people to act altruistically with each other for their common interests in different ways that has been beneficial for the society at large. GNH society emphasizes profoundly on this very vital aspect of human life and adopts state policies keeping the importance of strengthening family values in mind. The policy makers keep a keen eyes on whether the exertion of economic progress poses any threat on family bonding as it does in western countries. D. Penjore (2018), the chief researcher of CBS, said that the modernization resulted in the declination of community development and Bhutan is also a victim of the illusive touch of capitalist modernization (Kuensel, 2018). And thus GNH Index –a measurement system of people’s wellbeing – is introduced that makes survey in every five year on the performance of each of the indicators of nine domains (Ura et.al.2012,p.1) where family vitality is put emphasis to justify whether the policies of economic advancement causes any negative effect on family harmony and at large on community connectivity.

3. Research Methodology

The study is quite comparative in nature for which both qualitative and quantitative methodologies have been applied to collect the relevant data. To make the study an

empirical one both primary and secondary data have been collected. As far as primary data is concerned, the study has been conducted taking interview of seven Social Science faculty members - five from Dhaka University and two from two different private Universities of Bangladesh with semi-structured questionnaires. One of the authors of the study is also a senior Social Science faculty member of Dhaka University which facilitates the research team in selecting the scholars who possess vast knowledge on Bhutan affairs as well as on the issue of social values in Bangladesh. Their views, we firmly believe, are highly reliable and can surely add value to the study. One among them has also visited Bhutan and possesses practical knowledge on the socio-cultural aspects on Bhutan. The study has kept utmost care in maintaining the ethical issues. The participants were reluctant to identify their names and for that the Alpha-Numeric Code number has been applied in terms of analyzing their views. In this case, the Faculty Members of Social Science at the University of Dhaka have been coded as FMSC1, FMSC2, FMSC3, FMSC4, FMSC5, and Faculty Members of Private Universities are coded as FMPU1, and FMPU2.

Moreover, a relatively short but empirical survey with structured questionnaires has been arranged where the number of researchers is twenty five but they are well concerned with the very issue of the paper. Having said that the concept of GNH is still quite an unfamiliar concept even to the educated people in Bangladesh, the researchers have decided to look more on quality than quantity in selecting the participants who have satisfactory knowledge on GNH and thus university teachers, Mphil and PhD researchers, college teachers having social science background have been purposively prioritized as the participants in the survey. The questionnaires have been sent to the participants by mail with clear instructions on how to answer the selected questions and by the same way, they have sent their responses through mail. As a survey method, it is a very effective tool in research work in terms of time, cost, and respondents get convenient time and space to answer the asked questions and it has less chance of bias for the respondents (Islam, 2015, pp.205-206). Here, Table-1 shows the type of scholarly respondents we have selected for the survey.

Table 1. Sample size

Type of Respondents	Number of Respondent
Teachers (University)	6
Teachers (College)	3
Researchers (PhD)	5
Researchers (Mphil)	7
Lawyer (Supreme Court)	1
Government Employee (Social Welfare Division)	1
Others	2
Total	25

Secondary sources are published books, research works, periodicals, journals, and newspaper reports. Moreover, literature found from different sources both on GNH and the present state of family disintegration in Bangladesh due to people's relentless journey to gain material riches and illusion to modern luxury have been carefully analyzed.

4. Findings of the Study

4.1 Family Vitality in Bangladesh

'Development with values'- this very principle, practiced in Bhutan through GNH, is ignored to a great extent in Bangladesh at present. The capitalist philosophy of economic growth that does not count intangible values (Tideman, 2011, p.136) has deeply penetrated in the mind of modern people in Bangladesh. The capitalist modernity seems to snatch away all the emotional touches from the mind of the people where material interest is the key factor of developing any relationship as Marx and Engels state:

"The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation"(1970,p.38)

4.2 Consequence of Family Disintegration in People's lives

The state of family disintegration and its immediate and farsighted results in the lives of people in Bangladesh have keenly been focused in the following deliberations. And table 2, cited below, highlights the core points of those deliberations which strengthen our point of focusing so highly in GNH philosophy of family vitality as a development indicator and its relevance in the present context of Bangladesh.

Table 2: *Impact of GNH Factors in different age-group of peoples' lives*

Type of Family Member	Age Group	External Factors that affect GNH	Internal Factors that affect GNH	Scholarly Ref.
Women (Wives , Mothers and Daughters)	17-35-35	Financial issues, society, artificial needs, social mobility and economic capability, workplace, high expectation of career development, excessive abuses of modern devices,	Marriage, divorce, separation, abandonment, literacy & education, conjugal relationship, , marital instability, mistrust towards husbands,	Afroz, S. (2019) Ahmad, R., Molla, M. A. M. (2017); Ahmed, N. (2007) Hossain, M.; Ghose, S. (2018); Ahmed, S. (2017);Ahmed, S. (2017); Hossain, M., Ghose, S. (2018); Khan, N. T., Begum, A., Chowdhury, T. M. J., Das, B. K., Shahi, F. S., Kabir, S., Begum, M. (2017);Matin, W. M., Rahman, M. (2018);Rahman, M. M., Giedraitis, V. R., Akhtar, M. T.

Children	0-11	Deprivation of basic needs like food, housing, education ,treatment and so on,	Loneliness, lack of care, confinement in four-walls,	(2013);Rahman, S. M. (2018); Choudhury, H. (2017), Furstenberg, F. F. and Kiernan, K. E. (2001), Rahman, K. M. A. (2014),
Teenager	12-19	Excessive illusion to fantasy, drug addiction, attraction to negative applications of satellite channels,	Lack of family touch, casualty to practice own values at homes, lack of monitoring and control	Ahmed ,S.(2017)
Men (Husbands, Fathers & Brothers)	25-40	Excessive pressure of life, career development, addiction to modern devices ,	Lack of trust towards female partners, anxiety ,extra marital relationship	Ahmed, S. (2017), Kalmijn, M. M, and W. Unk,(2007) Popenoe, D. and Whitehead, R. D. (2010);
Grand-parents	60 above	Lack of social security, earning incapability,	family-disorientation, consideration as family burden	The Daily Sun (2018);

4.2.1 Women

Family disintegration though exempts none women, however, have usually to tolerate the pangs of sufferings of every consequence. Lack of trust between the couple, mainly due to the extramarital relation, ignorance towards women, goal of career development etc. leads the marriage into an unstable condition. Rate of divorce in Bangladesh has increased in an alarming way in the last few years (The Daily Star, 2018). In her

interview with the authors one of the interviewees said “Trust is the key to develop relationship which is clearly missing among the couple in the recent times and this is frightening as apart from the couple, it affects on children and other family members and the society at large has to suffer for it in different degrees - socially, culturally, politically, economically” (FMSC2).

Divorce, separation, abandonment are no more confined to among poor and illiterate classes as had commonly been observed in the past. Educated and economically solvent women now are more likely to apply to get divorce (Hossain & Ghose, 2018) to get relief from continuous physical and mental tortures of the husbands and their family members. Divorce or separation, nevertheless, releases women from a painful state but women both educated and illiterate have to suffer from economic hardship. Educated women suffer more from mental distress which affects their mobility and economic capability. Illiterate women, on the other hand, become absolutely hopeless, as they lose the roof over their heads. After divorce, most women usually come back to their parents but the situation becomes more catastrophic if the parents are poor or dead and there is no system of institutional support for the divorced women and their children to provide economic assistance to them in Bangladesh (Khaleque, 2011, p.57). Divorced women are even considered as ‘bad women’ and many of them are publicly ridiculed and face social exclusion (Rahman et al. 2013, p.30). One of the interviewees remarked “The male dominated social structure is hardly sympathetic towards women and they have to face the agony of divorce in the most pathetic ways throughout their lives.” (FMSC4). And, no doubt, loss of family bonding, works as the root cause behind all these disorders and anarchies in the society especially against women.

4.2.2 Children

The effects of family disharmony are more devastating in the lives of children and in most cases they become extremely aggressive and suffer from mental disorders (Furstenberg & Kiernan, 2001). Children in many families grow up alone mostly under the care of the servants and pass their time mostly with modern technologies. One of the interviewees said “Children are growing up observing the distrust among their elders which can cause a profound negative impact on them. They also feel encouraged to maximize material gains hardly thinking of the interests of others and

the lack of trust is clearly apparent in the socio- political cultures of Bangladesh because people develop the primary practice of democracy- tolerance, integration, sharing etc- from a harmonious family atmosphere” (FMSC1). Modern technologies and their rampant misuses have already created a narcissistic generation. Children hardly get any favorable environment to develop their moral values for the lack of company at homes of their parents (Rahman, 2014, p.4). Eminent ENT specialist of Bangladesh Dr. Professor Pran Gopal Datta says in a seminar that face book stimulates people especially teenagers to be addicted in the way as people get addicted to other drugs like cocaine.

Study report shows that most of the drug addicts are teenagers (The Daily Star, 2013) and the number of arrests of teenagers for taking drugs have alarmingly increased in the last few years (The Daily Star, 2020). The emergence of the young gang has been a tremendous threat for social stability. The root causes of all these moral disorders of the children are somewhat the losses of family values (Shazzad et.al. 2014). One of the interviewees remarked, “People seem to have no time to share with others. Parents miss the interactions of their children in daily lives. Children like to spend times alone with the modern devices in luxury in their isolated rooms at homes” (FMSC3).

4.2.3 Men

Men, being the principal member in the family, in the social context of Bangladesh have the key role to maintain the family bonding. But in the pursuit of gaining name, fame, money, wealth, they tend to forget the basic components of social capital (Ahmed, 2019, p.44). Temptation towards living into a virtual world pushes them to be involved with extramarital relationships and the practice of illicit relations results to put an end of their marital relation (Potoari, 2020, p.26). Again, due to social media, mistrust is developing between husband and wife (The Independent, 2018) and many divorces are happening due to the use of Face book (Ahmed, 2017, p. 50). In his interview with the authors one of the interviewees said “Western and Indian cultures have deeply penetrated in the very mentality of modern people in Bangladesh which allure people to maximize material gain and people are gradually getting themselves detached from their own values” (FMSC5). Divorce affects badly on the life style of a man and leads

him towards utmost frustration (Kalmijn&Unk, 2007). One of the interviewees said “In many cases, men are suspicious about their working wives. It weakens their bondage and leads them towards the termination of their relationship” (FMPU1). Children who live with their fathers after the divorce of their parents, in turn, increase tension and anxiety to the fathers, as they alone fail to manage them. Out of frustration and anger, many of them misbehave with their children. Moreover, if they remarry, the step mothers, in most cases, treat negatively with those children. In many cases, they become more susceptible to illness mentally (Ahmed, 2007) and unable to restore their impaired personality which affects their concentration of work (Rahman, 2018).

4.2.4 Old People

Old people’s role has extremely been crucial in terms of maintaining family as well as community integration as they contribute profoundly to bring all the family members under the same umbrella. But in the changing context, most of the elderly people are utterly neglected. The number of old homes is increasing rapidly and majority number of people in old homes come from educated and solvent classes and the basic reasons are the declination of family bonding and loss of moral and spiritual qualities of people as 67% old people state that no one take care of them at homes (The Daily Sun, 2018). One of the of the interviewees said “The growth oriented policy hardly encourages people to count for non-paid works like care, love, affection and old people in most cases become the victims of the newly penetrated modern cultures in Bangladesh” (FMPU2). These people who have used all of their energies to enhance peace and happiness for the families, fail to get a place in the large flats of their children and in the capitalist sense of intangible value, they are useless as they are unable to contribute any more from a materialistic point of interest. As per Professor DR NurunNabi, Population scientist of Bangladesh, in the present trend of nuclear families parents have hardly any room, let alone grandparents (Ibid).

4.3 GNH Survey Reports

Two surveys on GNH have already been done in 2010 and 2015 respectively. GNH Survey 2010, operated on 7142 people living in all the 20 districts of Bhutan including representatives from almost all sections of the country shows that 89.6% people are

somehow happy – ‘narrowly’, ‘extensively’, or ‘deeply’- and 10.4% were unhappy (shown in table 3) (Ura et al 2012,p. 2).

Table 3: 2010 GNH Index

	Percentage of people who are
Deeply Happy	8.3%
Extensively Happy	32.6%
Narrowly Happy	48.7%
Unhappy	10.4%

In terms of family vitality, ninety –two per cent people express their satisfaction in maintaining their family bonding (Ibid, p. 30). Again operated on 7153 people in 2015, including people in the similar fashion, the survey report shows that people’s standards of livings are getting better. Across different groups within Bhutan, The GNH Index grew significantly 2010-2015- from 0.743 to 0.756 (Shown in table 4) (GNH Survey Report, 2015).

Table 4: 2015 GNH Index

	Percentage of people who are
Deeply Happy	8.4%
Extensively Happy	35.0%
Narrowly Happy	47.9%
Unhappy	8.8%

The state of family vitality is quite outstanding. 67% of people viewed that they have shared a considerable time with their family; 87% have mentioned the practice of

good understanding in the family; 94.8% have revealed comfort in company with the families; and 96.2% reported the caring mentality of the family members (Ibid). People's eagerness towards showing love and respect to their families and communities have also been found in almost the same dimension in the other studies conducted by scholars outside from Bhutan (Monaco,2016, Mancall,2004,Munro,2016). The impact of family integration causes a profound positive impact in their social life. From the survey, it is shown that 85% people to some extents believe their neighbours; 61.7% people respond positively in terms of enjoying political freedom; nearly 92% people are interested to cast vote in the elections and 4% people only have expressed to be the victims of crime (Ura et al 2012,pp.26-30).Whereas people from many countries are relentlessly fighting to establish democracy, the King of Bhutan has taken the leading role to empower people by introducing the Parliamentary system in the country (Reza & Molla,2019,p.8).

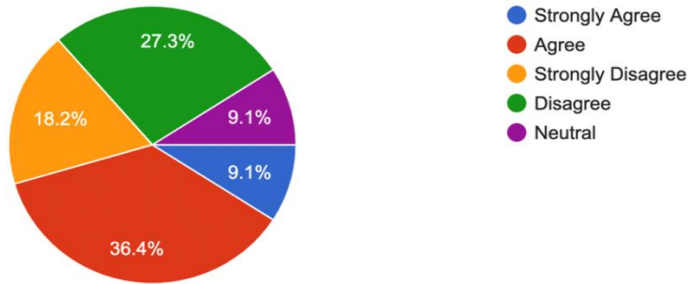
Since the first Parliamentary elections occurred in 2008 (Monaco,2016,p.3), Bhutan gradually has been on the way of democratization resulting in spite being nascent, in democratic practice, Bhutan ranks better remarkably in 65 position according to the V-Dem report 2021 whereas Bangladesh and India rank 146 and 93 positions respectively (V-Dem 2022). And, no doubt, social capital – whose root is in family bondage- has had a significant impact behind the success. One of the interviewees remarked “I have the experience of visiting Bhutan. People love and respect their own distinctive culture and like to share with others which promote social capital and obviously family plays a very vital role behind developing the social integration” (FMSC1). In the same tone, another interviewee said “ Democracy needs tolerance and mutual understanding which people learn from social integration and these features are deeply inherent in most of the people in Bhutan as they are influenced by Buddhism that promotes people to keep equal focus both on material and spiritual needs ”(FMSC3).

4.4 Short Survey Outcome

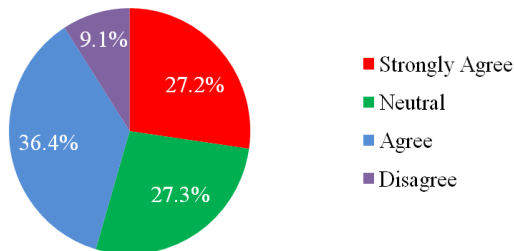
Researchers have done a short survey besides some qualitative focused description-oriented observation in Bangladesh to comprehend the meaningful outcome of the GNH issue of Bangladesh and to have a projection of a comparison -benchmarking dimension regarding this scenario. Researchers have received information from 25

participants in this study. The interesting findings came out from the survey where majority participants somehow reveal the relevance of GNH philosophy of family value in Bangladesh considering Bhutan more a peaceful country than Bangladesh. Responses = 25.

Do you think Bangladesh is a Happy Nation?

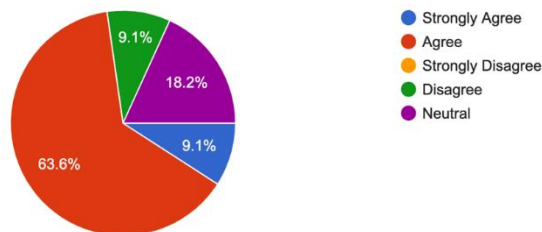


Do you think Bhutan is a Happy Nation?



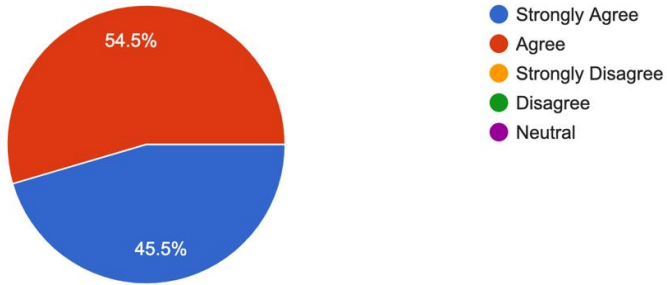
Do you think young couple in Bangladesh are getting divorced ?

11 responses



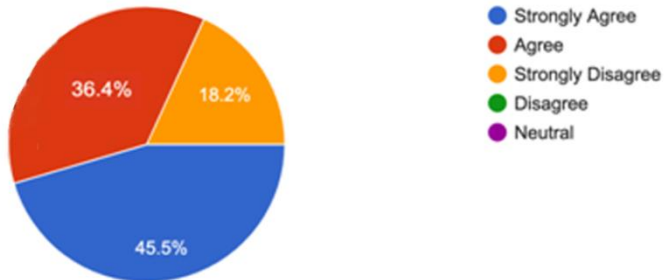
Do you think there can be a balance maintained in GDP and GNH?

11 responses



Do you think GNH can be a matter of high priority in Bangladesh?

11 responses



The survey was conducted on structured questionnaire and the survey results are explained in the below.

Table 5: Percentage% Distribution of Survey

Participants' Stance	BD Family Life	Happy Bhutan Family Life	Young People getting divorced in BD	Scope of balance between GDP and GNH?	of	Can GNH be of high priority in BD?
Agrees	45.5%	27.2%	63.6%	54.5	%	45.5%
	Agrees	Strongly agrees, 36.4%	Agrees, 9.1% strongly agrees	Agrees, 45.5%	Strongly Agrees,	Strongly Agrees, 36.4%
Disagrees	36.4%	9.1%	9.1%	0%		18.1%
	Disagrees		Disagrees			Strongly Disagrees
Neutral	18.2%	Stays 27.3%	18.2%	0%		0%
	Neutral		Neutral			

Outcome of the survey is that 81%9 participants are in favor of putting emphasis on GNH philosophy of family value in Bangladesh and 72%7 respondents expressed their views regarding the alarming divorce rates of the couples in Bangladesh in the recent times. Moreover, 54%5 respondents expressed their views to make a balance between GDP and GNH. The survey outcomes from the absolutely learned participants of the country, therefore, reveal the relevance of including GNH philosophy of family vitality as development indicator to restrain Bangladesh from serious family disharmony.

5. Discussion

The analysis of the interviewees and survey findings provide some significant insights on the Bhutanese love towards social integration and the society at large enjoys the benefits of that social capital that starts from a harmonious family connectivity. In Bangladesh, on the contrary, there are, of course, reasons to be concerned in different dimensions and Bangladesh can be beneficial taking insights from Bhutan's development philosophy of GNH.

Firstly, both material and spiritual development are necessary and family works as the first institution of developing the basic practice of spirituality among children. In so doing, the family members care each other which develop trust and confidence among themselves. The impact of family trust promotes them to trust their neighbours and the study findings show that most of the Bhutanese have trust on their neighbours. In case of Bangladesh, the family harmony is getting seriously declined in the recent times which escape none. Old people are in a dire state of hopelessness; children are growing up in an unhealthy surrounding due to the unhappy relation of the parents; and many teenagers are getting involved with different sorts of anti – social activities.

The Bhutanese are peace lovers and believe that in line with economic advancement, integration with other people and practice of their own distinctive cultures are equally important for the contentment in life. The western culture that mostly counts material gain has deeply penetrated in the mentality of the majority people in Bangladesh. People are running relentlessly to gain more and even at home they are busy for their own works. They hardly have any time to share and out of frustration people often involved with illegal relationship resulting the alarming rate of divorce in the recent times in Bangladesh. Development of social integration is now the demand of time and most of the participants have asked to look at how the Bhutanese practice their family and community bondage keeping equal focus on material and spiritual needs.

Within a relatively very short time, Bhutan has advanced quite remarkably in developing their democratic institutions. Since 2008, three Parliament elections have been occurred without almost any sort of violence. The culture of trust that they learn from their family atmosphere, also promote them to keep trust on others in a large scale. In Bangladesh, lack of trust among political actors is clearly apparent. All the elections- national and local- are afflicted with serious violence. And obviously, declination of social integration is a vital factor behind this mistrust among the political parties in Bangladesh for which a significant number of participants have asked for making a balance between GDP and GNH.

Merely money cannot ensure happiness in human life. We have already had a narcissistic generation. It has been felt more when the capitalist products of self-centered children are leaving their old parents on the street during the corona epidemic to save themselves. The number of ‘young gang’ has become an alarming issue for

the country and the root cause of which is the declination of family bondage. This individualistic character reminds us Shakespeare's creation of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* who represents the modern materialistic society where money is even more important than children. As Shylock states:

"I would my daughter were dead at my foot and the jewel in her ear; would she were hearsed at foot and the ducats in her coffin" (Shakespeare, 2018,p. 144).

The preceding analysis clearly reveals that focus on family bonding with highest attention is an inalienable demand at the present context of Bangladesh and money thus appears to be useless if we fail to strengthen our family tie and in so doing, we need to look at our home first .And here lies the significance of studying the principle of family vitality of GNH in Bangladesh.

6. Conclusion

In summing up, respect and ignorance towards practicing social values respectively in Bhutan and Bangladesh has almost clearly been reflected in the preceding analysis. The two countries – Bangladesh and Bhutan – no doubt, differ remarkably in diverse extents as Bhutanese society is influenced by Buddhist beliefs, Bangladesh is a Muslim dominated country followed by Hinduism. However, Islam is firmly considered as religion of peace, harmony, rapprochement and so are Hinduism. The basic point is how people practice their values with love and respect.

And finally, whatever the variations are, the basic goal of every state is the same and that is to boost up the spirit of peace and happiness for every individual which can never be achieved ignoring family values. As a densely populated country, the task is, no doubt, more challenging for Bangladesh to keep balance between the pace of economy and persisting values but this more challenge necessitates more focus on family value because economic progress goes in vain if we fail to ensure contentment in human life. This is what we have so far tried to argue, and this is why the variables of family vitality in GNH are so relevant at present in Bangladesh. We must keep in mind that peace at home pales the peace of heaven (Khair, 2008, p.39) and we can enjoy that heavenly pleasure looking at how GNH advocates making a balance between development and values. A moral revolution is, therefore, needed 'with a vision of plain living and simple thinking imparting to the posterity through our

education system and social movement' (Ahmed, 2017, p.53). Along with Three 'R'- Reading, Writing and [A]rithmetic - 4th'R' – Religion – is needed (Choudhury, 2018, p.117). Otherwise 5th 'R' – Rascality – would appear that would demolish the social structure of Bangladesh. And for that we can conclude with what Shakespeare has stated in As You Like It where we find the reflection of GNH to a significant extent:

“Who doth ambition shun?
And loves to live i' th'sun.
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleas'd with what he gets” (Shakespeare, 1996, p.52).

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