

# Happiness Slipping Away: Unhappy India

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## ABSTRACT

Happiness and wellbeing are one of the major aspects of having a quality of life. Happiness may help combat stress, increase immunity, protects from various heart diseases, and also reduce pain. In World Happiness Report 2021 But in the case of India happiness is slipping away. In world happiness Report 2021 India's rank is found to be 139 out of 149 countries which are worse than our neighboring countries. India has dropped down from 117th position in 2015 to 140th till 2020 drastically. Gallup's World Poll has been a prime source for the global data on life's satisfaction rankings of the countries and released in World Health Report. There are 8 indicators and the sum of those 8 indicators used for scoring for the ranking of countries in World Happiness Report. From all the indicators that are responsible for the world happiness score, in the case of India, Dystopia (1.85) + residual is a major indicator that effects India's score and ranking in world happiness report from 2015 to 2021.

**KEYWORDS:** World Happiness Report, India, Happiness, Dystopia, Downfall, WHI, WHR

## INTRODUCTION

Happiness and wellbeing are one of the major aspects of having a quality of life. It is always said that true happiness leads to healthy life and success. But why is it important to measure happiness on a scale? John F. Helliwell (Chief Editor, World Health Report) in an interview said, "When something is important, it needs to be measured on a comparable basis across the countries." Since the launch of the World Happiness Report in 2012, it illustrate that well-being and happiness are the most critical indicators for the economic and social development of the nation.

Gallup's World Poll has been a prime source for the global data on life's satisfaction rankings of the countries and released in World Health Report. To track the information for happiness, the statistics indicators to be measured are GDP per capita, well-being, freedom of choice, household incomes, and unemployment which aim towards the understanding of the association between the Happiness index and the factors contributing to the World Happiness Report.

In World Happiness Report 2021 India's rank is found to be 139 out of 149 countries which are worse than our neighboring countries like Pakistan,

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. Even the countries like South Korea with one of the highest suicide rates, countries like Niger, Madagascar, Democratic Republic of Congo, etc with the poorest countries in the world with very few medical and food supplies are performing better than India in World Happiness Report. India has dropped down from 117th position in 2015 to 140th till 2020. The aim of this article is to analyze the declining ranking of India on World Happiness Index and the reason for this constant fall.

## Methodology

Secondary data analysis is being done for this study to address the concern about falling of India's ranking in the World Happiness report every year.

Data was taken from World Happiness report 2015 to World happiness report 2020 from online sites. Past trends were observed from which various graphs and charts were constructed accordingly.

Several relevant research papers and articles were collected online and studied to come to a conclusive analysis.

**How to cite this paper:** Tanuj Kaushik | Nikita Bisht "Happiness Slipping Away: Unhappy India" Published in International

Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-6 | Issue-1, December 2021, pp.1489-1494,

URL: [www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd48034.pdf](http://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd48034.pdf)



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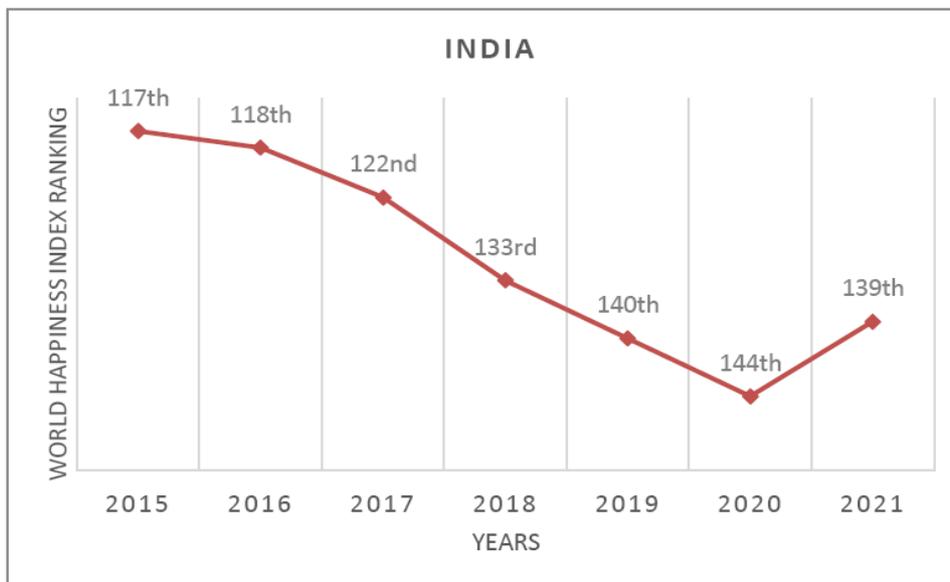


Various indicators and factors were taken into consideration to find the cause of the poor ranking of India on the World Happiness Report.

**RESULTS**

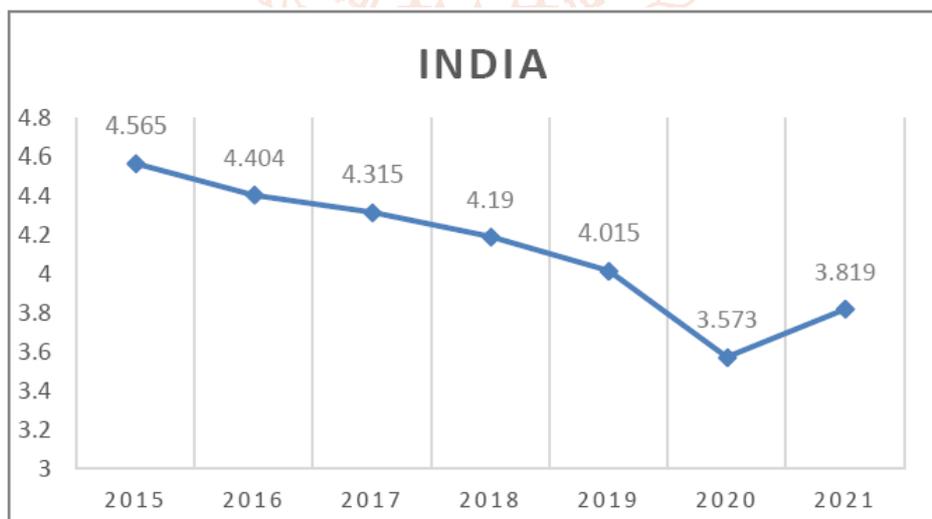
According to World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021 India’s ranking has been fallen down drastically while countries like Finland, Ireland, and Denmark hold their positions in the top 5 consistently. From Fig: 1 it can observe the downfall in the ranking of India from 117th in 2015, 118th in 2016, 122nd in

2017, 133rd in 2018, 140th in 2019, and lowest at 144th in 2020, but the improvement can be seen in 2021 with uplifting in ranking to 139th. The country participated in world happiness reports are 158, 157, 155, 156, 153, and 149 in the year 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2021 respectively. India’s ranking downgraded from 117th to 144th from 2015 to 2020 but countries like Benin shows improvement in their ranking from 155th to 86th in the same period of time



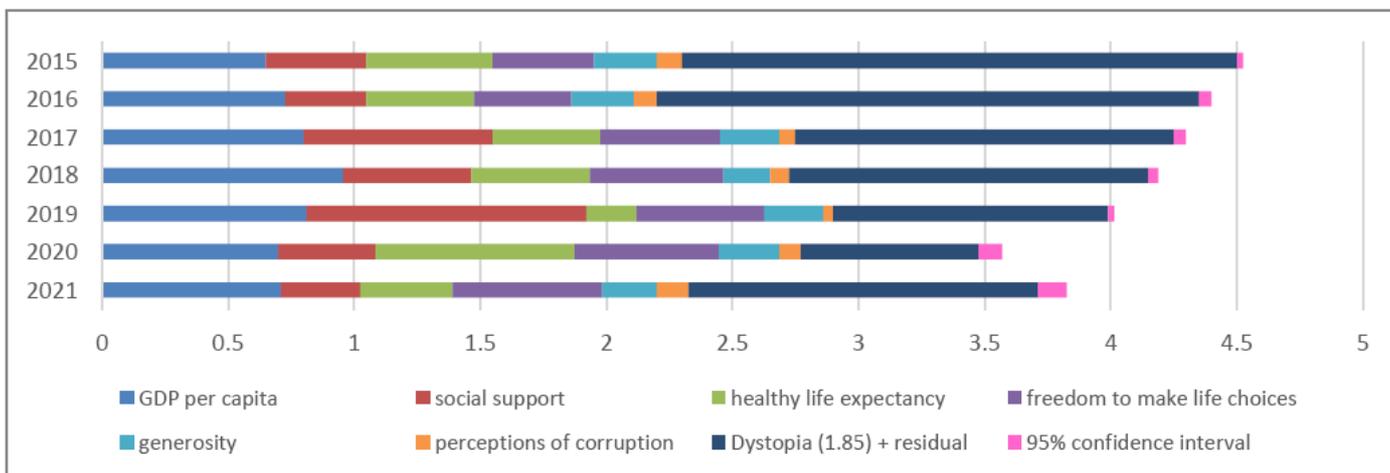
**(Fig 1: India’s ranking on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)**

The ranking system in World happiness report is done by the ladder system, where the country has been scored on the ladder from 1 – 10. The score is calculated from the sum of 8 indicators via the ladder method which means the greater the sum the higher the country is on the ladder (scale of 1- 10), and higher on the ladder resulting in a higher ranking for example countries like Finland, Denmark, Ireland, Iceland, etc. always have the score of 8+ on the ladder, therefore, they are always on the top of World Happiness Report.



**(Fig 2: India’s score on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)**

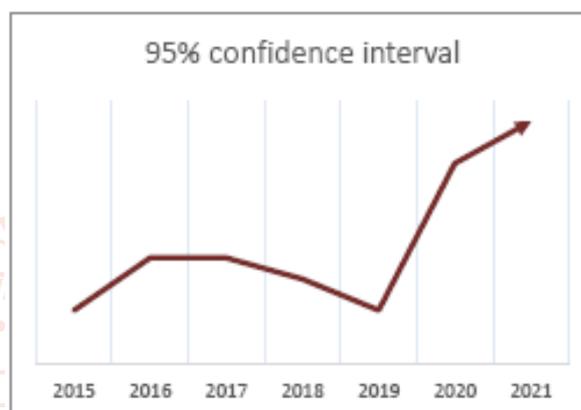
From Fig: 2 it can be observed the consistently falling slope in the graph of scoring of happiness, the score from 4.565 in 2015 has been dropped to 3.573 in 2020 with a slight improvement of 0.246 in the following year. Year-wise ranking of happiness of India is shown in Fig: 3 collected from the World Happiness Report 2015 to 2021 showing the score of every year with each indicator i.e. GDP per capita, Social Support, Healthy Life Expectancy, Freedom to make life choices, generosity, perceptions of corruption, Dystopia (1.85) + residual and 95% Confidence interval according to world happiness report.



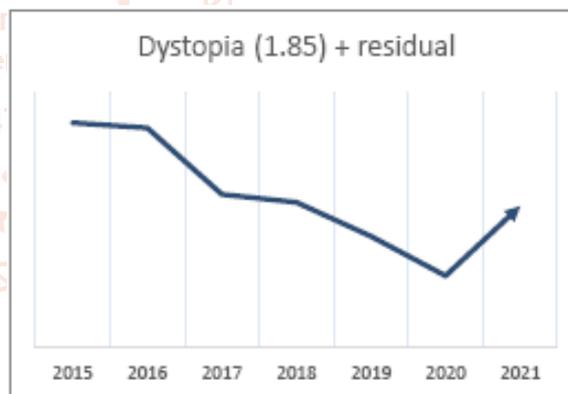
**(Fig 3: India’s score on Happiness ladder on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)**

As discussed above there are 8 indicators and the sum of those 8 indicators used for scoring for the ranking of countries in World Happiness Report from 2015 to the present. The first indicator is GDP per capita (Fig: 11), in India the peak is shown in 2018 while the years 2020 and 2021 are slightly better than the year 2015. The second indicator is Social Support (Fig:9), in India the highest score was obtained in the year 2019 and the second highest in the year 2017 with the least in 2021, while a drastic fall of 65% (approx) was seen in the year 2020. The third indicator is Healthy life expectancy (Fig:10), in India the slope seems uniform until the sudden drop in 2019 and then a sudden peak in 2020 which shows the best score in healthy life expectancy from the year 2015 to 2021 in World Happiness report. The next indicator is Freedom to make Life Choices (Fig:8), in India this indicator shows consistent growth with a slight downfall in the year 2019 but the best scores were seen in the year 2021 following by the year 2020. The next indicator is the Perception of corruption (Fig:6), in India this shows overall improvement from 2015 to the best in 2021, with the worst score on the ladder in the year 2019. The sixth indicator is Generosity (Fig:7), in India Generosity seems to decrease gradually but we can see the sudden fall of 22% (approx) in the year 2018 with the sudden rise of 27% (approx) in the next year.

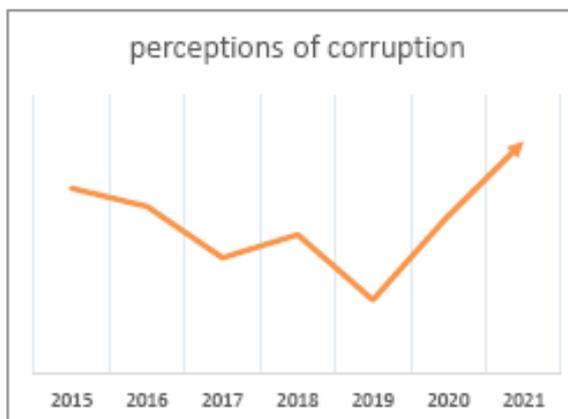
The most dominating indicator in India’s ranking over the years is Dystopia(1.85) + residual (Fig:5), the graph of Dystopia (1.85) + residual of India shows exact replica of the total scoring of India’s happiness Index, the drastic fall from 2015 to 2020 and a little uplift in 2021. The last indicator is the 95% confidence interval (Fig:4), in India, this shows a parabola graph from 2015 to 2019 and then a sudden boost up with the peak in 2021.



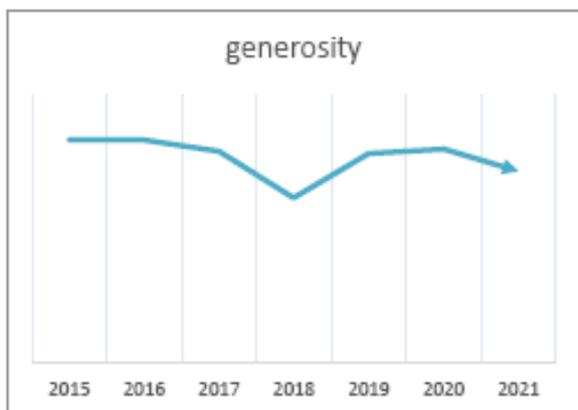
**(Fig 4: 95 % Confidence interval of India on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)**



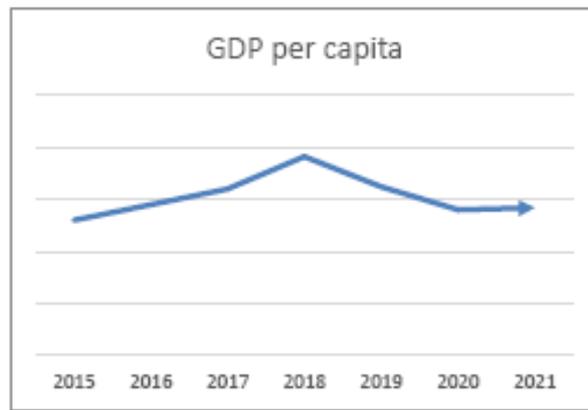
**(Fig 5: Dystopia (1.85) + residual of India on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)**



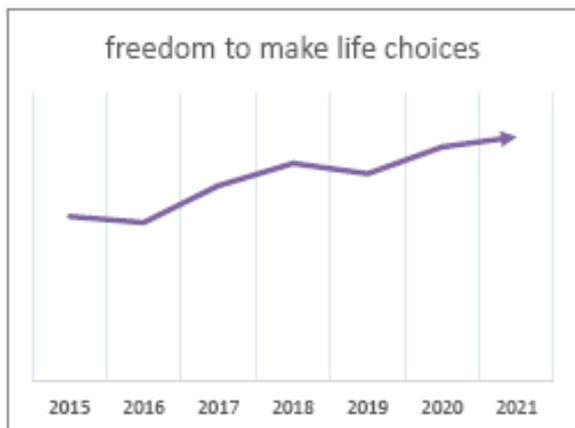
**(Fig 6: Perception Of Corruption of India on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)**



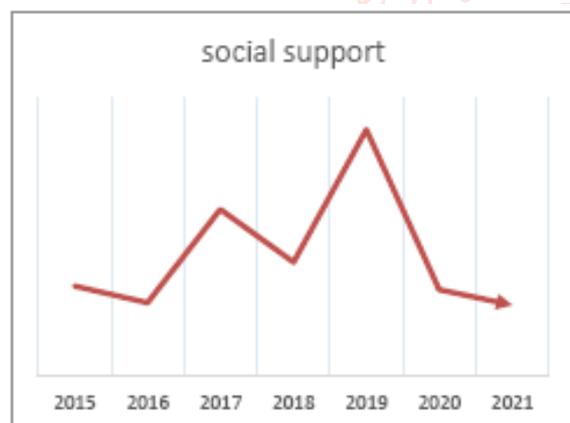
(Fig 7: Generosity of India on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)



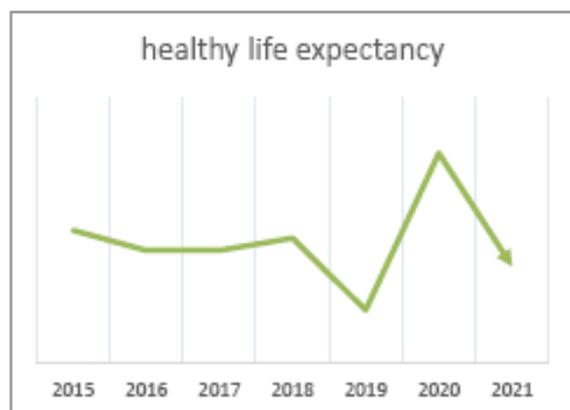
(Fig 11: GDP per Capita of India on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)



(Fig 8: Freedom to make Life Choice Of India on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)



(Fig 9: Social Support of India on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)



(Fig 10: Healthy Life Expectancy of India on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)

### DISCUSSION

Dystopia is considered as a hypothetical country where the world's least happy people live and this country act as a benchmark and compared against all the countries in term of each six factors (levels of GDP, life expectancy, generosity, social support, freedom, and corruption) which allows each sub bar to be zero or positive width. Therefore the country with all the 6 sub bars at its minimum i.e. lowest level of GDP, least life expectancy, minimum generosity, lowest social support, no freedom, and very high corruption is considered as "Dystopia" in other words totally inverse of utopia.

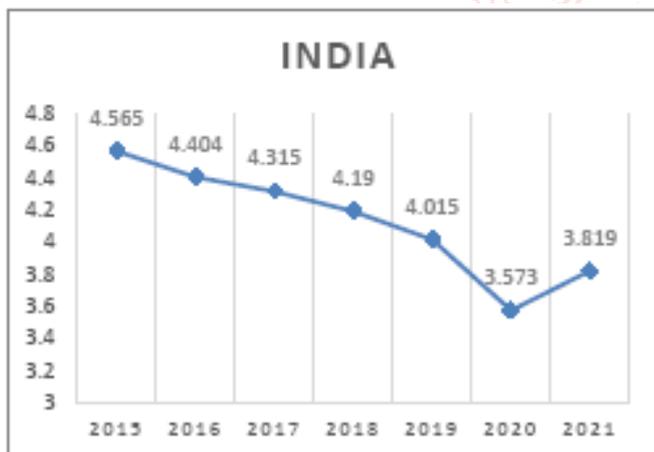
For explanation of How to calculate sub bars of each six factors? Let's take Table 2.1 from World Happiness Report 2020, all the six factors can be seen. According to World Happiness Report 2020 'Taking the example of healthy life expectancy, the sub-bar in the case of Tanzania is equal to the number of years by which healthy life expectancy in Tanzania exceeds the world's lowest value, multiplied by the Table 2.1 coefficient for the influence of healthy life expectancy on life evaluations. The width of each sub-bar then shows, country by country, how much each of the six variables contributes to the international ladder differences. The average country has a 2017-2019 ladder score that is 3.50 points above the Dystopia ladder score of 1.97. Of the 3.50 points, the largest single part (33%) comes from social support, followed by GDP per capita (25%) and healthy life expectancy (20%), and then freedom (13%), generosity (5%), and corruption (4%). The variables we use may be taking credit properly due to other variables, or to unmeasured factors' [7].

From all the indicators those are responsible for world happiness score, in case of India, Dystopia (1.85) + residual is major indicator which effects India's score and ranking in world happiness report from 2015 to 2021, as the clear resemblance can be seen in the graphs of , Dystopia (1.85) + residual and India's world happiness score than any other indicator.

**Table 2.1: Regressions to Explain Average Happiness across Countries (Pooled OLS)**

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable			
	Cantril Ladder (0-10)	Positive Affect (0-1)	Negative Affect (0-1)	Cantril Ladder (0-10)
Log GDP per capita	0.31 (0.066)***	-0.009 (0.01)	0.008 (0.008)	0.324 (0.065)***
Social support	2.362 (0.363)***	0.247 (0.048)***	-0.336 (0.052)***	2.011 (0.389)***
Healthy life expectancy at birth	0.036 (0.01)***	0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.033 (0.009)***
Freedom to make life choices	1.199 (0.298)***	0.367 (0.041)***	-0.084 (0.04)**	0.522 (0.287)*
Generosity	0.661 (0.275)**	0.135 (0.03)***	0.024 (0.028)	0.39 (0.273)
Perceptions of corruption	-0.646 (0.297)**	0.02 (0.027)	0.097 (0.024)***	-0.720 (0.294)**
Positive affect				1.944 (0.355)***
Negative affect				0.379 (0.425)
Year fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included
Number of countries	156	156	156	156
Number of obs.	1627	1624	1626	1623
Adjusted R-squared	0.751	0.475	0.3	0.768

Notes: This is a pooled OLS regression for a tapered panel explaining annual national average Cantril ladder responses from all available surveys from 2005 to 2019. See *Technical Box 1* for detailed information about each of the predictors. Coefficients are reported with robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses. \*\*\*, \*\*, and \* indicate significance at the 1, 5 and 10 percent levels respectively.

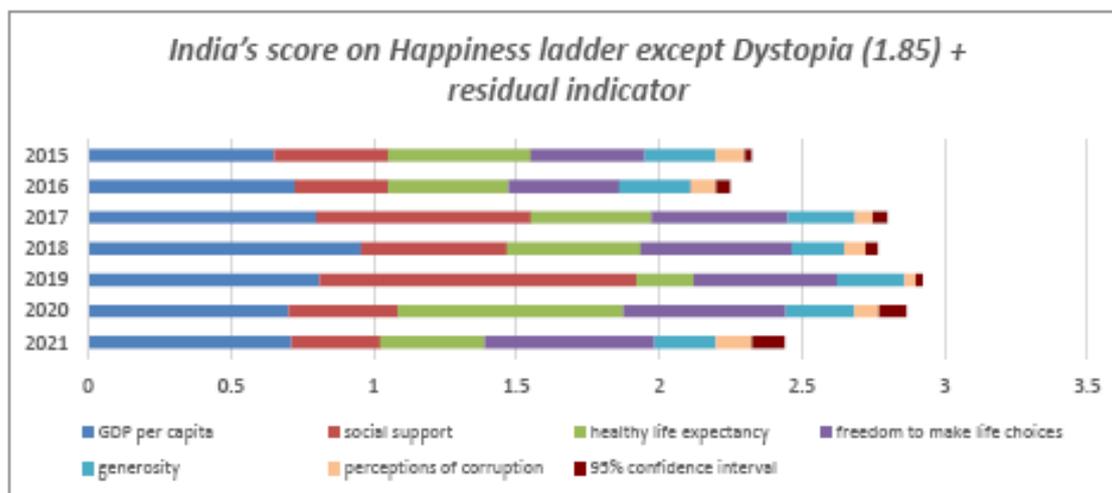


(Fig 2: India’s score on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)



(Fig 5: Dystopia (1.85) + residual of India on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)

To analyze the impact of Dystopia (1.85) + residual indicator effect on India’s score on World Happiness Report, the comparison between Fig:2 and Fig :3 shows with other seven indicators the score varies too much and for improving India’s ranking one must take Dystopia (1.85) + Residual indicator into consideration.



(Fig 12: India's score on Happiness ladder except Dystopia (1.85) + residual indicator on World Happiness Report from 2015 to 2021)

In Fig:12 can see the uneven outcome when we take out the Dystopia (1.85) + residual indicator from the ladder where as in Fig :3 the constant drop of the score from 2015 to 2020 can be easily visible.

## CONCLUSION

India may have improved in World happiness ranking in World happiness report 2021 with one rank up but the situation is not getting better with the constant fall from 2015 to 2020. There are various indicators like GDP per capita, Social Support, Healthy Life Expectancy, Freedom to make life choices, generosity, perceptions of corruption, Dystopia (1.85) + residual and 95% Confidence interval in the world happiness report, where the ranking of the country is given by score on the ladder which was calculated by the sum of all the indicators. Dystopia (1.85) + residual is the main indicator that effect the score of India in World Happiness Report. And to improve the Dystopia indicator major action is needed for improving other factors as Dystopia (1.85) + residual is calculated by considering all other factors like GDP per capita, generosity, Healthy life expectancy at birth, freedom to make life choices, and Perception of corruption.

## Limitation

The calculation of Dystopia (1.85) + residual is not clear.

Actual figure of indicators are not given instead comparison is done on the ladder of scale 1 to 10.

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