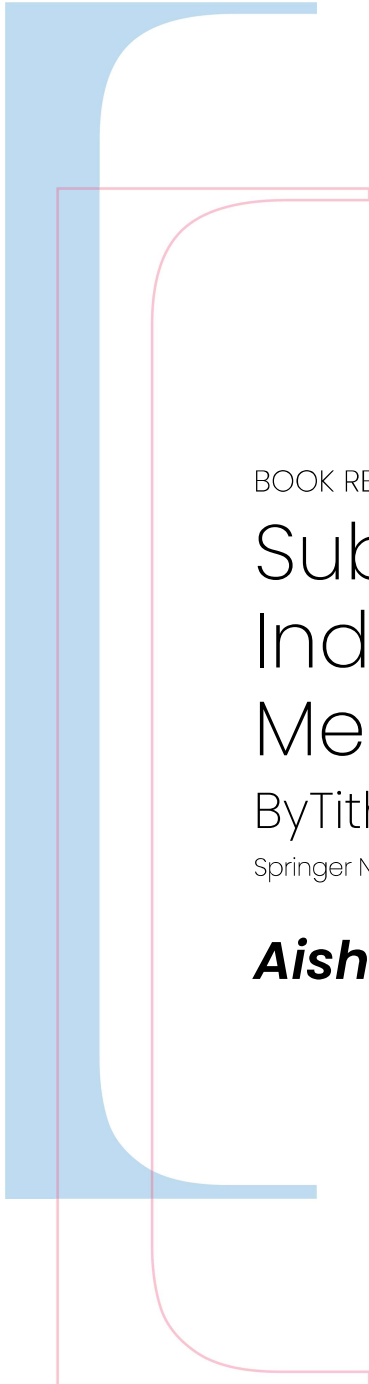




BOOK REVIEW

Subjective Well-Being in the Indian Context: Concept, Measure, and Index

By Tithi Bhatnagar

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"Subjective Well-Being in the Indian Context" by Tithi Bhatnagar is a groundbreaking work that delves into the conceptualization, measurement, and indexing of subjective well-being (SWB) in the Indian context. Bhatnagar, an esteemed researcher in the field of subjective well-being, has meticulously crafted a comprehensive study that not only contributes to the global understanding of SWB but also provides insights specific to India using an empirical approach. Her extensive background in psychology and social sciences, coupled with her Indian heritage, makes her uniquely qualified to undertake such a feat.

The book is divided into seven chapters, each offering a deep dive into various aspects of subjective well-being. Chapter 1, "Subjective Well-Being: Introduction and Conceptual Frameworks," sets the stage by discussing the evolution of SWB research and the importance of understanding how most Indians define their well-being and ill-being. Bhatnagar draws on the works of renowned researchers such as Robert F. Kennedy and Prof. Ed Diener to emphasize the significance of measuring well-being as a crucial social development indicator.

Chapter 2, "Subjective Well-Being: Determinants and Correlates," meticulously reviews the literature on the determinants of SWB, shedding light on the critical role of demographics and culture in shaping concepts of SWB. Bhatnagar critically examines the effect sizes of these determinants and correlates, providing a nuanced understanding of how context influences SWB.

In Chapter 3, "Subjective Well-Being: Measurement," Bhatnagar delves into the various scales developed for measuring SWB, including indigenous scales based on ancient Indian wisdom and Western scales validated in the Indian context. She asserts the relevance of an Indian-specific global measure and systematically reviews the pre-existing body of knowledge to establish the importance of a comprehensive understanding and measurement of SWB and subjective ill-being (SIB).

Chapter 4, "SWB Conceptualization: Enhancers and Reducers," offers a qualitative study conducted across different age groups and locales to conceptualize SWB in the Indian context. Bhatnagar's analysis of the respondents' responses provides a rich understanding of the conceptual categories enhancing SWB and reducing SIB, offering valuable insights into the cultural nuances of well-being.

Chapter 5, "Development and Standardization of the Subjective Well-Being Measure (SWBM)", provides a detailed account of the rigorous development and standardization process of the SWBM, emphasizing its robustness as an effective and sophisticated tool for measuring subjective well-being at both individual and collective levels. The systematic empirical explanation of the concept of subjective ill-being (SIB) and the identification of meaningful factors through principal axis factoring further establish the SWBM as a valuable contribution to the field of well-being research.

In Chapter 6, "Subjective Well-Being Measure: Profiling and Indexing", Bhatnagar focuses on the analysis of the subjective well-being measure and its implications for individuals' understanding of their own well-being and societal well-being. The main topics discussed in this chapter include the SWB profile, general analysis for both Parts I and II of the SWBM, computation of a composite SWB score, and the proposal of a SWB index.

Finally, in Chapter 7, "Conclusion", Bhatnagar provides a systematic approach to measuring and analyzing SWB and SIB. It offers insights into the factors that influence well-being at both individual and societal levels, emphasizing the importance of addressing mental health concerns and fostering a balanced approach to well-being. Additionally, the chapter underscores the significance of

societal growth and individual well-being, highlighting the interconnectedness of well-being with broader societal values and governance.

Tithi Bhatnagar's book, "Subjective Well-Being in the Indian Context", presents a comprehensive and meticulously researched exploration of subjective well-being (SWB) in India. One of the key strengths of the book is its rigorous approach to conceptualizing and validating a measure of SWB among Indians, based on a representative sample across various states and socio-economic strata. This methodological rigor establishes a strong foundation for understanding and measuring SWB in the Indian context.

A standout feature of the book is its recognition of the cultural nuances and idiosyncrasies of Indians, emphasizing the need to understand how individuals in India define their well-being and ill-being. By integrating Indian philosophical traditions and spiritual wellness into the understanding of well-being, the book offers a holistic perspective that considers indigenous cultural and philosophical viewpoints, thereby enriching the understanding of SWB in India.

Furthermore, the book's emphasis on the policy implications of SWB research underscores its practical and policy-oriented approach. By highlighting the implications of SWB research for public policy, the book contributes to a comprehensive understanding of SWB in the Indian context and underscores its relevance for policymakers. Bhatnagar's systematic study, which collates earlier work and operationalizes SWB and ill-being based on self-reporting by individuals, further strengthens the book's claim to offer an intellectually sound and meticulously researched understanding of SWB in the Indian context.

However, the book could benefit from a more extensive exploration of historical and cultural factors to provide a deeper understanding of well-being in India. Additionally, a comparative analysis of SWB across different regions and demographic groups could enhance the book's comprehensive overview by highlighting variations in well-being experiences and identifying specific determinants that contribute to these variations.

In conclusion, "Subjective Well-Being in the Indian Context" makes a significant contribution to the field of well-being research, particularly in the Indian context. Its emphasis on cultural nuances, policy implications, and systematic study methodology provides valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners interested in the field of SWB. Overall, the book offers a comprehensive understanding of SWB in India and underscores its significance in the field of well-being research.

