

# SEEKING A SUSTAINABLE PATHWAY TO DEVELOPMENT

## A Case study analysis of Bhutan's "Gross National Happiness"

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### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In this paper, sustainable development is analyzed in terms of its conceptualization and actual implementation, and highlight on a particular example of a national sustainable development promoting initiative; GNH of Bhutan, a philosophical national development strategy of Bhutan that prioritizes "Happiness" to realize sustainable development. The overall study is aimed to give a pilot case study of a national effort that promotes sustainable development through appealing to the ethical and moral beings of people, rather than reliance on economic and technological development.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

One of the world's most popular terminologies used in development debates from around the early 1990s, the term was first officially defined in 1987 by the WCED. This definition remains the most commonly referred to today, but there remains uncertainty as to what sustainable development is, due to the differences in interpretation and understanding, thus implementing tactics vary among nations and organizations. And within such differences, it could be said that the concept is interpreted and put into practice in notably two different ways; the "Development aspect" and "Sustainability aspect" skeletons of sustainable development. The latter skeleton places emphasis on ensuring sustainable livelihoods, and ethical and moral values of individuals and society play an essential role in its implementation.

### GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS OF BHUTAN

GNH case study aims to clarify the underlying elements of a "sustainability aspect" skeleton and the proposed hypothesis: *because fundamental morality and ethical values existed as a result of national culture, religion tradition, etc, philosophical guidance in promoting sustainable development was able to be pronounced and promoted at a national level.* GNH functions as a guiding philosophy to Bhutan's development strategies, and holds its priority in the maximization of happiness, through promotion of its four pillars of GNH; 1)Basic human values and culture 2)Equitable socio-economic development 3)Good governance 4)Natural environment. The philosophy appeals to the ethical side of Bhutanese people, rooted in its cultural and religious heritage, which values nature and social well being, and places humans as an element of the living system rather than a dominating factor.

### CONCLUSION

Because a strong religious base was existent in the society, and as a result, collective ethical character is formed in the society of Bhutan, it could be concluded that GNH, whose elements are very much in line with the features of sustainable development, was proposed, implemented, and currently functioning as a guiding philosophy that promotes sustainable development in Bhutan

Such philosophical policy in promoting sustainable development could be noted applicable elsewhere, especially places where economic and technical advancements remain low, but ethical unity exists, and the country holds a strong commitment to promoting national sustainable development.