

Happiness Curriculum: Experience during the Online Scenario

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Abstract

Happiness is a leading concern in everyone's life, having different connotations for every individual. There can be no universal definition of happiness, as it is relative to everyone in their journey of life. In this era when people especially, children are witnessing several man-made and natural crises having a great impact on their impressionable minds, it is the need of the hour to underline the need of teaching happiness. Furthermore, the fierce competition to be "career ready" has led to increased pressure on both the child and the parents. The relationship between happiness and education can be understood in the sense that one is the means to achieve the other and vice-versa. They both are continuous processes in themselves. There is a global need to develop curricula that are accommodative of the psycho-socio development of the children as well as to truly accomplish the purpose of education. The present paper is based on a study related to analyzing the effectiveness and ease of implementation of the innovative practice of the Happiness Curriculum during the pandemic in an online methodology.

Keywords: Happiness Curriculum, school education, psycho-socio development, well-being.

Introduction

Every child across the world is a creation of their conditioning which is interdependent on their upbringing and immediate setting. The constantly changing socio-economic dynamics of the families have serious and direct impacts on the physical, social and mental well-being of the children. In addition to this, students come to school with stressors arising from countless sources like "peer-interaction conflicts", "socio-cultural components", and "vulnerabilities" to physical and mental health risk factors. The recent report by NCRB has also pointed towards the ever-increasing suicide rate after 2019 among students in India. Ergo, presently the challenges before the education system have gone

beyond poor learning standards and academic results and emphasis has to be laid on the achievement of the true purpose of education. Education systems around the world are facing challenges in preparing students to deal with the demands of unpredictable environments.

However, with the onset of the present pandemic, the world in general and students in specific are facing a plethora of unprecedented issues and concerns. The rate of orphan children has increased substantially with the death of primary caregivers which in itself raises several social and emotional concerns for children across the country. Consequently, in light of recent developments, the need of the hour is to understand the coherence between

the pre-pandemic happiness curriculum framework and the existing situation.

Happiness Classes - Scope of Curriculum

The rationale behind the Happiness Curriculum was the need to enhance and expand the scope of the true purpose of education. It is set against the backdrop of increasing stress among students throughout the global education system and India's low ranking on the happiness scale on the basis of the World Happiness Report. Teaching happiness in schools will increase "their ability to manage stress, self-awareness and

emotional awareness". This will further help in the true purpose of education by creating a confident, happy, mindful, and responsive generation which in turn leads to happiness and peace in society in general.

The scope of the curriculum initially when it was launched in 2018 was for the nursery to grade 8 students across Delhi government schools. Discussions are now being held to extend this to private schools as well. The key objectives aimed to be achieved through the Happiness curriculum besides a holistic approach towards education, amongst learners were:

Figure-1: Objectives of the Happiness Curriculum

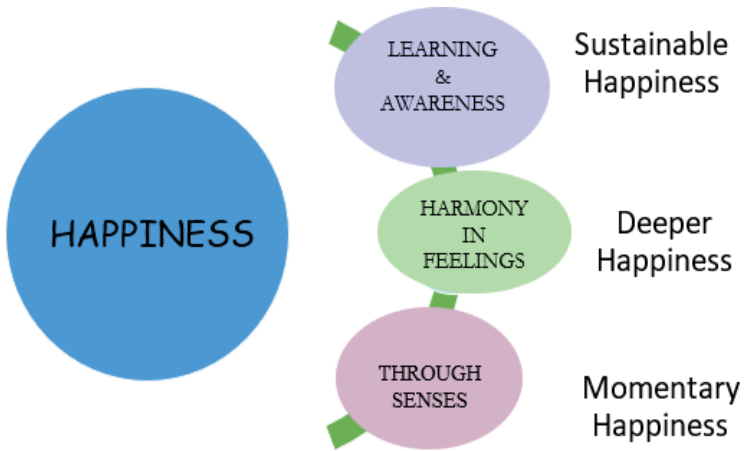


Key Components of the Happiness Curriculum

The elementary approach of the Happiness curriculum rests on the Happiness Triad proposed by philosopher Agrahar Nagraj in 1999. It is a model for happiness concerning the four elements which are "material",

"behavioural", "intellectual" and "experiential" aspects of human life. When these are clubbed together they can be converted into the three pillars of the Happiness Triad. The three pillars are learning, feeling and awareness are depicted in Figure-2.

Figure-2: Happiness Triad

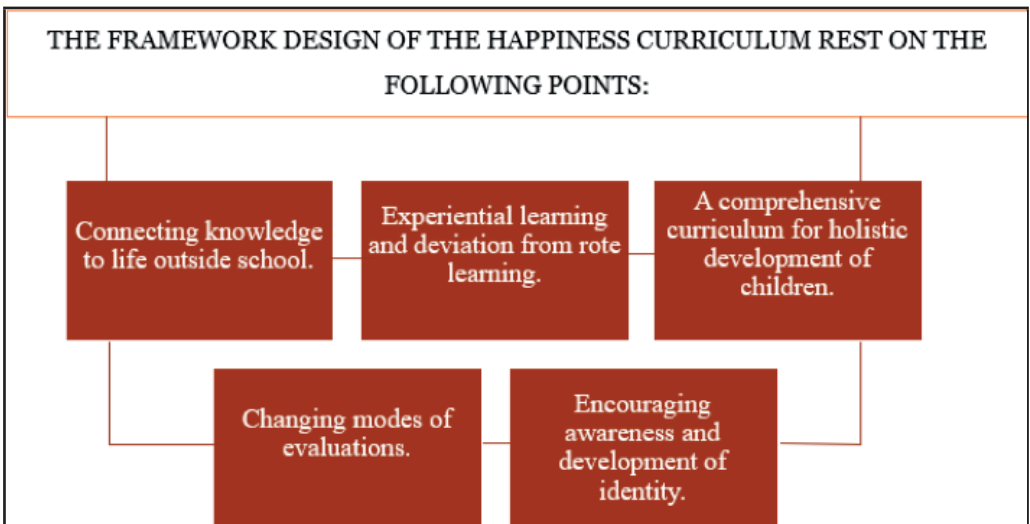


This happiness triad shows that the first pillar of happiness which can be achieved through our senses and is highly enjoyable but momentary, and thus the term momentary happiness. The second pillar of feeling depicts deeper happiness as feelings such as affection, empathy, love, trust, etc. make us content and peaceful. They have a longer impact on humans. Lastly,

the pillar of learning and awareness depicts sustainable happiness in the sense that happiness can be yielded by experiencing and learning by an individual.

The Happiness curriculum aims to bridge the existing gap between pillars of happiness. Furthermore, the framework of the Happiness Curriculum is depicted in the following figure;

Figure-3: Framework Design of the Happiness Curriculum



Challenges Posed by the Covid-19 Pandemic – A Study

The curriculum was introduced in the pre-pandemic school setting in 2018. Wherein the first class (ranging from 25-35 mins) was scheduled as the Happiness class. However, with the onset of the Pandemic, the schools were shut for almost a period of two years. Therefore, in order to examine the effectiveness of the Happiness Curriculum during the pandemic the researcher has conducted the present study.

Objectives of Research

- To study the effectiveness of the Happiness Curriculum during the pandemic.
- To study the implementation of Happiness classes during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To understand the major challenges faced by the students during the pandemic.

Research Methodology

The study was planned to find results through an empirical research methodology with primary and secondary methods of data collection. An empirical research approach is selected because the concept of this research was concerned with

interactions, experiences, perceptions & behaviour and understanding these is more important than looking for a quantifiable outcome. A tool with 15 items was prepared to comprise open-ended and multiple-choice questions, this was disseminated through a google form. The tool was validated by experts, but for its scalability, it will be improved in future. This is a preliminary paper which will be utilized as a pilot in my research.

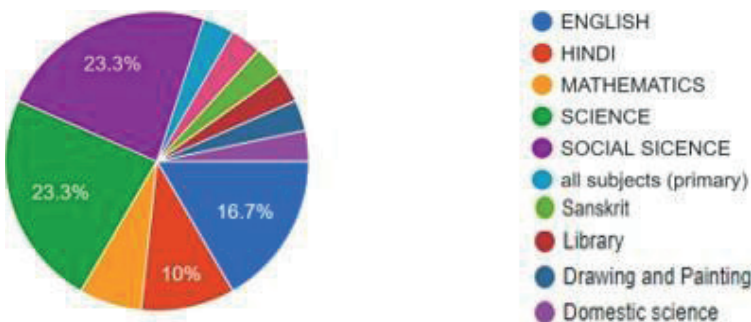
Population: The teachers who have conducted Happiness classes in Delhi Government schools.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The participants were selected through non-probability sampling techniques for this study from schools within the territory of Delhi. The sample comprises 30 teachers who are conducting Happiness classes in Delhi Government schools.

Demographic Variables

- The research consisted of 80 per cent female individuals and 20 per cent male individuals.
- The age group (26-35 years) of the research participant have maximum participation in the study
- The research participants were teaching the following subjects depicted by Figure 4

Figure-4: Depicting the Teaching Subjects of Research Participants

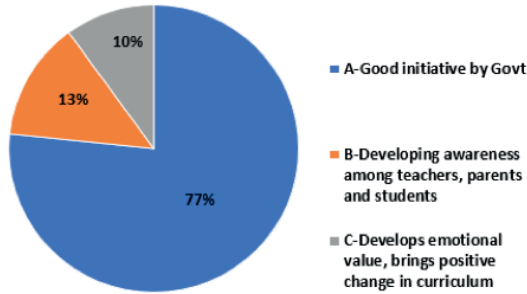


Analysis of the Data

- ❖ **Item 1** was designed to ask the teachers their viewpoint about happiness classes and how much advantageous did they find those

when they were introduced, the analysis of the collected data revealed the percentages of various viewpoints of the respondents, which are depicted by the pie chart shown in Figure 5;

Figure-5: Percentages of respondents with various viewpoints



- 77 per cent of the respondents had the opinion that point A, says that happiness classrooms are a good initiative by Govt.
- 13 per cent of the respondents had the opinion that point B says that happiness curriculum helps in developing awareness among teachers, parents and students.
- 10 per cent of the respondents had the opinion that point C says that happiness curriculum develops emotional value and brings positive change in curriculum.

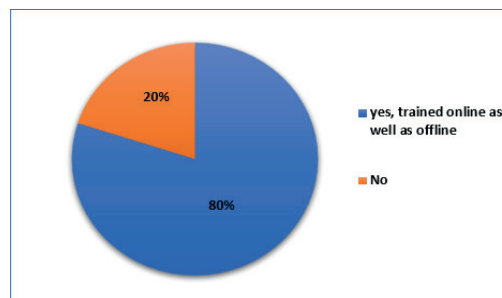
(77 per cent) had the opinion that the happiness classroom is a good initiative by the Govt., which improves the level of concentration of students, enhances their creativity, helps students to express themselves better, and is interesting for all the students. This opinion indicates the positive aspects added by this curriculum in the life of many people.

- ❖ **Item 2** was designed to inquire about the training status of teachers with respect to their training for effectively conducting the happiness classes and mode of training. The analysis of the collected data revealed the percentage of how respondents got trained for happiness classes, which is depicted in Figure 6:

Interpretation and Discussion

The analysis of the data related to item 1 reveals that most of the respondents

Figure-6: Percentages of respondents about how training was conducted



- 80 per cent of the respondents had admitted that they got requisite training through both modes.
- 20 per cent of the respondents had admitted that they do not get any sort of training and were directly given the classes to conduct.

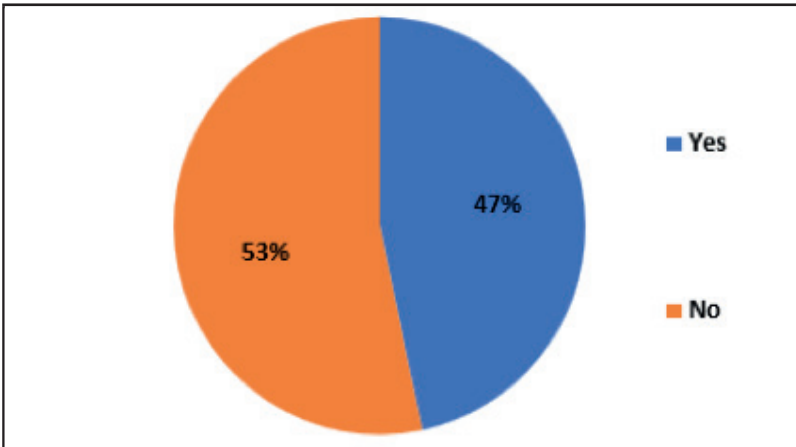
Interpretation and Discussion

The analysis of the data reveals that the majority of the respondents (80 per cent) answered in the positive, that they were trained for happiness classes in online and offline mode and the rest

of the participants were not trained. This is indicative of the training status and highlights the need to have fully trained teachers to successfully conduct happiness classes.

- ❖ **Item 3** was designed to ask the teachers about activities (if any) that were conducted before happiness classes started in their schools, the analysis of the collected data revealed the percentage of activities conducted and those are depicted in Figure 7:

Figure-7: Percentages of respondents about any activity conducted before happiness classes



- 53 per cent of respondents responded that no such activities were conducted before the implementation of Happiness classes.
- 47 per cent of respondents answered that the various activities were conducted before the happiness classes were started in their school.

the implementation of Happiness classes and the rest of them answered that the various activities were conducted before the happiness classes were started in their school.

- ❖ **Item 4** was designed to ask teachers about the mindfulness activities conducted in school during happiness classes, the analysis of the collected data revealed about various activities undertaken during these classes are as follows: storytelling, focus-increasing activities like observing sounds around, observing the pattern of your breath, Motivational story, etc.

Interpretation & Discussion

The data reveals that more than half of respondents had responded that no such activities were conducted before

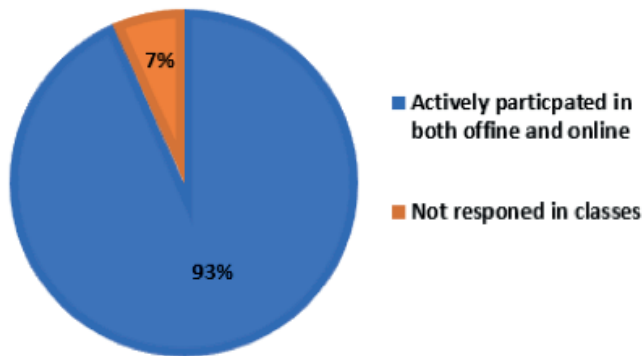
Interpretation and Discussion

During the analysis, 100 per cent responded with the affirmation that mindfulness activities were conducted during the happiness curriculum.

❖ **Item 5** was designed to ask teachers

the response received from students while practicing the various activities related to happiness both in the offline and online modes of classes. The analysis of the data collected from the respondents revealing the student responses to the Happiness classes is depicted in Figure 8.

Figure-8: Responses of students towards happiness classes both in offline and online mode



- 93 per cent of the respondents answered that students actively participated in Happiness classes in both offline and online mode.
- 7 per cent of the respondents answered that no responses were received in the Happiness classes.

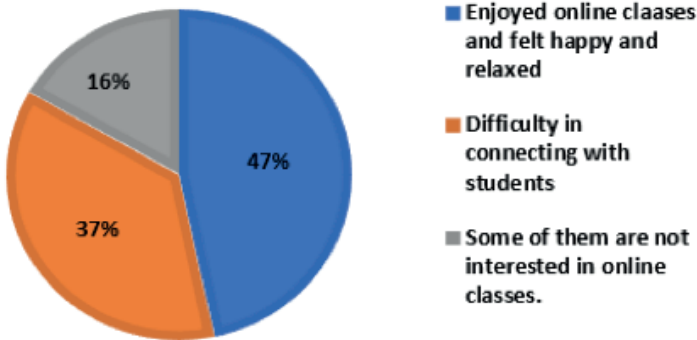
the happiness class and their readiness to share their feelings. They opined that a lot of positive changes were noticed in the students and students seem less aggressive. A very small segment of the respondent (7 per cent) opined that there were no responses from students for the activities conducted. The analysis clearly indicates that activities conducted during happiness classes have a wide scope of positive impact on the students, achieving its intended objective.

Interpretation & Discussion

The analysis of the data revealed that the majority [93 per cent] of the teachers answered that positive responses were received in the Happiness classes from the students. The responses are very encouraging, indicative of the connectivity and strengthened relationship amongst students as well as between teacher and students. The majority of the responses pointed towards the eagerness of the students for

- ❖ **Item 6** was designed to enquire from the teachers about the differences they have noticed in conducting happiness classes during pandemic, the collected data showed the per cent of respondents on various statements as depicted in Figure 9.

Figure-9: Percentages showing the differences in conducting Happiness classes during the research scenario



- 47 per cent of the Respondents stated that children enjoyed online Happiness classes
- 37 per cent of the Respondents stated that some students faced difficulty in joining the classes
- 16 per cent of the Respondents stated that some of them are not interested in online classes

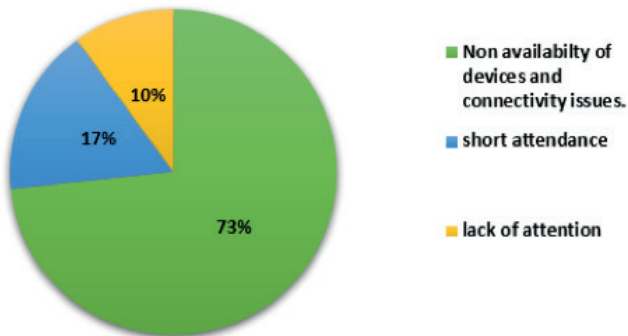
cent of the respondents stated that some students faced difficulty in joining the classes due to some technical error or connectivity issues. Therefore, due to the ease of access to offline classes they were not inclined to online mode of happiness classes. Another segment of respondents (16 per cent) stated that some of them are not interested in online classes due to several problems at their end.

Interpretation & Discussion

The data showed that most of the respondents (47 per cent) stated that children enjoyed online classes and these classes helped the student in overcoming the stress and made them feel happy and relaxed. Around 37 per

❖ **Item 7** was designed to ask the teachers about the challenges faced by them while conducting the happiness class in situation, the data collected revealed the percentage of respondents depicted in Figure 10:

Figure-10: Percentage of respondents stating the challenges faced by them



- 73 per cent of the Respondents had the opinion that most of the students have the problem of non-availability of devices at their home and connectivity issues
- 17 per cent of respondents had the opinion that short attendance was also a challenge
- 10 per cent of respondents had the opinion that some students did not pay attention

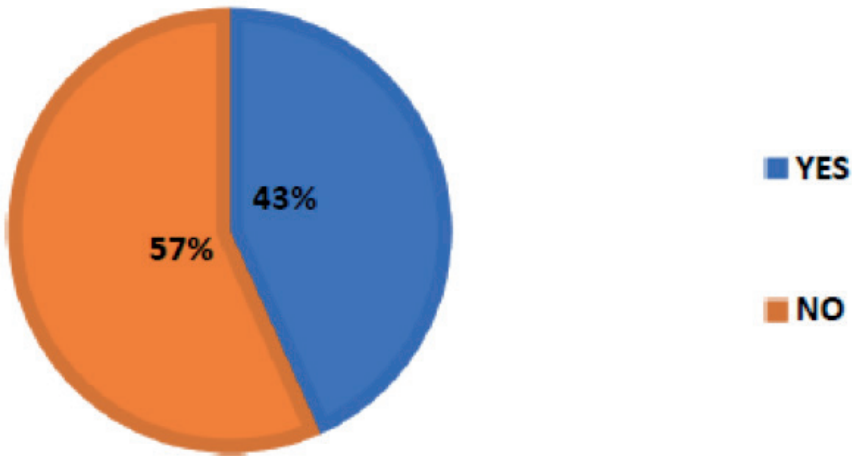
a challenge as a student often does not have devices to join from home which is the continuing reason for the first-mentioned problem. Around 10 per cent of the respondents also opined that children lacked attention and made it difficult to have a conducive environment to conduct online classes. This brings under the spot the major three issues that were faced by the teacher and consequent need to develop enough resources to overcome these issues.

Interpretation & Discussion

73 per cent of respondents opined that most of the students have the problem of non-availability of devices at their home and connectivity issues like no data recharge or limited data. Another 17 per cent of respondents had the opinion that short attendance was also

❖ **Item 8** was designed to ask the teachers conducting happiness classes whether classes in the digital mode were more interesting or in the offline mode, the data revealed the percentages of respondents depicted in Figure 11.■

Figure-11: Percentage of Respondents sharing their view about conducting happiness classes



- 57 per cent of the respondents had the opinion that it was not interesting to conduct the classes digitally.
- 43 per cent of the respondents had the opinion that it was interesting to conduct class digitally.

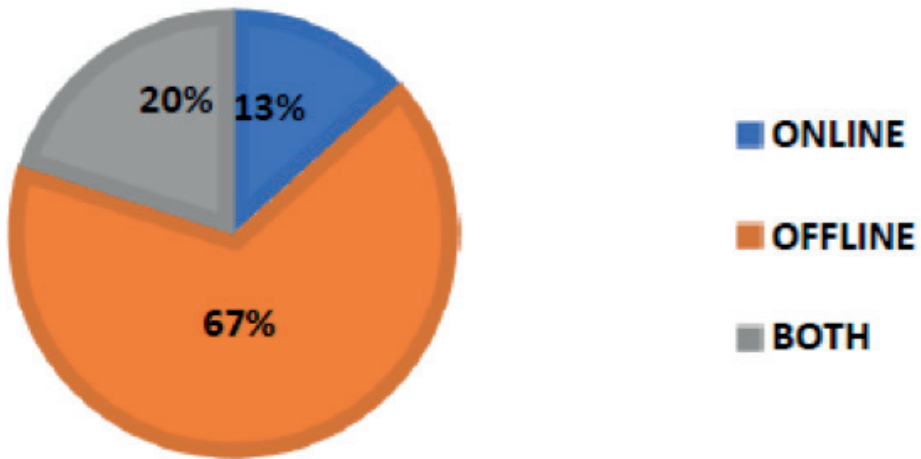
Interpretation & Discussion

The analysis of the data revealed that more than half of the respondents 57 per cent were of the opinion that it was not interesting to conduct the classes digitally due to several problems faced by them as well as students. While the rest of the 43 per cent of respondents

had the opinion that it was interesting to conduct class digitally. This is indicative of the prevalent resistance in conducting online happiness classes as the types of activities would be restricted and ease of conducting them in offline mode.

❖ **Item 9** was designed to ask the teachers their preferred method of happiness classes, the percentage of respondents revealed the following modes of taking classes (Figure 12).

Figure-12: Mode of taking happiness class preferred by teachers



- 67 per cent of the respondents shared their view that they are comfortable in taking classes offline only.
- 20 per cent of the respondents shared their view that they are comfortable in taking classes both online as well as offline.
- 13 per cent of the respondents shared their view that they are comfortable in taking classes both online and offline.

Interpretation & Discussion

The analysis of the data revealed that most of the respondents 67 per cent were of the opinion that they are comfortable taking classes offline as compared to 13 per cent of respondents who were more comfortable conducting online classes. Around 20 per cent of the respondents shared their view that they are comfortable in taking classes

both online as well as offline. The opinions herein are indicative of the inclination of teachers for conducting happiness classes in offline mode as their preferred method.

❖ **Item 10** was designed to ask the teacher about their opinion regarding the changes that should be introduced into the happiness curriculum to keep it up to the date. The data collected revealed that the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the happiness curriculum and its framework. Some Cumulative feedback was increasing the number of stories or activities provided in the curriculum to achieve its objectives

Conclusive Remarks

The Happiness curriculum makes it vital to recognize the relationship between education and happiness in contemporary times in order to

inculcate the latter into the former. Therefore, the researcher herein through the present study intended to identify the effectiveness of the happiness curriculum and its role during the pandemic. On the basis of the analysis done, it can be concluded that the implementation of a happiness curriculum is a good transformation in the traditional schedule of the students as it is free from the limitations of any subject, period, or evaluation criteria. The classes were welcomed by the students and the study shows the positive impact of the classes on the lives of the students. It has proved to be advantageous in multiple ways for the students by shifting its approach from the traditional teaching style. These classes have facilitated making the students more “thoughtful” and “mindful”. However, there are certain underlying issues that are needed to be pondered over like:

- Unavailability of the resources to join classes and consequent

damage to the mental health of the students in the pandemic situation;

- Due to the lack of physical contact, there is a hesitancy amongst teachers for conducting happiness classes online mode; and
- Need to strengthen teacher training programs for better implementation of Happiness classes and curriculum.

Implications of the Study

Therefore, there is a need to further the positive impacts of the curriculum by paving a way for better implementation of Happiness classes in contemporary times. The students are now coming back to school after a significant period of two years; this will further have deleterious consequences on the mental well-being of children. Ergo, Happiness classes should now be conducted keeping in mind the above-mentioned issues and to the utmost sincerity.

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