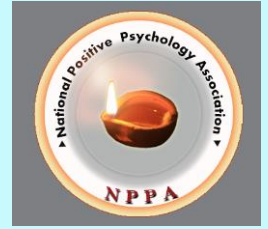


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The Scholarly Nook

The Scholarly Nook brings to you articles written by scholars either on some of their own research or regarding the latest ongoing research in the field of Positive Psychology. In this edition we present an article on the contemporary developments in Positive Psychology. Read ahead to know more!

Positive Psychology: Contemporary Developments

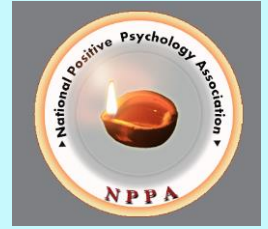
It has been over 20 years since Martin Seligman made the call for a science of 'human strengths' - what he termed as Positive Psychology. At his Presidential Address of the American

Psychological Association, Seligman drew attention to the need for changing the focus of Psychology from remediation to enrichment.

The role of Psychology in helping people lead happy and rewarding lives had been relegated to the fringes, while its role in healing, remediation and restoration had come to the forefront. Although this shift in focus was initially brought upon by circumstantial factors, such as the Second World War, it was maintained over time by certain systemic factors. These included the provision of funding opportunities for research on various forms of psychopathology. This was further augmented by the establishment of the National Institute of Mental Health, and the Veterans Administration. Consequently, this period saw the emergence of a large and significant body of scholarly work on psychological distress and disorders (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

However, the other aim of Psychology - that of promoting human flourishing did not make a comeback. Although Psychology made great strides in "...learning how to bring people up

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from negative eight to zero”, it did not achieve similar progress in “...understanding how people rise from zero to positive eight” (Gable & Haidt, 2005, p.103).

reviewed articles/publications on Positive Psychology related topics and themes.



Source: <https://mappalicious.com/2014/03/28/the-words-of-happiness-people-love-meaning/>

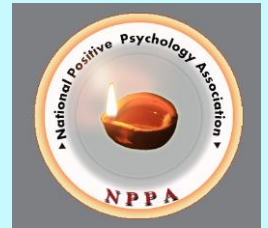
Under such circumstances, the call for a greater emphasis on human strengths, and on understanding positive emotions, traits, experiences and communities was only a natural development.

Among these articles, only 29 were published in 2003, and this figure gradually increased over time - from 88 in 2006, to 144 in 2009 and 232 in 2013!

Over time, a steady growth was observed in the number of publications on positive psychology-oriented constructs. For instance, in their systematic review, Donaldson, Dollwet & Rao (2014) report having identified around 1336 pre-

In addition to understanding these constructs, positive psychologists have also focused on their assessment. This has resulted in the construction, adaptation and translation of varied psychometric tools to measure these constructs. Positive Psychology Interventions have been another major area of development within

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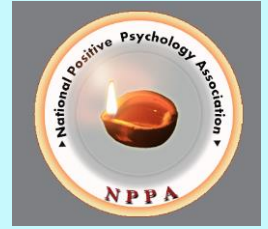


Positive Psychology. Besides these, the proliferation of cross-cultural research within Positive Psychology provided important insights into the culture-oriented and context-dependent nature of well-being and related constructs. For instance, when asked to define happiness, the Chinese used the terms ‘harmony’ and ‘balance’. In Chinese culture ‘balance’ implies a state of homeostasis both within one’s mind as well as between oneself and ones surrounding (Lu & Gilmour, 2004). Similar findings have been observed in other cultures as well. For instance, among Italians ‘inner peace’ was found to appear frequently in their definition of happiness, while among residents of Norway and Hungary, ‘inner balance’ was more pre-dominant (Delle Fave et al., 2016). Filipino adolescents, on the other hand, construe happiness as the expression of positive emotions, absence of negative emotions, fulfillment of their relatedness and other basic needs, and being motivated (Datu & Valdez, 2013). In contrast to Chinese and Filipinos, Australians were found to associate happiness with friendship, belonging, and optimism (O’Rourke & Cooper, 2010).

Having briefly considered the progress that has already been achieved within Positive Psychology, let us now look at two contemporary developments – Positive Psychology 2.0 and Positive Clinical Psychology - and their possible implications for the future of this field:

1. Positive Psychology 2.0 (PP 2.0), also referred to as the Second Wave Positive Psychology, recognizes the importance of both the positive and the negative in determining human behavior. As conceptualized by Wong (2011, 2019) PP 2.0 acknowledges the caveats of ignoring the negatives, and concedes “... that for most people, life is lived in negative territories” (p.2). It espouses the acceptance and transformation of human suffering as the way for achieving sustainable well-being. This balanced approach to Positive Psychology comprises of two key themes – Existential Positive Psychology and Indigenous Psychology:

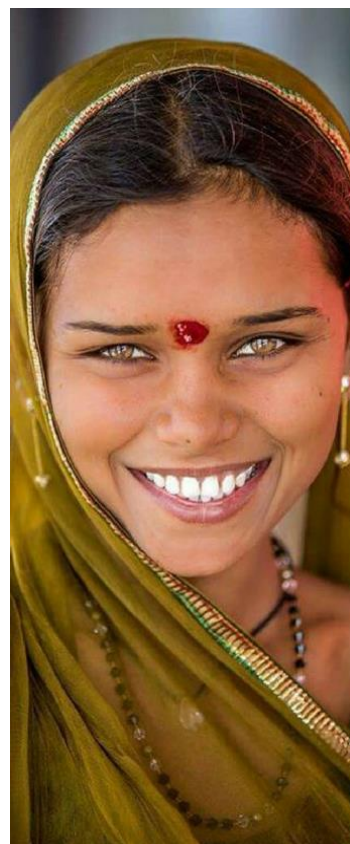
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Existential Positive Psychology: PP 2.0 accepts the universality of human suffering, and believes that accepting and transforming the suffering, rather than avoiding it or seeking out happiness, is what is adaptive in the long-run. Wong (2019) advocates the acceptance and transformation of suffering through meaning and meaning-focused interventions. This aspect of acknowledging human suffering and promoting its acceptance and transformation through meaning-focused interventions forms the existential dimension of PP 2.0.

Indigenous Psychology: Apart from accepting and transforming human suffering, it is equally important to be cognizant of the conceptualization of well-being in different cultures. This is important if we are to aim at alleviating human suffering at an individual as well as at a collective level. And, as Wong (2019, p.5) says “...what is universal is experienced and expressed differently in different cultures”. In fact, years of cross-cultural research stands testimony to the differences in how well-being is perceived across individualistic and collectivistic cultures. However, Positive Psychology has

largely remained Western and therefore individualistic. This has led to the neglect of culturally-relevant resources, pathways and collective practices which may hold greater value in enhancing well-being in collectivist nations, as opposed to the individual-focused resources or pathways that are emphasized in individualistic cultures (Novin, Tso & Konrath, 2014; Krysa et al.,

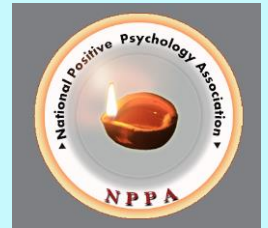


"THE AIM OF PP 2.0 IS TO REACH THE GLOBAL AUDIENCE IN TERMS OF ACHIEVING WHOLESOME WELL-BEING FOR INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY."

Paul Tp Wong

Source: <https://paultpwong.wordpress.com/2017/08/23/the-aim-of-pp-2-0/>

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2019). This recognition of the culture-dependent views of well-being and their role in determining the efficacy of interventions, serves as the second pillar of PP 2.0.

In sum, while the existential dimension gives it greater depth, the indigenous perspectives on happiness widen its breadth.

This Second Wave of Positive Psychology with Existential Positive Psychology and Indigenous Psychology as its two pillars has significant implications for counseling. Firstly, it encourages us to look at the negatives in a new light – a facet of human existence that needs acceptance, healing, and transformation.

Secondly, it encourages us to embrace the yin-yang principle in the context of negative and positive emotions – i.e.; happiness can be experienced by seeking an optimal balance between both the positive and negative in a particular context. Besides, by highlighting the significance of Indigenous Psychology it sheds light on the need for culture-sensitive interventions. Further, practitioners must be

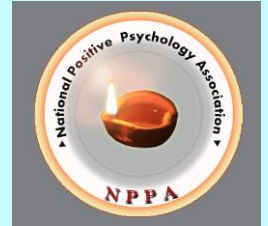
appreciative of the importance of cultural context in their clinical practice.



This picture shows students collecting qualitative data from an older rural Indian woman regarding her perception of well-being. Such data is significant for understanding cultural differences in well-being perception.

2. Positive Clinical Psychology – The idea of Positive Clinical Psychology rests on giving uniform weightage to both positive and negative facets of human life and behavior, both in clinical practice as well as in research studies (Wood & Tarrier, 2010). It is important that we do not misinterpret ‘Positive Clinical Psychology’ to

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mean a separate domain within Positive Psychology.

Its advocates have not called for a separate sub-field rather they have brought attention to the need for reorienting the focus of Clinical Psychology –instead of concentrating only on negative functioning, the field needs to widen its focus and incorporate well-being as well, for understanding and addressing psychopathology in a holistic manner.



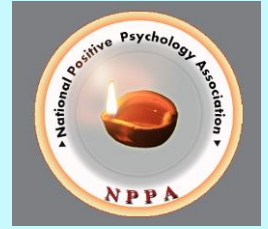
Positive Clinical Psychology makes a call for integrating both the positive and the negative while addressing psychological issues, and also in research.

Source: <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-29/july/positive-psychology-second-wave>

According to this perspective, the therapeutic focus of practitioners should not only be on easing the distress of their clients and addressing their underlying problems but also on building and enhancing their repertoire of positive skills and well-being. From a research perspective, focusing on the negative while negating the positive and vice-versa creates an imbalance, resulting in a disproportionately large number of researches on either distress or on well-being. Moreover, researchers have acknowledged the intimate link between the positive and the negative, while also highlighting that the “...assumption that any emotion or aspect of life can be designated as always “positive or negative” and separated from its polar opposite aspects” is a faulty one (Wood & Tarrier, 2010, p.824). Instead, they point out how the context determines whether a particular emotion is positive or negative, and appropriate or inappropriate (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010).

For instance, although anger is perceived as being dangerous due to the possibility of violent behavior, it is also important to feel a certain degree of anger if we are to be sufficiently

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motivated to redress a wrong-doing, be it societal or personal (Howells & Day, 2003; Pozzoli, Gini & Thornberg, 2017). Thus, there is a need to develop a more unified understanding of human behavior which can be achieved through Positive Clinical Psychology.

In addition to Positive Clinical Psychology and PP 2.0 there are a few other issues that might be equally critical in shaping the future of Positive Psychology:

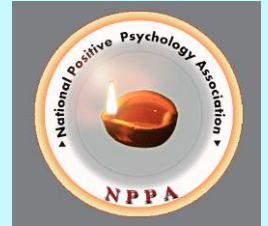
- Methodological considerations: Greater rigor in evaluating the efficacy of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs), specifically with regards to the nature of the control group; and using mixed-methods approach and methodological triangulation where feasible. For us to develop a more nuanced, and culture-oriented understanding of the subjective perception of happiness and its determinants (e.g. Delle Fave et al., 2016) character strengths, meaning in life, forgiveness, hope, optimism and the like, we need to focus more on using qualitative techniques.

- Evaluating the role of culture-specific practices in promoting and understanding well-being: Apart from developing and evaluating the effectiveness of culturally relevant PPIs, we also need to examine the healthy culture-specific strategies that are employed by people for enhancing their well-being. Such culturally sensitive practices may then be evaluated to gauge their potential as a form of well-being enhancing intervention.



Significant positive gains in well-being were observed in these rural Haryanvi women who participated in *satsang*.

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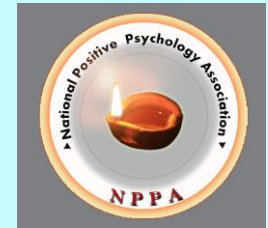
Satsang, for example, has been found to act as form of music therapy for rural Haryanvi women. The participants were found to experience greater well-being, and they also reported increased pro-social behavior, spiritual growth and reduction in stress and family conflicts after participation (Singh, Jain & Singh, 2014).

- Theoretical advancements through exploration of the indigenous well-being constructs: As has been emphasized in the extant literature, we need to examine and advance the well-being constructs that are embedded in the local culture. The construct of peace of mind (Lee, Lin, Huang & Fredrickson, 2012), for instance, has emerged out of work in Asian culture, namely China. Similarly, in India the concepts of *sukha-dukha* (Singh, Raina & Sahni, 2017), *sat-chit-ananda* (Singh, Khari, Amonkar, Arya & Kasav, 2013), *Preyas* and *Shreyas* (Salagame, 2013) have been explored, and we have been observing a shift towards a greater

appreciation of Indigenous Psychology. Consequently, there is a need for greater academic scholarship on research that explores and examines well-being concepts rooted in our culture. Theories and interventions must be such that they have cultural and social relevance in that particular context.

- Exploring and examining the role of psychological flexibility for achieving a balance between the positive and the negative, and the culture-specific implications of character-strengths, and other positive and negative emotions and traits
- Finally, if we are to incorporate evidence-based PPIs in clinical practice, for augmenting the existing psychotherapeutic techniques, then practitioners will need a set of ethical guidelines to direct them in their practice. The recently published “Ethical Guidelines for Positive Psychology Practice” (Jarden, Rashid, Roache & Lomas, 2019) serves as an

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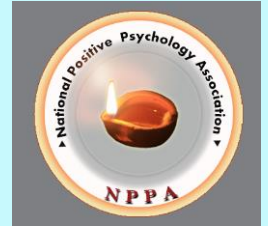
important step in this direction. Not only does it highlight the ethical dilemmas that Positive Psychology Practitioners are likely to encounter but also the need for culture-sensitive practices in clinical settings. Furthermore, the recognition of quality training of the practitioners is equally significant. We have recently seen the rise of a large number of 'life coaches.' Many such 'experts' claim to be using Positive Psychology techniques in their practice, despite not having received any formal training from a recognized institute.

While these four aspects have started manifesting, it is perhaps only a matter of time before we see a reconceptualization of the positive and the negative, in favor of a more unified and comprehensive understanding of human behavior.

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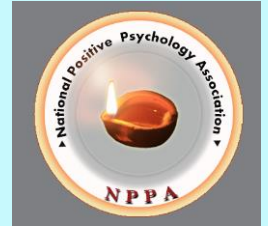
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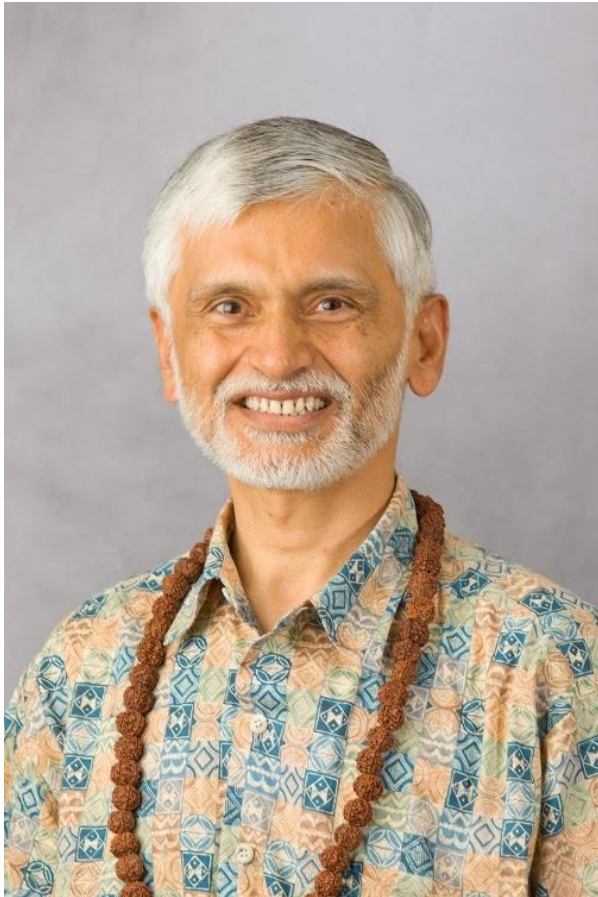
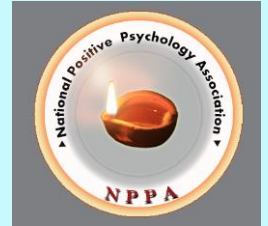
The Oracle: Interview Series with Esteemed Professors

In our fifth issue, we take the opportunity to introduce all NPPA members to **Professor Dharm P S Bhawuk**. He is a Professor of Management and Culture and Community Psychology at University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii. He obtained his Ph.D in Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has received many awards and honors including H Smith Richardson, Jr. Visiting Fellow, Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, North Carolina (2009-2010), Rupe Chilsom Best Theory to

Practice Paper Award from Organization Development and Change Division of the Academy of Management (2009). He is author of the book 'Spirituality and Indian Psychology: Lessons from the Bhagavad Gita' (Springer, 2011) and co-editor of the book 'Asian Contributions to Cross-cultural Psychology' (Sage, 1996). His major research interests include Indigenous Psychology and Management, Intercultural Training, Intercultural sensitivity, diversity in workplace, Individualism and collectivism, culture and creativity and spirituality. He has published more than 60 papers and book chapters and made more than 160 presentations at international conferences and universities.

Team NPPA is grateful and privileged to have Professor Dharm P S Bhawuk as part of the Advisory Committee. Read on to know more about his enriching journey in the field of Positive Psychology.

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1. What had stimulated your interest in Psychology?

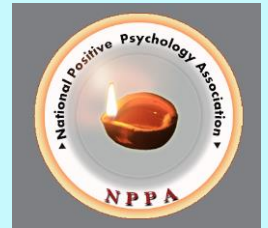
My interest in Psychology started with the first course that I took from Professor Mithila Bihari Saran at IIT Kharagpur in 1977. As a student of Mechanical Engineering, I found that understanding the functioning of machines was

straight forward, but understanding human psychology required much reflection. Decoding the intention behind human behavior is not only a fascinating puzzle but also a joyful process of discovery in which we learn about ourselves.

2. How did your association with Positive Psychology begin?

Questioning the claim that individualists are more creative than collectivists led me to discover that geniuses are attracted to the domain that is valued in a culture. This led to further discovery that Indian culture has emphasized spirituality for thousands of years, and India has given the largest number of creative people in the domain of spirituality. My academic interest in spirituality and creativity fit well with my daily *AdhyAtmik sAdhana*, which has allowed me to integrate my work and personal lives. Also, because of my interest in Indian Psychology, I was drawn to positive constructs like *ahimsa*, *satya*, *satsaGga*, and so forth, which are neglected in the Western literature. I started teaching a course in Positive

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Psychology in 2007, and started including meditation and laughter in all my classes.

3. What do you feel about the way Positive Psychology has been developing in India, and where do you see Positive Psychology in India, in the next five years?

There is much emphasis on using Western constructs and instruments. I hope we will pay attention to indigenous constructs and practices that will help us develop Indian Positive Psychology as a distinct field from Western Positive Psychology.

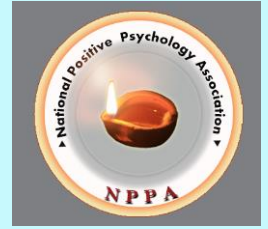
4. What would you say is the value of Positive Psychology to the general population?

Positive Psychology can inspire people to find and reach their full potential. It can guide people to lead a joyful and generous life filled with gratitude and optimism. Cultivation of positive practices can lead us to a different life trajectory.

For example, we can cultivate *kSamA* and lead a joyful life, instead of brooding over negative thoughts and feelings and ending up with depression and other problems. It helps us go away from the deficit model or illness-treatment paradigm.



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5. As someone who has been teaching, training, and guiding scholars in Psychology for several years, what kind of training would you suggest for students of Positive Psychology?

Positive Psychology is not only about knowledge (learning theories, constructs, and measurement) but also about understanding emotions and how they shape our behaviors. Therefore, we should attempt to integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral training for young scholars. We all need to cultivate some practices in our life, so that we can test the theories and ideas in our own experience. Positive psychology is a reflective rather than a cognitive domain of enquiry.

6. How can the community of Positive Psychologists contribute in a better way to research in the Indian setting?

I think we are doing well. We have an organization that presents an opportunity for like-minded people to come together and share their research ideas and findings. We should continue to have dialogue among ourselves and with researchers in other



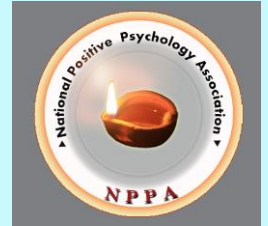
countries. Slowly but definitely we will be drawn to Indian constructs and methods since we have a rich spiritual tradition of not only yoga and meditation, but also *ahimsa* and other values.

Latest Updates

Upcoming Conferences & Workshops:

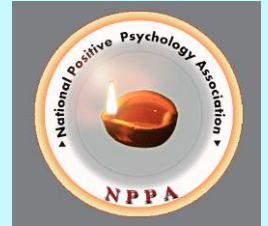
- ✓ 5th International Conference on 'Youth Mental Health; United for Global Change' in Brisbane, Australia from 26-28th October 2019.

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- ✓ 12th International Congress and 17th National of Clinical Psychology in Santander, Spain from 13th to 16th November, 2019.
- ✓ 5th International Congress of Clinical and Health Psychology on Children and Adolescents to be held in Oviedo, Spain from November 14 to 16, 2019.
- ✓ 3-day International Conference On 'Human Development and Indian Knowledge Traditions' from 16th December to 18th December, 2019 at Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth, Veliyanad, Ernakulam, Kerala, India.
- ✓ 2 Day Pre-Conference Workshop on 'Research on Sastra-s in Contemporary Times' on 14th-15th December, 2019 by Dr Dharm P S Bhawuk, at Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth, Veliyanad, Ernakulam, Kerala, India.
- ✓ 2 Day Pre-Conference Workshop on 'Fundamentals of Qualitative Research Methodology' on 14th-15th December, 2019 by Dr Kumar Ravi Priya, at Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth, Veliyanad, Ernakulam, Kerala, India.
- ✓ 29th Annual Convention of NAOP, India, and International Conference on "Making Psychology Deliverable to the Society" on 20th -22nd December, 2019 at Pondicherry University, Pondicherry, India.
- ✓ 6th International Conference on Stress Management ICSM 2019. Theme: "Assessments-Interventions-Technologies-Professionalism" organized by International Stress Management Association from 29th-30th November 2019 at GITAM HBS Campus, Hyderabad, India.
- ✓ 31st World Summit on Positive Psychology, Mindfulness, Psychotherapy and Social

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Sciences to be held on 27th-28th March,
2020 at Barcelona, Spain.

Members Section

Team NPPA looks forward to hear from you about your ideas, thoughts and research work in the area of Positive Psychology.

We welcome original contributions in the form of brief write-ups about your research and practice initiatives focused on Positive Psychology in India. Mail us your articles at admin@nppaassociation.org

- Contributions should be **up to 200 words only** and include appropriate citations wherever required.
- Each issue will carry **selected contributions** covered under the section 'NPPA Members Section'

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