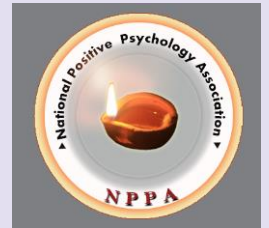


National Positive Psychology Association



Contents

01: *The Scholarly Nook*

02: *The Oracle*

03: *Latest Updates*

04: *Members Section*

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 promoting greater outreach of positive psychological research and resources to the general public. Read ahead to know more!

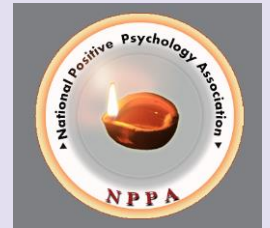
Promoting Community Outreach in Positive Psychology

Traditionally, researchers have been using peer-reviewed journals as the platform for

disseminating their scholarly work. While this helps them in reaching out to other scholars, potential collaborators, and funding agencies, it also creates a bridge between academicians, practitioners, and the general public. Currently there has been considerable emphasis on translational research and knowledge translation in the social and behavioural sciences. Consequently, those working in the domain of Positive Psychology (PP) must aim to bridge the existing gap between researchers and practitioners, and researchers and the general public for whom their findings, and research outcomes are intended.

While the terms basic and applied research are familiar to psychologists, translational research and knowledge translation may not be as familiar. Translational research is the “...effective translation of the new knowledge, mechanisms, and techniques generated by advances in basic science research into new approaches for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disease that is essential for improving health” (Fontanarosa & DeAngelis,

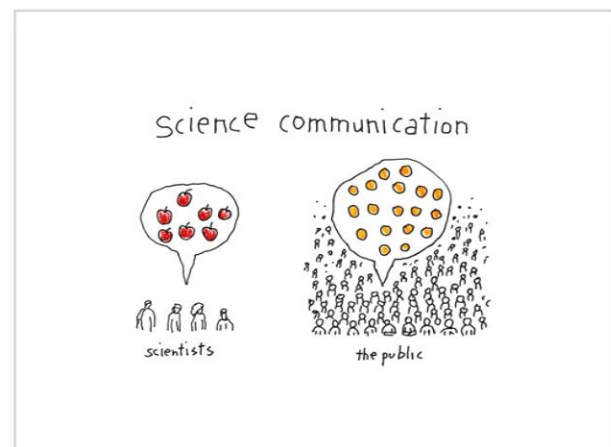
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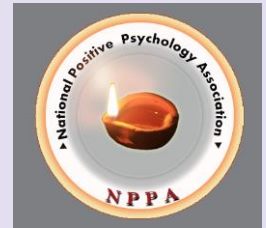
2002, p.1728). Such ‘translation’ includes the discovery of new drugs, vaccines, health care products and delivery systems, and improved treatment approaches. Knowledge translation is another closely related aspect that is defined as “The synthesis, exchange, and application of knowledge by relevant stakeholders to accelerate the benefits of global and local innovation in strengthening health systems and improving people’s health” (WHO, 2005, p.2). Both translational research and knowledge translation have a deep-rooted history in the medical sciences where they aim at reducing the gap between basic and clinical research, and clinical research and healthcare practice, respectively (Knowledge Nudge, 2017). Although this is one way of conceptualizing the difference between the two, eventually they both aim at bridging the know-do gap, producing policy-relevant research and evidence-based health-care practices, and improving our health. Further, these two terms also appear to have been used synonymously in the extant

literature (e.g. Rushmer, Ward, Nguyen & Kuchenmüller, 2018).

While “science and practice have become co-equal” in the medical sciences, the social and behavioural sciences have also been acknowledging the significance of translational research. In these fields, translational research “addresses how basic behavioral processes inform the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, and delivery of services for mental illness, and, conversely, how knowledge of mental illness increases our understanding of basic behavioral processes” (National Advisory Mental Health Council, 2000, p. iii).



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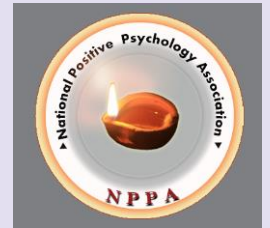


Singh & Sigroha (2019) recently released a book that specifically addresses the need and potential for translational research in the field of Applied Psychology in the Indian context. This book titled “Translational Research and Applied Psychology in India” sheds light on the potential of translational research in educational and work settings, and in rural Indian communities. It also outlines some of the potential avenues of translational research, viz. cyberspace, and religious and spiritual practices. Relevant theoretical frameworks, possible barriers, professional and ethical issues, and recommendations for better practice that will guide practitioners and other stakeholders (NGOs, governmental organizations, mental health advocacy forums) in their attempts to inculcate a culture of translational research in India have also been highlighted. Similarly, if we are to think about translational research in Positive Psychology, we would need to focus on how the theories, and academic scholarship from this field can help Positive Psychology practitioners, and promote translational

research outcomes. Positive Psychological Interventions (PPIs) and activities that are based on strong theoretical underpinnings of Positive Psychology can make significant contributions in this regard. Positive Psychologists have designed a wide range of PPIs and activities that are aimed at improving well-being, increasing positive emotions, thoughts, experiences, and interactions, character strengths, gratitude, forgiveness, and the like. In addition to the already existing repertoire of these PPIs and positive activities, Positive Psychology also has vital links to the other sub-disciplines of Psychology including clinical, personality, health, counselling, and industrial Psychology. Therefore, Positive Psychologists are well-positioned to contribute to the development and propagation of translational research in the behavioural sciences.

However, we also need to rethink our strategies for disseminating our findings in a way that reduces the existing know-do gap. Can we go beyond the traditional pathway of communication (i.e., publications in peer-

National Positive Psychology Association



reviewed journals) to ensure a greater outreach of positive psychological resources (e.g. research outcomes, interventions, positive psychology related activities) amongst the general population? If so, in what ways?

*Blogg*ing is one such option at the disposal of Positive Psychologists. Blogs are “...shared online websites written in the form of journals by individuals, groups or corporations about any topic or issue they want” (Australian Psychological Society, n.d.). Blogs date back to 1994 with Links.net being one of the first ever blogs to have been created (Shevked & Dakovski, 2006). From acting as a form of online diary to serving as a storehouse of information on fashion, food, travel, socio-political and economic issues, and mental health promotion, blogs have come a long way.

Their therapeutic value has also been examined by Boniel-Nissim & Barak (2013). They found a significant improvement in several parameters of mental well-being

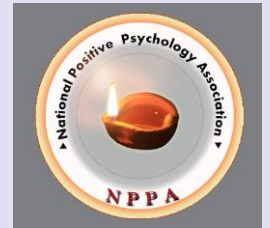
among adolescents who maintained blogs for a 10-week period.



Over time, scientists have also recognized the value of blogs as a medium of science communication. Within Psychology, for example, the *BPS Research Digest*, and the *NUIG Health Psychology Blog* have been serving as academic blogs, while *Psychology Today* and *PsyBlog* serve as platforms for disseminating psychological know-how to the general public (Relojo, 2017).

Academic writing is very formal with heavy use of jargons. Thus, the general public has little motivation to read articles published in

National Positive Psychology Association



scientific journals. However, it is not enough to use jargon-free and non-formal language while communicating via blogs. Positive

Psychologists working in the context of the Indian set-up need to consider the linguistic composition of their audience. Using English as the primary mode of communication may limit their audience to the English-speaking, urban Indians, and act as a barrier between

Positive Psychologists, and the non-English speaking Indian population. To increase our readership, and to raise greater awareness of PPIs and ongoing Positive

Psychology related research we should consider using the state language, in addition to English, and Hindi (which is spoken and understood by 43.63% of Indians). Further, we need to incorporate images in our blogs to

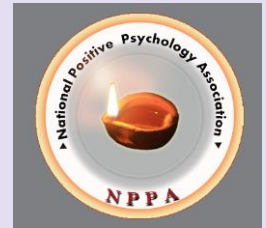
make them more entertaining, and to increase recall in our readers (Gardiner, Sullivan & Grand, 2018).



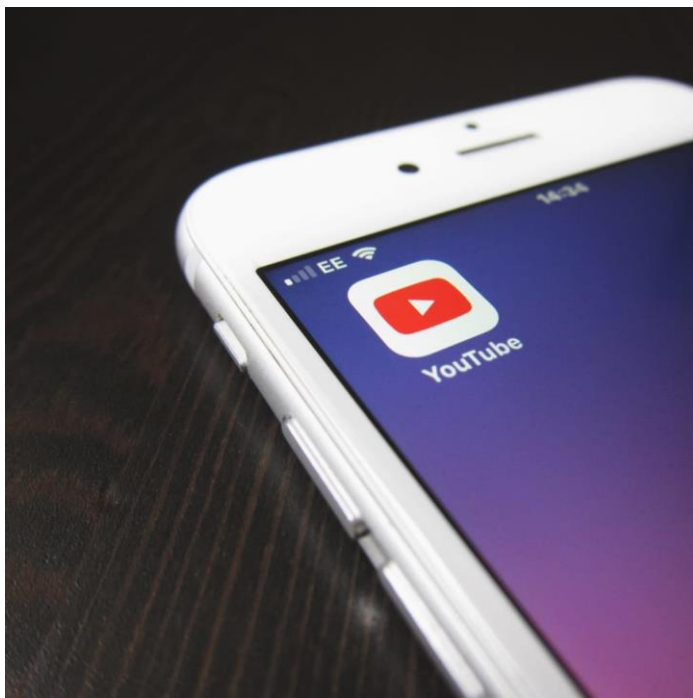
YouTube is another platform that we may use for communicating with the general public. Positive Psychologists in India have a great advantage in this regard. In April 2019 YouTube made known that with 225 million active users every month, India represents its largest and most

flourishing audience (Gadgets360, 2019). Hence, Positive Psychologists can capitalize on this opportunity and generate videos in Hindi, English and local languages to reach out to this ever-growing Indian audience.

National Positive Psychology Association



They can also collaborate with popular YouTubers to increase their chances of being heard. Initially this may be important because in addition to content related factors, some external or content-antagonistic factors also play a role in determining the popularity of any YouTube video. For instance, YouTube's recommendation system, and the video creator's social network on YouTube play an important role (Figueiredo et al., 2014).

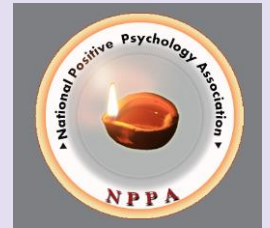


With respect to the content factors, on the other hand, video length is important. Lella (2014), for example, reports the average length of YouTube videos as being 4.4 minutes. In this context, Welbourne & Grant (2016) says "...if majority of the videos are short, then it is likely that most popular videos are short" (p.709). Hence, we must aim at churning out creative content that conveys our desired message within a brief time-frame.

Additionally, we must also remember to engage with the audience through the comments section. The questions, debates, and issues raised there may also provide the content creators significant inputs for their future videos as well as future research. Further, the significant questions raised in the comments section may be addressed in the beginning of the next videos that are uploaded by the content creator.

Another point to be remembered is that unlike blogs that often require no major technological expertise, video creation and

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editing is a skill and we may have to consider taking the help of a trained expert.

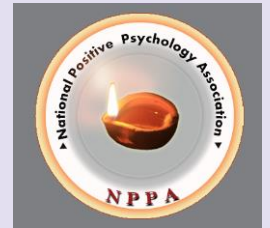
Thus, before venturing on YouTube as science communicators, we must be abreast of the various content and non-content related factors that may enhance or undermine the outreach of the videos generated by us.

Formal support for translational research: The Black Dog Institute, an Australian based not-for-profit enterprise has been working systematically for furthering and promoting the cause of mental health through its translational research initiatives. For

instance, they are currently examining the effectiveness of a smartphone-based application for improving sleep quality among teenagers with poor sleep patterns (source: <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/research/participate-in-our-research/for-young-people/dream-on>). The institute has developed an *Integrated Model of Knowledge Translation Exchange*, and works with all the key stakeholders in developing and implementing evidence-based practices. One such initiative was *HeadStrong*, a five-module educational resource developed for use in the classroom with adolescents. Its objective is to

The screenshot shows the Black Dog Institute website. At the top left is the logo, a stylized black and orange dog head. To its right are three buttons: 'Get help now' (orange), 'Fundraise' (blue), and 'Donate' (green). Further right are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn, along with a search icon. Below these is a navigation menu with links: 'Research', 'Clinical resources', 'Getting help', 'Education & training', 'Get involved', and 'About us'. The main content area features a dark blue background with a cartoon illustration of a blue fish-like character with a red cape, holding a yellow chick in its right hand and a blue chick in its left. The text on the left reads: 'Improving Sleep for Teens', 'Join a study to test the effectiveness of a smartphone app designed to help young people with sleep difficulties.', and a 'Read more' button with a right-pointing arrow.

National Positive Psychology Association



foster help-seeking behaviour in this age group. After ascertaining its effectiveness through a randomized controlled trial, it was distributed free-of-cost across the country through a website, from which it was downloaded 4212 times between 2014 - 2016. Further, the institute has also conducted numerous workshops and webinars to train the educators who are to conduct the intervention in the classroom (Werner-Seidler, Perry & Christensen, 2016).

Although there are several other distinguished institutions working on translational research outcomes (e.g. Karolinska Institutet, Sweden; Translational Research Informatics Centre, Japan), what makes the Black Dog Institute significant for us as psychologists is its focus on evidence-based practices and research outcomes in mental health. Most of the other organizations have had an almost exclusive focus on medical sciences. Similarly, in India we have the Indian Society of Translational Research (New Delhi) and the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (Faridabad).

They have been playing a key role in diminishing the knowledge-action gap in medical sciences.



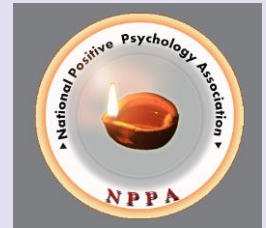
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एवं प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान
TRANSLATIONAL HEALTH SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE



In addition to these institutions, funding agencies – both governmental and private, also play an important role in furthering translational research.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), for instance has been providing a strong impetus for conducting research that

National Positive Psychology Association



are of a translational nature, through its funding initiatives.

Positive Technologies: As discussed at length in our first article (The Magic Leap of Technology into Well-Being Research; Issue 1), the emergence of virtual, augmented and mixed reality has opened newer avenues of research in Positive Psychology. Although not a medium for information dissemination, positive technologies such as these can augment translational research in this field. We can also develop and test the effectiveness of PPIs hosted on cyberspace, including Facebook, and YouTube.

In addition, Positive Psychologists must also take stock of a few other latest developments including digital wellbeing and social robots.

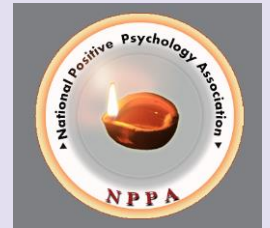
While smartphones have become an indispensable part of our lives, there are increasing concerns about their overuse. To bring about a balance in our use of technology, Google has been promoting 'digital wellbeing'. "We're working to ensure all of our products support your digital wellbeing" says their website (source: <https://wellbeing.google/>). Keeping in line with this commitment, Google has very recently launched six digital wellbeing apps on an experimental basis. These are Unlock Clock, We Flip, Desert Island, Post Box, Paper Phone, and Morph, and are available for download from Google Playstore. They help users to monitor their daily phone usage, and obtain a breakdown of which apps they use most often and for how long, pause the apps



Digital Wellbeing Get started For families Tools Our commitment

Great technology should
improve life, not distract from it.

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that act as distractors, set daily (time) limits for using specific apps, hide notifications temporarily, and turn off their work-related apps when they are at home, during the weekends or during vacations for better work-life balance.

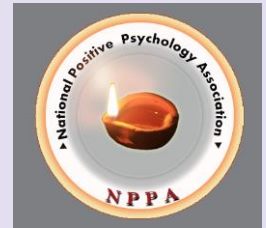
In addition to these apps, there are a large number of other smartphone apps that have been available for download since a long time. A few of these include Omvana, Sanvello, and Headspace. However, most of the so-called wellbeing apps have not undergone systematic examination. Calm, on the other hand, is one app that has been subjected to scientific investigation, and has been found to be efficacious in reducing stress, and improving mindfulness and self-compassion in a sample of college students (Huberty et al., 2019). Wellbeing focused smartphone applications that have been empirically shown to enhance wellbeing can serve as excellent example of translational research in PP.

Although not as parsimonious as these apps, social robots have also been found to improve

wellbeing levels, particularly in children who have special needs (Scassellati, Admoni & Matari, 2012), and in older people (Hutson, Lim, Bentley, Bianchi-Berthouze & Bowling, 2011). Research with social robots is at a very nascent stage and needs further investigation to ascertain its impact on wellbeing. However, most importantly, this technology needs to be made affordable for it to reach the homes of the common man. Be it virtual reality, smartphone-based wellbeing apps or social robots, as Positive Psychologists who intend to promote translational research, we need to figure out how to incorporate these technologies in the everyday lives of people in order to bring about a positive change.

However, it is not enough for us to develop, and test PPIs, or to talk about them via Blogs and YouTube videos. We must also build a framework for free and systematic distribution of these PPIs among the intended audience, and organize national workshops and webinars for training people to use them. Such large-scale implementation will not be possible without the support of funding

National Positive Psychology Association

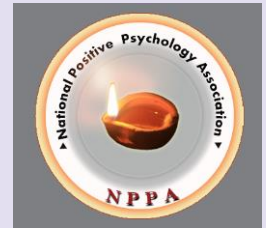


agencies. Thus, private donors and governmental funding agencies are also key stakeholders in any translational research initiative, be it in the medical or behavioural sciences.

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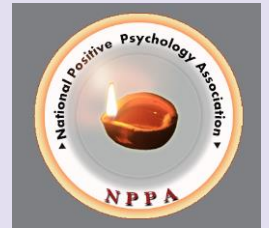
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The Oracle: Interview Series with Esteemed Professors

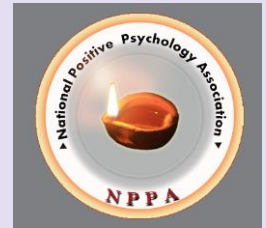
This new year we take the privilege to introduce all our readers to Prof. Rajbir Singh, one of the Advisory Committee Members of NPPA. He is currently a Professor of Psychology at the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences of SGT University, Gurugram, and has previously been associated with Kurukshetra University and Maharshi Dayanand University. Prof. Singh earned his PhD from the University of Rajasthan in 1981, and has been involved in teaching Psychology since 1982. He has a notable body of research work to his credit which includes over 60 research articles, 7 books, and 10 book chapters. Read ahead to know more about his illustrious journey in the field of Psychology, and his views about Positive Psychology.



1. What had stimulated your interest in Psychology?

It was in 1972, that had I enrolled in a Philosophy course during my under-graduation. My teacher introduced to me the word “Psychology” and its subject matter. I can’t recall anything else but Dr. Prem Sagar was the one who had stimulated my interest in this particular subject and the very next day I chose “Psychology” as an elective subject.

National Positive Psychology Association



2. How did your association with Psychology begin?

I can say it began through Martin Seligman's early experimental work on learned helplessness in animals. Being a student of animal behaviour and biopsychology, I followed his work, then, his address to the APA and declaration of Positive Psychology. I have gone through "Handbook of Character Strengths and Virtues" which further attracted me to the field of Positive Psychology.

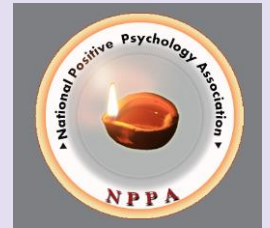
3. What do you feel about the way Positive Psychology has been developing in India, and where do you see Positive Psychology in India, in the next 5 years?

I think the pace of development of Positive Psychology in India is quite slow, not many universities include it in their curriculum, what to talk of a complete graduate or post-graduate programme in Positive Psychology? I see that Positive Psychology in India has found its inroads

through Health Psychology, particularly through the concept of wellbeing. A composite of Positive Health Psychology is more popular among the students and researchers, many of them embark upon it without a solid base in either Positive Psychology or Health Psychology. I feel that Positive Psychology shall become more popular in the next five years in India; and some Positive Psychology interventions might find their way to the field.



National Positive Psychology Association



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

I would say, that Positive Psychology is the most convincing and acceptable to everyone. It has otherwise helped to uplift the image of psychologists, whose association was not sought after earlier. Its thesis of “Life above zero” is full of energy and takes everyone towards ascendance. People value the concepts of Positive Psychology in their life. Its appeal for transformation is enchanting

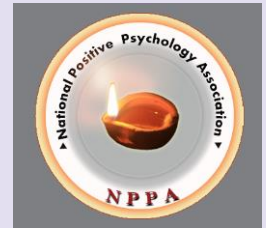
5. As someone who has been teaching, training and guiding scholars in Psychology several years, what kind of training would you suggest for students of Positive Psychology?

Positive Psychology should be introduced from the inception in teaching since its inclusion in curriculum inherently promotes positive way of life, better learning, creative thinking and soft skills. Later, students should be encouraged to take small projects within

and beyond their institutions with some Positive Psychology interventions. Our focus should be on applied research with sound parameters of outcome. As the outcome of Positive Psychology interventions are usually good and soothing which further motivates a researcher to be a practitioner.



National Positive Psychology Association



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

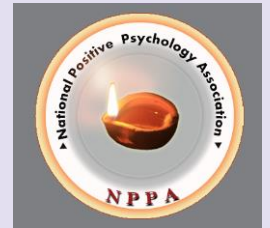
I believe a Positive Psychology research and training is a sort of action research which implies the active involvement of community participation and positive psychologists as the catalysts. There is a great promise of positive psychology for large scale application in the community in India. We all observe that people in general have a spiritual orientation in India besides an outward thrust for material sufficiency exists side by side. Neither we had the required number of professionals nor the facilities to help 7 to 10% of the population existing in a negative state or being distressed. All recent epidemiological surveys on mental health attest to the situation, globally as well in India. Let Positive Psychology play its role so that we embrace positive emotions, positive relationships and inclusive attitude. The nation is calling!

Latest Updates

NPPA endeavors to provide information about upcoming Psychology and Positive Psychology conferences and events as a public service. Inclusion of these events is not intended as an endorsement. We have not evaluated or authenticated these events.

- ✓ 46th National Annual Conference of Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists 2020. Theme of the Conference: “Clinical Psychology in Medical Setting: A Consultation Liaison Perspective”. 21st – 23rd **February** 2020, Chandigarh, Punjab, India.
- ✓ Employee Wellbeing Conference, 12th **March** 2020, Victoria Park Plaza, London, England.
- ✓ 5th Annual International Conference on Spirituality and Psychology 2020, 19th – 21st **March** 2020, Bali, Indonesia.
- ✓ Happiness Conference 2020, 20th – 21st **March** 2020, Singapore.
- ✓ ICPSBP 2020 14th International Conference on Psychological Sciences & Behavioural Psychology, 8th – 9th **April** 2020, Rome, Italy.

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- ✓ 4th Conference of Positive Psychology, 12th – 14th **June** 2020, Bydgoszcz, Poland.
- ✓ 10th European Conference on Positive Psychology, 24th – 27th **June** 2020, Reykjavik, Iceland.
- ✓ 32nd International Congress of Psychology, 28th – 31st **July** 2020, Prague, Czech Republic.
- ✓ 7th World Congress on Positive Psychology, 15th – 18th **July 2021**, Vancouver, Canada.

Montpellier, Gilda Corina Scarfe – Positive Action, Nadir Ali Kolachi – University of Fujairah, apart from a host of distinguished speakers. During the conference we presented Dr. Warner Woodworth a Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to build resilience and relieve human suffering over the past four decades. Overall it was two days of positive experiences for the participants that will surely lead to mindfulness, happiness and wellness”.

Members Section

We are happy to feature this information received from one of our readers:

Positive Psychology and Happiness Conference sponsored by LC Well

A two day ‘Positive Psychology and Happiness Conference’ sponsored by Mr. Lal Chand of LC Well (<https://www.lcwell.org/>) was held in November 2019 in Dubai. In the words of Mr. Chand, “The event attracted many bright minds including Warner Woodworth from Brigham Young University, Deborah Anne Dowling – Hult International Business School, Dr. Benedicte Gendron – University



Editor: Dr. Kamlesh Singh

Co-Editor: Shilpa Bandyopadhyay