INTRODUCTION

The recent years have witnessed an upsurge in the scientific study of human potentialities and goodness with an unprecedented momentum achieved after the formal establishment of Positive Psychology as a branch of inquiry in 2000. In the recent past, self-fulfilment, happiness, life satisfaction, well-being, contentment and gratitude have become the important psychological constructs to decipher the basic nature of human flourishing. The flourishing research has impacted the interventions of social institutions and educational institutions to achieve the most positive and fulfilling functioning. In psychological sense, the meaningfulness is most closely related with human flourishing. The researchers have argued that human flourishing occur when the life activities of the individuals are in consonance with the important values ensuing alive and authentic feeling. It has been found that happiness and meaning were included in the ratings of good life of people whereas in another view diverse set of mental health indicators reflecting happiness and the other meaningfulness denote human flourishing. Researchers have argued that to live within an optimal range of human functioning, one that connotes goodness, generativity, growth and resilience constitute human flourishing.

In essence, the science of Psychology witnessed a paradigm shift and took a new turn by studying positive aspects of human behaviours. The scientific study of well-being is one of the many constructs of positive psychology which has recently gained popularity in psychological literature. Well-being refers to the best possible psychological functioning and experience. It is the focus not only of everyday interpersonal inquiries such as “How are you?” but also of strong scientific study. Although the question, “How are you?” may seem simple enough, theorists have found the issue of well-being to be complex and controversial. The way well-being is defined and conceived influences the ensuing practices of government, teaching, therapy, parenting and preaching, as all such activities aim to change humans for
the better, and thus, require some vision of what “the better” is. Contemporary research on well-being has been derived from two general perspectives: the hedonic view and Eudaimonic view. The hedonic view focuses on happiness and defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance, and the Eudaimonic view focuses on meaning and self-realization and defines well-being in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning over a long period of time. It lies instead in the actualization of human potentials and conveying the belief that well-being consists of fulfilling or realizing one’s true nature. These two views have given rise to different research attention and a body of knowledge of well-being that is in some areas contradictory and in others opposite. New methodological developments relating to multilevel modelling and construct comparisons have also allowed researchers to formulate new questions for the field.

1.1 Perspectives of Human Flourishing

Various theoretical models have been put forth to explain the nature of human flourishing. Fredrickson and Losada (2005) have argued that flourishing is characterized by four main components: goodness, generative, growth, and resilience. According to Hone et al. (2014), there are four major streams of trends in the conceptualizations of human flourishing: Keyes (2002), Huppert and So (2013), Diener et al. (2010) and Seligman (2011). According to Keyes (2002), the presence of high levels of emotional, psychological and social wellbeing symptoms is essential for human flourishing and postulated human flourishing to comprise of emotional, social and psychological well-beings. The emotional component of flourishing consists of positive affect (interested), positive affect (happy) and life satisfaction, whereas psychological well-being comprises of positive relationships, purpose in life, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal growth and autonomy. The social well-being entails social contribution, social integration, social growth, social acceptance and social coherence (Keyes, 2005).
Huppert and So (2013) used the methodology of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) and the International Classification of Diseases (World Health Organization, 1993) to conceive the definition of flourishing which resulted in ten positive features such as competence, emotional stability, engagement, meaning, optimism, positive emotion, positive relationships, resilience, self-esteem, and vitality. Applying exploratory factor analysis and other statistics on ESS data of 43,000 Europeans, they come up with three factors: positive characteristics (emotional stability, vitality, optimism, resilience, and self-esteem), positive functioning (engagement, competence, meaning, and positive relationships), and positive appraisal (life satisfaction and positive emotion). Huppert and So (2013) argued that presence of positive emotion with four out of five positive characteristic and three out of four positive functioning features a flourisher. These two conceptions of human flourishing exhibit many similarities in measurement and conceptualizations (Hone et al., 2014). They also include hedonic as the first factor followed by eudaimonic as the second factor. These efforts have led to define human flourishing as the combination of the feeling good and functioning effectively (Huppert & So, 2013). The model of human flourishing of Huppert and So (2013) has also been applied to study the prevalence rate of this strength of various countries of the World.

The model of human flourishing of Diener et al. (2010) was based on the conceptions of many theorists such as Deci and Ryan (Ryan & Deci, 2001) and Ryff (1989) who advocated for universal human needs and effective functioning. These theorists label it psychological well-being which is an important component of humanistic theories of positive functioning. Ryff (1989) and Ryan and Deci (2001) argued that positive functioning (competence, self-acceptance, meaning and relatedness) with optimism, giving, and engagement significantly contribute to well-being (Seligman, 2006). According to Seligman (2011), well-being comprises of five components (positive emotions, engagement,
relationships, meaning in life and accomplishments; PERMA) having independent but correlated constructs.

The human flourishing entails a new and promising area of research having significant applications in the interventions of social institutions and educational institutions to achieve the most positive and fulfilling functioning. The researchers have demonstrated that the positive emotional feelings and sentiments convey more personal and psychological benefits than just a personal subjective experience. It has been reported to widen attention, broaden behavioural repertoires leading to expand skills, performance, intuition and creativity of the individuals. It also carries physiological benefits comprising significant and positive cardiovascular effects and predicts mental health, outcomes and longevity (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). The human flourishing and its components result into many substantial outcomes in addition to mental or physiological results. Self-efficacy, likability, and pro-social behaviour promote active involvement with goal pursuits in novel situations. The attributes of flourishing enhances the gradients and levels of motivation to work actively to pursue new goals with skills and resources leading to satisfy personal and societal goals.

It significantly impacts the academic achievement of the individuals. For example, it was reported that the individuals having high levels of flourishing were more likely to complete their university education, get better jobs, succeed in their jobs and exhibit lower work absenteeism (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005). This study also documented that flourishers are able to receive greater support and assistance from their co-workers and supervisors on their workplace as well as show wider social impact, community involvement, social relationships, overall social support, and perceived companionship than non-flourishers across culture.

The researchers have argued that flourishing research have important implications as an intervention technique which may facilitate levels of emotional, social, and psychological
wellbeing leading to positive mental health and functioning (Snyder, Lopez, & Pedrotti, 2011). Flourishing research has important implications for the students and their academic attainment and has the ability to increase attention and thought action repertoires of the students (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Keyes, 2002). In addition, the flourishing has usefulness in social engagement and instilling environmental mastery (Keyes, 2002).

There are contradictions in the operational meanings of the construct of human flourishing among the researchers. Keyes applied polythetic approach of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual which use and apply diagnostic criteria and identify the opposite of each symptom (American Psychiatric Association, 1987). It necessitates the presence of high levels of emotional, psychological and social well-being symptoms for human flourishing (Keyes, 2002). For example, as depression requires indications of anhedonia and malfunctioning, in the same manner the presence of hedonic symptoms and positive functioning for a person to be classified as flourishing (Keyes, 2002). This conceptualisation comprised of self-report assessment of functioning of the individuals at personal and social levels. This model also lend support from the conclusions of the studies on emotional wellbeing (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), distinctions between hedonic and eudaimonic well-beings (Ryff, 1989), and social well-being (Keyes, 1998). It resulted into a model of human flourishing which consists of three components emotional, social and psychological well-beings. The emotional component of flourishing consists of positive affect (interested), positive affect (happy) and life satisfaction, whereas psychological well-being comprises of positive relationships, purpose in life, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, personal growth and autonomy. The social well-being entails social contribution, social integration, social growth, social acceptance and social coherence. The Epidemiological studies with this measure have come up with the conclusions that human
flourishing is associated with superior physical, psychological, and psychosocial functioning (Keyes, 2005).

1.2 Personality

Personality has been defined as a coherent patterning of affect, behavior, cognition, and desires which represents integration over time and space (Ortony, Norman & Revelle, 2005). Various personality attributes have been shown to be associated with individual differences in affective level and environmental responsivity (Corr, 2008; Revelle, 1995). The most influencing theory of personality which has shown high degree of heuristic value is the Big Five Factor Model proposed by McCrae and Costa (1987). The theory conceives personality as the combination of five main dimensions which comprises of extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Extraversion refers to the degree to which an individual is sociable, cheerful, and active and an individual high on extraversion exhibits talkativeness, dominance, and gregariousness whereas agreeableness denotes friendliness and compliance in an individual. An individual high on this trait is good-natured, soft-hearted, and trusting whereas individual low in this variable would be more irritable, ruthless, and suspicious. Neuroticism indicates the dominance of experience of negative emotions and leads the individual with neuroticism to become more emotional, vulnerable, and anxious whereas those low on this trait shows calm, self-controlled and a greater sense of well-being. Conscientiousness refers to the extent to which an individual works hard, shows order and high self-discipline. The individuals high on this trait are driven, ambitious, and responsible whereas those low in this variable are negligent, lazy and irresponsible. The openness refers to the extent to which one is artistic, imaginative, and has intellectual interests. Those high in openness are creative, imaginative, and prefer variety whereas those low in this variable are uncreative, down to earth, and prefer routine.
1.3 Triguna Theory of Personality

Vedic theory asserts that while the classification scheme of the three gunas comprises all aspects of material, social and psychological reality, the gunas themselves are related to each other (Das, 1999). The Sattva guna comprises the qualities of cleanliness, truthfulness, gravity, dutifulness, detachment, discipline, mental equilibrium, respect for superiors, contentment, sharp intelligence, sense control, and staunch determination (Dasgupta, 1961; Prabhupada, 1986). Dasgupta (1961) describes the sattvic quality as being free from attachment and vanity and absolutely unruffled in success and failure. A person with a sattvic quality is characterized by satisfaction, simplicity, gravity, self-control and purification (Dasgupta, 1961). The rajas guna includes intense activity, desire for sense gratification, little interest in spiritual elevation, dissatisfaction with one's position, envy of others, and a materialistic mentality (Das, 1999). According to Bhagavad-gita, rajasic activity is characterized by an action performed with great effort by one seeking to gratify his desires, and it is enacted from a sense of false ego and a person predominated by rajas guna is described as greedy, envious, impure and moved by joy and sorrow (Das, 1999). The basic qualities associated with tamas guna include mental imbalance, anger, ignorance, arrogance, depression, laziness, procrastination and a feeling of helplessness. The quality of tamas overcomes the illumination of knowledge and leads to many errors and it leads to ignorance, carelessness, idleness and sleep (Dasgupta, 1961).

1.4 Self-compassion

Self-compassion, a construct from Buddhist thought, refers to self-attitude and self-evaluations (Neff, 2003a). The researchers have reported a positive correlations among self-compassion, life satisfaction, social connectedness, emotional intelligence and happiness as well as less anxiety, depression, shame, fear of failure and burnout (Barnard & Curry, 2011; Williams, Stark, & Foster, 2008). The understanding of self-compassion has given the
development of clinical intervention method to mitigate mental health symptoms. Buddhism philosophy argues that compassion entails being moved by and desiring to alleviate both others’ and one’s own distress (Neff, 2003a; Neff, 2003b) and did not divide compassion into self and others (Neff, 2003a). According to Neff (2003a), self-compassion has three components with two parts each that are exhibited during times of pain and failure. These three concepts are: (a) being kind and understanding toward oneself rather than being self-critical, (b) seeing one’s fallibility as part of the larger human condition and experience rather than as isolating, and (c) holding one’s painful thoughts and feelings in mindful awareness rather than avoiding them or over identifying with them.

Self-kindness involves extending forgiveness, empathy, sensitivity, warmth, and patience to all aspects of oneself including all of one’s actions, feelings, thoughts, and impulses (Gilbert & Irons, 2005; Neff, 2003a). Self-kindness facilitates affirmation in the state of failure and helps to believe that one deserves love, happiness and affection. Conversely, self-judgment comprises of hostility, demeaning, and critical of one’s self or aspects of one’s self (Neff, 2003a) and causes to reject one’s own feelings, thoughts, impulses, actions, and worth (Brown, 1998). The pain it causes can equal or exceed the pain of the eliciting situation (Germer, 2009).

Buddhist philosophy assumes that all human beings are intimately connected and it is wrong to hold the belief that one is separate from others (Brown, 1998). The humanity entails recognizing our connection to others, particularly in our confusion, sorrows, imperfections, and weaknesses. Common humanity involves forgiving oneself for being fully human-for being limited and imperfect (Neff, 2003a). Generally, most of the people make a distance from others in times of pain or frustration. Assuming all the responsibilities of failures and negative feelings make a person withdraw him from others and leave him alone to face his inadequacies of failures. Mindfulness consists of the awareness and acceptance of the present
moment (Shapiro, Brown, & Biegel, 2007) and it helps an individual to experience and learn from the present without the distractions of self-evaluations or worries about the past or future (Neff, 2003a). Contrarily, over identification entails rumination of personal limitations which results into the constriction of view that prevents close experience of the present (Neff & Vonk, 2009). Over identification magnifies the worth of failures (Shapiro et al., 2007).

1.5 Achievement Goal Orientations

Achievement goal is a set of beliefs of an individual reflecting the reasons behind his approach and engage in academic and learning tasks which is expressed by his concern for personal ability, normative social comparison with others, preoccupation with the perception of others, a desire for public recognition for performance and a need to avoid looking incompetent (Midgley et al., 1998). It also reflects an individual’s focus on task completion and understanding, learning, mastery, solving problems and developing new skills (Midgley et al., 1998). Academic goal orientation has its root in goal-as-motives theory which argued that all actions are given meaning, direction, and purpose by the goals that individuals seek out, and that the quality and intensity of behaviour will change as these goals change (Covington, 2000).

The goal theory assumes the role of purpose in motivation attitudes and behaviour (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Thus, academic goal orientation may be defined as individuals’ set of beliefs that reflect the reasons why they approach and engage in academic tasks (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). The researchers have proposed two types of general goal orientations as per the goal theory (Covington, 2000). Few researchers classify goals as ego or task-involved (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002) whereas some others classify it as performance and learning goals (Dweck, 1999). Ames (1992) divides goals into performance and mastery goals. The former is characterized by self-questions such as “Will I look smart?” which entails a concern for personal ability, a normative social comparison with others,
preoccupation with the perception of others, a desire for public recognition for performance and a need to avoid looking incompetent (Covington, 2000). On the other hand, learning goal orientation reflects the way the task is done (such as How can I do this task?) and consists of a focus on task completion and understanding, learning, mastery, solving problems, developing new skills and an appreciation for what one learns (Covington, 2000).

The above discussion demonstrates that the focus of research in psychology have taken a new turn with more emphasis on human strengths and virtues which constitute, hitherto, little known aspects of human behaviours. It can also be seen that psychology has shifted its attention from studying only human problems to the study of human potential. Traditional approaches in psychology assumed that human performance including academic achievements is determined and regulated by cognitive factors only whereas the new paradigm of positive psychology has realized the important role of human potential and non-cognitive factors in shaping the indices of performance. In addition, this new shift has motivated the researchers to look into the psychological constructs having their origin in Indian system of knowledge.