

# UNDERSTANDING MEANING IN LIFE, MEANINGFUL WORK AND HAPPINESS:

## A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON DOCTORS

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to understand meaning in life, meaningful work, and happiness in a sample of doctors. The medical profession is considered highly noble. However, it has also been found that many doctors suffer from burnout. In order to get a clear and more nuanced understanding of meaning in life, meaningful work, and happiness in doctors a qualitative study was conceptualized. A semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 doctors (Males = 5, Females = 5) in the age range of 30-55 years working in various hospitals in Delhi and Punjab. The interviews were transcribed and data thoroughly read to attain significant themes. The following themes emerged from thematic analysis of the interviews: Work as a source of meaning and happiness, happiness, social service, fulfilling interpersonal relationships, and good working environment. The themes along with codes and example responses are presented. A thematic map is also presented for a clear view of the themes. Implications of the study in terms of enhancing meaning in life, meaningful work, and happiness are discussed.

**Keywords:** Doctors, meaning in life, meaningful work, happiness

### INTRODUCTION

Several years ago, a growing number of psychologists became concerned that the field of psychology overemphasized on the negative aspects of behavior at the cost of celebrating the positive nature of human behavior. Martin Seligman introduced the paradigm of positive psychology that aims to use scientific methodology to discover and promote the factors that allow individuals, groups, organizations and communities to thrive. Understanding and facilitating happiness and well-being is the central objective of positive psychology (Seligman, 2002). Thus, happiness remains an important construct in positive psychology literature. Happiness has been found to be closely related to positive and fulfilling relationships, health, wealth, job satisfaction, religion, recreation etc. However, few years ago a new approach has emerged to explain the importance of one's work in the field of happiness. While many studies have established the role of variables such as job satisfaction, and work motivation in determining happiness, some other crucial variables that have been highlighted by researchers recently are meaning in life and meaningful work.

### Happiness

For Buddha, the path to happiness starts from understanding the root causes of suffering. Socrates believed that happiness can be attained by human effort. While Confucius believed in investing in intimate ties and living healthily, Aristotle supported the view that happiness is the central purpose of human life. The relationship between happiness and meaning in life has long been debated. Baumeister and his colleagues (2013) reported that happiness is the satisfaction of one's desires and needs while meaning is unique human activity of self-exploration and integration of past, present and future experiences. Other theorists on the contrary believe that happiness and meaning are similar in certain respects such as productivity, interaction between people.

Subjective well-being is the aspect of happiness that can be empirically measured and is defined as a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his/her own life (Diener, Lucas & Oishi, 2002). Moreover, many theories of happiness have been proposed since Aristotle's brilliant insights. These theories can be categorized into the following groups (Diener et al., 2002):

1. Need and goal satisfaction theories entail the idea that the reduction of tension and achieving one's goals leads to happiness.
2. Process or activity theories are the more contemporary theories that purport engagement in an activity itself provides happiness. Most notably, Csikszentmihalyi (1975) suggested that people are happiest when they are engaged in interesting activities that match their level of skill.
3. Genetic and personality predisposition theories suggest that to some degree people are born prone to be happy or unhappy. It was estimated that 40% of the variability in positive emotions and 55% of the variability in negative emotions could be predicted by genetic variation (Tellegen et al., 1988).

Furthermore, in his book *Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth*, Diener and Diener (2008) summarize the results from his 25 years of research on happiness. They highlighted four major characteristics for a happy life. Firstly, psychological wealth is beyond money. It encompasses one's attitudes, goals and work engagement. Secondly, happiness not only evokes positive feelings but is also advantageous for relationships, work and health. Thirdly, it helps us to set realistic expectations about happiness. Fourthly, thinking is vital for happiness.

Seligman is another leading authority in the field of positive psychology. Seligman (2002) found that the most satisfied, upbeat people were those who had discovered and exploited their unique combination of 'signature strengths', such as humanity, temperance and persistence. Seligman's vision of happiness combines Confucius and Aristotle's ideas of virtue ethics with modern psychological theories of motivation.

Seligman (2002) highlighted that happiness has three dimensions that can be cultivated: the pleasant life, the good life and the meaningful life. Pleasant life is attained if one learns to enjoy simple pleasures such as companionship, the natural surroundings and our physical requirements. Good life is experienced through exploration of one's unique virtues and using them to enhance life. Meaningful life is one marked by a sense of fulfilment and purpose for a greater good.

In his book *Authentic Happiness* (2002), Seligman proposed three 'orientations' of being happy; Pleasure involves maximizing positive emotions and minimizing negative emotions; Engagement involves working on tasks that allow one to experience a state of 'flow'. Meaning refers to leading a life focussing on the greater good beyond individual interests.

Seligman (2011) published another book '*Flourish*' in which he proposed the PERMA Model an alternative to his original theory of happiness. PERMA model involves addition of two more dimensions to happiness; Accomplishment and Positive Relationships. The five elements of the model form the acronym; Pleasure (P); Engagement (E); Relationships(R); Meaning (M); Accomplishment (A).

Lyubomirsky (2001) an eminent researcher in the field of happiness found certain cognitive and motivational processes such as social comparison, reduction in cognitive dissonance, perception of the people, self-evaluation and rumination that helps to differentiate between people who report exceptionally high and low levels of happiness.

Happiness brings with it a variety of rewards not only for the individual at a personal level but also for the community and society as a whole (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). These rewards include higher productivity, improved work quality, greater social rewards such as greater social connections, more satisfying relationships, more friends, powerful social support, higher activity, a sense of flow during tasks.

### **Meaning in life**

Victor Frankl was one of the first thinkers to suggest that people need meaning in life. He is widely regarded as a pioneer in the study of meaning. His early works emphasized on the importance of value as part of living a meaningful life highlights the story of how he survived the Holocaust by finding personal meaning in the experience, which gave him the will to live through it (Frankl, 1946).

Frankl (1959) identified three basic sources through which people find meaning in life. These include love, work, and suffering. Love is the strongest bond between people leading to inspiration and sacrifice. Without work, people easily fall into aimless existence. He notes that meaning in life differs from person to person and from situation to situation. Thus, he asserts that there is not a general meaning in life for all of humanity but rather a unique meaning that varies at any given moment.

In his famous book *Meanings of Life* (1991), Baumeister argued that people seek not just happiness but also meaning in life. Baumeister and his colleagues (2012) found fulfilment of one's needs and desires leads to higher levels of happiness but had no relevance for meaningfulness. Baumeister and Vohs (2005) identified four major needs associated with finding meaning in life. Purpose is the first need and can be distinguished between goals and fulfilments. Goal is a vision of a desirable future situation. If one lives with a purpose in life and the events in the present are organized then goal can be reached. There are long-term and short-term goals.

Value is the second need that can justify one's action. Values are often arranged in a hierarchical pattern. Human beings are predisposed to gain values easily however they still remain dependent on culture for their choices.

Efficacy is the third need which refers to the belief that one can make a difference. Sense of efficacy is experienced when there is moderately difficult goal. If a task is too easy then there is less satisfaction and if it is too difficult then it increases risk of failure (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009).

The final need is self-worth defined as the desire to feel one is a worthy person. To increase self-worth, two strategies are commonly used. Downward social comparison involves comparison of oneself with others who are worse off in some way which leads to feeling of superiority (Wills, 1981). Another influential strategy is self-serving bias (Bradley, 1978). It refers to the tendency to attribute success to one's virtues and failures to the external circumstances.

Michael Steger also highlighted the importance of meaningful living. He suggested that meaning in life encompasses a strong desire to make sense of experiences, exploration of the self-identity and finding the purpose in life. In other words, meaning in life is the feeling that people have that their lives and experiences make sense and matter. Research on meaning in life suggests that amount of meaning experienced by individuals is independent of how diligently they seek meaning.

Meaning involves two components: Comprehension and Purpose (Steger 2009; Steger et al 2006). Comprehension is the ability to make sense of one's life and how one operates in the world. Purpose, on the other hand is one or more over arching long term life aspirations that are self-concordant and motivate relevant activity (Steger, Sheline, Merriman & Kashdan 2012). Steger, Oishi and Kesebir (2011) found a moderate positive relationship between in meaning in life and life satisfaction. The dynamic interplay between search for meaning and people's experience of meaning in life predicted life satisfaction (Steger, Kawabatta, et al., 2008). Moreover, finding meaning in life has been associated with identity exploration, identity commitment as well as overall well-being.

Dezutter, Casalin, Wachholtz, Luyckx, Hekking and Vandewiele (2013) conducted a study on meaning of life as an important factor for the psychological well-being in a sample of 481 chronically ill patients. Results supported four distinguishable profiles - High Presence High Search, Low Presence High Search, High Presence Low Search, and Low Presence Low Search with specific patterns in relation to well-being and acceptance. Kashdan and McKnight (2013) investigated the commitment towards purpose of life in individuals suffering from social anxiety disorder (SAD). Results showed that being committed to a purpose in life provides enrichment to the lives of people with SAD. Steger, Oishi and Kesebir (2011) investigated the moderating role of the search for meaning in satisfaction in 122 undergraduate students. Results from correlation revealed that the relationship between meaning in life and life satisfaction was moderated by the extent to which the participant was searching for meaning in his or her life.

### **Meaningful work**

Work remains one of the most integral parts of any individual's life. More than 50% of the non-retired adult population spends a major part of their day at work. Thus, no research on happiness can be complete without considering happiness at work. Work also remains an important part of life in variety of ways such as producing income, influencing self-esteem, carving opportunities for meaningful activities, and providing the goods and services needed by society. Thus, it is important to engage in meaningful work that is challenging as well as interesting for the individual to perform.

What is referred to as calling mainly involves the perception of one's work to be meaningful and serving a higher purpose (e.g., Dik & Duffy, 2009). Csikszentmihalyi (1975) suggested that people are happiest when they are engaged in interesting activities that match their level of skill. He called the state of mind that results

from this matching of challenges and skill “flow” and argued that people who often experience flow tend to be very happy.

Horowitz, Suchman, Branch, Frankel (2003) in their study of meaning in medical practice used narrative analysis to study the stories of doctors found the following three themes: a fundamental change in the doctor’s perspective, a connection with patients, and a difference made in someone’s life. A study conducted by Chirayath and Joseph (2020) on workplace spirituality and employee engagement in Karnataka hospitals showed that there is a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and employee engagement of junior resident doctors. These findings suggest that in spite of high stress levels in their respective fields, individuals still continue with their jobs depending on how they approach their work and what they get from it which remains vital in learning how to achieve the best possible results for individuals and organizations.

Moreover, meaningful work can come from the individual as well as the organization. Some people bring a sense of meaning and purpose with them to the workplace, and some organizations successfully create a meaningful workplace which involves each employee into the tasks in order to ensure victory, team spirit and culture at work. The theoretical model of ‘Work as meaning’ proposed by Steger and colleagues (2009) suggests that it is important to understand one’s self, one’s organization, and one’s position within an organization that further motivates the individual to pursue one or more consistent purposes.

Finding meaning in one’s work helps people to transcend their own self-interests and pursue goals for the greater good of the society. Hence finding meaning in one’s work benefits the individual as well as the organization. Meaningful work has been found to improve work motivation and performance (Roberson, 1990). Moreover, when people find meaning in their work, they begin to develop better understanding of the kind of work at which they will be most effective as well as a better sense of self efficacy about career decisions.

Furthermore, individuals engaged in meaningful work report greater well-being and satisfaction with work. Finding meaning in one’s work has also been associated with greater morale, increased productivity, and lower turnover. In addition, people who seek meaning in life are, indeed, satisfied by experiencing meaning in their work which provides an avenue for satisfying that search, yielding wellbeing, career self-efficacy.

Steger (2012) identified certain key features of meaningful work and also proposed measurement techniques that directly correspond with these dimensions: -

- 1) The first feature involves positive meaning (PM) that remains a strong part of work psychology and captures people’s judgement about their work to carry significance and be meaningful.
- 2) The second feature involves meaning making through work (MM) which suggests that there is a common overlap between one’s work and one’s life work (Michaelson, 2005). Empirical evidence has shown that work usually remains a vital source of meaning in life in general. Steger and Dik (2010) suggested that meaningful work helps people to understand themselves and their surroundings, which paves way for personal growth.
- 3) The third feature involves greater good motivations (GG) referring to the desire to make a positive impact on others by one’s work.

Steger and Dik (2009) investigated the relationship between meaning in life and meaningful work. A total of 231 introductory psychology students were selected for the study. Meaning in life (2006), Brief Calling scale (2008), Career Attitudes (1996) were administered on the participants. It was found that people seeking global-level meaning in life reported greater well-being and self-efficacy in choosing a career if they experienced domain level meaning in their careers.

Dik, Sargent and Steger (2008) examined the goals and motivations of people striving for career self-efficacy. The sample consisted of 255 students in the mean age of 19.54 years. Findings suggested that meaning in life is related to calling. Experiencing meaning at either the global or domain level was related to higher well-being and career decision efficacy highlighting strong relation between meaningful work and presence of meaning in life.

Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre (1989) conducted a study on optimal experience in work and leisure. The sample consisted of 139 workers recruited from five large companies in the age range of 19 to 63 years. Respondents carried electronic paging devices that emitted seven daily signals. All the variables measuring the quality of experience, except relaxation and motivation, are more affected by flow than by whether the respondent is working or not.

## PRESENT STUDY

Work remains a crucial aspect of one's life. Feeling productive at work, not being alone, and being connected to others has been found to contribute to both happiness and meaning. When people find a sense of meaning in their work, they are more likely to be satisfied with their job thereby becoming happier to have found an overall meaning in life.

There have been very few studies on meaningful work and meaning in life in the Indian context especially with reference to doctors. Therefore, through this study, the researchers attempted to qualitatively understand the intricacies of meaning in life, meaningful work and happiness in doctors. Saving lives, giving back to the society has long been seen as a fulfilling reason to take up the medical profession. However, in the recent past an alarming set of statistics reveal that approximately one-third of physicians' report of experiencing burnout at any given point suggesting they may no longer be happy with their work or their working environment. Thus, this research aims at understanding what gives the doctors happiness, meaning in their work and their life in general.

## METHOD

### Design

The present study used the qualitative approach to study meaning in life, meaningful work and happiness in a sample of doctors. A semi-structured interview was carried out with 10 doctors and thematic analysis was done.

### Sample

Doctors were selected for this study because medical profession is considered highly noble. Doctors are engaged in the service of humanity and are assumed to have found the meaning in life. Since they interact with a very large section of the society, it was interesting to capture the factors that contribute to their happiness, meaning in life, and work. The sample consisted of 10 doctors (Males = 5, Females = 5) in the age range of 30-55 years working in various hospitals in Delhi and Punjab.

### Tools

#### Semi-Structured Interview

In order to gain a deeper and rich understanding of the variables of the research, a semi-structured interview was carried out with the participants. Following three questions were asked:

Question 1: What is happiness according to you?

Question 2: What gives your life meaning?

Question 3: Does your work in any way contribute in giving meaning to your life? Please explain.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interview data of the 10 participants were transcribed. Thematic analysis was used to find out the significant themes. Responses of the participants were carefully and thoroughly read many times so that codes could be derived. The codes were then read again and analyzed to see the emerging themes from the interview data. The significant themes were noted down. A thematic map was drawn based on the themes.

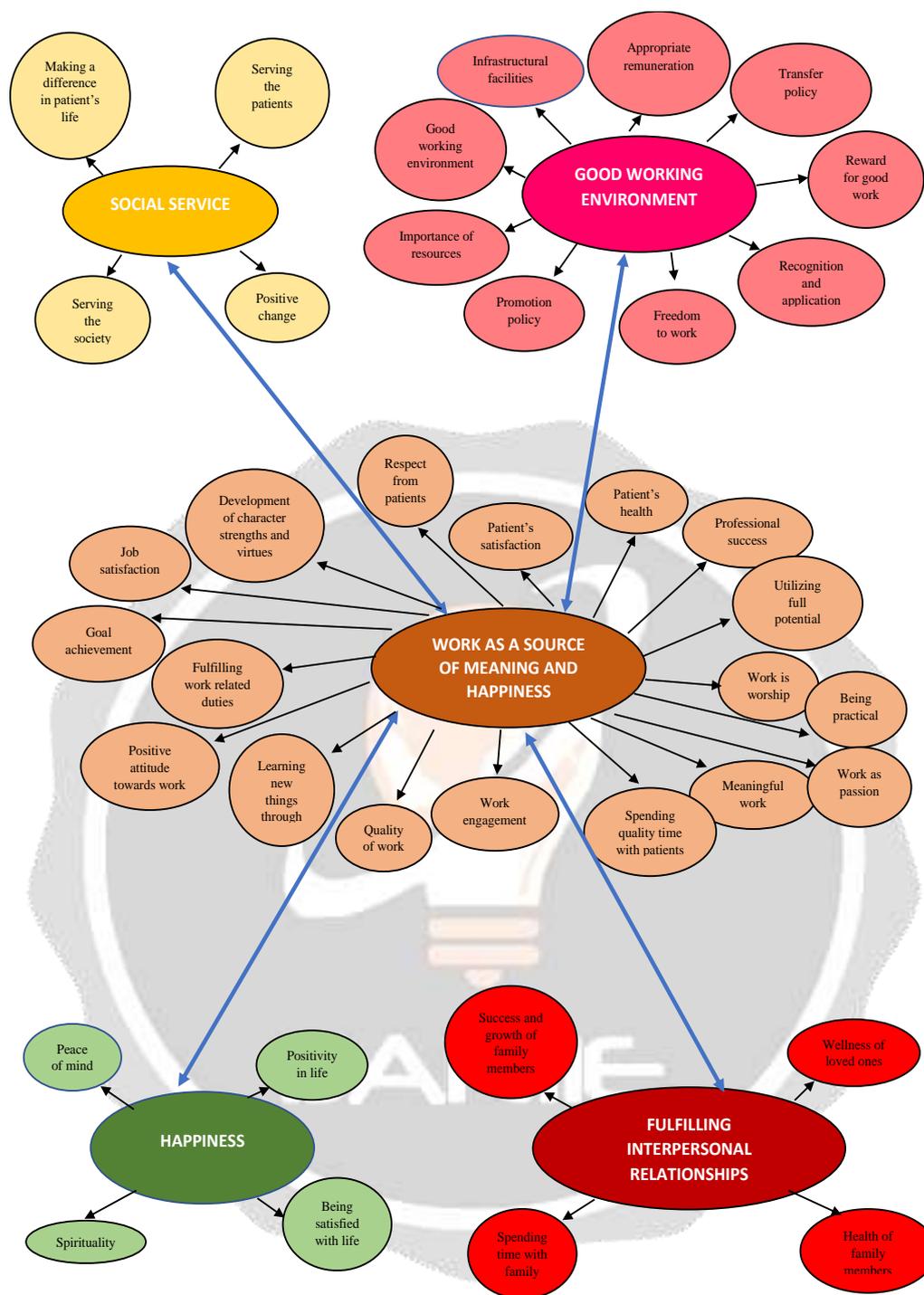
**Table 1:** Thematic analysis

Themes	Codes	Examples
Work as a source of meaning and happiness	<i>Respect from patients</i>	"Getting respect from my patients gives me meaning".

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Examples</b>
	<i>Patient satisfaction</i>	<p>“Patient’s happiness and satisfaction adds to my level of job satisfaction”</p> <p>“patient’s happiness really satisfies me”</p> <p>“Patient’s satisfaction is one factor that adds to my level of satisfaction”</p> <p>“My patient’s level of satisfaction is extremely satisfying for me”</p>
	<i>Patient’s health</i>	<p>“patient’s health is of utmost importance to me”</p> <p>“patient’s satisfaction and health are very important”</p>
	<i>Development of character strengths and virtues</i>	<p>“Another contribution of my work to life is development of discipline and patience”</p> <p>“I have found contentment from my work”</p> <p>“I have become a better human being by pursuing this noble field. The amount of patience and perseverance I have developed is unparalleled”</p>
	<i>Job satisfaction</i>	<p>“Professional satisfaction gives me immense happiness and patient’s happiness adds to my job satisfaction”</p> <p>“Job satisfaction adds to my happiness”</p> <p>“My job is not transferable which is dissatisfying”</p>
	<i>Goal achievement</i>	<p>“Achieving my personal as well as professional goals”</p> <p>“achieving my goals”</p> <p>“inability to fully achieve my goal is dissatisfaction”</p> <p>“Goal achievement is very vital for me”</p>
	<i>Work engagement</i>	<p>“engagement in work and fulfillment of goal that I set”</p>
	<i>Professional success</i>	<p>“I have found greater exposure to the world through my work. For me this is my professional success”</p>
	<i>Quality of work</i>	<p>“Quality of my work plays an important role in adding credibility to my job”</p>
	<i>Meaningful work</i>	<p>“I have found meaning in my job”</p>
	<i>Fulfilling work related duties</i>	<p>“100% performance of my duties”</p>
	<i>Utilizing full potential</i>	<p>“utilizing of my full potential”</p> <p>“working beyond my potential”</p>
	<i>Work is worship</i>	<p>“I definitely believe in work is worship”</p>
	<i>Being practical</i>	<p>“being pragmatic at workplace is importance to excel”</p>
	<i>Spending quality time with patients</i>	<p>“Spending quality time with patients gives me immense happiness”</p>

Themes	Codes	Examples
	<i>Positive attitude towards work</i>	“having a positive attitude towards my work is important” “Having a positive attitude towards my job remains highly important”
	<i>Work as passion</i>	“Pursuit of my passion is necessary” “pursuit of my passion for work is very important I feel”
	<i>Learning new things through work</i>	“My work allows me to constantly learn new things as in new technological advances in my field, new concepts, etc.
<b>Happiness</b>	<i>Peace of mind</i>	“meditation and positive state of mind” “meditation and yoga” “meditation and sleeping in peace”
	<i>Spirituality</i>	“expansion of consciousness” “spiritual pursuits” “calmness, tranquility, peace in inner conscience”
	<i>Being satisfied with life</i>	“unconditional love and contentment that I derive from life” “contentment and development of patience is all due to my work” “For me happiness is equivalent to contentment and this is how I found meaning in life also”
	<i>Positivity in life</i>	“I have developed greater positivity, there is greater excitement to do my job”
<b>Social Service</b>	<i>Serving the society</i>	“giving back to the society” “selfless charity” “positive contribution to the society”
	<i>Positive change</i>	“positive change in society is vital” “contribution to society and seeing humanity”
	<i>Serving patients</i>	“seeing my patients gives my life meaning”
	<i>Making a difference in patient's life</i>	“bringing a difference in patient's life through my work is very meaningful” “making a difference in patient's life” “making a difference in the lives of my patients”
<b>Fulfilling interpersonal relationships</b>	<i>Spending time with family</i>	“Spending quality time with my children gives me the most meaning” “the ability to take time out for my family”
	<i>Health of my family members</i>	“health of my family members is important” “the care of family and friends as well as togetherness with family”
	<i>Success and growth of family members</i>	“Seeing my kids progress in life is really fulfilling” “seeing my family flourish”

Themes	Codes	Examples
	<i>Wellness of loved ones</i>	“love, forgiveness, wellness of my loved ones gives me immense happiness”
<b>Good working environment</b>	<i>Infrastructural facilities</i>	“having proper infrastructure in place” “good working conditions”
	<i>Good working environment</i>	“good working environment”
	<i>Freedom to work</i>	“independence and freedom to work” “independence to do work”
	<i>Reward for good work</i>	“there should be proportionate rewards for my work” “there should be reward for my work”
	<i>Recognition and appreciation</i>	“fame and respect among colleagues” “recognition of my work and getting my work appreciated after all the hard work”
	<i>Importance of resources</i>	“there is a lack of resources to help people” “having sufficient resources to do everything for my family”
	<i>Transfer policy</i>	“it is difficult to work properly with constant transfers”
	<i>Promotion policy</i>	“My seniors ensure a time-bound promotion”
	<i>Appropriate remuneration</i>	“Good salary is important for me”



**Figure 1:** Thematic map on the basis of semi-structured interviews

The interpretation of the interview data is described below. The five major themes that emerged from the data are as follows:

- 1) Work as a source of meaning and happiness
- 2) Happiness
- 3) Social service
- 4) Fulfilling interpersonal relationships
- 5) Good working environment

### **Theme 1: Work as a Source of Meaning and Happiness**

The most important theme that emerged from the interview data was work as a source of meaning and happiness. Work remains the most integral part of any individual's life. Thus, work takes a strong precedence in one's life. However, if people do not enjoy the work that they do, there will be no sense of satisfaction with their job and hence no happiness. From the data, codes that were derived included respect from patients, patient's health and satisfaction, development of character strengths and virtues, job satisfaction, goal achievement, meaningful work etc. When interviewed on all the variables under study, majority of participants emphasized the importance of work in their lives. One of the participants was quoted saying *"Work is worship for me, it gives me the opportunity to learn new things"*. Moreover, a participant highlighted that *"I have found meaning in my job"*. Engaging in meaningful work is vital in every field especially in the realm of medical science. When professionals get appreciated and respected for their work, it gives them a great deal of meaning and happiness. Meaningful work allows individuals to develop virtues such as commitment, patience, discipline that improves their work performance and further lead to job satisfaction. These intertwined factors contribute to one's overall happiness in life.

### **Theme 2: Happiness**

Another pertinent theme that emerged from the data was happiness. On being interviewed about the various factors that contribute to their happiness, the participants reported several factors. The codes that were formulated from the data were peace of mind, spirituality, being satisfied with life, positivity in life. One of the participants was quoted saying that *"It gives me immense happiness to feel a sense of contentment on personal as well as professional front"*. Another participant expressed that *"For me happiness is equivalent to contentment and this is how I have found meaning in life also"*. These responses highlight the importance of deriving a sense of satisfaction with one's work that influences one's state of mind, level of positivity etc. If the job is satisfying and propels peace and positivity in one's life then happiness can definitely be derived.

### **Theme 3: Social Service**

A relevant theme that emerged from the interviews was social service. Medicine is a very noble profession that rests on the ideology of giving back to the society and working for the welfare of the masses. Codes that were derived from the responses of the participants were consistent to these notions. The codes included serving the society, positive change, making a difference in patient's life. A participant stated that *"Serving my patients gives my life meaning"*. *"Bringing a difference in patient's life through my work is very meaningful"*, said another participant. One of the participants expressed that *"Bringing in a positive change in the society gives my life real meaning"*. Such responses indicate that when people engage in humanitarian services, they do derive a considerable amount of meaning.

### **Theme 4: Fulfilling Interpersonal Relationships**

Another significant theme that emerged from the data was fulfilling interpersonal relationships. The microsystem in each individual's life comprises of the most influential people with whom the individual has the closest relationship with and a direct contact as well. Family remains the most crucial part of this microsystem. The codes that were developed from the interview data were in concordance with this understanding. The codes included spending time with family, health of the family members, success of the family members and wellness of loved ones. A participant said that *"Spending quality time with my family gives me most meaning"*. Another participant shared that *"Health of my family members is very important to me"*. *"Seeing my children progress is very fulfilling for me"*, said another participant. These responses reveal the importance of family in individual's life. Family acts as a source of social support and provides a sense of security further strengthening the individual's level of happiness and overall meaning in life.

### **Theme 5: Good Working Environment**

Another salient theme that emerged from the data was good working environment. Having favorable working atmosphere is essential for better work performance. When the environment at the workplace is conducive it is more likely to enhance the employee's output. Codes that were derived from the responses of the participants were consistent to these perspectives. The codes included freedom to work, reward for good work, appropriate remuneration, appreciation/recognition, and transfer and promotion policy. A participant stated that *"My seniors ensure a time-bound promotion which gives me immense job satisfaction"*. Another participant stated that *"recognition for my work and also being appreciated for it is really satisfying"*. Moreover, another participant shared that *"having sufficient resources to do everything"* which signifies the vitality of having proper

infrastructure, organizational policies, rewarding structure. This ensures that the employees feel satisfied with their job and excel in all their endeavors.

These five themes significantly reflect the intricacies of how meaning in life, meaningful work and happiness are perceived and experienced by doctors. They help in understanding the experiences of doctors and what gives them happiness and meaning to their life.

## CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at understanding meaning in life, meaningful work, and happiness in a sample of doctors. Thematic analysis of data collected through semi-structured interviews of ten doctors revealed five major themes. These themes included work as a source of meaning and happiness, happiness, social service, fulfilling interpersonal relationships and good working environment. Hence, this study helped in developing a rich understanding of the meaning in life, meaningful work and happiness in doctors.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results of the present study have immense implications for getting a deeper understanding of the life of doctors and how their profession plays a significant role in shaping meaning in their lives. It also indicates how work can act as a significant source of meaning in a person's life. Hence, the results of the study can be used by organizations to try to make work as meaningful as possible for the employees because meaningful work is significantly related to happiness. Various interventions can be designed by organizations towards enhancing meaningfulness at work which is significantly related to meaning in life and happiness in doctors.

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