UN World Happiness Report 2019

Why in news?

United Nations World Happiness Report for 2019 was released recently.

What is the report on?

- The report ranks 156 countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be.
- A sample of individuals from each country is asked to score their happiness on a 1-10 scale.
- The variation in country scores is then attempted to be explained statistically with the six variables:

1. GDP per capita
2. social support
3. healthy life expectancy
4. freedom to make life choices
5. generosity
6. freedom from corruption

- The report has been released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) at the United Nations.
- It is published ahead of the International Day of Happiness marked on March 20th.

What are the highlights?

- Finland was the happiest nation followed by Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Netherlands.
- The next five in the top 10 are Switzerland, Sweden, New Zealand, Canada, and Austria in order.
- Australia replaced Israel in the 11th spot, followed by Costa Rica.
- The United States came in 19th place.
- The last spot for the least happy nation, 156, went to South Sudan.

Where does India stand?

- Indians have emerged as one of the unhappiest peoples on earth in the Happiness Report.
- India ranks itself at 140 in happiness out of 156 countries. In other words, it is at the bottom 10% of all countries.
- India is just at the 50% rank for corruption, and at the bottom 58% for generosity.
- Unsurprisingly, India is at the bottom 25% for per-capita GDP and longevity.
- It, however, ranks better for freedom, being within the top 27%.
- Even favourable aspects for Indians such as strong social/family support had come out poorly in the rankings.

- In global terms, India's unhappiness is considerably worse in the ranking than other countries of South Asia and China, and South Africa, and far worse than Latin America.
- India comes out at the bottom in South Asia in the 2019 report.
- Moreover, there has been a steady deterioration in Indians' happiness scores in recent years.
- On the change in the happiness score over 2015-19, India's score deteriorated the most in South Asia.

Source: Business Standard

Quick Fact

Sustainable Development Solutions Network

- The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has been operating since 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General.
- The SDSN mobilizes global scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development.
- These include the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Author: Shankar IAS Coaching Center Chennai

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