

The Impact of Socio-Economic Status on Resilience of Undergraduates: A Need to Cultivate the Level of Resilience

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ABSTRACT

The socio-economic status appears to play a significant role in determining the positive psychological states such as hope, optimism, resilience, happiness etc. of undergraduates in a society. College life is an important stage in every person's life. For the proper psychological growth of youth social resources play a pivotal role. With these notions in mind, the current study is an attempt to explore the impact of socio-economic status on the resilience of undergraduates. A sample of 250 undergraduates of both sexes was selected from different colleges of Faridabad, Delhi and Ghaziabad on the basis of purposive sampling. The age range of youth was 18-23 years. In order to compare the undergraduates on resilience scores, One Way ANOVA, followed by t-test were implemented. The study revealed that higher the socio-economic status more the probability of developing of positive state such as resilience, may be due to the abundance of social and economic resources. The present findings endorse some suggestions that there is a need to cultivate and enhance the level of resilience in Indian undergraduates of low SES group.

Keywords: Socio-economic status, Undergraduates, Resilience, Resources

The specific personal resources and psycho-social strengths such as socio-economic status, resilience, hope etc have been found responsible to get a peak level of well-being, either subjective or physical. (Adler, Boyce, Chesney, Cohen, Folkman, Kahn, and Syme, (1994), Baltes and Staudinger 2000, Masten, 2001). Socio-economic status plays a key role in cultivating and expression of certain human strengths (i.e. "a capacity for feeling, thinking and behaving in a way that allows optimal functioning in the pursuit of valued outcomes") (Linley and Harrington, 2006).

Socioeconomic status (SES):

"It is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. Socio-economic status is typically broken into three categories, High SES, middle SES, and low SES to describe the three areas a family or an individual may fall into. When placing a family or individual into one of these categories any or all of the three variables (income, education, and occupation) can be assessed.

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Moreover a 4th variable, wealth is also an important component of determining socioeconomic status”.

Resilience

“Psychological resilience is an individual’s tendency to cope with stress and adversity”. “This coping may result in the individual “bouncing back” to a previous state of normal functioning, or simply not showing negative effects. A third, more controversial form of resilience is sometimes referred to as 'post traumatic growth' or 'steeling effects' wherein the experience of adversity leads to better functioning (much like an inoculation gives one the capacity to cope well with future exposure to disease). It is most commonly understood as a process, and not a trait of an individual”. It is vital to build and foster resilience to be ready for future challenges. Resilience will enable the development of a reservoir of internal resources to draw upon during stressful situations. “It refers to the ability of an individual, family, organization, or community to cope with adversity and adapt to challenges or change. It is an ongoing process that requires time and effort and engages people in taking a number of steps to enhance their response to adverse circumstances. Resilience implies that after an event, a person or community may not only be able to cope and recover, but also change to reflect different priorities arising from the experience and prepare for the next stressful situation”.

Background of the study

“Financial difficulties threaten a family’s ability to meet its basic needs, consequently leading to the feelings of frustration, anger and depression. On the contrary high socio - economic status plays a key role in fostering positive psychological states”. A number of studies have reported that socio –economic status plays a primary role in determining one’s positive psychological (1999) concluded that high SES plays a crucial role in developing resiliency in children. Similarly, Masten (1999) reported individual and environmental attributes playing a major role in one’s adjustment in, Cicchetti and Becker (2000) argued about the “universality of protective factors as risk or adversity must be present for a person to be considered resilient”. Similarly, Harvey and Delfabbro (2004) identified a long list of protective factors, but how and when people call upon particular resources when facing risks is a matter of concern. Haaften, Zhenrong and De Vijver (2004) reported that higher the SES, more is the resilience among Chinese people. As Fovet (2011) examined that social disparities and economic difficulties are in fact not predominantly relevant in manifestations of social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties (SEBD), low socio-economic spectrum school children rather developed resilience consequently later developed into adjusted adults. So low SES helped in developing resilience. Hair Elizabeth, C., Justin Jager, Sarah Garret., Chung and Elias (2011), studied on resilience and suggested that “pre-adolescent and adolescent girls tend to be having better adjustment than less prone to problem solving than boys of smaller ages”. Rolf, J., Masten, A., Cicchetti, D. (1990), found that “better adjustment to life stress occurs when adolescents come from higher socio- economic groups have good social support networks comprising family members and Peers and attend schools that provide a supportive yet challenging educational environment”. So, the family’s socio – economic status appears to play an intrinsic role in determining the positive psychological states of the youth, with this speculation, the following objective was selected for present research work.

Objective

To explore the impact of socio - economic status on the resilience of undergraduates.

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METHODOLOGY

The following methodology was adopted in the current research work.

Design

A multi group design was used in the present study to, find out the impact of socio-economic status (IV) on positive psychological state, as resilience (DV) of undergraduates.

Sample

In the present study a sample of 250 youth of both sexes, belonging to different socio-economic status was selected from different colleges of both urban and rural areas of Faridabad, Delhi and Ghaziabad (U.P). The sample was selected on the basis of purposive sampling technique within age range of 18-23 yrs.

Tools

In the present study the following tools were used:

- **Socio -economic status scale** (SESS, Dr. Rajbir Singh, Dr. Radhey Shyam and Satish Kumar ,2006) in hindi version was used. There are 25 items. The reliability coefficient is 0.653 and after a gap of 30 days it is 0.944. The validity is 0.689.
- **The Resilience Scale** (Dr. Gail Wagnild and Young ,1993). This scale consists of 25 items which is built on five characteristics. It is 7-point scale having range, 25-175. As per norms the total score above 146 indicates stronger high resilience, while the range between 25-100 is considered to be very low resilience status. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .72 to .94.

Procedure

Before giving the various tools to the respondents, the researcher explained the purpose of testing and after the establishment of rapport the sample was divided into three groups on the basis of SES as measured by socio-economic status scale. After measuring their SES, the resilience scale was given to the youths with adequate time gap. After collecting the data the scores were subjected to statistical analysis.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The scores obtained on the scale of socio-economic status, the youth were categorized into three groups viz high, middle and low socio-economic status. Further in order to compare them on resilience scores, One Way ANOVA, followed by t-test were used, with the help of SPSS, 16.0.

Table-1: Comparison of scores obtained on Resilience between different combination of groups of SES by using One Way Anova.

ONE WAY ANOVA

Variable	Socio economic status group.	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Resilience	Between Groups	18700.134	2	9350.067	26.414*
	Within Groups	87434.362	247	353.985	
	Total	106134.496	249		

* p < 0.01

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The significant value of F indicates that youth belonging to different levels of SES differ significantly on their capacity of resilience. T-tests were applied further to find out the difference between different combination of groups belonging to different levels of SES.

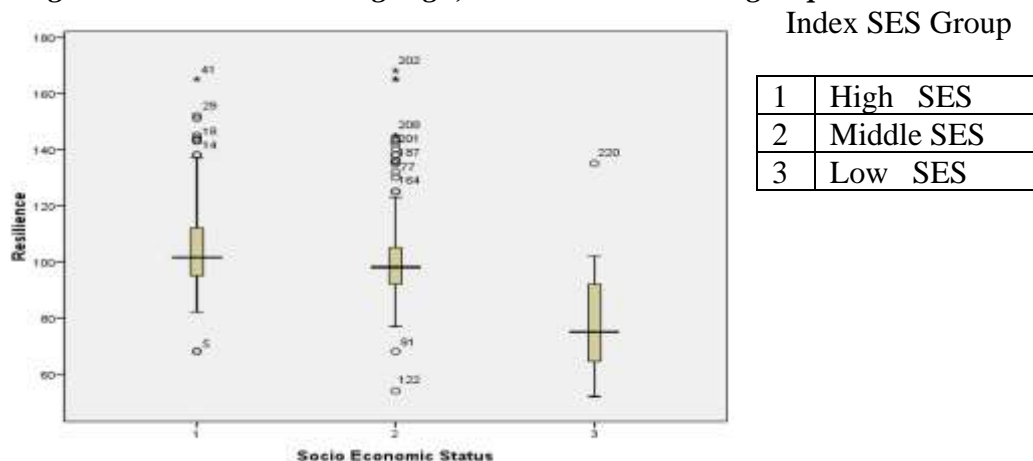
Table-2: Comparison between different combination of SES groups on resilience scores by using t-test.

Variable	SES groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev	df	t
Resilience	1High	74	107.09	20.134	216	1.906 NS
	2Middle	144	101.94	18.232		
	1High 3Low	74 32	107.09 78.72	20.134 18.234	104	6.847*
	2Middle 3Low	144 32	101.94 78.72	18.232 18.234	174	6.518*

*p <0.01, NS - Not Significant

From the above Table 2 it is evident that high and middle SES youth have more resilience in comparison to youth of low SES. The insignificant value of t (1.906) while comparing youth of high and middle SES reveals that undergraduates of both strata of society have equal level of resilience, while the significant values of t while comparing SES youth of high and low and middle and low reveal that youth of low SES have less capacity of resilience. In other words, they are unable to become resilient after facing the hardships and adversities of life. They might have addressed adversity as an obstacle to move forward. On the contrary youth of high and middle SES might have benefited themselves after facing adversity while normalizing or contextualizing adversity and distress. They might have seen crises as meaningful with a coherence. The present findings are in line with those of Masten et al., (1985,1999) and Rutter (1999). As earlier Werner et al., (1992) and Gernemeny et al., (1984) reported that facing of setbacks and adversities in life help in fostering resilience in children. It is generally assumed that children of low status of society have to face so many traumas of life and hence become more resilient. The present findings value indicates that youth facing the severe challenges in and their triumph in the face of adversity led to foster resiliency only in the youth of high / middle SES groups (not in low SES). The youth of high / middle SES group used to get the resources to successfully tackle the difficulties of life. On the contrary most of the youth of low SES are unable to successfully face the adversity of life may be due to lack of resources hence, became pessimist and non resilient.

Figure-1: Resilience among high, middle and low SES groups.



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Figure:1 depicts the low level of resiliency in youth of low SES group in comparison to high and middle SES. A few outliers are visible in high and middle SES group while low SES groups appears to be more or less homogeneous.

CONCLUSION

Socio-economic status of the family is the vital determinant in nurturing positive psychological state among undergraduates. Higher the socio-economic status more the probability of developing of positive state such as resilience (may be due to the abundance of social and economic resources). The present findings endorse some suggestions that there is a need to cultivate and enhance the level of resilience in Indian youth of low SES group by providing them warmth, secure environment, with specific interventions to boost and develop their resilience.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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