

Review Article

Individual Resilience: A Review Article

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A B S T R A C T

This comprehensive review paper delves into the multifaceted concept of individual resilience, exploring its fundamental principles and the pivotal factors contributing to life-threatening challenges. The examination encompasses various dimensions such as genetic, demographic, cultural, and social aspects. Resilience, defined as healthy, adaptive, or integrated positive functioning in the aftermath of adversity, has been scrutinized through the lenses of individuals, families, organizations, societies, and cultures. The review identifies three waves of resilience research: the first focusing on characteristics and factors, the second on how to achieve resilience, and the current third wave addressing practical strategies and policies for promoting resilience in society. Phases in life, stressors, and risks are examined, emphasizing the critical role of a positive attitude and adaptability in fostering resilience. The paper underscores the evolving nature of resilience research over the past four decades. The paper emphasizes the importance of overcoming risks and threats through factors such as social support, positive attitude, engagement in purposeful activities, and participation in community events. Emotional support and attachment are identified as key elements in developing resilience, though environmental factors may impact this process. Lastly, the review explores positive interventions for building resilience, noting the emergence of motivational speakers and programs aimed at fostering a positive outlook on life. Overall, the paper advocates for the development of individual resilience as a means to contribute to a stronger society and reduce instances of suicides.

Keywords: Resilience, SDG, Sustainability, Threat, Challenge, Adversity

Introduction

This review paper reviews fundamental concepts of individual resilience and identify the important factors contributing towards life threats and challenges. We also present a review of important researches with regard to techniques to increase individual resilience. Various approaches to develop resilience have been discussed. Positive approach and positive attitude help in development of resilience. Development of individual resilience will help in development of a strong society and will minimize instances of suicides.

Concept of Resilience

Resilience is generally referred as the ability to overcome adversities of life and retain positive attitude towards life. Resilience is a broad concept and needs to be looked at from multiple perspectives. This concept has to be studied from different angles including genetic aspects, demographic aspects, cultural and social aspects. Southwick, S. M., Bonanno, G. A., Masten, A. S., Panter-Brick, C., & Yehuda, R. (2014) discussed definitions these fundamental questions, and defined resilience as healthy, adaptive, or

integrated positive functioning over the passage of time in the aftermath of adversity. Resilience has been presented as a complex construct in various research papers and it denotes different meanings in the different context of individuals, families, organizations, societies, and cultures. Polk, L. V. (1997) defines resilience as the ability to transform disaster into a growth experience and the quality to withstand harsh challenges of life.

Resilience is a matter most related those persons who are living in difficult conditions or in marginalized conditions. The youth who are living in the most difficult circumstances need resilience. The qualities of resilience can help these youth in overcoming their challenges. Bottrell, D. (2009) has studied the youth affected by social inequities, social processes and the differentiated societal and ideological expectations. The research work highlighted the issues confronted by the marginalized youth and how such situations should be tackled.

Masten and Powell (2003) mention resilience as the ability to overcome adversity. It has been the quality of a person to adapt to a situation. It has been the ability of a person to react positively to adversity and overcome that adversity through positive response. Resilience means the ability of an individual or a system to respond to a challenge. This concept has been applied to an individual as well as to society or organization.

Concept of Phases in Life

Every human being faces hardships in life. Klein, R. A., Kufeldt, K., & Rideout, S. (2006) discuss about different theories of resilience and mentions that resilience is all about how we overcome hardships. The qualities like self-confidence in spite of hardships play an important role in success of a person. If a person is able to retain positive attitude and focus on goals of life in spite of all the adversities, this can achieve success in life. This has been the fundamental truth about every human being. This truth has been called the quality of resilience. This quality has been a very important quality for success and survival of every human being. The ability to focus on goals and remain un-affected by the adversities has been essential for the success of any person. There are some phases in our lives when we face lot of changes and these changes make us vulnerable too. We may not be able to overcome our anxiety. There are some periods of changes, during which each of us face some difficulties. We have to adapt to the situation and therefore a positive attitude would help us in adaptation. We have to become flexible person willing to learn from circumstances, but that flexibility should not take us towards negative side of life. Resilience is directly related to our ability to adapt and our ability to retain our positive attitude and positive framework towards life.

It has been over four decades that research on the subject of resilience has been carried out. As we have discussed, resilience refers to ability of person to overcome difficulties and adversity. Scientists were studied this subject thoroughly and were also related it to different concepts. Some scientists were studied it with regard to generic risks, some were studied with regard to family violence, some were studied it with regard to poverty or other adversities. Wright and Masten (2005) mention about three waves of resiliency research. The first wave focused on the What question|| – i. e what have been the characteristics of resilience and what have been the factors that constitute resilience. The second wave of research focused on —how question|| – how to achieve resilience – based on interaction of various social and biological factors so that resilience can be built. Now has been the period of the third wave of studies, which address the questions with regard to practice and policies to promote resilience. Thus, the field of study of resilience has been constantly evolving and it has been now that it was taken the stand with regard to creating resilient society.

There have been many definitions of resilience; however, the most important aspect is the ability to overcome challenges of life. Every one of us faces challenges, which may come any time. When they come all of sudden and we find ourselves difficult to adjust and adapt, this may be a difficult time. Those persons, who are able to show some qualities of positivism even in difficult circumstances, are able to overcome the challenges of life. Fleming, J., & Ledogar, R. J. (2008) define positive adaptation despite adversity. Over the past 40 years, resilience research was gone through several stages. From an initial focus on the invulnerable or invincible child, psychologists began to recognize that much of what seems to promote resilience originates outside of the individual. This led to a search for resilience factors at the individual, family, community — and, most recently, cultural — levels. In addition to the effects that community and culture were on resilience in individuals, there has been growing interest in resilience as a feature of entire communities and cultural groups. Contemporary researchers were found that resilience factors vary in different risk contexts and this was contributed to the notion that resilience has been a process. In order to characterize the resilience process in a particular context, it has been necessary to identify and measure the risk involved and, in this regard, perceived discrimination and historical trauma have been part of the context in many Aboriginal communities. Researchers also seek to understand how particular protective factors interact with risk factors and with other protective factors to support relative resistance. For this meaningful purpose they were developed resilience models of three main types: —compensatory, protective, and —challenge|| models. Two additional concepts have

been resilient reintegration, in which a confrontation with adversity leads individuals to a new level of growth, and the notion endorsed by some Aboriginal educators that resilience has been an innate quality that needs only to be properly awakened.

Factors Contributing Towards Adversities and Towards Resilience

Resilience is an outcome of both sustainability education and environment. It is contributed by both these aspects. Resilience is developed from both the variables together. Sterling, S. (2010) found that building more resilient local Social–Ecological Systems (SES) integrating the two ideas of environmental support and sustainability education helps in building resilience. The author looks at touchstones between discourses to suggest the possibilities and potential of mutual illumination and better integration. The author begins by reviewing tensions between an instrumentalist view and an intrinsic value view of environmental and sustainability education, the former seeing such education as a means to individual and social change, the latter upholding the primacy of the autonomous learner who, secondarily may – or may not – take action towards sustainability. The author then considers the discourse of the resilient learner, before reviewing social learning literature linked to resilience and discussing how far these various views can be brought together and reconciled. Parallels have been made with tensions in the debate on sustainability when seen as a desirable ideal, or as a process. Transformative learning theory has been then introduced in relation to addressing the paradox of resilient but maladaptive worldviews and the need to educate for resilience. The research has concluded with an argument for a transformative education paradigm—sustainable education—which necessarily integrates instrumental and intrinsic views and which nurtures resilient learners able to develop resilient social–ecological systems in the face of a future of threat, uncertainty and surprise.

Stressors in Life

We often face occasions when we are under a stress. This stress may reduce our performance and may have adverse impact on our health and thought process. A stress has been a situation, which has been demanding some outcome from us, which has been difficult given the resources and constraints. We get agitated or excited due to stress and give altered responses due to the stress. There may be some biological impact on our body due to stress. When the level of stress has been very high, it may activate some endocrine glands in our body to release some hormones to fight the stress causing situation. High level of stress for a long period of time may have adverse impact on our body and on our mind. We may not be able to cope up with the prolonged stress. We can adapt and cope up with

a short phase of stress. The ability to overcome the stress has been also closely related to resilience. A person, who was high resilience, may be able to overcome stress and a person, who was low level of resilience, may not be able to overcome the stress. Therefore, stress and resilience were close relation.

Risks and Threats of Life

Life has many types of risks and threats that come without any advance warning. Such occasions give a test to a person. A person with high resilience may be able to overcome such moments and may emerge victorious due to positive attitude and ability to adapt and remain positively composed. A person with high resilience may be able to overcome risks and threats of life easily and may be able to achieve a smooth transition. Researches on resilience have focused on risk factors that may cause a calamity for a person. Various types of risks have been identified, which may negatively affect resilience. Family dispute or family adjustment has been studied by many scholars. Patterson, J. M. (2002). Mentions about the concept of family resilience along with family stress theory using the Family Adjustment and Adaptation Response (FAAR) Model in order to create distinctions between family resiliency as capacity and family resilience as process. The author discusses family resilience with regard to family protection and family system processes.

There have been many risks and threats that may affect a person, for example: -

- Divorce
- Accident
- Retrenchment / Job – loss
- Family dispute
- Natural calamity
- Death of close persons
- Displacement
- Migration from one country to another
- Closing down of family business
- Heavy losses
- Major Disease

Overcoming Risks and Threats

Resilience has been directly related to a person's ability to overcome a situation of adversity and therefore this quality depends on the ability of a person to overcome risks and threats of life. Many measures have been developed to assess and measure resilience. Many tools have been available to assess and evaluate resilience and take proper rectifying decisions. Martin, A. V. S., Distelberg, B., Palmer, B. W., & Jeste, D. V. (2015) used factor analysis on the basis of an eight-factor structure for the ultimate goals of measuring multidimensional nature of resilience. Factors included self-efficacy, access to social support network, optimism, perceived economic and social resources, spirituality and

religiosity, relational accord, emotional expression and communication, and emotional regulation. Based on data analysis, multidimensional individual and interpersonal resilience measures were developed to make it easy to undertake an assessment of resilience for older adults.

Risks and threats of life have been not easy to predict and therefore it has been difficult to overcome those moments if they come in life. There have been many challenges of such situation. A person may be down due to high level of stress. It has been difficult to overcome such situations. However, there have been many supporting factors that may help a person in such circumstances. These factors would contribute towards resilience of a person and would help the person in overcoming such situations and emerge victorious. A few of such factors include the following: -

- **Close friends** – support by loving and caring friends help during the times of difficulties has been very helpful. If a person has been facing difficulties and there have been some friends who give assurance of full support, this puts a person at ease. The person should feel that there has been some help. An assurance that —you have been not alone|| itself works in times of difficulties. A person under stress gets positive assurance and has been able to overcome all difficulties due to such assurances.
- **Support by relatives** – difficulties has been the times when one needs relatives and support of the family network. The relatives and family network stands by a person during times of difficulties and thereby create a positive framework. This helps a person in overcoming the period of difficulties. A person who has been undergoing the period of difficulties may be able to overcome these difficulties if there has been family support. Those persons who have been not having any family or who have been detached from their families face difficulties. There has been a need to provide some training to these people in individual resilience so that these persons have been able to overcome these periods of difficulties.
- **Positive attitude** – positive attitude has been a very important tool for overcoming stressful situation and difficulties. A person with positive attitude will learn something even out of adversity and would emerge victorious. A person with tremendous positive attitude would be able to remain smiling and cheerful even in the most adverse circumstances and would be able to show a willingness to learn out of the situation. Such a person was very high resilience and this has been a very good virtue of this person.
- **Positive words by friends and relatives** – family and friends may give a few positive words of encouragement and support and this will help a person in overcoming difficulties and maintaining resilience. A person

who uses positive words would be able to support others through the words itself. Words have been means of transferring ideas. A person, who has been using positive words, has been creating opportunity for others to become resilient.

- **Engagement in some purposeful activities** - difficulties should not be treated as a burden and should not be taken as a full stop for life. A person should engage oneself in some positive and constructive activities in order to overcome difficulties and adversities. Engagement in some purposeful activities would enable a person to overcome adversities.
- **Participation in some events or activities** - participation in activities and events make a person social and enable that person to overcome difficulties and adversities.
- **Hobbies** – hobbies like painting, travelling, photography etc. enable a person to follow a passion and engage in some positive and constructive activity which will help that person in overcoming all types of anxieties and stress.
- **Engagements** – engagements refer to pursuance of some goals and mission. These activities would help a person in building resilience. A person should keep some positive goals for life to overcome challenges.
- **Prayers** – prayers and participation in sermons would help a person in overcoming stress, anxiety and would help that person in overcoming the period of difficulties.
- **Participation in religious or other groups** - religious or other activities would help a person in overcoming difficulties and enable the person in keeping optimism about a brighter future.
- **Community support** – community and friends would help a person in overcoming all difficulties and adversities.

Emotional Support and Resilience

Emotional support and emotional attachment help in building resilience among people. Resilience is a quality which can be developed through emotional support. However, resilience may reduce due to adverse environmental factors like conflicts, tensions, family divisions etc. Egeland, B., Carlson, E., & Sroufe, L. A. (1993) Resilience, the development of competence despite severe or pervasive adversity, has been examined using data from a longitudinal study of high-risk children and families. The study has been guided by an organizational developmental perspective. Resilience has been conceived not as a childhood given, but as a capacity that develops over time in the context of person-environment interactions. Factors related to resilience have been examined. From The research studies, it was found that emotionally responsive care had positive impact on resilience of children who had experienced poverty, family stress, and maltreatment.

Positive Interventions for Building Resilience

Today a number of people were emerged as motivation speakers or positive counselors or as inspirational speakers or as life coach. These persons have been fully involved in motivating others towards positive side of life. They motivate and inspire people to follow the positive aspects of life and take up positive goals to make the life a meaningful and impact making journey. There have been many programs, which have been aimed at building a positive goal for life. Such programs and activities have been becoming very popular in the present times. These programs may help a person in building resilience and may help the person in overcoming the adversities of the life. Such occasions would help the person in building a positive vocabulary and a positive thought process which will enable the person in overcoming the challenges of the life.

Community support, family Adaptation and Resilience

Factors like community support, loving family, collaborative culture, social support, social security; overall support system contributes towards resilience. A person is able to have an assurance about uncertainty if there are good support systems. Support systems help a person to have a sigh of relief. Muller, R. T., & Lemieux, K. E. (2000) have examined the relationships among social support, attachment security, and psychopathology high risk abuse survivors. These were all adults. They studied sixty-six participants who had met conditions for physical or sexual abuse. They used many scales to measure the level of stress and level of resilience.—Record of Maltreatment Experiences, ||, —Relationship Scales Questionnaire, ||, —Norbeck Social Support Questionnaire, || and multiple measures of psychopathology were used for data collection and analysis. During the research, social support did not emerge as a significant direct predictor of psychopathology, once the effects of negative view of self were accounted for. However, among participants low on social support, in comparison to those who have been high, a negative view of self was more highly correlated with some psychopathology measures. The research revealed that among the maltreatment survivors, negative view of self emerges as the most substantial predictor of psychopathology when examined in combination with other relevant risk factors.

Community participation, community support and community involvement help in building resilience. Community leadership may convert a community into resilient society and this may help the society at large. This depends on the systems of community participation, collaborative structure, community values etc. Therefore, there is a need to contribute towards community-based resilience. Berkes, F., & Ross, H. (2013) has explored the subject of community resilience and found community support

for building resilience. The researchers have studied social– ecological systems and psychology of development and mental health. Both these issues are important in community's contribution towards resilience. The first strand treats resilience as a systems concept, dealing with adaptive relationships and learning in social–ecological systems across nested levels, with attention to feedbacks, nonlinearity, unpredictability, scale, renewal cycles, drivers, system memory, disturbance events, and windows of opportunity. The second strand emphasizes identifying and developing community strengths, and building resilience through agency and self-organization, with attention to people–place connections, values and beliefs, knowledge and learning, social networks, collaborative governance, economic diversification, infrastructure, leadership, and outlook. Community reliance based on an adaptive perspective helps the individual. Resilience is affected by family relations, family adaptations, relations between persons of different generations and family flexibility and adaptation. Fonagy, P., Steele, M., Steele, H., Higgitt, A., & Target, M. (1994) studied these issues and identified a theoretical framework which provide a meaningful context for developing practical interventions to build upon the concept of resilience.

Optimism and Positive Attitude

There are many qualities that help in resilience, one such quality is optimism. Optimism enables a person to see positive side of everything. Optimism enables a person to remain happy even in most difficult conditions. There is a positive relation between optimism and resilience. Coutu, D. L. (2002) has studied and found that optimism helps in resilience, but it should not dilute reality. A person should remain connected to the reality. Optimism may help a person in overcoming the situation and enable him to become a resilient person.

Age Related Factors and Resilience

People of the old age need training in resilience. That is the time, when a person finds it difficult to cope with the unexpected challenges of life. Old age brings with it many adversities. In the current scenario, when older people are also often lonely and often, they don't find anyone to support them, they need the qualities of resilience to be able to overcome the challenges. Wagnild, G. (2003) studied the impact of resilience with regard to aging. The research found that a person who has been younger has been resilient, but as the person becomes older, the qualities of resilience get reduced. There has been a need to build resilience among older people so that they may face the adversities during old age with self-confidence.

Persons of every age require the qualities of resilience. However, youth are the persons, who can easily be trained in the art and practice of resilience. Resilience is a matter

most related those persons who are living in difficult conditions or in marginalized conditions. The youth who are living in the most difficult circumstances need resilience. The qualities of resilience can help these youth in overcoming their challenges. Bottrell, D. (2009) has studied the youth affected by social inequities, social processes and the differentiated societal and ideological expectations. The research work highlighted the issues confronted by the marginalized youth and how such situations should be tackled.

Childhood and emotional support during childhood plays an important role in development of resilience. Situations of extreme poverty, violence, family disturbances etc. inhibit development of a person's intellectual capabilities including resilience. On the other hand, development of an emotional supporting environment helps in development of resilience. Many studies including the study by Zolkoski, S. M., & Bullock, L. M. (2012) confirmed this. Zolkoski, S. M., & Bullock, L. M. (2012) found that many children have been reared in less-than-ideal family conditions which inhibit the normal intellectual, social, and emotional development of children and youth, thus interfering with them reaching their full potential as adults. Conversely, they also found many children, who encounter such adversities and fare well in spite of the challenges and may be considered to be resilient.

Relation between Individual Resilience and Other Concepts

There is a need to study the relation between individual and organizational resilience and also between organizational, infrastructural and individual resilience. Individual resilience itself depends on many other factors, which contribute towards building overall resilience. Organizational factors and overall circumstances contribute towards development of resilience. The factors that contribute towards resilience are those factors that help us in development of a good organization also. Thus, there is a positive relation between these concepts. Bhamra, R., Dani, S., & Burnard, K. (2011) have undertaken a review of literature in this field and have found that the relation of these concepts is an important contribution towards the fields of organization theory, strategy and operations management. These authors identify a number of areas for advancing resilience research, in particular: the relationship between human and organizational resilience; understanding interfaces between organizational and infrastructural resilience.

Spirituality and Resilience

Spirituality helps in building resilience. It has been one such quality which can help a person in overcoming any adversity. Spirituality can build a strong inner resilience in any person. Kim, S., & Esquivel, G. B. (2011) mention that spirituality has been a universal phenomenon and an inherent aspect of human nature that unfolds during adolescence

as the individual searches for transcendence, meaning, and meaningful purpose in life. Recently, spirituality is being considered as a source of resilience for adolescents. Theoretical perspectives and empirical research suggest that spirituality (distinctly and in relation to religiosity) promotes healthy development in adolescents, enhances the ability to cope, and leads to positive outcomes in mental health, psychological well-being, and academic learning. Given the value of spirituality as a source of resilience, implications for educational practices to foster adolescent spiritual development have been discussed in the context of school, family, and community settings

Interventions for Training in Resilience

There is a need to develop effective interventions to build resilience. This is one such sector, which require development and the interventions to promote resilience should be administered upon people affected by adversities. Sippel, L., Pietrzak, R., Charney, D., Mayes, L., &

Southwick, S. (2015) have advocated initiatives for promotion of interventions for imparting training in individual resilience. The researchers have also examined neurobiological and systems-level factors implicated in resilience. They have argued that the development of effective interventions to enhance resilience would depend on multiple layers of society and its structural factors.

Resilience should be a part of educational psychology and it should be further developed as a tool in educational pedagogies. Resilience should be an important part of education. Toland, J., & Carrigan, D. (2011) bring resilience into the educational psychology. They have suggested a paradigm shift for educational psychologists to begin to take a resilience perspective in all of their work.

Many factors that can contribute to resilience have been identified and training programs have been designed to impart greater resilience. Greene, R. R., Galambos, C., & Lee, Y. (2004) interviewed eighteen professionals to gain a clearer understanding of what conditions practitioners thought act as buffers to life stressors and contribute to resilience. They have found that personal attitude, spirituality/religion, education, and multilevel attachments contribute towards resilience. They have suggested suitable skills to enhance resilience.

Career Guidance and Resilience

Career guidance, counseling and mentoring are important interventions for building resilience. A positive attitude, a positive framework about career and a clear goal for life helps in building resilience. Therefore, there is a necessity to provide career guidance to youth so that they may frame a clear vision for their lives and create a path for themselves. There is a need to impart counseling and guidance to youth so that they may have a dream for their life and they may

decide how to overcome the challenges of life. London, M. (1983) found that career motivation has a positive impact on resilience. Career motivation itself depends on many factors. Earvolino-Ramirez, M. (2007, April) has mentioned about resilience-based interventions that may help the society in its transformation.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Researchers have identified important factors that contribute towards challenges for the life and those factors that contribute towards development of individual resilience. These studies are very important and relevant considering increasing instances of suicides among youth. There is a need to incorporate training in resilience in educational curriculum so that the students have better understanding of these concepts and they are able to overcome the challenges of life better. There is a need to have detailed studies on following issues: -

- How to increase individual resilience, family resilience, institutional resilience
- How to create an environment, where it is easier to overcome life threats and challenges
- How to improve our educational curriculum and pedagogy to develop resilience among students
- How to develop training contents and pedagogy for improving resilience

A lot of studies may be conducted for improving our understanding of this concept.

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