Study on resilience among rural academically backward children

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■ **ABSTRACT :** The study on "Resiliency among academically backward children" was undertaken with objectives to assess the level of resiliency and factors influencing resilience among academically backward children. The sample comprised 210 academically backward children studying in 7th, 8th and 9th standards of Government schools from four villages of Dharwad taluk. Results revealed that, majority of academically backward children belonged to medium level in all the components of both internal and external resilience. Further results revealed that, age, gender and SES factors had significant influence on both internal and external resilience of academically backward children.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Resilience, Scholastically backward, Rural children

Resilience is the capacity to 'bounce back' from adverse experiences, and succeed despite adversity. Masten *et al.* (1990) define resilience as "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" of life. Resilience is viewed as the outcome of interactions of two key sets of components *i.e.,* individual attributes and external supports available for them. This process is represented as the interplay between individual traits and external factors such as family environment and peer and teacher attributes (Bandura, 2006 and Kia-Keating *et al.*, 2011). Poor scholastic performance is usually a reflection of a larger underlying problem in children. Due to their academic backwardness, children are growing in an increasingly stressful world. Caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful involvement in schools, homes, communities, and among peers were strongly related to academic performance (Hanson *et al.*, 2003). The stress among most of these children stems from the pressure to succeed in academic performance by parents and teachers. As a result these they may suffer from anxiety, inadequacy feelings and certain behavioral problems. However, exposure to moderate stressors, challenges, and risks can help children develop effective coping responses and resilience (Rutter, 1981). Resilience factors influence the academic success of an individual. Some research characterizes resilient individuals as having average or expected outcomes; others emphasize flourishing *i.e.* doing better than average (Hildon *et al.,* 2008 and 2010 and Netuveli *et al.*, 2008). So, the present study was undertaken know the level and factors

influencing resilience of among rural academically backward children.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The study comprised of 210 academically backward children from four villages of Dharwad taluk out of which 122 were boys and 88 were girls. The academically backward children were selected based on their academic performance in the previous year, who are attending remedial classes and teacher's opinion.

Tools used for the study:

Background information was collected with the help of self structured questionnaire. Data on resilience was collected with the help of checklist developed by AICRP-CD, Hyderabad centre (2015). It measures external and internal resilience. The external resilience measures different aspects *i.e.*, school, home, community and peer assets. Further internal resilience measures six areas namely, cooperation and communication, self efficacy, empathy, problem solving, self awareness and goals aspirations. External resilience checklist consists of 33 statements and internal resilience checklist contains 30 statements. Each statement has to be rated as strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree and strongly disagree with a score of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively. In case of external resilience, the total score obtained by the respondent was categorized in to low (33-88), medium (89-144) and high (145-165), respectively. Scoring pattern for internal resilience ranges from 18-90 with low level (18-48), medium (49-79) and high (80-90), respectively.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data about background characteristics of academically backward children is presented in Table 1. With regard to the age, about 49.0 per cent of the children were in 13-14 years and 40.9 per cent were in the age group of 14-15 years and only 10 per cent were in age group of 15-16 years. More than half of the academically backward children were boys (58.9%) and 41.9 per cent were girls. Regarding ordinal position, higher percentage of the children were first born (34.2%) followed by 28.5 per cent, 22.8 per cent and 14.7 per cent second, third and forth borns, respectively. About 40.4 per cent of the children belonged to 9th standard followed by 8th (32.8%) and 7th (26.6%) standards. With regard to caste, more than half of the children belonged to the upper caste

Table 1 : Socio-demographic characteristics of academically backward children (n= 210)			
Q. No.	Background characteristics	Frequency	%
Q1.	Age		
	13-14 years	103	49.0
	14-15 years	86	40.9
	15-16 years	21	10.0
Q2.	Gender		
	Male	122	58.9
	Female	88	41.9
Q3.	Ordinal position		
	1st born	72	34.2
	2nd born	60	28.5
	3rd born	48	22.8
	4th born	30	14.2
Q4.	Class		
	7th	56	26.6
	8th	69	32.8
	9th	85	40.4
Q5.	Caste		
	Upper caste	116	55.2
	OBC	36	17.1
	Dalits	46	21.9
	Tribal	12	5.7
Q6.	Family type		
	Nuclear	150	71.4
	Joint	60	28.6
Q7.	Family size		
	2-4 (Small)	42	19.9
	5-7 (Medium)	120	57.1
	> 7 (Large)	48	22.8
Q8.	Monthly per capita income from all sources (total monthly income / number of family members)		
	>50000	-	-
	20000 – 49999	7	3.3
	10000 – 19999	23	10.9
	5000 – 9999	52	24.7
	2500 – 4999	19	9.0
	1000 – 2499	109	51.9
	<1000	-	-
Q9.	Education of either father or mother who is more educated among them		
	Less than Post Graduation	6	2.8
	Primary pass but <10th	132	62.8
	Illiterate	72	34.2
Q 10	Occupation of either father or mother		
	Service in private sector	52	24.7
	Self employed	158	75.2

Note: Numbers in the parenthesis indicate percentages

(55.2%) followed by dalits (21.9%) and OBCs (17.1%). Very few (5.7%) of them were tribals. More than three-forth of the children were from nuclear families (71.4%) and 28.6 per cent belonged to joint families. Regarding family size, 57.1 per cent children belonged to medium family size followed by large (22.8%) and small (19.9%) families.

With respect to the family income, more than half of the children (51.9%) belonged to family income of Rs. 1000-2499 followed by Rs. 5000-9999, Rs.10000-19999 and Rs. 2500-4999 (24.7%, 10.9% and 9%, respectively). Educational level of either of parents revealed that 62.8 per cent had primary education but did not complete 10th standard and about 34.2 per cent of them were illiterate. Further, very few completed less than post graduation and 10th class (2.8%). Occupation of either of parents indicated that about three-fourth (75.2%) were self-employed and 24.7 per cent were working in private sector.

Table 2 and Fig. 1 shows component wise distribution of external resilience of academically backward children. Majority of academically backward children had medium level of external resilience followed by low and high level. About 48-59 percentage of the respondents had medium level followed by 32-50 percentage had low level and 7.6-9.5 percentage had high levels of external resilience in school, home and community assets, respectively. Whereas in case of peer assets, 50 per cent of them had low level followed by medium level (40.5%) and high level (9.5%) of external resilience. In case of overall external resilience, higher percentage of academically backward children had medium level (47.1%) followed by low level (46.7%) and high level (6.2%) of resilience. These results are in line with research findings of Banu (2015) indicating that majority of the respondents had average level followed by low and high external resilience.

Data presented in the Table 3 depicts the component wise distribution of academically backward children. Results revealed that, more number of children had medium level of internal resilience in all the
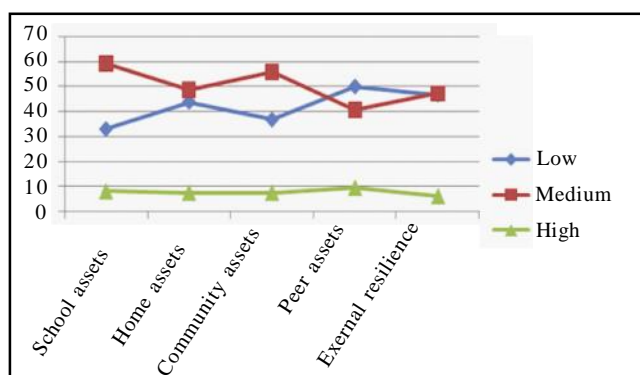

Fig. 1 : External resilience of academically backward children

Table 2 : External resilience of academically backward children			(n=210)
Type	Levels of external resilience		
	Low	Medium	High
School assets	69 (32.9)	124 (59.0)	17 (8.1)
Home assets	92 (43.8)	102 (48.6)	16 (7.6)
Community assets	77 (36.7)	117 (55.7)	16 (7.6)
Peer assets	105 (50.0)	85 (40.5)	20 (9.5)
External resilience	98 (46.7)	99 (47.1)	13 (6.2)

Note: Numbers in the parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 3 : Internal resilience of academically backward children			(n=210)
Type	Levels of internal resilience		
	Low	Medium	High
Cooperation and communication	90 (42.9)	101 (48.1)	19 (9.0)
Self efficacy	78 (37.1)	104 (49.5)	28 (13.3)
Empathy	85 (40.5)	109 (51.9)	16 (7.6)
Problem solving	72 (34.3)	114 (54.3)	24 (11.4)
Self awareness	76 (36.2)	115 (54.8)	19 (9.0)
Goals and aspirations	61(29.0)	119 (56.7)	30 (14.3)
Internal resilience	78 (37.1)	111 (52.9)	21 (10.0)

Note: Numbers in the parenthesis indicate percentages

components *i.e.* goals and aspiration (56.7%), self awareness (54.8%), problem solving (54.3%), empathy (51.9%), self efficacy (49.5%) and cooperation and communication (48.1%). This was followed by low level of internal resilience in cooperation and communication (42.9%), empathy (40.5%), self efficacy (37.1%), self awareness (36.2%), problem solving (34.3%) and goals and aspirations (29.0%). Further, in case of overall internal resilience, majority of them (52.9%) had high, low (37.1%) and high level (10.0%) of resilience.

Data represented in the Table 4 shows age wise distribution of academically backward children to resilience. In case of external resilience, majority of the academically backward children from 13 -14 years, 14-15 years and 15 -16 years had low level (45.2 %- 72.5%) followed by medium level (26.1 % to 36.9 %) and high level (1.4% - 17.9%) of external resilience. The chi-square value of 22.9 indicated highly significant association between external resilience and age of children. Hampel and Petermann (2005) research findings supports our research findings indicating that younger age group children were more resilient than older age group children (10 year than and 12 year) in external resilience components. Younger age group children had more support from adults at home, communities, peer support at school, and opportunities to participate a variety of activities than older children.

With respect to internal resilience, majority of the children from all age groups had low level (43.5% - 57.9%) followed by medium level (17.1% - 56.5%). About 25 percentages of 15- 16 years old children showed high level of internal resilience but none of the respondents from 13 – 14 years and 14-15 years old children showed high level of internal resilience. Further, chi-square analysis indicated significant association between internal resilience and age of children. Results are in line with research findings of Wasonga *et al.* (2003) reported that younger age group children (8 year olds) showed significantly higher scores than older children (10 year and 12 year) on the internal resilience components *i.e.,* communication, empathy, help seeking; whereas 10 year old children had higher scores than 6 year and 14 year old children on goals and aspirations subscale.

Table 5 depicts the gender wise distribution of external resilience of academically backward children. With regard to total external resilience, majority (59.3%) of boys were seen in medium level followed by low (30.1%) and high (10.6%). In case of girls, majority of them had low level (70.1%) and medium level (29.9%) of external resilience. None of them had high level of external resilience. Further significant association and difference exists between gender and external resilience which indicated that boys had more of external resilience as compared to girls. Results revealed that, more number of boys had medium level (45.5%) followed by low (37.4%) and high (17.1%) of internal resilience. Whereas majority of girls had low level of internal resilience followed by medium level (25.3%). The chi-square

Table 4 : Resilience of academically backward children by age					(n=210)
Type	Category	Age			χ^2 value
		13- 14 years	14- 15 years	15- 16 years	
External resilience	Low	36 (63.2)	50 (72.5)	38 (45.2)	22.93**
	Medium	20 (35.0)	18 (26.1)	31 (36.9)	
	High	1 (1.8)	1 (1.4)	15 (17.9)	
Internal resilience	Low	33 (57.9)	30 (43.5)	48 (57.9)	48.9**
	Medium	24 (42.1)	39 (56.5)	15 (17.1)	
	High	-	-	21 (25.0)	

Note: Numbers in the parenthesis indicate percentages, * and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

Table 5 : Gender wise distribution of academically backward children based on external resilience							(n=210)
Type	Gender	Levels of external resilience			χ^2 value	Mean (SD)	't' value
		Low	Medium	High			
External resilience	Boys	37 (30.1)	73 (59.3)	13 (10.6)	36.08**	2.19 (0.60)	6.53*
	Girls	61 (70.1)	26 (29.9)	-		2.76 (0.46)	
Internal resilience	Boys	46 (37.4)	56 (45.5)	21 (17.1)	33.89**	2.20 (0.71)	6.32**
	Girls	65 (74.7)	22 (25.3)	-		2.74 (0.43)	

Note: Numbers in the parenthesis indicate percentages, * and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

Table 6 : SES wise distribution of resilience of academically backward children					(n=210)|
Type	Category	SES level			χ^2 value
		Low	Medium	High	
External resilience	Low	29 (43.9)	69 (47.9)	-	7.73*
	Medium	37 (56.1)	62 (43.1)	-	
	High	-	13 (9.0)	-	
Internal resilience	Low	29 (43.9)	83 (57.6)	-	21.0**
	Medium	37 (56.1)	40 (27.8)	-	
	High		21 (14.6)	-	

Note: Numbers in the parenthesis indicate percentages, * and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

analysis and t-test indicated significant association and difference between gender and internal resilience of academically backward children which showed that boys had more internal resilience compared to girls. Sun and Stewart (2007) supports our research findings indicating that Female students were found to be more likely to report higher levels of communication, empathy, help-seeking and goals for future and aspirations. They also reported more positive connections with parents, teachers and adults in the community, peers in school and outside school, as well as sense of autonomy experience.

SES wise distribution of academically backward children to resilience was depicted in the Table 6. The results revealed that equal percentage (43.9% and 56.1%) of academically backward children from lower SES level showed low and medium levels of external and internal resilience, respectively. None of them showed high level of both the resilience. More number of children (47.9% and 57.6%) from medium level of SES showed low levels of external and internal resilience followed by 43.1 per cent and 27.8 per cent of them indicated medium level and 9 per cent and 14.6 per cent high levels of external as well as internal resilience, respectively. Further, the chi-square value indicated significant association between type of resilience and levels of socio-economic status of the respondents.

Conclusion :

Majority of academically backward children belonged to medium level to low level of resilience. Increased academic expectations of parents and teachers from children results adverse effects on adjustment problems in school, home, community settings. Therefore, it is important to promote resilience in children to cope with academic stress and other problems in turn which enhances their academic performance. This can be done through effective intervention programmes in the context of child, family, school and broader community.

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