

Resilience Building among the Underprivileged Youth Pursuing Higher Education in India

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Resilience is a term used to describe a set of qualities that foster a process of successful adaptation and transformation despite risk and adversity (Benard, 1995). Among the underprivileged youth only a few bright students are lucky enough to graduate from school and even college. But these students face lot of challenges in adapting themselves in higher education campus. Higher education institutions must play a critical role in fostering resilience for underprivileged youth students. The admission of disadvantaged groups to educational and training programmes is part of the wider concern of promoting their resilience building. There are various factors that hinder their promotion in educational institutions like attitude of other students, mental hurdles, inability to balance tradition and modernity, social factors, environment of family, communication, low academic inability etc. While resilience is a necessary attribute of the successful higher degrees students, resilience is an issue and shared responsibility for students, educators, institutions and communities alike. The educators in higher education institutes can use the “Resiliency wheel” model by Nan Henderson and play the role as agents of protective factors. Educators can create higher education institutes that are havens in which resilience can flourish. Such institutes boost the success of the youth from a under privileged class as they encounter the inevitable adversities in the campus. Providing opportunities for students to feel successful, valued, needed, empowered, and hopeful can be accomplished in ways that enrich required academic studies. This paper is all about the various factors that hinder their resilience, with a few suggestions of resilience building that higher educational institutes can train the educators to follow. With educational institutions involvement as an indicator of resilience, this study explores the ameliorating effect of protective factors on competence and mastery in the educational domain in the presence of risk factors. Suggestions for a proactive approach adopted by educators to build resiliency will be addressed, by emphasizing and strengthening the environment, and not fixing students.

I. PRINCIPAL & HEAD DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK, NAZARETH COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE, CHENNAI

Education is fundamental to every constituent of the society irrespective of gender, physical, racial, economic, geographical, cultural, or linguistic differences and its efficacy in human development can never be understated. A developed nation is inevitably an educated nation and India as a developing nation has been systematically progressing on the educational front since its independence. It has seen an appreciable surge in reaching out to all the classes of its society. The improvement on the country’s economic front, the up scaling of communication technology and the advent of the internet, have vastly leveraged the promotion of education across all verticals.

The ‘Right to Education Act’ which stipulates compulsory and free education to all children within the age groups of 6-14 years, has brought about a revolution in the education system of the country with statistics revealing a staggering enrolment in schools over the last four years. The educational movement has been receiving tremendous government support through comprehensive planning in its various five year plans.

Additionally the active involvement of the private sector has begun to demonstrate significant reach and improvement in the Indian education system. The involvement of private sector in higher education has seen drastic changes in the field. Today over 60% of higher education institutions in India are promoted by the private sector. This has accelerated establishment of institutes which have originated over the last decade making India home to the largest number of Higher Education institutions in the world, with student enrolments at the second highest. While the focus of the government has largely been on school education, in the context of post secondary and higher education, consistent and quality growth however has become debatable. An overwhelming demographic divide still persists in the access to quality higher education with several communities (Underprivileged) still remaining under represented, contradicting the very objective of equity within the social growth of the country. However the government has been making tremendous efforts to do away with this divide through several initiatives and by encouraging public private partnerships in promotion of quality higher education

Higher Education in India-Current Status:

The government in the current i.e. the 12th five year plan (2012-2017) has made ambitious plans and has proposed initiatives to ensure reach of quality higher education to every nook and corner of the country. There are several formidable challenges that need to be addressed in promotion of higher education in India.

India's higher education system stands third in size in the world after the US and China with nearly 26 million students in over 45,000 institutions in the country. In the last decade the country has witnessed a particularly high growth rate in student enrolment at a CAGR of 10.8% and institutions at 9%. The University Grants Commission (UGC) which enforces its standards is the main governing body at the tertiary level and advises the government, coordinating between the centre and the state. Accreditation for higher learning is monitored by twelve autonomous bodies established by the UGC. Indian higher education has been progressing at a fast pace adding over 20,000 colleges and about 8 million students between the ten year period 2001 - 2011. As of 2011, Indian higher education system is spread over 42 central universities, 275 state universities, 130 deemed universities and 90 private universities. Additionally 5 institutions were established functioning under the State Act, along with 33 Institutes of National Importance.

Enrolment of SC/ST Students

As per All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE), Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) students over the last four years is as under:-

GER in Higher Education (18-23 Years)

Year	SC Students	ST Students
2011-12	14.9	11.0
2012-13	16.0	11.1
2013-14	17.1	11.3
2014-15(P)	18.5	13.3

P – Provisional.

(Source – AISHE, MHRD)

It can be seen from the above table that there is an increasing trend in GER of SC/ST students in higher education over the last four years.

The goals of the higher education, for that matter any education system of any country is " expansion with inclusion, ensuring quality and relevant education. To meet these challenges, there is a need for policy to identify the key issues involved, to build up on the earlier policies, and to take a step ahead.

II. CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Higher dropout and low enrolment in rural areas

Due to various socio-economic reasons, many are unable to finish their studies. In the rural areas with the changing times the number of scholarships has either not increased with the times or they failed to transmit the benefit to the lower strata. Same can be said for the reservation, first of all the reservation is unable to percolate to the needy masses. And even if somehow it's reaching, then it's unable to translate into larger good, as, after higher education, the reservation is largely taken up by those who could do without it.

2. Outdate, outmoded government institutions and out of reach private institutions

Most of the government institutes have not evolved with the times, they still have archaic syllabus and outlook. Of the total number of 712 universities that we have, a large share belong to the private universities. The education cost is higher in these institutions and hence these are out of reach from the poor masses pursuing higher education.

3. Unequal access of quality education

The issue of quality education due to improper physical infrastructures, poor academic reforms, non quality text books and less importance to regional languages. It can be improved by ensuring good amount student to teacher ratios, including academicians in policy making and importance to regional language.

4. Poor quality of infrastructure

5. Lack of relevance in education to economy and society.

The higher education is facing many challenges as pointed above, most the challenges are difficult but are not impossible to resolve. In our goal to be a world power, the resolving and restructuring of higher

education is must, then only we will be able to harness the human potential and resources of nation to the fullest and channelize it for the growth of the nation.

6. Access & Inclusion

The National level enrollment into high education is a mere 20%.The access to education among various groups such as castes,religions produces a dismally poor picture.While Upper castes,Christians,Jains fare significantly higher than others.Muslims,SC,ST rank way below national averages.The poor among all groups are the worst affected with abysmal enrollments.The rural-urban,female-male divide are starkingtoo.Private un-aided universities are out of reach to majority of Indians.

7. Low level of achievement

The low level of achievement in higher education among them is mainly due to reasons like failing in examinations, heavy drop-outs and stagnations caused by their socio-economic background and educational training, lack of proper guidance, etc. Even most of those who stay in colleges and universities usually do not do well in their studies secure comparatively poor grades or percentage marks in examinations. In recent years some quantitative but not much qualitative changes have occurred in their educational performance of student of those communities depending upon variations in their socio-economic background, nature, nature of institutions they join, and type of course they opt for. Thus, the factors broadly relate to the social background of these students and their social and academic environments.

8. Attitude of other students,

The attitude of the students vary across department and across cultures. The negative tatitude towards these underprivilegeddstdentsbeacuse of their caste discriination can affect thier learning process and lead to droupout.

The others issues include the inability to balance tradition and modernity, social factors, environment of family, communication, low academic inability etc

A Brief Review of Under Represented Groups (UNDERPREVILEGED) in India

Our country suffers from several inequalities in education and employment based on caste, ethnicity and even gender. Since the beginning of Indian history, its society has been plagued by the caste system and to date precious little has been achieved against any movement towards its elimination. Although strongly identified with Hinduism, the caste system has been carried over to other religions on the Indian subcontinent, including small groups of Muslims, Buddhists and Christians. The upper castes historically look down upon the lower castes involving them only in base jobs and this divide continues even now. The lower castes have always been under represented across all sectors forcing successive governments to take initiatives to bridge the divide in the form of reservations in education and employment to help them overcome their socially perceived backwardness. The primary objective of the Indian reservation system is to increase the opportunities for enhanced social and educational status of the underprivileged communities and thus enable them to take their place in the mainstream of Indian society. This has resulted in the categorization of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes, (ST/ST/OBCs). The central government stipulates a total reservation of 49.5% reservations for these communities which however varies from state to state with some states such as Tamil Nadu having as much as 69% reservations.

The Scheduled Tribes

A conspicuous trait of Indian culture is the survival of tribal society and culture in the midst of a rapidly changing society. Scheduled Tribes who inhabit isolated mountainous regions were not appropriated into the agriculture based kingdoms of the plains, in the absence of easy communication and transport facilities. Kosambi identifies the spread of Brahmanism and its rigid subordination of individual to social function with the spread of a more productive agrarian order. According to the Census of 2001, the Scheduled Tribes, constitute 8.1% of the Indian population. In absolute terms, this comes to some 83.6 million people, classified under 461 different communities. They are spread over the entire country but are most heavily concentrated in central, eastern and north-eastern India. Two broad types of 6 scheduling viz. area based and community based exist for tribes. Areas under the Fifth Schedule belong to nine major states of western and central region extending from Maharashtra on the West to Jharkhand in the East. Vulnerable tribal populations of some states are left out however, such as in West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The Sixth Schedule applies to tribal areas in states of the North East.

The Scheduled Castes

The Scheduled Castes constitute around 16 per cent of the Indian population today. There are marked state and regional variations in terms of these proportions. Punjab has the highest proportion at 28 per cent. Among the larger states, (barring the North Eastern, where high tribal concentrations exist) Gujarat has the smallest percentage of SCs at 7.41%. From a sociological point of view, apart from their increasing visibility the most significant contemporary fact concerning the Scheduled Castes is their growing political assertion and identity formation as 'dalit'. As pointed out by Beteille, it is not easy to form a single consistent view of the present position of the Scheduled Castes because the regional diversity is so large and the balance between continuity and change so uncertain. Whereas in the past the social condition of the Scheduled Castes was governed strongly by the ritual opposition of purity and pollution, the calculus of democratic politics has become important today (Beteille, 2001). Urban migration, education, occupational change and religious conversion have been pursued by the scheduled castes as key strategies of socio-economic emancipation, status change and acquisition of a new social identity. They have achieved varying degrees of success. Anti caste and dalit movements have provided the bases for political consciousness and assertions of new self-consciousness and new self-respecting collective identities grounded in both moderate-reformist and radical ideologies.

III. CHALLENGES OF THE UNDERPREVILEGED IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES

Enrollment

Today there is a lot of competition to get enrolled to higher education. A student should secure high marks in their degree examination. However due to inequality in education system and social problems around them they are not able to pursue their higher education. Mahadevaswamy, M (2013) in her research on perception of ST/SC participating in higher education with special reference to Mysore reveals that the participation of SC/ST students is very low compared to the other section of the society. Further she concludes that inadequate finance, lack of awareness of benefits after obtaining his higher education, lack of basic infrastructure such as laptop facility, accommodation facilities and vehicle facilities are the most crucial factors affecting the SC/ST students participating for higher education. In fact, the social and educational problems of a deprived population are interlinked and inter-related. Although education has proved to be the best means for their development, it has not reached to its majority of the scheduled castes. Besides, education carries inherent handicap, both structurally and functionally. In this sense, social problems obstruct the motivation level, quality and utility of education.

In fact, the enrolment of SCs has not increased much in higher education in the last two decades. In fact, the SCs of today are also facing a lot of problems so far as the policies and practical situation is concerned. In fact, the situation is more worrying in higher education. In fact, the SCs of today are also facing a lot of problems so far as the policies and practical situation is concerned. In fact, the situation is more worrying in higher education.

DROUPOUT RATE

Drop out among ST continues to be high. A majority of ST children who enrol in lower classes drop out within a few years of entering school. Official dropout rates of tribal children from school.

UNEQUAL DIFFUSION AND PROVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Education of both the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been adversely affected by the ubiquity of unequal diffusion and provision of schooling. For several decades after independence, their habitations were not adequately provided with educational facilities due to paucity of resources and the gap between the massive scale of the required operation and the political will equally of state and society. The situation improved over the years, yet inadequate provision continues to serve as the most fundamental of educational deterrents to educational participation of underprivileged students. What is most alarming is the reversal today of earlier policy of equitable provision under the impact of structural adjustment.

RESILIENCY BUILDING AMONG THE UNDERPREVILEGED:

Resilience is the capacity to withstand stress and it develops as people grow up and gain better thinking and self management skills and more knowledge. It also is not something that you're either born with. Resilience has roots in its Latin word *resilio*, meaning "to jump back" (Klein, Nicholls, and Tomalley 2003). Resilience according to Berkes, Colding, and Folke 2003; Walker et al. 2004 consists of three capacities that respond to different degrees of change or shocks:

- Absorptive capacity covers the coping strategies individuals, households or communities use to moderate or buffer the impacts of shocks on their livelihoods and basic needs

- Adaptive capacity is the ability to learn from experience and adjust responses to changing external conditions, yet continue operating
- Transformative capacity is the capacity to create a fundamentally new system when ecological, economic, or social structures make the existing system untenable

While resilience is a necessary attribute for the successful higher degree students, resilience is an issue and share responsibility for the students, educators, institutions and communities. The educator in higher education institutes can use the “resiliency wheel” model by Neil Henderson (2003) and play the role as agents of protective factors.

RESILIENCY MODEL

Neil Anderson presents the resiliency model, based on the research findings of individual and environmental protective factors and mechanisms. She has designed the resiliency wheel, a set of strategies that can be implemented in various circumstances to foster resiliency. She considers the caring and support factor to be the most valuable and fundamental of all of the protective factors in the resiliency wheel, as it enables the creation of the relationships and environments that genuinely care for the child. It represents the base from which all the other five factors emerge: high but realistic, expectations for success: Opportunities for a “meaningful contribution” to others: Positive bonds and connections: clear boundaries: and life skills. The caring and support dimension is strongly connected with the learning engagement, efficiency and competence gathering. We can agree that the resiliency wheel seems logical and in full accordance with modern education curricula, but the evidence of the low learning motivation, low efficacy, numerous mental health problems among young students, bullying, school dropouts, etc., this appear so frequently in everyday school practice does not reflect this logical accordance.

UNDERSTANDING THE RESILIENCY MODULE BY NEIL ANDERSON MITIGATING RISK FACTORS IN THE ENVIRONMENT

- Increase bonding or connectedness
- Strengthening connections between the individual and pro-social persons or activities, e.g. in schools increase in family involvement, create engaging afterschool programs
- Set clear and consistent boundaries:
- Be consistent and fair in implementing policies and regulations; this might be most effective in combination with youth participation
- Teach life skills:
- Teaching such as conflict resolution and cooperation will help young people navigate environmental challenges. Provide care and support: caring relationships are the elements promoting resiliency

BUILDING RELIENCY IN THE ENVIRONMENT

- Provide opportunities for meaningful participation
- This strategy views young people as resources and involves them as active participants they take on the responsibility by making decision, planning, evaluating and implementing projects
- Set and communicate high and realistic expectations:
- High and realistic expectations are excellent motivators; cooperative and interest –based learning strategies such as service learning are effective

The resiliency model emphasizes the process and aspires to create and provide quality environmental conditions within the school context, that promote equality, inclusion, learning efficiency, the importance of acquiring life skills and key competences for lifelong learning. When these environmental protective factors and mechanisms for students.

Resiliency wheel may serve perfectly as a guideline for rethinking educational practices, aims and priorities and creating connections in the sense of mentoring, counseling and support.

Instead of labeling people she advocates resiliency based belief that everyone irrespective of age, has an innate capacity to bounce back. The next step is to identify and expand individual patterns, so-called resiliency builders that can be used to overcome challenges.

EDUCATORS AS RESILIENCY BUILDERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES:

The educators’ in higher education institutes can use the ‘resiliency wheel’ model by Neil Henderson (2003) and play the role as agents of protective factors, providing opportunities for students to feel successful, valued, needed, empowered, and hopeful can be accomplished in ways that enrich required academic studies can boost the success of the youth from an under privileged class as they encounter the inevitable adversities in the campus.

Teachers and higher education institutes have the power to transform lives. Teachers as mentors can provide the model three protective factors that enable positive development by meeting the underprivileged youth's basic needs for safety, love and belonging, respect, power, accomplishment and learning. These factors are :

Caring relationships

There are numerous ways in which the educators can convey loving support to students by listening to students and validating their feelings, and by demonstrating kindness, compassion, and respect (Higgins, 1994; Meir, 1995)

Positive and high expectations.

Educators can be student—centered: they use the student's own strengths, interests, goals and dreams as the beginning point for learning, and they tap students' intrinsic motivation for learning

Opportunities to participate and contribute.

Educators can help students express their opinions and imaginations, make choices, problem solve, work with and help others, and give their gifts back to the community in a physically and psychologically safe and structured environment

STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE

Understand student behavior and learning

Students from the privileged community have special needs that exhibit an array of behavior in response to the demands, stimuli, and relationships in the college environment. This behavior can indicate a need in the communications, sensory, academic, physical, medical, social, or emotional areas, or in a combination of these areas. The educators need to match our expectations for the student's behavior to the unique circumstance of the student.

Identify unique strengths

With a keen eye, we can observe the interests and strengths of our students and when possible, we can consider these to plan learning opportunities for students. By providing choice and respectful tasks, we can provide meaningful literacy experiences.

Use strength to address problems

A strengths approach is a specific method of working with and resolving problems experienced by the presenting person. It does not attempt to ignore the problems and difficulties. The educator rather can attempt to identify the positive basis of the person's resources (or what may need to be added) and the strength that will lay the basis to address the challenges resulting from the problems.

Encourage meaningful participation

The students may be given the responsibility of making decision, planning, evaluation, and the implements thereby involve them as active participants.

Provide challenges and support

The educators can provide challenges and support by constantly making them understand "you can do it "I'll be there to help".

Teach life skills

Life skills have been defined as "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (WHO). Life skills include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner. Essentially, there are two kinds of skills- those related to thinking termed as 'thinking skills'; and the skills related to dealing with others termed as "social skills". Young people as advocates need both thinking and social skills for consensus building and advocacy on issues of concern.

The educators must concentrate on the below mentioned ten core skills as laid down by WHO

- Self-awareness
- Empathy

- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Effective communication
- Interpersonal relationship
- Coping with stress
- Coping with change

Teaching life skill such as resolution and cooperation will help young people navigate environment challenge

Provide care and support

Caring relationships are elements of promoting resiliency, research increasingly points out that supportive environments and climate are essentials of learning. Connect learning, interests, strengths, experience, dreams and goals. When a teacher uses students' interests, curiosity, and areas of confidence as starting points in planning instruction, learning is more productive,. Teachers who are cognizant of these issues-reflect on how to use them as strengths upon which they can build-ensure that all students have access to the content. The educator should try to connect the interests, experience and learning of the underprivileged students and help to achieve their goals and dreams.

IV. REACH BEYOND THE RESISTANCE

Increase bonding

Sustained relation-ships and lose bonds form one of the fundamental conditions in the fostering resiliency. The students connection them and the stakeholders like parents, educators and community ca be strengthened

Consider culture as a asset

Many students have strength that are reorganized and neglected in tradition schooling. Students in underrepresented minority groups have culturally relevant knowledge that teachers ca use to promote learning

How can you help to develop resilience in underprivileged youth?

As a teacher or other significant adult life of a young person, it is important to encourage and be aware of the advantages of resilience the words and actions of the teachers help in promoting resilience in young people by providing safe, supportive, nurturing relationship/environment.

The key skills that young people need to be resilient are

- Self-esteem
- Social skills
- Self control
- Problem-solving skills
- Realistic expectations
- Optimistic thinking

V. STRATEGIES TO HELP PROMOTE THESE KEY SKILLS

Manage difficulties:-

Simple behaviors that assist in managing stress can help foster resilience in the youth by ensuring that they are getting enough sleep. Regular physical activity; spend time outdoors to clear their mind, able to ask for help if they need it. Young people need to be thought how to look after themselves and generate their own sense of self-worth.

Improve social skills and building optimism

- Helping young people to develop their social skills and build optimism will improve their ability to connect with others about to ask for assistance when they need it. This can be done asking for their opinion so they get good practice at communicating their views.
- Encouraging them to develop friendships with others to improve their social skills
- Teaching them how to handle disagreements and interpersonal difficulties effectively
- Helping them sense of them with more positive ones their own feelings to avoid jumping to negative conclusions.

- Teaching them to handle negative thoughts by showing them how to challenge unhelpful thinking patterns and replace

Improve problem solving skills and self control

You can encourage young people to develop their problem solving skills and sense of self control by:

- Setting and adhering to reasonable boundary and expectations
- Providing opportunities for young people to challenge themselves and improve on their current skills
- Increase a young persons level of independence and autonomy appropriate to their age and level of development t give them practice in making decisions for themselves

Being a role model for youth

Positive role models boost young people’s motivation by modeling a guide to achieving success. For example, they likely have 1) an ability to inspire others, 2) a clear set of values, 3) a commitment to community, 4) an acceptance of others, and 5) an ability to overcome obstacles. They illustrate for youth a way of achieving successful goals and a sense of self-worth. Youth who have a growth mindset are likely to gravitate toward these types of positive role models.

VI. Conclusion

The above study the education of the underprivileged students propels the conclusion that state policy and bureaucracy together serve to provide quantitatively the most inadequate and qualitatively the most inferior education. Grossly unequal provision, accompanied by an alienating curriculum and disinterested and discriminatory teaching learning process seem to add to thier woes. SC/ST students are largely “cooled out” at the primary level itself. There occurs an effective physical exclusion of SC/ST students or they achieve low levels of academic outcome, which do not necessarily reflect learning. Given the present scenario, the educators and the educationist can play a vital role in their success. It is all about changingones mind set and helping them to row as succesful youth.

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