



A Study on Resilience and Spirituality in Enhancing Education Amongst Adolescents in the State of Manipur

¹**Dr. Taithul Rita Chinneihoi Zou**, *Assistant Professor at Don Bosco College (Autonomous), Maram, Senapati District, Manipur*

rita_zou@rediffmail.com

²**Lokho Athishu**, *Assistant Professor at Don Bosco College (Autonomous), Maram, Senapati District, Manipur*

ahmsathishu@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper discusses about the role of spirituality in enhancing resilience of adolescents amidst the ongoing various unresolved socio-political conflicts in the state of Manipur. According to the ecological systems theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner, spirituality, is one of the most important aspects that have direct influence on individuals and its role cannot be ignored in enhancing resilience of adolescents. A multistage sampling method was employed in the study. Resilience of adolescents was found to be positively correlated with spirituality, and spiritual beliefs acted as a source of strength. The adolescents believed that no matter how bad the environment in which they live might be, it depended on them to be good and successful. This also means doing well in their present studies and further education. Resilience literature also identifies spirituality as one of the core characteristics of resilience in adolescents. Values inculcated by spirituality serve to maintain positive outlook on life and help to find meaning in adverse situation. For the purpose of the study, the terms spirituality and religion were interchangeably used.

Key words: *Adolescents, Conflict, Religion/Spirituality, Resilience, Education*

1. Introduction

The study was carried out in the state of Manipur, in the year 2019. Manipur, one of the Northeastern states of India is inhabited by a mosaic of people of various ethnic backgrounds. The state, according to the 2011 census, has a population of about 3 million (2,855,794), literacy rate of 79.85 percent. The diversity of the state characterized by extraordinary ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic, is also often, the reasons for the various issues and conflicts which have been taking place. And these conflicts could be broadly categorized into four, namely, tribal versus the State, tribal versus tribal, tribal versus non-tribal, and insurgency. The consequences of this violence have led to disruptions of normal lives affecting all sections of populations and all walks of life. The consequences of this violence have led to disruptions of normal lives affecting all sections of populations and all walks of life. It is in the context of these risks, surrounding the lives of the adolescents that the role of spirituality is being studied into.

A multistage sampling design consisting of four stages was employed and the techniques used were stratified and simple random samplings, which led to a selection of two tehsils – Lamphelpat (high conflict area) and Wangoi (low conflict area) under the Imphal West district. A sample size of 572 students (standards XI and XII) was collected from eight schools (four government and four private), affiliated to Council of Higher Secondary Education Manipur (COHSEM). Data were collected in the month of September 2019.

2. Adolescents of Manipur

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), those individuals between the age range of 10-19 years are termed as adolescents. But for the purpose of the study, the age of 14-24 was taken keeping in mind the various backgrounds of the respondents, where, in some communities especially, the tribal, the starting age for schooling is late and by the time they reach standards XI and XII, they crossed 20 years. The majority of the respondents, 418 (73.08%), belonged to the age group of the range 16-17 years. The number of male and female respondents was 186 and 386, respectively.

According to the International Resilience Project (2006), that conducted a study on the youth of Manipur between the age range of 11 to 20 years, reported about the adolescents and the youth of Manipur in the following:

“School children and college students routinely join, or are ironically forced to join, joint action committees protesting violations of human rights. Youth have come to accept violence as part of their lives, and it is standard procedure to demand compensation money from the government for lives lost. As a result, youth are vulnerable to high-risk behaviours as drug users or as non-state actors in revolutionary movement(s). (p. 1)”

3. Education

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits through various methods such as teaching, training, or personal experiences. It helps individuals develop intellectually, socially, and emotionally, preparing them to achieve personal growth and contribute to the society. Education typically involves both formal and informal settings, formal settings like school, colleges, and universities, as well as informal environments like home and community learning. Education is a cornerstone of personal and societal advancement. It opens opportunities, builds the foundation for a better, more equitable, and sustainable future.

Studies such as *the relationship between resilience and student success among a sample of South African engineering students* and *the relationship between resilience and academic performance at youth placed at risk*, have proven how non-cognitive factors like resilience is related to students' academic performance and successful adaptation to life.

4. Resilience And Spirituality

Resilience is best understood as social ecological construct. It emphasizes both on the individual's role in nurturing and sustaining his/her well-being and the relational, social and cultural factors that must be made available and accessible to those facing multiple risks (Resilience Research Centre, 2006, p. 5). According to the ecological systems theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1977), religion/spirituality is placed in the microsystem, that is, the immediate surrounding of an individual with his/her direct involvement. This system involves a bidirectional relationship where the individual is directly influenced by the system (religion/spirituality) and vice versa.

Using the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM), youth version, and The Religiosity and Spiritual Scale for Youth (five-point likert scale each), the resilience and

spirituality of the respondents were measured. The resilience of female respondents was found to be higher than that of male respondents (mean score of 164.5 & 156.51, respectively). It was also found that there was no difference in the resilience of adolescents whether they were from high or low conflict areas, or, from government or private schools (not significant at $p = .97$ & $p = .18$, respectively).

It was found that for the majority of the respondents, ‘spiritual beliefs’ acted as a source of strength in the environment they are in (mean score of 4.02), which also was one of the reasons why they are pursuing their studies and having dreams and ambitions. Their belief in what is taught by their respective religion (mean score of 4.11) and in themselves that no matter how bad their environment might be, it depended on them to be good and successful (means score of 4.4), show the respondents’ reliance on spirituality that is inculcated by their religion. Moreover, there was a positive correlation between the two variables ‘resilience’ and ‘spirituality’ ($r = .58$, $p = 0.001$). Thus, it shows that higher the spirituality, higher the resilience and pursuance of education amongst the adolescents.

5. Conclusion

Religion and spirituality have been identified as resilience factors according to various resilience research (Werner, 1996, p. 48). Similarity has been found between the protective aspects of religion and spirituality and in the protective processes found in studies of resilience at all three levels of individual, family, and community. It has been suggested conceptually that spirituality (and religion) may facilitate resilience in four major ways- it helps build attachment relationships, it opens access to sources of social support, it guides conduct and moral values, and it offers opportunities for personal growth and development (Bigger, 2007, p. 6). It also serves as a coping mechanism for dealing with adversity. Although some argue that religious beliefs might lead to negative coping, for instance, feeling punished by God, there are also other aspects of religious faith, like hope, that serve in enhancing adaptive coping, especially, in times of difficulties and hardships.

In the context of education, resilient students are better equipped to cope with academic challenges, setbacks, and the pressures that come with learning. Resilience and education are closely correlated, with resilience playing a crucial role in a person’s ability to succeed in

educational environments and education, in turn, helping to build resilience. Resilience and education influence each other in a dynamic way, with resilience enhancing educational outcomes and education fostering the development of resilience.

References

- American Psychological Association. (2012). *Building your resilience*. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>
- Baker, D. C. (2003). Studies of the Inner Life: The Impact of Spirituality on Quality of Life. *Quality of Life Research*, 12(1), 51-57. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4038230>
- Bigger, S. (2007). Spiritual Development in Childhood and Youth: A Response to the Sage Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence. In Roehlkepartain, E. C., Kind, P. E., Wagener, L., & Benson, P. L. (Eds), *The Handbook of Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence* (pp. 355-370). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brelsford, G. M., & Mahoney, A. (2008). Spiritual Disclosure Between Older Adolescents and Their Mothers. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22(1), 62-70. doi: 10.1037/0893-3200.22.1.62
- Cotton, S., Larkin, E., Hoopes, A., Cromer, B., & Rosenthal, S. (2005). The Impact of Adolescent Spirituality on Depressive Symptoms and Health Risk Behaviors. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 36, 529.e7-529.e14. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2004.07.017
- Dasgupta, C. (2009). *Resilience of Children Living with Political Violence in Kashmir: Role of Religion and Political Ideology*. Ph.D. Thesis, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/9385>
- Davis, J. (2014, March 13). Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory. Real Life Examples. Retrieved from <https://bronfenbrenner3040.weebly.com/real-life-examples>
- Global Finance Magazine. (2020). *The Most Peaceful Countries In The World 2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.gfmag.com/global-data/non-economic-data/most-peaceful-countries>
- Guy-Evans, O. (2020). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. *Simply Psychology*. Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner.html>
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313602814_The_relationship_between_resilience_and_academic_performance_at_youth_placed_at_youth_placed_at_risk

- Indira, K. (2014). Social Problems Among the Adolescents of Manipur: Role of Parents and Teachers. *Journal of North East India Studies*, 4(1), 13-21. ISSN 2278-1455 / ISSN 2277-6869. Retrieved from <https://works.bepress.com/jneis/41/>
- Johnson, B. R. (2008). A Tale of Two Religious Effects: Evidence for the Protective and Prosocial Impact of Organic Religion. In K. K. Kline (Eds.), *Authoritative Communities: The Scientific Case for Nurturing the Whole Child* (SISS, Vol. 5, pp. 187-225). New York: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-72721-9_9
- Kim, S., & Esquivel, G. B. (2011). Adolescent Spirituality and Resilience: The Theory, Research, and Educational Practices. *Psychology in the Schools*, 48(7), 755-765. Wiley Periodicals, Inc. doi: 10.1002/pits.20582
- Ningthoujam, S., Bansal, V. M., Singh, T., Devi, O. H., Zafar, M., & Imran, M. (2019). Career Aspirations Among Youth in Manipur: Studying the Barriers to Aspiration in a Conflict Region. *Journal of Career Development*, XX(X), 1-16. doi: 10.1177/0894845319890923
- Oinam, B. (2003). Patterns of Ethnic Conflict in the North-East: A Study on Manipur. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(21), 2031-2037. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4413594>
- Resilience Research Centre. (2006, January). *The International Resilience Project*. Retrieved from https://resilienceresearch.org/files/2006_reports/india.pdf
- van Wyk, M., Mason, H.D., van Wyk, B.J., Phillips, T.K., & van der Walt, P.E. (2022). The relationship between resilience and student success among a sample of South African engineering students. *Cogent Psychology*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2022.2057660>
- Werner, E. E. (1996). Vulnerable But Invincible: High Risk Children from Birth to Adulthood. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 5(1), 47-51. doi: 10.1007/BF00538544.