



A Comparative Study: Resilience of Youth in High and Low Conflict Areas in the State of Manipur

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Abstract: The paper discusses resilience of youth in the state of Manipur and compares it between low and high conflict areas. The factors which help cultivate resilience are nothing extraordinary and humongous but they arise from very ordinary protective processes. A multistage sampling method was employed and a total of 572 adolescents, both from government and private schools were surveyed, in the study. It was found that the youth of Manipur were resilient and there was no difference in the resilience of youth studying in schools located in high and low conflict areas ($p = 0.97$).

Keywords: *Resilience, Conflict, Youth, School*

1. Introduction

The study is a comparative one, that compares between the resilience of youth of Manipur residing in low conflict area (Wangoi) and high conflict area (Lamphel) in the Imphal West district. The data for the study were collected in the year 2019. The distinction between the low and high conflicting areas were reached upon by informal surveys carried out.

Manipur, one of the eight states that constitute the North-east India, is a small state known all over the world and the country for its achievements in sports, dances, martial arts, and also for its sustained violence and conflicts. Manipur has an area of 22,327 square kilometres and shares its boundaries with the states of Nagaland to its north, Mizoram to its south and Assam to its west. It also shares international boundaries with the Sagaing Region (to the east) and Chin State (to the south) of Myanmar. According to the 2011 census, the Meitei ethnic group comprises of about 53 percent of the state's population, the various Naga tribes

around 24 percent and the various Kuki-Zo tribes around 16 percent. Administrative wise, state is divided into sixteen districts.

Resilience

Resilience is often understood as the capacity to bounce back in adverse situations. The presence of social risk factors is associated with resilience and for it to be talked or studied about, there needs to be the presence of at least one stressor. Thus, this research has qualified in studying the resilience of youth in the turmoil-stricken state of Manipur (Zou, 2022). Resilience of individuals growing up in challenging contexts or facing significant personal adversity is dependent on the quality of the social and physical ecologies surrounding them as much, and likely far more than their personal traits, cognitions or talents (Ungar, 2012).

Studies on genetics, cognition, human development, family processes, community responses to disaster and trauma have shown the disequilibrium in the definition of resilience between individuals who lack opportunities for growth and development and those influenced by environments that facilitate resilience-promoting processes.

Conflict

According to the second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) Report (2008), the state of Manipur is the ‘most insurgency ridden’ state with different active violent outfits representing different tribes/communities.

In some districts of the state the militant organizations are virtually running a parallel government and are able to influence the decisions of the state government to certain extent- in appointments in government services, awarding contracts and supply orders; they also indulge in widespread extortion and hold “courts” dispensing justice in their areas of influence.

Northeast, besides conflict between the states of the region with the Central government, there also exist interstate as well as intra-state conflicts within the region. Of all the eight states in the northeast region, Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Tripura are the most violent states (Upadyay, 2006).

Youth

In India, the National Youth Policy (NYP) 2014 officially defines “youth” as persons in the age group of 15-29 years. This demographic constitutes about 27-28% of India’s population, making it a critical demographic dividend for the nation’s economic and social development.

In the contexts affected by conflict, it is important to consider youth when planning and developing peace-building interventions. Violence and instability in a state have generalized negative effects on the population, conflict and its associated risks will often be experience

differentially by young people. The lack of livelihood and education opportunities available to youth can leave them at higher risk of becoming engaged in violence. For many young people there is an increasing gap between their expectations and the opportunities available to them and this element can be a key conflict driver because youth's experiences of conflict and peace are influenced by their knowledge of the constraints and opportunities available to them (Asia-Pacific Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth, 2011). As Reilly (2012) states that despite the often negative association between young people and violence, youth have significant potential to serve as agents of peace.

2. Methodology

Since the data were collected at one given point of time across the sample, in the year 2019, it is a cross-sectional study. The study was intended to make generalization to a larger population (the adolescents of Manipur) and relied on correlations, survey and interpretations making it a non-experimental one. Data were collected both from the primary as well as secondary sources. Interviews, focused group discussions (FGDs), surveys were used for primary data collection whereas, for secondary data, documents on government publications, earlier researchers, personal recordings, newspapers and such others were referred to.

A multi-stage sampling design was employed that consisted of four stages, and sample were collected from both government and private schools from two subdivisions (Lamphelpat and Wangoi) of the Imphal-West district. Resilience of youth were measured using a tool, the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM), a standardized scale developed by the Resilience Research Centre (RCC).

3. Findings

To study the resilience of youth in the high and low conflict sites, an independent *t*-test was performed. The distribution of youth in the two areas was sufficiently normal for the purpose of conducting *t*-test. The independent samples *t*-test was associated with a statistically no significant effect, $t(570) = -0.04$, $p = 0.970$. Thus, it showed that there was statistically no significant difference between the scores of resilience of adolescents between the high conflict site and the low conflict site. Hence, the null hypothesis that states that there will be no significant difference in the resilience of adolescents from high and low conflict areas is accepted.

H: There will be significant difference in the resilience of adolescents from high and low conflict areas.

H₀: There will be no significant difference in the resilience of adolescents from high and low conflict areas.

It was interesting to find out that resilience of female was higher than that of male respondents. According to Sun and Stewart (2007), female have more tendency to communicate and maintain more positive connections with parents, teachers and adults in the community, as compared to their male counterparts. Females are more likely to have feelings of empathy and help-seeking, and more goal oriented. Similar finding was also reported by Limura and Taku (2017), in the aim to explore gender differences in the Japanese youth, it reported that female youth had higher resilience and conscientiousness level than the male youth.

4. Conclusion

Such similar findings were reported by Dasgupta (2009) and Punamaki (1996) whose studies found that residence or place of living was not related to psychological distress among children.

Thus, the finding implies that though there are differences in the socio-political scenarios in the two areas- Lamphelpat and Wangoi, there is no difference in the resilience of the youth.

Many of the youth of Manipur have proved to be excellent in their chosen fields, be it in sports, arts, and many more. The youth of the state have many latent talents which still need to be explored. At the same time, according to the findings of various studies, quite a good number of the youth in Manipur were also found to resort to anti-social activities such as alcoholism, drug abuse, and joining insurgent groups, in response to their frustrations in life and the environment surrounding them.

Resilience has sometimes been characterized as a personality characteristic that provides shield against life stress and adversity. However, there is insufficient evidence to support a singular, broad characteristic of resilience (Wright & Masten, 2015). There are many individuals as well as contextual factors that have been linked to resilience. An individual trait that poses as giving protection in one context can also pose as vulnerability in different context.

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