



Examining Resilience Capacity and Coping Strategies Among Indian Youths: Insights into Rural and Urban Dynamics

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of the present study was to examine the level of resilience among youth and the types of coping strategies they employ when confronting significant life challenges. A sample of 200 youth from Madhubani district was selected using random sampling technique. Findings revealed that youth possess a moderate level of resilience capacity. It was also observed that youth residing in rural areas demonstrate significantly higher levels of sense of mastery, sense of relatedness, emotional reactivity, and overall resilience compared to their urban counterparts. The results further indicated a highly significant difference in the coping strategies adopted by Indian youth, with a clear preference for active and approach-oriented coping patterns reflecting a problem-focused approach. However, no significant difference was found in the coping strategies employed by youth from rural and urban areas of Madhubani district.

Keywords: Youth, Resilience capacity, Coping strategies

Introduction

The concept of resilience significantly influences an individual's quality of life. Within psychology, two primary approaches exist for understanding resilience: resilience as a trait and resilience as a process. Resilience emerges along the developmental continuum rather than being an inborn characteristic. It develops as individuals mature, acquire enhanced thinking and self-management abilities, and accumulate knowledge. Resilience is further strengthened through supportive relationships with parents, relatives, peer groups, and others, as well as through cultural beliefs and traditions that assist individuals in navigating life's inevitable difficulties. The focus lies in conceptualizing resilience as a continuous and active process involving the development or emergence of new adaptive forces and resources for recovery, displaying uneven dynamics when confronted with emerging challenges.

Resilience refers to the capacity of an individual or social group to maintain equilibrium and integrity during difficult situations while effectively addressing both adaptation requirements and developmental tasks. It represents the capacity and dynamic process of adaptively overcoming stress and adversity while sustaining normal psychological and physical functioning (Russo et al., 2012; Rutter, 2012; Southwick & Charney, 2012). Certain individuals possess personality characteristics conducive to resilience, complemented by acquired skills and strengths. Others may lack such resilience or necessary skills and consequently become overwhelmed when facing difficult circumstances.

Every individual encounters stressful events, with most experiencing trauma at some point during their lives. Consequently, understanding resilience development and enhancement holds substantial relevance for promoting coping mechanisms while reducing maladaptive responses and stress-related psychiatric conditions including depression and posttraumatic stress disorder. Resilience denotes positive adaptation or the capacity to maintain or regain mental health despite adversity exposure (Wald, Taylor, et al., 2006). Such adversities manifest through various stressful events including bereavement, loss, accidents, physical assault, natural disasters, life-altering disease processes, and other traumatic experiences, with resilience emerging or developing as an outcome of these challenges.

From this perspective, Wagnild and Young (1993) defined resilience as "a personality characteristic that moderates the negative effects of stress and promotes adaptation." Rebounding represents a hallmark of resilience—the capacity to recover equilibrium. Resilient individuals possess the "capacity to be bent without breaking and the capacity, once bent, to spring back" (Vaillant, 1993, p.248).

Resilience is further defined as a set of capabilities enabling households and communities to function effectively amid life stresses while maintaining specified well-being outcomes. Measuring resilience involves assessing relationships between capacities,



responses, shocks, and current and future well-being states. Resilience capacities are quantified through indices corresponding to three dimensions: absorptive capacity, adaptive capacity, and transformative capacity. Among various definitions and measurements available in literature, the Resilience Capacity Index defines a form of "potential resilience"—specifically, a region's potential ability to recover or rebound when confronted with external shocks.

Coping proves fundamental to understanding how individuals adapt to adverse circumstances. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined coping strategies as constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts directed toward managing external or internal demands appraised as taxing or exceeding personal resources. According to Gutmann (1974) and Pfeiffer (1977), individuals tend to employ more passive coping strategies with advancing age, shifting from problem-focused approaches toward emotion-focused styles. Carver and Connor-Smith (2010) similarly suggest that such strategies diminish with age. Research indicates that young adults, whose development typically occurs within changing contexts, demonstrate more active coping patterns emphasizing problem-focused methods (Folkman, Lazarus, Pimley, & Novacek, 1987).

Coping strategies encompass thoughts and behaviors employed to manage internal and external demands arising from stressful situations. Contextual factors including individual personality, stressful situation characteristics, and social circumstances influence whether particular coping strategies are utilized and prove effective. Certain coping strategies demonstrate more consistent associations with successful adaptation than others, though no single strategy proves universally adaptive or maladaptive across all situations.

Lifespan development inherently involves navigating stressful events through various strategies. Understanding whether these coping strategies differ according to individual characteristics holds practical value. The transition period from school to young adulthood proves critical, with individuals facing numerous challenges and experiencing elevated stress. The level of resilience capacity and coping strategies adopted by Indian youth fundamentally influences their psychological well-being, which in turn supports higher professional competence and learning. Therefore, the present study aims to determine resilience capacity levels among Indian youth and identify the coping strategies they employ when confronting stressful life events or situations.

Objectives

Based on the observations the study adopt the following objectives:

- To find the level of resilience capacity of Indian youths.
- To compare the level of resilience capacity of Indian youths belonging to rural and urban areas.
- To find the kind of coping strategies adapted by Indian youths.
- To compare the coping strategies adapted by Indian youths belonging to rural and urban areas.

Hypotheses

Based on the objectives, following hypothesis was formulated:

- There will be no significant difference in the level of resilience capacity of Indian youths belonging to rural and urban areas.
- There will be no significant difference in the kind of coping strategies adapted by Indian youths.
- There will be no significant difference in coping strategies of Indian youths belonging rural and urban areas.

Method

Sample:

The sample consists of 200 Indian youths of which 100 belongs to urban areas (50=males; 50=females) and 100 from rural areas(50=males;50=females) of age range 18-22 years from middle-class socio-economic status of Madhubani district. Purposive sampling method used in the study.

Tools:

The scale assesses an individual's capacity to successfully adapt, recover, and strengthen when confronted with stressful circumstances and negative emotional experiences. It comprises 30 items distributed across four dimensions: perseverance, composure, self-reliance, and faith. Designed for individuals aged 14 years and above, the scale follows a five-point Likert format



and demonstrates high reliability and validity. Test-retest reliability was established at 0.87, while split-half reliability was found to be 0.84, both significant at the 0.01 level. The resilience scale was validated against the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson, 2003), yielding a concurrent validity coefficient of 0.86, which was statistically significant.

Developed by A.K. Srivastava in 2001, this scale assesses an individual's coping style. It contains 50 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, measuring tendencies toward active or approach coping (problem-focused) and avoidance coping (emotion-focused). The scale demonstrates high reliability and validity. Test-retest reliability was found to be 0.92, while split-half reliability ranged from 0.692 to 0.78. The content validity median ranged between 0.34 and 0.39, significant at the 0.01 level.

Procedure:

The data was collected using a purposive sampling method. The participants were contacted and introduction to the measures was given first. The target respondent was explained about the study and with the consent of the respondent, the data was collected using a paper pencil test. Ethical procedures like informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity were practiced throughout the research procedure.

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 01— “There will be no significant difference in the level of resilience capacity of Indian youths belonging to rural and urban areas”.

TableNo.1
Mean and SD of the Level of Resilience Capacity of rural and urban Indian youths

Variable	Area	N	Mean	SD	T	df	Significance
Resilience Capacity	Rural	100	118.64	11.44	1.96*	198	p<0.05
	Urban	100	115.78	9.32			

*Significant at 0.05 level

Result shows that the Mean and SD of resilience capacity of Indian youths was found to be 117.21 and 10.50, respectively which indicates “Moderate level of Resilience Capacity.” This states that Indian youths have a good balance and a solid foundation when facing challenges but may not find it as easy as highly resilient individuals. In which, Mean and SD of rural youths is 118.64 and 11.44, respectively whereas Mean and SD of urban youths is 115.78 and 9.32, respectively. The t-test of difference in resilience capacity between Indian youths of rural and urban areas is calculated to be 1.96(p<0.05) along with df 198, which is significant at 0.05 level. Thus, there is a significant difference between the resilience capacity of Indian youths belonging to rural and urban areas. Hence, our hypothesis is rejected. The study conducted in Dharwad region also shows that adolescents living in rural areas had notably greater levels of sense of mastery and overall resilience when compared to their urban counterparts (Koneru & Yenagi, 2024).

Hypothesis 02— “There will be no significant difference in the kind of coping strategies adapted by Indian youths”.

TableNo.2
Mean and SD value of approach and avoidance coping strategies of Indian youths

Variable	Types	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Significance
Coping Strategies	Approach	200	71.75	13.46	18.5**	198	p<0.01
	Avoidance		37.24	11.17			

**Significant at 0.01 level

The obtained ‘Mean’ and ‘SD’ of Approach Coping strategy was found to be 71.75 and 13.46, respectively whereas the ‘Mean’ and ‘SD’ of Avoidance Coping strategy was found to be 37.24 and 11.17, respectively. The t-test of difference between approach coping strategy and avoidance coping strategy among Indian youths is calculated to be 18.5 (p<0.01) along with df 198, which is highly significant. This shows that maximum number of youths tend to adopt approach coping strategy.

Thus, the result indicates that there is a high level of significant difference in the kind of coping strategies adopted by Indian youths. Hence, our hypothesis is not retained. The findings can be supported by the research of Folkman, Lazarus, Pimley, & Novacek

(1987), that young adults, whose development generally occurs in changing contexts, exhibit a more active coping pattern, emphasizing problem-focused methods i.e., approach coping strategy.

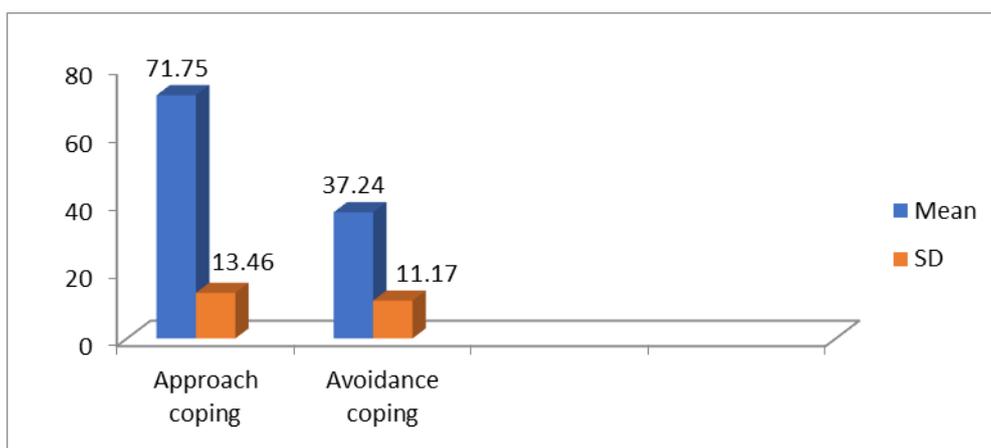


Figure No.1

Hypothesis 03— “There will be no significant difference in coping strategies of Indian youths belonging to rural and urban areas”.

TableNo.3
Mean, SD and t value of approach and avoidance coping strategies of rural and urban Indian youths

Coping Strategies						
Area	Approach			Avoidance		
	Mean	SD	t	Mean	SD	t
Rural	73.02	15.42	1.363	37.93	13.34	0.866
Urban	70.43	11.09		36.56	8.49	

N=200; df=198; p<0.05

For those Indian youths belonging to rural areas, it has been found that the ‘Mean’ and ‘SD’ of approach coping strategy was found to be 73.02 and 15.42, respectively, whereas ‘Mean’ and ‘SD’ of avoidance coping strategy was found to be 37.93 and 13.34, respectively. On the other hand, for those Indian youths belonging to urban areas, it has been found that the ‘Mean’ and ‘SD’ of approach coping strategy was found to be 70.43 and 11.09, respectively, whereas ‘Mean’ and ‘SD’ of avoidance coping strategy was found to be 36.56 and 8.49, respectively. The t-test of difference between approach coping strategy and avoidance coping strategy is calculated to be 1.363 and 0.866 ($p>0.05$) along with df 198, which is insignificant at 0.05 level. Thus, there is no significant difference in coping strategies of Indian youths belonging to both rural and urban areas. Hence, our hypothesis is accepted.

Several investigations have reported an absence of sex differences in both stress experiences and coping patterns (Compas et al., 1998; Armisted et al., 1990; Gore, Aseltine, & Colton, 1992). However, urban males were found to report higher levels of conflict and externalizing behaviors compared to their female counterparts and rural males. Despite the presence of challenging socioeconomic conditions in rural areas, the levels of stress and coping strategies employed remained comparable across rural and urban settings.

Conclusion

The present study examined resilience capacity and coping strategies among Indian youth in Madhubani district. A randomly selected sample of 200 Indian youth participated in the investigation. Findings revealed that youth in Madhubani district demonstrated moderate resilience levels; however, rural youth exhibited elevated scores in sense of mastery, relatedness, emotional reactivity, and overall resilience when compared to their urban counterparts. The study further found that Indian youth employed distinctly different coping mechanisms characterized by proactive and problem-focused approaches. Nevertheless, no significant difference emerged between the coping strategies utilized by youth from rural and urban sectors of Madhubani district. A critical



question for future research concerns how existing knowledge about resilience can be applied to further promote resilience and identify appropriate coping strategies for managing stressors.

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