



## Assessment of the Level of Resilience Among Adolescence of Single Parent Families

### KEYWORDS

Adolescence, Resiliency and single parents

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### ABSTRACT

*Adolescence being the most transitional stage of physical and psychological changes generally occurring between puberty and legal adulthood. The present study focuses on the level of resilience among adolescents which is a protective factor that facilitates individuals biological, psychological and social resist, adapt and strength itself, to a medium risk. Results related to resilience of the adolescents reveals that most of the sample adolescents had low sense of mastery and low sense of relatedness but at the same time average to high emotional reactivity. This implies that the adolescents belonging to single parent families had problems in relating with others and mastering situations and tasks. They also had low to average resource index as well as vulnerability, highlighting that they were not resourceful and needed help in dealing with stressful situations. Overall, most sample adolescents did encounter problems in mastering and relating to others along with showing high emotional reactivity and vulnerability, indicating their low levels of resilience. Statistical analysis indicates that on the whole sex of the adolescents significantly affected their sense of mastery, sense of relatedness and resource index. In all these areas more females scored lower than the males, indicating that females were lesser resilient than the males.*

### INTRODUCTION

Resilience is a protective factors that facilitates positive outcomes for children who are faced with adverse life events. These risk and protective factors are often interplay between genetic, personal and environmental factors (Rutter, 1999; Werner, 1995). Some of the Internal factors that contribute to resilience include flexibility, autonomy, sense of humor, internal locus of control, perceptiveness, creativity, self motivation, good decision making skills etc. Other positive factors which lead to the development of resilience include good parenting, faith and religious affiliation, talent valued by society and self, a sense of meaning in life, good schools, good intellectual skills, community resources etc. The circumstances during adolescence may be chronic and consistent or sometimes infrequent. To thrive, mature and increase competence, a person must draw upon all his/her resources biological, psychological and environmental which is possible through resilience which helps in reflecting the abilities to successfully adapt and function despite of prolonged and severe trauma. However, it is different from recovery (Bananno, 2004).

The family structure has an impact on mother adolescent relationship in single parent families. In recent years, children in single parent families have become focus of research in India. There is evidence that children in single parent families are likely to report feelings of loneliness, withdrawal, fear and anger. They are likely to face both social and emotional problems, suffer from high conflict and less cohesion with family members (Sethi, 1994).

The absence of one parent may change the adolescents perception about the other parent. The loss of father has less impact on the relationship that adolescents have with their mother (Aquilino, 1994). So also, those with divorced parents have limited effect on adolescents perception of support from their mother (Amato, 1987). Studies indicate positive impact of single parent families on mother adolescent relationship. Adolescents have a close and satisfying relationship with their single parent (Demo, 1992). Girls are found to have a more positive relationship with their mother and are more responsible than boys (Hetherington, 1989).

Adolescence is a time of many transitions for both teens and their families. To ensure that teens and adults navigate these

transitions successfully, it is important for both to understand what is happening to the teen physically, cognitively, and socially and also brings with itself numerous challenges. Coupled with this living in single parent families further can exposes them to several stresses and complexes. Gender has an effect on resilience. Pre-adolescence, girls are more resilient than boys but the situation reverses in adolescence. Different characteristics of the home environment are particularly protective for girls and boys. Girls benefit from an absence of over-protection, an emphasis on risk-taking and reliable emotional support. Boys benefit from greater structure and rules, adult supervision, the availability of a positive male role model and encouragement of emotional expression. This is the time when adolescence requires care and attention of both parents. The children in the single parent families might have developed some coping mechanisms to overcome the shortage of one parent.

### Purpose of the study

Adolescents of single parent families can face number of problems related to their emotional development, social development and psychological well being because of absence of one parent. The purpose of this study is to examine the level of resilience showed by the adolescents belonging to single parent families.

At a phase of life when the adolescents require the care and attention of both parents they are denied the presence of one parent. These children who are brought up in single parent families might have developed some coping mechanisms to overcome the shortage of one parent. Thus, in event of this stressful life condition it would be interesting to note the adolescent's level of resilience in terms of Sense of Mastery, Sense of relatedness and Emotional reactivity. Further it would also be interesting to assess differences if any in the level of resilience between the male and female adolescents.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted to understand the connectivity between parenting and resilience among adolescents belonging to single parent families of Jammu city.

#### 1. SAMPLE

a) SAMPLE SIZE: The sample for the study comprised of 80 adolescents and their single parent (either mother or father).

The selected adolescents were in the age group of 12-16 years, out of which 40 were boys and 40 were girls. Those adolescents were selected who resided in urban area of Jammu city. The parents with atleast matriculate and belonging to middle class was also the criteria for sample selection.

**b) SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:**

The entire sample was selected by random sampling through multistage sampling. In the 1st stage a list of private schools located in Jammu city was obtained from Jammu & Kashmir state board of school education .There are total of 37 schools in Jammu city. Then a survey was carried out to know about the schools that have more children from single parent families. From those schools, 8 schools were selected randomly by lottery method. Then from those 8 schools, 10 students out of which 5 were girls and 5 were boys studying in classes 7th to 11th were selected, after obtaining the permission from the principals of the selected schools After getting the permission from the principals of each selected school, an interaction with the teachers were carried out to identify the names of adolescents who belonged to the single parent families. In this way snowball sampling technique had been used for the identification of the sample. Then the interaction was carried out with the adolescents. The introduction was given to them about the single parent families that "single parent families are those families where only one parent (either father or mother) is available for the children. These families either can be temporary single families where one parent is separated due to migration to another city or can be permanent single families where one parent may be separated by natural reasons such as death or divorce. Then the data collection was done from the sample adolescents.

**2. TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION:**

The following tools were used for data collection.

The Resiliency scale for children and Adolescents devised by Prince Embury (2006) was (2006). The resiliency scales are self report scales presented individually in three -2 page record forms: the sense of Mastery(MAS)scale, composed of 20 items, the sense of Relatedness(REL) scale, composed of 24 items, and the Emotional Reactivity(REA)scale, composed of 20 items. The acronyms of the scales appear on the record forms rather than the full name of the scale to prevent bias of a adolescent's responses. In addition to these scales, the combination booklet provides space to score the scales and to plot their t scores, to calculate the Resource and Vulnerability Indexes, as well as to score and plot the subscale scores for each scale.

**3. DATA ANALYSIS:**

The data was analyzed using statistical techniques. Differences in the variables were tested by using t' test and chi square.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of the study along with their discussion are presented as under:

**Background profile of Adolescents and Parents**

**Table no. 1: Age of Sample Adolescents**

Age ( in years)	Males n %		Females n %		Total n %	
12-13	15	37.5	18	45	33	41.2
14-15	16	40	16	40	32	40
16-17	9	22.5	6	15	15	18.7
Total	40	100	40	100	80	100

Mean age of Male Adolescent= 14.05 ± 1.48  
 Mean age of Female Adolescent =13.93 ± 1.32  
 t-value=.397, insignificant

Table no. 1 reveals that sample adolescents were aged between 12-17 years. Most of them were in the age group of

12 – 13 and 14 – 15 (41.2 % and 40 %) years respectively. The mean age of adolescents males and females was 14.05 ± 1.48, and 13.93 ± 1.32 respectively. Computation of t- value indicates that there was no significant differences in the age of sample boys and girls.

**Table no. 2: Educational Status of Sample Adolescents**

Qualification	Males n %		Females n %		Total n %	
Up to 8 <sup>th</sup>	15	37.5	18	45	33	41.2
Up to matriculation	16	40	16	40	32	40
Up to higher secondary	9	22.5	6	15	15	18.7
Total	40	100	40	100	80	100

Mean qualification of Males adolescent = 9.05 ± 1.48  
 Mean qualification of Females adolescent =8.93 ± 1.32  
 t-value=.397, insignificant  
 Table value=9.49\* Significant at 5% level of significance

Table no. 2 indicates that most of the sample adolescents were currently enrolled in class 8<sup>th</sup> (41.2%) and another (40%) were in classes 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> .The mean and standard deviation for the educational status of male and female adolescents was found to be 9.05 ± 1.48 and 8.93 ± 1.32 respectively. The t-value depicts that there was no significant differences in the educational status of sample adolescents

**Table no. 3: Sense of Mastery Subscale Scoring**

Levels	Males		Females		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
High	2	5	1	2.5	3	3.75
Above average	3	7.5	-	-	3	3.75
Average	13	32.5	5	12.5	18	22.5
Below average	9	22.5	7	17.5	16	20
Low	13	32.5	27	67.5	40	50
Total	40	100	40	100	80	100

χ<sup>2</sup> for Sense of Mastery across adolescents boys and girls=10.51\* , df=4  
 Table value=9.49\* Significant at 5% level of significance

Table no. 3 indicates the Sense of Mastery among adolescents. Majority of the sample adolescents (50 %) had low Sense of Mastery, as it is considered to be an important aspect of resiliency . It is considered as a psychosocial resource when coping with stressful life events.. More males were seen to be lower on this aspect (32.5%) than females (67.5%). Where as the no. of adolescents scoring high and above average was comparatively low.

The calculated χ<sup>2</sup> value reveals that there was significant sex difference among adolescents on this indicator.

**Table no. 4: Sense of Relatedness Subscale Scoring**

Levels	Males		Females		TOATL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Above average	3	7.5	-	-	3	3.75
Average	4	10	4	10	8	10
Below average	11	27.5	3	7.5	14	17.5
Low	22	55	33	82.5	55	68.75
Total	40	100	40	100	80	100

χ<sup>2</sup> for Sense of Relatedness across adolescents boys and girls= 9.76\* , df=3  
 Table value=7.81\* Significant at 5% level of significance

Table no. 4 depicts the Sense of Relatedness among adolescents. Relatedness is the need to feel connected to others. It is valuing and caring about the relationships. 68.75% of the sample adolescents (55% males and 82.5% females) showed lower level in the Sense of Relatedness meaning they did not

interact effectively with others. Another 17.5% scored low on this dimension. None of the adolescents scored high on this subscale. Overall, most of the sample adolescents had below average to low level of Sense of Relatedness indicating some problems relating to others.

Calculating  $\chi^2$  indicates that there was significant sex difference in Sense of Relatedness among sample adolescents according to their sex, with more females showing lower level of it than males.

**Table no. 5: Emotional Reactivity Subscale Scoring**

Levels	Males		Females		TOATL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
High	14	35	12	30	26	32.5
Above average	4	10	8	20	12	15
Average	19	47.5	16	40	35	43.75
Below average	2	5	4	10	6	7.5
Low	1	2.5	-	-	1	1.25
Total	40	100	100	80	80	100

$\chi^2$  for Emotional Reactivity across adolescents boys and girls= 3.36 , df=4  
Table value=9.49

Table no. 5 contains data of the level of Emotional reactivity. Results reveal that most (43.75%) sample adolescents (47.5% males and 40% females) scored average of Emotional Reactivity. Another 32.5% adolescents showed high Emotional Reactivity . Emotions are an important part of every one's well being and provides an opportunity for expressing the repressed emotions. Majority of the sample adolescents showed average to high. The no. of adolescents who could not control their reactions to a situation was comparatively low.

The calculated  $\chi^2$  value depicts the insignificant sex differences in this sub area of resiliency; indicating that sex of adolescents did not significantly influence their Emotional Reactivity.

**Table no. 6: Resource Index**

Levels	Males		Females		TOATL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
High	12	30	3	7.5	15	18.75
Above average	6	15	2	5	8	10
Average	12	30	9	22.5	21	26.25
Below average	1	2.5	8	20	9	11.25
Low	9	22.5	18	45	27	33.75
Total	40	100	40	100	80	100

$\chi^2$  for Resource index across adolescents boys and girls= 16.26\*, df=4  
Table value=9.49

\* Significant at 5% level of significance

Table no. 6 reveals the Resource Index of sample adolescents. As this index takes in to consideration both the individual's Sense of Mastery and Sense of Relatedness and the development of strength is the result of an interaction of the individual's behavior in his or her environment , the outcome of which impacts on both Sense of Mastery and Sense of relatedness. Majority of sample adolescents 33.75% (22.5 % males and 27% females) scored on low in this resource index. Another 11.25% and 26.25% had below average and average resource index respectively, this means most of the sample adolescents were not resourceful and needed some

intervention strategies so that they could cope up with the stressful situations. These children couldn't effectively utilize their resources and hence needed guidance.

Calculating  $\chi^2$  depicts significant sex differences in this resource index . more females scored lower than males in their resource index.

**Table no. 7: Vulnerability**

Levels	Males		Females		TOATL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
High	-	-	2	5	2	2.5
Above average	-	-	2	5	2	2.5
Average	12	30	20	50	32	40
Below average	5	12.5	3	7.5	8	10
Low	23	57.5	13	32.5	36	45
Total	40	100	40	100	80	100

$\chi^2$  for Vulnerability across adolescents boys and girls= 9.27, df=4  
Table value=9.49

Table no. 7 indicates the vulnerability of sample adolescents. Results indicate that 45% of the sample adolescents (57.5% males and 32.5% females) had low level of vulnerability, meaning inability to with stand the effects of a hostile environment. Individual's vulnerability is quantified and estimated by a discrepancy between the individual's Emotional Reactivity and his or her Resource index. Emotional reactivity is the degree to which emotional arousal is experienced as intense, potentially impairing and difficult to recover from. This indicates that the sample adolescents were not vulnerable to stress, they could manage stresses reasonably well. Another 40% of the sample adolescents had average vulnerability index , indicating that they may sometimes scumb to pressures of their lives. Over all, some of these adolescents had low vulnerability, while others had average vulnerability.

Statistical procedures show insignificant differences in the vulnerability according to the sex of the adolescents.

**Conclusion:**

Results related to resilience of the adolescents reveals that most of the sample adolescents had low sense of mastery and low sense of relatedness but at the same time average to high emotional reactivity. This implies that the adolescents belonging to single parent families had problems in relating with others and mastering situations and tasks. They also had low to average resource index as well as vulnerability, highlighting that they were not resourceful and needed help in dealing with stressful situations. Spencer (1993) also suggested that such children require intervention for learning coping methods.

Overall, most sample adolescents did encounter problems in mastering and relating to others along with showing high emotional reactivity and vulnerability, indicating their low levels of resilience.

Statistical analysis indicates that on the whole sex of the adolescents significantly affected their sense of mastery, sense of relatedness and resource index. In all these areas more females scored lower than the males, indicating that females were lesser resilient than the males. Hunter (2001) in his study suggested that irrespective of age, gender, culture and socio economic status, all adolescents believed they were resilient. However, overcoming adversities and being resilient were different depending on the presence or absence of consistent, loving, caring, monitoring adults who helped the adolescent traverse the adversities of life.

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