

Methodological challenges in qualitative research, Lessons from resilience study with adolescents - Vaidehi Chilwarwar - TISS, India

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Short Communication

INTRODUCTION

Approaches to resilience studies emanate respect and worth for human capabilities and optimism for future, while concurrently acknowledging the presence of adverse life situations (Grotberg; 1995, Masten & Tellegen, 2012). In the field of psychology, the concept of resilience is under investigation since 1980s, giving rise to new paradigm of mental health practice (Lee, Kwong, Cheung, Ungar & Cheung, 2010). Studying the concept of resilience was a byproduct of the researches in the areas of adversities, acute risks and chronic illnesses faced by diverse populations (Garmezy, 1971, Kumpfer, 1999; Masten, 2011). Debates on the homogenous impact of certain grave risk factors and influence of positive factors on the at-risk population led to scholarly scrutiny.

Linear Understanding Resilience

The scholarly literature on resilience and various resilience frameworks provided a coiled, amalgamated and tangled conception of the phenomenon (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Walsh, 2002, Masten, 2013). Inevitably, our entry into the field setting was driven by the incoherent notion of resilience studies being founded on three pillars a) risk indicators and risky life events b) protective factors and protective life events c) positive outcomes. This understanding led our inquiry to be uni-dimensional and linear. The research questions were formulated considering the uncurled theorization of resilience.

Conclusion

This paper explained four predominant methodological challenges experienced while conceptualizing and conducting a resilience study conducted during the year 2015-2017 (Author, Date, Details Withheld for Peer Review). We primarily documented the methodological concerns based on the field observations that involved adolescent participants aged 12-16 years. A community learning centre at Janta Nagar, Mumbai, India, identified as a slum dwelling community was located as the field setting. Data collection methods involved five FGDs with twenty five participants and ten in-depth interviews with five males and five female participants. Aimed at understanding the construct of resilience, the empirical study adapted a qualitative phenomenological approach with a narrative inquiry nested within the same. We expressed issues and challenges while formulating this particular study. Diverse manifestations of these challenges were explained in detail in resonance to certain documented examples.