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**GRT** **RESILIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH**  
**MANAGEMENT AT MID LIFE: INDIAN EXPERIENCE**



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**Abstract:** Resilience can be called as acquired psychological immunity system (APIS), which is not only bouncing back, but also taking risks, learning to live with uncertainty, solving problems creatively and programming mind for superior coping skills in challenging situations. This study attempts to explore resilience-mental health dynamics across gender and job status at mid life (40-60 years) in work organization. A sample of 400 comprising of 200 male and 200 female Higher secondary school teachers (6 – 12th grade) were selected. Out of 200 males, 100 belonged to lecturer grade and 100 to teacher grade. Similar procedure was adopted to select female teachers. Results revealed that there is no significant difference between the resilience of male and female teachers but females showed lower level of positive mental health than their male counterparts. Age was negatively related to resilience but positively related to mental health. The exposure to psychologically critical life situations foster certain competencies and coping skills and make people invincible to emotional pain but in the process persons can be overactive, restless, obsessive, less friendly, depressed and acquire certain degree of neuroticism.

**Key words:** Resilience, Mental Health, and Job status.

**INTRODUCTION:**

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy”

Martin Luther King Jr.

Thirty years of research tells us that resilient people are healthier live longer, are happier and deal with stress and adversity effectively to reach out to new opportunities (Werner and Smith, 2001). The processes of coping with mild to severe disruptions are opportunities for growth, development and skill building for resilient person (Richardson, Neiger, Jensen and Kumpfer, 1990).

Resilience as a stable personality trait or ability that protects individuals from the negative effects of risk and adversity (Hollister- Wagnern, Foshee and Jackson, 2001; Walsh, 2002) can result from positive mental health, social competence, positive self- concept and self –esteem, academic achievement and success at age –appropriate developmental tasks despite exposure to risk (Hauser 1999; Masten et. al. 1999). Increasingly, there is a common agreement that resilience is not a fixed attribute or specific outcome but more as a dynamic process that evolve over time (Luthar et. al., 2000; Olsson et.al., 2003). Resilience as a protective factor moderate the effects of individual vulnerabilities or environmental hazards, so that a given development trajectory reflects more adaptation in a given domain (Hauser, 1999). Most studies find that during early and middle childhood, boys are more vulnerable to stressful life events than girls. However, during adolescence the

reverse has been found. Girls report more stressful life events, evaluate them as more stressful and have more negative outcomes in the face of stress than boys (Compass, 1989).

Age also influences appraisal of stress, the kinds and numbers of life events experienced, the coping resources available to address stressful events, coping style and strategy and the significance of the family as a buffer. With the life course approach, the researcher consider the relationship between multiple roles and well being by focusing on continuity and change across the life span (Moen, 1998). Qualitative studies suggest that parents and children who successfully negotiate poor and disrupted communities use particular coping strategies (Smith, Carlson, 1997). The resilient people tend to have goals, hopes and plans for the future, combined with the persistence and ambition to bring them to fruition (Levine, 2002; Ong, Anthony et.al., 2006).

The midlife studies revealed that persons with higher marital and life satisfaction exhibit fewer psychological symptoms (Keyes and Ryff, 1999; Merrill and Verbrugge, 1999). Yet there are other studies reporting that midlife crisis could involve people with large stocks of wisdom reflecting doubts about the abilities to sell their skills leading to joblessness and loss of physical strength (Miller & Chandler, 2002). Career resilience increased with age among men & women and career resilience was higher for men working part-time than full-time (Manuel London, 1993).

In India, midlife crisis and heightened stress associated with bereavement of parents, widow life, divorce,

family expectations, desire to excel professionally, health complaints, settlement plans of children, care of old parents, house construction, loan, mortgage, saving for future, marriage of children, pilgrims and other religious disclosure. Sometimes problems can break resilience level as it exceeds individual capacities.

This study has used the protective individual resilience perspective (Luther, et.al. 2000; Rutter, 2001) which states that the extreme of environmental risk exposure is not only determined in part by social circumstances but also is influenced significantly by how people themselves behave. To be resilient, one must first be exposed to traumatic or stressful situation, then act in a way that provides protection from negative effects that would typically occur. Exposure to mild stress like vaccination may strengthen an individual's resilience, protecting the individual from later stress that would overwhelm others who had not experienced earlier stressful events. The study is therefore aimed at identifying resilience level and mental health dynamics across gender and job status.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

*Question 1. What is the level of resilience and mental health of male and female teachers in Government Higher Secondary Schools?*

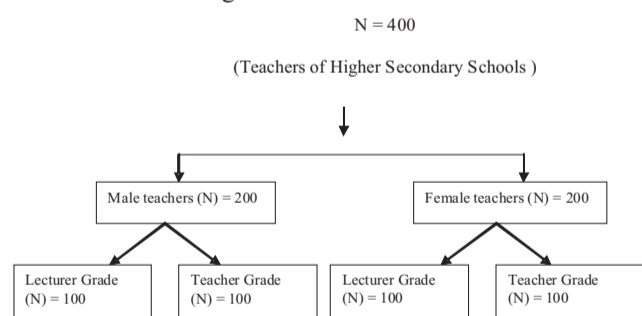
*Question 2. What is the level of resilience and mental health in lecturer (executive cadre) and secondary school (non-executive cadre) teacher.*

*Question 3. What is the effect of gender and job hierarchy on resilience and mental health?*

*Question 4. What is the relationship between demographic variables, resilience and mental health of males, females, lecturer and teachers.*

**Respondents:**

A sample of 400 Higher Secondary School teachers were selected. In first stage, purposive sampling was used to select 200 male teachers and 200 female teachers from government Higher Secondary Schools. Out of 200 male teachers 100 were from lecturer grade and other 100 from teacher grade. Similarly female teachers were also split into lecturer and teacher grade.



**Variables:**

- a) Independent
- i. Gender (A)
- ii. Job Hierarchy (B)

- b) Dependent
- i. Level of resilience
- ii. Level of mental health

**Measurements:**

1.Socio-demographic Information (Parameters): Each respondent's personal background information was recorded: age, gender, social category, educational qualification, designation, length of service, marital status, place of residence, etc.

2.Resilience Scale: Resilience Scale by Wagnild and Young (1993) constitute 25 items, 7-point scale. Internal consistency has been reported ranging from .76 to .91 with reliability co-efficient of 0.75. The personal competence, acceptance of self and life are sub-factors of resilience scale. The Culturally relevant Bilingual resilience scale was developed, grounded on Wignild and Young (1993) resilience model with the help of 5 Hindi language experts from the universities and 5 Hindi journal editors. The aim was to develop resilience scale in Indian Cultural context. The cumulative factorial validity was 70.583%. The Cronbach alpha was .8067. Higher scores indicate higher resilience.

3.General Health Questionnaire: GHQ-12 (Goldberg & Hiller, 1979) consists of 12 items, 4-point scale ranging from 'much less than usual' to 'much more than usual'. There are 6 positive and 6 negative items. Higher scores in positive items indicate good mental health.

The Hindi and English version scales were administered in two sessions. In first session (forenoon) lecturers grade teachers were given English version resilience scale and teacher grade, the Hindi version resilience scale. In second session (afternoon), lecturer grade teachers were given Hindi version and teacher grade the English version. For the total sample Pearson product moment correlation between English and Hindi versions was .918, which shows that both the scales measure almost similar matter. Culturally relevant resilience scale (CRRS) norms were established.

**Norms:**

For the Bilingual scale, there are 23 items having lowest score of 23 and highest of 161. The higher the score on this scale the higher the resilience of the subject. The score of 138 and above shows high resilience, Scores below 124 shows low resilience and the score between 124 and 138 shows average Resilience.

**RESULTS:**

The ANOVA table given below revealed the following analysis & findings:

Table-1 revealed that the main effects of gender on resilience indicated that resilience scores for gender don't differ significantly. It means that there is a no difference between resilience of male and female teachers.

**Table-1**  
**Summary of Two Way ANOVA (2X2) for Resilience.**

Sources of Variance	SS	df	MS	F-ratio	Significance
SSA (Gender)	632.025	1	632.025	2.062	Insignificant
SSB (Hierarchy)	330.625	1	330.625	1.079	Insignificant
SSA X SSB	330.625	1	330.625	1.079	Insignificant
Within	11030.5	396	306.40		

The main effect of the job hierarchy on resilience indicated that resilience scores for job hierarchy did not differ significantly, which shows that there is no significant difference between the resilience of lecturer grade teachers and teacher grade teachers. The interaction effect of gender and job hierarchy was found to be insignificant at .01 level of significant.

Table –2 shows that females (Mean = 135.55, SD = 15.48) are higher on resilience than their male counterparts (Mean = 127.60, SD = 9.45) but the difference between males and females was statistically insignificant.

**Table –2**  
**Mean and SDs on Resilience**

	Male	Female	Total
Lecturer	N = 100 Mean = 127.60 S.D. = 6.83	N = 100 Mean = 129.8 S.D = 15.82	N = 200 Mean = 128.7 S.D. = 11.91
Non-Lecturer	N = 100 Mean = 127.60 S.D. = 11.91	N = 100 Mean = 141.3 S.D = 13.50	N = 200 Mean = 134.45 S.D. = 14.25
Total	N = 200 Mean = 127.6 S.D. = 9.45	N = 200 Mean = 135.55 S.D = 15.48	N = 400 Mean = 131.57 S.D. = 13.28

- 1.t- value for Males and females = 1.96 (insignificant).
- 2.t- value for Lecturer and non-lecturer = 1.38 (insignificant).
- 3.t-value for lecturer males and females = .40 (insignificant).
- 4.t-value for non-lecturer male and female teachers = 2.41\* (significant at 0.05 level).
- 5.t-value for lecturer and non-lecturer males = 0.00 (insignificant).
- 6.t-value for lecturer and non-lecturer females = 1.75 (insignificant).

Table –2 also revealed that lecturer grade teachers (Mean = 128.7, S.D. = 11.91) did not differ significantly from teacher grade teachers (Mean = 134.45, S.D. = 14.25) on resilience scores. The mean score of lecturer grade male teachers was (M = 127.60, S.D. = 6.83) on resilience and mean score of teacher grade male teachers was (Mean = 127.60, S.D. = 11.91) and t-value is 0 (insignificant), thus showing almost comparable level of resilience. It shows that lecturer grade male teachers and teacher grade male teachers

were similar on resilience. The mean score of lecturer grade female teachers was (Mean = 129.8, S.D = 15.82) and mean score of teacher grade female teachers on resilience was (Mean = 141.3, S.D = 13.50) and t-value is 1.74, which is insignificant at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore lecturer grade female teachers did not differ from teacher grade female teachers on resilience. The mean of lecturer grade teachers on resilience was (Mean = 128.7, S.D. = 11.91) and that of teacher grade teachers was (Mean = 134.45, S.D. = 14.25) and t-value is 1.38, which is insignificant, thus showing a comparable level of resilience.

Table-3 shows that the main effect of gender on mental health indicated that mental health scores for gender differ significantly further suggesting that there is a significant difference in mental health of male and female teachers. This supported the gender role-strain arguments of previous studies (Coser, 1974; Changguin, 1993; Das, 1995).

**Table – 3**  
**Summary of Two Way ANOVA (2X2) for Mental Health**

Sources of Variance	SS	df	MS	F-ratio	Significance
SSA (Gender)	78.4	1	78.4	8.33**	Significant
SSB (Hierarchy)	25.6	1	25.6	2.72	Insignificant
SSA X SSB	4.9	1	4.9	0.52	Insignificant
Within	339	396	9.417		

\*\* Significant at P .01 The main effect of job hierarchy on mental health did not differ significantly. Thus no difference in mental health of Lecturer grade and teacher grade teachers. The interaction effects of gender and hierarchy was not found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance.

Table – 4 shows that female teachers differed from their male counterparts on mental health. The mean of females on mental health was (M = 34.65, SD = 3.48) as compared to males (M = 37.45, SD = 2.70) and t-value is 2.84, which was statistically significant at 0.01 level. It means that male teachers showed higher level of mental health as compared to female teachers, because collective and patriarchal structure, women are more exposed to a greater number of environmental stressors (exposure model) and may be more emotionally responsive to the impact of the negative life experiences than their male counterparts (Vulnerability model) (Ulbrich et. al., 1989).



**Table – 4**  
**Mean and SD on Mental Health**

	Male	Female	Total
Lecturer	N = 100 M = 37.00 SD = 3.19	N = 100 M = 33.50 SD = 3.71	N=200 M = 35.25 SD = 3.82
Non-Lecturer	N = 100 M = 37.90 SD = 2.18	N = 100 M = 35.80 SD = 2.97	N=200 M = 36.85 SD = 2.75
Total	N = 200 M = 37.45 SD = 2.70	N = 200 M = 34.65 SD = 3.48	N = 400 M = 36.05 SD = 3.38

- 1.t- value for Males and female teachers = 2.84 (significant).
- 2.t- value for Lecturer grade and teacher grade teachers = 1.52 (insignificant).
- 3.t-value for lecturer grade male and female teachers = 2.23 (significant at 0.05 level).
- 4.t-value for teacher grade male and female teachers = 1.8025 (insignificant).
- 5.t-value for lecturer and teacher grade male teachers = 0.736 (insignificant).
- 6.t-value for lecturer and grade female teachers = 1.503 (insignificant).

The mean scores showed that Lecturer grade teachers did differ from teacher grade teachers but statistically not significant. The mean of lecturer grade teachers (M = 35.25, SD = 3.82) and teacher grade teachers (M = 36.85, SD = 2.75) and t-value is 1.52, which was not statistically significant. Nonetheless teacher grade teachers showed better psychological health. The mean of lecturer grade male teachers on mental health was (M = 37, SD = 3.19) and teacher grade male teachers was (M = 37.90, SD = 2.18) and t-value was 0.736, which was also insignificant at 0.01 levels. It means that lecturer grade male teachers did not differ from teacher grade male teachers on mental health. The teacher grade female teachers (M = 35.8, SD = 2.97) and lecturer grade female teachers (M = 33.5, SD = 3.719) did not differ on mental health.

Table-5 shows a negative but significant relationship between resilience and health, which means higher the resilience, lower the mental health. Suggesting higher resilience is instrumental to recover effectively from severity of stress and diffusing stressors (Ong, Bergemen et.al., 2006). Individuals are typically exposed to some risk as a part of normal life, which may indeed contribute to competence and mastery (Sameroff, Seifer, Luthar & Zigler, 1992). Evidences suggest that if cumulative risk factors other than a single specific risk factor that tends to produce more consistently negative outcomes (Kolvin, Miller, 1983; Rutter, 1987). Highly resilient person has enhanced coping skills including adaptive coping styles, when dealing with stress and are less likely to disengage mentally or behaviorally (Miller, Omens & Delvadia, 1991). They are

high self monitors, are sensitive to the demands of social situations, and cope with challenges by developing their skills in reading situational cues and manage their impressions in majority situations which they do not need to develop (Snyder, 1974).

**Table-5**  
**Correlation between resilience and mental health**

Number of groups	Correlation between resilience and mental health
Total (N) = 400	-0.41**
Male (N) = 200	-0.27
Female (N) = 200	-0.274
Lecturer grade teachers (N) = 200	-0.20
Teacher grade teachers (N) = 200	0.012
Lecturer grade male teachers (N) = 100	-0.518**
Teacher grade Male teachers (N) = 100	-0.125
Lecturer grade Female teachers (N) = 100	-0.056
Teacher grade Female teachers (N) = 100	0.505**

When male and female population was considered it was found that the correlation coefficient of males between resilience and mental health was negative but not statistically significant where as the correlation coefficient of females was negative. It shows in case of males and females that higher the resilience lowers the mental health. It was also found that the correlation coefficient of lecturer grade teachers between resilience and mental health was negative but statistically insignificant and in case of teacher grade teachers the correlation coefficient was positive but statistically insignificant. It means that in case of teacher grade teachers higher the resilience better the mental health, but as far as lecturer grade teachers are concerned higher the resilience lower the mental health.

The correlation coefficient between resilience and mental health of lecturer grade male teachers comes out to be negative and statistically significant while the correlation coefficient of teacher grade male teachers was negative but statistically insignificant. Table –5 also shows a negative correlation between resilience and mental health for lecturer grade female teachers but it is statistically insignificant. Teacher grade female teachers showed significant positive correlation between resilience and mental health which means that higher the resilience better the mental health.

Table-6 shows the correlation coefficient of age and resilience was found to be negative but statistically insignificant, it means with the increase there is decrease in the level of resilience.

**Table –6**  
**Correlation between Age, Gender, Resilience and Mental Health**

	Resilience	Mental Health
Age	-0.023	0.137
Gender	-0.303**	0.418**

Correlation coefficient of gender and resilience was found to be negative but statistically significant. It means females have higher level of resilience as compared to male's correlation coefficient of age and mental health was found to be positive but statistically insignificant. It means with the increase in age there is increase in mental health. Correlation of gender and mental health was found to be positively significant. It means males have higher level of mental health as compared to their female counterparts.

#### DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Though male and female professionals did not vary significantly on resilience level, females showed higher level of resilience than their male counterparts. It shows that female teachers turn tougher when going gets tough. For women, time has come to display their potential and worth at the time of challenge and controversy in a patriarchal society. Studies have supported the positive contribution of women education in building up self-confidence, self-efficacy, independence, determination, invincibility, mastery, resourcefulness perseverance, adaptability, balance, flexibility and balance perspective of life in women. Mental health scores indicated that male teachers had higher level of mental health than their female counterparts. This reveals that males are mentally healthier than females. The probable reason may be that in a patriarchal structure males have lesser household and social responsibilities. Females in Indian society try to be good homemakers as well as good professional at the same time. So it could be that balancing equally challenging roles affect their mental health. Studies (Changguin, 1993; Das, 1995) also supported that women have higher stress, anxiety and higher neurotic tendency than males. The probable reason may be due to the fact that the women's pursuit of achievement and success often came into psychological conflict with their gender identity. A woman may wish to attain success and yet at the same time, she may wish to be a "real woman". These two goals often put her in social dilemmas, which mean that realistically she should not expect to have the best of both worlds. This place the women in a quandary, in which she often found it difficult to go either forward or backward. This affected the mental health of women adversely. Sacrificing family for profession socially devalued and fear developed to live with burden of negative stereotypes compels women to expand competence and mastery leading to resilience. If capacity to absorb stress reaches a critical threshold, women may develop difficulty in negotiating the transitions of life's trajectories thus leading to poor mental health.

The findings reveal that teacher grade teachers had higher level of resilience than lecturer grade teachers. This reveals that teacher grade teachers are more resilient to face

adverse situations. It shows that economic hardship could make a person resilient than those who are economically well off. Those who face economic hardship build an aggressive attitude to overcome adversity by 'taking the bull by its horns' for their survival. They have a feeling of 'nothing to loose' in life as they have limited things at their disposal rather such environments can lead to competency for increased use of available resources.

General health scores indicated that teacher grade teachers had higher level of mental health than lecturer grade teachers. The probable reason may be lecturer grade teachers may have higher workload, job stress, role conflict, political pressure, role ambiguity and responsibilities. This study suggests counseling programs such as self-development programs as well as spiritual training for control over mind to enhance the psychological health of lecturer grade teachers. More over, mental health differences in different social grouping may emerge from differential exposure to one's socialization environment that tutors emotional self control (Graziano and Bryant, 1998). The exposure to mild stress may strengthen and individual's resistance, protecting the individual from later stress and that would overwhelm others who had not experienced earlier stressful events. To be resilient, one must first exposed to traumatic or stressful situation, then act in a way that provides protection from negative effects that would typically occur (Rutter, 1987). In any cultural –social milieu whether one's social positions (gender, job status, role and ethnicity) are challenged or threat is largely a matter of subjective perception. (individual's perspective). The perception of positive gains from environmental demands results from appraisal process and can result superior or inferior dispositions and performance. In other words, the problems can be viewed as catalysts for the resilience process. Resilience is often inconsistent across different areas of individual's lives, so it is useful to study resilience, academic resilience or emotional resilience and the dynamic relations between the individual and the environment for promoting and expanding resilience.

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