CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN
&
METHODOLOGY
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The main aim of this chapter is to explain in detail the research methodology used. The methods and procedures utilized in obtaining the results to meet the research objectives are provided. Additionally, the methodology provides detailed information about how the study was conducted, which procedures were used in the study, the description of the participants, and how the variables are operationally defined and the measures used. Finally, the ethical statement for performing the research and protecting the subjects of the study is clearly stated.

3.1 Research purpose, significance and objectives

Adolescents need to be resilient in order to cope and conquer difficulties and achieve the respective goals in their lives. Nevertheless concern for our nation’s youth continues to grow with the complex issues and problems adolescents face today. With the large number of risk factors, a focus on protective factors that safeguards youth and promotes resilience is needed. It is important to build higher levels of resilience among the youth experiencing adolescence so that they can face unusually difficult situations in life without resorting to violent expression (Edwards, 2001). Increasing the number of protective factors in an adolescent’s life is one strategy we can use to protect our nation’s future. There is a rising need to explore aspects of living environment like home and school that would be conducive for making the adolescents in Indian society resilient to daily life stressors.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the home and school protective factors along with other demographic factors leading to resilience in adolescents. The significance of this research lies in helping to clarify the roles that families and schools can play in building resilience in adolescents of contemporary Indian society.
The following are the broad objectives of the present research:

1. To investigate the relationship, if any, between home environment and resilience among adolescents.
2. To investigate the relationship, if any, between school environment and resilience among adolescents.
3. To investigate the relationship, if any, between demographic variables and resilience among adolescents.

3.2 Research design

The current research is a survey based study with a cross sectional design. In this study resilience was conceptualized as the dependent variable and home and school environments as well as certain demographic variables like family type, gender and socio-economic status were conceptualized as independent variables. Resilience in adolescents for this study was operationally defined as an overall strength or capacity to face adversities or life stressors through positive belief system which is nurtured by external protective factors like home and school environment. Home environment for this study, was defined as an environment where an adolescent member experiences caring relationships with and healthy expectations from the family members and indulges in meaningful participation in family related matters. School environment is an external protective factor, which in the present research, was defined as an environment, where an adolescent student experiences caring relationships with and healthy expectations from the school faculty and takes meaningful participation in school and class related matters.

3.3 Sample

The sample of this study consisted of 130 boys and 130 girl students studying in senior secondary and high school grades. The age range of the respondents was 14
years to 18 years (Mean=16.61 years; SD=1.04). The research scales were administered on 300 student sample, however about 40 forms were found to be incomplete and were thus rejected. The final sample comprised of 260 adolescent students (N=260).

3.4 Research tools used

All participants completed the set of questionnaires in paper-and-pencil format. The set includes measures designed to assess for factors believed to contribute to adolescent’s resilience. The instruments included a demographic sheet, The Resilience Scale (Wagnild Young, 1993), and Home and School environment subscales of Resilience Youth Development Module (RYDM) of California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS).

3.4.1 Demographic sheet

The demographic sheet included a total of 13 items. Participants were asked about general personal information including their name, age, gender, religion, class, family type, parent’s occupation, parent’s education and their monthly income (see Appendix A).

3.4.2 Resilience Scale

Wagnild and Young’s Resilience Scale (1993) was chosen to assess resilience levels in the adolescent participants on account of the positive tone of its items and its relative brevity, and its ease of administration and scoring (see Appendix B). The scale items were originally drawn from an initial qualitative study done by Wagnild and Young (1993) on 24 women who had adapted successfully to a critical event in their lives. It consists of 25 items measures the following five sub dimensions:

1. Equanimity i.e. a balanced perspective of one’s life and experiences,
2. Perseverance i.e. persistence despite adversity or discouragement,
3. Self-Reliance i.e. belief in oneself and one’s capabilities,
4. Meaningfulness i.e. realization that life has purpose, and
5. Existential Aloneness i.e. realization that each person’s life path is unique

All the items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), with possible scores of 25 to 175. As per the norms (Wagnild, 2003), in this study total score above 146 indicated strong or high resilience while below 121 indicated weak or low resilience.

Wagnild and Young (1993) reported internal consistency reliabilities for the instrument ranging from .76 to .91 from several of their prior studies. Test retest reliabilities ranged from .67 to .84. Correlations with other instruments included measures of morale (.54, .43, and .28), Life satisfaction (.59 and .30), Perceived stress (-.67 and -.32), Symptoms of stress (-.24), depression (-.36) and self esteem (.57). For this study the internal consistency (alpha) was found to be .75.

3.4.3 Home environment and School environment scale

The Home and School Environment questionnaires are subscales of The Resilience and Youth Development Module (RYDM) which is a component of California Healthy Kids Survey (WestEd, 2002). The RYDM is devoted completely to assessing the internal and external assets associated with positive youth development and resilience (WestEd, 2002). The RYDM provides comprehensive and balanced coverage of external assets in home and school environment (see Appendix C).

The full RYDM contains 59 questions that measure 17 external and 6 internal assets in the home, school, community, peer group and in the individual domains. Both, the home and school environment scales for measuring external assets, have 9 items each, and measure three common dimensions;

1. Caring relationships i.e. supportive connections with others, like having a person who is there and who listens non-judgementally.
2. High expectations i.e. the consistent communication of message that the adolescent student/family member can and will succeed, a belief in youth’s innate resilience, and the provision of guidance that is youth centred and strengths focused.

3. Meaningful participation i.e. the involvement of adolescent student/family member in relevant, engaging and interesting activities and having the opportunities for responsibility and contribution (WestEd, 2002).

Each item has four response options (very much true, pretty much true, a little true and not at all true) out of which the participants had to choose the one option which they felt best applied to them. The scoring ranged from 4 to 1 on the four point Likert scale. The values 4,3,2,1, attached to each response option were averaged and then the following score categories were derived:

High scores - percent of students with average item response above 3. High score of the two scales were indicators on good home and school environment.

Moderate score - percentage of students with averaged item response of at least 2 but less than or equal to 3. Moderate score on the two scales were indicators of moderate home and school environment.

Low scores - percentage of students with average item response below 2. Low score on the two scales were indicators of poor home and school environment.

Cronbach’s alpha of the three dimensions in the home environment scale ranged from .70 to .80. For the three dimensions of school environment scale, Cronbach’s Alpha was found to range between .75 to .90 (Constantine & Benard, 2001). Good construct validity of both the scales has also been reported (Hanson & Kim, 2007).
3.5 Procedure

Initially eight schools in district Aligarh were visited for seeking permission for data collection, out of which permission was granted by only four schools. Informed consent for participation was taken from the students and they were made assured of the anonymity of their identities and confidentiality of their responses. The tests were administered in the school classrooms during free hours or periods especially allotted for conducting the survey.

Before the questionnaires were distributed to the voluntary participants, a good rapport was built with the students and an introductory discussion was held highlighting the purpose of the study and how the results of the study would be used. Detailed instructions on how to complete the questionnaires were also provided. The respondents were also encouraged to ask for assistance, in case they experience difficulties in filling up the questionnaires. The data collection procedure usually lasted for one hour.

3.6 Data analysis

The research data was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. Frequencies and percentage counts were taken to compute proportions of participants under various demographic categories like gender, Socio economic status, family type etc. Descriptive statistics including mean and SD values of resilience and its dimensions, home environment and its dimensions and school environment and its dimensions were calculated. Pearson’s Product Moment correlation was computed among the above mentioned variables. Parametric statistical analyses that include Chi-square, independent sample t test, ANOVA and step wise linear regression were conducted to examine the effects of home environment and school environment along with demographic variables on resilience. The demographic
variable, socio economic status was divided into 3 groups, high, middle and low on the basis of quartile deviations of the average monthly family income.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The following ethical issues were fulfilled for the present research study:

3.7.1 Confidentiality and anonymity: In this research confidentiality and anonymity were respected. The information given was kept safe and was not used unfairly to compromise the research. The subjects were convinced that the results will have no personal consequences against them. Every individual who has access to the information is obliged to maintain confidentiality.

3.7.2 Voluntary participation: Participation was voluntary no one was forced to participate. There was no payment for completing the survey.

3.7.3 Withdrawal: Students were free to withdraw anytime they feel like without any penalty.