CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

There are some manifest variables which either constrain individuals fear realizing their full potential or alternatively enhance their capacity to achieve positive life goals and an enduring sense of well being. Certain personal resources and psychosocial strengths such as high socioeconomic status, hope, happiness, wisdom and resilience have been found to facilitate individual efforts to achieve higher levels of subjective and physical well being (eg Adler, Boyce, Chesney, Cohen, Folkman, Kahn, and Syme, 1994), Baltes and Staudinger 2000, Masten, 2001). Socio-economic status plays a key role in cultivating and expression of certain human strengths (i.e. a capacity for feeling, thinking and behaving in a way that allows optical functioning in the pursuit of valued outcomes) (Linley and Haarrington, 2006).

Socioeconomic status (SES):

The word, socio comes from the word ‘social’ and refers to people and the ways (level) they fit into the community in which they live. It reflects how well they are educated, have job etc. Economic refers to the financial position of the people within society and include, how much they regularly earn, whether own a house and the assets owned etc. In other words, it is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person’s work experience and of an individual’s or family’s economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When analyzing a family’s SES, the household income, earners’ education, and occupation are examined, as well as combined income versus, when their own attributes are assessed. Socioeconomic status is typically broken into three categories, High SES, middle SES, and low SES to describe the three areas a family or an individual may fall into. When placing a family or individual into one of these categories any or all of the three variables (income, education, and occupation) can be assessed. Moreover a 4th variable, wealth is also an important component of determining socioeconomic status.
Components of SES:

Income:

Income refers to wages, salaries, profits, rents, and any flow of earnings received. Income can also come in the form of unemployment or workers compensation, social security, pensions, interests or dividends, royalties, trusts, alimony, or other governmental, public, or family financial assistance. It is a commonly used measure of SES because it is relatively easy to figure for most individuals. Low income families focus on meeting immediate needs and do not accumulate wealth that could be passed on to future generations, thus increasing inequality. Families with higher and expendable income can accumulate wealth and focus on meeting immediate needs while being able to consume and enjoy luxuries and wither crises. Additionally, low income and little education have shown to be strong predictors of a range of physical and mental health problems, ranging from respiratory viruses, arthritis, coronary disease, and schizophrenia. These may be due to environmental conditions in their workplace, or in the case of mental illnesses, may be the entire cause of that person's social predicament.

Education:

Education also plays a role in income as median earnings increase with each level of education. Higher levels of education are associated with better economic and psychological outcomes (i.e.: more income, more control, and greater social support and networking). Education plays a major role in skill sets for acquiring jobs, as well as specific qualities that stratify people with higher SES from lower SES. Annette Lareau speaks on the idea of concerted cultivation, where middle class parents take an active role in their children's education and development by using controlled organized activities and fostering a sense of entitlement through encouraged discussion. Annette Laureau (2003) argues that families with lower income do not participate in this movement, causing their children to have a sense of constraint. A division in education attainment is thus born out of these two differences in child rearing. Lower income families can have children who do not succeed to the levels of the
middle income children, who can have a greater sense of entitlement, be more argumentative, or be better prepared for adult life.

**Occupation:**

Occupational prestige as one component of SES, encompasses both income and educational attainment. Occupational status reflects the educational attainment required to obtain the job and income levels that vary with different jobs and within ranks of occupations. Additionally, it shows achievement in skills required for the job. Occupational status measures social position by describing job characteristics, decision making ability and control, and psychological demands on the job. Occupations are ranked by the Census (among other organizations) and opinion polls from the general population are surveyed. Some of the most prestigious occupations are physicians and surgeons, lawyers, chemical and biomedical engineers, and communications analysts. These jobs, considered to be grouped in the high SES classification, provide more challenging work and ability and greater control over working conditions. Those jobs with lower rankings are food preparation workers, counter attendants, bartenders and helpers, dishwashers, janitors, maids and housekeepers, vehicle cleaners, and parking lot attendants. The jobs that are less valued were also paid significantly less and are more laborious, very hazardous, and provide less autonomy.

**Wealth:**

Wealth, a set of economic reserves or assets, presents a source of security providing a measure of a household's ability to meet emergencies, absorb economic shocks, or provide the means to live comfortably. Wealth reflects intergenerational transitions as well as accumulation of income and savings. The effectiveness of social economic status in conditioning the faith personal, social and psychological development has an outstanding importance. Faith needs a happy and stable environment and a conducive social network for overall growth and development. Youth/adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood. Earlier it was seen as a period of storm and stress, nowadays it is considered as a time of plain sailing, where youth are full of vigor and vitality. Every youth is a storehouse of human strengths and
virtues. The need of the time is to make youth aware about their human strengths, such as hope, happiness, optimism and resilience etc. which will provide true insight into the core reasons behind their consistent successes.

**Happiness:**

Aristotle believed that eudaimonia (human flourishing associated with living a life of virtue), or happiness based on lifelong pursuit of meaningful, developmental goals, was the key to the good life (Waterman, 1993). In the study of happiest 10% of U.S. college students Diener and Seligman (2002), found that the qualities of good mental health and good social relationships consistently emerge in the lives in the sample of happiest young adults. Martin Seligman, (1998 a) coined the term Positive Psychology to describe the scientific study of happiness. He described happiness as being based on three lives - the pleasurable life, the engaged life and the meaningful life. The better each of these lives is lived, the happier the person will be.

Happiness can be defined in the following ways as suggested by Martin Seligman (2002):

\[ H = S + C + V \]

Where,

\[ H = \text{Happiness} \]

\[ S = \text{Set range, everyone is born with a certain 'set-point' of happiness, determined by genes.} \]

\[ C = \text{Circumstances one lives in influence his/her level of happiness.} \]

\[ V = \text{Voluntary control (past, present, future).} \]

**Theories of Happiness:**

There are innumerable attempts and theories in psychology of happiness, to explain nature, reason and formula for happiness. The "What One Has Theory," sees happiness as simply the collected sum of positive circumstances in one's life (i.e. good marriage, great job, good health, financial security, etc.).

The "How One View The World Theory," sees happiness being more contingent on a person's perception, or personal evaluation, of such
circumstances. The "Stressors and Successes Theory," sees happiness as the balance of positive and negative emotional experiences one has experienced over the years.

The "Born to be Happy Theory," pointing to basic genetics as the root of happiness. The set points for happiness is 98% (0.55/0.54) heritable. Some allocate happiness to basic temperament and disposition that is either learned early in life or inborn, the "Happy No Matter What Theory." Others say it's due to physiological and biorhythmic changes. The "Naturally Happy Theory." The "Happiness Skills Theory," (HST) proposes that state of happiness - subjective sense of well-being - is achieved by: 1) experience, 2) valuation, 3) anticipation, 4) hedonic acquisition, and 5) habit formation.

**Types of Happiness:**

1. The Pleasant life — Defined by how you feel.
   - Contentment about the past (Gratitude, forgiveness)
   - Pleasure, positive emotions in the present ("Savoring a Beautiful Day" exercise)
   - Hope, optimism for the future.

2. The Engaged life — Being in a state of "flow," fully in the present moment. Knowing and deploying one's highest strengths.

3. The Meaningful life — Feeling that one's life serves a larger purpose. "Not just fidgeting until one's dies."

Over time, positive emotions build personal resources and increase well-being. The positive emotions are not just a marker of well-being, but they also produce it for the future. Positive affect is the single most important active ingredient within human flourishing. Negativity is important as well, to keep us grounded and to avoid a pollyanna syndrome, but people tend to flourish when their positivity to negativity ratio is 3:1 or higher. When there is a low level of positive emotion, people tend to get stuck.
Hope:

Snyder, Irving & Anderson (1991) defined hope as “a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)” . Hope theory can be subdivided into four categories: goals, pathway thoughts, agency thoughts and barriers. Goals that are valuable and uncertain are described by Snyder as the anchors of hope theory as they provide direction and an endpoint for hopeful thinking. Pathway thoughts refer to the routes we take to achieve our desired goals and the individual’s perceived ability to produce these routes (Snyder, 2000). Agency thoughts refer to the motivation we have to undertake the routes towards our goals. Barriers block the attainment of our goals and in the event of a barrier we can either give up or we can use our pathway thoughts to create new routes. Goal attainment has been found to be associated with positive emotions. Snyder, Symson, Ybasco, Borders, Babyak, & Higgins, R.L. (1996) , whereas goal blockages are related to negative emotions (Diener, 1984); however this is not always the case. High hope individuals do not react in the same way to barriers as low hope individuals, instead they view barriers as challenges to overcome and use their pathway thoughts to plan an alternative route to their goals. High hope has been found to correlate with a number of beneficial constructs including, academic achievement and lower levels of depression. Meanwhile low hope is associated with negative outcomes including a reduction in well-being (Diener, 1984).

Resilience:

Psychological resilience is an individual's tendency to cope with stress and adversity. This coping may result in the individual "bouncing back" to a previous state of normal functioning, or simply not showing negative effects. A third, more controversial form of resilience is sometimes referred to as 'posttraumatic growth' or 'steeling effects' wherein the experience of adversity leads to better functioning (much like an inoculation gives one the capacity to cope well with future exposure to disease). It is most commonly understood as a process, and not a trait of an individual. It refers to the ability of an individual, family, organization, or community to cope with adversity and adapt to challenges or change. It is an ongoing process that requires time and effort.
and engages people in taking a number of steps to enhance their response to adverse circumstances. Resilience implies that after an event, a person or community may not only be able to cope and recover, but also change to reflect different priorities arising from the experience and prepare for the next stressful situation. It is important to build and foster resilience to be ready for future challenges. Resilience will enable the development of a reservoir of internal resources to draw upon during stressful situations.

**Characteristics:**

**Awareness:**

Resilient people are aware of the situation, their own emotional reactions and the behavior of those around them. In order to manage feelings, it is essential to understand what is causing them and why. By remaining aware, resilient people can maintain their control of the situation and think of new ways to tackle problems.

**An Understanding that Setbacks are Part of Life:**

Another characteristic of resilience is the understanding that life is full of challenges. While we cannot avoid many of these problems, we can remain open, flexible, and willing to adapt to change.

**An Internal Locus of Control:**

Resilient people believe that the actions they take will affect the outcome of an event. Of course, some factors are simply outside of one's personal control, such as natural disasters. While one may be able to put some blame on external causes, it is important to feel as one has the power to make choices that will affect their situation, their ability to cope, and their future.

**Strong Problem-Solving Skills:**

Problem-solving skills are essential. When a crisis emerges, resilient people are able to spot the solution that will lead to a safe outcome. In danger situations, people sometimes develop tunnel vision. They fail to note important details or take advantages of opportunities. Resilient individuals, on the other hand, are able to calm themselves and rationally look the problem and envision a successful solution.
Having Strong Social Connections:

Whenever one is dealing with a problem, it is important to have people who can offer support. Talking about the challenges one is facing can be an excellent way to gain perspective, look for new solutions, or simply express one’s emotions. Friends, family member, co-workers, and online support groups can all be potential sources of social connectivity.

Identifying as a Survivor, Not a Victim:

When dealing with any potential crisis, it is essential to view oneself as a survivor. Avoid thinking like a victim of circumstance and instead look for ways to resolve the problem. While the situation may be unavoidable, one can still stay focused on a positive outcome.

Being Able to Ask for Help:

While being resourceful is an important part of resilience, it is also essential to know when to ask for help. During a crisis, people can benefit from the help of psychologists and counselors specially trained to deal with crisis situations. Other potential sources of assistance include:

- Books – Reading about people who have experienced and overcome a similar problem can be both motivating and good for ideas on how to cope.
- Online Message Boards – Online communities can provide continual support and a place to talk about issues with people who have been in a similar situation.
- Support Groups – Attending support group meetings is a great way to talk about the challenges one is facing and find a network of people who can provide compassion and support.

Types of Resilience:

Individual Resilience-The ability for an individual to cope with adversity and change.

Community Resilience-The ability for an individual and the collective community to respond to adversity and change.

Organizational Resilience-The ability for a business or industry, including its employees, to cope with adversity and change.
Building of Personal Resilience:

Developing resilience is a personal journey. People do not react the same way to traumatic events. Some ways to build resilience include the following actions:

- Making connections with others
- Looking for opportunities for self-discovery
- Nurturing a positive view of self
- Accepting that change is a part of living
- Taking decisive actions
- Learning from the past

The ability to be flexible is a great skill to obtain and facilitates resilience growth. Getting help when it is needed is crucial to building resilience.

Factors Promoting Resilience:

Resilience involves the modification of a person's response to a potentially risky situation. People who are resilient are able to maintain high self-esteem and self-efficacy inspite of the challenges they face. By fostering resilience, people are building psychological defenses against stress. The more resources and defenses available during a time of struggle, the better able to cope and bounce back from adverse circumstances people will be. A person’s ability to regain a sense of normalcy or define a new normalcy after adverse circumstances will be partially based on the resources available to him/her. Resilience building can begin at any time.

On the basis of above literature it may be inferred that the positive emotions have unique adaptive values of their own. While negative emotions narrow one’s own response to “fight or flight”. On the contrary positive emotions broaden the range of responses leading to behavioral flexibility and emotional growth. They are not just the marker of well-being, but they also produce it for the future. Positive affects is the single most important active ingredient within human flourishing. Negativity is important as well to keep us grounded and to avoid a pollyanna syndrome but people tend to flourish when
their positivity to negative ratio is 3:1 or higher. When there is a low level of positive emotion people tend to get struck.