CHAPTER IX

LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

Forced migration/displacement is a serious issue with even greater serious implications, be it psychological or socio-cultural and on the other hand, resilience is an essential element of adaptation in this context. The rise of militancy in the valley of Kashmir and its adjoining areas since 1989 had led to politico-ethnic divide between the two major communities inhabiting the valley. It’s immediate and a major consequence had been the migration of more than 55,000 families, which mostly comprised of minority Kashmiri pandits to Jammu and other parts of the country (Raina, 1994). The present study was an attempt to bring the missing appreciation of trauma and resilience in this section of internally displaced people to the fore front.

Limitations of the study

The study has certain limitations related to sampling, design, data collection processes, and instruments which need to be addressed before implications could be drawn.

To begin with, the sample was relatively homogeneous i.e., it comprised of Kashmiri migrants belonging to Hindu religion only, it did not include non-Hindu migrants like Sikhs who were also products of 1989 insurgency. Further the sample was collected from Jammu city, migrants settled in other parts of the country like Delhi were not a part of this study. Hence, the composition of the sample may limit its generalizability. Also, purposive sampling in case of the qualitative strand allowed for greater homogeneity in the sample, but at the same time it might have increased the danger of selection bias and lowered its representativeness.

Second, even though the quantitative design of the study allowed description of the strength of the relationships between resilience and its correlates, it did not permit detection of changes in the development of resilience over time, i.e., the cross-sectional measurement limited the ability to draw conclusions about temporal sequence of the relationship between variables. Also, it was suspected that exploring trauma related variable and experiences using retrospective self-report measures may have resulted in a certain degree of under reporting (Fergusson, Horwood, & Woodward, 2000), as there was marked dependence on the relative accuracy of
people’s accounts of past experiences and memory of events which was susceptible to be tainted by incompleteness, repression, or lack of willingness to report.

Lastly, the study offered a beginning understanding of the relationships wherein the focus was on correlates of resilience. The list of antecedents of resilience studied in the present investigation was not exhaustive and several key variables like socio-economic status (Mujeeb & Zubair, 2012) and locus of control (Roth & Cohen, 1986) were absent and hence, need to be taken up in future researches.

Implications

Despite the limitations of the present study, it attempted to contribute to the body of knowledge in relation to understanding resilience in internally displaced persons. It has raised issues that would further discussion and debate, in particular the impact of coping, health, affective states, and social support on migrants’ ability to adapt in the host population. The implications of the present study might be observed in the efforts ‘striving for what makes people more resilient’. As suggested by Joseph and Linley (2006), the study may contribute to positive psychology at the pragmatic level accounting for the mixed methods research designs and practical applications used by positive psychologists.

In line with some of the findings of the current research, policy level attention is called for macro-structural influences such as social isolation, marginalization, and living spaces among Kashmiri migrants. These influences gain greater salience with respect to camp Kashmiri migrants who since 1989 had been inadequately accommodated in dingy one room squatters under subhuman conditions. To a limited extent, the Indian government has acknowledged its inadequacy and delay in providing basic necessities of life to displaced Kashmiri pandits (Bhat, 2008).

Since 2013, the camp migrants were being shifted to comparatively larger apartments in Jagti region on the outskirts of Jammu city, but they deem this step as ‘way too late… having suffered enough’. Moreover, these displaced Pandits are still suffering from poor levels of human functioning in these far-flung residential areas along with a greater sense of social isolation and marginalization, and low sense of security (Panun Kashmir. 2014). Government should look into reintegration of Kashmiri migrants into mainstream society with innovative initiatives and for that matter other internally displaced people within India so as to instill in them a sense of
belongingness. The plight of migrants in resettlement camps (comparatively lower level of resilience and high level of stress, and associated physical and psychological health symptoms) further necessitates the urgent implementation of rehabilitation plans for the IDPs in the country.

The results of the current study may also shed light on implications for counseling theory and practice with focus on development of prevention and intervention programs that might help to maintain optimal level of functioning by stimulating or enhancing their capacity for resilience (Kelly 2005; Pransky, 2003). Some of these are targeted at individual level while others focus on community settings. Interventions focusing on stress management and cognitive behavior therapies to improve levels of self-efficacy, positive emotion regulation, positive coping strategies, relaxation techniques, cognitive reframing, and searching for positive meanings in daily events might be therapeutic and promote resilience. At the community level, the focus should be on expansion of social capital and social structural conditions, strengthening of social connectivity through social exchange, and education of front liners like mental health and social workers to foster resilient communities and neighborhoods.

Further, the study highlights the need for evidence-based psychotherapeutic interventions for these marginalized populations, albeit applied innovatively in order to increase accessibility and engagement.

**Recommendations for future research**

Further research is implicated for the purpose of replication as well as exploration of the extant nature of relationships between resilience and associated factors in other populations. Kashmiri migrants from other parts of the country may be recruited for validation of the results of the present study. Researchers may also consider replicating the present study with other internally displaced persons in India like West Pak refugees. Future research may benefit from drawing comparisons within Kashmiri migrants as well as other internally displaced persons, and information established through the subsequent researches might assist in the development of resilience programs that are common across forcibly displaced people from diverse backgrounds.
The quantitative strand of the present study examined the psychological factors of resilience using a cross-sectional design which provided baseline data describing relationships between resilience and its correlates at one period in time. However, the effects of temporal influences on resilience had not been ascertained. Therefore, it would be useful to conduct a longitudinal study which explores resilience in Kashmiri migrants over time and in relation to context so as to measure any observed changes in patterns or rates of resilience temporally and to forecast future developments (Polit & Beck, 2004).

Further research is also needed to explore other concepts and variables associated with resilience and to address issues like event-specific vs. universal nature of resilience, cross-cultural differences in its expression, mediating and moderating psycho-biological mechanisms of resilience. Overall future research with internally displaced populations would benefit from greater sample sizes, improved methodologies (experimental, daily diary, life story narrative) and sophisticated analyses (multilevel modeling, dynamical systems analysis), longitudinal and sequential designs, innovation in recruitment of wider variety of internally displaced persons, and inclusion of cultural and situational frameworks while studying resilience.

**Conclusion**

While forced displacement/migration has been deemed an extensively traumatic event with a plethora of potentially devastating consequences, there is also evidence that forcibly displaced individuals, despite the trauma and its sequelae, function competently. The results of the present study attempted to make a contribution to the contemporary conceptualizations of resilience in Kashmiri migrants and internally displaced persons at large, and to offer valuable insights for the advancement of treatment and prevention programmes. The convergent mixed methods design enabled depth and breadth of description through combining qualitative and quantitative methods and allowed increase in understanding of resilience. Applied within the context of risk and protective factors, this thesis attempted to provide understanding of how the concept of resilience may be contextualized in internal displacement. Findings of this study might form the directional basis on which subsequent research may be conducted.