

ABSTRACT

Youth are the most energetic slice of the population in any country, the future of tomorrow. Youth constitute an integral developmental phase marked by transitioning from childhood to adulthood, characterised by unique cognitive, emotional and social changes. This period encompasses stages of maturation that neither occur in early childhood nor can be delayed until adulthood. It is often expounded by exploring roles and identities, relatively unbound from rigid social expectations, yet progressively shaped by emerging responsibilities and societal norms. Out of the 1.2 billion people living in India, 54 percent are below 24 years of age. Youth lifestyles are of concern. This study examines youth as a formative period that prepares individuals for active participation in the broader social collective.

This study explores the concept of risk and resilience among youth. It discusses various factors influencing risk factors and resilience components among the youth. The review of relevant literature highlights the importance of fostering resilience in adolescents and youth involved in various risk factors to support their overall well-being. Understanding the underlying risk factors and process of risk is crucial to the identification of those adolescents and youth who are most in need of early intervention, whereas clarification of protective factors and process of resilience can inform the design of sensitisation and intervention to strengthen those at greatest risk. The primary objective of this study was to assess the prevalence of risk behaviours and levels of resilience among youth, followed by the objectives to analyse the interrelationship between risk and resilience factors, to explore the socio-demographic predictors of risk and resilience and to examine the effect of the sensitisation programme on the risk behaviours and resilience among the youth. In the pursuit of these goals, risk and resilience research has focused on several levels of analysis.

An action-based cross-sectional research study was designed to target youth from both urban and rural areas within the Coimbatore jurisdiction, Tamil Nadu. A sample of 1710 youth aged 18-22 years was selected for the study using a simple random sampling technique from the city of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu state. The self-made demographic questionnaire was used to collect the socio-demographic information. The Youth Risk

Behaviour Scale 2019 was administered to study the risk behaviours, and the Resilience questionnaire 2017 was also used to assess the youth's response to resilience. The study also emphasised the sensitisation programme to be conducted to enhance resilience and reduce risk based on the prevalence of risk factors among the selected youth. A sensitisation programme for the youth after obtaining permission from the college administrators. A total of 184 youth were selected using a controlled randomised selection technique, where 122 youth were taken as the experimental group based on their willingness to participate in the programme, and 62 youth were taken as the control group (waitlist). The sensitisation programme was conducted for 2 weeks (4 days per week), consisting of 16 sessions (2 sessions per day) using validated educational content, through delivering lecturers/awareness, clearing doubts, tailoring messages to the students to make them aware on various topics such as unhealthy and abusive risks, the cycle of addictions, problem solving skills, strengthening protective factors and providing counselling sessions if asked and required. Data was collected from the experimental and control groups after the sensitisation programme (post data), and post data collection was done at two intervals. The first post-data was collected after 10 days of the programme, and follow-up data was collected after a gap of a month. The pre-sensitisation scores were taken from the data collected during the II phase (before sensitisation). The sensitisation programme was conducted by the investigator with the help of a trained clinical psychologist.

As part of the research framework and the study objectives, multiple levels of analysis was carried out, where the socio-demographic markers which includes age, gender, educational qualification, type of family, area of residents, parents education and occupation and family annual income served as the independent variables and the dependent variables constituted the risk factors (safety issues, attempting suicide, substance use, sexual behavior and health issues) and resilience components (self-belief, optimism, purposeful direction, adaptability, ingenuity, challenge orientation, emotional regulation and support seeking).

Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to determine the prevalence of risk behaviours and levels of resilience among youth. Subsequently, canonical correlation analysis was conducted to explore the interrelationship between risk and resilience factors. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to identify the socio-

demographic predictors of risk and resilience. To examine the effect and sustainability of the sensitisation programme on the risk behaviours and resilience among the youth, paired sample t test, independent t test and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were applied.

The study depicted that most youth experienced moderate to high levels of risk behaviours such as driving safety issues, bullying, smoking, tobacco use, alcohol, sexual behaviour, body weight, eating habits physical activities and health related issues, and moderate to low levels of resilience in the components of self-belief, optimism, purposeful direction, ingenuity, challenge orientation, emotional regulation, and support seeking. A significant interrelationship emerged between risk behaviours and resilience components, indicating that engagement in risky behaviours tends to reduce resilience, indicating high substance use and health issues, lowers ingenuity, challenge orientation, and adaptability. Conversely, low protective factors in youth increase susceptibility to risky behaviours like lower support seeking increases attempting suicide, and higher self-belief lowers the substance use. Socio-demographic markers were also identified as influential in shaping both risk behaviours and resilience of youth, indicating particularly, the gender and age of the youth, educational and occupational backgrounds of parents, family income, and area of residence were evident in shaping youth direction. These factors were linked to both heightened vulnerability to risk behaviours and reduced resilience capacities.

The effectiveness and sustainability of the sensitisation programme in preventing risk and promoting resilience were examined. Findings revealed that participants in the experimental group demonstrated significant improvements in resilience scores and reductions in risk behaviours at both post-test and follow-up stages. In contrast, the control group exhibited minimal or no statistically significant changes across the same measures. The significant differences in mean scores between the experimental and control groups provide strong evidence for the programme's efficacy. Nonetheless, it is important to note that certain dimensions of resilience did not show substantial improvement in the follow-up phase, underscoring the necessity for ongoing, targeted interventions to support long-term behavioural change and the continued development of youth resilience.

Based on the study's findings, several implications emerged for youth, college administrators, educators, parents, families, communities, and policymakers. These stakeholders must actively engage in sensitisation, intervention or awareness programmes to address the resilience and risk factors affecting young people. The study recommends efforts for fostering healthy development, positive mental health, and overall well-being. Early identification of at-risk students is crucial, along with initiatives to strengthen student–teacher relationships, enhance family involvement, and integrate mental health services on campus through accessible counselling.

Keywords: Youth, Risk Behaviour, Resilience Components, Sensitisation Programme, Socio-demographic Markers.