

# **Understanding Patterns Of Resilience: Recognizing Multiple Pathways To Well Being**

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# We already know...

- Health is more than just an absence of illness.
- Everyone facing risks or stress need not become 'dysfunctional' or 'ill'. One may adapt and cope.
- If a person is 'ill', it does not mean that they do not have any capacity to grow, resolve problems, set goals and manage relationships.

# We already know...

- The environment of a person (i.e. the family, community and culture) can play a significant role in challenging the risks in life of a person. Hence, understanding capacities or strengths of people and their contexts is important.
- There is no single universally applicable answer to the following questions-
  - What is ‘successful growth’?
  - What is healthy adaptation (and who defines it as ‘healthy’)?

# About Resilience

- Resilience occurs in the context of adversity.
- It is more than survival.
- Conceptualized in terms of a trait or characteristic, a process, as well as an outcome.
- Individuals **negotiate & navigate** their way to resources (psychological, social, cultural, physical) and opportunities that sustain their well-being
- Influenced by culture and context.

# About Resilience

- Success in this process of negotiation and navigation is **defined by a person** according to ‘reciprocity’ that one experiences ‘between themselves and ***social constructions of well being*** that shape their interpretations of their health status’ (Ungar, 2004, p. 352).
- Hence, resilience is a quality of the **environment** as much as the individual.
- ‘Changing the odds’ could be preferable to resourcing individuals to ‘beat the odds.’

# Subjective and Inner Well being

- *Subjective well being*: evaluation of own life in terms of how good one feels about it and how well one is functioning. One thinks in terms of time, i.e. – the prospect (future), present and past (Durayappah, 2011).
- *‘Inner well being’*: “*what people think and feel they are able to be and do*” (White, Gaines Jr, & Jha, 2013, p. 22). Inner well being associated with what an individual thinks and feels about: economic confidence, agency and participation, social connections, close relationships, physical and mental health, competence and self-worth, values and meaning

# Resilience and Inner Wellbeing

- Inner well-being could be an outcome of the process of resilience.
- Inner wellbeing could be one of the factors that contribute to the process of resilience.
- In this process (of navigation and negotiation) one can choose multiple pathways to try and attain a sense of inner wellbeing and peace.

# Resilience and Inner Wellbeing

- ***For both:*** **Understanding meanings** that people give to their life experiences and their behaviors more significant than assessing whether people conform to a set of pre-defined behaviors and outcomes.
- There is **heterogeneity** in how people respond to their environment and how people use 'various multiple alternative paths of accessing resources and addressing limitations'\*

# Context of Research: Kashmir

During any conflict, women face economic hardships, loss of family members, displacement, sexual violence, increasing responsibilities in family.

## **What has been happening in Kashmir?**

- Generations in Kashmir have faced the psychosocial impact of ongoing conflict
- Peace in Kashmir has been repeatedly interrupted due to conflicts between India and Pakistan.
- No reliable, comprehensive and factual survey about the number of widows in Kashmir.
- Role of civil society organizations evolving

# Resilience and Well being in Kashmir Context

- For a woman in context of conflict, the process of navigation and negotiation can involve exercising identities of being a 'victim', 'widow', and a 'mother'.

# About Shaheen

- **Shaheen** (name changed) is about 33 years old. In a village in Kupwara District of Kashmir, she lives with her mother-in-law, daughter and 2 sons. Daughter is in 11<sup>th</sup> class and her expenses are supported by the NGO. One son studies in 5<sup>th</sup> class and other in 4<sup>th</sup> class. Her husband passed away 11 years ago. She has studied till 5<sup>th</sup> class. She has not had any other formal training.
- Shaheen does not have a property on her own name yet. Relationship with mother in law is strained. She does not have any regular source of income through work. Her mother and brother stay in the same village and provide support to her when needed. She says that she did not remarry because of her concern for children. However, she also mentioned that remarriage would have made her life circumstances better.

# Environment tells her....

- This is a test by God...
- Be thankful/grateful to God...
- God rewards the patient...
- This was destined..
- Be tolerant and patient...

***“My mother used to say me that we should always be patient and should be thankful to ALLAH. Gods always rewards the patient.”***

# Other aspects of her environment

- Road not good enough for bus service. Hence, the only mode of transport is- sumo (takes 30 minutes from Kupwara) or by walking.
- Primary school (upto 5<sup>th</sup> class) in village.
- Nearest health center is about 2 kilometers.
- NGO, Hospital, Govt. departments based in Kupwara.
- Nearest Army camp is about 1 km from village.

**PATHWAYS TO WELLBEING:  
EXERCISING IDENTITIES**

# Identity as a mother

***“I was widowed six years after my marriage. . I did not marry again for such reasons.. as I was concerned about my children. I told you that I have begged for my kids. My kids were very small then. Son was one year old and my daughter was in nursery class. I scarified my life for my kids. I thought whatever happened with me had to happen.. but now I cannot destroy the life of my kids. God will be happy with me. Other women remarried in our village after few months of their husband’s death.”***

# Identity as a victim (of circumstances...of perceptions...)

***“...people who are rich don’t face problems. When there is drought they buy from the market, its basically a problem to us as there is no one to earn for us. Like those who are rich don’t go to forest... only poor like me need to.”***

Sharing how neighbors perceive her...

***“They call me beggar and so many other things. Look what God have done to them, they were worth it. Now they are dependent on us they have to beg now.”***

# Identity as a widow

Talking about her husband..

***“...That time I was not so worried as I am today because now I have to bear everything alone. He was the one to look after the home whatever be the need.”***

Reflections on how life is different in presence and absence of a husband.

**PATHWAYS TO WELLBEING: THROUGH  
DIGNITY, PURPOSE, CONTROL,  
BELONGING**

# Towards Dignity

***“I go by foot if I don’t have money and if we tell them (NGO) this then while coming back from there they pay me for bus. I have travelled hundred times by foot to YT (NGO). I take money from them because they will not taunt/ criticise me but the neighbours will.”***

Helpseeking, use of resources/support in context is influenced by experiences that impact dignity.

# Towards purpose

***“..Children are the priority for me. I have to manage many things for them. I keep on thinking about them and the it affects my health.”***

Identity as a mother seems to take the first priority.

# Towards Control

Sharing about how she copes when she feels upset..

*“I move into my orchards (vegetable garden) and spend 2-3 hours there because I just want to pass my time.. no matter what way. After that I start cooking for the lunch and also for dinner. I spend my days with my kids.”*

Attempts to maintain peace within.

# Towards Belonging/Togetherness

Sharing about strained relationship with mother in law and how she copes...

***“She (mother in-law) fights with me every now and then. Last time I went to my sister in shatpora for three days. Then I went to Amjad shahab (NGO worker) and he gave me socks for my kids and me. He consoled me there.”***

Wants relationships to be good. Seeks refuge in relationships where she feels supported and respected.

# Thinking in terms of time: Hope for a better future

***“My children say when we grow up you will not have to face all these problems. We will earn for you. But my kids are small today so I have to look after them.”***

# Further reflections

- Loss of self as a 'person'? Is it only about being a mother now?
- Is worrying bad? For women, worrying was part of everyday life. It seemed to keep them focused on the goal → a better future for children and self

# Further reflections

- One may not seem happy all the time, may not be satisfied with how life is. Yet, when one thinks in terms of time, if there is hope for a better future ...one moves towards it everyday.
- Its not necessarily about a sustained/consistent sense of inner wellbeing. Its about moments when one thinks and feels that one has a sense of dignity, purpose, control, belonging/ togetherness. This guides the process of navigation and negotiation everyday.

**THANK YOU!**