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### **Resilience As Related To Peer Attachment: A Comparative Study Of Orphan And Non-Orphan Children**

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

It is a known fact that children deprived of parental warmth, care and guidance are vulnerable to various psycho-social as well as psychological problems. While traumatic parental loss represents an undeniable risk factor for maladaptive outcomes, some groups of children seem to possess a special innate ability called resilience and appear to manifest successful adaptation. The importance of building resilience among orphan children living in orphanages cannot be ignored for safeguarding them against risk and adversities of their lives as well as ensuring their better future. Hence, it is essential to determine their existing level of resilience. Keeping this in mind, the present study was conducted to investigate resilience among orphan and non-orphan children as well as its relationship with peer attachment in them. The study was carried out in two orphanages and two schools run by Government in Tricity- Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali. The sample consisted of 50 orphan children and 50 non-orphan children. The tools used in the study included The Resiliency Scale (Wagnild & Young, 1993) and Inventory of Peer Attachment (Armsden & Greensberg, 2009). The findings revealed significant difference in resilience of orphan and non-orphan children, with orphan children scoring more on resilience as well as peer attachment than non-orphan children. The findings also indicated that peer attachment was positively correlated with resilience.

**KEYWORDS:** Resilience, peer attachment, orphan, non-orphan.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Children maturing toward adulthood not only grow physically, but also develop psychologically and in ways that define intellectual, social, spiritual and emotional characteristics. The circumstances or conditions in which this growth takes place can impede their development. Unfortunately, some children are deprived of parental care due to death of one or both the parents or because of abandonment by parents due to various reasons. Losing parents and other significant adults can render orphan children vulnerable including increased risk of developing a variety of psychological problems including anxiety, low self-esteem, behaviour disorders, distorted relationships with peers etc. A sense of inferiority complex is fairly apparent. Hence, these children are referred to be "the children at high risk".

According to the report of The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), it is estimated that there are 153 million orphans worldwide ranging from infants to teenagers, who have lost one or both the parents. India is the world's largest democracy with a population of over a billion people, of which 400 million are children. Social Statistics Division of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (Government of India, 2018)<sup>1</sup> has found that 4 per cent of India's child population of 20 million are orphans. The percentage of children who are orphans rises rapidly with age, from less than 1% among children under age 2 years to 9% among children age 15-17 years. The Northeast region has the highest percentage of children who are orphans (6% or more in every State except Tripura).

Even when they are deprived of parental warmth and are vulnerable to various problems, some children beat the odds and move from being 'victim' to 'survivor'. In other words, faced with significant stressors or adversity, some children display a special innate ability, known as resilience. It is the ability to bounce back and transform one's emotional and physical pain into something positive<sup>2</sup>. It is the ability to maintain a stable equilibrium and relatively stable healthy level of psychological and physical functioning, even in the face of highly disruptive stressful and traumatic events.

The protective factors that help children to overcome adversity include either resources or assets. Resources are external protective factors to individual and it includes peer attachment, adult mentoring, parental attachment that promote positive development. Assets are the positive factors that reside within the individual such as self-esteem, wellbeing, coping skills etc. Considering this, in the present study, an attempt was made to study the seemingly most important resource namely, peer attachment, as related to resilience among orphan and non-orphan children. Peer attachment refers to the emotional connection between individuals who belong to same age group or social group. Association with peers may be a source of support and comfort especially for vulnerable children. It

has been pointed out in various studies that children who are exposed to traumatic experiences, show resilient behaviours when accompanied with positive and warm friendships<sup>3</sup>.

Promoting resilience may enable better long term outcomes for orphan children by boosting their chances of positive adaptation in future. Keeping this in mind the present study was taken up with the following objective.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To determine the level of resilience and peer attachment in orphan and non-orphan children.
- To determine the significance difference between mean scores of Resilience and Peer attachment of orphan and non-orphan children.
- To examine inter- correlation among the two variables of the study.

### **METHOD**

The present study was conducted in randomly selected two orphanages and two Government schools in Tricity - Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali. The sample consisted of 50 orphan children (25 from each orphanage) and 50 non-orphan children (25 from each school). Children, irrespective of their gender, falling in the age range of 12-18 years were selected for the study. Stratified random sampling was used for data collection.

Tools used: Tools used for measuring various variables of the study have been given in Table-1.

**Table-1 Tools used for the study**

1. The Resiliency Scale	Wagnlid and Young, 1993 <sup>4</sup>
2. Inventory of Peer Attachment	Armsden and Greenberg, 1987 <sup>5</sup>

### **Statistical Analysis:**

- To find out difference in the level of resilience and peer attachment of orphan and non-orphan children, t-test was applied.
- Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation was applied to find out inter-correlation among the two variables of study.

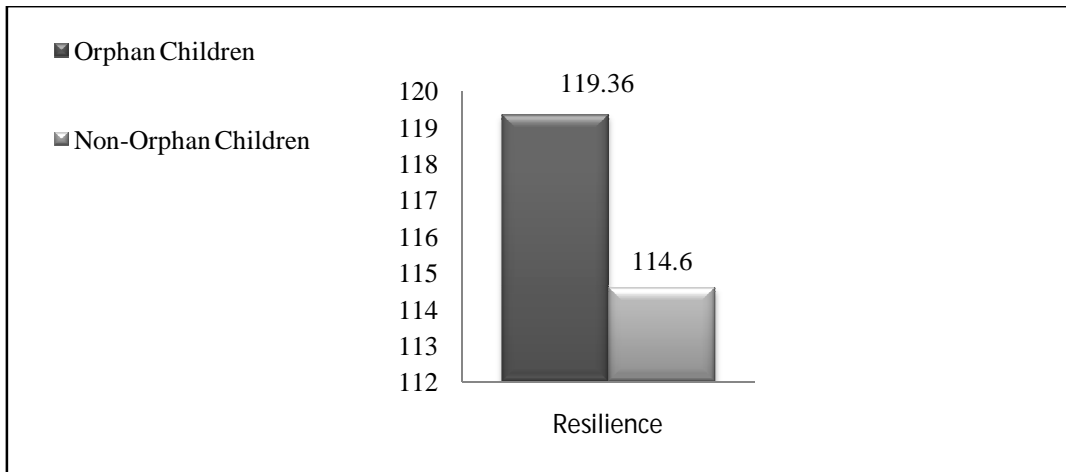
### **RESULTS**

In order to find out the difference between the mean scores of resilience and peer attachment of orphan and non-orphan children, t-test was applied. Mean, SD, SEM and t-values were calculated for the same. Data have been incorporated in Table-2

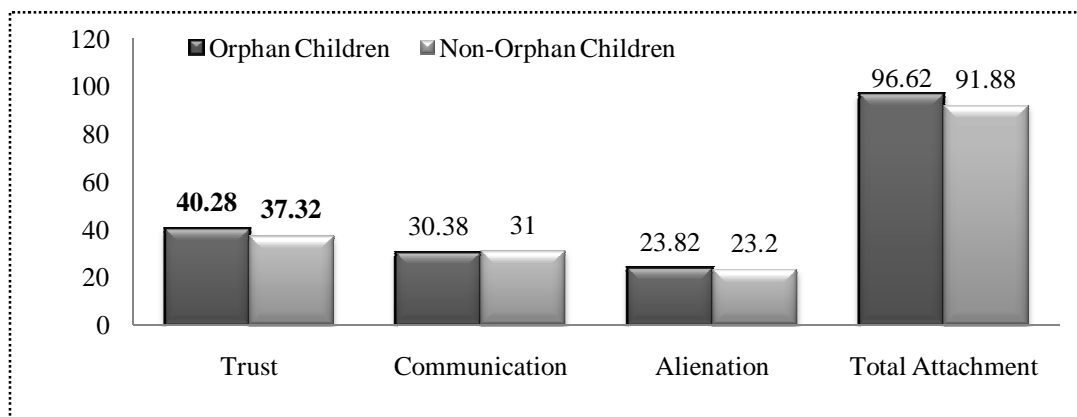
**Table-2 Significance of Difference between Mean Scores of Resilience and Peer Attachment of Orphan and Non-Orphan Children**

Variables	Dimension	Sample	Mean	SD	SEM	t-value	p-value
Resilience		Orphan Children	119.36	24.284	3.434	<b>1.8678</b>	<b>&lt;0.05</b>
		Non-Orphan Children	114.6	18.287	2.586		
Peer Attachment	Trust	Orphan Children	40.28	7.7539	1.096	<b>2.0522</b>	<b>&lt;0.05</b>
		Non-Orphan Children	37.32	6.6253	0.936		
	Communication	Orphan Children	30.38	6.7306	0.951	0.5183	NS
		Non-Orphan Children	31.00	5.1229	0.724		
	Alienation	Orphan Children	23.82	4.3221	0.611	0.7049	NS
		Non-Orphan Children	23.20	4.4721	0.632		
	Total Attachment	Orphan Children	96.62	14.188	2.006	<b>1.9825</b>	<b>&lt;0.05</b>
		Non-Orphan Children	91.88	12.058	1.704		

The diagrammatic presentation of Table-4 has been given in Figures 1 and 2



**Figure-1 : Mean scores of resilience in orphan and non-orphan children**



**Figure-2: Mean scores of peer attachment in orphan and non-orphan children**

Results presented in Table-2 show that there existed significant difference between mean scores of resilience of orphan and non-orphan children and orphans were found to be more resilient

than non-orphans. The possible reasons could be that positive, stimulating and enriched environment in the orphanage that is sustained over time contribute to boosting resilience among orphan children. Moreover, higher sense of resilience in orphan children as compared to their non-orphan counterparts mainly develops due to development of close and warm social bonds and friendships with peers in orphanages.

The findings also revealed significant difference in mean scores of trust in peers and total peer attachment of orphan and non-orphan children, with orphans having more trust and attachment with peers as compared to their counterparts belonging to non-orphan category. The possible reason for the obtained result in the present study might be that in the absence of parents, orphan children express their emotions and feelings openly with their peers. Not only they spend more time with them but disclose their inner self with them. Moreover, they do not have any hesitation with them as they are less controlling and less judgemental than adults. So they interact, share their feelings and take guidance from them at the time of need.

### ***Inter-Correlation***

In order to find out inter-correlation among the two variables of the study for the total sample, Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation was used and the coefficient values for the same have been furnished in Table-3.

**Table-3 Inter-correlation among various variables of the study (n = 100)**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Resilience</b>	<b>Peer Attachment</b>
Resilience	1	0.621**
Peer Attachment	-	1

Note: \*\* p<.01

It is clear from Table-3 that there existed highly significant positive correlation of resilience with peer attachment. It shows that the scores of resilience increase with increase in the peer attachment. The possible reason for this could be that friendships may buffer children and adolescents from the adverse effects of negative events such as family conflict, terminal illness, school failure etc. Making friends, keeping them and getting informal support from them forecast good outcomes on resilience. In adolescence, peers become the major source of intimacy and disclosure and are key providers of both emotional and social support which enhance resilience in vulnerable children. Having good and warm relationship with peers is related to less emotional problems as they indirectly lend support and thus encourage high rate of resilience.

## **CONCLUSION**

As parental absence presents an undeniable risk factor for maladaptive outcomes, therefore resilience is a vital part of the life of orphan children in order to manifest successful adaptation and overcoming the negative outcomes. The present study revealed

- Orphan children were found to be at moderate level of resilience while non-orphan children scored low on resilience.
- Orphan children showed more total peer attachment as compared to non-orphan children.
- Orphan children were found to have more trust in their peer relationships in comparison with their other counter-parts.
- Peer attachment was revealed to be positively correlated with resilience. In other words, an increase in peer attachment would enhance resilience in children at risk.

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