

Self-efficacy in Militancy Affected Youth of Kashmir Valley

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Abstract

Self-efficacy is a competence belief about one's "judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). There are multiple sources of self-efficacy beliefs, but mastery experiences—how one interprets, evaluates, and judges their competence—is the most powerful source (Bandura, 1997). Hence, the aim of the present investigation was to study self-efficacy in militancy affected youth of Kashmir valley. Self-efficacy was studied in two groups- militancy affected group and militancy non-affected group. Sample comprised 100 participants, 50 each in two groups. Self-efficacy was measured through General Self-efficacy Scale developed by Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem. t test showed that the control group scored significantly higher than the experimental group. When compared in terms of gender no significant difference was found in experimental group where as in control group significant difference was found as females outshined males.

Key words: self-efficacy, militancy, youth

Introduction :

The concept of self-efficacy lies at the centre of psychologist Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory. Bandura's theory emphasizes the role of observational learning, social experience, and reciprocal determinism in the development of personality. According to Bandura, a person's attitudes, abilities, and cognitive skills comprise what is known as the self-system. This system plays a major role in how we perceive situations and how we behave in response to different situations. Self-efficacy plays an essential part of this self-system.

According to Albert Bandura, self-efficacy is "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations." In other words, self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation. Bandura described these beliefs as determinants of how people think, behave, and feel (1994). It has also been defined as the belief

that one is capable of performing in a certain manner to attain certain goals (Ormrod 2006). It has been described in other ways as the sense of belief that one's actions have an effect on the environment (Steinberg, 1998) as a person's judgement of his or her capabilities based on mastery criteria; a sense of person's competence within a specific framework, focusing on the person's assessment of their abilities to perform specific tasks in relation to goals and standards rather than in comparison with other's capabilities. Additionally, it builds on personal past experience of mastery. The idea of self-efficacy is one of the centre points in positive psychology; this branch of psychology focuses on factors that create a meaning for individuals. It is believed that our personalized ideas of self-efficacy affect our social interactions in almost every way. Understanding how to foster the development of self-efficacy is a vitally important goal of positive psychology because it can lead to living

a more productive and happy life.

Since Bandura published his seminal 1977 paper, "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change," the subject has become one of the most studied topics in psychology. Why has self-efficacy become such an important topic among psychologists and educators? As Bandura and other researchers have demonstrated, self-efficacy can have an impact on everything from psychological states to behaviour to motivation.

Virtually all people can identify goals they want to accomplish, things they would like to change, and things they would like to achieve. However, most people also realize that putting these plans into action is not quite so simple. Bandura and others have found that an individual's self-efficacy plays a major role in how goals, tasks, and challenges are approached.

Since the present study was taken up in Kashmir, it is, therefore imperative to present a brief overview of the circumstances prevailing there in Kashmir. Insurgency in Kashmir has existed in various forms. Kashmir has been the target of a campaign of militancy by all sides in the conflict. Thousands of lives have been lost since 1989 due to the intensified insurgency.

A widespread popular insurgency started in Kashmir with the disputed 1987 elections with some elements from the State's assembly forming militant wings which acted as a catalyst for the emergence of armed insurgency in the region.

Kashmir has been witnessing the state of chronic socio-political conflict for about two decades now. The conflict has left in its aftermath many thousands of people dead, maimed, and disabled, many missing or confined, thousands of children orphaned and

women widowed. In addition, there has been a colossal damage to the property and cultural fabric. During the same time, natural disasters too have frequently traumatized already suffering people. Keeping these factors, to mention a few, into consideration, it would not be an exaggeration to state that militancy/insurgency has direct as well as indirect implications on the self-efficacy of people living there in Kashmir.

Hence the present investigation was taken up to figure out self-efficacy in insurgency/militancy affected youth of Kashmir valley while keeping into consideration the prevailing circumstances in Kashmir since 1989.

Method

Participants

The sample comprised 100 participants falling in two groups: militancy affected (experimental group) and militancy non-affected (control group). Each group consisted of 50 participants. The experimental group was purposively selected from different militancy affected households of Kashmir while the control group was drawn out of the general population of valley.

Measures

General Self-Efficacy Scale: The General Self-efficacy Scale aims at a broad and stable sense of personal competence to deal efficiently with a variety of stressful situations. The German version of this scale was originally developed by Matthias Jerusalem and Ralf Schwarzer in 1981, first as a 20-item version and later as a reduced 10-item version (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1986, 1992; Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1989). It has been used in numerous research projects, where it typically yielded internal consistencies between alpha .75 and .90.

The scale is not only parsimonious and reliable, it has also proven valid in terms of convergent and discriminant validity. For example, it correlates positively with self-esteem and optimism and negatively with anxiety, depression and physical symptoms.

Results

The results obtained and their interpretations have been presented in Table number 1 to 3. A perusal of table 1 reveals that mean scores of militancy affected (experimental group) and militancy non-affected (control group) were 59.72 and 73.19 with SD 10.23 and 15.37 respectively. The t-ratio between the two means was found to be 5.16 which was significant at 0.05 level of confidence.

A look at table 2 reveals that mean scores of militancy affected males and females were 46.87 and 50.13 with SD 15.93 and 17.42 respectively. The t-value between the means of the two groups was found to be 0.68 which was insignificant at 0.05 level of confidence.

Table 3 depicts that the mean scores of militancy non-affected males and females which were 39.87 and 65 with SD 12.72 and 15.93 respectively. The t-ratio between the two means was found to be 6.76 which was significant at 0.05 level of confidence.

Table 1: Comparison of mean scores of militancy affected and militancy non-affected group

Groups	N	Mean	SD	T	P
MAG	50	59.72	10.23	5.16	0.05
MNAG	50	73.19	15.37		

Table 2: Comparison of mean scores of militancy affected males and females

Groups	N	Mean	SD	T	P
MAM	25	46.87	15.93	0.68	NS
MAF	25	50.13	17.42		

Table 3: Comparison of mean scores of militancy non-affected males and females

Groups	N	Mean	SD	T	P
MNAM	25	39.87	12.72	6.76	0.05
MNAF	25	65	15.93		

Note:

MAG (militancy affected group)

MNAG (militancy non-affected group)

MAM (militancy affected males)

MAF (militancy affected females)

MNAM (militancy non-affected males)

MNAF (militancy non-affected females)

Discussion

The concept of "self-efficacy", introduced and investigated by Bandura (1977, 1986, 1995), is described as a self-perception that is formed in the context of behavior in specific areas (Bandura, 1977, 1986). This perception develops through a gradual learning process whereby the individual receives information from various sources regarding his/her abilities in a specific area of functioning.

This accumulation of feedback indicating success or failure in the given area naturally affects the perception of one's ability, creating a high level of self-efficacy in the case of positive messages and successes, and an opposite effect in the case of messages of failure (Bandura, 1977). The self-perception formed as a result of these experiences influences aspects such as stability and persistence in certain behaviors, patterns of thinking, and emotional response, decisions concerning course of action, and occupational choices. People also develop specific self-efficacy beliefs with regard to their ability to lead based on experiences of success in influencing people (e.g., Murphy, 2002).

The present study aimed at finding out differences between militancy affected youth and militancy non-affected youth with respect to their self-efficacy. The findings revealed that

the two groups- militancy affected and militancy non-affected group did exhibit statistically significant difference in relation to their self-efficacy. As the t-ratio ($t = 5.16, p < .05$) between the means of the two groups was found significant. When militancy affected group was compared in terms of gender, no significant difference was found. Since the t-ratio ($t = 0.68, p > .05$) which was insignificant at 0.05 level of confidence. Nevertheless, statistically significant difference was found when militancy non-affected males and females were compared on self-efficacy. As the t-ratio ($t = 6.76, p < .05$) between the means of the two groups was found significant. The results of the present study showed that the mean scores of militancy affected and militancy non-affected group on self-efficacy were found to be 59.72 and 73.19 respectively. Therefore, militancy non-affected group scored higher than militancy affected group on self-efficacy. The mean scores of the militancy affected males and females were found to be 46.87 and 50.13 respectively. Though the militancy affected females scored slightly higher than their male counterparts but this difference was not found statistically significant. The mean scores of militancy non-affected males and females were found to be 39.87 and 64 respectively. Therefore, militancy non-affected females scored higher than their male counterparts on self-efficacy.

The findings of the present study have some direct and indirect support from the studies and surveys conducted by various reputed organisations and institutes. A survey report on Jammu and Kashmir by a

Holland-based humanitarian group Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) maintains that a third of its respondents suffered from psychological distress. Nearly one in 10 people reported having lost one or more members of their immediate family due to violence in the period from 1989-2005. The survey reported that almost half (48.1%) of the respondents said that they felt only occasionally or never safe. It also indicated that violence or the threat of physical violence seems to have had a significant effect on the mental health and self-efficacy of people.

According to MSF, interviewees reported witnessing (73.3%) and directly experiencing themselves (44.1%) physical and psychological mistreatment, such as humiliation and threats thus causing extensive damage to their psychological health.

Psychologists maintain that people living at a place ravaged by conflict are often faced with a number of psychological problems. They say that the physical environment in which people live and survive has a direct bearing on their mental health, psychological wellbeing and self-efficacy. "Stress caused by feelings of insecurity and dependency can deplete physical and psychological buoyancy leading to varied mental problems, this has happened in most of the cases in Jammu and Kashmir", said Dr Adarsh Bhargava.

In this connection, a recent exhaustive review by Hobfoll et al. (2007) distils the findings of

empirical research to endorse five elements of immediate and mid-term mass trauma intervention. These elements are the

promotion of safety, calming, collective and self-efficacy, connectedness and hope. Interventions guided by these five elements can be applied at individual, group and community levels. Significantly, these include activities that are broadly economic-developmental.

To conclude the possibility of low self-efficacy involving violence, activism and other antisocial activities could not be ruled out completely owing to multiple restraints. Keeping these limitations into account more efforts are required to be made to delve deep into the problems of persons with low levels of self-efficacy and to come up with certain remedial measures, rehabilitation and, guidance and counselling.

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