Philosophers' Retreat
Detailed Report

13th June –17th June, 2019
Zhiwa Ling Ascent, Thimphu, Bhutan

INTRODUCTION:

The panel discussions that took place on June 14 and June 15, 2019 as part of the second Philosophers' Retreat focused on the theme, 'Inculcating Resilience in Youth'. The topic was a follow-up to the 2018 retreat that centered around the 'Purpose of Education' and its role in preparing our youth for the ever-changing world. It was noted that resilience is one of the main traits to help the youth deal with the various challenges of life and the inevitability of change.

Resilience was described as the ability of a person to balance toughness and tranquility as she navigates life's challenges and opportunities. It enables a person to maintain strength and equanimity throughout life's inevitable turbulence, with an internal stability and perspective which allows her to stay true to her continuous pursuit of personal ideals. It was recognized that resilience manifests in myriad ways depending on the person and the particular situation but in all cases, it enables a person to do the needful in order to continue moving toward her goals: if a situation requires mundane work, she will draw upon patience; if a situation requires extreme effort, she will muster strength; and if she is knocked down by an oppositional force, she will pick herself up, often bouncing back stronger.

Alternately stated, resilience is a person's ability to respond to a challenge in a thoughtful way. The challenge, most often than not, refers to a 'change' that destabilizes the individual and calls upon her to use internal resources such as courage and determination in order to maintain her internal wellbeing and integrity to her greater purpose. Resilience does not concern itself as much with the end result as it does with the process of decision-making. For example, a resilient person, based on her understanding of the context in a broader perspective, may choose to push harder toward achievement or let go of her present task. Resilience often requires a duration of effort to maintain stability and equanimity throughout the long period of the challenge. In other cases, resilience can be the ability to make wise choices in difficult circumstances in order to remain aligned with values and focus on a greater purpose.

Resilience is multi-dimensional and can pertain to various facets of our being, such as physical, psychological, cognitive and spiritual. Cognitive resilience is important but it is equally significant that a child is resilient physically, socially, spiritually and emotionally. Intellectual rationalization will fall short if there is a lack of recognition for emotional, social and spiritual hygiene. For example, a youth may understand the difference between positive and negative thoughts but it will require emotional grit for her to deal with negative thoughts in an effective manner.

The panelists noted that resilience is a well-researched topic and there is a lot of literature on it. Based on the existing resources, it was concluded that resilience can indeed be inculcated and developed as opposed to a fixed biological trait in humans that cannot be

Panel discussion in session

The dichotomy of Eastern and Western perspectives is discussed

changed. The resources cited included the ABCDE (Acceptance, Belief, Commitment, Discovery, Evaluation) strategy, concepts of Tragic Optimism and Positive Psychology, and various lesson plans used for inculcating resilience. Popular literature included Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance by Angela Duckworth and Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us by Daniel H. Pink. The first book makes a point that perseverance and determination are key to overcoming challenges, while the second one discusses how autonomy, self-mastery and purpose are key sources of intrinsic motivation that is necessary to thrive. Other concepts discussed were the Philosophy of Stoicism, Self-Determination Theory and Emotional Intelligence.

The various themes on resilience that were discussed are listed below.

EASTERN AND WESTERN PERSPECTIVES:

One of the salient points of the discussion was the wealth and wisdom of Eastern traditions that speaks of the notion of resilience. The non-sectarian teachings of Buddha say that the mind matters the most. The idea of 'mind over matter' shows the importance of knowing oneself and developing mindfulness and self-mastery to bounce back from any situation. Reflection and mindfulness can play a central role in a person developing resilience. This wisdom has been adopted to develop the 'Thought Model' by viewing the idea of thought at a granular level. Our thoughts and reactions to circumstances

lead to feelings, which in turn result in actions and consequences. We may not be in a position to control circumstances but we can choose what kind of thoughts we want to harbour, which will lead to the corresponding feelings, actions and consequences. The ability to apply the Thought Model skillfully can result in resilience.

There was also a discussion on the Buddhist perspective on the inevitability of adversities: it was noted that even the luckiest of us deal with sickness, aging and death. Many of the panelists shared deeply challenging experiences, such as loss of loved ones, poverty, war, natural calamities and loss of meaning in life. Others shared examples of life's mundane realities, which demand sustained energy and motivation for long periods of time. Reflecting on all of the situations, the panelists agreed that the education system is not the only social structure which must be engaged to inculcate resilience in youth: families, organizations and communities must also support the development of this quality. It was also unequivocally agreed upon that the infusion of technology in all aspects of life is causing unprecedented rates of change and increasing unpredictability in our lives, thus making resilience an indispensable trait for rising generations. All of these crucial factors and criteria are discussed in detail during their respective headings.

Another interesting way of looking at resilience was the paradox of the 'unstoppable force' vs 'immovable object' – both are indestructible and

The chairperson talks about the importance of mindset and outlook

therefore resilient. From a Buddhist perspective, resilience is viewed as more of a characteristic of an 'immovable object', tough and unaffected in challenging situations. On the other hand, Western, primarily capitalist, idea of resilience would be that of an 'unstoppable force', robust and overcoming all obstacles on its way. It was decided that a truly resilient person would embody both, oscillating between the two skillfully based on the situation.

The panelists also noted that traditional Buddhist teachings and culture puts a lot of emphasis on developing equanimity and calmness, which can be a huge source of resilience.

'BE YOUR PERSONAL BEST':

Perhaps one of the most important ways to inculcate resilience in our youth is to guide them to the understanding that they need to recognize their own potential and strive to be their personal best. Do they compare themselves to others or simply focus on bettering themselves when asked to assess their success? The answer generally plays a huge part in gauging if a person is resilient.

Adhering to the Buddhist philosophy of 'mind matters most', reflection and self-awareness are important components for inculcating resilience. A resilient person understands that a life unexamined is a life wasted, and lends herself to deep introspection on a regular basis. She takes time and makes genuine efforts to understand her aspirations, passions and

strengths, as well as her shortcomings and weaknesses. Instead of following a path with one big lifelong passion, she understands that it is more worthwhile to have 'micro-passions', which is identified by having a 'peripheral vision' and an open mind. This allows her willingness and flexibility to adapt to the situation at hand and respond to changing contexts. This idea is similar to Elizabeth Gilbert's concept of following one's curiosity instead of passion.

Employing the Thought Model, a resilient person is able to harbour positive thoughts and inculcate a Growth Mindset as opposed to a Fixed Mindset. She understands the power of her mind in influencing her physical body and muscles, thereby dictating how capable she is of meeting her goals. At the same time, she takes ownership of what is happening in and around her. This process ties into intrinsic motivation, which leads to avoidance of blame, helplessness and disappointment. That is why she is able to believe in herself being the source of her destiny and draws hope from that realization.

A truly resilient youth or person would not choose to give up on life, no matter how hard circumstances get. One of the best ways to ensure this is to provide ample opportunities for them to inculcate an appreciation and awe of life at a young age. The idea of hope, inspiration and aspiration can be a constant source for resilience, along with constant reflection and a deep sense of gratitude.

The panelists noted that how a person defines

success or failure plays a crucial part in determining her level of resilience. Most young people today do not know how to deal with failure and tend to lose their way during trying times. They have the notion that anything less than 100 % is not good enough, and often fail to bounce back when things do not go their way. In such a scenario, it was noted that a person who constantly strives to be the best version of herself is more resilient than someone else who gauges personal success based on her achievement in comparison to others. In most societies, success is equated with being at the 'top of the pack' and doing better than the rest. However, this framework does not allow for everyone to be successful because it is not possible for everyone to be the best among the best. That is why, it is important to encourage the youth to use themselves as yardsticks while assessing their own success. We need to encourage appreciation of individual effort and personal best. A resilient person, instead of succumbing to societal norms and expectations, should be able to gauge her options thoughtfully and chart out her own unique path to fulfillment.

CHARACTER-BUILDING:

Inculcating certain values and traits from a young age can make a person more resilient. Integrity, perseverance, compassion, justice and responsibility are examples of such important traits. Attitude and perspectives go a long in determining not only how an individual deals with failure, suffering and uncertainty but also with success and predictability.

As noted by the discussion on the Buddhist perspective on the inevitability of adversities, life is unpredictable and there are limitless circumstances that are not in our control. We need to recognize that life naturally comes with challenges for eachof us. However, our attitude and reaction to these circumstances are in our control and our outlook determines how we tackle every situation in life.

Having a positive outlook and a strong discerning mind is often a result of certain values and traits that need to be inculcated on a regular basis. Developing integrity towards oneself and others is paramount in possessing a personal code of conduct and holding yourself accountable. Self-discipline and perseverance give meaning to efforts put and reiterate the notion that becoming your personal best is something worth striving for. These traits encourage people not to look for instant gratification and instead have a long-term view of things. We need to realize that every action, however small and insignificant, define us. For example, in a professional setting, there might be days when we do not feel passionate about our work but we still need to show up and do our job.

Motivation and finding a purpose in life is a crucial trait that has an extremely positive correlation with resilience. The youth must be exposed to the idea of social change and be motivated to make a positive impact in society. Often times, they are not afforded the conducive environment to define their purpose and find their motivation. The first step involved in identifying purpose is questioning, followed by the
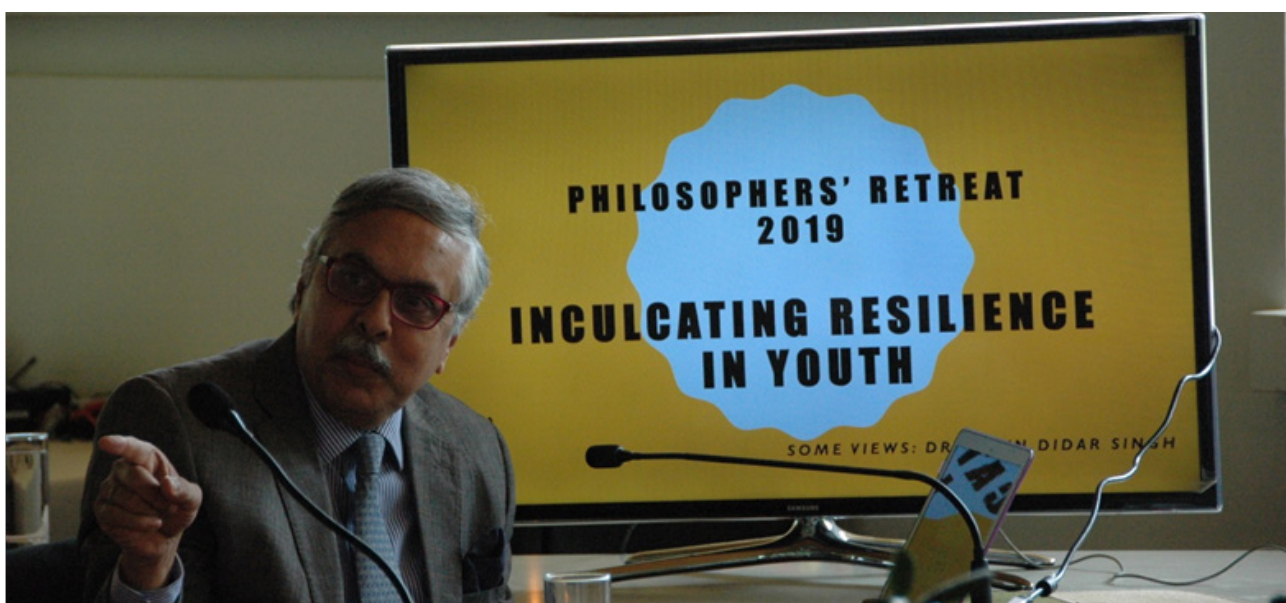
A presentation on 'Inculcating resilience in youth'

next step which is finding clarity. Then, constant reflection is needed to finetune the purpose, leading to more clarity. Institutions should work towards exposing their learners to the framework of finding a purpose – questioning, clarifying and reflecting. It is about time we realized that asking questions is not a sign of failure but instead a powerful tool for learning. However, we need to acknowledge the fact that a large section of the youth today does not have the opportunity or framework to identify their passions or purpose in life. For them, the notion of resilience cannot be applied as simply as it is to a more privileged youth. As in almost all cases, necessities in life such as basic health, nutrition and education need to exist before we can discuss traits such as motivation and purpose in life.

Compassion plays an essential role in inculcating resilience because it elucidates two important points – I am not alone and there are others who are going through the same adversity, and there are people whose situations are much worse off who could benefit from my intervention. Often, other people's experiences and sharing can be a huge source of inspiration. Also, while courage is instrumental for resilience, courage without compassion has no direction. Compassion can be an indispensable tool in developing a code of justice and a sense of responsibility towards one's community and humankind at large. We need to be mindful and empathetic of others' struggles and be able to see oneness arising from humankind in viewing diversity and differences.

Self-esteem and confidence are very important traits for being resilient. However, one needs to be careful because there is a thin line between confidence and arrogance. It is important that the education system examine this danger because arrogance can be self-defeating as well as destructive to society. The subtle difference between the two traits is represented quite skillfully in the following observation: arrogance smirks whereas confidence smiles. Arrogance is self-centered while confidence is often concerned about the community and bringing people together.

It is important to note that resilience needs to be dispositional as well as situational. While we need to inculcate resilience as a part of our overall character and outlook, we also need the ability to discern when and where it is needed. This requires developing the capability to take calculated risks and accept failure as a part of the journey. This also requires making tough decisions regarding what is worth fighting for and when it is time to let go. That is why, traits such as 'courage' and 'sacrifice' are central to the idea of resilience. Also, in most cases, resilience is not exhibited at a particular moment but over a period of time. The idea of closure can be crucial in these situations where resilience is a drawn-out journey.

In addition to possessing a discerning mind and a strong value system, there are other factors that invariably play a significant role in how resilient a person is.

A youth shares her views

The significance of role of parents, teachers and society is discussed

ROLE OF PARENTS, TEACHERS AND SOCIETY:

The role of home, school and environment in inculcating resilient in youth cannot be emphasized enough. They play an essential role in helping the youth develop self-esteem and a sense of belonging. It is important that parents, teachers and society allow children to be who they are while helping them become resilient. The pressures and expectations they put on the youth have an undeniable impact, especially with regard to resilience.

The discussion reflected an interesting dynamic among the parents, teachers and society in inculcating resilience in the youth. Who is accountable if the youth fails to be resilient: the parents, the educational system, or society as a whole? The consensus was that all three play a crucial role and that adults have a responsibility in deciding what kind of youth they want to nurture. Children learn by observing and it is important that adults are able to model resilience themselves. Empathy is needed towards youngsters in order to give them the time and space to develop resilience. We need to ensure that we are providing them the avenues and opportunities to become resilient.

It was noted that parenting style mattered. Perhaps the failure of inculcating resilience in youth stemmed from Generation X's more protective approach to child rearing – a reaction to their own upbringing. We have become a society of 'helicopter parents', where we never say 'no' to our children and shield them from

adversity. This results in children becoming entitled as well as unable to exercise mental toughness. Children who have never experienced denial at home experience a rude awakening when they step into the real world marked by struggles, difficulties and failure. That is why sometimes it is being in the position of privilege that makes people unprepared for what is in store for them in life. Parents need to ensure that their desire to protect does not come in the way of their desire to educate their children.

On the other side of the spectrum is the parenting style that puts too much pressure on the child. They have unrealistic expectations from their child and actively work towards getting their child to live up to those expectations. These parents need to understand that they cannot impose their idea of success and failure onto their children, especially because the context has changed so much. They need to rethink their definition of success as well as question what it means in the present context. There is an urgent need for parents and the older generation to calibrate their expectations to the realities of youth today, as opposed to imposing the same standards that they had when living in a completely different world. It is equally important that there is a gradual shift towards parents allowing their children to give their best and seeing that as success.

It is not only the parents who need to examine their framework of success – teachers, as bearers and facilitators of knowledge, information and wisdom should possess a framework that allows for every

child to be successful. If teachers assess success purely based on grades and competitive ranking, most students are unable to fulfill that criteria, resulting in self-doubt and feeling of unworthiness. It is time that we, especially teachers view success in terms of individual excellence instead of a standard benchmark. Also, we need to work towards institutionalizing that framework in the formal education system. It is time that we realize that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work.

The role of a teacher is crucial because in addition to shaping a child's mind, she is in the best position to identify the weak links in the education system. Also, in cases where parents are unable to, teachers are in a position to detect signs and symptoms in children and help come up with strategies to address them. Also, a teacher is in the position to create spaces for conversation and influence how a child interacts with her peers and others. A teacher is entrusted with inculcating self-esteem as well as a sense of community and responsibility, which go a long way to determining the level of resilience.

In addition to home and school, society at large plays a significant role in determining the psyche of a child and in determining how resilient she becomes. One's immediate circle of friends, colleagues and acquaintances, and fellow countrymen can help in developing a sense of belonging, stemming from a recognition of shared histories, cultures and traditions. This sense of belonging can, in turn, become an important source of resilience.

Moving forward, it is important that we as a society strive towards creating environments that make people more resilient. We need to encourage people to try, take risks, and fail without the feeling of incompetence. We need to realize how commonly perceived social challenges like adversity, poverty and failure can actually help build resilience. Also, we have to acknowledge that being one's personal best involves a negotiation between the individual and society's expectations. Just to think, 'I will just be my best' is perhaps not enough, and individual effort needs to be calibrated in some respect to the society's expectations.

CONTEXTUALIZATION AND ADAPTABILITY:

The influence of the environment on a person's level of resilience points to the understanding that resilience is a cultural formation. One's environment and context matter. Cultural variance is evident in inculcating and even defining resilience. For example, the problem of over-medication in the West versus the stigma that exists in discussing mental health in many Asian societies provide the varying context to understanding how resilience manifests itself today. In the West, it is considered resilient if you are able to accept your weaknesses and actively seek help. Conversely, in the East, resilience is equated more with the ability to toughen up and deal with your issues on your own. That is why it is important to discuss the notion of resilience in the context and time that one finds herself in.

The second day of discussions in progress

As discussed earlier, parents and the older generation need to calibrate their expectations to the realities of youth today. It has been noticed that the pressures and expectations have increased manifold compared to the previous generation; that might explain why we perceive that resilience has diminished. Today, we talk about the loss of rigour and how youth always pick the path of least resistance. But that could be because youth today are more strategic due to their access to more information. The older generation feel that they do not observe resilience in youth, but that may be the case because they are unable to perceive resilience in its current expressions. Older generations may not necessarily have the capacity to appreciate the many new and multidimensional challenges that youth are facing today. In all these cases, we need to understand the context and what position people are operating from.

Another way of looking at resilience is through its interaction with change. Since change is inevitable, resilience can be defined as the ability to face and process change. Resilience is not only about facing adversity but also dealing with constant change, be it good or bad. That is why, adaptability becomes an important trait for inculcating resilience, and we need to seriously ponder over what the enabling conditions for adaptability are.

Another thing we have to think about is whether the idea of resilience needs to be updated. It is refreshing to note that the definition of resilience has evolved from one primarily associated with toughness to one that indicates a deep engagement with one's emotions. It is increasingly being linked to the idea of being able to experience vulnerability and willingness to share and display emotions. Resilience in the past was about facing and overcoming hardships. Now it is more about the strategic choices that young people make and whether they are being responsible for their choices. Finding the space to share and talk about their emotions has become crucial in order to face the challenges of today's world.

AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY LEVEL:

In addition to inculcating resilience in individuals, we need to think about the systems and processes to make our communities more resilient. Apart from individual resilience, we need to look at collective resilience pertaining to organizations,

communalities, countries and even humankind. A crucial component of system resilience would be its ability to cope with change. Similar to individual resilience, the durability of a system resilience would depend on its adaptability. In today's ever-changing world, a sustainable system is not a robust and rigid one, but instead a flexible and adaptable one.

There is a need to contextualize and understand our place in the 21st Century by looking at our trajectory leading up to it. In this sense, 'knowing oneself' is not just about being aware of our inner processes but also being aware of our history as individuals and as a society. There is a need for not just positive thinking, but inculcating systemic changes in the way we operate in our society. We have become so interconnected through technology that we cannot ignore our place in the larger global picture. For example, let us go back to the dichotomy of the Eastern v/s Western perspectives by looking at the applicability of age-old philosophies to the modern context. The challenges of urban life are complex and the solution is perhaps not just a romantic return to the idealism of Buddhist teachings. There is a need to think about broader societal systems that can address resilience as opposed to just the individual and her psychology.

TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA:

Technology has accelerated the pace of change due to which adaptability has become a key trait in inculcating resilience in today's world. In the past, adults belonged to a generation that came with a scarcity mindset. Today's youth have an abundance of opportunities before them primarily due to technology. There are numerous avenues for learning and developing skill sets so going to universities for further studies is not the only option. Their aspirations and ambitions have changed. The temptations and challenges have changed. In short, the environment has changed, which calls for understanding the current situation and contextualizing the notion of resilience accordingly.

Let us look at how technology and information is continually shaping the workforce. The world is shifting towards a gig economy as more and more people are opting to be self-employed, entrepreneurs and part time employees. The concept of 'one degree-one career' is on its way to becoming obsolete. This generation understands that the best way to navigate

this terrain is to constantly adapt and reinvent themselves. This is why the idea of possessing 'micro-passions', as opposed to one singular lifelong passion, is more conducive to building resilience today. Since technology has ushered in an era that is extremely fluid and unpredictable, the youth need to be able to move between micro-passions, abandon them altogether, or create new ones. The adage, 'change is the only constant' has never been truer. And adaptability is the biggest tool that youth have to be resilient in the face or unforeseen and unprecedented change.

At the same time, the social media in all its varying facets have added new challenges to how people view success, failure and themselves. This generation is not only aware of its immediate surrounding but also of the global state. The youth know their standing in the world, often dictated by what they have and what they do not have. This is perhaps the biggest reason for the growing sense of inadequacy amongst them. Success is often misguidedly defined by comparison to others, and an increased awareness of competition tends to exacerbate the feelings of personal failure. Take the example of the social media phenomenon – 'selfie'. When we take a selfie, we choose the best ones to showcase to the world. We curate the results to represent the best visions of ourselves and nothing less is acceptable. Although innocuous on a superficial level, this has serious repercussions: does social media and modern conditions mandate that we re-examine what we teach children about how to deal with imperfections and difficulties? With

the over-emphasis on positivity and portraying only the best versions of themselves and their lives, do we undermine their ability to face adversity and negativity? These are the questions that require serious pondering.

Moreover, technology has, in many ways, severed the connection to self, family, friends and community at large. Gadgets, with its access to endless information and entertainment, have taken away time from real-life interactions. In the process, there has been a decline in essential relational attributes, such as self-awareness, empathy, teamwork and a sense of belonging. This has exacerbated the feeling of loneliness and depression, and resulted in mental illnesses and even suicide in the worst-case scenario.

There is another facet of technology that people are quite wary of – the concept of Artificial Intelligence. The fear is that while technology makes our lives much easier and does our work for us in a more efficient way, it also leaves us less involved and less engaged, thereby dumbing us down mentally and in other facets. However, we need to acknowledge that this scenario also presents tremendous opportunities and potential. With the machines and technologies taking over mundane and repetitive tasks, people can shift their focus on augmenting human intelligence. We can focus on important concepts such as learning how to learn, cultivating creativity, and inculcating resilience. The concept of Augmented Intelligence is different from Artificial Intelligence because it consciously and purposefully makes use

The impact of technology is deliberated upon

Panelists share what the curriculum on resilience should entail

of current machines and technologies to further human capabilities and push the boundaries of our intelligence and existence.

Technology is a game-changer. How we use it will determine what possibilities open up, how resilient we become, and possibly which direction the human race takes.

CURRICULUM:

How to incorporate resilience as a part of the school curriculum was a crucial theme of the discussion. Having established that resilience can actually be inculcated and developed as opposed to a fixed biological trait that cannot be changed, the panelists noted the rationale and strategies for doing so.

The world we live in today has vastly changed; so has the job market in order to keep up with the changes ushered in by the technological age. Today, employers are increasingly looking for certain qualities and traits versus only academic brilliance and competitive test scores. In the past, employers put utmost emphasis on technical skills, domain expertise and subject matter knowledge. Increasingly, they are expanding the list of desired core skills to include social emotional intelligence, resilience, collaboration and adaptability. This trend can and should be leveraged to apply a reverse pressure on institutions to rethink their curriculum in order to produce the kind of employees the market deems valuable. The age-old paradigm of grades being the metric for hard work

and capability needs to change at a systemic level to reflect the changing times.

On a more philosophical level, institutions need to rethink the purpose of education and ponder upon what kind of youth they want to mold and nurture. The panelists agreed that education should be able to produce sound, compassionate and resilient human beings who are able to make informed and good choices. Character-building needs to find its way back into the school curriculum. Indispensable traits such as rigour, compassion and resilience need to become a cornerstone of the curriculum.

After establishing the rationale for making resilience an integral part of the curriculum, the panelists discussed the salient features that need to be adopted in order to design a workable curriculum that is current, inclusive and evolutionary.

Not prescriptive:
The panelists agreed that developing a rigid curriculum on resilience to be taught in classrooms would be defeating. Such a curriculum cannot be didactic and prescriptive. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, multiple approaches would have to be employed in order to develop a successful curriculum on resilience.

Youth as active agents of learning:
The youth and students are perhaps the biggest resource in developing a working curriculum on resilience. A common understanding on what

constitutes resilience needs to be reached so that there are no gaps in perceptions on resilience between the youth and adults. Students' role in their own learning will set the stage for active participation and feedback, making them more responsible and accountable. At the same time, involving them will help in drawing up individualized lesson plans on how to help them inculcate resilience.

Technology has already sped the process by which more and more youth are increasingly becoming self-taught in various aspects. Now, the focus is on 'learning how to learn' instead of simply memorizing information. This trend should be leveraged so that children are increasingly empowered to discover how they learn and reproduce the process in every facet of their lives. At the same time, we need to create spaces for children to discuss with each other and learn from one another. They should be afforded the environment where they can disagree, form divergent opinions, and be open to communication.

Experiential and non-silo method:
It was agreed that a crucial method to understanding and embodying a concept is through experiencing it first-hand. The education system should be able to offer the youth exposure to a diverse range of experiences that test a person's ability to exhibit resilience. It was noted that since adversity and unpredictability are undeniable features of our lives, nature presents a great setting for inculcating resilience. The education system needs to acknowledge that fact and design a conducive strategy accordingly.

Also, it was noted that resilience cannot be taught as a stand-alone domain or as a part of a separate value education class. Instead, the approach should be integrated where the notion of resilience is conveyed through sports, arts and domain subjects. Increasingly, educationists are realizing that the silo approach in education does not work and the best method to understand a concept is through getting a well-rounded perspective on it. That is why lateral thinking needs a big push in the education system. The panelists felt that a strong sports curriculum or a robust arts curriculum should feature resilience as one of its major outcomes. At the same time, it is essential that the instructional technique of domain subjects include a process that actively seeks to inculcate resilience. There is a vital need for educationists to rethink curriculum design and implementation to reflect the need of the hour.

Stories:
One of the best ways to introduce, explain and showcase resilience is through stories, be it personal accounts or well-known folktales. Reading books must be encouraged at a very young age because it allows for an individual to experience a wide spectrum of emotions through characters, making her more empathetic and consequently more resilient. The curriculum must find space for inspirational stories, figures and examples. Early exposure to stories and anecdotes rooted in one's culture can help in developing a sense of belonging and inclination towards being firmly grounded. At the same time, children must have the opportunity and space for sharing stories of their own setbacks and personal challenges, and how they overcame it.

Assessment:
A much-deliberated topic during the discussion centered around whether it is possible to effectively measure resilience; if so, how would or should that look like? Panelists noted that the measurement of resilience cannot be performed in absolutes or by assigning it a fixed number rating. The assessment of resilience must be designed by first taking into account diverse types of risks and problems that the youth face today, especially exposure to endless information, a huge increase in competition, and reinvention of standards held for them. It was agreed that the new standard should not be set to compare different youth but rather the 'personal best' of an individual, ensuring that she is not beholden to external perceptions or trends. It was proposed that the benchmark be the individual's own benchmark. However, it was noted that resilience should not be solely measured against only one's own benchmarks, and be completely independent of society's expectations. The balancing act between one's own benchmark and society's expectations could be an essential tool in assessing the level of adaptability and resilience a person possesses.

In charting out one's own benchmark and the notion of 'personal best', we need to ask the youth to think about what resilience means to them and then develop means of measurement, assessment and reporting for themselves and others. At the same time, we need to realize that measuring resilience is not only for reporting purposes but also to be utilized as a vital tool for continual self-assessment. Youth should be able to use this process to form a distinct sense of self, dignity and self-worth, as well as to strategize

techniques to constantly improve themselves.

The educationists, in consultation with the youth and students, need to develop tools and techniques, some of which are individualized while others can be applied to everyone. It is important that these tools are adaptable and reflect the ever-changing times we live in. They should be able to measure the new risks and hazards in order to identify and prepare future tools. At any given point, the question of individual preparedness, community support structures and shifting thresholds will determine how resilience is measured and what tools and techniques are employed. At present, the field of psychometrics may be able to present a workable mode of measuring resilience but it is important that a far contextualized and individualized method is developed. This is where we are at the present. Similar to case studies and strategies of looking at levels of collaboration and trust in management training, we need to come up with a comprehensive yet evolving method of assessing resilience.

CONCLUSION

The panelists strongly felt that resilience is a very important trait, especially in the complex and unpredictable world we live in. Diverse factors come together in a myriad ways to dictate the level of resilience of a person. A discerning mind and a strong value system are paramount to inculcating resilience, along with a strong support system at home, in school and in the community. Since there is a strong rationale for incorporating resilience as a part of the school curriculum, it is crucial that we discuss the salient features that need to be adopted.

In conclusion, the panelists agreed that adversities and mundaneness are a part of life. There are numerous times in everybody's lives when moving ahead seems hard. Anyone can simply give up because that is the easiest thing to do. But to hold it together when everyone else would understand if you fell apart, that is true strength – that is resilience.

Group Photo