

DEVELOP SKILLS OF SUCCESS THROUGH APPLICATION OF GRIT AND GROWTH MINDSET

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Abstract : Positive psychology is new field in Psychology that focuses on study of the strengths that enable individuals and community to thrive. India is a rapidly developing country. To achieve economic prosperity physically and mentally competent youth will be one of the greatest strengths of India. This paper cites many research studies on the two newly developed Positive Psychology concepts, namely 'grit' and 'growth mindset'. The main aim of the paper is to put forth the importance of these two concepts for success and also to analyse how these ideas can be applied in Indian setup. Such an application is the need of the hour as India is facing global competition and challenges. For the application of these ideas the author has generated certain recommendations for application.

Keywords: grit, growth mindset, Indian youth and challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Psychology as a science was mainly concerned with studying mental illness and it has done fairly well with it. The new field of Positive psychology focuses on study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. To be successful and to be on the top in the field we are in is one of the driving force of human beings. The betterment of human life has always been a story of accumulated small successes of individuals and groups. As a nation India wants to develop. The success of India will be crafted by achievements of individuals. The mean age of Indian population will be 29 years in year 2020. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_India) India is having strength of youth. Application of two newly developed concepts from Positive Psychology namely 'grit' and 'growth mindset' will be helpful in developing Indian human capital.

There is no secret formula for success. But research on the character strength of grit by Angela Lee Duckworth has shown those grittier individuals are more successful. Grit is defined as "perseverance and passion for long-term goals." Grit in psychology is a positive, non-cognitive trait based on an individual's passion for a particular long-term goal or endstate coupled with a powerful motivation to achieve their respective objective. Individuals high in grit are able to maintain their determination and motivation over long periods despite experiences with failure and adversity. Their passion and commitment towards the long-term

1 Dr. Angela Lee Duckworth has developed a scale to measure grit and has done a lot of research on grit. The objective is the overriding factor that provides the stamina required to "stay the course" amid challenges and setbacks.

Angela and colleagues have measured grit of people in different settings and have found support suggesting that grit provided incremental predictive validity for education and age above and beyond the Big Five personality traits (Study 2); that higher levels of grit were more highly associated with cumulative grade point average (GPA) in an Ivy league sample when compared to those with lower grit levels ($r = .25, p < .01$; Study 3); that grit predicted retention after their first summer in two classes of cadets at the United States Military Academy (Study 4); and that participants in a National Spelling Bee with higher grit scores typically work harder and longer than less gritty peers, ultimately resulting in better performance. Through all these studies one characteristic emerged as a significant predictor of success. And it wasn't social intelligence nor IQ. It was grit.

So, Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. Grit is having stamina. Grit is sticking with your future, day in, day out, not just for the week, not just for the month, but for years, and working really hard to make that future a reality. Grit is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint. The development of grit in young population will really equip them to strive for success. For a country like India this is very important that teachers, parents and educational institution have to take steps to develop grittier youth. So youth can deal with challenges, setback and will accomplish success.

Then the question arises is how to nurture the character strength of grit. The answer is again provided by another concept from Positive Psychology – ‘growth mindset’. Growth mindset is a simple idea discovered by world-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck in decades of research on achievement and success—a simple idea that makes all the difference.

In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort. They’re wrong.

In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all great people have had these qualities. They understand that no one has ever accomplished great things—not Mozart, Darwin, or Michael Jordan—without years of passionate practice and learning. Dweck, C. S. (2006).

Research done by Dr. Dweck and others shows that growth mindset training begets accomplishment. In one study, it was interesting to note that girls who received the growth mindset training narrowed the gender gap in math (Good, C., Aronson, J., & Inzlicht, M. (2003). In another study it was observed that growth mindset training narrows the racial achievement gap. Aronson and colleagues taught college students a growth mindset and taught the control group about multiple intelligence (don't feel bad if you don't do well in one area, you may still be smart in other areas). There was also a no-training control group. The growth mindset group showed significantly higher grades than the control groups. This was particularly true for African American students, who also showed a sharp increase in their valuing of school and their enjoyment of their academic work. (Aronson, J., Fried, C. B., & Good, C. (2002).

It is also important to know that the growth mindset has been receiving scientific confirmation from cognitive psychology and from neuroscience. For example, neuroscientists tracked students during their teenage years. For many students, they found substantial changes in performance on verbal and non-verbal IQ tests. Using neuroimaging, they found corresponding changes in the density of neurons in the relevant brain areas for these students. In other words, an increase in neuronal connections in the brain accompanied an increase in IQ-test performance, while a decrease in neuronal connections in the brain accompanied a decrease in IQ-test performance. (Ramsden, S., Richardson, F.M and others, (2011)

Students with growth mindset had a very straightforward (and correct) idea of effort — the idea that the harder you work, the more your ability will grow and that even geniuses have had to work hard for their accomplishments. In contrast, the students with the fixed mindset believed that if you worked hard it meant that you didn't have ability, and that things would just come naturally to you if you did. Students with different mindsets also had very different reactions to setbacks. Those with growth mindsets reported that, after a setback in school, they would simply study more or study differently the next time. But those with fixed mindsets were more likely to say that they would feel dumb, study less the next time, and seriously consider cheating. If you feel dumb — permanently dumb — in an academic area, there is no good way to bounce back and be successful in the future. In a growth mindset,

however, you can make a plan of positive action that can remedy a deficiency. (Hong. et al., 1999; Nussbaum and Dweck, 2008)

The compelling research evidence on grit and growth mindset clearly indicates that trying to instil grit and growth mindset in youth is equipping them for success. The application of these two concepts in youth is of phenomenal importance to a country like India with majority of young population. These two ideas can be used in applied manner in many sectors and institutions in India. Following are some recommendations for applications -

Role of family - India's greatest social institution is family. Family provides a very nurturing environment for the little ones to develop. If the importance of grit and growth mindset is conveyed to parents and they are trained to foster the growth mindset from childhood then in coming years India will have beaming young population to take the challenge of developing the country.

Role of research – The gripping evidence for the usefulness of grit and growth mindset for assuring success is mainly from other country. For applying these concepts in Indian scenario lot of research is required. The

research has to answer the questions – what is the present mindset of children and youth in India? How many parents and teachers are trained to develop grit and growth mindset? Which medium and approach will be useful to train parents and teachers for the same? How can it be incorporated in Indian education system?

Role of Government and Funding agencies – To recognise the new emerging area of Positive psychology and make funding and facilities available for research in this area.

Role of media – Media will have to play an active role in spreading these ideas. The research evidence should reach to common people as well as to government to create an atmosphere for application of these ideas.

Role of corporate trainers and consultants – Many young entrepreneur will come up and existing companies will widen their production range with the Indian Government’s policy of make in India. The path for building business will not be easy in today’s competitive world. The training in grit and growth mindset will help to sustain through the challenges and setback. So corporate trainers and consultants also have to prepare training modules for the same.

CONCLUSIONS –

A proper implementation of training in the growth mindset will lead to increase in grittiness in Indian people. This character strength is very essential as Indian youth has to carve out success by facing global competition and environmental challenges.

The field of positive psychology is a new promising field that believes that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within them, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play. There are many more such concepts like grit and growth mindset that will drive us towards societal and individual wellbeing. These ideas should spread in common people as they are applied in nature and have the capacity to enhance achievement and satisfaction from all human endeavours.

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