

---

**Survival and adaptation In Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book***

---

**Krishika.R.Wadhwa<sup>1</sup>**

III-BA English Literature

Sri Ramakrishna College Of Arts & Science

Co-Author: **Dr .M. Mary Velanganni<sup>2</sup>**

Assistant Professor,

Sri Ramakrishna College Of Arts & Science

---

**Article Received:** 15/01/2025

**Article Accepted:** 19/02/2025

**Published Online:** 21/02/2025

**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2025.7.02.282

---

**Abstract:**

This paper explores Rudyard Kipling's philosophies on survival and adaptation through the lens of "The Jungle Book." By analyzing the novel's characters, settings, and plot developments, this study reveals Kipling's perspectives on resilience, human nature, and the interconnectedness of species. This research demonstrates how Kipling's narrative offers timeless insights into the universal struggle for survival and the necessity of adaptation.

**Keywords:** Survival, Adaptation, Resilience, Human Nature, the Jungle Book, Rudyard Kipling.

**Introduction:**

Literature, in its broadest sense, encompasses any collection of written work. However, it is more narrowly defined as writings specifically considered an art form, including novels, plays, and poems. This definition has evolved in recent centuries to embrace print and digital writing and oral literature that has been transcribed. Literature can assume social, psychological, spiritual, or political roles as a method of recording, preserving, and transmitting knowledge and entertainment. It is a powerful medium for aesthetic expression, social commentary, historical record, and personal reflection, reflecting the depth of human imagination and experience.

Rudyard Kipling, an influential English writer born in British India, is renowned for works such as *The Jungle Book*. His stories include *The Jungle Book* (1894) and its sequel, *The Second Jungle Book* (1895), as well as poems like "If---" and "The White Man's Burden," reflect his experiences and observations of colonial India. Kipling, was among the United Kingdom's most popular writers in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries,.

Kipling's literary contributions, marked by his innovative storytelling and exploration of complex themes, earned him the Noble Prize in Literature in 1907. His works remain influential, offering insights into the interplay between human and natural world's colonialism, as well as identity.

His poems include "Mandalay" (1890), "Gunga Din" (1890), "The gods of the copybook headings" (1919), "The White Man's Burden" (1899), and "If" (1910). He is seen as an innovator in the art of the short story.

Survival and adaptation are closely related ideas that are vital for living humans to grow in their environment. Survival refers to the ability of a human to maintain vital or essential functions and to stay alive despite facing various challenges, dangers, and adverse conditions. It involves the ability to acquire resources, protect oneself, and maintain homeostasis.

The term Survival and adaptation was coined by Charles Darwin. On the other hand, adaptation is the process through which the living humansst their behavior, physiology, or structure to suit the environment better. This improves the chances of survival and reproduction in that specific environment. Adaptation can be physical, such as the development of camouflage or the growth of more substantial limbs;; behavioral, such as migration or hibernation; or physiological,, such as the ability to regulate body temperature.

Kipling portrays survival and adaptation through Mowgli's journey in the jungle. When Mowgli faces numerous challenges, from Shere Khan's attacks to harsh jungle conditions, Mowgli tries to adapt to the jungle and survives. Mowgli also uses his intelligence and creativity to outsmart predators and to find food. "The law of the jungle, which never orders anything without a reason, forbids every beast to eat man except when he is killing to show his children how to kill" (*The Jungle Book 07*)

Kipling interprets Adapting or perishing as nature's inexorable imperative and as a fundamental principle of survival and success. He sees adaptation as a crucial aspect of survival, not just in the natural world but also in human life. He believed that every individual must adapt to their environment, circumstances, and challenges to thrive. Kipling would interpret "inexorable imperative" as an unyielding and absolute necessity. He emphasizes that adaptation is not a choice but a requirement for survival, imposed by nature itself. He also sees this phrase as an emphasizing and timelessness of the principle. He also believed that adaptation has always been essential for survival throughout human history and in naturalnatural. Kipling connects this with Mowgli; he says that Mowgli's survival depends on his ability to adapt to the jungle and its creatures. He quotes truthfully and emphasizes

the absolute necessity of adaptation for survival and success in an ever-changing world. "Adapt or perish, now as ever, is nature's inexorable imperative" (*The Outline of History*, H. G. Wells, 491)

Kipling pictures the art of survival, which, which is a combination of adaptability, creativity, and determination, as a concise and accurate summary of the essential skills for thriving in a challenging world. He emphasizes the importance of adjusting to new situations, environments, and circumstances and believes that adaptability is crucial for survival, as seen in his stories like *The Jungle Book*, where Mowgli adapts to the jungle. One can also see that creativity, a vital component of survival, enables individuals to find innovative solutions to challenges. He often featured resourceful characters in his stories, like Kim, who uses his creativity to navigate different cultures. Kipling stresses the importance of determination and perseverance in adversity. He believed that determination drives individuals to keep going, even when faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges. "Art of survival is a combination of adaptability, creativity, and determination" (*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey, 234)

Kipling pictures survival as not just about being strong, bright wise, and insightful observation. Kipling agrees that physical strength is important but not sufficient for survival. He also believes that intelligence, cunning, and cleverness are equally essential for navigating challenges. Mowgli's survival depends on his intelligence, adaptability, and resourcefulness rather than physical strength. Kipling shows how Mowgli outsmarts the predators and rivals, demonstrating the importance of intelligence in survival. Kipling highlights the importance of practical wisdom and cleverness in survival situations. He believes in the power of knowledge and understanding in navigating the world. He would also see intelligence as a key factor in survival, enabling individuals to make informed decisions and adapt to changing circumstances. "Survival is not just about being strong, it is about being smart" (*The Kid Who Climbed Everest*, Bear Grylls, 123)

Kipling says that the capacity to adapt is the ultimate key to survival in an ever-changing world. In today's fast-paced and unpredictable environment, it is able to adjust to new circumstances, which is crucial for success. Adaptability allows us to respond effectively to challenges, as well as as well as creativity, resilience, and resourcefulness. Kipling says that by being open to new experiences, we can transform potential roadblocks into opportunities for growth. He says that, in nature, species that adapt to their environments are more likely to survive and evolve. Similarly, in our personal and professional lives, cultivating adaptability enables us to stay ahead of the curve, innovate, and achieve our goals. In essence, the ability to adapt is the most critical survival skill,

empowering us to navigate life's twists and turns with confidence, agility, and resilience. By harnessing this ability,, we can transform challenges into opportunities, ensuring our continued growth, success, and survival in an ever-changingever-changing world. "The ability to adapt is the most important survival skill" (*The 33 strategies of war* Robert Greene, 178)

As I gaze upon the jungle's vast expanse, I realize adaptability is key to inheritance. Not the strongest, most cunning, or resilient will prevail, but the most adaptable. Adaptability sets existence ablaze, stirs evolution's waters, and redefines our destiny. In this unforgiving yet majestic realm, adaptability is the greatest gift. It allows one to bend, to yield, and to transform. Like the jungle, one must be flexible, resilient, and resourceful. For in adaptability lies the secret to thriving in an unpredictable world – a world that demands we adjust, innovate and evolve to survive. "Adaptability is the essence of life" (*On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin, 342).

Kipling's *The Jungle Book* discusses survival and adaptation as the central themes that illustrate the natural laws governing the animal world and Mowgli's journey of growth and self-discovery. The theme explores how Mowgli, a human child raised by wolves, must learn to adapt to the jungle's ways to survive. He learns the languages of different animals, understands the laws that govern the jungle, and becomes part of the animal community. Each animal in the jungle has developed specific traits and behaviors that ensure their survival. Bagheera,, the panther,, relies on stealth and strength, while Baloo the bear uses his knowledge of the jungle's laws. Shere Khan, the tiger, represents the dangers of the jungle, using fear and cunning to survive. The key lesson Kipling conveys through these themes is that survival in any environment—whether in the wild jungle or the human world—requires understanding, respect for life's rules, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. The "Law of the Jungle" teaches that life is about balance, cooperation, and respecting the natural order.

**References:**

**Primary source:**

Kipling, Rudyard. *The Jungle Book*, Pegasus Publishing, New Delhi

**Secondary source:**

Covey Stephen's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*,

Darwin Charles. *On the origin of species*.

<https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.46292>

Greene, Robert. *The 33 Strategies of War*

[https://pustaka.kemhan.go.id/index.php?p=show\\_detail&id=14567](https://pustaka.kemhan.go.id/index.php?p=show_detail&id=14567)

Grylls, Bear. *The Kid Who Climbed Everest*:

Impact Factor:8.175 (SJIF) SP Publications ;Vol-7, Issue-2(February), 2025

## **International Journal Of English and Studies(IJOES)**

ISSN:2581-8333 An International Peer-Reviewed and Refereed Journal

---

<https://doi.org/10.1049/et.2011.0827>

H. G. Wells *The Outline of History*. (1921). *Journal of Education*, 93(3), 64–64.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/002205742109300306>

### **Citation:**

**Krishika.R.Wadhwa & Dr .M. Mary Velanganni .”** Survival and adaptation In Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*” *International Journal Of English and Studies (IJOES)*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2025, pp. 278-282. DOI: 10.47311/IJOES.2025.7.02.282.