

## **Qualitative study of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on level of resilience of small-scale business owners.**

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to study the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on the level of resilience of the small-scale business. The covid 19 induced lockdown in India, was a huge economic shock. The small-scale business owners not only suffered business loss, also faced heightened risk of financial loss as well as personal losses, increased level of stress, reduced income, which tested their resilience level. This research evaluates how uncertainty and stressors impact their ability to adapt to unusual predicaments, life stressors and to bounce back from it. Purposive sampling method was used for selecting 10 samples of small-scale business – home based business in Nashik. The data was collected with semi structure interview, and then followed by a self-prepared questionnaire and a standardize test. The study reveals that the proprietors reflect a promising level of resilience and develop better coping strategies and demonstrate adaptive behaviour in the face of difficulties.

**Keywords: Pandemic, Resilience, Small scale business.**

### **Introduction:**

The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest global humanitarian challenge after WW II. The covid 19 pandemic in India is a part of the world-wide pandemic of corona virus disease 2019 caused by sever acute respiratory syndrome corona virus. The covid 19 induced lockdown in India, was a huge economic shock, and has dire and immediate consequences of for business sector, especially those with micro, small and contributing medium enterprises, who are about 30% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) at elevated risk because of covid-19. Studies and surveys showed that approximately 95% firms were impacted negatively due to national lockdown imposed in April 2020, 70% of businesses remained disrupted till August 2020. Even after progressive unlocking, reports suggest that almost 40% businesses remained interrupted till the end of February 2022 (Dr.Agyeya Tiwari, October, 21 2021, times of India). Beyond business loss the proprietors faced heightened risk of financial loss as well as personal losses, increased level of stress, reduced income, which tested their resilience level. According to American Psychological Association (2014) Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. A number of factors contribute to how well people adapt to adversities, predominant among them (a) the ways in which individuals view and engage with the world, (b) the availability and quality of social resources, and (c) specific coping strategies. In business setting, this can be applied to abilities to manage anything from a though work load to sudden changes, challenges that are an inevitable part of life. Resilience is an important skill in the context of work. A resilient individual behaves as a socially competent person that satisfies optimally the need of affection, respect, and social life, in turn, handles power better, achieves goals, makes better decision and can easily procure a happy, productive and a healthy life (Salgado, 2005). Resilience is also a key element in well-being. It refers to the process of adapting well-being in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats and even significant source of stress

**PROBLEM STATEMENT:** To study the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on level of resilience of small-scale business owners.

### **Purpose of the study:**

This study/research is been conducted by the researcher to understand how covid 19 pandemic has impact on the level of resilience of the small scale business owners. And also evaluates how uncertainty and stressors impact their ability to adapt to unusual predicaments, life stressors and to bounce back from it. It is important to practice resilient behavior as resilience is often defined as the ability to bounce back from negative events it also depends on the ability to return to a state of equilibrium after a period of adversity. Resilience appears to improve the proprietor's overall well-being and the ability to self-regulate and improve numerous outcomes for both business and individual.

### **Concepts under study:**

- **Pandemic:** An epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people. An epidemic is a disease a large number of populations, community, or region. In simple words pandemic is an epidemic something that travels. The World Health Organization declared outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020, and a pandemic on 11 March 2020. Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious. Disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment.

- **Resilience:**

The definition of resilience has evolved throughout the years. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines resilience as “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors.” Older research from 2004 states that resilience “in the face of loss or potential trauma is more common than is often believed, and that there are multiple and sometimes unexpected pathways to resilience.” A 2009 research article defines resilience as a process and describes the term as the “development of competence despite severe or pervasive adversity.” More recently in 2018, research recognized that resilience, as it relates to trauma and coping, is not well-defined and that its applications should vary based on the individual. As much as resilience involves “bouncing back” from these difficult experiences, it can also involve profound personal growth. According to Ann Masten resilience is “a class of phenomenon characterized by good outcomes in spite of serious threats adaptation or development”. Ryff and Singer define resilience “maintenance recovery or improvement in mental or physical health following challenge. Resilient responses to adversity are common across span of life.

### **Small scale business:**

Small businesses are independently owned organizations that require less capital and fewer work forces and less or no machinery. These businesses are ideally suited to operate on a small scale to serve a local community and to provide profits to the company owners. Small businesses are either services or retail operations like grocery stores, medical stores, trades people, bakeries and small manufacturing units. In India where unemployment is a serious issue, small business gains a special position in the industrial structure because of their ability to utilize labor and create employment. India's a developing country; every small-scale industry plays a massive role in the Indian economy. Apart from employing cores of people, it has the added benefit of minimum capital requirements. The government also offers several tax benefits to SSI for this purpose. As a very important segment of the Indian economy, the micro, small, and medium-sized venture sectors have arisen, making a vital contribution to the social-economic growth of a country is focused on macro and small-medium size Enterprises it also counts for 45% of overall factory output and 40% of total export and provides a vast contributor to GDP.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

Due to a lack of prior research on this subject the data produced from this study will be used to show how resilient people are engaged in more forward- looking and adaptive behavior when faced with the stressful situation like pandemic or lockdown, which thus assert that resilience is an essential personal resource that small scale business owners can leverage to better interpret and respond to the stressful situations like pandemic or lockdown.

### **Objectives of study:**

- To study the impact of COVID 19 on resilience of small-scale business owners.
- To study the level of resilience in small scale business during pandemic.

### **Review of literature:**

Anna Panzeri, Marco Bertamini, et.al, Factors impacting resilience as a result of exposure to COVID-19: The ecological resilience model, by research article published by Plos One, August (2021), using the ecological resilience model, the researchers examined this factors promoting or hindering resilience in the COVID-19 pandemic. Resilient individuals had low levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms; whereas low resilient individuals had high levels of depression and anxiety symptoms. Results that were found were as follows: resilient people had no exposure to COVID-19 whereas non-resilient people were either exposed to COVID-19, death of a near one, isolation, etc.

Bruce W. Smith, Jeanne Dalen, Kathryn Wiggins, Erin, Tooley, Paulette Christopher & Jennifer Bernard, September 2008, the brief resilience scale: Assessing the ability to bounce back, International Journal of

Behavioral Medicine. Previous resilience measures assess resources that may promote resilience rather than recovery, resistance, adaptation, or thriving. Purpose: To test a new brief resilience scale. Method: The brief resilience scale (BRS) was created to assess the ability to bounce back or recover from stress. Its psychometric characteristics were examined in four samples, including two student samples and samples with cardiac and chronic pain patients. Results: The BRS was reliable and measured as a unitary construct. It was predictably related to personal characteristics, social relations, coping, and health in all samples. It was negatively related to anxiety, depression, negative affect, and physical symptoms when other resilience measures and optimism, social support, and Type D personality (high negative affect and high social inhibition) were controlled. Conclusion: The BRS is a reliable means of assessing resilience as the ability to bounce back or recover from stress and may provide unique and important information about people coping with health-related stressors.

Shae-Leigh Cynthia Vella, Nagesh B. Pai, January 2019, Research Gate, A theoretical review of psychological resilience: Defining resilience and resilience research over the decades, This article reviews definitions of resilience over time. Although there is no single agreed definition; resilience is commonly described as the ability to bounce back. The risk of stress and negative life events in triggering mental illness has long been recognized. This article provides a review of definitions of resilience and resilience related phenomena as well as a historical review of the focus of resilience research across the decades in order to inform future research and theorizing. The article concludes with recommendations to researchers to explicitly define their definition and conceptualization of the construct as well as the imperative to move towards a united view of the construct of resilience. Further, it is clear that research on resilience has progressed and evolved over the decades however this does not denote that research in the area is complete. As such researchers should still seek to understand the complexities of resilience, how to build resilience in different populations, or in individuals experiencing similar adversities.

**Sample:**

Purposive sampling method was used for collection of samples, with a sample size of 10 small scale business scale -home based businesses in Nashik.

**Sampling method:**

For this present research qualitative research was used, where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviours. The qualitative research methods allow for in-depth and further probing and questioning of respondents based on their responses, where the interviewer/researcher also tries to understand their motivation and feelings. Understanding how your audience takes decisions can help derive conclusions in market research.

**Tools:** A standardized test and a self-prepared questionnaire were used to gather data and to get the conclusion of the statement of the research. A self-prepared questionnaire was conducted which consists of 10 items using five-points Likert scale, and has two-open ended questions. The objectives of test - resilience, adaptability, optimism. Brief resilience scale- The Brief Resilience Scale was developed purely to assess the concept of resilience under its original etymology or measure of ability. (Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), 2019.) The Brief-Resilience Scale intends to measure one’s ability to bounce back or recover from stress. According to Smith et.al. (2008), these notions of ‘bouncing back’ and recovering from stress are closest to the original meaning of resilience. Scoring is measured on a 5-point scale, adding the responses on all six statements with possible ranges from 6-30. According to Smith, et al., (2008), the Brief Resilience Scale is a reliable tool for assessing factors of resilience in terms of the ability to recover and bounce back from stress. Brief Resilience Scale provides both unique and important information about people and how they cope with health-related stressors.

**Observation:** An observation on the statements that were given in the self-prepared questionnaire.

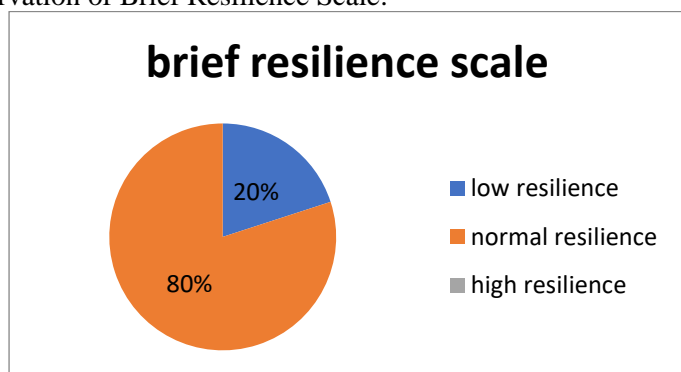
Sr.No.	STATEMENTS	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGRE E	NEUTRA L	STRONGY AGREE	AGREE
1	I was able to focus on what I could control and let go the rest.			20%	60%	20%
2	I could not tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.	10%	30%	10%	40%	10%
3	I was able to deal with difficulties/ restrictions imposed on market.	-	20%	10%	40%	30%
4	I was upset because things were happening unexpectedly.	20%	20%	-	40%	20%

5	I was able to adapt to the culture of new normal.	10%	-	20%	30%	40%
6	I could calm myself and focus on taking useful actions, during chaotic situations like lockdown.	10%	20%	-	50%	20%
7	I was able to create a work life balance and practice self-care.	-	-	30%	50%	20%
8	I was able to recover from losses and setbacks caused during the lockdown.	-	10%	10%	40%	40%
9	I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.	-	-	20%	50%	20%
10	I've learned from covid 19 experience.	-	-	-	90%	10%

### Interpretation:

Most of the study suggests that the pandemic was an abrupt occurrence; people were not prepared for this sudden change that was coming up their way. However, most of the participants expressed that adapting to change should be an organic process, and everyone should take it at their own pace. Pandemic taught them the importance of physical as well as mental health. And also practicing stress management, self-care, yoga and keeping themselves updated with new technologies and techniques is necessary for their business growth as well as personal growth. Preparing yourself for upcoming challenges and change is essential.

Observation of Brief Resilience Scale:



### Interpretation:

In the above study 80% of people scored normal resilience, resilience is a multidimensional characteristic that changes over time people with normal resilience to respond more healthily to challenges—we become more likely to grow, develop better coping-strategies, and demonstrate adaptive behaviors in the face of difficulties, 20% of the participants level of resilience is low, person have face difficult to cope with the stressors and major life disruptions.

### Discussion:

This research studied the impact of pandemic on the level of resilience of 10 small scale business, using a semi structure interview and a standardize test brief resilience scale. As per the study it was observed that the resilience level of 70% of the people was high as they could bounce back from the tough situations and it was easy for them to get back to normal. The participant with high resilience scored on normal resilience scale on brief resilience scale. They were able to ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from the stressors and major life changes. A positive attitude was observed in the interview. The participants' responses were "even though lockdown was a sudden happening and uncertain situations were faced, an optimistic view is important", "staying focused on the solution rather than crying over the problem". In the study, 30% of the participants had comparatively a low resilience, these participants scored on low resilience in brief resilience scale, as they were focusing on the negative situations and emotions and hence it was not easy for them to bounce back from the pandemic situations. Less persistence was observed in the interview. Overall, most participants could handle their businesses during the pandemic, as they were optimistic, and overcame the challenges that the pandemic brought them, while some of the participants could not face the

tough challenges during the pandemic. The restrictions imposed during the pandemic were stressful for some participants while many prevailed during this situation and had their business under their control.

**Conclusion:**

The research study gives an understanding to how pandemic has an impact over the level of resilience of small-scale owners in stressed events, leading to pitfalls and improvements.

**Limitations and Suggestions:**

The sample size was only limited to home-based business owners in Nasik. In this study co morbidity was not considered a quantitative study can be conducted on the psychological resilience and small-scale business using other clinical tools. A boarder study can do on a large set-up on small scale business and resilience in difficult area.

**References:**

Anna Panzeri, Marco Bertamini, et.al, Factors impacting resilience as a result of exposure to COVID-19: The ecological resilience model, by research article published by Plos.

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Shea-Leigh Cynthia Vela, Nagesh B. Pai, January 2019, Research Gate, A theoretical review of psychological resilience: Defining resilience and resilience research over the decades.