

Chapter 11

Factors Influencing Sustainable Resilience of Social Enterprises During the Different Phases of the COVID–19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Crisis and resilience are two sides of the same coin. Each crisis is unique, and its occurrence has impelled businesses to face a different set of limitations and prospects. The pandemic has offered many difficulties to social entrepreneurs, especially from emerging economies like India. The aim of the chapter is to analyze the factors of sustainable resilience that were implemented by the social entrepreneurs. The factors of sustainable resilience are identified through rigorous literature reviews along with their sub-factors. The identified key factors are examined by a qualitative approach. Interviews were carried out with Indian social entrepreneurs and their team members. The factors and sub-factors of sustainable resilience during the various phases of the crisis are established by content analysis. The study explains the role of the factors identified during the different phases of the crisis. This is one of the primary studies on sustainable resilience in the context of social enterprises which identifies the factors leading to sustainable resilience during adversity.

INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurs impact society by creating social value. The economies of developing countries like India significantly depend on social enterprises, so making such social enterprises sustainable will help achieve the sustainable development goals of the nations (Saqib and Zhang, 2021). Sustainability broadly covers environmental, social, and economic aspects, and this concept has guided social enterprises in improving their sustainability performance (Govindan *et al.*, 2020). Since the operations of social enterprises depend on several internal and external business environment factors, the implementation

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of sustainable resilience practices at each level becomes a challenge (Saqib and Zhang, 2021). Further, due to limited resources and poor infrastructure, social entrepreneurs face many challenges in adopting sustainable practices (Hong *et al.*, 2021). Apart from this, social entrepreneurs also need to improve the flow of information, materials, and funds with the other supply chain entities to gain sustainable resilience (Kamboj and Rana, 2021). The complexity of the decisions in the supply chain during a pandemic can be resolved only by integrating sustainable resilience in the supply chain. Social enterprises need to recuperate from disruptions and fulfill their social, environmental, and economic function.

The COVID-19 pandemic has distressingly impacted many industries (Chowdhury *et al.*, 2021), and social enterprises are not an exception. The concept of sustainability requires immediate attention from all types of organizations in today's scenario. While many companies have realized and accepted the importance of sustainability, implementing sustainable business practices remains a considerable challenge (Moktadir *et al.*, 2020), especially for social entrepreneurs. Among the various enterprises, the challenge is more demanding for the social enterprises as they use obsolete methods and techniques and have resource constraints. Despite the limitations, social entrepreneurs have been implementing the necessary changes to make the business processes more sustainable and resilient.

The term 'resilience' has become very prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic in recent months. Resilience is the capability of a system, or individual, to handle change and continue to grow. Sustainability deals with the capacity to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet future generations' needs. The lack of resilience among the social enterprises will pose a threat to their existence and the vulnerable groups they work with. It will ultimately lead to their struggle for recovery. When the resilience of a social enterprise is strengthened, it will be well-prepared to endure shocks and recuperate more rapidly and at less cost. Social enterprises face several critical situations daily. Considering the number and magnitude of such problems, a social enterprise's ability to resist, absorb and become more robust is the critical differentiator. In other words, the ability to overcome the impact and recover from the effect of a crisis in the short term is essential to building resilience over a long time. It will develop the sustainable resilience of a social enterprise. This is the key to enabling a social enterprise to become proactive and take forward-looking steps for sustainability.

The COVID-19 pandemic is unique as it is more severe and has a more dynamic impact than previous epidemic outbreaks (Haren and Simchi-Levi, 2020; Koonin, 2020). It has most badly affected the supply chain aspects of the businesses due to the extending lockdowns and restrictions on movement. About 94% of the Fortune 1000 companies have faced substantial disruption in their supply chains as the pandemic has impacted all the members of the supply chain (Fortune, 2020; Gunessee and Subramanian, 2020; Paul and Chowdhury, 2020). To understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from the supply chain perspective, researchers have focussed on assessing the role of technology in adopting resilience strategies, resilience strategies for managing the effects of the pandemic, and recovery and sustainability issues in the pandemic (Chowdhury *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, the existing literature has mostly explored sustainability and resilience separately as two different research areas (Fahimnia *et al.*, 2019). However, the need of the hour is to look at the two concepts in an integrated manner i.e. as a single concept of sustainable resilience.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, has presented a formidable challenge not only for commercial enterprises but also for social enterprises, it should be addressed by exploring the concept of sustainable resilience. Though the integration between sustainability and resilience is still relatively underexplored, especially in the context of social enterprises, it has been found that sustainability and resilience influence each other significantly (Fahimnia *et al.*, 2019; D'Adamo and Rosa, 2020; D'Adamo and Lupi,

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