

## Family Resilience During Covid-19: A Study of Adaptation and Well-Being Among Social Work Students

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**Abstract:** The concept of resilience, the ability to withstand and rebound from crisis and adversity, has valuable potential for research, intervention, and prevention approaches to strengthen couples and families. One of the crises the present family faces is COVID-19, and the lockdown in this situation, resilience is something that the family requires to cope with such crises. The impact of COVID-19 on family resilience was studied in this research paper by assessing the families' socioeconomic status and the family resilience shown by the families during the lockdown. The study participants were college students in the families of Peermade Taluk of the Idukki district. The results show a statistically significant increase in the target group's family resilience level. The study helped to gather evidence related to the resilience exhibited by the family. Studying the variables of family resilience enables us to identify the level of impact of COVID-19 on the well-being of families. It also helped to understand the family relationships and dynamics during this period. This study will be helpful in the future as a reference for family social workers and researchers.

**Keywords:** Lockdown and COVID-19; Cope Inventory; Economic Difficulties; Pandemic and Family Resilience; Global Crisis and Lockdown; Family Communication; Problem Solving.

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### 1. Introduction

Families worldwide often encounter various challenges, ranging from natural disasters to economic difficulties, which can significantly impact their well-being [1]. Among these challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as a particularly formidable crisis, testing the resilience of families globally [9]. Family resilience refers to the capacity of a family to cope with adversity, adapt, and emerge stronger from challenging situations [32]. It is not merely about surviving difficulties but thriving in the face of them, maintaining unity, warmth, and support that enables family members to overcome obstacles collectively [2]. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented disruptions to everyday life [29]. Originating in Wuhan, China, in late 2019, the virus quickly spread worldwide, leading to widespread illness, death, and significant social and economic upheaval [24]. Governments worldwide implemented lockdowns and social distancing measures to control the virus's spread, leading to job losses, business closures, disruptions in education, and increased stress and anxiety levels [21]. These sudden and severe changes have placed immense pressure on families, challenging their ability to maintain cohesion and support during an extended crisis [3]. The pandemic's psychological toll and economic hardships have made family resilience an essential research and policy development focus [31].

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For several reasons, understanding family resilience in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic is crucial [9]. First, resilient families are better equipped to navigate crises, supporting each other through hardships and emerging from them with strengthened bonds. Key factors contributing to family resilience include effective communication, a positive outlook, strong familial bonds, and access to external resources and support systems [2]. These elements help families to remain adaptable and resourceful, enabling them to manage stress and recover more quickly from adversity.

Research into family resilience has demonstrated that families with these qualities are more likely to thrive during times of crisis. For example, a family's belief system significantly influences how its members perceive and respond to challenges [5]. Those who view adversity as an opportunity for growth are more likely to develop resilience. Similarly, organizational patterns within a family, such as flexibility and connectedness, contribute to its ability to adapt to changing circumstances [2]. Communication within the family and with external support networks is vital in building resilience.

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is urgent to examine how these resilience factors have played out in families over the past few years [16]. The present study seeks to explore the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on families in Turkey, focusing on how resilience has influenced their ability to cope with and adapt to the challenges posed by the pandemic. By investigating these dynamics, the study aims to provide insights to inform the development of targeted interventions and policies to support families during crises. Understanding how family resilience operates in this context will contribute to broader knowledge about the mechanisms that help families navigate and thrive in adversity, offering valuable guidance for future global crises [28].

This study, therefore, not only contributes to the existing literature on family resilience but also provides practical implications for policymakers and practitioners seeking to enhance the resilience of families during times of crisis [10]. As the world continues to grapple with the ongoing effects of the pandemic, strengthening family resilience remains a critical priority for ensuring the well-being of individuals and communities [11]. The findings from this research will help shape strategies aimed at bolstering the ability of families to adapt and thrive in the face of future challenges.

## **2. Literature Review**

The concept of family resilience has evolved from individual resilience theories and has been extensively studied by family system experts. Walsh [29] redefined the idea of a "normal" healthy family, moving away from deficit-based perspectives that had previously dominated psychology. Instead of focusing solely on problems, Walsh [29] [30] emphasized the competence-based and strength-based paradigms of family resilience. This approach views resilience as a family's ability to recover from adversity by surviving and becoming stronger and more resourceful. Walsh [29] extended this conceptualization to include the potential for personal and relational growth following adversity, suggesting that families can transform and thrive after facing challenges.

Casmini [4] conceptualized family resilience as the ability of a family to navigate and thrive in the face of difficulties and crises by utilizing behavioural patterns and functional abilities. Similarly, Chapin [6] described family resilience as the process by which a family adapts and thrives both in the short and long term when confronted with adversity. They highlighted that resilient families respond to stressful situations uniquely, influenced by developmental levels, risk and protective variables, and shared family beliefs. Choolayil and Putran [7] later defined family resilience as an adaptive process that enables families to function effectively despite significant hardship and catastrophe.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought renewed attention to the concept of family resilience. Prime et al. [23] explored families' risk and resilience processes during the pandemic, focusing on family well-being. Their qualitative study highlighted how the social disruptions caused by COVID-19 have impacted children's adaptation through a cascade of effects on caregiver well-being and family dynamics. The study underscored the pandemic as a global crisis threatening public health, economic stability, and family well-being [12].

Ramadhana [25] conducted a quantitative study using survey data to assess families' emotional responses and resilience during the COVID-19 quarantine. The study covered various aspects of family life, including belief systems, organizational patterns, and communication, which are crucial components of family resilience. The research provided insights into how family structures and environments influence resilience, emphasizing the importance of effective communication and a positive outlook in maintaining family resilience during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The literature suggests that family resilience is a dynamic process that allows families to adapt, grow, and thrive in adversity [13]. The COVID-19 pandemic has further demonstrated the importance of family resilience as families continue to navigate the ongoing challenges posed by the crisis. Understanding the factors contributing to family resilience can help develop interventions and policies to strengthen families during and after global crises [14].

### 3. Methodology

This study is designed to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on family resilience, particularly among college students in Peermade Taluk, Idukki District. Given the profound and far-reaching effects of the pandemic, a descriptive research design was employed to systematically explore and document the various dimensions of family resilience during this unprecedented time. Descriptive research was chosen because it allows for a thorough examination of the current state of family resilience, enabling the researchers to capture the complex and multifaceted ways families have responded to the challenges posed by the pandemic [15].

This study prudently considers a particular demographic, the BSW and MSW students of Peermade Taluk, Idukki District. This population was considered because they are students and a part of families who likely will feel acute changes in their family dynamics or impact on resilience to the pandemic. The research considered the most efficient sample size to achieve a representative overview of this student population in that area [17]. A stratified sampling technique was employed to ensure that the sample accurately reflects the diversity within the student population [18]. This method was chosen because it allows for the inclusion of different subgroups within the population, such as BSW and MSW students, ensuring that both groups are proportionately represented in the sample. Stratified sampling enhances the precision and reliability of the study's findings by reducing sampling bias and ensuring that variations within the population are adequately captured [19].

The survey method was used for data collection as it is appropriate for the descriptive type of research. A structured questionnaire standardized by the Family Resilience Assessment Scale (FRAS) created by Ciotti et al. [8] was used as a primary data collection instrument [20]. A validated tool known as FRAS has been used in research to measure different aspects of family resilience. The authors developed the questionnaire to cover all the constructs affecting family resilience, including strong bonds, communication and problem-solving capacity, and abilities such as utilizing socioeconomic resources =, keeping a hopeful, positive look or optimism-connectedness spirituality [22].

Before administering the questionnaire, a pre-test and a pilot study were conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument. The pre-test involved administering the questionnaire to a small, representative subset of the population to identify potential questions or format issues. The pilot study, conducted on a slightly larger scale, further tested the questionnaire's effectiveness in capturing the intended data. Adjustments were made to the questionnaire based on the feedback from these preliminary studies to ensure that it accurately and effectively measured the variables of interest [26].

A questionnaire was then distributed to the specific respondents using a mobile unit, and data were collected for some time so that all respondents had enough time to complete the survey. Closed-ended questions were also asked, which generated quantitative data and several open-ended free-text responses to allow respondents to provide more detailed explanations and state their viewpoints. Using both types of questions allowed researchers to collect data suitable for statistical analysis and added qualitative detail, contributing to a richer understanding of family resilience amid the pandemic [27].

Once the data were collected, they were subjected to rigorous statistical analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were calculated to provide a clear overview of the data. Paired sample t-tests were conducted to compare the levels of family resilience before and after the lockdown, specifically examining changes in communication, problem-solving skills, the utilization of social and economic resources, maintaining a positive outlook, family connectedness, and spirituality. These statistical tests were chosen because they allow for the assessment of whether there are significant differences in these variables over time. The analysis aimed to observe patterns and trends in the data, including, but not limited to, describing how families accommodated the adversity brought on by COVID-19. These analyses were intended to help in the conclusion around pandemic-related changes and of different weights considering facilitators or barriers that might have increased/decreased.

### 4. Result

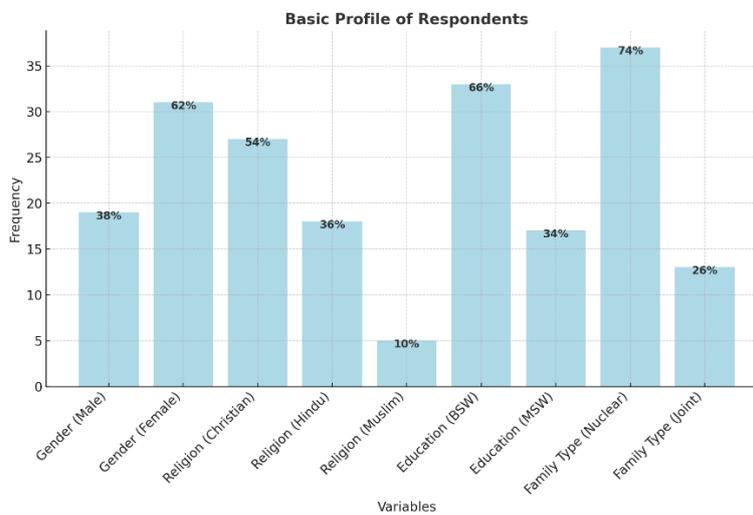
The study consisted of 50 respondents belonging to BSW MSW courses in Peermade Taluk in Idukki District, and the study revealed that most of the respondents were female, i.e. (62%) were female students, and the remaining (38%) were male (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Basic profile of the respondents

Variable	Frequency and percent
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	19 (38%)
Female	31 (62%)

<b>Religion</b>	
Christian	27 (54%)
Hindu	18 (36%)
Muslim	5 (10%)
<b>Education Qualification</b>	
BSW	33 (66%)
MSW	17 (34%)
<b>Type of Family</b>	
Nuclear	37 (74%)
Joint	13 (26%)

According to the study (54%) were Christian, (36%) were Hindu and rest of (10%) were belong to Muslim religion. Most of the respondents of this study have a Bachelor of Social Work (66%), and (34%) were studying for a Master of Social Work. The current study states that the total respondents (74%) belong to the Nuclear Family, and the rest (26%) belong to the Joint Family (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Basic Profile of Respondents

#### 4.1. Analysing Family Communication and Problem Solving

Table 2 gives information about paired sample statistics of Family Communication and problem-solving before and after the lockdown and the paired difference between family communication and problem-solving. The mean value of family communication and problem-solving skills before lockdown is 23.64, and the mean value of family communication and problem-solving skills after lockdown is 27.70. A paired sample t-test is carried out. The mean value of the paired difference is -4.060.

**Table 2:** Family Communication and Problem Solving, Before and After Lockdown

Variable	Mean	SD	Paired differences		T value	Df	P value
			Mean	N			
Family Communication and Problem-Solving Before Lockdown	23.64	6.114	-4.060	50	-4.475	49	.000
Family Communication and Problem-Solving After Lockdown	27.70	3.541					

The number of total respondents is 50. The p-value of this variable is .000, which is less than 0.001, which means that there is a statistically significant difference between each variable's value before and after the lockdown. Therefore, there is an increase in family communication and problem-solving. It can be concluded that there is a statistical difference in family communication and problem-solving before and after lockdown. Thus, it says there is a statistically significant difference in the mean of both variables, meaning the families' communication patterns and problem-solving skills improved during COVID-19.

#### 4.2. Analysing Utilization of Social and Economic Resources

Table 3 explains the paired sample and the paired difference in utilization of socio and economic resources before and after the lockdown. The mean value of utilization of social and economic resources before lockdown is 13.10, and the mean value of utilization of social and economic resources after lockdown is 15.10. A paired sample t-test is carried out. The mean value of the paired difference is -2.000. The number of total respondents is 50.

**Table 3:** Utilization of Social and Economic Resources Before and After Lockdown

Variables	Mean	SD	Paired differences		T value	Df	P value
			Mean	N			
Utilization of Social and Economic Resources Before Lockdown	13.10	3.919	-2.000	50	-2.752	49	.008
Utilization of Social and Economic Resources After Lockdown	15.10	2.901					

The p-value of this variable is .008. This is less than 0.05, meaning there is a statistically significant difference between the utilization of social and economic resources value before and after the lockdown. So, there is an increase in the utilization of social and economic resources, and it can be concluded that there is a statistical difference in the utilization of social and economic resources. Thus, it says there is a statistically significant difference in the mean of both variables; it shows that families increased the utilization of socio-economic resources during the pandemic to cope with the situation.

#### 4.3. Analyzing maintaining a positive outlook

Table 4 shows paired sample statistics and differences in maintaining a positive outlook before and after the lockdown. A paired sample t-test is carried out. The mean value of maintaining a positive outlook before lockdown is 12.96, and the mean value of maintaining a positive outlook after lockdown is 16.46. So thus, it can be concluded that there is an increase in maintaining a positive outlook after lockdown. This table 4 represents the paired difference in maintaining a positive outlook. The mean value of the paired difference is -3.500.

**Table 4:** Maintaining a Positive Outlook

Variables	Mean	SD	Paired differences		T value	Df	P value
			Mean	N			
Maintaining a Positive Outlook Before Lockdown	12.96	4.081	-3.500	50	-6.131	49	.000
maintaining a positive outlook after the lockdown	16.46	2.873					

The p-value of this variable is .000. This is less than 0.01, meaning there is a statistically significant difference between maintaining positive outlook values before and after the lockdown. From the table, there is an increase in maintaining a positive outlook, and it can be concluded that there is a statistical difference in maintaining a positive outlook before and after the lockdown. Thus, it says there is a statistically significant difference in the mean of both variables. Thus, it can be concluded that During COVID-19, the families maintained a positive outlook about the future.

#### 4.4. Analyzing Family connectedness

Table 5 presents the results of a paired sample t-test, examining the difference in family connectedness before and after the lockdown. The mean score for family connectedness before the lockdown is 13.76 with a standard deviation (SD) of 3.915. In comparison, the mean score for family connectedness after the lockdown is 15.28 with an SD of 3.220. This increase in the mean score suggests an improvement in family connectedness following the lockdown period.

**Table 5:** Family Connectedness Before and After Lockdown

Variables	Mean	SD	Paired differences		T value	Df	P value
			Mean	N			
Family Connectedness Before Lockdown	13.76	3.915	-1.520	50	-2.987	49	.004
Family Connectedness After Lockdown	15.28	3.220					

The paired difference analysis shows a mean difference of -1.520, indicating that, on average, family connectedness scores were higher after the lockdown than before. The sample size (N) for this analysis is 50 participants, and the t-test results yield a t-value of -2.987 with 49 degrees of freedom (Df). The p-value obtained is 0.004, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

These results suggest that the lockdown period had a positive impact on family connectedness, as indicated by the significant increase in the mean scores. The low p-value indicates that the difference observed is unlikely due to random chance, suggesting a meaningful change in family dynamics. This finding highlights the potential role of enforced time spent together during the lockdown in strengthening family bonds and increasing connectedness among family members.

#### 4.5. Analysing Family Spirituality

Table 6 shows the paired sample statistics and paired differences in Family spirituality before and after the lockdown. A paired sample t-test is carried out. The mean value of Family spirituality before lockdown is 13.98, and the mean value after lockdown is 13.82. There seems to be a 7.15% decrease in Family spirituality before and after lockdown. Thus, it can be concluded that there was a decrease in family spirituality skills after the lockdown. The mean value of the paired difference is 160, and the number of total respondents is 50.

**Table 6:** Family Spirituality Before and After Lockdown.

Variables	Mean	SD	Paired differences		T value	Df	P value
			Mean	N			
Family Spirituality Before Lockdown	13.98	4.148	.160	50	.262	49	.794
Family Spirituality After Lockdown	13.82	3.635					

The p-value of this variable is .794. This is more than 0.05, meaning there is no statistically significant difference between Family spirituality values before and after the lockdown. From the table, it is clear that there is a decrease in family spirituality, and it can be concluded that there is no statistical difference in family spirituality before or after lockdown. Thus, it says that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean of both variables. It proves that the spiritual attendance of the families decreased during COVID-19.

#### 4.6. Analyzing Ability to Make Meaning the Adversity

Table 7 shows paired sample statistics of the ability to make meaning of the adversity before and after the lockdown. The mean value of the ability to make meaning the adversity before lockdown is 10.26, and the mean value of the ability to make meaning the adversity after lockdown is 12.04. There seems to be a 0.0017 % increase in the ability to make meaning of the adversity before and after lockdown. Thus, it can be concluded that there is an increase in the ability to make meaning of the adversity after lockdown.

A paired sample t-test is carried out. The mean value of the paired difference is -1.780. The number of total respondents is 50. The p-value of this variable is .000, Which is less than 0.01, meaning there is a statistically significant difference between the ability to make meaning of the adversity before and after the lockdown. From the table, there is an increase in the ability to make meaning of adversity. It can be concluded that there is a statistically different Ability to make meaning of the adversity before and after lockdown. Thus, it says there is a statistically significant difference in the mean of both variables. Thus, it can be concluded that the families accepted the realities of the pandemic.

**Table 7:** Ability to Make Meaning the Adversity Before and After Lockdown

Variables	Mean	S.D	Paired differences		T value	Df	P value
			Mean	N			
Ability to Make Meaning the Adversity Before Lockdown	10.26	2.671					
Ability to Make Meaning the Adversity After Lockdown	12.04	1.577	-1.780	50	-4.447	49	.000

Family plays a significant role in a community. Family members' relationship among them also plays a major role in uplifting the community. If a crisis emerges in the community, it first affects the family members in the community. Every family faces various issues, including natural disasters such as floods and economic issues such as poverty. This type of crisis will impact families and, consequently, on kids. In such situations, a family's resilience is defined as the ability of its members to overcome a disaster. The ability of family members to cope successfully with adversity, allowing them to thrive with affection, acceptance, and togetherness, is known as family resilience. From this study, it is identified that the resilience of the family increases with time during lockdown.

After the research, information regarding resilience exhibited in the family would be useful for the assessment and intervention purposes of the social workers. The participation from the respondents improved their self-awareness, awareness about their family relationships, communication, problem-solving skills, skills to manage resources, etc., so this kind of study must be conducted in future because it makes the concept of resilience more familiar to the students.

#### 5. Discussion

The study proved a significant difference between family resilience before and after the lockdown during COVID-19. It is identified through conducting a 't' test, and the final results show that the family's resilience increases with time during lockdown. There is a considerable percentage increase in family resilience due to changes that took place in the family in areas of communication, connectedness, use of resources, maintaining a positive outlook, ability to make meaning of adversity, problem-solving and spirituality; it is identified by assessing six variables from family resilience assessment scale.

##### 5.1. Family Communication and Problem Solving

The study pointed out that the family communication and problem-solving of the social work students in Peermade Taluk increased after lockdown compared to before lockdown. It is increased by 0.0017 %. That means that after the lockdown, the family structure has become flexible in dealing with unexpected events compared with the flexibility of the family structure

before the lockdown. After the lockdown, it was noted that the compromising skills needed to solve the problems of the family members increased.

Consulting with each other about problem-solving decisions has heightened since the lockdown. After the lockdown, family members feel free to express their opinions and share responsibility within the family. The respondents are adapting and adjusting to the demands placed on them by the family. Thus, the findings regarding the study are that the effective management of the problems imposed by the pandemic eases family resilience. The communication patterns and problem-solving skills of the families have improved during COVID-19.

### **5.2. Utilization of Socio-Economic Resources**

It has increased from analyses of the utilization of socio-economic resources by the social work students in Peermade Taluk. The difference in percentage before lockdown and after lockdown is 0.0015 %. This indicates that compared to before the lockdown, there has been an increase in dependence on neighbours for help and assistance and an increased dependency on people in the community. Social work students' families gained a sense of belongingness as they felt secure living in this community. And they feel that people in the community are willing to help in an emergency. Thus, the findings regarding the study are that families increased the utilization of socio-economic resources during the pandemic to cope with the situation. This is the impact of COVID-19 on the family's skill to utilize social and economic resources.

### **5.3. Maintaining a Positive Outlook**

This study shows that one of the variables in family resilience, i.e., maintaining the respondents' positive outlook, is also increased. It is increased by 0.007%. That shows that social work students' families believe they can handle their problems and trust things will work out even in difficult times. They also have a sense of feeling that they are strong enough to solve their problems and that they have the strength to solve them. Thus, the finding implies that during COVID-19, the families maintained a positive outlook on the future.

### **5.4. Family Connectedness**

The study reflects that the family connectedness of social work students in Peermade Taluk increased after the lockdown compared to before the lockdown. It is increased by 0.0011 %. It shows that the family members of the respondents keep their feelings to themselves and show love and affection for family members. Also, they feel that they are taken for granted by family members. Thus, the findings regarding the study are that COVID-19 increased the intensity of relationships among family members.

### **5.5. Family Spirituality**

This study describes that overall, family resilience increased among them, and family spirituality decreased after the lockdown compared to before it. It decreased by 7.15%. It depicts that social work students' families in Peermade Taluk have reduced attendance at religious institutions. Compared to before the lockdown, now they have less faith in the Supreme Being and less participation in religious activities. Thus, the finding is that there are variations in family faith and spiritual practices. The spiritual attendance of the families decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **5.6. Ability to Make Meaning the Adversity**

In this study, the last variable of assessing family resilience, the ability to make meaning of the adversity, is increased. The difference in percentage before and after lockdown is 0.0017 %. This indicates that compared to before the lockdown, there has been an increase in the acceptance of stressful events as part of life. They are willing to accept the problems that occur unexpectedly. Thus, the findings regarding the study are the family's developed acceptance towards the realities of the pandemic. There is a change in the ability of families to accept the present crises and to have an optimistic view of the future during COVID-19.

### **5.7. Suggestions**

- During data collection, while interacting with respondents, i.e., social work trainees, it was found that they don't have basic knowledge of the concept of resilience. Thus, social work students should ensure they have more theory classes about resilience concepts, as they are future social workers responsible for helping families in crisis.

- Nowadays, most families are facing crises, and in such situations, the role of family resilience is inevitable. Thus, it would be effective if a family counsellor was available for such families. Within the local self-government, family counsellors should be available in primary, family, or community health centres.
- This study suggests that similar to SHGs, the family health centre and local self-government should form family resilience groups (FRGs) from the grassroots level to enhance their neighbourhood relationship. As a result, utilization of socioeconomic resources can be ensured.
- The study emphasizes the importance of family support centres (FHCs), which focus on empowering families undergoing crises.
- The aim of FHCs should be to help families overcome crises by providing services to enhance family resilience and interactions. The FHCs should implement programs that improve problem-solving and communication skills within the family.
- FHCs can utilize the professional knowledge social work students have on family resilience. Thus, it might help the FHCs to work more effectively if the participation of the social work students is ensured.

## 6. Conclusion

This study highlights the concept of family resilience as a critical yet underexplored area within the context of family crises, particularly in India. It is a universal truth that no family is free from challenges, and every family, at some point, faces adversity or stress. However, the capacity of families to recover and thrive in the face of such adversities forms the essence of family resilience. Despite its importance, family resilience has not been a primary focus in Indian research on family dynamics and crises. The findings of this study bring a fresh perspective, shedding light on the fundamental role that family resilience plays in helping families navigate challenging times. The study's emphasis on the mechanisms and strategies that foster resilience within families can serve as a valuable tool for raising awareness and informing policy-making. Additionally, understanding the influence of family resilience provides insights into how families can effectively adapt, cope, and grow stronger following a crisis. By addressing the gaps in existing research, particularly in the Indian context, this study contributes significantly to the broader discourse on family resilience.

The insights gained here can be instrumental in shaping future research, educational programs, and interventions designed to enhance family well-being. Overall, this study not only expands the body of knowledge on family resilience but also highlights its vital role in sustaining and strengthening families, offering a pathway towards improved coping mechanisms and better outcomes during periods of stress and crisis. There is no such thing as a family without issues. The slings and arrows of tragedy strike every family at some point, and stress is unavoidable. The concept of family resilience recognizes all families' ability to heal and provides a beneficial research platform. Family resilience is rarely emphasized in studies on family crises or family problems in India. As a result, the study's concept focus is new and could be used to raise awareness. The notions of family resilience, the need for family resilience, the influence of family resilience in overcoming crises, and so on have not been well-researched in the Indian context; therefore, the results of this study will be added to the body of knowledge.

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**Ethics and Consent Statement:** This research adheres strictly to established ethical guidelines, and the necessary informed consent from all participants has been obtained. Participant confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, with comprehensive safeguards to protect privacy and sensitive information.

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