

## Workforce Resilience: Ensuring Well-being Amidst Uncertainty and Change

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### Abstract

The study aims to understand resilience within the inclusive analysis of organizational behaviour, factors impacting employees' minds as well as employee health psychology and actionable. Resilience fuels happiness. Again, happiness strengthens resilience. Again, self-awareness leads to more happiness. While resilience is traditionally defined as the capability to recover from challenges, we intend to expound it as a developmental capacity that enables individuals and organizations to not only tolerate but also adapt, grow, become agile and thrive through upheavals. Explore key factors shaping employee well-being and resilience by focusing on inner growth, mindful habits, self-awareness, and mind management, while assessing organizational roles, especially HR's responsibility, in fostering support, clarity, and sustainable success.

This study has been conducted by mainly doing an extensive literature review encompassing various research journals, books, websites and speeches. In addition to that a survey will be conducted with 830 professionals across diverse industries and locations. The research analyzes resilience as multidimensional, influenced by internal and external factors. It critiques materialistic approaches and recommends a transition to spiritual, Indian value-based practices for lasting employee focus and holistic wellness. It underscores mind-body-soul connection, emotional security, flexible protocols, and HR's task in promoting self-awareness, self-management, and intrinsic power.

Further research can be done using stratified random sampling method, reflecting on diversity of roles, departments, and experiences within organizations. Also, work can be done how AI can help in workplace resilience. Although many studies have been done on employee resilience, this paper highlights how the focus on mind-body complex has a huge impact on happiness level and enhancing mental strength to stay agile, smart and resilient and how especially HR-Learning & Department can apply the findings.

**Keywords** - Stress Management, Culture, Work Life Balance, Mindfulness, Emotional Intelligence, Tension, Holistic Wellness, Workplace Resilience

### 1. Introduction-

In a period marked by dynamic technological, socio-economic disruptions, and worldwide health crises, organizations are struggling with unmatched uncertainty, complexity and difficulty. These challenges have accentuated the imperative need for strengthening workforce resilience. The objective is to ensure long-term sustainability in workplace.

## 2. Research Questions –

- What are the key factors that affect employees' overall well-being, performance and sustainability?
- How resilience, happiness and success are related?
- What are the different dimensions and levels of resilience and how organization can enable staff to overcome from setbacks, uncertainties and complexities?

## 3. Problem Statement

In today's world organizations and employees have multi-dimensional challenges. Employees feel insecurity, fail, can't sustain at times and even leave in the brittle, anxious, nonlinear and incomprehensible work culture. "Employees today have more connections but less valuable collaboration due to uncertain connection norms following the pandemic, broader social tensions and new technology that can isolate employees and depersonalize work," said Russ McCall, Director, Advisory in the Gartner HR practice. (Gartner, 2024)

## 4.Scope of the study and significance

Scope of the study is confined to literature reviews of research articles, thesis, websites, surveys, videos and books touching employees primarily in India, although few articles and surveys have international perspective too. Empirical study has also been done with 830 employees across industries mainly in India.

## 5.Research Methodology

In this research, emphasis has been given on 42 different sources of literature reviews. Also, a survey with 830 employees has been conducted online, following a non-probability sampling approach, primarily using convenience and snowball sampling methods to understand the pulse of the employees.

## 6.Review of Literature

Globally nearly 3 billion people have been working out of which it's reported that about 40% are happy. (Bush, 2019). A TED video series 'The Way We Work' shows Bush highlighting that workplace unhappiness stems from a lack of trust, fairness, and authentic leadership. Employee satisfaction is not just about perks. It depends on respect, candour, equity, and wholehearted listening from leaders. (Bush, 2019).

A video by SparrowCast shows that Goal Clarity, Positive Workplace and Rewards & Recognition are predominantly the three key strategies for ensuring employee happiness. (SparrowCast, 2021). As per SurveySparrow, 2023, the workplace is a complex ambience where diverse personalities interplay. Open communication, compliments and events (can be outside office hours also) are expected by staff where they can relish. (SurveySparrow, 2023).

### Negative Catalyst

Leadership styles that typically erode employee resilience are:

**Authoritarian or Autocratic Leadership** (seldom empowers employees and give space to think and grow, less autonomy or opinion), **Laissez-Faire Leadership** (when poorly executed,

does not guide and support properly), **Micromanagement**(showing less trust on team),**Toxic or abusive leadership**(focus is on threats and disrespect towards team members to get the work done),**Too Rigid Transactional leadership**(focus is primarily on rewards or punishment and not much on personal development) generally discourage employees and creates a difficult and complex work environment where overcoming setbacks and stay motivated becomes challenging.

### Positive Catalyst

On the other hand, leadership styles like **Transformational Leadership**(inspire and motivate staff by creating a sense of purpose and vision, cultivating creativity and personal growth), **Servant leadership** (focuses on serving the team first, helping team and create a culture of empathy, inclusion and collaboration) and **Democratic/Participative Leadership**(involving and empowering team in decision-making, believing in transparency) contribute a lot to employee resilience.

### Go-Giver leader

Organizations need more and more ‘Go-givers+Go-getters’ than ‘Go-getters’. ‘Only go-getters’ might burn bridges in order to get success which may not be sustainable during the odds. During the tides of life, the staff may not get the required helping hand from peers. Such ‘only go-getters’ when under tremendous pressure, unfavourable situations can falter and lose strength to rise in absence of support from others. ‘Go-givers+Go-getters’ can overcome setbacks by harnessing good relation with others.

A Go-giver leader leads by vision, building people, doing the work, standing for something and practise giving leadership. Leading from the heart, giving people something good to live up to something great, not reacting but just responding and applying tact as the language of strength- all these attributes of a leader build people. (Burg & Mann) Team’s resilience gets enhanced easily if the supervisor believes in giving more, stay hugely humble, grounded and get mud on his/her boots.

### Need of Supervisory effectiveness

Research done by Gallup on “The State of the American Manager,” has thrown light on the challenging areas employees face-half of the employees opted for “getting away from my manager” as their main cause for exit. Gallup emphasized that “The manager accounts for minimum 70% of the variance in employee engagement.”

Research done by Arthur Lefford, author of *The Influence of Emotional Subject Matter on Logical Reading*, showed that 90% of decisions rise from emotion.

Employee happiness thrives in an empathetic, open, comfortable space where approachable leaders encourage connection, quality communication, and exchange of creative ideas while balancing vulnerability with gravitas. That ensures happiness! (BookClub, 2023) That blossoms resilience among employees.

## **Happiness and Resilience:**

A research of Pamela Gail Johnson on “What Is Practical Employee contentment In 2023?” opines that employees are unhappier than the past, despite the fact that organizations have been focusing on creating engaged workplace cultures to make employees happier. The Society of Happy People offered a list of 31 types of Happiness. Happiness is not static and impacted by the way we manage happiness zappers(mood drainers) and stressors. Workplaces which retain talent by supporting evolving career needs, learning, appreciation, acknowledgement and problem-solving, contribute to staff happiness. (Johnson, ..) A happy employee has more optimism and filled with positive vibes which provide energy to bounce back faster from down.

## **Relation between Success, Resilience and Happiness**

As per Laura Gassner Otting, success paves the way for more hunger for higher desires, bigger and difficult goals, uncertainties, complexities and challenges leading to worries and tension. Success is unequal to happiness and just a voyage. Wonderhell teaches us that success is just critical juncture along the way. After securing one milestone, we march for another destination. Each time we imagine success as future possibility, even before we attain it, we see a version of ourselves we never thought real, a potential we never thought possible. (Otting, 2022) How is success related to resilience ? If after one success, mind cant achieve the next success, it may generates thoughts negative in nature ,adequate enough to pull back and falter. So success does not guarantee resilience and happiness.

When we start loving our job, have a meaningful and purposeful job and work religiously for the sake of work alone, as if work is like worship, and not to achieve milestones alone, we can get real happiness and power to rise from failures/difficulties.

Lao Tzu, alive around 600 BC in China, said , "If you are depressed you are living in the past. If you are anxious you are living in the future. If you are at peace you are living in the present”.

## **Happiness Hormones**

Mind and body influence each other, releasing different hormones. Dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphins are the “happiness hormones” that promote happiness and pleasure, minimizing inner demons, helping in wrestling with shadows. (How to Hack Your Hormones for a Better Mood,) A happy mind stays resilient too!

## **Humans look for Happiness**

We all intend to be happy. But unfortunately, most of us are not aware of the appropriate path to achieve it. (Divyanandaprana, 2020) As a result we fail to stay resilient.

## **Formidable Obstacles That Strain the Fabric of Fortitude:**

In the *Sankhya Sutras*, Kapila (sage in Hindu tradition) mentions dukkhas of three types-

- *Adhyatmika* -caused inside ourselves—in the body by illness and unhealthy living, and the mind by malicious desires, rage, greed, delusion or attachment, pride, jealousy, etc.
- *Adhibhautika* - arising from other living beings such as monsters, thieves, and wicked persons;

- *Adhidaivika* -the agony brought about by natural occurrence as in extremes of temperature, floods and storms, earthquakes, pestilences, etc.(Swami Yatiswarananda, n.d.)

### **Glitches in the habit loop that makes employees lesser resilient**

Some common examples which can lead to more stress, low productivity and stagnation in career and ultimately lesser resilient are-

1. Not proactive and waiting for the future
2. Focusing on external material objects which seldom make us happy for long tenure
3. Preferring isolation which can lead to higher level of depression
4. Victim mentality
5. Negative thoughts
6. Finding faults in others
7. Unnecessarily converting the difficult situations to more complex
8. Hiding problems and not trying to solve

Boosting habits for attaining greater happiness is one of the best things that we can do for self. (Bradberry, 2016)

### **HR Workshops on Atomic Habits to Ignite Employee Inner Strength**

HR/Training workshops can be designed to inspire employees by incorporating the principles of James Clear's Atomic Habits. James Clear, in Atomic Habits, mentions about the four Laws of Behaviour Change:

1. Cue: Make it evident.
2. Craving: Make it attractive.
3. Response: Make it easy.
4. Reward: Make it satisfying.

Similarly, he/she can discard bad habits like pessimism by inverting each of the 4 laws and diverting mind to optimism whenever negative ideas come, making mind understand that negative ideas will only pull him/her down, unattractive, and fill up mind with other positive vibes so that the pessimism can't come easily, and make mind realize that negative vibes can only yield negative outcomes.

These four laws can be implemented to make any behaviour easier (and the inversion of each law can be executed to make any behaviour harder). (Clear)

### **Resilience Quotient and Sattvik nature**

We all have the 3 elements /gunas in our minds : Sattvik,Rajasik and Tamasik.Sattvik nature means a calm and harmonious state of mind. Rajasik state implies highly active and restless, sensual and commotional nature while Tamasik refers to dull and deluded states of mind. An employee with higher proportion of Sattvik nature has higher resilience quotient as he /she is having a balanced and calm mind. He can analyse the difficult situation better, the mind being

more patient and still and generate better solutions or optimistic views. The employee can take his mind to higher level of thought process and deep dive to get the desired options and success.

If the employee is spiritually elevated, knowing that his real identity is soul and life's goal is realizing God, the thought of failure will not destroy his/her mind and can actually appear as a path to reflect and strengthen the mind and body for faster recovery.

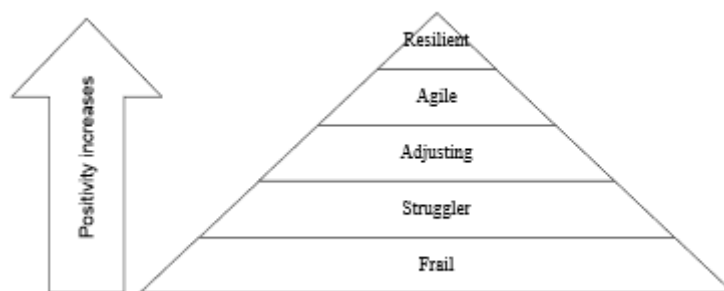
Organizations can continuously organize workshops, offer self-paced learning on the mind management angle and guide the staff towards Sattvik state. It's a long-term process but can create a great work culture.

According to the Katha Upanishad, the five senses, similar to horses pulling a chariot, create impressions in the mind, which reacts based on the intellect's capability to control the reins (the mind); if the senses are uncontrolled and the intellect is frail, the mind becomes jittery, resulting in an imbalance and eventual collapse. (Katha, 2021)

### Degrees of Happiness:

Happiness persists at different levels, influencing its span, with higher levels leading to more lasting fulfilment. The four key levels are **spiritual** (self-awareness, service), **intellectual** (creative problem-solving), **emotional** (achievements, recognition), and **sensory** (physical pleasures like food or incentives), with deeper levels offering greater long-term happiness.

### Spectrum of Resilience:



Organizations can enhance workplace resilience by addressing multifaceted strata of employee resilience:

- **Frail** – Staff with feeble, sensitive mind, feeling insured, having high probability to give up and leave, need strong support systems. There is a high probability that the performance will deteriorate. Organizations should provide **one to one coaching**, invite in workshops for providing mental health resources, **mentorship programs and track separately**.
- **Struggler** – Employees struggling, having low confidence, reacting to challenges need **skill-building workshops, resilience training, and peer support groups** to boost confidence and coping skills.
- **Adjusting** – Employees managing stress better than struggler but lacking proactive strategies require **stress-management programs and mindfulness sessions**.

- **Agile** – Employees are adapting by staying proactive and flexible. Organizations can offer **flexible work environments, leadership development, and exposure to cross-functional projects** to improve problem-solving.
- **Resilient** – Employees who excel in adversity should be empowered, recognized through rewards, invited for **leadership programmes** and **elevated**. They are strong enough to remain detached from the outcome.

### **Managing different personalities for creating a resilient culture**

To build organizational resilience, it's a necessity to harmonize strategies with the different personality types, for example, as mentioned by Predictive Index.

- Analytical profiles(more dominant than extraverted, more task oriented than people oriented)
- Social profiles(more extraverted than dominant, focus on relationships)
- Stabilizer profiles(have low dominance and extraversion, have high patience and formality)
- Persistent Profiles(more dominant than extraverted, with high amount of patience), task oriented and deliberate, thrive when they have control over their work.

By aligning support systems, communication, and roles with these personality traits, organizations enhance adaptability, engagement, and performance under pressure.

(<https://www.predictiveindex.com/>)

### **Impetus for staying resilient in life**

Quinn's 'Happiness: It's mind over matter' emphasizes that humans who have religious or spiritual beliefs are happier than those who don't, irrespective of their beliefs. Happy people are more helpful, productive and loyal. They are found to be of better physical shape, healthier and heal faster. (Quinn, 2014)

As the body and mind are closely related, when the body is perturbed, the mind gets unsettled and anxious too. Hence, healthy diet along with moderation in food and recreation is compulsory. (Srikantananda, 2009)

Mindfulness aids us to be more self-aware. Through workshops on mindfulness, employees are more likely to stay interconnected with organizational goals, and then, are more likely to focus on their work (Karen R. Johnson, 2019)

### **Meditation-Mind's strategic advantage**

Two broad types of meditation can really help humans-

1. Focus Attention Meditation: focus on an object-sustain focus, observe distractions and refocus mindfully. (Antoine Lutz1, 2008).
2. Open Monitoring Meditation nurtures non-reactive awareness by observing thoughts and sensations without focusing on a specific object. (Antoine Lutz1, 2008).

In Workplace Spirituality and Employee Well-being: An Empirical Exploration, Naval Garg (Garg, 2017) speaks about Spirituality at work which advocates the search for meaning or higher purpose, connectedness and transcendence for job satisfaction.(Garg1, 2017).Corporates like Apple computer (Cavanagh, 2015), World Bank (Laabs, 1995) and Ford Motor Company (Burack, 1999), are already reaping the benefits of workplace spirituality. The modern emphasis on objectivity and the dichotomy of science and spirituality, makes people separate from one another, from nature, and from the divine. (Whitney, 1995)

In the ‘7 Habits of Highly Effective People’, Stephen R. Covey emphasises on ‘reactive language’ and ‘proactive language’, ‘Circle of Influence’(in our control) and Circle of Concern’(out of our control). (Covey) HR-L&D can train employees on these areas.

Top banks like JPMorgan Chase, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, State Bank of India (SBI), and Yes Bank have introduced various employee-centric initiatives to ensure workplace resilience.

- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) for mental health support,
- Flexible work policies like hybrid work models,
- Learning & development opportunities for continuous skill enhancement.

These initiatives enhance in improvement in employees' adaptability to challenges and uncertainties in the workplace.

(<https://www.jpmorganchase.com/newsroom/stories/companies-mental-health?>, n.d.)

## **5 Signs of Emotional Suffering**

Five Signs of Emotional Suffering which can be triggers for organizations to take necessary action are

- Change in Personality,
- Agitation,
- Withdrawal,
- Lesser focus on personal care and
- Hopelessness

An employee may show one or more of these signs. The Five Signs is an easily understandable model to encourage people to be aware of their own emotional functioning and that of their loved ones, friends and colleagues. It encourages people to reach out to others and offer support and help if they become concerned. (Deb Bubb and Joanna Daly, 2024)

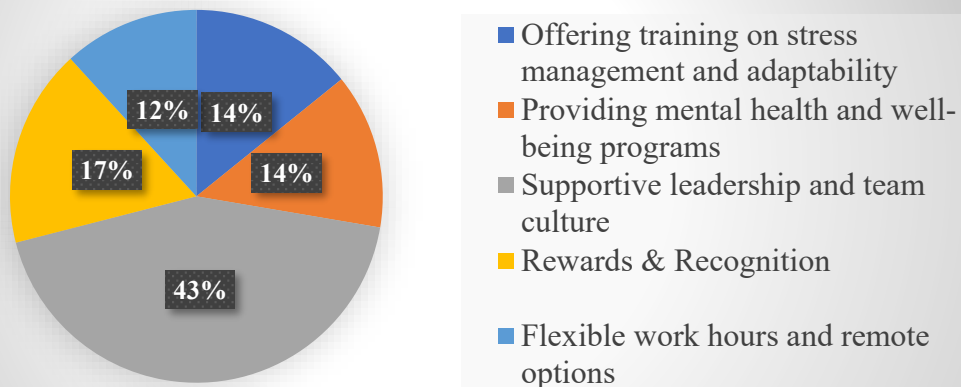
## **Primary Data Collection and Analysis**

A survey with 830 employees (PAN India (99.5%) and abroad(0.5%), from 22 diverse organizations) has been conducted online, following a non-probability sampling approach, primarily using convenience and snowball sampling methods to understand the pulse of the employees.

- Industries: Banking(97% of the respondents), IT, Education, Manufacturing, NBFC, Insurance, Transportation & Logistics



### The most effective way for organizations to build employee resilience



Majority respondents opted for Supportive leadership and team culture

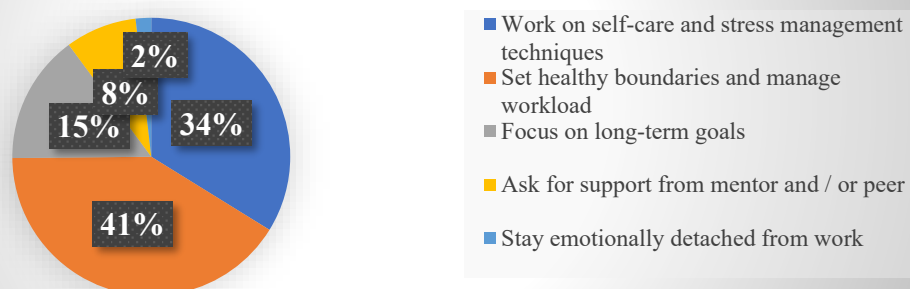
### Importance of leadership behaviour (e.g., empathy, communication) in impacting employee resilience



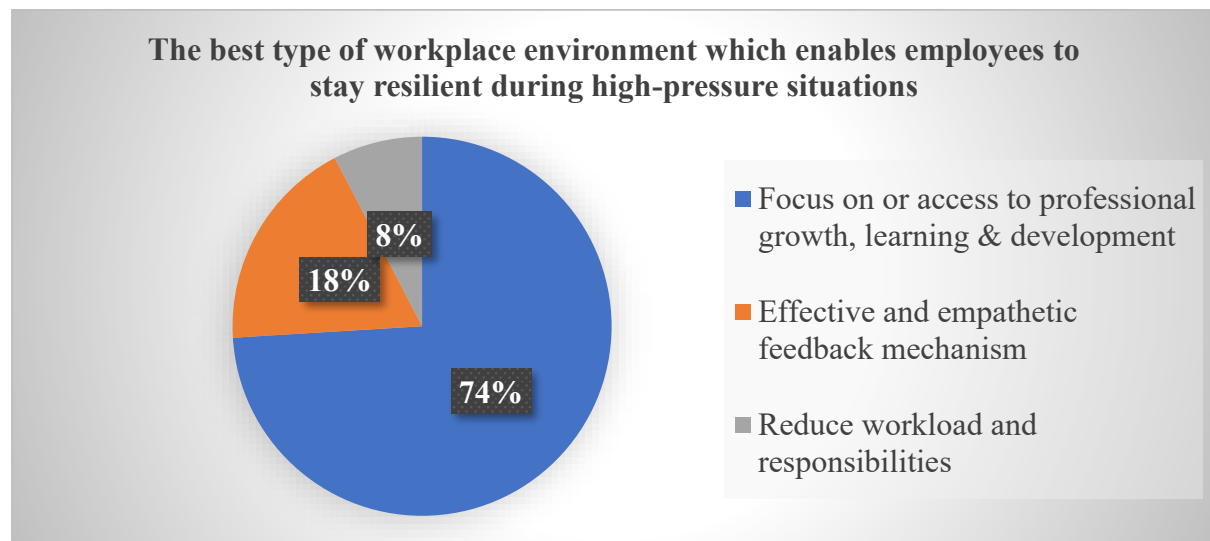
Majority of the respondents felt that leadership behaviour was extremely important for ensuring workplace resilience

It's the integrity, actions, attitude, behaviour, drive, empathy and leading by example that matter. That generates faith in the mind of employees which builds up the resilient energy.

### What employees can do themselves to be resilient at work



Majority of the respondents opted for setting healthy boundaries, manage workload and work on self-care stress management techniques



Majority of the respondents felt that best workplaces focus on learning & development and professional growth of employees to make them more resilient

### How HR-Learning & Development Can Contribute

Based on the target audience, organizations can design a workshop/curriculum to train the employees who have low resilience. Following can be a programme design outline.

‘Workshop for Individual Contributors: Capability Building to Enhance Resilience in the Workplace’

#### Module 1: Introduction to Resilience

##### Learning Objectives:

- Define resilience in a workplace context
- Understand the importance of resilience for individuals and teams
  - Pre test
  - Activities: Employees to share their “Resilience Moments” where they will present how they recovered from setbacks and difficult situations by not giving up and key learning from such incidents
  - Various research works done on workplace resilience
  - Group discussion: Signs of resilient vs. non-resilient workplace cultures

#### Module 2: Stress, Change & Emotional Triggers

##### Learning Objectives:

- Identify factors which create stress in workplace
- Understand the triggers/signs of stress
- Comprehend the connection between emotional regulation and resilience
  - Activities: Individual activity on “What Stresses Me?”
  - Case study discussion: On workplace change (downsizing, restructuring, impact of AI, disruptions at different levels) and how employees can overcome challenges

### Module 3: Core Skills for Building Resilience

#### Learning Objectives:

- Learn ways to improve adaptability, self-awareness, and optimism;
- Understand the art of giving feedback and self-reflection
  - Team activity : Topics: Growth mindset vs. fixed mindset ; celebrating failures as learning moments
  - Presentation on : Self-talk and reflection ; Goal setting and realistic optimism
  - Role-plays on case studies on difficult situations and how it can be handled.
  - A briefing on how body-mind complex works.

### Module 4: Building Interpersonal and Team Resilience

#### Learning Objectives:

- Understand the importance of collaboration for enhancing team resilience
- Understand Go-giver vs go-getter mindset
  - Team activity: How collaboration can contribute to team resilience
  - Presentation: What are Go-giver and go-getter mindset and the relevance in ensuring a great work culture?

### Module 5: Personal Resilience Plan

#### Learning Objectives:

- Reflect on personal strengths and areas for development
  - Individual activity: Personal resilience action plan
  - Team Activities: “One takeaway and one commitment”
  - Practise meditation
  - How increased concentration can make us resilient and stay happy
  - Post test
  - Feedback

### **Workshop for Supervisors : Leading Effectively to Inculcate Resilience in Team**

Similarly supervisory workshop can be done emphasizing on:

1. Leadership styles and impact on team management
2. How self-awareness can enable supervisors to rectify themselves to keep the team on high momentum
3. Relationship among happiness, peace, resilience and self-awareness
4. Spiritualism as an enabler
5. Surrendering all desires and materialistic attachments to the Almighty for mental relief
6. Focus group discussions on
  - a. Ways to enhance energy and focus management of staff
  - b. Causes of toxic work culture, ways to prevent and the impact on attrition
  - c. Disadvantages of excessive delegation

Also, vodcasts and podcasts of leaders on ‘How they stayed resilient and emerged as victorious’? can be rolled out as testimonials.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

Life is created by thoughts and hence thoughts should be positive to create a life filled with positive vibes. External factors influence us undoubtedly but the influence depends much on how we perceive, how our existing thoughts are and what new thoughts get generated which have a ripple effect on our whole life. Wearing red-tinted glasses, the world looks red to us and if we wear blue-shaded glasses, the world will appear as blue. Mind is not a dustbin and just as a white cloth, dipped in coloured water, absorbs the colour, mind also absorbs the experience it is exposed to. To make mind more resilient, employees need to be trained about the fact that the power of resilience is directly proportional to detachment from results, continuous learning and inversely proportional to worldly desires and impulse.

This study suggests that an organization can ensure holistic resilience and create a culture of learning when employees can be aware about their SWOT, body-mind complex and essence of upskilling, collaboration, go-giver attitude, calm mind and mindfulness. A restless mind takes wrong decision that leads to wrong decisions, all leading to unhappiness in the long run. Organizations try to retain employees through materialistic benefits etc. But all have short term lives.

Resilience can be learnt from sports too and hence facilities are needed in offices to encourage staff to invest quality time in recharging and learning from indoor /outdoor sports. Furthermore, individual goal should be aligned to organizational goal -otherwise employees will not sustain and fail to recover from the challenges offered by the ever-demanding corporate world. Employees should be in the right job role. HR Team should delve deep into job roles and required skills, avoiding superficiality. Avoidance of autocratic, micro-management or too much laissez-faire leadership styles accompanied by psychological safety, R&R can contribute to better work atmosphere.

Human history has witnessed a series of industrial revolutions. Artificial intelligence and automation will make this transformation notable. While many jobs will be lost, and many others created, almost all will change. The COVID-19 crisis accelerated existing trends and compelled organizations to re-evaluate many aspects of work. Hence, more studies can be done to find better solutions for employees to recover. The Gig economy and MSMEs offer challenges w.r.t. job insecurity, unpredictable job loss and inconsistent income. Banking and financial institutions are also quite sceptical and reluctant to finance them. Here workers face different dimensions of restlessness, mental pangs and experience inconsistent gaps between expectations and actual outcomes. What an organization can do and how workers can sustain and resist are the pressing questions.

Although many studies have been done on employee resilience, this paper highlights how the focus on understanding and controlling mind has a huge impact on the ability to rise from setbacks and how HR can have strategic influence.

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