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## Impact of Covid-19 On Retail Sector in India a study with special reference to Retailers of Puttur city

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### Abstract

The world economy is seeing its greatest fall ever. Coronavirus has largely impacted the growth of almost every country and is responsible for the slump in GDP worldwide. Like other countries, India is also impacted by this virus but not largely. Almost every industry sector has seen a fall in their sales and revenue. India's GDP growth has fallen to 4.7% in the third quarter of 2020. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has suggested the RBI reduce the repo rate up to 50 basis points and also asked for a reduction of 50 basis points on the cash reserve ratio. The government is planning to set up an amount to support MSMEs to overcome the crisis during this phase of shutdown, cash flow difficulty, and working capital issues. China is one of the largest exporters of many raw materials to India. Shutting down of factories has damaged the supply chain resulting in a drastic surge in the prices of raw materials. Some of the other products that have seen a rise in their prices are gold, masks, sanitizers, smartphones, medicines, consumer durables, etc. The aviation sector and automobile companies are the hardest hit among the rest. With no aero plane landings or take-offs globally, restricted travel has stopped the aviation and travel industry.

**Keyword:** COVID-19

### Introduction

India is the second-most populous country in the world having young demography and a market full of opportunities for start-ups. India's start-up ecosystem has witnessed tremendous growth in the past decade. From having only a few tech start-ups to over 55000 innovative ventures, it has been able to overcome various challenges. One such challenge was the COVID-19 pandemic that took the world by storm in the year 2020. The first cases of the COVID-19 pandemic were found in Wuhan, China which then spread all over the world causing a series of lockdowns all over the world including India. A countrywide lockdown was imposed from March 2020 to June 2020 to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease. This harmed the economy causing a slowdown in the growth of the start-up ecosystem. Businesses throughout the country were affected. Investments fell and companies suffered from a lack of funding. Many business operations came to a halt, compelling businesses to come up with new contingency plans to ensure survival. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on economies worldwide, and India has been no exception. As one of the largest and fastest-growing economies globally, India faced unprecedented challenges due to the pandemic. Among the sectors significantly affected by the pandemic is the retail sector, which plays a crucial role in India's economy, contributing significantly to employment and GDP. This research aims to explore the impact of COVID-19 on Retail Sectors in India, with a specific focus on retailers of Puttur city. By examining the challenges faced by retailers during the pandemic, analyzing the government's response and policy measures, and exploring the strategies adopted by retailers to navigate these challenging times, this study seeks to provide insights into the resilience and adaptability of the retail sector in the face of adversity. Through a comprehensive analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on retailers, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the subject and provide recommendations for policymakers and retailers to build a more resilient and sustainable retail ecosystem in India.

### Objectives of the Study

- To assess the extent of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the overall retail sales and revenue in Puttur city
- To examine the changes in consumer behavior and preferences towards online shopping versus in-store shopping due to the pandemic.

### How to Cite this Article:

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### Limitations of the Study

The study has been provided a more nuanced and cautious interpretation of the findings, highlighting areas for further research and improvement in understanding the impact of COVID-19 on retailers in Puttur taluk. The following limitations are;

- The study has collected a limited sample size of around 30 retailers, the study did not capture the full diversity of retail businesses in Puttur taluk, which led to potential biases.
- The study relies on self-reported data from surveys and interviews, which is subjected to recall bias, exaggeration, and under reporting by respondents.
- Some retailers have been declined to participate due to time constraints, lack of interest, or distrust in research activities, potentially skewing the results

### Review of Literature

- **Anjali (2020)** highlighted a comprehensive analysis of the early repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on various sectors of the Indian economy. It delves into the disruptions faced by industries such as manufacturing, services, and agriculture, highlighting the immediate challenges and potential long-term implications.
- **Rahul (2020)**: examined of the macroeconomic consequences of COVID-19 on India. It explores the ramifications on GDP growth, unemployment rates, and the efficacy of fiscal policy responses in mitigating the economic downturn triggered by the pandemic.
- **Priya (2020)**: focused on dissecting the impact of COVID-19 on specific Indian industries, such as tourism, hospitality, and retail. Further, she analyzed the magnitude of disruptions faced by these sectors, identified key challenges hindering recovery, and suggested potential strategies to revive economic activity.
- **Arjun (2020)**: stated that zeroes in on the informal sector of the Indian economy and its vulnerabilities to the COVID-19 crisis. Further, he examined the unique challenges faced by informal workers, discusses policy interventions aimed at providing relief, and evaluates the implications for livelihoods and social well-being.
- **Nisha (2020)**: explored the role of digital technologies in mitigating the economic impact of COVID-19 in India. It assesses the adoption of digital solutions across various sectors, identifies opportunities for innovation and resilience, and discusses the implications for future economic development.
- **Sanjay (2020)**: evaluates the implications of COVID-19 for India's trade and investment landscape. It examines the disruptions in global supply chains, shifts in trade patterns, and policy responses aimed at promoting resilience and competitiveness in the post-pandemic era.

- **Meera (2020)**: investigates the gendered impact of COVID-19 on the Indian economy. Further, she examined the disproportionate effects on women in terms of employment, caregiving responsibilities, and access to social protection measures, shedding light on gender inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic.
- **Vikram (2020)**: delves into the effects of COVID-19 on India's financial sector. It analyses the resilience of banking institutions, the volatility in capital markets, and the efficacy of regulatory measures implemented to stabilize the financial system amidst economic uncertainty.
- **Pooja (2020)** assessed the effects of COVID-19 on India's healthcare industry. It examines the strain on healthcare infrastructure, changes in healthcare delivery models, and the implications for public health policies and investments in strengthening healthcare systems.
- **Preet (2020)**: investigated the impact of COVID-19 on India's education sector. It analyses the transition to online learning, the digital divide among students, and the challenges faced by educators in adapting to remote teaching methods, while also discussing the broader implications for educational equity and access.
- **Shruti (2020)**: examined the impact of COVID-19 on India's transportation sector. It analyses disruptions in aviation, railways, and road transport, discusses challenges such as reduced passenger demand and logistical constraints, and explores strategies for recovery and resilience in the post-pandemic era.
- **Ravi (2020)**: discussed the implications of COVID-19 for India's environmental sustainability goals. It examines changes in pollution levels, shifts in environmental conservation efforts, and the policy responses aimed at balancing economic recovery with environmental protection in the post-pandemic period.
- **Sunita (2020)**: examined the impact of COVID-19 on India's e-commerce sector. It analyses shift in consumer behavior, challenges in last-mile delivery logistics, and the acceleration of digital transfer

### Methodology of the study

This study was descriptive and analytical in nature. The study mainly depended upon the primary data to develop this article. However, some secondary sources of data were consulted for the purpose of gathering background information supporting the study. Relevant primary data were collected using the combination quantitative (sample survey) and qualitative (interview) methods. Primary data were collected through questionnaire method. A Questionnaire was administered to 30 residents of the study area. Appropriate and relevant statistical tools and techniques will be used such as Descriptive Statistics (Mean and S.D), Tools used for the study is shown in the above

Table – 1 Criteria used for the Research Study

Class	0 - 20	20 - 40	40-60	60 - 80	80 -100
Perception of employee	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither or nor	Agree	Strongly agree

Source: Liker’s scale

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

**Findings:**

Table-2 Exhibits Respondents Perception towards Ten Components towards Impact of Covid-19 On Retail Sector

Covid-19 has affected their store’s Daily Operation	2 (6.7%)	4 (13.3%)	6 (20%)	9 (30%)	9 (6.7%)	3.6633±1.24 522	72.66
online shopping has become more popular due to the pandemic	2 (6.7%)	5 (16.7%)	11 (36.7%)	5 (16.7%)	7 (23.7%)	3.333±1.21	66.66
Challenges faced in Hiring and Retaining employees during the pandemic	7 (23.3%)	4 (13.3%)	8 (26.7%)	6 (30%)	5 (16.7%)	2.93±1.41	58.6
Covid-19 has changed shopping habits of Customers	2 (6.7%)	5 (16.7%)	4 (13.3%)	8 (26.7%)	11 (36.7%)	3.7±1.31	74
More customers are using online payment for their purchases	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	2 (6.7%)	11 (36.7%)	14 (46.7%)	4.2±.96	84
Limited shop timings have led to Overcrowding and longer Queues at stores	0 (0%)	2 (6.7%)	13 (43.3%)	10 (33.3%)	5 (16.7%)	3.6±.855	72
Government support has helped their business survive during Covid-19	11 (36.7%)	5 (16.7%)	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	5 (16.7%)	2.63±1.56	52.66
pandemic has accelerated their stores adoption of technology	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	13 (43.3%)	5 (16.7%)	6 (20%)	3.26±1.201	65.33
store had trouble getting products because of Covid-19	0 (0%)	2 (6.7%)	6 (20%)	13 (43%)	9 (30%)	3.96±.889	79.33
challenges faced in maintaining customer relationship during the pandemic	2 (6.7%)	4 (13.3%)	8 (26.7%)	9 (30%)	7 (23.3%)	3.5±1.196	70

**Covid-19 has affected their store’s Daily Operation:** From the above table,30% of the respondents strongly agrees that Covid-19 has affected their store’s Daily Operation .30% of the respondents agrees,20% of the respondents neither or nor ,13.3% of the respondents disagree and 6.7% of the respondents strongly disagree. The mean and standard Deviation (3.6333 and 1.24522), the % mean 72.666. Majority of the respondents are strongly agreeing that Covid-19 has affected their store’s Daily Operation.

**Online shopping has become more popular due to the pandemic:** From the above table,23.3% of the respondents strongly agrees that online shopping has become more popular due to the pandemic .16.67% of the respondents agrees,36.67% of the respondents neither or nor ,16.67% of the respondents disagree and 6.7% of the respondents strongly disagree. The mean and standard Deviation (3.3333 and 1.21296),

the % mean 66.666. Majority of the respondents are strongly agreeing that online shopping has become more popular due to the pandemic.

**Challenges faced in Hiring and Retaining employees during the pandemic:** From the above table,16.67% of the respondents strongly agrees that faced Challenges in Hiring and Retaining employees during the pandemic .20% of the respondents agrees,26.7% of the respondents neither or nor ,13.3% of the respondents disagree and 23.3% of the respondents strongly disagree. The mean and standard Deviation (2.9333 and 1.41259), the % mean 58.666. Most of the people neither agreed or nor disagreed that faced Challenges in Hiring and Retaining employees during the pandemic.

**Covid-19 has changed shopping habits of Customers:** From the above table,36.7% of the respondents strongly agrees that Covid-19 has changed shopping habits of Customers .26.7% of the

respondents agrees,13.3% of the respondents neither or nor ,16.7% of the respondents disagree and 6.7% of the respondents strongly disagree. The mean and standard Deviation (3.7000 and 1.31700), the % mean 74.000. Majority of the respondents strongly agrees that Covid-19 has changed shopping habits of Customers

**Customers are using online payment for their purchases:** From the above table,46.7% of the respondents strongly agrees that More customers are using online payment for their purchases.36.7% of the respondents agrees,6.7% of the respondents neither or nor ,10.0% of the respondents disagree. The mean and standard Deviation (4.2000 and .96132), the % mean 84.000. Majority of the respondents strongly agrees that More customers are using online payment for their purchases.

**Government support has helped the business survive during Covid-19:** From the above table,16.7% of the respondents strongly agrees that Government support has helped the business survive during Covid-19 .20% of the respondents agrees,10% of the respondents neither or nor ,16.7% of the respondents disagree and 36.7% of the respondents strongly disagree. The mean and standard Deviation (2.6333 and 1.56433), the % mean 52.666. Majority of respondents strongly disagrees that Government support has helped the business survive during Covid-19

**The pandemic has accelerated stores adoption of technology:** From the above table,20% of the respondents strongly agrees that the pandemic has accelerated stores adoption of technology.16.7% of the respondents agrees,43.3% of the respondents neither or nor ,10 % of the respondents disagree and 20% of the respondents strongly disagree. The mean and standard Deviation (3.2667 and 1.20153), the % mean 65.334. Most of the people neither agreed or nor disagreed that the pandemic has accelerated stores adoption of technology.

**Store had trouble getting products because of Covid-19:** From the above table,30 % of the respondents strongly agrees that store had trouble getting products because of Covid-19. 43.3% of the respondents agrees,20% of the respondents neither or nor ,6.7% of the respondents disagree and 30% of the respondents strongly disagree. The mean and standard Deviation (3.9667 and .88992), the % mean 79.334. Majority of the People agreed that store had trouble getting products because of Covid-19.

**Faced challenges in maintaining customer relationship during the pandemic:** From the above table,23.3% of the respondents strongly agrees that faced challenges in maintaining customer relationship during the pandemic. 30% of the respondents agrees,26.7% of the respondents neither or nor ,13.3% of the respondents disagree and 23.3% of the respondents strongly disagree. The mean and standard Deviation (3.5000 and 1.19626), the % mean 70.000. Majority of the respondents agrees that faced

challenges in maintaining customer relationship during the pandemic.

### Suggestions

- Retailers should stay connected with their customers through regular communication.
- Retailers should Implement Safety Measures to avoid Future risk
- In order to retain Employees Retailers Should Implement an Employee Recognition Program and Reward Outstanding performance
- Retailers should Keep their Customers Informed about any changes in business operations such as updated store hours, product availability etc.
- Retailers should implement e-commerce and digital payments systems to reach a broader customer base and enhance efficiency
- Retailers should invest in infrastructure to facilitate smoother logistics and supply chain operations
- Retailers should provide training programs to enhance the skills of retail workers, enabling them to deliver better customer service
- Retailers should Continuously monitor and analyze financial performance to identify areas for improvement and capitalize on opportunities for growth
- Retailers should set competitive prices that balance profitability with attracting customers, considering factors like cost, demand and competition
- Retailers should offer unique products or exclusive deals to set their store apart from competitors and attract customers willing to pay premium
- Retailers should prioritize customer satisfaction by offering exceptional service.

### Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected the retail sector in Puttur city, India. The disruption of supply chains, decreased foot traffic, and financial strains have posed significant challenges for retailers, forcing them to adapt to survive in an uncertain landscape. The growth of the economy has slowed down due to shutdown of different productions channels. Reverse migration of workforce and consequent shortage of labor, resulted in further decline of economic growth. It has an impact on the economy and lifestyle of the people. Financial crisis has faced in India due to pandemic mainly in organized and unorganized retail sector. Specially there was a great impact of covid-19 on the non-essential items in retail business. The measures from various government agencies and the central bank have provided some relief. The supermarkets and local retailers appeared to be the winners in this pandemic as many of the consumers have brought their essential goods from the nearby local supermarkets. In this covid- 19, consumers along with the retailers have opt for digital shopping and payment. Pandemic has given many challenges to the modern retailers and provided opportunities to both the traditional and modern retailers. It is vital for the

retailers to upgrade themselves with the technology, using strategies in terms of marketing, advertisement, partnerships and delivery this sector has all the possibility to bloom provided it has enough government support, policy and regulations made clear and implemented with the locomotive growth.

Overall, while the road to recovery may be challenging, the resilience and adaptability demonstrated by retailers in Puttur city offer hope for a brighter future. By learning from the lessons of the pandemic and embracing innovation, the retail sector can emerge stronger and more resilient in the years to come.

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#### **Conflicts of interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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