

Side by side in COVID-19: understanding family lockdown experiences through mother's lens

Nainika Hira^{1*}, Dhairya Khurana², Anushree Lal³, Samreen Rehman⁴

ABSTRACT

Background. With the advent of COVID-19, lockdowns have emerged as effective measures to control the spread of the virus. The present paper analyses the psychological impacts of lockdowns on families by studying the experiences of Indian mothers using the draw and tell method. **Method.** Twenty-seven mothers from all over India drew 'Good days' and 'Bad days,' which they experienced during the countrywide lockdown and explained them through an open-ended questionnaire. **Results.** The drawings were analyzed thematically, resulting in five themes. Mothers' 'Good days' were characterized by positive emotions, family support and bonding, the connective role of technology, and pleasurable activities, while 'Bad Days' consisted of high workload, family disputes, lack of communication, and negative media reporting. Findings also revealed that the participants engaged in pandemic-related preventive behaviors and perceived it both as a challenge to be overcome and an opportunity to bond with their families.

Keywords: Family, Drawings, COVID-19, Lockdown, Mothers

In December 2019, multiple cases of pneumonia were identified in Wuhan, China, attributed to a pathogen -severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), also known as COVID-19. The virus within months spread across the world. In India, the first case was identified on 30th January 2020, and subsequently, the first lockdown to prevent the spread of the disease was put on 24th March 2020 with 500 cases nationwide.

As the failure to contain the spread continued, 4 phases of lockdown were observed till May 2020. Lockdown refers to an emergency and preventative measure to restrict people's movement from one area to another (Grover et al., 2020). It is a temporary condition to limit social activities during the current pandemic. Even though the process of unlocking began in June 2020, the number of cases has not ceased to decline.

¹Post-graduate student, Department of Psychology, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India

²Post-graduate student, Department of Psychology, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India

³Post-graduate student, Department of Psychology, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India

⁴Post-graduate student, School of Human Ecology, Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai, India

*Responding Author

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As of 16th of March, 11,438,734 cases of COVID-19 have been reported. India is recording the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the world per day. Fatalities have reached 159,044 (World Health Organization, 2020). Public health measures such as compulsory lockdown, social isolation, and restricted travel have differential effects on different groups. Particularly women, people without work, young adults, and families from a lower-income group have reported being more psychologically stressed (Pieh, Budimir & Probst, 2020). Among these vulnerable groups, families serve as a junction where a range of psychological, social, and economic challenges amalgamate, risking the well-being of all its members.

Families, as defined by Desai (1994) as cited by Sonawat (2001, p.178) are “a unit of two or more persons united by marriage, blood, adoption, or consensual union, in general consulting a single household, interacting and communicating with each other.” They are a dynamic and functional unit, varying in terms of composition, pattern of interactions, value systems, socioeconomic characteristics, and so forth.

The impact of COVID-19 lockdown on Indian households remains to be unknown. Literature from other countries and researches from pandemics of the past suggest that under elevated external demands, communication among family members, individual adjustment, family routines, and rituals and rules, belief systems, and adaptability to new circumstances are likely to go under drastic shifts (e.g., Browne, Leckie, Prime, Perlman, & Jenkins, 2016; Prime, Wade & Brown, 2020; Spinelli, Lionetti, Pastore & Fasolo, 2020). Interconnectedness among family members further intricate this impact like change in the functioning of one family member leads to a change in the functioning of other family members — creating a spillover effect (Jenkins et al., 2012). Largely, family dynamics have changed in pursuit of finding the “new normal.”

Indian families are characterized by a collectivistic approach in communicating within and outside their family (Chadda & Deb, 2013). As beliefs about parenthood and household continue to change with globalization and mother's increased employment (Raley, Bianchi, & Wang, 2012), mothers continue to be perceived and act as primary figures in the family; being responsible for most domestic and caregiving household activities (see, e.g., McHale, Dinh, & Rao, 2014; Sriram & Navalkar, 2012; Tuli, 2012). Since the nationwide lockdown, a 100% increase in complaints regarding violence against women has been reported by the National Commission for Women (NCW), India (Vora, Malathesh, Das & Chatterjee, 2020, p.1). Other added stressors are increased workload in the form of jobs, housework and childcare, financial crisis, and fear for the family to get infected (Del Boca, Oggero, Profeta, & Rossi, 2020). It is indeed evident that women, especially mothers, have been tested in these trying times as most of the COVID-19 related burden falls on them without consideration to their already existent life responsibilities (McLaren, Wong, Nguyen & Mahamadachchi, 2020). Because these difficulties permeate the family systems' processes and structures, their impact will be longstanding (Prime et al., 2020).

Drawing as a research tool has been extensively used to tap into the lived experiences of families. Drawings as visual imagery are not a direct representation of experiences but rather contain inferred meanings of the drawer, capturing subjective understandings of a common phenomenon (Boden, Larkin & Iyer, 2019). The advantage of depicting visual-spatial spaces in drawings makes it especially suited to understand the sociality of family life and enrich verbal and literal data collected through traditional research methods (Kloft, Hawes, Moul, Sultan & Dadds, 2017). Bowers (2002) stated drawings, having universality in expression, allows its use in different cultures and with age groups. Through a comparison of projective

drawings of 43 mothers who experienced partner violence with the drawings of 56 children who witnessed violence between parents, Backos & Samuelson (2017) demonstrated the effectiveness of family drawings in the ability to access past memories and their usefulness as a treatment and assessment tool.

COVID-19 being a family affair, it becomes increasingly essential to assess the role of familial relationships in the meaning-making of a lockdown. Within these families, the effect of the pandemic may be gendered, wherein mothers are taking up new roles of educators while also managing existing physical and emotional caregiving duties and job commitments (Alon, Doepke, Olmstead-Rumsey & Tertilt, 2020; Craig & Churchill, 2020). Hence, this pandemic poses a challenge to mothers' physical, social, emotional, and mental well-being and, by extension, to their families who depend on them. Contrastingly, those mothers whose burdens are shared may view the restrictions as opportunities to get closer to one's family as opposed to being "stuck" with them, and collectively overcoming the challenges may produce conditions for developing family resilience (Prime et al., 2020). The present study explores the perceived familial experiences of mothers in a lockdown through a comparative analysis of their "Good Days" and "Bad Days" drawings. It serves to bring forth the lived accounts of mothers that are absent from the current literature on the COVID-19 lockdown. Further, the draw-and-write technique employed here provides an understanding of the meaning-making of these accounts, a factor critical to a family's ability to bounce back from these hard times (Walsh, 1998, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The study explores mothers' perceived familial experiences in a lockdown through a comparative analysis of their "Good Days" and "Bad Days" drawings.

Sample

Twenty-seven mothers residing in India were taken for the study. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting individuals. Participants who were in lockdown for the period of 21 days and had at least one child residing with them during the lockdown were selected. The age and number of children were not specified. The participants were aged between 28-55 years (Backos & Samuelson, 2017), with a mean age of 48.44 years, and belonged to an upper-middle-class socioeconomic status. Out of the total, 18 were stay at home mothers, while 9 were employed. Moreover, 21 mothers had nuclear families and 6 had joint families. Exclusion criteria excluded mothers living alone/not currently married and mothers having prior training in drawing.

Design

The study employs a qualitative phenomenological research design. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), phenomenological research is a type of qualitative research in which the lived experience of participants is described to provide a description of a phenomenon that has been experienced by the participants (p.12).

Measures

Demographic information including name or initials, age, occupation type (working and non-working), state, email address, family type, number of family members, number and age of children was obtained through a Demographic Form.

The participants' drawings were the primary measure to study their lived experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown. Participants were asked to visualize an image that best represented a 'Good Day' or a 'Bad Day' that they spent with their family during the lockdown, and then draw it on an A4 sized paper with pencil, without any time restrictions or use of artistic skills. Following each drawing's completion, participants answered a brief questionnaire to gain an understanding of the drawings from their perspective. This questionnaire entailed a brief explanation of the activity and communication taking place in the drawing and represented a 'Good Day' or 'Bad Day' with their family. To gauge participants' perceptions and experience of the lockdown, questions about the overall impact of the lockdown, and changes in their family's daily routines were also asked at the end.

Procedure

The participants fulfilling the inclusion criteria were approached by the researchers. The participants were explained the aim of the study and consent was obtained. Participants were assured that their responses would be anonymous and used only for research purposes. They were requested to fill up a Google form questionnaire, which approximately took 15-20 minutes. There were no time restrictions, and participants were instructed not to worry about their ability to draw. They were requested to use only a pencil and eraser and not ink or colored pen. Participants were instructed to label the family members drawn, e.g., husband, son, etc. They were also asked to retain all their drawings. On completion, participants had to take a photograph(s) or scan of the drawing(s) and upload it on the Google form. The drawing-based questionnaire was then answered by them to elaborate on the activities or communication depicted in their drawings. This questionnaire approach provided them the opportunity to express their experiences from their own perspectives, as shown in drawings. The researchers analyzed both the drawings and questionnaire responses.

Data Analysis

Four raters independently sorted the drawings into categories based on the image and its description. The data was reduced into meaningful units of analysis. These units were based on the manifest content, i.e., what the participants had drawn, and no attempts were made to seek inherent meanings. The researchers read the responses multiple times and immersed themselves in the data to obtain these units. The questionnaire responses also aided in forming meaningful units. The aesthetic value of drawings was not considered while categorizing them. Later, researchers compared their individual analyses. Following the first sorting, the raters negotiated a common set of categories for 'Good Day' drawings and 'Bad Day' drawings. Frequencies and percentages of each category and subcategory were noted. Common themes represented among the drawings and accompanying narrative were then derived through a thematic analysis approach.

RESULTS

Twenty-seven 'Good Day' drawings and twenty-seven 'Bad Day' drawings were received from mothers across India. These were analyzed to understand their meaning-making of lockdown experiences with their families. Tables 1-6 present the results that emerged.

Table 1 Aspects of Self Theme

Category	Good Day Drawing (n=27)		Bad Day Drawing (n=27)	
	n	%	n	%
Self in the drawing				
Presence	25	92.6	19	70.37
Absence	2	7.4	7	25.92
Emotions of Self				
Positive	20	74.07	1	3.71
Negative	0	0	21	77.7

The theme of ‘Aspects of self’ reflects the mother’s representation of themselves in the drawings. As seen in Table 1, under the category of Self in the Drawing of this theme, more mothers drew themselves on ‘Good Day’ (92.6%) than on ‘Bad Day’ (70.37%). Mothers in the ‘Good Day’ drawings were shown to be engaged in watching T.V. with family, doing household chores, celebrating birthdays, gardening, and praying. Drawings lacking self-representations were greater in number on ‘Bad Day’ (25.92%) as compared to ‘Good Day’ (7.4%). These ‘Bad Day’ drawings showcased only family member(s) or symbolic representations of event(s) like the death of a pet. In one such ‘Bad Day’ drawing, a participant has shown her daughter in distress due to uncertainties surrounding her academics and future (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Absence of self-depicted in a ‘Bad Day’ drawing

The category of ‘Emotion’ shows the emotional components of the lockdown experiences portrayed on the two days. Positive emotions of joy, surprise, and enjoyment were depicted primarily on ‘Good Day’ (74.07%). Mother’s narratives added additional detail to the experiences expressed in their pictures. A mother related to a drawing of herself, her husband, her two children, and a pet dog in their garden engaged in activities such as gardening, playing, and reading (Figure 2). She stated, “It gives me pure joy to spend quality time with my family.” At the same time, ‘Bad Day’ (77.7%) drawings were mainly characterized by negative emotions like guilt, anger, and frustration. For instance, a mother described her daughter’s sickness during the pandemic as a frightening experience.

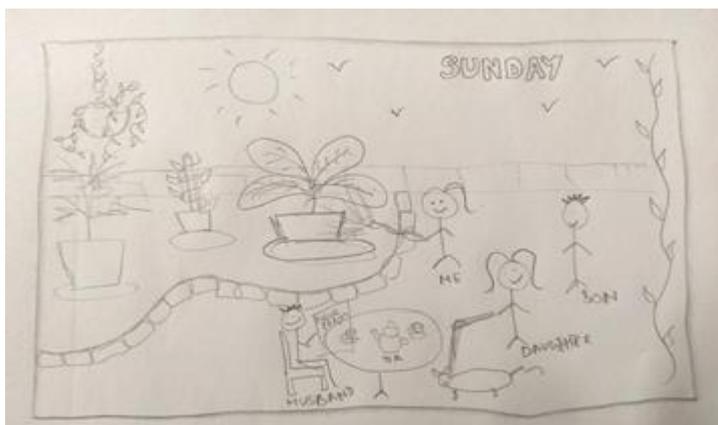


Figure 2. Emotion of joy depicted in a ‘Good Day’ drawing

Table 2 Self with Others Theme

Category	Good Day Drawing (n=27)		Bad Day Drawing (n=27)	
	n	%	n	%
Family members in the drawing				
Presence	26	96.29	17	62.96
Absence	1	3.71	9	33.3
Family bonding				
Increase	24	88.89	3	11.12
Decrease	1	3.71	9	33.3
Family involvement in Housework				
Presence	4	14.81	2	7.4
Absence	0	0	6	22.23
Communication				
Presence	19	70.37	7	25.92
Absence	8	29.63	19	70.37
Events				
Positive	4	14.81	2	7.4
Negative	0	0	2	7.4

The theme of ‘Self with Others’ shown in Table 2 describes the social aspects of the mother’s lockdown experiences, wherein the ‘others’ consisted of immediate and distant family. The family was drawn in 96.29% of ‘Good Day’ drawings, which was dropped to 62.96% in ‘Bad Days.’ A participant described a drawing of herself playing cards with her family as a ‘Good Day.’ She explained, “It (drawing) represents a good day because all of us sit together to play and Uno is a fun game which keeps you engaged.” On the contrary,

family members were absent from drawings more often on 'Bad Day' (33.3%) than on 'Good Days' (3.71%). Figure 3 shows a mother working alone in the kitchen. The mother describes it as a bad day, "Cooking food all the time was very irritating during lockdown."



Figure 3. Absence of family members depicted in a 'Bad Day' drawing

'Family Bonding' category relates to a sense of togetherness and support from the family depicted in the drawings. The mothers perceived their families to be more connected on 'Good Days' (88.89%), especially when family members were engaged in activities such as playing indoor games, watching movies, cooking, celebrating birthdays, watching television, and having meals together. In contrast, a decrease in closeness was stated in the case of 'Bad Day' drawings (33.3%). In one such drawing, family members (husband, son, daughter, and mother-in-law) are drawn in their respective rooms. Husband, daughter, and son are shown to be using their mobile phones while the mother-in-law is watching television (Figure 4). The participant expressed her dislike towards the sense of decrease in togetherness "There is no communication...everyone is in their own rooms, I do not like it."



Figure 4. Decrease in family bonding depicted in a 'Bad Day' drawing

Perceived presence or absence of support to mothers in housework such as cooking and cleaning by their family members in the face of increased workload in lockdown is illustrated through the category of 'Family involvement in Housework.' The percentages pertaining to the presence of family's support were similar for both, 'Good Day' drawings (14.81%) and 'Bad Day' drawings (7.4%); but a decrease in the same was depicted only in 'Bad Day' drawings (22.23%). For instance, in Figure 5, the mother has been depicted doing the household chores alone while family members are engaged in other activities. The

The category of 'Events' included particularly distinguished occasions experienced by the family together during the lockdown time. As shown in Table 2, the 'Good Day' drawings and 'Bad Drawings' did not differ greatly in their portrayal of either positive or negative events. 'Good Day' drawings included events like birthday celebrations (Figure 7), Mother's Day celebrations, and festivals. 'Bad Days' depicted negative events, including death and accidents.



Figure 7. Positive event of birthday celebration depicted in a 'Good Day' drawing

Table 3 Activities Theme

Category	Good Day Drawing (n=27)		Bad Day Drawing (n=27)	
	n	%	n	%
Experience of Activity				
Pleasurable	27	100	1	3.71
Unpleasurable	0	0	16	59.25
Type of Activity				
Shared	25	92.6	9	33.3
Independent	2	7.4	12	44.4

The dynamism in mothers' drawings was reflected through their and their families' engagement in a wide-range kind of activities. This dynamism has been included in the 'Activities' theme.

The pleasurable activities, under the 'Experience of Activity' category, were portrayed largely in the 'Good days' drawings, while no unpleasurable activities were reported. The pleasurable activities included watching movies, playing games, celebrating, and cooking. Pleasurable activities like playing indoor games with family were described as a "happy moment" by a participant. She reflected on the activity: "everyone forgot their worries related to the lock down and COVID." 59.25 % of 'Bad Drawings' had depictions of unpleasurable activities, with only 3.71% of pleasurable activities. These unpleasurable activities included housework, caretaking for a sick family member, tending to injured pets, and accidents, among others. Figure 8 shows a participant having a 'Bad Day' because of a household appliance malfunction.



Figure 8. Unpleasant activity of household appliance malfunction depicted in a ‘Good Day’

The ‘Type of Activity’ category indicated whether the activities were engaged in alone by the mothers or together with other family members. Shared activities such as watching T.V., playing games, cooking, and eating meals (Figure 9) were part of 92.6% of ‘Good Day’ drawings, while only 33.3% of ‘Bad Day’ drawings had portrayals of shared activities. Although independent activities were fewer in number, there were fewer instances of these in ‘Good Day’ drawings (7.4%) as compared to ‘Bad Day’ drawings (44.4%). In one such ‘Bad Day’ drawings that had shown independent activities, the mother has been shown to be leaving for work while her daughter is drawn in another corner, attending online classes. When asked why the image represents a ‘Bad Day,’ she responded, “All (members) are self-isolated.”

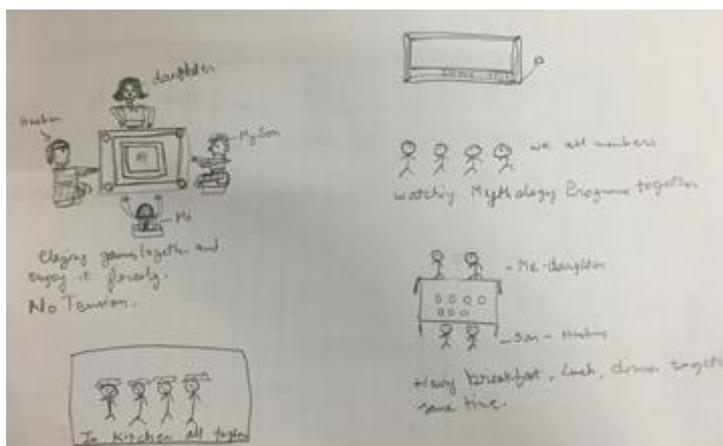


Figure 9. Shared activities depicted in a ‘Good Day’ drawing

Table 4 Gadgets and Mass Media Theme

Category	Good Day Drawing (n=27)		Bad Day Drawing (n=27)	
	n	%	n	%
Effect of Gadgets & Mass Media				
Positive	9	33.3	1	3.71
Negative	0	0	7	25.92

Side by side in COVID-19: understanding family lockdown experiences through mother's lens

A theme focusing on the role of gadgets including phones and laptops, and mass media in the form of news and social media in the lockdown experiences of mothers emerged in drawings, which has been shown in Table 4. ‘Good Days’ drawings (33.3%) emphasized the positive effects of gadgets and mass media. A ‘Good Day’ drawing showed three family members (mother, husband, and daughter) on a video call with the family's fourth member (son). As stated by the participant, gadgets have thus brought the family, “Everyone in the family is together, spending time with one another and talking.” In contrast, ‘Bad Day’ drawings had more depictions of gadgets' negative effects and mass media (25.92%), compared to none in ‘Good Days’ drawings. Figure 10 depicts a ‘Bad Day’ drawing, where the participant has shown her son using a gadget while eating. Displeasure is evident on the mother’s face, “my son has stopped (doing) physical activities and (is) busy with his mobile games.” The participant also perceived this behavior as worrisome, “It feels like they are ignoring their health...even their sleep schedule is hampered, which makes us, the parents, concerned.” Another participant stated that “news channels have made the environment tense.”

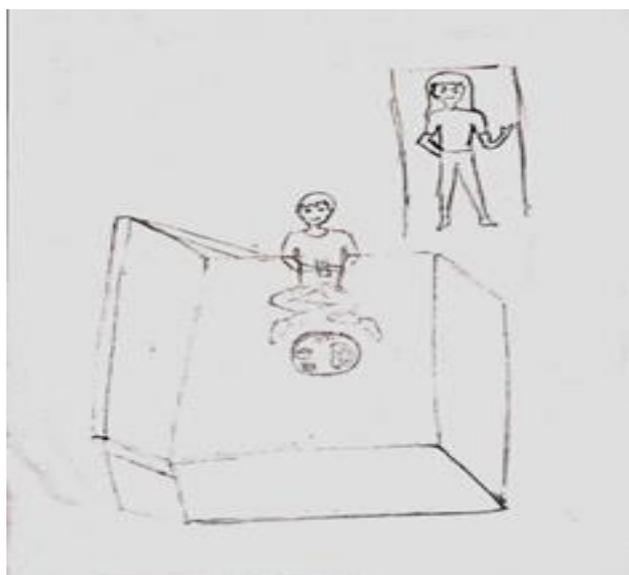


Figure 10. Negative effect of gadget and mass media depicted in a ‘Bad Day’ drawing

Table 5 Effect of COVID-19 Theme

Category	Good Day Drawing (n=27)		Bad Day Drawing (n=27)	
	n	%	n	%
COVID-19 caused changes				
Positive perception	7	25.92	2	7.4
Negative perception	2	7.4	8	29.62

The perception of changes that the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown has caused was a recurrent theme in the mother’s drawings, presented in Table 5. These perceptions involve complying with COVID-19 guidelines, change in daily routine, free time at hand, and the like. Changes like staying safe indoors and getting an opportunity to spend time with family were portrayed positively in ‘Good Day’ drawings (25.92%). A participant stated that

“routines have changed, and we are enjoying free time.” There were also a few instances where these changes were negatively perceived in ‘Good Day’ drawings (7.4%); “Life in COVID is so dull,” said one participant. COVID-19 caused changes that were perceived as more limiting and worry-provoking in ‘Bad Day’ drawings (29.62%). The pandemic and consequent lockdown contributed to uncertainty about the future, anxiety regarding the health of high-risk category members, feeling overwhelmed with COVID-19 related updates and guidelines (Figure 11), and fear of getting infected.

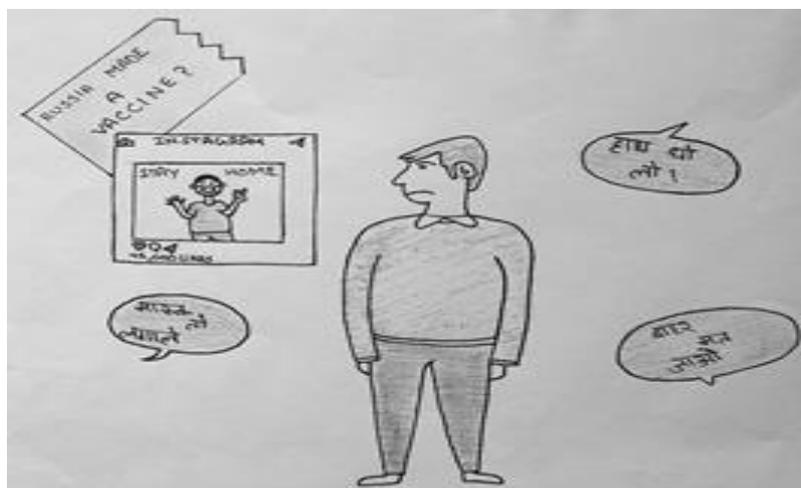


Figure 11. Negative perception of COVID-19 caused changes depicted in a ‘Bad Day’ drawing

DISCUSSION

The current study aimed to understand the familial experiences of Indian mothers during countrywide COVID-19 lockdown using the draw and tell method. Twenty-seven mothers were asked to draw their ‘Good days’ and ‘Bad days’ during the lockdown and explain them through an open-ended structured questionnaire. A thematic analysis of the drawings and their explanations was carried out, resulting in five major themes- Aspects of Self; Self with Family; Activities during Lockdown; Gadgets and Mass Media; and Effect of COVID-19.

Aspects of Self

In both drawings, the majority of mothers drew themselves, and self was present slightly more in drawings that represented “Good days.” The presence and absence of mothers in the drawing can be viewed as representing how the mothers recalled their days. According to Libby and Eibach (2002), a person recalls a memory in a third-person view (seeing themselves doing activities) when the memories are about aspects of self that changed. In this study, participants recalled their behavior in an unusual situation (nationwide lockdown), where they engaged in behaviors that they may not have done after the lockdown was over. For instance, spending time with family members who were at home due to the lockdown. One participant mentions, “Lockdown has made us watch each step.”

Moreover, the absence of self in drawings represents a first-person perspective where the participant ‘saw’ the memory through her eyes. Here, the self in the memory is stable and congruent with the present self (Libby & Eibach, 2002). This implies that the drawings where the mother was not present represented those aspects of self that are stable. For example, the death of a pet or celebrating Mother’s Day.

Self across the two drawings also differed in the emotions displayed by the participants. 'Good Day' drawings included positive emotions of joy, surprise, and enjoyment. While, 'Bad Day' drawings represented negative emotions like guilt, anger, and frustration. These findings are congruent with past studies. In a study by Linder et al. (2017), sick children's good days included drawings of happy emotions, while bad days consisted of negative emotions such as sadness, anger, and frustration. Moreover, Löfström and Nevgi (2014), who studied emotions faced by teachers using drawings, found that negative emotions were drawn when teaching was perceived as burdensome, or unpleasant. Hence, when the task of the participant was unpleasant or burdensome, they had a bad day and portrayed negative emotions in their drawings. In this study, bad days were characterized by a high workload, isolation from others, illnesses, and saying goodbyes. All of which are unpleasant and burdensome. One participant described her experiences as "Emotionally taxing."

Self with Family

The primary aim of the present study was to present an account of the perceived familial experiences of mothers in the lockdown. Family took the center stage in many of the drawings and was represented in different 'Good' and 'Bad' days. 'Good Days' were characterized by family members' presence and togetherness, enhanced family bonding and communication, family support in housework, and engagement in pleasurable activities together (i.e., games, movies, celebrations, cooking, and eating). The results emphasized the importance of supportive family relationships, as well as shared leisure during an adversity like COVID-19. Leisure provides opportunities for the strengthening of family bonds. Such opportunities pave the way for increased communication, efficacious problem solving, family life satisfaction, family cohesion, family adaptability, and overall enhanced family functioning (Agate et al., 2009). However, 'Bad Days' were predominated by the depictions of decrease in family bonding due to disagreements and disputes, perceived (independent gadget use, being in separate rooms, absence of family support in housework) or actual (a family member leaving, social distancing, conflict of interest in celebrating festivals together) separation from family, decreased communication, bonding and family time, as well as ill physical (flu) and mental health (stress) of loved ones.

Activity

In terms of activity, the majority of 'Good day' drawings featured 'shared' activities, done along with other members of the family. The presence of shared activity in the 'good days' may be attributed to the social support accompanying it. Marcinkus, Whelan-Berry, and Gordon (2007) have defined personal social support as involving one's spouse, parents, children, extended family, and friends and found that it leads to increased job satisfaction and lesser stress among working women. Furthermore, mothers having higher informal social support reported lower parenting stress levels, negative affect, and depression. This resulted from increased optimism, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being owing to the support (Ekas, Lickenbrock & Whitman, 2010). Along with support, it was discovered that all the good days featured pleasurable activities such as watching movies, playing games, or celebrating with others. This could be explained by Tirone and Shaw (1997), who assert that Indian origin women preferred activities involving their families and liked the social aspects of living with a large family rather than being alone during free time. This implies that the presence of social support that accompanied the shared activities not only had positive outcomes for mood and well-being but also that women sought social support during pleasurable activity.

On the other hand, 'Bad day' drawings included unpleasurable activities or events, such as doing chores, family conflicts, illness, and accidents. In addition to this, only 3 of the activities were shared. These drawings were characterized by a high workload. According to the Time Use Survey India (2019, p.26), 79.2% of urban females spent time on unpaid domestic service activities compared to just 22.6% of urban males. These activities included preparing meals, cleaning, maintenance, shopping, etc. Moreover, urban females spent 293 minutes per day on such activities, while males spent just 94 minutes per day on them. Thus, the burden of work that falls primarily on women leads to 'bad days', especially during the absence of support, as conveyed by the participant saying, "Tired of doing so much work." Notably, in certain drawings, conventional positive or neutral experiences were drawn in 'Bad Days,' for instance, celebrating birthdays and staying at home. Larson, Gillman, and Richards (1997) have found that a mother's positive experience during a family leisure activity is often overshadowed by her responsibilities like housework and child care. Thus, work is unpleasurable if its high workload and the responsibilities of the mother overshadow her leisure.

Technology

With regards to gadgets and mass media use, it was interesting to note that technology and media were perceived positively when it led to increased communication and family connection; on the contrary, it also contributed to making a day 'Bad' when communication and connection were hindered. A 'Good Day' consisted of watching movies on a laptop or television or video calling a family member. Kubey (1990) found that families who love spending time together will be more likely to watch television together, in which case the time they spend watching TV together will reinforce and build family cohesion. Additionally, sharing information about family life through face-to-face and video calls is closely linked to a higher degree of perceived family well-being as it delivers multiple verbal, non-verbal, and social cues simultaneously and brings instant and coordinated feedback leading to a better perception of information (Baym, Zhang & Lin, 2004, as cited in Shen et al., 2017). A 'Bad Day' displayed negative news updates and drawings where members separately used their gadgets in different rooms of the house. A participant reported, "Kids are too much into their phones, pc, tv playing games, and (they are) utilizing less time." In a study of the psychological and social effects of the Internet on involvement and well-being, a relationship was established between the increased use of the Internet and deterioration in communication among family members within the household (Kraut et al., 1998, as cited in Villegas, 2013). Media usage may disrupt interpersonal family relationships resulting in family members expressing frustration at each other's solitary utilization of technology (Morrison & Krugman, 2001). The existence of any media device during dinner time is a distraction for all and hinders successful interaction between family members. For all the important benefits that result from families sharing a meal, having the media present during this ritual may have a negative impact on the development of the family system (Villegas, 2013). A participant described, "Got tired of everybody repeating the same negative things about Corona 24/7", while she drew a picture of a post on Instagram reading "Stay home, Stay safe," highlighting that updates reported by the media increased the sense of threat experienced by people during COVID-19 (Slovic et al., 2004, as cited in Rubaltelli et al., 2020) which explained its inclusion under a 'Bad Day.'

Effect of COVID-19

Both positive and negative perceptions of COVID-19 were portrayed in the drawings of the participants. The positive perceptions of COVID-19 emerged in other literature too. A study by Evans et al. (2020) on Australian parents indicated that even though rarely, families

viewed this pandemic as an opportunity to develop good qualities like gratitude, patience, and strength during difficulties. Similar to the present study, Australian parents also revealed that due to the pandemic, they could spend more time with family, share household chores, and engage in hobbies. Evans et al. (2020) assert that these have led to more time for self-care for mothers, explaining the more positive perceptions present in the 'Good day' drawings.

While negative perceptions were expressed in both drawings, according to Roy et al. (2020), out of 662 Indians, 80% were preoccupied with the COVID-19 pandemic, while 72% feared it. Furthermore, 40% of Indians admitted being paranoid with the thought of contracting the virus. This paranoia and fear were attributed to electronic, and print media as half of the participants reported panic due to media reports about COVID-19.

Another trend in the present study was a depiction of COVID-19 related preventive measures such as not going out. Roy et al. (2020) have also indicated that Indians engaged in preventive measures such as not going out, and engaging in protective behaviors such as the use of masks (37%), gloves and sanitizers (75%), and increasing handwashing (85%). These results have been replicated in other studies too (Gudi et al., 2020; Kaushik, Agarwal & Gupta, 2020), but behaviors like handwashing and sanitizer use were not depicted in the drawings. Moreover, preventive behaviors like not going out may lead to the mothers feeling stuck or trapped inside their homes, thereby leading to negative emotions and bad days.

Weather

Another subtle influence of weather and nature was observed to differentiate the 'Good Days' from the 'Bad Days.' Pleasant weather was represented in 11.12% of the 'Good Day' drawings depicted through scenes of being outside the house with sun, birds, flowers, and plants. Howarth and Hoffman (1984) found that as the number of hours of sunshine increased, scores on optimism were also found to increase. A participant stated that "(I) Realised that nature was healing. The air was fresher, which eventually led to happiness." Unpleasant depictions of nature were characterized by a similar frequency (11.12%) in the form of rain and hot weather in 'Bad Days.'

Implications

A 'family' is a unit of paramount importance in Indian contexts, and mothers occupy a central role in it. The present study aided in understanding the lived experiences of COVID-19 and the role played by families during this time through a unique, universal, and non-culture biased medium of 'Good Day' and 'Bad Day' drawings. The study stressed the importance of social support. Social support by family members as well as division of labor in households is a key to better psychological outcomes of mothers, like well-being, positive affect, and lower stress. Additionally, the aspects that make a day 'Good' (i.e., family support, greater communication, and bonding such as shared pleasurable activities) can also work as coping mechanisms or protective factors for people facing a difficult situation such as COVID-19 and its consequences. Furthermore, technology and mass media play a crucial role in shaping the perceptions of the pandemic, especially its negative perceptions and preventive behaviors. Technology led to both increasing and hindering communication between family members. Furthermore, work is unpleasant if it leads to a high workload and if the mother's responsibilities overshadow her leisure (even during positive experiences). Thus, work, when viewed as threatening, burdensome, or unpleasant, evokes negative emotions. Whether participants perceived the lockdown positively or negatively also

influenced the emotions they felt. The study provided implications for the arts-based expression of lived experiences.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study has certain limitations. The sample size of the study was not very large. Moreover, the sample was predominantly limited to a homogenous regional, ethnic, and socioeconomic status. This limits the capacity to generalize the findings to a wider population of mothers in the country. This study has employed drawing as a method to collect data, analyzing only the manifest content. In the future, other methods such as focus group discussions could be corroborated with this method. Moreover, other aspects of the drawing, including the choice of colors, the context of the participant (past and present), and the latent meaning, could be studied. As the second and third waves of COVID-19 approaches in many countries, a lockdown situation is probable. Directions for future research include replicating the findings on a much larger and diverse sample. It would also prove useful to study the role of other demographic variables such as age, religion, number of children, family type, and employment status in understanding experiences in the lockdown. Future researches could also study fathers as the economy slows down and employment opportunities drop. Comparisons could be drawn between mothers' experiences in a feminine versus masculine country in a cross-cultural study. Lastly, exploring ways of coping and coping resources (Internet, hobbies, family support, keeping a journal) could be interesting.

CONCLUSION

The impact of COVID-19 lockdown was apparent on the perceived familial experiences of Indian households. Through their “Good Days” and “Bad Days” drawings, mothers in this study provided rich personal data about the unique shifts in their lived experiences. Five major themes discovered were: Aspects of Self; Self with Others; Activities during Lockdown; Gadgets and Mass Media; and Effect of COVID-19. Even though the five themes provide an accurate summary of mothers' lockdown experiences, it should be noted that these do not exist in isolation; these are interrelated in nature. The presence of family in the drawings and the subsequent social support provided by them often made the activities pleasurable and the day ‘good’.

In contrast, bad days were the result of the absence of members, especially in household tasks. Technology and mass media also played a crucial role in shaping the perceptions of COVID-19, especially the negative perceptions of COVID and preventive behaviors. Furthermore, technology augmented the connection between family members by increasing communication between members. Besides, the perceptions of COVID-19 also influenced the participants' emotions differing and ranging from fear and paranoia to enjoyment and togetherness.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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