

Effect of Therapeutic Art on Underprivileged Population during Post-Covid Recovery Phase

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ABSTRACT

Art used is usually used as a great stress reliever. It is used by people largely in terms of communication and expressing their deepest feelings, people in the ancient times saw art as a way to vent and heal themselves with its regular use. Even the medical practitioners identify people suffering from mental health illnesses and stress benefitting from its use. (Farokhi ,2011). Therefore, art therapy in this paper was used as an effective activity based medium with the underprivileged sections. Covid-19 made people feel fragile and disoriented. The people from a satisfactory socioeconomic status still have resources to take help. The population selected for the conduction of artwork was the underprivileged population, who cannot afford mental healthcare suffer in silence and face detrimental impact on their emotional wellbeing. The consent and subjective recording were taken after which a series of activities were conducted with the subject selected from domestic help service. She was a 30-year-old female, residing in Delhi. The activities performed where as follows-Activity 01- Mandala coloring and covid-19 symbol making, Activity 02- Prayer Mandala, Activity 03- Collage Making and lastly, Activity 04- Creative Psychoeducation. During and after each activity the observations were recorded. All the activities were performed through their understanding of the Post covid-19 situation. The subject successfully explained and associated her experiences as well as emotions through the artworks. At the end she had a sense of happiness and peace to perform something she had never done and felt appreciated. The series of activities were also conducted on a Ngo population through an online modality and the effects seen were also helpful.

Keywords: Art, Covid-19, Mental Health, Rural population

A rt therapy and art-based interventions

Art therapy includes an integrative mental health as well as human services profession that involves including individuals, families and communities through an active art-making, creative processes and applied psychological theory with human experience within a psychotherapeutic relationship. Art therapy is facilitated by a professional art therapist effectively supporting personal and relational treatment goals as well as the concerns for the community. Art therapy can be used to improve cognitive and sensorimotor functions, fostering self-esteem and self-awareness and cultivating emotional

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Received: July 23, 2022; Revision Received: November 28, 2022; Accepted: December 06, 2022

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resilience, promoting insights and enhancing social skills of the person. It helps in resolving the conflicts and distress and advancing societal and ecological changes. Professionals from this field work with individuals, couples, families and groups within diverse settings.

Settings where art-based activities can be applied are-

- Hospitals
- Schools
- Veteran's clinics
- Private practice
- Psychiatric and rehabilitation facilities
- Community clinics
- Crisis centers
- Forensic institutions
- Senior communities

Rural population and mental health concerns during the pandemic

The psychological effects of the pandemic were best understood in terms of the problems and issues that emerged as a response to social isolation and lockdown along with the aftermath of becoming infected. Additionally, the consequences are multidimensional. From the economic point of view one of the major effects would be on the employment of millions of people in the rural areas where concern for mental health and its treatment usually takes a step back in areas having lesser resources. Emotional impacts of the pandemic follow them. People from rural population lost their jobs mostly from the urban places, left cities becoming unemployed and carried away the trauma and stress of not being able to support their families and covering the distances as far as 500-100 km on foot. In the global scenario of crisis of covid-19 pandemic, mental health issues not only hit the rural population but its management was far more difficult due to lack of accessibility, availability and financial constraints on those people. Many people like domestic workers,

Relevance of art for people-

There is no doubt in general that people feel relaxed, at ease and state that any form of art is therapeutic for their mental health of society since they provide interest, amusement and satirical and challenging vision to people but they also help in flourishing, or more specifically completing sense of physical, social and mental well-being. (Macnaughton et, al, 2005)

Art based practices therefore have been used in this sense within communities for addressing many health issues and social inclusion of the underprivileged and marginalised communities like elderly and other disadvantaged groups. (Argyle & Bolton,2005)

Research suggests that the role and impacts of the art in community setting is somewhat limited or even non-existent for many rural communities, there is general agreement among many disciplines that community participation becomes a key element in individual well-being and health of that particular community. (VicHealth,2005).

METHODOLOGY

- **Sample population:** Domestic Help
- **Age:**30 years

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- **Aim:** The aim is to observe through experimental learning on Effect of Therapeutic Art on Underprivileged population during Post-Covid Phase
- **Objective:** The Application of Therapeutic Art on Underprivileged and Ngo Population for emotional relaxation during post covid recovery phase

Case study of a domestic helper

Week 01

Image 01

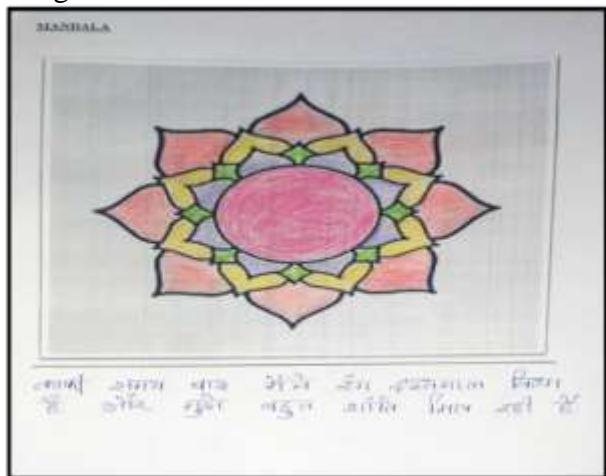


Image 02

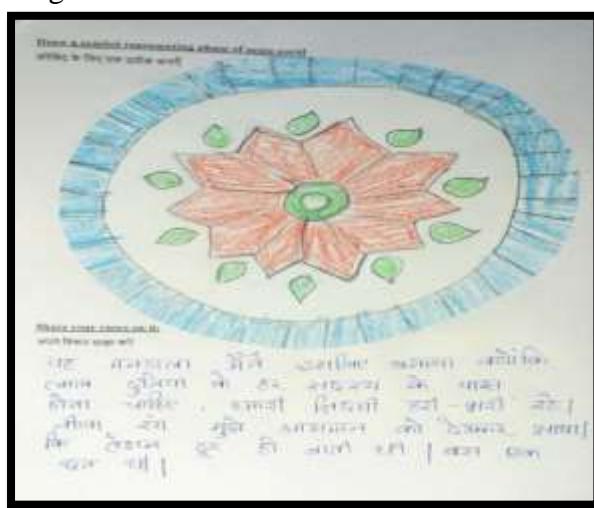
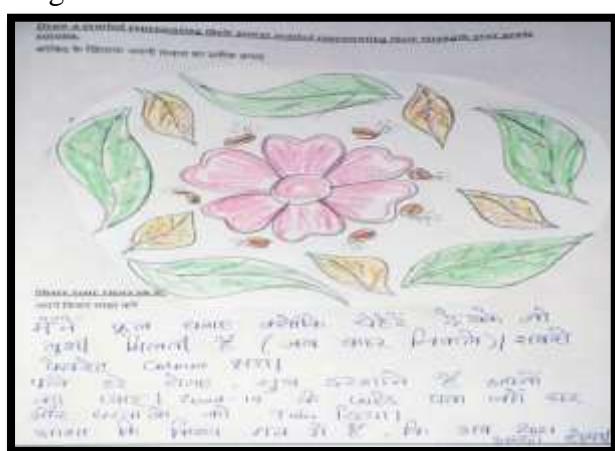


Image 03



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Week 02

Image 04

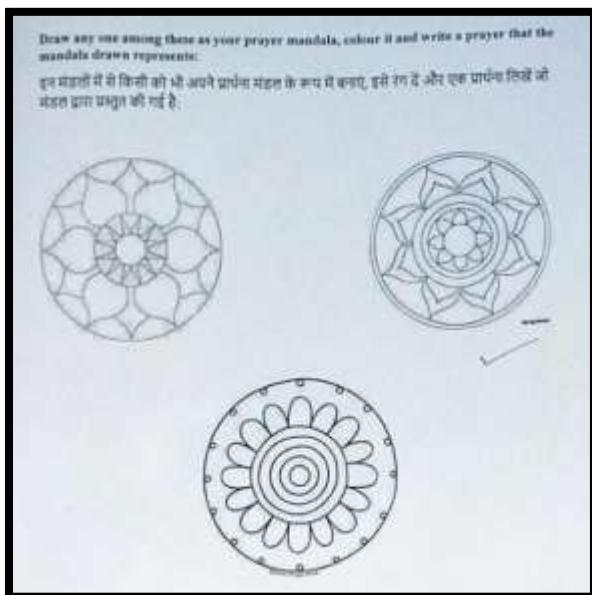


Image 05

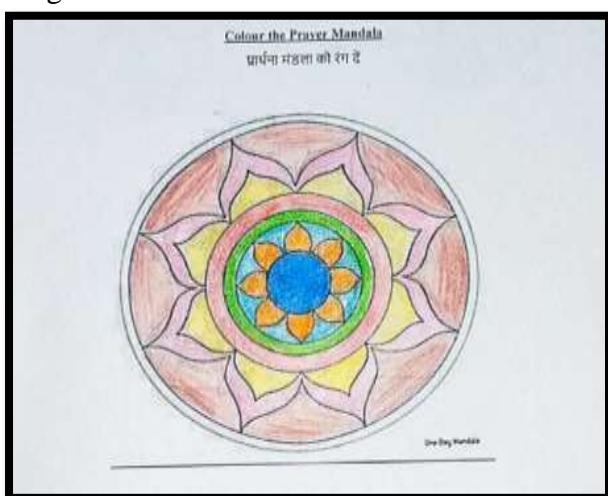
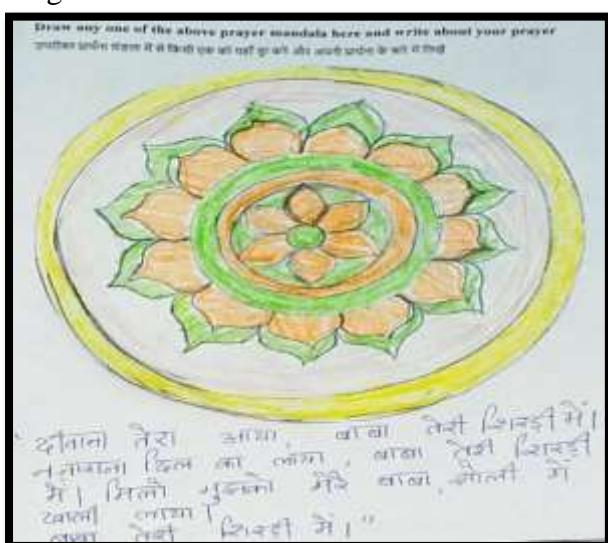


Image 06



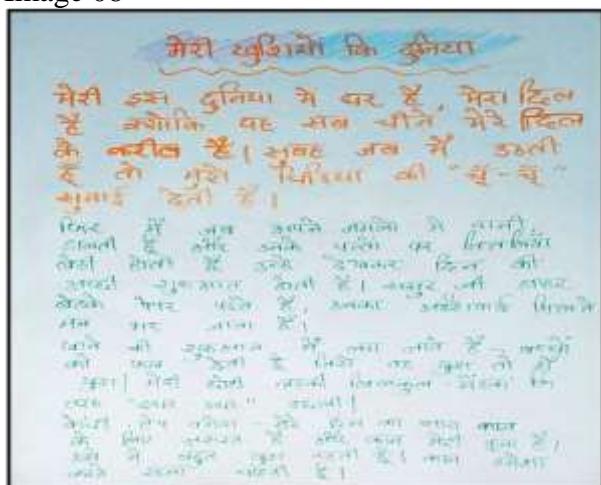
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Week 03

Image 07

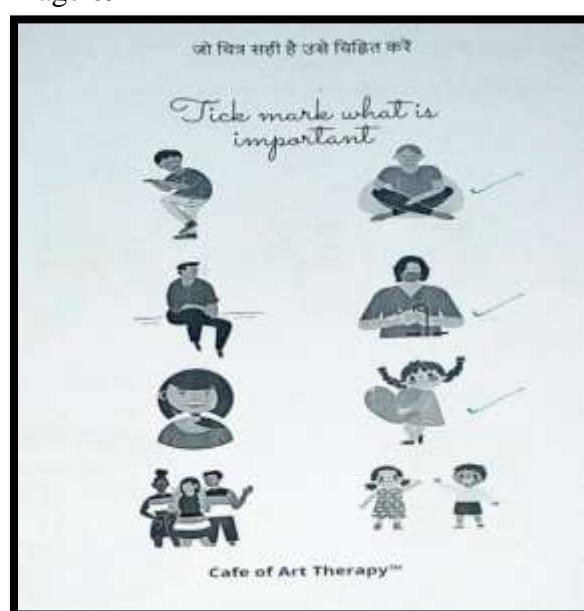


Image 08



Week 04

Image 09



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Image 10

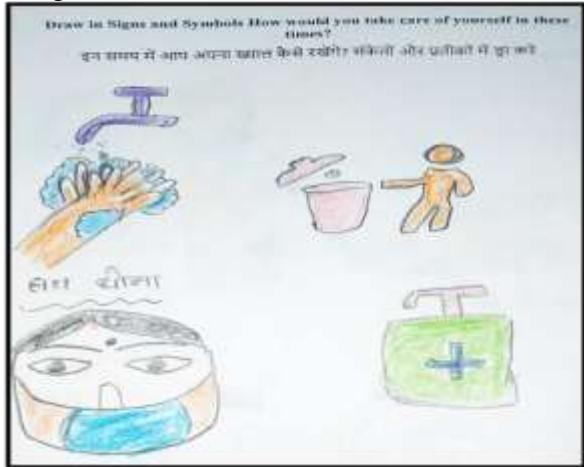
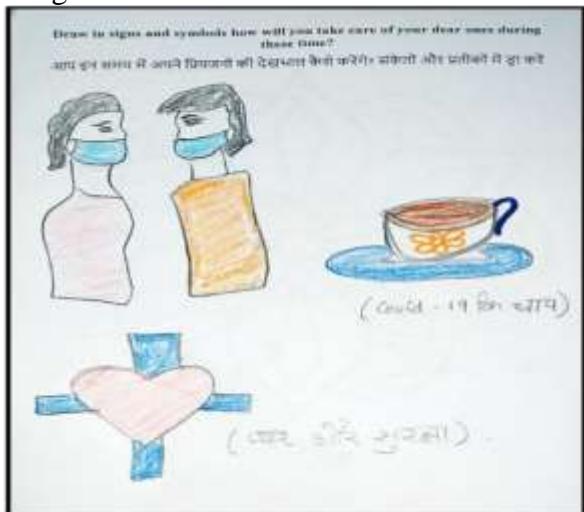


Image 11



Summary of the activities conducted

For the week 01, before the activities were conducted with the subject there was a short rapport formation with her for reducing any anxiousness regarding the session. There was a creation of a common ground with her where she was made feel comfortable. Her highs and lows during the covid where discussed, where she explained how she was completely unemployed during Covid-19. Talking about all this made her slightly emotional but in a control manner. She was proud that she handled all of those difficulties by her own. Then, a small game was performed asking about her strengths and weaknesses. She very cheerfully played the game and even from the beginning associated it with covid. After she was relaxed and confident enough the conduction was started.

While coloring the *first Mandala* she was a bit hesitant to hold a crayon mentioning that it has been years since she did it, she was motivated by the intern and told that it will not be judged to which she responded a yes. This activity put her at ease, she said it felt “returning to her child state of mind”. She felt peaceful. In the next part of drawing the *corona symbol* made her think for a while and then make it. She drew it all at once and filled in the colors she felt like filling in. Specific patterns made her realize of being caught in a cage. Colors like red made her feel inner strength, blue was associated with the longing of looking at the sky. During covid she just had this “chatt” (rooftop) she would stare at.

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At last, drawing her strength symbol made her feel very excited and she made it in no time. She very enthusiastically explained each and every part of the symbols representing her strengths. Flowers- for faces of her loved ones, green leaves for harmony in life, spending time with her loved ones. Diyas for further hope of a better 2021.

- For the second week a *prayer Mandala* was drawn by the subject, selected from the given set of 3 Mandalas. She selected the second one and made it, colored it and wrote a prayer that was she sang for almost a year now. This prayer was an actual prayer which she dedicated to “*Sai Baba*”. she mentioned how it gave her a lot of strength and she used to sing it all the time whenever she felt distressed and concerned with her life. She even explained as to how she specifically chose the colors depicting the dress color combination that the idols in the Mandir wear. Yellow, green and orange are the theme colors used in every *Sai Baba* ritual. Her strength mainly came from the submission to the divine.
- In the activity of collage making, she chooses some very bright and colourful cut-outs which she said depicted all her good and happy aspects. While making the collage the subject was patient and very much involved in the way she wanted the cut-outs to be glued in the circle. All here explanations were very spontaneously said and she didn't have to give much of a thought as to why she chose these cutouts.

Case study of Ngo school children

Name of the Ngo-East sons' school, Delhi NCR

Age of the population- 5-16 years of age

Summary of the activities conducted

After forming rapport with the group of children in the NGO, an image was shown to the children and was followed by an interaction based on asking them what it represents, to psychoeducation them on safety measures during covid-19 recovery phase. A picture was explained to them and they were asked to initiate a conversation over it. The session was closed by asking them to draw a symbol representing the ‘hero’ within them and encouraged them to explain it.

They had to explain the picture and initiate a conversation over it. The session was closed by asking them to draw a symbol representing the ‘hero’ within them and encouraged them to explain it. The children were extremely enthusiastic and happy to perform the activities.

At last, the children were asked to write about one superpower which their superhero had. Most of them drew “mother” as their superhero and told her immense love for them as her superpower.

DISCUSSION

The aim is to observe through experimental learning on Effect of Therapeutic Art on Underprivileged population during Post-Covid Phase. The population selected for the conduction of artwork was the underprivileged population, who cannot afford mental healthcare suffer in silence and face detrimental impact on their emotional wellbeing. Since experimental application of any therapeutic exercises can't be done online unless having a practical hands-on-exposure, hence given project we have in the first three weeks conducted hands-on practical application on our respective population from Essential Services and Domestic Help and then conduct the same on NGO Population online. A series of activities were conducted within two phases.

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In the first phase, it was conducted with the domestic worker. The subject was a 30-yr female who was extremely overwhelmed, excited and felt a sense of tranquillity while performing the activities. Overall, it was found that the subject experienced an amalgamation of emotions right from the very beginning, whether being introduced to the activities or initiating their own artwork. In the second phase of the study, it was conducted with the Ngo population aged, 5-16 years. As the art therapy helped subjects understand corona and its symptoms. It also provided them a medium to create self-awareness about their own strengths, willpower despite whatever they had faced during the lockdown period. While thinking and reflecting on their own art works it could be seen that subjects developed a sense of social skills to communicate whatever they felt while making them. As subjects created the artwork, they analysed what they made and how it made them feel about it. It could be seen that people of all ages can benefit from creating such art work whenever they feel extremely distressed.

As it was used with the impoverished community and the subjects reported a sense of alignment with what they made, it was seen that they can benefit from it at a wider intervention level as well. The Art-based activities were seen as a medium that helped them to articulate the unknown feelings of love, strength and affirmations that they experienced during the covid-19 pandemic phase.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was application of therapeutic Art on the Underprivileged and Ngo Population for emotional relaxation during post covid recovery phase. It was found that the subjects were able to understand about covid-19 as a virus and its precautions. Further, they could easily understand what was asked from them to be made as their own artwork. A series of therapeutic artworks were made by them and was analysed in order to relate it with the type of emotion felt while making it. Overall, it was seen that art-making helped them to express what they felt during the covid 19 pandemic.

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Acknowledgement

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Ganjoo, S. (2022). Effect of Therapeutic Art on Underprivileged Population during Post-Covid Recovery Phase. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 10(4), 996-1003. DIP:18.01.097.20221004, DOI:10.25215/1004.097