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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### UNRAVELING THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES\_ CHALLENGES AND TRANSFORMATIONS (2)-1

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#### ABSTRACT

Art is a reflection of the cultural, social and historical contexts in which it emerges. By exploring different cultures, and perspectives, students gain a deeper understanding of global issues, social justice and the role of art in society. Art explores its interpretations and representation. The field of art education has been impacted by the covid-19 pandemic in complex ways. Art educators have been challenged with teaching visual art skills, practices and concepts, to students in virtual classrooms using non-conventional means. Their principal goal has been to provide quality education in the Visual arts for all students. The National Art Education Association provided a wealth of digital resources to support virtual interactions during this time. These resources enabled art educators to successfully address the educational needs of their students. The long-term impact of the pandemic will require research to understand the nature of the impact of the pandemic on education and how educational policy needs to be adjusted to reflect the new-post-pandemic educational landscape. Art and cultural organisations in the region are re-thinking audience engagement through digital approaches as well as continuing to commission artists to create/ inspire new work and we are seeing arts and cultural organisations coming together and creating peer-support groups.

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## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 global pandemic has wrought severe public health challenges and large-scale societal, organisational, economic, and personal challenges. The constraints imposed on our daily lives to limit the spread of coronavirus have resulted in individuals being confined to their homes and a marked disruption of normal activities. In urban India, artists reached online audiences with greater ease, as virtual performance, talks and art walk-throughs became the norm. Urging both the Centre and state governments to take care of artists whose livelihoods have been affected by the pandemic. It will provide financial assistance to over a lakh artists to help them overcome the crisis. Covid-19 has affected the lives and livelihoods of artists like never before. Those who have dedicated their entire lives to arts are now struggling. The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound psychological impact on people across the globe, including artists. Artists faced unique challenges during this time due to the restrictions, uncertainties, and disruptions to their usual routines and livelihoods. The crisis has also affected artists in very specific ways, artists endured art shows being cancelled, studio space becoming unaffordable, creativity plummeting to new lows, and more.

**Lack of Enthusiasm:** There is on inspirations, Artists feel so much anxiety, depression and sometimes fear. Some artists do miss going to show openings, meeting and chatting with other artists.

**A Welcome Distraction:** Some artist's paintings improved in 2020. They always paint whenever they can and love the online courses from all over the world. The focus on all that painting has been a helpful distraction.

**Cancellation Station:** They could not do an annual art tour of their studio. Few artists feel that they have more time to paint which they loved and produced more.

**More Time to Paint:** As an art student, he/she lost valuable studio time. On the plus side, he/she was able to create a studio space in the apartment so they had more time to paint but less access to resources. All classes and workshops are virtual and not in person.

**Creative Reinvention:** It has allowed time to invest in creativity and nature, and coffee. Artists took up abstract painting as a new form of expression, It changed subject matter also. Rise to the challenge of our new normal of life in a global pandemic. At the time of pandemic artists get ample time to do their art work, but due to lack of materials - are not able to utilise it properly. Other hand artists were forced to find an alternative approach to represent his work with enthusiasm and excitement using new materials.

**Positive Impacts on Artist and art practice:** The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on various aspects of society, including the art world and artists.

While there were certainly challenges and disruptions, some positive impacts emerged during this time:

**Digital Creativity and Innovation:** With lockdowns and restrictions on physical gatherings, artists turned to digital platforms to showcase their work. Virtual exhibitions, online galleries, and live-streamed performances became popular. This digital shift allowed artists to reach global audiences, transcending geographical barriers and connecting with a broader fanbase.

**Exploration and Experimentation:** The pandemic provided artists with more time for introspection and experimentation. Many artists used this period to explore new techniques, mediums, and styles. Without the pressure of traditional exhibitions and events, artists could focus on personal growth and artistic development.

**Focus on Local Art and Sustainability:** With international travel restrictions, there was a shift towards supporting local artists and art scenes. This focus on local talent and culture helped sustain and promote regional art communities.

**Art Therapy and Mental Health:** The pandemic took a toll on mental health for many individuals. Art therapy gained prominence as a means to cope with anxiety, stress, and isolation. Creating art became a therapeutic outlet for many people, not just professional artists.

**Innovation in Art Education:** With physical classes suspended in many places, art educators adapted to online teaching. While this posed challenges, it also led to the development of new teaching methods and digital tools that could enhance art education even after the pandemic.

**Mental health issues surge for performing artists:** 92% of performing artists experienced significant changes to their work during the early stages of the pandemic – and at least half experienced depression. The major finding that emerged from the research was that the disruption to performances during lockdown let performers re-evaluate their artistic practice, whether through a break or reassessing their career paths. Some artists reported that their mental health, which may have already been impaired through the stress of working as performing artists, suffered or became exacerbated during COVID-19. The most affected were early career artists, freelancers, and women, many of whom were excluded from government support such as JobKeeper. Some sought mental health support, but some were inhibited from seeking help by the stigma associated with poor mental health or were prevented from seeking support by issues of access or cost. It has been observed by health experts that the ongoing pandemic has badly affected the mental health of people.

#### How artists managed the situation

**Virtual Platforms:** Many artists turned to online platforms to share their work and connect with audiences. Virtual exhibitions, live-streamed performances, and online workshops became popular ways for artists to stay connected and maintain visibility.

**New Creative Outlets:** Some artists used the pandemic as an opportunity to explore new mediums or styles of art. The restrictions forced them to think outside the box and find innovative ways to express themselves.

**Art Therapy:** Some artists turned to art therapy as a means of processing their emotions and coping with the challenges brought on by the pandemic. Engaging in their art as a form of self-expression and catharsis allowed them to navigate through their feelings.

**Support Networks:** Artists sought support from peers and artist communities through virtual forums, social media groups, and online gatherings. Sharing experiences and concerns with like-minded individuals provided a sense of camaraderie and solidarity.

**Self-Care:** Many artists prioritised self-care practices to manage stress and anxiety. Activities like meditation, exercise, journaling, and spending time in nature helped in maintaining emotional well-being.

**Government and Community Support:** Various governments and organisations provided financial and emotional support to struggling artists during the pandemic. Grants, relief funds, and online events were organised to help artists navigate the economic challenges.

**Adapting to Changes:** Some artists adapted their creative processes and business models to align with the new normal. This could involve focusing more on online sales, offering virtual art classes, or collaborating remotely with other artists. While the pandemic posed significant challenges for artists, it also highlighted their resilience and adaptability. Through creativity, community support, and finding new ways to connect with audiences, many artists managed to navigate the difficult times and continued to create meaningful art during the pandemic.

#### Keyword - resilience

**Creativity, Boredom Proneness and Well-Being in the Pandemic:** Throughout the course of the pandemic, it has become clear that the strictures of social isolation and various levels of lockdown constraints have impacted people's well-being. Here, our aim was to explore relations between trait dispositions associated with boredom proneness, self-regulation and well-being using data collected early in the pandemic. That is, people who engaged more in everyday creative activities also reported higher levels of self-esteem, optimism, and positive affect. In contrast, those who pursued fewer creative outlets had higher levels of depression and anxiety, were higher in boredom proneness, and reported experiencing more negative effects.

**Keywords:** creativity, boredom proneness, COVID-19 pandemic, well-being

**The pandemic's effect on cultural workers:** Difficulties weren't just faced by individual artists. The immediate impact for performing arts organisations was a complete shock to the system. Workload stress for managers increased with their efforts to maintain operations and recoup lost income. Many artistic organisations are only now beginning to feel the true burden of COVID-19 and will continue to feel these impacts throughout the medium term. The **high-pressure and hectic lifestyles** of many artists may lead to depressive symptoms, as tight deadlines, high expectations, fierce criticism, and intense travel are common for such individuals. Rates of anxiety, depression, and substance use disorder have increased since the beginning of the pandemic.

## CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about immense challenges to the arts and cultural sectors, impacting artists, performers, and cultural institutions worldwide. Nevertheless, amidst the hardships, the pandemic also acted as a catalyst for digital innovation, creative collaborations, and the democratisation of arts and culture. As lockdowns, social distancing measures, and restrictions on gatherings became the new norm, the arts and cultural sectors faced unprecedented challenges. The lessons learned during this transformative period may shape the future of artistic expression, making it more inclusive, adaptable, and resilient in the face of future challenges. This article explores the positive and negative effects of the pandemic on arts and cultural activities, highlighting both the struggles and the innovations that have shaped these sectors during this transformative time.

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