

Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Nishtha Shrestha (Registration Number: 1630093), PhD scholar at the School of Social Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Monday, 28 November 2022 at 3.00 pm on the WebEx Meeting platform.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Efficacy of Art Based Interventions for Emotional Problems Among Children Affected by Earthquake in Nepal**
- Discipline** : **Psychology**
- External Examiner** : **Deborah Wiese**
(Outside Karnataka) Associate Clinical Professor
Miami University
118 Psychology Building
Oxford, OH 45056, USA
- External Examiner** : **Roopesh B N**
(Within Karnataka) Associate Professor
National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences
(NIMHANS)
Lakkasandra
Bengaluru
Karnataka - 560029
- Supervisor** : **Dr Baiju Gopal**
Professor
Department of Psychology
School of Social Sciences
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
Bengaluru - 560029
Karnataka

The members of the Research Advisory Committee, faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 19 November 2022



Registrar

ABSTRACT

The earthquake of April 2015 left Nepal in a vulnerable state. Children represent an estimated 3.2 million of the 8 million people affected by the earthquake. The aim of the study was to examine the role of art in dealing with the long-term impact of earthquake on emotional problems in children in Nepal. A purposive sampling was adopted to select 454 children studying in 4th and 5th standard from four schools in Kathmandu Metropolitan City. Children completed the Level of Exposure Scale while the parents provided information about the emotional and behavioural difficulties of children using the Nepali version of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ/ 4-17). The influence of gender, severity of exposure, socio-economic status and type of family in relation to emotional problems were also examined in the selected group. The results of Phase 1 show that conduct, hyperactivity-inattention and peer problems were higher in boys while girls had higher pro-social behaviour.

Children belonging to lower socio-economic status were found to be at risk for emotional problems. Gender and exposure were also identified as predictors of emotional problems in children. For the second phase of the study, those children with high emotional problems (N=60) were selected for an art-based intervention consisting of nine sessions. Both the treatment (N=30) and control group (N=30) completed the pre- and post-treatment measure of SDQ. The results show that the children in the treatment group reported lower levels of emotional problems, hyperactivity-inattention and peer problems compared to the control group (Cohen's *d*: 0.50-0.80). In the final phase of the study, 12 children from the treatment group were interviewed to identify the elements of art that contributed to a change in the emotional problems.

A thematic analysis revealed six global themes: a new schema, an expression space, drawing the trauma, reappraisal of trauma narrative, protective factors and future benefits. The responses of the children show that the inherent properties such as regulation and social connection promoted by an engagement in arts needs to be adopted as an effective mode of trauma care. The findings also point to the possibility of using art-based therapy to overcome barriers of stigma and illiteracy which hinder the mental health professionals from implementing evidence-based treatments in the country.

Keywords: Child, earthquakes, emotions, mental health, Nepal, art therapy