



# **ASSESSMENT IMPACT OF THE SABRANG PROJECT**

An Executive Summary

2023

## BACKGROUND

Defining a prison is a more complex and nuanced task than it may initially seem. While recognized for primarily removing society's offenders, the modern world needs prisons to be more than mere confinement for prisoners. Further emphasized by the alarming statistic that half of the inmates who leave prison end up returning after a short period of time (Visher and Travis, 2003).

Moreover, historical prisons which solely isolated inmates, led to severe emotional and mental breakdowns among the inmates which hindered reflection, remorse, rehabilitation, and personal growth, denying them any chance of redemption. Contemporary focus has shifted towards using prisons for reflection, growth, and societal reintegration. This need for reform has been felt across the world (Coyle, 2004).

### India Vision Foundation

India Vision Foundation, founded by Dr. Kiran Bedi in 1994, is dedicated to prison reform and second chances. They employ music, art, meditation, dance, and gardening as interventions to rehabilitate prisoners and create a crime-free society. The foundation supports inmates' children with school admissions. Notably, the Gurugram prison houses the 'Nirmaan Bhavan,' symbolizing their commitment to personal growth. Emphasizing institutional reforms and psychological interventions, Dr. Kiran Bedi's vipassana meditation program stands as a successful intervention in this noble pursuit.

### Art - A Step Towards Mental Health

Art transcends the present through mind and body, offering not only a creative outlet but also cognitive benefits. Art-based therapies have gained popularity for enhancing well-being and life satisfaction. Studies show positive impacts on education, workplaces, and relationships. The "Sabrang" project, initiated in the year 2022 harnessed art to improve inmates' mental health, providing fulfillment, emotional release, and a sense of purpose. By fostering emotional catharsis and providing a sense of fulfillment, the project aimed to empower inmates with improved mental well-being and a newfound meaning in life.



### Objectives of Sabrang Project

The objectives of the Sabrang Project were to train the inmates in physical arts such as drawing, painting, and sketching in order to:

- Understanding their inherent emotions and personalities through their art
- Improve their life satisfaction

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to gauge the impact of the Sabrang project on the above-stated objectives through quantitative and qualitative analysis.

# METHODOLOGY

## Design

The 'SABRANG' project used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to assess the impact of art intervention workshops on prison inmate reformation. Data was collected from 30 actively volunteering inmates through informed consent. Qualitative data was gathered initially to explore emotional psyche, followed by quantitative surveys to assess workshop effects on emotional well-being and life satisfaction.

### Data collection

#### Qualitative

##### Draw a Person Test

A projective technique. In this test, participants were asked to draw a person before the art workshops began, revealing hidden emotions and conflicts. Thematic Analysis was employed to analyze the drawings and gain insights into the participants' psychological states and desires throughout the specified period.

#### Quantitative

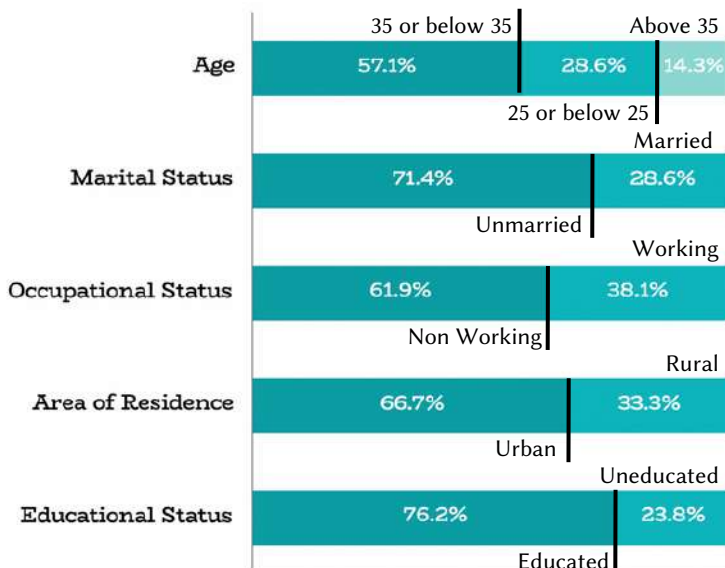
##### Life Satisfaction Questionnaire

A self report questionnaire measuring life satisfaction before and after an 8-week series of art workshops. The collected data was then organized and analyzed using SPSS software.

##### Well-Being Questionnaire

A self report questionnaire measuring overall life wellbeing before and after an 8-week series of art workshops. The collected data was then organized and analyzed using SPSS software.

#### Demographics



## RESULTS

### Qualitative: Projective Technique (Draw – A – Person)

*In every work of art, the artist leaves a piece of themselves, revealing their inner world -*  
Erich Fromm's wisdom echoed in the "Sabrang" Project



The comprehensive analysis of each drawing offered glimpses into inmates' emotional reactions -

- Aggression with spiked fingers, bare feet, visible teeth and exposed nostrils.
- Regression through omitted limbs.
- Grandiosity and fantasy with extravagant objects or adornments.

**Over 50% sketching, shading, and heavy lines indicated emotional focus and anxiety.**

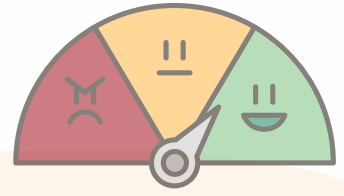
Self conditions found include -

- Paintings placed high represented ambitious aspirations yet low energy.
- Omitted fingers conveyed feelings of inadequacy or helplessness.
- absence of legs and feet indicated a sense of constriction
- Reinforced lines showed withdrawal, while light lines suggested uncertainty.

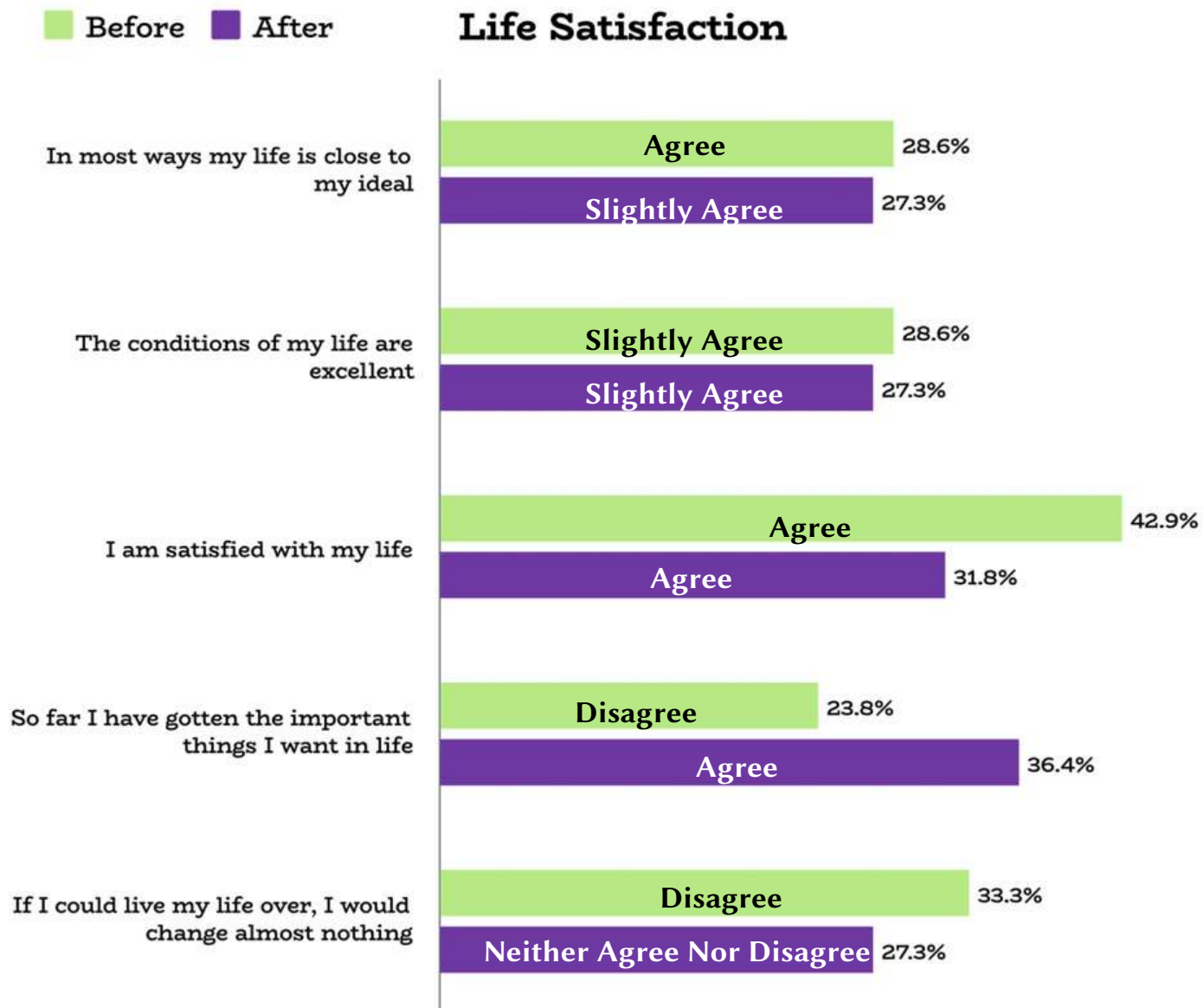
Art, a profound outlet for creative expression, delved into inmates' souls, unearthing hidden desires and emotions. Their artworks unveiled personality traits like aggression, regression, suspiciousness and paranoia, while anxiety and withdrawal seeped through the strokes. This phase of the study demonstrated a remarkable impact of art on the well-being and life satisfaction of the inmates and also provided a valuable understanding of the inmates inner struggles and emotions.



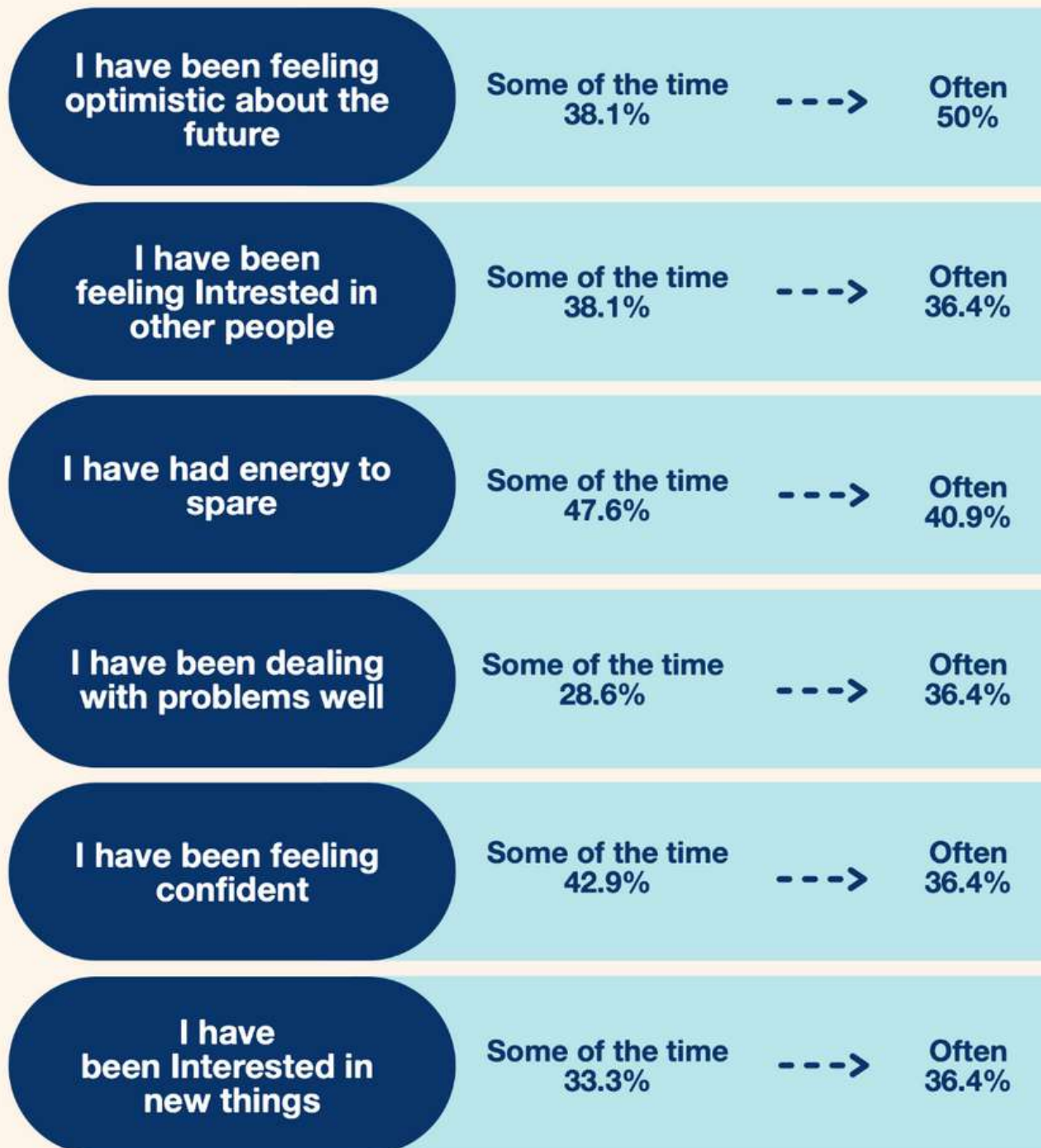
## Life Satisfaction Questionnaire



The "SAB RANG" initiative utilized art workshops to enhance happiness and employability among inmates, fostering collaborative engagement with the psychology team. Initially met with disagreement, the workshops led to a transformative shift in inmates' perspectives, as they identified areas for personal improvement and acknowledged the significance of life's accomplishments. This resulted in increased engagement and a desire for positive changes after their release from prison. Ultimately, the art intervention not only improved their well-being and employability but also instilled a strong motivation for self-improvement and a hopeful outlook for the future.



## Well-being Questionnaire

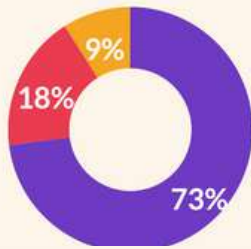


The "SABRANG" art workshops had a significant positive impact on the overall well-being of prison inmates, enhancing their social interactions, emotional equilibrium, and self-assurance. Participants reported increased socialization and a genuine interest in connecting with others. The workshops instilled a desire for regular art engagement, offering a sense of calm during emotional distress and empowering inmates with effective coping mechanisms. Increased confidence among participants further reflected the positive outcomes of the workshops, enhancing their overall well-being.

## Subjective Feedback

A part of the subjective feedback included understanding the participants emotions after every art session. They were asked if they felt this emotion or not - ranging their answers from 'bahut zyada'(the most) to 'bahut kam/bilkul bhi nahi''(very less or not at all) on a 5 point scale with 5 being the most and 1 being not at all.

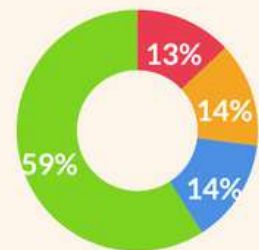
### Interested/Dilchaspi



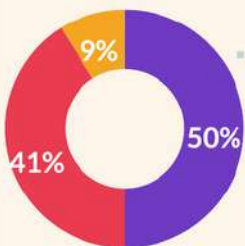
73% of the participants reported being highly interested in the art sessions and no participant reported being disinterested

### Distressed/Pareshan

59% of the participants reported feeling no distress after and during the art session.



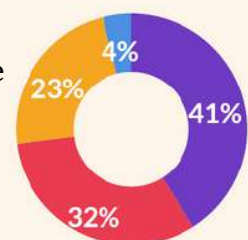
### Excited/Utsahit



50% of the participants expressed immense excitement for the art sessions and no participant reported being unexcited

### Inspired/Prerna

41% of the participants reported being inspired all the time and no participant reported being uninspired during or after the art sessions.



## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study were encouraging. The goal of the life skills and vocational program was to help and prepare the inmates to be ready for the world outside. The ultimate aim is to successfully align and integrate them into society. Despite of the study's limited sample size, it is pertinent to note that the inmates had a significant increase in their overall life satisfaction and well-being. Hence future studies with a bigger sample size can further help to validate the benefits of the art intervention.

Art workshop sessions conducted so far are mostly aimed towards teaching art and generating employability. Hence from the subjective feedback collected from the inmates so far, it has emerged that their understanding of art and the intention to participate in the workshop is simply to just practice and learn more about the forms and skills of art.

Inmates showed keen interest in learning, evident from their active participation in workshops. Feedback from the art sessions were positive, however, a primary concern was the lack of art materials for practice. Many expressed a desire to pursue art as a career after release, but material scarcity hindered their practice and caused them to miss subsequent classes. Some found it challenging to grasp how art could enhance their mental well-being.

Inmates experienced a variety of emotions while they drew (DAPT) during the sessions (as noted through their facial expressions and objective feedback) but how they actually felt while drawing as well as a record of the emotions they experienced requires a continuous understanding.

The identified issue encompassed inmates' challenges in expressing emotions, communicating, articulating emotional experiences, understanding art's psychological benefits, and recognizing its potential for healing. A crucial task will be to implant the notion that "art can heal" into their perspectives, as this concept has not been embraced before.

To enhance inmate engagement and well-being, consider conducting workshops that address specific concerns raised during interactions, such as stress, low motivation, and guilt. This targeted approach can foster greater response, facilitate emotional expression, and provide a platform for positive change.

It is recommended to conduct the art workshop in collaboration with an art therapist to enable inmates to not only acquire artistic skills but also undergo profound psycho-social-emotional transformation. While the ongoing workshops have provided benefits, they have fallen short of fulfilling the intended depth and nature of the experience. Hence, a more conscious and impactful engagement is needed.



A watercolor illustration of a palette with various colored paints (brown, blue, red, green) and two brushes, one blue and one brown, resting on a light blue and green wash. The background is a soft, light yellow with scattered watercolor splatters.

## Conclusion

Through the introduction of arts interventions in prisons, inmates have experienced profound behavioral and attitudinal changes. Engaging in the creative art process unveiled new dimensions of themselves and their surroundings, fostering personal growth and emotional well-being. The transformative impact of arts interventions has been evident, highlighting the crucial role of creativity in rehabilitation. These workshops serve as empowering outlets for self-expression, nurturing artistic skills and enhancing social well-being, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among inmates. Art has become a beacon of hope, illuminating the path to positive change within the prison system.

## References

**Andrew Coyle, Prison Reform Efforts around the World: The Role of  
Prison Administrators, 24 Pace L. Rev. 825 (2004)**

**Visher, C. A., & Travis, J. (2003). Transitions from Prison to Community:  
Understanding Individual Pathways. Annual Review of Sociology,  
29(1), 89–113.**



## **Authors**

Ms Kirti Maheshwari

Ms Neha Kaushik

## **Contributors**

C. Sai Charani

Khushi Jain

Pavit Arora

## **Advisor**

Dr Sujata Shahi,

Vice Chancellor, IILM University,

Gurugram

