



MUSIC THERAPY ON HEALING VARIOUS AILMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Life begins with first rhythm, the heartbeat. Music has frequently been used as a therapeutic agent from the ancient times. Music is a kind of yoga system through the medium of sonorous sound, which acts upon the human organism and awakens and develops their proper functions to extent of self-realization. This is the ultimate goal of Hindu Philosophy and religion. Melody is the key-note of Indian Music. The 'Raga' is the basis of melody. Various 'Ragas', have been found to be very effective in curing many diseases. As music has a sedative effect, it can replace the administration of tranquillizers, or can reduce the dosage. Music increases the metabolic activities within the human body. It accelerates the respiration, influence the internal secretion, improves the muscular activities and as such affects the central nervous system and circulatory system of the listener and the performer. They stimulate the brain, ease tension and remove fatigue. The effect of Music Therapy may be immediate or slow, depending upon number of factors like the subject, his mental condition, environment and the type of Music, selected for having the desired effect. Music Therapy largely depends on individual needs and taste.

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INTRODUCTION

The life begins with the first rhythm, i.e. the heartbeat. The rhythm is everywhere in life. It is present in all life processes (metabolism). It exhibits a rhythmic pattern in the daily, weekly or monthly to yearly cycles (Ayensu, 1981). It is present even in the biological clock or rhythm. The respiratory or breathing process follows a rhythm of inhalation and exhalation at a particular interval. During digestion, the peristaltic movement also shows a rhythmic motion. Circulation shows a prominent rhythm of beating of heart and pumping the blood. The reproductive cycles also follow a rhythm. The secretion of enzymes and hormones takes place in particular interval. Our hunger and sleep wake cycle even follow a rhythmic pattern. Not only human or other animals, the plants too follow certain circadian rhythm. The opening and closing of leaves or flowering, according to sunrise and sunset is evident.

The music is a combination of rhythm, melody and wordings. Music is basically a sound or nada generating particular vibrations which moves through the medium of ether present in the atmosphere and affects the human system. The music has impact on human body as it affects the nervous system, heart and the glands (Bonny 1983). These three systems have the major role in controlling and coordinating all the metabolic activities. The traditions and rituals of different countries show impact of music on human health. A study of these traditions within their cultural contexts can provide the basis for a better

understanding of the role of music as therapy in modern health care settings. Throughout history, music has been thought of as a healing force. Music has historically been, and continues to be, an essential component of the practices of traditional healers in most of the tribal and other indigenous cultures throughout the world that are not primarily oriented toward the Western medical model. This is certainly well supported in the ethnomusicological literature.

Music and Physiology

The physiological status of any person varies with the music, depending on its type and ambience. The sedative effect of music is evident, as the lullaby is used for making the children sleep. Studies reported in the literature clearly support the hypothesis that listening to music does influence a person's physiological responses. The often tested hypothesis that stimulative music increases physiological responses, while sedative music decreases them, was not unanimously accepted. Heart and pulse rates, blood pressure, skin responses and muscular or motor responses all show changes in response to music, but in no particular direction. The reasons for this may be threefold; the definitions of stimulative and sedative music may be too general; measurements of the various physiological responses may be unreliable or inaccurate; and variables such as the testing situation, movement on the part of patients, and extraneous sights and sounds, are difficult to control.

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Music and Psychology

Music does affect the psychological state of human being. The loud beat of percussion instruments like drums can alter the emotions of a psychologically weak person. Human characteristics other than body rhythms, such as mood states, are influenced by music and can influence body imbalances. Entertainment can therefore utilize both the tempo and the mood of music to effect change in mood and body rhythms. The three inescapable rhythms in which we live are the rotation of the earth, the moon and the earth around the sun; the three basic environmental periodicities are the daily, lunar-tidal and annual. Biological rhythms have different timing systems. Bio-function works by oscillation like heartbeat, breathing, transmission of nerve impulses. These impulses are not related to external time but have to do with demands of the body tissues for oxygen. These impulses could be affected by music and sound.

Music and Healing

As music has impact on human physiological and psychological status, it could be used in treating various disorders or abnormalities. In India from very ancient time, music has been used in healing diseases. The rhythmic sounds of temple bells and shankha (conch shell or bugle) produced during devotional practices have also been found to have therapeutic applications in India and hence is in use for rituals and customs. More specifically, it was found that if the shankha is played through the mouth by infusing twenty-seven cubic feet of air per second, within a few minutes it will kill the bacteria in the surrounding area of twenty-two hundred square feet and inactivate those in about four-hundred square feet area further beyond. A research study in Berlin University showed that the vibrations of the bugle sound could destroy bacteria and germs in the surroundings.

Research has shown that music does have healing effects. They stimulate the brain, ease tension and remove fatigue. The effect of Music Therapy may be immediate or slow, depending upon number of factors like the subject, his mental condition, environment and the type of Music, selected for having the desired effect. Music Therapy largely depends on individual needs and taste. Before using music as therapy it must be ascertained which type of music is to be used (Bonny 1983).

Music Therapy

Music therapy may be defined as the systematic application of music as directed by the music therapist to bring about changes in the emotional and/ or physical health of the person. As such, its functional rather than its aesthetic and entertainment aspects are emphasized. Music therapy is a scientific method of effective cures of disease through the power of music. It restores, maintains and improves emotional, physiological and psychological wellbeing. The articulation, pitch, tone and specific arrangement of swaras (notes) in a particular raga stimulates, alleviates and cures various ailments inducing electromagnetic change in the body.

Music is basically a sound or nada generating particular vibrations which moves through the medium of ether present in the atmosphere and affects the human body. Music beats have a very close relationship with heart beats. Music having 70-75 beats per minute equivalent to the normal heart beat of 72 has a very soothing effect. Likewise, rhythms which are slower than 72 beats per minute create a positive suspense on

the mind and body. Rhythms which are faster than the heart rate excite and rejuvenate the body.

Music is non-verbal. Verbal communication is linear and therefore limited to one level of communication. Music is multi-dimensional, crossing through verbal barriers and providing meaning on several levels simultaneously. Music evokes emotional responses. It is used in love songs, funeral dirges and marches. These are general responses; more specific responses occur within selections or within each individual as music is listened to. Music is considered a mood changer due to its ability to influence our feeling states. Music evokes physiological responses. Rhythm, the energizer of music, is related to heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and the whole multitude of vibrational periodicities that make up the body structures. The tension/release dynamic inherent in Western musical composition further enhance the rhythmic balances desired in good health. It is speculated that the production of morphine-like peptides or endorphins may be connected to certain musical experiences.

Music stimulates symbolic representation. Images, whether kinesthetic, emotional or visual are a part of treatment in various diseases. Carefully chosen music can effectively enhance the flow of imagery and fantasy or renewal of memories, where clinical situations dictate these as the treatment of choice. The sensory stimulation of music can create synesthesias of other senses. Touch, taste, vision and smell are enhanced when music is deeply listened to, creating a basis for work with the sensorily handicapped.

The concept of music therapy is dependent on correct intonation and right use of the basic elements of music, such as notes (swara), rhythm, volume, beats and piece of melody. In Indian Music there are countless 'Ragas' with numerous characteristic peculiarities of their own. That is why it is difficult to establish a particular Raga for a particular disease. Different types of Ragas are applied in each different case. The raga therapy thus developed to treat patients and still in experimental state.

Indian Music

Indian music is probably the most complex musical system in the world, with a very highly developed melodic and rhythmic structure. This includes complicated poly-rhythms, delicate nuances, ornamentations and microtones which are essential characteristics of Indian music. Indian music had its origins in the Vedas (4,000 B.C. to 1,000 B.C.). Indian music developed from the Sama Veda. This music, which was prevalent throughout the entire length and breadth of India, became more and more advanced every century due to the contributions of scholar-musicians like Bharata, Matanga, Sarangadeva, and Venkatarnakhi. All of these musicians made great contributions to both Sacred and Art music and are collectively responsible for the modern styles of bhajans, kirtans, concert formats, training techniques, etc., still used today. The music was highly influenced by the Arabic and Persian styles, resulting in a totally new style of music, namely Hindustani (Indian) music. In the South, the music continue to develop along the same lines, without any external influence and came to be called "Carnatic" music which means "traditional" in Tamil language. It is a system of music commonly associated with the southern part of the Indian subcontinent, with its area roughly confined to five modern states of India; Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

Indian music is basically composed of Ragas. Raga is the sequence of selected notes (swaras) that lend appropriate 'mood' or emotion in a selective combination. Depending on their nature, a raga could induce or intensify joy or sorrow, violence or peace and it is this quality which forms the basis for musical application. Thus, a whole range of emotions and their nuances could be captured and communicated within certain rhythms and melodies. Playing, performing and even listening to appropriate ragas can work as a medicine. Various ragas have since been recognized to have definite impact on certain ailments.

Indian Ragas on Treating Diseases (Raga Therapy)

The Indian Ragas are used for therapy in India from ancient times, which is known as 'Raga Chikitsa'. Raga chikitsa was an ancient manuscript, which dealt with the therapeutic effects of raga. The library at Thanjavur is reported to contain such a treasure on ragas, that spells out the application and use of various ragas in fighting common ailments. The ancient Hindus had relied on music for its curative role: the chanting and toning involved in Veda mantras in praise of God have been used from time immemorial as a cure for several disharmonies in the individual as well as his environment. Several sects of 'bhakti' such as Chaitanya sampradaya, Vallabha sampradaya have all accorded priority to music.

Ragas are closely related to different parts of the day according to changes in nature and development of a particular emotion, mood or sentiment in the human mind. Music is considered the best tranquilliser in modern days of anxiety, tension and high blood pressure. Raga Chikitsa dealt with curative ragas and suggested specific ragas with specific therapeutic and mood enhancing characteristics suggested to be used in clinical settings are still more to be tested and validated. The raga-based approach broadly involves application of musical pieces with a specific emphasis on swara patterns, embellishments and appropriate rhythms. This approach being both melodic and rhythm depends on the intended music function and the therapeutic objective identified. Ragas with swaras having short or long intervals and different embellishments, could be chosen with the appropriate slow, medium or fast tempo, with or without technical virtuosity (Sairam, 2006).

Various Ragas Used In Treating Diseases and Disorders

Research has shown that music has a profound effect on body and mind. Depending on the effects of the Indian ragas, they are therapeutically used for treating different diseases. The physiological effects of various ragas have been listed below:

Kafi Raga- Evokes a humid, cool, soothing and deep mood.

Raga Pooriya Dhansari (Hamsanandi-Kamavardini) - evokes deep, heavy, cloudy and stable state of mind and prevents acidity.

Raga Bageshri - It arouses a feeling of darkness, stability, depths and calmness. This raga is also used in treatment of diabetes and hypertension.

Raga Darbari (Darbari Kanada) - It is considered very effective in easing tension.

Raga Bhupali and Todi - They help to cure patients of high blood pressure.

Raga Ahir-Bhairav (Chakravakam) - It is supposed to bring down blood pressure.

Raga Malkauns and Raga Asawari (natabhairavi) - helps to cure low blood pressure.

Raga Tilak-Kamod (Nalinakanti), Hansdhwani, Kalavati, Durga (Suddha Saveri) - These ragas have pleasing effect on the nerves.

Raga Bihag, Bahar (Kanada), Kafi & Khamaj - For patients suffering from insomnia and need a peaceful sonorous sleep. Useful in the treatment of sleep disorders.

Raga Bhairavi- Provides relief to T.B, Cancer, severe cold, phlegm, sinus, toothache.

Raga Malhar- Useful in the treatment of asthma and sunstroke.

Raga Todi, Poorvi & Jayjaywanti- Provides relief from cold and headache.

Raga Hindol & Marava- These ragas are useful in blood purification.

Raga Shivanjani- Useful for memory problems. Used for treating patients with dementia and Alzheimer.

Raga Kharahara Priya - strengthens the mind and relieves tension. Curative for heart disease and nervous irritability, neurosis, worry and distress.

Raga Hindolam and Vasantha - They give relief from arthritis, B.P, gastritis and purifies blood.

Raga Saranga - It cures acidity.

Raga Natabhairavi - It cures headache and psychological disorders.

Raga Punnavarali, Sahana - Controls anger and brings down violence. Useful for Schizophrenia.

Raga Dwijavanthi - Quells paralysis and disorders of the mind.

Raga Ganamurte - Helpful in diabetes.

Raga Kapi - To get over depression, anxiety; reduces absent mindedness

Raga Ranjani - It helps to cure kidney disorders

Raga Sindhubhairavi- For a healthy mind and body; provides peace, tranquility and serenity of mind.

Raga Hameer-kalyani - It relaxes tension with its calming effect and brings down BP to normal.

Raga Brindavana Saranga-It increases the energy level.

Raga Mohana- Useful for the treatment of migraine headache.

Ragas Charukesi, Kalyani, Sankarabharanam and Chandrakans - they are considered to be very helpful for heart ailments.

Raga Ananda Bhairavi- Suppresses stomach pain. Reduces kidney problems. Also controls blood pressure.

Raga Amrutavarshini-It eases the diseases related to heat

Raga Madhyamavati- Clears paralysis, giddiness, pain in legs/hands, etc. and nervous complaints.

Music with a strong beat can stimulate brainwaves to resonate in synchronization with the beat, with faster beats bringing sharper concentration and more alert thinking, and a slower tempo promoting a calm and meditative state. Music is very much useful in warding off depression and anxiety. Thus, music promotes emotional wellbeing and in maintaining positive mental health. The changes in the brain waves brings about changes in other bodily functions as well. Breathing and heart rate can be altered by music. That may be one of the reasons why listening to music promotes relaxation and prevents the effects of chronic stress.

The power of certain Raga like Sankarabaranam is incredible. It cures mental illness, soothes the turbulent mind and restores peace and harmony. Sankarabaranam, if rendered with total devotion for a stipulated period, can cure mental disorders said to be beyond the scope of medical treatment. Similarly, Darbari Kanada and Mohanam also help to soothe turbulent mind and migraine headaches.

CONCLUSION

Indian music therapy is an integration of ancient healing practices and musical traditions coupled with the recent modifications derived based on the modern day practice and the knowledge gained by current clinical studies undertaken. Indian music therapy is based on long empirical traditions, it is unique and is cultural and there is a great scope for further studies. There is a growing awareness that ragas could be a safe alternative for many medical interventions. Music improves the immunity of the body. It has been observed that medical treatment with music therapy has reduced the intake of antibiotics and pain killers over a period of time. Simple iterative musical rhythms with low pitched swaras, as in bhajans and kirtans are the time-tested sedatives. Music helps improving human soul for collaborative learning for total life. It is necessary that a group of exponents in Indian ragas join experts in medical field to help evolving a scientific system of raga therapy for the most common illness of the modern times, especially Stress and Stress-Related Disorders and Cancer.

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