

INDIAN MUSIC AS A THERAPY A BOON TO MEDICAL SCIENCE

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“Na Nadena veena geetam Na Nadena veena swar,

Na Naadena veena nrityam tasmannadatmakam jagat ”¹

(There is no song or music without the Naad, there are no musical notes without the Naad. There is no dance without the Naad, Indeed the whole world is filled with the essence of the Naad.)

INTRODUCTION

It is very surprising to learn that, although we are all very human, we are still so different from each other. It is to be understood that though two people may be dissimilar in so many ways (in terms of physical features, tastes, thought process), it is still possible to derive health and happiness by following the same rules of wellness. All of us begin life as musical infants enjoying the laya yoga of the maternal rhythm of the heartbeats and her loving crooning of lullaby. Music therapy brings this loving tender care of the Mother Nature back to the people who need it. The base of the music therapy is that it is not only the part of our culture but it is the part of our nature. By promoting our culture and nature we are healing ourselves of all the discrepancies and

diseases that have crept into our beautiful lives and society. Music ultimately is the spiritual energy in the human race and harnessing it with the cosmic energy (GOD), the laya yoga between the „Jivatma“ and the „Parmatma“ happens, which cures all the illness of the world and makes it a better place to live in, in peace and harmony.

If you go to the past, music was an age-old part of Ayurveda, the holistic Indian science that promotes a happy and healthy life style. In Vedas too, music has an important place and the Samveda is full of music. As referred above, music of the raga has emerged from a mythological past, a past that was before recorded history. In this past Gods and Goddesses were the makers of our music. The concept of “*Naadbrahma*” belongs to this past. The concept describes as a vibration that filled the uncreated void, featureless and undifferentiated from which music emerged, embodied as “*RAGA*”. As such it would be utter injustice on us to look at Indian music through the eyes of „entertainment“ only.

What is a Therapy:

The word „therapy“ comes from the Greek „therapies meaning „a service or an attendance“ which in turn is related to the Greek verb „therapies meaning „I wait upon“. A generic term used to describe the application of any medical psychiatric, psychological or alternative designed to promote health and well being is called a therapy. Therapy might include exercise, splitting, positioning, using compressing garments, transparent face masks or treatment intended to cure or alleviate an illness or injury whether physical or mental.

It has been also observed that medicines may or may not cure the patients in every aspects like- motivation, enjoyment in life, optimism left untreated and hence non pharmacological supportive therapies like aromatherapy, massage therapy, water therapy, chemotherapy, **music therapy**, heliotherapy, Immunotherapy, infrared therapy, physiotherapy, shock therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc. should supplement the principal treatment.

DEFINITION OF MUSIC THERAPY

Music can be an incredibly important way of healing the body. Every time we listen to it, dance to it, music brings together all the parts of the body that are able, active and creative to help heal the rest of the body. Modern science and medicine are now re-discovering the healing powers of music. Music therapy is an emerging discipline in India that warrants more research in this area to make it evidence based. While music therapy is being widely and commonly used in the western countries, it is not so much common in India. With our rich traditions and classical music of centuries, the potential beneficial effects of such music need to be explored scientifically and get well documented. Now let's see what does Music Therapy mean - **It is the use of music within therapeutic relationship to sustain, restore or improve emotional, cognitive, physical, and spiritual health.** ²



Music therapy is different from music education and music lessons, recreation and entertainment.



Music therapy integrates the elements of music - its rhythms, melodies, and harmonies - with specific therapeutic treatment goals.

■ Music is the primary therapeutic tool. Using music to establish a trusting relationship, the music therapist then works to improve the client's physical and mental functioning through carefully structured activities. Examples can include singing, listening, playing instruments, composition, moving to music, and music and imagery exercises.

■ Music should be administered by a trained music therapist. A music therapist's education and training is extensive. Musical interventions are developed and used by the therapist based on his/her knowledge of the music's affect on behavior, the client's strengths and weaknesses, and the therapeutic goals.

■ Music therapy is received by a client and it targets a wide range of clinical populations and client ages.

MUSIC THERAPY IN WESTERN COUNTRIES

At present in the west, Music Therapy is at its advance state and is being employed successfully in medical profession.

The idea of music as a healing influence which could affect health and behavior is as least as old as the writings of Aristotle and Plato. The 20th century discipline began after World War I and World War II when community musicians of all types, both amateur and professional, went to veterans hospitals around the country to play for the thousands of veterans suffering both physical and emotional trauma from the wars. The patient's notable physical and emotional responses to

If the recent studies are to be believed, it turns out that music can actually save your life. Not only does listening to music boost your mood, it can do wonders for your health. Listening to your favorite music can not only be a health habit, it can also help you before you go for a crucial operation. Researchers have discovered that it makes patients less depressed and less confused.

Although the western countries are far ahead in utilization of the therapeutic potentiality in music, the tradition of using music to heal is actually an age- old Indian treatment. In India, music therapy is being practiced for more than 5000 years. Information about music and its utilities are available in our scriptures. In fact we have good literature known as the '*RAGA CHIKITSA*' which speaks about the curative powers of our classical music. But it is our utter misfortune that we have lost the literature irretrievably. Long before acoustics came to be known in Europe as a subject of study, the ancient Indian civilizations were already familiar with the therapeutic role of sound and vibrations and the other concepts pertaining to them. While music as a whole is well recognized for its entertainment value, the Indian civilization had gone a step forward to attribute the curative aspects of the music.

The ancient system of naad yoga has fully acknowledged the impact of music on body and mind and has put into practice the vibrations emanating from sound to uplift one's level of consciousness. By practicing music therapy we start thinking of our mind and body, thereby we get conscious of our body and mind. It effects in increasing the mind concentration, reduces stress and anxiety and also helps increases self confidence

Application of the music therapy there shows a specific

effect on the nervous system and also secretions in the internal glands. This results in the reducing of the heartbeats, Blood-Pressure and increases the working capacity of the lungs. Research studies say that by practicing regular music therapy it is observed that there is 4% reduction in the cholesterol and there can also be reduction in the blood sugar count. Music teaches us to live a new lifestyle by controlling the fluctuating mind and by adopting the holistic way of living our life.

According to an ancient Indian text- Swar Shastra, the 72 melkarta ragas (parent ragas) control the 72,000 important nadis or nerves in the body which are believed to transmit the life energy in to every cell of the body. The Ragas- Raginis can successfully be used for the treatment of various diseases but there is a need to prepare good musicians and doctors who are, expert in this discipline of therapy. It is believed that if one sings with due devotion, adhering to the raga lakshana (norms) and the shruti shuddhi (pitch purity) a raga could affect the particular nerve in the body in a favorable manner. Certain ragas do have the tendency to move the listeners, both emotionally as well as physically.

Music has been frequently used as a therapeutic agent from the ancient times. People in the villages or having rural background in the developed and under developed countries still believe in the charismatic power of music for curing certain diseases and correcting physical and mental disorders. The therapeutic values of music have been recognized and employed from a very early stage in the history of mankind and medicine. Thus, with pride, music therapy points to a tradition as old as mankind itself. Historical sources verify the very existence and effectiveness of the combination of music and medicine to

cure certain diseases and disorders.

The concept of mixing music as a part of therapy on one side with myth, superstition, cult or religion and on the other side, questioning about the placebo effects which are faced by every therapy and finally the appeal of scientifically, under-pinning empirical facts about the concepts of music therapy have forced the scientists, musicologists and physicians to put music therapy into action.

CONCLUSION

Indian Classical Music has very successfully been used as a therapy. Various ragas have been found to be very effective in curing many diseases. Thus, it has opened the doors for the musicians to use the classical ragas in music therapy. A major advantage of music therapy is its versatility which indicates the possibility of combining it with other related forms of therapy and neighboring disciplines. To mention a few, are musical exercises, music therapy with its various forms like dance, rhythmic gymnastics, aerobics etc.

Although the efforts are made in employing Music Therapy in India, it is yet in the budding stage. There is no scientifically documented material being available pertaining to the therapeutic effect which would stand as a guide to the present research. As the development of music therapy branch is at its very initial stage, a qualitative and systematic documentation of the data will be an added advantage for further studies and its implementation in this field. An extensive research is necessary to ensure the successful application of music as a therapy in practice.

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