



Indian Music Therapy and Spirituality

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Abstract- Music becomes our companion in distress. Music heals the heart. Music can change your mood and can rejuvenate you. Music is an integral part of our lives. It begins right from our birth. The heart beats in a rhythm. Even our breathing pattern follows a rhythm. Nature is full of music. Indian classical music therapy is a complementary therapy that promotes the inbuilt natural healing process. This music produces beneficial effects and is physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually uplifting. It can be effective by itself and also can be applied as an adjuvant therapy from our ancestors who were spiritually evolved and had realized essential harmony between the human being and nature. This paper will discuss that although music therapy has become an essential part of our lives but music therapy especially Indian Music Therapy also evolves spiritual aspect which is not being discussed as it should be. Raag chikitsa and its healing power will be discussed in this paper

Index Terms— Music, Music Therapy, Spirituality, Classical Music, Raag Chikitsa

I. INTRODUCTION

Music is a universal language. It can influence people from every walk of life in a positive manner. One does not need to be a musical maestro to enjoy any form of music. It is the language of the soul and therefore connects to God instantly. Music can heal our sorrow. God has created such magnificent creatures and the best gift he could bestow on us was music. One can't possibly imagine a world without music. There is a quote very well said about music by Billy Joel—"I think music in itself is healing. It's an explosive expression of humanity. It's something we are all touched by. No matter what culture we're from, everyone loves music."

Choosing the right kind of music is also helpful in promoting health. Negative traits like anger, worries also can be overcome through listening to good music. Depression can be cured by music therapy. When you are feeling low, soft and soothing music is recommended. If you play hard rock it is only going to worsen your case. It can cure headache, tension and abdominal pain. Also controls blood pressure and restores liver functions. Music is like a sedative and can therefore help insomnia patients.

II. MUSIC THERAPY

It is a new form of approach to help children and adults, who have problematic behaviors, to make effective adjustments toward social, emotional, mental and educational aspects, where brain plays a dominant role. Many of the imbalances in the so called normal may also be made set right by regular exposure to certain raagas with special emphasis on certain notes. Music Therapy acts on the human beings before being transformed into thought and feeling.

Music Therapy is of two modes of presentation. One is passive mode or passive form of music therapy which give importance to listening; the other one is active mode or active form of music therapy, which give importance to participating. Passive form of MT may be beneficial to almost all forms of ailments. Active form of music therapy will be of immense help in neurological problems, like neurological aphasia,- receptive aphasia, expressive aphasia- in the segment of alternative medicines to help children to reduce speech problems- to enhance speech fluency, in hyperactive children to reduce hyper activity and so on. Passive form of music therapy is more helpful in enhancing the concentration and memory to reduce the stress and strain, to cope up with series of heart problems like

hypertension, in bringing down the blood pressure and normalize the patients. The music which is being presented in the therapeutic sessions does the difference on patients. Classical Music is a direct experience before being transformed into thought and feelings. It acts as vibration, which does the wonder on patients. The results are proven scientifically, many of my research papers are published. Music therapy is a complementary form of medicine, in few situations it functions as alternative medicine also.

III. HISTORY OF MUSIC THERAPY IN WEST

The healing power of music has been recognized since ancient times and has been successfully applied in different countries. In the Cultural history of the world, music has always helped people to balance mind, soul and body. In ancient Egypt, China, India and ancient Greece, healers and philosophers, have taken music in practice in order to treat ill people and help them to sustain animated spirits. Even in small countries Tantrics and Sages had enormous importance as they performed different roles of practicing doctor. By executing any required rituals he handled drums or other music instruments according to his traditions.

Usually they sang songs using their rich vibrating voice that helped to heal wounds of soul and body. Plato, the famous philosopher, paid attention to music as means of self discipline. The word "person" consists of two parts; per and sona, that means 'sound, that goes through'. In this way history proves that person should sound as harmonic as music. The healing power of music has been recognized since

ancient times and has been successfully applied in different countries. The earliest known reference to music therapy in the United States was in 1789 in an article in the Columbia Magazine titled 'Music Physically Considered.' Scientific and anecdotal validation occurred through the 19th century and up to the 1940s, when it finally became accepted as a treatment modality in many hospitals, due in great part to the support of eminent psychiatrists like Kari Menninger. Clinics and hospitals began sponsoring scientific research in music therapy and documenting its efficacy. Music therapy was widely used with veterans of the world wars at rehabilitation facilities such as the Walter Reed Hospital in New York.

In Islamic countries traditional oriental music therapy is a system whose history spans over one thousand years and whose therapeutic, prophylactic and rehabilitative relevance remains to this day in a way, Islamic culture is a culture of listening. It is with genuine enthusiasm and appreciation that Muslims respond to the melodious sound of the divine word.

In Lithuania, music therapy was introduced as late as the 20th century and it was mainly used for relaxation. Although lately both scientists and practitioners have shown an increased interest in the field, Lithuanian experts still rely on the methodology which has been developed abroad. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to search for the most adequate and effective ways of adapting foreign experience and practice in music therapy to the Lithuanian socio-cultural environment.

The first music therapy degree programme was founded in 1944 at the University of Michigan. The National Association of Music Therapy (now the American Music Therapy Association, AMTA) was formed in 1950, founding a constitution, setting professional goals, developing membership categories, and appointing a

standing committee for research. Shortly thereafter curriculum requirements, clinical training requirements and standards and procedures for certification were established. Training to become a Music Therapist includes the intense study not only of music performance and theory, but a psychology, anatomy and physiology, and specific uses of music in a wide variety of settings. Both academic and practical training are a part of the curriculum.

Europe has a long history of music therapy. Most of the countries in Europe established registered music therapy associations and developed MT academic courses. Extensive research and development programmes have been involved in these countries to make music therapy more acceptable to the people. A Bird's eye view on the history of Music Therapy in Europe.

IV. CONCEPT OF MUSIC THERAPY IN VEDAS

Music therapy has emerged as a new branch of studies in present time in India and abroad. Modern science and medicine are now discovering the healing powers of music. Many clinics have also been set up for experiments and its implementation. New age medical practitioners are increasingly relying on the therapeutic powers of music to heal their patients. The development of music therapy as a profession is believed to be a hospital developed practice that originated in psychiatric hospitals. Much of the contribution of its popularity and establishment originates from wars. As a result the first music therapy degree programme was founded in 1944 at the university of Michigan. AMTA

(American Music Therapy Association) was founded in 1950. It draw the attention of musicians for music therapy as profession all over the world. As a matter of fact music performed or heard has been as therapeutic in the history of many cultures. When we peep in to the vedic literature, we find many references of curing disease by recitation of the mantras and chanting samans. On this paper an attempt has been made to highlight the concept of music therapy prevailed in the Vedic period.

Vedas are the most ancient literature of the world, the source of all knowledge. The four Vedas are the collection of mantras visualized by the seers in praise of deities as Agni, Indra, Varuna, Maruta etc. with a view to obtain wealth, long life, progeny, that is all happiness of the world. There are many mantras in the atharvaveda (the original source of Ayurveda) which are employed in sacrifices (Yajanas) for shanti and paushtika Karmas. Mantras which are used to avoid any untoward event as precautionary measure or to bring welfare are called paushtika and those which are used to remove inauspicious effects, misfortunes, disease etc. are called Shanti. If anybody is suffering from any disease, he can be cured of that disease by employing a particular mantra was the belief of Vedikas. We find mentioned about the fever and the mantras to cure this fever. In atharva veda there are four suktas 1.25, V21, VI.20 and VII .116. In these suktas fever named Takman is discussed. The symptom of the fever are that returns on the third day, the one that intermits (each) third day, the one that continues without intermission, and the tumnal one, coldone and the hot one, arrives in summer that arrives in the rainy season. This fever can be cured the mantras and by the medicine. In v. 4 Vedic Rishi to Rushta plant to destroy the Takman fever. So, the temperature of seasonal fevers caused by coldness, heat or rain can be cured by mantras.

Any kind of insect biting, serpent biting can also be by the use of mantras: AV IV. 6-7 deals with the poison and VI. 100, VI. 13, VI 12 are the Suktas where The mantras are for curing snake poison latter on this branch study was named as toxicology Av 1.12 mentions the e of fever, headache and cough and its cure. In AV we find the mantras for curing Jaundice and related diseases.

It is pertinent to note that every mantra has a presiding deity. Beside this every mantra is recited musically in particular Swaras, rhythm and technique. The techniques of recitation or chanting are discussed in detail in the lakshan granthas. These techniques were to be learnt according to different schools (Shakhas) and followed strictly while employing the mantras. The recitation of mantras though used in sacrifices Yajnas is not only a mode of worship or meditation, it has rather healing and soothing effect too on the chanter and the listener. Thus both attain the fruit. When a person recites a mantra or hymns he becomes communed with the and music of that mantra and he reaches that state of mind where there are no worldly worries and troubles. mantra, he also becomes communed with the rhythm of the mantra. What to say of man, even birds, beasts, creepers, too become communed with the rhythm of mantra. We find such similar references in the latter Shastragranthas of music.

We have given a glimpse of the rich music heritage. It is the demand of the present time that the researches be conducted in scientific manner to explore the healing and soothing effect of music apart from its artistic and aesthetical studies as one of the fine arts. I am sure that the study of Vedas and ancient music treatises would explore the facts and strengthen the modern researches on the society.

V. RAAG CHIKITSA (Healing Power of Indian classical music)

The healing power of music was recognized dating back to ancient Greece. Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle talk about prophylactic and cathartic power of music as mentioned by Richard Brown in "Medicina Musica" (1729). Music creates a mirthful spirit and acts as a good tonic. Anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, mental retardation, autism, insomnia, behavioral disorders, pertaining to aggression, phobias, sexual deviations, drug abuse and the like are amenable to supplementary therapy with music. It has the capacity to produce changes in metabolism, respiration, blood pressure, endocrine system and muscular energy. It has the power to distract from morbid state and replace with wholesome feelings and ideas. Indian music therapy is a complementary therapy that promotes the inbuilt natural healing process. This music produces beneficial effects and is physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually uplifting. It can be effective by itself and also can be applied as an adjuvant therapy from our ancestors who were spiritually evolved and had realized essential harmony between the human being and nature. In India music therapy was prevalent from time immemorial. Music therapy is known as Raga Chikitsa in India.

The ancient system of Nada Yoga, acknowledges the impact of music on body and mind. Vibrations are produced from sounds to uplift one's level of consciousness. Ragas have curative power, the vibrations in their resonance can synchronize with one's moods and health thereby stimulating our moods and controlling the brain wave patterns. Ragas help fight aging and pain.

Raga, is the sequence of selected notes that lend appropriate 'mood' or emotion in a selective combination. A raga can induce or intensify joy or sorrow, violence or peace. 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.

Some ragas like Darbari Kanhada, Kamaj and Pooriya are ragas that help in defusing mental tension, especially cases of hysteria. For those who suffer from hypertension, ragas such as Ahirbhairav, Pooriya and Todi are prescribed. Simple musical rhythms with low pitched notes, as in bhajans and kirtans are the time-tested sedatives, which can even substitute the synthetic analgesics, without any side-effect. Some Therapeutic ragas of Indian Classical Music:

1. Kalyani (Yaman): A Possible Remedy for High Blood Pressure

As we have already noticed, it is the intuitive use of resonance hidden in the tones that lend individuality to ragas. Not only that. According to this writer, it is the way the swaras are selectively used which has a definite impact on mind and moods. For instance the soothing touch inherent in the tivra madhyam in the raga kalyani (yaman is the Hindustani equivalent) which is interspersed with the other six swaras which are all shuddha render a compassionate personality to this raga, which could be the reason for its acknowledged role in bringing down one's (high) blood pressure. The other ragas identified for similar effects are : ahirbhairav, anandabhairavi, bhairavi, bhupali, darbari, durga, kalavati, puriya, todi, etc.

2. Malkauns (Hindolam): A Possible Remedy for Low Blood Pressure

For those who suffer from low blood pressure, the morning raga, malkauns (whose Carnatic equivalent is hindolam) is prescribed. The oscillations in Gandhar, Daivat and in Nishad one comes across in this raga, according to this writer, could be the reason behind elevation one's spirit as well the blood pressure. He finds magic in the to note the Madhyam, which makes it a feminine raga. The glides one notice in the swara combinations such Ni Da-Da-Ma' and in 'Ma-Ga', according to this writer, could be a reason for its application in improving one's self-confidence.

3. Bageshri : A Possible Remedy for Sleep Disorders

A romantic late night Hindustani raga is prescribed for disorders and insomnia. This writer is of the view that the occasional inclusion of Pancham, besides the Sharpness (Konial-type) in Gandhar and Nishad could be the secret for its soporific role!

4. Bilahari : A Possible Remedy for Depression

Recommended for depression, this raga is ideal for starting the day. This writer feels that this raga should be sung/heard at the very early hours of dawn by those who suffer com dejection and depression. Any prayer song made in this raga could prove quite beneficial in uplifting moods. Other ragas such as bhupalam, kedatan and Malaya marutham, could prove equally effective overcoming the bad effects of depression.

5. Darbari : A Possible Remedy for Stress

A majestic, late night raga, Durbari is considered ideal for soothing nerves and reducing tension. It is often used in devotional music as it brings peace and tranquility. According to the present writer, smooth glides in all its seven notes (it is a septatonic raga) could be the major reason for smoothening the flow of nerve impulses. He pointed out that the Emperor of Music. Tan Sen, administered this raga to the Emperor of Hindustan, Akbar the Great to make him recover from his 'Stress and mental tension in governance. Other stress busters such as durga, kalavati, hamsadhwani, shankarabharanam, tilak kamod etc also promise to relieve those who are stressed by the constant expectations of people and society alike.

6. Shiva Ranjani : A Possible Promoter of Intellectual Excellence

An ideal raga for the night, which is accredited with the improvement in one's intelligence quotient, this writer feels that the common man gets the taste of this raga from the least expected source of all : the Bollywood films! It may also be seen that any 'filmi abasement' of this raga leads to a hit song as in the films, Mera Naam Joker (Jaane kahaan Gaye wo din) and Ek duje ke liye (Solah Bara ki) and in many others. Followings are some Indian Ragas and their effects:-

Raga	Disease(s) it helps cure
Darbari Kanada	Headache, Asthma, Sedative
Ahir Bhairav	Indigestion, Arthritis, Hypertension
Bhimpalasi	Anxiety, Hypertension
Bageshri	Insomnia
Asavari	To build confidence
Sarang	Depression
Chandrakauns	Anorexia
Gujari Todi	Cough
Gunkaji	Constipation, Headache, Hemorrhoids
Hindol	Sodalities, Backache, Hypertension
Jaunpuri	Diarrhea, Constipation, Gas
Kafi	Sleep disorder
Kedar	Cold, Cough, Asthma
Madhuvanti	Piles, Hemorrhoids
Malhar	Asthma
Marva	Indigestion, Hyperacidity
Puriya	Colitis, Anemia
Puriya Dhanashri	Anemia
Sohani	Headache
Yaman	Rheumatic, Arthritis

VI. CONCLUSION

According to an ancient Indian text, Swara Sastra, the seventy-two melakarta ragas control the 72 important nerves in the body. It is believed that if one sings with due devotion, adhering to the raga lakshana and sruti shuddhi, the raga could affect the particular nerve in the body in a favourable manner. While the descending notes in a raga (avarohana) do create inward-orienting feelings, the ascending notes (arohana) represent an upward mobility. Thus music played for the soldiers or for the dancers have to be more lively and up lifting with frequent use of arohana content. Similarly melancholic songs should go for 'depressing' avarohanas. Although it is not a rule, most of the Western tunes based on major keys play joyful notes, while those composed in minor keys tend to be melancholic or serious. Certain ragas do have a tendency to move the listeners, both emotionally as well as physically. An involuntary nod of the head, limbs or body could synchronize with lilting tunes when played. 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. Historical records too indicate that one Haridas Swami who was the guru of the famous musician in Akbar's time, Tan Sen is credited with the recovery of one of the queens of the Emperor with a selected raga. The great composers of classical music in India called the 'Musical Trinity',- who were curiously the contemporaries of the Trinity of Western Classical Music, Bach, Beethoven and Mozart-were quite sensitive to the acoustical energies. Legend has it that Saint Thyagaraja brought a dead person back to life with his Bilahari composition Naa Jiva Dhaara. Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Navagriha kriti is believed to cure stomach ache. Shyama Sastry's composition Duru Sugu sises music to pray for good health. Raga chikitsa was an ancient manuscript, which dealt with the therapeutic effects of raga.

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