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## “Music” As Healing Therapy

Ruma Chakraborty

Research Scholar  
Department of Music,  
Patna University, Patna, India

**Abstract** — Music is a universal language. It is a medium for communication, which can be both a pleasant and healing experience. Music has the power to conjure up every possible emotion. It also has the power to improve our health and well-being, which simply increases its awesomeness. Researchers says that the various musical elements of rhythm, melody, harmony and tempo stimulates a cognitive and emotional response that comprises the affective component of pain, which helps to positively affect the mood and thus results in improved healing. As we know, Modern Science and Medicine are now rediscovering the healing powers of music, and ‘Music Therapy’ is the best example to heal several diseases of human body and mind. Indian Classical Music, especially Indian Ragas, has played an important role for the treatment of different health or mental issues. Playing, performing and even listening appropriate ragas can work as a good medicine. In brief, we can say that the power of musical study is very helpful for human being and also to shape social values. This research finds out the scientific aspect of the music.

**Index Terms** — Sound perception, Music Therapy, Raga Therapy, Benefits.

**Introduction** – Music is the soul of any culture and India has had a long tradition of musical ingenuity. It is said that Narad Muni introduced the art of music to earth. He is also taught the inhabitants about the sound that pervades the whole universe called “Naad Brahma”.

The word ‘Music’ is originated from the Latin word ‘Musica’; Greek adopted it as ‘Moysike’ from ‘Muse’. These conceptions survived in Roman world, thus music could mean either music or poetry. In India, Music is usually termed as ‘Sangeet’, which is derived from Sanskrit word. The word ‘Sangeet’ translates to ‘sung together’ from Sanskrit. Simply we can define Sangeet as – “Sangeet” (music) is the art of combining sounds so as to please the ear.

The power of music has been known to all major civilizations going back to antiquity, where music was considered to be the most important of the science, the most important path to religious enlightenment, the very basis of harmonious development and the character of the man. Science has found that most functions of the body are affected by music. It is a very powerful transformational tool for the human body and soul. It has the ability to change a person’s mood and also to strengthen or weaken emotions of an individual.

*‘Music has healing power. It has the ability to take people out of themselves for a few hours.’*

*-Elton John*

### Perception of sound “AUM/OM”

Our mind easily becomes absorbed in sound. This is why everybody even infants and animals enjoys listening to music. Sound is the source of silence and silence is the source of sound. All sound dissolves into silence; silence tends to manifest into sound. Because of this principle of sound and silence, esoteric musical philosophy recognized two complementary components known as ‘struck sound’ means which we can hear and ‘un-struck sound’ means which we cannot hear. In Sanskrit, these two sounds are commonly known as ‘Aahat naad’ and ‘Anahat naad’.

In Nada Yoga, we learn that the source of sound may be external or internal. As we know, in the Sanskrit tradition, the sound is known as ‘Anahat Naad’ (un-struck sound) which means the sound that is not made by two things striking together. Thus, all sound within our range of hearing are created by things visible or invisible, striking each other or vibrating together, creating pulsing waves of air molecules which our ears and brain interpret as ‘sound’. In short, un-struck sound is the center from which all struck sound emanates.

In ancient period, the audible sound which most resembles this un-struck sound is the syllable 'AUM' (or OM). Traditionally, this mantra is composed of four elements – A, U, M and the last sound, unheard, is the silence which begins and ends the audible sound, the silence which surrounds it. The word 'AUM' (or OM) is so much powerful that this single word can produce powerful and positive vibrations, which allows us to feel the whole universe. Thus, in Hinduism, it is believed that 'AUM' is the highest sacred symbol. Thus chanting of this mantra 'AUM' is very beneficial to us. It is beneficial in many ways, like –

- It gives us a lots of relaxation to our mind, body and soul
- It helps us to get rid from negative thoughts, feelings such as frustration, irritation, etc.
- It is beneficial for those who are suffering from diseases such as depression, migraine and another problem related to brain.

Thus, chanting of 'AUM' (especially in a particular swara or note) works as a healing component in our daily life.

### Music Therapy

Music is an old-age part of Ayurveda, the holistic Indian science that promotes a happy and healthy lifestyle. In Vedas too, the Samaveda is full of Music. From time immemorial, music has been a part of Indian Culture. 'Music Therapy' is an established health profession in which music is used within a therapeutic relationship to address physical, emotional, cognitive and social needs of individuals. This therapy is an evidence-based clinical use of musical interventions to improve client's quality of life. This therapy is one of the most effective ways of controlling emotions, blood pressure, restoring the functioning of liver, cure headache & tension, and many more. Since the time of early man, music has been a part of human culture. In Greek mythology, it was thought to have the power to help heal the mind, body and spirit. The first formal music therapy program in the United States was established in 1944, at Michigan State University, followed by the formation of the National Association for Music Therapy in 1950. An article was found related to music therapy by Harvard Medical School (published in Feb. 2016), in which it was mentioned that Holly Chartrand, a music therapist at Harvard affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital, first trained as a vocalist. She decided to become a music therapist when she realized that she could use music to support others just as it supported her throughout her life.

Music therapy may involve –

- Listening to music
- Singing along to music
- Moving to the beat of the music
- Meditating
- Playing an instrument.

According to K E Bruscia, "Music Therapy is a systematic process of intervention wherein the therapist helps the client to promote health, using experiences and the relationships that develop through them as dynamic forces of change." It is believed that music stimulates the pituitary gland, whose secretions affect the nervous system and the flow of blood. To be healed by music, it is necessary to vibrate the cells of the body, for it is through these vibrations that the diseased person's consciousness can be changed effectively to promote health. The right kind of music helps one relaxes and refresh. The various musical elements i.e. rhythm, melody, harmony, tempo, etc. stimulates a cognitive and emotional response, that comprises the affective component of pain, which helps to positively affect mood and results in improved healing. Music, which is used for relaxation, is non-lyrical and has a slow repetitive rhythm, a tempo of 60-80 beats/minute, with a simple harmonic or chord progression. As the body synchronizes with the tempo of the music, the sound vibrations can influence the body's rhythm.

### Raga Therapy: An Effective Treatment

Matang (9-10<sup>th</sup> century AD) was the earliest writer to define 'Raga'. According to him, "Raga is that kind of sound composition consisting of melodic movements, which has the effect of coloring the hearts of men." In simple words, we can say that 'Raga' is the sequence of selected notes (swara) that lend appropriate mood or emotions in a selective combination.

Indian Music is based on the concept of Raga and Rasa. As we earlier said that Raga is the arrangement of notes (swara) in a particular order so as to create a musical adornment. In Indian Classical Music, there are total seven swaras (notes) are present and they are – Shadaj, Rishabh, Gandhar, Madhyam, Pancham, Dhaivat and Nishad, while the moods are Sringar (love), Hasya (laughter), Karuna (compassion), Vir (heroism), Raudra (wrath), Bhayanak (fear), Bibhatsa (disgust), and Adbhut (wonder). Different notes are used to evoke the different emotions, like – madhyam and pancham swara are used to create feeling of love and laughter, gandhar and nishad are evocative of compassion, fear and disgust are conveyed by the use of dhaivat and finally shadaj and rishabh are commonly used to create a mood of anger, courage or wonder.

Raga Therapy means healing through Ragas. Ancient Hindus believed that suffering caused by man's uncontrolled thinking could be handled by Music Therapy. In India, people said that legend has it that Thyagaraja, the famous musician of South India, brought a dead person back to life by singing the composition *Nav Jeevan Dhara* in Raga-Bihari. Dr. Burnell has mentioned a manuscript named '*Raga Chikitsa*' in the collections of Saraswati Mahal Library in Tanjore, which elaborates on the therapeutic role of musical melodies. Swami Haridas (who lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century), a classical musician, was one of the many who used music in treating illness during that times. A 17<sup>th</sup> century worked title "*Sangeet Sudha*" authored by Nayak king Raghunath Nayak and his minister Govind Dikshitar, gives an account of effects of music on emotions. According to an Indian text '*Swara Shashtra*', the 72 parent ragas (melakarta) control 72 important nerves in our body. The explanation, pitch, tone and arrangement of swaras (notes) in a specific raga stimulates, alleviates and cures different illness actuating electromagnetic change in the human body. Performing or listening to a raga at the proper allotted time can affect the health of human beings. Thus, we can say that Music is a power or universal energy in the form of Ragas.

As we know, every raga has some specific moods. An appropriate mood is necessary to be evoked in the listener's mind before initiating the musical treatment. For example, Raga Kafi evokes a humid, cool, soothing and deep mood; Raga Pooriya Dhanashree evokes a sweet, deep, heavy, cloudy and stable state of mind; Raga Bageshree arouses a feeling of darkness, stability, depth and calmness. Raga Darbari is considered very effective in easing tension. People say that this late-night raga is composed by Tansen for Akbar to relieve his tension after a hectic schedule in court. Like this, Dr. Balaji Tambe of Maharashtra has proved that Raga Bhoopali and Todi give tremendous relief to patients of high blood pressure. Raga Chandrakauns is considered for heart ailments. Here we provide a list of some Ragas, which helps to cure many diseases of human being –

Sl. No.	Name of the Raga	Benefits
1.	Pooriya Dhanashree	Evokes sweet, deep, heavy, cloudy and state of mind and prevents acidity
2.	Bageshree	Arouse a feeling of darkness, stability, depth and calmness. It is also used in treatment of diabetes and hypertension.
3.	Darbari/ Darbari Kanhara	It is a late-night raga which considered very effective in easing tension.
4.	Todi & Bhoopali	It gives tremendous relief to patients of high blood pressure.
5.	Ahir Bhairav	It is supposed to sustain chords, which automatically brings down blood pressure.
6.	Malkauns	It helps to cure low blood pressure.
7.	Bhairavi	Provides relief T.B., Cancer, Severe cold, sinus, etc.
8.	Malhar	Useful in the treatment of Asthma and Sunstroke.
9.	Hindol & Marwa	These ragas are useful in blood purification.
10.	Chandrakauns	Helpful for heart ailments.
11.	Tilak Kamod, Kalawati, Hansadhwani, etc.	Provides relaxation and easing tension.
12.	Bihag, Bahar, etc.	For those patients who are suffering from insomnia and need peaceful sonorous sleep.

It is important that therapist are well qualified in music therapy, otherwise the process is referred to simply as music medicine and is supplementary in its use. Thus, some essential components of music therapy may include –

1. A qualified therapist trained in music therapy
2. A single person or group to work with.
3. Personalized goals sought to be attempted by applying music experiences followed by interpretation or reflection on the experiences.

### Benefits of Music Therapy

Music therapy confers the following benefits –

1. Positive effects on mood,
2. Reduce anxiety, stress and pain,
3. Better condition and attention,
4. Boosts emotional and physical well-being,
5. Explore feelings around issues such as self-esteem or personal insight,
6. Helps children with learning disabilities,
7. Restore lost speech,
8. Develop independence and decision-making skill,
9. Improves quality of life for dementia patients,
10. Reduce side effects of cancer therapy,
11. Boost our immune system by increasing levels of the antibody immunoglobulin A,
12. Gives a better awareness of self and environment, and so produce a positive impact on social interactions, etc.

*Music can lift us out of depression or move us to tears – it is a remedy, a tonic orange juice for the ear. But for many of my neurological patients, Music is even more - it can provide access, even when no medication can, to movement, to speech, to life. For them, music is not a luxury, but a necessity.*

*-Oliver Sacks*

### Conclusion

Music is a very powerful and awesome tool that has positive effects on human body and mind. It is impossible to find someone who doesn't feel a strong connection to music. Music Therapy is more than a nice perk. It can improve medical outcomes and quality of life in a variety of ways. It has played an increasing role in all facets of healing. Scientific evidence suggests that music can have a profound effect on individuals – from helping improve the recovery of motor and cognitive function in stroke patients, reducing symptoms of depression (those who suffering from dementia) and even helping patients undergoing surgery to experience less pain and heal faster. Research results and clinical experiences attest to the viability of music therapy even in those who are resistant to other treatment approaches. However it is important to know the right method and duration of music therapy, which is to be administered. This knowledge can be obtained only through regular experiments and experiences, specially the selection of the Raga. Indian Music, with its many ragas, is known to be particularly therapeutic in value. The Raga Research Centre in Chennai, India is

currently making a comprehensive study of Indian Ragas and evaluating their therapeutic potential with the help of musicians, doctor and psychiatrics. Thus we can say that music is a very necessary part of our life and since, it attract us easily, thus we use music therapy to cure or diagnose many problems related to human health, soul and mind.

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