

# MUSIC THERAPY

- DR. NIRANJAN BHANDARI

The present day and age is characterized by an abundance of economic and social problems of various kinds. An increase in materialism has inflicted serious harm on the physical and psychological health of people. Lifestyles are becoming increasingly fast paced and stressful. This constant stress has a very damaging effect on the body's immune system leading to an increase in all kinds of diseases and illnesses.

Music is a very powerful tool that can help in such stress related problems that may even cause severe behavioral problems. Not only this, music has been found effective in increasing will power, self confidence and concentration. It has also been found helpful in very effective in treating learning disabilities, autism, mental retardation in children and Alzheimer's syndrome in the aged. How does music help in such a huge spectrum of ailments? One of the answers to this question is that amongst all the fine arts that include music, painting, architecture, sculpture and literature. It is only music that is a 'moving' phenomenon. The act of creation by the artist and its appreciation by the listener are simultaneous, especially in a live performance. Consequently, its effect is very profound and highly enhanced on the human mind as compared to the other fine arts.

In the Nepal and Indian tradition, music has been linked to the

Absolute. It is considered a very effective spiritual tool to attain Nada Brahma. The ancient system of Nada yoga considers the whole universe as a formation of vibration. Even the most basic element of music the swara traces its name of swa (meaning self) and ranjan (meaning of please). Thus, the swara itself is that which pleases by itself the mind of the listener.

The essential pillars on which music therapy is based as follows:

**Power to Inspire:** Music has the power to inspire. It has the power to excite or to calm down a person. These are mutually in contrast but are used in treating different kinds of ailments.

**Sound Vibrations:** The sound vibrations have a definite effect on the human mind. Even the Vedic mantras are supposed to be recited in a particular manner with specific accents and intonations in order to produce the right vibrations to make the mantras effective in producing the desired results.

**Mind waves:** the human brain has different centers that emit different kinds of energy waves. The waves emitted are of four types: Beta, Alpha, Delta and Theta. Music helps in enhancing the production of the alpha waves that are believed to be very good for the mental and physical health.

**Sound waves and man:** The human ear can grasp sound that has a frequency of 20 to 20,000. Less than 20 vibrations per second cause's infrasonic sound which can affect mental health. More than 20,000 vibrations per second is ultrasonic sound that is believed to be helpful in treating several health problems including fractured bones or injured ligaments.

**Will power:** Music helps in strengthening will power that is very essential to dealing with health problems in a patient particular kinds of music helps in the creation of endorphins, which are a special kind of chemical that help in enhancing optimism in a patient.

**Emotion:** It has been found that different emotions create different physical changes in the human body. For example, when a person is angry, the pulse rate increases, the ears and eyes may turn red. Nervousness sometimes leads to sweating and so on. Music therapy is used so that certain specific emotions are generated in order to have the desired physical effect on the patient.

Music therapy is becoming increasingly popular in India. The music therapists use the categorization of individuals based on the nature principle of Rajsik, Tamsik and Satvik or the Ayurvedic principle of vata, pitta and kaph. Several classical Ragas are used in music therapy practices. This depends on the characteristic of the raga. Today, various commercial records are available in the market for the purpose of music therapy or meditation which can be used to treat a specific health problem in solution with an experienced

music therapist. It is not essential for patients to have knowledge of the ragas or any other genre that is being used for the purpose of music therapy to benefit from it. Music therapy has no side effect if done under the right guidance and supervision and is especially effective if used in combination of other methods of treatment.

References:

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