

## Critique on Music Therapy

Savadatti Shridhar<sup>1</sup>, Kamath Nagaraj<sup>2</sup>, Ashvini SM<sup>3</sup>, Lal Sarika<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Kriya Shareera,

Shri Shivayogeshwara Rural Ayurveda Medical College, Inchal, Karnataka, India

<sup>2</sup>Dean Innovations- Skill Development & Associate Professor, Department of Kriya Shareera,  
Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India

<sup>3</sup>PhD Scholar, Department of Dravya Guna, Sriganganagar College  
of Ayurvedic Sciences & Hospital, Sriganganagar, India

<sup>4</sup>PG Scholar, Department of Agada Tantra, Sri Dharmasthala  
Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India

### ABSTRACT

Emergence of music therapy as an organised profession has occurred primarily during the past few years. Music is the closest art form for expression to human beings. The evolution of music has its roots in the most primitive time and it evolved through countless processes. Music been defined by musicologists as the art of expression in sound, in melody and harmony, including both composition and execution. *Raga-Rasa-Siddhanta* can be applied to music in which lyrics are predominant over *Swara* and *Laya*. The scope of the present research work is restricted to the fact that music evokes some kind of bhava, feeling or emotion in the mind of a listener. The bhava evoked from music calms the listener or alleviates the pain and this is the therapeutic effect of music.

**KEYWORDS:** *Raga, Swara, Laya, Music, Therapy*

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### INTRODUCTION

Music is the closest art form for expression to human beings. The evolution of music has its roots in the most primitive time and it evolved through countless processes. Music been defined by musicologists as "the art of expression in sound, in melody and harmony, including both composition and execution". It is the art of sound in time, which expresses ideas and emotions in significant forms through the elements of rhythm, melody, and harmony. Man has been found to pick up natural sounds such as the gush of water, the whistle of the wind, the hiss of the flames, the rumble of the earth and the thunder of the sky. What man needs is to express and to share his feelings, ideas, thoughts and experiences. Man was inspired by the natural sounds and rhythms, and his imagination led him to evolve the concepts of *Swara* and *Laya*, gradually established in the form of art - Music. According to the Indian Philosophy of

Vedanta, the word for sound is '*Nada Brahma*' or '*Shabada Brahma*'. *Kallinath*, the annotator of *Sangeet Ratnaknr*, has described the *Nada* as the energy of *Brahma*. '*Sharangdev*' in *Sangeet Ratnakar*, describes '*Nada*'; '*Na*' is the indicator of Prana (or life) and '*Da*' of Agni (or energy). According to Vedic literature, music originated from *nada* or sound, which is the product of *Akash* or ether. There are two types of sound, the *Ahat Nada* or struck sound is audible whereas the *Anahnla Nada* or unstruck sound is inaudible. *Vedic Rishis* believed that the evolution of the *Brahmand* or universe was caused as a result of *Bindu Visphot* or an atomic explosion, that produced infinite waves of sound, which represent cosmic ascent and expansion.<sup>[1]</sup>

The chief purpose of all arts is to give an aesthetic pleasure. The essential quality in Indian music, which is responsible for creating an emotional appeal and

for giving an aesthetic pleasure, may be called the "Rasa". Indian aestheticians have described the concept of rasa in three aspects - physical, psychological and metaphysical. In the scope of the present research, the psychological aspect is studied. Bhavas mean the states of mind, which are usually referred to as emotions. Bhavas are considered to be of two kinds: 1) *Sthai Bliavas* - are the permanent emotions, and 2) *Sanchari Bhavas* - are the transient moods. The essential difference between *sthai* and *sanchari* bhavas seems to be that the former are more lasting and common to all human beings and the latter more fleeting and characterised by the personal idiosyncrasy of the individual. The psychological definition of Emotion is - "Emotion is a stirred up state of mind and body. From a psychological point of view, different feelings are aroused when one experiences different emotions". Emotions, moods, feelings, sentiments and passions are not sharply separate classes of experience ('The Emotions' - by Nico Frijda). Feelings may turn into emotions when urgency increases or when loosening of self-control allows action tendency to change from virtual to actual. Moods and passions may form the background for emotions to emerge upon the advent of specific events.<sup>[2]</sup>

Bharata, the ancient Indian rhetorician and the author of the *Natyashastra*, discussed about nine principal feelings of human nature and the corresponding nine rasas which are more or less universal in character. Bharata defines Rasa as - Rasa, a potentiality for a certain disposition, resides in the *Chitta* (Pure Consciousness) as a residuum of previous experience. *Bharata* has depicted particular rasa for *Saptaswaras*. The Raga-Rasa-Siddhanta of Bharata forms the kernel of Indian aesthetics. Bharata's treatise is mainly devoted to drama. *Raga-Rasa-Siddhanta* can be applied to music in which lyrics are predominant over *Swara* and *Laya*. The scope of the present research work is restricted to the fact that music evokes some kind of bhava, feeling or emotion in the mind of a listener. The bhava evoked from music calms the listener or alleviates the pain and this is the therapeutic effect of music. There are different views of eminent scholars on the relationship between music and emotion. On the basis of the literature review on music and emotion, it is found that there are three schools of thought. One group of scholars believes that music can evoke definite emotions. Another group believes that music cannot represent any human emotion and feeling. The third group believes that music does not express a particular emotion but creates parallel states of mind.<sup>[3]</sup>

Views of eminent Indian scholars form the foundation of the present research; some of the views are

mentioned below: Pt. Bhatkhande (1914) while expressing his views about the effects of music on a listener, accepted that he had not seen any related discussion in ancient Sanskrit treatises. He believed that one should study the effects of different *Swaras*, and combinations of different *Swaras*, *layas* and lyrics on a listener. He felt that there could be different methods that have to be applied to study the effect of music on a listener. S. N. Ratanjankar (1957) has expressed his views on 'Individual Notes and Specific Rasas' that - A musical tone has the inherent quality of pleasing, affecting the mind agreeably; yet there is much difference in the measuring of good effect it produces on the listener's mind when it is produced on different instruments or by different voices. The main factors that are responsible for giving an aesthetic pleasure, as given by an eminent scholar, musicologist Baburao Joshi (1963), are *Swara*, *Laya*, form, poetical content, and presentation. Musicologist M.R. Gautam (1980) opines that - perceptual responses to music are known to be correlated with cognitive, personality and motivational factors of the listener. Dr. G. H. Ranade, (1951) a great exponent on 'Physics and Aesthetics of Music' expresses his views as - The appeal of music is primarily based on the physical effect of consonance and dissonance and is therefore broadly, pleasant or unpleasant in character. Consonances may arouse in a broad manner, a feeling such as of joy, pleasure, hilarity, etc. In the same manner, a feeling of pain, pathos, destitution or submission etc. may be awakened through dissonances. Dr. B. C. Deva, (1967) writes about the effect of music on a listener as - "Consonance or dissonance, straight or odd rhythm, fast or slow tempo, high or low pitch - these create tension and relaxation and engender an excited or a calm state of mind or certain tonal forms which have no referents".<sup>[4]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

Music has been used extensively throughout history as a healing force to alleviate illness and distress, but the specific discipline of music therapy has evolved only in recent times - it may be said that music therapy has a long history, but a short past. The oldest of medical practices, the Ayurveda in India, and the Kahum papyrus of the West, provide an account of the use of incantations for healing, and references to the therapeutic uses of music are continually found throughout Eastern and Western History. However, the emergence of music therapy as an organised profession has occurred primarily during the past 50 years.<sup>[5]</sup>

Music therapy has been evolving into a profession and medical tool since the World War I and II eras, when community musicians began performing for

thousands of veterans recovering from physical and emotional trauma. They discovered that music could help alleviate pain, and calm or relax patients and counteract depression. The positive results of music on the patients led to its acceptance as a tool for physical rehabilitation. The resulting successes led hospitals to call for the hiring of musicians. When it became apparent that the musicians needed some prior training, the demand grew for a college curriculum. In 1944, the Michigan State University established the world's first music therapy degree program. Shortly afterwards in 1950, the National Association for Music Therapy ('NAMT') was founded to help ensure that practicing music therapists were qualified to heal. Therapy is nothing but a method or a technique to balance and to restore one's state of mind and body. To some extent, any factor that helps in the prevention or alleviation of illness or problems can be regarded as therapeutic. In the present research work, music is used to study the effect on psychological state of depressed patients. Emotion is the stirred up state of mind.<sup>[6]</sup>

Barbara L. Wheeler, studied the influence of music selection, mode of presentation, and music therapy activity on the response of 2 groups of alcoholics, with 5 to 18 members and a group of 5 drug addicts. 16 music therapy trainees participated in the two music therapy training groups. Therapists provided information on their activities during each group session and session components were classified and tallied by the number of occurrences. Client responses to each session were rated for involvement, enjoyment, intensity of elicited feeling and tension level. Art and music increased the subject's involvement and intensity of feelings while moving to music, decreased enjoyment and increased tension levels. The quantity of feelings elicited was greater when discussion was included, involvement was greater when rhythm instruments were used and the tension level was lower when classical music was used.<sup>[7]</sup>

Dr. Gopalkrishna Waghalkar, Nagpur (1993), has been practising music therapy on his patients. His research is based on music in chapter 6 of *Sidhistan* in '*Charaka*', a book of Ayurveda. He names the therapy as '*Gandhrvaveda Therapy*'. According to him, there are specific ragas to balance doshas and dhatus. He has listed specific ragas as a remedy, for particular diseases. Viz- for anxiety- *raga Puriya*, *Kedar*, *Darbari-Kanada*, for depression-*raga Ahir-Bhairav*, *Puriya* and so on.<sup>[8]</sup>

E.P. Herman, has elaborated the case studies under the title 'Music Therapy in Depression'. He writes that music of a lively nature is indicated in cases of the 'blues'. Such music has definite effects on all the

processes of the body. It increases body metabolism, which is usually decreased in a state of depression. It increases muscular energy, which is retarded when one feels 'down in the dumps'. It increases the blood pressure and pulse rate which are definitely slowed down in any depression state. It helps to decrease fatigue, which is an outstanding symptom of depression. It reduces suggestibility, which very often is among the prime causes of depression. It also has a tendency to reduce the extent of illusions by acting as a distracting factor.<sup>[9]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Music therapy is being used largely as an adjunct to primary treatment or along with other therapeutic interventions and, in certain cases, as the principal therapy. Music therapy is practiced worldwide, in different modalities for different age groups viz. - music therapy for certain psychological and psychiatric problems, e.g. - hyperactivity, emotional disturbances, personality problems, anxiety and stress related problems, mental health disorders, etc. Music therapy finds application in different physiological problems as well, for e.g. - in Cancer, hypertension, diabetes, etc. and also during surgery, post-operative care and in rehabilitation centers. The oldest of medical practices, the Ayurveda in India, and the Kahum papyrus of the West, provide an account of the use of incantations for healing, and references to the therapeutic uses of music are continually found throughout Eastern and Western history. Emergence of music therapy as an organised profession has occurred primarily during the past few years.

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