



RESEARCH ARTICLE

AN ANALYSIS OF CURATIVE POWER OF INDIAN MUSIC FOR RELIEVING STRESS.

Reema Sharma.

Department of Music (Vocal) Khalsa College for Women, Civil Lines, Ludhiana, Punjab, India.

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Abstract

Since time immemorial music has been an integral part of human's life. While music is well apprehended as a source of entertainment and spirituality, but the Indian people had confide in music for its healing power too. In Vedic times music was used for chanting and intoning Vedic mantras not only in praise of God but also to relieved of several disharmonies in the individuals. Since then it is believed that music helps to enhances memory, boosts energy, and creates liveliness in human's life. In the present era of competition most of the people are getting affected by stress whether it is positive or negative. Although the stress can produce positive action to some extent but excess stress gives rise to various physical ailments. Music therapy proved to be an easiest source to reduce anxiety, stress and negative feelings such as anger, fear, and jealousy.

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Introduction:-

Stress:-

Present manner of life is full of mental stress and anxiety due to competitive world. Stress at some suggested level is considered to be helpful for increasing work efficiency and creativity. Too much stress can lead to serious ailments. In the state of stress, human body responds as though it is in danger. It produces hormones which speed up heart beat, make ones breathe faster, and gives a burst of energy. In this way two types of stress can be defined:-

1. Positive Stress:-

Positive stress is experienced when a person having stress shows an improvement in his overall performance and productivity. This kind of stress can be recognized as positive stress. Positive stress is usually the outcome of the positive attitude towards a stressor. Experiencing positive stress leads to several benefits as increased creativity, higher productivity, improved self esteem and above all better health.

2. Negative Stress:-

Normally stress influences the performance of a person. But when stress crosses the limit and becomes out of control then it shows the negative impact of stress. However, the excess stress can have some serious consequences due to which overall performance and the productivity becomes completely incapacitated and infirm. Over stress can result in reduced efficiency, decreased creativity, loss of self esteem and poor health etc.

Symptoms of Stress:-

Stress can have serious impact on human's life; it can affect his emotions, behaviour, thinking ability, and physical health. But, because people manage stress differently so the symptoms of stress can vary. Frequent headaches, jaw

clenching or pain, grinding teeth, stammering, trembling of hands, neck ache, back pain, muscle spasms, frequent sweating, frequent colds, infections, heartburn, stomach pain, nausea, sudden attacks of life threatening, panic, frequent urination, excess anxiety, worry, guilt, nervousness, increased or decreased appetite, depression, frequent or wild mood swings, insomnia, nightmares, disturbing dreams etc. could be defined as the symptoms of stress.

Effects of stress on human's health:-

Above are the symptoms of negative stress which can have serious impact on human's health both physically and mentally. Stress is our body's physical, mental and chemical reactions to circumstances which makes a person frightened, demented and unbalanced or annoyed. If managed poorly it can become an enemy which can ruin a person mentally. Use of tobacco and alcohol may intensify the impact of chronic stress and moderate exercise can help to reduce the same.

Music Therapy (Introduction):-

Music is sweet sounding vibrations that influence the body and mind. When used properly, music can be an incredibly powerful treatment tool and not just because it's fun, relaxing, and motivating, but because music has a profound impact on our brains and our bodies. Music is known to be the wonderful source for creating harmony and a peaceful state for the mind and body due to which most of the health issues including anxiety, stress, blood pressure, and several other ailments show notable improvement. Music can also be used to upswing positive state of mind which further helps to keep depression and anxiety away.

Music therapy is a technique of complementary medicine that uses music prescribed in a skilled manner by trained therapist. Programmes are designed to help patients to overcome physical, emotional, intellectual and social challenges.

Listening to good music brings in energy, spontaneity, happiness and alertness. Every cell in the body is energized; there is increased vitality with peace of mind. Music can play an effective role in helping us to lead better and fruitful life. Listening to specific kind of music at specific time of the day has shown to be helpful in maintaining good health

Dr. B.M Manjula, psychiatrist at National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS) is reported to have used music (an hour of listening to sitar every day and bhajans at night) along with minor doses of anxiolytic drugs to cure anxiety neuroses effectively. It is reported that this form of therapy can be of great use in aiding de-addiction. Music can also be used to bring a more positive state of mind, helping to keep depression and anxiety at bay. Self-selected rather than prescribed music may be more effective in reducing stress as it allows the person to control some aspect of their environment by allowing them to choose music that they believe is relaxing.

How music helps in stress reduction:-

It is believed that music has an intense effect on body and mind. Human's brain responds to music quickly. Research has shown that day-old infants are able to detect differences in rhythmic patterns. Usually mothers use to sing lullabies and play rattles to calm the crying babies. We are still not aware of power of music, but our brains are equipped to respond to music.

Brain waves:-

Our thoughts, emotions and behaviours are the result of communication between neurons inside our brains. This further produces brainwaves. Our brainwaves change according to what we're doing and feeling. We feel tired, slow, sluggish, or dreamy due to slower brainwaves. Likewise the higher frequencies can make us feel energetic, overexcited or hyper alert.

The impact of music on Brain waves:-

Music with a strong beat can refresh the brainwaves. Further makes it to reverberate in sync with the beat. Faster beats enhance concentration and thinking, and a slower tempo provides calm and meditative state. Research indicates that music around 60 beats per minute can make the brain to synchronize with the beat causing alpha brainwaves (frequencies from 8 - 14 hertz or cycles per second). This alpha brainwave is present when we are relaxed and conscious. To induce sleep (a delta brainwave of 5 hertz), a person may need to devote at least 45 minutes, in a relaxed position, listening to calming music. Researchers at Stanford University (press release 2006) have said that "listening to music seems to be able to change brain functioning to the same extent as medication."

They noted that music is something that almost anybody can access and makes it an easy stress reduction tool. So it is important to use the type of music that reduces stress at its best. The research shows that the use of stringed-instruments, drums, and flutes are very effective for soothing the mind even when played reasonably loud. Sounds of rain, thunder, and nature may also be relaxing, particularly when mixed with other music, such as light jazz, classical (the "largo" movement), and easy listening music. It is more important to choose the music which is liked by the person in stress. There are variety of audios & videos available on internet which offers relaxing music. It is important to remember that quieting mind does not make person automatically feel sleepy, it just helps the brain and body to be relaxed, and after having relaxing music brain and mind functions best in all activities.

The changes in the brain waves bring about changes in other bodily functions as well. Breathing and heart rate can be managed properly with the help of music. That may be one of the reasons why listening to music promotes relaxation and prevents the effects of chronic stress.

The study researchers, including Prof. Isabelle Peretz of the Centre for Research on Brain, Music and Language at the University of Montreal in Canada, suggested the repetitive pattern of the music the infants listened to reduced distress, possibly by promoting "entrainment" - the ability of the body's internal rhythms to synchronize with external rhythms, pulses or beats.

Raga Therapy for Relieving stress:-

Music is considered the best tranquilizer in modern days of anxiety, tension and high blood pressure. Long before acoustics came to be understood in Europe as a subject of study, the ancient Arab, Greek and Indian civilizations were already familiar with the therapeutic role of sounds and vibrations and the later day concepts pertaining to them. The ancient system of Nada Yoga, which dates back to the time of Tantras, has fully acknowledged the impact of music on body and mind and put into practice the vibrations emanating from sounds to uplift one's level of consciousness. It is the Indian genius who recognized that ragas are not just mere commodities of entertainment but the vibrations in their resonance could synchronize with one's moods and health. By stimulating the moods and controlling the brain wave patterns, ragas could work as a complementary medicine (Sairam, 2004 A & B).

Dr. Neha Mehta studied on Therapeutic Benefits of Indian Classical Music on Stress-Related Disorders: - A study was conducted on 60 out patients, 20 patients suffering from essential hypertension, 20 patients suffering from bronchial asthma and 20 patients suffering from mixed anxiety depression syndrome (MADS). The patients were subjected to listen the specific ragas two times a day in a closed environment while sitting in a relaxed position for a period of 12 weeks. At the end of each week, their physical parameters were checked and they were told to maintain log books for the same. The study showed that raga Ahir Bhairav helped in reduction of blood pressure, especially diastolic pressure thus leading to an improvement in early morning headaches and an overall improvement in quality of life.

Indian music, with variety of Ragas, is known to have particularly therapeutic value. The curative power of music emerges from the reverberation of certain ragas on physical and psychological functions which produce secretions that keep the body balanced.

Ragas recommended for relieving stress, anxiety, and tension:-

1. Raga Pooriya Dhansari – helps to evoke sweet, deep, heavy, cloudy and stable state of mind and prevents acidity.
2. Raga Bageshri – arouses a feeling of darkness, stability, depths and calmness. This raga is also used in treatment of diabetes and hypertension.
3. Raga Darbari (Darbari Kanada) – It is regarded as very effective in lessening tension. It is a late night raga composed by Tansen for Akbar to relieve his tension after hectic schedule of the daily court life.
4. Raga Todi – gives great relief to patients of high blood pressure.
5. Raga Ahir-Bhairav – is supposed to sustain chords which automatically bring down blood pressure.
6. Raga Malkauns – helps to cure low blood pressure.

The real life demonstration was done by the Late Great Violin Maestro Sri. Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan. He was once preparing to show the remedial power of Ananda Bhairavi. The great poet Kannadasan had challenged in public to test his blood pressure after hearing Ananda Bhairavi from the great musician's violin. But Kannadasan who promised to preside over a function became ill with hypertension. Cajoled by the organisers he reluctantly came to

the function and requested Sri. Kunnakudi Vaidynathan to render any raga, which could soothe him. The great musician played Ananda Bhairavi elaborately. At the close of the concert, Kannadasan came up to the dais and announced that he was feeling much better. Ananda Bhairavi has such soothing effect.

Conclusion:-

Nowadays Indian and western medical sciences are admitting that music literally has the healing power. It is important to choose right kind of music to become relaxed and revitalized. This paper described the impact of music for relieving stress and also presented the Indian music therapy in form of Raga Therapy for the same. Indian Music therapy is an integration of ancient healing practices and musical traditions, which these days has been practised in collaboration with modern sciences. But it is unique and there is a great scope for further prove and studies.

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