

Indian Classical Music in Physical and Mental Health

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Abstract

Indian Classical Music is a Raga-based innovation to bring one's peace of mind or to sooth one's temperament. It is recognized that improvement of physical health is conducted by and inseparably connected to the mental-health of a person. A highly cognitive or a little cognitive impulse of a person peruses stronger healing with the function and regulation of emotion. Stroke, high blood pressure, brain injury, depression, autism, Alzheimer etc. could be fully recovered by the recurrent listening or performing of Ragas properly and purely through emotion.

Keywords: Mental Health, Neuromusicology, music-cognition, music-psychology, vata, pitta, kapha, Raga-lakshmanas, Raga-shuddhi, Taalim.

Over the past three decades, music has been studied and recognized as a cognitive phenomenon. Still, music is seen as a complex aspect of different processes and characteristics such as Pitch, Intensity, Intervals, Tempo, Rhythm and Melody. Indian classical music basically encompasses Raga-Sangeet. Listening to music is an obvious criterion to bring one's peace of mind or to sooth his/her temperament. But still now, in spite of many good results of various perspectives, society demands the scientific evidence of various clinical conditions, experimented or surveyed upon the musically trained or untrained individuals. Hence, the research in this field has emerged as a specialized branch of cognitive neuroscience and psychology. It is variously referred to as neuromusicology, music-cognition or music-psychology. The invention of various medical tools, technology, improved techniques immensely help this psychological research upon the human beings and upon the other species of this earth. At last, it is recognized that improvement of physical health is conducted by and connected to the mental health of a person.

Actually, 'Health' and 'Healthy' are not synonymous based on their inner-meanings. 'Health' means to have one's physical or mental state. On the other hand, 'Healthy' means to be or to live in good condition of health. Good health cannot be attained by the lack of consciousness and attention of a person. Moreover, it depends on good and proper thinking, justified feeling, will-power, determination along with consciousness. All these psychological aspects are es-

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essential for attaining sound mental health of human being. So, it will be rightly expressed that, attention is the concentration of consciousness upon one object rather than other and it implies holding an object in the focus of consciousness. According to Croce, 'Work' of art is purely mental; songs or the melodic (including rhythmic or non-rhythmic) utterance are the expressions only. He said that intuition is always based on one's feeling and expressions. In this way, one's pure intuition and aesthetic activity are equally significant and identical.

The physical health of a person is usually treated according to the disorder of organs and limbs. Rarely it is treated as a disorder of one's mental health, which is called mental disorder. Music is considered to be a biological phenomenon and not just a socio-cultural phenomenon. So, it is not only the subject of social science, but it is obviously the subject of neuroscience i.e., music-therapy or healing. Now, we are going to have a knowledge regarding what the mental health consists of. This is scientifically and medically proved that, the research on music and its obvious effects on our brain functions has produced insights into the nature of the brain, specially, the phenomenon of 'neural plasticity'. Hence, Indian classical Music effects in the brain of human beings through our nervous system. Highly trained musicians (Artists) are considered as an ideal population with whom the study of neural plasticity can be associated brilliantly. When a person is engrossed in music (specially Ragas) he or she is benefitted by the cognitive, emotional, physiological well-being as well as the social well-being. It is medically proved that the disease of refractory epilepsy is almost recovered by the recurring training of classical music. A patient of Parkinson's disease is found almost in a recovered condition by the stimulation of the nerves.

A highly cognitive or a little cognitive impulse of a person peruses stronger healing with the function and regulation of emotion. The Ragas, based on a daily schedule react upon the brain through its orderly or systematic methodology of listening or training of a person. The emotion processing is directed by the proper application of a Raga, first to last of its performing or expressing mode. The emotional experience of human beings rewards the centre of the brain by the recurrent listening or performing of Ragas and alters the psycho-physiological parameters such as pain-perception, relaxation, blood pressure, controlling and conduction of respiration and heart beats too. Indian classical music is an apt intervention to address in the multiple domains, like cognitional, emotional, social, which are adversely affected in psychiatric conditions of human being. This is also called psycho-pathological improvement, that

can easily be accepted by a patient or an ill person. Listening to the Ragas has also been shown to have beneficial effects in improving mood and functioning upon one's depression, stroke and dementia. Even a sad melody can heal the saddest mood of a patient or a mourning person.

All of us are well aware of the fact that, there prevails a very limited amount of scientific literature and therapeutic information in the area of Indian Classical Music as a Healing Therapy. Through the ages, the pioneers of Indian Classical Music and the performers having outstanding knowledge on Indian Classical Music, have not been researched well; though all the parents know that soothing melodies and musical sounds pacify even the most irritable moods of babies. So, the primary proof of Raga-Therapy is the lullabies we use to sing to infants and toddlers. This type of melodies later heightened into Raga Therapy for more mature perceptions of adult and adolescents. As a result, over the ages, the practitioners of music therapy have living proof regarding the effectiveness of Indian Classical Music in therapeutic applications on a daily basis. So that, in this earth, this therapeutic application can be used to treat us when we suffer from the diseases like stroke, brain injury, depression, autism, Alzheimer's disease and so on. The therapeutic effect of Ragas in Hindustani and Carnatic Classical Music is a time-tested one and it is described in our ancient system of Nada Yoga also. A Raga is a sequence of the selected notes or 'swaras', that lend appropriate mood or emotion in a selective combination. It is a Yoga system through the medium of sonorous sounds. A Raga can induce or intensify one's joy or sorrow, violence or peace, only by the proper application of a proper quality of Raga-Performance or Raga demonstration through vocal and instrumental music. This is our ancient system; since the Vedic Era, it has been used significantly to gain the controlling power upon Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, through Ayurveda. But Indian Classical Music is more than that, because it is a perception that to achieve it through listening or practicing, Raga must be played or sung to a patient keeping in mind one's physical nature of Vata, Pitta, Kapha.

There are 72 Ragas, which can control 72 nerves (out of 86 nerves of Cranial & Peripheral nervous system) of a human body. Playing or singing a Raga, is bound to perform with the Raga lakshanas (Specification of note-combination), Swara-Shuddhi (Purity in Pitch). Hindustani Raga Ahirbhairav and Raga Todi are prescribed for patients suffering from hypertension and the Carnatic-Raga Punnagavarali and Raga Saham are very useful to calm one's mind and control the anger. There are so many Ragas, that heal the diseases and help the

human beings to live their healthy lives. The following Chart (for example) will help us to get it more cleared:

Sl. No.	Name of the Ragas	Treatment of the diseases
1.	Bhairavi	Provides relief from sinusitis, cold, phlegm, toothache etc.
2.	Todi, Ahirbhairav, Bhupali	Provides relief from cold, headache, high blood pressure etc.
3.	Shivaranjani	Treats memory problems etc.
4.	Bihag , Bahar	For sound & sonorous sleep etc.
5.	Chandrakauns	Treatment of heart ailments & diabetes etc.
6.	Darbari, Darbari-Kanada	Relief from tension & provides relaxation etc.
7.	Asavari, Malkauns	Cures low blood pressure etc..
8.	Tilak-Kamod, Hamsadhwani, Kalavati, Durga	Easing tension etc.

Now a pertinent question can be raised— what's about the general people, who are not sick or seriously ill at all? Do the Ragas have nothing to effect upon them? So, let us have a look at that. The unconscious listening or the untrained listening of Indian Classical Music can definitely increase and control one's tolerance, peace, good-blood circulation, capacity of brain-work and will-power, good stimulation of the nervous system, pumping of heart, orderly secretion of stomach and pancreas and other glands. Hence, people can be blessed with a soothing, clam and peaceful mental state, that can have positive impact upon their sound mental health and effect upon their works and activities positively.

According to the time theory, the Morning Ragas (Lalit, Bhairav, Bhairavi, Asavari, Todi etc.), the Afternoon Ragas (Vrindabani-Sarang, Shuddh-Sarang, Madhuvanathi, Bhimpalashree etc.), the Evening Ragas (Purvi, Puriyadhanashree, Yaman, Maru-Bihag etc.) and the Night Ragas (Bageshree, Malkauns, Hameer Patdeep, Malhars) generally effect upon the non-trained or less-trained persons through their general perceptions and stimulus appreciation. But for the trained listeners and for the performers (having the outstanding knowledge and recurring innovative practice by receiving the proper and pure Taalim or teaching from their Gurus or Teachers), the Ragas produce more and more remarkable impact upon their physical and men-

tal states.

Now it can be summarized that, Indian Classical Music can help and support one to have confidence and optimistic thinking, to be stronger in mind and it can also cure various diseases or decrease the symptoms of those diseases, both in case of physical and mental problems. Not only upon human being, even upon the birds, animals and trees and plants, the recurrent playing and singing of Indian Classical Music has a strong impact. It is capable to keep ecological balance of the Nature and it helps in socio-economic improvement and inter-relationship between human and the others. The seasonal Ragas like all the Malhars, Basant, all type of Bahars; the late-night Ragas like Sahana, Suha, all type of Kanadas; the mid-night Ragas like Darbari, Malkauns etc. can affect immensely upon any person easily, if the Ragas are properly and purely played or sung. The happiness of a person mostly depends on health; health is the most precious wealth of a person. This health is two-fold criteria of human being; one is physical health and the other is mental health. The human beings are the best creations of the Nature and the Indian Classical Music is the best creation of human beings.

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