

The Role of Music in Reducing Mental Stress.

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Abstract

In today's era we can see that there is a rivalry everywhere. Any field or any stream is not free from tough competition. Everyone wants to outdo other, hence people work harder and harder. Sometimes beyond their strengths and capacity. Which results mental stress, depression, dejection and peevishness. Is this called progress? Is our aim to run after money only? What kind of so-called progress is this, where a person may fetch a handsome salary, in the form of high packages and perks but losing his/her mental balance day by day? Consequently, getting fed up of it, sometimes they even commit suicide also, and hence nowadays suicidal cases are on the rise. This is a serious and lamentable issue which must be resolved. Our Fine Arts, especially music could be a remedy of this critical problem. There is much discussion over Music Therapy nowadays. Music might not be able to cure chronic and complex diseases like Cancer or Aids, but music definitely works on our mind. It throws a plenty and positive impact on our mental health. How Music can be helpful to cope up with all the present challenging phases of life? It will be discussed in this research paper.

The Role of Music in Reducing Mental Stress

India is a land of art and culture. Music and other arts are recognized as a very respected genre. India is not only ahead in science and technology but in the cultural fields also. There is a distinctive and exclusive place of art and culture in India. Now the question arises, why these fine arts like music, dance, drama, painting, sculpture etc are needed, while they do not fulfill one's basic needs? The answer is, though Music and other Fine arts do not solve the problem of our day today life, yet it definitely fulfill the requirements of one's heart and soul. The great dramatist William Shakespeare said, "If somebody doesn't like Music, he is not trustworthy and could commit any kind of heinous crime.

"The man that hath no music in himself, nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils; The motions of his spirit are dull as night, And his affection dark as Erebus. Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music."

(Shakespeare. W (1600) The Merchant of Venice, V.I, 83-85)

There are more definitions which describe the importance of Music and art in one's life.

**Sahitya Sangeet Kala Vihina
Saakshaat Manushya Pashu
Puchha Vishaanhina
(Raja Bhartri Hari)**

It means, a person who doesn't have any sense of literature, music or art, is as good as an animal without having tail. The glory of music is indescribable. It throws a good and positive impact on our mind and soul. It refrains us from being panic, restless and harmful. A person who regularly practices music or uses to listen to a soft melodious music, would act in a decent manner. While a person who doesn't like music and gets disturbed by the sweet sounds, may act very harshly. There is a little bit of music in everyone. Every child should be given a good guidance towards music since the very beginning, so that he or she might become a responsible and good citizen. However everyone may not become a great artist and it's not

possible as well, yet it is for sure that one has to be given a proper education of music and fine arts like all other subjects.

Music and Meditation

Today, if there is anything which the world requires the most is “peace”. Our world is in the grip of violence. There is terrorism and bloodshed everywhere. T.V channels and newspapers are abounding with such incidents. Who creates this chaos? None other than our untrained, panic, ruthless mind. Hence our mind has to be trained. It could be done through yoga and meditation. A disciplined life is required for everyone. Our daily routine decides how our life will be in coming future. If we lead a disciplined and well-ordered life, we become healthy so that we could work more efficiently, on the other hand, if we lead a helter skelter life, we may become unhealthy and our bad health would definitely affect our work efficiency. Besides this, there is a lack of mental stability nowadays people just get carried away very easily over the petty issues. Anger, stress, dilemma, tension and another psychological problems occur out of mental instability. In such cases one has to train his/ her mind to be calm and steady even in any kind of adverse situation. A little regular practice of meditation will definitely help a person in this. It will be easier to concentrate if the help of music is taken during meditation. A soft slow melodious music, while doing yoga or some other exercise and meditation helps the mind to be static and calm. Playing some musical instruments also helps to improve concentration, as one gets, immersed in the mesmerizing sound of music.

Mandrasadhna- Not only that, but practicing vocal music early in the morning before dawn, also is a kind of meditation but strictly only on the lower notes. The lower you practice the better you could meditate. This process is called “Mandrasadhna” in singing. There are many more benefits of “Mandrasadhna” but here we are focusing only on meditation. When we utter “Om” and stabilize our voice, it spontaneously creates a pious and a serene atmosphere all around us.

“Aum is considered as third eye chakra, at the center of the forehead, directly in line with the center of the brain. In the beginning was the sacred sound of aum, it was with God and God is Aum. Its continuous chanting will shift the attention and echo the harmonic relationship of every vital organ, our heart beat, breathing, brain wave pulsing neuron cells metabolic, enzymatic and hormonal rhythms and will bust stress, addiction and improve behavior.”

(Hashia, V. (May 30, 2016) The ‘Aum’ sound is cosmic, not religious, times of India Page 12).

In ancient period, our Hrishimunis would take the help of music for their yajna and Austerity. They used to chant mantras and hymns to impress God or to develop their own skills. As we all know that there are four Vedas i.e. Rig-veda, Saamveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda, out of which Saamveda is based upon music. There were three notes or we could say three scales of music i.e. Uddata, Anuddata and Swarita. Music gradually evolved along with the time, now we have seven ShuddhaSwaras and five VikritSwaras.

Swar or Naad:-The origin of music is “Naad”

**“NakaaramPrananaabhanamDakaarmanalvidu
JatpranagniSanyoggattenNadobhidhiyate.”**

SangeetRatnakar “SharangDev”

“Na” is soul and “Da” is energy. The combination of soul and energy makes “Naad”

The base of swar is naad, similarly it's the base of music as well. There are two types of Naad.

1. Aahathnaad
 2. Anaahathnaad.
- 1) **AahathNaad-** It gets produced by putting any kind of force or beating on something. All kind of sound which can be heard in this world belong to “Aahathnaad.” Like the twitter of birds, sounds of animals, musical instruments etc.
 - 2) **AnaahantNaad:** “AnaahathNaad” is not concrete or substantial. That is why it cannot be listened by humans through their senses. It can only be heard by the hermits at the stage of their austerity, when the bond of their senses gets broken. Hence this is called heavenly sound, which is beyond the senses. AnaahatNaad is not meant for this materialistic world. The sound we can hear in this world, whether it's melodious or harsh, belong to AahathNaad.

The Types Of AahathNaad: There are two types of AahathNaad (1) Musical (2) Non Musical.

The former is called “Naad” and the latter is called “Raav”. All the melodious sounds like sounds of musical instruments, singing etc come under the “Naad” rest of the sounds which don't appear soothing to ears, are “Raav”. Like sounds of rattle, Noise etc.

For musical sound, the sound should be stable, regular and chiming. Chime is must for a musical sound, because the melody comes from that only. For example, the Sound of a horn is very much regular and stable as well, but it doesn't sound melodious because it does not chime.

Indian Classical Music

In India, there are two streams of classical music. Hindustani or Uttar Bhartiya Sangeet and Karnatak or Dakshinatya Sangeet. Initially both were not apart from each other, but due to certain circumstances it has get separated, during the British rule, northern India was not appropriate for musicians to do their “Saadhana” due to frequent attacks and aggressions by the British. So they migrated to South India, as it was free from British rule because it was easier to infiltrate from northern part of India as transportation was not easy that days.

In 13th century, the period of “Sharangdev” Indian Classical Music was divided into two parts, but the origin was the same. So despite being different from each other they have some similar qualities.

About Hindustani Classical Music: Both in Hindustani and Karnatak Sangeet, there are many ragas, talas, styles and soon. In Hindustani Classical Music, the singing styles are Dhrupad, Khayal, Thumri etc. Dhrupad is considered to be a highly devotional and an elite singing style. The texts of Dhrupads are also accordingly. It's mostly dedicated to God. Sometimes there is a description of nature or music also, but petty words are completely unacceptable in Dhrupads. It's apart from romanticism. Variability and fickleness are not allowed in Dhrupad as it's devoted to God while in another stream of Dhrupad, which is called “Dhamar” there is a little bit of liberation given to it. But in Dhrupad, all the rules are supposed to be strictly followed, which are belong to it.

If a person sings or play Dhrupad, it is essential to train his mind first, as restlessness might be a hurdle for Dhrupad singing. The word “Dhrupad” is built by joining two separate words i.e.

“Dhruv” and “Pad” Dhruv means static and “Pad” means verse or text. Dhruvad has come from “Dhruva” type of “SudaPrabandha”, which is out of ancient “Prabandha”. It’s also been associated with ancient “Geetis” rules are strictly followed in “Dhruvad”. Hence a person who sings or play Dhruvad on a musical instrument, spontaneously become steady, patient and calm. Dhruvad is supposed to be sung by male singers, as its required bass effect in voice. Serious and stable voice is must, but that doesn’t mean a women cannot sing Dhruvad. It just needs the above qualities which is required in Dhruvad singing, hence both male and female may sing Dhruvad.

The Psychological Effect of Musical Instruments

Not only in singing but also playing musical instruments drives our mind towards calmness and helps us to be steady and firm as stated earlier. There are many instruments and have been classified mainly into four sections, which are below mentioned

- (1) Thath (string instruments)
- (2) Avnaddha (percussion)
- (3) Ghan (idiophones) and
- (4) Sushir (wind instruments).

Out of the abovementioned types of instruments there is an instrument which is called “Taanpura”. Taanpura is not meant for accompaniment, yet it is used mainly in classical singing. It just supports the vocalist and constantly four strings are played. It doesn’t change notes once it is tuned. Taanpura is a string instrument. Our throat is also recognized as a string instrument as it has vocal chords. Taanpura has four string and it produces “Harmonics” or “Overtones”. In Hindi terminology it’s called “SwayambhooSwaras”. Swayambhoo means, “One who creates oneself.” Briefly we will see that how they are produced or made.

The basic swaras in which Taanpura gets tuned are called root notes and the notes which get produced themselves are called “SahayakNaad”. It also Known as “Swayambhooswaras”. It’s called overtones or harmonics in English. Scientists say that every musical instrument produces overtones besides basic notes but the number of overtones, frequency and density are different in different instruments. In string instruments, overtones could be listened more clearly than the other instruments.

In Taanpura the overtones are produced in a mathematical order. The ratio of overtones from basic notes are 2:3:4:5:6 etc. In other words we can say that overtones are produced in double, triple, four times, five times and soon. Now we would contemplate over the numbers of overtones through mathematics.

In modern age there are seven ShuddhaSwaras or seven basic notes and their frequencies are

Sa	Re	Ga	Ma	Pa	Dha	Ni
240	270	300	320	360	400	450

In Taanpura, the first string gets tuned in “MandraPancham” or “MandraMadhyam” (in lower scale) and the couple of middle strings get tuned in “Madhya Shadaj” and the fourth string gets tuned in “MandraShadaj”.

For example we will take MandraSadaj to see the frequencies, which are produced while striking it. We will multiply the frequency of “MandraShadaj” in order to one to nine, such as-

- The frequency of MandraShadaj is 120.
- 120 X 1 = 120 (Basic Note)
- 120 X 2 = 240 (Madhya shadaj)
- 120 X 3 = 360 (Madhya Pancham)
- 120 X 4 = 480 (TaarShadaji.e high scale)
- 120 X 5 = 600 (TaarGandhar)

120 X 6 = 720 (TaarPancham)
 120 X 7 = 840 (TaarAtiKomalNishad)
 120 X 8 = 960 (AtiTaarShadaji.e Higher Scale)
 120 X 9 = 1080 (AtiTaarHrishabh)

Thus we could see that Sa, Re,Ga,Pa,are being produced from shadaj as overtones,similarly we get Ma,Pa,Dha,Sa from Madhyamand Pa,Dha,Ni,Re from Pancham.Hence proved that all seven shuddhaswaras get produced on taanpura. However it's not possible to get all seven swaras at one time, as when we tune the Taanpura in Madhyam, we cannot get "Ni" and when we tune in "Pancham" we are unable to get "Ma".Thus we get maximum six shuddhaswaras at one time on Taanpura.

So we have seen how overtones get produced on Taanpura. These overtones or harmonics creates a pious atmosphere all around and it leads our mind and soul towards calmness and stability. It cannot be explained through writing, as it's a matter of experience. Some other instruments like flute, sitar, Iktara and many other also produce a soothing sound which helps us to tranquilize.

The Requirement of Music in our Life.

We have seen previously that how music can soothe our senses. Here we will contemplate over the requirement of a good music in our day to day life. As we know that the rivalry is increasing day by day. All fields are full of competitions. Hence tension, dejection, mental stress and several other psychological problems are occurring among human being. This is a very serious matter which cannot be ignored or neglected. Even children are coming across to mental tension and cannot be able to cope up with. We cannot overcome our strain. Sometimes we take wrong decisions due to excessive strain. It's a matter of concern indeed.Progress in all aspects are good of course but never at the cost of one's life. Now it has become necessary to take a step towards mending our mental health, so that our nation could progress rather more efficiently and successfully.

We are living in a mechanical age where everyone is running after some or other goals, but we are forgetting that we are humans also, even machines also need rest, then how could a human work 24X7? There should be some space and time for relaxing also, so that a person could manage his/her mind and soul. Music can definitely help towards this.

It is proved that with the help of music one can improve one's mental health.Music helps reducing stress, manages blood pressure and cures many kind of psychological disorders. Spending a little time with music enhances the capacity to work without getting stressed. Even physical work appears easier if music is there. That is why, many folk songs are made as per the trade of a layman. They sing while they work, thus they could find easy to work harder. It increases one's energy and stamina.

Not only the melodious notes of music but the lyrics of a song also helps to stimulate one's feeling. Like devotional songs (Bhajan, Keertanetc). Inspiring and encouraging GeetsandGhazalsetc are very helpful to raise a person's willpower.Hence a little knowledge of music or at least a little understanding of music is essential for everyone.

Music as an Educational Subject

As per previously mentioned that there is a very important place of music in our day to day life. Music is not meant for enjoyment and entertainment only. Music has a deep meaning which is required to be understood by everyone and for that music should be an essential part of our educational curriculum.

When a person learns music, he or she not only learns music but also learns how to manage his or her mood swings. A Person spontaneously learns culture, sacraments and manners

gradually along with music lessons. Music helps us to cope up with the challenges and struggles which naturally comes on our path of life and which cannot be overlooked. One has to face all the circumstances and problems of our life but it could be easier and would seem to be easily handled with steady and clam mind.

Hence Music education should be mandatory to all elementary and secondary schools, so that the mental health of our future generation could be better. However it is upto students, whether they want to pursue music further or not.

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