

## STRESS REDUCTION THROUGH LISTENING INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

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### ABSTRACT

In this review article the author argues that the complete presentation of Stress is relied through neither for Possible of Music in Ragaas as inevitable part of physical and mental health for stress busted leg. Lecturer in Psychology & Counseling Psychologist and Alt. Medicine (Homeopathy) Practitioner, Tirupati, India

**Keywords:** Stress, Ragaas, human body.

### INTRODUCTION

Stress is a priceless poison of 21<sup>st</sup> century, music as a best medicine of stress it has alternative medicine along with entertainment. music is helpful in managing stress, express emotions, meditation, activating chakras (energy centers), enhances memory, give pleasure and alleviate pain. Music is considered as the fourth Upaveda, the Gandharva Veda, in addition to Dhanurveda, Ayurveda, and Artha Shastra. I use devotional music as a means of spiritual energy transmission. Some Higher Force takes care of my process, once I decide to heal through music. Swara Shuddhi (pure notes) is held in great veneration and is considered as a standard of musical truth. Melody (raga) is the result of Swara Shuddhi. There is clarity and pure energy in such a melody. Ragas like Bhairavi, Kalyani, Vasant, Kosala, Hanurama thadi, Hamsadwani, Kirvani, etc, are the unspoiled sounds of eternal nature, the soul of man and paramatman. Whether melakarta or janya, ragas are all energetic indeed the potential exists in all ragas to cure conditions or afflictions. The musical healer will have subtle psychological conceptions of ragas at an intuitive level. It is not the mechanical performance of ritual with the intention for material reward. Music therefore is an experience of Truth in spite of intellectual interpretation."

**What is a Raga?** Simply defined, *Raga Chikitsa* means "healing through the use of ragas." *Raga Chikitsa* is defined as "the knowledge of how to use raga for the purposes of healing. Fundamental features of *Raga Chikitsa* is the classification of the ragas based on their elemental composition (ether, air, fire, water, earth) and the proper use of the elements to balance the nature of the imbalance.

Ragas are closely related to different parts of the day according to changes in the nature and development of a particular emotion, mood or sentiment in the human mind. Music is considered the best tranquilizer in modern days of anxiety, tension and high blood pressure.

It is believed that the human body is dominated by the three Doshas – Kaph, Pitta and Vata. These elements work in a cyclic order of rise and fall during the 24 hour period. Also, the reaction of these three elements differs with the seasons. Hence it is said that performing or listening to a raga at the proper allotted time can affect the health of human beings.[2]

Art of Music is the foremost and important art among the 64 arts. From the very beginning, musical art served as a treasure of people's culture, civilization, humanism and other features of life.

Music served as a medium to spread religious doctrines, to evoke thirst for freedom and to teach good and evil things in life. It was a part of every movement of human activity and was used as medicine to cure diseases of people.

The power of musical vibrations is connected in some manner all things and all beings and all beings in the universe on all plants in existence. The human body has 72,000 astral nerves (Nadis) which incessantly vibrate in a specific rhythmic pattern. Disturbance in their rhythmic vibration is the root cause of disease. The musical notes restore their normal rhythm, there by bringing about good health.

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 that 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 at & b).

### Raga Therapy in India

Raga, we all know is the sequence of selected notes (swaras) that lend appropriate 'mood' or emotion in a selective combination. Depending on their nature, a raga could induce or intensify joy or sorrow, violence or peace and it is this quality which forms the basis for musical application. Thus, a whole range of emotions and their nuances could be captured and communicated within certain rhythms and melodies. Playing, performing and even listening to appropriate ragas can work as a medicine. (Bagchi, 2003) Various ragas have since been recognized to have a definite impact on certain ailments. (Sairam, 2004b)

The ancient Hindus had relied on music for its curative role: the chanting and toning involved in Veda mantras in praise of God has been used from time immemorial as a cure for several disharmonies in the individual as well as his environment. Several [3]

sects of 'bhakti' such as Chaitanya Sampradaya, Vallabha Sampradaya have all accorded priority to music. Historical records indicate that one Haridas Swami who was the guru of the famous musician in Akbar's time, Tan Sen is credited with the recovery of one of the queens of the Emperor with a selected raga.

The great composers of classical music in India called the 'Musical Trinity', - who were curiously the contemporaries of the 'Trinity of Western Classical Music, Bach, Beethoven and Mozart- were quite sensitive to the acoustical energies. Legend has it that Saint Thyagaraja brought a dead person back to life with his Bilahari composition Naa Jiva Dhaara. Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Navagriha kriti is believed to cure stomach ache. Shyama Sastry's composition Duru Sugu uses music to pray for good health.

Living systems show sensitivity to specific radiant energies - be it acoustical, magnetic or electro-magnetic. As the impact of music could be easily gauged on emotions and thereby in mind, it can be used as a tool to control the physiological, psychological and even social activities of the patients

Indian classical music can be classified into two forms: *kalpita sangita* or composition, which is previously conceived, memorized, practised and rendered and *manodharma sangita* or the music extemporised and performed. The latter can be equated to the honey-mooner's first night as it conceives both spontaneity and improvisation. It is fresh and natural as it is created almost on the spot and rendered instantly on the spur of the moment.

According to an ancient Indian text, Swara Sastra, the seventy-two melakarta ragas (parent ragas) control the 72 important nerves in the body. It is believed that if one sings with due devotion, adhering to the raga lakshana (norms) and sruti shuddhi, (pitch purity) the raga could affect the particular nerve in the body in a favourable manner.

While the descending notes in a raga (avarohana) do create inward-oriented feelings, the ascending notes (arohana) represent an upward mobility. Thus music played for the soldiers or for the dancers have to be more lively and up lifting with frequent use of arohana content. In the same way, melancholic songs should go for 'depressing' avarohanas. Although it is not a rule, most of the Western tunes based on major keys play joyful notes, while those composed in minor keys tend to be melancholic or serious.[4]

Certain ragas do have a tendency to move the listeners, both emotionally as well as physically. An involuntary nod of the head, limbs or body could synchronize with lilting tunes when played.

Raga chikitsa was an ancient manuscript, which dealt with the therapeutic effects of raga. The library at Thanjavur is reported to contain such a treasure on ragas, that spells out the application and use of various ragas in fighting common ailments

#### Raga and its Effects

**Kafi Raga** - Evokes a humid, cool, soothing and deep mood

**Raga Pooriya Dhansari (Hamsanandi-Kamavardini)** - evokes sweet, deep, heavy, cloudy and stable state of mind and prevents acidity..

**Raga Mishra Mand** - has a very pleasing refreshing light and sweet touch

**Raga Bageshri** - arouses a feeling of darkness, stability, depths and calmness. This raga is also used in treatment of diabetes and hypertension

**Raga Darbari (Darbari Kanada)** - is considered very effective in easing tension. It is a late night raga composed by Tansen for Akbar to relieve his tension after hectic schedule of the daily court life.

**Raga Bhupali and Todi** - give tremendous relief to patients of high blood pressure.

**Raga Ahir-Bhairav (Chakravakam)** - is supposed to sustain chords which automatically brings down blood pressure.

**Raga Malkauns and Raga Asawari (natabhairavi)** - helps to cure low blood pressure.

**Raga Tilak-Kamod (Nalinakanti), Hansdhwani, Kalavati, Durga(Suddha Saveri)** - evoke a very pleasing effect on the nerves.

**Raga Bihag, Bahar (Kanada), Kafi & Khamaj** - For patients suffering from insomnia and need a peaceful sonorous sleep. Useful in the treatment of sleep disorders.

**Raga Bhairavi** - Provides relief T.B, Cancer, Severe Cold, Phlegm, Sinus, toothache .

**Raga Malhar** - Useful in the treatment of asthma and sunstroke.

**Raga Todi, Poorvi & Jayjaywanti** - Provides relief from cold and headache.[5]

**Raga Hindol & Marava** - These ragas are useful in blood purification.

**Raga Shivananjani** - Useful for memory problems.

**Raga Kharahara Priya** - strengthens the mind and relieves tension. Curative for heart disease and nervous irritability, neurosis, worry and distress.

**Raga Hindolam and Vasantha** - gives relief from Vatha Roga, B.P, Gastritis and purifies blood.

**Raga Saranga** - cures Pitha Roga.

**Raga Natabhairavi** - cures headache and psychological disorders.

**Raga Punnagavarali, Sahana** - Controls Anger and brings down violence

**Raga Dwijavanthi** - Quells paralysis and sicorders of the mind

**Raga Ganamurte** - Helpful in diabetes

**Raga Kapi** - Sick patients get over their depression, anxiety. Reduces absent mindedness

**Raga Ranjani** - helps to cure kidney disorders

**Raga Rathipathipriya** - Adds strength and vigor to a happy wedded life. This 5-svara raga has the power to eliminate poverty. The prayoga of the swaras can wipe off the vibrations of bitter feelings emitted by ill will.

**Raga Shanmukhapriya** - Instills courage in one's mind and replenishes the energy in the body.

**Raga Sindhubhairavi** - For a Healthy Mind and Body, Love & Happiness, Gentleness, Peace & Tranquillity, Serenity **listening at late night (1 am - 4 am)**

**Raga Hameerkalyani** - This particular Hindusthani coloured raaga, one with great therapeutic value relaxes tension with its calming effect and brings down BP to normal 120/80.

**Raga Brindavana Saranga** - For Wisdom, Success, Knowledge, Joyfulness and Greater Energy

**Raga Mohana** - Useful for the treatment of migraine headache. **listening at evening (7 pm- 10 pm)[6]**

**Ragas Charukesi, Kalyani (all time raga), Sankarabharanam (evening raga) and Chandrakauns** is considered very helpful for heart ailments

**Raga Ananda Bhairavi** - Suppresses stomach pain in both men and women. Reduces kidney type problems. Controls blood pressure

**Raga Amrutavarshini** - Ushana vyathi nasini ( alleviates diseases related to heat)

**Raga Reethigowla** - A raga that bestows direction when one seeks it

**Raga Madhyamavati** - Clears paralysis, giddiness, pain in legs/hands, etc. and nervous complaints.

M. Raj Kotwal(1998) results indicate that the background Indian classical music is efficacious in reducing psychological distress during a gastroscopic examination. We suggest that music could be applied to other medical situations as well, which tend to generate undue psychological stress and anxiety. Music, as a familiar personal and culture medium, can be used to ease anxiety, to act as distractor, to increase discomfort and pain threshold.

Uma Gupta and B. S. Gupta (2005) The results showed that the instrumental music led to significant increase in the alpha EEG frequency and a significant decrease

in the scores on depression, state and trait anxiety, and the four components of anxiety; the systolic and diastolic blood pressure and heart rate, however, remained unaffected.

Jaydeep Chakraborty,(2006) Music also taps into our neural machinery and places music therapy squarely into the realm of science. The approach describes a non-invasive method of applying Indian Classical music for reducing stress. This approach differs from the Music Therapy as it attempts to reduce stress.

Jyoti Dass and Dr. Lovely Sharma(2006)significant that A number of successful experiments have been made to assess the effect of raga-s on human beings by playing particular combinations of sound and also particular raga-s. Health cure with the help of classical raga with their specific emotional sentiment has also been experimented. Raga Ragini-s can be successfully used for the treatment of various diseases.[7]

Madhulika Srivatsav and Dr. Lovely Sharma,(2006)significant that psychological effects of music, the most pronounced ones are on the behaviour & temperament of the individual. Emotions, feelings and thoughts have been reported to be greatly influenced by music listening or participates. Emotional experience divided from music has a powerful effect on the formation of one's moral and intellectual outlook. Music activities enhance imagination & creative thinking. Music has a great ability to inspire and enthuse the listener and the performer.

Mohan D. Sundararaj (2006) This paper identifies the need for basic science research in music therapy to corroborate its role in health care thus advancing our strategies towards evidence-based methods. Basic science research is essential for progress, vital to the evolution of music therapy and will ultimately lead to better patient care.

Lalitha Ramakrishna(2006) This helps to enhance the memory and reflexes of the performer and the audience who keep the rhythm along with him. Rhythm is a powerful aid in the cure of modern maladies especially those of the psychosomatic type.

Caprilli S(2007) study that demonstrates that songs and music, performed by "professional" musicians, have a beneficial effect in reducing distress before, during, and after blood tests. This study shows, moreover, that the presence of musicians has a minor, but yet significant, effect on pain due to needle insertion.

Robert E. Krout(2007)indicate that role of music listening to positively affect neurophysiological and emotional responses related to relaxation is examined. Neurological bases of music listening and sound processing are reviewed, with emphasis on how music is processed by the limbic and related biological systems, including endocrine and hormonal responses.

Teresa Lesiuk,(2008) significant that interaction effect revealed that the group with High-Trait Anxiety and Introversion experienced no decrease in state anxiety over time. This same personality combination also perceived significantly higher air traffic activity than the three other personality combination types. Self-reports of degree of liking the music and effectiveness in stress reduction indicate a positive report of music in reducing work stress for air traffic controllers.

Catrine Kostenius and Kerstin Öhrling (2009) review that phenomenological analysis resulted in three main themes: (i) depending on oneself, others and the world around, (ii) choosing to be a doer and (iii) being in the here and now. We understood the

children's lived experiences of coping with stress as them being relaxed and powerful. The children chose to be active doers or inactive beings and their relationships, as well as their surroundings, helped or hindered their coping. Possible health promotion work is discussed.

Raji Kaliyaperumal and Jaya Gowri Subash (2010) significantly higher than the tabulated value at 5%. Music therapy is a beneficial nursing intervention that promotes relaxation and alleviates the perception of pain among the patients. Music therapy could be used as an intervention along with other modalities of pain management as it has no adverse effect.

Betty Lynn Schuster (1985) this study was to investigate the efficacy of music therapy in reducing the amount of fluctuation in the blood pressures of patients undergoing hemodialysis treatment. Adult dialysis patients ( $N = 63$ ) between the ages of 22 and 81 were included in the study.

Chouhan (2011)significant that Both the therapies are equally effective in stress reduction.

Joanna DeMarco (2012) suggested that patients waiting for surgery benefit emotionally from hearing music. This low-cost, complementary therapy has the potential to improve the experience and outcomes of patients electing to have cosmetic surgery.

Rodriguez AH(2013).show that positively influence several physiological variables related to anxiety, stress response and pain, the presented scientific evidence is intended to increase awareness among the medical community of the possible benefits of the widespread application of music therapy throughout modern medical practice.

Claire M Ghetti (2013)statistically significant. Actively engaging in a session of music therapy with an emphasis on emotional-approach coping can improve the well-being of adults awaiting cardiac catheterization procedures.

Carla Biset(2013) asked that short surveywas meant to give an idea of how and why music and emotion are related and are both of broad relevance for society Music has [9] effects on our wellbeing and hence on our happiness. Indeed, it can have an impact on many parts of our brain (even on more parts than language) which in turn releases feeling well hormones that have positive effects on our mood, happiness and on many parts of our body. Listening to music is however not absolutely necessary, since imagining music or rhythm can lead to comparable effects.

Sabita Paudel(2013) The students in all years of study had high prevalence of stress. The most frequently mentioned consequences of stress during all years were fatigue/tiredness and mood alteration. Listening to music was the leading stress reduction technique for students in all academic years. A contemporary dental school should address potential stress sources effectively, thus promoting the educational and professional well-being of dental undergraduates.

Lubna Bte Iskhandar Shah, et al (2013) Findings indicated that psychoeducation and relaxation-based interventions mitigated stress and depression; and enhanced relaxation intensity and knowledge on stress management. However, mixed results were obtained on anxiety. In addition, interventions using virtual reality technology revealed positive effects on depression, relaxation intensity and anxiety. Limitations and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Jun Jiang et al (2013) finding that the effects of sedative and stimulative music on stress reduction depend on music preference. Our study has important implications for the practice of clinical music therapy since it provides strong support for the use of preferred music when working to reduce patient stress.

Aaron Williamon et al.(2013) show that this offers new scope for interpreting the autonomic nervous system response to stress in real-world scenarios, with the evolution of stress levels being consistent with the difficulty of the music being played, superimposed on the stress caused by performing in front of an

audience. For an emerging class of algorithms that can analyse HRV independent of absolute data scaling, it is shown that complexity science performs a more accurate assessment of average stress levels, thus providing greater insight into the degree of physiological change experienced by musicians when performing in public. [10]

Roya Jabarouti, et al. (2014) showed that while retired men face the risk of suffering stress and depression, listening to classical poetry can be considered as an alternative means to the medical methods. It also suggests that may be listening to the classical poetry of any language for reducing stress in the speakers of that language would be beneficial.

Daisy Fancourt, et al. (2014) reviewed that developing a taxonomy of musical and stress-related variables in research design, and tracing the broad pathways that are involved in its influence on the body.

Serap Simavli, et al. (2014) finding that music therapy during labor decreased postpartum anxiety and pain, increased the satisfaction with childbirth and reduced early postpartum depression rate. Music therapy can be clinically recommended as an alternative, safe, easy and enjoyable nonpharmacological method for postpartum well-being.

Heather Kennedy, et al. (2014) reported that CAM positively impacted patient care. Staff indicated that sessions facilitated by masters level creative arts therapists or yoga therapists helped patients by increasing self esteem, increasing motor coordination and body control, providing relaxation, teaching coping skills, decreasing acting out behaviors, developing patient's awareness of emotions or underlying issues, and helping to broach difficult topics or issues for the first time. Milieu staff who participated in CAM groups alongside patients also received personal and professional benefits.

### Conclusion

Music can affect the body and mind in many health-promoting ways, which is the basis for a growing field known as music therapy. However, you can use music in your daily life and achieve many stress relief benefits on your own. One of the great benefits of music as a stress reliever is that it can be used while you conduct your regular activities so that it really doesn't take time away from your busy schedule. Music provides a wonderful backdrop for your life so that you can find increased enjoyment from what you're doing and also reduce stress from your day. [11]

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