

Music Therapy Education & its Training in India - Current State and Future Prospectus -

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ABSTRACT

Music Therapy is an established healthcare profession. It is one of the emerging and most interesting disciplines in the world education system. Many reputed Universities of the world are running regular programs and courses in Music Therapy, however in India the potential of Music Therapy is yet to be fully utilized and as a discipline, it is at the nascent stage. Though a few private institutions and organizations in India are offering short term Music Therapy programs through online and distance mode, however Indian Universities are yet to introduce Music Therapy as a subject and integrate it with their curriculum. This article attempts to explore the current state of Music Therapy Education and Training in India and insists the importance of introducing Music Therapy Education and Training programs in Indian Universities.

Keywords: Music Therapy Education and Training, Indian Music Therapy, Healing with Music, Music Therapy Curriculum, Raga Therapy.

1. Introduction

“*Music Therapy* utilizes music and music related activities to modify ineffective learning patterns, help to promote emotional, mental, social and physical growth and to develop nonmusical goals”¹. Research has shown that musical sounds when occluded in a certain way have a deep consequence on our body and psyche. Music affects us emotionally, physically and aesthetically. “It influences physiological responses (i.e. changes in heart rate, electrical skin conductance, and breathing; (Barlett, 1996)” and also affects motor responses (Thaut, 2005). Plants as well as animals respond to music. It has been proved that plants grow better when subjected to certain types of music particularly classical music. Similarly cows produce more

¹ http://www.peacefulmind.com/music_therapy.htm

milk in presence of slow music. It is on the basis of these characteristics that for centuries, music has been used for healing relaxation and meditation. Almost all the ancient civilizations knew about and used music as healing. Julie Ann Cunningham (2010) notes, “Ancient Greeks used music to help bring beauty and harmony, which they believed would then help the body to heal. Democritus believed that many diseases could be cured by the sound of a flute. Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoras all recognized the healing power of music, and Homer recommended music to counter negative emotions”. The renowned Turkish Islamic scientists and doctors Zekeriya Er- Razi, (854-932), Farabi (870-950) and Ibn-Sina (980-1037 A.D.) scientifically proved the therapeutic powers of music. Persio-Arabic *Maqams* as well as Indian *Ragas* have been identified to have an intense impact on various ailments. For instance *Maqam Rast* is believed to heal eyes, *Maqam Rahawi*-headache, and *Isfahan*-cold and so on. Similarly ragas like *Darbari Kanhada*, *Khamaj*, and *Pooriya* are found to diffuse mental tension.

Nowadays *Music Therapy* is being employed increasingly in many countries to treat many diseases. Many reputed foreign universities are imparting *Music Therapy* education and the courses range from certificate to doctorate level. However in India *Music Therapy* is yet to be recognized as a subject in Indian universities and other educational institutions. Based on the review and analysis of various research studies carried out on the subject of *Music Therapy*, websites of Indian *Music Therapy* organizations, discussions with some *Music Therapy* Professionals and my own insights developed on the subject while attending the 7th *World Music Therapy* conference organized by the *NADA Centre for Music Therapy Chennai* at New Delhi in November 2015, this paper attempts to answer the following research questions; i)What are the merits of *Music Therapy* education in general; ii) What is the current state of *Music Therapy Education and Training* in India; ii) What is the rationale for making *Music Therapy Education and Training* a part of curriculum in Indian universities.

2. What is Music Therapy?

Music Therapy is an emerging field of healthcare which employs music to heal. “Music Therapy is the prescribed use of music and music related techniques to assist and motivate a person towards specific, nonmusical goals. Music therapists use their training to effect changes in the cognitive, physical, communication, social, and emotional skills”². According to Dr. Narendra Kaur (2010) “Music Therapy is basically sound energy therapy. The basis of its effect is that when specific vibrations of musical sounds match with the vibrations of specific organs of the body, healing occurs” (P.111). American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) defines Music Therapy as “the clinical and evidenced-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved Music Therapy program (www.musictherapy.org)”. *Music Therapy* is used as a complementary medicine to treat patients of various ailments. In modern era, music as a therapy is more effective for stress, anxiety, hypertension, Alzheimer’s disease, substance abuse

² Ibid.

problem, acute and chronic pain, heart attack and cerebral stroke. “*Music Therapists* use the unique qualities of music and a relationship with a therapist to access emotions and memories, structure behavior, and provide social experiences in order to address clinical goals (Michael H. Thaut and Barbara L. Wheeler, 2008, P.819)”.

Music has the power of stimulating brainwaves, altering breathing and heart rate, helping to keep anxiety and depression at bay, lowering blood pressure, boosting immunity, and so on. With so many positive effects and benefits, the discipline of Music Therapy is gaining popularity all over the world.

3. Music Therapy in Education-A Historical Overview

Healing with music is not a new concept but it has been in vogue since ancient times. As reported by Carroll, D. (2011) *Music Therapy* is rooted in the ancient literate societies. “During Antiquity and ancient societies, the *Shaman* used music in magic-o-religious rituals to purge the evil spirits from the sick person’s body. Through music and dance, the patient reached a state of trance and ecstasy, allowing for catharsis/purification and healing (Carroll, D. 2011)”. King *David* is said to have cured *King Saul* when the latter was hagridden by an evil spirit. It is for this reason *David* is often regarded as the first music therapist. *Hippocrates*, the father of modern medicine is believed to have used music for treatment of mental diseases. “In the thirteenth century, Arab hospitals contained music rooms for the benefit of patients”³. “The Turku-Persian Psychologist and music theorist *Al-Farabi* (872-950), dealt with *Music Therapy* in his treatise *Meanings of the Intellect*, in which he discussed the therapeutic effects of music on the soul”⁴. It is also said that in ancient Egypt music was used to minimize the labor pain of women during child birth. So far as India is concerned, the origin of *Music Therapy* dates back to ancient Hindu mythology, Vedic texts, and local folk traditions. Various studies have established that ragas have a definite impact on certain ailments. “Historical records indicate that Swami Haridas, the guru of Tansen, recovered one of the queens of Emperor Akbar with a selected raga. Legend has it that saint Thyagaraja brought a dead person back to life with his Bilahari composition *Naa Jiva Dhara* (T.V Sairam, n.d.)”. “The most recent and memorable instances of *Music Therapy* have been noted during the First World War. Musicians of many varieties, both amateur and professional were brought into hospitals to perform for the infirm soldiers and were seen to have therapeutic effects upon the injured. Doctors and nurses as well witnessed some of the miraculous effects of music upon the soldiers and although they were aware of the need for a more structured academic environment to train the musicians, they were also patently aware of the power of music to heal (Mark Lincoln, 2009)”. “Toward the end of World War II, musicians were assigned to military hospitals to work directly with patients and it was during this time period that led to the establishment of the *Music Therapy* profession (Steven Harpern (n.d.)”. “The first degree program for *Music Therapy* was born subsequently at Michigan State

³ Music Therapy, available at www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_therapy#History

⁴ Ibid.

University in 1944 (Mark Lincoln, 2009)". "In 1950 a professional organization was formed by a collaboration of music therapists that worked with veterans, mentally retarded, hearing/visually impaired, and psychiatric populations. This was the birth of the *National Association for Music Therapy (NAMT)*. In 1998, *NAMT* joined forces with another *Music Therapy* organization to become what is now known as the *American Music Therapy Association (AMTA)*"⁵. *AMTA* represents all the Music Therapists in United States and in more than 30 countries around the world. It is in fact world's largest *Music Therapy* association. A large number of foreign universities are conducting programs in *Music Therapy*. Prominent of these universities include; Michigan State University, University of Kansas-United States, University of Miami-Florida, University of Minnesota-Minnesota, University of Georgia, Chapman University- California, Southern Methodist University-Texas, Seattle Pacific University-Seattle Washington, William Carey University, Mississippi, Arizona State University, Montclair State University-New Jersey, Drury University-Missouri USA and others.

4. Utility of Music Therapy Education

Various research studies have established the fact that music has a definite effect on the mind and body of a human being. As noted by John Pellitteri (2000), *Music Therapy* and general music education are two different fields. He says "The goals of the latter are to increase one's knowledge about music and to develop one's skills in playing a musical instrument. In contrast, the goals of *Music Therapy* are to improve one's psychological functioning through the use of musical experiences. The goals for change in *Music Therapy* may be in the areas of attention, concentration, impulse control, social functioning, self esteem, self expression, motivation, and cognition. It is not important to the music therapist if the client sings correct notes to the song because the focus is on the deeper psychological process of using one's voice for creative expression". *Music Therapy* uses music as a tool for communication and expression. "The various types of *Music Therapy* activities consist of either playing structured songs or improvisational music i.e., spontaneous music making (John Pellitteri (2000). Psychologically, music education influences the all-round development of the child. For instance, music promotes the development of child's cognitive abilities, imagination and creative thinking. "*Music Therapy*, practiced by highly skilled and specially trained professionals, can profoundly affect the lives of the individuals participating in the therapy"⁶. "*Music Therapy* is a particularly effective clinical intervention for people who have difficulty communicating verbally. For people affected by disability, illness or injury, working with *Music Therapists* can be life-changing. Children with autism can develop emotional, social and communication skills. Someone with an

⁵ History of Music Therapy,
<http://www.musicasmedicine.com/about/history.cfm>.

⁶ Music Therapy and Music Education-Meeting the needs of children with disabilities, accessed 19/02/2016 at www.musictherapy.org/.

acquired brain injury as the result of an accident can be helped to regain their speech. An older person frightened by the isolation and confusion brought on by dementia can, through the powerfully evocative nature of music, connect with these memories again and share these with others”⁷. “*Music Therapy* is seen by *Music Therapists* as a useful contribution to the education of students with special education needs (Aldridge, Gustorff, & Neugebauer, 1995; Daveson & Edwards, 1998; Patterson, 2003)”. Nowadays *Music Therapy* is increasingly being used in special education. (Susan Sze and Sanna Yu, 2004) notes:

“*Music Therapy* can play an important role in special education because many students with disabilities need special instructional treatment. The use of *Music Therapy* can help people who are crippled by various cognitive and bio-psychosocial problems. It can also help to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities of various kinds. Music provides a form of compensation for those with language impairments as well as a means of facilitating language development”.

Music Therapy research has found that *Music Therapy* is useful for Autism, dementia and various other mental disorders. Catherine Ulbricht (Co-founder Natural Standard research Collaboration) notes; “older adults with Alzheimer's, Dementia, and other mental disorders, *Music Therapy* has been found to reduce aggressive or agitated behavior, reduce symptoms of dementia, improve mood, and improve cooperation with daily tasks, such as bathing. *Music Therapy* may also decrease the risk of heart or brain diseases in elderly dementia patients”. “*Music Therapy* can be used to address many of the goals targeted in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) such as the learning of academic concepts, increasing cooperation and appropriate social behavior, providing avenues for communication, increasing self-esteem and self confidence, improving motoric responses and agility, and encouraging exploration and examination of issues that impact the life of the student”⁸.

5. Music Therapy Education in India

Music Therapy is still at the initial stage in India. Many individuals are practicing *Music Therapy* including some medical professionals. “A few premium medical institutions have introduced *Music Therapy* to patients as a complementary therapy (Sumathy Sundar, 2005)”. “Medical *Music Therapy* has been started in India at Apollo Hospitals in Chennai and similarly Junagarh Civil Hospital, Ahmadabad, has installed music systems in all its forty wards since May 25, 2005 (Narendra Kaur, 2014)”. There are various private institutes and Trusts in India that run certificate and diploma programs in *Music Therapy*.

⁷ What is Music Therapy? Accessed 28/02/2016 at <http://www.bamt.org/music-therapy/what-is-music-therapy.html>

⁸ Music Therapy and Music Education-Meeting the needs of children with disabilities, accessed 19/02/2016 from www.musictherapy.org/.

i. Music Therapy Trust (MTT)

“*The Music Therapy Trust of India* was set up in 2005 with a mission to create trained clinical music therapists through the academy and provide clinical *Music Therapy* services and to create awareness about *Music Therapy* in public at large Besides introducing Clinical *Music Therapy* as an academic discipline and a career option the centre has been spearheading the awareness about *Music Therapy* in Delhi and other parts of the country (<http://www.themusictherapytrust.com/>)”. The Academy offers PG diploma in clinical *Music Therapy* in association with *Otakar kraus Music Trust, UK* .It also conducts regular workshops and has partnered with many trusts and NGO’s like *Mewsic foundation, Austism care Nepal, Aanchal Delhi, Nehru Memorial Trust Delhi, Bal Sahyog, Music Basti Delhi* and many others to help children with special needs through *Music Therapy* training programs and sessions.

ii. The Nada Centre for Music Therapy, Chennai

It is a small nonprofit organization that strives to utilize the therapeutic potential of Indian music in clinical and non-clinical environs. It offers short term courses in *Music Therapy* through distance mode. Besides it is regularly engaged in the research and propagation of *Music Therapy* in India.

iii. The Indian Association of Music Therapy (IAMT)

“It is the association which represents researcher, bio-musicologist, scientist, *Music Therapists*, corporate members and related associations worldwide to promote the use of music not only in the cure of various diseases but also for the healthy life (<http://iamt.net.in/>)”. *IAMT* offers a six month online certificate course in *Music Therapy* and Bio-musicology for medical professionals, Para medical staffs, Endocrinologists, psychologists, Graduates and Postgraduates and all those having knowledge of music.

iv. Chennai School of Music Therapy (CSMT)

“It professionally trains special educators and *Music Therapists* with a curriculum of music improvisation, psychology, special education, neuropsychology and psycho-pathology with specific core courses and internship experiences in *Music Therapy* following the course work enabling them to get professionally certified to take up the work of a professional music therapist (<http://chennaiusictherapy.org/>)”. It in collaboration with IMC University of Applied Sciences, Krems, Austria conducts online certificate and diploma courses in *Music Therapy*.

v. Mumbai Educational Trust (MET)

The *MET* league of colleges conducts programs in a numbers of streams. It has recently launched a six month short term course in *Music Therapy* covering theoretical and practical components along with project work.

vi. Centre for Music Therapy Education and Research (CMTER)

As far as Indian universities are concerned, only *Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth Puducherry* is actively involved in *Music Therapy* education and research in India. The mission of *CMTER* is “to harness the healing effects of music and integrate *Music Therapy* into routine patient care, under the umbrella of complementary and alternative medicine; to set high standards for *Music Therapy* education in a clinical environment; to foster high quality scientific research that would facilitate the evidence-based application of *Music Therapy* (<http://sbvu.ac.in/cmter/mission>)”. The centre is offering a one-year Postgraduate Diploma program in *Music Therapy* since 25-03-2014. This program is one the first of its kind in India. As per the details given on their website, *CMTER* is soon going to launch the first Master’s degree in *Medical Music Therapy*. This would be a commendable service done by the centre to carry forward the *Music Therapy* education and research in India at a University level.

6. Rationale for introducing Music Therapy Education and Training Programs in Indian Universities

Indian music especially classical music has a strong therapeutic effect. While assessing the effects of *Ragas* on human beings, various experiments have been carried out. Atlekar (1986) observed that *Ragas* like *Shankara*, *Patdeep*, *Hindol* and others have proved good in bringing behavioral changes in children of 8 to 18 years of age. He also observed significant changes in the mood from irritating to normal after administration to them. According to Tiwari (1980), Pandit Omkar Nath thakur had observed a number of beneficial effects of *Ragas* on human beings. He reports that Pandit Omkar Nath Thakur cured a boy suffering from insomnia as a result of rendering raga “*puriya*”. As reported by (Bhattacharya, 1970), M.S. University Baroda, India has carried out some work to assess the effect of music and various *Ragas* (such as *Bihag*, *Kafi*, *Malkauns*, *Ramkali*, *Hindol*, *Bahar*, *Deshkar*, *Lalit* and *Jaijawanti*) for correction of aggressiveness, heart ailments, mentally disturbed persons and slow-learners. There was a significant improvement in the conditions of such persons. “Malaria, hysteria, insomnia, tuberculosis, constipation, typhoid, and many other diseases can be cured through various *Ragas* like *Hindol*, *Marwa*, *Puriya*, *Bilawal*, *Tilang*, *Ramkali*, *Multani*, *Kalingra*, *Sohni*, *Kamod*, *Paraj*, *Todi*, *Bhairavi*, *Malkauns*, *piloo*, *Bihag*, *Darbari Kanhara*, *khamaj*, *Sorath*, *Adana*, *Megh Malhar*, *Asawari*, *Bhairav*, *Vrindavani Sarang*, *Desh* etc.(V.S Thakur,1981)”.

Various other studies have revealed the therapeutic power of Indian music. Unfortunately in India the therapeutic potential of Music is yet to be realized and utilized fully. Keeping in view the large scale healing properties of our music, it is obligatory and mandatory to introduce *Music Therapy* as an essential subject in Indian Universities and colleges. Such education would be particularly beneficial to the children with special needs. As already discussed, *Music Therapy* Education is very useful for children with disabilities. In India where, as per 2001 census over 21 million people are suffering from one or the other kind of disability, *Music Therapy* Education is

the need of the hour. There are certain other issues which necessitate the incorporation of *Music Therapy* as an essential subject in India Universities:

1. The organizations and Trusts that are engaged in *Music Therapy* Education and Research in India, offer only short term certificate and diploma courses. Besides the courses offered by these organizations are expensive and therefore unaffordable for a student belonging to family with a low economic position.
2. The courses offered are generally online and distance course, where students are provided online study material and projects which they have to complete at their respective places in a certain period of time. There is hardly any practical training or field work which is an essential part of *Music Therapy Education*. Moreover online courses are less beneficial in India due to internet connectivity and network issues.
3. Since most of the organizations have collaborations with foreign universities therefore they follow curriculum of foreign Universities which are of little or no use to Indian students.

Conclusion

Music Therapy as a discipline is becoming an integral part of curriculum in all parts of the world. Many reputed Universities of the world impart *Music Therapy* Education and Training. Programs ranging from certificate to doctorate are offered to the students. However in India, despite the huge therapeutic potential of our music, *Music Therapy* is yet to be recognized as an integral part of curriculum in Indian Universities. Certain private organizations and trusts in India do offer short term certificate and diploma courses, but these courses are generally offered online or through distance mode. Moreover the work of these organizations is mostly theoretical as the courses offered by them lack practical training and research. Also the present available courses in India are expensive to pursue. It is therefore pertinent to design a proper curriculum and syllabus and offer *Music Therapy* as an important subject in Universities. Since *Music Therapy* involves many other subjects such as psychology, physiology, sociology, management and medicine; therefore it can be integrated with these subjects. The course of *Music Therapy* should be designed in such a way that it includes credits from Psychology, Physiology and medicine along with Indian music (theory as well as practical). Some the sub disciplines of Psychology which are important for a *Music Therapy* program are; music psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, abnormal psychology, clinical psychology and educational psychology. Besides education, rigorous research needs to be carried out to prove the therapeutic effects and benefits of music scientifically.

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