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MUSIC: An Effective Tool in Social Work Intervention for Positive Change

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Abstract

Music is a tool being used in the field of social work to deal with multiple problems at different levels. It is best known for its role in social mobilization and organizing communities. It acts as a powerful means of communication not only for addressing community issues but also for dealing with individual problems. Music is also used as a therapeutic exercise in addressing a variety of health concerns. Music has great social importance in advancing social change. Music works for strengthening socio-cultural cohesion with social humility and integrity. It has a strong potentiality to bring social transformation due to the interdisciplinary approach. Music works as a universal connector and it facilitates a humanitarian platform with connecting people from all different backgrounds working together to solve human suffering with the virtue of professional expertise, love and care, coordination, and cooperation. Music, in the lens of social work, is nothing but it is a problem-solving mechanism and an important tool for intervention with objectifying its social role in a wider perspective. Overall, music not only provides a platform of possibility for expressing own feelings but also provides a space to work together for the betterment of human life.

Through this paper, the authors attempt to understand how music, having played multifaced roles, acts as an effective tool in social work intervention. The authors also attempt to understand the organic aspect of both the disciplines and how they intertwine in encouraging positive change with a natural fit.

Key Words: Music, Social work intervention, social cohesion, social humility.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in EBSCO International Database of Journals**Introduction:**

Music has a broader perspective and it could be used as a scientific tool in social work interventions for individual and social transformation. There is a scientific understanding that music not only provides a pleasurable sensation but also helps in emitting neurotransmitters in the human brain which is concomitant with regulating mood, learning capability, memory, reward, appetite, sleep, and digestion. It also induces a multi-faced impact to yield powerful emotional responses and encourages the mind to embrace the positive side of the situation. It has got the enormous capacity for mobilizing human potential for reconstruction of self and societal normative. As a change agent, music has greater potentialities in breaking the culture of silence, promoting voices, boosting assertiveness, and encouraging for worthy survival. It gives therapeutic interventions not only in individual life but also it matters a lot in collective life for community partnership. During the Community Organization process, music plays a pivotal role in mobilizing and engaging people with full participation. Thus, it enhances social skills leading to inclusive growth for sustainable development. In a nutshell, music acts as a powerful tool in reconnecting society by bridging the gaps, cementing social fabrication, and strengthening social cohesiveness for rebuilding sustainable communities. It sensitizes people, makes them resilient, and helps them boost their self-esteem. At the broader level, it enhances socio-cultural humility that reduces cross-cultural and cross-border conflicts.

Objectives of the Paper:

- To critically analyse the role of music in social work intervention.
- To understand the therapeutic intervention of music in social work practice.
- To discuss the various scopes of music in social work practice.
- To examine how music plays as an effective tool in various walks of life for positive change.

Methodology:

The paper has followed the desk research and is qualitative in nature. It is purely based on secondary sources collected from various related books, journal articles, blogs from various electronic media, and several other online sources. It reviews and analyses the relevant literature to align and understand the subject based on the stated objectives.

I. Role of Music in Social Work Intervention:

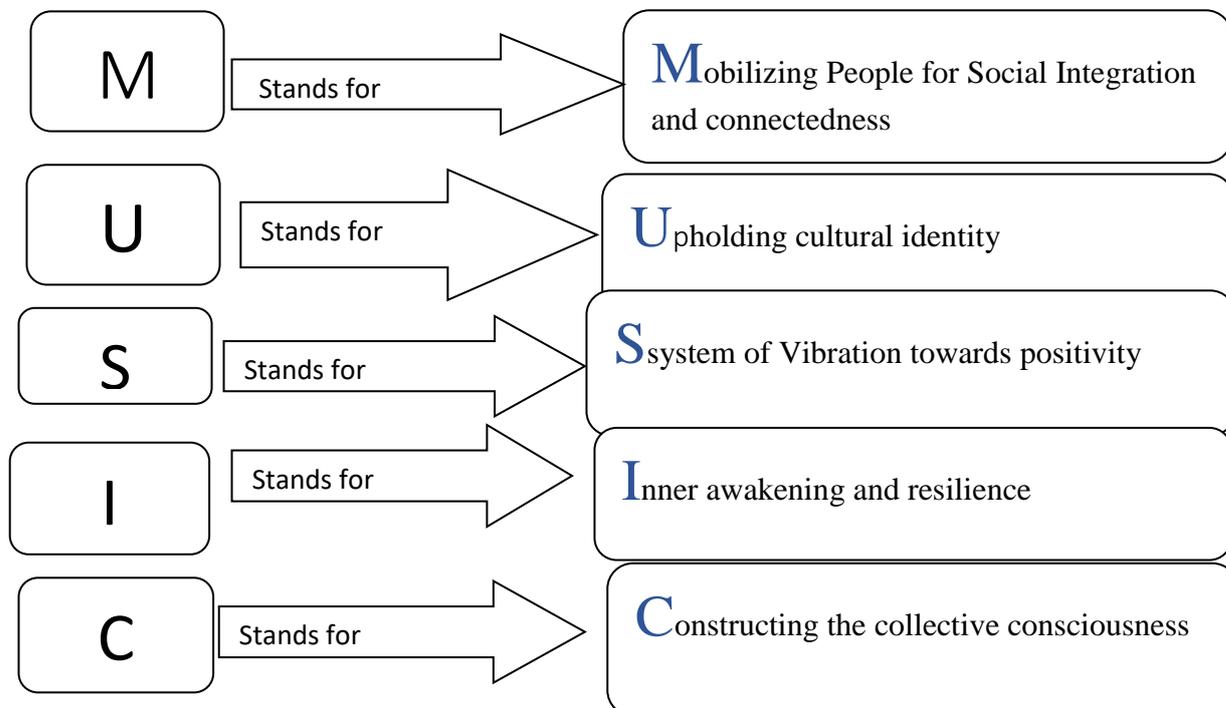
Music is one of the most universal ways of expression and communication for humankind and it is present in the everyday lives of people of all ages and from all cultures around the world (Welch, G. F et. al., 2020). Music act as an alleviator of the client's psychological symptom under the process of social work intervention. It helps the clients to express themselves and make them aware of their feelings and emotions and facilitate for appropriate communication through the use of sound and improvisation ("Using Music in Social work" Project-Wings of Hope for Trauma, N.D.).

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Music plays a variety of roles and has a phenomenal impact during crisis intervention and especially trauma counselling in the field of social work. A sense of connectedness is well channelized during the music and it arises a feeling of joint interest to achieve a common goal. Researchers have confirmed that when people play musical instruments and sing in a group, they not only synch their music but also synch their brain which directs the bodily movement to better affiliate in a group and thus, enhances their group identity. Music makes people more social and helps develop a sense of community while it is taken on a large scale in the community. Listening to music and singing together has been shown in several studies to directly impact neuro-chemicals in the brain, many of which play a role in closeness and connection (Suttie, 2016).

Looking into the context of discussion the authors have put forward below a frame- index for better understanding on the versatile role of MUSIC which deliberates that, in totality, **MUSIC** is for **M**obilising people for social integration and connectedness with **U**pholding cultural identity having activated the **S**ystem of vibration for positivity for enhancing **I**nnner awakening and resilience for **C**onstructing the collective consciousness for self and community building.

Frame- Index on the Role of MUSIC



II. Therapeutic Intervention of Music and Role of Social Work

It is highly evident that the discipline of social work has been proactive in making therapeutic interventions to deal with various issues. Music therapy is one of such treatment interventions which uses theories of human behaviour and social environment. It includes psychodynamics

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theory, behaviourism theory, social learning theory and so on to effect intervention outcomes. It is taken as an interdisciplinary therapeutic management treatment where social worker plays a key role in handling clients' problems along with a team of professionals working in various settings like in hospitals, schools, rehabilitation centers, outpatient clinics, recreational centers, Special schools etc.

Music therapy is the strategic use of music to deal with various issues of individuals and groups. The issues range from physical, psychological and social needs at various level of individual and community life. It engages a variety of activities, such as playing instruments, writing and composing songs, making poetries, listening and interpreting music etc. Music therapy interventions can address a variety of healthcare & educational goals Like Promote Wellness, Alleviate Pain, Express Feelings, Enhance Memory, Improve Communication, Promote Physical Rehabilitation and more (The American Music Therapy Associations, 2005).

Kim Innes, a professor of epidemiology at West Virginia University's School of Public Health also stated that Music seems to "selectively activate" neurochemical systems and brain structures associated with positive mood, emotion regulation, attention and memory in ways that promote beneficial changes." Many such researchers have shared their research and experiment outcomes on how music has been an incredible therapeutic tool in the treatment of various socio-psychological ailments. Music has been used as a therapeutic intervention in various deaddiction centres, rehabilitation houses, trauma centres etc. by trained social workers.

III. Scope of Music in Social Work Practice

Uniquely positioned to engage with diverse contexts and collaborate with a variety of change agents is the profession of social work. At the heart of the profession, in order to address societal issues related to promoting social justice for all, is the mission of social work, which aims to enhance human wellbeing.

Uniquely positioned to engage with diverse contexts and collaborate with a variety of change agents is the profession of social work. At the heart of the profession, in order to address societal issues related to promoting social justice for all, is the mission of social work, which aims to enhance human wellbeing (Newman et.al., 2019). Music has a broader spectrum of intervention in the field of social work practice. As social work is based on practice applications, it follows some methodological interventions for working with people in different settings. Let's discuss below the space of music as a vibrant tool in different methods of social work practice.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in EBSCO International Database of Journals***A. Music in Social Casework Practice:***

Social Case Work is a primary method of Social Work where the social worker as case worker works with the individual on one to one basis to help the client better adjust to the social environment. The worker helps the client to understand the self, realize the power within and take appropriate prevention and/or solution for better individual and social functioning. Understanding of 'self' helps to address the internal problems of the individual and boost morale and confidence. Here, in social case work, music therapy is very effectively used by the trained worker in shaping/ correcting the personality, attitude and thoughts to bring positive change within the individual. It provides a congenial atmosphere to the individuals for better social adjustment. As mentioned earlier, it is also used in trauma counseling and broadly in crisis intervention. In Social Case Work, music is used as a process of intervention where the case worker uses music as a therapeutic, preventive, and promotive tool to alleviate socio-psychological problems of the clients.

B. Music in Social Group Work Practice:

Music plays a dynamic role in a Social Group Work Practice. It facilitates working together to achieve the common goal of the group. Social group work is a method of social work which helps individuals to enhance their social functioning through a purposeful group experience (Konopka, 1963). Here, music as a tool helps in sensitizing and boosting the group members to be self-awakened towards their individual as well as group goal. The progression, eventually, leads towards a social process that demands their active contribution for achieving a better individual as well as group outcome. It develops a strong sense of belongingness among the group members and encourages everyone to be responsive to enhance their social skills for healthy performance. It helps in establishing a constructive relationship among members through group activities. Cornell University researchers explored this question in a pair of lab experiments and found that music can have important effects on the cooperative spirits of those exposed to music. The researchers conclude that happy music provokes people to more often make decisions that contribute to the good of the team (Baldon, 2016). In Social Group Work, music is also used to encourage leadership, boost self-confidence, develop an attitude of self-help and facilitate interdependency.

C. Music in Community Organisation and Social Action:

Looking into the various viewpoints of researchers and practitioners, it is implied that music is very much integral to enhancing community connectedness, the feeling of cohesion and collectiveness, and the worthiness of self-identity. It is used in mobilizing communities' rights from strengthening community cohesiveness to assuming collective responsibilities within the framework of Community Organisation and Social Action. With this methodological intervention, music plays a dynamic role in social cementing and is used as a tool of community organization towards positive change.

For musicologist Theodor Adorno (1941), the strength of popular music lies in its ability to act as "social cement," creating a feeling of identification in each listener and making him

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feel part of a common group (Epstein, 2017). Within the framework of social work intervention, music plays as an organizing tool for community organization and social action across the world. According to Amelia Charles, 2007, *Music as a Community Organising Methodology in the Black Freedom Movement*, in his paper, he told that “I contend that the Movement’s freedom songs were used as an organizing tool. They engaged people’s self-interest, valued ordinary individuals and their role in the community, reinforced a sense of community, reinforced and supported local leadership, and described community goals, and suggested an “action plan” to reach those goals. In his paper, he also argued that organizing refers to a process of “bringing out the leadership potential in all people, and on building group-centered, as opposed to individual, leadership in communities that would do the ongoing work of changing people and institutions.” Under community music therapy, music is used to facilitate change by assuring a high level of engagement with each other. It stimulates sensitization and a sense of responsibility among the people on the issues and boosts confidence to take collective action.

i. Music has a historical footprint in Indian Freedom

Music has a great account as a community organizing tool and has established ample shreds of evidence as an effective instrument in various freedom movements across the world. For instance, in the Indian Freedom Struggle, where music played a pivotal role in creating awareness among the people on the importance of independence. During the British rule, when a substantive part of the administration was managed by our own people, patriotic songs and motivational music in the form of folk music, songs, musical dramas were often open staged for awakening and overt actions. Such forms of music have played a significant role in shaping the mindset of common people to join the independence movement. The Indian freedom struggle was harmonized by the songs and lyrics of poets like Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Dwijendra Lal Roy, Rajanikanta Sen, Atul prasad Sen and others such great personalities. The songs and other forms of music, during that time, played a key role in inciting the spirit of nationalism and bringing social transformation. It led to a mass awakening which further steered to mass action against the British Rul. The legendry songs like “*Vande Mataram....*”, “*Sare Jhan Se Acha....*”, “*Jana Gana Mana...*”, “*Ye Desh Humara Pyara Hindistan*”, “*Tum Na Kisi Ki Aage Chukna*”, “*Ekla Chalo Re...*” etc. have left their footprints with igniting patriotism in Indian minds and soul.

ii. Music has a Historical Footprint in the Albany Movement,1961

Music has its historical footprints in the Albany Movement and many other civil rights movements. It has played an Important role in motivating, collectivizing and giving voice to the Albany Movement in 1961. “The freedom songs are playing a strong and vital role in our struggle,” said Martin Luther King, Jr., during the **Albany Movement**. “They give the people new courage and a sense of unity. I think they keep alive a faith, a radiant hope, in the future, particularly in our most trying hours” (Shelton,1962). There have been many such shreds of evidence across the globe where music and songs with their intrinsic power have helped revive the confidence during the difficult hours. “We became visible”. This is how Bernice

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Johnson Reagon, a Civil Rights Movement worker, a member of the Freedom Singers, and the founder of Sweet Honey in the Rock explained how songs uplifted and inspired those blacks and whites who worked tirelessly for freedom throughout the 1950s and 1960's. Indeed, freedom songs in the movement gave participants the ability to stand up against their fears, express their hopes and desires, and unite the diverse range of people who participated in the movement" (Lenert,2005).

iii. Historical Footprint of Music in the Black Freedom Movement:

Likewise, the world has witnessed Black Freedom Movement. According to the Scholar T.V. Reed (2019), "the music of the Black Freedom Movement was essential to the activists' success in opposing segregation and inequality. The movement without songs would have been like birds without wings... There is music in everything we did... when you got through singing...you could walk over a bed of hot coals and you wouldn't notice (Amelia, 2007)". The progression of music during the Black Freedom Movement reflects the whole journey of the movement itself. Calling songs "the soul of the movement," King explained in his 1964 book *Why We Can't Wait* that civil rights activists "sing the freedom songs today for the same reason the slaves sang them, because we too are in bondage and the songs add hope to our determination that 'We shall overcome, Black and white together, we shall overcome someday" (King, 1964).

Freedom songs were extremely magical in organizing the communities for consistent mass action. These songs were consciously used the community organizers and activists for mass awakening and mass action not only in the Black Freedom Movement but also in other civil rights movements around the world.

D. Music in Social Work Research:

Social work research means conducting an investigation in accordance with the scientific method. The aim of social work research is to build the social work knowledge base in order to solve practical problems in social work practice or social policy (Rubin & Babbie, 2020). As it is a practice-based profession, the application part in research is more important. It tries to find solutions and critically assess the treatment's effectiveness. The application of social work principles has a greater impact on social investigation.

Music is both art and science complementing its value. It has a synergetic effect on the body, mind, and soul. By content analysis of different music using cross-sectional and other methods of research, we try to understand the crosscutting issues of human experience, their reactions, coping, resilience and actions. It gives us a lead for the future framework of action for social change and sustainable development.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in EBSCO International Database of Journals**IV. The implication of Music in Various Ways of Life**

Let us discuss some of the fields where music predominately acts as an impactful tool in organizing and mobilizing the unit(s) where social work plays an intrinsic role using its core values for empowering and enhancing the group spirit to achieve the targeted goal.

a. Implication of Music in Sports:

Music footprints in sports are phenomenal across the world. It catalyzes for the athlete to strengthen the sportsman spirit especially the team spirit and paves the way for crowd engagement. It acts as an effective stimulator in the sporting spectacle. It provides a psychological effect not only to the players but also to the audience attending games and matches. At the same time, social work provides a structural intervention in handling human issues in the field of sport social work and works as a change agent in sport psychology. The profession of social work has begun to engage in integrative efforts within the sport. For instance, the Alliance of Social Workers in Sports (ASWIS) is a newly recognized national organization that seeks to “promote individual and community wellbeing through partnerships between the profession of social work and the field of athletics” (aswis.org). The ASWIS has several committees devoted to serving the needs of athletes in a variety of settings, including youth, collegiate, and professional sport (Newman et.al.,2019). In the Indian context, songs like *Chak de...*, *Dangal dangal...*, *Get ready to fight...*, *Kar har maidan fateh...*, *Tu jag ab to jag Milkha..* in Hindi (film songs), *E sudhu khela noy...*, *Fata fati football...*, *Eksho bochor dhorey...* in Bangali are a few of the references which have been showing an exemplary impact on sportspersons in motivating, strengthening their team spirit, aiming to compete and win and also to the sports lovers to support and encourage the sportspersons.

b. Implication of Music in culture:

Music is a strong cross-culture connector among people in all the communities. Music sensitizes them to be united with their culture and makes them feel connected. It gives an identity and provides a space to discover their own choice and interest provide a way to celebrate cultural traditions. Research about music has generated diverse beliefs, views, and theories that explore its nature and meaning. A recurring theme in the early literature on this topic is the view that the particular cultural context that surrounds a distinct music practice influences the music produced within those cultural boundaries (Herndon & McLeod, 1982; Lomax, 1976; Merriam, 1964; Nettl, 1992). Communal musical experiences and collective rituals in general enhance social cohesion and prosocial behaviour (Whitehouse, 2004) presumably through jointly experienced elation and synchronized action (Janata & Parsons, 2013). Music has been playing a linking role in cultural connectedness and community cohesion and helping in valuing different cultures. Eventually, it facilitates upholding cultural humility within and between cultures.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in EBSCO International Database of Journals***b. Implication of Music in Spirituality:***

Music is inherently spirited in each individual's life and an essential element for establishing the individuals as social beings. Spiritually music plays an important role from the birth to death of human beings. It connects our physical, spiritual, and social beings. *It has its contribution in each stage of human life be it during religious rituals, traditional celebrations or in embracing each milestone of life.* Swami Paramananda (N.D.) said "There are certain things that have universal attributes, like music. Something of greater magnitude is conveyed by them. They connect us with the universal storehouse of life and knowledge." According to Ravi Shankar (N.D.), "The highest form in music is spirituality." It influences our thoughts, our beliefs, our perspectives, our emotions, and our both physical and mental health. Music is one of the most powerful tools to awaken our body, mind, and soul. It connects us with our spiritual being for a peaceful living.

d. Music as a mediator for cross-cultural engagement:

Within the framework of Social Group Work practice, music plays a magical role in handling various groups in various settings and it creates a platform of cross-cultural engagement. Harris (1980) viewed culture as "learned and shared behavior". Culture is something in which emotions and feelings are articulated through different surfaces like language, music, art, and religion. As music is one of the important carriers, it is also manifested that culture is greatly influenced in the manners in which music is learned, taught, cherished, and performed. Regardless, Radocy and Boyle (1979) stated that "culture clearly affects musical behavior [and that] music may influence the culture [in which it is produced]." It facilitates co-creation and collaboration within and between the culture(s) followed by interdependence.

Conclusion:

In a nutshell, music is intrinsic with a multidimensional approach. It has a therapeutic, preventive, and promotive dimension that is exactly being used by social work during its intervention. Having its caring, consoling, and motivating approach, it goes beyond the directed impact. It is used in various health care issues and in multiple settings to motivate people to re-energize themselves, improve their psycho-social skills for being better resilient. It has strong clinical as well as social application for completing individualized goals such as self-expression, confidence, achievement, high level of motivation, better social relationship, improved emotional stability, good level of internal locus of control, and so on. Music has also a credible social implication while being used with the core values and principles of social work. It works as an impactful application innovation for creating mass collective consciousness. Music ignites patriotism among the people for nation-building. Being an effective interventional tool, it catalyses for strengthening community cohesion, we feeling, sense of collective responsibility, conflict resolution, communal harmony, and for community development for social change.

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