

GURBANI MUSIC THERAPY IN PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH

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Abstract

Mental health is a fundamental factor that contributes in maintaining physical health and social effectiveness. It is a Positive phenomenon that is more than the absence of mental illness. It indicates to mental well-being and ability that helps an individual to get adjusted in difficult situations of life maintaining peace of mind, dexterity and consistency. Mental Illness refers to different types of mental disorders which include disorders of thoughts, moods and behaviour and could be in the psychological, social, occupational, or interpersonal domains. Use of alternate, adjunct, complimentary, Supportive therapies with and without conventional therapy may provide healing in managing stress. Gurbani music intervention as a therapy aims to the restoration, maintenance, and improvement of mental and physical health. This forms the basis for music therapy, under the category of Mind-Body Medicine which caters to emotional healing.

Keyword: - Mental health, Mental illness, Stress, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Gurbani music intervention

CONCEPT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Fitness provides a rhythm to mind, body and soul. It enhances one's personal and social relationships and bonding's to boost self-esteem, and confidence. "Mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope up with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to the community. Mental health is the foundation for better well-being, positivity and an effective functioning for an individual or a community. This core concept of mental health is consistent with its wide and varied interpretation across cultures"¹ Mental health plays a significant and positive role in each and every stage of human development. It is related to the emotional, psychological, and social condition of a person. It effects on a person's ability to think and make decisions accordingly. People having mentally fit possess optimistic and balanced personalities. They live their life happily through managing stress, staying physically fit, maintaining cordial relations with others, contributing to society, working productively, boosting potential and accomplishing their goals

MENTAL ILLNESS

A person with mental illness may face difficulties handling daily activities, discharging responsibilities in family and at work place managing thoughts, emotions, behaviours and interactions with others, yet their social, cultural, economic, political and environmental factors are also responsible. Genetics disorders, lack of nutrition, perinatal infections and exposure to environmental hazards are also contributing factor in mental illness. It is said that if both body and mind are healthy, then you can consider yourself equal to the richest person in the world. Yet, it is not enough to be physically healthy only, but It is not necessary that

when a disease is visible with the eyes, then it is a disease, the mental illness that is not visible is also very fatal for the person.

STRESS

Stress is a normal human reaction. Stress is the body's automatic response to any physical or mental demand placed on it. When a person does not respond to a stimulus the balance of mind is disrupted which adversely affects and causes. This situation may be caused due to unaccomplishment of the worldly tasks, unfulfilled desires, domestic violence, unstable family circumstances, career obstacles, over worrying of a particular trauma, physical fatigue with mental pressures, fear of loss, feeling of inferiority complex, over and negative thinking, particular incident of humiliation, oppression, persecution etc. "Stress is a normal part of life. In small quantities, stress is good; it can motivate you and help you become more productive. However, too much stress, or a strong response to stress can be harmful. How we perceive a stress provoking event and how we react to it determines its impact on our health. We may be motivated and invigorated by the events in our lives, or we may see some as stressful and respond in a manner that may have a negative effect on our physical, mental, and social well-being. If we always respond in a negative way, our health and happiness may suffer."² "Stress is usually characterized by a sense of feeling overwhelmed. This feeling may be due to your coping capacity being over-stretched or having been under pressure for too long. Some stress can help us to perform our day-to-day functions, too much stress levels us 'distressed' and often exhausted"³

TREATMENT PLANS, MEDICATIONS AND INTERVENTIONS FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stressful situations may result into serious disorders therefore it is advisable to manage the inner stress with some supportive therapies at the early stage. There are so many established medical systems to fight and manage the stressful conditions. These include Allopathic, Homeopathy, Ayurveda, Unani, Naturopathy, Acupressure, Acupuncture and some other therapies such as Massage Therapy, Psychotherapy, Mud Therapy, Aromatherapy, Sunrays Therapy, Laughter Therapy, Color Therapy, Yoga Therapy, Meditation, Reiki, Music and Gurbani Music therapy.

There are 2 major types of music therapy

- **Active Music Therapy-** Known as expressive music therapy.
- **Receptive Music Therapy-** It engages patients in the active role either by singing/playing instrument. It involves listening to recording or live music selected by the therapist as part of relaxation techniques to manage Stress, Anxiety and other diseases. It does not affect disease but can help/support with the potential of having coping skills.

MUSIC AS THERAPY: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Indian classical music has been Part and Parcel in Indian traditional system of healing. A piece of balanced music is not ordinary a sound, but an efficient medium for the disclosure of subtle innervations. Music has the ability to influence on human body & mind both. Music therapy is a popular name for the modern era in alternative, adjunct and complementary therapy systems. The evidence of the existence of music during Vedic chanting and sound of drumming as healing properties can be well documented.

“Samveda is completely lyrical and is a storehouse of Indian classical musical knowledge, all Swaras, rhythms, verses, motions, mantras, vocal therapy, ragas, dances, mudras, expressions etc. have come out of Samveda itself.”⁴ “The role of Music has a psychotherapeutic effort in controlling various mental disorders. The role Music of has been established through various experimentations part and Indian classical music in mental illness has been documented.”⁵ “Music is very effective for mental health. The melodious sounds of musical instruments help to keep the mind cheerful by reducing stressful situations. Listening to 20 minutes of music at any time every day is very beneficial for mental health.”⁶

THERAPEUTIC SIGNIFICANCE OF GURBANI MUSIC

Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a holy scripture, a rare classic compilation of spiritual/mystical hymns compiled in 1430 Ang (Pages) by the fifth Guru Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji. He with a universal philosophy got compiled Bani of spiritual Sants. Sikh Gurus (6), Bhagats (15) and Bhattas (11) and others. Guru Gobind Singh (Tenth Guru of Sikhs) included the verses of 9th Guru Teg Bahadur in the holy Guru Granth Sahib. The text is duly prescribed in classical Ragas. In the Guru Granth Sahib, Gurbani music has been given due consistency. The mystery of Gurbani can be better understood through the integration of Bani and music. Except the Japuji Sahib, Salok, vaaran, swaiye the whole holy has been arranged and classified in 31 classical Ragas. 31 different Raga forms thus making a total of 62 Raga. The concept of Shabad Kirtan in Gurbani is very subtle and clear, because in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Music, Raga, Rhythm, Melody lyrics and power of words are the means of unity with God. “The system of music, enshrined in the Holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib is exactly in accordance with the musical tenets established by the Gurus.”⁷ Gurbani Shabad Kirtan brings the soul in unison with the Supreme Soul through sound of the Shabda. Instrument is used in the context of Naad. Gurbani music has also being used as therapy or interventions by various experts.

Gurbani is the medium which can provide an appropriate response to the dehumanization and mechanization of the human being by the modern system. Gurbani Music has that therapeutic impact on a human being. There are hundreds of references which can be quoted from Gurbani and we need to understand the same. A few being quoted for ready reference.

ਚਿੰਤਾ ਛਡਿ ਅਚਿੰਤੁ ਰਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਗਿ ਪਾਈ ॥ ਅੰਗ: 517	ਜਾ ਕਉ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਦੇਹੀ ਵਿਆਪੈ ਰੋਗੁ ॥ ਅੰਗ: 70
ਗਾਵੀਐ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਰਖੀਐ ਭਾਉ ॥ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਰਹਿਰ ਸੁਖੁ ਘਰਿ ਲੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਅੰਗ: 2	ਸਗਲ ਦੁਖ ਕਾ ਹੋਵਤੁ ਨਾਸੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਹੁ ਗੁਨਤਾਸੁ ॥੫॥ ਅੰਗ: 290
ਰੋਗੀ ਕਾ ਪੁਭ ਖੰਡਹੁ ਰੋਗੁ ॥ ਦੁਖੀਏ ਕਾ ਮਿਟਾਵਹੁ ਪੁਭ	ਪਰਮੇਸਰਿ ਦਿਤਾ ਬੰਨਾ ॥ ਦੁਖ ਰੋਗ ਕਾ ਡੇਰਾ ਭੰਨਾ ॥
ਸੋਗੁ ॥ ਅੰਗ: 1146	ਅੰਗ: 627
ਗਏ ਕਲੇਸ ਰੋਗ ਸਭਿ ਨਾਸੈ ਪੁਭਿ ਅਪੁਨੈ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰੀ ॥ ਅੰਗ: 619	ਤਾਤੀ ਵਾਉ ਨ ਲਗਈ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਸਰਣਾਈ ॥ ਚਉਗਿਰਦ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਰਾਮ ਕਾਰ ਦੁਖੁ ਲਗੈ ਨ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਅੰਗ: 819

Gurbani music is very effective in harmonizing minds and can potentially put following impacts.

- **Stress Reduction:** “Listening to Gurbani music has been found to reduce stress by promoting relaxation, calming the mind, and providing a sense of inner peace. The melodious tunes, combined with the spiritual messages of Gurbani, can help students feel more relaxed, centered, and emotionally balanced, which can contribute to better stress management.”⁸
- **Emotional Regulation:** “Gurbani music often conveys messages of hope, faith, and resilience. Gurbani music often emphasizes virtues such as contentment, humility, and compassion. Listening to Gurbani music may provide students with a positive outlet for their emotions, helping them manage negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, and frustration, and promoting a more positive emotional state.”⁹
- **Cognitive Reframing:** “Gurbani music often emphasizes virtues such as contentment, humility, and compassion, which can help students reframe their thoughts and perspectives on stressors. By focusing on the spiritual teachings and messages in Gurbani music, students may be encouraged to adopt a more positive and adaptive mindset towards stress, leading to improved stress management.”¹⁰
- **Spiritual Nourishment:** “Gurbani music is deeply connected to Sikh spirituality and faith, and for Sikh university students, it can provide a source of spiritual nourishment and connection. Engaging with Gurbani music can help students feel connected to their religious and cultural heritage, providing them with a sense of purpose, meaning, and identity, which can contribute to improved stress management.”¹¹
- **Community Connection:** “Gurbani music is often performed and enjoyed in community settings, such as Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and Sikh events, which can foster a sense of community connection among university students. Building social support networks, sharing common spiritual experiences, and feeling a sense of belonging can all contribute to improved mental well-being and better stress management.”¹²

CONCLUSION

Gurbani music intervention has been found useful, positive and effective in reducing the levels of stress (mild to moderate level), it may be included as one of the effective complimentary therapies to cater the issues of stress management and to improve the overall mental wellbeing.

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