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**"Effect of Music Listening on Health and Well-being: A Study Based on Kashmiri Population"****Nusrat and \*Bilal Ahmad Bhat****Faculty of Music and Fine Arts, University of Kashmir, Srinagar J&K****\*Division of Social Science, FoFy, SKUAST-Kashmir****Abstract**

Music is a big part of most people's lives and is used by people for many different purposes. It is used by a range of public services to manipulate behavior and reduce anxiety. Music listening not necessarily improve the performance of an individual but certainly can distract individuals from any discomfort that they are experiencing. The aim of the present study is to increase the knowledge about Kashmiri men's and women's attitude towards music listening and relation of music listening with health and well-being of an individual. In this paper, a sample of 400 persons aged 20 years and above (200 males and 200 females) respondents were selected from Kashmir valley at random for the study. Finally, suitable statistical techniques were used for analysis of the data.

**Keywords:** Music, Kashmir, Anxiety, wellbeing, Statistical analysis

**Introduction**

The valley of Kashmir has a very rich cultural heritage and has been a grand arena of arts. The delicacy, the grace and charm of Kashmiri music is ultimate. In Kashmir, there is no function or celebration which is performed without music. There is archeological evidence, which shows the existence of singing and dancing in Kashmir. It is observed that music of Kashmir during Hindu period was more or less a shadow of Indian music. Nilamatpurana and Kalhana's chronicle suggest that ancient music of Kashmir valley was a version of Indian music. Lalleshwari, Habba Khaton and others were the great musical personalities who belonged to Kashmir valley. Researchers divide the traditional music of Kashmir into different categories i.e., songs sung by women folk, songs sung by minstrels, songs sung by the professionals with the view of earning money, songs sung by farmers and. religious songs. Recently, Nusrat and Bilal (2014) have discussed in detail the various forms of Kashmiri music.

"Music is the medicine of the future," said Edgar Cayce in 1947 and who healed thousands of people while in a Trance State. It has been possible for music to be played at any time in any place, cheaply and easily since the advent of recording techniques. This has led to a proliferation of music in our lives. Human beings respond different ways to music and responses can be physiological, intellectual, aesthetic or emotional. Many research studies have shown that music has very powerful effects on our moods and emotions [Salimpoor et al., (2009), Abeles and Chung (1996), Perez (2010), Meyer (1956), Sloboda (1991), Laukka (2007), Iwanaga and Maroki (1999), Field et al., (1998)]. It has been observed that music listening has the potential to have a positive impact on health and well-being [Cassidy and MacDonald (2009), Hallam and Godwin (2000), and Kotsopoulou and Hallam (2010)]. It is important to note that whether the individual has selected the music to be played or whether music is imposed by others. It is noted that self-selection of music is likely to lead to a positive impact relating to the specific purpose for which it has been selected. Some music through its lyrics, what North and Hargreaves (2008) called as 'problem music' can promote attitudes and behavior which may not be in the best interest of the health and well-being of the individual who has selected the music. Several studies have shown that music can lead to marked changes in the behavior of an individual [Lai et al., (2006), Furman (1978), Reiber (1965), Ferguson et al., (1994), Savan (1999)]. Research shows that listening music has shown a direct impact in biological indicators of stress [Flaten et al., (2006), Triller et al., (2006), Cooke et al., (2005), White (1999) and Liu et al., (2007)]. It is reported that music listening is also important in achieving inner happiness, inner contentment and inner peace [Hays and Minichiello (2005)]. Music listening can contribute to alleviating anxiety in pregnancy [Yang et. al., (2009)] and stress in childbirth [McKinney (1990)]. A vast literature is available on the use of music in commercial environments [North and Hargreaves

(2008), Au et al., (2003)]. It is believed that music listening fulfills several functions (Baker & Bor, 2008), and is used to relieve boredom, ease tension, manipulate listener's moods, and fight loneliness (Wells & Hakanen, 1991). Music listening can reduce boredom in case work is simple and repetitive but where tasks are complex it can interfere with performance as might be expected on the basis of the Yerkes and Dodson law [Yerkes and Dodson (1908)].

### Methodology

The present study pertains to impact of music listening on health and well-being of an individual. The aim of the study is to increase the knowledge about women's and men's attitude towards music listening and relation of music listening with health and well-being of an individual.

To collect information a well designed questionnaire was prepared keeping in view the literature available on the topic and the characteristics of the respondents viz., age, gender, education status, profession, type of family, monthly family income, marital status and time spend in music listening. 400 (200 male and 200 female) respondents were selected for the study using simple random sampling technique. The data collected was tabulated and analysed using appropriate statistical techniques.

### Results and Discussion

The data presented in Table 1 shows the distribution of study population as per the characteristics age, gender, education status, profession, type of family, monthly family income, marital status and time spend in music listening. It is observed that majority of the respondents both male and female were in the age group 36-50 years. Further, majority of the respondents male as well as female were literate, employed, married and living in nuclear family. It is, further observed that majority of the respondents male as well as female spend on average 1-2 hours daily in music listening and having monthly income Rs 5000-10000.

Table 1: Distribution of the study population as per characteristics under study

S.No.	Characteristics	Male (%)	Female (%)
1	<b>Age (years)</b>		
	20-35	48 (24.0)	56 (28.0)
	36-50	64 (32.0)	69 (34.5)
	Above 50	88 (44.0)	75 (37.5)
2	<b>Education Status</b>		
	Literate	162 (81.0)	142 (71.0)
	Illiterate	38 (19.0)	58 (29.0)
3	<b>Profession</b>		
	Employed	135 (67.5)	105 (52.5)
	Unemployed	65 (32.5)	95 (47.5)
4	<b>Marital Status</b>		
	Married	143 (71.5)	162 (81.0)
	Unmarried	57 (28.5)	38 (14.0)
5	<b>Type of Family</b>		
	Nuclear	135 (67.5)	129 (64.5)
	Joint	65 (32.5)	71 (35.5)
6	<b>Monthly Family Income (Rs)</b>		
	3000-5000	21 (10.5)	26 (13.0)
	5001-10000	64 (32.0)	49 (24.5)
	Above 10000	115 (57.5)	125 (62.5)
7.	<b>Daily Time Spend in Music Listening (Hours)</b>		
	1-2	99 (49.5)	111 (55.5)
	3-4	65 (32.5)	52 (26.0)
	>4	36 (18.0)	37 (28.5)

The data presented in Table 2 shows the correlation between various study variables in case of male respondents. It has been observed that monthly income and education status of respondents are negatively related ( $p < 0.05$ ). Further, Table 2 reveals that education status of respondents and time spend in music listening as expected shows positive correlation ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 2: Correlations Analysis between various study variable for male respondents**

	Age Status	Education Type	Family Type	Profession Income	Monthly Type	Family Status	Marital
Education Status	-0.166	0.019					
Family Type	0.036	0.052					
Profession Income	0.107	-0.118	0.094				
Monthly Type	0.030	-0.172	0.002	0.103			
Family Status	0.050	-0.131	0.050	-0.048	-0.010		
Marital	-0.089	0.108	0.057	-0.106	-0.013	0.014	
Time Spend	0.019	0.144	0.105	0.060	-0.046	0.076	-0.087
	0.786	0.042	0.139	0.400	0.519	0.282	0.219

Cell Contents: Pearson correlation

P-Value

The data presented in Table 3 shows the correlation between various study variables in case of female respondents. It has been observed that end age of respondents show negative correlation ( $p < 0.05$ ) Further, Table 3 reveals that family type and profession of respondents show positive correlation ( $p < 0.05$ ). The other variables show low correlation and nonsignificant correlation.

**Table 3: Correlations Analysis between various study variable for Female respondents**

	Age Status	Education Type	Family Type	Profession Income	Monthly Type	Family Status	Marital
Education Status	-0.158	0.026					
Family type	0.099	-0.084					
Profession Income	0.038	0.010	0.178				
Monthly Type	0.047	-0.051	-0.005	0.014			
Family Status	0.043	-0.084	0.101	0.015	-0.004		
Marital	-0.121	-0.028	0.031	-0.075	0.021	-0.002	
Time Spend	0.024	0.063	0.094	0.087	-0.023	0.083	-0.134
	0.738	0.379	0.186	0.223	0.747	0.243	0.058

Cell Contents: Pearson correlation

P-Value

The data presented in Table 3 shows that generally people listen music to relieve tension, to get through difficult times, to reduce loneliness, to improve health and enjoy work. It has been observed that in reason iv and viii there is a significant difference between the opinion of male and female

respondents. The results obtained in our study are in agreement with the earlier studies [e.g., Wells and Hakanen (1991), Laukka (2007) and Baker and Bor (2008)] which shows that music listening is directly related to health and well-being of an individual.

**Table 3: Reasons for Listening To Music**

S.No.	Reasons for Listening to Music	Male (n=200) (%)		Female (n=200) (%)		Chisquare	P-value
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
i.	To enjoy the music	182 (91.0)	18 (9.0)	184 (92.0)	16 (8.0)	0.128576	> 0.05
ii	To relieve tension	166 (83.0)	34 (17.0)	159 (79.5)	41 (20.5)	0.804103	> 0.05
iii.	To help get through difficult times	118 (59.0)	82 (41.0)	102 (51.0)	98 (49.0)	2.58586	> 0.05
iv.	To create or enhance a mood	171 (85.5)	29 (14.5)	153 (76.5)	47 (23.5)	5.26316	< 0.05
v.	To reduce loneliness	181 (90.5)	19 (8.5)	183 (91.5)	17 (8.5)	0.1221	> 0.05
vi.	As a distraction from worries	173 (86.5)	27 (13.5)	161 (80.5)	39 (19.5)	2.61296	> 0.05
vii.	To reduce stress and anxiety	191 (95.5)	9 (4.5)	193 (96.5)	7 (3.0)	0.260417	>0.05
viii.	To enjoy work	185 (92.5)	15 (7.5)	163 (81.5)	37 (18.5)	10.6985	< 0.01

## Conclusion

The present study pertains to Kashmiri people provide an initial insight into the importance of music listening and its relation with health and well-being of an individual. Many results obtained in our study are in agreement with the results obtained in earlier studies conducted in different parts of the globe. People believe that Classical music can ease anxious feelings and quiet both blood pressure and heart rate even under very stressful conditions. It is observed that people believe music listening reduces both anxiety and depression which is in agreement with the earlier studies (e.g., McCraty, Barrios-Choplin, Atkinson and Tomasino, (1998)). Research indicates that moods rose and depression fell when people listened to familiar music. Music listening in Kashmir is an easy way to improve health and well-being by its ability to evoke positive emotions and thereby reduce stress and anxiety.

The music selected to listen the listener should be such that it must grab his attention and at the same time relax his body, so that all of his worries of the day, such as his concern about what has happened earlier and his plans for what should happen in the future should slip away. Slow music may be perfect. The recording technique has made it possible to play music in a wide variety of environments at little cost while the introduction of personalized listening devices has provided individuals of their choice which they consider beneficial to themselves whenever they wish. In conclusion, one should listen to a piece of music that one finds inspirational and uplifting. Many muslim scholars conducted research on the healing power of listening to Qur'anic recitations. Kashmir being a muslim majority state people love to listen Qur'anic recitations. To conclude, there is a scope for conducting more research on Music Therapy by Muslim scientists both in the West and

in the Muslim countries. Any future research conducted on music listening and health of an individual with the increase in sample size may show some more significant relations.

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