



## **Essence of Spiritual music and Guided imagery for enriching mental well-being among adolescents**

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### **Abstract**

*“Music is an art and rhythm residing within human hearts”*

The field of Indian classical Music elaborates on adolescents’ subjective well-being, strengthen their Physical, Mental, Social, Cognitive, and Emotional health to live a better life. Adolescent is a stage of changes and challenges affecting physiological and psychological changes “Indian Spiritual Music as a Psycho-Social Intervention can enhance and improve the Mental Health Problems and enriching the elements of mental well-being. The study focuses upon Mental Health issues among adolescents by application of traditional philosophy and intervention of Spiritual Music. The Psycho-Social Intervention and in- depth interview helped research participants to share their insights and knowledge about impact of spiritual music on stressors, anxiety, self-doubts, mood regulation, analysing physiological and psychological dimensions. The study is based on the pre and post effects of spiritual Music sessions, assessed the mental health of adolescents, conduction of spiritual music bases sessions with guided imagery, leading to enrichment in concentration and focus levels for a meaningful life. The conclusion focuses upon the Psycho-Social Intervention based on Indian Spiritual Music, planned to bring meaningful changes, and giving adolescents a space in field of Mental Health and Healing to live a potential life.

**Keywords:** adolescence, psycho-social intervention, mental well-being.

## INTRODUCTION

The term “Adolescence” comes from the Latin word ‘*Adolescere*’ which suggests to grow or ‘to grow to maturity’

The mental health issues of youth have received great concern from mental health professionals, psychologists, and educators because of their life-span influence on healthy functioning and well-being. Worldwide, statistics revealed that one out of every seven youths aged 10 to 19 years old experience a mental disorder, many adolescents report about the disturbances and stressors present in environment affecting them mentally. The physical, emotional, social, and mental changes, including exposure to poverty, abuse, or violence, makes the mental health scenario as a battle field filled with anxious thoughts by making adolescents vulnerable to mental health problems. Protecting adolescents from adversity, promoting socio-emotional learning and psychological well-being, and ensuring access to mental health care are critical for their health and well-being during adolescence and adulthood. Globally, it is estimated that one in seven (14.3%) of 10–19-year-olds experience mental health conditions. Adolescents who suffer from mental health conditions are vulnerable to social exclusion, discrimination, stigma (affecting readiness to seek academic difficulties, risk-taking behaviour, health issues, and human rights violations).

### *Mental health determinants*

Adolescence is a crucial period for developing social and emotional habits important for mental well-being. The necessary elements are healthy sleep pattern, exercising regularly, developing and coping, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills, learning to manage emotions. Protective and supportive environments in the family, at school and in the wider community are important. Multiple factors affect mental health, the more risk factors adolescents are exposed to, the greater the potential impact on their mental health. Factors that can contribute to stress during adolescence include exposure to adversity, pressure to conform with peers and exploration of identity. Media influence and gender norms can exacerbate the disparity between an adolescent’s lived reality and their perceptions or aspirations for the future. Other important determinants include the quality of their home life and relationships with peers.

Some adolescents are at greater risk of mental health conditions due to their living conditions, stigma, discrimination or exclusion, or lack of access to quality support and

services. These include adolescents living in humanitarian and fragile settings; adolescents with chronic illness, autism spectrum disorder, an intellectual disability, or other neurological condition; pregnant adolescents, adolescent parents, or those in early or forced marriages; orphans; and adolescents from minority ethnic or sexual backgrounds or other discriminated groups.

### ***Emotional and Behavioural Challenges***

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by significant physical, social, and emotional transitions. During this period, many young people experience mental-health concerns, particularly emotional disorders.

***Anxiety disorders*** are often characterized by persistent worry, panic, or extreme are among the most reported difficulties. These conditions appear more frequently in older adolescents than in younger ones, with global estimates indicating that a notable proportion of individuals aged 10–19 experience anxiety-related symptoms. Similarly, depressive disorders can affect the adolescents across the early and late teen years. Depression and anxiety share overlapping symptoms, including mood instability, irritability, and sudden emotional shifts. These disorders can negatively influence academic engagement, school attendance, and social functioning. In severe cases, untreated depression increases the risk of suicidal ideation and self-harm.

***Eating disorder*** like the anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa that often emerge during adolescence and early adulthood. These conditions involve distorted body image, poor patterns of eating, and a preoccupation with weight and physical appearance. Eating disorders frequently co-occur with anxiety, depression, and substance use and are associated with a heightened risk of suicide. Anorexia nervosa carries one of the highest mortality rates among mental-health disorders due to both medical complications and suicide.

***Psychosis*** includes the hallucinations and delusions, beginning in late adolescence or early adulthood. These experiences can severely disrupt daily functioning, Adolescents with psychosis also face increased vulnerability to stigma and human rights violations.

***Suicidal behaviour*** remains a significant public health concern as suicide is among the leading causes of death in late adolescence and young adulthood. Multiple factors such as childhood

trauma, harmful substances, lack of access to mental-health services, and social stigma around seeking help contribute to the risk.

**Engagement** in risk-taking behaviours such as tobacco or cannabis, alcohol consumption, and unsafe sexual practices, often begins during adolescence. These behaviours are sometimes used as maladaptive coping strategies in response to emotional distress. Patterns of substance use established in adolescence can extend into adulthood and adversely affect long-term well-being.

## **Intervention of Spiritual Music and Guided Imagery**

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) offers a rich foundation for culturally grounded mental-health interventions. Traditional Indian philosophies emphasize holistic well-being, balance between mind and body, emotional regulation, and social relationships principles that align with contemporary preventive mental-health frameworks. Practices derived from Indian traditions can meaningfully support adolescents in managing emotional and behavioural difficulties.

### ***1. Spiritual Music as a Therapeutic Modality***

Spiritual music such as mantras, classical ragas, bhajans, and Vedic chanting has embedded in Indian cultural and spiritual traditions. Research suggests that such Music as a therapeutic tool can reduce anxiety, regulate the mood, and foster a sense of inner calm. Adolescents who experience the series of emotional distress, spiritual music may function act as a grounding technique, supporting emotional regulation and reducing intrusive thoughts. Regular exposure to spiritually soothing music may also enhance the levels of concentration, reduce restlessness, and in managing symptoms often associated with anxiety or ADHD.

### ***2. Guided Imagery Inspired by Indian Traditions***

Guided imager is a Psychosocial intervention that aligns closely with practices found in Indian philosophical systems such as Yoga, Ayurveda, and Vedantic meditation. Visualization techniques—such as imagining the comfortable space, enjoying your hobbies, peaceful natural environments, visualizing positive energy, or connecting with symbolic images from Indian cultural narratives—can support adolescents in managing stress, fear, or depressive thinking patterns. They are adopted by many counsellors in schools or counselling

settings, guided imagery encourages relaxation, enhances coping skills, and strengthens resilience.

### ***3. Psycho-Social Integration***

There are many mental-health programmes that independently offers a culturally meaningful approach to prevention and promotion. Interventions may include:

- Group-based mantra meditation
- Music based relaxation sessions
- Yoga-based breathing exercises
- Guided imagery workshops rooted in Indian philosophical metaphors
- Storytelling from Indian texts to promote positive values.

These approaches promote emotional balance, reduce risk-taking behaviours, and build a supportive environment where adolescents feel connected and understood.

### **Early Detection**

Early identification of mental-health concerns is essential and interventions should solely focus and prioritize on non-pharmacological methods, community-based support, and counselling grounded in respect for adolescents' rights as outlined in international frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Preventive efforts must adopt a multi-level approach, delivered through schools, health centres, community organizations, and digital platforms to reach diverse groups of adolescents, including those

### **Instrument for data collection**

To obtain the data and assess it a self-constructed tool was developed focusing on (emotional stressor, feeling of isolation, anxiety, psychological triggers, social environment, communication pattern, medical condition and, depressive tendency) tool measures the various aspects of mental well-being and also studied the belief system, religious and spiritual faith among adolescents and individuality in practices and a intensive interview was conducted to understand the perspective of adolescents and assessing their mental well-being,

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design and Type of Study***

This study employed a mixed-method, exploratory research design that examined the mental health challenges faced by adolescents. The design integrates both qualitative and quantitative components to obtain a comprehensive understanding of changes in adolescents' emotional and cognitive functioning before and after structured intervention sessions.

The qualitative dimension of the study consisted of in-depth interviews with adolescent participants. A self-structured interview schedule was developed for this research. The tool included open-ended and semi-structured questions that helped participants express their experiences, perceptions, and emotional states. The interviews enabled adolescents to discuss their challenges related to stress, mood fluctuations, concentration difficulties, and coping strategies in their everyday life. The intervention involved guided sessions using Indian spiritual music and guided imagery including mantras, classical ragas, and meditative soundscape as long with guided imagery practices inspired by yogic and meditative traditions. These sessions were designed to promote relaxation, emotional regulation, self-awareness, and mental clarity. Participants engaged in a series of structured sessions aimed at reducing stress, improving mood stability, enhancing cognition, focus, and providing adolescents with a sense of spirituality, purpose and aims in life.

A pre–post assessment model was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. Before the intervention, participants completed self-report measures and interview questions assessing their mental-health status, perceived stress, concentration levels, and emotional balance. After completing the spiritual music and guided imagery sessions, the same tool was administered to examine changes in psychological and physiological responses. The mixed-method approach strengthened the study by combining numerical evidence of improvement with in-depth personal narratives. The integration of Indian spiritual music and guided imagery as psycho-social interventions offered a culturally relevant and holistic method of fostering adolescent mental well-being and supporting meaningful behavioural and emotional change.

## **Results**

The integrated intervention—combining *“Shiv Kailasho ke Vasi”* spiritual music, and Lord Krishna's instrumental ragas with a touch of guided imagery added a reflective teaching from

the Mahabharata within the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and noticed a scope of significant improvements in adolescent's Psychological, Emotional, Cognitive, and Spiritual well-being.

### ***Enhancement of Overall Mental Well-Being***

Participants noticed a notable improvement in levels of an overall well-being with the majority reporting a calmer internal state and heightened emotional resilience. The spiritually enriched ragas helped regulate Physiological arousal, creating a sense of inner peace. adolescents reported feeling “mentally lighter,” sense of purpose, and more capable of handling day-to-day stressors.

### ***Reduction in Stress and Emotional Tension***

Approximately 75% of adolescents experienced a significant decline in stress levels. The slow, meditative tempo of “*Shiv Kailasho ke Vasi*” and “*Krishna Dhwani*” supported parasympathetic activation, lowering the stressors and levels of anxiety, reported about the feeling associated with these factors.

- A strong release of emotional burden
- Rid of restless thoughts
- Feeling of ease from overthinking

The imagery-based guidance, embedded in spiritual metaphors derived from Mahabharata narratives, further facilitated emotional unloading and internal clarity.

### ***Improvement in Mood Regulation and Emotional Balance***

Adolescents (80%) demonstrated about improvement in mood regulation. The tonal structure of devotional ragas encouraged the stabilization of emotional oscillations. Adolescents described *Greater positivity*, *Emotional grounding*, and a sustained sense of *inner balance*.

The integration of IKS principles—particularly *sattva* (purity, harmony) that helped adolescents shift from states of agitation toward emotional steadiness.

Furthermore, nearly 78% of adolescents reported enhanced emotional balance, fewer mood swings, and coherent emotional expressions. The reflective aspect of guided imagery allowed participants to interpret their emotions through spiritual analogies.

### ***Strengthening of Self-Awareness***

Around 65% of the adolescents reported heightened levels of self-awareness. The session based on spiritual music and mental health allowed them to observe internal thoughts, identify emotional triggers. The intervention echoed the Mahabharata's teachings on *self-mastery (atma-vichara)*, encouraging introspection and the cultivation of inner wisdom. Many noted that they could better differentiate between transient emotions and grounded self-perception.

### ***Focus, Cognitive Stability, and Mental Clarity***

Over 70% of adolescents reflected the improvement in present state of focus, mental clarity, and cognitive control, adolescents reported the factors associated with cognition management:

- Increased attentional stability
- Improved concentration during academic tasks
- Enhanced retention and mental organization

This cognitive enhancement can be attributed to the rhythmic patterns of instrumental ragas, which are known to modulate neural oscillations and promote cognitive synchrony. IKS literature describes this effect as *dharana*, the training of focused attention through sound, breath, and visualization.

### ***Cultural Identity and Sense of Belonging***

Approximately 85% of adolescents expressed a strong cultural connection with the intervention. They resonated deeply with the use of Indian spiritual music, traditional instruments, and teachings from Mahabharat, Participants reported that the familiarity of the cultural elements:

- Increased Self- awareness, esteem, and cultural perception
- Enhanced level of comfort and understanding

- Promoted faith, belief, and narratives according to the Indian Knowledge System
- Feeling of belongingness

This outcome reflects the importance of culturally grounded therapeutic interventions, aligning and *parampara* (heritage-based learning).

### ***Integration of Spiritual Well-Being***

The spiritual dimension of the intervention produced an effect on adolescents' inner reflection by creating a meaningful environment. Several adolescents described experiencing:

- A sense of purpose
- Enhanced levels of spiritual calmness
- Connection with higher values, tradition, and Vedic philosophy
- Sense of gratitude and inner devotion (bhava)

The use of Krishna and Shiva-centric musical forms, along with Mahabharata reflections, helped adolescents connect with symbolic representations of compassion, strength, discipline, and mindfulness.

### **Conclusions**

The application of the Psycho-social Intervention of Spiritual Music as an implication considering the roots of culture, mental healing, and the glimpse of the Indian knowledge system as it combines traditional Indian wisdom and spiritual practices with modern therapeutic approaches. By drawing on philosophies and values, it promotes holistic adolescent development, encompassing mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Such culturally rooted interventions not only enhance resilience, self-awareness, and coping skills but also provide adolescents with a meaningful framework to navigate life challenges, bridging ancient knowledge with contemporary mental health practices. This research can be further adopted by Psychologist, Counsellors, Therapist, Schools as a curriculum enhancing spiritual wisdom helping other researchers to identify, analyze and enhance the psychological framework in society by enriching the roots of Indian Culture.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest relevant to this article.

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