

Unemployment Among Educated Youth In The Field Of Music: A Critical Study Of Formal Education And Livelihood Through The Lens Of Folk Music In The Era Of Social Media

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Abstract

People in India love music and consider it a part of their lives. Old songs and folk tunes, you know, they pass from one person to another. These days many young folks do music degrees in college. But after college? Many can't find jobs. Funny thing is, people who didn't study music can sing at home, record a song on phone, put it on YouTube or Instagram, and they get views and cash. They just know how to use the internet better, That's it. This paper just talks about this. Like, why do students with degrees have no work but local singers make money online? If we look at singers and students of Jammu and North India. They shared their live experiences. One big thing colleges don't teach how to earn online. They don't show how to run a channel or handle online fans. In this way, this paper provides some easy-to-follow guidelines. So that students can try social media too and an earn something with their songs.

Keywords: *Folk Music, Digital Platforms, Music Education, Youth Unemployment, Social Media Monetization*

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I. Introduction

In India, people don't see folk music only as fun — it's a part of their life. It helps people stay together, keep old customs alive, and feel proud of who they are. Every state or region has its own special songs and tunes that people learn and share from one generation to the next. When colleges started adding music to their courses, people thought it would bring new jobs for young musicians. Many universities opened music departments, research programs, and many students picked music as a career. But the truth is, even after getting a degree, many young people still don't get good jobs or they get only very few chances. At the same time, the internet has changed everything. Now anyone with a phone and internet connection can sing or play music on YouTube, Instagram, or Facebook and reach thousands or even millions of people. This difference makes us think, are our colleges only teaching music, or are they also giving students the skills they need to earn and live well? Is the main reason for jobless students their lack of digital knowledge. This work tries to find out what is behind these things.

Research Area

study mainly talks about Jammu and some parts of North India where people still sing a lot of folk songs. For this, three kinds of groups were asked about their work: Students who study music in colleges, Local folk singers who sings at wedding or local programs, YouTubers and online singers who share folk songs without any degree. These three groups help to see the difference between studying music in class and online music posting by themselves.

Research Gap

Music degrees do not have any classes for making online stuff, YouTube money or social media work. City students and folk singers do not work together much but they often share ideas. There is no real training which helps students to find real work, tools to be used. I used semi-open questions, Audio and video recorders, Smartphones and simple cameras to collect data, while MS Excel and NVivo were used for checking and managing notes and thoughts.

Objectives of the research

To understand in detail the situation of unemployment among the youth despite receiving formal education in music in North India, especially in the Jammu region, and to analyze its social, educational, and economic causes. To find out how folk singers and artists associated with YouTube or social media without any formal degree are making money and earning their living using digital platforms. Clarifying the lack of practical information and training associated with online content creation, digital marketing, and earning from social media in current music courses. To give concrete and practical suggestions to formally trained music students to make better use of digital mediums to make them self-reliant and explore new employment opportunities.

Research Approach

In this paper I did not just read books. But also gathered lives experiences from the people. I sat with folk singers, students, teachers and with some people who post songs on YouTube. They shared their ideas, thoughts, experiences about what problem they faced and how they carry out the things. So this paper is not just about collecting data. Its main is to find real truth, Its more real story of

II. Research Methodology

In this research, not just limited to bookish studies, but the experiences of real people have also been given prominence. For this, Interacted face-to-face with music students, researchers, folk singers and artists active on YouTube and social media. Group discussions were held at some places, where the participants shared their experiences and problems. Along with this, through observation, it was seen how artists make videos, upload them and connect with the online audience. Written information was also collected from the participants through some semi-structured questions, which were later organized by tools such as NVivo and MS Excel, combined with notes, recordings, and online content. In this research, mainly under the qualitative method, narrative study (stories), personal interview (talk), group discussion (talk) and observation method (see) have been used. Also, some quantitative aspects have been included by analyzing the data collected from the written answers and forms received from the students through NVivo and MS Excel. Purposive sampling was adopted for selection of participants and a total of 30 participants were sampled which included general students, research students, folk singers and YouTube singers.

Sampling

Sampling Method: purposive sampling only Sample Size: total 30 people — 15 normal students, 5 music research students, 5 folk singers and 5 YouTube singers. This mix makes the study more real and true.

Data Collection

To get info for this study, I did few normal things: I gave some paper questions to students. They wrote about study, jobs and also what they feel about doing work online. I used my phone only to record talks and some meet. I saw YouTube channels, Facebook pages, Instagram to see how people put songs and handle all this stuff.

Theories Used

This research talks about three main ideas: Cultural Industry Theory (Theodor W.Adorno & Max Horkheimer) — here music is seen like a thing people buy or share in online market. Ethnomusicology — it helps to see music with normal life and people's daily culture. Digital Content Theory — it shows how social media takes songs everywhere in world.

Data Analysis

The study collected information from 30 participants, including 15 music students, 5 research students, 5 local folk singers, and 5 YouTube artists, to understand their experiences regarding music education, employment opportunities, and online income generation. The data was analyzed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Qualitative Analysis

Semi-structured interviews and group discussions were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo 12. This helped identify recurring themes and patterns across participants' experiences: Limited Digital Skills among Music Students: While formally trained students possess strong theoretical and technical knowledge, they lack practical skills in using digital tools, creating online content, and monetizing music on social media. Rapid Online Adoption by Folk Singers: Local folk singers, even without formal music degrees, quickly adopt online platforms like YouTube and Instagram. Using basic smartphones and recording equipment, they share performances widely and generate income, often faster than students relying solely on traditional employment. Differences in Income Opportunities: The contrast between degree-holding students waiting for institutional jobs and folk singers

earning online highlights a gap between formal education and practical livelihood skills. Additionally, observations of participants' social media channels provided insights into strategies for audience engagement, video presentation, and interaction with followers, which most students had not yet adopted.

Quantitative Analysis

Responses from written questionnaires were organized using MS Excel to examine simple trends: A majority of students reported low awareness of online earning opportunities. Only a small fraction had attempted to create digital content for revenue purposes. A SWOT analysis was also conducted to compare formally trained students and independent online artists: Strengths of Students: Advanced technical knowledge and mastery of musical theory. Weaknesses of Students: Limited digital literacy, lack of familiarity with video creation and social media marketing. Opportunities for Students: Leveraging online platforms, collaborations with folk artists, and digital promotion of music. Threats: Limited job opportunities in traditional institutions and competition from self-taught online musicians.

III. Findings

The analysis revealed that: Formally trained students possess strong musical skills but lack practical digital skills needed for self-employment. Folk and online artists effectively use technology to reach audiences and earn income, even without formal training. Integrating classical music education with digital literacy and online content creation can significantly improve employment prospects for music graduates. In conclusion, the study highlights that traditional music curricula alone are insufficient for modern career opportunities. Students need to combine their musical expertise with digital skills, online marketing knowledge, and audience engagement strategies to succeed professionally in the digital era.

IV. Results And Discussion

Previous studies have consistently indicated a gap between formal music education and employability in the modern digital era. Scholars such as Andy Bennett (2002) and Dawn Bennett (2016) highlighted that formal music training enhances technical skills but often fails to prepare students for practical employment or self-employment opportunities, particularly in digital environments. Research by Shubham Kumar (2024) and Xiaofan Zhang (2023) demonstrates the increasing significance of social media and online platforms in promoting folk music and supporting independent artists' livelihoods. Classical studies by Regula Qureshi (2007) and Gerry Farrell (1997) emphasize the cultural importance of folk music, but provide limited guidance for translating traditional skills into modern income-generating opportunities. This literature provides context for understanding the structural and skill-based challenges that formally trained musicians face, especially in Jammu and North India.

Unique Contribution of This Study

This study offers original contributions by: Comparative Analysis: Examining three groups simultaneously—music students, local folk singers, and independent YouTube/online artists—provides a holistic understanding of employment patterns and skill utilization. Integration of Real-Life Experiences: Interviews, group discussions, and observations of online channels capture practical strategies and challenges faced by participants in earning and audience engagement. Focus on Digital Skills Gap: The study identifies specific deficiencies in formal curricula, including video recording, editing, social media promotion, and monetization, which are contrasted with adaptive practices of online artists.

Key Findings

Employment and Income Patterns: Most music students reported difficulty in securing employment, relying primarily on government or institutional jobs. Folk singers and YouTube artists, even without formal degrees, often earn income quickly by posting performances online and engaging audiences. Digital presence and active audience interaction significantly influence income more than technical proficiency alone.

Digital Literacy Gap:

Formally trained students have strong theoretical and technical knowledge but lack practical skills for online content creation and promotion. Folk and online artists acquire digital competence through practice, enabling them to reach wider audiences and generate revenue efficiently.

SWOT Insights:

Strengths of Students: Mastery of musical theory, disciplined practice, technical skill Weaknesses of Students: Limited knowledge of digital tools, passive approach to audience engagement Opportunities: Utilization of social media platforms, collaborations with folk artists, monetization of content Threats: Limited traditional employment, competition from digitally savvy independent artists

Integration Potential: Combining classical music training with digital skills and social media strategies can substantially improve employment prospects. Observations indicate that even small investments in recording equipment and consistent content posting can help students and folk singers reach audiences and generate sustainable income.

V. Discussion

The results demonstrate a paradigm shift in music careers: Traditional music education equips students with technical expertise but does not prepare them for contemporary challenges, especially in online platforms and self-employment. Interviews reveal that students are motivated and willing to learn digital skills if proper guidance is provided. Folk and online artists exemplify that practical knowledge of online tools and audience engagement can often outweigh formal training in generating income. Unlike previous studies that focused separately on employability or digital adaptation, this research connects formal training with real-world digital practices, providing actionable insights.

Practical Implications: Music curricula should integrate digital literacy, content creation, and online marketing alongside classical training. Folk artists can benefit from training in basic recording, copyright management, and social media promotion to increase income and sustainability.

Conclusion of This Section

In summary, this study demonstrates that: Formal education alone is insufficient for modern music careers. Digital adaptation and audience engagement are crucial for sustainable income. Integrating classical training with digital skills provides the most effective pathway for employment and self-reliance among young musicians in Jammu and North India.

Challenges

Many students don't know much about tech for doing work online. Colleges don't teach how to make videos or sell songs on internet. Folk singers don't get enough help from government. side. There are problems about who owns songs and copyright too. Also, free songs online means less fixed money.

VI. Conclusion

In the end, I saw one big thing. Students who study music know songs well. But they do not know how to show songs online. They finish study but no job comes fast. They wait for teacher post or small work but chance is less. Other side, some people sing folk songs, make small videos on phone and put on YouTube. They get fans and money fast. But if people stop watching, money stops too. So students need new ways. Just singing is not enough now. They must know how to record, how to put videos, how to talk with fans on Facebook or Instagram. College should teach this. Folk singers should also learn so they can earn at home. If both learn together, they can help each other. Government can help with rooms, tools, training. Teachers can show how to save songs so no one steals them. At last, music is good but earning needs new road. Old style and new online style must go together. Then young singers can earn and live happy with music.

Suggestions

College should teach how to make songs for YouTube. Not only old books, but how to record, edit and post. Students should learn how to earn from songs. Not wait for only teacher job. Government can give small studios, camera and internet help in village to. Folk singers can join small training to learn phone, YouTube and copyright. Both students and folk singers can help each other—share new ideas and shows. Teachers should tell students how to keep songs safe so no one steals. Small groups can be made where young singers help each other for shows, videos and earning.

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