

Ways of Preservation of Indian Music for Generation X and Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

Overtime, there has been a loss of appreciation for music, as many people choose to listen to different types of songs and stay in their comfort zones. Due to this, many important pieces of art are being lost and remain unexplored. In turn, the culture, history and past of the place also remain shadowed during the process. The present study focuses on identifying ways to preserve Indian music in order to conserve the feeling of home and familiarity which they instill. Thus, it also aims to bring people closer, explore uncharted genres, find ways to bridge their differences and form bonds. The research consisted of six Hindi songs out of which three were from generation X (40-50) and the rest from generation Z (15-20) living in Delhi NCR (Gurgaon). The main focus was to gather participants' views on each song and use their opinions to identify methods of preservation. It was observed that many of the participants of both generations had similar viewpoints on each song. Through this, the study was able to shed light on the main factors which can affect a person's thought process on how music stirs different emotions for everybody. Some of the major highlights were the use of instruments, vocals, lyrics, commerciality and the inherent emotionality. Furthermore, the findings were different from the assumption that there was a large gap between generations' music tastes. Music for people is about comfort, happiness and emotional support, over just being a means of superficial entertainment. It is a very subjective and immersive experience for people from both the generations and it shouldn't be simply confined to any one era or relatability factor, as it transcends thresholds.

Introduction

Music is a stimulator for various types of emotions and is an active enabler for forging connections and relatability. It's a binding factor and adds a commercial element in pop culture in the contemporary era. It can be explored on a differing spectrum ranging from classical to rock and pop, jazz, sufi, trending, korean pop to remixed versions.

Different genres are known to attract and invoke different stimuli in your brain. According to Neuroimaging, songs increase the dopamine levels in our body and constantly listening to the same numbers repeatedly - especially during important events in our lives - keeps them in our memory. "Perhaps most crucially, listening to music lights up the brain's visual cortex. Which means that as you hear a song, you'll start associating it with memories or other images almost immediately." (Gillespie, n.d.)

Each generation is broad-minded to the trending music of its time, and drawn more to the music that defines itself as "that generation's sound". As time passes, the generation tends to maintain its preference for the music it listens to during its youth. As new music genres emerge, regardless of how popular it is, a generation remains more favorable towards the music from its era than the newer genres. (Smith, 1994)

Another important factor based on what a song sounds like is the instrument, or rather the particular instruments that are clear/audible to the listener. (Nunes and Ordanini, 2014) Instruments help increase the understanding/knowledge of "social lives, local and global economies, key political events, physical geographies, religious belief systems and other aspects of human activities in which music takes part". (Post, 2013)

The effect of music being a part of human activities helps in associating a memory, making it more vivid, when revisiting the past. It has a distinct effect on the minds of listeners, and helps to remember important memories. Nostalgia, which is often produced by music, “increases positive self-regard and social connectedness”. Nostalgia is often related with memories, with friends and family, this not only increases social support but “provides existential meaning” when needed. (Waxman, 2019)

Thus, music is a very subjective and an immersive experience for people from both the generations and it shouldn't be simply confined to any one era or relatability factor, as it transcends thresholds. The present study focuses on identifying ways to preserve Indian music in order to conserve the feeling of home and familiarity which they instill. Thus, it also aims to bring people closer, explore uncharted genres, find ways to bridge their differences and form bonds.

The research paper focuses on the preservation of music as it plays an important part in sharing stories of the past. Due to the large knowledge gap between generations, many people do not know the charm of old music as it instills a feeling of home, nostalgia and shares a wide range of narratives about the beliefs of various people. Indian performances have always been a medium for sharing stories on mythology. The variety of instruments used also add a lot of depth and emotion to the pieces. Music can only be preserved if people are able to leave their comfort zone and experience other genres of Indian music as it helps connect many in order to form bonds between them. Thus, it is important that music is preserved in order to form a mutual space for sharing thoughts, experiences and sentiments.

Methodology

Research Aim

The aim of this research study was to explore the impact of an online workshop on forging connections between Generation X and Z participants through exposure to popular Hindi tunes from their respective eras. More specifically, this workshop sought to elicit their in-depth perceptions of their experiences of the different pieces, both as unique individuals and as “representatives” of their generations. Music is more than simply a combination of different sounds, it's a bond that links together people and brings a feeling of collective amnesia. It can highlight similarities and differences in people's perception.

Research Design

The present study is qualitative and cross-sectional in nature. As the research study was focused on the participants' experiences of the workshop, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach was adopted. The IPA approach encompasses three key components: “phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 8):

- Phenomenology: **concerns how people perceive a specific experience, i.e., a phenomenon, from their perspectives** (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).
- Hermeneutics: **concerns the interpretations of these experiences by the researcher**, which is why Smith and Osborn (2008) explained how **IPA is often a double-layered interpretation process in which the researcher seeks to interpret the participants' perceptions of their experiences.**
- Idiography: **concerns a deep examination of the experiences of individual participants, which leads to the generation of larger themes that would constitute a composite picture of the phenomenon under investigation** (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

Sampling

Purposive sampling (a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers choose members of different categories to participate in their study) was used for this research study. Specifically, the research study was limited to people of generations X (1960-70) and Z (2005-6). There were 11 participants from generation Z and 8 from generation X i.e. 19 participants residing in the Delhi NCR (Gurgaon).

These generations were specifically selected as there is a huge age gap, because of which there is a greater need of preservation between these generations to help them find a middle ground of using music for a shared bonding experience.

Informed consent

All ethical considerations were followed for the current study. Informed consent was taken from all participants for data collection. Confidentiality and privacy of the participants were maintained, no data would be disclosed to a third party. No identifier or picture were disclosed in the article or while conducting the study.

Tools used

Table 1

Rationale for Songs Selected

Title	Era	Genre	Theme	Characteristics
Senorita (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s kEX06r9Yn8)	Gen Z	Contemporary	Theme 1	Mix of Latin and Hindi, uses Maraca, Cajon and spanish guitar style, Merger of Spanish and Indian cultures.
Aaj Jaane Ki Zid Na Karo (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gN UQsj1O7g)	Gen X	Classical	Theme 3, Theme 1	It had classical instruments such as tabla and harmonium.
Mileya Mileya	Gen Z	Bollywood contemporary	Theme 1 Theme 2	Use of multiple vocals and languages with classical + contemporary instruments like saxophone, repetition of claps and acoustic guitar. Up-beat music.
Journey Song	Gen Z	Indie/country	Theme 1, Theme 2	Mellow, relaxing, has a bicycle bell sound.

Janu Meri Jaan	Gen X	Commercial Bollywood	Theme 2	Orchestra (use of a lot of musical instruments together + vocals) type music, yodeling.
Zindagi Ki Yah Reet Hai	Gen X	Classical Bollywood	Theme 2	Use of classical instruments for positive affirmations about life, Repeated chorus to restate the theme.

The selection of each of these songs is deliberate because different types of music genres affect different people at different ages in varied patterns. This research study is centered around the experiences of people in the stark age groups of 40-50 and 15-20. This is to highlight both the polar and similar reactions to how these two generations preserve and get attracted to the concept of Bollywood music, in their culturally rooted, collective memory.

These songs were based on different themes which included love, journeys and celebration to add a mix of different genres that evoke various emotions, to get different perspectives. The genres were fusion music, classical music, pop culture/ modern pop, to restate the collective experience of enjoying music as a form of art despite varying viewpoints. The moods of these songs were ranging from mellow to ecstatic which could add more credibility to each person's opinions. Some of these songs were commercial while the others were more classical to add to the variety between the two generations. These songs were assessed by individuals to determine whether it would appeal to a large cross-section of people who listen to Hindi songs. The agenda was to highlight the similar or varying thought processes of the participants on culture, languages and instruments used in the songs.

Data collection procedure

The workshop session took place on Zoom. Participants were told to keep their cameras on while the songs were played to record their reactions to each song and were asked to fill forms regarding each song after hearing them. Afterwards, they were requested to talk about how they felt about each song.

The Zoom session that was conducted lasted one hour thirty minutes. The program for the workshop was as follows:

1. Participants were welcomed to and briefed on the workshop. The agenda for the presentation and discussion of the selected music numbers was reiterated. The participants were essentially told to be open to all perspectives and vocal about their own, while being celebrated for their willingness to take part in a workshop on such a debatable topic. Finally, permission was sought and granted to videotape the session, solely for data analysis purposes.
2. To cover the varying genres in music that each demographic would supposedly be inclined towards, six songs were picked from two different time spans in Bollywood music, 1970s and 2019. The essential idea was to play the songs, after each song ask the participants to fill a form and in the end, ask them how they felt about each song. There was a unique mix of opinions and participants had interesting points to add about each song.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative data by following the step-by-step guidelines of Pietkiewicz and Smith's (2014) article, "A Practical Guide to Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in Qualitative Research Psychology":

- Step 1: Immersing in the data by revisiting the responses in the forms multiple times and highlighting relevant data points.
- Step 2: Re-reading the notes and charting out the thematic structure of the study including the personal observations, to convert them into emergent arguments for the paper;
- Step 3: Forging relationships between the emergent arguments in order to group them to form the final analysis.

Results and Discussion

The aim of the study is to identify methods of preservation of Indian Music between generations X and Z. A thematic analysis was carried out for analysing data.

Table 1

Basic summary of information regarding participants' knowledge in Bollywood music. (N = 11)

Generation	Rating of Familiarity to Hindi Music of Your Generation ("1" being "None at All", and 5 being "A Lot")	Rating of Familiarity to Hindi Music in General ("1" being "None at All", and 5 being "A Lot")
Z	2.5	3
Z	1	1
Z	2	2.5
Z	2.5	2
Z	2.5	2
Z	3.5	3.5
Z	3	3.5
Z	1.5	1
Z	2	1
Z	1	1
Z	1	1

Table 2:

Basic summary of information regarding participants' knowledge in Bollywood music. (N = 8)

Generation	Rating of Familiarity to Hindi Music of Your Generation (“1” being “None at All”, and 5 being “A Lot”)	Rating of Familiarity to Hindi Music in General (“1” being “None at All”, and 5 being “A Lot”)
X	2	2
X	2.5	3
X	3.5	3.5
X	1.5	1
X	1.5	1
X	1	1
X	1.5	1
X	2	1.5

Table 3

Thematic Analysis of the responses on each song played. (N = 19)

Summary of themes extracted in thematic analysis.

Theme/ Discourse	Example quote
Evolution of Instruments and vocals	<p><u>Gen X</u> “Old version. The singer needs to carry the song entirely on her singing. The modern versions take too much away from the song with all the loud and out of beat music.”</p> <p><u>Gen Z</u> “It’s like a classic old hindi song right, the drums and the ad libs are important for it. i like it because i’ve heard old songs quite a lot but it’s for sure an acquired taste. To me the guitar shone through the most.”</p>
Celebration of Joy and Life Through the Liveliness of Music	<p><u>Gen X</u> “Listening to the song is emotionally uplifting. It is cheerful and unique due to the use of a different language.”</p> <p><u>Gen Z</u> “The song is really soulful and just happy , the lyrics are well written symbolising a journey of life, that’s also what the movie is trying to convey. It’s a simple</p>

song with great vocals and all the other factors are really the perfect ingredients for this song.”

Bonding of Music → Indian Culture/Communal sense. Gen X

“Old version. The singer needs to carry the song entirely on her singing. The modern versions take too much away from the song with all the loud and out of beat music.”

Gen Z

“I prefer the older version for several reasons – the warmer chords, the more acoustic feel, the more soulful singing, and the overall portrayal of emotions.”

The three themes are the main connections that were made regarding all the information which was received from the participants on their views on generational music, specifically Bollywood/ Indian music.

Theme 1: Evolution of instruments and vocals

This theme brings out the participants' views on the instruments as well as the vocals of the song. The aim is to show that instruments can affect the views of a person and are an extremely important part of a song because they can make or break a song. Depending on how the instrument is used, multiple emotions can be invoked from one piece and make it more appealing.

GEN X

“Its the strength of the lyrics that work for me along with the raw voice of the singer.” (Aaj Jane Ki Zidd Na Karo)

“Old version. The singer needs to carry the song entirely on her singing. The modern versions take too much away from the song with all the loud and out of beat music.” (Aaj Jane Ki Zid Na Karo)

”I enjoyed listening to the juxtaposition of a contemporary musical beat complimenting a regional song.” (Mileya Mileya)

This showed that the participant of generation X was leaning towards the classical instruments over the ones evolving with technology. The voice of the singer along with the strength of the lyrics made it more impactful to the listener. Rhythm, along with tabla and harmonium (which are commonly used instruments in classical songs), was appealing to the listener. In older songs, the weight of the piece is carried by the vocalist whereas modern versions rely on technology based techniques to enhance music. The listener believed that instruments which did not overlap over the voice of the singer were something which made classical music more comfortable for him while the loud, unpleasant music of the modern version made it difficult for him to hear the singer and made the song less attractive. The music in the remix version of Aaj Jane Ki Zidd Na Karo was engaging to the listener but the dialogues in-between distracted them from the main song, making it less enjoyable for them. In the second version of Aaj Jane Ki Zidd Na Karo, the purity made it immersing. The simple use of sitar accompanied the vocals, creating a relaxing atmosphere for the listener. They believed that in Jaanu Meri Jaan, the woman’s laughter was not realistic enough and was not

suited for the song. The use of trumpet and the big orchestra made it melodious for the listener. Overall the music, with its slight flavour of flamenco, was likeable, but the lyrics took away from the quality of the song. Furthermore, the respondents expressed that the variation in music makes it appealing to the listener rather than a bland mix. Classical songs use a large variety of different sounds including the mix of contemporary beats with regional music, making them distinct.

Hence, many respondents mention that they prefer the older version of 'Aaj Jane Ki Zidd Na Karo' as the voice of the singer is more clear along with the instruments, while in the newer version the music overlaps the singer's voice. In Mileya Mileya, the variation in music makes it more appealing to the listener rather than the bland mix. Classical songs use a large variety of different sounds including the mix of contemporary beats with regional music, making them distinct.

GEN Z:

"It's like a classic old hindi song right, the drums and the ad libs are important for it. i like it because i've heard old songs quite a lot but it's for sure an acquired taste. To me the guitar shone through the most." (Zindagi Ki Yahi Reet Hai)

"I don't have a good range of knowledge on latin instruments but the style of the beat sounded like the bongo. I enjoyed the beat as the unique bar pattern made it musical to the ears. (Senorita)
Technically speaking, the rhythm and beat of the song are based on a typical Latin beat you hear as it is influenced by Spanish origins, which makes it a very upbeat song, something one would usually hear at parties and celebrations, but to me and many others in our generation, it has much more of a special meaning because it reminds us of our childhood." (Senorita)

"Usually hindi and punjabi go hand in hand in songs but i dont think it worked here, probably because the singer doesn't have punjabi as her first language." (Mileya Mileya)

"The saxophone appealed to me the most as it added a twist to the song that most Hindi songs don't really have. Other than that the claps give a sense of unity which brings out happiness." (Mileya Mileya)

"I like the mix because when its in a different language artists use different instruments to bring out the authenticity of wherever the other language may be from." (Journey Song)

According to the respondents, Drum and ad libs are a central part of hindi songs making it more appealing for the generation z participant. They enjoyed the non-familiar choice of latin instruments. Due to the upbeat rhythm of the song (Senorita), it is relatable to many generation z participants as it produces a familiar nostalgia of their early years. Furthermore, a particular song (Mileya Mileya) shows that fluency in a language has a large impact on the song. The use of unique and non-conventional instruments makes songs more enjoyable and distinct from the mainstream commercialised music. Use of everyday, habitual sounds produce a sense of collective belonging or relatability. Also, use of instruments from the place of origin of the language adds more local flavour, making it more palatable.

Therefore, instruments, fluency in languages and vocals have a strong impact on the listener and influence the emotions of songs. Thus they are an extremely important factor, depending on how they are used, they can be relatable to the participant and make it even better for them.

Based on the responses of the participants of generation Z, the fluency in a language and right mix of instruments can affect a song greatly. Generation X participants respond that the voice of a singer is a major part of the song and the modern version takes this away because of the music overlapping it.

Theme 2: Celebration of Joy and Life Through the Liveliness of Music

The deep meaning in songs can make a listener more joyful. The up beat music and lyrics have a strong influence and therefore are heard more commonly. Music helps calm a listener or cheer them up by stirring their mood and is often used as a source of inspiration. The happiness that is produced on hearing an up-beat song can be like a reflex, and the nostalgic feeling from important moments which come back on hearing a song.

Gen X:

“Listening to the song is emotionally uplifting. It is cheerful and unique due to the use of a different language.”
(Senorita)

Use of more than one language can make a song unique and cheerful depending on how they are used.

Gen Z:

“I really like the slow paced but up beat vibe of the song, its calming but at the same time optimistic.” (Journey Song)

“The song is really soulful and just happy , the lyrics are well written symbolising a journey of life, that’s also what the movie is trying to convey. It’s a simple song with great vocals and all the other factors are really the perfect ingredients for this song.” (Journey Song)

“I can hear guitars, violins, electric guitars and drums, and random vocal snippets, among other things. The use of each of these instruments increases the energy and boldness of the song.” (Jaanu Meri Jaan)

The meanings which are conveyed through lyrics along with the use of instruments can make a song cheerful and unique. The unfamiliarity of a different language makes it exciting . The rhythm and aura of a song can positively impact a listener’s emotions. Lyrics help in accentuating the main theme of a song, driving the emotions it produces. The use of multiple instruments adds depth and complexity to the song.

The generation X participant responds that the use of different languages makes a song up-beat. The generation Z participants mention that the instruments and lyrics make the song optimistic.

Theme 3: Bonding of Music → Indian Culture/Communal sense.

The listeners are able to relate to a song more if it reminds them of their past. It is a powerful medium for channelising memories as many commercial songs are played during festivities which makes people remember moments with their close ones, engraving them much more strongly. Music invokes deep emotions inside of us.

Gen X:

“Old version. The singer needs to carry the song entirely on her singing. The modern versions take too much away from the song with all the loud and out of beat music.” (Aaj Jane Ki Zid Na Karo)

“I will prefer the original. Some classics shouldn’t be tampered with in my view.” (Aaj Jane Ki Zid Na Karo)

“The use of Punjabi looked forced and somewhat stereo-typical. almost like a fashion to bring in one or two words of Punjabi.” (Miley a Mileya)

“Its familiarity is what works more than anything else. The lyrics carry the song more than the music but that’s also the failing of this song...weak lyrics after a strong opening stanza.” (Zindagi Ki Yahi Reet Hai)

According to the respondents, the use of vocals over music and the strength of the vocals are factors in a song that influences the opinion of the participant. Respondent’s taste in music was particular as they like the originality and essence of the quintessential songs to remain untouched. The nostalgia from hearing this song engages the participants and the strength of the lyrics further influence their opinion. The stereo-typical use of languages in commercial music make it less appealing to a listener than a unique mix.

GEN Z:

“I didn't really spot an inter cultural difference but the generational difference was very prevalent in the song, which is why it appeals to older audiences”. (Zindagi Ki Yahi Reet Hai)

“I prefer the older version for several reasons – the warmer chords, the more acoustic feel, the more soulful singing, and the overall portrayal of emotions.” (Aaj Jane Ki Zidd Na Karo)

“Usually classical songs are of very long lengths but because there are so many different compositions and segments that you can put into them they can be made more enjoyable. Long songs can be enjoyable if the artist is skilled and experienced and the songs work with the beat.” (Aaj Jane Ki Zid Na Karo)

“I would listen to *senorita* and *piku* again, because I associate them with my childhood and they both have a special place in my heart. The good melodies are just a nice addition.”

On the basis of the findings, it was found that some songs are more relatable to the particular generations of the era in which the song was produced. The length of the song doesn't become the trademark of its enjoyability quotient, as long as the artist is skilled enough to pull it forward. The variety of emotions being expressed by the artist in the song can make it even more attractive. Songs that have been a part of one's earlier years can be more appealing to the listener as they make it easy to revisit and time-travel to one's past.

According to generation X participants, the lyrics and language carry the song. Familiarity also plays a major part in influencing the piece. For generation Z, the length of a song and the skill of the artist are factors which affect the music. They also related a few songs with their childhood and enjoyed them.

Instruments and vocals used in the song have a large impact on the song and can change the entire mood depending on how they are used. They also help relate to songs as the listener is able to remember moments in their past which are connected to each song.

Implication

When hearing a song from before, memories of important events flood back with that song. Due to music being a container for memories, it will help people with Alzheimers to revisit their memory. In the case of people with dementia, music can activate memories filled with emotions. It can also provide them with physical benefits.

Conclusion

Music is an important form of art as it helps preserve memories as well as the history of a place/ culture. Thus, it helps evoke the feeling of nostalgia through retaining the essence of a place by containing it in the instruments, vocals and lyrics used. The methodology was successful as the study successfully identified ways to preserve music across generations by identifying significant markers that reiterate its importance. It was noticed that many participants of both generations were able to relate to songs which were not a part of their generation and open up more. This shows that music should not only be preserved in order to keep the past alive, but also to help form bonds among people. At the beginning of the research study, the assumption was that people usually stay in the comfort zone of the genres which they prefer but the participants' views showed that many of them liked songs from both the generations. Music forms an important part of our lives and helps connect people. Songs help represent and hold the weight of their identity, choices and emotions that they choose to relate with. Thus, the research addresses the primary motive of preservation of music.

Limitations

There were a few limitations in the paper such as the knowledge gap among the participants of each generation which can produce a variety of opinions and the choice of songs. If the participants are divided in an equal ratio for each generation, such as five are skilled in Indian music and five are not. This can help highlight different aspects of each song and the paper would be more open to varying perspectives. Having more songs like rap and folk music rather than simply commercial bollywood music, can also increase the information as many folk songs simply focus on the mythology.

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