

# MUSIC AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER IN INDIA: POWER, INEQUALITY, AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION — A CRITICAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS

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## ABSTRACT

*Music in India is stepping out from the shadows of economic policy discussions and becoming a hot topic in chats about growth, jobs, tourism, and city planning. Music in India isn't just about art or fun; it's a big deal for the economy, with concerts, tourism, online platforms, and jobs in creativity all playing a part. While it's clear that the music biz isn't playing fair with the cash and power, a lot of people are stuck in jobs that don't offer much security or formal benefits. This paper offers a critical, qualitative analysis of how music acts as an economic driver in India, with a special focus on live events, digital transformation, and the unequal positions of different groups. This paper dives deep into how music fuels the Indian economy, especially through live gigs, the digital shift, and the varied roles of different groups. This approach combines insights from political economy, cultural studies, and labour studies to explore who benefits, whose left out, and how policies can address these issues. The paper breaks down how concerts and the music biz work, how live gigs are booming, and how streaming and social media are changing the game for artists. This also shines a light on issues like inadequate social safety nets, uneven development across regions, and scant backing for grassroots and community music initiatives. The text suggests real-world actions for the government, businesses, and local groups to boost the Indian music scene, making it fairer, more sustainable, and welcoming for everyone.*

**Key words:** Music, Economic Driver, Concerts, Digital Transformation, Regional Imbalances, Power and Inequality.

## Introduction

India got a rich musical heritage, ranging from classical and devotional tunes to folk melodies and movie soundtracks. Lately, this cultural vibes really starting to show its economic muscle, especially with live gigs, music fests, and online streaming. International artists are now hitting up Indian cities, and local Indian musicians are rocking out at big domestic festivals, pulling in crowds from all over India and even from other countries. Lately, with all the concerts, festivals, and online music streaming, music's got a bigger slice of India's economy pie (Treelife, 2025; IFPI, 2025). Rising incomes, a youthful demographic, and improved online connectivity have all fuelled this trend. The growth of the concert industry really highlights this trend. Big events with famous international artists and top Indian performers are now a regular thing, not just once-in-a-lifetime shows. Big concerts aren't just about ticket sales; they also boost hotel bookings, restaurant business, local transport demand, and create a bunch of temporary and permanent jobs. Live events are now seen by businesses and policymakers as “economic engines” and “concert economies”, highlighting their growing significance in discussions about national growth. But let's not forget to consider the roles of power and inequality in this uplifting tale. A lot of the cash from tickets and sponsors goes to a handful of global artists, top Indian celebs, and big-time companies that run the show when it comes to venues, ticket sales, and promotions. A bunch of people working behind the scenes, like stage crews, security guards, cleaners, and small vendors, depend on quick, low-paying gigs with hardly any safety nets or leverage to negotiate. There are also strong divides between big metropolitan centres and smaller cities, and between dominant languages and regional ones.

**Digital technology** adds another layer to the mix. Streaming services, social networks, and online ticket sales have made it easier for musicians to connect with fans and for people to catch live shows. But they also bring in new gatekeepers, like algorithms, platform rules, and data-driven marketing, which can make old inequalities worse in new ways. The same equipment that helps some solo artists can make others disappear if they don't have the right tools or skills online. This paper, then, asks three main questions:

1. How does music help India's economy these days?
2. How do the pros and cons of music affect different people?
3. How does digital transformation change the game when it comes to power, inequality, and chances in this area?

The paper sticks to a typical research format. The text kicks off by taking a look at the ongoing chatter about India's music scene and its economic impact, then lays out a detailed and thoughtful approach. Next, it dives into a deep look at the economy, society, and tech, highlighting both the upsides and the downsides. Lastly, it suggests some policy and practice tips and points out where more studies could be done.

## 2. Literature Review and Critical Framework

### 2.1 Economic growth and the concert economy

(Sharma, 2025) Recent writing on India's music sector have focused on how quickly live events and concerts are growing. According to (Custom Market Insights, 2025), reports on the live events industry show that this sector is growing quickly and is expected to grow by a strong double-digit percentage in the middle of this decade. (Agarwal, 2025) Studies of international tours in India with artists like Coldplay and Ed Sheeran show that ticket sales, tax collection, travel bookings, and local business turnover all go up a lot around the time of the events.

(Vasanath, 2025) point out that concerts are becoming a regular fixture in city life, not just a rare event anymore. Meanwhile, the bigger picture from media and industry pros suggests that live gigs, festivals, and solo acts are really pushing the Indian music scene forward, both at These sources show concerts as fun but also key to tourism, hospitality, and making a city stand out.

### 2.2 Employment, skills, and job creation

(Team, 2025) Several recent reports, they're all about jobs and stuff Research suggests that India's concert scene might create a ton of short-term gigs by the early 2030s. They break down how a big concert can bring together thousands of people in all sorts of jobs, from setting up the stage to handling the sound and lights, keeping everyone safe, making sure guests are happy, getting people to and from the venue, selling tickets, and creating digital content Industry people view these quick gigs not just as temporary jobs but, in some cases, as stepping stones to longer careers in event planning, marketing, or tech support.

(Agarwal, 2025) At the same time, there is recognition that many of these workers lack formal training or recognized qualifications and that safety standards, labour conditions, and career progression opportunities vary widely. Talks about the industry really stress the need for better training and organized programs, especially if smaller towns are going to get a boost from concerts.

### 2.3 Digital platforms, globalization, and independent music

(Vasanth, 2025) On the digital side, music blogs and industry insiders emphasize three main trends: the rise of streaming, the emergence of "superfan" communities, and the growing global interest in Indian music. Streaming markets are going to keep growing, and it's pretty clear from the viral hits of tracks or soundtracks that online platforms are now taking Indian music across the globe. These same sources also stress the significance of platforms for independent artists. A bunch of people reckon that you can now grow your fan base straight up on social media, through niche ticket sites, and with tools that focus on the community vibe. But these upbeat stories don't really tell us much about how moneys spread out, the part algorithms play, and how much artists rely on big company systems.

### 2.4 Power, inequality, and regional imbalances

(Sharma, 2025) A growing number of commentaries and interviews point to uneven benefits within the concert economy. They point out that most big events happen in a few big cities, that English and Hindi are the most common languages in line-ups and marketing, and that local and regional artists may not get as much attention as global acts. People worry about people in small towns who might not get the training, connections, or money they need Bollywood tunes and a few big music companies pretty much call the shots on what hits the airwaves and shelves.

(EMX India Study, 2025) Independent, local, and regional artists—even if they've got a solid local fanbase—often don't have the means or know-how to get paid fairly or get the legal protection they deserve The informal sectors massive, but most of these artists are just winging it without any contracts or social perks In general, current research talks about more chances and a bigger economic effect, but it also points out some obvious gaps: not enough focus on informal and community-driven music jobs, scant investigation into the day-to-day lives of regular workers, and a lack of critical examination of this paper seeks to fill in some of these holes by uniting economic, social, and technical aspects within a critical, multidimensional approach.

## Methodology

This research takes a qualitative and critical angle. This isn't just throwing out fresh survey or interview stats; it's all about coming up with a fresh take and a new way to look at things by digging into different kinds of stuff out there and linking them up in a fresh way. It does not present new survey or interview data; instead, it develops an original interpretation and framework by reading across multiple kinds of existing material and connecting them in a new way.

First, the paper takes a close look at what's being said in the industry and media about indies live events and music scene, digging into numbers about how big the market is, how many jobs it creating, and what the future might hold, paints a vivid image of the concert industry's massive size and rapid expansion, and how it's a hot topic in public conversations.

Second, the paper talks about the rise of independent music, the emergence of superfan groups, and how Indian music is spreading worldwide. These sources shed light on the latest stories about chances and transformation.

The analysis draws on ideas from three key areas of critical thinking. Let's take a look at who's calling the shots with important stuff like money, places, and online spots, and figure out how the goodies get shared around. Cultural studies look into how language, region, and identity play a role in deciding which music gets promoted and backed. Looking into how people work in the music industry, focusing on their jobs, job stability, and learning new skills. Looking through these lenses, the paper reveals a complex view that's more than just numbers showing how much it's grown. This breaks down some new ideas like concert corridors, backstage precarity, and community music micro-economies to make the complicated stuff easier to get. This method has its boundaries. Since it doesn't have first-hand interviews or actual fieldwork, it can't say it's got every group full story but it lays down a strong idea base and questions for later studies to expand on.

## **Analysis: Music as a Multidimensional Economic Driver**

### **Three layers of economic impact**

Music plays a big part in India's economy, kind of like it's got three layers that kind of overlap. First off, we've got the main music track, **core music layer**. This covers ticket sales, streaming revenue, sponsorships, and licensing for live shows and recordings. Recent big concerts have shown a lot of money from ticket sales and a big boost to taxes for the city and state. The rapid expansion of the live events industry shows that this foundational layer is growing fast. The **supporting ecosystem layer** is also known as **the second layer**. This includes event management firms, stage and sound contractors, ticketing services, security and crowd control providers, content creation squads, food and merch vendors, and a whole bunch more. Every concert act like a temporary meeting spot that links up a bunch of small and medium-sized businesses, both on the up-and-up and the more casual side.

**Third**, there is **the spillover layer**. Big concerts bring in tourists from both near and far, which changes how people see and use cities. The way people travel increases the need for flights, trains, cabs, hotels, guest rooms, restaurants, and stores. Cities that regularly host big events become known as cultural hotspots, which can affect where people spend their money and how they shape the city. One way to think about these overlapping layers is to imagine concert corridors. These are like networks of cities linked up by the regular movement of touring bands, their fans, and all the services they need. As time goes by, these kinds of pathways can really influence the way we build stuff, where we set up training spots, and where we gather cultural riches—just like how industrial or cargo routes do in other economic areas.

### **Employment, skills, and “backstage precarity”**

The concert economy's job-making possibilities are drawing a lot of focus. Predictions of millions of new, short-term gigs by 2032 highlight the growing significance of this field for young job seekers. These jobs are all over the place, ranging from the ones you see, like artists and hosts, to the behind-the-scenes heroes who make events happen, like sound techs, camera crews, cleaners, and medical pros on the ground. However, from a critical perspective, there is a risk of **“backstage precarity.”**

Many of these roles are short-term, involve long and irregular working hours, may not provide contracts, and often lack social security or clear career paths. Some reports talk about a "gig-to-career" pathway where some temporary workers end up staying on for full-time jobs in audio engineering, event planning, or digital marketing. This suggests that with the right training and rules, concerts can be a way to find more stable work instead of a trap of never-ending short-term jobs. This place is all about building skills. As demand grows in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, there are worries that local workers might miss out if they can't meet technical or safety standards. Training, apprenticeships, and certifications for event work could turn this uncertain job market into a more organized and esteemed career.

### **Digital transformation and bargaining power**

Digital gadgets are totally shaking up the music biz, from how tunes get made to how they're shared and even how they make money. Streaming services and social networks let musicians connect with huge crowds without spending a fortune upfront, and they help create superfan groups that show up at gigs, snag merch, and spread the word about the artists online. Some indie artists can hit it big on platforms like TikTok or Spotify playlists, which can boost their concert ticket sales and open doors for cool brand partnerships.

But digital transformation shifts the balance of power in negotiations. Platforms and their algorithms pick out the tracks to suggest, the clips to show in feeds, and the events to highlight for potential buyers. Artists and smaller promoters may have very little insight into how these systems work or how to influence them, other than by following general guidelines and paying for promotion. This situation makes people depend on platform bosses and big middlemen. A few companies can really make a big difference in which songs and artists get noticed. This is similar to how record labels and radio stations

used to decide who got to hear what, but now it's all about numbers and stats instead of just playlists and shows. Big music companies and online music services usually make the most money by haggling hard on deals and chasing what's hot.

The rules around copyright are not clear, and many musicians, especially in rural areas, don't know their rights or how to register their music (IFPI, 2025). The governments got initiatives to keep cultural tunes alive, but they're kind of missing the mark on tackling the digital eras hurdles or offering a safety net for musicians without a regular gig A possible approach could be to picture a local algorithm charter: a voluntary pledge by platforms operating in India to ensure regional languages, independent labels, and up-and-coming cities get some spotlight This won't wipe out all bias, but it'll make finding stuff online more fair and help link online fame with real-life concert chances better.

### **Regional, linguistic, and urban inequalities**

Economic benefits in the music biz aren't spread out the same everywhere. Big concerts usually happen in a handful of big cities with huge places to play, solid setups, and companies that want to back them up. These cities act as major hubs in the concert corridors we talked about before, whereas smaller towns might only see a handful of big gigs or just be pit stops for fans on the move Language and genre play a big role too English-language plays and popular Hindi-language ones usually get the spotlight in big festivals and global partnerships Local musicians might show up in a bunch of different acts but often get less attention, shorter performances, and not as much money for promotion This doesn't mean local or regional scenes are lacking; in fact, lots of state and city festivals are lively and really connected to the local culture. They might not be hooked up to the same big-time national and worldwide networks that bring in the biggest bucks yet if we don't plan carefully and think ahead, we might end up making the new concert scene actually make things worse between different areas instead of making them more equal.

### **Community music micro-economies**

Beyond big stages and streaming platforms lies a wide landscape of community music micro-economies. Street artists, spiritual singers, wedding bands, school and college events, local cultural shows, and neighbourhood talent competitions. Each of these might involve a bit of cash Together, they support lots of jobs and keep our music heritage going strong. Local economies usually run on trust, traditions, and informal connections instead of formal agreements There pretty sensitive to sudden economic changes, new policies, and trends in what people like Big concerts can have a bunch of effects on local scenes: they could divert some cash from local gigs, but they might also spark fresh local acts and give up-and-coming musicians some inspiration Policy talks about the concert scene often skip over these tiny, local economies Still, they're super important for bringing people together, celebrating different cultures, and just having a good time with tunes Spotting them in cultural policy, handing out little grants, giving some basic training, and making space for them in city planning can help make sure that music-driven growth doesn't overlook its grassroots.

### **Discussion**

The analysis above shows that music in India is a powerful economic force in many areas. Live events, streaming, and tourism bring in money, create jobs, and boost tax revenues. They also change how cities market themselves, how businesses spend their money, and how platforms come up with their services. On a personal level, they shape our jobs, community projects, and who we are. At the same time, there are clear lines of inequality. When it comes to economic and symbolic power, it's all about the big names in the world, the best Indian talent, the biggest promoters, and the digital middlemen. A lot of people who work on the edges of the system take risks but don't get their fair share of the benefits. Where you're from, the language you speak, your social status, and how easy it is for you to get online can all affect who gets to join in and do well. A deep, layered perspective tells us that when it comes to policy and industry, we shouldn't just chase after growth numbers. We need to make sure we're also looking out for fairness, toughness, and a mix of cultures. So, it's not just about figuring out how big the concert scene can get, but also about who gets recognized for their work, whose music gets played, and who gets to call the shots. Music in India is stepping out from the shadows of economic policy discussions and becoming a hot topic in chats about growth, jobs, tourism, and city planning Live gigs, online shows, and the indie world are opening up new doors for musicians, crew, and the biz. But if we don't pay attention to power, inequality, and informal jobs, we might end up with uneven and fragile progress.

### **Conclusion**

Music in India is stepping out from the shadows of economic policy discussions and becoming a hot topic in chats about growth, jobs, tourism, and city planning. Live gigs, online shows, and the indie world are opening up new doors for musicians, crew, and the biz. But if we don't pay attention to power, inequality, and informal jobs, we might end up with uneven and fragile progress. This paper has argued that: Music fuels the economy in multiple ways: it generates direct income, bolsters related industries, and creates widespread effects. A lot of people deal with job instability, but some lucky ones manage to turn gig work into a steady career Digital transformation not only broadens our reach but also boosts the

power of new platforms Regional and linguistic differences determine who gets seen and who reaps the rewards Community music scenes are super important but usually missed.

Based on this, several recommendations emerge: 1. Let's treat music and concerts as crucial parts of our countries and states economic plans, not just for cultural reasons. Let's create some solid guidelines and training sessions for event workers, focusing on safety, fair pay, and helping them grow their careers, particularly in smaller towns. Encourage online platforms to adopt transparency and consider strategies to support multilingual content and independent creators. Give a little boost to local music scenes with some funding, spaces to perform, and recognition for community events, ensuring that small-time music shows get the attention they deserve.

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