



THE EVOLUTION OF MUSIC PIRACY AND TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Piracy has always been a threat to Music Industry and with time and enhancement in technology, it keeps on changing its shape to stay and harm the creativity of Music Industry. Past few decades, technology has changed the way we record and produce music. Piracy occurs in different ways, from copying or downloading copyrighted music illegally to stream ripping to peer 2 peer file sharing. This paper will focus on the changes music Industry have gone through with technology and how Music piracy stayed in the industry and changed its shape.

INTRODUCTION

Over a period of time, Music piracy have just changed its shape with change in technology but it's still out there and affecting Indian Music Industry adversely.

Indian music Industry have also evolved as technology shifted from vinyl to cassettes then to CDs/ DVDs and now to online streaming. With technology the revenue sources for the industry have also changed. Revenues through physical sales have declined intensively over the past decade and have become quite challenging for industry to maintain the revenue profit and to prevent the music piracy in digital era.

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The rapid growth of technologies has transformed the music industry world over from physical to digital. Music is something that is ever expanding and technology has been in the forefront of its progression. It has led to a new age of digitized music, which was almost unimaginable a few centuries ago. The transition from physical storage media to digital formats mostly relied on the internet and of course, the wide adoption of the MP3.

At very beginning of the audio industry, the Gramophones were in fashion and the first record factory came into existence in the year 1907 when the Gramophone and Typewriter Company (Gramco) was established in Calcutta. In the next year the company started a recording studio and a record pressing plant simultaneously with similar factories in U.K. Soon afterwards the Calcutta factories obtained exclusive rights to use in India the trade mark 'His Master's Voice' (HMV). Back in time, HMV brand was the most popular and widely recognised music trade marks in the country.

In 1950 came the revolutionary magnetic tape recorder with a frequency response of 50 to 10,000 cycles per second. This resulted in improved sound quality with minimum losses of raw materials. By the mid-1960's better tape recorder with higher frequency response became available. Subsequently stereophonic recording was also started.

For nearly half a century from its beginning, the Gramophone Company of India, which was better known as HMV- its brand name - enjoyed a virtual monopoly position. In 1969, Polydor of India Ltd. was started as a subsidiary of the European multinational Polygram of West Germany. In the early 1970's the HMV and Polydor ruled the Indian market having a market share of 60:40 respectively. The glory, however, did not last long as by 1980's records started giving way to audio cassettes and the market leaders could not make a quick switch over. Besides this, the entry of Super Cassettes Industries in the mid-eighties with its low-cost, cheap varieties of both pre-recorded and blank tapes made a significant shift in the Indian audio market. The competition started soaring up both in the areas of price and quality.

If 1980's saw change over from record to cassettes, the 1990's witnessed a shift from cassettes to Compact Discs (CD's).

In 1980s and 1990s, Indian Music industry was dominated by largest producers of music cassettes. Later in the 2000s, the industry transitioned to online streaming, bypassing CD and digital downloads.



Then music was produced in the form of Compact Discs (CD's) and DVD but later Music Industry started facing fall in sale of CD's and DVD's due to Physical piracy and Internet Piracy.

Technology also came with many benefits for the music industry, such as improved production, easier promotion, better distribution, accessibility, and the advancement and emergence of new musical genres. However, in the same light, many of these technologies have caused harm financially for the industry.

Music industry was shattered by P2P file sharing sites such as Napster, Lime wire, Kazaa, Torrent and many more. These sites used to provide unauthorised copies of Music in Mp3 format which leads to massive loss to Music Industry. P2P sharing allows files on your PC to be shared with other people using the internet. One could access these files through P2P software that would search for other connected PCs on a P2P network to locate the desired content. The problem was, P2P was majorly being used to share illegal and pirated content including movies, music, video games and whatnot.

However, the arrival of music streaming apps and services have entirely changed the way we consume music today. Local players like Gaana and Saavn (now JioSaavn) took the early advantage in India and started offering Bollywood, regional, and various other music categories under affordable as well as free tiers. However, they only started to gain traction in the market with the introduction of the Jio SIM in 2016 that led to the massive adoption of the internet due to its low data rates. This was soon followed by Google, Apple, Amazon, and Spotify entering the Indian market with premium, yet fairly affordable options compared to the global pricing.

But the music streaming industry in India is still not at its full potential. While there are a few people who are ready to pay for premium services, the majority still prefers free access even if they deal with annoying ads, since it's a really small price to pay. In fact, free access to music is so popular in India, that one of the most popular channels on YouTube is Bollywood music label, T-series. That's not all, Indian Music Industry (IMI) published a report last year suggesting that 67 percent of people in India still listen to pirated music which is way above the global average of 27 percent. A majority of those who are not pirating music, still rely either on the radio or just go to YouTube to listen to songs.

MUSIC PIRACY IN PRE INTERNET-ERA:

As per the study on copyright piracy in India sponsored by ministry of human resource development government of India, in the times of cassettes/CDs, the moment a new music album or a film is released, markets are flooded with its pirated versions. Industry incurs

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huge losses as major chunk of revenue is grabbed by piracy. In those days, broadly speaking, entire audio and video industry was worth around 2,500 crore and around 70 to 80 per cent of the revenue used to go to piracy.

With the advent of CDs in the eighties it was thought that piracy of sound recordings would become things of the past. But in reality, CD piracy was the greatest threat to music world. CD market was just 2 to 3 percent of the overall music market in the country. CDs was not taken off mainly because of high prices. In India CDs were sold on an average price ranging between Rs.150 to Rs.550. Considering price of cassettes, the price differential (between cassettes and CDs) is quite high and prohibitive for ordinary music lovers.

Earlier Music industry used to face three types of piracy. First, in which songs from different legitimate cassettes/CDs (and thus different rightholders) are copied and put in a single cassette/CD. These are then packaged to look different from the original products and sold in the market. Second, counterfeiting, when songs are copied in to and packaged to look as close to the original as possible using the same label, logos etc. These products are misleading in the sense that ordinary end users think that they are buying original products. The third form of music piracy is bootlegging, where unauthorised recordings of performance by artists are made and subsequently reproduced and sold in the market. All these happen without the knowledge of the performers, composer or the recording company.

MUSIC PIRACY IN INTERNET TIMES:

From the time recorded music has stepped into the digital era, it brought lot of opportunities for Music industry to promote and distribute their musical work in every corner of the world with minimal expenditure that was impossible before the Internet times.

With the rise of accessible internet and the invention of smartphones, a new concept of listening to music came to popularity: streaming. Streaming music was developed with the aim to listen to and discover new music without having the need to actually download or purchase songs. In addition, streaming made it possible to access music in the palm of our hands with smartphones.

Continued progress of technology has not only been beneficial for Music Industry but it is beneficial for consumers or music lovers also as they can access their favourite music whenever and wherever they want.

However, with benefits, digitalisation has brought challenges for Music Industry also as it became difficult to restrict online fraudsters from peer-to-peer file sharing. One major negative that has risen due to technological advancements is piracy. Due to music being

digitized, it could now be read, copied, and transferred between any two computers. Although it made music very accessible, it has also been financially disastrous to artists and producers.

In fact, the rate of music piracy in India remains higher than the global average (30%) at 68%, according to a report by the Indian Music Industry (IMI) which counts some of the biggest music labels in the country as its members. The report detailed trends being witnessed in the Indian digital music landscape in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. (As per the Medianama article by Mitaksh, Published March 5, 2022)

Nowadays a music pirate relies on illegal stream-ripping websites like Y2Mate and SaveFrom; they also use YouTube, free audio streaming websites, and short-form video apps to listen to music for free. Pirates also use mobile apps like SnapTube apart from cyberlockers and BitTorrent, as per the IMI report.

Basically, Stream Ripping is the illicit practice mechanism where streaming file accessible on the internet is converted into a downloadable file with plenty of alternatives wherein software tools, special websites, browser plugins in which the prepotent are, convert2mp3.com, YouTube Downloader and Tubemate (apps), where audio-visual content is accumulated.

As per the IFPI, 'Digital Music Study 2019' report, pirate services operate as an alternative for the off-screen consumption in which India comes at 2nd country in terms of the piracy rates, where 67% respondents use stream-ripping to obtain free downloads of music that is more than the global average so far. Conversely, the escalation of smartphones and Internet with reduced data costs is an auxiliary factor in the worldwide growth of digital audio streaming, where India subsists at the highest rate (about 97%). Nevertheless, 76% of music content is obtained through pirated means often.

Indian Music Industry (IMI) spotted with 50-60% revenue loss as approximately \$250 million because of Stream Ripping services or P2P (file sharing) precisely. In the consequence, the career of the new artists is thereby threatened simultaneously with the established artist, since IMI is already suffering from lesser revenue which reflects that IMI would not sign the new artists.

CONCLUSION:

The way in which music has been distributed has transitioned over time from vinyl to cassettes to CDs and currently, digital. Clearly, the method by which music is produced and consumed now a days has changed.

The rise of digital music brought about a new form of music piracy which the industry had to tackle. Looking at the history of technology and current data in this field, it is clear that

technology does not wait for the industry to catch up and music streaming will continue to grow in popularity and as a result the industry must adapt to the ever-changing trends in order to maintain a level of growth.

It is the job of the industry to catch up with technology and utilize it to make it as beneficial for all parties involved in the industry such as the consumers, artists, producers, and record labels.

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