ISSN (O): 2320-5407
ISSN (P): 3107-4928

Journal Homepage: - www.journalijar.com

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/23061
DOI URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/23061

CONFERENCE PAPER

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF MUSIC FESTIVALS AND EVENTS IN INDIA: EVENT CULTURE THEN AND NOW

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History
Received: 04 January 2026
Final Accepted: 08 February 2026
Published: March 2026

Abstract

How Music made its way into the hearts of commoners The Musicians in the olden times were strict, rigid and protective about their knowledge and the recipients. They used to follow their forefathers perception. Especially during the 15th Century, India was invaded, looted and most temples destroyed. Important scriptures and texts were erased and burnt. People were fearful due to this plunder and were just trying to keep themselves andtheir culture safe. Theirart form of music and its divine knowledge shielded from the marauders so that they do not lose their sense of self. They wanted to feel special of their descent and so wanted to hold onto that artistic medium very close to their heart and give only to those who, they thought deserved andhad honest intentions to learn music. Musical Genealogy was defended.That's where the gharana system sprouted, understanding that if we keep music in our family, it will be safe and ours forever. They did not accept other disciples from different origin to make sure their family name stays highlighted forever in history. Slowlyas families and next generation interests changed and the fear of losing the art loomed over them. Then and only then they started accepting students from other strata of society.

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Introduction:-

"Gharana"word comes from the Hindi word "Ghar", which means home or house. In Hindustani music (North Indian classical music), a gharānā is a system of social organization in the Indian subcontinent, linking musicians or dancers by lineage or apprenticeship, and more importantly by adherence to a particular musical style1. Each gharana is named after the place of origin of these particular musical principles which describe a style of music and dance. All the gharanas were initiated by a Guru (master) who once was a student which learnt music in a system by their ancestor or teacher. Each Gharana initiated small gatherings where the students performed within their gharanas and between two different gharanas. This gave students a platform to better their musical skill and competitive spirit.

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Changing times saw the downfall of Gharanas as it was inaccessible to a larger audience and students yearning to learn music in depth. Those days gurus were really tough with their shishyas. They were very choosy and critical of it. After selecting the rarest and the best shishya to carry forward the legacy. The shishyastill had to work really hard, tirelessly and with no expectation of appreciation from their guru's scrutiny. Today's Gen Z would have walked out of the first teaching class of this kind of music. The student had to just keep doing the best they could. Very rarely women were thought to be the flag bearers of this art as they knew that they will go into another family after marriage and their art will be lost or may be dismantled in a way the gharana guru might not approve of. That's where the concept of kuldeepak comes, only and only a boy can bring wealth, success, adulation, respect, acceptance to the family.Steadily students who were truly dedicated and passionate about music came to be accepted as true descendants of the gharanas thereby keeping it safe and passing on to the next generation carefully and with the same rules of their gurus. Still a need for integrating music in schools for easy access to all was blooming. Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande with the patronage of Maharaja of Baroda organized the first All India Music Conference in 1916 which was a great success2.It was a pivotal moment for organizing the fragmented traditions of classical music, leading to the establishment of music schools and a formal, non-oral, musical education system.

The Government of Bharat and Akashvani /All India Radio systematically propagated Indian Classical Music on a national scale in the early 1950s. They started with National Program of Music, Akashvani Sangeet Sammelan, and Scholarship to budding artists, honoring four artists every year by President of Bharat, organizing Music Concerts and Supporting Artists in many ways. These actions paved way towards popularizing classical music amongst the citizens of Bharat. Around the same time the Indian Film industry was also in its inception stage. The first silent movie released in 1913 and the first movie with dialogues and songs released in 1935. Bharat's first commercial music recording happened in 1902 by Gauhar Jaan in Kolkata. It's true that music is one of the most popular forms of entertainment for Public. As everyone has experienced music as an integral part of all auspicious occasions in Bharat. Many institutions also organized musical programs in many places of Bharatlike Varanasi, Allahabad, Kolkata, and Bombay every year.Mehfils and Baithaks became a mini version of music festivals. This way of experiencing music took their sweet time to pick up pace to the changing trends. Ancient texts in Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita talk about music as a treatment methodology. Music has been impacting the human brain since Vedic times but most people did not realize truthfully the impact of music until it was backed up by science and data. Music Therapy came up as a scientific method for the effective treatment of diseases. Through it, our emotional, physical and mental health is not only restored but also maintained3.This was truthfully experienced by masses in not therapy sessions but music Festivals and events.

The researched healing power of music slowly seeped into grass root level of public. People at large could also realize this by being conscious of its effects and wanted to experience this more and more. Music was being used widely to help people to sleep better, perform tasks better, all kinds of music supported different activities of an individual. For example: fast paced music helps a person exercise better and relax or slow paced music aids to unwind, lo-fi music assists in focus and productivity etc. Music is opening doors to everyone irrespective of age, color, religious outlook, cultural orientation. The paying capacity of an individual was also better comparatively which was used by investing in different experiences. Especially during a concert or music festival- classical music was also being appreciated by many with the pleasing nuances of folk and light music. Many classical artists came out of their old mindset and experienced the love for music at a massive level which was uncommon. Music festivals started happening in not just metropolitan cities but 2-3 tier cities too like Udaipur music Festival,Lollapalooza, Sun Burn Festival, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi Samroh, Kumbha Sangeet Samaroh and Smritiyaan Concert in memory of Pandit Chatur Lal. In these events a lay man just needs to be present to the music experience rather having technical knowledge. Theyare required to attune their bodies while experiencing this magic of music happening live. Modern set up in music festivals offers audience to experience a wide array of music from Turkish to western to Sufi to devotional to classical to light. This way the audience can choose aniche music or go for everything supported with improved technology and music systems, recordings, light work, stage setup, giving a buffet of sensational escapade.

What is a music festival?:-Economically speaking inmehfils or baithaks, the artist were getting patronage from the king and they used to amuse and entertain the king with their songs and raags. The king in turn used to take care of the artist and their families' food and shelter. Slowly when the king's courts were no longer functioning due to British rule or king's declining finance could not provide for the artist, the artists were subjected to make both ends meet. Those days money given to artist was meagre and they performed only for the king and his court. King's abandonment from the support made them rigid towards opening their heart for commoners. Then they became

stricter with Gharana System. They taught music in their own family and gave limited performances on stage, fearing that listeners will copy their style thereby leading hand to mouth life. The increased liking in the west towards classical music was earned rightfully by Pandit Ravi Shankar being a milestone in boosting the classical concerts in the world. The sustained efforts of music had led us to this era of music festivals and events. A music festival is a curated, recurring, often multi-day event featuring live performances by multiple artists, typically held outdoors and focused on specific genres, cultures, or themes. They serve as social, communal gatherings for large audiences, often incorporating food, art, and camping, acting as significant cultural or economic drivers[4].I feel music festivals can be understood as large therapy sessions for everyone,relieving stress of life and their by experiencing happy hormones, SEROTONIN and decreasing cortisol levels at a massive level. Thesephysical occurrences, shape the perspective of human beings and attract them towards these types of events and music festivals. Sitarist Rishabh Rikhi Ram is an apt example of the above. He started performing in India in the year 2024, where his tickets prices were reasonable and he was also understanding the pulse of the audiences in India. He got welcoming response and so he again performed in 2025 with a higher ticketing range, gradually he is increasing his ticket pricing. Attending music festivals has become a trending thing these days. A music festival is not just to quench the listener's thirst with great music but also roping in the hospitality, transport, food, employment, printing, security, electronic, tourism and many more industries giving a Win-Win situation for town's publicity. Music festivals and events were happening only in metro cities till 2012 but in last 6 yrs. due to widespread demand in smaller towns it has reached to 2-3 tier cities too. This gives opportunities to many, thereby turning out to be a profitable business too. Hence the boost. We recently experienced Udaipur Music Festival 6th to 8th February 2026.Here audience experienced a very wide range of artists from all over the world and their flavor of music. People from all walks of life felt good, enjoy music of all genres and experience all the above in an organized way with safety.

The Economic Data:-We know a simple concept in economics about demand and supply. If demand of a product/service increases then automatically it creates an increase on the supply of the same. Music Festivals and Events are a very wide umbrella to talk about. In Music Festivals and Events comes categories of classical, light, western, pop, indie, Indian and the list can go on. But as our topic foretells that we are talking about India in particular so Indians generally love Bollywood, Indie, mix, regional and EDM (Electronic Dance Music). Music festivals and events have become an organized sector giving a substantial kick to the GDP of India. Given are the reports from various government and private sources, providing data about the economic impact of Music Festivals and Events in Bharat. The Media & Entertainment industry Sector Size of India grew to ₹2.5 trillion in 2024[5], with live events contributing significantly to experientialrevenue streams.Industry surveys show that over 70% of Gen Z and millennials in Tier 1 cities attended at least one ticketed live event in the past year[6]. The defining cultural moment of 2025 was the return of Coldplay to India—not as a novelty, but as a global act investing in India as a full-fledged tour destination. The band performed two sold-out shows in Ahmedabad and Mumbai, with over 222,000 attendees in Ahmedabad alone[1], supported by elaborate stage builds, immersive lighting systems, and sustainability messaging] tailored to Indian fans. The Mumbai concert, held at DY Patil Stadium, was widely reported as one of the best-attended and most seamless concerts in Asia that year[7]. Talking about are Indian Stars taking Domestic tours like Diljit Dosanjh, A.R. Rahman, Arijit Singh have achieved incredible love from their fans. Live events trigger significant economic ripple effects in travel, hospitality, F&B, logistics, and merchandise sectors. Industry estimates suggest that for every ₹1,000 spent on a concert ticket, an additional ₹1,500–₹2,000 is spent across secondary sectors[8].

Ancillary Sector	Event-Driven Activity
Travel & Transport	Surge pricing on airlines and railways; spike in cab and chartered bus services,
Hospitality	70–100% occupancy at hotels; event-linked package deals
F&B	25–40% revenue increase for restaurants and bars
Retail &Merch	Sales of merchandise, pop-ups, local brand tie-ups
Logistics & Infra	Temporary power, barricading, security deployment

Case Study Selection For this research, we selected the "Deccan Festival" as our primary case study. This annual event, held in Hyderabad, Telangana, has been running for several decades and attracts approximately 100,000 attendees over five days. While not exclusively a music festival, it prominently features music and dance performances alongside other cultural activities. The Deccan Festival was chosen due to its established nature,

significant size, and its importance as a cultural and economic event in the region. The Deccan festival, Hyderabad generated Rs.50 crore (approximately $6.7 million USD) in overall revenue, including ticket sales, sponsorships, and on-site vendor sales.The total economic impact, including indirect and induced effects, is estimated at Rs.190 crore9. The seasonal capitalism of events supports job creation, regional economic development and other benefits explained in the table below10 for the City or region. Now earning is not limited to a 9-5 job or stereotypical jobs but a wide arena of job profiles which was unfathomable by our parents. Thereby giving a boost to the music economy. When a music festival or event doesn't materialize due to sudden weather disturbance or other factors it's a hit to the economic growth of that city. Bonnaroo's absence made visible what its presence often obscures: modern music festivals are not just cultural events, but temporary economic systems whose impact extends far beyond the festival gates11. By 2030, India can firmly establish itself among the world's top five live entertainment

Markets—joining the ranks of the USA, UK, South Korea, and UAE. To achieve this vision, key Strategic priorities must be pursued:

- Build 25–30 world-class, tech-ready venues across metro and Tier 2 cities.
- Implement a nationwide single-window digital licensing system.
- Develop a national skilling and safety certification programme for event operations.
- Promote regional touring circuits and creative districts.
- Launch a centralized music licensing portal ensuring transparency and compliance.
- Fund and promote homegrown IPs and regional artists on domestic and international Stages.

India possesses the talent, audience demand, and digital ecosystem. A shared commitment to Institution-building, creative investment, and infrastructure expansion will catalyze a global Leadership position12. Music festivals have long been celebrated as vibrant cultural phenomena, bringing together artists and audiences in shared experiences of creativity and community. However, beyond their artistic and social significance, these events play a crucial role in local and regional economies.

Summary:-

The Economic Impact has become noticeable in the last ten years because:-

1. Music is a language which appeals everyone in the world.
2. Music is therapeutic is proved by various scientific studies so its more acceptable in general like a form of entertainment and feel good factor.
3. Music influences people.
4. The gate keeping of media and entertainment industry is loosening up due to temporary employment opportunities.
5. Other industries as mentioned earlier in the paper are also roping in for collaborative outcomes.
6. Local and Regional economic boost.
7. Shared Experiences by artists and audiences in a community.
8. More individual income, digital access and youth dominated audience leaning towards economic growth through events and music events.

India is a developing economy. Changing times have led Bharat to understand a new passage of economic growth through music. It's ready to invest more to make it worthwhile/substantial.

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