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The Effects Of Piracy On The Music Industry In India

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Abstract

This research paper examines the impact of music piracy on the Indian music industry. It investigates the economic, legal, and cultural implications of piracy and explores strategies adopted by stakeholders to combat it. By analyzing secondary data, existing literature, and industry reports, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how piracy affects revenue streams, artist livelihoods, and the growth of digital platforms in India.

Keywords:

Music piracy, Indian music industry, Digital piracy, Copyright law in India, Illegal downloads, Streaming platforms, Intellectual property rights, Artist revenue, Music consumption behavior, Anti-piracy strategies

1. Introduction

The Indian music industry, with its vast linguistic and cultural diversity, is one of the most dynamic in the world. However, it faces a persistent challenge: piracy. Despite the rise of legal streaming platforms, music piracy—via downloads, torrents, and unauthorized streaming—remains widespread. This research seeks to understand how piracy continues to influence the Indian music sector in terms of revenue loss, artist recognition, and industry innovation.

2. Literature Review

Several studies have highlighted the global impact of music piracy:

According to the IFPI Global Music Report, India is among the top countries affected by digital piracy.

A study by Deloitte (2019) noted that the Indian music industry loses approximately ₹1,200 crores annually due to piracy.

NASSCOM reports suggest that low awareness of intellectual property rights and easy internet access fuel piracy in India.

Indian researchers such as Ravi Srinivas (2016) have pointed out that piracy not only affects revenues but also discourages new talent from entering the market due to lack of fair compensation.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research design, using secondary data sources such as:

Industry reports (IFPI, FICCI, KPMG)

Academic journals

News articles

Government and NGO publications

3.2 Data Collection

Data was collected from:

Online databases (JSTOR, Google Scholar)

Industry publications from 2015 to 2024

Interviews and case studies referenced in reports

4. Findings

4.1 Economic Impact

Loss of over ₹1,200 crores annually due to piracy.

Music labels, independent artists, and producers report declining profits.

Piracy reduces the incentive for investment in quality production and innovation.

4.2 Artist Livelihoods

Independent and regional artists suffer disproportionately.

Lack of royalties due to illegal downloads discourages new artists.

Streaming platforms often offer minimal per-stream income, worsened by piracy.

4.3 Legal and Policy Framework

India has IP laws (Copyright Act, 1957) and cyber laws, but enforcement is weak.

Slow judicial processes and limited digital forensics reduce deterrence.

Government campaigns like "Digital India" have limited effectiveness without awareness programs.

4.4 Consumer Behavior

A major cause of piracy is the public perception that digital content should be free.

Many users lack awareness of legal platforms or choose pirated content to avoid subscription costs.

5. Analysis and Discussion

Piracy in India is deeply intertwined with socio-economic factors such as affordability, internet accessibility, and digital literacy. While platforms like Spotify, JioSaavn, and Gaana have increased access to legal music, many users still prefer free pirated versions due to cost considerations.

The growth of mobile internet and low data prices have helped legal streaming services, but monetization remains low. Unlike Western markets where subscription is the norm, Indian users often resist paid content. This behavior, along with poor copyright enforcement, creates a culture where piracy is normalized.

Furthermore, artists in regional languages face significant challenges in earning fair compensation, as their music is frequently pirated without recognition or revenue sharing.

6. Conclusion

Piracy continues to pose a significant challenge to the Indian music industry. Despite legal platforms becoming more accessible, piracy erodes revenue, limits innovation, and harms artist livelihoods. To address this, a multi-pronged approach is required:

Strengthening IP law enforcement

Launching public awareness campaigns

Promoting affordable legal alternatives

Supporting regional and independent artists with transparent royalty systems

7. Recommendations

Education Campaigns: Promote awareness about the impact of piracy and benefits of legal streaming.

Better Enforcement: Train law enforcement agencies in digital piracy investigations.

Artist Support Programs: Government or NGO-led initiatives to support young and independent musicians.

Technology Solutions: Use blockchain or watermarking to track and secure digital music.

8. References

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