

Observing the influence of music in Pakistani Politics

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, a series of protest movements have occurred mostly in the capital city Islamabad in response to the actions of sitting governments of their times. The movements of capturing the capital started from 2014 and are still happening today. These are due to various reasons including inflation, poverty, rise in prices of fuel and food items etc. The movements contain a large number of young protestors as youth comprises most of the population of Pakistan. In order to mobilize them and keep them entertained, different political anthems are played.” This strategy was once used by the modern political parties to mobilize their followers but with the passage of time, the opponent parties also noticed the impact of music in attracting people and they also started making their own party anthems. Religious parties which considered Music haram since they were founded also have songs on their leaders these days. Music is such a powerful tool that made such parties change their agendas. This paper seeks to understand how music has been employed in protest environments. We will draw upon historic and recent examples to demonstrate how music became a strategy to attract masses especially youth with the passage of time as music is one of the best tools for delivering messages and brainwashing masses. This paper seeks to understand how music articulates messages of protest through the use of semiotics and how music has been employed in protest environments. The paper ends with a brief discussion with concluding remarks.

Keywords: Music, Sentiments, Youth, Protest, Music and Politics

INTRODUCTION

A. Summary of Research Purpose:

Music as a tool of brainwashing minds has been used since ages to design campaigns, bring revolutions and deliver messages. It articulates messages through the use of indirect message conveying technique i.e. semiotics to influence the minds of people. As Pakistan has a total population of 235,824,862 in 2022, 63 percent of it comprises of youth. In other words, youth here is in the majority and one has to convince the youth here in order to be successful here especially in politics. Pakistanis are music lovers and have various

recognized music artists all around the world. There are various cultures and people belonging to different religions as well. All have their own types of music in their native languages for example Balochis, Sindhis, Punjabis, Pashtuns and Gilgitis etc. All the campaign designed these days by the political parties of Pakistan somehow contain music to influence the minds of people. Wherever the party leaders move for addressing public, music regarding them in the areas native language has been played for the people to connect more easily with them.

B. Background of Research:

Pakistan has seen lots of protests including sit-ins and marches towards Capital Islamabad, every time, the agendas were different and the reasons were also different. Now, the country is still in a state of political unrest and music is proving to be very impactful in mobilizing and influencing people especially youth. Detailed research on this can be really helpful in countering agendas as well as designing campaigns according to what people of Pakistan want to see. The use of Music in bringing revolutions like the Arab Spring in the Middle East has been documented in a number of researches conducted in the past. No doubt, social media is considered to be the main reason behind such revolutions, many researchers have proved that music also played a great role in uniting people as through music, it is easier to convey emotions and sentiments.

C. Research Question:

Q How music has been employed in Pakistan’s protest environments and its power in influencing youth’s minds? (Bryman, They should be researchable—that is, they should allow you to research in relation to them, 2012)

1. How this research can help to resolve or better understand the issues I have raised in my research questions?

The research will provide a clear data about the reasons why specific music is being attracted to the youth of Pakistan as the data collected will be from the youth. It will include all the reasons behind liking that music and all the scenarios that led them follow a specific political party or leader. Similarly, it will also highlight the strategies used by the discussed political parties in catching youth sentiments and formulating campaigns according to what youth wants to see. It has been proven in the past in various researches conducted over time in specific countries where revolutions happened that after social media, there was a role of Music as well in bringing revolutions because people were able to convey what they felt at those times through various musical compositions and lyrics.

2. Significance / Importance of research:

This research is the need of the hour right now as it will be helpful and beneficial for advertisers who design political campaigns on what type of musical content youth of Pakistan wants to see. This can also help organizations which promote Nationalism to influence the minds of people and bring them together for the betterment of the country. The technique of using Music is effective in political campaigns. Religious parties using Music which was once considered unethical and haram by them is a clear evidence to this statement that how influencing music is here in our country.

All the researches carried out in the past were related to specific regions of the world where there was a role of music in bringing revolutions. In Pakistan, the trend of applying music in political environments came very late as compared to the rest of the world and the situation building up here is similar to the situations that were before revolutions took place all around the world. So, a specific research related to political influence of music on youth in Pakistan at present is very important.

2- LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been various researches conducted in the past on similar topics with researchers having different approaches and methods of data collection and analysis. One more common thing in these researches is that most of them are focused on revolutions brought with the help of music. All these researches are based on the roles of music in influencing public but are mostly region based. Some have researched on political music in protest environments (“*Politics can be strengthened by music, but music has a potency that defies politics.*” (Mandela, 1995), some have researched different genres of music and their effects on people ; some have discussed protest music’s relevance with the culture of youth, a book discussed this topic in depth by taking Turkish Rap music content and its effects on youth (Dr. Canay Umuñ, Oct 2020), similar articles on songs made by youth during crisis scenarios (Paula Guerra, 2020) (SHEPLER, 2010), some have drawn attention towards the use of semiotics in music (Erik D. Gooding, 2021), some have proven connection of music with revolutions (for example, according to the following author:

the involvement of music in movements related to wars show interesting progression i.e. it took no time for music to move from giving messages of peace to becoming patriotic songs of wars (Ramsey, 2019) (Quan Huiqi, June 7, 2022) (Martiniello, 2018) , some have drawn comparison between past and present social movements and role of music in them (Eyerman, 2002), some have conducted case studies on political music content on social media (Dr. Canay Umunç, Oct 2020) and others have conducted researches on youth's music preferences and their relation to civic activism in which they collected data from focus groups (Ambrose Leung, 2008). Following is the research conducted during the time of Syrian Revolution by Sadam Issa which is a case study on four revolutionary songs by Ibrahim Qashoush, their influence on public and role in the regime change of Syria. (Issa, 2016). As this is a wide topic, various methods of data analysis and collection have been used by different researchers according to the types of researches performed by them. To my knowledge, most of the researches conducted in the past on this topic are qualitative in nature.

3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As a keen observer of Pakistani politics which is a matter of concern these days and having a background related to music, the development of idea of researching this topic of political influence of music on youth and how it is being used as a tool for mobilizing people was an easy decision to make. These sorts of researches have been conducted in the past by the researchers of various countries regarding revolutions happened as a result of music but a proper research with authentic and qualitative data having all sorts of angles with opinions from various individuals mostly youth has not yet happened in Pakistan to

justify the reasons of effectiveness of music in protest environments. All the reasons are present right now in Pakistan which brought revolutions in the past in various countries. Some of the main reasons include poverty, corruption, crimes, lack of law and order, inflation, no freedom of expression and doomed economic situation of the country. So this is the main time when steps need to be taken to overcome this crisis situation and stop the people from taking law in their own hands as their sentiments suggest that they no longer believe in the system imposed on them. Through this research, members of the youth were invited to answer specific questions through online survey questionnaire. The age range of the participants of survey was 18-35. They were asked to read the instructions carefully and select the appropriate answers of the given questions. The researcher was available for answering any query or questions of the people who filled the survey questionnaire.

3.1 Data Collection Method:

- The research will be conducted in the **Qualitative Method**. The data has been gathered through **online survey/ questionnaire** as **surveys** are structured interviews without an interviewer
- The research design is **Cross Sectional**. (Bryman, The cross-sectional design is often called a survey design, 2012)
- The data collection could have been done **through Focus Group Discussions** but due to the shortage of time, it was not possible for me to gather people and a trained instructor
- This was done by creating survey consisting of **10 Questions** with different options to be selected as Answer

- The audience was **ensured** that the data they will provide will not be misused before conducting Survey
- The Age Range of the people who filled the questionnaire was **18-35** years
- The data was then compiled in the form of data sets in Microsoft Excel.

3.1.1 Ethical Consideration

The study will be conducted under the supervision of the thesis supervisor. A consent form will be provided as to obtain consent for participation in the study. It will be guaranteed that participants have the independence to leave the study on any time. Confidentiality of the data provided by the participants will be ensured.

4. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

The method of data analysis which I consider appropriate according to my research which is based on questionnaire (survey) is the **Cross Tabulation Analysis** (Bryman, Getting started in SPSS, 2012). As cross tabulation is the most widely used data analysis method for survey data to organize it in the form rows and columns and derive percentages and simplified, easily understandable data. This has been done through the IBM's SPSS software that is recognized all over the world for its authenticity. (Bryman, SPSS for Windows, which is possibly the most widely used computer software for the analysis, 2012)

4.1. Limitations of research

The only limitation of this research according to me is that it might look one sided and its conclusions and results might make audience think that it favors a certain agenda of a

specific group of people. As the public sentiments all over the country are in favor of a specific political party and it has effectively cashed in the situation, so the opinions of most of the members of youth were favouring the party. Their likings of the political music were also due to the influence and strong character of the party leader who most of them idealize as he will bring about change in the country. The research conducted is solely based on data collected from survey. The songs of resistance at this time of political and economic instability are attracted to youth and they have various valid reasons of liking them as well.

5. RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTED

The data was collected as a result of survey/questionnaires involving members of youth and analyzed through cross tabulation analysis show the following expected results:

1. Members of the youth idealize a specific party or leader and like everything related to the party or individual.
2. The reason for liking protest songs is because the youth is tired of watching their country destroyed by similar people again and again.
3. Good initiatives taken by the leader in helping people are one of the main reasons of youth following him.
4. As there is poverty and lack of jobs has created depression in the youth's minds and they are looking for a leader who could bring change.
5. The mantra of changing Pakistan is attracting youth.
6. Protest songs and poetry is the easiest way to convey sentiments and emotions.
7. No freedom of expression is making youth rebellious like unguided missiles.

8. The government is not focused on the musical content created against it. Not knowing that most of the revolution that took place in the world had music one of the main reasons behind.
9. With social media, it is easier to mobilize public by showing them content related to their likings. Songs related to the party leaders are one of the examples.
10. There is easy access to social media and its time consumption is increasing as there are fewer individuals from youth who have jobs, they watch politics which is the talk of town these days.
11. Lack of education is one of the reasons why youth unknowingly is becoming a part of various agendas.
12. Depression, anxiety and trauma due to the situation of country is seen everywhere. In this way, anyone who provides hope for betterment is being followed by the youth.
13. The use of revolutionary poetry containing hope and old and new songs based on such poetry attract youth.
14. The political parties watching the crisis and deprivations of people, creating content especially songs to attract them.
15. The political music generating sentiments of resistance in youth.
16. The people are not willing to bow down in front of any individual or country.
17. The agenda taken forward by a specific political party is very eye-catching and powerful.
18. The youth has anger and has sentiments of taking revenge from those who destroyed their country.
19. There is a small portion of youth which has a neutral point of view and is not interested in favouring any side.

20. There are members of youth who also consider the current political hype an agenda against establishment but it has been seen that the reasons they provide are not concrete.

21. Steps need to be taken in order to control the anger and sentiments of people because further delay might cause chaos which will be unbearable.

Below is the data collected from survey responses and analyzed in the form of tables in SPSS.

Gender * Education Crosstabulation

Count

		Education			Total
		Graduate	Other	Undergraduate	
Gender	Female	7	0	2	9
	Male	14	3	4	21
Total		21	3	6	30

The above table shows that 30 people participated in filling survey. 21 were graduates, 6 were undergraduates.

Gender * Effect (Political Crisis) Crosstabulation

Count

		Effect (Political Crisis)		Total
		No	Yes	
Gender	Female	0	9	9
	Male	5	16	21
Total		5	25	30

- The above table shows that out of 30 people. 16 males and 9 females got affected by ongoing political crisis.

**Gender * Music Effectiveness
 Crosstabulation**

Count

		Music Effectiveness		Total
		No	Yes	
Gender	Female	1	8	9
	Male	6	15	21
Total		7	23	30

- Out of 30 people, 23 people believe that political music is effective in attracting people

**Gender * Revolutionary Music Affects?
 Crosstabulation**

Count

		Revolutionary Music Affects?		Total
		No	Yes	
Gender	Female	1	8	9
	Male	5	16	21
Total		6	24	30

- 24 of 30 people believe that revolutionary music is effective in attracting people.

**Gender * Political Song a brainwashing tool?
 Crosstabulation**

Count

		Political Song a brainwashing tool?		Total
		No	Yes	
Gender	Female	0	9	9
	Male	9	12	21
Total		9	21	30

- Political songs used as a brainwashing tool for youth is considered to be true by 21 people.

**Gender * Political Crisis an agenda?
 Crosstabulation**

Count

		Political Crisis an agenda?		Total
		No	Yes	

Gender	Female	0	9	9
	Male	5	16	21
Total		5	25	30

- The current political crisis is considered to be a part of an agenda by 25 out of 30 people.

**Gender * Music used by Religious Parties
 Crosstabulation**

Count

		Music used by Religious Parties		Total
		Ethical	Unethical	
Gender	Female	1	8	9
	Male	7	14	21
Total		8	22	30

- Musical Campaigns used by religious parties is considered to be unethical by 22 out of 30 people.

**Gender * Is youth well informed/misguided?
 Crosstabulation**

Count

		Is youth well informed/misguided?		Total
		Misguided	Well Informed	
Gender	Female	3	6	9
	Male	14	7	21
Total		17	13	30

- 17 out of 30 people believe that our youth is being misguided right now and 13 believe that it is well informed of the current political situation of the Country.

Age

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	17	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	18	1	3.3	3.3	6.7
	21	2	6.7	6.7	13.3
	22	4	13.3	13.3	26.7
	23	4	13.3	13.3	40.0
	24	3	10.0	10.0	50.0
	25	2	6.7	6.7	56.7
	26	1	3.3	3.3	60.0
	27	3	10.0	10.0	70.0
	28	3	10.0	10.0	80.0
	29	1	3.3	3.3	83.3
	30	1	3.3	3.3	86.7
	32	1	3.3	3.3	90.0
	33	1	3.3	3.3	93.3
	34	1	3.3	3.3	96.7
	36	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total		30	100.0	100.0	

- The table above shows the age range of 30 participants of survey.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Graduate	21	70.0	70.0	70.0
	Other	3	10.0	10.0	80.0
	Undergraduate	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

- The table above shows the level of education of survey participants

5.1 Conclusions:

- There is a great amount of influence of political content including music on the youth as it describes their emotions and sentiments.

- The liking of certain music video related to politics is due to the revolutionary poetry it contains, talks about current country's issues it contains and its connection with the political leader they follow.
- Lack of trust in the government and other law enforcing institutes is at its peak and youth is in a state of confusion and anger. This is the reason of them liking political music.
- Government and other institutes are busy in stopping youth from basic right of freedom of expression which can never be stopped by force.
- The aggression of government is increasing the aggression in youth as well.
- In case of poverty, inflation and various other issues, youth is keeping itself busy on social media because it has nothing else to do e.g. jobs etc.
- In this scenario, youth is finding a trustworthy leadership to get rid of all those who have been involved in destroying the country since decades. Someone having no past record of corruption looks a suitable option to them for this as they have no other option.
- This Pakistani youth understands politics a lot and is no more uninterested in whatever happens to the country through politics.
- Music has been a major part of world's biggest revolutions. It is become a part of Pakistani politics very late but it has public sentiments attached to it which is showing its power.
- Necessary steps should be taken by the government to handle the youth which is in majority and the steps must be non-violent as violence is not a solution to any problems.
- Campaigns should be designed by Nationalistic organizations which should highlight the positive things happening in the country as well.

- More career opportunities should be provided to the youth so that its energies could be used in a positive manner which will be beneficial for the country as well.
- Steps in favor of what public is demanding should be taken as the final authority in any country is its public who is being ignored and this may prove fatal later if situation does not get better.

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