

# **Indian Diaspora, Music and Identity: Continuities and Changes in the Indo-Caribbean music.**

*A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Hyderabad in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of Degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**In**

**Indian Diaspora**

**By**

**Shazia Khan**



**Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora**

**School of Social Sciences**

**University of Hyderabad**

(P.O.) Central University,

Gachibowli, Hyderabad –

500046

Telangana

India

**December 2022**



## DECLARATION

**Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora  
University of Hyderabad**

I, Shazia Khan, hereby declare that this thesis entitled “Indian Diaspora, Music and Identity: Continuities and Changes in the Indo-Caribbean music” is carried out under the guidance and supervision of Professor Ajaya Kumar Sahoo, Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora, University of Hyderabad, for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Indian diaspora, is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Place: Hyderabad

Date :23/12/2022

Shazia Khan

Regd.No. 16SIPD04



## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "**Indian Diaspora, Music and Identity: Continuities and Changes in the Indo-Caribbean music**" submitted by **Shazia Khan**, bearing Registration Number **16SIPD04** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of Doctor of Philosophy in the **Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora, School of Social Sciences** is a bonafide work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

**This thesis is free from Plagiarism and has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other University or Institution for award of any degree or diploma.**

A. Further, the student has the following publication(s) before submission of the thesis/monograph for adjudication and has produced evidence for the same in the form of acceptance letter or the reprint in the relevant area of his research:

1. Khan, Shazia. "In search of roots: Indian music in the Diaspora." Volume 7, Issue No. 8, August 2022. International Journal of Social Sciences and Economics Research (ISSN: 2455-8834).

### **B. Presented Papers in the Following conferences**

1. "Chutney from past till present: Music of the forgotten ones" ODI Young Scholar International Conference on Global Indian Diaspora: Its Contribution in Retention of Indian culture and India connect. BHU, 22-23 January, 2019.
2. "Branches to Roots: Evolution of Indian music in the Diaspora" International E-Conference Migration, Diasporas and Sustainable Development: Perspectives, Policies, Opportunities and Challenges, GRFDT, MFA, CISAN, 2-5 November, 2020
3. "Women and their Mutilated bodies: Voices of female workers in plantation with reference to Gaurita Bahadur's Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture", World Indian Diaspora Conference 2020, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF INDIAN CULTURE, Trinidad, 22-23 Aug, 2020

Further, the student has passed the following courses towards fulfillment of coursework requirement for Ph.D. and was exempted from doing coursework (recommended by Doctoral Committee) on the basis of the following courses passed during his M.Phil. Program and the M.Phil. Degree was awarded:

| Course Code | Name                       | Credits | Pass/<br>Fail |
|-------------|----------------------------|---------|---------------|
| 1.ID701     | Indian Diaspora Theory     | 4       | PASS (B+)     |
| 2. ID702    | Research Methodology       | 4       | PASS (A)      |
| 3.ID703     | Dissertation Related Topic | 4       | PASS (A)      |
| 4.ID750     | Dissertation               | 12      | PASS (B+)     |

**Prof. Ajaya Kumar Sahoo**  
Supervisor

**Prof. Ajaya Kumar Sahoo**  
Head (CSID)

**Prof. Y.A Sudhakar Reddy**  
Dean of School

## **Acknowledgement**

In the name of Allah, the most gracious and the most merciful. First and foremost, I am thankful to Almighty ALLAH for giving me the strength, knowledge, ability and opportunity to undertake this study and complete it satisfactorily.

I want to sincerely thank my supervisor Prof. Ajaya Kumar Sahoo for his unwavering support throughout my Ph.D tenure, and for encouraging my research ideas. Without his perseverance, inspiration, enthusiasm, and extraordinary expertise, this thesis would not have been conceivable. It was a pleasure working with him throughout the research and writing of this thesis. He has provided me with solutions to every hurdle I faced during my PhD and words of wisdom that have boosted my morale and zeal to do my finest each time. I couldn't imagine having a better mentor and advisor than him.

Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee members Prof. Ajailiu Niumai and Dr. M.N Rajesh for their encouragement, insightful comments and support.

My sincere thanks also goes to my 'Muse of Literature' Prof. S.Z.H Abidi (Former Head (Retd), Department of English and MEL University of Lucknow) for inspiring me towards academics.

It is with the utmost pleasure that I extend my gratitude to Raj Singh and Rajinder Matadin for reaching out to me and providing their insights and sharing their knowledge with me. My sincerest gratitude extends to the Caribbean Hindustani team, who work around the clock to preserve Indo-Caribbean culture, language, and heritage. The success of this study has been largely due to the Facebook pages Caribbean Hindustani, Baithak Gana Community, and Chutney Music.

Additionally, I want to thank Mark Zuckerberg for creating Facebook and Instagram, which allowed me to conduct research and gather data even under the most challenging circumstances. My research and confidence during Covid-19 were salvaged by social media and Facebook.

I thank GOI and UGC for awarding me with the Maulana Azad National Fellowship and financially supporting my Ph.D. and research work. I thank Mr. Asgar Khan (Fellowship Section(admin)) for being kind towards all us researchers, and mostly for being utmost honest and dedicated towards his work.

I thank the University of Hyderabad for providing academic autonomy and an intellectual environment. I joined the UOH family in 2014 and since then I've never felt a shortage of happiness and joy in my life. Additionally, I want to thank the School of Social Sciences and the Centre for Study of Indian Diaspora for giving young researchers a forum and supporting them. I would like to thank the Horticulture department for keeping the University campus green through the year making 'University of Hyderabad' the most amazing place in the whole country. I am thankful to LH-7, Room no. 91 'My Safe Heaven' where I spent most amazing years of my life learning and growing.

Thank you, Devroop Kar and Rosaline Routh, for welcoming me into your family when mine was away and hosting me whenever I felt low, depressed or homesick in Hyderabad. I always regarded them as a constant source of goodness and humanity, which made my Ph.D. life bearable. My friends Utkarsha, Aishwarya, Deepanshi and Somdatta, I am grateful to them for being brave and for being the most amazing women for putting their faith in me even when I could not. I thank them for loving me unconditionally and uncontrollably.

I would like to thank Vighnesh(Viggi), Madhu, Ram, Karthik, Gautham, Rakesh(Ramji), Pratyusha, Aakash Singh, Amal Jose Philip, Rashda Rahman, Ajra Khatun, Prachi, Rahul and Swara for their constant support and making university life memorable for me.

I thank Akanksha my friend for being the most resilient person in my life. It is her positive attitude and unplanned singing sessions that kept me motivated. She and her family also provided me with oral literature and interesting facts from her family archives that helped me during the writing of my thesis. In 2019 my health took a toll and I faced my worst nightmare. It was she who took care of me and my health for which I cannot thank her enough.

I thank Astha, Bhargavi, and Urvashi, these women made life easy, memorable, and lovable. With them, I share my happiest memories. I thank them for stimulating discussions, for sleepless nights and encouragement before every deadline, and for all the fun we have had in all these years.

I would also like to thank Merriam for solving all my life's problems, and for elevating my mood and spirits in my low and dark times.

This thesis is dedicated to none other than my family, my parents Khurshid Begum and Inayat Ullah Khan who gave me birth in the first place and for providing a healthy life and proper education. I am grateful to them for supporting me spiritually throughout my life. Thank you for always encouraging me and supporting me in all my decisions. I thank them for making me a better person and always believing in me even when I didn't.

I thank my mother the most, for breaking the wheel of patriarchy and being progressive enough to shape her daughter's dream with her sweat, tears and blood. My father for being my safe space and my protector.

## Table of contents

|                                                                                                             |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>DECLARATION</b>                                                                                          | <b>2</b>   |
| <b>CERTIFICATE</b>                                                                                          | <b>3</b>   |
| <b>Acknowledgement</b>                                                                                      | <b>4</b>   |
| Glossary                                                                                                    | 9          |
| Table of Tables                                                                                             | 16         |
| Table of Figures                                                                                            | 17         |
| <b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>                                                                              | <b>18</b>  |
| Conceptualization                                                                                           | 19         |
| Transnationalism and Music                                                                                  | 37         |
| Indians in the Caribbean                                                                                    | 38         |
| Indian music in Diaspora                                                                                    | 40         |
| Theoretical Framework                                                                                       | 42         |
| Importance of the Study                                                                                     | 50         |
| Objectives of the Study                                                                                     | 52         |
| Research Methodology                                                                                        | 52         |
| Observing Digitally                                                                                         | 56         |
| Limitation of the Study                                                                                     | 62         |
| <b>Chapter 2: Indian Diaspora in the Caribbean: The Growth of Hindustani Music</b>                          | <b>64</b>  |
| Indo-Caribbean migration: Amalgamating culture and music                                                    | 65         |
| Socio-Political aspects of the Indo-Caribbean Community                                                     | 74         |
| Rise of musical tradition and folk culture among the Caribbean Hindustanis                                  | 75         |
| Routes to Roots: Transformation of Hindustani Music                                                         | 91         |
| Hindustani music in the Diaspora                                                                            | 103        |
| Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet                                                                                | 109        |
| Hindustanis in the Caribbean: reclaiming identities and embracing cultures                                  | 114        |
| Media and entertainment                                                                                     | 117        |
| Diaspora and Transnationalism                                                                               | 122        |
| Conclusion                                                                                                  | 123        |
| <b>Chapter 3: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet: The Birth of Fusion Art Forms.</b> | <b>124</b> |
| Indian Diaspora and Music: relationship and symbolism                                                       | 127        |

|                                                                                                             |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Changing trends in the Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet: Selected Artists and Genres .....                      | 129        |
| Conclusion .....                                                                                            | 178        |
| <b>Chapter 4: Diasporic Consciousness and Cultural Continuity in the Indo-Caribbean<br/>Diaspora. -----</b> | <b>180</b> |
| Migration as an Inevitability .....                                                                         | 182        |
| Music and Cultural connections .....                                                                        | 193        |
| Music and construction of a Diaspora identity .....                                                         | 199        |
| Finding India and Identity in diasporic music .....                                                         | 209        |
| Relationship between Bollywood and Caribbean Hindustani Music .....                                         | 216        |
| Consumption of Music among the Indian Diaspora .....                                                        | 220        |
| Carrier of Culture .....                                                                                    | 224        |
| Involvement of music in festivities and celebrations .....                                                  | 231        |
| Gender, sexuality, and music .....                                                                          | 241        |
| Conclusion .....                                                                                            | 247        |
| <b>Chapter 5: Conclusion -----</b>                                                                          | <b>251</b> |
| <b>References -----</b>                                                                                     | <b>256</b> |
| <b>Annexure -----</b>                                                                                       | <b>282</b> |
| <b>Annexure -----</b>                                                                                       | <b>292</b> |

## Glossary

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • <i>Adja</i> : Paternal GrandFather                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| • <i>Adji</i> : Paternal Grandmother                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| • <i>Anubhavas</i> : Anubhava refers to the impact or the consequents of a determinant. This is the physical or the outward manifestation. The function of anubhava is to apprehend the emotion or the prevailing permanent psychological state                                                                                                        |
| • <i>Atharva Veda</i> : The " <i>Atharva Veda</i> " is an ancient Hindu scripture and is one of the four <i>Vedas</i> commonly known as the fourth Veda. It contains hymns about charms, magic spells and incantations meant to be pronounced by the person who seeks some benefit, or more often by a sorcerer who would say it on his or her behalf. |
| • <i>Awadhi</i> : A literary dialect of Eastern Hindi                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| • <i>Baans</i> : Bamboo; A tall tropical plant with hard hollow stems.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| • <i>Baithak Gana</i> : Form of folk music originated in Suriname                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| • <i>Banne ke Geet</i> : Wedding song dedicated to grooms                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| • <i>Banni ke Geet</i> : Wedding song dedicated to bride                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| • <i>Bansuri</i> : A bansuri is an ancient side blown flute originating from the Indian subcontinent. It is an aerophone produced from bamboo                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| • <i>Bhagavat Gita</i> : The Bhagavad Gita, often referred to as the Gita, is a 700-verse Hindu scripture that is part of the epic Mahabharata.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| • <i>Bhajan</i> : Bhajan refers to any devotional song with a religious theme or spiritual ideas, specifically among Indian religions, in any language. The term bhajana also means <i>sharing</i> .                                                                                                                                                   |
| • <i>Bhakti</i> : loving devotion to God; Worship                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| • <i>Bharatiya Sangeet</i> : Bharatiya Sangeet in common English is addressed as Music of India or classical Indian music.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| • <i>Bhavas</i> : The emotion or mood conveyed by a performer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| • <i>Bhojpuri</i> : An Indo-Aryan language spoken in western Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh, India                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| • <i>Brahmins</i> : A member of the first of the four great Hindu castes, the priest and intellectual caste.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| • <i>Braj Bhasha</i> : A dialect of Western Hindi noted for its poetic literature                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chai</i>: Tea made by boiling tea leaves with milk, sugar, and sometimes spices.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chowtal</i>: A four-beat rhythmic pattern used in Hindustani classical music; An Indian folksong traditionally sung during the Holi festival.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chulha</i>: A small earthen or brick stove.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chutney</i>: A thick sweet sauce that is made from fruit or vegetables; A popular music genre originated in Trinidad&amp; Tobago in 1970s.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Coolies</i>: The one who carries burden of others; Indentured migrants were also documents as Coolies.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Damru</i>: A Damaru is a small two-headed drum, used in Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism. In Hinduism, the damaru is known as the instrument of the deity Shiva</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Desi</i>: <i>Indigenous</i>; <i>Desi</i> is a word used to describe the people, cultures, and products of the Indian subcontinent and their diaspora,</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Devanagari</i>: Script used to write the Sanskrit, Prākṛit, Hindi, Marathi, and Nepali languages</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dhantal</i>: The dhantal is a long steel rod-based percussion instrument, which was adapted from the iron "bows" that yoked the oxen that pulled the carts on the estates in Guyana, Suriname, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, other parts of the Caribbean, Fiji, Mauritius, and South Africa.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dhol-Tasha</i>: Dhol tasha is said to have been an integral part of Maharashtra from the medieval period. The dhol (double-headed drum) was also used to encourage the troupes during wars</li> </ul>                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dhrupad</i> : It is a genre in Hindustani classical music from the Indian subcontinent. It is the oldest known style of major vocal styles associated with Hindustani classical music, Haveli Sangeet of Pushtimarg Sampraday and also related to the South Indian Carnatic tradition.</li> </ul>        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dhwani</i>: Any sound is ‘Dhwani’. Here we are dealing with the dwani only which is useful for music.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Diwali</i>: Hindu festival of lights</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Eid</i>: A Muslim festival of the breaking of the fast. It is observed after a month of fasting and strict prayers rituals.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                   |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gandharvas</i>: <i>Gandharva</i> is a class of celestial beings whose males are divine singers and females are divine dancers from Gandhara region. It is also a term for skilled singers in Indian classical music.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ganesha</i>: Also known as <i>Ganapati</i>, <i>Vinayaka</i>, and <i>Pillaiyar</i>, is one of the best-known and most worshipped deities in the Hindu religion. He is also the son of Lord Shiva and Parvati.</li> </ul>         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Garba</i>: a traditional Gujarati folk dance and song, originally performed as a fertility ritual.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Girmitiya</i> music: Music of the Indentured Indians</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gowri Pooja</i>: Goddess Gowri is worshipped as she is deemed to the very incarnation of Adi Shakti Mahamaya</li> </ul>                                                                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Hanuman Chalisa</i>: It is a poem of 40 stanzas (Chaupayees) and talks about the strength, generosity, and intelligence of Hanuman.</li> </ul>                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Hanuman</i>: Hindu God of Wisdom, Strength, Courage, Devotion and Self-Discipline. Companion and disciple of Lord Rama.</li> </ul>                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Harmonium</i>: a musical instrument with a keyboard that makes sounds when metal reeds (= thin pieces) are made to vibrate by air that is forced past them by pressure</li> </ul>                                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Hindi</i>: An Indo-Aryan language spoken chiefly in the Hindi Belt region encompassing parts of northern, central, eastern, and western India.</li> </ul>                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Jagrata</i>: <i>Jagrata</i> means <i>Pernoctation</i> A religious watch kept during normal sleeping hours, during which prayers or other ceremonies are performed.</li> </ul>                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Janmashtami</i>: A Hindu festival celebrated annually in August or September in honor of the birth of Krishna.</li> </ul>                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Khadi Boli</i>: Is the local dialect spoken in Western Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and some parts of Haryana.</li> </ul>                                                                                                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Khali</i>: In classical music of Indian it is an off-beat or an empty beat is called <i>Khali</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Khayal</i>: The most common vocal form in North Indian classical music at the present time is the <i>khayal</i>, a Muslim word meaning “imagination.”</li> </ul>                                                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kirtan</i>: a devotional song, typically about the life of a deity, in which a group repeats lines sung by a leader.</li> </ul>                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kshatriyas</i>: A member of the second of the four great Hindu castes, the warrior’s caste.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                          |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Launda Naach</i>: <i>Launda Naach</i> is an Indian form folk dance most common among Bhojpuri speaking communities of India in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, further in Nepal, Mauritius and Caribbean Islands.</li> </ul>            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lawa</i>: Popcorn</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lord Krishna</i>: Powerful Hindu God</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lord Rama</i>: Powerful Indian Hindu deity</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Magahi</i>: a language spoken in Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal states of eastern India, and in the Terai of Nepal. Magadhi Prakrit was the ancestor of Magahi, from which the latter's name derives.</li> </ul>            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mahabharata</i>: The Mahābhārata is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India in Hinduism</li> </ul>                                                                                                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Maithili</i>: A cursive script derived from Devanagari; an Indic dialect of north Bihar.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mata ki Chowki</i>: a holy event which consists of all night kirtan of the Divine Mother Goddess Durga where Her devotees worship her by singing devotional songs</li> </ul>                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Matkor</i>: Pre wedding ritual which takes place on the ninth, seventh , fifth or third day before marriage particularly in North Indian weddings of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.</li> </ul>                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Matticore</i>- A pre-wedding ritual of clay digging done by the women of the family.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Moksha</i> : Liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Muharram</i>: Muharram is the first month of the Islamic calendar, and thus marks the start of the Islamic New Year. The word Muharram means ‘forbidden or prohibited’.</li> </ul>                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Naach</i>: Dance</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Naad Brahma</i>: Traditional teaching says Sound is God</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Naad</i>: A dwani which is useful for music is called 'Naad'. Naad signifies “The essence of all sounds," it is a specific vibration, a principal recurrence that comes from normally one source or sound current.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Nagaara</i>: The nagaara or nagaada has Persian origin which was disseminated to India with the Mughal migration, later on Indian diaspora spread it worldwide.</li> </ul>                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Natyashastra</i>: The Nāṭya Śāstra is notable as an ancient encyclopedic treatise on the arts, one which has influenced dance, music and literary traditions in India.</li> </ul>                                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Nava Rasa</i>’ i.e., Nine emotions</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pada</i>: <i>Pada</i> is a kind of love song using the poetic imagery characteristic of the romantic-devotional movement mentioned earlier.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Peti</i>: The name "Peti" comes from the Indian portable version of the Harmonium ("peti" literally means 'little box' in Hindi), although the structure is closer to that of a Western harmonium, small sized</li> </ul>                                                                                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Phagwa</i> : Hindu festival of colors also knows as Holi.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Qalbana</i>: A mode of classical music, attributed to Amir Khusro</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Qasida</i>: A style of Sufi devotional music marked by rhythmic improvisatory repetition of a short phrase, intended to rouse participants to a state of mystical ecstasy.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Qawwali</i>: In India and Pakistan, an energetic musical performance of Sufi Muslim poetry that aims to lead listeners to a state of religious ecstasy.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Raga</i>: Raga has no equivalent in English. A raga originates from a thaat. It has a specific combination of swar and varna.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Rajdhar</i>: Rajdhar is a style developed in Guyana incorporating Kathak, nagara, and bhojpuri style to Tan Sangeet music. With intricate foot works, story telling, and subtle hip movements are the essence for this dying art form</li> </ul>                                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ram Navmi</i>: a Hindu festival that celebrates the birthday of Rama, the seventh avatar of the deity Vishnu.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ramayana</i>: The narrative of <i>Rama</i> is recounted in one of the two great the epics. The Ramayana ("Rama's Journey"), traditionally regarded as the work of the sage Valmiki.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Rasa</i>: Rasa is essentially an emotional reaction.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Rig Veda</i>: The Rig Veda is the earliest of the four Vedas and one of the most important texts of the Hindu tradition. It is a large collection of hymns in praise of the gods, which are chanted in various rituals.</li> </ul>                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sam Veda</i>: "<i>Sama Veda</i>" is an ancient Hindu scripture and one of the four main <i>Vedas</i> of Hinduism. It is a collection of melodies and chants, and is also called the "Book of Song," "Veda of Chants" or even "Yoga of Song." It is basically the words of the "<i>Rig Veda</i>" put to music.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sam</i>: In classical music of India it is the first beat of any rhythmic cycle.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Samay</i>: Time cycle is followed to perform a raga.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sangeet</i>: Music</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Saptak</i>: <i>Sapta</i> is seven. Swar-saptak is a group of seven notes which are used in Hindustani classical music.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sarangi</i>: The <i>sārangī</i> is a bowed, short-necked string instrument played in traditional music from South Asia – Punjabi folk music, Rajasthani folk music, and Boro folk music – in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.</li> </ul>                                                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sargam</i>: Saragam means music notes of any song</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sarnami Hindustani</i>: <i>Sarnami</i> (sometimes called Suriname Hindustani) is a mixture of the Indian tongues that the immigrants spoke. It has also adopted words from Dutch and Sranan Tongo. The grammar and lexicon of Sarnami reflect the influence of all its mother languages.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Satsangs</i>: Satsang literally means ‘a good company’, especially on the spiritual path; a spiritual discourse or a sacred gathering</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Satyagrah</i>: A policy of passive political resistance, especially that advocated by Mahatma Gandhi against British rule in India. It literally means ‘insistence on truth’.</li> </ul>                                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sehre ke geet</i>: Wedding song during wedding procession in north-India</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Shastra</i>: A work of sacred scripture.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Shivratri</i>: Also known as Maha-shivaratri, \ “<b>Great Night of Shiva</b>” the most important sectarian festival of the year for devotees of the Hindu god Shiva.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Shruti</i>: Shruti means a microtone.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Shudra</i>: Fourth and lowest of the traditional varnas, or social classes, of India, traditionally artisans and labourers.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Shurpnakha</i>: Critical character from Hindu mythology The Ramayana</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sita</i>: Also called as Janaki and Vaidehi is a Hindu goddess and the female protagonist of the Hindu epic, Ramayana.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sitar</i> : The sitar is a plucked stringed instrument, originating from the Indian subcontinent, used in Hindustani classical music.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Swar</i>: Swar is the further quality of <i>Naad</i>. With regard to Indian traditional music, swara is a Sanskrit word that implies a ‘NOTE’ in octave.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Taal</i>: In the ordinary sense taal means rhythm</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Taali</i>: In classical music of India it means On beat</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tabla</i>: The tabla is an essential <b>instrument</b> in the <i>bhakti</i> devotional traditions of Hinduism and Sikhism, such as during bhajan and kirtan singing</li> </ul>                                                                                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tamil</i> : A Dravidian language of Tamil Nadu state, India, and of northern and eastern Sri Lanka</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tassa drum</i> : a bowl-shaped drum which is made up of mango tree trunk and covered with goatskin at the top end and the technique to play is to beat the drum with two wooden sticks.</li> </ul>                                                                                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Telugu</i>: A Dravidian member of the largest group of people in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, India.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Thaat</i>: <i>Thaat</i> is a cluster of <i>swaras</i> from which the ragas are produced.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Thumri</i>: It is another North Indian vocal form and is based on the romantic-devotional literature inspired by the <i>bhakti</i> movement. The text is usually derived from the Radha-Krishna theme and is of primary importance.</li> </ul>                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Vaishya</i>: The third Varna represented by agriculturalists, traders, money lenders, and those involved in commerce.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Vanbaas</i> : exile to forest</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Vibhavas</i>: Vibhavas are the stimulants of emotions(<i>Anubhavas</i>)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Vyabhicharibhavas</i>: Vyabichari bhavas, also referred to as sanchari bhavas, are light, fleeting emotions that appear and disappear in quick succession and serve to strengthen the sthayi bhava or permanent emotion in a song.</li> </ul>                                                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Yajur Veda</i>: The <i>Yajur Veda</i> is an ancient collection of Sanskrit mantras and verses, used in Hindu worship and rituals. It is one of the four primary scriptures of Hinduism known collectively as the Vedas, alongside <i>Rig Veda</i>, <i>Atharva Veda</i> and <i>Sama Veda</i></li> </ul> |

## Table of Tables

|                                                                                                                  |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table 1.1 Distribution based on age and sex -----                                                                | 58  |
| Table 1.2 Distribution based on education qualification -----                                                    | 59  |
| Table 1.3 Distribution based on marital status and sex -----                                                     | 59  |
| Table 1.4 Distribution based on Generation and Sex -----                                                         | 59  |
| Table 2.1: Distribution of Indian Migration to selective British and French colonies from<br>1838-1920-----      | 73  |
| Table 2.2: Country wise distribution of Overseas Indian population in the Caribbean. -----                       | 115 |
| Table 3.1 Details of selected Indo-Caribbean artists and their works 1968 onwards: -----                         | 130 |
| Table 3.2 Chronological distribution of albums composed and produced by Ramdew Chaitoe<br>from 1976 onwards----- | 142 |
| Table 3.3 Selected distribution of Sundar Popo's work and composition -----                                      | 152 |

## Table of Figures

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Figure 2.1 A copy of an original Indentured contract document, dated 28th February 1879. This image was shared by the admin of Baithak Gana Community (Instagram account) --67                                        | 67  |
| Figure: 2.2: Caribbean Map -----68                                                                                                                                                                                    | 68  |
| Figure: 2.3: The present-day map of the Caribbean countries -----69                                                                                                                                                   | 69  |
| Figure: 2.4 Image describes living arrangement on Indentured ships -----72                                                                                                                                            | 72  |
| Figure 2.5 Image of Indentured ships -----72                                                                                                                                                                          | 72  |
| Figure 2.6: Indians playing Indian musical instruments in the Caribbean plantation during indentured servitude -----78                                                                                                | 78  |
| Figure 2.7: Young baithak Gana artist Anupma Bhageloe is depicted in the image playing the traditional instrument Dholak. -----79                                                                                     | 79  |
| Figure 2.8: Moena Sital Famous Dholak player from Suriname -----80                                                                                                                                                    | 80  |
| Figure 2.9: An image of Trinidad and Tobago based Tassa players -----81                                                                                                                                               | 81  |
| Figure 2.10: Shifar Abdoelaziz famous all-rounder musician from Suriname -----82                                                                                                                                      | 82  |
| Figure 2.11: Bansuri (Flute) -----83                                                                                                                                                                                  | 83  |
| Figure 2.12: Manjira (hand Cymbal) -----84                                                                                                                                                                            | 84  |
| Figure 2.13: Harmonium -----85                                                                                                                                                                                        | 85  |
| Figure 2.14: Dhantal -----86                                                                                                                                                                                          | 86  |
| Figure 2.15: Raj Mohan (famous Indo-Surinamese artist/poet/songwriter) -----88                                                                                                                                        | 88  |
| Figure 2.16 An image of Hindi/Bhojpuri words that Indo-Caribbeans use in their everyday life. -----116                                                                                                                | 116 |
| Figure 2.17 Picture of traditional Launda Ke Naach performances -----120                                                                                                                                              | 120 |
| Figure 3.1 Dropati (Pioneer of Baithak Gana in Suriname) -----133                                                                                                                                                     | 133 |
| Figure 3.2 Ramdew Chaitoe (1942-1992) -----138                                                                                                                                                                        | 138 |
| Figure 3.3 Picture of Roshnie Sangeet Samaadj and its members. This picture exhibits the instruments used by Chaitoe and the group to compose early Baithak Gana songs. -----139                                      | 139 |
| Figure 3.4 Front picture of the dust-jacket of Chaitoe's original Vinyl record Raaté Sapna dekhai pya humko, his most popular composition Raaté Sapna dekhai pya humko. -----141                                      | 141 |
| Figure 3.5 Dholak king Soerin Ramkhelawan with his students in Suriname. -----148                                                                                                                                     | 148 |
| Figure 3.6 A statue of Sundar Popo established by National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago. The statue is located in Debe, and was established as a tribute to Sundar Popo and to honour his memory and legacy. -----153 | 153 |
| Figure 3.7 A picture of an original dust-jacket of Sundar's album -----159                                                                                                                                            | 159 |
| Figure 3.8 Image of an original Dust-jacket of Sundar Popo's record Sundar Soca -----160                                                                                                                              | 160 |

## Chapter 1: Introduction

There has been a great deal of recognition given to migration and displacement over the past few decades. In today's world, it is driven by a combination of economic, social, and political factors. Relocation and leaving one's country of origin can be the result of a variety of factors. In addition to better job opportunities, internal conflict, widespread human rights violations, religious conflict, and human trafficking, migration has been caused by multiple causal reasons. It is common for individuals to migrate to foreign lands to join family members already residing there. Punjab and Uttar Pradesh have the highest rate of migration due to social constructs like marriages.

Labour migration, skilled or unskilled, is not a contemporary phenomenon; humanity has been traveling and relocating from place to place since the dawn of civilization. When individuals move from domestic borders to international borders, they bring along many other changes in social, economic, and cultural aspects. This is also true in areas like music, film, dance, and so on. Although world history is crammed with people migrating from one place to another, it's still a difficult task to determine what percentage of people migrated at a selected point in time.

Eminent researchers, scholars, writers, historians, philosophers, ethnographers, and thinkers have contributed a decent number of inquiries into migration studies providing different definitions and theories of migration and diaspora. A common thread that connects all the definitions and theories is 'mobility' and 'hybridity' which will be discussed during this chapter.

In the current study, we address Indian immigrants and their cultural practice in the diaspora with a focus on Indo-Caribbean music, also known as *Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet*. Caribbean society is a major example of cultural cohesion and the mixing of traditions that enables it to live harmoniously with the rest of the world. Researchers have been discussing and researching the growing dynamics of the Caribbean society. In this society, different races coexist and live peacefully practicing and celebrating their diasporic experiences in the forms of festivals and carnivals.

## **Conceptualization**

This section of the chapter elaborates on the key concepts and terms used in the thesis. These concepts and terms are used for the effective understanding of the subject which includes Diaspora, Migration, Slavery, Indentured Labour, Coolie, Identity, Culture, Music, Chutney, and Interculturalism.

### ***Diaspora***

The term ‘diaspora’ can be understood as the migrant communities those who are settled permanently in countries other than they were born, but still maintain a bond with their native country or country of origin. The term diaspora has its origin in the Greek compound-word *diaspeiro* used by Greek philosophers Sophocles, Herodotus, and Thucydides in the early fifth century B.C (Dufoix, 2008: 04). If we further break down the word, ‘dia’ means through and ‘speiro’ which means dispersal, distribution or spreading or scatter (Mehta, 2010). Originally used to define ‘dispersing Jews’ as “the term initially referred to the setting of colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile and has assumed a more general connotation of people settled away from their ancestral homelands” (Shuval, 2003), lately, it has been given a much secular meaning. Often, diaspora implies the ‘loss of homeland’ where dislocation is associated with sense of loss brought on by the loss of their home countries and identity, historically the idea of diaspora was developed in order to understand and conceptualize the current situation of people living in an alien land, in which a specific community or individual experiences that resides more in a shared sociocultural experience than in a specific geographic origin.

Gabriel Sheffer (1986) in “Modern Diasporas in International Politics” mentioned about limiting ‘diaspora’ as solely to describe the dislocation or banishment of Jews; it is unfair as there may be other communities that have existed before say Assyrians<sup>1</sup>, Nabateans<sup>2</sup>, Phoenicians<sup>3</sup>. Moreover,

in the later part of the 19th century, the presence of migratory groups appeared that shared similar push and pull factors with the Jewish diaspora such as the Chinese Diaspora. Sheffer went on and proposed three criteria to define Diaspora:

1. Assuring that diasporic identity is maintained and developed in ‘diasporic beings’;
2. Existence of indoor organizations that is distinct from the ones found within the homeland or within their country of current residence;
3. Remittances and travel are significant contacts with the country of origin.

Clifford (1994) summarized the concept of Diaspora as a “traveling term, in changing global condition” (302). From a historical lens, Clifford in his article ‘*Diasporas*’ quotes Tölölian (1991) and explained the concept of diaspora as “the term that once described Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion now shares meaning with larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas-community, ethnic community” (303).

Steven Vertovec (1997) in “Three Meaning of ‘Diaspora’ Exemplified Among South Asian Religions” provides a breakdown of diaspora into three important categories:

- i. “Diaspora as a social form”-Vertovec in his work speaks of diaspora as an experience which often reflect upon the negativism “associated with forced displacement, victimisation, alienation, loss” (2). However, Vertovec’s emphasis on ‘diaspora’ as a social form provides a clear and visible illustration of the diasporic characteristics of diasporic groups that presents a “list of social relationship”:
  - “a. created as a result of voluntary or forced migration from one home location to at least two other countries;
  - b. consciously maintaining collective identity, which is often importantly sustained by reference to an ‘ethnic myth’ of common origin, historical experience, and some kind of tie to a geographic place;
  - c. institutionalising networks of exchange and communication which transcend territorial states and creating new communal organisations in places of settlement;
  - d. maintaining a variety of explicit and implicit ties with their homelands;

- e. developing solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement;
- f. inability or unwillingness to be fully accepted by 'host society' -- thereby fostering feelings of alienation, or exclusion, or superiority, or other kind of 'difference'" (3-4).

Furthermore, Vertovec talks about another social form in which he discusses the concept of a "triadic relationship" that flows between the people in the diaspora, hostland, and their homeland. Moreover, he talks about the economies of these transnational groups, as well as divided loyalists and political orientations (5-7).

ii. "Diaspora as a type of consciousness" - While talking about "diaspora consciousness", Vertovec points out "greater emphasis on describing a variety of experience, a state of mind and a sense of identity" (8). He talks about diaspora and consciousness which he called as "awareness of decentered attachments" in which the displaced communities are aware of "being simultaneously 'home away from home' or 'here and there' or...something else" (8). Furthermore, He points out "the awareness of multi-locality" helps the migrants to establish a connection with "oneself with others, both 'here' and 'there,' who share the same 'routes and roots'" (8).

iii. "Diaspora as a mode of Cultural production" - In his third and final set of meaning of diaspora, the author explains how 'diaspora' (single quotes have been used by the author in his original text) can be seen as a mode of globalization-base cultural production (19). Vertovec describes diaspora as "involving the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena" (19). It emphasizes the "fluidity of constructed styles and identities among diasporic people" (19), illustrating significance of syncretism and high degree of hybridity present in many diasporic communities.

Stuart Hall (1995) refers to diaspora "the scattering and dispersal of people who will never literally be able to return to the places from which they came; who have to make some difficult settlement with the new, often oppressive cultures with which they were forced into contact, and who have succeeded in remaking themselves and fashioning new kinds of cultural identity by, consciously or unconsciously, drawing on more than one cultural repertoire" (10).

William Safran in 'Concepts, Theories and challenges of Diaspora: A panoptic Approach' (2007) defines diaspora as "Expatriate minority communities" and while attempting to define diaspora he observed the following characteristics of the Expatriate minority communities:

1. "They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'center' to one or more peripheral, or foreign, regions.
2. They retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland — its physical location, history, achievements, and often enough, sufferings.
3. They believe that they are not, and perhaps cannot be, fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it.
4. They regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate.
5. They believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity.
6. They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined in terms of the existence of such a relationship. The absence of such a relationship makes it difficult to speak of transnationalism.
7. They share a common notion of 'peoplehood' not only with the homeland but with ethnic kin in other countries.
8. They are willing to survive as a minority by maintaining and transmitting a cultural and/or religious heritage derived from their ancestral home.
9. In structuring their communities and adapting to their hostlands, diasporas become themselves independent centers of cultural creation; yet their creations continue to contain certain ethno symbols, customs, and narratives of the homeland.
10. Their cultural, religious, economic, and/or political relationships with the homeland are reflected in a significant way in their communal institutions" (2).

Cohen (1995) believes that there is also a need to define diaspora positively rather than negatively, including scattered groups with strong connections to the past, aggressive or voluntary goals, and resistance to assimilation; diasporas should comprise scattered groups with aggressive or voluntary goals. Those in the diaspora tends to share the same identity as those in other countries that share the same ethnic group. This includes colonial settlers, overseas students, refugees, and economic migrants.

Judith Shuval (2000) defined diaspora as “a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, history, meaningful narratives, group identity, longings, and dreams, allegorical and virtual elements all of which play an important role in establishing a diaspora reality. At a given moment in time, the sense of connection to a homeland must be strong enough to resist forgetting, assimilating or distancing” (43).

Also, Stuart Hall explicitly pointed out that diasporic experiences “is not defined by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which in and through, not despite difference by hybridity” (Hall, 1990).

Alain Medam (1993) proposed typologies to understand and describe diaspora “based on the degree of cohesiveness and dynamism of the diasporic organization”. He differentiates it as “crystallised diasporas” and “fluid diaspora”. Later on, Bruneau (2010) defined four major types of diasporas:

1. Entrepreneurial diaspora,
2. Religious diaspora,
3. Political diaspora, and
4. Cultural diaspora.

According to Robin Cohen (1997), diasporas can be classified into four categories:

1. Labour Diaspora
2. Imperial Diaspora
3. The trade diaspora
4. Cultural diaspora.

According to him, the ‘cultural diaspora’ is the most productive type of diaspora as it offers a large place for hybridity and “evolution of new social dynamics as mixed culture” (cited in Yemini and Berthomière, 2005). The Caribbean countries are the best example to showcase the existence of hybridity and cohesiveness.

Shuval’s (2000) theory of diaspora links “theoretical discourse on transnationalism and globalization...Diaspora discourse reflects a sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes a homeland. It is characterized by a sense of living in one place while simultaneously remembering and/or desiring and yearning for another place” (43).

Having said that, all the above definitions by different scholars express their opinion about the term diaspora. In the current context, diaspora includes people or groups of people who migrated to another country out of their free will with a plan of settling down, unlike migration that took place on non-voluntary grounds. One of the key features that separated the process of migration from the diaspora is that those who were forced to leave always wanted to return home, whereas in voluntary migration, migrants plan to leave their country of origin to settle down in the hostland as it is not necessary that every person in diaspora lives in the ghetto of memories of the homeland.

Diaspora can be understood as a multi-layered term, it is a social construct fused with the yearning for the motherland which is the most sentimental emotion in present India and among Indian diasporas, for few scholars diaspora can be understood as an advancement or an upgrade towards a better and easier life. In most cases, it is found that diasporic nostalgia is directly or indirectly attached to the religious feelings, traditions and rituals of homeland which creates a sense of community ‘a collective’ even in exile resulting in giving birth to several art forms, languages, and literature, for e.g., a huge part of Indian diasporic literature and music exists in regional languages that include Bhojpuri, Tamil, Malayalam and so on.

## ***Migration***

A change of residence by an individual or group which fundamentally causes diaspora is labelled as migration. According to Melissa Lane (2006) “Migration is a part of the human condition, not something which can be eradicated by the will of state”. In her article *Myths about migration: historical and philosophical perspectives*, argues that: “migration is generated by significant differences between one area and another. These differences may lie in the environment, in the technological advancements or other differences leading to inequality between human groups, or in the demographic composition of those groups”.

Alan Simmons (1987) defined migration theories using these three major dimensions:

- a) Relocation;
- b) An employment shift, and
- c) Changes in social relationships.

Out of the three above mention shifts and changes, change in residence is the main criteria to fit into the frame of migration and is the basic foundation of diaspora. He also observed “migration theories cover specific types of migration, grounded in particular social and historical context”.

Allsopp in her article on *Philosophies of migration* discussed that migration revolves around the question of identity. In addition to it Shuval (2000) argues “it is important to be aware of inherent links”. He further goes on and talks about ethnic theory build “on the assumption that people see shared identity, especially in an era of large-scale urbanization and weakening of localised particularistic relation, ethnic theory address itself to understand the process involved in deriving such identities from commonalities of history, language (in some cases religion) and past achievements” (44).

In post-modern era migration is celebrated for diverse features that make it multi-layered. Diasporic migration is different from other types of migration, as diasporic migration is not always a result of exile “indeed they are often initiated by processes of uprooting, programs, political, religion or racial oppression; however, some people may opt for migration as a result of

political domination and recession, economic inequality, powerlessness or minority status” (Shuval, 2000: 46).

The intertwining nature of diaspora and migration has given a platform for cultural adaptability, due to which hybridity has slipped in and stabilized itself in the postmodern times. In most of the times assimilation turns out to be fruitful in order to help migrants adjust and accept the change as far as culture and society are concerned. Migration is a major ingredient to cultural cohesion also social and communal integration; it is not only proven to be beneficial for the migratory community but also for the host community.

The entry of culture into migration provides a component of shared beliefs (customs, values, attitudes) between migrants, which does not only determine ethnicity, but also identity among individuals and groups.

### ***The Indian Diaspora***

The idea of diaspora is not new to Indian understanding, it has been infested throughout many centuries; it has its foundations appended with folklores of numerous religions. Hindu mythological texts and epics such as “The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*” discusses uprooting and movement at a great length. Every God and Goddess is attached with a *Vahans*, for instance, Lion for *Durga*, Ox for *Shiva*, Swan for *Saraswati*, and so on. These *Vahanas* represent mobility. The very idea of diaspora is separation and outcast which is reverberated fittingly in *Rama's* and *Pandava's Vanvaas* or exile (Cohen, 2008: 65).

Indian diaspora is viewed as the second biggest diasporas on the planet and has an interesting nearness. It has spread over more than 200 nations with a high fixation in regions like the USA, U.K, Canada, Australia, Mauritius, Singapore, Malaysia, and South Africa. Indian diaspora is extensively divided into two particular phases, for example, Old and New (McKeown, 2004: 167).

1. Old diaspora /Colonial Phase in early 19th century - It started around 1834 and proceeded in the early years of the 20th century i.e., before Indian independence. The old diaspora is made up of communities hailing from different people from different regions and cultures and languages mostly from the North-Indian Hindi speaking belt, those who left their homeland for few unjustifiable reasons as obligated workers to British settlements.
2. New diaspora/Postcolonial phase - This phase mostly consists of the movement of people after Independence to modern and industrially developed countries. After the autonomy of India in 1947, the displacement of Anglo-Indians to England and Australia occurred. The concept of 'brain drain' also developed during the same period when Indian intellectuals and researchers of sciences, medicines and technology, and academics voluntarily and individually migrated during the late 20th century.

Despite the fact that individuals from India have moved to various countries for various purposes of time in Indian History, their relocation has prompted, the Indianization of the globe. The 20th Century migration from India to industrially developed countries was deliberate and mostly driven by commerce and trade. A large population in Caribbean countries like Surinam, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica has Indian ancestral roots. Also, countries like Mauritius, Fiji, Malaysia, and Singapore have a good number of Indians residing. They moved out of India in the 19th century and today most of them are recognized as NRIs or POIs sometimes also as expatriates or immigrants.

Cohen (1997) states “Indian diaspora was not a homogeneous entity comprising of different religions and other groups that existed in various parts of the subcontinent rather a cohesive group that originated were the indentured laborers who were brought from Africa, Southeast Asia, South Pacific, and west India. These regions were mostly within the framework of the British Empire” (59).

The Indian diaspora was a result of outrageous impoverishment, unemployment, and forced migration to industrial countries and agricultural provinces under the control of British and other western powerful nations. The ongoing movement to the first world has made colossal

accomplishments in the field of medication, designing, data innovation, academics, business, and enterprises.

Everywhere throughout the world, the spread of the Indian diaspora has proven quite significant and has impacted and enhanced every individual socially, strategically, and culturally. Indian moguls are found in all parts of the globe, Indian intellectuals are now a major resource of significant colleges and universities of the world. It will be inadequate if we do not include the names of Indian diasporic writers in the list.

### ***Slavery***

Slavery is characterized by the ownership of individuals by others and the control they exert over their lives and work. Slavery has existed in many periods and places throughout history. As did the Incas and Aztecs, ancient Greeks and Romans had slaves. As a result, slavery is difficult to trace. It is not universally agreed upon what a slave is. Slavery, however, requires the following characteristics to be present to be considered a slave by philosophy and history. Due to his status as property, the slave belonged to someone else. Some societies also considered slaves as movable property. There was no freedom and no choice for slaves.

Slaves were generated in many ways, for example, the most frequent were captured in war, kidnapping, punishment for a crime or debt few were enslaved rest were sold, and last but not least offspring of slaves were considered slaves too. Slavery existed mainly because of the social difference; similar was the reason for becoming indentured/Coolie.

### ***Indentured Labour***

Indentured laborers were those who worked under a contract of employment for a fixed period, i.e., 3 to 5 years, in a colonial plantation or foreign country in exchange for money, food, and accommodation. The conditions of indentured laborers were very pathetic and according to the contract they were not even allowed to change the firm in which they work, but the planters or the authority of the firm had the power to sell the workers for the remaining period of time in the contract, which was very much identical with the slavery system (Cohen, 2008).

Slavery and indentured both are connected and are linked with each other, Hugh Tinker in his book *A New System of Slavery* presented the relationship very subtly and beautifully by calling “a darker picture of [indenture] as a new system of slavery” (Karen, 2010: 01).

For indentured Indians, this description is not fully applicable, as indenture is required voluntarily will along with a contract that specifies the period of labour, salary, accommodation, ration, and free travel from India to other countries where these workers are allotted to work.

Indentured unskilled laborers were documented as ‘coolie’ in colonial records. These coolies were recruited from various British colonies including India, China, and the Pacific to work abroad for a period of at least 5 years or more. The contract allows them to receive a small amount of money as wages, a piece of land and in some rare cases, they were also promised a return passage after the completion of the contract. These were only on papers, which one can also call surficial realities, however, the hidden truth was completely different from what was presented on paper. The reality was crude and the conditions were harsh, with of course very low wages.

The main aim behind leaving India for these workers was to escape poverty which was frequent and very much evident during British Raj in India. Many people were coned as the high level of illiteracy was another ruling power in India, few understood the condition, and few remained under a vague picture, in order to work as an indentured worker, they put their thumb imprints instead of a signature. Due to this partial knowledge and veiled truths presented by the colonizers many Indians were misled about the passage, place, and the work atmosphere. Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras were the main ports of embarkation for all indenture migrants. Ports like Karaikal and Pondicherry were used to embark Indian emigrants to French colonies, around 49,890 migrated to French colonies (Tinker, 1974).

## ***Coolie***

The Cambridge Dictionary defines Coolie as simply ‘a hired labour’. In Indian English Term Coolie is used for someone who carries things, “a person whose job is to carry things, especially travelers; bags at the station, airports, etc”. The word Coolie has its origin in India and is believed to be derived from the South Indian Language Tamil. In Tamil “*Kuli*” which phonetically sounds similar to Coolie means wages. During 1830s-word Coolie gained place in the English Language as indentured labour started generating money for British Empire also substituting African slaves (Gandhi, 2013).

Bahadur (2013) used a similar description where she mentions that a Coolie is the one who carries someone else’s burden or baggage. In diasporic literature, the word Coolie refers to a group of mostly unskilled and cheaply employed manual laborers from various parts of Asia, who migrated to different colonies to work in plantations during the 19th century to early 20th century, i.e., during the age of colonialism.

During colonial times the pressure enforced on the British government, as a result of the abolition of slavery, to search for huge number of cheap manual laborers. Millions of Indians were taken to various British colonies including the Caribbean to work on sugar plantations as indentured labour (Claude, 1999: 895). All these selected indentured unskilled labourers were documented as ‘*Coolies*’ in the colonial records. This recruitment to colonial plantations included both men and women; the main reason behind recruiting women workers was to produce more cheap labour, so these women were documented as ‘coolie women’ in the various documents of the colonial records.

## ***Identity***

As of late, researchers working in a striking cluster of sociology and humanities disciplines have given a significant amount of attention to questions concerning identity. In recent times, a good

number of researches have been devoted to 'identity politics'<sup>4</sup> of race, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity and culture. Identity is the core when it comes to the grounds of patriotism and ethnic clash.

The word 'identity' is used in everyday discourse, yet it is difficult to unfold its true meaning as it is multilayered. There is no definite way to understand identity, every academic discipline has its own set of definitions.

According to Alexander Wendt (1994) "Social identities are sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object. ... Social identities are at once cognitive schemas that enable an actor to determine 'who I am/we are' in a situation and positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations" (395).

One of the important types of identity is 'cultural identity'. In the field of anthropology, it is mainly related to the cultural aspects, where the identity of a group, culture, or individual is influenced by a community or culture. Stuart Hall (1990: 223-25) talks about two different ways to define 'Cultural identity'. The first definition talks about shared culture as "a sort of collective 'one true self' hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common". He further explains and says:

"Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history".

---

<sup>4</sup> The term refers to signify a tendency of social movement of people of a particular race, ethnicity, gender or religion in claim recognition for their identity as a group that has been denied to them before by the dominant groups.

He further says:

“Cultural identity is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture...., they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture, and power... identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past” (225).

Discussion in diaspora studies is often concerning the issue of identity, Giddens (1991) proposed that globalization can be characterized as “the strengthening of overall social relations which connects far off territories so that local happenings are formed by events happening several miles away”. According to Buonfino (2007) “as travel becomes within the reach of most people and communication technologies enable people to be immersed in cultures located elsewhere, and to cultivate multiple identities, the question of belonging becomes more complex and more central to the debate on how we live together” (5).

David Gauntlett (2007) in *Creative Explorations: New Approaches to Identities and Audience* stated “Identity is complicated, everybody thinks they’ve got one”. Gauntlett poses an important question where he calls identity an illusion, and all of us are more similar than we think.

## ***Culture***

Kroeber and Kluckhohn (renowned anthropologist from America) developed and compiled a list of definitions consisting 164 different definitions of ‘Culture’ in 1952, as it is the fastest and most evolving process on earth. For the longest time in history the concept of culture was associated with ethnicity and nationality, while the contemporary understanding of culture is quite liberal and progressive. To all my understanding culture is a form of expression which promotes cohesiveness and leads to social homogeneity.

According to Hofstede (2001), culture consists of “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” he believed the same for other collectives like regions, ethnicity, occupation, organization, for that matter even age and gender does the same.

E.B Tylor (1871) one of the first anthropologist defined culture as the combination of knowledge, and proposed that in order to understand culture we must understand those capabilities including art, customs, morals, law, belief, norms, and traditions possessed by human beings which makes them a member of a social group aka ‘Society’.

To analyze culture from the diasporic lens, communities/people in diaspora try to maintain different kinds of links with their homeland and vice-versa. To maintain an active link, they may device several ways, cultural practice is one of the most important ones among all the active links because evolving cultural practice within another cultural environment is considered to be a step towards identity establishment. For diasporas, culture not only constitutes religious belief and ideology, but more than that it “constitutes a heritage that is shared with people and places left behind” (Gisr, 2015), moreover, it creates a link between individuals and the communities they share beliefs and ideologies with, e.g. PoIs in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, and Mauritius still practice and celebrate Indian rituals and festivals to keep the link with their ancestral homeland alive, also by inculcation Indian way of life in their art and literature. In such cases, culture becomes an identity marker that not only redefines an individual's identity in the host land but also is a way of strengthening their long-distance link with their homeland.

### ***Music***

Combining sounds to create a particular mood or express an idea or feeling. Such organized sounds are called music.

In *The Republic-Book III*, Plato explained that music contributes a great deal to education. He mentions that the younger generation should be introduced to music and myths which helps them to shape into moral beings. Plato said, “music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings

to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything”. Similarly, Aristotle in *Politics* argued that music practices encourage emotions and good judgments in individuals, and these individuals will benefit society and its members.

Almost all human cultures have a tradition of making music. In India the most commonly used word to denote music is ‘*Sangeet*’. There are two types of music in India: First is Uttar (north) Hindustani music and, the second is *Dakshindhi* (south) Carnatic music. Please note that in this thesis the focus is on North Indian/ Hindustani Music only.

### ***Chutney***

Chutney is a name given to a unique and vibrant blend of Bhojpuri music which is usually clubbed with precision music and Afro-Caribbean beats. With origins dating back to the early 70s, chutney music has served as a cultural landmark for its diverse fan base and rich history. Born within religious surroundings and houses of the Indo-Caribbean population, the genre owes much of its legacy to indentured servitude. The Indian migrants used music to overcome boredom of the journey and after work hours during their servitude on the plantation as contract labour. However, with assimilation and hybridity taking over India under the influence of African music composed a mixture of language and cultures, pioneering this exotic genre, Chutney.

Tina K. Ramnarine (1996) described chutney “as being spicy-a contemporary Indian Caribbean musical genre which displays influence from diverse sources. Where some musical elements can be traced to Indian and can be analyzed as examples of musical retention or preservation” (133).

Peter Manuel (1998) talks about the identity of Indo-Caribbeans and describes the significance of chutney music that even after going through hybridity it “remains at heart a modernized version of Bhojpuri folk song and dance” (26).

Chutney music is characterized by upbeat tempos and simplified themes. Stories of Indo-Caribbean life and love were sung to the sounds of *dholak*, *harmonium*, *dantal*, and *tassa*.

Performances were sung primarily in Caribbean Hindustani<sup>5</sup> or English with distinct Creole accents. Evolving from early traditions and religious roots, the music now exhibits a distinctive Indo-Caribbean flavor.

With time Chutney music witnessed many changing phases in its course of evolution, budding from Taan music and drawing inspiration from traditional Baithak folk songs, artists kept redefining the nature of Chutney. Artists like Sundar Popo are among the very first artists who fused synthesizer with traditional music instruments to give an upbeat to existing songs in order to make them ‘spicy’ and ‘masaledar’. Sundar Popo attracted a lot of young audiences at that time by introducing love and alcohol as Chutneys. An entirely new genre, Chutney Soca, emerged during the 1980s out of existing Chutney, and Drupatee was its pioneer.

Drupatee Ramgoonai’s fused Chutney elements with African music Soca and gave birth to a distinctive art form that represents the union of cultures in the diaspora. This evolution of the Chutney and Soca mix inspired a variety of local artists from Trinidad, Guyana, and Jamaica towards the Indo-Caribbean music industry and gave rise to the fame of Indo-Caribbean music.

### ***Interculturalism***

According to Ricard Zapata-Barrero (2013) “Interculturalism is viewed as a proximate set of policies sharing one basic idea: that the interaction among people from different backgrounds is important” (6). He also mentions that interculturalism is “technique of positive interaction” as it is a way to promote dialogue exchange between people from different cultures.

Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood (2012: 177) in their article *How does Interculturalism contrast with Multiculturalism* proposed interculturalism as “something greater than coexistence, in that

---

<sup>5</sup> Indo-Caribbeans and the Indo-Caribbean diaspora speak this Indo-Aryan language. Essentially, it is a dialect of Bhojpuri and Awadhi. As indentured laborers, Indian immigrants to the Caribbean spoke these Hindustani dialects. The language shares many similarities with Fiji Hindi and Bhojpuri-Hindustani spoken in Mauritius and South Africa. The Caribbean Hindustani dialect is primarily influenced by Bhojpuri, Awadhi, and other Eastern Hindi-Bihari dialects of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand. Since Bollywood films, music, and other media from India arrived, Standard Hindustani (Standard Hindi-Standard Urdu) has significantly influenced the language. There are also minor influences from Tamil and other Dravidian languages. Dutch and English have also contributed words to the language in Suriname and Guyana, and English and French in Trinidad and Tobago.

interculturalism is allegedly more geared toward interaction and dialogue than multiculturalism. Second, interculturalism is conceived as something less ‘groupist’ or more yielding of synthesis than multiculturalism. Third, interculturalism is something more committed to a stronger sense of the whole, in terms of such things as societal cohesion and national citizenship. Finally, where multiculturalism may be illiberal and relativistic, interculturalism is more likely to lead to criticism of illiberal cultural practices (as part of the process of intercultural dialogue)”.

Ted Cante (2012) in ‘Interculturalism: The New Era of Cohesion and Diversity’ explained “interculturalism is about changing mindsets by creating new opportunities across cultures to support intercultural activity and it’s about thinking, planning and acting interculturally. Perhaps, more importantly still, it is about envisioning the world as we want it to be, rather than be determined by our and separate past histories” (cited in *About Interculturalism* 2022).

Interculturalism is often confused and conflated with the term ‘multiculturalism’. It is not wrong to say that both terms advocates more or less the same progressive thinking and ideas, yet multiculturalism have some setbacks to it. For example, it does not substantiate the needs of a rapidly growing world which supports super-diversity. In simple words, multicultural societies are less progressive and less inclusive in comparison to intercultural societies.

Martyn Barrett (2013: 21-30) talked about the importance of ‘intercultural dialogue’<sup>6</sup> and calls it the central attribute of interculturalism. Intercultural dialogue cannot only be used to have a better understanding of ‘other’s’ culture it helps prevent conflicts caused by limited wisdom<sup>7</sup> and make the world more harmonious and better financially equipped. Barrett further goes on and says over the past decade the employment of intercultural policies has been more in comparison to multicultural ones.

Moreover, interculturalism is called an upgrade of multiculturalism as it stands on the same foundation of multicultural ideas.

---

<sup>6</sup> Intercultural dialogue is an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other's global perception.

## **Transnationalism and Music**

Understanding the link between migration and music is a key to understanding bond of transnationalism with music. As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, it is established that music helps migrants to express their emotions and story, when music is made and consumed in a dislocated setting it helps migrants not only express their migration story but helps an individual to connect with homeland through imagination. When migrants start contributing to the music industry of the host country it helps the migrant and the host country together to overcome social, cultural, and economic problems.

Gibert (2011) explained individuals often adept to music making to overcome historical and socio-cultural problems and mostly results in learning, which proves to be advantageous to the individual and hostland. Transnationalism complements music practices and creation as it provides a way to maintain a sense of one's origin and rebel against the conformities that a new culture would impose upon immigrants. It also allows the creation of a social niche for their new identity which is an amalgamation of both cultures.

Transnationalism gives ample space to immigrants in a non-native setting to openly and freely engage in various social and cultural activities which also includes building music networks. Transnationalism is relatively a new concept and has started to appear more frequently in academic writings. Simone Krüger Bridge (2020) says, musicians are the most ambulant in transnational cultural settings, which also is responsible for drawing the attention of scholars towards 'transnational music studies'. Simone further added that since there is a higher rate of acceptability of diverse music practices in a transnational setting it gives musicians an encouragement towards becoming a global citizen and proliferates advanced technologies to create more hybrid music and with it 'new hybrid identities. Simone also pointed out that developing this interdependence of music and transnationalism in the era of the internet has greatly contributed to developed 'virtual communities' and helps to understand the role of music in transnational culture development.

In a contemporary scenario, the amalgamation taking place in various genres of music makes it difficult for an individual to tag a music practice with just one particular nativity or culture. Where Indians are amalgamating Indian music with western music to create music that pleases a larger mass irrespective of the nativity of the musician, at the same time giving the musician the freedom to keep his/her cultural links alive along with identity.

### **Indians in the Caribbean**

Indians occupy a big part of the Caribbean's population, majorly concentrated in the regions of Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, and Surinam, however, they also are visible in smaller numbers in Jamaica, Martinique, Grenada, St. Lucia, and other regions of the Caribbean Islands. In Guyana Indian population is considered to be the largest ethnic group, whereas in Trinidad they are on road to becoming the largest with over 44 percent of the population of Indian Origin. Right after slavery was abolished, Indians first arrived in the Caribbean region to replace recently freed African slaves in plantation jobs. These Indians first migrated to the Caribbean in 1838 via the sea route under British colonial authorities and were documented as Coolies. Today, the Indian community is thriving all across the Caribbean Islands although most of them lost touch with their languages.

Kumar Mahabir (1995) explains that in the beginning these Indian Immigrants were placed in different colonies by the plantation authorities as per the demand for work, as a result of this in the contemporary scenario the presence of several cultural and religious aspects is evident in these regions. A majority of these Indians were from the Northern region of India where Hindi and its other dialects are widely spoken for day-to-day business and communication, while a lesser number of Indians were from the southern region of the country.

There were a good number of Indian migrants who opted to stay back after the abolition of indentureship in 1917 and started to accommodate themselves in the hostland because of several reasons, one of them was the anxiety of returning home after decades of servitude. In this respect, Lomarsh Roopnarine (2003) talked about how land ownership provided East Indians with an opportunity to “move from the estate to village settlements. This marked the first free

internal movement of the East Indians in the Caribbean”. However, he further added “Indo-Caribbean rural communities in the late nineteenth century, and even today, were and are marked by high levels of unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, and suicide” which symbolizes the lack of opportunities and struggle that Indians as a community suffered in hostland.

With the beginning of globalization effects, a great number of Indians migrated to various regions of the U.K, U.S.A, and the Netherlands for education and job opportunities. This migration only took place after most Caribbean countries achieved independence from their respective colonizers and became independent. Over the period of time the position of Indians in the Caribbean society changed and they manage to achieve both power and praise all across the Caribbean. The Indians in the Caribbean are known for their resistance to oppression, and they do it in various ways. The Indians have contributed to the unique culture of the Caribbean, and it has also contributed to politics by giving leaders such as Dr. Cheddi Jagan, Basdeo Panday, and many more. It is said that the involvement of Indians in the political scenario of the Caribbean has not only given visibility to the Indian diaspora community of the Caribbean Islands, it also encouraged Indian culture and gave it a boost bringing it on international platforms.

Today whenever there is a discussion regarding multiculturalism and positioning of the Indian diaspora, it is impossible to keep the Indo-Caribbeans out of it. The Indo-Caribbean community is considered to be the most vibrant and fast-growing, they depended upon assimilation and emphasized their education. They very progressively managed to hold their religious and cultural ties with growing activities of music and dance. In 2015 Late Sushma Swaraj (former Minister for External Affairs and Overseas Indian Affairs) remarked the glorious Indo-Caribbean diaspora by saying:

“Though numbering less than two million across the Caribbean Islands, they (Indians) occupy a position of considerable power and influence. They have produced some of the best artists, writers, spiritual leaders, political thinkers, doctors, lawyers, scientists and sportsmen. Indian festivities including Diwali, Holi, Maha Shiva (Rathri) and Ram Navami are celebrated with traditional fervour and gaiety. Indian films and music are as popular as they are in India” (cited in *Business Standard*, 21 September 2015)

## **Indian music in Diaspora**

India's music is immense and has variety in it, it incorporates various genres, assortments, and structures which encompasses classical music, folk music, Bollywood better known as filmi, rock, and pop. Music of India has a history traversing a few centuries and developed over several geo-locations spanning the sub-continent. In India music hold a vital position and is a part of socio-religious life too.

Peter Manuel (2006) talks about how Indo-Caribbean music is linked with both folk and modern culture which represents the distinctiveness and dynamic elements of Caribbean culture, which is very much visible in regions other than the Caribbean such as New York. Indo-Caribbean has a special place not only in the history and research studies but it a special place in the lives of every Indo-Caribbean family, from casual family gatherings to formal and traditional celebrations, music remains an inevitable part of their culture and daily lives.

Christine Amrita (2015) says:

“Like many communities across the world, the Indo-Caribbean community has developed a very intimate and nuanced relationship with music. From chowtal to chutney-soca, Indo-Caribbean artists have stitched together lyrics and instruments that preserve what remains of their ties to the subcontinent while also acknowledging the context with which these remnants have become creolised. What stands to remain is a repertoire of songs that both elegise and eulogise a crossroads of culture that remembers what was, celebrates what is, and mourns for what could have been”.

Indo-Caribbean music has served generations of Indians as a bridge that connects to the long-lost history of first indentured migration. Tina K. Ramnarine (1996) rightly points out while talking about the survival of traditional elements and mentions “the ability of music to retain identity”. As Ramnaraine discusses “Indian music in the diaspora” she discusses Indian music's role in building Indo-Caribbean identity where folk music of traditional ceremonies such as *Matkor* and *Sohar* became legitimate genres and helped the Indo-Caribbean community to stay together and assert their identity on public platforms.

Aside from bridging a direct connection with the ancestral land, music served as a tool for resistance for both the community and gender. Women who used music to educate their younger generation during traditional celebrations like *Matkor* later became a mouthpiece for the same gender to express and reclaim their identity. Women from diaspora Indian communities who once weaved their cultures with music now express their freedom through songs. Indo-Caribbean music and dance practices removed the difference between men and women and brought both genders together as a community in host countries to celebrate their ethnic identities. Though Indo-Caribbeans often use music to convey their Indianness, today they use music to showcase their unique identity as Indo-Caribbeans.

Apart from Indo-Caribbean music, the music world has witnessed an evolution of Indian music in different countries and areas where the Indian population resides. The presence of Punjabi culture in the United Kingdom, U.S.A, and Canada represent amalgamated and transnational identities of Indian diasporas.

Laura Leante (2004) says, “during 1980s, bhangra<sup>8</sup> emerged within the communities of the Punjabi diaspora in the United Kingdom. Characterised by the encounter between Indian tradition and Anglo-American pop, it came to represent a means for the younger generations of immigrants to express their identity as ‘Punjabis in the West’” (109). The Punjabi diaspora to the United Kingdom is a result of grand migration that took place all across the world during the 1960s and 1970s which was the starting point of globalisation. Just like Hindi-speaking migrants practiced their music culture in the Caribbean countries Sikh and Punjabis too exposed their traditions and culture in the form of music and dance to the British population and culture.

British-born Punjabis and Caribbean Born Hindustani share a common connection, they consider their birth country as their actual ‘homeland’ yet they maintain a cultural bond alive with India and their respective regions through cultural practices such as dance and music. Therefore, they are mostly found in a “complex soundscape”.

---

<sup>8</sup> Bhangra is traditional Punjabi rural dance form which the members of the community perform during the crop reaping season. The dance form is accompanied by traditional Punjabi vocals and instruments primarily Dhol and chimta (bended flat iron bar with cymbals attached to it). The female counter part of Bhangra is colloquially called *Gidda*.

Laxmi Subramaniam (2008) talks about Carnatic<sup>9</sup> music tradition in the United States and explains that as integral elements that capture the “essence of a nation” music and the performing arts are inevitably an important part of the diaspora community’s imagination.

Usage of music with religion has always been one of the strengths of the Indian diaspora, but now the Indian diaspora musicians are composing amalgamated versions of Indian music fused with various foreign music genres to create a unique kind of music. Music has the strength to bring people together, and the Indian diaspora as mentioned above has utilized its strength to reunite Indians in host lands. However, the modern Indian diaspora is making music to bring different races and ethnicity together removing the barrier of language, race, religion, and ethnicity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The literary world is filled with theories, concepts and hypothesis related to migration. Many academics from various fields have made theoretical contributed to various migration ideas. The main focus of these theories is to scrutinize the reasons and to discuss the pull factors of migration. Works on global migration emphasize the connection that diasporas create through various media and communication tools, and the influences they have on society building. Culture has become the prime source of these works and among all the cultural elements music and dance play an imperative role.

In an effort to comprehend the connection among music and diaspora and cultural exchange, I draw upon Arjun Appadurai's (1990) notion of "scapes". The framework offered in this study provided a productive understanding of the social shift of migrants in diaspora. In global cultural flows, there are many specific, yet mutually interconnected dimensions that can be identified as follows:

- 1) *Ethnoscape*: describes people who cross borders as migrants, refugees, workers, and laborers.

---

<sup>9</sup> Classical music of southern region of India

2) *Technoscape*: it refers to the flow of technology that is directly related to the day-to-day life of people.

3) *Ideoscape*: refers to the global flow of ideas through various medium such as public performances, speeches and also through social media.

4) *Mediascape*: it refers to the global flow of media and information and the distribution of the same through various channels.

5) *Financescape*: the global flow of money across political borders.

### ***Theories of memory, culture and music***

As the study in its later stage deals with narratives and memories of migrants in diaspora, I choose to utilize the 'theory of memory'. This explains the development and growth of music in diaspora. Pinar Guran (2014) in his study of 'music and cultural memory' has discussed three main concepts of memory in sociological forms in order to highlight the relationship between music and community building in diaspora through the channel of memory. They are:

1) *Collective memory*: Pinar Guran (2014) explained collective memory as a counterpart of cultural memory. He quotes from Maurice Halbwachs, (sociologist and a philosopher) who addressed memory "as a phenomenon that is not only formed in the past but it is mostly shaped in the present time" (20). In diaspora memories are the tools with which migrants experience the presence of homeland in the host country with the help of collective memory of the community members through narratives, oral literature, images, music, dance etc, which keeps shifting. A collective memory has a wide range of influences over and it always maintains a constant social relation between humans (migrants in this case) and culture.

2) *Cultural memory*: Pinar Guran (2014) further talks about the 'theory of culture memory' developed by Jan Assmann (Egyptologist) based on collective memory. According to Pinar Guran, the idea is "the act of remembering" based on the definition by Erll (2008), who talks about cultural memory in two contexts. First, in the 'socio-cultural' context where memory takes

place, and the second context was addressed as a 'symbolic' form that is based on memory constructed by a social group through sharing through multiple medium such as media, institutions and practices (22).

The link between culture and memory, which Pinar Guran (2014) describes, is something found in Assmann's (2001) 'Remembering' theory that describes the relationship between social-cultural form and symbolic memory by people in diaspora who exhibit solidarity among themselves and a sense of safety.

3) *Constructed memory*: it is more about the memory of the younger generation of communities. In diaspora the memory constructed by the younger generation after a visible generational change can be called a constructed memory, which mostly is a result of cultural and collective memory of the elders. Pinar Guran (2014) in his work has also talked about a link of constructed memory with music by using DeNora's (2003) definition and Radley's (1990) explanation of cultural constructs: "Here music again comes to the fore, as part of the retinue of devices for memory retrieval (which is simultaneously, memory construction). Music can be used as a device for the reflexive process of remembering/constructing who one is, a technology for spinning the apparently continuous tale of who one is. To the extent that music is used in this way it is not only, in Radley's sense, a device of artefactual memory [Radley, 1990; Urry, 1996]; it is a device for the generation of future identity and action structures, a mediator of future existence" (cited in Guran, 2014: 29).

The study views music as a cultural heritage "artefact" that descendants of Indians in the Caribbean have been preserving through various means and practices for many generations in order to develop a culturally strong identity.

The study at several levels' highlights 'generational changes' as a standard tool to address the growth and changes in immigrants' groups and also to point out the paradigm shifts that took place in the journey of Hindustani Sangeet through the course of diaspora. To understand this change in the nature of Hindustani Sangeet in the Caribbean, one needs to understand three important phases of diaspora - Theory of Accommodation, Assimilation and Hybridization. The study uses these three theories as core concepts of cultural traits as these three are the most inevitable phenomena that migrants in any sort of migration witness.

### *Cultural Accommodation*

Leong (2008) defined cultural accommodation as a cycle that occurs when people or a community share a characteristic arrangement of qualities and beliefs when they interact with an unfamiliar community in the host culture, adopting the values and beliefs of that culture while continuing to retain their own culture. As a general rule, the process of cultural accommodation is unidirectional i.e. every time a migrant group takes over or adapts the traits of the dominant culture it continues on to adopt more of it including beliefs and values; including the risks of losing its own cultural identity. Moreover, with every generational shift, they become more and more attached to the dominant culture than their ancestral roots and heritage. It is very important to know that cultural accommodation is a time-consuming process but is slightly assertive. There are essentially four main stages migrants experience while navigating through the adaptation or integration to a new place/land:

- The first stage is called 'Euphoria' also referred to as the "honeymoon stage" where the migrants experience excitement as a person on encountering a new culture, new people, and of course the difference in the environment in comparison to the one they are familiar with.
- The second stage is the state of being in a 'Cultural Shock'. This mostly causes trauma to the mental health of the migrants as it hits right after the 'euphoria'. This stage is mostly accompanied by nostalgia, fearfulness, homesickness, the frustration of being in an unknown land, and confusion, and sometimes instates a sense of anger in individuals as they undergo the process of understanding the dominant culture and its traits.
- Acceptance and adaptation are the next two stages where not only the individual accepts the new surroundings and their traits but also begins to adapt to the dominant culture and its values without giving up their own.

### *Cultural Assimilation*

Like cultural accommodation, cultural assimilation is the most extreme form of acculturation. It's more like an everyday occurrence in human lives, affecting their language and communication as a form of self-surveillance to prevent the fear of being an outcast. It is a process of compelling

the minority mostly voluntarily to adapt to the cultural practice of the host community. However, it is almost impossible for the minority community to entirely overthrow or replace its traditional cultural practices such as religion, culinary preferences, proxemics, and aesthetics. According to William A. V. Clark (2003), assimilation is “the process that occurs spontaneously and often unintended in the course of interaction between majority and minority groups.” However, if the process of assimilation continues and compounds with racial and biological fusion, it gives birth to an element of uniqueness. Constant practice of assimilation by one or more than one generation in the diaspora has resulted in the formation of a mixed or new identity. It is noteworthy to know that the longer the stay of the migrant in the hostland the more it is likely for them to start the process of assimilation to its culture. There are primarily four benchmarks to examine the degree to which migrants assimilate into a new culture:

- Financial or socioeconomic status is characterized by instructive attainment, occupation, and pay. It decides whether or not the migrants can move up the ‘social ladder’ shaking hands with hierarchy and affording a suitable living for themselves. Unfortunately, sometimes discrimination based on race and ethnicity makes it harder for migrants to maintain a healthy socioeconomic status.
- Spatial fixation is characterized by geology. In other words, spatial concentration is the degree to which comparable societies begin to fan out and not live as a cluster.
- Language fulfillment is characterized as the capacity to communicate in the host language and the withdrawal of the person’s primary or native language. This can be considered a roadblock for the settling population; as learning a new language can create certain setbacks. Moreover, it can limit the number of opportunities for the people of that minority group. The “three-generation model” of language assimilation (see Fishman, 1965; Gordon 1964, 1981) expresses that the first-generation migrants gain some headway in language absorption but hold the essential familiarity with their local language, while their immediate descendants are mostly bilingual and the third in line talks just English (cited Waters and Thomas, 2005).
- Intermarriage especially across racial and ethnic groups is viewed as a sign of social reconciliation. As it diminishes the capacity of families to provide the younger generation with a steady ethnic culture. As an example, by the mid-20th century, many Indians who migrated to the British colonies between 1845 and 1920 began to assimilate to the native

lifestyle, including its cultural norms, everyday slang, and colloquial usage of words, and music of the respected settlements where they had once been forced to migrate to. Then there were those communities that did manage to keep many of their original traditions and rituals enacted and are still thriving over it.

### *Cultural Hybridization*

According to Kenton Bell (2014), cultural hybridization is a “process by which cultural elements blend into another culture by modifying the element to fit cultural norms” (cited in [Sociologydictionary.org](http://Sociologydictionary.org)).

Manuel (1997) talks at length about the bonds the first-generation migrants shared with their native land. Moreover, he further discusses the roles of culturally ‘knowledgeable individuals’ such as musicians and pundits helped these migrants to tighten and maintain the bond with India and their local culture alive for decades. Manuel also talks about how music became a sustaining face for the Indians in their new ‘inhospitable homeland’ “by the mid-twentieth century, the significance of music as a cultural icon was being further heightened by the decline of other traditional emblems of Indianness such as caste consciousness and use of Hindi as spoken language” (19). The second half of the 20th century shows quite different music practice in the Caribbean. The Indo-Caribbean community not only grooved to their own style of ‘neo-traditional’ music but also often shakes their legs to Bollywood songs. Movies with Indian diasporic themes became popular as they reflect their own struggles, lifestyle, and changes they went through while settling down in their ‘new homeland’.

Lidskog (2017) explains culture hybridization in context of music as a "constitutive part of the culture" that is crucial for the formation of identity both personally and socially. The purpose of it is to bind group members together by showing them that they are a unit and that they have specific responsibilities or missions to fulfill.

There are several beautiful islands and mainland territories in the Caribbean, and they are known throughout the world for their vibrant and colorful culture, which reflects the varied racial and cultural backgrounds of their citizens. The Caribbean, therefore, has a unique identity because of

its ethnic diversity, which is highly influenced by cultural diversity. It consists of a variety of ethnic groups such as Indians, Africans, Chinese, and Europeans. Hence, this society is classified as multicultural due to its diversity as a result of colonization. Over a period, these races kept absorbing elements from each other. As they progressed to a more progressive political and social system that accepted immigrants from a variety of cultures, ethnicities, races, languages, and religious backgrounds, they made significant progress toward achieving a more cohesive society. This has influenced Indians in the Caribbean, and after becoming a part of a global multicultural system they still represent their unique identity and resist complete assimilation. By promoting multiculturalism, individuals are permitted to express their own identity in the manner they choose, instead of being forced to fit into the mould of a 'melting pot'. Indo-Caribbeans occupy a visible space in societies that have progressed to become more cohesive and recognize differences as well as similarities in culture.

### ***Theory of multiculturalism***

To understand music in diaspora and its relevance among the transnationals it becomes important to understand their connection of music with multiculturalism. One has to develop an understanding of their music while fostering their understanding of people in other cultures. Rick Parker (2015) explained the importance of multicultural music. He says: “understanding one’s own culture, as well as other cultures, enables a person to establish an identity”. He even addressed multicultural music learning as a powerful tool to not only educate individuals about their own culture, but it enhances the chances of developing a chance of understanding cultures of other while an individual fosters the musical understanding of that foreign group.

The theory of multiculturalism talks about several types of multiculturalism. They are:

- 1) Liberal Multiculturalism: It is tolerant of difference and accommodative. Liberal multiculturalism allows an individual to “retain, practice, and celebrate their culture and cultural identity”.

- 2) Conservative Multiculturalism: It promotes assimilation among societies and the idea of unity in diversity.
- 3) Pluralist Multiculturalism: It is the acceptance of opposing political viewpoints, moral principles and cultural customs or beliefs.
- 4) Cosmopolitan Multiculturalism: It respects cultural variety, but only to the extent that elements of the other cultures can be exchanged and incorporated into a larger effort to forge a shared global identity.

By applying the idea of multiculturalism proposed as by Tariq Modood and Bhiku Parekh, the study aims to understand the process of ‘culture preservation’ and ‘cultural practices’ among Indian diaspora in the Caribbean context. Through the consumption and creation of music and dance forms by the Indian diaspora, the Indo-Caribbean diaspora for over a century has asserted their unique identity, developed cultural ties and redefined socio-cultural meanings in the host country.

### ***Theory of Ethnomusicology***

Theory of Ethnomusicology is one of the most important theoretical frameworks that I have employed, and major chapter of this thesis are an outcome of this theoretical framework. Dutch musicologist Jaap Kunst originally used the word ethnomusicology in the 1950s, merging musicology (study of music) with ethnology (the comparative study of many cultures), and calling it “Our Science”.

Similarly, Alan P. Merram’s (1964) definition of ethnomusicology is concerned with culture and he defined ethnomusicology as “the study of music in culture”.

The present study uses Timothy Rice’s (2010) theory of Ethnomusicology, where he stated “Ethnomusicology theory involves writing of descriptions, classifications, comparisons, interpretations and generalizations about music, about particular musical traditions, about music in a set of related communities, or about music in relation to cognitive, artistic, experiential, social, cultural, political and economic issues, themes and processes” (105).

This theoretical framework has provided the study with a wider range of analysis of three important themes of this study i.e. Music, culture and Identity allows the investigation to comprehend the subject under different lights and lenses, reaching the objectives of the thesis.

Social Theory of Ethnomusicology is:

- a) Interdisciplinary-extended out of their academic roots;
- b) Suggestive of novel viewpoints;
- c) Produces interpretations rather than scientific justification;
- d) Critical of common-sense ideas about what makes human life seem “natural”.

*Music theory of Ethnomusicology*: is the research into how music functions in social and cultural environments. In order to comprehend not only what music is, but also what it means to its creators and audiences.

*Discipline specific theory*: understands not just what music is but why it is, what it signifies, and how it reflects, alludes to, and affects our human situation as individuals and as social beings. The study of music as aesthetic practice and source of social power is what it is, in essence.

It is my argument that this evolution of music and performing arts is a direct result of generational and multi-geological shifts that have helped the Indian diaspora redefine socio-cultural meanings in the host country. These theories discussed in this chapter, provide a simple but effective framework for understanding various aspects (historical, social, and cultural) of the Indian Caribbean diaspora's music and how it has evolved.

### **Importance of the Study**

Indian diaspora is playing a major role in strengthening the country's bond with the world. It is astonishing to know that every time Indians migrated under any circumstances, they globally work towards benefiting society. While overcoming the ‘fear of unknown’ in alien lands they

keep reminding themselves and others about 'where they are coming from'. Indian migration to the Caribbean happens to be one of the oldest chapters in the history of Indian diaspora writings, and it still sings for Indianism.

Modern-day tools and technological advancements have made the world tightly connected, moreover, it is now easier for an individual of any ethnicity to know and learn about their ancestral culture. I believe it is equally important to revisit history to keep reminding ourselves how Indian traditional and cultural traits together became the symbol of hope and identity for the 'lost souls of diaspora'.

It has been shown in the past that Hindustani Sangeet, through its growth in the Caribbean, has served as a touchstone symbolizing the power of culture and traditions in Indo-Caribbean communities. Similarly, it also shows how the 'processes of diaspora' and cultural assimilation can lead to language preservation. There have been many studies on the Indian diaspora and their lives. However, only a few have concentrated on coolies and their contribution to the music world and cultural preservation. Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet, also known as Indo Caribbean music, is very popular among global audiences and academicians, but not as much among laymen. Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet consists of several sub-genres, some of which have become instantly famous. Others, however, were followed by a rapid decline, others are still flourishing today under the protection of Caribbean Hindustani people. As the music industry undergoes rapid change with time and generational change, it is more important than ever for Indians in the Caribbean to nurture their musical tradition. Among their third and fourth generations, indentured musical traditions are preserved as a link to their ancestral land and Indian tradition. For the older generation music became a tool of expression and education for the younger generation as well. In this study, I strive to shed light and understand more deeply how Hindustani Sangeet evolved as the Indian rural migrants adapted to the new 'Indian Oceanic' way of life after experiencing diaspora (Servan, 2011). In this research not only, the historical perspective will be taken into consideration but also the current face of this genre and its subgenera will be taken into account.

This study seeks to conceptualize the global market influences that have contributed to Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet's sustainability through all the ups and downs it has experienced

in its voyage towards the modern world. Another crucial component of this research is also to examine how Indian women contribute to the survival of the folklore traditions alive in a non-native land and paving the way for Hindustani Music towards evolution and nurtured it to survive the constant changes taking place in the music world.

### **Objectives of the Study**

In order to carry out the research properly and to bring about a clear picture of this research, the researcher has set some objectives. Followings are the objectives of the research:

1. To analyze the reasons that made Indians travel to the colonial plantations far away from their homeland.
2. To trace the journey of Hindustani music into becoming the Caribbean Hindustani sangeet.
3. To examine Indian women's contribution to cultural preservation in the Indian Diaspora.
4. To study the representation of different gender roles and sexuality in Caribbean Hindustani sangeet.
5. To analyze the impact of the global market on Caribbean Hindustani sangeet and its different genres such as *Chutney*, *Chutney Soca*, and *Baithak*; and how it evolved over a while under foreign influences.
6. To analyze how interculturalism and transnationalism had an impact on Hindustani music in the contemporary era and its role in building a more blended community.

### **Research Methodology**

As a means of achieving the objectives of the present study, qualitative research methods were employed. For this study, primary and secondary sources of data were used. My primary research involved contacting 150 respondents of whom only 60 provided me with actual data. Respondents were selected using snowball sampling and social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Several of these respondents belong to financially stable and well-educated families that fell under transnational categories as they or their immediate

ancestors moved to New York, London, or Holland for either education purposes or to find better employment opportunities, which makes them distinct from the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean, and they have consistently been referred to as the Indo-Caribbean diaspora throughout the study.

A detailed analysis of qualitative data has been conducted to understand diasporic identity, transnationalism, and cultural practices among diasporic respondents. Respondents were interviewed using a structured interview schedule. We have compiled quality secondary data from musical compositions, articles, journals, books, blogs, documentaries, and internet sources. Throughout the research, a focus was always placed on socio-cultural aspects and the ongoing legacy of music in the Indo-Caribbean community.

### ***Snowball Sampling***

Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method using samples that have rare characteristics. The technique involves soliciting referrals from existing subjects to recruit the samples needed for research. As part of this sampling method, the primary source nominates other potential sources of data that may be useful in the research study. Referrals are the primary source of snowball sampling, which is how I was able to generate the desired sample size.

In situations where there is no predetermined list of target population details, snowball sampling is typically used. The snowball method ensures that you reach the targeted population. It is one of the most effective ways to gather data and meaningful information. Following is an example of how I used this technique:

1. Identifying and surveying members of a rare population,
2. To examine the relation between members of a population.

Regardless of the situation, respondents are expected to know the identity of other participants in a group or population.

3. Several artists expressed interest in the study during the data collection process but were hesitant to provide their identities because they were concerned about their privacy. Snowball sampling helps in this situation. Snowball sampling allows researchers to

closely examine and filter members of the population based on the respondents' demands. It also allows researchers to conduct research without collecting any personal data by explaining the purpose of the research and eventually analyzing the findings.

As part of the initial data collection phase, I contacted 150 respondents through social media platforms. It was Rahul, Mounisha, Tulsi, Dev Prasad, and Thomas<sup>10</sup> who led me to the other members of the community/group. In that way, the study began to gather a chain of people who had a common interest and enthusiasm for it. My survey collected information/data from 60 respondents with either professional or recreational ties to music and dance within the allocated time frame.

The study did not face any sample bias as the referrals were obtained from different sources and not just one which made the data collected very vibrant and diverse and helped the study with conclusive and powerful results.

After collecting survey responses, I reached out to the respondents to fathom their responses in a more elaborated manner, which led me to conduct qualitative interviews with the respondents who willingly participated in the survey.

### ***Interview Schedule***

A structured interview schedule is used by the researcher during the second phase of the data collection process. An interview schedule contained a set of questions that were to be asked exactly as written, with instructions for the interviewer to record the responses.

Questions are put in sequential order and the questionnaire contains both open-ended<sup>11</sup> and closed-ended<sup>12</sup> questions. There are some considerations that must be posed while keeping in mind the fact that the chosen people lived in various locations around the world.

---

<sup>10</sup> Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the respondents.

<sup>11</sup> Open ended question gives more scope to the respondent to provide response in explanatory ways.

<sup>12</sup> They are also called as Yes/No question where the respondent provide one word answer.

I created a questionnaire based on the Indian diaspora's musical consumption of culture in order to collect the data for this study. The sociocultural features of the Indo-Caribbean diaspora living in the Netherlands/Holland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America were given particular attention. As the data collection took place during the pandemic, the majority of responses were given online. I used social media platforms and video calls to share the interview schedule with the respondents using FaceTime, Facebook and Whatsapp video calling.

### *Narrative Interviews*

The technique is used to conduct unstructured interviews with a few respondents, allowing them to describe their own experiences in their own words. We aim to find out what kinds of changes are going on in the music industry of the Indo-Caribbean in the contemporary scenario and not rely only upon predetermined information and knowledge that previous research/literature has provided. In order to analyze the responses and narratives of the interviewees, I prepared a list of topics that respondents were willing to discuss.

### ***Observation***

I met a few of my respondents during their visit to India. It allowed me to interact face-to-face with the subject and gain firsthand knowledge. I was able to follow their narratives with complete attention, as I was able to not only observe their responses but behavior and surroundings. Meetings were took place in different regions of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. These respondents shared their narratives and family history with me while exchanging views on the music of the Indo-Caribbeans.

There are a few limitations to this method of data collection. These limitations might include observer bias<sup>13</sup>, and also the difficulty of replicating the data as most of the responses are spontaneous. Observation provides researchers with the freedom to collect data in an open and free way without being constrained by predetermined variables. Moreover, the directness of this

---

<sup>13</sup> Observer's presence can influence the situation and results as the researcher watches.

method has many advantages for the study, as it allows the researcher to gather unadulterated data from respondents. Furthermore, it allows the researcher to interact with individuals of any age and observe their behavior. In addition, data collected in an observation study allows the researcher to understand history most authentically. This is because the respondents are in natural surroundings which eliminate the artificiality of the data.

### **Observing Digitally**

As mentioned above there is a presence of these groups and communities on new media commonly known as social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Some of these social-media groups considered for this study are such as *Caribbean Hindustanis*, *Crownthebrown*, *Chutney music*, *The Cutlass Magazine*, and *the Baithak Gana Community*. The Indian diaspora community is assisted in various ways by these social media groups. The above-mentioned sites have been selected as they serve the Indo-Caribbean community as a place to interact and discuss topics such as music, dance, food, politics, and everyday life. *Caribbean Hindustanis*, a Facebook page with a substantial number of followers, has allowed this study to reach to a substantial number of respondents and allowed an opportunity to interact with members of the Indo-Caribbean community from Trinidad, Surinam, Guyana, and diasporic Indo-Caribbeans from the USA, UK and the Netherlands. The respondents discussed that apart from cherishing their cultural traits and links, they also participated in various celebrations organized by their local authorities, which eulogizes the existence of this hybrid community. The same platforms have been observed, organizing events to promote and celebrate Indian Arrival Day in the Caribbean, Cultural hybridity, and moreover, during the pandemic, the same pages were observed organizing Covid-19 vaccination awareness events as well.

### ***Digital Ethnography: Using social media, web meetings and e-callings as a research site.***

Ethnographic research has evolved in various directions opening up opportunities for the researcher to examine the behavior of participants in its most genuine forms. Like any other

ethnographic study, digital ethnographic studies are conducted to study people in their own environments in order to collect authentic, rich, and elaborate data. This study uses digital ethnography as one of the most effective and relevant research methods and tools to collect data.

In order to collect data, I used online interaction, followed by questionnaire surveys, and personal interviews. The reason I chose a digital version of ethnography over a physical one is that what I anticipated as a limitation of this study has turned out to be its most significant strength. Lack of finance was one of the reasons for settling down on digitalized ethnography, and being a rookie in the field it did take a toll on my research and mental health. At first, the response rate to my efforts was very low. However, I can now see that my efforts were not like 'shooting an arrow into the dark' but are relevant to the population and geographical area I intend to study. Despite only interacting with a handful of people, their diverse backgrounds provided insights into the nature of the field and its sociocultural complexities. My limitations became my strength, as with time I realized the diversity of data is simply a consequence of choosing a digital mode over a physical one.

After a few months into Covid-19, I started interacting with my respondents in order to continue the flow of research. It was an unfortunate time and an unfortunate situation, and I only received a handful of replies back. A majority of the Facebook accounts that I initially interacted with were erased. These were the respondents who took part in the study at its early stages. In the midst of the lockdown, I tried contacting as many respondents as possible for the study. It took me a while to discover Facebook pages like *Caribbean Hindustani*, *Chuntymusic*, and *Instagram accounts like baithakganacomunity* and *crownthebrown*. Around the same time, a Twitter account called *The Cutlass Magazine* released podcasts on indentured lives, their communities, and their problems across the world. In response to my approach to the admins of these Facebook pages, they arranged a Zoom and Google Meeting. These videos were subsequently posted on the timelines of these Facebook pages (*Caribbean Hindustani* and *Chutneymusic*) along with a questionnaire introducing the area of research to the members of these groups. As a result, more responses were received and new people interacted with me.

A little over six months after the outbreak of the pandemic in India, I also began participating in online webinars and conferences taking place in Caribbean countries or discussing the Indo-Caribbean diaspora. These conferences introduced a completely different crowd of respondents which enhanced the literary background of this study to significant lengths. When I began

communicating with the respondents, I was able to use the acquired knowledge about the Indo-Caribbean population, their culture, and music as an icebreaker.

I grew up in a Hindi-speaking family with strong connected roots to Uttar Pradesh and this fact also was proven to be beneficial for the research as it ignited a spark of curiosity among the members of the Indo-Caribbean community while I was interacting with them. Initially, I was an outsider to most of them, however, since most of the participants of this study have a connection to either my language or the place of my birth and origin, I was able to enter into their homes, lives, and finally celebrations, ultimately making me part of their community, all through using digital mediums such as WhatsApp video calling, FaceTime, Google meetings, etc. There were five respondents who were kind enough to share pictures, history and oral literature with me. As my research progressed, and as I collected more and more data, these respondents became my key informants, and in addition to answering the questions I was asking them, they also provided me with additional information, such as rare recordings, translation of songs, lyrics of the songs, anecdotes about a few compositions and images of old records and dust jackets of selected works, most of which I have used as secondary data for my research.

Below are the details of respondent data collected with the help of above-mentioned research technique, distributed under appropriate categories:

*Table 1.1 Distribution based on age and sex*

| <b>Sex</b> | <b>Age</b>             |                        |                        |                        |                              | <b>Total</b> |
|------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
|            | <b>10-15<br/>years</b> | <b>15-25<br/>Years</b> | <b>25-35<br/>Years</b> | <b>35-45<br/>Years</b> | <b>45&gt;above<br/>Years</b> |              |
| Male       | 1                      | 3                      | 10                     | 10                     | 8                            | 32           |
| Female     |                        | 8                      | 9                      | 7                      | 4                            | 28           |
| Total      | 1                      | 11                     | 19                     | 17                     | 12                           | 60           |

*Table 1.2 Distribution based on education qualification*

| <b>Education<br/>Qualification</b> | <b>Sex</b>  |               | <b>Total</b> |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
|                                    | <b>Male</b> | <b>Female</b> |              |
| Research                           | 1           | 4             | 5            |
| Masters                            | 9           | 7             | 16           |
| Bachelors                          | 19          | 14            | 33           |
| Diploma                            | 2           | 3             | 5            |
| Primary                            | 1           |               | 1            |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>32</b>   | <b>28</b>     | <b>60</b>    |

*Table 1.3 Distribution based on marital status and sex*

| <b>Marital Status</b> | <b>Sex</b>  |               | <b>Total</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
|                       | <b>Male</b> | <b>Female</b> |              |
| <b>Married</b>        | 15          | 9             | 24           |
| <b>Unmarried</b>      | 11          | 16            | 27           |
| <b>Divorced</b>       | 4           | 2             | 6            |
| <b>Other</b>          | 2           | 1             | 3            |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>32</b>   | <b>28</b>     | <b>60</b>    |

*Table 1.4 Distribution based on Generation and Sex*

| <b>Sex</b>    | <b>Generation</b> |           |           |          | <b>Total</b> |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|
|               | 3rd               | 4th       | 5th       | 6th      |              |
| <b>Male</b>   | 5                 | 8         | 18        | 1        | 32           |
| <b>Female</b> | 3                 | 5         | 18        | 2        | 28           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>8</b>          | <b>13</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>60</b>    |

For secondary sources of data, the study is depended on articles published in different journals, magazines, survey reports, books, discography of selected artist, and related literature, to bring out a clear interpretation of the topic.

### **Data Analysis**

Upon collecting the data, it was necessary to process, analyze, and verify the data to ensure it was relevant to the study. I employed Exploratory Data approach to analyze the data. The theory of Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) was developed by John Turkey along with a number of techniques in order to generate results. Data collection with EDA uses tools and techniques to gain access to social and psychological data. It works best with open-ended data. It increases the confidence of participants and makes it easy to analyze data. By virtue of its flexibility, new concepts and understandings of the area are generated, as well as new concepts and themes can be discovered.

According to Barney Glaser's (1992) instructions, I first identified the commonalities among the key variables, then searched for errors and anomalies. Literature and history about the research area and subject were put to the test, and together they provided major themes under which I have designed the key chapters of this thesis. The major themes of this thesis are:

- Diasporic consciousness;
- Hindustani music in the diaspora;
- The construction of Indian diasporic identity through music and cultural links;
- Musical expressions of patriotism in diaspora;
- Music as a carrier of cultures, and
- Gender, sexuality, and music.

The above-mentioned themes are carefully divided and presented in each chapter of this thesis, which the next sections discuss in brief.

## **Chapterization**

There are five chapters in the thesis. The scope and importance of the study are explained in the first chapter. Additionally, it covers the theoretical foundation, significant ideas, significance of the study, methodology, and study limits.

The Second chapter starts with a brief account of Indo-Caribbean migration; its history, concepts, journey, community building, and most importantly cultural evolution. To comprehend the music practices and choices of the Indo-Caribbean community, it is first important to know the 'Music of India,' its origin, versatility, and variants. The changeovers in forms of *Sangeet* practice in India from Vedic sangeet to modern music genres have been discussed for a better comprehension of the nature of musical activities by Indians and what are the factors responsible for its evolution and expansion. Music has a great influence on the lives of Indian people across the world, for most Indians, it is an everyday spice; it is a preference for many, for few a habit but the natives describe it as cultural, religious, and sacred.

This chapter later on also unfolds the dependence of Indo-Caribbean community upon the music. Moreover, a detailed discussion about every subgenus of *Girimitiya Sangeet* such as Baithak, Chutney, Chutney Soca is also included in this chapter. It focuses on the chronology of Indians migrating to the Caribbean and the formation of a community in the Caribbean that has Indian roots. In the end, it will also discuss the emergence of selected music genres and artists while discussing diaspora and interculturalism links.

The third Chapter discusses the evolution of *Girimitiya Sangeet* into various fusion art forms better known as *Baithak*, *Chutney*, and *Chutney Soca*. It investigates the changing patterns in these particular music art forms over time, showcasing different songs and lyrics that were composed by several great artists from the Caribbean and India at different times. It talks about the role of women in culture preservation through music and using music to liberate themselves from patriarchal claws.

The changes that took place due to technological advancements and a rapid shift in the choices of music among people in diaspora provoked by the change in generation and cultural hybridity are vital. The relationship between gender and sexual identity in Indo-Caribbean music is highlighted in the chapter which explains how music in the diaspora also represents the identity of different kinds.

The fourth Chapter includes the qualitative investigations of the data compiled from the Indian Diaspora from the different regions of the Caribbean, mostly, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Surinam. The study also included Indo-Caribbean respondents residing in the United States, United Kingdom, and Netherlands as their narratives provide a first-hand experience and helped this study comprehend how migrants build their ties with cultural elements in the hostland.

The respondents were reached out through the Snowball sampling method in which Facebook closed pages known as “*Caribbean Hindustani*” and “*Chutney Music*” and Instagram handle “*Baithak Gana Community*” has provided good quality and authentic data.

The respondents enthusiastically conferred about different genres of music practice in the Caribbean that has *Hindustani* roots. They strongly assert the fact that their music is just not a heritage of the *Hindustanis* in the Caribbean but it bridges the gap of memory also educates the future generation about culture, homogeneity, heterogeneity and liberty, and sexuality while cultivating a distinct sense of identity.

The fifth chapter is the conclusion that provides the important findings of this study.

### **Limitation of the Study**

The study of indenture is a difficult task in itself, as it is a very vast area to study and the researcher have to deal with both history and literature at the same time. Followings are the limitations of the study:

- Research on such a serious issue needs a wide-ranging view, a physical ethnography method to obtain data was not possible due to inevitable circumstances and pandemic.
- Lack of finance and time is one of the reasons that the researcher couldn't conduct a field study, as the areas concerned with this research are either far or are situated abroad.
- Collecting data via the internet was a lengthy process and very unpredictable. The frequency of response was less than half in comparison to offline data collection.
- Lastly, like Covid-19 impacted every single life on this planet, it had a huge impact on the research area as well. The in-connectivity of researchers with institutions and lack of library support for over a year made it difficult to finish this thesis in time.

## Chapter 2: Indian Diaspora in the Caribbean: The Growth of Hindustani Music

This chapter confers about the history of Indentureship in the Caribbean and provides a brief history of Hindustani music highlighting the continual process of evolution taking place with factors like an invasion, change in era, and expansion of civilizations, and so on that affect the nature of the music. To have a fundamental understanding of the emergence of diversified forms of Hindustani Sangeet in the Caribbean, it is vital to fathom the versatility of ‘Bharatiya Sangeet’<sup>14</sup>, this will provide a constructive documentation of the transfiguration of ‘Music in India’ first, and then in the Indian diasporas. Moreover, a detailed discussion about the history of *Girmitiyas* and their relationship with different forms of Hindustani music is included in this chapter. Music has been making its way into becoming one of the most preferred tools of expression, moreover as a soft power for connecting Indians all across the globe. Similarly, Indian music has been crucial in maintaining oral narratives and the inheritance of Indentureship alive along with an active link with Indian roots or homeland.

History helps us to evolve cognitively and provides us with a wide and better understanding of the world and people living around us. Citing Carl L. Becker, in “The Many Meanings of History, Part-II” Szasz, F.M (1974) says:

“The value of history is, indeed, not scientific but moral: by liberalizing the mind, by deepening the sympathies, by fortifying the will, it enables us to control, not society, but ourselves -- a much more important thing; it prepares us to live more humanely in the present and to meet rather than to foretell the future” (54).

---

<sup>14</sup> Bharatiya Sangeet which in common english is addressed as Music of India. As India is a diverse country that same diversity is reflected in the music of Indian which includes Indian Classical music, variety of folk music, pop, popular Bollywood which other wise is known as filmy sangeet and the most recent development in the area of Indian music is inclusion of Rock music. The origin of Indian music is as old as history of India is as its links can be found in oldest scriptures, the Vedas. Indian classical music which is the most famous form of Indian music is appreciated and acknowledged world wide. It is mainly divided into two main categories i.e. Hindustani(North Indian) and Carnatic(South Indian). Today, the presence of Indian music, particularly Bollywood and classical music is across the globe and among diverse audience. It will be unfair to state that it is only Indians or People of Indian Origin those who practice and perform music but even musicians from diverse parts of the world are now coming forward with their keen interest in Indian music. Artists such as Yaani himself and other sensational artists of 21st century such as Diplo, Akon, ColdPlay, and others are presently working with a number of Indian artists and musicians. One cannot escape the presence of Indian music in 21st century as it has been played over and over again by its devotees and addicts on street to concert halls, and from Olympics to political gestures.

Therefore, in a time of robust transnational networks and greater cultural heterogeneity, where the school of thought expands, tradition evolves and art forms variegate it becomes crucial to recognize the unique difference that Indian music carries, as it carries a great historical value in structuring Indian communities.

Before taking a leap into music of India and music of Indo-Caribbeans, it is important to know the history of indentured migration or Coolies migration. Moreover, to understand how human migration and music is interconnected. The next section of this chapter discusses major historical event that took place in the history of Indentured migration and how music became a savior of Indians in their journey to plantation. This section also throws light over the major freedom struggles carried out by Indians which also freed Indians from ‘Coolietude’.

### **Indo-Caribbean migration: Amalgamating culture and music**

With every new step towards a more civilized way of surviving and living as a community, this world has followed various directions towards community/society building and preserving identity. The Indian diaspora in the Caribbean is undoubtedly vibrant and has been upholding its roots even after 150 years of expatriation. Late Sushma Swaraj, the Former Minister of External Affairs, the Government of India, addressed the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean as “one of the most vibrant across the globe” (*Business Standard*, 21 Sept. 2015).

### ***Traveling through Kala Pani: Historical accounts of Indentured migration***

The Caribbean history reveals a high indulgence of European power, as the islands of the Caribbean were under different colonial masters. Imprisoning people defeated in wars use to be a common practice in ancient times, but with change in eras those who had a taste of power and its perks, devised advanced ways of practicing the concept of ‘master and the slave’.

Similarly, the concept of Indentureship was based on more or less a similar foundation, employed by the ‘Capitalist’ of the new world. After the abolition of slavery in 1834, a storm of

distress shook the income flow all across the British colonies. Calling for an immediate replacement of recently freed African slaves to work on the plantation under British authorities; marks the beginning of Indian indentured servitude. Indian were employed under a 5-year contract, during the second phase<sup>15</sup> of indentureship period starting in the middle of the 19th century and continued till early decades of the 20th century. These contracted labourers were documented as Coolies<sup>16</sup>, and were mainly from Hindi speaking belt of the Indian region (Northrup, 1995).

The concept 'indenture' can be defined or framed as— an individual being bound to work according to a prescribed contract. It can also be referred, as Malherbe (1991) says: “transfer of labour power from metropolises to colonies” or as “a system of bonded labour [with a] resemblance to slavery” (04).

Although, for Indian immigrants, this description is not fully applicable, as the indenture system required voluntarily will along with a contract; which declares a specific period for the labour, and also mentions salary, accommodation, ration, and free travel from India to other countries where these workers are assigned to work. Initially, over a half million Indians were sent to different Caribbean colonies as labors to work in plantation fields (Tinker, 1974).

These labors were employed to work on agricultural fields of sugar, cotton, and tea plantations; also few were sent to work to construct rail projects (*Striking women.Org*) in different British colonies of the West Indies, Africa, and South East Asia. The whole recruitment system of Coolies worked on two basic benchmarks, first lightly populated and preferably in the tropical colonies, and second and the most important one was, that there should be an uninterrupted supply of cheap labour. Indians were mostly taken from different streams of colonies like Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, British-Guyana, French Guiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe,

---

<sup>15</sup> Indian indentured migration took place only after the abolition of slavery in 1934, prior to that African slaves were serving the masters on the same plantation where Indians migrated post 1934. These are the two phases of indentured migration.

<sup>16</sup> The word *Coolie* has been defined in many ways by different scholar over a period of time, Farley(1968) describes as “European title for the lowest class of labors in most Eastern countries”. Tinker(1974) describes it as “a part of the lowest layer of industrial labour force”. In the present context the word *Coolie* denotes Indian migrants who traveled to the colonial plantation in search of jobs after signing a five years of contracted designed by the colonial masters during British India Raj.

Reunion, Fiji, South Africa and Malaya (Tinker, 1974). From 1838 till the end of World War I, Britain had already sent over 2 million unskilled Indian workers to 19 colonies (*see table 2.1*) under a signed contract for five or more years. The contract allows them to receive a small amount of money as wages, a piece of land, in some rare cases but mostly they were promised a return passage after the completion of the contract.

Figure 2.1 A copy of an original Indentured contract document, dated 28th February 1879. This image was shared by the admin of Baithak Gana Community (Instagram account)

**MAN.** *N<sup>o</sup> 1*

Ship's Name *"Leonidas"*  
 Ship's No. *27* *Fiji* Emigration Agency. *the*  
 CALCUTTA, the *28<sup>th</sup> February* 1879.

Depôt No. *34*  
 Name, *Trassoe* *M.*  
 Caste, *Chamar*  
 Father's Name, *C. Budhu*  
 Age, *28*  
 Zillah, *Jounpore*  
 Pergunnah, *Saieyalallpur*  
 Village, *Semalpoore*  
 Occupation, *Labourer*  
 Name of next of Kin, *Prattap M. Semalpoore*  
 If married, to whom,   
 Marks, *5-4*

Certified that I have examined and passed the above-named as a fit Subject for Emigration, and that he is free from all bodily and mental disease and has been Vaccinated.

*[Signature]* Surgeon Superintendent. *[Signature]* Depôt Surgeon.

I hereby certify that the man above-described (whom I have engaged as a laborer on the part of the Government of *Fiji* where he has expressed a willingness to proceed to work for hire) has appeared before me and the Protector of Emigrants, who has explained to him all matters concerning his duties as an Emigrant, according to Section XXXVIII of Indian Emigration Act No. VII. of 1871.

*[Signature]* Protector of Emigrants, Calcutta. *[Signature]* Govt. Emigration Agent for *Fiji*

Calcutta: Printed by P. S. D'Saunders and Co., 18, Waterloo Street. —200—578.

Source: Baithak Gana Community

For each migrant, the reason to leave their country was different, few wanted to escape poverty, and few wanted a better life, but most of them were coned as the high level of illiteracy gave colonizers a ruling power in India.

Figure: 2.2: Caribbean Map



Source: *Caribbean\_map.gif* (728×445). (n.d.). Retrieved 12 November 2020, from [https://www.worldatlas.com/img/areamap/continent/caribbean\\_map.gif](https://www.worldatlas.com/img/areamap/continent/caribbean_map.gif)

Figure: 2.3: The present-day map of the Caribbean countries



Source: *The Caribbean*. (n.d.). Retrieved 12 November 2020, from [https://www.uni-due.de/SVE/VARS\\_Caribbean.htm](https://www.uni-due.de/SVE/VARS_Caribbean.htm).

To reach the destination country, these ‘Coolies’ had to withstand a ship journey which on average took 4 to 5 months or more as it was entirely dependent on the destination and weather conditions (Roopnarine, 2003; Galenson, 1984). On 13th January 1838, *The Whitby* and *Hesperus*, cruised from Port Calcutta that anchored in Berbice, British Guiana, on 5th May 1838. *The Whitby* and *Hesperus* were the first ships that sailed to the Caribbean Island carrying Indian labors. Afterward, on 16th November 1844, the British Indian Government sanctioned the resettlement of Indian labors to other colonies of the Caribbean such as Trinidad, Jamaica and Demerara (Guyana) (Hoeft, 1998; Dabydeen, B. Samaroo et al. 2010).

Just Like slaves were treated with not even a flick of humanity, these migrant workers were kept in similar conditions on the ships. The inhuman conditions onboard and absurd residential arrangements made many workers sick, and mentally ill that creating a lot of conflicts and brawls between the inmates.

The ships that transported indentured workers to colonial plantations were divided into compartments. Bahadur (2013) in *Coolie woman: The odyssey of indentured*, describes the segregation on the ship as “the twin-deck, as it is called was partitioned into three, Single emigrant men stayed in the front of the ship; the married couple in the middle; and single women at the back” even the line for food was arranged based on gender.

The journey through *Kala Pani* was not only unpleasant and uncomfortable but affected the mental state of these contractually bounded labors. The ill-treatment and exploitative nature of officials on board created an atmosphere of depression among the inmates, some of them died because of sickness, and a few jumped into the sea committing suicide during the voyage. To maintain their sanity alive, and avoid boredom and depression inmates engaged themselves in various co-curricular activities such as singing and playing instruments like *harmonium*, *dholak*, *bansuri*, *manjeera*, and other musical instruments that they backpacked with them before starting the journey of *Kala Pani* (Manuel, 1997, 2006; Bahadur, 2013). Similarly, episodes from the epic Ramayana were fed to the inmates, as they could relate their journey with *Lord Rama's Vanbaas* or exile (Ray, 2003), moreover, they wanted to maintain internal hierarchy and patriarchy alive among inmates. For example, the story of *Shurpnakha* was used to instruct women on board to be submissive and keep their sexual desires in control otherwise they would meet the fate of *Shurpnakha* (Bahadur, 2013).

Importing women migrant workers to the plantation was a masterstroke by the colonial government, as it not only gave one more reason to Indian migrant men to stay on plantations but also proved to be beneficial for the plantation owners as it provided them leagues of coolie migrants from just one contract (Jonathan, 2018).

By the end of 19th century government of the West Indies started offering a piece of land or money, sometimes both to those who were willing to give up the passage to India (Lal, 1980). Only a small percentage of migrant workers returned and the rest stayed back, among them even a smaller percentage of women who left India returned in comparison to men because “indentured amounted to a great escape for women. They were less likely to return... because emigrating emancipated them from illiberal social and religious customs in Indian” (Bahadur,

2013:167). They had much more valid explanations for it, a few lost their spouse and many were in a relationship with other men in the colonies and accepted that place as home.

In the year 1917 indentured system ended after years of struggle and representation from Indian women approaching the British government to safeguard their honor. Mahatma Gandhi to a great extent played a vital role in ending the indentured system, not only he points out to the British Ministry about the unjust but also requested women to take an active part in the movement.

M. M. Mani (1996) says

“The hardships of emigrants during the voyage to the distant colonies, their living conditions on the plantation, unusual death rate of labour in the colonies, ill-treatment of labour by their planters were all much publicised in Indian native newspapers. In the last quarter of the 19th century public opinion was mobilized again the emigration of labour” (696).

Like Bahadur (2013) M. M. Mani also discusses contribution of nationalist leaders like “Madan Mohan Malviya, Gopalakrishna Gokhale, Mahatma Gandhi, Annie Besant, C.F. Andrews, Mahakavi Bharathi” who not only published news about the injustice and miseries of Indentured labours but also delivered speeches on “public platforms requesting the Government to abolish the system of Indentured labour emigration” (696).

The history of Indian freedom struggle also speaks about the ending of indentured migration. Major freedom struggles like *Satyagrah* is known to be Mahatma Gandhi’s first major political agitation in India which also triggered activism among Indian coolies in South Africa and Caribbean colonies. By 1915, the campaign against indentured had become part of the nationalist discourse against British colonial government and several groups of nationalists were sent as representatives to various colonies to report on the conditions of indentured workers. The reports combined with agitations and pressures from various Indian nationalist groups in Indian and the U.K eventually forced British India government to put an end to the recruitment of Indians as coolies or indentured once and for all in 1917.

Figure: 2.4 Image describes living arrangement on Indentured ships

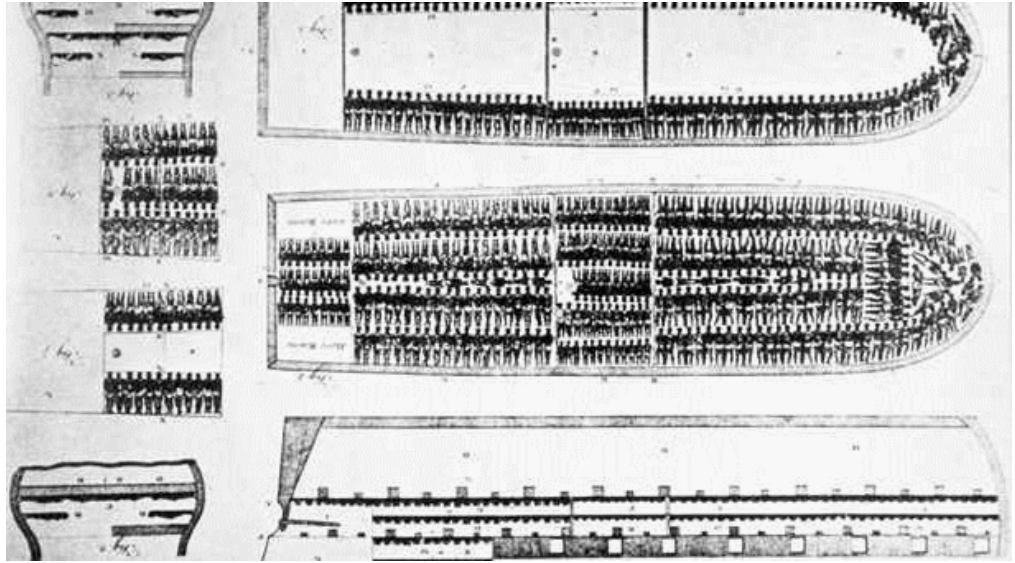


Figure 2.5 Image of Indentured ships



Source for Figure 2.4 and 2.5: *The Caribbean*. (n.d.). Retrieved 12 November 2020, from [https://www.uni-due.de/SVE/VARS\\_Caribbean.htm](https://www.uni-due.de/SVE/VARS_Caribbean.htm)

Above are the pictures which make it easy to understand the setting of the ships in which indentured migrants traveled across the sea to pursue the contractual labour-hood in different Colonies. Between the period 1838 and 1917 around two million Indians migrated under the contracted system of labour, i.e., Indian indentured migration to the British and Dutch Colonies.

*Table 2.1: Distribution of Indian Migration to selective British and French colonies from 1838-1920*

| Sl.No | Name of the Colony/<br>Country/Locations | Colony of | Period    | Number of<br>Indian Migrants |
|-------|------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------------------|
| 1     | Guyana                                   | British   | 1838-1917 | 2,38,909                     |
| 2     | Trinidad and Tobago                      | British   | 1845-1917 | 1,43,939                     |
| 3     | Jamaica                                  | British   | 1845-1916 | 36,681                       |
| 4     | Surinam                                  | Dutch     | 1873-1918 | 35,501                       |
| 5     | Guadeloupe                               | Dutch     | 1854-1887 | 45,844                       |
| 6     | Martinique                               | Dutch     | 1848-1884 | 25,509                       |
| 7     | French Guiana                            | Dutch     | 1853-1885 | 19,276                       |
| 8     | St. Lucia                                | British   | 1858-1895 | 4,354                        |
| 9     | Grenada                                  | British   | 1856-1885 | 3,033                        |
| 10    | St. Vincent                              | British   | 1860-1880 | 2,472                        |
| 11    | St. Kitts                                | British   | 1860-1861 | 337                          |
| 12    | Mauritius                                | British   | 1842-1870 | 3,51,401                     |
| 13    | Natal                                    | British   | 1842-1870 | 6,448                        |
| 14    | Fiji                                     | British   | 1879-1916 | 60,965                       |
| 15    | Malaya                                   | British   | 1842-1870 | 4,00,000                     |
| 16    | Singapore                                | British   | 1825-1873 | 3,000                        |
| 17    | Seychelles                               | British   | 1861-1890 | 6,315                        |
| 18    | Réunion                                  | British   | 1861-1878 | 26,507                       |
| 19    | East Africa                              | British   | 1896-1901 | 32,000                       |
|       | Total                                    |           |           | 14,42,491                    |

Source: Willcox, W. F. (1929). Statistics of Migrations, National Tables, British India, British Malaya, Straits Settlements, Ceylon, Dutch East Indies, French Indo-China, Karikal, Philippines, Siam, China, Japan. In *International Migrations, Volume I: Statistics* (pp. 898–939). NBER. <https://www.nber.org/books-and-chapters/international-migrations-volume-i-statistics/statistics-migrations-national-tables-british-india-british-malaya-straits-settlements-ceylon-dutch>

The present population of POIs in the Caribbean is around 2.5 million out of which many have ethnically blended with migrants from other parts of the world<sup>17</sup>. Showcasing an absolute intercultural and cohesive approach towards culture and society building. It is true that with time and change in era, the younger generation adapted to modern and western lifestyle along with language at the same time making sure their ties with their ancestral land stays strongly connected by observing festivals like Phagwa, Diwali, Shivratri, Eid, and Muharram. One can observe the usage of Hindu traditions and rituals during their weddings as well, where women still sing and perform folksongs to celebrate the ceremony.

### **Socio-Political aspects of the Indo-Caribbean Community**

Although this study is more wrapped up around cultural changes happening amongst the Indo-Caribbean community, which are mostly a byproduct of external influences, at the same time it is important to acknowledge the changes and developments that the Indo-Caribbean community is making. It has often been said that the Caribbean is a "region of immense political diversity" (Paul Sutton, 2000). It is unfair to compare the political scenarios in these countries as one, since the Caribbean region consists of 16 independent nations and 13 separate territories.

Understanding the political life of certain leaders from the Caribbean confers that it has been substantially impacted by internal factors. The emergence of a distinct ethnic group has been one of the most significant influences, however other elements, like as social classes, have also been crucial in shaping the political landscape of Caribbean nations. The Indian community in the Caribbean has been taking a stand to ensure that this community becomes even stronger.

---

<sup>17</sup> During the first and second phase of indentureship people were brought to different plantation colonies as coolies from different parts of the world. During the first phase that stretches from 17th century to 18th century which includes migration of workers from western Europe, British Isles and Germany. Similarly during second phase unskilled labours mainly from region of Asia, and Africa were brought to the newly captured colonies of Caribbean. Indians were included only after Slavery system got abolished and African slaves withdrew themselves to work in the plantations for the Britishers instead they started their own work like cultivation and so on. After indentureship ended in 1917 the Caribbean society already saw a lot of interracial communication and relationship build ups.

Cristine Khan (2020) talks about the struggle of the Indo-Caribbean community “to define themselves not only in bureaucratic forums but on a socio-political level, the question always remained: Where do we fit in?” (*browngirl*, 04 May. 2020).

The Indo-Caribbean community has given leaders like Raja Kumari Singh (Indo-Guyanese cultural and political Icon), Adrian Cola Rienzi aka Krishna Deonarine who was elected as the first president of the Southern Section of the Trinidad Workingmen’s Association (a group formed in 1989 that worked for the political reforms of the workers in the Caribbean also as a ‘watchdog’ for the rights of the workers). Rienzi read law in England and worked for the rights of the working class (cited in Paul Sutton, 2000).

In 1950 when the People’s Progressive party was formed, Dr. Cheddi Jagan becomes the leader and L.F.S Burnham was designated as the chairman. It was a step towards bringing two dominant races in Guyana i.e. Afro-Guyanese and Indo-Guyanese together by establishing national unity.

Not only Indians in the Caribbean resisted to reform their existing identities as ‘coolies’ but they also proceeded towards a more progressive version of the brave new world as a community, for example, establishment of the Rajakumari Center for the Indo-Caribbean Art and culture in New York and fighting legal battles for recognition of Hindu and Muslim marriages in Trinidad.

### **Rise of musical tradition and folk culture among the Caribbean Hindustanis**

As mentioned earlier music, dance, and folk tradition have been an eternal part of Indo-Caribbean culture and for migrants, it has acted as an anchor ever since the first ship arrived in the Caribbean Islands. Their music was mostly inspired by religious chants and folksongs transferred from one generation to another, and it still remains one of the most vital elements among Indo-Caribbean cultural practices (Manuel, 1997, 2000; Lal, 1980).

Indians in the Caribbean occupy ample space between other races. However, in countries such as Belize, Jamaica, Grenada, and other islands of the Caribbean People of Indian Origins (POIs) can be found in small minorities. Over a century and a half after the first migration of Indians as

Coolies, now known as Indo-Caribbeans, the Indo-Caribbean community carries important responsibilities and roles in many sectors of society. Time and again, they have been attaching and reattaching their links with ancestral roots through various mediums mostly with cultural practices, whilst exhibiting the uniqueness of Indo-Caribbean identity thriving alongside the fellow Caribbean communities.

Although a significant number of immigrants came from Hindi speaking belt, a sizable number of people also migrated from the *Tamil* and *Telugu*-speaking regions of Southern India. By virtue of diversity and multilingualism, Indians in the Caribbean preserved the Bhojpuri language which later merged with the English language and became the language of communication amongst the Indo-Caribbeans. Similarly, Tamil and Telugu also occupied their place, but mostly as a style of literature. Over the years as hybridity penetrated almost every element of Indo-Caribbean lives, it brought a lot of shifts in terms of lifestyle, language use, performative arts, and culture as well, and the charm of Bhojpuri along with the above-mentioned languages slowly faded away.

However, Bhojpuri and Hindi are still considered two important languages, which POIs in the Caribbean connect the most, although the present generation is much acquainted with their respective creolized version of English. People of Surinam on the other hand were able to perpetuate their link with their homeland not only by observing festivity and tradition but moreover by preserving their ancestral language 'Bhojpuri'.

During this study and after interacting with respondents from the Caribbean I observed that people from the third generation and fourth generation from Surinam still have a strong command over their ancestral language, and can efficiently and easily communicate with people in both Hindi and Bhojpuri in comparison with people from Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana. Sarnami is something which is also known as 'Sarnami Hindustani'<sup>18</sup>, a mixture of several Indian tongues (Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Maithili and Magahi) that migrant workers spoke. Although it is a mixture of all its mother tongues, some linguists have noticed that Sarnami is highly influenced by Awadhi and Bhojpuri in particular. While interacting with several Surinamese it

---

<sup>18</sup> Sarnami (sometimes called Suriname Hindustani) is a mixture of the Indian tongues that the immigrants spoke. It has also adopted words from Dutch and Sranan Tongo. The grammar and lexicon of Sarnami reflect the influence of all its mother languages.

came to my notice that since Surinam was a Dutch colony and not under British Order, it made a lot of difference and helped Sarnami flourish and develop, unlike British authorities who forced the 'superiority of their native language' upon civilizations under their rule. This practice of language superiority also became one of the reasons for the decline of Hindi and other Indian languages in colonies like Trinidad and Guyana.

Along with language Indian immigrants brought with them their music tradition, which later on they recorded and preserved as a part of oral literature for the upcoming generation. In India, folk tradition is extensively rich, it is also known as 'neo-classical tradition' (Manuel, 1997). India is a multicultural and multilingual nation where every region possesses its own kind of folk tradition which is more local and earthlier in nature.

Folk music in India is mostly used during celebrations, representing the burgeoning of communities through oral tales and narratives passing from one generation to another. The Indentured migrants while undertaking the journey towards plantations backpacked their musical instruments and mythological texts as souvenirs from their Homeland. Music and devotion go hand in hand in Hindu culture and hold a vital position in the lives of natives

Kumar Mahabir (2017) faculty at the University of Trinidad & Tobago has mentioned in one of his studies "most of the indentured immigrants to the Caribbean came from North India, primarily from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, while lesser number from South India" (2) explaining the nature of Chutney and congruity to Hindustani Music and less with Carnatic Music. Chutney is one of the distinct styles of singing that bloomed in the Caribbean waters of Suriname, Guyana, and Trinidad. Popularization of Hindu *Bhajan* practices among Coolies, recital of *Hanuman Chalisa*<sup>19</sup>, melodies of Tulsidas's *Ramayana*, and ceremonial singing at wedding rituals like *Matkor* and sangeet passed down from one generation to another, became the life-force and gave birth to music forms like Baithak, Chutney and Taan Singing in the Caribbean.

The majority of these instruments, including the *dholak*, *sitar*, *manjeera*, *bansuri*, and *tabla*, were unfamiliar to the Caribbean when Indian immigrants first arrived there (Manuel, 2000). Music

---

<sup>19</sup> A Chalisa is a collection of forty stanzas in local language. They are primarily meant for common people who are devoted to God but are not able to recite or understand the meanings of the Sanskrit hymns

became their healing element to cure nostalgia and isolation, not only from the homeland but also from the other communities residing on the islands such as ex-African slaves. As a result of isolation, a large portion of the Indians' ancestors' culture, which included music, was preserved

Based on early literature, early indentured musical performances were highly influenced by religious elements - mostly Hindu *bhajans* and devotional songs, as well as traditional Indian instruments that will be discussed in depth in the following section. It was only a matter of time before immigrants began to include music at every social gathering, from weddings to festivities. Girmitiya music<sup>20</sup> helped Indians in the Caribbean stand out among fellow races and further encouraged them to withstand their native identity.

Figure 2.6: Indians playing Indian musical instruments in the Caribbean plantation during indentured servitude



Source: Religion. (2014, March 12). *The People After Slavery*. <https://thepeopleafterslavery.wordpress.com/east-indian-life-on-the-plantations/religion-2/>

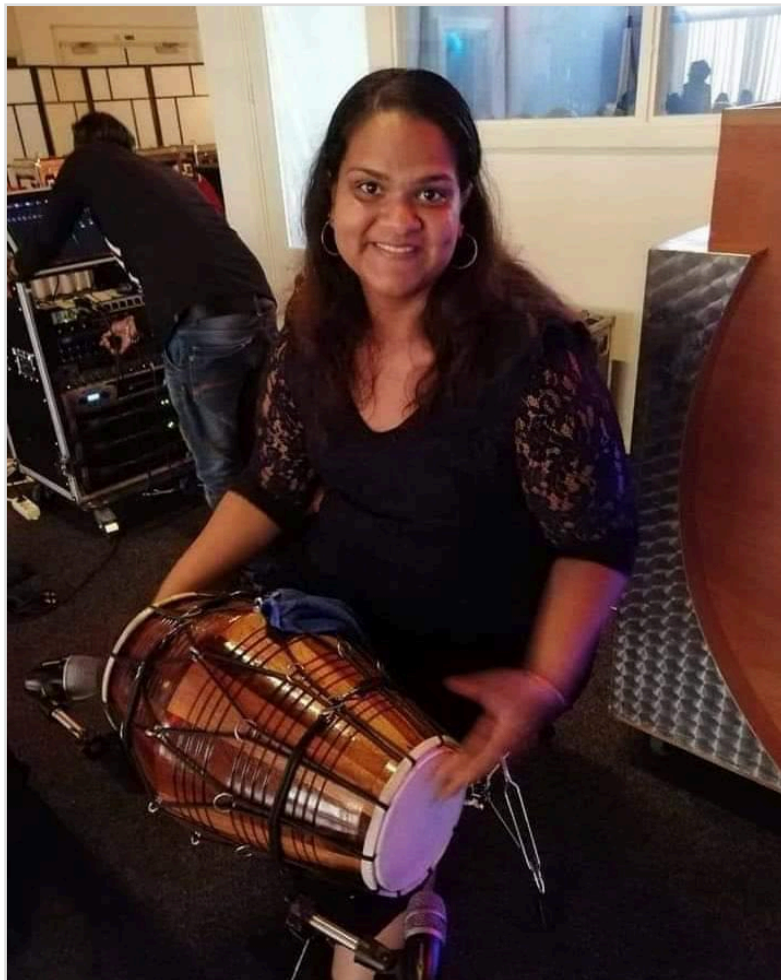
---

<sup>20</sup> music of the Indentured Indians

### *Musical Instruments and usage essential to Caribbean Hindustani sangeet*

Music and instruments of their motherland acted like a bond for these migrants to develop a unique link within their community thereby enabling them to survive in the adverse conditions and post long working hours, as “music heightened the joy of their happy moments and lessened the burden of heaviness that came with the sad times” (*Trinidad & Tobago Guardian*, 13 July. 2011). Traditionally, these performances were community events, and for these events to be successful, certain instruments are essential

Figure 2.7: Young baithak Gana artist Anupma Bhageloe is depicted in the image playing the traditional instrument Dholak.



She is the grandchild of Lachman Bhageloe (famous artist from Suriname and Caribbean). She plays Dholak, Dhantal and Harmonium.

Source: Baithak Gana Community & Baithaksisters&co.

Dholak is a popular folk two headed drum mostly popular in Northern India. It is usually shaped like a Barrel but on occasions it can be cylindrical too, with skins on either side; one side has high pitch and the other has a lower pitch

Figure 2.8: Moena Sital Famous Dholak player from Suriname



Source: Baithak Gana Community

Figure 2.9: An image of Trinidad and Tobago based Tassa players



Source: Title: *Trinidad & Tobago Sweet Tassa: "Dingolay"* on Vimeo. (n.d.). Retrieved 17 December 2020, from <https://www.google.co.in/imgres>

In the Caribbean what is commonly referred to as the *tassa drum*, it is a bowl-shaped drum which is made up of mango tree trunk and covered with goatskin at the top end and the technique to play is to beat the drum with two wooden sticks. Tassa is inspired by what is commonly known as *nagaara*<sup>21</sup> also known as *nagaada* in India and in neighbouring countries. The word “tassa” is derived from the compound word “*dhol-tasha*” which is how South Asian people refer to the instrument in a colloquial manner.

---

<sup>21</sup> The nagaara or nagaada has Persian origin which was disseminated to India with the Mughal migration, later on Indian diaspora spread it worldwide.

Figure 2.10: Shifar Abdoelaziz famous all-rounder musician from Suriname



Source: Baithak Gana Community

Figure 2.11: *Bansuri* (Flute)



Source: Religion. (2014, March 12). *The People After Slavery*. <https://thepeopleafterslavery.wordpress.com/east-indian-life-on-the-plantations/religion-2/>

Bansuri is a side blown flute and has originated in Indian subcontinent; it is a wind instrument a.k.a aerophone. Produced from bamboo in Hindi also called ‘*Baans*’. Bansuri holds a very special place on the list of Hindustani classical and folk music, as it has been in vogue since the *Rig Veda* times. There is evidence of *Bansuri* being in use during the early Indus civilization, moreover, the presence of this particular instrument is even found in the murals of Ajanta and Ellora Caves and is also linked to the lives and playfulness of *Lord Krishna*.

Figure 2.12: *Manjira* (hand Cymbal)



Source: *Classical Manjira*. (n.d.). Indiamart.Com. Retrieved 14 December 2020, from <https://www.indiamart.com/proddetail/classical-manjira-4950451688.html>

Manjeera resembles small cymbals, few would call it the Indian hand cymbal a.k.a *thalami*, *tala*, *jhanj* and *mondira* it is a traditional percussion instrument of India which makes high-pitched sounds. As mentioned above it is also known as *tala* which has Sanskrit origin, which literally means a clap; which also is the technique to play the instruments i.e., to clap together in a rhythmic manner in order to create creates sound.

Made up of copper or brass plates integrated with a string, it is a ubiquitous segment of Indian traditional music genres like *bhajan* and other forms of devotional music.

Figure 2.13: *Harmonium*



Source : Harmonium. (2020). In *Simple English Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia...*,  
<https://simple.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Harmonium&oldid=7174257>

Harmoniums are from free-reed aerophones family. The sound is produced by a small tabletop keyboard organ when the keyboard is being played with one hand and the other pumps the bellow at the back (*New World Encyclopedia*, 17 June. 2019). This particular one is a hand-pumped harmonium which was created by Dwarkanath Ghosh for easy playing, such as while sitting on the floor.

In India, a harmonium is also called a '*Peti*' which essentially means a Box. In various South Asian countries like Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and others Harmonium is an important element of Classical musical practice. In India, a '*Peti*' is not only important for many genres of Indian classical and folk music, but it is an essential part of Indian households to perform everyday ritualistic work and worship.

Figure 2.14: *Dhantal*



Source: (162) *Pinterest*. (n.d.). *Pinterest*. Retrieved 14 December 2020, from <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/615656211551021200/>

*Dhantal* is another percussion instrument made up of a long steel/iron rod. The technique to play a dhantal is by striking the metal rod with a horseshoe-shaped metal beater or a striker. The word Dhantal at times pronounced as '*dhandtal*' or '*dandataal*' has Indian origin; if we further break down the word it means *danda* which means "stick" and *taal* means "rhythm". However, in India the use of Dhantal as an instrument is not at all common to observe as the instrument was believed to be an indentured "innovation" modelled out using shaft (that connects the yokes of the bullocks) and a metal striker that was a horseshoe.

Tina K. Ramnarine (1998) wrote extensively about the musical activities of the Indian migrants while sailing towards the Caribbean colonies as well as in settlement colonies. She talks about how Indian labourers utilized music as a process of interaction and learning. Moreover, music helped the flow of culture alive among indentured labourers in the hostland. Ramnarine sees music practice by Indians in the Caribbean during indentureship, as an attempt to preserve traditions; more importantly, it became an agent of creating a unique Indian-Caribbean Identity narrating and revealing 'scars' of post-colonialism and its impact on the lives of Indian migrants in a foreign land by virtue of occasional musical performances.

Although harmonium and dhantal are the two key instruments of the Caribbean Hindustani sangeet, they are also the product of hybridization and adaptation. In the beginning, there are no evidences of Indian migrants bringing harmonium or dhantal to the islands with them, but they did carry other folk instruments such as: *bansuri*, *sarangi*, *sitar*, *dholak*, and *manjeera* along with them. As per oral tales and narratives of key respondents, dhantal (*see fig 2.14*) is a “product of pure necessity” as this particular instrument was not designed for musical use but was utilized as one for generations now. It was almost towards the latter half of the 19th century when harmonium was introduced to the migrants and was adopted by local musicians to bring rhythm and harmony to their songs and make them sound more coherent. However, it is still unclear how and who introduced harmonium to these migrant Indians. However, Gautra Bahadur (2013) in her non-fictional work *Coolie woman: The Odyssey of Indentured*, discusses the presence of Harmonium along with the other folk musical instruments on *The Clyde*<sup>22</sup> in 1903.

The use of harmonium in the Caribbean is as popular as it is in India, and almost every music performance is incomplete without it. For the Indo-Caribbean community, harmonium is not just an instrument anymore it is a part of their social lives; that allows people of Indian origin a tangible grip over inherited Indianism and cultural heritage. Moreover, in the world of hybridity and mixed cultures, it symbolizes singularity and serves authenticity to rituals, ceremonies, cultural practices, and performing arts scenarios of the Indo-Caribbean community.

---

<sup>22</sup> The Clyde is the name of the sailing boat on which Bahdur's Great grand mother Sujaria travelled across the seas to work in the plantations in 1903.

Figure 2.15: Raj Mohan (famous Indo-Surinamese artist/poet/songwriter)



In the picture famous Indo-Surinamese artist/poet/songwriter Raj Mohan can be seen playing harmonium during one of his many public performances. Raj Mohan is essentially a contemporary Indo-Caribbean musician who has been contributing significantly to music industry and to Baithak Gana of Suriname over the past 30 years.

*Source: (18) Facebook. (n.d.). Retrieved 19 February 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/ASANNederland/photos/t.100000848602703/1069045969871335/?type=3>*

Harmonium has developed in two different ways, in 1842 Alexandre Debain of Paris invented a pumped harmonium (Ramnarine, 1998) which now is practically dead but can be still found in vintage shops and the museums. A foot-pumped harmonium can be played when the player pushes on the two pedals one at a time and simultaneously operating keyboard.

The hand-pumped harmonium (see fig 2.13) in the northern region of India is colloquially called a ‘*Peti*’. Dwarkanath Ghose founder of Dwarkin & Sons (1875), also known as “Dwarkin”<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> The name “Dwarkin” is a result pairing the names of the founder Dwarakanath Ghose and his partner Thomas Dawkins.

(Sengupta, 2013), was an Indian entrepreneur who was trading in Western and Indian musical instruments in Kolkata (earlier known as ‘Calcutta’). Understanding Indian needs and utility Ghose introduced the hand-pumped version of harmonium. In 1884 Ghose decided to remodel the design of harmonium as it not only matched the Indian music tradition of ‘Baithak Singing’<sup>24</sup> it became more and more appealing to the Indian music style and its performers. Since most of the Indian music genres are performed while sitting on the ground, a hand pumped harmonium was more desirable also compact and handy while traveling. To play a hand-pumped harmonium the player pushes and pulls the handle to pump air with one hand while playing keyboard with the other in order to create harmony.

It is not uncommon to spot these instruments in Indo-Caribbean households or gathering as even though many have lost touch to their ancestral land and language their motivation to keep cultural link alive is commendable. In the present scenario usage of harmonium and dhantal and other instruments is as essential as dancing at these events is.

Performing arts such as music paired with dancing transmits knowledge and as Tina K. Ramnarine (2019) rightly points out, that in diaspora it has been used to explore “multiple points of views” through “dancing bodies” and “performing gestures” (113). She further talked about how costumes, and plot of the performance also has been transmitting the struggles of Indians. Similarly, I observed that usage of local Indian instruments such as harmonium, manjeera, bansuri and dhantal also signifies the Indianness of the Indian diaspora. It becomes important to highlight the example of ‘Mahatma Gandhi’ that Ramnarine (2019) uses to explain the relationship of use of cotton which symbolizes resistance and ‘self-reliance’ of Indians during colonial period. Indentured labours used their folk compositions and native instruments to display resistance against colonial power, and individuality which ultimately strengthened their bond as a community in hostland. She also added “performing arts practitioners, including dancers and musicians, play a central role in maintaining links between India and its Diaspora, as well as in representing a diverse range of performances on international stages” (110).

---

<sup>24</sup> Baithak in Hindi means to sit. It represents the trend of musical gathering where musicians gather and sit together to perform for the audience while both engage with each other with musical requests. It is important to note that Baithak represents celebration of music and appreciation while enjoying both music and performances accompanied by snacks and tea.

Music, dance, and performances are a vital part of Indian culture. From public celebration to any private affair music has always stayed close to hearts of every Indian. Although, music in Indian contexts is primarily attached with religion and sacred rituals it has remained an important part of community life of Indians. For Example, contemporary Indian weddings irrespective of religion are incomplete without this ceremony called '*Sangeet*' which means 'music'. People of the Northern Indian region, Hindus particularly from eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar observe this tradition of '*matkor*'<sup>25</sup> (Manuel, 2000, 2014). A women-centric pre-wedding ritual accompanied by dancing and singing of folk songs. Similarly, there are other forms of celebration that include singing and performance by men disguised as women, which is also called *Launda Naach*<sup>26</sup>.

*Matkor* and *Launda Naach* became two vehicles of entertainment and celebration, which also paved paths for music tradition to stay alive and further flourish in the Caribbean waters. These wedding songs and rituals acted as one of the foundational stones upon which this unique Indo-Caribbean identity was built.

Peter Manuel (2002) talks about how post-1917 after the indentured emigration ceased, music and community celebrations remained the only bridge alive between India and Indians in the Caribbean. By then the process of assimilation and accommodation penetrated the lives of Indians migrants along with other races living on the Caribbean Islands resulting in "some traditional aspects of Indo-Caribbean music culture declined or creolized... however, there relative isolation of many Indo-Caribbean communities, and the determination to perpetuate Indian culture, allowed certain forms of Indian music to remain vital and evolve in neo-traditional forms" (Manuel, 2002: 4).

Change is the only constant in music, and Indo-Caribbean music kins with Hindustani Sangeet, that has a page filled history of changes and innovations. The next section will briefly introduce

---

<sup>25</sup> Pre wedding ritual which takes place on the ninth, seventh, fifth or third day before marriage particularly in North Indian weddings of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. In this ceremony it is important to observe that it is an all women ritual where married women dig the clay in order to make the '*Vedi*,' around which later on the wedding rite is performed.

<sup>26</sup> *Launda Naach* is an Indian form folk dance most common among Bhojpuri speaking communities of India in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, further in Nepal, Mauritius and Caribbean Islands. It is a form of celebrating weddings, where male dancers dressed as females dances among male audience while leading the groom's entourage to the bride's home.

the history and a variety of elements of Hindustani music that will come handy throughout the chapter.

### ***Routes to Roots: Transformation of Hindustani Music***

There are many aspects of traditional and religious practices in Indian culture that are dominated by music. Artists of diverse backgrounds have incorporated Indian styles into their work in recent decades, gaining worldwide popularity for Indian music. The world is becoming increasingly global and diverse as thought, traditions, and art forms are developing. Indian music, however, holds a profound historical value in shaping Indian communities through its cultural nuances.

For centuries, music has been played a significant role in Indian culture, connecting numerous rituals and practices to everyday life. Indian music has gained a preposterous amount of popularity over the past several years; with a variety of artists and music specialists from different organizations consolidating Indian styles of sound to commend their work. Regardless of nationality and borders, human lives are increasingly connected in the 21st century, where cultural diversity increases connectivity, inspires creative thinking and ideas, and shifts customs and artistic expressions. Nonetheless, it is imperative to recognize the novel contrasts Indian music imparts since it has a profound influence on Indian culture and education.

The performing arts scenario in India today is diverse, creatively rich, and vibrant. The major forms are music, dance, and theatre. In each of these forms there is a variety of genres and styles. My intension in this chapter is to understand the journey of Indian musical form into existence, to its current evolving face in the cosmopolitan era. Indian music forms are diverse, and each form has a unique language, emotions, instruments, and sentiments.

This part of the chapter investigates and illuminates the question of cultural identity and a sense of nationalism build through the formation of different music genres over time that keep shaping and reshaping societies, traditions, and communities while becoming a vital part of Indian

identity. The current study allowed me to observe closely, the constant changes taking place in the ‘Odyssey of Hindustani Sangeet’ moreover, this is an attempt to magnify and celebrate the richness of Indian music genres triumphing over the global music industry. I believe this study brings up a much-hidden element of Hindustani music and provide a platform where it can get a chance to debate several topics such as identity, culture, evolution, and popularity of Indian music, without tempering the historical facts.

I wish to make a note that music has consistently been influenced by factors around, making it fluid and commodious. Before making a profound leap into the huge expanse of 'music of India,' I tried to investigate the changes and transformations of Indian music through a religious, historical, and social perspective. Yet, prior to that, I will be discussing a portion of the specialized terms from Indian music which gives a basic understanding. This section of the chapter manages key ideas and terms that I have used all through this chapter, for a viable comprehension of the subject.

## MUSIC

Indians most often use the word “Sangeet” to refer to music. The word ‘Sangeet’ comes from the Sanskrit language. If we further break the word *Sangeet*, it literally means *San*(together) and *geet*(Song). Sangeet can be considered as an umbrella term which in a wider sense it also signifies ‘dancing’ along with vocal and instrumental music. The historical accounts of India echos about an extraordinary legacy of old dance styles a.k.a classical dance and music. Utilizing the body as a vehicle of correspondence, the statement of dance is maybe the most unpredictable and grown, yet effortlessly comprehended work of art. There are majorly two distinct classical forms of music in India one is Uttar (north) Hindustani music and the other is the Dakshinadi (south) Carnatic music. Please note that in this thesis we are dealing mostly with North Indian/ Hindustani Music.

DHWANI:

Any sound is 'Dhwani'. Here we are dealing with the dwani only which is useful for music.

NAAD:

A dwani which is useful for music is called 'Naad'. Naad signifies "The essence of all sounds," it is a specific vibration, a principal recurrence that comes from normally one source or sound current. The sound, which can be used for music is called naada. Its main quality is that it pleases the ears. It has a fixed number of frequencies. There are three qualities of naad - Magnitude (these concerns with the volume), Timbre (this shows whether the sound is a human voice or of an instrument, etc) and Pitch (these concerns with higher or lower tones)

SWAR:

Swar is the further quality of *Naad*. With regard to Indian traditional music, swara is a Sanskrit word that implies a 'NOTE' in octave. When a Naad is chosen for sangeet, it becomes 'Swar'. A swar has all the good qualities of Naad. It pleases the ears; it has fixed frequencies and it remains for some time in the air. There are mainly seven swars in Hindustani classical music they are-

*SA (shadja)*

*RE (rishabh)*

*GA (gandhar)*

*MA (madhyam)*

*PA (pancham)*

*DHA (dhaiwat)* and

*NI (nishad)*" (Dighe et al., 2013).

Further there are three types of swars-"*shudha swar* (pure), *komal swar* (soft) and *tivra swar* (sharp)".

#### SHRUTI:

Shruti means a microtone. Between one note and the next, there exists the theoretically infinite number of steps in microtones. It is not practically possible to distinguish them or give each one of them a specific identity. In Hindustani classical, there are main seven notes and 22 microtones existing in between them.

#### SAPTAK:

*Sapta* is seven. Swar-saptak is a group of seven notes which are used in Hindustani classical music. The saptak is being divided into three groups namely-

Mandra Saptak (lower pitch)

Madhya Saptak (middle pitch)

Tar Saptak (higher pitch).

#### TAAL:

In the ordinary sense taal means rhythm or as described by Jairazbhoy (1971:27) as “time measure”. It is the medium of measuring time in music. The length of the taal is counted with the unit called *Matra*<sup>27</sup>.

Thus, taal is a combination of a number of *matras*, which has a shape. It has divisions, *sam*<sup>28</sup>, *taali*<sup>29</sup> and a *khali*<sup>30</sup>.

#### THAAT:

*Thaat* is a cluster of *swaras* from which the ragas are produced.

#### RAGA:

Raga has no equivalent in English. A raga originates from a thaat. It has a specific combination of swar and varna. It has a minimum of five swaras to a maximum of seven swaras “the concept of rāg is based on the idea that certain characteristic patterns of notes evoke a heightened state of emotions” (Jairazbhoy, 1971: 28).

---

<sup>27</sup> Musical meter refers to the regularly recurring patterns and accents such as bars and beats.

<sup>28</sup> First beat of any rhythmic cycle

<sup>29</sup> on beat

<sup>30</sup> off-beat or an empty beat is called *Khali*

The classification of Ragas is called '*Raga Jaati*'. The three main *Raga jaatis* are - *Audav jaati* (containing five swaras), *Shadav jaati* (containing six swaras), *Sampoorna jaati* (containing seven swaras). Further including these, there is also the combination of these three jaatis for the further classification of ragas.

#### SAMAY:

Time cycle is followed to perform a raga. Every raga has a specific time frame like the morning raga, noon raga, evening raga, etc.

#### RASA:

Rasa is essentially an emotional reaction. The feeling may be sad or pleasant, high or low. In the arrangement of Indian style, there are nine 'emotions' or 'feelings' commonly identified as '*Nava Rasa*' i.e., Nine emotions. The recognized order of these sentiments is as per the following:

*Shringara* (Romantic or erotic)

*Hasya* (Funny, comic or humorous)

*Karunya* (Despicable or sad)

*Rudra* (Rage, anger or fury)

*Veer* (Chivalrous or heroic)

*Bhayanak* (Fear or terror)

*Vibhatsa* (Evil, odious or disgusting)

*Adbhut* (Miracle, wonder or surprise)

*Shant* (Harmony, peace or tranquility)

### ***Brief history of Hindustani Sangeet/North Indian Classical and Folk Music***

Indian music has traveled in time, living its ups and downs. One needs to tap into pre-historic times if attempting to trace its origin. Indian music incorporates a rich history, starting in 'times of yore' with the Aryans who utilized music as a religious or a non-secular practice. It kept

developing through centuries, growing and venturing into a framework that has its own unique hypothesis, notation, instrumentation, and vocal style. Irrespective of religion, historically music time and again has given a sense of unity to Indian society and civilization.

The symbolic meaning of music provides common musical practice across the country, but the relationship between music practice and philosophical unity has its roots embedded deep into the mythical history of India. Which otherwise signifies music and religion are interlinked and share a common origin (Massey, 1996). Moreover, concluding scheme of Indian classical music has always been transcendental. It is believed in India that music has emerged from a mystical past, which goes back to times before documented history. Music of South Asia dispenses the conflict between religions countering new ideologies and intensifying worshipping. In India, it is tough to separate music from religion because Indian music at several level expresses concrete and abstract religious meaning.

#### *Historical accounts of Hindustani Music: religious bonds and mythological ties*

Music has an important place in Indian religious thoughts and its omnipresence envelops daily life (Deva, 1981). This interdependences of both Indian classical music and mythology attributes that both were assumed and were given more substantial existence (see Müller, 1861: 12). Hinduism music hold a distinctive place as the foundation of sacred scripts and devotional songs can't be comprehended without music. Music has the power to represent the order of the universe and to sustain human existence (Prajnanananda, 1963; Massey, 1996). In various elements of traditional and religious customs, music plays an integral role in Indian Hindu culture.

Music is a tool for expressing oneself to others and the divine according to Hindu sacred texts. Whether its Lord Shiva dancing in trance to his *damru* or Lord Krishna charming his followers through his melodious *bansuri* or Ganesha enjoying the sound of *tabla*, all illustrate the significance music holds as a means of *Bhakti*. According to Hindu tradition, music can be used to communicate with divinity and also as a pathway to *Moksha*. As a result of the deep rootedness of Indian literature in Bhakti poetry (religious songs/poetry/chants), Indian music has

remained the same even into modern times due to its persistence. *Satsangs, Garba, and Jagrata* are a few of the practices that illustrate the continuity of the idea of using music to connect divinity (Massey, 1996; Jha, 2019).

The evolution of Indian Music hails from the oldest existing history of the *Vedic* period and it is one of the most ancient types still surviving. Today, it is commonly called Indian classical music and has two sub-genres, the first, Hindustani Music of North India and the other Carnatic music of Southern India. Indian music is a result of interactions between different cultures and races that came here and dwelled over the ages, spanned over several centuries (Popley, 1921 and 1990). The oldest Vedic Chants, local folk traditions form, different region, and foreign influences, forms the present day what is known as Hindustani Classical Music (Jauhari, 2011, 2021; Jha, 2019). Born out of diversity Indian classic music always has had a preference for improvisation rather than written notation, therefore the music of the earlier generations has been lost but is omnipresent in Indian communities if not documented but they orally preserved the musical threads and passed it on from one generation to another in an improvised way.

India's culture has been infused with music since its beginnings. Thus, it forms an integral part of Indian culture and human life. There are different instruments like drums, cymbals, etc. There is evidence of music being present in the earliest civilizations, such as Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. In the excavation conducted under Sir Mortimer Wheeler, instruments such as the seven-holed flute and a variety of stringed instruments and drums were discovered (Massey, 1996).

### *Hindustani music under foreign invasion and conquests*

With the Aryan invasion, India entered the Vedic period of its history. Aryans were fair-skinned people in comparison to the dark-skinned indigenous inhabitants of India. After subjugating the country and capturing the northern part of India, Aryans also introduced their own culture and religions, and in turn, they adapted some local traditions, customs, and even Gods (Prajnanananda, 1963). Moreover, they introduced the cast (*Jati*) system to maintain their supremacy, which allowed many gradations in the social scale, interlocked with religion and economic conditions this division of people based on cast operated without creating tension. It

was designed in a way that eliminated the need for slavery in ancient India. “The Brahmins were the priest and intellectual, the *Kshatriyas* the warriors, the *Vaishyas* the merchant, and the *Shudras* the manual workers” (Massey, 1996: 12). Furthermore, there was a sub-categorization of each caste, the sub-castes which specialized in music, painting, and dancing functioned as a hereditary guild, passing forms, style and techniques from one generation to another, made it possible that Indian Music and dance survived and have been handed down over several centuries with all the respect and love that a great richly deserves.

The ancient history of India is mostly presented in a mythological form and has religious sanction by being associated with Gods (Naad Brahma<sup>31</sup>). Having the ability to elevate one's consciousness through music can allow one to understand the eternal essence of the universe. Rig-Veda began with two great epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, where all knowledge was embodied in books called Shastras<sup>32</sup>. A substantial amount of light is shed on music in the Ramayana and Mahabharata, highlighting its importance in human life (Jauhari, 2011). The *Gandharvas*<sup>33</sup>, or the professional musicians catered to various musical and cultural needs. Each *Shashtra* covers its subject in detail and represents the accumulation of a tradition codified in one volume. The epic Ramayana can be traced or its origins to folklore, for a considerable time was preserved and spread orally. By about the 7th century BC, the great poet *Valmiki* formalized into a very beautiful epic poem that was highly sensitive and lyrical (Bor, 2010). Thereafter, the *Suthas* narrated and sang the story of *Rama* and *Sita* with divine fervour and spread the epic to all corners of the earth. It is still very common for devotee groups of listeners to gather around a *Sutha* for a story of chaste love between Rama and his beloved. Amidst trials and tribulations, their unwavering commitment to Dharma was the key to their success. The Dharma in Ramayana was characterized by its purity, innocence, and nobility (Prajnanananda, 1963). It is so chaste and pure that it gives joy and peace after listening.

The Vedic literature is all about the great seas, the great mountains, trees, and of course human beings. The sacred scriptures consisted of four main *Vedas* - “*Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sam Veda*,

---

<sup>31</sup> Traditional teaching says Sound is God

<sup>32</sup> In hinduism shastras are a work of sacred scripture.

<sup>33</sup> *Gandharva* is a class of celestial beings whose males are divine singers and females are divine dancers from Gandhara region. It is also a term for skilled singers in Indian classical music.

and *Atharva Veda*,” (Jauhari, 2011) along with several minor ones. All these Vedas and various Puranas had a close connection with music or had set musical patterns (Prajnanananda, 1963; Jauhari, 2011; Bor, 2010). The Vedic era utilized music for two main purposes, invoking deities and accompanying sacrifices. Vedic religion was based on the use of music to structure sacrifices and form the core of its belief system. Dance and instrumental music were also considered divine since they were both propitiatory to the gods.

Early vocal music was known as *Samagan*, from '*sam*' meaning melody and '*gan*' meaning verse (Massey, 1996). There were only three tonal accents - *uddtta* (monosyllabic meaning “raised” acute accent high pitch), *anuddtta* (unaccented/unmarked low-pitched syllables “not raised”), and *svarkita* (high falling tone sound), later they were named as *swaras* musical notes. Eventually, a total of seven *swaras* were identified and came into use (Popley, 1990). Vedic music had fixed tones and scales, it developed mainly as an accompaniment to religious procedures and rituals. *Gandharva* or *Margi* Music evolved after *Vedic* Music, a type of stage song or *Natyadharmigiti*, possessing *Swara*, *Tala*, and *Pada*. There was then the emergence of regional or *desi* music that added to the treasure trove of Indian Classical Music, originating with the succession of tones that gave the listener an agreeable and pleasant experience.

After Bharata's<sup>34</sup> treatise on performing art '*Natyashastra*' from which the genuine type of raga came into being. In the *Natyashastra*, Bharata mentions that music was being studied and had advanced to a very high degree in terms of both performance and theory (Jairazbhoy, 1972; Popley, 1921). He was the first to create the rules of theatre between 200BC and 200AD, and music played a significant and essential role in these rules (Popley, 1990). The *Natyashastra* is mainly devoted to theatre, dance and music (Katz, 1996). Although prose and verse are used, verse is used more often. There are 36 chapters on music, which provide light on numerous instrument classes, *Gandharva* music, instrument-playing techniques, and an explanation of *tala* principles (Roy, 2013). The *Natyashastra* is written in Sanskrit containing 6000 *sutras* and incorporated in 36 chapters. It is set in a discourse form or a dialogue between Bharata Muni and

---

<sup>34</sup> The musical treatise "*Natya Shastra*" is typically attributed to the ancient sage *Bharata Muni*. Work focuses on Sanskrit theatre as well as ancient Indian dramaturgy and histrionics. Bharata is regarded as the originator of Indian theatre. Although estimates range from 500 BCE to 500 CE, he is dated to between 200 BCE and 200 CE. The primary texts of Bharatanatyam are thought to be "*Abhinaya Darpana*" and *Natya Shastra* by Bharata Muni (an Indian classical dance form).

his disciples. The result is an entire *Shastra*. Bharata gives credit to *Brahma* for all the knowledge that he had. Later Scholars like Dattila wrote, "*Dattilam*", Kohala wrote, "*Kohalam*", Narad wrote, "*Nardiya Shiksha*" and Matang wrote, "*Brihadeshi*" (Ghosh, 2002).

The Rasa theory, which is the foundation of Indian music has also been defined by *Natyashastra*. The Vibhavas, Anubhavas, and Vyabhicharibhavas come together properly to create the rasa. The main feeling produced by the interaction of the different "bhavas" is called natya rasa (Dasgupta, 2011). It is delivered through the appropriate body motions, vocal modulation, and involuntary reactions that positively affect the audience member's aesthetic sense. For the past 2000 years, this rasa idea has influenced hundreds of scholars and performers. It is the essence of Indian music, giving it power and life, and has given the performing arts, visual arts, and literary arts an invaluable aesthetic framework (Popley, 1921, 1990).

Before the Muslim invasion of India Matang's *Brihaddeshi* was one of the major contributions to the understanding of the term *Deshi*. *Brihaddeshi* also clarified many confusions about *shrutis* (Moutal, 1991; Katz, 1996). The word Raga first appeared in *Brihaddeshi*, which for generations, has served as the foundational idea of Indian art music. *Sargam* or notes appeared for the first time in *Brihaddeshi* (Jauhari, 2021). Matang explained *Deshi* as spontaneous, joyful singing by women, youngsters, cowherds, and kings in their own territories. *Deshi* music embodied a variety of human feelings from various cultures. It was formally transformed into ascending and descending scales through the use of notes (Mazzola et al., 2021). The concept of Talas and tala-music also developed during this period. Raga and tala are the two most important concepts of Indian music. A *Raga* is a melodic structure, whereas *Tala* is the fundamental beat in Indian music. Together, they set these other types of global music apart from one another. The rhythm patterns or tala became the framework upon which the development of a raga was based. In Hindustani music, the idea of a *tala* is ingrained in the notion of time, and it is the musician or artists who gives time quality. The *talas* were long-or short-duration cycles and repeated temporal patterns. Ancient treaties list 108 stories, while, modern performances are typically just about 15 tales long (Moutal, 1991).

### *Hindustani music during Sufi and Bhakti movement*

Around the 11th century AD, Sufis brought *Sufi music*, and Hindi and Farsi melodies started to become more popular (Jauhari, 2021). The Sufis with their great love for music were now beginning to secure a strong foothold in India. Indian music underwent many transformations and both Indian and non-Indian civilizations actively contributed to this transformation (Mazzola et al., 2021). Persian music and culture were introduced with the spread of Islam towards the end of the 12th century (Bhatkhande, 1974). Their contribution to the cause of Indian music was a focal point in the development and understanding of Classical music in India today, which ultimately became an inseparable part of the Indian culture. In the medieval period, North Indian music was greatly influenced by Persian musicians and Sufi composers like Amir Khusrow (Upadhyay, 2010), and later in the Mogul courts, he gained form and popularity. He was a bridge between Islamic Musical tradition and the Hindu tradition and blended Islamic music into the latter. He wrote around 500,000 verses in, *Braj Bhasha*, Hindi, *Khadi Boli*, also in languages such as Turkish, Persian and in Arabic. Amir Khusrow is renowned for his contributions to several music genres including '*Qawwali*, *Qasida*, *Qalbana*, *Naqsh*' (Ranade, 1951). Later on, Raja Man Singh Tomar introduced a new musical genre called *Dhrupada* also known as *dhrupad* (these songs were in praise of Lord Vishnu, Holi songs etc) (Prajnananda, 1963; Jairazbhoy, 1971; Widdess, 1994). During the same period, Bhakti Music became increasingly popular. This musical movement eventually evolved into a way of life, producing countless works of sacred poetry and art. Names like Kabir, Tulsidas, and Meerabai are associated with this musical genre (Deva, 1995). Braj and Awadhi were the main regional languages that were widely used in composition by the composers/poets during Bhakti movement.

This gave an idea that Hindustani music was well ahead in linguistic and literary development and was able to reach all strata of the society. The '*Pushti Margi sampradaya*' practised '*Haveli sangeet*' (Mazzola et al., 2021). It was the temple's music practice. Here the temple was treated as the living palace of the deity being worshipped. The primary location of this Vaishnava devotional cult was Nathdwara in Rajasthan (Deva, 1995).

Mian Tansen (Ramtanu Pandey) was a well-known singer and composer of Hindustani classical music during the 16th century (Bhatkhande, 1974; Mansukhani 1982). He was one of Akbar's

court's *Navratnas* (nine jewels). He was given the title of '*Mian*' which means a learned or a scholarly man. During his time many Persian and Central Asian cultures were blending with Hindustani music and his influence is often regarded as being essential to development and growth of Hindustani classical music (Prajnanananda, 1963). Many followers and grandchildren have likewise greatly improved the tradition. Even today, almost all Gharanas of Hindustani classical music asserts a relationship to the Tansen heritage (Massey, 1996).

During this time only a few musicological works were written in Sanskrit and the era saw an increase in the number works written in Persian, Urdu, Hindi, and other regional languages (Jairazbhoy, 1971). Following these numerous Indian academicians started to produce elaborated works on Hindustani music in both English and local languages. The most popular forms of music were *Khayal bandish* (short songs composed in Urdu Hindi and are romantic or divine) *Thumri*, and *Tarana*.

The modern period starts from the end of the 18th century. This marked the beginning of modern music in India. During this period, the British had come to India and the Muslim rulers were gradually overthrown "who were indifferent to Indian culture and particularly classical music. This led to the decline of the court-sponsored Musicians. Consequently, the musicians kept their knowledge and practice to themselves confining it to their own family members. Music became a vehicle of entertainment and was looked down upon in society" (*Times of India*, 27 September. 2016). One of an early British ideologists N. A. Jairazbhoy (1971) said: "there was a little sign of British interest in the Indian music, except for a treatise written by the Oriental scholar, Sir William Jones, entitled *On the Musical Modes of the Hindus*, which appeared in 1799" (22). All these advancements demonstrates the growth and emergence of Hindustani classical music, as it is known today.

During the 19th century, when the royal patronage enjoyed by the performers started to weaken, the concept of *Gharana* gained momentum. With time there arose stylistic differences in singing and presentation of *Khyal* from different places and therefore different *Khyal Gharanas* (Jairazbhoy, 1971) came into existence. *Gharana* means '*Ghar*' in Hindi or '*Griha*' in Sanskrit which means a family or house. When traveling to other locations or urban areas, performers felt the need to maintain their own identities and revert to using the names of the region to which

they belonged. As a result, geographic references are still present in the *Gharana* names. Similar to the *Dhrupad Bani* system, the *Gharana* system in *Khyal* was based on the *Guru-Shishya* tradition (Singh, 2004). The Mughal Empire's slow demise, which caused musicians to relocate from Delhi to princely territories like Lucknow, Gwalior, Hyderabad, Rampur, and Patiala, had a significant impact on the *Gharana* system (*The Indian Express*, 4 Sept. 2020). Some of the well-known *Gharanas* for singing *Khyals* are; Gwalior, Agra, Patiala, Jaipur, Kirana, Mewat, Indore, Sahaswan and Bhendibazar (Bhatkhande, 1974; Prajnanananda, 1963).

Along with *Dhrupad*, *Khayal* and *Tappa* (Trivedi, 2010), *Thumri*<sup>35</sup> is regarded as an influential and dominant genre in Indian music (Manuel, 1990); it is a genre that is well-liked by musicians, musicologists, and listeners alike. *Thumri* has its own idiom, academic tradition, aesthetics, and mannerisms, which are in many ways distinct from *Khayal* and *Tappa* but also share a much in common. This helps it maintain its distinctive character as a musical genre.

This historical period saw “demand for musicians to enlighten the courtrooms of the ruling monarchs created the conditions necessary to stimulate the evolution of classical Indian music. The political and colonial atmosphere during the medieval era of India created the recurrent themes of cultural and religious independence and the push for religious tolerance between groups, which translated into how Hindustani music developed” (*Chakranews*, 21 Oct. 2017). Due to the direct and structural brutality the imperialist ruler used to subjugate the populace during the British occupation of India, religious intolerance posed a challenge to Hindu music, and the lives of Indians were subjected to immense hardship. However, the emotional thread of music created strong bonds between people, communities and divinity.

### **Hindustani music in the Diaspora**

Hindustani Music in the diaspora has history spanning over several years and its presence can be felt in various countries across the world. A majority of literature available about Hindustani music in the diaspora suggests that it has the ability to ‘garner audiences’ and helped built

---

<sup>35</sup> *Thumri* form is connected with dance, dramatic gesture, mild eroticism, evocative love poetry and folk songs of Uttar Pradesh

identities for the Indian diaspora over the years. It occurred frequently in academic research over couple of decades, and is a celebrated marker of essential Indianness among the Indian diaspora.

Anjali Gera Roy (2011) in her article “*Meanings of Bhangra and Bollywood Dancing in India and the Diaspora*” while talking about “new Asian dance” cites Banerji (1988); Bauman (1990); Sharma, Hutnyk and Sharma (1996), and mentions that music has “emerged as one of the most important sites for the production of South Asian diasporic identities”. Diaspora, consequently, associates itself with links and mediums that in most cases directly, and sometimes indirectly connect them with their country or what they call ‘Home’. Music is not just a part of amusement or entertainment, rather it is used as a tool that serves as an anchor that keeps the link with their country alive and constant. ‘Music of motherland’ that includes performing arts and folklore serves as a means to blur the lines of distance and loneliness.

Murali Balaji and Thomas Sigler (2017) discuss how various Caribbean music genres have moved beyond their ethnic roots to attain popularity and global recognition while evaluating identity and music. For example, Balaji and Sigler discuss the growing visibility of musical pieces all over the internet and streaming platforms like YouTube have not only “enabled artists to be both heard *and* seen by widest possible range of consumers” (93), but have also given artists and music practitioners a sense of “territorially articulated identity” (94). Additionally, diaspora music often triggers 'nationalist sentiments' across sharp geographical boundaries and enables diasporas to understand their respective identities. They further quote Connell and Gibson (2004) while discussing the idea of territorial identity expression and added:

“Musicians are situated in multiple cultural and economic networks – some seeking to reinvent or revive traditions, others creating opportunities in musical production to stir national political consciousness or contribute to transnational political movements, and some merely seeking to achieve commercial success” (94).

They argued that in diaspora “place, territorial identity and commodification intersect within the music industry in such a way that they become intertwined” (103). Moreover, its commercial distribution strengthens the bond that have already undergone a massive transformation. Balaji and Sigler use Indo-Caribbean music as an example to explain how the community over the

years and generations have utilized their music practices and performances as a form of articulation to their territorial identity which defines them different from the other dominant races from the Caribbean such as the Afro-Caribbeans.

Lidskog (2016) cites Susan Hallam (2009) while talking about the significance of music in diaspora, says from the lens of psychology, “It has multiple functions; it can allow people to understand themselves, form and maintain social groups, engage in emotional communication, and mobilize for political purposes, among other functions” (24). Music, as we see, has the ability to inspire people, motivate masses, and moreover, it has the power to heal body and soul in an alien environment. He further puts forth an argument revealing the true potential of Indian music in the diaspora, he says:

“Music's social functions have been largely limited to western culture and much research has focused on individual cognition and perception, despite the fact that music has significant impacts on social interaction, group identity, and the construction of social meaning” (24).

For example, the practice of Hindustani sangeet by the POIs in the Caribbean and other colonies where Indians have migrated between 1845-1920, has not only given Indians a sense of individuality among other races, moreover the element of commonality has helped the same to form a community by sharing their cultural bonds and traditions. Furthermore, Lidskog (2016: 2) points out that music is more than just a “cultural and expressive practice that bonds group members together, but can also cross boundaries between social identities and shape new ones”. The existence of the Indo-Caribbean community is living proof of, how music can be helpful and plays a supportive role in rediscovering identities and creating new ones.

Anjali Gera Roy (2011) in her article “*Meanings of Bhangra and Bollywood Dancing in Indian and the Diaspora*” also discussed that between the 1980s and 1990s Indian folk music achieved great recognition on the international platform. Indian music art forms like Punjabi folk and Bollywood music have emerged giving recognition and fame to *Desi* art forms, on international platforms. It was in the 1990s, when Indian musicians started to hybridize local north Indian songs and folk music, particularly Bhangra and some Bollywood songs into remixes that captivated attention not only from music lovers but media and scholarly attention in India as well

as in countries like Britain, USA, Singapore and other countries with the sizable Indian population such as the Caribbean.

Elizabeth Chacko and Rajiv Menon (2013) in their work discussed the presence of cultural links among the younger generations of South Asian diaspora through practices and participation in diverse spaces that includes party venues (such as clubs), houses, public gathering, and even educational institutions. They also pointed that they (young diasporas) attempt to inculcate cultural practices and consumption of culture through various practices. In Chacko and Menon's view these activities are "fundamental to the creation of uniquely diasporic concept of cultural and ethnic identity for this group" (97).

Tina K. Ramnarine (1996: 133) talks about the increasing popularity of Chutney shows in cities like London, Toronto, New York and other metropolitan cities where people of India have migrated. The internet has majorly supported the remix culture where consumers/users come across content that is either a derivative work of previously published, which was commonly called a 'Remix'. For example, those legendary Hindi songs from the 80s and 90s were recreated several times, to name a few: *Laila main Laila*<sup>36</sup>, *Humma song*<sup>37</sup>, *Tamma Tamma*<sup>38</sup>, *Om Shanti Om*<sup>39</sup>, and so on. All these songs time and again have been added to Hindi films in the recent past. Similarly, musicians in the diaspora have time and again given a twist of non-native language with Indian songs which includes music of all genres i.e., folk, Bollywood also Sufi.

Saha (2012) discusses the ties between cultural production and identity, and the relationship

---

<sup>36</sup> The song *Laila main Laila* originally from the movies *Qurbani*(1980) featuring Zeenat Aman and sung by Kanchan and Amit Kumar was in 2017 again recreated and featured in the Shahrukh Khan starrer Bollywood movies *Raees* featuring Sunny Leone in what is known in Bollywood as an Item-song. Not only it again moved the crowd as the original song once did also became the most watched and heard song of the decade. A lesser known fact about the song is that even in its original form it was a plagiarized in terms of its music and beats. Black Blood a musical group from 1970s first released the song 'Chicano' which remains the source for the famous song *Laila main Laila*.

<sup>37</sup> *Humma Humma* originally composed by A.R Rahman for the famous romantic drama film *Bombay*(1995) directed by Mani Ratnam. In 2017 famous Bollywood rap star and singer Badshah along with Tanishk Bagchi(lyricist) recreated the song for *Ok Jaanu*, the Hindi remake of Mani Ratnam's Tamil film *O Kadhal*.

<sup>38</sup> *Tamma Tamma* was originally from the Bollywood movie *Thanedaar*(1989) starring Madhuri Dixit and Sanjay Dutt composed and sung by Late Bappi Lahiri, and Anuradha Paudwal. *Tamma Tamma* reappeared on the screen after almost three decades in Alia Bhatt and Varun Dhawan starrer feature film *Badri Ki Dulhaniya*(2017).

<sup>39</sup> *Om Shanti Om* originally appeared in 1980's feature film *Karz* starring Late Rishi Kapoor, however, the song was originally from the year 1978 created by Lord Shorty a.k.a Grafield Blackman for the album '*Soca Explosion*'. The song again was recreated for Shahrukh Khan starrer film *Om Shanti Om* in 2007 but in a new avatar and modified lyrics and beats.

between creative elements and media, where culture is produced as a 'commodity'. Therefore, migrants' diasporic identity is directly shaped by cultural production. In addition, Saha discusses the commodification of music in the diaspora by citing Indian music in the diaspora as an example of "innovative fusion of music" (738), which is also an example of western influences on Indian music.

Robert Layton and Gillian Wallace (2006) in '*Is Culture a commodity?*' said: "culture includes beliefs, values, language, political organization and economic activity; also, technology, art and material culture. A commodity is an item that can be freely bought and sold through market economy" (46). They further explained it using the concept of *Habitus* given by Pierre Bourdieu (1977) "Which stresses the interaction between ideas and their material expression" (46).

A huge visibility of Indian Remixed songs produced by artist of Indian origin in diaspora was available between 1990s till 2010 on T.V channels like MTV, and Channel V. Punjabi Rock songs such as *Sexy Mama* and *Rock the Party*<sup>40</sup> by Bombay Rockers (2003), *Let The Music Play*<sup>41</sup> by Shmur (2008). During the same decade several of Indian diaspora artists like Tarsame Singh Saini (British singer) a.k.a Tez Stereo, Steven Kapur (British Singer) stage name Apachey Indian, Bally Sagoo and other also contributed to the music market that caters to both traditional pathways and growth in a very well-connected system that operates globally.

Portability of music with the introduction of Cassettes and Compact Discs revolutionized the whole music culture in India and abroad making it accessible and cheap. Simran Bhargava (1991) says that the 80s and 90s saw India becoming "one of the top cassette markets of the world. on the basis of conservative estimates by the Indian Phonographic Industry, India's legitimate and pirate sales together (180 million music cassettes) push it way ahead of China (125 million), the UK (83 million) and Japan (59.2 million) to an amazing number two position - right after the giant United States (446.2 million) market" (cited in *India Today*, 15 January 1991). Companies like HMV (His Master's Voice, which completed its 100th year anniversary in 2021), Tips, and T-Series made the cassette market into a big giant. Moreover, it was after this revolution in the music industry, music was cheaper and easy to access from grocery outlets to

---

<sup>40</sup> Recreated in 2016 and appeared in the playlist of a Bollywood film *Rocky Handsome*.

<sup>41</sup> Recreated for the Hindi film *Roohi*(2021) as *Nadiyon Paar* performed by Indian young female actor Janhvi Kapoor.

*paan* shops (Bhargava, 1991). Record companies like HMV, T-series and Tips played an essential part in the 90s boom of hybridized music era which was commonly known as “Remix music”. Artists like Alisha Chinai, Remo Fernandez, Baba Sehgal, Apache Indian and others became common household names in every Indian family in India and abroad. Furthermore, some business owners focused on recording “devotional music, folk music, regional music, western music, all of which swallow 40 per cent of the market” (cited in *India Today*, 15 January. 1991).

It was during the late 1980s and early 1990s when artists of Indian origin introduced western cultural elements especially music to the Indian crowd. For example, artists like Apache Indian, who was once known as the father of Indie-Pop music, introduced a different music genre that had dancehall beats mixed with Hindi and Punjabi songs. It was the same time when the Indian crowd started to accept music which was not purely Indian or was solely from Hindi films. Apache’s *making way for the Indians* (1995) was a huge hit among the Indian population all across the globe. Apache who is a British Singer of Indian Origin draws his inspiration from the racially mixed community of Hansworth, Birmingham, UK, which is also known as the home of reggae bands (Jamaican music genre).

Around the same time when the famous Kanchan and Babla popularized Bollywood music to the Indo-Caribbean population. However, later they both toured many countries popularizing a unique music genre from the Caribbean Islands called Chutney, which is an Indo-Caribbean music genre.

The fluidity of music together with globalisation brings out a variety of music practices all across the globe. Hindustani music in particular has been reshaping itself time and again with the help of global migration. Artists of Indian origin are contributing to this new trend of hybrid-music making, popularizing their ancestral history, claiming the identity, and glorifying culture; whereas non-native artists are simply rejoicing in the tranquillity of Indian music by spreading awareness among their fans.

The available literature by Anamik Saha (2012, 2013), Balaji and Sigler (2017), Baksh-Soodeen (1998), Tina K. Ramnarine (1996) and others have also disclosed in their respective works about the relationship between cultural elements and identity claims in diaspora, where migrants are

using a variety of mediums to assert identities of different nature such as gender, ethnic and also territorial identity, and music out of all has remained one of the most strongest pillar that kept the cultural flow alive through time and space. Indian music and its role in diaspora have recently emerged out as an important theme in academic research however, not enough is available that justifies its significant contribution in the history of Indian migration.

### **Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet**

The blooming of ‘Hindustani sangeet’ in the Caribbean started with the first Indian indentured migration to the Caribbean Islands during colonial period. As mentioned earlier in the chapter it is the various music traditions and practices of the Indo-Caribbean people, often reflects the ‘Bhojpuri’ cultural heritage of many Indo-Caribbean people. It started with folk songs mostly sung by females during celebrations like childbirth (*Sohar*), mischievous and lighthearted songs sung during most of the North Indian weddings in order to insult the groom and his family (*gali*), songs of somber (*nirgun*) and other pre-wedding songs (*matkor*). Songs and performance at festivals like Holi (*phagwah*) are seasonal but are considered as important as other music practices and performances.

Music forms like *Chowtal* and *Taan-singing* became a binding agent for migrants and their identity as a community in foreign land. Moreover, music helped them stay connected to motherland at the same time provided them comfort in tough times.

In later part of the 20th century and around 1970s, one of the most popular forms of Indo-Trinidadian music came into existence called ‘Chutney’ which was quite similar to Baithak Gana originated in Surinam. With time music also changed its form, for example the usage of musical instruments, lyrics and language changed over the period of time making it more hybrid in nature as creolization took over *Bhojpuri* and *Hindi* lyrics, slowly Trinidadian creole replaced the usage of pure *Hindi* and *Bhojpuri* lyrics in music making. Chutney is one such form, where an evident shift is visible in terms of lyrics, tempo, rhythm and emotions.

To understand this change in the nature of Caribbean Hindustani sangeet, one needs to understand three important phases in any diaspora. This introduces us to the three core concepts

of cultural accommodation, cultural assimilation and cultural hybridization/negotiation. These three are the most inevitable phenomenons that migrants in any sort of migration witness.

### ***Cultural Accommodation***

According to Frederick T. L. Leong (2008), cultural accommodation was defined as the process by which a group of people or an entire society, on meeting with an unfamiliar community in the host culture, takes on the values and beliefs of that new culture while at the same time keeping their homeland culture as well. In general, cultural accommodation is unilateral, i.e., every time a migrant group attunes with traits of the dominant culture, it takes on more of it, including beliefs and values; and the risk of losing its own culture. They become increasingly attached to the dominant culture as each generation passes than to their ancestral roots.

Available literature on Indo-Caribbean music by Peter Manuel (1996, 1997, 2000), Tina K. Ramnariane (1996, 2006, 2019), and others indicates this ‘cultural shift’ among the Indian diaspora and their music and dance practices in the Caribbean. In the beginning, these shifts were mostly taking place in terms of language and nature of composition. For example, the shift in language from bhojpuri to Trinidadian creole while Chutney was surfacing indicates how Indo-Caribbean with time and generational change accepted and included linguistically hybridity in their music composition and also in their everyday communication. Similarly, the shift from Chutney to Chutney Soca and inclusivity of African inspired beats and lyrics also indicates that slowly and steadily the Indian diaspora in countries like Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago successfully went through the phenomena called cultural accommodation.

It is very important to know that cultural accommodation is a time taking process but is slightly assertive in nature, there are essentially four main stages migrants experience while going through the adaption or integration to a new place/land. They are:

- The first stage is called ‘Euphoria’ also referred to as “honeymoon stage” where the migrants experience excitement as a person on encountering a new culture, new people, and of course the difference in the environment in comparison to the one they are familiar with.

- The second stage is the state of being in a 'Cultural Shock'. This mostly causes trauma to the mental health of the migrants as it hits right after the 'euphoria'. This stage is mostly accompanied by nostalgia, fearfulness, homesickness, the frustration of being in an unknown land, confusion, and sometimes instate the sense of anger in individuals as they undergo the process of understanding the dominant culture and its traits.
- Acceptance and adaptation are the next two stages where not only the individual accepts the new surroundings and its traits but also begins to adapt to the dominant culture and its values without giving up their own.

The experience of 'Euphoria' experienced by migrants shortly after their arrival on the plantation soon turned into cultural shock after the dislocation. However, as time passed, they ultimately surrendered to the changes and accepted and adapted to the new surroundings and traits of the dominant culture. Chutney songs, for example, where musicians incorporated creole lyrics and African beats are symbols of significant cultural accommodation.

### ***Cultural Assimilation***

Likewise, cultural assimilation is the most extreme form of acculturation, it is more like an everyday occurrence in human lives, affecting their language and communication as a self-surveillance tool in order to avoid the fear of being an outcast among the majority. It is a process of compelling the minority mostly voluntarily to adapt the cultural practice of the host community. However, for the minority population to completely replace or destroy its prior cultural practices, such as religion, culinary preferences, proxemics, and aesthetics, is practically impossible.

William A V. Clark (2003) defines assimilation as “the process that occurs spontaneously and often unintended in the course of interaction between majority and minority groups” (13). However, if the process of assimilation continues and compounds with racial and biological fusion, it gives birth to element of uniqueness. A constant practice of assimilation by one or more than one generation in diaspora has resulted into formation of a mixed or new identities. It is

noteworthy to know that the longer the stay of migrant in the host land the more it is likely for them to start the process of assimilation to its culture.

Essentially, the genres such as Baithak and Chutney are a byproduct of cultural accommodation and assimilation. The first release of Baithak album in 1968 by Dropati, and Sundar Popo's famous composition '*Nana Nani*' reflects how Indians in the Caribbean started to accept their new identity while keeping their ancestral links alive.

There are primarily four benchmarks to examine the degree to which migrants assimilate into a new culture. They are:

- Financial or Socioeconomic status is characterised by instructive attainment, occupation, and pay. It decides whether or not the migrants can move up the 'social ladder' shaking hands with hierarchy and affording a suitable living for themselves. Unfortunately, sometimes discriminations based on race and ethnicity makes it harder for migrants to maintain a healthy socioeconomic status.
- Spatial Fixation is characterised by geology, in other words spatial concentration is the degree where in comparable societies begin to fan out and not live as cluster
- Language fulfillment is characterized as the capacity to communicate in the host language and the withdrawal of the person's primary or native language. This can be considered a roadblock for the settling population, as learning a new language can create certain setbacks. Moreover, it can limit the number of opportunities for people in that minority group. Assimilation of languages is based on the "three-generation model" of language (see Fishman 1965; Gordon 1964; Warner and Stroll 1945). According to this model, first-generation migrants gain some proficiency in language absorption but retain a strong grasp of their local language. Their immediate descendants, on the other hand, are mostly bilingual, whereas the third generation only speaks English (cited in Waters and Thomas 2005).

- Intermarriage especially across racial and ethnic lines is viewed as a sign of social reconciliation. Consequently, families are unable to bring forth a stable ethnic culture for the younger generation.

For example, many Indians who migrated to British Colonies between 1845-1920, it was seen that by the mid of 20th century they had already begun to assimilate to the lifestyle, including its cultural norms, everyday slang and colloquial use of words, and music of the respected settlements, they were once forced to migrate to. Then there were those communities that did manage to keep many of their original traditions and rituals enact and is still thriving over it.

### ***Cultural Hybridization***

According to Kenton Bell (2014), the concept of cultural hybridization is a “process by which cultural elements blend into another culture by modifying the element to fit cultural norms” (cited in Open Education Sociology Dictionary).

The Caribbean culture is a tale of British conquest and transformation of slave populations. It is a story of marginalized into becoming a whole community, that celebrates the difference and variety. The political atmosphere altered Indian culture since their original language, Hindi, was rapidly lost. To close this gap, Indian culture, religion, and spirituality were expressed via music as a means of practice. As a result, the Caribbean developed its own distinct musical genre.

Manuel (1997) talks at length about bonds the first-generation migrants shared with their native land, moreover, he further discusses the roles of culturally ‘knowledgeable individuals’ such as musicians and pundits helped these migrants to tighten and maintain the bond with India and their local culture alive for decades. It is important to bring out the fact that till the time migration process was on i.e. before 1917, it was easy for the Indian migrants to maintain the connection, however post indenture abolition Indians on the plantations suddenly became isolated which turned memories and joy into devotion towards maintaining their cultural heritage as the physical link was severed and all they were left was with a psychological bond.

In other words, the Indian diaspora could not maintain a communication network with their relatives in the subcontinent via travel or any other form of communication network following factors like poverty, illiteracy, and so on. As we know a majority of the Indians in the Caribbean were illiterate peasants from under-privilege regions of India. In such a scenario the only contact that existed was in form of traditions, rituals, and music. It was post 1930s when the import of commercial films and records gave a new direction towards building a new kind of relationship with India.

Manuel (1997) talks about how music became a sustaining face for the Indians in their new ‘inhospitable homeland’ “by the mid-twentieth century, the significance of music as a cultural icon was being further heightened by the decline of other traditional emblems of Indianness such as caste consciousness and use of Hindi as spoken language” (19). Traditions of public singing, ‘congregation of Hindu Bhajans’, musical celebrations related to festivals like Holi, Shivratri, and so on became the focal point for Indian communities in the Caribbean. The second half of 20th century shows a quiet different music practice in the Caribbean. The Indo-Caribbean community not only grooved on their own style of ‘neo-traditional’ music but also often shaking their legs on Bollywood songs. Movies with Indian diasporic themes became popular as they reflect their own struggles, lifestyle, and changes they went through while settling down in their ‘new homeland’.

Hindu culture is one of the most vibrant and visible cultures in the Caribbean and musical composition developed by the Indo-Caribbean community over the course of time represents the uniqueness of the Indian Diaspora in the Caribbean. Music has connected the Indian communities in the Caribbean to their Indian roots thereby strengthen the communities both in times of hardship and joy.

### ***Hindustanis in the Caribbean: reclaiming identities and embracing cultures***

The Caribbean is a diverse region with outstanding economic and development potential. The Gross National Income (GNI) per capita ranges from around US \$800 to US \$30,000. Whereas, most nations in this island depend fundamentally on travel industry, some depend on ware

exports. Relationship between the Caribbean countries and India is more than about just sharing religious values and cultural elements, but it also extends to trades and investments in growing technology and infrastructure, thus helping the Caribbean regions to offer more growth in various sectors ranging from establishment of new embassies to investment in sports like Cricket.

*Table 2.2: Country wise distribution of Overseas Indian population in the Caribbean.*

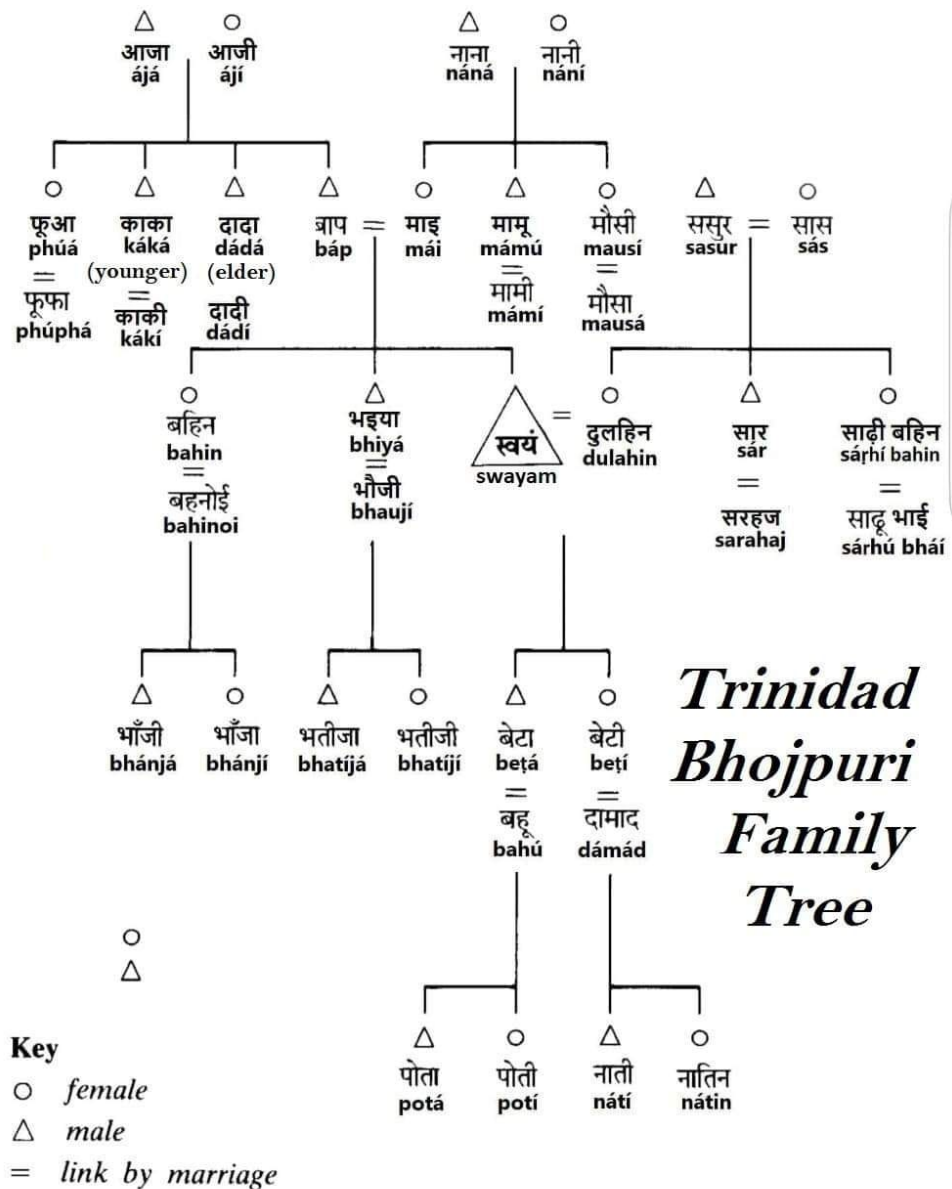
| Sl.No. | Country                                | Non-Resident<br>Indians<br>(NRI's) | Persons of<br>Indian Origin<br>(PIOs) | Overseas Indian |
|--------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1      | France(Martinique,Guadeloupe,St.Martin | 420                                | 66,800                                | 67220           |
| 2      | Grenade                                | 200                                | 5000                                  | 5200            |
| 3      | Guyana                                 | 600                                | 2,98,782                              | 2,99,382        |
| 4      | Jamaica                                | 5000                               | 75,000                                | 80,000          |
| 5      | St. Kitts and Nevis                    | 500                                | 50                                    | 550             |
| 6      | St Lucia                               | 550                                | 18,600                                | 19,150          |
| 7      | St.Martin                              | 2171                               | 300                                   | 5,171           |
| 8      | St. Vincent & the Grenadines           | 50                                 | 7,700                                 | 7,750           |
| 9      | Surinam                                | 205                                | 2,37000                               | 2,37,205        |
| 10     | Trinidad & Tobago                      | 1800                               | 5,55000                               | 5,56,800        |

Source: The Government of India *Report of the High-Level Committee on Population of Overseas Indian*.[https://mea.gov.in/images/attach/NRIs-and-PIOs\\_1.pdf](https://mea.gov.in/images/attach/NRIs-and-PIOs_1.pdf)

As the table shows, Trinidad & Tobago holds a major portion of the Indian population and the influence of the majority population is evident in its cuisine, festivals, and daily life. It is mostly because of their numbers in countries like Guyana, Trinidad, and Surinam where the population

of Indians is in majority, that have helped them retain their cultural identities maintained even after being constantly exposed to new influences.

Figure 2.16 An image of Hindi/Bhojpuri words that Indo-Caribbeans use in their everyday life.



Source: Baithak Gana Community

J. C. Jha (1974: 219) talks about how Hindi and Bhojpuri dialects are the most spoken, practiced, and known as their native language even among the second generation of Indian migrants “today the old Indians of indenture days and some second generation, even Tamilians and tribal people speak the old form of Hindi. ‘Seeta-Ram! Kaisan haal?’ (Good morning, how are you?), are the

most popular form of greetings. The young people, generally of the third or fourth generation, have taken to English, but some of them now learn Hindi in the Hindu or Vedic schools and other institutions like *Bharatiya Vidya Sansthaan*.<sup>42</sup>

Jha (1974) further talks about how in order to maintain this link these Indians have curated their own ways of practicing Indianness. For example, joint family system, religious belief, ceremonies, music, festivity, dance are few cultural traits. Moreover, naming their settlements areas in the Caribbean after Indian cities, names like “Calcutta settlements, Madras settlement, Patna Village, Fyzabad, Barrackpore, as well as street names like Agra, Ayodhya, Mathura, Benaras, Delhi, Bombay, Baroda, Cawnpore, Lucknow, etc., can be seen in several areas in Trinidad. In Guyana, A village is called Rampur” (220). Whereas it is not uncommon to find people named after Hindu Gods, celebrating Indian festivals in the most authentic way possible is also a way of the Indo-Caribbean community to celebrate their roots and heritage.

On the basis of online interactions and conversations with people of different age groups mostly from the countries such as Trinidad, Guyana, and Surinam, I have observed that with its stunning scenery and vibrant cultures the Indo-Caribbean community is undeniably intercultural that celebrates the multiplicity of ethnicity, language, culture, and heritage. In contemporary times they consider themselves as a ‘separate ethnic group’ that shares major cultural elements of their ancestral homeland in addition to the local Caribbean community which defiantly makes them diverse, but most of all progressive.

### **Media and entertainment**

The Indo-Caribbean community strongly associates itself with its inherited heritage. Although it was only the first-generation migrants who had the first-hand experience of being in exile, and a sense of loss, and longing for their native lands; the glorification of Indianness that has been done through various socio-cultural means has had an impact even on the new generation of

---

<sup>42</sup> Bharatiya Vidya Sansthaan (institute of Indian Knowledge) Trinidad & Tobago was engineered by Prof. Hari Shanker Adesh in 1966. It is an institute that promotes Indian culture and preserve it by offering Hindi language and cultural knowledge classes like music, dance, religious and so on. The Indo-Trinidadians believe that Prof. Adesh’s vision and contribution of Bharatiya Vidya Sansthaan have given the concept of diversity to their country and has benefitted the nation in many aspects from socio-economic to cultural aspects.

Indo-Caribbeans. The minority in a non-native environment often loses a variety of their cultural elements as the assimilation process takes place, and the chances of restoring these cultural values further diminish with the generational gap. It is quite interesting to note that more than half of the U.S and U.K audience members, who are 4th and 5th generation, consider their Indian ties as solid as their connections to the Caribbean, and they keep on learning about them through a variety of means.

Media and entertainment platforms are the strongest links the younger generation connects with, catering to an imaginative India which has been handed down to their predecessors in the forms of memories and family legends. T.V channels like Star Plus and Zee T.V are a few franchises that have been serving the Indian diaspora over the years, and in the Caribbean context, it is observed that the younger generation has been adapting to the sense of dressing and appearance watching Indian shows and movies.

Peter Manuel (1997: 22) talks about the evidence that shows the presence of Hindi films in the Caribbean around the 1930s, however, around the 1940s Hindi cinema had already become the spine of culture as it became very popular adding new meanings to the Indian cultural identities in the diaspora.

“Hindi movies are routinely broadcast on Guyanese and Trinidadian television without subtitles, such that nuances of dialogue as well as broad essentials of plot may be lost on many viewers who, while understanding little Hindi, nevertheless enjoy films as cultural icons” (22-23).

Peter Manuel (2000) also discussed T.V shows like *Mastana Bahar* that have been adding colors to the celebration and festivity of Indianism among the Trinidadians, where people of Indian origin take part in this talent show to display different cultural involvements and practices by Indo-Trinidadian community. He states “Mastana Bahar has evolved into an institution in Trinidadian culture”. *Mastana Bahar*, a Trinidad and Tobago based T.V talent show first produced by Sham Mohammed and hosted by Holly Betaudier, on 4th of July 1970, is now considered to be the longest-running show that has been running for approximately 45 years. It first aired on TTT (Trinidad and Tobago Television) (Kumar, 2015). Malena Kuss (2004) stated that this T.V show represents the local cultural life of Indo-Caribbeans in Trinidad.

### ***Music shows and performances***

Peter Manuel also talks about how Hindi film consumption established a new kind of connection between India and Indians in the Caribbean, whereas most use this connection to bond with their motherland, few get inspired to carry forward the legacy by contributing to the process by taking an active part in performing arts and representing what they consume as audience and listeners.

J. C. Jha (1972) stated “Indian music tradition has influenced the band music also. Many popular Indian tunes are rendered on the steel band. There are more than one hundred registered Indian orchestras in Trinidad at the moment” (369).

For the older generation it came naturally to be involved in music and their native language but for the younger generation indulging in Hindi films and media became a tool to learn *Devnagri* script even though they cannot speak it fluently. But it did not stop them to get involved in celebrating their native ties and ancestral heritage.

Music shows and dance performances are an essential part of any celebration amongst the Indo-Caribbean community. From songs of *Sohar* and *matkor* to public performances like *Rajdhar*, *Launda ke Naach*, Chutney, and Chutney Soca are a few styles that one can observe on various occasions and celebrations amongst the Indo-Caribbean community.

Figure 2.17 Picture of traditional *Launda Ke Naach* performances



Picture of traditional *Launda Ke Naach* performances during *Phagwa* celebration in Suriname.

In image famous artist 'Nachania Champa' during one of his public performances.

Source: Baithak Gana Community.

## ***Festivity and celebrations***

While boundaries might separate Indians from their native land but festivity and celebrations always bring them back together. Their love for traditions and festivity can be seen through celebrations of Indian festivals like *Diwali*, *Holi (Phagwa)*, *Shivratri*, and others. It is almost impossible to observe the eve of Diwali without Bhajans chants and thousands of *diyas* twinkling all around Indian settlements in the Caribbean. Music is an essential part of these festivities as this expresses the faith of the Indo-Caribbean community passed down remaining unaltered through the generations.

While *Diwali* seems like a more devotional affair in comparison to Holi which is mostly a festival of fun and frolic. Even during the indentureship coolies would gather and celebrate *Phagwa* by throwing colors at each other and singing folk songs of *Phagwa*. With the introduction of Hindi cinema, adopting Bollywood music became a new trend and now all these celebrations are marked by the sounds of Hindi film music. I observed that for younger generation people belonging to the Indo-Caribbean community, celebrations and festivity are mostly about reliving their ancestral ethnic identity which is as important to them as their individual identity.

The presence of elements like Indian food, dresses, and music makes it easy for the people to imaginatively connect with the missing link as most of the younger generation has never visited the motherland of their ancestors. The idea of being an Indian either comes to them through Television screens or being able to celebrate traditions and rituals just the way people in India would do.

Another, important element of festivity among the Indo-Caribbean communities are wedding celebrations. It is very common to observe rituals like *Sangeet*, *Mehendi*, and *Vidai* in both Indian and also in Indo-Caribbean Hindu weddings. What is more common in these weddings and rituals is the presence of folk songs, which are performed by both males and females. The significance of these songs is more than just for fun and joy, Hindus use this lyrical poetry to educate the newly married couple about their upcoming married life. It is interesting to know

that this particular music practice among various celebrations and festivals is quite identical among North Indians and Indo-Caribbean communities.

The Importance of these rituals in the lives of Indo-Caribbeans is equal to preserving legacy for future generations. In the contemporary scenario, Indo-Caribbeans by celebrating their music along with their festivals and rituals is a way of making a small contribution to the upliftment of the diaspora.

### **Diaspora and Transnationalism**

Thomas Faist (2010) defined diaspora and transnationalism as terms that refer to “cross-border process, diaspora has been often used to denote religious or national groups living outside an (imagined) homeland, whereas transnationalism is often used both more narrowly to refer to migrants’ durable ties across countries and, more widely, to capture not only communities but all sorts of social formations, such as transnationally active networks, groups, and organizations” (11). Faist also mentioned that both diaspora and transnationalism are often used ‘interchangeably’ calling them “two awkward dance partners” (11) with different intellectual genealogies.

There is a very thin yet important difference between the two as Walton–Roberts (2004) says corporations, communities, and states have developed interconnectedness, economic interdependency, and institutional interdependency as a result of globalization, particularly since the 1970s. Thus, it can be difficult to identify the differences between the diaspora and the transnational community.

Debora Upegui-Hernandez (2014) has written extensively about transnational migration. In the process of defining transnational migration Hernandez quotes Fouron & Glick-Schiller (2001) to define transnational migration as "a process of movement and settlement across international borders in which individuals maintain or build multiple networks of connection to their country of origin while at the same time settling in a new country” (02). The idea of transnational migration is based on immigrants’ constant relationships with people or with the homeland itself

in various ways, such as social, economic, and sometimes physical as well. Transnational migration addresses concerns about emerging societies and issues of minority groups. Transnationalism celebrates identity as an asset, as compared to being in the diaspora, where identity is more of a struggle. However, there is no denying that the effects of transnationalism are as evident as the impacts of the diaspora are on community building or individual identities.

The study examines the identity and cultural connectivity of the Indo-Caribbean diaspora in this context engaging through music and traditional practices. Cultural practices such as dance and music inspire cohesiveness and liberty among the members of a transnational state, whereas in the diaspora the same could cause alienation at the cost of individuality

### **Conclusion**

This chapter studies the history of Hindustani sangeet practices and their expansion, moreover how they evolved over the ages with inevitable factors affecting them. It talks about how music has different purposes in the lives of Indians and how it offers strength and support to build a community offering peace and harmony irrespective of borders. The practice of Indian music among the diaspora provided them with stability, by reconnecting them with their homeland in the most organic way possible. It creates a vivid picture and strengthens their psychological bond with their nativity and nation, irrespective of time and space in order to pacify their emotions and longing for the homeland. The performative art scenario in the Indian diaspora has changed extensively over time to satisfy their needs and so did their instruments, performances, and purpose. Moreover, they used music to speak and express their hardship, memories, tradition, and evolution.

In the following chapter, I will discuss the different music genres and artists from the Caribbean and discuss at length how migration and globalization have impacted the evolution of these genres under certain factors. The chapter will make an analysis of the stages and changes these music genres see over a period of time in terms of language, music, tempo, meaning, emotions, demand, and performances.

## Chapter 3: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Caribbean Hindustani

### Sangeet: The Birth of Fusion Art Forms.

*Saat samunder paar karaike,  
ek nava des ke sapna dikhai ke.  
Kaise hum ke o bharmaike, (x2)  
le gayo door Sarnaam bataike.  
Saat samundar paar karaike.*

*Kapda latta, kharcha, gahina,  
gathri mein baan k sab aasha.  
Kirpan sri Ram k mutthi mein,  
dusar k sahara pani pe.  
Kabhi dil ghabraye,  
thoda pachtaye,  
sayad tab jaike din badhiya aye.*

*Dui teen mahinna jahaj pe,  
rista-nata toh ban hi jaye.  
Contract jugai ke taili mein,  
ek-ek vicchar dimaag mein aaye.  
Ou des mein Kaisan bhet-ye,  
kheti-baari badhiya sairaye.  
Paanch baris kas ke kamai ke,  
lautab gaon apan paisa jamaike.  
Saat samunder paar karari k*

*Kuch din sarnaam mein rahi k bhai,  
dhire- dhire aadat pad jaye.  
Ab itna din mehnat kar ke,  
sab chhod-chaad wapas ke jaye.  
Jihu bole ab hin-ye reh jaye,*

*sarkaar bal pe khet mil jaye.*  
*Mann ke kona mein ehi sapna baki,*  
*rahige ek din gaon apan jaike.*  
*Saat samundar paar karaiyke* <sup>43</sup>

These evocative lyrics from Raj Mohan's Girmitiya *Kantraki* Bhojpuri song, capture the essence of indenture servitude, lives of coolies, memories, and the enigma of the exiled imagination. An estimate of over 18 million Indian diasporas all over the world, out of which approximately three million were taken under contractual labour. Moving past the difficulties of their lives, they have contributed remarkably to the cultural, linguistic, and religious diversities and brought glory to India in numerous ways. It is undeniable that the Indian diaspora has been facing socio and cultural alienation, political changes, emotional trauma, gender bias, and racism; together they all give birth to a diasporic consciousness, in simple words nostalgia.

Aristotle in *Poetics* describes the 'effects of true tragedy' as catharsis; which purifies the soul by the act of 'purgation'. A diasporic consciousness in most cases triggers the diaspora to express their traumatic experiences and emotions in the forms of writings, narratives, and oral literature. In recent scenarios various renowned and famous diasporic writers have used their consciousness to exhibit the missing linkages with their native land by conferring the folklore, dialects, ethics, myths, tales, traditions, and rituals of their homeland. The diasporic literature is colossal and besides nostalgia, it divulges the understanding of identity, exile, space, homeland, dislocation, and sense of alienation.

Similarly, in respect of the old Indian diaspora, they employed the medium of oral literature to illustrate the sense of alienation in exile, loss of homeland, and identity. It is very appropriate to quote William Wordsworth's comment here "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility" (Wordsworth, 1802). The creators of these oral narratives offer their questionable state of mind and understanding of 'home' and 'homelessness' to their creation in the forms of tales, songs, poetry sometimes religious chants. Salman Rushdie (1991) said that, "Literature is an interim report from the

---

<sup>43</sup> BEJOD. (2017, June 4). Girmitiya Kantraki Bhojpuri Song | Raj Mohan | NeoBihar & Champaran Talkies. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSLVqN0yOxY>

consciousness of the artist...Literature is made at the frontier between self and the world, and in the act of creation that frontier softens, becomes permeable, allows the world to flow into the artist and the artist to flow into the world” (427).

Kenneth D. Wald and Bryan D. Williams (2006) writes: “Diaspora consciousness, a term signifying the cognitive investment of members of a diaspora community in promoting homeland interests in their host nation” (02). The Indo-Caribbean diaspora has a distinctive structure that has a significant historical significance for the Indian diaspora. It has provoked great discourses above and beyond socio-cultural boundaries with its remarkable contribution to traditional practices, culture preservation, and identity-making. This kindles a desire to address the contribution of Indo-Caribbean music and musicians that is a direct outcome of displacement and diasporic consciousness; retained and nurtured by people of Indian origin over the years.

The analyses in this chapter examine the works of performers and musicians from the Indo-Caribbean community. To gain an understanding of the development that artists have made to various music genres under certain influences, the artists selected were from different eras and genres. The artists have also been selected to show the process of nesting with time. A single emotion is captured in all their works, yet all are reintroduced in unique ways that arise from a shared diasporic awareness. There are various musical pieces produced to keep the spirit of Indianism alive for those who have been displaced, while also giving them an imagined connection to their ancestry. Various music genres and musical pieces have developed their themes through the process of accommodation, assimilation, and hybridization. However, few survived unscathed to preserve their inherited relationship. To honour the study and to appreciate their role in contributing to the growth of the music industry in the Caribbean, as well as their contributions to community building and identity creation in the host country, I have tried to include artists from every relevant genre and era.

### **Indian Diaspora and Music: relationship and symbolism**

In a recent study conducted by Medimops (2021), a Europe-based music CD and online records company, India ranks 20th on 'The Global Influential Music Index' with 58.4 global scores, and 6th in the world music uniqueness score for its distinct and vibrant folk and traditional music. It is this uniqueness of Indian music what contributed significantly to the development of identities among diasporas around the world. In the midst of globalisation of world culture, and an increase in the transnational flow of people, income, commodity, and media content (Manuel, 1997), different socio-cultural practices among the diasporic community have added new dimensions to the process of identity building. In the context of the Indian diaspora, expressive cultural traits and practices such as music, and dance traditions have enabled them to maintain an absolute and symbolic bond with their homeland.

The fourth and fifth-generation diaspora are experiencing a shift in their understanding of socio-cultural practices compared to their elders. In other words, the older generations were more involved with traditional performances and music-making than the younger generations; this could be due to a lack of global connectivity, education, and electronic media.

With the boom of electronic media, and the introduction of music portability in the forms of films, music, video tapes, and others; socio-cultural practices among the diasporic community witnessed a slight change. In the sense that the participation of younger generation diasporas in comparison to their ancestors in such socio-cultural practices became limited. For example, community music performances use to be an everyday practice among the older diaspora, whereas the younger generation only participates in such activities in times of celebration and festivity.

Another major change that has been observed is in the theme of music making. For example, legends and myths from *Bhagvat Gita* and *Ramayana* were used and recreated over and over again in the form of musical pieces and public performances by the early diasporas to establish a community with people of the same natal links in the hostland, whereas most of the younger diaspora uses the available data and resources to study and preserve their inherent culture and introducing to their peers. In other words, at present, the art of music making among the Indian

diaspora is serving dual purposes one is to promote the Indian diasporic music industry, and second to keep the ancestral heritage alive by owning their individuality in diversity.

In assimilation settings, the change doesn't signify a decline in the presence of socio-cultural elements or the significance of native/ancestral identity among the younger generation. Instead, it signifies a modernised and enhanced version of traditional identity-building practices for assimilated communities. The socio-cultural element of music has become a powerful tool in the globalised era, as has its consumption, which encourages listeners, consumers, or audiences emotionally by creating a fondness for home and heritage.

This advancement in the music industry has contributed enormously to the relationship of the Indian diaspora with India, by educating and inspiring the younger generation to tighten the community, experience the richness of culture, and maintain the unbreakable link with India. Technological advancements have brought the versatility of Indian culture, and fluidity of its different music forms allowing it to grow and reach every household with a wide and diverse range of consumers.

Tina K. Ramnarine (1996), while talking about the music genre Chutney and its presence in various geographical locations, says, traditions are often associated with a particular locality, yet when its presence is felt in various geographical locations and is developed and maintained by people in their respective locations, the “relationship between place and tradition is questioned” (133). She further speaks, since the presence of Chutney music can be seen and observed from the Caribbean where it bloomed, to different locations of the world where Indian-Caribbean communities have settled as a part of a continuous human migration pattern that makes it transnational and protean. Ramnarine justifies and quotes Stokes (1992) and Turino (1993), while indicating how various ethnographic studies have examined a change in the nature of music and musicians, particularly in the context of rural to urban migration, which I believe makes a good case to study the pattern of paradigm shifts in Hindustani music when it comes in contact with diaspora and transnationalism.

## ***Changing trends in the Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet: Selected Artists and Genres***

The relatedness between cultural practices in India by Indians and PoIs in the Caribbean is remarkable. It becomes even more important to address that it is the devotion of Indians towards their religion, culture, and traditions that have made it possible for Indians to thrive across the globe. It becomes even more important to study this phenomenon considering the amount of racism and adversities migrants face in most non-native settlements; being from a 3rd world country it becomes difficult for Indians to pursue and practice their ancestral rituals in the new settings. However, in the world of literature and cultural studies, the same traditions and rituals are addressed as ‘uniqueness’, making the Indian diaspora stand-alone among other dominant races. The birth of Caribbean Hindustani sangeet is a byproduct of early Indian migration and the devotion of migrants towards their homeland, and culture.

There are a substantial number of studies and descriptions revolving around the Indo-Caribbean music tradition, and how it became a tool in community building in the host land, that includes Peter Manuel’s special overview of Caribbean music, Halen Myers’s discussion about folk traditions, Tina K. Ramnarine’s case study about presence of Chutney even in dual migratory pattern, and Tejaswini Niranjana’s (2006) take on gender representation in Indo-Caribbean music. However, there is hardly any study that discusses the transitional pattern in the Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet caused by factors such as music portability and introduction of media, generational change, and present consumer demand. Moreover, almost none present its relevance among the younger generation (age group 25-35) of the Indo-Caribbean community in the Caribbean and transnational settings.

This part of the chapter presents the distribution of selected Caribbean Hindustani artists, carefully selected to understand the transitional pattern taken place in the Caribbean Hindustani sangeet and the industry over the years. In this chapter, I shall interpret themes, artists, and pioneers of Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet, cultural shows and performances by selected artists, the introduction of music portability and electronic media, and its impact on the music industry. Moreover, for a detailed discussion about the influences and factors responsible for the transition and changes, I have intentionally selected artists from three major regions in the Caribbean, i.e., Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, and Suriname.

*Table 3.1 Details of selected Indo-Caribbean artists and their works 1968 onwards:*

| Artist                     | Country              | Years of active | Genre                                               |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Dropati                    | Suriname             | 1968            | Baithak Gana                                        |
| Sundar Popo                | Trinidad& Tobagonian | 1969-2000       | Chutney, Indian folk and Bhajan                     |
| Ramdew Chaitoe             | Suriname             | 1976-1988       | Baithak Gana                                        |
| Rampersad Khelawan         | Suriname             | 1971-2020       | Baithak Gana, Folk                                  |
| Rakesh Yankaran            | Trinidadian          | 1974-present    | Chutney, Bhajans, Kirtan, Indian Classical and folk |
| Drupatee Ramgoonai         | Trinidad& Tobagonian | 1983-present    | Chutney, Chutney Soca                               |
| Rikki Jai                  | Trinidadian          | 1988-present    | Chutney, Chutney Soca                               |
| Terry Gajraj               | Guyana               | 1989-present    | Chutney, Chutney Soca                               |
| Ravi Bissambhar            | Trinidad& Tobagonian | 2006-present    | Chutney, Chutney Soca                               |
| Raymond Ramnarain          | Trinidadian          | 2013-present    | Chutney, Chutney Soca                               |
| Rasika and Hemlata Dindial | Trinidadian          | 1999-present    | Chutney                                             |

Source: Rajinder Matadin

Before I discuss the analysis of the above, I would like to make a note that there is no concrete evidence of recordings or any other form of commodified music tape until 1960 that would represent the dawn of the Indo-Caribbean music industry, in addition to it Peter Manuel in his interview with Siddhartha Mitter (2011) while discussing Indo-Caribbean music mentions about the early recording made around the late 30s and early 40s and said: “but they’re just sort of imitating the records of film songs and popular songs that they were getting from India at that point, so they don’t really tell us anything about Indo-Caribbean music”. Before Dropati came out with her first record ‘Let’s sing and Dance’ which was a collection of traditional wedding folk songs, the only other documentation of such folk songs has been done by Alan Lomax in the

1960s, in which grinding<sup>44</sup> sound along with women's folk song in Bhojpuri Hindi were combined to make a musical piece (Mitter, 2011). Singing and dancing used to be a social gathering element among the settling Indians in various regions of the Caribbean. It was only later on when a few artists recorded and released their work for public listening, and turned into an occupation.

### ***Baithak Gana and Glorifying Indian Diaspora and Culture***

The history of Indo-Caribbean music is dominated by a few very distinguished names, and among them Dropati and Ramdew Chaitoe are known to be the torchbearers of the Indo-Caribbean music industry. The first stone itself was laid by Dropati in 1968 with the release of her first album *Let's Dance and Sing*. Ramdew Chaitoe came next, launching his career in 1976 with the release of "The King of Suriname," also known as "The Star Melodies of Ramdew Chaitoe," an album that broke numerous records.

Dropati is known for pulling East Indian Music out of the shadows in 1968 with the release of her traditional album *Let's Sing and Dance*, and is also known widely for her significant contribution to the Indo-Caribbean music industry. The album *Let's Sing and Dance* includes a collection of wedding songs, that had a religious touch to it, and since folk tradition and religious songs were the jam of the East-Indian population between the 1960s and 1970s, it instantly went on to become a hit. In several interactions with the Indo-Caribbean population Dropati's name was addressed as the 'mother of modern-day Chutney' and sometimes as 'The grandmother of Baithak Gana'. While studying Dropati's works more closely, I observed that songs like *Gowri Pooja*, *Manikdhar Jhabeeya (Lawa)*, *More Gari Suno Maharaj* are very popular even in 21st century, many listeners have asserted the fact that Dropati's songs transport the listener to colourful Indian village wedding of old times. The captivating and enchanting nature of her folk songs and her connection with her listeners made Dropati's name a touchstone in the history of the Baithak Gana community in Suriname and made Dropati one of the most enduring representatives of the Indo-Caribbean music industry.

---

<sup>44</sup> In older times women use to crush, and smooth out grains with the help of a stone grinder. Women in many places especially in Rural parts Bihar and Uttar Pradesh perform grinding in groups and sing along while performing the task. This practice is still prevalent in some rural parts of the country.

### *Folk songs and Hindi dialect in Indian diaspora music*

Dropati's experiment with Indian folk songs gave a new direction to local music practices. Moreover, it enabled old community music to reincarnate as a legitimate music genre that attracted and engaged every Indian diaspora across the Caribbean. On one hand her songs reflected rustic Indians and their earthy music practices while manifesting religious emotion, became one of the reasons for Baithak Gana to achieve instant recognition among the Indo-Caribbean population, especially among Surinameies. On the other hand, language usage became another link for the Indian diasporas to immediately get engaged, as most of the migrant's shared lineage with Hindi-speaking Northern India regions. In Northern India weddings are generally not a one-day affair, hence, there are various pre-wedding as well as post-wedding functions, enough to make any wedding a grand celebration. Similarly, every region of India has its own traditions and music is one of the primary elements of all these traditional rituals, and also is considered to be auspicious. They have different themes and motives behind every song.

Figure 3.1 *Dropati (Pioneer of Baithak Gana in Suriname)*



Source: *Let's Sing & Dance by Dropati*—RYM/Sonemic. (n.d.). Retrieved 2 November 2021, from [https://rateyourmusic.com/release/album/dropati/lets\\_sing\\_and\\_dance/](https://rateyourmusic.com/release/album/dropati/lets_sing_and_dance/)

Keeping this in mind, Indo-Caribbean artists like Dropati primarily drew inspiration from the same North Indian wedding musical pieces and songs that women use to sing to recall the spirits of Gods and sometimes ancestors too. The following excerpt from Dropati's song *Gowri Pooja*

can be identified as a ‘*Devi-Devta*’ song where the singer recalls the Hindu God and Goddesses to take their blessings for the happiness and prosperity in life.

Example 1: Gowri Pooja, Gowri Pooja (Windsor Records, *Let's Sing & Dance with Dropati*, 1968)

“Gaur pūjo, Gaur pūjo, Gaurī Ganeś ho; Ṭikahu' Dhartī maiyā māthā tumhārā.  
Gaur pūjo, Gaur pūjo, Gaurī Ganeś ho ; Ṭikahu' (tilak) Dhartī maiyā nām kā pukārā.  
Glorify Gauri-Ma and Lord Ganesh.

Tohare bharose maiyā mai' jag ropeva (ropayo) (2);  
More jag pūran ho-ī su/more Rāma (2).  
Gaur pūjo, Gaur pūjo, Gaurī Ganeś ho ; Ṭikahu' Bhavānī maiyā māthā tumhārā.  
Gaur pūjo, Gaur pūjo, Gaurī Ganeś ho ; Ṭikahu' hamāre maiyā nām kā pukārā."

Translation:

“Place the auspicious mark of Dharti Ma (Mother Earth) on your forehead.  
Glorify *Gauri-Ma* (Goddess Durga) & Lord *Ganesh*.  
Place the mark & call on the name of *Dharti-Ma* (Earth-mother).

I place my faith (trust) in this world in you, Mother.  
My whole world was devoted to Lord *Ram*.  
Glorify *Gauri-Ma* and Lord *Ganesh*.  
Place the auspicious mark of Bhavani-Ma (another name for Goddess Durga) on your forehead.  
Glorify Gauri-Ma and Lord Ganesh.  
Place the mark and call on the name of our mother”.

Source: dMann1017. (2008, May 5). *Dropati—Gowri Pooja*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cs995YwpO\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cs995YwpO_0)

Similarly, I have observed ‘*Sehre ke geet*’<sup>45</sup>, ‘*Banni ke geet*’<sup>46</sup>, ‘*Banne ke geet*’<sup>47</sup>. *Sehre ke geet* is traditional songs sung when the groom is about to wear *sehra*<sup>48</sup>. These songs are traditionally sung by women, where they tease the groom and his family with the usage of colloquial slang. These songs could be very insulting and disrespectful sometimes depending upon the language, although the main purpose is to bless the groom for his married life. Dropati’s song *Moray Gari Suno Maharaj* is one such *sehra* song.

Following is an excerpt from the song *Moray Gari Suno Maharaj* by Dropati, followed by its translation.

Example 2: *Moray Gari Suno Maharaj* (Windsor Records, *Let's Sing & Dance With Dropati*, 1968)

“Morey gari suno maharaj, ai dulahe Rama lalla  
Dulahe Rama lalla, dulahe Rama lalla  
Dulahe ke papa dekho ajaba saje hai  
Dulahe ke papa dekho ajaba saje hai  
Dulahe ke papa dekho  
Bhala jaise raja maharaj, ai dulahe Rama lalla  
Dulahe ke aja dekho ajaba saje hai  
Bhala jaise raja maharaj, ai dulahe Rama lalla”

Translation:

“Listen to my teasing insults, oh bridegroom Rama  
Bridegroom Rama, oh bridegroom Rama  
Look at the groom’s father how well-dressed he is

---

<sup>45</sup> Wedding song sung during wedding processions.

<sup>46</sup> Wedding songs dedicated to bride.

<sup>47</sup> Wedding songs dedicated to groom

<sup>48</sup> A head gear that Indian bride and groom generally wear during traditional Indian weddings. It could be made up of flowers, beads and pearls.

Look at the groom's father  
Like some great king, oh bridegroom Rama “

Source: *Dropati—Moray Gari Suno Maharaj (Dulha Sehra)—YouTube*. (n.d.). Retrieved 25 January 2022, from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT\\_eC0CgXF0&lc=UgwnglssEV6VkZN2N-94AaABAg&t=34s&ab\\_channel=ItsallAboutOurRoots](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT_eC0CgXF0&lc=UgwnglssEV6VkZN2N-94AaABAg&t=34s&ab_channel=ItsallAboutOurRoots)

I have observed another composition by Dropati, in which she has introduced another wedding ritual called *Lawa*. Lawa in colloquial Bhojpuri language is referred to ‘Popcorn,’ and Dropati’s song Lawa is about a ritual where the groom's family roasts popcorn as one of the traditions in many Bihari Hindu weddings. Following is an excerpt from Dropati’s composition, followed by its translation:

Example 3: Lawa (Windsor Records, *Let’s Sing And Dance With Dropati* 1968)

“Dulahā ke maiyā to bujhe lagī lāvā, dulahā ke māī to bujhe lagī lāvā(2)  
Pappā gire le pichhavāre, mānika morā chabiyā. [bujhe yā bhūnje.

Dulahā ke phuā (buā) to bujhe lagī lāvā, dulahā ke chāchī to bujhe lagī lāvā;  
Dekho phūphā gire le pichhavāre, mānika dhār chabiyā.

Dulahā ke mausī to bujhe lagī lāvā, dulahā ke māmī to bujhe lagī lāvā;  
Hyā ke mehararvan to bujhe lagī lāvā, hyā ke mehararvan to bujhe lagī lāvā;  
Dekho mausā gire le pichhavāre, mānika dhār chabiyā.”

Translation

“The groom's mother ensures the lawa does not burn (or roasts the lawa).  
Look, the (groom's) father fell down in the backyard - chewing the smell.

The groom's bua (father's sister) and chachi (father's brother's wife) ensure  
the lawa does not burn (by turning it).

Look, the (groom's) phupha (bua's husband) fell down in the backyard  
inhaling the delicious odor of the lawa.

The groom's mausi (mother's sister) and mami (mother's brother's wife)  
ensure the lawa does not burn (by turning it). All the local (these) women,  
turn (stir) the lawa so that it does not burn.

Look, the (groom's) mausa (mausi's husband) fell down in the backyard  
inhaling the smell of lawa”.

Source: ItsallAbout OurRoots. (2016, February 6). *Dropati—Manikdhar Jhabeeya (Lawa)*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgKMpHTft-8>

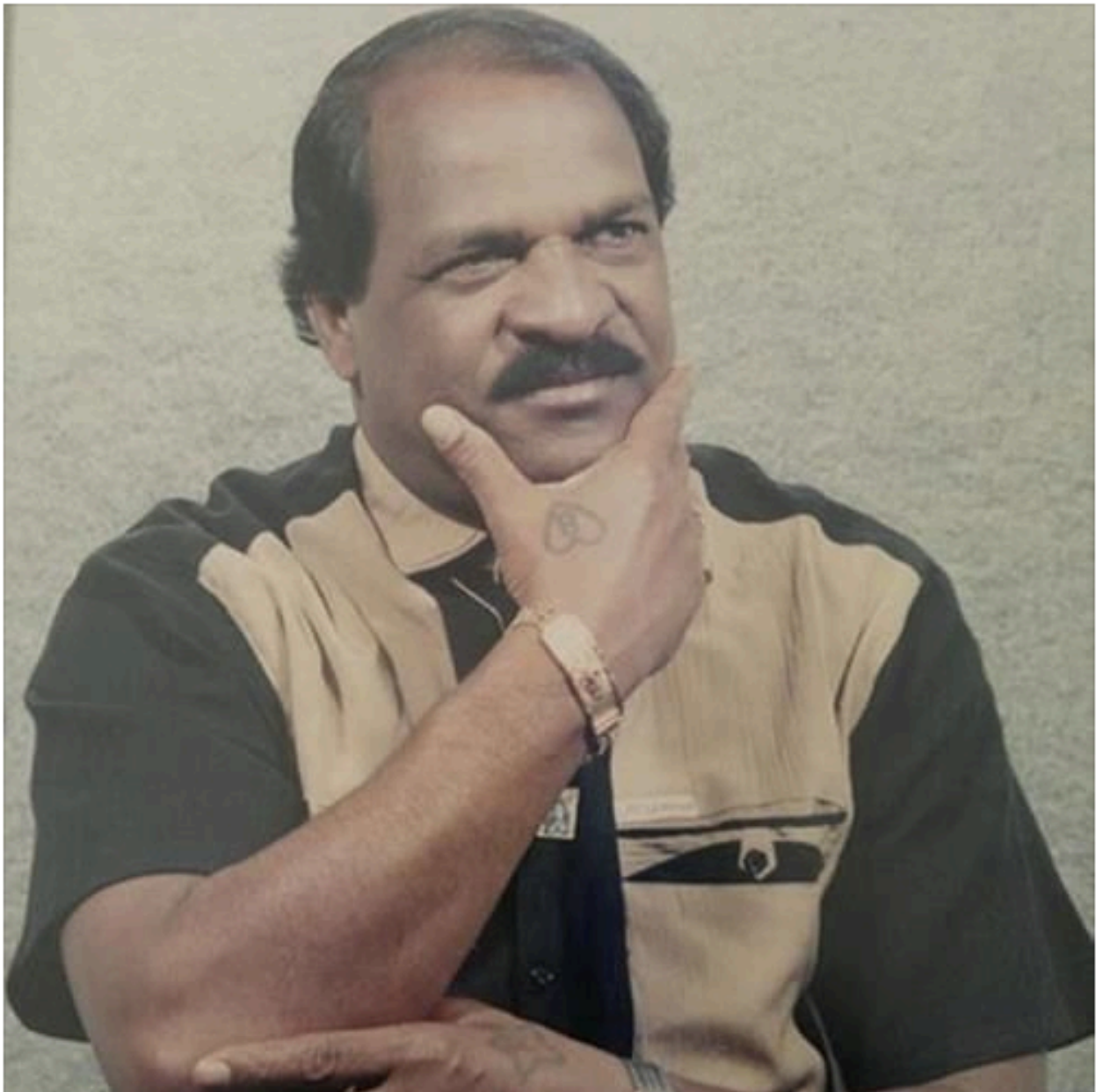
The arrangements of these songs resemble contemporary Bhajan’s performances which the Hindu community occasionally practices during *Jagran*, *Mata ki Chowki* and *Kirtan*, where Vocalist would sit on the ground with Harmonium, accompanied by a choir mostly playing instruments like manjeera, dholak, and other traditional instruments.

### *Indian diaspora musicians shift from traditional music making*

Ramdew Chaitoe started his music journey by participating in a radio program called ‘*Sunday Baithak Gana Program*’, it made him a popular name in every household. This inspired him to form his own music band in the early 1970s, called *Roshnie Sangeet Samaadj* (see fig 3.3), and released his first record *The Star Melodies of Ramdew Chaitoe* under Windsor record production.

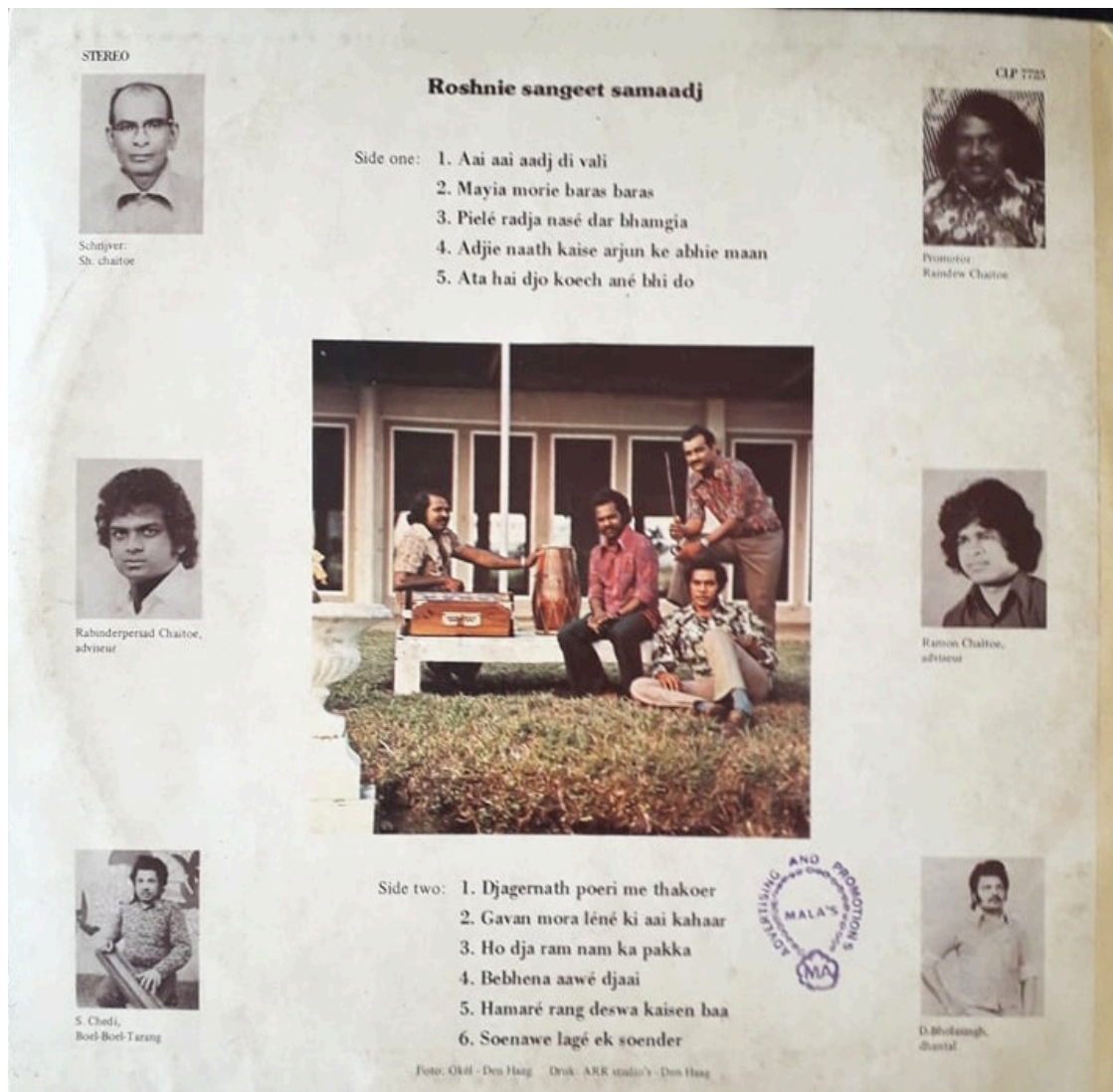
The *Star Melodies of Ramdew Chaitoe* was suitably named, as it made him an easily recognized name with East Indians in Suriname, yet all through the Caribbean. Despite the fact that his melodies were mostly religious in nature, the song “*Ek Haath Me Desh ka Jhanda*” turned every head around.

Figure 3.2 Ramdew Chaitoe (1942-1992)



Source: *Ramdew Chaitoe*. (n.d.). SoundCloud. Retrieved 2 November 2021, from <https://soundcloud.com/ramdew-chaitoe>

Figure 3.3 Picture of Roshnie Sangeet Samaadj and its members. This picture exhibits the instruments used by Chaitoe and the group to compose early Baithak Gana songs.



Source: Rajinder Kumar Matadin

The utilization of the solid beats of the dhantal, dholak, and harmonium combined with his own creolized form of Hindi; often had a large number of swayed listeners as though it was a pop tune. Songs like *Bhool Bisar mat jana*, *Mai Ramta Jogi Ram*, *Prem Ho to Shri Hari se*, and *Ab Ram ke Bigaral Baat* from *The Star Melodies of Ramdew Chaitoe* are purely religious in nature

and theme, Chaitoe extracted the mythological spirits Lord Vishnu and his avatars Lord Rama and Lord Krishna and presented it in form of a fast-track song.

### *Change in themes: introducing love compositions in Baithak Gana*

The year 1977 marks the release of *Raaté Sapna Dekhai Pya Hamko*<sup>49</sup> and *Phagun Ajie re*. *Raaté Sapna* became an instant hit and is known to be the most popular composition by Chaitoe so far. It proceeded to the heights of fame to turn into an enormous dance hit for a long time to follow, moreover presented him with opportunities of signing and performing for a global audience in other countries. Chaitoe's increasing popularity gave a boost to his career and he contributed to the industry by composing more musical albums and songs such as “*Ye wada karo Chaand ke saamne*” (1990) and “*Tara Gienoe Adhie Raath Mai Tere Leyie*” (1980) are romantic songs.

---

<sup>49</sup> Rajendir Matadin is a renowned Vinyl collector from Suriname, and posses over and around 4000 Lp,s told an anecdote stating “ when Chaitoe got in a fight in a bar, for that he went to jail. He was in a cell when he overheard a song *jaat ke Beriya*(original song by Pier Khan) over a radio programe *Maut ki Khabar* on channel RBN which inspired the tune for Chaitoe's famous song *Raat ke Sapna*”.

Figure 3.4 Front picture of the dust-jacket of Chaitoe's original Vinyl record *Raaté Sapna dekhai pya humko*, his most popular composition *Raaté Sapna dekhai pya humko*.



Source: Rajinder Matadin

Chaitoe experimented by inducing romance in his compositions to cater to the needs of his listeners as he knew when, how, and what will sway his listeners. The change in the themes of songs symbolizes the change in the choices of listeners

*Table 3.2 Chronological distribution of albums composed and produced by Ramdew Chaitoe from 1976 onwards*

| NAME OF THE ALBUM                                                      | Record label                          | YEAR OF RELEASE |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| The Star Melodies of Ramdew Chaitoe                                    | Windsor Record                        | 1976            |
| Melodies To Remember                                                   | Windsor Record<br>Chaitoe Productions | 1977            |
| The Golden Movies of Ramdew Chaitoe                                    | Chaitoe Productions                   | 1979            |
| Ramdew Chaitoe Presents His Golden Hits For Young and Old              | Chaitoe Productions                   | 1980            |
| Hot Tunes, De Beroemdste Zanger van Suriname                           | Chaitoe Productions                   | 1980            |
| The Caribbean Champion Ramdew Chaitoe Volume 6                         | Chaitoe Productions                   | 1980            |
| Melodies of Ramdew Chaitoe Volume 5                                    | Chaitoe Productions                   | 1981            |
| Ramdew Chaitoe And Various - Hot Tunes 1982 Zangers van Suriname Vol 8 | Chaitoe Productions                   | 1982            |
| The Family Chaitoe Vol 9                                               | Chaitoe Productions                   | 1982            |
| Bar Bar Baiga May of Ramdew Chaitoe                                    | Chaitoe Productions                   | 1988            |
| The Best of Europe and America Vol 3                                   | Chaitoe Productions                   | 1990            |

Source: *Ramdew Chaitoe | Discography | Discogs.* (n.d.). Retrieved 2 November 2021, from <https://www.discogs.com/artist/1975763-Ramdew-Chaitoe>

&

Source: Rajinder Matadin

### *Experimenting with Indian diasporic patriotism*

In the span of thirteen years Ramdew Chaitoe composed songs of mixed choices and themes. Song *EK hath me dash ka Jhandaa*, gives away Indo-Surinames anthem feel as it showers nationalistic emotions of Indo-Surinames community, where Chaitoe appeals to the Indo-Surinamese community to stand together as one, and encourages the successors of Indian migrants a.k.a Indo-Surinames to keep struggling and establish their home, their identities.

Example 1: Ek Haath mein des ka Jhanda (Windsor Records, *The Star Melodies of Ramdew Chaitoe* 1976)

*“Ek haath me des ka Jhanda,  
Ek haath me Suriname ka Jhnada,  
Dujhi me talwaar,  
kaum ka hoga tabhi Uddhar.*

*Agar chahte ho tum sab sukhi rahe,  
aur rehne ka thikana bane,  
toh jaat paat ab door bhagana hoga,  
ek hi jhanda k neechey ab sabko aana hoga.  
jisse ho kaum ho raksha,  
aisa party banana hoga,  
Guru govind aur Birjanand ki lane pe aana hoga.*

*Sau baaton ki ek baat yahi hai,  
ki tum sab ektaa ko mat bhoolna.  
Agar ektaa ko bhool gaya to surinaam desh me rehna ka thikana nahi.  
Aapne aap bhaiyon k upar tum sab zulm uthana nahi,  
ye kaam hai aapka, aur kisi ko beigana nahi.  
Seedheypan ka Surinameiyon ab raha wo zamana nahi,  
pichey dhokha kha chuka hai ab aage dhoka khana nahi.”*

*Source: Listen to Ek Haath Me Desh Ka Jhanda by Ramdew Chaitoe in The Star Melodies Of Ramdew Chaitoe playlist online for free on SoundCloud. (n.d.). SoundCloud. Retrieved 5 November 2021, from <https://soundcloud.com/ramdew-chaitoe/ek-haath-me-desh-ka-jhanda?in=ramdew-chaitoe/sets/the-star-melodies>*

As we see, the above song echos about the survival of the settling Indo-Surinamese community in the host land even after decades of first-generation migration. It is a kind of handbook of Dos and Don'ts for migrants and the following generations. Moreover, it is an inspirational call to

claim and secure the new identity i.e., Indo-Surinamese identity, by establishing peace and letting go of their ancestral traditions, particularly caste discrimination. Chaitoe through his song further speaks to Indo-Surinamese to promote brotherhood and unity as it is essential for community building in the hostland, failing which survival would become a hardship again as it was for their ancestors. The last two lines appear to be a satire subtly placed on the colonial masters, as he calls out their bluffs and at the same time advises the Indo-Surinamese to be smart and progressive.

Observing Chaitoe's compositions one can find a hint of religious knowledge, patriot, and a lover. An evident change is visible in the themes of the songs composed using traditional instruments. These songs do not imitate lamenting and problems of Indian migrants instead eulogize the community-building process in the new homeland. With passing generations, the successors of indentured migrants built an individual identity apart from the one their ancestors were recognized with i.e. coolies, the music industry played a huge role in community building across the Caribbean while simplifying the idea of both modernity and identity. It is important to address that although Ramdew Chaitoe made songs of every theme, he did stick to one genre of music i.e., Baithak Gana. The element of dislocation together with Chaitoe's attempt made it acceptable for a classical and folk music genre to grow out of its comfort zone and introduce a newer and interesting version of it on the global platform.

Rampersad Ramkhelawan<sup>50</sup> name is another milestone in the journey of Baithak Gana and among the Indo-Surinamese community. Just like Chaitoe and Dropati, Ramkhelwan also experimented with the themes of Baithak Gana and created some unforgettable melodies of his times. Ramkhelawan's compositions were primarily in Hindi and Bhojpuri. Usage of instruments like Dhantal, Harmonium, and dholak is very evident in each and every composition by Ramkhelawan. Like Chaitoe even Ramkhelawan sang patriotic baithak melodies such as '*Bharat Ke Kan Kan Me*' and '*Surinam Hômarâ Desh*,' where he invoked the loyalties of listeners with melodious arrangements of folk and country music coupled with Hindi and Bhojpuri lyrics.

---

<sup>50</sup> The key informants of the study shared anecdote with me and mentioned that Rampersad Ramkhelawa who was better known as Ustâd Jan Rampersad Ramkhelwan. The respondents also stated little known facts about Ramkhelawan such as he started his singing career at an early age of 20, however, became a big name in the Baithak industry 1971 onwards only. He participated in Carifesta(music fest) in 1979 on behalf of Suriname. He was awarded with medal of honor at the hands of president of Republic of Suriname, and in 1988 he achieved the title of Ustâd(master of song and music).

In Ramkhelawan's composition '*Suriname Hômarā Desh*' singer appears appealing to the emotions of the younger generation diaspora in Suriname, while addressing the journey of Indentureship, and hardship their ancestors went through while setting up a community of Indians in abroad. The usage of emotions attached with indentureship and displacements have been used very strongly in this particular composition.

Example 2: Suriname Hômarā Desh (Chaitoe Productions, *Hot Tunes 1980 – De Beroemdste Zangers Van Suriname* 1980)

*"Mehant aur masakat karke,  
baapon ne desh sajaya x2  
Suriname humara dese hume sabse pyaara hai.  
Hum yahan pe janam liya hai,  
aur palke bada hua hai,  
yah janambhoonmi hai humara is pe adhikar tumhara,  
is per Adhikari Humara...  
Suriname humara desh...Hume sabse pyaara hai."*

Source: *Various - Hot Tunes 1980 – De Beroemdste Zangers Van Suriname*. n.d. Accessed 3 November 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/release/8234525-Various-Hot-Tunes-1980-De-Beroemdste-Zangers-Van-Suriname>.

Apart from traditional themes such as religion and romanticism, the diasporic artists from the Indo-Caribbean experimented a lot with the theme of patriotism. There could be numerous reasons for choosing patriotism over any other theme or plot for music composition, one of which I believe is to provide the listeners with an impression that every individual is responsible to represent a collective stand. Another reason to choose patriotism could be to educate the younger generation with the narratives of indenture and their history of displacement and settlements.

### *Branches to Roots: Modern Baithak and Tan Singing*

It is by now evident that music creation is not rigid in nature and it takes a slight external push to create something different, and totally unconventional. Just like a river that gets divided into tributaries based on geological division, and might have different names, yet will always be known for its origin.

The name Baithak Gana comes from the arrangement of the performance, where performers/artists would sit along with listeners/audience on the ground forming a Baithak. A Baithak in Hindi literally means ‘to sit’ and *Gaana* means ‘to sing’ together symbolises singing while sitting, hence the name Baithak Gana.

A Baithak does not necessarily always symbolises a religious performance, rather often symbolises the social gathering of community people to experience joy, peace, and tranquility achieved by music performances. The aim of any Baithak is to promote social relations irrespective of religion, usually, in an Indian scenario any Baithak is incomplete without traditional Indian food and beverage especially ‘*Chai*’. In the Indian scenario Baithak performances are now either limited to concert halls or rural India. Bhajan and Kirtan are still very common and prevalent practices among Indians during *Ram Navmi*, *Janmashtami*, and *Mata ki Chowki*. In 2014 Brook Bond Company launched its new flavor of Taj mahal tea and organized a Baithak with eminent sitar player Pandit Niladri Kumar hosted by famous Bollywood actress Madhuri Dixit (*The Times of India*, 15 June. 2014).

Baithak Gana holds a very significant place in the lives of the Indo-Caribbean population and it has contributed significantly to the growth of popular music culture in the Caribbean region. Not only Baithak Gana represents strong and unblended cultural link between the Indo-Caribbean population and India, but also have helped in maintaining a strong cultural identity that represents diversity and distinctiveness. The popularity of Baithak Gana and artists like Chaitoe and Dropati captivated more audience/listeners, and magnetized new artists towards more such

musical gatherings and music-making business, which later on gave birth to many other music styles across the Caribbean region.

As Baithak Gana gained popularity in Suriname and across the Caribbean region, other artists from countries such as Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, and even Jamaica began to take an active role in the music-making business, i.e., releasing albums. East Indians in the Caribbean were united by music, but as religious elements faded away, and a non-religious popular music genre was in demand, it finally cracked the surface of East-Indian music. Displaced Indians from all over the Caribbean would benefit from music that soothed their roots and harnessed their energy.

Baithak Gana still hold a very powerful position among the Indo-Surinamese community, as do Bhojpuri. Apart from Bhojpuri being involved in music, a dialect of the language known as *Sarnami*<sup>51</sup> dominates everyday communication among Indian diaspora even today. The modern Baithak artist of Indo-Surinamese origin were observed trying social media platforms apart from live performances representing musical unity between global audience and performers. Various groups of Indo-Surinamese origin have started using social media giants such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook (now called Meta) to share awareness about their culture and musical practices that Indo-Surinamese have retained through ‘language and culture preservation’.

---

<sup>51</sup> Essentially, the Sarnami dialect is a mix of Bhojpuri and Awadhi. In Suriname, it is currently the third most popular language, spoken more frequently by the Indian diaspora than any other language.

Figure 3.5 Dholak king Soerin Ramkhelawan with his students in Suriname.



Source: Baithak Gana Community.

### ***Linguistic Hybridity: Chutney and Chutney Soca***

Rajiv Mohabir (2019) at great lengths has discussed the fusion of North Indian languages that have been transformed solely to communicate within a specific Indian diaspora. While trying to explain this linguistic shift, Mohabir (2019) discusses the process of ‘*koineization*’<sup>52</sup> which Surendra Gambhir (1981) in his study described as the “blending of lexicon and grammatical features to suit the various speech communities”. Mohabir’s reference extends toward the linguistic-shift that is visible in various music productions of East Indian artists such as Sundar Popo, which actively explains the beginning of transitions in music making particularly in

---

<sup>52</sup> Richard Nordquist (2019) says koineization is the process by which a new variety of a language emerges from the mixing, leveling, and simplifying of different dialects. Also known as dialect mixing and structural nativization. The new variety of a language that develops as a result of koineization is called a koiné. According to Michael Noonan, "Koineization has probably been a fairly common feature of the history of languages" (The Handbook of Language Contact, 2010). The term koineization (from the Greek for "common tongue") was introduced by linguist William J. Samarin (1971) to describe the process that leads to the formation of new dialects.

Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago. This linguistic shift started mostly from the third generation onwards, as English infiltrated these settling communities and demanded a more inter-linguistic approach for communication and trade purposes.

Similarly, Robin Cohen (2013) talks about ‘creolization’ that comes from the term ‘Creole’ and has Latin origins from the word ‘creare’ meaning ‘create’ or ‘to create a new’. A creole is defined as a language that has evolved from a mixture of different languages and has become the dominant language in a particular location or area. More than that creolization is a process through which migrants empower their identity formation processes to strengthen their community building in non-native land. Creolization can also be understood as a melting point where cultures fuses and hybridization take over, to design new forms of culture, identity and in many cases music.

The Political environment and pressure had a great impact on settlers’ habits, which swiftly altered their culture and caused Hindi, their native tongue, to go dormant. Except in Suriname, where elders passed on their language to the following generation; people of Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago in today's time are not very richly accustomed to the languages of their predecessors. Music was used as a means of language practice, cultural preservation, community unity, identity assertion, and spiritual expression in order to bridge this widening gap. This led to the emergence of regionally distinct musical genres throughout the Caribbean, including Chutney Music in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago (*Chakranews*, 21 Oct. 2017).

The word Chutney comes from the Hindi language. In India and also in neighboring countries Chutney is a condiment. Ramnarine (1996) explained:

*“Chutney is an Indian side dish, spicy and tangy in nature, that adds flavour to the main course of meal. If you go more local, it is an ancient way of preserving seasonal fruits or vegetable so that it could be tasted all around the year. The spices and minerals that are used in the process of preservation, eventually kills the actual taste of the fruit or the vegetable and start having its own smell/taste and becomes a part of our daily meals as a side dish”.*

In a similar vein, over time music practices among indentured migrants and their succeeding generations became less dedicated to rituals and memories of diasporas, and rather more focused on entertainment. Studying Chutney music illuminated a multidimensional understanding of the lives of Indians in the Caribbean and neighboring countries where the Indo-Caribbean population exist.

### *What is Chutney Music?*

Throughout the Caribbean particularly in Trinidad and Guyana, a unique style of Taan singing developed under the influence of Bhajans, and various mythological verses were handed down by generations. It was very similar yet different to what was called Baithak Gana which developed in Suriname. What made it different from Baithak Gana was the amalgamation of Indo-western instrumental use such as dholak, Harmonium, Dhantal, Tassa drums, synthesizer, and guitar used to create melody and harmony. Moreover, songs were sung in creolized English, and all of this was incorporated to develop a unique kind of composition, that now becomes the most valuable part of West-Indian culture. West Indies is home to vibrant Indian culture, and throughout its history, music has brought communities to their roots, and spiritual beliefs, and promoted cohesiveness.

Sundar Popo's in 1969 entered the music industry in collaboration with Windsor Records, and that marked the year as the biggest turning point in the history of East Indian Music. Popo born as Sundarlal Popo Bahorain, Barrackpore, a Trinidadian by nationality introduced a different kind of musical taste to the East Indian population. Before he released his first single Hit, *Nana Nani*, in 1969, he used to perform Bhajans at various public gatherings, such as Temples and weddings from a very early age. His song '*Nana Nani*' had a comical touch to it, where creolized Trinidadian and Hindi was mixed with instruments like dholak and dhantal, accompanied by guitar and synthesizer. Popularity of Popo's song made him an instant hit and also fetched him title 'King of Chutney'.

Example 1: Nana Nani (Windsor Records, *Nana Nani (Single)*, 1969)

*“Aga aga nana chale nani going behind*

*Nana drinking white rum*

*and nani drinking wine*

*Aga aga nana chale nani going behind*

*Nana drinking white rum*

*and nani drinking wine*

*Nana riding bicycle and*

*Nani ringing bell*

*Nani lock the handle*

*they fall inside ah well”*

...

Source: ‘Soondar Popo / The National Indian Orch. Of Trinidad & Tobago - Nana & Nani | Releases | Discogs’. n.d. Accessed 3 November 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/master/1914627-Soondar-Popo-The-National-Indian-Orch-Of-Trinidad-Tobago-Nana-Nani>.

Sundar Popo started his career with these record-breaking songs where he acknowledges the linguistic shift in his lyrics, at the same time addressing the complete assimilation of Indian migrants by representing the lifestyle of liberated East Indians where even grandmothers consume alcohol.

### *The shift from traditional romantic themed songs to upbeat love songs*

From the 1970s onwards Chutney music started rolling over the East Indian music industry. Soon chutney songs occupied every public and social gathering, from wedding halls to local liquor shops across the Caribbean region, particularly in Trinidad and Guyana. Songs by Popo had upbeat 70s music that was uplifting and made people want to dance, and the lyrics mostly drew

inspiration from everyday life and activities. Some even drew inspiration from folk songs and political events of the time.

Moreover, Popo composed love ballads rooted in Hindi, made popular wedding songs such as “Hum Nah Jaibey” covered Chaitoe’s Baithak song *Raat ke Sapna* and released it in his own unique style. Sundar’s compositions reflect love and admiration for his family, and cultural roots as the usage of language and themes of various songs suggest.

*Table 3.3 Selected distribution of Sundar Popo’s work and composition*

| S<br>L.<br>N<br>o | Album                            | Selected Song              | Record<br>label   | Format                                              | Year of<br>Release |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1                 |                                  | Nana Nani                  | Windsor<br>Record | Vinyl, 7",<br>45 RPM,<br>Single, <i>Black Label</i> | 1969               |
| 2                 | Come and dance with<br>the champ | Phulowrie Bin Chatni       | Windsor<br>Record | Vinyl                                               | 1979               |
|                   |                                  | Don’t Fall In Love         |                   | Vinyl                                               |                    |
|                   |                                  | Hum Na Jaibey              |                   | Vinyl                                               |                    |
|                   |                                  | Tears in My eyes           |                   | Vinyl                                               |                    |
|                   |                                  | Scorpion Gyal              |                   | Vinyl                                               |                    |
|                   |                                  | Subhagie Gyul              |                   | Vinyl                                               |                    |
| 3                 | Hot and spicy 1980               | Chaadar beechawo<br>Baalma | Windsor<br>Record | Vinyl                                               | 1980               |
|                   |                                  | Bigray kaise<br>Hindustani |                   | Vinyl                                               |                    |

Figure 3.6 A statue of Sundar Popo established by National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago. The statue is located in Debe, and was established as a tribute to Sundar Popo and to honour his memory and legacy.



Source: Rajinder Kumar Matadin

Sudar Popo's songs are a mixture of folk songs, country calypso, Reggae, Hindustani, Soca and Chutney. While on the one hand songs like '*Hum Na Jaibay*' (Come and Dance With The Champ 1980), '*Dulha kay Phuwa*' and '*Chali Gai Ho*' (1981) (Hot and Sweet) had Indian folk elements and were inspired by Indian wedding traditions and rituals just like Baithak Gana, on the other

hand, songs like '*Scorpion Gyul*'(1979), '*Chaadar Beechawo Baalma*'(1980), '*Tears in My eyes*'(1979), '*Oh My Lover*'(1979), '*I wish I was a Virgin*' and '*Don't Fall in Love*'(1979) had narratives of lover boys where Sundar mostly sang about infatuated East Indian men and poured out their loud emotions in the form of love ballads.

This sudden shift in theme of song making appeared with Sundar Popo, and according to narratives provided by respondents in this study, this change was due to a variety of factors, including movies and the representation of 'love hungry hero' in them. People with Indian ancestry in the Caribbean have always been very fond of Hindi movies. Through these films, Indians not only preserved the connection between India and Indo-Caribbeans but also repaired the growing cracks resulting from creolization of language and its use. However, except for Suriname neither Guyana nor Trinidad could retain their control over Hindi or any of its dialects. Therefore, lyrical creativity began to suffer, and Hindi films became the primary source of inspiration for the music composers, along with old traditional folk songs. This rapid change in the theme was also due to the audience quickly adapting to it. While they could relate to lyrics and songs with religious attachments, they also learned to appreciate the upbeat rhythm of Chutney songs that suits their dancing and celebration mood.

### *Representation of nostalgia and assimilation in Chutney songs*

'Nostalgia' has always been an important component for diaspora studies, that constantly maintains an active link between the diasporas and native land, irrespective of space and time. When nostalgia accompanies cultural activities such as dance and music, it harnesses the element of belongingness and caters to the community-building process in new settings, providing commonality to its members. In the diaspora, nostalgia is predominantly associated with trauma, isolation, and miseries, however, I have observed that the succeeding generations would associate nostalgia partially with fond memories and narratives of previous generations, and to a certain degree, they also relate it with what they practice and perform. The diaspora familiarizes themselves with what they define as culture and heritage, they feel a sense of belonging regardless of how directly they have experienced dislocation or in the form of a story. Furthermore, music also inspires a sense of belonging in diasporas, and to keep this growing

divide between homeland and diasporas from widening, Indo-Caribbeans created musical pieces that evoke their roots.

Popo's few songs, for example, evoke the migration of Indians to a foreign land and the changes that migration brought about. In Sundar Popo's speech, it is unclear whether he is referring to Indian immigration to the Caribbean, or to the twice migration of the Indo-Caribbeans to Europe and North America that took place in the second half of the 20th century. In his creolized lyrics, Sundar Popo describes East Indians moving on the streets as 'Bigrey Hindoestanis' or 'Bigrey Hindustanis' in a changed avatar. This is an excerpt from one of Sundar Popo's songs that have been used in the study.

Example 2 Bigray kaise Hindustani (Windsor Records, *Hot and Spicy (Chutney)*, 1980)

“Bigrey kaise hindoestani,  
Dharav fashion englistani.  
Tight tight pants pehen kar,  
mukh mein laali,  
ijaat kyu hai faani.  
Bigrey kaise hindoestani.  
Adhey tan k kapra pehne mandir girja jate,  
disco ke sab naach bhi karte  
zara nahi sharmate.  
Ye cinemas ke sailani  
koi pictures nahi anjaani,  
tight tight pants pehen kar, ...faani.”

Source: 'Sundar Popo - Kaise Hindoestani - YouTube'. n.d.: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=by4WpmlLe8Y&ab\\_channel=Surinameheritage](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=by4WpmlLe8Y&ab_channel=Surinameheritage) [Accessed 4 October 2022].

This song describes the changes emigrants and their succeeding generation undergo in the diaspora. Over and again, Sundar Popo lyrically depicts how people of Indian origin are embracing the ongoing changes in their culture and community. Popo hints at heavy western

influence over clothing that he describes as obscene in his song. He calls East-Indian alcoholics who enjoy disco-night gatherings and cinema culture.

“unch neech gharane wale maas machli sab khate  
pite bottle ki hai pani  
kaise chal bhi hai mastani”

In the above lines, Popo presents ‘class’ as a peculiar expression of caste consciousness. In one way or another, the above lines demonstrate that Indians in the diaspora do not just fit into the stereotypes of traditional Indian society. For example, food habits and their correlation with caste. In India, meat consumption is considered irreligious in many Hindu communities. According to local history consumption of meat is a practice that only ‘inferior caste’ people practice and prefer, and as a result of assimilation, the diaspora overcame this difference of caste.

### ***Gender and Caribbean Indian diasporic music***

There is no denying that music has played a vital role in the lives of Indo-Caribbean population by keeping religious and traditional link alive even after 150 years of migration. Women have played a significant role. They single-handedly preserved the greatness of music and poetry in the diaspora, moreover also paved the way for commercial cultivation of culture and music fourth younger generations. This part of the chapter presents the role of women and their contribution to supporting Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet over the years. The contribution of women toward Indo-Caribbean music can be categorized into the following three groups:

- I. Preserver
- II. Subject
- III. Performers, and Revolutionary

The analysis will be presented based on studies done on selected artists earlier mentioned in the chapter and investigating their respective works. To have a vivid understanding of women’s role and their contribution to Caribbean Hindustani sangeet and its evolution, I concentrated on the changing trend and themes of selected music compositions by various artists, that supports the argument that at every step, and in every form, women’s participation in music making has given

a direction towards glory not only to Indo-Caribbean music but also to Indo-Caribbean culture and community.

From saints to scholars many have echoed the contribution of women as the preserver of culture and acknowledge their role and importance in shaping the social structure. Vivekananda also talked and praised at great lengths the role of women as cultivators of social structures and preservers of cultural values. In the same vein role of women and their contribution to the Indian diaspora has been always pronounced as a carrier of culture and preserver of heritage. Similarly, their contribution to the music industry has also been very significant, as it was women who always maintained their link alive in their traditional practices. From singing wedding songs to becoming formidable names in the Indo-Caribbean music industry women remained committed to their native roots and language for the longest.

Peter Manuel (1998: 22-23) talks about the musical legacy of East Indians comprising a variety of genres, that is derived from folk culture tradition brought by immigrants. Furthermore, he lays out the importance of women performers who would sing and perform these folksongs at various ceremonies and gender-segregated gatherings such as '*matticore*'<sup>53</sup> (*Matkor*), and *Sohar*. These ceremonies mostly occur at wedding ceremonies or childbirth ceremonies where women would sing and perform erotic dances, and sometimes with sexual lessons to the brides.

The sexual appeal of these songs became the reason for these singers and performers to stay indoors educating their younger generation by feeding oral folktales and songs in the name of the tradition and culture of their homeland.

To some extent patriarchal culture did impose some restrictions primarily on women, however, under various circumstances, social freedom did reach women allowing them to participate socially. As a result, around the 1980s and afterward women occupied a dominant place in the Indo-Caribbean community and more importantly in the music industry sometimes as a performer, but predominately they stayed as a subject for musicians and composers. For example, in most of Sundar's creations, women occupy a central role, ranging from performances to central characters in songs. All of this did help to make him a household name across the

---

<sup>53</sup> A pre-wedding ritual of clay digging done by the women of the family.

Caribbean and also established the fact that the Chutney music endorses the theme of ‘liberated Indian woman’ in the diaspora.

Example 3: Subhagie Gyul (Windsor Records, *Come dance with the Champ*) 1979

“tell me that you love me,  
But I don’t believe so  
You pack up your uncle and walkin’ out meh door (\*2)

Look at you Subhagie,  
Walkin’ out meh place,  
Walkin’ in a mini and shakin’ up your waist”

...

Source: *Sundar Popo - Come Dance With The Champ*. n.d. Accessed 2 November 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/master/822279-Sundar-Popo-Come-Dance-With-The-Champ>.

This particular song by Sundar Popo belongs to the chartbuster category, created in 1979 yet it is very much alive even among the audience and listeners of 21st-century audience. This song as the title of the song suggests revolves around only one female character ‘Subhangie,’ an Indo-Caribbean woman. The theme of this song echos an unfulfilled desire of a lover towards his beloved *Subhangi*, where he presents Subhangie as a modern girl who travels and wears short clothes.

Throughout this song, I observed, that the central character *Subhnagie* represents Indian women in the diaspora. Several narratives of respondents revealed that not only chutney songs were influenced by Indian films, but also by the portrayal of characters in them. In several Chutney compositions, a reflection of these female characters from Indian cinema can be felt or heard. Similarly, in several Indian movies made during the 1960s until the 1980s, the Indian diaspora, especially women, in a modern, liberated, and Indo-westernized avatar has captured either the theme or plot of these films. Movies like *Purab and Paschim*, *Love in Tokyo*, and *An Evening in Paris* are a few examples of such movies. In these movies, women of Indian descent have been primarily introduced as ‘Indians abroad’. As well, these films also reflected a heavy western influence on these Indian women. It was done by portraying women as having loose morals,

being under the influence of alcohol, or just looking fantastic. Exactly how Sundar Popo has portrayed Subhangie, dancing and wandering on the streets in short skirts.

Figure 3.7 A picture of an original dust-jacket of Sundar's album



In the design of the album's cover, there is a very evident representation of women and femininity.

Source: Rajinder Kumar Matadin

Figure 3.8 Image of an original Dust-jacket of Sundar Popo's record Sundar Soca



Another original dust jacket of Sundar Popo's LP Sundar Soca was made with feminine images. Under the direction of MS Production, this album was released in 1986 on LP (Long Playing Format).

Source: Rajinder Kumar Matadin

The 80s decade also saw some avant-garde women artists who took the lead in Indo-Caribbean music in their hands and started representing a non-conventional image of Indian/Indo-Caribbean women on stage. The particular reason for the circumstances suggests that till 1980s among the Indo-Caribbean population women were more seen as keepers rather participators, as the only

involvement of women in music making was either represented as a preserver/custodian of oral literature or as a subject for male artists of the industry. Elders in the community objected to the whole process of exhibiting a 'westernized version' of Indian culture and values. Moreover, they considered it unworthy to pull out traditions that were earlier confined to places like home and temples into the public realm in an exceedingly 'disfigurative' manner that celebrates the theme of 'liberated woman'. Although the succeeding generation was accepting and adapting to the western environment, it was morally wrong for many to let women take the stage and perform.

In between this tug of war, the Indo-Caribbean music industry found its most unconventional performer Draupadi Ramgoonai. The bold and fierce music compositions of Draupadi Ramgoonai brought forwards the most liberated image of 'Indian diasporic woman' in her songs and also on stage and for the same reasons she is also known as 'Queen of Chutney', whereas many would prefer to call her as Goddess of 'Chutney Soca'

By the time Draupadi Ramgoonai came into the picture except for Baithak Gana, both Chutney and Chutney Soca were completely transformed in the terms of language and lyrics. Apart from a few remixes of previously recorded songs, in most of the fresh compositions, Hindi and Bhojpuri had completely been replaced by creole lyrics, which corroborates with the complete assimilation of the Indian diaspora and Indo-Caribbean music industry along with it. Until Ramgoonai, to see an Indian woman on stage for a Trinidadian audience was something that was considered rebellious, and unquestionably as unconventional. Drupatee became a sensational name with her own kind of music compositions, a mix of Indian folk tunes and Soca, that later went by the name Chutney Soca.

Tejaswini Niranjana (2009) discussed about the emergence and growth of chutney-soca as a 'genre'. While examining its history, she discusses its ties to calypso<sup>54</sup> and Soca<sup>55</sup>. Furthermore, she discussed a long history of mixing 'Indian' component with various Caribbean music styles.

---

<sup>54</sup> An Afro-Caribbean music genre originated in Trinidad and Tobago in between early to the mid 19th century and became popular to the rest of the Caribbean by mid 20th century. It is characterised by its rhythmic fresh creole vocals. Calypso is inclusive of a range of genres that also includes Soca music and Chutney soca.

<sup>55</sup> The "Soca" culture of Trinidad and Tobago originated in the late 1970s. In Trinidad, Lord Shorty, aka Garfield Blackman, is known as the father of Soca, having invented the term. However, throughout the years soca has evolved rapidly. Originally, soca didn't sound like it does today due to influences from other genres. Several artists from across the globe contributed to this new art form, including those from the Caribbean and other parts of the world.

Niranjana rightly calls Drupatee's soca creations as "Douglarised soca" right after pointing out the blend of Indian and African mix which later was called Chutney Soca. In the 1980s Drupatee took over stage performances and came to 'perform in public' marking a new era of Chutney soca music. It was taboo and exotic as well, as the audience would gather to listen to Drupatee's spicy bold songs like *Chutney Soca*, *Too much wood*, and *Lick down me Nani (careless Driver)*. Despite singing an outrageously bold song on stage, Drupatee went on to perform and dance on the stage as well performing some bold moves which ended up upsetting a few elders. A collection of cultural documentaries recorded Drupatee's interview and recorded her experiences, where Drupatee said:

"When I started singing chutney Sukka (now soca), especially moving on to big stage the older people didn't like what I was doing. I use to watch carnival shows ... and always wanted to be there, in that stage. That's what gave me incentive to be there. I got bashed to be an Indian, a woman on stage". (CITV, 2021)

For some time, women performers were kept away from stage performances, and confined to traditional singing and in-house performances. Whereas, for public performances instead of women, male performers would perform a very indigenous form of dance popularly known as *Launda ke Naach*. Male performers would dress up like female performers and perform in a public gathering. *Launda ke Naach* is a performative dance form where male performers dress up like females and perform instead of female performer. It can be seen or observed easily in the regions of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and across the Caribbean region with a higher no of POIs.

Music has come as a revolution in the Indo-Caribbean society, it brought togetherness, equality, and joy to the members of the community. Chutney brought public dancing, and in-house traditional dancing together under one roof and eliminated segregation on the basis of gender, and provided an equal participatory window to all the recognized genders of the society of that time. Chutney songs in the beginning replaced the tone of old wedding songs because the succeeding generation would rather want to dance on songs and music than to learn folk songs of old traditional. Drupatee in her interview with CITV has spoken at length about the blending of African and Indian melodies and also in her songs like "*Chatny soca Hotter than uh Chulha*". I am using Ramgoonai's most famous composition *Roll up the Tassa*, one such composition where Drupatee mixed Calypso music beats with various Indian themes to create a musical masterpiece of her time in praise of Soca music and Tassa drummers.

Example 4: Roll Up the Tass (J. M. C. Records, *Chutney Soca* 2000)

*"Not even Phagwa*

*Hoosay and laawa*

*Cudda better*

*Jammin the soca*

*Jamming the soca*

*Ali and Mustafa*

*Ramesh and Sookdath*

*Hold on Radhica*

*And dey jammin de soca*

*Jammin de soca*

*When Sita and Parbati*

*Start a song now in Hindi*

*But meh nani get on baad*

*She get the old man stick all hard*

*Roll up de tassa*

*Roll up de tassa Bissessar*

*Oh Beta, roll up de tassa,*

*Roll up de tassa, Bissessar*

*Rip up de tassa, Bissessar*

*Ruff up de tassa, Bissessar*

*Oh Beta"*

Source: 'Drupatee Ramgoonai, Machel Montano - Chutney Soca | Releases | Discogs'. n.d.  
Accessed 3 November 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/master/1468960-Drupatee-Ramgoonai-Machel-Montano-Chutney-Soca>.

This particular song did bring fame to Ramgoonai, making her a famous name in Chutney music and the Soca industry. Ramgoonai's songs are very similar in nature to what earlier elder women used to sing during the celebration of *Sohar* and *Matkor* in their respective ritual spaces. Bringing them on stage mixed with Soca music, Drupatee established the fact that Indo-Caribbean women are the biggest contributors to the culture. Moreover, her fusion lyrics convey a declaration of Indo-Caribbean culture and heritage, that is welcoming and encourages equality with modern music creation. The song also promotes a common space that enables primitive and modern generations to reconcile historical divergence and at the same time re-introduces ethnic blending as ethnic unity through music making and dancing.

Patricia Mohammed (2016) discusses on this extraordinary relationship between Indo-Caribbean women and music making by highlighting Drupatee's work. Moreover, Mohammed draws attention to the relationship by addressing the contribution of women towards music culture, at the same time putting forwards an outlook that describes how music making helped Indo-Caribbean women to gain social acceptability and gender rights. Mohammed says, particularly mentions Drupatee, "a housewife from Trinidad, defied taboos to publically perform the chutney songs that were once restricted to Indo-Caribbean female ritual spaces, the message was an affirmation of women's cultural contributions and of the increasing visibility of an Indo-feminist presence in an Afro-European dominated space" (01).

According to Cynthia Mahabir (2001), the introduction of Calypso music into Indo-Caribbean culture transformed the ethnic identity, particularly of Trinidadians, "Drupatee Ramgoonai Persad, who shifted ethnic, gender and cultural boundaries by introducing dimensions of her Trinidadian Indian culture into the calypso. She syncretized the idol and, in the process, drew both Indo-and Afro-Trinidadians into the same dance space. With her splashy introduction of Chutney Soca (a hybrid of Indian and African Island rhythms) in 1987, Drupatee revolutionized ethnic relations and national culture" (Mahabir, 2001: 421).

While observing gender roles and Indo-Caribbean music, the shifts and journey of both Hindustani Sangeet and gender in the Caribbean started to appear very inter-related and codependent. In other words, the journey of women in the Indo-Caribbean community, and the journey of Hindustani Sangeet into becoming Caribbean Hindustani sangeet appear the same, as

both experienced a phenomenal change in terms of experiencing recognition and affirmation in a non-native setting. It becomes appropriate to mention how Cynthia Mahabir also acknowledges the same connection and quotes Marcia Citron (1993) “gender explodes the insularity of music. It underscores the idea that music relates to real human experience and to aspects of identity and social location (. . .) (It) affords a valuable vehicle for accessing issues critical to an understanding of a woman's life and historical position” (Citron, 1993: 424).

### ***Media, Public performances, and East Indian Music***

Globally music industry gets its strength and revenue generated mainly through two forms i.e. live music performances, and recorded music. Evidences show that with change in times the way people listen to music also changes, similarly a change in music production is noticeable too, as both are directly proportionate to each other.

Initially, the popularity of East Indian music began to spread widely with television broadcasting with *Mastana Bahar*, which is to date the most famous Television show in the history of Indo-Caribbean media culture. The Mohammed brothers (Moen Mohammed and Sham Mohammed) are singlehandedly responsible for broadcasting the show on 4th July 1970 on Trinidad and Tobago Television (TTT). The contribution of this particular show is remarkable to the evolution of the East Indian Music industry as “*Mastana Bahar* has evolved into an institution in Trinidadian culture” (Manuel 2000). In the same vein Melena Kuss (2004) acknowledged the contributions of this particular show and expressed that *Mastana Bahar* T.V. show has acted as a backbone in supporting the local cultural life of Indo-Caribbean people.

The producers of the show believed and asserted “*Mastana Bahar* gave artistes an opportunity to develop themselves. *Mastana Bahar* through the years of its existence would have provided an initial showcase for our local artistes to display their talents” (*Trinidad Express Newspaper*, 16 May. 2019).

Tejaswini Niranjana (2006) says: “the popularisation of the name ‘chutney’ is in fact attributed to Meoan Mohammed by singer such as James Ramsewak and Cecil Funrose. The show

encouraged local compositions, and through the 1970s Indo-Trinidadian folk songs with English lyrics became common” (95).

Mastana Bahar was not just responsible for promoting cultural life, it also gave a boost to the careers of prominent artists like Ramdew Chaitoe, Sundar Popo, Dropati, and Drupatee. It fueled the circulation of their unique fast-tempo songs among the Caribbean region and made the listeners and local crowd hungrier for such performances. Following this several public performances were organized.

Sundar Popo also received fame, popularity, and recognition during his career and public performances were one of the big reasons that his name reached overseas, compelling famous musicians from India like Anup Jalota, Babla and Kanchan to perform with Sundar Popo. Kanchan and Babla added to the glory of East Indian by recreating old songs and performing them live for hundreds and thousands of audiences across the Caribbean. In 1977 when Kanchan first went to tour the Caribbean and performed live for the audience paying tribute to the various compositions of artists including Ramdew Chaitoe and Sundar Popo<sup>56</sup>.

Singer Drupatee also received fame by performing chutney songs on Mastana Bahar stage from 1983-1984. However, it was her Chutney Soca performances that recorded her name in the history of East Indian Music and made her unforgettable. Her famous public performances include *O Tassa Waaly* (1988) *Chutney Soca* (2000), *Hotter Than Ah Chulha* (2000) and so on.

Manuel (1997) talks about a unique connection that media establishes between the Indo-Caribbean population and India by “presenting an Image that is at once colourful, alluring, idiosyncratically modern, and distinctly India”. He extends his discussion about the Indo-Trinidadian population and further talks about how television broadcasting of Hindi videos and films have inspired and produced various Indo-Trinidadian ‘amateur performers’ and artists over the years. He says:

“Television broadcasts of the auditions are avidly watched by Indians, and the competitions, which invariably include acquaintances, are followed closely (...) a significant role in the Indo-Trinidadian cultural revival, not only spreading awareness of

---

<sup>56</sup> Based on narrative of primary respondents .

Indian popular music and dance but, more importantly, inspiring a prodigious amount of local amateur creativity” (Manuel, 1997: 23).

Manuel also addressed Mastana Bahar as an initiator of cultural curiosity among Indo-Trinidadian families where parents would not only encourage their kids and succeeding generation to mere participate in the competition but also encouraged their kids to take up music, dance and film as a hobby and sometimes as a profession. According to him “it is estimated that some 80,000 people have performed in Mastana Bahar since its inception” (Manuel, 1997: 23).

Performing for live audiences became very popular during the 1990s and onwards. Drupatee kept performing Chutney Soca for live audiences on different occasions and celebrations. Drupatee is still carrying her fame on her shoulders and performing live for audiences and popularizing Chutney Soca songs among the masses, I observed that Drupatee stayed active all these years with her public performances even though her last recorded album came in 2000. From 2010 till the present, she performed throughout the Caribbean, North America, and also Europe. People of Caribbean call her the “undisputed Chutney Queen” of all time.

From 1979 onwards, when Rohit Jagessar entered the market of Chutney music and started distribution and producing Chutney records, set the standards of chutney higher than ever. Rohit Jeggessar not only expanded the old markets but also took Chutney as a genre on an international platform by working with artists like Sundar Popo, Kanchan & Babla. The best-selling album in the genre, which Rohit Jagessar co-produced with Kanchan and Babla in 1980, peaked at number one on more than 50 radio and print music charts across more than 15 nations, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Africa. Before, music was recorded and distributed on Vinyl records, Rohit Jagessar became the first to record and release Chutney album CD.

Rohit Jagessar’s contribution to the industry is significant, as he single-handedly organized various live concerts and performances of Chutney artists that had a huge commercial impact on the industry over all: “in 1985, revenue from these concerts surpassed US \$1 million for the first time in the history of the genre and Jagessar signed Kanchan to a contract with Johnson & Johnson to produce and promote the popular brand in a most memorable television commercial that very same year” (Guyaneseonline 2013).

In 1990s, with Kanchan and Babla, Rohit Jagessar gave many memorable hit albums to the Chutney music industry. *Leggo Me Na Raja* which came out in 1991 became the first digitally recorded album of Chutney that included songs like *Tiny Winey*, *Bolo Bolo*, *Kuch Gadbad* hai and the title song of the album was *Leggo me na Raja*.

### ***Re-Creating Bollywood music and Its Impact***

Recreation of music involves creating a new melody from an old or existing song while arranging its rhythm. In this process of recreation sometimes the entire song changes in terms of mood. Musicians often believe that creating an original track, and recreating a track that already exists, require the same amount of hard work and effort.

In most cases, we often confuse recreation of songs with remixing, which is what a disc jockey (or DJ) does when he or she adds extra beats to a track and plays it at various public gatherings, mostly at nightclubs. However, recreation is slightly different from remixing. This is because it involves creating an original soundtrack from an existing melody that might remind you of the parent song mostly in the lyrics. Over the period of time music industry globally has experienced the culture of recreating existing songs for various new purposes and by different artists.

As of 1980, when the popularity of chutney music was peaking in the Indo-Caribbean music industry compelled various artists across the borders of the Caribbean to collaborate with existing Chutney singers. Chutney became the dominant form of music among the community listeners and audience, and Sundar's song 'Kaise Bani' became the anthem of the Chutney music industry. It is no secret that Sundar Popo and his music are still alive and popular in the minds of Indo-Caribbean people. Moreover, many new artists are taking inspiration from Sundar Popo's compositions, and also pay tribute to his legacy by re-creating his songs almost every year in their unique ways.

It is impossible to mention the song *Kaise Bani* and not talk about Kanchan and Babla. Kanchan was an Indian singer and she mostly worked with her husband Babla, who was known to be an

‘arranger’ in Bombay (now Mumbai) music industry around the 1970s. Kanchan is a famous name among the Indo-Caribbean population for her contribution to the music industry and for giving record-breaking hits over a period of time. Songs like *Kaise Bani*<sup>57</sup> (originally sung by Sundar Popo) and *Raat ke Sapna*<sup>58</sup> (Originally sung by Ramdew Chaitoe) are a few famous songs that came forwards every time a question was asked any Indo-Caribbean. Kanchan together with Babla recreated many of Sundar Popo’s songs, performed them live, and recorded them in her own ‘chutneyfyied’ way, gaining an unshakable place in the hearts of the Indo-Caribbean population.

Similarly, the popularity of this particular song was evident even in Bollywood, when in 2012 Indian movie star Salman Khan in his home production film danced over the same song recreated by the renowned musicians of the Indian film industry Sajid and Late Wajid Khan.

Example 4: Phulowrie Bin Chatni (Windsor Records, *Come Dance With The Champ* 1979)

"Kaise bani (4)

Phulari bina chatani kaise bani (2) x2

I went Sangre Grande to meet Lal Beharry (2)

I pull out meh coudharry and take out te dharry

Phulari bina chatani kaise bani (2)

Me and meh darling was flying in a plane (2)

The plane catch a fire and we fall inside the cane

Kaise bani (4)

Phulari bina chatani kaise bani (2)

I beating meh drum and ah singing meh song (2)

---

<sup>57</sup> *Kaise Bani* originally released as *Phulowrie Bin Chatni* is a traditional Bhojpuri folk song. In 1979 Sundar Popo first modified the song by mixing faster beats inspired by African music along with Bhojpuri lyrics. The song gained popularity and there after many Indian artists from Bollywood adapted the songs and recreated it over and over again. In 1982 Kanchan & Babla recreated the song for public performances in the Caribbean and also released an album including the same song which instantly became a hit. In the year 1994 hindi feature film *Ghar ki Izzat* also used the same song and again in 2012 famous Bollywood star Salman Khan made the song *Kaise Bani* popular among the audience of 21st century.

<sup>58</sup> *Raat ke Sapna* was originally sung by Ramdew Chaitoe and was released in 1977.

The only thing ah missing is meh bottle ah rum

Jack and Jill went up ah hil  
to fetch ah pale of water  
Jack fell down and broke his thumb  
and Jill came tumbling after  
Little Jack Horner sits in a corner  
Eating his christmas pie  
He put his thumb and pull out a plum  
And said what a good boy am I

Kaise bani...Phulari bina chatani kaise bani(3)”

Source: Caribbean VibeZ, dir. 2016. *Sundar Popo - Kaise Bani*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnMSmWgoupc>.

*Phoulouri Bina Chantni* is a perfect blend of Hindi and Trinidadian creole song created by Sundar Popo, a dancing number dedicated to the Indo-Trinidadian audience, drawing pure inspiration from Bhojpuri folk culture and music. As mentioned above over a period of time this particular version got popularized across the Caribbean region and also became famous in India replacing the earlier existing song that has pure Bhojpuri lyrics.

Another formidable name in the Indo-Caribbean music industry is Ravi Bissambhar, the stage name Ravi B. A Trinidadian musician and one of the famous Chutney Soca artists of contemporary times. Like other renowned artists, Ravi B also recreated one of the famous compositions by Sundar Popo called ‘*Nana Nani*’ and labelled it as ‘Tribute to Sundar Popo’(Ravi B. *Tribute to Sundar Popo*, Official Video May 4th 2021) in collaboration with Anil Bissambhar and Rishi Mahato under BassLab x Maha Production. The song was released on Youtube with a new and modernised music video, moreover, the same song is also available on every other music platform including Apple Music, Spotify, and sound cloud. The song has exact lyrics from Sundar Popo’s original Song, however, has a modern Chutney music score.

Rakesh Yankarran another famous name among Indo-Trinidadians, known for his unique style of singing. Rakesh a.k.a Raja. For the longest period, Rakesh Yankarran fused folk songs with soca

beats to compose and produce many albums. Rakesh Yankarran comes from a family of musicians and is an established name in the Indo-Trinidadian Music industry. Yankarran entered the Chutney industry when love songs were at the center of almost every composition, however, he brought back religious essence to his singing style and incorporated bhajans with Chutney and Soca beats, making his compositions unique and popular among the masses. Yankarran later on in his music career composed more recreated songs that he experimented with by combining with traditional folk and love songs. Furthermore, he collaborated with newly budding Chutney and Soca singers to make ‘chutnified’ Bollywood songs.

Rakesh Yankarran is mostly known among the masses of the Caribbean region for his adaptation of Hindi filmy songs, and recreating them in his unique style. For example, his latest song *Tujhe Suraj Kahun Ya Chanda*, with Raymond Ramnarine, was premiered on 19th June 2021 through online mediums including YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. The full version of this song along with a dedicated video is available on a Youtube channel name Raymond Ramnarine & Dil-E-Nadan which has over 75.5K subscribers and this particular song has over 6 million views on the youtube channel. It becomes important here to address a little more about the cross-over band Dil-E-Nadan formed in 1957, Raymond Ramnarine who again is a very popular name among the population of Trinidad is currently working with Dil-E-Nadan band and have composed several crossover tracks in collaboration with guest artists. He is very well known for his recreation of old Bollywood songs with a crossover of chutney soca beats and mixed lyrics. Out of his popular recreated songs *Tujhe Suraj Kahun ya Chanda* (with 6 million views), *Kya hue Tera Wada* (over 2.9 Million views), *Nack Ah Ting* (over 3 Million views) and *Mere Pyar ki Umar ho itni Sanam*, are the most popular and recommended.

By analyzing the works of each artist in this section, different facts emerged about ‘Chutney’ and its sub-genre ‘Chutney Soca’. It was discovered that noticeable changes in terms of lyrics, tempo, themes, and compositions began around 1980, specifically in these two genres. Further evidence of this transition can be seen in the song choices and techniques of re-creating existing songs by various artists over time. Consequently, this had a drastic impact on the whole industry, on the growth of artists, and most importantly, on the popularity of genres.

I have observed that Kanchan's recreated compositions more devoted to Chutney music following the footsteps of Sundar Popo, while the modern compositions are more on the Chutney Soca side, which reminds compositions by Drupatee. This difference appears clearer when a comparison was drawn based on lyrics and language blending techniques employed by these artists.

For example, Sundar Popo's song *Chaadar Beechawo Baalma* from the album Trinidad's Sundar Popo "Hot & Spicy" released in 1980, produced by Moean Mohammed for Windsor records. It was a collaboration between famous Indian musicians Anup Jalota and Sundar Popo. *Chaadar Beechawo Baalma* song has pure bhojpuri lyrics sung in Trinidadian creole accent, however, the usage of Indo-western instruments in combination makes it a pure chutney composition.

Example 5: Chaadar Beechawo Baalma (Windsor Records, *Hot & Spicy (Chutneys)* 1980)

“Chadar bichhao balma  
Chaundarya chadar bichhao balma  
Neend lage chain soye rehna  
Neend lage chain soye rehna [2]  
  
More sasur ji ke dui dui mohaliya  
More sasur ji ke dui dui mohaliya  
Sabse sundar hamaro mehla  
  
Chaundarya chadar bichhao balma  
Neend lage chain soye rehna  
Neend lage chain soye rehna”

Source: 'Sundar Popo - Hot & Spicy (Chutneys) | Releases | Discogs'. n.d. Accessed 3 November 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/master/1468864-Sundar-Popo-Hot-Spicy-Chutneys>.

Similarly, the song *Chali Gai Ho* from the album Sundar Popo 'Hot And Sweet', 1981 is another famous pure Chutney composition. Kanchan and Babla in 1982 recreated these songs in their album *Kaise Bani*, without adulterating its theme lyrics or beats. Upon hearing both version the

only difference a listener would identify is the difference between a feminine voice and a masculine voice of the playback singer. Since Kanchan was an Indian national her grip over Bhojpuri dialect came naturally, unlike Sundar Popo who had a creole accent.

Further in 2019, Sonu Nigam, a famous name in the Bollywood music industry, performed the same song *Chadar Bichao Balma*, at Paramaribo, Suriname in a live concert (details provided by respondents). There are various other versions available on the internet like youtube, Shazam, Gaana.com, Apple Music, and so on, all recreated by either Hindi-speaking singers or Bhojpuri singers.

It is observed that the original Chutney song by Sundar Popo lost its originality in this process, and while going through many layers of recreation. Any song composed by Sundar Popo or any other chutney song will be recognizable by its creole accent combined with Bhojpuri lyrics and instrument usage. It is thus unique and different from the vernacular songs of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. The growing demand for more aesthetic music among post-modern Indo-Caribbean audiences prompted artists to make more commercial music that differs from traditional music practices. As a result, too much hybridity destabilized the genius and individuality of Chutney and Soca composition and it started to become more dependent on external resources for creativity.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Bollywood films have had a strong influence on the Indo-Caribbean population, and Trinidadian musicians have been influenced by them in a variety of ways. In turn, it contributed to the decline in musical creativity among Chutney and Chutney Soca artists. Ingenious music genres like Chutney and Chutney Soca did not only suffer a setback but could not hold their ground on a larger stage and among a larger audience.

Observing Raymond Ramnarine's work, I found that even though a majority of songs were sung in Creole, under the Bollywood influences, there remain semi-original tracks or re-created versions for listeners. For reasons such as native link and nostalgia, it may appeal to audiences in the Caribbean region and neighboring countries, but it does not appeal to Indian audiences or those more attracted to Indian classical or semi-classical music. There is a blurred line between adaptation and inspiration in this crossover music style that is currently spreading like a fever in

countries like Trinidad and Guyana and other regions where the Indo-Caribbean diaspora is currently based, leaving listeners confused. It is not only completely different from what Chutney and Soca music used to sound like when it took off, but it also doesn't appeal to any social or cultural issues which used to be the central theme of music creation for the Indo-Caribbeans.

The current observation about Chutney and Chutney Soca songs that are being composed and produced appears to serve only entertainment purposes while maintaining a defined link with Indian roots in forms of inspiration, adaptation, and so on. It was interesting to observe that even though elements like history, religion, and patriotism have been completely removed from chutney and Chutney Soca composition, it still does remind the diaspora about their origin, separating them from nomads and gypsies. Even though it no longer directed at appealing to nostalgia or the sense of belonging of the diaspora community, it somehow manages to remain a firm reminder of their past and ancestors while the succeeding generation establishes their unique identity in the new world.

### *Representation of hyphenated identity in Chutney and Chutney Soca songs*

Identity is a deep, distinct difference that encompasses 'what we really are' since history has cut the heart of 'what we have become,' says Stuart Hall (1990). It is true, however, that we share a common social and cultural identity above all. Furthermore, we share a common identity that transcends our own perspectives and actions. Citizenship is another form of how individuals choose to represent their identity, and in the present scenario, an individual can possess more than one citizenship. When migrants process through globalization, they become a part of a multicultural and multi-racial society they tend to develop a consciousness that supports hyphenated identities in the minds of people. Identity markers such as clothing, cuisine, fashion, music, and language, however, there are poststructuralist arguments that support that identity is a fluid and social relation and encounters bring about a change in the character of identity. Similarly, Foucault also suggests that it is very much likely possible to harbor multiple identities for an individual, as identity reflects our participation in social structures. Moreover, it is this participation and practices such as class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality that governs hybridity in

any cultural setting, and the same is responsible for creating new elements in culture under the influence of external factors such as host culture.

While attempting to understand the cause and relationship between hyphenated identities and the music of the Indo-Caribbeans, I have investigated in this section the works of two prominent artists from the Indo-Caribbean music industry Rikki Jai, and Terry Gajraj. I observed how these two artists have been utilizing their history and heritage to make hybrid music that reflects a pure Indo-Caribbean identity.

Rikki Jai's debut single *Sumintra* (1988)-Tale of an Indo-Trinidadian woman from Debe. The song is about how Sumintra prefers Soca music over the music of India or by Indian artists such as Lata Mangeshkar.

Example 1: Sumitra (Rikki Jai Records, *Getting On/Sumintra* 1988)

“Hold the Lata Mangeshkar  
Give me soca ah ha ah ha...  
Sumintra judge me for being racist  
And tell meh doh take dem chance with she  
Doh let meh catch you in dat foolishness  
Trying to reach the Indian in me  
Like you into politics  
Boy you comin pon that tricks  
Boy I'm Trinbagonian  
  
I like soca action  
Take your Mohammed Rafi  
Bring me Scrunter or Bally  
Hold the then you be talkin to me,  
Yes, Rikki, she say”

Source: IslandLyrics : Artist : Rikki Jai Lyrics'. n.d. Accessed 4 April 2020. [https://islandlyrics.com/artist-rikki\\_jai.htm](https://islandlyrics.com/artist-rikki_jai.htm).

The lyrics of the song Sumintra, music, and its elements reflect a creative means of self-expression that solidifies the cultural hybridity and its significance within the history of the Indian diaspora. However, reflection and representation of hyphenated identity such as

Sumintra's in the above-mentioned lyrics put forward a contemporary twist and modern interpretation which presents a concoction of two different music styles, culture, and traditions that exhibits the progressive nature of the Caribbeans through their music choices. It is a reminder that history and customs are very significant, moreover, good music has the ability to bring people closer removing regional, communal and ethnic differences.

Appadurai (1996) suggested that hybridity in culture results from growing global flows of people, money, and entertainment. This exchange between different cultures, particularly after colonization, produced more hybrid cultures. As an example, he discusses how cricket has been incorporated into the culture of the Indian subcontinent as a national passion from the colonial Victorian era.

Similarly, while analyzing Terry Gajraj's most popular composition *Guyana Baboo* (1993), the language, and interpretation again reflect a celebration of assimilated identity. Terry Gajraj spoke to Indranie Deolall (2019) who he admitted that the song *Guyana Baboo* is an inspiration that emerged out of dislocation from his homeland Guyana and how he composed the song in order to seek and assert his background and a distinct identity in alienation.

Example 2: Guyana Baboo (Mohabir Records, *Guyana Baboo* 1992)

"Me come from de country dey call Guyana,  
Land of de Bauxite, de Rice and Sugar(x2)  
Me say pack up me grip and leh me go,  
Me gat fe go back ah Guyana some more" (x2)

Source: Terry Gajraj - *Guyana Baboo*. n.d. Accessed 3 November 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/master/2168020-Terry-Gajraj-Guyana-Baboo>.

In this song, Gajraj exhibits the story of the past, present, and a new found identity of 'Guyana Baboo' which also expresses the hyphenated identity of the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean. The usage of Guyanese dialect and references such as "Pack up me Grip and let me go" in the song reflects the complete assimilation of Indian migrants by following the laws, language, and social behavior of the host country.

### ***Comparing Chutney and Chutney Soca composition***

Chutney and Chutney Soca compositions share certain similarities, representing the uniqueness of culture and cultural hybridity, moreover both also represent Indian diasporic identities in the Caribbean. Usage of upbeat music, a sense of celebration, and festivity are the focal point among both these genres. Both Chutney and Chutney Soca have been paving the ways for Indian diasporic performers to redefine the sense of patriotism with the help of music creations.

The study here focuses on the similarities and differences among the two most popular cultural elements of the Indo-Caribbean community that have been promoting homogeneity and acceptance of traditional social norms. Moreover, to fathom the reasons for decline and growth patterns in these genres.

They showcase visible spiritual and traditional qualities of the Indian diasporic community in the Caribbean, which served as a tool for entertainment purposes for over 160 years. Chutney music remained a local music practice for the longest period in Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname, however, post-1980s various chutney artists started to fuse elements from Calypso, Soca, and American R&B and named it 'Indian Soca' or 'Chutnee Soca/Sukka' (as mentioned by majority of 3rd generation respondents and artist). The two share elements of similarities and differences but both remain significant to the history of Indian diasporic culture in and around the Caribbean.

I observed that most of the pure 'Chutney' compositions incorporate traditional themes only - themes of religion, love, and festivity, whereas Chutney soca developed around when local entertainers from the Caribbean region particularly from Trinidad started to add elements of flamboyancy and vulgarity to existing Chutney songs, showcasing loosening of social restrictions and a radical shift in music-making practices. Contemporary Chutney artists Hemlata and Rasika Dindial during an interview given to Carolyn Kissoon (2019) for *Trinidad Express Newspaper* said: "I am disappointed that the art-form is dying. There is hardly any element of chutney. It is more soca based. I do not like the lyrics because it is not positive. Chutney soca

means that the song should carry a chutney rhythm and it should be both Hindi and English. We had nothing like that” (*Trinidad Express Newspaper* 26 February. 2019).

Songs like *More Tor* by Rikki Jai, Ravi B’s *Rum Is Meh Lova*, Sonny Mann’s *Lootala*, and so on fall on the blurry lines of the two genres sharing Chutney and Soca vibes however both energizing music entrepreneurship.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presents an observation of various artists and their work over the period of time, and how music creation promotes culture and identity. We also observed how an individual or a group of people in diaspora tries to reattach unhooked links with the country their forefathers belonged to, with the help of old traditions and music making. As music creation and performing arts help the diaspora to build a network to experience an imaginative bond with the ancestral land, the process of assimilation infiltrates it with hybridity causing countless shifts and changes in these cultural activities. Indo-Caribbean music has experienced a vast expansion in a very short period and became an emblem of Indian culture in the Caribbean region and neighboring countries where the Indo-Caribbean population has migrated over the years. On one hand, the fusion of Eastern and Western music revealed ethnic unity, and coexistence it also initiates a sense of nostalgia, attachment, and cultural individuality, accompanied by celebration and festivity among the diasporas.

Both identity formation and identity assertion are highly debatable topics, largely depending on where the succeeding generation finds itself in these mixed cultural settings, and how deeply the process of assimilation has permeated the culture. In the study, artists and music styles such as Baithak Gana, Chutney, and Chutney Soca were examined. These represent a variety of cultural practices employed by people of Indian origin across the Caribbean. There is a correlation between observation and history, i.e., different colonial influences, which have dramatically influenced the subsequent generations, particularly the third, fourth, and fifth. The artists and their works discussed in this chapter not only represent just one aspect of culture but also give one a deeper understanding of socio-cultural and socio-political issues. A lot of detail has been

discussed with regard to the representation of femininity and hybridity in music. The image of women in these songs reflects contemporaneity, and their inclusivity in the East-Indian industry symbolises resistance and power. In both cases, hybridity entered Indian culture and altered the very nature of Indian music in the Caribbean, which had originally been used as a means of proving individuality in a foreign land.

The following chapter will discuss in detail qualitative analysis of 60 respondents from the Indo-Caribbean community who stay in the Indo-Caribbean region and neighboring countries. They opened their views about their culture and traditional practices in the host land and how they still maintain their ethnic links active and alive even after going through so many changes, moreover how these cultural activities help their succeeding generation to imbibe Indianness through music practices.

## **Chapter 4: Diasporic Consciousness and Cultural Continuity in the Indo-Caribbean Diaspora.**

The Caribbean is home to one of the largest South Asian diaspora groups, and among them the Indian community is the most vibrant one. Over more than two million strong diasporic population, Indians in the Caribbean “occupy a position of considerable power and influence. They have produced some of the best artists, writers, spiritual leaders, and a great line of political thinkers, doctors, lawyers, scientists, and sportsmen. Indian festivities including *Diwali*, *Holi*, *Maha Shiva (Rathri)*, and *Ram Navami* are celebrated with traditional fervour and gaiety. Indian films and music are as popular as they are in India” (*Business Standard*, 21 Sep. 2021). Indians in the Caribbean have a rich cultural heritage and traditional way of life rooted deeply in their history. A variety of music and dance practices are viewed as dominant elements in the lives of the Caribbean Indians. This along with a rich cultural heritage has made the Caribbean a popular tourist destination as well. Indo-Caribbean music is an expression of Indianness that allows younger generations to learn their history and that of the Indo-Caribbean diaspora. With the help of music consumption, the chapter identifies diasporic consciousness and cultural continuity among the Indo-Caribbeans.

It can be observed that the intentions of Indo-Caribbean music have always been to serve the hybrid community, however, it is also seen as a link that has been maintaining a bridge between cultural roots and the Indian diaspora community in the Caribbean. The longest devotional verses and traditional songs were once dominated music compositions of the Indo-Caribbean community, however, as a result of the introduction of Bollywood film, music marked a serious switch in the song choices and consumption among the Indo-Caribbeans. The modern Indo-Caribbean music compositions have a completely different outlook, however, genres like Baithak and Taan singing continue to uphold the expectation of preserving certain traditions and cultural roots. The popularity of modern music and its global accessibility of it has influenced the choices of the younger Indo-Caribbean population to choose global music over traditional composition, although the elder community members of the diaspora still firmly believe that their traditional music such as Chutney, Chutney Soca, and Baithak constituted as their cultural heritage and the integrity of it is unshakable in the lives of the Caribbean Hindustanis. The study examines that the Indo-Caribbeans residing in the Caribbean (Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana and Suriname) and

in the diasporas such as the U.S.A, U.K and the Netherlands, are undergoing a generational change which has caused a change in their outlook towards music making and music choices in the present scenario.

Tina K. Ramnarine's work *Musical Performances in the Diaspora* reveals that: "Diasporic music-making should not be understood as merely the result of population movement, the settlements of diaspora groups and cultural contact in the multicultural society. Rather, diaspora music making can be understood in the ordinariness of creative production, as musicians working as individual agents in their everyday environment, making musical choices that suit them and their audiences" (2007: 08). Through the help of primary data, this study tries to understand the impact of displacement on Indian music, as well as the consequences of globalisation on music creation and choice of music among the Indo-Caribbean. It has been found that music has been playing an active link between the displaced and their homeland. In addition, oral literature has been able to educate the younger generation about their past heritage which was discussed in earlier chapters. There has been a transition taking place in the music culture of the Indo-Caribbeans, which is largely determined by factors such as Bollywood, cultural hybridity, and largely by the tastes of audiences and listeners.

This chapter presents interviews and interactions that focus on the activities and behaviors of the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean and neighboring countries. In addition, it discusses respondent's views on music consumption and music-making by the Indo-Caribbean community. Participants<sup>59</sup> from the Caribbean and neighboring countries participated in the majority of interviews through video calling and e-calling. Some of the respondents were interviewed physically when visited India for various reasons.

I intend to discuss in this chapter how various forms of music practices have assisted the development of the Indo-Caribbean identity, thus reflecting the respondents' views on India. The majority of these respondents are from the 3rd, 4th, and 5th generation of the Indians diaspora.

---

<sup>59</sup>In order to protect the identity of these participants/respondents' pseudonyms have been used throughout this chapter.

A few numbers of these respondents are members of the first and second generation of Indo-Caribbeans-Americans living in various regions of the United States. They migrated to the United States for a variety of reasons like marriage, employment, education, and improved living conditions. For this research, three generations were chosen to investigate how the 'generational cycle' works and to identify what changes the music patterns, and what influences the choices of music among that group. Studying transnational Indians of Caribbean origin or twice migrated Indian diasporas is one way to understand their awe and curiosity for Indian culture, especially music. The group of people has been described as 'Modern Diasporas,' who possess not only a migrant identity but also an individualistic identity and lifestyle. They have, however, always been seeking ways and means to reconnect with the homeland of their ancestors.

### **Migration as an Inevitability**

In earlier chapters, we discussed that migration is often triggered by occupational opportunities, a greater standard of living, etc. Every migrant, however, has a different story, supported by reasons to migrate that are generally economic, social, and sometimes political. In the present scenario, migrants are choosing developed countries to migrate to, possessing specific skillsets to acquire personal growth and to become a part of an advanced and modern society.

A majority of the respondents fall under the category of PIOs (People of Indian Origin) which automatically makes them a part of the great Indian Diaspora community. Respondents living in Caribbean countries have become a part of the diaspora community as they are a part of the generational cycle. Few who have migrated to the United States, Netherlands and other parts of Europe from the Caribbean countries have moved out of their own will to pursue a more fulfilling career, education, business, and an improved lifestyle. Respondents who are of Indo-Caribbean descent have also expressed an interest in moving to the United States as a result of social influences. Overall, respondents discussed migration, and how cultural practices like music and dance can be used as a medium for teaching the younger generation about their ethnic roots, history, and sharpening their upbringing skills over time. They acknowledge that western culture has a heavy influence and that their lifestyles and cultures reflect this hybridity as well.

However, they believe that exposing their children to Indian culture is essential for their growth and development as individuals and more importantly as a community.

This study revolves around observing how music and dance traditions among the Indo-Caribbean have been changing under various circumstances, as well as how these changes are accompanied by a change in culture, lifestyle, and opportunities in the lives of these respondents. Even in their hybrid form, this music, dance, and performing arts practices are a symbol of their ethnic roots and cultures that their ancestors have continued to preserve in non-native settings. They use it to recall their history, and they aim to build a safe, secure, and nondiscriminatory environment for their children.

Mounisha (age 40, female), was born and brought up in Holland into a Surinami family. Mounisha holds a Master's in English Literature and is also a trained *Kathak* Dancer. Since 2013, she has been residing in London with her husband. She is a performer, and has participated in various cultural programs. She revealed that for her performances she had travelled to other countries as well, and she loved performing in Surinam in the year 2018. Her husband Rajat (age 42, Male) is a banker and he too was born and brought up in Holland to an Indo-Surinami family just like Mounisha. During the interview, Rajat and Mounisha expressed their love for Indian Classical music and dance, Mounisha also tried to converse in Hindi with the researcher and shared her thoughts about how language commonality automatically bridges the gap between them and India, and how they look forward to finding such an opportunity. She says:

“The reason I am a Kathak Dancer is that I have watched every Bollywood movie while growing up, my parents would never miss a chance to inspire my love towards Indian culture. My mother and I have performed at various social gatherings among the ladies, I am an admirer of Madhuri Dixit and loved how she performed in the movies *Devdas* and *Aaja Nachle*”.

Mounisha's love for dancing and singing is admirable and she says:

“Living in Holland was very similar to living in Surinam, we share our neighborhood with other Surinamese, we love our culture of singing and dancing, our families migrated to the Netherlands in the early 70s...and after moving to London in 2013, I understand the pain of separation and displacement, every time I dance, I feel a living connection

with my family, my ancestors, and India. Dancing is my way of connecting with my people and India”.

The younger generation of the Indo-Caribbean diaspora has acquired a great length of cultural knowledge and heritage from their earlier generations. Although, after so many migrational and generational cycles it does not look or appear the same as it used to be, it still serves the purpose of bridging the gap between the diaspora and India.

Mies van Niekerk (2004: 175) in this regard said:

“cultural meaning and social practices the first generation has brought along with it are modified and transmitted to the next generation. Immigrant children then reshape the parental message conveys to them at home in line with their own experience in society.... but the cultural ideal of the family as a cooperative entity is still alive. It engenders in children a sense of responsibility for family members and respect for parental authority”.

Simran (age 33, female) is an architect and currently lives with her parents. Simran’s family is Indo-Trinidadian and they are currently living in the Richmond Hills area of New York. Simran acknowledges the fact that her family had to move to New York for study and educational purposes, she said:

“Good education and an earning job is very essential to me, as it was once for my father. He once said, our ancestors never had a chance of landing in a good educational institution as they were poor and had no proper income. But my parents made it possible for us (me and my younger brother), by moving to the U.S they did leave a whole family behind, and the neighborhood where he grew up as a kid, it must have been very hard on them. Although living in U.S.A offers us a safe space and better opportunities, we’ve never forgotten what and where our roots come from”.

The Indian population in the Caribbean is mostly because of the enslavement of Indians during the colonial period, whereas the number of Indo-Caribbeans in regions like Richmond Hills, Holland, London, and others, is majorly due to the ‘double migration’ process. The nature of both migrations is essentially different from one another. The first type of migration is characterised by a massive organization to recruit people to work under a contract, which includes transportation of people overseas. In this type of migration poverty, and hunger has been

deciding push factor for migration. On the other hand, in the second type of migration where diasporas chose to migrate to another region pulled by factors such as education, better job opportunity, social acceptance, and better living standards. This type of migration is primarily volunteered or self-imposed and usually ends up for the betterment of the migrant and migrant's family.

Nitesh (age 65, male), is a 3rd generation Indo-Surinamese living in Holland. Nitesh migrated to Holland at a very young age for education purposes. He said: "I first came to Holland to study, and many others from my village in Surinam came along with me for the same purposes". When people that mostly include social relations, follow the same trend of migration and choose the same country of destination for purposes like work, study and marriage it forms a pattern of migration which is called 'Chain migration'<sup>60</sup>. Nitesh stated that after his migration, almost eight other families that he knew sent their young kids to study in Hague due to social and economic turmoil in Surinam. He adds:

"The Indo-Surinamese community exhibits a comparably high degree of cohesiveness, as our ethnic ties are still intact. Over a period of time a few inter-ethnic interactions like marriage have partly changed our social relations and practices, however, most of the Indo-Surinamese families living in Holland are still connected with our ancestral roots with our cultural practices that we have retained for ages".

Supriya (age 42, female), is an Indo-Guyanese woman, who is a certified Yoga Instructor and a social media Influencer from New York. Her family moved to the US from Guyana during her early childhood days. She currently runs a small business as a Yoga Instructor. She says: "I start my day, training with my daughter and making Instagram videos for my followers." Supriya has 152K Instagram followers including people from all across the world following her for Yoga Videos. Supriya says:

"I see a lot of Indo-Guyanese, Indo-Caribbean women as my fan following, a great number of New Yorkers are also among them. I love the fact that even people from India look up-to me for my Yoga skills and express how much they are proud and happy to see me expanding the knowledge of India and its culture through Yoga".

---

<sup>60</sup> Chain migration can be understood as a practice and process in which initial migration of human being leads to further migration of people from the same origin to the same area.

Supriya shared that even though she has been a Guyanese-American all her life she still finds peace when she worships Lord Rama and eats homemade curries, and that is how she connects herself with India and her homeland Guyana at the same time.

Beena (age 45, female) is a homemaker and she lives in Debe, Trinidad. Beena has two daughters, one is of age 9 and the elder one is 14. Beena holds a bachelor's degree in science and her major is in Botany. Beena said:

“I was born in Trinidad, but I know I have Indian roots. My Adji<sup>61</sup> came on a boat with her parents to Trinidad. In my childhood, I have seen her singing and playing Drum (*Dholaks*) at various weddings and childbirth ceremonies. I used to dance to those songs with my mother and I am proud and happy that my daughters are also learning to sing and dance”.

Beena revealed that although they do not speak Hindi or Bhojpuri at home, they enjoy folk songs and also have memorized these songs. Beena's daughters also love to sing Bollywood songs and inspired by Bollywood and Hindi cinema they started to learn Hindi a couple of years ago.

Multilingual practices emerged as a shared experience among different groups of respondents when comparing migration experiences. Wei and Zhua Hua (2013: 43) contend that migration influences linguistic practices among diasporic communities, including the acquisition of new languages, the maintenance of old languages, and how groups and individuals communicate in institutions. In addition, they explained how diaspora communities use linguistic practices to develop “social relationships, identities, and ideologies in the family, community, and workplace” (Wei and Zhua Hua, 2013: 43).

Stuart Hall (1993: 362), throws light on a similar idea and explains:

“The new diasporas which are forming across the world are obliged to inhabit at least two identities, to speak at least two cultural languages, to negotiate and translate between them. In this way, though they are struggling in one sense at the margins of modernity,

---

<sup>61</sup> In northern India particularly in central and some parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh local people address their paternal grandparents as Adji(grandmother) and Adja(grandfather). Similarly, the Indo-Caribbean diaspora consist of a heavy lineage from these origins and hence similarity in words and language is evident.

they are at the leading edge of what is destined to become the truly representative “late modern” experience.... They are the product of the cultures of hybridity”.

In terms of culture and traditions, the Indian diaspora living in the Caribbean and the Indo-Caribbean diaspora living in regions like New York, London, Holland, and other parts of Europe have a lot in common. ‘Language compromise’ was mentioned by the participants as one of the first steps toward assimilation with the host community/society. In my opinion, this had a substantial impact on Indian languages. It is also noteworthy that this linguistic shift began to overthrow the usage of local Indian languages, particularly in British colonies. Although the younger generations of Indo-Caribbeans mostly speak English, they acknowledge their cultural ties to Hindi and India due to their family conditioning and structure.

Asmita (age 55, female) who lives in San Fernando, Trinidad & Tobago, is a singer and musician by profession. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Fine Arts (BFA). Asmita opined that, she belongs to the 3rd generation of migrants, her father was a train conductor and her mother was a babysitter. Asmita said that:

“My music is dedicated to Lord Krishna. I use to accompany my mother on her jobs and I have seen her telling stories of our ancestors and India to little kids while she was babysitting them. My father made us learn *Dohas* and *Shlokas*, at times he would just chant Sanskrit verses for us as a lullaby. Even though I never visited India but it was always in my heart, as I knew where my soul belongs to”.

According to Asmita, her grandparents were first transported to Guyana but later they decided to move to Trinidad. She disclosed that the decision to move to Trinidad from Guyana was purely made by her ancestors to safeguard the future of their next generation, to educate them, and live a better life. When she was asked about her own travel stories and experiences, she took a deep breath and said:

“I have traveled so much to so many countries but my most precious visit so far was to Benaras, the land of my Adja and Adjji, sitting at the bank of Ganga and being able to breathe the same air once my ancestors did was altogether an elating experience for me and my kids”.

This was Asmita's first out of many visits to India, she also mentioned that she went to her ancestral village Belwa in Basti district, Uttar Pradesh in 2008, besides she has made several other visits to India as well. Apart from vacation and leisure visits to India, Asmita has also performed on several occasions upon invitations. Upon requesting Asmita recited a few lines of an old folk song that she mentioned was her father's favorite:

“Meera ke Prabhu Giridhar Naagar x2

Harakh harakh jas gayo

Payoji mene Ram Ratan dhan payo..

Vastu Amolik di mere sadguru

Kirpa kar apnayo, payoji mene...”

One out of many commonalities among all the narratives provided by the respondents of this study was the purpose of migration, whether it was ancestral migration as Coolies to plantation or migration to a different colony as indentured labour or it was the decision to migrate to a different country altogether. Every migration story reveals one single reason and that revolved around the idea of having a better life and living standards.

Rakesh (age 61, male) is a 3rd generation Indo-Surinamese who currently lives in Richmond Hill, New York. Rakesh was born in Surinam and he mentioned that after his grandparents migrated to Surinam in 1915, he is the only member who migrated to any other country outside Surinam. Rakesh mentioned that he spent some years in Holland for education purposes but later he decided to move to New York. He shared that his family speaks Bhojpuri, Hindi, and English, and is very religious. Richmond Hill is culturally very vibrant as it is the best example of a cohesive society. The South side of the city inhabits a great number of South-Asian diaspora including Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistanis, and a sizable Indo-Caribbean diaspora population too. Rakesh owns a grocery shop near Punjab Avenue, Queens and apart from that he often offers his religious assistance to other members of the Indian and Indo-Caribbean communities during festive occasions. When asked about his religious knowledge and command over the Indian language he said: “Surinam was a Dutch Colony and they didn't force migrants to learn their language or culture, for that matter. It gave cultural freedom to the migrants in Surinam to embrace their true form, and the popularity of Baithak Gana and Tan Singing is living proof of

it”. He further adds: “it was our music that encouraged religious practices among Indians in the Caribbean. Our ancestor’s common links and similar cultural practices made it possible to connect. Music, I believe, is the spine of our religious belief and is the most important pillar of our community building”

Almost every respondent in this study mentioned that they and their family’s attachment to cultural ties and particularly with music because music has always been an anchor for the Indo-Caribbean community which has enabled them to stay connected with their cultural heritage and homeland. These respondents still acknowledge their Indian links, customs, and traditions. They also believe that it is their heritage and cultural practices that provided them individuality in the hostland. The uniqueness of their rich traditions and culture which is identical to India in various ways binds them together as a community, and as a result even after 150 years of first migration, and even after so many generational and migratory cycles, the community is still thriving to keep their heritage and traditions alive.

Fazal (age30, male) is a small entrepreneur from Queens and is of Indo-Guyanese origin. Fazal has completed his undergraduate degree in Literature and migrated to Queens from Guyana in 2013. He said:

“Life in Guyana as a queer is not only difficult but is very dangerous. I decided to move to New York because I had to hide from the people of my village. When I was a child, I use to dance to Bollywood songs and imitate the female actors, after I reached a certain age, it suddenly became an unacceptable thing among the same crowd. It is very shocking for a child to have this as an experience”.

Fazal expressed that although Guyana is his birthplace, he would want to stay back in New York for social acceptability reasons.

Amongst the respondents of this study, few expressed that ‘social inclusivity’ and liberty of owning an identity other than the ethnic one, was one of the major reasons for them to choose to migrate from their homeland to a new settlement country or region. A handful of respondents expressed that their sexual choices and sexual orientation were one of the primary reasons for

them to choose to migrate to a more developed and inclusive state/region. As these migrants face 'sexual prohibition' spatial displacement becomes a natural approach for them.

Meg Wesling (2008) in *Why queer Diaspora?* quotes Eng and Hom (1998); Muñoz (1999); Patton and Sa'nchez-Eppler (2000), and discusses that heterosexuality gets an 'unconditional privilege' under structural arrangements of citizenship, immigration regulation, and marriage laws. Wesling further explains the relationship between queerness and diaspora by calling it 'Sexile'. Manuel Guzman (1997: 227) explained the term 'sexile' as "the exile of those who have had to leave their nations of origin on account of their sexual orientation". Among a few of the respondent's narratives, the thought of 'sexile' appeared important and central reason for them to choose a metropolitan and multicultural hostland over their homelands.

Robin (age, 35, male) migrated to New York with his family in 1995 and came out as queer in his early 20s. Robin says: "Being queer is as important to me as being a human being" a local musician from New York and an ardent Bollywood fan, Robin adds "My sexuality is my first and foremost identity, and I live in the New York City because it accepts me as I am by offering love and equality".

When asked about the problems faced and the issue of racism, Robin said:

"I have faced more discrimination for being transgender than being of Caribbean or Indian descent. I wanted to find a home far away from my homeland where I could find acceptance by people. I once visited New York and took part in a pride parade, and it was the first time I felt like it is not wrong to be queer, gay, or trans. I met my partner in the same parade, and I felt loved for who I am. I also felt the presence of the Caribbean community, which was appealing. Who doesn't want to be around their people?"

The Indian diaspora in the Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean diaspora does not find much difference between their lives, as the respondents expressed that these (current) displacements are not forced upon them, however, it is mostly a calculative decision, and therefore it does not have the emotion of regret and guilt attached with it, which was the case for indentured migrants. These new diasporas feel themselves at home even though they are not, and are away from their

homeland, the sense of acceptance and security appears to be a prevailing pulling force to which the modern Indian diaspora is willingly assimilating.

Christopher (age 40, male) is a music teacher and an instrumentalist from Trinidad, and currently, he is teaching music to school kids in Florida. Although he has never visited India, he says:

“I have seen many YouTube videos of folk performances, and they are very similar to what we have in Trinidad. Sometimes the songs are different, sometimes their costumes are also different, but Bollywood songs are very popular among performers in Trinidad, and when I watch and hear these performances, I automatically find a connection to India”.

When asked about migration and related experiences, he expressed that he has been migrating for work purposes to different countries and performances.

The respondents to this study acknowledge their link with India and its varied customs and traditions, regardless of their reasons for migration, whether it is social acceptance, economic growth, or historical reasons. As shown in every narrative, these respondents have maintained an uninterrupted bond with the help of music and dance practices despite migration and generational change. Additionally, they assert that along with other cultural customs, it is their music traditions that serve as a backbone to their religious and spiritual beliefs, which reflect the Indianness of this particular diasporic community. Moreover, they believe that apart from establishing a sense of belonging, music also helps them establish an authentic identity of ‘Indo-Caribbean’ as a community.

There is a presence of these groups/communities on social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook (Meta), and Instagram. Few of these groups have been considered for this study, such as *Caribbean Hindustanis*, *Crownthebrown*, *Chutneymusic*, *Cutlass*, and the *Baithak Gana community*. The Indian diaspora community is assisted in various ways by these social media groups. The above-mentioned sites have been selected as they serve the Indo-Caribbean community as a place to interact and discuss topics such as music, dance, food, politics, and everyday life. *Caribbean Hindustanis*, a Facebook page with a substantial number of followers, has allowed this study to reach a substantial number of respondents and allowed the researcher

an opportunity to interact with members of the Indo-Caribbean community from Trinidad, Surinam, Guyana, Indo-Caribbean Americans, and Indo-Caribbeans in the U.K and the Netherlands. The respondents discussed that apart from cherishing their cultural traits and links, they also participate in various celebrations organized by their local authorities, which eulogizes the existence of this hybrid community. The same platforms have been observed, organizing events to promote and celebrate Indian Arrival Day to the Caribbean, Cultural hybridity, and moreover, during the pandemic, the same pages were observed organizing Covid-19 vaccination awareness events as well.

Indian migration to the Caribbean dates back over 150 years, and a long-lasting colonial impact on it opened up other routes for Indian migrants in the Caribbean. The early 1960s saw a migration wave of Indian-Caribbeans to Europe, followed by the 1970s and beyond, which saw a massive migration influx to the USA. As a result of this, the presence of POIs and Indian culture can be seen and felt in various European and American regions and their local cultures. Furthermore, the respondents believe that Indian culture and its heritage have played an integral part in their social order and strengthening the community. Most of the respondents discussed that they had planned to visit India to get a first-hand experience of their ancestral heritage, however, they also asserted that they would continue to live in their respective regions and countries.

The presence of North Indians in the Caribbean community is evident. It also influences their festive celebrations, customs, music traditions, and dancing practices. However, a small number of South Indians, particularly Tamils and Telugus, are also found in the community sharing the same space and identity, such as Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Trinidad and Tobago. According to a few Trinidad and Guyana respondents, even though their ancestral language was not Bhojpuri or Hindi, they are grateful for Bhojpuri and Hindi since it was a part of their indentured history and played an important role in building community and social ties among migrants. The Indo-Caribbean diaspora is a melting pot of cultures, traditions, and languages. They are particularly interesting for this study due to their multicultural identity as they have gone through a significant amount of changes due to factors like assimilation, accommodation, and acculturation while acknowledging the Indian element in their identities.

### **Music and Cultural connections**

Rolf Lidskog (2017) says: “Music is a constitutive part of the culture and hence is important for individual and social identity formation. It can serve as space and practice that binds group members together so that they understand themselves as belonging to each other and maybe even having a specific task or mission to accomplish”. The relationship between culture and music is so closely intertwined that it is mostly used as synonyms. Almost every respondent of this study referred to music and culture as one and as an important element of their morality, religion, and social behavior.

The respondents stated that their earlier generation preserved their culture through music making and educated them about their roots, and history by doing the same. According to Shubham age 26, male) “it is equally important to carry forward their culture in the current environment, and they have been doing the same by following in the footsteps of their ancestors”. As observed, Indian diasporas are generally very attached to their cultural roots and focus on preserving them through various mediums such as food, music, dance, festivals, rituals, etc; this makes it interesting to learn the connection even more to understand the preservation approaches of cultural traits by Indian diasporas. To understand the relationship between culture and music, it becomes imperative to understand what cultural identity is, and what role music plays in forming a cultural identity for these migrants.

Stuart Hall (2011) states that culture and identity are two separate entities, though identities are formed using resources such as language, history, and culture. Identities are formed within the context of their respective cultures, and music helps us to understand where identities are constructed, particularly those rooted in culture. The diasporas best illustrate this idea since they see ‘representation’ and ‘becoming’ as crucial because it is their only means of determining their place in non-native environments, and the way music is produced, distributed, and consumed reflects the way Diaspora's see themselves. For Indians, their music practices are a way to connect with their homeland and also to represent their identity in their hostland, the Indo-Caribbean are aware of the fact that it is their culture has not only allowed them to stand out in a multicultural society but also aided them with enough power to keep their cultural identity alive. A majority of the respondents discussed that they would want their younger generation to learn

their ancestral culture which means learning Indian music and dance forms. To do that they expose them to Bollywood films, Indian daily soaps, and classical and semi-classical music. For the Indo-Caribbeans singing on most occasions and playing drums (*Dholak*), *dhantal*, and *harmonium* is seen as a part of the culture, and their social gatherings are the best place to observe this representation of their Identity.

Sharada (age 61, female) is from Surinam. She and her children watch Indian films, her son and daughter are both social-media influencers and post videos of them singing Bollywood songs. Since they belong to Surinam their hold on language is much stronger compared to Indo-Trinidadians and Indo-Guyanese, however, Sharada believes that it is important to keep them in touch with Indian elements such as music as they need to imbibe the legacy of their ancestors which automatically represents their Surinami or Indo-Surinami identity. She said:

“I like when I see Naitra and Shubham singing Lata Mangeshkar and Mohd. Rafi ji’s songs, although their friends would prefer Ed. Sheeran and Taylor Swift over old Bollywood songs. My children have stayed away from Surinam for a very long time, yet they know how to appreciate and express their affection towards their family and community”.

It is important to note that music culture and music practices vary among Indo-Caribbeans as discussed in the earlier chapter. On one hand, Surinam has a more Indian-influenced style of music practices, on the other hand, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago have more Chutney, Soca, and Calypso influence over their music styles and choices. Fatima (age 26, female) opined that:

“Music of Trinidad is not Indian, it is inspired by so many styles infused with Indian music, Chutney for example might appear as Indian but it is not, it is Trinidadian and so is Chutney-Soca, these music forms were invented by our ancestors in the Caribbean to establish their hybrid identity, therefore it only and only reflects the identity of Indo-Caribbeans which is unique and matters to us the most”.

These respondents are conscious of the history and the changes that have taken place in their cultural journey, however, as the younger generation grew in a changing environment, they embraced certain elements of ancestral culture as well as the culture of the country they were

born and brought up which ultimately points them into the direction of a new diasporic identity which is unique and is diasporic.

Nirmala (age 55, female) referred to Sundar Popo's music and style and said:

“Sundar Popo's songs were about the Indo-Caribbeans, they weren't about sadness or shame, instead these songs were to joy up the mood of the listeners. Popo's song ‘Nana Nani’ can you call it an Indian song? This song in particular represents how Indians were changing in the Caribbean... how they were slowly becoming Caribbeans. Sundar Popo founded this new style of music and it reflects the everyday life and doings of our community people”.

Nirmala believes that the current music style of the Indo-Caribbeans does not reflect Indianness however it reflects the Indo-Caribbeanness, ‘the hybridity’ of people and evolution of culture. Culture consists of both material and non-material elements, and diasporas in most cases like to attach themselves to non-material culture which they can redefine and modify with time to connect with their ancestral land (Sahoo and Sangha 2010). It was observed among the narratives of almost every respondent that even though, most music styles of the Indo-Caribbeans are not what we have in India, it still enables them to obtain the satisfaction of being in constant touch with India, moreover, it helps them imbibe the culture of their forefathers and at the same time, it provides them with entertainment.

Music and culture are topics of excitement among the Indo-Caribbean population of every age, even though they have drifted a bit from their earlier form it still holds a very powerful position and a sentimental value in the lives of every Indo-Caribbeans. The multiple layers of the Indian diaspora give an insight into the diversity of Indian culture, the classical touch in Baithak, and the hybrid nature of Chutney and Chutney Soca creates unity rather than division among the Indo-Caribbean community, as for the Indian diaspora the sense of belonging to one prevails over social divisions and discrimination.

Respondents belonging to the age group of 20-35 expressed “they enjoy listening to Indian music”. When asked about the medium of listening, they mentioned online mode, commodified form of music, some even mentioned that many radio stations (106.1FM, 102.7 FM, 103.1 FM,

106.5 FM, and 90.5 FM) also play Indian songs. Though most of these respondents admitted that they do not engage with music genres such as Chutney, Soca, and Baithak on an everyday basis but their weddings, religious rituals, and family traditions are incomplete without it, as they consider their ancestral music auspicious and an essential part of their culture and tradition. These respondents even mentioned that nowadays Bollywood songs are invading the place of their ancestral music forms as it is very popular among the Indo-Caribbean mass and is easily available. It is important to note that for these diasporas the important fact remains is to maintain the link, in the beginning of the indenture, it was through the medium of music making with the help of instruments, old fables, and narratives, creating a relaxed environment for the members of the community, whereas now it has become a more 'culture imbibing' approach by consuming the same in the form of available music in market.

The amount of music consumption among the Indo-Caribbean population is noteworthy, it is a kind of cultural experience that the Indian diaspora follows in their lives and society. From various social media platforms and through several interviews conducted, it is observed that for the Indo-Caribbean population, this experience of culture ranges from rock concerts, road carnivals, weddings, and festivals, and also in the form of cultural education they have been providing and imbibing.

Rasika (age 29, female) is a researcher from Trinidad, who is working on 'Gender and Hindu Gods', claims that the understanding of cultural consumption of the present/succeeding generation is widely different from the understanding of their elders, but it has a great impact on their lives as well. The availability of data and resources that helps them understand the history and culture of their ancestors is now easy to access via the internet and commercial market. She mentioned that even though her family does not speak any of the Indian languages yet they included songs from BollywoodBollywood and followed all the traditions just the way their elders did.

Rahul (age 38, male), is a Music teacher from Trinidad, who is currently learning Bhojpuri as he wishes to translate the bible into Bhojpuri. Rahul shared a list of Chutney and Baithak songs. It was interesting to observe that even though he could not speak very fluent Bhojpuri or Hindi, he remembers every lyric of these songs. He said:

“I learned a lot of Hindi songs from Bollywood movies and the internet (following Hindi lyrics written in English), although my ancestral roots are from Andhara Pradesh (currently Telangana region) we could only retain North Indian cultural roots as the majority of migrants who came to work in the plantation were from Hindi speaking belt of India and hence it has an impact on our popular culture, the culture that makes us Indo-Caribbeans”.

Rahul also spoke about how various organizations are supporting the music culture of Indo-Caribbeans as an initiative to promote cohesiveness and unity among the Indo-Caribbean community. He also mentioned that there are various artists and bands which are famous for their Indo-Caribbean style of music and for which they get invited to various functions and events to perform. Rahul also mentioned that the nature of music has changed over the time and there is an evident change in choices, the elders of his family are more concerned about the authenticity of traditions and rituals whereas the younger generation mostly sees it as heritage and history.

In the same vein the music-making practices among the Indo-Caribbeans were about traditions and values and the relevance of lyrics, music, and beats were very similar to its Indian parent forms. However, with time particularly after going through generational change ‘linguistical compromise’ made it difficult for the younger generation to maintain the same kind of attachment and authenticity. This gap widened due to a lack of communication and no media exchange between the migrants' successors and India. However, the introduction of Bollywood films and Hindi songs did create a bubble where Indo-Caribbeans were seen making efforts to re-establish the broken link with history and continued passing down the traditions to their children.

Rishi (age 42, male), is an instrumentalist and singer from Surinam, who currently lives in New York. Rishi has been a Drum (Dholak) player for over 15 years now, he shared that he currently plays with a Band that consists of mostly Indo-Surinamese. He expressed that Baithak Gana and *Launda Naach* are two of the genres he mostly volunteers for and that he is quite a famous name among the locals Suriname community. Rishi expressed that he can speak and understand four languages including Hindi, Sarnami, Dutch, and English. During the interview, related to this study he constantly spoke in Hindi with a creolized accent, he shared that the culture of New York has had a great influence on him and he majorly connect and communicate with his friends

and family in English, yet his work demands to deal in Bhojpuri (Sarnami) lyrics. During the interaction, he said:

“I am very humbled by the fact that I’ve gotten a chance to communicate with people from my ancestral land, every time I get an opportunity to communicate with people from India, I enjoy it the most, as I get to speak in Hindi and sometimes Bhojpuri and it satisfies my soul.... I did learn Bhojpuri, which we call Sarnami, from my parents, but because I stayed away from my family and Surinam, I would mostly communicate in English even with my parents, that’s how I think migration has influenced my culture, with music I try to fill up this gap that we have built between our culture and people because of migration”.

Strokes (2004) talked about how certain social groups can use music to identify themselves, both by the members of the group and its environs (their non-members). Music provides resources for contesting and negotiating identities, as well as creating new ones, in addition to expressing and maintaining existing identities. Several Indo-Caribbean respondents, particularly those from New York and London, remarked that music has been a staple of their cultural consumption and representation of their identities. Even though their music tradition has changed over the years, it still fosters the 'Cultural Vibe' and many traditions. A certain amount of skepticism exists among the narratives of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th generations. The younger generation asserts that music has been crucial in creating a new identity for their community, while the elders assert that music is a way of translating ancestral traditions in the Indian diaspora.

James Clifford (1997: 264) has talked about 'diasporic experience' where he points out: “the co-presence of ‘here’ and ‘there’ is articulated with an anti-teleological 'sometimes messianic (temporality)’” and it is possible to explore or at least accompany this 'experience' through music. During the study, respondents often referred to 'diasporic experience' when discussing music and culture. These stories demonstrate the crucial role music plays in developing cultural roots in diasporic communities. The growth in globalisation and exchange of cultural communication among the masses can sometimes change the identity of music or disrupt it during the process of its creation, distribution, and consumption.

The Indian diasporic population across the Caribbean and the Indo-Caribbean population in countries like the U.S.A, the U.K, and the Netherlands are now able to interact and potentially

identify with each other despite belonging to different diaspora groups<sup>62</sup>, and these connections in different ways can be explored through music.

Cultural understandings of diasporas are undergoing significant changes, and music is going through the same process as a major agent of these changes. The memories of their past remain unalterable, regardless of where they were born, where they grew up, and where they are socially positioned. Humans can create culture and music in this way, moulding it to convey particular ideas of a given era. These products must exhibit a certain degree of sincerity, which is sometimes referred to as authenticity or the capacity to adapt.

### ***Music and construction of a Diaspora identity***

Rolf Lidskog (2017) stated that: “a diasporic identity is only one of many identities a person may encompass. Due to their multiple belongings, members can navigate between different cultural claims and negotiate their identity in relation to different contexts and cultures”. Lidskog calls this kind of membership 'cultural citizenship' which means that culture is not a state-mandated concept, but something that is constructed by people and is accepted by the state. Similarly, social and political groups can also use diasporas to gain a privileged position, blur the lines between different groups, or give the diaspora a fixed identity that compels all of its members to behave similarly.

For Indian diaspora groups, music may have a special meaning and helps them to strengthen the identity and cohesion of a group along with giving a sense of diasporic consciousness to its members. However, cultural identities as Clifford (1994) suggests are not built by merely preserving and protecting cultures from “mixing” but are a product of such mixing, as culture and identities are something that is constantly remade. He further points out that disassociation among the people and their cultural traits are a threat to cultural identities as diasporic identities are disaggregated identities. The Indian diaspora is recognized for having a stronghold on their

---

<sup>62</sup> They are addressed as different diasporic groups, because not only do they have linguistic differences, but also cultural differences, regardless of belonging to the same country of origin, India. These differences have helped them to develop unique diasporic identities for each community. For example, the Indo-Trinidadians and Indo-Surinamese both have linguistic differences, but also cultural differences.

native identity to pressure their native lifestyle in closed spaces. As a result, they prefer an integrated approach in the public sphere.

Music has always been one of the most influential forms of entertainment, identity construction, and cultural production, as well as an educational tool to teach young people about all cultures and their origins. This study recognizes that culture is a crucial component of soft power the Indian diaspora uses to showcase identities. Soft power refers to a nation's "ability to shape the preferences of other nations through cultural attraction and seduction" (Nye, 2011: 31). Hence, soft power is derived from "intangible influences such as culture, values, ideology, ones occult knowledge and its like" (cited Gupta, 2008: 62). Families in diaspora are closely connected, which has allowed migrants to maintain a sense of connection/belonging to home. The display of cultural practices and performing arts in diaspora shows to the world the culture of an exotic country while helping immigrants to bridge the geo-locational gap between them and their motherland.

The case of Indo-Caribbean diaspora identity is complex and is built upon elements of both homeland and host land cultures. They have combined their cultures and created a new kind of identity that is neither purely Indian nor purely Caribbean, but rather a mixture of the two.

Mary E. Kelly (1996: 82), describes ethnic identity as "a group or individual's cultural construction of their ethnic past which is grounded in a historical context but which also responds to change in the lives of both groups and individuals". While they may not retrace back the steps of their ancestors, rather they strive to incorporate cultural symbols such as folk dances, folk songs, and ethnic festivals and delicacies into the identity they claim. This is why the Caribbean prides itself on its multi-cultural heritage and its pluralistic nature.

The present generation is equipped and accustomed to multimedia and global communication networks and prefers the modernized version of traditions. Not only they prefer modern ways of receiving information, but also prefer modern ways of re-producing existing information. Madan (age 38, male) from Trinidad is a modern Chutney songwriter, musician, and excellent percussionist. Madan says his 12 years old son (Rohan) is fascinated by the music he plays. He

said: “my son always accompanies me during all my performances, he also helps me during my practice sessions, I see that he loves music as much as I do”.

During one of the many conversations with Madan and his family, Madan played and sang one of Harridath Jairam’s old Chutney songs *Parosin Moergia Samahl*, while his son accompanied him on *Dhantal* giving first-hand experience of an authentic chutney performance. It was an amazing experience to watch a 12-year-old playing *Dhantal* with such finesse and involvement in the art form. Rohan said that he would want to follow in the footsteps of his father and become a musician, and he would want to learn every genre of music. He also mentioned that among his peers he is the only one who knows a little about their traditional music and instruments. The majority of his friends are learning guitar and violin and prefer Hollywood music such as pop, Rock, and Hip-Hop over traditional. Rohan mentioned that while he is in his peer group he would also participate in similar activities. However, nothing can replace the amount of joy that he gets when he participates and performs with his father. Madan explained how Chutney became Chutney-Soca, he said:

“Since the language of our fathers modified and hybridized it directly had an impact on our music creations, yes performers like Ramdew, Harridath, and Ramkhelawan ached using Hindi and Bhojpuri but at the same time performers like Popo and Ramgoonai introduced a completely different variety of music to us. They too were Indian descendants in the Caribbean, they all had the same history of migration and past, but they produced very different kinds of music from each other throughout their careers. I believe these changes and variety only represent growth, the evolution of cultures and our identities”.

As the young generation of Indian diaspora emerges, they are simultaneously maintaining multiple identities, i.e., ancestral identity and hostland identity. This plurality of identities among the Indo-Caribbeans is visible in their culture, couture, cuisine as well as language. A majority of the third-generation Indian diaspora respondents largely speak English (except Surinamese), and are educated. In comparison to the elder generations, the younger generations prefer a westernized lifestyle. Even though they follow traditional values and their music is similar to that of India, and to their ancestors, the music choices (both consumption and creation) and moods, in particular, among the fourth and fifth generations are different from their elders. A majority of music-making and choices in the current scenario and according to the narratives of the various

respondents (among the age group of 50 and above) point in the direction of deterioration and detachment from ancestral roots and culture, whereas the younger generation expresses that hybridity is not a threat towards heritage and its preservation. A 28-year-old male from the same band as respondent Madan, Brij plays harmonium and sings too. During interaction and conversations, it became apparent that Brij is also a performer and he participates in Launda Ke Naach performances as well. He shared:

“I personally like Chutney songs which have more of an Indian touch, however, Chutney Soca I believe is a representation of how our people have been rebuilding and recovering cultural identities through music. Chutney Soca came about with Ramgoonai in the 80s and was an instant hit. While some elders may not agree, you have to consider music as a spectrum. All of these music styles are different, but they all represent one thing: Indo-Caribbean identity.”

Abdullah (age 22, male) is a respondent from New York with Indo-Guyanese ancestry. He is a media student. Abdullah says: “our music is essential for us, apart from entertainment purposes it represents who we are, we are Indo-Caribbeans and our culture-dance, music, traditions, prayers, rituals, all are essential to nourish our sense of belonging in this era of globalization and multiple migrations”. Abdullah mentioned he works at a pizza shop to pay for his tuition fee and his co-worker Usha (age 23, female), who is Indo-Trinidadian-British is an actor. Abdullah says: “I and Usha are from different continents, yet we have bonded over our origins, our culture and music”. When asked if the religious difference between Usha and Abdullah has caused any disengagement and disagreements between the two, Abdullah stated, “We have known each other for almost two years and our identity as Indo-Caribbeans in diaspora speaks for us, for us, we are Indo-Caribbean first and then we are Christian, Hindu or Muslim”.

During the discussions with respondents, it became evident that music, apart from other forms of entertainment and cultural elements, has played a significant role in the formation of Indo-Caribbean political, cultural, and ethnic identities. For example, Balaji and Sigler (2017) have discussed the heavy influence of Caribbean music genres on global recognition and success for Caribbean people and their cultures on international platforms. Their discussion focused on Caribbean music, where “territorial identity” has been largely shaped by cultural production that has undergone a transition in terms of production and consumption that are now defined as much by “transnational exchange as much as they are by local factors such as culture, language and

place” (92). Fabio Pollice (2003) describes territorial identity “as a socio-cultural product, identity can be a subject of interest for geography, because it becomes a moulding element for territorial structure, and in general it can determine structural, relational and sense transformations in the geographic space” (107). Fabio Pollice further draws inspiration from Caldo’s (1996) definition, where he describes geographical identity as an “identity relationship that links a given community to its lived space” (cited in Pollice, 2003: 107). The above definitions supports the idea of identity formation in hostland with the help and display of cultural elements such as music. In the same vein Turco (1998) explains that territorialization of identity also represents “symbolic control of space” where elements that supports territorial identity such as culture started to take root in the hostland. Turco also talked about how territorial identity can be formed and defined by behaviors of the people which encourages “practical control of space” (cited in Pollice, 2003: 108). After observing responses from the participants and analyzing secondary data it became evident that the idea, symbols or territorial identity also changes with time, which are mostly triggered by circumstances such as adaption of the host culture by the immigrants. Transformations in language and communication tools of the immigrants also leads to the change in the understanding and symbolism of territorial identity. For example, songs and music compositions that were used earlier by the Indian immigrants in the Caribbean to symbolize and protect their Indian identity, with change in time and generation has now become a tool to express their Indo-Caribbean identity.

Taking examples from the early Baithak composition such as *Ek Haath mein desh ka Jhanda* by Ramdew Chaitoe, and *Surinam Homara desh* by Rampersad Ramkhelwan, I am putting emphasis on the nature of changes both identity and culture goes through in the course of time.

The modern diaspora (transnationals) has also found that music has helped them to become part of a much larger diasporic community or transnational community. Moreover, these interactions also establish the fact that music is an essential part of contemporary identity construction in a globalised world.

In this study, the majority of respondents indicated that India was their ancestral home, whereas the fourth and fifth-generation Indo-Caribbeans in the U.S.A, the U.K, and the Netherlands identified themselves as the Caribbean first and referred to their historical ties with India as

secondary. In their eyes, home is the country where they were born, raised, and share a social circle. Despite the fact that nearly everyone is connected to India in some way or another through music, dance, movies, and traditions, there is no direct experience of the land of their ancestors. The fusion of cultures and changing trends can sometimes leave people feeling confused and out of place.

Through a variety of responses from the respondents, the study found that the Indo-Caribbean population even across the borders of Caribbean countries shares a sense of self-preservation and identity crisis. Nevertheless, it varies among generations, but on the whole, they identify themselves as Indo-Caribbeans who acknowledge their past and present. The issue of identity has always been one of the central issues for Indian diasporas. Since music has helped them nurture their community for over a century the connection with India and Indianness comes naturally to them. The plurality of identity was found among the 3rd, 4th and 5th generation respectively. However, the sense of belonging appeared stronger among the 3rd generation in comparison to the 4th and 5th generation. Twice migration to multicultural cities and the process of assimilation has generated more identities among the children of diasporas. Jessica Ramsewak's (2020) work on *Twice Migration and Indo-Caribbean American Politics* discusses development of 'ethnic identity' which are guided by a variety of factors such as "childhood experience, relations within and outside of one's community, and one's proximity to authenticity within their culture" (01). Ramsewak's work revolves around the Indo-Caribbean diaspora present in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada, Ramsewak calls them "Indo-Caribbean Americans". The presence of three ethnicities in one identity of Indo-Caribbean American is both similar and different from the Indian identity in Caribbean. Ramsewak's work and the responses of the participants of this study suggests that due to the close connectivity with the modern culture of the host land (in this case the U.S.A and U.K) and distance from ancestral land with generations, it becomes difficult for the Indo-Caribbeans Americans to form authentic Indian identity, however, it is not difficult for them to represent their hybrid identity through the usage of hybrid traditions, language and practices.

Similarly, Roopnarine (2006) also proposed that the migration history of the Indo-Caribbean community has impacted the originality of customs and traditions of the Indo-Caribbean community he says it is "due to the dislocation and displacement of East Indians during the

indenture (primary migration) and the contemporary period (secondary migration)” (09). The different migratory patterns and trends over the years that have taken place among the migratory experiences of the Indo-Caribbean community have brought about a sense of “continuous structural change, especially in education, social life, language and caste” (04). Roopnarine further talks about even though after so many cultural, geological and generational changes, the Indo-Caribbeans have still maintained crucial ancestral traditions and institutions such as marriage and living in with elders or extended family of course with some modifications. With globalisation the Indo-Caribbean identity experience another form of development as the Indo-Caribbeans were by now adjusting to the new and westernized forms of cultural and social relationships such as race, class and gender. Roopnarine (2006) in this regard mentions about “plural society theory” which talks about the “Caribbean East Indians lives in a plural society in which they maintain their ‘transformed’ customs and culture(institutions), and interact with other ethnic groups at the work and market place, but at the end of the day retreat back to their own neighbourhood” (05). Roopnarine (2006) in regards of Indo-Caribbean social identity in the globalized world conceptualized four levels of identity that Indo-Caribbeans possess in plural societies they are:

- 1) Ethno-local-"Identity where East Indians have retained substantial aspects of their ancestral customs, particularly their attachments to ecology(land) and extended family network” (06). It is mostly visible in underdeveloped or rural areas of the Caribbean region. Ethno-Local identity is most noticeable during and around religious celebration and festival, where the entire community comes out under a united identity to protect their scared and pure locality elements from outside forces such as hostland cultural elements. Although, it has its own motives in its depth it is conflicted and is constantly challenged by its own agents. Therefore, among various Indo-Caribbean diasporas this particular identity has a negative connotation as it is considered regressive or “exemplifies a lack of commitment and loyalty” towards the process of creolization. Hence, there is a cleavage where the Indo-Caribbean have created what Roopnarine calls as the “internal cultural pluralism in the Indo-Caribbean community in which some sectors of the Indo-Caribbeans have retained remarkable degree of Indianness ‘indianite’ (traditional culture and hinduism0 while others have become creolized (western and Christianized)” (07).

- 2) Ethno-national: This form of identity is where “Indo-Caribbean people see themselves belonging to a separate ethnic group but sharing some cultural characteristics with their ancestral home and even with the wider Caribbean community. They however, put their ethnicity as well as their nationality together when identifying themselves” (07), which is also addressed as ‘dual identity’. For example, ethnicities addressed as Indo-Surinamese, as Indo-Trinidadian or even Indo-Guyanese can be called as ethno-national identities. In a host society Indo-Caribbean identity is constantly evolving and, in such cases, ethno-national identity becomes crucial as it helps the East Indians to stand out and not grouped or misidentified as something else. For example, in the U.K most of the Indo-Caribbeans are mistaken as Afro-Craibbeans and with the help of their cultural representation they assert their identity which defines them as they want to. Roopnairén’s work and close observation of the participants revealed that Ethno-national identity works best in non-Caribbean setting as the Caribbean is a “plural society” and each group has a nation building process going on which often release complexities and cause tension. However, in a white host society Indianness clubbed with Caribeanness works smoothly as cultural representations and practices has the ability to unite the Indo-Caribbeans as one group.
- 3) Ethno-Trans-Caribbean: This particular identity “reflects a sense of belonging to the region, which becomes a part of one’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors...ethno-trans-Caribbean identity embraces emotional attachments or family and religious resemblances, even if there is no personal knowledge of each other”. Roopnairine says: “ethno-trans-caribbean identity is not intra-Caribbean or insular, but is equally noticeable and equally vocal in the diaspora. It is in New York, Toronto, London and Amsterdam that East Indians find out their Caribbean commonalities and differences” (09).
- 4) Ethno-universal or International Identity: The ethno-universal identity is linked to what is called as East-Indian Communities. For example, even though there are POIs in many parts of the Caribbean but they do connect with each other on the basis of idea, and links that they create together as one community irrespective of their current location, region or even nation. This particular identity links each and every East Indian community across the globe that “may or may not share the same characteristics... This ethno-universal identity has more to do with beliefs and aspirations which may arise circumstantially” (09-10).

Since Indian diasporas are known for culture preservation, they introduce their children to both kinds of culture i.e., inherited and adopted, which has made it possible for the young Indo-Caribbean diaspora to fathom their historical links and current position in a multicultural environment and they establish this link through art, music, dance, festival, food, rituals, etc. These activities are introduced to the younger generation by their elders, to introduce them to their history and Indian links. There was not even one respondent who did not accept their Indian link irrespective of their age, generation, and nativity. However, they did assert that the lifestyle of the hostland has had a great influence on them but they do not want to let go of their cultural heritage and link to fade as it is their identity and is pivotal to them.

These respondents were asked about their traveling and visits to India or their native places, in response, a majority had said they have never visited India, and a few those who have visited shared that it is an expensive affair to frequently travel to India, hence, they depend upon literature, cultural practices to continue maintaining the bond with the homeland. These respondents also expressed that media - such as radio, movies daily soaps, magazines, etc are among the important connection through which these diasporas slip under the blanket of imagination. Almost every respondent agreed to the fact that music consumption is the most used medium through which they celebrate their identity and nativity. Shashank (age 35, male) is of Indo-Surinamese origin and was born and brought up in the Netherlands. Shashank works for an ad company and the nature of his job has made him travel through many countries. When Shashank was asked about how he reconnects with his homeland and culture he said:

“I was born in the Netherlands but I never forget where my roots come from, I and my wife would often cook our traditional cuisine like *Murgi Talkari* (Chicken Curry) served with Roti, we often eat *Baras* (Vada) for snacks. Since Surinami culture is very similar to India and so are our languages, we watch Bollywood movies and Hindi daily soaps too”.

According to Shashank and his wife Roshini (age 37), the historical link between India and Surinamese has an unbreakable bond and the younger generation of Surinamese often utilize this link to rejuvenate memories of Surinam, and their homeland through Indian media. Roshini also mentioned that offering morning prayers, chanting shlokas and practicing yoga are included in

their daily routine and so is the music of their motherland. She also shared that she and her family elders do all the cooking for festivals and functions. Roshini added:

“We cook and celebrate all the festivals, apart from that dancing and singing has to be there otherwise there is no festivity, we in the Caribbeans dance and sing for everything, we have childbirth songs, we have *Phagwa* songs, we have wedding songs, festivities for us is a chance to dance and sing and we never miss out on that”.

When asked about how much similarity she finds between contemporary Indian music and contemporary Caribbean music she said:

“There are a lot of similarities and differences, yet they are very similar. Over a period of time in a few regions of the Caribbean like Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, Indian music changed and became more Trinidadian and more Guyanese, for example, Chutney became Chutney Soca (a blend of Indian and Soca music) and similarly in Guyana also a lot of musicians followed the same pattern of transition including reggae mix to old folk songs and existing Bollywood songs. Although, if you look at Baithak Gana, which originated in Surinam but later many musicians followed, it is still very much similar to its original form as Surinamese preserved it. Just like Trinidadians include Chutney and Chutney Soca songs in their festivities and celebration, we are all about Baithak, Bhajans, and also sometimes Bollywood songs”.

Shashank also mentioned that Bollywood music has now become a vital part of their lives and celebrations, so much so that even the local singers take inspiration and recreate new songs for the Caribbean audience.

People who identify themselves as diasporas can be thought of as individuals who have hyphenated identities or who have negotiated identities, and diasporas who have migrated twice have a fluid sense of identity. In simpler terms, it means that their identities go beyond their homelands or cultures. Modern communication tools and advancements help them to feel safe and connected with the idea of home even if they are away from it. The younger generation of Indo-Caribbean diasporas, particularly those who have settled in the United States and Europe, is a significant part of this twice-migrated diaspora, and it is proper to call them transnationals as they identify with two or more cultures. Since multicultural societies do not pressure them to

assimilate, these diasporas are part of the Salad Bowl. As a result, they are given room to flourish under the umbrella of their own culture and identity.

### **Finding India and Identity in diasporic music**

James Clifford (1994) in his work on *Cultural Anthropology* stated that every diasporic experience is marked by “a strong attachment to and desire for a literal return to a well-preserved homeland” (305). However, the concept of ‘home’ in the diaspora has become complex with people accepting the plurality of ‘homes’ and ‘identity’. Likewise, in the present-day diasporic situation, multiple displacements have given rise to the emergence of multiple belongings due to the ambivalence and psychological apprehensions associated with the relationship between the diaspora and the native place of origin. Ashcroft et al (1995: 425) states: “—scattering leads to a splitting in the sense of home. A fundamental ambivalence is embedded in the term diaspora: a dual ontology in which the diasporic subject is seen to look in two directions—towards a historical cultural identity on one hand, and the society of relocation on the other”. As a result of this, the diasporas long constantly for their own space even in the hostland. From streets, towns, and villages there are all kinds of settlements and areas in Trinidad and Tobago that are named after Indian cities such as Calcutta settlements, Madras settlements, Patna Village, Hindustan Village, Gandhi Village, and so on. The Indian diaspora in the Caribbean has experienced a loss of home and which triggered a search for a homeland; an anchor to which the diasporic could latch on to feel secure in social, political, and cultural ways.

The Indian diasporas as the study discussed did assimilate into the Caribbean or colonial culture, however, they did maintain an active link with the homeland through cultural practices among their community such as music, dance, and language. It was also observed that the Indo-Caribbean diaspora living in the U.S.A, U.K, and the Netherlands have assimilated into the society of the hostland to a great extent, however, just like Indians in the Caribbean maintained their sense of belonging to India, these transnationals are also attempting to maintain a bridge that links their cultural heritage with new settlements.

Asha (age 38, female) is a nurse and works at a local hospital in the Queens area of New York. During interview, she spoke about how she finds herself culturally connected to her homeland

Guyana and India even while she is in a new diasporic setting for over 20 years now. She mentioned that the Richmond Hill area is also known as “Little Guyana” as it holds a large portion of Indo-Caribbean-Americans, particularly of Indo-Trinidadian and Indo-Guyanese origin. She also stated that sometimes it is also addressed as “Little Punjab” as well as the neighborhood holds a significant population of Punjabi Americans. Asha further explained how a city in America has multiple cultures all coexisting, and how small-small elements ranging from food, clothing, architecture, etc, make a region into a community that reflects coexistence. When Asha was asked about how she connects herself with her culture in a foreign land she said:

“The Indo-Caribbean community in the southern region of Richmond Hill can be found from residential areas to even in commercial areas, and since the population is of a sizable number it becomes easier for us to find each other, maintain our cultural ties, and exchange religious practices with each other”.

Asha was asked about the grounds she and her community members interact with each other, and what are the cultural elements that help them strengthen the bond between them, she said,

“Music and religion are two important pillars of our culture and we are maintaining it in every possible way, we have temples, churches, and other cultural theaters that accommodate our religion and cultural needs, and also it does not leave our kids alien to their present environment, and most importantly to their ancestral history”.

The earlier generations of Indian diaspora in the Caribbean migrated under contract as unskilled labourers, and they were kept in localities where all plantation workers stayed. With time these migrants bonded as they shared the same native, religion, and interests. In the current scenario, it is observed that the pattern of sharing a common community space comes naturally to Indian diasporas and particularly to Indo-Caribbeans as their ancestors once did, overriding religious differences, caste differences, and language differences. A majority of the respondents confirmed that their ancestors did face alienation and racism which on one hand caused them trauma and on the other helped the migrants grow fond of each other as they found strength, identity, and home in each other in the hostland.

Chandrashekhar Bhat and T.L.S Bhaskar (2007) talk about the rise of ‘Jahaji Bhai’- the bond of brotherhood. ‘Jahaji Bhai’ literally translates into ‘Ship brother’ which Bhat and Bhaskar addressed as “brotherly affinity due to travelling together” (90). The bond of brotherhood was born out of shared memories and miseries, people who traveling to plantations went through a hard time facing unjust, cruelty, and racism at the hands of colonial officials on the ship. In the

midst of this hardship, the migrants found comfort in each other and established an unshakable 'bond of brotherhood'. The respondents of this study explained that this bond that the indentured migrants shared helped them to grow out of social stigmas and stereotypes of their earlier life in India such as caste and untouchability. Raj (age 35, male) spoke about the significance of the 'Bond of Brotherhood' and how it holds a great value among the Indo-Caribbean community irrespective of their current nativity and settlements. He mentioned that it was the brotherhood of Indians that helped the indentured migrants to overcome alienation and helped them to establish a community where Indians would gather and sing away and celebrate to pull each other out of pain and hardship. He said,

“My adja (grandfather) had narrated to me stories of how our ancestors (mostly men) would gather up post-work-hours around a bonfire and would sing and drink alcohol. Alcohol I think was for the body after long working hours, and music was for their souls, both healed pain”.

Raj also mentioned in one of his interviews that the seed of this unique 'Bond of Brotherhood' was planted during the ship's journeys to the Caribbean colonies, the long journey of 6 months gave enough opportunities to the shipmates to cater a bond and kill boredom with some fun activities, most of the time it was music and religious activities. He added the same traditions were followed by the decedents of those indentured (his ancestors) and they turned a relaxing activity into a social gathering which later on encouraged Indo-Caribbeans to celebrate more than just the same nativity and Indianness.

To understand the birth and need of diasporic music in the Indian diaspora one needs to understand the concepts of alienation, individuality, and cultural attachment and education. In the context of indentured diaspora, alienation was caused by the 'difference in status' between the 'rulers' and the 'ruled'. When Indians were sent to the plantation to work as a cheap labour-force the colonial rulers enforced their own culture, as a result, the immigrants suffered from the loss of their archetypal existence. This 'inheritance of loss' leaves them in a state of dilemma and melancholia. They face a strong longing for their homeland and thus may join hands together to form an alliance among fellow migrants to overcome alienation. Most of the time alienation results in complete assimilation where the migrant suppresses native identity by assimilating into the host culture, however, when the migration takes place in great number it follows up with partial assimilation where the migrants would only adapt the host culture for communication and commercial purposes and maintain their homeland culture among people of the same origin. The

indentured migration was extensive in number and hence, preserving identity came naturally to all of them. Moreover, it became a much easier task for these migrants to keep their ties attached to their culture and homeland through various mediums such as cultural art forms and religion.

Dev Prasad (age 51, male) says:

“My Adjji (paternal grandmother) came on a boat with her parents, and she used to tell me bedtime stories of her childhood days when Indians were called Coolies. She does not remember her ship journey; I think she was very small but she used to tell me how the elders would gather up and would sing and dance. She said they were celebrating ‘togetherness in loneliness’. I don’t know when exactly they started to celebrate festivals and everything started to have music in it, but I think it has been in our culture for a very long time, longer than before I was even born, I guess”.

When Dev Prasad was asked about the importance of Indian diasporic music and particularly the significance of Indo-Caribbean music in his and his family’s lives he pointed out that although many music genres have emerged and changed over the period of time, the Indo-Caribbeans always found an attached string with India through music and dance. He also mentioned that he does not appreciate the face of many Indo-Caribbean music forms as it has become “very vulgar and not fit for a family gathering” it still carries a sense of individuality to it as it is different and unique just like the Indo-Caribbean community.

Mr. Prasad recalls how even after so many generational changes and migrations the Indo-Caribbean community and particularly the music lovers from the community are still making immense efforts towards keeping the Caribbean Hindustani sangeet alive and active by making new compositions. The fact that there is more than one form of music the Indo-Caribbeans practice, and all of them have a completely different purpose and audience to please marks the individuality of the Caribbean Hindustani identity.

It has been observed during several interviews with the respondents of this study, that for the Indo-Caribbeans the idea of home is not just homeland, it also means community Raj (2014) in his work *‘The Concept of Home in Diaspora’* discusses diaspora attachment and desire towards homeland, and said “The concept of home in diaspora is intricate, complex and multifaceted characterizing plurality of ‘homes’ and plurality of ‘belongings’” (87). To explain the plurality of

‘belongings’ Raj further added “Chinatown in London is an instance of how the Chinese population form their familiar space to make themselves feel at home and create a sense of belonging at where they are—home away from home” (88).

Similarly for the Indian diaspora the meaning of home is a place where the Indian diaspora feels secure, moreover, it is a place of connections, camaraderie, and a reservoir of group wisdom (collective memories) shared by every member of the community irrespective of the generation. Most of the time these memories are created because of the displacements and shared miseries by the members of the community/group, which time and again has helped the Indian diaspora to create an individual and strong identity. During the interview, it also came to my observation that, apart from collective memories these diasporas are formulating a longing for cultural practices. The association of a community with culture and its various practices indicates not just a bond with the homeland, but also enhances the cultural understanding of the future generation. The Indo-Caribbean diaspora’s idea of a community emphasizes and relies mostly on cultural connections and they make sure that their children are also as culturally attached as they are. The idea is to maintain cultural links alive while understanding their diasporic identity.

Kamala (age 37, female) is an Indo-Guyanese woman who lives in Queens, New York City, with her family that includes her father, husband Binod (age 42), and two sons Siddharta (age 6) and Gautam (age 3). During the interviews, she mostly spoke and communicated in English and shared that her family moved to the U.S.A before she was even born. She also stated that in Guyana it was forbidden for their ancestors to communicate in their native language or any language other than English, thus the language she and her family communicates in is English. She spoke at length about her family, and how they have been preserving their ‘Indianness’ on the islands through religious and various cultural mediums and practices irrespective of the fact that they do not speak the languages of India. Kamala said:

“We have been making a small contribution to the upliftment of Indian diaspora, in Richmond Hill as per my knowledge, there are around 300,000<sup>63</sup> Indo-Caribbeans residing. We have the liberty of being ourselves, you can witness the presence of Indo-Caribbean identity in New York and its significance from makers places to worship places”.

---

<sup>63</sup> Kamala’s reference to the number of population is based on rough assumptions and not based on any government data.

When Kamala was asked about how she manages to introduce her ancestral culture to her children she replied,

“My kids watch me perform *puja* every morning and they accompany me, they have a lot of questions about who we are and why are we praying to an idol which is blue (*Lord Shiva*) or why do I cover my head with a scarf when I perform the Puja. I believe it is my moral obligation to explain it to them just like my parents explained to me about our ancestors and origin, so I do, and I am nothing but proud that I get to do this for my kids and my community”.

In one of the interviews, Kamala expressed, that a lot of the work gets self-done as she resides in a neighborhood of other Indo-Caribbeans and Indians. According to her, the Indo-Caribbean-American community is very proactive when it comes to the enlightenment of their children, they would not want the culture and religion to wither away, hence they keep their kids also engaged in the same practices. The presence of other Indian diasporas in the city allows the Indo-Caribbean population to experience the missing link with India and provides an opportunity for easy exchange of cultural knowledge among the Indian diasporic population. When Kamala and her family were asked if they find any difference between Indo-Caribbean cultural practices and the practices of other Indian Diaspora, Binod replied, “other than the fact that our parents were born in the Caribbean I don’t find any dissimilarities, yes there are few hybridities that one can call as difference but I find them as diversities”.

Binod also stated that apart from religion and prayers, social gatherings and musical celebrations among the community play an instrumental role in stabilizing the identities of Indo-Caribbean in America. He also mentioned that apart from sharing religious and worship spaces Indo-Caribbeans and Indo-Americans find shared belongingness through music and entertainment. Binod said:

“If we don’t start promoting our culture, especially to our younger generation, we are soon to lose our culture. We are from the Caribbean; we can be Indians from the Caribbean. We have our history of our own culture which is a mix of Indian culture and Caribbean culture and it is a beautiful-beautiful fusion and I think it will be a very big shame if we lose it. We stay together and bond over cultural elements such as music to have a strong sense of identity, but the younger generation - our younger generation, our kids, have grown up in a time where people have stopped attending these events and now,

they are growing up without the cultural awareness or a strong sense of identity like my generation have”.

This alienation toward an individual's cultural heritage is a direct result of assimilation and generational change. To understand this scenario better, I interacted with teens especially those who are culturally connected and are related to music and dance in one way or the other.

Olivia and Sofia (age 19) are twin sisters and they reside in London. Olivia and Sofia's parents are both Grenada natives, and they both are budding dancers. Sofia is also a singer and she likes to practice classical and semi-classical music with Harmonium, whereas Olivia is a trained classical Kathak dancer and she loves Bollywood dance and music a lot. During an interview, Sofia was asked about her understanding of culture and why she thinks it is imperative to raise awareness. She said:

“We want to promote our culture rather than patriotic memories because in London sometimes we are referred to as 'black' and not as Indian or Indo-Caribbean, so our efforts aim to raise awareness about our culture and identity. And it is happening, people are becoming aware of our culture, particularly through our music and dance. It has a lot of Indian elements because of historical reasons, yet it is different and unique”.

When Olivia was asked about the inspiration behind her choosing Kathak dance over any other forms she replied:

“We both have seen our parents taking part in every Indo-Caribbean gathering for years now and over the period we have witnessed some spectacular performances by the community people. We both grew up watching those performances and I think our parents and our cultural attachment have resulted in us becoming performers too. This way not only we stay connected to our ancestors but with our culture and most importantly with our identity”.

The younger generation of Indo-Caribbean diaspora has a very unique approach when it comes to cultural attachments and heritage learning. Among the respondents of this study, only a few came up with absolutely no intention of learning the art and dance form of the Indo-Caribbean or either with an interest in consumption. However, a good number of respondents expressed that

the fear of Indo-Caribbeans turning away from their culture has been one of the major reasons why they want to learn more about it. A few of the respondents who are in the double diaspora or have biological hybridity experience a 'hole' in their cultural knowledge as their connection with their Indo-Caribbean ancestors is no longer there and they feel a cultural void for not knowing the history and culture of their ancestors. This void most of the time gives rise to the curiosity to reinvigorate the younger generation to not only participate in cultural events but also to understand the importance of cultural attachments and cultural education.

It has been observed that not every time the diasporas aspire to return to their homeland but they desire to experience their homeland in the hostland through cultural formations and social connections. Clifford (1994) talks about how diasporas maintain attachments with their homeland alive in the hostland through "Cultural forms, kinship relations, business circuits, and travel trajectories as well as through loyalties to the religious centers of the diaspora" (305).

### **Relationship between Bollywood and Caribbean Hindustani Music**

After the abolition of indentureship in 1917, the Indian population in the Caribbean remained deprived of India. With the end of contractual labour the communication between the Indian migrants and India stopped because there was a lack of media and other modes of communication. However, the Indo-Caribbeans stayed in touch with their history and cultural heritage through various mediums and Bollywood has to be one of the most important links that Indo-Caribbeans maintained.

Hanna Klien Thomas (2021: 215) while talking about popular culture of South Asia studied the relation between Bollywood and Indo-Caribbeans, particularly Indo-Trinidadians. According to her "film content and related symbols have served as a central marker of the ethnic identity within Trinbagonian society".

According to Katherine (age 29, female), the importance of Bollywood and its content is as important as other cultural practices such as religious rituals. Moreover, she stated that Bollywood has played an important role in ethnic identity formation as it served as a reminder to

the younger generation about their history and cultural roots. Kathrine mentioned that in earlier days, more than entertainment purposes Bollywood movies served as an educational tool for growing up women about femininity, womanhood, and patriarchy and the downsides of diaspora on Indian women. Although, with time the image of self-sacrificing woman changed, and now Bollywood is seen as a signifier of Indianness in the modern hybrid Caribbean society.

Apart from image building for the Indian diasporas, and providing them a sense of belonging through various media connections, the relationship between Bollywood and the Indo-Caribbean music industry has always been very interdependent and intertwined. As mentioned in the previous chapter in contemporary scenario Bollywood songs occupy an important place in the Indo-Caribbean music industry as many well-known musicians such as Rakesh Yankaran and Raymond Ramnarine are drawing inspiration from old Bollywood songs to make unique Chutney Soca musical numbers which are very popular among the party going masses. During various interactions with the respondents of this study, it came to my observation that for a variety of Bollywood films musicians recreated several Chutney, Chutney Soca songs, and Baithak Gana with renowned stars of Hindi cinema, and featured them in famous movies. The respondents also stated that it was because of the popularity of these songs that attracted many Bollywood musicians, actors, and singers to the Caribbean Hindustani sangeet sometimes as performers and sometimes as collaborators and producers.

One of the respondents from Surinam who is also a renowned Vinyl Collector and a music buff is famous for his over 4000 Vinyl collections comprising every possible Baithak, Chutney, and Chutney Soca album/record, along with most of Bollywood music. Surinder (age 62, male) is actively working on the digitalization of all his vinyl records collection. Currently, he uses the YouTube platform to publish all the digitalized versions of old Baithak, Chutney, Chutney Soca, and various old Bollywood songs on his YouTube channel. In one of the many interactions, Surinder stated:

“In my opinion, the beginning of song borrowing started with the song *Om Shanti Om* by Lord Shorty I in 1978. Lord Shorty a.k.a Ras Shorty I. He was from Trinidad and was very experimental when it came to fusion music, he is also known as the father of Soca. It was his song *Om Shanti Om* which was later recreated with pure Hindi lyrics for actor Rishi Kapoor and Kishor Kumar gave his vocals to the song and in the 1980 movie *Karz*.

Later on, in 1995 Sonny Man's *Lootela* became famous, and Indian pop celebrity Ishita Arun danced to the number in 2005. The song *Lootela* kept on coming again and again over the years with different artists trying to seduce Bhojpuri audience and it was very successful".

Surinder added that after Kanchan and Babla visited and performed in Surinam in 1977<sup>64</sup>, this trend of music recreation started, he also stated that Kanchan and Babla in collaboration with Rohit Jaggesar composed a good number of songs which were mostly adaptations of Baithak Gana, Chutney, and Chutney Soca, he said:

"Their song *Raat ke Sapna* (1983) was originally sung by the famous Ramdew Chaitoe in 1969 and in the same album Kanchan recreated Sundar Popo's song *Kaise Bani* which became famous and ended up in Bollywood so many times, the most recent is Dabang 2, another song Tiny Winy by Kanchan is an adaption of Calypso-Soca which was originally released in 1984 by Byron Lee and Dragonaires".

This Bollywoodization of Caribbean Hindustani music attracted more and more Bollywood legends to the Indo-Caribbean music industry and helped them recognize the existence of flourishing Indian cultural elements in the Caribbean society. The exchange of music between Indian musicians and the Indo-Caribbean industry was evident and many songs that were adapted from Indo-Caribbean musicians started to appear in several big banner Bollywood films. Bollywood film *Jadoogar* starring legendary Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Prada, popularized an old Chutney song *Parosin api Murgi ko rakhna Sambhal* in 1989, which was originally sung by Harridath Jairam as *Parosin Moregia Samahl* in 1977.

As the study's young participants discuss, the current state of Indo-Caribbean music is gaining inspiration from various Bollywood songs to make a Soca mixture. Aneeta (age 25, female) says:

"Changing trends are taking place in many genres of music, including Indian-Caribbean music and it started when Sundar Popo released Chutney and Ramgoonai released Chutney Soca. Gradually, these genres became very different from how they used to be, and when these genres changed completely, musicians began adapting famous Bollywood songs to recreate and re-mix Chutney Soca songs. There were times when this musical

---

<sup>64</sup> Surinder claims he had attended the concert in person when he was young.

exchange was motivated by cultural bridging, other times for commercial reasons... sometimes for nostalgia”.

Aneeta's explanation of the "nostalgic reasons" for the changing trends consists of the fact that, because media and information are accessible to everyone, it becomes easier to evoke the memory of one's history through relative elements, in this case, it is language and music of their past, of their ancestors. The reason few artists now opt for recreating Bollywood songs to create original Soca songs is similar to how Dropati transformed folk songs into commercial songs. For the generation that grew up with folk songs, social connections were encouraged through musical gatherings and events. The current generation is using Bollywood for the same cultural exchange.

Sawnia (age 25, female) is second-generation Indo-Guyanese-American. Sawnia mentioned that she recently took part in an annual cultural festival that takes place in the region of Richmond Hill, organized by the Indo-Caribbean community. While interacting with the researcher Sawnia shared one of the videotapes from the festival. Sawnia was seen dancing in a group of four other women over a mashup of various Bollywood songs, some of them were *Nagada sang Dhol* from the movies *Ramleela*, *Marr Dala* from the movie *DevDas*, *Ek do Teen* from the movie *Tezab* and many other dancing numbers from Hindi Cinema. Sawnia was asked why wouldn't she use old Chutney and Soca music to perform during these festivals she revealed:

“Soca and Chutney songs are for fun and frolic and traditional rituals. The reason that I chose Bollywood songs is that we listen to them a lot, more than I guess how much we listen to any other genre even chutney or Soca. We are Indo-Caribbean in America, a cocktail because we enjoy every religion, dance, music, food and that's what we also endorse and embrace as Indo-Caribbeans in America”.

The respondents of the study provided an insight, following which I observed that just like folk music and folk songs once gave foundation to the identity formation of indentured migrants in the Caribbean during their indentured servitude, likewise in contemporary scenario Bollywood allows the current generation of those Indentured to reunite with the land that once belonged to their forefather. The attachment to India comes naturally to these younger generations as the language and music sound similar to their community.

### **Consumption of Music among the Indian Diaspora**

Diasporas are observed to hold on to very few things, including music. So far, the study has found that music connects people to their past by conjuring up emotionally charged objects, creating a private heaven for migrants. This part of the chapter will discuss how Indo-Caribbeans have endeavored to preserve their music and have placed a high value on its uniqueness and originality. Moreover, it would discuss how often the current generation of Indo-Caribbeans engage themselves in this process of music consumption and music-making in transnational settings. As the respondents of this study have demonstrated, music is for them more than just identity. Instead, it is a means of transmitting their community's cultural memories to the next generation, which will form new memories. As a cultural link between heritage and the younger generation, this transmission mostly triggers emotions of 'remembering' among immigrants, which then becomes an important source of knowledge for them.

During several interactions with the Indo-Caribbean population, it was observed that the process of complete assimilation starts with the third generation onwards among the immigrants. They successfully blended into the host country's society and culture. A good number of respondents to this study belong to the third generation and they shared with the researcher how assimilation worked for them as they always have constant nourishment provided by their ancestral culture. However, throughout the interactions, I observed that there is a clash of cultures and traditions, that took over the cultural practices of their ancestors, yet the Indo-Caribbeans established a constant connection with their history and India. During the various interaction with the respondents to this study, music remained a common topic of discussion and how its consumption in various ways have served and nurtured the Indo-Caribbean community over the period. Moreover, it was also observed how music has also remained one constant source of education for the younger generation which they have gathered through oral transmission in the forms of stories and traditional songs but mainly through watching television, watching Bollywood cinema, and following daily soaps.

During one of the interviews, a local musician from New York, Ravi (age 28, male) stated:

“Since I was born in New York, I live like an American when I am outside my home or away from family, but when I am with my family, I am Indo-Caribbean. I take this liberty of being a musician and I have seen even Americans dancing and grooving over my mixed and hybrid Indian-Caribbean-American mixes. I think that passing on our culture, or our music to the younger ones is important, but at the same time it is important not to keep them away from the culture and music they get here in hostland, which sometimes the elders would do”.

He went on and added,

“There's always be a tug of war between the older and the younger generation regarding the authenticity of culture imbibing and I don't think we can ever satisfy them”.

When a young musician was asked if he observes any different characteristics in the music of their earlier generation and the music of new generation artists Ravi said:

“ I think the major difference is being able to understand most of the words in the present day music be it Chutney or Chutney Soca compared to before because now they mainly sing in English”.

To understand the true nature of consumption among the younger generation the same question was asked to the other group members of the same age group i.e., 4th and 5th generation of Indo-Caribbean. Their responses revealed that the younger generations relate more to Chutney and Chutney Soca as they can understand the lyrics and enjoy the high BPM music. Although, there are a variety of responses that reveals that for the younger generation the significance of music culture is otherwise in comparison to their elder generation.

One of the respondents, Usha (age 23, female) said: “I would not say I specifically relate to it but I grew up listening to Chutney music and I still do. We also play it at family events, etc”. Usha who is an Indo-Trinidadian-British currently resides in New York as an aspiring actor. She also added that genres like Chutney and Chutney Soca are more of a party and carnival music, it does carry a lot of importance in the lives of the younger generation however, not exactly how it has in the minds of the elders.

Another respondent, Brij (age 28, male) says:

“Yes, changes have taken over the old traditional styles of music such as Chutney and Chutney Soca, But that’s the nature of music, it changes. When Sundar Popo started making music that was different from how Ramdew Chaitoe started it, Ramgoonai’s music was different from that of Popo and opposite to what Ramdew would compose and sing. Now I understand all three are from different genres and masters of different music styles but they were all stemming from one single root”.

Abdullah (age 22, male) who lives in New York City states:

“I cannot deny the fact that with time changes have taken the course, be it rituals or way how we celebrate festivals, even for the matter of fact the way we eat our food. So yes, Lyrics and even music are very different now the music making has become very bold, previously it was more religious and traditional”.

The same question was asked to a group of respondents who belong to the third generation of Indian immigrants and mostly fall under the age category of age 50 and above. They were asked whether they find any differences in the key features of Indo-Caribbean music so far; they responded differently and I have provided a few of the responses.

Dev Prasad (age 51, male):

“I do not appreciate the face of many Indo-Caribbean music forms as it has become very vulgar and not fit for a family gathering, it still carries a sense of individuality to it as it is different and unique juts like the Indo-Caribbean community”.

Nirmala (age 55, female): “I feel Baithak Gana has some essence of the past left in it although I feel chutney and Chutney Soca is not the same as they use to be”.

Ajay (age 55, male):

“Traditional Hindustani music in Suriname is called Baithak Gana. Within the baithak gana music, there are different genres brought from UP/Bihar. When in the past people wanted to dance, they asked for *calta* music (chalta music), with more speed and more rhythm. This chalta music was called chutney in Trinidad and Guyana. That name is now common in the older Indian Diaspora, even in the Twice Diaspora in Europe and North America. In the Chutney, the lyrics are subordinated to the rhythm. The Chutney music is mostly very loud and many people complain about the noise they make”.

Rakesh (age 61, male): “both geographical and sociological changes can be felt in Chutney, especially Soca music. Sometimes when I listen to old Bollywood music and I listen to a recycled version of Hindi and Soca mix I sense the change”.

Sharada (age 61, female): “The Beat will be different (faster nowadays) while our indentured music was slower. The lyrics of our indentured music referred mostly to India. While today they sing more about the situation or a story, happy or sad”.

Surinder (age 62, male):

“old indentured music is akin to 19th-century Indian music, and we have preserved that here in the Caribbean, so musicologists come here from India to study their history. Chutney music was invented by people in Trinidad, along with chutney dance because they like the faster pace and the social commentary aspect, as opposed to indenture music which was mostly religious”.

Nitesh (age 65, male): “the music has become a recycled version of other Indian songs”.

All of these responses above display dual identities, in which Indian and Caribbean identity is stressed. In their discussions, Abdullah and Ravi shared how some families are worried that their children will be completely cut off from their traditions, religion, and culture. This is because they have foreign companies at schools or even at workplaces. As was observed during the interviews with Dev Prasad where he called out a few music genres as ‘vulgar’ and ‘inappropriate’ for family gatherings yet he still called them an essential part of the Indo-Caribbean community calling it a ‘carrier of cultures’.

During the interviews, I found that cultural practices, especially music, are triggering a feeling of belonging. My interviewees claimed that elders are unable to recognize change because of the same sense of belonging. In contrast, the younger generation can relate to both new and traditional music due to the same sense of belonging.

In this study, I have put a lot of emphasis on the importance of music as a cultural agent for communities, as has been indicated by the majority of respondents. When societies are changing, it is particularly impressive to see how music becomes an agent or a carrier of culture and new

ideas. The use of music can foster feelings of belonging, serve as a tool for cultural preservation, and strengthen communication, among the community members. It is in Eyerman and Jamison's work (1998) that they explore the role of music in "...the diffusion of movement ideas into the broader culture". According to them, as a social phenomenon referred to as "mobilisation of tradition" they explained that: "...in social movements, musical and other kinds of cultural traditions are made and remade, and after the movements fade away as political forces, the music remains as a memory and as a potential way to inspire new ways of mobilisation (1-2)".

### **Carrier of Culture**

So far, the study has found that music is a language of emotions, allowing humans to express themselves. Specifically, it allows immigrants to experience these emotions through music, which is a vehicle for expressing emotion when words do not suffice. This study observed that the Indian diaspora acknowledges music as an influential element of their community and also their culture. According to the respondents of this study music reminds them of 'Home' which Cohen (1997) describes as a "place of origin, or the place of settlement or a local, national or transnational place, or an imagined virtual community, or matrix or known experiences and intimate relations" (03). There is no universal benchmark of diasporic experience when it comes to the desire to return to the homeland. Therefore, when Clifford (1994: 305) talked about the concept of 'Home' about the Jew diaspora he discussed that the concept of home is extended through "cultural forms, kinships relations, business circuits, and travel trajectories as well as through loyalty to the religious centres of the diaspora". The importance of music in the diaspora cannot be overstated because it gave voice to indentured migrants, whose voices were seldom heard during colonial times, and transformed Indian communities in the Caribbean through its role in the great Indian diaspora.

Scholars and academicians have already established that indentured never lost their connection to their heritage, their culture, their language, or their religion. These sentiments were echoed in interviews with respondents in this study. Indentured migrants and their succeeding generation ensured that these ties to Mother India were preserved, along with the celebration of traditional festivals, be it Holi for Hindus or Muharram for the Muslims. Music has been one such link that has enabled these links to remain intact even in foreign lands. In the earlier chapter, we discussed

the role played by Indian women in keeping a folk music tradition alive in foreign lands. These indentured women contributed greatly to the preservation of a culture since they clung to its oral traditions and language.

Several interviewees stated that music not only helped them preserve their culture and maintain cultural ties, but it helped them develop their own identity as well. The uniqueness of Indo-Caribbean music is such that in the current scenario the whole world talks about the vibrancy and uniqueness of Indo-Caribbean music and culture. Moreover, as discussed in the above section even Bollywood has been taking inspiration from the Indo-Caribbean music industry. In the Indian music industry, musicians like Sneha Khanwalkar have not only adapted Indo-Trinidadian songs and introduced them in a mega hit and popular Hindi feature film series *Gangs of Wassepur*. The extraordinariness of Indo-Caribbean music is marked by its high beats per minute and hybridized lyrics that are a mix of Caribbean Creole and Bhojpuri.

When the respondents were asked how music has been a carrier of culture, most of them explained it as a “need to stay in touch with roots”<sup>65</sup>. Sakshi (age 26, female) is a dancer by profession and lives in New York. Sakshi is of Indo-Trinidadian ancestry, and she shared that the reason she learned to dance and became a professional dancer is that she and her family are too traditional and since childhood, she has been learning dance forms such as Kathak and Bollywood. She shared that she is a Madhuri Dixit fan and one day she would love to perform with her. Music, she says, is:

“Prime carrier of culture in every diaspora. From 1845 to 1917, those traveling to the Caribbean from the subcontinent would connect on a ship and use music to entertain one another. The poor migrants created a brotherhood for themselves while singing and dancing 'Jahaji Bhai'. Even now the Indo-Caribbean community celebrates togetherness with music and dancing. This bond has been passed down to us by our ancestors”.

Sakshi further explained how music is one of those few things that people exchange when they get to know each other or start living with each other. In her words “music teaches us to coexist and cohabit, it encourages tolerance, peace and acceptability”.

Another respondent Joseph (age 45, male) from Guyana shared:

---

<sup>65</sup> The phrase appeared common in almost all the responses provided by the respondents.

“Music and culture for us are two sides of a coin. Music not only elevates the mind of an individual, but it also elevates the soul of that person. Music in our culture is more significant than any tribe, caste, or religion. Apart from entertainment and communication, music brings solidarity to the diaspora communities”.

Just like Joseph, Amal (age 55, male) explained how Chutney music holds an essential place in his family. He said:

“My uncle’s daughter in the Netherlands is known for her Chutney singing, my daughter and son both sing Chutney and Bollywood songs. All of them have an active following on YouTube and I see a lot of people from all over the world commenting positively about Chutney songs. This gives me a sense of pride that the music of my ancestors and family is known and appreciated by so many”.

According to Amal music is not only responsible for the cultural education of succeeding generations. However, it also has the power to culturally educate as people as possible. Earlier, people used to gather and arrange public gatherings for such music exchanges. However, with the help of the internet and better media communication, it is now easier to make people aware of the diversity of cultures.

The majority of respondents acknowledge that music is the biggest carrier of culture by saying: “it makes us feel connected to India”. It is important to note that not every respondent to this study has visited India, the number is hand full. However, the belief that music allows them to ‘feel connected’ with their ancestral land is a marvelous revelation. The musician, Somil (age 32, male), is of Indo-Trinidadian heritage, and when asked how he establishes his connection with his roots and community, he explained, “Every country and every community have music that defines them. Where Baithak Gana and old Chutney remind me of my immediate ancestors and culture, similarly when I listen to Bollywood songs and watch Hindi cinema, I find myself connected to India”.

The narratives of the respondents, and literature both oral and written echos that music has an unshakable place in the lives and community of Indo-Caribbeans. While I was attempting to understand the role of music as a carrier of culture in a family setting, I interacted with people of different generations, and countries of settlements, but one common factor came forward among all the interactions, that music is a part of their cultural and social life, and it is the most

important element of any celebration. Not only do these respondents confirm the fact that music is and has always been a carrier of culture as it has helped them to re-establish their displaced community and with a sense of connectedness. The Indo-Caribbean often practice music while weddings, religious festival celebrations, and social gatherings.

While Chutney and Chutney Soca music has changed over the time under various unescapable influences, the Indo-Caribbeans believe that it still is a reminder of their diasporic community and identity that have been established in foreign lands by their ancestors, as the Indo-diasporic population in the regions of Trinidad, Guyana, Grenada have lost touch with the language of their ancestors just like their music forms Chutney and Chutney Soca. On the other hand, in Surinam, Baithak Gana and various performers are still making Baithak songs that reflect an untainted face of traditional music that was once popular among the indentured audience. Singer and performers like Raj Mohan who has Indo-Surinamese heritage are still making traditional Girmitiya songs that celebrate the history and over 150 years of Indentured migration to the Caribbean plantation. Raj Mohan has been performing in different countries including India where he has popularized his version of '*Gazal Numah*' geet and Baithak Gana. His songs are not only popular among his fans, but they also appreciate the fact that even after so many generational changes and technological advancements happening to the music industry Raj Mohan is still very successfully making traditional music with a wide imagination. Aishee (age 26, female) and Nitin (age 24, male) are of Indo-Surinamese heritage currently living in the Netherlands. They are siblings and study in a music school. During the interviews, they said they take inspiration from Raj Mohan and someday they also see themselves conquering the music industry with their music. Nitin said: "He (Raj Mohan) is a very big and popular name in every Surinami household, he is a musician of our generation and yet he very compassionately expresses the pain and suffering of those who travelled a century and a half back". Nitin and Aishee added, "the most interesting fact about Raj Mohan and his song is that even he uses modern music-making techniques yet his music echoes the sentiments of diasporic community without neglecting our past". Raj Mohan has composed various songs in Sarnami Bhojpuri for the millions of POIs, where he expressed beautiful emotions such as love, separation, and imagination.

On February 24, 2018, in Gandhinagar Gujrat, Raj Mohan was performing live for the audience of an international conference, which was organized and hosted by the Central University of Gujrat to discuss various aspects of the Indian diaspora. During an interaction with Raj Mohan when I asked him-in the middle of Rock, Pop, and Metal music how he manages to stay in touch with his ancestral language and music?

Raj Mohan smiled and said:

“When I was very young, it was that time when Rock artists and Bands like Queens and Rolling stones were making exceptional revolutionary music. I once heard Sufi songs in an old record shop, it was *Mehdi Hassan Sahab*<sup>66</sup> and I did not like it at all, I was already familiar with *Baithak* and *Lok Geet of Surinam*, but I somehow could not relate to Sufi music so I decided to listen to it until I fell in love with its lyrics, music, Sur and tan. I decided that I want to make such Gazal and Nazam Numah geet”<sup>67</sup>.

Raj Mohan’s music has the power to invoke the spirits of the Indentured and celebrates the divine power of music. His famous albums and works included *Kantráki* (2005), *Daayara* (2011), and *Dui Mutthi* (2013). He has been in the music business for almost 30 years and most of his songs are a tribute to the preservation of indentured culture that came to the Caribbean during the period of contractual labour. Like a hummingbird, Raj Mohan is again trying to hold back to the ancestral music practice, with Bhojpuri lyrics rhythm along with Ukulele, Guitar, Tabla, Dholak, and other acoustic and electronic instruments, he is making some revolutionary music that has the power to woo Indian audience and seduce western mass at the same time. His songs are shortening the distance between his ancestral homeland (Bihar) and his birth land (Netherlands), moreover, his contribution to the narration of Girmitya tales through his music has given Sarnami-Bhojpuri a platform to popularize the language, oral literature, and music culture that has remained understated for a very long time. Raj Mohan is now turning the tables and letting a new face of Indo-Caribbean music evolve into the world of hybridity.

---

<sup>66</sup> Mehdi Hassan was a Pakistani ghazal singer. In the history of Sufi and Ghazal music Gharanas he is considered one the greatest and most influential figures. Hassan is referred to as the “Shahenshah-e-Ghazal’ i.e. Emperor of Ghazal.

<sup>67</sup> This conversation and Raj Mohan’s narration was mostly in Hindi which has been translated word by word for this study purposes only.

## ***Using social media to promote ancestral culture***

In the age of social networking, it is easier to stay up-to-date on history, culture, politics, and society. In recent years, there has been a reduction in cultural and social distances, due to the rapid growth of social media. According to Chen-Zhang (2010), new media and globalization have compressed time and space, shrinking the world into a smaller interactive field. Further, Guo-Ming Chen (2012) added “the time and space compression caused by the convergence of new media and globalization creates a universal cyberspace in which new cultural identity is emerging in different virtual communities” (05).

Social media is often viewed by laypeople as a way to find long-lost friends, companions, and relatives, but according to my data collection and observations, social media is much more than accepting and sending friend requests, making reels, posting videos, and using filters. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of how the internet and social media have been used by Indian diaspora groups to create a social network and to share information, literature and historical knowledge about their own culture.

An individual can use social network sites to build a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, identify other users who are connected with them, and view and navigate both their connections and others' connections using web-enabled services (Barnes, 2006). Certainly, social media is a miracle of technological advancement which makes it easier for people to connect regardless of their origin, but its contributions towards culture production cannot be overlooked. Chen (2012) added “the new cultural identity formed by new media may not change the traditional meaning of cultural identity as a unique product through interaction in a specific group context, which gives members a sense of belongings to the group, but it will directly challenge the traditional attributes of cultural identity, namely, temporality, territoriality, contrastivity, interactivity, and multiplicity” (05).

I read the perspectives of those who have made it their life's mission to share information and cultural heritage via the internet and social media with their younger generations. They discussed how technological advancements and their relationship with music in particular have changed over time.

Jasmine (age 25, female) is from Suriname. She is related to a family of singers and musicians. During our conversation while she was sharing unseen images and anecdotes, she mentioned:

“I am a singer and I have my own female band... we have been sharing information through social media about baithak gana than singing because a lot of the young people will forget about it if we don’t share it with them”. Jasmine and her sister run an all-female Baithak Gana band. Jasmine also shared that “I received an award from the king of the Netherlands for my work for Hindu music and culture preservation... I am the youngest Hindu to receive this award because through my research and collections they (Indo-Surinamese in the Netherlands) also learn a lot about our background, culture and music”.

In the era of globalization, social media became increasingly popular, and now people of all ages use and explore social media because it is user-friendly and effective. During the data collection process, it was observed that people of all ages came forward to take part in the study which shows the efficacy and user-friendliness of these social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and even Tik-Tok.

Surya (age 38, male) as a social media influencer said: “social media promotes interconnectedness, and allows people to communicate and exchange information”. When Surya was asked about his views on using social media as a tool to educate the younger generation about culture and music, he added:

"We have, over time, moved away from our country and our culture, so when I see social media groups promoting my culture, it fills me with joy, happiness, and pride. I think it is a great initiative that groups like Baithak Gana Community and Caribbean Hindustani are taking because many forget their roots. Even though it is not easy, it is definitely effective”.

It was observed that new media allow people from diverse cultures to freely express themselves and form relationships in a virtual community that is more heterogeneous than the real world. As a result of its unique characteristics that are greatly different from conventional media, it may potentially challenge the existence of human communication in intracultural and intercultural contexts (Chen 2012). On the basis of collected data, I found that during and post-Covid-19 the visibility of these groups encouraging cultural interaction among the same community members has increased irrespective of geographical presence. Moreover, it was also observed that when compared with traditional means of communication social media communication is slightly ahead in the game of culture production. Due to the fact that social media communicates with

more people from multiple locations, engagement is more cohesive in nature than traditional communication. Also, documentation of this cultural knowledge over social media that does not have an expiry date can also be seen as an advantage.

### **Involvement of music in festivities and celebrations**

For Indian diasporas, celebration and festivity come as naturally as music does, and the Indo-Caribbeans mostly refer to them as one. It is an often-occurring phenomenon in India, and so is across the Indo-Caribbean communities. From harvesting festivals such as *Makar Sankranti* to religious festivals such as *Diwali*, *Pongal*, *Phagwa*, and *Eid*, are a few significant festivals that represent the cultural celebration and religious identity of Indo-Caribbeans. Tina Ramnarine (1996) talks about how music has been an integral part of all the religious festivals in Trinidad as “music has continued to play an integral role in religious rituals. Traces of ritual music can be found in some chutney songs. As well as the preservation of traditions, new ideas imported from India (including religious movements and figures) are absorbed by the Indian-Caribbean population” (139).

The study is focused on human mobility, humans as the transporters of traditions to many locations, and the changes it brings to music in a specific geographical context. This shift emphasizes on a variety of concerns about the survival of music traditions in new locations and develop identities attached to it (Ramnarine 1996). During various interactions with the respondents to this study, it was observed that festivity and celebration have an unbreakable bond with music, and the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean countries have incorporated both to represent their identity and popular music genres. The discussion about music practices, tradition and identity has been discussed before in the works of Mayer (1993) and Manuel (1995) and Ramnaraine (1996, 97, 98) while discussing public performances and emerging new genres out of old folk and oral traditions of Indian immigrants that turned into popular genres like Baithak and Chutney. Establishing arguments that the old tradition of *Matkor* and *Sohar* became famous music genres and gained popularity across the borders. In this part of the chapter, I will discuss three major festivities among the Indo Caribbean communities where music plays an important role, they are:

1. Festivals

2. Weddings
3. Casual parties (new year's eve, dance nights, boat parties, and public concerts by Indo-Caribbean artists and others)

The attempt here is to understand how music became the most celebrated theme among the Indo-Caribbean population that represents their unique identity.

One of the respondents, Muskaan (age 24, female), who is an American by birth with Indo-Guyanese heritage, during her interview talked at length about various forms of festivities and celebrations that take place in the Indo-Caribbean community that has been residing in Richmond Hill for over six decades. Muskaan was asked about the relationship between festivals and music, she said: “whenever there is festivity and a case of celebration music comes as default, for us Indo-Caribbeans music is synonym to fun, joy, festivity, celebration”. Muskaan also explained that for Indo-Caribbeans every event that brings community people close to each other is a call for festivity, she added: “we are not looking for an opportunity to celebrate Diwali or Phagwa, we look for opportunities to increase the interaction of community people, to educate the younger generation about our cultural heritage and social links”.

Another respondent, Philip (age 38, male) stated that: “*Divali and Phagwa* in Guyana and Trinidad are very popular and are declared as a national holiday here, for the Indo-Caribbeans the importance of Arrival Day and Carnivals are also very important”. During the long interview with Philip, it was observed that the Guyanese and Trinidadian Indian origin populations take equal participation in social gatherings as they do in religious gatherings. Philip also mentioned that since they all speak a common language and there is no caste barrier between them, it makes the involvement of people even more regular. When Philip was asked about the relationship between festivity and celebration with the music he replied “music and celebration are one expression for us. Today you’ll find a lot of people attending music shows, parties, and carnivals where they play Chutney and Chutney Soca songs”. Philip shared a couple of video clips from YouTube and also from his Facebook page, where people were seen dancing to DJ music on the *Phagwa* celebration. The songs in the background of those videos were mostly Soca songs. Philip also mentioned that engagement with music differs among different generations, and according to Philip the younger generation like to engage with either Bollywood songs if it is a

cultural fest, but if it is a party and some informal celebration people usually play Soca songs and remixed Bollywood songs.

It was interesting to observe the intertwined relationship between music and festivals of the Indo-Caribbean community, at times it becomes difficult to understand if the music supports the festival or if the festivals are used as an excuse to indulge in dancing and singing. The love of Indo-Caribbeans for music is irreplaceable and its presence can be observed everywhere. With the help of Youtube, I found a variety of videos where Indo-Caribbeans are seen celebrating *Phagwa* in the USA, and unlike India, they organized it in a ‘procession manner’ which is not often seen in India. I observed hundreds and thousands of people smeared in *Gulaal* and *Abhir*<sup>68</sup> moving on the roads with loud music playing in the background mostly famous Bollywood Holi songs and a mix of Chutney and Chutney Soca with it.

Sudesh (age 65, male) is a native of Surinam and currently, he lives in New York with his family. He mentioned that *Phagwa* and *Divali* celebrations are also common in Surinam along with the celebration of *Maha Shivratri*.

Sudesh who is a writer and a priest says:

“You see just like there is a change taking over our other cultural practices, there are changes that have taken place in our festival celebrations as well. My elders would tell me stories about how they would make colors with turmeric powder, flowers, and leaves, and this preparation would take days before the festivals, they had Bhojpuri songs for every occasion”.

Sudesh was asked if the *Phagwa* songs are still the same as it was when he was young, he replied

“In Surinam people still dance over songs like *Holi k din dil mil jate hain* from the movie *Sholey* and *Rang Barse* from the movie *Silsiley*. but yes, it will have some sort of remix to it. In Trinidad, Guyana, and Jamaica if you see the tradition is the same people pour colors on each other and dance but music is mostly Soca mixed with some random Bollywood or Chutney song”.

---

<sup>68</sup> Gulaal and Abhir are dry colors obtained from natural resources like flowers and petals that people usually use during Holi celebration to paint each others face and body with it.

The availability of Indo-Caribbean *Phagwa* songs on Youtube is over 400 songs they are Chutney and Chutney Soca mix where the singer mostly sings about what happens at the Phagwa celebration and their links with India.

For example:

“Somebody bring their water  
Somebody bring power  
we reuniting with each other and play Phagwa”

Source: Chutney Music. Nishal B Balkissoon & Arijit Singh - Holi Hai (Guyana). 2019. YouTube, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFKvemg\\_KaM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFKvemg_KaM).

The above excerpt is from Nishal B. Balkissoon and Arijit Singh’s *Holi Hai* (Guyana).

Similarly, Hitman and Arti Phagwa’s song is one of the popular Chutney Phagwa songs:

“Long time ago in ancient India  
Radha and Krishna were celebrating Phagwa  
Let’s all sing and dance with rama and Krishna  
Panghat na jaa  
Khela abhir se Marela”

Source: kurt kanhai. *Hitman & Arti Phagwah Song*. 2013. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWmElm0gCvc>.

I also observed the wedding tradition of Indo-Caribbeans particularly from Guyana, Trinidad, and Surinam to understand how and in which all forms of music is involved in Indo-Caribbean weddings. The respondents were generous enough to share their wedding video tapes and online video link. Prashant (age 27, male) and Urvashi (age 24, female) who recently got married in 2019, while watching the videotape of their wedding that was done how a Bihari wedding usually take place in India, I observed that the whole videotape has voice-overs by various

Bollywood songs and traditional Hindi songs. The song selection included Atif Aslam *Tere Sang Yara* and *Main Rang Sharabaton ka, Mor Tor* (Lawa milai), and Sehra song<sup>69</sup>.

It was impressive to see and observe rituals that are the same as any Hindu north Indian wedding would have. Kushal (22 age, male) shared clips from his brother's Kabir (age 26, male) wedding in Guyana where I observed that even at a Christian wedding the gathering would dance and perform over Bollywood songs<sup>70</sup>. Kushal and Kabir further stated: "Although we are Christians but we do follow and celebrate various Hindu celebration, and the presence of Indian elements and music in our festivities and daily lives establishes our links with India and Hindoo religion". Apart from songs, Bollywood has a great impact on the dressing and styling patterns of Indo-Caribbean. Not only they dance like Indian heroes on Bollywood songs they would also dress up in *Sherwani*, *lehengas*, and *saree* and perform on famous Bollywood and Chutney songs.

Prashant and Urvashi were asked how much importance was given to music and performances during their wedding, they laughed and said: "a wedding without music is a myth in Trinidad, music is involved in each and every ritual of a wedding. There are songs for rituals like *matkor*, earlier women use to sing those songs but now mostly we play songs on the sound system". The narratives of Prashant and Urvashi suggest that in the current scenario singing at weddings is not very common practice that used to be very popular in their earlier generation, however, music is still an integral part of it. The difference was observed when the respondents pointed out that people either are depended upon readymade music available on the internet and in commodified form or they depend upon local bands and musicians (if affordable) to sing and perform for wedding functions, except those who practice music, not all are very versed with the lyrics of these traditional songs. They added: "the part of singing was mostly done along with the background music which was playing throughout the wedding".

A visible number of respondents shared a list of video links from YouTube where famous chutney artists are performing for a live audience. Few of these video recordings were from the 1990s decade, whereas some are from a recently organized event that I was able to watch,

---

<sup>69</sup> Sehra songs are usually impromptu and singers make fun of the groom and his family by adding slang and insults to the song lyrics. This practice is very common in Northern region of Indian Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

<sup>70</sup> The video clip showed bride and groom taking vows in a White dress and Navy Blue Suite. The video clip also showed Bride and Groom slow dancing over famous bollywood remixes of songs such as *Tere Sang Yara*, *Be Intehaa* and *Mera dil bhai kitna pagan hai*.

observe, and mostly enjoyed as a live audience through live streaming on the social media platform Instagram during Covid-19.

The Caribbean population shares an unshakeable bond with public celebrations and carnivals and Trinidad and Tobago for far has hosted various carnivals in the Caribbean. A good number of respondents to the study have expressed that just like religious and other traditional music and dance practices, carnival culture also represents the inclusive vibrant nature of the Caribbean community. During the interviews with the respondents, it was observed that along with Calypso, reggae, dancehall, chutney, and Chutney Soca have acquired a remarkable place in the Carnival culture of the Caribbean. However, this place was only occupied by the Indo-Caribbean art forms after establishing themselves individually on public platforms. Kumar Mahabir (2015) has talked about the emergence of chutney as a “national art form” and how chutney competitions are now being promoted even by the political parties. Apart from carnival culture, Indo-Caribbean genres such as Chutney, Chutney Soca, and Baithak have a public reputation as the artists keep performing for a live audience. As discussed in the previous chapter that it was during the late 1970s when Chutney was introduced to public performances and concerts.

Sita (age 31, female) is a Ph.D. researcher from Trinidad. Sita says: “earlier music performances use to air on television only, but artists like Drupatee revolutionized it and with her unconventional performances on stage, and her unconventional songs made a mark in the history of Indo-Caribbean music industry”.

Sita also mentioned that before Drupatee it was Kanchan and Babla who performed live for crowds. Sita added:

“Before Drupatee it was only Kanchan who would perform for a live audience, and sometimes they would collaborate with famous artists like Ramdew and Sundar Popo, but they would not sing something new they would sing songs by famous artists, Drupatee on the other hand always had an original song while she performed live”.

Sita also shared one of Drupatee’s video clips from 1995 where she performed for a live audience during an event called ‘Calypso Spektakula 95’<sup>71</sup>. The same clip was shared by

---

<sup>71</sup> CITV CARIBBEAN INSIGHT TELEVISION. DRUPATEE RAMGOONAI: The Goddess of Chutney Soca Music. 2021. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dzb2H7IWshE>.

Narendir (age 61, male) during an interview while he discussed changing trends in music. Narendir also mentioned that after the abolition of indentured, migrants who stayed back could not maintain any active communication with India, and hence their tradition started to adapt elements from neighboring cultures or preexisting cultures of the Caribbean. Chutney Soca is an outcome of Chutney mixed with Soca (African influenced music). Narendir and Sita both confirmed that artists like Drupatee and Rohit Jagessar are responsible for bringing Indo-Caribbean music out of the shadows and making it visible to the eyes of the global audience.

Anusha (age 38, female) is from Trinidad, and by profession, she is a performer, she informed the researcher that she has been performing for the live audience for over 13 years now. Anusha says: “I get invited to local weddings and ceremonies to sing and perform”. Anusha explained further that: “since the majority of people in Trinidad do not speak Hindi but they do want to carry on the traditions so they either use electronic media to create music or they call bands and performers to perform for them”.

According to Anusha, singing and dancing became a profession only after artists like Sundar Popo, Ramdew and Kanchan started to perform traditional songs on stage or records. However, after Drupatee entered the industry, she introduced a different kind of music which changed the face of Indo-Caribbean music. Despite the vast diversity of ethnic and racial groups in the Caribbean, Indo-Caribbeans have maintained ties to their roots. Even though some ties have disintegrated over time, while others have assimilated and merged, together they retain their distinctive identities.

Ram Dev (age 45, male) says: “the inclusion of Chutney artists in the Carnival, as well as public performances by Chutney artists, illustrate the inclusion of Indians into one vast nation, enabling Indians to maintain their cultural identity”. The Indo-Caribbean music industry has changed dramatically since artists began to perform live, although it hasn't become a big hit in other parts of the world, amongst the Caribbean population, it is a big hit. Chutney artists are reinventing Indo-Caribbean identity with events like the Chutney Soca Monarch that takes place every year.

Kumar Mahabir (2015) has talked about how events and competitions like Chutney Soca Monarch are responsible for the growing fame of Chutney and Chutney Soca art form. He also

mentioned that a great number of people attend it and also that it has produced artists like Raymond Ramnaraine<sup>72</sup>. Mahabir also addressed that the growing popularity of Indo-Caribbean music is reaching beyond Caribbean water.

Aakash (age28, male) says: “even though a lot of Hindus from Trinidad do not appreciate the approach and lyrics of Chutney Soca songs, in recent years Indo-Caribbeans have contributed in public performances and carnivals to redefine itself”. Aakash also informed the researcher about the hype behind the Chutney Soca Monarch competition, according to Aakash this competition not only provides a wide viewership of Chutney Soca competitions to the whole of the Caribbean but also provides an international platform for artists to grow and gather fame with Cash Money prize of \$300,000<sup>73</sup> that helps these artists to establish their music career and promote their talent alongside their cultural heritage.

It was observed that just like the television show *Mastana Bahar*, the Chutney Soca Monarch competition (which also gets televised) has also evolved into an institution that in distinctive ways promotes diasporic identity and diasporic music together on one stage. Chutney Soca’s popularity was peaking during the early 90s. That’s exactly when the Chutney Soca Monarch was established in1996. Chutney Soca Monarch competition witnessed artists like never before and received a huge appreciation from all across the Caribbean, U.S.A, and U.K resulting in the sprouting of festivals like Chutney Brass, Chutney Soca, Chutney Calypso, Chutney Glow, and Chutney Mardi Gras (Kumar, 2018).

One of the respondents Sevita (age 46, female) informed the researcher that these public events are intended to inspire the creation of unique Indo-Caribbean culture rather than a mere imitation of India. These festivals are more than an attempt to encourage ‘local songs and singers’ that combine Hindi and English and create powerful renditions that promote Indo-Caribbean culture and identity along with other pressing issues such as politics, awareness, and humanitarian missions on the world stage.

---

<sup>72</sup> Raymond Ramnaraine won Chutney Soca Monarch in 2013 and since then he has become a famous name among the population of Indo-Caribbeans particularly Trinidadians.

<sup>73</sup> The cash money prize is subjected to change every year.

The music of Indo-Caribbeans for the longest was created and used to support the Indo-Caribbean population and culture, however, after it became a part of huge carnival culture it attracted artists all across the globe to support music culture and encourage artists. Moreover, it brought all Indian diaspora together under one roof where it wasn't nativity or history but music became an anchor and brought everyone to connect with each other. One of the famous Indo-diasporic musician Steven Kapur stage name Apachey Indian has been collaborating with a good number of Chutney and Chutney Soca artists particularly Terry G a.k.a Terry Gajraj (famous Chutney soca artist from the Caribbeans). During the 'Chutney Glow7' event that was organized by 'Save Abee Foundation'<sup>74</sup> in 2017 where Apachey Indian performed and opened up in an interview about the noble cause of the foundation and the aim of shows and events such as Chutney glow, he said:

“Collaborations are great... it means that you can spread our music further to each other's fan bases...because there is no barrier with the music...music breaks down all these barriers and music doesn't even have any language as such you can bring all the styles together and that what I do. It's a blessing it's great and I encourage people to collaborate because it introduces your sound to other people my sound to there”<sup>75</sup>.

Chutney Glow just like Chutney Soca Monarch is an annual event organized under the 'Save Abee foundation' that takes place in different regions of America like New York, Orlando, and Canada. It started in 2011 and has remained constantly a sold-out show for over 10 years now. The philanthropic aim of this event is to raise funds for the needy and underprivileged along with promoting a spectacular view of the most diverse culture of the Indo-Caribbeans which is taking over the hearts of people in America, Europe, and Asia. Chutney enthusiasts and patrons of the music world have come forward year after year to support the dual cause and achieve success. In the year 2020, the 'Save Abee' foundation organized 'Chutney Glow Cruise 2020' celebrating its 10th successful anniversary calling it 'Chutney Glow on the Sea'<sup>76</sup>. The event attracted renowned Chutney and Chutney Soca artists such as Terry Gajraj, Raymond Ramnaraine, and

---

<sup>74</sup> Save Abee foundation is a Guyana based foundation and is an initiative that supports and empower poor and under privileged by providing free education, medical outreach, community outreach and events. Save Abee helps the students from Guyana with educational grants and fellowships that they raise by organizing awareness shows like Chutney Glow.

<sup>75</sup> LetsTalkWithLakshmee. *Apache Indian Chutney Glow*. 2017. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3IdBJUA3M4>.

<sup>76</sup> Chutney Glow: Wear White – A Yearly Event In New York, for the Save Abee Foundation. <https://chutneyglow.com/>. Accessed 16 July 2022.

many more budding and local artists from the Indo-Caribbean community spread across Europe and America.

Similarly, artists like Ramgoonai have recently performed in an event called ‘Riddim Nation’ during the carnival season. The event took place in March 2022, although the attraction was observed all over the social media platform particularly Instagram and Facebook where the Indo-community people interact with each other the most virtually. The live streaming of the show was visible on a few selected social media platforms where it was a treat to witness Drupatee Ramgoonai’s phenomenal performance<sup>77</sup>. The vent was a success and entertained a good number of live audiences both physically and virtually.

The origin of carnival in the Caribbean comes from a complicated history of colonialism, resistance, freedom, and celebration. Similarly, the history of Indo-Caribbeans and their music is rooted in resistance, education, freedom, and celebration. Together these elements elaborate the inclusivity of Caribbean society which comprises two major races that were enslaved by the colonial master, and the music of the natives is symbolic of to end of emancipation which they represent through colourful dresses, music, and dance. The Indo-Caribbeans as discussed hold the second majority of the population in most of the Caribbean countries, particularly in Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Surinam. Their music making has evolved as they have gone through assimilation, acculturation, and hybridity throughout many migrational and generational cycles. The face of two major music forms of the Indo-Caribbeans i.e., Chutney and Chutney Soca have gone through change under the influence of various factors, some were external and some were internal. However, these music genres kept growing as per the demand of music consumers and music makers. For Indo-Caribbean diaspora that is situated in other parts of the world, particularly in Europe and the USA, their music act as a means to represent Indo-Caribbean values. Despite the modern engineering of music (Chutney Soca and carnival music style), the music is still considered somewhat desi, which gives the younger generation a sense of belonging and inclusivity and growth.

---

<sup>77</sup> Only a selected portion of the concert was being aired live for the dedicated followers. These live streamings were long and were done multiple times during one performance.

### *Gender, sexuality, and music*

F. Henry and D. Plaza (2019) in their book while talking about women in carnival discussed that for the longest Indo-Caribbean music glorified food of their community to glorify their culture for example *pholourie and chutney*. Then the time came when artists started to glorify women with music, in the previous chapter I have discussed at length the relationship between gender and music, in particular how the image of women has been used in several Chutney songs while discussing the changing trends of Indo-Caribbean music. Indo-Caribbean music has always revolved around women be it the temple music where women use to sing and dance or wedding songs where women would sometimes sing religious and traditional songs, and sometimes they would sing songs to educate the new bride about what happens after the wedding (with a sexual connotation, vulgar and adult remarks). All in all, women played a central role in the journey of Indo-Caribbean music which has been addressed as Girmitiya music. The respondents to this study have confirmed several times that in the Indo-Caribbean music industry name of Drupatee Ramgoonai appears as both pioneer of Chutney Soca and as a revolutionary, Drupatee Ramgoonai used her unconventional never heard before lyrics sung in pure creole marked the beginning of female presence in the industry and on stage. Moreover, it increased the visibility of the Indo-Caribbean woman in the public sphere, which was earlier not celebrated.

Tejaswini Niranjana (2006) while discussing women's role in Indo-Caribbean music quoted Mahabir Maharaj's criticism against Drupatee and her bold performance "for an Indian girl to throw her upbringing and culture to mix with vulgar music, sex, and alcohol in carnival tents tells me that something is radically wrong with her psyche. Drupatee Ramgoonai has chosen to worship the God of sex, wine, and easy money" (112). While discussing the relationship of music with gender, it was observed that a good number of respondents pointed out that Hindu patriarchs tried to condemn and renounced the presence of women on stage as they called women's dances "obscene", "vulgar", "promiscuous", "loud" and "disruptive". Whereas they also informed the researcher that women of Indo-Caribbean women used the music of their ancestors to assert control over themselves, their bodies, and sexuality.

Sanjana (age 35, female), is of Indo-Trinidadian origin and she runs a bakery in Queens. Sanjana informed the researcher that her culinary skills are famous in her community and she mostly

takes care of all the catering for most of the celebrations. During the interview Sanjana informed the researcher that women have always used music traditions as an assertion of their individuality, they would voice out about sexuality and femininity through the songs that they would sing during wedding rituals, she said: “it is because they were not allowed to mix up with men and men were also not allowed to certain rituals such as matkor, women would exchange sexual knowledge to each other during those traditions and dances”. Helen Myers (1998: 62) has also talked about how music offered Indian women in diaspora an expressive medium through which they found pleasure and freedom. A similar idea is echoed in the work of F. Henry and D. Plaza (2019), where they talked about how Tassa rhythms empowered women, by calling Tassa “a transgressive platform through which empowering feminine expression takes place. The rhythms drive women to dance and exercise control being out of control”.

Divya (age 23, female) informed me that the reason why many older Indo-Caribbeans don’t appreciate Chutney and Chutney Soca songs is that they are symbolic of obscenity and vulgarity. However, she also spoke at length about how these songs serve to represent the amalgamation of modern and traditional. Divya also shared that after the success of the Soca element in chutney songs there were various Soca artists of non-Indo-Caribbean origin who composed songs about Indian women and represented a very ‘sexy picture’ of them in their songs. Divya shared one of Olatunji Yearwood’s recent releases-Wining Good (Bharati Laraki)<sup>78</sup>, the video and lyrics of this song exhibit an Indo-Caribbean girl in a very bold Avatar, the singer talks about the sexual desires of the girl whom he addresses as *Indian gayl* or *Bharati Larki*. The Indo-Caribbean female character in the songs appeared wearing a saree, shorts and a crop top, and in a carnival dress, she appears to celebrate her body and shows her sexual desires through her bold dance moves.

During the initial investigation, while I was analyzing the reasons and purpose of migrations among Indo-Caribbean diasporas, apart from education, career, and opportunities, it was observed that there are a great number of young Indo-Caribbeans who decided to move to New York and London because they feel threatened to reveal their sexual identity. The diversity of data and information compelled me to look deeper into the issue. With the help of YouTube, I

---

<sup>78</sup> FOX FUSE. Olatunji - ‘Wining Good (Bharati Laraki)’ (Official HD Video). 2014. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kk6a8ZcaPs0>.

came across documentaries/videos<sup>79</sup> where Indian diasporas have asserted that their sexual choices are the reason for their migration and how under the hood of music and dance, they connect with their true selves. This inspired the idea of investigating the links between sexuality and music practices among the Indo-Caribbean, and how music has helped them to uncover and come out as queer. The main aim here is not to propagate a new theory but to understand how the fluidity of music has provided shelter to not only religious and native identity but also supports the sexual identity of the diasporas.

Surya (age 38, male) is a social media influencer and drag artist from New York, Surya informed the researcher that he uses his persona to entertain people, and more than that it allows him to reflect his true side of identity. Surya says: “I come from a family where being a queer is very unnatural, but I knew what I am so I decided to move to the USA The American societies are very inclusive particularly New York,” a similar response was given by Fazal and Robin during their respective interviews where they often referred to it as “complexities of being queer”<sup>80</sup>. Surya shared his images and videos from his performances where he dresses up in a feminine avatar and dances to the tune of various Bollywood songs. Surya explained to the researcher: “I grew up in a family where women would sing and dance and I use to join them as a kid, when I grew up suddenly my dancing as a woman character became unacceptable and I was asked not to continue it... I came to New York 12 years ago and started making my living, I started taking part in cultural events and performed too”. According to Surya dancing and music liberates him, and allow him to assert his identity as a queer in the diaspora through music and dance. Jodie Taylor (2012) calls the term ‘Queer’ as slippery, and that it “is and has always been at odds with normal and supposedly ‘natural behaviour” (13). To understand the relationship between identity and music from queer lens one needs to understand as Tia DeNora (2000:159) suggests, “music

---

<sup>79</sup> Videos such as :’(280) Queer/Coolie: The Politics of LGBTQ+ Indo-Caribbean Identities and Belonging in Toronto" - YouTube'. n.d. Accessed 30 September 2022. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QdvmHKKHl4&ab\\_channel=TalishaRamsaroop](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QdvmHKKHl4&ab_channel=TalishaRamsaroop).

CUNY TV, dir. 2020. Neither Here Nor There-Indo Caribbean Diaspora | Shades of U.S. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iugU6xeVE-s>.

’(280) Desi Queer Diaspora Video for GAPA Grant - YouTube'. n.d. Accessed 30 November 2022. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yt33wk8dRxI&ab\\_channel=DesiQueerDiaspora](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yt33wk8dRxI&ab_channel=DesiQueerDiaspora).

BBC, dir. 2022. The LGBTQ+ Community in Barbados | The Caribbean with Andi and Miquita - BBC. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2vUutl2eE4>.

<sup>80</sup> Based on the narratives given of Fazal and Robin.

may serve as a resource for utopian imaginations. For alternative worlds and institutions, and it may be used strategically to presage new worlds” (cited in Jodie Taylor, 2012). Further, Taylor explains that music consists of a variety of interconnected activities and text resources which produce and transmit narratives and decisions. She quotes Nicholas Cook (1998: 06) and adds:

“In today’s world, deciding what music to listen to is a significant part of deciding and announcing to people not just who you ‘want to be’ ... but who you are. ‘Music’ is a very small word to encompass something that takes as many forms as there are cultural or subcultural identities. And like all small words, it brings a danger with it. When we speak of ‘music’, we are easily lead to believe that there is something that corresponds to that word ... But when we speak of music we are really talking about a multiplicity of activities and experiences” (Taylor, 2012: 41)

While understanding how music intersects with queer identity and helps people to express their true selves, I came across Derrick Lacasse’s (2019) work '*Exploring Intersections of Queer Artists through Music: A community Engagement project*'. In his work he talks about how he has been using music to express his queer identity, he said:

“The intersection of being a queer person, male, and a music therapist were all at the forefront of me doing this project. As I worked through my internal struggle with these intersections, I realized how close my relationship to music was with my identity as a queer person. I found that throughout meaningful periods of my growth and development, I used music to express my queer identity” (03).

The representation and inclusion of queerness in popular music culture has become a global interest in past few years, and in recent times young artists are not afraid to come out as queer on global stage and in front of their audience. Since music and performative arts are considered to be liberating it is not so amusing to know that people have been using performative arts and music to reveal their sexuality.

The study at this point found that on one hand transmigration helps and ensures a sense of security by offering inclusivity to citizens or members of the society, along with the liberty of owning an identity to the dislocated population. Moreover, it observed that in transnational states citizens voice their identities using traditions and performing arts as tools to promote coexistence and equality. In the case of the Indo-Caribbean diaspora, it expanded the relationship between

Indo-Caribbean-New Yorkers and cultural practices to comprehend the sense of freedom and euphoria that an individual or community feels to unite ethnicity, culture, and identity.

The study chooses to focus on the sexual identities of the young Indian diaspora, and how transnationalism and traditional practices have provided them with liberation and asylum for their sexual choices and identities. I debate that music and dance practices have time and again encouraged the LGBTQ+ community to 'come out' and have the freedom to self-define gender identities. While trying to understand how 'transnational state' and age-old traditions are conducive to inclusivity and a more cohesive environment for its citizens irrespective of their native identity, I found that a handful of the respondents who are also members of Indo-Caribbean community in New York have combined traditional dance practices inspired by *Chutney* dance moves and *Launda Ke Naach* with American 'Drag culture'.

So far, the study discussed how girmitiya music cured the generational pain of Indo-Caribbean diaspora and allowed these diasporas to hold on to their cultural ties, it opens up a completely new dimension to the study where it finds that Indian diasporas have been breaking stereotypes with the help of music and dance practices which once helped their ancestors to assert their religious and native identity.

The development of the Indian art form *Launda Naach* over time, and its '*bidesiya*' twin, *Launda Ke Naach*, renders the idea that performative art evolves depending upon external factors such as space and time. Music and performing arts adept to social issues and influences more quickly compared to any other social element. But it is observed that in any scenario, this particular dance form has been most often performed to assert and address social issues, particularly the issue of identity; sometimes to display hyper-masculine identity on stage, and sometimes as a satire to address class consciousness. Jainendra Kumar Dost (2017) has written extensively about this particular art form.

He quotes Nirala (2014):

“we must not associate the name Launda with folk performers and dancers as the name is given by feudal mindset. The theme in Naach often attacks the upper castes-class for the atrocities that they perpetuated on the lower sections of society”.

Dost further talks about the evolution in the art form that has been taking place in various aspects, such as its themes and including elements of music, songs with storytelling, and presenting social issues on the stage. Similarly, the Indian diasporas used it to assert their native identity or religious affiliation in a non-native setting. During various interactions with the respondents to this study, it was observed that *Launda Naach* which the Indo-Caribbean community mostly addresses as '*Launda Ke Naach*' or as '*Nautanki*,' has evolved over the time just as Chutney and Chutney Soca did. *Launda Ke Naach* has become a medium of asserting identity, particularly gender identity.

The development of the Indian art forms over a period of time renders the idea that performative art evolves depending upon external factors such as space and time. Music and performing arts adapt to social issues and influences more quickly compared to any other social element. But it is observed that in any scenario, this particular dance form has been most often performed to assert and address social issues, particularly the issue of identity; sometimes to display hyper-masculine identity on stage, and sometimes as a satire to address class consciousness.

In general, I observed similarities among cultural practices across nations, and in a larger picture, it supports identity-building. To support this argument, I would like to discuss the contemporary counterpart of *Launda Naach* which has been gaining popularity in west and also among the younger Indian diasporas. The Drag culture is something that seems and appears similar to *Launda Naach*, where the performers adapt a persona, mostly of a female, in a very dramatic and sensual way. While observing the participants of the study, names of performers like 'Laila Gulabi' and 'Sundari-The Indian Goddess' have come forward. Vidya (age 33, female) in her response said: "they are famous drag artists who have amalgamated their identities as 'Desi Drag,' and have been performing for their fans and audiences across boundaries". Sundari-The Indian Goddess born as Mohamed Afzal Amin, has Indo-Caribbean roots. Both Laila Gulabi and Mohamed Afzal Amin are famous international drag artists and embrace their drag identities, particularly their sexual identity. While talking to CUNY TV, Sundari-The Indian Goddess a.k.a. Mohamed Afzal Amin said-

"There is so much intersectionality today within our communities. It's really important to make sure someone feel they are not alone. When you have an identity that with multiple layers of, on top of my many identities, being a Drag Queen, being openly gay, and you can connect to someone on such a strong deep level" (CUNY TV 2020, April 17).

Mohamed Afzal Amin, a.k.a Sundari's unique dancing style is truly inspired by Indo-Caribbean music and dance culture, which he uses to bridge communities—one that his ancestors belonged to, and the other he associates himself with. It is important for an artist when people, irrespective of native links, acknowledge music and art and feel connected with it immediately on a personal level. It gives a message of inclusivity, harmony, and liberty.

### **Conclusion**

According to Peter Manuel (2006: 151-52), the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean remained isolated for the longest period during indentureship and avoided contact with creolized "Afro-Saxon" culture. Manuel added "growing interaction with Creoles has led to a higher degree of mutual respect, but also ethnic tension. Meanwhile, Indo-Caribbean culture, including music, has exhibited trends both towards hybrid realization and purist revivalism, accompanied by an increasing institutionalization of multiculturalism as a paradigm of national culture". Solomon (2015) while referring to Bhangra has talked about how music acts as a "glue" among the diasporic communities keeping the members together.

In this study, respondents indicated that music triggers diasporic consciousness among them. Furthermore, it enhances a pleasant mental state. According to Sugarman (2004), a sense of belonging to a transnational group can be created through music, which connects dispersed individuals. It is evident that the Indo-Caribbeans have successfully catered their cultural links through music and dance practices, which creates awareness among community members, a common sense of belonging, and a sense of origin in a non-native setting. The study focuses on the successors of these Indian diasporas, particularly the 3rd, 4th, and 5th generations, and their connection with music. Additionally, it highlights how the assimilated population in comparison with their ancestors still maintained a sense of connection to their cultural heritage. Their contact with the ancestral land is minimal and limited. This is because they have been living in a culturally hybrid community all their lives. The only way they connect with India is through media representation, and oral literature passed down from earlier generations. The study observes that with generational and geographical shifts, diaspora cultural elements such as music

and dance practices also change. Furthermore, it noted that multiple migrations can bring about a change in the understanding of 'Motherland,' but do not eliminate the cultural bonds with the country of origin.

The study found that for the younger generation of the Indian diaspora, music, and dance practices are one of the main ingredients that bind the Indian diasporic community together. Moreover, it encourages cohesiveness between the Indian diaspora and other members of the hostland community. I observed that a lot of external factors affected these music and dance practices. These practices are both renounced and embraced from time to time by different generations and sections of the Indian diaspora. Post-1940, with the introduction of Bollywood cinema, I noticed a variety of distinct themes in the musical compositions of the Indo-Caribbeans. It was interesting to observe that even after a major generational change and creolization infiltrating the daily communication of the majority of the population, the Indo-Caribbeans have maintained an imaginary link with India by merely composing various religious songs and performing traditions. I also noticed that the second generation of Indo-Caribbean musicians developed more nostalgia-oriented songs in comparison to the third, fourth and fifth generation musicians. However, their music remains a major identity and a significant cultural marker that has a large impact on the community practicing it. In addition, it was observed that music has helped people break through stereotypes of their native land. This has helped them to move together as a great Indian diaspora community doing away with notions of caste, religion, and gender.

The Indo-Caribbean diaspora settled in New York, London, and the Netherlands had a different story relating to their migration, which was mostly voluntary. These migrants moved to different locations for better careers and education in most cases, and with them, they carried their culture, ideologies, and lifestyle. They constantly stayed in touch with their preserved culture and kept making efforts to maintain and preserve the culture their ancestors left for them. The presence of Indian stores, supermarkets, music stores, Indian restaurants, and media served as a reminder of their origin. This made the connection even more seamless and accessible to each and every diasporic member. This also led to an increase in the number of religious and cultural centers within the locality of Indo-Caribbeans. However, cultural practices such as dance, music, and festivities remained at the centre and played a crucial role in the Indo-Caribbean diasporic

community. The dependency of the elder generation, i.e., mostly 3rd generation, to stay in touch with their roots was observed in their usage and utilization of old audio records, radio channels, and newspapers, whereas the 4th and 5th generation to a significant extent depend upon the internet, Television and cinema to generate a link with India or Caribbean. In terms of music consumption as well, it was observed that the older generation would still depend upon their classic collection of records, radio, and television. However, the younger generation would use online platforms like YouTube, Apple Music, Spotify, etc to educate themselves and their younger generation about their cultural history and music traditions.

As a means of bridging generational gaps and overcoming cultural challenges, the Indian diaspora and Indo-Caribbean diaspora look to music for inspiration. Their connection with their traditional music form and with Bollywood music allows them to build a platform for the Indian diasporic community. This allows them to connect during annual festivals, weddings, cultural festivals, and other social gatherings. Apart from growing a connection among the diasporic community these cultural practices and traditions have also become a major tourist attraction where thousands of people attend them each year. Consequently, local economies are boosted each year through hotel bookings, taxes, and entertainment services. Even the food and fashion industries saw a boost.

Also, the study found that Indo-Caribbean migrants played a significant role in developing the economies of metropolitan countries. As a result, Indo-Caribbean immigrants moving to the USA, UK, and other multicultural countries and cities must be well educated and professionally trained, which often benefits the economies of those countries.

This chapter examines the relationship between music, gender, and identity. Emphasizing extensively on Indian diasporic women and their involvement in music. First, it discussed how women preserved the cultural heritage and helped the music of temples and traditions to occupy a place in public and social gatherings. Second, it discussed how male musicians dominated the music-making arena among the Indo-Caribbeans although one of the pioneers of Girmitiya music was a female musician Dropati. The chapter also explores the changes that took place like Indo-Caribbean music during the 1980s with the arrival of Drupatee Ramgoonai, which faced

criticism at the hands of patriarchs, who called the music and performers inappropriate and vulgar. With the arrival of women performers and Soca music, the Indo-Caribbean music industry witnessed the evolution of various music trends that gave recognition to Indo-Caribbean music genres on international platforms and gained popularity among other races and countries, and procured a place in carnival festivals. The chapter also discusses the involvement of Indo-Caribbean music and artists in the carnival festivals which typically involve public celebration and parades. In Trinidad and Tobago carnival has become a part of people's lives, and music genres such as chutney and Chutney soca becoming a part of carnival festivals gave rise to the popularity of these music genres in other parts of the world where the Indo-Caribbean population resides such as Toronto, New York, London and so on. Furthermore, it has given rise to other forms of carnival festivals and annual events that promote Indo-Caribbean culture and music.

The discussion about music helping members of the Indo-Caribbean community has occupied a significant place in this chapter. It talks about how preservation and assertion of identity work among the Indian diaspora in various ways. It focuses on voluntary migration and becoming a part of the transnational community. This is because cultural practices and family traditions have proven to be profitable during the process of settling in. Traditions and cultures were observed as vehicles for celebration and harmony, thus encouraging migrants toward social mobility. In addition, it promoted peace and equality by removing social parasites like racism, casteism, and gender inequality.

Thus, the above data establishes and verifies that the Indo-Caribbean diaspora despite various kinds of conflicts live comfortably, and the modern model of community building seeks to increase inclusivity and cohesion. The distinctiveness of cultures and people in progressive societies is treated as rare and extraordinary, and stereotypes are being rejected. Awareness of various cultures and their consumption by people has heightened human cognitive power, establishing a sense of consciousness and emotions. Thus, it becomes even more imperative than ever to enjoy one's cultural heritage and narrative literature. I believe losing out on cultural ties and heritage can have more harmful effects than how we engage with cultural elements to keep the human side of us alive. At the same time, citizens must ensure that the same rituals are not being consumed orthodoxly and blindfolded, thus ensuring growth and advancement.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

The human race has gradually spread across the globe, some reaching beyond it. While human beings have always been in motion, they have carried all kinds of human artistic expression with them. Literature, films, architecture, and food studies that are related to cultural production have been significantly enriched by studies of human migration. Nevertheless, I found music particularly intriguing since it is widely regarded as one of the most widely spread and easily created forms of culture. Music and migration are inextricably connected, as even literary legends such as Homer noted in his *Odyssey* by representing the connection between voyagers and music. Both academic literature and sociological studies have established that changing geographical locations benefit migrants and host communities alike. The process of developing and filtering creative ideas, which are the basis of innovation and excellence, brings new inspiration, personal enrichment, dialogue, and creative cross-fertilization to communities.

Increasing Indian diasporas with every passing year have demonstrated the effects of globalization, which have resulted in more blended communities and multicultural societies. Furthermore, it is the continuous migration of creators and ideas that has contributed to the excellence of artistic expression in Indo-Caribbean music. As the most vibrant and fastest-growing diaspora, the Indo-Caribbean diaspora is considered to be an exemplar of a multicultural society, as it relies greatly on assimilation and emphasizes education.

The present study finds that multiculturalism and interculturalism contribute to the Indo-Caribbean diaspora's peaceful survival. A distinctive multicultural society is promoted by the governments of all Caribbean countries. As a result, society as a whole became more cohesive without any formal basis. Moreover, it was noted that Caribbean countries promote ethnic harmony and multiculturalism. This means that the governments of these highly diverse countries have no difficulties in establishing unified nations all across the Caribbean despite their ethnic diversity.

The study's findings indicate that English and Dutch are official languages in the selected Caribbean countries where this study was conducted, although the majority use their respective

English-based creole<sup>81</sup> for day-to-day communication. The investigation also revealed that Indo-Caribbean use of ancestral language had lost touch with day-to-day life. Nevertheless, its existence is quite prominent in media and music. As of today, Suriname remains the only country where Indian languages such as Bhojpuri and Awadhi are still widely used for communication and entertainment. Sarnami comes from the fusion of Bhojpuri and Awadhi, and it's still the third most popular language among the Indo-Surinamese.

The study also found that even after over 140 years of displacement from the country of origin, i.e., India, the community members have retained a sense of oneness, which can also be called Indianness. The study concludes that a variety of factors contribute to the sense of Indianness in the widely distributed Indian diaspora. It was interesting to note that the cultural approach had a deep antiquity background, but it was also current and relevant. Compared to other cultural elements, music and dance have a strong connection with the Indo-Caribbean diaspora in particular and the Indian diaspora in general. Additionally, the expansion of Indian music and its elements into diverse genres can be attributed to the expanding Indian diaspora around the world and the growing immigrant population.

Throughout the past century, the Indo-Caribbean diaspora has added to their respective countries' cultures and engaged with their community's choice of music and media. Apart from traditional music, Bollywood music has continued to entertain and inspire the Indo-Caribbean diaspora, while also inspiring them and a wide variety of individuals to produce authentic and hybrid diasporic music. The respondents from the 3rd generation referred to Bollywood music as a medium to inculcate Indianism among their younger generation. Further, they emphasized that Indian traditions and folk music played many roles in their community's development post-1917 (the abolition of indentureship), aiding Indians in the Caribbean to remain connected to their heritage. There have also been narratives suggesting that the representation of India in Bollywood films and music also appeals to non-Indian diaspora members.

---

<sup>81</sup> In countries such as Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana and in Surinam, English and Dutch is the official language. However, the majority of the population would choose their English-based creole for everyday communication. In Trinidad it is Trinidadian creole, in Guyana it is Guyanese Creole, and in Surinam Sranan Tongo is their local English-based creole that is widely spoken.

In the study, it was determined that women have played an influential role in the diaspora, and their contributions to community building and culture have been cherished by every Indo-Caribbean respondent. Indian-Caribbean women are not only responsible for keeping age-old traditions and music cultures alive in non-native settings, but also for passing them down to their children by introducing them to oral literature and folk music. For the women in the diaspora, the story is not one of a past that has been lost into a new future but rather one of a past that has formed the distinct nature of the rising culture. The study also found that apart from being a preserver of cultures, their involvement in the entertainment world is remarkable too. They participated as performers and became torch bearers for the Indo-Caribbean music industry inspiring more artists to come forward and become a part of their music industry. Even though there are fewer names of female performers in the Indo-Caribbean music industry who made it big, their contribution is still significant. The respondents of this study and existing literature on Indo-Caribbean music confirmed that even though it was women who conceived, carried and gave birth to a unique music genre that became one of the identity markers for the Indo-Caribbean community, they still faced criticism and objectification at the hands of Indian men of their own community in the name of religion and tradition. However, few women took the initiative to express themselves and renounced all the criticism and patriarchy by creating bold songs and performing on public stages.

As the study progressed, it reflected upon one common contemporary characteristic of the Indo-Caribbean diaspora, which was their transnational presence and connection with their roots through expression, and through conjuring their ties with cultural practices and elements such as music, festivals and cuisine. Due to recent technological advances, the Indian diaspora, in general, has seen phenomenal growth among the diasporic communities, providing a way to develop the connection between the Indo-Caribbean community and India, bringing them closer to India and also facilitating the dispersed members of the community in the neighboring countries. When networks blossom between people from several countries at the same time, it is considered transnational

The study discusses cultural understanding of Indian diaspora in the Caribbean and the new Indo-Caribbean diaspora in countries like U.S.A, U.K and Netherlands. It focuses on them as they continue to engage with both their own and the culture of the majority. It allowed me to

understand the process of assimilation that took place during the early indentureship and in the contemporary scenario.

Usage of social network and modern media made great contribution in bridging the proximity between their country of origin and the hostland through advanced technique of communication.

I observed culture to be a commonality between the modern diasporas and old Indian diasporas, although the reason for one was contractual labour and globalisation is for the other. Assertion of identity in non-native settings is another common factor I can claim that the Indo-Caribbean diaspora are seen seeking the most. The modern diasporas are seen utilizing cultural means such as music to assert identity that is ethnic in majority but at times focuses on their gender too. These diasporas are observed seeking music and dance lessons which is undertaken to establish their real identity in front of other society members.

The study shows that these diasporas are not in the loop to find a passage back to India but to assert their identity through their cultural practices which is part Indian and part Caribbean. They have envisioned themselves in a brighter future in their respective country of residence, however, they do not want to break any ties or be completely uprooted from their ancestral culture and traditions.

These respondents are seen investing both time and money in learning process that gives them a hold over the cultural ties with the country of their ancestors and origin. In addition to following customs, media consumption has enabled them maintain regular contact with their family and ancestral homeland.

The younger generation of Indo-Caribbean diaspora was observed to more involved with public representation of their cultural identity whereas the elders mostly keep it within their families through oral tales and narratives. There is a whole lot of difference between the music and dance traditions of younger generation and older generation, however the idea of “belonging” remains the same among both. The sense of detachment and displacement was observed the same among the younger generation and the older generation, therefore, their attachment towards their cultural practices remained alive in different forms and degrees among both young and older

diaspora. Thus, the younger Indo-Caribbean diaspora is constantly involved in expanding and redefining India and their sense of Indianism in their Indo-Caribbean identity.

The future studies in this area of research should consider analyzing the cultural connection of different class and religions among Indo-Caribbean diaspora. Moreover, an attention should be paid towards the impact of transnational identity on music practices of Indo-Caribbean diaspora and how modern tool, techniques, themes and various genres help them maintaining their unique identity. Moreover, meaning of sexuality among the Indian diaspora should also be considered for future research as well as the development of policies that helps queer Indian diaspora to assert their gender identity.

## References

- Anteby-Yemini, L., & Berthomière, W. (2005). Diaspora: A look back on a concept. *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem*, (16), 262-270.
- Appadurai, A. (1990). Technology and the reproduction of values in rural western India. *Technology and the reproduction of values in rural western India*, 185-216.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization* (Vol. 1). U of Minnesota Press.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.). (1995). *The post-colonial studies reader*. Psychology Press.
- Bahadur, G. (2016). *Coolie woman: the odyssey of indenture*. Oxford University Press.
- Balaji, M., & Sigler, T. (2018). Glocal riddim: cultural production and territorial identity in Caribbean music videos. *Visual Communication*, 17(1), 91-111.
- Barrett, M. (2013). *Interculturalism and multiculturalism: similarities and differences*. Council of Europe.
- Barrero, R. Z. (2013). The three strands of intercultural policies: A comprehensive view. 17, 37.
- Bauböck, R., & Faist, T. (2010). *Diaspora and transnationalism: Concepts, theories and methods* (p. 360). Amsterdam University Press.
- Bell, K. (2014) Cultural hybridization definition | Open Education Sociology Dictionary. <https://sociologydictionary.org/cultural-hybridization.2014>
- Bendle, M. F. (2002). The crisis of 'identity' in high modernity. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 53(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071310120109302>

- Bhat, C., & Bhaskar, T. L. S. (2007). 4 Contextualizing Diasporic Identity. *Global Indian Diasporas*, 89.
- Bhatkhande, V. N. (1974). *A short historical survey of the music of upper India*. Baroda, Gujarat: Indian Musicological Society.
- Bor, J. (Ed.).(2010). *Hindustani music: Thirteenth to twentieth centuries*. Manohar Publishers & Distributors, Codarts.
- Bourn, D (2008) 'Young people, identity and living in a global society', *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*, Vol. 7, Autumn, pp. 48-61.
- Brettell, C. B., & Hollifield, J. F. (Eds.). (2022). *Migration theory: Talking across disciplines*. Routledge.
- Bridge, S. K. (2020). Gendering music in popular culture. *The International Encyclopedia of Gender, Media, and Communication*, 1-10.
- Brown, J. M. (2006). *Global South Asians: introducing the modern diaspora* (Vol. 1). Cambridge University Press.
- Brubaker, R. (1996). *Nationalism reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the new Europe*. Cambridge University Press.
- Brubaker, R. (2005). The 'diaspora' diaspora. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 28(1), 1-19.
- Bruneau, M. (2010). Diasporas, transnational spaces and communities. *Diaspora and transnationalism: Concepts, theories and methods*, 3(1), 35-50.
- Buckingham, David. (2008). "Introducing Identity." *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*. Edited by David Buckingham. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on

Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1–24. doi: 10.1162/dmal.9780262524834.001

- Buonfino, A., Byrne, L., Collett, E., Cruddas, J., Cuperus, R., Dijsselbloem, J. & Ibáñez, C. R. (2007). Rethinking immigration and integration: A new centre-left agenda. *Policy Network*, 36.
- Cattle, T. (2012). Interculturalism - a rejoinder to Modood and Meer Political Insight Dec.
- Carter, M. (1996). *Voices from Indenture: experiences of Indian migrants in the British Empire*. Burns & Oates.
- Castles, S., Miller, M. J., & Ammendola, G. (2005). *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. New York: The Guilford Press, (2003), \$30.00, 338 pages.
- Chacko, Elizabeth, and Rajiv Menon. (2013). 'Longings and Belongings: Indian American Youth Identity, Folk Dance Competitions, and the Construction of "Tradition"'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36 (1): 97–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.634504>.
- Chen, G. M. (2012). The impact of new media on intercultural communication in global context.
- Christine, Amrita. (2021). 'From Chowtal to Chutney-Soca: A Brief Introduction to Indo-Caribbean Music'. Jore. 5 January 2021. <https://www.joremagazine.com/post/from-chowtal-to-chutney-soca-a-brief-introduction-to-indo-caribbean-music>.
- Citron, Marcia. J. (1993). *Gender and the Field of Musicology*.

- Clark, W. A. (2003). *Immigrants and the American dream: Remaking the middle class*. Guilford Press.
- Clifford, J. (1994). Diasporas. *Cultural Anthropology*, 9(3), 302–338. Esman, M. J. 1986. Diasporas and international relations. *Modern diasporas in international politics*, 333, 49.
- Cohen, R. (1995). Rethinking 'Babylon': Iconoclastic Conceptions of the Diasporic Experience. *New Community*, 15.
- Cohen R. (1997) *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: UCL Press.
- Cohen R. (2006). *Migration and its Enemies*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Cohen, Robin. (2007). "Creolization and cultural globalization: The soft sounds of fugitive power." *Globalizations* 4.3 : 369-384.
- Cohen, R. (2008). *Global Diaspora: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Connell, J., & Gibson, C. (2004). World music: deterritorializing place and identity. *Progress in Human Geography*, 28(3), 342-361.
- Cvetkovski, T. (2004, September). The political economy of the music industry: its rise and stall. In *Australasian Political Studies Association Conference (APSA) (Adelaide, 29 September 2004)*.
- Dasgupta S N. (2011). *The Theory of Rasa*. Ed. V S Seturaman. Indian Aesthetic: An Introduction. Macmillan Publishers India Ltd.; New Delhi.
- Richmond, T., & Dabydeen, D. (2010). *The First Crossing: Being The Diary of Theophilus Richmond, Ship's Surgeon aboard The Hesperus, 1837-8*. Caribbean Press for the Government of Guyana.

- Harvey, D., Harvey, D. W., & Harvey, F. D. (1989). The condition of postmodernity an enquiry into the origins of cultural change.
- Deva, B. C. (1981). The harmonium and Indian music. *Journal of the Indian musicological society*, 12(3), 45.
- Diethrich, Gregory. (2002) 'Review of East Indian Music in the West Indies: Tān-Singing, Chutney, and the Making of Indo-Caribbean Culture'. *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 137–40. JSTOR.
- Dighe, P., Karnick, H., & Raj, B. (2013, November). Swara Histogram Based Structural Analysis And Identification Of Indian Classical Ragas. In *ISMIR* (pp. 35-40).
- Dost, J. K. (2017). Naach, Launda Naach or Bidesiya: Politics of (re) naming. *Performance Research*, 22(5), 106-112.
- Dufoix, Stéphane. (2008). *Diasporas*. Univ of California Press.
- Eyerman, R., & Jamison, A. (1998). Music and social movements: Mobilizing traditions in the twentieth century. Cambridge University Press.
- Farley, M. F. (1968). The Chinese Coolie Trade 1845-1875. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 3(3), 257.
- Fishman, J. A. (1965). Bilingualism, intelligence and language learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 49(4), 227-237.
- Gandhi, Lakshmi. (2013). 'A History Of Indentured Labor Gives "Coolie" Its Sting'. *NPR*, 25 November sec. Code Switch: Word Watch. <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/11/25/247166284/a-history-of-indentured-labor-gives-coolie-its-sting>.

- Galenson, D. W. (1984). The rise and fall of indentured servitude in the Americas: An economic analysis. *The Journal of Economic History*, 44(1), 1-26.
- Gauntlett, David. (2007). *Creative explorations: New approaches to identities and audiences*. Routledge.
- Gibert, Marie-Pierre. (2011). "Transnational ties and local involvement: North African musicians in and beyond London."
- Giddens, A. (1991). *1991 Modernity and self-identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gilroy, P. (1993). *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Harvard University Press.
- Gilroy, P. (1994). Diaspora. *Paragraph* 17(1), 207–212.
- Galenson, D. W. (1984). The rise and fall of indentured servitude in the Americas: An economic analysis. *The Journal of Economic History*, 44(1), 1-26.
- Gsir, Sonia, Elsa Mescoli, Italy) European University Institute (Florence, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, and Migration Policy Centre. 2015. *Maintaining National Culture Abroad: Countries of Origin, Culture and Diaspora*. San Domenico di Fiesole: EUI. <http://dx.publications.europa.eu/10.2870/12858>.
- Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis: Emergence vs forcing*. Sociology press.
- Glaser, Barney G.(1999). "The future of grounded theory." *Qualitative health research* 9, no. 6: 836-845.
- Gordon, Milton. (1964). *Assimilation in American Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Gordon, M. M. (1981). Models of pluralism: The new American dilemma. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 454(1), 178-188.
- Gordon, Marshall. (1998). "Dominant Culture." A Dictionary of Sociology. Encyclopedia.com. 10 May. 2016 <<http://www.encyclopedia.com>>.
- Gupta, Amit Kumar. (2008). 'Commentary on India's Soft Power and Diaspora'. *International Journal on World Peace* 25 (3): 61–68.
- Guran, Pinar. (2014). "Music and Cultural Memory: A Case Study with the Diaspora from Turkey in Berlin."
- *Guyana Journals*: [http://www.guyanajournal.com/women\\_guyana.html](http://www.guyanajournal.com/women_guyana.html).
- Guzmán, M. (1997). Pa'la escuelita con mucho cuida'oy por la orillita': A journey through the contested terrains of the nation and sexual orientation. *Puerto Rican jam: Rethinking colonialism and nationalism*, 209-228.
- Hall, S. (1990). "Cultural identity and diaspora." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Ed. J. Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart,
- Hall, S. (1993). Culture, community, nation. *Cultural studies*, 7(3), 349-363.
- Hall, S. (1997). "The work of representation." In *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*, edited by S. Hall. Pages. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hall, S. (2011). Question of Cultural identity. 1 ed. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Henry, F., & Plaza, D. (Eds.). (2019). *Carnival is Woman: Feminism and Performance in Caribbean Mas*. Univ. Press of Mississippi.

- Herbert, J. (2016). *Negotiating boundaries in the city: Migration, ethnicity, and gender in Britain*. Routledge.
- Hirlekar Hema (2010) *Nuances of Hindustani Classical Music*, Unicorn Books, Mumbai
- Hoeffte, Rosemarijn. (1998). *NWIG: New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 72, no. 3/4 : 316–19. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41849938>.
- Hofstede, G. H., & Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations*. sage.
- Huff, R. (2014, August 15). *transnationalism*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/transnationalism>
- Isaakyan, I., & Triandafyllidou, A. (2018). Reflections on diaspora and soft power: community building among female US expats in Southern Europe. *Identities*, 25(6), 650-667.
- Jairazbhoy, Nazir Ali. (1971). *The rāgs of North Indian music: their structure and evolution*. Popular Prakashan.
- James, Adam K., Suzuki Minori. (2016) “Indenture and slavery can not be compared. They are fundamentally different. Discuss.” *African and Asian Cultures in the Diaspora*. Academia.edu., n.d. Web
- Jauhari, S. (2011). *Elements of Hindustani classical music*. DK Printworld.
- Jha, J. C. INDIANS IN THE WEST INDIES. *India Quarterly*, 30(3), 219–224.1974
- Jha, Nagendra. (2019). *Historical Background of Music*. Peridot Publishers.
- Connolly, J. (2018). Indentured labour migration and the meaning of emancipation: Free trade, race, and labour in British Public Debate, 1838–1860. *Past and Present*, 238(1), 85-119.

- Kadekar, Laxmi N. Sahoo, Ajaya K and Bhattacharya, Gauri (eds.).(2009). The IndianDiaspora:Historical and Contemporary Context. Jaipur: Rawat Publication.
- Harris, K. L. (2010). Sugar and Gold: Indentured Indian and Chinese Labour in South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 25(1-3), 147-158.Katz, Jonathan. 1996. 'Music and Aesthetics: An Early Indian Perspective'. *Early Music* 24 (3,): 407-412+415-420.
- Horowitz, D. L. (2000). Ethnic groups in conflict, updated edition with a new preface. Univ of California Press.
- Kelly, M. E. (1996). Ethnic conversions: Family, community, women, and kinwork. *Ethnic Studies Review*, 19(1), 81-100.Khan, C. (2020, May 6). Indo-Caribbeans Rise and Resist in New York City. *Brown Girl Magazine*. <http://0mq.349.myftpupload.com/2020/05/indo-caribbeans-rise-and-resist-in-new-york-city/>
- Klien-Thomas, H. (2021). Caribbean Bollywood mashup: Digital practices and transcultural meaning making in Trinidad. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 19(2), 215-231.Taylor and Francis+NEJM, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14746689.2021.1940554>.
- Kroeber, Alfred Louis, and Clyde Kluckhohn. (1952). "Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions." *Papers. Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University* .
- Kuss, M. (Ed.). (2010). Music in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Encyclopedic History: Volume 1: Performing Beliefs: Indigenous Peoples of South America, Central America, and Mexico. University of Texas Press.

- Lacasse, Derrick, (2019). "Exploring Intersections of Queer Artist Identities through Music: A Community Engagement Project". Expressive Therapies Capstone Theses. 221. [https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/expressive\\_theses/221](https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/expressive_theses/221)
- Lal, B. V. (1980). Approaches to the study of Indian indentured emigration with special reference to Fiji. *The Journal of Pacific History*, 15(1), 52-70.
- Rai, R., & Pinkney, A. M. (2012). The girmitiyas' journey in Amitav Ghosh's Sea of Poppies. *History, Narrative, and Testimony in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction*, 65-78. Lal, Vinay. 'Indentured Labor and the Indian Diaspora in the Caribbean'. <https://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/southasia/Diaspora/freed.html>
- Lane, M. (2006). Myths about Migration: Historical and philosophical perspectives. *History and Policy Paper*.
- Layton, R., & Wallace, G. (2006). Is culture a commodity. The ethics of archaeology: philosophical perspectives on archaeological practice. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 46-68.
- Leante, Laura. (2004). 'Shaping Diasporic Sounds: Identity as Meaning in Bhangra'. *The World of Music*, vol. 46, no. 1, pp. 109–32.
- Van Lieshout, S. G. P. (2021). To accommodate or not to accommodate: The impact of knowledge of culture and messenger nationality on the accommodation process: A cross-cultural analysis from an American perspective.
- Li, Wei, and Hua Zhu. (2013) . 'Diaspora: Multilingual and Intercultural Communication across Time and Space'. AILA Review, vol. 26, Dec. ResearchGate, <https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.26.04wei>.

- Lidskog, R. (2016). The role of music in ethnic identity formation in diaspora: A research review. *International Social Science Journal*, 66(219–220), 23–38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/issj.12091>.
- Lively, A. (2000). *Masks: Blackness, race, and the imagination*. Oxford University Press on Demand.
- Mahabir, Cynthia. (2001). "The rise of calypso feminism: gender and musical politics in the calypso." *Popular Music* 20.3 : 409-430.
- Mahabir, J., & Pirbhai, M. (Eds.). (2012). *Critical Perspectives on Indo-Caribbean Women's Literature*. Routledge.
- Mahabir, Kumar. (1995). "The Indian Diaspora in the West Indies/Caribbean: A cultural history of triumphs and tribulations." *Puerto España* : 1-8.
- Mahabir, K., Boufoy-Bastick, B., Chinien, S., & Randle, I. (2015). Chutney Music in Carnival: Re-defining National Identity in Trinidad and Tobago. *Caribbean Dynamics: Re-Configuring Caribbean Culture*, 192-203.
- Mangru, B.(1999) *Indians in Guyana. A concise history from their arrival to the present*. Chicago: Adams Press.
- Mangru, B. (2006). *Indenture and abolition: sacrifice and survival on the Guyanese sugar plantations*. Ontario Audio Library Service.
- MANI, M. (1996, January). ABOLITION OF INDENTURED LABOUR EMIGRATION TO THE BRITISH AND FRENCH COLONIES: ROLE OF THE PEOPLE, THE PRESS AND THE PLANTERS OF TAMILNADU. In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (Vol. 57, pp. 696-711). Indian History Congress.

- Mansukhani, G. S. (1982). *Indian classical music and Sikh kirtan* (pp. 23-5). New Delhi: Oxford & Ibh
- .Manuel, Peter. (1990). Thumri: in Historical and Stylistic Perspectives. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publications.
- Manuel, Peter. .(1991)‘ The Cassette Industry and Popular Music in North India’. *Popular Music*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 189–204. JSTOR.
- Manuel, P., Bilby, K., & Largey, M. (2012). *Caribbean currents: Caribbean music from rumba to reggae*. Temple University Press.
- Manuel, Peter L.(1996). *Music, the Media, and Communal Relations in North India, Past and Present*. p. 12.
- Manuel, P. (1997). Music, Identity, and Images of India in the Indo-Caribbean Diaspora. *Asian Music*, 29(1), 17–35. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.2307/834410>.
- Manuel, Peter. .(1998) Chutney and Indo-Trinidadian Cultural Identity’. *Popular Music*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 21–43.
- Manuel, Peter. (2000). *East Indian Music in the West Indies: Tan-singing, Chutney, and the Making of Indo-Caribbean Culture*. Temple University Press. ISBN 1-56639-763-4.
- Manuel, P. L. (2002). Indo-Caribbean'Local-classical Music': A Unique Variant of Hindustani Music.
- Manuel,Peter. (2006). Indo-Caribbean Music Enters the New Millennium, *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*, 39:1, 151-156, DOI: 10.1080/08905760600696825

- Manuel, Peter. (2012). 'Popular Music as Popular Expression in North India and the Bhojpuri Region, from Cassette Culture to VCD Culture'. *South Asian Popular Culture*, vol. 10, no. 3, Oct, pp. 223–36. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14746689.2012.706012>.
- Manuel, P. (2015). The Intermediate Sphere in North Indian Music Culture: Between and Beyond “Folk” and “Classical”. *Ethnomusicology*, 59(1), 82-115.
- Malherbe, V. C. (1991). Indentured and unfree labour in South Africa: towards an understanding. *South African Historical Journal*, 24(1), 3-30.
- Markovits, C. (1999). Indian merchant networks outside India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: A preliminary survey. *Modern Asian Studies*, 33(4), 883-911.
- Massey, Reginald, and Jamila Massey. (1996). *The music of India*. Abhinav publications.
- McKeown, Adam. (2004). “Global Migration, 1846-1940.” *Journal of World History* : 155-189
- Médam, Alain. (1993). "Diaspora/diasporas. Archétype et typologie." *Revue européenne des migrations internationales* 9.1: 59-66.
- Meer, Nasar, and Tariq Modood. (2012). "How does interculturalism contrast with multiculturalism?." *Journal of intercultural studies* 33.2 : 175-196.
- Mehta, B. (2009). *Notions of Identity, Diaspora, and Gender in Caribbean Women's Writing*. Springer.
- Mehta.J.Brinda, (2010). “Indianites francophones:Kala Pani Narratives”,L'Esprit Créateur, Volume 50, Number 2, Summer, pp. 01
- Merriam, A. P. (1964). *Musicology*..

- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Min, Pyong Gap.(2013) ‘The Attachments of New York City Caribbean Indian Immigrants to Indian Culture, Indian Immigrants and India’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 39, no. 10, Dec, pp. 1601–16. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2013.833688>.
- Mishra, S. (2003). *From sugar to masala: writing by the Indian diaspora* (pp. 276-294). Permanent Black.
- Mohabir, Rajiv. (2019). ‘Chutneyed Poetics: Reading Diaspora and Sundar Popo’s Chutney Lyrics as Indo-Caribbean Postcolonial Literature’. *Anthurium*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1, Feb. 2019, p. 4. anthurium.miami.edu, <https://doi.org/10.33596/anth.353>.
- Mohammed, Patricia. (2016). "Women's and Feminist Activism in the Caribbean." *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies*: 1-6.
- Moutal, P. (1991). *A Comparative Study of Selected Hindustānī Rāga-s: Based on Contemporary Practice*. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.
- Mazzola, G., Lubet, A., Pang, Y., Goebel, J., Rochester, C., Dey, S. (2021). Time in Cultures, History and Present. In: Making Musical Time. Computational Music Science. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85629-8\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85629-8_4)
- Myers, H. (1998). ‘*Music of Hindu Trinidad*’ - Research - Royal Holloway, University of London [https://pure.royalholloway.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/book-review-myers-h-1998-music-of-hindu-trinidad\(ee043233-8f1e-4097-8d1c-f9aeed20711e\).html](https://pure.royalholloway.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/book-review-myers-h-1998-music-of-hindu-trinidad(ee043233-8f1e-4097-8d1c-f9aeed20711e).html). Accessed 7 July 2022.

- Niranjana, Tejaswini. (2006). *Mobilizing India: Women, music, and migration between India and Trinidad*. Duke University Press.
- Niranjana, Tejaswini. (2009). "Transported by song: music and cultural labour in Dharwad.": 35.
- Northrup D. (1995). *Indentured Labor in the Age of Imperialism, 1834-1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Parker, Rick. (2015). "Multicultural music and learning." GEMS (Gender, Education, Music, and Society), the on-line journal of GRIME (Gender Research in Music Education) 8, no. 3.
- Pollice, Fabio. (2003). 'THE ROLE OF TERRITORIAL IDENTITY IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES', January.
- Popley, H. A. (1921). *The music of India*. Association Press.
- Poynting, J. (1987). "East Indian Women in the Caribbean: Experience and Voice," in David Dabydeen and Brinsley Samaroo (eds.), *India in the Caribbean*. London: Hans Publications Limited.
- Prajnanananda, S. (1963). *A History of Indian Music: Ancient period* (Vol. 1). Ramakrishna Vedanta Math.
- Raj, P Prayer Elmo. (2014). 'The Concept of Home in Diaspora',"Lapis Lazuli An International Literary Journal (LLILJ).
- Ramnarine, T. K. (1996). "Indian" music in the diaspora: Case studies of "chutney" in Trinidad and in London. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 5(1), 133-153.

- Ramnarine, Tina K. (1998). "'Brotherhood of the boat': Musical dialogues in a Caribbean context." *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 7.1 : 1-22.
- Ramnarine, T. K., & Ramnarine, T. K. (2001). Creating their own space: The development of an Indian-Caribbean musical tradition. University of West Indies Press.
- Ramnarine, T. K. (2007, June). Musical performance in the diaspora: Introduction. In *Ethnomusicology Forum* (Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 1-17). Taylor & Francis Group.
- Ramnarine, Tina K. (2007). "Mobilizing India: Women, Music, and Migration between India and Trinidad. By Tejaswini Niranjana. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006. x, 271 pp. 21.95." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66.4: 1201-1203.
- Ramnarine, T. K. (2019). Dance, music and cultures of decolonisation in the Indian Diaspora: towards a pluralist reading. *South Asian Diaspora*, 11(2), 109-125.
- Ramsawak, Jessica. (2020). 'Twice Migration and Indo-Caribbean American Identity Politics', 28.
- Ranade, Ganesh Hari. (1951). Hindusthāni music: An outline of its physics and aesthetics. Poona: GH Ranade.
- Ray, Manas. (2003). "Nation Nostalgia and Bollywood" In *The Media of Diaspora*, edited by Karim H. Karim. 13-18. London: Taylor and Francis Group,.
- Reddock, R. (1984). "Freedom Denied: Indian Women and Indentureship in Trinidad & Tobago: 1898-1960." *Economic and Political Weekly: Review of Women's Studies*, 20, no. 43. 1984

- Rice, Timothy. (2010). "Disciplining ethnomusicology: A call for a new approach." *Ethnomusicology* 54, no. 2 : 318-325.
- Roberts, J. A., Sutton, P. M., & Mishra, P. N. (2000). Application of the membrane biological reactor system for combined sanitary and industrial wastewater treatment. *International biodeterioration & biodegradation*, 46(1), 37-42.
- Roopnarine, Lommarsh. (2015) .‘Tales, Tunes, and Tassa Drums: Retention and Invention in Indo-Caribbean Music’. *Ethnomusicology Forum*, vol. 24, no. 3, Sept., pp. 480–82. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17411912.2015.1091743>.
- Roy, A. (2011). Meanings of Bhangra and Bollywood Dancing in India and the Diaspora. *TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 26, 85–104. <https://doi.org/10.3138/topia.26.85>.
- Roy Choudhuri Bimalakanta. (2013). The dictionary of Hindustani Classical Music , Motilal Banarsi Dass, New Delhi
- Rushdie, Salman. (1991). Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981- 1991. Granta.
- Safran, William. (2007). "Concepts, theories, and challenges of diaspora: A panoptic approach." *Società Italianan per lo studio della Storia Contemporanea*.
- Safran, W. (1991). Diaspora’s in modern societies: myths of homeland and return. *Diaspora* 1(1): 83-99.
- Safran W. (2004). Deconstructing and comparing diasporas. In: Kokot W,. Tölölyan K, and Alfonso C (eds) *Diaspora, Identity and Religion*. London: Routledge, 9–29.

- Safran, W., Sahoo, A., & Lal, B. V. (2013). *Transnational Migrations: The Indian Diaspora*. Routledge India.
- Saha, A. (2012). Locating MIA: 'Race', commodification and the politics of production. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15(6), 736–752. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549412450633>
- Sahoo Ajay K and Kadekar, Laxmi N. (eds.).(2008). *Indian Diaspora:Trends and Issues*. New Delhi: Serials Publications.
- Sahoo, A. K., & Sangha, D. (2010). Diaspora and cultural heritage: the case of Indians in Canada. *Asian Ethnicity*, 11(1), 81-94.
- Seenarine, Moses. (2016). Indentured Indian Women in Colonial Guyana: recruitment, Migration, Labor and caste. Moses Site, 18 May. 2011. Web 20 April.
- Servan-Schreiber, Catherine. (2011). "Indian folk music and 'tropical body language': The case of Mauritian chutney." *South Asia multidisciplinary academic journal* .
- Sharma, U. (2021, February 26). India ranks 20th for global music influence, 6th for uniqueness in study spanning 30 nations. ThePrint. <https://theprint.in/features/india-ranks-20th-for-global-music-influence-6th-for-uniqueness-in-study-spanning-30-nations/612200/>
- Sheffer, Gabriel. (1986). "A new field of study: Modern diasporas in international politics." *Modern diasporas in international politics* 8 .
- Shuval, J. T. (2000). Diaspora Migration: Definitional Ambiguities and a Theoretical Paradigm. *International Migration*, 38(5), 41–56. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00127>.

- Shuval, J. T. (2003). The dynamics of Diaspora: Theoretical implications of ambiguous concepts. Rainer Münz and Rainer Ohliger, *Diasporas and Ethnic Migrants: Germany, Israel and Russia in Comparative Perspective*, London, Frank Cass.
- Simmons, Alan B. (1987). "The United Nations recommendations and data efforts: international migration statistics." *International Migration Review* 21.4: 996-1016.
- Singh, Nivedita (2004). *Tradition of Hindustani Music*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2004
- Stokes, M., 2004. Music and the global order. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33, 7–72
- Subramaniam, Lakshmi. (2008). "Culture and consumption: Classical music in contemporary India and the diaspora." *Transforming Cultures eJournal* 3, no. 1.
- Szasz, F. (1974). The Many Meanings of History, Part II. *The History Teacher*, 8(1), 54-63.  
doi:10.2307/491438
- Solomon, Thomas. (2015). THEORIZING DIASPORA AND MUSIC. p. 19.
- Taylor, Jodie. (2012). *Playing it queer: popular music, identity and queer world-making*. Peter Lang.
- Tinker, H. (1974). *A New System of Slavery- The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830-1920*. London:Oxford University Press.
- Tylor, E. B. (1871). *Primitive culture: Researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art and custom* (Vol. 2). J. Murray.
- Upadhyay, Dr. Durgesh. (2010). 'A Comparative Note on Hindustani and Karnatik Music', February.

- Upegui-Hernandez, Debora. (2004). *Transnational Migration Theory*. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7\\_676](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7_676).
- Urry J (2005) The complexity turn. *Theory, Culture and Society* 22(5): 1–14.
- Van Niekerk, Mies. (2004). 'Afro-Caribbeans and Indo-Caribbeans in the Netherlands: Premigration Legacies and Social Mobility'. *The International Migration Review*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2004, pp. 158–83.
- Vertovec, Steven and Cohen, Robin. (1999). *Migration, Diaspora And Transnationalism*.UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Vertovec, Steven. (Ed.).(1991) *Aspects of the South Asian Diaspora*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Vertovec, Steven. (1997). 'Three Meanings of 'Diaspora,' Exemplified Among South Asian Religions." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 6 (3): 277–99. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dsp.1997.0010>.
- Vertovec, Steven. (1992). *Hindu Trinidad : religion, ethnicity and socio-economic change*. Macmillan Caribbean, London.
- Vertovec, Steven. (1999). "Three Meanings of 'Diaspora,' Exemplified Among South Asian Religions." *Diaspora* 7, no. 2:1
- Wald, K. D., & Williams, B. D. (2006). The diaspora consciousness of Arab Americans: The intersection of social identity and global politics.
- Walton–Roberts, Margaret. (2004). "Globalization, National Autonomy and Non–resident Indians." *Contemporary South Asia* 13, no. 1: 53-69.

- Waters, Mary C., and Tomás R. Jiménez. (2005). "Assessing immigrant assimilation: New empirical and theoretical challenges." *Annual review of sociology* : 105-125.
- Weber, M. (1978). Ethnic groups. In *New tribalisms* (pp. 17-30). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Wendt, Alexander. (1994). "Collective Identity Formation and the International State." *American Political Science Review* 88:384–396.
- Wesling, Meg. (2008). "Why queer diaspora?." *Feminist Review* 90.1 : 30-47.
- Whab, Amar. (2010). *Colonial Inventions: Landscape, Power and Representation in Nineteenth Century Trinidad*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publication.
- Widdess, R. (1994). Festivals of dhrupad in northern India: new contexts for an ancient art. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 3(1), 89-109.
- Wordsworth, W. (1802). Preface to Lyrical Ballads..
- Presentation
- Concepts, Theories, and Challenges of Diaspora: A panoptic Approach |'. n.d. Accessed 8 February 2020. <http://www.sissco.it/articoli/cantieri-di-storia-iv-391/programma-392/dispersione-globalizzazione-e-costruzione-dellalterita-diaspore-e-migrazioni-nel-bacino-del-mediterraneo-ed-oltre-xix-xx-sec-435/concepts-theories-and-challenges-of-diaspora-a-panoptic-approach-441/>.

#### Newspapers

- Gharanas, the anchor of Hindustani music spawned by Mughal decline. (2020, September 3). *The Indian Express*. <https://indianexpress.com/article/research/bandish-bandits-gharanas-hindustani-classical-music-mughal-decline-6581735/>

- *Hurricane Hemlatha Dindial preserving chutney music.* (2020, February 9). Trinidad and Tobago Newsday. <https://newsday.co.tt/2020/02/09/hurricane-hemlatha-dindial-preserving-chutney-music/>
- Indian classical music through the ages. (2016, September 29). *The Times of India*. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/indian-classical-music-through-the-ages/articleshow/54540674.cms>
- *Is Chutney out of place in Carnival?* (n.d.). NewsGram. Retrieved 14 July 2022, from <https://www.newsgram.com/general/2018/01/14/is-chutney-out-of-place-in-carnival>
- January 15, S. B., January 15, 1991 ISSUE DATE:, September 19, 1991UPDATED:, & Ist, 2013 13:03. (n.d.). *As music market expands rapidly, India becomes one of the largest producers of cassettes.* India Today. Retrieved 27 September 2021, from <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/economy/story/19910115-as-music-market-expands-rapidly-india-becomes-one-of-the-largest-producers-of-cassettes-813888-1991-01-15>
- Maharaj, S. (n.d.). *Indian Musical Instruments in T&T.* Retrieved 17 December 2022, from <http://www.guardian.co.tt/article-6.2.446445.9c3d8106df>
- Music is an Expression of Faith and Culture for Young Caribbean Hindus. (2017, October 21). *ChakraNews.Com*. <http://www.chakranews.com/music-expression-faith-culture-young-caribbean-hindus/5951/>
- *Over 6 Lakh Indians Gave Up Citizenship Since 2017: Union Home Ministry.* (n.d.). The Wire. Retrieved 4 December 2021, from <https://thewire.in/government/india-citizenship-relinquished-granted-home-ministry-data-parliament>
- Tuli, A, & Arora, N. (2014). Madhuri Dixit and sitar player Pandit Niladri Kumar at an event organised by Brooke Bond Taj Mahal in Delhi. *The Times of India*. Retrieved 1 November 2021, from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/events/delhi/madhuri-dixit-and-sitar-player-pandit-niladri-kumar-at-an-event-organised-by-brooke-bond-taj-mahal-in-delhi/articleshow/36549737.cms>

## WEBSITES

- *About Interculturalism*. (n.d.). Retrieved 18 September 2020, from <http://tedcantle.co.uk/publications/about-interculturalism/>
- *Afropop Worldwide | Peter Manuel on Indo-Caribbean Music*. (n.d.). Afropop Worldwide. Retrieved 31 October 2021, from <https://afropop.org/articles/peter-manuel-on-indo-caribbean-music>
- *Caribbean Politics: A Matter of Diversity*. (n.d.). Retrieved 17 October 2021, from <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/publications/se/6402/640202.html>
- *CHUTNEY PULSE: The History of Chutney Music in Trinidad and Tobago (part two)*. (n.d.). Retrieved 12 November 2019, from [http://chutneyontheweb.blogspot.com/2009/10/history-of-chutney-music-in-trinidad\\_06.html](http://chutneyontheweb.blogspot.com/2009/10/history-of-chutney-music-in-trinidad_06.html)
- *Gandhi, L. (2013, November 25). A History Of Indentured Labor Gives ‘Coolie’ Its Sting. NPR.* <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/11/25/247166284/a-history-of-indentured-labor-gives-coolie-its-sting>
- *guyaneseonline. (2013, March 21). Chutney Music – featuring Guyana’s Terry Gajraj – autoplay 10 videos. Guyanese Online.* <https://guyaneseonline.net/2013/03/21/chutney-music-featuring-guyanas-terry-gajraj-autoplay-10-videos/>
- <https://plus.google.com/+UNESCO>. (2013, April 6). *Intercultural Dialogue*. UNESCO. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/intercultural-dialogue>
- ‘Indentured Labour from South Asia (1834-1917) | Striking Women’. n.d. Accessed 15 October 2022. <https://www.striking-women.org/module/map-major-south-asian-migration-flows/indentured-labour-south-asia-1834-1917>.
- *India – Caribbean relations: A Quiet and Progressive Transformation*. (n.d.). *Chanakya Forum*. Retrieved 11 October 2021, from <https://chanakyaforum.com/india-caribbean-relations-a-quiet-and-progressive-transformation/>
- Mahabir, K. (2015, May 24). *Mastana Bahar: The longest running (45 years) local TV talent show in Trinidad and Tobago. Indo-Caribbean Publications.* <https://>

[indocaribbeanpublications.com/2015/05/24/indian-arrival-day-commemorative-magazine-2015/](http://indocaribbeanpublications.com/2015/05/24/indian-arrival-day-commemorative-magazine-2015/)

- Malhi, A., & Ballantyne, G. (n.d.). *Interculturalism: How diverse societies can do better than passive tolerance*. The Conversation. Retrieved October 3, 2020, from <http://theconversation.com/interculturalism-how-diverse-societies-can-do-better-than-passive-tolerance-72874>
- *Overview*. (n.d.). [Text/HTML]. World Bank. Retrieved 11 October 2021, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/caribbean/overview>
- *Wayback Machine*. (2013, October 4). [https://web.archive.org/web/20131004215319/http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/rsw/current/cscs/working\\_papers/creolization\\_and\\_cultural\\_globalization\\_the\\_soft\\_sounds\\_of\\_fugitive\\_power.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20131004215319/http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/rsw/current/cscs/working_papers/creolization_and_cultural_globalization_the_soft_sounds_of_fugitive_power.pdf)
- *What Is Koineization (or Dialect Mixing)?* (n.d.). ThoughtCo. Retrieved 26 February 2022, from <https://www.thoughtco.com/koineization-dialect-mixing-1691093>

### Videos and Films

- Partha Sengupta, dir. (2013). *Harmonium the Unique Keyboard - a Documentry*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTTMU0zX3Xc>.
- (261) *The Caribbean East Indians, Part 1 of 2—YouTube*. (n.d.). Retrieved November 24, 2022, from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxFrQd6lVzA&ab\\_channel=CaribNationTV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxFrQd6lVzA&ab_channel=CaribNationTV)
- *The Caribbean East Indians, Part 2 of 2—YouTube*. (n.d.). Retrieved November 24, 2022, from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qeM2BecjNI&ab\\_channel=CaribNationTV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qeM2BecjNI&ab_channel=CaribNationTV)
- TTT Live Online, dir. 2022. Neval B - From Bollywood To Indo Caribbean Music. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WfOZtuz\\_5s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WfOZtuz_5s).
- Krish97310, dir. 2007. *Indian Dance-Chutney- French Guyana*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHebxbnfDNU>.

- Peter Manuel, dir. 2014. TASSA THUNDER : Folk Music from India to the Caribbean. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLu0dXWslcg>.

### Discography

- BEJOD (Director). (2017, June 4). *Girmitiya Kantraki Bhojpuri Song | Raj Mohan | NeoBihar & Champaran Talkies*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSLVqN0yOxY>
- *Caribbean Vibe* (Director). (2016, January 11). *Sundar Popo—Kaise Bani*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnMSmWgoupc>
- dMann1017 (Director). (2008, May 5). *Dropati—Gowri Pooja*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cs995YwpO\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cs995YwpO_0)
- *Dropati—Moray Gari Suno Maharaj (Dulha Sehra)—YouTube*. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT\\_eC0CgXF0&lc=UgwnglssEV6VkZN2N-94AaABAg&t=34s&ab\\_channel=ItsallAboutOurRoots](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT_eC0CgXF0&lc=UgwnglssEV6VkZN2N-94AaABAg&t=34s&ab_channel=ItsallAboutOurRoots)
- Drupatee Ramgoonai, Machel Montano - Chutney Soca | Releases | Discogs'. n.d. Accessed 3 November 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/master/1468960-Drupatee-Ramgoonai-Machel-Montano-Chutney-Soca>.
- *Gajraj - Guyana Baboo*. n.d. Accessed 3 November 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/master/2168020-Terry-Gajraj-Guyana-Baboo>.
- IslandLyrics : Artist : Rikki Jai Lyrics'. n.d. Accessed 4 April 2020. [https://islandlyrics.com/artist-rikki\\_jai.htm](https://islandlyrics.com/artist-rikki_jai.htm).
- ItsallAbout OurRoots. (2016, February 6). *Dropati—Manikdhar Jhabeeya (Lawa)*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgKMpHTft-8>
- Listen to Ek Haath Me Desh Ka Jhanda by Ramdew Chaitoe in The Star Melodies Of Ramdew Chaitoe playlist online for free on SoundCloud. (n.d.). SoundCloud. Retrieved 5 November 2021, from <https://soundcloud.com/ramdew-chaitoe/ek-haath-me-desh-ka-jhanda?in=ramdew-chaitoe/sets/the-star-melodies>

- ‘Soondar Popo / The National Indian Orch. Of Trinidad & Tobago - Nana & Nani | Releases | Discogs’. n.d. Accessed 3 November 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/master/1914627-Soondar-Popo-The-National-Indian-Orch-Of-Trinidad-Tobago-Nana-Nani>.
- ‘Sundar Popo - Hot & Spicy (Chutneys) | Releases | Discogs’. n.d. Accessed 15 July 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/master/1468864-Sundar-Popo-Hot-Spicy-Chutneys>
- *Sundar Popo’s Nani & Nana Lyrics*. (n.d.). Retrieved 4 October 2022, from <https://chutneymusic.com/sundar-popos-nani-nana-lyrics-translation/>
- *Sundar Popo—Kaise Hindoestani—YouTube*. (n.d.). Retrieved 4 October 2022, from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=by4WpnrLe8Y&ab\\_channel=surinamheritage](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=by4WpnrLe8Y&ab_channel=surinamheritage)
- *Sundar Popo - Come Dance With The Champ*. n.d. Accessed 2 November 2022. <https://www.discogs.com/master/822279-Sundar-Popo-Come-Dance-With-The-Champ>.
- *Various - Hot Tunes 1980 – De Beroemdste Zangers Van Suriname*. n.d. Accessed 2 November 2021. <https://www.discogs.com/release/8234525-Various-Hot-Tunes-1980-De-Beroemdste-Zangers-Van-Suriname>.

## **Questionnaire**

Centre for Study of Indian Diaspora, University of Hyderabad, Telangana

### **Indian Diaspora, Music and Identity: Continuities and Changes in the Indo-Caribbean music**

The undersigned will conduct a thesis entitled “Indian Diaspora, Music and Identity: Continuities and Changes in the Indo-Caribbean music”.

Music for the diasporas act as an important marker of their ethnic identity that links the diaspora with the homeland. This survey is attempted to understand the connection of Indian diaspora with music especially the consumption of Chutney, Chutney Soca and Baithak Gaana.

**The participation and answering to this survey will be kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose or shared with others and will only be used for writing the Ph.D. thesis.**

#### **A. Personal Information**

1. Name (Optional):

2. Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Others

3. Age:

- ☐ 15-25
- ☐ 25-35
- ☐ 35-45
- ☐ 45-55
- ☐ 55 and above

4. Present address(optional):

5. Marital Status:

- ☐ Unmarried
- ☐ married
- ☐ separated
- ☐ widow

6. Children if Any

7. Religion

- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Christian
- ☐ others

8. Place of Birth:

9. Your present Occupation:

10. Mention below the names and number of languages your are fluent in.

## **B: Education Background**

### **1. Education Qualification**

## **C :Family Background**

### **1. Family Type**

- ☐ Nuclear
- ☐ Joint
- ☐ Extended

### **2. Your father's Occupation:**

### **3. Mother's occupation:**

### **4. Children's Occupation:**

### **5. Are you a descendent of Indentured migrants ? If yes please mention the year when your forefathers arrived and to which country did they arrive . (applicable only for people from Caribbean):**

### **6. Did you or your parents migrated to other countries from the Caribbean region? If yes please provide details.( for example, year of migration, country of destination, purpose of migration, etc)**

### **7. What motivated you to migrate?**

8. Did your family members influence to emigrate?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ NO

a. If yes, Please elaborate how ?

b If no, Please elaborate the reason for emigration:

9. Do you have any extended family in the country you emigrated?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ NO

10. Did You face any problem while emigrating ?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

a. If yes Please discuss in details:

11. Were you born Outside Caribbean countries(Please mention the name of the country) and which generation do you belong to?(applicable for Indo-Caribbean population currently residing outside Caribbean countries)

#### **D. Connection with Music**

1. Do you listen to Music?

☐ YES

☐ NO

2. If Yes, what kind of music do you listen to most?

3. If no, why don't you listen to Music? Please mention in brief.

4. Do you Listen to Indian Music? if No please elaborate

☐ YES

☐ NO

5. Have you stayed/visited India ?

☐ Yes

☐ NO

6. IF yes what kind of Indian music you use to listen to when you were in india?

7. How do you listen to music?

☐ YouTube

☐ Mobile apps(Soundcloud/sportify/Gaana/Apple music, etc)

☐ stored Music

☐ Commodified form (cassette/ CD/DVD)

☐ Live concerts

☐ Radio

☐ All of the above

Other Please specify:

8. How frequently do you listen to Indian Music?

- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ often
- ☐ once in a week
- ☐ Never
- others (please specify)

9. Do you prefer any particular Genre of Music ?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ NO

10. Are you aware of 'Indo-Caribbean music' genres ?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ NO

11. Do you listen to Indo-Caribbean music?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

A. If yes,How often do you listen to Chutney, Chutney-Soca and Baithak songs?

B. If no, Please tell us why ?

13. Who according to you is your favorite Indo-Caribbean artist and why?

14. Who/what influences you most about the music preference/taste?

- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Reviews
- ☐ Family
- ☐ All of the above
- Others, please specify:

15. How much do you relate to Indo-Caribbean music as a member of the diasporic community?

16. How old Indentured music is different from present Chutney music? Please elaborate:

17. Is *Chutney music*, *Chutney Soca* and *Baithak gana* a part of your Culture and festivity?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

18. How often does it helps you to bond with family and friends who speak your native languages ?

19. What feeling does these songs(*Chutney*, *Chutney Soca* and *Baithak*) trigger in you the most:

- ☐ Nostalgia  
☐ Festivity  
☐ Entertainment  
☐ All the above

20. Do you agree that over the course of time Indo-Caribbean music industry has seen a lot of changes in terms of music, lyric and meanings ?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

21. If yes, please elaborate the kind of changes you observe most in the above mentioned genres and what impact does it have on the current generation?

22. Do you prefer other genres over Indo-Caribbean music for a daily dose of entertainment ?  
Please describe in brief .

23. Is *Chutney music, Chutney Soca and Baithak gaana* gaining popularity in your country (hostland)?

- ☐ A lot  
☐ Somewhat  
☐ Not at all  
☐ Don't know

24. Do your non-Indian friends listen to Indo-Caribbean music?

- ☐ Regularly  
☐ Often  
☐ sometimes  
☐ Never  
Other(please specify)

25. Please mention 10 Indo-Caribbean artist that you know and listen to :

26. What are the mediums through which Indians connect with India in your country(hostland) ?

- ☐ Movies
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Newspaper/Magazines
- ☐ Indian TV/Radio Channels
- ☐ Celebrating Festivals/rituals
- ☐ Indian clothes
- ☐ All of the above
- Others (Please specify)

27. Do you think Indo-Caribbean music promotes Indianness among Diasporic community in your country (hostland)?

28. Do you consider Indo-Caribbean music is as popular in your country as other musical genres are? Explain:

29. What do you listen to more when you don't listen to Indo-Caribbean music:

- ☐ Bollywood
- ☐ Indian Classical
- ☐ Hollywood
- ☐ EDM
- ☐ ROCK
- ☐ Techno

Other please specify

30. DO you think Bollywood music surpass local Indo-Caribbean music consumption ?

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not at All
- ☐ Don't Know

31. Do you think Bollywood has an impact on Chutney, Chutney Soca creations and compositions?

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Don't Know

32. Do you listen to music on radio?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ NO

33. If yes, what channels do you listen over the radio ?

34. Do you listen to Chutney , Chutney Soca and Baithak Gaana on radio?

35. Do you think that the new Indo-Caribbean artists doing justice to the existing music genres?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

please elaborate:

36. Please share any extra information which you would like to share about the current face of Indo-Caribbean music in music industry.



## UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

### INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS COMMITTEE DECISION LETTER



|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                       |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>IEC No.</b>                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Date of review</b>                 | 16-03-2022 |
| <b>Application No:</b>                                          | UH/IEC/2022/242                                                                                                                                                                              |                                       |            |
| <b>Project Title:</b>                                           | Indian music in Diaspora: Changing trends and patterns in the Caribbean Hindustani Sangeet, Global market and Inter-culturalism                                                              |                                       |            |
| <b>Principal Investigator/ Co-PI:</b>                           | PI: Shazia Khan<br>CI: NA                                                                                                                                                                    |                                       |            |
| <b>Participating Institutes if any</b>                          | ----                                                                                                                                                                                         | Approval from Participating Institute | ----       |
| <b>Documents received and reviewed</b>                          | Protocol & ICF                                                                                                                                                                               |                                       |            |
| <b>In case of renewal submission of update</b>                  | ----                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                       |            |
| <b>Decision of the IEC:</b>                                     | Approved<br>Duration: One year from date of approval                                                                                                                                         |                                       |            |
| <b>Any other Comments Requirements for conditional Approval</b> | ----                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                       |            |
| <b>Members Present</b>                                          | Dr. A.S. Sreedhar, Sri. A. Madhava Rao, Dr. Stalin Chowdary Bala, Dr. M. Srinivas, Dr. M.K. Aruansree, Prof. Pingali Sailaja, Prof. B.R. Shamanna, Dr. M. Varalakshmi and Dr. Deepa Srinivas |                                       |            |

**Please note:**

- Any amendments in the protocol must be informed to the Ethics committee and fresh approval taken.
- Any serious adverse event must be reported to the Ethics Committee within 48 hours in writing (mentioning the protocol No. or the study ID)
- Any advertisement placed in the newspapers, magazines must be submitted for approval.
- If the conduct of the study is to be continued beyond the approved period, an application for the same must be forwarded to the Ethics Committee.
- It is hereby confirmed that neither you nor any of the members of the study team participated in the decision making/voting procedures and declared conflict of interest.

A S Sreedhar  
16/03/22

**Chairman**

(Dr. A S Sreedhar)

B.R. Shamanna  
16/3/22

**Member Secretary**

(Prof. B.R. Shamanna)

M. Varalakshmi  
16/03/22

**Convenor**

(Dr. M. Varalakshmi)

Address: School of Medical Sciences, University of Hyderabad, C. R. Rao Road, Gachibowli, Hyderabad-5000046  
Tel (O): +91-040-23135470/23135471 Email: iec\_uoh@uohyd.ernet.in, deanmd@uohyd.ernet.in

# Indian Diaspora, Music and Identity: Continuity and Changes in the Indo-Caribbean Music

by Shazia Khan



Librarian  
Indira Gandhi Memorial Library  
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD  
Central University P.O.  
HYDERABAD-500 046.

---

**Submission date:** 20-Dec-2022 11:52AM (UTC+0530)

**Submission ID:** 1984903423

**File name:** Shazia\_Khan.pdf (4.59M)

**Word count:** 74919

**Character count:** 400388

# Indian Diaspora, Music and Identity: Continuity and Changes in the Indo-Caribbean Music

## ORIGINALITY REPORT

1 %

SIMILARITY INDEX

1 %

INTERNET SOURCES

0 %

PUBLICATIONS

0 %

STUDENT PAPERS

## PRIMARY SOURCES

1

[philosociology.com](http://philosociology.com)

Internet Source

<1 %

2

[www.discogs.com](http://www.discogs.com)

Internet Source

<1 %

3

[www.chutneymusic.com](http://www.chutneymusic.com)

Internet Source

<1 %

4

[soundcloud.com](http://soundcloud.com)

Internet Source

<1 %

5

[www.chakranews.com](http://www.chakranews.com)

Internet Source

<1 %

6

[scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu](http://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu)

Internet Source

<1 %

7

Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Yitzhak Sternberg.  
"Transnationalism", Brill, 2009

Publication

<1 %

8

[pure.royalholloway.ac.uk](http://pure.royalholloway.ac.uk)

Internet Source

<1 %

Submitted to University of California Riverside

|    |                                                                                                                                                                  |      |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 9  | Student Paper                                                                                                                                                    | <1 % |
| 10 | eprints.keele.ac.uk<br>Internet Source                                                                                                                           | <1 % |
| 11 | iccgis2016.cartography-gis.com<br>Internet Source                                                                                                                | <1 % |
| 12 | psasir.upm.edu.my<br>Internet Source                                                                                                                             | <1 % |
| 13 | www.business-standard.com<br>Internet Source                                                                                                                     | <1 % |
| 14 | Murali Balaji, Thomas Sigler. "Glocal riddim: cultural production and territorial identity in Caribbean music videos", Visual Communication, 2017<br>Publication | <1 % |
| 15 | kipdf.com<br>Internet Source                                                                                                                                     | <1 % |
| 16 | sdeuoc.ac.in<br>Internet Source                                                                                                                                  | <1 % |
| 17 | www.magisterseniusu.com<br>Internet Source                                                                                                                       | <1 % |
| 18 | Submitted to University of Auckland<br>Student Paper                                                                                                             | <1 % |
| 19 | Submitted to University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad                                                                                                                  | <1 % |

|    |                                                                                                                                     |      |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 20 | <b>addi.ehu.eus</b><br>Internet Source                                                                                              | <1 % |
| 21 | <b>repository.usfca.edu</b><br>Internet Source                                                                                      | <1 % |
| 22 | <b>www.youtube.com</b><br>Internet Source                                                                                           | <1 % |
| 23 | <b>Cristina-Georgiana Voicu. "Exploring Cultural Identities in Jean Rhys' Fiction", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2014</b><br>Publication | <1 % |
| 24 | <b>Pratap Kumar. "Indian Diaspora", Brill, 2015</b><br>Publication                                                                  | <1 % |
| 25 | <b>baadalsg.inflibnet.ac.in</b><br>Internet Source                                                                                  | <1 % |
| 26 | <b>core.ac.uk</b><br>Internet Source                                                                                                | <1 % |
| 27 | <b>idsa.in</b><br>Internet Source                                                                                                   | <1 % |
| 28 | <b>onlinelibrary.wiley.com</b><br>Internet Source                                                                                   | <1 % |
| 29 | <b>researchdirect.uws.edu.au</b><br>Internet Source                                                                                 | <1 % |
| 30 | <b>surface.syr.edu</b><br>Internet Source                                                                                           | <1 % |

|    |                                                                                                                           |      |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 31 | <b>vdoc.pub</b><br>Internet Source                                                                                        | <1 % |
| 32 | <b>Submitted to Parkland College</b><br>Student Paper                                                                     | <1 % |
| 33 | <b>Submitted to The Robert Gordon University</b><br>Student Paper                                                         | <1 % |
| 34 | <b>san.admiralsananda.net</b><br>Internet Source                                                                          | <1 % |
| 35 | <b>"Queering Migrations Towards, From, and Beyond Asia", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2014</b><br>Publication | <1 % |
| 36 | <b>www.slideshare.net</b><br>Internet Source                                                                              | <1 % |
| 37 | <b>www.springerprofessional.de</b><br>Internet Source                                                                     | <1 % |

Exclude quotes      On  
Exclude bibliography      On

Exclude matches      < 14 words