

CHAMAR-POP

Reclaiming Identity Through Popular Music

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ABSTRACT

This research project attempts to identify and understand the emerging themes in Chamar Pop music. For this study, a sample data of 25 songs were selected, and the thematic analysis of the lyrics and respective music videos of those Chamar Pop songs was conducted. The research concluded the prevalence of 9 major themes, ranging from the reclamation and assertion of the Chamar identity and community history, to idolisation of popular Dalit leaders, to assertion of their relatively newfound social presence and power that stems from their resistance to oppression as a united community that refuses to be limited by their caste identity.

RESEARCH QUESTION

- In what ways has the Chamar pop genre empowered the Chamar community?
- What is the narrative that the singers of this community wish to portray through the songs?
- What are the different themes being portrayed in the Chamar Pop music videos?

AIM OF THE PROJECT

To identify emerging themes in Chamar Pop music through their music videos, and their consequent contribution to the reclamation and development of the Chamar identity by the people of the very community.

METHODOLOGY

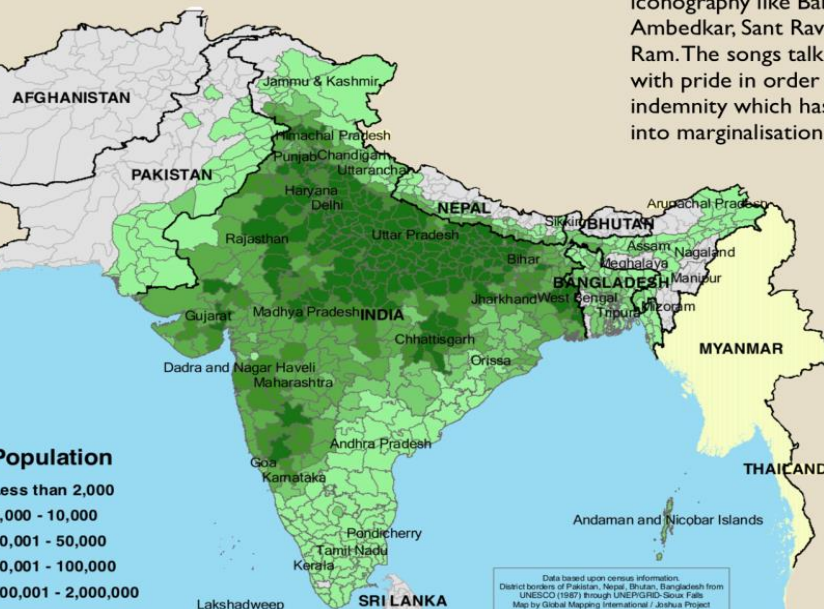
A total of 50 music videos and songs were selected for data analysis through the purposive sampling technique of which a total of 25 videos were finalised with the aid of pre-decided inclusion and exclusion criteria.

WHO ARE THE CHAMARS?

The tanners of leather, the preparers of skins, the manufacturers of leather articles, and the makers of shoes belong to a well defined class in so called the Indian social order. Most of these workers, in Upper India, are to-day included under the general term Chamar.

WHAT IS CHAMAR POP?

Chamar pop songs are pop-music composed and performed by the artists belonging to the Chamar Community. The lyrics make a heavy reference to popular Dalit iconography like Babasaheb Ambedkar, Sant Ravidas and Kanshi Ram. The songs talk about their caste with pride in order to reclaim their indemnity which has been pushed into marginalisation for centuries.



INCLUSION CRITERIA

- Only songs by artists belonging to the Chamar community.
- Songs which acknowledged the caste/community identity of artists involved.
- Only songs accompanied by visuals.
- Available on open source platforms, like YouTube.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- Lack of acknowledgement of caste identity by the artists.
- Language barriers, only the songs in languages comprehensible by the members were selected.
- Songs with no videos or no visual elements were not included
- Ethical issues like copyright infringement- Any music video that violated the copyright guidelines was excluded.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis has been used for the study since the thematic tool will help identify common themes across data sampled. According to Braun & Clarke, a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.

THEMES IDENTIFIED

- Emergence from atrocities
- Display of unity
- Sacrifice
- Asserting Social Presence
- Physical strength and the notion of power
- A call of the lost history
- Political Leaders as philosophical and spiritual idols

CONCLUSION

We observed that a duality was being expressed in those songs. There was an emphasis on the unique cultural and materialistic way of depicting themselves. There is also a display of unity and materialistic strength. The reinstatement of their presence in various social institutions like marriages and educational institutions. The primary focus of their music remains propagating the anti-caste teachings of Dr. B.R Ambedkar and Sant Ravidas.

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