Review of Rap Music's Rising Influence on Young Indian Girl's Mental Health

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the consequences of rap music on young Indian girls, focusing on the growing community of female rappers. Originating from African American oral traditions, rap music has gained worldwide recognition and has been both admired and criticized for its impact. Previous studies have explored rap's influence on youth behavior, attitudes, and mental health, addressing issues like drug use, risky sexual behavior, anxiety, and depression. The study examines the profound impact of rap music on Indian society through analysis of digital content from Indian female rappers such as Raja Kumari, Irfana Hameed, and others. The rise of artists like Agsy, Fenifina, DeeMC, and others represents a significant culture shift, with these artists challenging traditional societal norms and breaking stereotypes. This review assesses the dual nature of rap music's influence, acknowledging its capacity to foster empowerment, self-expression, confidence building, and advocacy for social issues, while exposing young girls to cyberbullying, online harassment, controversial themes, and gender issues, which can adversely affect their mental health. Examining these aspects, the study seeks to offer a balanced comprehension of rap music's impact on Indian female rappers and proposes strategies to optimize its beneficial effects while minimizing its obstacles. Ultimately, the purpose is to emphasize the transformative potential of rap music while ensuring that the growth of female rappers in India is both sustainable and constructive, benefiting individuals and the broader cultural context concurrently.

Keywords: Rap music, Indian Female Rappers, Cultural Influence, Mental Health, Empowerment, Self-Expression, Cyberbullying, Societal Norms, Media Effects.

INTRODUCTION

Many researchers and analysts assert that rap music is a cultural expression that originated in African-American culture. They argued that it is grounded in African American oral traditions, including signifying, toasting, and playing dozens. Despite its popularity since the 1980s, critics have argued that it hurts listeners. However, studies on media effects have found evidence for both destructive and positive influences on rap music fans around the world [1]. Previous research paper has explored the extent of drug use and its associated sociocultural factors among youth, as well as its impact on an individual's feelings, values, beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, and interactions. Additionally, it has also addressed the topic of risky sexual behavior, mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, political views, antisocial behavior, and drug and alcohol usage [2]. Let us consider the case study of Ankit Singh Patyal, also known as "IKKA," a well-known artist in the hip-hop and rap music industries in India. In an interview, IKKA explained that his stage name was derived from his nickname "AKKI," which he

reversed to create his unique moniker. He credits the global rap artist Eminem as his inspiration, particularly the song "Lose Yourself," which left a lasting impression on him. IKKA is a gifted songwriter who crafts his material, his raw, energetic, and influential personality earned him a sizable audience. His fan base continued to grow daily, Thus, we can say that it has a wide influence on Indian society and has an impact on almost every sphere of lifestyle, such as clothing, language slang, musical genre, thought process, peer selection, and things alike [3]. In recent years, there has been a notable rise in the number of Indian girl rappers, and many of them find inspiration from prominent artists like Eminem, Biggie, and Andre 3000. Rap music is widely regarded as one of the most innovative genres globally, and Indian female rappers like Agsy, Fenifina, DeeMC, TribeMama Marykali's, Won Tribe, Meba Ofilia, Rapper Annie, and other talented women are contributing their unique experiences and viewpoints to the genre, while simultaneously breaking stereotypes and pushing against societal norms.

The connection between preferences for specific music genres and alcohol, illicit drug use, aggression, and other risky behaviors is now evident in Indian female rappers, who are increasingly influenced by Western music and culture. The relationship between aggressive behaviors and listening to popular music, particularly rap music, was observed [4]. By analyzing these aspects, this review seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape. Additionally, it proposes actionable steps and strategies for leveraging this cultural shift to its fullest potential. This includes recommendations for cultivating supporting environments, creating platforms for emerging talent, and promoting mental health resources tailored to the unique needs of female rappers. Exclusive requirements within the framework of communities to which individuals belong, such as race, ethnicity, religious association, sexual orientation, involvement in volunteer organizations, fraternities or sororities, or athletic teams [5]. The objective of this review is to thoroughly assess the substantial impact of rap music on Indian female rappers, evaluate its benefits and drawbacks, and suggest strategies that can be employed to strengthen and sustain this movement.

THE RISE OF RAP MUSIC AMONG YOUNG INDIAN GIRLS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

In the early 2000s, the rise of Indian rappers who primarily rapped in English was unexpected. By 2011, a new wave of underground artists had emerged, creating what they referred to as independent music. These rappers, hailing from different regions of the country, rapped in their local languages and occasionally delivered songs in English, showcasing their potential for fresh talent. Despite being influenced by American rappers, these artists began developing their lyrics, which reflected their admiration for their idols [6]. Initially, rap music in India closely followed global trends, with male artists taking the lead. The genre's appeal lies in its ability to address social issues, personal struggles, and cultural narratives, thus providing a voice to those who were not heard. As global feminism gained grip, and digital platforms democratized music production and distribution, young Indian girls began entering the rap scene, challenging traditional gender norms and societal expectations.

THE RISE OF RAP MUSIC AMONG YOUNG INDIAN GIRLS IN CURRENT TRENDS

The emergence of social media platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, has played a critical role in this change. By providing young girls with direct access to audiences without the need for traditional industry gatekeepers, these platforms have empowered artists like Dee MC, Raja kumari, and Siri to become influential role models for a new generation of female rappers. Moreover, social media platforms offer the user a range of options for using hashtags to spread their posts. The use of hashtags allows users to mark the

intended significance of their posts on social media platforms. By using hashtags, users can connect their tweets, Instagram updates, or Facebook posts to a wide range of diverse topics including cultural practices, beliefs, and personal experiences. This intertextual potential of hashtags can have a significant impact on influencing other girls to follow in their footsteps [7]. Researches indicate that gender scripts, such as the gold digger, diva, and earth mother, significantly impact young women's self-worth and perceptions of relationships. Similarly, a limited range of macho cultural images, including thugs and players, are often used as a standard for authenticity among Black men. However, analysis of Black girl's web presence reveals the challenges faced in the self-definition process for young people in hip-hop, as their online performances often reflect these gender stereotypes [8].

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF EMPOWERMENT AND SELF-EXPRESSION

Strengthening self-esteem, encouraging empowerment, and nurturing a sense of accomplishment can all be observed in young girls through activities such as rapping, choir singing, playing musical instruments, and songwriting. By engaging in these creative endeavors, rappers have reported a range of positive impacts on their health and well-being. Moreover, rapping, songwriting, and composition have also provided marginalized individuals with a platform to express themselves and increased their social inclusion, intercultural connections, and overall sense of empowerment [9]. The rap community offers a sense of belonging, cultivating connections among like-minded individuals. This support network can play a vital role in mental well-being, providing emotional support and reducing feelings of isolation.

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Many young female rappers use their platform to address issues such as gender inequality, sexual harassment, and mental health awareness. This advocacy not only raises awareness but also empowers the artists and their listeners by cultivating a sense of agency and purpose. Early feminist thinkers primarily focused on the similarities among women's enslavement, but often overlooked significant differences among women based on factors such as class, age, sexual orientation, religion, and race. The concept of intersectionality emerged from discussions about the primary concern of feminist theory, emphasizing that women experience discrimination and other human rights violations due to a variety of factors, including age, ethnicity, class, and sexuality, in addition to gender [10]. The social cognitive theory posits that youth learn from media indirectly and are more likely to translate that learning into behavior when the role model is similar to the viewer in gender or ethnicity, the behavior is perceived as similar to real life, the role model is attractive, and the behavior is positively reinforced. Through observational learning and modeling, adolescents may develop attitudes and beliefs that support the role model's behavior, which can influence their decision-making in sexual situations [11].

NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF CYBERBULLYING AND ONLINE HARRASSMENT

The digital era has both opened up new opportunities for emerging artists and exposed them to the risk of cyberbullying and harassment. The negative comments and online abuse that young artists face can have serious consequences for their mental health, including the development of anxiety and depression. Indian female rappers, in particular, often experience significant cyberbullying and online harassment, which can severely impact their mental well-being. As they challenge traditional gender norms and assert their voices, they become targets for anti-feminist and trolling. The constant barrage of negative comments, threats, and

derogatory messages can lead to anxiety, depression, and a decline in self-esteem. The pressure to constantly defend themselves against online attacks can discourage emerging artists from pursuing their passion and limit their creative expression. To address this issue, it is essential to establish strong support systems, increase awareness, and implement strict measures to protect artists from online abuse. By doing so, we can create a safer digital space that allows for the growth and expression of young artists.

NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF CONTROVERSIAL THEMES

Rap music often includes themes of violence, substance abuse, and aggression. Exposure to such content can have a negative impact, especially on suggestible minds, potentially glorifying unhealthy behaviors. The pressure to succeed and the expectations placed on young female rappers can lead to stress and burnout. Balancing personal life, academics, and rapidly growing music can be overwhelming, potentially leading to mental health issues. Many young people use music to regulate their moods and emotions and cope with the challenges of life. However, negative affective states may also be observed in such situations [12]. For instance, controversial social media figure Irfana Hameed, a rapper from Kodaikanal, trained in traditional Karnataka vocal music in her childhood, leading to her ferocious lyrics and attire. Similarly, the MTV show "Hustlers" seeks out versatile artists like Raja Kumari who have diverse backgrounds and experiences. Several content analyses have been conducted in the past where song lyrics explicitly mention drugs and alcohol, and these exposures have been found to increase substance use in adolescents [13]. Hip-hop and rap were initially regarded as being solely fashionable rather than musical genres. However, it is important to recognize that music plays a significant role in both dominant society and traditional culture. In India, for instance, music had been the dominant force while hip-hop was not widely practiced. Nevertheless, in recent years, there have been debates indicating that hip-hop culture has been growing increasingly prominent in India [14].

DISCUSSION

The impact of rap music on the mental well-being of adolescent Indian girls is varied. On one hand, it provides several advantages in terms of empowerment and self-expression, but on the other hand, it also presents challenges that need to be tackled. It is important to provide mental health support and cultivate awareness to navigate these complexities. Performing rap can enhance self-esteem and confidence, particularly in areas such as public speaking and artistic abilities. However, some rap music contains violent and aggressive themes that may have a negative influence on the behavior and attitudes of young listeners. Additionally, some rap lyrics emphasize wealth, luxury, and material success, which can create unrealistic expectations and values among Indian female rappers.

CONCLUSION

The growing impact of rap music on young Indian girls showcases its transformative potential. In our previous discussion, we explored both the advantages and disadvantages of rap music. However, instead of promoting empowerment and identity formation, Indian female rappers are increasingly vulnerable to lifestyle diseases and cyberbullying. They are also participating in female rap cyphers and underground artistry, where previous research in India has been limited to just one or two studies. As these young artists continue to break barriers, it is crucial to support them in ways that promote positive mental health outcomes. Further research and observation are necessary to understand the emerging factors that contribute to the daily challenges and mental health issues faced by female rappers. By tackling these challenges and embracing

the advantages of promoting Indian cultural music, rap can remain a potent source of empowerment and transformation.

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