Music and social movements in India: A survey of awareness and Impact

Vandana Kumari and Dr Thakur, Sugandh Shekhar[2]

[1]PhD in Journalism and Mass Communication, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab
[2]Assistant Professor (Department of Journalism)
[1]vandanak499@gmail.com

Abstract
Comprehending the role of music in India's social movements is vital because it helps us to see how songs and music have been part of the journey towards change. Music has a unique power to bring people together, inspire, and share important messages. This paper delves into knowing whether people are aware of this, especially those who do not have a musical background. While music's impact on Indian social movements is known, this paper reveals how much people know it today. This helps people to see if this important part of history is still alive in people's hearts and minds. The paper aims to discover how much people know about social movements in India that use music and to understand how they think music can create social change. A survey of 126 persons asked questions about their awareness regarding social movements, and their thoughts on music's role in creating change. Music inspires and brings people together, reminding us of its power to create positive change in society.

Keywords: Music, social movements, social change, power of music, awareness

Introduction

People have long understood that music is a very effective medium for narrating tales, conveying emotions, and forming cultural identities. Music has the rare capacity to address social and political issues beyond its entertainment value, acting as a catalyst for change and increasing public awareness. Indian culture deeply embeds music, which holds immense potential to influence social consciousness in this vastly diverse country. This study explores people's opinions, convictions, and degree of involvement with socially conscious music in India.

In Plato's Republic III (* 360 BC/2006), he claims that music exerts an influential impact on a listener's personality. From the moment of a baby's birth, through lullabies to animals making sounds on pitches to communicate—some of which are not—music has been used as a means of communication. Bollywood films feature a lot of songs, and birthday parties and weddings are among the events when music is played according to the occasion. While watching a commercial, the researcher noticed a shift in the advertisement's message from humorous to serious as soon as the background music changed.

In the past few decades, there has been a new idea that has cropped up: the use of orchestral music education as a panacea for social issues like drugs, material violence, and spiritual poverty. (Baker,2016) A program that teaches orchestral music training to children and youth in Venezuela is El Sistema, which promotes the above idea. (Alfonzo, 2015; Verghagen et al., 2016).

Sociocultural music programs in Portuguese became a favourite allocation of money because of their awareness, which could yield prompt and magnificent results that displayed administrators engaged with social and cultural problems. (Baker,2021). A couple of these programs evolved into role models for various sociocultural programs, motivating individuals and institutions to follow their example. (Fischer,2012)

When we say music is a global language, it has the power to rise above borders, cultures, and mindsets. Throughout history, societies worldwide have unleashed the power of music to stimulate transformation, spark revolutions, and form narratives. The American Civil Rights Movement's anthems and South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle's rhythms all consisted of music working as an apparatus for social change. (McLeod,2013)

Social change

Social transformation points to the changes in social frameworks, values, standards, attitudes, and institutions in the long run. (McIntosh, 2016, McLeod, 2018). It is a sophisticated and intricate phenomenon that showcases the changes in various aspects of society, often spurred by, technological advances, cross-cultural interactions, political campaigns, and economic advancements. (Denton & White, 2019)

Social transitions include various elements that jointly form the evolution of a society. These elements encompass economic changes, political changes, cultural transformation, and structural transformation. (Cohn,2016). Different catalysts, such as technological advancements, social movements, and demographic changes, often accelerate social change. Macionis & Plummer (2018)

Power of Music

The idea of using music and music education for social change is not a novel concept. In all respects, famous philosophers, like Aristotle and Plato, deliberated on the favourable and unfavourable impact of music on separate identities and mankind. (Rinholm & Varkoy, 2020)

Many intellectuals associate music with the idea of a flourishing society and view it as a fallback for social transformation, leading to the belief that social transformation is always positive, even when it isn't. (Boeskov, 2018)

In recent decades, the field of music education has experienced significant advancements in literature and media reports, recognizing the power of music to transform individuals and society, enhance cognitive, social, and emotional abilities, and foster integration among people from diverse backgrounds. (Kertz-Welzel, 2022)

Music and social change

Changes in social relations closely link to the concept of social change. (Strood & Corbin, 2008) inside a society or community as a whole. (Kertz-Welzel, 2022) Strong & Corbin (2008) Social transformation encompasses the changes in systems within the construction of society, differentiated by modifications in conventions of conduct, cultural representations, appraisal systems, and social configurations. (Wilterdink & Form, 2020). Context roots the concept of social change, which encompasses various goals and meanings related to the cultural, economic, or sociopolitical situation in a society.

According to Aristotle, immersing in music, whether produced or listened to, was a way to obtain spiritual rejuvenation, insight, and pleasure. (Elliot & Silverman, 2016) Furthermore, Aristotle, the esteemed philosopher, argued that music serves as a catharsis, a cleansing process that alleviates overwhelming feelings or moods, thereby tranquilizing one's emotions. (Stamou.2002)

As stated by Juliet Hess (2019), producing music entails skills that are social, sentimental, communicative, and political, which are fundamental to the practice of music. This leads to the emergence of music's advocacy for social equity as a fundamental aspect of music production. According to Benedict et al. (2015), Gould et al. (2009), and Hess (2019), music's support for social equity has emerged as a basic feature of music production.

Music for social justice in the Indian Subcontinent

In the background of the Quit India Movement, different forms of art were supported in their own way. In 1942, the movie "Kismat" featured the song "Door hato ae Duniya walo Hindustan Hamara Hai," which translates to "Keep aside, this Hindustan is ours." In 1943, the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) was formed to help the freedom struggle. Shri Pt. Ravi Shankar and Salil Choudhry were among the co-founders.

In the 60s and 70s, there were ample protest songs linked with many leftist movements. Numerous significant movements, whether Dalit Movemnet, Narmada Bachao Movement, or Trade Union Protests, have all utilized songs to convey their purposes. The idea behind that music reaches easily and widely among the people.

Here are some instances where music plays a significant role:

By Sambhaji Bhagat, "Inki surat to Pahchano Bhai." This particular song originates from the Lok Shahin' custom, which commenced approximately 40 years ago in Maharastra. Influenced by the Dalit Panther Movement, Sambhaji Bhagat himself is a Dalit activist and a musician. He was spearheading a campaign against injustice, inequality, and caste discrimination. In the song mentioned above, he urged individuals to recognize the true malicious intent within civilization, which has seized all power and wealth. He asserts that we must also address the fundamental issues of Rozi and Roti. Numerous movements throughout India have utilized the song, which has gained significant prominence on social media.

The activist Medha Patkar composed the song "Narmada ki Ghati Mein Ab Ladai Zari nai" and Chhogalal

performed it. It serves as an anthem for the 'Narmada Bachao Andolan (Movement)', which has been active for over 35 years. The movement opposes the Sardar Sarovar Project. The song embodies the authentic essence of the movement. The song emphasizes that growth should not occur at the expense of local communities and the environment. The song underscores the need to provide project information and legal support to the impacted local population.

"Hum dekhenge, Lazim hai ke hum bhi dekhenge." We shall witness; it is imperative that we also witness. We will pay attention to the nazm that Faiz Ahmed has composed. Faiz has become an emblem of dissent throughout the whole subcontinent. In his pursuit of revolution, Faiz, a communist, employed traditional religious symbolism to critique political structures. Hum Dekhenge distinctly transforms the depiction of Qayamat, the day of Reckoning, into a day of the communist revolution.

Iqbal Bano first used this song as a protest anthem in Pakistan in 1986 against Zia's military regime. Recent student demonstrations across the nation have utilized this song as a protest anthem due to its immense popularity.

We conducted a thorough survey with 127 participants to gauge their opinions about the role of music in addressing societal issues. The study questions explore the frequency of music listening, the belief that music can heighten individuals' awareness of social issues, and the awareness of Indian musicians who actively support social causes and participate in social projects. The study also explores historical situations where music played important roles, such as the Indian independence movement and Dalit movement, and examines the impact of media platforms in promoting socially conscious music.

Additionally, the study looks at current events, such as farmers' demonstrations in India in 2020–2021, where protesters used music and other cultural forms to voice their demands. The study also assesses the participants' opinions about music as a vehicle for raising public awareness of such important issues and investigates their knowledge of environmental initiatives, such as the Chipko movement, etc. Through an analysis of responses from a wide range of individuals, this study seeks to offer an important new understanding of how music and social consciousness interact in Indian culture. Understanding public perceptions and engagement levels regarding socially conscious music can contribute significantly to discussion of the potential of music as a tool for social change. This research not only sheds light on the current state of social awareness through music but also paves the way for future discussions on harnessing the power of music to address the pressing social challenges of our time.

Significance of the study
1. The aim is to investigate the cultural significance of music-consuming habits and convictions among people from different Indian cities.
2. To comprehend the perspectives of people from various parts of India regarding social movements and their involvement in activities that contribute to the betterment of society.

Objectives
1. We must comprehend the crucial part the media plays in promoting socially conscious music.
2. The objective is to assess the level of understanding regarding diverse historical movements that strive to enhance societal welfare.

Methodology
The research is based on qualitative research methodology. The social sciences use qualitative approaches to explore and comprehend difficult phenomena. It emphasizes the collection and analysis of non-numeric data. It aims to uncover the deeper meanings, motivations, beliefs, and experiences of individuals. The population of interest encompasses individuals from different age groups, music users, and a few musicians actively involved in music communication and social change endeavours.

Data Sampling
There are 126 respondents, representing different places in India and belonging to different age groups. We created a questionnaire to gather data through a survey of respondents with varying educational backgrounds. We created the survey using Google Forms and distributed it to individual respondents as well as several What's App groups. Pie charts illustrate the data. In the case of gender, there were 67.5% males and 32.5% females.

As previously said, the sample included participants from every age group;
- Under 18: 1%
- 18 – 24: 4.8 %

- 25 – 34: 37.3%
- 45 – 54: 9.5 %
- 55 – 64: 5.6%

As mentioned above the respondents come from different educational backgrounds

Postgraduate degree - 65.1%

Bachelor's degree - 32.5%

High school – 2.4 %

Types of Variables

Dependent and independent variables are the two main categories of variables that can be employed in a study. A cause-and-effect relationship must be developed to produce scientific findings. The independent variables here are gender, age, musical tastes, Indian bands and musicians, etc.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Fig 1:

How often do you listen to music?
126 responses
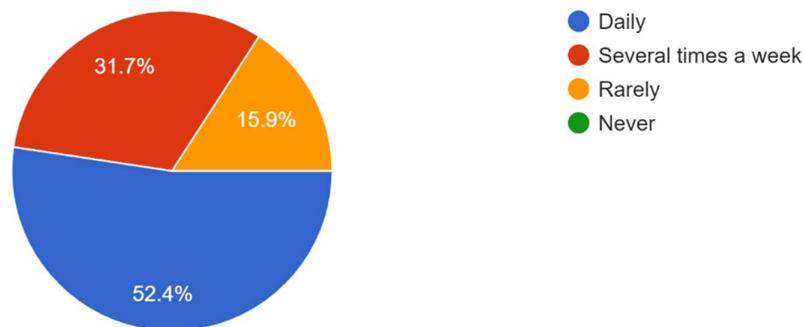
In Fig. It can be observed that 52.4% of respondents reported listening to music daily. Indicating the majority of respondents incorporating music into their daily routines, potentially suggesting its integral role in their lives. 31.7% state they listen to music several times a week, highlighting a significant portion of the respondents engaging with music multiple times weekly, reflecting consistent musical involvement. 15.9% mentioned listening rarely represents a smaller but notable segment of respondents, illustrating infrequent engagement with music, potentially due to other priorities or preferences.

Fig 2:

Do you think the media (TV, radio, online platforms) plays a role in promoting socially conscious music in India?

126 responses
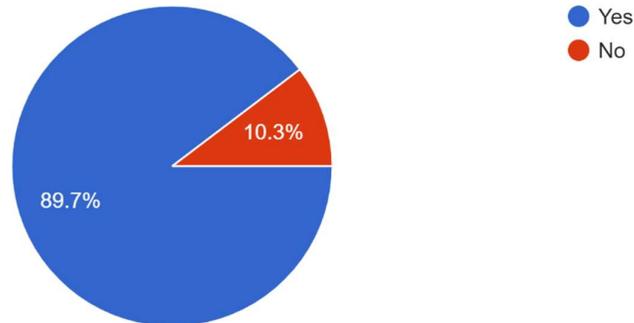
In Fig 2. 89.7% of respondents agree that the media (TV, radio, online platforms) is vital in promoting socially conscious music in India. It reflects a strong consensus among most participants regarding the media's impact on spreading awareness through music. 10.3% of respondents express a contrary opinion, suggesting that they do not perceive media platforms as actively promoting socially conscious music. This indicates a smaller but notable segment of respondents who might be doubtful about the media's influence in this context. A high percentage in favor implies that media platforms are recognized as influential tools in amplifying socially relevant music.

Fig 3:

Are you familiar with the use of music in the Indian Independence Movement against British colonial rule?
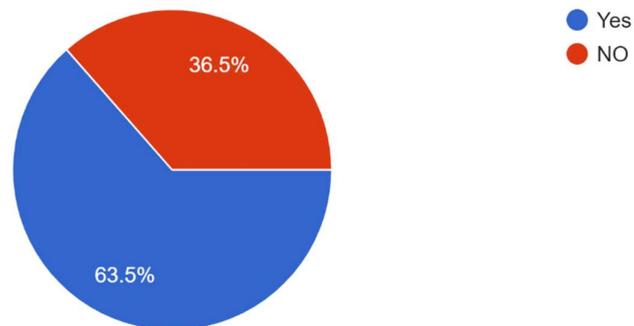
126 responses

Fig. 3. depicts that 63.5% of respondents are familiar with the use of music during the independence movement against British colonial rule. It shows that a sizable majority of participants are aware of how music has historically been used to support the Indian Independence struggle. 36.5% highlights a significant portion of respondents who may not be well-versed in this historical aspect, potentially due to varying educational backgrounds or interests.

Fig 4:

Have you heard about the use of music in the Dalit movement, which advocates for the rights and empowerment of marginalized communities?

126 responses
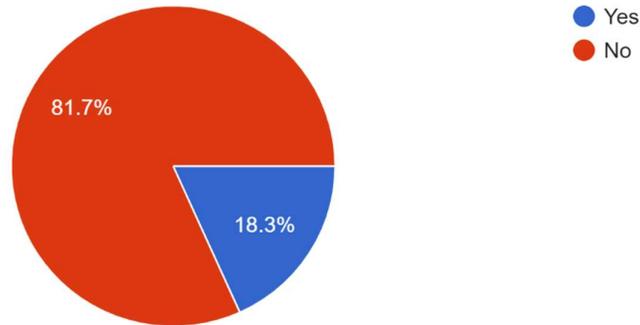
In Fig 4. 81.7% of respondents are familiar with the use of music in the Dalit movements, which advocate for the rights and empowerment of marginalized communities. This illustrates a significant majority with awareness of music's role in amplifying the voices and struggles of Dalit communities, putting in the spotlight its cultural and social impact. 18.3% represents a smaller segment of participants who may not be acquainted with this specific aspect of social activism within the Dalit community.

Fig 5:

Are you aware of environmental movements in India, like the Chipko Movement, that have used to raise awareness about environmental issues?

126 responses
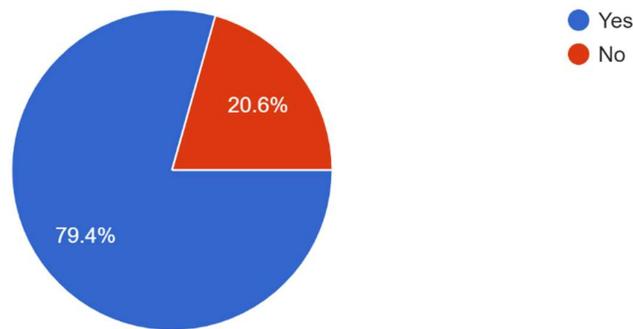
In Fig. 5. 79.4% of respondents are aware of environmental movements in India, such as the Chipko movement, which have been instrumental in raising awareness about environmental issues. It indicates a significant majority with knowledge about grassroots environmental activism, emphasizing the movement's impact on public consciousness. 20.6% of respondents, while a minority lack awareness regarding environmental movements like Chipko.

Fig 6:

Did you follow the recent farmers' protests in India(2020-2021) where music and cultural expressions played a role in conveying the farmers' demands?
126 responses
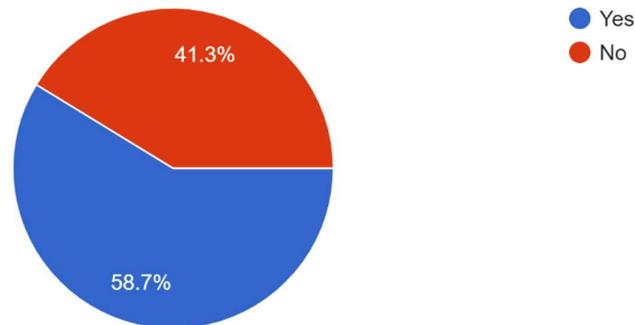
In Fig. 6. 58.7% of respondents indicate that they followed the farmers' protests in India (2020-2021), where music and cultural expressions played a significant role in conveying the farmers' demands. It suggests a substantial but not overwhelming majority with awareness of the protests, underscoring the public's engagement with sociopolitical issues. Despite being a considerable fraction, 41.3% of respondents did not follow the protests, suggesting a lack of interest in this specific social movement. These may not have been closely tuned into the protests or were not actively following news related to the farmers' demands.

Fig 7.

Do you think music can be a helpful tool in increasing public awareness about social issues in India?
126 responses
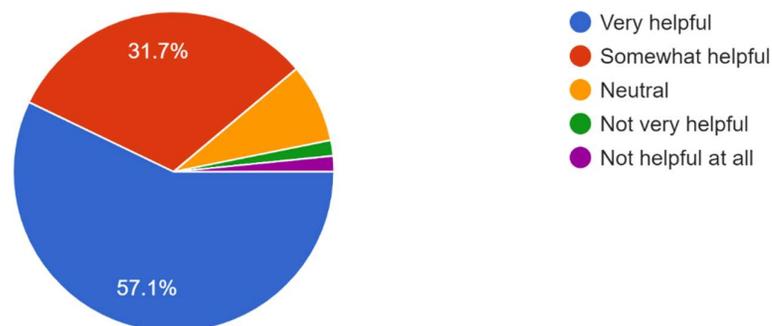
In Fig. 7, it can be seen that 57.1% of respondents perceive music as "very helpful" in enhancing public awareness about social issues in India. It illustrates a substantial majority endorsing the significant impact of music in raising awareness. 31.7% of respondents consider music "somewhat helpful" in increasing awareness. It shows a large chunk of participants who acknowledged the significance of music but with a slightly less emphatic perspective. 7.9% of respondents maintain a neutral stance regarding music's effectiveness in raising awareness. These are small but notable segments of respondents with no strong opinion, potentially indicating a need for more information or diverse perspectives on the topic. 1.6% of respondents find music "not very helpful," suggesting limited doubt about its effectiveness. Another 1.6% deem music "not helpful at all," indicating a minimal minority with a negative perspective on music's role in social awareness campaigns.

The overwhelming majority with positive or moderately positive views underscores the widely accepted belief in music's potential as a powerful tool for increasing public awareness about social issues in India.

Discussion and conclusion

The research paper focuses on the relationship between music, media, and social awareness in India, based on the responses to a questionnaire. The survey data provides valuable insights into the perceptions and engagement levels of the participants with various aspects of music and social issues. The survey indicates that a significant portion of respondents listen to music daily, which reflects the integral role of music in people's lives, potentially making it an effective medium for conveying social messages.

An overwhelming majority of respondents believe that media platforms play a critical role in promoting socially conscious music in India. This highlights the perceived significance of media in increasing music with social messages, making it accessible to a broader audience. A notable majority is aware of the use of music in the Indian Independence Movement, showcasing the recognition of music's historical role in India's quest for freedom. The survey reveals that a significant majority are aware of environmental movements like the Chipko Movement and their use of music to raise awareness.

The study's conclusions reveal music's complex place in India's societal structure. Its importance in history, culture, and the modern era cannot be underrated. It is essential to close the information gap on past movements and raise public understanding of current sociopolitical developments. Moving forward, a holistic approach involving artists, media, and educational institutions is essential. Through utilization of its emotional resonance and cultural origins, music may be an effective means of addressing societal challenges.

REFERENCES

1. Grant, C., & Low-Choy, S. (2021). Social awareness and engagement in undergraduate music students: Generating a foundation for curriculum decisions. Research Studies in Music Education, 43(2), 144-160. https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X19899170

2. Ramiyan Bhardwaj, Jitendra Singh, Archana Kumari. (2023). Psychological, Behavioral and Societal Effectiveness of Folk Theatre in Highlighting Educational Development in Jammu: An Evaluative Study. *Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities*, *6*(10s(2), 284–291. Retrieved from https://jrtdd.com/index.php/journal/article/view/1346

3. Stewart J, Garrido S, Hense C and McFerran K (2019) Music use for Mood Regulation: Self-awareness and Conscious Listening Choices in young people with tendencies to depression. Front. Psychol.10:1199. Doi:103389/fpsyg.2019.01199. Retrieved from https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01199/full

4. Yi, Tammy. (2023). Challenges and Potential of a Diverse Teaching Force. Update Applications of Research in Music Education. 10.1177/87551233231198242.

5. Hallam, S. (2010). The power of music: Its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people. International Journal of Music Education, 28(3), 269-289. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761410370658

6. Rabinowitch, T.-C. (2020). The Potential of Music to Effect Social Change. Music & Science, 3. https://doi.org/10.1177/2059204320939772

7. https://sites.psu.edu/kreitz137h002/2012/10/25/social-awareness-in-music/

8. https://www.savethemusic.org/blog/how-does-music-affect-society/

9. Baker, G.(2016). Editorial introduction: El Sistema in critical perspective. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 15(1),* 10-32. Act. maydaygroup.org/articles/Baker15_1.pdf

10. Alfonzo, J. (2015). Soggetto cavato: *La historia y mis relatos de los primeros cinco anos de El Sistema.* Graficas Iauki CA.

11. Kertz-Welzel, A. (2022). *Rethinking music education and social change* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press. http://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197566275.001.0001

12. Stroud, B. H., & Corbin, S. E. (2008). *Handbook of social change*. Nova Science.

13. Wilterdink, N., & Form, W. (2020). Social Change. In Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-change

14. Rinholm, H., & Varkoy, Oivind. (2020). Music Education for the common good? Between hubris and resignation: A call for temperance . In Yob, I. & Jorgensen, E. (Eds.), Humane music education for the common good (pp. 40-53). https://iupress.org/9780253046918/humane-music-education-for-the-common-good/

15. Boeskov, K. (2018). Moving beyond orthodoxy: Reconsidering notions of music and social transformation. *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education, 17*(2). Doi:10.22176/act17.1.92

16. Baker, G. (2021). *Rethinking social action through music: The search for coexistence and citizenship in Medellin's music schools*. Open Book Publishers. https://doi.org/10.11647/obp.0243

17. Fischer, H. (2012). Cidadania Sinfonica. VivaMusica!

18. Elliott, D., Silverman, M., & Bowman, W. (2016). Artistic citizenship: Introduction, aims, and overview. In Artistic Citizenship: Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis.OxfordUniversityPress. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199393749.001.0001

19. Stamou, L. (2002). Plato and Aristotle on music and music education: Lessons from ancient Greece. International Journal of Music Education, os-39(1), 3-16. https://doi.org/10.1177/025576140203900102

20. Benedict, C., Schmidt, P., Spruce, G., & Woodford, P. (2015). Preface: Why social justice and music education? In Benedict, C., Schmidt, P., Spruce, G., & Woodford, P. (Eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education (1st ed., pp. xi-xvi). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199356157.002.0007

21. Gould, E., Countryman, J., Morton, C., & Rose, L.S. (2009). *Exploring social justice: How music education might matter* (Vol.4). Canadian Music Educators' Association.

22. Hess, J. (2019). *Music education for social change: Constructing an activist music education.* Routledge.

23. McLeod, K. (2013). *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Outto Jazz and Africa.* Oxford University Press.

24. McIntosh, D. (2016). Social Change. In *The Oxford Handbook of Social Cognition* (pp.1005-1023). Oxford University Press.

25. McLoed, J. D. (2018). Social Change. Annual Review of Sociology,44, 573-592.

26. Denton, P., & White, R. (2019). Social Change. *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Urban and Regional Studies*, 1-4.

27. Cohn, N. (2016). Dimensions of Social Change. *Sociology,* 50(2),232-248.

28. Macionis, J. J., & Plummer, k. (2018). Social Change: Theories of Social Change. *In Sociology: A Global Introduction*(pp.446-468). Pearson.

29. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0QETSCliRk

30. https://www.google.com/search?q=narmada+ki+ghati+main+ab+ladai+zari+hai&0q=narmadandroid-oneplus&sourceid=chrome-mobile&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:91ad822e,vid:1mgeKgX84U8,st:0

31. https://youtu.be/dxtgsq5oVy4