

Gaana.com

Objective- Create social engagement platform for independent artists to connect with core fans in Gaana.com

Market trends

The audio streaming industry is at an inflection point as the music apps are gearing up to transform itself into super app encompassing everything related to audio- music streaming, podcasts, radio, audiobook, news etc. The video industry has already gone through this evolution as the likes of Instagram, snap chat and Tiktok transformed the concept of video into a very social interactive experience.

Insights

- **Audio is ripe for next wave of innovation**
- Unlike the evolution of the video industry which ended up emphasising on the highlights (Tiktok, Instagram), the audio would shed its image as a solitary, one sided phenomenon (music streaming, podcasting, audiobooks) into a deeply engaging and intellectually stimulating social experience. This is a natural transition considering the fact that listening to someone sing or talking is a personal experience and the ideas/emotions takes the centre stage in this engagement.
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- As of now, the data flow in audio is one way (except conference calls in zoom, skype) and this leaves the industry ripe for innovation in terms of interactivity between the creator & fans, between the fans themselves.

What Spotify's strategy points out?

There are enough evidence to believe that podcasting would be the game changer in the audio streaming industry

The music streaming services, like Spotify has been quite bullish on future of podcasting, making some strategic acquisition of Gimlet and Anchor. Gimlet is a narrative podcasting firm where as Anchor allows companies, brands to create, publish and monetize podcasts.

Addressing the monetisation issue

The strategic reason behind this move is to address a **fundamental problem in audio streaming industry- Monetization**. Unlike video streaming services like Tiktok & Instagram which mastered the art of native ads, the audio streaming industry is yet to fully utilise the immense potential of native ads. But Listening to someone sing or speak is a lean- back experience (passive listening), the advertisers are not able to find a suitable methodology to measure the impact/ROI of the ads.

Power of interactivity

There is a need to create a model where the user could seamlessly switch between lean back and lean forward listening experience. This is where the interactivity and social element comes in. When the listeners are given an option to interact with creators/ fellow listeners, the whole process invariably becomes a lean forward (active listening) experience.

Approach

Building the social experience through interactivity should be strongly connected to the features that solves existing problems faced by the users.

Creators are under-monetised

The creators in music streaming platform are clearly under monetized as they receive their payments solely based on the number of times their songs are played by the user. Although major label singers, who have high popularity through Bollywood may not necessarily feel to the need to depend on revenue from music streaming services, the independent artists (local musicians, local bands) are usually tight on cash. These creator segment constantly struggle to produce their next album so much so that they are compelled to crowdfund the required amount through various platform. Therefore, solving the problem of the independent artists would be a great starting point for audio streaming services as the music streaming and downloads of songs by independent artists has increased among the Indian listeners.

Is this the right step for Gaana.com?

Gaana.com has partnered with TuneCore to increase the reach for independent artists in India and enable the artists to earn 100% of the revenue from streaming.

Gaana's new initiatives like Gaana launchpad and Gaana originals all points to the increasing importance of independent local artists in the platform

"**Gaana originals**" initiative to promote regional non film music has witnessed tremendous traction with more than 100 million streams per month. And **Gaana launchpad** has been launched to bring the emerging indie artists to the spotlight. All these initiatives have strengthened Gaana.com's position to ride the indie wave.

The main competitor for Gaana.com. Jiosaavn has also launched distribution service for independent artists called **amplify** which would provide assistance in terms of promotion and distribution through several digital partners. The idea of providing an interactive platform for these artists to develop strong bond and engagement with their core fans is a natural step forward for Gaana.com in increasing the monetization opportunities for these artists. Ultimately, such interactivity would lead to user stickiness & network effects on both sides- creators and listeners.

Independent artists' key pain points

Poor Monetisation

The Creator wants greater monetisation opportunities through their core fans in gaana.com. The independent artists have no backing from major labels and therefore most of their projects are self-funded. Considering the fact that the production of album, recording studios are expensive, the artists often faced with financial difficulty which delays their release.

The current monetization model provides only one source of revenue for the artists- royalty per download. The independent artists may be motivated to dedicate more time and attention towards the platform if it is monetarily beneficial for them.

Low Engagement with fans-

The artist wishes to interact with their core fan base in Spotify in a fun manner. These interactions are important for these artists as this allows them to connect with their fans at a deeper level.

Collecting subjective opinion from fans-

The analytics dashboard provided by Gaana.com may provide great insights about listeners behaviour, location but the model doesn't provide information on several subjective aspects of music. Most of the times, subjective opinions from users are necessary in order for the creators to understand which would be the ideal direction for their journey in terms of musicality, lyrical theme and musical genre.

Solutions

Problem - monetisation

Strategy -

Connecting the super-fans to their favourite artist is the key to solving the monetisation problem. The willingness to spend on subscription is low among Indian music lovers is ----- compared to their international counterparts. But this doesn't necessarily mean that the super fans may be hesitant to spend more in the music streaming platform. The important question to ask here is what new offerings can the platform come up with, for which the users are willing to pay more.

Fan Subscription-

- Exclusive club membership through **subscription** for the fans they have access to live parties, virtual concerts and direct interaction by the artist. Exclusive club members subscription may be more practical for generating revenue as there is wide range of offerings for becoming a member and also it boosts the social status of the users among their friend circle. The user is likely to communicate the exclusivity aggressively which would also generate network effects.

Donation facility –

- Patreon link for the artists where the user is rewarded with badges and place in the top donor leader board. Here, the user is nudged to donate any amount he/she wishes in exchange for early access to new releases, badge of top fan etc.

Ticket per event

- The artists can host virtual concerts, live events and charge a fee for listener to attend the concert.

Solutions #2

Problem- Low Engagement with fans

Interactivity between the creators and fans can be several forms- live interaction where the fans can seamlessly interact with the creator on real time, pre recorded sessions by the creator upon which the users can comment/respond, special musical campaigns for users to engage. **Static/ pre-recorded contents are slowly falling out of favour in most social platforms** but if the frequency of new content uploads by the creators are low, then pre-recorded contents may be necessary for the platform. The frequency of the new content uploads by creators largely depends on following factors-

- a) Ease of content production
- b) Creator motivation
- c) Listener's response

For the independent artist, the motivation would be high and along with that, the responses is likely to be favourable if the recent trends are considered. The ease of content production is mainly a function of content quality. Activities like creating an acoustic version of their originals for a virtual concert would require considerable effort and resources. On the other hand, **a discussion about their hit song, upcoming release, song writing process, emotional undercurrents of their music etc is relatively easy to produce** and therefore, the frequency of new content upload may be higher than other content forms.

Live chatroom feature

- Create audio chatroom for the podcasters and their fans/listeners where the listeners and creator can indulge in live interaction.

Reddit model voice thread -

- Create features where the creator can post questions in the form of voice recording and listener/fan can reply to these questions, again in the form of voice recording. (reverse podcasting)

Daily remix campaigns-

- Artist can prepare a list of their original songs and create remix campaign where the artist urges the users to remix the songs and create something unique. There can be a leader board to showcase the best remixes of the day and a shoutout for the winner.

Solutions #3

Seeking opinions in an audio platform through voice is a challenge as the placement of the voice poll, timing, method of initiating the microphone for response, response for failure to capture voice, option to skip etc needs to be incorporated. But creating a voice-based feedback may become an absolute necessity considering the fact that the users prefer to multitask while listening and may not have their phone screen on. Apart from this, the number of users using smart speakers as the search engines for playing songs is expected to increase.

Text polls- a) Artist generated b) system generated

- **Artist generated text Polls** -Provide feature where artists can create polls to seek opinions from listeners on subjective matters. The poll question pops out on the screen & there would be multiple choices for the listener to choose from.
- **System generated text Polls-**

Voice Polls- a) Artist generated b) system generated

- **Artist generated Voice polls-** Artist can record the poll question (yes/no) type and the listener can respond by saying yes/no through their microphone.
- **System generated Voice Polls-** The algorithm inserts poll questions at the end of the song and the listener can respond by saying yes/no through their microphone.

Evaluation of solutions- impact vs effort

Problem- Monetisation issues

Fan Subscription- features-

- Access to live events from the artist- live jamming sessions, virtual concerts
- Feature to react to the posts/ events
- Early access to new album releases.
- Exclusive club member badge which can be showcased in social media- FB, Instagram.
- Discount on merchandises and other virtual gifts.

Impact – high

compared to pay per event model, the subscription model demands more commitment from the listener as the subscription fee would be higher than the pay per event fee. But an important step in this exercise is to connect the super fan with creator **and as the superfans are less likely to be price sensitive when it comes to becoming a exclusive club member, subscription model comes more economic sense.** This model will improve user stickiness and enable the artist to earn more through cross selling. The high impact would be high.

Effort -medium- This feature would require new user interface where the users can subscribe and get info regarding upcoming special events, live streams and merchandises. The effort required would be medium.

Donation/crowdfunding facilities-

- There would be a minimum amount set up
- Top patrons would receive badge and early access to new songs.
- Option to send requests to the artists suggesting what they would like to hear from the artist in the future.

Impact- medium-As the minimum amount set would be considerably lower than a subscription fee, the likelihood of large % of listeners becoming a patron is high. The acting of paying money to an artist in order to help them make new work of art, gives the donors a sense of ownership. **They are also likely to be very responsive to new release as it is them who helped the artist develop it.**

But considering Indian user's lack of familiarity with the model, it's unclear how the crowdfunding/donation feature for artist would be perceived by the public. Most of crowdfunding platform for artist in india, especially wishberry.com have donors from elite class.

Effort- The artist will have to set up an account with Patreon. The effort is negligible.

Ticket per live event-features

- User interface where the listener can see the list of upcoming events from their favourite artists.
- Option for group ticket buying and group chat while viewing live events.

Impact- medium -The commitment required from the user will be low as it is a one-time payment and would be significantly lower than a subscription fee. But the user may not get a badge or any other differentiator with which he/she can signal status among their friend circle. This feature may be ideal for those artists who are yet to build a large fan base. These artists can keep the ticket fee low to nudge new users to buy tickets.

Effort- Medium –

Chatroom – features

- The listener will be notified of the scheduled time and prompted to join the live chatroom few seconds before the start of the event
- The conversation would be moderated by the artist who can open up the chatroom for discussion whenever he/she finds it relevant.
- The listener will be notified when they have the option to converse. Interested user can put in a request and upon granted permission by the creator, they can address the group/ creator.

Impact- high

This feature would be ideal for those independent artists who have already garnered strong following within Gaana.com ecosystem. The commitment required from the user is high as this involves active listening and participation. The advantage of such chatroom is that **this creates a deep, personal relationship between the artist and their core fan group** as the act of conversing on a topic like a particular hit song etc compels the participants to open up emotionally.

Another major advantage is that this **increases the time spent by the users & creators** within the app. Typically a live chatroom conversation would last 1 hour and more.

Effort- high- Implementing this feature require considerable effort as live conversations between random users and creator can get messy with confusion regarding whether a user would get opportunity to speak or not, for how long can one speak, how many times can a user speak, what happens if the user doesn't get opportunity to speak. etc

Reddit model voice thread-

- Forum where the artists have posted a thought / question related to their music or music in general and the users can respond through voice messaging.
- The artist can respond to the user's voice messages through emoji or reply voice message.
- A new user can auto play the entire thread and the most relevant voice messages will be played.
- Link for the users to invite their friends into the thread.

Impact- Medium. The feature is static in nature, which means the participation would be high but not necessarily very exciting. The interesting aspect is that the questions and thoughts put forth by the creator/artist helps the listeners really understand the artist's personality and thought process. The frequency of new posts and questions by the creator depends mainly on the user traffic.

Effort- medium – New feature needs to be developed to auto play the conversation and the option for the user to pause wherever required and voice reply to any message of his/her choice.

Daily remix campaign- feature

- Dashboard for the creator to select the songs to be remixed by user.
- Dashboard for the user where there are remixing tools which are simple enough for an average listener to operate.
- Option for the creator to react and score the remixes submitted by the user.
- Leader board where the remix participants are ranked and virtual gift can be rewarded.

Impact – High

This activity requires high commitment from the participant as the art of remixing is intellectually and creatively challenging. This feature is ideal for well-established independent artist who have a strong following in the gaana.com ecosystem. As there is a feature where the creator can react to the remix submission, it is likely that the users are motivated to participate in remix campaign more than once.

The advantage is that the **motivation and satisfaction for the participants will be high** and likelihood of them communicating their activities to the friend's circle will also be high.

The disadvantage may be that it is **difficult to create variation within the remix space**. The themes for the remix can be changed along with the overall structure like beats, rhythm and background suggestion.

Effort- High

To implement this, remixing tool have to be created for the user. It is **difficult to ascertain the optimum complexity level for this tool** since creating a very low effort tool would fail to gain interest among the participants and on the other hand, developing a high effort tool would discourage a segment of user from participating.

Text polls - features

Artist generated & system generated– text polls-

Impact- High. The artist can create their questions and find answers to very specific aspects of their music. The disadvantage here is that the artist may not be an expert in understanding what information to seek that are actually relevant to their music and also, they may not be able to frame the question in a way that would motivate the user to answer the poll.

The advantage with **system generated polls is that a standard set of question can be curated by the user research team based on genre of music** and the response rate will be higher. Disadvantage is that specific subjective aspects of music cannot be explored through system generated polls.

Disadvantage with text poll is that **the user may not be looking at the screen most of the times and therefore it is unclear as to where to place the poll in the user journey** within the app. Few options regarding poll placement within app would be-

- a) **As soon as the user fires up the app, the poll question pops up-** In this option user may initiate answering the poll question if the user likes artist's work. But the user may not be comfortable spending more than 7-10 seconds on this poll. Therefore, the number of questions that can be asked will be limited.
- b) **At the beginning or at the end of the song-** poll question pops up once the song gets over. Advantage is user heard the song just now and all the feeling that song emulated is still fresh. But the disadvantage is that a passive listener may treat this pol as a disturbance and be

frustrated as the passive listener may be looking for a continuous loop of songs without distractions.

Effort- Low- medium

Voice texts - Artist generated & system generated

Impact-High – Artist generated voice poll may be treated as an interruption but the advantage is that the creator/artist themselves are asking the question and this may spark interest the user to respond. Another important aspect is creating the right interface for presenting the poll question and accepting the response from the user. Instead of app screen, the point of interaction for this feature is the microphone.

Effort- High- Creating right interface would be a challenge as the risk of user dissatisfaction is very high in this feature. The issue with placement, optimum length and speed of poll delivery, initiating the microphone, response in case of a failure to capture user's response etc needs to addressed.

Considering the impact and complexity in implementation for the chatroom feature, PRD for the same is provided below.

PRD- CHATROOM FEATURE FOR GAANA.COM

Objective and key results

User pain point	The artist wishes to engage with their core fan group in Gaana.com
Vision statement	A platform that would foster user engagement and social interaction in order to develop strong relationship between the artist and core fans.
Goals & KPI	Success is measured by increasing % of DAUs engaging in chatroom, increasing # of messages exchanged by the participants.
Persona	Independent artists in Gaana.com who have limited resource capability

How does the chatroom work?

The creator can host live discussions with their core fans in which there is two-way interactivity. The live discussions in chatrooms is scheduled by creator and then the notification is send to the followers in the app regarding the same and the topic of discussion.

Once the discussion begins, the creator puts forward a thought, objective, questions etc and opens the chatroom for participants to speak. The participant who is interested to speak can click CTA signalling his/her interest. **If multiple participants click at the same time, a queue will be generated.** The creator's dashboard displays the interested participants who wish to speak and upon creator's approval, the participant can address the chatroom.

Is this feature ideal for Gaana.com to foster engagement within the platform?

In order to understanding the suitability and effectiveness of this solution, following premises need to understood.

- **Listeners sentiments towards a song** – The listener usually has a special relationship with their favourite songs. The song may represent an event in their life- traumatic or happy. As of now, there is no right platform for the listener to express his/her feelings about the song or what this song/music means to him/her.
- **Artists creative thought process**- Artists, most often have very unique approaches to their song writing/ creativity process. They would want their core fans to know about this process and hopefully learn some new insights about their work from the fans.
- **Relatability to the song**- The participants get to listen to others speak about the composition and how it positively impacted them. The participants cannot communicate to each other outside the platform and therefore there is unlikely to be any kind of hesitation in opening up about their connection with the song.

Based on this premise, Lets analyse Gaana.com's business goals i.e. Improve the user stickiness in the app through social interactivity and also increase the monetisation options for independent artists. Creating Chatroom and engaging in such deep conversation invariably bring the fans closer to the artist, effectively priming them for further monetisation. **Considering the fact that only 50% of Gaana.com revenue comes from subscription, It can be inferred that Indian music lovers' willingness to spend on music streaming is low. Bundled services is a necessity to nudge the users to spend more.** And chatroom could be the ideal step toward this goal, as this is strongly connected to their fundamental need to share the feeling associated with the song to right audience in the right platform.

Logic for algorithm

- Recommendation system in chatroom listing- In the chatroom listing section, the order in which the upcoming events listed should be based on
 - a) **the user preference for an artist**, i.e. the chatroom featuring that artist who is most favoured by the listener needs to be preferred.
 - b) The **overall number of listeners** who expressed interest in a chatroom. - The optimum number would be 20-25 participants per chatroom. The chatroom with over 25 participants should be deprioritised.
 - c) The **scheduled time for the event**- today's events should be prioritised over events scheduled on next day.
- Presenting the opportunity for participants to speak-
 - a) As soon as the creator/host opens up platform for discussion, the participant will be alerted and a CTA button should be activated to join the queue.
 - b) Depending on the number of participants, the number of opportunities for each participant should be regulated.

Action plan

Stakeholders- User research, designers, developers,

User research team tasks-

- Estimate the number of listeners likely to join the chatroom.
- Estimate the number of chatroom sessions the artist is comfortable to organise in a week/month.

Designers tasks-

- Create the dashboard/interface for both sides- listener and creators keeping in mind their tech-savviness and user effort required (# of clicks , time taken to read)to execute the action is optimum.
- As the chatroom is unfamiliar to most users, they must be educated on how to use the interface through a tutorial or a pop-up instruction at the right place with right timing.
- As there are large number of steps involved in this feature, care should be taken to simplify the transition from one step to another and if possible, combine two or more steps with a single CTA.

Feature development plan

Features name	Live Chatroom
Description	An interactive interface where the creator can host live discussions and their fans can interact with the creator and other participants in real time.
User problem	The creator wishes to deeply engage with their core fan group.
Value proposition	Creation of a social interactivity platform which would increase user retention and open up more ways for fan groups to be monetised
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The users of Gaana.com wish to converse directly with their favourite local artists.- The user is interested to share their feelings and personal connection with the songs by local artists.

Out of scope	-
MVP	A virtual chatroom in which the creator/artist can host discussions and users can participate in live conversation with the artist and fellow participant.

User journey flow

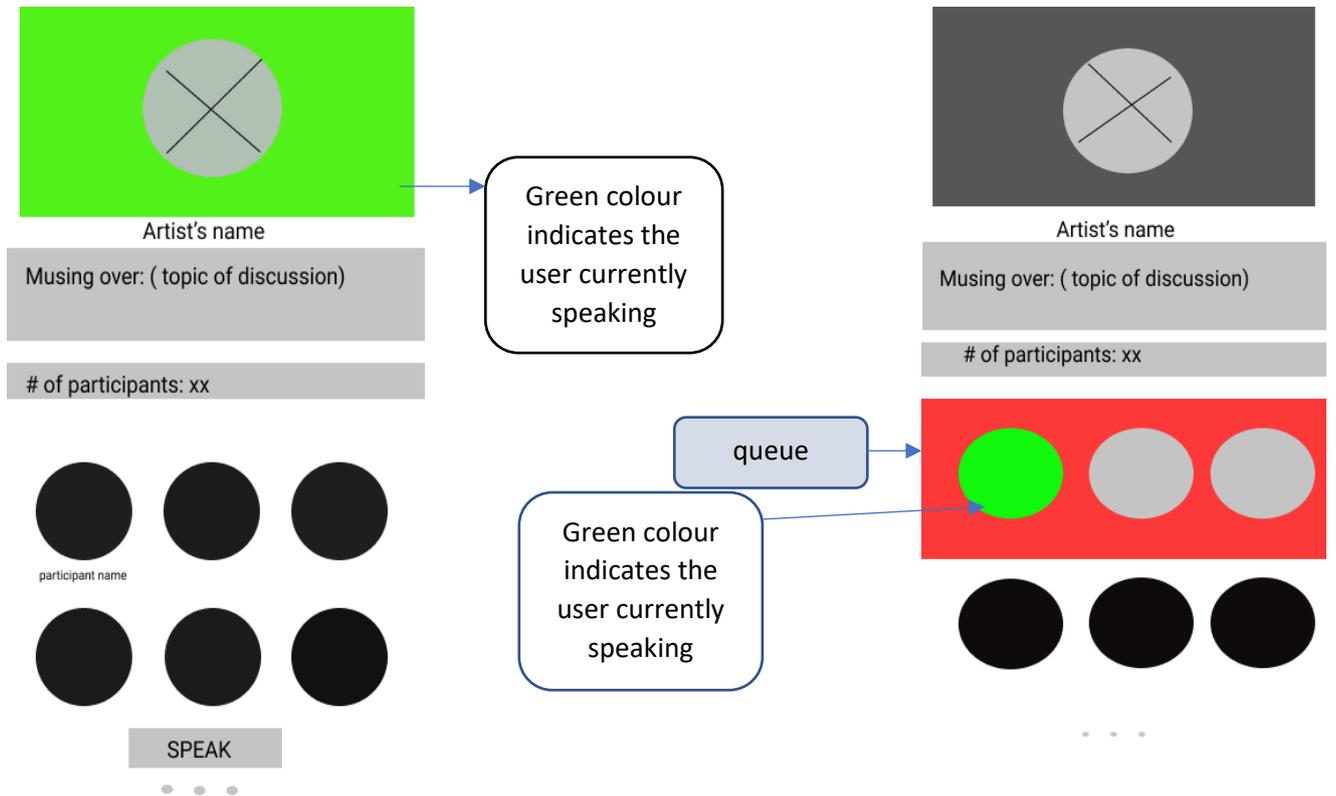


Fig: Design mock-up for interface where the participant have joined chat and are listening to artist.

Fig: Design mock up for interface in which the participant is in queue for chance to speak

Primary metrics to track

KPI	Baseline	Benchmark	Time frame
Increase the # of DAUs accessing the virtual chatroom	30 % week on week increase	45% week on week increase	2 months 2021 Q1
Increase % of DAUs who engage in conversation in chatroom	15 % week on week increase	30% week on week increase	2 months 2021 Q1
Reduce the user attrition from	15 % week on week increase	30% week on week increase	2 months 2021 Q1

chatroom during the live discussions			
Increase the # of artists hosting discussions	20 % month on month increase	30% month on month increase	2 months 2021 Q1
Increase the # of discussions hosted per artist	20 % month on month increase	35% month on month increase	2 months 2021 Q1