

Cultural Appropriation and Aesthetic Transformation of Telangana Dhoom Dham

Dr. Vamshi Vemireddy,* Dr. Sasi Kiran R.Mallam**

After the independence in 1947, the southern India witnessed the linguistic reorganization of states. Andhra and Rayalaseema were a part of the Madras Presidency and Telangana was a part of the Nizam's dominions¹. Post the linguistic reorganization, these three regions were merged together to form the state of Andhra Pradesh in 1956. There was always discontent among the people of Telangana who wished to have their own state, but were reluctantly convinced into merging with Andhra Pradesh. There were issues of allocation of resources and eventually Telangana continued to be a backward region, while the Andhra region was relatively better off. The demand for a state of Telangana was very strong during the first phase of the movement in 1969, which was suppressed through political manoeuvres by the central government, the demand again took wings during the early years of 2000 after the formation of three new states of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand. In 2001, a political party TRS- Telangana Rashtra Samithi, was formed and led by K Chandrasekhar Rao(KCR), whose only agenda was the formation of a separate Telangana state. The next decade witnessed a strong movement for a separate state led by people of Telangana from all walks of life. The movement highlighted Telangana as a distinct cultural unit that was deprived of its due by decades of Andhra rule². On 2nd June 2014, the new state of Telangana was formed after a long-drawn struggle in the form of the first and second phase Telangana movements.

The second phase of the movement also witnessed a cultural upheaval with the introduction and huge success of a composite protest art form known as Dhoom Dham. Telangana has a rich folk culture in the form of several art forms like *Oggu Katha*, *Burra Katha*, *Veedhi Bhagavatham*

and a variety of folk songs. When the Telangana movement resurfaced in the early 2000s, artists like Rasamayi Balakishan and Antudupula Nagaraju created this composite art form from the rich repertoire of folk-art forms that were already popular in Telangana. They organized live performances and galvanized people's support for the movement.

Dhoom Dham is primarily a live performance event conducted across the Telangana region - the artists toured rural, semi-urban and urban areas with folk performances accompanied by speeches by politicians. A typical Dhoom Dham performance would be a medley of songs, performances of folk dances and speeches on the Telangana movement. The performances included skits that depicted Telangana rural life, particularly the difficulties the people faced due to the lopsided development models pursued by Andhra leaders.

Dhoom Dham inherits the protest legacy of the left cultural organizations already involved in grass roots cultural movements like Jana Natya Mandali (JNM)³ led by the likes of revolutionary poet and balladeer Gaddar and popular folk artists like Goretu Venkanna. Dhoom Dham originated in the early years of the second phase Telangana movement and evolved into a potent protest art form during the final years with the collaboration of artists coming from marginalized caste backgrounds who contributed their own aesthetics to the form.

Dhoom Dham as a protest music form

Damodaran⁴ situates protest music as a distinct category in the genre of political music and characterizes it as a music of resistance and notes that this genre covers the use of music as politics and music in politics. Dhoom Dham is the practice of music as politics. She observes that the category of protest music evolved from the early twentieth century which witnessed movements for civil rights, socialist revolutions, anti-colonial struggles,

* Vamshi Vemireddy is Asstt Professor, Center for Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad.

** Sasi Kiran R.Mallam, Asstt Professor, School of Communication, FLAME University, Pune

trade union and peasant movements. Telangana was the site of several protest movements starting from the peasant rebellions of the 1940s, anti-colonial struggles, the Naxalite movement to the first and second phase Telangana movement. Protest music was a part of several of these movements and Dhoom Dham drew its aesthetics from all these earlier movements. Newspaper reports⁵ identified the unique contribution of Dhoom Dham and mention how the artists became rockstars during the movement drawing huge crowds. Dhoom Dham events played a crucial role in the election period during second phase Telangana movement, but they were largely unified by the Telangana sentiment and all political parties were criticized depending on their stance on the movement.

As the Telangana movement progressed Dhoom Dham became a site for critique of the contemporary political situation. A Dhoom Dham performance at any given point in time during the second phase Telangana movement would give a snapshot of where the movement was headed. Even the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) the flag bearer of the movement wasn't left out of criticism if the artists felt they were wronged or misled by the politicians. Dhoom Dham was also a grand success because majority of the artists came from marginalized caste groups in Telangana and wherever they went people identified with them. S.V. Srinivas⁶ describes a cultural turn where the left cultural aesthetics move towards becoming mass culture during the second phase Telangana movement. Dhoom Dham is the manifestation of Telangana's cultural renaissance and it accrued a rich cultural capital in the long years of Telangana Struggle.

The formation of the state, saw the appropriation of Telangana Dhoom Dham by political parties, which was at its core an affective composite protest art form. This article examines the dynamics of this cultural appropriation through the songs and interviews of artists who aligned with or performed in TRS, INC – Indian National Congress and BJP- Bhartiya Janata Party Dhoom Dhams. In the book *Soul Thieves*, that engages with the appropriation of black culture in the United States, Tamara Brown⁷ describes 'soul' as the essence of being and essential to being and a cultural factor that links the black community. Brown laments that once that is appropriated what is left is a vacuous cultural form. Dhoom Dhams organized by political parties are the pinnacle of vacuousness. The paper traces the journey of Dhoom Dham post Telangana state formation – its transformation from a protest form to a propaganda form used during election campaigns. The following sections demystify and decode the several layers of aesthetic appropriation by analysing the cultural appropriation of Dhoom Dham post the state formation. The textual analysis employs the videos of these events

and interviews of artists to engage with the notion of cultural appropriation.

Dhoom Dham's genesis is linked invariably with protest and its *raison d'être* was the formation of Telangana state. After the goal was achieved, some artists continued the protest tradition of Dhoom Dham, but a majority of them were co-opted by the state and other political parties. The state provided jobs to the Dhoom Dham artists under their Cultural Division and appointed one of the lead artists and co-founder of Dhoom Dham – Rasamayi Balakishan as its chairman and later endowed the position with a cabinet rank⁸. Since they are under the employ of the government there is no possibility of protest and their mandate is to publicize the government's schemes. As far as electoral politics go in the context of India, there is a thin and blurry line between the government's cultural division and the ruling party's cultural division.

Cultural appropriation of Dhoom Dham

The practice of cultural appropriation is not unique to Dhoom Dham, there have been multiple instances across the world where protest music created by one group was appropriated by groups with opposite ideologies. Outside of its original context, protest music has always been employed for propaganda and political communication during election campaigns. John Street⁹ in his analysis of the role of politics in music engages with the question of popular music as propaganda. He refers to instances of political parties in Britain using music as a means during election campaigns. He observes that music chosen during election campaigns acts as a form of propaganda – more powerful than other forms of political communication as songs play on human emotions. Lacey¹⁰ describes how the Jamaican government and political parties took cognizance of the revolutionary power of reggae. In a sub section aptly titled Politics/Politricks, King and Foster¹¹ discuss the appropriation of Reggae music by the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the People's National Party (PNP). The PNP used many reggae songs in its campaigns. Mcleod¹² documents the co-option of the Vaporwave genre by the alt-right and also mentions other instances of similar co-opting of punk rock by Nazi skinhead Oi music, heavy metal and English folk music by fascist-leaning Norwegian black metal and neo-folk in the 1990s.

Nyamnjoh and Fukwang¹³ note that the process of appropriation of music cannot be separated from power relations – political, economic, cultural and gendered. Their work is in the context of Cameroon and examines the relationship between musicians and political power, the dynamics of agency and identity politics. They identify

three categories of musicians – those who don't give in to the regime, some who are co-opted by the regime and the rest who straddle both the worlds. After the formation of Telangana state, the artists who participated in Dhoom Dham were scattered across different political parties. Those in favour of the regime stayed with the TRS party, the opposition split to congress initially and off late BJP, others remained nonaligned. Saichand¹⁴, one of the lead singers of the TRS Dhoom Dham event sums up the appropriation of Dhoom Dham perfectly when he says during the movement, we went from village to village talking about the movement, now that Telangana is on the path of development, we have a responsibility to go ahead and participate in promoting this development.

Street¹⁵ also notes that "The same capacity that is used to express a critical sentiment can also be deployed to endorse the established order or to win support for a party". This is something that the Telangana government and the ruling TRS party realized very early on. It is also noteworthy that in the age of social media campaigning political parties still choose a form which has its origins in oral folk cultures. They witnessed first-hand the connection that Dhoom Dham made with the people of Telangana and realized that the space it provided for political communication is un-paralleled.

Lenard and Balint¹⁶ discuss four conditions that define cultural appropriation – (1) a taking condition, (2) a value condition, (3) a knowledge, or culpable ignorance condition, and (4) a contested context condition. The article will engage with these conditions in the context of Dhoom Dham and understand the several layers of cultural appropriation at play here. The aesthetic ramifications of this appropriation are also discussed as we engage with the four conditions.

The taking condition is the appropriation of a practice or symbol that is not originating from the appropriator and is not exhausted by the act of appropriation¹⁷. In the case of Dhoom Dham, the costumes, the style of performing, popular songs and the name 'Dhoom Dham' itself is appropriated. The name itself has a strong association with the movement, it invokes images of artists performing in a politically charged environment protesting against all the actors who opposed the formation of a separate Telangana state. These events being named as Dhoom Dhams is also a case of the taking condition. Young¹⁸ in his philosophical treatise on cultural appropriation and the arts presents the aesthetic handicap thesis, which hints at the obstacles that artists face irrespective of their abilities when they engage in cultural appropriation. While Young presents several arguments to contradict the aesthetic handicap thesis, the following discussion on appropriation seems to support the thesis, that it's definitely not helping even the aesthetic

cause of the appropriator, as they seem to be misusing the protest form as a propaganda form.

Revolutionary Aesthetics of Dhoom Dham

Dhoom Dham can be described as employing a proletarian Bahujan revolutionary aesthetic with a focus on the assertion of Telangana identity. According to Brahma Prakash, "*Gaddar and JNM's performances reflect 'open creativity', 'daring initiative' and a 'persistent iteration'.*"¹⁹ The aesthetics of Dhoom Dham were influenced by the need for a strong sentiment of protest and identity creation, both of which were absolutely crucial to the sustenance and success of the movement. The following section details out a few characteristics of the Dhoom Dham aesthetic. Brahma Prakash²⁰ notes the transformative potential of JNM and Gaddar' performances by delving into their aesthetics. Prakash also recounts the long history of experiments with folk performances that social and political movements starting from the Jyotiba Phule's Satyasodhak Samaj to IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association). IPTA was one of the early groups to link folk performance and people's culture. He observes how Gaddar's songs give agency to the marginalized and the voiceless. In one song a labouring Dalit woman is centred and, in another martyrs, and revolutionaries.

Dhoom Dham can be broken down into its songs, folk dance forms, skits and speeches. These are tangible elements of the composite protest art form. There is the fifth element which is the general air of protest and revolution that permeated a typical live Dhoom Dham performance. Gaddar and JNM played a crucial role in Dhoom Dham performances by lending this fifth element to the performances. When the form is commodified for political parties' propaganda, this fifth element is lost. The following paragraphs discuss the 'taking' of costume, style and the revolutionary aesthetic of Dhoom Dham.

Kumar²¹ notes that Gaddar evolved as a powerful cultural leader of subaltern culture and countered the hegemony of capitalist ruling castes. When Gaddar collaborated with Dhoom Dham artists, he brought in the soul of JNM which then dominates the protest aesthetics of Dhoom Dham. The affect in JNM's performance was an amalgamation of the lyrics, costume, style and the artists themselves. The JNM singers had a standard costume – *Gochi* (loin cloth/dhoti), *Gongali* (a woollen blanket with a red border), anklets and *Dolu* (a percussion instrument) in hand. The costume signifies the subaltern and their struggle, it's a way of centering them and their labouring bodies which Prakash²² calls cultural labour. Gaddar brings in his signature red cloth even in the Dhoom Dham performances and does several gestures that are now etched in people's minds saluting the 'Red' colour

symbolizing the left and also the sacrifices of martyrs. Several artists, even the founder, Rasamayi Balakishan uses the JNM costume in many of the Dhoom Dham performances.

Gaddar developed a style of singing where in the middle of the song there is a shout of 'Ha' followed by a momentary pause. Prakash²³ notes that these rhythmic sounds symbolize labour. The same format when copied and performed in a political party electoral campaign is stripped of its context and meaning. During the political parties' Dhoom Dham events, the artist copies this style of shouting 'Ha' after every stanza, but there is no affect that comes in as it does when Gaddar performs the 'Ha'. When Gaddar performs, the 'Ha' it is a rallying cry, a call to action, a break in continuity all at the same time. Same logic applies to the costumes. When the song is commodified and transformed for a political party rally the creative and cultural labour that goes into the creation and performance of the song is exploited. The main draw of the subaltern communities to Dhoom Dham was this revolutionary aesthetic exemplified by the style and costume. The same form which laid bare the oppression when used to publicize a government scheme or praise a politician irrespective of the party loses its spirit. The cultural and creative labour of the artists is now just commodified labour.

The revolutionary aesthetics of the left protest traditions have evolved with active consultation and participation of the people and the heavy folk aesthetic specific to the Telangana region which has a huge part to play in the success of Dhoom Dham as well. In one Dhoom Dham event, Rasamayi upset with the political manoeuvres of the TRS party criticizes them and, in his speech, recalls the first revolutionary song he heard from an audio cassette - written by Guda Anjaiah²⁴ and sung by Gaddar. He goes on to observe that one has to question power. That was the true spirit of Dhoom Dham. It gave a platform to air these grievances, a space to engage in scathing and sharp critique of power²⁵. The next subsection discusses the repurposing of Dhoom Dham as a propaganda form.

Emptying out the soul: singing paeans to development

The most popular songs during the Telangana movement that were performed in Dhoom Dhams had strong resonances of fighting for rights, exposing exploitation, remembering sacrifice and martyrdom. These songs defined the spirit and soul of the movement. Eventually Dhoom Dham stopped being 'Telangana Dhoom Dham' and morphed into TRS Dhoom Dham, BJP Dhoom Dham, Congress Dhoom Dham. Each political party had its own agenda depending on the contemporary political

situation. The Dhoom Dham would also reflect those agendas. For instance, the TRS party wanted to focus on the developmental activities during its first term, so the discourse of development takes centre stage in that Dhoom Dham as in the following song.

*"Ask the lakes brimming with water
Ask the Kaleswaram Project
Ask the Kalvakurthi²⁶ ethipothala projects
Ask the water that flows in the streams
Ask the agricultural fields from the districts
Ask the new villages
Ask the non-stop 24-hour supply of electricity
Why should one vote for the Car²⁷ symbol?
Why should one vote for Saaru?"^{28,29}*

The above song was performed by Saichand, who was a lead performer in many Dhoom Dhams during the movement, for an interview at the site of TRS political campaign. The song is written for the election campaign of the TRS party and promotes the several development initiatives of the government ranging from irrigation to electricity. The use of the word 'Saaru' is interesting. The word 'Saaru' is a colloquial rearrangement of the word 'Sir' and is being used to refer to KCR. If one goes back to the heady days of the Telangana movement, politicians and their opportunism was one of the frequent concerns of the songs written and performed during Dhoom Dham. No Dhoom Dham song ever referred to any politician as 'Saaru'. This also represents the de-aestheticizing of Dhoom Dham at the level of words and lyrics. One can also observe a swift movement from protest to propaganda because the rallying call of all the artists was 'Jai Telangana' - 'Victory to Telangana'³⁰, which now morphs into Jai TRS in this particular instance.

The following lines are excerpts from a song performed in another political party's Dhoom Dham event

*"[The leader of the party] arrived
The entire country became clean
He said development is his goal
People of the country are his life
That is why all of us have to march along with him"³¹*

There is no revolutionary purpose in the lyrics here, it's a call to march behind the leader. The stage dynamics are also worth analysing here. In this Dhoom Dham performance, the four artists who are dancing are in the full JNM Costume, then the camera pans to the singers who are wearing a scarf on their shoulders that symbolizes the said political party. It is almost like the party wants to appropriate the form fully, but they know it ceases to be Dhoom Dham if they completely do away with its aesthetics, so the JNM costume remains.

The taking condition applies here as well - the political parties 'take' and appropriate the costume. It is interesting

to note that the standard aesthetics of the political party do not take over the performance completely. The performance here is stripped of its soul and thus becomes a promotional stunt and adapts the banal tone of a public service announcement or party propaganda. Therein lies the need to discuss and analyse this appropriation. Going further one can also notice that there is no air of excitement among the artists during the performance and the entire performance becomes a drab and desiccated affair, not serving the new role that Dhoom Dham is thrust into.

The value condition

The value condition focuses on the 'value' of the thing being taken and its cognizance by both the appropriator and the creator³². In the case of Dhoom Dham, the primary victims of appropriation would be the artists, as now they would have to curtail their creative expression and bend to the tune suggested by the political parties. If they refuse there could be serious implications on their livelihood.

There are a few criteria that are suggested by Lenard and Balint to pass the value condition – The symbol has to be central to a culture's collective life. Dhoom Dham satisfies this criterion since there were never any doubts about its centrality to the movement and Telangana's cultural ethos. It was the vehicle to communicate Telangana's rich culture and oppression by Andhra hegemony. The second criterion is that the symbol has to be recognizable by its membership or large numbers. Dhoom Dham artists were very popular and even individual folk singers post the movement developed their own following and became famous for their performances. This was given an official recognition also through the establishment of Telangana Samskruthika Saradhi (TSS)³³. The third criterion is about the significance of the cultural symbol to a large number of people, Dhoom Dham was extremely popular and is of great significance to the people of Telangana especially during the movement. The fact that it is appropriated post the movement is a proof of its significance to a large group of people. Outside of the criteria suggested here, the value of Dhoom Dham arises from the cultural and creative labour of the artists which imbued it with aesthetic and affective value.

The contested condition holds that the appropriation has to be contested by the members of that cultural practice³⁴. In the case of Dhoom Dham several artists opposed and publicly aired their grievances of appropriation. There were reports of discontent among the artists when it came to the allocation of jobs through TSS. It's worth noticing that the dissenting group of artists conducted their own Dhoom Dhams to protest this. The dissident group created a list of four hundred artists who

participated in the movement which was not honoured by the government in letter and spirit. In an interview to discuss this issue, artists Nernala Kishore and Daruvu Ellanna³⁵, discuss the notion of 'thought control' that the state hoped to impose on the artists it employed.

"By tying the artists to a job and imprisoning them in the gadi (colloquial term to describe forts and used popularly to indicate the centre of feudal power), thinking that the (protest) song can be stifled is an illusion. Poets and artists have to be given freedom. The job that the government is giving them is only for work, it's not for their thoughts or ideologies. The artist under employ has to write only pro-government songs and nothing else."

The knowledge condition notes that the appropriator must be deliberately appropriating the cultural practice being fully cognizant of the implications of their act³⁶. The political party machinery is very much aware of the power of Dhoom Dham, a speaker³⁷ from a congress party Dhoom Dham event observes that nowhere in the world was protest music as popular and effective as it was in Telangana. It is so popular that no one conducts a political campaign or an event in Telangana without planning a Dhoom Dham. The Dhoom Dham events drew huge crowds wherever they happened. Political parties' electoral campaigns need to attract people for their parties, the popularity of Dhoom Dham seems to be a great draw.

The appropriation of the popular protest forms of music is also profitable for the political parties as they need not spend money to produce new music or pay for copyrights. They have a potent political communication tool that can be leveraged free of cost. In *Soul Thieves*³⁸, there is a discussion on the appropriation of black hip hop music which focuses on the financial aspect and encourages us to look at it by situating in a late capitalist economy. Dhoom Dham is peculiar in that sense, because there is no tangible monetary system around the genre. There are YouTube videos of folk songs, but Dhoom Dham itself remains a tool of political communication, but there is no formal economy around Dhoom Dham, so the appropriation is more of the political and cultural capital that Dhoom Dham and its artists accrued over the past two decades.

From the artist's perspective, if they fail to find employment in the government through the official channels, performing in political party events becomes a means of livelihood. There is a definite precarity that they live through as artists and performers of forms that do not have any established commercial revenue prospects. When they are hired for the Dhoom Dhams it's also a matter of livelihood and this cannot be ignored in the discussion of appropriation. It is also noteworthy that the state's support comes only when it is about singing about

the welfare schemes, there is no clear mandate on what will be the modalities if artists wish to perform outside of it. From the perspective of artists who are entrenched in asymmetrical power relations their response could be read as utilitarian. Without political patronage the artists likely will not be able to survive their precarity.

From the perspective of the state, a protest art form like Dhoom Dham if not appropriated and reined in could lead to their own decimation. As the leading party during the Telangana movement, the TRS party understands the draw and implications of a form like Dhoom Dham, they cannot afford to give state patronage to what is primarily a protest art form. Rather they use the two-pronged Machiavellian approach of reining the artists in through a promise of jobs and also utilize the form during election campaigns. There is a definite conflict of interest here, but electoral politics and campaigns are rife with such awkward arrangements of convenience.

Conclusion

Dhoom Dham's political and cultural capital is the result of a turbulent history of protest music in the Telangana region. It involved the sacrifices and martyrdom of many artists. It is an appropriation of the intellectual, creative and cultural labour of all the artists who were a part of the left protest music traditions. It is also an appropriation of the folk aesthetics of common people since now it's not in the service of them, like it was during its social movement phase. It is now in the service of political parties and their leaders.

Any discussion around appropriation will have to deal with the question of ownership. In the context of Dhoom Dham, there is no sense of ownership in the intellectual property sense as it evolved as a protest form and not a genre which was meant to be monetized. There is also no central group which can claim ownership since many different cultural groups came together for Dhoom Dham, no one group can claim ownership. The question of who are the rightful carriers of the legacy is a complicated one. There are definitely the artists, the song writers, the singers, the performers. The question of who owns protest music is worth pondering over.

In conclusion, a de-aestheticizing of Dhoom Dham took place in Telangana after it became a state. This de-aestheticizing involved appropriation of both cultural and creative labour. As is the norm in capitalism, the labour eventually was alienated from the form. The purposes to which Dhoom Dham is being put by its appropriators does not need as potent a form.

Notes

1. Several parts of the Deccan region including Telangana were under the rule of the Princely state of Hyderabad ruled by the Nizams, until the annexation of Hyderabad in 1948 through police action.
2. Sumanth Inukonda, *Media, Nationalism and Globalization : The Telangana Movement*, Routledge, New York, 2020, p.3.
3. Jana Natya Mandali was a left cultural organization which was formed in the early 1970s, it took the revolution to the nooks and corners of Telangana by adopting the folk idiom extensively to expose the oppression faced by the marginalized castes of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. While their songs and efforts were popular among the people, they faced violent persecution from the state which arrested the artists frequently.
4. Sumangala Damodaran, *Protest and Music. In Oxford Research Encyclopaedias: Politics*, by William R. Thompson (ed), Oxford University Press, London, 2016.
5. N. Venugopal, *A celebration of being Telangana*, New Indian Express, 2010. URL : <https://www.newindianexpress.com/magazine/2010/jul/24/a-celebration-of-being-telangana-172570.html>.
6. S.V. Srinivas, "Maoism to Mass Culture: Notes on Telangana's Cultural Turn" in *BioScope (SAGE)* 6 (2), 2015, p.189.
7. Tamara Lizette Brown, "Preface." In *Soul Thieves : The Appropriation and Misrepresentation of African American Popular Culture*, by Tamara Lizette Brown and Baruti N Kopano (eds), vii-xxii, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2014, pp. vii-xxii.
8. G.O Issued on the same - "Government vide G.O MS No.208, Dated: 5.12.2014 of YAT & C (CA) Department have issued orders for appointing Sri Erpula Bala Kishan, M.L.A., (Rasamayi Balakishan) as Chairman, Telangana Samskruthika Sarathi".
9. John Street, " 'Fight the Power': The Politics of Music and the Music of Politics." *Government and Opposition*, 38 (1), 2003, pp.113-130.
10. Katrina Lacey, "Rastafari, Reggae, and Resistance" In *e-misférica* (Hemispheric Institute for Performance & Politics) (2.1), 2005. URL : https://hemi.nyu.edu/journal/2_1/lacey.html.
11. Stephen A.King & Renee P. Foster, "Revolutionary Words: Reggae's Evolution from Protest to Mainstream." In *The Routledge History of Social Protest in Popular Music*, by Jonathan C Friedman (ed), Routledge, New York, 2013, pp.248-262.
12. Ken McLeod, "Vaporwave: Politics, Protest, and Identity." In *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 30 (4), 2018, pp.123-142.
13. Francis B Nyamnjoh, and Jude Fokwang, "Entertaining Repression: Music and Politics in Postcolonial Cameroon." *African Affairs (Oxford University Press)* 104 (415), 2005, pp. 251-274.
14. Saichand, *Interview with folk singer Sai Chand over TRS Dhoom Dham - TV9*, October 6, 2018.

15. John Street, "Music as Political Communication." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*, by (eds.) Kate Kenski and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. Oxford University Press, 2017, p.3.
16. Patty Tamara Lenard and Peter Balint, "What is (the wrong of) cultural appropriation?" in *Ethnicities* 20 (2), 2020, pp.331-352.
17. Lenard and Balint, p.8.
18. James O. Young, *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2008.
19. Brahma Prakash, *Cultural Labour : Conceptualizing the 'Folk Performance' in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2019, p. 241.
20. Brahma, p. 240.
21. P. Kesava Kumar, "Popular Culture and Ideology: The Phenomenon of Gaddar." In *Economic and Political Weekly* 45 (7), 2010, pp. 61-67.
22. Brahma, p. 249.
23. Ibid, p. 267.
24. Guda Anjaiah is a prominent Telangana poet, writer and lyricist.
25. Rasamayi Balakishan, *Musitv News*, YouTube, 2021.
26. A reference to the irrigation projects taken up by the government post the state formation. Water resource allocation was a one of the central issues during the Telangana movement.
27. The Car symbol is the electoral symbol of the TRS Party.
28. Saichand, 2018.
29. The songs have been translated by the authors from Telugu to English.
30. Saichand, *Telangana Folk Singers Dhoom Dhaam With Mallanna*, 2013.
31. BJP Telangana, *Artist's performance at BJP Dhoom Dham*, 2018.
32. Lenard and Balint, p.9.
33. Telangana Samskruthika Saradhi (TSS) aims at creating awareness among the public about Government policies and schemes and disseminating the developmental programs of the Government through the group of artists of various art forms, in the interest of Telangana State.
34. Lenard and Balint, p.10.
35. Nernala Kishore and Daruvu Yellanna, *Nernala Kishore, Daruvu Ellanna on Telangana Samskruthika Sarathi Jobs Issue*, 2018.
36. Lenard and Balint, p.12.
37. Etelangana Channel, *Telangana Congress Party Samskruthika Sena - Dhoom Dham Dharuvu 21*, 2017.
38. Tamara, p.55.