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A Career in Music? ...

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Another point that the musicians shed light on was the development of the internet age, which added both advantages and drawbacks for the industry. "The internet is a sophisticated place, and in some ways I owe my career to it," says Tashfee, who was recently named the Brand Ambassador of Artistpread, an international artist management label. "Even though I got discovered through the internet, it is also true that piracy through the internet is a concern for the industry," she adds. It is to be noted that platforms like YouTube are constantly changing policies that are more disadvantageous for the budding content creators, and thus it is no more a reliable source of income, especially for music. "It is a misconception that you can earn large sums of money through music," says Pritom. "We now have to rely on telecom companies through which music can be digitally bought, and to be honest, we barely even receive 30 percent of the revenue generated". However, it also holds true that digital platforms will play a central role in the future of music. "When we signed with a certain music app company, it was a pretty fair deal. However, there are admittedly many flaws in the system. The gateway from the app to the consumer is not simple, and that drives many potential listeners away. It has to be made simpler", says Ishmamul Farhad, the guitarist for the popular band Shunno. "Also, you need to be able to negotiate when you sign a contract as such, and not be gullible. The people you will talk to will make you feel like you're signing the best deal in the world, and you have to be very aware of that", he continues. Farhad still considers himself a struggling musician, but

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thinks it is much easier doing music when one has a studio at home like he does. "I am blessed because my father was a professional musician as well. Studio sessions are very expensive, and that also holds a lot of musicians back", adds Musharrat Jahan Aanchal.

Even though the barrier of entry to the music industry seems high from this particular discussion, there are silver linings to it as well. Pritom Hasan admits that it is really rewarding to be a musician. "We all do music because we love it. As a nation, we are emotional and that is what holds us back most of the time. We need to be more professional in our

approach and that is what will make the industry a more viable place to operate in", he says. Even though not everyone can be massively popular, it is certainly possible to earn a good amount of money through live shows. "To be honest, the big shows pay pretty well. Winter is the season for music and you can gain many opportunities for live shows that way," says Oyshee. A typical corporate show has a healthy payout, not only for the headliners, but also the support acts. Even though the band scene has not exactly been flourishing, Ishmamul Farhad gives a surprising insight: "Well, not many know that our extreme metal scene is doing very

well. Many bands go to places like India, Nepal and Japan to perform, but we are not capitalising on this."

All the artists in the discussion agreed upon the fact that professional artist management was the way to go forward in the future. "When I signed with the company that I am contracted to right now, I was told that the only factor I will have to worry about from now on is music", says Tashfee. "The company manages my public relations, interviews, shows. I also earn a regular fee as well as cuts from the shows that I did. This takes a huge load off my back", she concludes. Pritom weighed in with some hope for the future: "As artist manage-

ment becomes more common in the country, we will have less difficulties to deal with. I think anyone who wants to pursue music today should first hire a manager," he says. "Even though the music industry has its fair share of problems, it is fair to say that problems exist in every country and it is our responsibility to try and make it better", asserts Ishmamul.

Overall, the discussion yielded a very simple answer: even though music as a profession is less viable than more conventional careers, it is very possible to earn a livelihood through it. It is challenging, but at the same time more accessible than it has ever been.



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