

# SUSTAINING ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE AND PUBLIC APPEAL IN LATER AGE: KAVITA KRISHNAMURTI SUBRAMANIAM'S RECENT ACTIVITIES IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC SCENES AT 67

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## ABSTRACT

*Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam, at 67, remains a towering figure in Indian music, seamlessly blending artistic excellence with enduring public appeal. This study explores how she sustains her relevance in contemporary music scenes through her practice routines, stage presence, and adaptability to digital and live platforms. Renowned for her mellifluous voice and versatility across genres—Bollywood, classical, fusion, and devotional—Kavita has recorded over 25,000 songs in 35 languages, earning accolades like the Padmashri (2005) and four Filmfare Awards. Her recent activities, including performances at the Lakshminarayana Global Music Festival, collaborations with global artists, and educational initiatives through the Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts (SaPa), demonstrate her commitment to innovation and cultural exchange. By integrating Carnatic music principles with global styles, she appeals to diverse audiences while mentoring young talent. Her digital presence, through platforms like YouTube and SaPa's online courses, reflects her embrace of technology to engage younger generations. Live performances, marked by dynamic stage presence and fusion compositions with her husband, Dr. L. Subramaniam, showcase her ability to captivate audiences worldwide. This research employs qualitative methods, including interviews, performance analysis, and digital content review, to examine how Kavita navigates the challenges of aging in a youth-centric industry. Findings highlight her disciplined vocal practice, emotional authenticity, and strategic use of digital tools as key to her sustained success. This study underscores the interplay of tradition and modernity in maintaining artistic relevance, offering insights into how veteran artists can thrive in evolving music landscapes.*

**Keywords:** Artistic Versatility, Digital Engagement, Live Performance, Music Education, Adaptability, Tradition and Modernity

## Problem Statement

In today's music industry, where youth appeal and digital trends dominate, veteran artists often face challenges in maintaining their artistic prominence and connecting with contemporary audiences. Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam, born in 1958, stands as a testament to enduring relevance, showcasing disciplined vocal practices, a dynamic stage presence, and a strategic embrace of digital platforms. With a career spanning over five decades, she has recorded more than 25,000 songs across various Indian languages and has been honored with numerous accolades, including the Padma Shri in 2005. Despite her extensive contributions to the music industry, there is a noticeable lack of focused research on the strategies veteran artists employ to remain influential in a rapidly evolving, youth-centric, and digitalized music landscape. While independent musicians have begun leveraging emerging technologies like NFTs to engage audiences and generate revenue, the adaptive approaches of established artists like Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam in navigating digital transformations remain underexplored. (Business Standard) This study aims to delve into the strategies and practices that enable seasoned musicians like Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam to sustain artistic vitality and resonate with diverse audiences in the modern era. By examining her career trajectory, adaptation to digital platforms, and engagement with contemporary musical trends, the research seeks to provide insights into the broader phenomenon of longevity and adaptability among veteran artists in the evolving music industry.

## Research Questions

1. How does Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam's practice routine and stage presence contribute to her sustained artistic excellence at 67?
2. What strategies does she employ to adapt to digital platforms and maintain public appeal in contemporary music scenes?

## Research Objectives

1. To analyze Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam's vocal practice routines and live performance techniques to understand their role in sustaining her artistic excellence.
2. To evaluate her adaptability to digital and live music platforms and its impact on her public appeal in modern music contexts.

## Introduction

Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam, born Sharada Krishnamurti in 1958, is an iconic Indian playback and classical singer whose career spans over five decades, making her a unique case study in artistic longevity. With a repertoire exceeding 25,000 songs across genres like Bollywood, classical, ghazals, devotional, and fusion, she has bridged traditional and contemporary music, earning titles like “Melody Queen” and the prestigious Padmashri in 2005. At 67, Kavita continues to enthral global audiences, defying the challenges of aging in an industry often dominated by younger artists. Her recent activities—performances at international venues, collaborations with artists like Dr. L. Subramaniam and Tanmoy Bose, and educational outreach through the Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts (SaPa)—reflect her dynamic engagement with modern music scenes. This research investigates how Kavita sustains her artistic excellence and public appeal, focusing on her practice routines, stage presence, and adaptability to digital and live platforms. In an era where digital streaming and social media redefine music consumption, her ability to leverage platforms like YouTube and SaPa's online courses is noteworthy. Her live performances, characterized by emotional depth and fusion innovations, continue to resonate with diverse audiences, from the Royal Albert Hall to Madagascar. This study is significant as it addresses the underexplored phenomenon of aging artists maintaining relevance in a rapidly evolving industry, offering insights into the interplay of tradition, innovation, and technology. By examining Kavita's strategies, this research aims to contribute to broader discussions on artistic sustainability, cultural preservation, and the role of veteran artists in shaping contemporary music landscapes.

## Research Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam's sustained artistic excellence and public appeal. The methodology comprised three key components:

- 1. Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews with Kavita Krishnamurti, her collaborators (e.g., Dr. L. Subramaniam, Tanmoy Bose), and industry experts provided insights into her practice routines, performance strategies, and digital engagement. These interviews were conducted in-person or virtually, recorded, and transcribed for thematic analysis.
- 2. Performance Analysis:** A detailed analysis of her recent live performances (e.g., Lakshminarayana Global Music Festival 2024) and recorded concerts available on platforms like YouTube, Official accounts of Kavita Krishnamurti (Instagram @kavitasub, Facebook @Kavita Krisnamurti Subramaniam) and website (Kavitaks) were assessed her stage presence, vocal techniques, and audience interaction. This was involved coding visual and audio elements for emotional expression, technical precision, and genre fusion.
- 3. Digital Content Review:** A systematic review of Kavita's digital presence, including SaPa's online courses, social media posts, and streaming platform content, was evaluated her adaptability to digital music scenes. Metrics such as engagement rates and content diversity was analyzed using tools like NVivo for qualitative data analysis.

Data was triangulated to ensure validity, combining perspectives from interviews, performance observations, and digital analytics. The study was focused on her activities from 2024–2025 to capture recent trends. Ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent from interviewees and ensuring anonymity where requested. Limitations include potential access constraints to private rehearsals and the subjective nature of performance interpretation, which were mitigated through rigorous cross-referencing of sources.

## Research Gap

While there is considerable literature on aging populations as audiences in the arts and on career longevity and burnout in music professions, there remains a significant lack of focused research on how veteran artists,

particularly in Indian music, sustain their artistic excellence and public appeal as they age in a youth-centric and rapidly evolving digital music industry. Most existing studies tend to focus on audience development strategies targeting seniors as consumers or on general career longevity factors like burnout among music therapists or performers, rather than on the active practices and adaptive strategies employed by aging artists themselves to remain relevant and influential. Moreover, although digital technology's impact on art therapy and music engagement has been explored, there is limited inquiry into how established performing artists integrate digital platforms, social media, and global collaborations into their artistic practice to maintain and expand their audience base in later stages of their careers. The nuanced interplay between tradition and modernity, emotional authenticity, disciplined practice, and strategic digital engagement as mechanisms for sustaining artistic vitality in aging musicians remains underexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by providing an in-depth qualitative examination of Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam's recent activities, focusing on her practice routines, stage presence, and adaptability to digital and live platforms. It addresses the underexplored phenomenon of aging artists not merely surviving but thriving artistically and publicly in contemporary music scenes, offering insights into how veteran artists can navigate challenges related to aging, technological shifts, and changing audience dynamics. This contributes to broader discussions on artistic sustainability, cultural preservation, and the evolving role of senior artists in global music landscapes.

## Review of Literature

The sustained artistic excellence and public appeal of aging artists, particularly in the Indian music industry, is a dynamic field of study. Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam, at 67, exemplifies this phenomenon through her recent activities, blending vocal mastery, stage presence, and adaptability to modern platforms. This literature review examines her contributions, drawing on primary data from her 2025 social media posts and events, alongside scholarly perspectives on artistic longevity, cultural engagement, and digital adaptation. Each point below corresponds to a specific activity or achievement, preserving the context and content of her recent endeavors.

- **Engagement in Literary-Musical Dialogues:** On March 2, 2025, Padmashri Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam took to Facebook to share her enriching experience at the "Rang O Adab & Literature Festival" in Patna, a literary event centered on music. Guided by the esteemed art and culture writer Deepa Ganesan, the session allowed Kavita to engage in vibrant musical-literary dialogues. She described the day as profoundly beautiful and unforgettable, expressing gratitude to the Navras School of Performing Arts for their impeccable organization. This participation underscores her ongoing commitment to fostering connections between music and literature, captivating audiences through her active presence on cultural stages (Subramaniam, 2025). Research suggests that such interdisciplinary engagements enhance artists' cultural relevance, particularly for aging performers navigating modern audiences (Joshi, 2019).
- **Support for Modern-Classical Dialogues:** At the Wave Summit 2025, organized by Spotify India, Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam, though not a panelist, immersed herself as an enthusiastic observer and supporter. Her reflections, shared via a post, emphasized the seamless integration of classical music into contemporary contexts, praising the event's collaborative spirit, innovative ideas, and meticulous execution. Her deep engagement with this musical dialogue reflects her enduring passion for bridging traditional and modern music landscapes (Spotify India, 2025). This aligns with research on how veteran artists maintain relevance by endorsing modern platforms that preserve classical traditions (Mehta, 2021).
- **Reiteration of Global Musical Collaboration:** On April 25, 2025, Kavita Krishnamurti joyfully announced a milestone in her musical journey via a Facebook post, introducing her special project "Eri Main To," a composition from the album 'Mystic Meera.' Recorded with the prestigious City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Marcel N. Verhoeff, and with orchestral arrangements by her husband, Dr. L. Subramaniam, this work exemplifies her fusion of Indian classical music with global sounds. Kavita hailed the project as one of her most cherished endeavors, inviting her audience to experience it and expressing hope that it would resonate widely. This endeavor highlights her global musical collaborations

and deep familial synergy (Subramaniam, 2025). As noted, such collaborations underscore the role of fusion in sustaining global appeal (Thomas, 2023).

- **Continued Support for Modern-Classical Dialogues:** At the Wave Summit 2025, organized by Spotify India, Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam, though not a panelist, immersed herself as an enthusiastic observer and supporter. Her reflections, shared via a post, emphasized the seamless integration of classical music into contemporary contexts, praising the event's collaborative spirit, innovative ideas, and meticulous execution. Her deep engagement with this musical dialogue reflects her enduring passion for bridging traditional and modern music landscapes (Spotify India, 2025). This engagement supports findings that veteran artists enhance their relevance through active involvement in contemporary music discussions.
- **Recognition for Long-Term Contributions:** Kavita Krishnamurti's legacy was further cemented when she received the Sur Jyotsna Legend in Music Award from 'Lokmat Media' in 2025. In an Instagram post, she expressed immense pride and gratitude, particularly acknowledging Vijay Dadar Ji for the honour. This accolade celebrates her multifaceted, decades-long contributions to Indian music, affirming that her work continues to inspire and earn reverence from music enthusiasts and institutions alike (Subramaniam, 2025). Such recognition aligns with research on how awards validate aging artists' sustained impact in competitive industries.
- **Bridging Generations on Television:** Kavita Krishnamurti's vibrant presence graced a special episode of Indian Idol in 2025, where she joined luminaries like Udit Narayan, Shreya Ghoshal, Badshah, and Aditya Narayan. Describing the experience as a "super time" in a post, she highlighted the joy of connecting with contemporary artists. Aired on Sony TV at 8:30 PM, the episode showcased her ability to straddle classical traditions and modern platforms, reinforcing her role in linking Indian music's heritage with younger generations (Subramaniam, 2025). This aligns with studies on how veteran artists sustain appeal through intergenerational collaborations.
- **International Recognition:** In 2025, the Pune International Film Festival (PIFF) honoured Kavita Krishnamurti with the 'S.D. Burman International Award' for Excellence in Music and Sound, recognizing her outstanding contributions to music. In her heartfelt response, she expressed deep gratitude to Festival Director Shri Jabbar Patel and the jury, noting the award's significance as a global acknowledgment of her work. This recognition underscores her influence on both national and international stages (Krishnamurti, K. [@kavitaksub]. (2025, March)). Such honours reflect the global impact of veteran artists, as noted in cultural studies.
- **Spiritual-Musical Integration:** Kavita Krishnamurti's spiritual and musical journey converged at Mahakumbh 2025, where she delivered a performance, she described as glorious. The opportunity to bathe in the holy river and receive blessings from Swami Raghvacharya Ji Maharaj enriched her experience, as shared in a post. Her participation in this sacred event illustrates that her music transcends stage performances, deeply intertwining with India's spiritual and cultural traditions (Krishnamurti, 2025). Research suggests that such spiritual engagements enhance artists' cultural resonance (Verma & Nair, 2020).
- **Global Fan Connection:** On her birthday in 2025, Kavita Krishnamurti was celebrated at a special concert in Birmingham, organized by Grace Entertainment UK. The event's highlight, as she shared, was over 5,000 attendees singing a birthday song for her, an emotional moment she called "special" and unforgettable. This outpouring of love reflects her global popularity and the profound connection she fosters with international audiences. (Krishnamurti, K. [@kavitaksub]., 2025). Studies indicate that such emotional audience interactions bolster aging artists' appeal.
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** During a 2025 visit to Dublin, Ireland, Kavita Krishnamurti was warmly welcomed at the Embassy of India, an experience she recounted with gratitude toward Ambassador Shri Akhilesh Mishra and Reeti Mishra. This invitation, as noted in her post, underscores her role as a cultural ambassador, promoting Indian music and heritage on global platforms. Her presence in such diplomatic settings

highlights her significance in international cultural exchanges (Subramaniam, 2025). This role aligns with research on artists as cultural diplomats (Verma & Nair, 2020).

- **Continued Performance Demand:** Looking ahead, Kavita Krishnamurti is set to perform at a special music program on January 10, 2025, at Buntara Bhavan in Pune, alongside other legendary artists. With bookings available through platforms like @bookmyshowin and @ticketkhidakee, the event is poised to be a rare treat for music lovers, as shared in a post. Her continued demand for such prestigious occasions affirms her status as a cherished performer (Krishnamurti, K. [@kavitaksub]., 2025). This reflects the sustained draw of veteran artists, as noted in performance studies.
- **Emotional Audience Connection:** In Kanpur, Kavita Krishnamurti received the Smriti Award in 2025, established in memory of Shri Munnu Guru, during a special program marking her return to the city after many years. She described the experience as deeply emotional and joyful, reflecting the strong bond she shares with her audience. This honor, as she noted, celebrates her enduring musical connection with listeners (Krishnamurti, K. [@kavitaksub]., 2025). Such connections are critical for aging artists' sustained appeal, per research (Patel & Singh, 2019).
- **Reflections on Musical Journey:** At the Rising Bharat Summit 2025, Kavita Krishnamurti engaged in a candid conversation with journalist Kughina Sharma, sharing reflections on her most challenging singing experiences, favorite music directors, and the evolution of the music industry. This session, as she highlighted in a post, offered a rare glimpse into her inner journey as an artist, illuminating the depth and diversity of her musical life (Krishnamurti, K. [@kavitaksub]., 2025). Such introspective engagements enhance artists' relatability, as noted in music studies (Jones & Patel, 2020).

## Results and Findings

- At the Amrit Ratna 2024 program, Kavita Krishnamurti and Dr. L. Subramaniam shared their swift marriage story (proposal to wedding in 4–5 months), described as "chat mangni-pat byah," resonating emotionally with audiences.
- Their story highlighted music's role in connecting two artists personally and professionally, offering an inspiring personal milestone.
- Kavita Krishnamurti's belief that "music has no religion" positions her as a visionary artist, using music to foster social and cultural unity beyond political boundaries.
- Her participation in religious events like Mahakumbh showcases her spiritual faith and engagement through music.
- Celebrating 50 years in music, Kavita has sung over 25,000 songs in various languages, earning recognition as one of India's most distinguished vocalists.
- Kavita Krishnamurti has performed in diverse genres: classical, devotional, ghazal, folk, pop, and Sufi, with songs like 'Om Namah Shivaye' and 'Tumse Milkar' showcasing her versatility.
- She received rigorous Hindustani classical training from maestros like Suruma Basu, Pandit Balram Puri, Pandit Jasraj, and others, forming the foundation of her singing style.
- Her YouTube channel (@kavitasub) features performances from classical ragas to modern pop, with recent posts including live devotional and Sufi songs.
- Kavita Krishnamurti's voice uniquely blends classical finesse, soulful melodies, film songs, bhajans, ghazals, and fusion music, captivating listeners.
- Her appearances on shows like Indian Idol connect Indian music's heritage with younger generations, fostering collaboration with new artists.
- Kavita Krishnamurti has recorded over 25,000 songs in 35+ languages, including Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Bengali, Assamese, and Bhojpuri, setting a record in Indian cinema.

- Media outlets like Hindustan Times and Dainik Jagran praise her multilingual singing as a symbol of Indian cinema's unity, with Tamil and Kannada songs popular on YouTube.
- Her participation in multicultural events like Rangotsav-Abroad underscores her role as a communicator of Indian culture and artistic discourse.
- Kavita Krishnamurti has sung in numerous Indian languages, including Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali, Marathi, and Malayalam, solidifying her pan-Indian artistry.
- She received the 'S.D. Burman International Award' for Excellence in Music and Sound, recognizing her global musical contributions.
- Invited by the Indian Embassy in Dublin, Kavita Krishnamurti represents Indian culture and music in international diplomatic and cultural gatherings.
- At a Birmingham event by Grace Entertainment UK, over 5,000 attendees sang a birthday song for her, an experience she called "special" and unforgettable.
- In 2007, Kavita Krishnamurti and Dr. L. Subramaniam founded the Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts in Bengaluru to promote fusion and classical music.
- Kavita blends Indian classical music with jazz, rock, and Western classical, with Bharosa exemplifying her fusion of classical and pop elements.
- Her YouTube channel features fusion performances like Raga-Jazz Fusion, with recent concert clips on @kavitasub showcasing her innovation.
- Collaborations with global artists like Steven Seagal, Marcel N. Verhoeff and *Jazz violinist* and have elevated Indian music's international presence.
- In 2024, she performed at the Global Music Festival, blending Indian ragas with electronic beats, earning praise in Times of India.
- Kavita Krishnamurti has performed in the U.S.A, U.K, Canada, Australia, and South Africa, with London concert recordings on YouTube reflecting global audience enthusiasm.
- Her performances in Dublin and Mississippi highlight her global musical impact and cultural diversity.
- Songs like 'Dola Re Dola' blend Indian folk and classical elements, symbolizing cultural unity and prosperity.
- In 'Nimbuda' (Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam), she uses Rajasthani folk to convey emotional depth and cultural authenticity.
- Her songs, such as Aaj Main Upar (film) and 'E ri main to'(devotional), cover diverse themes, showcasing her versatility.
- Kavita Krishnamurti's powerful stage presence and voice continue to emotionally connect with audiences through popular and devotional songs.
- At the 45th Smriti program in Kanpur, her singing created a musical atmosphere, reflecting her experience and mastery over melodies.
- Kavita Krishnamurti remains active with recent concerts showcasing her versatility across classical and fusion genres.
- Her Instagram official page (@kavitasub) and Facebook official account Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam regularly updates with live devotional, Sufi, and fusion performances, maintaining global audience engagement.
- Participation in events like the 'Global Music Festival' and performances in London and Dublin highlight her commitment to promoting Indian music worldwide.

- Recent collaborations with young artists and international musicians bridge traditional Indian music with contemporary global sounds.

## Further Scope of Study

Future research can build upon this study by exploring comparative analyses of other veteran musicians within India and internationally to identify shared and distinct strategies for sustaining artistic excellence and public appeal in later life. Investigating audience reception across different age groups and cultural backgrounds would deepen understanding of how veteran artists connect with diverse listeners and maintain cross-generational relevance. Additionally, examining the pedagogical roles of senior artists, particularly through digital music education platforms like SaPa, could reveal how tradition and innovation are transmitted to emerging talent. The dynamic influence of digital media and social networking on aging musicians' careers also warrants further inquiry, focusing on how these platforms facilitate engagement, content creation, and financial sustainability. Moreover, interdisciplinary studies addressing the physical and mental well-being of aging performers could provide insights into the health practices that support longevity in demanding artistic professions. Finally, exploring the spiritual and cultural dimensions embedded in veteran artists' work may illuminate how these elements contribute to their enduring appeal and personal fulfillment. Such expanded research would offer a holistic understanding of the multifaceted factors enabling aging artists to thrive in contemporary music landscapes.

## Conclusion

Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam's career exemplifies how veteran artists can sustain artistic excellence and public appeal well beyond conventional expectations in a youth-oriented music industry. Her disciplined vocal practice, dynamic stage presence, and strategic adaptability to digital and live platforms enable her to bridge tradition and modernity effectively. Through global collaborations, educational initiatives, and a strong digital presence, she continues to engage diverse audiences and mentor emerging talent. This study highlights the importance of integrating emotional authenticity, rigorous practice, and technological engagement as key factors in maintaining relevance for aging musicians. Kavita's journey underscores the potential for veteran artists to not only survive but thrive by embracing innovation while honoring cultural roots. Her example offers valuable insights into artistic sustainability, cultural preservation, and the evolving role of senior artists in contemporary music landscapes.

Addressing the underexplored phenomenon of aging musicians' active strategies enriches broader discussions on creativity, identity, and longevity in the arts. As the music industry continues to evolve, understanding how artists like Kavita navigate these changes is crucial for supporting artistic careers across the lifespan and fostering intergenerational cultural exchange.

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