

THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN HINDI CINEMA

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Abstract

This short paper offers a brief history of the Hindi film industry located in Mumbai (previously known as Bombay) and the role the film music has played in the popularity and success of Hindi movies, locally and globally. The paper describes the effect of the Internet on the marketing of these movies and the film music that remains an integral part of the Indian cinematic phenomenon. The paper also highlights the importance of four essential elements in Hindi film music: the songwriter, the music director, the playback singer, and the choreographer.

Keywords: Indian cinema, media and society, movie marketing, musicals, music and movies

1. The effect of the internet on movies in India

The Internet has changed the way the audience acquires their news, weather, sports' scores, and listings for entertainment. These, at one time, were the domain of the newspapers. Newspapers have lost a substantial portion of their advertising revenues to the Internet. The Internet has also taken away readership from the magazines to the blogs and other such websites. Magazines, too, have shrunk in sizes and lost advertising revenues. The book industry has met a similar fate. In many mid-size cities and Malls in the U.S., there are no longer any brick-and-mortar bookstores. Chains such as B. Dalton, Borders, and Books-A-Million are no longer in business. More and more, the readers download the books in digital formats. Similarly, music no longer comes from the radio or recorded media such as records, tapes, or CDs. Nor do people frequent record stores to purchase music. Record store chains such as Camelot Music, Goody, Virgin Records and Tower Records have all become extinct. Listening to, and buying of, music is conducted in the cyberspace. Movie rental businesses such as Blockbuster and Hollywood Video that soared with the penetration of VCRs and videotape, and later with DVDs, have all but vanished surrendering to online platforms such as Netflix, Hulu Plus, Cloudload, and YouTube.

The impact of the internet is not limited to the media industries in the US. Major cities in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East are experiencing similar trends.

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The shift from the traditional media such as books, newspapers, magazines, recorded music to their digital versions has had a doubly damaging effect on the movie industry. Not only have the movies lost a substantial share of the movie going audiences to the digital platforms, the revenues from the sale of tie-ins such as Long Playing records (LPs,) cassettes, and CDs as the soundtrack albums have also been lost to the digital downloads.

With the popularity of Rock and Roll and improved sound quality of LPs and 45 RPM singles during the 1950s and 1960s, music became an important consideration in the marketing of the movies. For instance, most of Elvis Presley movies were released with tie-in records. Two movies featuring The Beatles, *A Hard Day's Night* (Richard Lester 1964) and *Help* (Richard Lester 1965) sold more than 4 million and 3 million copies respectively. The music industry's better days in the US were the 1990s. Some of the biggest sales for the movie albums were in the 1990s (Marich, 2009: 204). During the 1990s, *The Bodyguard* (Mick Jackson 1992) sold 16 million albums; *Saturday Night Fever* (John Badham 1977) and *Dirty Dancing* (Emile Ardolino 1987) sold 11 million albums each, *Titanic* (James Cameron 1997) sold 10.1 million copies; *The Lion King* (Roger Allers & Rob Minkoff 1994) sold 10 million. *Grease* (Randal Kleiser 1978) sold 6 million albums (Marich, 2009: 205).

Until the year 2000, it was not uncommon for Hollywood movies to issue a CD that contained all the music tracks used in the movie. Identical were the practices in India and its movie industry in Mumbai. Since the late 1940s, film music has dominated the Indian music industry accounting for 80 percent of music sales in India (Ganti, 2004:40). Film producers typically created an album for a film and licensed the exploitation rights to a music company such as EMI, Sony, or Saregama. These music rights could cover as much as 25 to 30 percent of a film's total cost (Nendick & Balsara, 2011). Many of the larger production houses such as Yash Raj Films have set up their own music labels.

2. Development of the movie industry in India

When one talks of the Indian movie industry, one refers to all the movies made in various regions and languages in India. More than 1600 feature length films are produced in India annually (McCarthy, 2014). However, the largest film industry in India is the Hindi film industry located in Mumbai. The Hindi film industry produces around 20% of films in India. Although this paper offers a brief history of the development of the film industry in India, it focuses on Hindi movies and their music. Henceforth, the term "Hindi cinema" will refer to the movies made in Mumbai, and "Indian cinema" will include all the movie industries in India.

The movie industry in India has closely followed the developments in the movie industry in Hollywood. Thomas Edison held the first showing of moving pictures in 1896. The same year, Lumiere Brothers brought the moving pictures to India and had a screening in Bombay – now Mumbai (Ramnathan, 1996). Edison's studio turned out a loosely structured documentary short, *A Day in the Life of a Fireman*, (Edwin Porter 1903) and a narrative movie, *The Great Train Robbery*, (Edwin Porter 1904). Save Dada, an Indian filmmaker, was making short narrative films (e.g. *Man and Monkey*, *The wrestlers*) as early as 1899. Dada made a documentary about the coronation of King Edward the VII in Calcutta in 1903. The first American major feature film, *The Birth of a Nation*, directed by D.W. Griffith was released in 1914. Charlie Chaplin's first feature film, *The Kid*, came out in 1921. Dadasaheb Phalke produced the first Indian feature film, *King Harichandra* in 1913 (Gosh, 2002). The first American sound picture, *The Jazz Singer* (Dir. Alan Crosland), was released in 1927. Ardeshir Irani directed India's first full-length talkie, *Alam Ara* (1931) a musical with seven songs. Director Rouben Mamoulian's *Becky Sharp* (1935) was the first American color feature; the first color film in India, *Kisan Kanya/Woman Farmer* (Dir. Ardeshir Irani) was released in 1937. The first American Cinemascope film, *The Robe* (Dir. Henry Koster) came out in 1953. The first Indian cinemascope film *Kaagaz Ke Phool/Paper Flowers* (Dir. Guru Dutt) was completed in 1959 (Gosh, 2002).

The star-system emerged in Hollywood with the popularity of Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin during the 1910s (McClure, 1971). The movie industry in India developed its own stars around the same time. It was, however, a Hindi film, *Kismet/Destiny* (Gayan Mukherjee 1943) that ran for 187 weeks at a single movie theater in Calcutta and launched its male lead, Ashok Kumar, as the first superstar of Hindi cinema (Gosh, 2002).

Many story-types and genres such as the gangster movie, the western, family drama, historical movies, costume movies, love stories, war stories and musical evolved in Hollywood. Indian cinema copied each of these genres but with two marked differences. Irrespective of their story-types, a majority of the Indian films included a love story, and almost all of them contained musical numbers and dances. The tradition of song and dance in the Indian cinema has come from the Indian theater that had its roots in fantasy and mythology.

2.1 Movie content and popular appeal

A large segment of the Indian population lives in poverty; a large portion of the population is also illiterate. Consequently, very few families have access to television sets or radio sets. Very few can afford a newspaper or a book; even fewer can read. Thus, the only mass medium available to the masses in India is the motion pictures (Lent, 1990). Movies are inexpensive, offer new movies every

week, and provide comfort from the heat and humidity for two and a half hours. The average ticket price in India is US\$ 0.69.

Functionalist sociologists such as Robert K. Merton, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Karl-Erik Rosengren have explored that question: Why do the audiences use any particular medium? Previous research suggests that the viewers go to movies to escape reality, to fantasize, to socialize with friends or family, to experience adventure, and to be entertained (Livingstone, 1993). Popular Indian cinema provides these ingredients. In terms of content, all Indian movies have doses of romance, action, overseas locations, comedy and social justice. In these movies, love conquers all, sinners are punished and criminals are brought to justice, honesty is rewarded and the poor and underprivileged receive their due dignity.

In the make-believe world of modern Hindi films, in most cases, despite all obstacles, the boy gets the girl and everyone lives happily ever after. In Indian dream factory, all leading men are picture-perfect. They are tall, well built and handsome. All leading ladies are as beautiful as supermodels and beauty queens. Some have indeed been crowned as Miss India, others as Miss World or Miss Universe. For instance, Dia Mirza, Priyanka Chopra. Lara Dutta, Aishwarya Rai, Zeenat Aman and Sushmita Sen have all been winners of national and international beauty pageants. In a nutshell, Indian movies are fairy tales with beautiful people and locations. An Indian poet and screenwriter, Javed Akhtar, has claimed that the films “*reflect the desires, the hopes, values, and traditions. They are not a real reflection but the dreams of a society*” (Deutsche Welle, 2013).

Indian cinema has also played a significant role in sustaining the social and cultural fabric of its society (Vir, Woodward & Watson, 2002; Taj, 2002). With over 70 major languages, four major religions, and numerous different cultures, keeping the country and its people united is no easy task. Urdu/Hindi movies, especially the ones during the pre-independence period to the 1950s, produced in Bombay, relied on a language that was understood in all parts of India. Bombay movies, the stars of these movies, and the music popularized by these movies were seen as the “Indian Cinema”, Indian stars, and Indian film music. In this regard, the Bombay movies industry served as a glue that bonded diverse populations in India (Chakravarty, 1993).

Indian movies, as most are rooted in mythology and tradition, continue to reinforce the cultural values that are not local but national. Actions, dialogues, and attitudes of the “good guys” in the Indian movies reinforce the cultural values and provide role models.

Indian cinema has also played an important role in developing nationalism in India. From the early 1940s when the struggle for independence assumed a feverish pitch across the country, the movies presented themes to unite the diverse groups in a

common cause – to bring an end to the British colonialism.. Director, Mahboob Khan's *Humayun* (1945) was on such example for “promoting Hindu-Muslim unity in the build-up to Partition” (Dwyer, 2005:16). An economist and historian, Desai, asserts that the biggest influence of the Indian cinema was on nationalism and that “cinema actually has been the most vibrant medium for telling India its own story, the story of its struggle for independence, its constant struggle to achieve national integration and to emerge as a global presence” (Desai, 2013).

2.2 Scope and magnitude of the Indian film industry

Ever since the early 1970s, the Indian movie industry has retained the top position as the country that produced the largest number of movies; Hollywood has held the second place. However, according to a United Nations report, in 2014, 1969 movies were produced in 22 different languages in India. India also has the highest number of movie admissions in the world. Two thousand million movie tickets were sold in the India in the year 2011, as compared to 1345 million in the US. While there are 117 movie screen per million in the US, there are only 12 screens per million in India. France has 77 and Denmark has 61 screens per million.

The Indian film industry reached overall revenues of \$1.86 billion in 2011, up 11.5 percent over 2010. This is projected to rise at a compound annual growth rate of 10.1 percent to \$3 billion in 2016 (Bhushan, 2012). While nearly 66 percent of the revenues for Hollywood come from the overseas markets and 34 percent from the domestic markets, the situation is reversed for the Indian movies industry. Two-thirds of its revenues are generated domestically and one-third in the foreign markets. Music rights bring 2 percent to the total of industry's profits (Indian Media Industry Report, 2015).

From the time of India's independence in 1947 to the late 1960s is the period that film historian refer to as the Golden Age of Indian cinema (Chakravarty, 1993; Chandran, 2002). During this period, the movies became hits or flops depending on the popularity of their music. This is not to steal the credit from directors such as Satyajit Ray, Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, Bimal Roy, K. Asif, Mahboob Khan, Yash Chopra, and V. Shantaram who made some of the most successful and critically acclaimed films during that time. Nor can one deny the contributions of the leading male stars such as Ashok Kumar, Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor, and Dev Anand, or the leading ladies including Nargis, Madhubala, Nimmi, and Nutan. These were the first "stars" of Indian cinema and their work cemented the star system that remains the backbone of the Hindi film industry of present. However, if the stars are the backbone of the industry, music is its heartbeat.

2.3 Recording industry in India

At the turn of the 19th century, flat disc records were made with a natural rubber-based material known as shellac. India, a major producer of shellac, producing roughly 75 percent of world shellac production, exported the material to UK, US, and Germany (Kinnear, 1994). As early as 1908, a British record manufacturing company - Electrical and Musical Industries (EMI) started a record pressing company which was opened in Calcutta to service the local market as well as manufacture records for export. This was the start of the Gramophone Company of India. Here the singers were accompanied by a musical instrument, the harmonium (*Baja* in Hindi). The recording company became known as *Bajakhana* – the *Baja* place - with its label, His Master's Voice (HMV) that remained the dominant local label until it was acquired by – RPG Group in 1985. The name of the company changed from to 'Saregama India Limited' in the year 2000. "Sa-Re-Ga-Ma" are the first four notes of the Indian musical scale. The major players in the music business were Saregama, Tips Industries, Universal Music, Time Music, Sony Music, Zee Music, and T-Series Ltd. All of these were heavily invested in film music.

India is the 20th largest music industry in the world with annual revenues of USD\$155 million. According to KPMG's estimates, it is expected to reach US\$ 300 million by 2019, claiming the top-10 position ahead of South Korea, The Netherlands, Italy, Brazil, and Sweden.

Like many other countries, depending on the sale volumes, the Indian music industry also awards Gold and Platinum status to the records and albums. Hindi film category, which remains the most dominant music genre, considers 250,000 copies and 500,000 copies, respectively, for gold and platinum certificates.

2.4 The economics of film production in India

The biggest portion of an Indian movie budget is allocated to its stars (Murari, 2003). The second biggest expense is that of music. This category includes expenses such as lyrics, composition by the music director, fees for the playback singer, backup singers, and instrumentalists (Srivastava, 2002). Also related to music are the fee for the choreographer and the backup dancers.

EXHIBIT 1**Cost Breakdown for a Big-Budget Film**

Artists and Technicians	37 %
Shooting/Production Expenses ²	45 %
Insurance, Interest & Financing	4.5 %
Print cost ³	4.5 %
Publicity ⁴	9 %
Total	100

Movies with A-List stars can cost upwards of UD\$20 million. A Hindi/Tamil movie due to be released in 2017, titled, *2.0* (Dir. Shanmugam Shankar), is reportedly budgeted at US\$74 million. Another Telugu/Tamil movie, *Baahubali: The Conclusion* (Dir. Srisaila Rajamouli) is budgeted at US\$30 million.

The talent (actors and music) costs of a film can absorb as much as 50 percent of the budget. The stars on the A-List can receive as much as UD\$ 1.5 million in fees and a share of the profit. A director may get as much as US\$ 750,000.

3. Music in marketing Indian movies

Unlike Hollywood, a production in India does not begin with a story or a script. Nor does it begin with acquiring a successful director or with signing a superstar. Most producers start their productions by recording a song. Storywriters weave the lyrics of the songs into the stories as productions progress. Initially, a couple of songs are recorded and released in the market. Radio stations begin to play these songs and depending on the lyrics, the composition, the melody, and the popularity of the singer, a song may become a hit long before any images have been recorded on film.

² Production expenses for Hindi films are generally high as these films include shoots in foreign countries.

³ Movies generate 60 % to 80% of their theatrical revenues in the first week. To protect their investments, Indian movies with A-List stars are given a wall-to-wall release in the domestic market. As a result movies such as *PK* (2014) starring Aamir Khan was released in across 5200 screens. A film print costs about US\$ 1,000. A film print weighs 40-50 kg. Print transportation is a big cost item in distribution.

⁴ Even though the national average is close to 9 percent, the promotion and advertising costs for movies with A-List players can go as high as 15-20 percent of the budget (KPMG Report 2015).

The next step in production is to shoot a dance sequence or to picturize the song. A song only runs three to five minutes in a movie but it may take as long as ten working days to shoot. The songs and dance sequences are edited and an eight to ten-minute long reel is prepared to show the distributors. To take a project to this stage, a producer or investor has to pay a songwriter, the playback singers, a composer, instrumentalists, actors, a choreographer, and the recording studio expenses. The producer also pays for the actual expenses involved in shooting the songs and the dance sequences.

Preparing an attractive reel can cost as much as \$50,000. This is the kind of seed money that is required to launch a project. Based on the success and popularity of the songs and the visual appeal of the dance and song sequences, producers attract monies from distributors and complete their films. Songs determine the fate of a movie. Few films succeed without a successful music, and even fewer without any songs or dances (Rao, 2010). In a worst-case scenario, if a producer fails to raise the money the project is abandoned and the investment becomes a total loss. At other times, unsuccessful producers sell the recorded songs to other producers. Every year, several projects are left unfinished, however, the fact remains that more than 1500 movies do get produced every year. On the average, a movie has five songs. This translates into roughly 7,500 new movie songs annually. Many of these songs are filmed as dance sequences.

Movie songs (music and dances) are a parallel industry within the movie industry in India. Writers are needed to pen 7,500 new songs every year. Singers are needed to perform/record these songs. Hundreds of additional singers are required as chorus singers. Music composers are needed to compose and arrange the melodies and orchestrations for these songs. Literally thousands of musicians are employed annually to play various instruments to back up the songs. A large number of recording studios and technicians are employed to record, mix, and master these tracks. Choreographers are needed to direct and rehearse with hundreds of dancers. And finally, the music companies and promoters play an important role in promoting and marketing these songs on the radio, in music stores, and on the Internet. There are four essential elements in Indian film music: the songwriter, the music director, the playback singer, and the choreographer.

3.1 The song writers

Ever since 1837, when during the British rule, Urdu replaced Persian as the official language, Urdu remained the language of poetry in the subcontinent. It took another 60 years before Hindi was granted an equal status. With the division of India in 1947, Urdu became associated with the Muslim culture and Pakistan, and Hindi with Hinduism and India. In 1948, Pakistan declared Urdu as her national language. In 1950, India claimed Hindi as her national language. Urdu poetry flourished in both countries and for another decade after the independence, movies

made in Bombay were made in the Urdu language. Even when the stories or themes dealt with Hindu mythology using some dialogue in Hindi, the songs were written in Urdu. There were two reasons for such a leaning towards Urdu. Most of the Indian poets wrote in Urdu, and it was the language that was understood in all parts of India. For the film songs to gain popularity with the masses, Urdu was the practical and logical choice. Many of the great Indian poets of the 20th century were very successful writing songs for the Indian movies. India is a unique country where “a multitude of famous litterateurs have become professional lyric writers ... This partly explains the high standards of the classic Hindi song” (Vijayakar, 2013: 56). Indian movie industry and the audience have looked beyond the religious divide; both Muslim poets (Shakeel Badayuni, Kaifi Azmi, Javed Akhtar, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Hasrat Jaipuri, Sahir Ludehanvi were Muslims; Shailendra, Kavi Pradeep, and Anand Bakshi and were Hindus, and Gulzar, a Sikh.

Most films songs are written to advance the plot and to intensify the mood in a dramatic scene. There have been just as many occasions when directors have created twists and turns in a story to take maximum advantage of the lyrics. Film songs are an integral part of a film, however, hit songs become self-complete units, with their lyrics and melody, offering an emotionally satisfying experience that does not require any images.

Songwriter’s penmanship is put to test in three forms. A common practice is that the producer or the director presents a story or a specific situation in a story to the poet. The poet is asked to write a song that not only fits the situation but also advance the story. At other times, the songwriter is presented with a melody or a tune and is asked to write within the given meter. Occasionally, a piece of poetry stands on its own and is integrated into a film’s plot. At times, a poet may be asked to write a title song for a film. Such a song would include the name of the movies but may or may not have anything to do with the plot of the movie. Although a majority of Indian films are love stories, the songs are not only about love or love lost. There are songs in praise of beauty, of deities, about seasons, about cultural festivals; there are songs as social commentary and songs for comic relief. A songwriter, depending on his or her track record, may receive anywhere from US\$ 100 to US\$ 10,000 per song. Lyricists do not receive any royalties from the sale of their songs. The only opportunity for a poet to receive any royalties is his or her poetry is published as a book.

3.2 The music composers

With the success of the first Indian sound film, *Alam Ara* (Ardeshir Irani 1931), film music became an essential element in Indian cinema. Background music was used to set the mood for certain scenes, and used in place of sound effects. These chores were relatively easy. The challenge came with the composition of film songs and their orchestration. For this task, musicians trained in the classical

tradition were brought in as music directors. It is the work of such composers that has injected Indian classical music into popular film songs. In many instances, music composers worked in teams; one person creates the melody, the other sets the arrangement of various instruments. Shankar and Jaikishan were one such duo; Kalyan Jee and Anand Jee were another. Some renowned composers such as Sachin Dev Burman and Naushad were trained in the classical tradition. These artists blended the classical with the contemporary. Music directors, as this group is referred to in India, can be paid between US\$ 20,000 to US\$ 400,000 per film. Until recently, the composers did not receive any share of the subsequent royalties from their work. There is a move to change the existing setup and pay royalties to the writers, composers, and singers. A. R. Rahman, who won two Oscars for *Slumdog Millionaire* (Danny Boyle 2008), insisted on retaining the rights to his compositions and the rights to perform these at live concerts. When a producer refused to go along, Rahman declined the offer to compose the music. Consequently, Rahman turned down *Om Shanti Om* (Farhad Khan 2007) which became one of the top-grossing Hindi movies (*Dawn*, 2009). Prominent film music composers such as Naushad, S.D. Berman, Kalyan Jee - Anand Jee. Shankar-Jaikishan, Khayam and many others never received any royalties from the sale of their music in the form of records, cassettes, CDs, or downloads. Needless to say that no royalties ever go to the musicians or the backup vocalists.

3.3 The playback singers

For the first ten years of talkies in India, actors did their own singing. As the demand for sound movies increased, producers looked for creative strategies for using actors that were unable to sing. Playback singing offered a practical solution. Shamshad Begum and Mukesh began their film singing careers in 1941, Manna Dey arrived in 1942, Mohammad Rafi and Hemant Kumar in 1944, Geeta Dutt in 1946 and Lata Mangeshkar in 1947. Asha Bhosle and Kishor Kumar appeared on the scene in 1948.

These playback singers revolutionized the nature of Indian film songs and their voices lifted film songs from being mere 'add-ons' in the film to an essential element adding to the aesthetic and commercial value of a film. Once professional singers joined forces, lyrics writing too evolved into a poetic art form.

All elements of film music reached their peak in 1949 with actor-director-producer Raj Kapoor's movie, *Barsaat/Rain* (Raj Kapoor 1949). This was the first Indian movie to that became a megahit on the strength and popularity of its songs. The movie contained 11 songs and each one became a hit. Eight of these songs were solos by Lata Mangeshkar, for another two duets, she was joined by Mukesh. Mohammad Rafi sang the only male solo. Arguably, the movies, *Barsaat*, contains some of the best music in the history of Hindi film (Dwyer, 2005:19).

Many historians have referred to the period between 1950 and 1970 as the “golden era” of Indian film music (Krishnan, 2003). Fifty years later, songs and soundtracks from the hit movies of the 1950s and 1960s are still in great demand on audiocassettes, CDs, and digital downloads. The popularity of songs from a film has a directly positive correlation with the success of the film’s initial run at the theaters. Hit songs also guarantee subsequent demand in the rental market and sale of its soundtrack on CDs and audiocassettes. Some of the popular singers of the Golden Era, such as Mohammad Rafi, Kishor Kumar, and Mukesh have recorded upwards of 5000 songs each. Lata Mangeshkar held the Guinness Book of World Record for having recorded more than 26,000 songs in a dozen different languages. Asha Bhosle, who began singing for the movies in 1948 and continues to sing at the time of this writing (June 2016) has recorded more than 13,000 songs.

For many of the actors in Indian cinema, their star persona is built on their good looks, their acting talent, and their own voice plus the association with a playback singer who sings for them. For instance, during the 1950s, Raj Kapoor’s popularity depended a great deal on the voice of playback singer Mukesh who recorded a string of hits for the star. During the 1960s, Shammi Kapoor’s success depended on songs recorded by Mohammed Rafi. Similarly, another superstar of the 1970s, Rajesh Khanna owed much of his success to the singing voice of Kishore Kumar. This practice of repeated pairing of a star and a singer cultivates a demand for the teaming of a certain star with a certain singer; both become equally important. Playback singers do not receive any royalties from the subsequent sale of their songs. In 2012, Lata Mangeshkar launched her own recording label – LM Music.

3.4 The choreographer (the dance director)

It’s a rare exception, especially for a Hindi movie, not to have at least one song-and-dance sequence. While a director is responsible for directing the dramatic and technical aspects of a film, the composer is responsible for the composing and recording of background music and the songs for the film. The choreographer is the individual who is in-charge of teaching and rehearsing the moves for a dance.

Dance numbers were worked into the plots by either having the main actress as a professional dancer or by having some “bad guys” frequenting a nightclub where a scantily clad woman sings and dances. In some instances, the “good-guy” gets lured into the club by a seductress dancer. During the 1950s and 1960s, dancers such as Cuckoo Moray and Helen added box-office to their movies. At the height of her career in the 1950s, Cuckoo was paid more money for a dance number than some of the leading actors in the same movie. Both Cuckoo and Helen have helped the box-office of countless movies.

During the 1980s when the romantic themes of the Indian movies gave way to movies with action and violence, it became more difficult to fit the dance

sequences into the story lines. A new phenomenon, “an item song” emerged. Regardless of the nature of the story, one could fit a song in a dream sequence, or a character may find himself/herself in a seasonal festival such as the festival of colors (*Holi*) or the festival of lights (*Devali*). During such festivals, the Hindi movie conventions have taught its audiences that everyone sings and dances. Or it happens to be someone’s birthday – always a good excuse for a dance and a song. The item songs are performed by dancers that may or may not be the cast members in the movies. These dancers, with an army of backup dancers, appear for a dance and when the song ends, they are no more. However, some of the item dancers such as Sunny Leone, Malaika Arora Khan, Katrina Kaif, Kareena Kapoor, and Priyanka Chopra are paid tens of thousands of dollars for dance sequences that may run for only as long as five minutes in a movie.

Director. Sonakshi Sinha's movie, *Boss* (2013) included an item song at an estimated cost of US\$ 880,000. The dance number, 'Party All Night' featured rapper Yo Honey Singh, a dancer, Sonakshi, Akshay Kumar, the star of the movie, and 600 foreign models dancing in the background. Half of the song was shot on a movie set in Mumbai and the other half at a pub in Bangkok (Srivastava, 2013). [Link to the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moLHGy3VxjY_]

In 2016, a dancer who turned to acting and then to directing. Praphu Deva received US\$ 4.4 million for choreographing and directing a movie, dethroning Rohit Shetty as the most highly paid director in India with a salary of US\$ 3 million per movie. As a director, Praphu Deva may receive a percentage of the profits from the movies, as a choreographer, he would not receive any royalty payments.

4. Conclusion

According to a list of all-time Top-10 Indian movie soundtracks, six were made prior to 1982 (Verma, 2013). Themes and content of the movies have shifted to indestructible superheroes performing high-tech stunts, flying through explosions and fires accomplishing impossible feats with the aid of computer-generated animation and special effects. There’s little room for a romantic song in such contexts. With the popularity of Hip-Hop, Rap, and Salsa, the market for songs with strong poetic element and melody has fallen. Additionally, the marketing of music has undergone a major change. Music distribution has shifted from physical distribution to digital distribution. Music buyers no longer purchase albums, instead, they only download and pay for the tracks they wish to have. According to a media industry report, in the year 2010, 70 percent of the music was sold as CDs and other tangible media forms; only 30 percent was sold digitally, in the year 2015, 54 percent of the sales were in digital formats (Indian Media Industry Report, 2015:84). Not unlike the US market where nearly 53 percent of the sales’ share is retained by the music label (Campbell, Martin, & Fabos, 2015:141), a

lion's share of the profits from the film music is retained by the recording companies.

Film music on the radio and in the form of records was a powerful marketing tool for the movies during the 1950s, the 1960s, and 1970s. During this period, Indian film songs became a part of the Indian cultural heritage and have developed their own distinct identity and form. For many generations of moviegoers, the movie melodies have offered hope to young lovers, soothed broken hearts, spoke against social injustices and lifted the spirits with their beauty, wit, and wisdom. Innumerable times, film songs have saved deplorable movies from becoming box office flops.

Another recent trend in Indian cinema is of using songs in the background as inner monologs. Often, such songs resemble chants rather than melodious couplets in rhyming verses. Outside of their movie context, such songs have little appeal while the popular songs of the 1950s and 1960s were enjoyable even outside their movie/story context. Many of the playback singers of the "Golden Era", primarily associated with the movie music, have retired or passed on. The new generation of singers, not unlike their European counterparts, is keen on developing their solo careers outside the movie business through concert tours. Change is not always undesirable. Sometimes, one needs to go a long way out of the way to come back a short distance correctly. At other times, there may not be a coming back. Only time will tell.

Hit movies are remembered not only for their stars but also for their songs. In the case of many not-so-successful movies, their titles are remembered only because their songs have remained popular and assumed lives of their own. In the era of "item songs" and Indian Rap, the dance sequences of the item songs are immensely popular with the new generation of film audiences. The success of the top-10 money makers in the last ten years have much to thank for the popularity of their item songs and item girls. Even during the best years of the Hindi cinema, in many instances, music and the dances were more inspiring than the films. In many instances, this also holds true in the 2010s. However, any discussion of Indian cinema of any period remains incomplete without taking into account and crediting Indian film music.

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