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LOLLYWOOD – PAKISTANI CINEMA THROUGH A TRANSITIONAL LENS

Dr Erum Hafeez Aslam

ABSTRACT

The 68-year long history of Pakistani films has had its story of successes and failures. It has been a long time since films, as an industry and medium, have been struggling to carve a niche for themselves. Recuperating from the blow of partition, films produced in Pakistan indicate that despite all odds, the local film industry has a lot of talent in every area of production: be it actors, directors, technicians, poets or script writers. Yet, for some reasons, successful combinations have not been able to sustain themselves long enough to contribute significantly. As a consequence, we have only been exposed to a few glimpses of rare productions. The objective of this study is to archive the historical evolution of Pakistani Cinema and give an overview of the factors that are supposedly contribute to the rise and fall of the local film industry in different eras.

This study follows the two-pronged approach. Both Qualitative Content Analysis and Literature Review are used as the methods of research. Firstly, five top grossing Pakistani films are sampled and content analyzed through popularity charts from each of the six decades under study. Subsequently, relevant literature, including newspapers and magazines articles, reviews and books are referred through online database to complement the analysis of the films. Convenient random sampling technique is used for the selection of the mainstream literature, reviewed.

It is evident from the study that the lack of vibrant ideas, repetitive themes, absence of modern facilities, industry's infighting besides illegal screening of Indian films on cable, new electronic channels and availability of pirated foreign films have led to the downfall of the Pakistani film industry. The study recommends that Lollywood should explore the niche market and develop itself on its cultural strength. The current boom of the Pakistani cinema demands a multifaceted approach to improve simultaneously quality, quantity and economics of the situation.

KEY WORDS

Lollywood, Pakistani Cinema, Historical Evolution, Film Industry, Different Eras.

INTRODUCTION

Lollywood is the term coined after Bollywood and Hollywood that represents Pakistani Film Industry. It is considered the hub of feature films, mostly produced in Urdu besides regional languages. Till 1971, Pakistani film industry had three film making centers viz., Dhaka, Karachi and Lahore. However, after the fall of Dhaka, it lost one of its key production hubs which further confined to Lahore during 1980s in the martial law regime. It is the same time period when Pakistani cinema lost its past glory.

This study, thus, aims to examine the historical journey of Pakistani cinema across the last 68 years. It is important to identify the key factors that have led to the downfall of film industry in Pakistan in the yesteryears, and make it public in the current age, when we witness the revival of cinema in the country once again. This study can be considered a trend-setter since there is no such research locally conducted in the field.

However, it has its own limitations. In the absence of prior research studies and quality recordings of many old films, this research is heavily relied on the available secondary sources and media literature. Since the study follows the temporal approach and covers around seventy years' history, an in-depth analysis of the socio-political and economic conditions of different eras is impossible though it might have an impact on the native film industry.

It is, therefore, recommended that the future studies should focus on a relatively short time period and cover these aspects as well. Besides a comparative study between Lollywood and Bollywood with identical roots would also help to analyse the local cinema trends and public expectations in the region

HISTORICAL BACKGORUND

PREPARTITION FILM INDUSTRY OF LAHORE (1930s–1946)

In the 1930s, Lahore's film industry was very much influenced by Hollywood in every sphere of production, including stories, acting and costumes. The native heroes of 30s *would appear like Douglas Fairbanks and Errol Flynn* — the then Hollywood stars. It is perhaps because of the fact that Lahore wanted to distinguish itself from Bombay through its production.

According to the History of Lollywood, 2008, “Kardaar and Ismael set up a studio and a production company named as the **United Players Corporation** in 1928 at the Ravi Road, Lahore. The duo hired

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several actors, including Hiralal, Gul Hameed, Nazeer, Pran Sikhand, Ahmed Deen and the actresses such as Kaushalya Devi, Gulzaar and Mumtaaz to work on their projects.

In those days, shooting was mainly done in daylight and limited their productivity, but the area they encompassed was enriched with locations including important landmarks.” (History of Lollywood :The Silent Era"- Pakistani Film, 2008)

Kardar’s studio mostly had film projects with English titles such as *Sweet Heart, The Prisoner, Masked Rider, The Golden Dagger, Passion Flower, The Sacred Flower, House Boat, Golden Temple, The Award, and Paradise*. A few films with Urdu titles such as *Lala Rukh, Kafir, Khawaja Sira and Firdaus* were also under production. But hardly some of them completed successfully since all these were soundless films which became obsolete shortly. Bombay and Calcutta Film Industries were already experimenting with sound movies and ultimately Bombay released the first Indo-Pak sound movie in 1931 titled as **Alam Ara**.

“Kardar's directorial debut **Husn Ka Daku** would firmly add him into the director’s guild” (History of Lollywood :The Silent Era"- Pakistani Film, 2008), however, it was “**Heer Ranjha**, produced and released in Lahore in 1932, as the first sound film, that gave him real recognition as a director.”(Heer Ranjha, 2008). Till date, the region of Bhati Gate near Lahore is known to have produced some of the most notable actors, writers and artists (Bhati Gate _Lahore's Chelsea" - Academy of Punjab, 2008).”

Following the partition of sub-continent that came with the establishment of two separate states, Pakistan and India, a large majority of the artists and directors based in Lahore moved to India. The remaining industry left behind would later be recognized as the Lollywood.

EVOLUTION OF PAKISTANI FILM INDUSTRY DECADE WISE

POST INDEPENDENCE EMERGENCE OF A NEW INDUSTRY (1947-56)

Immediately after the partition, the newly founded “Pakistan faced a brain drain when all its highly talented and skilled workers migrated to India, including most actors and directors. Shortage of filming equipment further paralyzed the nation's film industry.” (Cinema of Pakistan, 2010)

Mainstream filmmakers took the partition of the subcontinent as a political settlement that would not disrupt the common heritage of culture, art, literature, music and films. They thought that once

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the riot and the social upheavals would be over, the flow of people, trade, commerce and cultural activities would resume as before

Since the newly born Pakistani film industry was too young to meet the demand of the native cine goers, Indian movies remained exhibited in the country after 1947. Partition pushed several well-established Hindu and Sikh filmmakers and distributors to instantly leave the country due to social and political pressures. Major distributors, expecting to return on normalization of conditions, left their business, in the hands of employees or minor associates.

Despite that free import of Indian movies kept local cinema houses running, the newly-migrated filmmaker fraternity started pressurizing the then government to restrict and rather ban imports and exhibition of Indian movies as they found the competition utterly unfair in the absence of financiers and facilities for local productions.

A large number of film people from Bombay to Calcutta migrated to Pakistan some immediately after partition and others at a later stage. They made Lahore, the only city actively involved in film making, their home. Prominent amongst the first batch of migrants were *Director and Producers*: Nazir, Daud Chand, Zahoor Raja, Shukat Hussain Rizvi and Sabtain Fazli

Actors: Noorjahan, Santosh Kumar, Ghulam Muhammad, Ajmal and Shamim Bano

Musicians: Feroz Nizami, Ghulam Haider, Rashid Attre and Khursheed;

Lyricists and Writers: Saadat Hussan Manto, Nazir Ajmeri, Tanveer Naqvi and Arsh and

Technicians: Murtuza Jilani, Pyare Khan, Bhayaji A. Hameed to name a few.

Pakistani Censor Board raised an initial barrier against freedom of expression by banning two feature films *Roohi* and *Wada* directed by Ahmed. These were the first feature films to be banned for propagating the socialist ideology on the pretext that the newly created Islamic Republic of Pakistan could not afford to project Communism on the big screen. After the ban of these two movies, no filmmaker dared to touch the sensitive socio-political issues. The self-censorship policy hampered the development of parallel cinema in the country since the beginning.

DECADE OF ENDURANCE; (1947-56)

First Pakistani movie, **Teri Yaad** premiered at Parbhat, Lahore in August, 1948. "Asha Posley, Nasir Khan (Dilip Kumar's brother) starred in Daud Chand directed production with music from

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Nath.” (Lollywood turns 60 on 27th, 2008). The film flopped badly and could not satisfy anyone except local distributors.

Do ansoo released in April 1950 was the “first Pakistani Urdu film to celebrate Silver Jubilee”, starring Santosh Kumar, Ajmal, Alaudin and Kamal Khanum. A Naubahar film production, it was directed by Anwar. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2010)

There is another trend-setter Punjabi movie, **Chanwey**, that became an instant hit. It is the first Pakistani film directed by a woman, the famous NoorJehan. She also played a lead role with Santoosh Kumar in the movie. It was produced by her husband Shukat Rizvi for their own Shahnur Studio. Its music was composed by Feroz Nizami while script written by Imtiaz Ali Taj.(Cinema of Pakistan, 2010)

Another Urdu film, **Sassi**, (1954) made history as the premiere Pakistani film that captivated the viewers for 50 weeks (Golden Jubilee). The cast of the movie included silver screen icons included Sabiha Khanum, Sudhir, Asha Posley, Nazar, and Saleem Raza. It was directed by Daud Chand for Ever Ready Productions. A mega budget film, it was shot at the most scenic locations of the country and regarded as the classic super hit in the history of Pakistani Cinema. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2010)

‘**Hamari Zaban**’ released in 1955 was the first Karachi Production that laid the foundation of another film center in the country.

Although no proper studio existed in Karachi at that time, yet the exhibition network expanded largely. Leading studios set their publicity departments to advertise their productions and project leading stars through media. The mass fan following reached to the point of worship and film stars including Noor Jehan, Santosh and Sabiha migrated from Calcutta and Bombay, enjoyed the status of quasi-deities among film viewers.

On the other hand, it was a trying period for the new breed of performers who worked really hard to prove their metal. The second generation of the film stars who brightened the skies of Pakistan’s Film Industry included Darpan, Musarrat Nazir, Nasreen, Aslam Pervaiz, Yasmeen, Shahina, Yusuf Khan, Zeenat and S. Gul to name a few.

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DECADE OF REINFORCEMENT (1957-66)

In 1958, renowned film journalist, Ilyas Rasheedi launched an annual Nigar Awards for outstanding performance in various categories of film making. (Overview; Lollywood's Oscars, 2012)

One of the important films of the era was “Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s film **Jago Hua Savera**, directed by Kardar, released in May 1959. However, it was failed at the box office despite classic script and lyrics from the popular poet..” (History of Lollywood, 2008).

A feature film titled **Shaheed** was produced on the Palestine issue in 1962. It was widely acclaimed with the famous actor Aga Talish in a leading role. Around the same time, Syed Kamal made his first appearance in the film **Tauba** which made him star, overnight.

In April 1964, colour fills the spectrum of Pakistani Cinema with the release of the foremost Pakistani colour film, **Sangam**. It was produced at Dacca (East Pakistan), starring Rozi, Haroon, Samita, and Khalil. Zaheer Rehan was the director and producer of the film and its music was given by Ataur Rehman. Some film historians claimed that Mala was the first Pakistani colour film. One of the first colour movies from West Pakistan was **Naila** starring Santosh and Sabiha Khanum.

Following the Indian invasion in September 1965, all Indian films were taken off the screen from cinemas and were completely banned across the country. Though the ban presented formally in the West Pakistan since 1952 and in the East Pakistan since 1962, however, it was strictly implemented post 1965 war. The very initiative increased the demand and popularity of local films, however, the avid film viewers often missed the variety and class provided by Indian productions.

In 1966, Waheed Murad came to the cinema screen with his superhit movie **Armaan** and became the ‘Elvis Presley’ of Pakistan. It was the first film that completed platinum jubilee (75 weeks) in the cinemas. (History of Lollywood, 2008)

DECADE OF EXPERIMENTS (1967-1976)

The decade is rightly known as the Decade of Experiments. It is that era when legend Pakistani actor Nadeem enjoyed the stardom with his debut appearance in **Chakori** released in 1967. He resembled superstar Dilip Kumar both in looks and mannerism, but he also has own charisma and professional approach that resulted in a long successful film career.

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Filmmaker Habib experimented and produced first horror movie, “Zinda Laash” in 1967. The movie received huge accolades and also did well commercially. It is known as the premiere X-rated movie of the country.” (Zindalash, 2007)

Two years later, **Neela Parbat**, the first adults only Pakistani film was released in January, 1969. The film was produced and directed by Ahmed Basheer, starring Muhammad Ali, Husna, Shahnawaz, Komal, Talish and Kamal Irani. The film ran only for three to four days at the box office .

The fall of Dacca in 1971 proved to be the second major jolt to the Pakistani film industry as it lost its Dacca based film center along with an array of refined performers and singers, including Runa Laila, Shahnaz Begum, Habib, who migrated to their new homeland Bangladesh and left the local film industry on the verge of disaster once again.(Cinema of Pakistan, 2010).

After the tragic incident, film **Dosti** was released in 1971. It sets another box office record by completing its Diamond Jubilee (100 weeks) in cinemas. The movie was produced for Punjab Pictures by Ijaz Durrani, who also stars along with star cast viz., Shabnam, Husna, Rahman, Saqi. It was directed by Shareef Nayyer while its music was composed by A. Hameed.(Mazhar., Pakistani films in 1971, 2008)

Pakistan’s Film Censor Board unduly restrained local film makers even at that time. A living example of it was the film **Tehzeeb**, which was released in November 1971. The director of the movie was ordered to alter the lyrics of a song that contained a reference to “Misr” Egypt. The rationale given was that it might spoil the diplomatic relations with the Arab country; ultimately the wording “*Laga hai misr ka bazaar dekho*” was changed to “*Laga hai Husn ka bazaar*” in the film’s soundtrack. (Mazhar., Nisar Bazmi's Profile, 2008)

VCRs were introduced in the country by the mid of 1970s and proved to be an instant hit. Considering the growing public demand, pirated video cassettes of both Bollywood and Hollywood were smuggled and made available at very low cost concurrent to their release in cinemas.(Cinema of Pakistan, 2010).

Pakistan’s first and perhaps the last film produced in English is **Beyond the Last Mountain** which was premiered in December 1976. The film also had an Urdu version titled as **Musafir**. It was produced and directed by Javed Jabbar with music by Sohail Rana, starring Usman Peerzada, Zahoor Ahmad, Subhani Bayounus and Raja Jameel . The film was appreciated by the critics but failed at the box office.

DECADE OF DECADENCE (1977-1986)

Film Aina, released in March 1977, has yet been considered one of the most popular movies in Pakistan’s film industry. It had Nadeem, Shabnam, Rehan, Qavi in its cast. The music of the film was composed by

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Robin Ghosh, while it was directed by Nazrul Islam. Aina completed more than 400 weeks at the box office, successfully. (Mazhar, 2008)

“Zia-ul-Haq’s military coup led to the so-called Islamization of Pakistani society which devastated almost every section of performing arts. The film industry was one of its initial and worst victims.” (Branigan, 2004). As a result of the radical registration laws introduced in 1980, it was made mandatory for filmmakers to be degree holders. In result, a number of the leading producers and directors were declared disqualified and compared to the “total output of 98 films in 1979 (including 42 in Urdu), only 58 films (26 in Urdu) were produced in 1980.” (Cinema of Pakistan, 2010)

Furthermore, the then administration demolished several cinema halls in the country, especially in Punjab and imposed increased entertainment taxes that raised the cinema tickets’ cost and thus reduced the number of cine goers further. (Lollywood goes pop, 2004).

The filmmakers who survived the newly-imposed conditions had dull plots and gave a bland storyline to Punjabi cult classics in 1979. The story was about a *gandasa-carrying* hero waging a blood feud with a local gangster. A regulation against public displays of affection confused the industry, and violence-laden Punjabi films flooded the cinemas. The educated viewers off shouldered the rowdy audience and showed disinterest in the films. The *gandasa* culture prevailed in the Punjabi films and this became famous as the Punjabi sub-culture. The veterans of this industry were Sultan Rahi and Anjuman.

(Cinema of Pakistan, 2010).

It was the same era when Pashto cinemas overshadowed viewership and took an interesting turn. Pushto filmmakers gathered political support and surpassed the censor policies conveniently. Their films were replenished with soft-core pornography and then attracted a flock of viewers to cinemas among the Pushto community. As a whole, the cinema goers felt Pakistani cinema lost the romantic, soft touch and fewer were attracted to the prospect of going to cinemas. Nevertheless, the sudden influx of Afghan refugees kept the industry alive and rolling.

The situation further aggravated when the iconic ‘Chocolate Hero’ of Lollywood, Waheed Murad expired in 1983. Media claims his death to be a consequence of the evident disheartened state of the cinema. The director of his film ‘**Hero**’ employed cheated shots to complete the rest of his legendary film. It was screened to a packed audience and everyone appreciated the impeccable work put together for the Pakistani

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film industry icon. However, the enthusiasm faded as the industry could not keep up with the demands of the native film viewers.

REVIVED PAKISTANI FILM INDUSTRY (1987-99)

This decade can be considered the Decade of Revival in the history of Pakistani Cinema. The first Pakistani science fiction film **Shaani** was released by the director, producer Saeed Rizvi in 1987. The film showcased elaborate special effects using special sound and filming technology. The Sci-fi film received recognition at the Moscow Film Festival and Egypt and Korea, but was shelved in its country of origin.” (Landmarks in Pakistani Cinema, 2007)

There is another film that attracted the attention of both viewers and critics. It was **International Gorillay**, released in 1990s, a formula film having all the elements of a commercial hit such as loud music, dance sequence, fights and conflicts,. The film portrayed Salman Rushdie played by Afzal Ahmed as a cruel fanatic who eventually had a divine justice.

It was estimated that there were total eleven film studios in the 1970s and 1980s, which produced around 100 movies per year, thus ranked Pakistan as one of the top ten film producing countries in the world. However, in the laste 1990s, the annual film output has been dropped to around forty (40) films only, all produced by a single studio.” (Bradfordthetelegraph & argus, 2006). In result, film production houses and financiers vanished and only a few independent films were released mostly financed by the filmmakers themselves.

Lollywood experienced a short peak in the mid-90s. It was the time when Syed Noor’s **‘Jeeva’** and Samina Peer. zada’s **‘Inteha’** were released and revived the Pakistani Cinema for a short period.

Some other notable movies of the 1990’s distinguished from the formula films included Deewane Tere Pyar Ke, Mujhe Chand Chahiye, Sangam, Tere Pyar Mein, and Ghar Kab Aao Gay. However, most of them didn’t do well commercially, perhaps due to the lack of audience, touch competition from illegally-smuggled cheap Blooywood and Hollywood movies and appropriate publicity.

Thers is another movie titled **Jinnah** produced in the late 1990s by Akbar Salahuddin . It was directed by Jamil Dehlavi. The film was criticised for the selection of Dracula fame actor Christopher Lee in the role of Jinnah depicting Quaid-e-Azam and casting of Indian actor Shashi

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Kapoor as the angel Gabriel. (Pakistan governments halts funds for Jinnah film, 2005). The experimental script of the film also received criticism from local media. Despite the criticism, Jinnah proved to be a milestone in Indo-Pak joint film ventures.

In a nutshell, the late '80s and 90s were the difficult period for Pakistani Film Industry. Death of Waheed Murad in 1984. Anjuman's marriage and departure from the film industry in 1989, Sultan Rahi's murder in 1996 proved to be major setbacks for the already declining Pakistani film industry. Specifically Punjabi film production died a sudden death with the loss of its leading icons.

Urdu films were the only hope in those trying years for Pakistani cinema lovers that were still produced, but in a small number as it had also lost some of its leading directors such as Nazrul Islam who died in the same time period and Sangeeta who became inactive due to her domestic life.

“In that scenario, a young director Syed Noor stepped up and tried to fill the vacuum with his Punjabi film **Chooriyan** starring Saima and Moammar Rana in 1998. The film revived Pakistan's Punjabi film industry with its storming success, grossed around 180 million rupees.

A NEW RAY OF HOPE IN THE 21st CENTURY

The 21st century brought new hope to Pakistani Film Industry. New film directors joined the field with fresh ideas. In July 2002, Javed Sheikh's Yeh Dil Aap Ka Huwa crossing over 200 million rupees across Pakistan. Suddenly investors realized the chances of profit and started taking interest in Pakistani films after a long period.

However, it proved to be a brief span of progress and Pakistani film industry, which used to produce over 100 feature films annually in the past now could hardly churn out 40 movies per year by 2003 with hardly single hit titled as Larki Panjaban.

Salakhain, an action thriller, released in August 2004 starring Ahmed Butt was another success that revived the activities of studios in Lahore and Karachi briefly. Though the number of films

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production had been markedly reduced. Lollywood was certainly having some hope in the new century since fresh talent with different approach entered the field.

Revival of Pakistani Cinema

During the first decade of the 21st century, several competent, new filmmakers joined the local film industry and proved that better films could be produced within the limited resources available. (Abbas, 2003)

The constant downfall of Pakistani cinema ultimately led to an urge for revival, echoed all over around. With the launch of multiple private television channels, a new channel Filmazia was aired, that especially projects new Pakistani releases, golden old film, gossips and behind the scene activities at studios to create public awareness and interest.

“Around the same time frame, Mahesh Bhatt, a veteran Indian director visited Pakistan, looking for talent, particularly singers who could lend their voices to his upcoming films in India. He came to attend the third Kara Film Festival, for the screenings of his film Paap in Karachi. Bhatt would later engage Atif Aslam for the soundtrack of his film Zeher and Pakistani actress Meera to play a lead-role in one of his films. (I'm India's ambassador, 2005)

In 2005, Pakistani government started considering the demand for lifting the ban on the display of Bollywood films in Pakistani cinemas. The issue was voiced by the Film Producers Association (FPA) and the Cinema Owners Association (CAO) of Pakistan after the release of the colourized remaking of the 1960s classic Mughal-e-Azam (Ghafoor, 2005)

When the government turned down the request, Geo Films, a subsidiary of Geo TV came forward to invest in upcoming Pakistani directorial ventures and titled the initiative “Revival of Pakistani Cinema. “Shoaib Mansoor's cinematic directorial debut `Khuda Ke Liye` was released on 20th July 2007 under the Geo Films. The film has been honoured as the premiere Pakistani film since 1965 which was released in India and Pakistan at a time. The movie changed the film history of subcontinent by being showcased in over 100 cinemas in 20 cities in Hindustan.”

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The burning theme of *Khuda Ke Liye* that raised the socio-political pressures faced by Muslim community due to emergence of radical forces in the Islamic countries and a resultant war in name of fight against terrorism made it an instant hit. (Pakistani film *Khuda Ke Liye* released in India, 2004)

“Omar Ali Khan’s first film, *Zibakhana* aka *Hell's Ground* presented at international film festivals around the globe, attracting viewers as the ‘first extreme-horror gore flick’ besides being appreciated by film critics. (*Hell's Ground* aka *Zibakhana*, 2007).”

The film marked resurgence in the horror genre in Pakistani Cinema. It was also the first Pakistani film recorded in HD. It revived the genre of horror movies in the Pakistani film industry. The accomplishment of issue-based Pakistani films in recent years like *Khuda Ke Liye* encouraged new directors such as Mehreen Jabbar and Saqib Malik to experiment with their unique approach and professionalism on the silver screen. Mehreen’s debut film *Ramchand Pakistani* is recognized as another world-class initiative taken for the Renaissance of Pakistani film industry.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Film Critic Nawazish Ali says the poor quality of films being produced in Pakistan deters viewers from visiting movie halls. A typical Lollywood movie displays half-a-dozen songs and dance sequels, sexual titillations, clichéd plot about lovers from different classes, a one-dimensional villain who ends up in jail and amateurish fights with exaggerated *dhishum dhishum* kind of sound effects.

Film studios are currently presenting a deserted scene while they were busy round the clock not too long. Some have rented out facilities for television productions. Leading professionals in the field can be counted on one’s fingers. According to the producers, “it would have been easier for them to be adventurous if they had any kind of government patronage. Pakistan, no doubt, had a National Film Development Corporation (NAFDEC) at the federal level, which was formed in the 1970s to promote healthy cinema, but its role in the development of the film industry was ceremonial rather than real. Pakistani films have been suffering due to the inconsistency of its censor policy, which fluctuated from providing ample breathing space to smother it completely, in accordance with the changing governments (Iqbal, 2008).”

The lack of vibrant ideas, absence of modern facilities of editing and cinematography, and the film industry’s infighting has thrown people into the lap of Bollywood and Indian television. Film experts say

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that the illegal screening of Indian films on cable; new electronic channels and availability of pirated foreign films have pulled away cinema audiences.

Repetitive themes are another contributing factor to the miserable state of Pakistani motion pictures which not only lack proper storyline, suitable casting but also 'original' titles.

An obvious remedy to the situation would be movies based on simple social issues and an attempt made at reviving the swiftly disintegrating norms and values of our society.

Whenever filmmakers think out of box and introduce a novel concept in sets, theme, script, casting, music or technique, the local film lovers admire and welcome it with open arms. Prime examples of these are illustrated through films like Armaan, Aaina, Jeeva, Choorian and Yeh Dil Aap Ka Huwa.

Rampant piracy and unrelenting onslaught of satellite and cable TV have reduced the number of theatres in the country 80% from their heydays in 1970s. According to the Federal Bureau of Statistics, cinema houses in the country declined from 545 in 1994 to 445 2002.

“There have been some positive factors as well. The launch of cable television has made filmmakers in Pakistan realize the need to make quality films if they want people to buy tickets and watch their movies. It has also made it clear to the authorities that there will be no film industry left if film producers are suppressed any further. Relief in entertainment tax and duties on import of film material has resulted in making recent hits like Yeh Dil Aap Ka Huwa and Chooriyan.(Iqbal, 2008).”

CONCLUSION:

It is not easy for the film industry to turn a new page and get out of a seemingly no-win situation. Amazingly film producers claim that they are giving audiences what they want, and that the public taste is rather low. They conveniently ignore the truth that this low-brow public taste is their own creation. People know nothing better, but with Indian films now being increasingly available, they ask why Pakistani producers cannot give them more sensible films.

In this scenario, a breath of fresh air is Cineplex; the first company of its kind that's building the country's first nationally branded Cineplex chain.(Noor, 2008). It will have multiple cinemas in various urban cities, with a view to provide quality family entertainment and to draw decent audiences to the cinemas once again. (Cineplex Goals, 2008)Cineplex preliminary 5-year built-out plan is for the growth of 20 screens and is targeting the largest cities of Pakistan.

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In recent years, there was repeated emphasis on promoting the “soft image” of Pakistan. However, with the political upheaval, the momentum slowed down once again. Overall the current environment seems to be conducive to filmmaking in Pakistan, which encourages new and qualified filmmakers to venture into the field with better projects. Pakistan’s Cinema has gone through different transitional periods and in recent years, the realization of its conscious decline has stuck many cinema lovers and founders. New institutions are being formed with the aim to provide formal education in performing arts such as National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA).

With such initiatives, the ray of hope remains. It is obvious that the film industry of any country largely depends on its economic conditions at large. Considering the recreational needs and taste buds of the local cine-goers, Lollywood needs to explore the niche market and develop it on its cultural strength at a larger scale. The boom of the Pakistani cinema demands a multifaceted approach to improve simultaneously quality, quantity and economics of the situation.

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