BOLLYWOOD AND GLOBALIZATION

A thesis submitted

by

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to

San Francisco State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the
degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
Design and Industrial Arts

This thesis has been
accepted for the faculty of
San Francisco State University by:

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Abstract

In the early 1990s, after many years of protectionism, India finally opened its doors to the outside world. Overall, the economic results have been positive but the effect on the entertainment sector have been decidedly mixed. In particular, the Hindi film industry, known affectionately as Bollywood, has struggled. Currently, it is still an industry in trouble, yet there are signs that it is indeed emerging from the doldrums. In this report, we examine the indirect and direct effect that globalization has had on Bollywood.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

These days, few words have as much power to polarize as the word "globalization." Although precise definition of such an elastic term is difficult (the Economist (Chanda, 2002) has called it "the most abused word of the 21st century."), in essence globalization refers to the growth in international flows of goods, services and especially capital that has taken place since the 1970s. Opponents worry that the stripping away of protectionist regulations will thwart the emerging industries of developing countries while taking jobs away from the more expensive developed countries. Supporters feel the opening up of new economies will lead to larger markets and thus greater prosperity.

From a cultural standpoint, critics worry about globalization leading to homogenization as the local entertainment industries are overrun by those of the developed nations, in particular Hollywood. In 2000, for example, the market for domestic cinema in France fell to 30% and in South Korea to 33% [(Miles & McLennan, 2001)ref – Global Crossing] with Hollywood films accounting for the largest share of the box office in both countries. Korean filmmaker Lee Chang Dong, at the 2000 Cannes film festival, called for an international coalition to stop "the United States' attempts to use free trade treaties to expand the reach of American movies." French film critic, Michel Clement agreed: "The American cinema has imposed its rhythm and subject matter on the young [French] audience. When they see different films," meaning even films in the classic French manner, "they have difficulty adapting."

For India, long encumbered by various regulations enacted to raise trade barriers and encourage state run trade bureaucracies, the 1990s and thereafter were a case study on the effects of globalization. Early on in the decade, it undertook reform, lowering many of its regulatory barriers to the outside world. The economic effect of this has been dramatic with India enjoying record GDP growth. However, the effect on the Indian entertainment industry has been mixed. The story of how the industry has been affected by the forces of globalization and its efforts to survive makes for compelling reading. In particular, we focus on Bollywood (as the Hindi film industry is affectionately known) as it effectively encompasses the experience of the entire Indian entertainment industry.

There is no question Bollywood is an industry in trouble. Although, revenues have increased over the past five years, losses have mounted as well, reaching Rs. 3 billion in 2002 ("Bollywood Cash," 2003) . In particular, Bollywood's fortunes during 2001 and 2002 illustrate how rocky the ride has been. 2001 was a banner year: "Lagaan" and "Monsoon Wedding" enjoyed worldwide success while "Gadar-Ek Prem Katha" and "Dil Chahta Hai" were hugely successful with audiences. In contrast, 2002 yielded little but grief with one unequivocal super-hit, "Devdas", and a string of expensive flops (Tan, 2003). Out of 132 films released that year, only 8 did not lose money. South Asian industry veterans have long blamed "the forces of globalization" as a big reason for this kind of performance. But as we shall see, the effects have been more varied. One of the things it has done is to throw into relief the flaws and shortcomings of Bollywood. Consequently, Bollywood has made efforts over the years to be more competitive and there are signs it may indeed be emerging from the doldrums. How Bollywood has attempted to weather the huge changes in the Indian media landscape wrought directly

and indirectly by "the forces of globalization" is what we examine in the rest of this thesis.

In Chapter 2, we look at the history of Bollywood, prior to the 1990s and globalization. Chapter 3 presents a timeline of the relevant events. Chapter 4 discusses the challenges faced by Bollywood during the 1990s, the advent of globalization whereas chapter 5 delineates how Bollywood has evolved to meet these challenges. Since globalization is intended to be a two way street, we conclude with an examination of how Bollywood has started to influence world culture in chapter 6.

CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIAN CINEMA

The first Indian film show occurred in July 7, 1896, a few months after the Lumiere brothers introduced the art of cinematography in Paris in 1895. Filmmakers in the west soon started using India, its scenery and exotic culture in their films like *Coconut Fair* (1897), *Our Indian empire* (1897), *A Panaroma of Indian Scenes and Procession* (1898), and *Poona Races '98'* (1898). The very first Indian film by an Indian Filmmaker was *Wrestlers* in 1899 by Harischandra S. Bhatvadekhar, popularly known as Save Dada. He was a stills photographer, an equipment dealer and a cinema exhibitor. This was followed in 1900 by *Splendid New View of Bombay* and *Taboot Procession,* both by F.B Thanawala.

In 1905 J.F Madan established the Elphinstone Bioscope company, which showed mainly showed Western movies. Madan was the first businessman who envisaged the great business opportunities for Indian filmmaking. The first Indian feature film, *Pundalik,* was made in 1912 as a result of growing demand for audiences to see Indian characters and experiences on screen. However, it was shot by an Englishman and never really received the acclaim of being an independent feature film. [ref. encyclo.. and Indian Popular…] Instead, the honor of making the first indigenous feature film goes to Dhundiraj Goving Phalke for *Raja Harishchandra* released in 1913. It was a completely Indian production and was shown as a self-contained work in its own right. Between 1917 and 1931 several more Indian silent films were shot. They were in Hindi as well as other regional languages. Their content was inspired by the Ramayana and Mahabharata, two of India's most well known epics.

In 1931 *Alam Ara*, the first Indian talkie, was made. It was a costume drama full of fantasy and melodious songs and was a stunning success (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 1998). Subsequently, music and fantasy came to be seen as vital elements of filmic experience. Sometimes the use of music was overdone. For example *Indrasabha* in 1932 contained 70 songs. Since this era, music became the defining element of Indian cinema.

The popularity of a new medium for mass entertainment encouraged filmmakers to explore new ideas for filmmaking. The 1930s saw a fascination for social themes and, subsequently, interplay of tradition with modernism that included questioning aspects of the feudal patriarchy (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 1998). By 1940s cinematography played an important role in Indian movies. There remained a great deal of western influence on Indian popular cinema along with the song, dance, and fantasy staples. The economic and political environment around this time was also undergoing changes - India was moving towards capitalism and modernism amidst political unrest and religious diversions. It was against this background that film directors and actors like Bimal Roy, Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, V Santaram, Mehboob Khan made films which became popular (legends) both in Indian and abroad.

By the 1950s Indian popular cinema had established itself as a form of art, entertainment and industry. Film historians call this period the golden age of Indian cinema. During this era, movies like *Awara* (The Vagabond, 1951), *Pyaasa* (Thrist, 1957), *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (Paper Flower, 1959), *Shree 420* (Mr, 420, 1955), *Mother India* (1957), The Apu Trilogy by Satjyajit Ray consisting of *Pather Panchali* (Song of Road, 1955), *Aparajito* (The Unvanquished, 1956) and *Apu Sansar* (The World of Apu, 1959), were made. The international popularity for many of these movies and film actors like

Raj Kapoor made the Indian government recognize the revenue-earning capacity of the film industry (Dwyer & Patel, 2002).

The subsequent government intervention resulted in censorships and heavy taxation, which made life difficult for filmmakers. In 1960, the Film Finance Corporation, which later formed the National Film Development Corporation, for financing and exporting films, was established and in 1961, the Film Institute of Pune was started. Around this time Indian state television, Doordarshan, became a daily service programming for an hour. The broadcast was restricted to Delhi (Rajadhyaksha & Willemen, 1999).

In 1973, the Directorate of Film Festivals was started which organized annual International Film Festivals in India, opening doors for the common people to see world cinema. In 1976, Doordarshan, still the only television station in India, separated itself from All India Radio and later, in 1985, became fully commercial selling prime slots to private sponsors and TV soaps. Some of the box-office hits during this time include *Aradhana* (1969), *Bobby* (1973) and *Sholay* (1975). While movies of the 70's were influenced by the political and social trends, the 80's saw an emergence of violence in cinema. The audience was also changing – the introduction of color television in 1982, the availability of VCRs and the numerous soaps on kept more middle-class people at home (Dwyer & Patel, 2002) (Rajadhyaksha & Willemen, 1999). The theaters became more decrepit, being more a refuge for the lower-middle class than the middle class. In order to cater better to their audience, filmmakers increased the level of violence in their films with revenge dramas becoming more popular. Some of the popular movies of this period included *Naseeb*, *Coolie*, *Hero*, *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* and *Sagar.*

CHAPTER III

TIMELINE OF EVENTS IN INDIAN CINEMA

Introduction

This chapter presents a brief chronological sequence of events and films to Indian cinema since its inception in 1895 to present date. The landmarks are further organized by decade. Where possible, each film entry is supplemented by a description indicating why it was included in the list. Please refer to (Rajadhyaksha & Willemen, 1999) for more detailed coverage of each year.

1895 – 1910

Landmarks

1896: First film screening at Watson's Hotel, Bombay on 7 July, by the Lumiere Brothers cameraman, Maurice Sestier. The Madras Photographic Stores advertises imported 'animated photographs'

1897: First films shown in Calcutta and Madras. Daily screenings commence in Bombay

1898: First gramophone record is released by Gramaphone & Typewriter Company, Belgatchia

1898: Hiralal Sen begins making films in Calcutta

1898: Amritlal Bose screens a package of 'actualities' and 'fakes' at the Star Theatre, Calcutta.

1898: The Warwick Trading Co, commissions Panorama of Calcutta newsreel, other films made include Poona Races and Train Arriving at Churchgate Station (by Andersonscopograph)

1899: Calcutta receives electricity supply

1899: H.S. Bhatavadekar films a wrestling match in Bombay's hanging Gardens.

1900: Major Warwick establishes a cinema in Madras.

1900: F.B. Thanawala starts Grand Kinetoscope Newsreels.

1900: Boer War newsreel footage is shown at the Novelty Cinema in Bombay.

1901: Hiralal Sen's Royal Bioscope establishs a film exhibition in Calcutta.

1901: Bhatavadekar films the return of M M Bhownuggree and R.R. Paranjpye to India

1902: J. F. Madan lauches his film distribution and exhibition empire with a tent cinema

at the Calcutta Maidan

1903: Bhatavadekar and American Biograph film Lor Curzon's Delhi Durbar

1904: Manek Sethna starts the Touring Cinema Co. in Bombay

1906: J.F. Madan's Elphinstone Bioscope Co. dominates indigenous film production

1907: Madan begins the Elphinstone Picture Palace in Calcutta, the first Calcutta cinema

house.

1907: Pathe establishes an Indian office.

1910 – 1920

Landmarks

1910: Dadasaheb Phalke attends a screening of the *The Life of Christ* at P.B. Mehta's

America India Cinema.

1911: *The Durbar of George V* in Delhi is the first film extensively filmed in India.

1911: Andai Bose and Debi Ghose start the Aurora Film Company, with screenings in

tents.

1912: *Pundalik*, directed by Tipnis and probably India's first feature film, is shot.

1913: Dadasaheb Phalke makes *Raja Harishchandra*, it is shown at Bombay's Coronation Cinematograph

1914: Phalke shows his first three features, *Raja Harishchandra*, *Mohini Bhasmasur* and *Satyavan Savitri* in London.

1914: R Venkaiah and R.S. Prakash build Madras' first permanent cinema, the Gaiety.

1916: R Nataraja Mudaliar makes the first South Indian feature, *Keechaka Vadham*.

1916: Universal Pictures sets up Hollywood's first Indian agency.

1917: Baburao Painter starts the Maharashtra Film Co. in Kolhapur.

1917: Patankar-Friends & Co. is started. This is the predecessor to Kohinoor Studio.

1917: J.F. Madan makes *Satyavadi Raja Harishchandra*, the first feature film made in Calcutta.

1917: Dadasaheb Phalke makes *How Films are Made*, a short on the filmmaking process.

1918: Kohinoor film company founded.

1918: Phalke's Hindustan Cinema Films Co. is founded.

1918: Indian Cinematograph Act comes into force.

1920 - 1930

Landmarks

1924: First radio programme, broadcast privately with a 40w transmitter, by the Madras Presidency Radio Club Radio. The station ran for three years.

1925: *Light of Asia* by Himansu Rai is the first film made as a co-production with a German company.

1926: Punjab Film Corporation started in Lahore.

1926: Ardashir Irani founds Imperial Films.

1927: Indian Kinema Arts, predecessor of New Theatre, is founded in Calcutta

1929: Several important film studios founded - Prabhat Film Co (Kolhapur), Ranjit

Movietone (Bombay), British Dominion Films Studio and Aurora Film Corporation

(Calcutta) and General Pictures Corporation (Madras).

Significant Films

1925: *Veer Kunal* (Close Shots, Extensive use of Grey Tones) (Hindi)

1926: *The Telephone Girl* (Pioneering Use of Real Locations) (Hindi)

1927: *Balidaan* (Location shooting in Rajasthan) (Hindi)

1927: *Village Girl* (Shooting of Urban Landscape) (Hindi)

1928: *Shiraaz* (Hindi)

1930 - 1940

Landmarks

1932: East India Film Co. starts in Calcutta making films in Bengali, Tamil and Telugu.

1932: The Motion Picture Society of India is founded.

1933: *Sairandhri* (Prabhat Studios, Pune) is arguably India's first color film (processed

and printed in Germany)

1933: Wadia Movitone is founded.

1933: The Air Conditioned Regal cinema opens in Bombay.

1934: Bombay Talkies is established.

1935: South Indian film studios are founded - Madras United Artists and Angel Films

(Salem and Coimbatore).

1935: First all India Motion Picture Convention.

1936: Master Vinayak and Cameraman Pandurang Naik co-found Huns Pictures.

1939: Vauhini Pictures started by B.B. Reddi (Madras).

1939: S.S. Vasan starts Gemini Studios (Madras).

Significant Films

1931: *Alam Ara* (First Indian Talking Film) (Hindi)

1931: *Shirin Farhad* (sound and Image recorded separately) (Hindi)

1931: *Jamai Babu* (Images of Urban Calcutta) (Bengali)

1931: *Kalidas* (Tamil)

1932: *Indrasabha* (song & dance spectacular) (Hindi)

1932: *Amrit Manthan* (Influence of German Expressionist Cinema) (Marathi/Hindi)

1935: *Devdas* (Hindi)

1936: *Bangalee* (first film to consciously use 'source light') (Bengali)

1936: *Sant Tukaram* (Marathi)

1937: *Mukti* (Tracks, Mix of Interior & Exterior, Expressionism & Realism)

(Bengali/Hindi)

1940 - 1950

Landmarks

1940: Film Advisory Board is set up by the Government of India.

1942: Filmistan studios set up by S. Mukherjee and Ashok Kumar.

1942: Kardar Studio founded by A. R. Kardar.

1942: Rajkamal Kalamandir Studios started by V. Shantaram.

1942: Homi Wadia starts Basant Pictures.

1942: Mehboob Khan forms Mehboob Studios.

1944: Navajyothi Studios started in Mysore.

1948: Raj Kapur founds R.K. Studios.

1949: Films Division is set up in Bombay.

Significant Films

1941: *Khazanchi* (B/W-Hindi)

1943: *Kismet* B/W-Hindi)

1946: *Dharti ke Laal* (B/W-Hindi)

1946: *Neecha Nagar* 1948 Aag (Chiaroscuro Lighting) (B/W-Hindi)

1948: *Ajit* (first Indian Color Film - 16mm Kodachorme blown up to 35mm) (Color-

Hindi)

1948: *Chandralekha* (Gemini Studios Song & Dance Spectacular) (B/W-Tamil/Hindi)

1949: *Barsaat* (B/W-Hindi)

1950 - 1960

Landmarks

1950: Satyajit Ray, Subrata Mitra, Bansi Chandragupta and Dinen Gupta meet on the sets
of Jean Renoir's 'The River'. Ramananda Sengupta is operating cameraman for Claude
Renoir.

1951: The S.K. Patil Film Enquiry Committee reports on all aspects of cinema, noting the emerging shift from the studio system to individual ownership.

1952: First International Film Festival of India held in Bombay.

1952: Ritwik Ghatak makes his first film, *Padatik*, shot by Ramananda Sengupta.

1952: *Aan* and *Jhansi ki Rani* are made in color.

1952: The Indian Cinematograph Act of 1952 replaces the Cinematograph Act of 1918.

1952: Filmfare is launched as a fortnightly.

1953: *Do Bigha Zameen* (Bimal Roy) reveals the influence of Italian Neo Realism.

1955: Satyajit Ray makes *Pather Panchali*, Subrata Mitra debuts as a cameraman.

1956: Experimental Television Broadcasts begin in Delhi.

1958: The Indian Copyright Act comes into force.

1958: A festival of documentary films is begun in Bombay.

1959: *Kagaz ke Phool*, the first Indian cinemascope film, is made by Guru Dutt and shot by V.K. Murthy.

Significant Films

1951: *Awaara* (B/W-Hindi)

1955: *Pather Panchali* (B/W-Bengali)

1955: *Do Bigha Zameen* (B/W-indi)

1956: *Shree 420* (B/W-Hindi)

1957: *Mother India* (B/W-Hindi)

1957: *Pyassa* (B/W-Hindi)

1958: *Madhumati* (B/W-Hindi)

1959: *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (B/W-Hindi)

1960 – 1970

Landmarks

1960: The Film Institute (later the Film & Television Institute of India) is founded in Pune.

1960: The Film Finance Corporation, later to become NFDC, is founded.

1960: K. Asif's Mughal-e- Azam, the most expensive feature film till then in Indian film history, is completed.

1961: Drastic cuts in the import of raw film stock.

1961: Second International Film Festival of India in Delhi.

1964: The National Film Archive of India is founded in Pune.

1964: The Adyar Film Institute is founded in Madras.

1965: Daily hour long television broadcasts begin in Delhi.

1966: Ritwik Ghatak becomes Director of FTII.

1967: Hindustan Photo Film makes India self sufficient in B&W and sound negative film. All color film is imported and locally perforated.

1967: The first 70 mm wide screen film is shown in India.

1968: "Manifesto for a New Cinema" issued by Mrinal Sen and Arun Kaul.

1969: FFC finances Bhuvan Shome (Mrinal Sen) and Uski Roti (Mani Kaul), both photographed by K K Mahajan inaugurating 'New Wave Cinema'.

Significant Films

1960: *Mughal-E-Azam* (B/W, Color-Urdu)

1961: *Gunga Jumna* (Color- Hindi)

1962: *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* (B/W- Hindi/Urdu)

1964: *Charulata* (B/W-Bengali)

1964: *Sangam* (color – Hindi)

1966: *Guide* (Color-Hindi)

1969: *Olavum Theeravum* (First art-house cinema in Kerala) (B/W-Malayalam)

1969: *Aradhana* (Color-Hindi)

1970 - 1980

Landmarks

1971: Drastic fall in the screenings of Hollywood cinema in India following the expiry

between the MPEEA and the Government of India.

1971: India becomes the largest producer of films in the world with 433 films.

1972: First Art House Cinema is opened by FFC.

1972: Chitralekha Co Op, the first co-operative started by film technicians, starts

production with Adoor Gopalakrishnan's *Swayamvaram*.

1973: FFC becomes the sole channelling agency for the import of raw stock. A 250%

import duty on raw Stock is imposed.

1974: Hindustan Photo Films starts limited production of positive color stock.

1974: The International Film Festival of India becomes an annual event.

1974: The Film Institute of India becomes the Film and Television Institute of India.

1976: Doordarshan is separated from All India Road and is allowed to take advertising.

1979: Malayalam cinema overtakes Hindi Cinema in volume of production.

Significant Films

1970: *Khamoshi* (B/W- Hindi)

1970: *Heer Ranjha* (Hindi)

1970: *Anand* (color-hindi)

1971: *Dastak* (B/W- Hindi)

1971: *Mera Naam Joker* (Hindi)

1972: *Swayamvaram* (B/W-Malyalam)

1972: *Seeta Aur Geeta* (Hindi)

1973: *Bobby* (Color- Hindi)

1973: *Ankur* (color-Hindi)

1974: *Sonar Kella* (color-Bengali)

1975: *Dharmatma* (Hindi)

1975: *Muthyala Muggu* (color- telegu)

1975: *Deewaar* (color – Hindi)

1975: *Ganga Chiloner Pakhi* (B/W-Assamese)

1975: *Sholay* (color- Hindi)

1977: *Hum Kisise Kum Nahin* (color-Hindi)

1977: *Amar Akbar Anthony* (color – Hindi)

1978: *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* (color-Hindi)

1979: *Junoon* (color-Hindi)

1980 - 1990

Landmarks

1980: FFC merges with the Indian Motion Picture Export corporation to form the NFDC (National Film Development Corporation).

1982: Doordarshan begins color broadcast with Satyajit Ray's *Sadgat*i and *Shatranj ke Khiladi*.

1985: Doordarshan becomes a fully commercial network, first major TV series, 'Humlog' broadcast.

1989: First Bombay International Festival of Short Films and Documentaries.

Significant Films

1980: *Shaan* (color- Hindi)

1980: *Qurbani* (color- Hindi)

1981: *Silsila* (color- Hindi)

1981: *36, Chowringhee Lane* (Color -English)

1983: *Coolie* (color- Hindi)

1985: *Saagar* (color- Hindi)

1987: *Nayakan* (Color-Tamil)

1988: *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* (color- Hindi)

1989: *Chandni* (color- Hindi)

1989: *Ankusham* (color-Telegu)

1990 - 2000

Landmarks

1991: Cable and satellite television comes to India following the Gulf War.

1991: Free market restructuring carried out under the tutelage of the International

Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

1992: The launch of Zee TV and Star TV.

1992: The government greatly liberalized the requirements [2…website], resulting in a

great increase in foreign films being released domestically.

1994: North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) passed.

1995: VSNL introduced Internet services in India.

1998: India conducts nuclear tests.

Significant Films

1992: *Roja* (color –Hindi)

1993: *Baazigar* (color –Hindi)

1993: *Darr* (color – Hindi)

1993: *Manichithratharazu* (color –Malayalam)

1994: *Bandit Queen* (color –Hindi)

1994: *Hum Aapke Hai Koun* (color –Hindi)

1994: *Kadhalan* (color –Tamil)

1994: *1942 : A Love Story* (color –Hindi)

1994: *Nireekshe* (color –Kodava)

1994: *Unishe April* (color –Bengali)

1995: *Bombay* (color –Hindi)

1995: *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (color –Hindi)

1995: *Karan Arjun* (color –Hindi)

1995: *Rangeela* (color –Hindi)

1995: *Nattupura Pattu* (color –Tamil)

1997: *Dil to Pagal Hai* (color –Hindi)

1997: *Pardes* (color – Hindi)

1998: *Taal* (color – Hindi)

1998: *Satya* (color – Hindi)

1998: *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (color – Hindi)

1999: *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam* (color – Hindi)

2000 - 2003

Significant Films

2000: *Mohabbatein* (color – Hindi)

2000: *Hey Ram* (color – Hindi)

2000: *Mission Kashmir* (color – Hindi)

2001: *Zubeidaa* (color –Hindi)

2001: *Lagaan* (color – Hindi)

2001: *Ashoka* (color – Hindi)

2001: *Monsoon Wedding* (color – Hindi/English)

2001: *Gadar-Ek Prem Katha* (color – Hindi)

2001: *Dil Chahta Hai* (color – Hindi)

2002: *Devdas* (color – Hindi)

2003: *Koi Mil Gaya* (color – Hindi)

2003: *Baghban* (color – Hindi)

2003: *Bhoot* (Color – Hindi)

2003: *Darna Mana Hai* (Color – Hindi)

2003: *Jism* (Color – Hindi)

CHAPTER IV

HOW GLOBALIZATION AFFECTED BOLLYWOOD

Introduction

Historically, globalization is not a new concept. Thousands of years before the root word for this concept - 'globe' - came into use, our ancestors had already spread across the earth. The discovery of the "New World" by Columbus in 1492 was significant in that it brought together peoples who had been separated for over 10,000 years (Chanda, 2002). No less significant has been the exchange of plants and animals. For example, a Peruvian tuber, the potato, has become a global staple. But, it can be argued that it was the emergence of the world's first multinationals - the British East India Company (in 1600) and the Dutch East India Company (in 1602) - that truly launched the process that has matured into the current economic integration of the world (Chanda, 2003).

After participating (or being forced to participate) in largely one-way trade via British colonization (which was initially started by the British East India Company), independent India retreated behind a wall of protectionism and socialist style economic planning. It can be argued (Pal, 2001) that in the '80s, India avoided hyperinflation and a Latin America style economic crisis largely due to this type of tight foreign-exchange controls and prudent economic management.

Only when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi changed course did India experience a foreign-exchange crisis. India had started depleting its foreign exchange reserves in the late '80s, mainly to hard currency payments for a flood of imports and an increasing amount of foreign debt. A severe fiscal crisis brewed in 1991, when the country only had

enough foreign exchange left to pay for a few weeks of imports. The government went to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund for help, and consequently India opened up the economy and deregulated the private sector (Pal, 2001). Under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, who assumed office that year, and his successors, restrictions on the multinationals and the private sector have been greatly relaxed. The current governing alliance, headed by the Bharatiya Janata Party's Atal Bihari Vajpayee, has continued the same policies. The public sector is being steadily, albeit slowly, dismantled.

Though ten years may be a short period of time, the effect wrought by these changes in India has been dramatic. A big reason for this has been the rise in information technology - wireless telephones, satelite television, and the Internet were all made available in India during this period in part due to the new economic policies. Their adoption has been meteoric. The consequent exposure of Indians to the information explosion outside its borders and the rise of the middle class and their shifting tastes have forced Bollywood to reevaluate its methods of conducting business.

Bollywood has been affected thus both directly and indirectly. The direct causes have been the rise of alternate sources of entertainment such as TV, both satellite and Doordarshan, the state run media, and the Internet. On the other hand, the rise of a new middle class, made prosperous by the new jobs being created in India due to globalization, and the Indian diaspora abroad has created an audience whose entertainment expectations have changed. We explore each contributing factor in more detail next.

Cable TV In India

The roots of cable TV in India can be traced to the late seventies and the advent of the VCR. Using VCRs, entrepreneurs in apartment complexes began setting up makeshift distribution networks in order to provide households with an alternative to Doordarshan (DD), the state run television network. The 1990 Gulf war and the resulting popularity of CNN, available worldwide via satellites, provided additional impetus. The demand from consumers prompted the local cable operators to install satellite dishes and add CNN to the normal programming of English and Hindi movies (How Cable TV Began, 1999).

The launch of Zee TV and Star TV in 1992 was the next crucial step. By making their programming free and available on satellites, they were able to leverage the local cable operators and their makeshift networks to make inroads into the Indian audience. In January 1992, there were an estimated 412,000 urban Indian households with cable. By 1999, that number had swelled to 22 million (How Cable TV Began, 1999).

Currently, a standard cable TV package can cost anywhere from Rs. 50 for a 10-12 channel service to Rs. 125-150 a month for a 30-60 channel plus service. The programming that cable TV offers ranges from Hindi films and MTV Asia to local events like fairs, religious discourses, civic elections, regional news, community games such as Bingo and favorite local sports. Practically every network has at least two cable channels -sometimes both of which screen Hindi movies and songs. Additionally, satellite networks such as HBO and Star TV also feature English movies as part of their lineup. Consequently, this sector continues to grow at staggering rates: while the revenue generation of the film industry fell from Rs 4,500 crore in 2001 to Rs 3,900 crore in 2002, the total revenue generated from subscriptions from television business shot up to

Rs 6,000 crore from Rs 4,005 crore in 2001 — a growth of 50 per cent. Of this, broadcasters realised Rs 840 crore — more than double the previous year's figure of Rs 410 crore (Bhatnagar, 2003).

Hollywood

The market for English language features in India has traditionally been small amounting to no more than 2-5% of the country. One of the main barriers was language, another being bureaucracy - in the past, all foreign films had to be routed via the government run NFDC (National Film Development Corporation). The NFDC had its own regulations that had to be met before the film could be certified for domestic distribution. The resulting morass limited the number of foreign films entering the country.

In 1992, the government greatly liberalized the requirements (Policy for Import of, 2002), resulting in a great increase in foreign films being released domestically, not only by Hollywood based companies but also a number of domestic importers. In addition, the practice of dubbing films into Hindi, Tamil, and Telegu became common practice. As a result, revenues from Hollywood fare jumped from Rs. 38 million in 1992 to Rs 400 million in 1999-2000 (Desai, 2000). Attendance shot up from 8 million in 1992 to 47 million in 1998 and 50 million in 2000. In general, blockbusters such as Jurassic Park, Titanic, and Titanic accounted for the bulk of this revenue.

Internet

In India, the level of Internet penetration is still very low. As of March 2000, 5he country had just around 850,000 Internet subscribers and 3.97 million users (ICRA, 2000). The corresponding worldwide figures (including that of India) are 75 million Internet subscribers and 400 million Internet users. According to projections, India would reach a subscriber base of around 8.3 million users by FY2005, with the highest growth rate being witnessed by DSL and cable connections. However, dial-up connections would still account for the largest share of Internet connectivity options. Despite all this, the Internet has been making inroads in India, accounting for audiences at the expense of other forms of entertainment.

The Indian Middle Class

By any standards, the rise of the Indian middle class has been impressive. Minuscule during India's Independence in 1947, 1999 estimates put the current number at around 300 million. The middle class (India's Middle, 2000)can be subdivided further into upper middle class (about 40 million people), the middle middle class (150 million) and the lower middle class (about 110 million comprised of the affluent in rural areas). Additionally, over the past decade, India's very rich have grown from 500000 to 2.1 million (Devadayal, 2002). This has brought about a sea change in consumption patterns, from cars to butter to entertainment. A large proportion of this group are English speaking and, having grown up on cable TV, do not necessarily respond to the standard song-dance melodramas that is the Bollywood staple.

As a matter of fact, according to a 2002 Variety article (Pearson, 2002), Hollywood provides serious competition for Bollywood in popularity among filmgoers in major Indian cities. For example, in Bangalore, the country's information technology hub, a British-oriented culture has boosted audiences at cinemas showing English language movies.

"`Spider-Man' did well wherever it was played in Bangalore, after which we decided to stick to English movies only," says Anil Kapool, managing director of the Rex movie hall. "When you step out onto the streets in Bangalore, you can hear people speaking mostly English."

"B.M. Nagaraj, manager of the Symphony theater, also in Bangalore, says that on weekends, the IT professions who populate the pubs and restaurants prefer English movies. But he gives another reason for Hollywood's recent success. 'Compared to Hindi and Kanada (the local language) movies, Hollywood movies have better themes and screenplays,' he says.

Piracy

It is difficult to obtain exact losses that piracy causes Bollywood each year but there is little doubt to its significance. Current estimates ("Indian Movie Pirates," 2003) put the yearly loss by the Indian film industry at around 17 billion rupees ($356 million). Mass DVD piracy and unauthorized display of films on cable TV are two of the biggest culprits (Arti, 2003). The former accounts for over 60% of all film sales in India alone. Courtesy the Internet and the emerging global audience for Bollywood products, the

damage done by pirates in Bollywood is not limited to India. Once copied, such films can spread very quickly to other territories outside, resulting in even greater loss of revenue.

Overall Financial Impact

In terms of revenues, 2002 was the worst year in Bollywood in living memory. Kamal Nahata, editor of Film Information, a trade journal, reckons that 95% of films lost money that year (Pearson, 2003). Total loss was 3 billion rupees ("Bollywood Cash," 2003). According to Subhash Ghai, one of the more established Bollywood directors, revenues in the industry have fallen by 40% over the past three years ("Trying to Be a," 2003), even though people are watching more than twice as many films. He ascribes the decline due to piracy - both on digital media as well as cable TV operators airing their own channels of non-stop pirated movies. Whether it is via illegal or legal content programming, revenue figures indicate that TV is indeed siphoning off the film-going audience.

Conclusion

Thus far, we have seen the main culprits - alternative sources of entertainment, changing audience tastes, and piracy. In the next chapter, we will investigate how Bollywood is coping with these issues.

CHAPTER V

HOW BOLLYWOOD IS DEALING WITH THE CRISIS

Introduction

If 2002 was the nadir of Bollywood for the longest time in living memory, 2003 seemed to offer a glimmer of hope. Several films made money – there were hits both large and small. According to industry veterans ("Bollywood Cash," 2003), Bollywood even expected to break even by 2004. What caused this change? It was the nature and quality of the films being released that seemed to indicate the soul searching of Bollywood, caused by the lengthy decline in fortunes during the 1990s, had finally begun to bear fruit.

We next take a look at some of the changes that Bollywood has made (or has been forced to make) in order to be more competitive. We compare with some of the films released during 2003 (and the new millennium) that illustrate how Bollywood has absorbed this lesson. The changes made can be divided into two parts: film content and industry practices.

Industry Practices

Bollywood has long been plagued with accusations of shady business practices. For much of its existence, Bollywood has been very parochial business controlled by a handful of movie producers and clans. Most films have been privately financed, often at monthly rates of interest of 2% or more ("Trying to Be a," 2003). Many of the lenders have been accused of having links with the underworld. Cost overruns and production delays have been endemic. Stars promised themselves to two or three simultaneous

productions. Three-quarters or more of films have lost money—even worse than in Hollywood. Hence, though Bollywood' popularity in India has long attracted serious business interest, its chaotic management and finances have deterred serious commitment for a very long time.

This began changing in 2000 when the government gave film-making official "industry" status ("Cash Boost for," 2001), opening it up to more conventional sources of bank finance, including loans from the government's own Industrial Development Bank of India. Famous Mumbai director Subhash Ghai's company, Mukta Arts, broke new ground later that same year with a public offering of its shares on the Indian stock market ("Trying to Be a," 2003). The success of Mukta's offering plus the stockmarket boom, in which media-company shares soared, encouraged others to follow Mukta into the market.

Additional sources of revenue came from new money making opportunities, particularly with the boom in satellite television in India and the global market for Indian movies. More than 60 satellite-television channels in India have enlarged the appetite for local films and film music. Television production houses, such as Sony Entertainment and Star TV, pay huge sums to buy the rights of Bollywood favorites. Often, producers are able to secure a large portion of the costs of their next film by selling the music rights.

Even bigger returns flow from the growing foreign market for Indian films. Revenues from movie exports have almost doubled in the past two years. The cost of making an Indian movie can now be covered from the overseas distribution rights alone. Of particular note is the emergence of the NRI (Non Resident Indian) market, particularly over the 1990s. Current estimates put the number at roughly 20 million (The Indian Diaspora, 2002). While small compared to the Indian population, their higher spending

power makes them an attractive target for Indian entertainment. The same estimate put

the yearly earnings for the Indian diaspora in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Many

first generation Indians in the diaspora view Bollywood as a means of re-connecting with

India while second generation immigrants embrace it as part of their heritage. Their

commitment has translated to box office for certain films. For example, the colorful song-

and-dance routines of *Taal* (Rhythm), Subhash Ghai's biggest-grossing movie, ensured it

to be the first Indian film to open in the Top 20 in the USA and top 10 in the UK (Prasad,

1999). Ghai sold the world screening rights to Eros Entertainment, a global distribution

company for Bollywood films, for 80 million rupees. "They have recovered the money

within two weeks," said Ghai, who spent 30 million rupees making the movie.

Ultimately, *Taal* grossed close to $2 million in the USA and half a million pounds in the

UK. *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge*, a Yash Chopra produced film, brought in

approximately $1.6 million in the USA and 1.5 million pounds in the UK. This trend has

continued in 2003 with the top grossing films such as *Koi Mil Gaya* and *Baghban* earning

a large portion of their overall earnings from overseas, particularly USA and UK (Top

Grosses by, 2004). In addition, new and unlikely markets have also opened up: *Taal*

attracted large audiences in Japan ("Growing Up," 2000). Moreover, Hollywood studios

have started to distribute Indian movies in a small way, although they have yet to venture

into production.

However, piracy has put a dampener on what undoubtedly is a very lucrative

market. From personal experience, I can confirm the availability of illegal Bollywood

films on DVD in local Indian grocery stores within weeks of their release in theaters. Of

late, the Indian film industry has been making attempts to curb this practice. In March

2003 ("Indian Movie Pirates," 2003), the Indian Motion Pictures Producers' Association (IMPPA) launched a joint initiative with the Hollywood based Motion Picture Association (MPA) to curb piracy in the Asia-Pacific region. The strategy includes raids on factories and other sites producing illegal DVDs across India. This was in addition to the anti-piracy drive launched in Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the Phillipines.

Within India, the other major cause of revenue loss comes from cable operators illegally airing pirated films. According to distributor Shyam Shroff (Arti, 2003), "India is the only country where you can see films openly on cable television. We are helpless. In the last five years, I have spoken with chief ministers, deputy commissioners of police and local authorities. These functions cannot help unless we don't do something. The Hindi film industry is really not united. Unless that happens, we are of no use at all." Additionally, Film Industry editor Komal Nahata feels that Bollywood still lacks an effective strategy to maximize revenues from the theater screening and DVD release of a single film. In the fight between producers and directors," Nahata said, "outsiders -- cable operators -- make money. We need to adapt to technology and follow Hollywood, which earns $255 million by DVD sales. DVD rentals alone account for $385 million. We have to realize DVDs and VCDs are here to stay. We have to realize movies, DVDs, VCDs need to exist. Today, most of the money and business from theatrical releases is gained in the first four weeks of a film's release." Additionally, Nahata feels there should be a lock-in period for a year on DVD and VCD releases.

In a related recent development (Chmielewski, 2003), Yash Raj films became the first major global movie production company to offer digital download of a full length feature film. *Supari* is available for $2.99 from the peer-to-peer network Kazaa. According to Nikki Hemming, chief of Kazaa, about 4% of the users who viewed the free preview of the film purchased it.

In an effort to counter audience loss, the Indian film industry also embarked on building modern movie multiplex houses in the major cities in India in order to increase the number of available theaters and lure back its middle class patrons. Currently, there are more multiplexes coming up in India and China than anywhere else in the world. There have been complaints about the resulting rise in ticket prices but the popularity of these new theatres show the middle class is indeed being attracted back. In another instance of following Hollywood business practices, Bollywood has also started experimenting with product placement. *Koi Mil Gaya* features an alien sipping Coca Cola ("The Son's Second," 2003). Other products prominently displayed include Sansui, Nescafe, and Hero Honda (a motor scooter).

Film Content

Throughout the last decade, Bollywood has made great strides in all the technical areas of filmmaking. For example, comparing a Aamir Khan 1990 film, *Awwal Number* with *Lagaan*, (2001), also starring Aamir Khan, shows the great improvements made by Bollywood in editing, cinematography and other production values. Both films are ostensibly about cricket yet they couldn't be more different in both style and presentation. Many of these improvements are due to big budget producers and directors anxious to

win back audiences lost to other forms of entertainment. Films by Yash Raj Chopra and Sanjay Leela Bhansali are glossy, slick affairs that emphasize production values and star power over stories that have tended to be formulaic. As a matter of fact, of all the critiques leveled against Bollywood, the most prevalent seems to be that it lacks content. For example, according to Yash Chopra ((Yash Chopra, 1998): "Despite great talent in all areas - acting, directing, cinematography, music, sound and so on - Bollywood is missing out on a very crucial component which is writing. We just don't have great writers and this is unfortunate."

In the early 1990s, the decline of the middle class film going audience meant Bollywood was creating more fare intended for lower class consumption (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). The films created during this period could be roughly divided into three groups: action films (revenge dramas) shown mostly in cheap theaters; comedy (movies featuring actors like Govinda and the like), which mostly catered to lower-class taste but were becoming popular with a wider audience; and the big budget romantic movies. The latter type was the most successful both in India and abroad and continues to be the big revenue-earners even today. Examples of these include movies directed by old guard Bollywood directors such as Yash Chopra and Shubhash Ghai. The themes are mostly based on old feudal romance within the Hindu patriarchal society but with very stylized presentations. Movies like *Hum Aapke Hai Kaun* and *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayange* falls in this genre of films and have been copied many many times.

However many the categories of film, Bollywood continued to rely on formula and song and dances leading to fan web sites listing the so-called "Rules of Bollywood." A sampling of these include:

1. Two brothers separated in childhood will always grow up on different sides of the law. The law-breaker, will suddenly turn over a new leaf before the end, bash up the villain (who is the real bad guy), and be pardoned for all his sins before the last scene family reunion.

2. If the number of heroes is not equal to the number of heroines, the excess number will i. Die ii. Join the Red Cross and fly off to Switzerland before the end of the movie.

3. If there are two heroes in the movie then they will fight each other savagely for at least 5 minutes (10 minutes if they are brothers).

4. The hero's sister will either marry the hero's best friend or else will be raped by the villain and will commit suicide.

5. When the hero fires, he will never miss or run out of bullets.

6. Fight scenes will occur in the vicinity of pots, fruits, and glass bottles.

7. Any film involving lost and found family will involve a song sung by the brothers, blind/crazy mother, and family servant/cat. The amazing thing is that these folks remember the song after 20 years but you can't remember it 2 minutes after leaving the hall.

8. Heroine – always seems to wear skimpy westernized clothes (if navel shows then so much the better) – wears traditional Indian clothes during sad scenes (i.e. when she is grievously wronged).

9. Police inspectors are either scrupulously honest, stupid or totally corrupt.

10. Song minimum requirements – at least 6 minutes, at least 3 instrumental solos, 3 costume changes, 3 different locales (at least 1 foreign), at least one scene with rain or waterfall.

11. *Sacha Pyaar* (True Love) is the Holy Grail. Any character, be he a con artist, murderer, rapist or thief, will be redeemed once he achieves Sacha Pyaar.

One of the main reasons for this creative stagnation could be due to the domination of Bollywood by scions of the successful actors, directors and producers of previous generations. This need to manufacture vehicles for star sons and daughters also discouraged risk taking, leading filmmakers to copy previous hits, rely on formula, or lift from successful Hollywood films many of whom, if not released theatrically in India, are now available on DVD. The lack of effective copyright law and enforcement further encouraged this practice. Some of the biggest Indian hits from the 1990s have been blatant Indianized ("chutneyed") copies of Hollywood (Nayar, 2003). For example, there have been three versions of "Sleeping With The Enemy" (*Agni Sakhshi* being the most popular), lifts from "Sabrina" (*Yeh Dillagi*), "Mrs Doubtfire" (*Chachee 420*) and "The Fugitive" (*Criminal*), to name but a few. The biggest hit of 2003, *Koi Mil Gaya*, featured elements from "E.T." and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." Nor is copying only reserved for foreign films. The biggest Bollywood in the 1990s is *Hum Apke Hain Kaun*, a family marriage melodrama boasting fourteen songs and running over three hours has proven to be a particularly fertile blueprint. Producers have rushed to imitate the latest successful film, sacrificing originality and relying instead on a handful of stars to attract box office.

The influx of new talent in Bollywood has come from a variety of sources: the South Indian film industry in the 1990s and from everywhere in the 2000s. In the 1990s, South Indian film directors such as Mani Ratnam and Ram Gopal Verma crossed over into Bollywood bringing with them an eagerness to explore new topics and techniques that supplemented the efforts of Bollywood bigwigs to update industry practices. In particular, with *Roja* and "*Bombay*, Mani Ratnam focused on militancy in Kashmir and sectrian violence respectively. Both films were critical and commercial successes, considerably expanding Bollywood's storytelling scope. Though Mani Ratnam later returned to the Tamil film industry, it is Ram Gopal Verma who remained in Mumbai and through his groundbreaking work, has rekindled hopes of a new Bollywood. For example, his 2003 release, *Bhoot* (Ghost) has been one of the biggest hits of the year (Top Grosses by, 2004). Yet it features no songs and in relying on scares showed Bollywood that it did not need expensive budgets to attract an audience.

Deeply influenced by Hollywood (Neelakantan, 2003), Ram Gopal Verma's penchant for breaking the mould in Bollywood (he once jokingly described himself as being to Bollywood what Al Qaida was to the USA) has yielded a series of films that owe as much to Mulholland Drive as to Malabar Hills. For example, his gritty underworld drama *Satya* (Truth) dared show a deglamorized, brutal Bombay yet was a huge hit with audiences. *Daud* (Run) was a road film, *Jungle* dealt with dacoits and kidnappings in a jungle, and *Company* was a taut dissection of the Bombay mafia and globalization. However, Ram Gopal Verma's greatest contribution to Bollywood may be the group of young filmmakers that he is grooming at his production company. Films by his protégés such as *Road* and *Darna Mana Hai* (Fear is Forbidden) have highlighted his values of

quirky scripts made relatively cheaply – and while not being blockbusters, they have grossed respectably in India.

Indeed, the influx of new talent from many sources into Bollywood over the past couple of years has been the most heartening effect of globalization. A large contributor has been the burgeoning advertising sector where aspiring filmmakers have honed their skills cutting commercials for India's growing market. NRI children, who grew up on Bollywood fare, have poured into Mumbai in search of roles and projects. And there is also mixture of NRIs and Indians who have been learned their craft from film schools outside India. One result of all this has been the growth of low budget alternative films being produced in the heart of Bollywood. Productions such as *Bombay Boys*, *English August*, and *Everybody Says I'm Fine* are in English or rather, Hinglish, a mixture of Hindi and English. While clearly not tailored for the lower class like most Bollywood fare, these films are aimed squarely towards the Indian middle class and the NRI market. Actors such as Rahul Bose are now able to devote themselves solely to these Hinglish productions. Faced with this new wave, even established filmmakers are responding ("Trying to Be a," 2003). One of the features of Mukta Arts is the creation of a "story bank" as well sponsoring in-house low-budget "alternative" productions. It has released two this year: *Joggers Park* and *Ek Aur Ek Gyarah* (One and One Make Eleven). Neither has fared particularly well. In addition, it has also been working on "forward and backward integration". That means, looking forwards, the building of its own distribution network; and, backwards, setting up an international film institute, to open in Mumbai in 2004, that expects to train 200 professionals each year.

Bollywood has even started dabbling in once taboo subjects (Haider, 2003). *Jism,* (Body) a steamy (by Bollywood standards) retelling of Double Indemnity, and starring Bipasha Basu, was one of the most talked about films of 2003. *Khwaish* (Desire) promised even more heat with seventeen kisses and a bevy of bikini clad girls but failed to bring in the crowds. Yet films such as *Boom* suggest the trend will continue.

CHAPTER VI

BOLLYWOOD AND THE FUTURE

In October 2003, Bollywood was on the cover of Time Asia with the feature story trumpeting how Bollywood had reinvented itself and was poised for further success. Despite detractors that claim Bollywood badly needs an overseas audience due to declining viewership at home (Shamsie, 2002), Bollywood has inadvertently found itself receiving such accolades with the global popularity of ventures like *Lagaan* and *Monsoon Wedding* (although the latter was, strictly speaking, not a Bollywood film, being in director Mira Nair's words, "a Bollywood film made on my own terms".) However, this breakout success has not extended to subsequent films. The year after *Lagaan*, *Devdas*, despite tremendous hype and a Cannes showing failed to break out of its diaspora audience. Part of the reason for this was just plain lack of marketing savvy. In 2002, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* made over $1 million on only 73 screens in its opening weekend in the United States. Despite being the largest opening, to date, of an Indian movie here, its producers did not report the figures to Variety promptly, losing out on the chance to place the film in the U.S. top 10 and make international news (Tsering, 2003). Additionally, apart from the ethnic press aimed at Indian immigrants, Bollywood films are rarely advertised or promoted to Western audiences. Nevertheless, due to the increasing influence of India abroad, curiosity about India and Bollywood has never been higher. There are cultural signs of Bollywood's impact on Western culture: the sampling of Bollywood hits by hip-hop artists is but one example. The question is can Bollywood influence culture outside India?

According to director Shekhar Kapur (Kapur, 2002) the long-term answer is yes. He feels that due to demographic shifts in the world population, it is Indian and Chinese filmmakers that will dominate global entertainment in ten to fifteen years. This is because of the potential huge entertainment market for movies in those countries and also because Hollywood is making less and less films on its own. "Soon we will find that in order to make a hugely successful film, you have to match Tom Cruise with an Indian or a Chinese actor."

Kapur feels that in order to prosper further, Bollywood has to adapt to international markets. Over the years, Bollywood has survived by assimilating external influences (even if that includes blatant copying) and adapting to trends yet remaining recognizably Indian. It is precisely this strength that may allow it to prosper further in the future. For example, the trend of smaller quirky productions in 2003 may well be the biggest milestone of that year, blockbusters aside. Aamir Khan, one of Bollywood's most well known stars, summarizes ("The Young Turk," 2003):

> In the 1950s and 1960s, Indian cinema was making really good stuff, but in the late 1960s and 1970s there was a gradual decline and the late 1970s and 1980s, things could hardly have been worse. Finally, in the late 1980s, some better films started being made again, using music, but using it with some sensibility. A bunch of people got into film who were completely fed up with the sort of films coming out. It was like, 'F--- you. We can't stomach this any longer.'
>
> Plus the audience is changing and getting exposed to more and more different times of entertainment. In fact, it's quick stunning how quickly people have

changed: we've gone from one television to 100—not a natural growth—and

people have been bombarded with a whole host of new things from outside India.

Anyway, so now people are building on the good work that was being done

then, and doing completely different stuff. People are suddenly willing to

experiment with new ideas: the films being made today wouldn't have even seen a

release 10 to 15 years ago. There's a whole new level of passion and integrity and

commitment. We have a lot to learn as a film industry, but the momentum is

building now.

But he also warns:

What excites me and what is changing is that we can now entertain a world

audience. And we should explore that, but we shouldn't neglect our audience here.

There are filmmakers who are looking towards a Western audience. But I'm not

interested in making a *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* or looking for a pattern

of what might be successful. I want to make films that I believe in and if that

happens to interest an international audience, then great. *Lagaan* is an example of

a mainstream Indian film that was seen all over the world and that was never

intended for an international audience.

There are other trends that indicate the shape that the industry is likely to take in the

future. Of late, there has been an increase in the number of co-productions. For example,

Marigold and *The Invaders* are Indian stories being financed through Indian, UK and

German sources and feature cast and crew from the US, UK, and India. According to

Rahul Bose ("The New Wave," 2003), at the vanguard of the Hinglish movement in

Bollywood:

Also, there has been a *diktat* put out by the bosses of American studios to fund

movies in other countries that would seem to have audiences across the world.

'Find movies that will break through.' And that's new in the last two years. It's

cheaper, you see. We can make a movie here for $1 million that would cost $20

million in the US. And the money's talking.

Perhaps Bollywood, after many missteps and absorbing many blows from the outside

world, may finally be ready to start influencing the rest of the world in a big way. Rahul

Bose again:

So here, it all adds up to movement. I was thinking about moving abroad to work

a few years ago. But now, everything's suddenly changed. There's a huge upswing

and suddenly Indian talent is keeping up with others in Los Angeles or Spain or

Italy. And, back here, the guard is changing. I have very respected old-style

Bollywood guys phoning me up and saying, 'I want to make crossover films, or

low budget films or experimental films. I'm sick of doing this old s---.' Put us all

together, and you have a movement. Put us together with the audience, and you

have something sweeping the world.

CHAPTER VII

THE INTERACTIVE ESSAY CREATION PROCESS

Introduction

Once my research was laid out in print, I was faced with the challenge of designing a creative work project that would present this enormous amount of information in a concise and interesting way. I chose to design an interactive digital presentation. I commenced the process by studying interface designs created by other designers and analyzing their choices. By gauging the effectiveness of their projects, I was able to maintain a high standard throughout my design process. I gathered the bulk of my insights from the web although there were some design books (Donnelly, 2000) and magazines that were useful. In parallel, I also started exploring various software programs such as Macromedia Director and Flash to find which would best realize my presentation. In the remainder of this chapter, I focus on the implementation process and provide reasons justifying the various design decisions that I made.

Choosing A Medium For The Presentation

My earlier research indicated the dearth of available information on the web for Indian Entertainment in general and Bollywood in particular. While there were may web sites on Bollywood, most featured photos and wallpapers of stars, some gossip, and occasional reviews regarding new releases. There was no online archive on Indian films although written books did exist covering various facets of Indian cinema. However, no one book covered the topic I wished to explore. Hence, I realized the importance of my

web presentation in providing information otherwise not readily available. Due to this

lack of online material, my research process took more time than anticipated and I had to

gather most of my data from online news articles, discussions, some books and by

studying Hindi movies and correlating their trends with the economic, social and political

environment of the times.

My final project was intended to be an interactive essay with images, movie clips,

animations and audio effects. After a fair amount of research and hands-on

experimentation, I realized Macromedia Director would be ideal for my project.

However, since I wanted to publish my project on the web, it would be easier to utilize

Macromedia Flash which has more widespread usage on the web. Unfortunately, using

Flash entailed several difficulties. Initially, I used Flash 5 but its lack of video support

proved crippling. I had read about the video capabilities of Flash MX and decided to use

it instead. However, even with Flash MX, I experienced problems managing long video

sequences. This was primarily because: i) Flash imports the video frame by frame and ii)

the frame rate in Flash (12 fps)) is much lower than that of Digital Video (DV) (29.97

fps). Additionally, Flash MX uses only one type of video compression, Sorenson Spark,

while outputting video. Thus it is difficult to regulate the quality of the video, which is

fairly low in quality. In spite of these difficulties I chose to use Flash for building the

basic presentation. However, I did augment its functionality with a suite of programs

(SwishMax, Adobe Premiere 6.0, Adobe After Effects 4.0, Cubase SX, Adobe Photoshop

6 and Adobe Illustrator 9) that I used to complete my project.

Making The Rules of Bollywood

In addition to utilizing archived and downloadable movie clips for my presentation, I also created a 13 minute documentary style short film titled *The Rules of Bollywood*. The notion of a 'formula-film' is fairly common in Bollywood. Such films are affectionately known as 'masala (meaning spicy) films'. Though the Indian audience is intuitively familiar with many of the clichés used and many non-Bollywood films parody some of them, no film thus far has explicitly spelled out the rules. That was my intention for *The Rules of Bollywood*: provide a list of the most common rules and highlight them with examples from masala films that I could then include in my creative work project. Clearing the rights to the movie excerpts used in *The Rules of Bollywood* was a time consuming process. Initially, I chose candidate sequences from a wide range of movies knowing that my choice of final clips I used would depend on the company that would actually grant me the rights. Accordingly, I approached many North American distributors of Hindi films for clearance. Finally, Video Sound Inc. was the only company that replied promptly to my queries and showed interest in my project. Hence, I used only their movies and after submitting a detailed list of titles and approximate length of the footage used in each film, I received permission to use the clips for both my project as well as for future festival distribution, if necessary.

Chapter 5 lists many of the *Rules of Bollywood*. However, while making the film, I selected a few of the rules that could be best represented by the found footage. Since the *Rules of Bollywood* was mainly an edited piece, its main challenges lay in post-production. They included:

- capturing the movies directly from DVDs

- editing them using a non-linear editing tool such as Adobe Premiere,

- creating animations using Flash and Adobe After Effects and compositing them with the movie clips

- editing the sound

- dealing with the file compression and transfer difficulties both within and across various software programs and maintaining picture quality in the process

After several trials, I was finally able to make *Rules of Bollywood* suitable for streaming on the web.

The Design Process

My main design project was to build a website that would summarize the findings in my written report, highlighting the main points and presenting it in an interesting manner. After selecting the content for the site, my next goal was to design the visual presentation of this information.

Bollywood movies have undergone many stylistic changes over the years but certain aspects of its culture still remain. This includes the romanticism much of which is achieved through song and dance sequences and the use of brilliant colors and extravagant sets. In my presentation, I wanted to capture that aspect of Bollywood, which, to me, is most comparable to Hollywood cinema in the 1970s. I experimented with different color palettes, bright color contrasts and icons typical of 70's design. After discussing a number of design concepts with my committee members, I arrived at the current approach.

I used warm colors like red, orange and yellow to reflect the energy and vitality of Bollywood movies. These colors also represent Indian society since they are seen extensively in various social, religious, as well as political occasions. For instance, the Indian flag contains saffron, which is a shade of orange, white, green and blue. These colors are also used abundantly on wedding invitations and for other social gatherings. Contemporary Bollywood movies use a lot of primary colors as well in addition to a film look and narrative derived in large part from ad films. My choice of using images from Bollywood both in the foreground and background of my main page followed naturally. The concept of using illustrations flowed from the fact that most 70's and 80's movies in Bollywood used illustrations for their posters rather than photographs. Also, life-sized cutouts of stars were used to promote films. It remains a common practice in Tamil cinema even today. I combined these ideas in my presentation through the usage of drop shadows with illustrations to provide it with the paper and cardboard look.

To add additional interactivity, I employed animated caricatures for the navigation buttons. Each of the characters represent a genre of Hindi cinema, which is related to the developments mentioned in the various chapters of this report. For instance, I used a cartoon of Amitabh Bacchan whose heydays were in the 70's to represent the history of Indian cinema. The next character, Kajol, is a representative of the 90's, when Bollywood started dealing with the effects of globalization by raising its production values and increasing the budget on its films while it continued to follow the content and style of the older genres. Hrithik Roshan, the third character, is the current face of Bollywood. Aishwariya Rai, the last cartoon character, can be called the future of Bollywood, as most articles about Bollywood and its awareness among other world

cultures, uses her image as representative. For the history page, I used the timeline

concept for the local navigation in order to sub-divide each category further. The same

look was maintained while designing the other pages to make the site consistent. I also

employed pop-up windows to present extra material pertaining to each section without

cluttering each page with too much information.

To make the presentation independent of browser size or the number of palettes

open at any one time, I structured the entry point to my presentation such that the Flash

material is a link from the index page. I also used Action Scripting to restrict the Flash

window size. The website is targeted for screen resolutions ranging between 800x600 to

1152x864 pixels. If the resolution were to be any higher, the text or images would be

considerably diminished and might be difficult to read. The introductory animation is

intended to depict a movie theater experience with appropriate audio-visuals that include

audience noise. It also incorporates elements from Indian movie introductions which

open with a censorship clearance certificate and follow it with a dramatic film production

company visual. The old film scratches and projector sound works in lines with the

overall theme which is more 70's than a contemporary production.

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APPENDIX A

INITIAL DESIGN CONCEPTS

Figure 1: Template 1

Figure 2: Template 2

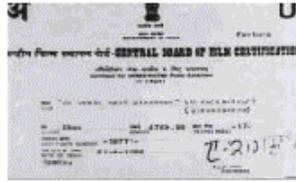Figure 3: Template 3

Figure 4: Template 4

Figure 5: Template 5

Figure 6: Template 6

Beginning Animation: A theater full of audience- show some audience interaction to make it interesting.
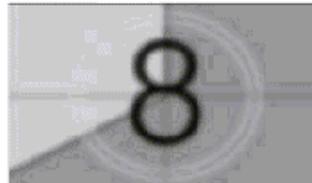
Zoom in to the Screen: show censorboard certificate - an integral part of indian movies.

Pause between certificate and the beginning of the "Movie": show screen scratches as on old film.

Production company Logo: a small animation.
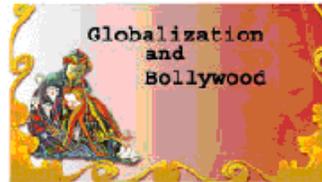
Movie Countdown

Presentation Page 1: Title appear with some kind of text effect - e.g the letters type in.

Figure 7: Rough Storyboard I

Presentation Page 1: Title app-earing.

Presentation Page 1: Title anim-ation complete.

Presentation Page 1: Title moves to the left.

Presentation Page 1: Text Effect on Title to show fade to white as it moves the left hand corner.

Presentation Page 1: Title as logo on left hand corner, the background and foreground images disappear and a talking head/character appears.

Presentation Page 1: All the characters appear, fading in from white.

Figure 8: Rough Storyboard II

Presentation Page 1: Text box forms.

Presentation Page 1: Intro text appears inside the box. The characters are rollover buttons, which lead to seperate pages. On rollover, the text in the text box changes.

Presentation Page 2: History Page. Time line appears with rollover points. The text in the text box changes on rollover. For additional material, a button takes to a pop-up window.

Presentation Page 2: Pop-up window.

Figure 9: Rough Storyboard III