

# **Pakistani Cinema: A Seventy Years Study of Rise and Fall**

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## **Abstract**

*Pakistani Cinema is now more than 70 years old but it is not an established one as it must be. Pakistani film industry is still struggling to get a prominent position in comparison with the neighboring countries. Its history is full of success and failure stories. The industry was not fully recovered from the shocks and after socks of partition of India when a number of artists moved to India. There was another blow of partition dividing Pakistan into two halves Bangladesh and the present Pakistan. Again, Dacca having a prominent cinema culture was gone with some of the best artists. The films produced clearly shows that the local film industry has a lot of talent in every area of film production but there are a lot of reasons due to which successful combinations have not been able to sustain themselves long enough to contribute significantly. That is why there are a very few super hit productions.*

*The objective of this study is to collect and present the historical evolution of Pakistani Cinema and to give an overview of the factors that evidently contribute to the rise and fall of the cinema industry in different eras.*

*This study follows Qualitative survey as the method of research. The study is divided into seven decades and convenient random sampling technique is used with the help of questioner to get the public view of the Pakistani cinema under study. Further different available literature, magazine articles, various reviews and books were referred through online database for the analysis of the films. Convenient random sampling technique is used for the selection of the literature, reviewed.*

*It is apparent from the study that due to absence of new ideas, old themes, prohibited screening of Indian films on cable, political unrest in the country, technological innovation promoting home theater culture and conveniently available pirated foreign films are the main reasons for the downfall of Pakistani film industry.*

*The study recommends that Pakistani cinema should explore the niche market and develop itself on international standards. The current scenario of the Pakistani cinema demands a multidimensional approach to improve quality and quantity economically at the same time.*

**Key Words:** Pakistani Cinema, Film Industry, Music, Talent, Urdu Language.

## **Introduction**

Lollywood is the term coined after Bollywood and Hollywood and is the oldest film industry of Pakistani cinema, based in Lahore. Lahore has been the center of cinema industry since 1929 and is producing films in both the regional and Urdu languages. Karachi produces more Urdu language films than Lahore. Before the fall of Dhaka in 1971 Pakistani film industry had three film making centers namely Lahore, Karachi and Dhaka. The fall of Dhaka was a serious blow to the film industry mainly due to loss of one of its key production hubs and moving of some of prominent artists to their new homeland Bangladesh. After the Dhaka fall when a major portion of the country was lost the whole nation was in chaos and another blow to the industry was the martial law regime of 1977 due to which film production was confined to Lahore.

This study, thus aims to observe the historical journey of rise and fall of Pakistani cinema across the seventy years that is from the beginning in 50's to revival of cinema in 2000 and onwards. The study is very important as it aims to identify the key factors that have led to the down fall of the film industry and to avoid such mistakes in future when the revival of film industry is started.

The study also has some its own limitations. Due to scare time and money resources the data was collected on the basis of convenient random sampling which is itself not a very good method. This research heavily relied on the available secondary sources and available on-line media literature. Since the study follows the chronological approach and covers seventy years' history, an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic conditions of different era is impossible though it might have an impact on the film industry. It is, therefore, recommended that the future studies should focus on a relatively short period of time and cover these aspects as well.

### **1-The Rise of Pakistani Cinema (1947-1958)**

The newly founded country was full of administrative and financial problems. The biggest problem was an early settlement of refugees and funds for proper running of government. Scarcity of resources and shortage of filming equipment further paralyzed the nation's film industry. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

With a lot of hardships, the newly established film industry was able to produce its first feature film "Teri Yaad" on 7th August, 1948. It was premiered at the Parbhat Theatre in Lahore. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019) The film flopped badly.

The following year, Evernew Studios established a studio in the country which later becomes the largest film company of the time. Over the next few years, films such as "Chanway", "Sassi" and "Umar Marvi" were released reaching average success until the release of "Do Ansoo". "Do Ansoo" was released on 7th April, 1950. It became the first Pakistani film which was continuously viewed by public for twenty-five weeks. It became the first film to get a silver jubilee status. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

The first Pakistani film directed by a female director was "Chanway" which was released on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1951. It was directed by Madam Noor Jehan. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

Syed Faqir Ahmad Shah produced his first film in 1952 "Jagga Daku" in directorship of Saqlain Rizvi. The people of Pakistan were highly patriotic in those days and like to view love stories and historical films. The film was not very much appreciated due to violence shown in it. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

With the passage of time cinema viewership increased and in the meantime on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1954 "Sassi" was released. It was first film to reach golden jubilee status for staying on cinema screens for 50 weeks. In 1955 the legendary playback singer Ahmed Rushdi started his career by singing his 1<sup>st</sup> Pakistani song "Bander Road Se Kemari". The first Pakistani film

produced in regional Sindhi language was “Umer Marvi”. It was released on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1956. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

In 1957 producer Bari Malik produced a block buster Punjabi film “Yakkay Wali” in which actress Musarrat Nazir played the title role. The film completed golden jubilee and is said to be the most profitable film of that time. It was a feminist film way ahead of its time and addressed the issue of women empowerment. It was a great Punjabi romantic musical movie of a brave woman who supports her family by riding a horse-cart. Its melodious Punjabi folk style soundtrack was created by Ghulam Ahmad Chishti. (Seven unforgettable, daring Pakistani films, 2017)

To celebrate the success of these endeavors, film journalist Ilyas Rashidi who is the pioneer of film journalism in Pakistan, launched an annual awarding event on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1958, with the name of Nigar Awards. Nigar Award was an extension of the Nigar Magazine which was founded by Rashidi in 1948. Nigar Magazine was Pakistan’s first weekly newspaper dedicated solely to Pakistani cinema. The event since then is the Pakistani Cinemas most prestigious event celebrated annually. Nigar Awards are distributed among top performance holders in various classes of filmmaking. (Nigar Awards, 2018)

## **2-The Golden Age of Pakistani Cinema (1959-1969)**

With the advent of new and better technologies color films recoding began and black-and-white became obsolete. The reason was totally commercial as it became difficult to sell a film for television broadcasting if the film was not in color. 1961 was the last year for Hollywood films to be released in black and white. Pakistani Cinema Industry also followed the path by introducing color films. In early 1960’s first color film Munshi Dil’s “Azra” was released. On 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1964 first full length colored film Zahir Raihan's “Sangam” was released and first colored cinema scope film was “Mala” which was also released in 1964. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

On 26<sup>th</sup> May 1961, Kay Productions released an Urdu language film titled “Bombay Wallah”. The film escaped from the sharp eyes of the censor board due to its name similar to a city of India, Bombay now called Mumbai. When the tension between the two countries grew stronger the film censor board was blamed for their irresponsibility it was the first film which was targeted by Pakistani politicians. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

In 1962 a film “Shaheed” became an instant hit. It was produced on Palestine issue and was very popular among the cinema lovers. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

On 9<sup>th</sup> March, 1962 a historical event occurred at Nishat Cinema, Karachi where a film was premiered by Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah. The film was “Charagh Jalta Raha” directed by Fazal Ahmed Karim Fazli. Actress Zeba won Nigar Award as best supporting actress and made her film debut. Pakistan’s most versatile actor Mohammad Ali debut his acting career in this film and this film was also debut film of Talat Hussain, Kamal Irani and Deeba. (Seven unforgettable, daring Pakistani films, 2017)

Famous actress Mussarat Nazir after witnessing the change in attitude of filmmakers left film industry and settled with her family in Canada. Her much awaited film “Bahadur” was left unfinished and never released. This made room for alternative films like “Tauba”. Actor Syed Kamal’s debutant role in film “Tauba” filled the gap to a certain limit. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

During the India Pakistan war of 1965 all Indian films from the cinemas were taken off the screen and a complete ban was imposed on the Indian films. Initially it was supposed that Pakistani cinema industry will suffer from the decision instead the banning of Indian films made room for more Pakistani films to be screened on cinemas. The cinema business grew rapidly and it received more viewers for Pakistani films. As the banned Indian films were in Urdu language more demand for Pakistani Urdu language films was created. Waheed Murad realized this potential

of film industry and stepped into the industry. Film industry was not new to Waheed as his father Nisar Murad was a film distributor since before the birth of Pakistan. From the experience of his father he knows very well the recipe of a good film and taste of Pakistani film viewers. Waheed who was already an actor, script writer and producer soon become famous for his charismatic expressions, nice-looking persona, warm voice and rare talent for acting. Due to his personality film viewers soon began to call him the chocolate hero. No doubt he became Pakistani “Marlon Brando” and “Elvis Presley”. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

On 18<sup>th</sup> March 1966, a black and white Urdu film “Armaan” produced by Waheed Murad and directed by Pervaiz Malik was released. Waheed along with Zeba acted in this film. For 20 years after the birth of Pakistan “Armaan” was the first film to complete more than 75 weeks on the screen at nearly all prominent cinema houses of the country and got the platinum jubilee status. This film gave birth to pop songs in our country and introduced Pakistan’s first pop song “Ko Ko Korina”. Legendry play back singer Ahmed Rushdi and music maestro Sohail Rana were also introduced by this film. The magnificent soundtrack composed by Sohail Rana contributed extremely to the success of this film and is considered to be his magnum opus. The music of this film is the most memorable in the history of Pakistani film industry and many of the songs such as “Akelay na Janna” are cited as classic in film music. The playback singer was Ahmed Rushdi, Mala, Naseema Shaheen and Khursheed Nurali. It was one of the most precious endeavors of the Pakistani film industry and won 6 prestigious Nigar awards. Producer Waheed Murad got the best film of the year 1966 award, Pervaiz Malik got the best director award, Zeba got the best actress award, Sohail Rana got the best musician, Ahmed Rushdi got the best play back singer award for “akelay na janna” and Nirala got the best comedian award. (Armaan, 1966 film)

“Badnam” is Urdu language film adopted from Manto’s short story “Jhumkay” directed and produced by Iqbal Shehzad. Its screenplay

is written by Riaz Shahid. “Badnam” was a Silver Jubilee and box office hit film of 1966. The film, like *Neela Parbat* and *Lakhon Main Aik*, is considered as an important landmark in the history of Pakistani cinema. (Seven unforgettable, daring Pakistani films, 2017)

In 1967 film “Chokori” was released and Nazeer Baig with the film name Nadeem got instant success. “Chokori” became his debut film. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019) The same year a horror film “Zinda Laash” directed by Khwaja Sarfaraz was also introduced for screening in Pakistan. It was first X-Rated film produced in Pakistan. (Zinda Laash, 2018)

On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1969 Pakistan’s first “Adults only” feature film “Neela Parbat” directed and produced by Ahmed Bashir was released. It was one of the earliest experimental feature films on Freudian sensual themes and was very unusual for Pakistani cinema viewers and this why it was tagged “for adults only”. The film was unable to run for more than three to four day on box office. (Neela Parbat, 2018)

On 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1969 film “Zarqa” directed and produced by Riaz Shahid was released. He also wrote its screenplay and took a bold step to deviate from the conventional theme of Pakistani cinema and undertook a risky experiment by bypassing the regular them of 60’s. The story of the film is about the Palestinian liberation movement against Israel and revolves around the activities of the organization. It became the hit film of 1969 and got the diamond jubilee status. The film also became controversial when the rights of its distribution in the Middle East were offered to the Palestinian guerrilla organization, Al Fatah. (Seven unforgettable, daring Pakistani films, 2017)

### **3-Age of the VCR (1970-1978)**

On 7<sup>th</sup> February 1971 film “Dosti” directed by Sharif Nayyar was released and became a mega hit film. It was pictured in England

and celebrated diamond jubilee status by completing more than 100 weeks continuous screening in many cinemas in a single city.

(Mazhar., Pakistani films in 1971, 2008) Films “Mastana Mahi”, “Parai Aag” and “Salam-e-Muhabbat” were also produced in 1971. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

Due to political uncertainty all over the country and ethnic armed clashes in East Pakistan the film makers were asked officially to look after the socio-political impacts of their productions. When Urdu film “Tehzeeb” was released on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1971 the producers were asked to change word “Misr” because it might be taken in negative sense by diplomats of Egypt which is a Muslim country. The line “Laga hai misr ka bazaar dekho” was changed to “Laga hai husn ka bazaar dekho” in the song of the film. It was a super hit film of 1971 produced by Hassan Tariq. (Tehzeeb, 2019)

After the 1971 war with India which ended on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1971, Pakistan lost East Pakistan. Bangladesh was created as a new state for Bengali speaking population of East Pakistan. At that time 55% of total Pakistani population was living in East Pakistan. Pakistani film industry not only lost its Dacca wing but also 55% of cinema viewers due to which number of cinemas decreased rapidly. The period saw the migration of talented film makers such as Zahir Raihan and professional workers in the industry leaving for the newly founded Bangladesh. In 1971 there were about 400 cinemas in Pakistan and a quarter of them existed in East wing of the country. In 1970 114 film including three in Urdu language were produced in East Pakistan alone. (Noorani, A., & Arshad, S., 2016) This caused another serious jolt to the film industry since the partition of India. Pakistani film industry was at the brink of disaster yet again.

According to Mushtaq Gazdar in all 47 Urdu movies produced in East Pakistan, ranging from *Chanda* to *Jalte Suraj Ke Neeche* were released in the country’s west wing. Making films in Dhaka was a boon for West Pakistani filmmakers because the cost of production

was lower there. Rahman, for example, charged a fraction of what Waheed Murad or Mohammad Ali would. The most notable of the Urdu films made in East Pakistan were *Chanda, Talash, Bandhan, Milan, Indhan, Sangam, Kajal, Nawab Sirajuddaulah* and *Chakori*. (Gazdar, M. 2012)

Due to the frequent changes in the political landscape of our country the film industry has become vulnerable and victim of violence. In 1976 at Quetta a protesting mob set fire a cinema just before the screening of Pakistan's first Balochi language film, "Hamalo Mah Gunj" in it. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

Pakistan's first English language film "Beyond the Last Mountain" which was released on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1976. It was written, produced and directed by Javed Jabbar. To this day it remains Pakistan's only English language feature film. The Urdu version of the film was titled "Musafir" and was unable to do well in box office. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

On 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1977 Urdu language film "Aina" directed by Nazrul Islam was released on two main cinemas Bambino Cinema and Scala Cinema at Karachi. It is Pakistan's only Crown Jubilee film which was screened in cinemas from 18<sup>th</sup> March 1977 to 1982 approximately for 4 years, 9 months and 27 days total 401 weeks combined. The film was also a big musical success composed by Robin Ghosh and the play back singers were Mehdi Hassan, Mehnaz, Nayyara Noor and Alamgir. Its theme song "Mujhe dil se na bhulana" was a super hit song sung in happy, sad and in child version sung by child star at the climax of the film. Film "Aina" got 12 Nigar awards and had broken all the previous box office records and yet no Pakistani film has been able to break its record. Producer M. Ahmed Shamshi got best movie of the year 1977 award, Nazr-ul-Islam got the best director award, Bashir Niaz got the best screenplay award, Shabnam got the best actress award, Nadeem got the best actor award, Rehan got the best supporting actor award, Robin Ghosh got the best musician award, Tasleem Fazli got the best song writer award for the song: "Mujhe dil se na

bhulana", Afzal Chaudhry got the best photography award, Mehdi Hassan got the best playback singer award for the song "Mujhe dil se na bhulana", Alamgir got best upcoming singer award for the song "Wada karo saajna" and child star Shehzed got the special award. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

A well know film critic Mushtaq Gazdar also wrote about "Aina" in his famous book "Pakistan Cinema 1947-1997" published by Oxford Press in 1997.

"In Aina, Nazrul infused a romantic note through the songs using the elements of nature as tools to enhance their impact. His use of open spaces to create the mood of the scenes in contrast with the normal lip-sync presentation of songs greatly appealed to the audience." (Gazdar, M. 2012)

While the film industry was revolutionizing, Pakistan's government was in a state of turmoil. On 5<sup>th</sup> July, 1977 military removes the civil government, martial law was imposed and constitution was suspended. General Zia ul Haq deposed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in a military coup and Bhutto was controversially tried and was executed less than two years later. Harsh laws were imposed which brought press into chains. Print media was totally under strict sensor polices and in the control of military government. Journalists who were against military government and in favor of democracy were punished and sent to jail. Pakistani television and radio were already owned by the state government and after martial law become mouth piece of military government.

Film production in Lollywood was collapsed by the end of the 1990s. By 2005, barely 20 local films were released annually. (The fall and rise of Pakistani film, 2018)

Due to Islamization of the country by Zia Ul Haq civil liberties were curbed and entertainment programs were completely banned even on theater and stage. It was policy of ruling dictatorship to keep public confined at their homes so as to avoid public gathering

and speak up. Law and order situation due to bomb blasts and target killing of 80's also contributed to keep people inside their homes. The people at home have only option to switch to their TV and radio sets as cinemas and other outdoor activities were nearly closed. The Pakistani radio and TV run by the ruling government were also under the process of Islamization and were unable to pace with international entertainment programs and therefore were unable to fulfill local public's demands. People had left with only one option which was to opt for the home entertainment. Private home entertainment was available in the form of Indian films which can be run on Video Cassette Recorders. A new culture in Pakistan was born which can be termed as "Indian film culture" or "VCR culture" VCR ruled our homes for more than two decades and vanished with the advent of new technologies but Zia's Islamization gave a serious blow to our film industry.

Manufacturing of Video Cassette Recorders commonly known as VCR's for consumers was started in 1975. Japanese companies developed technically advanced and easy to operate machines and became the winners of the field. By 1979 VCR became a mass consumer product and the industry boomed in 1980's. It is amazing to know that by 1978 some of the people in Pakistan have VCR's, a country where its import was legally banned till 1983. VCR's were actually brought in Pakistan by the expatriates working in Gulf countries or those living in United States and United Kingdom. Initially it was a costly item but its availability on rental made it affordable. Families began to unite on weekends at any convenient private residence and Indian films on VCR's were watched together. In almost all cases people get inside to watch films due to the reason that watching Indian films was considered immoral and as VCR was not legalized there was always a chance of police raid and confiscation of the equipment and video films.

In 1983 when VCR's were legalized more people purchased it and it became a house hold appliance. Besides viewing Indian and to some extent English films recording and viewing wedding videos

or personal events became a fashion and yet another reason for promotion of VCR.

The arrival of VCR in Pakistan was one of the most important innovative technological advancement of its time and rapidly films from all over the world were copied onto video cassette. This helped in the birth of the film piracy industry where films were copied on video cassette the day they were premiered in cinemas.

The public attendance at cinemas decreased. It was felt comfortable to watch films at home and at any time and the same film many times in day. Further waiting time, travelling time, cinema ticket cost and conveyance expenses were saved. VCR contributed to the demise of an unestablished Pakistani film industry.

Some other factors also favored use of VCR and hammered last nails to the Pakistani film industry coffin. Among them first was that in Zia era women were expected to sit at home and at that time there was only one channel on Television and that too was started around 5 pm. Indian films provided a substitute source of entertainment for them. Secondly the Zia government also wanted people to stay at home to avoid political gatherings. Thirdly the youth have heard stories of some very good Indian films from their elders and there was a lot of curiosity. Further Bollywood films are far better in production, direction, acting, story, song and composition than Pakistani films.

#### **4-Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization and the downfall (1979-1987)**

Zia soon began to islamicize the country and one of the first victims of this socio-political change was the film industry. New registration laws for film producers were imposed one of which required filmmakers to be degree holders. Producers who were not degree holders were unable to produce films which led to a sharp decline in the film productions. To display Islamic values and Zia's Islamization policy most of the cinemas in Lahore were closed by force. New and more taxes on much higher rates were

levied, further decreasing cinema audiences. Due to punitive laws and increase in entertainment tax production of films was dropped from a total 98 films in 1979, of which 42 were in Urdu language, to only total 58 films in 1980, of which 26 were in Urdu language. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

Censorship policies representing Islamic values were against display of love and affection between couples. Dance scenes, night clubs' scenes and showing bars of wine was against the policy of film censor board. Art films, stories on social issues, stories on taboo topics, criticizing government departments especially police or armed forces was felt as a direct attack on martial law rulers. Very few topics were left as a second option for film producers and fighting scenes without arms was one of them. Such type of fighting scenes can best fit in Punjabi films which in turn give rise to the production of Punjabi cult classics like "Maula Jatt" of 1979 telling the story of a gadasa carrying hero fighting with a blood-feud. From "Maula Jatt" to onwards such stories were similar to each other with a very little change narrating the story of a gadasa carrying hero fighting with a feudal lord or fighting with a gangster to help kidnapped heroine. This type of films was the only option left for the Lollywood film makers and for the viewers of the densely populated province of Pakistan. This type of film sub-culture came to be known as the "gadasa culture" in the local film industry. This culture came as a serious blow to the Pakistani film industry as a result violence-ridden Punjabi films succeeded and outshined the Urdu language cinema.

On 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1979 producer Sarwar Bhatti released his Punjabi language action film "Maula Jatt". It was directed by Younus Malik. Sultan Rahi performed the title role and Mustafa Qureshi as villain Noori Natt. The film represents the rural culture of central Punjab. It was a big hit and commercially a huge success. It got a Diamond Jubilee status for running more than 75 weeks on screen. "Maula Jatt's" success was followed by "Maula Jatt tey Noorie Nut" which was followed by "Maula Jatt in London" and Punjabi formula film productions continue with the

popular culture. Actor Sultan Rahi and actress Anjuman were super stars of Gandasa culture and both became important figures of Punjabi film industry. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

The legendary filmmaker Younus Malik has played a significant role in the development of cinema in Pakistan giving a boost to violence-ridden films. The pioneer of gandassa culture has over 100 movies at his credit including ‘Mastana Mahi’, ‘Jeera Sain’, ‘Ziddi Jatt’, ‘Sholay’, ‘Yaraana’, ‘Toofan Mail’ and many more. (Jiyaabbas, 2015)

With the support of resourceful politicians Pashto filmmakers of Pakistani film industry were able to avoid censor policies and produced their films with some soft-core pornography and increased their viewership. However, the arrival of Afghan refugees kept the entire Pashto film industry active as they were deprived of such entertainment in their country. Karachi and Peshawar were the main centers of Pashto film industry as Afghan refugees were living since the Afghan war in both cities. Pashto speaking who left their homeland to get a better earning and find jobs now living in Karachi were also potential Pashto film viewers and frequent cinema goers. They over throw Pakistani cinema’s romantic and melodious film image and reduced it to the public interest movies. When the industry was almost collapsed and there could not have been any other destruction left to be made Waheed Murad ‘The chocolate hero’ died out of stomach cancer and abusive use of alcohol in 1983. Some people said he committed suicide. Nevertheless, his unfinished film ‘Hero’ was completed by using cheat shots to screen the last film of such a legend in front of dishearten yet eager audience. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

### **5-Collapse (1988-2002)**

The enthusiasm soon faded and not even the first Pakistani science fiction film “Shanee” in 1989 could uplift the falling industry. Director Saeed Rizvi even introduced complicated special effects; the film was awarded at the Moscow Film Festival and even in

Korea and Egypt but it was abandoned by its own country where it was produced. Pakistani film industry was bestowed with a worthy fate in the beginning of 1990. From the few studios in the 70s and 80s, only 11 were operational producing around 100 films every year. As studios went towards producing short-plays and television commercials this number lowered further. Leaving the industry behind as cable television started to progress. The annual output was reduced to around 40 films produced all from a single studio by the early 90s. Other productions merely made were usually financed by the filmmakers themselves. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

In the mid and late 90's the local film industry succeeded to gain some attention of cinema viewers. In 1994 science fiction horror action and drama film "Sarkata Insaan" produced and directed by Saeed Rizvi was released. (Sarkata Insaan, 2018)

Urdu film "Jeeva" directed by Syed Noor was a Platinum Jubilee mega hit film of 1995 with outstanding music by famous music director M. Arshad. It was also highly praised at foreign film festivals wherever it was screened. In 1997 science fiction film "Tilsimih Jazira" produced by Saeed Rizvi was released. In 1999 "Inteha" produced and directed by Samina Pirzada was released. It was her debut directional attempt and was a successful movie. It seemed that the cinema of Pakistan was headed towards a much-needed revival but short attendance was recorded at the box-office for later ventures it was a complete and utter collapse of the industry. Some Prominent productions of the time include 'Deewane Tere Pyar Ke', "Mujhe Chand Chahiye", "Sangam", "Tere Pyar Mein", and "Ghar Kab Aao Gay", which tried hard to get away from the usual violent storylines but were not accepted fully amongst the lower middle-class cinema audience. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

On 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1998 English & Urdu language film "Jinnah" was released. It was produced by Akbar Salahuddin Ahmed and directed by Jamil Dehlavi.

The story of the film revolves around the struggles and accomplishments of Quaid e Azam. It received a devastatingly positive response in Pakistan. This Pakistani film features, Christopher Lee from Hollywood, Bollywood legend Shashi Kapoor, prominent British actor James Fox and other well-known celebrities from Pakistan. A number of controversies arose while filming of Jinnah. Protests were made over casting Christopher Lee as the hero portraying Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the addition of Indian Shashi Kapoor as Angel Gabriel in the cast joint with the experimental nature of the script. Imran Aslam, editor of The News International, said “the author wrote the script in a 'haze of hashish’”. Out of all the controversies and the gossips and rumors; the film proved that both Indian and Pakistani actors and producers can work together on such filmmaking projects without the ban being elevated. It was expected that more actors would look forward to such journeys in and across the borders. (Pakistan government halts funds for Jinnah film, 2005)

After losing Waheed Murad in 1983 film industry suffered another blow, in 1989 top Punjabi film actress Anjuman got married to Mubeen Malik and quieted from acting and play back singing. Murder of Punjabi film top hero Sultan Rahi 1996 attributed to the whirling industry which did not just lose viewership for its Urdu but Punjabi films too following the death of Sultan Rahi. Nazrul Islam director of mega hit film “Aina” died in 1994. During this time and film actor and director Sangeeta left silver screen to join her family life. By the start of the new era, the industry was declared to be dead. Syed Noor was very disheartened at the abrupt deterioration of the cinema. He started gathering investors for what was considered the only Pakistani film industry to survive this turmoil.

On 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1998 Punjabi language film “Choorian” directed by Syed Noor and produced by Haji Faqir Muhammad was released. It was opened in 22 screens across Pakistan and earned PKR 200 million in just one year of its running. It is the third highest grossing film after the record being broken by “Waar” and

“Khuda Kay Liye.” “Choorian” gave hope to film industry and made the directors realize that there was still some hope left. Javed Sheikh's ‘Yeh Dil Aap Ka Huwa’ released in 2002 made over 200 million rupees across Pakistan. The economic prospects were then realized fully and for the first time in twelve years, investors starting taking keen interest in Pakistani films. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

The cinemas could not have kept afloat with such short periods of success in the industry. The same industry that at a point of time produced more than 100 films annually a decade ago was now decreased to only 32 per year. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

### **6- Revival under President Musharraf (2003-2009)**

When General Pervez Musharraf assumed power in bloodless military coup and overthrew Nawaz Sharif on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1999, he imposed no restrictions on the media and within three years he allowed new channels to come and join media industry. (Pakistan's private TV news revolution under General Musharraf - Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF), 2019)

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)

A need of restoration was being resonated in the media as the Cinema was weakening in all major cities of the country. Young filmmakers took a stand to prove that high quality content could be produced by the local film industry using the limited resources available in early 2003.

With privatization of television stations in full swing, a new channel Filmazia Entertainment was broadcasted, primarily to broadcast films and productions made indigenously in the country.

There was only one partial success film in 2003 “Larki Panjaban” which did an average amount of business at the box office. (Cinema of Pakistan, 2019)

Mahesh Bhatt, a renowned Indian director visited Pakistan looking for talent during this time period, particularly singers who could lend their voices to his upcoming films in India. He was also in Pakistan to attend the third Kara Film Festival as the screening of his film “Paap” was to be held in Karachi. Bhatt decided to hire Atif Aslam for the soundtrack of his film ‘Zeher’ and Pakistani actress Meera to play a lead-role in one of his films. (Mahesh Bhatt to bring Pakistani artistes back to India, 2017)

Later in 2005, the officials of the film industry realized that the government should eliminate the ban for the screening of Bollywood films in Pakistan. The issue was voiced by the Film Producers Association (FPA) and the Cinema Owners Association (CAO) of Pakistan, after the release of the colorized premastering of the 1960 classic Mughal-e-Azam. (Ghafoor, 2005)

When the government rejected the request; Geo Films, a subsidiary of Geo TV took on itself to advance in upcoming Pakistani directorial projects and dubbed their efforts in "Revival of Pakistani Cinema" and on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007 released Shoaib Mansoor's cinematic directorial debut “Khuda Ke Liye aka In the Name of God”. This film became the first Pakistani film since the obligation of the ban in 1965 to be released simultaneously in both India and Pakistan. The four decades ban was finally lifted with its general release in India. The film was released in more than 100 cinemas of 20 cities in India. (Pak film Khuda Ke Liye released in India, 2008)

Unbeknown to the local media, a Pakistani horror film, full of violence and bloodshed was already being displayed in International film festivals. Omar Ali Khan directed another directorial debut, ‘Zibakhana aka Hell's Ground’ which was being premiered at festivals throughout the world gaining reputation as

the 'first extreme-horror gore flick' and received awards and praises wherever it was screened. The film steered a revival in the horror genre for Pakistani films. It was also the first Pakistani film shot on HD. Where the horror genre seems to have been reincarnated in the industry; 'Freedom Sound' a science fiction film used the computer-generated special effects for the first time since 1989's "Shanee".

The recent successes of issue-centered Pakistani films such as 'Khuda Ke Liye' encouraged director Mehreen Jabbar daughter of Javaid Jabbar to come forward with her installment with the release of 'Ramchand Pakistani' which will mark the first true efforts of international collaboration towards the restoration of cinema in Pakistan. 'Khuda Ke Liye' is an Urdu language award winning Pakistani Drama film produced and written by Javed Jabbar released in India on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2008 and in Pakistan on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008. In this film lead roles were performed by Nandita Das, Rashid Farooqi, Syed Fazel Hussain, Maria Wasti and Noman Ijaz.

#### **7- The Revival in 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2010-2018)**

Pakistani cinema got a much-needed launch pad after the cinemas in Pakistan unanimously agreed to first limit the screening of Bollywood movies, and then in late 2015, completely ban them from Pakistani cinemas. Although, the motives for that decision were fuelled by the Kashmir crisis, and as of early 2018, the ban has been lifted. However, the fact remains that 8 out of 10 of the highest grossing films in Pakistani Cinema's history, including '*Punjab Nahi Jaungi*', the highest grossing Pakistani film of all time; shows that Pakistani Cinema did benefit from the ban, which effectively removed their biggest competition from their target market. It should also be noted that Pakistan has seen more Cinemas opening in the last 10 years than any other decade before it. (Revival of cinema in Pakistan, 2018)

A careful search of records of high grossing films of Pakistani cinema screened year wise from 2010 to 2018 clearly shows revival of Pakistani film industry and an upward trend in film production.

The year 2010 appeared as a very weak year in the history of Pakistani film industry. During this year twelve films were released, out of which only one, the Punjabi film “Wohti Le Key Jani Aay” directed by Syed Noor, was declared successful, with a business of almost PKR 8 million in just two days.

The famous films of 2011 were “Bol”, “Love Main Ghum” and “Jugni” among which “Bol”, directed by Shoaib Mansoor, released on 24 June 2011, was super hit Urdu language film. It is real eye opener social film which did a rolling business. The story revolves around a religious Muslim family who refused to accept his transgender son.

The well-known films of 2012 were “Shareeka” and “Gol chakkar”, “Gol Chakkar” is a 2012 Pakistani comedy film directed by Shahbaz Shigri, produced and written by Aisha Linnea Akhtar.

The prominent films of 2013 were “Waar”, “Zama Arman” a Pashtu film, “Main Hoon Shahid Afridi”, “Josh”, “Ishq Khuda”, among which “Waar”, directed by Bilal Lashari, was super hit and showed the efforts of the Pakistani security forces in their fight against terrorism and how the lives of security officials are affected. The famous actor Shan Shahid played the lead role.

The famed and super hit film of 2014 was “Na Maloom Afraad”, directed by Nabeel Qureshi, it was a comedy and drama film which revolves around life of three friends. Its cast includes the legendary Javed Sheikh as one of the lead roles.

The renowned films of 2015 were “Jawani Phr NHI Ani”, “Bin Roye”, “Wrong No.”, “Jalaibee”, “Karachi se Lahore”, “Manto”,

“Dekh Magar Pyar Se” and an animated film “3 Bahadur”. Among these “Jawani Phir NHI Ani”, directed by Nadeem Baig, was super hit and earned the most in box office. It was a comedy film which revolves around three childhood friends, who are married and settled in their lives but are afraid of their wives.

The famous films of 2016 were “Actor in Law”, “Janan”, “Ho Mann Jahan”, “Lahore Se Agey”, “Dobara Phir Se”, “Bachana”, “Zindagi Kitni Haseen hai” and an animated film “3 Bahadur: The Revenge of Baba Balam”. Among these “Actor in Law”, directed by Nabeel Qureshi, was super hit. The film brought a new idea by portraying the life of a young lawyer.

The celebrated films of 2017 were “Punjab NHI Jaungi”, “Na Maloom Afraad 2”, “Yalghar”, “Mehrunisa V Lub U”, “and Verna”. Among these “Punjab NHI Jaungi”, directed by Nadeem Baig, earned the most in box office. It stars Humayun Saeed, Mehwish Hayat and Urwa Hocane in lead roles and is a funny love story.

The legendary films of 2018 were “Jawani Phir NHI Ani 2”, “Teefa in Trouble”, “Parwaaz Hai Junoon”, “Parchi”, “Load Wedding”, “Saath Din Muhabbat In” and an animated film “The Donkey King”. Among these “Jawani Phir NHI Ani 2”, directed by Nadeem Baig, was super hit and earned most in box office. This film is sequel of “Jawani Phir NHI Ani” and is funny and entertaining like its prequel. (List of highest-grossing Pakistani films, 2019)

### **Discussion and Analysis**

Pakistani film lovers do not visit cinema due to the poor quality and repeated theme of films produced in our country. A usual Pakistani film shows a half dozen songs with unrelated dance sequence, some sexual scenes, old story of lovers from totally different class of society, a villain who always ends up in jail, some fights with or without weapons and some useless or unrelated out door shootings. The lack of exciting ideas and unavailability of modern cinema technology have led people to view Bollywood

films and Indian Television. Repetitive themes and unsuitable castings are also one of the contributors to sad demise of our film industry.

Another blow to our film industry is provided by screening of Indian films and Indian TV Channels by Cable TV. Introduction of new channels and 24 hours availability of pirated foreign films have pulled away our cinema going audience.

Technological innovations and home entertainment equipment's are keeping our cinema going viewers away from cinema but when films like "Khuda Kay Liye", "Bol" and "War" are produced Pakistani cinema goes on as always and cinemas have house full shows.

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. Film producers blame government for lack of support and inconsistent censor policies. According to the data provided by the Federal Bureau of Statistics, cinema houses in the country declined from 545 in 1994 to 445 in 2002.

Film producers are of the opinion that "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)."

A quick remedy to the situation would be production of films based on simple social issues and films which will try to revive

norms and values of society. It is evident from the history of top hit films of Pakistani film industry that whenever film producers introduce a new concept in story, set design, themes, script, casting the film lovers admire and welcome it with open heart. Prime examples are films like Armaan, Aina, Jeeva, Choorian and Yeh Dil Aap Ka Huwa.

“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 films. 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:**

The Pakistani cinema has gone through different periods of rise and fall and in recent years the realization of its constant decline has socked cinema lovers and founders. It is not easy for the film industry to turn a new page and get out of apparently no-win situation. Our film producers generally claim that they are giving audiences what they want and our public has poor taste. They conveniently ignore the truth that this low-brow public taste is their own creation. People know nothing better, but when Indian films are easily available and people generally view them, they simply ask why Pakistani producers cannot produce better films for Pakistani cinema lovers.

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.

As the newly elected government in Pakistan believes in change and revival of Pakistani cinema industry is taking place. The overall current situation seems to be encouraging to filmmaking in Pakistan, which inspires new and qualified filmmakers to venture into the field with better projects. The ray of hope remains. It is a fact that the film industry of any country largely depends on its economic conditions and economic condition of our country is moving towards stability. Considering the entertaining needs and taste buds of the local cinema 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 multidimensional approach to improve quality and quantity economically at the same time.

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