

# THE IMPACT OF EVOLVING HINDI FILM MUSIC ON SOCIETY

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## ABSTRACT

*With the advent of sound films in India, music has carved a special place in the hearts of millions worldwide. Hindi film music, which is known for its soulful melodies and rhythmic richness, has a profound emotional impact on its listeners. Over time, it has become a well-established genre within Indian music, with its popularity evident across the country and beyond. Hindi film music has had a profound impact on Indian society, shaping cultural identities, and influencing social trends. Its melodies and lyrics often reflect the emotions, values, and aspirations of the people, resonating across generations. The emotional depth and relatability of film songs continue to influence fashion, language, and social norms, making Hindi film music a powerful force in shaping contemporary Indian culture. This article explores the evolution of Hindi film music from 1930 to 2000, highlighting the many transformations it has undergone and its influence on society across different eras. For the research method, I have used the already existing reliable documents and similar sources of information as the data source under record keeping and content analysis methods.*

*Keywords: Hindi Cinema, Classical, Western, Songs, Decade, Music, Folk, Bollywood*

## Introduction

What is that one distinctive quality of Indian Cinema that differentiates it from the cinema of other countries? Yes, we can talk about the storylines, technology, etc but the simplest answer would be its Music. By far the most common explanation for the presence of songs in Hindi Films, offered by scholars, and members of the Hindi Film industry, focuses on songs as the main difference between Hindi and Hollywood films. (Morcom 1).

For Hindi Cinema music has been its soul and spirit since the 1930s. With the onset of sound films, music has been an indispensable feature in filmmaking. The gradual development of music once reached such an extent that the songs were considered more prominent than the film. We have an example to back this statement. In 1937, a renowned filmmaker known as Wadias made a film named 'Naujawan' without any song in it. The audience was so upset with it that the producers had to show a disclaimer before starting the movie to mention the reason. Though there were a few films like Munna (1954) and Kanoon (1960) which were praised even without the music they both are considered as exceptions. The film Indrasabha was made in 1931. This film has 71 songs which still holds the world record for the maximum songs in a film. Hindi film songs reflect the traditions and customs of India and mirror the socio-political changes in society. The influence of Hindi Film music on society is being felt in different ways. Socially and politically, it has been a mirror of society.

It can be said that Hindi Film Music has been influenced mainly by these forms of music:

- Indian Classical Music & Semi Classical Music
- Folk Music from different parts of India
- Western and Pop Music along with traditional and contemporary music from various cultures around the globe.

## The Dawn of the Sound Films- 1930s

The songs of this decade's movies influenced the soft Bangla school music. Pankaj Mullick and KC Dey were singers cum composers of that era who were inspired by Rabindra Sangeet. 'Baba Man Ki Aankhein Khol' composed by R. C. Boral for the movie 'Dhoop Chaon' (1935) had Baul-influenced music which is a folk style prevalent in West Bengal. In this era, a musician emerged whose brilliance continues to

endure even today. Timir Baran, a student of Ustad Allauddin Khan of Maihar whose knowledge of Indian Classical Music can be witnessed in his music. 'Balam Aaye Baso More Man Mein' based on Raga Kafi and 'Dukh Ke Ab Din Bitat Naahi' based on Raga Desh from the movie 'Devdas' (1936) shows the domination of Indian Classical Music in Hindi Film Music. This decade also gave Hindi Cinema its first female composer Saraswati Devi, whose simple melodious tunes were influenced by the elements of Indian Classical Music.

The singing stars of this decade were K. L. Sehgal and K. C. Dey. Sehgal's songs became a rage all over the country. In the year 1935, Raychandra Boral collaborated with B. N. Sarkar, owner of the New Theatres of Calcutta to pioneer playback singing which started in the early 1940s.

The music of this era reflected the traditional and regional cultures of India. Songs often drew from Indian classical and folk music, helping to preserve and promote these art forms. They connected audiences to their cultural roots and encouraged a sense of identity. Many songs served as a mirror to the socio-political climate of the time. They addressed issues such as poverty, love, and social justice, resonating with the common man and providing a voice for their struggles and aspirations.

### **The Emergence of Playback Singing and a Pivotal Era in Music History- 1940s**

In this decade the soft Bangla school music started fading away and was eventually replaced by elements of Indian Classical Music and robust Punjabi Music. Music composers like C. Ramchandra, S. D. Burman, Vasant Desai, Naushad Ali, and Anil Biswas blended the elements of Hindustani Classical, Thumri, Ghazals, and Folk Music into their compositions.

In 1943, filmmaker V. Shantaram crafted the cinematic creation 'Shankuntala,' featuring an enchanting musical score by Vasant Desai that captivated audiences and left an indelible mark. The soundtrack has thirteen songs, each intricately woven with the essence of pure Indian classical music, further enhancing the film's allure.

In 1944, Naushad composed the musical score for the film 'Ratan,' showcasing the folk melodies of Uttar Pradesh in a unique style that resonated with audiences and became a sensational hit. Throughout the decade, Naushad continued to weave his musical magic in films such as 'Anmol Ghadi' (1946), 'Anokhi Ada' (1948), 'Dillagi,' 'Dulari,' and 'Andaz' (1949), infusing his compositions with the rich influences of Uttar Pradesh's folk tunes.

Anil Biswas, often revered as the 'Pitamah', of the Hindi film industry, stood as an iconic figure in the realm of film music during this period. Pioneering innovation and reshaping the landscape of cinematic melodies, Biswas established a distinctive place for himself by introducing revolutionary concepts. Renowned as the visionary who first conceptualized the use of an orchestra in film music. Beyond this, Biswas ingeniously utilized chorus singers, marking a paradigm shift in the industry's sonic landscape. His discerning musical acumen was further highlighted by his trailblazing idea of incorporating counter melodies into songs, adding a layer of complexity and depth previously unseen in Hindi films.

Singing actors were replaced by playback singers. Indian audiences seem to have quickly reconciled the moral stakes of voice substitution, and playback singing became the norm in a dual-star system. (Morcom 86). Singers like Geeta Dutt, Noor Jehan, Suraiya, Shamshad Begum, Lata Mangeshkar, Mohd Rafi, Mukesh, and Talat Mehmood made sure that the future of Hindi Cinema remains as bright as before. The music played a role in shaping public opinion and fostering a sense of national identity. The songs often echoed the socio-political landscape of the time, addressing themes like love, patriotism, and social

justice. They resonated with the audience's sentiments, reflecting the struggles and aspirations of everyday life, and fostering a sense of community and shared experience.

### **The Golden Era of Hindi Film Music- 1950s**

The music of the 1950s is often referred to as the Golden Age. The exceptional quality, creativity, and eternal appeal of the music produced during this period made it a significant and celebrated era in the history of Hindi Film Music. The music in the 1950s was characterized by a blend of Indian Classical Music, folk melodies, and Western influence.

In 1952, Naushad composed the music for the immensely successful film "Baiju Bawara," leaving an indelible mark with its musical brilliance. Featuring a total of thirteen songs, with each composition rooted in the emotive tapestry of Indian classical ragas. Songs like Tu Ganga Ki Mauj (Bhairavi), Aaj Gawat Man Mero Jhoom Ke (Desh), Mohe Bhool Gaye Sanwariya (Bhairav), and Man Tarpat Hari Darshan (Malkauns) continue to exert a timeless influence and leave a lasting impression on listeners across generations.

The famous Madan Mohan style was established in this decade only with the movie Adalat (1958) when he composed some outstanding melodies like Jaana Tha Humse Dur, Yoon Hasraton Ke Daag, Unko Yeh Shikayat Hai ke Hum, Zameen Se Humein Aasman Par. This was the movie that made Madan Mohan the uncrowned king of Ghazals. A situation came when every producer wanted him to compose at least one ghazal for his film's success.

It also witnessed a growing influence of Western music styles, particularly in the context of composition, orchestration, and arrangements. Compositions like 'Shola Jo Bhadke' (Albela, 1951) and 'Aaiye Meherban' (Howrah Bridge, 1958) had jazz-influenced music that showcased a fusion or inspiration from Western musical elements. These songs reflected the increasing influence of Western musical styles and arrangements in Hindi Cinema during the 1950s, contributing to the evolving soundscape of Indian Cinema.

The era saw the rise of incredibly talented playback singers like Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammed Rafi, Kishore Kumar, Geeta Dutt, and Asha Bhosle, among others. Their versatile voices and mastery of various genres added depth and charm to the songs of the period.

The 1950s, coming right after India gained independence, saw songs play a crucial role in instilling a sense of patriotism among the public. Songs like Jahan 'Daal Daal Par Sone Ki Chidiya' encouraged unity and celebrated Indian resilience, inspiring a collective national identity. Songs from this era popularized fashion trends, especially through actors like Raj Kapoor and Nargis. Audiences emulated their style choices, from hairstyles to clothing, and Bollywood's glamour became aspirational, affecting youth culture and urban fashion.

### **The Decade that Initiated the Influence of Western Music in Hindi Cinema- 1960s**

The 1960s were a transformative decade for Hindi Cinema music, characterized by innovation, experimentation, and a blend of traditional Indian sounds with global influences. Composers and musicians started experimenting with various musical genres, including jazz, rock, pop, and Latin influences. This fusion of Western and Indian elements gave rise to a more eclectic sound. This decade saw an increase in the use of yodeling and scattling in Bollywood songs, influenced by Western musical styles. These vocal techniques added a unique flavor to the compositions.

Songs like 'Aao Twist Karein' (Bhoot Bangla, 1965), 'Jaan Pehchan Ho' (Gumnaam, 1965), 'Aaja Aaja Main Hoon Pyar Tera' (Teesri Manzil, 1966) incorporated Latin beats, rock n roll feels and jazz elements, showcasing the influence of global musical trends.

The 1960s saw the peak of playback singers like Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammed Rafi, Kishore Kumar, Asha Bhosle, and Mukesh, whose voices became synonymous with Hindi Film music. Composers like Shankar Jaikishan, Khayyam, R.D. Burman, S.D. Burman, Naushad, and O.P. Nayyar dominated the industry, contributing to numerous hit songs with their distinctive styles. Shankar Jaikishan won 5 Filmfare awards during this decade. Their best work was noted for being 'Raga-based' and having both lilt and sonority.

In this era, the emergence of a remarkable composer, S. D. Burman, marked a significant musical influence that extended over the following two decades. Despite being born into affluence, S. D. Burman undertook extensive journeys on foot, traversing the districts of East Bengal. His purpose was to draw inspiration from the diligent and resilient villagers, immersing himself in the richness of folk music. This unique approach not only shaped his compositions but also contributed to the enduring legacy of his folk and raga-based music. In the iconic song 'O Re Majhi' from the movie Bandini (1963), the adept use of traditional instruments and rhythmic patterns gives a profound sense of rustic simplicity. The composition skilfully weaves together the sounds of traditional instruments, immersing the listener in a musical landscape that resonates with the raw and authentic essence of rural life.

This way folk music continued to be an essential influence, with songs like 'Mere Samne Wali Khidki Mein' from the movie Padosan (1968) infusing elements of North Indian folk music.

The songs 'Nainon Mein Badra Chhaye' (based on Bhimpalasi) and 'Tu Jahan Jahan Chalega (based on Nand) from the movie 'Mera Saya' (1966) exemplify the profound influence of classical ragas in film music.

The 1960s saw the rise of youth-centric films and music, with songs highlighting romance, independence, and youthful rebellion. Songs like 'Ajeeb Dastan Hai Yeh' (Dil Apna Aur Preet Parai) and 'Pyaar Kiya To Darna Kya' (Mughal-e-Azam) became anthems for young audiences, encouraging a more open and expressive approach to love and relationships. These songs broke away from traditional conservatism, normalizing romance and emotional expression for the youth. Film songs and the stars who performed them heavily influenced fashion, popularizing Western-inspired attire like fitted dresses, bell-bottoms, and distinctive hairstyles. This decade's songs also featured stronger, more independent female characters. Songs like 'Parde Mein Rehne Do' (Shikar) and 'Aaj Phir Jeene Ki Tamanna Hai' (Guide) reflected women's evolving roles in society, portraying them as assertive and self-assured. This shift encouraged progressive views on women's independence and self-expression.

### **The Harmonious Epoch: A Perfect Balance of Indian and Western Music- 1970s**

The 1970s brought reformatory changes in Hindi Film music, primarily due to the influence of music directors like R.D. Burman and the changing musical landscape of the decade. It was a time of experimentation and diversification, with Hindi Film music evolving to adapt to the popular trends of the era while retaining its melodic and emotional core.

'Heer Ranjha' (1970) was a musical hit. Madan Mohan's music for Heer Ranjha was classic, even S. D. described it as the best he had heard in recent years. There was a continued blending of folk and classical influences into mainstream Hindi Film music, blending traditional sounds with contemporary arrangements. Songs like 'Baiyyan Na Dharo' (Dastak, 1970), 'Raina Beeti Jaye' (Amar Prem, 1971)

'Patta Patta Boota Boota' (Ek Nazar, 1972), and 'Mere Naina Sawan Bhado' (Mehbooba, 1976) kept taking inspiration from elements of Hindustani Classical Music.

Disco music which was making the world dance during the 1970s also influenced Hindi Film Music with its upbeat rhythm, funky basslines, and electronic sounds making it popular among youth. Songs like 'Duniya Mein Logon Ko' (Apna Desh, 1972) and 'Yeh Mera Dil' (Don, 1978) have a disco beat showcasing the influence of Disco music in Hindi Cinema. Music directors and composers pushed boundaries, experimenting with new sounds and instruments, giving rise to progressive music. 'Dum Maro Dum' from the movie Hare Rama Hare Krishna (1971), sung by Asha Bhosle and composed by R.D. Burman, is the perfect example that shows experimenting with psychedelic sounds. Songs like this contributed to an edgier, free-spirited fashion, with an emphasis on individuality, freedom, and self-expression, challenging conservative norms and influencing a new youth identity.

Contributions of singers like K. J. Yesudas, Hemlata, and Bhupinder Singh, and the established ones are still celebrated today.

### **The Disco Trend of the 1980s**

The 1980s were a dynamic and reframing period for Film music. This decade witnessed several changes and trends in the industry, reflecting the audience's evolving tastes and Western music's influence. This decade's music marked the widespread use of synthesizers and electronic instruments in film music. Composers like Bappi Lahiri and Laxmikant-Pyarelal incorporated electronic sounds, which gave the music a more modern and energetic feel. The disco trend, which began in the 1970s, continued to the early 1980s. Songs with a disco beat and danceable tunes remained popular. Iconic tracks like 'Aap Jaisa Koi' (Qurbani, 1980), 'I am a Disco Dancer' (Disco Dancer, 1982), and 'Jawani Jan-E-Man' (Namak Halaal, 1982) promoted this trend. These songs brought high-energy beats and vibrant choreography, encouraging a new dance culture and celebration of nightlife in urban India. This trend popularized the nightclub scene, expanding the role of dance in Indian pop culture and reflecting growing urban aspirations for a more glamorous lifestyle.

Khayyam gave 3 musically hit movies in this decade 'Umrao Jaan' (1981), 'Razia Sultan' (1983), and 'Bazaar' (1982) for 'Umrao Jaan' he got his first National Award. He composed some timeless melodies for these movies. Apart from Khayyam and Bappi Lahiri, Lakshmikanth-Pyarelal and Rajesh Roshan started composing some classic melodies in this period.

Songs like 'Solah Baras Ki Bali' (Ek Duje Ke Liye, 1981) and 'Man Anand Anand Chayo' (Vijeta, 1982) represent the continuation of classical influences in Hindi Film music, even in a decade when electronic and modern sounds were gaining popularity. The timeless appeal of classical ragas and melodies remained a part of the musical fabric of Hindi Cinema.

Singers like Kishore Kumar, Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Anuradha Paudwal, S. Janki Alka Yagnik, and Udit Narayan contributed to the diverse musical landscape of Hindi Cinema in the 1980s, with a wide variety of songs spanning romance, disco, and melodious ballads.

### **The Romantic Hits Era and Unveiling Glamour in Hindi Cinema- 1990s**

Each decade has its musical uniqueness and peculiarities but the music of the 1990s stands out because it has given us some timeless melodies with poignant lyrics. It was marked by a shift in styles, the advent of new music directors, and the rise of independent pop music. The 1990s offered a wide range of musical genres within Hindi Cinema, including romantic ballads, dance numbers, qawwalis, and item songs. The concept of item songs, often featuring lead actresses in upbeat and catchy dance numbers, became a

significant trend in the 1990s. This added an element of glamour and entertainment to the movies. Item songs were not as prevalent in the 1980s. Dance became central to Bollywood songs in the 1990s, with choreographers like Saroj Khan and Farah Khan revolutionizing Bollywood dance moves. Songs like 'Ek Do Teen' (*Tezaab*) and 'Chaiyya Chaiyya' introduced new dance forms and made dancing a popular form of self-expression among Indian youth. Bollywood dance styles from this era blended Indian classical moves with modern, Western-inspired choreography, inspiring a surge in dance classes and making dancing a mainstream cultural phenomenon.

In 1990 Gulzar's critically acclaimed movie 'Lekin' made headlines specially for its Music and the performance by Dimple Kapadia. The music of this movie was composed by Hridaynath Mangeshkar which was fully inspired by Hindustani classical music. The film won 5 national awards, a record for that year. 'Yaara Seeli Seeli' was probably the most popular song. A.R. Rahman, who gained prominence in the early 1990s, played a pivotal role in blending Indian and Western musical elements. The music from movies like 'Roja' (1992), 'Bombay' (1995), and 'Dil Se' (1998), made a tantalizing impact on Hindi Cinema Music. Iconic movies with memorable soundtracks, such as 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge' (1995), 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai' (1998), 'Hum Aapke Hain Koun...!' (1994) and 'Hum Saath Saath Hain' became classics.

Singers like Kumar Sanu, Alka Yagnik, Udit Narayan, and Kavita Krishnamurthy gained prominence during the 1990s and became the voices behind many hit songs.

The 1990s was a diverse and dynamic decade for music, characterized by the blending of genres and the emergence of iconic artists who continue to influence contemporary music today. It was a period of immense creativity and cultural change in the music industry.

Following the year 2000, Bollywood music underwent a significant transformation, incorporating elements of Western pop, rock, and electronic genres. This era saw the emergence of dance-centric tracks and item numbers, which added a new layer of creativity to the industry. However, this shift brought about certain societal concerns. The focus on "item songs" and extravagant dance performances often highlighted superficial glamour, diminishing the importance of thoughtful lyrics and meaningful narratives. As a result, traditional values and the cultural authenticity that were once hallmarks of Bollywood music began to be overshadowed. Moreover, the preference for catchy, upbeat tunes over soulful or classical melodies resonated more with younger audiences, who seemed to favor instant gratification over deeper, contemplative content. Many popular songs started featuring lyrics that leaned towards casual or provocative themes, prompting criticism that they perpetuated stereotypes and, in some cases, encouraged materialism or objectification. While this evolution in Hindi film music has proven to be commercially successful, it has sparked discussions regarding its artistic merit, the erosion of cultural values, and its influence on shaping the social norms and values of Indian youth. In conclusion, the evolving Hindi film music has had a profound impact on Indian society. From the early influences of Indian classical music and folk tunes to the gradual incorporation of Western instruments and styles, film music has been a reflection of the changing cultural landscape. However, it is disheartening to note that in recent years, there has been a noticeable shift towards Westernization in film music, with a diminishing focus on Indian classical music and folk tunes. This trend raises concerns about the potential loss of the rich musical heritage and cultural identity that has been integral to Hindi film music. The prevalent trend of promoting party culture and including item songs in almost every movie release has raised concerns about the negative impact on society. It is alarming to see that such trends are adversely influencing societal norms. The individuals involved in the film and music industry bear a significant responsibility

to society. They must strike a balance between embracing modern influences and preserving the essence of Indian classical music and folk traditions to ensure the continued cultural relevance and diversity in Hindi film music.

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