

## ***Music of India and entertainment industry*** ***A search for new opportunities***

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**Index term :** entertainment, music, Bollywood, concerts, television radio, artists.

**Abstract :** Music industry has always been associated with the entertainment business. As the latter keeps on changing its horizon, music also has to adjust as per new challenges and opportunities. This tug of war between musicians and their promoters, show-managers, producers, broadcasters, sponsors, patrons etc., continues. On one side there are artists, accompanists, arrangers, etc. and on the other, are show managers, studios, music companies, electronic media, and other market forces which control and sometimes curb music. This struggle has been prevalent from the very beginning of our cultural evolution but presently it is more dynamic and diverse. Hence, it needs a thorough review. The same has been analysed in this article post-independence.

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**Introduction :** In this article, we will deal with the entertainment aspect only as we need to analyze the entertainment Industry.

Traditionally, music has been connected with entertainment. Sangeet Parijat describes two objectives of music, one of which is entertainment. Various folk traditions of music have been a key source of entertainment even when there was no internet, no mobile phones, no laptops, no electronic media etc. Music was the cheapest and the most effective passtime during initial days of human endeavor and aspiration. Mothers use lullabies to get their babies sleep. Peasants sing to get relief from fatigue and inclement weather while they work hard in their farms. Many folk traditions originated as workers and peasants would sing their hearts as they worked in tough climates and unfavorable working conditions. Tradition of singing folk songs is one of many such practices which evolved as hard-working laborers expressed their emotions by singing and dancing. Even a baby claps and moves her limbs to express happiness or irritation to the circumstances she encounters.

Musical melodies are an expression of our sentiments and emotions. Playing them on a musical instrument, singing a song or listening to one's favorite music gives mental satisfaction.

### **What is music?**

Generally, singing a song, or playing its tune on some instrument, is considered as creating music. There is a saying, "singing and sobbing is known to all." Most of the common masses think that singing is music. They associate it with singing songs or playing the same on an instrument.

However, when it comes to the musicians, music is a well-defined concept. The artists consider it as a fine art. In the list of the five fine arts, music and literature come on the top. The Indian philosopher and thinker Bhartrihari reveals the same as follows,

#### **“Sahitya Sangeet Kala Viheenaha, Sakshat Pashuh Puchcha-vishaana heenaha”**

Meaning, those who live without music and literature, are like the animals without the horns and tails.

Dr Radhakrishnan, the great philosopher/teacher and the former President of India stated in his famous book that a poem expressed perfectly and charged with the sentiment, becomes a musical genre.<sup>1</sup>

Music is a fine art which relates to singing, playing of a musical instrument and dancing. In music, the medium of expression is the sound. All sounds are not musical ones. Musical sounds are said to have certain characteristics like softness, pleasantness, clarity etc. The sounds used in music are thus called 'Naada'. Naada is expressed through the musical notes. These musical notes do not have any substantial relevance for the laymen. The masses do not ponder over the minute ideas like the accuracy of musical notes, the pitch, the composition etc. They just like or dislike the musical composition they listen to. Therefore, the concepts like the composition, 'Swara Sadhana', purity of Raga, perfection of certain techniques etc, which are very important to a music critique, do not have much significance to the masses.

Thus, music is expressed through the medium of sound. The pleasing sounds or 'naada' is expressed through a variety of musical notes which have evolved over the ages. These musical notes create music. We can use the vocal chords, which are gifted by Nature, or the man-made musical instruments available in different shapes and sizes to create music.

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<sup>1</sup>An idealist view of life, Dr S. Radhakrishnan, P.91-100.

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Sometimes, the musical notes are created just by whistling; here one can adjust one's lips to create different musical notes. At present, the western world considers the art of dance unique and separate from music. However, here in India, the trefecta of vocal music, instrumental music and dance is included in the same art of music.

Many artists submit that one can polish an artist to perfection but the artists cannot be created; they are born through the grace of God.

For the masses, arts in general and music in particular, make the artists glamorous. Everybody is infected by genuine and pleasant music. Subsequently, everybody wants to learn it and wishes to have a mastery over the art. But in the opinion of Shri L. K. Pandit,<sup>2</sup> in the music Institutes we do not create 'Tansens' but 'Kaansens'. Every learner of music cannot necessarily become an artist but he/she surely can become 'Kaansen' [the appreciator of music].

On the basis of above description, the art of music can be associated with two basic components: the creator of music [the artist] and the listener or the audience. The linking medium which connects these two is the art-form. There are numerous forms of music which have been categorized by musicologists in different classes. Some of them, for instance, are: popular music, folk music, film music, light music, devotional music and last but not the least, classical music. Classical music is further divided into classical and semi-classical music. There are different classes and types of musical forms.

Historians tell us that man used to produce different sounds during different experiences – joyous, sad, passionate, soothing etc.<sup>3</sup> Nature has been our great teacher. Man has learnt a lot from nature. He imitated the sounds which he used to hear around him. The sound of thunder, chirping of birds, grunting and shrieking of different animals etc, became the raw material for the vocal training of human beings. Hence, whatever voices he produced, his partners guessed his state of mind from them. This guess work led to the development of a kind of verbal communication, which finally opened our doors to linguistic skills. Music also came from natural sounds.<sup>4</sup>

In Sangeet Parijat also, Pt. Ahobal has proposed two objectives of music. Namely, Janranjan, that i.e. for entertainment and BhavBhanjan, that is, emancipation.

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<sup>2</sup> Former Associate Professor in the Department of music, Delhi University and also, Former Programme Executive, for All India Radio, L. K. Pandit has been an eminent vocalist and A Grade artist in Akashvani.

<sup>3</sup> Story of Civilisations, Richard Toflar, P.32.

<sup>4</sup> See Sangeet Ratnakar, Pindotpatti Prakaran of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter.

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Though we know that music has been used by our ancestors mainly for entertainment purposes, the entertainment Industry grew slowly but steadily during the industrial revolution. Before the revolution, entertaining artists earned their living but it was not organized in a manner that we could consider as entertainment industry. Soon After the industrial revolution, things changed drastically and entertainment evolved as a specific industry. In medieval times, music concerts had begun to take place in Europe and elsewhere. In India, we had two different streams of musical entertainment. One was related to Durbars and the other was temple music. A third stream was also evolving in rural areas. Folk traditions of music and dance were getting organized slowly. Though these communities relating to folk music were marginalized, as the historians put it,<sup>5</sup> they were invited to social functions and ceremonies to entertain rural masses.

We will deal with the present status of the entertainment industry and hence will not go into its historical aspect . We shall also keep our discussion limited only to Indian context only.

## **Background**

Before coming to the present era of entertainment, let us have some glimpse, some taste of its status during our freedom struggle. As Europeans came to India, they gradually controlled Indian political space, and influenced our cultural traditions . From Goa to Pondicherry, Church music evolved as our local folks got converted to Christianity by European missionaries. Christians, Jews and Parsis learnt Western form of music and spread the same in coastal India.<sup>6</sup>

As 20<sup>th</sup> century ushered in, cinema came to India. In 1933, first talking film was produced in India. Cinema brought new opportunities for music artists as well as composers/arrangers of music. Till this time, recording capabilities had been spreading to our country and many sound recordists have established themselves as sound specialists. Thus began the entertainment industry since the film music had to be made available for the elite classes of Indian society to purchase. Recording companies like HMV<sup>7</sup> had established offices in India and retail stores had opened. Film Industry initially came out in the cities like Calcutta and Lahore but ultimately this industry shifted to Bombay or Mumbai as we call it presently. Since then, Mumbai has been the city of Dreams. Each day, many men and women of all ages catch trains from almost all corners of India to reach this multicultural and multi-

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<sup>5</sup> P. 121-125, History of arts and artists, another side. S Majumdar.

<sup>6</sup> Apr 23, 2015. Sansad TV. Youtube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AO5ZH67LQ-4>

<sup>7</sup> <https://hmv.com/blog/music/100-years-of-hmv-our-story-so-far>

ethnic metropolis. The objectives may be different for different people ; but the target is the same – to get to Mumbai and try their luck. Most of the adolescents run from their native cities/villages in order to become actors and actresses. Some wish to become singers. The essence of all this is that everybody is influenced by the glamor and glitter of the great metropolis Mumbai.

All activities with regards to cinema and popular music begin from Bollywood. It is not that other parts of India have nothing to do with these activities. There are other film cities too. And there are other localities also where the popular music is composed and recorded. But the film industry as well as the music industry has made its stronghold in Mumbai, not in recent years but from the pre-independence era. That is why, when one has to study the film and music industry, he/she has to turn to Mumbai. Mumbai is a city of ambition, founded upon an island created by human labour and home to vast disparities and contradictions. For the past eighty odd years, India's popular music industry has been dominated by film songs from Mumbai. Recently, a new category of national popular music, Indipop, has emerged in tandem with economic liberalization, the rise of satellite television, and the growing significance of the global Indian Diaspora. The word "Indipop" has been used in an article, by Peter Manuel.<sup>8</sup>,

However, Indipop has struggled to achieve widespread success and remains largely a product of urban, middle and upper class experience. With roots in the cosmopolitan, westward-looking culture of Mumbai's English-educated middle classes, Indipop music cannot merely be dismissed as an example of western cultural imperialism in India. Rather, the sound of Indipop evokes a practice of individualized consumption and international consciousness that, although connected to global capitalism, is thoroughly tied to the unique histories and experiences of professional musicians and music marketers in Mumbai. Through ethnographic and textual study, this analysis provides a social history of Indipop in Mumbai and a study of the dynamic and contested manner in which artists and promoters construct a meaning for this new genre. Finally, the struggles of these individuals to connect with wider domestic and international markets parallels the anxiety felt by many of the country's urban elites struggling to understand their role in contemporary Indian society.

In the Indian Subcontinent, the popular music or the pop music as it is called in short, came through the music of the cinema.

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<sup>8</sup> "Formal Structure in Popular Music as a Reflection of Socio-Economic Change" Published in "International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music", Vol. 16, No. 2. (Dec., 1985), pp. 163-180. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0351-5796%20198512%2916%>

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Bollywood, as Mumbai is synonymous to, has played an important role in shaping and developing the entertainment Industry. Film music changed the scenario by initiating the art of writing musical compositions. This is also noteworthy that the film music in India neither could be included in the category of the classical music nor could it be called the folk music. In fact, it borrowed immensely from all kinds of music. Be it folk music, Raagdari music, devotional music, Sufi music, regional music or the western music. That is why; the film songs had the glimpse of all kinds of music. Thus, these kinds of songs cannot be included in a specific category. To solve the problem, the film songs were called popular music. In fact, this music has to be very popular. Soon it made its place on all channels of music. All the media was full of the film music. Radio, television, recording industry, all media that was related to music directly or indirectly, gave remarkable space to film music. Common people, who had never thought of learning music, began to sing the movie melodies; it made its roots deep in the masses. The Rikshaw walas, hawkers, vegetable sellers, the drivers of different vehicles, people of all strata of the society danced to the tune of the movie songs. The popularity of the film music was such that initially it was impossible to make a film without songs. The popularity of a film depended very much in India over the popularity of its songs. That is why; there is nothing wrong if film music in India is called popular music.

Although movie melodies are also an inseparable part of Indipop, but initially, the jazz and fusion have influenced our music. The film music is affected with these forms of music too.

The Jazz music influenced Indian popular music and showed a unique way for its new taste and tanner. However, Jazz got a new dimension in Indian environment. That is why; various new streams of Jazz came out in different tastes and forms. Indipop borrowed many of its properties from Jazz but in turn, gave many things to it too. (Wim Van Der Meer: Hindustani Music In the Twentieth Century, PP. 101.)

Gradually, Indipop separated itself from the film Industry, though, not fully. Many pop singers began to release private albums. In 80's the first such private Album got very popular in the Indian subcontinent. It was titled, "Disco Diwane" and the artist was a new talent from Pakistan – Nazia Hassan. Later on, Usha Uthap, Sharon Prabhakar, Baba Sehgal, etc., came up with new and innovative music albums. More recently, great pop stars like Daler Mehndi, Hemesh Reshamiya, Shilpa Rao, Mamta Sharma, Shaan, Honey Singh, etc. have brought a phenomenal change in the field of Indipop.

Some classical musicians are also trying their luck in the field. Eminent classical musician Shubha Mudgal has released several pop music albums. Sufi singers are also coming with

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pop albums. There is no specific definition of Sufi music. Every singer who sings romantic songs tends to label him/her as a Sufi singer.

These newly emerging pop artists have brought about many remarkable changes in the presentability and production of music. The songs which previously were composed keeping in view the listening skills, now have become so visual that sometimes, words just do not matter. Music is regulated by market forces these days.

### **Commercialization of music**

Like everybody else, musicians also have the right to earn from the art they possess. After all, they have to do something to live a decent life. Music is not only an art form, but also a profession. It is this aspect of professionalism in music that inspires the musicians to make their art more presentable and more sellable. Without these basic properties, there is nothing left for them. In such a scenario, musicians have to make several compromises as far as the artistic value is concerned. The problem begins from this very point.

It has already been established that the popular music in India is mainly based upon the movie melodies. The Film Industry needs musical compositions suitable to the story of the movie. Therefore, the musicians do not have enough liberties while working for a film. They have to abide by the guidelines set by the director of the film.

As the films are filled with scenes full of vulgarity and violence, the musical composition should reflect the same. This leads to songs like "Munni Badnaam Hui", "Sheela Ki Javani" etc., with no artistic value but full of salability.

Presently, there are several reality shows being telecast on different TV channels where the producers of the show claim that they wish to search for a kind of singing talent. Several auditions are conducted in different cities in the name of such TV reality shows. The selected candidates have to go through a well-set singing criterion. Moreover, to make the show more participatory, the viewers are asked to send SMS's in favor of the candidates they like. This leads to some fraudulent practices relating to the benefit of the networks who provide service for SMS. The candidates purchase SMS cards and distribute them amongst their friends and relatives in order to make as many SMS's as possible.

Sometimes, this search for new talents targets even the little kids as young as five years. Very recently, a reality show titled "Indian Idol Junior" telecast on Soni TV, presented a five year old girl for the audition. She sang the popular song, "Pallu Ke Peeche Chupa Ke Rakha Hai". As the judges objected on account of the vulgarity, she presented another shocker – "Chiknee Chameli". Finally, though she was not selected for the show, yet it reflected as to

how badly our kids are being influenced by the commercialization of the music Industry.

Now, the question arises as to what is the purpose of a song. The basic definition of music seems of no substance with regard to the present state of Indian popular music. Every artist who comes to perform in the form of popular music has just one target – to earn as many bucks as possible. For this, he/she forgets everything but the “popularity Massala mix” that has the capacity to sell the music album. This masala consists of sexy words, provocative visuals, and overall an exciting video. The art of music is fast disappearing from this popular medium. The aspect of artistic beauty is easily forgotten in the madness of selling the “product” and earning as much money as possible.

### **Branches of entertainment Industry**

As far as music is concerned, we presently have these important branches of entertainment. Though there may be many more but I mention here only those which need attention and further studies.

### **Entertainment Branches**

1. Recording Industry- It began with metallic records for Gramophones. Then came Records for record players which were called L. P's. Gradually tapes and cassettes evolved and presently we have digital recording through computerized studios. These new tools made music production very easy and presently we can download music of our choice through internet .
2. Film Industry – we have talked a bit about films or the cinema industry in this article. It gave shelter to musicians, composers, lyricists, music producers, sound editors etc. along with the traditional dance streams, it patronized folk and popular dance forms too . Artists relating to instrumental music also get employment in the film industry. So many lives are getting their bread and butter through this.
3. Recording companies – music sellers like HMV, T series, Times cassette etc., evolved in time and are fading now due to a fall in demand for cassettes and recorded tapes. Mobile phones and computers have filled in the gap very efficiently.
4. Recording studio – Initially, there were many big studios in Mumbai and elsewhere in India but gradually, Digital recording came and studios were started and installed in smaller cities too. Regional entertainment industries evolved due to regional cinema coming into being. Tollywood, Koliwood, and many more such regional aspirations are rapidly evolving.



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**Conclusion :** Entertainment industry has transformed our music into an ever-changing popular stream of music. This needs a very thorough examination and a book can easily be composed on the topic. However, let me state here that the entertainment Industry has always been sympathetic to our traditional classical music. Many Cassettes and CD's have been launched by various music companies involving great musicians like PT Ravishankar, PT Nikhil Banerjee, PT. Jasraj, Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan etc. but as new technologies came into being, the era of cassettes and tapes ended. Now, we can listen to our favorite artists on youtube and other such platforms.

On the other hand, entertainment industry has been responsible in creating various new newways of regulating music;. Show managers who arrange and organize music concerts and shows in India and abroad, Stage managers and choreographers who look into stage related issues, and the Sponsors who foot the bills of the expenses occurred. We cannot ignore these Professionals without which the artists will hardly survive. They are like the modern patrons of our music.

Finally, let us conclude that our music is bound to take new shapes and touch new horizons in this era of ever changing entertainment industry in India.

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