

ROLE OF STUDIOS AND PRODUCTION HOUSES IN DOWN SWINGING PAKISTANI FILM INDUSTRY (1947 – 2017)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore the Pakistani film industry, identify the challenges and factors that have led to a decline of the production houses and local studios. It explores the primary data collected from in-depth interviews with the professional participants of the Pakistani film industry for the use of a thematic analysis. The research methodology used for the purpose of the current study is qualitative in nature. The data is collected from 30 respondents. The interviews are then analyzed through thematic analysis. The study concluded that there are a few challenges that face the Pakistani film industry with respect to local studios and production houses. The lack of national support, controversies regarding item songs, the funding issues, and improper utilization of talent are the main challenges as faced by the Pakistani Cinema. The thematic analysis of the conducted interviews highlighted the main challenges that are faced by the film industry of Pakistan with a specific focus on local studios and production houses. Prospective filmmakers can seek guidance from the study on the entrance into the film industry which has specifically high barriers. Prospective filmmakers can also gain valuable insights on the technicalities, budgeting, casting, and production of films for a strategic box office film. This study takes an original approach as it presents the challenges faced by the Pakistani film industry from the perception of professionals in the sector and their guidance on how the industry could be revived by fixing the areas the key players often neglect.

Keywords: Production Houses, Film Industry, Pakistani Cinema, Local Studios

INTRODUCTION

Background

Cinema, a highly creative and preceptive art form has come to dominate the modern era. The art form, with the help of technology and other resources brings to light the deeper intricacies of a society. Cinema has proven its worth in not just evaluating and showcasing a society's morals and beliefs but has created a space for itself as the most popular mode for entertainment (Machin, 2013). And indeed, the essence of cinema lies in storytelling, an age-old cultural activity which lends cinema the legitimacy it enjoys today.

While for the 21st century, many key players in the Pakistani film industry have formed it as audience-driven, where the image of the country must always be shown as something positive, this wasn't the case for the earlier cinema work in Pakistan. The era that began in 1895 and lasted till 1959 was the birth of Pakistani cinema where filmmakers were bringing in new content and injecting a fantasy-like romance and drama in the field of animated entertainment. Most of the time belonging to this era is pre-partition, but the assumption used to classify it as Pakistani cinematic history is that the film industry that was established in Lahore is treated as Pakistani cinema (Siddique, 2017).

1959 to 1977 marked the golden age for the film industry in Pakistan, as this was the time when the filmmakers had access to technology, they didn't have prior access to. During this era, two Pakistani films were nominated for the Oscars in the foreign language category. Other than this, many film producers, actresses and other talent emerged in the rising fame of cinemas. Citizens went to cinemas to pass their free time and the industry made revenue.

Political influence also had a huge impact on the film industry when the Ayub-era films depicted storylines where the ultimate goal for most protagonists was to make it in urban cities (Munir, 2011). This was the symbolization of the governance methods and the aims for the leader of Pakistan in that age. Additionally, the establishment of National Film Development Corporation (NAFDEC) was the first step taken by the government for the progress of the industry. Little efforts were shown afterwards.

This rise in filmmaking lasted till the 1980's when Zia ul Haq came to power. During this time, in the little time when there wasn't a ban on films,

the films that were allowed to be shown had a more violent story (Ahmad, 2014). This emphasis on the Gandasa genre was marked during this era and cinema houses reduced by a large number from 700 to 127 (Dawn, 2019). Policy reforms took place, censorship was abundant in the industry and the cinema became a place for the elite entertainment. After this, there was a long halt in the Pakistani cinematic industry.

By 2003, young filmmakers emerged and emphasized on reviving the film industry. They experimented with low budget films in the hopes that cinema houses would make a comeback. Television channels became privatized during this era and started airing old movies as well as the new low budgeted ones. With the premiere of Shoaib Mansoor's *Khuda kay Liye* in 2007, the masses came back to watch films as it was a huge success (Dawn, 2019). During this period, many film producers tried to bring back films that highlighted the social issues in Pakistan such as *Chup*, *Devdas*, and *Saltanat*. However, it was Shoaib Mansoor's *Bol* in 2011 that officially revived the film industry.

In 2013, seven new films were released in Pakistani cinemas, where *Zinda Bhaag* was submitted for the Oscars. *Main Hoon Shahid Afridi* was also a hit and many filmmakers worked to revive the Pakistani cinema scene. It was due to the efforts of filmmakers and producers that industry was revived, but there is still a lack of cinema screens in the country (Hasan, 2018). This has cost the cinema millions of Rupees which is a discouragement for all the newcomers who want to produce quality cinema. This barrier for entry, lack of screens, censorship controversies (Hasan, 2018) and the inability for filmmakers to cover their costs of production after the release of their films is a hindrance in the revival of cinema. But there is yet themes and topics that have highlighted the majority of the film industry and is yet to be explored by the current study.

Pakistan's Cinema industry previously, did not receive enough attention and appreciation as the international films used to have. Since after its inception in 1947, Pakistan has faced several challenges in the launch of the movies (App, 2018). The initial years of Pakistan's film industry gained attention due to the remarkable filmmakers and actors. However, their efforts ended in vain and after few decades, Pakistan faced a demise. In the contemporary scenario, there are several movies as *Teefa in Trouble*, *Jawani Phir Nae Ani*, and others. But these movies have the content that is not appreciable. The

current films are gaining revenues and becoming popular amongst the youth. Unfortunately, none of the current movie is knowledgeable or worthy enough to view with the family, apart from few exceptions (Dawn, 2018). The cinema industry in the current scenario, is however, trying to improve the monetary situation of the existing cinemas.

In the film industry, the films with more budget do well, mainly because they have international investment. We were talking to our distributor, and he said something very interesting. He said that his entire experience with films is disheveled now, because previously, people didn't want to see TV stars on cinema screens; but now people only come to watch the film because of the TV stars. The important thing is content. Only stars aren't important. But since we're talking about faces, our TV has more outreach. News channels are watched the most. People emerging from the TV already have acceptance. People know whether a person is a good actor or a bad one. He won't bore us, the film will be entertaining, and we will be getting value for our money.

Objectives

The purpose of this research is to examine the role of local studios and production houses in the demise of Pakistan film industry. It also sheds light on the state's role, responsibility and policies towards cultivating this important industry which is considered as the soft power of a nation in the 21st century.

Problem Statement

The current research is purposeful in investigating the factors, challenges and reasons that have led to the demise of the Pakistan's film industry. There are several reasons for this demise which include

- Digital revolution in the marketplace
- Scarcity of the meaningful stories and script writers
- The use of modern equipment in film making
- Frequent release of Indian movies on love, fiction, and action.
- The Pakistan film industry lacks professional directors, actors, music, and lyrics which also pushes the industry behind.
- The political instability and the state unrepresentativeness of the society are also the reasons in making the industry ineffective.

Research Questions

The research questions include the following:

1. What is the role of local studios and production houses in the demise of Pakistan's film industry?
2. Does the influx of foreign content also play a vital role in affecting our cinemas?
3. What role has the censor board played in the collapse of the film industry?
4. How has the government policies or lack of support undermined the economic aspects of film business?
5. How much important is to have film schools and aren't the current schools adequate enough?
6. What aspects needs to be improved to revive the local cinemas?
7. How important is to have copywrite laws that would safeguard the interest of the whole film community?
8. Why is it necessary to protect the past heritage of Pakistani cinema while paving the way for a glorious future?
9. Are there any chances of revival of Pakistan's film industry?
10. What steps could be taken to make this industry sustainable for the film community?
11. What are the suggestions to cater the challenges faced by Pakistan's film industry?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cinema since its inception was a medium for propaganda and it continued its pre-coded purpose till today. However, the form and shape may have changed over time but its fundamental nature of propagating the masses towards a certain narrative has never stopped (Branigan, 2012). To understand the scope of cinema (Biltereyst, Maltby, & Meers, 2019), we need to analyze the most advanced approaches used by this medium by the giant entertainment industry where content is produced industrially and delivered day and night all over the world.

According to Ali Serdouk; Hollywood's film business serves as an example of American media and cultural hegemony today. It represents

the best, biggest, and most successful film business in the world, with its films taking up most screens around the globe. Hollywood generates annual revenues of more than \$41 billion worldwide, with about \$12 billion coming from North America alone, according to data published in 2018 by the renowned company of motion picture in USA, MPAA. Additionally, there are approximately 1.5 billion moviegoers worldwide who watch American films in theatres. The number of regular American film watchers on international televisions is double that amount (Rousse-Marquet, 2013). According to Jack Valenti, a former MPAA president says; No other American company can make such a claim; the film business of USA is the solely industry that exist with the trade excess. (Al-Alousi, 2012: 237).

The financial success of Hollywood, the \$2.7 billion in earnings from a single film like Avatar (Pallaruelo, 2010) was enough to surpass the national financial plan of numerous countries, like Djibouti and Liberia. Hollywood's immense commercial success and its ability to influence audience trends are explained enough through this.

The function of the movie is to portray real world scenarios and leave a lasting impact on people and their emotions. It does this by drawing interest to their conventional fundamental components more than the actual image does because, according to Albert Mehrabian, 55% of our sources for reality perception are visual (Appendix 2). Because of this, Hollywood movies have a tremendous cultural impact (Nassar, 2008).

Demise of Pakistan's Film Industry

The disappointing point is that the complete demise of Pakistan, i.e., the time when there were approximately 100 Pakistani films in one year, they were then equal to 0. Even if people wished to go watch a film, there was no film nor the cinema, but after Mr. Shoaib made *Khuda Kay Liye* (For GOD's Sake, 2007), the act of going to the cinema started again, and it was the first step towards revival.

After this, the era of multiplex cinemas began, where new cinemas were established in Lahore and Pindi. It was very good; the atmosphere was beautiful; the families which had gone away were now coming back and were not only supporting the films but also enjoying them. On a social level, it became a cultural phenomenon to go to cinema again. That is where the entire process started, and with time the Pakistani filmmakers started making

films and many new people entered the industry to contribute.

There was and is no restriction on making films. Technology is easy, so basically if anyone can arrange funds, then they can arrange their technical team, can get artists, can get a script, then can simply make a film. There is only one step in which one must present themselves and if they are not a member of the producer's association, and they don't get clearance, then the censor board cannot censor their film. Every filmmaker has a dream, a vision, and they represent that in a film.

Challenge is to recover the money, after the efforts are put forward and a film is produced. This is a big challenge, because most times people take loans, people sell their assets to have funding available for their films. It is not an easy job and it takes much effort.

Another problem that the film industry is facing globally is that whatever producers/directors produce, they should have a marketing sense for it. No matter how good the product is, if it can't market properly, it is useless. It will harm the filmmakers and they will probably lose everything. New filmmakers don't understand this. When they have the teams and the funding available, their mind is occupied as if by a ghost. They are eager to make the film and they don't listen to anyone; they don't research well, and simply fill it with their hopes and dreams. This isn't a new phenomenon; this happens in the entire world. The important point is that when you have invested money on it, how will they retrieve it?

Another challenge is how to deal with Actors (Kellison, Morrow, & Morrow, 2013). Filmmakers usually bring in new people from TV. There are many ways to make money off TV through channels and production houses. There isn't a risk. The TV needs to have something on its screen for 24 hours. They manage something in each slot. Dramas aren't made with 6-8 Crore, they are made in a lesser budget, but the profit is a lot. It is a safe investment. The investments for films are not safe in a way that there are phases. First there is a need to promote a film, and then the filmmakers need to have trust in the audience that they will come watch the film. TV and film are two different industries.

Another reason of Pakistan's film industry demise is the lack of certifications and education in the domain of filmmaking. Because films are being produced, that means the technology is present. Pakistani films aren't like the ones produced internationally and there are multiple reasons behind

it. DCP is the final packaging, otherwise the work that comes before that, that has to be packaged as well. The hurdles here are education and certifications. In Pakistan, there is a lack of certified people for this. There is a lack of institutes who can train the filmmakers or certify actors. Unfortunately, the available film schools that give out degrees but what do the teachers do? Where do they stand? They have done nothing; they are just teaching.

Apart from this, the education is provided abroad at different institutes and one example is NYFA. However, the year the people graduate in also matters (Edgar, & Kelly, 2007). The year when Steven Spielberg had lectured would be of more value than that of any other. The point is, that the teachers haven't done anything, but the graduates have learned from them; and the people that are doing something on field, they don't have the education. This is how Pakistan's industry is.

Music and Filmmaking Challenges

The review of literature shows that Pakistan's film industry is growing. A film does not only have music, it has actors, script, story, promotions, dance, comedy, action, thrillers, horror, drama and what not. Film has a lot to offer and not only one thing. Music industry is contributing at 20% and is not playing its part as it should (Evans et al., 2014). This is because the ground hasn't been made yet. Music is such an art form that is complete in itself. It's the art of communication. In the context of film, there is high room of improvement. In Zia's era, a number of movies got banned due to below the standard music (Ahmad, 2014). There were economic situations of the country that created challenges for film makers in the previous decade. An aura of terrorism was in the country which impacted the film industry negatively.

Challenges faced by Pakistani Film Industry

Pakistani viewers watch Hollywood and Bollywood films and compare Pakistani films to that; therefore, current market is limited (Khan, 2012). Another unfortunate thing for Pakistan's film industry is that on our screens, there is a trend to sell star value rather than the content. That is not a bad thing as the entire world does that, however, the global industries are also creating stars for the next decade. The dangerous situation for Pakistani film industry includes questions about who will be the hero in films for the next five years, or upon who will the film industry conduct its business on? The revival is good, but it is not long-lasting. Pakistan's audience isn't as flexible that they would accept any new actor as a hero in a film.

The number of screens has increased, because of which the box office has grown, which led to an increase in feasibility. The Cinema used to protest and, in a year, maybe one film was released, or films were released after various delays (Misbah, 2019). Pakistan's industry cannot solely depend on filmmakers. Nevertheless, Pakistan's industry has started to revive. Notably, in 2018, three Pakistani films were released merely for Eid-ul-Azha. Sadly, there are limited screens that the available ones, but success has begun in the current era.

Because of the new screens, the less budgeted films can also expect a certain level of revenue. The investor, when he hears about the figures, his confidence will increase. But the problem is that in the banking industry, one will not see investments for filmmaking. All of the funding is private. It is the filmmakers' own struggle, that deserves a lot of respect on how much effort someone has put in and has made a film. It's a different discussion if someone does their work in an incorrect way though, it's different if one doesn't know about the public opinion.

This century is an era of technology. Everything is online; people are watching news online; they receive messages instantly on WhatsApp. Hollywood and Indian films are being released on the same date and you have to bring in content that competes with that. The person who wants entertainment, now has a choice. They don't need a certificate of patriotism; they want to support the Pakistani cinema. But time has a value, and cinema isn't a very cheap medium now. In the older days, cinema was a medium for the masses and their entertainment. Now the masses living in villages and small cities are simply waiting for the week to end, because the cost of setting up a cinema and its feasibility will take some time.

We can call it an industry, because if something is running on a regular basis and is bringing in economic change, then it is an industry. The industry is also profitable now. Whether the films are imported, or they are locally produced, they do bring profits. The main reason for that is the cinema is huge, and there are a lot of screens. The other factor is that the films being produced pulls the masses to watch films and hence that is itself a big thing. The culture of watching films had vanished, however now it is reviving again. So, it is definitely an industry. An industry can stand on its own, it can get its recognition, however, for its sustenance, the government needs to change its tax policies, its support networks, and it needs to oversee everyone, directors, producers, distributors, and filmmakers as an association and acknowledge the whole ecosystem.

In Pakistan, when someone makes a film and does something huge, then everyone just starts wanting the same thing. They assume that this industry has a lot of revenue. This is a total loss business, simply because there is a lot of risk in filmmaking. The audience would like the new faces. When there are new actors, brands don't endorse you; and a brands endorsement really matters in Pakistan because that could compromise the budget of the film. Brands liven the producer and encourage him to invest in the film. On an individual level, there are financial hurdles, but filmmaker's intention is to really enter with new people.

Audiences compare the films at national and international level. This creates challenges for the film makers. A problem here is that a film in Pakistan having a budget of 5.5-6 Crore and is in competition with Indian films having a budget of around 180 Crore. That is a major hurdle for filmmakers. The audience have high standards and they compare the films, saying that Indian film was so amazing, and our local films aren't. Which is to some extent correct. Because Pakistani producers face challenges in managing finances and couldn't compete with foreign budgets.

Challenges at Producer level

As mentioned by film producers of Pakistan that if some producer gets 30 to 35% then they are a very lucky producer. However, the reality is that we are getting only 28 – 30% after PNA has been cut. Numbers are puffed up, especially as shown in media channels. They are inflated. The industry doesn't do that much business. They say the box office has done 7 Crore, 50 Crore, but my question is that, was that film released alone? My own films have been released on Eid, and they have been top runners. I remember when Actor in Law came out, there were two more films by ARY and Geo channels; if my film made 26 Crore in the box office, the ARY film made 12 Crore which was shown as 18 Crore, and Geo's film which probably made 4-5 Crore was shown as 10 Crore. When you accumulate those claims, you have 50-60 Crore worth of box office, even the original figures add up to 40 Crore. If someone says my film alone did the 60 Crore box office, and the other also says that we hit 15 Crore, then people started doubting the original figures. This confuses potential filmmakers who enter the industry thinking that Pakistan has an 80 Crore worth of box office, which makes them wonder how to project their film.

But sometimes we notice plot holes, incomplete research, immature plots, huge jumps in the story, the music narrating something different. Is this a lack

on the director's side of homework or because of the lack of support by the producer?

I think both things are the problem. I would like to put it out there that for 1-2 decades there weren't any films, there wasn't any institution. Like there were TV dramas, which had its evolution, there were weaknesses, there were improvements, there were copies, and eventually the dramas improved and matured. It went through different forms. Film was not made for 20-25 years. Makers vanished. People didn't even assist to make the films. We worked with commercial films, we assisted in music videos, even directed some, we worked with TV commercials, and serials. By mainly working at videos and serials, we gained command in two areas. The first thing we understood was how to operate the technical equipment. When we worked on a TV commercial, a good quality camera was of 35mm during that time. That was a film camera and we learned how the unit for a film worked. The second area we learned was how to handle big-sized production. Our budget for TVCs was so huge that we used to work on a larger scale, and there were around a 100 to 200 or sometimes 500 people working on the set. Sometimes we shot in stadiums, while shooting for a Pepsi commercial, we used to handle a 1000 people, we learned how to work internationally, how to separate sound, why was there dubbing because that wasn't prevalent in TV etc. We learned all that. Whatever we learned, we learned from commercials. Secondly, our parents weren't billionaires. They didn't send us abroad to study at NYFA, and the people who have studied from there have made nothing. The important thing is that this is skill-based work. Your field experience matters. I feel no shame in saying that I have worked as a spot boy, production assistant, art director, assistant manager and so, at every level.

The directors get involved in some production houses and not for some others, or maybe the directors get involved for some packages of the production house and not for some other packages. This is still a mystery to me. This should not be the case. I feel that the entire team, from the spot boy to the final editor, should be present during the process of filmmaking. It makes a difference when everyone is providing their own input. There is a lack of teamwork. Lobbying is present. Lobbies aren't bad though, they're positive. It's not like everyone is pitted against each other. Everyone wants to do good but the business module for this kind of work is different.

We will get there. As you said that our cinema is not huge and screens are

limited, our producers' share is very limited. Unions are very important. Many producers are against the idea of having unions, but the smart producers are for it. There should be a technicians' union. I want my people protected. When we start a film in our office, I make sure that from the spot boy to the assistant director, everyone is insured. We give them coverage, but we can't give them a lot, because even we have limited means. This is a law. This is a law that we cannot take an actor or a technician to shoot without them having insurance. When we were shooting in South Africa, I had to insure even my actors.

For films to be available every Friday, we need to make more films more often, which is not the case. Films are only coming in every two events, because as I've said many people only come in to watch a film only once a year. During that time, the box office is very different, and we have experienced this. But yes, when there is a clash of three films, business stops there. I think now you will see more films releasing off-season. New windows of opportunity will open like summer holidays, new year's etc. As far as the producers' support network is concerned, producers are insecure. We will meet each other in a friendly manner, but inside we won't like them. It's like how you meet your aunt very nicely, but when you come home your mom says she wasn't nice. Likewise, producers will be best friends on the outside, but after they part, they'll think, I have to get there first, I need to apply this idea first. We don't acknowledge each other's work. They are afraid that if we compliment them, they'll think they are better than me. Secondly, there's a group by the name of Producers Association of Pakistan on my phone, and on that group, besides a fake congratulations, a happy birthday, nothing is sent.

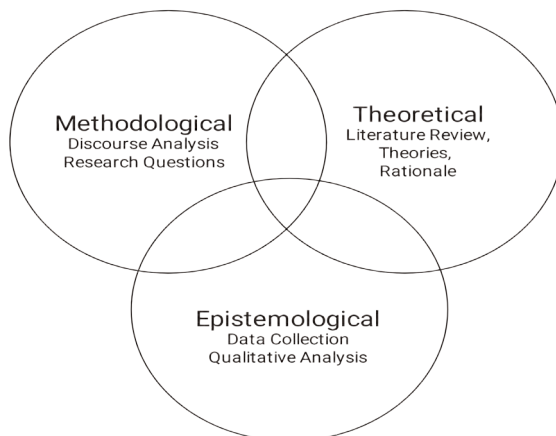
Revival of Pakistan's Film Industry

The good thing is that this is the first time someone is saying 'after' the revival of cinema. All I've been hearing is that it is reviving, or for the revival of cinema. We need to stop saying for the sake of Pakistani revival. Masha Allah Pakistani cinema has revived. It is a big achievement for all of us and we need to acknowledge all those who worked hard for all of this. We need to acknowledge that the revival has come. If we're talking with regards to the technique and equipment, then we are at par with the rest of the industry. We are not above anyone, but we are equal now. The kind of cameras, equipment, and lighting that is being used in India are the same ones used in Pakistan. We have the same sound and mixing, the same formats for film shootings and releases and so we have reached there. All that is left now are budgets.

The Pakistani cinema industry is an independent industry, it is self-made; many people have their own investments and money in the industry and the government has given zero support. That has always been the case, but it is expected to improve in the future that the government may give us a forum and start treating us like an industry that we are, and like how the rest of the world treats the film industry. We don't have any rebates, tax deductions, or any funding that the government usually provides. Globally, if there is a film that handles the topic of national interest, they are made tax-free, but in Pakistan, even if we make such films, we are not allocated zero tax. For instance, we have this new film, *Load Wedding*, which clearly a message against dowry, but no acknowledgment. We get appreciation from the general public, they want us to make more films like this, but no acknowledgement from the government's side. They don't give us studios. We are working in a gorilla-style. Our studios are make-shift, we use warehouses for such purpose. We have not been allocated space or any such organization that would take care of such things.

Initially, people were enjoying the look and the feel of the film, such that the pixels are clear, the grading is nice, you can see that the investment is there etc. But there were milestones, and filmmakers kept upgrading this, and with time, at one point, people decided that this is the optimum. Now, people want star-studded content with the same looks. I feel the boom of the cinema came when *Jalebi*, *Na Maloom Afraad*, and *Wrong Number* came out; we are now during the revival phase and if we don't think about creating content and stars for the next 5-10 years, then I don't think we can survive for a really long time.

Theoretical Framework



The presented research covers the study of Pakistan's film industry, its different periods of downfall in the film industry and explore the reasons of demise of Pakistan's Cinema with the efforts of reviving it. To understand the problem, interviewed conducted from the renowned producers, directors, music directors, film distributors, and actors of Pakistan's film industry. For this we use the techniques of interviewing them, utilizing the available content, researcher observatory notes, and visual/digital materials and analyze the data using the discourse analysis method.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a crucial part of a research report (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2018). It assists a researcher in exploring the research questions, investigating the problems and provide a methodology that could lead to viable results. The current research is based on the qualitative research method. The data is collected from the filmmakers, directors, producers, and actors that are engaged in the filmmaking industry of Pakistan. Primary interviews are collected from 30 participants and data is then analyzed through thematic analysis. Secondary methods of data collection are used to review the existing literature conducted on filmmaking, demise of Pakistan film industry, challenges and factors associated to the decline of local studios. Convenient sampling technique is used to collect the information from the participants. Interviews of fifteen to twenty minutes. There are three types of data collection methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method (Brannen, 2017). The purpose of current research is to explore the reasons behind the demise of the Pakistani film industry, with a focus on the role of local studios. The method of data collection will be qualitative. The primary qualitative interviews were collected from the professionals, associated specifically, with the film industry. Face to face interviews were conducted to recognize the challenges faced by the Pakistani studios and investigate their role in the downsizing of the Pakistani film industry. The factors which led to the decline in the number of Pakistani film studios were inquired in detail during interviews from the participants. This method is deemed appropriate, as the fifteen to twenty minutes interviews enable a researcher to collect significant and real time information related to the research variables. A convenient sampling technique enabled the researcher in collecting viable information from the respondents. The interviews were then analyzed through thematic analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research is to understand the challenges faced by the Pakistan's film industry. A qualitative research design was used, and interviews were conducted from Actors, Directors, Singers and Producers, associated with the Pakistan's film industry. A thematic analysis is performed and discussed in this section.

Challenges faced by Pakistani Filmmakers

Abiz Raza

There is a lot of risk, if you are not coming in with stars. We didn't come in with stars, we went in with completely new faces & A problem here was that our film had a budget of 5.5-6 Crore, and that was in competition with Padmaavati which had a budget of around 180 Crore & Another factor that matters is the chemistry between the director and the financier.

Jami

There is lack of vision in directors and some of it in distributors as well. But with time, I think we'll learn.

Jami

I think there is a union problem. No one is enforcing ethics. & basically, there should be an enforced union. Government should make laws. No one is coming together. The people in cinema have started doing this but the filmmakers haven't started as such.

Jami

Dialogue delivery isn't being recorded on the set, when the actor is in the mood. Our films will always be called second class films because the acting would be weird. I can't make sounds from Saddar sitting in this room & we don't have people for the sound recording, and for that you need budget. When you have a limited budget, you can't shoot the film properly.

Babar Sheikh

Our content is mostly like TV commercials we most directors goes to creating films with the sensibilities of a commercial. They are not the

same thing, and their scope and audience are entirely different.

Fizza Ali

It may be possible that you don't see new faces because they are not the main leads. Cinema is a risky business, and in Pakistan it is even riskier, because there are less screens. & we do need to keep 2-3 new people because if we don't it will only get tougher for us; we will have no one to work with later. We get new talent in, even if it is for the role of a villain.

Aijaz Gul

Producer should be encouraging towards the film and story but many times they behave like dictators just because they have invested their money. Because the director is not able to concentrate if he is constantly pressured from the Producer.

Lacking in Pakistan's Filmmaking

Fizza Ali

Film was not made for 20-25 years. Makers vanished. People didn't even assist to make the films. & the important thing is that this is skill-based work. Your field experience matters.

Jamshed Irani

The fundamental question is whether we are capable of telling compelling stories or not? If we agree that we can then why are not our cinemas flooded with audiences? The only right answer is that we are not and ironically, we don't have the capacity to realize that we need a lot of time and investment to build our industry if we want to accomplish international standard.

Owais Shamsi

We have everything we need in this time. We have cameras, lenses, rigs and sets to compete with other markets and now all we need is good content.

Abiz Raza

For film, people just care about where the business will do well. When you start caring about business, then you will be afraid, and that fright

will lead you to create content that will only focus on what people want to watch.

M.Arsalan mentioned

The directors are very rigid in their imagination which is why the visual of our stories are not complementing the story. Instead, they are contradicting the narrative and thereby focusing on beauty rather than authenticity.

Shahrukh Khan mentioned

We need realistic content that depicts our society rather than imitating Bollywood or Hollywood. While we are looking for inspiration, we should consider Iranian Cinema and study their journey from making low budget films to dominate every prestigious film festival all over the world.

Babar Qayum mentioned

We as editors don't have a lot of room to play sometimes because the Production phase mostly don't involve us, and no one wants to consult us. So, when all is done with the shoot then how can we adjust it that's why we work with what we have?

Jami: Lack of Good Scripts

In the 1920's our films were worthy of a storm, but in the 80's executives came in and they changed the entire game. & . People think that if you have money, you can make an entire film, but you can't make a story.

Fizza Ali

We have so much equipment and they have gone obsolete by simply being in a room because we did not have the HR to operate it.

No. there are floors but not studios. There's a difference between the two. They give us a warehouse after emptying it from coke bottles. But is it ready for audio recording? Once a plane passes, we pause shooting because it disturbs us. And they fly by 40 times a day; studios are supposed to be soundproof from that. There is an entire ecosystem in a studio. There is an entire set, generators, lights. The warehouse will have the basic 4 lights. There are no unions, and not proper arrangement. We don't know about food, what the lower staff (it's not a nice word to use), and the directors will have

to eat. The director will have food from okra while camera boys will have biryani in bulk. These are big issues, and no one understands.

During the interview, Singers as Shuja Haider revealed significant insights about Pakistan's music industry and its association with the film industry. Although there are many factors that are associated with the demise of Pakistan's film industry, but there are several that are working for its improvement. The Singer was opined that Pakistan's music industry is moving towards improvement because as compared to India and other countries there has been new music genres. The music that was part of 70s, 80s, is not present anymore, which is a good sign. Currently, there are a lot of things to be inspired of, there have been things coming in from the west, musicians are being inspired. Inspiration is being coming in from India as well, even in Pakistan, a lot of inspiring work is taking place. Shuja was hopeful that Pakistan's film industry will grow in near future.

Coming back to directors, when they know that 4-5 Crores are available easily for expenditure, but they have to work with 40 people instead of 120 people, then they need to direct the story, but it is difficult. Except Ahsan Rahim, no one amongst us have made a hit film. The film was being edited for a really long time. I have been a commercial director and we don't know how to narrate stories, which is why films go over the budget and will be a gamble despite it making money. Nadeem Baig has given us 3 hit films, and he's from the drama industry. He knows storytelling. If you see Punjab nahi jaongi, then that is a very interesting film, even if it has a dramatic touch. The writer plays a huge role in this. The commercial directors are not ready. We have a separate working style; it doesn't have storytelling. For an Olpers 30 second ad, all you need is a mother in white clothes laughing in slow motion. We can't learn storytelling overnight. We have only made music videos in the meanwhile with dhaani, pal dou pal, door etc. We never had a storyboard, we memorized everything. For Moor and 021, there was no storyboard, everyone knew every scene, and I knew the dialogues for the entire film. Any good director would do this.

Nabeel Qureshi, me, or any other director for that matter, did not start making films because there was a need for it, but because we were passionate about it since our childhood. We invest 12-13 Crore in a film, while we could've invested the same in Bahria Town. It's all a party to them. The main point is to connect your DNA with the cinema. You need to make a

story; the money will follow automatically. Here, people do the opposite and make film to generate money. It's not bad, but there's a difference. I didn't find good writers; at the end, I had to write the film myself. Everyone on set would be ready, and I would be writing, then there would be a printout, and everyone would check my script. Even the ratio for hit or miss has a very huge difference, in writing and in money. I had a writer write it, and the opening scene had such pointless dialogues that I didn't even read the next page even though the payment was made. You can't do this in any other industry. No one gets a second chance anywhere else, there should be focus all the time. It's like a patient died.

Item Songs had been part of controversy in the film industry and to some extent they are reason of Pakistan's demise. However, during the interview, contrasting opinions are received from the interviewers. For instance, one of the interviewees mentioned that:

In Pakistan, even if we got loyalty then it's a huge achievement, and royalty comes way after. The system has just started. People are making YouTube channels; they can upload their own content and get royalties. You can do so much on your own. Even in India there are many singers who are making money off their own content and are not labelled with any label. This is an entire study. You go on digital media and make money. That's totally a choice.

I don't want to say anything bad, nor am I saying that my word is correct or incorrect. This is anti-filmmaking. People don't seem to understand. It's like one day you're reading a good book by Ghalib or Muhammad Haneef and there's this one vulgar page in between. Who will tolerate that? You will not tolerate it. Similarly, we would not tolerate it either. Suppose we're watching a documentary; the documentary is about the burning of a factory, and while watching it suddenly a naked girl appears out of nowhere. How will you feel about it? It's a serious scene. Filmmaking is serious. This is what I'm saying. This is a very low-end. Low-ends never last. It always ends up affecting you. Like the films with Salman Khan. They are not reaching 120 Crore. Dangal has reached that. There is no Munni there, and neither is she being disgraced.

The point is that if you're talking about a revival, the revival should not be

as if there is a book by Ghalib and there are two poem pages stuck in between. There is no point in that. Then you should leave the entire book. If it is a film then let people make the film, and I feel that this is my point of view.

Revival of Pakistan Cinema and Current Standing of Pakistan's Film Industry

During interview Abdul Khaliq mentioned:

I feel revival will take a lot of time, the time when a lot of films will be produced, when 3 films will be released per month or maximum 4 per month, only then we can talk about revival.

During interview Abiz Raza mentioned:

If you consider the Pakistani film industry within Pakistan, then it is fruitful in some areas for some people, but unfortunately, for some people it is not as fruitful, simply because there is a lot of investment and competition.

Fizza Ali mentioned:

If we're talking with regards to the technique and equipment, then we are at par with the rest of the industry. We are not above anyone, but we are equal now.

Satesh Anand stated:

On a social level, it became a cultural phenomenon to go to cinema again. That is where the entire process started, and with time the Pakistani filmmakers started making films and many new people entered the industry to contribute.

Aijaz Gul mentioned:

We need to create independent bodies which are self-sufficient in funding whether by government or private sector to allow young filmmakers to come forward and take the mantle of this industry and lead it from the front.

Jami stated:

Well, box office-wise the industry has performed better. As I would usually say, between money and respect, money has started pouring in, but for respect, I would say that respected films have received less of a

chance, I think.

Jami stated:

Revival is difficult, everything is uncertain. Now every person comes around and asks everyone to support the Pakistani cinema. Why should we support it? Are you begging? But the ticket price is yet full, Rs. 600.

Shuja Haider

I feel that Pakistan's music industry is moving towards improvement because as compared to India and other countries there has been new music genres.

Abiz Raza

I feel that the entire film watching culture started from 2013 onwards because of Na Maloom Afraad and Jalebi. & we are now in the midst of the revival phase and if we don't think about creating content and stars for the next 5-10 years, then I don't think we can survive for a really long time.

Pakistani films are focusing on creating a positive impact on society by bringing in social issues. One of the interviewees mentioned about this during her interview:

The films that are written in Film Wala Pictures is that we have a social aspect. You can clearly see the impact of our society in our writing, in our scripts, which is why when we connect to something, we think of correcting it and improving it; you don't simply show the negative aspect, but also show the solutions for the negative parts of society. Some examples would be Actor in Law, Na Maloom Afraad, Na Maloom Afraad 2, or Load Wedding. We showed that these are the problems in our society, this is how we fix them, and how there are some problems with which we believe are condemnable; we showed them categorically. You can't simply give speeches - the cinema isn't the place for speeches; you need to sugar coat your message. Our films are mainly satirical or humorous, but because film is a revolutionary medium worldwide, and we, as filmmakers, try to convey our message in the best way possible.

Revival did bring change; I mean maybe we were expecting too much 2 to 3 years ago that things would change very quickly but it doesn't make sense that it will bring a drastic change quickly. If you look at India, from the 90s and '95, from where you think the system changed a little bit or people started doing things a little bit differently, or there were new faces coming in, like where it all started changing, you would remember in Sholay, at first there was only singing and dancing and there were very pretty heroes, and then the guns came in Sholay. This was change. And after that it became the black stone and etc. etc. And after that Karan Johar came in. And this is how things changed. And now they have reached at Dangal.

See, Khuda ke Liye did not revive, please note that. Someone should ask why. Why did it not revive? There is gap between Khuda ke liye and Moor and Waar. I think it came out 12 years ago. It's a very interesting point. That revival was injected. There wasn't any demand. There wasn't a requirement to wake up the industry. There was only a requirement for man to make film and to present a point of view. And after that came Bol. Such a huge gap. So, the revival, which is not asked for from the heart, which is not internally asked for, you cannot externally enforce it, that 'hey let's make films and revive the industry'. There was no revival. Please note, even Bol didn't bring revival. Even Bol was externally funded, the profit was not rolling because it was made from the outside.

So even cinema didn't revive when I started making films, let alone filmmaking revival. So, we thought, let's just make films, however possible. And right after Moor, came Waar. The story changed midway. It was like the cinema got some kind of CPR or a cut. It was like it came alive all of sudden, but it's not like the corpse just started running. Films like Teefa had all the support, they were given all the cinemas. The point is that the cinemas are less. You can't make 100 crores even if you give all the screens or run them 24 hours. The lack of screens is the biggest issue.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted with the aim of discovering the challenges faced by the film industry in Pakistan. The thematic analysis conveyed a number of problems that have hindered the success of the industry and have caused a demise in the recent years. The study concluded through the interviews, that some of the main challenges that have always been pre-existent was the lack of budget for the production of films. This problem was reiterated by many

professionals in the filmmaking industry, where the others also pointed out that there is a lack of cohesiveness in the industry's players. The presence of a union would facilitate the improvement of the industry, however, not one person initiates a discussion on the topic and the support from the government is minimum. While discussing the challenges, an important obstacle was concluded that there was a lack of proper sound equipment for Pakistani Cinema. There is great camera equipment for shooting purposes, but if the filmmakers of a film are shooting at a public place, they need to be able to record right at the moment, and not have to redo sound. Furthermore, there were many mixed perceptions on storytelling. Some professionals believed that regulation is too tough for the filmmaking industry, while others argued that some components of a film, such as item songs, do not make sense, and often don't fit in the story line. The common presence of workplace inequality and prolonged hours of work for the staff was also identified as a key factor as a challenge for the film industry.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE FILM INDUSTRY

- Film though an art form requires deep understanding of its form and substance that it creates. That's why the current industry lacks skillful talent because there are no educational facilities available which only focus on filmmaking.
- The government can also provide tax incentives to foreign filmmakers for shooting in our country so that there can be exchanges and collaborations between our filmmakers with the global film fraternity.
- The government should also take responsibility in building this industry by subsidizing the local taxes for studios and production houses.
- The number of screens should have to increase to attract more investors and adequate security should be provided so that it should also be considered as a state infrastructure.
- There are little to no laws regarding copywrite disputes which is why the lawmakers need to draft a comprehensive and strict legislation to penalize the culprits through the court of law so that everyone belonging to the industry would feel safe.
- The government can also create a 100million dollar fund to support the local filmmakers by organizing screenwriting labs and contest so

that independent filmmaker can create films without any financial hindrance.

- The censor board should be transparent and an elected body which would represent the filmmaking fraternity and safeguard the industry's interests.
- The monopoly of T.V channels should also be scrutinized and monitored so there can be no undue favors to any producers or studios so that there can be level playing field for everyone.

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