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## **Abstract**

The paper attempts to find out the decreasing trends of cinema hall business and ways to revival of that business in the golden age of 1980s in the viewpoints of the cinema loving cent percent respondents of Sylhet city. In searching the reasons of failing cinema hall business, the attraction to core product (Cinema) of audience and to the alternative ways of getting the products is also discussed. One hundred ninety nine respondents from different professions in different age categories were surveyed thorough a well constructed structured questionnaire including 12 vital questions to them as an audience. The responses were processed through Microsoft Excel 07 and SPSS 19 to get the output in simple statistical tool: cross tabulation. The outputs were analyzed objectively with the researchers' analysis on different matters. It is found that failure of making better movies with all required elements competitively with Hollywood and Bollywood is the main cause of deterioration cinema and cinema hall business in the country. Failure in releasing expected cinema in expected environment in (is) identified as the main reasons of decaying cinema hall business. So (,) to bring back the audiences to the cinema halls, Cinemas should be produced in expected quantity and quality and its forward linkage industry the Cinema halls should be reconstructed with modern technology and competitively modern environments.

**Keywords:** Cinema, Hollywood or Bollywood, Cinema Hall Business

## 1. Introduction

Entertainment is one of the basic needs of human and movie is the most common element of entertainment. People love to enjoy movies reflecting their own culture and norms. So, film industry is developed in every country to make films in their own language to make them understandable to all the people. Films requires as industry to generate the film in very complex process of mental and physical efforts with a forward industry cinema halls to reach its mass audience. Once, the movies were viewed only by theaters. So, like other countries, many cinema halls were developed to fulfill the need of people. Up to 2004, Bangladesh Film industry was flourishing with sufficient numbers of films produced in every year to fulfill the need of halls to entertain the viewers.

But the core product Bangladeshi Films were failing to entertain people with their different elements of movie; story, acting, photography and entertainment. The films of Hollywood, Bollywood, Taiwan and other countries with their high budget, technology, and better making has attracted the attention of Bangladeshi viewers though these can be viewed in small screen only. People find more entertainment in those films than Bangladeshi Movies. Similarly, the theaters of Bangladesh did not think about improving their hall environment. Thus the product, movie and its distribution by cinema halls disappointed the viewers day by day. The sky culture paves the way to the consumer of films to satisfy their need in alternative means. Ultimately, people moved far away from the cinema halls and cinema hall businesses become a business of decay. Shopping malls are constructed by demolition of halls. People adopted with sky culture in great cities much earlier than us but their theaters are not decreasing. In neighboring countries like India and Pakistan, the cinema hall business is increasing day by day. Due to the lack of the proper modification of products and distribution media, that is the cinema and halls, according to the demand of consumers, these businesses are dying.

Sylhet is a city of 165,000 people in 2004 with 8 theaters to fulfill the demand of movie lovers. Now with around 0.5 million population in the city and 2.7 million in the district (BBS 2010), the numbers of theaters reduced to 5 only; Nondita, Obokash, Lalkuti, Boteswar, BGB Auditorium in a decreasing trend of business. Cinema hall industry in divisional city, Sylhet is also facing various problems. The movie goers are reduced drastically at Sylhet from the beginning of this century. The hall owners are concentrating to build up mega shop or multi storied super shopping mall replacing cinema hall (popular Monika cinema hall at Kanishail road replaces a market). All the cinema halls are now on the verge of shutting down as the owners are incurring huge losses for want of movie-goers at Sylhet city and district (Shofiee 2012). A good number of women were the regular viewers of Sylhet cinema halls but they have completely stopped to go to cinema due to several reasons as vulgar films, poor sitting arrangements, bug bites, insufficient and poor washroom etc. The perception of common citizen is that movies are made for rickshaw puller and slum dwellers. Such people enjoy cinema at roadside tea stall, playing DVD at home, through cable television or even in mobile phone hand set without going theatre. As a result cinema owners are incurring huge losses in this business. People of Sylhet are not interested to watch movie going cinema hall because Bangladeshi movie makers are not making quality films due to the technological and financial shortcomings (Islam 2013).

Not only in Sylhet but also Cinema Hall business is deteriorating all over the country in the last 20 years. The numbers of halls are reduced from 1500 to 500. Average a hall is closing down in a week now (Masud C. 2011). It is important to search a turnaround strategy of the cinema hall business of the country to have to survival of entertaining people by the large screen of theaters. The viewers' opinion is most important to find out the actual reason of decay and way to survive. In the way of searching the limitation of product and distribution policy should be analyzed as it may not be the limitation of films or theaters only.

The researchers attempt to analyze the causes of failing cinema hall business in Bangladesh with special reference to Sylhet city to the viewpoint of consumers.

## **2. Literature Review**

Cinema industry needs forward linkage with Cinema hall traders. . Customers search for some tangibles for the service such as interior as the physical eviandence (Lovelock, Wirtz and Chatterjee 2013). Cinema halls work as physical evidence of Cinema. Now a days Cinema Industry also using other media industry as its forward linkage industries but the Cinema hall has alone backward linkage industry- Cinema. The people of all the classes including the middle class have left the cinema halls since many years. This may be due to the sky culture, the failure or making minimum entertaining films or due to the poor environment of cinema halls (Masud, 2012). Due to that, the cinema hall business is deteriorating day by day in Bangladesh. The number of cinema halls have been decreased from 1230 in 1990 to 742 in 2010 (BFDC 2011).

Before 1980s the only way to watch movie was cinema halls and to entertain the audiences the production of movies was increased with a growth rate of 25%-30% in a every five years (Raju, 2011) Now movies can be enjoyed in small screen by various media like TV, online, DVD player etc. But the people of USA, European Countries and other countries are still going to the cinema halls to enjoy movies (Yeasmin, 2011). Even in India and Pakistan every shopping complex includes multiplex cinema hall but in Bangladesh Shopping complex are replacing the cinema halls (Masud, 2012).

Cinema halls are to display the cinemas. Cinema is the main product of Cinema halls. The movie lovers expect new films with new story which will be up to date with latest technology. These movies will be able to meet their satisfaction. As Cinema halls of Bangladesh have to display only the movies of Bangladesh, so the need of new movies in every week is a prerequisite to attract the viewers. But Bangladesh film industries are in declining trend in movie making. In 1996-2003 periods, the average film production was 80 in a year (Raju 2011) that is decreased to 35-40 in recent years (Yeasmin, 2011) and in 2013 it was reduced to only 30 (Daily Prothom Alo 2013). The crisis of Bangladeshi Cinema is apparent from its backward move and inferior quality of production (Ahmad 2010). Films of Bangladesh need to reach up to the standard of 'bhodro' (more civilized) family allow their members to enter the cinema halls (Masud C. 2011). Due to the crisis in quantity and quality of production and unhygienic condition of cinema halls, the audiences search the easy alternatives of satisfying themselves in Hollywood and Bollywood movies in a minimum cost or free of cost. From the starting of cinema from silent age to digital age, it is advancing through the use of technology. The poor

technology used by Bangladeshi movies deprived the viewers and ultimately they have gone away from Bangladeshi Cinema. The reasons of poor quality of Bangladeshi films as identified are: small budget, politics in Govt. contribution, poor storylines, copied story, play write, lack of emotional and rhythmic songs etc (Yeasmin 2011). Quality cinema is that cinema which is designed to send a message to the target customers and it will create an image to the audiences mind (Murshedul, 2010) as it created an image in 1960s when the local industry produced competitively better film than its competitors; Hollywood, Bollywood, Kolkata's Tollywood and Urdu films of West Pakistan (Masud C. 2011). But FDC of Bangladesh can't produce quality film due to different reasons. FDC is lagging 30 years behind the state-of-art film making, not only in global context but even to our sub-continent standard (Mokammel, 2012). Making better quality films with modern technology and comfortable, congenial environment of cinema halls can bring back the audience to the cinema halls as watching a film in big screen is different from watching them in small screen at home (Islam 2008). Cinema halls are (like) shops where the product is to be sold. After regular closure of cinema halls, now only 20-30 halls are in minimum middle class standard with only one multiplex hall in Dhaka where in India this number is 700. Even in Khathmundu, with a population of less than one million, the number of multiplex cinema hall is eight with 19 new under construction. The over taxation on cinema ticket is another barriers in development of film and cinema hall industry (Masud C. 2011).

### **3. Research objective**

The main objective of that research is to find out the reason of failing cinema hall business in Bangladesh with special reference to Sylhet City. The specific objectives are as follows:

3.1 To find out the attitudes of people toward cinema according to different age categories and different professions of people.

3.2 To search the attitude of people towards cinema in different languages and proportion of people entertained by the cinema halls.

3.3 To search the causes of disliking the Bangladeshi Cinema those are displayed by cinema halls.

3.4 To search the reasons of audiences' discontinuation in watching movies in the theaters.

3.5 To search way of bringing back the audiences to Cinema halls and turnaround of cinema hall business.

### **4. Benefits of the Research**

This study is significantly important for industries that are providing different services especially the entertainment to audiences. The consumers may leave the media of entertainment because of better alternatives and failure of existing media to satisfy the need of them. Besides, the product may become unattractive because of failure in improving the quality compared to the competitors. Awareness about the viewpoints of viewers may provide a guideline to the industry to bring back the audience to the product and to the media of enjoyment.

## 5. Methodology

This is a descriptive analytical research conducted by stratified type of probabilistic sampling. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire with 12 basic questions. The questions were set in accordance to the objectives of the research. The questionnaires were distributed to 325 targeted respondents. Of them, 205 have returned the questionnaire with their answers. Six of them were canceled due to outlier and incomplete answers.

The data were processed through Microsoft Excel 2007 and SPSS 19. The outputs were analyzed objectively with the judgments of researchers. Some recommendations were made according to the findings for survival of Cinema hall Business.

## 6. Findings

The respondents are divided into three major age categories to reflect the attitudes towards movies; up to 20, 20-35 years and above 35 to include all important stages of human life. Below 20 age is the stage where most of the people do not think more about the complexities of carrier. The 20-35 age is the stage of life where people have to fight more to start the carrier and the above 35 is the stage of settled life where people become stable in their carrier. It is found that (Table 1) in all those stages of life, people like to enjoy movies, as there are different types of movies; action, horror, comedy, war, religious, social, fantasy, science fiction, documentary and other to fulfill the demand of various requirements of different peoples. Recreation is thus become the basic need of human and as an common element of recreation movies are fulfilling the common recreation need of people of different age categories.

Language is the symbol of transmitting and receiving information. Similarly different language create obstacle to different people who are not able to understand that language. But movies have a common symbol of transmitting ideas. So, with lack of skill in a language people can enjoy movie of that language. In the present world English becomes a language of the world and Hollywood is leading the movie industry by their highest quality of movie making and distributing around the world. India is the second important place of movie making to the people of Bangladesh as it is the nearest place of Bangladesh with almost similar culture and norms and making the movies with their advanced technology and skill in that work. Most of the Indian movies are in Hindi, the language, understood by many people of Bangladesh. Songs of Indian movies are also very common to the people of Bangladesh. Movies in Bangla, are produced by Bangladesh and West Bengal. People are supposed to understand those movies well because of mother language. But the product quality is not comparable to the products of Hollywood and Bollywood because of technology and art of making.

The researchers are interested to find out the fascination of people under survey to the movies of different languages as the cinema halls are not allowed to show the movies of different languages, made in countries other than Bangladesh freely. Some English movies are released in specific Cinema halls in Bangladesh with the necessary permission. So people can not enjoy all of the mentioned movies in the Cinema Halls.

It is found that with a small difference in age categories, English movies are most popular among the respondents (43.7%). Bangla movies of Bangladesh and West Bengal are following the English movies (34.7%) that are followed by Hindi Movies (16.1%). It is not possible to watch the films of West Bengal and India (28.7% in total) in the cinema halls of Bangladesh because of unavailability. Most of the English Movies are not also available in the Cinema Halls due to the above mentioned reason. So Cinema halls are not able to entertain 72% (rest of 28%) people because of unavailability of products.

Among different professionals, students and housewives can manage time to enjoy movie more than other professionals. Other professionals are busier and it is harder for them to manage time to enjoy movies. Language is supposed to create more problems to the less educated persons. But in case of movie, people like to enjoy better movies irrespective of language. Generally English movies are well made and entertaining, so people of different professions like to enjoy English movies more. Housewives have shown more preference to Bangla movies than other professionals. Jointly Bangla movies made by Bangladesh and West Bengal got second highest preference among professionals because of mother language. It is followed by well made Hindi movies. From the above two tables, it is found that people like better movies irrespective of skill level in language. To understand movie an average skill is sufficient for the viewers. But there are preferences in mother language as people love Bangla film though these are not well made.

Cinema halls are only places to entertain people by movies with large screen and proper concentration as people have nothing to do in the halls but to watch movies. The other common ways to watch movies are: by CD, DVD, Online, Downloading from websites & watching by computers, TV channels and in special occasion by projectors etc. Common people are used to watch movie by TV channels. Every day around twenty bangla movies, twenty hindi movies and same number of English movies are available by different channels. People can select the movie and watch them in free of cost. The IT knowing people may enjoy movies from online and offline by CD or DVD player, computer, laptop, or android mobile phone. People can enjoy movies by all of these ways in minimum cost and homely environment. The availability of alternatives debar the viewers from the cinema halls. The other reasons of accepting the alternatives of small screen instead of large screen of cinema halls are: disliking Bangladeshi and imported English films available in cinema halls, time constraints, loving alternatives and saving money. It is found that, the main reason for aborting cinema hall is the unfavorable hall environment (28.6%) that is followed by disliking the imported English movie (27.6%). Another important reason of disliking cinema hall was time constraint of people that is people do not want or have the time of at least three hours to spend in the cinema hall (21.1%). People found alternative way of entertainment as the reason of abandoning cinema hall (12.6%). Thus it is established that public use alternative way of watching movies for lack of better hall environment, movies, and sufficient time to enjoy in the hall but they do not consider the alternatives as a substitute of big screen. Another important finding is, a very small portion of people (4.5%) consider the disliking of Bangla film as the reason of not going to cinema hall.

Cinema Halls are to view the cinemas. So cinema is the core product. Bangladeshi cinema halls are permitted to show only Bangladeshi and imported English Films. Mainly Bangladeshi Films are displayed in the halls. So movies are main important factor of attracting



viewers in the halls. The researchers feel the importance of searching the reasons for not liking the Bangladeshi films by the movie lovers. Factors are identified as: few number of films released, poor technology used in making the films, poor acting by the performers, unattractive stories of the movies, less attractive music, costume and choreography and lack of better performers.

Films are the product shown in cinema hall in large screen. In one sense there is no alternative of enjoying cinemas in large screen in multiple dimensions and with full attention as there is nothing to do in the cinema hall other than enjoying it. As the main product of cinema halls are Bangladeshi films, so it is important to search the reason of avoiding hall in disliking the product itself. It is shown in above table that around one fifth of the people like Bangladeshi Films. The researchers' findings regarding the reasons of disliking the films is shown in Table 5.

It is found that, with less variance in the age groups, the respondents consider the factors number of films (29.1%), technology (15.6%), acting (17.1%), story (19.1%) and entertaining elements (13.1%) as almost similar causes of not liking Bangladeshi Films. The leading cause is the number of movies, i.e. few numbers of films is released in halls regularly. Movie lovers like to enjoy new movies regularly. Lack of new movies disappoint them and drive them to search for new source of entertainment in movies. Movies of Hollywood or Bollywood may occupy the place of Bangladeshi films. The unattractive stories are the second important reason of disliking the films. The main attraction of films is story. Attractive story attract the viewers in hall for three hours at a stretch. Lacking in it, debar the viewers from viewing Bangladeshi movies. Similarly poor acting in those films dissatisfy the viewers in getting a perception of taste of real incidence by the movie. People express their feeling with the performers in the sequences of events in the films due to real like acting by the performers. Better technology and entertaining elements attract the viewers to the movie. But failure in providing it, disappoints the viewers and drives them to search alternative in English or Hindi movie.

Unattractive story is the main reason for disliking Bangladeshi film as found from the responses of Job holders and businessmen. The students and housewives identified the problem of few number of Bangladeshi Films released every year to entertain the viewers. Besides, the professionals identified the others reasons of not liking Bangladeshi films as quality in film making (technology & entertaining elements) and poor performances by the performers.

To search a turnaround strategy of cinema hall, it is important to analyze the viewers' viewpoint in this regard. Table 7 illustrates the prerequisites of regaining the cinema hall businesses in Bangladesh.

Viewers identified the hall environment as the main barriers of attractiveness and cause of failure of halls in attracting them. In consistency with it, most of the viewers (29.1%) suggest improving physical environment to regain the cinema hall business. In line with that option, they also suggest (21.1%) to build multiplex halls for more attraction. That is, 50% are in favor of improving the hall environment to bring back the audience to the halls. Film making by including more entertaining element and using high tech is optioned by 15.6% and 14.6% of the respondents. That is in total 36% viewers (making good films, using high tech and introducing more entertainment) are in favor of improving the products to attract the audience to the cinema hall. Besides, Another 11.6% are in favor of improving the hall products by importing good films from different countries.

## **7. Overall Interpretation**

All the people love movies as different types of movies are able to entertain people of different walks of life and of different age categories, so the entertainment is the basic need of human and the movies become the common element to entertain all. Most of the people like to enjoy better movies, but they are not available in the cinema hall. People want to enjoy the films in mother language for better understanding but these films are not well made and the better options are available in the market. So cinema halls are failed to entertain 72% movie lovers as they are not providing the desired products to the customers. The rest of the population are supposed to enjoy movie in the cinema halls but due to the internal (time constraints) and external (hall environment, availability of alternative sources etc.) people do not go to the cinema hall to enjoy the movie in the big screen with full involvement. The limitation of Bangladeshi film in attracting the viewers are identified as; few numbers of films released each year, stories are not attractive, not well produced due to poor technology and less entertaining, and poor & limited numbers of performers. To regain the viewers in the halls, hall environment should be improved by more physical facilities and multiplex arrangement and the product should be improved by using better technology, well made by introducing more entertainment and outsourced by importing better films from other countries.

## **8. Conclusion**

Cinema and Cinema Hall industry of Bangladesh is losing its place both in domestic as well as international market. The entertainment industry with its product cinema and forward linkage industry cinema halls is losing its place to it's competitors' products (cinemas of Hollywood and Bollywood) and other media (small screen). But the cent percent people like to enjoy cinema in Cinema Hall. To give greater satisfaction, cinema halls have no alternatives as no ways are available to watch cinema in greater screen without formal leave. Now people have de-tasted on both the Bangladeshi Cinema and cinema halls. So, both are to be improved as a complementary product. In the time of developing the products of competitive quality, the alternative products collected by importing from other countires should be used in the halls. Negligence in modification of products according to the requirements of viewers brings failure in any business.

## **9. Limitation of the Research**

The cinema hall business in Bangladesh is falling in all over the country. But this research has the limitation of sampling frame error and sampling errors as the opinion of the audiences of other parts of the country is not reflected in that research though the researchers assumed the opinion may be similar in all over the country because of similar culture, race, income level and attitudes of population.

## **10. Further Research**

There are many scope of further research by changing the sampling frame and by comparing the audiences of movie in other media. The failure of the product may be studied on different viewpoints.

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## Appendices

**Table 1** Movie Enjoying Attitudes of Respondents distributed by age group

			Enjoy Movie	Total
			Yes	
Age	Up to 20	Count	46	46
		% within Age	100.00%	100.00%
	20-35 years	Count	141	141
		% within Age	100.00%	100.00%
	35-above	Count	12	12
		% within Age	100.00%	100.00%
Total		Count	199	199
		% within Age	100.00%	100.00%

Source: Field survey conducted on May-July, 2014

**Table 2** Liking of movies in different language distributed by age group

			Movie enjoy						Total
			Bangladeshi movie	Hindi Movie	English Movie	West Bengal's Movie	Irani Other	Other	
Age	Up to 20	Count	10	9	21	4	1	1	46
		% within Age	21.70%	19.60%	45.70%	8.70%	2.20%	2.20%	100.00%
	20-35 years	Count	32	20	61	19	7	2	141
		% within Age	22.70%	14.20%	43.30%	13.50%	5.00%	1.40%	100.00%
	35- above	Count	2	3	5	2	0	0	12
		% within Age	16.70%	25.00%	41.70%	16.70%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Total		Count	44	32	87	25	8	3	199
		% within Age	22.10%	16.10%	43.70%	12.60%	4.00%	1.50%	100.00%

Source: Field survey conducted on May-July, 2014

**Table 5** Reasons for not liking Bangladeshi Film distributed by age group

			Reasons not liking Bangladeshi Film						Total
			Few Number of film Released	Poor technology	Poor Acting	Unattractive Stories	less attractive music, costume, choreography	Actors & Actresses	
Age	Up to 20	Count	11	7	10	8	7	3	46
		% within Age	23.90%	15.20%	21.70%	17.40%	15.20%	6.50%	100.00%
	20-35 years	Count	43	22	22	28	17	9	141
		% within Age	30.50%	15.60%	15.60%	19.90%	12.10%	6.40%	100.00%
	35- above	Count	4	2	2	2	2	0	12
		% within Age	33.30%	16.70%	16.70%	16.70%	16.70%	0.00%	100.00%
Total		Count	58	31	34	38	26	12	199
		% within Age	29.10%	15.60%	17.10%	19.10%	13.10%	6.00%	100.00%

Source: Field survey conducted on May-July, 2014

**Table 6** Reasons not liking Bangladeshi Film by Profession: Cross tabulation

			Reasons not liking Bangladeshi Film						Total
			Few Number of film Released	Poor technology	Poor Acting	Unattractive Stories	less attractive music, costume, choreography	Actors & Actresses	
Profession	Students	Count	38	24	24	20	20	7	133
		% within Profession	28.60%	18.00%	18.00%	15.00%	15.00%	5.30%	100.00%
	Job Holders	Count	10	2	3	11	4	3	33
		% within Profession	30.30%	6.10%	9.10%	33.30%	12.10%	9.10%	100.00%
	Businessmen	Count	4	5	5	5	2	1	22
		% within Profession	18.20%	22.70%	22.70%	22.70%	9.10%	4.50%	100.00%
	Housewives	Count	6	0	2	2	0	1	11
		% within Profession	54.50%	0.00%	18.20%	18.20%	0.00%	9.10%	100.00%
Total		Count	58	31	34	38	26	12	199
		% within Profession	29.10%	15.60%	17.10%	19.10%	13.10%	6.00%	100.00%

Source: Field survey conducted on May-July, 2014

**Table 7** Prerequisite to regaining Cinema Hall Business distributed by age groups

			Prerequisite to regaining Cinema Hall Business in Bangladesh							Total
			Import good film	make good films like 1980s and earlier	Arrange high tech	More entertaining elements	Multiplex Halls	Improve physical facilities	Gender Friendly environment	
Age	Up to 20	Count	6	3	11	7	8	11	0	46
		% within Age	13.00%	6.50%	23.90%	15.20%	17.40%	23.90%	0.00%	100.00%
	20-35 years	Count	14	9	17	19	33	45	4	141
		% within Age	9.90%	6.40%	12.10%	13.50%	23.40%	31.90%	2.80%	100.00%
	35- above	Count	3	0	1	5	1	2	0	12
		% within Age	25.00%	0.00%	8.30%	41.70%	8.30%	16.70%	0.00%	100.00%
Total		Count	23	12	29	31	42	58	4	199
		% within Age	11.60%	6.00%	14.60%	15.60%	21.10%	29.10%	2.00%	100.00%

Source: Field survey conducted on May-July, 2014