## A STUDY ON PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES OF SELECTED BENGALI MOVIES IN 2014

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### ABSTRACT

Like other film industries, Bengali film industry or Tollywood started applying marketing tools keeping in view on various genre films that have been produced in recent times with shorter release window. Distribution has been transformed through digitization along with increase of multiplexes. Bengali cinema raised its budget & marketing expenditure to boost the business, increasing the gross income to some limited number of films but lags far behind the success of even South Indian films. Hence, film promotion techniques are used with the growth in audience research area, where Word of Mouth & Viral Marketing play an important role across most demographic and socio-economic levels, to enhance the size of the market and to help the business in its expansion across larger regions in order to earn higher gross income per film, as the number of film releases are more in recent years.

**Keyword:** social media, marketing strategy, film production & promotion, revenue, film industry, single screen, multiplex, audience research, digitization.

### Introduction

2014 has shown a sharp decrease in revenue in all film markets viz. Indian Regional, Bollywood & Hollywood. Number of successful films has been far less than the previous two years globally. Only the second half of the year garnered some good revenue through few hits, where the last quarter of the year was the brightest one (according to different media reports of the period). But in 2013, global revenue for all released films reached $35.9 billion, up 4 per cent over 2012's total, due to increases in international ($25.0 billion) and U.S./Canada ($10.9 billion) box office collection; the Asia Pacific region ($11.1 billion), for the first time, became the top region in international box office figures.  Also, by 2013, over 80 per cent of the nearly 135,000 cinema screens across world became digitized[1]. Hence, film corporate houses or Hindi movie production houses started to invest in Bengali films due to which CII, FICCI & Filmfare have come along to help this industry by organizing surveys/events in Kolkata, focusing Eastern India.  A chain of both multiplexes and selective single theatre movie halls are now used for film promotions, but Bengali films producers are not yet ready to spend some high amounts for the promotional activities due to its reliability factor. However, the primary focus of promotion is still on South Bengal market, neglecting the North Bengal market (due to low population there) and also among NRI Bengalis of India and abroad and other language people may also watch the films with subtitle.  In an adverse situation, the number of single screen theatre halls are gradually decreasing year-on-year, piracy is picking up and effect of digitized television is diminishing the footfalls of regular movie watchers. To protect it, investment in infrastructure, leading to the co-existence of multiplexes and standard single screens, along with the right ticket price can offer consumers a compelling & attractive theatrical experience. Exploring new content delivery platforms like digital library or live stream rental, focusing on digital rights management, effectively promoting films and continuing to focus on local content development like literature based scripts are measures that could propel this industry[2].

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[1] *Theatrical Market Statistics.* (2013). Motion Picture Association of America.
[2] FICCI Frames-a symphony of art-media & entertainment in east india-bengal-2011

## Review of Literature

In film or movie marketing, the literatures about films are not relevant due to its approach towards arts aspect and technicality of subjects of film production. Hence, the 'film marketing' related terms can be discussed here so that proper review can be done. Movies are intangible objects consumed for pleasure rather than for the maximization of an economic benefit (Eliashberg & Shugan, 1997). The Promotion includes: "Direct and indirect communications with individuals, groups and organizations in order to inform and motivate them toward buying the company's products or services" (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 1998). In general, word-of-mouth (WOM) involves informal, non-commercial communication between consumers concerning positive or negative consumption experiences with regard to goods or services, including movies (Hennig Thurau & Walsh, 2001). WOM is usually perceived as more credible and trustworthy for consumers (LIU, 2006). Both the papers of Liu and Duan et al. (2008) examined the direct correlation between online word-of-mouth and box-office revenue/movie sales, and Mabry & Porter (2010) have questioned how social network site MySpace and official film websites affect the audiences' need to see a particular film. Moreover, significant studies have explored the conditions and characteristics that affect the virality of online content (Berger & Milkman, 2011)[3]. The creation of a website potentially serves as a source of information about the film (e.g., plot, stars, trailers, etc.). In addition, it may serve to induce awareness about a new film, to enhance the site visitors' intentions to see a film, and consequently increases the likelihood of ticket purchase upon opening (Zufryden, 2000). Advertising campaign for the film, in the print media, usually start two weeks before the movie release and the ads can be published on daily or weekly basis (Jafari Nejad, 2007). Also, online news sources (online newspapers, magazines and websites) have evolved in content, agendas, features and lay-out (Cooke, 2005; De Waal & Schoenbach, 2008; Barnhurst, 2009).  A large production budget could be taken as a signal of higher quality (Elliott & Simmons, 2008) and greater box office popularity (Basuroy, Chatterjee & Ravid, 2003)[4]. Digital technology spreads the art of cinema to a wider audience and because of it, more people can explore into the filmmaking process; McKernan goes a step further to affirm that "today's digital technology has democratized this most powerful form of storytelling, making it affordable enough for practically anyone to use" (2005)[5]. In case of buzz marketing, unlike word of mouth which is motivated internally by knowledge, people are influenced by or attracted to a theme to spread the information. They can be cultural trendsetters or people with connections, such as experts, press or celebrities. It is a low cost tool since it is the consumers spreading the message. It also creates visibility for movies. However, in order for buzz marketing to work, there has to be something remarkable enough about the message to create a buzz (Mohr Iris, 2010). The technological developments have moved advertising from passive to a more interactive one where consumers are actively engaged in promoting products and services, whether they are aware of it or not (Marc, 2010)[6]. It was major film studios' long-term aim therefore to support and sustain film's extensive "afterlife" by controlling the digital distribution and exhibition of film titles online (Currah, 2007)[7]. Apart from the above mentioned concepts, similar works of Kerrigan (2010) are most commonly used source of film marketing literature and most of these authors belong to Europe or North America. These literatures hence describe about digital aspects of movie marketing in North America or globally but none

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[3] Zhou, L. (2013). Online Film News and its Interplay with Film Viral Marketing. *Erasmus University, Rotterdam*.

[4] Mohammadian, M. & Habibi, E.S. (2012). The Impact of Marketing Mix on Attracting Audiences to the Cinema. *International Business and Management*, 5 (1), 99-106.

[5] Cebas, B. (2011). Cinema in the Digital Age: New Financing and Distribution Models. *London College of Communicaton.*

[6] Tuohimaa, S. (2010). The Role of Internet in Marketing Premiering Movies. *Oulu University of Applied Sciences.*

[7] London, I. (2012). Hollywood Online. *University of London.*

discussed anything about Indian regional or Bengali movies, which is the prior reason to pursue this paper.

**Objective**

The objectives of the paper are described as below:
- To have an overview of the promotional strategies of Bengali films in recent years
- To find out the production related important features for the betterment of movie business
- To identify the impact of social & other media on film viewers

*Methodology*

The present study is primarily based on qualitative approach. Initially, some film & entertainment based reports of various years of different governing bodies like KPMG/FICCI, CBFC, Ernst & Young, and MPAA etc. are used as secondary data. Newspaper based advertisements are taken to form a set of data regarding the film release patterns in West Bengal so that one can get a certain idea of movie market distribution scenario, compared to the Hindi movies, which are the immediate competition. Books, journals or previous research works are being utilized to find the expected result of the study. As primary data, promotional strategies, which are especially used in different genre films according to the market, are discussed for the purpose of analyzing them as case studies as well as to form a compact set of promotional tools, applicable to both high and low budget movies. Audience research has also been touched upon to identify the actual set of customer taste or preference of movies. Hence, some viewers were approached for brief interviews and discussions. To add up, certain secondary interview data were taken into consideration from different media reports to project a clear idea about film marketing as proper industry data is still not available much because of the fact that most producers do not provide business data of Bengali film industry.

**Indian film market scenario**

The figures below in table 1 indicate the release of films in major Indian languages which have a good or moderate business size:

**Table 1:** Number of films released-

| Language | Films certified in 2010* | Films certified in 2014** |
|---|---|---|
| Bengali | 110 | 121 |
| Telugu | 181 | 221 |
| Tamil | 202 | 226 |
| Malayalam | 105 | 156 |
| Kannada | 143 | 129 |
| Marathi | 116 | 106 |
| Hindi | 215 | 233 |

Source: *Central Board of Film Certification or CBFC, 2010 Report
       **The Film & Television Producers Guild of India Ltd., 2014

There is a certain classification, or 'Genre', of Indian feature films, derived by CBFC which are - Social, Crime, Comedy, Drama, Action, Biography, Mythological, Political, Spoof/Satire, Vengeance, Patriotic, Legendary, Suspense Thriller, Mystery, Horror, Thriller, Devotional, Children's film, Fantasy, Fiction, Historical, Murder Mystery, and Sci-fi. Out of these, most films are certified as Social, in any language.

Now, table 2 identifies the language wise size of the regional markets, with the level of TV media reach, which can be efficiently utilized to increase the volume of movie business -

**Table 2:** Market size of six major local language film markets-

| Language | Households(million in home state)* | Cable & Satellite households(million)* | Viewership share of regional channels** |
|----------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Tamil | 17.7 | 15.9 | 27.6% |
| Telugu | 20.9 | 14.8 | 24% |
| Bengali | 20.3 | 8.6 | 11.7% |
| Kannada | 13.5 | 9.9 | 12.1% |
| Malayalam | 8.1 | 7.1 | 5.3% |
| Marathi | 24.9 | 14.9 | 14.1% |

Source: *IRS Q3 2012; Industry discussions conducted by KPMG in India

 ** pp34, FICCI Frames 2015 KPMG Report Summary

India has more than 2000 multiplexes, but with screen density of only 7 per million as compared to Indonesia (141), US (125), China (13) and Brazil (10), India continues to be heavily under screened (a mere 3.85 per million in West Bengal) and lessons could be learnt from China which has overtaken India in terms of domestic box office revenue since 2009. China is adding 18 screens per day and at this rate it is expected to be at par with U.S. in terms of screen count in the next 3 years; but with lower real estate prices in smaller towns, the exhibitors are able to considerably bring down the cost per screen. Also, online video, which is off to a slow start in India, has a significant presence in China. Almost half among 439 million Chinese users are now willing to pay for content online by mid 2014. The revenue generates from domestic theatrical release, overseas theatrical release, home videos, cable & satellite rights and ancillary revenues[8]. The theatre-to-television window is reducing with movies being broadcast on television within 60 to 90 days of their theatrical release in most languages. These are some important aspects of movie business in future and its marketing potentials, with high possibilities of remodeling with innovation in promotional strategies. Therefore, the data presented here in table 3 draw the futuristic lines of this industry from past data -

**Table 3:** Media & Entertainment industry size & projections-

| Overall industry size(INR Billion) | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 Projected |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|----------------|
| TV | 297 | 329 | 370 | 417.2 | 474.9 | 543.2 |
| Films | 83.3 | 92.9 | 112.4 | 125.3 | 126.4 | 136.3 |
| Music | 8.6 | 9 | 10.6 | 9.6 | 9.8 | 10.4 |
| Animation & VFX | 23.7 | 31 | 35.3 | 39.7 | 44.9 | 51 |
| **Total** | **652** | **728** | **821** | **918** | **1026** | **1159** |

Source: pp09, FICCI Frames 2015 KPMG Report Summary.

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[8] http://www.ibef.org/media & entertainment industry; pp93 FICCI Frames 2015 KPMG Report Summary.

Producers are now trying to capture revenues in a shorter time window by same-day releases across all theatres and pre-selling cable & satellite rights; but in 2014, the value of these rights have come down drastically across India as the corporate channels or networks have declined to pay any high amount for the rights of the films in all languages.

**Bengali film business - pros & cons**

Normally the movie theaters pay an average of 50-55 per cent from their ticket sales as film rental fees to the producer of any film. Hence, producers of today's highly marketed movies ensure that those movies are shown in theaters for two-three weeks. There are a few movies every year that defy this ground rule by increasing their theater run through good word-of-mouth and reviews. In recent past, Bengali film 'Bhuter Bhobissot' got huge success with word of mouth (WOM), whereas, Hindi films 'Queen' or 'Mardaani' have also bagged commercial success due to WOM. Veterans in this business like Sandip Ray or Prosenjit Chatterjee etc. have started to insist the producers to decrease the number of releases with longer time windows for each film, along with better content and production platform allowing a bigger revenue collection for the production houses, so that in long term the business consolidates with steady growth, without any clutter of sub-standard films. Some media reports indicate that the pre-release marketing budget is found to be correlated with the opening weekend success of a film. Year 2013 had such examples with some high first weekend earning for the hardcore commercial Bengali films like 'Boss', 'Khoka 420' etc. by grossing Rs. ten million within 3 to 5 days and making the grand total to 50-60 million for the films till their run. Thrillers like 'Chotuskon', 'Mishor Rohosso' or 'Baishe Shrabon' utilized the durga-puja release phase to grab this pattern of business. So, the model applied to earn the film expenditures is same that of Bollywood, i.e., at least to recover budget by the second weekend (in 10 days) of the release. But, it is mostly tough as most of the theatres in Bengal are still single screen with very low ticket rate. Even in multiplexes, the ticket price of Bengali films are comparatively lower than that of Hindi or English films, which is a disadvantage due to the number of footfalls at theatres have not been increasing anywhere in India in last few years. In 2013, the average movie ticket price in the USA was $8.13 (around Rs. 500) whereas in India that average was less than Rs. 50. Though, due to leaked digital print or pirated dvd/cd, the films have been seen all over the places and the movie theaters started losing revenue for this a lot from late 1990s.

Apart from that, content is a large problem as some films are just straight remake of South Indian films. Hence, people are not getting interest to go for movie-watching as it is only look wise glossy, but not contemporary or practical, especially in case of commercial or big budget films. People now wait to watch these movies on TV a few months later when the world premiere happens. But, where a 45 per cent theatre occupancy level is considered a good run in multiplexes, Inox official data depicts that Hindi films like 'Dhoom 3' or 'Chennai Express' had 85-95 per cent occupancy on weekends; Bengali film 'Chander Pahar' with 85 per cent on weekdays and 100 per cent on weekends; and in English, best performance was by 'Gravity' with 50-60 per cent in the last quarter of 2013[9]. Same trend was observed during October to December'14 with 'Kick', 'Bang Bang!' or 'PK' in Hindi, 'Chotuskon' or 'Byomkesh Fire Elo' in Bengali and 'Interstellar' or 'Transformers 4' in English (various day observation records & reports by authors).

After the 'initial collection' phase, in 2014 it was another area to check the trailer/music promo hits (level of watching a trailer or sharing it to others) to judge the possibility of finding the right number of viewers for a movie in opening weekend. But it was not always easy to get the actual idea whether a film would be successful from high hit rates, e.g., Bengali films like 'Chander Pahar', 'Mishor Rohosyo', 'Boss', 'Alik Sukh' etc. had a good box office success story with chunk of trailer hits where as 'Buno

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[9] Times News Network. (2014, February 05). *The Times of India.*

Haans', 'Take One', 'Goynar Bakso', 'Meghe Dhaka Tara' etc. were moderate to low earners at box office even after a good trailer viewership. Smartphone has triggered this impact along with ease to access in internet. Reliance Entertainment analyzes this kind of trailer/music promo hit data to find out the potential customer base according to geography & demography in case of Hindi movies as the market is well scattered, but the same story cannot be seen in Bengal as the market is comparatively small. Budget is another constraint as Bollywood roughly spends 3 to 5 million rupees for trailer launch only for a medium to big budget movie which Bengali producers cannot afford even half[10]. Another large scale constraint for Bengali movies in this regard is the low number of releases, compared to Hindi. Since 2008, Digitization has caused lowering the per print cost from Rs. 60000 (analog) to Rs. 12000 on an average for a large scale simultaneous release, with even a satellite control to restrict piracy without any extra expense. Top Hindi producers' average number of screen releases were 700+ in 2008 which turned to 2000+ in 2014 (since the coveted '100 crore club' started in Bollywood in 2008 with 'Ghajini' released over 1550 screens across India, the level has reached now to over 5000 screens for 'PK' in 2014) – Bengali producers cannot compete with this massive strength, as the maximum number of screens available to Bengali movies is close to 350, which is unstretchable until new screens come into existence[11]. This market for Bengali films can be expanded to a 340-million-strong Bengali audience spread over Bangladesh, West Bengal, Tripura and Assam, apart from all the non-resident Bengalis across the globe using low or medium cost digital platforms to survive in longer terms. Exact figures are unavailable and hence, touching the break-even is sometimes declared as 'Hit' movie, though the industry standard is to earn double of the investment to say a film hit as the producer earns roughly 50% from the income, rest is distributors' zone wise share. In Multiplex structure, in the first week, the producer gets 50% which goes down to 30% in the fourth week, if the movie is still running - hence, the single screens are to be depended upon, if the movie is a commercial one, to make some profit. Along with that, there is another drawback as the Bengali film producers themselves distribute the movie to hall owners and have some good income (this does not happen for Hindi films, released in West Bengal) but if the movie does not do well in response, then the owners bear a good chunk of loss themselves, without harming the producer much[12]. To accommodate this, promotional tools like music release, footage of interview with the cast members or other important persons of the film, trailers, posters, teasers, paid advertising in TV-print media-radio, web based apps or websites, viral marketing, Word of Mouth, appearances, publicity stunts are so far being used variably by movie industry to conquer customer minds of Bengal. But to reach the larger segment in quick span, high investment is sometimes necessary which is yet to happen as national multiplex operators prefer to invest elsewhere as West Bengal contributes a mere five per cent to the national box office, as per the COO of Reliance Entertainment[13]. A little discussion about the biggest blockbuster of Bengali movies so far, 'Chander Pahar', is important here as it crossed the barrier of Rs. 200 million gross income as the first Bengali movie with total budget of Rs. 150 million where the producers spent Rs. 15 million in promotion of the film, another highest so far for a Bengali film. 'Joddha' was another film with a budget of Rs. 150 million but somehow it did not manage to profit. In reverse, 'Ramdhanu' was a sleeper hit with very limited budget & promotion, yet became talk of the town with an urban viewership focus, with just two factors- a new content and word-of-mouth.

For a clearer understanding, the promotional tools of Bengali films are discussed here-

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[10] AnandaPlus. (2014, July 28). *Ananda Bazar Patrika.*

[11] Times News Network. (2014, October 07). *The Times of India.*

[12] AnandaPlus. (2014, October 15). *Ananda Bazar Patrika.*

[13] t2. (2014, November 13). *The Telegraph.*

**i) Music release:** Releasing the film music, or **music videos**, before the release of the film is considered a form of advertising. Using producer owned channel for this purpose is a much used phenomena in local language films. **Ringtone** download is another aspect.

**ii) Interviews: Press Conferences** are arranged at various media platforms like FM radio channels, news channels, entertainment channels, music channels, web portals, magazines, newspapers etc. This could be paid or PR arranged, according the need of the film.

**iii) In theaters: Trailers** are a mainstay of film promotion, because they are delivered directly to movie-goers. Now also available in internet, it is making the most use of it. **Film posters-** a common tool to promote, also used in public places for attraction. **Standees** (freestanding paperboard life-size images of figures from the film)- a theatrical or music store standee is a large self-standing display promoting a movie, or character from the film. They are typically made of cardboard, and may range from large self-standing posters to three-dimensional devices with moving parts, sounds and lights.

**iv) Television and Radio:** Movie distributors buy **paid advertising slots** (commercials) at different channels. TV is effective because it is an audio-visual medium like film. FM radio serves the purpose in cities. **Extended placement-** full episodes of television talk shows, entertainment news programs, reality shows, daily soaps or network news programs, devoted to compensated exposure of the film, stars, clips, director, etc. Production and paid broadcast of **behind-the-scenes** documentary-style shows work as well as **Advance** trailers, longer previews, or behind-the-scenes footage on rental videos and DVDs.

**v) Internet:** One tool is creation of standalone studio-sponsored per-**film websites or apps**. **Viral marketing-** free distribution of trailers or contents like games by rapid broadcasting via wiki, blogs, social networks or video sites, to attract young customers.

**vi) Print: Paid advertisement** in newspapers, magazines, and inserts in books. **Cross-promotion** is also trendy through original story book including special editions or new cover jackets like "Now a major motion picture" with film posters.

**vii) Merchandising: Paid co-branding,** or **co-advertising** of a product with the film is also seen**.** A **teaser campaign** is an advertising campaign which typically consists of a series of small, cryptic, challenging advertisements that anticipate a larger, full-blown campaign for a product launch or otherwise important event.

**viii) Promotional tour:** Film actors, directors, and producers appear for television, radio, and print media interviews, sometimes showing a clip from the film or an outtake. During film production, these can take place on set. After film release, key personnel make **appearances** in major market cities, or participate remotely via satellite or telephone.

**ix) Publicity:** The publicity of a movie takes place at two levels- At **producer level** & at **distributor level**. At producer level the publicity of movies is done at a large scale with a Bengali cultural scenario in consideration, associated with the star cast of the movie. At distributor level the publicity happens mainly for making the target audience aware about the theatres where the movie is being played and the timings of the movies. Also, this publicity tries to reach the audience who may not have access to cable TV or radio. But the scope of this activity is limited to the distributor's territory. The media used at this level are **posters**, **hoardings**, local newspapers etc.

Way back, 'Viral Marketing' term was coined by a Harvard Business School professor, Jeffrey Rayport, in December 1996. Viral marketers identify individuals with high social networking potential (an age, interest or peer group who are extremely active and very sociable online) and create viral messages which will appeal to these individuals and their peers and create a word-of-mouth buzz (National Media Museum, UK, 2011). Recent Bengali movies, considered here for case study, have all used this form of promotion as it is handy to use & control, low-cost and mostly connected to the younger customers. When 'audience research' is conducted for some domestic theatrical release, it involves areas like:

positioning studies; test screenings of finished or nearly finished films; title or climax testing in an early stage; concept testing that would occur in development phase of a film before it is produced etc.

With the table 4 here, a list of Qube digital formatted theatres across India in 2013-14 is given to show the lag of digitisation in West Bengal from south India -
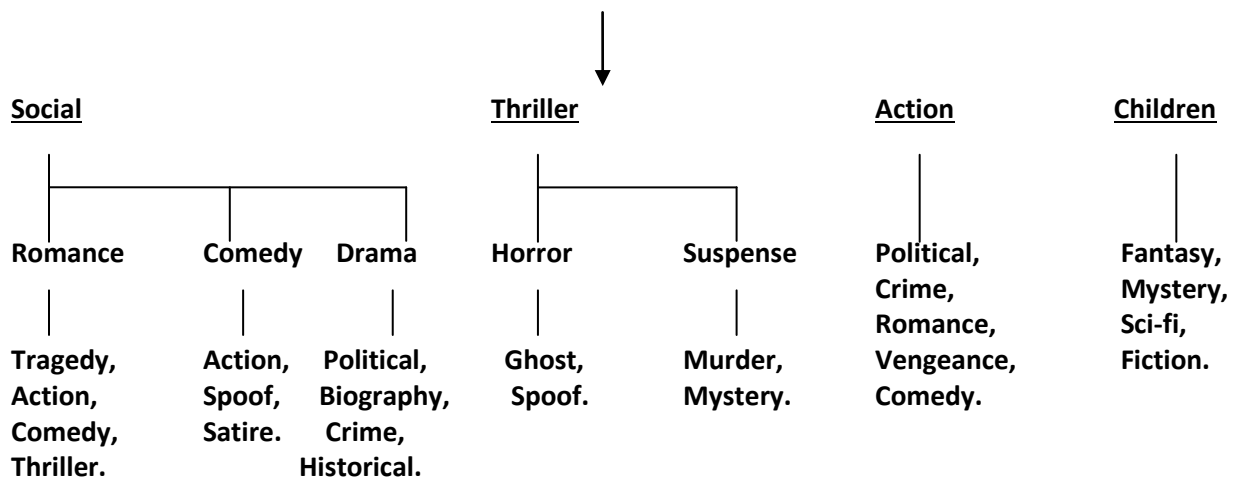
**Table 4:** Qube Digital screens-

| State | Tamil Nadu | AP & Telengana | Bihar | Gujarat | K'taka | Kerala | Maha'tra | R'than | UP | WB | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total No. of theatres | 637 | 726 | 54 | 80 | 272 | 146 | 42 | 47 | 88 | 169 | 2405 |

Source: http://www.qcn.in/theatres

Out of around 350 screens in West Bengal including multiplexes, almost 310 screens are in South Bengal whereas 40 screens are in North Bengal (as per Eastern India Motion Pictures Association or EIMPA database). Among 169 screens with Qube digital platform in West Bengal, only 30 are in North Bengal; UFO Moviez claims to have installed their digital technology in 228 Bengali screens across West Bengal at the same time. Now, the Bengali films are classified here as per genre-

**Bengali Film Genre Assortment as Product Portfolio**

**Social**

**Romance**        **Comedy**    **Drama**

**Tragedy,**      **Action,**   **Political,**
**Action,**       **Spoof,**    **Biography,**
**Comedy,**       **Satire.**   **Crime,**
**Thriller.**                   **Historical.**

**Thriller**

**Horror**        **Suspense**

**Ghost,**        **Murder,**
**Spoof.**        **Mystery.**

**Action**

**Political,**
**Crime,**
**Romance,**
**Vengeance,**
**Comedy.**

**Children**

**Fantasy,**
**Mystery,**
**Sci-fi,**
**Fiction.**

**Analysis**

In the beginning, let's look into the promotional strategies of the select Bengali films by case study method in comparison with some Hindi films. The producers of 'Chander Pahar' used many of the marketing tools of the film promotion strategies viz. trailer & poster release, paid advertising & behind-the-scene broadcasts, interviews by various members of the film, viral marketing and publicity events by the producers. Other considered movies with massive numbers of prints are 'Game', 'Bindaas', 'Joddha', 'Ami Shudhu Cheyechi Tomay' and 'Bachchan' (all are remakes of south Indian films-but adapted with a Bengali tone). These movies also used various tools of promotion like music videos & ringtone releases, interviews with casts of the film in channels, viral marketing, trailer & poster releases, paid advertisement, publicity stunts etc. These movies could not earn profit as expected, but some of them reached their break-even point. 'Khaad' director got involved in audience research through a week long

preview of the film for viewers from different strata of society for seven days at a multiplex[14], apart from using other promotional tools when the same person used a comparatively niche marketing strategy for his film 'Apur Panchali' due to the film's rich value content by framing the movie for the pure urban classy customers. With some selective single screen and maximum multiplex release, this movie's producer cum distributor attempted to intentionally promote the movie with few tools like teaser trailers, interview with cast in selective media & viral marketing forms along with newspaper advertisements. Hence in recent times, it can be said that the viral marketing buzz has played a major role in any sort of Bengali movie promotion, like 'Buno Haansh' or 'Chotuskon' being some other examples of such moderately marketed films.

Now, let's move on to the ways through which producers publicized 'Happy New Year'. Along with a first look, an official Twitter handle was started and several hash tags on the topic trended on social networking sites. Then the trailer (along with music videos) arrived simultaneously on YouTube, Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter and the DTH service Tata Sky. After that, the film's cast and crew travelled on a promotional tour through USA & UK. Lastly, an official game based on the movie was released for Android and iOS. 'PK', the highest grossing film in India up to December 2014, maintained low profile marketing strategies and yet the film became the biggest hit in Indian cinema with total gross of Rs. 7350 million after releasing over 6000 screens worldwide, grossing Rs. 1000 million from China alone. Posters were released serially to generate curiosity for few months till the release, and then teaser & music videos came out. 'Kick' escaped from doing media promotions due to tussle between Salman Khan & Indian media at large, and it earned more than Rs. 3500 million globally using the brand value of Salman Khan. Channel based trailers & music videos did the trick. 'Bang Bang!' was another hit machine with subtle promotional tools like very attractive teaser trailer, various posters, music videos, and viral marketing through twitter & facebook.

Now, to realize the pattern of film releases by its producers/distributors in West Bengal, let's take a view of the big releases in West Bengal from table 5, for the session January to December'14 -

**Table 5:** Selective list of films released in West Bengal-

| Film | Distributing House in West Bengal | South Bengal | | North Bengal | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single Screen | Multiplex | Single Screen | Multiplex |
| Chander Pahar (Bengali) (after 50 days run) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 34 | 09 | -- | -- |
| Jai Ho (Hindi) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 158 | 21 | 34 | 05 |
| Ovishopto Nighty (Bengali-A rated) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 39 | 20 | 07 | 03 |
| 2 States (Hindi) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 51 | 22 | 07 | 06 |
| Gunday (Hindi) | Yash Raj/Jalan | 50 | 22 | 08 | 05 |
| Bangali Babu English Mem (Bengali) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 105 | 12 | 25 | 02 |
| Humpty Sharma | Bablu Damani | 47 | 22 | 13 | 05 |

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[14] Times News Network. (2014, October 29). *The Times of India.*

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ki Dulhania (Hindi) | | | | | |
| The Royal Bengal Tiger (Bengali) | Eskay Movies | 65 | 19 | 16 | 03 |
| Holiday (Hindi) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 96 | 23 | 13 | 06 |
| Queen (Hindi) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 41 | 22 | 07 | 04 |
| Taan (Bengali-A rated) | NA | 39 | 14 | 05 | 01 |
| Main Tera Hero (Hindi) | Aum Moviez | 100 | 23 | 20 | 03 |
| Chirodini Tumi Je Amar 2 (Bengali) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 68 | 17 | 13 | 02 |
| Take One (Bengali-A rated) | Friends Communication | 34 | 20 | 08 | 02 |
| Apur Panchali (Bengali) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 19 | 20 | -- | 01 |
| Mary Kom (Hindi) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 59 | 21 | 15 | 07 |
| Ami Shudhu Cheyechi Tomay (Bengali) | Eskay Movies | 112 | -- | 36 | -- |
| Arundhati (Bengali) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 97 | 12 | 18 | 03 |
| Kill/Dil (Hindi) | Yash Raj/Jalan | 86 | 21 | 15 | 07 |
| Ek Villain (Hindi) | Bablu Damani | 70 | 23 | 16 | 05 |
| Game (Bengali) | Grassroot/ Reliance Entertainment | 209 | 15 | 33 | 03 |
| Kick (Hindi) | Jalan | 109 | 21 | 28 | 04 |
| Bindaas (Bengali) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 119 | 10 | 12 | -- |
| Singham Returns (Hindi) | Reliance Entertainment | 101 | 22 | 24 | 05 |
| Buno Haansh (Bengali) | Reliance Entertainment | 71 | 24 | 09 | 03 |
| Borbaad (Bengali) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 83 | 19 | 11 | 02 |
| Daawat-e-Ishq (Hindi) | Yash Raj/Jalan | 67 | 21 | 11 | 07 |

| Hercules (Bengali) | Screentouch Entertainment | 17 | 18 | -- | 02 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aakorshon (Bengali-A rated) | Raa Info & Entertainment | 24 | 15 | 05 | -- |
| Chatuskon (Bengali) | Reliance Entertainment | 13 | 22 | 01 | 02 |
| Haider (Hindi) | Aum Moviez | 09 | 24 | -- | 05 |
| Bang Bang (Hindi) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 128 | 25 | 19 | 07 |
| Bachchan (Bengali) | Reliance Entertainment | 128 | 15 | 24 | 03 |
| Joddha (Bengali) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 128 | 22 | 35 | 03 |
| Happy New Year (Hindi) | Yash Raj/Jalan | 132 | 20 | 26 | 07 |
| Khaad (Bengali) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 23 | 20 | -- | 03 |
| Force (Bengali) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 118 | 14 | 18 | 05 |
| PK (Hindi) | Aum Moviez | 102 | 24 | 22 | 05 |
| Badshahi Aangti (Bengali) | Shree Venkatesh Films | 51 | 22 | 07 | 05 |
| Byomkesh Fire Elo (Bengali) | Bakliwal Pictures | 22 | 18 | 02 | 02 |

Source: Various newspaper advertisements throughout months of 2014.

The above table shows how differently the same producer/distributor acts when the language or type of the film changes, according to the area of release. Focus in multiplex is a common factor though. Exclusion of several small hit films in both Hindi & Bengali languages are done in the list due to their very low key release with small number of prints, apart from other reasons.

Due to the non presence of multiplexes in most places, viewers mostly don't have to pay much price for the ticket. But if there is any, they prefer to purchase from the low end of the price bracket due to their no or less income. Some watch movies at multiplex only when the ticket price is discounted on any particular day or time. The largest chunk of film viewers visits halls at a rate of one film in two or three months, which is pretty low and matter of concern where so many films are released throughout the year. Sometimes it happens that 3-4 films are released in one week only and people don't understand which film to choose, and there comes the effect of marketing or film story, irrespective of the language of the film. This is a severe concern that many people have lost the attraction to go for movies. Another reason here, as rightly said by ace Bengali actor Prosenjit Chatterjee during his release of 'Force', is the loss of women viewers as influencers also who now stick to television programmes.

After all the above discussions, it can be said that the movie business, along with its marketing tools and factors, is going through turmoil in recent times in West Bengal. To protect the industry, the pattern of business has to be moderated in multiple ways, one being usage of social media extensively as it is low cost among other factors. Digitization platform may be more prone to come in form of direct-to-home or video-streaming at a fairly reasonable cost. But to survive for now until there is any massive change

globally; viewers must be attracted to theatre halls on a regular basis to watch a film once or more, given a good choice of movies throughout all seasons along with variability in promotional innovation or activity.

## Findings

In the Bengali film entertainment space, the largest investors, Shree Venkatesh Films & Reliance Entertainment have the following divisions: Production, Distribution, Exhibition, Digital Cinema and Music and Online Store. Other investor houses are partially involved among these. But all the below mentioned issues here matter on the budget of the production as well as marketing of any particular film. The comprehensive film marketing activities necessary for business are like this (developed from Blume, 2006):

- Creation of advertising materials (posters, trailers, television, radio, on-line)
- Planning publicity activities (interviews with all sorts of media)
- Test screening of film to determine playability with climax and influence marketing materials and positioning
- Ongoing monitoring of film performance on each screen and negotiations regarding extending exhibition time
- Extension/reduction of promotional activities in line with performance of the film
- Negotiation and coordination of commercial deals with consumer goods companies to provide cross-promotion for their products and the film
- Pricing the tickets according to the local purchasing power parity with standard services

## Conclusion

Since there is no certain model available for marketing and promotion of films in Tollywood, a serious attempt should be made by the producer in this direction. Big production houses in West Bengal like Shree Venkatesh Films, Eskay Movies, Reliance Entertainment and Greentouch have realized this problem with true spirit. In this direction, they have made various steps to earn profit by producing-distributing-marketing Bengali films, distributing & marketing Hindi & English films in West Bengal, producing Bengali daily soaps/serials, digitizing the processes, etc. Although, acceptance of social media is not yet a mass phenomenon, however it can be a penetration area for Bengali film promotion with low cost, supported by 'app' development by the producer's house. Protection from piracy should also be taken care of by both the producers and governments (the central and state) by using stronger satellite links and cyber laws. The focus areas can be highlighted with the help of the following model (developed by authors) -
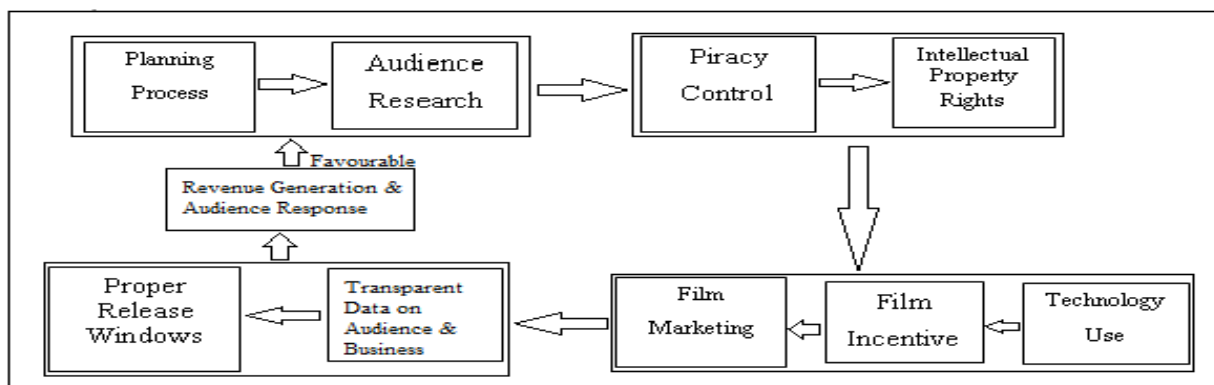


Film Marketing Interactive Model

According to KPMG-FICCI report 2014, West Bengal has the low penetration of film promotion through newspapers. So, other forms of media like social media have to be used to remain in peoples' mind for

long term as mobile penetration with smart phone is in exponential growth rate now. Above all, regular local audience research may boost a good idea development process for the production houses to satisfy the needs of various viewers. Finally, opening new reasonably priced standard screens at different regions will attract more revenue as West Bengal has become the state with highest numbers of newly emerged towns in India since 2001 (Indian Census Report, 2011).

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