

Hook Line: Bollywood's Strategy of a Hit Song

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ABSTRACT

Music is the universal language. It can be felt by everyone, including plants and animals. Everybody loves listening to songs. Some of the songs become so popular, irrespective of their language, they become huge hit that people around the world sing those songs. For example, 'Gangnam Style', 'Despacito' and 'Taki Taki'. They broke the barriers of language and became exceptionally popular. There were two main reasons behind their popularity, first, their music and the second, use of the hook lines in the lyrics. Apart from music, singing and lyrics too played a vital role in the song's success. Nowadays, with the invention of auto-tune software, composers manage with the singers but the lyricists have still a significant role to play. We love to sing songs and most of the time we, unintentionally and unknowingly sang those songs which are catchy. Their lyrics are easy to remember. It is because of the use of what can be called 'hook lines' in the songs. From the past decades, producers and composers in Bollywood are mainly focusing on the hook lines. It makes a song more popular and catchy. People subconsciously remember the lines and hum the songs repeatedly and thus the songs got a hit tag. In this paper, I'll talk about the use of the hook line strategy of producer and composers in Bollywood to make a song hit.

1. Concept of Hook in Song-writing

In music, a hook is simply the part of the song that catches the attention of a listener. The part of the song that hooks you in. it's a lyrical line or melodramatic phase that makes the song memorable and standout. Think of a recent chart buster song *Swag Se Swagat* from the movie *Tiger Zinda Hai* (YRF).

The most popular hooks will be stuck in your head for days on end. If you ever had a song stuck in your head for what you feels like an eternity, the part that you keep playing on repeat in your head is more likely the hook of the song. It all happens because it's a kind of strategy of song makers. They wanted you to keep playing. A good hook will catch the audience attention and they keep coming for the song.

Let's take some of the world's most famous and biggest hit songs. You'll find the hook in them. *Ganganam Style*, *Despacito*, *Taki Taki*, *Faded*, and many more... Bollywood also follows the trend from the beginning, but from past two decades the production of such songs have taken notable leap. It is because of the internet users in India are growing very swiftly. According to Internet And Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), India has world's second most monthly active internet users in the world. Any song that releases in India, it easily got a million marks in a day or two and comes in the category of a hit tag. *Swag Se Swagat* (YRF), *Kala Chashma* (Zee Music Company), *Kar Gayi Chull* (Sony Music India), *Cutiepie* (Sony Music India), *Badtameez Dil* (T-Series), *Sunny Sunny* (T-Series), *Chikni Chameli* (Sony Music India), *Saturday Saturday* (Sony Music India), *Shiela Ki Jawaani* (T-Series), *Tamma Tamma* (T-Series), *Guli Guli Mein* (T-Series), *Bhaag DK Bose* (T-Series), *Chaar Bottle Vodka* (T-Series), *Chittiyaan Kalaiyaan* (T-Series) and the list goes on....

It's always a confusion between the hook and the chorus. Many people consider the hook as the chorus but it doesn't have to be. For example, *Maa Tujhe Salaam* (Sony Music India, album, *Vande Mataram*, 1997) by A.R. Rehman, in this song the hook line is '*Maa Tujhe Salaam*' but the chorus part is *Vande Mataram*. But, most of the time the chorus play the hook line part. Let's see some of the examples, *Kun Faya Kun* (Rockstar, 2011, *T-Series*) the chorus here works as the hook. It makes song more melodious. It is also because the song is falls under the category of *sufi* song where chorus played the major part. People love to sing such songs when they are in group, moreover the *sufi* touch makes song more likeable. Another such example is *Love You Zindagi* (Dear Zindagi, Sony Music India).

What we call a riff in music? It is the series of notes, chord pattern or musical phrase that is repeated is called a riff. Often a riff is used as an introduction to a song, such as guitar riff. It is one particular idea that's often used in rock and metal music as well as funk, Latin and jazz. Typically, it's repeated all throughout or recurs frequently as the chorus or a part of it.

The best example of a riff is found in the song *Oh Oh Jaane Jaana* (Pyaar Kiya Toh Darna Kya, 2012 T-Series) it has become so popular that most of the people only listen to the song for its riff. Other such examples are *Tum Hi Ho* (Ashiqui 2, 2013 T-Series), *Sanam Re* (Sanam Re, 2016 T-Series), and *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil* (Ae Dil Hai Mushkil, 2017 Sony Music India)

This second pattern, the riff too played a significant role in making songs a hit. People love to listen to the melodious riffs. They even keep it as their mobile ringtones. Thus producers of the music labels in bollywood often demand such riffs from the composers to make their songs chartbusters.

The third pattern is of distinct sounds. Nowadays composers are trying to make songs that is anyhow noticeable. Apart from the hook lines and riffs, they also add various sound pattern in songs to make it more enjoyable. Some of the songs are thus known for its sound pattern which can be in any such as whistle, cowbell, strange sound from mouth etc. some of the songs are *AanhunAahun* (Love AajKal, 2009, Eros Now), *Kar GayiChull*(Kapoor and Sons, 2016 Sony Music India)

So we have established three different recurring patterns for 'hooking 'a song in audience/listeners to get them popularize:

- The First few lines of the chorus
- A riff of the song
- Or a distinct sound

2. Effects and After-effects

The first and foremost effects is the amount of listener it gains. In comparison to other songs, which are lack in these characteristics, these songs got more listeners and more viewers and got a hit tag quickly. Why does it happens? It is because the songs which are catchy is more likely to be listened in compare to the songs which doesn't have a hook line or catchy tone. People often prefer those songs which can be easily remember as we love to sing along with songs irrespective of our voice. It is also one of the reason that people prefer *item number* (a musical song inserted into a film that does not have any relevance to the plot) as they are easy to sing than melodies songs. Think of any item number and find its pattern of music and lyrics, you'll be end up with the find at least one or two qualities mentioned above in the chosen song. The hook line, the riff or any distinct sound pattern helps the producers to gain listeners which is the ultimate aim of the producers.

India has world's second largest monthly active internet users. If even half of the users once listen to the song, it will easily get the hit tag. But what producers do is, make song more catchy so that it attracts more and more people. And now it is easier to rich to the people with YouTube, Gaana, Spotify, iTunes, Wynk, JioSavn, and Google Play Music. There are numerous users of these applications that makes so easier to reach people.

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Let's see the effects in figures. These are the bollywood's top most viewed song on YouTube and still counting. *Mile Ho Tum Humko reprised* (837m Zee Music India), *High Rated Gabru* (832m T-Series), *Lahore* (790m T-Series), *Swag Se Swagat* (788m T-Series), *ZarooriTha*(784m UstadRahat Fateh Ali Khan) *AankhMarey Lyrical* (656m T-Series)

What is the main qualities of these songs? Its hook lines, its riff and distinct sound pattern. All the top songs, irrespective of industry have these qualities to hit globally.

3. Conclusion

A good hook will catch audience attention and reel them in. Some hook lines, riffs and sound become so popular that people easily recognize the song by it. It remains in people's minds till the long time. But what happens from the past two to three decades is the songs are only coming with hook lines. The lyrical quality of the song is rapidly coming down. The contemporary lyricist and composers are often accused with writing and making obscene lyrics and songs. Kumar, a noted lyricist of bollywood in an interview with KomalNahta of ETC said that the producers demand the songs which he termed as 'One Night Stand Songs'. SwanandKirkire in the same interview said the producers told lyricist to write a Hook line first and song later further he added that they even say, "*Antara to tulikhlegavohumemaloomhai, tusirf hook line dikha*" (We know that you'll manage to write Antara, we just want to see the hook line). Amitabh Bhattacharya a well-known lyricist of Bollywood was accused with writing the lyrics of Bhaag DK Bose, defend himself by saying that people listen to these type of song and it also get more viewers. So he said the reason for coming of such songs more are people only.

Thus, now it becomes a strategy for bollywood producers to coming with "*chalisa hook line*" (any hook line) as kumar describe, and make song hit. If people want to hear good songs with meaningful lyrics, they must value those songs and listen to it more.