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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## CONDITION OF CINEMA HALLS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT IN WEST BENGAL: A REVIEW

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### Abstract

The cinema exhibition sector in West Bengal has undergone significant transformation due to technological advancements, the rise of multiplex culture, and the proliferation of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms. This review paper examines the condition of cinema halls—particularly single-screen theatres—and evaluates management practices within the regional context. Drawing on recent industry reports and academic literature, the study identifies infrastructural challenges, shifting consumer behavior, and policy gaps, while highlighting opportunities for revival through innovation and strategic management. The findings suggest that sustainable growth depends on integrating policy support with experience-driven business models.

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### Introduction:-

Cinema halls have historically played a significant role in the cultural landscape of West Bengal, particularly in Kolkata, which has long been considered a hub of cinematic heritage. However, the emergence of multiplexes and digital streaming platforms has transformed the exhibition ecosystem (Ganti, 2012; EY, 2024). In recent years, traditional cinema halls have faced declining footfall, outdated infrastructure, and financial instability, raising concerns about their long-term sustainability. Evolution of Cinema Infrastructure in West Bengal:- The cinema exhibition sector in West Bengal has evolved from a single-screen dominated model to a multiplex-driven ecosystem. Single-screen theatres, once widespread across urban and rural areas, have experienced a steady decline due to limited modernization and financial constraints (KPMG, 2023). In contrast, multiplexes have expanded in metropolitan areas, offering enhanced viewing experiences and diversified revenue streams. However, this growth remains uneven, with limited penetration in semi-urban and rural regions (FICCI-EY, 2024). Current Condition of

### Cinema Halls:- Decline of Single-Screen Theatres:-

Single-screen cinemas in West Bengal are facing severe challenges, including:

1. Rising operational and maintenance costs
2. Low occupancy rates
3. Competition from multiplexes and OTT platforms

India has seen a consistent reduction in single-screen theatres, with regional markets experiencing the highest impact (KPMG, 2023).

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**Uneven Multiplex Growth:-**

Multiplex growth is concentrated in Kolkata and nearby urban centers, creating disparities in access to cinema infrastructure. This urban bias limits the reach of theatrical exhibition in smaller towns (FICCI-EY, 2024).

**Impact of OTT Platforms:-**

OTT platforms have significantly disrupted traditional cinema consumption patterns. Audiences increasingly prefer on-demand and personalized viewing experiences, leading to reduced theatre attendance (PwC, 2024; Athique, 2019).

**Management Challenges in Cinema Halls:-****Financial Sustainability Issues:-**

Cinema operators face rising costs related to electricity, staffing, and licensing, while revenues remain inconsistent. Many single-screen theatres lack access to formal financing channels.

**Limited Business Model Innovation:-**

Unlike multiplexes, most traditional cinema halls rely primarily on ticket sales. Multiplexes, in contrast, generate revenue through food and beverages, advertising, and experiential offerings (EY, 2024).

**Customer Experience Gaps:-**

Outdated infrastructure, lack of amenities, and poor maintenance negatively impact customer satisfaction and repeat visits.

**Policy Implementation Challenges:-**

Although government policies aim to support the cinema sector through subsidies and incentives, their effectiveness is limited by bureaucratic inefficiencies and low awareness among stakeholders (Government of West Bengal, 2021).

**Opportunities for Revival:-**

**Experience Economy Integration:-** Modern consumers seek immersive experiences rather than passive viewing. Incorporating cafés, live events, and themed screenings can enhance engagement and footfall (Pine & Gilmore, 2019).

**Digital Transformation:-**

Adoption of digital tools such as online ticketing, data analytics, and targeted marketing can improve operational efficiency and customer engagement (PwC, 2024).

**Policy and Institutional Support:-**

Strengthening public-private partnerships and simplifying policy implementation can accelerate infrastructure modernization.

**Promotion of Regional Cinema:-**

Encouraging Bengali film production and distribution through targeted incentives can boost local audience engagement and industry growth.

**Discussion:-**

The cinema exhibition sector in West Bengal reflects broader structural changes in the global entertainment industry. While multiplexes demonstrate adaptability and innovation, single-screen theatres highlight the consequences of stagnant management practices. A critical gap exists between policy formulation and implementation. Additionally, the lack of integration between cinema infrastructure and evolving consumer expectations has further contributed to the sector's decline.

**Conclusion:-**

The condition of cinema halls in West Bengal underscores the urgent need for transformation in both management practices and policy frameworks. While challenges such as declining footfall and OTT competition persist, opportunities for revival lie in adopting innovative, experience-driven business models supported by effective

government policies. Sustainable growth will depend on repositioning cinema halls as multi-functional entertainment hubs that align with contemporary consumer preferences.

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