

## **LATA MANGESHKAR: NIGHTINGALE OF INDIA**

**Dr. Monali Amol Kakade**, Assistant Professor, Ashoka International Centre for Educational Studies & Research, Nashik

### **Abstract**

Lata Mangeshkar, one of the most iconic and respectable playback singer in Indian cinema, left notable mark on the music industry through her unique voice, technical brilliance, and immense versatility. With a career spanning more than seven decades, Lata Ji Mangeshkar was the voice behind thousands of memorable songs in thirty-six Indian languages, as Indian playback singing. This paper explores her significant contribution to Indian music, both in terms of her artistry and influence, and examines the socio-cultural impact of her work.

### **Introduction**

Lata Mangeshkar was born on September 28, 1929, in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, to a Marathi-speaking family. From a young age, she showed a keen interest in music, influenced by her father, Deenanath Mangeshkar, a well-known classical singer and theatre personality. Lata's entry into the world of playback singing in 1942 marked the beginning of a new era in Indian cinema. Her initial learning was from her father, and after his death Lataji was trained by various music maestros.

Fondly known as Didi or elder sister by all, she became the Voice of the Nation. Over the years, she became the voice of several generations, establishing herself as the "Nightingale of India."

### **Her Struggle**

It is said that the road to success is never easy. Lata Ji also faced many difficulties in making her career. Many musicians initially refused Lata Ji because of her shrill voice. Lata Ji was compared with the famous singer Nur Jahan of that time, but gradually Lata Ji started working on the strength of her passion and talent. Lata Ji's amazing success made her the strongest woman in the world of playback singers.

When Lata Mangeshkar's father passed away, Master Vinayak, owner of Navayuga Chitrapat Movie Company, assisted the Mangeshkar family and gave Lata Ji her first song. Lata Mangeshkar sang her first song "Naachu Ya Gade, Khelu Saari Mani Haus Bhaari" but her song was removed in the final cut. She then sang her first Hindi song "Mata Ek Sapoot Ki Duniya Badal Le Tu" for a Marathi film Gajaabhaau.

### **1. Lata Mangeshkar's Musical Style and Technique:**

Lata Mangeshkar's voice was characterized by its purity, clarity, and emotive power. Her ability to convey a range of emotions, from joy to sorrow, contributed to her widespread appeal. As a playback singer, Lata Ji mastered several genres, from classical to folk, devotional to romantic, and modern to bhajan, which gave her a unique ability to adapt to the diverse styles by using different languages of Indian cinema. She worked with several notable artists, including Anil Biswas, Naushad Ali, Madan Mohan, SD Burman, C Ramchandra, and

Khayyam. She sang alongside some of the great male playback singers: Kishore Kumar to Mohammed Rafi.

### **1.1. Classical Training and Its Impact**

Lata Ji's early classical music training under her father and various other maestros helped her develop a strong vocal technique that made her stand out. She also studied with renowned singers Aman Ali Khan Sahib and Amanat Khan. Her impeccable sur (pitch) and taal (rhythm) skills were essential to her success as a playback singer. This training allowed her to render complex ragas and rhythms with ease, setting her apart from many of her contemporaries.

### **1.2. Vocal Versatility and Range**

Lata's voice was uniquely adaptable to various genres. She has performed Pop, Ghazals, and Bhajans. She could effortlessly transition from the classical compositions of composers like Shankar Jaikishan and S. D. Burman to the peppy tunes of R.D. Burman and the soulful ballads of Madan Mohan. Lata's ability to bring a wide emotional palette to each song she sang became a hallmark of her career. Songs such as Ajeeb Dastan Hai Ye (1960), Lag Jaa Gale (1964), and Tere Bina Zindagi Se (1971) exemplify her ability to convey depth and emotion.

## **2. Lata Mangeshkar's Contributions to Indian Cinema**

Lata Mangeshkar's impact on Indian cinema cannot be overstated. She was the voice of several Bollywood heroines for more than five decades, capturing the hearts of audiences across the globe. Through her powerful renditions, she became an inseparable part of the golden age of Hindi cinema.

### **2.1. The Era of Great Composers**

Lata Mangeshkar was the central figure in the golden era of Hindi film music, working with some of the most legendary composers in the industry. From the works of Naushad and Shankar Jaikishan in the 1950s and 1960s to the collaborations with R.D. Burman, Madan Mohan, and others in the 1970s and 1980s, Lata was the preferred choice for composers. Her voice gave depth and nuance to many iconic tracks, and she contributed to making the soundtracks of films like Mughal-e-Azam (1960), Pyaasa (1957), and Guide (1965) unforgettable. Apart from singing songs, Lata Mangeshkar has also composed music in many films. She composed a song for the first time in 1955, in a Marathi movie Ram Ram Tamhane. She composed songs for a lot of Marathi movies in the 1960s. Apart from this, Lata Mangeshkar also produced four films, the first film she produced, in 1953, was a Marathi film, after which she produced three Hindi films.

### **2.2. Musical Icon of Different Generations**

Lata's voice transcended generations, appealing to both older and younger audiences alike. Her association with superstars like Rajesh Khanna, Shammi Kapoor, and Dharmendra made her an integral part of Indian cinematic storytelling. In the modern era, she also sang for actresses like Kajol and Aishwarya Rai, proving her adaptability and timeless appeal.

## **3. Cultural and Social Impact**

Lata Mangeshkar's contribution to Indian music goes beyond just her songs. Her influence shaped popular culture, and her music became the soundscape of India's post-independence period, accompanying the country through times of progress, social change, and national events.

### **3.1. National Identity and Unity**

Lata Mangeshkar's music played a role in the formation of a unified Indian cultural identity. Her songs, especially those composed during India's post-independence era, such as Aye Mere Humsafar and Vande Mataram, became synonymous with national pride. Her contribution to patriotic and devotional songs further solidified her place as a cultural icon.

### **3.2. Empowering Women**

Lata's immense success in a male-dominated industry served as an inspiration for generations of female artists. She became a role model for women who aspired to carve out careers in the entertainment industry, symbolizing strength, independence, and artistic integrity.

### **4. Her contributions for Society**

In 1962 Indo-China War Contribution: After the war, she performed at a fundraising concert, and the proceeds were donated to the war relief efforts.

She donated generously to the families of soldiers who lost their lives in the Kargil war. Lata Mangeshkar donated a large sum to Maharogi Sewa Samiti, the organization founded by Baba Amte, which works for the rehabilitation of leprosy patients, disabled individuals, and tribal communities.

Lata Mangeshkar, alongside her brother and musician Hridayanath Mangeshkar, came together to establish the Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital and Research Centre in Pune, inaugurated by the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee

COVID-19 Relief (2020): She donated ₹25 lakh to the Maharashtra CM's relief fund for pandemic-related assistance.

### **5. Awards and Recognition**

Lata Mangeshkar's illustrious career was marked by numerous awards and honours, both in India and internationally, during her eight decade-long career. She was the recipient of several National Film Awards, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, and numerous other accolades.

Her international recognition included honours like the French Legion of Honour, further cementing her place in global music history. A perfume brand name was also launched named Lata Eau de Parfum in 1999. She was also awarded Zee Cine Award for Lifetime Achievement the same year. She was also nominated as a member of the Rajya Sabha in 1999. She was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour in 2001.

Along with these, Lata Ji held the distinction of being the most recorded artist in history of Indian music in Guinness record with 'Daughter of the nation award' on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in September 2019

‘Lata Mangeshkar- A Musical Journey’ in this book contain facts intertwined with the story of her life in music struggles successes and her reign as the queen of the Hindi music from the 1940s to the present day “Music is my life and God” Lata ji said in Ms Kabir’s book “My prayer is music it is A father and mother to me.” It is her inner feelings about her work.

Lata Ji passed away at 92 years of age on 6th February 2022, a day after Vasant Panchami, a festival dedicated to the Hindu Goddess Saraswati who represents music and knowledge.

### **Conclusion**

Lata Mangeshkar's contributions to Indian music and culture are immeasurable. Her legacy, built on her remarkable vocal talent and her unparalleled contributions to Indian cinema, continues to inspire millions of music lovers across the globe. Through her versatility, emotional depth, and dedication to her craft, Lata Mangeshkar has earned a permanent place as one of the most influential figures in the history of Indian music.

### **References**

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