

PRE-COMMERCIAL ERA OF SOUND-RECORDING IN INDIA

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The pre-commercial era of sound-recording in India has not yet found a chronicler chiefly because resurrecting this history necessitates dependence on vernacular source materials. The present study, based mostly on Bengali literature, it is believed, will encourage similar investigation in other Indian languages. This paper highlights how the early era paved the way and also modified the course for things to come in the commercial period. The talking machine, after its advent in India, very soon lost its charm as one more wonder product of the 'West'. Also, the technical proficiency gained in this era by Indians helped H. Bose to establish the first commercial house of sound-recording in India. The success and failure of Bose has been discussed in comparison with Pathe, his French collaborator. In conclusion, some still extant historically important wax cylinder recording made in India have been discussed.

Key Words : Sound-recording, talking machine, H. Bose's record, Pathe-H. Bose's Record, Wax-cylinder record, Phonograph, J.C. Bose, Rabindranath Tagore, Father Lafont, Thurston Collection, Fox Strangways Collection.

There was an era which can be considered as the pre-commercial period which paved way for both the wax cylinder records and the shellac discs to appear as commodities in India. There are numerous references in periodicals, particularly in vernacular (Bengali gets the preference by the author's inability to probe into other languages), reminiscences and advertisements which witness that the era of this non-commercial recordings in India should find a chronicle. I shall be only content if what follows encourage researchers from all parts of India to join hands in the endeavour.

Samachar Chandrika was the first Bengali periodical which announced the news of the invention of Edison's phonograph. In its issue of 9 January 1878 we read,

"By the help of this machine words can be stored in its bottle and whenever one prefers he can open the cork and hear the words. Even after hundred or even thousand years, by reopening the cork one could hear the same words".

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Obviously, the reporter had very little idea about the working of a phonograph and the report to-day appears amusing. At the same time, unknowingly the report is also very modern in its terminology if we remember that recorded music is now also called canned music which is not very far away from bottled music.

The news of the first live demonstration of a phonograph in Calcutta was published in the Bengali periodical *Sambad Prabhakar*. Here is a translation of a portion of the news from the issue dated 21 December 1878,

“Messrs Harraden (Samuel) has demonstrated in the Dalhousie Institute a machine named phonograph invented by Mr. Edison. In this tiny machine any kind of words or songs can be inserted and later the machine can reproduce the same without any alteration. A lot of crowd gathered during the exhibition. A Hindi song rendered by Dave Carson was clearly reproduced from this machine”.

Incidentally, Dave Carson was well known in the Calcutta Theatrical circuit. He produced a pantomime entitled *Dev Carson Sahib ka Pucka Tamasha* which was staged at the English Opera House. His dig at the “Bangali Baboo” provoked Ardhendusekhar Mustafi and he wrote and produced *Mustafi Sahib ka Pucka Tamasha* which was first performed on 15 January 1873 at the National Theatre.¹

Sambad Prabhakar reported on 13 February 1879 that two days ago in the annual conference of the Mahomedan Literary Society a phonograph was demonstrated. The editorial of *Sambad Prabhakar* on 17 February carried further detail of the demonstration,

“In the meeting place Babu Pannalal Seal sang a Bengali song in the mouth of the machine. Later, the song was immaculately reproduced with its tune by the machine automatically. Another Indian sang a Hindi song which was also likewise reproduced by the machine”.

From a letter published in *The Statesman* (10 June 1890), it is known that the above conference was held at the Town Hall and it was again Samuel Harraden and his machine. In 1847 Harraden was Professor of Music in Hindoo College and in another three years time had set up a company of “music publishers, and musical instrument seller” at 3, Tank Square.²

Father Eugene Lafont who taught science at the St. Xavier’s College, Calcutta was a legendary figure. Among his students were Rabindranath Tagore and J.C. Bose. Lafont’s activities were not confined within the class room. Both as populariser of science and promoter of scientific research in the nineteenth century, Calcutta should be grateful to him. It was primarily Lafont’s active support which ultimately saw the founding of the Indian Association for Cultivation of Science (IACS) by Mahendralal Sircar. Lafont gave a series of lectures in IACS. Among which was one entitled “The history and capabilities of Edison’s speaking phonograph with numerous illustrations and experiments” (delivered on 15 July 1886). Lafont wrote to the editor of *The Statesman* that he would “make this wonderful machine speak, cough, laugh and sing”.

Lafont among other things purchased a phonograph for IACS when he was visiting Paris in 1879. From 1886 to 1899, Lafont demonstrated the working of the phonograph at many places which were reported in *The Statesman*, *The Indo-European Correspondence*, *Bamabodhini Patrika* and *Paricharika*.³ *The Statesman* in 1899 reported, “the latest concert phonograph, a gift of the Maharaja of Darbhanga to Father Lafont, has arrived in Calcutta, and Father Lafont intends to give a matinee at St. Xavier’s College on an early date”.⁴

Recently excerpts from the diary of Mahendralal Sircar has been published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*. The entry on 27 January 1874 reads,

“[I] was present at the ceremony of distribution of prizes to the students of Sourindra Mohan Tagore’s school. Father Lafont was made the Chairman. After the prize distribution the *Ragas* were presented in their visible and audible forms.”

There is no evidence that Lafont ever developed any inclination to Indian music. His presence, thus, suggests that he might have made phonographic recordings at the request of Sircar.⁵

Incidentally, the presence of another phonograph in a musical conference is worth recording. Pradyotkumar Tagore purchased a phonograph. On 7 March 1898, “a micro-phonograph of Edison kindly loaned by Maharajkumar Pradyotkumar was played for the enjoyment of the members of Bharat Sangeet Samaj”.⁶

Bamabodhini Patrika in 1891 (May / June 1891) reported a very amusing incident related to the above phonograph of the Presidency College. It is worth translating.

“We have already referred to a musical or voice machine called phonograph. The way it works could not but bring smile to all of our women readers. This machine can exactly reproduce calls of dogs, cats and birds, as well as songs or instrumental music. Babu Jagadis Chandra Basu, Professor of Science preserved a couple of songs rendered by male and female members of the Brahmo community in the machine which had come to the Presidency College. For two hundred years these voices are supposed to be preserved. Even after one’s death, his songs, voice or words will be contained therein. There are numbers of wax cylinders, within which the preservation is made. If necessary one can erase an earlier one (recording) and store a new song or voice of someone else. This has recently caused a great *tamasha* (amusement). Someone, a Babu, imitated calls of dogs, cats and birds. These were preserved in a cylinder. Later, in the same cylinder Babu Rabindranath Thakur’s (Tagore) song was recorded: It was purely a devotional song in recognition of the greatness of the God. One day, the machine was singing that song and the listeners were attentive. Suddenly a dog started barking when the singing had not yet come to an end. What a difference between a profound divine song and the barking of a dog! The earlier recording of the barking was not properly erased which caused the sudden barking of the dog”.

This amusing incident, however, also contains some valuable information. Firstly, this is the earliest document related to Tagore's voice-recording. It also indicates why even a physicist like Bose, later, depended on H. Bose to make perfect recordings.⁷

The year 1892 has left us with a visual document of the phonograph in India. This is a photograph dated 22 May and was taken by Lala Deen Dayal in Hyderabad. Interestingly, we need not try to translate the image into words but simply translate the relevant portion from the reminiscences of Nalinikanta Sarkar, a poet, singer, journalist and close associate of Sri Aurovinda, Nazrul and Dilip Kumar Roy. Far away from Hyderabad, in a mofussil town of Murshidabad of Bengal, he witnessed a similar happening. The entertainmentwala's were already pitching their tents of phonograph at different corners of India. Hyderabad, as recorded visually by Deen Dayal was a Royal Court but Sarkar's impression was gained from a traditional annual village fair held during the 'Holi' festival. Sarkar writes,

"The price of admittance was one paisa. The talking machine was inside a tent. A crowd had gathered outside the tent. I also went in and took a seat. By the side of me were two or three people occupying their own seats. In the front was a small box. There were a number of holes in the box. From each of these holes came out a rubber tube. Each of the tube ultimately forked out into two smaller ones. Something like a stethoscope used by physicians. They plugged into my ears the endings of this twin tube. Within a few seconds the machine started to sing, *Aar ghumao na man, mayaghore aar katakal rabe achetan*. (Oh mind, do not sleep any more, for how long do you want to remain unconscious in the web of illusion). What an inexplicable sensation that was, what a pleasure! The elders told me—this is called a phonograph".⁸

There is only one detail missing from the narrative. Sarkar did not mention how the machine worked, while from the photograph it is clear that the machine was pedal-driven. It was only in 1896 that spring-wound phonograph came to the market. However, it is yet to be ascertained whether the above song belonged to the repertoire of H. Bose's Records.

Almost an identical account of demonstration of a phonograph with hearing tubes has been described by Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee, renowned for his biography of Tagore in Bengali. In his reminiscences, Mukherjee has written that it was also during a village fair when a tent was pitched by the itinerant entertainers. He, however, adds that he had already been acquainted with the talking machine because two Hindusthani traders, by that time, had visited their house with their ware of phonographs and cylinder records.⁹

In the house of the Tagore at Jorasanko, Calcutta, a private literary club was established in 1896 and in its first meet, we read among the agenda, "Listening to a phonograph". The meeting was hosted by Rabindranath Tagore and Gaganendranath Tagore.¹⁰

Michael Kinnear's pioneering work on the Gramophone Company contains informations about a very interesting pre-1902 non-commercial use of a phonograph for a practical purpose. Kinnear writes that Amarendranath Dutt of the Classic Theatre fame purchased an Edison phonograph (exact date not given) and thereafter "he would often make recordings of the dialogues and songs of the plays being performed at his Classic Theatre, to be used as rehearsal aids and also for his own use as director and producer of many of the plays then being performed". It is needless to repeat here Kinnear's account of the Amarendranath Dutt and Gramophone Company connection in the years to come.¹¹

H. Bose's voice-recording activities can certainly be ascribed to start from 1902 if not earlier. There are two reminiscences, both of which speak about his proficiency as a voice-recordist. 1902, incidentally, was the year when Fred Gaisberg made his first voice-recording expedition to India.

The renowned physicist D. M. Bose, who succeeded Professor J.C. Bose as the Director of the Bose Institute had written that J.C. Bose after his return from England in 1902, started residing in his newly constructed house in Parsibagan Lane and at that time Rabindranath frequently paid visit and used to sing songs in the drawing room so that Hemendramohan Bose could record them in his new Pathephone machine.¹² There is little doubt that writing years later Dr. D. M. Bose had made a confusion about cylinder-records with Pathephone. Elsewhere the same writer had commented that H. Bose could very skillfully make recordings in the wax cylinders of the phonograph and made a number of recordings of Tagore's Swadeshi songs.¹³

Charuchandra Bhattacharya provides us with the second evidence which again shows how much H. Bose was active in 1902 and the reliance of Professor J.C. Bose on him for voice-recording. Bhattacharya writes,

"When we were students of M.A. class, Jagadishchandra Basu returned from England Sometimes he invited students of the M.A. class to his residence I remember an afternoon like that. The phonograph had recently made its advent in our country and H. Bose was making 'dish' (indigenous) records. A record was made to play—"majhi tor baitha nere ami aar baite parlam na" (A 'Bhatiali' or boatman's song)".¹⁴

Whether the above recording as well as other contemporary ones were commercially released as H. Bose's Records from his talking Machine Hall, 41 Dharmatolla Street (presently Lenin Sarani) cannot be ascertained.

Hopefully, it will not be out of context here to discuss in brief the first article in Bengali which provided a comprehensive account of the cylinder record trade in Bengal before the first batch of Gramophone disc records reached India. The article was not published in any mainstream periodical but a rather obscure one (rarely referred to by researchers) entitled *Mahajanbandhu* (The Merchant's Friend) published by the sugar merchants of Calcutta to promote "agriculture, crafts, commerce and industry".¹⁵

The article was also unconventional in the sense that it was contributed not by a person but by a firm named Sukha Sancharak Co. of Mathura. Published in 1903, the article made comparisons between different makes of phonographs with reference to merit cum price. Two varieties of Edison's phonographs Edison-Standard and Edison-Gem were mentioned. It wrote that like all other German products, German phonograph is also cheap but the quality of sound reproduction was quite poor. The article also recounts some historical details,

“About twenty one years ago an Edison phonograph was brought to the science department of the Calcutta University. It was heard that at the time it cost two thousand rupees. Now it costs Rs. 80. At present a German phonograph costs Rs. 15 but it does not have rubber tubes. London Gem phonographs cost Rs. 30”.

In the next chapter the above article differentiates between two chief categories of phonographs—one with the horn and the other with their hearing tubes. Making comparison with the disc records it also points out that the facility of re-recording is only offered by cylinder records.¹⁶

In view of the comments regarding prices of phonographs in *Mahajanbandhu*, a comparative study can be made from the advertisements published in *The Statesman* between 1897 and 1902.¹⁷ While the cheapest one called the 'English Phonograph' was priced at Rs. 20, an Edison Phonograph cost Rs. 35. The costliest one, the 'Columbia Graphophone', was priced at Rs.125.

In the Calcutta market, phonographs were first offered for sale in 1897 by T.E. Bevan and Co. at 10 old Court House Street. By 1901 a number of houses, including Indian ones, started advertising different makes and models of phonographs :

1900 : Kidar Baksh Khan, 80 Bentick Street.

1901 : The Western Trading Co., 17 Chowringhee.

1901 : G.C. Mookerjee and Sons, 62 Bentinck Street.

G.C. Mookerjee offered the cheapest phonograph and his was the first illustrated advertisement of a phonograph in *The Statesman*.¹⁸

Historians of Indian music also made use of the phonograph. Pandit Visnunarayan Bhatkhande recorded compositions of Ustad Ahsiq Ali Khansaheb of Jaipur on phonograph. This was done before the death of Ashiq Ali's father Mohammed Ali 'Hasarang', who later also taught Bhatkande some *bandishes*. Mohammed Ali died in 1905—as such it seems that these recordings were also made in the pre-commercial era.¹⁹

In the pre-commercial era, phonograph was also used for recording folk lores. Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder of *Thakurmar Jhuli*-fame travelled from village to village, starting from the vicinity of Dacca to Maimansingh of the present day Bangladesh and recorded narratives from the elderly people (predominantly women). Among them the oral tradition had not yet dried up. Dineshchandra Sen in his

monumental work, *Bangabhasa O Sahitya*, wrote that the story of Malanchamala in *Thakurdadar's Jhuli* was recorded by Dakshinaranjan by the aid of a Dictaphone (proprietary name of model of phonograph) from a centenarian woman and transcribed it faithfully.²⁰

It would not be a wild guess to assume that he also made use of the phonograph for preparing the manuscript of *Thakurmar Jhuli*, the publication of which (1906) preceded the *Thakuradadar Jhuli* by only two years. The assumption of this use of the phonographic aid finds support from the fact that the second editions of both the books suffered a lot by the dictations of print-culture. Dineshchandra observed that the first edition of *Thakurdadar Jhuli* not find commercial success because in the "urban and commercial centres", its language on account of its provincial and antiquated dialect was held in disfavour. A comparison of the texts of the first and second edition of *Thakurmar Jhuli* also corroborates that the adverse criticism forced the author to revise (standardise) his texts for the subsequent editions. This is a clear indication how standardisation in the form of print culture dealt a death blow to the plurality of oral traditions. Rabindranath Tagore was full of praise for the second version of *Thakurmar Jhuli* in 1906 as the only 'Swadeshi' alternative to the translations of western fairy tales. We must note here that the year 1906 saw a surge of nationalism in Bengal following Curzon's declaration to partition Bengal. 'Boycott' of *Bideshi* was the call of the day. If introduction of printing press brought about standardisation of language and sanitized its literary tradition, the same might have also happened in the world of music, not in the pre-commercial era, but in the era of commercial recording.

For the sake of making a comparative study as well as tracing the transition from the pre-commercial to the commercial stage, we may take a brief notice of the birth and growth of the Pathe company with which, we have already noticed, H. Bose went into collaboration.

Pathe, to be more accurate, Pathe-Freres (Pathe-Brothers) were virtually born the day when Charles Pathe purchased an Edison phonograph and started arranging entertainment programmes at different places. This part of the story of the itinerant *tamashawala* finds close parallel with the Indian scenario already described.²¹

The fair at Vincennes in 1894 had among their attractions a phonograph of Edison. Charles, one of the visitors, made an on the spot mental arithmetic. Charging 1.5 to 2 Francs per two minute audition from each listener was viable and it was also possible to make such an audition simultaneously accessible to 20 listeners. Charles immediately placed order for procuring an Edison phonograph with all the accessories and paid a fabulous price of 1800 Francs. (Compare the price of the phonograph as mentioned in the *Mahajan Bandhu*). After acquiring the phonograph, Charles on 9 September 1894 pitched his tent at a fair in the suburb of Paris and on the very first day pocketed 200 francs. He never looked back after that. Charles ran from one fair to the other and like

his Indian counterparts also attended places of pilgrimage like one near Rainey. The amount of profit reaped by him made many stall-holders curious and before long we find Charles emerging as a dealer of Edison machines in Paris. To meet the need of the customers, Charles now started recording opera and cafe-concerts. This was Pathe's first cylinder record manufactory. Established in 1896 at cours of Vincennes it ultimately emerged as a great industrial house known as Pathe-Freres. Emile, Charles' brother was in-charge of the cinematographic divisions.²²

Manufacturing of phonographs were taken up in due course. As Edison's machines were very costly, Charles went for American 'Graphophones'. The first batch of Pathe machines named 'Coq' (Cock) was almost an exact copy of the 'Eagle' model of 'Graphophone'. By 1899, however, to cater to the "French taste", the machine was modified and the motto of the firm, "I sing loud and clear", became very popular. From 1906 Pathe started producing disc records by making copies from their master cylinders with the help of pantographs. In the long run the hill-and-dale records of Pathe on shellac-coated pressed boards lost the battle with lateral-cut shellac discs of other multinationals. Disc recording activities were abandoned by Pathe in 1929 and the phonographic department was absorbed in the Socite Pathe-Marconi. Further regrouping and merger took place later involving the Gramophone Company and Columbia as well which ultimately saw the formation of EMI.²³

Keeping in mind the Indian scenario of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, particularly, the enterprise of H. Bose, the Pathe narrative provides areas of both convergence and divergence of objectives of pursuit separated not only by geographical but political space as well. Bose, operating in colonial India, was much more handicapped than the Pathe brothers. Charles Pathe in his earlier years did not have to compete with a giant like Gramophone Company in his own soil.

We should not, however, forget that the commencement of Bose's cylinder record business lagged behind Pathe's by some vital five or six years. Bose's first big campaign for cylinder records started from 1905-6 with full page ads in newspapers *the Bengalee* and *the Amrita Bazar Patrika*. We have already noted that Pathe by this time (1906) was already convinced that the future of the trade was favourably tilted towards the disc. Even for such a big house as Pathe technological constraints made the transition from cylinder to disc problematic. As a manufacturer of cylinder records, Bose correctly attempted a tie-up with Pathe so that his repertoire could be transferred from cylinder to disc format.²⁴ But the first Great War drove the first nail in the coffin. The shipment of Bose's cylinders from India and Pathe-H. Bose's Records from France or Belgium was seriously affected. (Most of Pathe-H. Bose's Records were pressed in Belgium). The Talking Machine Hall of H. Bose put down its shutter in 1915 after Bose's death in the same year. Bose's entrepreneurship came to a termination quite in accordance with many other *Swadeshi* venture, which were after all proprietorship concerns. After

Bose, the inheritors continued to function in the manufacturing business of perfumes but wound up all other branches of activities (Printing Press, Automobile and Bicycle Garages, Showroom and Record manufacture) initiated by Bose. They choose to follow the path of minimum risk.²⁵

Thus, the pre-commercial era set the stage, where the talking machine, both in the rural and urban areas, ceased to be a mere curiosia. This meant that with the beginning of the commercial era, the rival companies would be hard pressed for selecting proper artists and securing rights to make their commodities acceptable.

This brings us to the concluding paragraph of the first part of this article. It must be apparent that so long we have been pursuing only a literature-survey. None of the recordings referred to, including the post-1902 commercial cylinder-recordings (H. Bose's Records), have physically survived. At least till today no counter evidence has been produced.

II

Two sets of non-commercial recordings made in India on wax cylinders are still extant and are in the safe custody of the National Sound Archive, a wing of the British Library in London. (Not taking into account 13 cylinder of an unidentified Baluchistan series and 510 wax cylinders recorded by Arnold Bake during his field trip of India between 1925 and 1929).²⁶

The first set consists of 137 cylinder records (including duplicates and may be a few stray ones) in the National Sound Archive (Ref. No. 624) which were recorded by Edgar Thurston and his assistant K. Rangachari. In the Report of the NSA (2 September 1994) there is an indication that this collection belonged to the Madras Museum. No mention is however made when and how the collection was transferred from Madras to London. But A.H. Fox Strangways in his *Music of Hindostan* (first published in 1914) is quite categorical when he observes that the phonographic records of the melodies of Todas collected by Thurston are "at present in the hands of Dr. Myers of Cambridge". (footnote, p.48, 2nd Indian edition, 1994). Moreover, the bibliography of the Strangways' book is also quite revealing. It helps us to identify Dr. Myers as Charles S. Meyer, the author of Chapter XIII of *The Vedda* by C.G. and B.Z. Seligmanu (Cambridge, 1911). The bibliography mentions that this chapter was a product of "phonograms closely analysed". In short, the Thurston collection or a part thereof was already in England by 1911.

The NSA Report, already referred to, provides us with the following informations:

"These (Thurston Collection) are a mixture of South Indian Classical music and tribal music from the same region ... Thurston was a doctor turned Museum Curator, Superintendent of the Madras Government Museum from 1885 to 1908. In 1894 he took up anthropology, and for at least the next 15 years he studied the various castes and tribes of Southern India, publishing a number of papers and

books culminating in the 7 volume work *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras 1909). It is not clear when he began recording cylinders if it was 1894 he may have been the first British field recordist of all. He certainly seems to have been recording by 1901, when he makes reference in a paper to songs he has collected from the Todas (see 'Todas of the Nilgiris', *Madras Government Museum Bulletin, Vol, IV, No.1, pp.7-10*). A similar paper of 1896 makes no mention of songs however."

Dr. Janet Topp Fargion, Curator, International Music Collection of NSA, communicated to the author that 17 Thurston cylinders have been dubbed and are accessible for listening.

In the Indian context the second important cylinder record holding of the NSA is the Fox Strangways' Collection (Ref. No. C 72). Strangways as the author of *The Music of Hindostan* is a familiar name with connoisseurs of Indian music. He enjoys a great reputation in the Bengali culture zone as an early admirer of Tagore. Strangways considered "Tagore to personify Indian music in the broadest sense". (p. vii). It is rather unfortunate that in spite of this great complement he apparently did not record any Tagore songs (at least there is no such indication in his book nor is there any physical evidence in the NSA collection).

In a different article I have noted Strangways' Orientalist thinking caused him to create a divide between melody and a harmony, a ladder of progress which starts from melody and reaches the zenith with harmony.²⁷ In the present context I shall borrow from Strangways' own words to explain why he took recourse to the phonographic recordings to supplement his transcriptions. Strangways' cylinders were recorded all over India and his 'Musical Diary' extends over "half a dozen months of 1910-11". Strangways found it extremely difficult to visually (in the way of notation) represent the "niceties of expression" of the different renderings of the melodies (particularly so in the case of specifying exact pitch) and as such took recourse to phonograph as a backup. However, he admitted,

"It would have been good to have been able to note the exact pitch in each case, but the absence of the proper means made this, except in a few instances, impossible. A phonograph cannot be carried on the person or unlimbered and brought into action in half a minute like a camera; there are also conditions, such as distance of sound, or movement of the producer (e.g. in dancing) with attended dust, which precludes its employment altogether."²⁸

From the index of his book, one can readily see that Strangways himself identified 16 of his notations which were recorded in cylinders. Out of these eleven have been identified and are preserved in the NSA. But the NSA collection is still a treasure-trove for researchers because it consists of a still extant 84 cylinder records all of which have been dubbed into a tape. The scope of research will be exemplified if I am permitted to quote the following relevant passage from the Report of the NSA Cylinder Collection,

“Many of the others (cylinders) originate from this trip (1910-11) but were transcribed either ‘live’ or from cylinders which broke before he could get home and check them. The fact that there are no references to any cylinders which I have not identified, suggests that we have the bulk of the collection. There are some gaps however, there are two boxes marked ‘*Jaltarang*’ for example (= a set of tuned water bowls), but the cylinders do not match the inscription The database contains 99 entries, of which nine refer to stray lids, 3 cylinders are broken, and 3 more were too poor to be dubbed. A total of 84 cylinder were dubbed therefore. One of the unidentified cylinders is almost certainly an FS stray, and several more may be lid-less Frazer duplicates which may correspond to FS lids.”

The author had the opportunity to visit the prime archives of sound recordings in Paris and London, namely, Bibliotheque Nationale Department de la Phonotheque Nationale at de L’ Audiovisuel , Paris and the National South Archive, Exhibition Road, London - but it is rather saddening to note that even extra- literary searching (physical rummaging) failed to reveal any trace either of H. Bose’s voice- recording activities in the cylinder era or in the era of Pathe- H. Bose’s Records in the hill-and-dale disc format. It was particularly frustrating to find that Bibliotheque National, so rich in its holdings pertaining to Pathe activities offered nothing about the Pathe-H. Bose collaboration. The Indian record collectors can put forward, physical as well as literary evidence that Pathe-H. Bose’s Records were in great circulation. What were the factors which contributed to obliterating H. Bose and his activities from the well documented history of Pathe remain an unresolved puzzle, and more so because even after its merger with EMI , Pathe is still a celebrity in cultural studies.

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20. Dinesh Chandra Sen, *Bangabhasa O Sahitya*, Calcutta, 1926 (5th ed), p. 79.
21. Jacques Kerambon (ed), *Pathe, Premier Empire du Cinema*, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1994; Daniel Marty, *Histoire illustree du phonographe*, Paris, 1995, pp. 142-3; Liliane Korb and Laurence Lefevre, *Silence, on tourne*, Paris, 1995 and archival materials belonging to Bibliotheque Nationale et de L' Audiovisual, Paris.

22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. Siddhartha Ghosh, "Jantrarasik H. Bose", op. cit.
25. *Ibid.*
26. From records of National Sound Archive, The British Library, London, consulted or communicated by Curators of the International Music Collection.
27. Amitabha Ghosh, "Orientalism and Technology", op. cit.
28. A.H. Fox Strangways, *The Music of Hindostan*, New Delhi, 1994 (reprint), p.17.

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