

## “Movies As A Source Of PR, Propaganda And Soft Power For A Nation And Its Culture In Reference To Hollywood, Bollywood And South Indian Cinema”

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### Abstract:

*Cinema is not just a cinema now a days and never it was. It is a mean to communicate with millions in just 2 or 3 hours. But, movies, films, short films or whatsoever you name these artistic forms, came in late 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century. Before these, there were other ways to put your words together. And the most popular way was Drama, Theatre, Nukkad-Natak. Nukkad-Natak was done in open while the other two were done in closed room. But the reach of these three were very few and artists have to perform again and again from place to place. After starting the age of Cinema, artists got rid of that iteration process.*

*As we know, there was a need to research over mass media means on the topic how mass media can change the mentality of a society and can affect the entire section with just few words after the World War I. However, till that time only Print media was in advanced form while e-mediums were still in their starting stages. There were no talking movies. But in late 20s, with the advancement in technologies (a big thanks to Europeans and Americans), movies started talking. It gave the same feel as audience used to get in those three forms mentioned above.*

*This invention brought a huge change in mass communication form. Earlier people can only read (newspapers) or listen (radio). But now, with listening, they can watch what actually happening. This was successfully used by Nazis and Hitler in 30s and Americans while Second World War. Hitler was the first<sup>1</sup> new who actually understood the power of this medium. That's why he ordered to shoot films and present them in the entire Germany. There was a Department of Films in Nazi Party for monitoring film propaganda. This provoked nationalism in the entire Germany. (Propaganda in Nazi Germany, Wikipedia) [1]*

*In Indian context, this Cinema Culture was never considered as a good thing. This is the reason why Dada Saheb Phalke (father of Indian Cinema) could not get a proper heroine in his earlier movies. No woman (even the Prostitutes) was ready to work in films. With the time, situation got worst in terms of stories and screenplay. In 80s and 90s, there was hardly any action movie, which did not have rape scenes. At one hand, Hollywood got so much developed in time that it started making futuristic sci-fi movies like Back to Future, Star Wars, Star Trek, Jurassic Park and Terminator. At the other hand, Bollywood stucked to its course: masalamovies, romantic movie and comedy movie.*

*So, it is important to understand when the world was Globalizing and Hollywood movies were reaching to Indian Markets, still Bollywood lacked behind to tell a narrative where*

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*India is leading the world from the front. And still there is no movie telling the world a story from the perspective of India as a world leader.*

## Introduction

What are films mean to us? A source of entertainment when we are bored, depressed, suppressed or alone. A source of killing the time when we are travelling in the train for straight 20 hours. Or a part of our lives which now can't be excluded because they are so much into us that we can't even exclude it willingly.

While hosting the Filmfare awards 2022, famous Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh said in his introductory speech about films (specifically Bollywood films), "In this modern era, our films lighten our burden. All of you are attached to our industry in some ways. We play Holi and the DJ plays Rang Barse 20 times. We win the cricket match and sing Chak de India. When we are afraid, we put our hand on our heart and say All is well, all is well, all is well. And last but not the least our marriage ceremonies. In marriage ceremonies, our films fill the colours." (Filmfare, 2022) [2]

What Ranveer Singh said in his speech is true in some ways. Whenever we watch a movie, a specific character influence us so much that the hangover of that character remains with us for a time. In some cases, people start living that character. In many interviews, Raju Shrivastava had said that he used to go to see Superstar Amitabh Bachchan's movies and imitate as same as Amitabh Bachchan back at home and school. In a recent case occurred in Delhi, the accused of killing his girlfriend and chopping her body into 35 pieces disclosed that he watched an American tv show Dexterto know how to chop the body and dispose the parts.

Basically, we need to understand that movies are not made for entertainment purpose solely. In Indian context, we can say that so far movies have been made for entertainment and earning purpose. But to contradictory, contemporary industries especially Hollywood has evolved through the time. By understanding the role of movies for mass communication, they have started to act accordingly.

In this research paper, we will try to find out how American Cinema has influenced the world and helped America to sell its propaganda around the globe. And in the Indian context, how we can overcome from our stereotypical image and why Indian Cinema is failing to do what American cinema is doing? And we will also talk about the south industry and how it is changing the image of Indian Cinema. What is the future of south cinema in building the image of India across the globe?

## 1.1 Objective of the Research

Objective of this research are as follows:

1. Understand the reasons which makes Hollywood and Indian Cinema far different.
2. Hollywood becoming a voice for its nation while Indian Cinema is still struggle with its inner conflicts.
3. Does cinema only failing us or as audience we are also failing our cinema?
4. Does Hollywood really killing us and our culture and selling their narratives successfully?
5. How can our cinema can overcome with this struggle and can be strong contender to its counterpart.
6. What is the difference between the role of our government and their government?

## Literature Review

To gain the insight over the topic, a literature review was conducted. A few keywords regarding to the topic were used to get the relevant published papers, articles and journals from the most renowned and credible research database like Google, Google scholar and ShodhGanga.

### The Promotion of American culture through Hollywood movies to the world [3]

America is the only superpower in 21<sup>st</sup> century and to keep the status quo, America is using all the possible ways. Films have capability to spread the message to the world at once. And also, American movies are not just seen in America only but throughout the world. Understanding the value of movies in mass communication, Americans are promoting their culture through their movies. This is how they are doing cultural imperialism.

Hollywood is now beyond entertainment and entering in the local markets of the different countries affecting their film's market. Specially India, which is the home of the industry which produce the most numbers of films in a year. Earlier, Bollywood was all about family-oriented dramas, romance and fight between good and evil. But now with the Hollywood effect (which we can say Hollywoodization), Indian cinema has changed. The induced western ideas are slowly diminishing the real traditional and cultural ideas of the country.

Apart from India, other Asian countries are also getting affected by American cinema. And not just Asian but other industries are also having a tough competition with American cinema even in their homes. It means that if you are viewing the American movies, you are getting access to the America. In fact, the world society which is seen as globalized but it is subtly Americanized. (Maisuwong, 2012) [3]

### Use of Hollywood as a Soft Power Tool in Foreign Policy Strategy of the United States of America [4]

Soft power is the force which helps you to subjugate others without even letting them know they are being captured. One country overpowers the other country, one culture overpowers the other culture because the later one starts following and admiring the former one. They start having a trust blind foldedly over their subjugator.

The same has been done by the America to the rest of the world. Hollywood helps the American Government in propagation of American culture in foreign countries. The USA imposes its soft power on people's mind that 'promises hope, supports democracy and justifies the ideal of freedom' (Emrah Aydemir, 2017) [4]. Basically, America is trying to sell its American Dream throughout the world.

Hollywood is the expression of mental process for the political aims of America (Emrah Aydemir, 2017) [4]. Hollywood works as a spokesperson for the American government's politics. Movies are made aiming their foreign policies. They play with the emotions, values, desires and wishes of their target audience.

Hollywood is like a better half of the Washington. They discuss things like at home from old times, but are deeply together for the rest of the world. American army is the key element who features in their movies very frequently. CIA claims they have a pact with Hollywood from 1990s in order to improve their image on movie and TV sector. This is because, it is stated that Hollywood is the only way that people may acquire knowledge about CIA. (Jenkins, 2012:32, as cited in Emrah Aydemir, 2012) [4]

### How India can harness the soft power of Bollywood [5]

Soft power is which one can't put a finger on it neither they can measure it. It can only be exerted. The term, Soft Power, is coined by an American scientist Joseph Nye. It is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion. (WION, 2020)[5]

America is presenting itself as the most desirable country in the world and selling their American Dream through Hollywood. A walk to Times Square, weekend in Long Island, vacation in Miami, fall in Vermont, the Ivy League colleges, the steak and the beer. Most of the people who are applying for H1B visa or the American colleges, they are longing for this life. As once said by the ex-American president Donald Trump, "The most prized, treasured, cherished and priceless possession anywhere in the world, it's called American Citizenship." (WION, 2020)[5]

In most of the American movies, where aliens are attacking on our earth, it's the American superheroes who are stepping up to the front line for the fight. All the important decisions are being taken in the White House and American President takes all those decisions as the global leader. Hollywood is building America's image, projecting America as the global superpower, upholder of the human rights and dignity and harbinger of democracy and justice.

What we Indians are doing is Dancing. When the *Ra. One* was released on big screen, the protagonist was fighting for his family only. While the other one, *Krrish*, was dancing and romancing with a human. Bollywood is not interested in telling India's narrative to the world.

In American movies, earlier Russia and now China is the antagonist. They are tuned in geopolitics. While we are having a soft spot in our narrative for our competitive nations. Bollywood goes from

Chandani Chawk to China and not to forget *Bharangi Bhaijaan*. In both the movies, the protagonist goes to our neighbouring countries: China and Pakistan, carrying a brotherhood message.

America calls Iran world's biggest exporter of terrorism. And this is what shown in their movies also. In *ARGO*, if Ben Affleck's character would have fall in love with an Iranian woman, how would the US have controlled the narrative on the Iran hostage crisis? (Which in reality took place in 1979-80) (WION, 2020) [5]

Coming to India, the same prestigious title has been given to our very dear neighbouring nation in the west. And our reality is our man in well-dressed uniform is so clichéd that he is falling in love with a woman across the border. He is ready to spend his entire life in a prison for her dignity and pride (*Veer-Zara*). While in another one, starring Salman Khan as a RAW agent, also fall for a woman who is his counterpart from Pakistan's ISI. In this movie, both the countries have been shown equally bad.

### **The Changing Landscape of Indian Cinema [6]**

Earlier when we talk about the Indian Cinema, it was all about Bollywood. Because of the wide reach of the Hindi Cinema across the country, it was considered as the biggest industry. But within last 7 years, after the release of the *Bahubali*, south industry has gained the same recognition.

North Indian states which were castles for the Bollywood are now more open for the south cinema. They are watching south movies and now south Indian film makers don't need to think within the box of their region (Galatta Plus, 2022) [6]. There are tremors in the north and it is raising form the south.

In terms of period, there is pre *Bahubali* and post *Bahubali* period. In context of Indian cinema, in post *Bahubali* period they have started making PAN India films. Which means now their target audience is just not the particular language audience. Now the film makers are looking for releasing their movie from Jammu-Kashmir to Tamilnadu over more and more screens. However, not every film can be released PAN India level. The subject needs to be more universal than regional.

In post Bahubali era one more thing happened that is OTT. After the launch of several OTT platforms, there has been a split in the kind of content that we are going to see in theatres. Content-based smaller films are finding it hard to get people to theatres (Galatta Plus, 2022). Whereas large-scale movies like KGF, Bahubali and 2.0, especially if it is a sequel or a part of franchise is seeing a large pull to theatre. This is because, the audience is already known to plot and compiled with the same world.

### **Hollywood**

The English feature films which are made in United States of America are considered to be Hollywood. However, this does not mean that the film should be shot only within America. It means that the production houses which are making and producing the films are from America. In its earlier days, it was just the means of entertainment. But the real change came in Hollywood in 80s & 90s, where more realistic Science Fiction movies started making then the earlier movies which were more comic rather than science fiction. Back to the Future, Star Wars, Terminator and Jurassic Park are the best examples of science fiction movies of that era. These are the movies which changed the perspective of watching Hollywood movies.

Slowly and gradually other film makers also find this genre more benefiting than others. The best way of telling the story was putting American people and American Scientist ahead all of the world. Americans used to love watching such stories and then rest of the world also. On one hand, NASA was planning to send man in space more frequently. Whereas, Hollywood was telling a Space Odyssey where men made contacts with Aliens and having a fight with them (Star Wars series). And in all of these, those were the American man and woman who were doing all sort of things.

In context of India, earlier people used to watch Hollywood movies just to watch more pale skin actor and actress (more specifically actresses). But with those sci-fi movies, people started to watch Hollywood for their content rather than their pale skin. This way Hollywood gained the audience in the entire world, for their unique concept. But once they gained the audience, they also started playing with the content. Now they knew people will watch and listen their perspective of the story. It results in several propaganda movies in the duration: a) Black Hawk Down (2001) and b) Pearl Harbour (2001)

### **Black Hawk Down**

Black Hawk Down, directed by Ridley Scott, is based on Somali Civil War or Battle of Mogadishu. A story which tells the excellency of the American Forces and how they overcome with the Somali Militants. They brought whatever peace for the Somali people. But what it cost for both of them was not shown in the movie.

After the battle, the pictures which were published next day in world's newspaper was not even appropriate to show. Dead bodies of American soldiers were brutally humiliated by those militants and it wasn't a complete win-win situation for the American Forces. But the director, controlling the narrative of the story, just showed the one aspect of the war. How bravely sons of America fought

the war. (Which wasn't even their own) Americans, the peace bringer in the world, has a job to bring peace and harmony in the world. Isn't it smell like tyranny?

### **Pearl Harbour**

Pearl Harbour, for a change, copy of a classic Indian hit Film Sangam by Raj Kapoor. This name Pearl Harbour reminds us of our history book. While reading about World War II, this name used to pop up. Attack on Pearl Harbour was the reason why America directly participates in WW II and retaliate on Japan with Atom bomb. Till now, we have read in several places it was America's mistake and an impulsive decision to attack on Japan's cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki with Atom bomb. (For which they never said sorry officially)

While watching the movie, you won't feel that Japan is the victim and America is antagonist. The narrative is controlled in such a way that you will start have feeling for the American soldiers who died in Pearl Harbour attack. And atomic attack on Japan will seem an appropriate answer. Director Michael Bay, taking the artistic liberty, controlled the narrative of atomic attack to present the American narrative. So many historical facts were shaped in justification.

Although American soldiers died in Pearl Harbour, great in number. So, it was vendetta of America on Japan in actuality.

### **America's Dominance through Hollywood**

As stated above, Soft Power can't be felt but can only be exerted. And this exertion doesn't come within night. It takes times and generations. The best way to understand this is example of Nestle in Japan. When Nestle launched its coffee in Japan, it was a failure. It was totally a new concept for them, whereas Japanese people were more found of Tea. So, Nestle could not make penny from there. After understanding the problem, Nestle launched coffee flavoured toffees in Japan. Toffees was more consumed by the children than the older ones. Ten years later when Nestle relaunched its coffee, it was a success. Because till then, those children grew up and they have also grown the taste of coffee. So, it wasn't totally a unique taste for those youngsters.

Above example shows us Soft Power takes time to harness. America has done the same through Hollywood in the rest of the world (specifically in third world countries) in decades. Selling the American Dream and presenting its super power status quo through movies again and again made people believe that it is the America who can save the world and humanity in our need. That is the reason why when covid came, the whole world was looking towards America for the solution.

The reason for this hope is simple because in all those dystopian movies, it was the America who brought the solution and became the saviour of humanity. World War Z and Resident Evil is the perfect example. Who could have thought that India might have made his own vaccine and supply to rest of the world. But it did happen and the whole world watched.

America have sold his American dream concept through his movies which basically shows the rich lifestyle of a person in America apart from showing the real trouble. They induced the thought of free will and fate, more liberal democracy, highly paid jobs, well furnished homes, well planned cities and towns, a clean environment to breathe and most importantly a spectacular education system. This is all a man wants for his family and these Hollywood movies promise them.

### **Hollywood and Geo-Politics**

Hollywood does not guarantee a corruption free political environment but it does guarantee a democracy which is the most powerful in the world. All the decisions in all those movies where aliens are attacking in our world are taken in the Oval office of White House. In the movie 'Independence Day' it is the American Air Force and their Pilots who are taking a

fight with the alien war ship on the order of American President.

If you have watched the Superman and Lois tv series, the General of US Army says to Superman in some episode to decide between saving the America and saving some other country. General says to Superman to put the America above all. Today, we all know the story Superman, an alien came to earth and took an oath to protect the earth and its people which includes the whole humanity. But still he was made to choose. And when he does not choose America as his first choice, he was captured declaring as traitor. This metaphorically represents that allies of America must have to choose America as their first choice. The same did by America in Ukraine forcing them to choose America as a first choice and doing the bidding as said by American Government. Which made Ukraine number one enemy of Russia and the rest is History.

**Hollywood and India**

Films are like water; they found their way to the audience. Earlier Hollywood films needed to be dubbed for the Indian audience. And their reach was also very much limited. Not because of limited theatres, but also because of cultural differences (specifically in rural parts). India got its independence just few decades back and all these Hollywood movies were supposed to be mind catching with all their bold and bikini scenes. But once Bollywood also started imitating the same in their movies, people became more liberal minded with movies. That’s the reason watching English films (obviously Hindi dubbed) wasn’t a taboo topic even in rural areas.

An English film which changed the whole perspective of Hollywood was **Spiderman**, released in 2003 by Marvel Studios. After its theatrical run, when it was premiered on TV for the first time, it was a grand success. Till then, TV and Cables had become the part of household thing in both: big cities to small towns (apart from rural areas). 90s kids who grown up watching Shaktiman on every Sunday, had now watched a live action superhero movie, which was far better in technique. Scenes

were seemed more real on TV in comparison to Shaktiman. And then, an era of superhero films started in India, which checkmated the Indian Films in their own turf.

**List of top 10 highest earned Hollywood movies in India**

S.No.	Movies	Net Box-office collection in India
1.	Avatar: The Way of Water (2022)	378.22 cr
2.	Avengers: Endgame (2019)	373.22 cr
3.	Avengers: Infinity War (2018)	227.43 cr
4.	Spider-Man: No Way Home (2021)	217.52 cr

5.	TheJungleBook (2016)	188cr
6.	TheLion King (2019)	158.40cr
7.	DoctorStrangeintheMultiverseofMadness(2022)	130cr
8.	Furious7(2015)	108cr
9.	Thor:LoveandThunder (2022)	101.71cr
10.	JurassicWorld(2015)	101cr

Source:IMDb)[7]

If you see this list, 5 out of top 10 movies are Superhero films made under the banner of Marvel Studios. After launching its Cinematic Universe in 2008, Marvel changed the whole scenario of superhero movies not just in India but for the world. Gradually with time, it came to a point where other Indian movies and production houses started frichtening with these big budgets, multi starred Super Hero films. That is reason when Avengers: Endgame was releasing in India on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2019, Ajay Devgan starrer rom-com ‘De De Pyaar De’ shifted their releasing date to 16<sup>th</sup> May. Surely, if they both had clashed on box office, Ajay Devgan starrer movie had to take a huge loss because of Avengers: Endgame. Endgame was set and hit franchise in India. It had already released 22 movies prior and all were commercially hit in India which created a hype for the last movie of the long-watched series. Later, released on 16<sup>th</sup> May, De De Pyaar De earned 143cr on worldwide Box office, which is not even the half of what Avengers: Endgame earned on just Indian Box-office.

## Bollywood

Bollywood, just the synonym of Hollywood, represents the entire Hindi Cinema made in Mumbai (earlier Bombay). Bollywood known for its romantic, comedy, family drama and masala massaction movies. Over the period of time, the stories have changed but not the genre. They are still stucked to these courses. Hollywood movies are showing the futuristic space odyssey where they are able to establish colonies on different planets making the environments suitable for humans. Bollywood movies are still tuned with romanticism and household fights. There is no any space odyssey telling how India is making progress in space science.

Keeping aside these sci fi movies, where we stand in other genres of the movie where India can harness one of the world leader positions. India had fought several wars within the course of 75 years and won almost all of them. Also, within the course of 78 years in United Nation, India has been part of several wars in the word as the Peace Keeping force of UN. The best one could be the 1971 war where India freed Bangladesh (then eastern Pakistan) from Pakistan. Stories have been told in last 25 years of that war but not in entirety. Personal glorified victories and victories in battels by armed forces have been showed so far. The whole narrative of India taking part in a civil war in Bangladesh never been told. Border and The Ghazi Attack are stories of such battels. But stories of all those war crimes committed by Pakistani soldiers are yet to tell to the world. Only a movie ‘Children of War’ tried to tell the narrative but still could not get much recognition.



## Bollywood and rest of the world

Globally, Bollywood has gained its audience in several countries in spite of having a strong contender like Hollywood. The very first name which comes to this list is Russia. Well not just the Russia but the whole USSR is a big fan of Indian movies. This love is not new but coming from decades. And the whole credit goes to the biggest showman of Bollywood Raj Kapoor. His movies *Mera Naam Joker* and *Shri 420* has a huge fan base in Russia. And the song of movie *Shri 420* 'Mera Joota Hai Japani' is an all-time classic hit. And same recognition had gained by Mithun Chakraborty with his movie 'Disco Dancer'. Its song 'Jimmy Jimmy' is also an all-time chartbuster in Russia. Both these two songs have several Russian versions.

Russia is not just the single name in the list. Middle eastern countries especially Saudi Arab, Poland, Germany, China, Egypt, Japan, Nigeria and Peru have a huge fan base for the Hindi cinema. Thank to one global star Shah Rukh Khan, who has a huge fan base in most of the countries and earned the badge of Global Superstar over the period of time with his movies. He is even the brand ambassador of Saudi Arab.

Still if we look deep into this, we will find it's not the narrative of the Bollywood films which gained this huge fan base. But other factors are working for this. Like songs, music, dance and romanticism in the movies are the main factor to gain this fan base. However, the pitch has now settled for Bollywood to tell a story of India's supremacy, but still Bollywood is lacking behind.

## Bollywood and Geo-Politics

Bollywood has no any interest regarding this field. In Bollywood movies, our own issues can't be resolved so that they can go further beyond the lines. Honour killings, Love Jihads, Political propagandas, Hindu-Muslim are the latest features of Hindi Cinema. These are the aspect to make the story hit on box office. Keeping aside the world, nationalism is the prime factor. Once we are resolved with our own fracas then we will think about others.

Hollywood movies are making the problem world's problem. Their superheroes are stating they are not just fighting for the America but for the entire humanity. They have to save the world, the universe. Their villain when arrived to earth annihilated half of the human race from the earth. What our Indian superheroes are doing is personal vendetta. Some superheroes so much childish, even the children couldn't get them. And of course, there is tones of romanticism in the entire movie.

Coming to spy thriller, war-based movies and some geo-political movies. War-based are ok where two howls of India are Pakistan and China presented as antagonists. But when it comes to spy thrillers, there is more silliness than the actuality. If we avoid Neeraj Pandey's work in this genre, which movie you will tell has a perfect narrative? Latest blockbuster **Pathaan**, starring Global Superstar Shahrukh Khan has an ordinary story line which we have seen in his counterpart Salman Khan's movie **Ek Tha Tiger**. A spy from India's R&AW and a spy from Pakistan's ISI fall in love and now they have task to save the pride of their respective nation.

Answering to a question in an interview with ANI, based on Bollywood depiction of spies in movies, ex-R&AW chief Vikram Sood said that they are hilarious movies best for comedy. I'll be shoot if I get romantically involved with an ISI agent. If it is done under a mission is different but when it is done on his own then it's different. (Ep-57, India's clandestine forces with former R&AW chief Vikram Sood, ANI, YouTube)[8]

## List of Bollywood movies based on cross-border romantic relationships

S.No.	NameofMovie	ReleasingYear
1.	Henna	1991
2.	Refugee	2000
3.	Gadar-EkPremKatha	2001
4.	DilPardesiHoGaya	2003
5.	Veer-Zara	2004
6.	EkThaTiger	2012
7.	PK	2014
8.	Razi	2018
9.	IndooKiJawani	2020
10.	Pathaan	2023

(Source:Bollymints)[9]

Starting with DilPardesi Ho Gaya where for the first time a uniformed man gets romanticallyinvolved in relationship with a girl across the border started this trend. The very next year another movie came Veer-Zara with much bigger faces in the lead, giving the message of peace and love .Whereasjust5 yearshadpassedaftertheKargilWar.

### **Bollywood andAudience**

As a movie maker if Bollywood is failing to convey the narrative of the nation, haven't we also failed Bollywood as being audience as we are to those Hollywood movies. Now a days, youngstersare more obsessed in watching Korean and Japanese movies and dramas along with English ratherthan Hindi. High budget sci fi films which have potentiality to grow better in future have failed onbox office. Ra. One is such example. Having extreme high VFX, some good storyline and of course finest of the Bollywood in the lead Shahrukh Khan wasn't enough to bring audience to the theatre.Later it was tagged as a movie which was ahead of its time. It might have earned 207cr in a budgetof150crbutitcan'tbesaidasuccessfulventure.That'swhytherewasneveranysequel.

Failures like this gives insecurities among the movie maker who feels audience is still not ready towatch futuristic movies from their side. Makers here see low budget family drama, romantic dramaandsocial dramamorebeneficial than the high budget sci fi and war movies.

**List of Bollywood Movies which earned big amount in a smaller budget**

S.No.	Name of Movie	Budget	Box-Office Collection (Worldwide)
1.	Secret Superstar (2017)	15cr	858cr
2.	Andhadhun (2018)	32cr	456.89cr
3.	Hindi Medium (2017)	14cr	334cr
4.	Uri: The Surgical Strike (2019)	25cr	359.73cr
5.	The Kashmir Files (2022)	15cr	250cr
6.	The Kerala Story (2023)	20cr	258.32cr
7.	Raazi (2018)	36.98cr	195.75cr
8.	Stree (2018)	23cr	182cr
9.	Sonuke Titu Ki Sweety (2018)	30cr	156cr
10.	Badhai Ho (2018)	30cr	130cr
11.	English Vinglish (2012)	20cr	121cr
12.	Aashiqui 2 (2013)	18cr	109cr
13.	Taare Zameen Par (2007)	12cr	98cr
14.	Pink (2016)	23cr	108cr
15.	Kahani (2012)	8cr	80cr

(Source: YouTube, gg

india,)[10][11]

This list includes films in last 10 years where low budget movies with regular Bollywood drama have earned lots of money. Most of the movies from this list is part of those typical genres on which movie have been made time to time and all are very successful. In the next section we will try to understand is it true what we learned so far from the Bollywood or South Indian Cinema is actually challenging the status quo?

**Differences and Problems**

Hollywood and Bollywood are like two poles in film industry. Sometimes they try to cross each other but still their flavours are different. Artistic and literary form of India is much older

than western culture. Apart from Ramayana and Mahabharata, there are other many authors and dramatists, whose literature is world class. Westerners still find Kalidas' work in Drama genre the best. His work Abhigyan Shakuntalam was the first Indian play which was translated in English along with many languages. Bharat Muni's Natya Shastra gives the implicit acquaintance of the drama, including dance, music, poetic and general aesthetic. Coming to presenting those literature on silver screen, we still lack behind a lot in comparison to Hollywood. Hollywood is extremely indulged in showing their western civilization and culture from decades. Troy, Hercules, 300, Gladiator, Exodus: Gods and Kings, Cleopatra are those movies showcasing the enriched western civilization. If we left last 8 years of Bollywood, there are only 2 movies showcasing the enriched Indian civilization: Mughal-e-Azam and

Jodha-Akbar. Apart from that most of the Indian historical films are based upon the Independence Fight. Kranti, Purab aur Paschim, Junoon, Lagaan, Saheed, Mangal Pandey are the films showcasing the fight of independence.

Hollywood at one hand, spent money like water in those films. Huge sets were made to give the reel feel of that era. Their creative directors, set designer or art director are set free to bring more realism in the film. At the other hand, we talk about Indian films, money is the biggest problem. Everyone here is to make huge profit with less investment. Only K. Ashif, director of Mughal-e-Azam was so much zealous to bring that realism. He took 9 years to complete his movie but didn't compromise with his approaches. Filmmakers from 80s 90s had no any interest in making Period Historical drama showcasing our cultural inheritance and heritage.

Bollywood had a mob mentality, following the chain which has been passed to one generation to another from decades. Those mass masala action, romantic and comedy had been made in thousands of numbers. Still, they are in production in the same number. Whereas in last few years we have seen, if the content has universality, storyline is packed and actors showing their full potential, such stories can reach to audience and the response will also be great. Padmaavat, Bajirao Mastani and Tanhaji are such stories which get the huge response from the audience.

### **South Indian Cinema**

In today's date, you turn on your TV and start watching movie channels, every channel showing 3 out of 5 movies are Hindi dubbed South Indian movie. The craze of South Indian movies is even greater than Bollywood movies, even in northern parts of India. South Indian cinema made up of 4 states regional cinema which includes: Telegu films, Tamil films, Malayali films and Kannada films. All the films made under these industries are called South Indian film. And all these four industries have their own WOOD name:

- a) Telegu Film Industry - Tollywood
- b) Tamil Film Industry - Kollywood
- c) Malayali Film Industry - Mollywood
- d) Kannada Film Industry - Sandalwood

Today, top south Indian actors enjoy the same stardom in the entire country which once actor like Rajesh Khanna, Amitabh Bachchan and Shahrukh Khan used to have. Now the word PAN India is in practice. Movies of these top actors are released PAN India level. It means that the movie is released all over the country simultaneously, dubbed into the mother tongue of the particular region or state. Now, target audience of Tollywood, Kollywood, Mollywood and Sandalwood movies are not just Telegu or Tamil or Malayali or Kannada speaking people but the entire nation. They are spreading their boundaries and making the content which has more universal appeal.

### **Pre and Post Bahubali Period**

Yes, the subhead which you just read is true. South Indian cinema has two periods: 1) Pre Bahubali period and 2) Post Bahubali period. You know Bahubali is a 2015 fantasy epic historical movie made by **S.S. Rajamouli** starring Prabhas, Tamanna Bhatia, Anushka Shetty and Rana Daggubati. A movie which changed the course of South Indian cinema

entirely or one can say Indian Cinema in the world entirely. But here for now we will stick with the course of South Indian cinema in the entire nation.

### **Age of Bahubali**

Bahubali is a movie of 2 parts. First part named Bahubali: the beginning released on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2015. With its release, it started breaking all the records. Its first day collection was Rs 75cr worldwide which was the highest till that date. First weekend opening was Rs 165.1cr which was the highest for any Indian film. In the first week movie earned around Rs 263cr worldwide and lifetime collection was Rs 650cr worldwide, surpassing all the records till that date.

The movie was based upon complete fictional work. It had the same plots as some other movies of this genre had. A King, a Queen, their child who lived an anonymous life and someday he suddenly finds out he is destined to do bigger things and conspiracy for the throne. Isn't it giving you the vibe of the Game of Thrones (GoT)? Where other movies, especially Hindi, lacked in this genre is they always tried to compare themselves with Hollywood movies. The leads in such movies always wore a long cape, high ankle shoes, collared shirt. These kings were more inspired with cowboys of American films than the actual kings of India. These fashioned clothes arrived in India after the invasion of Britishers. But in Bahubali you can see Prabhas wearing a complete Indian costume in the entire movie. A true sense of Indian culture depicted in the movie. Above all that, screenplay, visual effects, acting of all the cast (especially Anushka Shetty as Devsena and Ramya Krishnan as Rajmata Shivgami Devi) was outstanding.

This film brought back the stories of Kings and Queens in mainstream cinema. Such epic historical movies were stopped being made in Indian cinema. While the Hollywood had a long list of stories of kings and queens including Lord of the Rings, 300, The King, Troy, Alexander, Hercules and Gladiator. But in Indian cinema there are only few in the list includes Mughal-e-Azam and Jodha-Akbar as masterpiece before Bahubali. Instead of movies, such adventures were done on TV only. Ramayana and Mahabharat are the best example.

### **Pre Bahubali-Period**

So, it is not like that, South Indian movies were not travelling to northern parts or rest of the world. As I said above movies are like water, they find their ways to the audience. Earlier TV channels and some YouTube Channels used to buy rights of these movies to dub in Hindi and premiere it to the audience. We all have grown up watching Don no 1 and Meri Jung on Set Max starring Naga Arjun. Superstar Rajnikanth movies has always brought a charm on the screen. Shivaji the Boss and Robot are the two movies which were blockbuster of their time. But still there wasn't a huge theatrical release of these movies in northern parts. Most of us get to watch these movies only when they premiered on TV. Since, there was no OTT culture also, we could not get these movies in their own language with subtitles.

### **Post Bahubali-Period**

To understand what changes Bahubali has brought in the Indian cinema, we need to go through south megastar **Chiranjeevi's** speech, which he said on the pre-release event of his film Acharya with lots of aggression in his voice: In 1988, I made a movie called Rudraveena with Naga Babu and it got a national award. We went to Delhi to receive the award. The ceremony was scheduled in the evening. It was preceded by high tea. We were having tea in the hall. The walls around us were decorated with posters showcasing the grandeur of Indian Cinema. There were some brief notes regarding the same. There were photos of Prithviraj Kapoor, Raj Kapoor, Dilipkumar, Dev anand, Amitabh Bachchan, Rajesh Khanna, Dharmendra and so on. They showed their pictures. They described them beautifully. They praised various directors and heroines. And we thought that they would also talk about South India

ncinemain such great detail. But they just showed a still image ofNTR and Jayalalita dancing. Theydescribed it as South Indian cinema. And Prem Nazir, who played a hero in a record number offilmsin the historyof Indian Cinema,theys showed his pictureand that wasit.

They saidnothingaboutKannadaKanteeravaRajkumarorVishnuvardhan.They saidnothingabout Telugu actors like Rama Rao and Nageswara Rao. They were like demigods to us. And therewas no picture of them. There were no photos of NadigarThilagam Sivaji Ganesan. For me, it washumiliating and I felt very sad. They projected only Hindi Cinema as Indian cinema. They dismissedotherindustriesasregionallanguagecinema.Theydidn’tevenbothertoacknowledgei tscontribution.It mademe so sad.

I returned to Chennai and spoke with the media about this incident. **The Hindu** published a nicearticle about it. But there was no response to the issue we had raised. After so many years, today I feel so proud I could thump my chest. Our industry proved that we are no longer the regionalcinema. Telugu cinema has removed these barriers and has become the part of Indian cinema.Today, we are proud of our cinema. Everyone is amazed at our success. We have overcome thediscrimination. Thanks to films like Baahubali, Bahubali 2 and RRR. These films have helped us a great deal. We are so proud that Telugu industry has made these films. The maker of these epicfilms, the great director Rajamauli, hats off to him. (When Chiranjeevi felt humiliated at an award’sceremony,Brut India,YouTube)[12]

The above statement is enough to stablish the fact that **Bahubali: the beginning** was actually thebeginning of a revolution in Indian cinema. After the release of this film so many things hadhappened, which has changed the mannerism of watching the cinema. Jio 4g was launched andhigh-speed internet had made accessibility to content more easier. This was capitalized by manyOTT and Social media platforms. The culture of dubbing the movies in Hindi and premiering it onYouTube got fastened. And North Indian audience had taken this opportunity immediately. Now thesuccessofmoviesstartedcountinginmillions(basedupontheirviewsonYouTube).Southsup erstar Allu Arjun starrer Sarrainodu was the first Indian movie to cross the mark of 300million.Now if you search for most viewed Indian movies on YouTube, you will just find one Hindi movieinthelist in top 10whichisever green movieSooryavansham.

#### ListofIndianmoviesonYouTubewithhighestnumberofviews

S.No.	NameofMovies	Views(inmillions)
1.	JayaJanaki Nayaka	704.66m
2.	K.G.F:Chapter1	696m
3.	SitaRam	583m

4.	TheSuperKhiladi 3(NenuSailaja)	537m
5.	DumdaarKhiladi(HelloGuruPremaKosame)	502m
6.	AAa	493m
7.	Sooryavansham	427m
8.	DearComrade	361m

9.	InspectorVijay(Kavacham)	339m
10.	AAa2 (Chal Mohan Ranga)	324m

(Source:FreshLive,BollywoodProduct)[13][14]

### 5.1 What has been changed in Indian Cinema in last 8 years?

We need to go through lots of lists and tables of movies to understand the changes. These tables are based on:

- highest grossed movies (domestically and worldwide)
- highest grossed movies on Day 1 and Week 1
- no of footfalls of movies

#### Highest grossed Indian movies (Domestically)

S.No.	Name of Movies	Total Gross (in Rupees)	Original Language
1.	Baahubali 2: The Conclusion (2017)	1429cr	Telugu/Tamil
2.	K.G.F: Chapter 2 (2022)	1008cr	Kannada
3.	RRR (2022)	944cr	Telugu
4.	Pathaan (2023)	654.28cr	Hindi
5.	Dangal (2016)	538.03cr	Hindi
6.	Baahubali: The Beginning (2015)	520cr	Telugu/Tamil
7.	2.0 (2018)	519.65cr	Tamil
8.	Avatar: The Way of Water (2022)	484.36cr	English
9.	PK (2014)	473.33cr	Hindi
10.	Bajrangi Bhaijaan (2015)	444.92cr	Hindi

(Source: Wikipedia)[15]

As you can see in the table, 5 out of 10 movies are from south Indian cinema. Whereas at top 3 places, it's the south movies only. So far, no any movie has reached near Baahubali 2. And if we compare this with Hindi movies the difference is significant. Highest ever grossed Hindi movie is Pathaan, which released in 2023, earned 654.28cr. It is almost 300cr less

than the 3<sup>rd</sup> placed movie RRR in the list. So, the craze of South cinema on Indian box-office and audience can be understood.

### Highest grossed Indian movies (Worldwide)

S. No.	Name of Movies	Total Gross (in Rupees)	Original Language
1.	Dangal (2016)	2024cr	Hindi
2.	Bahubali 2: The Conclusion (2017)	1810cr	Telugu Tamil
3.	RRR* (2022)	1258cr	Telugu
4.	K.G.F: Chapter 2 (2022)	1250cr	Kannada
5.	Pathaan (2023)	1050cr	Hindi
6.	Bajrangi Bhaijaan (2015)	918cr	Hindi
7.	Secret Superstar (2017)	858cr	Hindi
8.	PK (2014)	769cr	Hindi
9.	2.0 (2018)	723cr	Tamil
10.	Bahubali: The Beginning (2015)	600cr	Telugu Tamil

(Source: Wikipedia) [16]

\*The movie is still in the run on the box-office in some countries.

For a change, in the worldwide collection, table topper is a Hindi movie named Dangal starring Aamir Khan. It is because of the stardom of Bollywood actor across the globe. This is the reason why 3 out of 10 movies in this list starring Aamir Khan. His movies gross too much in China, which makes his movies part of this list. However, 5 out of 10 movies are from South Industries. Whereas 3 in top 5 is from South Industries.

### Highest Opening Day Grossers in Indian Cinema

S.No.	Name of Movies	Total Gross (in Rupees)	Original Language
1.	RRR (2022)	222.5cr	Telugu
2.	Baahubali 2: The Conclusion (2017)	213cr	Telugu Tamil



3.	K.G.F:Chapter2(2022)	165.1cr	Kannada
4.	Saaho(2019)	124.6cr	Telugu
5.	2.0(2018)	105.5cr	Tamil
6.	Pathaan(2023)	101.2cr	Hindi
7.	Kabali(2016)	90cr	Tamil
8.	Beast(2022)	87.1cr	Tamil
9.	SyeRaaNarasimhaReddy(2019)	85.3cr	Telugu
10.	PonniyinSelvan: Part I(2022)	81.3cr	Tamil

(Source:IMDb)[17]

Coming to the list of highest opening day grossers is going to amaze you. Just one movie in the list, which again came in 2023. Before that there was no any Hindi movie in this list. It denotes the supremacy of south Indian films in Indian cinema nowadays. If you noticed the releasing year of films, all are dated after 2015, which was the releasing year of Baahubali: The Beginning. Definitely, Baahubali brought the bigger market for the south Indian films. Now they are not dependent on YouTube channels to dub the movies. They are doing this their own under their own banner, which is more profitable for them.

### HighestOpeningGrossers(Week)inIndianCinema

S.No.	NameofMovies	NoofDays	TotalGross (inRupees)	Original Language
1.	Pathaan	5	542cr	Hindi
2.	RRR	3	500cr	Telugu
3.	K.G.F:Chapter2	4	442cr	Kannada
4.	Baahubali2:The Conclusion	3	391cr	Telugu Tamil
5.	Sahoo	3	253.17cr	Telugu
6.	Sultan	5	252.2cr	Hindi
7.	2.0	4	205cr	Tamil
8.	War	5	193cr	Hindi
9.	Avengers:Endgame	3	187.14cr	English
10.	Avatar:TheWayofWater	3	160cr	English

(Source:Wikipedia)[18]

Note: Number of days for each film are different because not every film released on Friday. So, the count of days forweek isfromthedayoftheirrelease tofirstSunday.

It is needless to say why Pathaan is at the top. It got total 5 days to conclude its first week. So, on an average, it was much slower than RRR, which crossed 500cr mark just in 3 days. Again, in this listalso, 5 out of 10 movies are from south industry. Whereas just 3 from Bollywood and surprisingly 2fromHollywood.

### HighestFootfalls(noofticketssold)ofIndian Moviesinlast20years

S.No.	NameofMovies	Footfalls(in millions)
1.	Baahubali2:TheConclusion (2017)	120m
2.	Gadar:EkPrem Katha(2001)	50.6m

3.	K.G.F:Chapter2(2022)	50.5m
4.	Baahubali:TheBeginning(2015)	49m
5.	RRR(2022)	48m
6.	Dangal(2016)	39m
7.	2.0(2018)	36m
8.	PK(2014)	35.5m
9.	BajrangiBhaijaan(2015)	35.5m
10.	Dhoom3 (2013)	34m
11.	Enthiran(2010)	33m

(Source:Wikipedia)[19]

This list is more important than any other list of grossing money, because this shows the number of audiences coming to theatres for watching the movie. However, this list is just of last 20 years. If we conclude the entire history of Indian Cinema in this list, only 5 movies of 21<sup>st</sup> century will get into top 20. And out of those 5, again 4 movies are South Indian movies. The last Hindi movie which got the considerable amount of audience was Gadar: Ek Prem Katha, which sold 50 million tickets on ticket counters. After this, years passed, but not a single movie would have even come closer to that digit. Movies of stars like Aamir, Shahrukh and Salman were not even able to cross the mark of 40 million for almost 14 years. This shows how the craze of movies watching in theatres was decreasing. People started to rely more on Television and Phone to watch.

It was Bahubali: The Beginning which had managed to sold 49 million tickets, bringing back the era of theatres again. Whereas, Bahubali 2: The Conclusion sold 120 million tickets, breaking many previous records and setting the new one. Bahubali 2 lack behind from only one movie of the overall list which is Sholay. Sholay's footfall was more than 150 million, which is still a record.

Going through all the tables from above, one can easily conclude what has changed in last 8 years. People are more indulged in watching south Indian films than Hindi Films. Their movies

and concept have attracted the audience all over the nation. Apart from Pathaan and The Kerala Story, no other Hindi movie in recent time got so much hype. Whereas, in south industry there is huge number of movies in the list, which got so much hype for their concept, storyline, acting and music. Karthikeya 2, Ponniyin Selvan, Vikram, Kantara and Sita Ram are such movies of this list which attracted the audience from the entire nation.

### **South Industry: an opening for a whole new universe**

Movies are considered to be mirror of our society. They reflect our culture, habitude, religious beliefs and community. Due to internet, the reach of the content is worldwide. So, it is very important what we are saying and showing. Because that is the narrative of the nation. That builds the image of the nation. This way movies work as a PR for a nation.

If we see the work of Bollywood in last few years, does it really seem convenient? The violence and atrocity have taken over again the industry. Its nature is more sinister than before. It is tempting our youth. Tier B cities youth is more indulged in youth politics and hooliganism. We often hear riots in UP, Bihar, Bengal and Delhi. Crime rates in these areas are also high. Delhi is 4<sup>th</sup> most unsafe city in the world for women. All these have come from

the movies and other content that the youth watched regularly over the period of time. No one here has dared to go out of the league. Now they have got a new weapon: OTT.

If talk about south industry, at present we can sense the pure Indian culture in their movies. Dhoti, Kurta, Saree, classical music and instrument are still the vital ingredient of their movies. It is not like that it feels primitive, but there is balance in the fusion. Now our movies are being watched all over the world and it is working as an endorser of our culture. Videos from Russia, Japan and America had gone viral where people dressed in Indian attire marching on roads chanting Bhajans and Indian prayers. In such conditions, it is best to give them pure Indian culture rather than giving them back their own culture wrapped with Indian flavour.

South industry has got the Door to access the world, which Bollywood had from several years. However, where Bollywood had failed to deliver the quality content regularly. South industry is doing phenomenal job. Baahubali duology, Ponniyin Selvan duology, Kantara and Karthikeya 2 represents our cultural heritage. There are lots of stories left yet to tell our cultural heritage. We are one of the oldest civilizations of the world. Where others vanished with time, we are still here with the same firmness. That is the reason why it is more important to tell the world who we are and what we are.

## Conclusion

Going through all three industries above, I found that two industries didn't lose their flavour in spite of having a huge impact of cultural imperialism and globalization. It is not just India which is getting westernized but slowly westerns are also partially inclining towards Indian culture. Indians present there are actually making their presence strong. They are part of their parliament, part of their policy making. Still their narrative hasn't changed at all. Rather they expanded their narrative for all. In every big project of Hollywood, Indian character is a crucial part. Image of snake charmer and magicians has changed. The way Indians have contributed in last 30 years in building their IT and Media sector, have changed the perspective. That's why the India which you witnessed in "Indiana Jones" wasn't the same in "Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol."

South industry, however, haven't grown so much. But what they are doing is representing them in complete another way. Things which Hollywood delivers in mega budget, south has delivered

in lowest budget. *Minnal Murali*, released in 2021, in a budget of just 18 crore has the quality of a mega budget Hollywood movie. But, if you start watching the movie, you will get the pure desi feel rather than Hollywood. That's why people watched it and praised it for its unique concept. His powers may collide with those who are part of mainstream cinema in Hollywood for years, but the narrative is not what you will find in their cinema. Superhero in India had also started having the same mean as Hollywood: specially suited, protecting a city and overall children's favourite. And supervillain had the same traits like Hollywood. But *Minnal Murali* had broken all those traits. Supervillain in *Lungi* is so much destructive, fight between hero and villain in farm instead of some fancy location. All this is possible in India but not in Bollywood.

Bollywood need to understand that we are heading forward. So, a man in *Lungi* can't only be local gangster or a comic character. He can be a supervillain destroying the humanity. Big budgets and fancy locations don't make a film worth watching. It's the plot and storyline, acting and emotion that connects with the people. They need to work more on their narrative. I am not saying to stop what they are doing right now. But what am I saying is expand themselves and their narrative as the other two have done over the period of time.

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