

Chapter 50

Space of Culture and Brand in Sequel of Telugu Films: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

Telugu film industry known as Tollywood, is making its mark in terms of rich contents and branding strategies and subsequently receiving the audiences' acceptance to a greater extent. Making sequel of film has brought success to many of the films. The positioning of culture and brands has played a major role in the sequel of Telugu films in India. The films like Money - Money Money to Money Money more Money, Gaayam to Gaayam 2, Satya to Satya 2, Shankar Dada MBBS to Shankar Dada Zindabad, Rakta Charithra to Rakta Charithra 2, Mantra to Mangala and Mantra 2, Gabbar Singh to Sardaar Gabbar Singh, Baahubali: The Beginning to Baahubali 2: The Conclusion have made their landmark if culture and branding are taken into discussion. The making of such films has redefined the space of culture and brand endorsements. The chapter attempts to explore the sequel of Telugu films which have relevant pertinence to culture and branding in India.

INTRODUCTION

Making of sequels in Indian languages has a special space in the history of Indian film industry. There were cases when *Bollywood* sequels did well than their predecessors. The films like *Dhoom 2* and *Dhoom 3*, *Lage Raho Munnabhai*, *Phir Hera Pheri*, *Aashiqui 2*, *Golmaal Returns* and *Golmaal 3*, *Dabangg 2*, *Housefull 2*, *Krrish* and *Krrish 3*, *Singham Returns* and *Tanu Weds Manu Returns* did better than the previous films (Nandni, 2015). There are certain upcoming *Bollywood* film sequels like *ABCD 3*, *Hera*

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Pheri 3, Tere Bin Laden Dead or Alive, Great Grand Masti, Dabangg 3, Son of Sardaar 2, Kya Kool Hain Hum 3 based on the success of their previous films which are to be announced soon ('10 Upcoming Bollywood Film Sequels You Shouldn't Miss,' n.d.).

Tamil film industry, Kollywood created sequels - *Jaihind 2, Jaihind Kalyanaraman, Jithan 2, Kanchana 2, Ko 2, Krodham 2, Vennila Kabaddi Kuzhu 2, Vishwaroopam II, Pizza II: Villa, Pulan Visaranai 2* have the track record of doing better. When a film does well in Kannada film industry, Sandalwood, there are fair amount of chances to go for sequel film (Christopher & Suresh, 2017; Joy, 2013). Certain landmark sequels - *Mungaru Male 2, Savaari 2, Care of footpath 2, Huchcha 2, Uppi 2, Ayya 2, Bachchan 2, Dandupalya 2* in this industry have been well accepted by the audience.

The Telugu film industry, *Tollywood* is cashing in on film by making sequels. To name a few are *Kick 2, Arya 2* and *Bahubali-The Conclusion*. Studies find that the culture of sequels has gripped the industry ('Sequel fever grips Telugu cinema,' 2017). Sometimes it is the director or lead character as a symbol of brand in the film leads to make a sequel of the previous one. It is also found that to cope with the bad phase of one's career, the celebrities take the shelter of making sequel ('Nani coming with Sequel of his Hit Movie,' 2017).

From the above discussion, it can be said that major regional film industries including *Tollywood* are making sequels, keeping in mind the success of the original films. The present chapter focuses on the branding aspect of films. The branding could be the entire film, director or any lead character in the film.

CULTURE, FILM AND BRANDING: A THEORETICAL REVIEW

It is imperative to discuss certain concepts and theories pertaining to branding in the domains of films. Daragh O'Reilly and Finola Kerrigan (2013) in their study 'A View to a Brand: Introducing the Film Brandscape' assert that the socio-cultural approach to branding is essential. It is a common practice in film marketing that marketability and playability have engagements with marketplace. Marketability refers to the strengths of a film to its target audience. On the other hand, playability is all about the audience's response to the film (Kerrigan, 2010).

In their findings, Holly Cooper, Sharon Schembri, and Dale Miller (2010) claim that brand narrative is a multivariate construct the culmination of a multitude of different influences which have bearings on buyers and sellers. As result, consumers attempt to link social and contextual meaning to products and brands through observations of certain brands displayed in the films. In addition, D. Jobber (2004) has rightly observed that successful brand narratives possess the elements of clarity, consistency, competitiveness and credibility.

Yi Zhang (2015) underlines that the brand image has heavy bearings on brand equity which is related to the consumer's general perception and feeling. This strategy is used by filmmakers to market the audience for their films. M. Lorenzen and F. Ta'ube (2008) and P. K. Nayar (2009) explore that the star plays a greater role in making a film box office hit in Hindi cinema. It can also be applied to *Tollywood* in probing the complex nature of the space of culture and brand in sequel of Telugu films in India.

The current chapter attempts to study the space of culture and brand in sequel of Telugu films. The present research of qualitative in nature has considered certain sequel of certain films to understand the space of culture and branding in filmmaking in Telugu language.

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