



The reason South Indian cinema is successful today

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In his Academy Awards acceptance speech, Bong Joon-ho famously said, "Once you overcome the one-inch-tall barrier of subtitles, you will be introduced to so many more amazing films." This single quote sums up my journey of discovering South Indian cinema.

Regional films have been India's strongest suit when it comes to quality in filmmaking. Despite Bollywood being its biggest industry, Hindi films have only won 14 of the last 70 National Film Awards, while Bengali films have won 22 of them. Satyajit Ray is the most honoured director in National Film Awards with six films, with Buddhadeb Dasgupta, Mrinal Sen and Girish Kasaravalli holding the next spots.

However, it is not just quality and awards that define the regional film industry in India. The dynamic shifted a few years back, especially with S.S. Rajamouli's *Bahubali*. The duology collected over 2400 crores rupees, making it the highest-grossing Indian movie of all time.

Even before that, Shankar's *Enthiran* became an all-India blockbuster hit. In recent times, movies like *K.G.F.*, *Pushpa*, *RRR* and *Vikram* flooded the box office all across India. Regional industries that produced movies for the classes once in a while suddenly engulfed the masses and broke Bollywood as we know it.

WHAT DID THE REGIONAL FILMS DO RIGHT?

The creative vision is the soul of any film industry. Take for example *Hey Ram* (2000), a Tamil film directed by and starring Kamal Haasan. It is an alternate history film set during the partition of India. While films like *Inglorious Basterds* (2009) and *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019) popularised alternate history films, Haasan dared

to attempt so in 2000. However, the movie was not a financial success simply because it was ahead of its time.

Before *Bahubali*, Rajamouli's Telugu film *Magadheera* (2009) made him a household name. It's a fantasy-fiction film as bold as *Bahubali* in its approach, yet the technology just didn't catch up with its time back then. After Shankar attempted the impossible with Rajinikanth in *Enthiran* and revolutionised VFX in Indian cinema, Rajamouli could finally approach period films the way he wanted to and gave us *Bahubali* and *RRR*. Be it for the classes or the masses, the South Indian film industry has always been the one brave enough to dare, to dream, and put those dreams to reality.

The biggest factor behind the success of South Indian films is perhaps their originality. South India continues to hone its love for cinema with its originality and still be honest about its roots, extravagance, and boldness. *KGF* and *Pushpa* still have those mass over-the-top moments from the Rajinikanth days but with a modern touch and better storytelling.

With OTT taking over, the regional film continues to dominate the box office because it is brave enough to experiment with the art of storytelling and not play it safe.

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How growing up in gender-biased households affects sibling relationships

FATIN HAMAMA

The oddest common scenario in even the most progressive and learned families is the "Take your little brother with you" phenomenon.

It is when parents make their pre-teen sons, who are not logically capable of protecting a person double their age from anything, accompany their fairly-mature daughter everywhere they go, be it to the grocery store or to the coaching centre, for said daughter's "safety".

Despite how we choose to judge this particular occurrence, this is just one of many ridiculous circumstances faced by girls growing up with male siblings in a blatantly gender-biased household.

While the most apparent outcome of these treatments is the prolonged normalisation of such sexist practices, the one thing we seldom give thought to is how horribly this affects sibling relationships, especially when the brother themselves choose to stay oblivious.

Comparatively earlier curfews, evidently stricter restrictions in regards to going out, or being without adult supervision are some of the most recurrent biases most parents impose on their teenage daughters while being either notably lenient, or absolutely nonchalant, in regards to their sons, not realising that the latter is exactly what breeds the perfect excuse for justifying the former.

In countless cases, the brother never considers the wrongness of, or questions the discrimination despite being adults, and makes matters worse by actively siding with their parents who in turn fuel their superiority and saviour complex. In the midst of it all, it is the daughters who suffer the resulting lack of bare minimum freedom as an individual.

Matters become complicated if the brother happens to be a much younger sibling. It is difficult to make a young one unlearn parental conditioning.

Lashing out on them is certainly no way to make them understand such a multi-faceted issue.

However, when the brothers are older than or of the same age, such lack of empathy and action become very difficult to excuse, especially when they assign themselves an authoritative role over their sister by weaponizing the misogyny.

Naturally, after tolerance comes resentment, rage, and grudge. While the expression maybe different depending on the age gap, it can be equally scarring for both parties involved.

The worst part is that even when your brothers are supportive and speak up against the unfairness, their voices are usually the ones being heard, whereas yours have been ignored for ages. This realisation only cements the fact that they are still considered eligible to make decisions for you. This makes the resentment last just a bit more.

So, while the luckier ones of us do receive unconditional support from our

brothers, it is important to not lose sight of the actual problem as we actively tackle it to the end.

Hamama's problems smell like daruchini because she's dweep into them 24/7. Send help at fatin.hamama003@gmail.com

