

BEHIND THE BAHUBALI BOX OFFICE COLLECTIONS

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Abstract

The article mainly deals with the reasons behind the record-breaking collections of the movie bahubali. And it also tries to understand the plot of the movie and compares the movie with the rise of Narendra Modi's rise from Godhra massacre to the Prime minister position. The article states that achieving 1500 crore milestone for the first time in Indian movie history and winning the highest number of Lok Sabha seats after 1984 elections are nothing but the awakening of the fake nationalism, varnashramadharma among the majority of the people of India.

Key Words: Bahubali, Varnshramadharma, Hindu nationalism

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Baahubali 2- The Conclusion is the first Indian movie to cross the benchmark of 1000 crores worldwide. It got released across 9000 theatres in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada languages. *It earned Rs 854 crore in India and is inching towards the Rs 200 crore mark in the international markets with a tally of Rs 193 crore, bringing the worldwide figures to a grand Rs 1047 crore within 10 days of its theatrical run.*(Times of India) Continuing the legacy initiated by the Bahubali- the beginning movie which has been released in the year 2015 and with haunting question of ‘why kattappa killed bahubali’ dragged audience in large numbers to the theatres thus achieving the highest grosser benchmark.

It's no doubt that Bahubali is a spectacular movie with the highest standards of visual graphic works and presentation. Movies with this standards are desired to achieve this benchmark or even they are subjected to achieve more than that. But in the veil of the visual wonders, the movie lacks basic ideal that movie with an international standard should have a desire to present egalitarian values openly or sublimely. In the loudness of the presenting the visual wonder to the world audience, the movie misspelt the ideals and engulfed itself around the Hindu mythological values and highlights the utter feudalism as a form of society. The Varnshramadharma and the caste system were elevated to new heights in coating with the extravaganza of visual wonders. Certainly, as Devasena of Bahubali points, the beautiful and huge structures won't bring greatness to any kingdom or a movie in this case. It is the embedded values in the system which brings greatness. The movie lacks the embedded values of justice, equality in the rush of presenting this thick skinned movie.

With fake expressions of equality between the king and his subjects, with a mediocre and clichéd storyline of the queen mother or the deformed scheming uncle, the film only reinforces many terrible aspects of a cruel present that can draw sustenance from the success of this film. But this is good stuff for those who are not in the middle of this social world — like the NRIs who flocked to the movie on its release.(Sundar Sarukkai, The bali of cinema, 13th May, 2017, The Hindu)

The varnashramadharma uprightly placed where brahmin acts as a Manthri, a kshatriya family taking guard of the kingdom as kings, and shudras as the subjects and the fifth varna as the Banisa or a bonded slave. The varnas are not allowed to take over the other varna and do the duties out from their birth. Kattappa as a bonded slave- an untouchable has to guard the honour of the king and his family despite having all the abilities to rule the kingdom. The bahubali

family is the subject to rule the kingdom and through the male protagonist, the director hints the kshatriya values and duties. *The main conflict in the sequel appears to be about “Kshatriya” values, which plays out in what can only be described as “vachan clash”. Protagonists are always driven by duty and honour — determined by their varnashramdharma — and competing promises, equally valid, separate right actions from wrong ones. Then there is the fact that the film clearly promotes the cult of a great leader, infallible and just, set in the (lost) grandeur of a Hindu empire — complete with a giant Ganesh and porcelain Krishna.*(Aakash Joshi, Baahubali’s technical finesse is a vehicle for regressive socio-political values, May 10, 2017, Indian Express)

As an entertainment based industry, the movie freaks may argue that as an entertaining media the movie may always not be an idealistic or message oriented. But what's the point is that it shouldn't be supporting the values which contradict with the constitution. The movie upholds the values which were subjected as unconstitutional and pronounced as uncivilised. The world leading table topper in the gross collection- The avatar movie has been motivated towards the rights of the Pandora people and they showcased how the globalisation is going to destroy the ecology. Unlike that, the bahubali failed to give a proper message to the people and stands shamelessly as an object of sheer entertainment and box office money collection and nothing else.

Kuffir in his article Bahubali: *Celebrating the children the grandchildren of Nehru and Savarkar* places an important comparison before us that *The parallels with the Hollywood film 'The Birth of a Nation', released in 1915, exactly 100 years before Bahubali (The Beginning), are quite a few. The Birth of a Nation was the first blockbuster perhaps in cinematic history: made with a budget of around 100,000 dollars, it went on to earn around 20 million dollars. Like Bahubali, it too had one major idea to sell, that of white supremacy. Like Rajamouli, D W Griffith used unprecedented spectacle and scale to whitewash his inherently inegalitarian philosophy. As the film critic Richard Brody says in The New Yorker:*

'The worst thing about "Birth of a Nation" is how good it is. The merits of its grand and enduring aesthetic make it impossible to ignore and, despite its disgusting content, also make it hard not to love. And it's that very conflict that renders the film all the more despicable, the experience of the film more of a torment—together with the acknowledgment that Griffith, whose

short films for Biograph were already among the treasures of world cinema, yoked his mighty talent to the cause of hatred (which, still worse, he sincerely depicted as virtuous. (Kuffir, Bahubali: Celebrating the grandchildren of Nehru and Savarkar, 15 May, 2017, Round table India)

The same applies to Bahubali. Kuffir says that the movie is nothing but a celebration of the unequalness among the castes and showcasing the power of the upper castes with shamelessness. In his words, Bahubali *..is a film that celebrates the unabashed assertion of caste pride of the young, successful, new age Brahmin-savarna, of the grandchildren of Nehru and Savarkar, across India and the world.*

The second and important aspect of the movie's success can be very much comparable with the success of the Bharatiya Janata Party led by Narendra Modi the prime minister. His rise from the graves of the Godhra and aftermath massacre the spread if religious fear spread through his colleagues was much visible. His whole journey from the chief minister of the Gujarat to establishing the BharatiyaJanata party as a single largest party in 2014 Lok sabha elections by winning 336 seats. His rise in the party and as a national figure for Hindu nationalism started with this particular massacre. He never apologised for the riots and he has been criticised for not consoling the GujaratMuslims. (SHREEYA SINHA and MARK SUPPES, Timeline of the Riots in Modi's Gujarat, August 19, 2015, The New York Times) When asked for the apology he compared the riot victims with the puppies.

"... any person if we are driving a car, we are a driver, and someone else is driving a car and we're sitting behind, even then if a puppy comes under the wheel, will it be painful or not? Of course, it is. If I'm a Chief Minister or not, I'm a human being. If something bad happens anywhere, it is natural to be sad," Mr.Modi said to a question whether he regretted the riots. (IANS, No guilty feeling about Gujarat riots, says Modi, The Hindu, 2013)

"Up till now, we feel that we used our full strength to set out to do the right thing," he said. (IANS, No guilty feeling about Gujarat riots, says Modi, The Hindu, 2013))

Mr.Modi also contended that the Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team had given him a clean chit. "India's Supreme Court is considered a good court today in the world. The Supreme Court created a Special Investigation Team and topmost, very bright officers who

oversee the SIT. That report came. In that report, I was given a thoroughly clean chit, a thoroughly clean chit.” (IANS, No guilty feeling about Gujarat riots, says Modi, The Hindu, 2013)

Modi bears a responsibility for some of the worst religious violence ever seen in independent India – but there's nothing like looking like a winner to attract apologists. And the standard apology for Modi comes in two parts. First, there is normally an acknowledgement that the chief minister of Gujarat bears some vague responsibility for the orgy of killing and rape that engulfed his state in 2002 – but, um, wasn't that all a long time ago? And hasn't he behaved himself since – or, as the FT put it yesterday, done his best to "downplay tensions" between Hindus and Muslims? This is followed by pointing to Gujarat's rapid economic development and an appeal: shouldn't the rest of India enjoy some Modinomics? Or, as Gurcharan Das, the former head of Procter & Gamble India, put it in a piece for the Times of India last weekend: "There will always be a trade-off in values at the ballot box and those who place secularism above demographic dividend are wrong and elitist."(Aakash Joshi, Baahubali's technical finesse is a vehicle for regressive socio-political values, May 10, 2017, Indian Express)

So many criticisms in his name and party Modi managed all to win the elections and successfully leading the government. The development perspectives he showcased may have whitewashed the criticisms on him but the truth is that most of India need a Modi as he was. A Hindu nationalist with strong convictions to establish a HinduRashtra based on the terms of RSS. People have voted for that along with the development promises.

This is where the two successful events can be compared. Showcasing the Hindu nationalism and fundamentalism one rose to the power and one made a box office record to his name. The two cases are based on one theme- Hindu nationalism or life according to the varnashramadharma. One fearlessly fights to establish that and one projects the beauty of that in a grandeur manner.

The co-relation between this two grandiose success stories can be witnessed through this *At a theatre in a south Delhi mall, Baahubali: The Conclusion was met with the standing ovation it deserves. But the film was also greeted with chants of “Bharat Mata ki Jai” and “VandeMataram”.A Ram-like Hindu king, amid massive structures and temples has an obvious symbolism. In fact, Minister for Information and Broadcasting M. Venkaiah Naidu has called*

Baahubali: The Conclusion a “shining example of Make in India” and, in a lighter moment, said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is “the real Baahubali”. As we praise, and rightly so, the film’s masterful visual effect, there is some merit to looking at the effects of its story as well. (Aakash Joshi, Baahubali’s technical finesse is a vehicle for regressive socio-political values, May 10, 2017, Indian Express)

The two cases expose the myth of India as a diverse nation with rational values such as tolerance, equality and respect towards others. These two cases act above the constitution of India and glorify the Hindu nationalism and presses time and again for the need to revive the varna system embedded with the features of caste system through their respective mediums. And they are very much successful in their attempts to convince the people that what they are presenting is true and that should be the way of life. The grand presentation of saffronised Indian traditions, values and dharmas in the guise of cinema or politics must be reprehended.

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