

BOLLYWOOD ACTORS AND WEB SERIES A STUDY ON THE TREND OF BOLLYWOOD ACTORS APPEARING IN WEB SERIES

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ABSTRACT

Bollywood is the term given to Hindi Cinema. It is a formal name for the Indian film industry and every artist from this field like actors, singers, cinematographers, directors, producers, fashion designers are a part of it. Till now Bollywood has given many prominent faces to the audience but now the emergence of the digital platform, the popularity of web series is increasing with every passing year and thus the choice of popular actors too. They are trying their skills in online series as it is getting more recognition. The reason for the popularity is the youth who are spending more time on the internet. From last few years, many prominent actors became part of various web series on different online portals. In this study close observation is done on 2019 web series and popular Indian film actors who got portrayed in diverse characters. Also, critical analysis is done on the roles they are playing in web series.

Key Words: Bollywood, Web Series, Actors, Digital, Netflix, Amazon's Prime Video

I. INTRODUCTION

Bollywood is the industry which provides entertainment to the Indian audience. Every year several films release under this banner. People happily pay money to watch these movies as they want to spend their leisure time with entertainment. Indian cinema has a long history and it started way back in 1913 when the first Indian feature film was made by Dadasaheb Phalke, the silent one 'Raja Harishchandra'. After that, there was no looking back. The Indian film industry is producing the largest number of films in the world every year at present and Bollywood is the epicentre for this achievement.

Though the term 'Bollywood' is derived from the name 'Bombay', which is now known as Mumbai and 'Hollywood' is the term used for American Cinema, but it welcomes all the artists from different parts of the country and also from around the world to be part of it in any form. There are many actors and actresses who got success due to their talent, hard work and platform offered by the Bollywood industry. Few superstars of the film industry are Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor, Rajesh Khanna, Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan, Madhubala, Nargis, Hema Malini, Sridevi, Madhuri Dixit, Aishwarya Rai, Deepika Padukone and many more. They all are legends of their era. The big silver screen made them a well-known name to every house in India. Their fans are quite difficult to count in numbers as their fan following is endless. This shows the power of Bollywood which has given name, fame and money to many of its artists. Bollywood stands on top of

the entertainment sector for more than 100 years but nothing remains constant. To give competition to Bollywood another platform came gradually in India but now it's showing its worth. This platform not only competing with the silver screen but also with other mediums like television, radio and print. This new sector is popularly known as Digital Media.

Digital media changed the mindset of viewers or its consumers. Now folks are not taking out their time according to timings of Television, radio or films. On the contrast, they watch shows or films when they are free. All thanks to online platforms and internet which gave flexibility to its users. Now due to the changing trend and choice of people especially youth, the concept of providing video content is also changing. Just like in many foreign countries consumers are shifting from silver screens or television to OTT like Netflix, Hotstar, Amazon Prime, ALT Balaji, Zee 5 or others, where they can watch content according to their availability. This is the reason concept of Web series is introduced in India too in which few numbers of the episode of a particular show is made and then it's released on any online portal. A lot of youth in our country is busy with their life as competition is increasing day by day so in this busy lifestyle availability of a platform on which they could see content according to their choice and time is a wonderful option for them. Spending time and money in cinema halls for a movie started changing slightly. So now, actors from the film industry are also showing their interest for working in web series as they know this fact very well that this platform could increase their fan following as it has wide reach in comparison to Big Screen. Even directors and producers know this fact and thus they are considering Bollywood stars to play characters in their web series so that their existing followers engage with their web series too.

In this study concept of casting Bollywood stars in various web series on different online portals is analysed by taking experienced actors of the film industry who appeared in Web series in 2019. The parameter for the selection of actors is their experience. Actors who have more than 10 years of experience in Bollywood are analysed in this study.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Alpana (2019), explains in this research paper "**Analysis of Product Placement in Web Series and its Influence on Consumer Buying Behaviour**" says that most of the youth between the age group of 20 to 35 spends more time in watching episodes of a series in comparison to other age groups. The reason behind this is that as most of the people in this age group are students or working professionals who spend more time on smartphones while travelling and at that time they prefer to watch any series.

Kakkar A. And Naya K. in their study "**The Netflix Phenomenon in India: A qualitative enquiry into the urban Indian Youth's engagement with Netflix**" explains that with the improved technology and subtitles appearing in the episodes promoting the practice of viewing content online

as viewers have options like post-play, playback and mobile viewing or watching an entire season in a row.

Yashwant (2019) in his study "**Analysis of various effects of web series streaming online on the internet on Indian youth**" explains that majority of Indian youth (50%) according to study spend 3-6 hours daily watching web series, 40% of youth spend 1 to 2 hours and 10% exclusively spends 7-10 hours on OTT platforms which includes Netflix, Amazon's Prime Video, Youtube, Alt Balaji, Eros, Cheers, Hot star etc. This study also tells the taste of the youth. It explains that 70% of youngsters are watching online content which includes funny and bad words or language, violence or intimate scenes. 20% watch for lavish lifestyle and only 5% for other reasons.

Chauhan K. (2019) in her article '**Bollywood actors hit their stride in web series**' on Indian Television website quotes that film actors found a new cosy space as they are being part of web series on the digital platform. It was an experiment with Bollywood actors that was started in around 2017 and it's still going well. Platforms like Netflix, Amazon's prime video, Voot, ALT Balaji and Viu featured actors like Rana Daggubati in Social, Rajkumar Rao in Bose: Dead/ Alive, R Madhavan and Amit Kaushik Shah in Breathe and many more in various web series.

John Lynch (2018), in an article on **Business Insider** website, says that "Sacred Games" is Netflix's first original release in a campaign to reach more than 1 billion viewers in India as it is one of the largest potential international markets for the streaming services

Objectives:

- To find out prominent actors who acted in web series in 2019
- To analyse the characters played by various popular actors in 2019 web series
- To find out which online video streaming portal released maximum web series that includes Bollywood actors.

III. METHODOLOGY

Content analysis and personal observation have been done for this study. Many web series, online streaming portal and Bollywood actors are closely observed and focused on the study.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

1. Manoj Bajpayee

He is 50 years talented actor in the Indian film industry who has around 26 years of experience. He received many awards for his acting skills like two National awards, four Filmfare awards and also Padma Shri in 2019. Mr Bajpayee appeared in 2019 web series 'The Family Man' and played the character of 'Srikant Tiwari' a man working for his country in a national investigation agency against terrorism. The struggle of a family man is described in this series who tries to balance his time towards his family and duty. This series released on Amazon prime and got a good response from

its viewers. Manoj Bajpayee is a well known veteran actor and he debuted on the digital platform with this series and also got appreciated.

2. Nawazuddin Siddique

45 years actors with 21 years of experience have some extraordinary acting talent within him. Based on his wonderful skills he became one of the prominent faces of Bollywood after a lot of struggle. Although the struggle was worth as he got well recognition not only on the national level but also at international level. All credit goes to his web series 'Sacred Games' where he is playing a lead role as 'Ganesh Gaitonde'. This series is the first original Indian web series on Netflix which was released in June 2018 and after this, a lot of other Indian series got space on Netflix. In 2019 season 2 of Sacred Games also got appreciated by its viewers. Nawazuddin Siddique who already established himself as one of the most talented actors in bollywood has earned more fan following with this series. Even his dialogues from series such as "Kabhi Kabhi lagta hai ki apun hi bhagwaan hain" which means "Sometimes I do feel that I am the God" got a lot of popularity among the audience. All in all, he has won the hearts of his fans with this series. The other accomplishment of Siddique is that he won a lot of awards at the national and international level like Cannes Film Festival, Berlin Film Festival, Busan Film Festival, Tribeca Film Festival, Asia Pacific Screen Awards, Breakthrough Talent at the 2012 GQ Men of the Year Award and many more.

3. Saif Ali Khan

This man started his career 28 years ago with Hindi movie Parampara. He also won an award for Filmfare Best Male Debut. His initial years in Bollywood gave him some recognition but not stardom since his movies were not doing well on box office. But after struggling phase, he got well acclaimed for his role played in crime drama Omkara and received Filmfare Award for Best Villain in 2006. Soon after that, he reached to his golden era as he gave few of the biggest hits in their respective years like Race, Love Aaj Kal, Cocktail and Race 2.

2018 approached to him with a debut on the digital platform with the Netflix series 'Sacred Games' where he is playing the role of a policeman who wants to save his city from terrorist attack. He is one of the leads in this series. His role was well praised by critics. His role also continued in season 2 of Sacred Games that was released in 2019. This platform of web series given him a chance to prove that he even can play challenging roles like the character of 'Sartaj Singh' a Sikh cop who is shown as a normal human being, not like some superhero generally shown in many movies where a cop can fight anywhere with anyone. On the contrary, this character is much close to reality where even policeman could be beaten if he got stuck in any dangerous situation.

4.Pankaj Tripathi

Another great actor from Bollywood who has 16 years of experience till present and doing extraordinary well in Bollywood by playing a variety of

characters in movies like Stree, Newton, Gangs of Wasseypur, Lukka Chuppi, Fukrey and many more for whom he is becoming eye-catcher for viewers. He also appeared in many web series like in Mirzapur on Amazon's Prime Video in 2018 and won iReel best actor Award for it. Then in 2019, he appeared in Sacred Games 2 on Netflix, where he is acting as Godman and next to his another popular series of 2019 that is Criminal Justice on Hotstar, he is playing a character of Madhav Mishra, a lawyer who is trying to unfold a murder mystery to seek justice for his client. He is proving his potential to do variety and challenging characters in the Indian film industry and now on the digital platform too. He is applauded by critics for his outstanding roles in various projects and also got awards like News18 REEL Movie Awards for Best Supporting, Screen Award for Best Supporting Actor, Zee Cine Award for Best Dialogue during his journey in Bollywood.

5. Arjun Rampal

He is a multitalented actor who has 19 years of experience in the industry. He has received several awards including the National Film Award for Best Supporting Actor and the Filmfare Award for Best Supporting Actor for his performance in Rock On. He appeared in the Zee5 series 'The Final Call' and Arjun Rampal is playing the role of 'Captain Karan Sachdev' in the series who is disturbed and because of that many lives in flight gets in risk. He played his character perfectly. The story is very intense of the series and so the role played by him.

6. Emraan Hashmi

Emraan Hashmi doesn't need any introduction in India as he is well popular out there with 17 years of experience in Bollywood. But now he is getting well recognised in other countries also because of his Web series debut on Netflix with 'Bard of Blood'. It is a thriller with a combination of action and drama. This series is based on the novel of the same name written by Bilal Siddiqi. This series gave him well-deserved fame; he is portraying Kabir Anand a RAW Agent who can go to any extent for his country. In the mission of saving four Indian spies that are captured in Balochistan, Kabir is risking his life. This role proved his capability of doing justice to any given character.

7. Dia Mirza

This Diva has 21 years of journey in Bollywood and still going well and earning applause from fans and critics both for her acting skills. The latest example to prove this is her 2019 series 'Kaafir' on Zee5 for which she also won awards like Best Actor OTT female (critics) at Gold Awards, Best actor female (critics) at IWM digital awards and Dadasaheb Phalke Award, 2020 (Best Actress). Before 'Kaafir' she has many other awards in her kitty. Dia Mirza is playing the character of a Pakistani girl who is stuck in India under some circumstances and then the whole story is revolving around her struggle to prove that she is not a terrorist or Pakistani spy. She gave a

power pack performance and that is the reason she got so much appreciated, that she received three awards in a row for Kaafir.w

8. Vivek Oberoi

He has 18 years of experience in Bollywood and done a quite number of films. Even won awards like Filmfare award for best male debut and best supporting role for his first movie Company. After that, his movies didn't do well at box office. He was fading from Indian film industry when a web series 'Inside Edge' gave him recognition again, it was released on Amazon Prime in 2017. After the success of the first season, the second season released in December 2019 worldwide. Critics appreciated Vivek Oberoi hard work and he won the hearts of viewers too. He is playing the character as Vikrant Dhawan who is a businessman who is involved in betting too in cricket. He is playing the villain of the show and his role is quite convincing.

9. Vikrant Massey

He has 16 years of experience in the Indian film industry. He appeared in many Bollywood movies as well as Indian television shows like Balika Vadhu, Lootera, Dil Dhadakne Do, Half Girlfriend and recent one Chhapaak. He won awards like Kaleidoscope Indian Film Festival for Best Actor. On the digital platform, his career is quite blooming well. There are several series in his kitty like Rise on Youtube, Mirzapur and Made in Heaven on Amazon Prime, Broken But Beautiful on ALTBalaji, Criminal Justice on Hotstar.

In 2019 he placed the role of a cab driver named as Aditya who is framed in charges of murder and the story revolves around the murder mystery. He portrayed the role very well who got into jail for years without any crime and how he survived there. He got good reviews for his role in the series.

10. Kalki Koechlin

Kalki is an actress appreciated by critics for many of her performance on the big screen since around 12 years. She is well known for her roles in Dev D, Margarita with a Straw, Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara, Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani and many more. She even got Filmfare Award for Best Supporting Actress for her first movie Dev D and National Film Award – Special Jury Award in 2015. She has even done many series like Kalki's Great Escape, Shockers, Smoke. But in 2019 she marked her existence on the digital platform with 'Made in Heaven', 'Sacred Games 2' and 'Bhram'.

Made in Heaven is a famous series on Amazon Prime in which she is playing the role of Faiza Naqvi who is involved in a romantic relationship with her best friend's husband. She adopted this character beautifully and has done complete justice with this role. Another series on Netflix the popular Sacred Games 2 where she is one of the leads, she is playing the role of Batya Abelman who is a follower of Khanna Guruji played Pankaj Tripathi. She is playing a negative character in series and she did it very well. Her another series in this year is 'Bhram' on Zee 5 which is a horror

thriller. She is playing a lead role in this series too as Alisha Khanna who is observing some paranormal activities at her place but other people do not believe her. She again nailed the character in the series and has done full justice with her role.

V. MAJOR FINDINGS

- Celebrities gain the attention of the audience as they already won many awards and that's why they are being preferred in various Web series.
- Years of experience in Indian film industry engage existing viewers for the web series as fans are already familiar with them.
- In 2019 more Bollywood stars appeared in web series of Netflix in comparison to other OTT.
- On Netflix also 'Sacred Games' series is the one included maximum number of Bollywood stars like Saif Ali Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Radhika Apte, Pankaj Tripathi, Kalki Koechlin
- Apart from them Manoj Bajpayee, Huma Qureshi, Emraan Hashmi, Dia Mirza, Vivek Oberoi, Vikrant Massey were also starred in various web series on other OTT like Hotstar, Amazon's Prime Video, Zee 5 and ALTBalaji.

VI. CONCLUSION

Bollywood actors who have years of experience in the industry, they already have earned name and fame for themselves. Casting these actors means a kind of less risk of getting a particular web series flop. Every producer or director keeps this thing in mind while making any video content that it must get viewership also. This is a business point of view but very much needed when it comes to big projects. If there is any series which they want to release on some big platform, they want to ensure that their project must become a big hit and for this, they are using stardom of Bollywood stars. On the flip side, stars are also willing to be part of this new concept because they also knew this very well that the trend of watching content by viewers is changing and this is the platform where they can also increase their popularity because of the wide reach of this platform. This is a chance for them after getting famous in their nation as well as to get popular in other countries too. Moreover, for few stars web series are providing some challenging roles which these stars are willing to do as an artist. In this study, only a few stars are analysed who has done web series as the study is based on 2019 only. Apart from them, many other actors had done great work in web series like Radhika Apte, Mithila Palkar, Maanvi Gargroo, Rajeev Khandelwal, Sumeet Vyas, Priyanka Chopra, Arunoday Singh, Arjun Rampal, Anupam Kher, Rajkummar Rao, R Madhavan, Juhi Chawla, Nimrat Kaur, Karishma Kapoor, Dino Morea. This list will soon be going to add a good number of names of other Bollywood actors also in upcoming years as they are all set to get released in various online series. Few names of these stars are Kajol, Bobby Deol, Jacqueline Fernandes, Akshay Kumar and many more. The trend of actors choice is changing with choices of viewers in India and so there is an entire shift is coming soon in Bollywood where no longer first option of Bollywood stars will be only a

big banner film, it could be some big banner web series also. For it let's wait and watch.

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