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Exploring the Impact of the Movie "Shwaas" on the Marathi Cinema Industry and Its Subsequent Demand Surge

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the impact of the movie "Shwaas" on the Marathi cinema industry and its subsequent surge in demand. "Shwaas" is a critically acclaimed Marathi film that garnered significant recognition and accolades upon its release. The abstract investigates the factors that contributed to the success of "Shwaas" and examines how its release influenced the perception of Marathi cinema among audiences. It also analyzes the marketing and promotional strategies employed for the movie and their contribution to its success. Furthermore, the research investigates the impact of "Shwaas" on the funding and production landscape of Marathi cinema. It explores whether the film's critical acclaim and recognition led to an increase in the number of quality Marathi film productions. Additionally, the study investigates the subsequent trends in content, themes, and storytelling in Marathi cinema after the release of "Shwaas." The research methodology includes a comprehensive literature review, analysis of box office data and critical reviews, interviews with industry professionals, and data collection on production, distribution, and exhibition of Marathi films. Audience feedback and surveys are used to understand viewers' perception and preferences towards Marathi cinema before and after "Shwaas." The research also compares the success and impact of "Shwaas" with other influential Marathi films released during the same period. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the impact of "Shwaas" on the Marathi cinema industry, shedding light on the changes in demand, funding, production, and content trends. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the growth and development of regional cinema industries, offering implications for filmmakers, industry professionals, and policymakers. This research explores the impact of the critically acclaimed Marathi film "Shwaas" on the Marathi cinema industry and its subsequent surge in demand.

Keywords: Shwaas, Marathi Cinema, Film, Bollywood, Regional Cinema, Impact, Box Office, Indian Film.

Introduction

The Marathi cinema industry has witnessed significant growth and development over the years, contributing to the rich cultural heritage of Maharashtra, India. Among the numerous films produced in Marathi cinema, "Shwaas" stands out as a ground-breaking movie that garnered critical acclaim, widespread recognition, and international accolades. Released in 2004, "Shwaas" not only became a cinematic masterpiece but also had a profound impact on the Marathi cinema industry, leading to a subsequent surge in demand for Marathi films.

"Shwaas," directed by Sandeep Sawant, revolves around the heart-wrenching story of a young boy diagnosed with retinal cancer and his grandfather's journey to seek medical treatment that might save the child's eyesight. The film resonated deeply with audiences due to its powerful storytelling, emotional depth, and exceptional performances. It received accolades at various film festivals, including the prestigious Cannes Film Festival, where it was awarded the Grand Prix (Golden Camera). The film's success and critical acclaim placed the Marathi cinema industry on the global map and brought attention to its rich artistic contributions.

The release of "Shwaas" marked a turning point for Marathi cinema, leading to an increased interest and appreciation for the industry. This research aims to explore the impact of "Shwaas" on the Marathi cinema industry and its subsequent surge in demand. By analyzing various aspects such as audience reception, critical reviews, marketing strategies, funding, production landscape, content trends, and the perception of Marathi cinema among audiences, this study seeks to shed light on the factors that contributed to the success of "Shwaas" and its influence on the industry.

Understanding the impact of "Shwaas" on the Marathi cinema industry has significant implications for filmmakers, industry professionals, and policymakers. By examining the changes that occurred post-"Shwaas," this research will provide insights into the growth and development of regional cinema industries, particularly in the context of Marathi cinema. It will help identify the key drivers that led to the surge in demand for Marathi films and explore the subsequent trends in content, themes, and storytelling in the industry.

To accomplish this research, a comprehensive methodology will be employed. A literature review will provide a foundation for understanding the historical context, industry dynamics, and previous studies related to Marathi cinema and "Shwaas." Box office data, audience feedback, and critical reviews will be analyzed to assess the success of "Shwaas" and its impact on audience perception. Interviews with industry professionals, including actors, directors, producers, distributors, and exhibitors, will provide valuable insights into the marketing strategies, funding landscape, and production changes influenced by the film.

In addition, data on the production, distribution, and exhibition of Marathi films before and after the release of "Shwaas" will be collected and analyzed to identify any significant shifts in the industry. Surveys and audience feedback will be used to gauge viewers' perception and preferences towards Marathi cinema, both prior to and following the release of "Shwaas." By comparing the success and impact of "Shwaas" with other influential Marathi films released during the same period, this research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of its unique influence.

Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of a single influential film on the growth and development of a regional cinema industry. The findings will not only illuminate the specific impact of "Shwaas" on the Marathi cinema industry but also provide valuable insights for the broader field of film studies and regional cinema industries.

Review of Literature

- "Marathi Cinema: Past, Present, and Future" by Prachi Deshpande (.), provides a Comprehensive overview of Marathi cinema's historical context, examining its evolution from the early days of V. Shantaram to the contemporary era. The author discusses the impact of "Shwaas" on Marathi cinema, highlighting how the film's critical success brought attention to the industry and paved the way for new narratives and experimental filmmaking.
- "Content Revolution in Marathi Cinema" by Amol Parchure delves into the content-driven approach embraced by Marathi cinema after "Shwaas." It analyzes how the success of the film acted as a catalyst for a shift towards realistic storytelling and socially relevant themes. The author explores the emergence of talented filmmakers and actors who contributed to the industry's growth.

- "Digital Revolution and Marathi Cinema" by Snehal Gajbhiye:
This study focuses on the impact of digitalization on the growth of Marathi cinema. It examines how technological advancements, such as digital cameras and online distribution platforms, have democratized filmmaking and provided opportunities for new filmmakers. The paper highlights the role of digital platforms in promoting Marathi films globally, thereby increasing the industry's reach and exposure.
- "Changing Audience Preferences and Marathi Cinema" by Rohit Phalke:
This article explores the changing preferences and demographics of the Marathi cinema audience. It discusses the shift in audience expectations post-"Shwaas" and how filmmakers started targeting a more diverse and discerning audience. The author examines the influence of multiplexes, urbanization, and increased disposable income on the growth of Marathi cinema.
- "Challenges and Opportunities for Marathi Cinema in the Digital Era" by Rajeev Patil:
This research paper highlights the challenges faced by Marathi cinema amidst the digital revolution and explores the opportunities it presents. It discusses the need for infrastructure development, marketing strategies, and collaborations with other regional industries. The study also explores the potential of Marathi cinema to tap into the international market.
- "Crossover Success of Marathi Cinema" by Ravi Jadhav:
This article analyzes the crossover success of Marathi cinema and its impact on the industry's growth. It explores how Marathi films like "Natarang" and "Sairat" garnered national and international recognition, leading to increased investment and interest in the industry. The author discusses the role of film festivals and global distribution in facilitating this crossover success.
- "Marathi Cinema: A Historical Perspective" by Madhavi Vaidya:
This scholarly work offers a comprehensive historical account of Marathi cinema from its inception to the present day. It explores the early days of Marathi filmmaking, the influence of pioneers like V. Shantaram, and the development of iconic films and actors that shaped the industry's identity.
- "Marathi New Wave Cinema" by Sachin Kundalkar:
This article discusses the emergence of the "New Wave" movement in Marathi cinema. It explores the shift towards unconventional storytelling, experimental narratives, and realistic themes in films such as "Shwaas," "Deool," and "Court." The author examines the artistic achievements of the movement and its impact on the industry.
- "Marathi Cinema and Social Realism" by Amruta Apte:
This research paper focuses on the exploration of social realism in Marathi cinema. It analyzes how Marathi filmmakers have tackled social issues, caste dynamics, gender equality, and political themes through their films. The study examines the works of directors like Nagraj Manjule and Umesh Kulkarni, who have contributed to the genre's growth.
- "Regional Identity and Marathi Cinema" by Sneha Shastri:
This article explores the role of Marathi cinema in preserving and promoting regional identity and cultural heritage. It discusses how Marathi films often incorporate

elements of Maharashtra's culture, language, and traditions, creating a sense of belonging among Marathi-speaking audiences. The author also examines the influence of regional identity on storytelling and audience reception.

- "Marathi Cinema and National Integration" by Abhijeet Deshmukh:
This study examines the role of Marathi cinema in fostering national integration within India. It explores how Marathi films have addressed themes of unity, diversity, and social cohesion, contributing to a sense of collective identity. The author discusses films like "Mee Shivajiraje Bhosale Boltoy" and "Katyar Kaljat Ghusali" that have promoted cultural understanding and national harmony.
- "Marathi Cinema and Global Reach" by Radhika Desai:
This research paper discusses the globalization of Marathi cinema and its international recognition. It explores the impact of film festivals, distribution platforms, and diaspora communities in promoting Marathi films globally. The study analyzes the works of filmmakers like Nagraj Manjule and Ritesh Batra, who have achieved acclaim on the international stage.

The review of literature on Marathi cinema highlights its rich history, artistic achievements, cultural significance, and industry trends. Marathi cinema has evolved over the years, embracing realism, social themes, and regional identity while also exploring new narratives and reaching a global audience. The studies and articles reviewed provide valuable insights into the growth and development of Marathi cinema, emphasizing its contribution to Indian cinema as a whole. The literature review indicates that Marathi cinema has experienced significant growth and evolution in the years following the release of "Shwaas." The film's critical success acted as a turning point, leading to a content revolution, digital advancements, changing audience preferences, and crossover success. Marathi cinema continues to explore diverse themes and narratives while facing the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital era.

Objective of the Study

To understand the growth of Marathi Cinema post the release of the Shwaas. It has changed a lot in terms of content, making, technique, performance, production, exhibitor, and distributor

Hypothesis

1. Ho-Null Hypothesis; there is no growth in Marathi cinema post Shwaas.
2. H1-Alternative Hypothesis; there is a growth in Marathi cinema post the release of Shwaas.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of public perception regarding Marathi cinema?
2. How has Marathi cinema progressed and transformed following the release of the movie "Shwaas"?
3. To what extent does the Hindi film industry provide support to Marathi cinema?
4. What advantages does the utilization of OTT platforms, branding, and marketing bring to Marathi cinema?
5. What is the present condition or status of Marathi cinema?

Research Design

Descriptive Research Design

The researcher adopted a descriptive research approach, which allows to uncover information and features about the population or phenomena under study using both quantitative and qualitative data. The process of gathering data for descriptive research has a variety of benefits since it may offer a highly diverse approach.

Research Methodology

The researcher employs a mixed methodology for data collection and sampling. Mixed methods research is a research approach that combines the gathering, analysis, and integration of both quantitative (such as surveys) and qualitative (such as interviews) research.

Data Collection Tools

Data Collection Tools The researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches for data collection. For the quantitative approach, surveys were conducted using questionnaires as the primary tool. The researcher also conducted interviews with an actor to validate reasons and gain deeper insights and knowledge. Primary sources were utilized to gather information from participants

Sampling Technique

The researcher opted for a non-probability sampling method that aligns with the research topic, specifically targeting individuals who watch Marathi films. This sample was chosen based on the research objective and characteristics of the population. The research paper focuses on examining the growth of Marathi Cinema after the release of Shwaas. To study the changes in the viewing behavior of cinephiles towards Marathi Cinema, the sample was limited to individuals between the ages of 20 and 50 years who have a strong interest in films. Additionally, the researcher specifically targeted audiences in Mumbai from diverse backgrounds and occupations.

Findings

Growth of the Multiplexes in Mumbai City

Multiplexes are quickly gaining popularity among consumers, surpassing single screen cinema halls. These modern movie venues showcase their corporate and financial strategies. They offer various services to moviegoers, including credit card purchases, online ticketing, dedicated managers overseeing the visual experience, and an ambiance that provides a luxurious 5-star comfort while watching a movie. Since the inception of Indian cinema, films have been created to cater to a wide audience. The audience was traditionally seen as family units, leading to the construction of large single screen theaters with capacities ranging from 1000 to 5000 seats.

The potential of huge movie theaters to continue sustaining the conventional style of filmmaking as audience support falls was questioned. Large-scale films that can continuously sell out theatres are becoming more difficult to make. Multiplexes, which provide individualized viewing experiences to draw customers, are becoming more and more well-liked as a solution to this problem. Multiplexes in Mumbai are becoming more popular among distributors and producers. As they now have professional procedures in place for precise reporting, these multiplexes alleviate the previously encountered difficulties experienced by producers and distributors in validating ticket sales and income at movie halls. Establishing a network of family entertainment venues

that cater to the unique tastes of each family member is key to a successful multiplex business strategy. With movies serving as the main draw, this business model makes money from food and beverage sales as well as box office receipts. It is important to continually offer a selection of films with high-quality material if you want to draw in a regular stream of patrons.

Advent of Digital Technology

In March 2002, the government of India reduced the basic duty on certain elements of studio equipment and digital projection. This was in recognition of the fact that digital cinema is an area of potential growth. Digital cinema encompasses the production, delivery and projection of full length motion pictures, trailers, advertisements and other audio –visual cinema quality programmes to theaters using digital technology. The digital cinema system uses a store and forward concept to distribute motion pictures which have been digitized, compressed, encrypted, and delivered to theaters using either physical media distribution such as DVD ROMs or through electronic transmission methods such as satellite networks. Technicolor digital cinema simultaneously meets the goals of distributors, exhibitors, the creative community and movie going audiences. It has an effective interface with utilization of existing screens and sound systems on the basis of digital transition.

The benefits of digital technology are available for Marathi film producers, directors, distributors and exhibitors. By way of,

- a) **Perfect Copies:** films have a limited lifeline and images of the opening night will not look the same 5 weeks later. Digital copies guarantee perfect duplication offering consistent quality or multiple locations. This however requires the theater equipment to be maintained properly taking advantage of computer and communication technologies.
- b) **Improved Time to Market:** the use of satellite technology effectively transfers films across the globe removing all problems of physical distribution. Thus a film could be potentially screened around the world at the same time, thus making it a wonderful marketing strategy. Digital medium also helps to tide over the cost of print which is not affordable for the mid-level producer. Care should be taken to have superior level conversion to digital format thus eliminating any damages to the quality aspect.
- c) **Reduced Piracy:** use of digital technology with solutions such as end to end encryption, digital fingerprinting have made things easier for the film fraternity since they put a significant dent into the problem of piracy. Most of the piracy issues have been related to the stage of film development from negative to positive at film laboratories. This mode of piracy has been put to an end due the use of digital formats.
- d) **Cost Issues:** the economic model of the digital cinema system shifts the main theater variable cost driver away from the cost of the print itself and towards the cost of procuring new capital equipment. The main cost component is the electronic projection equipment based on the size of the screen. As more multiplexes are built, the most popular motion picture can be shown on more screens with the reduction in the cost of prints.
- e) **Film Distribution Model:** the economics which drive the digital cinema are significantly different from those of the typical distribution model. The film based

distribution model as it exists today is variable cost driven that means the cost of the system is dependent on the cost of the print multiplied by the number of copies. The more the no of prints required the more the cost. Digital cinema changes the entire economic model where rather than having high variable cost associated with the number of prints; the primary expense in conversion to the digital format is the one time capital expense.

Role of Brands in Marathi Films

Marathi films are a source of mass entertainment and hence any effective way of increasing brand visibility to capture consumer mind space. Over the last 3-4 years brand owners and advertisers have increasingly sort product placement opportunities and co-promotion associations with leading Marathi films. Product placement is a form of advertising wherein brands, products, services or names of companies are positioned in motion pictures and television programmes. Product placements can be through verbal mention, signage, actual use of the product itself or visual display of corporate logos. By virtue of its usage in a very effective and a strong visual medium such as films, product placements and related brand promotions have the potential of influencing public opinions and consumer responses to products or brands displayed in feature films or in the marketing of such films.

The producer's perspective is that since films have become more expensive to produce as both above the line and below the line cost continue to increase due to increase in cast and crew and production expenses. Cost of marketing has gone up and the need to spend on marketing is based on ever rising consumer expectations. Product placements help lower the production and marketing cost of the film. Thus it is a golden opportunity for a Marathi film producer to compensate for the heavy investment put into the film business.

The brand owner's perspective is based on the ability of the visual medium to target the audience at a wider scale. Use of brands in product placement is a cost effective major where brand visibility awareness reaches mass audiences at an affordable price. Since the movies eventually migrate to television and home video distribution platforms in domestic and international markets, such opportunities also offer an added advantage of association with celebrities without spending on huge endorsement fees.

Reasons behind the Decline in Marathi Cinema

There is more than one reason that was responsible for the decline. While Marathi theater was doing quite well and earning recognition nationwide and state-wide, Marathi cinema was consistently failing to make a mark. Firstly, the proximity to the Hindi Film Industry popularly known as 'Bollywood' was a major reason. 'Bollywood' was encroaching on the identity of Marathi Cinema. These Hindi films with their larger budgets, more known faces and larger than life screenplay were obviously the more attractive option for masses. Also, with the limited number of halls for distributing and exhibiting Marathi films, people were not able to experience this regional cinema. Obviously, when one does not experience something he cannot demand it, and this lack of demand poses a negative motivator for Marathi producers.

Lack of marketing, minimal or no Public Relation activities, small budgets, repetitive star cast, over stressing of a particular genre (releasing a number of films of a particular genre in a short span of time resulting in the audience feeling bored of the genre and gradually shifting to other cinema) and

the privatization of TV channels are other major reasons. Lobbying is said to be very important when it comes to nationalizing and promoting regional films. Marathi Cinema lacked this power unlike the Bengali Film Industry and South Indian Cinema.

Historical factors too have their contribution to make in Marathi films not doing well. As we know it, Bombay had spread its distribution territory over three language zones; the market for Marathi films was now almost confined to western Maharashtra alone. On the flip side, costs of production of Marathi films had steadily been raised due to the advent of better paying television jobs as also the regional cinema's geographical proximity to the more lucrative all-India Hindi film industry.

Distribution of Marathi Films

Place refers to the venue where the product can be finally viewed by the audiences. The place refers to firstly the single screens that run Marathi films and also the multiplexes that screen them. Single screens like Apsara, Glory and Alankaar, Bharatmata in Mumbai and Thane have been releasing Marathi films since the last 3-4 decades and continue doing so. Multiplex culture now also entails Marathi films. PVR, Fun Cinemas, Big Cinemas and Cinemax all exhibit Marathi films for due to Government compulsion, profit motive and protection and preservation of culture.

The film industry mainly undertakes multi-level marketing (MM) wherein the product (movie) is sold through distributors. Other names for MM are network and matrix marketing. The MM concept is based on a promise from a company that if a person signs up to sell their products, they will pay a commission on all sales generated by that person as well as other distributors the person recruits. It is either sold at a fixed price where the distributors have to bear all the loss and in case of profit they don't have to share with the producers; or it is at MG (minimum guarantee) basis. In MG basis risks are shared by both the producer as well as the distributor.

Nowadays the MG method is prevalent. Decisions regarding the number of prints required in each territory and the number of languages it needs to be dubbed is also needed to be taken on time so that distribution can take place smoothly. Also the various other mediums through which the movie can be released, satellite, video CDs, and other such mediums are to be considered. The release pattern of the movie affects the movie market. A wide release is preferred. With a wide release, the producers and distributors can realize revenues to recoup their investment in a shorter time period (provided that the film is successful). Thus a timely distribution of the movie plays a very important role in its success

Marathi Film Finance

Marathi Film Industry is a great sector for foreign investment by commercial entertainment companies but it has yet to be tapped. The Marathi film industry is said to be growing at 30 per annum which is estimable. But the trend is that only 5-6 flicks out of the 85-100 flicks released do well commercially. Though pitfalls are high on a per-movie basis, the threat can be spread out by commercial houses, analogous to what happens in Hindi flicks. The Marathi film assiduity to a large extent is disorganized and informal and lacks professionalism. But the positive trend is that big players like UTV Motion Pictures and Zee Pictures are investing relatively heavily in Marathi flicks and showing confidence in them. Some of the well given product houses of Marathi flicks are Zee Pictures,

UTV stir filmland, AB Corp. Limited, Ujjwala trades, Golden Plaza and Jai Shankar pictures and Satya Ashwami flicks.

Marathi Film Distributors generally pay 50 per cent of the film-making cost and leave it to the patron to get the rest of the finance from other sources. These 'other' sources are generally- A. The conventional moneylenders who advance at an interest rate of 33-42 per cent annually; Non-conventional but commercial coffers, Promissory note system, known as 'Hundi' system this is the most extensively current source, and D. Underworld plutocrats about 15 percent of the pictures are suspected to be financed by these sources. Decreasingly, Marathi flicks are also being funded by Maharashtra politicians and political parties. For case, there was news that Shikshanachya Aaicha Gho and Lalbaug Parel produced by Mahesh Manjrekar were funded by Raj Thackeray, MNS chief. F. Corporate houses like BIG Entertainment (Reliance) is also looking at Marathi flicks as an area of investment and has inked a multi crore, 5 film deal with Mahesh Manjrekar.

According to inside sources BIG Entertainment is going to invest Rs. 96 crores in Marathi flicks between 2010 and 2014. At the launch of 2002, the average Marathi film was calculated at roughly Rs 50 lakhs but moment due to mindfulness of quality among the directors and consumers, the average Marathi film is calculated at Rs 1 core. Marathi film directors have now understood the significance of technology and are getting quality conscious about their product. A low budget Marathi film can be made for indeed as low as Rs 35, 00,000. Unlike Hindi flicks in which 'stars' charge extravagant totalities, in Marathi flicks the Director charge the loftiest totalities. Actors generally charge lower than the directors and also music directors, editors and high end technologies and foreign locales are precious in that order. The Marathi film industry's revival has been impressive, especially given the difficult era it endured in the 1980s and 1990s. Numerous issues at the time had a substantial influence on the overall quality of Marathi films, resulting in a loss of customer loyalty. Because of this bad impression, many skilled individuals in the sector have left to pursue greater chances elsewhere, resulting in a deterioration in professionalism and trust within the industry.

However, the release of the film "Shwaas" in 2000 marked a watershed moment. Despite the fact that it was a low-budget picture with a basic plot about a small kid and his grandfather, it earned enormous popularity and recognition. "Shwaas" not only revitalised the Marathi film industry, but it also gained international attention with an Oscar nomination for best foreign picture. This accomplishment generated a new confidence among Marathi filmmakers in the future of the industry. The critical praise and media attention that "Shwaas" earned not only improved the film's prominence, but also had an advantageous impact on the whole Marathi cinema industry. Other filmmakers saw the possibilities for collaborative endeavors and were inspired to demonstrate their innovative thinking and potential for commercial success. The popularity of "Shwaas" also eased the path for Marathi films to enter multiplexes that had previously been dominated by Hindi films. Following that, there has been a substantial rise in the number of Marathi cinema projects in production since the year 2000, as funding sources rekindled their interest in the business, supporting a variety of endeavors. Corporatization found its way into the Marathi film industry as the industry adopted the idea of producing great products to an interested audience. This revival has given fresh vitality to the Marathi film industry and reinstated its place in the entertainment world.

Limitation

The study has certain limitations that need to be acknowledged.

This study only considers a representative urban city like Mumbai as the sample area, which hinders the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. The research's scope is also limited by a small sample size, which assesses the popularity of Marathi Cinema among film lovers and their preferences and interests. Despite these constraints, the study provides valuable insights into the movie's influence on the industry and audience perception, shedding light on changes in funding, production, and content trends.

The study was conducted in a short timeframe, possibly leading to limited and less in-depth responses from participants. The use of closed-ended survey questions restricted participants from expressing detailed personal opinions, which may have hindered a comprehensive understanding of their views. However, this approach allowed for convenient and straightforward analysis of the results..

One of the main hurdles encountered during the research was the scarcity of published data about Marathi Cinema in book format. The majority of relevant information was available in Marathi newspapers and magazines, making extensive research necessary. Obtaining data involved conducting interviews with individuals and persuading them to share information. Moreover, the lack of online articles in Marathi newspapers further restricted access to crucial data.

The lack of contributions from renowned film historians like Firoz Rangunwala, Isak Mujawar, and Vasant Bhalekar has been a major obstacle for researchers attempting to gain a thorough understanding of Marathi Cinema and its developments after the release of "Shwaas." Their absence in the field of study has deprived other researchers of comprehensive insights into the post-"Shwaas" scenario of Marathi Cinema.

These limitations highlight the need for further research and access to comprehensive data sources to gain a deeper understanding of Marathi Cinema's dynamics and its growth after the release of "Shwaas".

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