



Will the IPL season affect the box office business of Kalank and Avengers: Endgame this year?

March was one of the most successful months in 2019 for Bollywood.

There was a time in Bollywood when filmmakers would shift the release dates of their film during IPL matches so that cricket wouldn't affect their business at the ticket windows. But in the last few years, the tables have turned as we saw Indian Premier League has not impacted the collections of the films, and both cricket and movies are equally enjoying good viewership from the audience. Though this brings up a debatable question whether the audience is now preferring films over cricket matches. To get some clarity about the situation, we got in touch with Siddharth Bhardwaj from UFO Moviez and here's what he had to say.

"There was a healthy mix of content driven as well as big budget movies that released in March, that worked magnificently at the box office. Films like Akshay Kumar's Kesari, Amitabh Bachchan's Badla and Luka Chuppi to name a few. South film industry is also not left far behind in the box office number game. Mohanlal's Lucifer has shattered all records in the Malayalam market, Kannada film Yajamana has also worked wonders at the big screen. With films like Kalank, South remake of Queen and Avengers End Game around the corner, it looks like April is heading for huge box office numbers too," he said.

But what could be the reason for the audience preferring films over matches? "Movies and cricket are two biggest passions of our country, films doing well and clocking huge box office collections through IPL season, only validates this fact. In a country where movies and cricket enjoy a religion-like status, choosing between the two can be difficult. While earlier, filmmakers wouldn't want to release movies during IPL, the trend gradually changed with films like Raazi, Hindi Medium, 102 not out, Baahubali2 etc. Through the initial years of IPL, the big-budget releases stayed away from IPL window, the niche movies and medium, small budget movies were the first to take advantage of this box-office window as they had little competition from big budget movies. However, this trend was also broken last year by Baahubali 2 and with Kalank scheduled to release in April, we can safely say that IPL now not anymore a blackout period for big budget films. Case in point, this IPL season Kesari which stars Akshay Kumar which released 2 days before the IPL is still going strong and has crossed Rs 100 crore while Lucifer starring Mohanlal has broken all records in the Malayalam market. Telugu movie, Lakshmi's NTR is working well," Siddharth reflects.

So does that mean content is overpowering stardom now? "Yes, content is always more powerful than any other element (stardom) in the film. Till few years back when the world was not so connected, the only information available to the public was the star cast and the movie director, however in today's context when the world is in-tuned and so connected, the movies are marketed very well and movie makers use all possible hooks to build excitement around the movie. Hence, the reason why audiences decide to go and spend money on a movie is based on multiple aspects of content and are not limited to just the star anchoring the movie. A star can only guarantee a decent box office opening, however, quality content and word of mouth can drive BO revenue through the week and beyond. With audiences maturing, star power and quality content can create magic on BO and this magic is not limited to local markets but it has the potential to break language/geographic barriers also. We are really excited about this trend, audiences now have more reasons to keep coming back to cinema screens and drive an increase in cinema footfalls," he concludes.