



## 2018 a blockbuster year for Hollywood

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Shalini, a 51-year-old university professor, watched the smash hit Avengers: Infinity War last year. It was dubbed in Hindi.

"The advantage of a dubbed version is you get the experience of a hardcore Hollywood spectacle, which is obviously different from Bollywood, and it's still easy to follow because it's your own language," she said.

Shalini is among thousands of filmgoers who lined up for screenings of Hollywood films dubbed in local languages last year. Hollywood films, English originals included, accounted for 26-30% of box office collections in 2018, according to film industry experts.

But most Hollywood films release in at least three local languages -- Hindi, Tamil and Telugu -- which make up 50-60% of Hollywood revenue in India.

A decade ago, Hollywood films contributed about 3-4% of the total business in the country. The figure was 22% as recently as 2013.

"The year 2018 was exceptional thanks to one big title, Avengers: Infinity War, which made all the difference," said Atul Mohan, editor of trade magazine Complete Cinema. The ₹ 650 crore earnings of Hollywood in 2017 went up to around ₹ 800 crore in 2018. More than one-fourth of this, ₹ 222.69 crore, came from the Marvel superhero film that is currently the highest grossing Hollywood film of all time in India. A blockbuster like Avengers was equal to two decent-sized Hollywood hits, said Mohan. In contrast, the biggest Hollywood hits of 2016 and 2017, fantasy adventure The Jungle Book and action film Fast and Furious 8, had made ₹ 188 crore and ₹ 86 crore, respectively.

However, there were other money-spinners in 2018, too, that included Marvel's other superhero film Black Panther (₹52.53 crore), X-Men series instalment Deadpool 2 (₹58.08 crore), science fiction adventure Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom (₹82.60 crore), Tom Cruise's action spy film Mission: Impossible—Fallout (₹80.20 crore) and DC superhero film Aquaman (₹52.60 crore).

"More and more Hollywood content is being released in India and the interest in the segment has also increased over the years. Dubbing in multiple regional languages has helped Hollywood movies reach a wider audience," said Devang Sampat, director, strategic alliances, Cinépolis India. Unlike a decade ago, now even medium-sized films are released here. Some examples are Mamma Mia 2, Bohemian Rhapsody and The Fault in Our Stars.

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"The screen density has really gone up, especially with the multiplexes in the metros. Of course, Hindi and other Indian language films are given preference in single screens but when there are more screens overall, all kinds of content get a platform," Jaysinh said.

India had a screen count of 8,700 at the end of 2017-18, with multiplexes adding 200-250 screens every year and growing at 8-9% annually, according to KPMG's media and entertainment industry report for 2018.

The coming year is set to be just as exciting for Hollywood. Apart from Avengers: Endgame, the sequel to Infinity War that will release in May, there's another film on Captain Marvel, James Cameron's cyberpunk action film Alita: Battle Angel, animation science fiction comedy The Lego Movie 2 and Dark Phoenix, the next X-Men film.

"Hollywood films now release on the same day and date in India as the rest of the world, if not before. The success of recent years has established India as a very lucrative market for studios, besides setting the pace for the next five or six years," Mohan said.