



With Rs 355 crore in pre-sales, Rajinikanth's 2.0 may pocket Rs 30 crore on Day 1

The euphoria around the film is evident from its pre-sales of over Rs 355 crore.

What makes *2.0* special? To begin with, it is touted to be the costliest Indian film, made at a budget of over Rs 500 crore. It is also the first Indian movie to be shot on a 3D camera, and it brings together two hit forces on one screen – Rajinikanth and Akshay Kumar.

The euphoria around the film is evident from its pre-sales of over Rs 355 crore. Southern markets alone have gathered Rs 170 crore from advance bookings. The markets in the North too are looking strong for *2.0*, which is usually unlikely for films coming from the South. It seems the star power of Akshay Kumar is helping get the attention of audiences from the northern parts of the country where he has a strong fan base.

The distributors are planning a massive release for *2.0* in the Hindi belt. They are targeting approximately 4,000 screens including 2D, 3D, and 17 IMAX 3D screens with 20,000 to 21,000 shows, according to a Koimoi report, a Bollywood news portal.

The screen count of *2.0* is more than *Baahubali 2: The Conclusion* in the Hindi belt (3,900) and this could be because of Akshay's presence in the film. The other reason for the film's pan-India release could also be the strong performance of its predecessor, *Robot (Enthiran in Tamil)*.

2.0 will release on 7,500 screens in India, and worldwide its screen count will be 10,500, eclipsing *Baahubali 2's* massive release of 9,000 screens worldwide. Hence, it is being regarded as the biggest Indian release ever.

Looking at the frenzy in the market prior to the release of *2.0*, trade analysts expect the film to open in the range of Rs 25-30 crore, with the latter being optimum for the Hindi version.

On the other hand, *Baahubali 2: The Conclusion* had amassed Rs 41 crore from its Hindi dubbed version and minted Rs 80 crore from other language versions, taking the opening day total to Rs 121 crore. This would be a high target for *2.0* to surpass.

The film could achieve this feat as it faces no strong competition from any segment of the Indian film industry or Hollywood. But, all depends on the quality of content.

Talking to *Moneycontrol*, Siddharth Bhardwaj CMO, UFO Moviez India Ltd, said, "When *Thugs of Hindostan* was about to release, there was a huge hype around the movie, like any other big entertainer of Aamir [Khan] or Amitabh [Bachchan]. It was an anticipated hit which saw a great opening. People did go and watch the movie [on the first day]; thereafter the content took over and the movie didn't strike a chord with the audience. Moviegoers did not consume the content beyond two-three days, and footfalls dropped dramatically."

But does this mean that *2.0* will take the same path as *Thugs of Hindostan*?

“Right now the situation for audience is once bitten twice shy. After going through such an experience [*Thugs of Hindostan*], people are generally reluctant to invest money for an upcoming movie. Hence, when *2.0* opens, it might be slightly impacted, but eventually it the content that is going to drive the crowd,” Bhardwaj said.

“The Indian film industry has already delivered 28-29 hits this year. Surprisingly, and unfortunately, the small-budget films have outperformed the big ones. And, when small movies perform well, consumers place their trust in the content, and go to watch movies more often,” he added.

According to Bhardwaj, the opening day for *2.0* will be a humongous hit. When asked whether it will surpass the day-one numbers of *Baahubali 2*, he said, “A movie is not about the opening day. Our country is too fascinated by the opening day. The real test is what happens after that. On opening day, it is all about marketing, or how well you have sold the move to the audience. But, immediately after the first three- four hours, the feedback is out. And you can get India to the screens only with positive reviews from the audiences as well as the critics. Hence, content will still rule.”

Meanwhile, in the overseas markets, the craze for the film is nothing less than India. After all, it is a Rajinikanth film!

Movie-goers in Singapore, Malaysia, and the US, flock the theatres in large numbers to catch a Rajinikanth movie.

In international markets like the US, the UK, Europe, South Asia, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific region, *2.0* has a screen count of 850, 300, 500, 100, 350 and 900 respectively, as per film trade analyst Ramesh Bala.

2.0 will see a huge release in Switzerland and a record release in Sri Lanka. In the UAE, the show count for day one are as follows – Tamil- 490 shows, Hindi- 360 shows, Telugu- 55 shows; amounting to a total of 905 shows.

The success of *2.0* is crucial for the industry especially after two big banner films tanked on the box office – *Thugs of Hindostan* and *Race 3*. “If *2.0* performs well, it will set the stage for other big releases in the last quarter like *Simmba*, *Kedarnath*, *Zero*. It will definitely have a rub off,” said Bhardwaj.

Be it star power or the technology or the success rate of the director [Shankar], there is confidence in the industry for *2.0*. In an earlier interview to *Moneycontrol*, Rahul Puri, MD at Mukta A2 Cinemas had said, “*Robot* is a massive brand. They are trying to replicate what happened with *Baahubali*, a regional film, a regional brand cashing in a lot of interest from a strong Hindi audience. *2.0* is a massive spectacle with wonderful special effects and this will attract the audience.”

He further said, “It [*2.0*] is an extremely bankable film because of the massive brand and hype.”

The satellite and digital rights (Amazon Prime) for *2.0* ranges around more than Rs 110 crore and Rs 54 crore, respectively.

According to a Moneycontrol report, if *2.0* is unable to do a business of Rs 200 crore - Rs 250 crore, then the Rs 1,000 crore dream for the last quarter will be lost.

So far, 2018 has turned out to be a successful year for the film industry. Around Rs 2,000 crore has already been generated in the first three quarters of 2018. On the other hand, the last three quarters of 2017 had generated Rs 1,600 crore - Rs 1,700 crore.