

# Influence of Low Budget Cinemas on Kannada Film Industry

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**Abstract:** Cinema is a magical medium that happens be larger than life, where people present art on a bigger canvas. For any cinema, budget becomes a vital part of the production. It is always considered as an art where people spend huge amount of money like Shankar, director of Enthiran, the Robot and also filmmakers like Raam Reddy who directed Thithi. Though a film can be produced with an expensive budget and gain huge success in the market, the real challenge lies in making ‘successful’ films with a low or limited funding. From the past few years, low budget cinemas have taken a new turn with their brilliant and witty storylines, screenplay, content and cinematography. It all lies in maintaining a perfect balance between the content and a low budget, and how well it is able to stand out amidst countless other films produced. In the same line, pertaining to Kannada Film Industry, many cinemas have been able to deliver luminary performances in the recent decade. From utilizing minimalistic locations and lesser cast to fascinating and compelling content, this Industry is making news in every way possible. Various researches have concluded that filmmaking in Kannada Cinema has improved that has resulted in obtaining a large spectrum of audience and low budget cum independent films have played a major role in this aspect. Some of these films are Puta 109, Haggada Kone, Thithi, Rangitaranga, Godhi Banna Sadharana Mykattu, etc. This study aims to interpret the influence of low budget cinemas on Kannada Film Industry and if the production of these films can establish a new trend and change the course of filmmaking in the coming years.

**Keywords:** Low Budget, Kannada Film Industry, Low budget cinema, filmmaking, Independent Films, Production.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**Low Budget Films** - Low-budget filmmaking is the process of creating a film with a limited budget or one that only permits you to spend on the necessities, which can range from nothing to only paying for meals and transportation, split payments to the crew, to half-priced rates for everyone, and so on. However, no one will be paid handsomely, and your team will number in the tens or perhaps twenties. The recent tendency is to create films with a large number of famous stars which costs many crores of rupees. There's no denying that in recent years, new filmmakers have attempted to make low-budget films with experimental themes. However, determining how many of these films are economically successful is a challenging task.

**Low budget films and filmmaking in Sandalwood** - The Kannada Film Industry is a branch of Indian cinema that produces films or motion pictures in the Kannada language, which is mostly spoken in Karnataka, India's southernmost state. Sandalwood, Chandhanavana, and Kannada Cinema are all terms used to describe this business. Kannada Theatre/Drama existed before the Kannada Film Industry. Many well-known actors and actresses first appeared on stage in Kannada Theatre World. Over the last few decades, the Kannada film industry has flourished. Many notable films were made, and the emergence of outstanding performers and directors ushered in a new era in filmmaking.

Examining the data from recent low budget films reveals that they are quite successful, considering the budgets they produced were produced with. The success is seen both in the revenue made and in the films' acclaim. Some of the best examples of these can be, Lucia, Thithi, Rangitaranga, Godhi Banna Sadharna Mykattu, etc. The Kannada cinema industry, which has been around for eight decades, has undergone a significant transition in terms of fresh voices and themes that have blurred the borders between commercial, experimental, and parallel films. Filmmakers also preferred to shoot digitally rather than on film during this decade. Approximately 1,500 films have been made in the last 85 years, out of a total of over 4,000. Because of technology developments, satellite-enabled last-mile connectivity, international releases, and rural penetration, Kannada cinema has gained traction in the last ten years. Seeing as low-budget films can't cast top stars in the industry, this niche has given many new actors the opportunity to debut and rise in the ranks, bringing a new wave of talent to the forefront of the Sandalwood industry.

Additionally, there is a shift in the focus of the films being made. Writers and directors are now creating films that are content and theme-centric, with an emphasis on developing the plot and characters in novel ways. The budget constraints affect the filming locations available for the production. As a result, there have been several films where the entire film shoot was done within a single city, region or even a single location (Eg: Puta 109, haggada Kone, etc). This shift has also gone hand in hand with the tendency towards films inspired by true stories that draw from the impactful narratives of real life events (Eg: Om, Ring Road, Killing Veerappan, etc). Some of the low budget films also go in a different direction by making music their central theme or motif.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Gururaj H. Kidiyoor and Prashant V. Yatgiri (2017) – “Kannada movie industry in India: Strategies for survival”

Several difficulties have been addressed in relation to the Kannada Film Industry, since it contributes just 2% of total income and has a success record of only 25% at the box office. The Kannada Chalanahitra Academy was founded with the goal of promoting and growing the Karnataka film industry. According to reports, the chairman of the aforementioned institution was concerned about Kannada films' low success record. This article investigates the many identities and roles that exist in this profession. It also strives to come up with a number of tactics to resurrect the industry in light of the competitive market.

### Mahesh Chandra (2015) – “Critical analysis on the history of Kannada Cinema”

The prospects of the Kannada Film Industry in the new millennium are highlighted in this research paper. This industry has made use of sophisticated film production technology such as recording, editing, special effects, dubbing, advanced cameras, DTS, background music, songs, and so on. Many contemporary Kannada films have technological applications. Another feather in the crown comes in the form of the extremely skilled and competent film personalities. Many of the films being made currently are creative, have relevant themes, and are of high taste. To sum up, this article asserts that this industry has a significant deal of potential for future growth.

### Srinidhi Adiga (2018) – “New age Kannada Cinema and Crowd Funding”

According to the research, the quality of films produced in this business is gradually deteriorating owing to a variety of factors (hero centric films, magnifying fight scenes etc). The allure of bygone eras has faded during the last two decades. During the crisis, some filmmakers who are creative and imaginative began to deviate from the norm. Pawan Kumar, who directed Lucia and U-Turn, Anup Bhandari, who directed Rangī Taranga, and Rakshith Shetty, who directed Ulidavaru Kandante, are among these directors. These filmmakers have succeeded to usher in a new era in Kannada cinema. As a result, the audience's aloofness from Kannada films was diminished.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### Research Method -

**Qualitative Analysis** - Qualitative research is descriptive and subjective, regardless of the facts. Observation and description are more important in this type of technique. This method's main purpose is to examine people's knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and perspectives on the research topic. This method incorporates grounded research, case studies, action research, and disclosure analysis.

**Quantitative Analysis** - This type of study assesses the importance of the research hypothesis. This is a methodical, quantitatively based research procedure. Quantitative research approaches include laboratory tests, econometric, mathematical calculations, surveys, and simulation. The quantitative research technique relies heavily on data analysis and measurement, as well as the interplay of variables

### Research Objectives

- To understand the influence of low budget films on Kannada Cinema.
- To interpret if low budget films can establish a new trend in Sandalwood.
- To shed light on influence of budgeting in filmmaking.

### Research Gap

In the times when high budget films are gaining popularity amidst the audience, this paper successfully elucidates how low budget films are able to swoop in into the crowd and make a name of their own. This research paper also focuses on Kannada Cinema and its relation to low budget filmmaking, which is the first paper to do so.

### Significance of the Study

In the modern era, narrative and content-oriented films have begun to acquire momentum and captivate the interest of audiences. This research will shed light on how low-budget movies are capable of capturing audiences' interest, as well as assist aspiring filmmakers in acquiring an audience's perspective on these films in Sandalwood today.

### Limitations

Since the research was mainly conducted online, there was a gap in the field. There also existed time limit. Another limitation is that, out of a large population, the sample size is 50 which may reduce the accuracy of the study. Since the distribution of questionnaires was through online basis, the legitimacy of the responses might be a problem.

### Theoretical Framework

**Cultivation Theory** - Cultivation theory states that when the media consistently portrays particular themes, the general public is influenced by those messages and is unable to discriminate between reality and the media. The audience may be influenced by the media's value systems and worldview. As a result, some stereotypes may emerge. The audience may also begin to imitate the acts of the media and attempt to alter the real world in the same way that the media alters the material. According to the Cultivation Theory, frequent exposure to media over time has an effect on views of social reality.

**Auteur Theory** - Auteur theory is a filmmaking ideology that considers the director to be the film's fundamental creative force. The director, who is in charge of all auditory and visual parts of the film, is more of a "author" of the film than the screenplay writer,

according to the auteur theory. In other words, important visual features such as camera location, blocking, lighting, and scene length, rather than the plot line, reflect the film's message. According to the auteur theory, the most cinematically successful films will bear the director's distinct personal imprint. Because this study is focused on the filmmaker and his style of filmmaking, this hypothesis is the most applicable.

**Magic Bullet Theory - Magic Bullet Theory** - The magic bullet idea, sometimes known as the hypodermic needle model, holds that a media message is completely "injected" into the recipient's awareness and taken at face value. According to Lasswell, the magic bullet technique meant that the message's originator could directly impact or modify the perspective of the intended listeners. The hypothesis is based on the assumption that the general population is passive and gullible, making it simpler for the message's source to affect its audience.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

- Majority of the respondents (58%) are aged between 23-27 years.
- 92% of the respondents believe budget plays an important role in the success of a film.
- Majority of the respondents (50%) feel making low budget films is more challenging when compared to high budget films.
- 58% of the respondents believe low budget films always end up as content oriented movies.
- According to most of the respondents (82%), economically, the success of a low budget film acts as a boon to the film industry.
- Low budget films are beginning to create a trend in Kannada Cinema, according to the respondents.
- 72% of the respondents believe that content is the New Hero.
- According to majority of the respondents, i.e. 80%, the definition of a low budget film has changed over a period of time.
- 88% of them think content is the most important in low budget filmmaking.
- According to most of the respondents (84%), lack of good publicity is a major drawback of a low budget cinema.
- Many agree that Covid-19 has influenced Kannada filmmakers to direct low budget cinemas
- 89% of them believe low budget films have marked a beginning of a new trend in Sandalwood.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

According to industry experts, low-budget films have a high success rate in the current era, particularly in the southern Indian film industry, with some earning returns on investment of over 600%. This tendency has demonstrated that large stars aren't a guarantee of success, and that audiences prefer to focus on the content rather than the performer. This is unquestionably a positive trend. Today, producers now have options to broadcast and promote their content with direct-to-home (DTH), VOD (Video-On-Demand), OTT (Over-The-Top) and others, in addition to traditional theatre release and television channels, where the cost of production is nearly guaranteed. The southern film industry, particularly Kannada, provides us with a footing in a creatively lively atmosphere where many fascinating stories are told. In the south, the cost and income models are quite sensible.

Although in the new wave, particularly low-budget cinema, are limited in number, they have made a substantial contribution to Kannada cinema's quality and inventiveness. India is the world's largest film producer, and Kannada was the state with the most films made in India last year. Despite the industry's uncertainty, some filmmakers see this as a positive indicator that people are willing to invest in it. Others say the figures will increase demand for theatres, lowering Kannada films' chances of succeeding. The route of filmmaking in this industry is gradually shifting from traditional to independent films, marking a stage of development. Sandalwood has advanced significantly with new generation films. Many are referring to the aforementioned situation as Kannada cinema's 'new wave,' and young filmmakers, most of whom have no filmy connections or formal film training but have grown up with a huge dose of world cinema, are catching on. The way this new generation of filmmakers has been able to actively seek out and establish an audience has evolved tremendously in the last few years.

Therefore, according to the outcomes of this study, respondents agree that budget plays a vital part in a film's success. They believe that over time, the definition of a budget has evolved. The story line is the most important aspect in determining success, as evidenced by the success of low-budget films. Despite their growing popularity, small-budget films confront numerous challenges, including lack of theatres – particularly when big stars decide to premiere their films, and insufficient funding. While many say that one of the biggest disadvantages of a low-budget film is a lack of decent exposure, many also believe that low-budget films have ushered in a new trend in Kannada cinema in which content has proven to be the most significant factor.

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