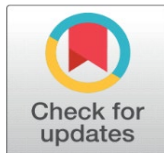# BAAHUBALI: THE BEGINNING & BAAHUBALI 2: THE CONCLUSION – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

"The only reason I would write a sequel is if I were struck by an idea that I felt to be equal to the original. Too many sequels diminish the original." ~ Dean Koontz

A sequel is a production of literature, film, theatre, television, music, or video game that continues or expands upon the plot of some earlier work. When we talk about the narrative work of fiction, a sequel showcases events set in the same timeline and set as an earlier work, usually following the events of that work.

In many cases, the sequel proceeds with the same elements of the existing story, often with the same characters and settings. A sequel can lead to a series, in which key characters appear repeatedly for eg. 'The Dhoom franchise'. The Indian film industry is known for the sequels even though most of them are not as successful as the prequel. Most of the sequels either repeated the entire cast in a different storyline while some of them were made with a few popular characters of a successful movie. 'Padmashree Doctor Saroj Kumar 'is an example for the same as the movie was made with three main characters (Saroj Kumar, Pacchalam Bhasi, and Rafeeque) of its prequel 'Udayananu Thaaram'.

'Baahubali: The Beginning' is one of the most successful movies ever made in India. The movie was released in 2015 and the sequel, 'Baahubali: The Conclusion' was released in 2017 and became the biggest block buster of all time. Even though surpassing the collection records of the prequel there are many flaws and unanswered questions regarding 'Baahubali: The Conclusion'.

This study compares and analyses 'Baahubali: The Conclusion' as a perfect sequel in light of aspects like the story, screenplay, character portrayal and quality like graphics and other aspects are studied. 'Baahubali: The Conclusion' has several elements which fail to connect with the first film. This study will also analyze the reasons behind the elements that failed to do justice to the prequel.

Keywords: Sequel, Prequel, Characters, Movie Elements

1. INTRODUCTION

A sequel is a work that continues the story of or expands upon, some earlier work. This includes movies that completed, one single story in two or even three parts. In the case of sequels, there are several common elements that will connect it to the viewers easily. The background music of 'Dhoom' (later used in all the following movies of the Dhoom franchise) is a perfect example.

1.1. SEQUELS AND INTERNATIONAL FILMS

The film industry, which has a history that spans over 100 years, has witnessed a lot of trends. From the early silent era to the age of Altron, films have undergone changes in terms of storytelling, character portrayal, technicalities like VFX, and even the dialogues which were once considered as the backbone of each screenplay. The history of sequels is as old as the practice of film making itself. French filmmaker, Georges Méliès, followed up the successful film 'A Trip to The Moon' with the film 'The Impossible Voyage', both of which were based on novels by Jules Verne. By the late-1920s, the creation of sequels began in earnest and the first "talkie", *The Jazz Singer* (1927), prompted Warner brothers to immediately produce a sequel, *The Singing Fool*, which was even more successful.

1.2. SEQUELS IN INDIAN CINEMA

Ever since its beginning, film sequels have had an impact on the box office. This trend in International films was imbibed by the Indian film Industries also like the Hindi film Industry.

Even though not as popular as in the west, the first Hindi film with a sequel was 'Hunterwali' (1935) starring Fearless Nadia. A sequel to this film, 'Hunterwali ki beti' was released in 1943 in which fearless Nadia played the protagonist.

The South Indian film industries like Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, and Malayalam started the production of sequels only in the early 60s but were far ahead of Hindi or any other industries (excluding the Bengali film industry) in terms of the successful sequels produced in the 70s and 80s. Even though many of them failed to impress the critics most of the sequels were financially successful which lead to developing sequels into a franchise.

1.3. BAAHUBALI: THE BEGINNING

It was in 2015 that the Indian film Industry witnessed one of its greatest hits taking off. The storm created by 'Bahubali: The beginning' was beyond imagination. For the first time ever, all the theatres of Hyderabad (capital of Andhra Pradesh) only had one film on screen. People watched again and again celebrating the film as their greatest artistic representation. The fictional characters of the movie and the kingdom of Mahishmati were added to the bedtime stories. Directed by S.S.Rajamouli, 'Baahubali: The beginning' broke all the box office records and became the biggest block buster of the year. But as the movie title said, it was just the beginning.

1.4. BAHUBALI: THE CONCLUSION

Baahubali: The beginning told the story of Siva (Mahendra Bahubali) who realizes his real identity through various conflicts. But it ended with a question. Why did Kattappa Kill Amarendra Bahubali? The answer for the question was also the biggest blockbuster of Indian Cinema, *Baahubali: The conclusion*, which released in 2017. The film collected over 1500 crore as gross and remains at the second spot in the list of highest grossing movies in Indian film history. The impact of *Bahubali: The beginning* was considered as one of the major reasons for the success of *Baahubali: The conclusion*, as there are many who believe that the beginning was better than conclusion. The quality of making and the excellent performance of Prabhas, Rana Daggubatti, Anushka Shetti, Ramya Krishnan, Satyaraj, Tamanna and Nasar was a common element in both the films. The music for both the films (songs and Background music) was created by M.M. Keeravani which was appreciated by viewers all over the globe.

1.5. THE STORY

The Story of Mahishmati and the crowned prince Amarendra Bahubali is told in two parts. *Baahubali: The beginning* is about Bahubali's son Mahendra Bahubali who is saved by Sivagami from her elder son and Amarendra's cousin, Bhallaldev. Mahendra was found by a group of tribals who raise him as one among themselves. A young Mahendra falls in love with Avantika whose mission is to save her queen Devasena (Amarendra's mother) from Bhallaldev. Amarendra takes the task from Avantika which takes him to his mother and Kattappa, the army general of Amarendra Bahubali. Kattappa narrates Mahendra About his father and Bhallaldev and the big war against Kalakeyas which proved Amarendra to be worthy of the crown.

In *Baahubali: The conclusion* Amarendra's relationship with Devasena is manipulated by Bhallaldev and his father who brainwash Sivagami against Amarendra. This further leads to Amarendra's death. Kattappa who is forced by Sivagami to kill Amarendra reveals the real plot of Bhallaldev to Sivagami further to which she declared Mahendra as the crowned prince. Knowing the whole story, Mahendra decides to avenge his father's death and attack Bhallaldev with an army of rebels lead by kattappa. In the final faceoff he kills Bhallaldev and becomes the next king of Mahishmati.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Baahubali: The Conclusion is considered among the best sequels in terms of success. But can we say that it is the best or perfect sequel ever made in the Indian film history?

There are several questions and comparisons between the two films that need explanation. The author of this paper writes to find whether these questions are relevant and to analyze if the film has done justice to its prequel in all aspects.

3. OBJECTIVES

1) To study the different elements of *Baahubali: The conclusion* and to compare it with *Baahubali: The beginning*. The elements are

- Character continuity
- Appearance Continuity
- Technical perfection

2) To observe the use of CGI used in *Baahubali: The conclusion* and *Baahubali: The beginning.*

4. RESEARCH DESIGN
4.1. DATA SOURCES AND TYPES

The primary data are the two movies. Both the films will be watched and reviewed carefully. VFX break-up videos of both the movies available in the online platforms will be analyzed to work on the second objective. The reviews and opinions about both the films published by film critics and reviewers will be referred.

4.2. DATA COLLECTION

The DVD's of the films were purchased. The VFX Break-up videos were downloaded from YouTube. Reviews of both the films online as well as print were collected for reference. The images that are used in this study are screenshots which were taken from the DVD's while playing.

4.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A film maker has all the liberty to omit or compromise with any of the elements of his film. Most of the observations will have a reason from the makers perspective.

The director's cut of the film is yet to release which may have the elements that is being studied in this paper

Personal interview of the characters could not be done

5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
5.1. CHARACTER CONTINUATION

Aslaam Khan

Few characters who were given importance in *Baahubali: The beginning*, were not seen in *Baahubali: The conclusion*. The character played by Actor Sudeep (Aslam) who became friends with Kattappa was expected to have a significant role in *Bahubali: The conclusion*. But his character was nowhere to be seen In *Bahubali: The conclusion*.
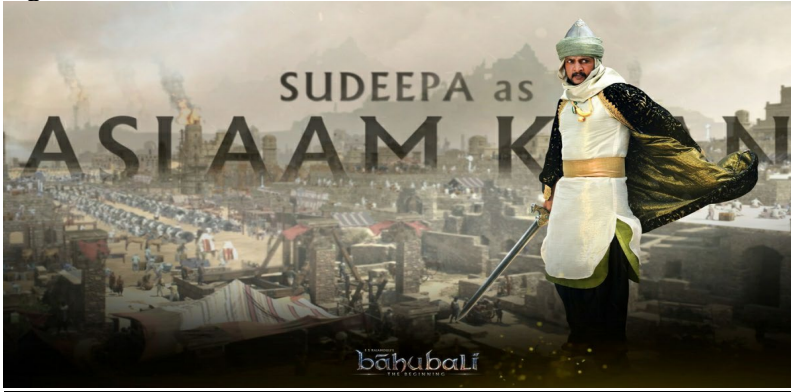
Figure 1

Figure 1 Character poster of Aslaam Khan

Female Bodyguard

Another notable omission was the character of a female Bodyguard, who used to assist Sivagami played by Ramya Krishna. She was seen in almost all the crucial frames of Baahubali: the beginning but was **replaced** by another artist in *Baahubali: The conclusion*.

Figure 2

Figure 2 female body guard in Baahubali: The Beginning

Kattappa

The character of Kattappa portrayed by Satyaraj in *Baahubali: the beginning* was a serious, strong, and ruthless army general. In *Bahubali: The conclusion* we see an entirely different Kattappa in the beginning of the movie where he is seen joking and acting as the uncle of Bahubali in disguise. Scenes where he performs as a comedian (like the one in which he sings a lullaby for the wounded Bahubali) does not match with the character, which was hesitant to feed the young Bahubali even after his command (*Baahubali: the beginning*). Even though entertaining, this change in the character of Kattappa is a big mismatch or continuity lapse from a technical and aesthetical perspective.

5.2. APPEARANCE CONTINUITY

In several scenes of *Baahubali: The conclusion* we can see a significant difference between the appearance of Bhallaldev (Rana Dagubatti) and Devasena (Anushka Shetty). It is very clear that the time gap between the two films has changed the appearance of the actors and the director had to compromise on the appearance continuity aspect. You can clearly see as mentioned in the below images that Bhallaldev is way too lean in *Baahubali: The conclusion* whereas he looks broad and heavy in *Baahubali: the beginning*. Anushka's change is in reverse as we can see many versions of Anushka in *Baahubali: The conclusion*.

Figure 3

Figure 3 Bhallaldev and Devasena

5.3. TECHNICAL PERFECTION

Continuity of scenes is significant for any film. When a story is told in two separate films this becomes more significant. In *Baahubali: the beginning* the first scene shows Sivagami Devi (Ramya Krishna) coming out of a cave carrying the infant Mahendra Bahubali. The scene which connects to this event as a flashback in *Baahubali: the conclusion* shows Sivagami trying to escape from Mahishmati where she is seen rowing in a coracle on a river in the outskirts of the Palace. Bhallaldev shot arrows on Sivagami which makes her fall in the river. These two scenes from the two films does not connect.

Towards the end of *Baahubali: the conclusion* there is a scene when Devasena throws the head of Bhallaldev's son and Mahendra shoots an arrow which takes the head to Bhallaldev. When Bhallaldev is seen holding his sons head, there is no sign of an arrow piercing it to carry it that long.

5.4. COMPUTER GENERATED IMAGERY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Baahubali: The Beginning and *Baahubali: The Conclusion* had a significant number of scenes in which CGI was used very effectively. Even though the war scenes of *Bahubali: the beginning had CGI* the major scenes like saving the locals from Kalakeyas, the final fight between Bahubali and the Kalakeya General and the fight between Kattappa and Mahendra Bahubali were shot physically in set with less amount of CGI. Whereas in *Bahubali: the conclusion* most of the scenes including Bahubali saving Kuntala Kingdom, Bahubali and his troops entering Mahishmati and the final fight between

Bahubali and Bhallaldev had CGI as a main element which reduced the impact of certain scenes. Many of the viewers had the opinion that the war scenes of *Baahubali: The Beginning* were far better than that of *Baahubali: The Conclusion.*

6. CONCLUSION

After watching and analyzing both the films, there were several elements in *Baahubali: The Conclusion* which were either mismatching or incomplete. The elements explained in the findings clearly shows that the director had to compromise with certain aspects like the appearance continuity. Certain logical questions like how Mahendra Bahubali learned to fight against a warlord like Bhallaldev within few days after meeting his mother and Kattappa, were not taken as a research problem as it can be either explained or ignored considering the genre of both the films. But technical shortcomings with visual proofs clearly indicates that *Baahubali: The Conclusion* can't be considered as the most perfect sequel ever made in Indian Cinema. Yet we cannot ignore the impact created by these two films which took Indian Cinema business to the next level.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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