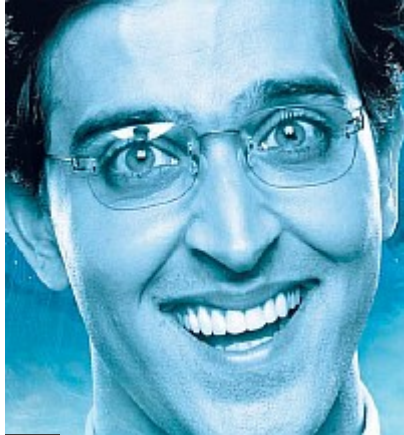


The sequel story...

8 Jul 2008, 0000 hrs IST, MANDVI SHARMA ,TNN



Still from Koi... Mil Gaya

*We have always debated the fate of sequels and the [Box Office](#) has given its verdict on them on many occasions.*

According to a study led by Prof Subimal Chatterjee, marketing professor at Binghamton University, sequels do better week-by-week. “We here at the University are greatly interested in movies, whether [Hollywood](#) or Bollywood and doing research on them is something we love,” says Prof Chatterjee.

The professor did this research along with his colleague Suman Basuroy, assistant professor of marketing at Florida Atlantic University. “To begin the research we read most of the critical reviews of the sequels. Then saw

some sequels and examined the Box Office reviews.” Prof Chatterjee categorises sequels in three categories:

**Short time gap:** The release timing of a sequel is the key factor in the movie’s success. The sooner the period between releases, the better. “The whole funda works on the recall value. *Sarkar* and *Sarkar Raj* have a gap of three years and according to the study, it works. The gap between sequels can maximum be for five years. *Koi... Mil Gaya* and *Krrish* are another example. They again have a gap of three years. We have found that some franchises in Hollywood are also closely following this practice. For instance, New Line Studios released the [Lord of the Rings trilogy](#) in almost clocklike precision – Fellowship of the Ring in December 2001; The Two Towers in December in 2002; and the Return of the King in December 2003. A shorter time gap for releasing a sequel is better than a longer time gap given that the ‘buzz’ and anticipation is likely to dissipate in consumers’ memory with a longer wait,” says Prof Chatterjee.

**Star power:** According to the study, the only thing that holds a sequel, with long gaps between them at the BO, is the star. “For example, people were quite willing to wait for over 10-years to see Bruce Willis back in *Die Hard* or 19-years to see Harrison Ford in *Indiana Jones*. There is something to be said about star power in keeping the franchise alive,” he says. “Boredom should not set in, otherwise the sequels don’t work. For instance, *God Father 3* did not work that well at the BO because of the monotony. The same way, I feel that *Sarkar* and *Sarkar Raj* have graduated well. However, to hold the audiences’ interest they will have to big in a new element in the third installment,” he

adds.

Franchise and series: Prof Chatterjee says that a single film may spawn multiple sequels and become a franchise. For example, the [James Bond](#) franchise, starting with Dr No in 1963, has produced over 20 sequels. According to Chatterjee, the number of sequels can affect the current sequel's box office performance, and ultimately the strength of the franchise. "What has worked for the Bond movies are the independent stories. And this is why the monotony has not set in there. However, the Rocky Balboa series could not have stretched beyond what it did. If consumers perceive that the sequels are better than the original film, the number of sequels can have a positive impact on the current sequel's box office performance. Once again, we found that 'buzz' and consumer anticipation can be the 'make or break' factor in building the overall franchise," he says.

Prof Chatterjee suggests that this study offers [movie studios](#) key managerial insight. But the question here is whether Indian cinema industry can come out with Franchises like the Bond movies or not? "Why not? Indian star power system is much stronger than Hollywood. It is literally like a religion in India. And this is what the Indian filmmakers can encash upon. What one has to keep in mind is the time gap between the movies, the star power, different storylines and interesting elements that don't let monotony set in," he explains.