

# An Exploratory Study Of Tamil Film Popularity Amidst Youngsters In Kerala, India

Patricia Michelle Mathias<sup>1</sup>, Melvin Jacob<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, NISCORT Media College and Ph.D. Scholar, Sharda School of Media Film & Entertainment Sharda University, Plot No. 32-34, Knowledge Park III Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201310, INDIA Email- [srmichellefsp@gmail.com](mailto:srmichellefsp@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>NISCORT Media College A-2, Sector 1, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, NCR Delhi-201012.

## Abstract:

India is the hub of cultures and a bed of cinema in multiple languages. This research paper focuses on the cinema of two neighbouring states, namely, Kerala and Tamil Nadu from the South of India. While, Malayalam is the state language of Kerala or Keralites, Tamil is the state language of Tamil Nadu in India. The past decade has seen a phenomenon that has been observed constantly in Kerala with regard to some of the Tamil films which are earning massive revenues in Kerala as compared to their own Malayalam films- the language of Kerala itself. Despite receiving coverage of the same in many media outlets, there is a lack of research content in this field. This gap of intellectual observation of this phenomenon is being covered through this research which elucidates data from Malayali youngsters of Kerala who are a prime audience of Tamil Cinema as to why Tamil cinema is much more popular in Kerala despite having brilliant storylines in the state language. This exploratory research has used a quantitative survey research method to reach out to youngsters from Kerala and also carried out a cluster analysis of the sample to study the observation.

**Keywords:** Mollywood, Kollywood, Tamil Film Popularity in Kerala.

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## 1. Introduction

Tamil Nadu and Kerala are two states in Southern India. While Malayalam is the popular spoken language in Kerala, Tamil is the spoken language in Tamil Nadu, its neighbouring State. Both Kerala and Tamil Nadu have a well- developed, full-fledged, film industry that churns out a multiple number of films every year. However, of late, it has been noticed, that Tamil cinema has gained massive popularity in Kerala.

While, India has an over-arching Bollywood (Hindi film industry), the Bollywood industry has often looked to the South for Stories and the re-make of films. Krishnan (2015) states that while initially both Tamil Cinema (Kollywood) and Hindi cinema (Bollywood) relied on the Malayalam Film industry (Mollywood) for story-line-based remakes, the tide has changed with many Bollywood remakes of Kollywood films, and many Tamil films reaping huge monetary gains in Kerala. This rising popularity of Tamil cinema in India has seen many translations in different languages all across

India. The newspaper Hindu states that Kerala is now Tamil cinema's biggest territory, followed by Hindi cinema (The Hindu, 2016).

The film industry of Kerala has a massive stronghold when it comes to novel stories with sturdy plots or realistic stories with a healthy 'self-censor' of the exaggerated and melodramatic scripts (Bhaskaran, 2016) as compared to the often highly dramatic, macho-styled, hero-oriented, movies of Tamil Nadu. An example of this are films like *Drishyam*, *Kumbalangi nights*, *Traffic*, etc. However, the recent popularity of Tamil films that have grossed huge sales in Kerala and are a growing craze reported amongst the youth for Tamil films, despite the story-lines, seems to be changing the tide.

This appears to be a baffling phenomenon in a state with an erudite population and where people appreciate movies with at least some sense of logic. In the words of Neelima Menon, "Every film is dissected, analysed and smirked at by a nanometre", in Kerala. However, there seems to be a reverse trend amongst Malayali's who seem to be enjoying the larger-than life, high-voltage 'masala' films of Tamil Nadu. The word 'Masala' actually means a concoction of spices that are blended to be added to the food in India. However, a 'Masala' film in India indicates a purely entertaining, unrealistic, feel-good film, with an exaggerated coverage of varied emotions, comedy and violence. In short, masala films in Indian cinema are those films that mix action, comedy, romance, drama, melodrama or various genres in one film (Ganti, 2004). These films are often a showcase of hegemonic masculinity with menial rooms for female characters.

Menon (2017) states that one among the reasons for popularity of certain Tamil films amongst Malayali's for instance, Tamil actor 'Vijay's' films like 'Mersal' or Vikram's 'I', is because of the creation of a "parallel universe" which is often based on the criteria of providing fun moments for the viewers, by relegating "habitual traits of cynicism". Chellapa (2021)

states in his article that Tamil films with their concoction of unrealistic macho- fight scenes blended with equally colourful, upbeat, song and dance features create the required enchantment to draw crowds. Menon reiterates that for everything else, there is Malayalam cinema which is high on realistic plots.

A multiple number of coverages of this phenomenon has been observed in the newspapers (Chellapa, 2021) in these later years, however, there seems to be a dearth of quantitative research on the same. This research therefore explored the phenomenon and the reasons of the growing craze for Tamil films amongst Malayali Youth of Kerala and the popularity of these films amongst them.

## 2. Review of Literature

The film terrain in the south is often undeniably dominated with the factor of a star-craze, followed by the necessity of a good storyline and consequently a great direction. The audience today, especially the younger generation, which is digitally equipped has a varied variety to choose from due to the availability of cinema of all genres, not just from different states, but also hailing from different countries.

An analysis of top 50 story films in four south Indian languages inclusive of Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada by Ormax Media states that Malayalam films totally stand apart from the other three languages given the fact that every three out of four films had a realistic style with stories of the struggles of ordinary people with 'people-like-us' heroes or the 'under-dog taking on the powerful'. While over 50% of films in Tamil, Telugu and Kannada were portrayals of a hegemonic masculinity and were basically macho-hero oriented (Jain G. and Singh A., 2021).

Jain G. and Singh A., (2021) have also pointed out that about 60% of Tamil, Telugu & Kannada films had foreign locales and polished urban settings while Malayalam cinema was rooted in simple daily-life culture. The study

also stated that as compared to Malayalam films (28%), the other Southern film industries- Kannada (64%), Tamil (56%) and Telugu (44%) films had larger than life 'Protagonist entry' sequences. Even in case of comedy, only 26% Of Malayalam films had a running comedy track as compared to double the percentage in Kannada, Tamil and Telugu film industries (Jain G. and Singh A., 2021).

The review of literature will take an exploratory look at the different literature that was available in the domain of this research which could possibly lead us to an understanding for the craze and the success of Tamil films in Kerala. From historical reasons to elements of filmmaking that could possibly explain the phenomenon.

### **2.1 Tamil films- an integral part of Film Broadcast in Kerala.**

Tamil cinema has been an integral part of film Broadcasting in Kerala. As both Tamil and Malayalam films are showcased in Kerala. F. Osella and C. Osella (2000) highlight that even in 1995, the primetime watching of Malayali households included Malayalam films and serials, and films songs from Malayalam, Tamil and Hindi films. This is possibly one of the reasons why the Malayali youth grow up understanding Tamil, Tamil film language and develop a craze for Tamil films. The Review of Literature will look at different perspectives that could possibly be the domains to discover the reason for the popularity of Tamil films and the foundation for the questionnaire.

**2.2 Star craze and fan clubs:** Indian Cinema has for ages relied on a star system. It has existed over the years. The same goes for Kollywood and Mollywood. South India has culturally always been known for Hero worship, wherein before the release of the films, people even perform the Milk 'Abhishekam' wherein the portraits of stars are bathed in milk, an honour which is normally given only for deities in India.

Christopher (2011) states that in Tamil Nadu, a superstar dominates the film, the promotion and the expectation of the film goes, which makes it important to look at these actors and the role they play which is an integral part of the film's public presence. He further adds that "the knowledge about the image of the star delivers an intertextual dimension to the content and gives the spectator an insight into the fictional world. Here we can see that the presentation of the film star bears on the function of genre" (Christopher, 2011).

Baas (2018) builds on Sara Dickey's seminal work and states how these star actors do not perform plainly entertainment roles but also resemble as personalities who are 'Redeemers of the fraught, defenders of the underprivileged, saviours of the starving, and divine intervenors of the downtrodden'. The heroes thus turn into audience motivators, educators, uplifters, social workers who stand for rights and bring reforms. These "warrior heroes" thus have crazy fan-following and has also led to massive 'Hero-worship' of many actors, specifically certain male actors. Baas (2018) states that audience insentiently assumes star actors as superhumans with divine powers and display tremendous devotion to them, including open hero-worshipping. Star 'Actors' like Rajnikanth, Kamal Hassan, Thalapathy Vijay, Surya etc have a massive fan following in Tamil Nadu and neighbouring states.

Sreedhar Pillai, a film trade analyst in his interview highlighted that during the Covid break, in most Malayali theatres, the exhibitors held back the Malayalam films or for that matter, even the international films, in order to release, Thalaathy Vijay's 'Master' in view of getting a financial relief post Covid (Farooqui, 2021). The film did send the coffers ringing for Kerala and went onto become a huge success.

Popular Tamil actors like Rajnikanth, Kamal Haasan, Thalapathy Vijay, Surya, etc, also have a huge fan following and existing fan clubs in Kerala as well. This could also be a reason for Tamil films grossing far more income than their

Kerala counterparts. It is also a fact that many Malayali's like Vikram, Asin, Arya, etc have made it equally big in Tamil Nadu and have made it huge in the Tamil Film Industry. Another factor, that has made Kollywood, an industry to reckon with is the music, song and dance feature.

**2.3 Kollywood and the influence of its Music, Song and Dance:** Song and dance has always been part of the Indian Cinema, albeit the fact that certain, serious cinema may not entertain dance numbers, but music and song play an important role in most cinema pan India. As Arundhati Subramaniam rightly states in her paper that while one may wince at its incongruities and the display of over blown fantasy, complete with the bump-and-grind antics, Indian film dance is an integral part of India's collective consciousness. She highlights how over the years duets that were slow paced have increasingly relegated to the back ground and every second or third song was, and continues to be, accompanied by fast-paced dances.

The high-end popular numbers of many songs in the south, like 'Humma Humma', 'Roja', 'Why this Kolaveri Di'? 'Apdi pode', 'Vaathi Coming' etc are popular Tamil dance numbers that have echoed across India, with a recognition not just of the actors who danced in it, but the stalwart musicians that have risen due to the music composition. A. R. Rahman rose to stardom and is considered an Indian musical prodigy due to his musical masterpieces. On the other hand, there are other psycho thriller films like 'Ratchasan' that hit bull's eye with the musical brilliance of M. Ghibran and its direction.

Arun Mohanan says that despite the Malayalam cinema industry having melodious songs rooted in classical and semi-classical notes, there was a lack of variety when it came to fast dance numbers and western beats meant for DJ purposes, etc. While Mollywood musicians could barely think of groping with such beats, A R Rahman's music attracted youngsters.

Rahman's mastery in digital technology and his use of "synergistic techniques" to the utmost precision drastically changed the music scenario with films like 'Roja' (Sarrazin, 2014)).

Thirumurthy (2021) in her article states that the director Mani Ratnam and A R Rahman often brought people to theatres albeit the fact, that the film itself may have not been up to the mark, it was sheerly the music of A R Rahman that kept them on their chairs rather than quitting the film in between. Sarrazin (2014) in a similar tone reiterated that both A R Rahman and Mani Ratnam were pragmatic in their unparalleled meticulousness of editing wherein musical change aligned tightly with the visual change in films like Roja or Ponniyin Selvan 1.

Another factor, that is popularly endorsed by many media lovers in India is the masculinity of the male character and the use of stunts and fight sequences in carrying the narrative forward.

**2.4 Stunts and Fight sequences:** The concept of the hero as a saviour, rugged, brute, tough and inhumanely strong has always been a part of Indian cinema. And the same can be applied to South Indian Cinema as well. Often, a single punch sends five men swirling and swinging in the air is common to this 'macho image' of Indian stars.

Quoting a study by Srinivas from 2003, Christopher (2011) states in his research that brute fighting scenes are very popular in Telugu film industry as well as the Tamil film industry. Films like Singham and Ghajini have sent waves across India and have been translated in so many languages due to their popularity. Fight sequences provide an adrenaline rush to many, leading to a craze for watching the film.

**2.5 Technological brilliance:** K Pradeep (2016) states that Tamil films have found a foothold worldwide with their "multi-cultural sense", "sophisticated cinematic technique" and the dynamism of the visual text and elements. Films like 2.0 and its sequels,

Ponniyin Selvan 1 are high on their technical brilliance. Tamil films have high-end budgets as compared to Malayalam films. These big budget sequences and films have a pan-India audience. Technical brilliance, excellent film direction, musical brilliance, and a good marketing strategy are attributes that attract audiences to theatres.

**2.6 Story lines:** Tamil films like Ghajini, Singham, Thupakki, etc, have been lapped up in the towering Bollywood (Indian Film Industry) as well as other states as well. The unique storylines with the mass ‘macho-actor’ appeal have created waves all across India. Gautaman Bhaskaran (2016) states that the current Malayalam films are strong on both plot and novelty. Director Aashiq Abu states that “the people of Kerala, do not look at the star, as much as the writer, director and the content.” The Malayalam film industry has produced brilliant storylines and one cannot escape with sub-standard story films in Kerala given the sense of a good ‘film perception’ that exists in Kerala. Despite that, certain Tamil films with macho heroes and typical ‘macho-hero story lines’ gross better incomes.

**2.7 Film Direction and Cinematography:** Directors like ‘Mani Ratnam’ have a pan Indian audience with the brilliance of their directorial skills. However, a new crop of young directors has arisen both in Kollywood and Mollywood who have changed the perception of film direction while also maintaining huge hits at the Box office coffers. This could also be the reason for Tamil film popularity in Kerala.

**2.8 Marketing:** Marketing is a strong strategy of Tamil films, and these films are also simultaneously released in Kerala in many theatres. The marketing is also massive for promoting the film and making it popular. From themed flights for Kabali, to augmented reality for 2.0 or unconventional marketing strategies writes Shanmuga Vel, Tamil directors and producers market their films to rake in audiences. Social media creates a frenzy and the fan groups co-operate massively in propagating

the film and its trailers. The research will delve into determining whether the younger generation who is often on social networking forums does get influenced by film promotions and trailers. The marketing strategists capitalize massively on the macho hero status of any actors while promoting their films. A recent trend has also seen that Kollywood and Mollywood use Star actors from both the industries in order to garner mileage in both the territories for the success of their films.

Harikumar and Thomas (2019) state that Malayali film distributors faced varied hassles in promoting films including a raise in tax rates, difficulty in grant optimisation and attainment of funds from institutions. The major findings in this research highlighted that just 41.3% distributors focused on Malayalam films, 31% focussed on Bollywood films, while 27.7% focused on Tamil films. Even outside Kerala, Tamil films have a clientele, but the same cannot be said about Malayalam films.

## 2.9. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Of late, many Tamil films in Kerala have performed far better monetarily as compared to some Malayalam films, despite the known fact that Malayalam films have excellent storylines. Youngsters in Kerala have become accustomed to watching both Tamil and Malayalam films. However, this craze has recently led to theatre coffers pocketing massive profits as well as growing Fan clubs of Tamil Stars in Kerala. It is also notable that many Tamil films have performed far better than Malayalam films themselves in Kerala (Ranjith, 2012). Many newspapers and websites have carried articles of this trend. The sole purpose of this study is to understand the reasons for the growing craze for Tamil films among Malayali youngsters in Kerala.

This research is based on a unique topic that has rarely been done before despite the fact that this topic has been covered extensively by media in the press. The study will therefore contribute uniquely to a topic hitherto unexplored in detail.

This is a first of its kind research on this topic which has been covered often by many media jaunts.

### 3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the attitude of youngsters in Kerala towards Tamil films
2. Determine the reasons for the popularity of Tamil films amongst the Malayali youth in Kerala.
3. To identify, what changes need to be made in Malayalam movies that could facilitate the popularity of Malayalam movies just like the Tamil movies in gaining massive popularity.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

This is an Exploratory study using Quantitative Methodology and Survey Designs. A structured survey questionnaire was fed into Google forms and the form link was forwarded via WhatsApp to collect samples from Malayali Youngsters of Kerala aged '18-30'. The Snowball Sampling Method was used to forward the form online and collect the data due to a massive Covid lockdown. Friends were requested to forward the form to their friends with the request of filling the data. Choices were rendered using Likert scales.

The questions in the survey were the output of the review of literature in this field due to lack of pre-designed structures by researchers in the field. The data was downloaded in an Excel sheet and transferred to the IBM SPSS software which was used to analyse the Statistics and draw the Bar Graphs that have been chosen for the representation. A sample size of 270 youngsters were part of this online survey. Most of the youth were selected from Kottayam, Thrissur, Ernakulam, Kozhikode, Wayanad and Palakkad districts of Kerala. A Cluster Analysis was also done in view of elaborate findings based on age and gender differences.

The survey questions were based on the varied elements related to Tamil and Malayalam cinema aesthetics, story-telling, etc, as discussed in the Review of Literature. 270 youth across Kerala participated in this online survey. Based on the survey questionnaire the findings and the analysis have been stated below.

### 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### 5.1 Demographics

The data highlight the participation of 270 youngsters from the age group 18-30, out of which 191 were students, 49 were working professionals, 24 were job-seekers and 6 were both studying and working. 59% were female respondents as compared to 41% male respondents. Majority (25%) of the youth were from Kottayam, followed by Changanassery (6.7%) and Kannur (4.4%). Most of the respondents were students (70.7%), followed by working (20%), unemployed (9%), and 2.2% were studying and working simultaneously.

#### 5.2 Consumption of Tamil films amidst Malayali youngsters

On being asked if these youngsters watch Tamil films (Table 5.2.1), 93.3% youngsters stated that they watched Tamil films and enjoyed them as well (Table 5.2.3) while 6.7% stated they did not watch Tamil films nor enjoyed them (Table 5.2.3). While, on being asked if they understood Tamil films as it was a language of the neighboring state, 62.6% youngsters stated that they understood Tamil, as they have grown up watching both Tamil and Malayalam films, 21.1% stated that they knew Tamil so they watched, 8.5% watched them with subtitles, 6.7% did not watch Tamil films, while barely 1.1% refrained from answering this question by choosing 'none of the above' (Table 5.2.2).

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Table 5.2.1 Watching Tamil films</b>		
Yes	252	93.3
No	18	6.7
Total	270	100.0
<b>Table 5.2.2. Understanding of Tamil films</b>		
Yes, I understand Tamil, as I have grown up watching both Tamil and Malayalam films.	169	62.6
Yes, I understand Tamil, so I watch Tamil films	57	21.1
I don't understand Tamil, so I don't watch Tamil films	18	6.7
No, I don't understand Tamil, but I still watch Tamil films with subtitles	23	8.5
None of the above	3	1.1
Total	270	100.0
<b>Table 5.2.3. Enjoying Tamil films</b>		
Yes	252	93.3
No	18	6.7
Total	270	100.0

On asking about their preference for films in the two languages Table (5.2.4), 21.9% Malayali youngsters stated they preferred Malayalam films and only 4.1% stated they preferred Tamil films. However, 29.6% percent stated that they though they prefer Malayalam films, they equally enjoyed watching Tamil films. The

same 6.7% watched only Malayalam films. However, it is interesting to note that a large percentage of Malayali youngsters (37.8%) stated that they watched good cinema of any language, despite the fact that they watched Malayalam films.

<b>Table 5.2.4. Preference of film</b>	Frequency	Percent
I prefer Malayalam films as compared to Tamil films.	59	21.9
I prefer Tamil films as compared to Malayalam films.	11	4.1
I prefer Malayalam films, but I enjoy Tamil films equally.	80	29.6
I only watch Malayalam films.	18	6.7
I enjoy good cinema of any language, But I mostly watch Malayalam films.	102	37.8
Total	270	100.0

### 5.3 Kollywood Fandom amongst youngsters

The survey findings revealed that most youth had friends who were massive fans of Tamil film actors (66.3%), while only 8.1% responded negatively and 25.6% were unsure (Table 5.3.1). However, only 17 out of 270 youngsters were actually part of any fan club of actors (Table

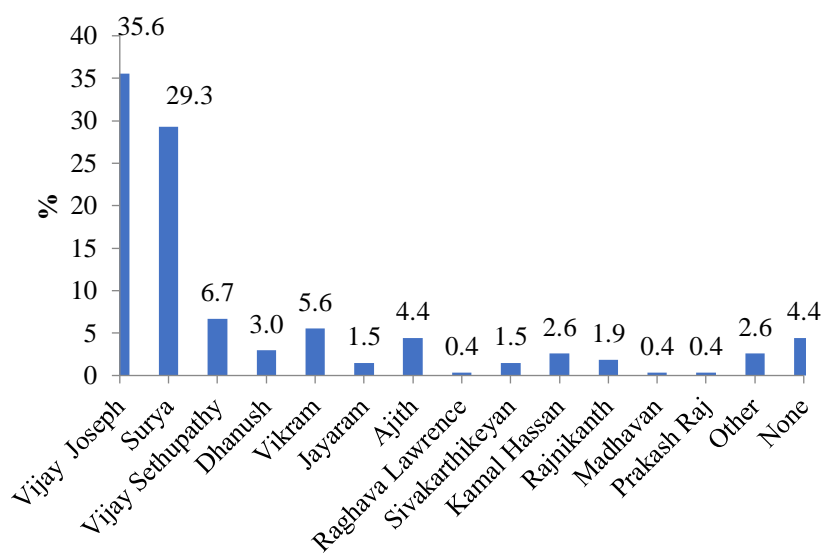
5.3.2). On being asked, who led the ladder amongst their favourite actors and actresses in Kollywood, Tamil stars Thalapathy Vijay Joseph and Suriya led the survey amongst male actors and amongst female lead actors (Figure 1), it was Nayanthara followed by Samantha (Figure 2).

**Table 5.3.1. Fan crazy friends**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	179	66.3
No	22	8.1
Unsure	69	25.6
Total	270	100.0

**Table 5.3.2. Part of fan club**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	6.3
No	253	93.7
Total	270	100.0

**Figure 1. Favourite tamil actor**



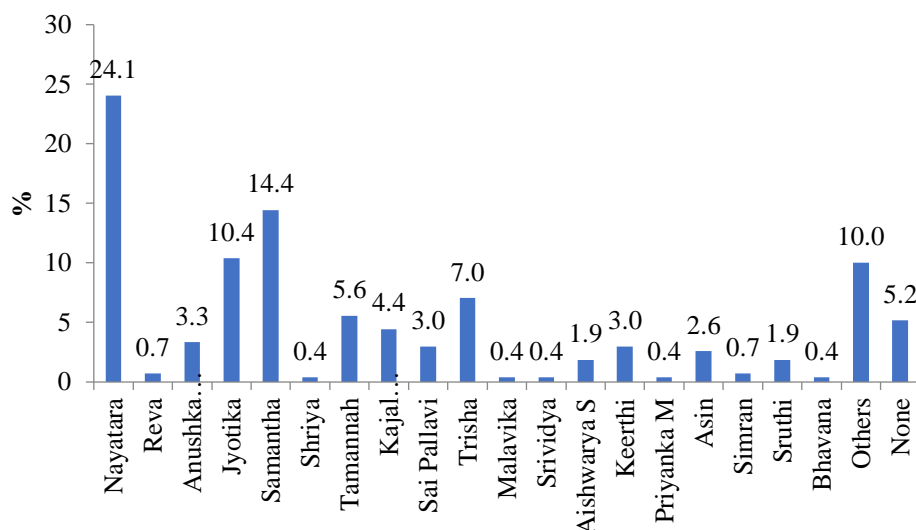


Figure 2. Favourite tamil actress

**5.4 Film Industry with better Storylines amongst Mollywood and Kollywood**

The Malayali youngsters gave a thumping majority (84.4%) to the fact that Mollywood had better storylines as compared to Kollywood (Table 5.4.1). On being asked who inspired them most (Table 5.4.2), 61.9% said that Malayalam films inspired them much more (61.9%) as compared to Tamil films (19.6%). However, 18.5% chose ‘other’ as their option which indicated that the language did not matter, the content did and that the youngsters were prone to watching movies of very genre and languages. The response to the survey question based on better originality again found that Malayali youngsters were aware that Mollywood had better originality (84.8%- Ref to Table 5.4.3)

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Table 5.4.1. Better storyline</b>		
Malayalam Film Industry	228	84.4
Tamil Film Industry	42	15.6
Total	270	100.0
<b>Table 1.2 Inspires better with their storylines</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Malayalam Film Industry	167	61.9
Tamil Film Industry	53	19.6
Other	50	18.5

Total	270	100.0
<b>Table 5.4.3. Better Originality</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Malayalam Film Industry	229	84.8
Tamil Film Industry	41	15.2
	270	100.0

### 5.5 Reasons for watching Tamil Films

The survey questioned the Malayali youngsters about their reason for watching Tamil films over Malayali films based on the varied

elements discussed in the Review of Literature, including those of acting skills, star casts, fight sequences and stunts, music and songs, dance numbers, story and direction, technological nuances and picturization.

<b>Table 5.5</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>5.5.1 I love watching Tamil films more, because, they male actors perform excellent stunts unlike our Malayali heroes.</b>		
False	117	43.5
True	37	14.7
Only in some cases	88	32.5
Malayalam actors are my first preference	28	10.3
Total	270	100.0
<b>5.5.2 I watch Tamil films as they have better film sets, scenes and quality while Malayalam film sets are far more realistic.</b>		
False	90	33.6
True	41	15.1
Only in some cases	106	39.1
Malayalam actors are my first preference	33	12.2
Total	270	100.0
<b>5.5.3 I prefer Tamil films because they are usually big budget films, unlike Malayalam films, which are smaller on Budget.</b>		
False	113	41.9
True	43	15.9
Only in some cases	113	41.9
Malayalam actors are my first preference	1	0.3
Total	270	100.0
<b>5.5.4 I enjoy watching Tamil films because the technology used in their films is much better.</b>		
False	65	24.3
True	64	23.6
Only in some cases	117	43.2
Malayalam actors are my first preference	24	8.9
Total	270	100.0

<b>5.5.5 I enjoy Tamil film music because it is excellent and they have very good Music Directors.</b>		
False	24	8.9
True	122	45.3
Only in some cases	104	38.4
Malayalam actors are my first preference	20	7.4
Total	270	100.0
<b>5.5.6 I prefer watching Tamil films because, they have peppy, funny and dance-promoting numbers.</b>		
False	72	27.0
True	64	23.6
Only in some cases	115	42.4
Malayalam actors are my first preference	19	7.0
Total	270	100.0
<b>5.5.7 I enjoy Tamil films, Tamil actors are macho stars and it give us an adrenaline-rush (hyper excitement).</b>		
False	99	36.9
True	40	14.8
Only in some cases	97	35.8
Malayalam actors are my first preference	34	12.5
Total	270	100.0
<b>5.5.8 I enjoy Tamil films because of their excellent fight sequences.</b>		
False	101	37.7
True	57	21.0
Only in some cases	81	29.9
Malayalam actors are my first preference	31	11.4
Total	270	100.0
<b>5.5.9 Tamil films have excellent picturization as compared to Malayalam films which are simpler.</b>		
False	80	30.0
True	46	17.0
Only in some cases	107	39.6
Malayalam actors are my first preference	37	13.4
Total	270	100.0
<b>5.5.10 I watch Tamil films only because, I have grown up watching these, not because of any star or fan craze or better direction.</b>		
False	86	31.7
True	74	27.4
Only in some cases	74	27.4
Malayalam actors are my first preference	36	13.3
Total	270	100.0
<b>5.5.11 I watch Tamil films not because of a particular actor but because of good direction and story-telling.</b>		
False	23	8.5

True	148	54.8
Only in some cases	74	27.4
Malayalam actors are my first preference	25	9.3
Total	270	100.0

The survey showcased that in most cases, youngsters preferred Malayalam films or they chose their answer as 'only in some cases'. However, the only two elements that outshone in case of Tamil films were the category of Song and Music Direction (Table 5.1.5) and that of good story-telling and direction (Table 5.1.11) in certain Tamil films which drew massive crowds and showed that a higher percentage of Malayali youngsters did accept that Direction, Music and Songs were better than Malayalam Industry.

**Table 2.1 Worldwide release**

	Freque ncy	Perce nt
Malayalam Film Industry	104	38.5
Tamil Film Industry	166	61.5
Total	270	100.0

**Table 3.2 Better film marketing**

Yes, I think so	128	47.4
No, I don't think so	43	15.9
I think, it is the better film quality, star cast and the entertainment factor, that makes Tamil cinema popular	39	14.4
Yes, it is both massive release and better star power as well as better film quality	60	22.2
Total	270	100.0

**Table 5.6.3. Tamil films make more money due to better marketing**

Yes, I think their marketing is better so their movies make more money.	153	56.7
Yes, I think their marketing and their movie making skills are better, so they make more money	46	17.0
No, I don't think so	63	23.3
Malayalam Films are better	8	3.0
Total	270	100.0

## 5.6 Marketing and worldwide distribution of Kollywood and Mollywood

The survey questions that dealt with marketing and prominent worldwide releases changed the tide. 61.5% of Malayali youngsters felt that Tamil cinema had better worldwide releases (Table 5.6.1) and marketing strategies (47.4%- Ref to Table 5.6.2) resulting in better revenues (56.7%- Ref to Table 5.6.3).

## 5.7 Difference in enjoying and preference of Tamil films based on age

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Age**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	21.83	3.134

**Table 5.7.2. Difference in enjoying Tamil films based on Age**

Enjoy Tamil films	Mean $\pm$ SD	t	p value
Yes	21.829 $\pm$ 3.18	-0.005	0.996
No	21.833 $\pm$ 2.479		

**Table 5.7.3. Difference in preference between Malayalam and Tamil films based on Age**

Preference of film	Mean $\pm$ SD	F	P value
I prefer Malayalam films as compared to Tamil films.	22.644 $\pm$ 3.408	1.430	0.224
I prefer Tamil films as compared to Malayalam films.	21.091 $\pm$ 2.212		
I prefer Malayalam films, but I enjoy Tamil films equally.	21.725 $\pm$ 3.379		
I only watch Malayalam films.	21.833 $\pm$ 2.479		
I enjoy good cinema of any language, But I mostly watch Malayalam films.	21.52 $\pm$ 2.914		

**Table 5.8 Association between Gender and the Preference between Malayalam and Tamil film**

5.8.1 Preference of film	Male	Female	F	P value
I prefer Malayalam films as compared to Tamil films.	22 (37.3%)	37 (62.7%)	5.37	0.251
I prefer Tamil films as compared to Malayalam films.	3 (27.3%)	8 (72.7%)		
I prefer Malayalam films, but I enjoy Tamil films equally.	33 (41.3%)	47 (58.8%)		
I only watch Malayalam films.	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)		
I enjoy good cinema of any language, But I mostly watch Malayalam films.	48 (47.1%)	54 (52.9%)		

**Table 5.8.2. Association between Enjoying Tamil films and gender**

	Male	Female	F	p value
Yes	106 (42.1%)	146 (57.9%)	2.739	0.098
No	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)		

**Table 5.8.3. Association between part of fan club, Film industry with better story line, inspires better with storylines, better Originality, better release worldwide and Gender.**

	Male	Female	Chi square	p value
<b>Part of fan club</b>				
Yes	13 (76.5%)	4 (23.5%)	9.593	0.002
No	97 (38.3%)	156 (61.7%)		
<b>Better story line</b>				
Malayalam Film Industry	92 (40.4%)	136 (59.6%)	0.092	0.761
Tamil Film Industry	18 (42.9%)	24 (57.1%)		
<b>Inspires better with storylines</b>				
Malayalam Film Industry	72 (43.1%)	95 (56.9%)	1.358	0.507
Tamil Film Industry	21 (39.6%)	32 (60.4%)		
Other	17 (34%)	33 (66%)		
<b>Better Originality</b>				
Malayalam Film Industry	96 (41.9%)	133 (58.1%)	0.871	0.351
Tamil Film Industry	14 (34.1%)	27 (65.9%)		
<b>World wide release</b>				
Malayalam Film Industry	28 (26.9%)	76 (73.1%)	13.377	0.000
Tamil Film Industry	82 (49.4%)	84 (50.6%)		

**Table 5.8.4. K means clustering**

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	p value
Age	23	22	21	0.044
Watching Tamil films	Yes	Yes	Yes	0.006
Gender	Female	Female	Female	0.808
Understanding of Tamil films	Yes, I understand Tamil, so I watch Tamil films	Yes, I understand Tamil, so I watch Tamil films	Yes, I understand Tamil, so I watch Tamil films	0.464
Enjoying Tamil films	Yes	Yes	Yes	0.006
Preference of film	I only watch Malayalam films.	I only watch Malayalam films.	I only watch Malayalam films.	0.101
Fan crazy friends	No	No	No	0.639
Favourite Tamil actor	Surya	Vijay Sethupathy	Other	0.000
Favourite Tamil actress	Asin	Jyotika	Bhavana	0.000
Part of fan club	No	No	No	0.418
Fan club member	Allu Arjun	Allu Arjun	Allu Arjun	0.489
Better story line	Malayalam Film Industry	Malayalam Film Industry	Malayalam Film Industry	0.109

	<b>Cluster 1</b>	<b>Cluster 2</b>	<b>Cluster 3</b>	<b>p value</b>
Inspires better with storylines	Tamil Film Industry	Tamil Film Industry	Malayalam Film Industry	0.506
Better Originality	Malayalam Film Industry	Malayalam Film Industry	Malayalam Film Industry	0.254
World wide release	Tamil Film Industry	Tamil Film Industry	Tamil Film Industry	0.688
Better film marketing	No, I don't think so.	No, I don't think so.	No, I don't think so.	0.078
Tamil films make more money	Yes, I think their marketing and their movie making skills are better, so they make more money.	Yes, I think their marketing and their movie making skills are better, so they make more money.	Yes, I think their marketing and their movie making skills are better, so they make more money.	0.352
Streaming of Tamil movies	No	No	No	0.095
Tamil movies in Newspaper	No	No	No	0.503

**Table 5. Cluster Profiles**

	<b>Cluster 1</b>	<b>Cluster 2</b>	<b>Cluster 3</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	26.4%	64.5%	9.1%
Female	24.4%	68.1%	7.5%
<b>Watching Tamil films</b>			
Yes	25.8%	67.5%	6.7%
No	16.7%	55.6%	27.8%
<b>Understanding of Tamil films</b>			
Yes, I understand Tamil, as I have grown up watching both Tamil and Malayalam films.	25.4%	66.9%	7.7%
Yes, I understand Tamil, so I watch Tamil films	22.8%	73.7%	3.5%
I don't understand Tamil, so I don't watch Tamil films	16.7%	55.6%	27.8%
No, I don't understand Tamil, but I still watch Tamil films with subtitles	34.8%	60.9%	4.3%
None of the above	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
<b>Enjoying Tamil films</b>			
Yes	25.8%	67.5%	6.7%
No	16.7%	55.6%	27.8%
<b>Preference of film</b>			
I prefer Malayalam films as compared to Tamil films.	20.3%	72.9%	6.8%
I prefer Tamil films as compared to Malayalam films.	18.2%	81.8%	0.0%
I prefer Malayalam films, but I enjoy Tamil films equally.	25.0%	71.3%	3.8%
I only watch Malayalam films.	16.7%	55.6%	27.8%

	<b>Cluster 1</b>	<b>Cluster 2</b>	<b>Cluster 3</b>
I enjoy good cinema of any language, But I mostly watch Malayalam films.	30.4%	59.8%	9.8%
<b>Fan crazy friends</b>			
Yes	26.8%	67.0%	6.1%
No	18.2%	54.5%	27.3%
Unsure	23.2%	69.6%	7.2%
<b>Better story line</b>			
Malayalam Film Industry	25.0%	65.4%	9.6%
Tamil Film Industry	26.2%	73.8%	0.0%
<b>Inspires better with storylines</b>			
Malayalam Film Industry	21.6%	68.3%	10.2%
Tamil Film Industry	39.6%	58.5%	1.9%
Other	22.0%	70.0%	8.0%
<b>Better Originality</b>			
Malayalam Film Industry	24.0%	66.8%	9.2%
Tamil Film Industry	31.7%	65.9%	2.4%
<b>World wide release</b>			
Malayalam Film Industry	23.1%	67.3%	9.6%
Tamil Film Industry	26.5%	66.3%	7.2%
<b>Better film marketing</b>			
Yes, I think so	22.7%	68.0%	9.4%
No, I don't think so	20.9%	62.8%	16.3%
I think, it is the better film quality, star cast and the entertainment factor, that makes Tamil cinema popular	25.6%	69.2%	5.1%
Yes, it is both massive release and better star power as well as better film quality	33.3%	65.0%	1.7%
<b>Tamil films make more money</b>			
Yes, I think their marketing is better so their movies make more money.	27.5%	65.4%	7.2%
Yes, I think their marketing and their movie making skills are better, so they make more money	26.1%	65.2%	8.7%
No, I don't think so	22.2%	66.7%	11.1%
Malayalam Films are better	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
<b>Streaming of Tamil movies</b>			
Yes	26.3%	68.4%	5.3%
No	25.0%	66.7%	8.3%
Unsure	23.2%	63.4%	13.4%
<b>Tamil movies in Newspaper</b>			
Yes	24.6%	69.3%	6.1%
No	23.1%	67.7%	9.2%
Unsure	27.5%	62.6%	9.9%



**Table. 5.8.6 Association between reasons for popularity of Tamil films and gender**

	Male	Female	Total	Chi square	p value
<b>Better entertainment factors as compared to Malayalam movies which are made on serious topics</b>					
False	19 (46.3%)	22 (53.7%)	41	3.346	0.341
True	17 (44.7%)	21 (55.3%)	38		
Only in some cases	70 (40.5%)	103 (59.5%)	173		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
<b>Fan crazy and love their star casts</b>					
False	34 (45.3%)	41 (54.7%)	75	4.338	0.227
True	17 (48.6%)	18 (51.4%)	35		
Only in some cases	55 (38.7%)	87 (61.3%)	142		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
<b>Male actors perform excellent stunts unlike our Malayali heroes</b>					
False	41 (39.4%)	63 (60.6%)	104	3.26	0.353
True	16 (43.2%)	21 (56.8%)	37		
Only in some cases	49 (44.1%)	62 (55.9%)	111		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
<b>They have better film sets, scenes and quality as compared to our Malayalam film sets which are far more realistic</b>					
False	29 (36.7%)	50 (63.3%)	79	10.141	0.017
True	25 (61%)	16 (39%)	41		
Only in some cases	52 (39.4%)	80 (60.6%)	132		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
<b>They are usually big budget films, unlike our Malayalam films, which are smaller on Budget</b>					
False	37 (35.2%)	68 (64.8%)	105	12.539	0.006
True	27 (62.8%)	16 (37.2%)	43		
Only in some cases	42 (40.4%)	62 (59.6%)	104		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
<b>Technology used in their films is much better</b>					
False	16 (28.1%)	41 (71.9%)	57	9.857	0.020
True	41 (50.6%)	40 (49.4%)	81		
Only in some cases	49 (43%)	65 (57%)	114		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
<b>It is excellent and they have very good Music Directors</b>					
False	8 (42.1%)	11 (57.9%)	19	2.743	0.433
True	57 (42.2%)	78 (57.8%)	135		
Only in some cases	41 (41.8%)	57 (58.2%)	98		

	Male	Female	Total	Chi square	p value
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
They have peppy, funny and dance-promoting numbers					
False	31 (47%)	35 (53%)	66	4.276	0.233
True	28 (36.8%)	48 (63.2%)	76		
Only in some cases	47 (42.7%)	63 (57.3%)	110		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
Tamil actors are macho stars and it give us an adrenaline-rush (hyper excitement)					
False	46 (43.4%)	60 (56.6%)	106	2.912	0.405
True	20 (40%)	30 (60%)	50		
Only in some cases	40 (41.7%)	56 (58.3%)	96		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
Excellent fight sequences					
False	35 (36.1%)	62 (63.9%)	97	6.483	0.090
True	28 (40.6%)	41 (59.4%)	69		
Only in some cases	43 (50%)	43 (50%)	86		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
Excellent picturisation					
False	28 (38.4%)	45 (61.6%)	73	3.801	0.284
True	27 (40.3%)	40 (59.7%)	67		
Only in some cases	51 (45.5%)	61 (54.5%)	112		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
Grown up watching these, not because of any star or fan craze or better direction					
False	30 (33%)	61 (67%)	91	9.468	0.024
True	34 (42%)	47 (58%)	81		
Only in some cases	42 (52.5%)	38 (47.5%)	80		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		
Not because of a particular actor but because of good direction and story-telling					
False	10 (43.5%)	13 (56.5%)	23	2.767	0.429
True	64 (42.1%)	88 (57.9%)	152		
Only in some cases	32 (41.6%)	45 (58.4%)	77		
Malayalam actors/films are always my first preference	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	18		

## 5.9 Discussion:

In understanding Research Objective 1 - the research findings showed that the respondents were divided into three clusters (1, 2 and 3) in terms of their attitude towards Tamil films. Cluster analysis revealed that there was a significant difference in the attitude of Malayali's towards Tamil movies in terms of age but not gender among the three cluster groups. Further, their attitude towards watching and enjoying Tamil films, and preference over their favourite actor and actresses varied significantly among the three clusters. The dominant attitude of cluster 2 was found among female participants, towards watching, understanding and enjoying Tamil movies, preference of Tamil over Malayalam movies, presence of fan crazy friends, better story line in Tamil films, Malayalam films inspiring more with better story lines, better worldwide release, film marketing, and profit making, streaming of Tamil movies and knowledge on Tamil movies in newspaper. The attitude of cluster 3 was the weakest towards all aspects of Tamil cinema. There was a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) association between reasons for popularity of Tamil movies such as having better film sets, scenes, and quality, higher budget, better technology, grown up watching Tamil movies in terms of gender.

The exploratory research in view of Research Objective 2, found that respondents mostly watched Malayalam movies but also enjoyed watching good movies from other languages (37.8%). More than two-thirds of them had 'star-crazy' fan friends.

Table 5.7.2 shows that respondents enjoyed watching Tamil movies at a moderate level. There was no significant difference in respondents enjoying Tamil films (Table 5.7.2) and their preference between Tamil and Malayalam movies (Table 5.7.3) based on their age ( $t = -0.005$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). The association between preference between Tamil and Malayalam movies and gender was

insignificant ( $F = 5.37$ ;  $p < 0.25$ ) (Table 5.8.1). There was no significant association ( $p < 0.05$ ) between enjoying Tamil films and gender of participants (Table 5.8.2). There was a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) association between being the part of fan club and the worldwide release of Tamil and Malayalam movies in terms of gender (Table 5.8.3).

The study highlighted that albeit the fact that Malayali youngsters are strict with their own film industry, they don't mind spending money for Tamil films which are often high on adrenaline rush, macho power of male actors, unique locales, entertaining music and high-end production. Though of late, there are a few films that have hit bull's eye with a simple star cast. In a few cases, it was found that many of these purely 'entertainment genre films' are also being termed as 'Pandi' films by youngsters, which is a highly derogatory term but is being watered-down and used in a lighter, jovial context to indicate that one is going for an 'entertaining film' and not in view of a 'good' story-line. However, one common comment that was voiced by many youngsters in the survey in an open-ended comment section was the 'marketing strategy' used by the Tamil film Industry across India and internationally that gave it a higher edge. Therefore, in response to Research Objective 3, perhaps a better marketing strategy for Malayalam films, a mixed star-cast, better financing could lead to a better impact of an industry that produces some of the best storylines in India.

## 6. Limitations:

Due to little or no research done in this field, it had become a daunting task to do the Literature Review which was primarily based on media reports from leading News Websites as the foundation. Lack of research papers and the provision of parameters for defining the various variables made the research a tedious affair. The variables had to be explored based on the barely available literature on this topic. This

research was done online, due to Covid-19 pandemic, with one of the researchers himself becoming victim to the ailment. Therefore, the sample was subject to online promotion and unable to garner an on-field filling of the survey form. The data collection occurred over the period of a year making the collection of the sample a tedious job.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, Tamil films were popular amongst Malayali youth mainly because of their better marketing, the stardom of actors and actresses of Tamil films, film sets, quality, profit-making, and better worldwide release than Malayalam movies. The Malayali youngsters just the same had a high opinion of Malayalam films and preferred watching Malayalam movies for better and more inspiring storylines. Anish Panthy's (2008) observation that Malayali viewers with their higher degree of both intuition and insight are able to distinguish reality from fiction, amidst the varied themes of experimentalism, can rightly be applied here. As one could relate to the fact that Malayalis expect high standards from their own while thoroughly enjoying the masala, entertainment and macho-style genres of films from Tamil Nadu, irrespective of the story-lines.

Further, youth in the first cluster made of 21-year-olds preferred to watch Tamil movies based on their favourite actor and actresses, while 22-year-olds watched based on several factors like, favourite actors, better marketing worldwide release etc., while the third cluster made of 23-year-olds had least preferences towards watching Tamil films. Thus, it could be inferred that youth interest in movies is higher during college days and is prone to decline after completion of their graduation due to their busy schedules as they tend to pursue higher education or work. Perhaps research and study could find out more possibilities for helping the Malayalam Film Industry with its brilliant storylines.

A better marketing and targeting of a larger audience with multiple language releases could provide relief for the industry that need a global platform for its calibre. In the current scenario, the success of films like Baahubali and Pushpa, which turned actors Prabhas, Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna into pan-India actors, has led to the new trend of marketing a southern film in different languages for a pan-India or a pan-world release. Perhaps, the erudite and realistic film industry of Kerala is in need of such films that can create ripples and draw the attention of the world to its finesse.

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