



From a Hit to being a Hit: A Success Story of a Subaltern Film Pandit

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Today social networking sites have become an integral part of life of almost all youths and professionals. This computer mediated communication has also enabled business professionals to serve their purpose of business networking . The user generated content and high interactivity in the social networking sites have enabled them gain more popularity despite their security concerns. Social media takes on many different forms including magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, micro blogging, wikis, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. The only feature that makes it unique is the Sharing button. The promotion of ideas is getting more interactive with some way or other involving the consumers themselves. Internet at one level provides a platform that to varying degrees allows the traditional channels to migrate their content and reach different audiences and on another level it delivers a series of new media platforms and has created the forum through which the consumer and brand can interact .

Movie promotion techniques are just getting interactive. Unlike earlier days, when we used to come across big hoardings and posters in market place and cinema halls, now-a-days it's just a click away. If you are a Social Media addict, everyday you will be flooded with new, innovative promotional materials of any upcoming movie in the form of trailers, quotes, Viral ads or videos, exclusive promotional contents such as information about cast, crew and many more things directly from the set. Film productions are on a way to interact with fans and engage them into production story to spread the message.

Santhosh Pandit, an upcoming Malayalam film actor and director came into the limelight of main stream media after the songs of his directorial debut film *Krishnanum Radhayum* was released on YouTube. The songs went viral on the internet and were extremely popular. The film was released in only three theatres in Kerala and all of them went for packed houses though it was damned by some veteran film pundits of Bollywood. He is credited as an actor, director, producer, script writer, lyrics writer, playback singer, music director and editor and stands chance for entering into record books for maximum credits for an individual in a released film.

Pandit made his small screen appearance in 2005 in a tele-film *Kalyaniyude Kalyanam* which was shown in a local television channel in Kozhikode, his native city. Pandit's cocky demeanor, loquacious nature and his self-imposed superstardom have made him fodder for derision and famous overnight making him the second most searched name on Google next only to Facebook. But some film makers share a different opinion about his success saying it a bad publicity. Hit maker Lal Jose dismisses the movie's success as evidence of Malayali's taste for

sarcastic pleasure while Ashique Abu, a popular director does not consider Santhosh worth of discussion.

How information is being spread over the internet is something one needs to be curious about. Be it a small idea or big, it reaches the whole world within a fraction of second. Viral Marketing is one kind of way where information about any products, services is disseminated. It aims to engage consumers so that they can replicate and disseminate the ideas to others. Viral marketing, viral advertising, or marketing buzz are buzzwords referring to marketing techniques that use pre-existing social networks to produce increases in brand awareness or to achieve other marketing objectives (such as product sales) through self-replicating viral processes, analogous to the spread of viruses or computer viruses. Online Viral Marketing kills two birds with one stone (Suresh, 2011). Viral Videos are something that gets popular overnight through the process of sharing on internet such as social media and email. Viral video has emerged to describe the phenomenon in which video clips become highly popular through rapid, user-led distribution via the Internet. Most of the filmmakers are using this trend to promote their upcoming movie by creating a buzz in the market. If the filmmaker creates, publishes and promotes during the production, he or she will be pointing to the active users who would take the idea to the next level. They will be emotionally involved in the process and will spread the content to their networks.

He has released some song albums in youtube which were received with the most vulgar comments one post in the youtube can ever have. But at the same time the number of hits for these videos went up day by day. He regarded all these "negative" publicity as encouragements for him and produced a full length movie in which he handled 17 responsibilities apart from being the hero in the film. This was actually a shock for the Malayalam film industry. Slowly channels started talk shows with him keeping in mind the hike it can bring in the viewership of the channel. People from the film industry and film critics were invited for joining the shows in person or at least in phone. Those who criticize him through channel interviews also do that with the intention to get more viewers for their programme. Briefly saying, Santhosh Pandit, though was criticized, became a means for making money for many channels and other media.

There were some articles in the blogs where people commented "Malayalam film history can be divided into two parts as before Krishnanum Radhayum and after Krishnanum Radhayum". Though it can be seen as a sarcastic comment, we should accept the fact that Pandit could make a wave in the audience. Let's call it Pandit Effect. He had his own styles, ways of doing things and individuality.

Though we knew that each click of mouse we do on his video links will fetch him lakhs and crores of money we continued doing the same till now. I have seen people watching his videos, commenting on it very harshly and turning this side humming "Rathri Subharathri".

He was of the view that there is no hard core rules related to the making of a movie. No one has articulated that this is the only way to make a movie. Mr. Pandit had his own ideas and he portrayed it in his own ways with all his mannerisms. At the end what happened is he made a fool of us and made money. There are shock treatments for all those who believe that they cannot go wrong. What Pandit did is the same. He gave a fatal blow on the face of the Malayalees who boasted of their 100% literacy and being the most intelligent people of India.

The media world today is having a lot of tactics and techniques to promote an idea, a product, a movie or a song or even a person. "Kolaveri" has become a widely used title even in the leading national dailies. A catchy word can make an immense impact on the audience who always looks for newness and creativity. Whatever is unusual always gets easy attention. This peculiar style of mixing Tamil and English in a film song has created a mass hysterical kind of impact on the youth - the most probable users of the social media sites. The "Kolaveri" song with its Tamglish language pattern was without doubt a song targeting a wider audience even across the state and national borders. The lyric is simple, catchy and easily understandable even for a kid, so much so that the little son of Sonu Nigam could make it without much constraints of language. The number of versions "Kolaveri" is getting is an example of its very wide acceptance all over the world.

The question before us is whether the story of the "leaked video" is an accidental leak or a cooked up story. This is not the first case of this kind. This is a time where people will go to any extreme in the name of publicity. If the

producer is sure that a product gets an extra mileage through a particular kind of campaign, they will go for it at any cost forgetting all its ethical considerations. Kolaveri can be regarded as one of the hundred and one ways the advertisers and public relations officers will take up to get that extra mileage.

Krishnanum Radhayum is a creation of Malayalam Film Industry itself. It's a parody or an extension of the existing stardom and its tastes. This movie has created awareness in the public that a movie can be made by even an ordinary man like you and me. That's why the Cinema Pandits are harshly criticizing this movie.

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1. Special Features

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