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If you have enjoyed recent historical films like *Bajirao Mastani*, and *Padmaavat*, this is one genre that has clearly caught our filmmakers' fancy. What's more, after the mammoth success of *Baahubali* this is one trend that is strongly favoured by filmmakers.

With films like Akshay Kumar's *Kesari*, Ajay Devgn's *Tanaji* and *Battle of Saragarhi*, the much awaited Kangana Ranaut starrer and directorial *Manikarnika - The Queen of Jhansi* and Ashutosh Gowariker's ambitious war drama *Panipat* coming up, this genre is here to stay. We spoke to a cross section of the industry to know about the lure of this genre.

Atul Mohan — Trade Analyst and Editor, Complete Cinema: "I feel historicals have a great future because of their wide canvas and large mounting. Just reading history is very staid but if you see it on the big screen with its larger than life performances and colour, it becomes infotainment because you tend to learn history and get entertained as well and that's the reason for the popularity of historical films."

Karan Razdan — Actor-Director: "I just saw the trailer of *Manikarnika* and was blown away by it. I am eagerly awaiting the release of the film. I feel after the success of *Padmaavat* there is a good market for historical films and, given an opportunity I would like to make a historical film myself. However, such films need huge budgets and it is quite a risky proposition to make such films."

Anil Sharma — Producer-Director: "I myself have been a fan of such a genre and have made historical films like *Veer* and *Gadar-Ek Prem Katha*. Now with the success of films like *Baahubali*, there is a huge market for such films. I would like to make historical films on a wide canvas some day."

Nanubhai Jaisinghani — Video Palace Owner: "Historical films have a great market because the huge colourful canvas really attracts the audiences. History is something in which everyone is interested but such films are very risky because of their huge budgets. However, if it's a film on an icon like Shivaji the film will naturally attract the audiences."



Manikarnika - The Queen of Jhansi



Baahubali

Hysterical about historicals

SANDEEP HATTANGADI speaks to industry insiders to gauge the reasons behind the popularity of this genre

as *Ten Commandments*, *Benhur*, and World War based movies. Even in India the great doyen of historical films, Sohrab Modi made acclaimed historicals like *Prithvi Vallabh*, *Pukar*, and *Sikandar* in which Prithvi Raj Kapoor starred. There is an iconic film like *Mughal-E-Azam* which is one of the greatest fictionalised historicals and there can't be another *Mughal-E-Azam* ever. So I feel that the future belongs to movies made on a large scale and the historical genre is one of the most popular genres. Even I am making a historical film based on the first Indian lady doctor, Dr Rakhmabai who fought against the British and society in general, to make it as a first lady doctor."

While it looks like the historical genre is here to stay the downside is that even if

one big budget historical falls there could be panic amongst filmmakers who will develop cold feet when it comes to making huge budgets and lavishly mounted historicals. Much now depends on Kangana Ranaut's historical *Manikarnika* and how it fares at the box-office. The battle begins!



Bajirao Mastani

Sushil Kumar Agrawal — CEO Ultra Media and Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.: "India has always been historically rich in terms of stories, rulers, patrons, warriors and the various struggles it had undertaken to fight both the foreign as well as internal tyrannical rulers. The world has been in awe of our colourful history till date. Over

the years, Indian cinema has portrayed these tales very illustriously on the screens, and many films exploring these topics have been commercially successful. Other than it being a nostalgic journey these tales also have been constantly inspiring and giving us insights into certain interesting nuances that we were not aware of. There is a huge set of youngsters who over and above reading about the history in text

books will benefit a lot watching it depicted on the screen and understand the rich and varied folklore and culture of India. Bollywood filmmakers nowadays have a special affinity for historical films. Historical films definitely will and always have a market and patronage. Case in point is the success of these films in the past two years and the upcoming gems like

Manikarnika - The Queen of Jhansi, *Panipat*, *Kalank*, *Taanaji*, *Kesari*, *Tukhi* etc."

Anant Mahadevan — Actor, Writer, Director: "Co-incidentally I starred in one of the first historical shows in India - *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*. This genre has huge prospects because today the audience has easy viewing on OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime. The audience needs something gigantic on the screen like Hollywood films of yore such



Padmaavat