

## El cine indio en las salas de cine españolas diez años después de *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*

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### Palabras clave

“Bollywood”; “Cine indio”; “Cine español”;  
“Cine transnacional”; “World Cinema”

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ña, comparándolas con otras industrias filmicas asiáticas relevantes: japonesa, surcoreana y china. El hallazgo principal es que las películas indias tienen una presencia reducida en España, respecto a lo esperable su por relevancia mundial, y menor al de otras industrias cinematográficas asiáticas. Una limitación de este estudio ha sido la epidemia del covid-19, que puede haber afectado a la exhibición de películas indias en España. La aportación original de este estudio es que sugiere la necesidad de reelaborar los acuerdos de fomento de la colaboración de ambos países en materia filmica.

### Resumen

El contexto del presente estudio es la relación transnacional entre las industrias filmicas india y española. Un hito en esta relación fue la película *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (Zoya Akhtar, 2011), que aumentó la visibilidad de España en India, y de India en España, dando lugar a acuerdos para fomentar las coproducciones entre ambos países. El objetivo principal ha sido analizar presencia del cine indio en las salas de cine españolas. Para ello, se han analizado las estadísticas del Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales entre 2015 y 2020 referentes a la exhibición de películas indias en España,

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### Cómo citar este texto:

Bitasta Das y Jaime López-Díez (2022): Indian cinema in Spanish movie theatres ten years after *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*, en *Miguel Hernández Communication Journal*, Vol. 13 (2), pp. 429 a 449. Universidad Miguel Hernández, UMH (Elche-Alicante). DOI: 10.21134/mhjournal.v13i.1471

## Indian cinema in Spanish movie theatres ten years after *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*

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### Keywords

"Bollywood"; "Indian Cinema"; "Spanish Cinema"; "Transnational Cinema"; "World Cinema"

### Summary

1. Introduction and context. 1.1. India in Spanish movies; Spain in Indian movies. 1.2. *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*. 1.3. Objectives and research questions. 2. Methodology. 3. Results. 3.1. Films exhibited. 3.2. Filmgoers. 3.3. Average attendance to films per film nationality. 3.4. Box office revenue. 3.5. 2017 Statistics. 4. Discussion. 5. Conclusions. 6. Bibliography. 7. Filmography.

2020 concerning the exhibition of Indian films in Spain have been analyzed, comparing them with other relevant Asian film industries: Japanese, South Korean, and Chinese. The main finding is that Indian films have a reduced presence in Spain compared to what would be expected due to their global relevance, and less than that of other Asian film industries. A limitation of this study has been the covid-19 epidemic, which may have affected the exhibition of Indian films in Spain. The original contribution of this study is that it suggests the need to rework the agreements for the promotion of film collaboration between the two countries.

### Abstract

The context of the present study is the transnational relationship between the Indian and Spanish film industries. A milestone in this relationship was the film *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (Zoya Akhtar, 2011), which increased the visibility of Spain in India, and of India in Spain, leading to agreements to promote co-productions between the two countries. The main objective has been to analyze the presence of Indian cinema in Spanish movie theaters. For this purpose, the statistics of the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts between 2015 and

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## 1. Introduction and context

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the Indian and Spanish film industries. Specifically, the main objective has been to study the number of Indian films shown in Spanish cinemas, compared to other significant Asian film industries: Japanese, South Korean, and Chinese. We have focused on the period 2015-2020 (both included), and we have taken into account the impact of the Indian film *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (You Don't Live Twice) (Akhtar, 2011) (henceforth ZNMD), which was a milestone in the relations between both countries in the cinematographic area. The importance of this study is to provide quantitative data on the impact of Indian cinema in Spain, which will contribute to assessing the effectiveness of measures to promote relations between the two film industries.

To understand the context, first, we will examine the cultural relations between Spanish and Indian cinema, with respect to films from one country set in the other, and Indian films that have been successful in Spain. Secondly, we will focus on the most significant movie in terms of film relations between the two countries, ZNMD—which celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2021—, its implications, and the agreements between the two countries to which it gave rise. After stating the research questions of this study, we will explain the methodology and the results. Finally, we will discuss the results, and we will arrive at some conclusions.

### 1.1. India in Spanish movies; Spain in Indian movies

According to film histories on Spanish and Indian cinemas, the presence of Spanish films set in India and Indian films set in Spain is, in both cases, scarce (Benet 2012; Saran, 2012; Gubern, 2009; Bose, 2007). The only successful Spanish film set in India has been a film from the 1940s, *The Harvest Is Rich* (*La mies es mucha*) (Sáenz de Heredia, 1948) (Benet, 2012; Martín Corrales, 2004). It was a huge success of critics and box office, and it won several awards, including the 1949 Medal for Best Film awarded by the Circle of Cinematographic Writers (Martín Corrales, 2004).

*The Harvest Is Rich* is a religious film, directed by one of the most important Spanish directors of the time, José Luis Sáenz de Heredia. The cast included two actors who would later become great stars of Spanish cinema: Fernando Fernán Gómez and Sara Montiel. Heredia tried to film it in India, but he could not obtain the permits, so he used as shooting location a privately owned Botanical Garden in Malaga, in Southern Spain, which had tropical vegetation (Martín Corrales, 2004).

Later, during the 70s, India was present in two Spanish co-productions, *Slaughter on the Khyber Pass* (*El tigre del Kyber*) (Merino, 1970), and *The Uncertain Death* (*La muerte incierta*) (Larraz, 1973), a horror movie co-produced by Spain, Italy, and India. Until the 2010s, India would

not have a significant presence in Spanish cinema again, although always in independent films, and with very little success with the public. Some titles are the video diary *Mapa* (*Map*) (Siminiani, 2013), the short film *Jaisalmer* (Alameda, 2013), the road movie *Anochece en la India* (*Night Falls in India*) (Rodríguez, 2014), and *Bollywood Made in Spain* (Margareto, 2016), which obtained a Special Mention of the Jury at the 2016 Mumbai International Film Festival.

In 2019 we find *La cinta de Álex* (*Alex's Strip*) (Alameda, 2019), a co-production of Spain, India, and the United States, which was the first film to be shown in Spanish theaters after the 2020 house confinement due to the covid-19 pandemic<sup>1</sup>. It made 14,876€ at the box office, and 2,578 filmgoers. It was #184 in the ranking of highest box office movies in Spain in 2020 (#1 was the Spanish movie *Father There is Only One 2* (*Padre no hay más que uno 2: La llegada de la suegra*) (Segura, 2020), with almost €13 Million, and approx. 2,310,000 viewers).

Indian cinema, on the other hand, despite the use of European locations in successful films such as *Silsila* (Chopra, 1981) or *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* (Chopra, 1995), it was not until 2011 that located a major film in Spain, *ZNMD*. Nevertheless, historiographies of Indian cinema record the inclusion of some Spanish cultural motifs such as flamenco and bullfighters, popularized by the actress Helen in successful films such as the hit *Teesri Manzil* (Anand, 1966) and *Caravan* (Hussain, 1971).

The idea that general audiences in Spain have about Bollywood movies, frequently it is that of romantic stories, full of songs and group dances (García García, 2009). However, it is common that the Spanish public, even a specialized audience, such as university students of audiovisual communication, is not able to name the main Bollywood blockbusters or their main stars (personal communication of university students of media studies, February 8, 2021).

The greatest Indian film commercial success in Spain has been *Monsoon Wedding* (Nair, 2001), with 307.813 spectators in 2002 (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, 2002)<sup>2</sup>. It is a co-production of India, the US, France, Germany, and Italy that won the Golden Lion award at the Venice Film Festival (Olmedo, 2002). Some authors consider it a “Bollylite”, a movie that does not follow the “internal conventions” of Bollywood and has great success in the US (Joshi. 2010: 245). Likewise, Satyajit Ray's films, especially his Apu trilogy, always has been widely known among scholars and cinephiles (Romero Escrivá, 2010; Elena, 1999).

1 Jiménez, J. (2020, June 23) “La cinta de Álex”, la primera película española en estrenarse en cines tras la cuarentena. RTVE. <https://www.rtve.es/noticias/20200623/cinta-alex-primera-pelicula-espanola-estrenarse-cines-tras-cuarentena/2020964.shtml>

2 *Slumdog Millionaire*, (Danny Boyle and Loveleen Tandan, 2008) which registered 1,738,874 spectators in 2009, is a UK film, not an Indian film. Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales (ICAA). (2002). Anuario de Cine. Año 2002. <https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/cultura/areas/cine/mc/anuario-cine/anuarios/ano-2009.html>

For Spanish general audiences, one of the audiovisuals with the greatest impact related to Bollywood may have been the Coca-Cola television commercial “Pita Del”, released in the summer of 2004 (Fraile Prieto, 2012), where an Indian waiter serving in a mansion banquet suddenly starts to sing and dance with the guests in a Bollywood style.

Recently, this Indian cinema has gained the attention by Spanish audiences due to the emergence of OTT (Over-the-Top) platforms. *The White Tiger* (Bahrani, 2021), released by Netflix in 2021, may be regarded as the biggest Bollywood success in Spain so far in terms of viewers<sup>3</sup>.

## 1.2. *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*

*Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (*You Don't Live Twice*) (Akhtar, 2011) has represented a milestone in the relationship between both countries. As the emotional story of the three friends progressed, the viewers travelled across the country with them—Barcelona, Costa Brava, Buñol, Seville, Pamplona. The actors were shown partaking in traditional Flamenco dance, La Tomatina festival, and Bull race and savoring Spanish cuisine. ZNMD was released in India on July 15, 2011. In Spain, it was titled *Solo se vive una vez*.

The narrative of the film reckons about appreciating and relishing life, to live while alive. The story is presented through the tribulation of each character and how each one of them conquers their devils, reconciling to the fact that life is about leaving the burdens of the past behind and enjoying the present.

Initially, the film was to be titled *Running with the Bulls*, and it was intended to be shot in Mexico. But the producers were not able to reach an agreement with Mexican authorities for co-financing it (Val Cubero, 2016). Miguel Nieto Sandoval, in charge of the Turespaña office in Delhi, knew about the project and offered the production company to pay part of the budget and facilitate access and permits to film locations. Finally, the bull would be run in Pamplona (Navarre), which bull races during the San Fermin festival were made famous outside Spain by Ernst Hemmingway in the novel *The Sun Also Rises*, originally published in 1926 (1995).

Thus, Turespaña signed an agreement with the production company Excel Entertainment, and the film was co-financed by the Spanish Agency of Tourism, Turespaña, which depends on the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Tourism, and whose task is to promote Spain as a touristic destiny.

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3 Mantilla, D. (2021, January 27). “‘Tigre blanco’, la sorpresa de Netflix que debería desmontar los prejuicios sobre el cine indio”. *El Español*. [https://www.elespanol.com/series/entrevistas/20210126/tigre-blanco-nueva-pelicula-netflix-desmontar-prejuicios-cine-indio/553195828\\_0.html](https://www.elespanol.com/series/entrevistas/20210126/tigre-blanco-nueva-pelicula-netflix-desmontar-prejuicios-cine-indio/553195828_0.html)

One of the keys to the success of *ZNMD* in India was the similarity between two festivals, the Spanish tomato war, Tomatina, and the Indian festival Holi. Ritesh Sidhwani, the producer of *ZNMD*, said that “Tomatina is important to our movie [...]. I thought the Indian audience would relate to tomatoes because in India, people also use eggs and mud to play Holi.”<sup>4</sup>. And director Zoya Akhtar added that “Tomatina in Spain is a festival closest to our Holi. They play with tomatoes and the world turns red for the day.”

In India, *ZNMD* was released in more than 2,500 movie theatres. It achieved the highest box office revenue in India in 2011 (\$3,108,485), and it won seven Filmfare awards, the Indian equivalent to Oscars. It also grossed \$1,448,132 viewers in the UK. Nevertheless, in Spain, the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA) reports of 2011 (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, 2011) and 2012 (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, 2012) do not include it in the list of movies exhibited in Spain.

In Spain, there are several governmental institutions to promote the audiovisual industry internationally. Regarding Cinema, there are the Spanish Film Commission, ICEX Audiovisual, and Rodar en España (Film in Spain). The State Secretariat of Tourism signed a Protocol of Intentions with the Spain Film Commission and the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA) in March 2019, aimed at promoting film-induced tourism (Gobierno de España, 2020).

Spain tourism had a marketing tie-up with the producers of the film to boost the inflow of Indian tourists, an attempt to attract India’s fast-growing overseas tourism market. “There was an immediate impact in the number of people requesting entry visas to travel to Spain”, said the director of the London office of Turespaña, Enrique Ruiz de Lera, who led the agency’s talks with the producers of the movie <sup>5</sup>.

The year after its release, 60,444 Indians visited Spain, nearly double the 2011 figure, according to the industry and tourism ministry. Lonely Planet in 2013 launched a guide to Spain aimed specifically at the Indian market and travel agencies. India’s ambassador to Spain, Vikram Misri, said the film “was singlehandedly responsible for making Spain a household name in India and increasing tourism from India”<sup>6</sup>.

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4 Kotwani, H. (2011, 19 March). *Hrithik, Kat recreate Holi with tomatoes in Spain*. Hindustan Times. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/bollywood/hrithik-kat-recreate-holi-with-tomatoes-in-spain/story-gf5uzma6zDU7czQ8hPBLCK.html>

5 AFP. (2016, June 24). Spain joins forces with Bollywood to boost tourism- Daily FT. <https://www.ft.lk/Travel-Tourism/spain-joins-forces-with-bollywood-to-boost-tourism/27-550518>

6 AFP. (2016, June 24). Spain joins forces with Bollywood to boost tourism- Daily FT. <https://www.ft.lk/Travel-Tourism/spain-joins-forces-with-bollywood-to-boost-tourism/27-550518>

The movie made such an impact that Spanish tourism from India saw a significant increase, especially at its on-shoot locations, post-2011. Many tourist agencies in Spain now offer “Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara Movie Beach Tour” to Costa Brava and Lloret de Mar beaches and other locations in Spain where the movie was shot. Tour operators in India now offer tailored adventure tour packages to Spain from India that include activities such as deep-sea diving, flamenco dancing, skydiving, and bullfighting, as shown in the film (Val Cubero, 2016; Méndiz Noguero, 2014). In global tourism, Spain ranks as the third most visited country. But in the bid to diversify its tourism base beyond the northern European tourists, Spain began to coax Indian movie makers to use its colorful fiestas and historic monuments as settings for their films.

Table 1. Indian visitors to Spain

Year	Indian visitors
2010	30,000
2011	60,444
2015	85,000
2018	206,560

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2021

Though *ZNMD* started a significant relationship between the Spanish and the Film Industry when both countries signed a film co-production agreement in 2012, a year after *ZNMD* was released, according to the Work Document Culture and Sport, published by Spain Indian Council Foundation (Fundación Consejo España India), and the Indo Spanish Chamber of Commerce in 2020 (Fundación Consejo España India, 2020), the agreement on film coproduction signed in 2012 did not fulfill the expected goals, because of structural differences of their film industries, as well as for lack of interest of big production companies.

In June 2016, the VII International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards, were celebrated in Madrid (Spain). In June 2016, a new agreement was signed between the Producers Guild of India and the Spanish Film Commission (Fundación Consejo España India, 2020). And in July 2016, Queen Letizia gave Zoya Akhtar the III Award of the Foundation-Council Spain-India, along with Spanish director Carlos Saura.

In 2020, Zoya Akhtar won the 8th India International Film Tourism Conclave (IIFTC) IIFTC Tourism Impact Award 2020 for her Outstanding Contribution to World Film Tourism (Arora, 2020). Besides *ZNMD*, she used the same strategy in *Dil Dhadakne Do* (Let the Heart Beat) (Akhtar, 2015).

Besides these events, several film festivals —Imagine India (directed by Qazi Abdur Rahim), *IndiaIndie* (organized by Casa de la India, and currently directed by Guillermo Rodrí-

guez Martín), Asian Film Festival Barcelona (organized by Casa Asia, and currently directed by Menene Gras Balaguer), and the Film International Week of Valladolid (SEMINCI) (currently directed by Javier Angulo)—promote Indian cinema in Spain, though it is mostly independent movies, which are the ones that reach some Spanish multiplex theatres.

Moreover, several Indian movies have included shooting locations in Spain. Director Zoya Akhtar chose locations in Spain for *Dil Dhadakne Do (Let the Heart Beat)* (2015), and the Amazon series *Made in Heaven* (Akhtar, and Kagti, 2019). Among other Indian films with locations in Spain are *Bharat* (Zafar, 2019), *Singji: The Boss* (Shankar, 2007), *Nanban* (Shankar, 2012), *Zam Zam* (Neelakanta, 2019), *Ranarangam* (Varma, 2019). Film producer Karan Johar visited Spain in January 2020 looking for locations for *Takht*, but the covid pandemic stopped production, and it is still in the preproduction stage<sup>7</sup>.

### 1.3. Objectives and research questions

The main objective of this research is to study the relevance of Indian cinema in Spanish cinemas. To do this, we have formulated the following research questions:

RQ 1: How many Indian films have been released in Spanish cinemas between 2015 and 2020?

RQ 2: How many filmgoers have attended Indian films exhibited in Spanish cinemas between 2015 and 2020?

RQ 3: What box office revenues had Indian films exhibited in Spanish cinemas between 2015 and 2020?

RQ 4: What percentage do they represent Indian films shown in Spain between 2015 and 2020, compared to other Asian film industries in terms of number of films exhibited, number of filmgoers, and box office revenues?

## 2. Methodology

To answer research questions 1, 2 and 3 formulated, the methodology followed in this study has been the review of the statistics of the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual

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7 Khurana, A. (2020, March 21). *Karan Johar spending lockdown period fine-tuning Takht script; reveals film was to be shot in Italy, Spain*. Zoom. <https://www.zoomtventertainment.com/bollywood/article/karan-johar-spending-lockdown-period-fine-tuning-takht-script-reveals-film-was-to-be-shot-in-italy-spain/571854>



Arts (ICAA), of the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sport. We have limited the study to the years 2015 (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, 2015), 2016 (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, 2016), 2017 (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, 2017), 2018 (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, 2018), 2019 (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, 2019), and 2020 (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, 2020). We have focused on the following data: number of films exhibited, number of filmgoers, average attendance to films per film nationality, and average box office revenue.

In addition, we have looked deeply at the data of the ICAA for 2017, the year with the highest number of Indian films exhibited in Spain (24 movies), and also the year when it could be expected to be exhibited in Spain the highest-grossing Indian film and in Bollywood films, *Dangal (Wrestling Competition)* (Tiwari, 2016)<sup>89</sup>, released in India on December 23, 2016. In the analysis of the 2017 data, we have also studied the language of the Indian films shown.

To study the relative importance of Indian cinema in Spanish cinemas and thus answer Research Question 4, the methodology followed in this study has been the review of the statistics of the Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA), of the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sport. on the film industries of China, Japan, and South Korea. These are the three Asian film industries with the highest number of films produced<sup>10</sup> (Gabriel Navarro, 2021).

### 3. Results

To contextualize the data found in the ICAA statistics regarding Indian cinema and other Asian film industries, we highlight that in all the studied categories, US and Spanish film industries were at the top of the list, followed by major European film industries, such as France, the UK, or Germany, which could be expected because of geographical, political, and cultural proximity (Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, 2021).

Between 2016 and 2020, the US exhibited an average of 550 movies per year (30.93% of all the movies exhibited in the period), and Spain 431 (24.52%). Regarding filmgoers, the average number of filmgoers to US films was almost 60 million (58,487,427.17) (average film

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8 Samrudh, David. (June 25, 2016). Highest Grossing Indian Films. *Imdb*. <https://www.imdb.com/list/ls063771441/> (Updated January 2021)

9 Bollywood Hungama. (2021). Bollywood Top Grossers Worldwide. Year: All Time. *Bollywood Hungama*. <https://www.bollywoodhungama.com/box-office-collections/worldwide/>

10 Gabriel Navarro, J. (2021, August 21). Leading film markets worldwide 2007-2018, by number of films produced. *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/252727/leading-film-markets-worldwide-by-number-of-films-produced/>

attendance, 10,6951.5), while the average number of filmgoers to Spanish films was almost 16 million (15,861,207.67) (36,596.5). Concerning the box office, in 2015-2020, US films made an average box office revenue of 580,421.02€, and Spanish movies, 266,106.10€.

3.1. Films exhibited

As we see in Table 1, India ranked second in the list of several films exhibited in Spain produced in these four countries, while it produces more films per year than China, Japan, and South Korea. According to Gabriel Navarro (2021), Indian film production from 2015-to 2018 was almost three times the Chinese production, more than three times the Japanese production, and almost five times the South Korean production.

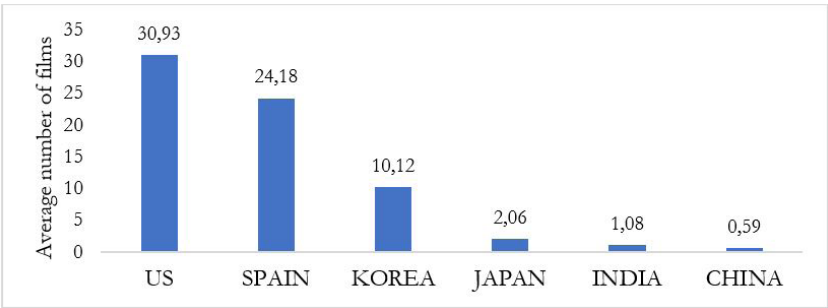
Table 3. Number of films exhibited in Spain in 2015-2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Japan	31	35	48	39	56	36	245
India	3	11	24	21	32	14	105
South Korea	10	12	13	12	11	18	76
China	7	6	8	11	10	18	60

Source: Own elaboration. Based on ICAA reports

If the take the average of films exhibited by country each year regarding the total number of films exhibited that year, and then we compare the averages of the six years for each country, we find that the average of Indian films comes last in the ranking.

Graphic 1. Average number of films exhibited in Spain in 2015-2020



Source: Own elaboration. Based on ICAA reports

3.2. Filmgoers

When we look at filmgoers, the number of people that go to see Indian movies exhibited in Spain is in the last position, with numbers twelve times lower than Korean and Chinese, and almost ten times lower than Japanese.

Table 4. Number of filmgoers in Spain in 2015-2020

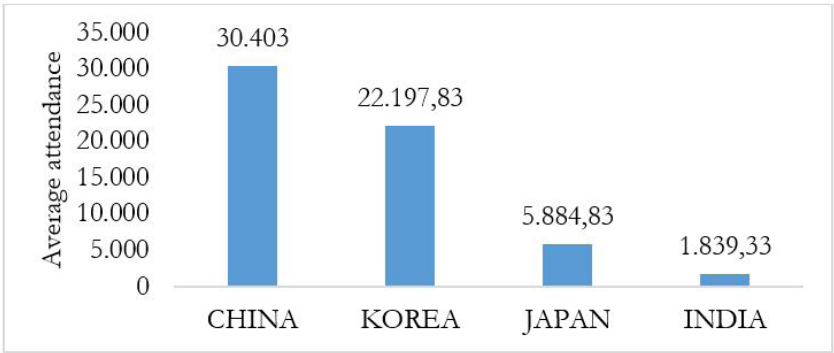
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
South Korea	6,310	33,240	499,524	28,382	303,793	1,104,811	1,976,060
China	5,726	53,980	20,560	1,800,844	53,578	17,322	1,952,010
Japan	258,453	149,217	259,990	220,293	534,689	75,473	1,498,115
India	1,688	78,458	22,015	23,646	30,824	4,678	161,309

Source: Own elaboration. Based on ICAA reports

3.3. Average attendance to films per film nationality

If we look at the average attendance to films per film nationality, Indian movies also obtain meager figures.

Graphic 2. Average film attendance in Spain per film nationality in 2015-2020



Source: Own elaboration. Based on ICAA reports

In Table 2 we see that Korean film registered a spike in 2020, due to *Parasites* (Ho, 2019), which won the Oscar for Best Picture, and China had a huge number of filmgoers in 2018, almost exclusively because of one film, a US-Chinese co-production, *The Meg* (Turteltaub, 2018), a science fiction action film on a megalodon shark.

### 3.4. Average box office revenue

Concerning the average box office revenue, Indian movies are also the lowest of the analyzed Asian film industries: fifteen times lower than Chinese revenues, almost ten times lower than Korean's, twice lower than Japanese's.

Table 5. Average box office revenue in Spain in 2015-2020

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Average
China	1,756.14	49,985.27	10,245.98	997,319.79	24,975.70	4,076.74	207,674.87
South Korea	2,934.73	16,865.68	206,684.54	12,450.02	161,622.67	369,538.61	128,349.38
Japan	48,352.01	25,096.23	31,651.31	33,645.75	57,062.18	12,107.23	34,652.45
India	3,440.00	42,438.93	7,027.88	8,908.79	8,170.81	2,900.56	13,171.82

Source: Own elaboration. Based on ICAA reports

### 3.5. 2017 Statistics

With respect to the data for 2017, the four Bollywood films with the highest number of filmgoers were *Golmaal Again* (Shetty, 2017), with 3,069 filmgoers; *Baahubali: Conclusion* (Rajamouli, 2017), 2,046; *Kaabil* (Gupta, 2017), 1,703; and *Parched* (Yadav, 2015), 1,583 (which was on the top of the list in 2016 with 47,858 filmgoers).

Thus, we found that *Dangal* was not exhibited on the Spanish screens in 2017, or 2016. Although, with a meager number of filmgoers, the second highest-grossing film of Indian cinema was exhibited, *Baahubali: Conclusion*.

Table 6. Indian movies were exhibited in Spain in 2017

Movie	Language	Number of filmgoers in 2017	Box office revenue in 2017
<i>Tiger Zinda Hai</i>	Hindi	5,080	42,500.53 €
<i>Golmaal Again</i>	Hindi	3,069	25,015.83 €
<i>Manje Bistre</i>	Punjabi	2,047	14,928.00 €
<i>Baahubali: The Conclusion</i>	Telugu/Tamil	2,046	15,724.20 €
<i>Tubelight</i>	Hindi/ English	1,864	15,635.10 €

<i>Kaabil</i>	Hindi	1,703	13,707.17 €
<i>Parched</i>	Hindi	1,583	6,983.15 €
<i>Laboriye</i>	Punjabi	1,259	9,172.00 €
<i>Nikka Zaildar 2</i>	Punjabi	900	7,003.00 €
<i>Toofan Singh</i>	Punjabi	438	3,363.00 €
<i>Sarvann</i>	Punjabi	327	2,446.80 €
<i>Secret Superstar</i>	Hindi	283	2,370.90 €
<i>Super Singh</i>	Punjabi	263	1,906.00 €
<i>Rangoon</i>	Hindi/English	252	1,843.72 €
<i>Judwa 2</i>	Hindi	181	1,668.00 €
<i>Sardar Mohammad</i>	Punjabi	166	1,296.50 €
<i>Bailaras</i>	Punjabi	162	1,236.50 €
<i>Court</i>	Marathi/Gujarati/ English/Hindi	155	341.50 €
<i>Befikere</i>	Hindi	87	336.80 €
<i>Sarkar 3</i>	Hindi	58	556.50 €
<i>Saab Bahadar</i>	Punjabi	45	360.00 €
<i>Aparajito</i>	Bengali	20	117.80 €
<i>Pathe Panchali</i>	Bengali	20	113.90 €
<i>Apur Sansar</i>	Bengali	7	42.10 €

Source: Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, 2017

## 4. Discussion

As mentioned in the literature review, concerning the presence of Spanish and Indian culture and society in each other filmographies, this presence has been, historically, incidental: one major Spanish film located in India, *The Harvest Is Rich* and released in the late 40s, and several flamenco dances in Bollywood films, some of them featuring Helen, a Bollywood star of Spanish ascendance.

Then, in 2011, there was a great opportunity to strengthen links between both film industries when *ZNMD* was released. The Spanish government co-financed the film, which was mainly located in Spain, and it was a huge success in India. It induced a spike in the number of Indian visitors to Spain and made it possible for Spain to represent fun and frolic in the background of history and tradition to the Indian psyche. The diverse nature of the country—cheerfulness interspersed with culture makes Spain among the most sought-after places to visit for the Indians. The figures say India is 40% cheaper than Spain, despite the huge margin Indians do not mind shelling out their travel budget to have an experience in Spain. Indeed, cinema sells dreams, the story of Spain in India is among the fascinating ones.

But the relationship did not work out as expected, besides several Indian movies being shot in Spain, while the interest in both sides remained, and new agreements and events were organized to maintain close links, as the agreement signed in 2016 between the Producers Guild of India and the Spanish Film Commission, closely related to events such as the IIFA 2016, celebrated in Madrid, and *ZNMD*'s director, Zoya Akhtar, winning the III Award of the Foundation-Council Spain-India.

The current study found that data from the ICAA annual reports from 2015 to 2020 reveal that the relationship is still weak in most of the studied categories. With respect to the number of films, compared with other major Asian film industries, India comes after Japan, which more than doubles Indian films exhibited (245 Japanese films, and 105 Indian films). It can also be noticed that Indian movies show a leap in 2017 when the number of Indian exhibited films doubles those exhibited in 2016 and represented four times the ones in 2015.

A possible explanation may have been the promotion agreements between the Spanish and the Indian governments. But then, in 2020 it seems to go down again, which could suggest that Indian movies are not consistently distributed in Spanish movies theaters. Moreover, regarding the average of films exhibited by country each year regarding the total number of films exhibited that year, we find that the average of Indian films comes last in the ranking.

What is surprising is that India is at the bottom of the list of the number of filmgoers, average film attendance, and box-office revenue.

With regard to the number of filmgoers, one reason could be that Indian films in Spain are exhibited mostly in film festivals, like *IndiaIndie*, Asian Film Festival, Imagine India, and Seminci, and they are usually indie or independent films. These independent films are also exhibited on some multiplex screens of big cities. But Bollywood blockbusters are not exhibited in big Spanish movie theatres, intended for big audiences, except for screening organized by the Embassy of India. Besides, they are also exhibited in small theatres, intended for Indians and Pakistanis living in Spain, most of them in Barcelona and Madrid.

The relevance of films exhibited for Pakistani audiences is shown in the fact that in 2017, the year with more Indian films exhibited in Spain, 9 out of 24 films were in Punjabi (11 in Hindi). a language also spoken in Pakistan.

Regarding the low revenue, despite being India the second Asian film industry with more films exhibited in Spain in the studied period, the explanation may be related to the same reasons that affect the low number of filmgoers, as well as to the fact that Indian blockbusters exhibited for Indian and Pakistanis living in Spain, usually have a cheaper ticket price or even free, as in the case of the movies exhibited by the Embassy of India in Madrid, that sends an invitation to Indians living in Madrid for the event.

These data show that despite the size of the Indian film industry, its movies are almost inexistent in Spain in terms of filmgoers and box office revenues, even the most commercial Bollywood films, and even compared not with US or Spanish movies, but with other Asian film industries smaller regarding the number of films produced.

A possible explanation for this poor performance of Indian movies in Spain, including Bollywood blockbusters, widely unknown to Spanish audiences, might be the duration. Typically, Bollywood movies are 2,40 to over 3 hours long, unlike most of the films exhibited in Spain, including US films, with durations from 1,30 to 2,30. This affects the way of watching movies on screens, as in India films have usually an intermission, which is not the case in Spain, as well as the distribution and exhibition because fewer sessions can be scheduled. This could be supported that it is usually independent Indian movies, shorter in duration, that make it to multiplex screens. It also has consequences in the storytelling, as the setup of the story usually takes longer than in shorter films.

Another reason may be cultural and social differences between Spain and India. It could be argued that Japanese, South Korean, or Chinese societies are also distant, but more developed than India in several aspects, and, thus, close to Spain. On the other hand, it could be argued that India shares more Western values than China, which is higher in the list of filmgoers and box revenue.

## 5. Conclusions

The purpose of the current study was to see the relationships between the Spanish and Indian cinema, especially after *ZNMD*, focusing on the relevance of Indian movies on Spanish screens.

In reviewing the literature, the relationships between both industries were found to be anecdotal, with the significant exception of one movie, *ZNMD*, that motivated closer institutional links. But despite these efforts, as well as the significant effort of the Embassy of India in Spain, and several film festivals, data show that ten years after Zoya Akhtar's blockbuster, India and Spain remain as cinematic strangers, with Indian movies absent from the minds of the Spanish audiences. Countries like Japan, Korea, or China, very different from Spain in terms of culture, achieved better figures on the Spanish screens.

A limitation of this study is that the covid-19 pandemic may have affected the exhibition of Indian films in Spain. Additionally, Spanish and Indian film histories are 120 years old, and referenced studies on them may have not included films or characters that connect both film industries.

Thus, this study has raised important questions about the nature of this low performance in Spain of one of the biggest film industries in the world. Nevertheless, recent trends in

watching movies on OTT may change this situation.

Future transnational cinema research may focus on the causes of this contradiction, especially on how and why the distribution of Indian films in Spain, which might offer key explanations, contributes to it.

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**Cómo citar este texto:**

Bitasta Das y Jaime López-Díez (2022): Indian cinema in Spanish movie theatres ten years after Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara, en *Miguel Hernández Communication Journal*, Vol. 13 (2), pp. 429 a 449. Universidad Miguel Hernández, UMH (Elche-Alicante). DOI: 10.21134/mhjournal.v13i.1471