



From Anticipation to Outrage: *Adipurush* and the Limits of Mythological Blockbuster Cinema

Saishilpa Janamanchi¹ & Prof. Y. L. Srinivas²

1. Junior Research Fellow and doctoral researcher in English, University College of Arts and Social Sciences (UCASS), Osmania University, Hyderabad, India.

2. Vice-Chancellor, Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University, Telangana, India.

Abstract

In June 2023, dialogue revision happened in running theatres. Om Raut's *Adipurush* - a ₹500–700 crore Ramayana adaptation starring Prabhas, Kriti Sanon, and Saif Ali Khan - had opened eight days earlier to near-record numbers and near-immediate outrage. The makers announced the re-dub while the original version was still being screened. No precedent exists for this in Indian cinema. Accounts of the controversy are not scarce. CGI, dialogue, casting - these have been catalogued at length. What remains unexplained is why failure took this organized form: legal petitions across five states, coordinated digital campaigns, post-release re-dubbing in running theatres. That precision of response demands a structural explanation, not just a production one. The concept at the centre of this paper is mythological expectation. Not preferences. Prior knowledge. Sagar's *Ramayan* (1987–88) is one source of it. Calendar art another. Amar Chitra Katha, Ram Lila, temple iconography - cumulatively these produced a visual grammar audiences hold without formal instruction. It tells them what Rama looks like. How Hanuman sounds. What the visual architecture of Lanka demands. The paper reads reception through three functions: Remembering (invoking the inherited standard), Comparing (testing the film against it), and Policing (what happens when the test fails). The analysis draws on Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding framework, Henry Jenkins' participatory culture thesis, and Reddit reception threads from the controversy. *Adipurush* is also being applied prospectively - by audiences using it as a negative benchmark against Nitesh Tiwari's forthcoming *Ramayana* (2026). That extension is the paper's final concern.

Keywords: *Adipurush*, Mythological Expectation, Ramayana Cinema, Participatory Spectatorship, Sacred Recognition.

Introduction

The facts alone are strange. *Adipurush* released June 16, 2023 - simultaneously across India in

Article History: Received: 10 June 2026. Revised: 20 June 2026. Accepted: 10 August 2026. First published: 31st August, 2026.

Copyright: © 2026 by the author/s.

License: Distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Published by: Adrija Press, India.

Citation: Janamanchi, Saishilpa & Prof. Y. L. Srinivas. (2026). From Anticipation to Outrage: *Adipurush* and the Limits of Mythological Blockbuster Cinema. *Newliteraria Journal* 9:1, 139-148.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.48189/nl.2026.v09i1.014>

five languages, directed by Om Raut, starring Prabhas as Rama (credited as Raghav), Kriti Sanon as Sita (Janaki), Saif Ali Khan as Ravana (Lankesh), Devdatta Nage as Hanuman (Bajrang). Production budget: reported between ₹500 and ₹700 crore, the largest for any Indian mythological film. Day-one worldwide gross: ₹126 crore. By the end of the first week, High Court petitions had been filed in at least five states. By the end of the first month, the production team had announced that dialogues would be re-dubbed - and that the revised version would run in theatres still screening the original. Post-release re-dubbing, screened alongside the version it was meant to replace, has no precedent in Indian cinema. Something happened here that the usual vocabulary of box office underperformance or critical failure doesn't adequately capture.

The outrage wasn't general. It was precise. Specific elements drew specific responses - Prabhas's appearance, Saif Ali Khan's Ravana design, a particular Hanuman dialogue - and those responses were articulated in categorical terms, not in the language of aesthetic disappointment. Something about the way audiences named what had gone wrong points toward a structure of expectation that predates the film and would have confronted any Ramayana production with similar force. The question the controversy poses isn't 'why did the film fail?' It's more specific: why did failure take this particular shape, organized so quickly, across legal and commercial and digital channels at once?

The term mythological expectation names that structure. It isn't anticipation of a particular film - that's the more ordinary thing. What this refers to is prior knowledge of the Ramayana itself: a dense, inherited network of visual, narrative, devotional, and cultural assumptions constituted across Sagar's television Ramayan (1987-88), Amar Chitra Katha, calendar art, Ram Lila, temple iconography. Hall (1981) argued that 'the popular' names not a stable body of texts but a contested terrain - the ongoing site of struggle between what cultural producers impose and what audiences claim as their own. Mythological expectation is the specific form that contestation takes when the terrain is sacred. By the time *Adipurush* released, the audience had already written their Ramayana. They weren't an empty space the film could fill. They were already occupied.

The reception is traced through three audience functions: Remembering, Comparing, Policing. Remembering describes the prior framework - the inherited standard held before any encounter. Comparing is the recognition test - what happens when the film's elements are measured against that standard. Policing is enforcement - the response when the test fails. Together these constitute how mythological expectation operates in practice, and their sequential activation explains the *Adipurush* controversy more adequately than accounts focused on production failure alone.

2. Manufacturing Hype: The Anticipation Economy (2019-2023)

August 18, 2020. The announcement of *Adipurush* arrived with two pieces of strategic information: the director (Om Raut, whose *Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior* had combined historical epic with CGI spectacle to considerable commercial success) and the lead actor (Prabhas, carrying, after S.S. Rajamouli's two-part *Baahubali*, one of the most potent pan-Indian star personas of the decade). That combination was a promise. What *Baahubali* had accomplished for invented epic kingship, this film would accomplish for the Ramayana. Whether the promise was deliverable is a separate question. That it was received and understood as a promise is not.

₹350 crore. Then ₹500. Then reports reaching ₹700 crore (PinkVilla, 2023). Each revision generated headlines, and each headline raised the threshold further. In commercial cinema's vocabulary, budget scale signals the maker's seriousness - the claim that the subject

deserves this much. ₹700 crore is, read that way, a form of reverence toward the Ramayana. The problem is that devotional audiences don't read it that way.

But devotional audiences don't read scale that way. Scale reads as ambition. And ambition directed at the sacred raises the threshold of expectation - it doesn't guarantee satisfaction. Every budget headline was simultaneously making the standard harder to meet. By release date, the mythological expectation the film had to satisfy wasn't proportional only to the Ramayana's devotional weight. It was that weight multiplied by four years of escalating promotional promise. The announcement had manufactured a ceiling the film would have to reach, and kept raising it.

The IMDb synopsis for *Adipurush* describes "the exiled prince Raghav's journey to rescue his wife Janaki from the demon king Lankesh" (IMDb, 2023). Raghav, Janaki, Lankesh - genuine Valmiki epithets, traceable in the Sanskrit. But what an epithet does and what a proper name does are different things in devotional reception. Raghav is a literary figure who can speak in contemporary idiom. Rama is a divine presence carrying four decades of specific iconographic and affective weight in Indian popular culture. Framing the film as following Raghav is one position: it licenses creative latitude. Marketing to devotional audiences expecting encounter with Rama is another. These can't both be held at once. The film tried. The contradiction was structural, there from the start, before a single scene was filmed.

The teaser released October 2, 2022. Response was sharp and specific. CGI drew video game comparisons; BJP Home Minister Narottam Mishra threatened legal action over Hanuman's appearance - bearded, leather-clad, without the moustache devotional iconography demands; Saif Ali Khan's Ravana was compared to *Game of Thrones* villains rather than the scholar-king of South Asian devotional tradition (The Tribune, 2022). The postponement from January to June 2023 - explicitly to rework VFX - was a public confirmation. Recognition had failed at first encounter, and the production acknowledged it.

3. The Audience Had Already Written Their Ramayana

Eighty million viewers. That is the lower-end estimate for the audience that watched Ramanand Sagar's Ramayan on Doordarshan between January 1987 and July 1988 (Lutgendorf, 1990). Sunday mornings became, for a particular generation of North and Central Indian households, a devotional event. Purnima Mankekar's (1993) ethnography captures what this looked like concretely: informants bathing before episodes, covering their heads, adorning television sets with flowers and incense. Not watching a programme. Conducting darshan - the act of beholding a deity. Arun Govil, who played Rama, was touched at the feet in public for decades. For millions of viewers, he wasn't an actor who had played the role. He was Rama. That identification doesn't dissolve. It hardens into a standard.

A.K. Ramanujan's (1991) essay documented over three hundred distinct Ramayana traditions across South and Southeast Asia. That scholarly plurality is real and important. But the Ramayana governing reception of a contemporary Hindi-language multiplex release was shaped by a narrower, historically specific formation: Sagar's serialization, Amar Chitra Katha's illustrated retellings, Ram Lila performances, temple iconography, calendar art's mass-produced deity images permeating Indian domestic life at every class and regional level (Jain, 2007). This formation constituted a visual grammar of the divine - specific colors, postures, expressions, iconographic attributes - internalized as the necessary appearance of sacred figures with no formal art education required. By the time any Ramayana film reaches a theatre, the audience carries this grammar. It functions not as preference but as criterion.

Reddit reception threads produced exactly this vocabulary, without any theoretical

framework being offered. On r/pj explained: “It has an expectation problem. Ramayana is a sacred religious text and 90% of india is familiar to it. We all grew up hearing it, watching it our whole life... You can’t put much creativity into it” (greatestoffalltimefr, 2026). On the same thread: “We are already expecting stuff and want it to be in a certain mould, which will be the downfall” (rithvikrao, 2026). Neither commenter invoked reception theory. Both were describing, from inside the experience of it, the structural condition theorized here as mythological expectation.

Advanced_Two4629 named something the academic literature rarely captures with equivalent economy. The comment - “Kitna hi Zimmer-Wimmer le aao jabtak scene dekh ke श्रद्धा, भक्ति aur नैतिकता ka ehsaas hi nahi hoga tab tak bekaar hi hai” - translates roughly as: no matter how many Hans Zimmers you bring in, until the scene itself generates *shraddha* [reverence], *bhakti* [devotion], and *naitikta* [moral integrity], it is useless. Hans Zimmer. One of the most celebrated film composers working. Dismissed as beside the point. What matters are three affective registers that no production budget generates automatically. *Shraddha*, *bhakti*, *naitikta* - these are, in Advanced_Two4629’s formulation, what mythological expectation actually demands. And they’re entirely independent of scale.

4. The First Crack: When Recognition Failed

Recognition, as the term is used here, is the moment at which audiences measure what appears on screen against the framework they already hold. Not a conscious test. A felt response - correspondence or the sudden absence of it. The question being answered isn’t ‘is this good?’ It’s more basic: is this what it claims to be? When the answer is yes, the character is received. When it’s no, something more specific happens - the character’s name is being applied to something that, by the criteria the audience carries, doesn’t answer to that name. That’s displacement. And displacement isn’t the same as disliking a film.

October 2022, first teaser. Saif Ali Khan’s Ravana: “Indian mythology should be done Indian way. Ravan doesn’t look like Ravan. Ravan was a devotee of the Lord Shiva. He was a half Brahmin. But I thought I was watching a bollywood version of a mughal barbarian” (Why Do I Hear Bosss Music, 2023). Mughal barbarian and scholarly demon-king of Lanka belong to distinct iconographic traditions with different visual histories. The design belonged to the first when the expectation demanded the second. Not a matter of quality. Categorical failure.

Prabhas as Rama: “Oh thanks, I had forgotten brown jesus existed” (andhadhund, 2026, 624 upvotes on r/Bolly Blinds N Gossip). Funny - but also a precise cultural diagnosis. Western Christian iconography invoked where South Asian devotional visual grammar is what the expectation demands. That’s tradition misattribution - not general dislike, but a specific cultural wrong-turn located with precision. On the same thread: “Along with South Bombay ka Raavan” (mx-shot, 2026, 404 upvotes). Wrong tradition. Wrong social type. Wrong register entirely. Neither statement is vague disappointment. Each one names the gap in cultural terms rather than aesthetic ones - and names it without any theoretical vocabulary having been offered.

The video game comparison deserves separate attention. A video game world is understood by its users to be constructed - navigable, artificial, avowedly not real. Sacred visual representation, whatever its production values, requires a grammar that produces encounter rather than immersion in an acknowledged artifice. Consider what Ramanand Sagar’s *Ramayan* managed on a fraction of *Adipurush*’s budget: the grammar of devotional encounter, sustained through specific management of color, framing, music, iconographic reference. Sagar’s production values were, by contemporary standards, extremely modest. But technically sophisticated production and culturally legible grammar are separable achievements. *Adipurush* had one and not the other. The one it lacked was the one that mattered.

5. Casting as Theological Contract

Arun Govil is still touched at the feet in public. More than thirty-five years after Ramanand Sagar's Ramayan ended, audiences approach the actor who played Rama with gestures of devotional reverence. Not because they've forgotten he's an actor. Because, for a generation constituted through that specific media encounter, the identification between performer and deity was total and has never fully dissolved. This is what mythological casting does, at its most complete. And it describes a condition for which ordinary film criticism's vocabulary - performance quality, star power, audience chemistry - is genuinely insufficient.

In conventional casting, there's a gap between actor and role - a creative premise both parties accept. The actor inhabits the character; the audience tracks the inhabiting. Mythological casting operates differently. For the devotional majority of any Ramayana film's intended audience, Rama is not a fictional character to be inhabited. He's a divine presence. What the audience requires is something closer to transparency: the actor must not compete with the character's devotional weight. They must carry it without displacing it. The term used here is sacred embodiment - and it explains why an actor's prior screen persona matters, in mythological casting, in ways it doesn't elsewhere. A powerful prior persona creates interference.

Prabhas after *Baahubali* carried one of the most physically dominant personas in contemporary Indian cinema - martial, earthly, triumphant, a particular kind of divinity constituted through epic kingship and physical scale. That version of heroism is real. But it differs from Rama's. Rama's heroism is subordinated to a moral order, to restraint, to a quality of serene dignity that *Baahubali*'s idiom doesn't carry. When Prabhas appeared as Raghav, the overlay - for many viewers - proved too strong to dissolve. A sympathetic r/bollywood moderator put the condition plainly: Prabhas "looks good and believable as Ram" only "if you can see beyond Ram with Moustaches" (DrShail, 2023). That conditional is the problem. The film required an act of selective perception it hadn't earned and couldn't guarantee.

Saif Ali Khan's Ravana didn't trigger the expected recognition - and audiences named what went wrong with cultural specificity. "A bollywood version of a mughal barbarian" (WhyDoIHearBossMusic, 2023). Mughal barbarian: violent, iconoclastic, iconographically crude. That's a real cultural type in the Indian popular imagination. But it isn't Ravana. In South Asian devotional tradition Ravana is Brahmin scholar, Shiva devotee, great king - his iconographic grammar across centuries of representation is precise. What appeared on screen was the wrong type. "The character he's playing is a religious figure, the story is derived from proly most sacred religious text of nation. You can't take it like a fictional movie but a responsibility to deliver a 10/10 movie" (greatest off all time fr, 2026). Responsibility. Not creative risk. Obligation.

6. The Dialogue and Sacred Register

The specific dialogue: 'Kapda tere baap ka, tel tere baap ka, aag bhi tere baap ki, aur jalegi bhi tere baap ki' - the cloth is your father's, the oil is your father's, the fire is your father's, and it's your father's Lanka that will burn (Zee News, 2023). Hanuman's line, Lanka Dahan sequence, spoken to Indrajeet. The word baap carries bravado connotations in colloquial North Indian usage - a taunting, street-register emphasis. It was quoted verbatim in legal petitions. Within hours of the film's release it was circulating on social media as evidence of a category violation. Arun Govil stated publicly: 'Lord Hanuman, we worship him, he is our god, and god talking in this language is not done' (Filmibeat, 2023). Not: this is poor writing. Not: this

characterization choice is mistaken. Not done. Categorically.

Muntashir had written in accessible, contemporary Hindi - a characterological choice, he explained, giving Hanuman a 'childlike' quality; the result of 'a very meticulous thought process' (Koimoi, 2023). He defended it publicly. Next day: dialogues would be changed. Day after that: 'I accept with folded hands... people's emotions have been hurt' (BusinessToday, 2023). Defend, concede, unconditional apology - seventy-two hours. What Stuart Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model describes abstractly, this sequence enacts. Muntashir encoded from a creative position: accessible register, characterological motivation. Audiences decoded from a devotional one. Hanuman doesn't speak this way. Not under any framing. The gap was irreconcilable through argument. Institutional surrender was the only close.

January 2023. The film hadn't released yet. A PIL was already before the Allahabad High Court alleging that Adipurush 'casts aspersions on the characters of the famous epic Ramayana and tarnishes the image of Ayodhya's cultural legacy' (SCC Blog, 2023). Post-release: the court directed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to constitute a five-member expert committee. Om Raut and Muntashir were summoned for personal appearance. Petitions followed in Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana. The Supreme Court stayed proceedings (SCC Blog, 2023). Whatever the juridical outcome, what the legal machinery registered is clear: devotional audiences can claim a right to dignified representation of sacred figures - and they can formalize that claim against commercial production decisions.

7. Digital Outrage: Remembering, Comparing, Policing

Henry Jenkins (2006) formulated participatory culture as primarily celebratory: fan communities extending, reimagining, and deepening their engagement with texts they love. Fiske (1989) pushed further - popular audiences aren't just passive consumers but active producers of meaning who resist and rework dominant cultural texts. What the Adipurush controversy activated was something beyond either formulation - not creative engagement, not resistant reworking, but enforcement. Audiences mobilizing rapidly, across multiple platforms and legal jurisdictions simultaneously, demanding that a text conform to standards they held before it existed. Participatory mythological enforcement is the term proposed here for this mode. Jenkins describes fan creativity; Fiske describes fan resistance; what happened with Adipurush was fan governance - and it may be the most extensively documented large-scale instance of that mode.

Ramanand Sagar's 1987 serialization became the evidentiary baseline. Side-by-side comparison videos - Adipurush scenes against their Ramayan equivalents - ran on YouTube, Instagram, Twitter throughout the controversy. The older, technically modest work was consistently positioned as authoritative. The ₹500+ crore production was the one found wanting. Budget and production date don't reset the inherited standard - that's the implicit argument in every comparison video, and it's the Remembering function operating at scale. It was running prospectively too. A r/BollyBlindsNGossip post with 407 upvotes compared Adipurush scenes against the new Ramayana trailer before Tiwari's film had even been completed (Fantastic-Rest-6097, 2026). Remembering applied to a film not yet made.

Comparing - the recognition test in real time - appears across the Reddit evidence with notable cultural precision. 'Ravan doesn't look like Ravan.' 'Oh thanks, I had forgotten brown Jesus existed' (andhadhund, 2026, 624 upvotes). 'Along with South Bombay ka Raavan' (mx-shot, 2026, 404 upvotes). None of these statements say the film is bad in general. Each one names a specific recognition failure using a specific cultural referent. Wrong tradition. Wrong social type. Wrong visual register. The precision is the point.

The enforcement ran in three directions simultaneously. On social media, the baap dialogue was still circulating more than three years later - a Reddit commenter with 250 upvotes quoted it verbatim as the specific thing Tiwari would know to avoid (GhostWriter69420, 2026). In the courts, petitions across five jurisdictions within weeks of release. At the box office: ₹126 crore worldwide on opening day, the largest Indian film opening of 2023 (DNA India, 2023) - then the collapse. Lifetime theatrical collection approximately ₹393 crore worldwide (Sacnilk, 2023). Well below production cost. A collective verdict, delivered in the first week.

8. Five Structural Lessons for Mythological Blockbuster Cinema

The controversy didn't close with *Adipurush*'s release. It became a framework. Audiences are applying it to Nitesh Tiwari's forthcoming two-part *Ramayana* (2026) before that film exists - comparing trailers, flagging casting choices, using *Adipurush* as the explicit negative benchmark in active threads on r/BollyBlindsNGossip and r/pj_explained (Fantastic-Rest-6097, 2026; FollowingOdd896, 2026). The lessons below don't come from outside the controversy. They come from what the controversy itself produced.

8.1 Sacred characters carry inherited visual expectations that function as criteria

Pass/fail - that's the operative logic. Mythological expectation isn't a spectrum of preferences that creative ambition can gradually satisfy. The visual grammar audiences carry from Sagar's *Ramayan* and devotional iconography doesn't negotiate. It either recognizes what appears on screen or it doesn't, and when it doesn't, the response isn't disappointed - it's categorical. Production teams who read inherited visual frameworks as constraints to creatively overcome will find that out. The useful question isn't 'how do we make this feel fresh?' It's harder: how do we honor visual memory without simply replicating it? *Adipurush* answered the first. That's why it generated the second.

8.2 Star casting in mythological cinema is theological as well as commercial

Bankability rests on prior persona. In mythological cinema, prior persona of sufficient weight creates interference with sacred embodiment - the transparency the audience requires to receive the divine character through the actor. Tiwari's casting of Ranbir Kapoor as Rama poses this question directly: Kapoor's recent screen persona includes the morally transgressive violence of *Animal* (2023), a character whose idiom sits far from Rama's. One viewer, watching the forthcoming trailer, was already applying *Adipurush* as the comparison point: "Just look at the backlash the recent teaser is getting for looking a bit like a video game" (FollowingOdd896, 2026, 17 upvotes). The benchmark is already set.

8.3 The naming strategy signals the production's relationship to the sacred

Raghav, Janaki, Lankesh - authentic epithets deployed as a hedge. The film positioned itself as 'a modern adaptation following Raghav' while marketing to audiences expecting encounter with Rama. Creative latitude and devotional obligation can't both be claimed at once without producing irreconcilable contradictions in audience expectation. *Adipurush* built that contradiction into its self-description. Audiences found it immediately.

8.4 Dialogue register is a sacred obligation, not a stylistic choice

Muntashir's three-phase arc - defense, concession, unconditional apology - established with institutional force that the language given to divine figures in mythological cinema carries obligations creative preference cannot override. The three affective registers Advanced_Two4629 named - shraddha, bhakti, naitikta - are the operative criteria. They're not archaism. Finding a voice that carries devotional dignity while remaining accessible is a

genuine creative challenge. But it can't be solved retrospectively, after the film has released and the dialogue has already circulated.

8.5 Digital audiences now police mythological cinema prospectively

The baap dialogue was quoted verbatim in a 2026 Reddit thread with 250 upvotes - cited as evidence of what Tiwari wouldn't repeat (GhostWriter69420, 2026). The enforcement function persists long after the controversy closes. A scene-by-scene comparison post between Adipurush and the new Ramayana trailer drew 407 upvotes and 128 comments - participatory mythological enforcement applied to promotional material before the film exists (Fantastic-Rest-6097, 2026). Mythological expectation doesn't reset between productions. It accumulates. Whatever Tiwari's Ramayana releases into, it will be received by audiences who already have Adipurush as a reference.

9. Conclusion

Adipurush's significance lies less in what it failed to achieve than in what its failure exposed. The film stripped away the comfortable assumption that the Ramayana can be commercially produced for a devotional audience without assuming specific obligations toward that audience's inherited imaginative framework. Every stage of the production - its naming strategy, its budget narrative, its teaser, its casting, its dialogue - either activated or violated the expectations through which contemporary Indian audiences determine whether a cinematic Ramayana deserves recognition, acceptance, or rejection.

A structure of devotional accountability has always governed the production of sacred mythology in Indian cultural life. What Adipurush made newly visible is the digital infrastructure through which this accountability now operates - instantly, collectively, with institutional reach across courts and platforms and box offices at once. The audiences who filed petitions across five states, organized comparison campaigns, compelled a post-release re-dub, and drove the film toward commercial failure within its first week were applying, with precision, the criteria of mythological expectation to a production that had staked its entire commercial identity on satisfying those criteria. The failure is a lesson. And it's already being applied.

Adipurush demonstrates that mythological blockbusters are evaluated long before audiences enter the theatre. Production begins in the studio, but reception begins in cultural memory. Between these two lies mythological expectation - the inherited framework through which contemporary audiences determine whether a cinematic Ramayana deserves recognition, rejection, or revision.

References

- Advanced_Two4629. (2026, March). Maine toh tab bhi bol tha logon ko Hans Zimmer se ghanta farq nahi padta [Reddit comment]. r/pj_explained.
https://www.reddit.com/r/pj_explained/comments/1sbcjg1/
- andhadhund. (2026, March). Oh thanks, I had forgotten brown jesus existed [Reddit comment]. r/BollyBlindsNGossip.
<https://www.reddit.com/r/BollyBlindsNGossip/comments/1sctrym/>
- BusinessToday. (2023, July 8). "I accept with folded hands": Adipurush dialogue writer Manoj Muntashir issues unconditional apology. BusinessToday.
<https://www.businesstoday.in/trending/entertainment/story/i-accept-with-folded-hands-adipurush-dialogue-writer-manoj-muntashir-issues-unconditional-apology-for-hurting-peoples-emotions-388806-2023-07-08>
- DNA India. (2023, June 17). Adipurush box office collection day 1: Prabhas film scores

- biggest opening for Indian film in 2023. DNA India.
<https://www.dnaindia.com/bollywood/report-adipurush-box-office-collection-day-1-prabhas-film-biggest-opening-for-indian-film-in-2023-om-raut-ramayana-3048047>
- DrShail. (2023, June). Adipurush – All reviews and discussions on this [Reddit post].
 r/bollywood. <https://www.reddit.com/r/bollywood/comments/14aiz0r/>
- Fantastic-Rest-6097. (2026, March). Made an unbiased scene to scene comparison of [Reddit post].
 r/BollyBlindsNGossip. <https://www.reddit.com/r/BollyBlindsNGossip/comments/1sctrym/>
- Filmibeat. (2023, June). Arun Govil reacts strongly to Adipurush controversy, slams makers for distortion. Filmibeat. <https://www.filmibeat.com/bollywood/news/2023/arun-govil-reacts-strongly-to-adipurush-controversy-slams-makers-for-distortion-prabhas-kriti-sanon-355191.html>
- Fiske, J. (1989). *Understanding popular culture*. Routledge.
- FollowingOdd896. (2026, March). I honestly feel like the makers are taking a massive gamble [Reddit comment].
 r/pj_explained. https://www.reddit.com/r/pj_explained/comments/1sbcjg1/
- GhostWriter69420. (2026, March). Ok but I don't think Nitish tiwari will have dialogues like [Reddit comment].
 r/BollyBlindsNGossip. <https://www.reddit.com/r/BollyBlindsNGossip/comments/1sctrym/>
- greatestoffalltimefr. (2026, March). It has an expectation problem [Reddit comment].
 r/pj_explained. https://www.reddit.com/r/pj_explained/comments/1sbcjg1/
- Hall, S. (1980). Encoding/decoding. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, & P. Willis (Eds.), *Culture, media, language* (pp. 128–138). Hutchinson.
- Hall, S. (1981). Notes on deconstructing 'the popular.' In R. Samuel (Ed.), *People's history and socialist theory* (pp. 227–240). Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- IMDb. (2023). Adipurush. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12915716/>
- Jain, K. (2007). *Gods in the bazaar: The economies of Indian calendar art*. Duke University Press.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York University Press.
- Koimoi. (2023, June). Adipurush writer Manoj Muntashir finally apologises. Koimoi.
<https://www.koimoi.com/bollywood-news/adipurush-writer-manoj-muntashir-finally-apologises-days-after-defending-prabhas-starrers-tapori-dialogues-i-accept-peoples-emotions-have-been-hurt/>
- Lutgendorf, P. (1990). Ramayan: The video. *The Drama Review*, 34(2), 127–176.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1145948>
- Mankekar, P. (1993). National texts and gendered lives: An ethnography of television viewers in a north Indian city. *American Ethnologist*, 20(3), 543–563.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1993.20.3.02a00040>
- mx-shot. (2026, March). Along with South Bombay ka Raavan [Reddit comment].
 r/BollyBlindsNGossip. <https://www.reddit.com/r/BollyBlindsNGossip/comments/1sctrym/>
- PinkVilla. (2023, June 2). Decoding the economics of Adipurush: Prabhas and Kriti Sanon film budget, theatrical deal and recovery. PinkVilla.
<https://www.pinkvilla.com/entertainment/box-office/decoding-the-economics-of-adipurush-prabhas-and-kriti-sanon-film-budget-theatrical-deal-and-recovery-1224037>
- Ramanujan, A. K. (1991). Three hundred Ramayanas: Five examples and three thoughts on translation. In P. Richman (Ed.), *Many Ramayanas: The diversity of a narrative tradition in South Asia* (pp. 22–49). University of California Press.
- rithvikrao. (2026, March). You've said what I wanted to say [Reddit comment].
 r/pj_explained. https://www.reddit.com/r/pj_explained/comments/1sbcjg1/
- Sacnilk. (2023). Adipurush final worldwide box office collection and records. Sacnilk.

From Anticipation to Outrage: Adipurush and the Limits of Mythological Blockbuster Cinema

- https://www.sacnilk.com/news/Adipurush_Final_Worldwide_Box_Office_Collection_and_Records
- SCC Blog. (2023, July 21). Supreme Court grants interim relief to makers of film Adipurush. SCC Blog. <https://www.scconline.com/blog/post/2023/07/21/supreme-court-grants-interim-relief-to-makers-of-film-adipurush-legal-news/>
- The Tribune. (2022, October). Teaser lands Adipurush in trouble over depiction of deities, demon king and bad CGI. The Tribune. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/entertainment/teaser-lands-adipurush-in-trouble-over-depiction-of-deities-demon-king-and-bad-cgi-438131>
- WhyDoIHearBossMusic. (2023). Indian mythology should be done Indian way [Reddit comment]. r/bollywood. <https://www.reddit.com/r/bollywood/comments/14aiz0r/>
- Zee News. (2023, June). Adipurush makers change Lord Hanuman's controversial dialogue. Zee News. <https://zeenews.india.com/bollywood/prabhas-kriti-sanon-starrer-adipurush-makers-change-bajrangs-tere-baap-ka-line-2624921.html>

Bio-note

Saishilpa Janamanchi is a Junior Research Fellow and doctoral researcher in English at the University College of Arts and Social Sciences (UCASS), Osmania University, Hyderabad. Her research examines contemporary Ramayana retellings across literature, television, cinema, and digital media, focusing on myth, adaptation, cultural memory, and narrative transformation in post-liberalization India.

Email ID: sravyashilpa@gmail.com

Prof. Y. L. Srinivas is Vice-Chancellor of Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University, Telangana, and former Professor of English at Osmania University, Hyderabad. His research spans postcolonial literature, literary theory, film and media studies, and cultural criticism, with publications in national and international journals.

