Sholay

Not to be confused with Sholay (1984 film).

Sholay (IPA: [ʃoˈlaɪ], lit. Embers) is a 1975 Indian action-adventure film, written by Salim-Javed, directed by Ramesh Sippy, and produced by his father G. P. Sippy. The film is about two criminals, Veeru and Jai (played by Dharmendra and Amitabh Bachchan, respectively), hired by a retired police officer (Sanjeev Kumar) to capture the ruthless dacoit Gabbar Singh (Amjad Khan). Hema Malini and Jaya Bhaduri also star, as Veeru and Jai's love interests, respectively. Sholay is considered a classic and one of the best Indian films. It was ranked first in the British Film Institute's 2002 poll of "Top 10 Indian Films" of all time. In 2005, the judges of the 50th Filmfare Awards named it the Best Film of 50 Years.

The screenplay was written by screenwriter pair Salim-Javed, consisting of Salim Khan and Javed Akhtar. Their screenplay was initially rejected by several producers and directors, before they met Ramesh Sippy and his father G. P. Sippy, both of whom liked the script and wanted to direct and produce it, respectively. The film was shot in the rocky terrain of Ramanagara, in the southern state of Karnataka, over a span of two and a half years. After the Central Board of Film Certification mandated the removal of several violent scenes, Sholay was released with a length of 198 minutes. In 1990, the original director's cut of 204 minutes became available on home media. When first released, Sholay received negative critical reviews and a tepid commercial response, but favourable word-of-mouth publicity helped it to become a box office success. It broke records for continuous showings in many theatres across India, and ran for more than five years at Mumbai's Minerva theatre. The film was also an overseas success in the Soviet Union. It was the highest-grossing Indian film ever at the time, and was the highest-grossing film in India up until Hum Aapke Hain Koun..! (1994). By some accounts, Sholay remains the highest-grossing Indian film of all time, adjusted for inflation.

The film is a Dacoit Western (sometimes called a "Curry Western"), combining the conventions of Indian dacoit films with that of Spaghetti Westerns along with elements of Samurai cinema. Sholay is also a defining example of the masala film, which mixes several genres in one work. Scholars have noted several themes in the film, such as glorification of violence, conformation to feudal ethos, debate between social order and mobilised usurpers, homosocial bonding, and the film's role as a national allegory. The combined sales of the original soundtrack, scored by R. D. Burman, and the dialogues (released separately), set new sales records. The film's dialogues and certain characters became extremely popular, contributing to numerous cultural memes and becoming part of India's daily vernacular. In January 2014, Sholay was re-released to theatres in the 3D format.
In the small village of Ramgarh, the retired policeman Thakur Baldev Singh (Sanjeev Kumar) summons a pair of small-time thieves that he had once arrested. Thakur feels that the duo—Veeru (Dharmendra) and Jai (Amitabh Bachchan)—would be ideal to help him capture Gabbar Singh (Amjad Khan), a dacoit wanted by the authorities for a ₹50,000 reward. Thakur tells them to surrender Gabbar to him, alive, for an additional ₹20,000 reward.

The two thieves thwart the dacoits sent by Gabbar to extort the villagers. Soon afterwards, Gabbar and his goons attack Ramgarh during the festival of Holi. In a tough battle, Veeru and Jai are cornered. Thakur, although he has a gun within his reach, does not help them. Veeru and Jai fight back and the bandits flee. The two are, however, upset at Thakur’s inaction, and consider leaving the village. Thakur explains that Gabbar had killed nearly all of his family members, and cut off both his arms a few years earlier, which is why he could not use the gun. He had concealed the dismemberment by always wearing a shawl.

Living in Ramgarh, the jovial Veeru and cynical Jai find themselves growing fond of the villagers. Veeru is attracted to Basanti (Hema Malini), a feisty, talkative young woman who makes her living by driving a horse-cart. Jai is drawn to Radha (Jaya Bhaduri), Thakur’s reclusive, widowed daughter-in-law, who subtly returns his affections.

Skirmishes between Gabbar’s gang and Jai-Veeru finally result in the capture of Veeru and Basanti by the dacoits. Jai attacks the gang, and the three are able to flee Gabbar’s hideout with dacoits in pursuit. Fighting from behind a rock, Jai and Veeru nearly run out of ammunition. Meanwhile, Jai, who is continuing the gunfight single-handedly, decides to sacrifice himself by using his last bullet to ignite dynamite sticks on a bridge from close range.

Veeru returns, and Jai dies in his arms. Enraged, Veeru attacks Gabbar’s den and catches the dacoit. Veeru nearly beats Gabbar to death when Thakur himself by using his last bullet to ignite dynamite sticks on a bridge from close range. Veeru nearly beats Gabbar to death when Thakur appears and reminds Veeru of the promise to hand over Gabbar alive. Thakur uses his spike-soled shoes to severely injure Gabbar and destroy his hands. The police then arrive and arrest Gabbar. After Jai’s funeral, Veeru leaves Ramgarh and finds Basanti waiting for him on the train. Radha is left alone again.

Cast

- Dharmendra as Veeru
- Sanjeev Kumar as Thakur Baldev Singh, usually addressed as “Thakur”
- Hema Malini as Basanti
- Amitabh Bachchan as Jai (Jaidev)
- Jaya Bhaduri as Radha, Thakur’s daughter-in-law
- Amjad Khan as Gabbar Singh
- Satyen Kappu as Ramlal, Thakur’s servant
- A. K. Hangalas Rahim Chacha, the imam in the village
- Sachin as Ahmed, son of the imam
- Jagdeep as Soorma Bhopali, a comical wood trader
- Leela Mishra as Mausi, Basanti’s maternal aunt
- Asrani as the Jailer, a comical character modelled after Charlie Chaplin in The Great Dictator (1940)
- Kesho Mukherjee as Hariram, prison barber and Jailer’s side-kick
- Mac Mohan as Samba, Gabbar Singh’s sidekick
- Viju Khote as Kaalia, another of Gabbar’s men whom he kills in a game of Russian roulette
- Ilftkhar as Inspector Khurana, Radha’s Father
- Helen in a special appearance in song “Mehbooba Mehbooba”
- Jalal Agha in a special appearance in song “Mehbooba Mehbooba”
- Raj Kishore as a jail inmate with gayish mannerisms

Production

Development

The screenwriter pair Salim-Javed, consisting of Salim Khan and Javed Akhtar, began narrating the idea for Sholay as a four-line snippet to filmmakers in 1973.[9][10] The idea was rejected by two producer/director teams, including directors Manmohan Desai and Prakash Mehra.[11] About six months after the release of Zanjeer (1973), Salim-Javed got in touch with G. P. Sippy and his son Ramesh Sippy,[10] and narrated the four-line snippet to them.[11] Ramesh Sippy liked the concept of Sholay and hired them to develop it. The original idea of the film involved an army officer who decided to hire two ex-soldiers to avenge the murder of his family. The army officer was later changed to a policeman because Sippy felt that it would be difficult to get permission to shoot scenes depicting army activities. Salim-Javed completed the script in one month, incorporating names and personality traits of their friends and acquaintances.[11] The film’s script and dialogues are in Hindi-Urdu,[9] primarily Urdu,[3] Salim-Javed wrote the dialogues in Urdu script, which was then transcribed by an assistant into Devanagari script so that Hindi readers could read the Urdu dialogues.[12]

The film’s plot was loosely styled after Akira Kurosawa’s 1954 Samurai cinema film, Seven Samurai,[13][14] It is a defining example of the Dacoit Western film, combining the conventions of Indian dacoit films, especially Mehboob Khan’s Mother India (1957) and Dilip Kumar’s Gunga Jumna (1961),[15] with that of Westerns,[13][14] especially Sergio Leone’s Spaghetti Westerns such as Once Upon a Time in the West (1968) as well as The Magnificent Seven (1960).[14] It also plots several elements borrowed from the Indian films Mera Gaon Mera Desh (1971) and Khote Sikkey (1973).[11] A scene depicting an attempted train robbery was inspired by a similar scene in Gunga Jumna,[16] and has also been compared to a similar scene in North West Frontier (1959).[17] A scene showing the massacre of Thakur’s family has been compared with the massacre of the McBain family in Once Upon a Time in the

Hindi's Mother India (1957) and Gunga Jumna (1961), which is a defining example of the Dacoit Western film, combining the conventions of Indian dacoit films, especially Mehboob Khan’s Mother India (1957) and Dilip Kumar’s Gunga Jumna (1961),[15] with that of Westerns,[13][14] especially Sergio Leone’s Spaghetti Westerns such as Once Upon a Time in the West (1968) as well as The Magnificent Seven (1960).[14] It also plots several elements borrowed from the Indian films Mera Gaon Mera Desh (1971) and Khote Sikkey (1973).[11] A scene depicting an attempted train robbery was inspired by a similar scene in Gunga Jumna,[16] and has also been compared to a similar scene in North West Frontier (1959).[17] A scene showing the massacre of Thakur’s family has been compared with the massacre of the McBain family in Once Upon a Time in the Westerns such as Once Upon a Time in the West (1968) as well as The Magnificent Seven (1960).[14] It also plots several elements borrowed from the Indian films Mera Gaon Mera Desh (1971) and Khote Sikkey (1973).[11] A scene depicting an attempted train robbery was inspired by a similar scene in Gunga Jumna,[16] and has also been compared to a similar scene in North West Frontier (1959).[17] A scene showing the massacre of Thakur’s family has been compared with the massacre of the McBain family in Once Upon a Time in the

Hindi-Urdu scripture

The idea was rejected by two producer/director teams, including directors Manmohan Desai and Prakash Mehra.[11] About six months after the release of Zanjeer (1973), Salim-Javed got in touch with G. P. Sippy and his son Ramesh Sippy,[10] and narrated the four-line snippet to them.[11] Ramesh Sippy liked the concept of Sholay and hired them to develop it. The original idea of the film involved an army officer who decided to hire two ex-soldiers to avenge the murder of his family. The army officer was later changed to a policeman because Sippy felt that it would be difficult to get permission to shoot scenes depicting army activities. Salim-Javed completed the script in one month, incorporating names and personality traits of their friends and acquaintances.[11] The film’s script and dialogues are in Hindi-Urdu,[9] primarily Urdu,[3] Salim-Javed wrote the dialogues in Urdu script, which was then transcribed by an assistant into Devanagari script so that Hindi readers could read the Urdu dialogues.[12]
The character Gabbar Singh was modelled on a real-life dacoit of the same name who had menaced the villages around Gwalior in the 1950s. Any character captured by the real Gabbar Singh had his ears and nose cut off, and was released as a warning to other policemen. The character was also inspired by Gunja Jumna, where Dilip Kumar's character Gunja is a dacoit speaking with a similar dialect, a mix of Kharboli and Awadhi. The character was also influenced by the villain “El Indio” (played by Gian Maria Volonté) of Sergio Leone’s For a Few Dollars More (1965). Soorma Bhopali, a minor comic relief character, was based on an acquaintance of actor Jagdeep, a forest officer from Bhopal named Soorma. The real-life Soorma eventually threatened to press charges when people who had viewed the film began referring to him as a woodcutter. The main characters' names, Jai and Veeru, mean “victory” and “heroism” in Hindi.

Casting

The producers considered Danny Denzongpa for the role of bandit chief Gabbar Singh, but he could not accept it as he was committed to act in Feroz Khan's Dharamatma (1975), under production at the same time. Amjad Khan, who was the second choice, prepared himself for the part by reading the book Abhishapta Chambal, which told of the exploits of Chambal dacoits. The book was written by Taronm Kumar Bhaduri, the father of fellow cast member Jaya Bhaduri. Sanjeev Kumar also wanted to play the role of Gabbar Singh, but Salim-Javed felt he had the audience's sympathy through roles he’d done before; Gabbar had to be completely hateful.

Sippy wanted Shatrughan Sinha to play the part of Jai, but there were already several big stars signed, and Amitabh Bachchan, who was not very popular yet, lobbied hard to get the part for himself. He was cast after Salim-Javed recommended him for Sholay in 1973; Bachchan's performance in their first collaboration, Zanjeer, convinced Salim-Javed he was the right actor for the film.

As cast members had read the script ahead of time, many were interested in playing different parts. Pran was considered for the role of Thakur Baldev Singh, but Sippy thought Sanjeev Kumar was a better choice. Initially, Salim-Javed approached Dilip Kumar to play Thakur's role, but he turned down the offer; Dilip Kumar later said it was one of the few films he regretted turning down. Initially, Dharmendra was also interested to play the role of Thakur. He eventually gave up the role when Sippy informed him that Sanjeev Kumar would play Veeru if that happened, and would be paired with Hema Malini, who Dharmendra was trying to woo. Dharmendra knew that Kumar was also interested in Malini.

During the film's production, four of the leads became romantically involved. Bachchan married Bhaduri four months before filming started. This led to shooting delays when Bhaduri became pregnant with their daughter Shweta. By the time of the film's release, she was pregnant with their son Abhishek. Dharmendra had begun wooing Malini during their earlier film Seeta Aur Geeta (1972), and used the location shoot of Sholay to further pursue her. During their romantic scenes, Dharmendra would often pay the light boys to spoil the shot, thereby ensuring many retakes and allowing him to spend more time with her. The couple married five years after the film's release.

Filming

Much of Sholay was shot in the rocky terrain of Ramanagara, a town near Bangalore, Karnataka. The filmmakers had to build a road from the Bangalore highway to Ramanagara for convenient access to the sets. Art director Ram Yedekar had an entire township built on the site. A prison set was constructed near Rajkamal Studio in Mumbai, also outdoors, to match the natural lighting of the on-location sets. One part of Ramanagara was for a time called "Sippy Nagar" as a tribute to the director of the film. As of 2010, a visit to the "Sholay rocks" (where much of the film was shot) was still being offered to tourists travelling through Ramanagara.

Filming began on location on 3 October 1973, with a scene featuring Bachchan and Bhaduri. The film had a lavish production for its time (with frequent banquets and parties for the cast), took two and a half years to make, and went over budget. One reason for its high cost was that Sippy re-filmed scenes many times to get his desired effect. "Yeh Dosti", a 5-minute song sequence, took 21 days to shoot, two short scenes in which Radha lights lamps took 20 days to film because of lighting problems, and the shooting of the scene in which Gabbar kills the immam's son lasted 19 days. The train robbery sequence, shot on the Mumbai–Pune railway route near Panvel, took more than 7 weeks to complete.

Sholay was the first Indian film to have a stereophonic soundtrack and to use the 70 mm widescreen format. However, since actual 70 mm cameras were expensive at the time, the film was shot on traditional 35 mm film and the 4:3 picture was subsequently converted to a 2.2:1 frame. Regarding the process, Sippy said, “A 70mm [sic] format takes the awe of the big screen and magnifies it even more to make the picture even bigger, but since I also wanted a spread of sound we used six-track stereophonic sound and combined it with the big screen. It was definitely a differentiator.” The use of 70 mm was emphasised by film posters on which the name of the film was stylised to match the CinemaScope logo. Film posters also sought to differentiate the film from those which had come before; one of them added the tagline: “The greatest star cast ever assembled – the greatest story ever told.”

Alternate version

The director's original cut of Sholay has a different ending in which Thakur kills Gabbar, along with some additional violent scenes. Gabbar's death scene, and the scene in which the immam's son is killed, were cut from the film by India's Censor Board, as was the scene in which Thakur's family is massacred. The Censor Board was concerned about the violence, and that viewers may be influenced to violate the law by punishing people severely. Although Sippy fought to keep the scenes, eventually he had to re-shoot the ending of the film, and as directed by the Censor Board, have the police arrive just before Thakur can kill Gabbar. The censored theatrical version was the only one seen by audiences for fifteen years. The original, unedited cut of the film finally came out in a British release on VHS in 1990. Since then, Eros International has released two versions on DVD. The director's cut of the film preserves the original full frame and is 204 minutes in length; the censored widescreen version is 198 minutes long.
Themes

Scholars have noted several themes in the film, such as glorification of violence, conformity to feudal ethos, debate between social order and mobilised usurpers, homosocial bonding, and the film's role as a national allegory.

Koushik Banerjea, a sociologist in the London School of Economics, notes that Sholay exhibits a "sympathetic construction of 'rogue' masculinity" exemplified by the likeable outlaws Jai and Veeru.[48] Banerjea argues during the film, the moral boundary between legality and criminality gradually erodes.[49] Film scholar Wimal Dissanayake agrees that the film brought "a new stage in the evolving dialectic between violence and social order" to Indian cinema.[50] Film scholar M. Madhava Prasad states that Jai and Veeru represent a marginalised population that is introduced into conventional society.[51] Prasad says that, through the elements of revenge included in the plot and the application of Jai and Veeru's criminality for the greater good, the narrative reflects reactionary politics, and the audience is compelled to accept feudal order.[51] Banerjea explains that though Jai and Veeru are mercenaries, they are humanised by their emotional needs. Such dualism makes them vulnerable, in contrast to the pure evil of Gabbar Singh.[49]

Gabbar Singh, the film's antagonist, was well received by the audience, despite his pervasive sadistic cruelty.[50] Dissanayake explains that the audience was fascinated by the dialogues and mannerisms of the character, and this element of spectacle outweighed his actions, a first for Indian melodrama.[50] He notes that the picturisation of violence in the film was glamourised and uninhibited.[52] He further notes that, unlike earlier melodramas in which the female body occupies the audience's attention as an object of male fetish, in Sholay, the male body becomes the centrepiece. It becomes the battleground where good and evil compete for supremacy.[52] Dissanayake argues that Sholay can be viewed as a national allegory: it lacks a comforting logical narrative, it shows social stability being repeatedly challenged, and it shows the devaluation of human life resulting from a lack of emotions. Taken together, these elements comprise the allegorical representation of India.[53] The narrative style of Sholay, with its violence, revenge, and vigilante action, is occasionally compared by scholars to the political unrest in India at the time of its release. This tension culminated in the Emergency (rule by decree) declared by prime minister Indira Gandhi in 1975.[54]

Dissanayake and Sahai note that, although the film borrowed heavily from the Hollywood Western genre, particularly in its visuals, it was successfully "Indianised".[55] As an example, William van der Heide has compared a massacre scene in Sholay with a similar scene in Once Upon a Time in the West. Although both films were similar in technical style, Sholay emphasised Indian family values and melodramatic tradition, while the Western was more materialistic and restrained in its approach.[18] Mathili Rao, in Encyclopedia of Hindi Cinema, notes that Sholay infuses the style of the Western genre into a "feudalistic ethos".[56] Ted Shen of the Chicago Reader notes Sholay's "hysterical visual style" and intermittent "populist message".[57] Cultural critic and Islamic scholar Ziauddin Sardar lampoons the film in his book The Secret Politics of Our Desires: Innocence, Culpability and Indian Popular Cinema, both for its caricature and stereotyping of Muslim and women characters, and for what he calls mockery of innocent villagers.[58] Sardar notes that the two most prominent Muslim characters in the film are Soorma Bhopali (a buffoonish criminal), and an impotent victim of the bandits (the imam). Meanwhile, the sole function of one female character (Radha) is to suffer her fate in silence, while the other female lead (Basanti) is just a garrulous village belle.[58]

Some scholars have indicated that Sholay contains homosocial themes.[59][60] Ted Shen describes the male bonding shown in the film as bordering on camp style.[67] Dina Holtzman, in her book Bollywood and Globalization: Indian Popular Cinema, Nation, and Diaspora, states that the death of Jai, and resultant break of bonding between the two male leads, is necessary for the sake of establishing a normative heterosexual relationship (that of Veeru and Basanti).[61]

Music

R. D. Burman composed the film's music, and the lyrics were written by Anand Bakshi. The songs used in the film, and released on the original soundtrack are listed below.[62] Following that is a list of unused tracks and dialogues which were released later on an updated soundtrack.[63]

The song "Mehbooba Mehbooba" was sung by its composer, R. D. Burman, who received his sole Filmfare Award nomination for playback singing for his effort. The song, which is often featured on Bollywood hit song compilations,[64] is based on "Say You Love Me" by Greek singer Demis Roussos.[17]

"Mehbooba Mehbooba" has been extensively anthologised, remixed, and recreated.[65] A version was created in 2005 by the Kronos Quartet for their Grammy-nominated album You've Stolen My Heart, featuring Asha Bhosle.[66] It was also remixed and sung by Himesh Reshammiya, along with Bhosle, in his debut acting film Aap Kaa Surroor (2007). "Yeh Dosti" has been called the ultimate friendship anthem.[67][68] It was remixed and sung by Shankar Mahadevan and Udit Narayan for the 2010 Malayalam film Four Friends,[69] and also in 2010 it was used to symbolise India's friendship with the United States during a visit from President Barack Obama.[70]

Several songs from the soundtrack were included in the annual Binaca Geetmala list of top films songs. "Mehbooba Mehbooba" was listed at No. 24 on the 1975 list, and at No. 6 on the 1976 list. "Koi Hasena" was listed at No. 30 in 1975, and No. 20 in 1976. "Yeh Dosti" was listed at No. 9 in 1976.[71] Despite the soundtrack's success, at the time, the songs from Sholay attracted less attention than the film's dialogue—a rarity for Bollywood. The producers were thus prompted to release records with only dialogue.[72][73] Taken together, the album sales reached an unprecedented 500,000 units.[74] By 1979, the soundtrack went Platinum[75] (equivalent to 1 million sales at the time),[76] becoming one of the top-selling Bollywood soundtracks of the 1970s.[77]

Music critic Oli Marlow reviewed the soundtrack in 2013, calling it a unique fusion of religious, folk, and classical music, with influences from around the world. He also commented on the sound design of the film, calling it psychedelic, and saying that there was "a lot of incredible incidental music" in the film that was not included in the soundtrack releases.[78] In a 1999 paper submitted to London's Symposium on Sound in Cinema, film critic Shoma A. Chatterji said, "Sholay offers a model lesson on how sound can be used to signify the terror a character evokes. Sholay is also exemplary in its use of soundmatching to jump cut to a different scene and time, without breaking the continuity of the narrative, yet, intensifying the drama."[79]
Sholay was released on 15 August 1975, Indian Independence Day, in Mumbai. Due to lacklustre reviews and a lack of effective visual marketing tools, it saw poor financial returns in its first two weeks. From the third week, however, viewership picked up owing to positive word of mouth.[80] During the initial slow period, the director and writer considered re-shooting some scenes so that Amitabh Bachchan's character would not die. When business picked up, they abandoned this idea.[81] After being helped additionally by a soundtrack release containing dialogue snippets,[49] Sholay soon became an "overnight sensation".[40] The film was then released in other distribution zones such as Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, and Hyderabad on 11 October 1975.[82] It became the highest-grossing Bollywood film of 1975, and film ranking website Box Office India has given the film a verdict of "All Time Blockbuster".[83]

Sholay went on to earn a still-standing record of 60 golden jubilees[6] across India,[40] and was the first film in India to celebrate a silver jubilee[6] at over 100 theatres.[40] It was shown continuously at Mumbai's Minerva theatre for over five years.[40] The film was released on 15 August 1975, Independence Day,[82] and was the first film in India to celebrate a silver jubilee[6] at over 100 theatres.[40] It was shown continuously at Mumbai's Minerva theatre for over five years.[40] It was released on 15 August 1975, Independence Day,[82] and was the first film in India to celebrate a silver jubilee[6] at over 100 theatres.[40] It was shown continuously at Mumbai's Minerva theatre for over five years.[40] It was released on 15 August 1975, Independence Day,[82] and was the first film in India to celebrate a silver jubilee[6] at over 100 theatres.[40] It was shown continuously at Mumbai's Minerva theatre for over five years.[40] It was released on 15 August 1975, Independence Day,[82] and was the first film in India to celebrate a silver jubilee[6] at over 100 theatres.[40] It was shown continuously at Mumbai's Minerva theatre for over five years.[40] It was released on 15 August 1975, Independence Day,[82] and was the first film in India to celebrate a silver jubilee[6] at over 100 theatres.[40] It was shown continuously at Mumbai's Minerva theatre for over five years.\[13\] Sholay was the Indian film with the longest theatrical run until Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995) broke its record of 286 weeks in 2001.[84][85]

Exact figures are not available on the budget and box office earnings of Sholay, but film trade websites provide estimates of its success. According to Box Office India, Sholay earned about ₹150 million in net income[6] (valued at about US$16,778,000 in 1975)[8] in India during its first run,[87] which was many times its ₹30 million (valued at about US$3,355,000 in 1975)[86] budget. Those earnings were a record that remained unbroken for nineteen years, which is also the longest amount of time that a film has held the record. Its original gross was increased further with re-releases during the late 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s.[88] The film's total gross revenue in India amounted to ₹350 million[5] ($39.15 million)[6] Box Office India estimates the film's total footfalls in India as over 100 million tickets sold.[89] In addition, the film was also an overseas success in the Soviet Union, where it was released in 1979,[90] earning 48.4 million tickets during its initial run at the Soviet box office,[91] before eventually selling 60 million tickets including re-runs.[92] It was the highest-grossing Indian film ever up until Disco Dancer (1982)[82] and the highest-grossing film in India up until Hum Aapke Hain Koun...! (1994).[84][85]

It is often cited that, after adjusting the figures for inflation, Sholay is one of the highest-grossing films in the history of Indian cinema, although such figures are not known with certainty.[93] Box Office India estimated ₹1.63 billion as Sholay's adjusted domestic net income in 2008,[6][94] while Times of India estimated over ₹3 billion as the adjusted domestic gross in 2009.[95] Mid Day estimated the film's total adjusted gross as ₹15 billion ($246 million) in 2014.[96] In terms of footfalls, the film sold an estimated 100 million tickets in India,[89] in addition to 60 million tickets in the Soviet Union.[6] In 1985, India Today estimated that the film drew a total audience of 250 million,[97] which is comparable to the number of tickets sold by some of the highest-grossing films of all time adjusted for inflation.[98]

Critical response

Initial critical reviews of Sholay were negative. Among contemporary critics, K.L. Amladi of India Today called the film a "dead ember" and "a gravely flawed attempt".[99] Filmfare said that the film was an unsuccessful mincing of Western style with Indian milieu, making it an "imitation western—neither here nor there."[99] Others labelled it as "sound and fury signifying nothing" and a "second-rate take-off" of the 1971 film Mera Gaon Mera Desh,[85] Trade journals and columnists initially called the film a flop.[100] In a 1976 article in the journal Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review, author Michael Gallagher praised the technical achievement of the film, but otherwise criticised it stating, "As a spectacle it breaks new ground, but on every other level it is intolerable: formless, incoherent, superficial in human image, and a somewhat nasty piece of violence."[101]

Over time, the critical reception to Sholay greatly improved; it is now considered a classic, and among the greatest Hindi-language films.[14][102] In a 2005 BBC review, the well-rounded characters and simple narrative of the film were commended, but the comical cameos of Asrani and Jagdeep were considered unnecessary.[103] On the film's 35th anniversary, the Hindustan Times wrote that it was a "trailblazer in terms of camera work as well as music," and that "practically every scene, dialogue or even a small character was a highlight."[104] In 2006, The Film Society of Lincoln Center described Sholay as "an extraordinary and utterly seamless blend of adventure, comedy, music and dance", labelling it an "indispensable classic".[105] Chicago Review critic Ted Shen criticised the film in 2002 for its formulaic plot and "slapdash" cinematography, and noted that the film "alternates between slapstick and melodrama".[107] In their obituary of the producer G.P. Sippy, the New York Times said that Sholay "revolutionized Hindi filmmaking and brought true professionalism to Indian script writing".[13]
Under the leadership of computer animator Frank Foster, 350 people worked to convert the film into the digital 3D format, for which every scene had to be divided into 47 images, each of which had to be brought to life. The film was a watershed for Hollywood's scriptwriters, who were not paid well before Sholay; after the film's success, its writing duo Salim-Javed became stars in their own right and script writing became a more respected profession. The BBC has described Sholay as the "Star Wars of Bollywood", comparing its impact on Bollywood to the impact that Star Wars (1977) later had on Hollywood, while comparing Gabbar Singh to Darth Vader. Certain scenes and dialogues from the film earned iconic status in India, such as "Kitne aadmi the" (How many men were there?), "Jo dar gaya, samjho mar gaya" (One who is scared is dead), and "Bahut yaaraana laagta hai" (Looks like you two are very close) — all dialogues of Gabbar Singh. These and other popular dialogues entered the people's daily vernacular. Characters and dialogues from the film continue to be referred to and parodied in popular culture.

Gabbar Singh, the sadistic villain, ushered in an era in Hindi films characterised by "seemingly omnipotent oppressors as villains", who play the pivotal role in setting up the context of the story, such as Shakal (played by Kulbhushan Kharbanda) of Shaan (1980), Mogambo (Amrish Puri) of Mr. India (1987) and Bhujang (Amrish Puri) of Tridev (1989). Filmmaker, in 2013, named Gabbar Singh the most iconic villain in the history of Indian cinema, and four actors were included in its 2010 list of "80 Iconic Performances" for their work in this film. The film was a watershed for Bollywood as the "Kitne aadmi the" (How many men were there?) and a picture of him is painted on the back of an auto rickshaw, a common mode of public transport. Dialogues and characters from the film have contributed to many cultural tropes in India's daily life.

The film is often credited with making Amitabh Bachchan a "superstar", two years after he became a star with Zanjeer (1973). Some of the supporting actors remained etched in public memory as the characters they played in Sholay; for example, Mac Mohan continued to be referred to as "Sambha", even though his character had just one line. Major and minor characters continue to be used in commercials, promos, films and sitcoms. Amjad Khan acted in many villainous roles later in his career. He also played Gabbar Singh again in the 1991 spoof Ramghar Ke Sholay, and reprised the role in commercials. The British Film Institute in 2002 wrote that fear of Gabbar Singh "is still invoked by mothers to put their children to sleep".

In 2004, Sholay was digitally remastered and shown again to packed theatres in India, including Mumbai’s Minerva, where it had run successfully 29 years earlier. An attempt to remake Sholay, Ram Gopal Varma’s film Aag (2007), starring Amitabh Bachchan as the villain, was a commercial and critical disaster.

Because of television and home media, Sholay is widely available and still popular. Twenty years after its release, Sholay was first shown on the Indian DD National television channel, where it drew the highest ratings ever for an Indian film broadcast. Video game producer Mobile2win released the "Sholay Ramgarh Express" game for mobile phones in 2004, along with other Sholay themed content such as wallpapers, video clips, and ringtones.

Sholay has been the subject of two books and many articles. Wimal Dissanayake and Malti Sahai’s Sholay, A Cultural Reading (1992) attempts a comprehensive scholarly study that sets the film within the broader history of popular cinema in India. Anupama Chopra’s Sholay: The Making of a Classic (2000) provides an inside look at the film’s production based on interviews with the director, stars, and crew members. Sholay has been labelled by Chopra as the gold standard in Indian cinema, and a reference point for audiences and trade analysts. Over the years, the film has reached a mystic stature in popular culture, and has been called the greatest Hindi film of all time. It belongs to only a small collection of films, including Kismet (1943), Mother India (1957), Mughal-e-Azam (1960) and Hum Aapke Hain Koun..! (1994), which are repeatedly watched throughout India, and are viewed as definitive Hindi films with cultural significance. The lasting effect of Sholay on Indian cinema was summarised by Anupama Chopra, when in 2004 she called it "no longer just a film, [but] an event".

In 2010, Sholay received a special award at the 50th Filmfare Awards in 2005: Best Film of 50 Years. Anupama Chopra, when in 2004 she called it "no longer just a film, [but] an event".

A line of Gabbar Singh (Tera kya hoga, meaning, "What will happen to you?") and a picture of him is painted on the back of an auto rickshaw, a common mode of public transport. Dialogues and characters from the film have contributed to many cultural tropes in India's daily life.

**3D re-release**

Filmmaker Ketan Mehta's company Maya Digital was responsible for converting Sholay into the 3D format. Mehta was approached by G. P. Sippy's grandson, Sasha Sippy, about the project in 2010. In March 2012, Shaan Uttam Singh, the grandson of producer G. P. Sippy, said that he would sponsor a conversion of the film to 3D, and release it in late 2012. This was later postponed to late 2013, and eventually finalised for 3 January 2014. It took ₹250 million (US$3.5 million) to convert Sholay to 3D.

Under the leadership of computer animator Frank Foster, 350 people worked to convert the film into the digital 3D format, for which every scene had to be
individually restored, colour-corrected and re-composited in 3D to match the depth.[9][143] New set-pieces, particularly those suited to the new format were also included, such as digital logs which scatter in the direction of the camera during the first half of the film when the train collides with them, the gunshot scene which frees Jai and Veeru from their handcuffs, and panoramic views of Gabbar’s hideout in the caves.[143]

The theatrical trailer and release date were unveiled by the original script-writers Salim Khan and Javed Akhtar. The two original leads, Bachchan and Dharmendra, were also involved in promoting the re-release. The film was released in 1,000 screens in India, and additional screens overseas. It earned approximately ₹100 million (US$1.4 million) during its re-release, not enough to recover its conversion cost.[152]

See also

* List of highest-grossing Indian films

Footnotes

a. ^a^ The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) notes three running times of Sholay. The version that was submitted in film format to BBFC had a running time of 198 minutes. A video version of this had a running time of 188 minutes. BBFC notes that “When a film is transferred to video the running time will be shorter by approximately 4% due to the differing number of frames per second. This does not mean that the video version has been cut or re-edited.” The director’s cut was 204 minutes long.[47]

b. ^a^b^c^d^ The exchange rate in 1975 was 8.94 Indian rupees (₹) per 1 US dollar (US$).[7]

c. ^A^ A golden jubilee means that a film has completed 50 consecutive weeks of showing in a single theatre.

d. ^A^ A silver jubilee means that a film has completed 25 consecutive weeks of showing in a single theatre.

e. ^a^b^ According to the website Box Office India, film tickets are subject to "entertainment tax" in India, and this tax is added to the ticket price at the box office window of theatres. The amount of this tax is variable among states. “Nett gross figures are always after this tax has been deducted while gross figures are before this tax has been deducted.” Although since 2003 the entertainment tax rate has significantly decreased, as of 2010, gross earnings of a film can be 30–35% higher than nett gross, depending on the states where the film is released.[86]

f. ^A^ The 3D version of the film has a run-time of 198 minutes and the original shots were of standard film frame rate, i.e. 24 frames per second, therefore this version has 285,120 frames which were digitised, up-scaled to High Definition (HD) and element mapped.[148][149]
References


This Friendship) glorified male bonding and is, even today, viewed as the ultimate friendship anthem.

---

**References:**

1. Chopra, Anupama (11 August 2015). "Shatrughan Sinha as Jai, Pran as Thakur and Danny as Gabbar? What 'Sholay' could have been". Scroll. Archived from the original on 8 November 2015.


"FILMFARE NOMINEES AND WINNER" (PDF). The Times Group. Archived (PDF) from the original on 19 October 2015. Retrieved 17 September 2015.


"Hayward 2006, p. 67: "In its truest sense Sholay was perhaps the first Masala movie"


Bibliography


Amitabh Bachchan

Amitabh Bachchan is an Indian film actor, film producer, television host, occasional playback singer and former politician. He first gained popularity in the early 1970s for films such as Zanjeer, Deewaar and Sholay, and was dubbed India's "angry young man" for his on-screen roles in Bollywood. Referred to as the Shahenshah of Bollywood, Sadak Ka Maharanayak, Star of the Millennium, or Big B, he has since appeared in over 190 Indian films in a career spanning almost five decades. Bachchan is widely regarded as one of the greatest and most influential actors in the history of Indian cinema as well as world cinema. So total was his dominance on the Indian movie scene in the 1970s and 1980s that the French director François Truffaut called him a "one-man industry". Beyond the Indian subcontinent, he also has a large overseas following in markets including Africa, the Middle East, United Kingdom, the former Soviet Union and parts of the United States.
**Bollywood**

Hindi cinema, often metonymically referred to as Bollywood and formerly known as Bombay cinema, is the Indian Hindi-language film industry, based in the city of Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. The term being a portmanteau of "Bombay" and "Hollywood", Bollywood is a part of the larger cinema of India, which includes other production centers producing films in other Indian languages. Linguistically, Bollywood films tend to use a colloquial dialect of Hindi-Urdu, or Hindustani, mutually intelligible to both Hindi and Urdu speakers, while modern Bollywood films also increasingly incorporate elements of Hinglish.

**Dacoity**

Dacoity is a term used for "banditry" in Bengali, Odiya, Hindi, Kannada and Urdu. The spelling is the anglicized version of the Hindustani word and as a colloquial Indian English word with this meaning, it appears in the Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases (1903). Banditry is criminal activity involving robbery by groups of armed bandits. The East India Company established the Thuggee and Dacoity Department in 1830, and the Thuggee and Dacoity Suppression Acts, 1836–1848 were enacted in British India under East India Company rule. Areas with ravines or forests, such as Chambal and Chilapata Forests, were once known for dacoits.

**Deewaar**

Deewaar is a 1975 Indian crime drama film, written by Salim-Javed, directed by Yash Chopra, and starring Amitabh Bachchan, Shashi Kapoor, Nirupa Roy, Parveen Babi and Neetu Singh. Reflecting the tumultuous socio-political climate of 1970s India, Deewaar tells the story of a pair of impoverished brothers who, after their family is betrayed by the misplaced idealism of their father, struggle to survive in the slums of Bombay, and eventually find themselves on opposing sides of the law. The deewaar ("wall") of the title is the wall that has sprung up between the two brothers, drawn apart by fate and circumstances in a time of socio-political turmoil. Bachchan's character Vijay was loosely inspired by the real-life Bombay underworld gangster Haji Mastan.

**Amjad Khan (actor)**

Amjad Khan was an Indian actor and director. He worked in over 130 films in a career spanning nearly twenty years. He enjoyed popularity for villainous roles in Hindi films, the most famous being the iconic Gabbar Singh in the 1975 classic Sholay and of Dilawar in Muqaddar Ka Sikandar(1978).

**Jaya Bachchan**

Jaya Bachchan born on April 09, 1948 is an Indian film actress and politician. She is currently the Member of Parliament in Rajya Sabha from the Samajwadi Party, notably serving four terms since 2004. She is recognised as one of the finest Hindi film actresses of her time, particularly known for reinforcing a naturalistic style of acting in both mainstream and "middle-of-the-road" cinema. During her career, she won nine Filmfare Awards: including three for Best Actress and three for Best Supporting Actress, which makes her the overall most-awarded performer in the female acting categories, along with Nutan. She was awarded the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007. In 1992, she was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India.

**Javed Akhtar**
**Javed Akhtar** is an Indian poet, lyricist and screenwriter. He is a recipient of the Padma Shri (1999), Padma Bhushan (2007), the Sahitya Akademi Award as well as five National Film Awards.

**Zanjeer (1973 film)**

*Zanjeer* is a 1973 Indian crime action film, written by Salim-Javed, directed and produced by Prakash Mehra, and starring Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan, Pran, Ajit and Bindu. The film changed Hindi cinema's trend from romance films to crime action films, and pioneered Bachchan's new image of a brooding but explosive person who fights back when cornered, known as "The Angry Young Man."

**Ramesh Sippy**

*Ramesh Sippy* is an Indian film director and producer, best known for directing the popular and critically acclaimed film *Sholay*. He is a winner of the civilian honour of Padma Shri in 2013.

**Kaala Patthar**

*Kaala Patthar* is a 1979 Indian Bollywood disaster drama film, based on the Chasnala mining disaster. It was produced and directed by Yash Chopra, with a screenplay written by Salim-Javed. This film is the fourth collaboration between Amitabh Bachchan, Shashi Kapoor and director Yash Chopra after the hugely successful *Deewaar* (1975), *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976) and *Trishul* (1978). However, this film did average business at the box office. It was nominated for 8 Filmfare awards. While Rajesh Roshan composed songs for the lyrics penned by Sahir, the background score was composed by Salil Chowdhary.

**Salim Khan**

*Salim Abdul Rashid Khan*, also known as *Salim Khan*, is an Indian film actor, producer and screenwriter. As a screenwriter, he wrote the screenplays, stories and scripts for numerous Bollywood films. In Hindi cinema, Khan is best known for being one half of the prolific screenwriting duo of Salim-Javed, along with Javed Akhtar. The duo Salim-Javed were the first Indian screenwriters to achieve star status, becoming the most successful Indian screenwriters of all time, and are regarded as "Hindi cinema's greatest screenwriters". While working together, *Salim Khan* was largely responsible for developing the stories and characters, while *Javed Akhtar* was largely responsible for developing the dialogues.

**Salim-Javed**

*Salim-Javed* were a screenwriting duo in the Indian film industry, composed of Salim Khan and Javed Akhtar. They are noted for being the first Indian screenwriters to achieve star status, becoming the most successful Indian screenwriters of all time. They are regarded as "Hindi cinema's greatest screenwriters". They worked together on 24 films during 1971–1987, of which twenty were commercially and critically successful films. They worked together on 22 Bollywood films, as well as two Kannada films.

**Gunga Jumna**
I came across some photos from a trusted source of the inside of planes that are used for chemtrails and I figured if I passed them on to you, you can help spread more awareness with it on your website. Let me know if this is ok with you. Thanks. When asked if the source would like to elaborate on these photos, I was told: Unfortunately my source does not want to be known and would rather remain anonymous…I’m sure they have some pretty good reasons and I must respect their wishes. As long as the information gets out there I think that’s the most important thing I’ll send you more photos later

New York is not Italy, even if there are plenty of Italians and, indeed, some good Italian restaurant (Stay tuned for my Top 5 Italian Eateries in the Big Apple.) So you may wonder: why you can now buy the latest edition of the whaiwhai guidebooks, “New York: the Pegleg” from Select Italy? The answer is really easy: WE ❤ whaiwhai. And we love the guys at LOG607 since Select Italy’s President Andrea Sertoli discovered whaiwhai — at a trade fair in Venice. It was natural to add it to YOU & ITALY. Here at the New York office we can’t wait to get together (again!) and play the New York edition

Ganga Jamna, also transliterated as Ganga Jamuna or Gunga Jumna, is a 1961 Indian crime drama film, written and produced by Dilip Kumar, and directed by Nitin Bose, with dialogues written by Wajahat Mirza. The film stars Dilip Kumar, Vyjayanthimala and Nasir Khan in the lead roles. Set in rural Northern India, the film tells the story of two impoverished brothers, Ganga and Jamna, and their poignancy and sibling rivalry on opposing sides of the law, one a dacoit criminal and the other a police officer. The film was also notable for its Technicolor production, use of the Awadhi dialect, and its rustic setting, and it is a defining example of the dacoit film genre.

Ganga Jamna

Ramgarh Ke Sholay

Ramgarh Ke Sholay is a 1991 Hindi-language Indian spoof feature film directed by Ajit Diwani, starring Vijay Saxena, Kishore Bhanushali and Amjad Khan in lead roles. The film parodies the 1975 classic Bollywood blockbuster Sholay.

Gabbar Singh (character)

Gabbar Singh is a fictional character, the antagonist of the 1975 Bollywood film Sholay. Gabbar Singh alias Gabra was born in 1926 in Dang village of Bhind district, a Gujar by caste. He was written by duo Salim-Javed, consisting of Salim Khan and Javed Akhtar.