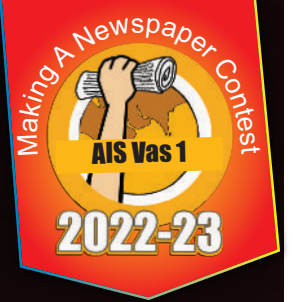


...AND THE OSCAR GOES TO...



...The Past, Present, & Future Of The Most Significant Award In Film History

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The 95th Academy Awards brought in a new dawn for Indian cinema as it bagged two awards with RRR's Naatu Naatu clinching Best Original Song and The Elephant Whisperers by Kartiki Gonsalves and Guneet Monga winning Best Documentary Short. India's third nomination, All That Breathes, lost the Best Documentary Feature, but still brought the country a lot of glory. The Academy Awards - an annual celebration of cinema, shining light on riveting documentaries, animated movies, and films from across the world - is a 95-year-old ceremony that has always been appreciated as gospel. So, let's see what all the hype is about, and if it is even worth it.

A significant win

India is no newbie to Oscar wins, with Bhanu Athaiya bagging the first ever Oscar in 1982 for Best Costume Design for the movie Gandhi. The country's last win at the Oscar was in 2009 - Best Original Song and Score for AR Rahman and Gulzar's Jai Ho, and Resul Pookutty for Best Sound Mixing. However, RRR's triumph ushers in a new chapter, given that it is the first Indian feature production to win an Oscar. Slumdog Millionaire, a British production, was more of a western world's interpretation of the mainstream Indian musical scene. RRR, on the other hand, is an Indian mainstream production that is unapologetic about its spectacular action pieces and dance. The Naatu Naatu win can be viewed as the Academy's nod to cinema that captured the imagination of a multicultural American society. Not just India, but the 95th Academy Awards

became a major night for Asian representation with a series of milestones. With Everything Everywhere All At Once taking home a total of seven awards out of the eleven nominations, and Michelle Yeoh making history as the first woman of Asian descent to win the Best Actress award, this year's edition can certainly be hailed as all inclusive.

A significant history

The Oscars were first orchestrated in 1929 after the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was established to advance the motion picture industry. The ceremony, lasting 15 minutes, witnessed some 270 guests in attendance, including prominent film stars, directors, and producers. The rules on how the entrants and winners were chosen was fairly simple - the members of the Academy nominated and voted for the candidates, a practice prevalent even today. The academy is divided into various branches of film production, and the nominees in each award category are chosen by the members of the corresponding branch. Writers nominate writers, directors nominate directors, and so forth for all the categories.

A significant decline

The age of social media has been rather challenging for the Academy Awards to navigate, conspicuous in its dwindling ratings and fading popularity. From envelope mix-ups to accusations of racial bias, from preferring white artist to 'kissgate' and 'slappgate', the Oscars have become tainted with misogyny, racism, and violence. The glitz and glamour that once had the world by the tail

has grown dull over the decades. Many have attempted to theorise the reasons for the same - movies with multiple big names garnering all nominations, abandonment of cable television, representation and diversity being mere checkboxes, flabbergasting inclusions and omissions from nominations (Don't Look Up chosen over Spider-Man: No Way Home? The King's Speech winning over Toy Story 3?). It's a long list, one that's mostly rooted in systemic practices and virtue signalling. And that's bound to leave audiences, even the most fanatic ones, jaded at the Academy's lack of evolution in the contemporary age.

A significant future

But to completely write off the Academics would be way off, for they are very much a relic of old glorious Hollywood. The Academy's seal of approval continues to be a great source of validation to the artist and the work. Punctuating a film or an artist with 'Oscar Nominated' or 'Oscar Winning' holds more metaphorical weight than the gold statuette in the hand could ever offer. Paychecks inflate, film offers increase, box office numbers soar, and talent is recognised. The Oscar for South Korean film Parasite led to a wider interest in the Korean industry, causing Netflix to invest over 500 million USD in it. Oscar nominated films earn an average of 12.7 million USD at the box office. Best Actor winners can expect a salary increase to the tune of 3.9 million USD.

OSCAR TRIVIA

The statuette presented to winners is composed of gold-plated bronze on a black metal base, and was sculpted by George Stanley.



The nominees receive a bag of goodies, the cost of which run upwards of 126,000 USD.



The Oscar winners, or even their family, cannot sell the trophy without offering it back to the Academy first for 1 USD.



Due to a metal shortage during World War II, Oscars were made of painted plaster for three years.



The Academy Awards ceremony was televised for the first time in 1953.



Filmmaker Hal Mohr won the Oscars for cinematography of A Midsummer Night's Dream without even being nominated for the award.

