



Differential pricing will work till the novelty factor of 3D works after which the incremental revenues will settle at 30-40%. In the Indian context, I do not see more than 10-12 titles a year because Bollywood does not have as many genres suitable for 3D as the West. A Robot comes once in a while

SANJAY GAIDWAD
MD, & Founder, UFO Movie

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A Time to Pause?

A still from *Haunted*

Hollywood worrying over a possible saturation of the family film genre can never be a concern for India as the tears that follow any film in that category, send the box office pulse racing. So, there's no reason to worry here.

Computer animation as a genre has never brought in the mega bucks in India, even for the biggest Hollywood hits, as the larger audience in India prefers live action, real heroes and real fights. So again, there's not much to worry here.

In next few years, the number of Hollywood 3D films will surely drop from the annually 40 to 15 or 16. Whereas India is concerned, the key is the quality of the 3D. If we can achieve the same quality as Hollywood and reach Tier 3 and 4 cities, I feel 3D is here to stay.

RANJIT THAKUR

CEO, Scrabble Entertainment

So far, 3D fare shown in India has been sourced from Hollywood. The release of these films has been in step with India's 3D screen roll out (by April 300-400 3D screens). Next month, India rolls out its first 3D stereophonic production — Vikram Bhatt's *Haunted*. Bhatt and the producers, Dar Motion Pictures, have roped in 3D experts like cameraman Brent Robinson who have worked on films like *Incredible Hulk* and *Resident Evil 4* so there seems to be no compromise there on technology while total cost of production

and print and advertising are reported to be approximately ₹20 crore.

The incremental cost of 3D is around 30-40% higher than the cost of production of a normal movie. The 3D shooting equipment and rigs and qualified manpower all currently come from abroad, while the complex shooting increases the number of shooting days on a film's schedule by 8-15%. The money for all of the above is definitely sought to be recovered in the premium ticket that exhibitors have been charging for 3D movies and so far getting.

The trend for English movies has been such that the box office collections of these movies have been almost five to 10 times those of the 2D collections. UFO did a dip stick test for *Piranha* in the first week of its release and found that the 3D collections were more than six times that of 2D and this included centres like Jaipur and Raipur as well. (₹20 lakh versus ₹3 lakh).

While the 3D pioneers in India, like UFO founder and MD, Sanjay Gaikwad, agree that the debate of 3D movies future is on at the international level and there are some pessimistic views being voiced, US box-office data has been encouraging. As for India, the 3D story is just beginning and we will ensure not to repeat Hollywood's mistakes.

"The key is the quality of 3D. If we can achieve the same quality as Hollywood (animation/live action) and reach tier-3 and 4 cities, I feel 3D is here to stay," says Ranjit Thakur, CEO, Scrabble, who has got in the DCI-compliant 3D roll-out in India and between both UFO and Scrabble, should have about 350-400 screens ready for Bhatt's *Haunted*.

Of course, the fact that Bhatt is releasing his film bang in the middle of the IPL season does not concern Arun Rangachari, chairman, Dar Capital Group, who is confident that cricket fatigue coupled with no major releases scheduled during the period would not affect *Haunted*. Since it is India's first

stereoscopic 3D movie, *Haunted* will work in the film's favour and draw the audiences in. Between 2010 and 2011, 12 3D movies were released as compared to 11 last year (five post success of *Avatar* last year). The average return of 3D movies, say exhibitors, is 10-15% higher than normal Hollywood movies. Now, whether Bollywood can match that has to be seen.

In fact, everybody is waiting to see whether the genre (horror), plus IPL, plus 3D can turn the fate for the industry.

But the pause is not just for one film. As UFO and Scrabble build the 3D platform, there are more in the industry ready to jump onto the 3D bandwagon. UTV's co-production *Joker* with Akshay Kumar, Farah Khan and Shirish Kunder, is slotted for the summer of 2012 and the producers are sure of its commercial viability (₹40-45 crore) with the layer of 3D revenue being the cream on the cake. Likewise there are many an announcement, from Shekhar Kapur's Paani to Boney Kapoor's *Mr India 2* and Ram Gopal Varma's *Amma*.

Gaikwad says, "I do not see more than 10-12 titles a year because Bollywood does not have as many genres suitable for 3D as the West. It's the family genre for us, which does not lend itself to VFX or 3D. A Robot comes once in a while."

So Scrabble and UFO as in the rest involved with 3D (exhibitors included) all have a vested stake in the growth of 3D. But will the West's fears be true here? Will the novelty factor carry forward till films like *Paani* and *Mr India 2* are made? As with any new technology, everyone one wants to cash in on the bandwagon. Even Hollywood is sitting and planning 3D projects after the failures of some big 3D films. But the Indian industry is hopeful that the future is 3D.

Nandini Raghavendra