



# Theatres smitten by Digital Technology

By **AMATUL M SIDDIQUI**

**Aurangabad, April 30:** After digital music, it's digital movies that have taken the country by a storm with over 1,000 theatres screening digitalised movies, two of which are very much in Aurangabad.

Digital Cinema is the distribution and exhibition of movies via satellite or a digital projector, instead of using analog prints. It is a fast growing technology that several movie theatres have adopted primarily because of its cost-effective and anti-piracy nature.

Fame Tapadia is the first cinema house in the city to broadcast digital prints at the multiplex. "Digitalisation of movies simplifies the

entire procedure for exhibitors, because it does not require any manual transfer. We are receiving digital prints of our movies directly via satellite," explains Abhishek Rai, Programming Head, Fame Tapadia.

Generally in smaller parts of the country, the analog print of a movie is received a couple of weeks after release, but this technology allows movies to be shown first-day-first show, coupled with better picture and sound. Digital Cinema Service was supplied to Fame Tapadia last year in April by United Film Organisers (UFO), a pioneer in providing these services across the country.

In the past two years, we have supplied our services to 1,080 theatres in India, including many in and around Aurangabad," says Rajesh Mishra, CEO India Operations, UFO

India Ltd.

Digitalisation of movies provides a long list of benefits that work in the favour of anyone connected to their screening, including distributors, exhibitors and even the audience. Immediate screening of movies helps in combating piracy activities and retaining the better class of audience, who would have otherwise watched the film on DVD. Digitalisation also means better picture quality and sound, something that every movie-goer looks forward to after spending money on the ticket.

The two attractive features of investing in digital technology are: First, no matter how many times a movie is screened, it will not show any signs of wear and tear," says Babasaheb Giri, Technical Manager, PVR Cinema. The wear and tear effect

is common in analog prints where the effect increases with every screening, thus worsening the picture quality.

Secondly, we are saving nearly ¼ of the energy that is used up in the conventional method of screening," Giri says.

PVR Cinema is experimenting the use of a Digital Light Projector (DLP), which converts the original print to Real Images for better quality. The difference is that instead of receiving data via satellite, we receive our digital print on a hard-disk," says Chandramohan Sharma, General Manager, PVR Cinema. Digital Cinema Services come with unlimited benefits at a very small price and its application has proven to be a win-win situation for all – producers, distributors, exhibitors and audience.

Maybe in the next three years, almost all movie theatres in the country might switch to Digital Cinema.

An analog print costs anything between Rs 60,000 and 80,000.

The price becomes the deciding factor as to which theatre a movie will be screened at. In some cases, the collection cost does not cross the print cost, which obviously means loss for the exhibitor. Now, with digital prints, a distributor is allowed to spread his film across the country for a mere price of Rs 6000, meaning that whether a film has done well or not, it will not effect the exhibitor's profits.

