



■ SANJAY GAIKWAD

'Digital cinema's concept is suited for India'

DIGITAL CINEMA was introduced in India a few years back but the lukewarm response of the exhibitors discouraged the survival of this concept. But now United Film Organisers have come up with a bang and brought 160 cinemas under their umbrella and hopefully 10 more cinemas would be added within the next six months. Sanjay Gaikwad, CEO and Executive Director of UFO Moviez/Valuable Media Pvt Ltd explains the concept of Digital Cinema-how it is cost effective and the benefits that the film trade can derive from it. "The indus-

core strengths of technological solutions and infrastructure based business. It would be wrong to say that digital cinema failed in the west and other countries. It has simply taken a slow start primarily due to the huge costs involved.

Q. The Adlabs had started the business but the result was not as encouraging as expected.

A. Adlabs was one of the earlier entrants into digital cinema, where they realized that this is a future of the business. However, their growth trajectory in other



that a print costs is miniscule in comparison. Besides the government also encourages the multiplex culture by offering tax subsidies in some states.

Q. Please throw some highlights on Costing and explain how cost effective it is.

A. The immediate benefit of Digital

the digital format have witnessed more than 100% jump in their box office collections mainly due to the availability of fresh releases every week coupled with extremely good quality and scheduling flexibility. In fact many cinemas on the brink of closedown are now upgrading their facilities such as seats, sound systems and other infrastructure facilities such as parking space, toilets etc to provide better entertainment opportunity to the viewer.

Q. There are also other groups coming up with similar concept.

A. The biggest endorsement of any technology innovation is the entry of other players into the same segment. We sin-

'With one print costing about Rs 60,000, for a distributor releasing a film in 100 digital cinemas, there is an immediate saving of Rs 60,00,000 to him coupled with savings in cost of handling and transportation'

cerely believe that competition is good for the business and it brings out the best in the players of the business. The prime example is the telecom sector wherein the government's vision of ensuring more than two players in any sector has reaped rich dividends for the telecom industry as a whole and subscribers.

Q. Any the final word.

A. Digital cinema as a concept is ideally suited for countries like India wherein on the one hand the cost of the print is too high compared to the production budget of the film and on the other hand, the continental proportions of India face a logistic challenge for the optical mode of release. Secure and stable technology coupled with a win-win business model provided by us will drive the business. ■

Rang de Basanti one of the many films released in the digital format



try where piracy is rampant and the following Tuesday has become the expiry date for almost 98% movies, the concept of Digital Cinema should work," tells Gaikwad to Shashank Jare. Excerpts:

Q. What prompted you to start the concept of Digital Cinema in India, notwithstanding its failure in the West and other countries?

A. We are essentially a technology based company specializing in technology-enabled business solutions. Digital Cinema as a business is eminently suited to our

areas of film processing, distribution and production etc. may have shifted their focus from digital cinema. However, even today they continue to run their digital theatres using digital cinema technology and I am sure they would be reconsidering their options given the changing face of technology.

Q. Are you catering to Multiplex cinemas as well?

A. Multiplex cinemas are the blue-eyed boys of the distributors. Also the collections from multiplexes are so high today

Cinema is the saving of print cost of the producer and distributor. With one print costing about Rs 60,000, for a distributor releasing a film in 100 digital cinemas, there is an immediate saving of Rs 60,00,000 to him coupled with savings in cost of handling and transportation.

Q. How is the overall response from the producers, distributors and exhibitors?

A. The overall response from the producer, distributor and exhibitor is extremely positive and in fact cinemas releasing films in