

# It's renaissance for Gujarati cinema

Screens Showing Gujarati Films' Shoot Up By Over 600%

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**Ahmedabad:** Once considered on its deathbed, the Gujarati film industry is witnessing a renaissance of sorts.

According to data compiled by UFO Moviez, in 2011, the average number of screens playing a Gujarati movie stood at 20-25, while in 2015, the average went up to 150-160, an increase of almost 600%.

Year by year, the Gujarati movies are making their presence felt in the cinema screens space which is dominated by Bollywood movies. Producers, film-makers and distributors believe that good content coupled with better production quality over the last three years have prompted

## RISE OF GUJARATI CINEMA



Year	2011	2015
▶ Total no. of screens in state	450	<b>625</b>
▶ Avg no. of screens playing Gujarati movies	20-25	<b>140-150</b>
▶ Avg no. of screens playing Gujarati movies digitally	24	<b>42</b>
▶ No. of Gujarati films released	35	<b>68</b>
▶ Avg production cost per Gujarati film	₹30L-40L	<b>₹1.5cr-2cr</b>

the cinema owners to play more Gujarati movies.

"Five years ago, around 35 movies used to release in the state. My own produced film starring Vikram Thakor could manage only 50 screens. With the increase in the number of Gujarat movies being made, the average screen per movie has gone up. This has been possible because of rich content and word of mouth publicity," said Haresh Patel, convener of Gujarat chapter of Indian Motion Pictures'

Producers Association (IMP-PA).

In the same period from 2011 to 2015, the total number of screens in Gujarat has increased from 450 to 625, an increase of 39%.

UFO Moviez COO Pankaj Jaysinh said, "'Chello Divas', which released last year, got maximum screen ever for a Gujarati film with a total of 243 screens. This included 207 screens in Gujarat. 'Chello Divas' was followed by 'Gujjubhai The Great' and recent-

ly released 'Romance Complicated'."

Jaysinh added, "Until a few years ago, the average cost of making a Gujarati movie was around Rs 30 lakh to Rs 40 lakh. Today, producers spend up Rs 1.5 crore to Rs 2 crore for a good quality film. This has also to do with the hike in remuneration of Gujarati actors. These days, a top star charges somewhere around Rs 20 lakh to Rs 25 lakh."

At the same time, there has been a spurt in box-office earnings of Gujarati movies. In 2015, the box office collection for Gujarati films was over Rs 55 crore, up from Rs 7 crore in 2014—a whopping increase of 685%.

"Earlier, the films were made specific to communities and regions, and production quality was also poor. Now, the films are being made for all kinds of audiences and fresh faces are being cast," said Yagnesh Dave, a producer.