

# Business Line

CINEMA

## 'Movie-on-wheels' brings Bollywood to village folks

UFO Moviez-owned Caravan Talkies also aims to promote brands through in-cinema ads

**BINDU D MENON**

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As dusk sets in at Benipur village near Varanasi district, the village comes alive in anticipation of a Salman Khan starrer.

By seven in the evening, close to 600-700 people have gathered to watch movie-on-wheels brought to their village by Caravan Talkies. For villagers, it is an opportunity to see their favourite stars on 12 x 10 feet screens and less stressful than travelling to the nearest theatre 3-4 hours away.

UFO Moviez-owned Caravan

Talkies is taking both Bollywood and regional films to areas which lack a proper cinema theatre.

The company says through Caravan Talkies, it is helping rural audience get a big screen experience besides helping brands to promote themselves in media-dark regions through in-cinema advertisement and brand activation campaigns.

"We already had experience in in-cinema advertisements. We were looking to expand our portfolio through a synergetic business. Caravan Talkies was one such platform which we took to

the media dark region," Siddharth Bhardwaj, Chief Marketing Officer and Head of Enterprise Sales, UFO Moviez, told *BusinessLine*.

### Dual purpose

Bhardwaj said Caravan Talkies served dual purpose as it provided rural India its dose of entertainment and simultaneously enabled advertisers to reach out to their target audience in a captive environment.

Brands such in Coca-Cola, ITC, Hindustan Unilever Ltd and Dabur were among players who have tied up with Caravan talkies. According to Bhardwaj, some brands take up to 20 vans for their brand activation cam-



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**SIDDHARTH BHARDWAJ**  
Chief Marketing Officer, UFO Moviez

paings. The CMO said Caravan Talkies uses vans which display brand's advertisements during the day and act as exhibition centres for free film viewing in the evening in designated rural areas on the weekly market day or *haats*.

He said the company currently has 115 vans which operate in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Odisha, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh, among others. "Our research indicated that South India had a significant penetration of screens. However, North and West India lacked adequate number of screens. Additionally, it was also a market which brands wanted to reach out to," he ad-

ded. UFO Moviez has invested close to ₹35 crore in Caravan Talkies, which takes mobile screens and projectors to villages and plays sundown shows 8-9 months a year.

On revenues, from the vertical, Bhardwaj said the company earned through its brand associations. "We, however, have to pay content owners or film owners for distributing content".

He said, "Each film show witnesses close to 250-1,100 footfalls and runs up to 25 minutes of advertisements. The realisation per van is pegged at about ₹10 lakh per year," Bhardwaj said. Most of the companies have done van branding as well as on-ground activations, he added.