



## Cinema advertising to be at its peak as brands bet big on Bharat's Eid release

*Festivals are just another reason for brands to celebrate their product's campaigns through big screens, which is enabling the sector with better returns on investment*



The buzz for the Salman Khan-starrer Bharat is at its peak, giving more reasons for brands to showcase their products in theatres, hence boosting cinema advertising.

Cinema advertising, which is growing significantly, sees a peak during long, festive weekends and big releases. Bharat, which is being released during the Eid weekend and is made at a budget of around Rs 200 crore, has all the ingredients to take the in-cinema advertising a notch up.

Talking to Moneycontrol, Siddharth Bhardwaj, Chief Marketing Officer - Head of Enterprise Sales, UFO Moviez, said, "Salman Khan movies' association with Eid has been a very efficacious formula, so for Bharat, like all Eid-Salman movies, brands are looking to book slots weeks in advance. During festive weekends, and especially with movies like Bharat, our ad inventories are full and we usually charge an additional premium as well on rates."

Concurring with Bhardwaj is Amit Sharma, MD, Miraj Cinemas who said, "For a normal release to a big-ticket item during a holiday, the inventory sold is 20 percent higher and even the rates are 20 percent higher."

Explaining the rising interest of brands, Bhardwaj said, "There's a significant increase in-cinema advertising demand during festive and long weekends and big releases. Our inventory utilization through these weeks is disproportionately high vis-a-vis other weeks."

"Since it is the holiday period, the frequency of visits is higher and occupancy is better. Advertisers understand this scenario and are very keen to capitalize on the same. There are about 15-20 weeks in a year where advertisers are very optimistic and the demand for the in-cinema ad inventory increases. These are usually either films with a big star cast or those releasing around important festivals like Eid, Diwali and others," he explained further.

While in the advertising expenditure (Adex) pie, cinema has a marginal contribution, but the segment plays an important role for theatre profits.

"Cinema advertising is a segment that is increasing 12-15 percent CAGR (compound annual growth rate) every year. For multiplexes, which are leaders, they are increasing by 20-35 percent. If you look at Inox, CAGR is increasing by 30 percent YoY; PVR is also increasing by 20-25 percent. This is the biggest scheme to make money for multiplexes and we are seriously looking at monetising it on YoY basis," said Sharma.

According to a Pitch Madison 2019 report, cinema grew by 37 percent in 2018, taking Adex to Rs 805 crore. It is expected to grow at 14 percent in 2019 and cross the Rs 1,000 crore mark to reach Rs 1,047 crore.

Growth in the segment comes on the back of an increase in the number of multiplex screens, especially in smaller towns; improved expansion of digital distribution; infrastructure; and an awakening in the advertising and media buying community that in-theatre advertising offers a proper target audience which is captivated during the time ads play out.

“Cinema advertisement is to get a captive audience, it is to talk to the audience one-on-one. A lot of brand activation is happening. Cinema advertisement is all about eyeballs and when you have a Bharat kind of film, you know that eyeballs get increased significantly. Every cinema has a different clientele to cater to. So for every product, they (brands) prefer a different kind of cinema,” Sharma said.

Rahul Puri, MD, Mukta Arts, explained that advertisers “look at the film, specific period, time of release, clientele the theatre has, the locality it is in.”

Experts also believe that advertising in theatres also leads to a better chance of creating a recall value. In addition, cinema has different segments to attract customers like kiosks, seat branding, food and beverage counters among others.

“Off-screen side we are seeing a lot of traction for the Eid weekend and Bharat is a big component of that. We know that we will get guaranteed footfall for that long weekend,” said Puri.

In-cinema advertising is becoming a hotspot for brands as the industry has started producing more number of box office hits every week. Hence, advertisers and brands have a reason to come back to the big screen more often.

And festivals are just another reason for brands to celebrate their product’s campaigns through big screens, which is enabling the sector with better returns on investment.