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That we talk of many films getting wider releases across the country by the day is all thanks to UFO Moviez, who, over a decade have ensured digitised screens, making immense difference in the way films have been distributed and exhibited. Though the anti-piracy movement in the country hasn't been greatly effective, this digital cinema distribution network is doing its bit to come up with technological advancements that help cinemas track piratical activity. Besides film distribution, the chain also handles the advertising segments between the breaks. Now, as UFO is set to join hands with Qube Cinema Technologies (which have a major foothold in the south), movie releases are set to get wider.

UFO Moviez' CEO Rajesh Mishra opens up on what it means to the film industry. "Qube has as many number of screens as us, we were in identical businesses and this will help our operating leverages. Ultimately, the focus is to optimise revenues, this is a benefit which will pass onto the industry."

This will eventually mean more pan-Indian releases with transparency, ease of operations, clarity in processes for the producers. "Earlier the producers had to sign documents with both of us, it was tasking. The merger will create a network of cinemas across the country, this will help pool our services together and offer better services to the distributor. The pan-India advertising, offering dis-



Bigger platforms Spectators at a theatre, Rajesh Mishra-CEO, UFO Moviez (below)  
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND REUTERS

tributors and producers over 7000 screens is a huge advantage."

Talking of how UFO has used its satellite based M4 platform in curbing piracy, Rajesh adds, "Earlier piracy used to happen because films released in limited theatres. Say the Telugu states have about 800 theatres on the whole, the films used to release only in 300 theatres and those who didn't have access to the film would go onto watch a pirated copy.

We've reduced the print cost so much that the producers don't mind increasing the screen count." Thereby, the two-tier, three-tier town crowds needn't compromise on the film watching experience.

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The movie file can't be accessed unless there's a license to it. "The encrypted file made it impossible for anyone to access the image, the piracy that's happening today is about a person sitting in a hall and recording it in his/her phone."

However, he mentions that's not

something that can be immediately stopped, not everyone can be policed. "The solution is the digital watermark we use; depending upon the print, we can zoom in and identify which place and time was it recorded. Thereby the cinemas become vigilant and stringent checks can be done. There has been huge impact in bringing down piracy," he says.

Viewers have also been increasingly curious of how KDM delays (the license used by the exhibitor to screen the film) have impacted film releases over the years. He says the process is very automated.

"Once the release order comes from the distributor, there's no human intervention. The delays surface because ex-

hibitors and distributors keep negotiating deals till the eleventh hour."

As the debate on the rise of non-film segments during pre-film and intermission segments rages on, many producers in the recent past have questioned the distribution majors about its control in the duration. To which he responds, "Typically it's a 10 minute break we can't give that entirely to the distributor/exhibitor or a multiplex, basically it's a chain where everyone needs to get benefited. This is not something that's done only in digital cinema." About 5 five minutes content is reserved for films, which goes up during big releases owing to the popularity. "The experience will get better with time though," Rajesh assures.

