

THE TIMES OF INDIA

A bid to revive the single screen

Indian cinema is like no other, in terms of the popularity it enjoys among the aam junta. Yet it's a pity that India doesn't have the screen count in the right proportion with its population density. It is to bridge this gap that the country's largest film distribution chain is coming with NOVA Cinemaz, a bid to revive the single screens across the country. **UFO's CEO Vishnu Patel** tells us what the initiative has in store.

How big is the theatre watching crowd in India?

Indian cinema witnesses the highest footfalls in the world. Films are the largest source of entertainment in the country with over 2,000 film releases in 2017, according to the FICCI-EY Report 2018. However, the screen density in India is abysmally low. Currently, the screen universe in India is 9,530+ screens in all, among this, there are around 6780+ single screens and 2,750+ multiplex screens. As per industry reports and discussions, Single screens and miniplexes continue to contribute over 45% market share in the box office revenues. In 2018, single screens contributed over 70% in the box office revenue for movies like Satyamev Jayate, Baaghi 2.

How will UFOs subsidiary NOVA Cinemaz help in the bloom of single screens/ miniplexes?

It is a known fact that, despite producing the highest number of films in a year, India stands as one of the most underpenetrated markets in terms of screen count. With 9530+ screens serving a population of more than 1.2 billion which amounts to only 8 screens per million heads as compared to 117 screens per million in USA and 30 screens per million in China. Going by world average, even if we add 25 screens per million, India at least needs additional 20,000 to 25000 cinema screens. There is a huge potential for exhibition business to grow in semi-urban and rural areas of India. With growth in rural incomes and fast-paced urbanization, there is a definite set of potential customers waiting for newer experience, translating into better exhibition-business prospect. NOVA Cinemaz taps these underserved areas. NOVA Cinemaz currently operates 38+ screens in 18+ cities across India and we plan to add approximately about 1500 more screens in the next five years. NOVA Cinemaz works as a one-stop solution for the local populace to set-up movie theatres in their respective areas through a standardized model. NOVA aims to make the movie-going experience affordable, entertaining and accessible. NOVA Cinemaz encourages local entrepreneurs to own and operate NOVA branded theatres in various parts of the country. As per the arrangement, the franchisee shall make the primary investment and UFO shall ensure that the theatre is set up at a competitive cost and will invest close to 20-25 per cent of the capital.

Does this translate into better movie watching experience?

Under Nova screen refurbishing of single screens into miniplex initiative, we help iconic cinema screens that have strong catchment in uplifting their cinema experience. The renovated screen generally increases the occupancy by 15 to 25 per cent or more leading to a revenue increase of 2-3 times. NOVA Cinemaz, recently refurbished Nagpur's iconic single screen, Rajvilas Talkies. The screen is now fully air-conditioned & boasts of lush interiors with world-class amenities. Equipped with advanced Digital sound and movie projection, it has a seating capacity of 432 seats along with ample of legroom for comfortable seating. It impeccably blends the finest of luxury and technology, whilst keeping it contemporary and ambient.

How does UFO/NOVA help in providing theatre infrastructure/ technical and content help to theatres support in Tier-III/tier IV markets as well as in the media dark areas?

Under NOVA Cinemaz, as per the arrangement, the franchisee shall own the theatre and make the necessary investments for setting up the theatre and shall be responsible for day- to- day operations of the same, while NOVA shall be responsible for putting up of the theatre at a competitive cost, providing complete branding support and taking care of programming of films at the theatre. NOVA shall also take care of deployment of the theatrical technologies i.e. digital cinema & online ticketing. Thus, through this initiative, we offer an infrastructural boost to budding entrepreneurs who aspire to get into movie-exhibition services and a better cinematic experience for the local cine-goers.