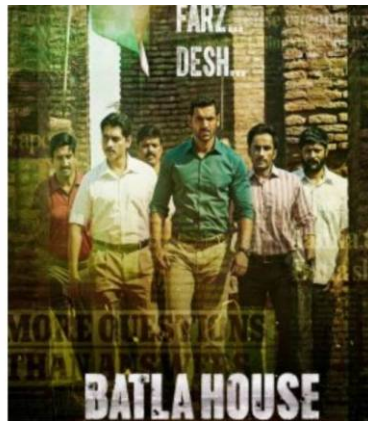




Mission Mangal, Batla House making August 15 a good opportunity for both audience and advertisers

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Mr. Siddharth Bhardwaj (UFO Moviez)

This Independence Day, there will be no dearth of entertainment, especially for movie buffs who can choose between two big star releases hitting theatres on August 15.

Akshay Kumar is bringing to the big screen the story of the scientists at Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) who worked for the Mars Orbiter Mission with Mission Mangal.

Meanwhile, John Abraham's film Batla House is about Operation Batla House, an encounter that happened in 2008 in Jamia Nagar, Delhi.

But the opportunity is not attractive for cine-goers alone as interest amid advertisers is also peaking for in-cinema advertising.

Talking to Moneycontrol, Siddharth Bhardwaj, Chief Marketing Officer - Head of Enterprise Sales, UFO Moviez, explained how holidays like August 15 are lucrative periods for advertisers and the exhibition industry.

"Whenever there is an opportunity of an extended weekend or an occasion like Diwali or Eid or August 15 or January 26 - most blockbusters release during this time, our inventories increase during such weeks. During these weeks advertisers have to pay a premium," he said.

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However, Bhardwaj points out that advertising rates depend on many factors and differs from screen to screen and market to market.

“All screens are not the same. Every screen is a different entity and every screen has a different market as the audiences are different and it showcases that kind of movies also. Hence, the premium depends on the market, the category of screens,” he explained.

He added that in screens that see higher footfalls, the premium goes as high as 100 percent during holidays. Other screens could charge a premium of 10-15 percent.

It is during such periods that theatres make more money for the same kind of inventory as the occupancy rates are higher.

And when there is variety of content available, it is even better.

According to Bhardwaj, two big films (Mission Mangal and Batla House) releasing together is good news because “more the content the better it is, better the quality of the content, better the occupancy in theatres.”

“There are brands that are endorsed by Akshay Kumar and there are brands that are endorsed by John Abraham, so it is good news and cinema needs it. Advertisers too need such opportunities after the World Cup, IPL and elections. They need a good property,” he added.

There was a time when advertisers would approach theatres only for a Salman Khan or Shah Rukh Khan release during Eid or Diwali but the scenario has changed.

“There is excitement around every occasion where there is holiday. Earlier, it was believed that there are only four days when people would step out to watch films. There were only four-five big movies that were chased by advertisers. Now it is more content driven and there is excitement beyond the big stars,” said Bhardwaj.

In addition, “There is an intrinsic need amid the public to go out when there is a holiday. This is why it is a great time to showcase your content and get audiences to the theatres. Two years down the line, there will be excitement around other holidays as well,” he added.

This is probably why Bhardwaj is betting big on cinema advertising, which currently has a market size of approximately Rs 1,000 crore and is expected to touch Rs 1,400 crore by 2021.

“Cinema is the second-fastest growing platform in the country after digital. It is a highly under leveraged medium. The inventories in cinemas are still to be discovered. Because there is continuous excitement around cinema advertisers keep coming to theatres which is helping the medium grow. For radio and television, the inventories are practically full and the only way to grow is to take the rates up. But on our platform inventories are still to be discovered and the medium will keep growing for the next three-four years,” said Bhardwaj.