

THREAT ALTERNATIVE WHICH MIGHT IMPEDE THE GROWTH OF FILMED ENTERTAINMENT AND THE MULTIPLEX INDUSTRY

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***Abstract:** Gone are these days of viewing a movie with enormous scratches, distorted sound and the picture changing colors several times in a span of three hours. This scenario has changed for better since the Multiplex format entered the scene. Air-conditioned halls push back seats, clean and extravagant ambiance and tantalizing audio system are the salient features of the present day cinema halls. This is certainly backed up by the technological innovations and the change of outlook among the customers towards cinema viewing. Growth of nuclear families in urban areas, increasing number of working women and the younger wage earning population are the major highlights of the demographic profile. As the young wage earning population tends to spend more on entertainment and leisure, entertainment combined with fun-filled experience is likely to be a major attraction. As a result of this, many theatre owners due to their capability over themselves and new vision, they come out with new projects. This article is based on threats alternative which might impede the growth of filmed entertainment and the multiplex industry"*

***Key Words:** Multiplex, Cinema, Customers, Entertainment.*

I. MULTIPLEXES A THREAT TO SINGLE SCREEN CINEMA

India is far short of the cinema screens as compared to many developed countries in the world. Since the economy is going through a bullish phase, there is enormous scope for leisure, entertainment and tourism. This reinforces the need for the transformation of the theatres form into the multiplex form. As the film industry is expected to go through a major transformation through the growth of multiplexes, there are certain key indicators to support the success of this segment. Multiplex launches continue to dot the cinematic contours of the country even as fresh ventures are being signed by entrepreneurs big or small. The emergence of the multiplex industry and the new genre of entrepreneurs in India put the industry up to the challenge of meeting global standards as also to a new horizon of opportunities. The cinema claims to provide all the features of what is now

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aggressively sought to be promoted as Cinema experience that comprises swanky ambiances characterising glittering colours, well designed auditoria with wall-to-wall screens, comfortable sightlines, push seating, and state-of-the-art sound and projection technology. Multiplexes' opening with 4 screens, 7 screens, and 9 screens with a total seating capacity of 700 to 1500 has created a mass to cinemaas. The multiplex is equipped state of the art cinematic comforts and services that comprise latest and perfect sound and projection technology, fully automated box office with computerized ticketing, and home delivery services. A good mix of aesthetics and all these backed up by an efficient service mechanism.

The admission rates at multiplex range between Rs. 90 to Rs.120, 150, 200, 250. Prices vary depending on time of the day and day of the week thereby making the movie going experience affordable to a wider audience. The programming mix will include different language films. Today around 400 multiplex screens in country contribute to almost 30-35 per cent of the all language theatrical collections. However, the multiplex screens have gained greater importance only so far as the Hindi movie business is concerned. The remaining 12,000 single screens in the country are still influenced by traditional ways of working since there haven't been any policy supports for them on the lines of multiplexes, and no investments have been made to dispel the inertia of minimum guarantees. Above all, the industry players failed to realize that if a change in the business model suits the multiplex well, the same would hold true for the single screens. Multiplex has revived the entertainment industry to a great extent. The multiplex business popularized cinema viewing again. It has changed the total format of the cinema viewing where many other things are clubbed together along with movie, such as restaurant, shopping, games, photography and the like. Earlier, there used to be a single screen with fixed time slots of shows running between 10.00 a.m. in the morning to 1.30 a.m. in the night. This format has changed dramatically due to the entry of multiplexes. The movies are scheduled at varied time slots with a minimum of two screens per multiplex.

The Indian consumer is viewing shopping in an all together different perspective like never before. Previously, shopping was viewed as a routine task to be gone through on a weekly or monthly basis. Consumers are now viewing it as a source of recreation. These days, shopping for the entire week or month is clubbed along with other forms of entertainment such as watching a movie, family outing and the like. The multistoried sprawling complexes that provide shopping, entertainment and food under one roof are becoming more and more popular. Most of the malls now house the cinema halls inside to attract more footfalls and the opposite is also equally true. The multiplex's design also offers leisure shopping, restaurants, eateries, etc., to attract more consumers. This automatically allows the customers to get the packaged deal of entertainment, shopping, leisure and fun.

II. NEW CHALLENGES FOR MULTIPLEX INDUSTRY

Thanks to the advent of multiplexes – that promised to offer much more than mere moving watching the way movies are experienced in theatres has changed in many terms. They did live up to the promise they made impacting one's cinematic experience, but at a price that is now slowly becoming debatable if it is worth the burden on the pockets? A hit movie is the one that sells most popcorn. As the act of movie-watching changes itself to become the movie experience and further as a 'multiplex experience' this appears to be working as a perfect metaphor for the new cinematic era. As a movie-going takes form of a 'community experience' there are many things that get packaged into 'combo offers' from movie ticket to lucky draw coupons to jumbo packs of popcorn (where the cost of the pack is, probably, equal the number of corns inside) and cola, and other attractive promotions etc. Malls and Multiplexes are temples of consumerism. It isn't by accident that cinema hall seats are designed with attachments to hold that cola glass or popcorn bag. Today everything is viewed with an accent on consumption, including cinema. The idea is to make the consumer choose to buy a movie ticket, and then hook him with the eatables and threats. And, it seems to be working tremendously for the money spinning mechanism. A movie theatre may be a good way to attract crowds to a mall, but it is also a hugely dangerous feature, if you have a movie theatre in a mall people come there and occupy your parking area for two or three hours at a time generating no revenue. In fact, they are creating no revenue for the mall beyond Rs. 250 for the movie tickets and Rs. 50 parking fee. Rs. 300 for three hours spent at the mall? A mall is not a building it is a product. Building a mall cannot begin after you've found some land and built a swank steel, concrete and glass structure. It must be well before that. By giving customers a unique experience, what the customers sees the first thing on entering.

There are certain threats from the alternative sources of entertainment which might impede the growth of filmed entertainment and the multiplex industry. The urban lifestyle is taking new directions, providing space for entertainment through a number of innovative formats. There are other new entertainment avenues such as DVD, satellite pay channels, other television-based segments and online cinema viewing. Cinema industry already faced with a slew of challenges both legal and illegal is now in for a potential new threat from an organized home video concept. Moser Baer, the New Delhi based leading optical media manufacturer is adding one portfolio after others towards expanding its business domain that is likely to impact the movie going habits of people. So an indirect put potential threat for the theatrical industry is in the offing.

Moser Baer, the leading optical media manufacturer, is making its intentions clear expanding the home video market. The company is leaving no opportunity go unattempted towards this goal aggressive pricing, acquisition and new exciting product launches, everything. Recently, it acquired as many as 800 leading Hindi

movie titles. The measure, one of the biggest in the industry, is said to give a whopping 50 per cent market share to the company. The company intends to buy bulk titles from production houses in the near future as against the current strategy of acquiring movies on one off basis. Giving further momentum to its acquisition drive, Moser Baer recently acquired Hindi and Gujarati titles from Ultra Video another big player in the home video market. The acquisition is said to have given the company licenses for over 2,500 Hindi titles and for over 400 Gujarati titles. "This acquisition enables us to offer some latest hit titles to customers at affordable prices by leveraging our proprietary technology" The company's offering of older movies at mere Rs. 34 per DVD and Rs. 28 per VCD, has swept the market attracting a sizeable number of buyers who would otherwise had been longing for the theatrical releases of those titles. The company's promises to make available the new titles too at the same pricing not only led to an unprecedented enthusiasm among movie lovers but also triggered a price war with the existing players like Ultra, Shemaroo Entertainment and T-Series.

III. CONCLUSION

"Cinema viewing is not only about the movies anymore," argue most multiplexers. "It is about convenient timing, choice of movies, comfortable and sophisticated movie watching, good food and quality services." Multiplexes have surely changed the way we watch movies. But have they changed the movies we watch? The consumer's cine-going experience is also set to burn a bigger hole in their wallets. Chances are that the consumer may have to sell out more money for the multiplex experience, the production costs are rising and hence the ticket rates prices will have to reflect this hike.