

7 DAYS IN SLOW MOTION

PRESS NOTES

AS OF 3.27.09

ABOUT THE FILM

7 Days in Slow Motion presents an **engaging** and **relevant** story about today's **middle-class kids in India**. In India, children's films either depict slice of life themes or fantastical/magical/fairy tale kinds of stories. And Indian stories that travel to the west are mostly festival fare that have historically dealt with niche subjects – poverty, class struggles, abuse, mysticism etc.

When director and screenwriter, Umakanth Thumrugoti, started to conceive of the idea for this film, he realized right away that this would be a very unique film both in India and worldwide.

Having worked at Disney for a decade and a half, Umakanth has been deeply ingrained in creating “wholesome” family entertainment. Umakanth continues: “And I knew that I wanted to leave behind and create movies for Indian families & children that didn't talk down to either the parents or the children.”

“In this film, I told a simple fictional tale that rings true in nearly every middle-class family in India – the kind of pressure parents put on their children to succeed academically – and in turn, their kids who squelch their own dreams to please their parents who sacrificed so much for them.” added Umakanth. He continued: “And the best way to tell this story was to create an entertaining context for it – mother dictates a pie-chart of her son's life which ordains 60% education and son tweaks it to get more “fun” time squeezed into the pie – and the comedy of errors that follow with the kids taking on different roles as their little project starts to go haywire!”

Umakanth added: “I know there is a place for films that are popcorn Bollywood or the typical festival fare dealing mostly with niche subjects. At the same time, there is also a need for stories that deal with subjects that are a bit more subtle. I believe, in life, one is more often faced with simpler moral choices than big life and death moral conflicts. It's not often about which limb of yours you want to sell first so you can feed your family for a few more days. It's more often about approving the coverage of a deserving patient even if it hurts your company's profit motives or invites your boss's wrath. To me, these are the heroes/heroines of the modern world - a loyal secretary, a greedy banker or an obedient eleven-year old kid who disrupt the stereotype with their conscience. They may not change the world at large but they may change the life of one person. ‘7 days in slow motion’ is about a kid's small rebellion against his mother to show truth as he sees with a ‘borrowed’ camera. It changes the lives of a few people forever. It's honest, believable and entertaining.”

FAMILY FILMS IN INDIA: A MYTH?

Family films are virtually non-existent in India where parents and kids satisfy their “movie” needs with popular “mass” films, most of them with the typical “boy-meets-girl” theme. A recent headline in a Mumbai newspaper read: Children's films are a neglected genre in India where popcorn romances are rolled out every week as a safe bet at the box office. And yet another story read: “The film fraternity has let children down,” exclaims Nafisa Ali, the Chairperson of the Children's Film Society of India. Further still, the concept of a “family film”, one that both parents and tween children can equally enjoy and watch together, is even rarer, and hasn't truly existed since Mr. India (1987) or Haathi Mere Saathi (1971). Case in point with this recent story: MUMBAI: “Children's films are for babies,” says a ten-year-old, adjusting her spectacles on her nose. “I don't see them because I'm too grown-up for them.”

Many of today's films in India tend to deal with more adult themes such as “how to woo your dream woman” (Partner), re-incarnation to seek your soul-mate (Om Shanti Om), boy meets girl on a road trip (Jab We Met), to psychological eerie horror (Bhool Bhulaiyya). Even the more family friendly Taare Zameen Par dealt with a fairly mature subject matter of a dyslexic child and a family's troubles surrounding it. See Appendix for India's Top Films of 2007 and 2008 vs. USA's Top 10.

Last year's Surf Excel Li'l Star Awards in India (the equivalent of Kids Choice Awards) were evidence to the kinds of films that kids in India were largely exposed to and appreciated – winners in the 3 most popular categories – Best Film – Jab We Met, a boy meets girl on a road trip tale, Best Actress – Kareena Kapoor for Jab We Met and Shah Rukh Khan for Om Shanti Om. And this despite the fact that “Taare Zameen Par”, the highly touted family film, and “Bhootnath”, the lone token “children's” film nominee, were nominated in several categories.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

The defining aspect of every middle-class family in India – the desire for their child to succeed academically, i.e., exams. This common 4-letter word in India forms the cornerstone of a parent's involvement in their child's lives – exam, i.e., the omnipresent academic tests, that appear periodically through the year and culminate before the summer in the fearful “final” exam.

Supporting this truth are the myriad stories that mark the newspapers in March all over India.

Students Are Finding It Difficult To Handle Exam Pressure - Some students have discovered other mechanisms to deal with the pressure, like running away from home or simply refusing to appear for exams.

Experts blame pushy parents for aggravating the stress caused by an already faulty system of education. “Parents are highly ambitions and want their kids to excel in every field,”

*Exam stress takes toll of young minds – Total of 5,857 student suicides or 16 Suicides A Day In India.
Exam time ushers in suicide season in India. Tutors are called in, and parents take time off to coach their children through exams*

Daughter refuses to study, mother sets herself ablaze.

HAVEN'T YOU noticed the strained expression on parents' faces of late? It's not just the heat and power cut that are taking their toll during summer. Our schools ensure that both parents as well as children are in a pressure cooker, more so during annual exams. In an increasingly competitive milieu, there is this constant anxiety to excel, resulting in frayed nerves and lost tempers.

See Appendix for a sampling of some of the above stories.

OUR FILM

Set against this backdrop is the story of one of such family, the Suri's and their son, Ravi, who must always get the "first rank" in his exams. The film chooses ***not*** to weave a morbid tale of exam pressure and stress and instead tells an engaging and comical tale of a child who dares to defy his mother's academic desires for him by aspiring to make a Bollywood film and learning important life lessons along the way. Deftly balancing humor with insight in nearly every scene, the film cleverly glances upon several other societal issues in India – women's child marriage, multiple generations under one roof, class-structure stigmas, fascination with foreigners etc.

OUR FILM – VIEWER COMMENTS

A sampling of comments over the few private screenings.

"Less exploitative than Slumdog" – Caucasian female, 40

"Charming, funny, engaging – I loved it" - Asian male, 30

"Real and honest - I laughed, I cried, I thunk" - Caucasian male, 50

"The last scene brought tears of joy" - Caucasian male, 50

"Wow, this was so real and yet so much fun" – Indian-American female, 28

"Finally, an Indian movie I can watch with my kids without feeling uncomfortable" – Indian male, 38

"I identified with the characters – this is what we live" – Indian male child, 11

"The kids were so cute – didn't feel acted or contrived" – Indian female, 35

"Funny, I laughed all through" – Indian female, 17

SYNOPSIS

Ravi lives his life by the pie-chart his mother defines for him – 60% education and only 2.9% for fun! When Ravi and his friends, Hamid and Onka, chance upon the camera of a visiting American tourist, Mr. Turek, they see their dreams come true where they can make a Bollywood film and meet the famous actor, Ms. Ray.

The path to making a film is riddled with problems: they only have 7 days to make the film and their final exams begin in 7 days; they must find a heroine, but alas, no girl will talk to them and they must turn to Hamid's cloistered cousin, Saleha; Hamid, Ravi's best friend and the self-anointed producer of the film dictates that without a song, there will be no film; Ravi's mother must not find out about their little project because she is intent on her son getting the "first rank"; and Mr. Turek must be watched lest he goes to the police about his missing camera!

The 7 days mark a comical journey where Ravi sets out to make a Bollywood film with his schoolmates, writes a ransom note, casts a heroine in his film, uses creative ways to keep his friends, Hamid and Onka involved in his project during the ever-stressful exam season and keeps his mother thinking that all his hard work was towards his final exams!

In his movie-making mission, Ravi accidentally captures some darker moments of his friends' and families' lives which gets revealed in a party where everyone suddenly sees on the screen who they are and what they represent. They all turn on Ravi for revealing their true selves but this truth results in life changes for one and all.

Set in a middle-class India, where the pressure of examinations is the most defining aspect of a parent and child's life during school years, this movie deftly balances humor with life lessons to tell an important story.

Directed, written and produced by Umakanth Thumrugoti, a 15 year Disney Feature Animation veteran, the film is co-produced by Digiquest Studios. Director of photography is Derth Adams (Project Runway, Top Chef). The film features 7 original compositions. Music composer is Anu Malik (*Monsoon Wedding*, National Award Winner for *Refugee*) and songs are rendered by Kunal Ganjawala, Sunidhi Chauhan, Kailash Kher etc.

ABOUT THE CAST

Teja

(Ravi)

Teja is well known child actor in Tollywood, the Telugu film industry. Having starred in over 30 films, this is Teja's first lead role. Teja had to undo the working norms of the Telugu film world to prep for his role in this film by undergoing disciplined training, diligent dialog work and thorough cast interactivity.

Teja goes to Hyderabad Public School and aspires to become an actor when he grows up.

Kunal Sharma

(Hamid)

In his debut role in "7 days in slow motion", Kunal plays vivacious Hamid, whose bossy mother, Abida, dotes on him, but treats his girl cousin, Saleha, as a servant.

Kunal was the instant choice to play Hamid when he wowed the director with his knowledge of films at that young an age. He had never before been involved in acting or behind the scenes of a film and not even his school plays. Kunal underwent rigorous training with this co-actors, Teja and Shiva to create the on-screen reality in this film.

Kunal is a top student in his class and excels in academics. His fascination with the Autobahn has him aspiring to become an Automobile Engineer in Germany when he grows up.

Shiva Varma

(Onka)

Shiva is also a child actor in Tollywood and has acted in nearly 20 films thus far. A natural actor, Shiva was the instant choice to play Onka. Shiva brings a natural charm and ease to the characters he plays. With incredible on-screen presence, he manages an instant connection with the audience. Hailing from a very modest family with little means, Shiva is an important earning member of his family.

Shiva aspires to be an actor when he grows up.

Rajeshwari Sachdev-Badola

(Mrs. Suri, Ravi's mother)

Rajeshwari Sachdev started her career on stage doing plays with The Indian People's Theatre Association at Prithvi. She went on to doing films winning the Maharashtra State Government Award for Best Actress in her debut film "Aaytya Gharat Gharoba" directed by Sachin. Her role in Shyam Benegal's "Sardari Begum" got her the National Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role. She blazed the television screen in Margarita & bagged the Screen Videocon Award for Best Actress. She has also starred in the Hollywood epic "Little Buddha" opposite Keanu Reeves, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci. More recently, she was seen in Shyam Benegal's Welcome to Sajjanpur and Nagesh Kukunoor's Bombay to Bangkok. A versatile performer, Rajeshwari has over 13 years of training in Bharat Natyam and has launched three successful pop CDs; "Hulle Hullare", "Mukhda Piya Ka" and "Ummang".

Rajeshwari has recently seen much success on TV - compering shows such as Zee's Antakshari, Sony's K for Kishore, as a celebrity performer on Nach Baliye and more recently on Jalwa Four 2 Ka 1.

She is a natural performer and exudes incredible intensity on screen.

Ayesha Jaleel **(Abida Rahman, Hamid's mother)**

Ayesha Jaleel is a veteran character actor in Tollywood with over 26 years of experience on stage, radio, TV and film. She is a recognized face in Tollywood and has gained popularity with some famous TV series. Hailing from a Muslim family, Ayesha's choice to become an actress was met with serious resistance in her family and to-date, it is not completely accepted.

She is an incredibly talented performer who dedicates herself completely to the roles she plays. Ayesha was one of the most diligent performers on the set who kept her co-cast and crew on their toes with her detailed preparation and immense passion.

Vivek Mushran **(Mr. Suri, Ravi's father)**

Vivek Mushran came to limelight as an actor in the 1991 film Saudagar directed by Subhash Ghai, where he was paired opposite Manisha Koirala. He blazed the Hindi cinema screen in the early 90s with several films like Prem Deewane, Ram Jaane, Jaan etc. In Subhash Ghai's, Kisna: The Warrior Poet in 2005, fans adored Vivek's performance. Since then, Mushran was seen on the small screen in serials like Son Pari (Star Plus), Kitty Party, Ankahee (Zee) amongst others. He has also cut a music album called Kahin Kho Gaya. Actor Vivek Mushran is all set to don the director's hat soon.

ABOUT THE CREW

Umakanth Thumrugoti

(Director)

A 15 year veteran of Disney Feature Animation, Umakanth visualizes his stories in art palettes and story panels. He began his career at Disney training on Lion King and proceeding to earn credits as a CG artist on Pocahontas, Fantasia 2000, Treasure Planet, Chicken Little etc. In his 15 year stint at Disney, he worked in development as well as production in varying roles including Software Developer, Technical Director, Digital Effects Supervisor, Sequence Lead and Lighting Supervisor.

He also spent four years in Visual Development (Kingdom of the Sun, Wildlife, Chairy, Joe Jump etc.) at Disney, designing layouts, character looks etc. Most recently, he was Co-Art-Director on a project in development for Disney Feature Animation.

He took a one year sabbatical to shoot his first live-action feature film in India. After screen testing over 300 kids in Hyderabad, he chose his 3 main leads and rehearsed with them extensively.

Derth Adams

(Cinematographer)

Derth is a talented cinematographer based in Los Angeles and is considered one of the most knowledgeable about high-def cameras. He has worked extensively with this new technology on landmark TV shows such as Top Chef and Project Runway.

His outstanding contribution to the medium was recently recognized when he was nominated for “Outstanding camera work in a reality series” – in the 2008 primetime Emmy for his work on Project Runway’s episode “En Garde”.

In India, Derth overcame language and cultural hurdles to create a workflow to ensure a film look. He also worked very closely with the director to brainstorm about the day’s camera setups and layouts.

Anu Malik

(Music Composer)

Anu Malik is one of the most versatile and talented music composers in the Indian film industry today. Perhaps the only Indian composer to have as many international credits such as Monsoon Wedding, Moulin Rouge and Bride and Prejudice, he ably blends his traditional eastern leanings with western rhythms to create highly popular tunes.

He was recognized with the National Award for his melodious harmonies in the film Refugee in 2000. He has also won numerous Filmfare, Screen Weekly and Zee Cine Awards over the years. In 2004, Screen Weekly awarded him the “Artist of the Decade”, an accolade well deserved for his numerous contributions to the Hindi film industry.

Anu Malik is known to have a unique ear for talent and has been instrumental in bringing the talent of Sonu Nigam and Kunal Ganjawala, two of today’s hottest singers, to limelight. He is currently the popular judge of Indian Idol on Sony TV.

Various (Singers)

Kailash Kher – one of the most popular singers in India today, he has an incredibly rabid and loyal fan followings all over the world. He has a very unique folksy voice that lends him very easily to Sufi compositions. Kailash is the co-judge of the popular Indian Idol on TV.

Kunal Ganjawala – a very popular playback singer today, Kunal has established a name for himself in the Hindi as well as Kannada and Telugu film industries. He is the judge one of Amul Voice of India, a talent show on TV for new singers.

Sunidhi Chauhan – credited with having one of the most unique female voices in the Hindi film industry, she is most popular for rendering “item numbers”. She is considered the “most heard” voice on Indian radio today and has numerous awards to her credit.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Common refrains heard before and during the production included - “Oh, 10-11 year olds as protagonists? Can’t you make them teenagers?” or “Kids can’t act – you will never get the production done on time” or “This feels like a mainstream movie with kids – who would want to see that?”

But we were on a mission – to make a “fun” family film in India, for India, about today’s Indian kids.

Knowing our very limited time and budget, we knew we had to get a very methodical and structured workflow in place and set up priorities for each shoot period (3 hours), day and week.

Setting the structure in place was easier given Umakanth’s animation background- he storyboarded the entire film and painstakingly drew out every single camera move and layout. But the tougher task was introducing a new working norm to our local cast and crew - undo the way they normally do things and introduce:

- (1) concept of scripts - practically non-existent – actors extemporize on the set and pages of dialog are written on the day of the shoot;
- (2) structured shooting schedule – much of the shooting in India is drawn out over several months and non-linear shooting is rare
- (3) 25 – 30 camera setups per day – local norm is 6-8

And then the problems came tumbling down – the original boy cast for the lead’s voice broke as he entered puberty a month before the shoot and the girl we had shortlisted to play Saleha fell through a week before the shoot - her family wouldn’t let her act in films – she was from a ‘good’ Muslim family – what was she thinking? Our camera rental company had double booked the zoom lens, not once, not twice but three times during our shoot – so, we had to have a production assistant shuttle back and forth between the 2 productions running the lens! The generator for the lighting equipment broke down twice few hours before the end of day and end of location shoot and we still had 12 setups remaining for the day – and extending for the next day would not only mean paying more for the location, overtime for the crew, but keeping the acting talent (from Mumbai) in town over the weekend – canceled airplane tickets, hotels etc.!

Despite this, the last day of principal photography, 8 weeks after actual shooting began and 35 shooting days later, was emotional and rewarding – the crew had really bonded – a new relationship had blossomed between the costume designer and the camera grip, a few birthdays were celebrated and the crew had adopted a little orphan boy they found on one of their locations!

APPENDIX

INDIA TOP 10 - 2007

| Rank | Movies | Business | Rating | Genre | Cast |
|------|------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|--|
| 1 | Om Shanti Om | Rs. 132,75,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Romance | Shahrukh Khan, Deepika Padukone |
| 2 | Welcome | Rs. 118,55,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Romance | Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif |
| 3 | Chak De India | Rs. 91,97,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Sports | Shahrukh Khan, Sagarika Ghatge |
| 4 | Partner | Rs. 96,40,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Romance | Salman Khan, Katrina Kaif, Govinda, Lara Dutta |
| 5 | Taare Zameen Par | Rs. 85,57,00,000 | U (PG / G) | Family | Aamir Khan, Darsheel Safary, Tanay Cheda |
| 6 | Bhool Bhulaiyaa | Rs. 83,66,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Thriller | Akshay Kumar, Amisha Patel, Vidya Balan |
| 7 | Heyy Babyy | Rs. 79,46,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Romance | Akshay Kumar, Vidya Balan |
| 8 | Guru | Rs. 63,90,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Bio-Drama | Abhishek Bachchan, Aishwariya Rai |
| 9 | Ta Ra Rum Pum | Rs. 57,00,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Drama | Saif Ali Khan, Rani Mukherjee |
| 10 | Namastey London | Rs. 56,73,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Romance | Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif |

INDIA TOP 10 - 2008

| Rank | Movies | Business | Rating | Genre | Cast |
|------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Ghajini | Rs. 136,00,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Action/Intense | Aamir Khan, Asin |
| 2 | Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi | Rs. 76,00,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Romance | Shahrukh Khan |
| 3 | Singh is Kinng | Rs. 75,00,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Romance | Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif |
| 4 | Race | Rs. 59,00,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Action/Romance | Saif Ali Khan, Anil Kapoor |
| 5 | Jodha Akbar | Rs. 54,00,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Historical | Hrithik Roshan, Aishwarya Rai |
| 6 | Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na | Rs. 54,00,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Romance | Imran Khan (Aamir Khan production) |
| 7 | Golmaal Returns | Rs. 51,00,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Romance/Comedy | Kareena Kapoor, Ajay Devgan |
| 8 | Dostana | Rs. 43,00,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Bio-Drama | Abhishek Bachchan, Priyanka Chopra |
| 9 | Bachna Ae Haseeno | Rs. 31,00,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Romance | Ranbir Kapoor |
| 10 | Kidnap | Rs. 19,00,00,000 | UA (PG-13) | Action | Sanjuy Dutt |

U.S.A. TOP 10 - 2007

| Rank | Movie | Release Dt | Distributor | Genre | MPAA | 2007 Gross |
|------|-------------------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------|-------|---------------|
| 1 | Spider-Man 3 | 5/4/2007 | Sony Pictures | Adventure | PG-13 | \$336,530,303 |
| 2 | Shrek the Third | 5/18/2007 | Paramount Pictures | Family | PG | \$321,012,359 |
| 3 | The Transformers | 7/3/2007 | Paramount Pictures | Action | PG-13 | \$319,071,806 |
| 4 | Pirates : At World's End | 5/25/2007 | Buena Vista | Adventure | PG-13 | \$309,420,425 |
| 5 | Harry Potter Order of Phoenix | 7/11/2007 | Warner Bros. | Family | PG-13 | \$292,004,738 |
| 6 | The Bourne Ultimatum | 8/3/2007 | Universal | Action | PG-13 | \$227,471,070 |
| 7 | 300 | 3/9/2007 | Warner Bros. | Action | R | \$210,592,590 |
| 8 | Ratatouille | 6/29/2007 | Buena Vista | Family | G | \$206,445,654 |
| 9 | I am Legend | 12/14/2007 | Warner Bros. | Horror | PG-13 | \$206,129,574 |
| 10 | The Simpsons Movie | 7/27/2007 | 20th Century Fox | Comedy | PG-13 | \$183,135,014 |

U.S.A. TOP 10 - 2008

| Rank | Movie | Release | Distributor | Genre | MPAA | 2008 Gross |
|------|-------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|-----------|-------|---------------|
| 1 | The Dark Knight | 7/18/2008 | Warner Bros. | Action | PG-13 | \$531,001,578 |
| 2 | Iron Man | 5/2/2008 | Paramount Pictures | Action | PG-13 | \$318,412,101 |
| 3 | Indiana Jones Kingdom Crystal Skull | 5/22/2008 | Paramount Pictures | Adventure | PG-13 | \$317,101,119 |
| 4 | Hancock | 7/2/2008 | Sony Pictures | Action | PG-13 | \$227,946,274 |
| 5 | WALL-E | 6/27/2008 | Buena Vista | Family | G | \$223,806,889 |
| 6 | Kung Fu Panda | 6/6/2008 | Paramount Pictures | Family | PG | \$215,434,591 |
| 7 | Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa | 11/7/2008 | Paramount Pictures | Family | PG | \$177,016,810 |
| 8 | Twilight | 11/21/2008 | Summit Entertainment | Drama | PG-13 | \$176,922,850 |
| 9 | Quantum of Solace | 11/14/2008 | Sony Pictures | Action | PG-13 | \$166,820,413 |

10 Horton Hears a Who

3/14/2008

20th Century Fox

Family

G

\$154,529,439

APPENDIX (Contd.)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Mumbai

Home Cities India World Business Cricket Sports Health & Science Infotech Ent
Mumbai Delhi Bangalore Hyderabad Chennai Ahmedabad Kolkata Pune Go
Rajkot Surat Vadodara Mysore Ludhiana Mangalore Hubli Allahabad Kanpur

SSC student suicide: A wake-up call for parents, teachers

17 Mar 2009, 0214 hrs IST, Anahita Mukherji & Madhavi Rajadhyaksha, TNN

MUMBAI: An eroding value system, schools that concentrate solely on the textbook and pay little heed to life skills as well as crippling parental pressure to perform have

come together to form a heavy cocktail that has pushed students over the edge, say mental health professionals and educationists, who feel the drastic step by the SSC student should serve as a wake-up call. Such suicides have sadly become characteristic of the exam season.

"It is important that copying be viewed as an inappropriate behaviour which needs correction," says social psychiatrist Harish Shetty, pointing out that cheating is dealt with punitive action by the administration. "A counselling protocol is the need of the hour after such incidents so that the student is counselled immediately and is safely handed over to his parents," he says.

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SSC girl who ended life had not cheated

18 Mar 2009, 0342 hrs IST, Anahita Mukherji, TNN

MUMBAI: Bhavi Desai, the Class X student who committed suicide on Monday afternoon after being charged with cheating, may not have been liable for punishment after all, as the chits were found on her person before the examination started.

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A probe into the incident by north Mumbai's education inspector has concluded that Bhavi was found with the chit while seated inside the exam hall at 10.45 am, 15 minutes before the SSC paper actually started. In other words, the question paper had not been handed over to students at the time, the inquiry report concluded.

"Since the chit was found with the girl before 11 am, and she had not been given the question paper, such an incident is not punishable by the SSC board," said Basanti Roy, secretary of the Mumbai division of the education board. Roy added that had the chit been found after 11 am, when the paper began, it would have been a punishable offence.

A student of Pune Vidyabhavan, Ghatkopar, Bhavi was allotted her own school as the SSC exam centre. As the supervisor for Monday's paper walked past Bhavi's table at 10.45 am, a chit that Bhavi was holding in her hand dropped onto the floor, says the report. The supervisor saw it and confiscated the chit. Bhavi, though, was allowed to appear for the paper.

Daughter refuses to study, mother sets herself ablaze

Vijay V Singh | TNN

Mumbai: A 32-year-old woman immolated herself at her Versova residence after her nine-year-old daughter refused to study. The incident took place on Monday and the victim was admitted to a hospital where she died on Tuesday morning. Minakshi was staying with her husband Vishwanath Gujralikar, a son aged



four and a daughter aged nine, at D'Souza Wadi in Versova. The girl is studying in Std IV in an English medium school at Andheri (W). The deceased was a housewife and her husband is a peon with the State Bank of India. Her husband and two children were present

in the house when the incident took place. Vishwanath also sustained burn injuries while trying to rescue his wife and is currently recuperating in a private hospital.

In her final statement, Minakshi said she was depressed for the past few days as her daughter's exams were on but the latter was not inclined to study, despite Minakshi's repeated attempts.

On Monday, the family had dinner around 9.30 pm and after some casual discussions, Vishwanath and their son went to sleep. Minakshi stayed up, asking her daughter to concentrate more on studies as her exams were on, but she refused to listen to her mother.

Later when her daughter went to sleep, Minakshi poured kerosene, set herself ablaze and ran out of the house. When Vishwanath heard the noise, he rushed out to rescue Minakshi and with the help of some neighbours, managed to douse the flames. But by then, Minakshi had sustained 80% burns and was admitted to Cooper Hospital where she died the next day. Vishwanath sustained burn injuries on his hands.

Minakshi's relatives claimed her body at Cooper Hospital on Tuesday.

Senior police inspector Suresh Nalavade of Versova police station said, "She stated that she was depressed because of her daughter's study habits. We have not received any complaint of foul play and are conducting an inquiry."

pro

Bharati Dub

A day after the rumour of Big Cinemas demanding a 50% share, failing which it would not release films onwards, multi-plexes held a press conference in Andheri on Monday to argue the case. They were demanding a 50% share of the box office and fixed revenue-share model that distributors demanded. Owners want to work on a performance-linked revenue system.

Tushar Dhillon, chairman of Big Cinemas, said, "We do agree to the 50% share as demand by exhibitors." Own the film industry, into account the multiplexes have rake in 2004-05, multi-plexes contributed about 45% of the box office, the figure rose to 70% in 2008, the fact that they are often empty theatres. Shringar Films ready to pay distribution provided they get a tent. Big stars make a film; give it a super-hit."

Over a share Shroff argued that it is not fair to pay more, on the contrary, the film did well. "The collection of the film is a success. Fanaa's release."

TRAIN DERAILS AT KARJAT, LOCALS CANCELLED

Pics: Santosh Srinivas