

Animation feature films set for global makeover

Transition from mythological subjects to larger-than-life superheroes

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CHENNAI: For over five years, the animation feature film market has been ruled by the chubby Ganesha, rose-tinted Krishna or lanky Hanuman who with their super-natural reflexes battle the demons and with their jigs impresses their friends.

Ever since the Indian animation companies began to roll out animated feature films, mythology and epic have been their favourite picks.

The primary reason, among many others, is that the success of the first few films on mythology has made it a safe platform to tread on. With changing global trends, Indian animation motion pictures are ready for a makeover.

Taking cue from Hollywood's animation movies on superheroes, Indian production companies are now growing out of mythological subjects to make films on larger-than-life superheroes of Indian cinema.

The most-talked-about *Sultan The Warrior*, produced by Soundarya Rajinikanth's Ocher Studios, has raised expectations among Rajinikanth fans, as it promises never-seen-before stunts of their hero in an animated version.

Mayabimbham, which has won accolades for its comical animated feature film *Inime Naangathan*, is making *Puratchi Thalaivan*, with M.G.R. and Saroja Devi pair-



A still from the animation film Puratchi Thalaivan.

ing up in the animated film.

"Our first movie had characters drawn out of sharp wit. This will also be one such entertaining film," says its managing director Venky Babu.

Though there is a surge in the number of animation films made in the country, Mr. Babu, says the films do not gain the recognition they deserve.

"A lot of work goes into making of such films, where every movement and emotion must be created by computer graphic technicians, unlike usual films where the actors do the part."

In line with the trend is Animation Dimensions that will produce a feature film

with Mohanlal in the lead.

With the popularity on the rise, the Indian animation companies are going global.

When the film *Alpha and Omega* sees its worldwide release next year, Crest Animation Studios may become one of the first Indian production companies to make a Hollywood animation movie.

The film is scheduled for release in October next year in 3,000 theatres. The studio, which has co-produced this movie along with Lions Gate, is hoping that this would open new windows for Indian production companies to venture into the animation genre in Hollywood.

"Animation films in India do not have a good market at present. They mainly rely on mythological characters, a niche market limiting the films largely to an Indian audience. In Hollywood, over 60 animated films have been made in 10 years and more are on the anvil" said the Vijay Paranjpe, Chief Financial Officer of Crest Animation Studios.

The revenue out of animation feature films, DVD licensing and TV licensing for movies is huge, which makes Hollywood the best destination for any animation film. For instance, US filmmaker gets, on an average, \$ 300 million for an animated movie, as they are instant hit among the audience, he says.

