



« Indian mythology will find a market in the West as well »»

SHARAD SHARAN

Tarantella Pictures Pvt. Ltd

CP Viswanath, director, Karadi Tales Company, believes the demand for mythological stories has grown almost 50 per cent. "While India always had a market for mythology, visibility in that genre is five to 10 times more now. As people move further away from their roots, they feel the need to get closer to them, a sentiment that was earlier unique to NRIs. Now, with urban Indians increasingly moving away from their traditions, they feel the need to return to those roots and mythological content fulfills that need."

Mythology movies

Matching the growing demand for such books, music and audio-visual content is the spurt in animated mythological films. Shethia Audio Visual's 3D animated film *Krishna: Aayo Natkhat Nandlal* is due to release on September 29. Malaysian NRI Sharad Sharan's Tarantella Pictures is working on a film on elephant god Ganesha, and animation studio Eyecircus is planning an all-India release for its animated film *Life with Jesus* by Christmas.

While critics say Indian animation will find it hard to compete with the better-produced and packaged offerings of the West, believers like Sharan are optimistic: "*Hanuman* was a trend-setter and it paved the way for more animated films. Indian mythology lends itself well to animation and I'm sure it'll find a market in the West as well".

Keeping the myth alive

New players:

Bamboo Notes, Shethia Audio Video, Toonz Animation and Viva Media, who are presenting stories on Krishna (picture above), Vikram-Betaal, Chhatrapati Shivaji, Akbar-Birbal



Upcoming animated films: Shethia Audio Visual's *Krishna: Aayo Natkhat Nandlal*, Tarantella Pictures' *Ganesha* film, Eyecircus's *Life with Jesus*, Percept's *Hanuman* sequel

Ganesha. Book and music stores across the city have shelves packed with audio-visual and interactive learning CDs based on mythology. And the game might get bigger with Walt Disney reportedly eyeing the market.

Samant's labour of love, *Hanuman* languished for seven years for lack of production and distribution backing, till Sahara and Percept Pictures stepped in. Percept is now planning a sequel.

Increased interest

Hanuman's success has renewed interest in mythology as a genre among audiences as well as marketers. "Mythology books, music and films are a big category now and *Hanuman* appears to have triggered it. And besides kids, parents too are getting interested in it. Suddenly there are lots of small indigenous companies producing mythological software," says Ameesha Prabhu, head, buying and merchandising, at Crossword Bookstore.

The players

Bamboo Notes, Shethia Audio Video, Toonz Animation India and Viva Media are some of those new players behind stories of Krishna, Vikram-Betaal, Chhatrapati Shivaji, Akbar-Birbal and

Rs 7 crore

Hanuman's all-India collection, including Rs 3.5 crore in Mumbai alone in its first three weeks of release, is a record for an animated film in India