



Press Release

RED BEE MEDIA AUDIO DESCRIBES FIRST BOLLYWOOD DVD IN HINDI

23/04/10

Veer has become the first Bollywood film to be audio described (AD) for DVD in a joint initiative by Red Bee Media, the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and Eros International.

The audio description track, an optional function on the DVD, narrates the story between passages of dialogue to describe action sequences, body language, costume and scenery and allows blind or partially sighted viewers to understand what is happening on screen.

Red Bee Media created the audio description track using its editorial and technical expertise for Eros International in conjunction with RNIB, who provided the voice-over. The initiative followed research among blind or partially sighted people of Asian origin in the UK and India that found that over 70 per cent of respondents were more likely to watch Bollywood films if audio description was provided (RNIB 'Bollywood for All' report, 2009). David Padmore, Director of Access and Editorial at Red Bee Media said: "For ten years we have provided audio description for the two million people living in the UK who are blind or partially sighted. This project further extends our experience of working to enhance the levels of accessibility to films and TV programmes and we are proud to have worked in partnership with the RNIB to deliver it to market." Pranab Kapadia, Head of International distribution at Eros International said: "We are extremely excited to join forces with RNIB and Red Bee Media to present the first film on DVD, Veer, to carry audio description for blind or partially sighted fans of Indian cinema. We strongly believe in our social responsibility and this is our humble attempt in initiating a step that we believe will benefit consumers largely."

Stephen King, RNIB Director of International Affairs said: "RNIB has worked with the Bollywood industry to bring the benefits of audio description to new audiences. The decision by Eros to include audio description on its DVD release is momentous, transforming the experience of blind and partially sighted Bollywood fans watching films at home, not just in the UK but internationally. Our research tells us that fans want AD on Bollywood films and RNIB hopes that other distributors will follow the lead of Eros." Veer, a love story set in India during British rule, from Eros international is directed by Anil Sharma and produced by Vijay Galani movies. The film stars Salman Khan, Zarine Khan, Sohail Khan and Liza Lazarus. The DVD will be available worldwide from April 24, 2010.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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ABOUT RNIB

RNIB is a UK-based charity offering practical support, advice and information for anyone with sight difficulties. Every day another 100 people in the UK will start to lose their sight. There are almost 2 million people in the UK with sight problems. If you, or someone you know, has a sight problem RNIB can help. Call the RNIB Helpline on 0303 123 9999 or visit www.rnib.org.uk

RNIB Research on Audio Description for Bollywood Films

In 2009 RNIB funded research to determine the demand for AD on Bollywood films from blind and partially sighted people of Asian origin in the UK and India. A copy of the research report is available on request from RNIB Media Relations team. Some of the findings are as follows:

- * 19 per cent of the 260 respondents in the quantitative study said they watched a Bollywood film on television everyday, with 6 per cent stating that they watched them on DVD about once a day.
- * Viewing of Bollywood films at the cinema was much lower, with 66 per cent stating they never watched Bollywood films at the cinema.
- * 40 per cent believed that their current sight level was a major factor that prevented them from going to the cinema to watch Bollywood films, as it affected their understanding of the film.
- * Over half of the respondents stated that they were more likely to watch Bollywood films if AD was provided (56 per cent in the quantitative study and 92 per cent in the qualitative study).
- * The majority of respondents preferred AD in Hindi compared with description in English.

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(An RNIB spokesperson is available for interviews in English or Hindi)