





## Indian films don't get the price they deserve in global markets - Rtn Shyam Kurup, Director, IDN

(Rtn Shyam Kurup has become a globe trotter owing to his professional commitments as the Director of India's only overseas distribution and sales company. He attends all the International Film Festivals across the Globe. He has been networking with majors in the international film industry for promoting Indian films, especially the regional ones. Shyam is doing a lot of market research to understand the preferences of film goers of different countries. The following is the reproduction of the interview given by Shyam to Indian Express daily- Editor)

Shyam Kurup, who heads IDN, a global film distribution and sales company, talks about taking Indian films to non-traditional international territories, the opportunities and challenges involved in it. The last decade or so has witnessed a remarkable leap for South Indian films, both in terms of the diverse range of stories and their phenomenal performance at the box office. The tables have turned to the extent that it has changed the general perception among foreigners that Indian cinema is only Bollywood. South Indian films, especially those from Malayalam, are now making a mark in uncharted global territories, reaching audiences beyond the Indian diaspora. Indywood Distribution Network (IDN), a distribution and sales company, has been at the forefront of this movement, by identifying emerging markets and introducing Indian regional language films to a new section of the international audience. IDN is an integral part of the Indywood Entertainment Consortium, launched by Aries group Chairman and filmmaker Sohan Roy. In the last couple of years, IDN has facilitated the international release of biggies like Jr NTR's Devara (Portugal), Sivakarthikeyan's Ayalaan (Cambodia), Prithviraj Sukumaran's Aadujeevitham (Mauritius), with more ambitious plans in place. We talk to Shyam Kurup, the Director of IDN, to learn more about the intricacies of global film distribution, the company's objectives, and the potential reach of Indian films in international markets.



(At RedSea International Film Festival, Jeddah)



(With Allu Arjun and distribution partner Japan during Pushpa2-Berlin promotion)

### Q1: What inspired the thought of a global sales and distribution network?

**Ans:** Every year, major international film summits are held in Cannes, Berlin, Los Angeles, and Hong Kong. We have noticed countries like South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan aggressively promoting their films at the summit. Their ministers, cultural ambassadors, and high commission officials will be present to promote their films. These films can't recover their investment by releasing in their native countries alone, so they have to promote across borders. It left me wondering why we aren't promoting our films on a similar scale. There will be hardly any Indian representation except for a couple of big Indian corporations who are there to sell their own films. There's no helping hand for independent producers and regional films. I thought IDN should be the bridge between regional films and the global market. Similarly, each country has sales agents who help sell their films in foreign territories. Korea and Japan have around ten each. Even smaller countries like Taiwan and Hong Kong have five or more, but India doesn't have one. I realised that Indian films are not reaching many countries because of the lack of credible sales agencies. That motivated me and currently, we're the only cross-border sales company for Indian films.

### Q2: Do you pick films for distribution and the regions where they should be promoted?

**Ans:** It's entirely based on experience. Back in 2010, we made Dam 999, which was made on a massive budget. We realised we wouldn't be able to recover the investment by releasing it in India alone, so we took it to global markets. That exposure was a major learning experience. Over the years, I've interacted with representatives from various countries to understand the demands of each market. In most of these regions, they assume Indian cinema is just Bollywood and are hesitant to take up such films because of the usual love-song-dance routine. So, I mostly pick content that suits a particular market. For example, in China, there's massive acceptance for films that portray women as superheroes, like Dangal, Secret Superstar, Mom, the Tamil film Kanaa, and even films like Padman and Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, that talk about social issues concerning women. Maharaja's stellar success is the only recent anomaly. Similarly in Latin America, disaster-based works work well because floods and dam disasters are common there. That's why we're planning to release the Malayalam film 2018 there in over 400 screens. It will be the first-ever Indian film to be released theatrically there. In Russia, there's a market for any film with dogs or pets. Like say, 777 Charlie and Valatty. In Japan, you need big epics like Baahubali and RRR. Countries like France prefer arthouse films and Taiwan prefers action. It's upon us to ensure we launch with the right film. If the first film fails, it will be hard to regain their trust. Ayalaan was the first South Indian film to be released in Cambodia. It was well received and now I'll have to find other similar alien films. It needs extensive research to identify the market demands.

### Q3: Some of these films, like 2018 and Valatty, were released three years ago and are now available on streaming platforms. Will that affect their global run?



(@Land of Casinos Calling ! Las Vegas)

**Ans:** It's a traditional market where Indian films are in demand like the UK, US, and Australia, then delayed releases can have a huge impact. That's why we see most big films getting simultaneously released there. In non-traditional markets, we can afford to release it after a couple of years, but not too late. Even if a film like 2018 comes on Sony LIV, not many from Latin America would be watching it. We are planning to release Vikram and Malaikottai Vaaliban in Japan this year. Vikram would be the first Tamil film to have a customised release for the Japanese audience and it will be out in May. The Japanese team will be visiting the shooting locations in Tamil Nadu to capture the visuals and document them. They're planning to go all out to promote it like any other film, not as an Indian film. They have similar plans for the Malayalam film Malaikottai Vaaliban, which will be introduced there as 'The Mountain Hero', and released by the end of the year.

(to be continued.....)

## Minutes of the regular meeting held on 19th February 2025.

In the absence of President Kurian, who is mourning the sudden death of his son-in-law, the meeting was chaired and called to order by the Vice-president Rtn. T. S. Ajith at 7.30 pm. The Secretary Sujith TS was also absent as he was out of town and in his place Rtn Sethu Ravi acted as Secretary. Rtn. George Thomas invoked the blessings of God Almighty. One minute silence was observed to pay respects to the departed soul of Rev. Fr. Nijo, Son-in-law of Rtn John Kurian. Rtn Ajith in his opening remarks informed that the date for organising the family meeting and vocational service award distribution will be finalised once the President is back to office. He invited the members to pay homage to the deceased son-in-law of President. Followed to this, Rtn. Adv. Murugan briefed about details of the members who attended the funeral function held at Kunnankulam, Thrissur and paid tributes to the departed soul. Rtn. Varghese kurissingal, Rtn. George Thomas and AG. Rtn. CA. Antony M . Malayil also shared their experience with president and how they consoled him.. AG also requested the members to participate in a cleaning program at the Alappuzha Beach on Paul Harris day which falls on 23rd February. Joint secretary Rtn. Dr. Sethu Ravi thanked all the rotarians present at the meeting and extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of Rtn Kurian. She also offered special thanks to the host of the meeting Rtn. George Thomas. The meeting was adjourned by vice-president at 8. 15 pm for dinner and fellowship.

**Rtn Sethu Ravi**  
Jt Secretary

## Glimpses of regular meeting held on 19.02.2025



## TWO WOMEN ARMY



Rtn Vijayalakshmi Nair and Rtn Dr Sethu Ravi represented RC Alleppey in the Alleppey Beach Cleaning Programme organised to commemorate the Rotary Foundation Day on 23rd February. Congratulations Vijayalakshmi Teacher and Dr Sethu Ravi.

## MY FITNESS CHALLENGE



Rtn Jose Abraham

Born in Kainakari, a picturesque village in Kuttanad, I developed a natural instinct for swimming early on and became quite skilled at it during my school days. However, in my younger years, I never followed a structured fitness routine. Life in Kuttanad was simple and confined, but I always dreamed of traveling across India—a dream that came true when I joined the Indian Army in 1990. My journey in the Army took me through rigorous physical training, starting in Secunderabad, followed by a year in Aurangabad, three months in Jabalpur, and my first posting as a Havildar Clerk in Bhatinda, Punjab. Over the years, I served in Udampur (J&K), Kolkata, Bhatinda, and the Army Headquarters in New Delhi. The Army instilled in me the importance of fitness, with standardized exercise routines and regular fitness tests to ensure combat readiness. However, my knack for building strong relationships and my pleasing manners often landed me the role of Private Secretary to senior officers, sparing me from intense physical drills! After 18 years of service, I took voluntary retirement and settled in Punnamada, Alleppey, where I started a houseboat business. It was then that I realized the need for a structured fitness routine. Now, my day begins at 5:30 AM with my well-ingrained Army habit of shaving and freshening up. I then embark on a brisk 45-minute walk through the serene interiors of Punnamada, soaking in the refreshing breeze from Vembanad Lake. My walk is followed by a visit to my houseboat, where I oversee operations and ensure everything is set for the day's cruise. But my true fitness challenge—and passion—comes next: fishing with a net. The act of casting, retrieving, and pulling in a net full of fish is an excellent full-body workout, improving cardiovascular health, building muscle strength, and aiding in weight management. Beyond physical benefits, fishing has become my way of de-stressing and achieving mental peace. The rhythm of the activity, combined with the tranquility of the waters, helps me stay calm and focused. One of my most memorable fishing experiences was during my Presidential year at the Rotary Club when a few fellow Rotarians joined me at Jijo's resort. That day, I managed to catch a fine haul of pearl spot fish, which we later fried and enjoyed as part of a delightful fellowship gathering. Moments like these highlight how fishing is not just about fitness—it fosters social bonding and community well-being, reinforcing the values we cherish in Rotary. Through my fitness journey, I have come to appreciate the balance of physical activity, mental relaxation, and social engagement. Whether it's a brisk morning walk, a disciplined routine, or the joy of casting a fishing net, staying active is not just about fitness—it's about embracing a healthier, more fulfilling life.

# Rotarian in the spotlight



## Rtn Varghese Kurisinkal

This week, Royalweeks proudly places Rtn. Varghese Kurisinkal in the spotlight—a seasoned leader whose unwavering commitment to service and leadership has left an indelible mark on numerous community development organizations. His contributions span across All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF), United Christian Association, OLAM, World Malayali Council, and many more, where his leadership skills have been widely recognized and respected. Beyond his organizational roles, Varghese is a mentor and a sought-after trainer, having inspired many through his knowledge-sharing and community-building efforts. What truly sets him apart is his compassion and sense of responsibility—always stepping forward to support those in need, making a real difference in the lives of many. As a dedicated Rotary leader, Varghese nurtures warm and lasting relationships with fellow Rotarians, ensuring that camaraderie and fellowship remain at the heart of our club. Despite mobility constraints due to medical challenges, he remains steadfast in his commitment, making it a point to attend important meetings with the help of an aid. A remarkable testament to his dedication and selflessness was his recent 300-km journey to Kunnamkulam, braving poor road conditions, to pay his last respects at the funeral of Fr. Nijo, son-in-law of our President, Rtn. Kurian. This heartfelt gesture speaks volumes about his deep sense of empathy and solidarity. Royalweeks is honored to shine the spotlight on you this week!

## NEXT MEETING

@7.30 pm on 26.02.2025 Host: Rtn S Siva Kumar



**2** Rtn.Rosey John **4** Rtn.Cherian . K. **5** Rtn. Jose Abraham  
**8** Rtn.Ambu Vaidhyar **14** Rtn. N.A.M.Kunju **17**Rtn. Mathew Joseph Mapila  
**17** Rtn.Shan T. **20** Rtn.Sreenivasan. R. **20** Rtn.Sivadas. B **22** Rtn.Shyam Kurup  
**24** Rtn.Vidhu Kumar **25** Rtn.Sujith T.S

MARCH



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