

## Shahid's draw in 'Paathshala'

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Children's films without stars don't make it big at the box office and that's a prime reason why choreographer Ahmad Khan roped in Shahid Kapoor for his first production 'Paathshala'.

"If Shahid Kapoor wasn't in 'Paathshala', it could become a documentary. The film is so serious and it's so beautiful. But people wouldn't have gone and watched just a children's film even though it deals with a serious issue," Khan said in an interview.

Shahid has a nearly 40-minute appearance in the film.

"Many people make many children's films, but not many become known ones. If Aamir Khan would have not been in 'Taare Zameen Par', that film would have got only limited exposure. Just because of Aamir's presence, it got a wider audience and so much appreciation.

"If I would have made a general children's film, no one would have gone and seen it. But if Shahid Kapoor and Nana Patekar say some good dialogues, and they are in the film, people will go and watch. So they get to see Shahid and also a sensible film. These stars make the range of a film go higher, otherwise it becomes a small-time film," he added.

'Paathshala', directed by Milind Ukey, is primarily about the Indian education system and deals with contemporary and socially relevant issues regarding children. The film, which releases on April 16, also stars Ayesha Takia.

"The film is education-driven and about pressure on kids. It deals with a school...and Nana Patekar, who plays the principal, wants to make the school big by bringing reality show people in, having auditions in the school to get media coverage," he said.

It features child actors Swini Khare from 'Cheeni Kum', Ali Haji from 'Fanaa' and Dwij Yadav from 'Nanhe Jaisalmer' and Avika Gor, the youngest 'bahu' of Indian television.

Khan, who was a child actor himself, says it has been a wonderful experience working with kids as they are much more professional unlike children in his times.

"Child actors these days are very professional. On the sets, you have to call them with their character's name, you can't call them with their real name. They say - 'Uncle, if you call me with the character's name, I will be in the character.' They really know what they are doing," he said.

Khan, who started choreographing for films when he was 19, is also getting another opportunity to be with kids - he has been chosen to be on the judges' panel for Colors' new dance reality show 'Chak Dhoom Dhoom'. He says it is tougher to deal with children on such shows vis-à-vis those who feature in films.

"Children on these dance shows want to enjoy being a dada in their colony and school for 15-20 days. But then when they lose, they blame it on the judge. They should be ready for victory as well as loss. And their parents should also be prepared.

"Kids in films are so professional. When they come for audition, we ask them to deliver six-seven dialogues. We tell them 'Okay, thank you beta'. They ask 'Am I in the film, uncle?' So then we say - 'No beta, you can't be in this film because the role doesn't suit you'. They say 'Okay, uncle. Take my number. Let me know if you have any other film and call me.' And then they go without making a sad face," he said.

On 'Chak Dhoom Dhoom', Khan will be sharing the judge's seat with ace choreographer Saroj Khan and actor Vindu Dara Singh.

Source: IANS

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