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TELANGANA

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THE BANDITS OF GOLAK

From India to a Galaxy Far, Far Away

INDIA'S UNSUNG HEROES

Animated show by Graphiti Multimedia

Another MIPCOM is upon us. It looks set to emerge as one of the more exciting ones with participation swelling compared to the previous three years. We expect the lines to be long outside the cafés that line the Croisette as well as the inner streets of Cannes and the lovely old Suquet. And of course the deal making is most likely going to be frenetic, with back to back meetings over the three days.

Thankfully the writer-studio faceoff in the US has been resolved. It's finally the consumer who's going to pick up the tab for the higher residuals (that the studios agreed to) in the shape of increased monthly payouts for their subscriptions.

But the entire sector is going through belt-tightening times, with show budgets being scanned ever so much more closely with a magnifying glass. Gone are the halcyon days of big spending as the OTT players have finally realised growth has flattened with no new subscribers signing up. Shareholders and investors have been baying for them to get better realisations, and bottom lines. And then of course inflationary pressures have meant that consumer salaries are buying a lot less, so spends on advertising by brands on TV and AVOD services have been shed weight.

This relative gloom is likely to continue way into late 2024 and 2025 when the sparing green shoots we see now will start bearing fruit. It could take even longer should the West continue to encourage the Russia-Ukraine conflict. One view is that they will bail out on Zelensky, when push comes to shove in the next couple of years.

Fast television is all the rage with almost every content owner speedily setting up their own services in a bid to pocket some ad dollars.

From the Indian perspective, the government is showing signs of going all out to pump some testosterone in the Indian AVGC sector in the form of easier filming clearances, incentives for making in India and co-productions. That's why this MIPCOM 2023 special issue has a strong focus on government policies from the central government and from the southern Indian state of Telangana, and how industry is reacting to these. You will see many more animation creators and studios pitching their originals, pitch bibles, to you at this year's MIPCOM as they go about building on India's "Create in India" messaging.



Artist: Renjith G From Toonz Media Group

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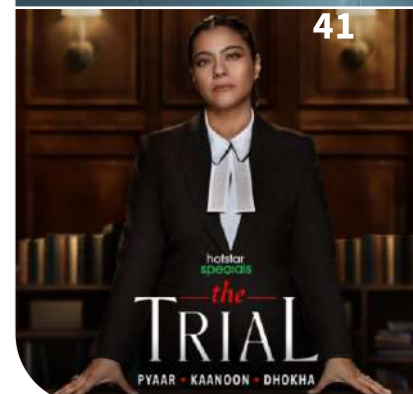
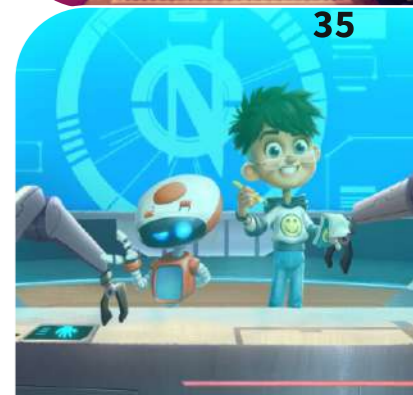
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Sony Pictures Networks India's YAY! Animations: Crafting a new era of diverse and engaging content

By Prerna Kothari

In recent years, the colourful canvas of Indian animation has been undergoing a breathtaking transformation, and leading this enthralling journey is Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI), a dynamic entity within the global Sony Corporation. At the helm of this animation odyssey is Leena Lele Dutta, the astute business head for kids and animation at SPNI.

The genesis of animation at SPNI

Dutta's voyage within the Sony Group commenced in 2007 when she joined Sony Pictures Television as the vice president of the content distribution division in India and South Asia. Her role revolved around shaping and spearheading the distribution and sales of Sony Pictures' diverse range of feature films, television products, and digital content across all platforms—excluding the theatrical distribution.

Over the years, Dutta's role evolved, and she moved to the network side under SPNI. Here, she and her team recognised a need for dedicated kids' programming in India. The transformation began with the rebranding of Animax into Sony YAY! — a channel with a clear mission to deliver Indian narratives, enriched with the linguistic and contextual flavors that resonated deeply with young audiences.

own IPs, including beloved shows like *Honey Bunny Ka Jholmaal*, *Guru aur Bhole*, *Paap-O-Meter*, and *Kicko and Super Speedo*. These shows quickly became staples on Sony YAY!, which is now one of the 29 channels in the SPNI bouquet, offering content in multiple Indian languages like Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Gujarati and Bengali.

Approach to content development in animation

Sony YAY!'s approach to content development remains rooted in timeless values of friendship, entertainment through comedy, and humour.

Dutta shares, "All our content is infused with comedy and moments of relief, driven by our belief that today's children face more pressure than ever before. Unlike adults who understand their life paths, kids often feel the weight of parental and academic expectations. When they tune in to our channel and destination, our goal is simple: to provide them with joy, understanding, laughter, and pure enjoyment. This is our guiding principle for developing IPs for our pay TV channel, Sony YAY!."

However, our approach takes a distinct turn when curating content for our recently launched animation studio, YAY! Animations, where a wholly different lens and filter come into play and our YouTube channel, Buzzwatch, which features animated stories presented in a comedic format.

These stories cater to a broader audience beyond just kids. While Sony YAY! primarily utilises social media for promotional purposes, Buzzwatch allows us to explore short-form animated content for various audiences."

Entering the world of animation production

Inspired by the resounding success of their transformation of Indian author Sudha Murty's children's books into the preschool kids' show *Sudha Murty - Stories of Wit and Magic*, which has been captivating audiences on Netflix since its debut in 2022, Sony YAY! embarked on a thrilling journey into animation production with YAY! Animations. This exciting venture took flight approximately six months ago, to delve deeper into animation storytelling beyond the realm of children's content.

YAY! Animations has already embarked on a promising journey, with five unique IPs in their slate. These IPs cater to a diverse audience, and some of them are co-productions. "While YAY! Animations' projects are initiated in India, they aim to cater to a global audience," explains Dutta. "The intrinsic characteristics of our stories make them relatable across borders." She also mentions their efforts to adapt and localise content for different markets while retaining the core story.

Here's a glimpse into some of the exciting IPs YAY! Animations is working on.

Animation for Adults:

Karna - The Guardian: The show is a unique production, that blends the rich story material hailing from India with the creative prowess by Ascension, a Japanese studio. Directed by Tetsuo Hirakawa, this ambitious and groundbreaking show combines Indian mythology and science fiction. The story takes you on a journey of an ordinary boy who discovers his lineage as the guardian of the three realms.

Uncanny Short Stories - Satyajit Ray – The show is an animated adaptation of a selection of 13 short stories written by the acclaimed Academy Award Winner – Satyajit Ray. The series delves into supernatural, psychological and macabre elements and explores dark secrets - from haunted houses to paranormal investigations. The original works written in Bengali will be re-produced under the creative supervision of Sandip Ray with a backdrop music rendered by the National Award Winner Shantanu Moitra.

The Besiegement – A horror show that narrates the gripping tale of Victor's adventurous quest to confront, and vanquish Demon, the ancient ghoulish being who is responsible for the curse on his family. His true challenge lies in battling this ghoulish being, creating a spine-chilling atmosphere throughout the series.

Makeup My Life: The show delves into the insecurities faced

by teenage girls and follows the transformative journey of Maya, a timid teenager. It begins with Maya, initially shy and socially awkward, stumbling upon a magical makeup box. Each makeup product she uses unlocks a unique aspect of her personality, leading to her blossoming into a self-assured and confident individual as the season progresses.

Kids Animation:

W.H.A.T & the Dog – This chase comedy series follows the adventures of a resourceful stray dog as he navigates risky encounters while searching for food, water, shelter, and affection around a house. Inhabited by a human family and their four pets, the house becomes a hilarious battleground where the dog's determination clashes with the pets' efforts to keep him at bay. This dynamic results in a blend of rivalry and occasional moments of friendship among them all.

Omi No. 1 – The show revolves around Omi, a privileged nine-year-old boy who is the sole heir to India's milk magnate. Omi is pampered by his opulent family of six, while he remains blissfully unaware of the outside world as he enters school life. This sets the stage for comical clashes between his unreal riches and the harsh reality of the outside world.

Talking about her plans for MIPCOM, Dutta shares that their intention is to strengthen existing partnerships with international collaborators like TV Tokyo (*Naruto*), Xilam (*Oggy and the Cockroaches*). They also aim to showcase their animation slate and explore potential opportunities with all the other partners internationally.

Sony YAY!'s venture into animation production marks a significant stride in the Indian animation landscape. It transcends the confines of children's content and boldly explores a range of animation styles and genres, encompassing horror and transformative narratives tailored for all age groups. This endeavour is a testament to their commitment to redefining animation storytelling in India, and as the curtains rise on this captivating narrative, we can't help but be excited about the limitless creative horizons it promises to explore ■



Leena Lele Dutta

A PEEK INTO THE LIVES OF DIGITAL FIRST GEN ALPHA KID OF INDIA

Gen Alpha, the generation born post 2008, is growing up in an era of rapid technological advancements. In India, the generation is displaying unique attitudes and psychographics that are likely to result in enduring shifts in culture codes. This generation has been shaped by digital, as also the COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted their relationships, activities, interests and media choices.

In order to understand the nature and extent of changes defining the Gen alpha cohort, Kantar conducted Kidscan 2022 in India. This is a unique study among Gen Alpha kids and their parents which provides a comprehensive deep dive into their psychographics, media consumption and category disposition. We have contrasted Kidscan 2022 findings with a previous wave conducted in 2017 as a reference point to identify significant and definitive shifts. Our research points to a Gen Alpha kid who is markedly different from the same age cohort in 2017 in terms of mindset and exposure. Key difference being:

Growing individualism and emotional distancing from friends

Gen Alpha kids are more individualistic and driven by selfhood than the same age cohort in 2017.

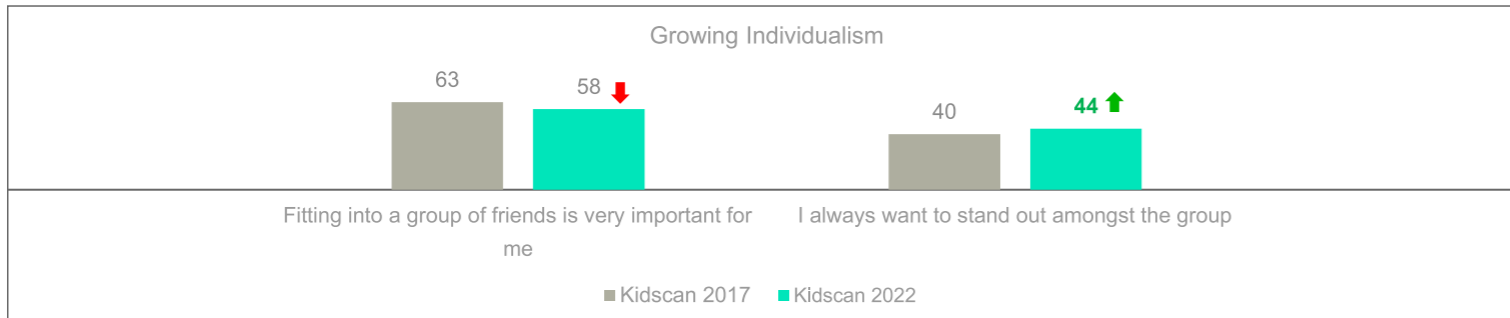


Fig. in % | Source: Kidscan2022, 2017 | Green/Red arrow signifies significant increase/decrease vs 2017 respectively.

The sense of individualism has made them independent and confident but at the same time, this has also made them somewhat self-centred and entitled. There is a growing emotional distancing from friends, perhaps as a result of a couple of years of social distancing along with growing individualism.

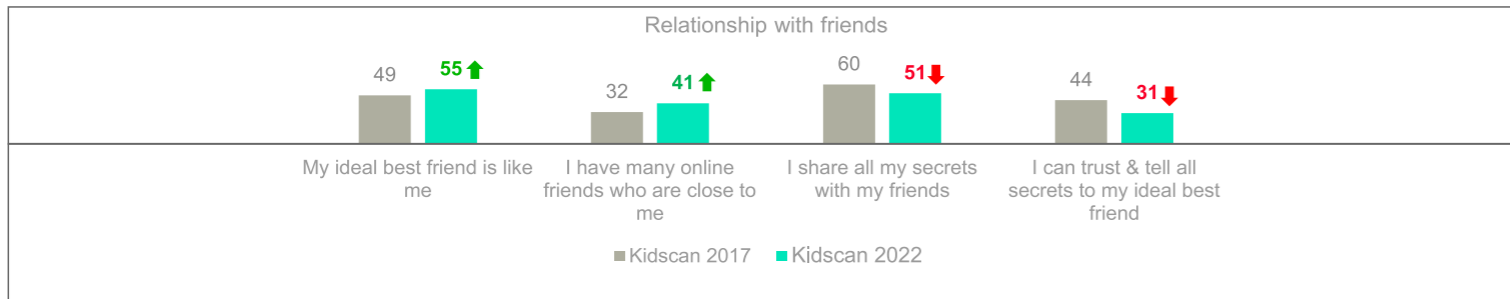


Fig. in % | Source: Kidscan2022, 2017 | Green/Red arrow signifies significant increase/decrease vs 2017 respectively.

Trust and kinship are gradually taking a backseat. Hence, Gen Alpha doesn't find an outlet for sharing their innermost feelings, which makes them at times over-sensitive.

Playing the role of adult and kid at the same time

This generation has a unique mix of adult-like maturity as well as child-like traits. Given their media exposure, they are well informed and highly image conscious. Further, they are ambitious and comfortable with multitasking. They are curious and explorative, but at the same time also exhibit emotional vulnerability. Their adult and kid sides co-exist often comfortably. There is a strong influence of materialistic aspirations among Gen Alpha kids.

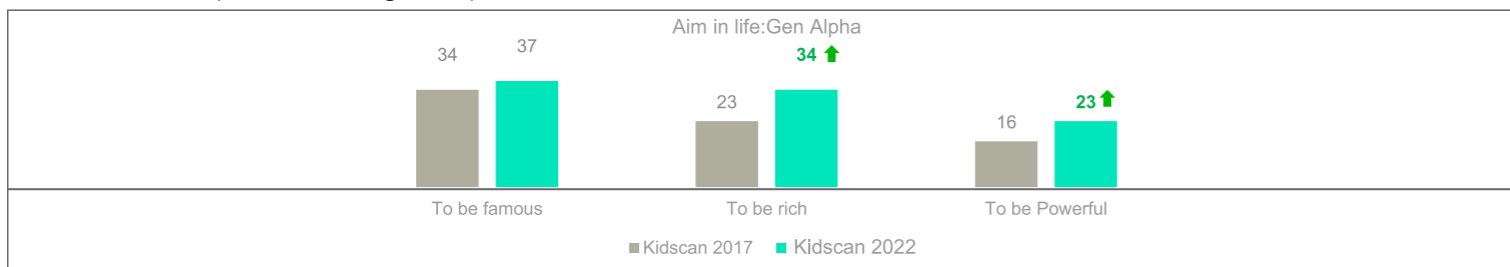
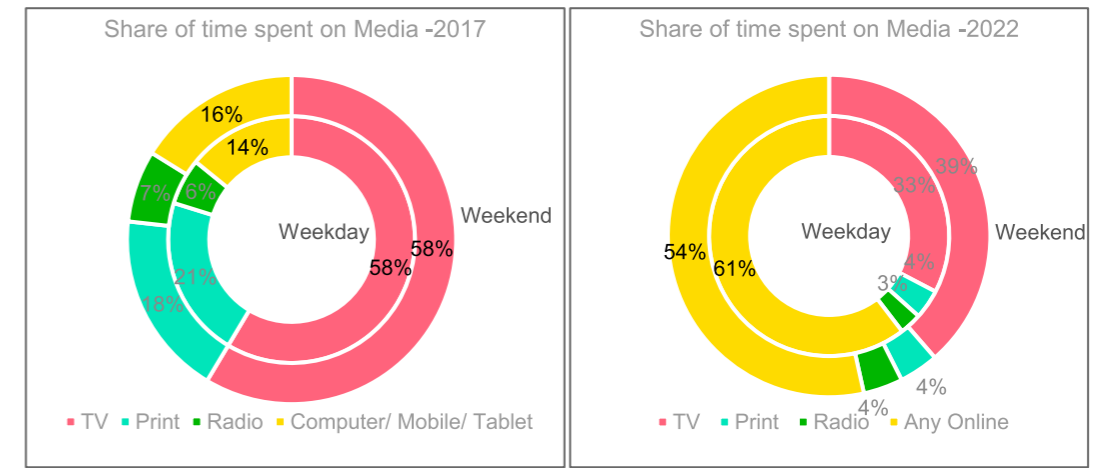


Fig. in % | Source: Kidscan2022, 2017 | Green/Red arrow signifies significant increase/decrease vs 2017 respectively.

The materialism is fuelled by their heightened exposure to digital media. Average screen time of Gen Alpha has increased from two hours 22 minutes in 2017 to three hours 18 minutes in 2022, a growth of 40 per cent. Online media dominates the share of time spent among these kids.



Source: Kidscan2022, 2017

Gen Alpha is leveraging the internet for information which feeds their knowledge and convictions.

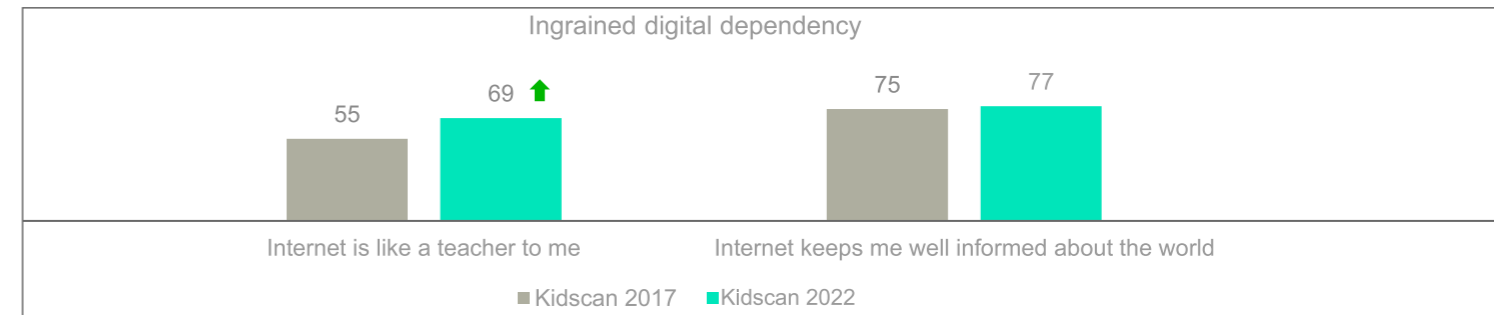


Fig. in % | Source: Kidscan2022, 2017 | Green/Red arrow signifies significant increase/decrease vs 2017 respectively.

Their ability to leverage the internet fuels their inquisitiveness which has led to fostering of a more argumentative generation.

Greater inclusion in purchase decision

Access to vast amounts of information is empowering Gen Alpha kids to make well informed arguments. Further, Gen Alpha exert a stronger influence on their parents especially when it comes to snacking choices.

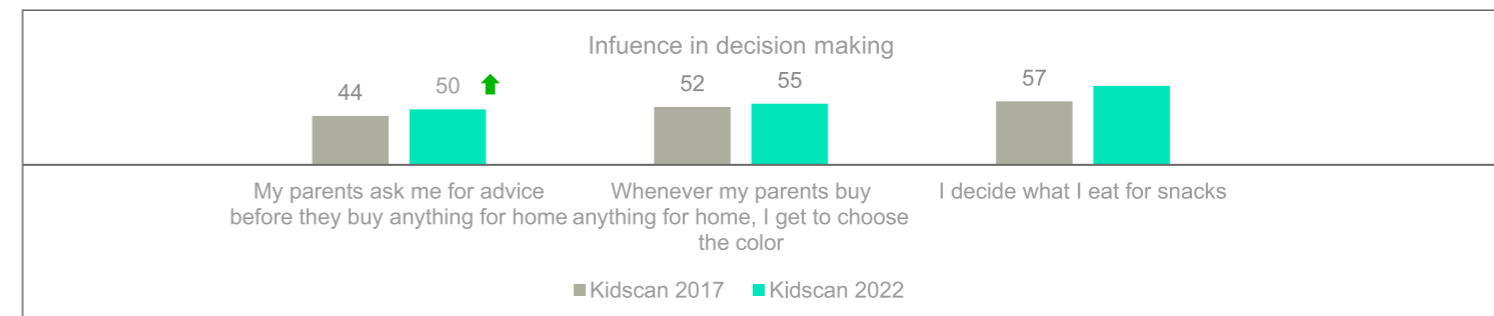


Fig. in % | Source: Kidscan2022, 2017 | Green/Red arrow signifies significant increase/decrease vs 2017 respectively.

Conclusion

Digital is central to the lives of Gen Alpha as a window to the world for the information, social and entertainment needs. This is a child who is assertive, materialistic and has growing pester influence with parents for snacking and for other household purchases. It is therefore important for advertisers to address this kid within their digital context and align to their defining values.

(This article has been contributed by Kantar group account director Aditya Kaul and AnimationXpress does not necessarily subscribe to these views)



Elevating animation with cross-cultural content Indian kids' broadcasters lead the way

By Anshita Bhatt

India's ever-growing portfolio of original IPs has currently kept up with the increasing appetite of the country's kids audiences for novel content. At the forefront of this effort are India's private broadcasters who - in collaboration with the country's animation studios - are churning out brand new shows for the kids audiences in the country.

seen before on TV - horror comedy, sci-fi and shows based on popular live-action Indian IPs. When broadcasters started banking on homegrown content years ago, the shows they created were dialogue-based and hyperlocal, and those worked wonders for the audience at that time. This period gave birth to shows like *Chhota Bheem* which airs on Warner Bros. Discovery's Pogo channel, and *Motu Patlu* which airs on Nickelodeon. Soon, channels realised the need to create themes that are relatable for the local audience, but equally culturally relevant for the international audience. A prime example of this is the chase comedy *Lamput*, which Cartoon Network now airs globally.

All in all, it's a golden period for animated kids content in India. And there are two reasons for

that, says Sony YAY! programming head Ronojoy Chakraborty. "While Sony YAY! is reaching out to more than 100 million kids, a rise in animated content viewership is supported by digital streaming platforms," Chakraborty shares. "The second reason for the surge is that we have a whole generation of kids who have grown up on animated content in the last decade or so. So, they are more accepting of the format of animation, and want to see different genres of animated content."

The power of localisation

Localised content plays a pivotal role in the surge of animated content popularity. Syndicated and original content is dubbed in various Indian languages to connect better with regional audiences. "As the animated characters go beyond the boundaries of countries, creed or ethnicity, the content when dubbed in regional languages helps the kids to connect better to the character. The localisation of content also gives a proxy edge for the better distribution of content through cable operators and multi system operators in the respective states," explains ETV BalBharat head of channel operations Shashi Prakash Singh. The channel provides content in 11 Indian languages apart from English.

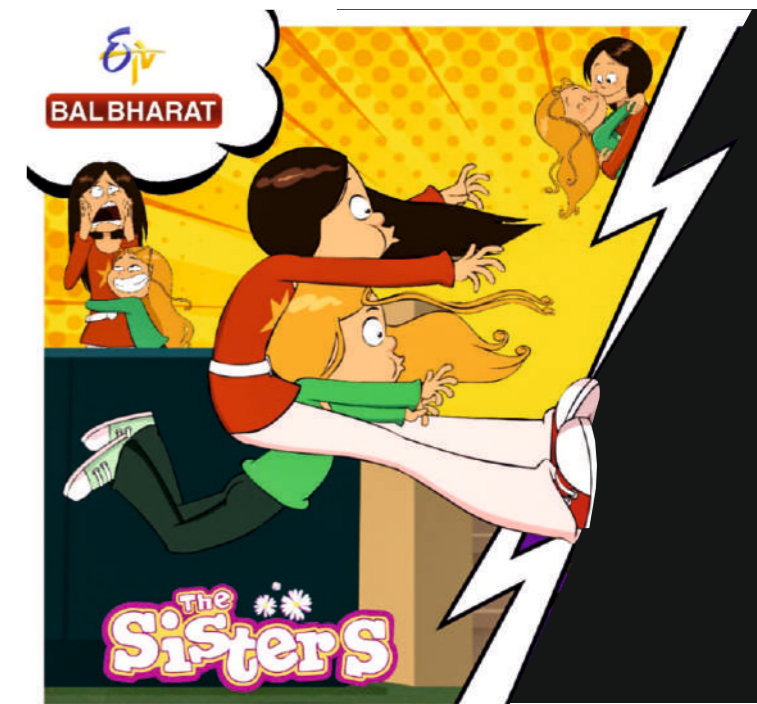
Broadcasters have learnt the art to tweak international content and to work on adaptation which means not only dubbing

but also the title and content management. For instance, popular comedy series *Oggy and the Cockroaches*, which Sony YAY! acquired from France-based Xilam Animation, airs in India in eight languages, while *Harry & Bunnie* that the channel acquired from Malaysia's Animasia Studio, airs in India under the name *Rabbit aur Bhalla Ab Fun Hoga Khullam Khulla*. *Harry & Bunnie* is about a young fledgling magician and his rabbit who always steals the limelight during the boy's performance. "When dubbed in the local languages, the content reaches a large segment of audience in their mother tongues, resulting in greater acceptability," highlights Chakraborty. "At Sony YAY!, we dub content while incorporating Indian cultural references and idioms. That is something I think that makes the content even more endearing to audiences." Additionally, broadcasters have gained expertise in understanding their young audience to deliver a wholesome content experience.

Global collaborations and diverse storytelling

Broadcasters have acknowledged the importance of co-productions and creating diverse storylines to reach the global audience. Nickelodeon International teamed up with Nickelodeon India to create the animated comedy show *The Twisted Timeline of Sammy & Raj*, which fuses eastern and western storytelling elements. The 2D series about two Indian-American cousins living in the USA with their parents, which is already airing in many other countries, will soon air in India. Slapstick comedy *PaJaMa* created by Indian animator Siddharth Maskeri, produced by India's Toonz Media Group which airs on Sony YAY!, is about the funny antics that take place in a family comprising a mother, a father and their child. The show is dubbed in Indian languages in the country and airs in gibberish language in the international market.

"Over the years, we have seen that themes like friendship, family values, personal growth, worked very well with audiences. Light hearted comedy content also works very well," reveals Chakraborty. He believes that mythology and folktales work well for kids. Their show *Sudha Murty - Stories of Wit and Magic*, based on Indian philanthropist Sudha Murty's book, ran successfully and also went on to

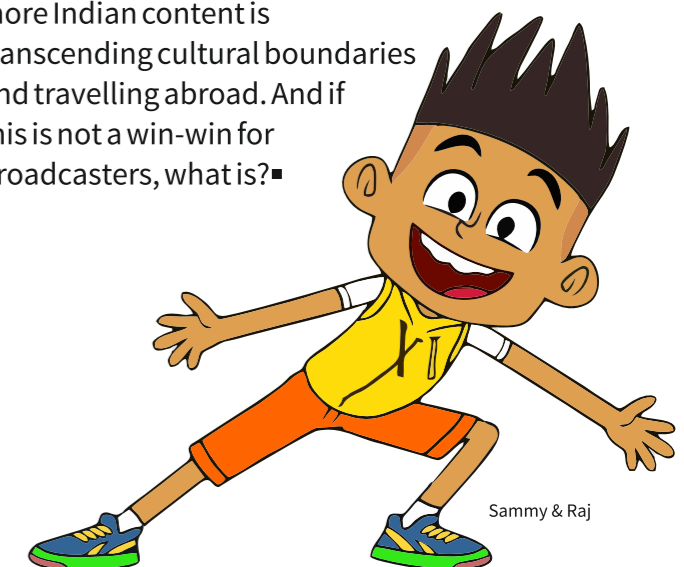


streaming giant Netflix. Similar is the case with the show *Mighty Little Bheem*, which is a global success on Netflix. Created by India's Green Gold Animation studio, *Mighty Little Bheem* is the baby avatar of the studio's long-running IP *Chhota Bheem*.

Broadcasters are now creating a 360 degree environment around their animation shows, with movies, games and outdoor experiences. Relatable shows coupled with the growing demand for varied content has spurred the Indian animation industry, resulting in studios coming up with diverse and cross-cultural content. Indian studios that have only done outsourced work for long, are now teaming up with broadcasters and international studios for co-productions. More and more Indian content is transcending cultural boundaries and travelling abroad. And if this is not a win-win for broadcasters, what is? ■



Sammy & Raj



Sammy & Raj

Dubbed international content:

A growing trend in India's media landscape

By Prerna Kothari

In the ever-evolving Indian media industry, the consumption of dubbed international content has emerged as a significant trend. One Take Media is one such company that specialises in recognising niche content and brings the best premium Korean content to Indian audiences. Their offerings span a wide spectrum of genres, including premium Korean shows (available in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada), kids animation, Hollywood movies dubbed in nine Indian languages, Spanish and Russian shows, regional movies, K-Pop, and cooking content. They ensure that top-notch international content is made accessible to Indian viewers in their preferred languages.

With insights from One Take Media managing director Dimpy Khara, we explore the reasons behind the growing popularity of international content in India and its future prospects.

Indian audience preferences for content consumption

India's diverse market is characterised by a population of over 1.4 billion people. According to a report by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), 94 per cent of the urban population in India has internet subscriptions, indicating a shift towards digital media consumption. While television remains popular, digital platforms are gaining traction. Urban audiences, in particular, have a penchant for global content. Smartphones have emerged as a significant platform for consuming international content, offering viewers the flexibility to watch at their convenience.

But let's not forget that post-covid, cinema has bounced back, with theatricals again emerging as a major entertainment player. While fandom for Hindi cinema and South India's film industry has always been at the peak, India also has a loyal fanbase for international film franchises like *Mission Impossible*, *Fast & Furious*, *Transformers* as well as Marvel and DC Universe movies. Understanding India's huge market, the Hollywood films which used to be released in Hindi and English have now started releasing in multiple languages. Major feature films like *Avengers: Infinity War*, *Avatar: The Way of Water* and *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny* were released in at least three Indian languages apart from English, with some releasing in as many as five Indian languages.

Key factors driving the popularity of dubbed international content are:

- **Language Barrier:** Dubbed content allows Indian viewers to enjoy international shows and movies in their native language.
- **Cultural Adaptation:** Audiences appreciate content that is culturally relevant and relatable, even if it originates from a different part of the world.
- **Quality of Dubbing:** High-quality dubbing enhances viewing experience, making it more immersive.
- **Content Variety:** A diverse range of genres and themes cater to different tastes and preferences.
- **Audience Demographics:** The younger, tech-savvy generation is more inclined to explore international content.
- **Word-of-Mouth and Social Media:** Recommendations from peers and social media buzz drive curiosity and viewership.
- **Local Adaptations:** Some international stories are adapted to suit Indian sensibilities, further increasing their appeal.
- **Globalisation:** Exposure to global cultures and trends fuels curiosity about international content.

Future Prospects and Trends

While the future of dubbed international content in India is promising, there are challenges to

navigate. Shares Khara, "As the Indian market continues to witness a surge in international content offerings, it's possible that over-saturation could lead to challenges in audience connection. When there is an overwhelming amount of content from various parts of the world, it can become difficult for viewers to identify with and invest emotionally in every piece. At times, this might result in viewers feeling disconnected from the stories being presented."

However, it's worth noting that while over saturation is a concern, it also provides opportunities for content creators and distributors to refine their strategies and focus on quality over quantity. Successful content is often driven by factors like cultural relevance, storytelling and the ability to connect with viewers on a personal level. As such, producers and platforms will likely strive to strike a balance between offering a diverse array of content and ensuring that each piece resonates with its target audience.

In conclusion, dubbed international content has found a firm footing in the Indian media landscape, driven by factors like language accessibility, cultural relevance and quality dubbing. As the market matures, content creators and distributors will need to adapt to evolving audience preferences and maintain a focus on delivering engaging and relatable stories to stay ahead in this dynamic space ■



Dimpy Khara

UNVEILING THE LEGACY OF SSOFTOONS

A Revolution in Animation

Ssoftoons revolutionized the animation industry by delivering educational, entertaining, and high-quality content.

A Digital Leap Forward

As times changed, so did perspectives and demands. Ssoftoons introduced its content on YouTube and Facebook and on own dedicated app and OTT

A National Presence

Ssoftoons stands as a pioneer in both **2D and 3D Animation**, having developed a host of beloved IPs that have captured the hearts of audiences nationwide.

Introducing **Twinkle Sharma**

Meet Twinkle Sharma, a remarkable 10-year-old dynamo with a heart of gold. This bright and quick-witted girl-next-door is known for her spunk, intelligence, and boundless bravery. Though mischievous at times, her intentions are always pure and her actions guided by a spirit of kindness.

As a central figure in Ssoftoons' enchanting universe, Twinkle Sharma's adventures promise to captivate audiences young and old.

3D ANIMATION PURAN-KATHA

BASED ON 18 MAHA PURANS

SHIVA

Lullu: The Unconventional Ghost!

Meet Lullu, a spirited young phantom with a zest for life... after life! His mission? Reclaim his human form by fulfilling his unrealized dreams.

Join Ssoftoons for a ghostly giggle-fest! With each frame, you'll find yourself in stitches, as Lullu takes you on a side-splitting ride through a world where the supernatural meets the silly.

LULLU

GANESHA

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Visit our website at www.ssoftoons.com and witness the magic that has enchanted audiences for two decades, and join us as we continue to shape the future of animation.

LET'S CONNECT SSOFTOONS contact@ssoftoons.com

Anime consumption market in India is having a moment in the sun. And that moment has just begun. The anime fandom and its demand is picking up steam in the country, and the Indian broadcasters, OTT channels and cinema chains are in the right place at the right time to leverage this booming demand.

“Indian anime fans are known for their dedication and deep passion, spending more than 60 minutes each day to watch their favourite shows,” says global anime streaming platform Crunchyroll’s director – marketing Akshat Sahu. And that could be a major reason why content creators started tapping into this market a couple of years ago. “India holds the position of the second-largest global anime audience (behind China). The anime industry stands at a robust \$20 billion, showing no signs of slowing down, and the hunger for more anime is only growing in India,” Sahu shares.

Broadcasting the love for anime

While Crunchyroll is a dedicated anime platform with a global presence including in India, streaming giants like Netflix have a wide anime slate and keep adding to their library. The oldest players in the anime business in India, however, are the kids broadcasters. *Pokémon*, *Beyblade* and *Dragon Ball Z* were few popular anime series that aired in India in the 2000s. The popularity of the shows dipped in between, but bounced back a couple of years ago. Just last year in 2022, Warner Bros. Discovery introduced the shows *Dragon Ball Super* and *Digimon Adventure* on Cartoon Network. This year, the channel aired *My Hero Academia* and other shows and films from the *Dragon Ball* franchise. Another Indian kids broadcaster Sony YAY! started airing the highly popular anime series *Naruto* last year.

While the broadcasters cater to kids, teens and young adults, the streaming platforms satiate the interests of young adults and adults. KC Global Media Entertainment, which has acquired TV network Animax, provides Animax’s content in India through its streaming partners JioTV and Prime Video. “The two key groups of audiences [in India] include a core group of youths, ranging from tweens to young adults, and those who grew up with Animax in the early 2000s and are now in their late 30s and 40s,” says KC Global Media co-founder, president & CEO George Chien. For Crunchyroll, its majority audience is below the age of 35. “Anime fans tend to be young and well-connected across SNS channels - fans love to connect with others



Anime fever: The rising craze in India

Exploring the revival of anime and its expanding market in India

By Anshita Bhatt

through their fandom,” exclaims Sahu.

Cultural considerations in dubbing and subtitling

Even though each Indian platform offering anime caters to a different audience group, they all have one factor in common - dubbing the content in Indian languages which has helped them penetrate a wider audience. Cartoon Network airs *Digimon Adventure* in three Indian languages - Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. *My Hero Academia* and *Dragon Ball Z Kai* on Cartoon Network, and *Naruto* on Sony YAY! air in five languages. Crunchyroll too offers anime in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu dubs apart from English subs and dubs. “We are seeing high traction on Hindi dubbed anime series as compared to English,” Sahu reveals. Since the platform

launched Tamil dubs in July 2023, “there’s been a noticeable surge in interest in Tamil-dubbed anime as well.” But “when dubbing Japanese anime to Indian languages, it is absolutely essential to retain the nuances of the story and characters. It is necessary to ensure dubbing is done by experts. If dubs are not done keeping high standards in focus, they will not work,” Sahu adds. This makes it increasingly essential to have Indian distributors bring anime to the country.

“Initially dubbed in English, localisation efforts for anime resulted in the content being more relatable and popular among non-English viewers,” explains Chien. But Animax keeps its anime titles in their original Japanese language

“for the unique viewer experience, which is something most fans appreciate. More fans are starting to be open to learning more about the language, culture, and values shared through their favourite anime. (Based on JetSynthesys survey, 50 per cent of Indian anime fans are keen on learning more about Japanese culture),” he says.

Content to consumer: anime merchandise

“A younger and affluent population also makes up a key demographic of anime fans and this demographic is willing to spend on anything anime related (50 per cent of those surveyed live in urban areas),” says Chien. And that opens up a whole new market - licensing and merchandising. Sony YAY! that airs *Naruto* in India, acquired the licence for the anime in the country, and in partnership with a retail chain, offers 18 categories of official *Naruto* merchandise including apparel, accessories, footwear, personal care products and toys.

Crunchyroll recently announced a partnership with brand licensing agency Black White Orange to manage L&M of more than 35 anime titles streaming on its platform, including series like *My Dress-Up Darling*, *Zom 100* and *Bucket List of The Dead*.

Popular anime genres

According to anime streaming platforms, action, adventure and fantasy genres work well with the Indian audience. At the same time, genres like Shonen and Isekai also see a high interest among Indian fans. “Overall, Indian audiences are drawn to anime that are well-made, coupled with exciting storylines, relatable characters, and universal themes that offer a strong emphasis on character development, which create deep emotional connections with viewers,” shares Chien.

According to Sahu, “some of the popular anime shows in India include *Naruto: Shippuden*, *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba*, *Jujutsu Kaisen*, *Spy x Family*, *Dragon Ball Z* and so on.”

For Animax, action, adventure, and fantasy titles such as *Naruto*, *Yashahime: Half Demon Princess*, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, *Granbelm* are a hit among anime fans in India. Titles with strong female leads such as *Fruits Basket*, *The Demon Girl Next Door*, *A Place Further than the Universe* are also fan-favourites among Indian

audiences who relate to their loveable, diverse, and down-to-earth personalities. Anime titles such as *Kuroko's Basketball*, *Haikyuu!!* and *High School Prodigies Have It Easy Even in Another World!* are also loved by fans who appreciate themes of friendship, camaraderie, competitive team spirit and overcoming adversity.

Anime on big screens

Anime's popularity in India is not limited to TV and streaming platforms. India's cinema chain giants - PVR and Cinépolis, have brought anime to the country's big screen. "In India, animation was once seen as solely for children, but now, on a global scale, animation studios have elevated storytelling through animation to new heights. Animated movies are no longer just for kids; they are a source of family entertainment, meant to be savoured together on the big screen," says Cinépolis' CEO Devang Sampat.

When Japanese-director Makoto Shinkai's anime film *Suzume* released in India this year in April, PVR hosted a Makoto Shinkai Film Festival in May, during which the theatre chain screened four of Shinkai's previous anime films along with *Suzume*.

As for Cinépolis, it has been steadily increasing the number of anime and animated films screening in India since 2019. This year till date, the cinema chain has released nine anime films (including *Suzume*) totalling 3,369 shows in India. "Animated films and anime movies, while gaining traction, usually do not reach the same box office heights as big-budget live-action films. However, there have been exceptions with successful animated films like the *Hanuman* series, *Chhota Bheem*, and some Japanese anime films like *Jujutsu Kaisen* and *Suzume*," reveals Sampat. "These movies are typically distributed in major cities across the country, including but not limited to cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Pune."

country, including but not limited to cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Pune."

Marketing for wider reach

One cannot diminish the role of partnerships and collaborations that have helped bring anime content to a wider Indian audience. Crunchyroll in India recently collaborated with celebrity anime fans like Rashmika Mandanna and Tiger Shroff "who connect with wider anime fans across India through their authentic love of the art form," shares Sahu. Such marketing strategies widen the ambit of fandom in India.

The increased popularity for anime presents a variety of opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges between Indian and Japanese creators, feels Chien. Echoing his thoughts, Sahu says, "As the Indian anime audience expands, it opens up numerous possibilities and potential for creating anime movies and series that are specifically tailored to India." Sampat adds, "As Indian audiences develop a stronger appetite for anime and Japanese animation, there is potential for co-productions between Indian and Japanese studios." Chien highlights that creating "anime adaptations of Indian literature and films present a huge opportunity to introduce Indian culture to a global audience and convert the local audiences to new fans of anime."

"Anime is a global phenomena because it presents unique storylines, character arcs, depth and breathtaking visuals, making it a sought after genre for content," Sahu states. And rightly so, because anime isn't just about content. It is about building a community and driving an ecosystem. "India's response to anime has grown steadily over the years with a passionate fanbase leading its charge, as more viewers are discovering and embracing it as more than a form of entertainment, making it commercially viable in the coming years," concludes Chien.

Tavrohi Animations: Weaving tales through animation excellence

Tavrohi Animations is one among a bouquet of five sister studios based in India and Dubai, crafting unparalleled animated stories as a beacon of creativity and innovation. Founded in 2017 by Colonel Rohit Kataria, a former army officer who ventured into the world of IT, Tavrohi Animations was born out of a profound passion for masterful storytelling. The studio's journey, which began in a humble basement, has transformed into a thriving office, now home to several dedicated professionals. Tavrohi is not just a studio; it's a haven where stories come to life.

Political satire: 'OMG!' - A hilarious take on politics

Politics, they say, is show business, and Tavrohi wholeheartedly embraces this notion through its iconic political satire series, *OMG! (Oh My God)*. With over 500 episodes, *OMG!* ingeniously caricatures political leaders and events, delivering witty and satirical commentary. It captures the theatrical spectacle of politics that keeps viewers entertained and informed. It is India's leading animated politoon.

Sports animation: Bringing sporting events to life

Tavrohi is the only studio in the country to have produced animations for a multitude of sports events. It all began with a partnership with Star Sports for the Indian Premier League (IPL). The studio created caricatured animations of cricket players for a series *Silly Point*, capturing the spirit of the game with humour and creativity. This success led to more opportunities, including the creation of logos, mascots and animations for events like the ICC World Cup, Women's Premier League (WPL), Hockey World Cup, Khelo India Games, and National Games.



Tavrohi played a pivotal role in branding these events, with their mascots becoming the face of the games. The studio has also ventured into international sports animation, recently having worked for Caribbean Premiere League.

Children's shows: Crafting magical worlds for kids

The studio takes great pride in crafting enchanting worlds for children through its captivating children's shows. Two of their flagship IPs currently on air are *Happy and Pinaki - the Bhoot Bandhus*, which airs on Nickelodeon Sonic, and *Bhoot Mast Zabardast*, which can be seen on Gubbare. *Happy and Pinaki* has completed three seasons, with the fourth season in production, while *Bhoot Mast Zabardast* has successfully completed two seasons, with the third season underway. The studio's commitment to creating content loved by audiences of all ages is evident in the magical shows tailored for young viewers. These shows have won several awards including the Best Indie Studio of the Year twice.

A consistent legacy of excellence and international expansion

Throughout its remarkable journey, Tavrohi has remained consistent in producing outstanding original content. Be it political satires, sports animations, children's shows or content for Bollywood, the studio's commitment to quality and attention to detail shine through. An industry pioneer, Tavrohi is now expanding internationally, pitching several of their IPs at MIPCOM. With a new office in Dubai, Tavrohi is all set to raise the bar higher, on a global scale.



Devang Sampat



George Chien



Akshat Sahu



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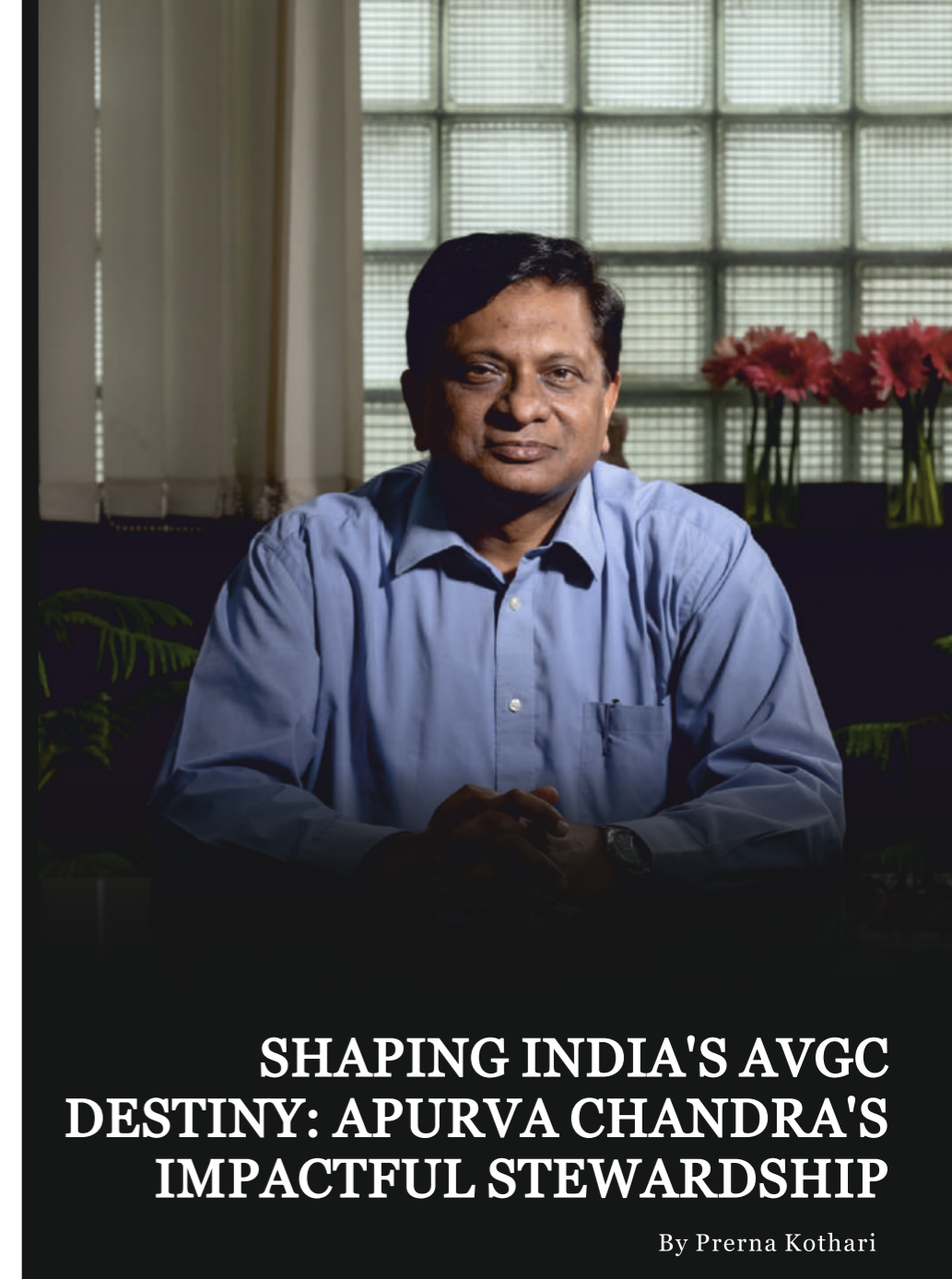
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India's Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics (AVGC) sector has been on an exhilarating journey of growth, innovation, and global recognition. Since taking the helm as the secretary of the ministry of information & broadcasting (MIB) in August 2021, Apurva Chandra has played a pivotal role in shaping the industry's destiny. With an illustrious career spanning various key government positions, Chandra has been a driving force behind the growth and potential of the AVGC sector in India. His tenure has witnessed a surge in India's AVGC prowess, with remarkable achievements and promising statistics.

The sector had an estimated market size of around US\$2.3 billion in 2019, contributing approx 0.7 per cent to the global AVGC market. However, the growth trajectory is poised to skyrocket. With the right interventions, India aims to capture five per cent of the global AVGC market share, amounting to approx \$35-40 billion, by 2025-26, creating over 1,60,000 new jobs annually.

Chandra spoke to AnimationXpress in an email interaction. He was pretty sanguine about how he sees the Indian AVGC-XR sector shaping up with the government's support. Said he: "The facilitation of growth in the AVGC sector aligns with the government's objective of making India a global hub for products and services being delivered in the AVGC-XR sector and thereby enhancing the export potential of audio and visual services. At the same time, the sector has the potential to generate employment opportunities in the sunrise sector for the country's youth and provides a platform to create iconic Indian characters inspired by local culture and folk arts."



SHAPING INDIA'S AVGC DESTINY: APURVA CHANDRA'S IMPACTFUL STEWARDSHIP

By Prerna Kothari

Excerpts from the interaction:

On setting up of National Centre of Excellence (NCoE)

The setting up of three AI COE's (Centres of Excellence for Artificial Intelligence) to enhance research and innovation and development of the sector, is being implemented by the ministry of electronics and information technology, government of India.

in India, a taskforce was constituted in 2022 which submitted its recommendations to the government in December 2022.

As per the taskforce recommendations, MIB in collaboration with other key ministries will spearhead the task of establishing the country's first National Centre of Excellence (NCoE) for AVGC.

The NCoE has been envisioned to deliver on four main fronts-

skilling, education, industry development and research and innovation for the AVGC sector. NCoE shall serve as the nodal agency for AVGC promotion and act as a mentoring institution for the industry to guide the policies for growth of this sector, establish standards for AVGC education in India, actively collaborate with industry and international AVGC institutes, and enhance the global positioning of the Indian AVGC industry. Subsequently, regional centres of excellence (RCoEs) on the lines of NCoE would be established in collaboration with state governments.

Along with several other recommendations for promoting the AVGC sector, a national AVGC policy has been formulated in addition to the Model State Policy which is to be adopted by the states. The broad spectrum of the AVGC policy is to create a conducive infrastructure to unleash the huge potential of the sector. The state policy has been given to the states and is in the process of being customised and adopted by several states in India. The national policy is being worked out with other stakeholder ministries and departments for obtaining approvals of the government. It could be followed by creating a dedicated mission for the promotion of AVGC sector.

On paving the path to global AVGC dominance

+ MIB has been leading several interactions and feedback gathering sessions with other concerned line ministries, state governments, industry bodies

+ understand the requirements in the sector and work in the best possible way to enhance its competitiveness.

+ By way of national policy for AVGC, MIB has put together certain priority pointers such as:

- Enhancing the industry's market access
- Focused skilling and mentorship initiatives
- Standardising AVGC education
- Increasing access to technology for all in the sector
- Enhancing the sector's financial viability
- And promoting creation of high-quality content in India

+ In order to functionalise the above national AVGC-XR policy, the government is also considering setting up a national AVGC-XR mission to handhold the promotion and growth of the sector, via development of AVGC-XR sector on mission mode.

+ It is also important to give impetus to content creation in India by way of the "Create in India" initiative. The Ministry therefore endeavors to focus on the following:

- creation of high-quality content
- promotion of international co-productions
- creation of global content in India
- promotion of IP
- offering a global platform to Indian artists and creators, among others.

+ As an initial step in the direction of skilling more youth in this AVGC sector, the Ministry has started a pilot project of training 100 youth in the field of 3D animation from March 2023.

+ The same is being proposed to be taken up again shortly in Bengaluru. Further, the ministry has reached out to several other ministries to come forth and support training of the youth in this sector.



'Raji: An Ancient Epic' game by Indian indie gaming studio Nodding Heads Games

On the role of state policies and educational grants

Each state in India is unique in terms of its potential and the contribution it can make for the AVGC-XR industry. In this respect, they have complete functional autonomy to develop a state-level policy as per their strengths. The state-level policy is based on a comprehensive assessment of the status of the sector in those states, and will accordingly focus and facilitate access to infrastructure, technology, market, promotion of local content and so on. Many states are in the process of formulating their own policies in this context; the flagship states being Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and so on. To guide other states to formulate their policies, MIB released a Model State Policy along with the national policy in

December 2022.

For degree courses in animation, visual effects and gaming sector, students will be able to avail scholarships as per various schemes of the Indian government. In addition to that,

the task force report has recommendations for the setup

of various funds such as 'Incubation Fund' for intellectual property (IP) promotion and content development, R&D Grant Scheme for industry-led consortiums and a plan to fund higher education institutions to set up labs to evangelise new and emerging technologies into academics as well as industry practices. Moreover, state-level scholarship funds/CSR programs will be explored through the respective state governments.

On the impact of increased FDI in Animation and VFX - A catalyst for industry growth and prosperity

To promote foreign investments and make the sector business-friendly, the government has

taken key initiatives to ease the regulations. This has translated into significant gains for the sector as many foreign studios outsource their work to India to utilise the cost arbitrage that India continues to offer. From delivering back-end services, India has now emerged as the provider of turnkey services - from pre-visualisation to final rendering. This also means an increase in both value and volume of work coming India's way.

In 2022, while service exports made up 35-40 per cent of the total revenues for the animation sector, it made up 70-75 per cent of revenues for the VFX sector. The total revenue for animation and VFX sector was US \$457 and \$601 million respectively in India.

Moreover, top global VFX players continue to expand in India, as Indian VFX artists cost only one-eighth of the cost incurred on hiring artists in the UK or North America. In 2022, five global VFX players, including Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), Cinesite Group, Pi Square Technologies, Ghost VFX, and Folks, have either started operations or announced their entry into the Indian market.

On boosting international co-production: Government incentives and support

Under the incentive scheme for audio-visual production launched by MIB, financial incentives are available for the international co-productions that are shot in India. The Indian co-producer can claim a payable cash reimbursement of up to 30 per cent on qualifying expenditure in India, subject to a

maximum of Rs 2 crore (US \$260,000). Productions employing 15 per cent or more of their labour force from India can access a further five per cent of spend, capped at Rs 50 lakhs. The scheme is available for animation feature films as well. The scheme is executed through the FFO (Film Facilitation Office) under the aegis of National Film Development Corporation (NFDC).

Moreover, the government is also considering the proposal for increasing the quantum of incentives under this scheme. In addition, nationals of countries with which India has signed audio-visual co-production treaties can claim financial incentives from both the countries.

Also, as part of the taskforce recommendations, the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme to attract the AVGC-XR sector hardware manufacturers to the country has been proposed. The PLI scheme is already available for large-scale electronics hardware manufacturing.

On global filmmakers embracing India's incentives: A thriving partnership

So far India has entered into audio-visual co-production agreements with 16 countries and the ministry is presently looking to reach out to more countries for signing of the co-production agreement.

As a testimonial to the growing popularity of India as a filming destination, over 180 international applications have

been facilitated by FFO until date. Disbursement of incentives has been done for four films in the last 15 months and many more are on the verge of disbursement. The ministry had apportioned sufficient funds for this purpose.

The FFO which is now run by a team of experts under Invest India has started facilitating film makers from foreign countries for filming in India.

As the way forward, FFO has integrated its website with the national single window system portal and is also in the process of integrating with the various State filming permissions portals for single window clearance for the filmmakers.

India has official co-production treaties with Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russia, Spain and the United Kingdom to enable co-creation of content and collaboration between talent. Some prominent co-produced films in recent years include *two+One* (Russia 2022), *Last Film Show* (France 2021), *The Hero of Centopia* (Germany 2020), *The Extraordinary Journey of Fakir* (France 2018), *Sir* (France 2018), etc.

Through these arrangements, not only does the Indian government promote joint projects and exchange of culture with other countries, it is also trying to bring the attention of the world to India as a filming location with its exotic destinations, talent pool and relatively cheaper cost of production. Film financing can be

into an existing model and is unable to source funding from established studios. In that sense, international co-productions help independent filmmakers to experiment with storytelling and create unique content.

“For audio-visual production, incentives are available for the international co-productions that are shot in India. Indian co-producer can claim a payable cash reimbursement of up to 30 per cent on qualifying expenditure,”

On MIPCOM and India - a vision for showcasing Indian content to the world

Platforms such as MIPCOM provide a key opportunity to bring together executives from the global entertainment industry so that they can discover and trade in interesting content being produced in other countries.

With the aim to promote Indian content across all mediums including television, films, OTT and animation, the Indian government has been making a representation at MIPCOM with the key stakeholders of the M&E industry. The government is committed to provide all regulatory support to animation studios, production houses, distributors, and broadcasters to promote their products and push the frontiers for Indian content.

As long as these trade platforms continue to provide benefits and open doors of opportunities for the M&E community, the government is committed to provide support on its end.

On thoughts on the need for a dedicated creative content promotion authority

The mandate to promote Indian content and films domestically and globally has been given to National Films Development Corporation (NFDC), a public sector enterprise established under the MB. The FFO works under the NFDC to facilitate foreign and domestic filmmakers for shooting of films, co-productions and offering incentives through a single-window service mechanism. The government is looking forward to strengthening the role of these bodies and addressing the evolving demands of marketing Indian content across the world.

On strategic planning for industry conferences

MIB participates in many industry-led conferences such as FICCI Frames, CII Summits, MIPCOM and so on, and through its delegation has been apprising and receiving inputs from industry stakeholders for the holistic growth of the sector through all kinds of support, including the easing of regulatory hurdles or providing financial incentives.

Moreover, the government is open to receive any application/proposal that wants to invest in the growth of industry ■

Telangana: An attractive destination for the global media and entertainment sector

By Prerna Kothari

Jayesh Ranjan, the principal secretary of the industries & commerce and information technology departments of the Telangana government is not your average Joe bureaucrat. He is an official who knows his onions, and has been a champion of the information technology enabled services sector for more than a decade. Known to take quick decisions, he comes across like a private sector head honcho, always ready to talk about his vision for the southern Indian state of Telangana, and how it is being implemented. AnimationXpress' deputy editor Prerna Kothari had a tete with him just before MIPCOM – which he is visiting for the first time. Excerpts from the conversation:

Telangana's commitment to technological advancement is well-known. How has this approach been applied to support the media and entertainment (M&E) industry?

Telangana government believes in using technology as an enabler to bring about transformation and growth. As a result, the state focuses on supporting its citizens with the technology needed to transform an industry. The soon-to-be-launched Image tower will provide the AVGC industry with world-class facilities needed to excel in this space.

Startups in the space are also encouraged with a supportive innovation ecosystem. The state incubator, T-Hub, is the world's largest technology incubator and runs a program called Cinepreneur which focuses on training individuals and providing incubation support to startups in the M&E space.

Telangana also has the Image Center of Excellence which provides support to startups in the gaming, animation, VFX, and media space. The Image centre of excellence (COE) provides startups with mentorship, funding and a plug and play space in order to scale up and become successful.

These initiatives by the government ensure that there are home grown startups bringing in innovation and disruption to this space and also there are skilled professionals who bring the necessary talent in order to make this ecosystem flourish.

Telangana also has a well-established IT sector which provides support services such as web designing and management, interactive services (webcasting / streaming), media software development and integration.

Telangana's integrated IT and creative media



ecosystem has gained attention. Can you highlight initiatives that make the state an attractive destination for M&E businesses?

As a part of the Telangana ICT Policy, the state has created a very vibrant innovation ecosystem to encourage startups and entrepreneurs. The state incubator, T-Hub, is the world's largest technology incubator and runs a program called Cinepreneur which focuses on training individuals and providing incubation support to startups in the media and entertainment space. The biggest investment the state is making in this space is the Image Tower. The tower, to be inaugurated in 2024, will have a built-up area of 1.6 million sq ft with state-of-the-art facilities like mo-cap labs, CV labs, plug-and-play office space as well as access to industry experts for mentorship. It will be able to accommodate up to 20,000 employees. The tower will also have recreational spaces such as tennis courts, gym, food and beverages deck, and

swimming pool. The media wall is the most eye-catching feature of the tower, and is strategically planned in the corners to emphasise the multimedia and animation theme.

Hyderabad also has the advantage of having some of the major support companies for this sector such as HP, Nvidia, AMD, Dell, Intel, Amazon Web Services and Microsoft. It also has offices of international media companies such as Warner Bros, Walt Disney and domestic players such as Purple Talk, Green Gold Animation, Prime Focus Technologies etc. Hyderabad is also the nexus of the Telugu film industry which is one of the largest film industries in India and has produced renowned movies such as *Baahubali* and *RRR*. All of these factors make Telangana and Hyderabad an attractive destination for media and entertainment businesses.

How does the government of Telangana envision the future of the AVGC sector and what strategies are in place?

The government of Telangana recognises the substantial growth potential in the AVGC industry, and strives to develop it as a champion sector within the state.

The state government has implemented a comprehensive AVGC policy, called the Image policy, aimed at fostering the expansion of the AVGC industries. This policy is focused on providing a comprehensive composite framework that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship.

The key components of the Image policy are:

- Fostering skill development and job creation
- Encouraging co-production, collaborations, and public-private partnerships
- Developing specialised infrastructure and facilities to cater to the industry's needs
- Attracting investments and promoting entrepreneurship
- Offering fiscal incentives to eligible companies and start-ups

The government has been backing a range of economic and industrial activities with specially tailored policies to galvanise growth while stepping in to further bolster the already leading IT/ITeS (information technology enabled services) sector.

The Image tower is a large office space in Telangana for AVGC companies. It will be a symbol of Telangana's dedication to becoming a top AVGC destination. The tower will have modern facilities and workspaces for AVGC businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs.

There's also IndiaJoy which is a big event in Hyderabad that focuses on AVGC, esports, and digital technology. It is organised by the government of Telangana and the Telangana VFX, Animation & Gaming Association (TVAGA).

All these activities highlight the Telangana government's commitment to nurturing and developing the AVGC sector, preparing it for anticipated future growth and breakthroughs.

How does Telangana actively support and participate in IndiaJoy, and what benefits does it bring to the state and industry?

Hosted by the TVAGA and supported by the government of Telangana, IndiaJoy - the largest digital entertainment festival in Asia- plays a significant role in uplifting the AVGC sector in attracting multinational cooperation, encouraging talent, and forging new partnerships.

The Telangana government actively participates in IndiaJoy in several ways:

- **Support:** The Telangana government has

“We are actively promoting Telangana and India as a 'creative hub,' showcasing our capabilities and inviting collaboration at global events like MIPCOM.”

consistently backed IndiaJoy, initiating programs to assist the execution of the event.

- **Partnership:** It plays a crucial role in fostering relationships with industry leaders.
- **Promotion:** The government helps promote the event, ensuring input from various countries and leading industry voices.

There are various key benefits IndiaJoy brings for both, the state and the AVGC industry:

- **Global exposure:** IndiaJoy provides a platform for both international and local delegates to network and create potential collaboration opportunities.
- **Economic growth:** With the engagement of top industry experts, global investors, and other key stakeholders, it positively impacts the economic prosperity of the state.

- **Industry development:** The discussions, workshops, and collaborations that happen during IndiaJoy help in the overall growth and development of the AVGC industry.

- **Human capital creation:** With numerous corporates, governments, and industry professionals in attendance, IndiaJoy fosters a conducive human capital environment in the AVGC sector.

What role do content markets like MIPCOM play in Telangana's plans to promote India on the global stage?

Content markets like MIPCOM are



Jayesh Rajan

important in the M&E industry. They bring people together from different countries and cultures to create and share content. MIPCOM helps us put our state and India on the global entertainment map. It allows us to show our creativity, work with international media companies, and improve our position in the global content market.

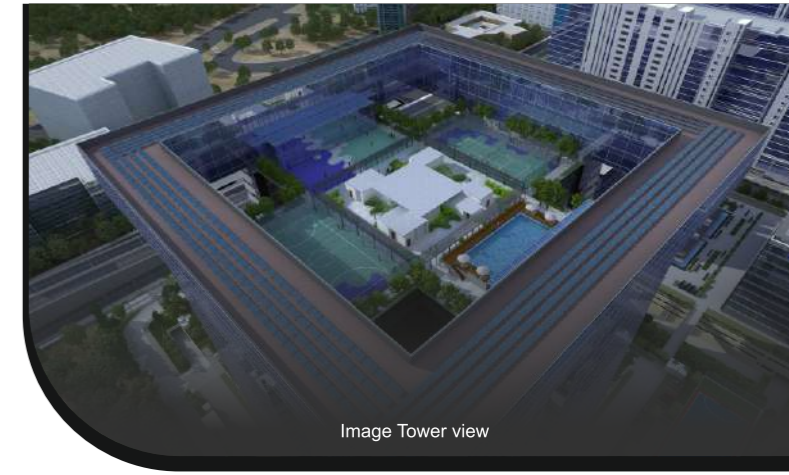


Image Tower view

The Telangana government has ambitious plans to position India at the forefront in such markets by

- **Promoting Telangana as a creative hub:** The government is actively promoting the region and India as a 'creative hub,' showcasing our capabilities and inviting collaboration at global events like MIPCOM.

- **Government support:** We are working to create a supportive ecosystem for the M&E industry – making sure we have a policy (Image policy) that spurs growth, attract investment, and cultivate talent.

- **Building infrastructure:** Telangana state is leading the establishment of infrastructures like the Image tower to boost the industry and offer world-class facilities for content creation.

- **Fostering international collaboration:** Through strategic alliances and partnerships, we are leveraging these platforms to establish meaningful collaborations for mutual progress in the content market.

- **Investing in industry:** We believe the future of the industry lies in the hands of the industry itself. Thus, we are heavily investing in events such as MIPCOM to bring a delegation of our promising AVGC companies and help them get access to global markets.



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AVGC veteran Biren Ghose speaks on govt's policies

Indian AVGC-XR is the sunrise sector contributing to job creations and more

By Binita Das

The Indian animation, visual effects, gaming, comics and extended reality (AVGC-XR) industry is no longer restricted to the limited outsourcing for simple skills as the global industry now seeks partnerships, co-productions, and even establishment of end-to-end production of world standards on Indian soil. Today the AVGC-XR industry is gaining momentum in a triage between academics, Industry and the government.

The government has introduced various schemes to support this burgeoning sector, including the Start-up India Seed Fund Scheme (DPIIT), Support for International Patent Protection in Electronics and IT (MEiTY), Procurement and Market Support Scheme (MSME), and Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana. Through proactive consultations with key stakeholders in the Indian AVGC industry, the government aims to provide tailored support, enabling the industry to reach new heights.

The CII national AVGC committee chairman and Technicolor India country head Biren Ghose believes that the government's recognition and intentions for the sector, such as for the establishment of dedicated animation and VFX Centers of Excellence, coupled with favourable policy initiatives, which include grants and financial incentives, shall play a crucial role in supporting the growth of this industry.

He shares: "These measures have attracted both domestic and foreign investment, leading to the establishment of some of the most renowned world-class animation studios and production houses like the four brands at Technicolor Creative Studios. These have proved to be lighthouses and created a road map from the West to India, making it a favoured global hub."

At the same time, the industry has amplified its

momentum towards creating universally appealing content that resonates with global audiences. "In recent years, Indian content creators have been focusing on developing stories that transcend the domestic market. This shift to creating more universally appealing content has opened up new opportunities for the Indian AVGC sector to expand its reach and influence in the international market."

Government fuelling up the AVGC engine

The Union Budget 2023 announced three centres of excellence (COEs) for Artificial Intelligence (AI) being set up in top educational institutions.

Looking ahead, Ghose suggests: "Beyond the inevitable positive AI evolution, the government is committed to enhance its support to the AVGC sector by supporting on infrastructure development, technology parks dedicated to AVGC production, financial incentives for co-productions, ease of business for international studios and producers to leverage India, and simplified regulations for foreign investments. The government shall certainly also

promote skill development initiatives and establish collaborations with international organisations to facilitate knowledge sharing and talent exchange."

The Indian government is encouraging original Indian IP creation by providing grants and incentives to creators. Besides promoting the sector's growth, this will contribute to the country's cultural and creative identity.

Also, the central government's decision to raise the FDI limit to 100 per cent through the automatic route is a significant milestone for the animation and VFX industry. Highlights Ghose: "We shall see this open to significant foreign investments,

“By emulating the success of KOCCA, India can enhance its presence in the global media landscape and showcase its rich and diverse cultural heritage through AVGC content.”

technology transfer, and job opportunities. This move positions India as a competitive destination for global AVGC companies, stimulating economic growth and development of cutting-edge content.”

Global players landing in India

In 2022, five global VFX players either started operations or announced their entry into the volume of work in India signifies the country's growing prominence in the global AVGC industry. India offers a unique blend of talent, cost-effectiveness and a diverse culture that resonates with international audiences.

“The entry of top global animation players has not only brought investment and business opportunities but also fostered collaborations and knowledge exchange taking the locally established Indian studios to world-class levels of performance. This has led to the transfer of advanced technologies, best practices, and expertise in the field, benefiting from overall growth and development of the Indian AVGC sector, which has the highest growth rate in the Indian M&E landscape,” he says.

AVGC Taskforce shaping government policies

The AVGC taskforce has played a pivotal role in shaping government policies for the sector. It has facilitated collaboration between industry stakeholders and government bodies, resulting in policies that promote growth, innovation, and competitiveness. By addressing challenges and identifying opportunities, the taskforce has created an environment conducive to the AVGC industry's development.

As a committee member of the taskforce, Ghose mentions, “Our work is ongoing, and we remain committed to ensuring the sector's competitiveness on a global scale. Skill development is a key area of focus. To this end, we have collaborated with educational institutions and industry experts to design comprehensive training programs that equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in this field. As a governing council member of the MESC, I

can confirm that our incentives are geared to create a significant positive movement in skilling initiatives.”

Content creation agencies and markets

Establishing a body similar to the Korean Content Creation Agency (KOCCA) in India could be instrumental in promoting Indian culture and content globally. According to Ghose, an agency like CII's AVGC Committee, can play a vital role in providing support, funding, and resources for Indian AVGC professionals and entrepreneurs.

“By emulating the success of KOCCA, India can enhance its presence in the global media landscape and showcase its rich and diverse cultural heritage through AVGC content. This would not only contribute to the country's soft power but also create new opportunities for revenue generation and job creation,” he adds.

In the fast-paced world of media and entertainment, where trends evolve rapidly and creative content is king, the importance of trade shows and B2B interactions cannot be overstated. Ghose concluded by saying that this year's MIP market offers a valuable platform for networking, exploring partnerships, and gaining insights into global AVGC trends ■



Biren Ghose



Unveiling India's unsung heroes: 'KTB Bharat Hain Hum' by Graphiti Studios

Celebrating India's freedom struggle and global debut on Doordarshan, Netflix and Prime Video

By Binita Das

Mumbai-based Graphiti Studios has been on a mission to captivate audiences with animated stories that breathe life into India's rich heritage, culture, and legacy. Best known for its animated movie series *Krish Trish Baltiboy (KTB)*, Graphiti Studios is back with a captivating series that promises to celebrate India's unsung heroes. Co-produced with the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), *KTB Bharat Hain Hum* is a high-budget animated project featuring over 100 iconic characters from India's Freedom Struggle.

In parallel, Graphiti Studio's journey in animation has seen remarkable success with *Deepa & Anoop*, a Netflix Original series that has garnered accolades and captured hearts. This dual

narrative explores the monumental collaboration between Graphiti Studios and the government for *KTB Bharat Hain Hum* and the triumph of *Deepa & Anoop* as a global animated sensation.

Graphiti Studios co-founder, director & COO Munjal Shroff shared insights into this unique partnership with CBC. In an industry where OTT platforms and broadcasters often claim intellectual property rights, Shroff and his team decided to produce this series in collaboration with the Ministry.

"Since *Krish, Trish and Baltiboy* is an IP owned by Graphiti, we chose to produce it with the Ministry and then seek distribution on broadcast and OTT through different players. Though this is a co-production, Graphiti is responsible for distribution and

monetisation." Shroff praised the CBC team for their invaluable support in shaping this distinctive project.

Collaboration with the Ministry: A historical initiative

The genesis of *KTB Bharat Hain Hum* can be traced back to an invitation by the CBC, as they had invited proposals from the industry to produce an animation series on the freedom struggle of India as a part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav-Celebration of India's 75 years of Independence. Graphiti's proposal, presenting the incredible stories of unsung heroes from 1500 to 1947, received approval from the evaluation committee of CBC, leading to the co-production agreement.

Creating a series rooted in India's freedom struggle involved

extensive research and navigating a complex approval process that included multiple stakeholders like the Ministry, broadcasters, and OTT platforms. The journey, though challenging, reaffirms the significance of *KTB Bharat Hain Hum* as a landmark project of national significance.

KTB Bharat Hain Hum: A grand production

KTB Bharat Hain Hum is a colossal undertaking, both in terms of storytelling and production. The series features an astonishing array of characters, numbering from 60 to over 100, including both primary and secondary roles. Apart from the four main characters - Krish, Trish, Sanskriti and the mice, each episode introduces a different hero from a distinct region and time period, requiring meticulous pre-production efforts.

"The challenge was that the amount of pre-production that we would usually do for an entire series, we were doing for each episode! Hence the cost of production is fairly high," Shroff revealed.

Artistry in animation: Styles and techniques

The makers have retained the KTB format and visual styling. It features the KTB world in 3D while rendering the story world in 2D. The series introduces a new character named Sanskriti, a digital assistant of KTB.

"We have designed her as a beautiful conch shell and she speaks and projects a

holographic screen and we see the story of the heroes being projected by her. There is a nice pulsating light animation on her as she speaks. For the story animation we have chosen a 2D animation style with a classical look. We have also ensured that the style of animation is not too toony as that would take away from the gravitas of the story. The



visual styling is very rich and detailed," he shared.

The pre-production team at Graphiti has taken a lot of effort to ensure that the background authentically captures the era, architecture and flora and fauna of the places being depicted. Overall the visual styling and approach to animation has been done so that it appeals not just to kids but to teens and adults as well.

Universal appeal: Beyond age and borders

The target audience for the show is seven years and above, reflecting the universal appeal of the stories from India's freedom struggle. In fact, the makers anticipate that there will be co-viewing, with both children and

adults engrossed in the narratives.

They have carefully crafted the narrative style of the show. Animation today is no longer just a medium for kids. The series aligns with the global trend of animation transcending age boundaries, driven by the rising popularity of anime worldwide.

"We are seeing a tremendous surge in interest in India fueled by



the growing prominence of India on the world stage. The recent wins by Indian movies like *RRR* and the documentary *The Elephant Whisperer* has generated a lot of interest. My show *Deepa and Anoop*, a Netflix Original which received four awards at Kidscreen in February has further strengthened my belief that there is growing demand for Indian content," Shroff pointed out.

A worldwide debut: Unprecedented release

Scheduled for release in October 2023, the series is divided into two seasons, each comprising 26 episodes, with each episode lasting 11 minutes. The creative team has already embarked on research and scripting for the second season.

What sets this project apart is its global debut. Sharing his

excitement, Shroff exclaimed, "I am extremely delighted to confirm that we will be releasing worldwide with a simultaneous release on Netflix and Amazon in 19 languages. Apart from this, the series will be released on Doordarshan Network in Hindi and 10 regional languages. It will by far be the largest release for any animation show in India.

"This series is one of the biggest

multi-lingual productions with a simultaneous global launch on Netflix and Amazon. It will be available in 11 Indian languages: Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali, Odiya, Assamese, Punjabi, Marathi and Gujarati. For the global audience, the series will be released in eight languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Korean and Japanese.

This ambitious release strategy makes it the most extensive launch for any animated show in India.

Government incentives: Fostering Indian animation

Shroff further highlighted how the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has undertaken a lot of policy initiatives in the last 18 months. The National AVGC-XR which is awaiting the nod from the cabinet is a solid step in the right direction. There are a host

of incentives including co-production funding, focused on skilling to ensure a 10x growth

in the talent pool in the sector. One can see a strong presence and consistent representation of Indian studios and producers under the 'Create in India' initiative.

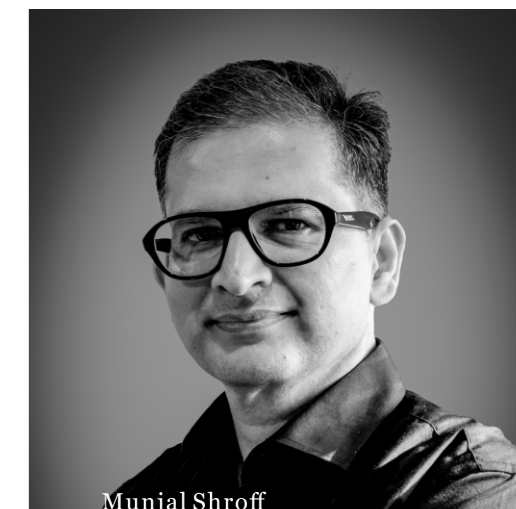
State-level AVGC policies, under consideration in over 10 Indian states, offer additional incentives and funding. The active pursuit of

co-production treaties with various animation-producing countries like Canada, France, UK, further demonstrates the government's commitment to the growth of the animation sector.

MIPCOM and global reach

Having participated in global content markets like MIPCOM since 2005, Shroff emphasises the importance of meticulous planning for successful market engagement. With limited meeting slots and time constraints, effective pitch rehearsals are essential. He recommends carrying business cards as they remain valuable networking tools in such events.

In conclusion, *KTB Bharat Hain Hum* is not just an animated series; it's a celebration of India's remarkable history. This ambitious project, born from collaboration with the government, is poised to redefine Indian animation on a global scale. Shroff's journey in animation has reached an extraordinary milestone, exemplifying the power of creativity, culture, and collaboration in storytelling.



Munjal Shroff



A 2D animated comedy for Kids 3-7 Years
 52 X 11' Episodes
 Created by Prayan Animation
 Developed by Jeff Sager



Prayan Animation Studio: Illuminating the animation world from Kerala, India

In the vibrant world of animation and entertainment, Prayan Animation Studio has emerged as a luminous star, proudly situated in the picturesque landscapes of Kerala, India. Established in 2012, this studio has embarked on an awe-inspiring journey that's infused with boundless creativity, unwavering innovation, and an undying commitment to crafting top-notch content.

Prayan Animation Studio's journey commenced with modest origins, but quickly soared to remarkable heights. The studio's tale is marked by numerous significant milestones that have made it a force to be reckoned with.

From the very outset, the studio established a steadfast mission to consistently deliver excellence in both the realm of quality and storytelling. This unwavering dedication quickly garnered them widespread acclaim and an array of thrilling projects. The studio achieved remarkable success by successfully producing Season 2 and Season 3 of the *Super Sema* series, an intellectual property (IP) owned by the Kenya-based company known as Kukua.

Prayan also received international acclaim for their short film *Dreams*, a project centered on environmental conservation. This unique and

compelling narrative, combined with their exceptional animation quality, earned them numerous accolades on the global stage.

The studio's transformative journey has been under the dynamic leadership of Vinayan V, the CEO, and Remesh Ram, the managing director. Together, they set out to diversify the studio's creative portfolio, leading it toward exciting new horizons.

Prayan Animation Studio ventured into collaborations with renowned international production houses and broadcasters. This collaboration yielded a treasure trove of critically acclaimed animated series and films, elevating the studio's global stature and unleashing its creative genius.

The studio's creative endeavours have embraced a wide spectrum, spanning 2D and 3D animation, comic and children's book illustrations, and more. This diversification has allowed the studio to keep pace with industry trends while catering to a broader audience.

It has proudly established itself as a champion in the realm of IP development. Over the years, the studio has diligently nurtured a treasury of original characters and immersive story worlds, poised to



Butcher and The Goat

evolve into iconic brands. Their dedicated team has achieved remarkable success, having created and cultivated a total of eight IPs, including *Norman & Fudgy: Toy Therapists*, *Butcher and The G.O.A.T*, *Zena's Zoo*, *Norman & Fudgy: Heroes for Toys*, *Yuki: Adventures of the Little Yeti*, *The Jelly Bean Show*, *Monty & Camy: The Mysteries of Nivood*, and *Run Dino Run*.

The animation house is far from static, churning out nearly 600 plus minutes of 2D animation content annually. The studio's portfolio extends to 3D animation, children's book illustrations, game content development as well as comic book illustrations.

CEO Vinayan reflects on the studio's journey: "No one can truly succeed unless they're passionate about their work. At Prayan, we instill our team with the right values, vision, and a spirit of innovation." These words underscore the studio's commitment to creating a profound impact on the animation landscape.

Prayan has evolved from a modest startup to a formidable entity with over 100 employees and numerous partner studios. Their team is a vibrant blend of creative and business professionals, all united by a common goal - achieving excellence. The studio's future is built on a robust foundation of creativity and innovation. Their vision includes expanding their global footprint by collaborating on larger and more ambitious projects, cementing their position as a global animation leader.

Prayan stands as a shining testament to India's remarkable prowess in the field of animation. With a rich history marked by unwavering commitment to quality, a spirit of innovation, and a forward-thinking approach to growth, the studio is poised for an even more promising future. Their dedication to intellectual property development is set to play a pivotal role in shaping the global animation landscape. As Prayan continues to push the boundaries of creativity and captivate audiences with their compelling storytelling, their journey is destined to soar to dazzling new heights in the years ahead.

For further inquiries about Prayan or to discuss potential projects, reach out at +91-9526573922 or via email at info@prayananimation.com



Norman and Fudgy



Zena



Butcher and The Goat

Initiative By
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From India to a Galaxy Far, Far Away: 'The Bandits of Golak' illuminates the Star Wars universe

Revisiting 88 Pictures's journey of cracking the magnum opus project

By Binita Das

When Indian culture and the legendary *Star Wars* universe collided, a dazzling creation emerged in the form of *The Bandits of Golak*, an animated short featured in the anthology series *Star Wars: Visions Volume 2*, now airing on Disney+.

The short is created by 88 Pictures, the Indian animation and VFX studio that has worked on projects like DreamWorks' *Kung Fu Panda: The Dragon Knight*, *Trollhunters* and Max's *Gremlins – Secrets of the Mogwai*.

Armed with a rich tapestry of cuisine, costume, and culture, 88 Pictures founder and CEO Milind D Shinde and director Ishan Shukla managed to win the trust of American production company Lucasfilm, thereby becoming the first Indian entry into the esteemed *Star Wars* franchise. *Visions Volume 2* featured nine captivating shorts from around the globe — *The Bandits of Golak* being a standout addition.

The genesis of this remarkable collaboration came when Shinde heard about Lucasfilm's plan for the second part of *Visions*. He had only one thought: "If *Visions 2* was going to be about how *Star Wars* influenced cultures around the world, India had to be a part of it." His goal was clear: to illustrate the country's animation prowess on a global stage.

Talking about convincing Lucasfilm to trust an Indian studio to deliver *Bandits of Golak*, he shared that right from the stage of idea pitching to the final delivery, Lucasfilm team was there to guide 88

Pictures throughout. They gave them full freedom to execute their vision of the film while being in the background as a rock-solid pillar.

Crafting "The Bandits of Golak"

The Bandits of Golak episode in the series centres around Charuk, an elder brother who is tasked with protecting his Force-sensitive sister, Rani. This short fits in the *Star Wars* theme of a battle between good and evil, painted with the colours of all things Indian. Embarking on its creative journey, 88 Pictures meticulously weaved Indian heritage and architecture into the *Star Wars* universe. Every detail, from attire and colours to patterns, was carefully considered in character creation. One can find references of food, dhaba (road side eatery) and Indian cinema. In its initial pitch, 88 Pictures imagined a world where the Indian iconic film *Sholay* met *Indiana Jones*. The team took references from here to build the mood and vibe of the animated short.

The major highlight of this short is its visual style. The team aimed to present something entirely unprecedented; thus opting for a hybrid style that incorporated traditional painting techniques.

Shinde explains: "We had one thought in our mind that if the audience paused at any frame, it should look like a painting." So the film was made to look

like a painting coming to life, a kaleidoscope of artistic brilliance, drawing inspiration from 18th-century orientalist oil painters like Edwin Lord Weeks, Gustav Bauernfeind, and Rudolf Ernst.

Exciting cultural elements

The Lucasfilm team's commitment to maintaining the integrity of the *Star Wars* universe led Shinde and his team to focus on storytelling essentials, eliminating elements that did not contribute to the plot's depth.

Character development played a pivotal role in ensuring a global connection with the audience. The siblings, Charuk and Rani, were initially crafted as typical Rajasthani individuals, later



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refined to have a more universally appealing aesthetic. Drawing inspiration from Indian mythology, 88 Pictures fashioned the villain of the story after Asuras, resulting in the creation of the iconic Inquisitor character with golden armour and menacing red eyes.

One noteworthy sequence in the film featured an Indian train, seamlessly integrated into the Star Wars universe with intricate Indian patterns. The beloved Indian sweet, "jalebi" was cleverly renamed as "lebi" in the film.

Finishing touches and the magic of voice acting

One can spot innumerable novel elements in *The Bandits of Golak* that exuded a distinctly Indian essence while shining brightly in the *Star Wars* universe. Achieving the perfect animation, complete with expressive body language was one of the major aspects.

The voice acting, featuring talents like Suraj Sharma, Lillete Dubey, and Neeraj Kabi, truly brought the characters to life. Kabi's approach as the Inquisitor added a touch of magic to the script as his voice skillfully blended imposing menace with mischievous charm. His conversational approach followed by the final attacking jump brought out the villain's dreadful side.

As for the fight sequences in the film, 88 Pictures wanted to create a very different style and they drew inspiration from the 'Kalaripattu' sword fight, infusing a unique style that caught the eye of Lucasfilm. The film's creators added a flowy dance-like choreography to the fight and the Inquisitor sequence because



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the fighting style that Rugal is trained in relies heavily on aerial rolls and twists. The studio's careful attention to detail in the use of lightsabers and the visually stunning fight sequences left a lasting impression.

Sneha Khanwalkar who was on board as the music composer created a distinctive music that represented various cultures, geographies and instruments. For instance, Jangori music was more bombastic, relying on custom made Indian 'wuzelas' and playing flute for the brother-sister theme music that was calming as well as nostalgic.

The Bandits of Golak stands as a testament to India's rich talent pool and the treasure trove of narratives waiting to be shared on the global stage. 88 Pictures' involvement in the *Star Wars* franchise marked the culmination of years of passion, persuasion, and the development of invaluable global connections ■

International content adaptations in India

The art & science of captivating diverse audiences

In the ever-evolving landscape of Indian entertainment, the art and the science of content adaptation from international formats has become a strategic imperative. It is a testament to the dynamism of the Indian media industry that we have successfully embraced and localised international content, putting it on the top of our diverse entertainment offerings.

Recipe for success: The adaptation of format shows Format shows have emerged as pioneers in the realm of international content adaptation in India. These shows serve as compelling examples of how relevant adaptations, coupled with the right star cast and tweaks as per local nuances, go a long way in ensuring success across languages and demographics.

Big Brother: Over 17 years of engagement, and yet breaking records

One of the most iconic format shows, *Big Brother*, underwent a remarkable transformation on Indian soil as *Bigg Boss*. The show's genius lay in its ability to capture the essence of drama and celebrity culture. Each season brought together a diverse mix of contestants, from Bollywood stars to everyday individuals, creating a microcosm of society within the confines of the Bigg Boss house.

The Indian adaptation's popularity soared as audiences eagerly tuned in to witness the interpersonal conflicts, alliances, and emotional roller coasters that unfolded. The right blend of celebrity contestants and ordinary participants ensured that viewers from all walks of life could connect with the show. *Bigg Boss* has not only resonated with viewers across languages (*Bigg Boss* is today rolled-out in Hindi, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil), but has also spawned regional adaptations, further expanding its reach.

Fear Factor: Thrills and chills for the Indian audience

Fear Factor, transformed into *Khatron Ke Khiladi* in India, exemplifies how the adaptation process can capture the spirit of adventure and thrill-seeking within the Indian context.

The show tapped into the Indian appetite for adrenaline-pumping challenges, catapulting contestants out of their comfort zones.



The Indian version's success was a result of smart casting, with renowned Bollywood and television stars taking on the role of fearless contestants. Add to this the bang-on hosting by Indian actor Akshay Kumar initially, and later Indian director Rohit Shetty. This approach infused a sense of glamour and intrigue into the show, while also retaining the core essence of daring stunts and nail-biting suspense.

MasterChef India: A culinary extravaganza

The adaptation of *MasterChef* as *MasterChef India* served up a delightful fusion of global culinary expertise and Indian flavours. The show seamlessly integrated the world of gastronomy with the rich tapestry of Indian cuisine.

The presence of renowned chefs and culinary experts on the judging panel added credibility and depth to the Indian adaptation. Contestants, from homemakers to aspiring chefs, brought their unique culinary heritage to the forefront. The show not only appealed to food enthusiasts but also transcended language barriers, thanks to the universal language of food.

Fiction shows: The global appeal of *The Night Manager* & *The Good Wife*

While format shows have made their mark, fiction shows have not lagged behind in the race for international content adaptation success. Take, for instance, *The Night Manager*, a gripping espionage thriller based on John le Carré's novel, produced in India by Banijay Asia and The Ink factory.

The adaptation seamlessly transported the intrigue and tension to Indian screens. The key to the show's success lay in its meticulous storytelling and casting choices, led by none other than veteran actor Anil Kapoor and Aditya Roy Kapoor.



Deepak Dhar

Similarly, the adaptation of *The Good Housewife* into *The Trial* in India stands as another great example of the power of relevant adaptations and star power. Starring the immensely talented Indian actress Kajol, the show found its way into the hearts of viewers across India. Kajol's compelling performance breathed life into the complex character she portrayed, resonating with audiences who eagerly followed her journey from a homemaker to a determined woman seeking justice. Both these shows went on to become two of the most watched shows on the streaming platform Disney+ Hotstar.

The global success story of adaptations

The phenomenon of international content adaptation is not limited to India alone. Across the globe, countries have embraced this trend, adapting and localising content that resonates with their audiences. The reason for this global success lies in the universality of compelling narratives and relatable characters.

Navigating fragmented entertainment markets

As entertainment markets across countries become increasingly fragmented, new opportunities open up for content creators and storytellers. The proliferation of television channels and the emergence of streaming services have transformed the industry landscape. This fragmentation, far from being a challenge, presents an exciting opportunity. Content creators can now cater to niche audiences while simultaneously aiming for mass appeal. The diversity of content offerings ensures that viewers can find content tailored to their specific tastes, leading to increased engagement and loyalty.

The omnichannel approach: Leveraging television and streaming platforms

Format and fiction shows in India have intelligently leveraged both television and streaming platforms to connect with their audiences. This omnichannel approach ensures that content reaches viewers at their convenience, creating a dynamic ecosystem for entertainment consumption. It also allows for experimentation with diverse themes and genres, catering to the evolving tastes of viewers. *Bigg Boss* in India is first played out on an OTT platform, followed by its television season – with both getting record ratings.



The future of international content adaptation in India

Looking ahead, the trend of international content adaptation in India is poised for exponential growth over the next two-three years. With a growing appetite for fresh and engaging narratives, coupled with the ever-evolving tastes of Indian audiences, the industry will continue to be a hotbed of innovation and creativity, within the adaptations.

International content adaptation in India has evolved into an art as well as a science form - enriching our entertainment landscape with diverse offerings that appeal to a multitude of viewers. This trend has not only redefined the way we consume content but has also elevated the Indian media industry to global prominence. As we move forward, embracing this trend will be pivotal in captivating audiences and ushering in a new era of content creation and consumption in the country ■

(This article has been contributed by Banijay Asia and Endemol Shine India founder & group CEO Deepak Dhar and AnimationXpress does not necessarily subscribe to these views)



Source: All India, NCS 2+, Colors SD+HD, WK40 - WK45 2022, Original + Repeat



In the bustling world of an underground ant world, Lazy Lilly, a plump and book-loving ant, stumbles upon extraordinary solutions to everyday problems with her ingenious laziness, proving that sometimes the most unexpected heroes can save the day.

LAZY LILLY

USP: Unique, Magical Fantasy
 FORMAT: 11 Minute Episodes
 GENRE: Slice of Life, Slapstick, Fantasy
 AUDIENCE: Kids

Tavrohi Animations

TAVROHI ANIMATIONS

THE SENSATIONALS

MAX, MACY & MIKE

'A SPECIAL SHOW FOR EVERY KID! - Cause every kid is special'

USP: Inclusivity, Diversity, Unique Adventures
 Format: 52 x 11 min Episodes
 Genre: Slice of life, Fantasy
 Audience: Tweens

Misfits everywhere, a trio of siblings gain extraordinary abilities from a wise mentor in an enchanted forest, becoming confident heroes who go on unique adventures to save the endangered enchanted forest.

Tavrohi Animations

Shanaya

- The Wanderlust Detective

Join the jet-setting journey of an uber stylish teen influencer turned detective as she travels the world, solves mysteries, and uncovers the secrets hidden in exotic locales - where fashion, food, and intrigue collide!

A modern-day Nancy Drew meets Carmen Sandiego.

USR: teen female detective cum influencer
 Format: 22 X 8 episodes per mini series
 Genre: Mystery, Travel, Action Adventure
 Audience: Teens and Young Adults

In a multicultural household, two lovable yet comically senile grandmas - an Indian dadi and a Mexican abuela navigate whimsical challenges and cultural differences to raise their adorable grandson

Granny VS Granny!

An epic battle between 2 grannys!

USR: Grandparent love, Family Values, Relatable to diaspora
 FORMAT: 11 minute episodes
 GENRE: Animated sitcom with a dose of drama and slapstick
 AUDIENCE: Kids and family



Silver Slate Animation Pvt. Ltd.

Show name - WILD SPARKLES
Duration of episodes - Each of 11 minutes.
POC - Prinita Gautam

In an adventure school, 14-year-old Eartha and her friends - Layna, Irina, Ajax, and Theron - embark on a quest to find Eartha's missing parents, the King and Queen of a tribe, who set off in search of the mystical island of Lakufa. Breaking the school rules, they escape but are pursued by guards. As they follow clues, they get separated, facing obstacles and mysteries in their quest to reunite and uncover the secrets of Lakufa, ultimately reuniting with the missing King and Queen.

Ann Awards 2023:
Honouring Indian animation excellence

Animation Xpress concluded the fourth edition of Animation & More Summit and Ann Awards on 13 September. The rebranded edition of the Kids, Animation & More (KAM) Summit was followed by the grand award ceremony Ann Awards bringing together students and esteemed professionals from the sector to celebrate and recognise the talent within the Indian animation industry.

The AM Summit 2023 and Ann Awards were powered by 88 Pictures and co-powered by Zebu Animation. The creative technology partner was Autodesk; and Powerkids Entertainment, the lanyard and badges partner. The associate partners were Karco, ARK infosolutions and Moho. The support partners were ETV BalBharat, Sony YAY!, Wacom, Eizo, Reliance Animation, Appu Series and Huion. DigiCon6 Asia was the event's festival partner.

The Ann awards Jury included: Charuvi Design Labs founder/director Charuvi P. Agrawal, CAKE production VP Ciara Breslin, Joan Vogelesang Consultants consultant Joan Vogelesang, Parle Products senior category head Krishnarao Buddha, Saffronic studio director Prabhakar Sambandan, MPC (Technicolor Creative Studio, India) creative director - VFX Rajarajan Ramakrishnan, Paperboat Design Studios founder and chairman Soumitro Ranade, Reliance Animation CEO Tejonidhi Bhandare, and AnimationXpress founder, chairman, editor-in-chief Anil NM Wanvari.

Last year, AnimationXpress in association with Graphiti Multimedia instituted the "Ram Mohan Award For Excellence in Animation" in honour of the father of Indian animation - Late Padma Shri Ram Mohan. This year, the award was presented to UID, Gandhinagar, and New Delhi adjunct professor Prakash Moorthy for his significant contributions to the Indian animation industry, with the award being felicitated by late Ram Mohan's wife Sheila Rao, Graphiti Multimedia CEO & co-founder Tilak Shetty, COO & co-founder Munjal Shroff, and Wanvari.

Continuing the tradition, AnimationXpress hosted "The Arnab Chaudhuri Director's Award", instituted in memory of the late Arnab Chaudhuri, a creative genius and champion of the Indian animation industry. Neeraja Raj was honored with "The Arnab Chaudhuri Animation ACE Award." Raj, a film director and writer at Nexus Studios, impressed everyone with her remarkable body of work. In the second category, "The Arnab Chaudhuri Young Ace Award," Gaurav Pati emerged as the winner. Pati is pursuing his undergraduate in animation filmmaking from National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad.

The Arnab Chaudhuri awardees were selected by a committee consisting of individuals who worked closely with Arnab during his lifetime. The committee consisted of: Srishti Manipl Institute of Art Design and Technology consultant, UPES School of Design distinguished professor Nina Sabnani; The Walt Disney Company Europe & Africa original programming, animation, media networks VP Orion Ross; filmmaker, animator & UCLAN part time animation lecturer Pete Bishop; UID, Gandhinagar and New Delhi adjunct professor Prakash Moorthy; On Air Promos Sdn Bhd creative director Rob Middleton, Anil NM Wanvari and Chaudhuri's wife Ashima Avasthi.

Here's the complete list of the winners of Ann Awards 2023:

DIGITAL & OTT

Best Animated Digital Series - 2D
Varsity Junior by Zerodha Broking

Best Animated Digital Series - 3D
Gremlins - Secrets of the Mogwai by 88 Pictures

Best Use of Animation in a Music Video
Aata Senasaata by Plangle Studio

Best Animated Short Film
Bandits of Golak by 88 Pictures

Best Animated Full Length Feature Film
Peter Pan: The Quest For Never Book By Powerkids Entertainment

LICENSING & MERCHANDISING

Best Animated Character Merchandise
Chhota Bheem & Funskool Association from Green Gold Animation

Best Use of Leveraging a Character for Brand Marketing
Chhota Bheem - Bum Tum Association from Green Gold Animation

Best Licensed Animated Series Programme
The Jungle Book Franchise from Powerkids Entertainment

MEDIA ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Best Channel Packaging
Sony YAY! Rebrand by Sony YAY!

Best Digital Campaign for an Animated Series
The Quiz Time - Spongebob Squarepants by ETV BalBharat

Best Experiential Marketing
Oly's World by Tavrohi Animations

Best Use of Animated Character in a Brand TVC
IPL - Simpoo Singh by Tavrohi Animations

Best Animated Brand Film
Lion and Goat by Tavrohi Animations
Star Mush Detector by Paperboat Design Studios

Best Brand Collaboration
When Chai Met Toast Concert and Van Heusen in Partynite from Gamitronics

Best Innovative Campaign
Baahubali 1 & 2 - Stop Motion by Shemaroo Entertainment

Best Promo
Baahubali 1 & 2 - Stop Motion by Shemaroo Entertainment

PROGRAMMING

Best 2D Animated Series
PaJaMa from Toonz Media Group
Kanha - Yudh Ke Ladoo from Viacom 18 Media (Nickelodeon)

Best 3D animated series
Pffirates from philmCGI
Dragonero: Tales Of Paladins Season #1 from Powerkids Entertainment

Best Preschool Show
Gogo Bus by One Take Media Co.

Best Animated Short Film
The Endless Night by Arijit Ghosh

Best Animated Full Length Feature Film
My Fairy Troublemaker by philmCGI

TECHNICAL

Best Animated Project in Metaverse
Gujarat Titans Metaverse by Tavrohi Animations

Prayan Animation Studio



A heartfelt CG adventure comedy for 6-9 Year Old
52 x 11' Episodes
Created by Prayan Animation
Developed by Jeff Sager

Best Music Composer
HappyVerse Song from Sony YAY!

Best Title Song
Abhimanyu from Viacom18 Media (Nickelodeon)

Best Title Design
4AM Worldwide Advertising for Mai

Best Character Design
Roro Aur Hero – Bhoot Mast Zabardast by IN10 Media Network
Tattva_118 by Paperboat Design Studios

Best Production Coordinator
Warner Bros. Discovery – Roohnaz Khan for Little Singham (2D+3D) / Chhota Bheem (2D+3D) / Titoo / Ekans / Baby Little Singham / Simmba / Bunty Billa Babban / Fukrey Boyzzz

Best Composer
philmCGI for The Karate Sheep

Best Modeller
Kumkum Varma / Frameboxx 2.0 Animation & Visual Effects/FC Road for Sword

Best Editing in an Animated Film
Cosmos Maya for Titoo Ki Vampirepanti

Best Screenplay Writer
Vishal TM for Off-Camera

Best Dialogue Writer
Pratilipi Comics for Love in Mussoorie
Nupur Sharma for Little Singham_ Naagsingham (Telefeature)

Best Producer
philmCGI for Pffirates

Best Director of an Animated TV Series
Dhananjay Bhopale from Symbiosys Entertainment

Best Director of a Digital Series
Shyam Wanare & Rajiv Sarkar for Varsity Junior

Best Director of an Animated Film
Dheeraj Berry from Cosmos Maya for Titoo Ki Vampirepanti

Best Animator – Male
Yogesh Rupani from 88 pictures for Bandits of Golak & Gremlins – Secrets of the Mogwai

TECHNOLOGY

Best Hardware Used in Animation
Studio56
Shemaroo Entertainment

Best Software Used in Animation
Shemaroo Entertainment for Baahubali 1 & 2 – Stop Motion

Best Technical Innovation
Carmond Infinity for Jungle Marathon

PARTNERS/SERVICE

Best Effects
Vinay A M / Mikros Animation for Kamp Koral: SpongeBob's Under Years

Best Character Design
4AM Worldwide Advertising for character design of Burpy

Best Storyboard Artist
Shresath Tuli from Reliance Animation Studio, for Baby Little Singham – Kite Fun

Best Concept Artist
Aditi Kiran from Zebu Animation Studios for Lego Dreamzzz: Trials of the Dream Chasers (Season 1/ Ep1 – Ep 10)

Best Composer
philmCGI for The Karate Sheep

Best Art Director
Venky Ramanan from Zebu Animation Studios for Lego Dreamzzz: Trials of the Dream Chasers (Season 1)

Best Producer
Ishani Priyamvada from Zebu Animation Studios for Lego Dreamzzz: Trials of the Dream Chasers (Season 1)

Best Animator – Male
Rakshith A from Mikros Animation for Star Trek: Prodigy

Best Preschool Show
Eureka from Assemblage Entertainment

Best Animated TVC
Puma Nitra: A New Era of Running by Famous Digital Studios

Best Animated Digital Series
Booba by Assemblage Entertainment

Best Animated Series
Mia and Me Season 4 / 100% Wolf: Legend of the Moonstone by Studio56 Animation
Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir by Assemblage Entertainment

Best Animated Short Film
Alvaro: Reignition | Free Fire Tales from SDFX Studios (Company3 Method India)

Best Animated Full Length Feature Film
Mia Movie – The Hero of Centopia by Studio56 Animation

Best Partnered Animation Work
Super Giant Robot Brothers by Assemblage Entertainment

SOCIAL MEDIA

Best Reel With The Use of Animation
Dim Buc Doo by Crazy Cub Animation Studio

Best Social Media Content – Animated
Teen Buddhu by Green Gold Animation

Best Social Media Presence by an Animation Platform/Studio
Cosmos Maya for WowKidz

STUDENTS

Best Student 2D Film
Sreeram J from Indian Institute of Art and Design

Best Student 3D Film
Joy Dust from Maya Academy of Advanced Creativity, MAAC India

SPECIAL AWARDS

Best Syndicated Content
Powerkids Entertainment for The Jungle Book Franchise

Best Use of Animation in a Public Service Message
Off-Camera from Videogyan Studios

India's Most Loved Animated Character
Chotta Bheem from Green Gold Animation

Popular Character (Global)
Mighty Little Bheem from Green Gold Animation

Best Bollywood Inspired Animated IP
Smashing Simmba from Reliance Animation Studios

Best Ensemble in an Animated Series
Cosmos Maya for Motu Patlu

Young Animator of The Year
Dolly Kela

Hall of Fame 2023
Arjun Madhavan

Contribution to the Animation Industry
Ashish Kulkarni

Animation Personality of the Year
Manoj Mishra, CEO, Powerkids Entertainment
Milind D. Shinde, founder & CEO, 88 Pictures

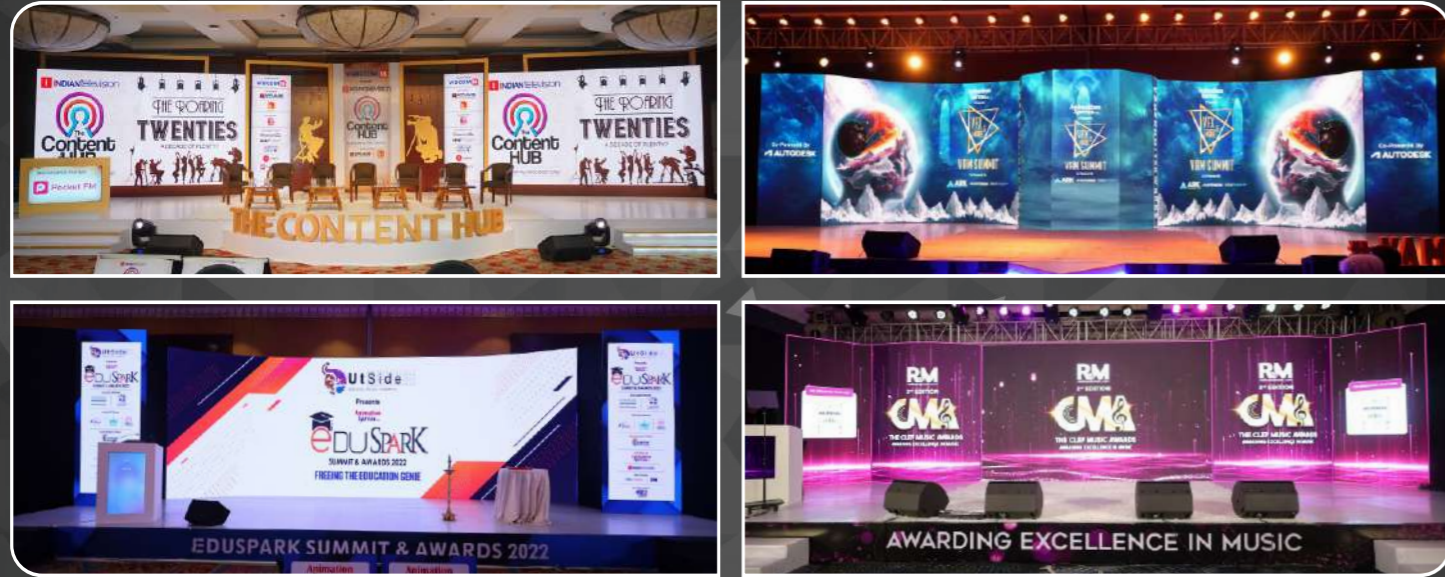
Best Indie Studio
Tavrohi Animations

Studio of the Year
philmCGI



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- Entertainment Awards Shows: Roll out the red carpet and let us handle the rest! Our team will ensure your awards show is a dazzling affair that honours excellence

OUR SERVICES

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| 4 Audio-Visual Excellence | 5 Logistics Management | 6 Event Marketing |

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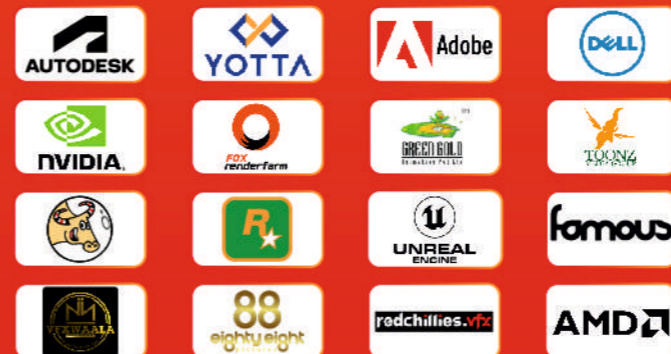
SERVICES

- Information & Knowledge
- Syndication & Distribution
- Activation
- Marketing & Promotion
- Recruitment & Job

BRAND PARTNERSHIPS



OUR CLIENTS



ONLINE PORTAL Demographic Statistics

- TIME SPENT **2 min**
- READERSHIP **140+ countries**
- EMAILER DATABASE **1,00,000+**
- SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS **1,00,000+**
- PAGES VISS PER MONTH **1.25 Million**
- UNIQUE VISITORS PER MONTH **2,50,000+**

OUR IPs



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