

Talent is the buzzword for Indian animation industry

Lack of skilled talent and big-budget projects are the main roadblocks for the Indian animation industry to sustain its robust growth that has seen its revenue multiply manifold to \$306 million, experts maintain.

'There has been a boom in the animation industry in the last three years but we have still room to improve upon the quality. If we compare our works with the West, their projects show finesse because of the budget involved,' Amit Sharma of Rhythm and Hues told IANS on the sidelines of an animation seminar organised by Maya Academy of Advanced Cinematics (MAAC) here.

'In India, animation is considered to be a medium for fast money and you don't get quality exposure. The time constraint and the low-budget for the project also hampers the quality,' added Sharma.

Deepak Ganguly from Tata Elxsi echoed the same saying: 'Quality gets hampered by the stiff deadlines.'

However, V.K. Gupta, Sr. Pipeline Technical Director at Big Animation, stresses more on story telling.

He said: 'In animation, story telling is the main thing. The quality parameter is very subjective. It is the director at the end of the day who decides what quality is needed.'

Both Ganguly and Sharma said that quality would begin to show when budding animators join the profession, and not just for the money.

'One should opt for animation as a career only when one is creatively involved and not just because the money is good,' said Ganguly.

Gupta added: 'Indians are delivering worldwide. There is a lot of quality in our work. We need to nurture the talent that is required in the Indian animation industry.'

The animation and Visual FX segment was pegged at Rs.13 billion in 2007, growing by 24 percent over 2006. Going by the speed at which the industry is expanding, India will need 25,000 more professionals by the close of next year. The industry currently has only a little over 10,000 professionals working in this techno-creative field.

But this is no cause of alarm. Thanks to many institutions that have come up of late to provide animation education, there are now about 100,000 students who are undergoing training in animation, VFX and gaming in different parts of the country. The first batch of these will fill the gap by turning professionals by next year.

Gupta is concerned that people are not exposed to variety and versatility is lacking because of the same.

'A lot of overseas projects are coming to India but we need to improve on the whole for more business opportunities,' said Ganguly.

The animation industry is poised to touch more than USD 1.5 billion by 2009, according to an industry forecast by Anderson Consulting.

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