New media educator

With the Indian media and entertainment industry comprising film, television, radio, music and the evolving gaming and animation industries witnessing explosive growth, there’s a commensurate demand upsurge for skilled professionals capable of developing content for new age digital media.

Anticipating this demand and lacuna in quality media education in India, Chennai-based entrepreneur Rathish Babu promoted Access Atlantech Edutainment India Ltd (AAT) in the year 2000 and shortly thereafter, acquired a licence to establish the Indian campus of the School of Audio Engineering, Australia (SAE) — billed as the world’s largest media college with a network of 53 institutions in 19 countries. Subsequently, the college has expanded its network to Mumbai, Bangalore, Dibrugarh and Delhi and claims the distinction of being the first private college in India to provide a gamut of study programmes in media and entertainment.

Currently the five SAE campuses in India host an aggregate 860 students instructed by 53 faculty enrolled in three-year undergraduate degree programmes in digital filmmaking and recording; animation; games design and development; animation for games and games design. Moreover SAE India offers four 18-month diploma courses and 18 short-term optima courses. Affiliated with Middlesex University, London and Dibrugarh University, Assam, SAE India has academic and other collaborations with international media education providers including SAE Australia, Digidesign, USA, and Optima, Chennai which ensure wide placement opportunities for its graduates. In July this year, AAT signed a partnership agreement with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to offer two six-month certification programmes in digital audio and digital production in the blended learning model combining online and classroom study modules.

“The media and entertainment industry has experienced a sea change with consumers graduating from print to electronic medium, films to television, landline to mobile phones, the internet, satellite radio, and a host of electronic communication services. Hand-held devices and value-added services are currently ruling the edutainment market, and have created diverse requirements for content and an urgent need for content providers. The existing new media institutes in the country can only cater to 30 percent of this huge demand. Our objective is to deliver trained professionals to the fast-track media and entertainment industry,” says Rathish Babu.

An engineering graduate of Bharathiyar University, Coimbatore, who completed a senior management programme at IIM Bangalore and an entrepreneurship development programme at the Regional Engineering College, Trichy, Babu began his career in 1989 with HCL-HP, before deciding to quit the IT industry in 1998. His passion for films and media led him to sign up as faculty with SAE College, Sydney (1999) and after a 10-month stint there, Babu returned to Chennai to promote AAT and plant the SAE flag in India.
“We plan to inaugurate an SAE campus in Cochin this year and in Calcutta and Hyderabad next year. There are immense opportunities for young entrants in this field, particularly in the gaming industry whose revenue is set to hit Rs.1,500 crore this year. The new media and entertainment industry in India — already the world’s largest — is set to get bigger,” predicts Babu.

Hemalatha Raghupathi (Chennai)