Devices lead the revolution

"Devices with content are changing the way consumers look at entertainment," observes Rathish Babu, Chief Executive Officer, Access Atlantech Edutainment Ltd.

A student of the Carmel Garden Matriculation Higher Secondary School and alumnus of the Tamil Nadu College of Engineering here, he has emerged the chief for all the five SAE institutions in India. SAE, which has 53 campuses in 19 countries, specialises in education and training in audio engineering and creative media sectors. That includes digital film making, animation, gaming, journalism, etc.

The basic motto of the Access Atlantech is to "educate, manage, and create," says Mr. Babu.

He heads an institution which has raised well-known film industry personalities like Silambarasan, Shruti Hassan, G.V.Prakash (A.R.Rahman's nephew), Ganesh Vaidyanathan (L.Vaidyanathan's son), Anu Malik, Aparna Pillai and Sharada Ramanth (who won three awards for cinematography, choreography and music).

In a chat with G. Satyamurty, he outlines how media scenario has changed over the years thanks to the digital revolution and the immense employment potential in the media world.

He admits both the reading and writing habits have also undergone a sea change.

Entertainment industry has weaned the children away from reading. Electronic newspapers have changed the way how news is received. From a static medium, newspaper has become a dynamic medium. A newspaper when becomes electronic needs new content makers.

He points out that the "content" has got to be changed according to the device (sector). In the "funnel" of entertainment and media industry, "we have graduated from film theatres to television, internet, social sites on the net, value added services and mobile, internet protocol TV, satellite radio, internet radio, community radio and regional TV."

Mr. Babu gives some staggering statistics. At present, the theatres in India are screening films in 32 languages. "From that stage, we have moved on to television channels running to more than 100 in India itself. If the channels were also to use materials in 32 languages, what would be the number of content providers required, that too for round-the-clock transmission? Apart from the content providers, every channel requires on an average 100 ancillary staff," he adds.

The content meant for the film industry is not suitable for the television sector. It keeps on changing from sector to sector (device to device). Thus the number of content providers and the ancillary staff necessary is mind-

boggling.

The way entertainment production is done has also changed quite a bit. For instance, from studios of a big size, home studios have come into existence. Instead of spending crores of rupees on a film, now it is possible to produce a film at just Rs. 25 lakh using the home theatre.

Similarly, the minimum budget for an analog film used to be Rs. 2 crore. Now digital films could be produced at just Rs. 30 lakh to Rs. 50 lakh.

The avenues for publicity have also grown in leaps and bounds. Even before the release of the film, ring tone is introduced through the mobiles. Publicity could be done through the YouTube across internet. Besides, it could be done on all social websites including Facebook and myspace.com.

Blog is another option. "What you should notice is that the material is ready for publicity well before the release of the film and it is coming to you at zero cost."

He also points out that the very outlook and the expectations of the consumers are changing. "They are controlled by devices."

There is a shift in terms of what you look at and value added services market has become enormous. From viewing films in the theatres, home theatres have become quite common.

From iPod, mobile, desk\laptop computers and digital camera, any number of devices are invading the market and the consumers' preferences are influenced by these devices.

Mr. Babu is certain that regional\local content will rule the entertainment industry.