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‘Create in India,’ says task force on gaming, animation and VFX



The task force has proposed a national AVGC-Extended Reality Mission with a budget outlay to be created for the integrated promotion and growth of the sector. M. KARUNAKARAN

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

A “Create in India” campaign with an exclusive focus on content creation; an international platform for animation, visual effects, gaming and comics (AVGC) aimed at attracting foreign direct investment, co-production treaties and innovation in collaboration with international counterparts; national and regional centres of excellence for skill development; and leveraging the National Education Policy to develop creative thinking at school level.

These are among the recommendations in the report of a task force on AVGC promotion, submitted to the Union government. The task force has proposed a national AVGC-Extended Reality Mission with a budget outlay to be created for the integrated

promotion and growth of the sector.

Draft national and State policies for the promotion of the sector have been submitted by the task force, which presented the report to Information & Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on December 22. Chaired by I&B Secretary Apurva Chandra, the group comprised Secretaries of the associated Union Ministries, including those of Skill Development, Education, Electronics and Information Technology, besides prominent faces of the sector.

“The Ministry of Education may advise NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) to create books focusing on subjects relevant to AVGC,” the report said.

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‘Create in India,’ says task force on gaming, animation and VFX

Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comic (AVGC) Task Force

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had made an announcement during her Budget 2022 speech on 1 February that India's creative industries have been waiting for a long time.

AVGC Task Force was constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of I & B, Shri Apurva Chandra, to help realize the full potential of the AVGC sector in India, with key stakeholders from the Industry and the Government

The task force aims to:

- provide focused thrust for the growth of the sector by driving the institutional efforts to guide the policies of growth for 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.

Potential

- India has the potential to capture 5% global market share in AVGC sector by 2025
- Also has potential of 1.6 lakh jobs annually.
- According to a Redseer report done with Lumikai, India's gaming market is expected to jump from \$2.2 billion in value in 2021 to \$7 billion by 2026. Also, India's gamer base is expected to touch 700 million by 2025. The report also found that gaming company studios increased from just 25 in 2015 to over 500 in 2021.

Challenges facing the task force when it comes to the gaming industry

- Talent development:
 - Creation of Centres of Excellence encourages institutes to come up with video game development courses. This has to be a constant endeavour to encourage youth to take up game tech and game design as a mainstream career option.
- Financing:
 - This includes a combination of government and private sector financing.
- Access to global best practices:
 - Having worked in the gaming sector for over a decade, Sehgal has seen the benefits of knowledge exchange between industries in different geographies.
 - India has a thriving deep tech and animation sector, but there is still a lot to learn when it comes to best practices in areas like data science, UI/UX design, and there is immense potential for collaboration.
- Building from India for the world:
 - The last two years have been exciting, and Indian companies are seizing the global landscape in the B2B, SaaS, and edtech space. We should be leading from the front when it comes to gaming culture and entertainment as well

Domestic Industry Development for Global Access

- A National AVGC-XR Mission with a budget outlay to be created for integrated promotion & growth of the AVGC sector.
- Launch of a 'Create in India' campaign with exclusive focus on content creation, In India, For India & For World!
- With a goal to make India the global hub for AVGC, institute an International AVGC Platform, along with a Gaming Expo) with focus on FDI, Co-production treaties and Innovation.
- Establish a National Centre of Excellence (COE) for the AVGC sector to become an international reference point across Skilling, Education, Industry Development and Research & Innovation for the AVGC sector. Regional COEs will be instituted in collaboration with the State

Developing Talent ecosystem to realize Demographic Dividends

- Leverage NEP to develop creative thinking with dedicated AVGC course content at school levels, to build foundational skills and to create awareness about AVGC as a career choice.
- Launch AVGC focused UG/ PG courses with standard curriculum and globally recognized degrees. Standardize admission tests for AVGC related courses (viz, MECAT by MESIC).
- With an eye on the demand of 20 Lakh skilled professionals in AVGC sector in this decade, augment skilling initiatives for AVGC sector under MESIC. Enhance Industry participation to ensure employment opportunities and absorption for students from non-metro cities and NE states.

Enhancing Technology & Financial Viability for Indian AVGC Industry

- Democratize AVGC technologies by promoting subscription-based pricing models for MSME, Start-Ups and institutions.
- Made in India for AVGC technologies through incentive schemes for R&D and IP creation. Evaluate PLI scheme to incentivize AVGC hardware manufacturers.
- Enhanced Ease of Doing Business in AVGC sector i.e tax benefits, import duties, curbing piracy, etc.
- Leverage Start-Up India to provide technical, financial and market access assistance to AVGC entrepreneurs to promote culture of R&D and

Raising India's soft power through an Inclusive growth

- Establish a dedicated Production Fund for domestic content creation from across India to promote Indian culture & heritage globally. Evaluate Reservation for high-quality indigenous content by broadcasters.
- For an Inclusive India, target skilling and industry outreach for youth in Tier 2 & 3 towns and villages in India. Establish Special incentives for women entrepreneurs in AVGC sector.
- Promote local Children's channels for raising awareness on rich culture and history of India among children and youth
- Establish framework to ensure Child Rights Protection in the digital world

Expedite classification of nomadic tribes in quota lists, panel tells Centre

Parliamentary panel on Social Justice and Empowerment notes the process has been 'very slow'; says the delay will increase communities' suffering and deprive them of welfare scheme benefits

Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

The parliamentary panel on Social Justice and Empowerment has pulled up the Union government over the "very slow" process to categorise over 260 denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes under the SC/ST/OBC lists. Government officials have pointed out that this has delayed the approval of benefits under the SEED (Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs) launched in February this year.

The scheme was launched by Union Social Justice Minister Virendra Kumar, with the aim of providing free competitive exam coaching, health insurance, housing assistance, and livelihood initiatives. An amount of ₹200 crore has been allocated for this scheme – to be spent over five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

As of December 26 evening, a total of over



In red tape: Over 5,400 applications had been received under the Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs. FILE PHOTO

5,400 applications had been received under the SEED, none of which have been approved and no amount has been sanctioned.

The panel, in a report tabled in Parliament this Winter Session, noted that it had earlier too flagged the "inability of the department to take necessary action" on the speedy and accurate categorisation of these communities.

After the government said that the work was proceeding and would be finished by 2022, the panel said the process was still

very slow. It added, "Delay in locating them would increase their suffering and they would not be able to get benefit of the prevailing schemes meant for the welfare of SC/STs."

The panel further said it expects the government to expedite this exercise and finish it in a time-bound manner and sought detailed timelines for the same.

Department's response
In response to the panel's concerns, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment had submitted

that the Anthropological Survey of India had submitted reports on categorisation of 48 DNT communities so far. In addition, of the 267 communities not categorised so far, the AnSI has finished studies on 24 communities, with Tribal Research Institutes studying 12 of the communities.

Further, the AnSI is finalising studies on 161 communities and is expected to finish studying the remaining communities (about 70) by the end of 2022.

More than 10 crore Indians from over 1,400 communities are either denotified, nomadic or semi-nomadic. Of this, the Idate Commission had categorised 1,262 communities under SC/ST/OBC lists and 267 communities were left uncategorised. Even the communities categorised by the Idate Commission are not accurate with many communities appearing in SC lists in one State or district and on the ST list in another.

02

Expedite classification of nomadic tribes in quota lists, panel tells Centre

Scheme for Economic Empowerment of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (SEED)

De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes

- These are communities that are the most vulnerable and deprived.
- DNTs are communities that were 'notified' as being 'born criminals' during the British regime under a series of laws starting with the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871.
- These Acts were repealed by the Independent Indian Government in 1952, and these communities were "De-Notified".
- A few of these communities which were listed as de-notified were also nomadic.
 - Nomadic and semi-nomadic communities are defined as those who move from one place to another rather than living in one place all the time.
- Historically, Nomadic Tribes and De-notified Tribes never had access to private land or home ownership.
- While most DNTs are spread across the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) categories, some DNTs are not covered in any of the SC, ST or OBC categories.
- It has been estimated that South Asia has the world's largest nomadic population.
- In India, roughly 10% of the population is Denotified and Nomadic.
- While the number of Denotified Tribes is about 150, the population of Nomadic Tribes consists of about 500 different communities.

Related commissions and committees

- These include the Criminal Tribes Inquiry Committee, 1947 constituted in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh),
- Ananthasayanam Ayyangar Committee in 1949 (it was based on the report of this committee the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed),
- Kaka Kalelkar Commission (also called first OBC Commission) constituted in 1953.
- The B P Mandal Commission constituted in 1980 also made some recommendations on the issue.
- The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC), 2002 held that DNTs have been wrongly stigmatised as crime prone and subjected to high handed treatment as well as exploitation by the representatives of law and order and general society

Developmental Efforts Regarding DNT

- **National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT)**
 - A National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) was constituted in 2006 by the then government.
 - It was headed by Balkrishna Sidram Renke and submitted its report in 2008.
 - The commission held that “It is an irony that these tribes somehow escaped the attention of our Constitution makers.
 - They are deprived of Constitutional support unlike Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes”.
- **Renke commission**
 - The Renke commission estimated their population at around 10.74 crores based on Census 2001.
- **Idate Commission**
 - The National Commission was constituted in 2015 under the chairmanship of Shri Bhiku Ramji Idate.
 - This commission was tasked to identify and properly list DNT communities in different states, to evaluate the progress of development of these communities in the states.
 - Based on the recommendation of this commission, the Government of India set up the Development and Welfare Board for DNTs, SNTs &NTs (DWBDNCs) in 2019.

Schemes for DNT

- **Dr. Ambedkar Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNTs:**
 - This Centrally Sponsored Scheme was launched w.e.f. 2014-15 for the welfare of those DNT students who are not covered under SC, ST or OBC.
- **Nanaji Deshmukh Scheme of Construction of Hostels for DNT Boys and Girls:**
 - This Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched w.e.f. 2014-15 is implemented through State Governments/ UT Administrations/ Central Universities.
- From the year 2017-18, the scheme "Assistance to Voluntary Organization working for the Welfare of OBCs " has been extended for DNT.

Scheme for Economic Empowerment of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (SEED)

The Scheme for Economic Empowerment of Denotified/Nomadic/SemiNomadic (SEED) communities was launched in February 2022 by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

It aims to provide free competitive exam coaching to these students, to provide health insurance to families, to uplift clusters of these communities through livelihood initiatives, and to provide financial assistance for housing.

Components:

- Free coaching to students from these communities for Civil Services, entry to professional courses like medicine, engineering, MBA, etc.
- Health Insurance through PMJAY of National Health Authority.
- Livelihoods to support income generation
- Housing (through Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (PMAY/IAY)).

Features:

- It ensures expenditure of Rs.200 crore to be spent over five years beginning 2021-22.
- The DWBDNCs (Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities) has been tasked with the implementation of this scheme.
- An online portal has been developed by the department which will ensure seamless registration and will also act as a repository of the data on these communities.

Unfunded pension scheme is a tax on future generations, says Sanyal

Revival of old pension scheme by some States reverses recent pension reforms says member of PM's EAC; economist sees 2023 as a difficult period given current stress in global economy, urges vigilance over prospect of resurgence of COVID-19

PressTrust of India
NEW DELHI

Concerned over revival of the Old Pension Scheme by certain Opposition-ruled States, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) member Sanjeev Sanyal on Monday said unfunded pension schemes are ultimately a tax on future generations.

Mr. Sanyal further said given the current stress in the global economy and the repeated downgrades done to world GDP growth

Word of caution

Some Opposition-ruled States have opted to revert to the Old Pension Scheme spurring concern about the fiscal implications

■ The OPS, under which entire pension amount was given by government, was discontinued by the NDA government from April 1, 2004



■ Under the New Pension Scheme, employees contribute 10% of their basic salary while State government contributes 14%

■ India needs to continuously monitor inflation, current account given global challenges

numbers by international agencies, it was quite obvious that 2023 would also be a difficult period.

"It should be very clear that unfunded pension schemes are ultimately tax on future generations. There-

fore, one should be very, very careful to reverse pension reforms that have been done with great difficulty over the last couple of decades," he told PTL.

Mr. Sanyal was responding to a question on some Opposition-ruled States' decision to switch to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS).

The OPS, under which the entire pension amount was given by the government, was discontinued by the NDA government in 2003 from April 1, 2004.

On overall macroeconomic situation, he opined

that apart from the problems in eastern Europe, a sharp surge in COVID cases in China will possibly have spillovers on rest of the world's economic growth.

According to him, India needs to be vigilant about the prospect of resurgence of COVID-19.

"There are macroeconomic stability issues that we need to be continuously monitoring particularly in the area of inflation and also in the case of current account given that our export markets are all slowing down," he opined.

03

Unfunded pension scheme is a tax on future generations, says Sanyal

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

NCPCR is a statutory body set up in March 2007 under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005.

It is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Women & Child Development.

The Commission's mandate is to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes, and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with the child rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Any person between the ages of zero and eighteen is considered a child.

It inquires into complaints relating to a child's right to free and compulsory education under the Right to Education Act, 2009.

It monitors the implementation of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

NCPCR warns NGOs over depiction of vulnerable children for fundraising

SPECIAL

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

The practice of civil society organisations using representative visuals for fundraising activities concerning development issues such as malnutrition now faces new scrutiny, with the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) issuing a directive to non-governmental organisations (NGO) not to depict vulnerable children.

A 2013 campaign by a U.K.-based NGO, Save the Children, titled “Khushi”, featured a 20-month-old baby lying on a hospital bed at a malnutrition treatment centre in Tonk, Rajasthan. The baby was videographed as a helpless and needy child, with the camera zooming into a close-up of her face and eyes as she looks morosely into it.

The narrator describes her as a malnourished

child in need of help and makes an ardent appeal: “Please, will you help? Please, donate ₹500 a month and make a difference.”

The campaign, which aimed to raise money for the NGO’s initiative against malnutrition, came under scrutiny from several corners over the use of the images of a vulnerable child.

The campaign ran for several years even as some within the NGO were shocked that their organisation did not know the latest on the well-being and whereabouts of the child featured in its campaign.

Now, another campaign by the same NGO, titled “Anand”, depicting an emaciated infant whose ribs can be seen sticking out under his skin, is at the centre of a fresh controversy that has sparked a debate on the imagery among child rights organisations.

On December 2, the NCPCR wrote to NGOs across the country on the practice of “raising funding, domestic as well as in-

ternational, for their NGOs through advertisement while showing vulnerable minor children in deplorable conditions”.

The letter asked NGOs to refrain from such depiction as it amounted to a violation of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015.

This missive was preceded by another letter from the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) on November 2 to all States and Union Territories.

The letter named Save the Children and its campaign to tackle malnutrition in tribal children by raising ₹800 from the general public, and called it misleading on the ground that the issue of malnutrition was being “vigorously pursued” by the government through its Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 scheme.

It also asked States to “report” similar incidents involving NGOs, take “appropriate measures to expose the false information” and “alert beneficiaries



Ensuring welfare: The rights body said that such depictions amount to violation of the Juvenile Justice Act. FILE PHOTO

about false claims made by them”. Both the letters were based on a detailed complaint by a Rajya Sabha member.

Sudharshan Suchi, CEO of Save the Children, did not respond to a questionnaire e-mailed to him, seeking details of his organisation’s policy on the use of imagery involving children, and the whereabouts of the child “Khushi”.

Images taken down

The images from the “Anand” campaign have since been pulled down

and the NGO’s website is now replete with images of happy children.

Save the Children’s “statement of principles” regarding the use of imagery, specifically the portrayal of children in a 2017 document – it updated its media policy following widespread criticism – available on its website states its “clear priority is to generate the response that will help fund our work” which requires that “we create and publish challenging, hard-hitting imagery”.

However, efforts are made to ensure it does not

objectify, belittle or dehumanise children, the NGO says. Informed consent of the subject or their family is obtained for photos and it is ensured that they understand the use to which their images may be put as well as the possible consequences, the NGO says. It adds that rigorous procedures are also undertaken to minimise any risk to the children, and no more than two of the following pieces of information are given out: a child’s full name, image and location.

The Ethical Image Policy of another NGO, WaterAid, also pays attention to what is allowed or not allowed in post-production, and how long images can be used. In order to ensure visual representation is more egalitarian and participatory, it has also started hiring and training local people to work as “photo, film and story gatherers”, and trains children and young adults in Pakistan and Nepal to use cameras to communicate issues that affect them.

The UNICEF’s “Eight quick steps to ethical imagery” suggests asking the question – “If she/he were my child, how would I want her/him portrayed?” It also warns against the other extreme of using happy and cute images of children as they “tend to objectify children into an idealised and sentimentalised happiness that negates the complexity of their real life”.

Many in the civil society have welcomed the government’s directive.

“We ensure that we don’t present children in their vulnerability, though those representations appeal most to the people. Instead we present strength and dignity. The poorest of children do laugh and have managed to live with dignity. Therefore, the government’s position is the right one,” Kavita Ratna, director, advocacy and fundraising, The Concerned for Working Children, said.

But the agency of the subjects involved is crucial and if it is the decision of

the community to be depicted in a difficult situation, then that is also taken into account, she added.

Ms. Ratna, however, points out that there is also a need for a mind shift as the donor community appears to need or respond to evocative pictures in fund-raising.

The government’s concern over visual representation of children comes at a time when it has doggedly challenged global reports on rising levels of malnutrition in India.

In 2020, a warning on how COVID-19’s impact on access to healthcare services and food systems could result in a rise in malnourished children led to Smriti Irani, the Minister for Women and Child Development, calling up the UN headquarters.

The Union government has also repeatedly rejected India’s performance in the Global Hunger Index and questioned the methodology. India was ranked 107 among 121 countries in 2022 on the index.

04

NCPCR warns NGOs over depiction of vulnerable children for fundraising

Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister

27th December THNA

EAC-PM is a non-constitutional, non-statutory, independent body constituted to give advice on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.

The council serves to highlight key economic issues to the government of India from a neutral viewpoint.

It advises the Prime Minister on economic issues like inflation, microfinance, and industrial output.

For administrative, logistic, planning and budgeting purposes, the NITI Aayog serves as the Nodal Agency for the EAC-PM.

Terms of Reference of EAC-PM:

- Analyzing any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the Prime Minister and advising him thereon,
- Addressing issues of macroeconomic importance and presenting views thereon to the Prime Minister.
- These could be either suo-motu or on reference from the Prime Minister or anyone else.
- It also includes attending to any other task as may be desired by the Prime Minister from time to time.

Periodic Reports:

- Annual Economic Outlook.
- Review of the Economy.

QUIZ OF THE DAY

Q1. Consider the following statement:

1. Diesel-electric submarines need to resurface more frequently, making them easier to detect.
2. India is among six nations that have nuclear-powered submarines, alongside the US, the UK, Russia, France and China.
3. India has INS Chakra 2, a type of nuclear-powered submarine.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1,2 and 3

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Interpol.

1. It was established in 1923 and India was a founding member of Interpol.
2. It is an international organization that facilitates worldwide police cooperation and crime control.
3. Research and Analysis Wing is India's nodal agency for Interpol.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3