

Industry and Govt. officials do a reality check on M&E industry

MUMBAI, 21 March 2017: Experts from the M&E industry and senior Government officials did a reality check with private sector players discussing ways to monetize consumption platforms and calling for a level-playing field for all stakeholders and transparency in policies and implementations.

Speaking at the **FICCI FRAMES** session on *'Do the Lions Still Roar: A reality check for media and Entertainment Industry and its contribution'*, **Mr. Ajay Mittal, Secretary, Information & Broadcasting, Government of India**, sought to address the issue of threats of violence to film makers, stating that creativity is the soul of society and should not be fettered. "Our Constitution articulates protection very well" but reminded the audience that this freedom is not absolute and that the Constitution speaks of reasonable restrictions.

Mr. Sudhanshu Pandey, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, pointed out that the service sector in India was largely in the unorganised sector and had found its own way to grow. In the next phase the country has to move towards a level-playing field. Transparency in the policy framework and implementation were critical in creating such an environment, he said.

The other panellists were Mr. Siddharth Roy Kapur, Leading Film Producer and President, The Film and Television Producers Guild of India; Ms. Anuradha Prasad, Chairperson & MD, BAGS Films & Media Ltd; Mr. Bharat Anand, Henry R. Byers Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School; Mr. Raj Nayak, CEO, Colors – Viacom 18; Mr. Harit Nagpal, Managing Director & CEO, Tata Sky and Mr. Kapil Agarwal, Jt. Managing Director, UFO Moviez India Ltd.

The session was moderated by Mr. Nalin Mehta, Consulting Editor, The Times of India and Senior Fellow, IDF & Editor, South Asian History and Culture (Routledge).

The industry players agreed that this was a diamond era for content creators but wondered how the digital platforms could be monetised unless the subscription business model came into play. There was need for all stakeholders to get together and sort out the issues. Censorship in any form was unacceptable because the so-called offensive content was available for viewing on YouTube. It was noted that today everyone is a media company providing content and that there was a blurring of industry boundaries.

In the session on *'The Content Trap: A Strategist's Guide to Digital Change'*, Mr. Bharat Anand, Henry R. Byers Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School, said that if content is king, then content connectors are emperors. He added that not just content but differentiated and unique content was the king.

Mr. Anand said that just content was not enough but creation of a fundamentally different experience was needed for success. He added that there were complementarities being built between content and connectors which was helping in enhancing business.

Speaking about hierarchy in content, he said that digital fundamentally encourages openness but there was hierarchy in content, which allowed only a certain kind of information to be published and there was need to balance out hierarchy and content.