

Animation industry in Bangladesh: Global potential and current challenges

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Remember 'Meena', the animated character who taught generations of Bangladeshis about morals and knowledge? How about the escapades of 'Thakurmar Jhuli' that filled our rooms with anticipation and joy? These animations were not just children's tales; they were the building blocks of many childhoods in Bangladesh.

Today, animation in Bangladesh is metamorphosing, moving beyond the flickering screens of our childhood to present a host of career opportunities. It is emerging as a flourishing sector, creating a space where tradition meets innovation and dreams meet reality.

The evolution of Bangladeshi animation

The animation industry in Bangladesh, while still in its nascent stages, is a testament to the nation's burgeoning creative potential. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the canvas for animators expands, and Bangladesh is no exception. However, like any emerging industry, it faces its own set of challenges and opportunities.

At a glance, Bangladesh's animation landscape might seem like it's playing catch-

pushing the envelope. Yet, for all its potential, the industry's growth is stymied by a lack of investment and resources. The animation sector, by its very nature, is capital-intensive.

Ruhan and Ratul articulate this challenge, saying, "The existing investments and resources in Bangladesh's animation industry are growing but are not ample to ensure competition on an international level." Local animation experts agree that there is a pressing need for enhanced support from third parties, angel investors, and government initiatives. However, a harmonious collaboration between private entities, governmental bodies, and animation studios can propel the industry forward, allowing Bangladesh to carve a niche for itself in the global animation landscape.

From access to advanced tools and training to financial constraints and navigating the intricate maze of creative complexities, the challenges are manifold. Ruhan and Ratul highlight, "Significant challenges in animation projects encompass overcoming technical intricacies, managing financial constraints, and navigating creative complexities to produce engaging high-quality content."

One of the leading animation studios of Bangladesh, Cycore Studios' CEO, Murad Mahub Abrar, adds another layer to this, pointing out the scarcity of educational institutions offering specialised courses in animation in Bangladesh. This gap in formal education underscores the importance of self-learning, mentorship, and on-the-job training.

Ahsan Habib Shawon of Magic Puppets Studio, a leading animation studio working for the film industry and international market, offers a unique perspective, drawing attention to the payment structure for animators in Bangladesh. He says, "The volume of work in Bangladesh is a lot in comparison to the payment for the animators, and this disparity could deter potential talent from entering the field." However, he remains optimistic about the future, believing that with time, the talented animators of Bangladesh will be reaching greater heights.

The rise of animated storytelling in Bangladeshi films

The film industry in Bangladesh, while traditionally rooted in live-action cinema, is gradually recognising the potential of integrating animation into its narrative fabric. A prime example of this is the collaboration between Magic Puppets Studio and the makers of the film 'Hawa'. Ahsan Habib Shawon of Magic Puppets Studio recalls their involvement, particularly in the intricate VFX and liquid simulation scenes. Their contribution to the movie's underwater sequences is a testament to the studio's prowess and the broader capabilities of Bangladeshi animators. These collaborative endeavours lay the groundwork for more comprehensive projects in the future, diminishing the distinction between live-action and animated filmmaking.

Cycore Studios, on the other hand, has taken a more global approach, focusing on pressing issues that resonate worldwide. Their project, 'Tomorrow: An animated film about climate change', is an ambitious testament to the vision and the broader potential of animation to convey societal messages such as climate change.

The importance of specialisation

In the multifaceted world of animation, the

mantra for success increasingly leans towards specialisation. The vast expanse of the animation pipeline, from conceptualisation to final rendering, demands expertise at every stage. For those aspiring to carve a niche in this industry, a generalist approach might offer a broad understanding, but it's the specialists who often find themselves in high demand.

Murad Mahub Abrar of Cycore Studios aptly points out the pitfalls of being a "jack of all trades, master of none" in this domain. According to him, as the industry evolves, so does its complexity, making it imperative for animators to delve deep into specific areas, be it character design, texture artistry, rigging, or any of the myriad specialities the field offers. By honing expertise in a particular segment, animators not only enhance their employability but also contribute more effectively to intricate animation projects. In essence, specialisation isn't just a career choice; it's a strategic move towards ensuring longevity and success in the animation world.

Bangladesh's emerging role in global animation outsourcing

Digital platforms have emerged as a beacon of hope, enabling local animators to showcase their talent on an international stage. This is a golden opportunity for Bangladesh, a nation teeming with young, eager animators. Ananta Islam further elaborates on this, stating, "For young animators in Bangladesh, there are opportunities to work on local and international projects like advertisements, TV shows, and educational content." The future holds the promise of increased collaborations with international clients.

As per a common sentiment shared by professional local animators, the economic dynamics of the animation industry also favour Bangladesh. According to them, historically, India has been a major destination for outsourced animation work. However, Bangladesh is emerging as a more cost-effective and convenient alternative. The quality of work, combined with competitive pricing, makes Bangladesh an attractive proposition for international studios looking to outsource. This shift is not just about cost but also the dedication, creativity, and resilience of Bangladeshi animators, who are increasingly being recognised on the global stage.

Navigating a future in Bangladeshi animation

For local animators aspiring to make their mark, the journey ahead, while promising, requires careful navigation. Ananta Islam offers a roadmap, advising youngsters to "master the fundamentals, leverage online learning, practice consistently, and build a quality portfolio." Moreover, understanding the specific segment of animation they excel in, staying updated with industry trends, and networking extensively are crucial. As the industry evolves, so should the skills and strategies of the animators, ensuring they remain relevant and in demand, both locally and internationally.

As it can be seen, the animation industry in Bangladesh is at a pivotal juncture. It stands on the cusp of greatness, armed with talent, ambition, and a drive to succeed. The challenges, while significant, are not insurmountable. With the right investments, collaborations, and a focus on education and training, Bangladesh's animation odyssey is poised to be a tale of success, innovation, and global recognition.



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up with global standards. Ananta Islam, a young solo animator from Genkai Studios, says, "Global animation hubs often have larger budgets, access to advanced software and hardware, and a deeper pool of experienced professionals. Compared to international animation standards, Bangladesh is still catching up." Earlier in the year, Genkai Studios posted an original animated short film called 'Flight', which was directed and animated in Bangladesh by Ananta, a student of Fine Arts at Jagannath University.

A similar sentiment is echoed by RTBRuhan and Ratul Biswas, directors and animators at XD Bros, a local animation studio in Bangladesh. They note, "There is a disparity between local animation quality and well-established global standards, attributed to limited access to advanced tools and training." Yet, it's about more than just the challenges. The very fact that these observations exist indicates a keen awareness of the global benchmark and a drive to meet, if not exceed it.

The financial puzzle of local animation

The animation industry's future in Bangladesh is not just about content creation; it's about innovation, diversification, and

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Minimum experience: 5 years
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A beginner's guide to navigating the modern creative industry

Ever felt you have what people call 'the artistic touch'? Have an everlasting desire to dive into design-based projects? Are you someone who never loses an opportunity to show the world your innermost creative ideas? In the ever-evolving landscape of the modern creative industry, opportunities abound for those with a passion for innovation and a flair for the artistic.

However, whether you are a budding designer, writer, photographer, or multimedia enthusiast, stepping into the world of creativity can prove to be an ineffective endeavour if you aren't sufficiently prepared. Before you embark on this exciting journey of a professional creative talent, here are some essential things to keep in mind.

What kind of jobs are considered 'creative'?

The creative industry today encompasses a diverse range of professions, each playing a vital role in shaping the cultural and visual landscape. Some of the most common creative jobs today involve **digital marketing**, where you will need to combine creativity with business strategy to create innovative, eye-catching campaigns and advertisements. As such, a professional digital marketer needs to be armed with sufficient business sense and idea about the current market to effectively promote products and services in the competitive online realm of today.

You can also opt for creative **content**

creation, which, professionally, usually involves blogs and videos where you can earn money through sponsored advertisement. Bloggers and writers are constantly in high demand for crafting compelling narratives and engaging content for various platforms, including websites and social media.

Similar to writing and video-making, **graphic designing** is a popular choice in today's creative industry. From branding to digital media, graphic designers breathe life into visual concepts, making them a crucial part of marketing and communication strategies.

If you want to make your creativity shine through **photography** and/or **videography**, you can do so professionally as well. In the creative industry, having good visual storytelling skill is paramount. Skilled photographers and videographers can capture moments that resonate with audiences, whether in the realms of advertising, journalism, or entertainment.

If none of the above fits your bill - go for **web development**. While you will need proper courses and education to build a professional website on your own, you can always opt to collaborate as a designer with web developers to craft user-friendly and visually appealing websites.

What to expect when working in the creative industry

Being able to put your creativity to the test in a professional setting will seem like a thrilling experience, but, like every other



job, this field too comes with its unique sets of challenges. Here are some essential things you should be wary of:

Collaboration is key: As an artist, writer, or photographer, you will often find yourself working with others in collaborative environments. Be prepared to regularly interact with diverse teams, exchange ideas, and embrace different perspectives to elevate your work and take your creativity to the next level.

Adaptability is crucial: The creative industry is dynamic, with trends and technologies evolving rapidly. Stay

abreast of industry changes, continuously upskill, and be adaptable to new tools and techniques.

Passion fuels productivity: A genuine passion for your craft will not only drive your creativity but also make the inevitable challenges more manageable. Love what you do, and it will reflect in your work.

Tips for a successful start

Now that you have the basic ideas of what kind of jobs to expect and what kind of mindset you should be equipped with, let's dive into some essential tips so you can successfully dive into the wild world of the

modern creative industry.

Build a strong portfolio: A portfolio is an excellent way to showcase your skills as a visual designer or creative writer, allowing potential employers or clients to get an understanding of your preferred style. Be sure to include your best work, especially prominent past projects, in your creative portfolio.

Network, network, network: Like any other field, building a strong network will help you find better job opportunities in the creative industry. As such, as a young professional, you should attend industry events, join online forums, and stay in touch with experts in your field. Networking opens doors to mentorship and collaborative projects as well.

Be open to feedback: Keep in mind that your creative style might not match everyone's taste. So in case you receive constructive criticism, embrace it and use it as an opportunity to grow. Helpful feedback is a powerful tool that you can use to refine your skills further.

Keep learning: In the world of creativity, there is no end to learning. Use everything and everyone around you as a source of inspiration to fuel your everlasting thirst for creativity. Explore mediums of arts and literature that you might not be used to, as you can potentially find new sources to draw inspiration from and thus, keep your ideas fresh and innovative.