

India - Educating taxpayers of the future

Whereas taxpayer outreach towards school going children and young adults has always been a part of the tax administrations' outreach strategy, Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, a government-wide initiative of the Union Government of India celebrating the completion of 75 years of India's independence, provided a platform for truly revolutionizing the tax administrations' communication strategy to the taxpayers of the future. As a part of this campaign, the Department proposed the launch of board games, a 3-D Puzzle, comic books, an animated video series and an Android Game, all aimed at enhancing the tax literacy of the future taxpayers of the country.

A short brief of the board games, 3D Puzzle and the comic books is given below,

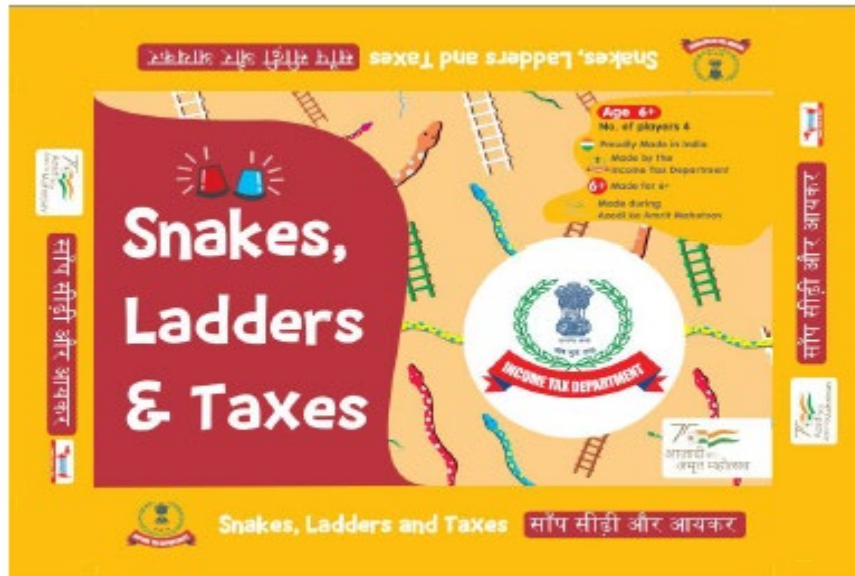
A. Board Games and 3D Puzzle

- i **Snakes, Ladders and Taxes:** This board game introduces good and bad habits in respect of tax events and financial transactions among the players through the well-established game pattern of snakes and ladders. The game is simple, intuitive and educational with good habits being rewarded instantaneously and bad habits being penalized instantly.

For example: When the player reaches the square with “Advance Tax is paid in time”, the player moves up a ladder. At the top of the ladder, a reward is also mentioned - the interest saved on timely payment can be invested. When a player reaches a square with “Income tax search”, the player moves down the snake with an outcome - “All black money unearthed”.

Some images of the game are placed below,





- ii **Building India:** This collaborative game introduces the concept of importance of paying taxes through the use of 50 memory cards based on infrastructure and social projects. The game, just like taxation is collaborative in nature and not competitive wherein every person tries to do their best so that everyone can win together. The better everyone uses their memory, the happier the country remains. The game introduces the concept of physical and social infrastructure in the country and their importance to the growth and development of a nation.

For example: After shuffling and placing the cards in rows and columns, when two similar cards, say Indian Air Force, are picked, the player keeps the cards, and moves the happiness token one notch towards the “happy end”. However, when two different cards are picked, the cards are placed back on the floor and the happiness token moves one step towards the “unhappy end”.

Some images of the game are placed below,

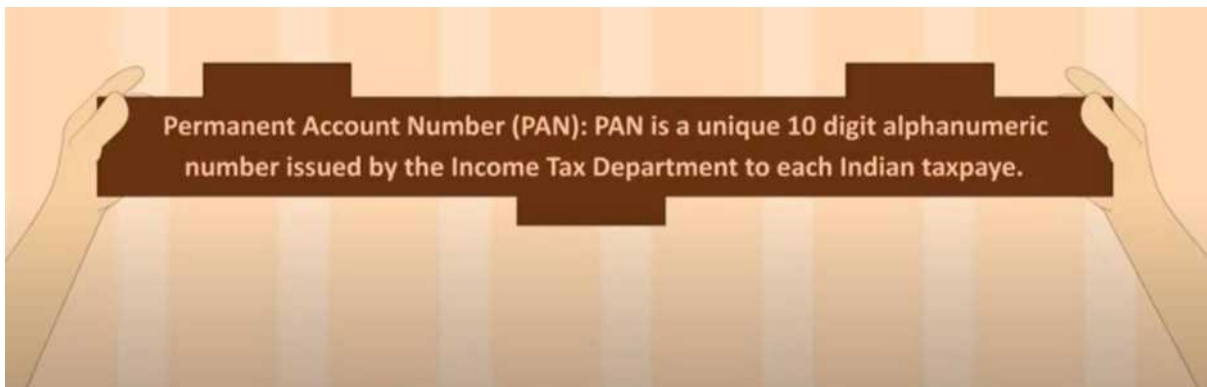




- iii **India Gate - 3D Puzzle:** This game consists of 30 pieces, which when connected together will build a 3-dimensional structure of India Gate. Each piece contains important information on various concepts and terms pertaining to Direct taxes. The game uses a 3-dimensional model to intuitively teach about income and taxes. The underlying theme is that a nation's infrastructure is built on a foundation of taxes.

The pieces are made of foam board, when constructed, the model can be broken down and rebuilt by the children or can be used as a memorabilia in homes and offices. The bright and visible slogan at the base of the model "*Pratyek Aayakar Data ek rashtra nirmaata*" (Hindi for Every taxpayer is a nation builder) reminds everyone in the family of their responsibility of tax payment.

Some images of the 3-D Puzzle are placed below,





B. Comic Books

The Income Tax Department has collaborated with the characters “Motu” and “Patlu”. These characters are the most watched Indian comic characters worldwide with a viewership of several millions. This was the first such collaboration of the Income Tax Department with well-established comic characters.

Through these comics, the role played by taxes in nation building and the ease in tax compliance in India are highlighted. It is a series of 8 comic books in English, Hindi and other regional languages.

Some of the images of the comic books are placed below,



C. An Android Game

An Android Game is currently under development. It is proposed to provide with players, an opportunity to perform the functions of a tax administrator in a small town. The players are allowed to take on responsibilities like collecting taxes in a fully functional city. The players identify businesses that are following short on their tax payments and may choose between a set of options to improve the tax collections. Once the city's treasury has enough amount of revenue, the player can choose different kinds of infrastructure that he can create for the city.

D. Educational video series

An educational video series is under development which is proposed to explain the concept of money and taxes, intuitively through white board animation. The main characters, a currency note, takes the viewers along in its journey across the country through businesses, banks and individuals. Viewers experience the same journey through the video and obtain an understanding of how the economy works and the role played by taxes in the economy.
