



Advanced Cinematics (MAAC) for Rs 76 crore. The secondary non-IT courses had mixed fortunes. Aptech's premium brand, Avalon, introduced courses in tourism in association with Thomas Cook which showed a 35% decline in the number of enrolments due to a severe downturn in the aviation sector. However, Aptech acquired First English in May 2009, and in FY10 re-launched it as English Express with a bouquet of offerings like General English, Spoken English, Business English, Accent Training and English Test Preparation. Aptech plans to open about seventy English Express centers across the country in the current fiscal.

Beyond the Domestic Market

Vietnam, Africa and China happen to be the common geographies where two major training companies seem to be vying for the top slot. Aptech Vietnam has once again emerged as the leader in Vietnam's growing information & communication technology space. The international IT education firm won the 'Top ICT Vietnam 2009 Cup' and ICT 2009 gold medal for the seventh year in a row. The company even received the '5 stars' title for being the biggest IT training unit in Vietnam. In FY10, Aptech launched three centers in this market and is all set to push one-third of its global revenues to 40%.

Last year, Aptech entered into a JV with the Falgo Group in Brazil. Aptech's foray in Brazil last year helped the company to develop, expand and focus better on the entire Latin American region and also paved way for its next big investment wherein it invested 51% stake in ACE Educacao do Brasil, a new company formed for imparting information technology education and training in Brazil. Keeping up with its multi geographical approach, it has signed a joint venture with the New Life Group, a Philippines based company,

Software for Schools

With a greater penetration of ICT in the school segment, the school software solution providers play an indispensable role in the training ecosystem. The solution providers can be categorized into multiple IT solution vendors and training majors like NIIT which has devised tools for automation. FY10 saw NIIT launching Quick School which is an integrated and comprehensive education resource planning solution for schools.

CEON Solutions, a leading developer of school and college learning management system, offers solutions such as 'i-School' and 'i-Campus' that aim to automate and enhance the quality of education and administration in schools and colleges. The i-School

solution has already been implemented in some of the schools in Gujarat.

Similarly Core Projects and Technologies, a solution and service provider in the education sector, offers covers, compliance, assessment, ICT, content, teacher training, vocational training and examination management system. This has impacted more than 25,000 schools, 20 mn students and trained over 1,00,000 teachers worldwide. The company has announced its collaboration with the University Of Oxford, UK to offer holistic and integrated global education solutions in the Indian education space through a single window that essentially includes ICT and content.

to expand its retail presence in the country. The JV will be in the ratio of 60:40 in favor of the New Life Group and Aptech respectively. Through this JV, Aptech plans to expand the scope of the retail training brands of Aptech like Aptech Computer Education, Arena Multimedia, Avalon Academy, English Express & N-Power across Cambodia, Philippines and Laos.

FY10 saw Aptech betting big on the IT training market in Russia as it plans to increase the number of existing centers from twenty-five to sixty in the next two to three years. The company has signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with fifteen universities. Going back to China, Aptech may file a Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) for its Chinese JV, BJB Career in one to two months. The Chinese JV is expected to raise \$80-120 mn and will dilute 15-20% equity via IPO.

NIIT in FY10 expanded its China operations by bringing in three new government-assisted NIIT centers live in Dalian, Chengdu and Changzhou. In addition, the company ramped up its capacity in Wuxi New District representing

NIIT's largest such facility anywhere in the world. The company added new Cisco learning partner associates (LPA) in the Cisco channel and expanded the 'Li Gong Xin Rui' range of programs.

Apart from focusing on its traditionally strong markets such as Vietnam, Nigeria, Malaysia and Thailand; the company strengthened its presence in South Africa and Botswana through various events such as 'Business Partners Meet for the launch of 10th Scholarship' in Nigeria. In terms of new geographies, NIIT added Bhutan, Maldives and Columbia to its existing portfolio of foreign countries. NIIT signed 'International Cooperation General Agreement' with Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA), Colombia's leading technical education institute, to provide IT, ITeS, english and professional life skills training to people of Colombia. The total students intake across all geographies including India cumulatively in the individual and school learning business has been 5,00,000 with 2,500 new centers added globally.

—Atreyee Dutta
atreyeed@cybermedia.co.in