

**Gavin Dabreo**

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Harnessing Technology to Improve K-12 Education in India

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25 NOVEMBER 2016: Do you realize how a 10-year-old today is more adept at handling an iPad than we were of handling a bat at the same age? Children love tech and are more proficient at using it than we realize. Keeping in view this reality, we utilize children's natural curiosity for all tech things to transform how they learn.

Today, India has more than 250 million students enrolled in schools. The need for quality primary and secondary (K-12) education is growing. Besides, there is an ongoing hustle to create a technology-based digital nation (Digital India). Couple this with social readiness (the Right to Education Act) and willingness of the Indian middle class to pay for good education and India emerges as the perfect laboratory to experiment technology-led learning. In fact, the Government has been diligently working to utilize low-cost computer and internet technology to take education to the masses. Initiatives like National Digital Literacy Mission, Vidyanjali, Web-based School GIS and ePathshala are making optimum use of technology and human resources to take school education in India to the next level. Private players are also making the most of this opportunity. E-learning, information and communications technology, and smart-class platforms are gradually becoming mainstream. However, is this enough?

The Gaps in Indian K-12 Education System

While the government and the private players are doing their part of revolutionizing education in the country, India's K-12 education system consistently ranks low in all global assessments. Reason? The following gaps that are making the system hollow -

- **Lack of Personalization** - The student-teacher ratio in India is 1:35 which leads to a one-size-fits-all approach. The result? A frustrating experience and poor learning outcomes for the students.
- **Lack of Access to Good Teachers** - Rural as well as city schools and colleges have failed to recruit quality teachers. This has led to the rise of numerous coaching classes and private tuitions.
- **No Love for Learning** - K-12 Students in India are taught to memorize concepts and shown the fear of examinations. Love for learning is a non-existent concept.
- **Indifferent Content** - Textbooks re-run age old concepts which are far-flung from realities of the classroom. There are no efforts to customize content to make it timely and relevant.

In addition, there are concerns like duplication of pedagogy (after-school tutoring) and wastage of investments in technology that doesn't deliver (many smart-class products). To address these concerns, we must define ways to make digital an integral part of the education system, rather than it playing a supportive role.

Technology - Giving K-12 Education in India a Facelift

Tech provides access, democratizes quality availability, and enriches the experience; it is hygiene, and no longer a 'bells & whistles' factor. In the near future, digital education will become mainstream and technology will be a key aid for teachers. It will play a significant role in rendering better learning experiences for students and expanding the horizons for teachers. It brings in the required flexibility to education, making content customized, relevant, and on-demand. Plus, the rate of internet penetration in India is on a rise. Thus, there is a huge potential of using smartphones, tablets, and other connected devices to improve learning. In fact, today the Indian market for e-learning based products and services is growing leaps and bounds and its annual turnover is expected to touch \$40 billion by 2017. This indicates a huge shift in the way students and teachers experience education.....and More>>

Making Technology Mainstream in the Indian Education Environment

In India, to enable tech to make a profound change in the system, we must look at the bigger picture. The need of the hour is to use technology to address the prevailing gaps in the education system.

Digital platforms shouldn't be used for mere learning. Schools must harness their data-generation ability to provide real-time feedback on the effectiveness of education programs and customize content to reflect reality in textbooks. Technology-based tools must be used at the micro level to gather information about the academic performance of students.....and More>>