BYTE-SIZED LESSONS

Technology startups are realising what the best teachers have long known - that it pays to interact with students not lecture them, find Krithika Krishnamurthy & Malavika Murali

Why Ed-tech is on a High in India

Greater smartphone and internet penetration

-Greater need among professionals to re-skill themselves

Low public education standards Advancement of hi-tech concepts like gamification that make education fun

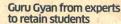
Potential in the Sector

According to University Grants Com-

700

20 million Students enroll into higher ed annually

12K crore Was raised globally across 350 deals, according to CB Insights data.



K12 - Use games and edutainment

Test prep – Create communities to have a peer network

Professional certification - Show spects for career with every new

Roadblocks so far

K-12 is a tricky sector, as parents are buyers and children are consumers

Hard to recover payments from schools in the K-12 space

Incremental innovation coming through from startups

Recent Acquisitions in India

Toppr acquired EasyPrep Embibe acquired 100Marks XSEED acquired Pleolabs

VC Funding between 2012 and 2015

K-12 - ₹66 crore

Test prep - ₹41 crore

Professional certification -300 crore



.Which the desktops & laptops overtook...

more than 250 million school students, larger than the populations of the United Kingdom, South Africa and Japan put together.

"There is a generational shift taking place in the student community - the way the current generation lives their life, thinks, engages and spends their time - which has not happened over the last three generations," said K Ganesh, one of India's most successful education entrepreneurs, who sold his online tutoring company Tutorvista to British firm Pearson for over t1269 crore (8200 million) two years ago. "The next 25 years will be the golden era of education," he said. Education startups are teaching students the way they like to be taught; in small, byte-sized, 10-minute videos that can be watched on the go, fostering peer-to-peer learning through games or quizzes; and providing custom-ised training, among other things. Indoing so, they areable to engage and retainstudents' attention far more effectively than early e-learning firms such as Khan Academy and Coursera, which continue to offer lengthy video lectures online.

This, combined with increasing demand from marks-obsessed indian parents for such services, is revelving investor interest in a sector that has remained tepid so far. Investors poured in £190 crore (320 million) in ten education startups in just the first four months of this year, compared with £152 crore (524 million) in 24 deals in all of last year, according to startup data tracker firm Tracxn.

Broadly speaking, education startups in India fall into three categories: those that help school students get more marks; those that help them get admission into premier institutions; and those that help professionals get or advance in jobs. The first category, the K-12 segment, is the

biggest, pegged at about ₹1.27 lakh crore (\$20 billion) in market size. The Indian test prep mar-ket is at about ₹50,000 crore (\$8 billion) and the professional training market at ₹6,300 crore (\$1 billion), according to various sources. The last category is gaining traction among

Winds of Change

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investors. As processes and functions in technology become automated and new technologies emerge, professionals constantly seek ways too skill themselves, a trend the likes of Simplilearn and Jigsaw Academy are capitalizing on. Five-year-old Simplilearn has about 18,000 people take its certification courses every month, and is growing at 200% every year in terms of revenue. "When the economy, from a tech-industry perspective slows down people invest in their

perspective, slows down, people invest in their careers," said Gerald Jaideep, chief operating officer of Simplilearn, which has become one of the largest certification platforms globally in technology, projects and processes.

...And now there are smartphones to learn on the go

"These are early days, but we have enough conviction in this space," said Rahul Chowdhri, partner at Helion Venture Partners, an investor in Simpliearn. But he also said Helion is picky about education startups. "It's not an easy space to be in. Unlike buying a dress on an ecommerce site, here it isabout takings call on your career." Chowdhrisaid. The K-12 segment is still an open play ingfield as it entails long sales cycles and a fragmented decision-making framework, and startups are still figuring out the perfect business model: While a school principal typically gets to decide which startup to work with, the trustees have financial control, and the teachers wet the content.

"In academic circles it is very difficult to bring in change," said Mohandas Pal, chairman of Manipal Global Education, which has partnered with about five education startups for students of its universities and engineering and medical colleges. "You can't impose change. There are a bunch of processes involved and the regulations are stiffling innovation."

"The difficult part is to figure out a slot in the school's curriculum for students to use your product," said Sampadh Menon, chief executive of CoBELS. Unlike in the United States or Northern Europe, where schools are mostly government-funded, the Indian education market

tive of COBLEA. Unlike in the United States or Northern Europe, where schools are mostly gov-ernment-funded, the Indian education market is driven by parents like Nanditta Kapoor. The mother of 13-year-old Vanya Kapoor swears by Learnhive, a technology portal that teaches con-cepts through flashcards and videos.

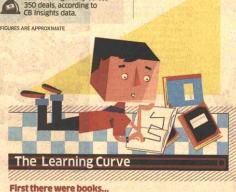
"This eliminates the six to seven tuitions that I

ANIRBAN BORA

"This eliminates the six to seven tuitions that I would otherwise have to put my child in. The best part is, she can learn from anywhere, whether have at play (drams) protties or water state that the stable of the state of the

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First there were books.

t's like the release of a new film,"
says Latha Selvan, a junior school
math teacher, describing the rush
of students outside the computer
lab once every week. Bengaluru's
school happens to be a customer of CoBELS, a
Mangaluru-based education tech startup that
helps students learn concepts through its repository of 250 games.

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Selvan asys her students are more attentive in class and do their homework because otherwise they don't get to play. The games reinforce class-room learning. So instead of merely learning about fractions on paper, the students experiment with the concept online: Pour water in a bucket, fill it to three-fourths, empty the bucket at little, fill is some, let the water spill. The games encourage the students to try, make mistakes, and correct themselves.

"I don't have to shout or monitor them. They now listen intently. That's saving 90% of my energy," said the 44-year-old teacher, adding that the animated games helped her students score 15% over the previous batch.

COBELS is one of many startups in the education sector that happen to be in the right sector at the right time, as infrastructure—high-speed internet connectivity, cloud-based software, advanced analytics capability, and smartphones and tablets—now exists to support newer education formats for an attention-deficit and highly competitive generation Y. The complex kinder-preneurs to resist the potential to address India's

