

## Education sector has emerged as a fast developing field

15 July 2014 - Beas Dev Ralhan CEO, Next Education



*Technology in education is fast picking up in India. Schools are increasingly adopting digital teaching solutions to engage with a generation which is well-versed with the likes of PlayStations and iPads, and trying to make the classroom environment more inclusive and participatory. Students are getting exposure to world-class education, something that was just not available in a chalk and talk approach. To know more about this, Dataquest spoke to Beas Dev Ralhan, CEO, Next Education. Excerpts*

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### Is digital education really becoming mainstream in India?

Digital education is being adopted at school as well as individual learner level. At the school level, we are observing that schools have adopted some sort of digital solution over time, but we are now looking for integrated solutions across the spectrum-labs, classroom, and assessments.

On the self-learning front, we believe that it is still at the nascent stage because the child is involved very deeply with the school (the typical student reaches home only around 2:30 pm), and excessive reliance on the neighborhood tutor/tuition center. However, there is now increasing desire among parents to have proper evaluation of their child to help him in

specific areas. Therefore, I believe that the new trend here will be personalized learning based on rocket science level evaluation.

### What role technology can play in keeping the traditional classroom teaching alive?

Technology in education is fast picking up in India because teachers can look beyond preparing for their regular classes-they get capsulated information from the curriculum that is easy for them to use while in the classroom, and easy for the students to grasp. They can now focus on going deeper into concepts and information because they no longer worry about preparing for their classes. This apart, we have always maintained that technology is only a tool that a teacher can use-it can never replace her.

### What do you think about video-based learning picking up pace in India?

Video-based learning helps to solve the problems of scale, quality of education, and learnability of the student. Teachers can now reach the full classroom through digital screens, enabling each child to get the same base content. Student engagement is higher as it combines various instructional styles. And each student gets exposure to world-class education, something that was just not available in a chalk and talk approach.

### What are the trends that digital classroom is witnessing?

Today, due to hi-tech network and multimedia, the education sector has emerged as a fast developing field. Another prominent result of the use of technology in education is that there is an extensive change in the teaching and learning methods, styles, and content across many schools in India.

Today, students use a unique form of technology called cloud technology wherein they can easily submit and review their assignment regularly. When a school includes such facilities in a digital learning environment, the classroom becomes much more comfortable and welcoming to students.

With computers and digital elements in classrooms, students find studying more enjoyable. The aim of a teacher however should be to create an atmosphere that makes every student want to study. Moreover, considering that the young students today are usually surrounded by computers, iPads and mobiles, bringing the same technology into the classrooms makes them feel easy and acquainted.

### **Can games transform education?**

Game-based learning creates an environment where the learners easily relate themselves to and get involved. The world we have today is cultivating children who are more than just well aware of both the developments in their surroundings and their skills and abilities.

Transforming the K-12 sector, game-based learning undoubtedly will revolutionize the education world products and give us a better self-trained generation next.

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### **How teachers are using technology at home and in classrooms?**

The role of teachers today is changing from simply distributing knowledge at school, to heeding the comprehensive feedback and high-quality assessment of the students. Rather than being teachers literally, they are becoming schools in themselves, imparting both knowledge, skills and attributes to one and all. Teachers to a great extent are incorporating modern education technologies like online assignments for home and video lectures for the classrooms to help make the study material engaging, interactive and refreshing.

### **How do you see the future of education in the digital era?**

Digital education is here to stay. It is also picking up in tier-2 and -3 towns, for which educational content needs to be made much more lucid because of lack of teaching facilities and quality teachers. The kids are also lapping up digital media there because all school-goers today, irrespective of where they live, are much more visual thanks to creative cinema and TV.

We are at a very important crossroads in terms of education in India. The number of children enrolled in schools as of 2009 was about 227 mn. The pupil-teacher ratio was estimated to be 32:1. If you consider the RTE recommendation of 30:1, we are short by about 500,000 teachers.

### **What are the challenges in the digital education domain?**

We believe any problem where money is the solution is not a roadblock at all. The bigger challenges are the mindset of teachers towards change, and the lack of modernization in the B.ed syllabus.

#### **Source:**

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