



ATAL INNOVATION MISSION

thebusiness|year

# THE BUSINESS YEAR

## INDIA EDTECH SPECIAL REPORT

**A**s 2020 wore on and the extent of the COVID-19 health emergency became clear, students around the world were quickly faced with isolation and the need to adapt to new tools to continue the learning experience uninterrupted. India, with an already well-established tech scene, was quick to both promote the use of, and develop new tools in the realm of education technology, better known as edtech.

India's National Education Policy (NEP) is at the heart of its digital ambition. And with NEP 2020 hot off the presses, Ramesh Pokhriyal, Minister of Education, was quick to tell TBV that, from now on, "As proposed in NEP, technology will play an important role in education processes." And it is with seamless coordination between the public and private sectors that schemes and initiatives are being rolled out, with a stream of new edtech tools being made available to students and teachers up and down the country, and in a variety of languages.

Edtech solutions, however, have been available in India long before the onset of COVID-19, and the edtech start-ups sector grew from USD91.7 billion in the financial year 2018 to over USD101 billion in 2019, with solutions ranging from

crash courses for high-stakes tests to remote learning solutions, key to ensure strong enrollment levels in a country with a large rural population but with relatively cheap internet and extensive telecoms infrastructure. Solutions are also provided by both start-ups—of which 4,450 were launched in the edtech space between 2014 and 2019—and tech giants, such as Google.

There is also a rush to ensure the right skills are being honed at educational institutions across the country to prepare India for the new age of digitalization ushered in by COVID-19. Indeed, the Indian edtech market is estimated to have scaled USD3.5 billion by 2022, and the adult skills development component will give the K12 market a run for its money as more companies adapt to Industry 4.0 and train the staff required to navigate it. Meanwhile, the signs for 2021 are good. While the pandemic dented India's hiring by 18% in 2020, many companies now rushing to close their skills gaps.

This special report, coming at a time of increased attention on this crucial sector, brings informative interviews with the sector's top players, as well as news and analysis of the growth and development of edtech and our expectations for 2021 and beyond. ✖

Supported by

**2**

From the editor's desk

**4**Ramesh Pokhriyal,  
Minister of Education of India

• Interview

**6**

A progressive plan

• Focus: National Education Policy 2020

**8**Ramanan Ramanathan,  
Mission Director,  
Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)

• Interview

**10**

A step ahead

• Focus: Tech giants &amp; edtech in India

**12**Rahul Sharma,  
President – Public Sector, Amazon  
Internet Services Pvt. Ltd.,  
Amazon Web Services (AWS) India and  
South Asia

• Interview

**14**

Take it online

• Focus: COVID-19 & the Rise of edtech  
start-ups**16**Byju Raveendran,  
Founder & CEO, BYJU

• Interview

**18**Vamsi Krishna,  
CEO & Co-Founder,  
Vedantu

• Interview

**20**Mayank Kumar,  
Co-founder & MD,  
upGrad

• Interview

**22**Akshay Chaturvedi,  
Founder & CEO,  
Leverage Edu

• Interview

**24**

Classroom Disruption

• Focus: Edtech &amp; VCs

**26**Amit A. Patel,  
Managing Director,  
Owl Ventures

• Interview

**28**Will Poole,  
Co-founder & Managing Partner,  
Unitus Ventures,  
Sunitha Viswanathan,  
Vice President,  
Unitus Ventures

• Interview

**30**Sajith Pai,  
Director,  
Blume Ventures

• Interview

**32**

Ctrl-Alt-Rethink

• Focus: Technology uptake by Indian  
institutions during COVID-19**34**Nitish Jain,  
President,  
SP Jain School of Global Management

• Interview

**36**S Sadagopan,  
Director,  
International Institute of Information  
Technology Bangalore (IIITB)

• Interview

**38**Raghav Podar  
Chairman,  
Podar Education Group

• Interview

**40**Shailendra Raj Mehta  
President & Director,  
MICA

• Interview

CEO  
Ayşe ValentinRegional Director  
Han LeCountry Editor  
Benjamin MacshaneCountry Representative  
Janhavi GaonkarEditorial  
Terry Whittam, Aidan McMahonContributors  
Jason Shaw, Susan Barrett,  
Gillian Docherty, Babak BabaliRead more at [thebusinessyear.com/india](https://thebusinessyear.com/india)

The Business Year is published by The Business Year International, Trident Chambers, P.O. Box 146, Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands. Printed by Uniprint Basim San. Tic. A.Ş., Ömerli Mah. Hadımköy - İstanbul Cad. No.159 Hadımköy Arnavutköy 34555 İstanbul/Türkiye. The Business Year is a registered trademark of The Business Year International, Copyright The Business Year International Inc. 2020. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrievable system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopied, recorded, or otherwise without prior permission of The Business Year International Inc. The Business Year International Inc. has made every effort to ensure that the content of this publication is accurate at the time of printing. The Business Year International Inc. makes no warranty, representation, or undertaking, whether expressed or implied, nor does it assume any legal liability, direct or indirect, or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information contained in this publication. The paper used in the production of this publication comes from well-managed sources.

ISBN-13: 978-1-912498-73-4

ISBN 978-1-912498-73-4  
[www.thebusinessyear.com](https://www.thebusinessyear.com)



## THE JOURNEY AHEAD

Ramesh Pokhriyal  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF INDIA

**The Ministry of Education is ready for India to establish itself as a knowledge superpower, with the ambitious NEP set to significantly transform digital education and support edtech.**

### BIO

Ramesh Pokhriyal is the Minister of Education of India. He started his career as a teacher and later became a journalist. He entered politics in the late 1980s, becoming a cabinet minister in Uttar Pradesh in 1996. With the establishment of Uttarakhand state, he became finance minister and later occupied other cabinet positions. He then entered the Indian parliament and was re-elected in 2019, subsequently becoming the Minister of Education.

**India passed its ambitious and wide-ranging education reform in July 2020. What is your vision for the role of technology for this reform, both in implementing NEP and as a focus of NEP itself?**

Technology has become an integral part of the Ministry of Education. With regards to NEP 2020, the Education Ministry embarked on a digital consultative process throughout the country, with over INR2.75 lakh direct consultations, both online and offline. As proposed in NEP, technology will play an important role in education processes and outcomes. An autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration, and so on, both for school and higher education. Furthermore, a rich variety of educational software will be developed and made available

for students and teachers at all levels. All such software will be available in all major Indian languages and will be accessible to a wide range of users including students in remote areas and Divyang students. NEP also recommends key initiatives such as conducting pilot studies for online education; the creation of open, interoperable, and adaptable public digital infrastructure; a concentrated focus on content creation, a digital repository, and dissemination; providing training and incentives for teachers; and online assessment and examinations, among others. Existing platforms and ongoing ICT-based educational initiatives such as SWAYAM, Diksha, and the National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) will be optimized and expanded. The future of education is a blended mode of education. The ministry has already started various initiatives in the same vein, be it PRAGYATA guidelines, Learning Enhancement Guidelines, or the education learning apps as mentioned above.

**How would you describe the current ecosystem for Indian start-ups in the edtech sector and the level of collaboration between the private edtech sector and the relevant public authorities?**

NEP proposes major transformation for digital education and supports edtech. An autonomous body NETF will provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration, and so on, both for school and higher education. The aim of NETF is to facilitate decision making on the induction, de-

ployment, and use of technology by providing to the leadership of education institutions, state, and central governments, and other stakeholders the latest knowledge and research as well as the opportunity to consult and share best practices. In a recent development, CBSE Skill Education and Training partnered with Google to enable 1 million teachers in 22,000 schools to deliver a blended learning experience, namely a combination of online learning and classroom approach. CBSE also partnered with Facebook to launch a certified curriculum on digital safety and Augmented Reality (AR) for students and educators across India. To make e-learning more constructive, NCERT and Rotary India also digitally signed an MoU for e-learning content telecast for class 1-12 overall NCERT TV channels. In other initiatives, the government of India also launched a national program VidyaDaan 2.0 to invite e-learning content contributions. Steps have been undertaken to ensure quality, accessible, and inclusive education for all. This is just the start; India will definitely establish itself as a knowledge superpower.

**The ministry is also administering the new Academic Bank of Credit (ABC), which, among many other things, should greatly enhance the access and viability of online education. What is your outlook on the long-term impact of the ABC?**

During COVID-19, forecasting the needs of the future, we have already shifted to enable massive open online course of SWAYAM for credit transfers while ensuring the three cardinal

principles of the NEP—access, equity, and quality. The courses delivered through SWAYAM are interactive, prepared by more than 1,000 specially chosen faculty and teachers in the country and are accessible to any learner free of cost. Upon successful completion, the grades secured in this proctored examination can be transferred to the students' academic record from the host institute. The University Grants Commission has issued Regulation 2016 advising universities to identify courses where credits can be transferred to the academic records of students for courses done on SWAYAM. The step is in line with the recommendation of NEP to establish ABC to digitally accumulate the academic credits earned from various recognized HEIs so that degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into account the credits earned.

**Starting from Class 6, coding as a subject has been added to the national curriculum. What impact do you foresee this having for India's human capital and general competitiveness?**

As mentioned in NEP, math and mathematical thinking will be extremely important for India's future and its leadership role in the numerous upcoming fields and professions that will involve AI, machine learning, data science, and so on. Thus, math and computational thinking will be given increased emphasis throughout the school years, starting with the foundational stage, and activities involving coding will be introduced in the middle stage, upskilling students as per the needs and demands of the 21st century. ❌



# A PROGRESSIVE PLAN

India's progressive National Education Policy (NEP 2020) will be put into practice soon, almost revolutionizing the concepts of schooling and higher education.

**I**N RECENT YEARS, educators, parents, and students from Mumbai to London have raised their voices to complain about the outdateness of the curricula which are taught in schools and institutions of higher education. Memorization of Latin or Sanskrit verb conjugations seems to be no guarantee for a job in the current job market which is under constant transformation by digitalization, automation, and artificial intelligence (AI).

This has not escaped the notice of India's educational authorities. In July 2020, the Union Cabinet of India approved a landmark piece of legislation, entitled the NEP 2020 to reconstruct India's education system. Indeed, the time was ripe for the launching of a new education policy, as the previous framework dated back to the 1980s, when the reality of the Indian society was a far cry from what it is today. Back in the 80s, India was not an Asian manufacturing powerhouse, it was not the focal point of the world's IT industry, and it was not the second largest economy in Asia.

Now in 2021, India has achieved all these distinctions, among many more, and therefore a well-rounded education policy is needed to prepare the country's students for the world of the future. NEP 2020 has been truly thought through: it covers elementary education, secondary education, vocational training, and higher education across the country.

Despite its ambitiousness, however, the new education policy is strict about the timing of its implementation. Far from being a set of loosely defined objectives, NEP 2020 is specific about its goals, and the nation's educational policymakers are determined to begin to put the plan into practice by the end of 2021.

In a country as wide and multilingual as India, English is likely to keep its role as the de facto language of education, though NEP 2020 has a relaxed attitude toward language, allowing each Indian state to use the local languages in education. The emphasis on English is well-placed as—in spite of the bitter memories of colonization—Indians' relatively good command of English has given them quite an edge over competing Asian and Latin American aspiring economic giants.

Nevertheless, NEP 2020's progressive nature means that its language policy is broad and open to interpretation not only by each state, but also by each school or even individual student.

The policy makes it clear that “no language will be imposed on the students.” This essentially means that schools are free to deliver courses in English, Hindi, the regional languages spoken in each area—and, more interestingly of all, in Sanskrit, a classical language used in the subcontinent which dates back to the second millennium BCE.

This open-minded approach to education continues into the final years of the school system. In classes 11 and 12, for example, when the

most challenging topics are covered in subjects such as social studies, history, and philosophy, critical thinking is encouraged, and students are informed about multiple viewpoints regarding the issues under study. Undoubtedly, such an education policy will lead to the emergence of a more clear-thinking class of Indian citizens in the coming years.

What is more, the new education policy encourages multidisciplinary studies anywhere possible. The reasoning behind this is that an ideal citizen must be able to see the larger scheme of things and understand how what he or she does may connect to the larger picture.

NEP's emphasis on multidisciplinary education is not limited to school years. It also stipulates that undergraduate programs must also have a multidisciplinary quality, which will give India's future highly educated workforce and leaders a good understanding of the complexities of the world and eliminate those problems caused by tunnel vision. NEP 2020 wants all institutions of higher education across India to become completely multidisciplinary by 2040, and there must be at least one multidisciplinary university or college in every district by 2030.

Furthermore, NEP 2020 usually gives students several exit options: if after two years of higher education, some students decide to say farewell to the academic world and start a career, an appropriate degree will be awarded to them, while those who are prepared to put in an extra two years will be able to work their way toward a bachelor's degree—or even proceed to postgraduate studies.

“The aim will be to increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% to 50% by 2035,” according to Hindustan Times. And, a large portion of the additional enrollment will be in short-term vocational programs rather than traditional, theory-based ones; after all, India's mighty manufacturing sector needs an army of technicians and engineers to keep the nation's industrial engine well-oiled and running.

This will decrease the number of so-called college dropouts and guarantee that no student's efforts will be ignored just because they failed to complete every course and module in the syllabus. Ken Robinson, the British educator, once commented that, “Our task is to educate their (our students') whole being so they can face the future. We may not see the future, but they will and our job is to help them make something of it.” And, India's new national education policy seems to be progressive and multidimensional enough to promise a future for almost any student, regardless of their social class, aptitude in one subject or another, or the duration of their stay in the education system. ✕

An IT classroom  
at a school in  
Maharashtra







## RAPIDLY SCALING UP INNOVATION

Ramanan Ramanathan  
MISSION DIRECTOR,  
ATAL INNOVATION MISSION (AIM)

**A flagship initiative by the Indian prime minister, AIM spurs and promotes an ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship across the country.**

### BIO

Ramanan Ramanathan is the Mission Director of AIM, a flagship national innovation initiative of the prime minister and the government of India under the NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India). He is also the additional secretary at NITI Aayog. He was previously managing director & CEO of CMC Ltd, a subsidiary of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), where he led CMC's rapid transformation from a domestic government organization to a global IT private sector organization.

**2021 will be AIM's fifth anniversary. How would you characterize the success of this initiative over the course of this milestone?**

India has 115 million young students entering the workplace over the next five to 10 years, and this is a powerful demographic dividend for any country to have. More than 65% of the country is under 35, so it is extremely important that these youngsters who will transform the country and change the future of India and the world are given the opportunity to create solutions for problems in and around the communities we live in. AIM was set up in late 2016 with the clear goal of creating a problem-solving innovative mindset in our young students in schools, as they will become entrepreneurs of the future. Second, we sought to create an ecosystem of entrepreneurship in universities and industry through the creation of hundreds of start-ups so that these young innovators are able to realize their

dreams. To this end, AIM has launched a series of initiatives in a holistic manner. At the school level, we launched thousands of tinkering labs, which are dedicated innovation workspaces in schools where the latest technologies like 3D printing, robotics, IoT, and augmented virtual reality are available between grades 6 to 12 through do-it-yourself kits. In universities, we are creating hundreds of incubators that will foster thousands of start-ups that will be able to solve our problems and create a nation of job creators rather than just job seekers. AIM has launched over 1,000 tinkering labs across the country where more than 3.5 million young students have an opportunity to get exposed to innovation. In the last five years, we have launched over 100 incubators to be established in India, of which 70 are already operational, and we have more than 19,000 start-ups that have emerged in the last few years alone. More than 575 of them are women-led start-ups. Many are focused on edtech because education is extremely important in order to reach the remotest parts of India. The ultimate purpose is to create a nation of job creators, and India has truly excelled in the last few years with a USD190-billion IT industry servicing the rest of the world. The question now is how we can progress further to the point where we can become solution enablers and product creators and set up a number of companies that will create jobs. That is the larger objective of AIM, and in the last five years it has made tremendous progress.



**What is the mission behind the Atal community innovation centers?**

To spur community centric/district centric innovation and local job creation in tier-2 and tier-3 cities and in rural India, AIM has launched over 24 Atal Community Innovation Centres in partnership with multiple stakeholders at the local level. To stimulate early-stage Make in India innovations, AIM is systematically launching Applied Research and Innovation for Small Enterprises (ARISE) challenges for MSMEs and Atal New India challenges for prototype to commercial/social innovative product deployment with a national socio-economic impact. All of these AIM initiatives are done in close consultation and collaboration with various stakeholders from government, industry, academia, local states/districts, and also with global partners. All AIM initiatives are linked together to create and take advantage of a nationwide ecosystem for innovation to succeed and scale speedily. AIM and other government innovation initiatives have indeed scaled rapidly in the past couple of years and are making a positive impact on the nation.

**What potential do you see for the edtech sector in India to scale globally?**

This is one of the biggest opportunities for India to not only address further opportunities in India but also across the world. Digital transformation has come to the rescue in these

COVID-19 times. This has also been a watershed moment in India's history, where digital transformation and technologies have come to the rescue in the edtech field. With the rise of the internet, AI, virtual reality, and collaboration platforms, students will have the ability to learn anything from anywhere at any time, leveraging the net as well as virtual mentoring and teaching and distance learning. We already see this in India with companies like BYJU'S, which is one of the top five edtech unicorn companies in the world. The Khan Academy has also become extremely popular in more than 150 countries across the world. Education technology has tremendous opportunities, and India has the maximum opportunity to leverage it, create new solutions and reach across the masses to address the diversity of people, the languages and topics. We are bridging the cultural divide in not just technology, engineering, and science but also in arts and culture. We are losing touch with older traditions, arts, and handicrafts but digital technology is coming to the rescue, resurrecting many of these widely lost arts that are so important for humanity to be preserved and nurtured. One of the most important things edtech is able to do is bridge and bring together academia, industry, and government. We are creating, for example, online universities through a major initiative in India that are world class and where there are virtual labs that can supplement physical labs. ✕

# A STEP AHEAD

Education is taking a digital turn across the world, and India is ahead of the curve.

**EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY** flourishes in countries with robust IT ecosystems and large populations eager to hone their skills.

The IT industry in India has seen an exponential growth since the 1980s, becoming virtually synonymous with India's services sector.

At the same time, India is home to some 250 million school children, just under 35 million university students, and millions of adults who want to acquire one skill or another to secure themselves a job in the constantly expanding economy of India.

All these groups can benefit from e-learning. Edtech solutions have proven to be more attractive than traditional tutoring, as they combine teaching with interactive activities and even games, to engage younger—as well as adult—learners.

Given this niche for edtech services and the large number of tech-savvy entrepreneurs in India, it is not surprising that over a five-year period (between 2014 and 2019) some 300 edtech investment deals and more than 4,450 startups were launched in India, raising up to USD1.8 billion.

In 2020, however, Indian edtech startups saw unprecedented growth with over USD2.22 billion raised in a single year.

Edtech platforms in India specialize in different areas of education, ranging from single-module courses—say in computer programming or foreign languages—to traditional K-12 school courses.

E-learning startups specializing in online test preparation courses targeting ambitious students have been particularly in-demand in recent years. Preparatory online courses make up 70-80% of the edtech market in the country.

In recent years, more and more students from India have been taking internationally-recognized standardized tests such as the famous—and much dreaded—Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), Graduate Record Examination (GRE), and Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), which are used as admission requirements for many undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

"The number of Indian students taking the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) in India grew by nearly 20%, according to the latest figures released by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) that conducts the GRE," noted The Hindu back in 2015, and the trend has further accelerated since then.

Most test-takers who want to ace the aforementioned exams turn to edtech companies for preparation, and institutions such as Jamboree, Manya Group, and Abhyaas have combined internet-based training and mock-testing with traditional classes to guaranty the students' success in the SAT, GRE, and GMAT.

Edtech startups with different areas of focus are also beginning to emerge. The demand for online courses which offer verifiable certification to their graduates is particularly high.

UpGrad and its ever-growing popularity is a case in point. The

Mumbai-based company has teamed up with respectable universities such as Duke and Liverpool John Moores to offer online degree programs in data science and business administration, among other areas of study.

UpGrad is confident that its graduates are just as competent as those holding degrees from traditional universities. The company's co-founder, Ronnie Screwvala, challenges anyone who doubts this: "I invite you to evaluate our learners for various roles at your organization and I am confident that with their new skill sets, our learners will be star performers at your company." Also of note is the business model which an increasing number of edtech companies employ: training interns on the job.

Awign, a Bangalore-based company, for instance, has "built a platform to take up on-the-ground work from businesses" and complete the job by its intern gig workforce. The company has an interesting business model: "gig workers apply on the task, get selected, get trained in the app and then go out to work in their city to complete the tasks in the app." This model has found favor with interns and employers alike because gig workers can earn money while learning their craft and the employers are charged only after the completion of the task with their desired quality.

India's edtech scene is not limited to startups; well-established market leaders such as BYJU and Unacademy have become household names in India and beyond. The two online tutoring giants are constantly on the lookout for promising startups to acquire. Unacademy recently bought six edtech startups including PrepLadder, Kretaryx, and Mastree.

Although BYJU acquired fewer startups by comparison, it succeeded in buying the startup WhiteHat Jr., which teaches programming to children.

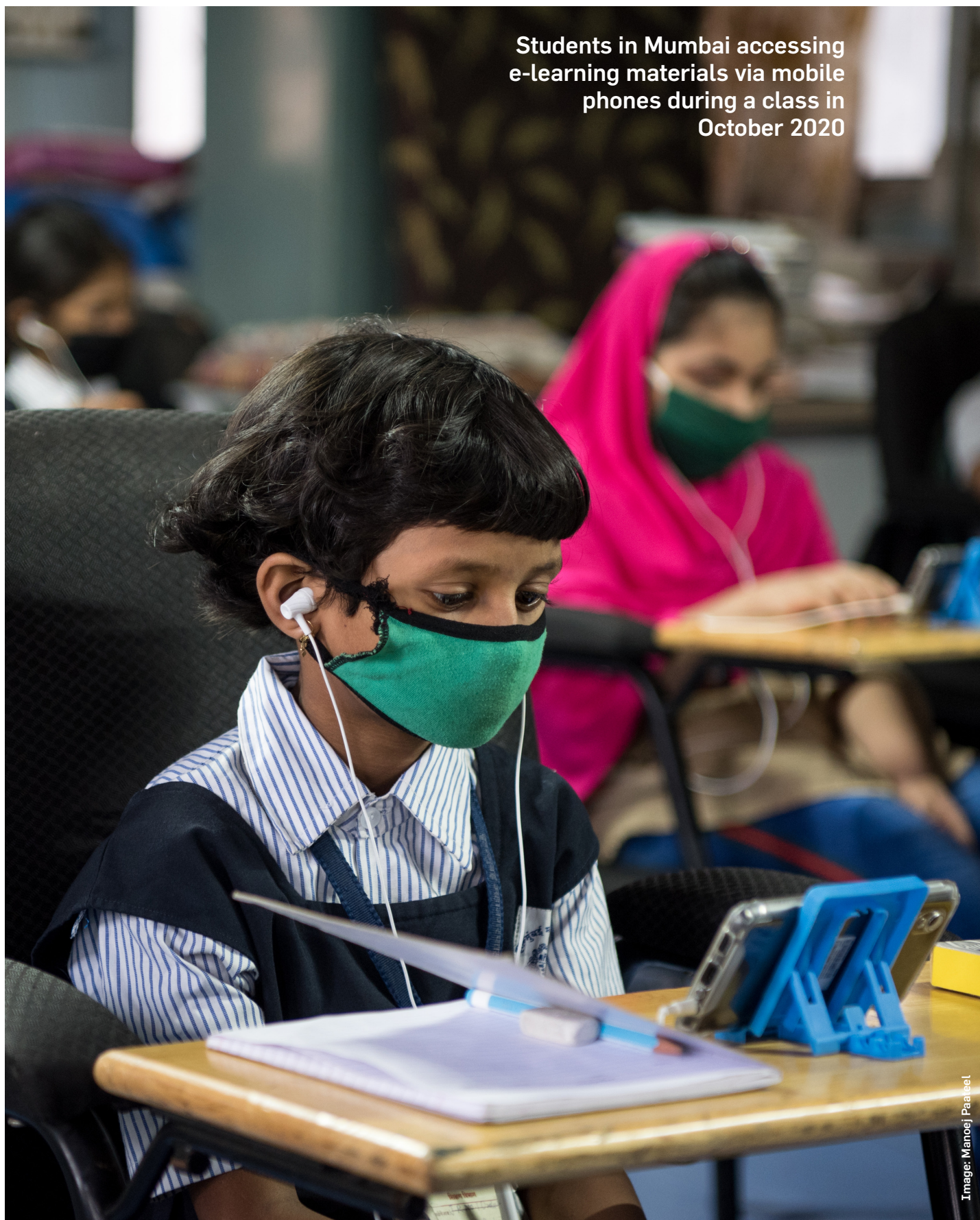
The edtech sector in India not only generates profits for itself, but also enables people to upgrade their knowledge and skillset, while creating jobs for freelance educators who have something to teach to others but cannot find traditional employment.

Companies such as Classplus have created a platform on which "millions of teachers" can "kickstart their online teaching business," according to the company's cofounder, Mukul Rustagi. Edtech startups are, in short, revolutionizing the concept of education in less privileged parts of the subcontinent, while creating jobs for local educators and IT experts.

Although 2020 was a year of bad news, illness, and unstable markets, it was certainly a good year for edtech startups, which proved their merits to the world. As business activities pick up in 2021, people will remember the effective role that edtech played during the lockdowns, which will improve the image of online education in the coming years. ✖



Students in Mumbai accessing e-learning materials via mobile phones during a class in October 2020







## SCHOOL OF IDEAS

Shailendra Raj Mehta  
PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR,  
MICA

**MICA's key focus on research and idea generation place it in good stead for the changing face of education in India, with a heavier focus on thought leadership and innovation.**

### BIO

Shailendra Raj Mehta is currently the President and Director of MICA. Prior to this he headed Auro University and Ahmedabad University. Earlier, he was Visiting Professor of Business Policy at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIM-A). He returned to India in 2006-7 to head the collaboration between Duke CE and IIM-A as regional managing director for India, West Asia and the Middle East. Prior to that he was at Purdue University for 16 years, where he taught economics and strategic management. His BA and MA are from Delhi University (St. Stephen's College and Delhi School of Economics, respectively), his MPhil is from Balliol College, Oxford, and his PhD is from Harvard.

**What have been the most significant long-term impacts of this pandemic that will change MICA and higher education in general?**

One part is that remote login will become fairly common, and people will perhaps only work from home, a co-working space, or wherever they want; this is something that everyone has to prepare for. Teamwork will take on a different meaning, and people have to prepare to continuously reinvent themselves. The only thing we can promise them is that change will be continuous. The most important thing is to learn how to learn and constantly upgrade themselves. We are also putting in place a whole series of modules at MICA for continuing education of our alumni so that they can continue to take courses at MICA on a continuous basis. Now that almost everything has gone digital, it will be much easier to bring the alumni back into the classroom.

**How has your experience been integrating edtech companies into your programs, and how do you see these collaborations developing in the future?**

We have partnered with UpGrad, Talentedge, and Eruditus for some time now; some of these partnerships are several years old, so this model did not come as a surprise or an afterthought for us. Every year, we take in 200-odd new students; meaning, we are a compact, small residential institution with an intense educational atmosphere. We have about 8,000 people applying for those 200 slots, so we are a highly selective school. Many more people want a MICA experience than we can possibly accommodate. We are a fairly young institution; we have only been around for 25-plus years and have about 3,000 alumni. However, every year more than that number go through our digital programs via our partners. We have reviewed it primarily as a way to take the quality of education that we stand for to a much broader footprint than would be otherwise. Many of the skills that we develop in our online programs are so highly marketable that students do not wait for companies to pay for these courses; they pay for them out of their own pockets. Often, they may have jobs waiting for them because it is also well integrat-

ed with placements. It is a great way for people to continuously up-skill themselves and move up the ladder.

**What other challenges with online education are you are experiencing now?**

The biggest challenge is that while we have gone completely online for now, there is still a compromise on the basic experience, which is the residential experience, because instruction is only a small part of the MICA experience. A large portion of it is basically bonding with people from all walks of life, learning how to work in teams, and face-to-face contact; in addition, MICA is a 24/7 campus. Our library is open around the clock, and our work and refreshment areas are always open. It is an extremely lively campus, which is part of the experience. We are extremely keen to resume that part of MICA, and at least for the foreseeable future a large part of it will have to be done differently. A small number of those students are on campus, and we hope to bring many more. We have to maintain the appropriate social distancing, so even when students return on a broader scale, it would have to be only a small fraction of the total student body. I do not see that changing for the next few months, and that is the challenge that we face moving forward: bringing back the residential aspects of MICA that are so critical to the MICA experience.

**How do you see the new National Education Policy impacting higher education for an institution like MICA?**

First, the new education policy has been widely praised and well received across the political spectrum. I do not remember another piece of legislation passed by the government of India in recent years that was met with so much acceptance, partly because it went through a long and extremely thorough review process. Overall, I am extremely pleased with the direction it has taken. For example, the policy mandates that research and idea generation have to be key because Indian institutions need to move up rapidly in terms of global rankings. That was music to our ears because that was what MICA has focused on. Our tagline is: MICA - The School of Ideas. Many of the MICA faculty publish in the top journals in the field worldwide. Our best faculty are also writing the area defining textbooks with some of the global thought leaders. We are setting global thought leadership at MICA, and not just for the region or the country. Secondly, the new education policy heavily stresses governance. It wants all institutions to pay great attention to their governance, which is the weakest spot in the country at this point. Once that accountability falls in place, we will see change across the entire educational environment. ✖





# You've reached the end of the free preview.

---

To continue reading, purchase the  
full version via this app or go to  
**[thebusinessyear.com/shop](https://thebusinessyear.com/shop)**

Or contact us at:  
**[info@thebusinessyear.com](mailto:info@thebusinessyear.com)**

**thebusiness** | year