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## MAGAZINE NOTES

# Start-ups Transforming Education and Skill Development

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GS2

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CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

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# Start-ups Transforming Education and Skill Development

 **Kurukshetra**

Chapter 1 · 2 min read ·

India ranks as the **third-largest startup ecosystem globally** with over **1.4 lakh registered startups** by mid-2025 and **118 unicorns**. The education and skill development sector has been one of the biggest beneficiaries of this startup revolution.

## **Historical Evolution of India's Startup Ecosystem**

- **Late 1990s:** IT giants — Infosys, Wipro, TCS — laid the foundation for India's tech entrepreneurship culture
- **2000s–2010s:** Success of Flipkart, MakeMyTrip, Zomato normalised entrepreneurship as a career path
- **2016:** Launch of **Start-up India Initiative** — tax incentives, simplified compliance, funding support, ease of entry/exit
- **Unicorn growth:** From **4 unicorns in 2014** to **118 by mid-2025** — a new unicorn emerged roughly every 20 days during peak years
- **Employment:** Over **12 lakh direct jobs** created by startups

## **NEP 2020 and the EdTech Revolution**

The **National Education Policy 2020** catalysed a paradigm shift from rote learning to competency-based, multidisciplinary education:

- **Flexible entry-exit** options in higher education
- Emphasis on **innovation, entrepreneurship, and critical thinking**
- Integration of technology as a core delivery mechanism

**Major EdTech domains and key players:**

| DOMAIN              | KEY STARTUPS                    | INNOVATION                                           |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| School/Test Prep    | BYJU'S, Physics Wallah, Vedantu | AI-driven personalised learning                      |
| STEM Education      | Cuemath                         | Gamified math learning                               |
| Early Childhood     | Multiple startups               | Play-based digital learning                          |
| Inclusive Education | CwSN-focused startups           | Assistive technology for children with special needs |
| Immersive Learning  | AR/VR startups                  | Simulation-based platforms                           |
| Micro-credentials   | Skill-focused platforms         | AI-ML courses, data science, digital marketing       |

### Skill Development Initiatives

| SCHEME/INITIATIVE                               | FOCUS                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Skill India Mission                             | Umbrella programme for skill development      |
| PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana)     | Short-term skill training with certification  |
| Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)                     | Non-formal education for disadvantaged groups |
| NAPS (National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme) | On-the-job training in industry               |
| Craftsman Training Scheme (CTS)                 | ITI-based vocational training                 |

**Startup contributions to skilling:** AI-ML courses, data science bootcamps, digital marketing certifications, robotics and coding camps, affordable online courses bridging the urban-rural skill gap.

### UPSC Angle

- **GS3:** Industrial policy, innovation ecosystem, education technology, demographic dividend
- **GS2:** Government schemes (Start-up India, NEP 2020), ease of doing business
- **Essay:** “Can India’s startup ecosystem convert its demographic dividend into an innovation dividend?”

Source: [NextIAS Kurukshetra January 2026 Summary](#)



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