8 eSTARTUPS

Avanish Tiwary

EANING forward, Ratan Tata, chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons is intently trying to listen to the 'Team Indus' entrepre-neurs explain how and what their robot does. Present at the launch of Kstart, a seed-cum-accelerator, Tata in conversation with Vani Kola, MD, m conversation with variation, with, Kalaari Capital, said, "As a young employee in Jamshedpur, when I had an idea, I would go to my bosses and they would tell me not to be so eager and that something was being done in a particular way for 30 ways. And I a particular way for 30 years. And I would quietly go back. I yearned for

would quietly go back. I yearned for an environment where I could be heard if I had an idea." Platforms such as Kstart, Microsoft Accelerator, TechHub, GSF, etc. open various doors for star-tups as mentors like Tata, Mohandas Pai, Rajan Anandan, are available to rai, rajan Anandan, are available to help entrepreneurs develop their ideas into a viable business model. Tata joined Kalaari Capital's advisory board this year. India stands third in the global

startup ecosystem with around 4,200 startup ecosystem with around 4,200 startups by 2015 end. Earlier this month, \$650 million fund manager Kalaari Capital launched its own accelerator and mentor programme in India for startups. Nasscom too announced its fifth batch under its 10,000 Startups Vanacthus Vanacthus vanach announced its fifth batch under its 10,000 Startups Konnect programme, shortlisting over 200 applicants. US-based TechHub that provides co-workingspace and a community of sorts for entrepreneurs has partnered with 'Google for Entrepreneurs' this month. neurs' this month.

'With the startup ecosystem taking shape, it's good more incubators and accelerators are coming up. But most of them are just announce-ments and lot less is happening on ground," said Rajesh Sawhney, founder, Global Superangels Forum (GSF) accelerator. Four-year-old GSF receives over 1,000 applications a year of which it chooses just10-15 startups to work with. "We don't fund ideas, to work with. "we don't thind load we find teams. We want them to at leastbuild their product, have a small team in place and show some traction—good or bad," headded.

If entrepreneurs are to be believed, accelerators and incubators are indeed important to get a head-deat tables one is entrine of goth. The

start when one is starting afresh. The hand-holding process starts right from the beginning, that is helping in hiring—in many cases even finding a

work money growth project 222

ACCELERATI STARTUP SUCC

Platforms such as Kstart, Microsoft Accelerator, TechHub, GSF have opened doors for startups and mentors like Ratan Tata, Mohandas Pai and Rajan Anandan are available to help entrepreneurs develop their ideas

co-founder.
"We started when I was in college and had zero knowledge or experience of how things worked. We are glad we spent our starting-up time at TLabsas that opened a lotmany doors forus," said Azhar Iqubal, co-founder, Inshorts. Earlier NewsInShorts, the company in partnership with media houses dilutes news articles into 60 words for quick read. It has investors such as Tiger Global, Times Internet, Flipkart founders Sachin and Binny

Bansalamong others.

The TLabs accelerator programme launched by Times Internet

works with young startups for alimit-ed period of time providing mentor-ship, opportunities to meet and dis-cuss ideas with industry stalwarts. Within four months at TLabs, InShorts (earlier NewsInShorts) was able to launch its Android applica-tion—a bigleapforthem from having

just a Facebook page before they enrolled for the TLabs programme. So how important are platforms like accelerators, incubators or the common working spaces for star-tups? "You can't quantify the impact of their help, but it really calms you down when you are working with

I MONDAY I FEBRUARY 22 I 2016 NURTURING







RAJAN ANANDAN, MD & VP, Google India

people who are going through the same challengesas you are. You know you are not alone," Iqubal sighed. Sawhney said that accelerators

Sawhney said that accelerators largely help in three ways: finding a right mix in the team, opening new doors to make their initial product or service viable and lastly help the founders raise funding.

"It's not to say that if we hadn't enrolled in an accelerator programme wewouldn't havegot to where we are, but it definitely would have become much difficult. We didn't know anything related to raising funds and when you are starting out, you need someone to tell you how system works," said Gaurav Agarwal, founder, Gamezop. founder, Gamezop,

founder, Gamezop.

The company recently raised seed round of \$350,000 from talent management firm Kwan, Snapdeal chief product officer Anand Chandrasekaran and redBus co-founder Phanindra Sama, among others. Agarwal said GSF's role was instru-mental in helping them find potential investors.

5/24/2016 4:50 PM 1 of 1