

Education

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Shipping containers as schools?

FE BUREAU

AN INNOVATIVE PROJECT has been launched in India to tackle the issue of ensuring quality education for street children within the Commonwealth. Called Project Out of School Children (OoSC), it aims to enrol, educate and empower 127 million children out of school in the Commonwealth nations with a special focus on India's 17.7 million kids. It has been set up by educationalist Amreesh Chandra, and

converts renewable shipping containers into classrooms. Project OoSC will set up 50 container schools in four states of India, and in Nepal and Bangladesh, by the first quarter of

2020. Thanks to swift assembly, the use of shipping containers helps install education infrastructure easily. Chandra said: "Today there are more children in school around the world than at any other time in history, but there are still 262 million children who are not. Project OoSC will focus on putting infrastructure in place."

The project, he added, is taking shape in Gorakhpur, UP, the second will come up shortly in Mirzapur, UP, and the third in the outskirts of a village near Jaipur.

How will management education change in 2020

Tomorrow's leaders need both technical & soft skills



VIDHU GAUR

THE TRADITIONAL MBA pedagogy has been disrupted by technology. Massive open online courses (MOOCs) are now common in both B-schools and corporate development programmes. In 2020 and beyond, e-learning will be the go-to choice. According to 'E-Learning: Global Market Outlook (2017-2026)', the global e-learning market can grow from \$176.12 billion in 2017 to \$398.15 billion by 2026. This tech shift has led to MBA courses turning advanced, specialised and progressive.

According to Oxford Economics, the anticipated skill sets of the future are: digital skills, agile thinking skills, interpersonal & communication skills, and global operating skills. The paradigm of workforce is also changing. According to PwC, 37% are worried about automation, the internet of things and industry 4.0. At the same time, alternative workforce is getting mainstream. Managers are supposed to lead a team with a diverse mix of people through 'unified communication', considering and tackling the issues of inclusion, fairness, trust. Deloitte notes in a report: "For organisations that want to grow and access critical skills, managing alternative forms of employment is critical."

Here comes the importance of 'leadership'. While organisations are restructuring 'the purpose of corporations', which now sparingly serves shareholders' interests, business leaders are required to be laser-focused in their principles. To be an impactful leader, Gartner recommends the following: Promote open dialogue to create a more collegial and informal work environment, focus on upskilling employees to improve perceptions of co-worker quality, and tailor digital business training to build capacity and digital dexterity.

At this outset, one thing is certain: Management education is as dynamic as business. While the digital transformation is both a challenge and an opportunity for an organisation, business leaders of tomorrow need to have the synergy of both technical and soft skills. In 2020 and beyond, entrepreneurial thinking, adaptive leadership styles, and being highly resilient are the qualities that need to be honed by the B-schools in their students. In other words, embracing technology with ethics at heart is the future.

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● MBA 4.0

The year MBA will change

Techno-managerial skills are essential to succeed in the age of Industry 4.0

AMOL SHIMPI

THE UNPRECEDENTED SWAY of technology has mandated a fresh Industrial Revolution, the Fourth, driven by the convergence of digital, biological and physical innovations. Throughout the first two industrial revolutions, it was the innovative curricula that played a role in transforming the technical and managerial capacities of workers. Now, the education system needs to step up again to support the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and this means preparing students who possess techno-managerial skills.

Most premier MBA programmes are now introducing modules that include AI, robotics, genomics, and so on through coursework, case studies, seminars and conferences. The goal is to help students learn the workings of newer career avenues, about new integrated technologies, advantages they can deliver, and the challenges and opportunities for a company that deploys them.

Built environment is an industry that offers students several novel career opportunities, and there are courses such as MBA in Real Estate & Urban Infrastructure, MBA in Construction Project Man-



agement, MBA in Construction Economics & Quantity Surveying, and MBA in Infrastructure Management. The growth of built environment in the current industrial and economic scenario has been exponential, leading to transformation in the entire system covering all business functions like human resources, manufacturing, sales and marketing, services, operations, finance and much more.

Interestingly, therefore, MBA 4.0 is first making an appearance catering to the built environment sector. Specialised courses that fall under MBA 4.0 help

develop students' strategic thinking, efficiency, managing skills and crisis management. And these are the skills needed the most when implementing Industry 4.0, or the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In 2020 and beyond, we expect to see more and more MBA courses that have a techno-managerial content-a curriculum that integrates theory and applied skills-that prepare students for Industry 4.0.

The author is associate dean & director, RICS School of Built Environment, Amity University, Mumbai

Three edtech trends of 2020

HARI KRISHNAN NAIR

THE SURGE WITNESSED by edtech companies in the professional education space over the last one year has been nothing less than phenomenal. I see three trends shaping edtech in 2020 and beyond.

Revenue growth: We, at Great Learning, have seen significant growth over the past year with professionals increasingly opting for high-quality upskilling courses that can help them achieve career transitions. Many edtech firms are expected to see revenue growth in 2020 and beyond.

Freshers opting for courses in data science, AI, ML: Industry expectations from freshers have changed drastically. Corporates want to hire professionals that are good at new-age skills like devops, data science, machine learning and the cloud. We saw great demand for our data science course that helps fresh graduates build a career in data science and analytics.

Tech firms partnering with edtech platforms: Reskill is the buzzword echoing off corporate walls as companies are driving large-scale initiatives among the existing workforce to build a continuous learning culture. Skillings has become a priority for corporates. In 2020, we will see technology companies partnering with edtech platforms, which will work with corporates to deliver tailor-made programmes keeping in mind the roles and requirements within the organisation.

The author is co-founder, Great Learning

● HR TRENDS FOR 2020

Corporate investments into skilling will continue

The ability to learn will rank high for every employee



CHAITANYA N SREENIVAS

THE TALENT MARKET will continue to evolve in 2020 and beyond, changing at a faster pace than ever before. The focus on skill transformation will remain, as organisations will keep up their investments into reskilling and upskilling. The top two trends for 2020 would be:

► **Evolving talent pool:** The ability to learn will rank high. For instance, organisations in the technology sector will consider a developer in one domain becoming a full-stack developer with broad capabilities a greater asset than someone who is doing well as a developer on a specific platform. While adaptability becomes vital, organisations across key industries would look for other skills such as soft skills, collaboration and teamwork. Companies would seek out talent that is comfortable with working alongside or leveraging emerging technologies like AI and data analytics. The capability to work with these technologies would be the new normal. On the supply side, new talent markets will emerge, as groups that are more diverse join the workforce. These diverse groups would include micropreneurs, contingent workers and vocational streams, in addition to traditional graduates.

► **The shift in talent management:** Driven by niche technologies such as AI and machine learning, new ways of work will come to the fore. Organisations will now have the ability to sift through large pieces of (unstructured) data using AI models to provide meaningful, timely and customisable information that is actionable. This dashboard view will enable managers to take better decisions promptly, and cognitive insights will become part of the mainstream tools helping companies.

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HR practices that need a relook in 2020

NAVNEET TRIKHA

THE NEXT DECADE is likely to introduce more start-ups, newer technologies, gig economy, aggregator set-ups, and use of analytics to focus on serving each customer uniquely. This presents a unique set of challenges on the people front as well. Many HR practices will need a relook—the process-centric approach in HR will have to accommodate employee-centricity.

Renewed customer-centricity of businesses may require HR to revisit organisation structures and combine hierarchies along with matrix reporting arrangements with loosely-structured, empowered, flexible, mix-and-match and tenured project teams. Also, the pyramids of workflow would get reshaped, and learning agility, competence and adaptability will take precedence over experience and expertise.

The emergence of new roles and available capabilities may redefine the dynamic boundaries of role and, therefore, flexibility in hiring could be the norm, rather than going by fixed job description.

The dimensions of compensation and benefits, and recognition for the workforce of the future will be quite different. Besides being competitive, such practices have to focus on differentiating individual identity, help employee see meaning in the job.

Leadership development would focus on cultivating behaviours that drive inclusivity, greater levels of sensitivity, continuous coaching, with feedback and feed-forward. The HR practices of tomorrow will be highly business-aligned, unique for employees and flexible in their approach.

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Science & tech

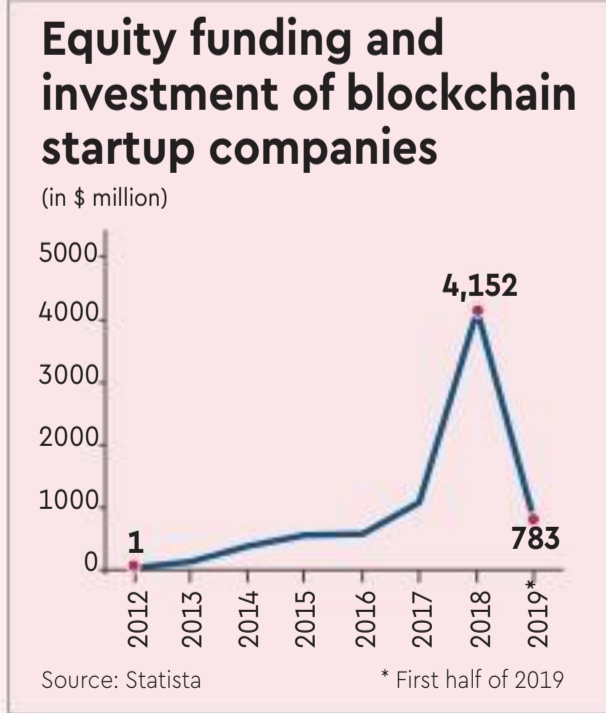
● EAVESDROPPER

The year of comebacks

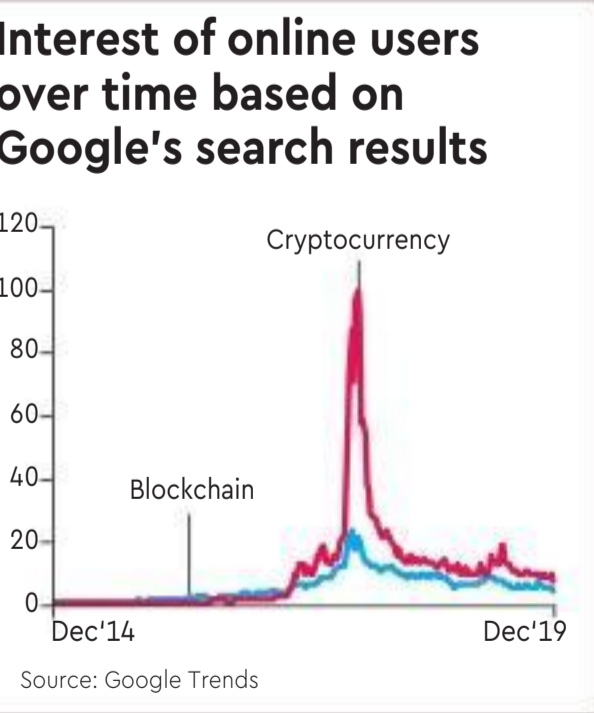
Blockchain will make a big impact in 2020, but AR & VR still have a long way to go



"I'll be back." Arnold Schwarzenegger's wax replica from the iconic Terminator at Madame Tussaud London



the only entity to try its hand at cryptocurrencies; many central banks and international consortiums may also be ready with their currency launches. Fortunes won't turn too drastically for bitcoin—more governments are banning it as they believe it used for money laundering by cartels—but the coming of Facebook currency would certainly upend global finance. Imagine, over a billion users being able to transact easily using the wallet (Calibra) in a currency that Facebook wants. Many have since left Facebook's consortium over privacy and security concerns, but if the Menlo Park headquartered social



media company can convince users and government to get on board, winning back friends won't be an issue. But not until Facebook gains user confidence, it can roll out its currency. And, that may require some give and take.

Facebook will need to share some of these gains with the people. A revenue-sharing arrangement, where the company deposits money into people's accounts for using their data. If Facebook does dispense off a few Libra to each person, it would undoubtedly start a market. By not allowing the currency to leave its platform, and onboarding small businesses, it will be

able to help money make more money. Combined with cashback and discounts, the model can work in Facebook's favour. It would not just be a social media platform; it will be the world's biggest bazaar. Another issue that is of paramount importance is security, and this is where blockchain gains significance.

As people use more technology, they would want secure systems. Someone using an automated home would never want anybody sitting in a remote part of the world, gaining access to their house. Besides, the situation becomes even more precarious, if that someone can access a hospital's database and control everything that is one the cloud, even the life-saving equipment.

This is where blockchain becomes useful. Even if one can gain access to a single block, it will be impossible to hack into the entire network. So, while hackers may still be able to cause some damage, it would not turn into a catastrophe.

The technology may have gone into slumber over the last year, but it will score big in 2020. Governments may come to rely more on blockchain as they integrate public services with the internet. Hospitals are one example. Telangana has been experimenting with technology for land records; the Indian government may also do so. But more important, it can help in voting. With most countries recording low voter turnouts, blockchain can provide an easy way out. The government can empower people to vote using their phones.

Banking and insurance have more use cases for blockchain. Not only can it reduce the time for transactions, but trade finance and insurance will get more accessible with the technology. Smart contracts are one feature that will make insurance processes smoother. International transactions can become cheaper, as well. All banks will have to do is integrate one blockchain with another, or make two systems interactive.

With a host of blockchain apps available for messaging and email, consumers can benefit too. Even companies may adopt technology for shareholder voting.

What blockchain does, most of all is help developing economies better their structures. Institutions in these countries are weak, and leakages are high, blockchain can address this problem. Every data point gets recorded, and every change is marked, ensuring trust between counter-parties.

AR & VR are still far off for the world. We'd see more companies using AR & VR to push more products, but don't expect too many changes in the technology. Not unless a Pokemon Go is hiding somewhere ready to surprise the market. Even then till the devices don't become affordable AR or VR won't take off.

As for twistable, foldable, wrappable and portable technologies, there is undoubtedly much more to come.

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