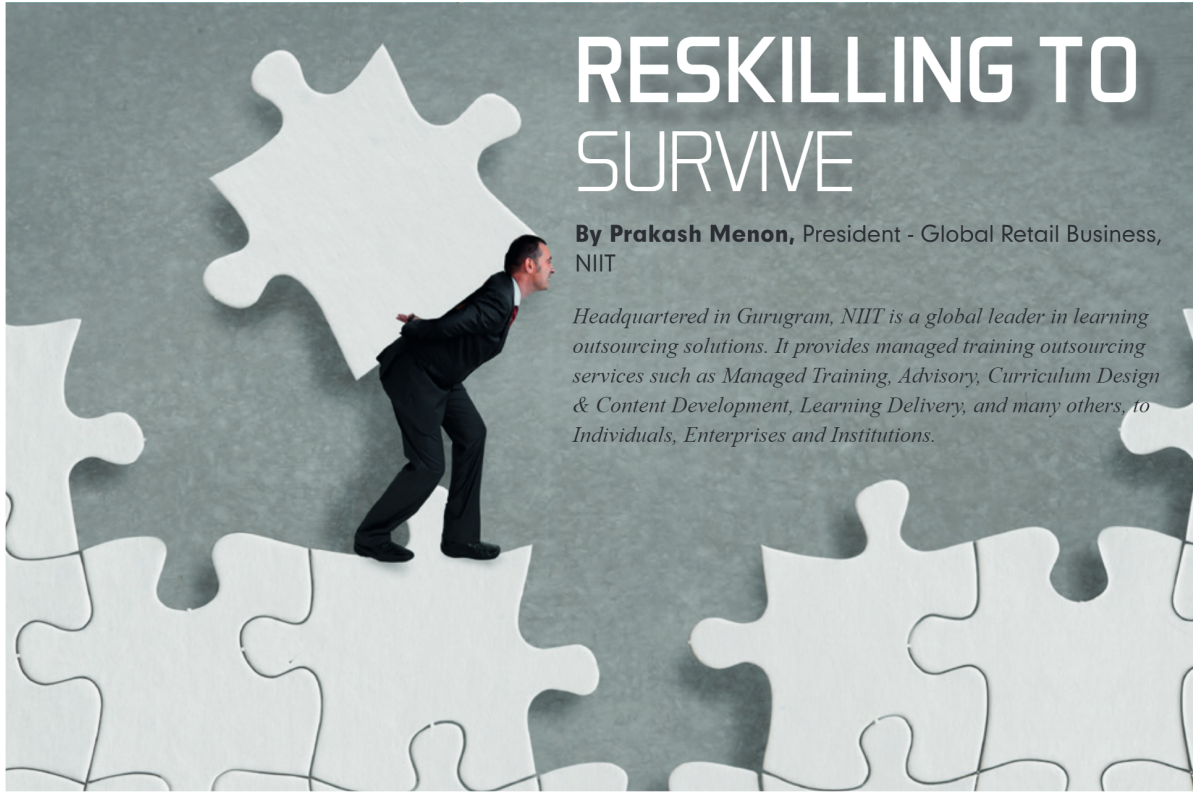## IN MY OPINION

RESKILLING TO
SURVIVE

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Headquartered in Gurugram, NIIT is a global leader in learning outsourcing solutions. It provides managed training outsourcing services such as Managed Training, Advisory, Curriculum Design & Content Development, Learning Delivery, and many others, to Individuals, Enterprises and Institutions.

There is only one constant in the 21st century, a period in the history of the world where disruption has been the norm. Over the last several decades, we have seen myriad developments sweep over the planet that have led to change. These include geo-political shifts driven by the rise of emerging markets, global economic upheavals, ageing populations the world over, acts of terrorism, and of course, the arrival and high consumption of powerful technologies we would never have dreamed could exist.

It is in this century that we have seen the arrival of the now ubiquitous computer, which has expanded in power and capability even as its footprint has shrunk. From giant, monolithic super computers that occupied equally gargantuan spaces, to devices that boast an exponentially higher computing power, but fit into the palm of a hand, technology has come a long way.

We have also witnessed the rapid and rampant growth of laptops, handhelds, and smart devices in enterprises that have emerged as accepted tools for personal and organizational productivity. It is in this age too that we have seen the rise of mobility, one of the most revolutionary and inclusive forces which has emerged as a great productivity enhancement tool for modern road warriors within organizations.

Driven by these external changes and global trends, companies have altered the way they view themselves internally and conduct their businesses. One of the most significant developments within organizations, in fact, has been the deployment and increasing use of cutting-edge technologies in the conduct of everyday tasks, and with a goal of improving productivity, efficiency and profitability. Over the last 50 years, as computers and smart devices have proliferated across the enterprise landscape, they have ushered in a phenomenal metamorphosis in the manner in which work is done.

With the altering nature of work, the skills that organizations have required over the years, have also taken a quantum leap. From the time they embarked on their IT journeys, they have been focusing extensively on forging a talent pool that is

comfortable with the state-of-the-art and engages easily with technology. They have also hired people who have expertise in the technologies that the companies have invested in and the critical know-how to use them optimally.

Reskill or perish is now the new success mantra for organizations, as it is not only a path to staying productive and profitable, but simply an imperative for survival in the new age

In a country such as India in particular, organizations have been looking to increase their techie manpower as they have added sophisticated hardware, software, and communications equipment on their turf. While during the early years of computerization, companies hired IT people such as computer and communications engineers, programmers, software architects and maintenance staff. In more recent times, the profile of the technological workforce has undergone a significant makeover.

The reason for this is the arrival of the next phase of technological evolution—what we are now referring to as Digital Transformation (DT), or the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The reality is that technological disruptions of a greater order than known before are causing companies to relook at their employee base and see just how well adjusted it is in terms of existing skills sets to the ongoing Digital environment. As they adopt what is commonly called Industrial 4.0 technologies, companies across industries are going through a process of upskilling and re-skilling employees.

The large posse of these incoming technologies including SMAC (Social, Mobility, Analytics, Cloud), Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Robotics and Natural Language Processing, to name a few, and the changing paradigms of talent deployment, are making reskilling an imperative. Enterprises are therefore preparing their people to seamlessly straddle existing and on-the-horizon technologies so that they can save themselves from obsolescence and contribute to the building of a future-proof and future-ready workplace.

It is true that already many firms in India have established dedicated programs to re-skill existing employees and invested massively on training initiatives. According to IT-BPM industry spearhead and India's leading chamber of commerce, NASSCOM, the country's top companies have already reskilled an average 50 percent of their employee base to fit people for job roles of the future.

A research by NASSCOM in fact indicates that the IT-BPM industry, which currently employs around four million people will need an additional 1.2-2 billion employees to maintain existing growth momentum and achieve its targeted revenue goal of $100 billion by 2025. To get here, and in order to keep pace with the automation of the sector, up to 40 percent of the workforce will need to be reskilled in technology, domain, social and thinking.

Alongside its enterprise members therefore, NASSCOM has launched

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an initiative that is aimed at skilling/reskilling 1.5-2 million people (both aspirants and current employees) over the next 4-5 years. The chamber is working with over 20 companies to achieve this target. Additionally, NASSCOM has announced the launch of the NASSCOM Leadership Resource Center, a global collaborative learning community aimed at building differentiated leadership competencies in future leaders of the industry.

Meanwhile, employees within organizations too have become more conscious about reskilling to stay relevant. A recent study by global management consultancy firm Accenture on the changes that technology is expected to bring to work over the next five years, has shown that employees are now looking to invest their free time in learning new skills such as technical skills, creativity, people management, ability to work with intelligent machines and judgment & decision-making to stay relevant.

It is becoming increasingly clear that reskill or perish is now the new success mantra for organizations. It is not only a path to staying productive and profitable, but simply an imperative for survival in the new age. **si**