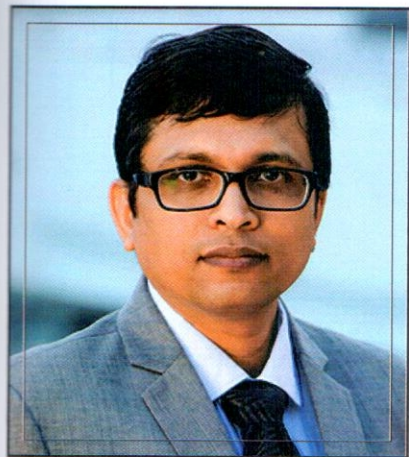


## Year 2023 will witness significant growth in adoption of blockchain and AI



"While automation is trickling into all industries, a significant shift is underway in how software is being made," says **Mr. Ashwini Rath, CEO, Batoi Systems Pvt. Ltd.**

any industry, sector and even our life in every possible way.

While the IT sector in India is gradually leaning toward products, the focus does not become less on services due to a huge demand of skilled workers. On the other hand, the rise in the cost of living has made the theory of India being a cheaper IT outsourcing destination, untenable. Instead, the shift of its focus now should be toward quality. If the initiatives of government, industry bodies and the academic fraternity converge on this, it will greatly contribute to the economy.

**Is Odisha emerging as a hotspot for IT Business? Please throw some light on it.**

It has been more than a decade since several IT majors began their operations in Bhubaneswar. The proactive measures from the State Government and the lucrative cost

of operation pushed them to hire more locally and expand. Many new companies from outside the state have recently opened their shops. Some of the homegrown startups have also expanded their activities. STPI (Software Parks of India) has now opened its centers in the state's second-tier cities, giving an enormous impetus to the expansion drive. Overall, Odisha has all opportunities to become an IT hub.

**What are the challenges the state needs to address in order to create a conducive ecosystem for Startups and accelerate their competitiveness in the global market?**

The significant challenges lie in the state's ability to produce the requisite number of skilled human resources in cutting-edge technologies and associated areas. As the number of educational institutions have grown significantly in recent years, there needs to be more initiatives for industry-academia collaborations.

**Odisha slipped to rank 16th in the Innovation Index. What are the major drawbacks, and how can we work towards enhancing the same?**

Innovation and commercialization through the industry ecosystem will

**O**disha's capital Bhubaneswar has seen significant growth in investment and employment creation in the IT sector in the last decade. In an interview to ON TRADE, Mr. Rath shares his views on how the city can maintain this growth momentum in the IT sector. Mr. Rath also highlights the key trends shaping the IT sector, the benefit of cloud computing and futuristic technologies such as automation, blockchain and augmented reality.

**Excerpts of the interview:**

**How do you assess the current scenario of the IT Sector in India? Can you highlight its role as a catalyst in reforming the Indian Economy?**

The IT sector has expanded its sphere to include many technologies to form a larger industry vertical called digital technologies. Every tangible object we use may be coded and made intelligent, creating a cardinal role for digital technology in

“With the number of educational institutions increasing in recent years, there needs to be more initiatives for industry-academia collaborations.”



promote the culture of entrepreneurship. This will go a long way to ensure sustainable growth for startups. Talking about industry-academia collaborations, strong academic curricula and continual research programs with industry partners will foster a better innovation environment. Moreover, we should also initiate alliances with other startup ecosystems across borders to leverage external markets and innovations.

**“Innovation and commercialization through the industry ecosystem will promote the culture of entrepreneurship. This will ensure sustainable growth for startups.”**

**How can skilling and innovation boost entrepreneurship in the state? Please share your insights.**

The demand-supply crisis in skilled workers discourages startups and SMEs due to their inability to invest explicitly in training and up-skilling programs. A robust ecosystem generating top-skilled talents, institutions driving lateral skill programs, and research collaborations will boost entrepreneurship in the state in a big way.

**What are the few technology trends we can expect in 2023? How shall these affect the Start-up ecosystem?**

While automation is trickling into all industries, a significant shift is underway in how software is being made. The coming year will see the acceptance of rapid application development with low-code tools and DevSecOps processes. The year 2023 will see a significant growth in

adopting new technologies like blockchain, AR/VR (augmented reality and virtual reality), IoT, and artificial intelligence (AI).

The evolution in core areas of digital technologies will see the creation of new products and startups. Larger enterprises and venture capitalists will be willing to invest in such startups creating a new era of computation.

**Can technology and skilled manpower go hand in hand to uplift the industrial performance of the state?**

Yes, but it is always a difficult task at hand. The success of involving new technologies in the industry is always driven by the availability of adequate human resources. Sufficient trainers and appropriate lab infrastructure are instrumental for achieving such a result.

**How can AI & Innovations support MSMEs of Odisha in their business process?**

Like many other states in India, the MSME sector in Odisha is largely stuck with old methods of doing business, despite availability of progressive adoption of new technologies, tools and techniques. The innovations in digital technologies including AI will democratize the technology implementations; and thus a widespread adoption is on the horizon.

**What is the future of Cloud Computing in India? Can this empower small businesses?**

The model of Cloud Computing greatly reduces the capital investment in technology infrastructure; it brings down the cost of digital transformation. Moreover, it is the vehicle for a host of new technologies, and thus expedites the adoption of new digital technologies among small businesses.

I see an unprecedented growth in Cloud Computing in India in the coming years. While SaaS (Software as a Service) model will be preferred for short term projects and startups, businesses will accept Rapid Application Development tools for their digital transformation - primarily for their ability to produce customized software while giving full transparency into the regulatory requirements.

**Can you elaborate the Digital Transformation in industries like healthcare, engineering, and others?**

Digital transformation initiative in an organization may be driven by profitability or productivity. In most sectors, including healthcare and engineering, there is a profound scope of digital intervention considering the current state of technology adoption.

I am quite optimistic; the new paradigm has the ability to bring the entire population into the domain of formal healthcare which could not be imagined before. Small scale industries will be able to leverage 3D printing for the engineering of personalized goods.