

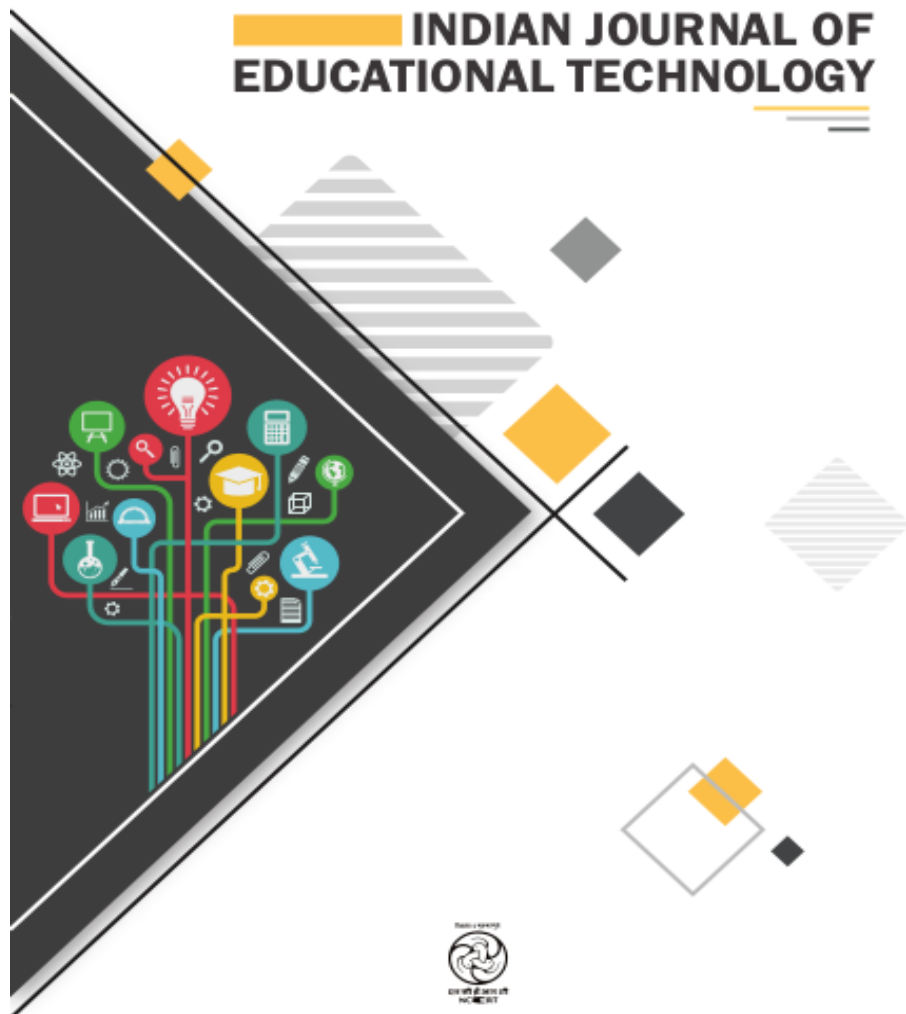
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21 Lessons for the 21st Century
By Yuval Noah Harari, 2018, Jonathan Cape,
Penguin Random House, London
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The rapid changes in technology have changed polity, society and the way people interact with each other at a pace that has confounded even thinkers of our time. A nagging question exists whether society is on the path to further human progress or is it hurtling towards destruction? Twenty years into the 21st century, social scientists to technologists, climate scientists to politicians, educationists to activists are debating on the shape that is being acquired by this century. Specialists are finding specialization inadequate for comprehending the breadth of changes, even when their tools of analysis become even more important in an increasingly complex world. The turn to the new millennium has added the question: will human beings survive as a species after having contributed to the extinction of several fellow life forms on earth?

The murkiness of the problems has added to the anxiety of our times. However, quick-fix solutions, barrage of suggestions and abundance of technology driven information have also created a noise that has made it even more difficult to make sense of the world. Yuval Noah Harari pithily

announces in the first line of his book, 21 Lessons for 21st century (pix), the primary challenge of our times: 'In a world deluged by irrelevant information, clarity is power'. He acknowledges that most people in the world do not have the luxury of thinking on where humanity is headed even when they have to bear its consequences. And thus assumes the role of a teacher by deploying his skills as a historian and philosopher to explain the swift turns of this century.

The book itself is an outcome of Harari's talks, articles and lectures that have sought to clarify the human past and its future, thoroughly elaborated in his two previous works: the Sapiens and the Homo Deus. The first book Sapiens gave a spectacular view of the human past, right from the beginning 6 billion years ago to its becoming the only species left in the human genus about 10,000 years ago; and the revolutions that transformed it as well as the violent, sometimes accidental turns in history and culture. This compelling book was followed by Homo Deus, an extrapolation of human future based on current developments in technology. It presents a future