AICAR 6th International Research Conference

Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

for India and Indian Boards:

Corporate and institutional requirements for ensuring collective survival

Monday 2nd September

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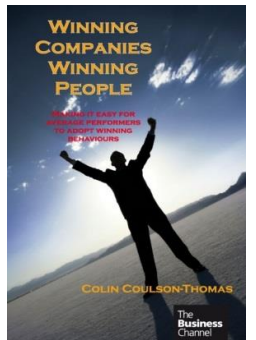
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AICAR 6th International Research Conference
(India and the VUCA World)
Agenda

- Evidence and Sources

- Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges for India and Indian Boards

- Common features of contemporary risks, threats and challenges

- Requirements for effective responses

- Obstacles to effective responses

- Questions for Leaders and Boards

AICAR 6th International Research Conference (India and the VUCA World) Scientific Evidence and Sources

- IPCC, UNEP, WEF and WMO annual and pre-COP summary and synthesis reports

- CCT Theme Papers for IOD India annual international events:

    - 2023 London Global Convention on Corporate Governance and Sustainability: Boards, ESG and Corporate Governance for the New World Economy

    - 18th International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility: CSR and Exploring the Evolution of ESG in the New World Economy

    - 2024 UAE Global Convention and 31st Annual World Congress on Leadership for Innovation and Excellence

    - 25th International Conference on Environment Management and Climate Change: Board's agenda for addressing Climate Change and Environmental Risks: Driving Towards a Greener Society

    - 2024 Annual Directors' Conclave: Emerging Trends and Building Inclusive Boards

- CCT monthly articles in Director Today and quarterly articles in Effective Executive and Management Services

Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges
WEF 2-year Global Risk Ranking (Severity of Impact)

- **Misinformation and disinformation (T)**

- **Extreme weather events (E)**

- **Societal polarization (S)**

- **Cyber insecurity (T)**

- **Interstate armed conflict (G)**

- **Lack of economic opportunity (S)**

- **Inflation (Econ)**

- **Involuntary migration (S)**

- **Economic downturn (Econ)**

- **Pollution (E)**

Source: WEF (World Economic Forum) (2024), *The Global Risks Report 2024*, 19th Edition, Cologny, Geneva, World Economic Forum, 10th January

Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges
WEF 10-year Global Risk Ranking (Severity of Impact)

- **Extreme weather events (E)**

- **Critical change to Earth systems (E)**

- **Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse (E)**

- **Natural resource shortages (E)**

- **Misinformation and disinformation (T)**

- **Adverse outcomes of AI technologies (T)**

- **Involuntary migration (S)**

- **Cyber insecurity (T)**

- **Societal polarization (S)**

- **Pollution (E)**

AICAR 6th International Research Conference
(India and the VUCA World)
Existential Threats

- Asteroids

- Nuclear Weapons and Threats

- Biosecurity Threats

- Global Warming and Climate Change

- Artificial Intelligence and its Regulation

- Biodiversity (Monocultures/food security)

- + Various Malevolent / Terrorism / Exogenous

Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges Consequences of Collective Human Activity

- We face shared existential challenges:
  - Environmental degradation
  - Reduction of biodiversity
  - Running down of natural capital
  - Spread of contagious disease
  - Global warming and climate change
  - Gen AI / AGI as an existential threat, etc.

- Collective human activity is the cause of global warming, climate change and other existential challenges facing humankind. Could survival become a shared interest?

- Where do existential threats feature in corporate and institutional policies and priorities? How prepared are people, organisations, communities and societies?

- Are common features of contemporary risks, threats and challenges, requirements for effective responses, and obstacles to them understood?

- How might obstacles for effective responses be overcome? Is this interesting or imperative?

- What role can and should boards play? How do we transition from studying selected aspects of certain problems to supporting more holistic and collective responses?

- Inter-related and/or inter-dependent and complex

- Collective human aspirations / activities / lifestyles as a cause

- Uncertainty on timing/tipping points and/or slow burn

- Increasing vulnerability of life-forms and infrastructures

- Reducing resilience and increasing potential impact/cost

- Potentially catastrophic impacts

- Possible unintended consequences of human intervention/responses

AICAR 6th International Research Conference Requirements for Effective Responses

- Collaboration and collective action

- Supply / value chain and community/stakeholder cooperation

- Recognition of priority common / shared interests (e.g. collective survival)

- Cross-functional, inter-disciplinary and wider cooperation

- Disaggregating data / trends (differing local impacts)

- Corporate / community and public / private partnerships

- Flexibility, adaptation, intelligent steering and greater flexibility and speed

- Quicker adoption/scaling up of sustainable innovations

AICAR 6th International Research Conference
Obstacles to Effective Responses

- Fragmentation and polarisation

- Self and vested interests in the status quo/fossil fuels

- Distractions and short-term pressures

- Delaying strategies and tactics

- Bias, misinformation and disinformation

- Increasing population / lifestyle aspirations

- Limited natural capital and persistent negative externalities

- Social media / retreat into virtual worlds

- Departmental structures, organisational boundaries and discipline rather than holistic solution focus

- Public and private sector remit, approval and budgeting incompatibility

AICAR 6th International Research Conference Questions for Leaders and Boards

- How vulnerable to existential threats are your areas of responsibility? Which activities, communities and supporting infrastructures are most vulnerable?

- Are: causes and common features of contemporary risks, threats and challenges; requirements for effective responses; and obstacles to them, understood by those for whom you are responsible?

- Where do existential threats feature in your, corporate and institutional policies and priorities?

- How prepared are people, organisations, communities and societies? How might obstacles for effective responses be overcome? Are actions regarded as interesting, important or imperative?

- Could survival become a common, shared and priority interest? What could you and your colleagues do to engage stakeholders, confront vested interests and enable, support and accelerate:

  - The minimisation of negative externalities and transition to more sustainable and inclusive aspirations, objectives, policies and priorities, and activities and lifestyles in harmony with the natural world?

  - Cooperation and inter-disciplinary, inter-departmental, inter-organisational and inter-national collaboration across organisational, departmental and other boundaries and collective and responsible responses to global risks, existential threats and contemporary challenges?

Operating in a VUCA World
Selected Further Reading (Theme Papers)

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2023), [Theme Paper] 2023 London Global Convention on Corporate Governance and Sustainability, www.iodglobal.com [https://iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/theme-paper-lgc-2023.pdf, 17th August]

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2023), [Theme Paper] 18th International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility, www.iodglobal.com [https://iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/theme-paper-18th-international-conference-on-csr.pdf, 15th November]

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), [Theme Paper] 2024 UAE Global Convention and 31st Annual World Congress on Leadership for Innovation and Excellence, www.iodglobal.com [https://iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/2024/theme-paper-uae2024.pdf, 11th January] [

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), [Theme Paper] 25th International Conference on Environment Management and Climate Change, www.iodglobal.com [https://iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/2024/theme-paper-icemcc2024.pdf, 30th April]

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), [Theme Paper] 2024 Annual Directors' Conclave: Emerging Trends and Building Inclusive Boards, www.iodglobal.com [https://iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/2024/theme-paper-adc2024.pdf, 10th July]

Operating in a VUCA World
Selected Further Reading (Articles)

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Challenging Misinformation, Understanding Impacts and Pursuing Possibilities, *Director Today*, Vol. X Issue III, March, pp 17-20

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), AI, Sustainability and the Future of Work, *Management Services*, Vol. 68 Number 1, Spring, pp 13-19

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Directors, Boards and Existential Threats, *Director Today*, Vol. X Issue IV, April, pp 43-48

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Handling Differing Director and Board Perspectives, *Director Today*, Vol. X Issue V, May, pp 15-19

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Preparing Directors for Corporate Survival and International Operation, *Director Today*, Vol. 10 Issue VI, June, pp 21-27

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Recognising and Preparing for Existential Threats, *Management Services*, Vol. 68 No 2, Summer, pp 22-29

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Confronting Cyber Risk Realities, *Director Today*, Vol. 10 Issue VII, July, pp 11-17

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Leadership Qualities for Confronting Existential Threats, *Effective Executive*, Vol. 27 No. 2, Summer, pp 5-25

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Accelerating Environmental and Climate Action: How bias, misinformation and disinformation can discredit and delay, *Director Today*, Vol. 10 Issue VIII, August, pp 63-68

Future and Responsible Leadership and the Under-pinning CSF Research Programme

'Transforming Public Services', Talent Management 2', 'Transforming Knowledge Management', 'Winning Companies; Winning People', 'Developing Directors' and reports on creating and exploiting knowledge, customer and client relationships, purchasing, winning business, pricing, etc. briefings, tools and reports can be obtained from: www.policypublications.com and articles and recent theme papers and articles related to existential threats are available from: http://www.academia.edu
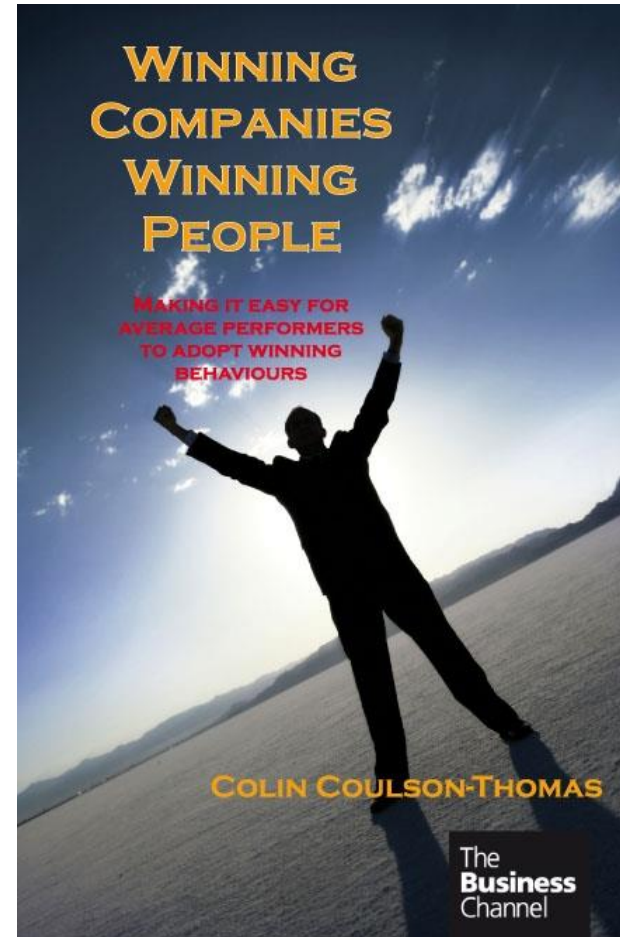
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