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AI skills could boost salaries of workers in India by more than 54% and accelerate career growth as AI adoption ramps up, finds new research

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Hiring AI-skilled talent is a priority for over nine in ten employers in India but 79% struggle to find the AI talent they need, highlighting a looming AI skills gap in the country

NEW DELHI, India—March 19, 2024—Amazon Web Services (AWS), an Amazon.com company, today released new research showing that when artificial intelligence (AI) is fully harnessed, workers in India with AI skills and expertise could see salary hikes of over 54%, with workers in IT (65%), and research and development (62%) enjoying the highest pay increases.

To better understand emerging AI usage trends and skilling needs in workplaces, AWS commissioned Access Partnership to conduct a regional study, titled *"Accelerating AI Skills: Preparing the Asia-Pacific Workforce for Jobs of the Future"*. Over 1,600 workers and 500 employers were surveyed in India.

On top of significant salary increases, 97% of workers in India expect their AI skills to have a positive impact on their careers, including increased job efficiency and career advancement. 95% of workers in India indicated a keen interest in developing AI skills to accelerate their careers, and this interest transcends generations. 95% of Gen Z, 96% of Millennials, and 93% of Gen X workers want to acquire AI skills, while 90% of baby boomers — a demographic usually contemplating retirement — say they would enrol in an AI upskilling course if it was offered.

The research also found that the productivity payoff from an AI-skilled workforce could be immense for India. Surveyed employers expect their organisation's productivity to increase by 68% as AI technology automates repetitive tasks (71%), encourages learning of new skills (68%), and improves workflow and outcomes (64%). Workers believe AI could raise their efficiency by as much as 66%.

Organisations in India go all-in on AI

The speed of AI transformation happening in India is remarkable. Almost all employers (99%) envision their companies becoming AI-driven organisations by 2028. While most employers (97%) believe their finance department will be the biggest beneficiary, they also foresee IT (96%), research and development (96%), sales and marketing (96%), business operations (95%), human resources (94%), and legal (92%) departments driving significant value from AI too.

"The AI wave is sweeping across the Asia-Pacific region, including India, transforming the way businesses operate and the way we work. Our research shows that society as a whole will benefit from an increased productivity boost, which will translate into higher salaries for skilled workers in India," said Abhineet Kaul, Director at Access Partnership. "With a growing number of organisations expected to deepen their use of AI solutions and tools, and the continual evolution of AI-driven innovations, there is a need for employers and governments to nurture a proficient workforce capable of steering current and future AI advancements."

Generative AI—a type of AI that can create new content and ideas quickly, including conversations, stories, images, videos, music, and more—has captured the attention of the general public in the past year. This technology is already transforming workplaces in India where 98% of surveyed employers and workers expect to use generative AI tools on the job within the next five years, with 73% of employers highlighting 'increasing innovation and creativity' as the top benefit, followed by improving outcomes (69%), and automating repetitive tasks (68%).

"Generative AI offers an unprecedented opportunity to transform businesses across India, and this research shows that AI skills are imperative for the future workforce. From financial services to construction and retail, industries are embracing AI at a rapid pace, which is why an AI-skilled workforce is essential to unleashing a culture of innovation and driving productivity in India, aligning with the government of India's IndiaAI Mission," said Amit Mehta, Head of AWS Training and Certification, AWS India Private Limited*. "At AWS, we are helping organisations such as Wipro, L&T Technology Services, Iris Software, and others, to upskill their employees to be ready for a future powered by generative AI."

"AI skills are becoming paramount for our customers to innovate and stay competitive. AWS and Wipro are collaborating to train AWS skilled associates at Wipro in generative AI services," said Ramesh Pai, Vice President, AWS Business Unit Head, Wipro Technologies. "Equipping them with Wipro developer experience platform devNXT.ai, which is integrated with Amazon CodeWhisperer and Amazon Q, helps in accelerating developer productivity and fostering a culture of continuous innovation."

Bridging India's AI skills gap is mission-critical

The research reveals a looming AI skills gap which must be bridged to ensure India is well-positioned to unlock the full productivity benefits of AI. Hiring AI-skilled talent is a priority for more than nine in ten (96%) employers in India, of which 79% can't find the AI talent they need. The research also uncovers a training awareness gap, whereby 91% of employers indicated that they don't know how to run an AI workforce training program. Meanwhile, 86% of workers said they aren't sure about relevant career paths where AI skills are useful.

The research highlights the need for greater collaboration between governments, industries, and educators to help employers across India implement AI training programs and guide workers in matching their AI skillsets to the right roles to harness their newly acquired AI capabilities.

"In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, upskilling workers in AI, founded on ethical frameworks and principles, is not just a strategic choice, but a critical imperative for governments and organisations across Asia-Pacific," said Dr. Rupa Chanda, Director of Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). "This report shows that the future of work demands a workforce equipped with AI proficiency to navigate emerging challenges and harness opportunities for sustainable and equitable economic growth and development as well as inclusive innovation."

Accelerating digital skills training across India

AWS has trained more than 5.5 million people in India on cloud skills since 2017. But with the rapid adoption of cloud-enabled technologies like AI, more needs to be done to upskill the workforce at scale so organisations can innovate and grow in an AI-dominated future.

In November 2023, Amazon launched the 'AI Ready' initiative that complements AWS's commitment to provide free cloud computing skills training to 29 million individuals globally by 2025. Through 'AI Ready,' we now offer a suite of free AI and generative AI training courses, aligned to both technical and non-technical roles, so that anyone can build AI skills. This is in addition to the more than 100 courses and learning resources on AI, machine learning, and generative AI available through AWS Skills Builder and AWS Educate —our digital learning centres for beginners to advanced learners. AWS also announced new generative AI innovations at AWS re:Invent 2023, including Amazon Q —a new generative AI assistant designed for work that can be tailored to businesses.

For more information about our *"Accelerating AI Skills: Preparing the Asia Pacific Workforce for Jobs of the Future"* research, download the report here.

About Amazon Web Services

Since 2006, Amazon Web Services has been the world's most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud. AWS has been continually expanding its services to support virtually any workload, and it now has more than 240 fully featured services for compute, storage, databases, networking, analytics, machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), mobile, security, hybrid, media, and application development, deployment, and management from 105 Availability Zones within 33 geographic regions, with announced plans for 18 more Availability Zones and six more AWS Regions in Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and the AWS European Sovereign Cloud. Millions of customers—including the fastest-growing startups, largest enterprises, and leading government agencies—trust AWS to power their infrastructure, become more agile, and lower costs. To learn more about AWS, visit aws.amazon.com.

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*About Amazon Web Services (AWS) India Private Limited

AWS India Private Limited undertakes the resale and marketing of AWS Cloud services in India.