95% of India workers say they need more digital skills to adapt to job changes due to COVID-19, but less than half of organizations have a training plan in place

March 22, 2022

Cloud, cybersecurity, and machine learning skills will be among the top five most demanded digital skills by employers by 2025

91% of organizations that invested in digital skills training saw increased revenue, 92% improved employee productivity, and 90% reported higher employee retention

March 22, 2022 | New Delhi, INDIA – Today, Amazon Web Services, Inc. (AWS), an Amazon.com company, released findings from a new research report showing that the need for digital skills training became more acute during the pandemic, with 95% of workers in India reporting they need more digital skills – the ability and knowledge to apply digital technologies for tasks in the workplace – to cope with changes in their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report found that over the next year, the number of India workers requiring digital skills for their jobs is projected to increase by 27.3 million, representing 7% of India's workforce. Despite this, only 45% of employers in India have a training plan in place, which could affect their competitiveness in such areas as productivity, innovation, and employee retention.

The "Building Digital Skills for the Changing Workforce" report, prepared by strategy and economics consulting firm AlphaBeta, and commissioned by AWS, surveyed 1,012 digitally skilled workers[1] in both technology and non-technology roles[2], and 303 employers[3] in India, with representation from public, private, and nonprofit sectors of different sizes and industries. The report also found that the ability to use cloud-based tools, such as cloud developer tools, as well as online collaboration, accounting, and customer relationship management (CRM) software, will be the most in-demand skill required by employers by 2025, followed by technical support skills, and cybersecurity skills. It also highlights the need for more advanced cloud computing skills, including machine learning and cloud architecture design, which emerged as the fifth and sixth most in demand digital skills by employers in India by 2025. These skills are expected to be in high demand in businesses from healthcare to agriculture, fintech to media and entertainment.

By 2025, 63% of workers in India feel they will require training in cloud-related skills to progress in their careers. Among these workers who feel that they require training in cloud-related skills, 45% feel that they need to learn how to make use of cloud-based tools in their work, 24% of workers also feel that they will require training in migrating on-premises facilities to the cloud, and 32% believe they will require cloud architecture design skills. Employers who support skills training programs see significant benefits, with 92% reporting improved employee productivity, 92% stating they were able to fast-track their digitization goals, 92% achieving cost efficiencies, 90% reporting higher employee retention, and 91% seeing increased revenue.

Genevieve Lim, Director for APAC, AlphaBeta (part of Access Partnership), said, "While the need for digital skills has been growing for years, the research shows that job changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated the need for more training for both tech and non-tech workers on digital capabilities in India. Organizations have accelerated their digitization process to cope with the pandemic and ensure their long-term competitiveness. Transitioning into a digital-first economy will help countries' recovery from COVID-19 and secure a stronger economic future. There is an urgent need for governments to work together with employers, training providers, and workers to meet these diverse and growing digital learning needs."

AWS is focused on breaking down barriers to help solve this challenge, and is investing hundreds of millions of dollars globally as part of a global commitment to provide free cloud computing skills training to 29 million people. AWS offers over 500 free digital training courses, available to anyone with a desire to learn and an internet connection. To prepare the next generation of cloud professionals for early cloud careers, and to build a diverse pipeline of entry-level talent into the workforce, AWS collaborates with higher education institutions, nonprofits, workforce development organizations, governments, and employers on a range of digital upskilling programs. In India, this includes programs like AWS re/Start, which is a free, full-time, 12-week program that prepares unemployed, underemployed, and transitioning individuals for careers in cloud computing. Tech Mahindra Foundation, the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm of Tech Mahindra Ltd. and Generation India, a non-profit organisation, recently announced they will support to train unemployed and underemployed individuals in cloud computing through the AWS re/Start program, extending the reach of the program to more cities in India. AWS has already trained over one million of individuals in India with cloud skills since 2017.

"Over the course of the pandemic, we have seen organizations of all sizes accelerate their digital transformation plans, driving an increased need for employers and their workers to advance skills training for cloud computing, cybersecurity, and machine learning," said Rahul Sharma, President, Public Sector – AISPL*, AWS India and South Asia. "The Building Digital Skills for the Changing Workforce report shows an urgency for workers and employers to increase digital skills knowledge and maximize the benefits of technology to individuals and organizations. AWS is committed to collaborating with industry and government in India to address the digital skills shortage and stay ahead of the training curve. We are embracing a culture of lifelong learning and micro-skills as the new operating model for the future and current workforce through cloud curriculum integration in higher education, and programs like AWS re/Start. Our goal is to help people—from beginners to seasoned IT professionals—gain new cloud computing skills."

The lack of time to pursue training is the most commonly faced barrier to digital skilling, with 77% of workers in India citing this. To address this barrier, workers can take courses in modular, micro-skills that are available on-demand, such as the NASSCOM FutureSkills initiative, which curates learning content from global providers to train and certify IT professionals in emerging technologies, while governments can work with industry to develop short-term micro-skills training courses. Debjani Ghosh, President, NASSCOM, added, "Natural evolution and a sense of urgency created by the pandemic have led to a rapid rise in the adoption of digital technologies across the board, leading to an accelerated increase in the demand for trained digital talent. Skilling at scale must be a national priority and become India's competitive edge to enable the country grow as the global powerhouse for developing technological talent. To thrive in a digital future, new formats of skilling programs on emerging technologies must be built and delivered at a massive scale. NASSCOM FutureSkills Prime aims to enable the talent pool in India to develop competence in emerging technologies that will shape

India's techade across domains. Technologies such as cloud computing have seen rapid adoption, and courses such as the AWS Cloud Master Class on FutureSkills Prime provide a gateway for aspirational learners to build new skills and align to the fast-changing industry demands."

Download the research report: "Building Digital Skills for the Changing Workforce".

To learn more about Amazon's global commitment to provide free public cloud computing skills training to 29 million people, visit AboutAmazon.com/29million.

About Amazon Web Services

For over 15 years, Amazon Web Services has been the world's most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud offering. AWS has been continually expanding its services to support virtually any cloud workload, and it now has more than 200 fully featured services for compute, storage, databases, networking, analytics, machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), mobile, security, hybrid, virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR), media, and application development, deployment, and management from 84 Availability Zones within 26 geographic regions, with announced plans for 24 more Availability Zones and eight more AWS Regions in Australia, Canada, India, Israel, New Zealand, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates. 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.

*About Amazon Internet Services Private Limited
Amazon Internet Services Private Limited ("AISPL") undertakes the resale and marketing of AWS Cloud in India.

[1] Workers who need to apply digital technologies in order to do their jobs. These workers can be technology or non-technology workers.

[2] Non-technology workers refer to workers in occupations that do not require specialized technological knowledge and skills but need some basic technological skills such as knowing how to use word processing software and smartphones (e.g., administrative staff, café owners, human resources managers).

[3] Business managers, information technology (IT) managers and IT decision makers. Business managers are defined as professionals in middle and senior management who perform hiring and/or people management roles. IT managers are middle and senior management executives with a strong focus on the company's technology-related function. IT decision makers are workers who play a significant role in the selection and implementation of IT solutions for their organization.