

# For a career in AI, strong fundamentals and soft skills crucial

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Considering the amount of churn that is happening in the job market over fears AI will be taking over white-collar jobs and a lethargic macro environment, we thought it would be a good time to start a webinar series where we focus on the tech skills and competencies that would be most useful for young techies today.

Sashi Kumar, head of sales at Indeed India, a job search platform, says that far from AI taking over jobs, at the moment there is booming demand for AI engineers instead thanks to the incessant need of companies to rapidly create intuitive solutions. "There is a significant increase in the number of AI jobs, so I think it's great to be able to be focused on skills that can help you land jobs in AI and maybe worry about the impact AI will have on jobs for maybe a little more in the future."

Anita Christopher, talent development head at Samsung Semiconductor India Research, says that if we take a step back and look at what's happening around us dispassionately, we will notice that we're entering a world of hyper intelligence, hyper sensors, and basically a hyper connected way of living. "I think that opens up so many

## LEVEL UP WITH TIMES TECHIES

opportunities for AI to be sort of a good friendly assistant for us."

So, what skills should one possess in our postmodern world? It depends heavily on the domain one is specialising in, says Kumar, but overall, he says programming languages like Python, Java, JavaScript and SQL seem to be in demand across a lot of the companies that are hiring for tech workers.

Most importantly, work on your fundamental skills, whatever domain you are specialising in. So for a career in AI, get a grip on programming languages, machine learning algorithms, deep learning and neural networks, big data analytics, etc.

Aside from that, Christopher says soft skills are as crucial as your fundamental skills when it comes to surviving in our fast-paced world. "One can always work on technical skills, but then what attitudes to learning that one comes with, that's something that's a little more difficult to change. So, I think the focus on creative thinking, problem solving, analytical thinking and having a growth mindset are crucial."

That last part, a growth mindset, Kumar says is par-



Master your fundamentals, really understand and feel it. Get it in your gut. One can build the rest over time but get your fundamentals right first. The second part is to work on one's creative thinking and analytical problem-solving resilience, those elements become very important for a growth mindset.



**Anita Christopher** | TALENT DEVELOPMENT HEAD, SAMSUNG SEMICONDUCTOR INDIA RESEARCH



For people who are keen on getting into the tech industry, they should broaden their horizons and look at the opportunities available to them in industries that might seem traditional but are rapidly evolving because they are adopting tech. Basically, we are seeing that companies that are not traditionally tech are also becoming tech companies



**Sashi Kumar** | HEAD OF SALES, INDEED INDIA

ticularly important. "When we looked at Indeed job postings for the last two years, there's been an almost 150% increase in the use of the term 'growth mindset' in job openings. A growth mindset is a belief that you can develop your skills and talent through hard work, the right strategy and guidance from others. So, it's essentially about being able to learn and develop yourself over time rather than just possessing a bunch of skills as a qualification."

The other notable data point from Indeed's job postings is the importance being given to creative mindsets. "We've seen an almost 70% increase in the use of the word creativity in job openings," says Kumar.

If you're a fresher looking for that perfect AI career, then Kumar says certification courses can be a good way to get your foot in the door. "A certificate is a proxy for some level of skill or proficiency. So, to that extent, yes, it's definitely helpful to get certifications if your work experience isn't that great."

## AI'S IMPACT IN INDIA

### ECONOMY:

Successful AI adoption by Indian businesses could consistently add 1.4 percentage point to real GDP growth

### JOBS:

Just the top 500 Indian companies will need at least 25,000 to 30,000 advanced practitioners of AI/ML in the next 3-5 years

### COMPANIES' BOTTOM LINES:

Successful AI adoption can add Rs 1.5-2.5 lakh crore in incremental pre-tax profit, for the top 500 Indian companies, over following 5 years

### AI MATURITY LEVEL:

Select Indian BFSI companies (particularly banks and new-age NBFCs) have very high AI Maturity, on par with global frontrunners. Overall, two out of three Indian companies are laggards in terms of AI adoption and maturity

Source: 'AI in India - A Strategic Necessity' report by IIMA-BCG

