

AI Is Eating Indian Jobs—Or Is It Creating Them?



The rapid ascent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in India has triggered an urgent and complex debate: Is AI devouring traditional employment, or is it paving the way for a new wave of high-skilled, future-ready jobs? With AI systems now performing tasks once thought exclusive to humans—from customer service to software testing—the anxieties are real. But so are the opportunities.

At the heart of this debate lies a country at an inflection point. India, home to one of the world’s youngest and largest workforces, is being reshaped by algorithms and automation. The nation has a dual task: cushion the displacement of jobs and simultaneously equip millions with the skills necessary for a new digital economy.

The Automation Anxiety: Are Old Jobs Dying?

India’s IT and BPO sectors, which have employed millions and driven economic growth for decades, are particularly vulnerable to AI-led automation. Tasks like data entry, software testing, technical support, and even creative work such as content generation are now being handled faster and more cost-effectively by machines.

Dr. **Srinivas Padmanabhuni**, CTO and Co-Founder of AIENSURED, acknowledges this impact candidly:

“There is adoption of AI across realms of human work right from creative works to knowledge work in India. While AI can cause reduction in jobs due to automation in areas like BPO, or software testing, the flip side of the same is that jobs will see more productivity which will be more like AI-assisted.”

India is not alone in facing this shift. Globally, AI is triggering waves of transformation across industries. However, for India—with its dependence on service-based employment—the risks feel more immediate and personal. A 2023 International Labour Organization (ILO) report warned that up to **30% of existing IT and BPO jobs in India** could be impacted by automation by 2030.

The Flip Side: A Surge in New-Age Roles

But if some doors are closing, others are opening. AI isn’t just a destroyer—it’s also a creator. New roles are emerging faster than ever in AI strategy, data annotation, human-in-the-loop systems, machine learning operations, and even in the ethical governance of AI.

Dr. Padmanabhuni elaborates:

“Newer jobs include BPO reincarnation as data labelling industry for AI is emerging. Likewise new job profiles are emerging like AI ethicists, AI governance professionals, Data Science professionals and Data engineers. Overall a positive effect.”

This emerging trend is what **Nitin Mahajan**, Founder and CEO of BrandBooster.ai and QuickAds.ai, sees as a “shift” rather than a catastrophe.

“AI is undoubtedly disrupting traditional job roles in India, but it’s not just about job loss—it’s a shift. While routine tasks are being automated, new opportunities are emerging in areas like prompt engineering, AI strategy, data curation, and human-AI collaboration. The real challenge lies in how quickly our workforce can adapt.”

According to **NASSCOM**, India’s AI sector is poised to create nearly **1 million new jobs** by 2025, with the domestic market projected to reach **\$7.8 billion**. Startups and global firms alike are hiring roles that didn’t exist five years ago.

The Public Sector Embrace: From e-Governance to AI-Governance

Even the Indian government is pivoting toward AI in its digital mission. Whether it’s **Aadhaar-based systems**, **chatbot-led citizen services**, or **smart city initiatives**, AI is already improving efficiency and scalability in governance.

Ashish Nigam, Vice President – Government Sales, sees AI as a cornerstone of this evolution:

“AI is changing the global trends of the workforce and now a critical debate point: AI – Job killer or Job creator? The answer lies in understanding its dual impact. The transformation and automation are displacing repetitive and rule-based tasks, but simultaneously giving rise to new job roles... In the context of pioneering the shift from e-Governance to AI-Governance, a new ecosystem of roles centered around data analytics, natural language processing, digital citizen services, and conversational AI deployment is fostering employment.”

This evolution is far from cosmetic—it signifies a re-engineering of how governments interact with citizens, opening up roles in AI project management, systems integration, and AI-augmented public policy planning.

The Human Element: Adaptability is Everything

The technological revolution AI brings isn’t just technical—it’s psychological and cultural. Many Indians fear obsolescence, especially in roles they trained years to master. But some experts believe the shift is less about replacement and more about reinvention.

Dr. Malini Saba, businesswoman, psychologist, and philanthropist, provides a humanistic take:

“AI is not the villain out there to take away people’s jobs in India. Yes, it’s changing things, and that can be unsettling. Some jobs are disappearing, and that’s hard. But I also see it opening up so many new doors. Jobs that actually need us to think, to feel, and to imagine... The real question is, are we ready to keep learning and changing with it?”

This means fostering **“human-in-the-loop” systems**, where AI augments decisions but humans provide final judgment—whether in healthcare, law, or creative industries.

Conclusion: The Question Is Not *If* But *How*

Is AI eating Indian jobs, or is it creating them? The answer is both. The more important question is: How will India respond?

If India invests in **education**, **upskilling**, and **inclusive policies**, AI could very well become an engine of equitable growth. If not, the risk is a deeply polarized job market—one where opportunity belongs only to the digitally privileged.

In the words of Dr. Saba:

“It’s not us against the machines—it’s about how we grow alongside them.”

And perhaps, that’s the most important lesson as India writes its AI story—not one of replacement, but of **reinvention**.

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