37% of Entry-Level Tasks in India Already Done by AI, Finds Cognizant and Pearson Study

Employers to focus on interdisciplinary skills; expect new hires to supervise AI

BENGALURU, INDIA, June 18, 2026 – Cognizant (NASDAQ: CTSH) and Pearson (FTSE: PSON.L) today released findings from their joint study, *The AI Workforce Pulse: The Adaptability Imperative*, highlighting how artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming India's entry-level workforce at a faster pace than the global average, while simultaneously creating new career pathways and urgent skilling challenges.

Based on a survey of 750 HR leaders across the US, UK and India, the study finds that 37% of entry-level tasks in India are already performed by AI, compared to a 33% global average, with 18% of HR leaders reporting that AI now handles half or more of entry-level work, signalling accelerated disruption in one of the country's largest workforce segments.

The findings point to four interconnected shifts shaping the AI workforce ahead:

Roles are Being Reinvented

The study finds that entry-level roles are evolving as organisations increasingly shift from task execution toward working alongside AI systems.

- Nearly all (96%) HR leaders expect entry-level roles to evolve into positions where employees supervise or manage AI systems within the next five years.
- Nearly all HR professionals (94%) expect AI will generate new entry-level roles in the next five years that didn't exist before.
- More than 90% of respondents say middle managers are instrumental to redefining job roles as AI changes the day-to-day work of team members.
- Nearly all HR professionals (98%) are increasing focus on AI skills even for non-technical roles.

Employees in these roles are increasingly expected to manage AI outputs, validate decisions, interpret results and apply human judgment.

In India, 80% of organisations report that AI is enabling employees to focus on higher-value work, compared to 77% globally, reflecting the growing shift toward more strategic responsibilities.

Human and Interdisciplinary Skills Are Increasingly Important

As AI takes on routine work, organisations are placing greater emphasis on human capabilities and adaptability.

- Nearly all (97%) report soft skills matter more than ever, reflecting a need for adaptability, problem-solving, and human judgment.
- Two in three HR professionals (67%) report they value liberal arts degrees more than they used to in light of AI advancements.
- Nearly 7 in 10 (69%) HR professionals say broad, interdisciplinary backgrounds are more important for early-career talent than deep, specialized skillsets or focused degrees, with 65% of HR professionals in India reflecting this shift.

In addition, 91% of organisations in India place greater value on AI skills for non-technical roles, signalling a broader redefinition of what "job-ready" talent looks like.

Demand for AI Skills Is Rising, but Readiness Is Uneven

While demand for AI capabilities is accelerating, organisations are not fully prepared to meet it.

- 91% of HR professionals report increased employee demand for AI training over the past 12 months.
- 60% say their L&D programmes cannot keep pace with how quickly AI is transforming jobs, with India reporting a similar challenge at 63%.
- 54% of HR professionals say their organizations proactively arrange AI upskilling in anticipation of future roles evolving, while 46% say their organizations are not proactively arranging this training.

At the same time, India shows relative strength in how organisations are approaching learning:

- 63% of organisations in India have allotted time for AI training, higher than the U.S. (49%).

However, 61% of organisations in India report challenges finding the right talent, reflecting the pace at which skill requirements are evolving.

Middle Managers Are Critical to AI Adoption

Middle managers play a central role in enabling AI adoption and translating strategy into execution.

- 95% of HR leaders say middle managers are critical to ensuring employees use AI effectively.
- 92% say middle managers play a crucial role in redefining job roles as AI reshapes day-to-day work.

Rajesh Varrier, President – Global Operations and Chairman & Managing Director, Cognizant India said, "India is at the forefront of how AI is transforming entry-level work, with organizations already embedding AI into day-to-day operations at scale. We are seeing a fundamental redesign of roles, where early-career talent is expected to work alongside AI and focus on higher-value outcomes. This shift underscores the necessity for extensive reskilling and improved managerial effectiveness, both of which are key in an economy increasingly shaped by AI."

"AI is reshaping the talent landscape and exposing the limits of traditional talent and learning models," said **Kathy Diaz, Chief People Officer, Cognizant**. "With the fundamental shift in entry-level tasks and skill requirements changing rapidly, organizations must rethink how they hire and develop talent at pace."

The new findings build on Cognizant's earlier New Work, New World 2026 study, which found that AI is already impacting 93% of jobs, underscoring the urgency for employers to prepare for changing role expectations. Cognizant sees early-career talent as increasingly important in an AI-enabled workforce. After hiring 20,000 fresh graduates in 2025, the company expects to exceed that number in 2026, reflecting its continued investment in early-career talent and skill development as work evolves.

"As work evolves, the most successful organizations will focus less on replacing tasks and more on building the capabilities that help humans and AI work together. That starts with early-career talent," said **Ali Bebo, Chief Human Resources Officer, Pearson**. "The future belongs to organizations that combine AI innovation with a deep understanding of how people learn, develop and apply new skills in the real world."

Through their partnership, Cognizant and Pearson are working together to help recent graduates, apprentices and mid-career professionals build skills in AI, cloud and digital technologies. Pearson supports Cognizant's existing workforce development programs, including Synapse and its Immersive Learning Center in Chennai, to help create stronger development paths for the workforce.

Methodology: Cognizant and Pearson commissioned independent market research conducted by Wakefield Research in three markets: the US, UK and India, between March 23 and April 3, 2026, using an email invitation and an online survey among 750 HR professionals at the director level and above, at companies with at least 1,000 employees.

To view the complete study and learn more, please visit:https://www.cognizant.com/us/en/insights/insights-blog/adapting-roles-for-an-ai-workforce.

About Cognizant
Cognizant (NASDAQ: CTSH) is an AI builder and technology services provider, building the bridge between AI investment and enterprise value by building full-stack AI solutions for our clients. Our deep industry, process and engineering expertise enables us to build an organization's unique context into technology systems that amplify human potential, realize tangible returns and keep global enterprises ahead in a fast-changing world. See how at www.cognizant.ai or @cognizant.

About Pearson
At Pearson, our purpose is simple: to help people realize the life they imagine through learning. We believe that every learning opportunity is a chance for a personal breakthrough. That's why our c. 18,000 Pearson employees are committed to creating vibrant and enriching learning experiences designed for real-life impact. We are the world's lifelong learning company, serving customers in nearly 200 countries with digital content, assessments, qualifications and data. For us, learning isn't just what we do. It's who we are. Visit us at plc.pearson.com.

Forward-Looking Statements
This press release includes statements that may constitute forward-looking statements made pursuant to the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, the accuracy of which are necessarily subject to risks, uncertainties and assumptions as to future events that may not prove to be accurate. These statements include, but are not limited to, express or implied forward-looking statements relating to the impact of AI on the job market, including entry- and mid-level positions, the importance of interdisciplinary skills and demand for AI skills. These statements are neither promises nor guarantees but include findings of the reports discussed above and remain subject to a variety of risks and uncertainties, many of which are beyond Cognizant's control, which could cause actual results to differ materially from those contemplated in these forward-looking statements. Existing and prospective investors are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date hereof. Factors that could cause outcomes to differ materially from those expressed or implied include general economic conditions, the impact of technological development and competition, the competitive and rapidly changing nature of the markets Cognizant and its clients compete in, the competitive marketplace for talent and its impact on employee recruitment and retention, and the other factors discussed in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Cognizant undertakes no obligation to update or

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