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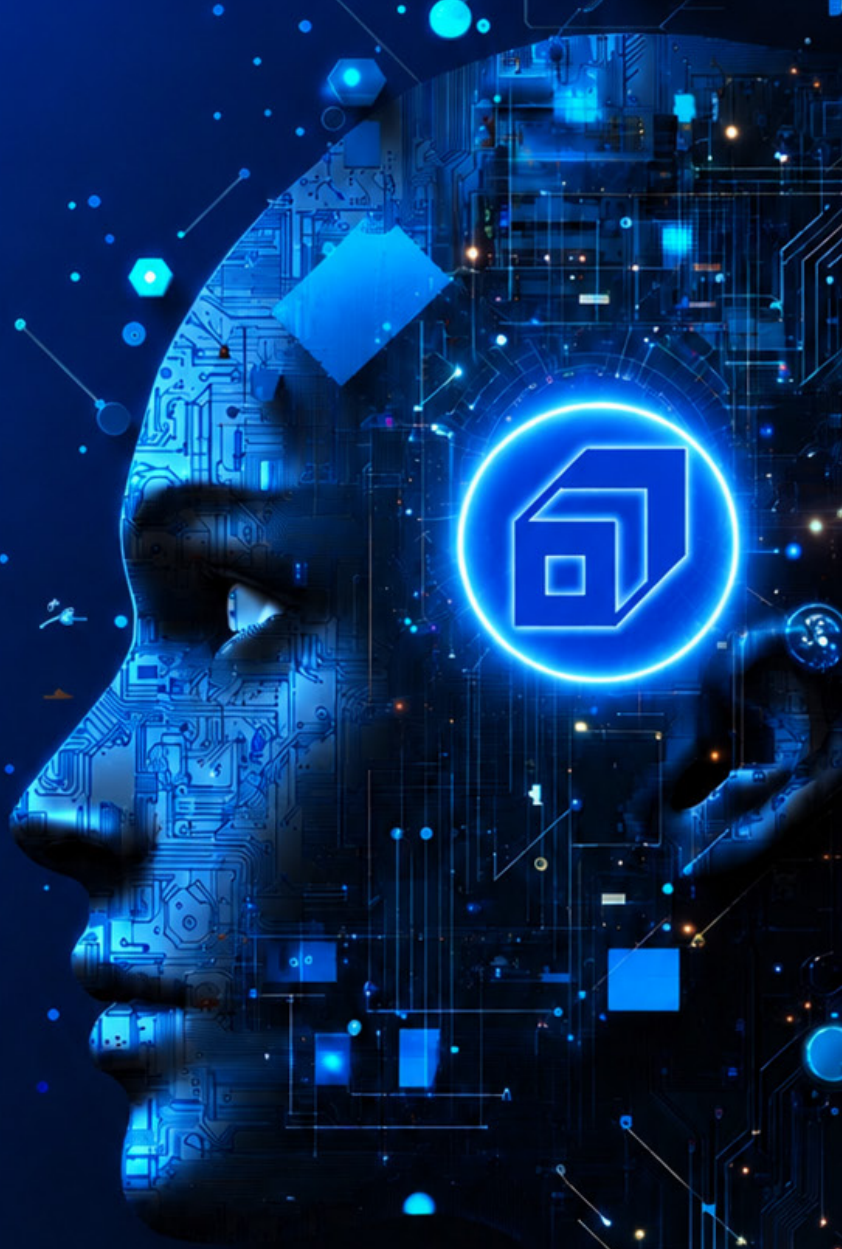
INDIA

AI

WORKFORCE

REPORT

2026



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India's Decade to Decide - To AI or Not to AI

A few years ago, AI felt like a conversation for engineers. Today, it is a conversation for everyone. Half of all AI-enabled roles in the market right now have nothing to do with engineering. Finance professionals are using it to model risk faster. Marketers are using it to personalize at scale. HR teams are using it to make better hiring calls. The shift is not coming; it is already inside the building, and most people are still figuring out what to do about it.

India is not just a participant in this transformation; it is positioned to lead it. We are home to one of the world's largest pools of technology talent, a thriving digital ecosystem, and an ambitious, young workforce eager to learn and adapt. What excites us most about this report is where the real transformation is happening. It is alive in Tier II cities, from where one in five learners with the right access are competing on equal terms with their metro counterparts. It is also visible in the growing number of women entering AI roles and, in many cases, commanding better compensation outcomes than the industry average. India's AI talent story is becoming more democratic, more distributed, and more powerful with every passing year.

The gap between AI's rapid advancement and people's confidence in using it is where Scaler creates impact every day. We train engineers, managers, career switchers, and fresh graduates. And over the last few years, we have kept asking the same question: once someone invests in AI Learning, what happens to their career? Not in theory. In data.

This report is our attempt to answer that honestly. To map where AI Learning is creating a real, measurable career impact and where the opportunity remains underserved.

What we found :

- One in five AI learners come from Tier II cities. They are landing roles, earning well, and competing on the same terms as their metro counterparts. India's AI talent story is becoming less of a Bengaluru story and more of a country story.
- Women in AI are not just entering the field in growing numbers, in several cases, they are commanding better compensation outcomes than the industry average.
- AI Learning is not just producing better engineers. It is producing people who think more clearly, make decisions with better information, and move faster. That is what leadership looks like in organizations today.

For professionals, employers, and business leaders alike, the future of work is already taking shape, and those who invest in building AI capability now will be best positioned to lead it.



**Abhimanyu
Saxena**

Co-Founder, Scaler



**Anshuman
Singh**

Co-Founder, Scaler



AI and the Next Chapter of Professional Growth

We built Scaler to make world-class learning accessible to every ambitious professional in India. This report is part of that same commitment, to make the landscape clearer, the path more visible, and the opportunity more real.

If you are reading this as a professional, the evidence is becoming difficult to ignore. AI Upskilling is no longer just a pathway to better technical skills but also a catalyst for career acceleration.

A few findings stood out:

- AI Upskilling is becoming a leadership accelerator, not just a technical skill. Some of the strongest outcomes are emerging in leadership pathways, suggesting that AI is helping professionals make better decisions, think more strategically, and create greater business impact.
- India's AI talent story is becoming more distributed. One in five AI learners now comes from a Tier-II city, demonstrating that opportunity is expanding well beyond traditional technology hubs.
- Women are translating AI skills into stronger career outcomes. Across several AI-enabled roles, women are recording notable compensation gains, highlighting AI's potential to unlock new pathways for growth and advancement.

- AI is no longer an engineering-only conversation. More than half of AI-enabled opportunities today sit outside traditional engineering functions, spanning consulting, HR, marketing, operations, and finance.
- AI is creating career mobility, not just salary growth. Professionals are using AI skills to move across functions, take on more strategic responsibilities, and transition into higher-value roles.
- The impact spans every stage of a career. From early-career professionals to experienced leaders, AI is emerging as a capability that accelerates growth regardless of where someone is in their professional journey.

Looking across all the findings, you see the story extending beyond AI. It is about people. People find discovering new opportunities, building new capabilities, and taking on larger responsibilities than they thought possible. And if these trends continue, the next chapter of India's AI story will be defined as much by leadership and talent as by technology itself.

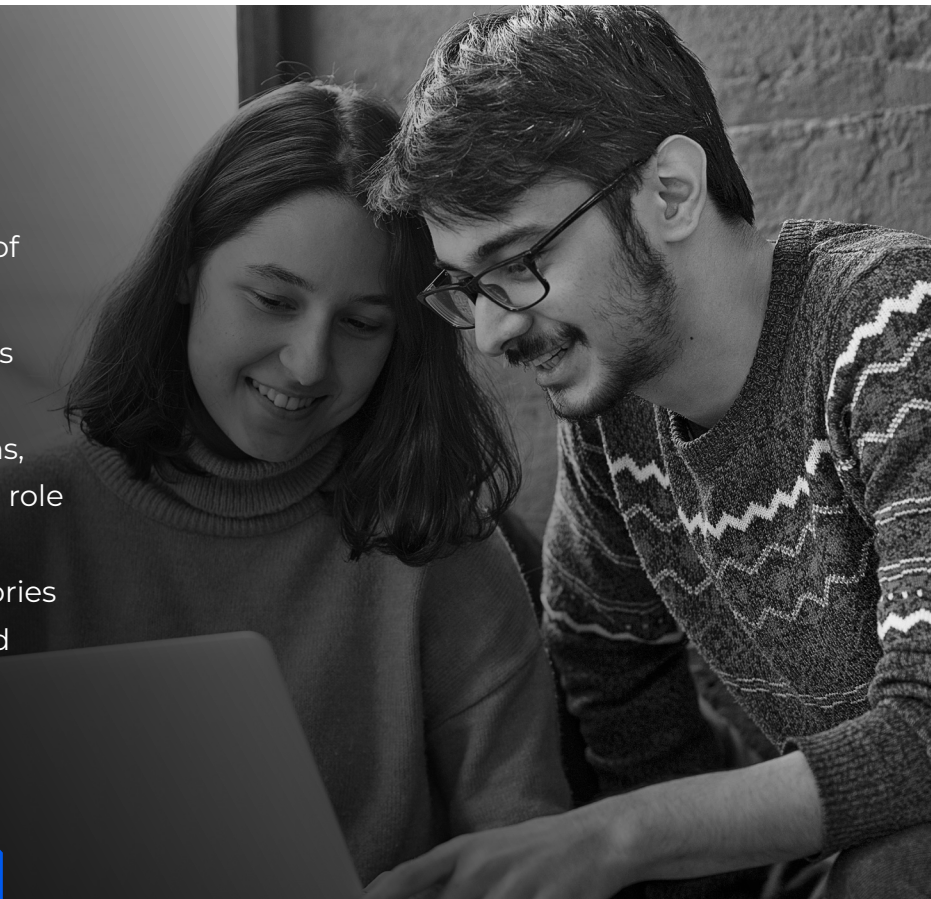
**Amar
Srivastava**

CEO
Online Business &
Group CPO,
Scaler



Methodology

The study analyzes career outcomes of **11,444** AI learners across India. Learner profiles were examined across experience levels, educational backgrounds, industries, organizations, salary progression, and post-program role transitions. Designations were standardized into broader role categories to identify patterns in AI adoption and workforce transformation.



Experience Profile

62%
0-5 years of experience

26%
5-10 years of experience

12%
10+ years of experience

Educational Background

Learners represented
3,000+
national and international institutions,



Including graduates from IITs, NITs, VIT, UCLA, Penn State, Michigan State University, Reed College, and other leading institutions.

Professional Background

Learners came from some of the world's largest organizations, including:

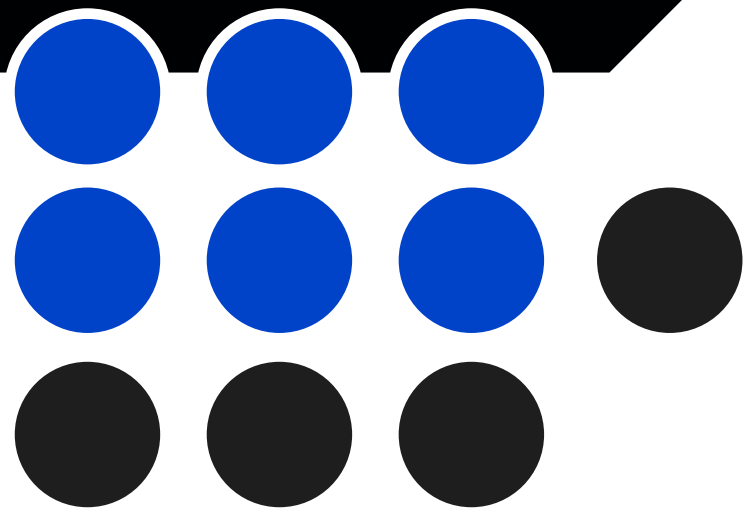


AI Upskilling is empowering tech natives, but it is not just about tech.

6 in 10

AI learners are tech natives -

software engineers and engineering leaders turning domain expertise into AI capability.



1 out of 4

of the learners are from **non-tech backgrounds**, highlighting AI's broadening appeal

AI Upskilling is creating new pathways into **Consulting**; doubling the share of outcomes to

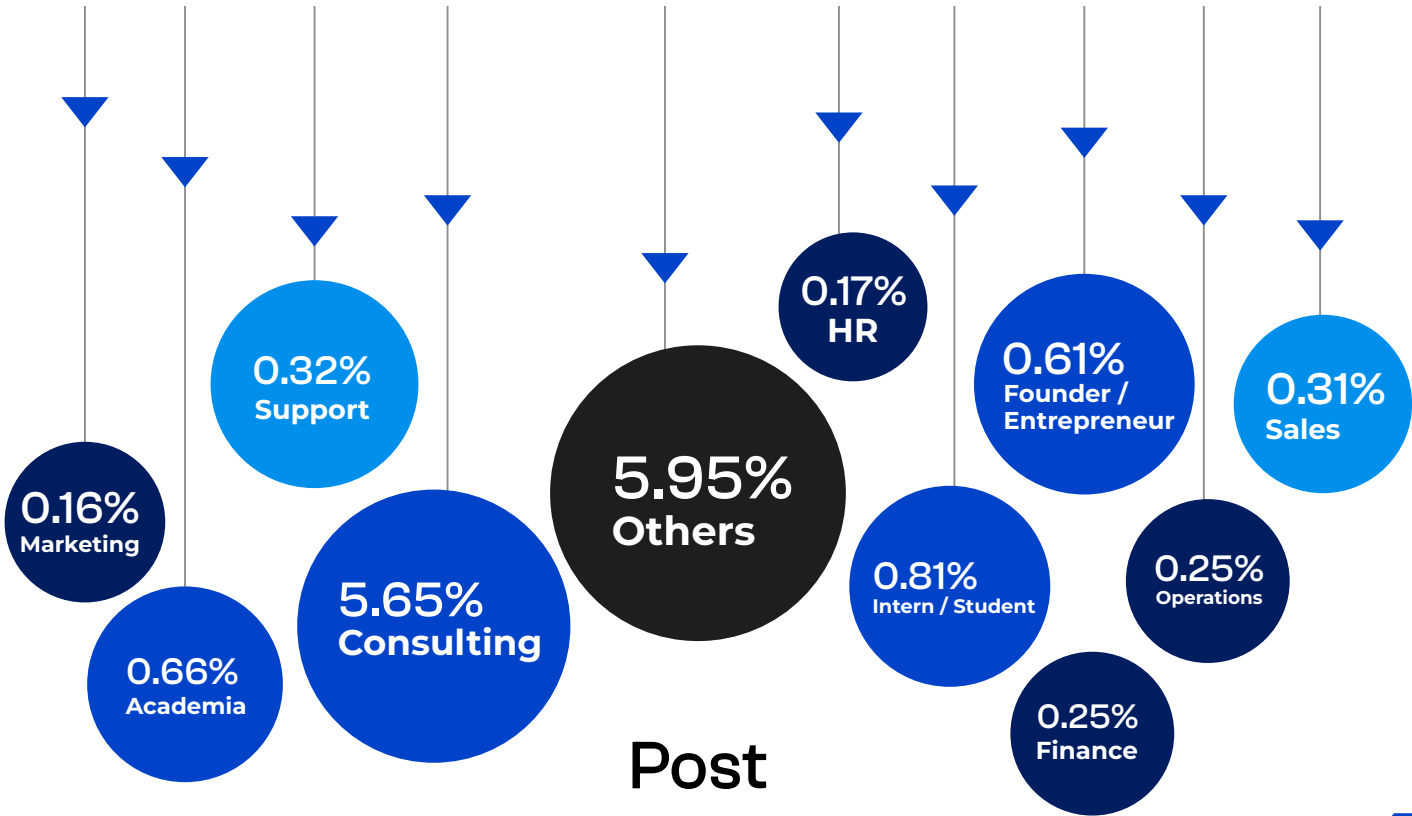
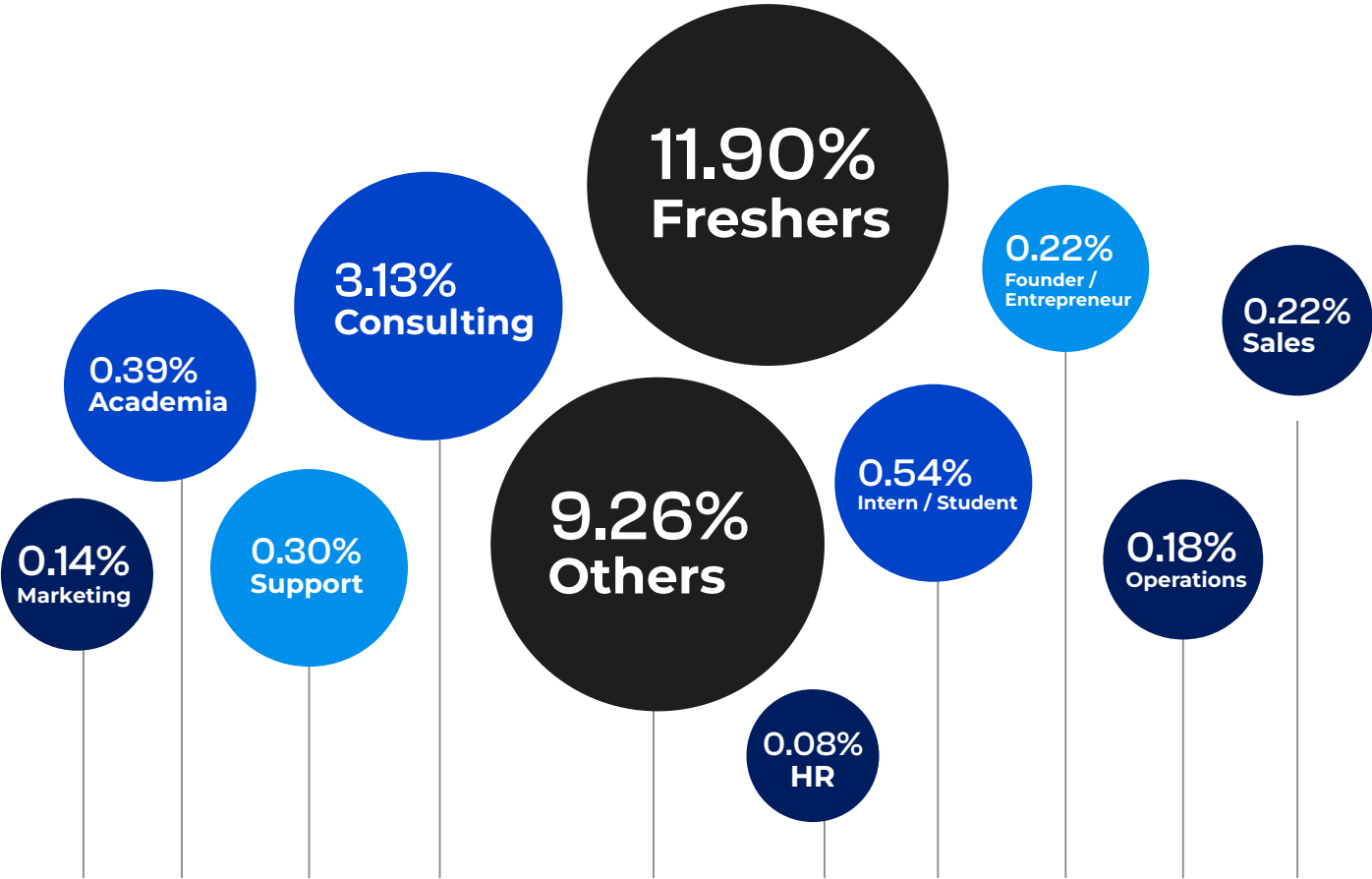
5.65%

of all professionals from just



3.1% of all learners

Pre



Post

AI Learning is
reshaping every
function in a
business, not just
engineering.

Above
50%
of the
AI enabled roles are
non-engineering,
underlining AI's cross
functional adoption.

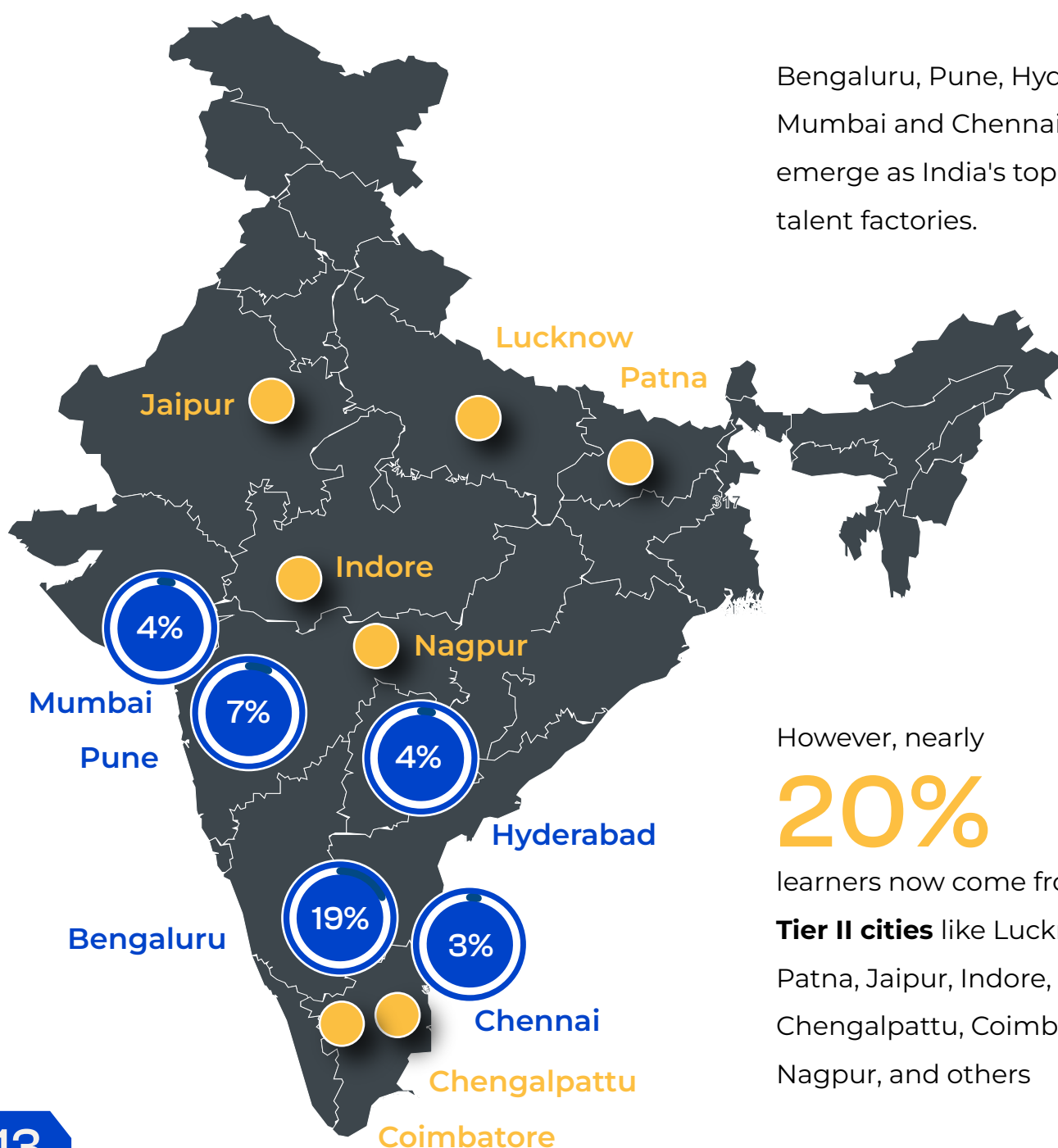
48% **Engineering**
(SE, SSE, BE, FE,
FSE, QA, DevOps)

27% **Leadership**
(Engineering Leadership,
Data Science Leadership,
Data Engineering Leadership)

15% **Non-Tech**
(Consulting, HR, Marketing,
Sales, Finance, Ops, Support,
Academia, Founder)

10% **Data & AI**
(DA, SDA, DS, SDS,
DE, MLE, SDE)

India's AI talent story is no longer just a metro story.



Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Chennai emerge as India's top five AI talent factories.

However, nearly

20%

learners now come from

Tier II cities like Lucknow, Patna, Jaipur, Indore, Chengalpattu, Coimbatore, Nagpur, and others

AI Upskilling is opening new pathways for women to enter and thrive in the technology workforce.

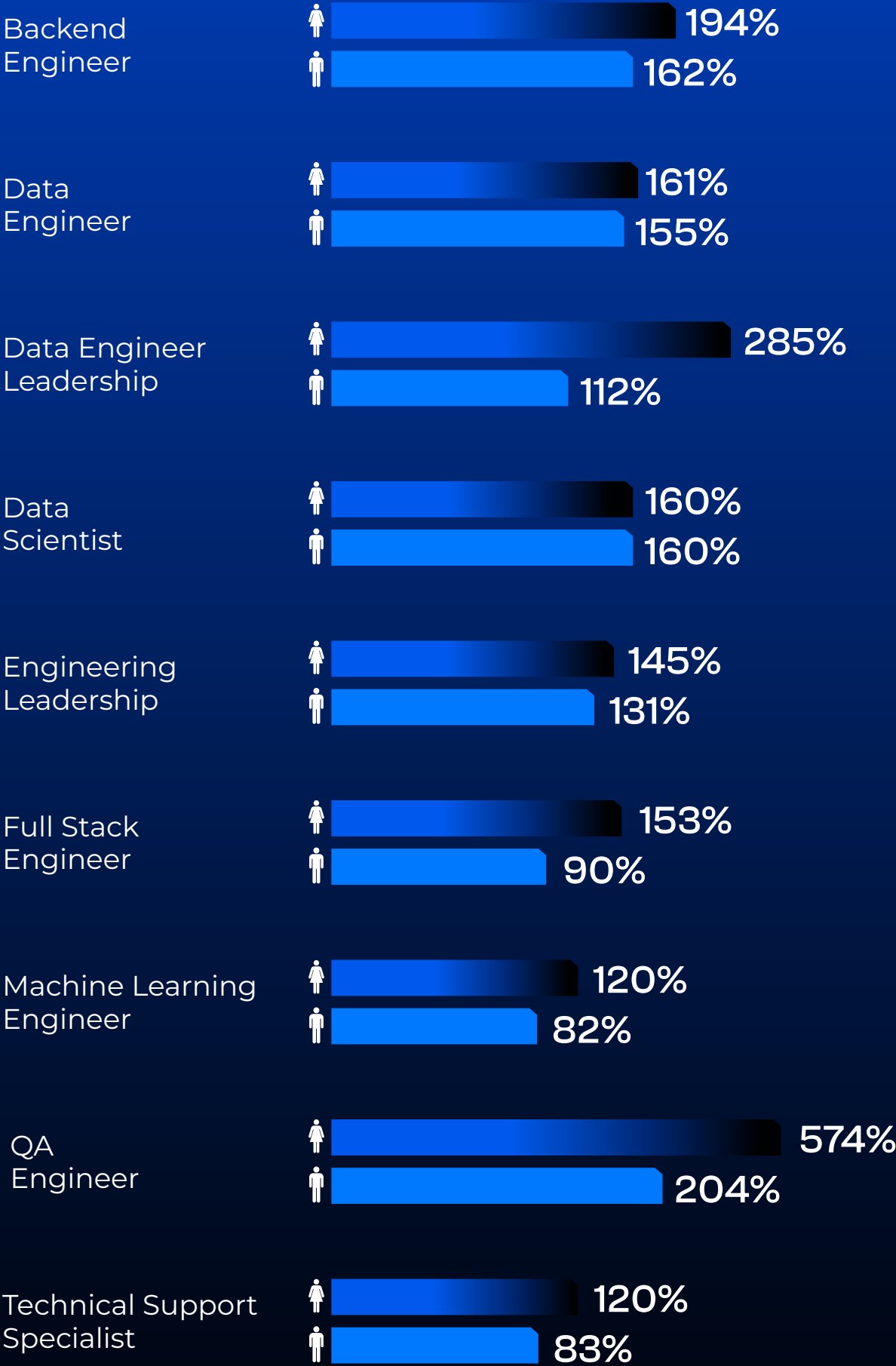
AI skill development is enabling women to break into **technology roles** that were previously less accessible.

On average, women reported a

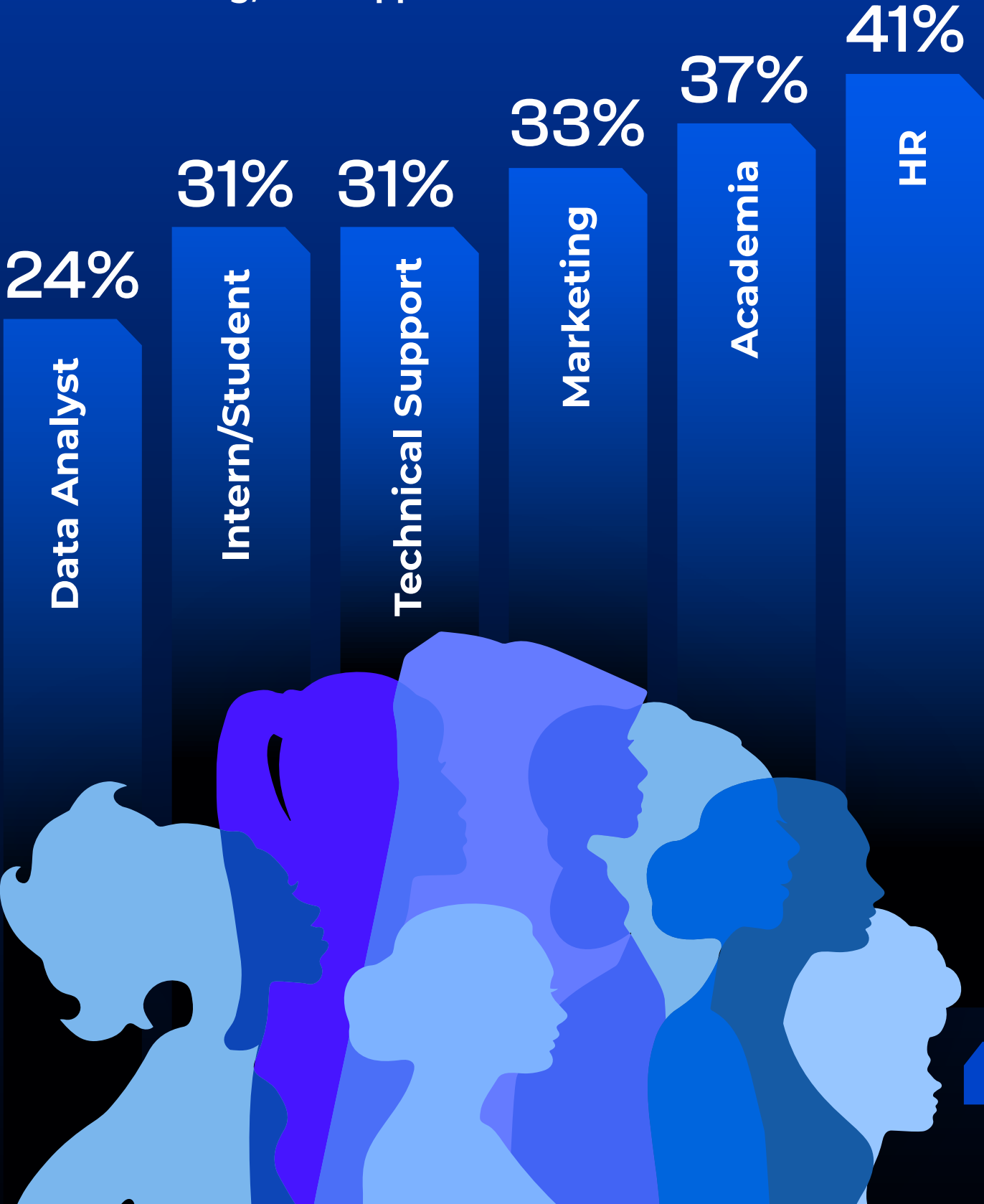
145%

increase in CTC after transitioning into AI-enabled careers.





Women are taking AI beyond code, building its **impact** across business functions like **HR, Academia, Marketing, and support roles.**



AI Learning is not just creating engineers; it is creating more leaders.



1 out of 4

AI Learners move into leadership roles.



27%

Leadership

(Engineering, Data Science, Data Engineering)

10%

Data and ML Roles

AI Leadership commands premium outcomes

Technical
expertise

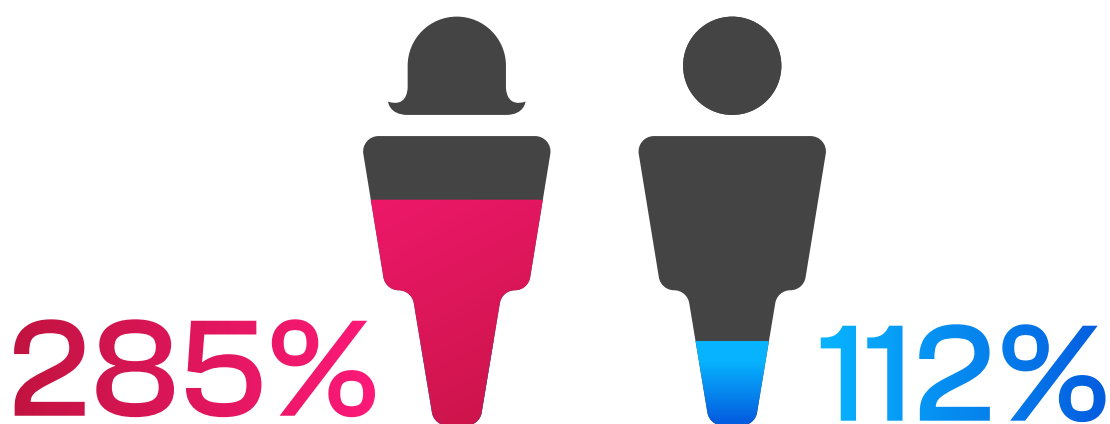
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Strategic
decision-making

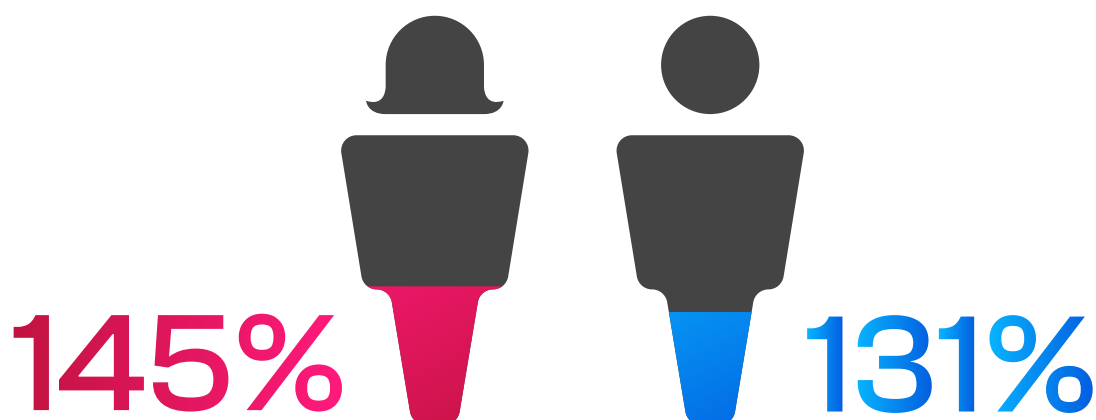
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Better
CTC

Avg Salary Increase



Data Engineering Leadership



Engineering Leadership

Engineering drives scale,
leadership drives value.

Software engineers and engineering leaders
dominate AI Upskilling cohorts.

Leadership roles

command the **highest compensation**.

Most sought
after roles
in India

₹17L
Senior Data
Analyst

₹13L
Data Analyst

₹27L
Data Science
Leadership

₹33L
Engineering
Leadership

₹20L
Software
Engineer

₹20L
Consulting

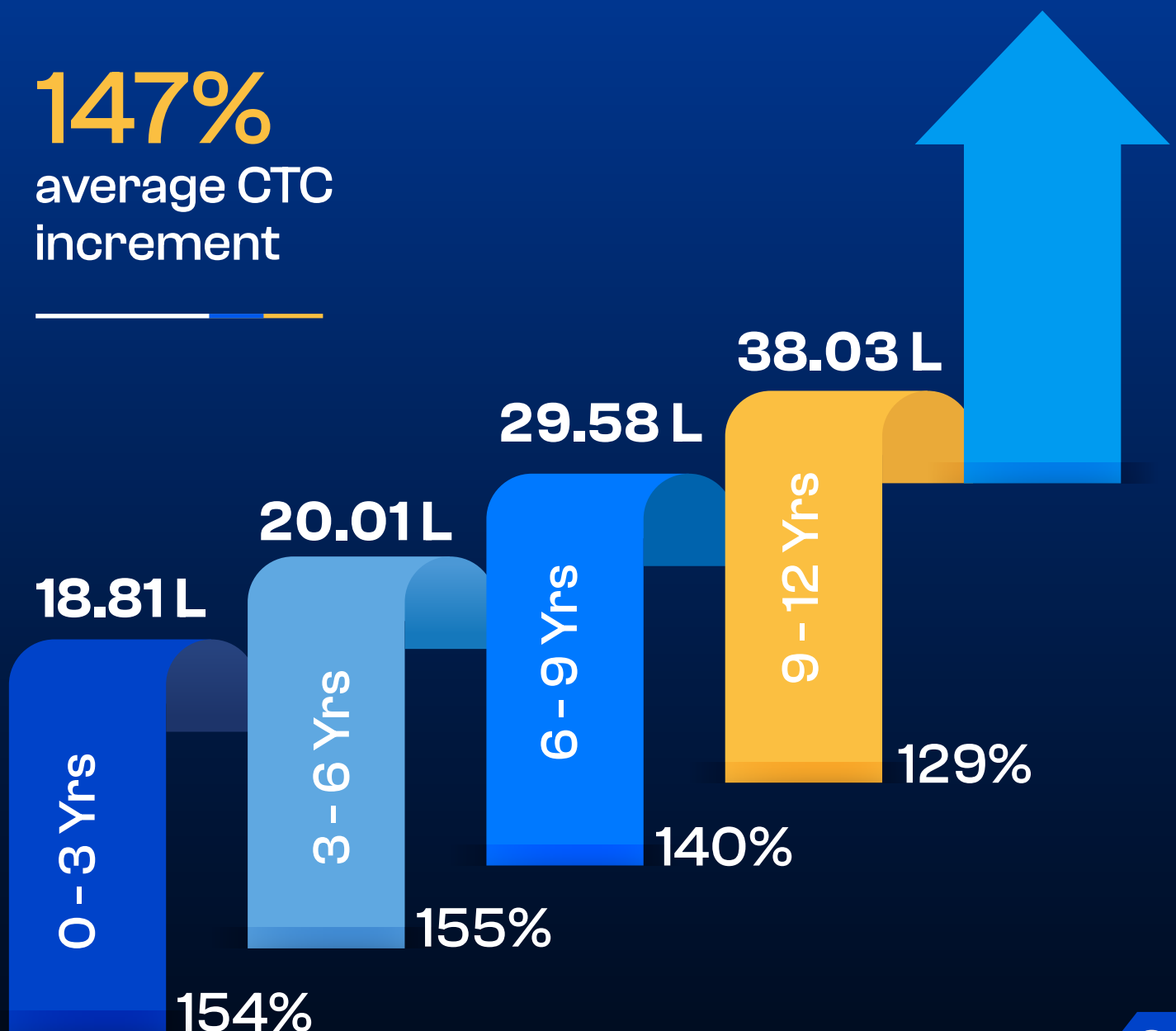
₹27L
Senior Software
Engineer

■ Avg Post CTC

AI Upskilling delivers career growth at every experience level.

AI Upskilling benefits professionals at every stage, driving outsized salary growth early and premium compensation later.

147%
average CTC
increment



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AI-Led
Curriculum



Lifelong
Learning Access



24x7 AI
Companion



20k+ Learner &
Alumni Network

Modern Software and AI Engineering Program | Modern Data Science & ML | Advanced AIML

Masters in DataScience | Masters in Software Depeloment | Online PGP in Business & AI

AI Engineering Advanced Certification by IIT-Roorkee, CEC | DevOps, Cloud & AI Platform Engineering