INSIGHT PAPER

AI and the Future of Work:

What Anthropic's Labor Market Report Means for Indian Schools and Colleges

Based on: *Labor Market Impacts of AI: A New Measure and Early Evidence*

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Executive Summary

In March 2026, Anthropic released a landmark study measuring how AI is actually affecting jobs—not in theory, but based on real-world usage data from millions of Claude conversations. Their key finding: AI's labour market impact is still in its early stages, but the pattern of which jobs are most exposed carries urgent signals for educators, especially in India.

This insight paper distils the report's core findings and translates them into implications for Indian high schools and colleges. It connects these findings to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 framework, acknowledges the steps India's education system has already taken, and identifies where the gaps remain. The bottom line: the careers students are being prepared for today are shifting beneath them, and the education system has a narrow but real window to adapt.

What the Report Found

A New Way to Measure AI Exposure

Previous studies asked: "Could AI theoretically do this task?" Anthropic's study goes further. It introduces a metric called observed exposure that combines theoretical capability with what people are actually using AI for in professional settings. This distinction matters enormously. Many tasks that AI could do in theory are not yet being automated in practice, due to regulatory, organisational, or trust barriers.

The gap between what AI can do and what it is doing is still large. For instance, in Computer and Mathematical occupations, AI could theoretically handle 94% of tasks, but Claude currently covers only about 33%.[1] This gap is the breathing room that educators have to prepare students—but it is narrowing.

[1]Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Projections 2024–2034; Anthropic Economic Index reports (August and November 2025).

Which Jobs Are Most Exposed?

The most exposed occupations in the study are dominated by roles that Indian colleges produce graduates for in large numbers:[2]

#	Occupation	Exposure	Source
1	Computer Programmers	75%	Exact
2	Customer Service Representatives	71%	Exact
3	Data Entry Keyers	67%	Exact
4	Financial Analysts	~58%	Est.
5	Editors	~55%	Est.
6	Writers & Authors	~53%	Est.
7	Web Developers	~52%	Est.
8	Accountants & Auditors	~48%	Est.
9	Market Research Analysts	~46%	Est.
10	Technical Writers	~44%	Est.

Note: The top three occupations (Computer Programmers, Customer Service Representatives, Data Entry Keyers) are reported with exact figures from the study. Remaining figures are directional estimates based on the report's methodology and are included to illustrate the pattern of exposure, not as precise measurements.

At the other end, 30% of workers have zero AI exposure today. These include roles like cooks, mechanics, lifeguards, and bartenders—jobs that require physical presence and manual dexterity.

Who Is Most Affected?

Workers in the most AI-exposed jobs tend to be more educated, higher-paid, and more likely to hold graduate degrees. The group with the highest exposure earns 47% more on average than the unexposed group. This overturns a common assumption that AI primarily threatens low-skilled work. In India, this means the very graduates that families invest the most in—engineers, MBAs, CAs—are the ones facing the highest disruption risk.

Impact on Young Workers

Perhaps the most important finding for educators: the study found suggestive evidence that hiring of workers aged 22–25 has slowed in AI-exposed occupations, even though overall unemployment in those roles has not risen. Young people entering the workforce are the canary

[2]Massenkoff, M. & McCrory, P. (2026). Labor Market Impacts of AI: A New Measure and Early Evidence. Anthropic. The report's top three occupations (Computer Programmers, Customer Service Representatives, Data Entry Keyers) have exact coverage figures. Figures for remaining occupations are directional estimates derived from the report's methodology and publicly available Anthropic Economic Index data. They are included to illustrate the pattern, not as precise measurements.

in the coal mine. They are not being fired—they are simply not being hired at the same rate, as companies find that AI can handle work that would previously have gone to entry-level staff.

India's Chief Economic Advisor has flagged exactly this transitional risk, noting that while technology "eventually generates more jobs than it displaces," what matters is what happens in the interim—and whether supporting institutions are ready.[3]

A Note on Translating US Data to India

An important caveat: the Anthropic study uses US occupational categories (O*NET) and US labour survey data. India's occupational structure is different in ways that matter.[4] For example, "Customer Service Representatives" at 71% exposure reflects US usage patterns, where much customer interaction is text-based and English-only. In India, a significant share of customer service is voice-based, multilingual, and involves domain-specific processes (insurance claims, banking KYC, telecom troubleshooting) that AI handles differently. Similarly, India's IT services sector performs work—enterprise application maintenance, legacy system support, regulatory compliance—that doesn't map neatly onto US occupational categories.

The directional signal is still valuable: roles centred on routine cognitive tasks are more exposed than those requiring physical presence, contextual judgement, or deep domain expertise. But the specific percentages should be treated as indicative of global trends, not precise measurements of Indian job risk. This is precisely why an India-specific version of this metric is needed (see Recommendations).

[3] India's Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran noted in the Economic Survey 2024–25: "Sometimes we all feel that technology eventually generates more jobs than it displaces. That is true, but the keyword is—eventually. What happens between and eventually is critical."

[4] The Anthropic study uses US O*NET occupational categories and Current Population Survey data. India's occupational mix differs significantly—for instance, a large share of Indian customer service is voice-based and multilingual, and much BPO work involves domain-specific processes not captured in US task taxonomies.

What This Means for Indian Education

India Is Not Starting from Zero

Before discussing what needs to change, it is worth acknowledging what has already begun. AICTE declared 2025 the "Year of AI" and has been working to integrate AI modules across all engineering disciplines—not just computer science—across more than 14,000 institutions.[5] CBSE introduced AI as an elective subject from Class IX in 2019 and Class XI in 2020. CISCE added AI and Robotics to its curriculum from the 2025–26 academic year. Over 8 lakh students from more than 4,500 schools have enrolled in AI subjects. India plans to roll out an AI curriculum from Grade 3 onwards starting in the 2026–27 academic year.[6]

These are real steps. The question the Anthropic data raises is not whether India has started, but whether the pace and depth of these efforts match the speed at which the labour market is shifting. The evidence suggests the answer is: not yet.

1. The "Safe Career" List Is Changing

For decades, Indian families have operated with a mental model of safe careers: engineering, medicine, law, chartered accountancy, and MBA-track roles. Anthropic's data suggests this hierarchy needs rethinking. Occupations like computer programming (75% AI coverage), financial analysis, and administrative roles are among the most exposed. This does not mean these jobs will disappear, but the entry-level version of these jobs—the version a fresh graduate performs—is exactly the portion most likely to be absorbed by AI.

Implication for schools: Career counselling at the high-school level should move away from a fixed ladder of "prestigious" courses and toward an honest conversation about which skills within a field are durable and which are automatable. NEP 2020's emphasis on flexible subject choices and multidisciplinary learning provides the structural framework for this shift—but the mindset of students, parents, and counsellors has yet to catch up.[7]

2. The Entry-Level Problem Is India's Problem

India produces over 1.5 million engineering graduates and hundreds of thousands of commerce and management graduates each year. Many of them enter the workforce through precisely the

[5]AICTE declared 2025 the "Year of AI" and constituted an expert committee chaired by Anand Deshpande (MD, Persistent Systems) to integrate AI across all academic streams. CBSE introduced AI as an elective from Class IX (2019–20) and Class XI (2020–21). CISCE added AI and Robotics from the 2025–26 academic year.

[6]India plans to implement an AI curriculum across all schools from Grade 3, beginning with the 2026–27 academic year, aligned with NEP 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023.

[7]NEP 2020 emphasises multidisciplinary education, flexible entry/exit points, integration of vocational training, computational thinking from the foundational stage, and coding from Class 6. It explicitly positions technology and AI as enablers of equitable, personalised education.

kind of entry-level roles—data entry, basic coding, report writing, customer service—that the Anthropic study identifies as high-exposure. The finding that hiring of 22–25-year-olds has already slowed in exposed occupations in the US should be treated as an early warning. India's IT services and BPO sectors, which employ millions in task-level work, sit squarely in the exposed zone.

Implication for colleges: Curricula must be redesigned to ensure graduates can operate above the level at which AI performs. This means less emphasis on procedural execution (writing boilerplate code, preparing standard reports, processing routine queries) and more on judgement, synthesis, stakeholder management, and domain expertise that AI cannot replicate. Concretely, this could mean restructuring the final-year capstone project to require AI-augmented deliverables—where students must use AI tools, evaluate their output, and demonstrate the human value they added on top.

3. The "Gap" Is the Opportunity

The study's most actionable insight is the size of the gap between AI's theoretical capability and its actual deployment. Only about a third of theoretically automatable tasks are currently being handled by AI. This gap will close, but it gives Indian institutions a window—perhaps three to five years—to retool. Colleges that move now to integrate AI fluency into their programmes, restructure internships around human-AI collaboration, and build faculty capacity will produce graduates who ride the wave rather than get swept by it.

4. AI Fluency as a Core Skill, Not Just a CS Elective

The report distinguishes between automated use (AI performing tasks independently) and augmented use (AI assisting humans). Most current usage is augmentative. This means the immediate demand is not for people who can build AI, but for people who can work effectively with AI. Every college department—not just computer science—should be asking: are our students learning to use AI tools to amplify their work in law, finance, design, healthcare, and research?

AICTE's push to embed AI across disciplines is the right structural move.[8] But the gap between policy intent and classroom reality remains wide. A recent survey found that while 62% of Indian educators use generative AI for lesson planning and workflow tasks, far fewer are teaching students how to work with AI as a professional tool in their specific domain.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are designed to build on what India has already started—not replace it—and to align with the structural provisions of NEP 2020.

For High Schools

- Integrate AI literacy as a cross-cutting theme across subjects, not a standalone elective. Students should understand what AI can and cannot do before they make career choices. NEP 2020's emphasis on computational thinking from the foundational stage provides the mandate; schools need to extend this into career-relevant AI awareness by the secondary stage.
- Reframe career guidance around skill durability rather than job titles. Help students and parents distinguish between the automatable components of a role and the human-centric ones. Career counsellors should be trained to reference labour-market exposure data, not just placement statistics.
- Move toward project-based learning that involves working with AI tools—using generative AI to research, draft, critique, and iterate—so students build the collaboration muscle early. This is already consistent with NEP 2020's push for experiential, competency-based learning.

For Colleges and Universities

- Audit existing curricula against the exposure data. Programmes that are heavily procedural (basic coding bootcamps, rote accounting, template-based report writing) need the most urgent revision. The audit should identify which courses are training students to do what AI already does, and redesign them.
- Make AI-augmented coursework the norm, not the exception. Assignments should increasingly require students to use AI tools and then evaluate, critique, and improve the AI's output. For example: a law student should use AI to draft a contract and then identify its errors; a finance student should use AI to build a model and then stress-test its assumptions.
- Redesign internships and placement preparation to emphasise roles where humans add value on top of AI. This means prioritising client interaction, strategic decision-making, ethical judgement, and cross-functional coordination. Consider creating "AI-shadowing" internships where students spend time in organisations observing how AI is deployed and where human expertise remains essential.

- Invest seriously in faculty development. Lecturers cannot teach AI-augmented practice if they have not experienced it themselves. AICTE's faculty training initiatives need to go beyond awareness workshops and into sustained, hands-on programmes where faculty redesign their own courses around AI tools.

For Policymakers (AICTE, UGC, CBSE/State Boards)

- **Commission an Indian version of the observed exposure metric using domestic employment and AI-usage data.** The Anthropic study uses US occupational categories and US labour data; India's occupational structure is different and needs its own measurement.[9] NASSCOM, the Ministry of Labour, or the National Statistical Office could partner with AI companies operating in India to build this.
- Create a national framework for AI fluency standards across higher education, building on AICTE's 2025 "Year of AI" initiatives. This should go beyond computer science to define what AI competency looks like for a law graduate, a commerce graduate, a design graduate, and a healthcare professional.
- Fund pilot programmes at select institutions that redesign degree pathways around human-AI collaboration, measure employment outcomes rigorously, and publish the results openly. India's scale demands evidence-based scaling, not blanket mandates.
- Leverage existing partnerships strategically. AICTE's collaborations with OpenAI, Perplexity AI, and others have created access to tools.[10] The next step is to ensure these tools are integrated into assessed coursework and faculty practice—not just made available as optional extras.

Closing Note

Anthropic's study is careful to say that the sky is not falling—yet. Unemployment in AI-exposed jobs has not risen significantly. But the slowdown in hiring of young workers is a leading indicator, not a lagging one.

India is not starting from scratch. NEP 2020 provides the structural framework. AICTE, CBSE, and individual institutions have begun the work. But the pace of institutional change is slow, and the pace of AI capability growth is not. For a country where the education system is the primary vehicle for economic mobility, waiting for the impact to become obvious is not a strategy. The

[10]OpenAI's Learning Accelerator India partnership with AICTE, IIT Madras, and the Ministry of Education includes distribution of approximately 500,000 ChatGPT licences to educators and students (announced February 2026).

time to act is while the gap between AI's capability and its adoption is still wide enough to prepare.

Primary Source

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