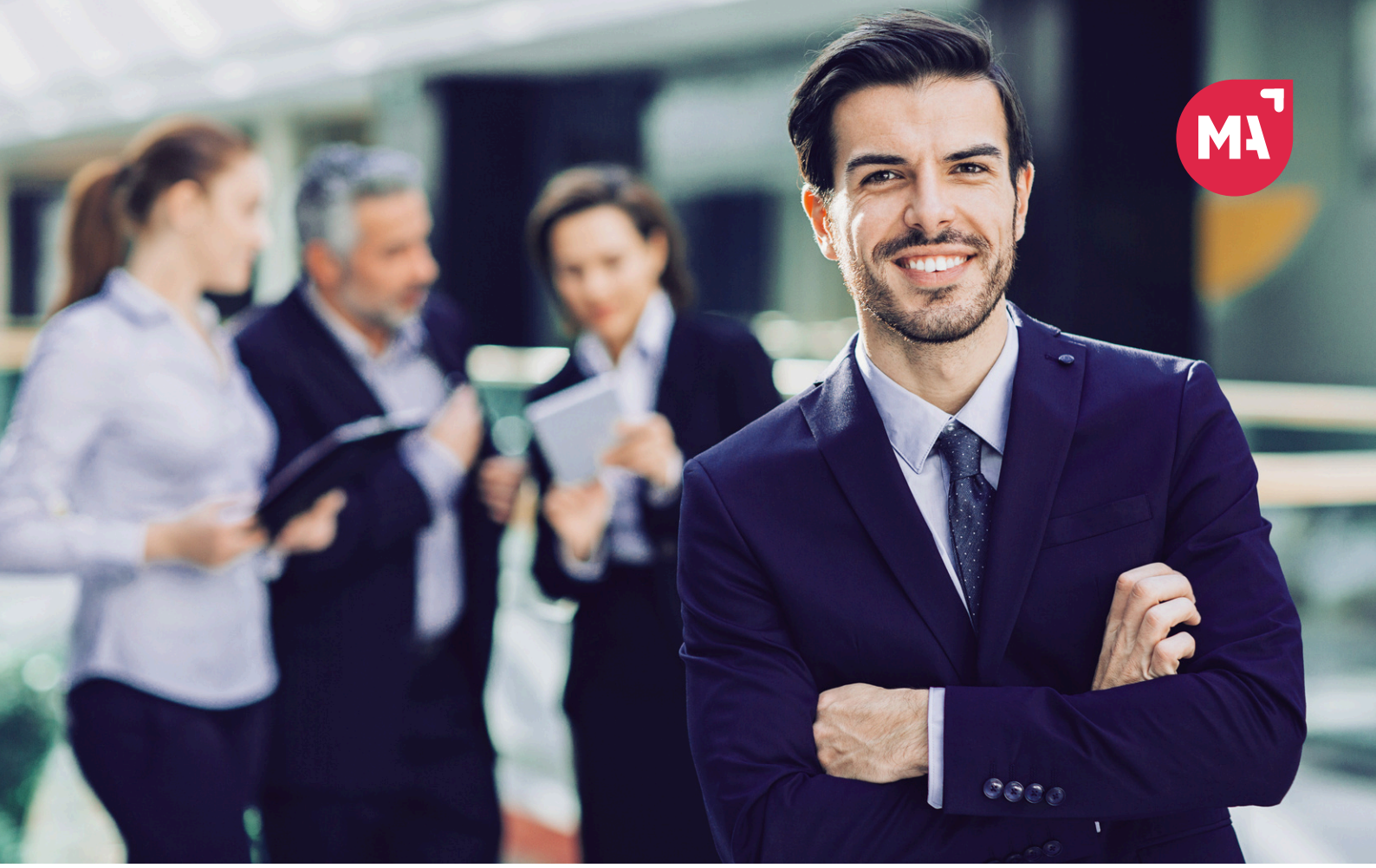
The GCC Talent & AI Transformation Index

2026



Executive Summary

India's **Global Capability Center (GCC) ecosystem** has entered a new phase of evolution. **GCCs** are rapidly transitioning from cost-optimization centers to strategic innovation hubs, with Artificial Intelligence emerging as the primary catalyst for transformation.

Research across more than 500 GCCs and 100+ GCC leaders reveals four defining trends:

- AI adoption has become nearly universal.
- Hiring is shifting from volume-based recruitment to specialized AI talent acquisition.
- GCCs are increasingly expected to lead enterprise innovation rather than merely support global operations.
- Organizations with structured AI governance, defined AI career pathways, and dedicated AI Centers of Excellence achieve significantly better business outcomes.

1. The State of India's GCC Ecosystem

India hosts approximately **1,700 GCCs**, making it the world's largest GCC hub. These centers increasingly serve as strategic innovation engines rather than traditional offshore delivery units.

A growing number of multinational enterprises now expect their India GCCs to:

- Lead enterprise innovation
- Drive global AI initiatives
- Own strategic technology platforms
- Develop AI intellectual property

Cost efficiency, while still important, is no longer the primary value proposition. Innovation, execution excellence, and AI enablement have become the dominant expectations.

2. AI Adoption Reaches Maturity

AI adoption among Indian GCCs is effectively universal.

Key Findings

- 499 out of 500 surveyed GCCs have deployed AI.
- 75% of GCC functions are AI-supported.
- 71% of GCCs use Generative AI.
- 31% of business processes are currently AI-enhanced.
- 27% of GCCs report significant business improvements from AI.

Where AI Is Being Used

Highest adoption areas include:

- IT Delivery
- AI Product Engineering
- Customer Service
- Cybersecurity
- Data Analytics

Generative AI remains the dominant technology, followed by predictive AI, embedded AI, and agentic AI solutions.

AI Investment Priorities

The average GCC now allocates approximately 15% of its operating budget to AI initiatives.

Primary objectives include:

- Faster execution
- Higher quality outputs
- Better customer experience
- Product & service innovation

Interestingly, cost reduction is no longer the leading AI objective.

3. Hiring Trends: The Rise of Precision Hiring

One of the strongest themes across all reports is the shift away from mass hiring.

AI's Impact on Hiring

Surveyed GCC leaders reported:

Hiring Impact	% of Respondents
Reduced overall headcount requirements	**~42%**
Increased need for specialized AI talent	**~33%**
Still evaluating impact	**~17%**
No measurable impact	**~8%**

This indicates that AI is not eliminating hiring; it is changing what organizations hire for.

Most In-Demand Skills for 2026

The highest-demand skills include:

- AI / ML Engineering
- GenAI / LLM Engineering
- Data Engineering
- Platform Engineering
- AI Product Management
- Cloud & DevOps

Traditional backend engineering remains important but is no longer the primary hiring focus.

Emerging Hiring Philosophy

Organizations increasingly prioritize:

- AI fluency
- Automation-first thinking
- Prompt engineering skills
- Productivity-oriented mindsets
- Business outcome ownership

The market is moving from experience-based hiring to capability-based hiring.

4. The Evolution of Job Roles

Over 60% of GCC leaders report significant AI-driven changes to job descriptions.

New Expectations

Modern GCC professionals are expected to demonstrate:

- AI tool proficiency
- Prompt engineering capability
- Automation-first thinking
- Measurable productivity improvements
- AI-assisted workflow execution

AI literacy is becoming a baseline expectation rather than a specialist skill.

5. AI Talent Strategy

Leading GCCs are investing heavily in workforce transformation.

Talent Sources Producing Better Outcomes

Top-performing GCCs rely on:

- Internal employee training
- Direct local hiring
- Academic partnerships
- Strategic outsourcing

Academic partnerships are particularly impactful, increasing the likelihood of significant AI outcomes.

AI Workforce Penetration

Approximately 20% of the average GCC workforce is directly involved in developing or deploying AI solutions.

AI Career Pathways Matter

Organizations with clearly defined AI career paths are:

- 19% more likely to achieve significant AI outcomes

Yet only a minority of GCCs have fully formalized these pathways.

6. AI Centers of Excellence Become Standard

The AI Center of Excellence (CoE) has emerged as a key organizational structure.

Current Status

- 28% already operate an AI CoE
- 30% are actively building one
- Less than 10% have no plans for one

This means over half of India's GCCs have already institutionalized AI transformation efforts.

Characteristics of High-Performing AI CoEs

Successful AI CoEs:

- Prioritize business outcomes
- Own use-case discovery
- Embed within business functions
- Upskill existing employees
- Build reusable AI assets and frameworks

7. AI Governance and Responsible AI

Responsible AI (RAI) is becoming a business differentiator.

Key Findings

- Nearly 80% of GCCs have Responsible AI policies.
- Fewer than one-third consistently enforce those policies.
- Organizations that consistently enforce Responsible AI are 9% more likely to achieve strong AI outcomes.

Governance is increasingly viewed as essential for scaling AI responsibly across global enterprises.

8. What Separates High-Performing GCCs?

The strongest predictors of AI success include:

Success Factor	Impact
Complete process redesign	**+30%**
Defined AI roles and career paths	**+18%**
AI champions	**+7%**
Academic talent sourcing	**+6%**
CEO/CIO reporting structure	**+6%**
Dedicated AI teams	**+5%**
Increased process automation	**+5%**

The research suggests that transformation is driven more by organizational change than by technology deployment alone.

9. The Future of GCCs

Across surveyed leaders, three future themes emerged consistently:

1. From Delivery Centers to Command Centers

GCCs are increasingly becoming strategic decision-making hubs rather than execution-only teams.

2. Enterprise Agentification

Organizations expect widespread deployment of agentic AI systems capable of autonomous decision-making and workflow optimization.

3. Talent Elevation

The next competitive advantage will come from:

- Internal upskilling
- AI-native career pathways
- Specialized deep-tech talent
- Expansion into Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities

Key Takeaways for GCC Leaders

1. AI adoption is no longer optional; it is nearly universal.
2. Hiring is shifting from volume recruitment to specialized AI talent acquisition.
3. AI fluency is becoming a baseline requirement across engineering & business functions.
4. AI Centers of Excellence are rapidly becoming the standard operating model.
5. Defined AI career paths and workforce transformation programs directly improve business outcomes.
6. Process redesign—not merely automation—delivers the strongest AI results.
7. India's GCCs are evolving into global innovation and AI leadership hubs rather than support organizations.

Sources

- Infosys, AI-First GCC Index 2026 – Volume 1 (500 GCCs surveyed across India).
- GCC Circle, GCC AI Hiring Pulse Report 2026 (100+ GCC leaders surveyed across industries).
- EY, India Capability Centres Employee Value Proposition Pulse Report 2026.