

Tech Jobs & Hot Skill Trends @ COVID – India IT

November 2020

The Year 2020 began with bets on the Top Thriving IT Skills as those from the niche technology clusters related to Data Science, AI, IoT and Blockchain. At the start of the year there were a little over 60K active job openings in the market just for the top IT skills namely **Data Analytics, AWS, Data Science, AI/ML/NLP, Cyber Security, Data Visualization, IoT and Blockchain**. With job openings available across entry, mid & senior levels, the annual remuneration in offering ranged from 3Lakhs for starters and all the way upto 1Cr+ for niche and experienced talent. There were over 130 senior openings in AI, Data Science, AWS, Analytics and Cybersecurity that were in the 1Cr+ group. On the other end of the spectrum, the entry level talent in these skillsets also had about 4500 openings they could go to. On the whole, the year seemed to be all set for a high ride for these Specialist Skillsets in IT... till COVID hit.

The Top Trends that are in play and are expected to shape the Indian Tech industry jobs and skillsets are:

- **Redistribution of the pyramid from a top heavy structure to an optimised and slimmed down structure**
- **Short-term Reprioritising of Functional Skillsets and Jobs over high-niche R&D and Innovation skillsets & Jobs**
- **Fluctuation of Candidate Expectations and Joining Ratios of Top Jobs & Top Skills based on short-term shift in demands**
- **Moderation of salary packages based with higher Premium Pay potential for niche and top skills**

Thriving IT Skills – Surviving Lockdowns

COVID and the resultant extended lockdown and Remote Working as the new norm, sent out a wave of reprioritisation of Tech Skills in demand. Some of the projected Thriving IT Skill domains like ML, IoT and Blockchain were put on the back burner, as more operational tech skills took the lead. Few of the Thriving Skills that survived the Lockdown and are expected to stay warm if not Hot are:

Hot Job Groups	Top Hiring Sectors	Why it's hot and pandemic proof?	Salary Ranges (INR)	Premium Pay (%)
Cyber Security / Virtualisation	IT, ITeS, Banking, NBFC, Fintech, EduTech, eCommerce	COVID triggered the largest wave of simultaneous Remote Working and extended WFH systems across verticals. The resultant migration of more processes to distributed virtual mode continues to keep Information Security and Data Protection as a top priority for all enterprises. This has helped CyberSecurity and Virtualisation & Migration expertise to remain a HotSkill across industries.	8 – 25 Lacs pa	20 – 35%
AI / Robotic Process Automation	IT, ITeS, Banking, eCommerce	Tighter market conditions have applied pressure on preserving bottomlines and enterprises are turning to Automation	10 – 40L pa	20 – 30%

		and Bot-ification more than ever before. Automation of rule based functions and BOT-ificaton of low-to-mid cognitive processes to reduce headcounts and overheads keeps AI &RPA skills as a Top Skill across tech powered enterprises.		
Full Stack Engineers	IT, ITeS, eCommerce, Fintech, Healthtech	With pressures on the bottomline across verticals, the need for optimal cost deployment is at its highest curve. Full-stack Resources with end-to-end development capabilities that can operate independently and reduce headcount involvement continue to be in demand.	7 – 18L pa	15 – 30%
AWS / Azure / GCP	IT, ITeS, Banking, Pharma, FMCG	COVID Triggered large virtualization and remote operations has increased the focus on migration to cloud based ecosystems for core and non-core processes. Demand for Specialist Skills on Top Cloud systems have remained hot through this phase.	6 – 28L pa	15 – 25%

Active openings in India IT crossed the 110K mark in October 2020, after reaching 100K in August and registering a minor dip by end September 2020. At a sector level the Software Sector currently contributed to nearly 38% of active job opportunities followed by IT Services at 19% and Internet Enabled Services sector at 16%. The only other non-Tech sector that’s among the top contributors to active openings is the BFSI sector with 18% contribution to active openings.

In the IT and IT Enabled Services sector, Indian Unicorns and Soonicorns feature among the prominent contributors to employment generation. During and post COVID lockdown phases, Indian Unicorns and Soonicorns have put to work a total of nearly 12K additional headcounts.

Current and Near Term Top Tech Jobs & Hot Skills

Some of the Hot Tech Jobs and demand for Top Skills in IT has been sharply growing since the Market and Business Unlocks began. The Top Tech Jobs in the IT sector and the skills that define them are:

1. Fullstack Engineers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> React.js (Redux), Node.js, Angular.JS/Backbone.js (Combination of Backend & Frontend Exposure)
2. Backend Engineers with Database Exp
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GoLang/Python, GoLang/Java, Java/Python, Python/Django, ROR/Rails Framework + (NoSQL/MongoDB)
3. Data Engineer/Analytics Engineers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across Java/Python/GoLang/Django/AWS/Micro-Services)

4. React/Native Developers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile/Web
5. SRE/Devops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWS/Docker/Kubernetes
6. Machine Learning Engineers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NLP/NLU/DL/RS

Salary Ranges in the offering for these Top Jobs and Skills vary based on size and type of employer and moderated also by the Pedigree of Institutions and Qualifications that the talent comes with. The typical range on the salary multiplier seen in the market are often linked to the total years of relevant experience that the candidate holds.

Some of the salary package ranges currently encountered in the market are:

Pedigree Institutes (IIT, NIT, BITS, IIIT) – Salary packages range between 6 to 9 times the Years of Experience of the candidate

Tier 2 Pedigree Institutes – Salary packages range between 4 to 6 times the Years of Experience of the candidate

Tier 3 Pedigree Institutes – Salary packages range between 2.5 to 4 times the Years of Experience of the candidate

The experience to package ratios are not cast in stone or be treated as regularized controls. They are by and large used to define the budgets for roles and skillsets. There are multiple fine aspects of a role and a candidate profile that may swing the packages in favour of or against a candidate. The network of the skillsets are defined by factors other than the qualification and dimensions like project experience, product exposure, location, tenure, past employer brands etc. affect the negotiation capability of the Talent.

Salary Packages – An Indicative Digest by Skill and Institution pedigree

- Average salary ranges given below are in INR (Lakhs)
- Indicative range slabs and max limit can go up higher in some cases of specific experiences or qualifiers
- The range covers the minimum to maximum packages that are in offering

TIER 1 PEDIGREE INSTITUTES (IIT, NIT, BITS, IIIT)				
	0 -- 3 Yrs	3 -- 6 Yrs	6 -- 9 Yrs	9 -- 12 Yrs
FULLSTACK ENGINEERS	6 -- 19	19 -- 45	45 -- 65	65 -- 80
BACKEND ENGINEERS WITH DATABASE EXP	6 -- 17	17 -- 35	35 -- 55	55 -- 70
DATA ENGINEER/ANALYTICS	6 -- 15	15 -- 30	30 -- 45	45 -- 60
REACT/NATIVE	6 -- 17	19 -- 40	40 -- 55	55 -- 70
SRE/DEVOPS	6 -- 17	19 -- 40	40 -- 55	55 -- 70
MACHINE LEARNING ENGINEERS	6 -- 17	17 -- 35	35 -- 55	55 -- 70

- **DIFFERS BETWEEN COMPANIES -- AVERAGE SALARY COMPUTATION IS ANYWHERE BETWEEN 6 TO 9 TIMES THE YRS OF EXP - MAJORLY COMES PLAYERS FROM STARTUPS, HIGH-TECH PRODUCTS, E-COMMERCE, R&D, ETC.**
- **FINANCIAL SERVICES, BANKING, IT SERVICES, IT CONSULTING, BIG 4 CONSULTING, SEMICON, ENGINEERING, AUTOMOTIVE, TELECOM, HEALTHCARE AND OTHER INDUSTRIES - SALARY RANGE DIFFER AGAIN, AVERAGE SALARY COMPUTED IS NORMALLY BETWEEN 5 TO 7 TIMES OF YRS OF EXP**

	TIER 2 PEDIGREE INSTITUTES			
	0 -- 3 Yrs	3 -- 6 Yrs	6 -- 9 Yrs	9 -- 12 Yrs
FULLSTACK ENGINEERS	4 -- 14	14 -- 28	28 -- 40	40 -- 55
BACKEND ENGINEERS WITH DATABASE EXP	4 -- 13	13 -- 24	24 -- 36	36 -- 48
DATA ENGINEER/ANALYTICS	4 -- 13	13 -- 24	24 -- 36	36 -- 48
REACT/NATIVE	4 -- 14	14 -- 28	28 -- 40	40 -- 55
SRE/DEVOPS	4 -- 14	14 -- 28	28 -- 40	40 -- 55
MACHINE LEARNING ENGINEERS	4 -- 13	13 -- 24	24 -- 36	36 -- 48

- **DIFFERS BETWEEN COMPANIES -- AVERAGE SALARY COMPUTATION IS ANYWHERE BETWEEN 4 TO 6 TIMES THE YRS OF EXP ACROSS STARTUPS, PRODUCTS, E-COMMERCE, R&D, ETC**
- **REMAINS SAME IN THIS SPACE FROM OTHER INDUSTRIES TOO**

	TIER 3 PEDIGREE INSTITUTES			
	0 -- 3 Yrs	3 -- 6 Yrs	6 -- 9 Yrs	9 -- 12 Yrs
FULLSTACK ENGINEERS	4 -- 14	14 -- 28	28 -- 40	40 -- 55
BACKEND ENGINEERS WITH DATABASE EXP	4 -- 13	13 -- 24	24 -- 36	36 -- 48
DATA ENGINEER/ANALYTICS	4 -- 13	13 -- 24	24 -- 36	36 -- 48
REACT/NATIVE	4 -- 14	14 -- 28	28 -- 40	40 -- 55
SRE/DEVOPS	4 -- 14	14 -- 28	28 -- 40	40 -- 55
MACHINE LEARNING ENGINEERS	4 -- 13	13 -- 24	24 -- 36	36 -- 48

- **DIFFERS BETWEEN COMPANIES -- AVERAGE SALARY COMPUTATION IS ANYWHERE BETWEEN 2.5 TO 4 TIMES THE YRS OF EXP ACROSS STARTUPS, PRODUCTS, E-COMMERCE, R&D, ETC**
- **REMAINS SAME IN THIS SPACE FROM OTHER INDUSTRIES TOO**

Candidate Expectations and Joining Ratios of Top Jobs & Top Skills

Interesting to observe that despite the slowdown and notable job cuts announced in IT earlier in the slowdown phase, the negotiation spirit of candidates hasn't been dampened! Especially notable are the demands that candidates with niche and topskills put on the table during the hiring conversations. We also observe a tendency for some top candidates to raise their own expectation bars higher even as the hiring conversations progress. Top Candidates, specifically those with hot skills around React.Js/Redux, GoLang/Python, SRE/Devops have heightened their demands and expectation in the current conditions.

The hiring demand have increased by 4X to 5X for these top skills as compared to what it was during the same period in 2018 and 2019. As some of these top skills remain niche and rare, the higher

demand for the talent has also heightened candidate expectations and demands. The salary expectations, given the kind of niche experience these candidates have, has increased from between 60% to 120%, especially with the pedigree candidates.

Candidate Joining Ratios

Despite the increase in demand and the heightened negotiation levels from candidates, the joining ratios do not seem to be all too encouraging. The current scenario is witnessing lower joining ratio than earlier in many top job cases. The drop ratio for these skills has gone from 25% earlier to 60% now and this applies to joining ratios even top end employer brands.