Defence Tech Is Quietly Becoming India's Next Big Employer, reveals CIEL HR Study

- *Defence Tech hiring in India has nearly **doubled over the past three years**, rising from around 3,500 roles in 2022 to nearly 7,000 in the current period, with close to 60% of skill demand now concentrated in radar, RF and secure communication technologies.*

- *While India's Defence Technology workforce is scaling rapidly, the study highlights continued shortages in Soldier Protection and Personal Gear Systems, Avionics and Mission Software, Naval Electronics and Combat Systems, Swarm and Tethered Drone Technologies, and Cybersecurity and Information Assurance*

National, 29th January 2026: At a time when **employment** has emerged as one of **India's most pressing structural challenges**, India's **Defence Technology sector** is quietly **redefining** the nature of formal, future-ready employment. According to a comprehensive study by **CIEL HR**, Defence Technology is no longer only about safeguarding national security; it is increasingly shaping a new class of high-skill, mission-critical jobs aligned with global standards.

The data points to both scale and structural depth. **Defence Technology hiring demand** has nearly **doubled** over the **last three years**, rising from approximately **3,500 roles in 2022 to nearly 7,000 roles in the current assessment period.** This growth has been consistent year-on-year rather than driven by short-term spikes, reflecting long-cycle modernisation and indigenisation programmes. Nearly **60%** of current skill demand is concentrated in **radar systems, RF engineering** and **secure communication technologies,** while **compensation** for high-technology defence roles has **increased by around 30% since 2022**, underscoring the premium placed on specialised, execution-critical skills.

The study shows that Air and Aerospace Systems account for nearly one-third of Defence Technology hiring demand, driven by indigenous fighter programmes, aircraft upgrades and deeper private-sector participation in manufacturing and avionics. **Cyber, C4ISR** (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance)**, Electronic Warfare** and **Space technologies** together contribute **26%** of demand, highlighting the growing importance of secure communications, sensor fusion and data-driven decision systems. Naval and Maritime Systems (19%), Land Systems (14%) and Unmanned Platforms (10%) further reflect a shift toward electronics-intensive, autonomous and networked defence platforms.

Commenting on the findings, **Mr Aditya Narayan Mishra, MD & CEO, CIEL HR**, said, *"Defence has always been a critical sector for India, but what we are seeing now is a structural shift in the nature of employment it generates. Warfare is becoming increasingly technology-driven, and that is reflected directly in hiring demand. Radar, RF and secure communications are now foundational skills across platforms, while aerospace continues to anchor large-scale employment. Defence Technology is emerging as a source of high-skill, credible and globally relevant jobs."*

A key implication of this shift is its potential to attract Indian engineering and technology talent currently working in advanced defence, aerospace and electronics ecosystems overseas. As India builds indigenous capabilities across avionics, electronic warfare, autonomy, AI and secure systems, the complexity and depth of work increasingly mirror global benchmarks. This positions Defence Technology as a credible destination for professionals seeking long-term and mission-critical careers with national impact.

The study also highlights that employment growth in Defence Technology is being driven by sustained capability build-up rather than episodic hiring cycles. To manage rising demand for specialised skills, approximately **20–25%** of **defence organisations** increasingly **rely on internal mobility** and **structured lateral movement.**

The study finds that organisations redeploy experienced professionals with deep platform and compliance knowledge into electronics heavy modernisation initiatives and facilitate movement across adjacent capability stacks such as RF engineering to electronic warfare, avionics software to safety critical mission systems, and embedded software to autonomy and systems integration roles. **Nearly half of mission-critical technical and programme leadership roles** are filled through structured **succession planning**. This approach helps preserve institutional knowledge and execution readiness across long-duration defence programmes.

As hiring scales, defence employers are also placing greater emphasis on **rigorous assessment** and **security-first hiring** practices. Defence employers deploy structured technical assessments and simulator-led evaluation environments to assess readiness for mission-critical roles. Assessments focus on deep technical expertise, strong STEM fundamentals and the ability to solve complex engineering problems under operational pressure. At the same time, **background verification** frameworks remain significantly more stringent than in conventional sectors to safeguard classified workflows and defence-critical intellectual property.

Other Key Workforce and Talent Insights from the Study

Persistent skill gaps despite rapid capability build-up:
While India's Defence Tech workforce is rapidly scaling across AI/ML, cybersecurity, computer vision, Electronic Warfare and systems integration, the study identifies continued supply gaps in Soldier Protection and Personal Gear Systems, Avionics and Mission Software, Naval Electronics and Combat Systems, Swarm and Tethered Drone Technologies, and Cybersecurity and Information Assurance.

Geographic Concentration of Defence Tech Hiring
Over 75% of demand is concentrated in Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi NCR, Hyderabad, and Ahmedabad-Vadodara, aligned with naval, avionics, cyber, missile, and shipbuilding programmes. Other cities, Chennai, Pune, Lucknow-Kanpur, Coimbatore, Nagpur, Visakhapatnam, Goa and Nashik, account for the remaining roles, reflecting a geographically concentrated Defence Tech ecosystem.

Talent practices are becoming more structured and specialised:
Defence Tech organisations are increasingly investing in deep technical learning, including simulator-based Live, Virtual and Constructive (LVC) training platforms, large-scale digital and AI skilling programmes, partnerships with premier academic institutions and industry-recognised apprenticeships focused on electronics engineering and precision manufacturing.

Methodology:

This quantitative study analyses India's defence-tech workforce across Land Systems, Air & Aerospace, Naval & Maritime, Unmanned Systems, and Electronic Systems, including C4ISR, EW, Cyber, and Space technologies. The report covers hiring demand, functional role clusters, engineering skill groups, indicative demand-supply gaps, geographic hiring density, and capability maturity signals. The analysis spans major Tier-1 defence hubs such as Bengaluru,

Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Chennai, Ahmedabad-Vadodara, and Pune, alongside emerging Tier-2/3 centres including Lucknow-Kanpur, Coimbatore, Nagpur, Visakhapatnam, Goa, and Nashik. Talent demand was derived quantitatively from ~7,000 unique defence-tech job postings collected between Oct 2024 and Oct 2025 from job portals, specialised engineering boards, and career pages of 50+ defence-tech firms.

About CIEL HR

CIEL HR is India's only company offering a complete suite of tech-driven HR solutions, covering the entire employee lifecycle. With 83 offices across 41 locations and more than 1371 employees, CIEL has served 5000+ companies as of March 2025.

Our HR Services

- Exec Search, Selection, RPO, Value Staffing, NAPS & NATS by CIEL HR, Aargee Staffing
- Professional IT & Engineering Staffing by CIEL Technologies
- HR Advisory by Ma Foi Strategic Consultants, People Metrics
- HR Managed Services (payroll/compliance) by Ma Foi Strategic Consultants
- Skilling by CIEL Skills & Careers
- Background Verification by Vibrant Screen

Our HR Tech Platforms

- Talent Assessment & Development by Jombay, Thomas Assessments
- Talent Engagement by Jombay
- HRMS by HfactoR
- Learning Solutions by Courseplay
- Statutory Compliance by esYCOMP
- Fresher Upskilling by ProSculpt
- Automated Background Verification by Vibrant Screen