

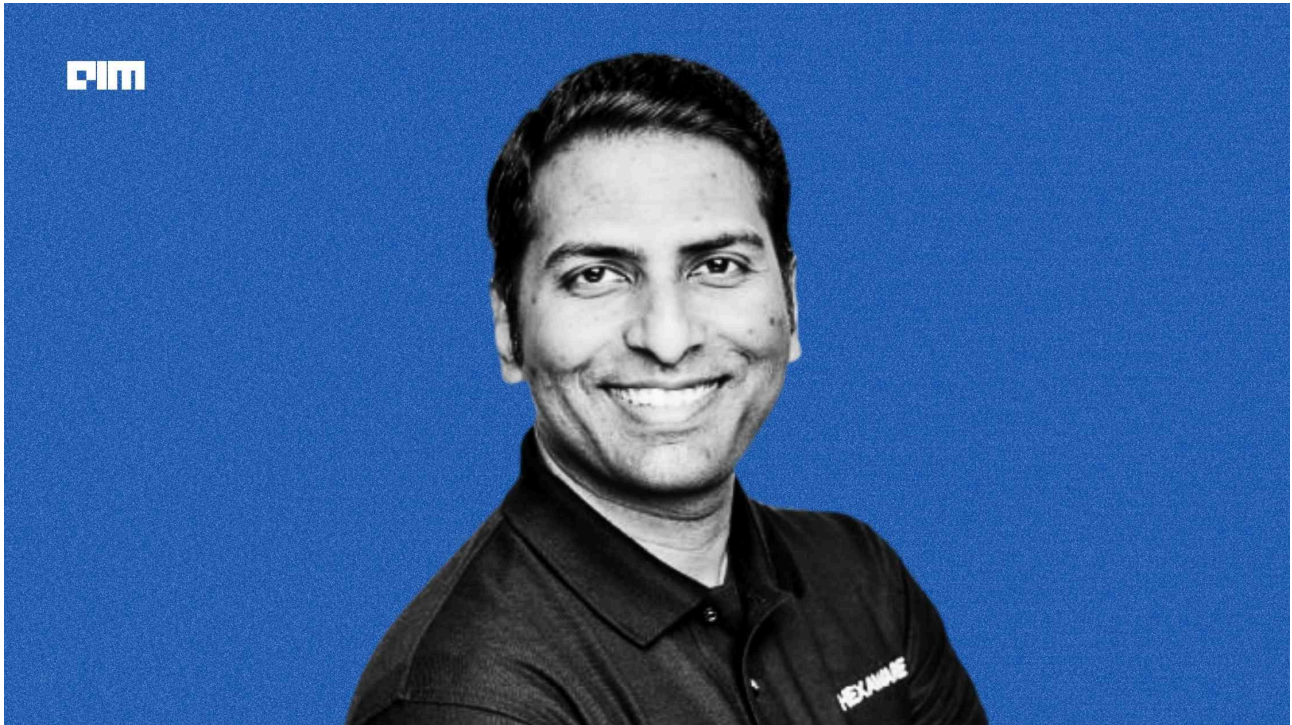
# Hexaware CTO Says Without AI, 90% of Young Coders Would Struggle



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Indian IT firms are on a vibe coding spree. After Cognizant's week-long experiment with Lovable, a vibe coding platform, Hexaware, a Bengaluru-based IT firm, announced its partnership with Replit for secure vibe coding for enterprises.

For Hexaware, the AI push is not new. CTO Satyajith Mundakkal says that the company had already trained 80% of its 21,000 developers on GitHub Copilot. Now, the Replit partnership is set to expand adoption across its 32,000 employees, including those who are not software engineers.

"Many people have ideas, but unfortunately, they don't know how to convert those ideas into applications," Satyajith Mundakkal, chief technology officer at Hexaware, told **AIM**. "What the industry is trying to do with vibe coding is eliminate the need for anybody else to be there. Every individual who has an idea or a thought process can develop."

Mundakkal said the company's focus was on making its employees more productive and putting them at the centre of building products. That push drove Hexaware into vibe coding.

## The Crazy Vibe Demand

Hexaware explored multiple products in the market before zeroing in on Replit. What stood out, according to Mundakkal, was its ability not just to build apps but also to host and test them in dynamic, collaborative environments. Developers, program managers, product

managers, and subject matter experts could all come together on a single platform.

The company has been working closely with Replit on its latest release, Agent 3, which launched globally on September 10. Hexaware had early access. And shared feedback during the product cycle.

Replit's Agent 3 is built for autonomy. It can test and fix its own code in a loop, improving applications in the background. Its runtime has jumped from 40 minutes to 200 minutes, allowing it to think and act independently for hours.

Another breakthrough came through Replit's integration with Microsoft. Enterprises had resisted being forced to deploy apps in Replit's own environment, citing security concerns. "It takes a long sales cycle to convince a client why they should use your environment when they already have a massive one," Mundakkal said.

Hexaware's feedback pushed Replit to integrate with Azure. Now, apps built on Replit can be deployed directly on Microsoft's stack, making them immediately enterprise-friendly. While Replit is Hexaware's preferred vibe coding partner, Microsoft Copilot is also part of the mix. Copilot Spark, however, is not yet available for enterprise.

This move aligns Hexaware with other Indian IT companies such as Cognizant, Infosys, TCS and HCLTech, all of which are rushing into AI partnerships.

## **The Impact of AI and India**

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"If I'm a Replit expert, my job is guaranteed for a long time compared to someone who doesn't know it. We are trying to ensure our 30,000 employees are not part of the impact," Mundakkal said. He noted that resistance to AI tools is inevitable. But freshers are already heavily reliant on them.

"If I take GitHub Copilot away, 90% of my young population will struggle to code. They use these as coaches and guides. Our more senior population looks at it with a critical eye. They validate the work. That's their role."

On criticism that Indian IT firms get stuck at proof-of-concepts, Mundakkal pushed back, saying Hexaware already has almost 17–18 solutions in production.

Still, he admitted that the return on investment from AI is long-term. "Most of the investment today is enablement. Training 30,000 employees is expensive, but tomorrow, when clients ask for developers, they'll come to us because our developers can do 20% more. That's the return." The challenge, he added, lies in client maturity. Many still ask for discounts rather than focusing on productivity gains.

Mundakkal dismissed the trend around "agentic washing" where companies inflate their number of AI agents. "You go to LinkedIn and search for a GenAI developer. There is not a single profile without it. Technology is solid, maturing, and if used rightly, very potent. Yes, it's hyped and oversold, but it is maturing," he said.

He expressed caution about the service mindset in Indian. “The problem is trust. It takes years to build trust in products, but only a few months to build products,” Mundakkal said. “We believe in accelerators, not products. Our aim is for clients to become productive fast.”

Demand for AI solutions, he said, remains stronger in the West than in India, where scepticism and low risk appetite hold firms back. “Indian companies would rather trust SAP or some large solution. They are listening to both positive and negative news. Western firms focus more on the positive.”

Mundakkal also pointed to the lack of support for Indian AI models. “We never go and use Indian-generated LLMs. Everyone rushes to test GPT-5, but when Sarvam comes out with a new version, hardly anyone takes it up. It’s a mindset.”

Despite this, he said IndiaAI must be at least tenfold. “The future of the economy will be driven by AI.”