Hello everyone. So this session right now is talking about job uncertainty in the market. We'll talk about job evolution, changing nature of jobs and how do we deal with it. So that's the plan for today's conversation. Firstly, we'll begin by talking about a bunch of factors. The nature of India's job market.

We'll talk about the labor market in India, the technology sector in India. We'll talk about what's the purpose of higher education in terms of demand supply curves. We'll talk about maybe taking a little bit of a big picture view of careers. We'll also talk about different frameworks you can use in terms of understanding what is the right career for you.

We'll talk briefly about Ikigai. We'll talk about some of the problems with the Ikigai framework and we'll advocate a very different framework in terms of what you should be using. Okay, let's jump in into the nature of India's job market. So Indian job market is very unique in nature. So there are approximately 40 lakh engineering students who end up joining the first year of the engineering program.

And there are around 12.5 lakh graduates coming out every year. So it's 1.25 million students graduating with an engineering degree every year. That's a lot of people.

So just imagine this. There are 12.5 lakh people graduating every year, and you only have 2.5 lakh jobs being generated every year. So what does this mean? This means that one out of five students will never be able to find a job.

That's just the nature of India's job market. So if you take up an engineering degree thinking that everybody will find jobs, that's absolutely not true. It's very competitive by nature. India still doesn't have enough jobs to absorb each one of the people who come out of the engineering programs. So that's point one.

There's a big difference between the number of graduates every year and the number of people who find jobs. And within the people who find jobs, the job distribution is not equal for every discipline. For example, if you take the job of computer science, that's most of the jobs being generated in India. So in this case, out of 250,000 jobs, 180,000 jobs are just in the field of IT enabled services. This is what India is known for.

So you have a lot of these companies like Wipro, TCS, Infosys, and so on. Those really contribute a big huge chunk of the overall jobs of the Indian economy, 180,000 jobs. So well more than 60% of the jobs, out of all the jobs being generated in India, are IT years jobs. By nature, they are not super high paying. Again, there can always be exceptions based on which school you're from.

But typically, it's very cost conscious, right? Because the more cost conscious you are, then you'll be able to cater and serve overseas markets. And keeping a budget under control is very important. So that's one part of the job market. Then you have job markets which For example, in the space of computer science, which is all about data analytics, which is about hardcore computer programming, machine learning, artificial intelligence, all these jobs are just 40,000 in number.

So out of 2.5 lakh jobs, just 40,000 jobs are in some of the hardcore software areas, which are high-paying jobs. And when I say high-paying jobs, these jobs tend to be around 8 to 10 lakhs per year. So these are jobs which are very sought after by students, but just 40,000. So look at it from this perspective. So if you are a student, you're looking for a job, 180 plus 42, 20,000 jobs out of 250,000 jobs are in computer science and data analytics.

So that's where most of the jobs are. So if you are, for example, from biotechnology, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, the overall number of jobs is probably around 30,000. So it is not easy to find great jobs in core engineering sectors in India right now. That's just the nature of the job market. And this is the data I've pulled from the NASSCOM report of 2020.

There was a survey done between Scalar and NASSCOM, which I pulled out here. So if you want to get good jobs, high paying jobs in India, you will have to know computer science. You will have to know a little bit of data analytics. So there's just a nature of the market and be aware of this graph of these numbers. This can change a lot in the future, but this is how things are.

Knowing computer skills is very essential for you to find high paying jobs. And again, you may say that you don't want to do high paying jobs. You want to do other jobs. That's okay. But again, have this number in mind.

What about the nature of the technology labor market in India? So across the world, including India, off late there's been a flood of applicants. Typically there used to be around 500 applicants per job posting. Now the number has climbed very high because of layoffs and the number is touching 2,000 to 3,000 applicants for every job posting. So hiring manager typically tells the recruiter, especially those working HR, saying that give me the top 20 candidates. So just look at it from this perspective.

There are 3,000 applicants and the manager is telling you give me the top 20. It's a tough job for human resources. So they have to filter down 2000 to top 20. So when it comes to evaluating resumes, they are going to eliminate people left, right, and center. They really don't have too much time to sit and read 2000 resumes.

That's just not possible. And remember, a recruiter is not just interviewing for one job or trying to get resumes for one job, they probably have 20 to 30 jobs lined up. The moment they close one job, a new job opens up. So every time they are working on 20 to 30 jobs, each job has 2,000 to 3,000 job applicants. That's a lot of people. So your job, as you read all these statistics, what should come to your mind is you have to make it easy for the recruiter to notice you.

Do not make it difficult. The more comfortable you make it for the recruiter to notice you, the higher your chances of getting through to the interview process. So if you apply directly on a company website for jobs, your chances of getting selected for a job is probably between 0.5 to

2%. I would say a number close to 1%. That's really a small chance of you getting noticed if you directly apply on the company website.

So if you want to find jobs and you're sending your resume to, say, 20 companies on the career website, see, your chances of getting in all these 20 companies is close to zero. It's absolutely worthless. Because again, I've given you the numbers why it is so. 2,000 applicants for every job. And the HR recruiter has to filter through 2,000 to 3,000 people to select the top 20.

It's almost impossible. But if you're going through a referral, your chances are going to increase from around 1% to 2% to maybe 25% to 30%. So 1% to 30%, there's a big increase. So that's the advantage of having a referral when you apply for a company. And similarly, when you are going through campus recruiting process, your chances of getting in is much higher than you would by directly applying on the company website. Your chances of getting in could range from 5 to 30% based on which college you are visiting because if it is a top tier college maybe your chances is 30% in a campus recruiting process and if you are from say a very low ranked college your chances are probably close to 5% when it comes to campus recruitment.

So overall it is an elimination game. So we talked about this earlier in terms of the early stages of the process is always about getting eliminated and you want to do everything possible to make sure that your name It's not kicked out in the elimination process and goes down to the interview process where you have a higher chance of being selected. Now you get a sense of why people do higher education. So you already heard about what's happening in the market. You always want to be in a situation where there's a lot of demand from recruiters, right? You always want to be in a location, you want to be in a job where there are a lot of recruiters chasing you.

You do not have too much competition from your peers, from your competitors. So you always want to be in any job, whatever you take up, it is always about increased demand and decreased supply. Supply is all the students out there, the job seekers out there, that is the supply and demand is the demand from recruiters. So if there are more jobs, more companies, there is going to be lot more demand. the more the companies, the more easier it is for you.

And when you have great skills you bring to the table, yes, you get identified and picked up by the company. So in this case, the purpose of higher education is basically to gain skills. So the reason of higher education is always about what technical skills you gained, what business skills you gained, what people skills you gained. You should be able to deliver more value to the business. That's the reason why companies sometimes pay more for people with a master's degree or a PhD degree.

Likewise, when you go in for higher education, you're also in a scenario where there are less people like you. The number of people who finish a PhD program is much, much smaller than the number of people who finish an undergraduate program. The supply is much lesser, so there are more skill gaps and typically a PhD program requires like 5 to 6 years of training, so not many people put themselves through this training process. So the more you get this training done, the more valuable you are in front of recruiters because you have taken the effort to get trained and you bring a lot of skills that companies need. So increased demand, decreased supply is always going to help you.

It's a quick discussion about why do people go to US for higher education, right? Like what they're really doing at the end of the day is they want to go to a place where there's more

demand for jobs. For example, again, this is data from a couple of years back, it's not up to date, but then you have lots of jobs in the US, more than the number of graduates graduating every year. So there are approximately 100,000 graduates coming out every year from the undergrad, master's programs, MS programs and so on. But there are a lot more jobs. So there are probably a million STEM jobs and very few graduates.

So it's a place where there's a lot of demand, very little supply. And that's one of the reasons why some Indians prefer to go to the US and search for jobs, because it's very different from the Indian job market. So whether there's increased supply, then it's a problem. But then there's a decreased supply, it's placed your advantage. So STEM majors have a huge advantage in the US.

India has a big surplus, US has a big shortage. So naturally what people think is, if I move from India to US, I should be able to leverage my skills and get a high paying job. That's typically what's driven a lot of migration from India to the US. But life is not straightforward.

Things can change all the time. So what's happening off late is that the waiting time for green cards, H1B visas is getting longer and longer because everybody wants to go in a certain direction. So there are too many applicants. So at last count, there was something like 8 lakh applicants for something like 85,000 H1B slots. What this means is that only about 10% of people who apply for H1B visas will get H1B visas. Most people will have to come back to India because there is a flood of people trying to enter the US market.

So that's part of the problem and also when there are too many people from another country coming to a different country, there can be a lot of demographic changes and that's also causing political issues. So that's also something which people have to look at as they look at their long-term strategy in terms of migrating to other countries. Okay so I'll share some thoughts about careers in terms of, again we'll share more models and more frameworks for the future but in this conversation today let me share some perspectives in terms of how not to get obsessed over just one number and in your life a number like compensation is Change is much lesser in the beginning, but then the change is much, much higher as you get older, pick up work experience, pick up skills. So in this case, what I've shown is you look at the x-axis, you've got time here. The 20, 30, 40, 50 are the ages as you go through your, as you get older, as you get more skills, as you gain more people skills, communication skills, business skills, you will get paid a lot more.

So the graph always goes, the slope is much, much lower in the beginning. Compensation rises very slowly in the beginning. So when you're 20s, probably may not increase too much. When you're 30s, maybe not too much. But then you will reach a point where suddenly it becomes much higher.

So there's a dramatic jump after your mid-30s, 40s, where people really get into high-paying jobs. They get into good companies and so on. So it really doesn't matter too much of what people do between the ages of 20 to 30, because Again, the difference in terms of compensation is not that high. So for example, let's consider this example of students going to US for doing the PhD degrees. The difference between a master's degree and undergrad degree is probably 10 to 15 thousand dollars in terms of annual compensation.

So people take a lot of loans to do a master's degree. But then they're not paid so much compared to an undergraduate degree holder because the difference in skills is not that high.

Similarly, when you compare a master's degree and a PhD degree, maybe the difference in many companies probably around $10,000, $15,000 in terms of compensation especially in core engineering branches. So what this means is that again there is not too much of a difference just because you have done a PhD degree for 5 years does not mean that you have enough skills to completely differentiate yourself from a master's degree student. So what is more important is as you spend time in the workplace as you gain the skills which companies need that is when you become valuable. The more time you spend in industry the more valuable you become.

 So by the time you touch your 30s, you probably have more than 10 years of work. By your mid-30s, you probably have around like 8 to 10 years of work experience. By the time you touch your 40s, you have another like 14, 15 years of work experience. And that's really the time when you can add value to the table.

 You can bring in more revenues. You can make an impact. You have customers. You can talk to clients. You can sell. So you bring a lot of new skills to the table.

 That's when your compensation goes up dramatically. So I'll share some examples. People have told me that Sometimes between ages 40 to 41, they've made more money in that one year than they made their entire life before that. And between the ages 41 to 42, they made more money than, again, the entire period before that, including the ages 40 to 41. So making money will happen naturally to most people in their lives.

 So don't obsess about making money very early on. So again, don't focus too much about compensation. Think about skills. The more you learn, the more you improve your communication skills, the more you improve your business skills, you're setting yourself up for success later on in your life. And during our different conversation, Vibin, I think, talked to you about how just focusing on compensation early on in your life will remove the enthusiasm in terms of being able to work hard, learn, and contribute enthusiastically.

 So again, consider these factors as you look at your careers. This is another way to look at compensation, right? I mean, I tried to show... Three sets of friends, let's look at three employees. One of them is in green, the other one is in red, the other one is in black, and this is how compensation goes up and down with time.

 Like there are times when compensation is high, there are times when compensation is low. Initially when you get a promotion, your compensation dramatically increases, then it's stagnant for a couple of years, then it dramatically increases, then it's again stagnant, then you change jobs, again it increases. So when you're comparing between friends, don't get obsessed because there are times when your friend is making a lot more than you, but there are times when they are also making much lesser than you.

 So life is up and down. So look at life as a free flow. It's not just a straight line upwards. It's not like if your friend is making more money than you. Right now, they'll always make more money than you throughout their life.

 It doesn't work that way. It's up and down. So just be aware that don't obsess over one number compensation at one single point. And if you just look at one point here, you may think that somebody's up, somebody's down, but then it keeps changing. There's times when green is the highest, there are times when red is the highest, there are times when black is the highest. Similarly, there are times when Red is the lowest, green is the lowest and black is the lowest.

Again, it is an indicator to the fact that compensation changes with time. So, focus on skills, I think that is the takeaway from this conversation. Do not obsess about one single factor called compensation right now. Look at compensation throughout one's life, right.

That is a better indicator. Okay, let us move on. This is a very good diagram to show careers. So most people look at careers like a straight line graph. Like it's always going up in one direction. This is what I think my career is going to look like. Always going up till it reaches a CEO position, right? That's not how careers work.

There are times when you are probably flat in your career, stagnant in your career. Maybe there are times when you are compensation could decrease, you change jobs and it's a time of like for example in similar time of layoffs where you cannot find a good paying job. You may get a salary cut of 40%, 50%, 60% and so on. So if you made $100,000 earlier, your new compensation would probably be something like maybe $40,000 or $50,000. Life goes in circles, ultimately you will end up where you need to be, but again this has lot of curves in the process.

So, do not get disappointed that just a nature of the world and the key ideas that as you focus on skills you can get ahead, but if you look only at the factor called compensation you will go up and down. So, be ready for rocky ride if you are looking only at compensation. So, again when you repeat the key learning, focus on skills and learning not necessarily on compensation and salary. These are some examples I want to pull up to show that there are people who are focused on upskilling throughout their lives. So all these people out here, Mukti Khaire, when I was at IIT Bombay, I remember she came and talked to us one day.

She's a professor at Harvard at that point of time. She talked to us. I was impressed by her resume. She had an undergraduate degree in science. but then she ended up getting to a very different field. Kris Gopalakrishnan, very famous person from the Indian IT sector.

He has a bachelor's degree in the sciences. Liz Centoni, again I had a chance to work with her. She was executive vice president at Cisco. She also had an undergrad degree from Mumbai University in sciences. Even though these people began with a very unique degree, they're not even engineers to begin with, right? They had sciences degrees. At the same time, they picked up additional skills like Kris Gopalakrishnan and Mukti Khaire.

They all ended up studying a lot more. They ended up upskilling themselves, going for higher education. Kris Gopalakrishnan did an additional degree. He did a master's from IIT Madras in engineering. in computer science and that's how you pick up skills. So the more you upskill, the more you focus about learning, it's not about where you begin, it's about how much you're trying to learn throughout your career, the more you practice, the more interested you are, the better you are at the end of your career.

So that's something I wanted you guys to think about. Let us look at another famous example, Parag Agarwal. So, I was doing a research one day for a newsletter I was writing and I was looking at Parag. Parag was in IIT Bombay around the time I was there and he had a PhD from Stanford in computer science, right. That is probably the best degree you can ever get in computer science.

So, everybody was like in awe of him. But Parag, as an employee at Twitter, I had a couple of friends who worked in Twitter tell me this, that he was a person who would always look at upskilling opportunities. So in his hackathon, he would participate. When there was some online courses, he would take part in it. It's not about him having a PhD degree in computer science.

It's about what do you do after that. A PhD degree can only teach you so much. It cannot prepare you for industry lifelong, right? You have to keep on upskilling yourself. You've got to keep learning. You've got to pick up new skills, new classes, new courses, compete with the outside world. Parag did that really well.

That's one reason why he rose very, very quickly to become the CEO of Twitter. And right now what I hear is he's left Twitter and now he's opened up a new startup and he's working on it. So you keep experimenting in life, right? So that's a key thing. Don't be happy or sad about whatever is happening, but keep doing different things. So this is actually a very famous pictorial about how to find the right job and occupation for yourselves. So this is Ikigai, he talks about what you love, what you are good at, what the world needs and what you will be paid for, try to find that intersection, you will do really well.

It's okay, it's a framework to begin with, but I think there are lots of problems in the world we are in right now because if you look very carefully, as you evolve in your careers from your undergrad degree and as you get older in your life, what you love will change. So when I began my career, I was a mechanical engineer. I loved working in a shop floor.

But after a couple of years, I was not that happy anymore. I said, no, I'm done with shop floors. I want to do something different. So what you like and love keeps changing with time. So that's the nature of how people are.

Life is not about constant likes, it keeps changing. What the world needs also keeps changing. So right now, 10 years back, it was the focus on entrepreneurship, it was about cloud computing and so on, but now the focus is on AI, ML. So it's just the world needs different things at different times, so that also keeps changing. What you're good in is also going to keep changing. As you pick up skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, you'll also become better.

So that space of what you're good in will keep changing. And what you can get paid for will also change. So I went from being a mechanical engineer to a person working in human resources. It's a big change. So I got paid in different disciplines because I kept changing fields.

So again, this also keeps changing. So what do you do in this case when everything is changing? Then what sort of choices do you make for your career? I actually advocate this model whenever I talk to students, I always ask them to seek an intersection of these three intersecting circles out here. So, one of the big circles is actually enthusiasm. What do you bring to the table? I mean, there's a word for it in Hindi and Sanskrit, it's called Urdhya, but I feel that where you are most enthusiastic, take it very seriously. There's also another circle which is about where is it you can do a lot of hard work, where you're genuinely passionate and you have so much passion that hard work is no problem for you. right, I like writing, so sometimes I can write endlessly forever and I never get disappointed with the number of hours I spend on writing.

So that's a skill for me, likewise I think everyone has a skill, it could be music, it could be something different, designing, architecture, everyone has a certain skill in a certain space where they can put any amount of hard work without necessarily asking for compensation as a reward. So without an expectation of reward, I call it self-motivated hard work. People can do a lot of work and that's something to identify. There's an Indian term for it called karma.

I don't think it's a well understood term, but I think it's a good way to understand what this means. I've seen a lot of people working startups. Some of them are unicorn founders. They've studied with me. They've become unicorn founders.

Something I know about them is that they're capable of immense hard work in that space they're in. They don't count the number of hours, right? You give them a task, just like they go all out. They spend like 30, 40 hours straight and they get the work done. Because they have passion. That's called self-motivated hard work.

And then they have the enthusiasm, right? They're just brimming with enthusiasm. infectious enthusiasm. They're more than happy to share updates. They're always talking about that space they're interested in. That's enthusiasm. Also, very important, which no one talks about right now in terms of careers is, what is the impact you're going to have in terms of family and society, right? Your family should have, whatever you do should have positive impact on your family. You should also have a very positive impact on society and do not choose jobs which do not cater to that segment of impact on others.

So if you make all these three circles come together and if you find a spot at the center, that's the place where you have to introduce yourself. And I think that's a better way to look other than Ikigai. I think following a Dharma is probably a better option. And you may be doing other things in your life, but I would say that look at this as a long-term career opportunity in terms of where you want to be.

So with this, I'm going to... Some people may ask questions like, how do I know this? When will I find it? I think the idea is to keep experimenting. Sooner or later, you'll find it. It's more of a long-term strategy, but when you find it, you'll know it.

That's the way I would close the conversation. Okay, so we come to the end of today's conversation. I'll keep talking about similar topics in the future. Cheers, everyone. Thanks. Bye-bye.