

Mechanic Diesel: how employable, and how future-proof, is this trade?

Diesel mechanics service the engines that move India's goods, power its construction sites, and keep its factories running. As AI diagnostic tools arrive and electric trucks inch toward viability, the honest question is not whether the role will change but whether today's NTC holder will still be hireable in 2030 and beyond. This report examines the evidence.

63.9 /100

COURSE EMPLOYABILITY SCORE (CES V2)

Moderate employability, scored across all four CES pillars (\$02).

63.9^P

CES score, Moderate employability band (Lakshya CES, 2025)

USD 53B¹

India commercial vehicle market size 2025, growing at 5% CAGR (IMARC Group, 2025)

7.2%²

India automotive aftermarket CAGR 2026-2032, rising repair demand (OpenPR/MRFR, 2025)

90%³

Share of India truck market still diesel-powered in 2024 (Mordor Intelligence, 2025)

Subject: the "Mechanic Diesel" CTS trade · Compiled from NSQF program spec + independent third-party research (see Sources).

Can AI or automation replace this job? The honest answer.

Automation is reshaping the diagnostic and administrative layers of diesel servicing, but the physical, contextual, and safety-critical core of the job continues to require a skilled human body in a physical space. The transition is incremental and sector-specific, not a sudden displacement event.

The risk, stated plainly

AI-powered diagnostic platforms can already parse thousands of fault codes from onboard engine management units faster than any technician, and predictive maintenance software using sensor data can flag component wear weeks before failure ⁴. These tools automate a meaningful subset of the cognitive diagnostic work that once required hours of manual inspection. At the same time, the ILO notes that transport-sector occupations face elevated automation exposure due to their high proportion of routine physical tasks, and the Frey-Osborne Oxford framework identified 47% of US jobs as potentially susceptible to computerization, with vehicle maintenance and repair occupations rated in the moderate-to-high risk tier ^{5,6}. For diesel mechanics specifically, routine tasks such as oil changes, filter swaps, and basic error-code reading are increasingly systematized through checklists and scan tools.

What automates vs what stays human

THE TASKS AUTOMATION IS TAKING

- Reading and interpreting OBD/ECU fault codes via AI diagnostic software ⁴
- Scheduling and triggering preventive maintenance alerts from telematics sensor streams ⁴
- Filling in digital service records, parts orders, and warranty claim documentation ⁶
- Conducting visual pre-inspection checklists through image-recognition cameras on fleet vehicles ⁴
- Estimating repair time and labour costs using AI-assisted job-card generation systems ⁴
- Routine oil, filter, and fluid replacement following templated step-by-step protocols ⁶

THE WORK THAT STAYS HUMAN

- Physical disassembly and reassembly of engine blocks, transmission systems, and hydraulic components in constrained spaces requires dexterity and situational judgment that robotic arms cannot replicate cost-effectively at small-scale workshops ^{4,P}
- Diagnosing intermittent or multi-system failures where sensor data is ambiguous demands trained human inference and field experience ⁴
- Road-testing repaired vehicles under real load conditions to verify fix quality involves safety judgments that current AI systems cannot certify ^P
- Servicing diverse equipment fleets, DG sets, agricultural machinery, mining vehicles, in locations without connectivity or standardised tooling remains inherently human-led ⁷
- Customer-facing explanation of repair scope and cost negotiation in regional languages creates a social layer that automation cannot replicate ⁶
- Emergency breakdown response on highways or remote construction sites where adaptability and physical intervention are essential ^P

The resilient anchors

90%³

Share of India truck fleet running on diesel in 2024, maintaining a large installed base requiring human servicing for years ahead

7.2% CAGR²

Growth rate of India automotive aftermarket 2026-2032, expanding the total repair and maintenance market even as EV share rises

80%⁸

Estimated skills gap in India automotive industry, meaning demand for trained technicians outpaces supply today

Automation is a tool for the skilled mechanic, not a replacement, for now.

AI diagnostic systems augment the qualified diesel mechanic rather than eliminate the role in the 2025-2030 window. The physical and contextual demands of servicing heavy equipment in varied Indian environments, heat, dust, remote locations, mixed fleet ages, create barriers that current robotics and autonomous systems cannot overcome economically ⁴⁶. Mechanics who learn to use AI diagnostic tools as a force-multiplier will become more productive and more valuable, not redundant.

The longer-term risk is real: if electric medium and heavy trucks achieve cost parity by 2035, demand for diesel-specific skills will gradually narrow ⁹. However, the Indian commercial vehicle fleet is large, structurally long-lived, and diesel-dominant today. The 7.2% growth in the automotive aftermarket means aggregate servicing volumes are rising even while the fuel mix slowly shifts ². The practical horizon for a diesel NTC holder earning a living in this trade extends well beyond the next decade, provided they layer in emerging technology skills over time ^P.

Automation exposure by task

Task in this trade	Automation risk	How this trade / program is positioned
ECU / OBD fault-code reading	High	AI scan tools automate initial code retrieval; human judgment still needed to interpret multi-code scenarios ⁴
Routine oil and filter service	Moderate	Largely procedural; robotics unlikely to dominate at workshop scale in India in this decade ^P
Engine block overhaul and component replacement	Lower	High dexterity, heavy physical manipulation, robotics not cost-competitive at Indian workshop scale ^P
Transmission and differential repair	Lower	Complex multi-step physical task requiring adaptive human skill ^P
Hydraulic system servicing (construction/mining equipment)	Lower	Contextual, site-specific work; AI tools assist diagnosis but not physical repair ^{P7}
Road and load testing post-repair	Lowest	Requires human safety certification and real-world environmental judgment ^P
Service record and warranty documentation	High	Largely automatable through digital job-card systems; technician time saved, not eliminated ⁴

How to read these numbers. Automation risk scores are modelled probabilities, not certainties. The Frey-Osborne framework assigns a single probability to an entire occupation based on task composition, but individual workplaces vary widely, a DG-set technician in a remote mining camp faces near-zero automation displacement risk today, while a service advisor in a metro fleet depot is more exposed ⁵⁶. The CES model applies a neutral prior (50/50) to automation possibility for this trade precisely because reliable, India-specific task-level data is limited. Treat risk ratings as directional signals, not forecasts.

02 THE COURSE EMPLOYABILITY SCORE (CES)

How this trade scores on Lakshya's employability metric

The Lakshya Capital Employability Score (CES) for Mechanic Diesel stands at 63.9 out of 100, placing the trade squarely in the Moderate employability band. This score is derived from four pillars weighted to reflect real financing risk: Training Quality (30%), Market Dynamics (30%), Placement Outcome (25%), and Government Support (15%). The trade's strongest signal is Government Support (70), reflecting active policy backing from DGT/MSDE and the PLI-Auto scheme. Placement Outcome (67.9) shows reasonable employer breadth across 14 distinct hiring entities with strong hiring recency. The weaker link is Market Dynamics (56.4), partly because salary data is thin and automation signals are uncertain at this evidence level. Scored on the evidence in this report, this role earns a **CES of 63.9 / 100, "Moderate employability."**

CES Pillar (CES v2)	Weight	What it measures
Training Quality	0.30	Regulatory recognition and licensure of the qualification
Market Dynamics	0.30	Demand, salary band, sector trajectory, automation possibility and displacement risk

CES Pillar (CES v2)	Weight	What it measures
Placement Outcome	0.25	Whether the market actually hires this role: live employers, openings, pay and recency
Government Support	0.15	Migration pathways, federal frameworks and policy backing the role

Score bands: ≥80 High employability (full financing exposure) · ≥60 Moderate · ≥40 Uncertain outcomes · below that Weak job linkage. Framework: CES v2.

Market Dynamics, by sub-signal

Sub-signal	Score/100	Sub-weight	Conf
Demand	62	0.40	0.65
Salary (vs country floor)	40	0.30	0.17
Sector trajectory	80	0.15	0.88
Automation possibility	50	0.10	0.30
Displacement risk	50	0.05	0.30
Market Dynamics composite	56	n/a	0.49

The four pillars, scored

CES pillar	Score	Conf	Weight	Evidence
Training Quality	65	0.95	0.300	One-year CTS program at NSQF Level 4, awarding a nationally recognised NTC credential administered by DGT, a structured, standardised qualification with defined competency outcomes ^P
Market Dynamics	56	0.49	0.300	India's commercial vehicle and automotive aftermarket sectors are expanding at 5-7% CAGR, with diesel maintaining 90% truck fleet share, though salary realisation in live postings remains low (score 40/100) ¹²³
Placement Outcome	68	0.64	0.250	Live market hiring of the role: 16 openings · 14 employers · 2 with pay · 25 recent postings
Government Support	70	0.90	0.150	PLI-Auto scheme (Rs 25,938 crore outlay), Bharatmala infrastructure programme, PM Gati Shakti logistics push, and MSDE's Dual System of Training all directly generate or sustain demand for diesel technicians ^{1011P}

Composite (applied weights, renormalised over scored pillars): $65 \times 0.30 + 56 \times 0.30 + 68 \times 0.25 + 70 \times 0.15 = 63.9$. Confidence 1.00 · evidence 25 clean / 14 rejected · 7 sources.

COURSE EMPLOYABILITY SCORE (CES V2)

63.9 / 100, "Moderate employability"

The Moderate band (60-79) reflects a genuine and stable hiring market, 14 distinct employers, strong recency, a sector scoring 80/100, offset by the lowest sub-score in salary realisation (12.5/100), meaning most live openings do not publish wages, which signals informal employment norms, not necessarily low pay. Government support is the standout pillar at 70, underpinned by DGT's NTC infrastructure and automotive PLI incentives that sustain fleet expansion ^{P10}.

To move toward the High employability band (80+), a Mechanic Diesel graduate should stack the NTC with additional certifications in diesel fuel injection systems or hydraulics, seek apprenticeship placements with organised-sector fleet operators (Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland, Reliance, logistics firms), and progressively build competency in AI-assisted diagnostic tools. International pathways, Gulf, Southeast Asia, Africa, open after 2-3 years of domestic experience and substantially improve earnings ^{P12}.

Pillar scores map cited evidence to the published CES v2 rubric; the live figure refreshes as cohort outcomes feed Lakshya's engine.

India's diesel-powered commercial fleet is one of the largest in Asia and its supporting aftermarket services sector is growing at 7.2% annually. The skilled technician shortage is acute and documented, creating a structural demand tailwind that policy alone cannot quickly resolve.

The India commercial vehicle market was valued at USD 53.23 billion in 2025 and is projected to reach USD 84.12 billion by 2034 at a 5.03% CAGR, driven by the Bharatmala highway programme, e-commerce logistics expansion, and fleet renewal under BS-VI emission norms ¹. The Indian truck market alone was worth USD 20.18 billion in 2025, with diesel powering 90.14% of 2024 revenues and electric trucks growing from a tiny base ³. The automotive aftermarket, where most diesel mechanic jobs actually sit, reached USD 11.84 billion in 2025 and is on track to hit USD 19.26 billion by 2032 at a 7.2% CAGR ². Separate from passenger vehicles, the India diesel generator market was valued at USD 1.24 billion in 2025 and is expected to reach USD 1.88 billion by 2031 at a 7.18% CAGR, driven by construction, data centres, and manufacturing, all of which employ diesel mechanics ⁷. Against this backdrop, India's automotive industry faces an estimated 80% skills gap, with 4.3 vacancies per 100 employees in skilled maintenance roles ⁸. The India Skills Report 2025 placed ITI employability at 45.95%, up from 41%, suggesting measurable but incomplete industry absorption of vocationally trained graduates ¹³. The logistics sector employs over 22 million people and contributes 14% of GDP, and PM Gati Shakti's 434 infrastructure projects valued at Rs 11 lakh crore are set to deepen demand for heavy equipment maintenance over the next decade ¹¹.

USD 53.2B¹

India commercial vehicle market size 2025, CAGR 5.03% to 2034, direct demand driver for diesel technicians

USD 11.84B²

India automotive aftermarket size 2025, growing to USD 19.26B by 2032 at 7.2% CAGR

USD 1.24B⁷

India diesel generator market 2025, growing to USD 1.88B by 2031, DG mechanic roles expanding across construction and industry

04 LIVE HIRING EVIDENCE (2025/26)

What employers are actually posting

Captured from live job boards (Indeed, LinkedIn, Naukri) in the current scrape window: **16** openings across **14** employers, **2** with disclosed pay, **25** recent. These are real postings.

The live hiring snapshot captured 16 active listings across 14 distinct employers, with 25 recent postings, a thin but geographically diverse signal spanning Chennai, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Haryana. Only 2 of 16 listings disclosed a salary, reflecting the informal wage norms prevalent in this trade rather than an absence of real jobs.

Employer (live posting)	Posts	Disclosed pay	What they want
Indus Motors	2	n/a	We are looking for a skilled and experienced Mechanic with 2 years of hands-on experience in vehicle maintenance and repair. The candidate will be res
Akasa Air	1	n/a	Certifying Mechanic - PAN India at Akasa Air (), linkedin IN
Capital Trucks	1	n/a	Key Responsibilities * Diagnose mechanical, electrical, and hydraulic faults in diesel vehicles. * Perform routine maintenance, servicing, and prevent
Charter Manufacturing	1	n/a	Equipment Mechanic at Charter Manufacturing (Faridabad, Haryana, India), linkedin IN
Delcot Engineering Pvt Ltd	1	n/a	***Diesel Generator Mechanic Fresher or Experience. Fresher ITI Diesel Mechanic / Mechanic Motor Vehicle Apply. Experience candidate also apply. High
Global Projects Services AG	1	n/a	Mechanic Heavy Duty (Specialist in Hydraulic) at Global Projects Services AG (), linkedin IN
Kataria Automobiles Pvt Ltd	1	n/a	**Automotive Technician Job Description Template** Our company is expanding rapidly and we are looking to hire an automotive technician to join our te
Lonza	1	n/a	Maintenance Mechanic at Lonza (Haryana, India), linkedin IN
Mahalaxmi Diesels Pvt Ltd	1	n/a	**Job Title:** Diesel Mechanic / Service Technician **Location:** Satara, Maharashtra **Job Type:** Full-time **Experience:** 1-4 years (Freshers with
NITYANAND INFRA PROJECTS PVT LTD	1	n/a	DG Mechanic Technician at NITYANAND INFRA PROJECTS PVT LTD (Bengaluru, Karnataka, India), linkedin IN
Prabha Continuous Utility Services	1	n/a	Job Description-Diesel Mechanic **Position:** Diesel Mechanic **Location:** Gandhinagar, Gujarat **Experience:** 2-4 Years Job Summary We are seeking
Reliance Industries Limited	1	n/a	Coke Drum Mechanic - JMD SEZ Coker (82663644) at Reliance Industries Limited (Jamnagar, Gujarat, India), linkedin IN

THE SIGNAL IN THE DATA

- 14 distinct employers posting simultaneously suggests genuine distributed demand, not a single concentrated hiring spike, employers range from Reliance Industries and Akasa Air to SME auto service firms and infrastructure contractors
- 100/100 hiring recency score means all observed postings are recent, indicating active rather than stale demand in the market
- Employer breadth score of 75.3 signals moderate diversification across sectors: automotive service, DG maintenance, construction equipment, and industrial facilities

WHY THIS MATTERS

- Complement the NTC credential with diesel fuel injection or hydraulics certification to qualify for the higher-paying organised-sector roles that do advertise salaries ^P
- Target fleet operators with 50+ vehicles, Tata Motors authorised workshops, Ashok Leyland service networks, logistics aggregators, where formal employment contracts and wage transparency are more common ³
- Consider NSDC-affiliated apprenticeship placements under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), which link trainees to verified employers and create a documented employment record ¹³

Bottom line: The live-hiring data is thin by sample size but consistent in showing real, geographically spread demand from a cross-section of employer types, the low salary disclosure rate is a feature of informal trade employment, not evidence of weak demand.

05 ROLES, PATHWAYS & EARNING POTENTIAL

What the trade leads to, and what it pays

A Mechanic Diesel NTC opens four parallel tracks: organised automotive service (OEM workshops, fleet operators), heavy equipment and construction plant maintenance, diesel generator and industrial power, and international placement in Gulf and African markets where diesel skills command premium wages.

Role this prepares for	Indicative pay in India	Automation resilience
Diesel Mechanic / Service Technician (entry, OEM workshop)	Rs 2-3 LPA ¹²	Resilient, formal employment, OEM training support
Senior Diesel Technician / Team Leader (5+ yrs)	Rs 3-5 LPA ¹²	Resilient, supervisory scope, low automation risk
Fuel Injection and Emissions Specialist	Rs 5-7 LPA ¹²	Higher resilience, specialist expertise, fewer substitutes
DG Set / Power Plant Technician	Rs 2.5-4 LPA ⁷	Resilient, cross-sector demand (data centres, industry, construction)
Heavy Equipment Mechanic (construction / mining)	Rs 3-6 LPA ⁷	High resilience, remote sites, very low automation substitution risk
Gulf / International Diesel Technician	USD 400-600/month equivalent ^P	High resilience, strong demand in Gulf, Africa, Southeast Asia

PHASE 1

Foundations (ITI Year 1, NTC)

Complete the one-year Mechanic Diesel CTS course at NSQF Level 4, covering engine theory and overhaul, fuel system servicing, cooling and lubrication systems, transmission and differential, brakes and steering, and use of precision measuring instruments. Pass the DGT trade test to earn the National Trade Certificate (NTC) ^P.

PHASE 2

Specialisation and Apprenticeship

Enroll in a NAPS apprenticeship with an OEM-authorised service centre (Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland, Mahindra) or a fleet operator. Stack a diesel fuel injection certification or a hydraulics certificate from a recognised institute. Learn to use AI-assisted diagnostic scan tools, proficiency here differentiates formal-sector candidates from informal-sector ones ⁴¹³.

PHASE 3

Progression or Specialisation

With 3-5 years of verified experience, pursue CITS (Crafts Instructor Training Scheme) for an instructor pathway, or apply for Gulf/international placements through NSDC-empanelled overseas placement agencies. Advanced learners may pursue a lateral-entry Diploma in Mechanical or Automotive Engineering to open supervisory and service-management roles ^P.

Trained for the floor, not just the test

WHAT CANDIDATES ACTUALLY WORK ON

- Diesel engine overhaul: dismantling, inspection, reconditioning, and reassembly of multi-cylinder engines per manufacturer tolerances ^P
- Fuel system servicing: high-pressure fuel injection pump calibration, injector testing, and common rail direct injection (CRDI) familiarisation ^P
- Transmission, differential, and axle repair: manual and automatic gearbox removal, overhaul, and reinstallation ^P
- Braking and suspension system maintenance: hydraulic and air brake overhaul, wheel alignment, and shock absorber replacement ^P
- Use of diagnostic scan tools, pressure gauges, feeler gauges, and precision measuring instruments for fault identification and quality verification ^P

WHY THESE RESIST AUTOMATION

- Physical engine overhaul in constrained workshop or on-site environments, robotics cannot replicate this at Indian SME scale ⁴
- Multi-system fault diagnosis in aging or non-standard fleet vehicles where sensor data is incomplete or absent ⁴
- On-site emergency breakdown response for highway trucks, construction equipment, or DG sets in remote locations ⁷
- Client-facing diagnosis and repair explanation in regional languages, a social skill that technology cannot replace ⁶
- Hydraulic system repair for construction, mining, and agricultural equipment, contextual, physical, and safety-critical ^P

The positioning in one line: A Mechanic Diesel NTC holder who layers AI diagnostic tool literacy onto hands-on engine skill becomes harder to displace, not easier.

07 THE CREDENTIAL & QUALITY LAYER

NTC from DGT: a portable, nationally recognised credential with global currency

The National Trade Certificate (NTC) awarded by the Directorate General of Training (DGT) upon passing the Mechanic Diesel CTS trade test is recognised across India and by employers in Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Southeast Asia, and parts of Africa. The NTC is issued at NSQF Level 4, confirming competency in engine maintenance, fuel systems, transmissions, and vehicle safety systems. The credential can be stacked: CITS registration allows NTC holders to become ITI instructors, while DGT's Advanced Diploma (Vocational) pathways and lateral entry to diploma engineering programs provide upward mobility ^P.

For lenders and employers, the NTC functions as a quality signal, a standardised, externally assessed qualification that reduces the information asymmetry inherent in evaluating informal apprenticeship experience. Organisations including Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland, and Reliance Industries routinely reference NTC/ITI credentials in live job postings as a minimum qualification, confirming the credential's hiring-market legitimacy ^{P3}.

08 THE INDIA TALENT CONTEXT

Abundant graduates, scarce job-readiness

The Wheebox India Skills Report 2025 recorded overall graduate employability at 54.81%, while ITI-trained graduates came in at 45.95%, a meaningful improvement from 41% but still below the cross-category average ¹³. The gap reflects two dynamics: curriculum-industry misalignment in some ITIs, and the persistent preference of small workshops to hire through informal referral networks rather than credentialled sourcing. However, organised-sector employers, OEM service networks, fleet operators, large logistics companies, and public-sector undertakings, consistently demand the NTC credential and use it as a hiring filter, meaning credentialled graduates have a distinct advantage in the formal tier of the market. India's logistics and transport sector employs over 22 million people and contributes approximately 14% of GDP ¹¹. The Bharatmala and PM Gati Shakti programmes are expanding the highway network and freight corridor infrastructure, increasing the total vehicle-km run and, correspondingly, the maintenance demand for the diesel-powered fleet that carries the bulk of India's goods. This structural backdrop, a growing fleet, a documented skills gap, and policy tailwinds, positions a certified Mechanic Diesel graduate for durable relevance in the labour market, even as technology gradually reshapes the nature of the work.

45.95% of ITI graduates are formally employable today, but NTC holders targeting organised-sector employers with verified credentials outperform this average ^{13P}.

How a candidate stays on the resilient side

LEAN INTO

- Master AI-assisted diagnostic scan tools (OBD II, telematics platforms), being able to interpret and act on machine-generated fault data is the defining skill of the next-generation diesel technician ⁴
- Develop hydraulic and heavy equipment competency, construction, mining, and agriculture are the sectors least exposed to electric powertrain transition and most in need of on-site skilled technicians ⁷
- Pursue formal apprenticeship under NAPS with organised-sector employers to build a verified, documented employment record that qualifies for formal-sector wages and overseas placement ¹³
- Gain familiarity with BS-VI emission compliance servicing and diesel particulate filter (DPF) maintenance, fleet renewal under BS-VI norms creates a surge of newer, more complex vehicles requiring specialist attention ¹
- Stack toward CNG/LNG dual-fuel and hybrid powertrains as the commercial vehicle fleet diversifies, diversified fuel-system competency reduces sector-transition risk over the 2030 horizon ³

AVOID BEING DEFINED BY

- Remaining solely competent in legacy carburettor-based or pre-common-rail injection systems, the organised sector is moving to CRDI and BS-VI powertrains that require updated skills ^P
- Relying on informal referral hiring exclusively, documented credentials and formal apprenticeship records are what open doors to higher-wage, organised-sector employment ¹³
- Ignoring digital documentation: workshop management software and digital job cards are becoming standard in fleet service centres, and technicians who resist these tools will be passed over for advancement ⁴
- Treating the NTC as a terminal qualification, continuing education through CITS, advanced diplomas, or OEM certification programs is what separates a stagnant career from a progressive one ^P

10 SOURCES & CITATIONS

Every figure, traced to a source

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