EPISODE 7

When India's Corporate Engine Accelerates Who Keeps Up?

Inputs / What firms invest

- **Capital investment** AI tools, infrastructure
- **Data infrastructure** GST data, analytics platforms
- **Regulatory frameworks** GST formalization, compliance
- **AI and automation** Tools replacing manual work

Whose interests it serves

Large firms, digitally fluent professionals

The workers already positioned to be "adaptable."

CORPORATE AI ADOPTION: What looks like adaptability rests on a foundation that is not distributed evenly

THE VISIBLE SURFACE: "Adaptability is the new differentiator"

Treated as a personal quality, available to anyone who chooses to take it up.

rests on ↓

THE FOUNDATION: Five structural preconditions adaptability requires

Income buffer Stable enough income to pause paid work for reskilling	✓ Default worker	✕ Most workers
Professional networks Connections that signal where new opportunities are emerging	✓ Default worker	✕ Most workers
Prior education Educational base that scaffolds rapid acquisition of new skills	✓ Default worker	✕ Most workers
Digital fluency Comfort with new tools without first learning the medium	✓ Default worker	✕ Most workers
Workplace EQ-development environment Mentorship and psychological safety that builds EQ over time	✓ Default worker	✕ Most workers

Outputs

- Efficiency
- Speed of execution
- Scale of operation
- Shareholder return

Adaptability is not a personal quality. It is a product of accumulated advantage. The system rewards what the foundation already distributed.

Excluded: three populations, three different mechanisms

Entry-level workers

Where careers used to begin

The work that taught junior accountants and consultants by doing has been absorbed into AI tools. The training pathway is gone before any replacement was built. Deep expertise becomes a privilege of firms that choose to invest in it.

Workers without reskilling support

Treated as natural casualties of the transformation

No income buffer to pause work, no networks to surface alternatives, no educational base to learn quickly. Uday's frame: they will probably wilt away, and that is fine. The framing dissolves the accountability the condition produces.

Informal economy

Outside the GST formalization that opens the new credit pipeline

Capital democratization through GST-linked trade finance reaches businesses inside the GST system. Most of India's small enterprises are not. The democratization Uday describes runs along a track most of the economy is not on.