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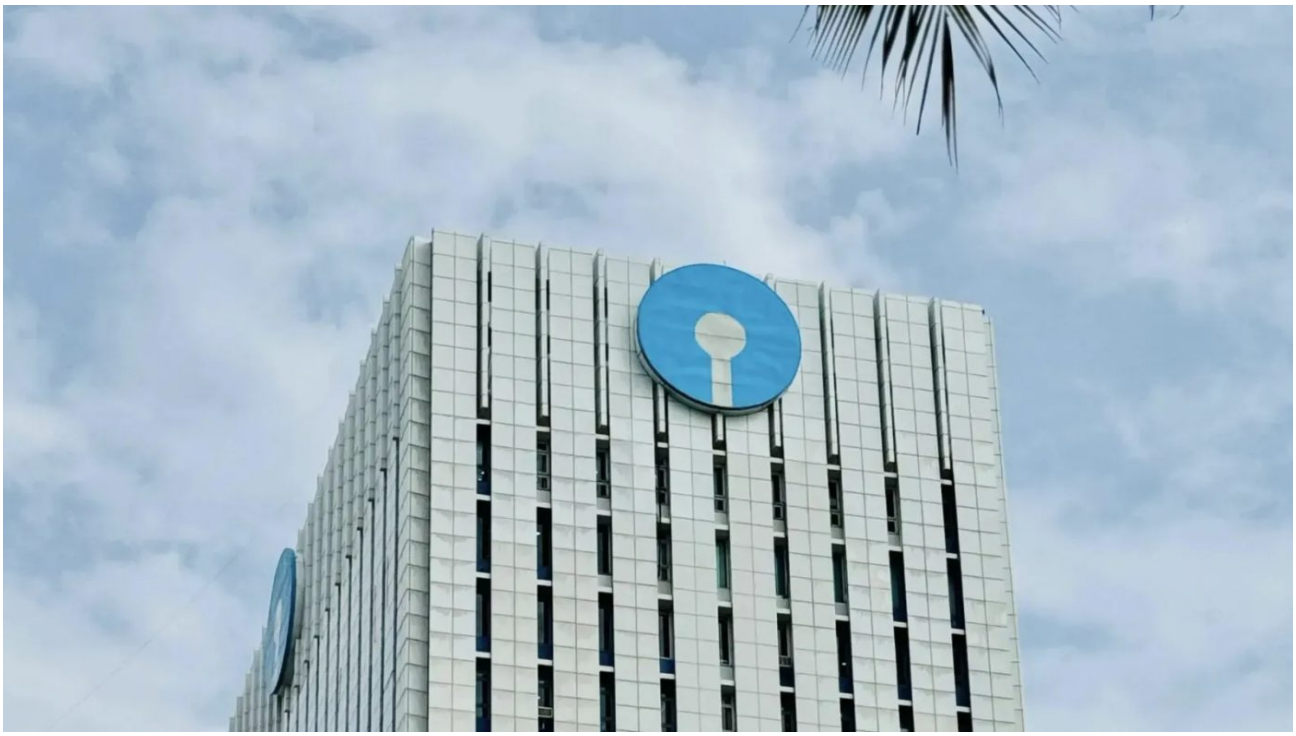
SBI's ₹1.6 Crore Chief AI Officer Role: Why India's Banks Are Competing for Artificial Intelligence Leaders

SBI's recruitment for a General Manager and Chief AI Officer, offering an advertised maximum annual CTC of ₹1.6 crore, highlights the growing importance of artificial intelligence in India's banking sector. The position involves leading AI and machine learning initiatives to improve operational efficiency, strengthen risk management and develop enterprise-level AI solutions. SBI also advertised five other specialist roles across AI, analytics and technology architecture, reflecting its broader push towards digital transformation. However, the ₹1.6 crore figure is the maximum advertised CTC, not a guaranteed salary, and the role requires at least 15 years of relevant experience. The recruitment drive signals increasing demand for senior AI professionals who can combine technological expertise with banking knowledge, while addressing challenges such as data privacy, cybersecurity and responsible AI governance.

By Riddhi Suthar · 23 November 2026 · 5 min read



SBI is strengthening its artificial intelligence capabilities as it looks to attract experienced technology professionals with a Chief AI Officer role offering up to ₹1.6 crore in annual CTC.

In 60 seconds

1. SBI advertised an annual CTC upper range of ₹1.6 crore for its General Manager and Chief AI Officer position.
2. The compensation comprises 90% fixed pay and 10% variable pay, subject to performance.
3. The role requires at least 15 years of relevant experience and three years in senior AI or analytics leadership.
4. The bank also advertised five other specialist positions in AI, analytics and technology architecture.
5. The appointments are on a three-year fixed-term basis, extendable by up to two years at the bank's discretion.
6. The application deadline was extended to November 16, 2026, and has now closed.

State Bank of India's search for a Chief AI Officer highlights how artificial intelligence is becoming a strategic priority for banking, risk management and digital transformation.

Why is SBI offering up to ₹1.6 crore for an AI role?

Artificial intelligence is moving beyond chatbots and automated customer support. For banks, it is increasingly relevant to fraud detection, risk assessment, customer services, operational efficiency and financial decision-making.

Recognising the importance of this shift, the State Bank of India (SBI) advertised a General Manager and Chief AI Officer position in October 2026, with an annual cost-to-company (CTC) upper range of ₹160 lakh, or ₹1.6 crore.

The recruitment is significant because it shows how India's largest public-sector bank is looking to bring senior AI expertise into its leadership structure. Rather than treating AI as a standalone technology function, the advertised role places it within the bank's broader operational and strategic priorities.

However, ₹1.6 crore is the maximum advertised CTC range, not a guaranteed salary. SBI's notification states that the final compensation is negotiable and depends on the candidate's experience, existing remuneration and place of posting.

What will SBI's Chief AI Officer be responsible for?

The position goes beyond supervising technology projects. According to SBI's recruitment notification, the Chief AI Officer will lead the implementation and operation of artificial intelligence, machine learning and natural language processing tools to improve operational efficiency and mitigate risks.

The responsibilities also include developing scalable big-data workflows, building enterprise AI platforms and delivering AI solutions across the bank's operations.

This is particularly relevant in banking, where technology must operate alongside strict requirements for data protection, cybersecurity, accuracy and risk management.

For example, AI-based systems can help financial institutions identify unusual transaction patterns, support risk analysis and improve customer interactions. However, their effectiveness

depends on reliable data, proper oversight and responsible implementation.

The Chief AI Officer's role is therefore not simply to introduce new tools, but to ensure that AI systems can be integrated into a large banking organisation in a controlled and effective manner.

SBI is recruiting more than just one AI leader

The Chief AI Officer position is part of a wider recruitment exercise involving six specialist roles.

Apart from the top AI position, SBI advertised three Deputy General Manager roles covering risk and operational analytics, AI governance and compliance, and data engineering and AI operations. It also invited applications for an AI Solution Architect and an Enterprise AI Architect.

The advertised annual CTC upper ranges were:

- General Manager and Chief AI Officer: ₹1.6 crore
- Deputy General Manager positions: ₹1.2 crore each
- AI Solution Architect and Enterprise AI Architect: ₹90 lakh each

All six positions were offered on a fixed-term employment basis. The initial engagement period is three years, with the possibility of renewal for another two years at SBI's discretion.

This recruitment structure suggests that the bank is seeking expertise across the entire AI ecosystem—from designing systems and managing data infrastructure to ensuring compliance and overseeing risk.

Understanding the ₹1.6 crore compensation

The salary figure has attracted attention, but the structure matters.

SBI's notification specifies that 90% of the annual CTC is fixed pay, while the remaining 10% is variable pay linked to performance. The bank also states that compensation is negotiable rather than automatically fixed at the upper limit.

The eligibility criteria are equally demanding. Candidates for the Chief AI Officer position must have at least 15 years of relevant professional experience, including three years in senior leadership involving AI, analytics, model oversight, governance or business transformation. The prescribed age range is 40–55 years as of September 30, 2026.

The selection process involves shortlisting, an interview and CTC negotiation. Shortlisted candidates for the Chief AI Officer and specified senior positions must also make a 10-minute presentation on their professional experience and achievements.

What does this signal for India's banking industry?

SBI's recruitment highlights a broader shift in the relationship between finance and technology. As banks handle increasingly complex digital transactions and large volumes of customer data, the ability to use AI effectively could become an important source of operational advantage.

But adopting AI in banking also involves challenges. Financial institutions must address data privacy, cybersecurity, algorithmic errors, model transparency and regulatory compliance. Poorly governed systems can create financial and reputational risks rather than improve efficiency.

This makes experienced AI leadership increasingly important. Banks need professionals who

understand both technology and the complexities of financial services.

The bigger picture

SBI's ₹1.6 crore Chief AI Officer position is more than a high-value recruitment headline. It reflects the growing importance of AI expertise in India's financial sector and the competition to attract professionals capable of managing large-scale technological transformation.

The application window, initially scheduled to close on November 9, was extended to November 16, 2026, and is now closed.

The larger takeaway is clear: as artificial intelligence becomes more deeply integrated into banking, expertise in AI strategy, governance, risk and enterprise technology is becoming a critical leadership requirement.