

## **Coverage Report**

**Mphasis F1 Foundation and The/Nudge Institute launch Rs 6.5 Cr prize  
challenge to create digital work opportunities for 1M women  
December 06, 2024**

Online

**PTI**

[Rs 6.5 cr prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for 1 million women](#)

Two Bengaluru-based companies, The Nudge Institute and Mphasis, have announced a 'Digital Naukri Challenge,' on Monday to create digital work opportunities for 1 million women by 2030.

With a prize purse of Rs 6.5 crore and a duration spanning 20 months, the challenge invites tech startups and innovators to unlock gainful employment opportunities for more women in India, said Deepa Nagraj, Senior Vice President & Global Head-ESG, Sparkle Innovation Ecosystem, and Communications, Mphasis.

The companies have collaborated with Manthan, a Government of India platform for research and innovation to promote collaborations at scale, a press release issued by The Nudge Institute said.

## **Business Standard**

### [Explained: Rs 6.5 cr prize challenge to create digital jobs for 1 mn women](#)

Two Bengaluru -based companies, The Nudge Institute and Mphasis, on Monday announced a 'Digital Naukri Challenge,' to create digital work opportunities for one million women by 2030.

With a prize amount of Rs 6.5 crore and a duration spanning 20 months, the challenge invites tech startups and innovators to unlock gainful employment opportunities for more women in India, said Deepa Nagraj, Senior Vice President & Global Head - ESG, Sparkle Innovation Ecosystem, and Communications, Mphasis.

Contestants will compete for a Rs 6.5 crore prize, aiming to create flexible, time-and-location-free jobs for 500 women in Phase 1 and scale to 10,000 women in Phase 2.

#### Phase 1: Proof of viability

Remote, time-flexible microwork: 1-4 hours a day

Sustainable income of Rs 200-500/hr for 10+ days a month

Fast onboarding with platform access and upskilling

#### Phase 2: Proof of scalability

Demonstrate outcomes at scale across geographies

Demonstrate retention of at least 70%

Provide evidence of 2+ transferable tech skills

The initiative is backed by Manthan, a Government of India platform for research and innovation aimed at fostering large-scale collaborations. The goal is to bridge the digital divide and create inclusive economic opportunities, particularly for women who are underrepresented in the workforce.

Currently, India's female labour force participation is just 37%, with married women having a much lower participation rate (20%) compared to single women (60%). Many housewives have expressed interest in formal work, underscoring the potential of this untapped workforce. The initiative aims to address the gaps in employment opportunities and help women, especially homemakers, participate more actively in the economy.

The focus will be on providing women from underserved communities, including homemakers, with the skills and opportunities they need to succeed in the digital economy.

Manthan will facilitate large-scale collaborations and provide valuable resources to participating organizations, helping them scale their impact across the country.

#### Addressing the Gender Gap in India's Workforce

India's female labor force participation rate currently stands at just 37%, a stark contrast to the growing labor force of men. In urban areas, single women between the ages of 25-29 have a participation rate of 60%, but married

women in the same age group only have a 20% participation rate. Interestingly, many housewives, often seen as a large untapped segment, have expressed interest in formal employment, highlighting the potential for economic engagement.

Once selected, the chosen cohort of 8-10 organizations will embark on a 20-month journey to develop and test their solutions. Participants will receive support from an influential group of investors, research partners, policymakers, and academic experts, ensuring they have the guidance needed to scale their innovations.

This initiative is particularly timely as India is experiencing rapid economic growth and aims to become a \$35 trillion economy by 2047. According to Sapna Pothi, Director of Strategic Alliances, Principal Scientific Adviser, Gol, the Digital Naukri Challenge represents a unique opportunity to bridge the gender divide and contribute to the nation's vision of inclusive growth. "This initiative showcases how collective efforts can create an inclusive future, where technology drives progress and transforms lives," she said.

Who is eligible to apply?

The Digital Naukri Challenge is open to a variety of organisations – for-profit, non-profit, hybrid, and social enterprises that are enabling work opportunities for women across any part of India. These organisations may be operating across the following work types:

**Existing Microwork Organisations:** These platforms provide microtasking services such as data labelling, transcription, and content moderation.

**IT / BPO / Outsourcing Organisations:** These companies offer tech-driven services like customer support, data processing, and IT services for global/domestic clients, specialising in back-office operations and technical support.

**Job Access Platforms:** These online platforms match job seekers with employers, offering freelance, gig jobs, and upskilling to connect talent with job opportunities.

**Digital/Tech Skilling:** These organisations provide training tailored to women, enhancing job readiness by addressing workforce barriers.

**AI and data organisations:** These organisations work in cutting-edge technologies across AI and data, and may plan to fractionalise tasks on model training and data.

What is the last date to apply?

The last date to complete the first application is December 29th 2024

Can I fill out the application in parts?

The application form does not have an option to save a partially filled form or resume the application later. Once the tab is closed/refreshed, you may lose your filled in data. Please keep the data and any attachments handy before starting to fill out the application to reduce the risk of data loss.

How will I know if my application is selected for evaluation?

You will receive an intimation from The/Nudge Prize team via email for the next steps, if your application is selected for evaluation.

What happens after my application is selected for evaluation?

The application will go through multiple rounds of evaluation. All applications will first be screened by The/Nudge Prize team, and then evaluated by a panel of experts. They will review the applications on multiple parameters based on the selection criteria, and then the shortlisted organisations will be sent a second application form to fill out, which would contain a pitch deck. The shortlisted organisations will present their pitch to an eminent jury panel of experts. The selected 8-10 organisations will make up the challenger cohort for the Digital Naukri Challenge.

When will the cohort be announced?

The cohort will be announced by February 2025. Updates will be shared on our website and social media handles.

Who can I reach out to for application related queries?

Please reach out to – [prize@thenudge.org](mailto:prize@thenudge.org) for application-related queries.

What knowledge and networking opportunities are available to the contestants of the challenge?

The/Nudge Prize – Digital Naukri Challenge brings together an ecosystem to provide expert guidance to the cohort throughout the challenge – knowledge partners, implementation partners, investors, and thought leaders.

Challengers have the chance to access one-on-one conversations with mentors at regular intervals, knowledge sharing sessions, masterclasses, workshops, and opportunities to interact with potential investors across pitching events. Ecosystem members will also host knowledge sessions and workshops for challengers throughout the duration of the challenge.

Will there be any form of mentorship for the contestants of the challenge?

We have a mentor-in-residence model where we onboard experts connected to the female labour force participation ecosystem to provide mentorship to the challenger cohort. In the past, our Mentor-in- Residence model enabled online office hours for each contestant on various aspects such as business models, technical expertise, etc. throughout the course of the challenge. The Mentor-In-Residence model in the past had the mentors:

Providing 1:1 mentorship/guidance with a minimum of 3-4 hours per month across the cohort of organisations during the course of the challenge

Providing connects to relevant stakeholder such as government, academic institutions and potential opportunities such as investment, pilot if possible

Serving as speakers/panellists at events and seminars during the course of the challenge, as required for coverage of topics based on expertise:

Some of the mentors from the previous challenge, DCM Shriram AgWater Challenge, were:

Asitava Sen- an Independent Strategic Advisor to Agribusiness (Ex-CEO – Croplife India). As a mentor, he provided advice on growth and business strategy, stakeholders connect, policy and regulatory matters, etc.

Nicholas Brozovic- Director, Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute. To the participants, he provided advice on water policy and management, entrepreneurship/ technology.

P SuryaKumar- Former Deputy Managing Director NABARD. He provided advice on sustainable agriculture, smallholder farmers perspectives to finance and policy.

Renuka Diwan- Co-founder Bioprime Agri Solutions. She provided advice on agriculture, entrepreneurship, Prize journey, and go-to-market strategy.

For the Digital Naukri Challenge, we will have a similar Mentor-In-Residence model hosting mentors who have extensive experience in the space.

What are the avenues through which I can take my digital work solution to women in rural and peri-urban regions?

You will have an opportunity to connect with implementation partners such as i-Saksham and Lighthouse Communities to reach and establish meaningful connections to solve for these women.

## **The Economic Times**

### [Bengaluru-based companies announce Rs 6.5 crore prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for women](#)

Two Bengaluru -based companies, The Nudge Institute and Mphasis, have announced a 'Digital Naukri Challenge,' on Monday to create digital work opportunities for 1 million women by 2030. With a prize purse of Rs 6.5 crore and a duration spanning 20 months, the challenge invites tech startups and innovators to unlock gainful employment opportunities for more women in India, said Deepa Nagraj, senior vice president & global head - ESG, Sparkle Innovation Ecosystem, and Communications, Mphasis.

The companies have collaborated with Manthan, a Government of India platform for research and innovation to promote collaborations at scale, a press release issued by The Nudge Institute said.

"By bridging the digital divide and unlocking opportunities at scale, this initiative showcases how collective efforts can create an inclusive future, where technology drives progress and transforms lives," said Sapna Pothi, director, strategic alliances, principal scientific adviser, Gol, who has also played a vital role in the development of Manthan.

"While female workforce participation is rising, data shows that women remain concentrated in a few low-productivity sectors, highlighting the need to close solution gaps. At Mphasis, we're committed to supporting initiatives that drive real change," the release quoted Deepa Nagraj as saying.

**The Hindu**

[Mphasis F1 Foundation, The/Nudge Institute announce ₹6.5 crore prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for women](#)

Mphasis F1 Foundation and The/Nudge Institute have announced the launch of the 'Digital Naukri Challenge', with the goal of creating and showcasing digital work opportunities for one million women by 2030.

With a prize purse of ₹6.5 crore and a duration spanning 20 months, the challenge invited tech start-ups and innovators across digital work organisations, IT/ITES, BPO, tech outsourcing companies, Job Access Platforms, digital/tech skilling organisations and beyond to discover disruptive, tech-first, and population-scale solutions to unlock gainful employment opportunities for more women in India.



## YourStory

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According to a press release, the challenge features a prize purse of Rs 6.5 crore and a duration spanning 20 months. It invites tech startups and innovators across digital work organisations, IT/ITES, BPO, tech outsourcing companies, job access platforms, digital and tech skilling organisations to discover disruptive, tech-first, and population-scale solutions to provide employment opportunities for more women in India.

Digital Naukri is the fourth prize challenge by The/Nudge Institute—a series of grand challenges which focuses on scalable solutions for complex livelihood challenges, ensuring urgency and a sharp focus on supporting the vulnerable segments of society.

Once a cohort of eight-10 organisations is selected from the applicant pool, they will kickstart their 20-month journey of developing and testing their idea for scalability and retention, among other outcomes, the press statement added.

During this process, they can access support from an eminent group of investors, research, and implementation partners, advisers, academia, and policymakers.

The advisers include Sharad Sharma, co-founder of iSPIRT Foundation, Rituparna Chakraborty, Co-founder, Teamlease, Gayathri Vasudevan, Chairperson, Labournet, and Chetna Gala Sinha, Founder, MannDeshi Foundation.

The/Nudge Prize's ecosystem partners include Lead at Krea University, Pradan, and Digital Empowerment Foundation Frontier Markets, with ACT Grants and Rang De on board as some of the capital and investment partners.

"While female workforce participation is rising, data shows that women remain concentrated in a few low-productivity sectors, highlighting the need to close solution gaps. At Mphasis, we are committed to supporting initiatives that drive real change. We're proud to take this step through The/Nudge Prize, helping to identify and support innovative ideas that create equitable livelihoods for women," Deepa Nagraj- Senior Vice President & Global Head - ESG, Sparkle Innovation Ecosystem, and Communications, Mphasis said.

Kanishka Chatterjee, Director, The/Nudge Prize, added, "This is the most ambitious challenge we've ever launched—an audacious call for visionary founders to drive inclusive growth, contribute to reshaping the future of work in India, and amplify opportunities for women through government-market-civil society collaboration."

"The untapped potential of millions of homemakers and aspiring women, eager to break free and actively participate in this economy, is nothing short of inspiring. Our hope is that this potential resonates deeply with the ecosystem we are building and sparks real change. Even the smallest progress on this path could ignite a remarkable new journey for countless women with dreams and aspirations," Chatterjee said.

**CNBC TV18**

[Startup Digest: PhonePe discontinues Juspay tie-up, Bhavish Aggarwal to pledge 1% of Ola Electric's equity and more](#)

Mphasis F1 Foundation, in partnership with The/Nudge Institute, has announced the launch of the 'Digital Naukri Challenge,' aimed at creating and showcasing digital work opportunities for 1 million women by 2030.

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The cohort will comprise of 8-10 organisations and will be provided with access to mentorship from investors, research, and implementation partners, advisors, academia, and policymakers.

## MSN

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"By bridging the digital divide and unlocking opportunities at scale, this initiative showcases how collective efforts can create an inclusive future, where technology drives progress and transforms lives," said Sapna Pothi, director, strategic alliances, principal scientific adviser, Gol, who has also played a vital role in the development of Manthan.

"While female workforce participation is rising, data shows that women remain concentrated in a few low-productivity sectors, highlighting the need to close solution gaps. At Mphasis, we're committed to supporting initiatives that drive real change," the release quoted Deepa Nagraj as saying.

According to her, India's female labour force participation rate is only 37%.

"In urban India, for instance, the labour force participation rate for single women aged 25-29 is 60%, as compared to an abysmal 20% among their married counterparts. Interestingly, at least a third of housewives have expressed an interest in formal employment," added Nagraj.

Kanishka Chatterjee, director, The Nudge Prize, said, "This is the most ambitious challenge we've ever launched. The untapped potential of millions of homemakers and aspiring women, eager to break free and actively participate in this economy, is nothing short of inspiring."

According to Chatterjee, once a cohort of 8-10 organisations is selected from the applicant pool, they will kickstart their 20-month journey of developing and testing their idea for scalability and retention, among other outcomes.

"During this process, they can access support from an eminent group of investors, research, and implementation partners, advisors, academia, and policymakers, including the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser, Govt. of India," added Chatterjee.

## The Week

### [Rs 6.5cr prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for 1 million women](#)

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## Rediff Money

### [Rs 6.5cr Prize: Digital Work for 1 Million Women](#)

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Print

The Hindu

# ₹6.5 crore prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for women

**The Hindu Bureau**

BENGALURU

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Online		
Date	Publication/ Portal	Headline
December 03, 2024	PTI	<a href="#">Rs 6.5 cr prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for 1 million women</a>
December 03, 2024	Business Standard	<a href="#">Explained: Rs 6.5 cr prize challenge to create digital jobs for 1 mn women</a>
December 02, 2024	The Economic Times	<a href="#">Bengaluru-based companies announce Rs 6.5 crore prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for women</a>
December 03, 2024	The Hindu	<a href="#">Mphasis F1 Foundation, The/Nudge Institute announce ₹6.5 crore prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for women</a>
December 02, 2024	YourStory	<a href="#">Mphasis F1 Foundation and The/Nudge Institute launch Rs 6.5 Cr prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for 1M women</a>
December 02, 2024	CNBC TV18	<a href="#">Startup Digest: PhonePe discontinues Juspay tie-up, Bhavish Aggarwal to pledge 1% of Ola Electric's equity and more</a>
December 03, 2024	MSN	<a href="#">Bengaluru-based companies announce Rs 6.5 crore prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for women</a>
December 02, 2024	The Week	<a href="#">Rs 6.5cr prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for 1 million women</a>
December 02, 2024	Rediff Money	<a href="#">Rs 6.5cr Prize: Digital Work for 1 Million Women</a>

Print			
Date	Publication	Edition	Headline
December 04, 2024	The Hindu	Across Editions	6.5 crore prize challenge to create digital work opportunities for women