

Mphasis FI Foundation and The/Nudge Institute Announce INR 6.5 Crore Prize Challenge, to Create Digital Work Opportunities for 1 Mn Women

~ The 'Digital Naukri' challenge is in partnership with research, investor, & implementation partners like Office of Principal Scientific Adviser, Gov; ACTGrants, MannDeshi Foundation, Frontier Markets amongst others.

~It focuses on digital work, a disruptive solution to provide employment to India's homemakers facing social and structural constraints

Bengaluru, December 2, 2024 – Mphasis FI 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 1 million women by 2030. With a Prize Purse of INR 6.5 crores and a duration spanning 20 months, the challenge invites tech startups 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.

While women form an essential part of India's economic growth story, 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. However, they face several barriers to employment. One constraint is limited mobility – in fact, only seven countries in the world have larger populations than the number of non-working Indian women who don't step out of their houses even once a day. Millions of women face the challenge of time poverty and, according to NITI Aayog, spend 9.8 times the time that men do on unpaid domestic work. Social restrictions exacerbate these challenges.

Fortunately, digital work & fractional employment can present an effective, disruptive solution to provide employment to India's 160 million homemakers. This refers to small, discrete tasks distributed across a large set of workers online, which can be completed quickly and with foundational digital skills and literacy. These tasks are flexible and work-from-home friendly, thus making multitasking and managing home-based responsibilities easy for the homemakers while offering a gateway to more productive employment. Ranging from tasks like data entry to sentiment analysis to geospatial data capture, such jobs are in-demand, particularly as the AI economy develops, and can co-exist with the constraints that Indian homemakers face in accessing jobs.

Deepa Nagraj- Senior Vice President & Global Head - ESG, Sparkle Innovation Ecosystem, and Communications, Mphasis said, “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. We're proud to take this step through The/Nudge Prize, helping to identify and support innovative ideas that create equitable livelihoods for women.”

Commenting on the challenge, Dr. Sapna Pothi, Director, Strategic Alliances, O/o Principal Scientific Adviser, GoI, who has also played a vital role in the development

of Manthan – India's platform for Research and Innovation to promote collaborations at scale, said, “India, as the world's largest democracy and a burgeoning digital economy, is at the forefront of using science and technology to address complex societal challenges. The Digital Naukri Challenge embodies this spirit of innovation and collaboration, reimagining traditional work structures through technology to empower women. 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.”

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.”

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. The advisors include Sharad Sharma, co-founder of iSPIRT Foundation (non-profit technology think tank that conceptualized India Stack, Health Stack, and more), Rituparna Chakraborty, Co-founder, Teamlease (one of India's leading providers of a wide range of HR services in the organised segment), Gayathri Vasudevan, Chairperson, Labournet (social enterprise focused on linking worker productivity and wage growth with corporate gains) and Chetna Gala Sinha,

Founder, MannDesi Foundation (non-profit pioneering financial inclusion and empowerment for 950,000 rural women). Lead at Krea University, Pradan, Digital Empowerment Foundation Frontier Markets are acting as some of The/Nudge Prize's ecosystem partners, with ACT Grants and Rang De on board as some of the capital and investment partners.

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

About The/Nudge Institute

[The/Nudge](#) is an action institute building resilient livelihoods to alleviate poverty. We work with social entrepreneurs, women, farmers, tribals and youth on rural development, agriculture, skilling and economic inclusion, along with 15 central and state government partners. [Set up with](#) support from 90+ eminent philanthropists, 40+ corporates and 15+ foundations, The/Nudge is contributing towards a "**poverty-free India, within our lifetime**".

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About Mphasis

Mphasis' purpose is to be the "*Driver in Driverless Car*" for Global Enterprises by applying next-generation design, architecture, and engineering services, to deliver scalable and sustainable software and technology solutions. Customer centricity is foundational to Mphasis, and is reflected in the Mphasis' [Front2Back](#)[™] Transformation approach. Front2Back[™] uses the exponential power of cloud and cognitive to provide hyper-personalized (C=[X2C2](#)[™]=1) digital experience to clients and their end customers. Mphasis' Service Transformation approach helps 'shrink the core' through the application of digital technologies across legacy environments within an enterprise, enabling businesses to stay ahead in a changing world. Mphasis' core reference architectures and tools, speed and innovation with domain expertise and specialization, combined with an integrated sustainability and purpose-led approach across its operations and solutions are key to building strong relationships with marquee clients. Click [here](#) to know more. ([BSE: 526299](#); [NSE: MPHASIS](#))

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