

ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA

SMT DROUPADI MURMU

AT THE DIGITAL INDIA AWARDS 2022

New Delhi, January 7, 2023

I am delighted to address you on the seventh edition of the Digital India Awards which is an occasion to encourage and honour innovative digital initiatives at all levels.

The Digital India Awards 2022 acknowledge, inspire and motivate not only Government entities but also startups to attain the vision of a digital India. The awards are but a step towards transforming India into a digitally empowered society where people's potential is unleashed by effective use of digital governance.

I have been insisting in my speeches, and want to repeat it here too, that the pace of change in future will be rather fast and driven by the use of technology. In this context, social justice should be the prime objective of digital innovations. India will develop into a knowledge economy only when the digital divide is substantially bridged through use of technology.

I am confident that India is setting the right example of ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised sections of society, strengthening economic, social, and cultural rights in our journey towards Digital Antyodaya.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Digital technologies have enabled the Government to reach the remotest parts of the country at the click of a button. India's story of digital transformation is a story of innovation, implementation and inclusion. There is a need to create collaborative platforms to find innovative solutions to make the world a more accessible and equitable place.

I always maintain that the technology that makes the common man's life easier gets accepted at the social level. In my own experience, I have seen even barely literate people getting proficient in use of technology to operate bank accounts and claiming their entitlements. This awareness should be made the strength of good governance.

There is no doubt that digitisation brings in efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability in the service delivery system and infuses confidence among citizens. India has pioneered innovative digital projects that promoted digital inclusion with an objective of providing affordable access to digital services to all citizens.

In the face of the pandemic, our proactive technological interventions helped us in pandemic management and ensured operational continuity of important government services. As a result, India has emerged as an important country using technology for a resilient economy and people-centric governance. Indeed, India's success in this direction, especially during the pandemic, has been exemplary and beneficial for the rest of

the world too. Thus, Digital India is also playing an important role in enhancing the country's profile on the world stage. This becomes all the more relevant as India takes over the presidency of G20 which is a milestone event. What is noteworthy here is that India, as Mother of Democracy, has been substantially using these technological innovations to deepen the democratic traditions rooted in our soil.

Last year, India also launched indigenous 5G network services that provide high data speeds, reliable connectivity for a large number of devices and the ability to process extremely large volumes of data very quickly. This will positively transform the governance and the society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and its organisations, especially National Informatics Centre (NIC), have been doing excellent job of providing a hassle-free Government-Citizen interface. I am happy to note that Indian IT companies have done a remarkable job in making the world realise the value of the Indian talent. After proving its prowess in software, India should strive to become a hub for software products. We should leverage prevailing policies and enable the ecosystem to position the country as a global powerhouse for software and hardware products by building innovative Made-in-India technologies.

Data is the cornerstone of creating new knowledge, insights and thus solutions; and leads to whole new fields of application. We should focus on democratising the use of government data so that young technology enthusiasts can use it to build localised digital solutions.

It gives me a pleasure to learn that new technologies such as data analytics, Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT) and drones are going to substantially change the way we live. Apart from the matters of daily life, these technologies will bring about radical changes in the field of public health and finance.

I am pleased to see the innovative initiatives undertaken by Government entities at the grassroots level and also in collaboration with startups to foster public-private partnership. We have to keep challenging ourselves to deliver innovative solutions to improve the ease of living for all citizens, be it in the judiciary, land registration, fertilizers or public distribution system. Many of such initiatives have made it to the winners' list this year.

Ladies and gentlemen

I compliment the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and NIC for establishing and managing Digital India Awards and playing a pivotal role in furthering the cause of Digital India at all levels of governance. I am confident Digital India Awards will continue to scale new heights year after year.

We have 22 Digital India awardees for the year 2022 across 7 categories that have brought about positive changes at district, state and national levels. My heartiest congratulations to all the winners. From citizen empowerment and data sharing platform to the ease of doing business, I am happy to see the diverse range of innovations made to benefit the people.

I extend my compliments to all those who are participating in ICT-led development of the country. The jury members should also be applauded for upholding high standards of selection process and rewarding benchmark performances across categories. I encourage all participants to keep evolving and creating new ways to impart citizen-centric services through digital governance. I wish that the indomitable spirit of India and its citizens keeps shining bright, and may we continue to join hands together to keep growing stronger as a nation.

Thank you,

Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!