



Economic Liberty in Digital Market and Digital Competition Legislation: Indian Context

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ABSTRACT

The rise of extraordinary digital platforms raised issues of monopolistic behaviours, market concentration, and digital ecosystem power balance, which complicated economic liberty protection in the digital age by compromising economic freedom, such as fair competition, innovation, and customer care. This paper focuses on the Digital Competition Bill from India 2024, a crucial piece of legislation that attempts to lure the digital market monopolies from threats and culminate in a model of economic liberty in a digital economy. The bill aims to regulate "gatekeeper" platforms, those huge digital companies that lead access to markets and services across the Internet, against a number of anti-competitive practices, including self-preferencing, exploitation of data, and restrictive business terms brought into the picture for the benefit of another party. Such an act of practice mostly cuts off the competition, disallows minimum market access for small entities, and hampers the overall consumer experience. The Digital Competition Bill, therefore, seeks to create a level regulatory field for large and small representatives in the marketplace so that innovation and abuse of access to digital opportunities are promoted. The paper will also examine in detail how this

particular law on digital competition, the Digital Competition Bill, mentioned above, helps create a conducive digital market environment to realize economic liberty for companies, small and big. This study argues that a Digital Competition Bill can change the country's approach to regulating digital market competition, provide an adequate framework for fostering economic liberty in digital markets.

INTRODUCTION

Economic freedom is one of the basic pillars of democratic capitalism and expresses the principles of free markets, whereby individuals and businesses are unhindered in their economic pursuits without excessive government interference.¹ Economic liberty rests on the belief that people are allowed to pursue their own interest in the marketplace, which will, in turn, create competition that gives rise to desirable outcomes starting from innovation, efficiency down to the satisfaction of consumers.² Traditionally, it has been understood that economic liberty applies to national economies, where businesses are seen as standing in competition with each other in relatively transparent and open markets and with minimum government intervention.³ However, as world economies rose, digital-age innovations thoroughly rearranged the commercial architecture. On the one hand, the new digital platforms led by Amazon, Google, Facebook, and Apple etc. have thrown opportunity after opportunity into the fray. The alternative is that these companies have changed the landscape of buyers and sellers' interaction with markets; they have practically ruled a few sectors of the global economy by exploiting massive amounts of data and con-

trolling crucial infrastructure locations.⁴ Accordingly, this has complicated the understanding of the economic liberty paradigm. How far is the economic liberty visa when a handful of tech giants dominate so much of the marketplace? How far do these platforms balance the scales against economic freedom for smaller entities and consumers alike?⁵

In India, a rapidly digitizing economy, such questions assume acute proportions. In relatively recent times, India has witnessed a technological revolution whereby millions of people came online, and digital platforms have formed a block of everyday life.⁶ With the acknowledgment of heightened concentrations of power in the hands of a few dominant players in the digital economy, the Government is proposing the introduction of new regulatory measures. The Digital Competition Bill of 2024, which aims at addressing the dominance of "gatekeeper" platforms, constitutes a major legislative step intended to secure economic liberty in the digital marketplace.⁷ The bill aims to create a com-

1 Smith, A. (1776). *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*. Strahan, W., Cadell T.

2 Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Available at: <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/C/bo68666099.html>

3 Hayek, F. (2007, March) *The Road to Serfdom*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, pp. 27-31.

4 Cohen, J. E. (2020). *Digital Platforms Regulation: New Age for Economic Freedom*. Oxford University Press.

5 Stigler, G. J. (2018). Digital monopolies and the limits of competition law. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 32(1), pp. 45-60.

6 Mishra, D., Kedia, M., Reddy, A., Kanwar, S., Das, B., Gupta, S., Sharma, D. (2023). *State of India's Digital Economy (SIDE) Report*. Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). Available at: <https://icrier.org/publications/state-of-indias-digital-economy-report-2023/> (Last access: 15 January, 2025).

7 Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. (2024). *Digital Competition Bill of India*. Government of India. (Last access: 25 January, 2025).

petitive and transparent digital marketplace by regulating the behavior of dominant digital platforms so that they do not impede competition, decrease consumer choice, or misuse consumer data.⁸ This paper discusses economic liberty and digital competition law in the Indian context, thus enabling such regulatory frameworks to provide equilibrium between innovation and free and competitive market environments. The main argument revolves around the idea that digital competition laws, such as the Digital Competition Bill, are key to curbing monopolistic behavior while also having the potential to further economic liberty by ensuring that smaller businesses and consumers are not overly restricted by the maximum market operations possible from big tech monopolies.⁹

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a doctrinal and comparative legal research approach. The doctrinal method is applied through an analysis of the Digital Competition Bill 2024, together with official reports of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Competition Commission of India, and documents of international organizations such as UNCTAD and ICRIER. These sources provide the normative basis for assessing how the proposed legislation addresses issues of economic liberty in digital markets.

The comparative legal method is used to contextualize India's approach against major international models, including the United States' antitrust practice, the European Union's regulatory framework (e.g., the GDPR), and China's state-controlled regulatory model. Such cross-jurisdictional analysis highlights both the strengths and the limitations of India's evolving digital competition law.

The theoretical foundation of the research

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gouri, G. (2025). The Competition Commission of India and Digital Markets. Competition Policy International. Available at: <https://www.pymnts.com/cpi-posts/unpacking-america-first-antitrust-for-europeans/> (Last access: 01 May, 2025).

draws upon classical and modern doctrines of economic freedom, including the works of Berlin, Hayek, Friedman, and Rawls. These perspectives provide an interpretive framework for evaluating how the Digital Competition Bill 2024 redefines economic liberty within the rapidly expanding Indian digital economy.

1. NOTION OF LIBERTY: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A classical concept that denotes the absence of external restrictions on the action of an individual. It has many philosophical definitions, two of which are negative liberty and positive liberty, and both of these principles have different views on the economy.¹⁰ As stated by Isaiah Berlin, 'negative liberty' indicates freedom from external interference, particularly from the government. In terms of economics, this is that laissez-faire capitalism, wherein individuals and businesses act in a sort of free market with minimal regulation from the state, is to be expected.¹¹ With the advent of electronic markets, however, the assertions look twisted because such corporative monopolies could frequently exercise just as much repressive power as governments.¹² In 'positive liberty', on the other hand, the ability to act or act independently in any aspect of decision-making is what an economically independent person should enjoy. By extension, it indicates that institutional and protective frameworks are thus required to permit individuals the chance to be meaningfully free and to participate in economic activities rather than forging ahead under the force of a monopolistic economy or under predatory market conditions.¹³

¹⁰ Berlin, I. (1969). Two Concepts of Liberty. Four Essays on Liberty. Oxford University Press, pp. 118-172.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Stigler, G. J. (2018). Digital monopolies and the limits of competition law. Journal of Economic Perspectives, 32(1), pp. 45-60.

¹³ Rawls, J. (1971). A theory of justice. Harvard University Press. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjf9z6v>

Thus, understanding economic freedom in digital markets will mean different things to these two perspectives. Whereas unrestricted markets confer freedom to innovate to entrepreneurs, excessive concentration on the part of corporations paradoxically reduces the economic liberty of individuals by limiting their choices or market entry opportunities. Well-designed competition legislation can promote positive economic liberty, though, in that it assures fair market access to all actors.¹⁴ Unique to the digital economy are many of the challenges that affect economic liberty, but which were absent in the previous market form. One major challenge is platform monopolization, where companies, by definition, sell direct to consumers but, in many cases, use barriers to entry to limit competition from smaller players in the industry.¹⁵ Then there is algorithmic bias and market manipulation, much of which is created by the data generated by artificial intelligence-trained algorithms, as it may augment the market competitiveness of certain businesses at the expense of other businesses, thus undermining fairness.¹⁶ Further, at the heart of economic liberty in digital market discourse are concerns over data privacy. Information about consumers has become a commodity that, in many cases, major corporations abuse their privilege and extort against individual privacy rights, which undermines the freedoms of individuals in a digital space.¹⁷ Countries have different experiences and approaches to regulating digital competition. The United States, for example, focuses on antitrust laws, yet tends to be lenient toward tech monopolies by allowing large firms to acquire monopolistic power

without significant interventions. The European Union is much stricter with regulations; for example, it has the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which mainly focuses on consumer rights and data protection while at the same time limiting the power of tech giants.¹⁸ Much of China's position on digital market regulation can be seen as balancing two opposite terms: government versus economic regulation. While the Chinese government plows a posture toward intervention in regulating digital platforms, it also seeks economic growth and innovation, albeit through a relatively controlled approach.¹⁹ Each of these regulations represents a tiny aspect of the much broader dilemma of how to preserve economic liberty while ensuring strong, competitive, fair, and accessible digital markets.

2. ECONOMIC LIBERTY IN THE DIGITAL MARKET

Economic liberty and competition are understood by many as the right of free individuals within a market and free-moving businesses to sell their merchandise. But they have increasingly come under threat in a digital age. Till now, economic liberty has been given as much weight in granting businesses the freedom to innovate and compete under conditions of their choice dictated by supply and demand, which is the core of the market.²⁰ Digital platforms are altering this paradigm, that trade, consumer behavior, and market affiliation are way beyond what was possible from their early beginnings due to extreme influence. Fundamentally, open competition forms a vital part of economic freedom. In a traditional environment, competition

14 Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J. A., Woren, D. (2012). *Why nations fail: the origins of power, prosperity and poverty*. Crown Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc., New York.

15 UNCTAD. (2021). *Digital Economy Report*.

16 Pasquale, F. (2015). *The black box society: the secret algorithms that control money and information*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press.

17 Shoshana, Z. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. New York: Public Affairs.

18 Bradford, A. (2020). *The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World*. Oxford University Press.

19 Creemers, R. (2018). China's Regulatory Approach to the Digital Economy. *Journal of Comparative Law*, 13(2), pp. 87–110.

20 Schumpeter, J. A. (1942). *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. Vol. 36, Harper & Row, New York, pp. 132–145.

presses prices down, provides choice in product lines, and stimulates entrepreneurs to act differently to differentiate themselves. This mechanism supports capitalist economies wherein resources are consensually directed toward their efficient use by that invisible hand.²¹ The digital economy, in contrast, on the opposite end, tends to pervert this idea by concentrating power on huge platforms like Amazon, Google, or Meta. These companies have now emerged as the gatekeepers to the digital marketplaces, search engines, and social media ecosystems, all essential arteries for modern economic life.²²

They can nonchalantly decide which digital entrants will live or die. They influence price structures, gate consumers, and control the flow of information.²³ While this level of control may enhance efficiencies, it puts up colossal hurdles for small businesses that do not possess corresponding resources or technical expertise. Other terms that the platforms impose are exploitative, for instance, exorbitant commission fees on goods sold via Amazon or inflated ad costs charged on platforms like Google and Meta-which correlates to the unfair competition in the marketplace.²⁴ One particularly troubling dynamic relates to algorithms whereby decisions through which market outcomes are affected are apparently neutral. In actual practice, algorithms often embed systemic biases that advantage the platform's own products or services effectively, thereby undermining fair competition.²⁵ For example, Amazon's algorithm might unconsciously prefer Amazon-branded products over third-party sellers' products that are better or cheaper. This self-preferenc-

ing reduces consumer choice, deepens market power, and stands in direct opposition to the concept of economic liberty. Such opaqueness raises great ethical and regulatory issues. Most consumers remain blissfully ignorant of the fact that their digital interactions are being engineered towards certain ends, reducing transparency and denying the possibility of informed decision-making.²⁶ The situation is especially acute regarding this question in India. Rapid digitization has taken place in India, but platforms have rendered many SMEs worse off. Small and medium enterprises are compelled to accept terms that restrict their operations to be able to access marketplaces like Amazon or Flipkart; failing to do so would mean being denied access to major advertising platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

The extent to which this concentration of power restricts competition hampers the development of the truly inclusive digital economy within India. A large number of entrepreneurs and start-ups lack the voice and influence to participate in digital marketplaces on an equal footing. This imbalance is further reinforced by technologies that aid in the absence of infrastructure, the lack of access to data that directly inhibits local companies' efficient functioning, and the economic power to operate an advanced business. In order to correct these disparities, in 2024, the Digital Competition Bill in India was passed. It affords a robust regulatory framework to deal with the monopolistic behavior of Systemically Significant Digital Enterprises. The Bill aims to create an enabling environment where businesses, big and small, will have equally fair opportunities to grow and compete in the digital marketplace.²⁷

Key provisions of the Bill speak directly to the economic liberty concerns just mentioned, such as preventing self-preferencing, exclusive tying advantages, and access on discriminatory terms,

21 Smith, A. (1776). *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*. Strahan, W., Cadell T.

22 Cohen, J. E. (2020). *Digital Platforms Regulation: New Age for Economic Freedom*. Oxford University Press.

23 Binns, R. (2021). Algorithmic Bias and Fairness in the Digital Economy. *Indian Journal of Law and Technology*, 17(3), pp. 111–138.

24 Stigler, G. J. (2018). Digital monopolies and the limits of competition law. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 32(1), pp. 45–60.

25 Binns, R. (2021). Algorithmic Bias and Fairness in the Digital Economy. *Indian Journal of Law and Technology*, 17(3), pp. 111–138.

26 Cohen, J. E. (2020). *Digital Platforms Regulation: New Age for Economic Freedom*. Oxford University Press.

27 Ministry of Corporate Affairs. (2024). *Report of the Committee on Digital Competition Law*. (Last access: 01 February, 2025).

thereby protecting small businesses against being squeezed out. Additionally, it imposes transparency requirements providing for the disclosure of algorithms and decision-making criteria affecting market exposure. This allows for a greater level playing field upon which SMEs can make rational decisions and compete fairly. Further seeks stakeholder consultation, thereby giving SMEs and start-ups a voice in the regulation of digital markets. This participative approach reflects, indeed, the spirit of inclusive economic liberty, bringing forth the different demands of the vast entrepreneurial landscape in India.

Very importantly, the Digital Competition Bill will also encourage innovation by preventing anti-competitive mergers and acquisitions that may suppress emerging businesses. The bill further aims to prevent any kill zone effect where large firms acquire the start-ups to neutralize future competition by imposing an advance notice regime and pre-merger review of acquisitions by SSDEs.²⁸ The implications are that the Digital Competition Bill is a necessary evolution for India's economic regulation framework. It redefines economic liberty in the digital age as more than just state non-interference; it is about algorithmic transparency and equally fair access that protects against digital monopolies. The Bill, thus, creates the foundation for a more inclusive, vibrant, and just digital economy in India.

3. THE ROLE OF DIGITAL COMPETITION LAW IN PROMOTING ECONOMIC LIBERTY

Market contestability measures such as India's Digital Competition Bill of 2024 seek to promote fairness in the market, given that the same measures challenge the essence of economic liberty. The very existence of digital platforms often creates discrimination among the

constituents nurtured in their environment, where power becomes concentrated in the hands of a select few dominant players. Such concentration raises legitimate fears of monopolistic tendencies, barriers to market entry for smaller enterprises, and exploitation of consumers. The regulation of such dominant operators would restore economic liberty as constituting the core of competition, fair market access, and capping unfair business practices.²⁹ The Digital Competition Bill focuses primarily on "gatekeeping" digital platform companies that determine market access and marketplace intermediation between businesses and consumers. It highlights certain conduct of these platforms, including self-preferencing, data appropriation, and predatory pricing behavior, primarily responsible for disquiet in the minds of businesses and consumers. Such gatekeepers as Amazon, Google, and Facebook heavily influence the workings of digital markets. They set the rules of engagement for countless businesses that depend on their platforms for visibility, sales, and interaction with consumers.³⁰

India's digital economy is flourishing, with billions of active internet users and a proliferation of e-commerce businesses. It is the ideal ecosystem for new digital platforms to flourish.³¹ Conversely, this also implies a challenging ground for small businesses that cannot match such big players. For a good number of small businesses, platforms like Amazon or Flipkart become a wider base of consumers, quantifying these terms for larger commissions, which in turn become extractive and foreign to enlarge their earnings and maneuverability in the market. And, not to mention, this control of the platforms as 'gatekeepers' might bury them deep in search result pages or actually eliminate them for certain lucrative opportunities.

28 Digital Competition Act 2024. Available at: <https://prsindia.org/policy/report-summaries/digital-competition-law> (Last access: 11 February, 2025).

29 Schneider, (2022). Competition and innovation in digital markets: a balancing act. *Law and Economics Journal*, 28(1), pp. 134-150.

30 Cohen, J. E. (2020). *Digital Platforms Regulation: New Age for Economic Freedom*. Oxford University Press.

31 IBEF. (2025). *E-commerce Industry in India*. Available at: <https://www.ibef.org/industry/ecommerce> (Last access: 11 February, 2025).

Thus, during the year 2024, the Digital Competition Bill emerged as a regulatory answer to tackle the problems cited above. By assuring that the competitive integrity of the digital marketplace is preserved, it addresses a range of issues through transparency requirements, curbing anti-competitive behaviors, and safeguarding small businesses from any disadvantages. For example, the Bill mandates that gatekeepers disclose the criteria upon which they base product or service rankings, which transparency will help businesses understand how to compete for consumer attention and take steps to minimize discrimination risk and maximize chances for success.³²

It also defines regulations for fair use of data that the platforms must uphold. Under current affairs, the powerful platforms enjoy fencing off and collecting data in huge volumes of business and user data for the improvement of their own services, turning the information into assets in competition with others, and consequently profiting from their products.³³ For example, Amazon is a platform that uses the above data to promote its items over the goods sold by third-party sellers, thus tilting the field. The Digital Competition Bill will regulate such practices, establishing regulations for the use of business data with a focus on transparency of data sharing and fairness.³⁴ Thus, the Bill upholds the economic liberty of small players in the market against being wiped off under the competition barriers exerted by the mighty. The measure shall also build a level playing field against the conduct of the dominant firms in the market, to foster a competitive environment conducive to small business resorts. With this consequence, the Digital Competition Bill assures the liberty of corporate players alongside those of consumers for the preservation of

competition as a functional efficiency in promoting fairness and innovation in the digital economy. Moreover, the Bill addresses pressing concerns regarding platform transparency and the requirement for digital platforms to disclose their ranking and promotion of products. The larger implications of this transparency will be that smaller businesses will be able to maneuver within the pale of the digital marketplace and come up with strategies to counter larger, more established competitors. Being able to understand ranking algorithms will allow small businesses to set up their practices and adapt to fast-moving market dynamics.³⁵

Thus, with the above provisions, the need for such rules in the Indian context arises as digital businesses will continue to grow in the country and remain under the heavy influence of global giants like Google and Amazon. The enforcement of these laws will propel India to secure those small businesses do not lose out on digital opportunities, securing the economic liberty of every participant in the market, for such an emergence of forward players. The Digital Competition Bill not only looks to adopt regulation but also toward the establishment of an ecosystem conducive to fostering entrepreneurship, deterring anti-competitive conduct, and ensuring a fair chance of success for all participating market players, irrespective of size.³⁶ Legitimate commercial activity of this nature would go further toward preserving the integrity of India's entrepreneurial landscape, where enterprises both big and small can all thrive and actively contribute to the growth of the digital economy. Therefore, the Digital Competition Bill is a watershed moment in securing the economic liberty of all players in the digital marketplace from being a mere theoretical concept.

32 Binns, R. (2021). *Algorithmic Bias and Fairness in the Digital Economy*. Indian Journal of Law and Technology, 17(3), pp. 111–138.

33 Schneider, (2022). Competition and innovation in digital markets: a balancing act. Law and Economics Journal, 28(1), pp. 134–150.

34 Cohen, J. E. (2020). *Digital Platforms Regulation: New Age for Economic Freedom*. Oxford University Press.

35 Binns, R. (2021). *Algorithmic Bias and Fairness in the Digital Economy*. Indian Journal of Law and Technology, 17(3), pp. 111–138.

36 India Briefing. (2025). India's Digital Competition Bill Advances with Industry Insights. Available at: <https://www.india-briefing.com/news/indias-digital-competition-bill-advances-with-industry-insights-36536.html/> (Last access: 18 February, 2025).

4. IMPLICATIONS OF ECONOMIC LIBERTY

Innovation, alongside consumer welfare, presents a broader impact that emanates from competition laws, with monopolistic behavior and fair competition always shielding digital competition law. If a competition law really intends to rigidly establish a level playing ground where it will recreate just as well the fertile grounds for innovation, then one of the harshest conditions that must exist will be competitive environments that constantly compel companies to innovate as a means of differentiation and improve newer and better products and services for consumers.³⁷ Provided that no dominant firm threatens to outdo them, they may invest in innovative forms or technologies or construct new business models to encourage innovation because they are willing to take that risk.³⁸ The Digital Competition Bill is particularly important for digital markets because it tends to enable multiple businesses to enter the market. The rules are on the conduct of firms within market space, while other smaller competitors are allowed to develop and launch new offerings for the betterment of consumer welfare. When the Bill restricts big companies from monopolizing segments of consumer interests, welfare is guaranteed, and competition dynamism is retained.³⁹ Competitive markets yield benefits like increased variety, lower prices, and higher quality.⁴⁰

However, just as much through the Digital Competition Bill, regulation must show a flexible balance while encouraging economic liberty and consumer welfare. A regime without balance, through its overly regulatory measures

of impeding innovation, will only limit those platforms and companies that have been the engines of the digital age development.⁴¹ The burden on legislators, then, becomes how to frame a regulation that will deter monopoly practice without hindrance to the aesthetic development of such digital platforms, creating huge value for consumerism and businesses. For instance, the Digital Competition Bill has to make that limitation on self-preference and data mining such that it does not become a disincentive to investments in technologies that transform digital ecosystems.⁴² This means that in prohibiting blanket prohibitions, a nuanced standard will have to be put in place that distinguishes harmful from benign practices. This balance is all the more pressing for the Indian context. India's 63 million-plus MSMEs are now transitioning to digital operations, and a regulation that is too rigid may curtail their growth or deter foreign direct investment. Regulation must be fit for the local business environment, tailored to apply different compliance obligations according to size and systemic impact.⁴³ The obligations imposed on a digital vendor at home would not be the same as those imposed on Amazon. Besides, the Bill should recognize and reward pro-competitive behaviors such as demonstrating interoperability among platforms, promoting open-source technologies, and mandating transparency in algorithms. Such provisions would encourage innovation but would never breed dependency or monopolistic control. Public-private partnerships in digital infrastructure would also promote access to SMEs located in less than served or remote areas. It will finally condense into a well-balanced application of the Digital Competition Bill towards fostering an inclusive and dynamic digital ecosystem. It would thus protect con-

37 Hayek, F. A. (2007, March). *The road to serfdom*. University of Chicago Press.

38 Smith, A. (1776). *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*. Strahan, W., Cadell, T.

39 Schumpeter, J. A. (1942) *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. Vol. 36, Harper & Row, New York, pp. 132-145.

40 Stigler, G. J. (2018). Digital monopolies and the limits of competition law. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 32(1), pp. 45-60.

41 Hayek, F. A. (2007, March). *The road to serfdom*. University of Chicago Press.

42 Binns, R. (2021). Algorithmic Bias and Fairness in the Digital Economy. *Indian Journal of Law and Technology*, 17(3), pp. 111-138.

43 Government of India. (2024). *Report of the Committee on Digital Markets and Competition*. Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

sumer liberties and stimulate innovation – all fundamental pillars that strengthen and further nourish genuine economic freedom in the 21st Indian digital economy.

CONCLUSION

The law that is today – the Digital Competition Bill, 2024 – is set to amalgamate the economic and free in digital markets of India. In India, this groundbreaking piece of legislation heralds an entirely new epoch in the country's benign evolution in regulation – where the country now enters the world's forefront towards realizing a more equitable and inclusive digital economy. This Bill addresses the core gaps in the existing antitrust laws; therefore, it acts as a crucial tool for promoting competitive parity in the digital space, dismantling monopolistic structures, and upholding principles of economic liberty and democratic access within the digital sphere. Most importantly, the Bill is the structural transformation of digital markets by introducing measures towards transparency, the end of exploitative practices, and, most importantly, fair participation by all players. It specifically mentions gatekeeper platforms – those institutions in the digital ecosystem that hold disproportionate power – to prevent them from these practices, like preference to their products, unfair use of user data, and constraining terms on business users. Such measures, which in most need apply in India's rapidly burgeoning e-commerce and digital services environment, mark a decisive step towards the empowerment of start-ups, MSEs, as well as any individual entrepreneur, for they will have a fair chance to compete and innovate on their merit.

Above all, it addresses the very future, not only present inequities. Nowhere in history has there been more serious consideration of what unchecked dominion by a few could mean for all valuable markets when digital infrastructures find themselves, regardless of usage, becoming the essential backbone of commerce, communication, and services. This legislation

fortifies India's commitment to shaping digital market competition among data monopolies, algorithmic discrimination, and network effects, which are silent to prevent new entrants, toward inclusive and accessible as well as long-term benefits of economic growth. The proactive nature of this regulatory position typifies the government's way forward in enhancing and promoting economic liberty while building a resilient digital economy. The law creates, moreover, an extra level of accountability in the governance of the digital state through procedural fairness and control of institutions. Transparency in ranking algorithms, terms of service, and grievance redress mechanisms demystifies the kinds of operational opacity that often characterize powerful digital platforms and empowers businesses and consumers to act with greater confidence and trust in market operations. Such trust is what the Bill promotes as being more than healthy for the operation of digital markets, but also desirable as the foundation for sustainable investment.

Another outcome worth remarkable mention from the Bill is the indirect benefit that it brings to the consumers. Competition naturally promotes innovation and higher service quality when smaller enterprises flourish. This translates to choosing more, better-quality options at lower prices for end users. Thus, not only do the producers of the digital economy are benefitted, but this Bill consequently appeals to the consumer crowd, so that the digital economy grows in a balanced, inclusive, and responsive manner to the needs of India's varied population. The potential for the Bill's success lies, however, very much in the ability of regulators to administer it wisely. There will be no exception to the rule that one fights for the rights of the innovation capacity of digital platforms. As in many cases, overregulation with little contextual flexibility could create inertia in bureaucracy or discourage investment in new, developing technology. Thus, then, the Bill must be termed a living document that develops with technological advancement and market dynamics. The Competition Commission of India (CCI), along

with industry bodies and civil society, has to carry out continuous review, adaptation, and fine-tuning of enforcement strategies to strike a healthy balance between oversight and entrepreneurial freedom.

Strengthening provisions around data portability, user consent, and interoperability can further increase the Bill's effectiveness. These mechanisms will greatly lower informational asymmetry and prevent lock-in of consumers, inducing healthy competition and allowing companies to compete on innovation rather than on fenced-off access to data. Government-green initiatives for awareness, regulatory support to actualize startup ideas, and proliferation in digital literacy will collectively add to the goals of this legislation by enabling workforce-wide participation in digital markets. The Digital Compe-

tition Bill of 2024 is not a law but a vision for a future digital India. It once again embodies the promise for a market where innovation, merit, and consumer interest trump power concentration and exploitative practices. It would restore opportunity balance, decrease dependence on digital oligarchs, and guarantee that economic liberty in the digital era is not an exclusive privilege, but a universal right. While world economies are grappling with similar issues concerning the concentration of their digital markets, India's bold and preventative approach could serve as a beacon. If executed insightfully, with inclusivity and integrity, the Digital Competition Bill could pave the way for a more competitive, transparent, and equitable digital economy-not just in India but as a model for the world.

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