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01

India’s GDP Performance

A Strong Start to 2026-27 with 7.8% Real GDP Growth

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India's economy began 2026-27 on a strong note, with real GDP growth accelerating to **7.8% in Q1**, riding on manufacturing and services, while real GVA rose **8.2%**. Investments rose by **11.9%**; household consumption grew **7.1%** and exports grew by **12.0%**. This momentum continued into July, with industrial production up **6.7%**, while cumulative merchandise and services exports during April-July rose **13.16%** year-on-year. Credit to industry and services grew **20.0% and 22.9%**, respectively, in July.

India's Macroeconomic Position

India entered 2026-27 amid persistent geopolitical tensions and uncertainty around global trade. Despite these external pressures, **real GDP grew by 7.8% in Q1 2026-27**. The outcome marked the **highest Q1 real GDP growth during the four-year period from 2023-24 to 2026-27**. This has been supported by buoyant domestic demand and gains in manufacturing and services.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also highlighted India's role in the global economy. In July 2026, it described India as **one of the world's fastest-growing economies** and a **key engine of global growth**.

India's sovereign credit assessment further reflects this confidence. In August 2026, S&P Global Ratings affirmed India's **'BBB/A-2' sovereign ratings with a Stable Outlook**. This followed the upgrade of its long-term rating to 'BBB' in 2025, after an 18-year gap.

A Stronger Start to 2026-27

Growth Accelerates in the First Quarter

Economic growth strengthened in the first quarter (Q1) of 2026-27. This outcome has exceeded the Reserve Bank of India's estimate of 7.0% for the quarter.

- **Real GDP**, or GDP at Constant Prices, is estimated at **₹81.36 lakh crore** in Q1 FY 2026-27. It recorded **7.8% rise**, compared with **6.9%** in Q1 FY 2025-26.
- **Nominal GDP**, or GDP at Current Prices, is estimated at **₹88.27 lakh crore**. It recorded **10.3% rise**, compared with 8.1% last year.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the value of final goods and services produced in the domestic economy in an accounting period.

- **Real GVA** is estimated at **₹73.82 lakh crore**, recording **8.2% growth**, compared with 7.0% last year.
- **Nominal GVA** is estimated at **₹80.53 lakh crore**, recording **11.5% growth**, compared with 8.1% last year.

Gross Value Added (GVA) measures the individual contribution of producers, industries or sectors to the economy.

Revised Estimates Strengthen the Growth Picture

Real GDP has been revised upwards for the previous three financial years. The revisions show that the first-quarter performance follows a stronger growth trajectory than previously estimated.

Table-1: Revised Real GDP Growth Estimates

Financial Year	Earlier Estimate	Revised Estimate
2023-24	7.2%	**7.3%**
2024-25	7.1%	**7.2%**
2025-26	7.7%	**7.8%**

Source: Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)

Basis of the Revised Estimates

The annual revised estimates reflect the use of new price and production indices with base year 2022-23. This includes the **Output Producer Price Index (PPI)** and **Banking Services Price Index (BkSPI)**. Updated administrative data from different sources were also incorporated.

To read more on National Account Statistics revisions, please refer to: Counting What Counts: Strengthening India's National Accounts and Core Economic Statistics

Composition of Growth Drivers

Economic activity in the first quarter was supported by a sharp rise in investment, firm household consumption and stronger exports.

Trends Across Key Expenditure Components

Table-2: Key Expenditure Components of Real GDP			
Component	**Interpretation**	**Q1 2025-26**	**Q1 2026-27**
Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)	Domestic funding of investment	5.8%	**11.9%**
Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE)	Spending by households on goods and services	6.8%	**7.1%**
Exports	Goods and services supplied to the rest of the world	6.0%	**12.0%**
Source: Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)			

Growth Extends Across Major Sectors

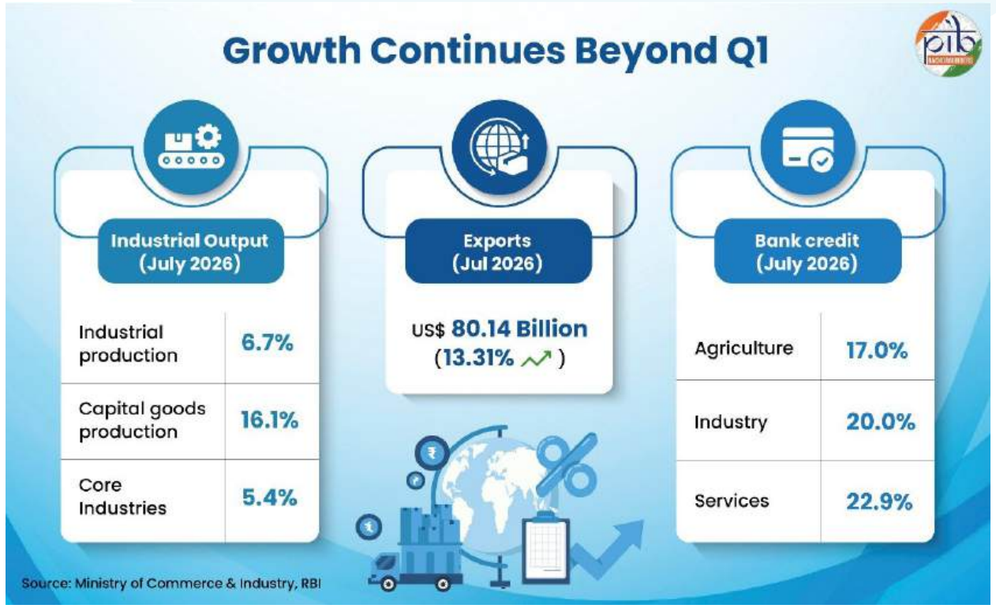
The strength in expenditure was also reflected on the production side, with the tertiary and secondary sectors expanding at a faster pace.

- In terms of **Real GVA**, the **tertiary sector grew by 10.0% in Q1 2026-27**, up from 8.0% in Q1 2025-26. Within the sector, **financial, real estate, IT and professional services recorded 12.1% growth**.
- The **secondary sector expanded by 8.6%** in Q1 2026-27, compared with 6.1% in the corresponding quarter of the previous year.
  - » **Manufacturing recorded 9.2% growth**, supported by strong output across key segments. **Several manufacturing categories** also performed well during the quarter:

Table-3: Key Manufacturing Categories Record Notable Gains (Year-on-year IIP growth (%))		
Manufacturing category	**Q1 2025-26**	**Q1 2026-27**
Electrical Equipment	9.7	**27.0**
Other Transport Equipment	3.8	**19.5**
Computer, electronic and optical products	8.8	**12.4**
Machinery and equipment	6.6	**9.1**
Source: Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)		

  - » Under the **IIP**, capital goods production also increased by **15.2% in Q1 2026-27**, compared with 8.8% a year earlier. Infrastructure/ construction goods also recorded higher growth of **7.2%**, up from 6.1%.

Recent Indicators Signal Continued Momentum



Industrial Activity Remains Firm

- **Industrial production grew by 6.7%** in July 2026, compared to 5.4% last year. It increased by **6.3% in April-July 2026-27** compared 4.0% last year same period.
- **Capital goods production rose by 16.1%** in July 2026 over July 2025. Intermediate goods increased by 10.0% and infrastructure and construction goods by 6.9%.
- **The Index of Core Industries (ICI) recorded year-on-year growth of 5.4% in July 2026**, compared with July 2025. **During April-July 2026-27, the ICI grew by 4.3%**, up from 1.5% in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Strong Export Performance

- India's combined merchandise and services exports reached an estimated **US$ 80.14 billion** in July 2026, increasing by **13.31%** over July 2025.
- **During April-July 2026-27**, cumulative exports were estimated at **US$ 316.42 billion**. This is **13.16% higher** than the US$279.63 billion recorded during April-July 2025-26.

Credit Expands Across Major Sectors

Bank credit growth strengthened across major sectors in July 2026.

- Credit to **agriculture and allied activities grew by 17.0% year-on-year**, compared with **7.3%** in July 2025.
- Credit to **industry increased by 20.0%**, up from 6.5% in July 2025.
- Credit to the **services sector grew by 22.9%**, compared with **10.2%** in July 2025.

Recent Policy Measures Supporting Growth

Policy measures introduced during 2026 have complemented these economic trends, spanning manufacturing, energy security, trade and investment, and agriculture.

Manufacturing and Industry

- The **Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme** (July 2026) has an outlay of **₹62,500 crore through 2030-31**. It aims to further expand production, deepen value addition and strengthen global competitiveness.
- Approved in July 2026, **Semicon 2.0** has a budget outlay of ₹1,27,500 crore. It supports chip design and manufacturing, advanced packaging, research, materials, equipment and talent development.
- Approved in July 2026, the **BHAVYA Rasayan Scheme** has an outlay of ₹3,030 crore for a period of 5 years from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31. It will support the establishment of three dedicated chemical parks across the country.
- **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0 (ECLGS 5.0)** targets additional credit flow of ₹2.55 lakh crore in response to the West Asia situation. It provides 100% guarantee coverage for MSMEs and 90% for non-MSMEs.
- Passed by Parliament in **August 2026**, the **MSME Development (Amendment) Bill, 2026** simplifies compliance and supports MSME development and competitiveness.

Energy Security

- **Samudra Manthan, the National Offshore Exploration Scheme**, has an outlay of ₹84,084 crore through FY 2030-31. The Scheme supports exploration to unlock India's offshore energy potential.
- The **Scheme for Promotion of Surface Coal/Lignite Gasification Projects** was approved in **May 2026** with an outlay of **₹37,500 crore**. It supports the **100 MT coal gasification target**

by 2030 and aims to reduce import dependence.

- **GOBARdhan, the National Circular Bioenergy Scheme**, was approved in **August 2026** with an outlay of **₹23,731 crore**. The Scheme will be implemented from **FY 2026-27 to FY 2035-36**. It aims to increase compressed biogas production from agricultural, animal and municipal organic waste.

- Approved in July 2026, **Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY)** has an outlay of ₹5,070 crore. It supports 5,000 MW of floating solar projects with co-located energy storage, with projects sanctioned during FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31.

Trade and Investment

- **The India-UK CETA and Agreement on Social Security** entered into force on 15 July 2026. It provides zero-duty access for nearly 99% of India's exports to the UK.

- **The India-Israel Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA)** entered into force on 4 July 2026. It aims to strengthen bilateral economic ties and provides a more secure and predictable framework for investment.

- In June 2026, reforms were announced to **expand Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) participation in Government Securities**. Key measures include tax exemptions, wider coverage under the Fully Accessible Route and streamlined investment norms. The reforms are intended to attract long-term foreign capital and deepen India's debt market.

- Launched in **May 2026**, the **Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMIP)** carries a sovereign guarantee of **₹12,980 crore**. It provides maritime risk cover while reducing dependence on foreign insurers amid global volatility.

Agriculture: Farm Income and Production Support

- The continuation of **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)** from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31 has been approved with an outlay of ₹3.15 lakh crore. The scheme provides eligible farmer families income support through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system.

- For **Marketing Season 2026-27**, the Government increased MSPs for **14 Kharif crops** to ensure remunerative prices for farmers. The highest absolute increases were for **sunflower seed, cotton, nigerseed and sesamum**.

- Approved in May 2026, the **Mission for Cotton Productivity (Kapas Kanti)** has an outlay of ₹5,659.22 crore for 2026-27 to 2030-31. It links cotton farmers with modern research and technologies, reduces pest risks, and strengthens production systems and agricultural trade.

- The **National Investment Policy for Urea-2026 (NIPU-2026)** aims to promote new investment in gas-based urea manufacturing units. It supports higher domestic production and India's goal of self-sufficiency in urea.

These measures build on a decade of policy initiatives including Make in India, Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, PM-KISAN, the Export Promotion Mission and others.

Conclusion

India's economic performance at the start of 2026-27 reflects **broad-based momentum across key areas of the economy**. Investment has accelerated, household consumption has remained firm, while manufacturing, services and exports have provided additional support.

More recent indicators show that this strength has carried beyond the first quarter. Continued government support through various policy measures has also helped maintain the pace of economic activity.

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02

Understanding Q1 2026-27 GDP Estimates

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Published on: September 02, 2026

Updated GDP Series

On 31 August 2026, the updated series of annual and quarterly GDP estimates with 2022-23 as the base year was released. The estimates incorporate the new Output Producer Price Index and Banking Services Price Index, both based on 2022-23, along with updated administrative data.

Two concepts are important in the latest GDP series: r**evision of the base year** and **adoption of double deflation for manufacturing.**

- The base year in National Accounts Statistics provides the reference prices used to calculate real growth. It is revised periodically to **reflect structural changes and ensure relative prices remain representative** of current economic conditions.

Deflation removes the effect of price changes between two time periods from a current-price (nominal) value to get its value at constant prices (real value).

- The updated GDP series reflects an improved and more robust methodology. The **double deflation method** is adopted for various industries under the manufacturing sector. Under this, output and intermediate consumption are deflated separately to derive GVA at constant prices.

IMF describes double deflation as the preferred method for calculating GDP in volume terms.

To read more about India's GDP Performance in Q1 2026-27, please refer to: India's GDP Performance

To read more on India's National Accounts Statistics revisions, please refer to: Counting What Counts: Strengthening India's National Accounts and Core Economic Statistics

Deflation Methodology

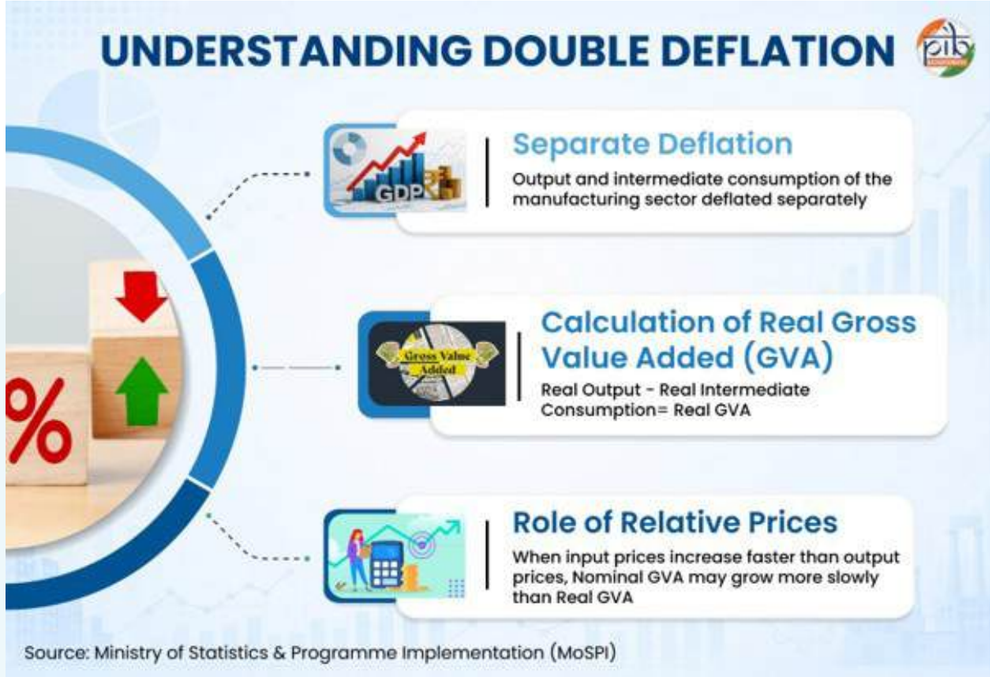
1. **How can the manufacturing sector record a negative inflation in GVA implicit deflator of "-1.5%" in Q1, 2026-27 despite increase in both manufacturing output and input prices while the agricultural sector recorded a positive inflation rate of 3.9%?**

Understanding Double Deflation: Under the double-deflation approach, output and intermediate consumption of the manufacturing sector are deflated separately. The real GVA is obtained as real output minus real intermediate consumption. Therefore, when input prices increase faster than output prices, the relative price movement can result in nominal GVA growing more slowly than real GVA.

Consequently, the implicit GVA deflator, which is derived by comparing nominal GVA with real GVA, can show negative inflation even though both output and input prices are rising.

Importantly, a negative GVA deflator does not mechanically imply lower real growth. Real GVA growth depends on the relative movements in real output

A negative inflation in implicit deflator in manufacturing does not mean that manufacturing prices have fallen. It is important to distinguish between the price deflators of output and inputs and the implicit Gross Value Added (GVA) deflator.



and real intermediate consumption.

An illustration to understand the above scenario is given below:

	Year 1	Year 2	Growth Rate
Gross Value of Output	1,000 Cr	1200 Cr	20%
Intermediate Consumption	800 Cr	976 Cr	22.0%
Nominal Gross Value Added (Current)	200 Cr	224 Cr	12.0%
PPI Output Index	100	110	10.0%
PPI Input Index	100	114	14.0%
Deflated Output (Constant)	1,000 Cr	1,091 Cr	9.1%
Deflated Inputs (Constant)	800 Cr	856 Cr	7.0%
Real Value Added (Constant)	200 Cr	235 Cr	17.5%
Current Price Growth Rate (%)	**12.0%**		
Constant Price Growth Rate (%)	**17.5%**		

As per illustration, nominal GVA grows by 12%, while real GVA grows by 17.5%, resulting in a **negative implicit GVA deflator.** It reflects the **relative movement of output and input prices under double deflation.**

In Q1, 2026-27 manufacturing GVA is compiled using the double-deflation approach, under which output and intermediate consumption are separately deflated. During this period input prices increased faster relative to output prices. As a result, nominal GVA growth for this sector was relatively lower at 7.7%, while r**eal GVA growth was 9.2%.** The **resulting difference between nominal and real GVA growth produced a negative implicit GVA deflator of 1.5%.**

For example, some of the activities where the growth of input prices was found more than that of output prices are manufacturing of textile and cotton ginning, manufacturing of basic metals, manufacturing of rubber and plastic products, etc.

At Quarterly level, Agriculture GVA is compiled at constant price first using the production estimates. Current Price estimates of Agriculture GVA is then derived by inflating the Constant Price estimates using the relevant Producer Price Index.

During Q1, 2026-27, the output Producer Price Index for Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing group rose by approximately 5%. Since the output prices rose and agricultural nominal GVA is heavily driven by these output prices, its implied inflation remained positive at 3.9%.

OECD Research Papers highlight that countries using double deflation frequently experience volatile or negative implicit deflators in manufacturing during global energy and raw material shocks. Advanced economies that depend heavily on imported raw materials regularly experience negative manufacturing deflators when international supply chains fluctuate.

2. **How does the mechanism of double deflation apply to Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE), and does it enter PFCE calculations directly?**

The mechanism of double deflation **does not directly enter the calculation of PFCE.**

Double deflation is a production-side technique used to estimate the GVA of an industry at constant prices by deflating gross output and intermediate consumption separately. Because PFCE is a measure of final demand (expenditure

on goods and services for final use), it has **no intermediate consumption to subtract**.

At the quarterly level, PFCE is estimated at a detailed item/item-group level. For various goods such as food and manufactured products, constant-price estimates are compiled first using appropriate volume indicators, and current-price estimates are subsequently derived using relevant Consumer Price Indices.

For several services items under PFCE, such as education, health, restaurants and accommodation services, current-price estimates are compiled using relevant output indicators and the corresponding constant-price estimates are derived using appropriate price indices.

Thus, double deflation is relevant to the estimation of production-side GVA and is not a method used directly for estimating PFCE.

Understanding Nominal and Real Estimates

1. **How do we reconcile a 2.5% implied GDP inflation rate when consumer inflation (CPI) was 3.9% and wholesale inflation (WPI) was over 9%?**

This price divergence is reconciled by understanding that the GDP deflator is an implied price of net value added, not a direct measure of transaction prices. There is no inconsistency because the GDP deflator, CPI and WPI measure different aspects of the economy and have different coverage and weights.

This price divergence is reconciled by understanding that the GDP deflator is an implied price of net value added, not a direct measure of transaction prices. There is no inconsistency because the GDP deflator, CPI and WPI measure different aspects of the economy and have different coverage and weights.
The baskets of goods used to measure these economic indicators vary according to their purposes:

CPI (Consumer Price Index): Reflects price changes of only a specific basket of household consumption of goods and services at the final **consumer's** end.

WPI (Wholesale Price Index): Reflects price changes of bulk commodities, raw materials, and manufactured goods excluding services at the **wholesaler's** level.

Implicit GDP Deflator: It is the ratio of GDP at current prices and GDP at constant prices and it covers the **entire economy,** including government spending, corporate investments, exports, and financial and non-financial services (like banking, IT, and real estate). Since raw material prices were very high and certain service sector inflation was very low, it diluted the high inflation seen in the consumer or wholesale commodity sectors.

The implicit GDP deflator need not move in line with either CPI or WPI. Differences in coverage, weights, price concepts and the relative performance of different sectors of the economy can result in the GDP deflator being significantly different from consumer or wholesale inflation.

Understanding Different Price Measures

Category	CPI	WPI	Implicit GDP Deflator
Coverage	Household consumption basket of goods and services	Bulk commodities, raw materials and manufactured goods excluding services	Entire economy; government spending, corporate investments, exports, and financial and non-financial services
Measurement Basis	Price changes at the final consumer's end	Price changes at the wholesale level	Derived from current-price and constant-price GDP

Source: Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)

Note: Deflation of individual item/group of items is done using the relevant price indices for that item/item-group. The implicit GDP deflator is only a derived number reflecting the price impact of more than 300 individual price deflators used at the item/item-group level.

2. **Why there is massive gap between Nominal GVA and Real GVA estimates of Mining sector?**

In the Quarterly GDP compilation, the constant price estimates of the Mining & Quarrying sector are compiled using the relevant Index of Industrial Production (IIP) as the volume indicator. During **Q1 (April-June) 2026-27, the IIP growth for Mining & Quarrying was -3.8% in April, -1.4% in May and 1.6% in June.**

Table-1: Growth Rate in IIP			
Description	**April-26**	**May-26**	**June-26**
Mining & Quarrying	**-3.8**	**-1.4**	**1.6**
(a) Fuel Minerals	-5.6	-6.1	-1.8
(b) Metallic Minerals incl. Rare Earth Mineral	12.4	18.3	39.4
(c) Non-Metallic Minerals incl. Minor Mineral	-10.3	-6.1	-11.7

This is broadly consistent with the **-2.4% growth in real GVA** of the Mining & Quarrying sector during Q1 2026-27.

The nominal estimates are derived by applying the relevant Producer Price Indices (PPI) to the corresponding real estimates for different mineral groups.

The PPI data for Q1 2026-27 indicate significant price increases in the Mining & Quarrying sector. In particular, prices **of Crude Petroleum and Natural Gas** increased by 69.5% in April, 72.2% in May and 33.7% in June, while Mining of Metal Ores recorded inflation of 27.6%, 25.2% and 23.5%, respectively.

Table-2: Inflation based on PPI			
Commodity Name	**April-26**	**May-26**	**June-26**
Mining & Quarrying	**22.0**	**21.2**	**15.5**
(A) Mining of Metal Ores	27.6	25.2	23.5
(B) Mining of Coal and Lignite	-1.6	-2.3	-1.6
(C) Other Mining and Quarrying	6.9	6.5	8.7
(D) Extraction of Crude Petroleum and Natural Gas	69.5	72.2	33.7

The nominal GVA growth of the Mining & Quarrying sector accordingly stood at **22.3% in Q1 2026-27.**

The substantial difference between real and nominal GVA growth doesn't reflect an inconsistency between the real and nominal estimates. It is primarily a result of the **strong increase in mineral prices, particularly crude petroleum and natural gas and metal ores.**

Revisions and Statistical Reconciliation

1. **Last year's Current GDP has been revised down from Rs. 86 lakh crore to Rs. 80 lakh crore, to make current year's GDP look better. If last year's number had not been revised, the growth would have been 2.6% in Current prices.**

The comparison of the Q1 GDP estimates needs to be understood in the context of the revisions made to the GDP series. The change in the estimate of Q1 2025-26 does not represent a downward revision made to make the current year's growth appear higher. It reflects successive methodological and data revisions to the GDP series.

Benchmark-indicator approach: The Quarterly GDP estimates are compiled using the benchmark-indicator approach, under which the movement in the quarterly estimates is guided by the movement in relevant high-frequency indicators.

A revision in the previous-year benchmark does not, by itself, create an artificial increase in the current year's underlying economic activity or the indicators used for estimation.

In the quarterly series more than hundreds of volume or value indicators are used. To mention a few, some of the volume indicators used are, viz., growth in crop production, growth in cement production index, growth in finished steel consumption, growth in sales in commercial vehicles, etc.

- **February 2026:** With the introduction of the **2022-23 base-year series,** the estimate was revised to **₹80.32 lakh crore,** reflecting updated data sources, improved methodologies, revised coverage and other relevant information.

- **29 August 2025:** Q1 2025-26 GDP at current prices was estimated at **₹86.05 lakh crore** under the then prevailing **2011-12 base-year series.**
- **5 June 2026:** The Q1 2025-26 estimate was further updated to **₹80.44 lakh crore** with the release of the Provisional Estimates for 2025-26. Thus, **reflecting the availability and updation of indicators and data.**
- **Subsequently:** Incorporation of the **new series of IIP and PPI series** led to a further revision, taking Q1 2025-26 GDP at current prices to **₹80.00 lakh crore.**

It is incorrect to interpret the difference as a deliberate downward revision of last year's GDP to mechanically increase the current year's growth rate. The movement from ₹86.05 lakh crore to ₹80.00 lakh crore is the result of successive revisions to the GDP series arising from the change in base year, incorporation of improved data sources and methodologies, and updation of available indicators.

Most importantly, the **₹86.05 lakh crore estimate from the old 2011-12 series cannot be directly compared with the current Q1 2026-27 estimate under the revised 2022-23 series.** Rather, the growth rates are calculated using estimates from the same and latest comparable GDP series i.e., with base 2022-23.

Thus, the relevant comparison for **Q1 2026-27 of Rs 88.27 lakh crore** would have been with the earlier Q1 2025-26 estimate of ₹80.32 lakh crore, and not with the old ₹86.05 lakh crore estimate from the superseded series.

2. **As the discrepancies are high in both current and constant price GDP estimates during Q1, 2026-27, does it mean the GDP estimates will be revised significantly in the next revision round when discrepancies get adjusted?**

The **Q1 2026-27 estimates are based on the information available at the current stage and are subject to revision** as more comprehensive and updated source data become available. As additional information is incorporated, estimates under the different approaches may change and, consequently, the statistical discrepancy may also change.

The discrepancy is a statistical balancing item arising from the difference between the GDP estimates compiled through the production and expenditure approaches. Its movement should therefore not be interpreted, by itself, as evidence that the reported GDP is understated or overstated.

Therefore, while **the current discrepancy may change in subsequent revision rounds, it cannot be concluded in advance that GDP will necessarily be revised upward,** or by a specific magnitude.

The direction and magnitude of any revision will depend on the revisions to the underlying production and expenditure-side estimates, rather than on a mechanical adjustment of the discrepancy alone.

At the time of release of final estimates at current prices, the discrepancies will be very insignificant or zero as was found in case of FY2022-23 and FY 2023-24.

PIB Research

03

Data Centres in India

Infrastructure for the Digital Age

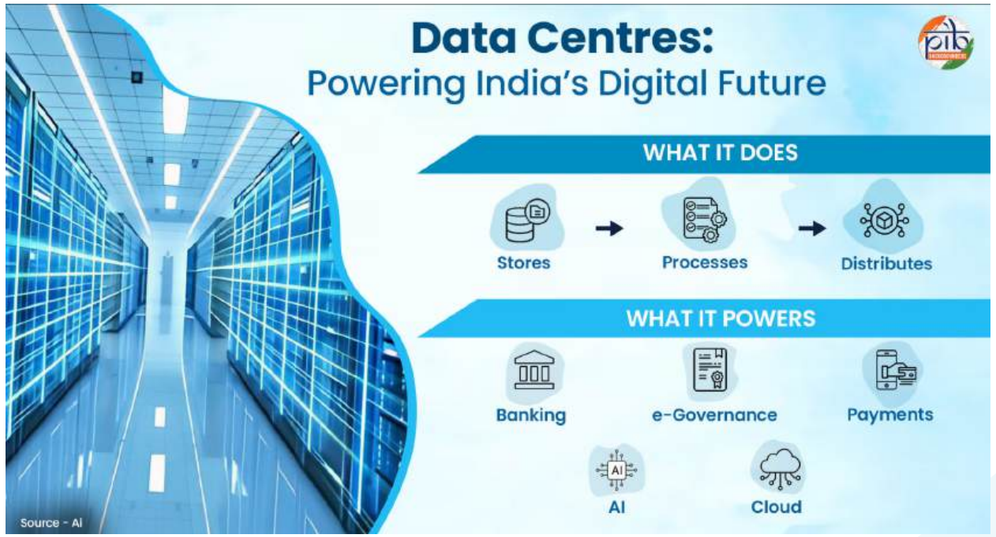
Published on: September 14, 2026

Data centres are the invisible engines powering India's digital life. They support banking, e-Governance and online services every second. As emerging technologies drive rapid data growth, the Government is building a supportive policy ecosystem. Infrastructure status, fiscal incentives and clean energy adoption are strengthening India's data centre ecosystem.

Strengthening India's Digital Infrastructure through Data Centres

India's **digital economy** is entering a new phase of rapid growth and technological transformation. **Digitalisation** is reshaping productivity, competitiveness and service delivery across sectors.

As digital services expand, they are generating unprecedented demand for **computing capacity, data storage and high-speed connectivity.** Meeting this demand requires infrastructure that can operate continuously, securely and at scale. **Data centres provide this critical foundation, powering the digital services that increasingly drive India's economy and governance.**



A **data centre is a secure facility that houses computing, storage and networking equipment.** It stores, processes, manages and distributes large volumes of digital information. These capabilities support **online banking, e-Governance, digital payments, cloud computing and other emerging technologies.**

Data Center in Simple Words

Think of a data centre as a m**assive digital warehouse full of thousands of super-fast computers.** Just like a physical warehouse holds goods, a data centre holds digital information. Whenever you make a UPI payment, check your bank account, or stream a video, these computers work continuously in the background to fulfill your request.

Modern data centres integrate computing, networking, power, cooling, security and management systems. These systems work continuously to maintain **reliable operations, data security and uninterrupted digital services.** As India's digital economy expands, resilient **data centres are becoming a strategic infrastructure for innovation, competitiveness and sustained digital growth.**

Inside a Data Centre: The Technologies Powering Digital Services

A data centre relies on a **reliable power infrastructure** to ensure uninterrupted operation of critical equipment. Data centre computers can never turn off—not even for a millisecond. **Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS)** provide immediate backup during electrical interruptions. Backup generators and electrical distribution systems provide additional resilience during prolonged power disruptions. Continuous operations of this scale requires **cooling systems** to maintain suitable operating conditions for the computing equipment. **Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)** systems regulate temperature and airflow within the facility. Advanced airflow management and liquid cooling further improve thermal efficiency and reliability.

IThe **Information Technology (IT) infrastructure** then performs the core computing functions. Servers process information and run digital applications. **Storage systems** securely hold large volumes of data using Hard Disk Drives (HDDs) and Solid-State Drives (SSDs).

Security systems protect equipment, networks and data from physical and digital threats.

Networking equipment, including routers and high-speed switches, enables data exchange within and beyond the facility. **Fiber-optic connections** provide high-speed communication between the data centre and external networks.

Finally, **management software** monitors the systems and helps optimize the use of computing resources efficiently. **Virtualisation** allows multiple virtual machines to run on one physical server, improving resource use. Imagine taking one large house and dividing it into several separate apartments. Virtualization allows one physical computer to run multiple virtual "mini-computers" inside it, maximizing resource efficiency. **Automation tools** manage workloads, support maintenance and help identify operational problems.

From Click to Response: How a Data Centre Handles Your Request

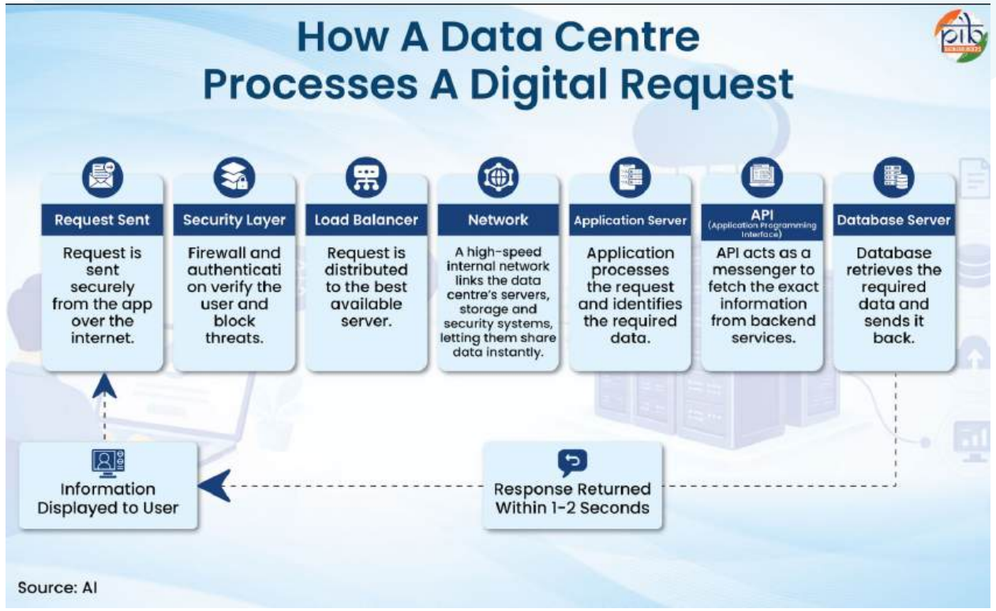
Every digital request begins with a simple action, such as opening an app, checking a bank balance or accessing a document. Behind the instant response, the request travels through a network to a data centre, where multiple systems work together to process it securely and efficiently.

The **security layer** first checks the request and protects the system from cyber threats. The **load balancer** then directs the request to an available server, helping distribute the workload efficiently.

The **application server** processes the request and determines what information or service is required. If necessary, it uses an **Application Programming Interface (API)** to communicate with other applications or services.

The **database server** then retrieves the required information and sends it back to the application server. Once processed, the information travels back through the network and reaches the user's device.

This entire process can take just **1–2 seconds,** enabling fast and seamless digital services. This interconnected chain— **Connect → Receive → Network → Process → Store → Secure → Respond**—allows cloud services, e-governance platforms and Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications to deliver information reliably and at scale. It shows why modern data centres are far more than storage facilities; they are the **digital infrastructure that enables everyday online services.**



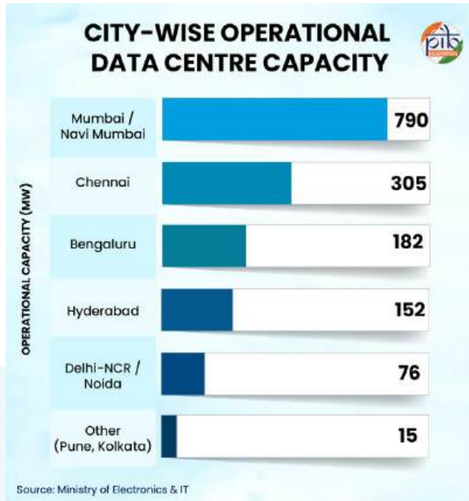
In Simple Terms: The Behind-the-Scenes Team

- **Network** = The Corridors & Intercom, the internal hallways that connect the whole team so they can pass information to each other instantly.
- **Security Layer** = The Security Guard, inspects your request at the entrance for safety.
- **Load Balancer** = The Traffic Cop, directs incoming digital traffic so no single server gets overwhelmed
- **Application Server** = The Chef, takes your order, figures out what information or recipe is needed.
- **API** = The Waiter, acts as a messenger.
- **Database Server** = The Digital Vault, where details are locked away and retrieved when needed.

Status of Data Centers in India

India's data-centre journey has evolved alongside the rapid expansion of e-Governance and digital services. Rising citizen expectations for online services are increasing demand for robust data-centre infrastructure. **The National Informatics Centre (NIC)** has established state-of-the-art National Data Centres across the country. These include facilities at NIC Headquarters in **Delhi, Pune, Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar.** NIC has also established **37 smaller Data Centres** at various State Capitals. These facilities provide reliable digital services to Government institutions at different levels. They support round-the-clock operations, system management and skilled onsite personnel.

India's rapidly expanding digital economy is further strengthening demand for secure and reliable data infrastructure. Installed data-centre power capacity stood at around 375 MW in 2020. It has increased to 1.57 GW as of August 2026. The capacity is projected to expand further to nearly **8 GW by 2030.** Investments of nearly **USD 70 billion** are already underway in India's data centre sector, with an additional **USD 90 billion** in announced projects, highlighting the scale of expansion and reflecting strong investor confidence.



Enabling Policy Environment for Data Centres

The Government has strengthened the data-centre ecosystem through targeted policy and fiscal measures. In the **Union Budget 2022–23,** data centres were included in the **Harmonized List of Infrastructure.** This accorded infrastructure status to data centres and facilitated greater access to credit for digital infrastructure. The measure also supported investment and expansion of India's data-centre capacity.

Infrastructure Status in Simple Terms

Giving data centres "Infrastructure Status" treats them like national highways, airports, and power grids, granting them access to easier and cheaper long-term loans.

The **Union Budget 2026–27** further introduced a **tax holiday for eligible foreign cloud service providers until 2047.** The incentive applies to global operations using India-based data-centre infrastructure. It covers **Tax Years 2026–27 to 2046–47** for notified foreign companies. These measures strengthen India's investment environment for data centres and cloud infrastructure.

Linked Ecosystem Schemes Supporting Data Centre Growth

- The second phase of the **Semicon India Programme (Semicon 2.0)** was approved by the Union Cabinet on 15.07.2026, with an outlay of **₹1,27,500 crore** under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM). It aims to holistically build a trusted and resilient semiconductor ecosystem in the country.
- The **IndiaAI Mission** was approved with a total budget outlay of **₹10,371.92 crore** to build a comprehensive AI ecosystem in the country. The AI ecosystem being **fostered** under the Mission is a key driver of data centre growth in India.
- The **Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)** has also received higher financial support. Its allocation increased from ₹22,000 crore to ₹40,000 crore.
- The Government of India has also launched PLI Scheme 2.0 for IT Hardware to create a robust domestic manufacturing ecosystem for IT hardware (such as servers), attract large investments, reduce import reliance, and make India a trusted global supply chain hub.

Sustaining the Data Centre Sector: Energy and Water Planning

Data centre capacity is expanding rapidly, making energy and resource efficiency increasingly important. Data centres require reliable electricity and efficient cooling systems for continuous operations. According to the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Ministry of Power, demand could reach 17 GW by 2031–32. As the sector is expanding, the Government is also promoting cleaner energy and efficient resource use to support sustainable sectoral growth.

Renewable Energy & Clean Power

The Government is promoting renewable energy through several key initiatives. These include the Green Energy Open Access Rules, Green Energy Corridor Scheme and National Green Hydrogen Mission. The National Programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules and Solar Park Scheme further support clean-energy deployment. These measures improve access to cleaner and more reliable power for energy-intensive digital infrastructure.

SHANTI Act & Clean Power

The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act strengthens the clean-power ecosystem. It supports reliable nuclear power for emerging sectors, including Artificial Intelligence and data centres. The framework also enables future deployment of Small Modular Reactors and Micro Nuclear Reactors.

BIS Standards for Data Centres

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has developed standards for data-centre efficiency. Its technical committee LITD 31 covers Cloud Computing, Information Technology and Data Centres. BIS has published standards covering Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) and Carbon Usage Effectiveness (CUE). These standards also address Cooling Efficiency Ratio (CER) and Water Usage Effectiveness (WUE).

In Simple Terms

PUE and WUE serve as green mileage ratings to measure how efficiently a facility uses electricity and water.

CUE measures how much carbon pollution a data centre produces for every bit of electricity its computers use.

CER measures how efficiently the cooling systems (like fans, chilled water pipes, or liquid coolant) remove that heat relative to the electricity they consume.

Energy and Water Efficiency Standards

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) has notified the Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) 2017. It also notified the Energy Conservation and Sustainable Building Code (ECSBC) 2024. These codes prescribe energy-efficiency and water-conservation norms for buildings. They also include provisions relevant to data-centre infrastructure.

Advanced Cooling and Water Management

Data-centre water requirements depend on the cooling technologies deployed. Groundwater extraction, including for industrial purposes, is regulated under guidelines issued by the Ministry of Jal Shakti. AI infrastructure is driving adoption of advanced cooling technologies in data centres. These include direct-to-chip liquid cooling, adiabatic cooling and immersion cooling. Closed-loop liquid cooling systems are also emerging as resource-efficient solutions.

Way Forward

India's data-centre growth reflects a steady policy journey towards a resilient and sovereign digital infrastructure. It is increasingly important for data sovereignty, digital trust, economic competitiveness and technological self-reliance. The expansion of cloud and Artificial Intelligence infrastructure is creating new opportunities for innovation and economic growth. However, this growth also requires responsible governance of data, technology, energy and digital infrastructure. A technology governance approach can help balance innovation with security, sustainability, accountability and public interest. This requires strong standards, robust cybersecurity, responsible data practices and efficient resource management. It also calls for greater domestic capabilities across computing, semiconductors, energy and critical digital infrastructure. As India advances towards Viksit Bharat by 2047, data centres can serve as a foundational layer of the digital economy.

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PIB Research

04

India Building Semiconductor Future

Emerging Capabilities Across Design, Manufacturing, Packaging, Materials and Talent

Published on: September 17, 2026

Building on the successful implementation of Semicon 1.0, the Union Cabinet approved Semicon 2.0 on 15 July 2026 with an outlay of Rs 1,27,500 crore. While the first phase laid the foundation for India's semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem, Semicon 2.0 advances the next phase through six strategic pillars. These include research and development, chip design, machines and materials, setting up more fabs, talent development, and further strengthening the ATMP/OSAT industry. It will position India as a trusted global semiconductor hub and advance the vision of Viksit Bharat.

Setting the Context

Semiconductors are the building blocks of modern technology and a foundation of economic power. They power Artificial Intelligence (AI), telecommunications, electric mobility, defence and advanced manufacturing. Technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), 5G/6G, data centres and autonomous vehicles are further driving chip demand. Their availability and technological capabilities will increasingly shape innovation, competitiveness and national technological strength.

This growing importance is reflected in the rapid expansion of the global semiconductor market. The global semiconductor market grew at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.5 per cent between 2014 and 2024. It is projected to grow at 8.5 per cent over the next 5–10 years. However, recent disruptions have exposed vulnerabilities in the interconnected global semiconductor value chain. Geopolitical tensions have further highlighted the risks of supply dependence. Major economies are therefore strengthening domestic semiconductor capabilities to secure their technological and economic interests.

India is also witnessing rapidly rising semiconductor demand. It is projected to reach USD 110 billion by FY2030 and exceed USD 200 billion by FY2035, while domestic manufacturing remains at a nascent stage. India spent almost USD 150 billion on semiconductor product imports during FY17–FY25. Imports grew at a CAGR of 23 per cent during this period. If this trend continues, annual imports could reach USD 240 billion by 2035. Building a comprehensive semiconductor ecosystem is therefore an urgent national priority. The Government of India is strengthening this ecosystem to advance self-reliance, security, skills and technological competitiveness.

SEMICON 2026: Catalyzing India's Semiconductor Ecosystem

Semiconductors form the core of modern electronic systems. Building a strong semiconductor ecosystem is therefore essential for technological resilience, economic security and national self-reliance. Recognising this strategic importance, the Government of India is strengthening the semiconductor ecosystem through policy support, infrastructure and global partnerships. In this endeavours, SEMICON India 2026, themed "Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem," was inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, on 17 September 2026. Being held from 17 to 19 September 2026, the SEMICON 2026 brings together global industry leaders, policymakers, investors, academia and start-ups. It provides a platform to advance India's semiconductor ambitions and strengthen the ecosystem across the entire value chain. Click To Explore Agenda

What is a Semiconductor?

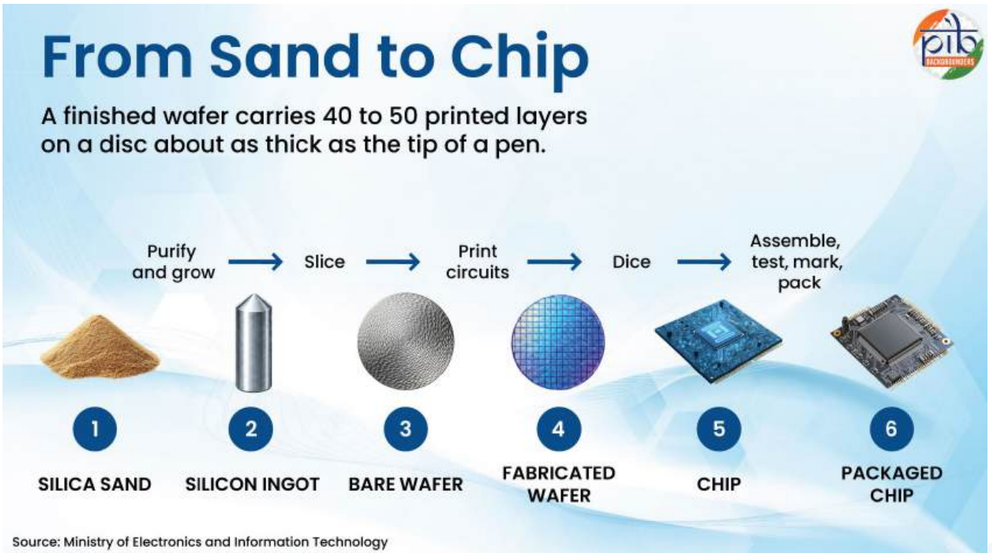
A semiconductor is a material whose electrical conductivity can be controlled. Conductors such as copper allow current to flow easily, while insulators strongly resist it. Semiconductor materials can be engineered to switch, amplify, sense or control electrical signals. A transistor is a microscopic electronic switch. Modern integrated circuits place millions or billions of transistors and other components on a small chip. Their coordinated switching makes computing, communications, sensing, memory and power management possible.

Most modern electronic devices depend on semiconductors. Smartphones, computers, medical equipment, automobiles, defence systems, satellites and data centres use semiconductor-

based components. In simple terms, **semiconductors are the building blocks of modern electronics.**

From Silicon to a Semiconductor Chip

Silicon is the most widely used semiconductor material. It is obtained from silica, which occurs abundantly in sand. Chip manufacturing begins with highly purified silicon, which is formed into cylindrical **ingots**. These ingots are sliced into thin **wafers** and polished. Inside fabrication plants, wafers undergo hundreds of carefully controlled processes. These include deposition, photolithography, etching and ion implantation.

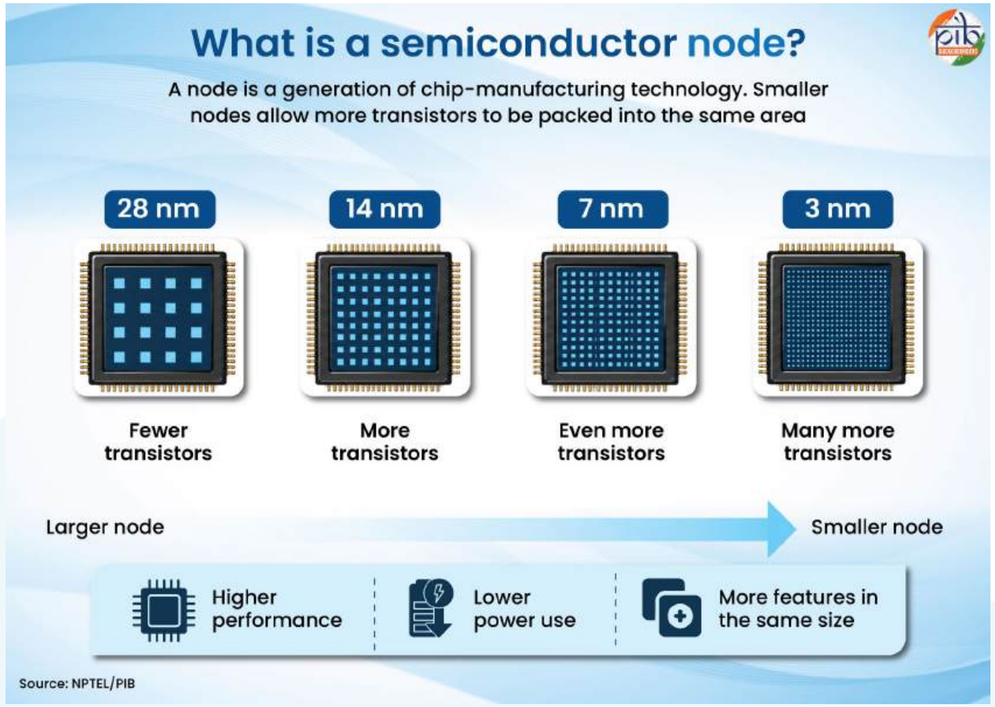


Together, these processes create the intricate structures that form billions of transistors and other components. During **photolithography**, patterns are transferred onto the wafer using light. These patterns define structures that ultimately form transistors, interconnects and other parts of a chip. Transistors are the microscopic electronic switches on the chip that control the flow of electrical current. The process is repeated across multiple layers to build complex integrated circuits.

Finished semiconductor devices then undergo **Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) or Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT)** processes. Packaging protects the chip and enables it to connect with other electronic components. Testing ensures that the finished devices meet required performance and quality standards.

Understanding Semiconductor Node

A semiconductor node identifies a generation of manufacturing technology. Historically, labels such as 90 nm, 45 nm and 28 nm tracked particular physical dimensions. Today, node names function mainly as shorthand for a process generation. A smaller node can enable higher transistor density, better performance or lower energy use, but the result also depends on circuit design, materials, packaging and the intended application. Advanced nodes attract attention because they support high-performance computing and leading-edge processors. Mature nodes remain essential for automobiles, industrial electronics, telecommunications, power systems and many consumer products. India is now building capabilities that extend from established nodes towards more advanced semiconductor technologies.



Why Semiconductors: A Strategic Perspective

Semiconductors have emerged as a **strategic resource for economic growth, technological leadership and national security.** Today, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, China and the United States dominate global semiconductor manufacturing. Taiwan alone accounts for over 60% of global chip production and nearly 90% of advanced chips. This concentration has highlighted the need for secure, diversified and resilient semiconductor supply chains. For India, domestic semiconductor capabilities are more than an industrial opportunity. They are essential for reducing import dependence, strengthening national security and creating high-value employment. They can also deepen technological self-reliance and reduce vulnerabilities across strategic sectors. No single country controls the complete semiconductor value chain. Different economies lead in chip design, fabrication, equipment, materials, memory and packaging. This specialisation has improved efficiency, but it also creates concentration risk. India's policy therefore focuses on trusted partnerships alongside stronger domestic capacity.

Semiconductors Power India's Strategic Missions

- Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL), Mohali develops flight-grade chips for satellites and launch vehicles, designed to withstand extreme space conditions.
- Chandrayaan-3's lander carried an Indian-made camera chip, supporting the lander's imaging systems.
- SCL's Vikram processor is used in satellite launch vehicles and rockets.
- Aditya-L1, India's mission to study the Sun, uses radiation-hardened ADC chips developed by SCL

India's Emerging Semiconductor Ecosystem

India's semiconductor journey has evolved from building strategic capabilities to creating a broader domestic ecosystem. Early institutions such as the Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL) laid the groundwork, while recent policy interventions have accelerated investment, innovation and talent development. These efforts are positioning India to participate across the semiconductor value chain.

Semicon 1.0: Laying the foundation

The Government of India approved Semicon 1.0 in December 2021, with an outlay of ₹76,000 crore. It aimed to establish a domestic semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem. The programme introduced dedicated Schemes for setting up Semiconductor Fabs and Display Fabs. It also introduced the Scheme for setting up Compound Semiconductors, Silicon Photonics, Sensors and Semiconductor ATMP/OSAT facilities. Additionally, the Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme strengthened India's semiconductor design capabilities. Together, these schemes established the foundation across chip design, fabrication, packaging and related technologies.

Semicon 1.0: Key Achievements

- **Twelve semiconductor manufacturing units** approved, carrying cumulative investment of over Rs 1.64 lakh crore.
- These include one silicon fab, one silicon carbide fab, one Gallium Nitride Micro LED Display Fab and nine ATMP/OSAT units.
- Units are located in Gujarat, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. Five units have commenced commercial production.
- **Twenty-four chip design projects** approved, with a total value of about Rs 900 crore.
- **More than 1 lakh engineers from 500 organizations across the country,** including 400 academic institutions and 100 start-ups have been provided access to advanced chip-design tools.
- Together, our organizations have developed **more than 300 chip designs.**
- India has established semiconductor cooperation with partners including the United States, Japan, the European Union, Singapore and the Netherlands.
- India signed a Joint Declaration of Intent on an India-Germany Semiconductor Ecosystem Partnership during the German Chancellor's visit from 12 to 13 January 2026, and joined Pax Silica at the India AI Impact Summit in February 2026.
- India hosts about 7% of the world's Global Capability Centres (GCCs) of Semiconductor domain and employs nearly 20% of the global semiconductor chip design workforce

Semicon 2.0: Building the Complete Ecosystem

Building on the foundation laid by **Semicon 1.0**, the Government of India approved **Semicon 2.0 in July 2026** with a total outlay of **₹1,27,500 crore.** The programme seeks to provide sustained and long-term support to India's semiconductor sector. It aims to deepen the capabilities created under Semicon 1.0 and accelerate the growth of a globally competitive semiconductor ecosystem. Semicon 1.0 concentrated mainly on fabs and ATMP/OSAT plants. Semicon 2.0 adds machines and materials, design, research and talent to the mission. Together, the two phases span the chain from raw materials to finished chips.

Semicon 2.0 rests on six pillars: design, machines and materials, setting up new fabs, further advanced packaging, research and talent development. Its purpose is to build **the complete chip value chain within the country, and not merely its closing stages.** This effort carries India towards supply chain resilience, strategic autonomy and high-value employment in a technology that now underpins every modern industry.

India's semiconductor ambitions are supported by a progressive policy ecosystem spanning manufacturing, infrastructure, investment, research and talent development. These measures have steadily strengthened the electronics value chain and created a foundation for semiconductor self-reliance.

Key Supporting Policy Ecosystem

- **National Policy on Electronics (NPE) 2019 –** Established the overarching framework for **Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM)**,

including core components such as chipsets.

- **Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS) (2020)** – Provides capital expenditure linked incentive for domestic manufacturing of components, sub-assemblies and semiconductors in order to strengthen the electronics manufacturing ecosystem in the country
- **Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters Scheme (EMC 2.0) (2020)** – Supports world-class infrastructure, common facilities and plug-and-play facilities for electronics manufacturing.
- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing (2020)** – Provides production link incentive to boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in mobile phones and components manufacturing.
- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme 2.0 for Information Technology (IT) Hardware (2023)** – To boost domestic manufacturing of IT Hardware and attract large investments in its value chain. It promotes domestic manufacturing of laptops, tablets, All-in-One Personal Computers and servers.
- **Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (2025)** – With an enhanced outlay of ₹40,000 crore (Budget 2026–27), to develop robust component manufacturing ecosystem by attracting investments across the value chain, leading to increase in Domestic Value Addition (DVA).
- **Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (2026)** – Aims to increase global competitiveness by further enhancing the scale, deepening the mobile manufacturing supply chain through higher domestic value addition (DVA) and stronger domestic manufacturing capabilities, and supporting Indian mobile brands.
- **Research, Development and Innovation Scheme** – Supports eligible research projects under **Semicon 2.0** and strengthens domestic semiconductor innovation.
- **100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Policy for Electronics Manufacturing** – Facilitates global investment and technology partnerships while integrating India with global electronics and semiconductor value chains.

These initiatives are creating the industrial base, market demand and investment environment needed for a resilient semiconductor ecosystem. They complement flagship semiconductor initiatives and advance India's goal of becoming a global electronics and semiconductor hub.

Towards an Advanced & Self-Reliant India

India's semiconductor story has advanced rapidly in a short period. In 2021, the country had no commercial chip plant. By 2026, twelve units stand approved, and five are in production. Students across hundreds of colleges are now designing chips. Semicon 2.0 is the natural next chapter in this account. It does not begin afresh. It takes a functioning ecosystem and completes it. Machines, materials, design, research and talent now join fabs and packaging. The road ahead is demanding. Chip manufacturing ranks among the most complex industries in the world. It requires patience, precision and steady policy support. Semicon 2.0 provides that support for the long term. For citizens, the gain will be quiet but real. Devices will be manufactured more fully within India. Critical systems will depend less upon distant supply chains. Young engineers will find high-value work closer to home. A small chip carries a large promise. India has resolved to build it at home.

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PIB Research

05

Vibrant Villages Programme

Strengthening India's Frontiers Through Inclusive Development

Published on: September 06, 2026

The **Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)** has redefined the role of India's border villages. They are no longer remote outposts. They are now **strategic partners** in national security and development. The programme is implemented through **VVP-I** and **VVP-II**, with a combined outlay of **Rs 11,639 crore**. It is expanding road connectivity, electricity, telecommunications, healthcare, education and livelihood opportunities across villages along India's international land borders. VVP seeks to build vibrant, resilient and prosperous border communities. It improves quality of life and creates sustainable economic opportunities. In doing so, it strengthens India's border security by sustaining thriving communities along its frontiers.

Why the Border Village Matters

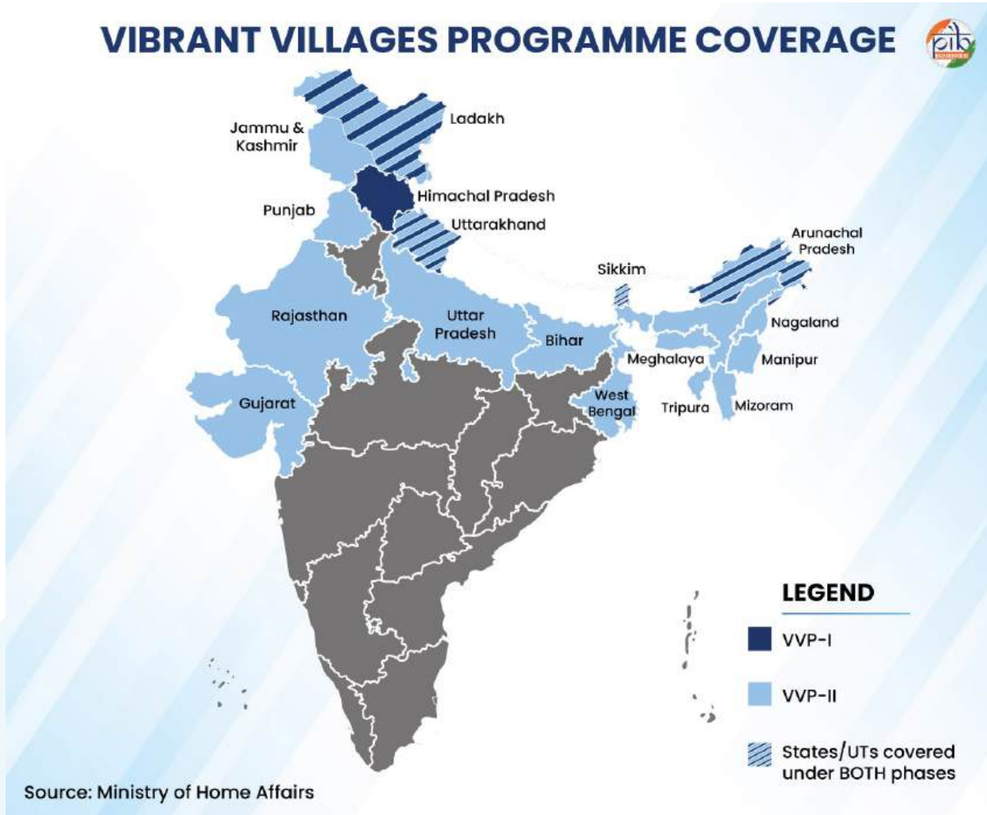
India shares over **15,000 kilometres (km)** of international land border with seven neighbouring countries. The longest stretch runs **4,096.7 km** along the border with **Bangladesh. China** follows at **3,488 km** and **Pakistan** at **3,323 km**. Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan and Afghanistan account for the remainder.

For decades, many border villages remained isolated by difficult terrain, weak connectivity, limited infrastructure and few livelihood opportunities. These challenges triggered out-migration, leaving several frontier areas sparsely populated. To address these longstanding issues, the **Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)** was launched in **2023**. It seeks to accelerate the comprehensive development of selected villages along India's borders. Recognising border residents as the **eyes and ears** of the border guiding forces, it aims to build vibrant, secure and prosperous frontier communities. The programme also marks a shift in perspective by treating these settlements **not as the nation's last villages, but as its first.**

Starting with northern border villages, the Government has expanded the programme across the entire land frontier in phases. Empowered border communities form the foundation of a **secure** and **strong Viksit Bharat@2047**.

Did You Know?

The first warning of the 1999 Kargil intrusion did not come from a radar or a patrol. On 3 May 1999, local residents were the first to report suspicious movement in the Kargil sector. This underscores the importance of border communities as the first line of defence for the nation.



Two Phases, One Frontier Mission

The Government is implementing the Vibrant Villages Programme in two phases that together cover India's entire international land border. **VVP-I** covers villages along the northern border. **VVP-II** extends the same approach to the other international land borders. Together, the

two phases aim to cover more than **2616 villages** with a combined outlay of **Rs. 11,639 crore**.

The two phases differ in design but share a single purpose. VVP-I is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** implemented with the States, while VVP-II is a **Central Sector Scheme** funded fully by the Centre. Both phases of the initiative aim to improve **living conditions, generate local livelihoods** and **empower border communities.** They work to strengthen the nation's border security by developing "first villages" as vibrant centres of growth.

VVP-I: Strengthening Northern Border Communities

The first phase of the **VVP** was announced in the Union Budget 2022-23 for villages along the northern border. It was launched at Kibithoo in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh on 10 April 2023. The villages in 46 blocks abutting northern border in 4 States and 1 UT in 19 Districts were identified out of which 662 strategic villages were taken on priority for comprehensive development covering a population of about 1.42 lakh. These are **Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand** and the Union Territory of **Ladakh**. The scheme was approved with an outlay of Rs **4,800 crore**. This covers the financial years **2022-23 to 2026-27**. Out of this amount, **Rs 2,500 crore** was earmarked for **road connectivity**. The programme aims to bridge the development gap in remote border villages. It strives to provide quality infrastructure and essential services to them comparable to those available elsewhere in the country.

VIBRANT VILLAGES PROGRAMME (PHASE I&II) AT A GLANCE

Combined Outlay: **Rs. 11,639 Crore**

Total Sanctioned Projects (VVP-I): **2,903**

Parameter	VVP-I	VVP-II
Ground launch	Kibithoo, Arunachal Pradesh, 10 April 2023	Nathanpur, Cachar, Assam, 20 February 2026
Type of scheme	Centrally Sponsored Scheme	Central Sector Scheme (100 per cent Central funding)
Outlay	Rs. 4,800 crore	Rs. 6,839 crore
Period	Currently 2026-27	FY 2024-25 to 2028-29
Border covered	Northern border	All land borders other than Northern border already covered under VVP-I
Coverage	662 Villages (Initial Phase), in 4 states and 1 UT	1,954 villages in 334 blocks, in 15 States and 2 UTs (Identified)

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

Vibrant Village Programme
Border Villages Covered Under First Phase

State /UT	Villages
Arunachal Pradesh	455
Himachal Pradesh	75
Uttarakhand	51
Sikkim	46
Ladakh (UT)	35
Total	**662**

Source: MHA

Did You Know?

Kibithoo was chosen to launch the VVP due to its strategic location, history and development needs. Located in Arunachal Pradesh's Anjaw district, it is among India's easternmost inhabited villages. The area witnessed fierce fighting during the 1**962 India–China War**. Remote terrain, sparse connectivity and out-migration have long constrained development. Launching the Programme from Kibithoo reflected the Government's vision of bringing development first to the nation's frontier.

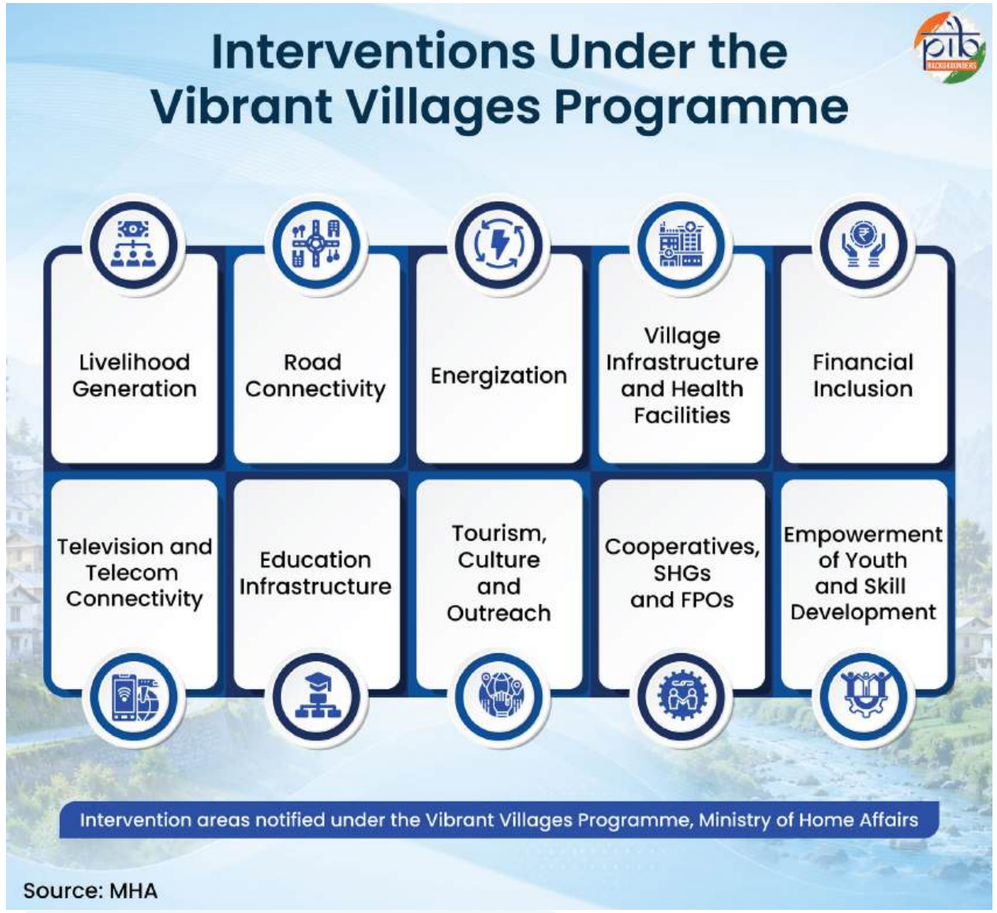
Key interventions under VVP-I

The programme supports **all-weather roads, drinking water, reliable electricity, mobile and internet connectivity, and essential healthcare and education infrastructure**. It also promotes **tourism** facilities and multi-purpose **community centres** to improve livelihoods and the overall quality of life.

Livelihood support is organised on a **hub-and-spoke model**. It encourages **social entrepreneurship, the empowerment of youth and women, the promotion of tourism and local culture, and one-block-one-product** enterprises. By creating convergence, VVP-I established the delivery model that the second phase now carries to the rest of the land border.

Did You Know?

India has been supporting **border villages for nearly four decades**. The **Border Area Development Programme (BADP)** was launched in **1986-87** along the western border. It was later expanded to cover villages within 10 km from the first habitation from international border. It covered 111 districts across 16 States and 2 Union Territories, and sanctioned over **39,000** development works since 2004-05. The programme is now in its sunset phase. Building on this foundation, VVP focuses on selected border villages. It ensures they receive every applicable government scheme, helping people stay in their villages and strengthen border security.



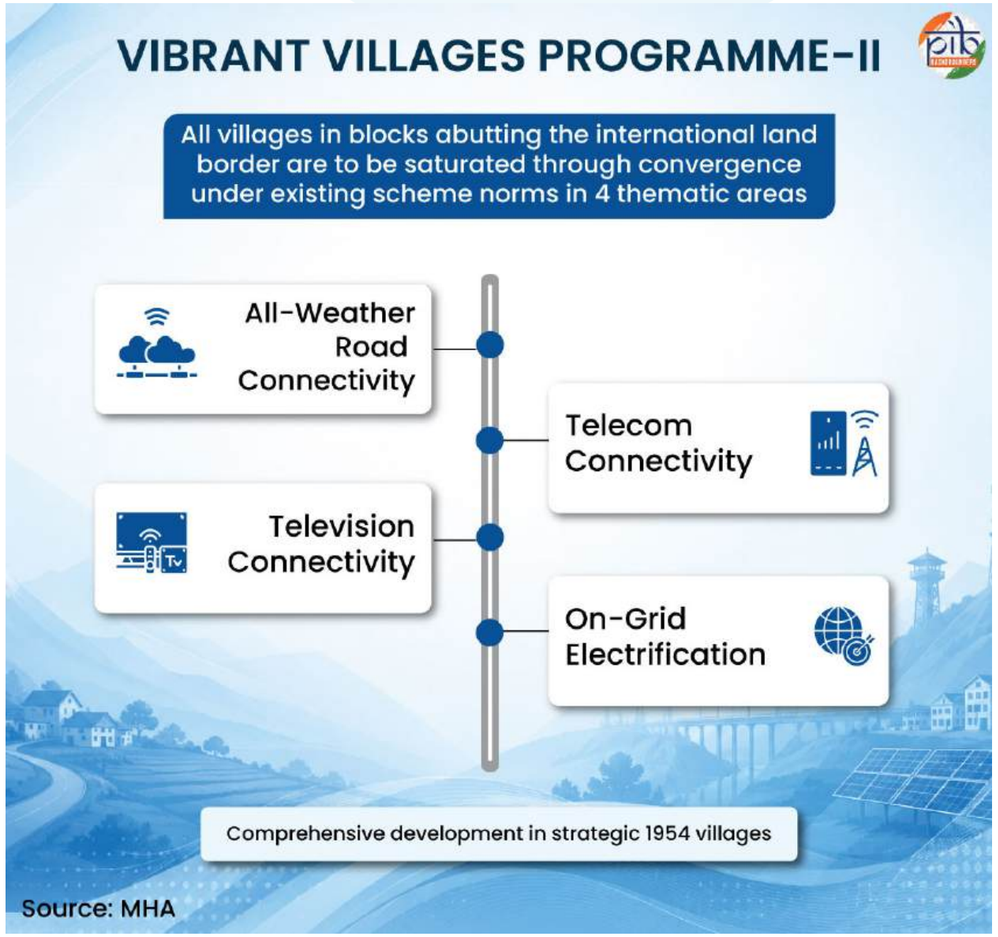
Source: MHA

VVP-II: Extending the Model to All Land Borders

The Union Cabinet approved VVP-II on 2nd April, 2025. Unlike the first phase, VVP-II is funded entirely by the Centre and implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). It was formally launched on 20th February, 2026 at Nathanpur village in Cachar district of Assam. The scheme carries an outlay of **Rs. 6,839 crores** till financial year **2028-29**.

It has identified **1,954** villages for comprehensive development in **334** blocks abutting the international land borders. These blocks lie in **15 States** and **2 Union Territories**. The States/UTs are **Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar**, **Gujarat, Manipur, Meghalaya,**

Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir (UT) and Ladakh (UT). Blocks on the northern border, already covered under VVP-I have been excluded to avoid duplication of efforts.



Did You Know?

VVP-II seeks to build prosperous and secure border areas. It places special emphasis on preventing and controlling **trans-border crime** through stronger border communities.

Interventions under VVP-II

The Government of India approved a comprehensive package under VVP-II to strengthen border villages. The scheme supports infrastructure, value chains through cooperatives and self-help groups (SHGs), SMART classrooms, tourism circuits and sustainable livelihoods. It also promotes road connectivity, healthcare, financial inclusion, skill development, and telecom connectivity. The objective is to improve living conditions, generate livelihoods and encourage people to stay in border villages. It extends the Vibrant Villages Programme to India's entire land border under a unified development framework.

Delivering Development Through Scheme Convergence

The VVP implementation is guided by **Village Action Plans**. This is to be achieved through border-specific, State-specific and village-specific interventions based on local needs. The programme follows **a convergence-based** approach, ensuring saturation of schemes under existing norms. All-weather roads are being developed under the **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)-IV** of the Ministry of Rural Development.

Since the border villages face unique challenges, a High-Powered Committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary may recommend relaxations in scheme guidelines to address them. The Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal ministry. It works closely with State Governments, district administrations and border guarding forces for coordinated planning and implementation.

Impact on the Ground

Since its launch, Vibrant Villages Programme-I has laid the foundation for inclusive and sustainable development in northern border villages.

As of July, 2026, the Ministry of Home Affairs has sanctioned **1,248 projects**

IMPACT OF VVP-I AT A GLANCE

Total Sanctioned Projects	2,903
Financial Outlay	**Rs. 4800 crore**
Completed Projects	**283** projects completed
Roads	**111** projects connecting **134** villages
Telecom	**528** villages connected to 4G
Utilities	• Piped drinking water to **625** villages • Electricity to **621** villages
Health & Education	• Mobile Medical Units – **40** • School infrastructure projects- **146**
Community Outreach Activities	**8800+**

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

*As of July 2026

with an outlay of **Rs. 3,020.32 crore.** A further **1,655 projects** have been sanctioned by Central Ministries and Departments under convergence. An amount of **Rs. 953.47 crore** has been released to the States and the Union Territories, while **283 projects** have been reported completed by them. A state/UT wise table for the sanctioned projects is given below.

S. No.	State or Union Territory	Projects sanctioned by MHA
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	832
2.	Himachal Pradesh	98
3.	Ladakh (UT)	79
4.	Sikkim	87
5.	Uttarakhand	152
	Total	1,248

Connectivity: roads and long span bridges

In all, **111 road projects** with an outlay of **Rs. 2,481.93 crore** have been sanctioned. These roads will connect **134 villages** that had no road access earlier. A total of **35 long span bridges** were also sanctioned under these projects. Better roads are expected to ease travel, widen local markets and support tourism in these villages.

Tourism as a new source of income

Tourism has become one of the most visible components of the programme on the ground. Under VVP-I, **327 tourism projects** with an outlay of **Rs. 145 crores** have been approved. These include viewpoints, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, eco-resorts, trek routes and tourist centres.

Outreach and service delivery

More than **8,800 activities** were held up to 31st July, 2026. These include awareness drives, service delivery camps, health and veterinary camps, and skill training. Arunachal Pradesh recorded 2,990 activities, and Ladakh recorded 2,221 activities. Uttarakhand held 2,038, Himachal Pradesh 1,037 and Sikkim 530 activities.

Did You Know?

The **Viksit Vibrant Village Programme** transforms border villages into living classrooms for India's youth. In 2026, over 400 volunteers from every State and Union Territory spent a week in 74 border villages across Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. They engaged in community service, cultural exchange and grassroots development.

VVP: Impact Beyond Infrastructure

The impact of the Vibrant Villages Programme extends beyond infrastructure to strengthen security, livelihoods, governance and community resilience.

Security: A populated and confident border belt supports the work of the border-guarding forces. Both phases seek to create a strong frontier population acting as a strategic asset to the nation.

Demography & Reverse Migration: Livelihood opportunities and improved connectivity give families reason to remain in the border villages. In Arunachal Pradesh, people of border villages of Kurung Kumey, Dibang Valley and Shi-Yomi districts are returning to their villages. This signifies the impact of the programme.

Economy: Border tourism, cooperatives, SHGs and Farmer Producer Organisations are creating a local income base in areas where economic opportunity was previously limited. Local procurement by the border guarding forces adds an assured market within the village itself.

Governance: The saturation approach brings every eligible household in these villages within the reach of existing Central and State schemes. Village Action Plans give the district administration a single instrument for sequencing that work across several departments.

Collectively, these four strands describe a single idea: that development and security are not competing claims on the frontier but reinforce one another.

Did You Know?

In Arunachal Pradesh, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) procures milk, vegetables, eggs and grains directly from vibrant villages. A border post thereby becomes a dependable customer for the farms beside it.

Towards a Connected and Self-Reliant Frontier

The Vibrant Villages Programme is a promise that India's frontier communities will share fully in the nation's progress. Better infrastructure, sustainable livelihoods and convergence of government schemes are creating opportunities closer to home. At the same time, border tourism and local enterprise are unlocking the region's potential. As these villages become more vibrant, prosperous and self-reliant, they will continue to strengthen India's borders and advance the vision of a secure, inclusive and **Viksit Bharat by 2047**.

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PIB Research

06

World Tourism Day 2026

India's tourism growth and the digital transformation

Published on: September 26, 2026

World Tourism Day 2026, to be observed on **27 September** under the theme **"Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence to Redesign Tourism"**, highlights the role of technology in shaping the future of tourism. In India, the sector is emerging as an important contributor to economic growth, employment, and livelihoods, contributing **5.22% to GDP** and supporting **8.46 crore jobs in 2023-24.** Domestic Tourist Visits reached **428.55 crore in 2025,** while Foreign Tourist Visits rose to 2.53 crore and foreign exchange earnings from tourism increased to **₹2,76,831 crore.** India is also strengthening its digital tourism ecosystem through e-Visa, the **Incredible India Digital Platform** and **NIDHI+**, with **AI** enabling more personalised and seamless travel experiences. Alongside digital innovation, initiatives such as **Swadesh Darshan 2.0, PRASHAD, cruise tourism** and tourism skill development are expanding destinations, improving visitor experiences and creating livelihood opportunities. India's World Tourism Day 2026 celebrations, highlights India's efforts to build a more connected, inclusive and sustainable tourism sector.

Tourism: Connecting Communities, Culture and Sustainable Development

Tourism brings people, places, and cultures closer. It creates opportunities for communities, supports livelihoods, and contributes significantly to economic development. Globally, travel and tourism contributed **US$10.9 trillion**, or **10% of global GDP**, in 2024, while supporting **357 million jobs** and generating **US$1.9 trillion** in international visitor spending.

As the sector grows, the way people travel and experience destinations is changing. Technology is becoming an increasingly important part of this transformation, with Artificial Intelligence emerging as the next major force shaping tourism. From improving decision-making to strengthening skills and enhancing visitor experiences, AI can help make tourism smarter, more inclusive and sustainable.

This changing landscape will take center stage on **World Tourism Day 2026,** observed on **27 September** in **El Salvador,** under the theme **"Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence to Redesign Tourism"**. The theme highlights how digital innovation and AI can reshape the future of tourism while improving the way destinations are experienced and managed.

India will mark World Tourism Day through a nationwide showcase of the country's diverse tourism, culture, and experiences. As part of the central celebration at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, Union Minister for Tourism Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat will unveil a series of key new initiatives. These initiatives will seek to strengthen India's tourism ecosystem and enhance opportunities for sustainable and inclusive tourism development. These include the launch of the National Digital Tourism Stack, an open digital public infrastructure initiative aimed at making tourism offerings more discoverable, accessible and trustworthy, and Dekho Apna Desh 2.0, focused on promoting tourism-ready, lesser-known destinations and enabling a more balanced distribution of tourist footfall.

The Ministry will also enter into strategic partnerships through MoUs with leading industry organisations to support destination visibility, digital outreach, experiential and sustainable tourism, and greater community participation under the Incredible India framework.

Expanding this vision regionally, Telangana will host a vibrant array of cultural programmes, workshops, tourism film screenings, concerts, and artisanal stalls showcasing food, handlooms, and handicrafts. The Telangana **State Tourism Awards** will also recognize contributions from **travel agents, tour operators, classified hotels, restaurants, independent hotels,** and other recognized segments of the travel industry.

The Delhi Government will mark the occasion with **"RANG • RAS • ROOH"**, a two-day celebration at **Baansera, the bamboo park at Sarai Kale Khan on the banks of the Yamuna, on 26-27 September,** bringing together art, culture, food, entertainment and experiences, including a special Qawwali evening by the Nizami Brothers.

World Tourism Day: Connecting Tourism with Sustainable Development

World Tourism Day is an initiative of the **United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).** It commemorates the adoption of the **UNWTO statutes in 1970.** First celebrated in **1980,** the day highlights the contribution of tourism to socio-economic development and its role in advancing the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

Tourism in India: From Journeys to Economic Opportunities

Tourism is much more than a journey from one destination to another. It connects people with India's diverse cultures, heritage and communities while creating opportunities for businesses and livelihoods. It also contributes to economic activity, employment and foreign exchange earnings, strengthening tourism's role in India's growth story.

The sector has gained significant momentum in recent years. The tourism sector's contribution to India's economy is measured through the **Tourism Satellite Account (TSA).** TSA is the official accounting framework used to measure the tourism sector's direct and indirect economic contributions. According to the latest TSA estimates cited by the Ministry of Tourism, the sector contributes **5.22% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).** Employment in the sector rose from **6.94 crore in 2019-20 to 8.46 crore in 2023-24,** reflecting its growing role as a source of livelihoods.

Travel on the Rise

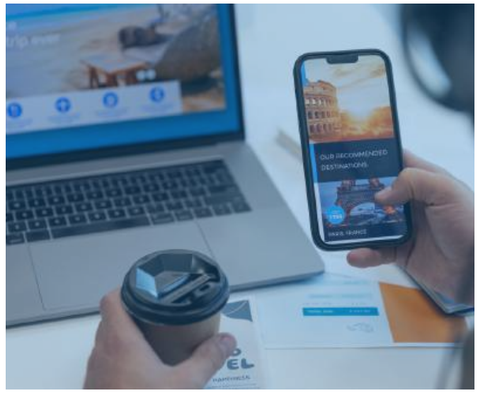
India has also witnessed strong growth in tourist movement. **Domestic Tourist Visits reached 428.55 crore in 2025,** up from **67.7 crore in 2021. Foreign Tourist Visits** rose from **0.1 crore to 2.53 crore** during the same period.

The sector's contribution to foreign exchange has also grown. **Foreign Exchange Earnings from tourism increased from ₹63,978 crore in 2021 to ₹2,76,831 crore in 2025.**

Redefining the Tourism Experience

From Physical Journeys to Digital Experiences

The way we travel is changing. Once, a map and a guidebook were enough to navigate a journey. Today, a smartphone helps us **discover, plan, and experience** a destination. Tomorrow, travellers may



simply describe the journey they want, and **Artificial Intelligence could help plan the rest.**

As traveller expectations evolve, tourism must evolve too. **Convenience, personalization, and seamless digital experiences** are becoming an important part of the journey. India is responding by making travel easier, strengthening digital tourism platforms and harnessing **technology and AI** to transform how travellers discover and experience the country.

e-Visa: Making Travel Easier

India has steadily simplified international travel through the **e-Visa facility,** introduced in 2014 with Electronic Travel Authorisation for nationals of 43 countries. The facility has since expanded significantly and is now available to nationals of **172 countries.** Entry is permitted through **88 international ports,** including **37 airports, 38 seaports and 13 land ports.** It is pertinent to mention

that India now issues roughly 78% of all visas as electronic visas. India also processes approximately **95% of e-Visa applications within 72 hours,** making travel more convenient and accessible for international visitors.

Incredible India Digital Platform: Bringing Destinations to the Digital World

The revamped Incredible India Digital Platform takes digital tourism a step further. It offers virtual experiences across India's **cultural, heritage, adventure, gastronomical, wellness, art and craft, and rural attractions.** Its AI-powered tool personalises visitor experiences through features such as **real-time weather updates, city exploration, and essential travel services.**

The platform also connects travellers with Online Travel Agents **(OTAs)** and other tourism stakeholders for booking flights, hotels, cabs and buses, as well as tickets for ASI monuments. Its integration with NIDHI provides information on registered tour operators and travel agents, bringing several parts of the travel journey together on one platform.

NIDHI+: Building a Digital Tourism Ecosystem

Digital platforms are also reshaping how tourism services are accessed and managed. **NIDHI+**, the National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry, provides a unified digital platform for the registration, recognition, and classification of tourism service providers.

It enables end-to-end online processing, integrated payments and transparent approvals, while improving ease of doing business. As of **23 September 2026,** NIDHI+ lists **63,740 accommodation units, 54 convention centres, 215 food business operators, 1,450 online travel aggregators and 15,531 tourism service providers.** The platform is helping build a more connected digital ecosystem for India's tourism sector.

Google India Partnership: Advancing AI in Tourism

India's digital tourism journey is also expanding through partnerships. In June 2026, the Ministry of Tourism signed an MoU with Google India to strengthen the digital promotion of Indian tourism through digital technologies, artificial intelligence, data-driven insights and capacity building.

The collaboration will draw on insights into global travel trends, traveler behavior and digital engagement patterns to support evidence-based tourism

promotion. It also includes training for Ministry officials in digital marketing, campaign optimization, content creation and emerging technologies, including AI.

Innovation Beyond Major Cities

Technology is also creating new opportunities for tourism entrepreneurs. As of **17 April 2023,** the travel and tourism sector had **1,497 DPIIT-recognised startups across 262 districts,** generating employment for nearly **13,919 people. Notably, 58% were based in Tier II and Tier III cities.**

These startups are working across travel technology, online booking, homestays, rural and experiential tourism, smart mobility, and AI-enabled travel planning. Notable initiatives include **Highway Delite,** which has created a digitally connected highway amenities network; **VilloTale,** which promotes rural tourism through homestays and community-based experiences; and **udChalo,** which provides technology-enabled travel services to over **2.8 million defence personnel,** veterans, and their dependents through digital platforms and a network of more than **70 booking offices.**

Multilingual Tourist Helpline: Support Around the Clock

The Ministry of Tourism provides a **24×7 toll-free multilingual Tourist Helpline** to assist domestic and international visitors. Available on **1800111363** or short code **1363,** the service offers travel information in **12 international languages,** including Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. It also assists tourists during distress and alerts concerned authorities when required.

India's Diverse Tourism Landscape

India's tourism strength lies in its diversity. From pilgrimage and heritage to wellness, wildlife, rural experiences and business events, each segment offers a distinct reason to travel. This diversity also creates opportunities for destinations, local communities and tourism businesses across the country.

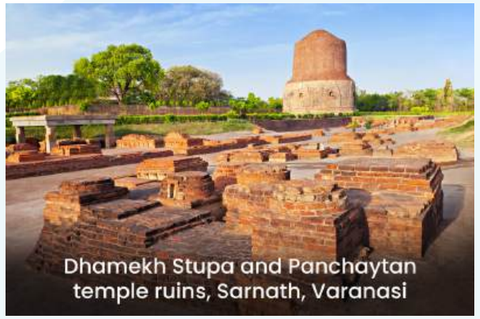
Buddha Statue, Bodh Gaya in Bihar

Spiritual and Pilgrimage Tourism

India is home to some of the world's most important pilgrimage and spiritual destinations associated with **Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism.** Destinations such as **Ayodhya, Kashi, Bodh Gaya, Amritsar, Tirupati and Puri** attract pilgrims and visitors from across India and abroad. Government initiatives such as **PRASHAD and Swadesh Darshan** are supporting the development of infrastructure and visitor amenities at religious destinations.

Buddhist Circuits and Cultural Linkages

India's Buddhist heritage connects it with communities and travellers across Asia. **Bodh Gaya in Bihar, Sarnath and Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh,** along with other sites associated with the life of the Buddha, form an important part of India's Buddhist tourism landscape. These destinations also highlight the country's deep historical and civilizational links with the wider Buddhist world.


Dhamekh Stupa and Panchaytan temple ruins, Sarnath, Varanasi

Heritage and Cultural Tourism

India's heritage is reflected in its **forts, palaces, temples, archaeological sites, museums and historic cities.** Its cultural appeal extends beyond monuments. Classical dance and music, festivals, handicrafts and regional cuisines allow visitors to experience traditions that continue to thrive across generations.

The ancient Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhgaya, Bihar

Wellness, Yoga and Medical Tourism

India's longstanding traditions of **Yoga, Ayurveda and other traditional systems of medicine** give the country a distinctive place in wellness tourism. These traditions are complemented by modern healthcare facilities and medical services. Together, they create opportunities for visitors seeking

wellness, preventive care and medical treatment.

Eco Tourism and Wildlife Tourism

India's diverse landscapes offer experiences ranging from **wildlife safaris and birdwatching to trekking and nature trails.** National parks, tiger reserves, wetlands, mangroves, forests and Himalayan landscapes provide opportunities to experience nature while supporting conservation. Responsible tourism can also create livelihood opportunities for communities around these destinations.

A houseboat sailing in Alappuzha backwaters in Kerala

Rural, Homestay and Community Based Tourism

Tourism is increasingly taking travellers beyond conventional destinations. **Homestays, village experiences, local cuisine, handicrafts, agriculture and community-led activities** offer a closer connection with local life. They can also create additional income opportunities for rural households, artisans and local

View of Mateura village in Jari nearly Kasol in Himachal Pradesh

enterprises. The Ministry of Tourism has also introduced initiatives to support homestays in rural and tribal areas.

Coastal, Cruise and Experiential Tourism

India's coastal and inland waterways are opening new avenues for tourism. **Sea cruise passenger traffic increased from 1.08 lakh in 2014-15 to 4.62 lakh in 2025-26,** recording a **328% growth.** International cruise terminals at **Visakhapatnam, Mumbai and Chennai** have been upgraded and operationalised. The East Coast Cruise Circuit has also been expanded with the addition of **Puducherry.**

Technology is further improving the cruise experience. A **QR-based immigration clearance system** has reduced immigration clearance time to about **30 seconds per passenger.** Digitised customs procedures and **e-Group Visit Visas** are also helping facilitate smoother entry for international cruise groups.

Lighthouse Tourism

Lighthouses have long served as **Marine Aids to Navigation,** ensuring safe and efficient maritime navigation. Today, they are also being developed as unique tourism destinations. Under **Section 23 of the Marine Aids to Navigation Act, 2021,** the Government is promoting the use of lighthouses for educational, cultural and tourism purposes while preserving India's maritime heritage.

Lighthouse Museums at Chennai, Mahabalipuram, Alappuzha, Kannur, Muttom, Dwarka and Gopnath showcase the evolution of lighthouse technology and India's maritime history. Tourism facilities have been developed at **75 lighthouses across the country,** helping preserve their historical and architectural significance while opening them to visitors.

MICE Tourism: Building India's Business Events Ecosystem

Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions, or **MICE tourism,** is an important part of India's tourism strategy. The Ministry of Tourism has formulated a **National Strategy and Roadmap for the MICE Industry** to support the sector's growth. India is strengthening its MICE infrastructure through major venues such as **Bharat Mandapam, Yashobhoomi** at Delhi and **Jio World Centre at Mumbai.** The Government has also identified the potential to develop at least **10 Indian cities,** particularly in South India, as global MICE destinations.

The global MICE industry is projected to grow from **USD 870 billion to more than USD 1.4 trillion by 2030.** With India currently holding a 5% global market share, the country is well-positioned to capitalize on this expanding market.

BRICS: Strengthening Tourism Cooperation

India's **BRICS Chairship** in 2026 also placed tourism cooperation on the international agenda. The **BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting,** held in Jaipur in August 2026, concluded with the adoption of the **Jaipur Declaration.** The declaration focuses on four priorities: **Artificial Intelligence and Tourism, sustainable and responsible tourism, tourism skilling and capacity building, and tourism exchanges with seamless travel facilitation.** It also supports cooperation in tourism planning, destination management, visitor services, multilingual communication and travel facilitation.

G20: Taking India's Tourism Story Across the Country

India's G20 Presidency brought international attention to destinations beyond the traditional metropolitan centres. **More than 200 meetings were held across 60 cities,** creating an unprecedented geographic footprint for the G20 events.

The meetings brought together India's heritage, local crafts, regional cuisines and cultural experiences with a global audience. They also demonstrated the country's capacity to host major international events across diverse destinations.

Infrastructure-Led Destination Development

India's tourism development is increasingly focused on creating **integrated destination ecosystems,** rather than developing attractions in isolation. Under **Swadesh Darshan 2.0,** the Ministry of Tourism is following a destination- and tourist-centric approach focused on sustainable and responsible tourism, tourism experiences, and amenities.

Connectivity remains an important part of this approach. Since its inception, A total of **687 RCS UDAN routes connecting 95 airports** have been operationalized. The Modified UDAN scheme for **2026-27 to 2035-36** has an approved outlay of **₹28,840 crore,** with plans that include the development of **100 airports and 200 modern helipads.** These measures are intended to improve regional and last-mile access to tourist destinations, particularly in underserved areas.

Together, these efforts are widening the tourism map of India. They are connecting more destinations, creating new experiences and bringing tourism closer to communities across the country.

Government Initiatives to Boost Tourism

Swadesh Darshan Scheme

Swadesh Darshan was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in **2014–15** to develop tourism circuits around identified themes across the country. Under the scheme, the ministry has sanctioned **76 projects** with an investment of **over ₹5,295.24 crore** across **15 thematic tourist circuits.** Of these, **75 projects** have been physically completed. The programme has developed infrastructure across the Buddhist, Coastal, Desert, Eco, Himalayan, North East, Ramayana, Rural, Spiritual, Tribal and other thematic circuits.

Building on this, **Swadesh Darshan 2.0** adopts a destination-centric approach, focusing on sustainable and experience-based tourism. **53 projects, worth ₹2,207.08 crore,** have been sanctioned to develop destinations through better planning, infrastructure, and visitor experience.

Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD)

The **Challenge-Based Destination Development (CBDD)** initiative is a sub-scheme of **Swadesh Darshan 2.0.** It focuses on undertaking the holistic development of tourist destinations, enhancing visitor experiences, and promoting **sustainable and responsible tourism.**

So far, **37 projects worth ₹687.99 crore** have been sanctioned for destinations with high tourism potential, covering **spiritual and eco-tourism categories.**

PRASHAD Scheme

The **Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)** was launched in **2014-2015** to develop tourism infrastructure at identified pilgrimage and heritage destinations. The scheme provides financial assistance to States and Union Territories for integrated development of these destinations, with interventions focused on visitor facilities, accessibility, cleanliness, safety, and local livelihoods.

Since the launch of the scheme, the Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned **54 projects worth ₹1,726.18 crore** under PRASHAD. The scheme has supported interventions such as **tourist facilitation centres, sound and light shows, parking facilities, ghats, solid waste management systems, solar panels and CCTV installations** to improve the visitor experience, sustainability and safety at pilgrimage destinations.

Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI)

The **SASCI scheme for tourism** supports the development of iconic tourist destinations to global standards. It focuses on better tourism infrastructure, connectivity and visitor facilities. The scheme also seeks to create employment and support local economic growth. Under the scheme, **40 projects** across **23 States** have been approved. The scheme received **₹3,295.76 crore in FY 2024–25,** with **100% Central funding.**

For **FY 2025–26,** the amended guidelines allow eligible States that did not avail

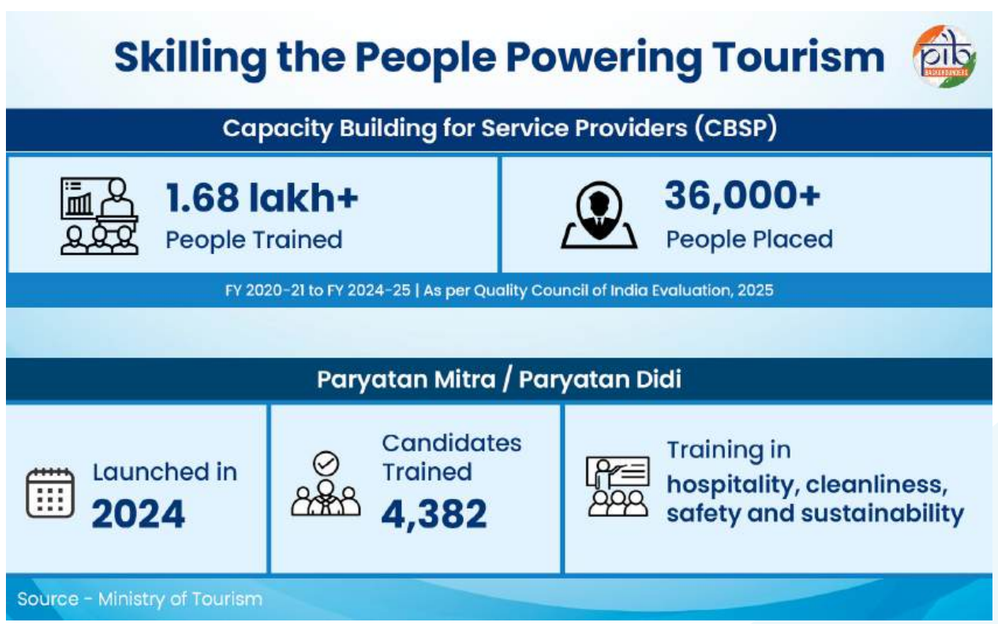
funds under Part III of SASCI 2024–25 to receive **up to ₹250 crore** for tourism projects under Part II. Under these provisions, **₹250 crore each has been sanctioned and released to Nagaland, Mizoram, and Himachal Pradesh** for tourism projects.

Investing in the People Behind Tourism

India's tourism sector is strengthened by investing in the skills of people who serve visitors. Under **Capacity Building for Service Providers (CBSP),** the Ministry of Tourism provides short-term training for skilling, upskilling, and reskilling. It covers local communities, tribal areas and youth from underprivileged backgrounds. **Hunar Se Rozgar Tak** is also implemented under the scheme.

Training is delivered through government and empaneled private institutes, including **Institutes of Hotel Management, Food Craft Institutes and the Indian Culinary Institute.** A **Quality Council of India evaluation in 2025** found that CBSP trained over **1.68 lakh people** and placed more than **36,000** between FY 2020–21 and FY 2024–25.

The **Paryatan Mitra/Paryatan Didi** initiative, launched in 2024, trains local service providers in hospitality, cleanliness, safety, and sustainability. Around **4,382 candidates** have been trained. Training covers **cab and auto drivers, transport staff, hotel and restaurant workers, homestay owners, guides, police personnel, street vendors, shopkeepers, and students.** Women and marginalized communities are also included.



The Ministry is also revising the CBSP curriculum and adding tourist destinations based on industry needs. Partnerships with **21 Central Institutes of Hotel Management and eight leading hospitality groups** further strengthen professional training.

The Next Destination is Digital

The future of tourism will not be shaped by technology alone, but by how effectively it is used to make journeys more personalized, destinations more sustainable, businesses more competitive and tourism more inclusive. The **World Tourism Day 2026** theme reflects this changing landscape, where **Technology, Data and Artificial Intelligence** are becoming integral to the tourism experience.

India's expanding **digital platforms, AI-enabled services, destination development, connectivity and skill-building** efforts are helping create a more seamless and connected tourism ecosystem. As India continues to strengthen this tourism architecture, the next destination is not only digital, but also inclusive, sustainable, people-centered, and world-class.

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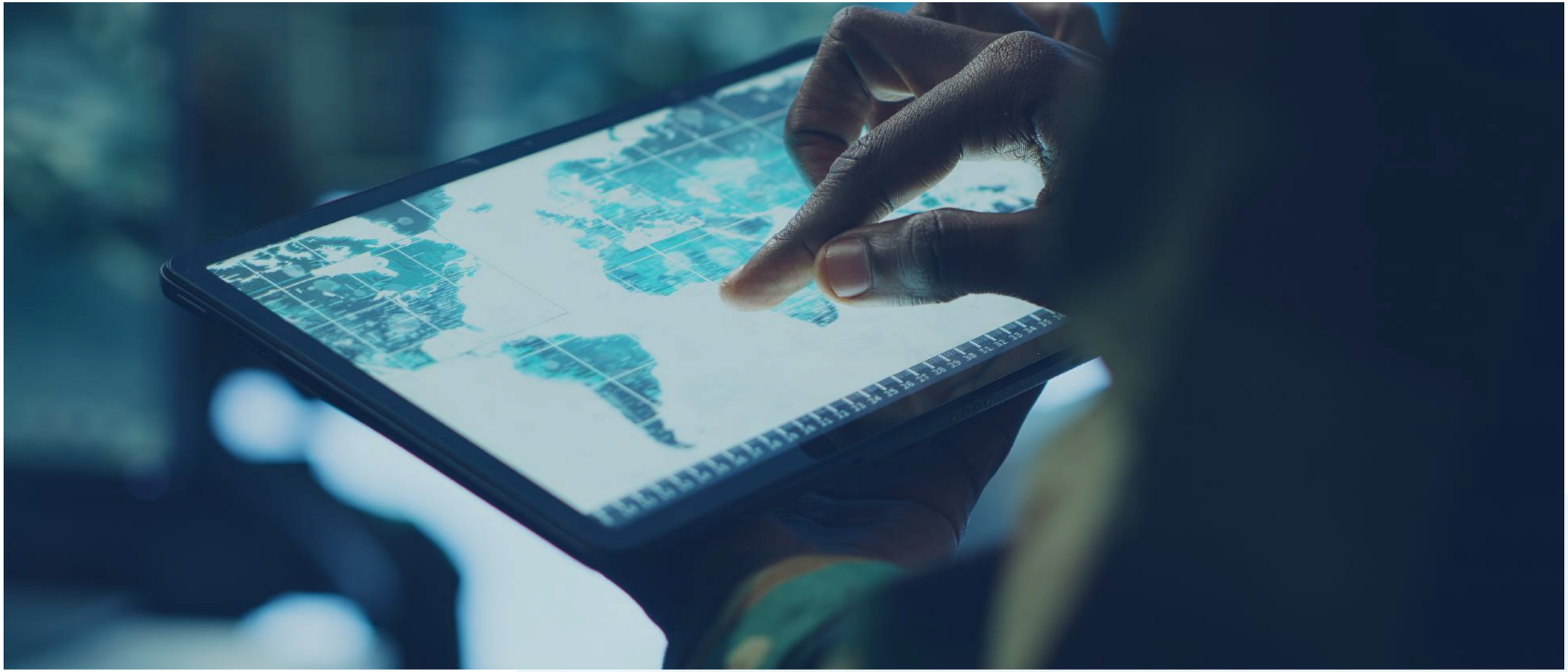


07

Districts as Export Hubs

Taking India's Exports to Every District

Published on: September 02, 2026

While India's export journey has been marked by impressive growth, sustaining this momentum requires a more inclusive approach to development. The Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) Initiative is a framework to realise inclusive export growth, which transforms every district into a center of export planning by identifying products and services with global potential and connecting local producers to international markets. Building upon the One District One Product (ODOP) concept, DEH adopts a convergence-based approach, bringing together Central and State schemes, institutions and industry. By unlocking district-level strengths and connecting them to international markets, DEH is driving employment generation, strengthening MSMEs and making India's export growth more inclusive and globally competitive.

Why India Needed a District-Led Export Model

Exports have become a key engine of India's growth story. Every rupee earned from overseas markets adds to jobs, incomes and industry at home. India's total exports of goods and services touched an all-time high of **US$ 825.25 billion in 2024-25**, growing further to an estimated **US$ 863.11 billion in 2025-26**. For decades, export activity stayed concentrated around a handful of established industrial clusters and port cities. Small towns, rural districts and remote regions rarely found their way into shipment manifests, even though many held unique, high-quality products. Products such **as Bastar's iron craft, Jalgaon's bananas and Meghalaya's Mandarin Oranges** reflected this untapped strength.

Recognising this opportunity, the Government brought in a **district-led export strategy in the form of Districts as Export Hubs Initiative**, enabling every district to contribute to India's export growth by leveraging its unique strengths.

From ODOP to DEH: Evolution of the Framework

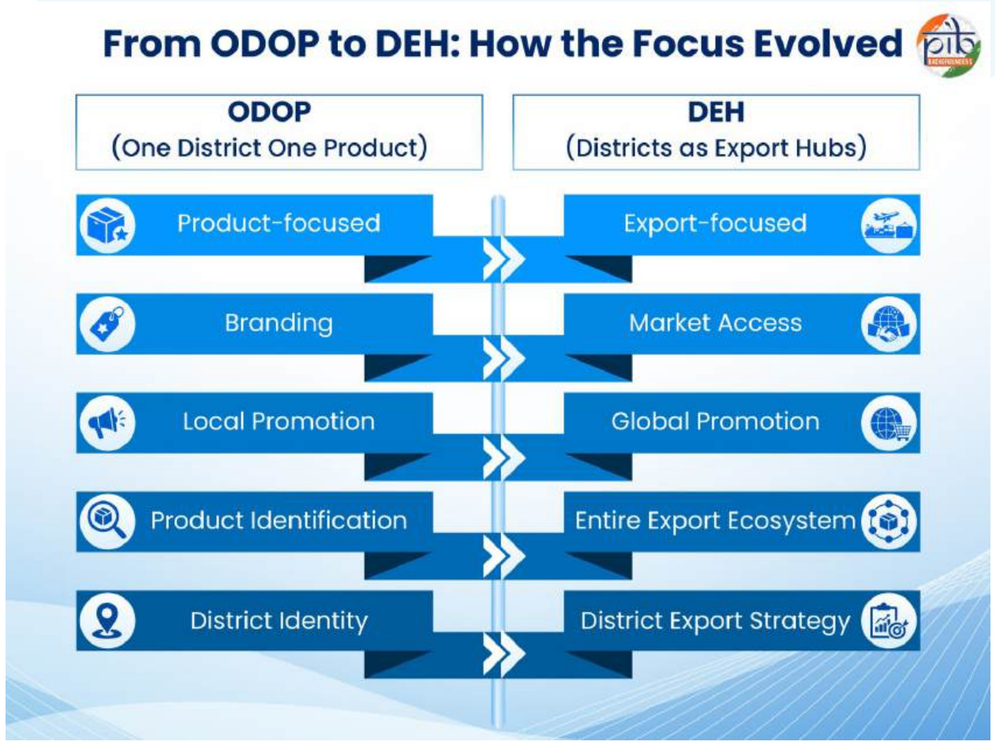
The **Districts as Export Hubs (DEH)** initiative is launched to harness the strengths and resources of every district and unlock its export potential. Each district is treated as a **unit of export planning, not merely a unit of production.** It is helping local enterprises access global markets, improve competitiveness and drive district-led economic growth. It also aligns with India's broader vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Vocal for Local.

The story of DEH begins with the One District One Product (ODOP) programme. ODOP set out to select, brand and promote **one distinctive product from each district**, converting local identity into economic opportunity

Did You Know?

ODOP began as a Uttar Pradesh state initiative in 2018. It was built around Moradabad's brass industry, before it was scaled nationally.

To strengthen this approach, the Department of Commerce **through the DEH initiative** under the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has expanded the focus from **product promotion to a comprehensive export promotion and ecosystem strengthening.** As on January 2026, the DEH initiative covers **more than 770 districts across the country**, reflecting its expanding reach and stronger integration with overall export planning.



DEH is best understood as a convergence framework, not a funding scheme. Rather than introducing a separate financial scheme, DEH leverages the funding available under various ongoing central and state schemes. It promotes exports, manufacturing and employment generation at the grassroots level. In doing so, it addresses district-specific export challenges and enhance district export competitiveness.

The Institutional Architecture

DEH runs on a layered system of coordination between the Centre, States and districts. The Department of Commerce provides overall policy direction, while the DGFT anchors implementation, facilitates stakeholder coordination and monitors progress.

- At the **State level, State Export Promotion Committees (SEPCs)** guide implementation and ensure convergence across departments.
- At the district level, **District Export Promotion Committees (DEPCs)**, identify export opportunities, resolve local challenges and coordinate with industry, exporters and other stakeholders.

A key responsibility of the DEPCs is preparing **District Export Action Plans (DEAPs)**. These plans map products and services with export potential, assess infrastructure and logistics, identify export bottlenecks. They also recommend interventions to improve competitiveness and market access. As of March 2026, draft DEAPs have been prepared for 590 districts, of which 249 stand formally adopted by the respective DEPCs.

Building District-Level Export Ecosystems

Exports require more than a competitive product. DEH helps districts to build exporter capacity and address awareness gaps in export related logistics, quality standards and market access to strengthen their export readiness.

Mapping products and services

DEH identifies export-worthy products and services across districts. These include **GI-tagged products**, agricultural clusters, and toy clusters, engineering goods etc. District-specific mapping helps prepare targeted export strategies. Some of the products with export potential include:

Product	District	State
Ceramic & Tiles, Potato	Sabarkantha	Gujarat
Minerals, Agro-processing, Glass and Tiles	Aravalli	Gujarat
Jalgaon Banana, Jalgaon Bharit Brinjal	Jalgaon	Maharashtra
Orange	Agar Malwa	Madhya Pradesh

Bastar Iron Craft, Rice, Jowar, Maize	Baster	Chhattisgarh
Bamboo Craft, Cashew	Jamtara	Jharkhand

The list of DEH products across districts can be accessed here .

Meeting global standards

Once identified, these products must meet international quality benchmarks. DEH **supports** to generate awareness and build capacity regarding **quality standards**, testing facilities, packaging, branding and certification, helping local goods clear global compliance requirements.

Enabling digital export

Digital access has enabled hyper-local reach and expanded market access for all businesses, even those located in remote regions. Partnerships with **e-commerce platforms** under the DEH initiative such as Amazon, Shiprocket, and DHL provide MSMEs with cost-effective courier shipping alternatives to buffer against freight rate volatility. **Dak Ghar Niryat Kendras** extend this reach by offering low-cost postal export facilities for documentation, packaging and small consignments.

Building capacity & Outreach

To build export readiness, DGFT Regional Authorities along with district administrations conduct capacity building and awareness programmes covering **logistics planning, export procedures, packaging norms, and regulatory compliance.** Various ecosystem partners have actively contributed to the successful implementation of these outreach programmes. They include Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC), Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), Ministry of MSME, India Post, and Exim Bank. These events have provided valuable skills to exporter to overcome identified concerns. They also focus to enhance awareness about challenges associated with e-commerce adoption, such as payment-related issues, trust and buyer verification.

Fostering Grassroot Initiatives for Development

DEH is supported through partnerships with specialised institutions. DGFT has partnered with **EXIM Bank** to strengthen export ecosystems in selected districts. As part of the collaboration, six districts - **Anantapur, Raipur, Solan, Tiruppur, Kanpur and Kolhapur**-have been selected for support under EXIM Bank's **Grassroots Initiatives for Development (GRID)** programme. The initiative addresses sector-specific constraints, identifies potential beneficiaries and develops district-specific interventions to enhance export competitiveness.

Did You Know?

Tiruppur, India's knitwear capital, achieved record exports of ₹46,000 crore in FY 2025-26. The Tiruppur Exporters Association has now set an ambitious target of ₹1 trillion in exports by 2030. This is in line with India's goal to increase textile exports from $38 billion to $100 billion by 2030.

Focused Approach for DEH Implementation

To fast-track implementation, the Government has adopted an outcome-oriented, focused and phased approach under Districts as Export Hubs Initiative from **1st June 2026**. In the first phase of the implementation, **districts across 27 States and Union Territories have been covered**, with support from **24 DGFT Regional Authorities** and **11 partner agencies**. The focus is on measurable outcomes such as new exporter registrations and increasing value of exports through convergence of ongoing central & state schemes, leveraging GI products and MSME clusters.

Together, the DEH framework is helping districts overcome long-standing structural constraints and translate local production strengths into export opportunities.

The Road Ahead

Districts as Export Hubs marks a shift in India's export strategy from concentrating growth in a few industrial centres to unlocking the potential of every district. By combining local strengths with better export capacity, market access and institutional support, the initiative is creating a more inclusive and resilient export ecosystem.

As India moves towards its **US$1 trillion export ambition**, stronger coordination between the Centre, States and districts is fundamental. This will transform **local economies into engines of trade, investment** and **employment**, expanding export-led growth across the country.

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08

The Last-Mile Architects of Rural Transformation

Published on: September 20, 2026

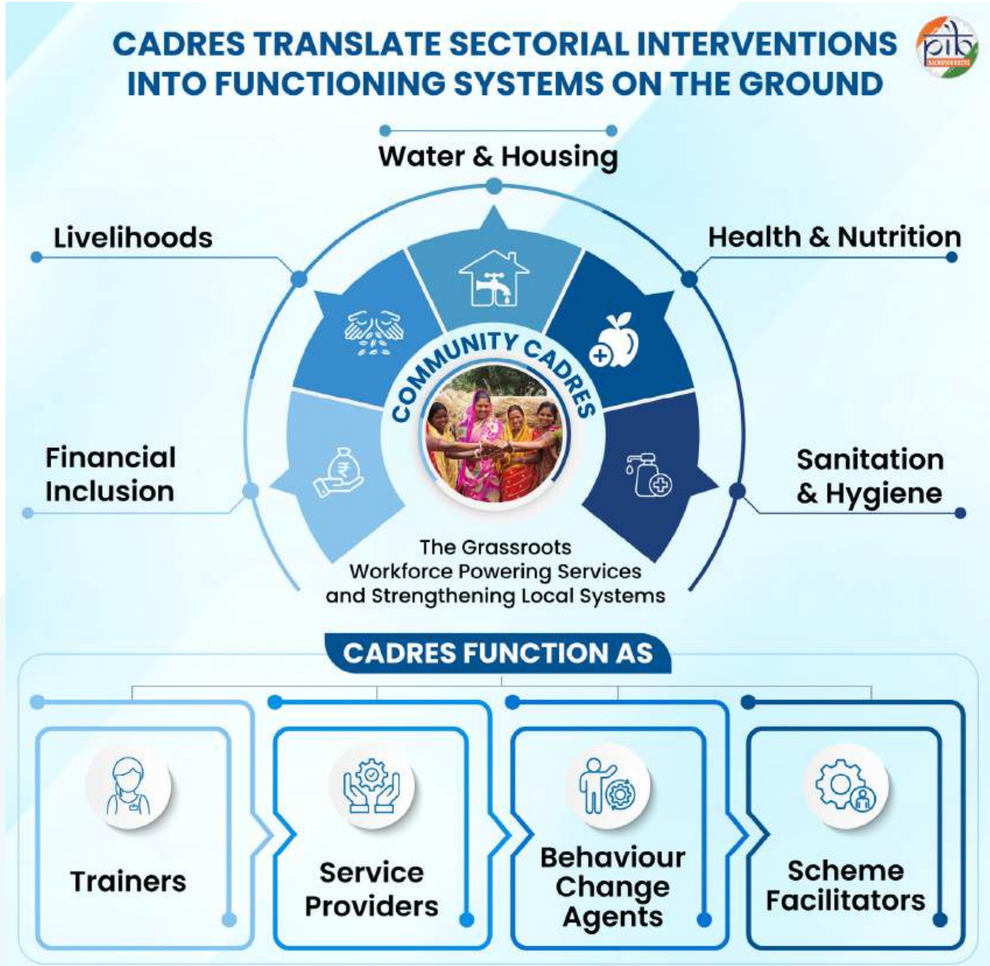
A network of trained grassroots workers forms the backbone of decentralized service delivery. These workers support the implementation of government programmes, mobilize communities, and provide timely assistance at the village level. Across the country, more than **9 lakh** Community Resource Persons (CRPs), along with ASHAs, Anganwadi Workers, Swachhagrahis, Awaas Mitras, and other frontline workers, are bridging the gap between institutions and rural households. Out of the 9 lakh CRPs, nearly **4.08 lakh** are livelihood CRPs supporting agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forest produce, and enterprise development. Other CRPs extend their services across areas such as gender awareness, financial literacy, and community development. Furthermore, in health and nutrition, over **10.40 lakh** ASHAs and **10.58 lakh** trained Anganwadi Workers are strengthening community healthcare and early childhood services. Across sectors, these grassroots cadres are enabling convergence and strengthening local institutions.

Community Cadres Powering Last-Mile Delivery

Over the past decades, the Government has made substantial investments in rural development across multiple sectors like livelihoods, health, nutrition, sanitation, drinking water, housing, financial inclusion and employment through various programmes. A key enabler in these interventions has been the presence of a dedicated network of frontline workers who facilitate continuous engagement with rural communities and play a vital role in strengthening the last-mile delivery. This network includes over **10.40 lakh** Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA), **10.58 lakh** Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), in health and nutrition. Over **9 lakh** Community Resource Persons (CRPs) are active at the grassroots, serving areas such as agriculture, banking, insurance etc. Of these, nearly **4.08 lakh** CRPs work on livelihoods in agriculture and allied activities and rural enterprises, and are variously known as Krishi Sakhis, Pashu Sakhis, Matsya Sakhis, and Van Sakhis. The remaining nearly **5 lakh** CRPs work as Bank Sakhis, Business Correspondent Sakhis, Financial Literacy CRPs, Bima Sakhis, and Gender Champions, providing essential support across other specialized areas, like financial inclusion, financial literacy, insurance, gender awareness, and community development. In addition, there are frontline workers like Swachhagrahis, providing sanitation support.

Through awareness generation, capacity building, service support, and improved access, these **local frontline workers strengthen the link between institutions and communities.** This connection helps improve access to services, supports programme implementation, and coordinates service delivery at the household level.

The Cadre Approach in Action: Sector by Sector, Village by Village



Source: Ministry of Jal Shakti; Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; Ministry of Women and Child Development; Ministry of Rural Development

The Community Cadre Approach is a decentralized mechanism to ensure the effective last-mile delivery of services through a trained grassroots workforce. These community cadres perform multiple interrelated roles. As trainers, **they build capacities** through **peer learning and skill dissemination.** As service providers, they ensure **access to essential livelihood and financial services** at the community level. As **behaviour change agents,** they promote awareness and encourage the **adoption of improved practices in health, sanitation, and social inclusion.** As scheme facilitators, they enable access to government programmes by assisting with **documentation, linkage, and convergence.**

Frontline rural cadres receive compensation as per the respective scheme guidelines issued by the Government which is generally activity-based with incentives tied to service delivery outcomes, task fulfilment, and community mobilization efforts.

Livelihoods at Scale from Farms to Enterprise

For rural households, livelihoods are often constrained by limited access to knowledge, services, credit, and markets. The Government of India has therefore strengthened community-led approaches by building institutions that enable rural households to access livelihoods, financial services, social development interventions and government programmes closer to their homes. Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) is central to this approach. It has established one of the country's largest networks of women-led community institutions, mobilizing more than **10 crore rural households into around 92 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** across the country.

Besides Village Organizations and Cluster Level Federations, these institutions are supported by a large network of Community Resource Persons (CRPs) working across different thematic areas. More than 9 lakh community cadres are supporting rural communities across areas including agriculture, livestock, fisheries, enterprise promotion, banking, financial literacy, insurance, and social development. They help bridge gaps in access to opportunities across both farm and non-farm sectors. The CRPs are drawn from the community and receive training, field-based handholding, and continuous capacity building in their respective areas of work.

Community cadres such as Krishi Sakhi, Pashu Sakhi, Matsya Sakhi, and Community Resource Persons for Enterprise Promotion (CRP-EP) play a key role in rural livelihoods. This community-based workforce is enabling rural women to move beyond participation in development programmes to becoming trained service providers, community leaders and local change agents.

Livelihood CRPs

These CRPs are active in both farm and non-farm sectors. The **farm livelihood** CRPs are trained community cadres that support SHG members and rural households in adopting improved agricultural practices, strengthening livestock management, improving productivity and accessing livelihood services. As of June 2025, more than **4.62 crore Mahila Kisans** had been covered under farm livelihood interventions, supported by more than **3 lakh trained livelihood CRPs.**

Krishi Sakhis play a central role in strengthening agricultural livelihoods. They work closely with farmers, promoting sustainable agriculture and marketing of agricultural products. As mentioned in the Annual Report 2025-26, over **1.91 lakh Krishi Sakhis** have been mobilized, significantly enhancing the reach of grassroots agricultural extension. In forest-based regions, **Van Sakhis** contribute by supporting the collection, cultivation, and value addition of non-timber forest products. Around **2,993 Van Sakhis** are providing field-level support and disseminating knowledge.

Allied sectors are also being served by community cadres, including **Pashu Sakhis** and **Matsya Sakhis.** Around **1.70 lakh Pashu Sakhis** have been mobilized, and livestock-rearing households are receiving support to improve animal health, reduce input costs, and enhance productivity. Similarly, over **2,012 Matsya Sakhis** are extending assistance to **enhance** fisheries-based livelihoods and **improve** market access.

Beyond farm and allied activities, there is a growing emphasis on **non-farm livelihoods** through enterprise development. Community Resource Persons for Enterprise Promotion (CRP-EP) and Udyog Sakhis are supporting households in identifying viable business opportunities, preparing enterprise plans, facilitating access to credit, and establishing market linkages. With nearly **48,785 Udyog Sakhis** supporting non-farm livelihoods and CRP-EPs providing specialized support under the **Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP),** a strong institutional network has been established to promote rural entrepreneurship.

As of June 2026, 4.32 lakh enterprises have been supported under SVEP. This effort is further institutionalized through dedicated enterprise promotion initiatives operating across hundreds of blocks in multiple States and Union Territories. Additionally, building on this institutional network, the Government is implementing the **National Campaign on**

Entrepreneurship to train **50,000 CRPs on enterprise promotion** and provide **enterprise development training to 50 lakh SHG members.**

Finance at the Frontlines

Business Correspondent (BC) Sakhis and Bank Sakhis are trained women community cadres promoted under the DAY-NRLM who function as grassroots financial intermediaries. Over **1.48lakh BC Sakhis** provide a range of digital, doorstep financial services in villages, including account opening, deposits, withdrawals, fund transfers, and balance inquiries over 50,548 branch-level Bank Sakhis facilitate credit linkage. **Till date,** Bank Sakhis have helped SHGs access **₹13.41 lakh crore** in bank credit since 2013-14.

This ecosystem is further supported by **56,727 Financial Literacy CRPs,** who conduct village-level awareness campaigns. They also promote informed financial decision-making in coordination with bank-led Financial Literacy Centres. During 2025-26, more than **3.81 crore women SHG members** were provided financial literacy training covering financial planning, savings, credit, insurance, pension, enterprise financing and business correspondence.

Balancing Banking and Business: A BC's Inspiring Journey

In the villages of Nagaon, Assam, Debashree Gogoi Bora's journey highlights how BC Sakhis are transforming rural banking while creating diverse livelihood opportunities. Introduced to the programme by a neighbour, she began with basic banking transactions, later obtaining a Common Service Centre (CSC) ID and setting up a Customer Service Point (CSP).

For over five years, Debashree has helped villagers access financial services locally, including benefits under schemes such as PM Kisan and Arunodoi. Serving 30-35 customers daily, she provides doorstep banking support and processed over **2,500 transactions** between April and August, earning a monthly commission of **₹10,000–₹17,000.**

Alongside banking, she runs a Desktop Publishing (DTP), Photocopying, and photo printing service, while her home-baking skills support local celebrations. With her husband's support, she continues to manage multiple ventures. Her plans to shift the CSP to a dedicated shop reflect her commitment to expanding services. Debashree's story showcases how BC Sakhis are strengthening financial inclusion and building sustainable rural enterprises.

Community Cadres for Social Development

The community institution architecture under DAY-NRLM extends beyond livelihoods and financial inclusion to social development. Community cadres support interventions relating to gender, nutrition, health, sanitation, social inclusion and access to government services. DAY-NRLM has also strengthened convergence between its community institutions and frontline systems of other Government programmes such as Anganwadi Workers, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives and ASHAs in strengthening community engagement, reaching household levels.

Health & Nutrition in Every Home

Improving health outcomes requires more than infrastructure; it relies on awareness creation and active community involvement. This is where health frontline cadres play a central role. **As of 31st December 2025, over 10.40 lakh** ASHAs serve as the first point of contact in India's healthcare system.

They act as a crucial bridge between communities and essential health services. As community-based volunteers, ASHAs work flexibly beyond fixed hours, respond to local needs, and receive performance-based incentives under national health programmes.

Complementing them, **Anganwadi Workers (AWWs)** anchor nutrition and early childhood care under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Poshan 2.0. They screen and identify children with Severe Acute Malnutrition and Moderate Acute Malnutrition (SAM/MAM), deliver supplementary nutrition, and promote behavioural change on child feeding, breastfeeding, hygiene, and sanitation.

The Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi initiative aims to improve the quality of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) through the Anganwadi system. It seeks to equip AWCs with improved infrastructure, play-based learning materials, and well-trained AWWs. As part of this initiative, capacity building of AWWs has been prioritized to strengthen ECCE. By **March 2026, over 10.58 lakh AWWs** had been trained, enhancing the quality and reach of early childhood services at the grassroots level.

Sanitation and Hygiene Scaling Behaviour Change

Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) aims to provide people with sustainable sanitation and hygiene services. At the core of this effort are Swachhagrahis, who are the foot soldiers of the SBM. They are the motivators for bringing about behaviour change with respect to key sanitation practices in rural India. Ideally, each village has at least one Swachhagrahi, with preference given to women. A Swachhagrahi is a volunteer who can come from a diverse background. It includes ASHA, ANMs, AWW, and other community-level local staff. It also includes water linemen workers, pump operators, and members of the general village community.

As per the SBM(G) Capacity Building Dashboard, over **10.36 lakh** functionaries and **36,342 master trainers** have been trained. This has strengthened implementation and behaviour change efforts across rural areas.

Swachhata Didis: Turning Waste into Livelihoods in Bastar

In the forested heart of Bastar, waste was once an invisible crisis, characterized by scattered plastic, unmanaged dumps, and the absence of a clear system to deal with it. Villages struggled with poor sanitation, and the burden quietly grew on both people and the environment. Change began through the Swachh Bharat Mission, as women from Self-Help Groups stepped forward as Swachhata Didis to lead community waste management.

What started small soon expanded across 114 villages and 71 Gram Panchayats with the setting up of Solid Liquid Resource Management (SLRM) centres. These centres created a systematic process for waste collection, segregation, transport, processing, and recycling.

The SLRM Centres generated over **₹12.22 lakh** in revenue in **a single year,** compared to **a total of ₹15.20 lakh** earned over the entire previous five years (2017–22). Additionally, women from SHGs in rural areas earned **₹2.50 lakh,** combining payments from Panchayats **(₹1.52 lakh)** and material recovery facilities **(₹97,553)**. The **Swachhata Didis** manage waste, change mindsets, revive neglected systems, and prove that sustainability can go hand in hand with livelihoods.

Reliable Water Access through Local Cadres

In line with the **73rd Constitutional Amendment,** Jal Jeevan Mission promotes village-level planning and community participation through Panchayati Raj Institutions. Gram Panchayats and their sub-committees, Village Water & Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) or Pani Samitis, are empowered to plan, implement, operate, and maintain in-village water supply systems. VWSC members are selected through the Gram Sabha. The committees ensure at least 50% representation of women and include **Panchayat members, representatives from SC/ST communities, and underprivileged households,** while liaising with local **ASHA workers** to monitor water quality and health indicators. They are responsible for water security at the village level. It includes managing funds, maintaining bank accounts, setting user charges, preparing budgets, and ensuring proper use and upkeep of water systems. As per the Jal Jeevan Mission's dashboard, **over 5.33 lakh VWSCs/Pani Samitis** are operational across the country.

Similarly, the Nal Jal Mitra Program trains community members as **"Nal Jal Mitras"** to strengthen local capacity. They are trained in technical skills like plumbing, electrical work, and pump operation. Such skills enable them to manage and perform minor repairs to water supply systems

Homes Built with Community Support

Awaas Mitras are field-level facilitators under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), supporting implementation, monitoring, and beneficiary assistance in rural housing. Each sanctioned house is linked to a village-level functionary, such as a Gram Rozgar Sahayak, Awaas Sahayak, Awaas Mitra, or an SHG member. They ensure continuous support and follow-up until the house is completed. Through this structured support system, PMAY-G aims to construct **4.95 crore** houses by **March 2029.**

Community Cadres Turning Systems into Services

Cadres drive transformation through a sequential pathway of access, awareness, capacity building, and service delivery.

They begin by identifying eligible beneficiaries within their communities, improving access to government services. They facilitate enrolment by assisting with documentation,

Awaas Mitras Enabling Safe Housing – Sumati Debbarma's Journey to a Pucca Home

Awaas Mitras play an important role in the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G). They help beneficiaries at every stage, from identifying eligible families and completing documentation to monitoring construction and ensuring the timely completion of houses. The story of **Smt. Sumati Debbarma** from Rangacherra Gram Panchayat in Mohanpur Block, West Tripura, shows how this support changes lives.

She lived with her daughter in a dilapidated kuccha house. The weak roof, mud floor, and fragile walls made it unsafe, particularly during the monsoon. With the support of an Awaas Mitra, she availed financial assistance under PMAY-G and successfully completed the construction of her house in 2022. She received **₹1.30 lakh** in three instalments through Direct Benefit Transfer, linked to construction progress and geo-tagging.

Throughout the process, the Awaas Mitra guided her at every step, handled documentation, monitored construction, and coordinated with the Block Administration. With this support and community participation through shramdaan, Sumati completed her pucca house on time. Her new home provides a safe and secure place to live, improving her quality of life and protecting her family from harsh weather.

verification, and bank account linkages. They also raise awareness of financial services, government programmes, and digital platforms. Their trusted presence within communities encourages behaviour change and improves service uptake.

Continuous handholding and capacity building in financial literacy, livelihoods, and enterprise development strengthen household capabilities and promote self-reliance

Convergence at the Household Level: The Real Transformation

Convergence at the household level is based on the idea that a single rural household should be connected to multiple dimensions of development simultaneously. These include **livelihoods, health, sanitation, and financial inclusion.**

Beyond the traditional sector-specific roles, cadres are now equipped to address multiple dimensions of household well-being. For example, ASHA workers, while primarily responsible for maternal and child health, are also trained in sanitation, nutrition awareness, and **responding to violence against women.**

Rising Against Odds: Aarti's Grassroots Leadership Story

Aarti, a 32-year-old woman from Thanwa Mudiyari Gram Panchayat in Basti district, Uttar Pradesh, grew up in a financially vulnerable household. She could not complete her education and was married at a young age. Her family lived in a kuccha house and depended on her husband's migrant income.

In 2016, she joined a Self-Help Group, which boosted her confidence and community participation. She went on to become an office-bearer in the SHG, the Village Organization, and later the Cluster Level Federation. Her journey took a new turn when she became a **Convergence Community Resource Person (CCRP)** under the Panchayati Raj Institutions-Community-Based Organizations (PRI-CBO) Convergence Project.

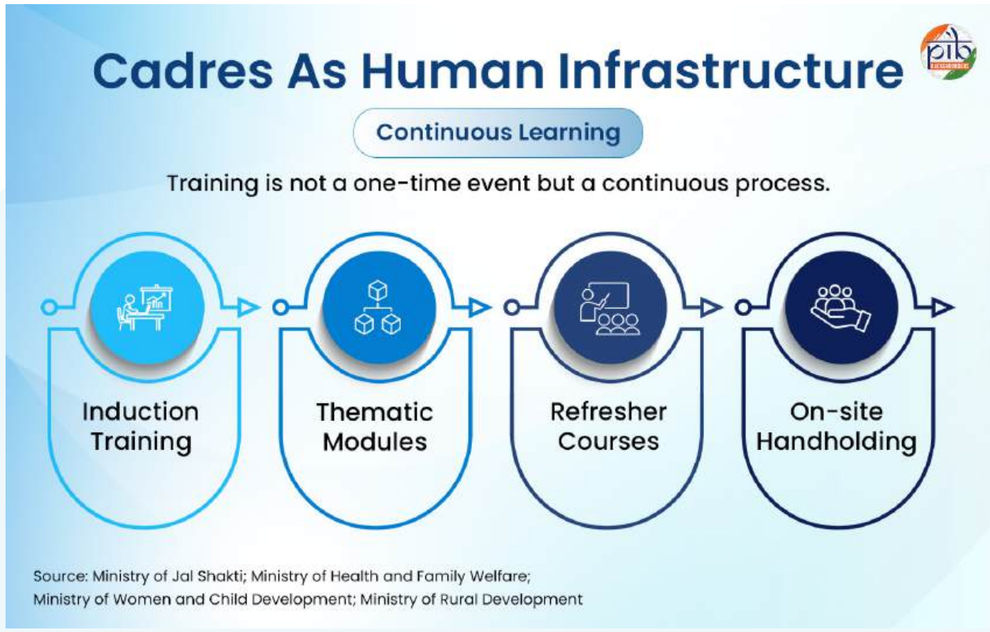
She helped mobilize villagers, supported the **establishment of a weekly market**, and strengthened links between the Panchayat, frontline workers, and rural households. Her work also contributed to her family's income.

Inaugration of Literacy classes by women elected representatives in Mudiyari, Basti. Aarti is the one draped in yellow saree.

In similar lines, Gender CRPs under NRLM play a critical role in addressing deeper social issues such as **gender-based violence, exclusion, and inequality.** Their role strengthens social inclusion and ensures that development interventions are equitable and responsive to the needs of all sections of society. As emphasized in the joint advisory of the **Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Women & Child Development, and the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare,** frontline cadres are the **last-mile enablers of convergence**. As a result, convergence moves beyond coordination on paper to creating **tangible improvements in the quality of life of rural households.**

Continuous Capacity Building for Community Cadres

Capacity building is no longer a one-time exercise but a continuous process that combines induction training, thematic modules, refresher courses, field mentoring, and on-site handholding. It is systematically institutionalized under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). It has developed a diverse cadre ecosystem, including Krishi Sakhis, Pashu Sakhis, Matsya Sakhis, and CRP-Eps, trained through a blend of classroom instruction and field immersion in agriculture, allied sectors, and community mobilization.



The same learning architecture is reflected across sectors:

Health and Nutrition: ASHAs undergo phased training spread across the year (23 days), supported by field-based tools and regular skill reinforcement.

Sanitation: Swachhagrahis are trained to promote behaviour change and sustained sanitation practices.

Water Security: VWSC members and Jal Sakhis are trained in village water planning, water quality monitoring, and operation and maintenance of water systems.

Housing: Awaas Mitras are trained to support beneficiary identification, construction monitoring, and convergence with other schemes.

These cadres demonstrate a common institutional design: **continuous capacity building, decentralized knowledge transfer, and sustained community presence.**

The Human Backbone of Rural Transformation

Frontline community cadres have emerged as trusted partners in translating government initiatives into meaningful outcomes at the household level. They build **awareness, strengthen capacities, facilitate access to services, and promote convergence** across sectors. Their efforts ensure that development reaches those who need it most. As rural India continues to evolve, sustained investment in these community-based institutions and frontline workers will remain essential to strengthen service delivery, improve livelihoods, and promote social inclusion, thereby building resilient, empowered, and self-reliant rural communities.

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PIB Research

09

India Cine Hub

Streamlining Film-Shooting Permit Applications

Published on: September 22, 2026

The India Cine Hub (ICH) is a single-window digital portal that simplifies film permits, visa processing, and vendor access for domestic and global creators. Managed by the National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC), it eliminates multi-state bureaucratic friction by consolidating state approvals, police clearances, and co-production applications into one central system. This streamlined approach makes filming across India faster and far more accessible, helping fuel the country's rapidly growing entertainment economy.

Making Filmmaking Easy in India

India, renowned for its rich cultural art forms and vibrant films, is steadily emerging as a global powerhouse in film, television and online content creation. This sector alone generated USD 13.1 billion in revenue in the financial year 2024, up 18 percent since 2019. This growth is expected to continue at a rate of 6-10 percent in the coming years and is estimated to reach a combined revenue of about USD 17.5-19.7 billion in the financial year 2029. Fuelled by a young population, a rapidly expanding 5G network, and ultra-affordable data, India is rapidly expanding its content ecosystem.

India is not just producing films and digital content; it is also a thriving filming location for domestic and international filmmakers. Its diverse geography spans from the scenic Himalayas to the white-sand beaches in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Featuring UNESCO World Heritage sites like Rajasthan's forts and palaces, India has emerged as an attractive location for filmmakers and tourists alike.

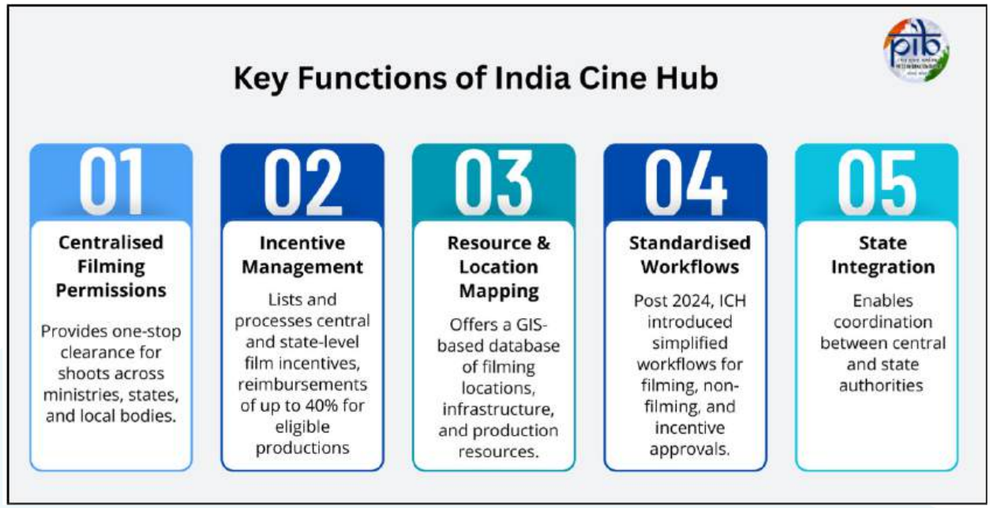
The Government has been initiating a series of reforms to further incentivise filmmaking in India. One key measure the government has put in place is streamlining shooting permits for films and live events across Indian locations through the India Cine Hub (ICH).

The **India Cine Hub (ICH)** is a digital, single-window platform designed to streamline the process of obtaining film permits across the country. By simplifying regulatory procedures and facilitating coordination with relevant authorities, it promotes **ease of doing business** and strengthens India's position as an attractive global filming destination. Through collaboration with States and Union Territories, the platform also enables them to showcase their diverse filming locations, infrastructure and resources, creating opportunities for tourism and local economic development. By bringing greater efficiency, transparency and accessibility to the filmmaking process, the **India Cine Hub** is creating a more enabling ecosystem for filmmakers and supporting India's emergence as a preferred destination for film production.

Beyond film permits, the platform is expanding to support Live Event Permissions as the core digital infrastructure for the Live Events Development Cell (LEDC). Through a venue-mapping approach, event proposals are routed to relevant local authorities and nodal officers for centralized coordination-with 9 premier venues already onboarded.

India Cine Hub: Single Portal for Film Permits

Run by the National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC), the ICH acts as a digital single-window portal for filming permits. The NFDC is mandated to promote Indian cinema. Furthermore, it operates as an organisation under the Indian Union Government.



NFDC: Promoting the Indian Film Industry

The NFDC was established in 1975 by the Government, and it is mandated with the promotion and growth of the Indian film industry. Over time, it expanded by absorbing the Film Finance Corporation, Indian Motion Picture

Export Corporation, and, following a 2020 government mandate, the Films Division, Directorate of Film Festivals, National Film Archive of India, and Children's Film Society, India. Today, it serves as a fully integrated entity for film development, production, promotion, and preservation across all Indian languages.

Main Focus:
1. Co-produces film projects through public-private partnerships.
2. Provides line production for foreign shoots in India and overseas animation services.
3. Hosts **Film Bazaar India**, a major South Asian co-production and distribution market alongside the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa.

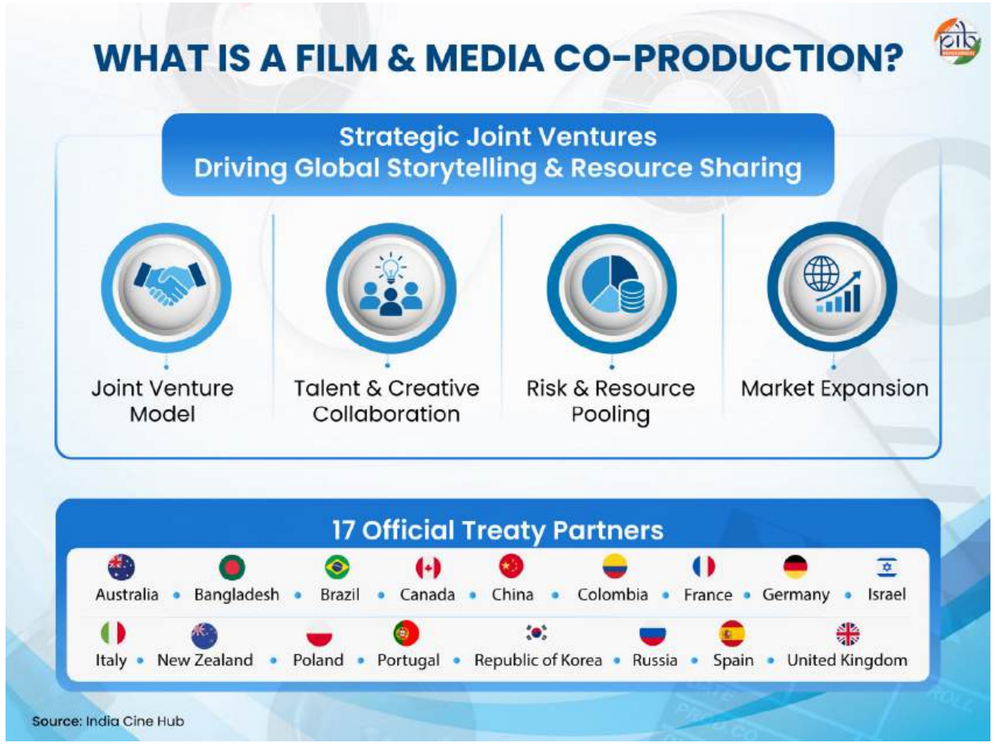
Core Principles
Mission: Foster cinematic excellence and cultural diversity by supporting multilingual Indian films.
Vision: Drive domestic and global appreciation for independent Indian cinema.

Objectives:
a.Nurture talent via script development, workshops, and co-productions.
b.Promote Indian culture through cinema worldwide.
c.Maintain an agile organisation responsive to industry needs.

Features of India Cine Hub

The India Cine Hub offers the following features to creators interested in filming content or hosting live events in India:

1. Provides a unified portal for domestic and international creators to apply for filming permissions. It integrates state-level systems, providing a common application form for states without online processing.
   - International creators can apply for filming permissions through the ICH, which facilitates obtaining a Film Visa.
2. Processes applications for permission to undertake co-production ventures and provides detailed guidelines regarding such treaties.
3. Offers comprehensive guidelines on film visas, regulations, aerial filming, animal filming, forests, and filming at monuments.



4. Provides a comprehensive GIS-based location directory and information on shooting locations, relevant permit authorities, and India's filming hubs.

India's Film Cities

India has various major production hubs, employing over 1.6 lakh people. The cities with such hubs are Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Thiruvananthapuram/ Kochi, Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, and Delhi. Of these, three are established and pivotal film cities: Film City in Mumbai (Maharashtra), Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad (Telangana), and Noida Film City in Noida (Uttar Pradesh). These cities are contributing to India's emergence as a one-stop destination for media and entertainment services by attracting filmmakers from across the world.

Mumbai Film City

The Mumbai Film City in Goregaon, Mumbai, is one of the largest studio complexes in the world and has all the facilities that filmmakers need. It covers more than 520 acres and has approximately 42 outdoor shooting locations. Film City boasts a varied natural topography including hills, valleys and ravines, flat open spaces, natural woods, shrubbery and water bodies. The Film City was established in 1977 by the Maharashtra state government, and it was renamed Dadasaheb Phalke Chitranagari in the year 2001 to commemorate the founder of the Indian film Industry.

Ramoji Film City (Hyderabad)

Ramoji Film City, set up by Ramoji Group in 1996, was certified by the Guinness World Records as the world's largest film studio complex. It is also the world's largest integrated film city and India's only thematic holiday destination. Nearly 40 Indian films can be produced simultaneously in the complex, manned by a workforce of 6,000 personnel. It is spread over 2,000 acres, provides over 500 locations, and can cater to 20 international films simultaneously.

Noida Film City

The Noida Film City has various film studios and media houses. It houses satellite channels, multiplex offices, publication companies, radio broadcasting, audio industry giants, and film companies. It is spread across 100 acres. It has 16 studios and 350 channels broadcasting to 162 countries. It is the hub of television and media businesses. Around **17,000 media professionals** are engaged in Film City, generating a wider economic impact through employment and livelihood opportunities for approximately **1.5 lakh people** across associated and supporting sectors.

Development of New Film Cities

Digital content and media are now one of the largest media segments in India. India is also one of the youngest (15-29 years) consumers of digital content, with a large cohort of content creators. This generation is not only driving demand for global content but also actively shaping trends through short-form video, gaming, live streaming, and vernacular content platforms. India's internet footprint is also expanding. Internet subscribers increased from 25.15 crore in 2014 to **109.2+ crore** at the end of March 2026. Wireless data cost dropped drastically from Rs.308/GB in 2014 to Rs. 7.51/GB in 2026, making digital services more affordable. 5G services are now available in 99.9% of districts across all States and Union Territories.

With rising demand for digital content led by a digitally savvy consumer base, and expanding internet infrastructure coupled with affordable wireless data services, this sector is expected to explode. To keep up, states such as Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Bihar are building film city infrastructure in collaboration with private players. Driven by regional cinema and filming incentives from states, employment in the segment may grow at ~3.2%, leading to employment of about 200,000 people across the country by 2030. India is rapidly transitioning from being the world's largest consumer base for digital content to becoming a formidable global powerhouse in content creation, innovation, and distribution.

5. Lists verified film and non-film resource directories detailing local vendors across states, including:

a. Post-production companies
b. Property rentals
c. Filmmakers and talent
d. Film studios
e. Equipment rentals
f. Casting agencies
g. Catering units
h. Hotels and accommodations
i. Medical facilities
j. Security services
k. Travel operators

Promoting Indian Tourism Through Made in India Films

Indian films have often led to higher tourism. One of the many such films that promoted the Indian film industry is **3 Idiots**. After the movie, tourist arrivals in Ladakh increased 2.4-fold, according to the EY-FICCI Report. Similarly, **Krrish** filmed in Singapore through a collaboration with the Singapore Tourism Board, boosted Indian tourists in the country from six to seven million. Beyond

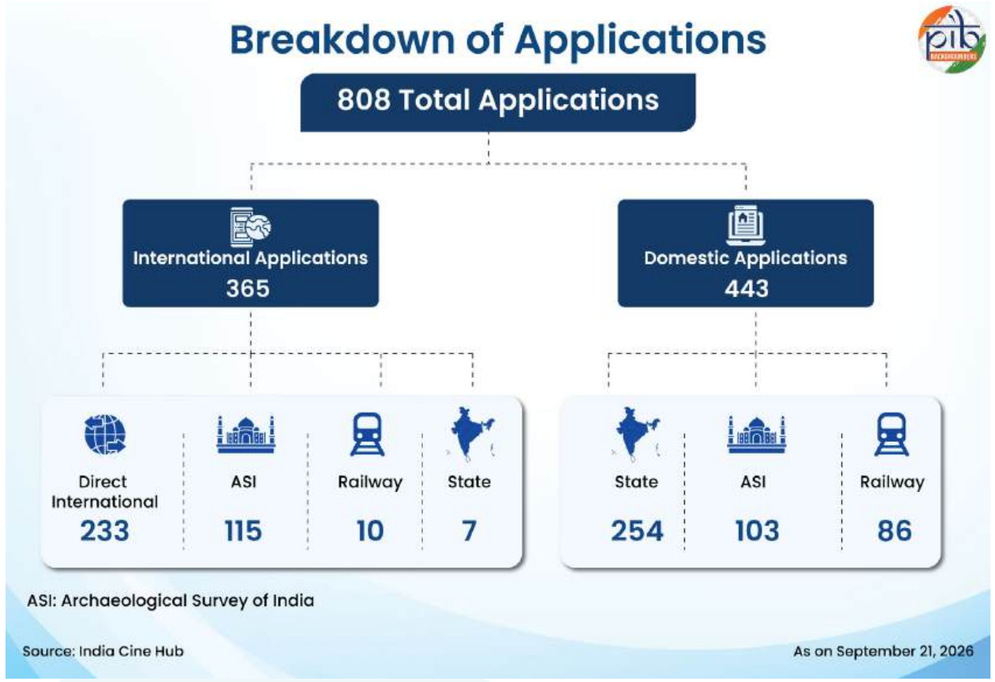
domestic hits and regional favorites like Rajasthan, India's visual diversity and cost-effective production environment continue to attract major global projects, ranging from Oscar-winning films like **Slumdog Millionaire** and **Life of Pi** to original productions by global streaming platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime.

Madhya Pradesh won the **"Most Film Friendly State"** award at the 68th National Film Awards for its inclusive tourism ecosystem, while states like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Keralam and Uttarakhand actively lure filmmakers with infrastructure incentives, government location fee waivers and subsidies of up to Rs. 2 crore. Film tourism generates local employment and pours into local rural economies, while showcasing and preserving India's cultural heritage.

6. Built with robust encryption, the portal is scalable to handle large volumes of applications and user traffic

Additionally, a dashboard tracks total applications, providing a breakdown of approvals across state, national, and international levels.

centralised, single-window platform that simplifies the regulatory processes associated with film production. Filmmakers can apply online for shooting permits, while applications are digitally



Positioning India as a Premier Filming Hub

India's film industry, among the world's largest, plays an important role in promoting film tourism by bringing lesser-known destinations into the public imagination and transforming filming locations into travel attractions that showcase the country's diverse cultural heritage. Supporting this potential, the India Cine Hub (ICH) serves as a

routed to relevant Ministries and State Nodal Officers, facilitating coordination for multi-agency clearances, location permissions, and film visas through a streamlined process.

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PIB Research

10

PM Vishwakarma: Strengthening Traditional Artisans and Craftspeople

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As PM Vishwakarma approaches three years, its registration target of 30 lakh beneficiaries has been achieved. The scheme has also delivered skill training, toolkits, credit support, digital incentives and market linkages. Beneficiaries are also being onboarded on the Udyam Assist Platform and connected with wider market channels, including GeM, e-commerce platforms, trade fairs and exhibitions. The scheme is built around Samman, Samarthya and Samriddhi and also seeks to strengthen the Guru-Shishya parampara and family-based practice of traditional skills.

Supporting Traditional Artisans and Craftspeople

India's traditional artisans and craftspeople form an important part of the country's local economy and cultural heritage. Many of these occupations depend on manual skills, family-based knowledge and small-scale enterprise. **PM Vishwakarma was launched on 17 September 2023 to provide end-to-end support to such artisans and craftspeople**.

PM Vishwakarma is built around the three pillars of Samman, Samarthya and Samriddhi, reflecting respect, capability and prosperity for traditional artisans and craftspeople. The scheme also seeks to strengthen and nurture the Guru-Shishya parampara or family-based practice of traditional skills.

The Central Sector Scheme has an outlay of ₹13,000 crore for FY2023-24 to FY2027-28, covering 18 traditional trades. The scheme seeks to improve the quality and reach of artisans' products and services and facilitate their integration with domestic and global supply chain.

As the scheme approaches 3 years on 17 September 2026, its registration target of 30 lakh beneficiaries has already been achieved.

Scheme Framework and Key Components

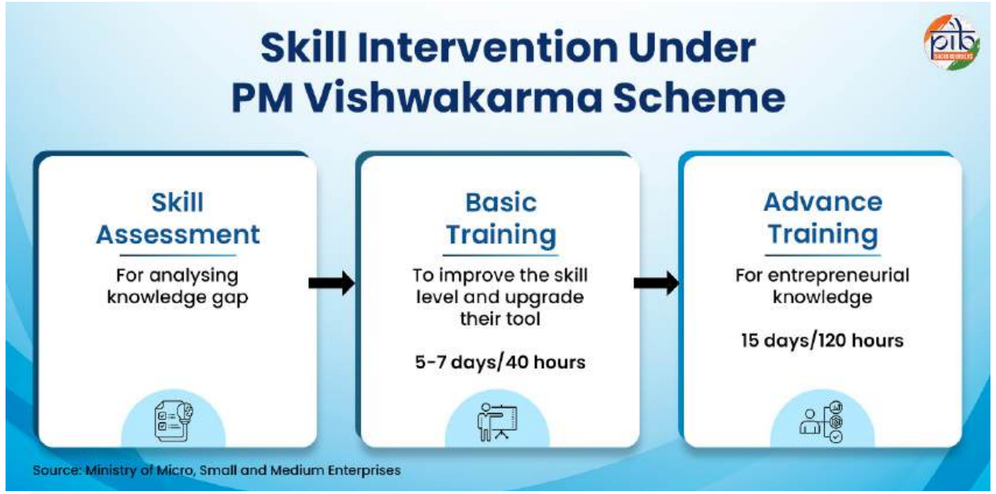
PM Vishwakarma brings multiple forms of support within one framework. Its major components are recognition, skill upgradation, toolkit incentive, credit support, incentive for digital transactions and marketing support.

Recognition

- On completion of the registration and verification process, beneficiaries are provided recognition through a **PM Vishwakarma Certificate and ID Card**.

Skill Upgradation

- **Through skill upgradation, beneficiaries are introduced to modern tools, best practices and innovative designs**. Training also covers digital transactions, marketing and entrepreneurial knowledge.
- **Basic Training runs for 5–7 days, while Advanced Training is for 15 days or more**. Trainees receive a stipend of ₹500 per day.



Modern Toolkits

Modern toolkits of up to ₹15,000 are also provided to the eligible beneficiaries of the Scheme.

Credit Support

Access to formal credit is a central part of PM Vishwakarma. **The scheme provides collateral-free Enterprise Development Loans of up to ₹3 lakh in two tranches**. The first tranche is up to ₹1 lakh with an 18-month tenure. Beneficiaries completing Basic Training are eligible for the first tranche of loan. The second is up to ₹2 lakh with a 30-month tenure.

The loans are provided at a fixed concessional rate of interest of 5%, with interest subvention to the extent of 8%

borne by Government. Eligibility for the second tranche is linked to repayment of the first tranche and adoption of digital transactions or completion of Advanced Training.

Digital and Marketing Support

PM Vishwakarma combines financial support with digital and marketing assistance. **Beneficiaries can receive Rs. 1 for each digital pay-out or receipt in their bank account, up to a maximum of 100 eligible transactions per month**. Marketing support includes trade fairs, exhibitions, branding and e-commerce platforms such as GeM, advertising and publicity. It encourages artisans to adopt formal business practices and reach wider markets.

Eligibility, Registration and Formalisation

Eligible Applicants

PM Vishwakarma is open to artisans and craftspeople aged **18 years or above** who work with their hands and tools in one of the **18 notified family-based traditional trades**. They should be working in the **unorganised sector on a self-employment basis**.

- Applicants should not have availed loans under similar credit-based government schemes for self-employment or business development during the previous five years.
- Registration and benefits are restricted to **one member of a family**, comprising the husband, wife and unmarried children.
- A person in government service and their family members is not eligible.

Beneficiaries of MUDRA and PM SVANidhi who have fully repaid their loans are eligible under PM Vishwakarma.

Self-Employed Worker & Unorganised Sector?

A self-employed worker is one who is not employed by an employer but works independently in an occupation. The unorganised sector broadly covers informal enterprises and workers outside the organised sector.

Trades Covered under PM Vishwakarma		
Carpenter	Boat Maker	Armourer
Metalsmith	Hammer and Tool Kit Maker	Locksmith
Goldsmith	Goldsmith	Sculptor, Stone Breaker
Cobbler / Shoesmith / Footwear Artisan	Mason	Basket / Mat / Broom Maker / Coir Weaver
Doll & Toy Maker	Barber	Garland Maker
Washerman	Tailor	Fishing Net Maker

Registration

Applications can be submitted through **Common Service Centres (CSCs)** only.

Three-tier Verification and Approval

- **Verification**: At the Gram Panchayat or Urban Local Body level.
- **Vetting and Recommendation**: By the District Implementation Committee.
- **Approval**: By the Screening Committee.

PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries are also onboarded on **Udyam Assist Platform** as entrepreneurs in the formal MSME ecosystem. This enables them to access applicable government benefits.

Udyam Assist Platform

It is an online system for registering informal micro enterprises and providing them with an Udyam Registration Number and certificate.

Progress under PM Vishwakarma

Skill Upgradation and Toolkit Support

As of 15 September 2026, over **24.37 lakh artisans had received basic skill training**, and more than **18.16 lakh had received toolkits**.

Strengthening Access to Institutional Credit

More than 6.19 lakh loans worth ~₹5,316 crore have been sanctioned under the scheme. This credit support is aimed at helping beneficiaries purchase inputs, upgrade tools, expand operations and strengthen their enterprises.

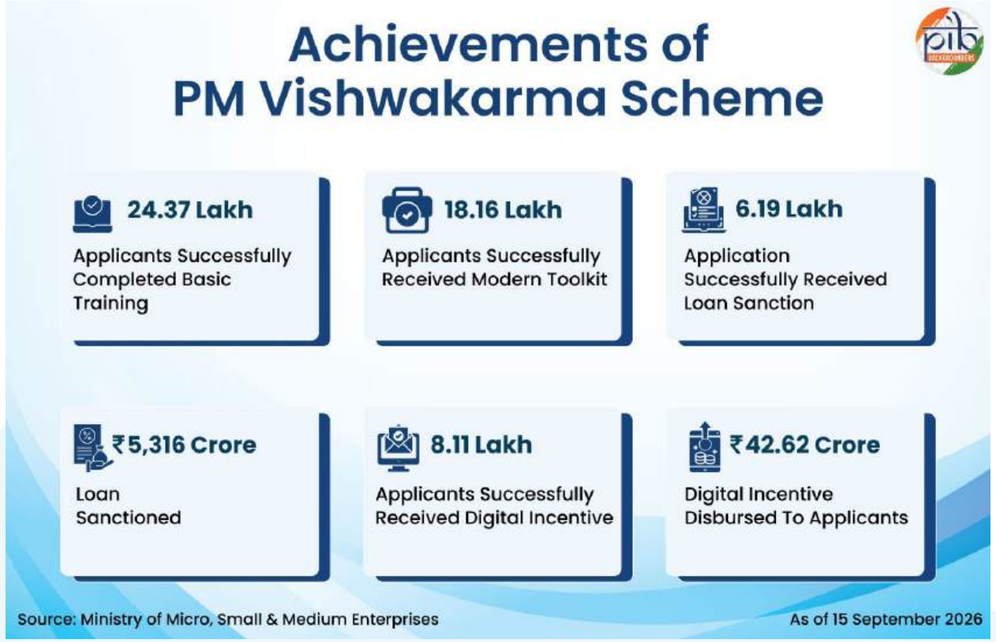
Digital Enablement

Over 8.11 lakh beneficiaries have received digital incentives with more than ₹42 crore disbursed as incentive.

More than **12,000 artisans** have also been trained in the use of AI tools for branding, product design, packaging and marketing.

Market Access and Outreach

- More than 1,500 awareness programmes and camps, over 50 workshops, 82 trade fairs,37 State-level exhibitions and more than 50 flash mobs had been organised across the country.
- First PM Vishwakarma National Exhibition cum Trade Fair was organized from 17th Jan 2026 to 31st Jan 2026 at Dilli Haat. At this event, more than 117 artisans participated across India where they have made the record sales of more than 2 Crore Rupees. This event was visited by Foreign Diplomats of various countries, many senior officials of India Government and received the footfall of more than 60,000 people.
- More than 30,000 Vishwakarma beneficiaries have been onboarded on various e-Commerce platforms such as Government e-Marketplace, ONDC, Meesho, Amazon Fabindia, Sulekha etc.
- The Ministry of MSME also signed an MoU with Amazon to facilitate onboarding of eligible artisans on its marketplace.
- PM Vishwakarma is also using the One Station One Product (OSOP) initiative to provide market access to Divyangjan Vishwakarma artisans. Dedicated retail outlets at selected high-footfall railway stations provide space to showcase and sell their products. More than 42 Divyangjan beneficiaries from different trades had been facilitated with stalls across 14 States/UTs.
- PM Vishwakarma stalls have also been opened at airports, including Bhopal and Chandigarh in collaboration with AVSAR scheme of Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- To promote the packaging and branding of PM Vishwakarma products, multiple workshops been organized across 6 cities in collaboration with Indian Institute of Packaging to train 1500 Vishwakarmas (250 Artisans per city)
- To promote tribal artisans and to expand their market reach, ministry in collaboration with TRIFED organized multiple Tribal Artisan Melas to link the tribal PMV artisans with reputed platforms like Tribes India etc.
- Multiple PM Vishwakarma stalls are set up in star category hotels and resorts at Bihar, Gujarat, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, Puducherry etc. (such as Hotel Taj, Radisson, Adbuz, etc. across states)



Beneficiary Experiences and Evaluation Findings

The scheme is being implemented across a diverse range of traditional occupations and regions. The following case studies present the experiences of beneficiaries from two different trades and States.

Beneficiary Stories

Smt. Villi, a basket maker from Zunheboto, Nagaland, completed skill training under PM Vishwakarma and availed a ₹1 lakh collateral-free loan. She used the loan to purchase raw material and expand her enterprise. Her monthly income increased by around 40% to nearly ₹15,000.

Mr. Darshan Lal, a woodcarver from Chamoli, Uttarakhand, has been practicing the craft for over three decades. His family tradition is associated with artisans involved in the construction of the Badrinath temple. Under PM Vishwakarma, he received skill training, a toolkit and access to affordable credit. In 2026, he also participated in the PM Vishwakarma Haat in Delhi, his first exhibition in the national capital, providing him an opportunity to showcase his products to a wider market.

Concurrent Evaluation by IIM Mumbai

A concurrent evaluation of PM Vishwakarma by IIM Mumbai covered 11,591 beneficiaries across all States and Union Territories. The evaluation also included feedback from banks, Common Service Centres, India Post personnel and training centres.

According to the evaluation, 93% of the beneficiaries surveyed reported a moderate to significant increase in income following training. The finding indicates that skill upgradation was associated with tangible economic gains for a large share of the surveyed beneficiaries.

Sustaining Traditional Skills and Livelihoods

PM Vishwakarma places traditional occupations within a national framework of support while retaining their local and family-based character. The scheme also seeks to strengthen the continuity of traditional skills and the Guru-Shishya tradition associated with many of these occupations. By supporting artisans and craftspeople across different stages of their work, **it aims to create livelihood opportunities while helping traditional knowledge and skills remain relevant in a changing economic environment.**

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PIB Research

11

Jute: India's Golden Fibre

Sustaining livelihoods through innovative policy interventions

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India leads global raw jute production, supporting millions of livelihoods while advancing sustainable industrial growth. **India produced 76 lakh bales of raw jute** and **12.80 lakh MT of jute goods** in FY 2025-26. During the same year, **India exported 22,700 MT of raw jute worth ₹225.11 crore** and **1,71,300 MT of jute goods worth ₹3,155.27 crore.** Government interventions have strengthened farmer incomes, modernised the value chain, and promoted product diversification. Jute's biodegradable nature and expanding applications make it a key alternative to synthetic materials. Innovation, market expansion, and digital technologies are positioning India's Golden Fibre as a globally competitive and environmentally responsible industry.

India's Golden Fibre Industry

Jute is one of the most significant natural fibres in India, valued for its wide range of applications and environmental sustainability. In the trade and industrial context, jute and mesta are collectively classified as **raw jute** due to their comparable end uses. Mesta is a bast fibre crop cultivated as a cost-effective alternative to jute, particularly in drier agro-climatic regions. Owing to its characteristic golden colour and silky lustre, jute is commonly referred to as the **"Golden Fibre".**

India is the world's largest producer of raw jute. The Third Advance Estimate of Production of Food Grains (2025-26) highlights the growth of jute and mesta production from 88.02 lakh bales in 2024-25 to **94.03 lakh bales in 2025-26.** India is also the leading jute goods-producing country globally, accounting for about 75% of estimated world production, as of July 2026. The jute industry has a heavy industrial base in India's eastern region, especially **West Bengal.** This industry provides **direct employment** to approximately **3.70 lakh workers** in organized mills and diversified jute units. It also sustains the livelihoods of nearly **40 lakh farm families** engaged in jute cultivation. As of December 2025, India has **120 composite jute mills,** and West Bengal alone houses **89** of them, the highest among all states.

India continues to be fully *Atmanirbhar* in the production of jute goods, with domestic output adequately meeting national demand. In FY 2025-26, the domestic consumption of jute goods was **12.05 lakh MT.** This accounts for 94% of the total production of jute goods, which was **12.80 lakh MT.** Further, India exported **1.71 lakh MT** of jute goods

valued at **₹3,155.27 crore** in FY 2025-26. In terms of raw jute, India exported **22,700 MT** worth **₹225.11 crore** in FY 2025-26.

Tracing the History of Jute Production in India

The history of jute in India can be traced back to the **third century BC.** However, it emerged as a significant commercial commodity during the British Colonial period owing to its **strategic military applications.** The East India Company established numerous jute mills in Bengal, positioning the region as a centre for jute cultivation and processing.

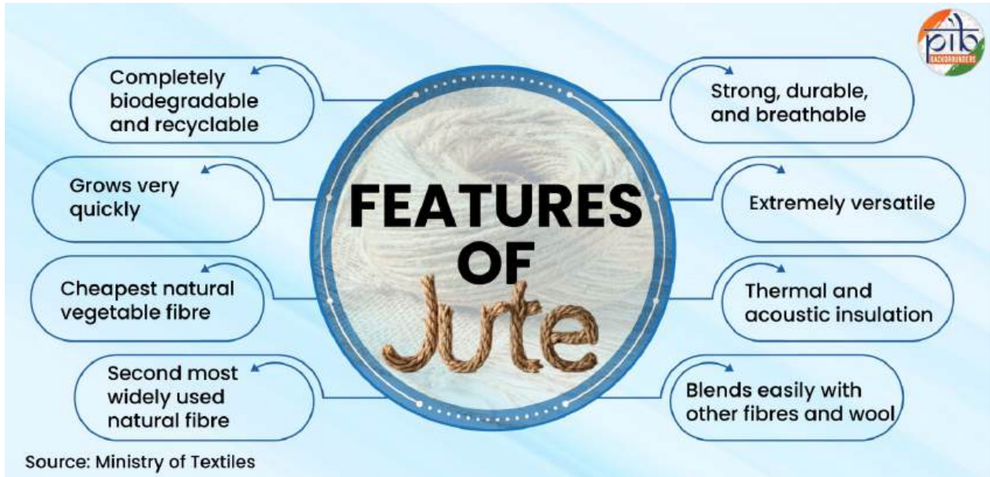
India's independence in 1947 and the

subsequent partition significantly disrupted the integrated jute economy of Bengal. Nearly **80 percent** of the jute-growing areas became part of **East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).** But most jute mills remained in India, resulting in an acute shortage of raw material for processing in these mills. To address this imbalance, the government launched the **"Grow More Jute"** campaign in **September 1949.** The farmers were encouraged to shift from paddy cultivation to jute. Consequently, India's raw jute production more than doubled from 6.7 lakh tonnes (1951-52) to 14.56 lakh tonnes (1961-62). The **Jute Packaging Act, 1987,** further strengthened the sector by mandating the use of jute sacks for packaging essential commodities. This move ensured a stable market for Indian jute farmers. Over time, jute emerged as a **strategic green fibre,** contributing to rural livelihoods and environmentally sustainable industrial development.

Presently, **West Bengal** contributes the largest share of raw jute cultivation in the country, followed by **Bihar, Assam, Odisha,** and **Jharkhand.** Jute is generally sown during **March-April** and **harvested within 100–110 days.** It thrives under hot and humid conditions with rainfall between 700–1,500 mm during the crop-growing period. Given these agro-climatic requirements, its cultivation is concentrated mainly in eastern and northeastern India and is predominantly rainfed. The crop is primarily grown by small and marginal farmers.

Why is Jute an Important Natural Fibre?

Jute is a **biodegradable** and **recyclable** natural fibre characterised by its rapid growth, cost-effectiveness, and wide availability. It is **strong, durable, breathable,** and highly **versatile,** with applications spanning packaging, construction, agriculture, and industrial textiles. Jute also possesses favourable functional attributes, including **thermal** and **acoustic insulation,** high **moisture absorption,** and **low static generation.** It **blends well** with both natural and synthetic fibres, facilitating a wide range of value-added and textile applications.



Can Jute be Eaten as Food?

Jute leaves have long been consumed as a vegetable in regions such as **Africa, the Middle East,** and **Southeast Asia.** In Japan, jute leaves are widely recognized and consumed as a **health food.** Nutritionally, jute leaves are rich in **vitamins, carotenoids, calcium, potassium,** and **dietary fiber,** underscoring their value as a functional food source. Proven technologies have also been developed for anti-oxidant herbal drink and health care products from jute leaf.

Jute Geotextile: The Fabric of Sustainable Infrastructure

Jute Geotextile (JGT) is a versatile, diversified jute product belonging to a class of **technical textiles.** It can be applied in many fields like civil engineering, soil erosion control, road pavement construction and protection of river banks. JGT can be made from jute fibers through **special treatment and weaving processes.**

It is increasingly gaining acceptance due to its functional effectiveness, environmental compatibility, favourable techno-physical properties, and price competitiveness. From an ecological standpoint, JGT is **fully biodegradable,** thereby improving soil structure and fertility. Moreover, JGT is globally recognized as an effective natural solution for soil stabilization, erosion control, and ecological restoration in degraded landscapes. This is because it helps in regulating the micro-environment by **maintaining lower soil temperatures** and **reducing surface disturbance.** Hence, it supports seed germination and early plant establishment.

Applications of Jute Geotextile

Jute Geotextile has gained recognition as an effective natural material for diverse applications in civil engineering, soil conservation, and infrastructure development:

- It is widely utilized for **slope protection** in earthen embankments, hill cuttings, riverbanks, canals, and rainwater harvesting structures. This is because of its high initial tensile strength, and surface roughness enhances soil stabilization and mitigates erosion.
- In **road and haul road construction,** as well as in **railway track formation,** JGT improves load distribution and control settlement. This reduces maintenance requirements and lifecycle costs.
- Its use in **concealed drainage systems,** particularly in hilly regions, enables regulated water flow while preventing soil migration. JGT is also used to **stabilize soft soils** through prefabricated vertical drains, accelerating consolidation and enhancing bearing capacity.

In recent years, the National Jute Board has been actively engaged in developing and promoting jute geotextiles as an engineering material. The Board provides technical support to end users, including guidance on design specifications, procurement processes, testing protocols, and installation practices.

Indian Contingent Showcases Jute Apparel at Commonwealth Games 2026

Jute-viscose-blended apparel was worn by the Indian athletes and team members at the **2026 Commonwealth Games.** The clothing has been developed by the **National Jute Board.** The apparel was designed by the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), New Delhi. This initiative highlights the potential of **100 percent biodegradable** jute-viscose blended fabric as a sustainable and innovative textile solution. This initiative has provided **global visibility to India's jute industry** while highlighting the craftsmanship of Indian manufacturers.

From Farm to Market: Government Interventions for the Jute Industry

The government has undertaken a series of policy measures reflecting a sustained commitment to strengthening India's jute sector. These include upward revisions of the **Minimum Support Price**

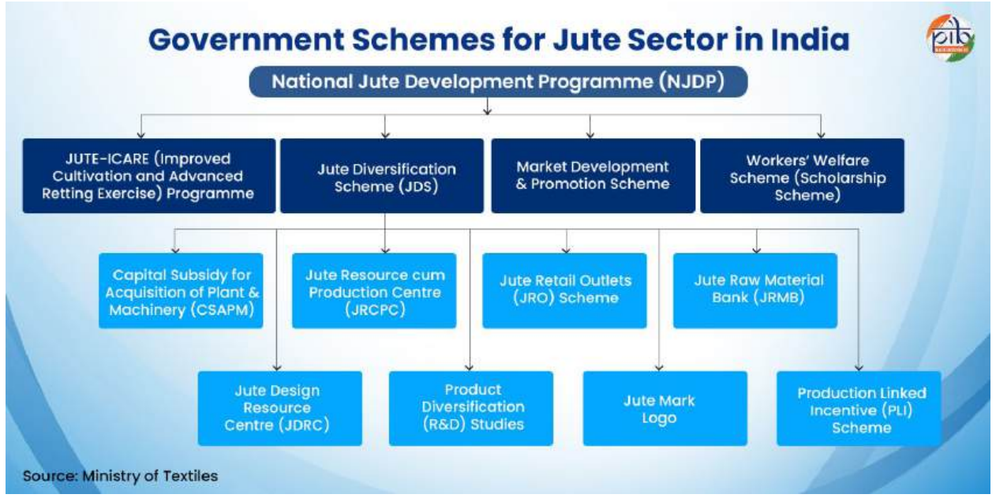
(MSP) for raw jute. The MSP of raw jute has been fixed at **₹5,925 per quintal** for FY 2026-27. This would ensure a **61.8 percent** return over the all-India weighted average cost of production. This marks an increase of around 147% from the MSP of raw jute in FY 2014-15 (₹2,400per quintal). The MSP amount paid to jute farmers has also increased over time. For the period of FY 2004-05 to FY 2013-14, the amount paid was ₹441 crores. It has increased to ₹1,342 crores from FY 2014-15 to FY 2025-26.

The government has also implemented the **Jute Packaging Materials** (Compulsory Use in Packing Commodities) Act. It specifies the commodities and the extent to which they are mandatorily required to be packed in jute packaging material. The government mandated jute packaging for **100% food grains** and **20% sugar** in jute bags.

Jute Corporation of India

The Jute Corporation of India Ltd. (JCI) is the **sole nodal agency for implementing the MSP policy for raw jute.** It safeguards jute farmers' interests by procuring directly from farmers when market prices fall below the MSP. JCI's Departmental Purchase Centers (DPCs), which are situated in rural areas, purchases raw jute directly from the farmers. JCI has around **110 DPC's** in states of West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Tripura.

The government has integrated its efforts for supporting jute cultivation and processing under the **National Jute Development Programme.**



National Jute Development Programme (NJDP)

The National Jute Development Programme (NJDP) is the umbrella scheme for the development and promotion of the jute sector. It is being implemented by the **National Jute Board** with an outlay of **₹485.58 crore** from FY 2021–22 to FY 2025–26. It focuses on enhancing farm productivity and farmer incomes, as well as diversification through two key components: **JUTE-ICARE** and the **Jute Diversification Scheme.** The programme also supports seminars, exhibitions, and awareness campaigns to promote jute as an alternative to plastics.

National Jute Board (NJB)

The National Jute Board (NJB)serves as the nodal agency for the **development, promotion, and diversification** of the jute sector across the value chain. Its key functions include:

- improving cultivation and fibre quality,
- enhancing productivity and standardisation,

- promoting domestic and export markets,
- supporting research and value-added product diversification, and
- strengthening MSMEs and artisans through capacity building and market development.

JUTE-ICARE (Improved Cultivation and Advanced Retting Exercise) Scheme

The JUTE-ICARE scheme, launched in FY 2015–16, aims to enhance **jute productivity** and fibre quality. This is being achieved through scientific cultivation, mechanisation, and improved retting techniques. It supports small and marginal farmers through subsidised certified seeds, field demonstrations, and mechanized interventions. It is being implemented in collaboration with the **Central Research Institute for Jute and Allied Fibers (CRIJAF)** and the **Jute Corporation of India.** The scheme also facilitates the construction of retting ponds through convergence with the **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana** and **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana.**

Jute Diversification Scheme

The Jute Diversification scheme includes schemes supporting jute processing, marketing, sales.

Intervention for Supporting Jute Processing: Jute Raw Material Bank (JRMB)

The Jute Raw Material Bank facilitates the availability of raw jute materials for the **unorganized sector and small production units** for manufacturing of jute diversified products. This is done by supplying raw jute materials at the economic rate of mill-gate price plus actual transportation costs. The scheme supports artisans, women SHGs, and MSMEs engaged in jute-diversified products by providing regular access to quality raw materials. This further promotes rural livelihoods.

Interventions for Manufacturing, Marketing, and Sales

The **Jute Diversification Scheme** promotes value addition, modernisation, and market expansion through multiple sub-schemes:

- **Capital Subsidy for Acquisition of Plant & Machinery:** Offers a 30% subsidy on machinery costs for jute mills and MSMEs producing JDPs.
- **Jute Resource-cum-Production Centres:** Cluster-based training and production centres for artisans, women SHGs, entrepreneurs, NGOs, members of cooperative societies etc.
- **Jute Retail Outlets:** Support retail and showroom sales of JDPs with 25% sales assistance (up to ₹9 lakh per unit).
- **Production Linked Incentive for JDP Exports:** Provides exporters with incentives linked to raw material usage in jute diversified products exported and its value realisation on exports.

Interventions for Branding, Quality Assurance, and Market Promotion

Jute Mark India Logo

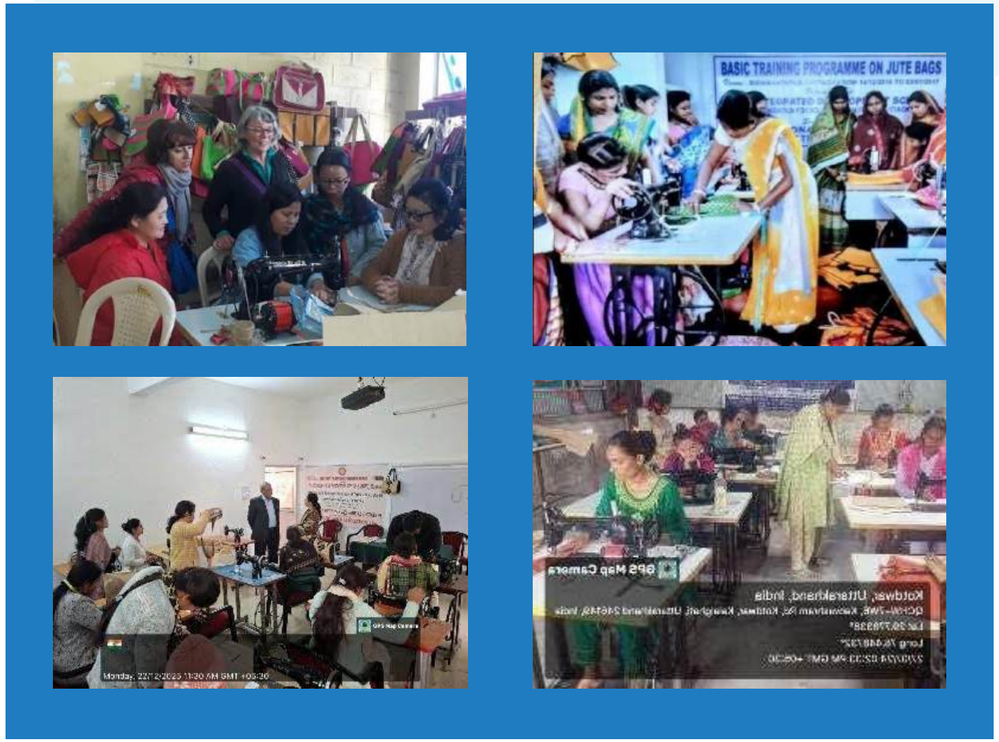
The Jute Mark India logo symbolises authenticity, quality assurance, and sustainability in jute and jute-blended products. The stylised sheaves of jute within a structured framework represent natural fibre strength, craftsmanship, and standardisation across the value chain. The Jute Mark India logo **certifies compliance with quality standards and verifies jute content in blended products.** This enhances consumer confidence and strengthens brand recognition.

Domestic Marketing Initiatives

The government organised over **57 regional jute fairs** across major cities in FY 2025-26, such as the **India International Trade Fair, Surajkund Mela,** and **Bharat Tex.**

Jute Handloom Enterprise: From SHG to Export Market

Branding, exhibition-based promotion, and structured market access have boosted field-level outcomes for jute enterprises. Such are the stories of Bharatiya Gramothan Sanstha, Rishikesh (Uttarakhand), Hayden Hall Institute, Darjeeling (West Bengal), Jute Artisans Guild Association, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) and Rural Organisation for Social Action, Cuttack (Odisha). Trained under the National Jute Board programmes, they leveraged mentoring and market linkages to enter organised jute handloom production. They started participating in major trade fairs such as IITF New Delhi, Tex-Trends India, New Delhi and GiftTex Show, Mumbai. This enabled direct buyer interactions for them, secured bulk export orders, and strengthened their marketing skills. As a result, their members individually started earning more, with notable improvements production capacity and social recognition.



Digital and Technological Interventions Across the Supply Chain

JUTE-SMART

Since 2016, the entire operations of procurement and supply of jute sacking (food grain) bags is being managed by the Office of Jute Commissioner. To facilitate these operations, an end-to-end e-governance software portal, viz. JUTE-SMART has been developed and implemented by the Office of Jute Commissioner in November 2016. Till August 2026, **303 lakh bales of B.Twill Jute Bags** (@500 pieces of bags/bale) worth more than ₹1.00,000 crores (approx.) have been procured by more than **20 State Procurement Agencies** incl uding Punjab, Haryana, Odisha, Telangana, West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and FCI etc., through this portal.

In 2026, JUTE-SMART has been further upgraded for digitizing various processes in the supply chain. Various stakeholders have been onboarded, like transporters, raw jute traders, and importers. Registration of raw jute traders, importers and jute mills has been completely digitized. The required returns are also completely online for improving the ease of compliance.

Jute Crop Information System

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), through the **National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC),** has developed the **Jute Crop Information System.** It has been developed in collaboration with Jute Corporation of India and National Jute Board. The system functions **to monitor jute cultivation using remote sensing and field data.** As part of this initiative, two key tools have been developed:

- **BHUVAN JUMP:** a mobile app for on-field jute monitoring, and
- **PATSAN (Prospective Assessment of Jute Using Mobile App-Based Field Observations):** a web-based platform that provides **near-real-time jute surveillance and analytics** to support informed decision-making by officials and stakeholders.

Market Development & Promotion Scheme

The government, under the National Jute Development Programme, has been implementing the **Market Development & Promotion Scheme.** This scheme supports the Jute Diversified Product (JDP) entrepreneurs/exporters in promotion and sale of JDPs in the domestic/export market.

Workers' Welfare Scheme (Scholarship Scheme)

National Jute Board Act, 2008 provides to "secure better working conditions and provisions and improvement of amenities and incentives for workers engaged in the jute industry". In line with the same, NJB provides **scholarship/ incentive support** to the girl children of the workers of Jute Mills/JDP-MSME units on passing out Secondary and Higher Secondary examinations.

A Sustainable Future with Jute

India's jute sector has evolved into a key driver of sustainable and inclusive development. It supports millions of farmers, workers, artisans, and entrepreneurs across the value chain. Policy support, innovation, and improved production have strengthened the sector's competitiveness. Jute contributes to **rural livelihoods, environmental sustainability, and industrial growth.** Its growing relevance reflects India's transition towards greener and sustainable materials. Continued investment, innovation, and community participation will unlock the sector's full potential.

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PIB Research

12

Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool

Strengthening India's Maritime Sovereignty

Published on: September 27, 2026

India relies heavily on maritime trade, with most of cargo and energy supplies transported through sea routes. The Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMIP) offers marine insurance to Hull & Machinery risks in respect of vessels that are Indian flagged or are owned, managed or controlled by Indian entities or cargo vessels destined to or starting from India. It was launched in May 2026 with coverage up to ₹13,906.50 crore (USD 1.5 billion). It provides domestic insurance coverage for Hull, Cargo, Protection and Indemnity (P&I), and War risks. BMIP reduces dependence on foreign insurers and ensures affordable, uninterrupted coverage during global disruptions. Policies are issued by domestic insurers, with risks collectively reinsured based on members' commitments. Claims up to USD 100 million are settled through reserves, while larger claims use sovereign guarantees. Since launch, BMIP has issued War-risk and P&I policies for coastal vessels, reduced premiums, and strengthened India's maritime sovereignty.

Overview

India stands among the world's leading trade nations, with the majority of its trade flowing through maritime routes. The sea is not merely a transport medium for India; it is the backbone of commerce. It supports energy security and drives economic growth across diverse sectors of the national economy. From crude oil imports to merchandise exports, maritime connectivity underpins virtually every sector of India's economy. Coastal shipping and inland waterways further strengthen this lifeline, ensuring resilience and efficiency in trade.

India's maritime trade has expanded, but key marine insurance services remain largely dependent on foreign providers. This leads to an annual outflow of USD 45–60 million in Protection and Indemnity (P&I) premiums, besides higher marine insurance payments abroad.

Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMIP) has been conceived as a sovereign solution to this strategic gap in domestic maritime insurance capacity. Approved on 18 April 2026 and formally launched on 12 May, 2026, the BMIP is India's first domestic maritime insurance pool of ₹13,906.50 crore (USD 1.5 billion). It assures sovereign backing of ₹12,980 crore (USD 1.4 billion). For the first time, Indian companies are insuring Indian ships independently for higher-value vessels. The coverage spans Hull & Machinery, Cargo against War perils in High-Risk Area and Protection & Indemnity.

India's Maritime Sector: A Nation of the Seas

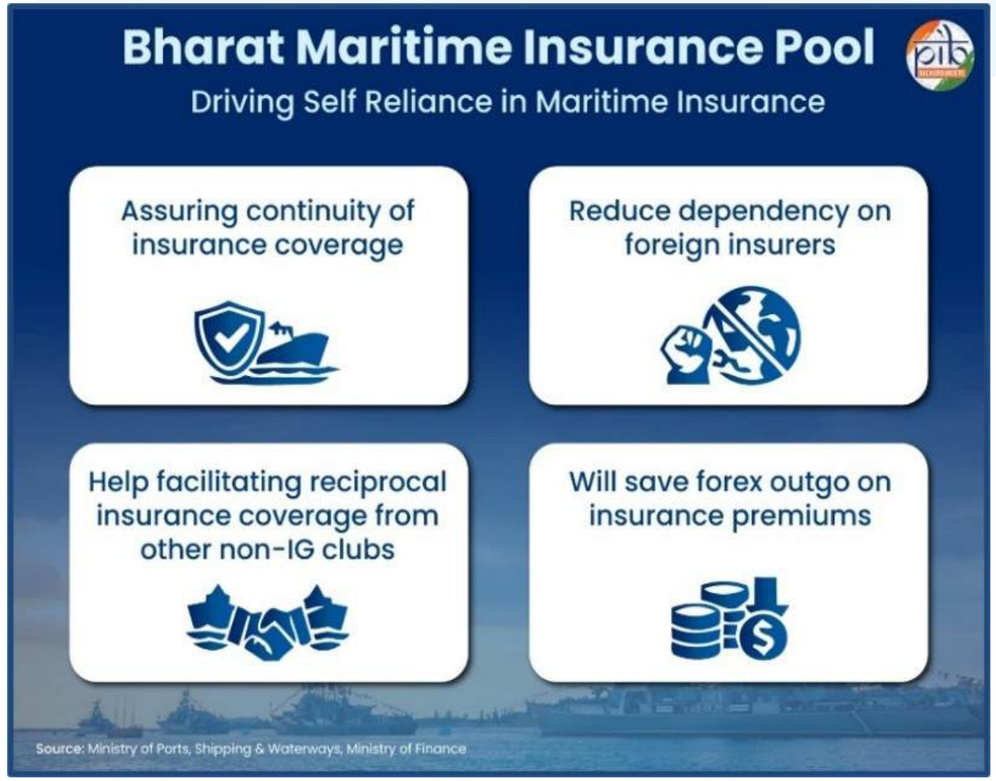
India operates 12 Major and 217 Non-Major Ports, handling diverse cargo types nationwide. India's major and non-major ports handled 1,668 million metric tonnes of cargo during 2025–26, a figure rising with economic growth and trade expansion.

- **India's coastline** extends around 11,098 kilometres, among the world's longest, with natural harbours and port sites.
- **Exclusive Economic Zone** spans 2.4 million square kilometres, granting sovereign rights over marine resources and fishing activities.
- **Inland waterways** exceed 14,500 kilometres, offering rivers, canals, and backwaters for cost-effective freight movement.
- **Coastal states and territories** border the sea, positioning population and industry to benefit from maritime trade.
- **Maritime livelihoods** support over 30 million people, including fishers, port workers, seafarers, and shipbuilders.

Why India needs BMI Pool

The Indian-flag fleet has grown to 1,609 ships and 14.33 million GT as of mid-2026, a roughly 36% increase in tonnage since 2015. 95% of India's trade value and 70% of trade volume flows through maritime routes.

- **Maritime Insurance: The Invisible Lifeline**
  Marine insurance is mandatory for global trade. Hull and machinery policies protect vessels, cargo insurance safeguards goods, and Protection and Indemnity (P&I) covers liabilities like pollution or crew injury. War Risk insurance shields against piracy and conflict. Together, these make insurance a legal and commercial necessity for India's shipping economy.
- **Overdependence on Foreign P&I Clubs**
  India, has been dependent on foreign insurers for the insurance value chain. Indian shipowners rely almost entirely on 13 international P&I clubs, mostly based in the West. This dependence leaves India vulnerable to sudden coverage withdrawal or politically influenced decisions, underscoring the importance of a homegrown alternative.



The International Group of Protection and Indemnity Clubs is made up of thirteen main clubs. Together, they insure about 90% of the world's large ships against risks like cargo loss, pollution, collisions, and crew injuries.

- **Geopolitical Volatility and Trade Disruption** Conflicts in the Red Sea and tensions near the Strait of Hormuz have disrupted vital routes. With a major share of crude oil imported by sea, India's energy security depends on uninterrupted coverage. During this period, foreign insurers increased insurance premiums or stopped providing cover. This increased costs sharply for ship owners, raising the need for a domestic safety net.

- **Absence of Domestic Expertise** Earlier, India did not have institutional depth in marine underwriting and claims management. BMIP builds this expertise indigenously, laying the foundation for a world-class domestic insurance sector and reducing reliance on foreign hubs like London or Switzerland.

The Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMIP) ensures affordable, sovereign coverage for vessels and cargo, enhancing resilience against global risks.

BMI Pool: Design, Structure and Coverage

The pool provides marine insurance cover to safeguard vessels and cargo on trade routes. It functions through collective insurer participation and structured governance to manage large maritime risks.

- **Sovereign guarantee:** Government-backed support of ₹12,980 crore (USD 1.4 billion) ensures financial strength. This guarantee meets obligations even during catastrophic losses.

- **Underwriting capacity:** The Pool can insure risks worth ₹ Rs.13,906.5 crore, i.e., USD 1.5 billion, backed up by the Sovereign Guarantee, increasing its ability to cover large maritime losses.

- **Risk coverage:** Hull & Machinery, Cargo, Protection & Indemnity (P&I), and War Risk are included.

- **Vessel eligibility:** Vessels that are Indian flagged or are owned, managed, or controlled by Indian entities, or cargo vessels destined to or starting from India, qualify.

- **Duration:** It has a duration of 10 years, which is extendable up to 15 years.

- **Joint policy issuance:** Policies will be issued by domestic insurers that are members of the Pool, using their combined underwriting capacity. The risks covered under these policies will then be reinsured collectively by all Pool members, in proportion to the capacity each has committed.

- **Claims management:** Claims up to USD 100 million are met from accumulated reserves and reinsurance recoveries. For larger claims, the sovereign guarantee activates only after complete exhaustion of pool reserves.

- **Administration:** General Insurance Corporation of India serves as the Pool Administrator, managing daily operations. It submits performance reports and supports the Pool's efficient functioning.

- **Governance:** A Governing Body oversees and regulates pool operations, ensuring compliance and smooth functioning.

- **Underwriting discipline:** An Underwriting Committee ensures

sound and consistent risk evaluation, supporting long-term financial sustainability.

Coverage Types and Scope:

BMIP has been designed to provide comprehensive coverage across the full spectrum of maritime risk categories. It ensures that no vessel or cargo involved in Indian trade is left without domestic insurance protection, regardless of the route or nature of the risk.

- Hull and Machinery War coverage: It protects vessels from damage to hull structure (main body of the ship), propulsion systems (machinery that powers the ship's movement), and installed equipment. This ensures the capital value of India's merchant fleet remains secure and domestically insured.

- **Cargo War coverage:** It safeguards goods transported across international sea routes against loss or damage to shipments. Indian exporters and importers benefit even in high-risk or conflict-affected maritime corridors.

- **Protection and Indemnity coverage:** It addresses liabilities, including pollution, oil pollution clean-up, wreck removal, crew injury, and cargo damage. Indian shipowners gain domestic access to coverage previously available only through foreign clubs.

- **War Perils coverage:** It insures against losses from armed conflict, piracy, terrorism, and hostile vessel seizure. This protection is vital for Indian trade routes crossing sensitive corridors like the Red Sea, Strait of Hormuz, etc., besides the other High-Risk Areas.

Outcome & Impact

The launch of Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool in May 2026 marks a significant milestone in India's maritime insurance sector. Since its operational launch, the BMIP has ensured uninterrupted War-risk insurance for Indian maritime stakeholders. War-risk insurance premiums have **fallen by about 35–40%** since the peak of the West Asia conflict. As on 7th September 2026, the Pool has issued **3000 Cargo War, 92 Hull War-risk and 3 Protection & Indemnity insurance policies.**

A Strong Start: What the Launch Delivered

- **India's First P&I Policy:** On 30 July, 2026, India's first Protection & Indemnity insurance policy under BMIP was issued to Shipping Corporation of India Limited. Issued by New India Assurance Company Limited, it provides financial protection against third-party liabilities.

- **First Hull and Machinery War-risk policy:** On 12 May 2026, the pool's very first policy was given for a vessel sailing through conflict zones. New India Assurance issued this Marine Hull and Machinery War Policy to M/s. Hoger Offshore and Marine Private Limited. In simple terms, an Indian ship now sails with home-grown protection against War risks.

- **Cover for goods coming into India:** A Marine Cargo War Policy was issued to M/s. Vedanta Sterlite Copper Limited. It protects the company's import of cable wires into India. This shows the pool can serve India's large industrial importers. It keeps the supply chains feeding Indian industry safely insured.

- **Beyond shipping companies:** A policy was also issued to Balrampur Chini Mills Limited, a sugar manufacturer. This proves the pool is not for shipowners alone. Farms, factories, and commodity traders moving goods by sea can all seek cover. The pool, therefore, works for the wider Indian economy.

- **Governance and systems in place:** The Governing Body and Underwriting Committee have been set up since the launch. General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re) has taken charge as the Pool Manager/Administrator. Systems for underwriting, claims, and regulatory compliance are also put in place. The pool is operating at full commercial scale.

Way Forward

The Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool marks a major step in India's maritime financial independence. Its role is to ensure credible operations, competitive pricing, and reliable claims handling for stakeholders. Medium-term focus remains on strengthening human capital, legal frameworks, and reinsurance partnerships. These efforts enhance resilience while keeping reliance on sovereign backing minimal.

In the long term, the pool emerges as a regional anchor for maritime insurance in the Indian Ocean Region. India gains recognition as a provider of financial services and a shaper of maritime risk norms. As shipbuilding expands and ports handle larger cargo volumes, the pool will grow alongside India's maritime ambitions. Its capacity and coverage stand as a lasting pillar of India's maritime infrastructure.

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PIB Research

13

Green Highways

India's Journey Towards Sustainable Road Infrastructure

Published on: September 28, 2026

India's green highway approach is transforming road infrastructure through **plantation, climate-resilient design and resource-efficient construction.** Over the last five years, more than **3.61 crore saplings** have been planted across approximately **1.32 lakh km of National Highways.** From Miyawaki forests to recycled construction materials and indigenous bio-bitumen technology, green practices are shaping highway development. Satellite-based monitoring through the National Highways Green Cover Index is strengthening scientific assessment of green cover. Community initiatives and pollinator corridors are also adding a wider ecological dimension.

Building Roads, Growing Green

India's highways are no longer just corridors of connectivity. They are becoming an important part of the country's broader infrastructure transformation. As road infrastructure expands, the focus is also shifting towards building corridors that are efficient, resilient and environmentally responsible.

Over the past decade, India's National Highway network has grown by nearly **61%,** from **91,287 km** in 2014 to **1,46,572 km** by March 2026. This rapid development has strengthened connectivity, improved access to markets and supported faster movement of people and goods. As road infrastructure expands, the focus is also shifting towards building corridors that are efficient, resilient and environmentally responsible. Large-scale plantation along National Highways (NH), the use of recycled and waste-derived materials, energy-efficient construction practices, and satellite-based monitoring of green cover are contributing to a more sustainable highway network.

Green Highways Policy, 2015: Policy Evolution

The greening of India's National Highway network is guided by the **Green Highways (Plantation, Transplantation, Beautification and Maintenance) Policy, 2015.** The Policy was formulated to:

- Evolve a policy framework for plantation along National Highways.
- Reduce the impact of air pollution and dust, as trees and shrubs are known to be natural sinks for air pollutants.
- Arrest soil erosion at the embankment slopes.
- Moderate the effect of wind and incoming radiation.
- Create employment opportunities for local people.

The implementation of the policy brings together multiple stakeholders. Plantation activities are undertaken by **Self Help Groups, private agencies, State Forest Departments, Forest Corporations and contractors,** according to the scope of sanctioned works. A **Plantation Cell** has been established for overall monitoring through regional offices of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and other agencies.

Greening the Corridors: Plantation & Afforestation.

The greening of National Highways is increasingly being measured by the number of saplings planted, their survival, growth and distribution along highway corridors. As of July 2026, more than **3.61 crore saplings** have been planted across approximately **1.32 lakh** km of National Highways during the last five years. The approach has also expanded from plantation to broader environmental management. Earlier, monitoring of plantations relied primarily on site visits by field personnel. Today, this is being supplemented by **drone and satellite based monitoring. Miyawaki plantations** have also been introduced to increase green cover. Wherever tree felling is necessary for highway development, **compensatory afforestation and tree transplantation** are being undertaken.

The Miyawaki technique is a method of creating dense forests within limited spaces. Also known as the 'pot plantation method', it involves planting trees and shrubs close to one another to promote rapid growth and establish forest-like ecosystems in a shorter period. Plants can grow up to 10 times faster under this method, making it particularly suitable for expanding green cover in space-constrained urban areas.

Miyawaki plantation initiative near the Sonkatch Toll Plaza on NH-46, Madhya Pradesh

Plantation and landscaping have become an integral part of National Highway development and project completion. NHAI's September 2026 guidelines reinforce this approach. Plantation works will be considered compliant for provisional completion certification only when at least 80% of the available **Right of Way (RoW)** earmarked for plantation has been covered. RoW refers to the designated land area that is legally required for the construction, operation, and maintenance of highway infrastructure. The planted saplings must also have a minimum 90% survival rate at the time of inspection by officials. The same survival benchmark applies during the Operations and Maintenance period, with provisions for timely replacement of plants that do not survive.

To encourage good practices, NHAI instituted the Green Highways Excellence Awards in 2025. The 2026 awards placed the highest weightage on plantation survival, along with species diversity, use of native species, site-specific plans and protection measures.

- In the **Avenue Plantations** category, the Six-Laning of the Chilakaluripet Bypass on NH-16 in Andhra Pradesh secured the First Prize.
- In the **Median Plantations** category, the Four-Laning of the Hyderabad–Yadgiri section of NH-163was awarded the First Prize.
- The Jamtha Clover Leaf Oxygen Bird Park on NH-44,Nagpur, received the First Prize in the **Plantation in Land Parcels category.**

These award-winning efforts show how every stretch of a highway can become an opportunity to add greenery and strengthen the surrounding landscape.

National Highways – Green Cover Index (NH-GCI)

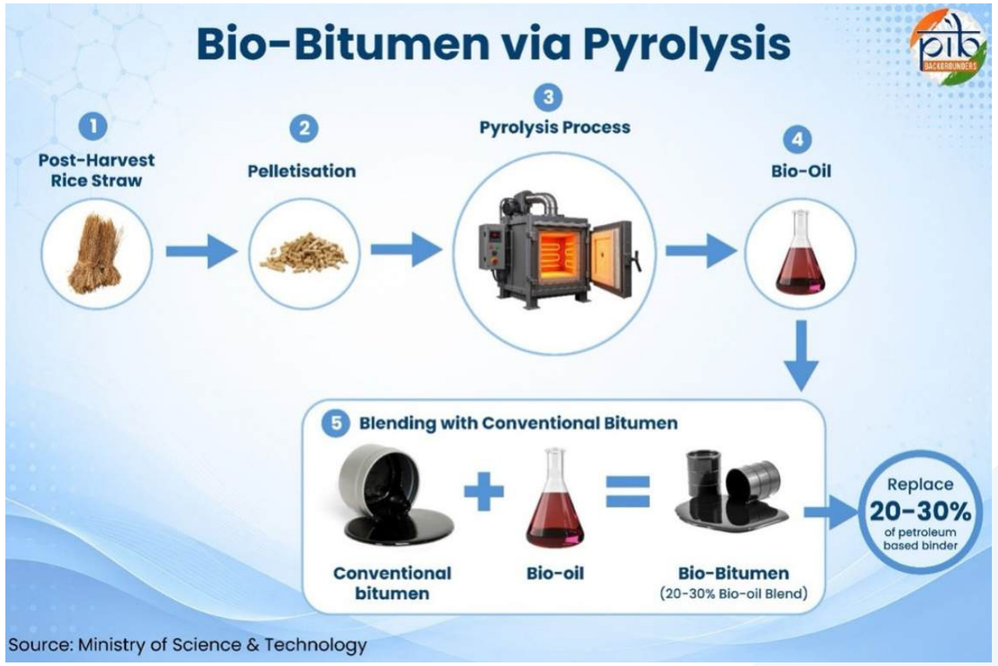
Marking a new milestone in sustainable highway development, the first Annual Report on the **National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI) 2025–26** has been released. Prepared in collaboration with the **National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) of ISRO,** the report provides the country's **first scientific and quantitative assessment of green cover** within the RoW along National Highways. The assessment covers nearly **30,000 kilometres of National Highways** under the **Operation and Maintenance (O&M) phase** across 24 states. It includes observations recorded before and after the monsoon season. Using advanced space-based technologies, it establishes a reliable baseline for monitoring and enhancing roadside plantations. The assessment reveals significant variation in green cover along National Highways. The findings enable comparison, ranking, and targeted interventions for improved plantation management.

Driving the Shift to Sustainable Materials

India's highways are also transitioning from fossil-fuel-based materials towards bio-based, regenerative solutions. A major scientific breakthrough was announced in January 2026 with the technology transfer of Bio-Bitumen produced via pyrolysis of farm residue. Technology transfer (TT) is a process that allows scientific findings, knowledge and intellectual property to flow from universities and research institutions to public and private users.

The innovation, **"Bio-Bitumen via Pyrolysis: From Farm Residue to Roads",** was developed jointly by **CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CSIR-CRRI), New Delhi,** and **CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum (CSIR-IIP), Dehradun.** Bitumen is a mixture of organic liquids and hydrocarbons, used for paving roads, and is known as black gold in the pavement industry. Currently, India meets nearly 50% of its bitumen requirement through imports. Innovations such as bio-bitumen can reduce import dependence while strengthening domestic production capabilities.

The process uses post-harvest rice straw as feedstock for producing bio-oil through pyrolysis.



The bio-oil is subsequently blended with conventional bitumen to produce the bio-bitumen blend. The technology uses biomass pyrolysis to produce multiple value streams, including bio-binders for roads, energy-efficient gaseous fuel, bio-pesticide fractions and high-grade carbon. These outputs have applications in batteries, water purification and advanced materials, offering an emission-free and cost-effective solution for the future.

A 100-metre trial stretch using bio-bitumen has been successfully laid on the Jorabat–Shillong Expressway (NH-40) in Meghalaya, demonstrating its feasibility. The technology also supports management of farm residue. Plans are underway to integrate this into national highway construction standards. With this, India has emerged as the first country to scale bio-bitumen technology to industrial and commercial levels within the same year.

The shift towards alternative materials is also visible in the wider use of recycled and industrial by-products in highway construction. Fly ash, a thermal power plant by-product, and pond ash are increasingly used in embankments and structural works. **Reclaimed Asphalt Pavement (RAP), Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste and recycled aggregates** are also used in suitable highway works, as per technical specifications. Other materials being promoted include plastic waste, slag, crumb rubber, bio-bitumen and other recycled or industrial by-products. Together, these practices improve resource efficiency, conserve natural resources and help address environmental concerns associated with highway construction.

Community Engagement & Public Awareness

The impact of green highway initiatives is most visible on the ground, where plantations are being linked with biodiversity and community participation. Experiences from different States show how highway spaces can become platforms for wider environmental action.

Turning Highway Greenery into Pollinator Corridors

Green corridors along highways can serve purposes beyond shade and landscape improvement. Along identified stretches of the **Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway,** pollinator corridors under the **"Trees for Bees"** campaign are being developed. The initiative uses flowering and locally suitable species to provide nectar and pollen across seasons, creating continuous habitat for bees and other pollinators.

Sustaining the Green Cover

Andhra Pradesh has seen sustained plantation activity along its National Highway network. Between 2010 and 2025, around 18 lakh seedlings were planted through avenue and median plantations. These plantations are being maintained to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change and ensure safer travel for highway users.

For 2026–27, a further 3.86 lakh saplings have been targeted for avenue and median plantation across the State. On World Environment Day 2026, around 3,200 saplings were planted across Andhra Pradesh under the **"Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam"** initiative.

Together, these efforts reflect a shift from planting trees along highways to nurturing green corridors that communities can help sustain over time.

Building the Highways of Tomorrow

India's highway sector today stands at the intersection of large-scale infrastructure delivery and environmental stewardship. Each initiative, from grassroots plantation to indigenous bio-bitumen, reflects a common thread. Growth need not come at the expense of green cover. The Green Highways story is woven into India's larger national priorities. These span climate action, self-reliance and inclusive growth. It reinforces the vision of Viksit Bharat through sustainable, technology-backed infrastructure. As India's highway network expands, its green cover is expanding alongside it.

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PIB Research

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Geothermal Energy

A New Chapter in India's Clean Energy Journey

Published on: September 04, 2026

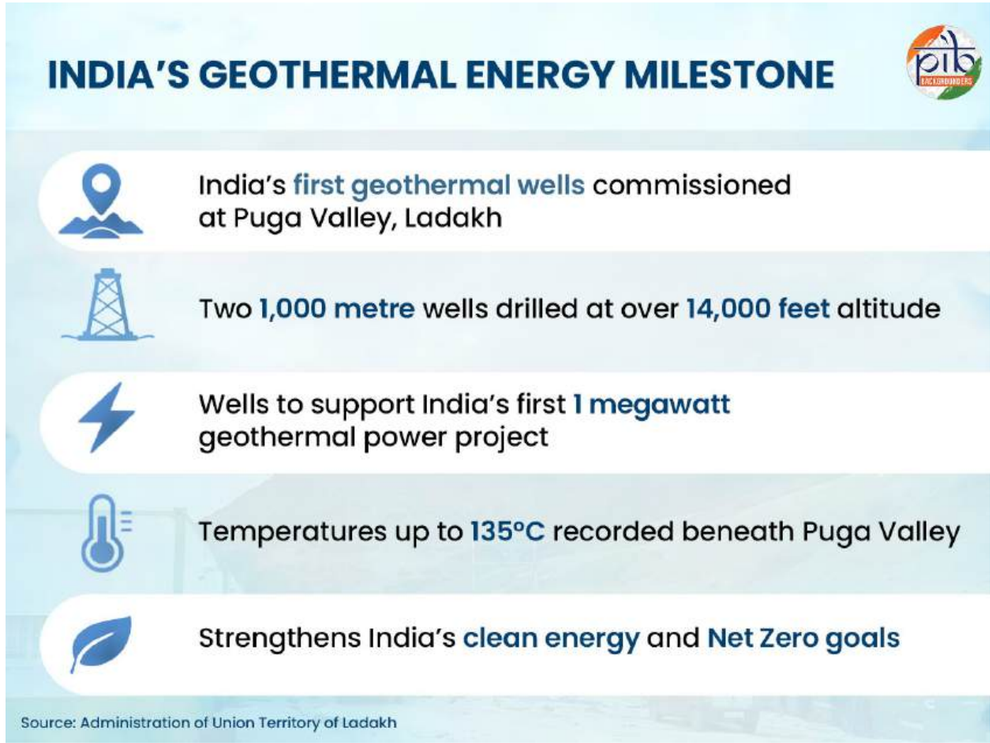
The intense heat in the Earth's interior is a powerful source of clean energy called geothermal energy. Given India's rich geothermal resources, this form of energy holds immense promise as a round-the-clock available source of power. The National Policy on Geothermal Energy aims to harness this potential. It seeks to make geothermal energy a key part of the nation's renewable energy story as India drives towards Net Zero by 2070. The recent commissioning of the first two geothermal wells in Ladakh marks the beginning of this journey.

Harnessing Geothermal Energy for a Sustainable India

Deep below the Earth's surface, emanating from the intense heat of its interiors, lies a constant, low-carbon source of energy called geothermal energy. In locations with suitable geology and tectonics, this energy can be tapped to generate power or used directly on the ground. Unlike solar and wind energy, this source provides renewable energy that is available round the clock. Recognising this potential, the Government notified the **National Policy on Geothermal Energy** in September 2025. The policy charts a clear roadmap for exploring and developing India's geothermal resources. The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** is the nodal ministry for its implementation.

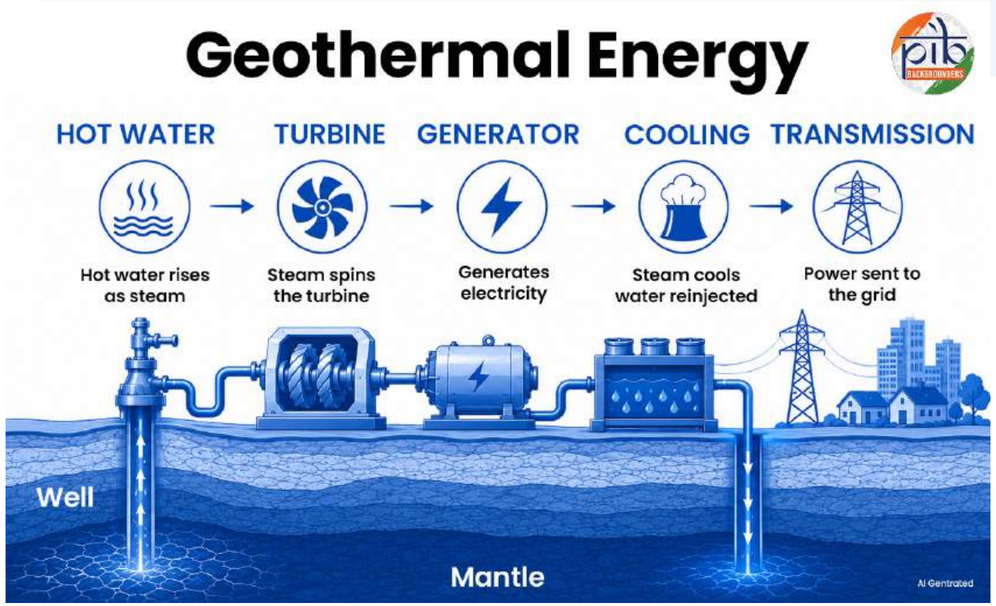
Building on this framework, India achieved a historic milestone in July 2026. The ONGC Energy Centre commissioned the country's **first two geothermal wells in Puga Valley, Ladakh.** At a height of over 14,000 feet above sea level, Puga Valley is among India's most promising geothermal sites, known for its hot springs and underground heat reserves. The two 1,000-metre-deep wells will support reservoir evaluation. They also pave the way for **India's first 1-megawatt demonstration geothermal power project,** marking the country's entry into geothermal power generation.

As India advances its clean energy transition, geothermal power offers a dependable, indigenous way to diversify the nation's renewable energy mix.



Understanding Geothermal Energy: An Overview

Geothermal Energy is a steady, low-carbon and weather-independent energy source. It holds a vast untapped resource base to strengthen India's clean energy future and cut reliance on fossil fuels.



Formation of Geothermal Energy

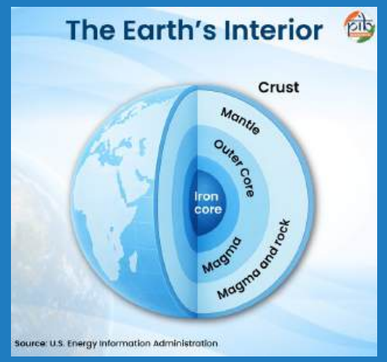
The Earth's interior consists of four main layers: the outermost, solid crust; the middle, semi-solid mantle; and the core divided into a dense liquid outer core and solid inner core. The temperature of the interior rises with depth - the mantle temperature reaches about 3700 Celsius degrees at its boundary with the core, while the core temperature goes up to 5000- 6000 Celsius. This heat is generated by radioactive decay of elements like uranium, thorium, and potassium, as well as residual heat left over from the planet's formation. This heat gives rise to huge convection currents in the mantle, as hot material moves up from the core boundary towards the cooler, upper parts of the mantle and crust. This material also contains water trapped as hydroxides. These convection currents give rise to all tectonic activity, including earthquakes, volcanoes and mountain building. In geologically active regions, faults and fractures let the hot material travel closer to the surface. This process creates reservoirs of hot water and steam, trapped within permeable rock. This thermal energy, harnessed from within the Earth, is known as geothermal energy.

From Geothermal Energy to Power Production

Geothermal power generation converts the earth's natural heat into electricity by tapping hot water and steam trapped beneath the surface. Deep wells bring these resources up to the surface. The steam then drives a turbine connected to a generator. This process resembles conventional thermal power generation. However, it replaces fuel combustion with naturally occurring underground heat. After power generation, the used water is condensed and reinjected into the reservoir. This supports resource replenishment and enables continued energy production. Geothermal energy also supports direct heat applications across district heating, agriculture, aquaculture, and space heating & cooling, enabling efficient utilisation of geothermal heat.

Inside the Earth

From the centre outward, the Earth is structured in four distinct layers. The **inner core** is a solid ball of iron and nickel, about 2,400 km wide. The **outer core** surrounding it is a liquid layer of molten iron and nickel, roughly 2,400 km thick. The **mantle,** composed mostly of hot, dense rock, extends nearly 2,900 km and forms the largest layer. Finally, the **crust** is the thin, solid outer layer, ranging from about 5 to 8 kilometres thick beneath the oceans to 24 to 56 kilometres thick beneath the continents.



India's Geothermal Resource Base

India's varied geology offers a strong foundation for geothermal development. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has mapped **381 hot springs and identified 10 geothermal provinces nationwide.** India's theoretical geothermal prospect stands at nearly 10.6 GW. Of this, **42 sites have been recognised as promising for power generation and direct heat use.**

The 10 geothermal provinces include the Himalayan Geothermal Province, Naga-Lusai, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Son Narmada Tapi (SONATA), West Coast, Cambay Graben, Aravalli, Mahanadi, Godavari, and South Indian Cratonic regions.

India's geothermal rift basins hold strong scope, owing to favourable geology

and tectonics. But suitable projects can arise anywhere geothermal resources exist. Advanced technologies like **Enhanced Geothermal Systems (EGS)** and **Advanced Geothermal Systems (AGS)** will further widen exploration opportunities.

Repurposing Abandoned Oil and Gas Wells

Geothermal energy can be extracted from abandoned oil and gas wells. Inactive or unproductive wells can potentially be repurposed for geothermal initiatives, subject to technical and operational feasibility. This approach builds on existing drilling expertise, well data and infrastructure from the oil and gas sector.

India's Geothermal Expansion

India is moving from resource assessment to field demonstration with remarkable speed. This momentum is reflected in the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy sanctioning five research and development projects between July and August 2025, covering resource assessment, indigenous technology development and field demonstration. The projects span electricity generation, heating and cooling applications. These efforts are generating the technical data and field experience needed for future commercial deployment.

Project	Current Status of Government-supported Projects as of 12 December 2026
Ankleshwar, Gujarat	A pilot project evaluating electricity generation by retrofitting unproductive oil and gas wells. Field investigations and baseline geological and production data have been completed.
Gandhinagar, Gujarat	A demonstration project integrating solar and geothermal energy has drilled three geothermal wells that produce geothermal fluid at 70 to 80°C and has demonstrated electricity generation of 50 to 90 kilowatts.
Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh	Studies are underway at five geothermal sites to assess the region's geothermal resource through field investigations and geochemical analysis.
Hyderabad, Telangana	A research project is developing a geothermal cooling system for air conditioning applications using modelling and performance analysis.

Shallow Geothermal Energy	Pilot study is developing analytical models to evaluate shallow geothermal systems using Borehole Heat Exchangers for heating and cooling applications.

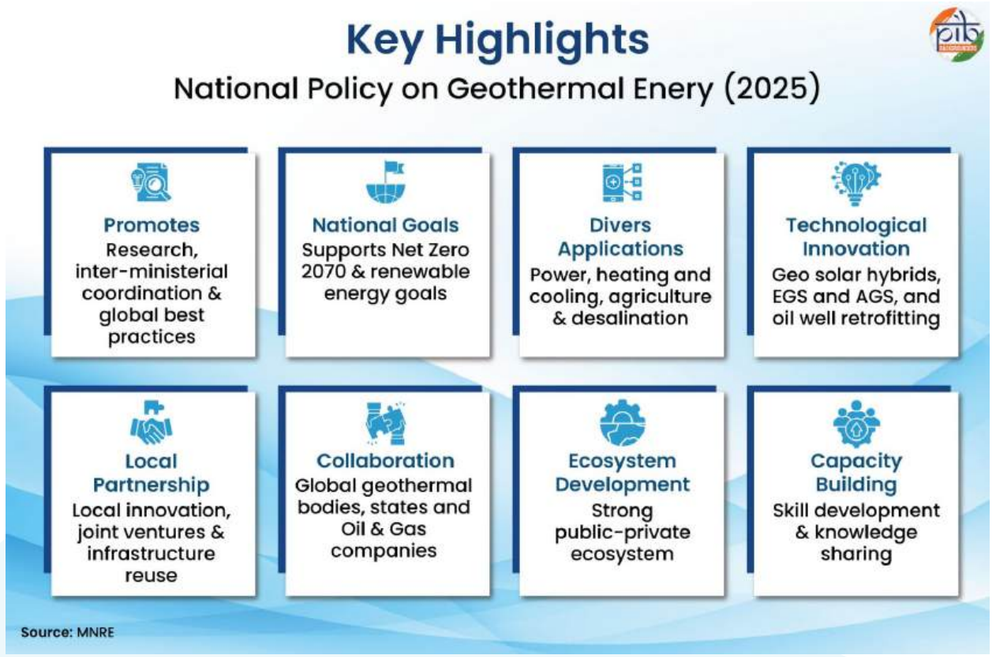
Significant geothermal resources, advancing technologies and early field activity are laying the foundation for a future of geothermal energy in India. While commercial-scale power generation is yet to be established, expanding well fields, demonstration activities and research and development initiatives are strengthening the ecosystem for wider deployment.

Unlocking India's Geothermal Potential: Policy & Partnerships

Geothermal energy is a proven, established renewable technology worldwide. **Global installed capacity reached 15.67 GW by the end of 2025.** Indonesia, the US, the Philippines, Türkiye and New Zealand lead the field, together holding around 67% of global capacity. India is now building a strong ecosystem to advance geothermal energy from resource assessment to real-world deployment. National programmes and international partnerships are driving this mission forward, powering research, technology development and knowledge exchange across the sector.

National Policy on Geothermal Energy, 2025

The National Policy on Geothermal Energy aims to establish geothermal energy as a major renewable pillar. It promotes systematic exploration and deployment of India's geothermal resources. The Policy prioritises research, drilling, reservoir management, and direct-use applications. It also supports Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHPs) for heating and cooling. A clear regulatory framework encourages both public and private sector participation. The Policy facilitates repurposing abandoned oil and gas wells for geothermal use. It further supports a national geothermal data repository, pilot projects, and Centres of Excellence.



Renewable Energy Research and Technology Development Programme (RE-RTD)

MNRE is implementing the RE-RTD scheme through research institutions and industry partners. This initiative aims to develop indigenous, cost-effective technologies for renewable energy, including geothermal energy, across the country.

International Collaborations

India has advanced its geothermal energy efforts through collaborations with several international partners.

Under cooperation mechanisms with **Australia** and **Iceland,** geothermal energy has been identified as a key area of cooperation. Similarly, an MoU with the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** designated geothermal energy as a focus area of bilateral engagement.

These initiatives are providing a coordinated platform for translating India's geothermal resources into scalable solutions across sectors.

New Dimension in India's Renewable Energy Mix

India's geothermal energy journey reflects the Government's steadfast commitment to energy security and sustainable growth. From notifying the National Policy on Geothermal Energy to commissioning the country's first two geothermal wells at Puga Valley, Ladakh, India has moved decisively from planning to implementation. The country holds a theoretical geothermal resource potential of nearly 10,600 MW. Growing pilot projects and strengthening international collaborations are expanding its applications, from power generation to heating, geo-tourism and agriculture. Geothermal energy is thus emerging as a valuable addition to India's renewable energy portfolio. As India advances towards its 2070 Net Zero target, geothermal energy will remain a steady, indigenous pillar of the country's energy transition and progress.

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9th Rashtriya Poshan Maah

A Month-long Celebration of Nutrition

Published on: September 08, 2026

The Rashtriya Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month) is observed every September as a dedicated platform to mobilise communities and reinforce key nutrition, health and caregiving behaviours among pregnant women, lactating mothers, children, adolescents, and their families. The 9th Poshan Maah 2026, which will be launched on Sept. 9, 2026, highlights the importance of Anganwadi Centres. It will raise awareness about balanced, protein-rich nutrition for pregnant and lactating women. Over successive Poshan Maah campaigns, awareness and positive behaviour change have been strengthened on maternal nutrition, infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, growth monitoring and hygiene, alongside broader efforts to improve nutrition outcomes across the country.

Background

Malnutrition remains one of India's most significant public health challenges, affecting the health, growth, learning and productivity of women and children across the life cycle. To mount a coordinated response, the Government of India launched POSHAN Abhiyaan in March 2018 as a multi-ministerial convergence mission placing nutrition at the centre of the development agenda.

In the Union Budget 2021–22, these interventions were integrated under **Mission Poshan 2.0**—India's **unified National Nutrition Mission** anchored by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Poshan 2.0 consolidates three core schemes into one framework:

1. **POSHAN Abhiyaan** (Technology-driven monitoring, Jan Andolan mass mobilisation, and behavioural change).
2. **Anganwadi Services/ Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** (Supplementary nutrition, hot cooked meals, and early childhood care).
3. **Scheme for Adolescent Girls** (Nutritional support for out-of-school/adolescent girls).

The **Rashtriya Poshan Maah, or the National Nutrition Month**, observed every September, is one of the ways through which the government spreads awareness of the Mission POSHAN 2.0 scheme and objectives.

The **9th Rashtriya Poshan Maah**, will be launched on **September 9, 2026**, at the Rudraksh International Cooperation and Convention Centre in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, to **recognise the importance of Anganwadi centres**. Anganwadi centres are the **world's largest childcare network**, delivering essential care and support to children in even the most remote communities. The Central theme this year is **"Hamari Anganwadi Hamari Jimmedari"**, calling upon every citizen to take shared ownership of Anganwadi centres.

9th Rashtriya Poshan Maah

Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2026, under the overarching theme **"Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Jimmedari,"** seeks to place Anganwadi Centres at the heart of community-led action for nutrition, care and early childhood development, while strengthening collective ownership

and accountability for Poshan. It is proposed to be anchored in five mutually reinforcing priorities:

i. promotion of dietary diversity, with a focus on adequate protein intake, diverse food groups and local foods;

ii. promotion of fresh, diverse HCM under the SNP through menu rotation, hygiene and quality assurance;

iii. strengthening community ownership and accountability for Poshan through the newly constituted AMCs (guidelines issued on 23rd June 2026) and the display of SNP Menu Boards;

iv. promoting cognitive development and adequate nutrition as fundamental pillars of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), highlighting the inseparable link between what a child eats and how a child learns; and

v. Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2026 will also commemorate 10 years of the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), India's flagship maternity benefit programme, highlighting its contribution to supporting maternal nutrition, promoting health-seeking behaviours, and providing income support during pregnancy, while reinforcing the critical importance of maternal nutrition and care during the first 1,000 days of life for healthy growth, cognitive development, and lifelong well-being.

Proposed Themes for Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2026

1. **Dietary Diversity & Adequate Protein**: A diverse diet that includes cereals and millets, pulses, fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, and milk and milk products, along with adequate protein from both plant and animal sources, is essential for meeting nutrient requirements, supporting healthy growth and development, and preventing all forms of malnutrition. Promoting dietary diversity across the life course, particularly during the complementary feeding period, is fundamental to improving nutrition outcomes and fostering healthy eating habits from an early age.

Activities may include –

- **Healthy and Diverse Recipe Demonstrations**: Conduct live demonstrations of healthy and diverse recipes at Anganwadi Centres, using affordable, locally available ingredients drawn from different food groups, cereals and millets, pulses, vegetables and fruits, nuts and seeds, milk and milk products, and eggs.

- **Poshan Melas**: Organise Poshan Melas showcasing local nutritious foods through interactive displays and recipe demonstrations, with counselling on building balanced and diverse meals for every age group.

- **'Protein-Rich Foods' Campaign**: Conduct awareness activities on protein-rich foods from plant and animal sources, pulses, legumes, nuts and seeds, milk and milk products, and eggs, demonstrating practical and affordable ways to add protein to daily diets.

- **Showcasing Poshan Vatika Produce and Local Foods**: Showcase produce from Poshan Vatikas and locally available seasonal foods, promoting their regular use in household meals and in complementary feeding for young children.

2. **Fresh Hot Cooked Meals (HCM) at Anganwadi Centers**: Ensuring that beneficiaries consistently receive fresh, diverse, and nutritious Hot Cooked Meals (HCM) is central to improving the quality, utilisation, and effectiveness of the SNP, while encouraging regular attendance at Anganwadi Centres. Emphasising freshly prepared, hygienic meals made from locally available ingredients, including millets, pulses, and seasonal vegetables, reinforces the importance of dietary diversity and supports the adoption of healthier eating practices at the household level. Poshan Maah 2026 provides an opportunity to strengthen the quality and acceptability of HCMs through weekly menu rotation, community participation, and robust quality assurance mechanisms.

Activities may include –

- **Weekly Menu Rotation**: States/UTs should be encouraged to operationalise weekly menu rotation at Anganwadi Centres, ensuring a diverse Hot Cooked Meals (HCM) menu across days of the week using locally available ingredients, millets, pulses and seasonal vegetables.

- **Hot Cooked Meal (HCM) Demonstrations**: Live demonstrations of HCM prepared as per the SNP guidelines, highlighting appropriate ingredients, hygienic preparation practices, and balanced meal composition.

- **Mission-Mode Hot Cooked Meal (HCM) Quality Testing**: Conduct nationwide testing of HCM in collaboration with FSSAI to reinforce food safety and quality standards.

- **Community Hot Cooked Meal (HCM) Tasting Sessions**: Organize

community tasting sessions of HCMs at Anganwadi Centres with participation from parents, Panchayats, SHGs and Anganwadi Management Committees.

3. **Community Ownership & Accountability**: The recent constitution of Anganwadi Management Committees (AMCs), as per the Ministry's guidelines issued on 23 June 2026, provides a timely opportunity to strengthen community ownership and accountability within the SNP. Chaired by the Anganwadi Supervisor, AMCs are intended to promote participatory oversight, strengthen community engagement, and improve the quality and effectiveness of service delivery at the Anganwadi Centre. Poshan Maah 2026 can serve as an important platform to operationalise these committees by encouraging their active participation in awareness generation, beneficiary mobilisation, and oversight of nutrition and early childhood care services.

Complementing this effort, the universal display and use of SNP Menu Boards at AWCs can enhance transparency by making beneficiary entitlements and daily menus visible to the community. Together, AMCs and Menu Boards can foster greater community participation in monitoring menu adherence, meal quality, and service regularity, while increasing awareness of supplementary nutrition, beneficiary entitlements, and responsive childcare practices.

Activities may include –

- **Activation of Anganwadi Management Committees (AMCs)**: Activate AMCs across all Anganwadi Centres to lead community participation, review nutrition service delivery & support Poshan Maah activities. Additionally, ensure that at least one AMC meeting is conducted during Poshan Maah.

- **SNP Menu Board Display**: Ensure States/UTs to display SNP Menu Boards at all Anganwadi Centres to improve beneficiary awareness of day-wise HCM/THR menus and strengthen transparency and community monitoring of service delivery.

- **Community Monitoring of Meal Quality**: Engage AMCs and Mothers' Committees in monitoring meal quality, quantity, menu adherence and periodic social audit of Supplementary Nutrition Programme.

Theme 4: Nutrition and Early Stimulation for Childhood Development: Reflecting the direction of the Chief Secretaries' Conference that cognitive development and adequate nutrition are fundamental to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), this theme highlights the inseparable link between what a child eats and how a child learns.

Good nutrition and responsive caregiving during the first 1,000 days are essential for optimal brain development, while undernutrition during this critical period can have lasting effects on cognitive, motor, and socio-emotional development. The revised Home Visit Scheduler, with its structured package of 34 developmental milestones for children aged 0–3 years, provides a tool for Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) to strengthen caregiver counselling, and promote early stimulation.

Activities may include –

- **Revised Home Scheduler**: Accelerate the rollout of the revised Home Visit Scheduler to improve coordinated counselling and follow-up during the first 1,000 days and early childhood. Promote quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) through the implementation of the Navchetna and Aadharshila curricula, fostering age-appropriate learning, development, and school readiness.

- **Referral of Children with Developmental Delays**: Promoting referral pathways and mass awareness on identification and referral of children with developmental delays with health systems and RBSK teams.

- **Awareness about the importance of nutrition on early stimulation**: Mass awareness campaign on the importance of adequate nutrition and early childhood stimulation for optimal brain development, and cognitive development.

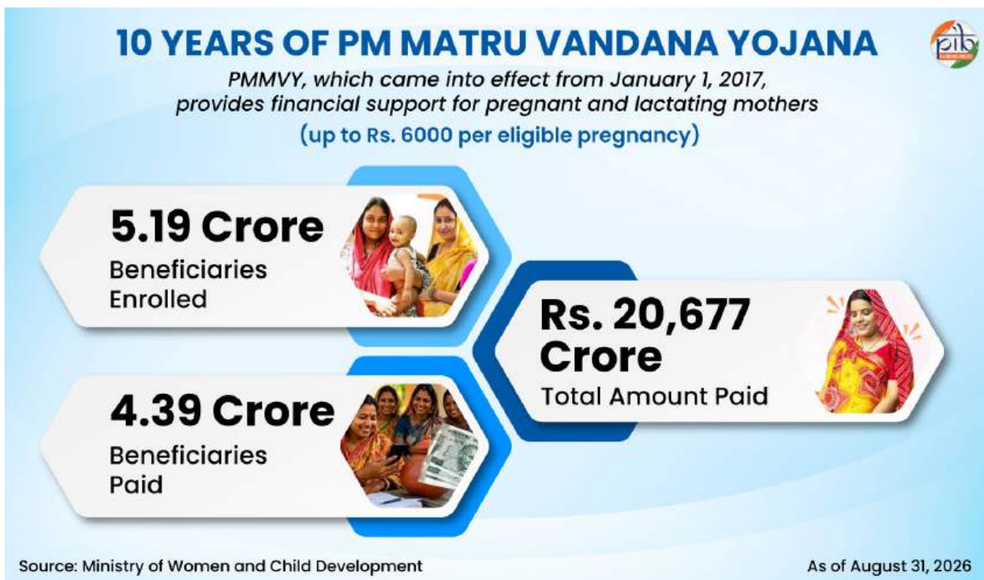
Theme 5: Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY): Cash transfers for Maternal Health: Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) marks 10 years as India's flagship maternity benefit programme, supporting maternal nutrition, promoting health-seeking behaviours, and providing income support during pregnancy. Poshan Maah 2026 presents an opportunity to expand coverage among all eligible beneficiaries, strengthen citizen awareness, and celebrate a decade of progress in advancing maternal and child health.

Activities may include –

- **100% Saturation Drive**: Conduct special enrolment drives to identify and register all eligible pregnant and lactating women under PMMVY.

Review pendency and expedite verification, approvals, and Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs). Monitor regular progress reviews through PMMVY dashboards.

- **Citizen Awareness Campaign**: Conduct awareness campaigns on PMMVY eligibility, benefits, installments and the application process. Promote beneficiary testimonials and success stories through social and mass media.
- **Launch of PMMVY Toolkit**: Release of PMMVY toolkit for field implementation by States/UTs. Encourage States/UTs to localize and disseminate toolkit materials in regional languages.



Community Engagement: Nutrition as a Jan Andolan

The defining character of POSHAN Abhiyaan is its positioning of nutrition improvement as a Jan Andolan, a genuine people's movement rather than a government-administered programme.

The mission recognises that lasting behavioural change around infant feeding practices, dietary diversity, antenatal care, hand hygiene, and institutional health-seeking can only be achieved through active community ownership and ground-level participation. Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada are among the largest nutrition centric community mobilisation campaigns, and are conducted annually in designated months, to reach out to the masses to promote practices that nurture health, wellness and immunity.

Poshan Pakhwada (April 2026)

Observed annually since 2018, Poshan Pakhwada is a two-week intensive outreach campaign conducted in April to strengthen community mobilisation and reinforce key nutrition behaviours under POSHAN Abhiyaan.

In 2026, the 8th edition of Poshan Pakhwada is being held from 9th to 23rd April. Scientific evidence indicates that more than 85% of brain development occurs by the age of six years, with the most rapid growth taking place during the first 1000 days – a crucial period for optimal brain growth, physical development and holistic well-being.

Recognizing the critical importance of care and nutrition for children in the early stage of life, the 8th Poshan Pakhwada seeks to deepen the Jan Andolan by focusing on a scientifically critical and transformative theme "Maximizing Brain Development in the First Six Years of Life" and strengthen awareness among families and communities about practices that support healthy growth and brain development.

It aims to shift the narrative from "nutrition for health" to "nutrition and early childhood stimulation for optimal brain development" through the following **Central Theme: Maximizing Brain Development in the First Six Years of Life.**

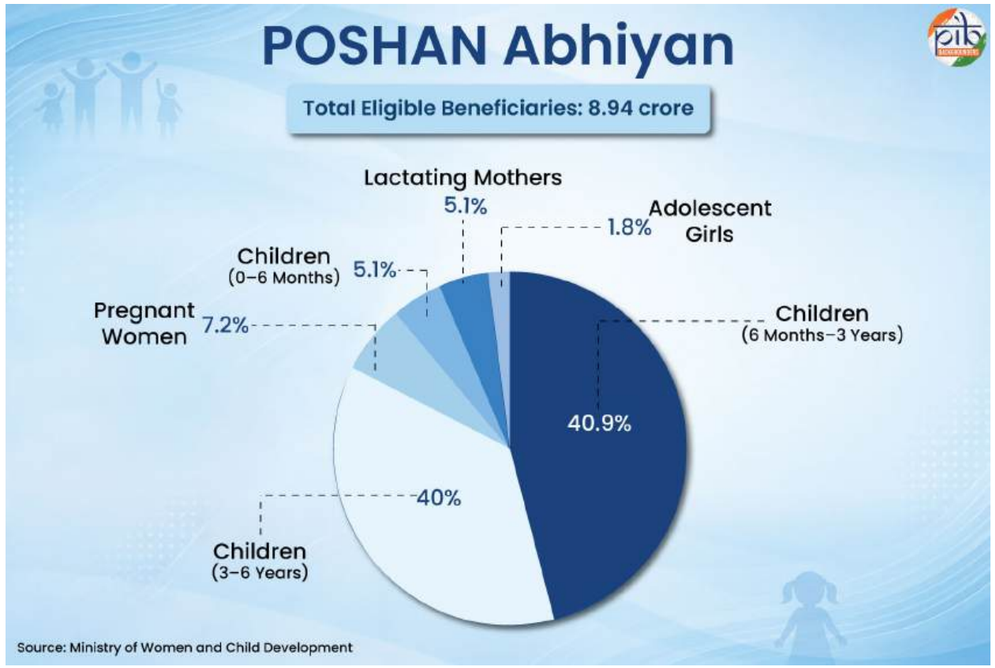
8th Rashtriya Poshan Maah

The 8th Rashtriya Poshan Maah was launched by the Prime Minister on 17th September 2025 from Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, along with the Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan (SNSPA). The initiative is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The 2025 Rashtriya Poshan Maah focused on promoting nutrition literacy and healthy lifestyles. Key themes included maternal nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and reduction in sugar and oil consumption to address obesity. A total of 14.33 crore activities were conducted nationwide in convergence with more than 20 Ministries.

The Poshan Tracker: A Digital Platform for Nutrition Governance

Launched on 1st March 2021, the Poshan Tracker serves as the primary governance tool for monitoring infrastructure and service delivery. The application has facilitated near real-time data collection for Anganwadi Services, including the opening of Anganwadi Centres, daily attendance of children, ECCE activities, and growth monitoring. Currently, the system monitors a universe that consists of Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers, Children up to 6 years of age, and Adolescent Girls.



As of July 31, 2026, India's nutrition infrastructure spans **nearly 13.99 lakh Aanganwadi Centers** staffed with **13.30 lakh Aanganwadi workers**, forming a vast grassroots network reaching almost 8.94 crore beneficiaries.

Children remain the primary focus, with those aged 6 months to 6 years accounting for **over 7.2 crore** of all beneficiaries combined, underscoring the emphasis on early childhood nutrition and development.

Meanwhile, pregnant women and lactating mothers together number **nearly 1.1 crore**, reflecting sustained attention to maternal health during the critical **first 1,000 days**.

Towards Healthier Families and Nation

By combining technology-driven real-time tracking with large-scale community mobilization (Jan Andolan), **Rashtriya Poshan Maah** has transformed nutrition into a nationwide public movement. Operating under the unified framework of **Mission Poshan 2.0**, this annual campaign continues to bridge service-delivery gaps, promote dietary diversity, and prioritise the critical initial years of a child to build a healthier, malnutrition-free India.

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9th Rashtriya Poshan Maah

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Swachhata Hi Seva

Making Cleanliness a Collective Responsibility

Published on: September 18, 2026

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), launched in 2014, has evolved from toilet construction into a broader sanitation movement covering waste management, behaviour change and citizen participation. **Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS),** launched in 2017, is a dedicated campaign that provides an annual platform for citizens and institutions to undertake **collective cleanliness action.** Over the years, SHS has evolved with changing cleanliness priorities, bringing greater focus to plastic waste management, visual cleanliness and garbage-free public spaces. The 2023 and 2024 editions further expanded the campaign through **large-scale shramdaan, public-space transformation, youth participation, SafaiMitra welfare,** and community engagement. SHS 2025 brought Swachhata into community celebrations through **Swachhotsav,** clean public spaces, SafaiMitra initiatives, and **eco-friendly festivities.** SHS 2026 carries this evolution forward with the theme **"Swachhata Mein Sahbhag,"** emphasising collective ownership, youth engagement, waste-management responsibilities, and sustained cleanliness practices.

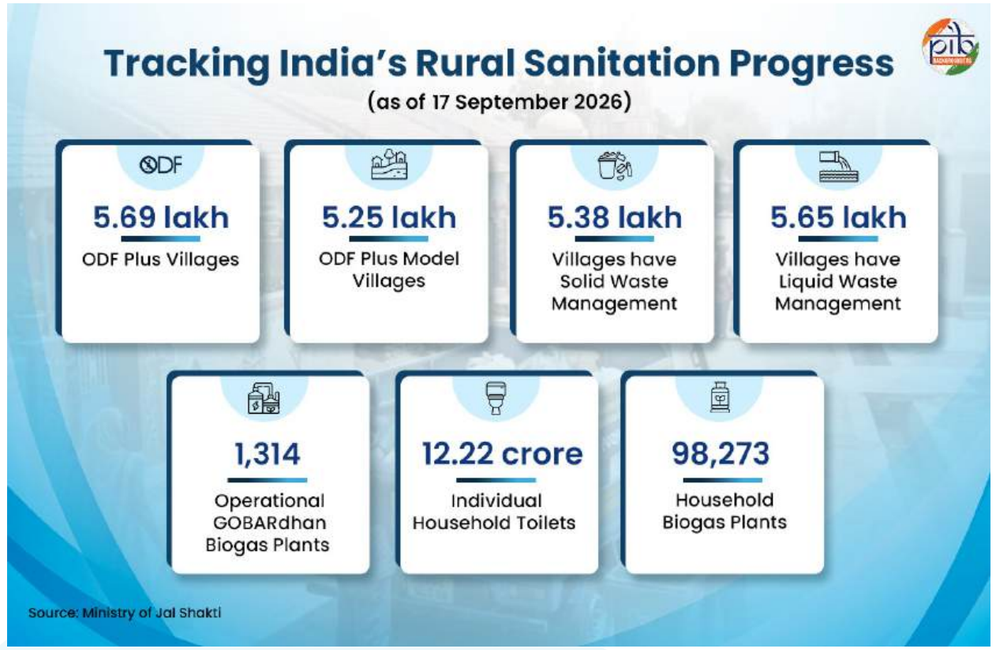
Swachh Bharat Mission: Building a Clean India

Image 1: Logo of Swachh Bharat Mission

The **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM),** launched on **2 October 2014,** is one of the largest sanitation movements led by the government. The logo of SBM represents the spectacles of **Mahatma Gandhi,** who envisioned Swachhata as the principle that **"Cleanliness is next to godliness."** The logo helped in creating the brand value and representing the emotion for cleanliness worldwide. It also helped people associate themselves easily and quickly with the SBM.

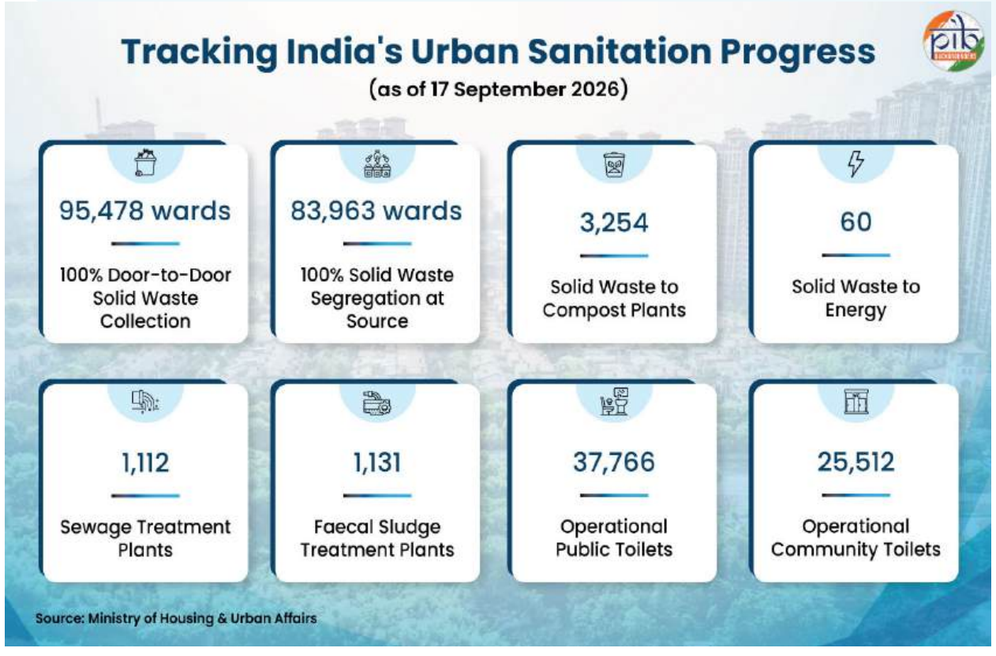
The Mission has two components: **Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G)** and **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U). SBM-G** focuses on rural sanitation, toilet access and usage, and solid and liquid waste management. **SBM-U** focuses on urban sanitation, waste management, public spaces, and cleanliness infrastructure.

The impact of this mission is now visible across India's villages and cities. **Rural India was declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) in 2019.** Further, as of 17 September 2026, India has attained over 5.69 lakh **ODF Plus villages** and more than 5.25 lakh have achieved **ODF Plus Model** status. More than 5.38 lakh villages have established **solid waste management** arrangements, and over 5.65 lakh villages have established **liquid waste management** systems. A total of 1,314 **GOBARdhan biogas** plants is currently operational in 585 districts. At the village household level, 12.22 crore **individual toilets** and 98,273 biogas plants have been constructed.



ODF Plus and ODF Plus Model Villages

An **ODF Plus village** not only sustains ODF status but also effectively manages solid and liquid waste, while maintaining visual cleanliness. Along with sustaining ODF Plus village status, these villages are classified into three progressive stages: **Aspiring, Rising, and Model.** Aspiring villages manage either solid or liquid waste. Rising villages manage both solid and liquid waste. Model villages, in addition to both waste streams, also demonstrate visual cleanliness and display ODF Plus messaging.



In urban areas, 95,478 wards have **100% door-to-door solid-waste collection,** and 83,963 wards have **100% solid waste segregation at source.** India has 3,254 **solid waste-to-compost plants,** processing 1.39 lakh tonnes and 60 **solid waste-to-energy plants,** processing 25,759.50 tonnes of waste every day. Further, 1,112 **sewage treatment plants** are processing 41,020.63 megalitres and 1,131 **faecal sludge treatment plants** are processing 95,371 kilolitres of liquid waste per day. Urban areas have **68,339 public sanitation facilities,** comprising **37,766 public toilets and 25,512 community toilets, and 5,061 urinals.**

The expansion of sanitation infrastructure has contributed to measurable health gains. A WHO study estimated that nearly 3 lakh diarrhoeal deaths were averted in 2019 compared with 2014. ODF regions recorded notable declines in groundwater pollution levels.

Thus, the SBM has evolved from mere toilet construction towards holistic **sustainable sanitation systems.** Behaviour change, waste management and citizen participation now form important parts of this transformation. Behaviour change at such a mass scale has been made possible through several national-level campaigns, most prominent of them being the **'Swachhata Hi Seva'** campaign.

Swachhata Hi Seva: Making Cleanliness a People's Movement

Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) has been observed annually since **2017.** The campaign precedes **Swachh Bharat Diwas,** which is organised every year on 2 October. It mobilises citizens

Image 2: The Logo of SHS Campaign

towards voluntary action and collective ownership of Swachhata. The campaign emerged from the broader Jan Bhagidari approach of the SBM. It provides a dedicated period for citizens, institutions and governments to undertake collective cleanliness actions. Recently, SHS 2026 was launched on 17 September 2026.

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Swachhata Hi Seva 2026: Swachhata Mein Sahbhag

SHS 2026 is currently running from17 September to 2 October. Its theme is **"Swachhata Mein Sahbhag; Swachh Bharat, Viksit Bharat."** The campaign follows a **'Whole of Government'**

Image 3: Students being educated on SWM Rules 2026

and 'Whole of Society' approach. It gives greater emphasis to youth, stakeholder responsibilities, and collective ownership. The campaign is also creating awareness about the **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026.** It seeks to strengthen understanding of responsibilities across stakeholders. As part of SHS 2026, the following five core activity pillars are being undertaken by local bodies, governmental institutions, and people:

- **Transformation of Cleanliness Target Units (CTUs) and Clean Public Places**
  The campaign targets neglected garbage points and difficult-to-clean locations. These sites will undergo waste removal, beautification, and sustained maintenance. The Swachhata App can be used for reporting sanitation and garbage-related grievances. Identified locations can subsequently be mapped on the SHS 2026 portal. The campaign also covers markets, schools, hospitals, transport hubs, parks and water bodies. Public

and community toilets will be assessed using **FACES (Functional, Accessible, Clean, Eco-friendly and Safe) parameters.**

- **Swachh Paathshala - Yuva for Swachhata**
  Students and youth have a dedicated role in SHS 2026. The focus is on sustained behaviour change. Students from Classes 6 to 12 will be participating in **Swachhata Gyan Yatras.** These visits will expose students to waste management and sanitation facilities. Schools are also encouraged to organise discussions on sanitation and water conservation. These discussions can cover hygiene, handwashing, menstrual hygiene, and safe drinking water.

- **SafaiMitra Suraksha Seva Evam Samman Shivirs**
  The campaign continues its focus on sanitation workers and their families. Camps will provide health services, safety equipment, and welfare linkages.

- **Jan Bhagidari for Swachhata**
  Jan Bhagidari is central to SHS 2026. Citizens and institutions are encouraged to take ownership of everyday cleanliness. Planned activities include awareness of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026, demonstrations on four-way source segregation, home composting awareness, campaigns against littering and single-use plastics, swachhata rallies and human chains, public Swachhata pledges and collection drives for reusable household items.

Image 4: Planning of Eco-Friendly Festivals

The campaign also promotes **Swachh Parv, Harit Parv.** Festivals during the campaign period are encouraged to adopt eco-friendly and plastic-free practices.

- **Swachhata Se Samriddhi**
  The campaign links cleanliness with resource recovery and circularity. It promotes **Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle** practices. **Kabaad Se Jugaad** will promote useful products from discarded materials. **Kabaad Se Kala** will promote artistic creations from waste. These initiatives connect waste management with creativity and resource recovery.

Further, on 1 October, 2026, simultaneous cleanliness activities will be undertaken under **Ek Din, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath.** Citizens, youth groups, NGOs and institutions are encouraged to participate in these programmes. On 2 October, **Special Gram Sabhas** will discuss SHS activities and the SWM Rules, 2026. **Urban local bodies** will also organise **Special Council Meetings.** Thus, SHS 2026 combines **cleanliness, behavioural change, youth engagement and waste management.** It also strengthens attention towards sanitation workers and public sanitation infrastructure. This approach reflects the broader transition from **Swachhata as an activity to Swachhata as a collective habit and responsibility.**

To place the 2026 campaign in

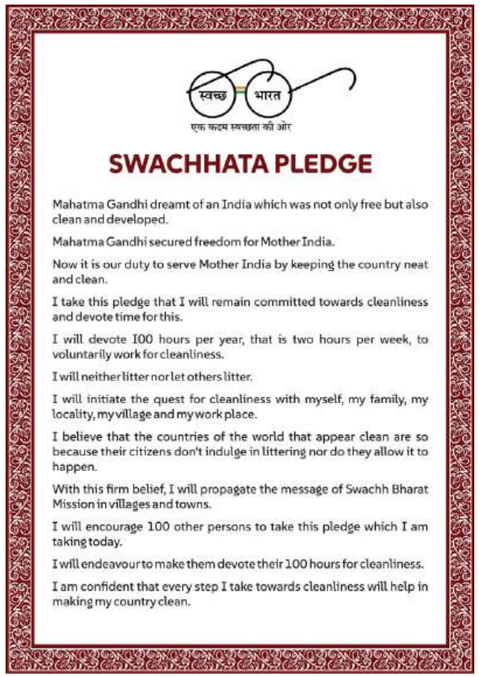
perspective, it is important to trace the evolution of SHS over the years. Its focus areas and themes show a gradual movement towards sustained sanitation behaviour.

Since its inception in 2017, the campaign has evolved its focus areas, scale and areas of intervention, responding to emerging sanitation and cleanliness priorities.

Swachhata Hi Seva 2017: The Beginning of a People-Led Movement

The first SHS campaign was launched on **15 September 2017.** The launch featured the Swachhata Hi Seva pledge and a call for nationwide participation. The campaign positioned cleanliness as a **shared national responsibility.** Citizens were encouraged to participate directly through shramdaan. **Shramdaan** (selfless service) refers to community service or voluntary contribution towards community welfare. Under SBM, shramdaan is focused on cleanliness activities. The first SHS campaign was linked closely with the wider sanitation transformation under SBM. By 2017, **4.82 crore toilets** had been constructed since 2014. The number of ODF villages had reached 2.38 lakh. Individual toilet coverage had increased from 42% in 2014 to **64%** in 2017. Hence, the SHS campaign emerged alongside the rapid expansion of sanitation infrastructure, complementing this progress with a strong emphasis on citizen mobilisation and community participation.

The SHS 2017 saw widespread public participation. A total of **2.46 crore children** participated in the **Swachh Sankalp Swachh Siddhi painting competition.** The competition focused on building awareness among children about cleanliness. The campaign also saw social media mobilisation. **#SwachhataHiSeva** became a leading trend on the day of its launch. Citizens subsequently used the hashtag to


स्वच्छ भारत
एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

SWACHHATA PLEDGE

Mahatma Gandhi dreamt of an India which was not only free but also clean and developed.

Mahatma Gandhi secured freedom for Mother India.

Now it is our duty to serve Mother India by keeping the country neat and clean.

I take this pledge that I will remain committed towards cleanliness and devote time for this.

I will devote 100 hours per year, that is two hours per week, to voluntarily work for cleanliness.

I will neither litter nor let others litter.

I will initiate the quest for cleanliness with myself, my family, my locality, my village and my work place.

I believe that the countries of the world that appear clean are so because their citizens don't indulge in littering nor do they allow it to happen.

With this firm belief, I will propagate the message of Swachh Bharat Mission in villages and towns.

I will encourage 100 other persons to take this pledge which I am taking today.

I will endeavour to make them devote their 100 hours for cleanliness.

I am confident that every step I take towards cleanliness will help in making my country clean.

Image 5: The Swachhata Pledge

share their shramdaan and cleanliness activities online.

Other initiatives included **cleanliness drives, sanitation activities and action around open-defecation vulnerable locations.** Self-help groups (SHGs), NGOs and local communities participated in several such activities.

Swachhata Hi Seva 2018: Strengthening the Jan Andolan for Swachhata

SHS 2018 was organised from 15

Image 6: Swachhata Sabha in Process

September to 2 October. SHS 2018 strengthened the ***jan bhagidari*** approach and reinforced the concept that **'sanitation is everyone's business'.** It brought together students, ***Swachhagrahis*** (dedicated, trained and properly incentivized sanitation workers at the gram panchayat level), ***Nigrani Samitis*** (who work to persuade villagers not to defecate in the open), women leaders, youth groups, famous personalities and community organisations. The campaign expanded activities across Gram Sabhas, railways, iconic places and educational institutions.

Image 7: Shramdaan for Visual Cleanliness

The campaign gave special importance to children and young people. Students from Classes 3 to 5 participated in **handwashing campaigns.** Students from Classes 6 to 12 participated in **outdoor Swachhata activities.** On 16 September, **Swachhata Sabhas** were organised. Special Gram Sabhas were organised in villages to review local cleanliness. They also prepared action plans for future sanitation activities. **17 September** was observed as **Seva Diwas.** Union and State Ministries organised Swachhata activities across the country. Government employees participated in these activities under ministerial leadership. **Antyodaya Divas on 25 September** added another layer of community mobilisation. Each Swachhagrahi was encouraged to create a wider network of Swachhagrahis. This approach sought to expand sanitation participation beyond individual volunteers. It connected local leadership with sustained sanitation action.

One Mission, Many Voices: India Comes Together for Swachhata

Swachhata Hi Seva 2018 brought together people from across India for one collective effort towards cleanliness. School children from Dibrugarh, women Swachhagrahis from Dantewada and Salem, and volunteers cleaning the Ganga in Bijnor shared their grassroots efforts. Celebrity endorsements like **Mr. Amitabh Bachchan** spoke about cleaning a Mumbai beach, while **Mr. Ratan Tata** highlighted the honour of contributing to a movement for every citizen. **Indo-Tibetan Border Police jawans** participated from Pangong Lake, while media houses like **Dainik Jagran,** cooperatives, railway employees and citizens added their efforts. Together, these voices reflected the government's message that Swachh Bharat was not a government movement, but **a movement of the entire nation.**

Swachhata Hi Seva 2019: Turning the Focus Towards Plastic Waste

SHS 2019 was organised from 11 September to 2 October. The campaign focused specifically on **plastic waste awareness and management.** Citizens were encouraged to reduce single-use plastics. The campaign promoted alternatives such as cloth and jute bags. A nationwide shramdaan for plastic waste collection and segregation was organised on **2 October.** Plastic collected through shramdaan was

Image 8: Plastic Use Awareness IEC Material

subsequently planned for recycling or appropriate disposal. The campaign therefore extended beyond collection to address the subsequent management of plastic waste. Moreover, during this campaign, all states were advised to discourage the use of single-use plastic products. Consequently, **six states and 171 districts banned single-use plastic.**

SHS was not organised in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Swachhata Hi Seva 2021: Building a Culture of Visual Cleanliness

Image 9: Wall Paintings

SHS 2021 was organised from 15 September to 2 October. It sought to accelerate ODF Plus activities and sustain ODF achievements in villages. The campaign combined awareness with community mobilisation. During SHS 2021, more than **60 lakh** people participated in over **1.5 lakh *shramdaan* activities.** More than **43,000 Gram Sabhas** passed resolutions **against single-use plastics,** till 1st October, 2021.

A major feature of SHS 2021 was the ***Satyagraha Se Swachhagraha Rath Yatra.*** More than **783** Swachhata Raths travelled across districts, blocks and gram panchayats to spread sanitation awareness. The campaign combined awareness with direct community action through **Swachhata Shramdaan and 37,507 Swachhata Jagriti Yatras.** On **Swachh Bharat Diwas** alone, approximately **6.4 lakh people** participated in over **2.4 lakh *shramdaan* activities.**

SHS 2021 used communication tools to make sanitation messages visible across

rural communities. **9,401 wall paintings, rallies, and several slogan writings** carried ODF Plus messages into villages. The campaign also recognised and awarded **Swachhata Champions** and encouraged community participation.

SHS 2021 also addressed the less visible dimensions of sanitation. The ***Sthayitva Evam Sujalam Abhiyan*** focused on liquid waste management. 15,951 household-level and 7,216 community-level soak pits were constructed during this campaign. Therefore, SHS 2021 strengthened the **jan bhagidari for comprehensive cleanliness, or Sampoorna Swachhata.** This created an important foundation for the stronger **visual cleanliness focus of SHS 2022.**

Swachhata Hi Seva 2022: Focusing on Visual Cleanliness

SHS 2022 was organised from 15 September to 2 October. The campaign focused on the **visual cleanliness** of villages and targeted garbage and waste dumped around villages. SHS 2022 sought to strengthen the jan bhagidari for ODF Plus villages. It also promoted the idea of a **"sampoorn swachh" village.** The campaign reinforced the principle of 'sanitation as everyone's business.' The campaign connected visible cleanliness

Image 10: Solid Waste Segregation Dustbins

with broader sanitation practices, like **waste segregation, plastic management** and **cleanliness around water bodies.** The approach supported the transition towards **sustainable rural sanitation** under SBM-G Phase II.

The campaign also included **United India for Swachhata** activities across nine states. The campaign promoted the **4R principle for plastic waste management: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.** SHS 2022 used multiple communication channels to promote sanitation awareness. Activities included **wall paintings, nukkad nataks, swachhata raths** and social media content. Citizens were encouraged to take **"No Littering" pledges.** These activities connected village leadership with community-level sanitation action.

The campaign recorded substantial participation across rural India. More than **9.81 crore** people participated in shramdaan for sanitation activities. The campaign also recorded over **1.59 lakh Gram Panchayats** passing resolutions against single-use plastics. Around **1.68 lakh Sarpanches** participated in Sarpanch Samvads on ODF Plus components. The campaign, thus, connected cleaner surroundings with community ownership and sustainable waste management.

Swachhata Hi Seva 2023: Towards a Garbage-Free India

SHS 2023, conducted between 15 September to 2 October, adopted the theme **"Garbage-Free India."** The campaign focused on volunteerism,

Image 11: Riverbank being Revitalised

shramdaan, visible cleanliness, and **Safai Mitra** welfare. For this, **SafaiMitra Suraksha Shivirs** were organised from 17 September onwards. The objective of these shivirs was to improve the well-being and quality of life of all sanitation workers engaged in solid waste management and used water management.

During the 18-day campaign, over **109 crore participations** were recorded. Around **53 crore people** participated in **Shramdaan for Swachhata.** This averaged nearly three crore shramdaan participants each day. The campaign culminated in **"Ek Tareekh Ek Ghanta Ek Saath"** on 1 October. Around **8.75 crore people** participated in nearly **9.2 lakh events** nationwide. Rural areas recorded **6.8 crore participants,** while urban areas recorded **1.95 crore participants.**

The campaign produced visible improvements across public spaces. Nearly **7,611 beaches** were cleaned. **6,371 riverbanks and waterfronts** were revitalised. Over **15,576 legacy waste sites** were reclaimed. **3,620 tourist and iconic destinations** were improved. Over **1.23 lakh public spaces** were restored. More than **16,000 water bodies** were cleaned. Nearly **66,779 garbage-vulnerable sites** were cleaned.

The **Indian Swachhata League 2.0** also brought youth into the campaign. More than **4,000 city teams** were prepared

for participation. These teams rallied to clean beaches, hills, and tourist places. The initiative sought to build sustained **youth ownership of Swachhata.**

Image 12: Indian Swachhata League Run 2023

SHS 2023 brought together the SBM's rural and urban components. **71 ministries and departments** contributed to the campaign in their own unique ways. Their initiatives extended Swachhata efforts across different sectors and public spaces. For example, the **Ministry of Tourism** launched the Travel for LiFE for Cleanliness Campaign at 108 selected sites. The **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** played the SHS video across cinema screens. The **Department of Telecommunications** played the SHS ringtone across mobile networks.

This campaign demonstrated the scale possible through **coordinated government** and **community action.** Its outcomes also showed the expanding scope of Swachhata beyond toilets towards waste management and behavioural change.

Swachhata Hi Seva 2024: From Swachhata to Swabhav

SHS 2024, conducted from 17 September to 2 October, marked a major shift towards **behaviour and social values**. Its theme was **"Swabhav Swachhata, Sanskaar Swachhata."** The campaign focused on the following broad areas:

- **Transformation of Cleanliness Target Units (neglected and dirty areas)**
- **Swachhata Mein Jan Bhaagidari: Public participation in cleanliness**
- **Safai Mitra Suraksha Shivirs: Welfare of sanitation workers**

Image 13: SafaiMitra Suraksha Shivir

Cleanliness Target Units (CTUs) were the identified severely neglected areas posing environmental and health risks. These areas, like garbage points or dumpsites, were often overlooked during routine cleanliness drives in various regions. The campaign sought to transform these locations through time-bound interventions. The campaign transformed **3.10 lakh residential areas.** It also revitalised **2.11 lakh roadside areas** and **56,526 market locations.** Over **61 lakh trees were planted** during the campaign.

Interestingly, SHS 2024 expanded participation beyond conventional cleanliness drives. **Swachh Bharat Cultural Fests** connected cleanliness with local art and culture. These events also highlighted community participation and SafaiMitras' contributions. The

Image 14: Women taking Swachhata Pledge

campaign recorded **76,837 Swachh Bharat Cultural Fests.** Around **15,710 Swachh Food Streets** were established. The initiative also promoted **Waste-to-Art activities** and eco-friendly products. Cultural participation therefore became another channel for communicating Swachhata.

Safai Mitra Suraksha Shivirs provided preventive healthcare and welfare linkages. This widened the meaning of Swachhata. The campaign addressed both cleaner surroundings and the wellbeing of workers supporting sanitation systems.

During this event, by 1 October, 2024, **29.21 lakh** events were planned. Of these, **26.44 lakh** events were completed. Public participation reached **26.25 crore individuals.** Citizens also made **3.04 lakh Swachhata pledges.** SHS 2024, therefore, connected cleanliness with habits, values, participation and dignity.

Swachhata Hi Seva 2025: Taking Swachhata to Community Celebrations

SHS 2025 built upon the behavioural focus of 2024. Its central focus was **"Swachhotsav"** and the spirit of clean festivities. The campaign ran from 17 September to 2 October. At the heart of Swachhotsav laid its five key pillars. These were the focused initiatives that turned the vision of a cleaner, greener India into on-ground action by uniting people, places, and purpose.

The Five Pillars of SHS 2025 were:

- **Transformation of Cleanliness Target Units**
- **Clean Public Spaces**
- **SafaiMitra Suraksha Shivir**

- **Clean Green Festivities**
- **Advocacy for Swachhata**

Image 15: Swachhata Rangoli

The campaign cleaned **15.75 lakh** CTUs. These activities recorded **7.74 crore** participants. The campaign also led to the cleaning of **5.89 lakh public spaces** with the participation of **6.22 crore** citizens. SHS 2025 also connected cleanliness with cultural celebrations. Communities were encouraged to adopt sustainable practices during festivals. Hence, the campaign recorded over **4.31 lakh eco-friendly pandals,** over **3.18 lakh post-festival cleanliness activities,** and more than **2.81 lakh Swachhata Rangolis.** This approach brought Swachhata into community celebrations.

The campaign continued the **SafaiMitra Suraksha Shivir** initiative. More than **2.71 lakh shivirs** were organised during the campaign, recognising **5.12 lakh sanitation workers.** 1.63 lakh preventive health checkup camps were organised for the workers, and 4.55 lakh PPE kits were distributed. **Overall, these shivirs benefitted 81.51 lakh beneficiaries.**

Several advocacy activities expanded the campaign's community reach. A total of **29.02 lakh events** were organised, with **3.27 crore participants.** Following are some of the activities organised:

- **4.09 lakh Swachhata rallies**
- **1.01 lakh Waste-to-Art installations**
- **2.47 lakh Swachhata competitions**
- **93,145 sports leagues**
- **3.64 lakh drives against single-use plastic**
- **15.94 lakh door-to-door awareness activities**
- **92,971 Swachh Food Streets**

Image 16: Government Officials in Cleanliness Drive

In total, SHS 2025 saw the participation of 18.06 crore people across the country. SHS 2025, thus, extended Swachhata from cleanliness activities into community celebration and sustainable practices.

Beyond Cleanliness: Shaping Everyday Behaviour

The SHS journey shows a gradual expansion in the meaning of cleanliness. The early editions focused on cleanliness action and volunteerism. Later editions brought plastic waste, visual cleanliness, and garbage management into focus. The shift became clearer from **2023 onwards.** "Garbage-Free India" expanded attention towards public spaces and waste management. The 2024 theme then connected cleanliness with **Swabhav and Sanskaar.** In 2025, **Swachhotsav** brought cleanliness into festivals and community celebrations.

In 2026, ***Swachhata Mein Sahbhag*** places **collective action and cooperation** at the centre. The campaign has evolved from cleaning physical spaces to fostering **sustained behavioural change,** embedding Swachhata in everyday practices and strengthening a sense of **shared community responsibility.**

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PIB Research

17

PMAY-U: The Story of Housing, Inclusion and Empowerment

Published on: September 16, 2026

PMAY-U is a flagship urban housing mission aimed at ensuring Housing for All in urban areas. It provides pucca houses with basic civic amenities to eligible urban households across the country. The Mission primarily targets EWS, LIG, MIG families and slum dwellers in cities and towns. Implementation experience under PMAY-U led to the launch of a restructured PMAY-U 2.0 in 2024. Strong emphasis is placed on inclusivity, with benefits extended to women and other vulnerable urban groups. Technology-enabled systems such as geo-tagging and real-time dashboards have strengthened transparency and monitoring.

The Foundation of Urban Aspiration

A safe and secure home is the foundation of a dignified life. It provides families with stability, protection, and the confidence to pursue better opportunities. Access to quality housing not only improves living conditions but also contributes to better health, education, financial security, and overall well-being. For millions of urban families, a permanent home represents more than shelter; it is a pathway to a brighter and more secure future.

Recognising the transformative role of housing in fostering inclusive growth, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana–Urban (PMAY-U) was launched in June 2015. The Mission places affordable housing at the centre of urban development. Over the years, it has evolved the housing landscape through scale, innovation, and a focus on those who need support the most.

PMAY-U: A National Response to Urban Housing Needs

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana–Urban (PMAY-U) provides all-weather pucca houses with basic civic amenities to eligible urban households across the country. It focuses on the housing needs of slum dwellers and families belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), Low Income Groups (LIG), and Middle-Income Groups (MIG). Under the scheme, central assistance is provided to States and Union Territories for the construction and delivery of affordable housing. The original mission period was up to March 2022. However, on the request of States/UTs and to ensure the completion of sanctioned projects, the scheme period has been extended until 30th September 2026. Further, based on the learnings and experiences from implementation of PMAY-U and owing to the increase in housing demand, the scheme was revamped and launched as PMAY-U 2.0 in September 2024. The scheme continues the vision of "Housing for All" in urban areas with a more responsive and inclusive approach.

Who is a beneficiary family?

A beneficiary family under PMAY-U includes a husband, wife, and unmarried sons and/or unmarried daughters. The family should not own a pucca house (an all-weather dwelling unit) anywhere in India in any member's name. An adult earning member, regardless of marital status, is considered a separate household. This applies only if:

- He or she does not own a pucca house in his/her name anywhere in India.
- In a married couple, either spouse or both jointly can avail a single house. This is subject to household income eligibility under the scheme. An eligible beneficiary can avail benefits under only one of the Mission's four verticals.
- Individuals with a pucca house below 21 sq. m. can be considered for upgradation with expansion of up to 30 sq. m. under the scheme. If this is not feasible due to land or other constraints, she/he can get a house under PMAY(U) elsewhere.

PMAY – Urban 2.0: Building the Next Chapter

PMAY-U 2.0 marks the next phase of India's affordable housing mission, building on the strong foundation laid by PMAY-U. The scheme aims to provide financial assistance to 1 crore additional urban poor and middle-class families and is being implemented from 2024 to 2029. Under the scheme, eligible families receive financial assistance of up to ₹2.50 lakh per unit to support the construction or purchase of affordable houses in urban areas. PMAY-U 2.0 also supports the provision of affordable rental housing for eligible beneficiaries, helping address diverse housing needs across urban India.

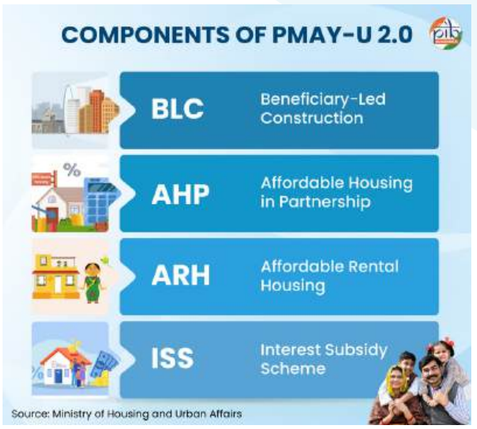
The PMAY-U 2.0 scheme is open to families belonging to EWS, LIG, and MIG segments. The income criteria for beneficiaries is as follows:

- EWS households: Annual income up to ₹3 lakh.
- LIG households: Annual income from ₹3 lakh to ₹6 lakh.
- MIG households: Annual income from ₹6 lakh to ₹9 lakh.

Four Verticals of PMAY-U 2.0

Building on the experience of PMAY-U,

PMAY-U 2.0 adopts a similar four-pronged approach to address diverse housing needs in urban India.



Beneficiary-Led Construction (BLC)

The BLC vertical provides financial assistance of up to ₹2.5 lakh to eligible EWS families. They can construct new pucca houses on their own available land, with a maximum carpet area of 45 sqm.

Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP)

The AHP vertical provides financial assistance to EWS beneficiaries for owning a pucca house. Public or private agencies construct affordable houses with 30–45 sqm carpet area for eligible beneficiaries. Financial assistance of up to ₹2.5 lakh per unit is provided together by Central and State Governments towards the property's purchase price.

Affordable Rental Housing (ARH)

The ARH vertical provides affordable, dignified and hygienic rental housing for urban dwellers needing short-term accommodation or for those who are unable to buy or construct houses. It covers EWS and LIG beneficiaries, including migrants, homeless, industrial workers, working women, construction workers, urban poor and destitute persons. It also covers street vendors, rickshaw pullers, contractual employees among others. Essential infrastructure, including water, sewerage or septage, sanitation, internal roads, health centres, etc., is also addressed to make the houses livable.

Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS)

The ISS vertical provides interest subsidy on eligible home loans under PMAY-U 2.0. It covers loans sanctioned and disbursed on or after 1st September 2024. Eligible EWS, LIG and MIG beneficiaries can avail the subsidy for purchase, repurchase or construction of houses. A maximum interest subsidy of ₹1.80 is provided to eligible beneficiaries having a loan tenure of more than five years.

Key Achievements of PMAY-U and PMAY-U 2.0

The journey of PMAY-U reflects a sustained commitment to making affordable housing accessible at scale. Between 2005 and 2014, only about 8 lakh urban houses were completed under earlier schemes. As on 9th August 2026, **1.25 crore** houses have been sanctioned across PMAY-U and PMAY-U 2.0. Of these, more than **1 crore houses** have been **completed and delivered** to beneficiaries across the country.

Ensuring Equitable Access to Urban Housing

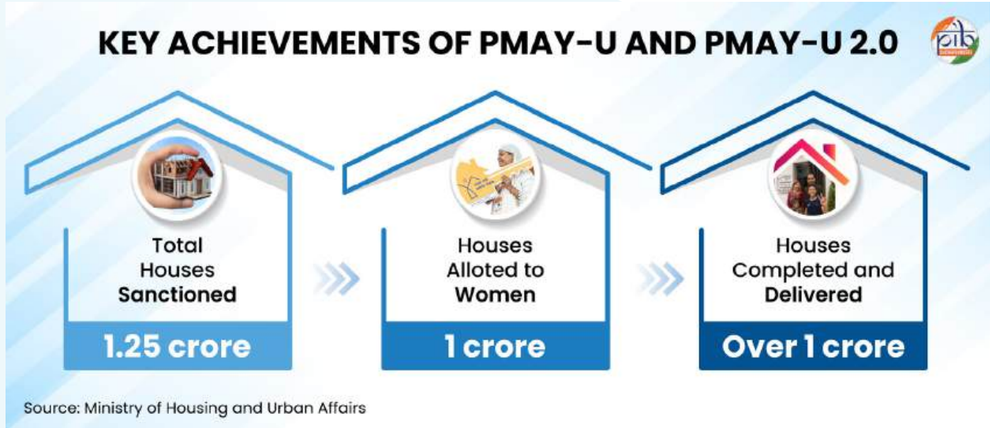
The true success of urban development lies in how widely its benefits are shared. The Mission places inclusivity at the centre of its approach, supporting vulnerable households across cities and towns.

Women have remained at the heart of this transformation. PMAY-U mandates ownership or co-ownership of houses in the name of women beneficiaries. This provision has strengthened financial security and enhanced their role in household decision-making.

The Mission also prioritises housing access for SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and transgender persons. By addressing the needs of diverse beneficiary groups, PMAY-U has helped make urban growth more equitable and accessible.

PMAY-U 2.0 continues this commitment through targeted support for diverse beneficiary groups. As on 9th August 2026, about **18.38 lakh** houses have been sanctioned under the scheme. It combines home ownership opportunities with focused interventions for vulnerable communities.

- Of the **18.38 lakh houses** sanctioned, **14.40 lakh houses** fall under the Beneficiary-Led Construction vertical.
- **2.48 lakh houses** have been



sanctioned under the Affordable Housing in Partnership vertical.

- **1.36 lakh houses** have been covered under the Interest Subsidy Scheme vertical.
- **13,046 dwelling units** have been sanctioned under the Affordable Rental Housing component.
- Among the **1.25 crore houses sanctioned** under PMAY-U and PMAY-U 2.0, **1 crore houses** have been **allotted to women** (in the name of female head of the household or in joint ownership).

These achievements reflect the Mission's continued focus on ensuring that housing benefits reach those most in need. By combining affordability with inclusion, PMAY-U is helping create more equitable and resilient urban communities.

Technology-Enabled Implementation and Monitoring

Modern technology has added a new dimension to urban housing delivery. Digital dashboards, geo-tagging and integrated monitoring systems have strengthened implementation under PMAY-U. These tools have improved transparency and enhanced project monitoring.

- **Unified Web Portal:** The Unified Web Portal of PMAY-U 2.0 serves as a single digital platform for the implementation and monitoring of the scheme across urban areas. It enables eligible beneficiaries to apply for housing assistance and facilitates the processing and tracking of applications. The portal brings together key stakeholders, including beneficiaries, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), States/UTs and other implementing agencies, on one platform. It also facilitates geo-tagging of houses at different stages of construction and streamlines fund disbursement, ensuring transparency, accountability and efficient monitoring of the scheme.

- **PMAY-U Dashboard:** The dashboard provides real-time progress on key performance indicators, accessible to States, UTs, ULBs/implementing agencies, Hon'ble MPs and MLAs, beneficiaries and all concerned stakeholders. This enables informed and data-driven decision-making and facilitates effective monitoring of implementation.

- **Geo-tagging:** Projects are tracked across five stages starting from grounding, foundation, superstructure, finishing & external development, and completion. This staged monitoring ensures large-scale projects remain on schedule and meet quality benchmarks.

- **Technology Sub-Mission (TSM):** This supports the adoption of modern, green and innovative construction technologies for faster and better-quality housing. Under TSM, Global Housing Technology Challenge – India (GHTC-India) was organized. A total of 54 proven technologies from across the world were shortlisted as mainstream, globally proven disaster-resilient technologies. Six Light House Projects (LHPs) using six distinct technologies shortlisted under GHTC-India are constructed at six places in the country.

- **Technology and Innovation Sub-Mission (TISM):** Building on TSM's progress, the Technology & Innovation Sub-Mission (TISM) under PMAY-U 2.0 promotes innovation in housing construction. It encourages innovative design, quality assurance, and adoption of green building standards for sustainable housing. TISM supports climate-responsive layouts and building plans across diverse geo-climatic zones.

- **Technology Innovation Grant (TIG):** PMAY-U 2.0 provides an additional Technology Innovation Grant (TIG) for AHP projects. The grant supports the use of innovative and alternative technologies notified under the GHTC-India.

Impact on Beneficiary Lives

The real impact of PMAY-U is best understood through the lives it has transformed across urban India. These success stories reflect how secure housing has strengthened dignity, stability and self-reliance for beneficiaries.

A Roof of Their Own,
A Future of Possibilities

Mandhalapu Ananthalakshmi lived with her husband and three children in a small house with a temporary roof in Addanki, Andhra Pradesh. The family depended on buffalo rearing for a modest income, and owning a permanent home seemed beyond their reach. After receiving support under PMAY-U, they overcame financial constraints by constructing the house themselves. The new pucca house brought safe sanitation, ended open defecation, and improved their quality of life. More importantly, it instilled confidence, inspiring the family to invest in their children's future.

From Constant Repairs to Lasting Stability

In Nongpoh town, Meghalaya, Lucybon Syngkli supports her father and sisters as the family's sole breadwinner. An ASHA worker and pineapple cultivator, she lived in a kutcha house that required frequent repairs, especially during the rainy season. The costs often strained the family's finances and affected her father's medical care. After becoming a PMAY-U beneficiary, Lucybon secured a permanent all-weather home, reducing maintenance expenses and improving the family's financial stability. The savings help meet her father's healthcare needs. The family has also adopted rainwater harvesting, planted fruit-bearing trees, received an LPG connection and switched to LED lighting. Their new home has brought peace of mind for the entire family.

Advancing the Vision of Housing for All

The story of a city is ultimately the story of the people who call it home. As urban centres grow and evolve, housing becomes one of the most visible indicators of inclusion, opportunity and quality of life. The journey of PMAY-U reflects this understanding. It has brought housing closer to millions who had long remained on the margins of urban development. In doing so, it has helped transform home ownership from an aspiration into a reality for countless households across the country. The Mission has also been strengthened by the use of technology-driven systems for planning, monitoring and transparent implementation. Through PMAY-U 2.0, the mission continues to ensure that every family has a safe place to call home.

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11th Ayurveda Day

Ayurveda for a Healthier Tomorrow

Published on: September 22, 2026

On the 11th Ayurveda Day, India celebrates a decade of bringing its 5,000-year-old healing system into every day, modern healthcare through evidence-led scientific research. Today, government clinics and hospitals across the country offer Ayurvedic treatments right alongside regular medical care. Free online doctor visits, insurance coverage, and top-tier scientific research are making these ancient wellness practices safer and far easier for everyone to access. Through strong global partnerships, India is showing the world how traditional wisdom and modern science can work together for a healthier future.

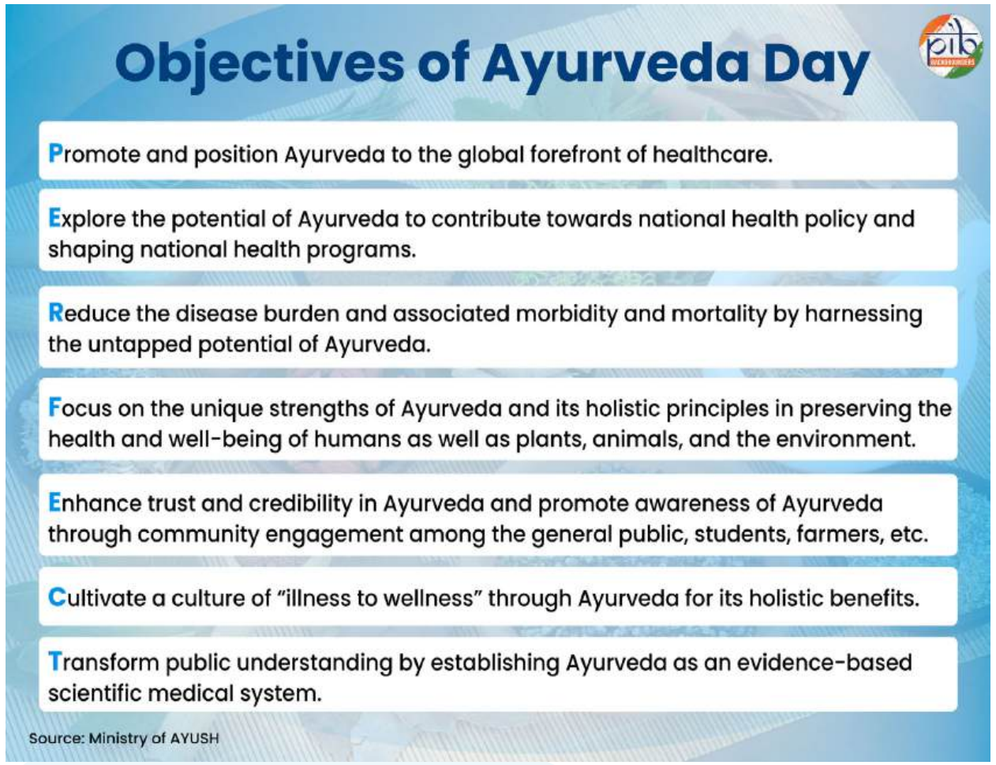
Ayurveda: The Foundations of Holistic Living

Ayurveda is a **science of life that is over 5,000 years old.** It has roots tracing back to the Rigveda. The word Ayurveda is derived from *Ayu* (life) and *Veda* (science), with its foundational goal -*"Swasthasya Swasthya rakshnam, aturasya vikara prashaman"*-being to maintain wellness in the healthy and cure illness in the sick.

Ayurveda defines true health as a **harmonious balance of metabolic entities.** This requires optimal alignment among the bio-energies (*doshas*), metabolic fire (*agni*), bodily tissues (*dhatus*), and waste elimination (*malas*), alongside a serene soul (*atma*), mind (*manas*), and senses (*indriyas*). By utilising the medicinal and therapeutic properties of plants, animal products, and minerals, which are also described in the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, Ayurveda remains an ancient science with modern relevance. Central to this science is the principle that **good health is a state of total alignment between the individual body, mind, and spirit** - and the surrounding world.

To honour and promote this heritage, the Government marks **September 23rd** annually as **Ayurveda Day,** aligning with the autumnal equinox to reflect natural balance. Under the theme **"Ayurveda for a Healthier Tomorrow,"** the Government is executing a national strategy to revive traditional healthcare.

The Government is also establishing an ecosystem to support the growth of the Ayurveda sector. This is through upgrading education, advancing evidence-based R&D, establishing drug standards, global outreach, and integrating Ayurveda with modern medicine. This whole-of-government approach runs in tandem with the growing global popularity of Ayurveda and allied traditional medical systems, including Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy.



Building the Health Infrastructure

The Government, through its **National Ayush Mission (NAM),** and the **National Health Mission,** is expanding, modernising and integrating Ayush systems, including Ayurveda, into mainstream public medicine. The two national missions run by the Ministry of Ayush and the Ministry of Health

and Family Welfare, respectively, are **establishing Ayush clinics, hospitals, departments and community public health centres across the country.**

The NAM is driving the expansion and integration of Ayush healthcare in the country. Between the financial years 2014–15 and 2025–26, the Central Government released over **Rs.6,406.99 crore** through the NAM to States and Union Territories to weave Ayush healthcare into conventional medical systems. The NHM is also supporting some of these initiatives. These initiatives include:

- **Modernising and Establishing Local Ayush clinics/health centres:** Existing health clinics (dispensaries) are being modernised and upgraded into better-equipped wellness centres called **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Ayush).** This is a collaborative effort by the NHM, which supports Ayush AAMs by funding and training Ayush health personnel, and the NAM, which provides for the infrastructure, equipment/furniture, and medicines.
  - > There are 12,260 Ayush AAMs functional (as on September 19, 2026). The NAM is targeting the setup of 12,500.
  - > These Ayush AAMs are also being co-located with other community health centres through the NHM. The NHM helps offer Ayush services alongside standard medical care in **13,249 public health facilities** nationwide.
  - » **Facilities Covered (as on December 30, 2025):**
    - **6,302** Primary Health Centres
    - **3,191** Community Health Centres
    - **475** District Hospitals
    - **3,281** Other local health facilities
    - **Staffing Support:** The government funds salaries for **25,322 Ayush doctors** and **5,666 Ayush paramedics** working across various states and union territories.
  - > A **trained Ayurveda practitioner** (a Bachelor of Ayurveda, Medicine and Surgery graduate) can be a Community Health Officer (CHO) to manage a village-level primary healthcare centre, providing a holistic approach to healthcare.
- **Combining Services Under One Roof:** Adding traditional medicine counters and doctors inside standard public healthcare facilities, including local health centres and district hospitals.
- **Upgrading Existing Hospitals & Clinics:** Repairing and updating standalone traditional medicine hospitals and clinics.
- **Building Better Facilities:** Fixing run-down clinic buildings, moving clinics out of rented spaces into permanent ones, and constructing brand-new clinics in areas that currently have no traditional medicine services.
- **Building New Integrated Hospitals:** Setting up new 10, 30, or 50-bed hospitals that combine different traditional medicine practices under one roof.
- **Providing Essential Medicines:** Ensuring a steady, free supply of necessary traditional medicines to government clinics, hospitals, and teaching facilities.
- **Community Health Programs:** Running public health drives tailored around traditional wellness and preventive care.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Creating educational programs, advertisements, and community outreach to teach people about health, wellness, and available treatments.
- **Opening New Medical Colleges:** Building new traditional medicine colleges in states and regions that do not have enough public options for students.
- **Improving Medical Schools:** Upgrading campus facilities, classrooms, and equipment for existing colleges, while adding advanced degrees, pharmacy programs, and paramedic training.

The Government is also expanding Ayush care by establishing Departments of Integrative Medicine at these central government hospitals:

- Vardhman Mahavir Medical College (VMMC) & Safdarjung Hospital, and
- Lady Hardinge Medical College.

These departments provide **preventive, promotive, and therapeutic medical services,** including a fully functional Panchakarma unit. Additionally, **extended OPD services** by Ayush Research Councils are available at:

- Vardhman Mahavir Medical College (VMMC) & Safdarjung Hospital,
- Lady Hardinge Medical College, and
- Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.

Ayush services are also available at the new All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

Telemedicine

The government offers a free telemedicine service–**eSanjeevani**–which has served over 50 crore patients. In addition to conventional medicine, eSanjeevani also **offers Ayush OPD services,** allowing patients to **virtually consult doctors specialised in Ayurveda** (and other Ayush services) directly through the platform.

Health Insurance

The government has updated insurance policies to cover Ayush treatments under health insurance plans. In 2024, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) mandated that all **insurers are required to offer products or add-ons covering all systems of medicine**–including Ayurveda–under Board-approved underwriting policies.

On February 10, 2026, the All-India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi, signed a Common Empanelment Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the General Insurance Council (GIC). This **empanelled AIIA with all 32 general insurance companies in India,** marking the first time an Ayush institution entered into a universal empanelment agreement for cashless treatment. The AIIA also launched a dedicated **Ayush Health Insurance Helpline** (1800-11-0008) to assist beneficiaries with their insurance-related queries and improve awareness about Ayush insurance coverage.

Inclusion of Ayurveda in the WHO ICD-11 Module

Ayurveda's terms are now internationally recognised due to the **World Health Organisation including it in the International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision Module.** This inclusion will now enable **clinicians worldwide to record ASU (Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani) diagnoses using standard codes,** ensuring uniform interpretation across different regions and health facilities. It also makes it easier for **insurance providers to process, approve, and reimburse Ayush treatments,** help with research and development and policy-making, including making disease-control strategies for the future.

Development of Ayurveda Educational Infrastructure

An expanding Ayush health infrastructure also needs Ayush health personnel to run it. The NAM makes provisions for the expansion of education in Ayurveda through **the establishment of undergraduate and postgraduate institutions,** including pharmacy and para-medical programmes.

17 Ayush colleges have been approved for establishment across the country under the NAM, out of which **12 are centred on impacting Ayurvedic education.** Ayurveda educational institutions–both public and private–are **growing in number and helping build the sector.** Across the country (as on March 13, 2026), there are:

- 593 Ayurveda colleges,
- 45,245 undergraduate Ayurveda seats, and
- 5,673 post-graduate Ayurveda seats.

Beyond clinical training and academic expansion, establishing Ayurveda's credibility within contemporary medicine requires rigorous, evidence-based research and scientific validation.

Research and Development in Ayurveda

To advance research and development in Ayurveda, the government runs several schemes aimed at modernising traditional medical practices and strengthening drug development.

AYURGYAN Scheme

Central to these efforts is the **AYURGYAN**

scheme, launched in 2021-22 by the Ministry of Ayush, which provides **financial backing for R&D initiatives.** Out of a total research funding pool of Rs. 17.79 crore across 34 projects, **Ayurveda accounts for half of the portfolio,** receiving **Rs. 9.38 crore for 17 dedicated projects.**

By early 2026, 11 specific research projects had been approved, with six focused on developing safety and efficacy dossiers for five key single Ayurvedic botanicals. These efforts reflect a growing academic output, contributing to **33 Ayurvedic-specific research publications** between 2014-15 and 2025-26, and 77 total publications since 2001-02.

AYUR SWASTHYA Yojana

Complementing AYURGYAN scheme is the AYUR SWASTHYA Yojana (2021-2026), which provided **financial assistance to government or non-profit Ayush organisations for research and development** into Ayush clinical and drug research, education, public health initiatives, and for the upgradation of facilities to **Centres of Excellence.**

Out of 25 projects supported through late 2025, **22 focused on or incorporated Ayurveda interventions.** The scheme established 28 specialised Centres of Excellence, with **22 dedicated to advancing Ayurveda-centric research** and healthcare delivery.

Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)

At the institutional level, the **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)**-one of five autonomous research bodies under the Ministry-leads the scientific formulation, coordination, and promotion of Ayurvedic studies nationwide. Operating through a network of 30 national and regional institutes, CCRAS builds research capacity through fellowships, training programs, and targeted student initiatives such as the SPARK Programme.

SPARK Programme

The Studentship Programme for Ayurveda Research Ken (SPARK) **fosters research interest and aptitude among undergraduate Ayurveda students.** The programme supports short-term independent projects to encourage students to conduct research in Ayurveda. Between 2022-23 and 2024-25, **289 Ayurveda colleges benefited through the SPARK** programme.

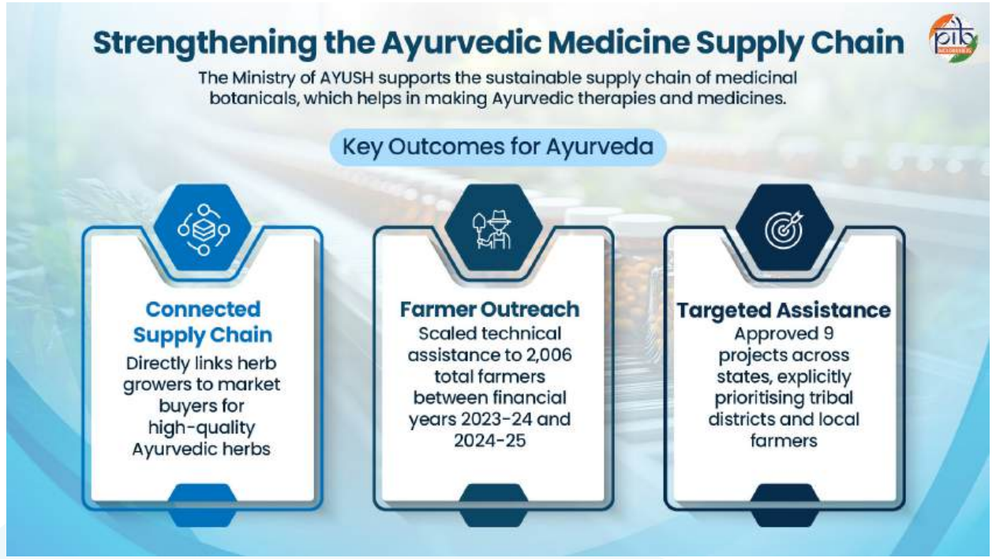
AI-Translation of Ayurveda Research

To make scientific knowledge accessible to everyone, the CCRAS partnered with Anuvadini AI-an artificial intelligence translation platform developed by the Ministry of Education's AICTE-in March 2026. Through this collaboration, CCRAS is translating its extensive research findings, educational resources, and quarterly medical journals into **13 regional Indian languages.**

By breaking down language barriers, this initiative democratises access to Ayurvedic medical research, ensuring that students, practitioners, and the general public across India can easily read and learn from these scientific developments.

Development of Medicinal Plants

The Government actively supports farmers and research bodies in conserving, cultivating, and processing therapeutic herbs. It does so by bridging supply chain gaps, incentivising farmers while empowering local communities and maintaining pharmaceutical standards.



Strengthening Regulatory Standards: Drug Safety and Consumer Foods

As the Ayurveda market booms, the Government is also establishing a legal framework to ensure that the products are safe for consumers.

Quality Control of Medicines

Ayurvedic medicines are strictly regulated under the **Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940, and the Drugs Rules, 1945.** Under these legal frameworks:

- Manufacturers must adhere to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), prove drug safety and efficacy, and meet pharmacopoeia standards.
- Government Drug Inspectors

conduct routine sampling and testing to maintain quality control, supported by a specialised Ayush vertical established within the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).

To streamline compliance, the government launched the **e-Aushadhi portal** for paperless processing and real-time tracking of drug manufacturing license applications.

Ayurveda Aahara

Extending these safety principles from pharmaceuticals to nutrition, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Ayush, introduced a standardised regulation for **Ayurveda Aahara.** This initiative establishes a product list of authentic Ayurvedic dietary items based on authoritative classical texts. This list is also crucial for licensing and registration of traditional food manufacturers. It creates a transparent, regulated sector for traditional food manufacturers while boosting consumer confidence in India and globally.

Expanding International Partnerships and Diplomatic Ties

For the global acceptance and market integration of Ayush, the Government has established strategic bilateral partnerships, research collaborations, and educational exchanges worldwide. This is through the signing of various country-to-country agreements, research collaborations, educational exchange programmes, and global certification of medicines.

International Collaborations

Through strategic international partnerships, collaborative research frameworks, academic chair appointments, and specialised scholarship programs, the country continues to establish a strong international footprint in holistic healthcare and integrative medicine. India has signed various MoUs, such as:

- **27** Country-to-Country MoUs for cooperation in traditional medicine and Homoeopathy.
- **16** MoUs with international institutes for setting up Ayush Academic Chairs.
- **57** Institute-to-Institute MoUs for collaborative research and academics.
- **3** Country-to-Country MoUs signed in 2025-26 in Angola, Kazakhstan and Tanzania and
- **6** institute-level MoUs signed with institutions in Ghana, South Africa, Réunion Island, Germany, Malaysia and Mongolia, and an academic chair MoU with Oman.

This global footprint is further supported by:

- **46** Ayush Information Cells established across **43** foreign nations.
- **104** scholarships offered to foreign nationals under the International Ayush Fellowship/Scholarship Program.

Leading Global Summits, Frameworks, and Strategic Agreements

India is now a global hub for policy and standards in traditional medicine. In December 2025, New Delhi hosted the Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine at Bharat Mandapam. The event gathered delegates from over 100 countries and 22 health ministers under the theme **"Restoring Balance: The Science and Practice of Health and Well-being".** Attendees adopted the Delhi Declaration, encouraging member states to bring traditional medicine into primary healthcare through proven scientific methods.

Setting International Standards and Promoting Cultural Diplomacy

Setting strict quality and training standards drives India's global strategy. The WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre in Jamnagar, Gujarat, acts as a primary research and policy hub. The Ministry of Ayush partnered with the WHO to create standard training guides for Ayurveda and Unani. It also co-hosted an herbal drug regulation workshop with 17 nations and presented research at the International Conference on the Science of Botanicals in the US. Cultural outreach continues to expand.

The 11th International Day of Yoga in June 2025 featured roughly 2,000 events across 191 countries. Meanwhile, daily Yoga sessions at World Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan, turned the Indian Pavilion into one of the event's most visited highlights.

Multilateral Cooperation and Medical Value Travel

India continues to embed traditional healthcare into major international alliances. Following recent BRICS statements, including the Rio de Janeiro Declaration, the 16th BRICS Health Ministers' Meeting in Chandigarh established a dedicated Expert Working Group on Traditional, Complementary, and Integrative Medicine.

At the same time, the government is making it easier for foreign patients to seek natural care in India. Specialised Ayush Visa options now streamline travel, offering the M-3 visa for patients and the M-4 visa for their accompanying caregivers. This initiative supports India's aim to be a global medical tourism hub.

Union Budget 2026-27 Allocations for the Ayush Sector

The Union Budget's (2026-27) allocation of Rs. 4,408 crores for the Ministry of Ayush highlights the government's commitment to strengthening Ayush healthcare systems across the country, promoting evidence-based research and innovation, and strengthening other Ayush-related infrastructure and global outreach. The Budget announced several key initiatives:

- Establishment of **three new All India Institutes of Ayurveda (AIIA)** to strengthen education, clinical services and research.
- Upgradation of Ayush pharmacies and Drug Testing Laboratories to ensure quality, standardisation and availability of skilled manpower.
- Upgradation of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre, Jamnagar, to promote evidence-based research and global outreach in traditional medicine.

Integrating Tradition with Modern Health Systems

Ayurveda's journey from an inherited knowledge tradition to an increasingly institutionalised component of contemporary healthcare reflects its evolving relevance in modern society. The expansion of healthcare infrastructure, education, research, regulatory mechanisms, digital access, and international collaborations has created a broader ecosystem for its development and responsible integration. The growing emphasis on scientific validation, quality standards, and evidence-based research is particularly significant in strengthening its contemporary relevance.

At the same time, Ayurveda's integration into public health systems and its expanding global partnerships show how traditional knowledge can engage with modern institutions and scientific inquiry. Ayurveda's continuing evolution thus represents a dynamic interface between **India's civilisational knowledge, contemporary healthcare systems and the pursuit of holistic well-being.**

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12 Years of Make in India

India's Journey towards a Manufacturing Nation

Published on: September 24, 2026

As Make in India completes twelve years, the initiative has transformed India's manufacturing landscape by expanding production, investment and capabilities across industries. During this period, production has increased across electronics, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, steel, railways and defence. India has also developed the capacity to manufacture components, machinery, strategic materials and advanced technologies. Initiatives such as NSWS, PLI, PM GatiShakti and the India Industrial Land Bank have supported investment and production. New schemes focus on semiconductors, mobile phones, industrial parks, specialty steel and rare-earth magnets, further strengthening domestic manufacturing.

A New Direction for Indian Manufacturing

Twelve years ago, on **25 September 2014, 'Make in India' was launched** with the ambition of becoming a global hub for manufacturing, design and innovation.

The initiative focused on facilitating investment, fostering innovation and developing world-class infrastructure. Guided by **'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance',** it has also sought to modernise processes and policies.

Over the years, Make in India has opened new opportunities for businesses and investors to participate in India's manufacturing journey. The initiative has subsequently been expanded under **Make in India 2.0.** The initiative now focuses on **27 sectors,** which include **15 in manufacturing and 12 in services.**

India's Manufacturing at a Larger Scale

Manufacturing has recorded strong growth over time. Recent indicators also point to continued growth in manufacturing.

Manufacturing Gross Value Added (GVA) at constant prices recorded a compound annual growth rate of **10.88% between 2022-23 and 2025-26** under the revised national accounts series.

Industrial output provides another indication of recent growth. The manufacturing component of the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP) increased by 7.0% during April-July 2026 compared with the corresponding period of 2025.**

List of Sectors under 'Make in India' Initiative

MANUFACTURING SECTORS		SERVICE SECTORS	
1	Aerospace and Defence	16	Information Technology & Information Technology enabled Services (IT &ITeS)
2	Automotive and Auto Components	17	Tourism and Hospitality Services
3	Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices	18	Medical Value Travel
4	Bio-Technology	19	Transport and Logistics Services
5	Capital Goods	20	Accounting and Finance Services
6	Textile and Apparels	21	Audio Visual Services
7	Chemicals and Petro chemicals	22	Legal Services
8	Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM)	23	Communication Services
9	Leather & Footwear	24	Construction and Related Engineering Services
10	Food Processing	25	Environmental Services
11	Gems and Jewellery	26	Financial Services
12	Shipping	27	Education Services
13	Railways		
14	Construction		
15	New and Renewable Energy		

Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry

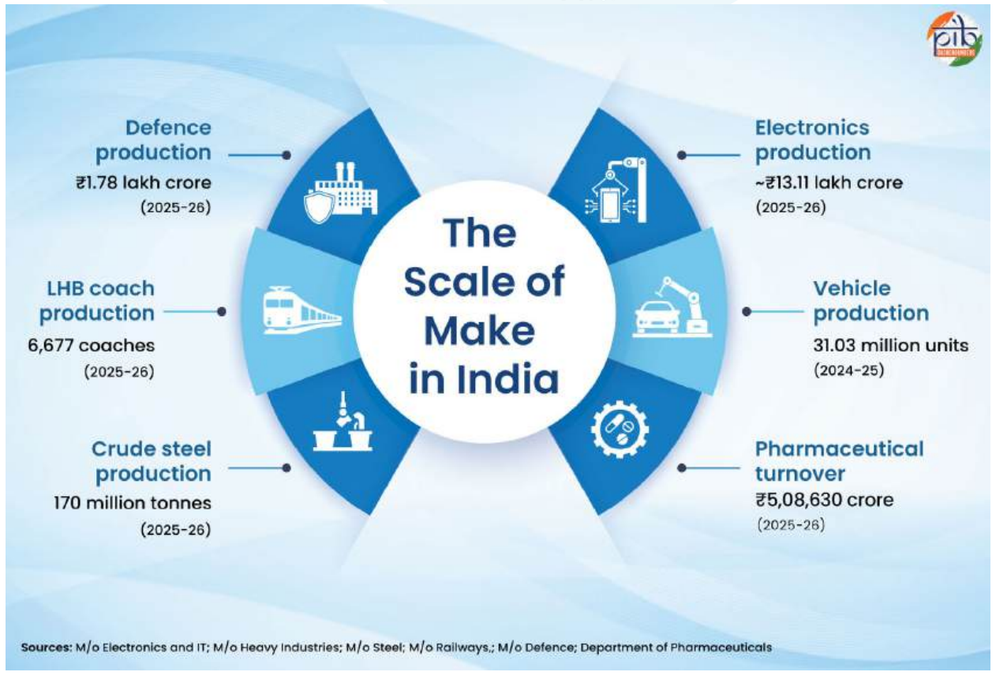
Rising Production Across Key Manu -facturing Industries

The expansion in manufacturing is also visible across several industries, with substantial increases in production and capacity.

Electronics

- Electronics production increased nearly sevenfold, from **~₹1.9 lakh crore in 2014-15 to ~₹13.11 lakh crore in 2025-26.**
- Within this total, mobile-phone production rose approximately **32-**

fold, from ~**₹18,900 crore to ~₹6.3 lakh crore** over the same period. India is the **world's second-largest mobile phone manufacturer** by volume.



- Overall electronics production also recorded **15.8% growth in 2025–26** over the previous year.

Automobiles

- Vehicle production reached **31.03 million units in 2024-25, ~33% higher than in 2014-15.**
- Several vehicle segments also recorded significantly higher production in **2024-25 compared with 2020-21:**

1. Passenger and commercial vehicle production increased by **65% each.**
2. Three-wheeler production rose by **71%**.
3. Two-wheeler production grew by **30%.**

Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices

India's pharmaceutical industry ranks **3rd globally by volume and 11th by value.**

Annual turnover reached **₹5,08,630 crore** in 2025-26, growing at an average rate of **9.2%** over the preceding five years. During 2025-26, pharmaceutical exports stood at **₹2,62,697 crore.**

Domestic manufacturing of medical devices rose by **~48.2%**, from **~₹28,000 crore in 2019-20 to ₹41,500 crore in 2024-25.**

Steel

Crude steel production increased from **81.7 million tonnes in 2014-15 to 170.0 million tonnes in 2025-26.**

Railways

- **Indian Railways manufactured 54,809 coaches over 2014-24.** Average annual railway coach production rose from **less than 3,300 during 2004-14 to 5,481 during 2014-24.**
- Domestic production also includes locomotives and modern passenger coaches. In **2025-26,** Indian Railways produced **1,674 locomotives.**
- **6,677 Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches were manufactured in 2025-26.** These coaches are lighter, safer and designed for greater comfort and jerk-free travel.

Defence

The value of indigenous defence production increased from **₹46,429 crore in 2014-15 to a record ₹1.78 lakh crore in FY 2025-26.** This reflected an increase of **~283%, bringing production to nearly four times its 2014-15 level.**

Deepening Domestic Manufacturing Capability

The increase in final-product manufacturing is only one part of India's manufacturing journey. Domestic capabilities increasingly extend into the **inputs, components, systems and machinery** used across industrial value chains.

Advanced Products and Strategic Materials

Advanced and Complex Pharmaceutical Products

- India now manufactures complex and advanced pharmaceutical products. These include **Trastuzumab Emtansine,** the world's first biosimilar antibody-drug conjugate for breast cancer.
- India also manufactures **Docaravimab-Miromavimab,** the world's first anti-rabies monoclonal antibody combination.
- **Miqnaf** is India's **first developed** macrolide antibiotic in three decades for bacterial pneumonia.
- **Desidustat,** a new chemical entity for

treating anaemia in kidney patients, further reflects India's capability in innovative drug development.

Rare-earth permanent magnets

- A pilot plant for **Nd-Fe-B (Neodymium-Iron-Boron) rare earth permanent magnets** was established at the **International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI), Hyderabad, in March 2026. These magnets are essential for electric vehicles, renewable energy systems, electronics and advanced manufacturing technologies.**
- The facility will support technology validation, process optimisation and industry collaboration. It will also help scale indigenous innovations towards commercial manufacturing while supporting deep-tech startups and private-sector participation.

Components, Systems and Assemblies

Manufacturing capabilities now increasingly cover **intermediate components, integrated systems and structural assemblies** used in complex final products.

Sectoral Coverage	Key Achievement
Semiconductors for space applications	• ISRO and SCL developed **VIKRAM3201 and KALPANA3201 microprocessors** for space applications. • VIKRAM3201 is the first fully Make-in-India microprocessor qualified for the harsh conditions of launch vehicles and was fabricated at SCL's facility. • KALPANA3201 is a microprocessor designed to work with open-source software tools and has been tested with flight software.
Solar cells and modules	• Module manufacturing capacity rose from **2.3 GW in 2014 to 192 GW as of June 2026.** • Solar-cell capacity increased from **1.2 GW in 2014 to ~30 GW as of June 2026.**
Electric-vehicle technology	An indigenous **30 kW drive system,** combining the motor and inverter, was launched in **March 2026.** It has been designed, fabricated, and validated and is ready for commercialisation.
Aircraft manufacturing	• Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) opened its **third Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk1A production assembly line in October 2025,** taking annual capacity to **24 aircraft.** • It also inaugurated a **second HTT-40 trainer-aircraft production line,** covering major structures such as the fuselages, wings and control surfaces.
Railway components	• In **2025-26,** the Rail Wheel Factory produced **2,10,026 wheels, 1,22,000 axles and 1,20,100 wheelsets. These registered a growth of 4%, 30% and 22%,** respectively, over the previous year.
Nuclear components	• In **September 2025,** Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC) dispatched its **eighth set of steam-generator tubes for upcoming 700 MW Indian nuclear reactors.** The tubes were manufactured, tested and inspected domestically.

Capital Goods: Machinery Behind Manufacturing

Domestic manufacturing capability also extends to the machinery used to produce, process and assemble goods. Production across heavy engineering equipment and various capital goods sub-sectors increased from **₹2,87,233 crore in 2019-20 to ₹5,69,900 crore in 2024-25. This was nearly a twofold increase over the period.**

Production across Various Capital Goods Sectors & Heavy Engineering Equipments (Val in ₹ crore)			
Category	**2019-20**	**2024-25**	**% increase**
Earthmoving and mining machinery	31,028	80,750	160.3%
Printing machinery	12,678	29,716	134.4%
Machine tools	6,152	14,286	132.2%
Plastic-processing machinery	2,350	4,827	105.4%
Heavy Electrical Engineering Equipment	1,79,199	3,64,706	103.5%
Food-processing Machinery	7,547	15,249	102.1%
Textile Machinery	5,355	10,461	95.4%
Dies, Moulds and Press Tools	13,682	18,400	34.5%
Process Plant Equipment Source: Ministry of Heavy Industries	29,250	31,505	7.7%

Reforms Journey under Make in India

Make in India's reform journey combines easier investment and business processes with support for domestic production. Recent initiatives build on these measures, extending attention to components, strategic materials and specialised technologies.

Key Initiatives under Make in India

- India's investor-friendly policy permits **100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** through the automatic route in most sectors, excluding certain strategic sectors. Cumulative FDI reached **USD 843 billion** during 2014-15 to 2025-26, rising 169% over the preceding twelve-year period.

- The **National Single Window System (NSWS)** helps businesses identify required approvals and apply through a common digital platform. It currently provides access to over 327 Central approvals and 3452 State approvals across 34 States and Union Territories.

1. As of **21 September 2026,** the platform handles an average of **over 3.06 lakh applications annually.** It has also onboarded **over 5.69 lakh business entities,** including proprietorships, companies, LLPs and foreign entities.

- **India Industrial Land Bank (IILB)** is a centralised GIS-enabled platform offering up-to-date spatial and non-spatial information on industrial land across India. As of May 2026, the platform mapped **4,220 industrial parks,** covering **~6.98 lakh hectares.**

- **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan,** launched in October 2021, enables infrastructure planning and coordinated execution across Central ministries/ departments and States/ UTs. It uses geospatial data, satellite imagery and API integration to support informed decisions on infrastructure development.

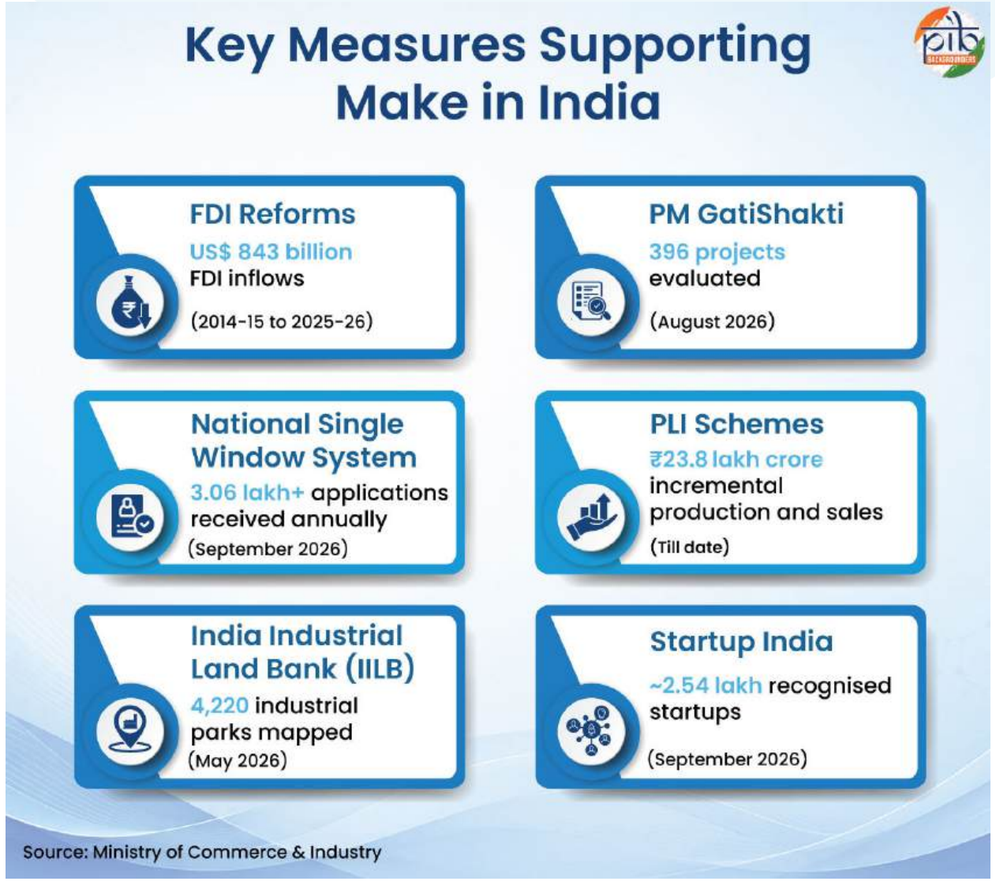
Under this framework, the Network Planning Group (NPG) evaluates major Central infrastructure projects at the planning stage. It focuses on coordination, connectivity across transport modes, last-mile links and development around project locations.

As of 11 August 2026, NPG had evaluated 396 projects worth **~₹18.66 lakh crore.** Of these, 256 projects had been sanctioned, including 198 under implementation.

- The **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes** incentivise incremental production and sales across **14 sectors,** including electronics, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, solar PV modules, specialty steel and textiles.

- As of June 2026, the schemes attracted **₹2.6 lakh crore in investment** and generated **₹23.8 lakh crore in production and sales.** They also supported **more than ₹15.5 lakh crore in exports** and created **14.6 lakh jobs.**

- Launched in **January 2016, Startup India** aims to nurture innovation, support startups, and encourage investment in India's startup ecosystem. As of **September 2026, ~2.54 lakh entities** have been recognised as startups under the initiative.



Deepening Manufacturing through Recent Initiatives

Name of scheme	Key Features
Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Specialty Steel (PLI 1.2) (Third round launched in November 2025)	The third round covers advanced and emerging steel categories. This includes **super alloys, CRGO steel, stainless steel long and flat products, titanium alloys and coated steels.**
Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnets (Notified in December 2025)	**₹7,280 crore** has been allocated to establish **6,000 MTPA of integrated manufacturing capacity for sintered NdFeB-type rare-earth permanent magnets.**
Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA) (Approved in March 2026)	**₹33,660 crore** has been allocated to develop **100 investment-ready, world-class industrial parks** with integrated industrial infrastructure
Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) (Approved in July 2026)	**₹62,500 crore** has been allocated for FY2026-27 to FY2030-31 to scale up mobile phone production and deepen domestic value addition. It also aims to **strengthen supply-chain resilience and enhance global competitiveness.**
Semicon 2.0 (Approved in July 2026)	**₹1,27,500 crore** has been allocated to provide sustained, long-term support for India's semiconductor ecosystem. The support covers **design, manufacturing, advanced packaging, materials, equipment, research and talent development.**
Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana Rasayan (BHAVYA Rasayan) (Approved on 24 July 2026)	**₹3,030 crore** has been allocated to facilitate the establishment of **three dedicated chemical parks** in India.

Conclusion

As 'Make in India' completes twelve years, it continues to strengthen India's position as a manufacturing and investment destination.

The initiative now goes beyond producing more goods and focuses on building the skills, technology and capacity needed to make them in India. As these foundations mature, Indian manufacturing is positioned to create greater value at home and compete with confidence across global markets.

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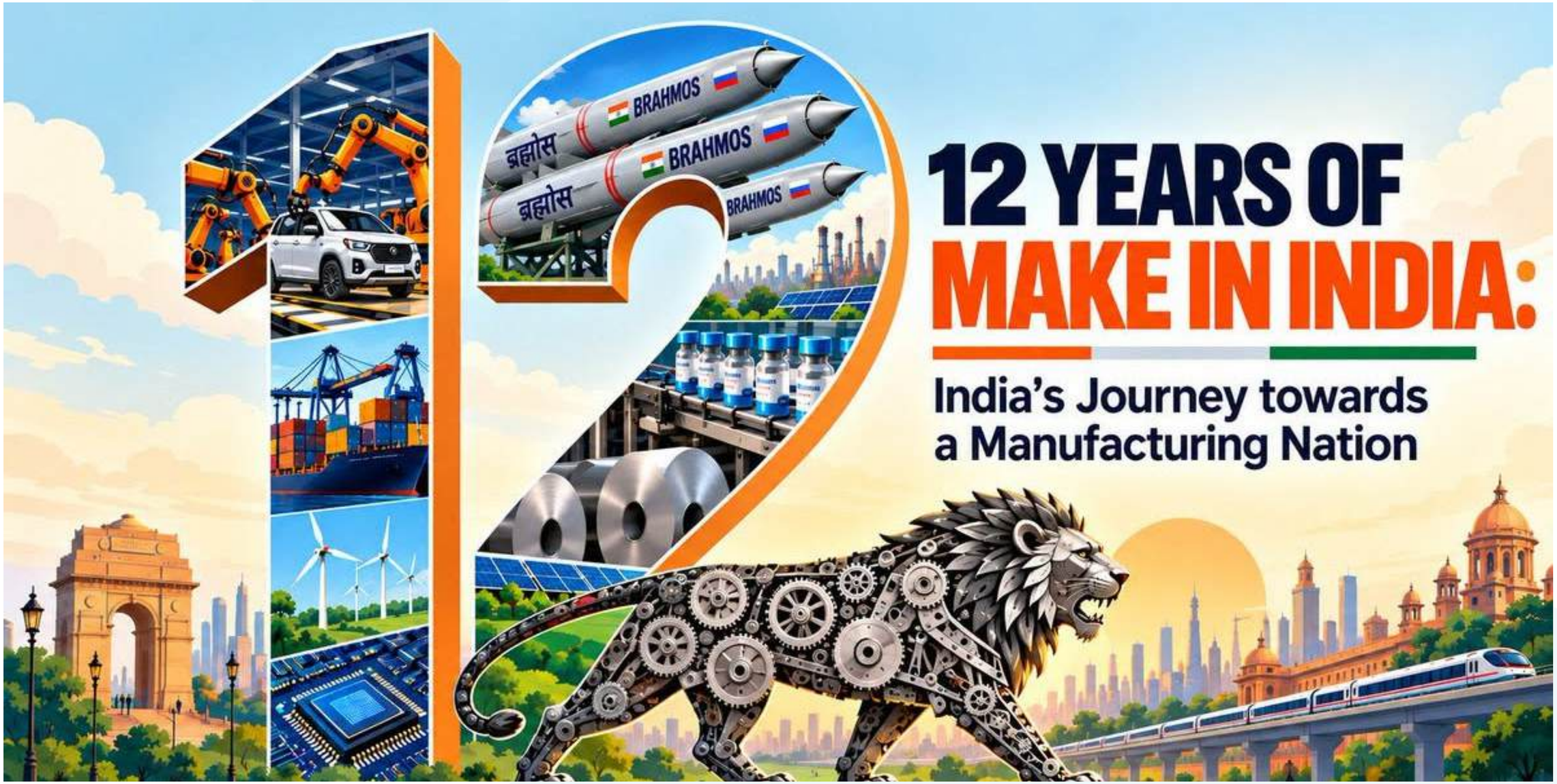

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BRICS

Evolution Cooperation and India's Leadership

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A boardroom acronym for four emerging markets has grown into something far bigger. Today it is a geopolitical bloc spanning four continents. The journey runs from a four-country dialogue to today's far wider grouping. Successive waves of membership pulled in oil states, African economies and Southeast Asian partners. At the centre of this expanding architecture sits India this year, chairing the grouping for a fourth time since its inception.

BRICS: Shaping an Inclusive Global Order

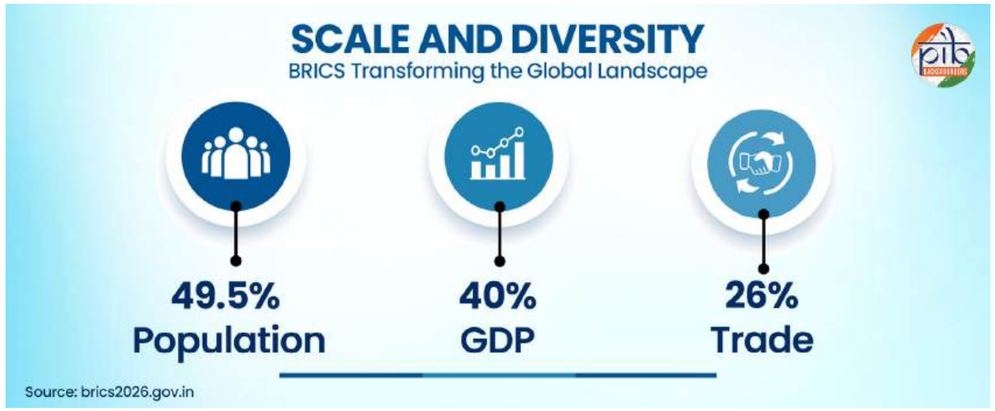
BRICS has emerged as a key platform for coordinating economic policy among major emerging economies. It serves as the principal forum where these nations shape a common position on global governance. Through sustained dialogue, it has become a channel for advancing the interests of the Global South within multilateral institutions. Its agenda spans development, finance, technology, trade and people-to-people exchanges. **The grouping reflects the growing economic weight and aspirations of emerging economies globally.** It provides members with a platform to share experiences and address common challenges.

Under its 2026 Presidency, **India is set to host the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi on 12–13 September 2026.** It will mark India's fourth Chairship of BRICS in 2026.

India's Chairship is guided by the theme **"Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."** The theme reflects India's focus on strengthening existing achievements and institutional effectiveness. It places development, sustainability and innovation at the heart of the agenda. It also highlights the aspirations of the Global South. India seeks to reinforce BRICS as a constructive and solutions-oriented forum

Today, BRICS comprises **11 countries:** Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the UAE. Collectively, these members represent **49.5% of the global population, 40% of global GDP, and 26% of global trade.** These figures underline their substantial demographic and economic weight. Its expanded membership has also widened its geographical reach across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. **This diversity brings together major markets, natural resources, technological capabilities and varied development experiences.**

The Aim, Objective and



The Origin

The acronym 'BRIC' was coined in 2001 by Goldman Sachs in its Global Economics Paper, 'The World Needs Better Economic BRICs.' Based on econometric analysis, the paper projected that Brazil, Russia, India and China would be among the world's largest economies over the following five decades. Their growing economic weight and vast geographic reach across three continents highlighted their emerging global significance. The BRIC concept subsequently evolved into a formal grouping, with South Africa joining in 2010 and transforming BRIC into BRICS. The evolution marked the transition from an economic grouping identified by analysts to a formal platform for political, economic and development cooperation.

Areas of Cooperation

BRICS was initially conceived as a forum for dialogue on major issues shaping the international agenda. Its early focus was on developing common positions on global political and economic matters. It sought to promote a more democratic, legitimate and balanced international order. The grouping also emphasised sustainable economic and social development, social inclusion and shared

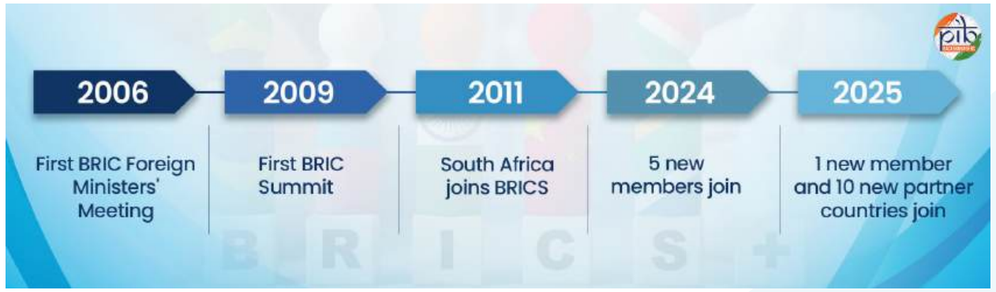
prosperity among emerging economies. Over time, these priorities have provided a foundation for deeper and broader engagement among members.

Across successive summits, BRICS cooperation has progressively expanded to encompass strategic global issues and areas of practical collaboration. **Its agenda covers terrorism, climate change, food and energy security, trade and agriculture.** It also addresses labour and employment, telecommunications, international finance and the global economic situation. **BRICS advocates for greater representation and equity in international institutions, including the WTO and global financial architecture.** These efforts seek to make global governance more inclusive, effective and responsive to contemporary challenges.

BRICS Through the Years: From Crisis to Collective Action

The **2008 global financial crisis** marked a defining moment in the evolution of BRICS. It exposed gaps in the existing global financial architecture. It also created a need for broader consensus on global economic governance. The four BRIC countries articulated a common position on these issues. They called for a more representative international financial system. They sought greater voice for emerging economies in the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and **World Bank.** They also opposed protectionism and supported an open, rules-based multilateral trading system. This coordination laid the foundation for the **first BRIC Summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009.**

BRIC was formally established in 2006 as a political cooperation forum among Brazil, Russia, India and China. Its founding members shared an aspiration for a more representative and equitable global order. **South Africa joined as a full member in 2011,** transforming **BRIC into BRICS.** This inclusion expanded the grouping's geographical representation across continents. **The grouping subsequently broadened its agenda beyond economic issues to development, finance, health, climate action, technology and trade.** This evolution strengthened BRICS as a wider framework for engagement among emerging economies.



A Wider BRICS: Expanding Reach, Deepening Engagement

A major phase of expansion began in January 2024. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE became full members. Indonesia joined as the eleventh full member in January 2025. These accessions significantly expanded BRICS' geographical and economic reach. The expansion was accompanied by the creation of a Partner Country category. Ten countries joined this framework during 2025: Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. The new arrangement provides an additional channel for structured engagement with BRICS.

The Partner Country framework broadens BRICS' outreach without altering its full-membership structure. It strengthens opportunities for **South-South cooperation** across Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eurasia. The wider network also creates scope for collaboration on trade, finance, climate action and sustainable development. **It reflects growing interest among emerging economies in participating in discussions on global governance.**

The evolution of BRICS demonstrates a shift from a **four-country economic dialogue to a broader framework for political, economic, financial and**

Source: brics2026.gov.in

social cooperation. Its expansion has increased its demographic and economic weight. It has also broadened its regional representation and areas of engagement. **The grouping's institutional evolution has kept pace with the changing priorities of emerging economies.**

BRICS Presidency: Rotation and Responsibilities

The BRICS Presidency rotates annually according to the letters of its acronym. Each Presidency term begins on January 1st and concludes on December 31st of the respective year. The country holding the Presidency sets the priorities of the agenda for that year. It also organizes the group's annual Summit and steers key ministerial and working group meetings. With the recent expansion of BRICS membership, a new rotation formula for the Presidency is also being discussed among member countries.

India at the Helm of BRICS: From Continuity to Consensus

Before this year, India has previously chaired BRICS in **2012, 2016 and 2021.** Each Chairship reflected the priorities and challenges of its respective period. India's repeated leadership demonstrates its sustained engagement with the grouping. It also reflects India's commitment to constructive multilateralism and the priorities of developing economies.

2012: Laying the Foundation for Stronger Cooperation

India hosted the **Fourth BRICS Summit** in New Delhi on **29 March 2012**. The Summit was held under the theme "BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Security and Prosperity." Discussions focused on global governance reform, sustainable development, food security and energy security. The Summit adopted the **Delhi Declaration** and an **Action Plan for strengthening BRICS cooperation.** The outcomes established a stronger foundation for institutional and sectoral engagement.

2016: Goa Summit Expanded BRICS Outreach

India hosted the Eighth BRICS Summit in Goa in October 2016. The Summit was held under the theme "Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective

Major Outcomes

- The Summit proposed exploring a new Development Bank to mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects. The proposed institution would serve BRICS, emerging economies and developing countries. It would complement existing multilateral and regional financial institutions in supporting global growth and development.
- Member nations signed the Master Agreement on Extending Credit Facility in Local Currency and boost intra-BRICS trade.
- The summit also laid the foundation for the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) as a financial safety mechanism for BRICS countries. The arrangement was designed to provide short-term liquidity support and help member countries address financial instability.
- India institutionalized new joint tracks for practical cooperation in agriculture, health, and science.

Solutions." India's Chairship focused on strengthening intra-BRICS cooperation and expanding outreach. It also advanced collaboration on counter-terrorism, trade, innovation and multilateral coordination. The Goa Summit reinforced the grouping's focus on emerging global challenges and practical cooperation.

2021: Consolidating Cooperation in a Changing World

India hosted the 13th BRICS Summit virtually on 9 September 2021. The Summit marked the 15th anniversary of BRICS. It was held under the theme "BRICS@15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus." India focused on strengthening institutional continuity, deepening cooperation and building greater consensus. The Chairship also advanced cooperation across health, digital technologies, counter-terrorism and sustainable development.

Major Outcomes

- The operationalization of the New Development Bank was solidified with the rollout of its first set of financial loans, primarily backing renewable energy projects.
- BRICS elevated renewable energy access, clean energy transition and energy security as shared priorities.
- Greater focus was placed on combating HIV and tuberculosis.
- India secured stronger BRICS language on combating terrorism and called for adherence to FATF (Financial Action Task Force) standards.
- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Outreach Summit expanded engagement between BRICS and countries of the wider Bay of Bengal region. Discussions covered counter-terrorism, trade, energy, investment, environment, technology and infrastructure.
- Agreement to establish BRICS Agriculture Research Platform, BRICS Railway Research Network, BRICS Sports Council and various youth-centric cooperation forums.

Major Outcomes

- India led the adoption of a unified BRICS Counter-Terrorism Action Plan.
- India hosted the first-ever BRICS Digital Health Summit during its Chairship.
- A BRICS Vaccine Research and Development Center was launched to collectively address current and future pandemic responses.
- Agreement on Cooperation for the BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation. it enables countries to share remote-sensing data for environmental protection, disaster management, and climate monitoring.
- India introduced new ministerial-level working paths, launching the BRICS Alliance for Green Tourism and the first BRICS Water Ministers Meeting for sustainable resource management.

Through successive Chairships, India has contributed to the institutional and substantive development of BRICS. Its priorities have evolved with emerging global challenges while retaining a focus on practical cooperation. India's 2026 Chairship builds on this experience and the grouping's expanded membership.

BRICS 2026: Key Outcomes Emerging from Ministerial Meetings

India assumed its fourth BRICS Chairship on 1 January 2026. During its Chairship, India convened a series of ministerial meetings across priority areas of BRICS cooperation. Over the year,

BRICS members countries exchanged views on shared priorities and global and regional developments. These discussions advanced cooperation across the grouping's three fundamental pillars. The pillars comprise political and security cooperation, economic and financial cooperation, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

More than 350 meetings and high-level engagements were held across 25 cities during India's Chairship. The meetings generated practical and development-oriented outcomes across key areas of cooperation. The following outcomes emerged from ministerial meetings held during India's 2026 BRICS Chairship.

- **BRICS Centres of Excellence on Agro-Ecology** agreed upon as a collaborative platform for joint research, knowledge sharing and capacity building on natural, organic and regenerative farming practices to promote climate-resilient and sustainable agricultural systems (initially coordinated by ICAR-Indian Institute of Farming Systems Research, Modipuram). **BRICS Network on Digital Agriculture** to deepen cooperation and scale the deployment of AI-driven decision-support systems, geospatial intelligence, IoT-enabled monitoring, and advanced data analytics in agriculture (initially coordinated by IIT Delhi).

- **BRICS AGRIN (Agro-Inputs, Genetic Resources and Information Network)** agreed upon as a voluntary, farmer-centric cooperation framework among BRICS countries to strengthen collaboration in seeds, germplasm, and agricultural inputs.

- **BRICS Mission for Healthy Lifestyle:** The priority was launched along with the BRICS Roadmap for a Joint Initiative on Healthy Lifestyle Promotion (2026-2029). It aims to serve as a collaborative platform for technical cooperation, knowledge exchange and coordinated awareness initiatives, promoting preventive and life-course approaches to obesity and other non-communicable diseases.

- **BRICS Expert Working Group on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine (TCIM):** It aims to serve as a platform for structured and consensus-based cooperation on TCIM, covering policy dialogue, research and evidence generation, capacity building and academic exchange, digital knowledge platforms, quality and regulatory standards, and the protection of traditional and indigenous knowledge.

- **Focus on Mental Health** through BRICS Training Hub Network and BRICS Network of Centres of Excellence, with NIMHANS India as the coordinating Centre. It aims to optimize human resources for mental health through upskilling, task-sharing and standardized training, and to integrate mental well-being into primary healthcare.

- **Mainstreaming Traditional Knowledge** through adoption of BRICS Principles for Advancing Climate Resilience through People-centric and Community-based Adaptation and BRICS Guiding Principles on Strengthening Academic Collaboration on Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

- **Advancing Sustainable Lifestyles** through Network of BRICS Institutions to Advance Knowledge Sharing, Research & Innovation and Sustainable Lifestyles Week for exchange of knowledge on policies, programmes, initiatives and leading practices; conduct capacity-building workshops on thematic areas; facilitate dialogue among stakeholders including academic and research institutions; and compilation of case studies.
- **BRICS CONNECT for Skilling:** A BRICS Cooperation Network for Capacity Building, Employability, and New Skills and Technologies (BRICS CONNECT), building on the BRICS Virtual Liaison Office. It is a flexible platform with four components, namely capacity building for advancing social security, women's participation in the workforce, skills and employability, and digital public infrastructure. Cooperation under it is voluntary and non-binding.

- **Smart Grids and Energy Storage:** The BRICS Guiding Principles on Energy Storage and Smart Grids were adopted and the BRICS Digital Centre of Excellence for Smart Grids and Energy Storage was launched to serve as a voluntary platform for knowledge sharing, capacity building, the exchange of policy and regulatory best practices, and promotion of pilot initiatives among BRICS countries.

- **Urban Infrastructure strengthened** through establishment of BRICS Urban Mobility Hub, a virtual collaborative platform which will promote knowledge sharing, capacity building and technical cooperation in sustainable urban mobility; adoption of BRICS Voluntary Principles for Climate Resilient Urban Infrastructure to support the integration of climate and disaster risk considerations into urban planning, design, investment, construction, and maintenance; and establishment of a BRICS Urban Research and Knowledge Network for applied urban research, cross-

border peer learning, and sustained institutional collaboration.

- **BRICS MSME Cooperation Portal,** to serve as a digital ecosystem accessible to all BRICS member countries, supporting MSMEs, technology centers and clusters, trade associations, financial institutions, training and capacity-building institutions, policymakers, and other relevant stakeholders, along with an institutionalized Dialogue on MSME Finance and Workplan on the Internationalisation of MSMEs were key outcomes to leverage BRICS for enhancing MSMEs' access to markets and finance.

- **BRICS Incubator Network,** a digital interface/network to connect National Nodal Agencies, selected incubators and start-ups across BRICS countries, facilitate registration and linkages with participating incubators, and enable referral of qualified start-ups to incubators in other BRICS countries.

- **BRICS Startup Innovation Fund** to catalyse financing for early and growth stage startups and foster innovation driven entrepreneurship in BRICS countries.

- **BRICS Science and Research Repository** welcomed as a structured platform for scientific knowledge storage and sharing among BRICS countries.

- **BRICS Logistics Supply-Chain Cooperation Framework:** A voluntary, consensus-based framework to strengthen cross-sector transport logistics resilience and sustainability. It aims to address fragmented supply chains and weak connectivity by promoting technical exchange, knowledge sharing on cargo and shipping services, localized assembly and manufacturing ecosystems, and capacity building, while advancing environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient logistics practices.

- **BRICS Cooperation on Global Value Chains** through GVC Action Plan 2026-2030, including a Technical Council and GVC Joint Study for enhanced BRICS cooperation to ensure that GVCs are resilient, efficient and productive; and to advance the opening of markets and economic diversification among BRICS Members.

- **BRICS Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters:** Members confirmed their in-principle approval and willingness to sign the Agreement to support faster trade, lower transaction costs, more secure borders, trusted trade facilitation, improved ease of doing business, and tackling illicit trade.

- **Cooperation in the Field of Standardization** through an MoU signed by BRICS National Standards Body Heads, a formal framework to strengthen collaboration in the development, adoption and implementation of standards, promote information sharing, exchange of best practices, technical cooperation and capacity building, reinforce quality infrastructure, enhance consumer protection, reduce technical barriers to trade.

- **BRICS Youth Cooperation Framework 2026** adopted as a reference document to support continuity, coherence and structured cooperation to guide future dialogue, experience sharing and the consideration of practical initiatives under the BRICS Youth Track.

- **Sport Technology Cooperation institutionalized** through a new Working Group to promote cooperation in the field of sport technology in the form of exchange of good practices, institutional experiences, technical information and research inputs.

The ministerial meeting outcomes under India's 2026 BRICS Chairship reflect a continued focus on practical cooperation, inclusive growth and a stronger voice for the Global South.

2026: Steering BRICS Towards a More Inclusive Future

India's 2026 BRICS Chairship comes at a time of significant global transformation. The international system is experiencing economic fragmentation, technological disruption and geopolitical uncertainty. Climate change and resource pressures are adding further complexity. These interconnected challenges require cooperation that is inclusive, practical and responsive to diverse national circumstances.

BRICS provides an important avenue for addressing these challenges through dialogue and coordinated action. Its expanded membership brings diverse perspectives from major emerging economies. The grouping can help advance cooperation on development, climate action, technology, energy and financial resilience. It can also contribute to discussions on reforms in global institutions.

For India, the objective extends beyond expanding the grouping's scale. It is about converting greater representation into meaningful cooperation and tangible outcomes. India's Chairship seeks to build consensus across diverse members while strengthening the effectiveness of existing mechanisms.

India aims to reinforce BRICS as a constructive force for a more inclusive global order.

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PIB Research

National Film Awards

A Nation's Tribute to the Magic of Indian Cinema

Published on: September 20, 2026

National Film Awards — At a Glance

The National Film Awards are the country's most prestigious honours for excellence in the field of cinema. **Instituted in 1954**, they are conferred every year by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Over seven decades, the awards have recognised outstanding creative and technical achievement in Indian filmmaking. They cover three fields, namely feature films, non-feature films and writing on cinema.

The **72nd National Film Awards** honour achievements in Indian cinema for the year 2024. The winners were announced on **18 July 2026** by the chairpersons of the three juries. The **President of India** will present the awards on **22 September 2026 at Ekta Nagar (formerly Kevadia), in Gujarat.**

The awards reflect the rich linguistic, cultural and regional diversity of filmmaking across the country. They place large commercial productions and small independent films on a single national platform. This breadth is what gives the honour its standing among filmmakers and audiences alike.

Did You Know?

In a major policy initiative, the Ministry has decided to hold the awards in various parts of the country. Future editions will travel beyond the National Capital to different States and cities. The ceremony at Ekta Nagar will bring together cinematic talent from across India. It will embody the spirit of **Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.**

Legacy & Evolution — Since 1954

The journey of Indian cinema began in 1913 with Dadasaheb Phalke's film **Raja Harishchandra**. The Film Enquiry Committee, set up in 1949, recommended the institution of the 'State Awards for Films'. They were constituted to honor and encourage the artistic and technical excellence in Indian cinema. The awards were established in 1954 and the first edition honoured the films of 1953.

The first edition of National Film Awards

The first edition covered three categories, namely feature films, documentary films and children's films. **Shyamchi Aai** in Marathi won the President's Gold Medal for the Best All-India Feature Film. **Mahabalipuram** won the President's Gold Medal for the Best Documentary Film, and **Do Bigha Zamin** received a Certificate of Merit. A modest beginning of seven honours thus opened seven decades of national recognition for Indian cinema.

Widening the canvas

Awards for artists and technicians were separately established for the films of the year 1967. Uttam Kumar and Nargis received the first Best Actor and Best Actress awards in 1968. The Best Actor award was then called **Bharat** and the Best Actress award **Urvashi**. The **Dadasaheb Phalke** Award was instituted in 1969 and first presented to Devika Rani. New categories and technical crafts were added steadily as Indian cinema grew in range.

Purpose & Significance

The objectives of the National Film Awards are set out clearly in the official regulations. They encourage the production of films of aesthetic and technical excellence and social

Year	Milestone
1913	Dadasaheb Phalke completes Raja Harishchandra, a landmark in Indian film making.
1954	The awards are instituted as the State Awards for Films. The first honours go to films of 1953.
1967-68	Awards for artists and technicians begin. Uttam Kumar and Nargis win the first acting honours.
1969	The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is instituted. Devika Rani is the first recipient.
1973	The Directorate of Film Festivals begins administering the awards.
2022	The Directorate of Film Festivals is merged into NFDC, the present implementing body.
2026	The 72nd awards are announced in July. The ceremony is scheduled to be held at Ekta Nagar, Gujarat.

relevance. They help audiences understand and appreciate the cultures of different regions of the country. In doing so, the awards also promote the unity and integrity of the nation.
The awards further encourage the study and appreciation of cinema as an art form. Books, articles and reviews carry critical appreciation of this art form to a wider readership.

Why the recognition matters

A National Award confirms that a film has met the highest standard set by the nation. It draws audiences towards work that might otherwise reach only a small circle of viewers. The honour travels with the filmmaker and opens doors for the next project.

Award Structure

The National Film Awards are organised in three sections, along with one lifetime honour. The **Feature Film** section is for full length films. The **Non-Feature Film** section for documentaries, short films, animation and other allied forms. The **Best Writing on Cinema** section honours the best book and the best film critic. The **Dadasaheb Phalke Award** stands apart as the highest honour in Indian cinema.

The feature film section includes Best Feature Film, Best Direction and Best Actor in a Leading Role among others. It also covers Best Children's Film, Best Cinematography, Best Music

Section	Categories	Medal	Cash prize
Feature Films	**26 (with special mentions)**	Swarna Kamal, Rajat Kamal	Rs 3,00,000 and Rs 2,00,000
Non-Feature Films	**16 (with special mentions)**	Swarna Kamal, Rajat Kamal	Rs 3,00,000 and Rs 2,00,000

Section	Categories	Medal	Cash prize
Best Writing on Cinema	2	Swarna Kamal	Rs 1,00,000
Dadasaheb Phalke Award	1	Swarna Kamal, shawl	Rs 10,00,000 for 72nd NFA

Every Language Has a Place

A Best Feature Film award is given in each language listed in Schedule VIII of the Constitution. Films in languages outside the Schedule are honoured through separate awards of their own. In the 72nd edition, Dholi in Garhwali and IMBU in Tulu were recognised under this provision.

Direction and Best Costume Design. The non-feature section includes Best Documentary, Best Short Film and Best Animation Film. It also carries Best Arts and Culture Film, Best Narration or Voice Over and Best Script among others.

How the Awards Are Selected

Entries are invited every year for films certified during the preceding calendar year. The Ministry then constitutes separate juries for each of the three award sections. Distinguished contributors are drawn from the field of cinema, allied forms of art and the humanities to serve as the jury members.

A two-tier examination for feature films

Feature films are assessed through a two-tier process introduced from the 57th edition onwards. Five regional panels first shortlist the entries received from every part of the country. A central panel then decides the winners in the feature film section of the awards. The Non-Feature Film section and the Best Writing on Cinema section have their own juries. No entries are invited for the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, which follows a different route. A specially constituted committee of eminent film personalities recommends the recipient.

The juries of the 72nd edition

Shri Jayaraj chaired the Feature Film Jury for the 72nd National Film Awards. Shri Aseem Sinha chaired the Non-Feature Film Jury for the same edition. Shri A. Chandrasekhar chaired the Best Writing on Cinema Jury.

Recognition Across Indian Cinema

The National Film Awards look at cinema made in every part of the country. The 72nd edition honoured films in Marathi, Santhali, Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada. Films in Tulu and Garhwali were also recognised, among several other languages. For the first time, a

Eligibility in Brief

Films must be certified by the CBFC during the award year and must carry English subtitles. A feature film must run for more than 72 minutes. Dubbed, remade or re-edited versions already submitted are not eligible.

Santhali film was honoured in the Non-Feature Film section.

Angen, directed by Shri Ravi Raj Murmu, won the Best Debut Film of a Director. A first recognition of this kind widens the map of Indian cinema a little further.

Latest Edition — Key Highlights

The 72nd National Film Awards cover Indian films certified during the year 2024. Article 370 won the award for Best Feature Film in this edition. Yami Gautam won Best Actress in a Leading Role for the same film. Mammootty and Kartik Aaryan shared the award for Best Actor in a Leading Role. They won the award for Bramayugam and Chandu Champion respectively.

Shri Rajkumar Periasamy won the award for Best Direction for the Tamil film Amaran. Kalki 2898 AD was named Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment. Shri Randeep Hooda won the Best Debut Film of a Director award for Swatantrya Veer Savarkar. Bhangaar was adjudged Best Non-Feature Film and Ram-Nami was named the Best Documentary.

Current Awardees — 72nd National Film Awards

The table below carries the principal awards of the 72nd National Film Awards. Language awards, technical crafts and Special Mentions are recorded separately in the full list.

Award	Film (Language)	Awardee
Best Feature Film	**Article 370 (Hindi)**	Producers: Jio Studios and B62 Studios; Director: Aditya Suhas Jambhale
Best Direction	**Amaran (Tamil)**	Rajkumar Periasamy
Best Actor in a Leading Role	**Bramayugam (Malayalam); Chandu Champion (Hindi)**	Mammootty and Kartik Aaryan (shared)
Best Actress in a Leading Role	**Article 370 (Hindi)**	Yami Gautam
Best Actor in a Supporting Role	**Bhakshak (Hindi)**	Sanjay Mishra
Best Actress in a Supporting Role	**Maharaja (Tamil); Mithya (Kannada)**	Sachana Namidass and Ropashree Varkady (shared)
Best Debut Film of a Director	**Swatantrya Veer Savarkar (Hindi)**	Randeep Hooda

Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment	**Kalki 2898 AD (Telugu)**	Producer: Vyjayanthi Movies; Director: Nag Ashwin Singireddy
Best Feature Film Promoting National, Social and Environmental Values	**Captain Miller (Tamil)**	Producer: Sathya Jyothi Films; Director: Arun Matheswaran
Best Children's Film	**35 - Chinna Katha Kaadu (Telugu)**	Producers: S Originals and Waltair Productions; Director: Nanda Kishore Emani
Best Music Direction	**Article 370 (Hindi); Amaran (Tamil)**	Shashwat Sachdev (Songs); G. V. Prakash Kumar (Background Music)
Best Non-Feature Film	**Bhangaar (Marathi and English)**	Producer and Director: Sumira Roy
Best Debut Film of a Director (Non-Feature)	**Angen (Santhali)**	Director: Ravi Raj Murmu

Best Documentary	**Ram-Nami (Hindi)**	Producer: BBP Studio Virtual Bharat Pvt. Ltd.; Director: Bharatbala Ganapathy
Best Direction (Non-Feature)	**Statue of Unity - Ekta ka Prateek (Hindi)**	Aanand L Rai
Best Book on Cinema	**Naaniruvude Nimagaagi Naadiruvude Nanagaagi (Kannada)**	Author: Kenchanuru Pradeep Kumar Shetty; Publisher: Mirror Pusthaka
Best Film Critic	**Hindi**	Sanjeev Shrivastava

Dadasaheb Phalke Award

The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is the highest honour in the field of Indian cinema. It was instituted in 1969, when it was presented to Devika Rani. The award commemorates Dadasaheb Phalke, who directed **Raja Harishchandra** in the year 1913. Recipients are recognised for outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema.

Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2024

The Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2024 will be conferred on Shri Anant Nag. The Government of India announced the decision on 16 September 2026. He was born on 4 September 1948 in Karnataka and began acting in the early seventies. He made his acting debut in the Kannada feature film Sankalp, and his Hindi debut with Ankur.

He has portrayed diverse characters in over 300 films across six Indian languages. His work also includes the

Did You Know?

Dhundiraj Govind Phalke (1870-1944), known as Dadasaheb Phalke, directed Raja Harishchandra in 1913, India's first full-length feature film, and went on to make 94 features and 27 short films. Honoured as the Father of Indian Cinema, he is commemorated through the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, instituted by the Government of India in 1969.

widely loved television series Malgudi Days. He has won five Filmfare Awards and five Karnataka State Best Actor Awards. The Government of India honoured him with the Padma Bhushan in 2025. His cinematic journey spans more than five decades and has inspired generations of artists.

Indian Cinema: Culture, Identity and Influence

Cinema remains one of India's most expressive art forms and one of its most powerful cultural assets. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting describes it as a powerful medium for creativity, culture and innovation. Beyond artistic expression, it sustains a vast creative economy: India's media and entertainment sector is now the world's fifth largest, supported by 2 to 2.5 million digital creators and a 40 to 60 percent cost advantage in animation and VFX services. Indian films also carry the country's soft power to global audiences, strengthening cultural heritage while creating livelihoods across languages and regions.

Recent Recipients

Shri Mohanlal received the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for the year 2023. Shri Mithun Chakraborty received the award for the year 2022. Smt. Waheeda Rehman received the award for the year 2021. Each award is presented at the National Film Awards ceremony of that edition.

Continuing Contribution to Indian Cinema

Indian cinema today reaches audiences in more languages and formats than ever before. The National Film Awards remain the country's central measure of cinematic merit. They reward craft, courage and clarity of vision rather than commercial scale alone.

The move to Ekta Nagar carries the awards closer to audiences outside the capital. Future editions will travel to different states and cities across the country. Film cultures that grow far from the large studios will now find a national stage.

The 72nd edition already shows this promise at work in more than one way. A Santhali film enters the roll of honour for the very first time. A veteran of Kannada cinema receives the highest honour in the field. The awards thus continue to serve both the art and the nation.

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Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana 2.0

Building a Skilled and Self-Reliant Workforce

Published on: September 24 2026

Equipping rural youth with relevant skills and access to employment opportunities is central to advancing inclusive and sustainable rural transformation. To advance this goal, the **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)** was launched on **25 September 2014** under the **National Rural Livelihoods Mission.** Building on this, the DDU-GKY 2.0 scheme is currently being implemented across **31** States and Union Territories through over **749** approved projects, with more than **760** active training centers and over 455 Project Implementing Agencies, covering **all** sectors of the economy as on date. Since inception in 2014-15, more than **18.47 lakh** candidates have been trained for more than 800 job roles, and over **12.43 lakh** have been placed. Complementing the skilling efforts, RSETIs promote self-employment and rural entrepreneurship. As of date, **647** RSETIs across **634** districts have trained **63.47 lakh** candidates, with **45.60 lakh** successfully settled. These initiatives strengthen industry-aligned training, digital delivery, employment retention, and sustainable livelihood opportunities for rural youth.

Strengthening Rural Youth through Skills and Opportunities

India's young population presents a significant opportunity to strengthen economic growth and rural livelihoods. The youth population is projected to reach nearly **345 million by 2036.** Harnessing this demographic potential requires greater access to quality skills, employment, and livelihood opportunities.

Recognizing this need, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) launched the **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) on 25 September 2014,** under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission. As DDU-GKY marks its 12th anniversary this year, the programme continues to strengthen pathways from skills to employment and sustainable livelihoods for rural youth. For more than a decade, the scheme has been providing placement-linked skill training to rural youth **aged 15-35 years** from poor households.

It also promotes social inclusion through mandatory coverage of SC/ST communities **(50%)**, women **(33%),** and persons with disabilities **(5%).** Over the past decade, the scheme has evolved to place greater emphasis on employment outcomes and post-placement support. The Government notified the upgraded **DDU-GKY 2.0** Guidelines in May 2025, strengthening the framework around **training, placements, employment sustainability, and post-placement support.** The revised framework provides training across multiple sectors based on industry requirements, including **aerospace and aviation, agriculture, beauty and wellness, green jobs, healthcare, textiles, and others.** The continued focus on rural skilling is also reflected in the Union Budget 2026–27, which has allocated **₹750 crore** to DDU-GKY.

Special Initiatives: Targeted Interventions for Vulnerable Regions

Two special programmes are being implemented under DDU-GKY 2.0:

Roshni: It addresses the specific needs of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected districts notified by the Ministry of Home Affairs. It mandates residential skill training, with **40%** coverage for women candidates. The initiative has been extended to Aspirational Districts, focusing on local infrastructure, education, health, natural resources, and traditional skills.

Himayat: It is a special DDU-GKY scheme for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. It covers rural and urban youth, including BPL and APL persons, and supports wage, self, and gig employment. The scheme is 100% centrally funded and implemented with State support through dedicated Mission Management Units.

North East: Acknowledging the challenges in terms of socio-cultural differences and topography unique to the North Eastern States, out of the total allocation for DDU-GKY, 10% is earmarked for the North-Eastern States.

Hard to reach Areas: Further there is provision for Special Area Allowance where Project implementing agencies shall be eligible for a payment at the rate of an additional 10% of the Base training cost per candidate.

DDU-GKY 2.0: A Shift Towards Sustainable Employment

DDU-GKY 2.0 adopts a more end-to-end approach to skilling and employment, covering the journey from training and placement to employment retention and career progression.

The revised framework strengthens training standards, extends the minimum placement duration, and enhances post-placement support. It also addresses the challenges associated with migration and strengthens technology-enabled monitoring and implementation.

Standardising Training Framework

DDU-GKY 2.0 retains the 576-hour minimum while providing a more structured training framework. A three-month course comprises **396 hours of domain training and 180 hours of mandatory non-domain training.** The non-domain component is standardised across four areas: English Communication **(60 hours)**, Employability and Life Skills **(60 hours)**, Computer and Digital Literacy **(30 hours),** and Entrepreneurship **(30 hours).** It ensures that candidates receive job-specific technical skills alongside communication, workplace, digital, and entrepreneurial capabilities.

Placement Duration

Earlier, DDU-GKY placement was defined as continuous employment for a minimum of **three months**. Building on this stronger training foundation, under DDU-GKY 2.0, the minimum placement duration has been extended to **six months.** The revised guidelines cover both continuous and non-continuous employment, including wage, self-employment, and gig employment.

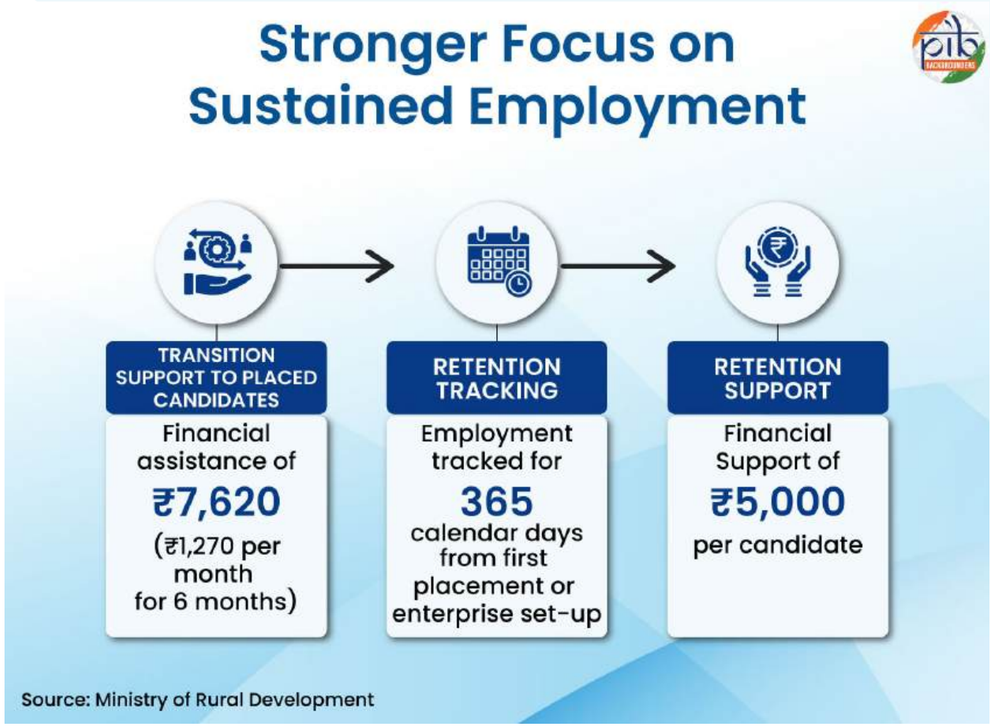
Strengthening Employment Retention and Career Progression

Under DDU-GKY 2.0, greater emphasis has been placed on **sustained employment.** To support the extended six-month placement duration, DDU-GKY 2.0 provides **12 months of post-placement tracking** to facilitate employment continuity, specifically:

- Placed candidates receive financial assistance of **₹7,620**, at **₹1,270 per month for six months.**
- In addition, retention **support of ₹5,000 per candidate** is provided to candidates who remain employed for **365 days**, with a maximum employment break of 60 days.
- Placed candidates are also provided with **upskilling and reskilling opportunities after 12 months of placement**, enabling them to strengthen their skills and improve their prospects for continued employment and career progression.

Job Melas for Connecting Rural Youth with Employers

Job Melas are organised by SRLMs at the block and Gram Panchayat levels to connect local youth with potential employers. They include youth registration and counselling, employer verification, and tracking of placement outcomes for one year through Kaushal Panjee. The Melas are mainly for youth with employable skills, including DDU-GKY-trained candidates seeking better job opportunities. Funding of up to **₹50,000 per GP-level fair** and **₹1 lakh per block-level fair** is available from the DDU-GKY budget, subject to placement of 100 and 200 candidates, respectively.



Migration Support Centres (MSC)

Given that a considerable proportion of trained candidates migrate in search of livelihood opportunities, DDU-GKY 2.0 has placed renewed emphasis on strengthening migration support systems. State Rural Livelihoods Missions (SRLMs) establish Migration Support Centres (MSCs) in areas with a high concentration of placed candidates. These centres operate both within the home state and in destination states. MSCs offer a range of services to support candidates during this transition, including accommodation assistance, counselling, and placement support.

They also facilitate the flow of employment-related information, encourage alumni networking, and strengthen engagement with employers. Beyond this, the centres liaise with local administrative bodies and service providers to help candidates settle into urban work environments and remain in stable employment over time. Reflecting the growing importance of this support system, per-centre annual funding for MSCs has been increased considerably, from **₹10 lakh** earlier to as much as **₹30 lakh** under the revised framework.

Employing Technology in Implementation

Technology integration has been a defining feature of **DDU-GKY** since its inception. The framework relies on **geo-tagged and time-stamped biometric attendance** records, computer labs, and e-learning facilities. These measures strengthened programme monitoring while enhancing trainees' exposure to digital tools.

DDU-GKY 2.0 builds upon this technological foundation by introducing an end-to-end digital solution encompassing the entire programme lifecycle. The platform spans PIA onboarding, project submission and evaluation, training-centre and candidate management, assessment and certification, financial management, and project monitoring and placement tracking.

The revised approach also introduces:

- **Advanced dashboards** for real-time programme monitoring.
- **Public candidate portal** for training search and viewing PIA performance ratings.
- **Automated processes**, including Project Registration Number (PRN) generation, grievance redressal, and certificate verification.
- **Digital attendance and assessment** through face authentication and real-time dashboards.
- **Skill India Digital Hub** integration for automated course-detail validation.

Key Milestones Achieved Under the Scheme

Leading the Rollout (2025-26) of DDU-GKY 2.0

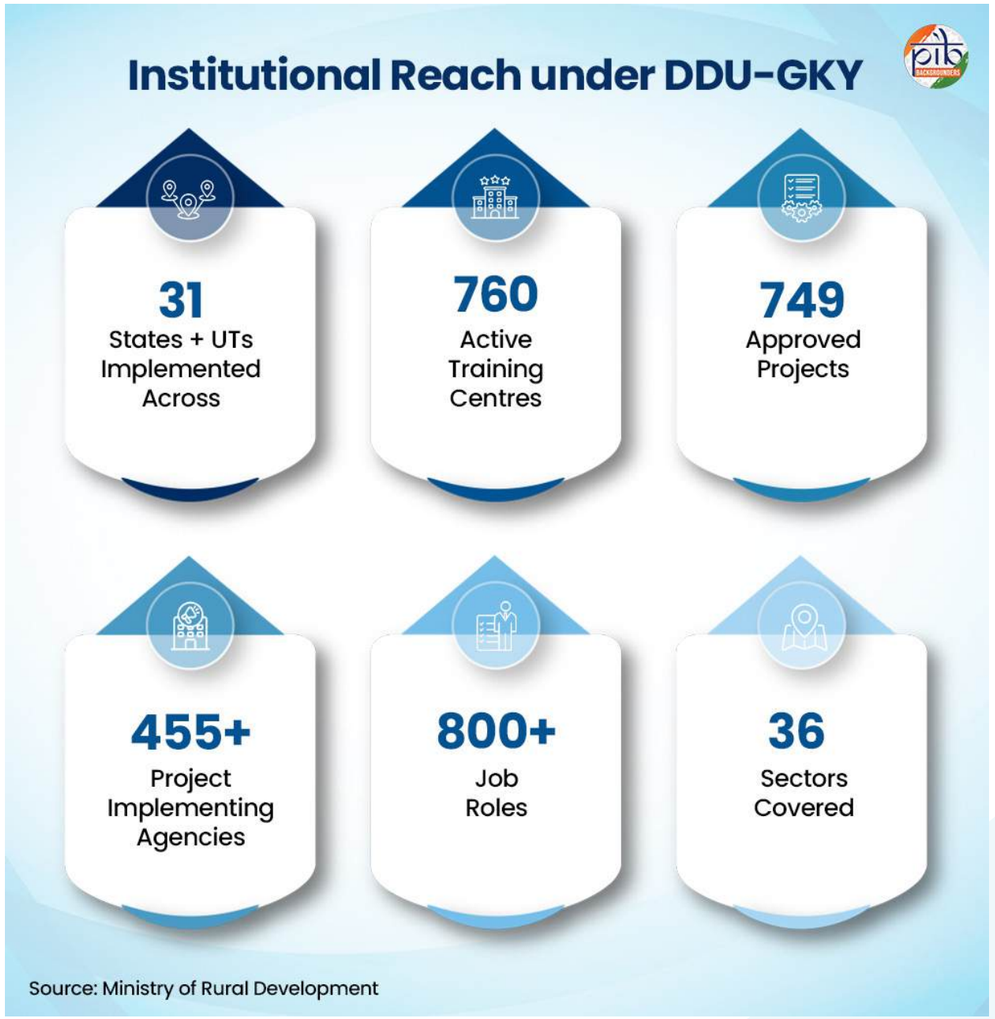
- **Goa has emerged as the pioneer in creating batches of DDU GKY 2.0.**
- **Andhra Pradesh has commenced training of more than 12000 candidates in a short span of 3 months.**
- **Jammu & Kashmir allocated 100% targets allocated and commenced trainings for 91% of the allocation.**

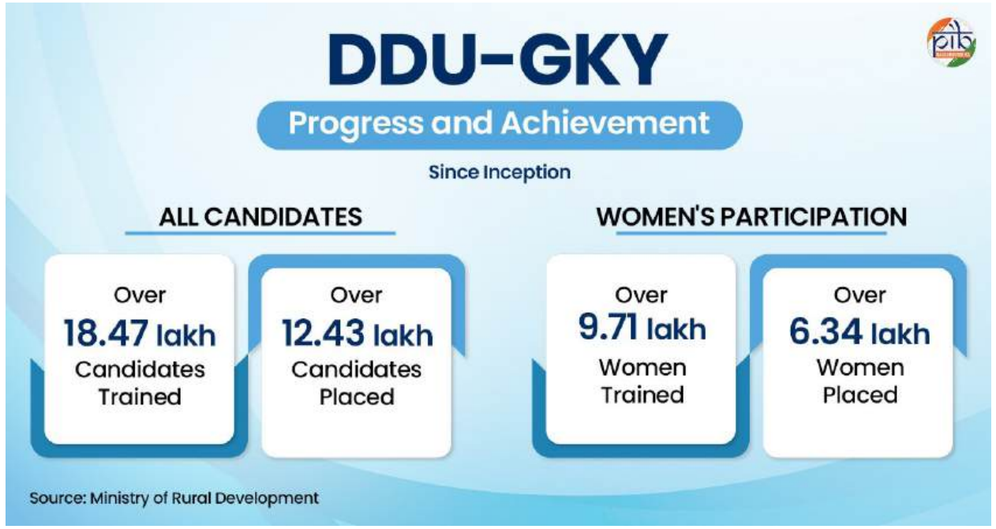
DDU-GKY is currently being implemented across **31 States & Union Territories** through an extensive skilling network. As on date, the programme has **749** approved projects, with **760** active

training centres, in partnership with more than **455** PIAs.

Since its inception in 2014-15, DDU-GKY has **trained** over **18.47 lakh** candidates, covering all **36 sectors** of the economy and **over 800** job roles, and placed over **12.43 lakh**. This reflects the scheme's wide sectoral reach and focus on industry-aligned skill development for rural youth.

Over **9.71 lakh women were trained,** and over **6.34 lakh** women secured placements under the scheme.

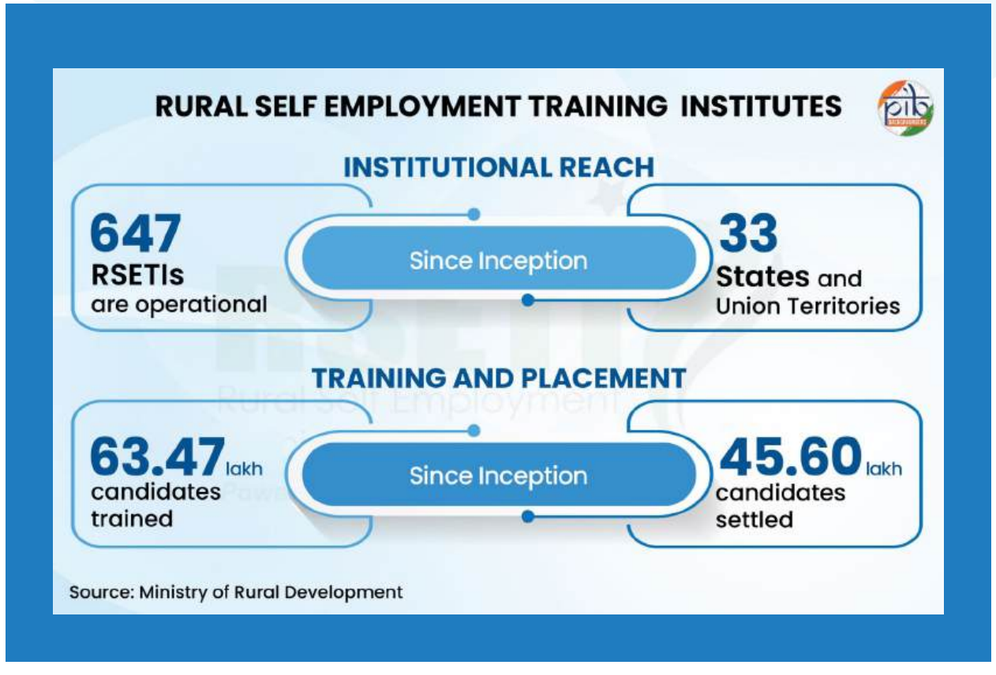




Other Initiatives Supporting Rural Youth Entrepreneurship

While DDU-GKY focuses on placement-linked wage employment, the Government has simultaneously strengthened self-employment and entrepreneurship pathways through **Rural Self-Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs).** The programme provides **free residential training** to rural unemployed youth aged **18-50 years,** followed by handholding support for setting up sustainable livelihoods. The programme creates dedicated skill infrastructure in every district of the country. It focuses on upskilling rural youth, especially those from below poverty line (BPL) and DAY-NRLM households.

As on date, a total of **647 RSETIs** are operational across **634** districts in **33** States/UTs. Since its inception (2009), the scheme has trained **63.47 lakh** candidates. Total of **45.60** lakh candidates have also been **settled.** Among the candidates settled under RSETI, around **94%** have established sustainable self-employment ventures. About **6%** have secured wage employment.



Shaping Rural India's Workforce for the Future

Strengthening the skills, employability, and entrepreneurship potential of rural youth remains central to inclusive economic growth in India. Through DDU-GKY 2.0, the Government is creating a more responsive, technology-driven, and outcome-oriented skilling ecosystem. The programmes prepare rural youth for jobs and support sustained livelihoods. Continued focus on quality training, industry partnerships and responsive support can help translate skills into durable livelihoods. DDU-GKY 2.0 represents an important step towards building a skilled, empowered, and self-reliant rural workforce for the future. It also promotes India's vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 that aims to transform the country into a global economic and knowledge hub.

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PIB Research

23

Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Domestic PNG Connection

Clean and Affordable Piped Cooking Gas for Every Home

Published on: September 13, 2026

Overview

Piped Natural Gas (PNG) expansion is an important part of India's transition towards cleaner household energy and energy security. Supplying PNG to homes is part of City Gas Distribution (CGD) network development. Such a network comprises pipelines and allied facilities that serve households, commercial establishments, and industrial units. Entities authorised by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) develop it. PNGRB has authorised entities in **309 Geographical Areas (GAs)**. Together, these areas span the entire mainland of the country. As of 18 August 2026, there were **1.74 crore** domestic PNG connections across the country.

To expand PNG coverage further, the **Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Domestic PNG Connections** was launched on 18 August 2026. The Scheme came into effect from 1 September 2026.

About the Scheme

The Incentive Scheme for Promotion of Domestic PNG Connections seeks to accelerate the growth of active domestic PNG connections. It aims to enable households to access **clean, safe and affordable cooking gas** through piped supply. The Scheme provides incentives to CGD entities for converting unbilled connections into active, billed connections. It also incentivises the expansion of the PNG network into new areas. The Scheme will run in two tranches spread over six months.

A minimum number of connections has been fixed for every Geographical Area under the scheme. During the performance period, eligible CGD entities must add billed domestic connections beyond this threshold. For each such incremental connection, the entity earns an **additional allocation of 200 Standard Cubic Metres (SCM)** of gas. This gas is domestically produced Administered Price Mechanism (APM) gas, which is **priced lower.**

The additional allocation will replace the costlier Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). CGD entities presently buy this LNG for their Compressed Natural Gas (Transport) segment. Substituting it with cheaper APM gas brings down their overall gas sourcing cost.

The payback period on capital spent for a domestic connection is therefore expected to shrink. It is expected to fall from about ten years to nearly three years. Companies therefore gain a strong commercial reason to connect homes faster.

Benefits of PNG for Households

PNG offers several important benefits for households, including ease of use, cost savings, and uninterrupted availability. The following are the key advantages of PNG for household users:

- **Safe and secure:** Gas travels through underground pipelines at low pressure, so cylinders need not be stored or handled. Being lighter than air, it rises and disperses quickly in the rare event of leakage.
- **Everyday convenience:** No booking, storing or changing of cylinders is required. Gas remains available at home round the clock. Bills are based on metered use, much like electricity or water.
- **Lower costs:** A household pays only for the gas it actually uses. On a per-unit energy basis, PNG usually costs less than LPG. Monthly fuel expenses therefore come down over time.
- **Cleaner environment:** PNG burns cleaner and gives off fewer pollutants than conventional cooking fuels. Indoor air stays healthier and carbon emissions remain lower.
- **Assured supply:** Pipeline supply is continuous and free from the logistics of cylinder delivery. Homes in high-rise buildings and crowded urban colonies benefit the most.

Initiatives for PNG Expansion

PNG expansion is being supported through measures for faster approvals, rationalised taxes, and streamlined infrastructure development. Digital platforms and awareness initiatives are making household transitions to PNG simpler, quicker, and more accessible:

- **Streamlined Regulatory Approvals:** An **Accelerated Approval Framework** has been issued under the **Natural Gas and Petroleum Products Distribution (Through Laying, Building, Operation and Expansion of Pipelines and Other Facilities) Order, 2026.** The Order also introduces uniform charges for pipeline Right-of-Way (RoW), which cover permission to use land or public areas for laying PNG pipelines. Applications will now be processed on priority and within defined timelines.
- **Reduced Value Added Tax (VAT):** States are being encouraged to **lower VAT** on natural gas to 5 percent. Several States have already done so, making piped gas cheaper for consumers.
- **National PNG Drive 2.0:** The nationwide drive was held from **1 January to 30 June 2026 to accelerate DPNG connections across Geographical Areas.**
- **Unified PNG registration portal:** A single-window digital platform is being developed. It will make applying for and tracking new connections **simple and quick.**

Towards Cleaner, Connected Homes

Clean cooking fuel at home adds to the comfort, health and dignity of every household. Now in effect, the new Scheme aligns the commercial interests of gas companies with this national goal. As pipelines reach more areas and more kitchens, dependence on cylinders steadily declines. Piped gas is thus set to become a natural part of everyday living in India.

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PIB Research

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Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)

When a Skill Opens Another Path

Published on: September 24 2026

In villages where a family's future depends largely on harvests, acquiring a skill can often open up alternate livelihood pathways. For many rural youth, that path begins with an opportunity to learn, work, and build new sources of earning. That is where the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) enters the story. Launched on 25 September 2014 under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), DDU-GKY focuses on youth from marginalized and vulnerable rural households. It provides placement-linked skill training aimed at sustainable livelihoods. The programme targets **youth aged 15 to 35 years, linking skill training with employment opportunities.**

The programme is also changing with the world of work. The revised DDU-GKY 2.0 framework places greater emphasis on industry-led training, sustainable employment, post-placement support, upskilling and reskilling. An end-to-end digital system now covers training, assessment, certification, monitoring and employment tracking. It also strengthens employer engagement through partnerships, job fairs, campus placements and industry consultations.

The focus is clear: **training should lead to work, and work should have a better chance of lasting.** As of June 2026, **18.45 lakh** rural youth have been trained under DDU-GKY, while **12.35 lakh** have been placed.

Behind these numbers are stories of individuals whose lives changed when **learning opened pathways to employment and livelihoods.**

Keeping the Dream Alive

For years, **Vimethano Sakhrie from Nagaland** witnessed her mother work tirelessly to support a family of ten. After completing high school, Vimethano aspired to pursue higher education, but financial constraints made it difficult to realise that ambition

Everything changed when she learnt about **DDU-GKY.** Refusing to give up

on her dreams, she enrolled in a **DDU-GKY tourism and hospitality training programme.** Months later, Vimethano walked into her first job at **The Den Bengaluru in Food & Beverage Service.** It was more than employment. It marked the beginning of a new chapter for her and her family.

Looking back on her journey, Vimethano says, "I extend my gratitude to the Ministry of Rural Development and NSRLM, Government of Nagaland for implementing DDU-GKY, which has helped many unemployed youths across India. This opportunity was a blessing for me, and I hope many more youths can benefit from it, just like I did."

For Vimethano, DDU-GKY turned an interrupted education into a launchpad for a career. For Chandan Shah, the opportunity eventually led much further from home.

From Odd Jobs to a Career Abroad

There was a time when even basic necessities were difficult for **Chandan Shah's** family. Living in Tetahli village of Siwan, Bihar, he had little hope of continuing his education. He left school after high school to help his father in the fields. With few opportunities around him, Chandan took up odd jobs to earn a living. Yet, the work barely offered enough for a decent life.

A new possibility emerged through his mother, who was part of the Genda JEEViKA Self Help Group. She encouraged him to explore DDU-GKY. Chandan underwent counselling and

chose to train as an **Assistant Electrician.** The training equipped him with the skills needed to take his first step towards a career. Upon completing the course, he secured his first job in **Baddi as a helper at a distillery,** earning **₹10,500 per month.** This early experience provided him with a foundation for further professional growth. Building on these skills and experience, Chandan later pursued an opportunity overseas and moved to **Dubai,** where he joined

Al Shafa General Contracting as an electrician.

By then, his monthly earnings had increased to **₹35,000.** The impact extended beyond his own career, bringing greater financial security to his family. Chandan was able to support his family and contribute towards his siblings' education in private schools. His journey also made him a source of inspiration for young people in his village.

Chandan's story illustrates how a **first employment opportunity can become a foundation for sustained livelihood progression.** DDU-GKY equipped him with the skills to take that first step, while his determination and experience enabled him to pursue further opportunities. Together, they helped him build a more secure future for himself and his family.

Yet, not every DDU-GKY journey leads away from home. For Rupali Hasda, the opportunity eventually brought her back.

Turning a Job into an Enterprise

Financial hardship had forced **Rupali Hasda** of Charaideo, **Assam,** to leave school after Class 9. Her family depended on agriculture, with her father as the sole earner. Her mother, an active

member of a Self-Help Group, continued to encourage her dreams. Rupali learnt about DDU-GKY through a Jeevika Sakhi and enrolled in the Sewing Machine Operator trade in December 2022.

After completing her training, she secured a job at KPR Apparels Mills in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu. For five months, she worked in an unfamiliar city and adapted to a new environment. Yet, her thoughts remained close to home. She returned to Hatibandha with savings from her job and invested **Rs.50,000** in a **Sewing and Cutting Centre.** What began as a livelihood for herself soon created an opportunity for someone else. She employed a young girl at the centre and began building an enterprise within her community. With an annual income of around **Rs.1.10 lakh,** Rupali's journey shows another side of skilling. A job gave her a start, but she chose to turn that experience into something of her own.

Rupali chose to build her livelihood close to home. **Hiralal,** however, sought a different path-one that would enable him to build a career while navigating the challenges before him.

A Career of His Own

Hiralal Pandit from Jharkhand had grown up watching every harvest decide how far his family's money would stretch. His family of four depended on his father's seasonal farming, which earned around **Rs.5,000** a month.

After completing Class 10, he began helping his father in whatever ways he could. As a differently abled young man, finding work was far from easy. but Hiralal refused to let his circumstances define his future.
He aspired to build a career of his own while contributing to the financial well-being of his family. While exploring his options, Hiralal came to know about **DDU-GKY.** The programme's free training and placement support offered him an opportunity to acquire skills and pursue employment. He enrolled in the **Healthcare Multipurpose** trade at a training centre in Dumka, Jharkhand.
The training marked a significant turning point in Hiralal's journey. He acquired new skills in a supportive and inclusive learning environment where he was treated with dignity and equality. After completing the course, he secured placement at **SMBT Hospital in Nashik as a General Duty Assistant.** The opportunity enabled him to earn independently while contributing to his family's well-being. More importantly,

the experience strengthened his confidence and broadened his sense of what he could achieve.

Today, Hiralal encourages other

young people to look beyond their circumstances and make the most of the opportunities available to them. For him, the journey began with the courage to take the first step. DDU-GKY helped him turn that first step into a pathway towards a career and a more secure future.

When a Skill Becomes a Livelihood

A skill cannot remove every hardship faced by a rural household, but it can open doors to greater possibilities. For Vimethano, it provided a route to employment when financial constraints interrupted her educations. For Chandan, it marked the beginning of a career that eventually took him to Dubai. Rupali brought her skills and experience back home to build an enterprise of her own, while Hiralal found an avenue to employment and an opportunity to support his family.

Their journeys took different directions, but they share a common thread: the chance to acquire skills, apply them, and build a livelihood. DDU-GKY seeks to make that first step possible, helping rural youth move from training to employment and **from employment towards more secure and sustainable livelihoods.**

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Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)

Sharing the Gains of Mining with Those Who Bear Its Cost

Published on: September 17, 2026

Overview

Minerals are a vital national resource. Their extraction generates revenue, supports industries, and creates employment. Yet the districts that host mines often carry high costs. Displacement, pollution and loss of traditional livelihoods weigh on the people living there.

India has built a dedicated mechanism to return a share of mining revenue to these communities. This framework operates through **District Mineral Foundations (DMFs).** DMFs collect statutory contributions from holders of mining leases. The **Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY),** launched on **17th September 2015,** directs these funds into welfare and development projects on the ground.

About the Scheme

Every mining-affected area deserves a minimum standard of social and physical infrastructure. Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY) has been framed in the national interest to provide for the welfare of these areas and its people. The Scheme is implemented by the DMFs, using the funds that accrue to them under the Act.

The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 requires States to incorporate PMKKKY into their DMF rules. Revised guidelines for the Scheme were issued in **January 2024.** They provide an updated framework for planning and executing projects.

Objectives

- Implement developmental and welfare projects in mining-affected areas. Such works complement the ongoing programmes of the States and the Centre.
- Minimise the adverse effects of mining on the environment, health and socio-economic conditions of local people. This covers impacts felt both during mining and after it ends.
- Ensure long-term, sustainable livelihoods for the affected population.

District Mineral Foundation: The Institutional Base

Provision for **District Mineral Foundation (DMF)** was introduced through the 2015 amendment to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. DMFs are non-profit trusts formed with an objective to work in the interest of persons and areas affected by mining-related operations. It covers every district affected by mining. The operation of DMFs falls under the jurisdiction of the relevant State Government. The fund for DMF is collected at the district level. DMFs have so far been set up in **656 districts** across **23 States**. Each state has framed its own DMF rules.

Safeguards for Scheduled and Tribal Areas

Mining-related operations largely affect less developed and remote areas of the country. They also impact vulnerable communities, particularly Scheduled Tribes. This makes it essential to ensure that special care and attention is devoted to them. While making rules, the State Government follows the constitutional provisions relating to the administration of Scheduled and Tribal Areas. It also follows the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 and the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

How the Foundations Are Funded

Holders of mining leases are required to pay a certain amount in respect of the mineral extracted in proportion to the quantity extracted, known as royalty. The contribution to the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) is prescribed as follows:

- Ten per cent of the royalty in respect of mining leases or prospecting licence-cum-mining lease granted on or after 12.01.2015.
- Thirty per cent of the royalty in respect of mining leases granted before 12.01.2015.

Where the Funds Go

The utilisation of PMKKKY funds follows a defined framework, balancing priority welfare needs with infrastructure development.

High-Priority Sectors: at least 70 per cent of funds

- Drinking water supply.
- Environment preservation and pollution control measures.
- Health care and education.
- Welfare of women and children, and of the aged and differently abled.
- Skill development and livelihood generation.
- Sanitation and housing.
- Agriculture and animal husbandry.

Other Priority Sectors: up to 30 per cent of funds

- Physical infrastructure.
- Irrigation.
- Energy and Watershed development.
- Any other measure that raises environmental quality in mining districts.

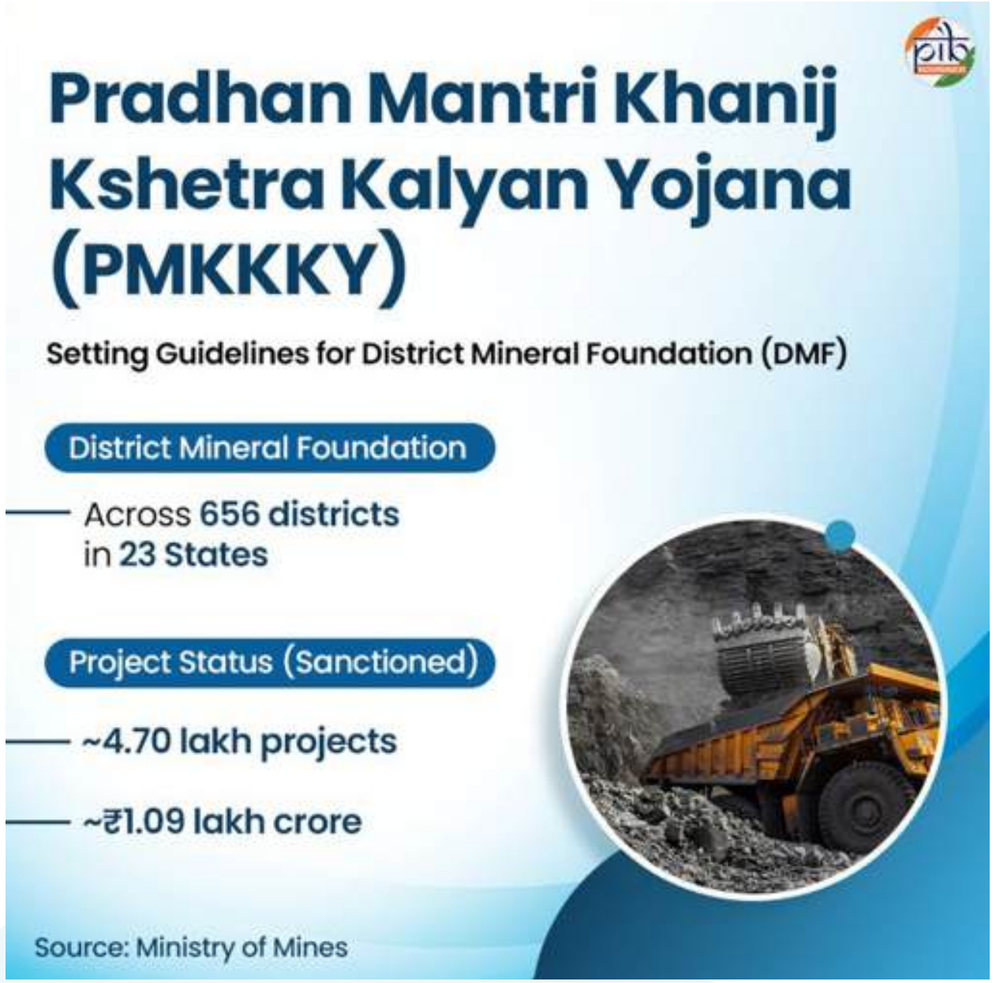
Progress on the Ground

The scale of implementation is reflected in the numbers. **Over 4.70 lakh projects,** worth **more than ₹1 lakh crore**, have been sanctioned so far. More than **2.92 lakh** of these projects stand completed. Another **78,809 works** are under execution, backed by committed funds of **over ₹30,512 crore** as on July 2026.

A Fairer Deal for Mining Districts

Minerals belong to the nation. Their benefits must therefore reach those who bear the costs of extraction. Through DMF-PMKKKY, these benefits are channelled into improving education, healthcare, drinking water, and livelihood opportunities in mining-affected areas.

Project Status	Number of Projects	Amount (₹ crore)
Sanctioned	4,70,020	1,09,938
Completed	2,92,156	49,973
Ongoing	78,809	30,512 (committed)



As implementation deepens, affected communities will secure a fairer share of the wealth beneath their land. Mining can thus advance both national growth and local wellbeing together.

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PIB Research

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Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 5.0

Strengthening Business Resilience through Timely Credit Support

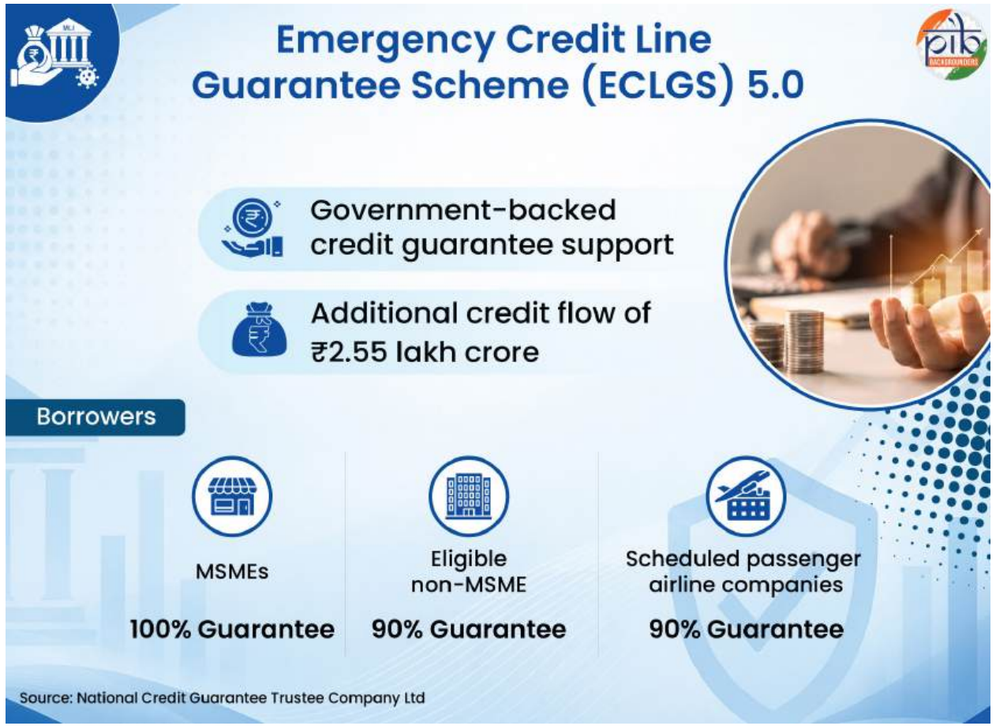
Published on: September 05, 2026

The ECLGS 5.0 provides targeted credit guarantee support to businesses affected by external disruptions. Implemented by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company, the scheme enables eligible lending institutions to extend additional working capital with reduced credit risk. It supports MSMEs, eligible non-MSME businesses and scheduled passenger airlines through government-backed guarantees. Building on the earlier phases of ECLGS introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, the scheme strengthens access to institutional credit while supporting business continuity. Extensive outreach, digital access through the Jan Samarth Portal and participation of banks and financial institutions have expanded its reach. By improving liquidity, preserving employment and strengthening supply chains, ECLGS 5.0 contributes to business resilience and sustained economic growth during periods of global uncertainty.

Supporting Enterprises During External Economic Shocks

India remains committed to sustaining economic growth, safeguarding livelihoods and ensuring uninterrupted business operations amid evolving geopolitical developments. Such developments can affect supply chains, increase logistics costs and create liquidity pressures for businesses across sectors. To address these challenges, the Government approved the **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 5.0 on 5th May 2026**.

The scheme is implemented by the **National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC)**. It provides **government-backed credit guarantees** to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) for extending **additional working capital to eligible business borrowers**. It aims to facilitate an additional credit flow of up to ₹2.55 lakh crore.



The **scheme supports uninterrupted domestic production and resilient supply chains**. It also helps businesses preserve employment and sustain economic activity during external disruptions. Moreover, enhanced liquidity enables enterprises to meet short-term operational and financial commitments.

Evolution of ECLGS

The **ECLGS** was launched in **2020** under the **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Package**. The scheme aimed to help businesses overcome financial stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It enabled MLIs to extend additional credit with 100% Government-backed guarantee support. ECLGS has evolved through successive phases to address the changing needs of different sectors.

- **ECLGS 1.0** covered **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), business enterprises, Mudra borrowers and individual business loans**. Borrowers with outstanding loans not exceeding ₹50 crore and days past due upto 60 days as on 29 February 2020 were eligible.

- **ECLGS 2.0** expanded coverage to **26 stressed sectors** identified by the Kamath Committee and the healthcare sector. It covered borrowers with outstanding loans above ₹50 crore and up to ₹500 crore with days past due upto 60 days as on 29.02.2020.

- **ECLGS 3.0** extended support to the **hospitality, travel & tourism, leisure & sporting and civil aviation sectors**. Eligible borrowers had credit facilities with lending institutions and up to 60 days past due as on 29 February 2020.

- **ECLGS 4.0** focused on strengthening healthcare infrastructure during the pandemic. It covered **hospitals/ nursing homes/clinics/medical colleges/ and manufacturers of liquid oxygen, oxygen cylinders** etc. Eligible entities had credit facilities with lending institutions and up to 90 days past due as on 31 March 2021.

Each phase broadened the scheme's coverage in response to evolving economic and sector-specific requirements. **From ECLGS 1.0 to 4.0, 1.19 crore guarantees** were issued, amounting to **₹3.68 lakh crore**. The schemes subsequently concluded on 31 March 2023.

Salient Features of ECLGS 5.0

ECLGS 5.0 is operational until **31 March 2027**, or until guarantees amounting to ₹2.55 lakh crore are issued, whichever is earlier. It covers **MSMEs, eligible non-MSME business borrowers and scheduled passenger airline companies**. Borrowers must satisfy the eligibility conditions prescribed by **NCGTC**, including account status and other applicable lending norms. Credit assistance is provided through **Scheduled Commercial Banks, Scheduled Urban Co-operative Banks, Financial Institutions** and eligible **Non-Banking Financial Companies**.

MSMEs and Eligible non-MSMEs

- **Eligible borrowers:** The scheme is available to borrowers with **existing working capital facilities from MLIs** as on 31 March 2026. Their loan repayments should not be overdue by more than 60 days. Borrowers who have already availed additional credit under the **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Exporters (CGSE)** are not eligible for assistance under ECLGS 5.0 up to the amount already availed under CGSE.

  The scheme is available to MSMEs across all sectors. For eligible **non-MSME borrowers, certain sectors are excluded from coverage under the scheme**. These include Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), power (Generation, transmission and distribution), telecom service providers, sugar and ethanol, and information technology companies. The list also includes paper and paper products, educational institutions, and beverages (excluding tea and coffee) and tobacco. Where a borrower operates in both eligible and ineligible sectors, the lending institution determines eligibility based on the proportion of turnover generated from eligible sectors during **FY 2025–26**.

- **Credit guarantee coverage**: 100% guarantee for loans extended to eligible MSMEs and 90% guarantee coverage for eligible non-MSMEs

- **No guarantee fee** is payable by MLIs under the scheme.

- **Additional credit support:** The scheme provides additional credit of up to 20% of the peak fund-based working capital outstanding during the fourth quarter of FY 2025–26, subject to a ceiling of ₹100 crore per borrower.

- **Interest rate of credit:** The scheme ensures that loans are available at regulated interest rates. For MSMEs, the rate is based on EBLR, while eligible non-MSMEs are charged based on MCLR. In both cases, lending institutions may charge up to 0.75% above the benchmark, subject to an overall ceiling of 9% per annum. For loans extended by eligible NBFCs, the rate of interest shall not exceed 13% per annum.

Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) are lending institutions registered under ECLGS 5.0 for extending additional credit facilities to eligible borrowers. This includes Public and Private Sector Banks, Small Finance Banks, Foreign Banks, Co-operative Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and Finance Institutions.

External Benchmark Lending Rate (EBLR) is the benchmark interest rate used by banks to determine floating interest rates on eligible retail and micro and small enterprise loans. The benchmark is set by Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The **marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR)** is an internal reference rate for banks fixed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It helps banks to define the minimum interest rate on different types of loans.

- **Loan tenure:** The loan will have a 5-year tenure from the date of first disbursement, including a 1-year moratorium.

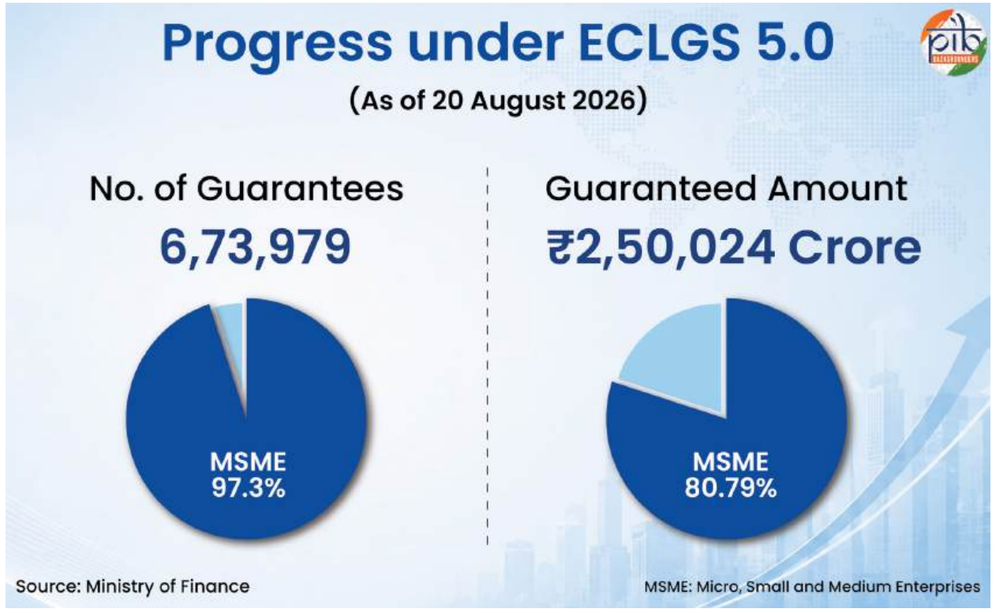
Scheduled Passenger Airlines

- **Eligibility condition:** Business enterprises in the scheduled passenger airline sector are eligible if they had outstanding fund-based and non-fund-based credit facilities from MLIs as on 31 March 2026. The credit facilities should be classified as 'Standard' (excluding SMA-2) on the same date.
- **Credit guarantee coverage:** A 90% credit guarantee is available for loans extended to eligible scheduled passenger airlines.
- **No guarantee fee** is payable by MLIs under the scheme
- **Additional credit support:** The scheme provides additional credit of up to 100%, subject to a ceiling of ₹1,500 crore per borrower, based on specified eligibility conditions. Of this, any amount beyond ₹1,000 crore and up to ₹1,500 crore shall be permitted only with a proportionate amount of equity contribution from the promoters/owners.
- **Interest rate of credit:** The lending institution will determine the rate of interest in accordance with its Board-approved policy.
- **Loan tenure:** The loan will have a tenure of 7 years from the date of first disbursement, including a 2-year moratorium.

ECLGS 5.0 in Action

ECLGS 5.0 has witnessed encouraging progress since its launch. As on 20 August 2026, **6,73,979 guarantees have been issued** under the scheme. The **guaranteed amount reached ₹2,50,024 crore**. The strong uptake reflects the scheme's rapid adoption across the lending ecosystem. **MSMEs accounted for 97.3% of all guarantees issued by number and 80.79% of the total guaranteed amount**.

Eligible borrowers can access the scheme through the **Jan Samarth Portal** (https://www.jansamarth.in/home). Click here to know how to apply on the portal.



The Government is actively promoting awareness to maximise the scheme's reach.

- **Phase 1: Outreach campaigns** were conducted across **9 locations between 20 May and 6 June 2026**. The campaigns were organised through State Level Bankers' Committees (SLBCs). NCGTC, PSB Alliance, banks, industry associations and enterprises participated actively.
- **Phase 2: Outreach is continuing across 10 additional locations, with 4 already completed**. A wide network of banks and NBFCs ensures broad geographical and sectoral coverage. MLIs continue to reach out to eligible borrowers through multiple communication channels

Sustaining Growth and Enterprise

ECLGS 5.0 reinforces India's commitment to supporting businesses during periods of global uncertainty. It strengthens access to institutional credit through government-backed guarantees. The scheme enables enterprises to continue operations, preserve employment and maintain supply chains. **By enhancing business resilience, ECLGS 5.0 contributes to sustaining India's economic growth momentum**.

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Every School, A Model School

PM SHRI and India's Push for Future-Ready Schools

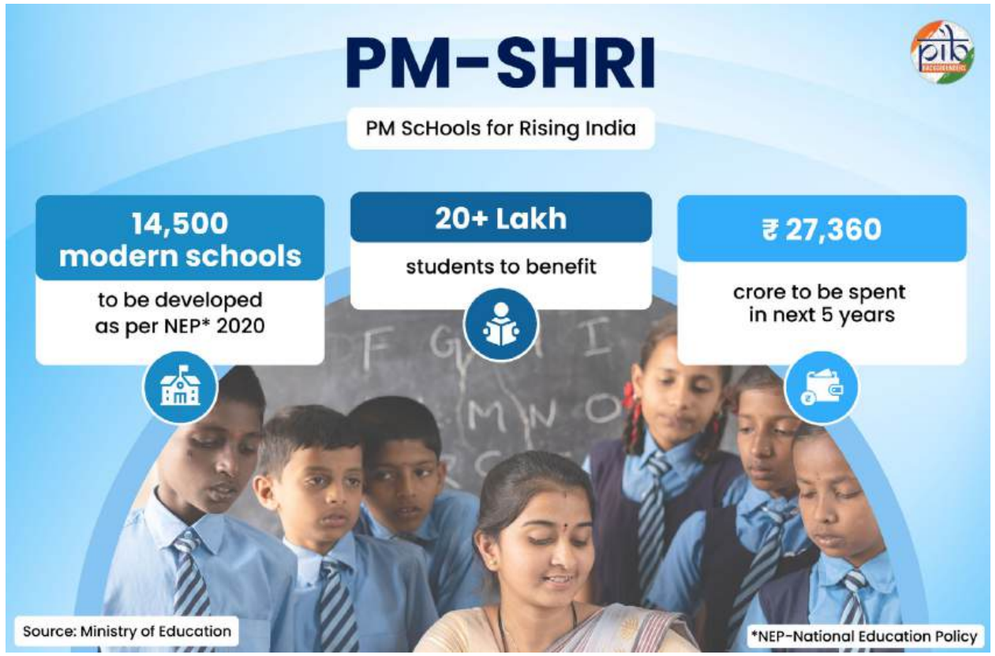
Published on: September 09, 2026

Launched on 7 September 2022, the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) Scheme seeks to develop over 14,500 exemplar schools aligned with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. With a total outlay of ₹27,360 crore across 2022–23 to 2026–27, the scheme strengthens infrastructure, pedagogy, inclusion, and sustainability, while equipping students with 21st-century skills. As of July 2026, 13,092 schools - around 90% of the target- have been selected across 36 States/UTs including schools under KVS, NVS, and NCERT. The schools are selected through a three-stage Challenge Mode based on defined quality benchmarks. Envisioned as mentor institutions for neighbouring schools, PM SHRI schools mark a shift from infrastructure-centric development towards holistic, equitable, and future-ready education.

PM SHRI: Building Schools That Lead by Example

India is witnessing a significant transformation in its school education system, marked by a growing emphasis on quality, equity, inclusion, and future-ready learning. With **14.71 lakh** schools serving more than **24.69 crore** students, the education system is increasingly focused on enhancing learning outcomes and creating enabling environments that support the holistic development of every learner. The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** furnishes the overarching framework for this transformation, while the PM SHRI initiative operationalizes its vision at the school level, translating policy intent into institutional practice. **Launched on 7 September 2022,** the **Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) Scheme** is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education. The scheme seeks to qualitatively strengthen existing schools and develop them as exemplar institutions demonstrating the effective implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. With a total project cost of **₹27,360 crore,** the scheme focuses on strengthening **more than 14,500 existing schools** as exemplar institutions. These schools are envisioned to provide **safe, stimulating, and welcoming learning environments,** supported by quality infrastructure, appropriate learning resources, and diverse learning experiences.

As of July 2026, **13,092 schools have been selected** as PM SHRI Schools across States and Union Territories, including schools under the **Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).** This represents around **90% of the envisaged target.** The scheme is expected to benefit more than 20 lakh students directly.



Strategic Focus of PM SHRI

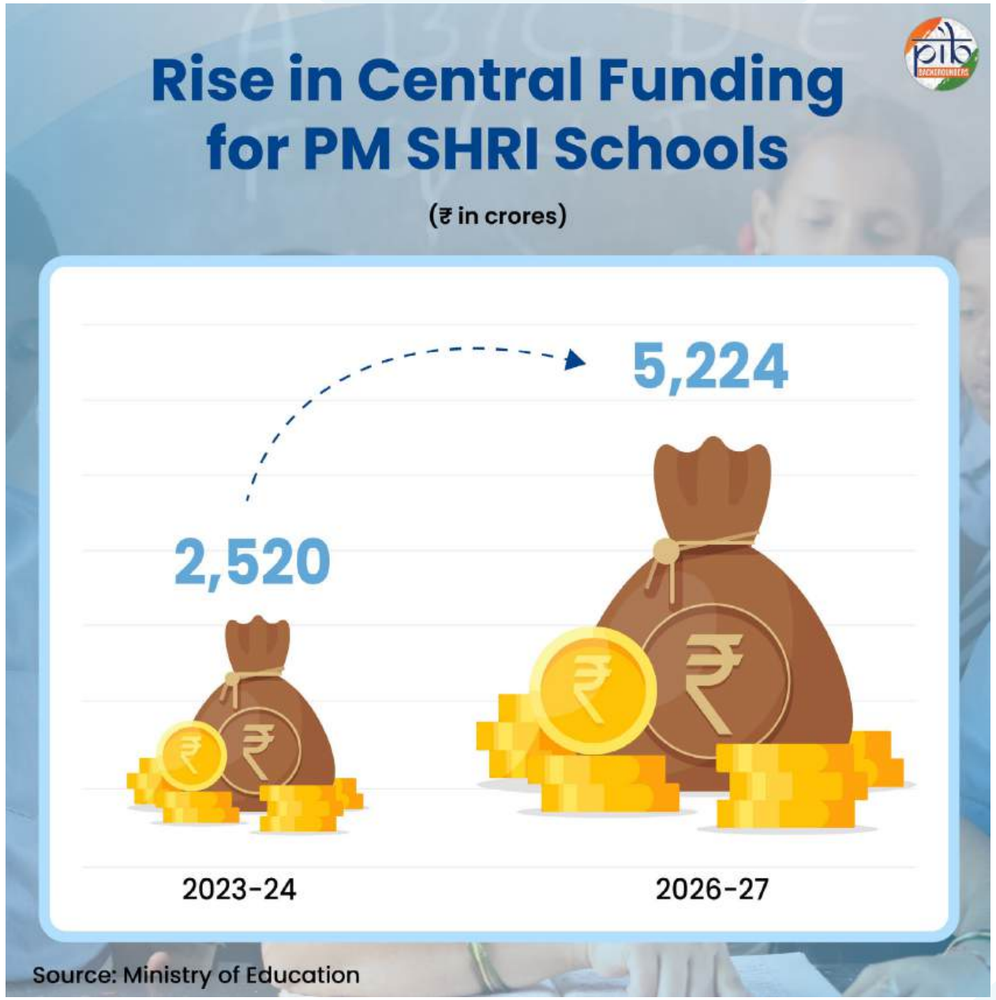
The scheme extends support beyond strengthening individual schools. PM SHRI schools are envisioned as **models for their regions,** sharing their practices and supporting neighbouring schools through **mentoring, handholding, collaboration and clustering.** This is intended to create a ripple effect, enabling more schools to develop towards exemplar standards over time.

At the core of the scheme is a vision of education that fosters **lifelong learning** and equips students with the capacity and disposition to learn, unlearn and relearn. The broader objective is to develop engaged, productive and responsible citizens capable of contributing to the creation of an **equitable, inclusive and plural society.**

Strengthening School Education Through PM SHRI

The **Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising**

India (PM SHRI) scheme is being implemented over **five years, from 2022–23 to 2026–27.** The scheme has a total project cost of **₹27,360 crore,** including a **Central share of ₹18,128 crore.** The central share of approved **Project Approval Board (PAB) outlay** rose from **₹2,520 crore in 2023–24 to ₹5,224 crore in 2026–27.** This marks an increase of around 107%, reflecting the growing scale of investment in strengthening PM SHRI schools.



PM SHRI Schools: Advancing the Vision of NEP 2020

PM SHRI Scheme aims to showcase all the components of the National Education Policy 2020 and focuses not only on cognitive development but also on creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with key 21st century skills. The scheme focuses on creating an equitable, inclusive, and joyful learning environment that caters to diverse backgrounds and varied academic abilities. These schools are designed to engage students actively in their learning process, ensuring that every child feels welcomed, cared for, and supported in a safe and stimulating environment.

Key Dimensions of Quality and Excellence under PM SHRI

PM SHRI Schools are designed as exemplar schools that demonstrate the key principles of NEP 2020 through quality education, modern infrastructure, inclusive practices and sustainable development.

- **Inclusive Learning:** Provides high-quality, equitable, and joyful education while addressing diverse backgrounds, multilingual needs, and different learning abilities.

- **Mentorship:** PM SHRI Schools will serve as exemplar schools and provide leadership and mentorship to other schools in their regions.
- **Green Schools:** Promote sustainable and environment-friendly practices as an important school quality benchmark.
- **Experiential Learning:** Emphasizes experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-based, and learner-centered approaches, including play and toy-based learning in the foundational years.
- **Learning Outcomes:** Focuses on curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to strengthen learning outcomes and the application of knowledge.
- **Quality Infrastructure:** Involves assessing school infrastructure on parameters including **adequacy, functionality, aesthetics and safety.**
- **Future Ready Skills:** Promotes exposure to **21st century** skills and links schools with the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- **Quality Assessment:** The **School Quality Assessment Framework (SQAF)** provides a structured mechanism to assess and monitor the quality of PM SHRI Schools.

The six pillars of PM SHRI schools

The PM SHRI schools scheme is based on the development of sub-domains of six major pillars derived from 9 chapters of NEP 2020, which are as follows:

How PM SHRI Schools Transform School Education

Learning Designed Around the Child

PM SHRI schools follow either the CBSE or the relevant State or Union Territory syllabus according to their affiliation. Their curriculum follows the National Curriculum Framework or State Curriculum Framework developed in accordance with the 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure under NEP 2020. States and Union Territories have flexibility to contextualise the curriculum according to local needs while adhering to core principles and constitutional values.

PM SHRI Schools also promote experiential learning through bagless days, internships with local artisans, study of local arts, crafts and traditions, celebration of important cultural events, and preservation of indigenous knowledge and practices.

Equity, Inclusion and Multilingual Learning

PMSHRI schools have played a pivotal role in providing inclusive and equitable education, ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds, including rural and underserved communities, have access to high-quality education. By focusing on bridging educational disparities, these schools have helped create a more equitable learning environment across India.

The scheme also promotes the use of the **mother tongue, local or regional language as the medium of teaching and learning, particularly in the early grades.** The latest UDISE+ 2025–26 data records 6,102 Sanskrit teachers, 1,994 Urdu teachers, and 9,152 regional language teachers in PM SHRI schools.

It also encourages community participation in supporting learning through local languages. This approach is crucial for ensuring that every child develops strong **foundational literacy and numeracy skills.**

Technology Enabled Learning

A significant achievement of PM SHRI Schools lies in the systematic integration of technology into the teaching–learning environment. The provision of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities, smart classrooms, internet connectivity, digital learning platforms, and STEM-based programmes is contributing to the creation of more interactive, experiential, and learner-centred educational environments. These interventions not only enhance access to diverse learning resources but also support the development of digital literacy, technological competencies, critical thinking, and problem-solving

skills. Platforms such as DIKSHA serve as repositories of high-quality digital educational resources and facilitate the sharing and dissemination of learning materials among teachers and students, thereby strengthening technology-enabled pedagogical practices.

Holistic Student Development

PM SHRI Schools adopt a holistic approach to student development by integrating academic learning with extracurricular activities, sports, arts, and life-skills education. This multidimensional approach extends beyond conventional academic achievement to foster the development of leadership capabilities, creativity, socio-emotional competencies, and interpersonal skills. By providing opportunities for diverse forms of learning and participation, the schools seek to equip students with the competencies, resilience, and adaptability required to navigate future educational, professional, and social challenges.

Empowering Teachers and School Leaders

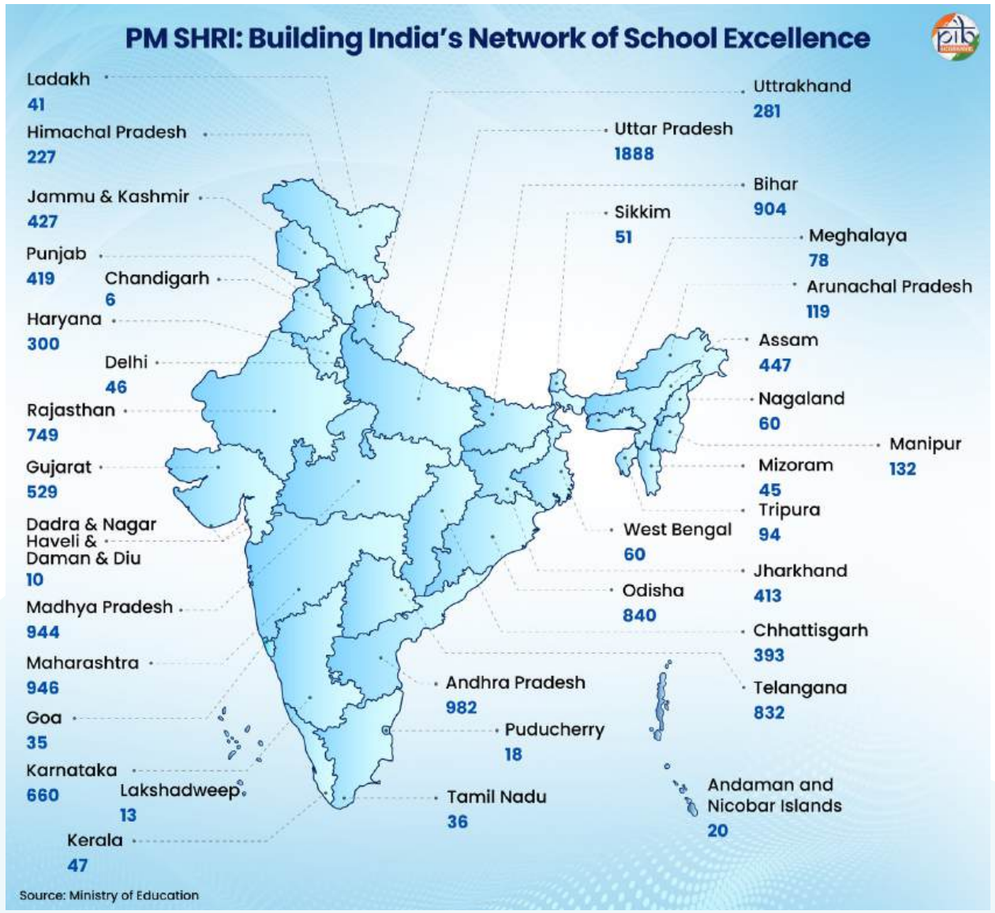
PM SHRI Schools seek to strengthen teacher capacity and institutional leadership through structured professional development initiatives supported by District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs). Under the initiative, financial assistance of up to ₹3 lakh per DIET is provided for capacity-building programmes, while support of up to ₹2,500 per teacher is extended for the training of subject teachers, principals, special educators, ICT teachers, and master trainers.

Principals are provided training in educational leadership, school management, and competency-based pedagogical planning, enabling them to strengthen institutional planning and academic governance. Teachers receive professional development in areas including the Holistic Progress Card, school safety, mental health and well-being, first-level counselling, and ICT integration. These interventions seek to enhance pedagogical competencies, strengthen school leadership, and promote continuous professional development among educational personnel.

A Growing National Network

The PM SHRI initiative has established a substantial national network comprising **13,092 selected schools** across States and Union Territories, including institutions under the **Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).** The initiative has achieved extensive geographical coverage, encompassing **725 districts and 8,340 blocks/ULBs,** thereby establishing a broad institutional and spatial footprint across the country.

Among the **13,092 selected schools, 1,305 are primary schools, 3,102 upper primary schools, 3,141 secondary schools, and 5,544 higher secondary schools.** The network further includes 80 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs), 913 KVS schools, 620 NVS schools, and 4 NCERT schools. The scale and diversity of this network demonstrate the expanding reach of PM SHRI Schools.



Selection Built on Quality Benchmarks

Selection of PM SHRI schools is done through Challenge Mode, wherein Schools compete for support to become

exemplar schools. Selection is done through a three-stage process with definite timelines, which is as follows:

- **Stage 1: Signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**
  States and Union Territories (UTs) enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Centre, outlining their commitments towards providing the requisite support and enabling the selected schools to achieve the prescribed quality standards for PM SHRI Schools.

- **Stage 2: Identification of Eligible Schools**
  A pool of schools eligible for selection as PM SHRI Schools is identified on the basis of prescribed minimum benchmarks and relevant indicators available through the UDISE+ data.

- **Stage 3: Selection through the Challenge Method**
  Eligible schools identified in Stage 2 participate in a challenge-based selection process to demonstrate compliance with specified criteria. Schools compete against the prescribed challenge conditions, with fulfilment of the stipulated requirements.

- Fulfillment of conditions is verified and certified through physical inspection by the respective States/UTs, KVS, or NVS authorities, and recommend the list of schools to the Ministry.

An Expert Committee headed by the Secretary (SE&L), at the Ministry of Education, is constituted for final selection of schools. Schools must meet minimum standards such as a **pucca building, barrier-free access, safety measures, separate toilets, drinking water, hand-washing facilities,** electricity, ID cards for teachers, enrolment at Elementary and Senior Secondary levels must be more than the State average enrolment and library or sports facilities. For the Challenge Method, schools in urban areas are required to secure a minimum score of 70 percent, while schools in rural areas require a minimum of 60 percent. The assessment covers **infrastructure, learning outcomes, pedagogy, PM POSHAN, vocational education, green initiatives, and stakeholder commitment.**

Schools as Models for Wider Change

PM SHRI represents a paradigm shift from an **infrastructure-centric approach to school development** towards the establishment of holistic, inclusive, equitable, and future-ready learning institutions. The initiative operationalises the vision and priorities of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** by emphasising quality and competency-based learning, continuous teacher professional development, technology-enabled education, and the creation of a safe, inclusive, and enabling school environment.

As exemplar institutions, PM SHRI Schools are envisaged to **demonstrate and disseminate innovative educational practices** that can be adapted and replicated by neighbouring schools, thereby contributing to broader systemic improvements in school education. The overarching objective is to foster capable, confident, creative, and responsible learners, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values required to participate meaningfully in a **more equitable, inclusive, and future-ready India.**

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India’s Path to Blue Skies

From Awareness to Action for Cleaner Air

Published on: September 07, 2026

Observed globally on 7 September, the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies highlights urgent action against air pollution. India's multi-sectoral response includes the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) across 130 cities. In FY 2025–26, 108 cities recorded lower PM10 levels than in 2017–18. Among them, 72 cities achieved reductions above 20%, while 26 recorded reductions above 40%. Strengthened monitoring, cleaner mobility, city-specific action and scientific interventions continue to advance India's clean-air efforts.

Towards Cleaner Air: A Global and National Commitment

Clean air is fundamental to human health, environmental sustainability and economic well-being. As urbanisation and economic activity expand, addressing air pollution has become an important global priority. Recognising this need, the global community has placed clean air at the centre of environmental action.

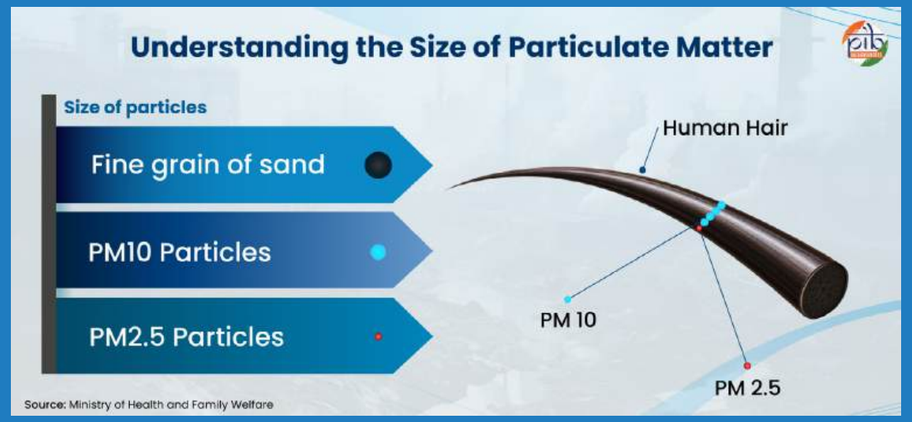
The **International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies** is observed globally on **7 September.** The **United Nations General Assembly designated the day in 2019** to strengthen global action against air pollution. It stressed the importance of raising public awareness at all levels and promoting and facilitating actions to improve air quality. India observes this occasion as **Swachh Vayu Diwas,** linking the global campaign with national priorities.

The Government of India is addressing this complex challenge through a comprehensive, **multi-sectoral approach.** This approach combines air-quality monitoring, emission control and city-specific action plans. The Central Government is supporting States and cities through targeted programmes and policy interventions. State Governments and district administrations play a critical role in implementing these measures on the ground. These combined efforts address pollution sources while strengthening institutional capacity for sustained air-quality management.

Understanding Air Pollution

Air pollution occurs when harmful substances accumulate in the atmosphere at levels that can affect human health and the environment. These pollutants may be present as gases, liquid droplets or solid particles. They can originate from both natural processes and human activities, including transport, industries, construction and burning.

Among them, the key air pollutant is Particulate Matter (PM), comprising tiny solid or liquid particles suspended in the air. Based on their size, these particles are commonly classified as **PM10** and **PM2.5.** PM10 refers to particles measuring 10 micrometres or less in diameter. **PM2.5** refers to finer particles measuring **2.5 micrometres or less** in diameter. For perspective, a human hair is about **100 micrometres wide,** making PM2.5 extremely small, almost 40 fine particles could be placed on its width. Their small size allows finer particles to penetrate deeper into the respiratory system. Some particles can even enter the bloodstream, increasing their potential health impacts. This makes controlling particulate pollution an important priority for **cleaner air and healthier communities.**



India in Action to Mitigate Air Pollution

National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP)

The Central Pollution Control Board initiated the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring (NAAQM) programme. It was subsequently renamed NAMP. Its objectives are to periodically evaluate air pollution, determine the status and trend of ambient air quality in the urban areas, estimate future changes, and ascertain violations of prescribed ambient air quality standards and health hazards.

As on March 2026, the ambient air-quality monitoring network in the country currently comprises **1,646 stations across 603 cities in 28 States and 7 UTs,** including **manual stations** and **real-time stations.** Manual stations collect and analyse samples periodically, while CAAQMS provide continuous, real-time air-quality data.

The SAMEER mobile application and web portal provide near real-time AQI information for more than 292 cities, enhancing transparency and citizen awareness. Public Grievance Redressal Portals have also been established in all

Air Pollution Monitoring in India

India uses specialised monitoring systems to track **ambient air quality and pollution from industrial sources.** The key systems include **Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring System (CAAQMS), Ambient Air Quality Monitoring System (AAQMS)** and **Online Continuous Emission Monitoring System (OCEMS).**

CAAQMS provides automated, real-time monitoring of ambient air quality. It tracks pollutants such as $PM_{2.5}$, PM_{10}, Sulphur Dioxide (SO_2), Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ozone (O_3) and Ammonia (NH_3). The system continuously records pollutant levels and supports timely assessment of air-quality conditions.

AAQMS is a broader monitoring framework covering both **manual and automated monitoring systems.** It is capable of detecting and quantifying critical air pollutants such as particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), gases like nitrogen dioxide (NO2), sulphur dioxide (SO2), carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O3), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and other pollutants as specified in the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), as well as specific meteorological parameters (temperature, humidity, wind direction and speed, among others). In manual monitoring, air samples are collected over **24 hours** and analysed in laboratories. This provides detailed information on pollutant concentrations and supports long-term assessment of air quality.

OCEMS are the Online Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems that monitors emissions directly at industrial sources. These systems are installed at industrial facilities such as 17 categories of highly polluting industries. In case of Delhi-NCR, medium and large-scale red category polluting industries, food and food processing industries, and metal units in addition to 17 categories of polluting industries were mandated to install OCEMS. They continuously transmit monitoring data to regulatory authorities for compliance assessment to CPCB server. This helps ensure that industrial emissions and effluent discharges remain within **prescribed environmental standards.**

NCAP cities, enabling public participation in pollution control efforts.

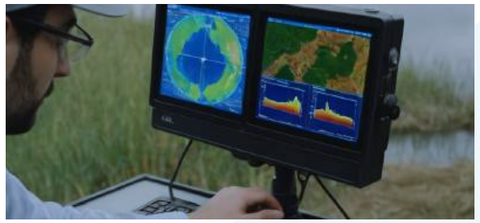
Air Quality Index (AQI)

AQI is a simple tool for citizens to understand air quality. It classifies air quality into 6 categories, from Good to Severe, based on pollutant concentrations and their potential health impacts. AQI is calculated using eight pollutants: PM10, PM2.5, NO_2, SO_2, CO, O_3, NH_3 and Pb, with the worst-performing pollutant determining the overall AQI.

AQI Category	AQI
Good	0-50
Satisfactory	51-100
Moderate	101-200
Poor	201-300
Very Poor	301-400
Severe	401-500

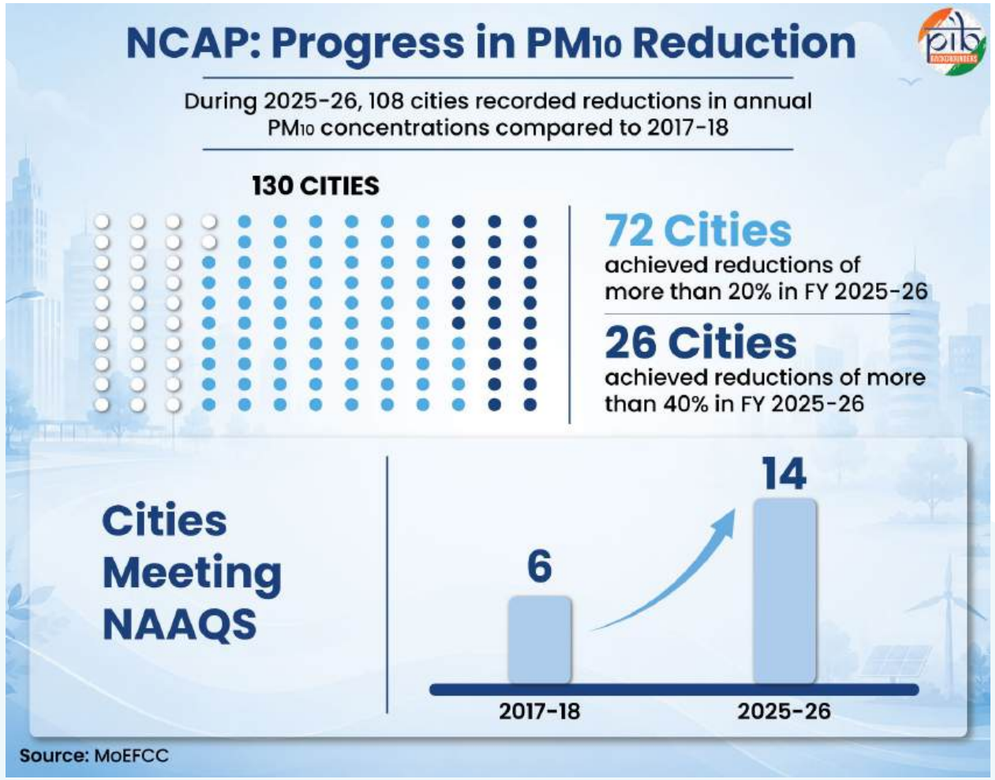
National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

To address air pollution in urban areas in mission mode, NCAP was launched in 2019 by the Government in 130 cities across the country. It is a multi-sectoral initiative involving the coordinated efforts of the Central and State Governments, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and other stakeholders. NCAP emphasizes source specific mitigation measures through city, state, and national-level clean air action plans, and it is monitored by various committees constituted at Central, State and District level.



Key Achievement of NCAP

- **Under NCAP, 24 States/UTs and 130 cities have prepared State and City-specific Clean Air Action Plans,** targeting key pollution sources through short- and long-term sectoral measures.
- ₹16,423.55 crore was provided to 130 cities during FY 2019-20 to FY 2025-26 through air-quality performance-linked grants to support pollution mitigation measures. So far, cities have reported the utilization of ₹11,575.54 crore (70.5%) of the funds.
- In FY 2025–26, 108 cities reduced annual PM10 concentrations compared with 2017–18, with 72 cities recording over 20% reduction, 26 over 40%, and 14 meeting NAAQS.



Digital Tracking of Clean Air Progress

"PRANA" – Portal for Regulation of Air-Pollution in Non-Attainment cities, is a portal for managing and monitoring the implementation of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). It supports tracking the physical as well as financial status of city air action plan implementation and disseminates information on air quality management efforts under NCAP to the public. Information related to various activities and their progress under NCAP by various stakeholders is available on this portal, which will help in future policy decisions. Click To Reach Portal

Swachh Vayu Survekshan

Swachh Vayu Survekshan is an annual assessment of 130 cities under the NCAP. Launched in 2022-23, it is an initiative of the MoEFCC. The assessment covers measures addressing major pollution sources and implementation of City-specific Clean Air Action Plans. It promotes healthy competition, innovation and accelerated action among cities to improve air quality.

Champions of Swachh Vayu Survekshan 2025

The **2025 Survekshan** recognised **11 best-performing cities** across these three categories. **Category 1** covers **47 cities** with populations of 10 lakh or more. **Category 2** covers **44 cities** with populations between 3 and 10 lakh. **Category 3** covers **40 cities** with populations below 3 lakh. **Indore** ranked first in Category 1, **Amravati** topped Category 2, while **Dewas** led Category 3.

Champions of Swachh Vayu Survekshan 2026

Ward level Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan is one step forward in ensuring the bottom-up approach and recognizing actions at the root level. Ward-level Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan carried out in more than 7,400 wards across the country.

The 2026 Survekshan recognised 10 best-performing cities across these three categories. Lucknow ranked first in Category 1, Rourkela topped Category 2, while Kalinganagar led Category 3.

10 wards awarded across three categories at National level; Category 1 Population > 30,000, Category 2 with population between 10,000-30,000, Category 3 with population < 10,000.

Ward 70 Lucknow ranked first in Category 1, Ward 30 &36 Bhubneshwar topped Category 2, while Ward 13 Rourkela led Category 3. Further, 69 wards, 3 wards from each State/UT have also been awarded from 23 State/UTs.

Sector-Wise Key Mitigation Measures Taken to Improve Air Quality

Vehicular Emissions

- Introduction of **BS VI compliant vehicles** across the country since April, 2020.
- Promotion of **electric vehicles** through PM E-Drive scheme of the Ministry of Heavy Industries and PM E-Bus Sewa of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.
- Establishment of **charging infrastructure** for E-vehicles as per guidelines issued by Ministry of Power.
- City action plans include traffic decongestion and junction improvement measures to address pollution from vehicular movement.
- Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) has issued notifications on the establishment of Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSFs) and Automated Testing System (ATS) to create an enabling framework for implementation of Vehicle Scrapping Policy.
- Improving and Strengthening of Pollution Under Control (PUC) Certificate System programme across the country by MoRTH.
- MoHUA has launched the "Program for Accelerated Renewal and Incentivization of Vehicle Assets for Reducing Transport Air-Pollution and Network Emission (PARIVARTAN)", a time-bound fleet modernization scheme aimed at reducing vehicular pollution in NCR by incentivizing the replacement of BS-IV and older trucks and buses with BS-VI, CNG or Electric Vehicles (EVs).
- In Delhi-NCR, directions issued by CAQM to the Government of NCT of Delhi and State Governments of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh for migration of public transport services, especially buses in NCR to cleaner modes. CAQM directed State Governments to augment infrastructure for public transport and allow only BS-VI/CNG/EV public transport buses to enter into Delhi, including tourist buses from 01.11.2026.
- In Delhi-NCR, CAQM issued direction to the Government of NCT of Delhi and State Governments of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh regarding fast-tracking of cleaner mobility in services provided by Motor Vehicle Aggregators, Delivery

Service Providers and E- Commerce Entities.

- In Delhi-NCR, mandatory induction of only electric three wheelers of L5 category (Passenger and Goods) in Delhi, followed by High Volume Districts of NCR, namely Gurugram, Faridabad, Sonipat, Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddh Nagar and in all other districts of NCR in a graded manner.

Industrial Emission

- MoEFCC has notified **environmental standards for industrial sectors.** Industries without specific standards must follow the applicable general standards under the Environment Protection Rules, 1986.
- CPCB classified **419 industrial sectors and sub-sectors** based on their pollution potential. These include **125 Red, 137 Orange, 94 Green, 54 White and 9 Blue** categories.
- To reduce industrial emissions in Delhi-NCR, CAQM notified a standard list of approved fuels for industries. All identified industries are required to install Online Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems and ensure connectivity with CPCB servers.
- The CPCB directed 17 highly polluting industry categories **to install Online Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems (OCEMS).**
- CAQM has strengthened and issued the revised particulate matter emission norms of 50 mg/Nm³ for polluting and large industries that will become applicable from 1 October 2026. Air Pollution Control Devices are accordingly being installed across identified industrial units.
- State Pollution Control Boards have been advised for strict monitoring action in non-conforming areas with industrial establishments.
- CEPI based categorization enables classification of industrial clusters as Critically Polluted Areas (CPAs) or Severely Polluted Areas (SPAs). Action plans are mandated for these zones to reduce pollution load and improve environmental quality.
- In 2022, MoEFCC notified stricter emission standards (CPCB IV+) for power generators up to 800 kW running on Diesel, Gasoline or dual fuel mode.

Road Dust and Construction

- CPCB published guidelines for environmentally sound management of **Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste,** and guidelines for controlling dust from construction materials and C&D waste.
- **State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and Pollution Control Committees (PCCs)** are to deploy **anti-smog guns** and adequate dust-control measures at construction sites exceeding **20,000 sq. metres.** CPCB also issued guidelines for using anti-smog guns at C&D projects.
- Directions issued for setting up of a "Dust Control and Management Cell" by road owning/ maintaining/ construction agencies for monitoring and effective implementation of dust control measures in the NCR. 70 Dust Control and Management Cells (DCMCs) have been set up across NCR, with regular reviews by the CAQM.
- Online monitoring mechanism (through web portal) introduced for monitoring compliance of dust mitigation measures for construction sites above 500sqm plot area in Delhi NCR.
- Redevelopment of roads to control road dust, deployment of adequate Mechanized Road Sweeping Machines (MRSMs) and strengthening of infrastructure for collection of Construction & Demolition waste in Delhi-NCR.

C&D Waste

Construction and road dust is a major contributor to particulate pollution in Indian cities. It contributes around 40–50% of PM10 in most cities, according to the Source Apportionment (SA) studies conducted under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). Under City Clean Air Action Plans, cities prioritise road improvement and traffic decongestion. Measures also include junction improvements and greening of open spaces to reduce dust and improve urban air quality.

Open Waste Burning

Enforcement of Solid Waste (2016, revised in 2026), Plastic Waste (2016, amended 2022), Hazardous Waste (2016), E-Waste (2022), Battery Waste (2022) and Biomedical Waste Management Rules (2016).

Market-Based Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) mandates producers to manage post-consumer waste for plastic packaging, e-waste, batteries, tyres, and used oil. It promotes recycling, reduces landfill pressure, and curbs emissions from informal waste handling.

Ban on 12 Single-Use Plastics (SUP) items with low utility and high littering potential, like plastic cutlery, straws, and thermocol decorations, w.e.f.1st

July,2022, to support plastic waste reduction and curb emissions from plastic waste burning.

Crop Residue and Biomass Burning

- CPCB supports paddy straw pelletisation and torrefaction plants through one-time financial assistance.
- CAQM has directed 5-10% biomass co-firing in thermal power plants within 300 km of Delhi and in captive plants and Brick kilns in NCR. These measures promote alternative use of crop residue and reduce open burning.
- CPCB provides financial support for establishment of paddy straw-based pelletisation and torrefaction plants in NCR States. An amount of ₹37.16 crore has been sanctioned for 34 plants, including 27 plants in Punjab and 7 plants in Haryana.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has provided Rs. 4,233.84 crore for crop residue management initiatives during 2018-19 to 2025-26. Over 3.53 lakh crop residue management machines distributed to farmers and more than 43,535 Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) established in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and the NCT of Delhi.
- The combined efforts of multiple stakeholders have yielded encouraging results. With continued efforts, number of paddy stubble burning instances have reduced by 93% in Punjab and 91% in Haryana in 2025 with respect to 2021.

Afforestation and Green Cover

- The **Green India Mission** focuses on improving forest quality, ecological resilience and carbon sequestration. **₹1,019.26 crore** has been released to States as of **March 2026.**
- The **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA)** supports forest restoration and ecological conservation. More than **3.20 lakh hectares** of compensatory afforestation were undertaken between FY 2020–21 and 2024–25.
- **Nagar Van Yojana** launched in 2020, the scheme aims to develop 1,000 Nagar Vans and Vatikas by 2026–27. As of 31 March 2026, ₹557.62 crore has been released for developing **626 Nagar Vans/Vatikas.**
- **Aravalli Green Wall initiative** targets restoration of 6.31 million hectares across Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana and Delhi. It has established **435 nurseries** with a combined capacity of **393.24 lakh seedlings.** About 36,025 hectares were restored during 2025.
- **Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam,** the campaign has emerged as a major public environmental movement. **262.4 crore saplings** were planted by December 2025.

Institutions Driving India's Clean Air Goals

The Government of India has established a **multi-level institutional framework** to address air pollution. It brings together national regulators, State agencies, urban local bodies and specialised institutions for regulation, monitoring, enforcement, scientific assessment and coordinated action.

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

CPCB is a statutory organisation established under the **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974,** and is entrusted with powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981. It works to improve air quality and prevent, control and abate air pollution in the country, while also providing technical services to the MoEFCC.

Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)

The Government enacted the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021 and constituted CAQM as a dedicated statutory body for coordinated management of air pollution across the NCR airshed. It also coordinates GRAP implementation across the NCR.

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

The GRAP is an emergency response framework for managing worsening air quality in the National Capital Region. It brings multiple government agencies together to take graded and targeted measures based on the severity of pollution. The measures are triggered when Delhi's AQI reaches or is expected to reach specified levels. GRAP uses air-quality data, weather forecasts and scientific assessments to enable timely action. Its four stages range from 'Poor' (AQI 201–300) to 'Severe+' (AQI above 450). Measures become progressively stricter as air quality deteriorates. They include controlling dust and emissions, regulating construction and industrial activities, and restricting certain vehicles. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) coordinates implementation across the NCR.

State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)

SPCBs of India are key regulatory bodies responsible for controlling environmental pollution. They are at the frontline of environmental regulation. Beyond their original responsibilities under the Water Act, Air Act, and Environment Protection Act, SPCBs today also monitor noise, manage hazardous and plastic waste, maintain inventories, set standards, and ensure compliance across an expanding industrial base.

These institutions provide a coordinated framework for addressing air pollution through regulation, monitoring, enforcement and scientific assessment.

To bring greater transparency, consistency and efficiency in environmental regulation for industries, Government has made amendment to Air Act 1981 and Water Act 1974 and has notified uniform consent guidelines "Control of Air Pollution (Grant, Refusal or Cancellation of Consent) Guidelines, 2025 on 29th January, 2025 and Water Pollution (Grant, Refusal or Cancellation of Consent) Guidelines, 2025 on 30th January".

A Unified Consent and Authorization Management System (UCAMS) has also been launched by CPCB to facilitate online processing of consent applications by all State Pollution Control Boards and Pollution Control Committees. This portal provides a solution for End-to-end online processing of grant, refusal, or cancellation of Consent and through this uniformity in fees, siting criteria, timelines will provide enhanced transparency and traceability.

Way Forward

India's clean-air efforts will increasingly focus on sustained, source-specific and science-based interventions. Strengthening air-quality monitoring further will enable better identification of pollution sources and emerging hotspots. Greater use of real-time data, forecasting and scientific modelling can support timely and targeted interventions.

States, cities and district administrations will remain central to translating national programmes into measurable improvements on the ground. Cleaner mobility, improved public transport and greater adoption of clean fuels can further reduce emissions from transport.

Strengthening dust management, waste processing and industrial emission controls will address major urban pollution sources. Urban greening and ecosystem restoration can provide additional environmental benefits while improving resilience.

Continued innovation can enable cleaner technologies and more efficient pollution control systems. Public awareness and citizen participation will remain essential for sustaining behavioural change. India's continued focus on collaborative governance and measurable outcomes can accelerate progress towards cleaner air and healthier communities.

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PIB Research

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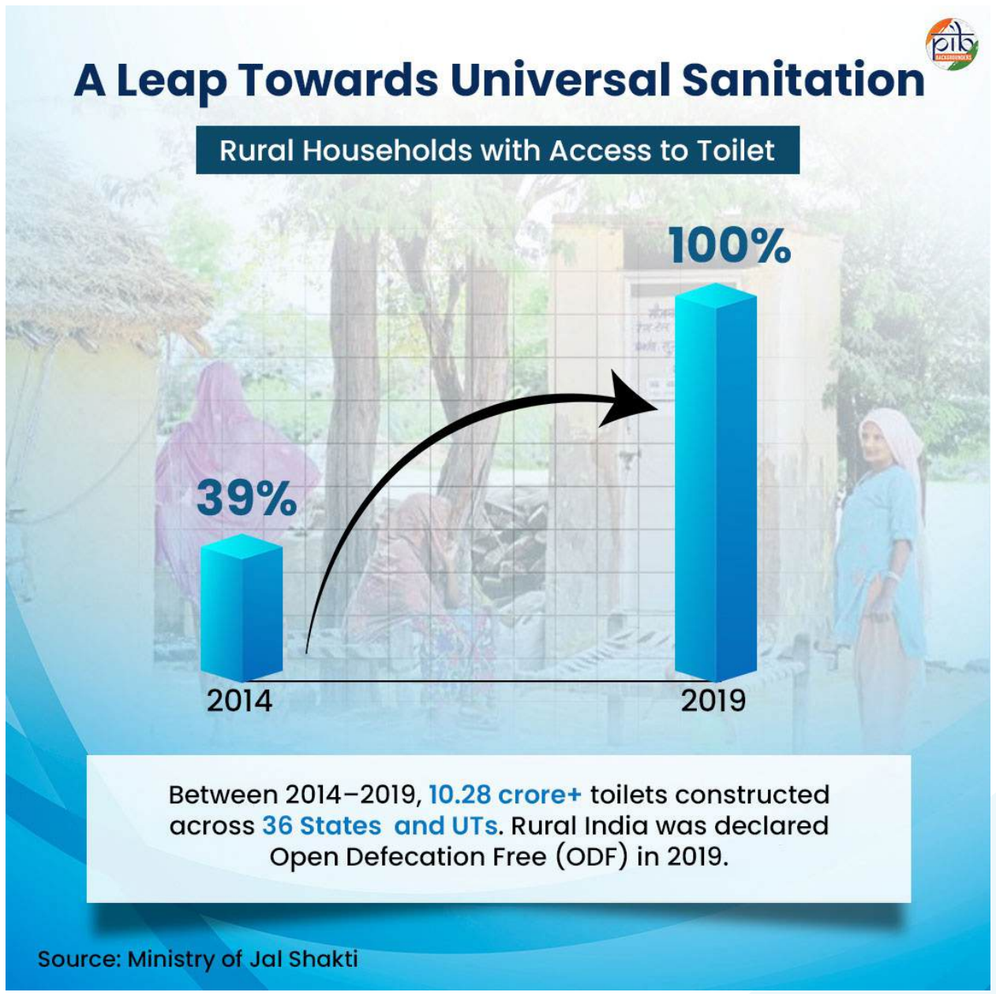
When Swachhata Became a People's Movement

Collective Action and Behaviour Change Transforming Rural Sanitation

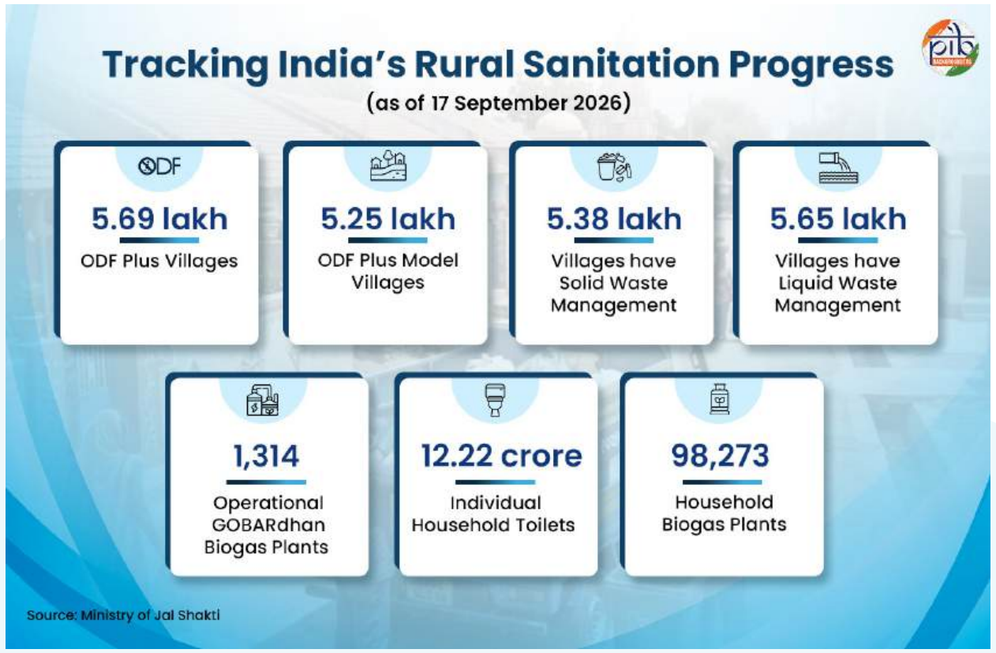
Published on: September 20, 2026

For decades, rural sanitation remained a persistent development concern nationwide. Sanitation coverage stood at 39 percent when the **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)** began in **2014**. By 2019, rural India had achieved **100 percent** sanitation coverage. More than **10.28 crore toilets** were constructed across 36 states and union territories between 2014 and 2019. Rural India was subsequently declared **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** in **2019**. This achievement transformed the nature of India's sanitation landscape. The focus shifted from an emphasis on household toilet access to a broader concern with the sustainability of sanitation practices and the management of waste at the village level. This became the focus of Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin Phase II. It focuses on **sustaining ODF status** and **strengthening Solid and Liquid Waste Management systems**.



The impact of this focus is now visible in India's villages. An **ODF Plus village** not only sustains ODF status but also effectively manages solid and liquid waste, while maintaining visual cleanliness. Along with sustaining ODF Plus village status, these villages are classified into three progressive stages: **Aspiring, Rising, and Model**. Aspiring villages manage either solid or liquid waste. Rising villages manage both solid and liquid waste. Model villages, in addition to managing both waste streams, also demonstrate visual cleanliness and display ODF Plus messaging.

As of 17 September 2026, India has attained **5.69 lakh ODF Plus villages**, of which **5.25 lakh** have achieved ODF Plus Model status. Furthermore, **5.38 lakh villages** have established **solid waste management** arrangements, and **5.65 lakh villages** have established **liquid waste management systems**. **1,314 GOBARdhan biogas** plants are currently operational in 582 districts. At the household level, **12.22 crore individual toilets** and 98,273 biogas plants have been constructed.



GOBARdhan (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan)

A flagship umbrella initiative under SBM-G Phase II that converts cattle dung, agricultural crop residue, and organic waste into biogas, compressed bio-gas (CBG), and organic manure/bio-slurry.

From Building Toilets to Building Habits

These national-level numbers reflect bigger changes at the individual and community levels, because lasting transformation begins with everyday behaviour. **A toilet becomes meaningful when households choose to use, maintain and sustain it**. Similarly, effective waste management begins with decisions and practices within individual households. Recognising this, SBM-G places **Behaviour Change Communication (BCC)** at the centre of sustaining ODF outcomes. Households are encouraged to adopt safe toilet use and disposal practices, understand appropriate sanitation technologies, and manage wet waste through compost pits or biogas plants. The focus also extends to everyday hygiene practices, including handwashing, safe water storage, maintaining sanitation facilities, and avoiding littering and spitting in public spaces. Thus, sanitation extends beyond the provision of infrastructure. It becomes a set of everyday practices adopted within households, reinforced through communities, and sustained through collective behaviour.

When Women Became Agents of Change

Women have been central to this transformation. Sanitation directly affects women's privacy, safety, dignity, and health. They are not merely beneficiaries of interventions but active participants in development and agents of social change. The SBM-G guidelines give special preference to women as **Swachhagrahis**. They also recognize DAY-NRLM Self-Help Groups (SHGs) as important platforms for Behaviour Change Communication. Working closely with households and communities, Swachhagrahis support families in adopting and sustaining toilet use, while undertaking door-to-door outreach, awareness activities, and cleanliness verification. Through this community-based engagement, they help translate sanitation interventions into sustained everyday practices.

Image 1: Swachhagrahis promoting public hygiene

Image 2: SHG Women collecting plastic waste

Women's collectives have helped translate sanitation awareness into sustained community action. In **Howrah, West Bengal**, SHGs supported a **plastic removal programme** across 18 Ganga-adjacent gram panchayats, collecting **9.32 tonnes of plastic waste within 18 days**. The initiative further established a **regular plastic collection network through the SHG federation**. It brought together elected representatives, panchayat functionaries, community members, and market vendors to strengthen collective action on waste management.

Women have also emerged as **sanitation workers, entrepreneurs, and local service providers**. In **Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh**, around a dozen SHG women manage a **Resource Recovery Centre**, collecting household waste and segregating it into wet and dry waste. Wet waste is converted into vermicompost, while dry waste is channeled for sale, generating wages and additional income for the women. In **Bhopal**, **Madhya Pradesh**, a **Cluster Level Federation** operates a Material Recovery Facility, supported by an MoU with the Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin for the sale and purchase of plastic waste collected at the facility. Women's participation in sanitation has expanded **from awareness and mobilisation to implementation, waste management, livelihood generation, and local decision-making**.

The Change Comes Home from School

Beyond women's collectives, **schools serve as another important institution for translating sanitation awareness into everyday practices**. They provide a structured environment where children can develop habits related to hygiene,

sanitation, and waste management, while also influencing practices within their families and communities. SBM-G Phase II explicitly recognises schools as important institutions for sustaining sanitation outcomes. It has provisions for functional sanitation facilities and arrangements for managing biodegradable and liquid waste. In **Chandil**, **Jharkhand**, a school banned single-use plastic and constructed a soak pit for greywater (domestic wastewater from kitchens and baths) management. Teachers also regularly engage students on personal hygiene and puberty-related concerns. Such efforts create a **two-way flow of behavioural change**. Children learn and practice sanitation at school and carry these behaviours into their homes, while families, in turn, become part of a broader culture of cleanliness and responsible waste management.

The role of children is also expanding into a wider youth-led movement for cleanliness.

Swachhata Hi Seva 2026 places students and youth at the centre of sustainable behavioural change. Schools and educational institutions are being positioned as spaces for building cleanliness as a sanskaar. Activities include **Swachhata Gyan Yatras**, school **Samvads**, and **demonstrations** on source segregation. Students will also engage with the **Swachhata Evam Jal Samvads** and learn about the **Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026.** This approach extends the school-to-home cycle into a broader school-to-community movement.

Going Beyond the Realm of Traditional Swachhata

Interestingly, children are taking SBM-G beyond conventional sanitation. In **Jharkhand**, members of child cabinets have taken responsibility for **menstrual hygiene management (MHM)** activities. In one school, girls maintain the stock register for sanitary pads, while child cabinet members help ensure regular availability. **At Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya**, **Jhikpani**, child cabinet ministers proposed the establishment of an **MHM laboratory** to the school authorities. The laboratory was subsequently established with support from school funds and external resources.

When a Village Takes Ownership

As sanitation practices take root within households and schools, they increasingly require **collective systems and institutions to sustain them at the community level**. Household waste needs to be collected, segregated, and treated; greywater requires appropriate drainage and disposal; and public spaces require regular upkeep. This is where the **Gram Panchayat** assumes a central role. Under SBM-G, Gram Panchayats are responsible for planning and implementing village-level sanitation activities. Their role extends beyond infrastructure to **community mobilisation, demand generation, hygiene promotion, Information, Education and Communication (IEC), and capacity building**. In this way, the Gram Panchayat provides the institutional framework that connects individual practices with collective sanitation outcomes.

Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) further strengthen this community-level institutional structure by supporting village planning, mobilisation, implementation, supervision, and behaviour change. The impact of such collective ownership is evident in **Gadli Gram Panchayat, Haryana**, which achieved ODF Plus Model status through a process-driven community approach. The Sarpanch, Kanta Kanwar, worked with the cleanliness committee to establish community and separate toilets, a village-wide drainage system, and greywater treatment through five ponds. The village also adopted **GOBARdhan biogas plants**, converting cow dung into manure and biogas, with the resulting slurry used in agriculture. Public rallies, meetings, and announcements reinforced these practices. Gadli illustrates how individual sanitation practices, when supported by **local institutions and collective action**, can evolve into a **village-wide sanitation system**.

People Lead. Institutions Make It Last.

The **people-led sanitation movement is supported by government institutions through financing, convergence, and capacity building**. SBM-G draws resources from government allocations, Finance Commission grants, Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar & Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) funds, and other revenue-generation mechanisms. Convergence with **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** engages SHGs and CLFs, while skill development initiatives strengthen field capacities and the **Jal Jeevan Mission** supports greywater management. This multi-level institutional structure links community action with government support: Gram Panchayats lead implementation, blocks provide handholding, districts offer technical support, and States and the Centre enable financing, convergence, and scale.

Cleanliness Becomes a Collective Ritual

Jan Bhagidari further strengthens sanitation as a shared community responsibility. Cleanliness drives bring together panchayat representatives, SHGs, youth, schools and local communities to translate collective ownership into regular action. **Karnataka's Swachh Sanivara** offers one such example. Before each drive, panchayat representatives engage with village communities, youth groups, cooperatives and SHGs. On the first Saturday of every month, communities undertake cleanliness activities across schools, Anganwadis, hospitals, offices, water sources, temples and other public spaces. The activities include shramdaan, waste segregation, drain cleaning, identification of sites for compost pits, and reinforcing sanitation messages through wall writings.

Swachhata Hi Seva: Turning Participation into a People's Movement

Launched in 2017, **Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS)** is an annual campaign promoting citizen participation in cleanliness. It brings together government institutions, local bodies, organisations, and citizens around shared responsibility for cleanliness. The campaign strengthens the **Jan Bhagidari** approach by encouraging cleanliness as an everyday practice. **Swachhata Hi Seva 2025** witnessed participation from more than **18.06 crore citizens**. **Swachhata Hi Seva 2026** will begin on **17 September**. Its theme is **"Swachhata Mein Sahbhag; Swachh Bharat, Viksit Bharat."** On **1 October**, citizens will undertake collective shramdaan under **"Ek Din, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath."** On **2 October**, special Gram Sabhas and cleanliness awareness programmes will be organised in villages. The campaign will also promote community action for cleaner public spaces and sustained cleanliness.

A New Economy Around Sanitation

As collective sanitation systems take shape, they can also generate **new livelihood opportunities**. In **Betul, Madhya Pradesh**, Babita Dhurve found a livelihood opportunity through household waste collection. After losing both parents in 2021, she approached her Gram Panchayat to operate an e-rickshaw for waste collection. Despite initial community resistance, she learned to operate the vehicle and became the **district's first woman e-rickshaw waste collector**, enabling her to earn a livelihood while remaining in her village. With around **100 Gram Panchayats in Betul** now using waste-collection vehicles, the initiative demonstrates how sanitation systems can simultaneously strengthen village cleanliness and create local employment.

The livelihood potential of sanitation extends beyond waste management to the **skills and services required to sustain sanitation infrastructure**. In **Nadia, West Bengal**, the expansion of toilet construction created demand for trained masons, leading to the establishment of **two masonry training institutes**. Around **2,400 men and women were trained** in toilet construction. This reflects that sanitation can generate a wider local ecosystem of livelihoods spanning **construction, collection, transportation, processing, and maintenance**.

SBM-G Transforming Waste into a Resource

As sanitation systems expand, community-led efforts increasingly require appropriate infrastructure and technical support. **Vedancha, Gujarat**, demonstrates how community demand can evolve into a locally designed wastewater management system. Its greywater treatment system was planned around local land and water-flow patterns, with local contractors supporting its operation and maintenance. Panchayat members, operators, and participating citizens were also trained to manage the system. The system treats **200 kilo-litres of greywater daily**, with treated water used for **irrigation and groundwater recharge**. The panchayat earns around **₹2.5 lakh annually** through compost and treated-water reuse. At the same time, the initiative

Image 3: Greywater Treatment Plant in Vedancha

has also contributed to improved public health, including reductions in reported waterborne diseases and mosquito-borne outbreaks. This model shows how sanitation can evolve from waste disposal and resource recovery to **environmental sustainability and local value creation**.

Therefore, the ultimate objective of rural sanitation is **sustained behaviour and collective ownership**. An ODF Plus village must not only sustain ODF status but also manage solid and liquid waste and maintain a clean environment. India's sanitation journey has therefore moved from access to usage, and **from usage to sustainability**.

The enduring measure of Swachh Bharat lies not only in the infrastructure created, but in whether cleanliness becomes an **everyday practice sustained by people and communities**. *"Clean villages are not built for communities; they are built by communities."*

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Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: From Local Action to Water Security

Published on: September 03, 2026

For centuries, communities across India developed ways to capture, store and share water according to local needs. Stepwells, tanks, ponds, johads and traditional irrigation systems reflected a simple understanding: water security was a shared responsibility.

Growing populations, expanding agriculture and rapid urbanisation have made water management increasingly complex. New technologies, infrastructure and institutional mechanisms have become necessary. Yet, community participation remains central to sustainable water management.

This tradition of collective actions found a new expression in **Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB)**. Launched on 6 September 2024, the initiative has placed community partnership and ownership at the heart of water conservation. The initiative focuses on constructing low-cost groundwater recharge and water storage structures and reviving defunct borewells. It also promotes scientifically designed, locally appropriate solutions through a Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society approach. **JSJB** is guided by the **3Cs — Community, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Cost.**

Building on this approach, more than **27 lakh** structures were constructed across the country under **JSJB 1.0** by May 2025 to **capture rainwater and replenish groundwater.** Further, under **JSJB 2.0,** launched in **June 2025,** more than **1.5 crore groundwater recharge structures** were constructed by **May 2026.** In June 2026, the scope of the Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB) initiative was expanded. JSJB was integrated with the Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain (JSA: CTR) campaign as **Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Catch the Rain (JSJB: CTR).** As of 3 September 2026, more than **1.58 crore** artificial groundwater recharge structures have been constructed.

A National Focus on Water Conservation and Collaboration

The Ministry of Jal Shakti's Departmental Summit was held in New Delhi on 1–2 September 2026. It was the first in a series of Departmental Summits aimed at strengthening cooperative federalism and closer Centre–State collaboration. **Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Catch the Rain** was among the Summit's four key thematic pillars, alongside water infrastructure projects, source sustainability of drinking water systems, and rural water supply under Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0.

Emphasising Jan Bhagidari (Public Participation), Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggested promoting "Jal Utsav" to create greater public awareness. The Prime Minister further called for strengthening knowledge and capacity on water management and governance in universities and higher educational institutions. He suggested structured inter-State study visits involving public representatives, officials and farmers to facilitate practical learning and replication of successful interventions. He also called for robust water data governance, with water-sector data brought together, systematically managed, analysed and effectively utilised.

The Summit brought together discussions on key aspects of water governance, marking a step towards realising the vision of a Water Secure India and Viksit Bharat 2047.

Across the country, these principles are being translated into local action, with communities and institutions adapting water conservation measures to native conditions.

Chhattisgarh: When Farmers Made Space for Water

In Chhattisgarh's Korea district, farmers have set aside part of their own agricultural land for water conservation. Under the **Aawa Paani Jhoki movement**, farmers voluntarily dedicated **5 percent of their agricultural land** for recharge ponds and terraced pits. The model shows that sustainable water management does not require large-scale displacement or heavy capital investment. It requires collective will.

More than **1,260 farmers** adopted the model, while more than **2,000 soak pits** were created across the district. In many villages, groundwater levels rose by **3 to 4 metres,** while springs were revived in 17 remote tribal hamlets. The government supported the effort through micro-watershed mapping, hydrogeological assessments and technical guidance. Farmer ownership remained central to the initiative.

Korea district, Chhattisgarh

Andhra Pradesh: Villages Take Charge of Their Water

In Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh, villages such as once faced erratic rainfall, declining groundwater levels and borewell failures. These challenges affected agriculture and livelihoods.

Under the JSJB initiative, the response began at the local level. Gram Sabhas, door-to-door campaigns, Kalajathas (traditional folk-theatre performances), and workshops were organised to

Prakasam District, Andhra Pradesh

raise awareness. These efforts brought **farmers, women, youth and local institutions together** to plan measures such as water budgeting, crop planning and groundwater sharing.

Adopting a **ridge-to-valley approach,** the villages implemented measures to capture, store, and recharge rainwater. The ridge-to-valley approach involves managing rainwater as it flows from higher ridge areas towards the valley, strengthening soil and water conservation downstream.

In Murugummi, 71 water conservation structures provided about **8.11 lakh cubic metres** of cumulative storage capacity. They support protective irrigation across 264.5 hectares of agricultural land.

Marella had 53 structures with about **10.04 lakh cubic metres** of cumulative storage capacity. Additionally, the renovation of community ponds and tanks contributed nearly 5.95 lakh cubic metres of additional storage capacity.

Thangella had 71 structures with around **5.89 lakh cubic metres** of cumulative storage capacity. The revival of traditional water bodies further enhanced the storage capacity by approximately 3.98 lakh cubic metres.

Together, these efforts improved groundwater availability for about **5,900 people,** strengthening agricultural and dairy livelihoods, restoring soil moisture and helping reduce distress migration.

Prakasam District, Andhra Pradesh

Odisha: From Rooftops and Ponds to Aquifers

In Odisha, the JSJB initiative brings together s**chools, colleges, government offices and other institutions.** They are capturing rainwater where it falls, facilitating its recharge into underground aquifers. Through the **CHHATA Scheme,** rainwater is captured from rooftops, while the **ARUA Scheme** facilitates recharge from water bodies into underground aquifers. Together, these interventions connect **public infrastructure, local water bodies and community participation** to strengthen groundwater conservation and water security.

In **Jajpur district, 117 recharge shafts** were constructed under the ARUA Scheme and **114 rooftop rainwater harvesting systems** were installed under the CHHATA Scheme between 2022–23 and 2025–26. These developments across government institutions and educational campuses cover high-priority blocks including Korei, Binjharpur, Bari, Rasulpur, Dasarathpur and Jajpur. The effort has contributed to steadier water supplies, greater agricultural resilience and less time spent by households, particularly women, fetching water.

The approach extends beyond Jajpur.

In **Cuttack district, 57 rooftop rainwater harvesting systems** were established under the CHHATA Scheme across government offices, educational institutions and public facilities. **35 recharge shafts** were constructed under ARUA in ponds and water bodies to facilitate deep aquifer recharge. These efforts were supported by street plays, seminars and workshops involving **self-help groups, students and Panchayati Raj Institutions.**

Similarly, in **Digapahandi, Ganjam** district, groundwater levels fell **by 1–3 metres between 2020 and 2022.** Rooftop harvesting systems in government offices and schools channel rainwater into recharge borewells. Assessments show better post-monsoon recovery around intervention sites.

Digapahandi, Ganjam District, Odisha

A Growing Movement for Water Security

The government's approach is not merely about creating structures for water conservation. It is also about fostering a culture of responsibility around water. JSJB places Jan Bhagidari—people's participation—at the centre of water management. It brings together communities, Panchayats, institutions and other stakeholders on locally appropriate solutions. Its larger significance lies in connecting **traditional knowledge with scientific planning, local ownership with institutional support, and individual action with collective outcomes.** Every conserved drop becomes part of a larger effort to build resilient communities and strengthen India's long-term water security.

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Waves OTT and MyWAVES

From Public Broadcasting to Public Participation

Published on : September 23, 2026

WAVES reflects Prasar Bharati's shift from conventional broadcasting to an integrated digital public-service ecosystem. **WAVES OTT** brings live television, radio, on-demand programmes, archives, education, devotional content and publications onto one digital platform. With **1.4 crore registered users**, **over 1.7 crore downloads and 20,000-plus titles**, it is widening access across devices and languages. **MyWAVES** gives creators an institutional platform for submission, discovery and showcasing, while **Gems of India** promotes district-level stories and talent. New content-sourcing and distribution mechanisms further expand participation. Together with the **WAVES Summit** ecosystem, these initiatives connect India's broadcasting heritage and emerging creators with wider audiences and global markets.

Public Broadcasting for a Digital Generation

For decades, **Doordarshan and Akashvani** connected millions through stories, news, culture and music. Today, audiences increasingly access content through smartphones, smart televisions and digital platforms. Public broadcasting has therefore evolved across changing formats, languages and viewing habits, to adopt the digital, over-the-top or OTT platform mode. Under this model, video, audio, and messaging content is directly streamed to viewers over the internet without the need for cables, satellites, and service providers. **WAVES OTT**, launched by **Prasar Bharati on 20th November 2024,** is a response to this transformation. It brings archival treasures from TV and radio, contemporary programmes and live broadcasting onto one multilingual digital platform. **MyWAVES** takes this transition further by enabling citizens to create and share their original content.

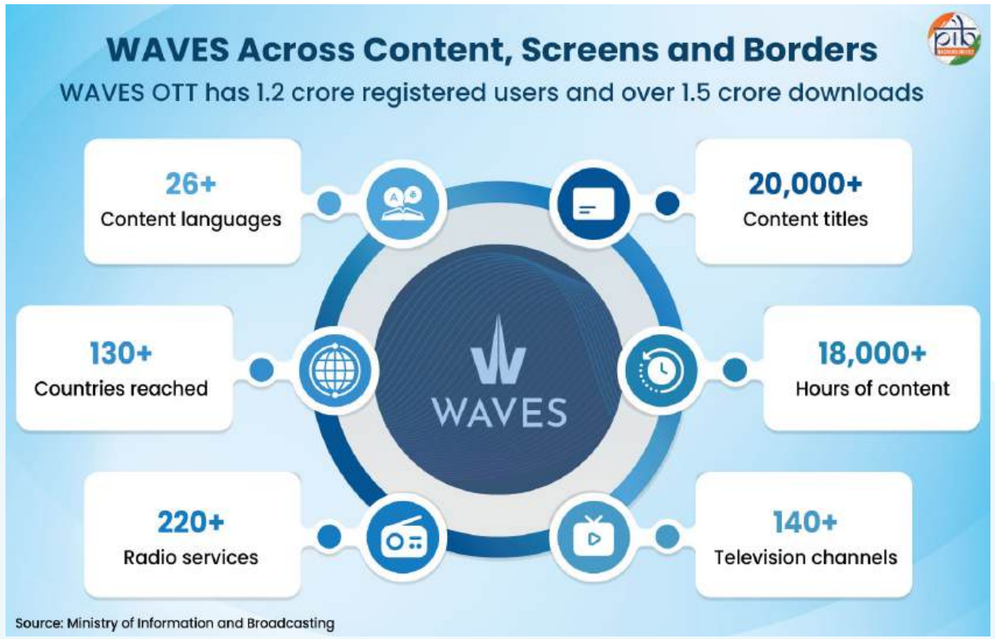
This transformation is part of a broader national effort to strengthen India's **creative economy** and expand opportunities across the media and entertainment sector. The push and visibility for this comes from the **WAVES Summit, envisaged as a platform** to bring together creators, industry leaders, policymakers and investors from across the world, fostering partnerships, business opportunities and international dialogue. The first edition of WAVES Summit was held in 2025. The summit has contributed to supporting creators and start-ups, facilitating investment, and strengthening global collaboration across the media and entertainment ecosystem through its various platforms.

WAVES OTT: Making Public Broadcasting Digital

From Broadcast Archives to Digital Access

WAVES OTT was launched at the **55th International Film Festival of India** on 20th November 2024 in Goa. It was unveiled as Prasar Bharati's public-service OTT platform. The launch brought India's broadcasting legacy into the modern digital space. Unlike commercial OTT platforms, WAVES OTT goes beyond entertainment. It brings together reliable information, education, culture, news, and selected entertainment. It takes public broadcasting beyond fixed schedules and traditional television sets. Audiences can access national and regional content according to their convenience.

It also brings Prasar Bharati's extensive archives to younger and wider audiences. Its easy access helps reach people beyond major cities and paid streaming services. Partnerships, subtitles and improved search information make regional content easier to discover. Its launch supports three larger goals: **wider digital access, cultural preservation and linguistic diversity**. It shows how a national institution can modernise while



retaining its public-service purpose.

WAVES OTT is therefore more than another streaming platform. It represents a wider reform in how Prasar Bharati distributes content, reaches audiences and works with creators, producers and content partners.

One Platform, Multiple Experiences

WAVES OTT brings television, radio, streaming, learning and digital publications onto one platform. Its growing library now includes over 20,000 titles and 18,000 hours of content. The content is sourced from more than 480 content partners, making the platform different from traditional broadcasting ecosystem.

- **Watch on demand**: Films, television shows, web series, documentaries and archival programmes.
- **Tune in live:** Over 140 television channels and 220 radio services.
- **Follow major events:** National occasions, sports, cultural programmes and devotional streams.
- **Learn and prepare:** PM eVidya channels and educational programmes support students and learners.
- **Read and explore:** Over 9,300 e-books, publications and magazines such as Yojana and Kurukshetra along with archival audio-visual content.
- **Play and shop:** Games and ONDC-integrated shopping extend WAVES beyond conventional streaming.

The platform combines entertainment with education, culture, heritage and useful public information. Thousands of hours from Prasar Bharati's archives further connect new audiences with India's broadcasting history.

Reach Across Languages and Screens

WAVES OTT currently has **1.4 crore registered users and over 1.7 crore downloads,** reflecting the growing adoption of Prasar Bharati's digital services. It now reaches audiences across **more than 130 countries.**

- Its interface supports **over 10 languages.** Its content is available in **more than 26 languages.**
- It is accessible through mobile applications, websites, and connected televisions.
- It carries all **35 Doordarshan satellite channels** alongside other broadcasters.
- Its radio services draw upon Akashvani's national and regional networks.
- Regional content and subtitles help reach audiences across languages and locations.

WAVES OTT caters to audiences across India, particularly youth and digital-first users, regional and linguistic communities, and those seeking cultural, spiritual, and archival content. It also extends access to Indian content, culture, and public broadcasting services to the Indian diaspora and audiences worldwide. This expanding digital reach strengthens WAVES OTT as an important component of India's evolving public broadcasting ecosystem while providing a platform that showcases the country's cultural heritage, knowledge traditions, regional diversity, and creative expression.

Opening the Platform to More Content

WAVES OTT is also changing how content enters public broadcasting. The **Pay-Per-View Content Sourcing Policy** provides a transparent and scalable mechanism for producers and rights holders to offer quality content for the platform.

WAVES has also introduced **ONDC integration and railway-related digital distribution initiatives.** These measures broaden distribution, encourage content partnerships, and create additional routes for Indian and regional content to reach audiences.

MyWAVES: Turning Viewers into Creators

MyWAVES was launched on **23rd March 2026** within WAVES OTT. It expands the platform from content viewing to active public participation. Citizens can create, upload, and share original content through a structured national platform. MyWAVES supports **short videos, vertical videos, and episodic content.** Its multilingual interface can help creators tell stories in Indian languages. It also supports participation in national programmes, including the **Create in India Challenge.**

The platform is especially relevant for emerging creators outside established media networks. It can bring regional stories, local talent and community experiences to wider audiences. In doing so, MyWAVES strengthens both citizen participation and India's growing creator economy.

MyWAVES turns citizens from audiences into participants in India's digital storytelling journey.

Gems of India: MyWAVES in Action

The **Gems of India Challenge** demonstrates how MyWAVES can support creators nationwide. Its pilot phase was launched on 21st July 2026 across six pilot States and Union Territories. Creators could submit original videos of **one to three minutes** through the MyWAVES section of WAVES OTT. Submissions for the pilot phase were accepted from **1st-31st August 2026.**

The challenge invites citizens to tell stories about their districts. Subjects

include:

- Culture, heritage and historical places.
- Tourism, nature and lesser-known destinations.
- Folk traditions, festivals and performing arts.
- Handicrafts, handlooms and regional cuisine.
- Local personalities, innovations and achievements.

The initiative involves Prasar Bharati, My Bharat and State and district administrations. Cultural and educational institutions support creator participation and content development. Furthermore, **YouTube and Meta** are also supporting outreach through their creator communities.

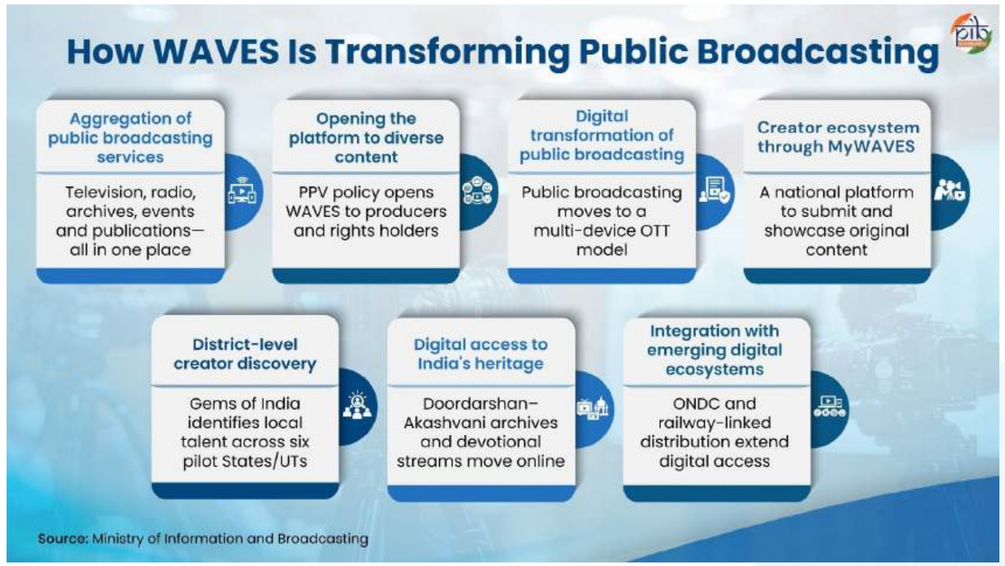
The programme is expected to expand across all States and Union Territories. Its larger goal is to build a nationwide network of grassroots digital creators. It can also create a digital collection of India's diverse local identities.

Connecting Content, Creators and the Creative Economy

iIndia's digital media transition is not only about moving content online. It is also about widening access, encouraging participation, and creating opportunities for talent.

Each initiative addresses a different part of India's creative journey. **WAVES OTT** preserves broadcasting archives and opens them to new audiences. Its multilingual content makes information, education, and entertainment available across regions and devices.

MyWAVES builds upon this access by giving citizens a voice. It allows regional



The Wider WAVES Ecosystem

The World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) is India's global platform for media and entertainment. Its inaugural edition, held in Mumbai from 1–4 May 2025, brought together creators, businesses, investors, policymakers and technology leaders. It covered **broadcasting and infotainment, AVGC-XR, digital media and films.**

WAVES 2025 at a Glance

100+ countries | 10,000+ delegates | 1,000 creators | 300+ companies | 350+ start-ups | Over one lakh participants

Key Platforms

The Global Media Dialogue advanced international cooperation, while CreatoSphere and the Create in India Challenges identified and showcased creative talent. WAVES Bazaar connected projects with buyers and investors, and WaveX supported media-tech start-ups through mentorship, incubation and investment opportunities. The Bharat Pavilion and knowledge sessions presented India's storytelling traditions and emerging capabilities.

Key Outcomes

- The **WAVES Declaration** was adopted by **77 countries**.
- Create in India Challenges attracted nearly **one lakh registrations from over 60 countries**, with **750+ finalists** and **150+ awardees**.
- WAVES Bazaar generated **₹1,328 crore in business transactions** through **3,000+ meetings**.
- The Viewing Room featured **100 films from eight countries, while 30+ start-ups pitched** through WaveX.

WAVES continues beyond the Summit through its creator, business and start-up platforms. These initiatives connect talent with markets, investment and global opportunities throughout the year.

creators to document local cultures, traditions, places and achievements. Stories once limited to local communities can now receive national visibility.

The **WAVES Summit** brought these efforts into a global creative-industry ecosystem, connecting creators with businesses, investors, policymakers, and technology leaders. Through its marketplaces, creator challenges, and start-up platforms, it provides avenues for talent to access professional networks, audiences, and global opportunities. The strength of these initiatives lies in their interconnectedness. **Archives preserve India's cultural memory, regional platforms amplify diverse stories, and new talent is provided opportunities to create and innovate.** Together, they connect India's rich cultural inheritance with its evolving creative future, making public broadcasting more accessible and content creation more inclusive.

By preserving existing narratives while enabling new voices, these initiatives are contributing to India's expanding presence in the global media and entertainment landscape. They are helping shape **a creative economy rooted in local cultural identities, connected through national platforms, and increasingly visible on the global stage.**

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7th Global Fintech Fest 2026

Potential to Impact

Published on: September 08, 2026

Powering the FinTech Revolution

India is reshaping the global fintech landscape through scale, innovation and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). The introduction of Aadhaar, expansion of internet connectivity and development of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transformed financial services. These innovations enabled digital identity, instant payments and consent-based data sharing at population scale. India's experience demonstrates how technology can make financial services more accessible, efficient and inclusive.

This transformation has positioned India as a global centre for fintech innovation and digital finance. The **Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2026** reflects India's growing global influence in this sector. **The 7th edition of GFF is being held in Mumbai from 8 to 11 September 2026.** It provides a platform for global dialogue, collaboration and innovation in financial technology.

Since its inception in 2020, GFF has grown into one of the world's leading fintech gatherings. Its growth reflects increasing global interest in India's digital financial architecture and fintech capabilities. The Fest provides an avenue to showcase India's experience and exchange ideas with global innovators. It also strengthens engagement with developed economies, emerging markets and the Global South.

Institutions Driving the Success of GFF 2026

Payments Council of India (PCI), National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) **and** Fintech Convergence Council (FCC) are the principal organizers of GFF. Additionally, GFF 2026 is supported by:

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
- Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance
- New, Emerging and Strategic Technology (NEST) Division, Ministry of External Affairs
- NITI Aayog
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
- International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)
- Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)

GFF 2026 - Powering the Next Wave of Financial Innovation

The 7th Global Fintech Fest 2026 is far more than a conference. It is the world's largest fintech festival, uniting the brightest minds to shape an AI-powered future. Every edition of the GFF journey has been driven by innovation and a shared vision of inclusive growth and prosperity.

Global Fintech Fest - Theme & Agenda

The theme of GFF 2026 is **"Potential to Impact: Agentic AI | Tokenisation | Quantum: Trusted, Connected, Global Systems for Inclusive Finance."** It is built upon three foundational technologies that are shifting the landscape of global finance toward autonomous, programmable, and secure ecosystems.

- **Agentic AI:** It enables financial systems to sense, decide, and act in real time within strong governance frameworks. It orchestrates end-to-end workflows, strengthens regulatory oversight, enhances fraud prevention, and responsibly personalizes financial services at scale while empowering human decision-making through explainable intelligence.
- **Tokenisation:** It transforms assets into programmable digital units, enabling fractional ownership, instant settlement, and interoperable money. By unlocking liquidity and democratising access, it reshapes capital markets, payments, and participation across global financial systems.
- **Quantum:** Quantum technologies introduce a foundational shift in computation and security. From quantum-safe cryptography to advanced risk optimization, they strengthen systemic resilience and ensure long-term trust in the financial infrastructure of tomorrow.

Click Here to Access the Agenda GFF 2026

Understanding Fintech

FinTech is generally described as an industry that leverages technology to make financial systems and the delivery of financial services more efficient. It refers to "technologically enabled financial innovation" that can lead to new business models, applications, processes or products, with a significant impact on financial markets, institutions and the provision of financial services.

Key Enabling Technologies used by FinTech

API (Application Programming Interface): APIs comprise a set of rules and specifications that software programmes use to communicate with each other. They allow new applications to be built on top of others.

Cloud Computing: The use of an online network ('cloud') of hosting processors to increase the scale and flexibility of computing capacity, generating cost savings.

Biometrics: The study of distinctive and measurable human characteristics that can be used to categorize and identify individuals.

DLT (Distributed Ledger Technology): A digital system for recording the transaction of assets in which details are recorded in multiple places at the same time.

Big Data: Voluminous amounts of structured or unstructured data that can be generated, analyzed and utilized by digital tools and information systems.

AI (Artificial Intelligence) & ML (Machine Learning): IT systems that can perform functions that would otherwise require human capabilities. ML entails computers learning from data without human intervention.

Importance & Benefits of Fintech

FinTech has the ability to reshape the financial landscape in a fundamental way - offering consumers a wider choice of financial products at more competitive prices, while helping financial institutions operate more efficiently. FinTech is delivering measurable gains in efficiency, inclusion and financial stability across economies.

- FinTech has played a key role in making the financial sector more efficient. For example, UPI, recognised by the IMF as the world's largest real-time payment system, processed 2,365.8 crore transactions worth ₹29.88 lakh crore in July 2026 alone, with 741 banks live on the platform - transaction volumes have grown nearly 12,000-fold since FY 2016–17.
- By overcoming market failures such as information asymmetry or high transaction costs, FinTech helps enhance financial inclusion. India's Financial Inclusion Index increased from 43.4 in March 2017 to 70.0 in March 2026.
- The growth of FinTech is diversifying credit sources beyond traditional banking channels. Greater diversity in credit provision can reduce systemic risks arising from dependence on a limited number of banks. This can strengthen the resilience, competition and stability of the financial ecosystem.

The Foundation of India's FinTech Success

India's FinTech success is built on a decade of investment in **Digital India and DPI**. This foundation combines **universal access, digital identity, interoperable payments and open digital networks.** These capabilities have created an ecosystem where financial innovation can scale rapidly and inclusively. Click To read More: India's Digital Public Infrastructure.

- **JAM Trinity:** The Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile (JAM) Trinity provides the foundation for digital financial inclusion. Jan Dhan accounts provide access to formal banking, while Aadhaar enables secure digital identity. Expanding internet access connects citizens to digital financial services. As of 26th August 2026, **59.15 crore Jan Dhan accounts** had been opened and Aadhaar enrolments crossed **144 crore by March 2026**. It has created a large, accessible base for fintech services across the country.
- **UPI:** Unified Payments Interface (UPI) provides the interoperable payment infrastructure powering India's digital transactions. UPI transactions reached **24,509 million in August 2026.** The platform handles nearly **50% of global real-time digital transaction volume** and operates in **11 countries.** This open infrastructure allows fintech firms to build innovative payment solutions at population scale.
- **Digital Identity and Documents:** Trusted digital identity is essential for secure and efficient financial services. **Aadhaar e-KYC** enables digital customer verification while reducing paperwork and onboarding time. It has processed more than **2,458 crore transactions** as of 29 June 2026. **DigiLocker** has over **73.53 crore registered users** and has issued **936.03 crore documents.** These digital systems strengthen trust while simplifying customer onboarding and verification across financial services.
- **Digital Welfare Delivery: Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** uses digital financial infrastructure to transfer benefits directly into beneficiaries' bank accounts. This reduces intermediaries, improves

transparency and supports faster delivery of government benefits. Cumulative DBT transfers reached **₹53.26 lakh crore as of September 2026**. Such large-scale digital transfers demonstrate the capacity of India's financial infrastructure to deliver services efficiently.

- **Open Digital Commerce: Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)** extends India's interoperable digital approach beyond payments. By June 2026, ONDC had reached over **20 crore buyers and 5 lakh sellers across 1,000+ cities.** Its **Financial Services category** is creating additional opportunities for digital financial products. This open architecture can help fintech firms reach new users and markets more efficiently.

A Robust, Trusted Regulatory Ecosystem

As India's FinTech sector has scaled, the Government and the Reserve Bank of India have continuously strengthened the regulatory and consumer-protection architecture that underpins public trust in digital finance.

- **Self-regulation and standards:** RBI's Framework for Self-Regulatory Organisation(s) in the FinTech Sector **(SRO-FT, May 2024)** promotes ethical conduct, market integrity and dispute resolution within the industry.

- **Payment security:** RBI's Master **Directions on Digital Payment Security Controls (2021)** mandate common minimum-security standards across various payment channels (including internet and mobile banking) to combat web and mobile app threats, while NPCI has deployed Artificial Intelligence (AI)/ Machine Learning (ML) based fraud monitoring for UPI transactions.

- **Data protection:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology notified the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act in 2023** and the **Digital Personal Data Protection Rules in 2025** to safeguard the personal data of individuals.

- **Safe innovation testing:** The Reserve Bank of India introduced the **Regulatory Sandbox framework** in August 2019, allowing innovative financial products and services to be tested in a controlled regulatory environment, with or without regulatory relaxations.

- **Consumer protection in digital lending:** A strengthened regulatory framework, a Digital Lending Apps (DLA) directory and cybercrime-reporting mechanisms (the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal at **cybercrime.gov.in** and Helpline **1930**) safeguard citizens against fraudulent lending apps, while the public-facing **SACHET portal** facilitates complaints specifically regarding the illegal collection of deposits.

- The regulatory approach is therefore not limited to responding to innovation after it reaches the market. It creates institutional mechanisms through which responsible innovation can be tested, assessed and supported.

Way Forward

India's FinTech ecosystem is built on **scale, interoperability, innovation and institutional trust.** Its Digital Public Infrastructure provides a strong foundation for accessible, affordable and inclusive financial services. The next phase should deepen **digital sovereignty, technological self-reliance and responsible innovation.** Open digital platforms can further democratise technology for citizens, start-ups and businesses.

Emerging technologies can enable smarter, safer and more efficient financial services. Artificial Intelligence, tokenisation, blockchain and quantum technologies can unlock new opportunities across the financial ecosystem. Strong **cybersecurity, data protection and consumer safeguards** will remain essential as digital finance expands. FinTech innovation should remain anchored in **people-centric governance, inclusion and public value.**

India can further share its digital expertise through partnerships with emerging economies and the **Global South**. This can strengthen India's role as a trusted partner in building inclusive digital financial systems. The way forward is to build a **sovereign, secure and inclusive digital financial ecosystem.** This approach can position India as a global leader in shaping the future of **people-centric digital finance.**

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Fueling the Blue Economy

Six Years of Empowering India's Fisheries Sector under PMMSY

Published on: September 08, 2026

The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) has strengthened India's fisheries sector. The Government allocated a record **₹2,500 crore** in BE 2026–27 under PMMSY, reaffirming its commitment to the sector. Fish production increased from **141.64 lakh tonnes** in 2019-20 to a record **197.75 lakh tonnes** in 2024-25. Fisheries exports rose from ₹46,663 crore in 2019–20 to **₹73,890 crore** in 2025–26, reflecting strong sectoral growth. The scheme created employment opportunities for **58 lakh persons** in fisheries and aquaculture-related activities. It also approved **₹2,797 crore** for cold-chain and marketing infrastructure, strengthening post-harvest management and market connectivity. Additionally, **2,195 FFPOs** were supported through projects worth **₹544.86 crore,** strengthening collective empowerment.

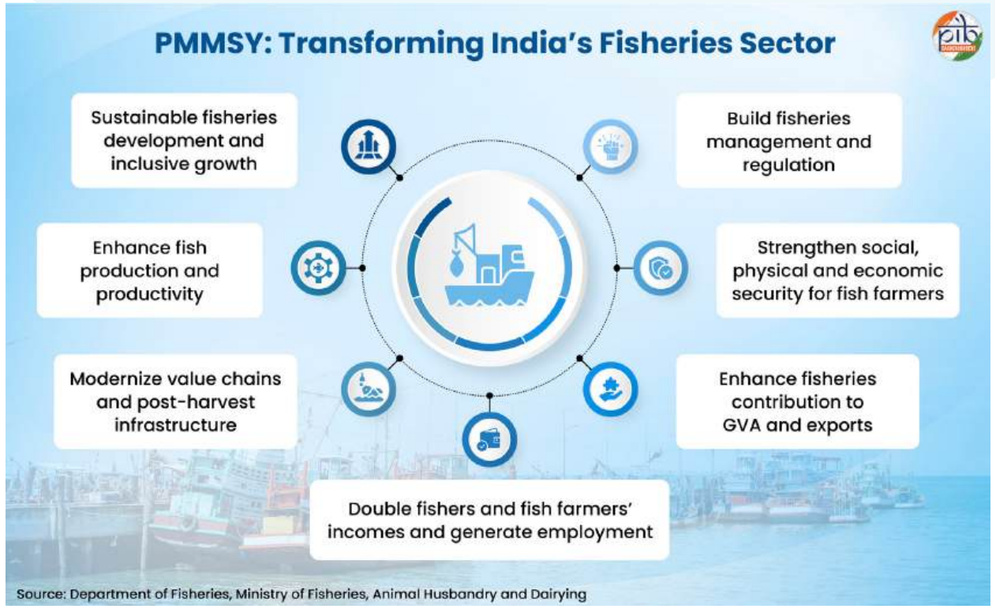
Strengthening India's Blue Economy

India's fisheries sector is a vital economic pillar, **sustaining nearly three crore livelihoods,** especially among marginalised and coastal communities. As a recognised **Sunrise Sector,** it has seen consistent growth driven by policies that boost production, exports, infrastructure, and technology adoption. To further unlock this potential, the Government introduced the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY),** focused on fostering inclusive and sustainable growth across the sector. As PMMSY completes **six years on 10 September 2026,** it stands as a landmark in the transformation of the Indian fisheries sector towards modernisation, sustainability, and prosperity. Since its launch in 2020, the scheme has built stronger infrastructure, opened up new opportunities, and provided consistent support to fishers and fish farmers across the country.Building on the Blue Revolution scheme, PMMSY was conceived to address critical gaps across the fisheries value chain.

The Government has been implementing PMMSY since 2020–21, with a total outlay of **₹20,750 crore.** The Government reaffirmed its commitment by allocating a record **₹2,500 crore in BE 2026–27 under PMMSY,** strengthening fisheries infrastructure and livelihoods. The scheme has also continued to support large-scale investments in fisheries and aquaculture infrastructure. As of **11th August 2026,** during the period **2020–21 to 2025–26,** the Department of Fisheries has approved fisheries and aquaculture projects worth **₹21,394.88 crore,**

including a **Central share of ₹9,510.89 crore.** These approvals, based on proposals received from **States, Union Territories and various implementing agencies,** are supporting infrastructure development and strengthening the fisheries value chain across the country.

PMMSY has focused on transforming India's fisheries sector by enhancing production and productivity, modernising the valuechain, generating livelihood opportunities, increasing incomes, boosting exports and GVA, strengthening fishers' security and welfare, and improving fisheries management and regulation.



Success Story: From Ice Plant to Greater Prosperity

In Porbandar, Gujarat, Mr. Pravinbhai Babulal Masani has spent over two decades building his fishing enterprise. With extensive experience in the industry, he understood that investing in a new ice plant could strengthen his business. However, the high cost of establishing an ice plant was beyond his financial capacity. The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) provided him with an opportunity through financial assistance for establishing ice plants.

In 2021–22, Mr. Masani successfully received **a ₹48 lakh subsidy** under PMMSY. With this support, he established a **30 MT/day ice plant,** enabling him to produce high-quality ice blocks for fishing boats. The new facility helps fishing boats carry sufficient ice to keep fish fresh and reduce spoilage during fishing operations. This has strengthened Mr. Masani's fishing business, improved his earnings, and supported a better livelihood for his family. His journey demonstrates how targeted support under PMMSY can help fishers invest in essential infrastructure, strengthen their businesses, and contribute to fisheries growth.

Transforming India's Fisheries Sector through PMMSY

The PMMSY is an umbrella scheme comprising Central Sector (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) components.

Central Sector (CS): Fully funded and implemented by the Central Government. The Central Sector component supports genetic improvement, innovation, technology demonstrations, training, aquatic quarantine, harbour modernisation, disease surveillance and fisheries data systems. It also strengthens the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) and fisheries institutions, fisher safety, FFPOs, cooperatives and SHGs, while promoting certification, traceability, accreditation and labelling. The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY) is a Central Sector sub-scheme. It operates under the broader ambit of PMMSY. The scheme complements and reinforces PMMSY's overarching objectives. Its specific mandate is to strengthen the development of the fisheries sector.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)

The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY) is a Central Sector sub-scheme implemented under the umbrella of the **PMMSY.** Operational across all States and Union Territories for four years from 2023-24 to 2026-27, it carries an estimated financial outlay of **₹6,000 crore.**

The scheme facilitates the structural transformation of the fisheries sector by advancing formalisation, expanding insurance coverage, strengthening access to institutional finance, and promoting quality assurance and traceability across the fisheries value chain. It aims to enhance financial resilience, risk mitigation, and market integration for fishers, aquaculture farmers, and allied stakeholders, thereby fostering a more organised, transparent, and sustainable fisheries sector.

Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS): Partially funded by the Central Government and implemented by States and Union Territories. CSS activities include:

- **Enhancement of Fish Production and Productivity:** Focuses on increasing fish production and productivity through technology infusion and improved fisheries practices. It covers inland fisheries, marine fisheries, mariculture, seaweed cultivation, development of fisheries in Himalayan and North-Eastern States/UTs, and ornamental fisheries.
- **Infrastructure and Post-Harvest Management:** Strengthens fisheries

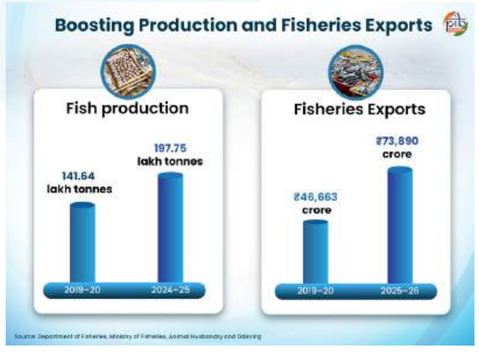
infrastructure through fishing harbours, fish landing centres and post-harvest facilities. It also supports cold-chain infrastructure, deep-sea fishing, integrated modern coastal fishing villages, markets and marketing infrastructure.

- **Fisheries Management and Regulatory Framework:** Promotes monitoring, control and surveillance, insurance for fishing vessels and fishers, and fisheries extension and support services. It also strengthens the safety and security of fishers at sea while supporting the **livelihood** and nutritional needs of fishers.

PMMSY: Strengthening Production, Infrastructure and Livelihoods

The PMMSY has made significant contributions over the past six years towards increasing fish production, enhancing fisheries exports, and creating livelihoods and employment opportunities.

- Fish production increased from 141.64 lakh tonnes in 2019-20 to a record **197.75 lakh tonnes in 2024-25.**
- The scheme has created direct and indirect employment opportunities for **58 lakh persons** in fisheries and aquaculture-related activities.
- Fisheries exports increased from **₹46,663 crore in 2019-20 to ₹73,890 crore in 2025-26.**



Expanding Modern Aquaculture and Fisheries Infrastructure

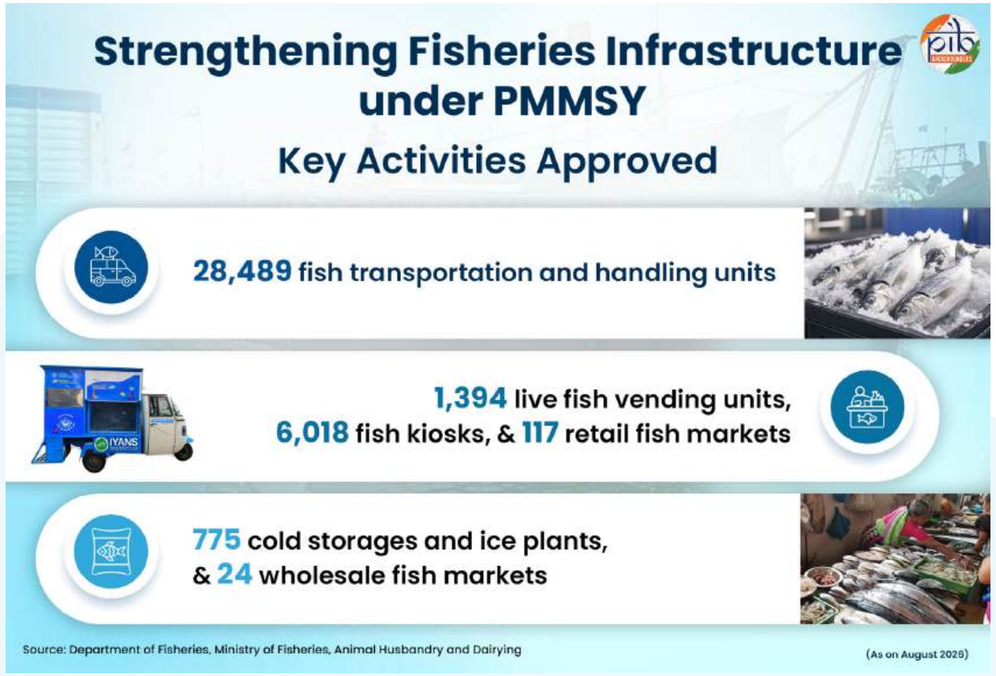
- Under PMMSY, 12 Integrated Aquaparks have been approved at a total cost of **₹713.80 crore.**
- During the last 5 years (2020-25), projects worth **₹198.17 crore** have been approved towards seaweed cultivation and its allied activities.
- **52,058 reservoir cages** and **23,285.06 hectares of pond area** have been approved for inland aquaculture. The scheme has also supported 12,081 **Recirculatory Aquaculture Systems** (RAS) and **4,205 Biofloc units.**
- **2,672 ornamental fish** rearing and integrated ornamental fish units have been supported under PMMSY.

Strengthening Fisheries Infrastructure and Value Chain

The Government is strengthening fisheries infrastructure under PMMSY, with a focus on fishing harbours, fish landing centres, cold chains, transportation and marketing facilities. During the last five years, the Department of Fisheries has approved **₹3,741.89 crore** for 28 fishing harbour development/modernisation projects, 25 fish landing centre projects and 23 dredging projects.

Additionally, **₹2,797 crore** has been approved for the development of cold-chain and marketing infrastructure. As of 11th August 2026, the approved projects include:

- **28,489** fish transportation units
- **1,394** live fish vending units, **6,018** fish kiosks, **117** retail fish markets
- **775** cold storage & ice plants and **24** wholesale fish markets.



These interventions are strengthening post-harvest management, cold chains, transportation, and market access for inland fisheries produce.

Empowering Communities through Collective Action, Resilience and Technology

The PMMSY is strengthening fisheries through infrastructure development, community empowerment, climate resilience and technology adoption.

Promoting Collective Empowerment through FFPOs

The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) provides financial assistance for establishing **Fish Farmers Producer Organizations (FFPOs)** to economically empower fishers and fish farmers and strengthen their bargaining power. From **FY 2021–22 to FY 2025–26,** the Department of Fisheries approved projects worth ₹544.86 crore to establish 2,195 FFPOs nationwide, supporting incubation, management costs, and equity grants.

Building Climate-Resilient Coastal Communities

Under PMMSY, the Department of Fisheries has identified 100 coastal fishermen villages as Climate Resilient **Coastal Fishermen Villages (CRCFV)** to strengthen climate resilience and make them economically vibrant. The initiative is being implemented under the Central Sector component of PMMSY, with a **unit cost of ₹200 lakh per village,** fully funded by the Government, and supports resilient infrastructure, livelihoods and post-harvest facilities for coastal fishing communities.

Technology-Driven Aquaculture

The scheme promotes technology-driven aquaculture systems that enhance productivity while optimising land and water use. It supports high-density, water-efficient models such as Recirculatory Aquaculture Systems (RAS) and Bio-floc technology, improving output, water quality, resource efficiency and environmental sustainability.

- **Recirculatory Aquaculture System (RAS):** RAS filters and recirculates water, removing waste and impurities while enabling intensive fish farming with minimal land and water.
- **Bio-floc Technology:** It is a sustainable aquaculture method that recycles nutrients in water using beneficial microbes. These microbes form clumps called bio-floc, which serve as natural feed and also help clean the water. This method requires little or no water exchange, making it ideal for high-density fish farming with minimal resources. It boosts productivity while being environmentally friendly, earning it the name “green soup” or heterotrophic ponds in aquaculture circles.

Digital Transformation of Fisheries

Beyond modernising production systems, PMMSY is also driving the digital transformation of the fisheries sector. The **National Fisheries Digital Platform (NFDP)** was launched under PM-MKSSY in September 2024. It aims to advance digital governance and formalisation in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. The NFDP creates work-based digital identities and a comprehensive stakeholder database to formalise the sector. Operationally, it functions as a single-window digital system, enabling beneficiaries to access institutional credit, aquaculture insurance, traceability mechanisms and performance-linked incentives. The platform also supports fisheries cooperatives, training and capacity-building initiatives. As of 8 September 2026, the NFDP platform has recorded over **37.01 lakh** individual registrations, with total registrations crossing **37.23 lakh.**

Contribution to SDG 14: Life Below Water

PMMSY promotes sustainable and responsible fisheries and aquaculture, supporting the sustainable use of aquatic resources. The scheme also promotes sustainable fish production methods and modern aquaculture practices, including Bio-floc, RAS, cage culture and mariculture. These interventions contribute to SDG 14 (Life Below Water) by supporting sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture and strengthening aquatic resource conservation.

Towards Sustainable Fisheries and Blue Economy Growth

The fisheries sector occupies an important place in India’s agricultural and rural economy, contributing to livelihoods, food security, employment and exports. The **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** is driving the transformation of India’s fisheries sector by strengthening production, infrastructure, technology, livelihoods and sustainability. Its investments in modern infrastructure,

cold-chain facilities, technology-driven aquaculture and digital platforms are strengthening the fisheries value chain. Continued support for fishers, fish farmers and coastal communities can create opportunities for higher incomes and improved market access. These efforts also contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water) by promoting sustainable use and conservation of aquatic resources. With sustained investments, PMMSY has laid the foundation for a modern, competitive and sustainable fisheries sector. As India advances its Blue Economy vision, PMMSY will continue to play a pivotal role in enhancing livelihoods, strengthening food security, boosting exports and promoting responsible utilisation of aquatic resources.

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Power from Waste

Inside Swachh Bharat Mission Waste-to-Energy Story

Published on: September 27, 2026

Across India, organic waste is finding a second life as fuel, electricity and valuable manure. Under the **Swachh Bharat Mission, launched in October 2014,** scientific management of municipal solid waste has remained a core objective. As the Mission evolved, organic waste has been recognised as a valuable resource to produce clean energy. Biogas, produced through the anaerobic decomposition of organic waste, is among the most viable, economical and environmentally friendly cooking fuels available. The by-product slurry is rich in nitrogen and serves as an effective organic fertilizer. It reduces dependence on chemical inputs, lowers costs and helps maintain soil fertility. This delivers a dual benefit from a single initiative.

Waste-to-energy, under **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0,** takes different forms across India, depending on the available waste and community needs. A vegetable market in Hyderabad lights its own streetlights with rotten vegetables. In Prayagraj, a multi-feedstock bio-CNG plant converts different types of organic waste into clean fuel and compost. An educational institution in Gandhinagar cooks for more than 500 people a day without depending on LPG cylinders. A gaushala in Gwalior turns cow dung into compressed biogas. Different feedstocks, different scales, but the same underlying shift. These initiatives showcase how cities and institutions are emerging as frontrunners in the journey towards sustainability. By adopting innovative, circular approaches to waste management, they are reducing environmental impact and unlocking the value of waste as a resource.

Gandhinagar: An Educational Campus Eliminating LPG Dependence

At the Shrimati Manekba Vinay Vihar Educational Complex, near **Adalaj in Gandhinagar, Gujarat**, the **kitchen cooks for more than 500 people every day.** Around 250 hostel students receive two meals daily, alongside 15 staff families living on campus. The kitchen, however, has eliminated its dependence on LPG and transitioned to a biogas-based cooking system.

The Vasumati Charitable Trust, which manages the campus, operates **two biogas plants** with a combined capacity of 90 cubic metres per day. The feedstock includes dung from 222 cows housed in the trust's cowshed. It is supplemented by kitchen waste and agricultural residue from nearby fields. The gas meets the campus's entire cooking-fuel requirement, without which 30 LPG cylinders would have been required every month.

The institution demonstrates how innovative and scientific waste management can drive energy self-reliance and sustainability. The institutional mechanisms such as the Gujarat government's Institutional Biogas Plant Scheme and Gujarat Energy Development Agency (GEDA) provided the policy and financial support to make this transition.

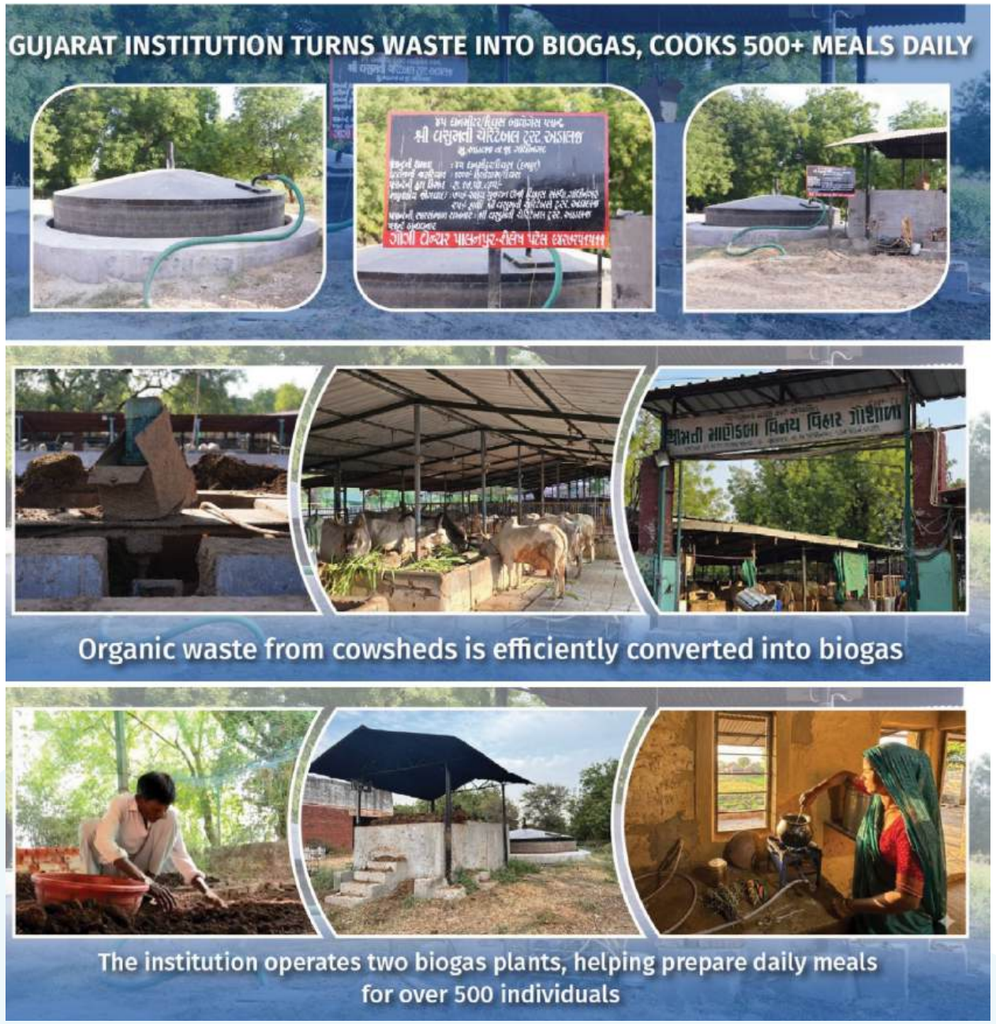

Image 1: Biogas plants at the Shrimati Manekba Vinay Vihar Educational Complex, Adalaj, Gujarat

Gujarat continues to advance **alternative energy** and **sustainable development,**

reducing pollution and achieving energy self-sufficiency. It also enables the scientific disposal of organic waste from gaushalas and educational institutions alike.

Prayagraj: One Plant, Four Feedstocks

Prayagraj's bio-CNG facility is a waste-to-energy plant designed to process diverse forms of organic waste.

Image 2: Bio-CNG Plant at Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

With the launch of the plant, Uttar Pradesh has established a significant milestone in green energy and waste management. The project represents a forward-looking step towards environmental conservation while advancing the mission of turning waste into a valuable resource.

The plant can process **343 tonnes of organic waste a day** and produce around **21 tonnes of bio-CNG.** Its **multi-feedstock model** uses wet waste, paddy straw, cattle dung and poultry litter, creating productive uses for agricultural residues while helping address stubble burning.

The facility operates under a **public-private partnership model** and absorbs bulk organic waste from hotels, restaurants and apartment complexes. Daily wet-waste supply has increased from just 7**–8 tonnes initially to around 125 tonnes**, strengthening waste utilisation in the city. The bio-CNG produced is sold under the Compressed Bio-Gas **(CBG)** - City Gas Distribution **(CGD) Synchronisation Scheme**, reaches users through the fuel cascade route, and currently supports city transport.

The process also produces **28 tonnes of high-quality compost daily,** which is made available to local farmers, supporting regenerative farming. Looking ahead, the project is expected to extend clean energy access to around **45,000 households through piped gas** and reduce carbon emissions by approximately **57,000 tonnes annually.**

Gwalior: A Gaushala That Became a Power Plant

At Adarsh Gaushala in Laltipara, Gwalior's largest cowshed, more than 10,000 cattle call it home. In October 2024, the gaushala gave its daily dung a new purpose with the inauguration of a **100-tonnes-per-day (TPD) Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) plant.** The facility made Adarsh Gaushala **India's first modern, self-sufficient gaushala** built around a state-of-the-art CBG plant.

Image 3: Cattle dung-based Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) plant, Laltipara, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh

The plant's design goes beyond **cattle dung** alone. It is Madhya Pradesh's first CBG plant built to **also process vegetable and fruit waste** collected from markets and homes. Spread over 5 acres, the ₹31-crore project was developed in collaboration with Indian Oil Corporation. Every day, it converts 100 tonnes of **cattle dung into two tonnes of compressed biogas.** It also produces **10–15 tonnes of dry bio-manure daily,** providing an affordable input for farmers in nearby districts and encouraging organic farming.

The benefits extend beyond the gaushala. The CBG provides a cleaner, **eco-friendly alternative to fossil fuels,** while converting dung into energy helps **reduce carbon emissions and contributes to climate change mitigation.** The project has also created **local employment opportunities,** promoting skills in green energy and sustainable practices and contributing to the local economy.

The CBG plant is more than an industrial facility. It represents collaboration between society and government and demonstrates how waste can be converted into useful resources.

Bowenpally: What a Vegetable Market Can Power

Among these four stories, the vegetable market story at Bowenpally tells about one of the most innovative waste management systems. At Hyderabad's Bowenpally Vegetable Market, roughly **10 tons of vegetable and fruit waste** are collected every day. This waste previously went to landfills. Since a **biogas plant** was set up on-site, nearly all the waste collected from the market is put to use. It generates around **400–500 units of electricity and 30 kg of biofuel a day.** The electricity generated is used to run the market's streetlights, stalls, administration building and water-supply network. The biofuel is supplied to the market's commercial kitchen, helping keep the marketplace clean and pollution-free.

Image 4: Bowenpally Vegetable Market and Bowenpally's Biogas Plant, Hyderabad

Inside the biogas plant, vegetables are chopped, shredded and ground into slurry. The slurry then feeds into anaerobic digesters, while the resulting gas is stored in balloons until further use. The leftover slurry produces liquid bio-manure, which is used by farmers as fertiliser. **Biogas** is also collected in a separate tank and sent through a pipeline system for cooking. The biofuel is supplied to a **100% biogas generator**, which powers the cold storage rooms, water pumps, shop and streetlights.

The plant has cut the market's electricity bill by roughly half, from an earlier average of about ₹3 lakh a month. Following its impact, five more such plants at other market yards have been funded. These include Gudimalkapur, Gaddiannaram, Erragadda, Alwal and Saroornagar, with capacities suited to the waste generated at each yard.

Image 5: Bowenpally's Biogas Plant

The plant has also created steady **work for women** in the market. They sort and segregate waste, operate machinery, and handle administrative roles. This **plant offers women workers a steady income and skill development.**

Rukmini Devamma's words on the biogas plant: "Since the biogas plant was set up, we are being paid well for our work. We are also provided with all the necessary safety gear, such as masks, gumboots and gloves. With a safe working environment, we are encouraging others to join us and work with us as well".

Image 6: Rukmini Devamma, a woman employee at the Bowenpally vegetable market

What Ties These Stories Together

Across these four stories, the feedstock changes, but the principle remains the same: waste is no longer the end of the cycle. They demonstrate what happens when waste management is designed around resource recovery. Under the **Swachh Bharat Mission**, this approach is expanding the role of **urban waste infrastructure beyond collection and disposal, towards processing, energy generation and productive use of by-products.** Cow dung, kitchen waste, crop residue and discarded vegetables are being converted into fuel, electricity and manure. Multiplied across India's cities, campuses, gaushalas and markets, this approach moves beyond isolated projects. From generating clean energy to promoting organic practices, these efforts highlight a scalable pathway for urban India, where **scientific waste management, community participation, and forward-looking policies** together pave the way for cleaner, greener, and more self-reliant cities.

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National Single Window System

Transforming Business Approvals in India

Published on: September 23, 2026

The National Single Window System (NSWS) is a digital platform that guides investors in identifying the approvals required for their businesses. It also enables them to apply for these approvals based on their specific business requirements. Implemented by DPIIT, it enables investors to identify, apply for, and track approvals through a single interface. Its key features include the Know Your Approvals module, Common Registration Form, Applicant Dashboard, Document Repository and E-Communication Module. By enabling one-time submission, online processing and real-time tracking, NSWS reduces duplication, compliance burden and approval timelines while improving transparency and coordination. With expanding integration of Central Ministries, States and regulatory authorities, NSWS is strengthening India's Ease of Doing Business and fostering a more seamless investment ecosystem.

National Single Window System: An Overview

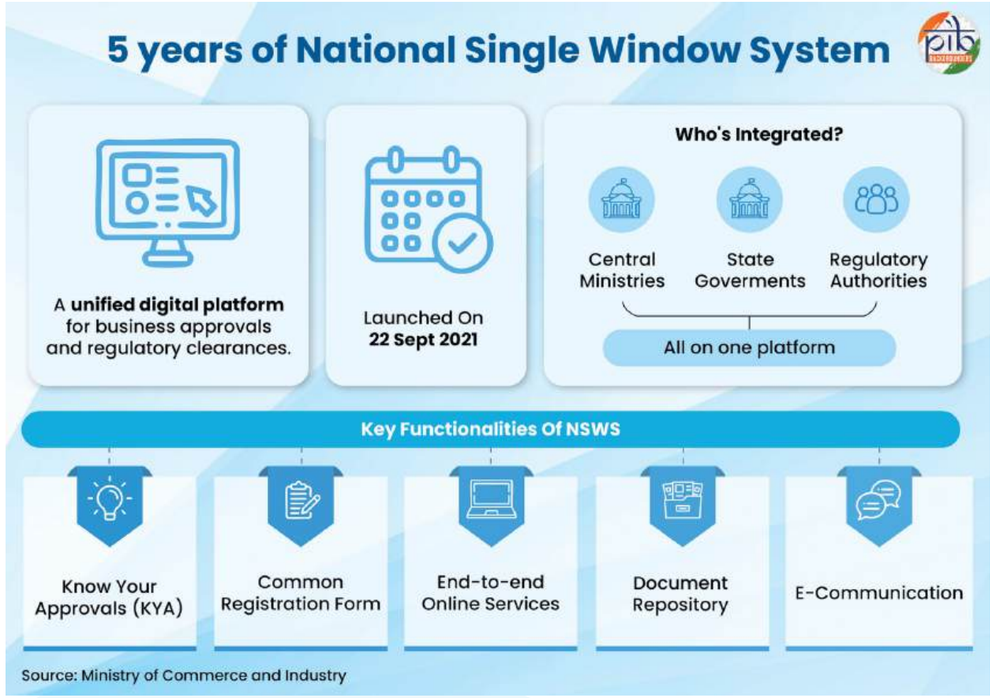
An efficient regulatory ecosystem is essential for promoting investment and economic growth. The Government has undertaken several digital governance reforms to create a transparent and investor-friendly regulatory ecosystem. The **National Single Window System (NSWS)** is one such reform. It serves as a digital platform that guides investors in identifying and applying for the approvals required for their businesses.

Launched on **22 September 2021,** NSWS is implemented by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.** This year, it completes 5 years of its success. It integrates approvals offered by Central Ministries, State Governments, and regulatory authorities on a common digital platform.

Contribution to Ease of Doing Business

The NSWS **simplifies the approval process** by enabling one-time submission of information and documents. It helps **reduce compliance and approval timelines.** The platform also enhances transparency through real-time application tracking and online communication with regulatory authorities. These features make the approval process more predictable and efficient.

NSWS minimizes duplication of information across departments and improves coordination among government agencies through an integrated digital ecosystem. Collectively, these reforms strengthen the **Ease of Doing Business**, facilitate investment, and support the Government's vision of **Minimum Government, Maximum Governance.**



Key Functionalities of NSWS

NSWS enables online submission of applications and payment of fees. A key feature of NSWS is the **Know Your Approvals (KYA) module**, a tool that identifies the approvals applicable to a business based on its proposed activities. The portal hosts applications for approvals from **32 Central Ministries/ Departments and 34 State Governments and Union Territories**. This helps investors navigate regulatory requirements for business. The guidance provided through KYA is advisory in nature and does not constitute legal advice.

To simplify compliance, NSWS provides a **Common Registration Form** that captures information through a single interface and enables reuse of information across applications. The platform also offers seamless access to

State Single Window Systems through a dedicated **State Registration Form,** ensuring integration with State-level approval mechanisms.

The platform includes an **Applicant Dashboard** for submitting applications, monitoring their status, and responding to departmental queries. The portal also allows investors to **renew applicable approvals** easily and **track the status of the application in real-time.** A **centralized Document Repository** enables one-time upload and reuse of documents across multiple approvals, reducing duplication of submissions. The **E-Communication Module** facilitates online exchange of queries and clarifications between applicants and the concerned Ministries and State Governments.

Approval Workflow under NSWS

An investor begins by registering on NSWS using an email ID and mobile number. The investor may identify applicable approvals through the Know Your Approvals (KYA) module or search for required approvals from list of approvals. After verification, they can submit applications for various Central and State approvals.

Once an application is submitted, NSWS forwards it electronically to the concerned Ministry, Department, or State Government for processing through its respective backend system. While **registration on NSWS is free of cost, applicants are required to pay the statutory fees** prescribed by the respective authority through the portal.

Applicants can monitor the status of their applications through the Applicant Dashboard. They can respond to departmental queries using the E-Communication Module, and access all uploaded documents from the centralized Document Repository.

Expanding Digital Integration

NSWS implements **Permanent Account Number (PAN)** as the **Single Business ID,** with user authentication of authorised representatives through the **Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)** and **DigiLocker** (for sole proprietors).

The **Foreign Investment Facilitation Portal (FIF Portal)** has also been integrated with NSWS, enabling a single-window mechanism for FDI applications requiring Government approval. The **Industrial Entrepreneur Memorandum (IEM)** and **Industrial License (IL)** processes have been fully migrated to the **National Single Window System (NSWS)** since **October 2025** and March 2026, **respectively, and are now** completely digital. The digitalised processes facilitate auto-population of information through integration with relevant government databases, eliminate manual approval requirements, and enable industries to generate acknowledgements instantly, thereby improving efficiency and reducing processing time.

Further, the **Production Investment Business Registration** module was launched on NSWS in **November 2025** to facilitate Indian companies in generating **Sponsorship Letters** for inviting foreign professionals under the **e-Production Investment Business Visa (e-B-4 Visa).** The module provides a streamlined digital mechanism for registration and issuance of sponsorship-related documentation.

Additionally, the **Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO)** has integrated all **74 licensing modules** with NSWS, making it the first department to achieve complete transaction-level integration.

Coverage and Performance

Since its launch, the NSWS has significantly expanded its reach and service delivery. As of **21 September 2026**, the platform receives an annual

average of **over 3.06 lakh** applications and facilitates the processing of **more than 2.26 lakh approvals each year**. The platform has also onboarded **over 5.69 lakh business entities,** including sole proprietorships, companies, LLPs and foreign entities.

NSWS currently provides access to over 327 Central approvals and 3452 State approvals across 34 States and Union Territories. It facilitates key regulatory approvals such as company incorporation, industrial licences, startup recognition, FDI approvals, and registration under the Contract Labour Act. Assam (335), Karnataka (327), Tamil Nadu (223) and Manipur (190) offer the highest number of integrated approvals.

The platform also serves as a common gateway for approvals under flagship initiatives, including the **National Green Hydrogen Mission, Ethanol Policy, Vehicle Scrapping Policy,** and the **Indian Footwear and Leather Development Programme.**

Towards a Seamless Business Ecosystem

The NSWS marks a significant step towards creating a transparent, and technology-driven regulatory ecosystem. Continued integration of Ministries, States, and regulatory authorities will further strengthen its effectiveness. Leveraging digital technologies and process simplification will enhance investor confidence and improve India's ease of doing business. As the platform evolves, NSWS has the potential to become the cornerstone of a unified business regulatory framework in India.

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Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojna (PM-AJAY)

Building Pathways to Progress

Published on: September 28, 2026

Scheduled Castes (SCs), constituting 16.6% of India's population, have historically faced barriers to socio-economic advancement and inclusion. Addressing these disparities is vital to ensuring social justice, equal opportunity, and broader participation in India's development journey. Recognising these development gaps, the Government of India launched Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY) to foster the overall development of Scheduled Castes.

A Vision for Inclusive Empowerment

The **Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojna (PM-AJAY)** is a 100% centrally sponsored scheme launched in FY 2021-22. It envisions achieving socio-economic and educational empowerment of Scheduled Caste communities through a comprehensive and integrated approach. The Government has launched **'PM-AJAY' Mobile App** and **'PM-AJAY' Portal** for expedited and quality implementation of the PM-AJAY Scheme.

PM-AJAY is a **merger scheme** of three erstwhile centrally sponsored schemes, namely, **Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY)**, **Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCA to SCSP)** and **Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (BJRCY)**. Implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, PM-AJAY turns its broader goal of ensuring development for everyone into practical action through the following three main objectives:

- To reduce poverty of the SC communities by generation of additional employment opportunities. It can be done through skill development, income generating schemes and other initiatives. These interventions seek to enhance livelihood opportunities and enable beneficiaries to engage in sustainable income-generating activities.
- To improve socio-economic developmental indicators by ensuring adequate infrastructure and requisite services in SC dominated areas. The scheme seeks to bridge critical developmental gaps and improve access to essential facilities that contribute to a better quality of life.
- To increase literacy and encourage enrolment of SCs in schools and higher educational institutions. It is achieved by providing adequate residential facilities in quality institutions and residential schools, especially in aspirational districts/ SC-dominated blocks and elsewhere in India.

Who Can Benefit from PM-AJAY?

At the heart of PM-AJAY lies a carefully defined framework of eligibility, ensuring that the benefits of the scheme reach the individuals and communities for whom they are intended. Accordingly, access to the scheme is determined on the basis of the following criteria:

- While selecting beneficiaries under GIA component, priority is given to the families/persons having annual income not more than Rs. 2.50 lakh per annum. SC members of SC majority group are also be eligible.
- In case of Infrastructure Development, villages having 40% or more SC population and total population more than or equal to 500 are eligible for grants under the Scheme.

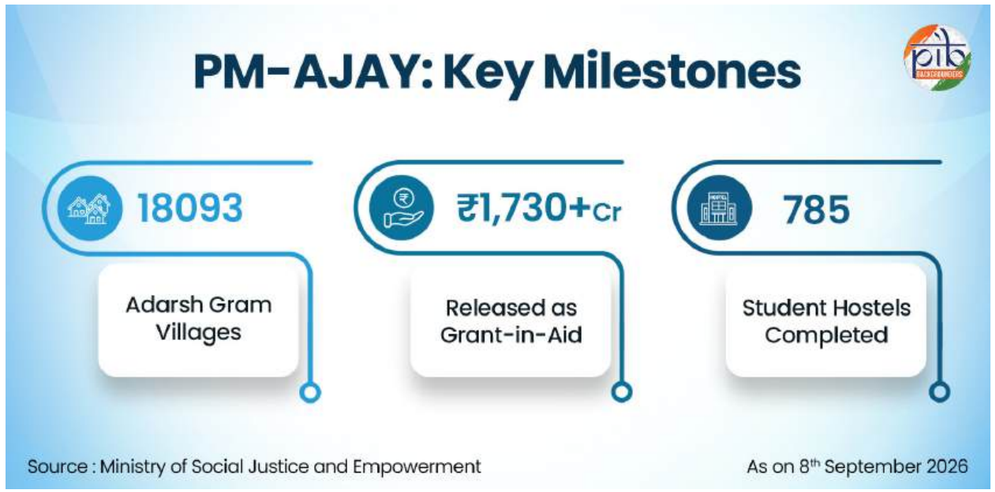
PM-AJAY in Action

The architecture of PM-AJAY rests on three distinct components to address various aspects of development:

Development of SC dominated villages into "Adarsh Gram"

Transforming SC-majority villages into 'Adarsh Grams' (model villages) by filling critical gaps in infrastructure and services. The **Adarsh Gram component** has covered **47,243 villages**, benefiting more than **47.79 lakh citizens** across the country. A total of **46,944 development works** have been completed, while 27,032 **Village Development Plans (VDPs)** have been prepared. As on 8th September 2026, **18,093 villages** have been declared as **Adarsh Grams**, reflecting significant progress in improving infrastructure, basic services and quality of life in Scheduled Caste-majority villages.

> An 'Adarsh Gram' is one wherein people have access to various basic services. The minimum needs of all the sections of the society are fully met and disparities are reduced to a minimum. These villages are envisioned to have all essential infrastructure and universal access to basic services required for dignified living. This creates an enabling environment for every resident to realise their full potential.



Grants-in-aid for Socio-Economic Projects to State/Districts

Providing financial assistance for district/state-level projects aimed at the socio-economic betterment of SCs. This includes:

i. Increasing the income of the target population by way of comprehensive livelihood projects, including skill development and related infrastructure.

ii. Improving socio-economic developmental indicators by creating adequate infrastructure in SC dominated villages.

iii. Increasing literacy and encouraging enrolment of SCs in schools by providing residential schools where required.

More than **₹1,730 crore** has been released directly to States under the Grants-in-Aid component from FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26. It extends skilling and livelihood support to over **2.5 lakh individual and group beneficiaries**.

Construction/Repair of Hostels

- The construction and repair of hostels is one of the means to enable and encourage students belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC) to attain quality education. Such hostels are immensely beneficial to the students hailing from rural and remote areas of the country. As of **September 2026**, a total of **785 student hostels have been completed**. The Government has allocated central assistance of **₹61.46 crore** for **FY 2026-27** for construction of **two hostel projects (one for girls and one for boys)** to provide accommodation for **264** students.

Investing in Empowerment

Effective implementation of any welfare initiative requires sustained financial support. An overview of the funding framework under PM-AJAY is presented below.

Funding at a Glance	
Funding Pattern	100% Centrally Funded Scheme
State/UT Contribution	States/UTs may supplement the scheme with additional resources, if required
Component-wise Allocation	• **Up to 50%** - Gap-filling activities in selected **Adarsh Gram** villages. • **Up to 5%** - For setting up and operation of the TSG (Technical Support Group) and PIU (Project Implementation Units) at the Central level as well as PIU at the State and District level. • **Up to 2%** – Construction and repair of hostels- to be utilized for Central Institutions and released directly to the implementing agencies by the Ministry. • **Remaining funds** - Grants-in-aids for the Projects at District/State, allocated based on Scheduled Caste population and ratio of State SCSP to the Annual Plan as compared to the SC population in the States/UTs.
Maintenance	Post completion of the infrastructure projects under the scheme, their upkeep and operations shall be taken care of by the State Governments/implementing agencies, as the case may be.

A Digital Leap Towards Effective Governance

The recent launch of the **'PM-AJAY' Mobile App** and **'PM-AJAY' Portal** aims to transition from paper-based workflow and processing to an end-to-end digital workflow and processing on a real-time basis.

Good governance is built on the principles of transparency, accountability and efficiency.

Digital technologies have transformed the planning, delivery and monitoring of public programmes. Technology-enabled governance improves information access, strengthens monitoring and supports data-driven decision-making. It also enhances coordination, transparency and the overall effectiveness of programme implementation.

The Next Chapter in India's Growth Story

The journey towards **Viksit Bharat @2047** is founded on the principle that the benefits of development must reach every section of society and create opportunities for all to progress. In this endeavour, **PM-AJAY** plays a significant role in advancing the socio-economic and educational empowerment of Scheduled Caste communities through targeted interventions that promote sustainable livelihoods, quality education and improved infrastructure. As the scheme continues to expand, greater use of technology, stronger monitoring mechanisms, and focused last-mile delivery are enhancing its effectiveness and outreach. By empowering individuals and communities to realise their full potential and actively participate in India's development journey, PM-AJAY will continue to foster a more inclusive, equitable, and empowered nation.

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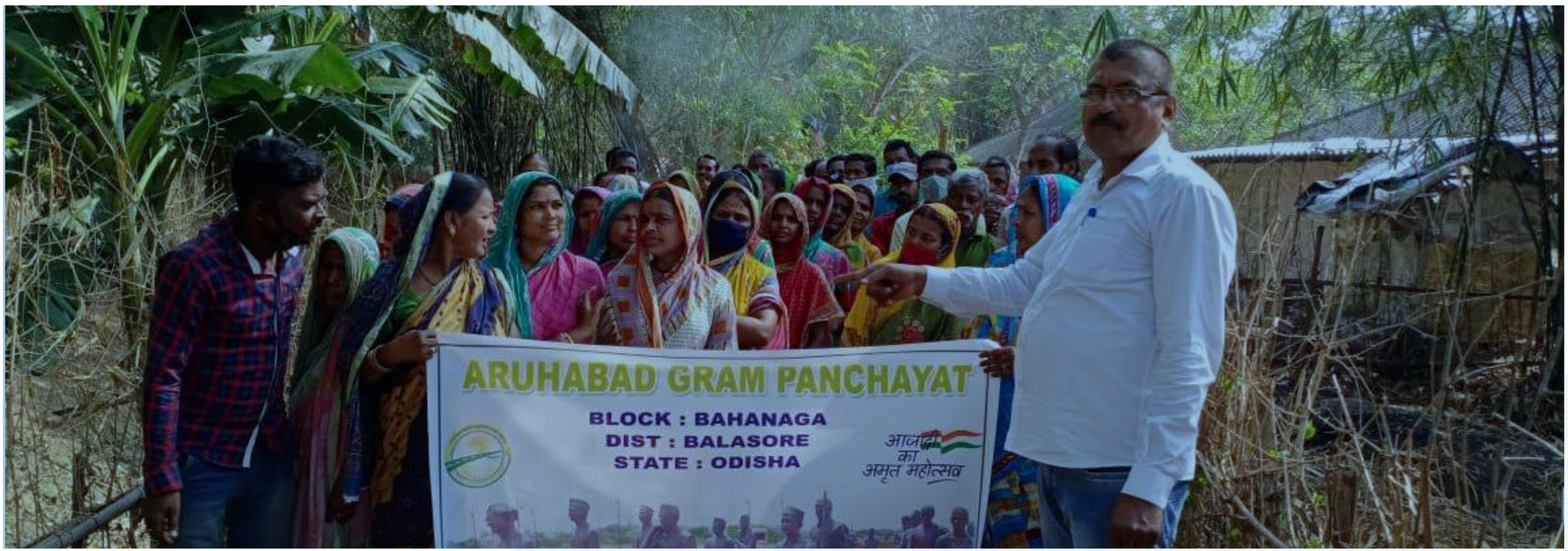

Silicon Dreams

SEMICON India 2026 and the Making of a Chip Powerhouse

Published on: September 15 , 2026

On September 17, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will walk into Yashobhoomi in Dwarka and inaugurate SEMICON India 2026. Global chipmakers, policymakers and investors will fill the halls behind him, all watching an industry India has built from the ground up. For three days, the country's semi-con (semiconductor) manufacturing story will be on full display. For an industry that barely had a heartbeat in India a decade ago, this is not just a conference. It is the moment India's semiconductor ambitions step into the spotlight.

The theme this year is **"Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem."** That phrase carries more weight than it first appears to. India is no longer asking whether it can make chips. It is now asking how fast it can build everything around them.

The Object That Runs the World

Hold up your phone. Somewhere inside it sits a piece of silicon smaller than a postage stamp, carrying billions of transistors switching on and off, billions of times a second. Apple's A19 Bionic chip, built at 3 nanometres, packs roughly 30 billion transistors onto that tiny surface. It is, without exaggeration, one of the most complex objects human beings have ever built.

Chips are not a niche product anymore. They sit inside cars, drones, aeroplanes, MRI machines and satellites. At the moment, the global electronics industry is valued at around $4.3 trillion and growing fast. Semiconductors sit right at the base of this growing structure, forming it's foundation. Every other industry, from automobiles to healthcare to defence, depends on what comes out of a chip fabrication plant. That is what makes semiconductors a foundational industry. Miss this layer, and every layer above it becomes fragile.

The world learned this the hard way. For example, during the COVID pandemic, car factories faced shutdowns. Not because of a lack of steel or labour, but because they could not get chips. Countries that had spent decades treating semiconductors as someone else's problem suddenly scrambled to build their own capacity. The pandemic did not create the race for chips. It simply forced everyone to run faster.

A Long Road to This Moment

India's interest in semiconductors goes back further than most people realise, decades of quiet attempts, small starts, and lessons learned the hard way. For a long time, the ambition was there, but the ecosystem around it never quite came together. That changed with a different approach. Reforms in foreign investment, taxation and customs opened the door wide. Global electronics companies slowly began setting up manufacturing lines in India, and the results are hard to argue with.

In 2014-15, India produced about ₹1.9 lakh crore worth of electronics goods. By 2025-26, that number touched ₹13.11 lakh crore, a sevenfold jump. Electronics exports rose from around ₹38,000 crore to ₹4.24 lakh crore, an elevenfold increase.

Mobile phones tell an even sharper story. Production rose 33 times, from ₹18,000 crore to ₹6.27 lakh crore. Exports rose 165 times, from about ₹1,500 crore to ₹2.59 lakh crore. Smartphones did not even feature among India's top 100 exported goods in 2014. In FY 2025-26, smartphones became India's single largest exported commodity. Ahead of petroleum products and ahead of gems and jewellery. India now makes 99.2 percent of the phones it uses, and has flipped from a net importer of mobiles to a net exporter. This entire manufacturing engine now supports 2.5 million jobs.

This is the moment where the picture shifts. A country once known for false starts in electronics is now the second largest mobile phone manufacturer in the world by volume. Electronics manufacturing was the proof of concept. Semiconductors were always the next step.

Building the Mission

That next step arrived in 2021 with the Semicon India programme. The strategy was deliberate. Build a real ecosystem, not a showpiece. Semicon 1.0 came with a ₹76,000 crore outlay. Covering the entire value chain from chip design and fabrication to packaging, testing, equipment, materials and skilled talent. In July 2026, the government approved Semicon 2.0, scaling that foundation with a ₹1,27,500 crore outlay. This is built around six pillars: chip design, semiconductor equipment and materials, fabrication facilities, advanced packaging, research and development, and talent development.

The numbers on the ground back the intent. 12 semiconductor projects have been approved across six states, with investment commitments exceeding ₹1.64 lakh crore. The projects span across silicon and compound semiconductor fabs, display fabrication and advanced packaging. Three facilities have already started commercial production. That single fact marks India's shift from semiconductor policy on paper to semiconductor manufacturing on the ground.

Growing the Talent Behind the Chips

A fab is only as good as the engineers designing what goes inside it. The target set for this is clear. A pool of 85,000 skilled semiconductor engineers within this decade. Through the Chips to Startup programme, Electronic Design Automation tools have already been deployed across 320 academic institutions, with more than 68,000 students trained so far. Separately, 24 semiconductor design projects have been approved for financial support, along with 105 startups and MSMEs receiving EDA tool support under the DLI Scheme.

By April 2026, 211 chips had been taped out by 75 institutions, a clear sign that design capability is spreading well beyond a handful of elite labs. Seven of those chips have been fabricated at various nodes, including advanced nodes down to 12 nanometers.

To democratize chip design across the country, the ChipIN Centre has been set up at C-DAC under the Chips to Start-up (C2S) Programme and the Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme. It serves as a centralized national facility providing access to advanced chip-design tools, fabrication services and specialized training.

The ChipIN Centre has extended these facilities to more than 1 lakh engineers from over 500 organizations, including 400 academic institutions and 100 start-ups. These organizations have collectively developed more than 300 chip designs for fabrication at SCL, Mohali, and advanced foundries abroad, while recording over 4 crore hours of chip-design tool usage. By enabling shared access to otherwise capital-intensive tools and services, this initiative has lowered entry barriers, reduced development costs and accelerated chip innovation, creating the world's largest user base for a centralized chip-design facility.

An Alliance for the Chip Age

India's semiconductor push is no longer just a domestic story. On the fifth day of the India AI Impact Summit 2026, India formally joined the Pax Silica coalition. The coalition brings together the United States and other partner nations, focused on securing the global silicon supply chain. Its goal is to secure the full "silicon stack", from critical minerals and fabrication to advanced AI systems and deployment infrastructure. The mission is simple. Keep supply chains out of too few hands. Resist economic coercion. Keep the technologies that will define this century in the hands of open, democratic nations. For India, this is proof its semiconductor ambitions now reach well beyond its own borders.

Where It All Meets

This is what makes SEMICON India 2026 more than an exhibition. Over three days at Yashobhoomi, more than 600 exhibitors, 300 international companies will fill 15,000 square metres of space and 150+ renowned speakers sharing knowledge and wisdom . Six country pavilions and 12 state pavilions will sit alongside a startup showcase, a student hackathon, a workforce development pavilion and Women forum , each one a small window into a piece of the ecosystem India has spent five years building.

A chip takes years to design and months to fabricate, but its footprint lasts far longer, inside every phone, every car, every hospital equipment it powers. Every one of those devices in your life today depends on someone, somewhere, having built that chip first. SEMICON India 2026 is India's declaration that it intends to be that someone. Not tomorrow. Starting now.

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Securing Farmers' Future with Dignity

7 Years of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana

Published on: September 11, 2026

For seven years, PM-KMY has helped small and marginal farmers look towards old age with greater financial security and dignity. Launched in 2019, the scheme offers a minimum assured **pension of ₹3,000 per month** from the age of 60. By February 2026, **over 24.96 lakh farmers have enrolled** under the scheme across the country. **Haryana leads with around 5.75 lakh enrolments,** followed by **Bihar with over 3.46 lakh.** Since 2019, **₹540.66 crore** has been **utilised** to support the scheme's implementation and outreach, as of February 2026. Its reach reflects a growing awareness of the importance of social security among farming communities. PM-KMY stands as a continuing effort to make farmers' later years more secure and dignified.

7 Years of PM-KMY: Looking Beyond the Years of Farming

For generations, India's farmers have nurtured the nation's food security, dedicating themselves tirelessly to the fields. As they grow older, the Government recognises that their years of hard work deserve the reward of security and dignity. This is particularly significant for small and marginal farmers who may have limited savings to rely on in their later years.

With this vision, the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY)** was launched on 12th September 2019. The scheme offers eligible landholding Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs), both male and female, the assurance of a steady monthly pension from the age of 60. The intervention seeks to ensure their golden years are met with stability and peace of mind.

Since its launch, PM-KMY has emerged as an important pillar of social security for the farming community. **On 12th September 2026, the scheme marks seven years of its journey**. Over these seven years, the scheme has steadily expanded its reach among farmers across the country. It reflects the government's continued commitment to ensuring that farmers can look towards their later years with greater financial security and dignity.

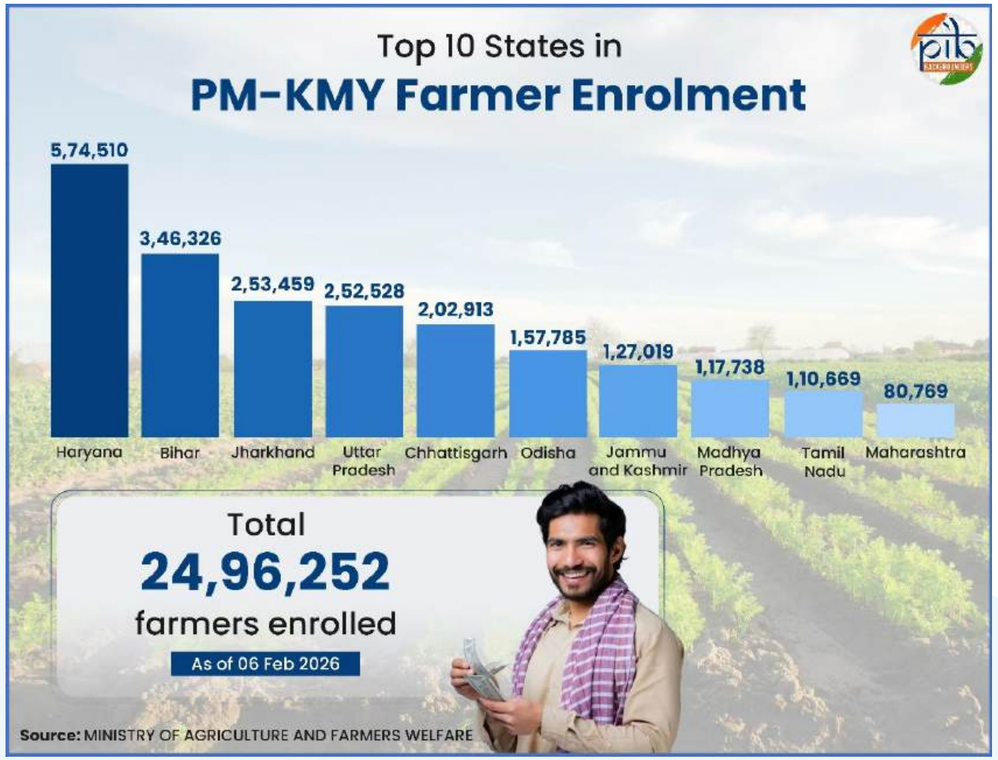
Impact: Expanding the Social Security Footprint

The journey of PM-KMY is reflected not only in its seven-year milestone, but also in the growing number of farmers it has brought within its social security framework. The promise of social security has increasingly found resonance among farming communities, with PM-KMY drawing **24,96,252 enrolments** by 06 February 2026.

The impact is particularly visible in the scheme's **state-wise spread. Haryana leads with around 5.75 lakh enrolled farmers**, followed by **Bihar with over 3.46 lakh. Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh** have each crossed **2.5 lakh enrolments**, while **Chhattisgarh** has recorded over **2 lakh**. Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra further strengthen the scheme's national footprint.

Behind this expanding reach lies sustained public investment. **Since 2019, ₹540.66 crore has been utilised nationwide under PM-KMY** as of February 2026, supporting its continued implementation and outreach.

From a social security measure introduced for farmers' old-age protection, PM-KMY has grown into a nationwide safety net. It brings the promise of financial security closer to millions who spend their working lives securing India's food security.



A Pension Shield for Farmers' Golden Years

The **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY)** is a **Central Sector Scheme** administered by the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.** The scheme is implemented in partnership with the **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).**

PM-KMY is a **voluntary and contributory old-age pension scheme** designed to provide financial security to **small and marginal farmers** during their later years. Under the scheme, eligible subscribers receive a **minimum assured pension of ₹3,000 per month after attaining the age of 60 years.**

The scheme also provides **family pension support** after the subscriber's death. If a subscriber passes away while receiving the pension, the spouse is entitled to a **family pension equal to 50% of the subscriber's pension**. This amounts to **₹1,500 per month.** The benefit is available exclusively to the spouse and applies only if the spouse is not already a beneficiary of PM-KMY.

The scheme also provides an option in case a subscriber **dies before attaining the age of 60 years.** If the beneficiary has made regular contributions, the spouse may **join and continue the scheme** by making the prescribed regular contributions. Alternatively, the spouse may **exit the scheme** as per the exit and withdrawal provisions.

Who Can Benefit from PM-KMY?

The scheme is open to **small and marginal farmers throughout the country with cultivable landholdings of up to two hectares.** Farmers must be **between 18 and 40 years of age** to enrol. To qualify, their names must appear in the **land records of the respective States or Union Territories as on 1 August 2019.** They must not fall under the scheme's exclusion criteria.

Exclusion Criteria: Who Is Not Eligible for PM-KMY?

While the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana (PM-KMY) is designed as a broad social safety net for Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs), specific categories of individuals are explicitly excluded to ensure benefits reach those with minimal old-age financial coverage.

1. **Farmers Covered Under Other Social Security & Pension Schemes**

Farmers who are already enrolled in other statutory or central social security programs are not eligible to join PM-KMY:

- Subscribers to statutory schemes such as the **National Pension Scheme (NPS), Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)** scheme**, or Employees' Fund Organization** scheme.
- Beneficiaries of the **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan Yojana (PM-SYM)**.

- Beneficiaries of the **Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana (PM-LVM)**

2. **Categories of Higher Economic Status**

To target support toward vulnerable farming families, individuals and families meeting any of the following higher economic indicators are excluded:

- **Institutional Landholders:** All institutional landholding entities.
- **Constitutional Post Holders:** Former and present holders of constitutional posts.
- **Public Representatives:** Former and present Ministers or State Ministers, Members of Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha, Members of State Legislative Assemblies or Councils, Mayors of Municipal Corporations, and Chairpersons of District Panchayats.
- **Government & Public Sector Employees:** Serving or retired officers and employees of Central/ State Government Ministries, Departments, or field units, Central or State Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs), attached or autonomous institutions, as well as regular employees of Local Bodies.

    - **Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS), Class IV, and Group D** employees are **exempted** from this exclusion and remain eligible for PM-KMY.

- **Income Tax Payers:** All individuals who paid Income Tax in the last assessment year.
- **Registered Professionals:** Practicing professionals such as **Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants (CAs), and Architects** registered with professional bodies.

3. **Verification & Self-Declaration**

Eligibility verification for PM-KMY relies primarily on self-declaration by the applicant. State or Union Territory Governments certify eligibility based on these self-declarations. If an applicant is found to have submitted an incorrect or false declaration, they become ineligible for financial benefits under the scheme, the Central Government's matching contribution is stopped, and subscriber contributions are refunded without interest.

A Shared Contribution for a Secure Future

PM-KMY follows a **shared contribution model**, under which the farmer and the Central Government contribute equally to the pension fund. Farmers make a monthly contribution throughout their working years, while the Government makes an **equal matching contribution**.

The **farmer's monthly contribution** ranges from **₹55 to ₹200**, depending on the age at which the farmer joins the scheme. Thus, younger entrants contribute a lower amount each month, while those joining at a later age contribute a higher amount, as mentioned below:

Entry Age (in Years)	Superannuation Age (in Years)r	Member's contribution (Rs.)	Government's contribution (Rs.)	Total contribution (Rs.)
18	60	55	55	110
19	60	58	58	116
20	60	61	61	122
21	60	64	64	128
22	60	68	68	136
23	60	72	72	144
24	60	76	76	152
25	60	80	80	160
26	60	85	85	170
27	60	90	90	180
28	60	95	95	190
29	60	100	100	200

30	60	105	105	210
31	60	110	110	220
32	60	120	120	240
33	60	130	130	260
34	60	140	140	280
35	60	150	150	300
36	60	160	160	320
37	60	170	170	340
38	60	180	180	360
39	60	190	190	380
40	60	200	200	400

The farmer's contribution is **automatically debited from the bank account linked to the scheme.** This ensures regular monthly contributions towards the pension fund. At the time of enrolment, the farmer provides an **auto-debit mandate**. It authorises the deduction of the applicable monthly contribution from the linked bank account.

Eligible Small and Marginal Farmers can also opt to use their **PM-KISAN benefits for voluntary contributions** towards PM-KMY. For this purpose, the farmer submits an **enrolment-cum-auto-debit mandate.** It authorizes automatic deduction of the contribution from the bank account into which PM-KISAN benefits are credited.

Enrolment: A Simple Digital Process

PM-KMY provides eligible Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) with a **simple, paperless enrolment process** through the nearest Common Service Centre (CSC). Farmers need to carry their **Aadhaar card, bank account details and mobile number for OTP verification.**

At the CSC, the **Village Level Entrepreneur (VLE)** verifies the farmer's details and completes online registration. The farmer signs the mandate form. At this step, the **first contribution is processed digitally.**

After successful registration, the farmer receives a **Pension Account Number and pension card.** The details are forwarded to Life Insurance Corporation, which manages the pension fund and pension payouts. Subsequent contributions are **auto-debited from the farmer's bank account.**

Farmers can choose **monthly, quarterly, four-monthly or half-yearly** contribution options, providing flexibility according to their financial cycles. This process enables farmers to complete enrolment digitally at their convenience, while ensuring that their contributions and pension records are maintained systematically.

A Continuing Commitment to Farmers' Well-Being

Seven years of PM-KMY reflect a sustained effort to strengthen social security for India's small and marginal farmers. Launched in 2019, the scheme has steadily expanded its reach across the country, **bringing old-age income security closer to farming families.** Its simple, paperless enrolment process and flexible contribution options have made it easier for eligible farmers to participate. More importantly, PM-KMY looks beyond farmers' productive years by providing a dependable pension after the age of 60. The journey of PM-KMY is therefore not only about enrolment and coverage. It represents a wider commitment to protecting farmers' dignity and financial stability in their later years. By building a pension safety net, **the scheme strengthens the promise of greater security for those who spend their working lives securing India's food security**.

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From Awareness to Ownership

Building a People's Movement for River Conservation

Published on: September 01, 2026

For centuries, the Ganga has been woven into India's civilisation, culture and everyday life.

It has nurtured communities, supported livelihoods and inspired traditions across generations. Over time, however, growing cities, pollution and unplanned urbanisation placed increasing pressure on the river. This highlighted the need to strengthen its ecological health and people's relationship with it. Reviving the Ganga, therefore, calls for more than cleaning its water. This broader understanding shapes the **Namami Gange Programme (NGP),** launched in 2014.

The programme is an Integrated Conservation Mission for the Ganga and its tributaries. It brings together pollution abatement, conservation and river rejuvenation. NGP's work extends across sewage treatment, riverfront development,afforestation,etc.Scientific monitoring and public awareness further strengthen this integrated effort. Yet, lasting transformation depends on a partner that no programme can do without. That partner is the community itself. This belief gave rise to **Jan Ganga,** the public participation pillar of Namami Gange. Inspired by the vision of **Jan Bhagidari,** it places people at the centre of conservation. This is where Namami Gange becomes a story of people. A story that moves from awareness to participation, and ultimately towards ownership.

United by the River: Celebrating Stories of Participation

A river can bring people together in ways that extend beyond environmental action. Its banks become spaces where communities meet, participate and celebrate their shared connection. Jan Ganga creates such opportunities through cleanliness drives, plantation campaigns and educational initiatives. These activities turn conservation into a collective experience rather than an isolated responsibility.

One of the clearest expressions of this participation under NGP is river cleanliness. The **Ganga Swachhta Pakhwada** has become an important platform for spreading this message. Observed annually from **16th to 31st March,** it is a fortnight-long event that reaches thousands of people across the five main-stem Ganga basin States. These include **Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.** It also covers the **National Capital Territory of Delhi** and towns along Ganga's tributaries. Students, volunteers, community groups and other stakeholders participate in coordinated efforts to strengthen public engagement with river conservation.

This momentum is further sustained through regular weekly cleanliness drives along the **Yamuna** in Delhi. These drives contribute directly to cleaner river stretches and surrounding areas. Together, such efforts are helping make river conservation a regular civic practice rather than an activity limited to designated occasions.

As communities care for cleaner river stretches, their attention also extends to riverbanks. Plantation has consequently become an integral part of public participation under Namami Gange. Healthy vegetation helps stabilise riverbanks and reduce soil erosion. These ecological benefits strengthen the resilience of rivers and their surrounding habitats.

Complementing this, the **'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam'** campaign has deepened participation in plantation activities. The campaign encourages people to plant trees as heartfelt tributes to their mothers. It also connects personal emotion with a shared responsibility towards environmental conservation. The powerful connection has encouraged individuals, families and communities to participate with renewed purpose. This spirit is also reflected in the way **World Environment Day** brings citizens together. Through plantation drives, awareness activities and community initiatives, the occasion further strengthens public participation in environmental conservation.

A movement also becomes stronger when its values reach the next generation. This makes youth engagement an important part of Jan Ganga. Schools, colleges and universities now offer diverse avenues for environmental learning and creative expression. Students explore river-related themes through essays, paintings, posters, debates and interactive awareness programmes.

Experiential activities provide opportunities to connect classroom knowledge with real-world ecological challenges. **University Ganga Clubs** extend this involvement through lectures, field visits, volunteering and outreach initiatives. Eco-clubs, NCC units and educational institutions provide additional platforms for sustained participation. Together, these efforts foster informed young citizens committed to protecting rivers beyond textbooks and classrooms.

The Namami Gange Programme has integrated river conservation into several annual observances.

These occasions keep people connected with rivers throughout the year. Among them, **Ganga Utsav** stands out as a flagship platform for community engagement. It commemorates the Ganga's recognition as India's National River. This brings together performances, exhibitions, art contests and public dialogues, creating spaces for participation and shared expression. Other observances, including **Swachhta Hi Seva** and **International Day of Yoga,** further expand opportunities for public involvement. They reinforce the enduring cultural relationship between people and rivers.

A deeper connection with rivers often emerges through direct experience rather than awareness alone. The Namami Gange Programme has created innovative initiatives to bring the spirit of river conservation into public life. A notable example was the **Border Security Force's all-women river rafting expedition** along the Ganga. The journey covered the river from its upper reaches to the sea, showcasing courage, collaboration and environmental commitment. It presented the Gangaas more than a natural resource. Interactions with students, residents and young volunteers created spaces for conversation.

Across the Ganga basin, **Ganga Praharis** have become committed community volunteers supporting conservation efforts at the grassroots. They work with residents to spread environmental awareness, encourage responsible practices and safeguard local biodiversity. **Ganga Seva Doots** complement these efforts by extending outreach across schools, institutions and neighbourhoods. Through awareness drives and local initiatives, they help bring river conservation closer to everyday community life. Protecting aquatic life, restoring habitats and maintaining ecological balance further strengthens people's connection with the river. Together, these volunteer networks reflect the **spirit of Jan Bhagidari** through citizen-led action. Their efforts demonstrate how informed communities can become enduring guardians of rivers and their surrounding ecosystems.

Creating a Culture of River Stewardship

The most lasting legacy of river rejuvenation is not only a healthier

river, but a stronger relationship with it. Infrastructure can restore river health, scientific interventions can strengthen ecosystems and technology can improve monitoring and management. Yet the long-term future of rivers depends upon something that cannot be created through engineering alone. Through Jan Ganga, the Namami Gange Programme has demonstrated that each effort contributes to a larger transformation. It is far more than an environmental mission. Guided by the vision of Jan Bhagidari, it shows how collective action can become the foundation of sustainable development.

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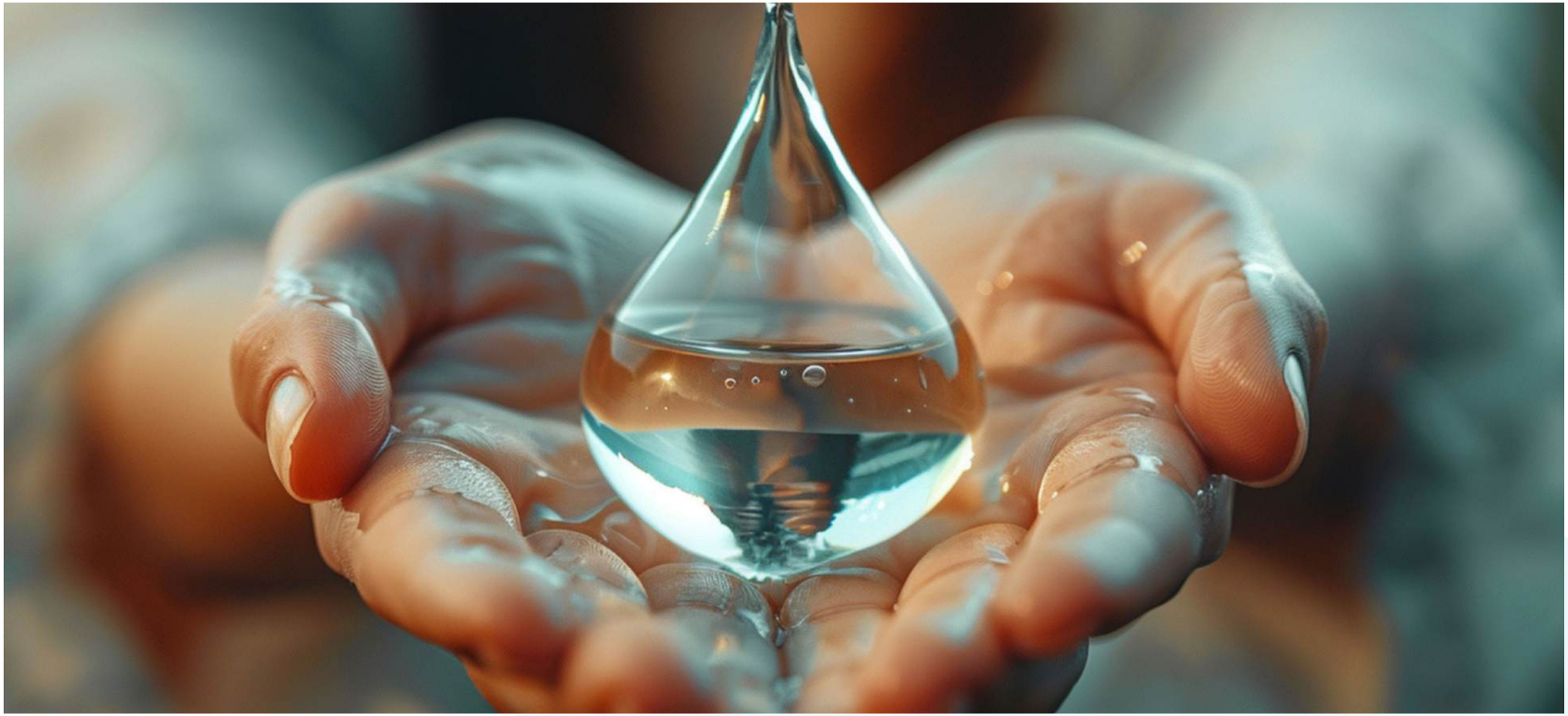

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Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme

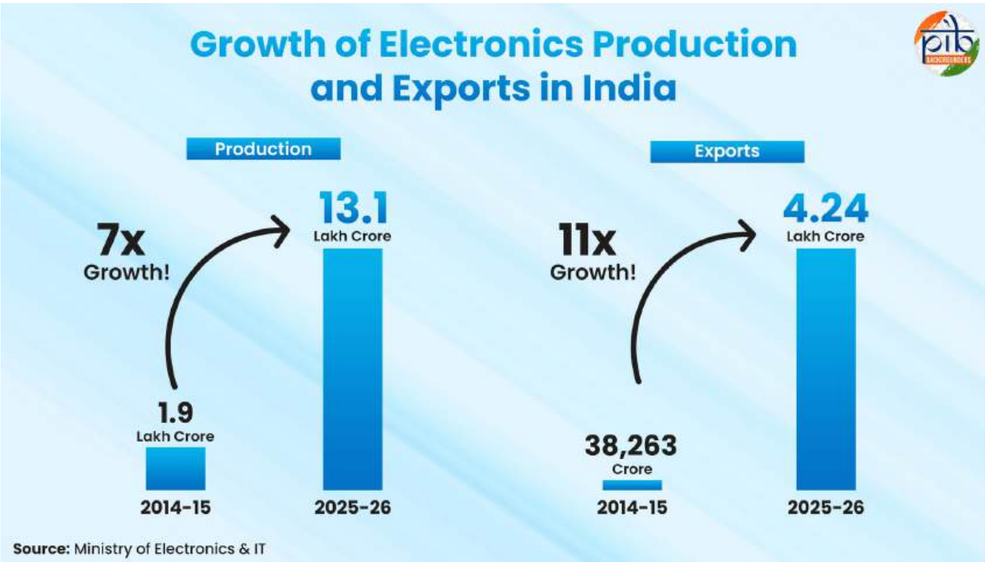
Building India's Electronics Backbone

Published on: September 17, 2026

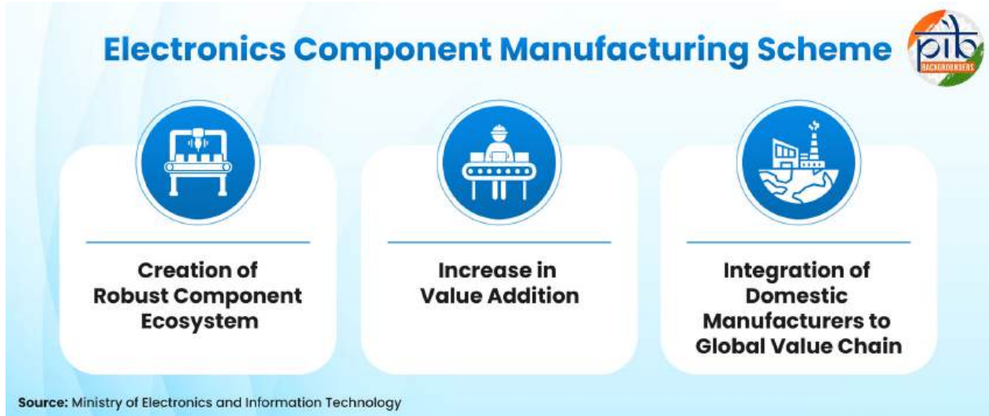
ECMS for making India self-reliant in the electronics supply chain

Electronics have become integral to modern economies and everyday life. They power communication, healthcare, transport, finance, manufacturing and digital infrastructure. From smartphones and automobiles to telecom networks and industrial systems, electronics drive technological progress and economic competitiveness. A strong domestic electronics ecosystem is therefore critical for technological resilience, economic security and national self-reliance.

India's electronics manufacturing sector has witnessed remarkable expansion over the past decade. Electronics production increased from ₹1.9 lakh crore in 2014–15 to ₹13.1 lakh crore in 2025–26. Electronics exports grew from ₹38,000+ crore to ₹4.24 lakh crore during the same period. This sustained growth has established a strong foundation for India's electronics manufacturing ambitions. The next priority is to deepen this ecosystem through domestic component manufacturing, higher value addition and stronger supply-chain resilience.



The Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) is designed to drive this transition. Several critical components and materials remain import-dependent. These include printed circuit boards, camera and display modules, connectors, capacitors, lithium-ion cells and rare-earth magnets. ECMS supports domestic manufacturing across components, sub-assemblies, supply-chain products and related capital goods. It seeks to increase domestic value addition and reduce import dependence. The scheme also aims to strengthen resilience across India's electronics supply chain. By building capabilities deeper within the electronics value chain, ECMS aims to convert India's manufacturing momentum into a self-reliant and globally competitive electronics ecosystem.



SEMICON 2026: Catalyzing India's Semiconductor Ecosystem

Semiconductors form the core of modern electronic systems. Building a strong semiconductor ecosystem is therefore essential for technological resilience, economic security and national self-reliance. Recognising this strategic importance, the Government of India is strengthening the semiconductor

ecosystem through policy support, infrastructure and global partnerships. In this endeavour, SEMICON India 2026, themed "Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem," was inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, on 17 September 2026. Being held from 17 to 19 September 2026, the SEMICON 2026 brings together global industry leaders, policymakers, investors, academia and start-ups. It provides a platform to advance India's semiconductor ambitions and strengthen the ecosystem across the entire value chain.ecosystem through policy support, infrastructure and global partnerships. In this endeavours, SEMICON India 2026, themed "Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem," was inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, on 17 September 2026. Being held from 17 to 19 September 2026, the SEMICON 2026 brings together global industry leaders, policymakers, investors, academia and start-ups. It provides a platform to advance India's semiconductor ambitions and strengthen the ecosystem across the entire value chain. Click To Explore Agenda

ECMS Progress So Far: From Policy to Production

The Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme is accelerating the development of a robust and deep-rooted 'Swadeshi' electronics value chain, moving beyond assembly to domestic manufacturing of critical components and essential raw materials.

- ECMS was notified on **8 April 2025**. It was launched with an initial outlay of **₹22,919 crore.**
- The scheme has a six-year tenure, with an optional one-year gestation period.
- Capex Incentive is available for Five (5) years
- The Union Budget 2026–27 increased the ECMS outlay to **₹40,000 crore**. The enhanced allocation will further deepen domestic electronics component manufacturing.
- As of August 2026, **106 projects** have been approved across 15 States.
- These projects cover 30 electronic domain products and involve an approved investment of ₹69,548 crore.
- Production has already ongoing at 38 approved plants. Another 16 projects are at advanced stages of construction or machinery installation.
- The approved projects are expected to **generate ₹ 5.34 lakh crore** in production.
- They are also projected to create **74,628 direct jobs** and **2.5 lakh** indirect jobs.
- ECMS is strengthening domestic capacity across critical electronics components and materials. Production capacity now meets or exceeds domestic demand across several product categories.

Government Strategic Initiatives to Boost Electronics Manufacturing

- **National Policy on Electronics 2019 (NPE 2019):** Set the overarching objective of positioning India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM). This includes developing core components and an enabling environment for globally competitive manufacturing.
- **ProductionLinkedIncentiveScheme (PLI)** for Large Scale Electronics

Manufacturing: Introduced performance-linked incentives of 4%–6% on incremental sales for eligible target segments. The focus is on scaling domestic electronics and mobile manufacturing.

- **Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS) and Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0)**: SPECS provided a 25% capital-expenditure incentive for electronic components, semiconductor/display fabrication, ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging) units, specialised sub-assemblies and capital goods. EMC 2.0 supported world-class manufacturing infrastructure, common facilities and Plug-and-Play capacity.

- **PLI for IT Hardware:** Offers production-linked incentives to boost domestic manufacturing and attract investment. PLI 2.0 builds on this to strengthen the manufacturing ecosystem, cut import reliance, and position India as a trusted global supply-chain hub.

- **Semicon India Programme:** The ₹76,000-crore Semicon 1.0 programme created a broader semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem. It complements electronics manufacturing with support for fabs, packaging, testing, design and related capabilities. Semicon 2.0 was approved in July 2026 with a ₹1,27,500 crore outlay. It aims to scale India into a global semiconductor hub.

- **Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC) Scheme:** This offers financial assistance of up to 50% of the project cost with a ceiling of ₹50 crore for every 100 acres of land for greenfield projects.

- **Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP):** Establishes a structured, tariff-based approach to deepen domestic value addition in cellular mobile phones and their key sub-assemblies.

- **Electronics Development Fund (EDF):** Serves as a Fund of Funds investing in venture funds (Daughter Funds) to supply risk capital and promote market-driven innovation, product design, and startup growth in ESDM and IT.

Towards a Global Electronics Manufacturing Hub

The Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme is helping translate India's electronics manufacturing ambitions into investment, production and employment. As projects move from approvals to construction and commercial production, ECMS is broadening the country's manufacturing base, deepening domestic value addition and strengthening integration with global value chains. With electronics exports already emerging as a major export category, India is targeting a **$500 billion (₹47.75 lakh crore) domestic electronics manufacturing ecosystem and $150 billion (₹14.33 lakh crore) in electronics exports by 2030,** reinforcing its ambition to become a globally competitive electronics manufacturing and export hub.

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Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector

“Strengthening India’s Decentralized Grain Storage”

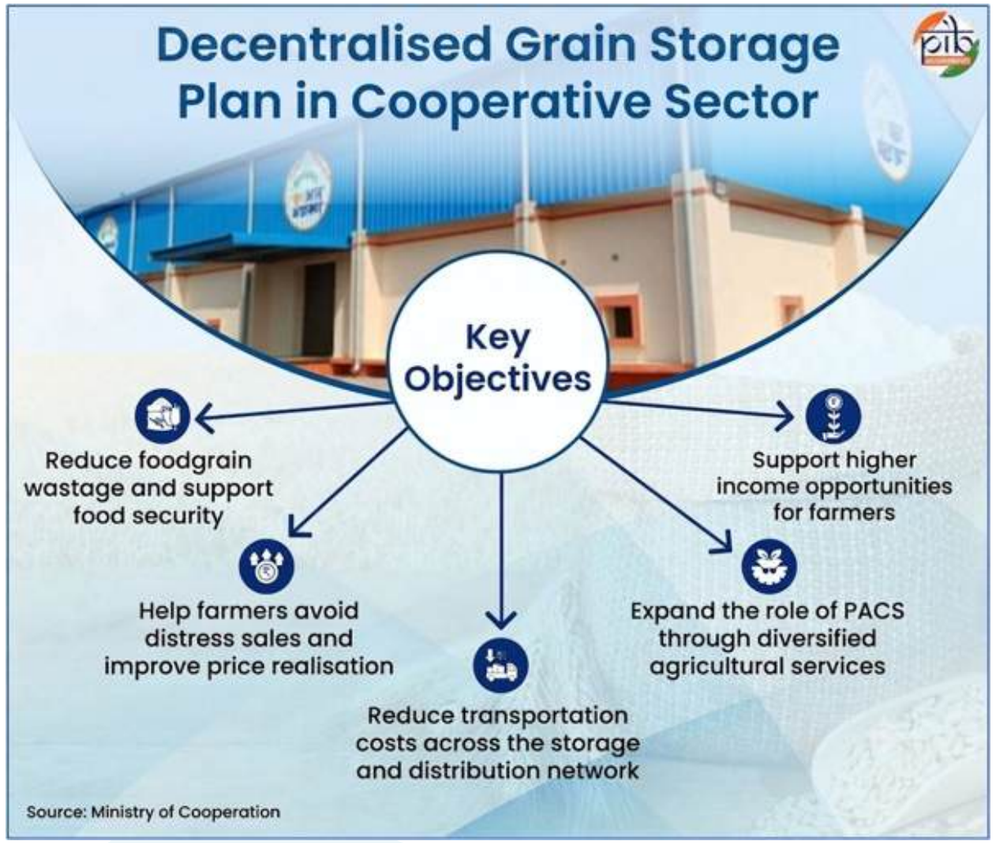
Published on: September 03, 2026

India's expanding agricultural production and food security efforts have increased the importance of decentralised grain storage infrastructure across the country. The Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector, launched in 2023, is designed to improve storage, processing, procurement, and distribution systems through Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS). The Plan adopts an integrated, cooperative-led approach by converging existing government schemes. It is supported through institutional coordination and financial support mechanisms. Beginning with pilot projects across 11 states/PACS with 9,750 MT of storage capacity, the initiative has expanded steadily. As of July 2026, godown construction had been completed in 313 PACS across the country, creating more than 1.80 LMT of storage capacity. The framework also emphasises quality standards, transparency and operational viability.

Building Storage Capacity for a Growing Agricultural Economy

India's grain storage system has evolved through a combination of traditional storage practices, decentralised local systems, and modern infrastructure. This integrated approach has strengthened food preservation and supported the country's food security. Traditional storage methods such as earthen bins, underground pits, and mud plastered storage structures continue alongside warehouses and silo-based infrastructure. However, rising agricultural production and expanding food security requirements have increased the need for modern, decentralised storage facilities across the country.

According to the Third Advance Estimates (2025-26), the country's total foodgrain production is estimated at 376.563 million tonnes which is nearly 18.8 million tonnes (5.3 percent) higher than last year's production of 357.732 million tonnes. India also operates one of the world's largest food security programmes under the National Food Security Act, 2013, that covers about 80 crore people. Meeting these requirements depends on a robust network of grain storage facilities. While centralized storage infrastructure managed by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and State agencies remains important, decentralized facilities are equally essential. The Ministry of Cooperation has highlighted the need for storage closer to production centres. These facilities focus on reducing transportation costs between



procurement centres, minimizing foodgrain wastage, and supporting food security.

In this context, the **Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector** was rolled out as a **Pilot Project on 31 May 2023.** The initiative marked an important step towards strengthening decentralised grain storage through cooperatives. Anchored in the cooperative framework, the initiative seeks to:

- reduce foodgrain wastage and strengthen food security,
- provide farmers with greater flexibility to avoid distress sales and secure better price realization,
- reduce transportation costs between procurement centres, warehouses, and Fair Price Shops,
- expand the role of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) through diversification of agricultural

activities (PACS are village-level institutions that provide short-term credit and financial services to rural borrowers, and facilitate the collection of repayments). And,

- support higher income opportunities for farmers.

Integrated Infrastructure and Convergence Framework

The Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector seeks to create integrated agricultural infrastructure at the **PACS level**. The mechanism operates through the convergence of existing government schemes:

- **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) scheme** - Provides financing and interest subvention support for the creation and upgradation of post-harvest infrastructure.
- **Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure scheme (AMI)** - Provides back-ended capital subsidy for the construction of foodgrain storage facilities.
- **Sub Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)** - Facilitates the establishment of Custom Hiring Centres and access to agricultural machinery.
- **Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises scheme (PMFME)** - Promotes the formalisation and growth of micro food processing units.

The convergence of these schemes enables PACS to evolve into integrated rural service hubs, strengthening agricultural infrastructure, enhancing value chains, and improving farmers' incomes.

Key facilities and services under the Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector include:

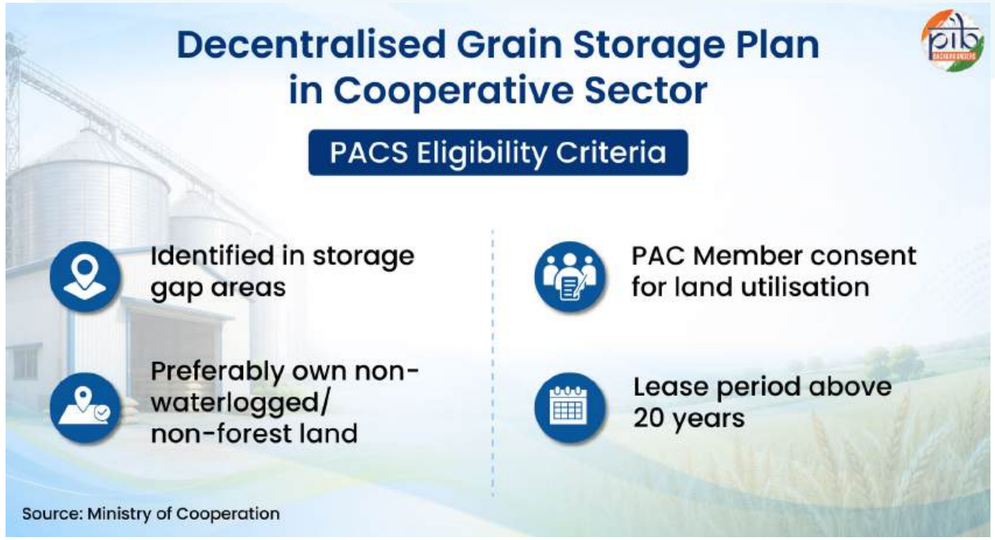
- **Custom Hiring Centres** enable PACS to **procure agricultural machinery** for rental to farmers. Equipment may include tractors, harvesters, tillers, and other farm machinery.
- **Fair Price Shops** facilitate **grain distribution** and the sale of processed food products within local communities.
- **Primary processing units** undertake **processing** activities such as grain cleaning, sorting, and drying, thereby improving the quality and marketability of the produce.
- **Procurement centres** support **grain procurement** by PACS for State Agencies and FCI.
- The Plan provides for **silo-based storage infrastructure** of **50 metric tonnes (MT), 100 MT, and 200 MT capacities** under the cooperative storage model.

The implementation framework also lays down institutional and eligibility criteria for PACS participating under the Plan.

Selection of PACS and Institutional Framework

According to the **"Margdarshika"** (Standard Operating Procedure), **PACS are identified and approved by District Cooperative Development Committees (DCDCs).** PACS are selected in areas with storage demand.

The Plan also sets out land-related conditions for infrastructure development. PACS should preferably **have their own land**. The land **should not be waterlogged** or **located in forest areas.** The Consent of PACS members is required for the utilization of land. For leased land, the lease period **should be longer than 20 years.**



Implementation Mechanism:

The **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)** is the implementing agency of the Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector. Implementation is supported through coordination at the national, state and district levels. At the national level, an **Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC)** monitors overall implementation of the Plan. **The National Level Coordination Committee (NLCC)** supports operational coordination among participating institutions and agencies. **State Cooperative Development Committees (SCDCs)** and **District Cooperative Development Committees (DCDCs)** support implementation and coordination at the state and district levels.

Financial Support and Project Viability

The Government has taken several measures to improve project viability under the Plan. These include an enhancement of the subsidy under the **AMI scheme** from **25 percent to 33.33 percent**, a reduction in the margin money requirement from **20 percent to 10 percent**, and a revision of cost norms for godown construction.

Fina**ncial support is also available through interest subvention and credit support mechanisms under eligible schemes. Under the AMI scheme, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** serves as the subsidy-channelizing agency for eligible projects. **State Cooperative Banks and District Central Cooperative Banks** function as the primary lending institutions for PACS. These institutions are responsible for sanctioning and disbursing credit under the implementation framework.

The Plan also utilizes **NABARD's special refinance facility** to reduce the financial burden on participating cooperatives. When combined with the **3 percent interest subvention** available under the **AIF**, the effective loan interest rate for PACS is **reduced to 1 percent** under the Plan.

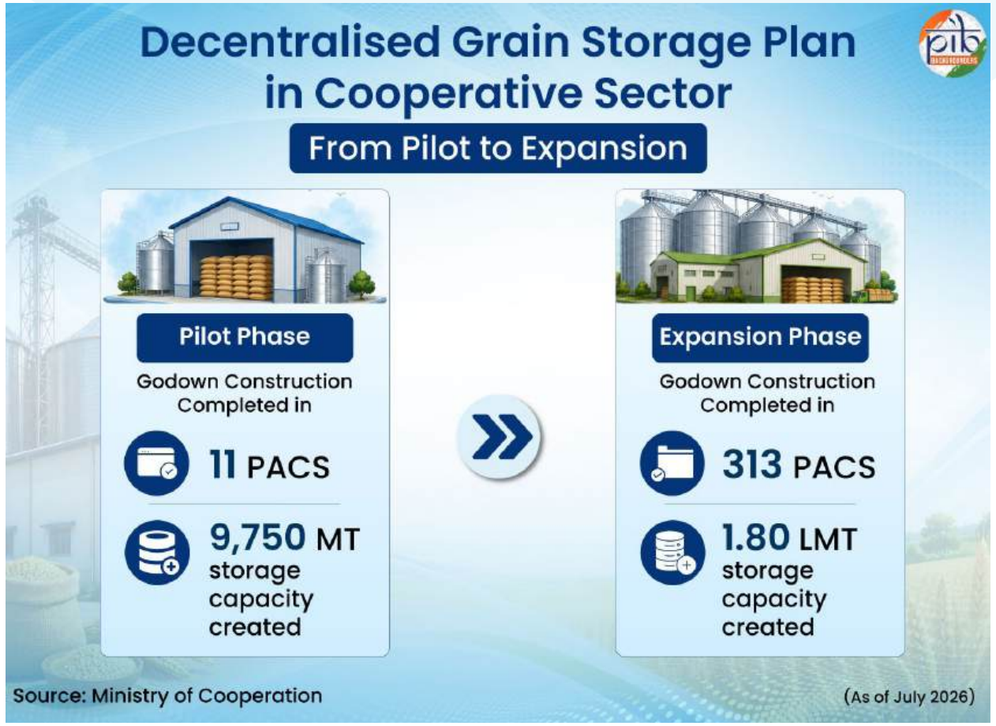
FCI has also been authorized to provide assured hiring of eligible godowns created under the Plan, subject to prescribed conditions. This measure enhances the financial viability of storage projects and encourages greater participation by PACS.

Following the operationalization of the structure, implementation progressed through a phased expansion strategy.

From Pilot to Expansion

The Plan has progressed through a phased implementation strategy, beginning with pilot projects and moving towards scaled expansion. Under the pilot phase, godown construction was completed in **11 PACS across 11 states**, creating **9,750 MT** of storage capacity. The pilot projects were implemented in **Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Assam, Karnataka, and Tripura.** These pilots have provided an important operational foundation and demonstrated the feasibility of local storage infrastructure at the cooperative level.

Building on this foundation, implementation has expanded significantly. As of July 2026, **1012 PACS or cooperative societies** had been identified under the Plan. As of July 2026, construction of godowns had also been completed in **313 PACS**, creating more than **1.80 LMT** of storage capacity.



This progress reflects a transition from conceptualization towards scaled execution.

Cooperative Storage in Action: Nerpingalai PACS

Nerpingalai PACS in Amravati, Maharashtra, has constructed a 3,000 MT warehouse under the Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector. The project received support under the Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure (AMI) and Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) schemes. With NABARD refinance support, the effective loan interest rate for the project was reduced to 1 percent. Around 300 farmers are storing nearly 32,000 bags of soybeans in the warehouse. The society has also provided advances of about Rs. 4.50 crore
against the stored produce, helping farmers access liquidity
and reduce distress sales. The PACS is expected to earn about Rs. 7.68 lakh annually through rental income and nearly Rs. 54 lakh through annual interest income. The warehouse has improved storage access for farmers in surrounding areas and strengthened the income base of the cooperative society. The initiative has also created local employment opportunities. It demonstrates how decentralised storage infrastructure can support farmer support systems and rural cooperative institutions.

Nerpingali PACS warehouse and society member Source: Ministry of Cooperation

Quality Standards, Branding, and Transparency

The Plan provides uniform branding guidelines for storage infrastructure created under the scheme. Each storage structure must display the approved grain storage logo and the prescribed colour scheme. The objective is to create a recognizable identity for the initiative and strengthen awareness among stakeholders.

Grain Storage Logo

Quality Assurance:

The model lays down quality standards for warehouse construction and maintenance. Storage structures should comply with **Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA)** norms and should be suited to

local environmental conditions. Durable, corrosion-resistant materials are to be used in construction, along with proper ventilation systems to prevent spoilage and maintain grain quality.

Regular inspections and quality audits are required to ensure compliance with design specifications and safety standards. PACS members are expected to monitor project progress, while **Project Management Consultants (PMC)** share updates on construction activities and expenditure to enhance transparency and accountability under the implementation approach.

These measures are intended to ensure that infrastructure created under the Plan remains durable, accountable, and aligned with prescribed quality standards over the long term.

Strengthening India's Decentralized Grain Storage Network

The Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector represents an integrated approach towards improving agricultural infrastructure through cooperatives. By linking storage, processing, procurement, and distribution at the PACS level, the Plan strengthens foodgrain management closer to production centres.

The initiative also reinforces food security, reduces wastage, and strengthens rural cooperative institutions. The phased expansion of the Plan is supported through the convergence of existing schemes, institutional coordination, and financial support mechanisms. The framework reflects a cooperative-led approach towards strengthening decentralized agricultural infrastructure and long-term foodgrain management systems in the country.

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Reclaiming the Land Beneath the Waste

Transforming India's Legacy Dumpsites

Published on: September 21, 2026

Behind every clean street in urban India lies a chain of infrastructure and systems that manage the waste generated by cities. Every large Indian city generates waste that comes from households, markets, institutions, commercial establishments and public spaces. Much of this waste is directed to dumpsites, where it accumulates over time and forms legacy waste sites. To tackle this challenge, the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) was launched in October 2014.

Over 12 years, SBM-U has been building infrastructure beyond basic sanitation. Its focus now extends to managing urban waste and creating better spaces for cities to live, work and gather. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0, launched in October 2021, cities across India are undertaking the transformation of legacy dumpsites into productive and environmentally sustainable spaces. The scale of this effort is reflected in the 3.66 crore metric tonnes of legacy waste remediated between January and December 2025. During this time, 459 Urban Local Bodies across 29 States achieved complete dumpsite remediation. The Lakshya Zero Dumpsite initiative under this mission is driving a structured and time-bound effort to scientifically remediate such sites across States and Urban Local Bodies.

Gorakhpur

In Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, a 40-acre site once stood as a towering mound of accumulated municipal waste. For seven years, it served as the city's primary waste disposal site. The growing waste mound affected the surrounding environment and created difficult living conditions for nearby residents. The site was scientifically remediated through biomining, with around 400 tonnes of waste processed every day. The process separated the accumulated waste into refuse-derived fuel, black soil, recyclables and inert material. Recovered black soil was used for filling low-lying areas, while refuse-derived fuel went to cement industries for co-processing. Gradually, the waste mound gave way to reclaimed land.

Image 1: Dumpsite in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh

The transformation continued beyond clearing the accumulated waste. The entire 40-acre site was developed into the **Kachre Se Kanchan Rapti Eco Park.** The new public space now includes green lawns, walking and jogging tracks, and a children's play area. An open gym, yoga zone, solar lighting and water conservation structures further expand its public use. Food courts, parking facilities and other amenities have also been incorporated into the park. Several installations made from recycled waste materials highlight the possibilities of resource recovery. The park has also created space for local livelihoods. The women-led self-help group **Shakti Ki Rasoi** operates a restaurant within the park. Today, the park attracts around 500 visitors each day. A site once defined by accumulated waste has thus become a space for recreation and community life.

Delhi

Gorakhpur is not an isolated success. In the national capital, another towering mound is steadily shrinking. The Bhalswa dumpsite, spread over about 70 acres, once held vast quantities of legacy waste. Since July 2022, biomining has been carried out in mission mode continuously at the site.

In September 2025, the annual Swachhata Hi Seva cleanliness campaign was launched nationally from Bhalswa. The site was taken up for accelerated remediation. In November 2025, the Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme (DRAP) was launched. This nationwide, mission-mode initiative fast-tracks the remediation of remaining dumpsites under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0.

Image 2: Dumpsite in Bhalswa, Delhi

As part of DRAP, results are now visible in Bhalswa. By May 2026, more than half of the site had been reclaimed, and by 31 July 2026, 99.07 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste had been remediated.

The work goes beyond removing old waste. Fire-prevention measures, leachate management and other environmental safeguards support safety around the site. Newly awarded work to process fresh waste at the landfill is also being expedited. The goal is to prevent new legacy waste from

building up again.

Nagpur

In Nagpur, the Bhandewadi dumping yard is being reshaped into a working waste-processing facility. As a rapidly growing city of over 30 lakh people, Nagpur generates waste from homes, markets, institutions, and public spaces. A significant share of waste used to go to the Bhandewadi dumping yard, which became a major legacy waste site over time.

Image 3: Bhandewadi dumping yard, Nagpur

The city chose to move from open dumping to scientific waste management. Legacy waste was excavated, segregated, and processed in a systematic way. More than 10 lakh metric tonnes of accumulated waste have been treated, which has enabled the reclamation of acres of valuable land, once locked under waste.

The story did not end with reclamation. The site is now an Integrated Municipal Solid Waste Processing Facility. Here, materials are recovered, waste is composted and waste-derived fuel is produced. Modern machines process the waste, while real-time monitoring and CCTV keep a close watch. Dust control and leachate treatment help protect the surroundings.

The transformation has brought benefits for the city. Dependence on landfills has fallen markedly. Air, water and soil quality have improved, along with public health in surrounding areas. The city has also added composting plants, modular processing units and construction and demolition waste systems. Here, waste is no longer seen as a liability, but as a resource to be recovered.

Raichur

In Raichur, Karnataka, the reclaimed land is taking a different form, with 35 acres of Yakalaspura dumpsite being transformed through scientific legacy waste remediation. Around 62,252 metric tonnes of waste have been processed, reclaiming nearly 22 acres of urban land.

Part of the restored site now supports sustainable land use, including

Image 4: Yakalaspura dumpsite, Raichur, Karnataka

a Miyawaki forest spread across approximately 5-7 acres. It demonstrates how a former dumpsite can be converted into a thriving ecological space. Around 60,000 bamboo and native saplings are being planted to expand green cover, support biodiversity and restore the soil. The plantation began on **5 June 2026,** with the site inaugurated on World Environment Day. The Yakalaspura transformation is more than waste remediation. The initiative is developed around the concept of "Toxic Waste to Ecological Wealth". It demonstrates how reclaimed dumpsite land can support ecological restoration and sustainable urban development.

The Movement beyond Cleanup

A reclaimed dumpsite is more than recovered land. It represents a changing approach to managing the waste generated by cities. Across Gorakhpur, Delhi, Nagpur and Raichur, the pattern is the same. Waste mountains are excavated, sorted and turned back into usable land.

Machines and plants alone cannot make this last. City Solid Waste Action Plans, tracked progress on the SBM-U portal and annual Swachh Survekshan rankings keep the work on course long after the ribbon is cut. Infrastructure and institutions together turn a one-time cleanup into a lasting system. Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban began with sanitation, but it has grown well beyond it. It is now reshaping how cities reclaim land, restore ecology and build public spaces where people live, work and gather.

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Progressing Towards Universal Health Coverage

Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

Published on: September 22 2026

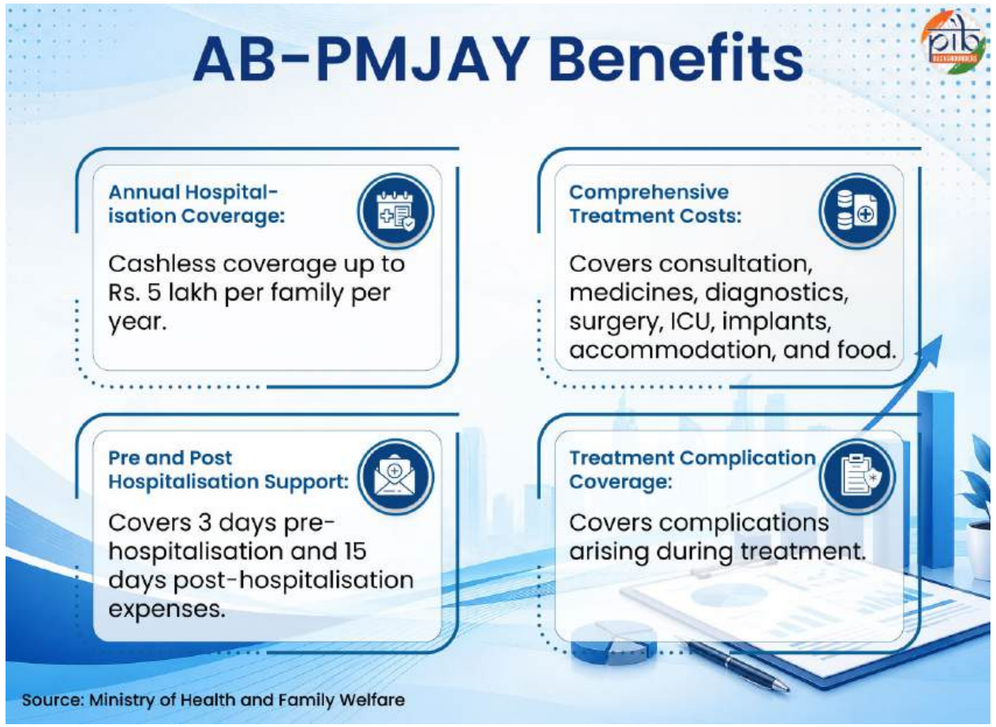
Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri-Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) serves as the flagship financial protection pillar of India's healthcare system, providing annual **cashless hospitalisation coverage** of upto **Rs.5 lakh** per family to economically vulnerable citizens. Marking its **eighth anniversary**, the scheme now covers **about 33% of India's population with Ayushman cards**, having funded **13.25 crore admissions worth Rs. 2.03 lakh crore** and drastically reducing out-of-pocket medical expenses. This inpatient care model works alongside three complementary pillars-Ayushman Arogya Mandirs for primary care, the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission for integrated health IDs, and PM-ABHIM for physical infrastructure-to achieve comprehensive universal health coverage across the nation.

Ensuring Health Coverage for All

Investing in healthcare makes communities more resilient, capable, and productive. **Universal health coverage** is about ensuring everyone, including the most vulnerable families, gets access to affordable, quality healthcare, enabling them to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

The Government of India launched the **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan-Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)** eight years ago on **September 23, 2018,** to achieve **universal health** coverage. It is a public health assurance scheme and covers secondary and tertiary care. It is one of the world's largest public healthcare schemes, with **about 33% of India's population (over 48.51 crore people) already holding Ayushman cards on the scheme's eighth launch anniversary (as of September 21, 2026).**

AB-PMJAY has **served people with treatment worth upto Rs. 2.03 lakh crore** in about 13.25 crore hospital admissions through a network of over 38,000 empanelled public and private hospitals (as on August 31, 2026).



AB-PMJAY is one scheme under Ayushman Bharat that is promoting universal health coverage. The other schemes that are building India's public health infrastructure are: **Ayushman Aarogya Mandirs (AAM), Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission** and **PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM).** Led by AB-PMJAY, these four flagship schemes are strengthening India's public health infrastructure to deliver universal health coverage.

AB PM-JAY: Saving Citizens from Medical Debt

AB PM-JAY aims to save families from catastrophic medical bills. It provides cashless healthcare services for **1,961 procedures across 27 medical specialties.**

In March 2024, the government had also expanded the scheme to include about

37 lakh families of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), anganwadi workers, and anganwadi helpers. As on 21.09.26, more than 44.81 lakh Ayushman cards have been created for ASHAs/AWWs/AWHs under the scheme.

Following this, on September 11, 2024, the Government expanded the scheme to include **all senior citizens aged 70 years and above,** covering about **6 crore senior citizens.** As on 21.09.26, more than 1.36 crore senior citizens have Ayushman Vay Vandana cards.

Empowering Vulnerable Beneficiaries

Beneficiary families are identified based on the **Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011,** using defined deprivation and occupational criteria. The scheme also includes families previously covered under the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY).

Rural Beneficiaries

For rural areas, eligibility under AB PM-JAY is determined based on the deprivation criteria specified in the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC), 2011. Eligible households include those falling under one or more of the following six criteria:

- D1: Households having only one room with kucha walls and kucha roof;
- D2: Households having no adult member between 16 and 59 years of age;
- D3: Female-headed households having no adult male member between 16 and 59 years of age;
- D4: Households having a disabled member and no able-bodied adult member;
- D5: Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe households; and
- D7: Landless households deriving a major part of their income from manual casual labour

Urban Beneficiaries

For urban areas, the following 11 occupational categories of workers are eligible for the scheme:

- Ragpicker
- Beggar
- Domestic worker
- Street vendor/ Cobbler/hawker / other service provider working on streets
- Construction worker/ Plumber/ Mason/ Labour/ Painter/ Welder/ Security guard/ Coolie and other head-load worker
- Sweeper/ Sanitation worker/ Mali
- Home-based worker/ Artisan/ Handicrafts worker/ Tailor
- Transport worker/ Driver/ Conductor/ Helper to drivers and conductors/ Cart puller/ Rickshaw puller
- Shop worker/ Assistant/ Peon in small establishment/ Helper/Delivery assistant / Attendant/ Waiter
- Electrician/ Mechanic/ Assembler/ Repair worker
- Washer-man/ Chowkidar

Additional beneficiary categories covered through specific initiatives

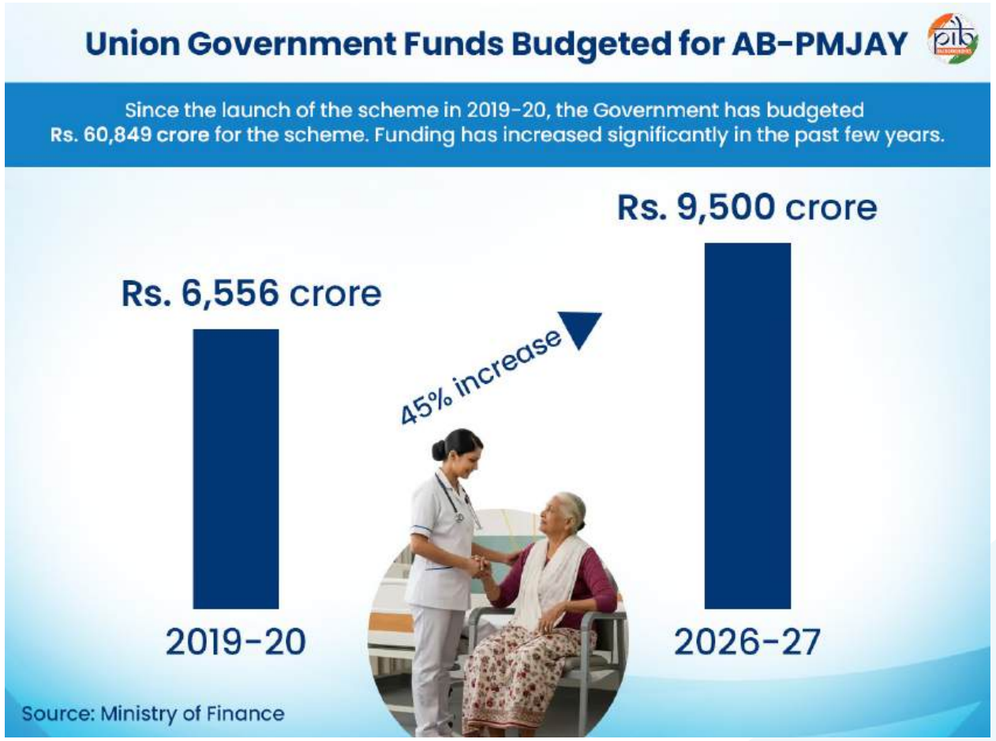
- **Building and Other Construction Workers** (BOCW) and their dependants;
- **Road accident victims** covered under PM-RAHAT;
- **Transgender persons** covered under the Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE) initiative;
- **Eligible children under the PM CARES for Children Scheme** who lost both parents, a surviving parent, a legal guardian, or adoptive parents due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- **Waste pickers and identified sanitation workers** covered under the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme; and
- **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** covered under the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN).

AB-PMJAY Funding Structure and Central Budgeting

Aiding the Ailing Elderly

Birmati, a 65-year-old woman from Haryana's Jind district, suffered a severe fracture in her femoral neck, which connects the hip to the leg. Fortunately for her, she was able to get timely surgery and proper care worth Rs. 44,140 at a district orthopaedic and maternity hospital through the Ayushman Bharat scheme for free. The scheme has proven to be a lifeline for the economically and socially weaker sections of society, providing them with affordable, timely, quality, and accessible healthcare.

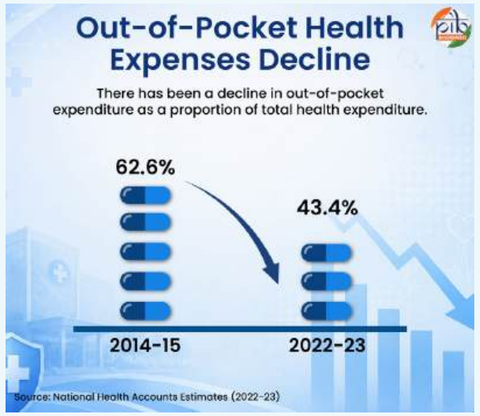
AB-PMJAY is a centrally sponsored scheme. The sharing of funds between the Centre and the States is in the ratio of 60:40 for all States, except the North-Eastern States, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, where the sharing ratio is 90:10. For Union Territories without a legislature, the Central Government provides 100% funding, while for Union Territories with a legislature, the Centre and the UT share the funding in the ratio of 60:40. The Union budget estimates have increased over the past few years, with a budget of Rs. 9,500 crore estimated for 2026-27.



Reducing Out-of-Pocket Health Expenditure

People are spending much less of their own money on healthcare than they used to. Government data reflects that **personal health expenses** have also dropped due to **higher government funding and free and low-cost schemes like AB-PMJAY.**

Apart from AB-PMJAY, Ayushman Bharat's other schemes are also ensuring that people get universal health coverage.



Ayushman Arogya Mandirs: Strengthening Grassroots Primary Care

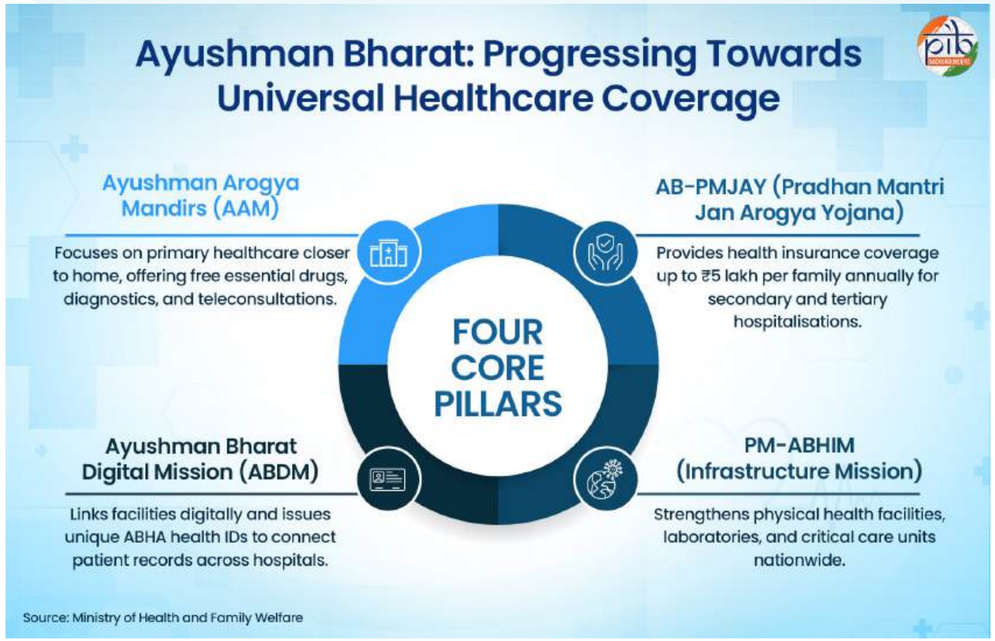
Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAM), the second pillar of Ayushman Bharat, make **primary healthcare more accessible to people.**

AAMs are **community healthcare centres** with medical professionals leading the frontline workers. AAMs are often upgraded from existing health centres that previously provided basic maternal and childcare services or other services.

AAMs are equipped with all the required resources, including:

- Upgraded infrastructure
- Additional human resources
- Essential drugs and diagnostics
- IT systems, etc.

AAMs go beyond maternal and child health care services. They also provide the following services: Screening and management of diseases, oral, eye, and ear-nose-throat care, and mental health support. First-level emergency and trauma care, and free essential medicines and diagnostics are also provided at these centres.



Since the Government is also expanding AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy) care, there are now **AYUSH AAMs** for people, too.

AAMs are centres for **community health outreach** for Community Health Workers and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs). At these centres, they spread awareness of health programmes, check in on patients, and keep track of community health.

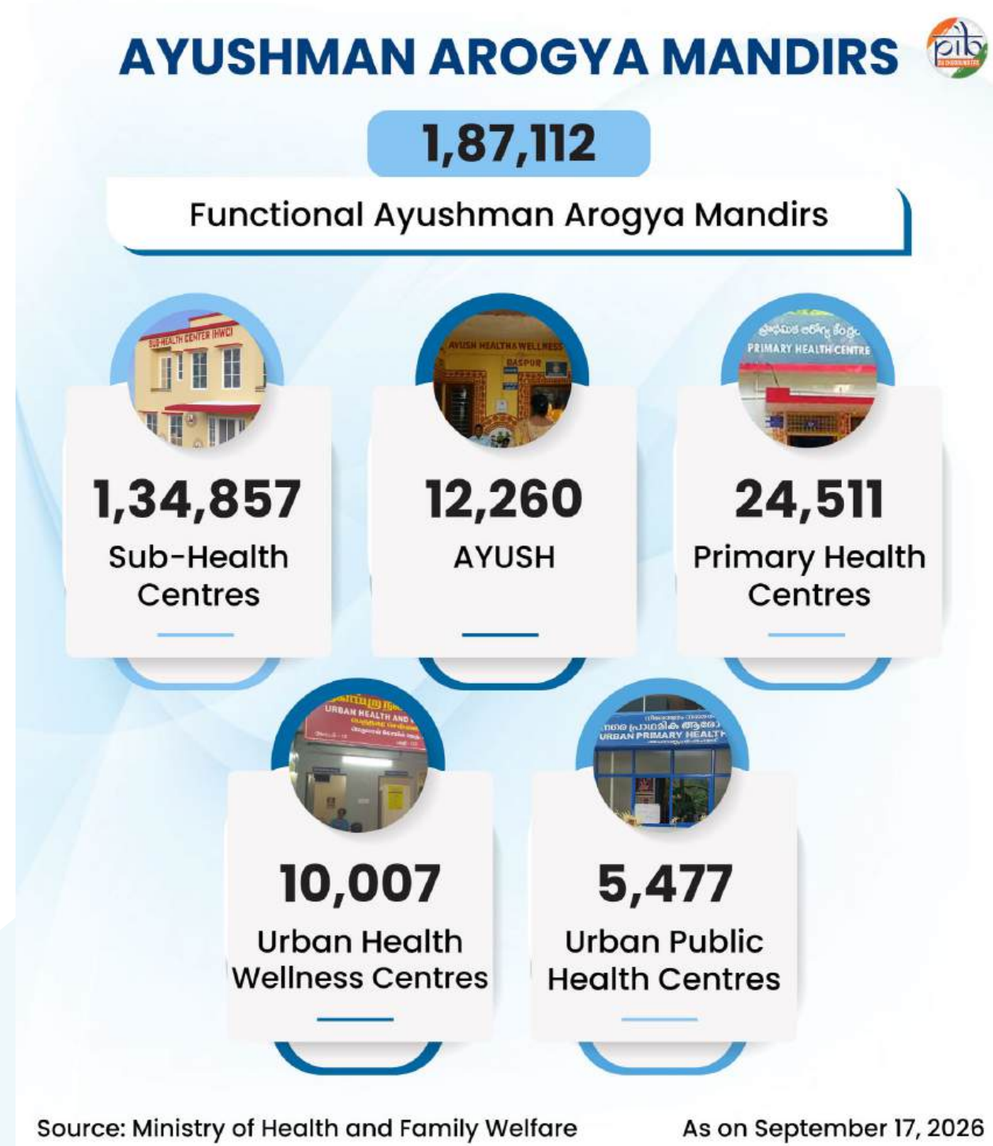
AAMs are also where citizens can connect to healthcare professionals at district, state, or national hospitals through e-Sanjeevani, which is a government-run telemedicine service.

- More than **50 crore teleconsultations** were conducted, including at the AAMs (as of September 17, 2026).

The AAMs have recorded a cumulative **footfall of over 540 crores** as on date. The government is rapidly building this infrastructure.

Building Digital Health Infrastructure via ABDM

While a brick-and-mortar infrastructure forms the backbone of universal healthcare delivery, an equally robust digital public infrastructure is also essential. It helps in making healthcare



delivery more seamless, efficient, and accessible. Recognising this, the Government of India launched the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** in September 2021 to develop an integrated, citizen-centric national digital health ecosystem.

ABDM's infrastructure rests on the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHAs), which are digital health IDs, similar to the Aadhaar number, for every individual. People's health records and insurance claims are integrated with the ABHA IDs. Through the ABHA IDs, individuals can connect to insurers, healthcare facilities, doctors, and other services with all their medical history intact through this one **interoperable network.**

As of 17 September, 2026, over **97.61 crore ABHA IDs are now operational**, and over **119.95 crore health records** have been linked to the accounts. **Women make up 49.74%** of the ABHA ID users, **men 50.26%**, and **other genders 0.01%** (as on Sept. 17, 2026). Additionally, there are over **5.78 lakh verified healthcare facilities** and over **11 lakh healthcare professionals** registered on the platform.

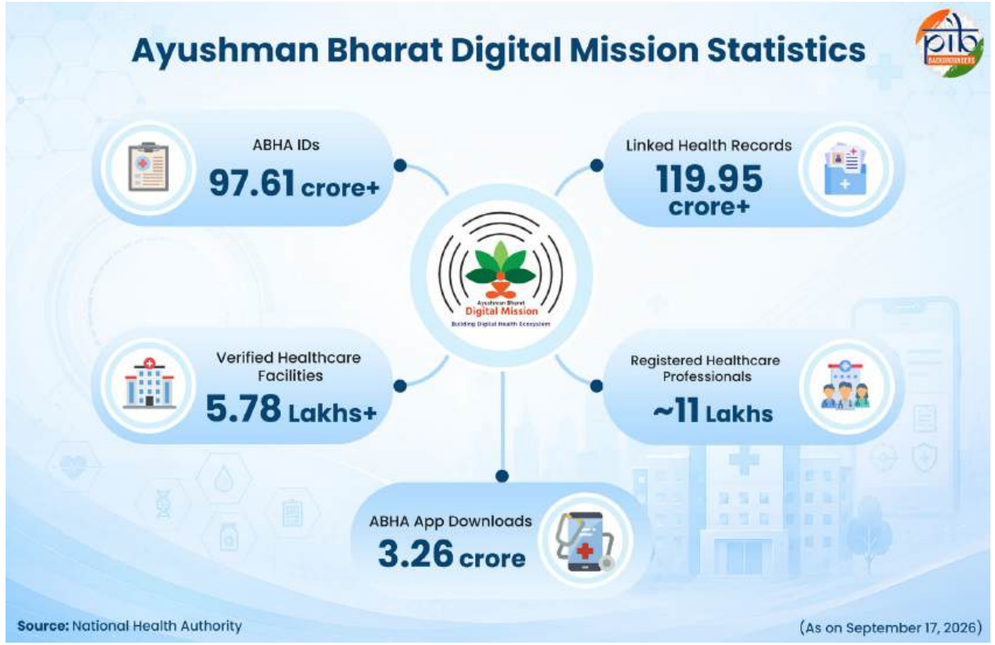
Beyond the ABHA, ABDM is a full-fledged digital health ecosystem. It brings all healthcare providers onto one single network.

- **Healthcare Professionals Registry:** A national registry of all healthcare professionals-from doctors to AYUSH practitioners - verified and digitally connected.
- **Health Facility Registry:** A national registry of health facilities-hospitals, clinics, labs, pharmacies-public and private, all in one place.

- **Unified Health Interface:** An open network for health services-like UPI for healthcare. Book appointments, consult doctors, and discover services across any app.
- **Aarogya Setu 2.0:** It serves as a unified app to digital health services and Personal Health Record (PHR), accelerating nationwide adoption of digital health.

PM-ABHIM: Bolstering Critical Care and Disease Surveillance

During COVID-19, the government responded swiftly through a unified, whole-of-government approach. Demonstrating a proactive commitment to transforming the national healthcare landscape across local clinics and major hospitals, the government launched the landmark **PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM)** on October 25, 2021, as part of Budget 2021-22.



With a monumental budget of **Rs. 64,180 crore** (2021-2026), PM-ABHIM focuses on **strengthening health infrastructure, bolstering disease surveillance, and expanding health research** across urban and rural areas. This effort empowers India to achieve self-reliance and complete resilience in handling future health challenges.

PM-ABHIM focuses on:

- **supporting 23,224 rural health and wellness centres** in 10 high-focus states.
- **establishing 13,736 urban health and wellness centres** in all states.
- **setting up 3,389 block public health units** in 11 high-focus states.
- **setting up 744 integrated public health labs** in all districts.
- **establishing 631 critical care hospital blocks** in all districts with a

population of more than 5 lakh.

Path to Universal Healthcare Coverage

AB-PMJAY expands access to quality and affordable secondary and tertiary healthcare for eligible beneficiaries, while **Ayushman Aarogya Mandirs** bring comprehensive primary healthcare closer to communities. **ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account)** enables individuals to create a unique digital health identity and access their health records across participating healthcare facilities. **PM-ABHIM** strengthens the health system's infrastructure and preparedness by supporting the development of health centres, laboratories, and critical care facilities from the grassroots to the district level.

Overall, these initiatives strengthen the continuum of healthcare, from primary care and digital health services to hospital-based treatment and resilient health infrastructure, advancing the goal of **universal health coverage.**

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IMEI Tampering

Threat to Digital Sovereignty

Published on: September 23, 2026

India's Growing Digital Ecosystem and the Need for Secure Devices

India's rapid digital transformation has made **telecommunications integral to everyday life, commerce and governance.** The country's active wireless mobile subscriber base reached **1,204.01 million in July 2026.** This vast subscriber base reflects the scale of India's connected digital ecosystem. Mobile networks and devices increasingly support digital payments, online **services and citizen-centric governance.** As dependence on these technologies grows, ensuring the **security and integrity of telecom networks and devices** becomes increasingly important.

This expanding digital ecosystem also brings new security challenges. One such concern is the misuse of the **International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number.** Tampering with or misusing IMEI numbers can facilitate the operation of devices with altered identities and complicate the identification of devices on telecom networks. Such practices can create challenges for law enforcement, consumer protection and network security. Strengthening the integrity of device identifiers is therefore essential for maintaining a secure, trusted and resilient telecommunications ecosystem.

What is Unlawful Tampering of an IMEI

It shall be unlawful if a person:

- Intentionally removes, obliterates, changes or alters unique Mobile Device Equipment Identification number; or
- Intentionally uses, produces, traffics in, has control or custody of, or possesses hardware or software knowing it has been configured as above.

Understanding IMEI

- **What is an IMEI?** The IMEI is a unique **15-digit number** that identifies a mobile device on a telecom network.
- **What does TAC mean?** The first eight digits of an IMEI form the **Type Allocation Code (TAC),** which identifies the device model or type.
- **Who allocates IMEI numbers?** The Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA) oversees the global allocation of TAC.
- **How are IMEIs assigned?** GSMA allocate TACs to manufacturers and brand owners. Manufacturers then assign unique IMEIs to individual devices.
- **How many IMEIs does a dual-SIM phone have?** A dual-SIM phone generally has two IMEI numbers, one for each SIM slot.
- **How can users find their IMEI?** Users can dial *#06# on their mobile device to display its IMEI number.
- **How can users verify an IMEI?** Users can visit Sanchar Saathi portal or mobile App or send **KYM <15-digit IMEI number>** by **SMS to 14422** to verify device details.

Everyone's Accountability Towards Safety

A secure telecom ecosystem requires responsibility across the entire device lifecycle, from manufacturing to everyday use. Manufacturers, importers, sellers and citizens each have a role in preventing misuse of IMEI.

- **Manufacturers** must register the IMEI numbers of all applicable telecom devices manufactured in India with the Government before their first sale, testing, research or other use. Registration is carried out through the Device Setu–Indian Counterfeited Device Restriction (ICDR) portal. Manufacturers must also ensure that devices are assigned valid, unique and untampered IMEI numbers.
- **Importers** must register IMEI

numbers with the Central Government before importing applicable telecom equipment into India. The registration must be completed through the Device Setu–ICDR portal for devices intended for sale, testing, R&D or other purposes. Importers must ensure that imported devices carry valid and authorised IMEI numbers.

- **Resellers and retailers** must ensure that telecom devices offered for sale have valid and untampered IMEI numbers. Those dealing in used devices should verify the IMEI against the Government's central database of tampered and blacklisted devices before completing transactions, by paying certain fees per IMEI verification. Selling or dealing in devices with tampered or configurable IMEIs can attract stringent legal action.

- **Brand owners** must ensure that devices sold under their brands comply with applicable IMEI registration and cybersecurity requirements. Their brands must be appropriately registered through the Device Setu–ICDR portal, linked to the relevant GSMA Type Allocation Code (TAC). They should ensure that devices placed on the market carry authentic and authorised IMEIs.

What Citizens Should Avoid

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) advises citizens to refrain from activities that involve the tampering or misuse of telecommunication identifiers and resources:

- Using, procuring or assembling devices such as modems, modules, SIM Boxes or other equipment with configurable or tampered IMEIs.

- Procuring SIM cards through fake documents, fraud, cheating or impersonation.

- Transferring, selling or handing over SIM cards obtained in their name to others who may misuse them.

- Using mobile applications, websites or any other means to modify Calling Line Identity (CLI) or other telecommunication identifiers.

What Citizens Should Do

Consumers should take precautions to protect their devices and ensure that their IMEI numbers remain genuine and secure.

- Purchase mobile devices only from authorised sellers and verify the IMEI details.

Sanchar Saathi Platform

Citizens can leverage the Sanchar Saathi platform to verify and secure their mobile handsets. The platform enables users to validate a device's **IMEI details,** including the **brand, model, and manufacturer,** helping strengthen device authenticity and security. **Read more about the Sanchar Saathi app.**

- Use strong passwords, PINs or biometric authentication to secure the handset.

- Get devices repaired only at authorised service centres to reduce the risk of IMEI tampering or other malicious activity.

- In the event of device loss or theft, follow the official step-by-step blocking procedure:

1. File an immediate report with the local police and secure a copy of the complaint.

2. Obtain a duplicate SIM card for the lost mobile number from your telecom operator. (Under TRAI regulations, SMS services are restricted for the first 24 hours of a re-issued SIM's activation. Since Sanchar Saathi requires a mobile OTP verification, you must wait 24 hours after activation to submit your request).

3. Register the blocking request on the Sanchar Saathi (CEIR) portal or mobile app, uploading the police report and a valid ID proof to receive a unique Request ID.

4. If your device is subsequently recovered, report it to the local police first, and then use your Request ID on the portal to safely unblock the handset.

Maintaining device security is a shared responsibility across the telecom ecosystem. Awareness, compliance and responsible use can further help prevent fraud, protect citizens and strengthen the security of India's digital infrastructure.

Legal Safeguards Against IMEI Tampering

India has established a strong legal framework to protect the integrity of the telecommunication ecosystem.

- The **Telecommunications Act, 2023** provides for stringent action against tampering with telecommunication identifiers, including the IMEI number of mobile handsets and other telecommunication devices.

- **Section 42(3)(c)** prohibits tampering

with telecommunication identifiers. **Section 42(3)(e)** prohibits obtaining Subscriber Identity Modules (SIMs) or telecommunication identifiers through fraud, cheating or impersonation.

- Violations may attract imprisonment for up to **three years,** a fine of up to **₹50 lakh,** or both. Such offences are **cognizable and non-bailable** under **Section 42(7)** of the Act.

- Under **Section 42(6),** persons who abet or promote the commission of such offences are also liable to the same punishment.

These provisions create a strong deterrent against IMEI tampering and misuse of telecom resources.

Safeguarding India's Digital Future

India's telecom journey reflects both remarkable progress and shared responsibility. Strong laws, verification tools and citizen awareness together keep this network secure and trustworthy. Every stakeholder – including the government, industry, and individual users- has a role in preserving this trust. A vigilant, informed citizenry remains the strongest defence against misuse. Sustained cooperation will keep India's digital connectivity safe for generations to come.

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From Green Stems to Green Enterprises

How the Traditional Bamboo Resource is Creating New Livelihoods, Enterprises and Opportunities

Published on: September 12, 2026

A bamboo bag might seem like an ordinary find at a city market stall. But its journey tells a story that winds from a small village enterprise to a shift in national policy. At the SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2026 in Gurugram, one such story stood on display: bamboo bags crafted by **Vishakha Didi** from Assam. In 2014, she joined a Self-Help Group (SHG) and revitalised her father-in-law's bamboo craft enterprise with new designs. Government support and exhibitions helped her reach wider markets. She participated in the India International Trade Fair, 2025; her bamboo creations earned her **₹2 lakh** in sales. Her journey captures a moment that turned a homegrown craft into a thriving enterprise.

Image 1: Vishakha Didi at Saras Mela

For generations, bamboo was closely linked with **traditional livelihoods** across communities, but an outdated regulatory barrier once held back its true economic potential. Under a British-era law, bamboo was classified as a tree, which made harvesting and transporting it unnecessarily cumbersome for the people who depended on it. In 2017, the government took a landmark step by removing bamboo from this classification, freeing it from restrictive forestry regulations. This forward-thinking reform opened the doors to **greater innovation, entrepreneurship, and value addition** in the bamboo sector. The importance of this move is now visible across the country, especially in the Northeast, where bamboo is driving employment, business, and innovation.

Image 2: Bamboo Plants

One such example is fashion designer and sustainable innovator **Chimi Ongmu Bhutia's** Lagstal Design Studio near Gangtok, **Sikkim**. This women-led manufacturing enterprise makes **bamboo handicrafts, incense sticks, furniture, interior décor items**, etc. Bamboo here moves beyond traditional craft into contemporary design and enterprise. Chimi's story is part of a wider

Image 3: Chimi Ongmu Bhutia and her Studio

movement. In **Tripura, Bijoy Sutradhar adopted technology to improve bamboo product manufacturing.** In **Nagaland**, SHGs around Dimapur are adding value to **bamboo-based food products**, alongside local enterprises like **Khorolo Creative Crafts** producing furniture and handicrafts. Meanwhile, in Mizoram's **Mamit district,** teams are advancing scientific cultivation through **bamboo tissue culture** and **poly-house management.** These examples point towards the bamboo sector becoming more diverse, innovative, and value-driven.

A transformation of this scale requires more than skilled hands. It needs technology, processing facilities, training, and stronger market connections. This is where government support becomes important. The National Bamboo Mission focuses on **cultivation, processing,** and **market access** for bamboo farmers, manufacturers, and sellers. It also supports **nurseries for quality planting material.** Consider an example to understand the impact of this government scheme at the farm level. In **Madhya Pradesh, Vijay Patidar** turned to bamboo after repeated losses from conventional farming in 2019. He planted around **4,000 bamboo saplings** with support from the bamboo mission. Within two years, he earned approximately **₹75,000** from selling bamboo poles. Bamboo also allowed him to **intercrop** chilli, capsicum, ginger and garlic. His experience shows how bamboo can become both a crop and a **longer-term livelihood asset.**

Further, the **North East Centre for Technology Application & Reach (NECTAR)** has supported bamboo technologies across several **commercial applications.** These include food and agro-processing, construction materials, manufacturing machinery, renewable energy, industrial products, etc. These interventions have generated employment of around **30 million man-days** annually. They have also raised value addition for bamboo commodities from 10 percent to as high as **70 percent.** For example, engineered bamboo is opening new possibilities in the field of construction. **Engineered bamboo** is

Image 4: Engineered Bamboo Boards

a composite material made by binding and compressing raw bamboo fibers, strips, or particles. Furniture made with new designs and engineered bamboo is gaining popularity and attracting the attention of architects, designers, and interior decorators. Consequently, more than **42 lakh square feet** of engineered bamboo structures have been built for **disaster relief and rehabilitation.** In **Chhattisgarh, 576 school rooms** have been made from engineered bamboo, housing about **20,000 children**. This shows how bamboo is moving into construction applications once associated only with conventional industrial materials.

The bamboo value chain is expanding in directions beyond product diversification. Women's groups are becoming important participants across this emerging value chain. Such a story of women's livelihoods becomes especially visible in Gadchiroli, **Maharashtra**. A bamboo-based agarbatti initiative, named the **Gadchiroli Agarbatti Project (GAP)**, started production centres across the district in 2012. By 2020, they had **32 centres** employing around **1,100 people**, and nearly 90 percent of these workers were women. Monthly earnings reached around **₹5,000 for every woman.** Employment also increased from roughly 45-60 days annually to **more than 225 days**. Work also moved closer to home and became less physically strenuous in nature. Women gained new skills, confidence, and opportunities for leadership. This initiative also **reduced dependence on forests** as a source of income.

Image 5:A member of Gadchiroli Agarbatti Project making agarbatti from bamboo

Stories like these have been made possible due to continued efforts by the government towards capacity building and training. **CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI), Nagpur**, recently, in June 2026, conducted a five-day training programme on bamboo handicrafts for women SHGs. The theme of this training programme was "Empowering Women SHGs through Bamboo Handicrafts from Bamboo Grown on Fly Ash Dumps." The training provided hands-on skills in bamboo harvesting, treatment and processing, handicraft production, value-added product development, entrepreneurship, branding, marketing, and product design. The initiative demonstrated how **reclaimed fly ash dump sites can be transformed into productive landscapes,** generating both environmental and socio-economic benefits for local communities.

The bamboo story is becoming a story of people, possibilities, and transformation. Across India, bamboo is creating livelihoods, enterprises, and sustainable opportunities. **The story of bamboo in India is therefore no longer simply about what bamboo can become. It is about what communities can become when a traditional resource is connected to technology, enterprise and opportunity.**

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India International Water Week 2026

Water Security, From the Ground Up

Published on: September 25 2026

Water does not follow a single path. A drop of rain can seep into the soil, fill a pond, recharge a well, or flow into a river. How we capture, conserve, and manage that water can shape lives and livelihoods. Across India, communities have traditionally built structures to capture rain, recharge groundwater, and restore rivers and traditional water bodies. Today, as the demand for water grows all around us, it has become even more important to revive community participation for ensuring water security, along with scientific planning, strong institutions and sustained action.

The Government's approach is to bring these different efforts together to address diverse water challenges. These priorities also find expression in the India International Water Week (IIWW), conceptualised in 2012. Today, IIWW has evolved into a biennial platform where policymakers, researchers, industry leaders and communities come together to exchange ideas and explore solutions for sustainable and climate-resilient water management.

India International Water Week-2026

The **9th edition of India International Water Week (IIWW) 2026** is being held from **22–26 September 2026 in New Delhi,** with the theme **"Climate Resilient Water Management."** The Ministry of Jal Shakti organises India International Water Week.

The discussions this year centre on seven sub-themes:

- Inclusive and Equitable Water Governance
- Collaboration for Optimal Use of Water Resources
- Technology and Community for Water Security
- Water in Climate-Related Risk
- Innovative Financing Models for Water Infrastructure and Modernization
- Sustainable Water Resources Management
- Water for People and Planet

The programme brings together representatives from **six Union Ministries and 16 States and Union Territories (UTs).** Around **150 countries have been invited to participate,** with **11 countries expected to join as partner countries.** The event features **49 focused sessions** covering various water-sector themes, including ministerial plenaries, a youth forum and dedicated start-up forums.

Over the past decade, the Government has taken a range of measures to strengthen water conservation and improve water security. Initiatives such as the **Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain, Atal Bhujal Yojana** and **Mission Amrit Sarovar** have supported these efforts. More recently, **Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari** has strengthened community-led conservation, while **NAQUIM 2.0** is providing scientific inputs for area-specific groundwater management. These efforts are also reflected in the country's groundwater indicators. Total annual groundwater recharge increased from **432 billion cubic metres (BCM) in 2017 to 448.52 BCM in 2025.**

In addition to these Government efforts, stories from across India bring the themes of **community participation, groundwater recharge, sustainable water management and inclusive governance** to life. They show how communities, local institutions and technology are shaping practical responses to water challenges. From groundwater recharge and water-quality monitoring to river restoration and rainwater harvesting, these efforts offer a ground-level view of the ideas

and approaches discussed at **IIWW.**

Community Recharge at Scale

In the **Balod district of Chhattisgarh,** water conservation has evolved into a community-led effort. Gram Panchayats and local communities have come together across villages to create structures that capture rainwater and support groundwater recharge.

Check Dam in Balod District, Chhattisgarh

Under **Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari 2.0,** the district created 2.84 lakh recharge structures between June 2025 and May 2026. These included check dams, recharge pits and contour trenches across villages to conserve rainwater.

A notable intervention has been the rejuvenation of the 14.3-km Tawera Nala, a seasonal water channel. More than 6,250 water conservation structures were created along the nala. These interventions are expected to conserve 6.5 crore litres of additional rainwater and improve groundwater levels by an estimated 5–10 feet.

Beyond the number of structures created, the experience demonstrates how water conservation can become a shared responsibility, with communities contributing to efforts to strengthen local water security.

When Women Become Water Managers

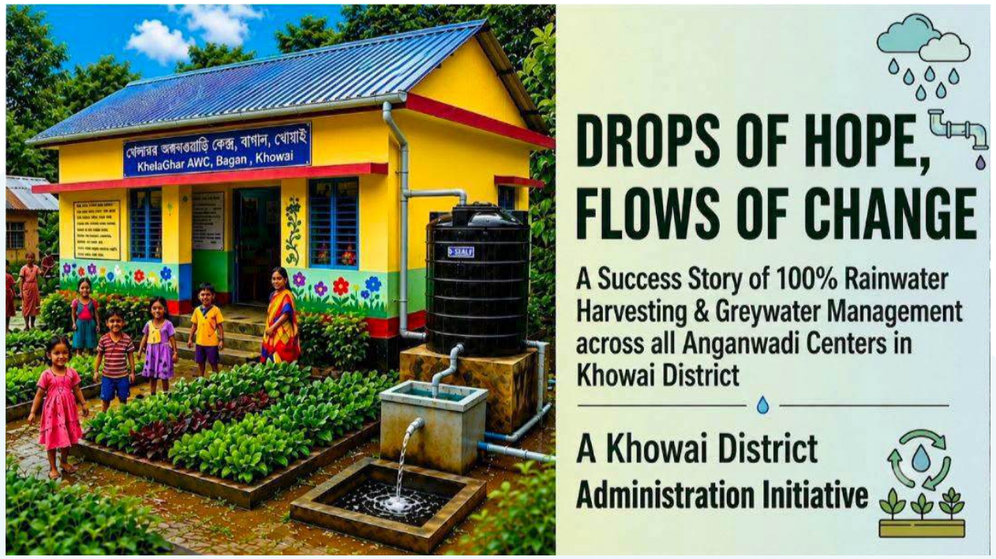
In **Khowai, Tripura,** rural water supply is being strengthened through **community participation and local institutions.** The district has brought together Panchayats, Self-Help Groups, schools and other local stakeholders to support sustainable water management.

More than 6,000 SHG women are engaged in community mobilisation. Through **School Water Clubs,** SHG women also train students in basic water-quality testing using Field Testing Kits (FTKs). This brings basic water-quality monitoring closer to local communities.

Women in Khowai, Tripura, attending the Jal Aarpan Diwas event

The district has also strengthened monitoring of rural water-supply schemes. **Geo-tagged monitoring, third-party quality audits, and regular District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM) and District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) meetings** support implementation and accountability. Completed schemes are formally handed over to Gram Panchayats through Jal Arpan.

Source sustainability forms an important part of the district's approach, ensuring the long-term reliability of water sources. Measures include **catchment protection, afforestation, groundwater recharge and greywater management.** All 860 Anganwadi centres in the district have rainwater-harvesting structures.



From Rivers to Reliable Water

A tap-water connection brings water to a household, but long-term water security also depends on protecting the sources that sustain it. In **Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh,** this idea has shaped efforts to link Jal Jeevan Mission implementation with river rejuvenation, water conservation and community participation.

Water Supply Scheme in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh

Under the **"Dhara se Dharohar Tak"** campaign, the Ban River was revived across nearly 42 kilometres, while the Sot River was restored across around 17 kilometres. As a result, the groundwater level in Amroha improved. The approach has also been extended to rivers in neighbouring districts, including the Malan in Bijnor and the Hiranyavati in Kushinagar.

Community participation has been central to these efforts. **Gram Sabha-based monitoring, Pani ki Pathshala sessions and women-led water-quality** testing have encouraged residents to take an active role in protecting their water resources. **Jal Seva Aankalan** has further strengthened community engagement and accountability.

Where Students Learn To Save Every Drop

Discussion on the Importance of Rainwater Harvesting in Health Care Centers

For a student, rain can simply mean a break from the classroom. In **Odisha,** it is becoming a lesson in where water comes from and where it goes. Through the **Catch the Rain 2026** campaign, educational institutions are introducing students to groundwater science, hydrological processes and rainwater harvesting.

The learning is being supported by a wider public campaign. Odisha has conducted **968 Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities,** using street plays, folk performances and community programmes to spread awareness about rainwater harvesting and groundwater conservation.

But the campaign does not stop at awareness. Across the state, 905 structures have been created to harvest rainwater and recharge groundwater. These include 849 rooftop rainwater-harvesting structures that collect rainwater and 56 recharge shafts that help replenish groundwater. In Jajpur, Odisha, 45 recharge shafts have been constructed. The state has also taken up 98 tanks across all 30 districts for renovation and desilting.

Community Outreach Programme

From Local Action To International Coordination

These experiences show that lasting progress depends on **community participation, scientific planning, institutional coordination and continued stewardship. This is the larger conversation that India International Water Week 2026** brings together. It is providing a forum for countries and stakeholders to share knowledge, exchange experiences and explore approaches for sustainable water management.

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Literacy for All

India's Journey Towards Viksit Bharat

Published on: September 29, 2026

India's Literacy Leap: Charting the Path to Full Literacy

Literacy is a foundation of national development. Beyond being an indicator of educational progress, it enables individuals to access opportunities, participate in the economy, and engage meaningfully in society. UNESCO recognises literacy as a fundamental human right and a significant driver of achieving equality, justice, inclusion, and respect for the rule of law. India has made significant strides in improving its literacy rate over the past eight decades. In 1947, the country's overall literacy rate stood at just 14%, while female literacy was remarkably low at 8%. India has undertaken several initiatives over the years to improve literacy and strengthen its education system. The government introduced the **National Education Policy (NEP)** 2020 to reform education at all levels and develop a skilled, adaptable, and future-ready workforce.

What is Literacy?

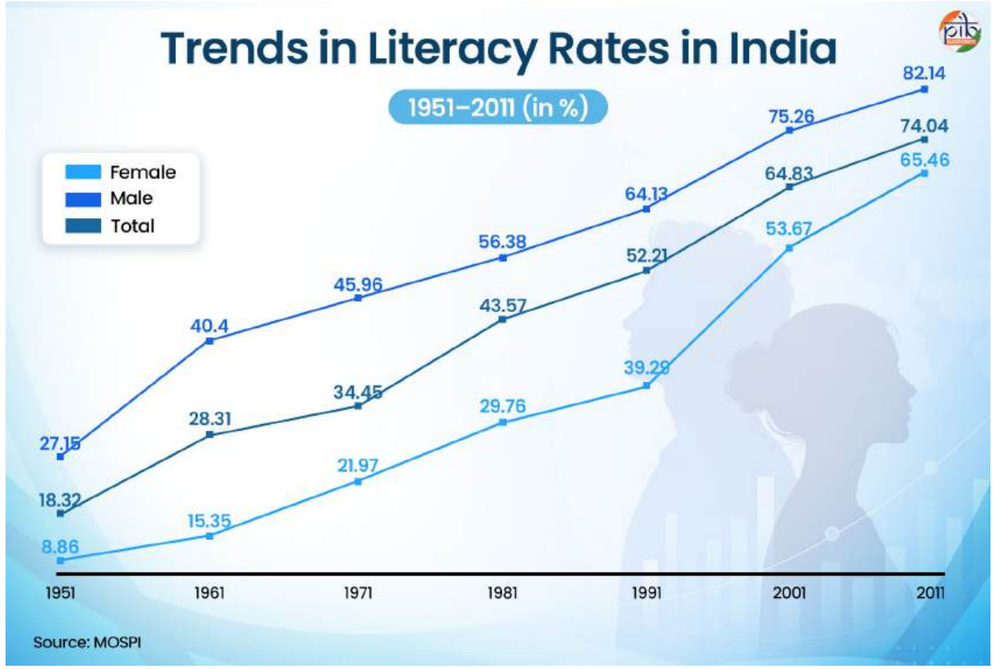
The **Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, for the first time defines Literacy** as "the ability to read, write, and compute with comprehension, i.e., to identify, understand, interpret and create, along with critical life skills such as digital literacy, financial literacy, etc." It considers **95% literacy** in a State/Union Territory as equivalent to full literacy.

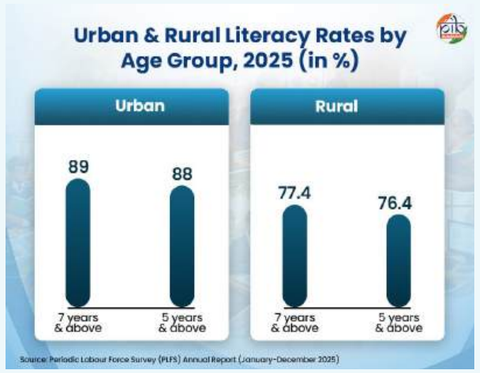
In a global context, UNESCO defines Literacy as the ability to read, write, and use numbers, as well as to use digital materials to solve problems in an increasingly technological and information-rich environment-a foundational skill that is central to individuals' engagement in work, learning, and life. It is an essential component of the right to education and a prerequisite for enjoying other human rights.

Measuring Progress in Literacy and Education

India's literacy rate has made remarkable progress since 1951, increasing from 18.32% in 1951 to **74.04%** in 2011. Male literacy rose from 27.15% to **82.14%**, while female literacy increased significantly from 8.86% to **65.46%**.

The urban literacy rate increased from 34.59% in 1951 to **84.1%** in 2011, while the rural literacy rate rose from 12.10% to **67.8%**. Between 2001 and 2011, rural female literacy grew by **26%,** compared with **10%** for rural males, reflecting significant gains in female literacy.





According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025, the literacy rate in **urban areas** reached **89% for those aged 7 years and above, and 88% for those aged 5 years and above.** Among urban residents aged 7 years and above, literacy reached **93.1% for males and 84.8% for females.** In rural areas, the literacy rate among those aged 7 years and above was 77.4%, and 76.4% for those aged 5 years and above. Among the rural population aged 7 years and above, the literacy rate was **84.8%** for males and **70.3%** for females. **The overall Literacy rate of the country is 81.1 % as per this survey.**

To complement literacy gains, the government has also taken measures to improve school enrolment, retention, and progression. Notable improvements in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), transition, and retention rates have been noted since 2014-15. According to the UDISE+ Report (2025-26):

- **School Enrolment: Over 24.72 crore** students were enrolled in schools.
- **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER):** Stood at **42.8%** at the Foundational stage, **91.7%** at the Preparatory stage, **89.6%** at the Middle stage, and **71.7%** at the Secondary stage.
- **Dropout rates** were **1.8%** at the Preparatory stage, **3.6%** at the Middle stage, and **7.0%** at the Secondary stage.
- **Retention rates** stood at **98.5%** for Foundational, **91.1%** for Preparatory, **83.7%** for Middle, and **51.9%** for Secondary stages.
- **Transition rates** improved, with **99.2%** progressing from the Foundational to the Preparatory stage, **93.8%** from Preparatory to the Middle stage, and **88.3%** from Middle to the Secondary stage.

The transition rate refers to the percentage of students who successfully move from one level of education to the next.

Participation in higher education has expanded significantly over the past decade:

- Enrolment increased from 3.42 crore in 2014-15 to **4.50 crore** in 2023-24.
- GER increased from 23.7% to **30%** over the same period.
- Higher education out-turn increased from 88.28 lakh in 2014-15 to over **1.09 crore** in 2023-24.

Higher education out-turn refers to the total number of students who pass out of higher education institutions in a given academic year.

The increase in women's participation, alongside the inclusion of SC, ST, and other disadvantaged groups, reflects enhanced access and equity. It reflects continued improvement in access to higher education, supporting NEP 2020's target of attaining a 50% higher education GER by 2035.

Key Government Initiatives for Advancing Literacy

India's approach to literacy has evolved from basic reading and numeracy to broader competencies needed to participate in a rapidly changing economy and society. In line with NEP 2020, the Government has introduced initiatives such as ULLAS and NIPUN Bharat to expand access, strengthen learning outcomes, promote inclusion, and support lifelong learning.

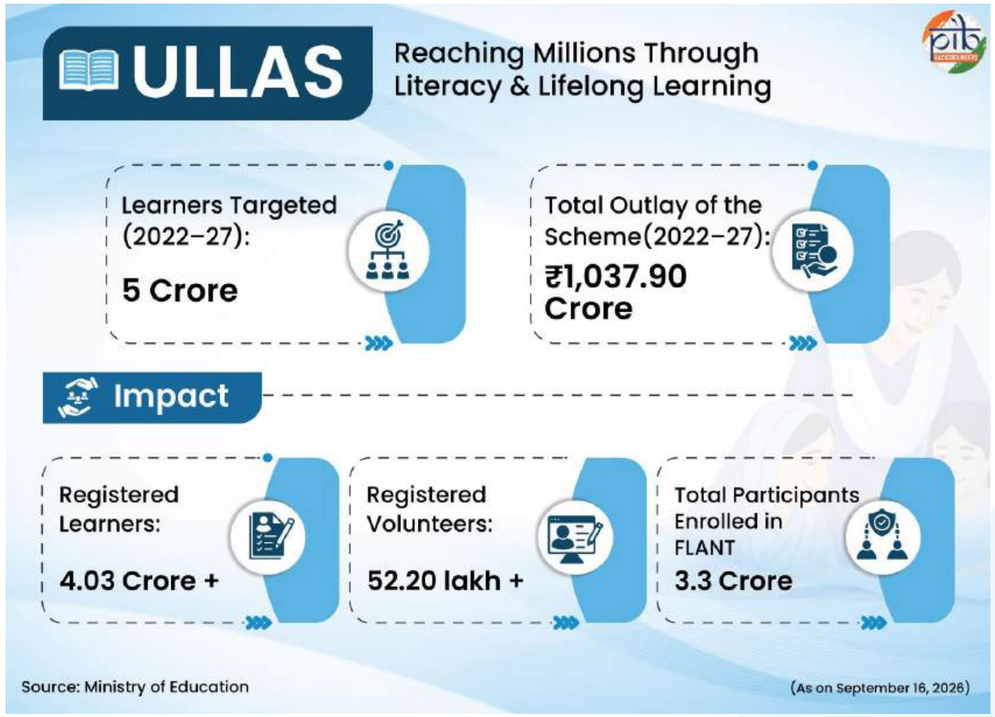
ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society)

ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram: ULLAS, or the **New India Literacy Programme (NILP)**, is a centrally sponsored initiative. It aligns with **NEP 2020.** It focuses on empowering adults aged 15 years and above who missed formal schooling. The programme provides functional literacy, numeracy, critical life skills, and lifelong learning opportunities. This promotes the social integration of the target group and encourages their contribution to national development.

ULLAS's vision is **'Jan Jan Saakshar',** empowering every individual through literacy. It follows the spirit of **'Kartavya Bodh' (Duty)**. It promotes **volunteerism** and **Janbhagidari,** or community participation, to achieve universal literacy.

ULLAS follows a hybrid learning approach. The **ULLAS App**, available on **iOS** and **Android** platforms, has teaching-learning material in **27 languages**. Under the scheme, learners and volunteers are identified by surveyors at the district- or block-level. They may include school teachers, civil society workers, ASHA workers, and Anganwadi workers. Surveyors conduct door-to-door surveys to identify non-literate individuals and potential volunteer teachers. In the next stage, learners are connected with a Voluntary Teacher to support and guide the students in registering on the **ULLAS App.** Training, orientations, and workshops are conducted through face-to-face and online modes. Learners access learning materials and develop foundational literacy and numeracy skills. They then appear for the **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT),** followed by evaluation and certification.

ULLAS's Progress and Impact: The scheme aims to cover **5 crore** learners during 2022-27 with a financial outlay of **₹1,037.90 crore.** ULLAS has about **4.03 crore** registered learners and over **52.20 lakh** volunteers. To date, more than **3.3 crore** learners have participated in the FLNAT.



Ten (10) States/UTs have declared themselves fully literate between 2024 and 2026. These include Ladakh, Mizoram, Goa, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir. ULLAS is expanding adult literacy through community participation, reaching millions of learners while advancing India's goal of universal literacy.

NIPUN Bharat: (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy)

Launched in July 2021, under the aegis of **Samagra Shiksha**, the initiative focuses on strengthening early learning and supporting continued academic development. It seeks to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy by 2026-27, ensuring that every child acquires foundational skills by Grade 2. The mission focuses on the Foundational Stage of ages 3 to 8 years.

In addition, the Government has undertaken several initiatives to increase enrolment and improve retention in schools. Key initiatives include **Samagra Shiksha, PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India), PM e-VIDYA,** and **PM POSHAN (Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman)**.

- **Samagra Shiksha** focuses on enhancing **school effectiveness and ensuring equal opportunities for schooling to improve learning outcomes.** The scheme is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4) on education. It was introduced by subsuming the three erstwhile schemes-Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), and Teacher Education (TE). The scheme promotes equitable, inclusive, and quality education, with a focus on foundational learning, teacher development, and vocational integration.
- **Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI)** seeks to strengthen more than **14,500 exemplar schools** across the country. The scheme focuses on the holistic and well-rounded development of students by fostering an equitable, inclusive, and joyful learning environment that addresses diverse backgrounds, multilingual needs, and varied academic abilities.
- **PM e-VIDYA** is a comprehensive initiative that brings together various efforts related to digital, online, and on-air education to provide multi-mode access to learning. The initiative is expected to benefit nearly **25 crore** school-going children across the country.

- **PM POSHAN** is a centrally sponsored scheme that provides one hot cooked meal to **11.20 crore students** enrolled in Bal Vatikas and Classes I to VIII across **10.36 lakh** government and government-aided schools on all school days. The scheme aims to provide nutritional support and encourage greater school participation among students.

Together, these initiatives create an enabling environment that enhances enrolment, retention, and learning outcomes. They also address literacy across age groups and learning stages, strengthening foundational education, adult literacy, and lifelong learning.

Literacy for Viksit Bharat and Sustainable Development

The SDGs provide a comprehensive framework for promoting a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future for all. Literacy and education are central to **SDG 4,** which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. Literacy is positively associated with GDP and per capita income and contributes to economic growth and national development. For India, achieving the vision of **Viksit Bharat** requires a literate, educated, and skilled population.

Beyond education, literacy contributes to women's empowerment, equality, inclusion, and the realisation of human rights, while enhancing employability, productivity, innovation, and economic participation. Education and skills can also enable participation in green jobs, support the circular economy, and contribute to environmental sustainability. Thus, progress in literacy can create multiplier effects across the SDGs, supporting inclusive, sustainable, and broad-based development.

Looking Ahead: Advancing Literacy for All

India's literacy journey since Independence reflects a wider transformation in nation-building and human development. Literacy today extends beyond reading and writing. It enables learning, livelihoods, empowerment, and meaningful participation in society. Initiatives such as **NEP 2020, ULLAS,** and **NIPUN Bharat** are broadening this vision. They connect **foundational learning** with **adult education, lifelong learning, and future-ready skills.** Aligned with **SDG 4**, these efforts reinforce India's commitment to inclusive and equitable development.

As India moves towards Viksit Bharat, sustained implementation remains essential. Greater attention to regional and gender disparities will help ensure that the benefits of literacy reach every section of society. A literate, skilled, and empowered population can become a strong foundation for a more inclusive, productive, and sustainable Viksit Bharat.

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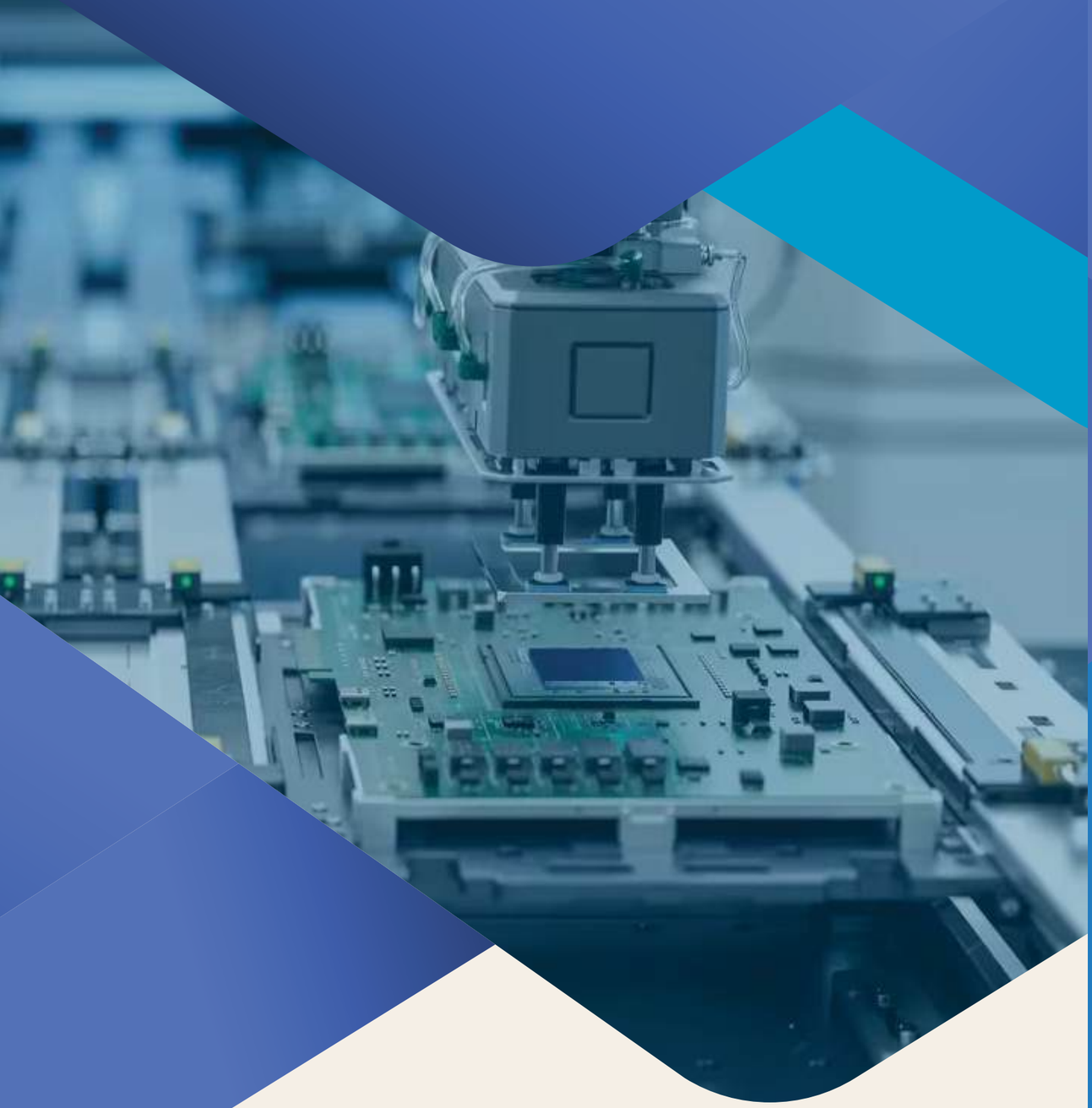

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‘Whole-of-Industry’ approach to drive India’s Electronics and Semiconductor ambitions

Published on: September 23, 2026

India's electronics and semiconductor sector is entering an exciting new chapter. With major investments flowing in, manufacturing capacities expanding, and global companies increasing their presence, the ecosystem is growing at an unprecedented pace. As the industry scales up, leaders are increasingly advocating for a stronger, more coordinated approach among industry bodies to transform individual strengths into a collective national capability.

A key message emerging from industry leaders is that the next stage of growth cannot be driven by any single segment alone. Semiconductors, electronics manufacturing, components, materials, design, packaging and end-use applications are becoming increasingly interdependent. Success, therefore, will depend not only on technological capabilities and infrastructure but also on the industry's ability to work together.

This spirit of collaboration was at the heart of the panel discussion, "Industry Associations Advancing India's National Agenda," held during SEMICON India 2026. Moderated by Shri Amitesh Kumar Sinha, CEO, India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) the session brought together senior representatives from leading industry associations to discuss how deeper collaboration can help accelerate India's semiconductor and electronics ambitions.

The panel comprised **Mr Ajit Manocha, CEO** and **President, SEMI; Mr Pankaj Mohindroo**, **Chairman, ICEA; Mr Rajoo Goel**, **Director General, ELCINA; Col. Suhail Zaidi**, **Director General, MAIT**; and **Mr Ashok Chandak, President, SEMI India**

The discussion reflected a growing consensus that the industry must move towards a more coordinated, "whole-of-industry" approach. Participants noted that while individual associations represent different segments of the ecosystem, they are ultimately working towards a common objective: building a globally competitive electronics and semiconductor sector in India.

A recurring theme during the discussion was the increasing convergence across technology sectors. Chips today derive value not in isolation but through their integration into devices, products and systems. Advances in fabrication rely on supporting materials and equipment, while manufacturing depends on packaging, testing and broader electronics capabilities. This interconnected nature of the industry calls for stronger linkages and more structured collaboration across the value chain.

Another area of discussion was the need to sustain engagement beyond individual conferences and events. Industry leaders explored the idea of creating a more permanent community mechanism that can facilitate continuous dialogue, encourage coordination among associations and help drive collective action on matters of national importance.

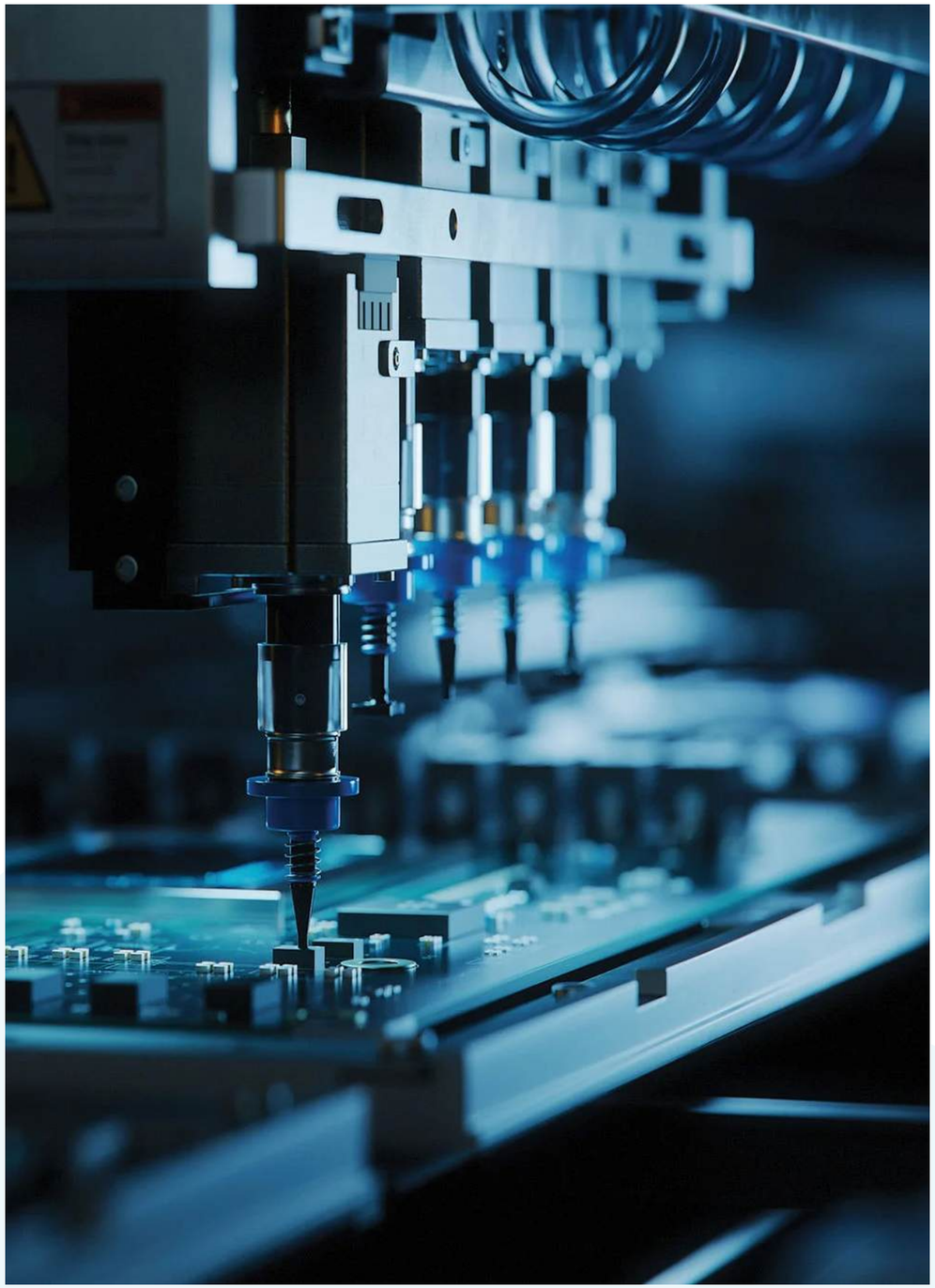
The proposal is not about replacing the specialised role of existing associations. Instead, it seeks to build on their strengths by providing a common platform where they can collaborate on issues that cut across sectors and value chains. As India's ambitions evolve from establishing manufacturing facilities to building a comprehensive semiconductor ecosystem, such institutional collaboration is increasingly being seen as a strategic necessity.

The discussion reinforced the broader "Silicon to Systems" vision, where design, manufacturing, packaging, electronics and technology solutions work in tandem to create a stronger and more resilient ecosystem. As India advances its semiconductor ambitions, industry leaders indicate that collaboration may prove to be just as important as capital investments and infrastructure development in shaping the next phase of growth.

Supporting this momentum, SEMICON India 2026 brought together more than 600 exhibitors, including nearly 300 international companies, showcasing the growing global interest in India's semiconductor and electronics ecosystem. The event also witnessed 56 MoUs, strategic initiatives and industry announcements across manufacturing, design, packaging, AI, R&D, logistics and skilling.

Government support continues to play a significant role in this transformation. Through initiatives such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes and the India Semiconductor Mission, efforts are underway to strengthen domestic capabilities and build a robust manufacturing ecosystem. The Government has approved 12 semiconductor projects under the Semicon India programme, with five commercial semiconductor units already operational as of September 2026.

Together, these developments underline a broader reality: India's semiconductor story is no longer just about building factories. It is increasingly about building connections across industries, institutions and technologies, with collaboration emerging as the foundation of the country's next phase of electronics and semiconductor growth.



When Festivities Find a Greener Way to Celebrate

Published on: September 28, 2026

India's festivals arrive in many forms, but their emotional language is remarkably familiar. Ganesh Chaturthi brings Bappa into homes and neighbourhoods. Durga Puja fills pandals with devotion and artistry. Diwali brings the glow of diyas, prayers and new beginnings. Chhath brings families together at the ghats, offering prayers to the Sun. Rooted in faith, family and community, these celebrations are also closely tied to the spaces where they unfold.

A temple receives flowers, a pandal becomes a place of worship, and a ghat becomes part of a sacred ritual. As these traditions bring communities together, caring for these sacred spaces is becoming part of the celebration itself. This spirit finds a national platform in **Swachhata Hi Seva 2026**, launched on **17 September 2026.** This year's campaign carries the theme "**Swachhata Mein Sahbhag; Swachh Bharat, Viksit Bharat".** The campaign places shared responsibility for cleanliness at its heart, with **"Swachh Parv, Harit Parv"** focusing on clean and green festivities. It also promotes source segregation, **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (3R's),** circular economy and **Waste-to-Wealth initiatives.**

Across India's festive landscape, this idea is already finding expression in meaningful ways. Devotional flowers are being repurposed, clay is returning to Ganpati celebrations, bamboo is being used to create festive spaces, and Chhath ghats are being kept clean for devotees. Together, these efforts demonstrate how deeply rooted traditions can evolve with changing times while remaining anchored in faith, community participation, and a growing sense of environmental responsibility.

When Flowers of Devotion Find a New Life

At dawn in Ujjain, thousands of devotees enter the **Mahakaleshwar Temple** carrying flowers for worship. For them, the flowers are offerings of faith. The temple receives around **75,000 to 100,000 visitors every day** and generates around **5 to 6 tonnes of floral waste daily**. Special **'Pushpanjali Econirmit'** vehicles collect the flowers and take them to a processing plant, where they are converted into products such as compost, briquettes and biofuels.

For the women of the **Shiv Arpan Self-Help Group**, discarded flowers have become a source of livelihood and renewed purpose. In 2024, by transforming floral waste into more than **30 million incense sticks** and other eco-friendly products, the initiative has turned waste into value while creating stable employment opportunities. In this way, a flower offered in devotion does not mark the end of its journey; after the prayer, it finds a new purpose through enterprise, livelihoods, and environmental responsibility.

Female workers upcycling floral waste

When Celebration Meets Environmental Responsibility

For millions, **Ganesh Chaturthi** is a deeply personal celebration. Bappa enters homes amid music and prayers, becomes part of the family, and eventually departs for visarjan, carrying with him the promise of his return. The farewell is sacred, but it is also the moment when a cherished tradition intersects with the responsibility of protecting our water bodies.

In **2024, Navi Mumbai created 136 artificial ponds** for Ganesh idol immersion, providing devotees with designated spaces for visarjan. The locations were shared through social media and WhatsApp, making it easier for devotees to access these facilities while helping reduce pressure on natural water bodies.

Artificial pond for Ganesh idol immersion

The **Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)** supplied around **500 tonnes of free clay** to sculptors, encouraging the use of traditional and environmentally conscious materials for Ganesh idols. Complementing this effort, **the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board** launched the **Eco-Bappa** mobile application to promote eco-friendly idols and decorations. The initiative encourages devotees and artisans to adopt sustainable practices while preserving the cultural and devotional essence of the celebration.

The idea also found resonance among young participants. The **Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation**

organised an eco-friendly idol-making and decoration competition for students. They were encouraged to work with clay, papier-mâché, natural fibres and recycled materials, bringing environmental care into the celebrations. In Thane, Maharashtra, nearly **500 students** learnt to make Ganpati idols using shadu clay. Beyond developing their creativity and craftsmanship, these initiatives introduced young minds to the idea of carrying cherished traditions forward with greater environmental care.

Following the visarjan ceremony (2023), the spirit of participation continued. More than **900 Swachh volunteers**, including over **500 students**, helped clean Versova Beach. They removed around **80,000 kilograms of waste** and collected approximately **7,400 Plaster of Paris Ganesh idols. The farewell to Bappa became another opportunity for seva.**

The green transformation does not always require something new. Sometimes, it means returning to materials that communities have known for generations.

Versova Beach clean-up post celebration

In **Digboi, Assam**, Ganesh Puja (2023) was organised around bamboo. The material was used for idols, entrance gates, and traditional decorations, including the **Japi headgear and Khorahi baskets.** The celebration brought local tradition and environmental care together.

Delhi offered another expression of this idea through eco-friendly Ganesha idols made from **coconut bark and clay,** embedded with plantable seeds. After immersion, the idols dissolved into the soil, allowing the seeds to germinate and grow into plants. The ritual remains rooted in tradition, while the materials offer a **more sustainable way to complete the journey.**

Eco-friendly puja pandal in Assam

From Pandal to Prasad: A Greener Celebration

Durga Puja is a celebration of devotion, artistry, and community, with pandals transforming into temporary spaces that welcome the goddess. Increasingly, the materials used to create these spaces reflect greater environmental awareness. In 2023, instead of thermocol and plastic, **bamboo, wood, coconut shells, cloth, jute, coir, hay, straw, cane, and paper** were used, while soluble clay Durga idols were also encouraged.

The effort extended beyond the pandal. **Blue and green waste bins** were placed at high-footfall locations, night-time cleanliness drives were organised, and non-plastic decorations were promoted. Some pandals in Delhi chose bamboo and cotton as the primary materials for their installations.

The offerings, too, found a second life. **Flowers and other organic materials** collected after the Puja were channelled towards composting and other productive uses. Prasad and refreshments were served on **paper plates, banana leaves, shell leaves and clay plates,** showing how familiar elements of the celebration can be retained while adopting more environmentally conscious practices.

Eco-friendly Durga Puja pandal

Celebrating Diwali, Carrying the Spirit of Swachhata

Diwali has always been closely linked with cleanliness. Homes are cleaned, old things are sorted, and families come together for puja, gifts, and sweets. The **"Swachh Diwali, Shubh Diwali"** campaign builds on this tradition. It encourages waste segregation, the **3Rs- Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle**- locally made products, and cleaner celebrations.

In **Mira Bhayandar, Maharashtra**, the celebration began with preparation and community cleanliness. A special pre-Diwali sanitation drive saw Safai Mitras cleaning public spaces, washing statues of national heroes and freedom fighters, and tending to green areas.

In **Rajasthan and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands,** citizens are encouraged to take household waste generated during Diwali cleaning to nearby **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle centres.**

Pre-Diwali sanitation drive: washing statues

from Self-Help Groups made earthen diyas for an eco-friendly Diwali. Further, Delhi's **Deep Mahotsav, Swachh Utsav and Voter Utsav** demonstrated how celebration itself could become a zero-waste experience. Fabric katran waste became reusable streamers, discarded cardboard became selfie frames, and old ice-cream sticks became hanging decorations. Their work kept a familiar tradition alive while offering a more sustainable choice.

Women making earthen diyas

After the Diyas Go Out

In **Guwahati,** the story continued even after the diyas were lit. Banana leaves used in the traditional Diwali celebration were collected afterwards and sent as feed for elephants.

In **Jhalrapatan, Rajasthan, Nirmalaya Vahan** vehicles collect garlands and other Puja material from temples. The collected material is then processed into compost. In **Indore, Madhya Pradesh,** special cleaning began as early as 4 am after the festival. Under the **'Clean Up to Clean Air'** initiative, sprinkler vehicles watered trees and plants with the message **'Swachhata Se Swachh Vayu Ki Aur'.**

Where the River Becomes Part of the Prayer

Chhath Puja reflects one of India's deeply rooted relationships with nature. Devotees offer prayers to the Sun while standing before the water, often along sacred rivers such as **the Ganga,** making the ghat an integral part of the ritual rather than merely a venue for the celebration.

Cleaning Ganga ghats in Patna for celebrating Chhath Puja

In **Patna, Bihar,** the Municipal Corporation organises **zero-waste Chhath Puja** at designated ghats. Separate waste bins are installed, while dedicated vehicles collect waste generated during the celebrations. Wet waste is processed into organic compost, and a plastic ban is enforced. An extensive **Information, Education and Communication (IEC)** campaign is also conducted for a month ahead of the Puja to encourage devotees and the wider community to maintain a clean and hygienic festive environment. The approach recognises that the sanctity of the festival is closely connected to the cleanliness of the spaces where it is observed. **When the river becomes part of worship, caring for its banks becomes an expression of reverence.**

A Celebration That Leaves Something Good Behind

A festival is remembered for its prayers, lights, music, and the people who come together to celebrate. Yet every celebration also leaves something behind: a street to be cleaned, flowers at a ghat, an idol in a water body, or decorations left after the crowds have dispersed. Increasingly, it can leave something more: **a cleaner ghat, a recycled decoration, a clay idol, a new plant, a livelihood, or a community that has learnt to celebrate with greater care.**

India's festivals do not need to lose their colour to become greener. The diya can still glow, the drums can still play, and prayers can still rise. What can change is what we leave behind when the celebration ends. **A celebration is truly complete when its joy remains with people, while its burden does not remain with the earth.**

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From Waste to Purpose: Indian Cities Are Rewriting the Plastic Story

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Over a decade ago, walking through an Indian market, a purchase often came with a plastic bag, commonly called polythene. These bags carried vegetables, clothes, food and countless other purchases.

Today, markets across the country are increasingly becoming plastic-free. Many shoppers carry a cloth bag from home. A shopkeeper offers a reusable alternative. Residents segregate dry and wet waste at home. Plastic collected from households travels to a recovery centre instead of a dumpsite. Some of it may eventually return as a new product. India began changing its plastic story with stricter rules and better waste management systems. The **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM),** launched on **2 October 2014,** has strengthened systems for collection, segregation and recovery. Identified single-use plastic items have been prohibited since **1 July 2022.**

But this change has not happened overnight, nor has it come from rules alone. It has grown through small habits, supported by awareness, local action and community participation. Across cities and communities, they show how small changes can reshape the plastic journey. Together, they cover the arc of plastic: reduce, reuse, return, recover and recreate.

Reduce: Making Market Part of The Solution

A market is where one small habit repeats hundreds of times each morning. In Trichy, the city corporation launched a campaign in 2022 to tackle persistent single-use plastic use in markets.

Three farmers' markets — **Tennur, K.K. Nagar and Woraiyur** — covering **220 vendors,** were selected for intensive engagement. Trichy City Corporation engaged the vendors, explaining the environmental harm caused by single-use plastic and encouraging them to adopt sustainable alternatives. The **"ThunippaiThiruvizhai" (Cloth-Bag festival)** initiative further encouraged shoppers to use reusable cloth bags. The results were measurable. Tennur market avoided **2,200 kg of single-use plastic in one year,** while K.K. Nagar avoided 620 kg in four months and Woraiyur 300 kg in six months.

Reuse: Thaila ATM: Making the Reusable Choice Easier

A cloth bag is a simple alternative to a plastic bag, but making it part of everyday shopping requires easy access. In **Vita town, Maharashtra,** the Nagar Parishad (Municipal Council) has installed **five "Thaila ATMs"** at crowded locations to offer shoppers reusable cotton bags.

The machines work like vending machines. Shoppers insert a coin or note and receive a cloth bag. Built on **Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM)** technology, the machines remotely monitor bag availability and alert the council when stocks fall below a set level. The initiative is creating livelihood opportunities too. Women from local **Self-Help Groups stitch the bags** supplied through the machines. Around **6,000 bags have been sold,** with the weekly market recording nearly **200 bags in a day.**

For Vita resident Mumtaz Raju Sayyed, the change is practical: "With the Thaila ATM, I can now get a cloth bag, which makes carrying my shopping easy."

Mumtaz Raju Sayyed

The Thaila ATM is part of wider efforts in Maharashtra to reduce plastic use. Cities are combining **enforcement with awareness** through market inspections, penalties, street plays and public campaigns. In Indapur, authorities seized **25 kg of plastic bags and imposed a ₹90,000 fine.** At the same time, communities are promoting practical alternatives. In Wardha, a Self-Help Group distributed 17,000 paper bags, while cloth and jute bags are being encouraged for repeated use. Together, these efforts are helping make plastic-free choices more accessible in everyday life.

Return: Milk Pouches Earn A Return

What if an empty milk pouch could bring something back to the household? In the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands,** a buy-back initiative is encouraging residents to return used plastic milk pouches instead of discarding them.

Collection points were established where consumers could exchange used pouches for rewards, including fresh milk and discounts. Awareness campaigns encouraged residents to participate and highlighted the importance of recycling and responsible disposal. The project was done in collaboration with Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation Limited (ANIIDCO) and Sri Vijaya Puram Municipal Council (SVPMC).

The initiative gives plastic waste a value while creating an incentive for people to return it through a structured system. By November 2024, 17,600 milk pouches were collected, rewarding residents with 352 liters of milk. The model shows how a simple incentive can turn responsible waste disposal into a community habit.

Plastic Milk Pouch Buy-Back Scheme in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Recover: Where Plastic Waste Finds a Second Life

Bengaluru is being made greener through plastic-waste recycling. According to the **Karnataka State Plastic Association,** plastic consumption in the city is around **16 kg per person each month.** Against this backdrop, United Nations Development Programme's Project **Prithvi** is helping give discarded plastic a second life.

Under the programme, a **Material Recovery Facility called Swachhata Kendra** was established in 2019 for Safai Saathis. The centre sorts plastic waste and processes it through **shredding and baling,** making the processed material **suitable for recyclers.** The facility also provided employment to **76 Safai Saathis** during the COVID-19 pandemic. Managed by social organisation **Hasiru Dala,** the centre connects waste recovery with livelihoods.

Safai Saathis Sorting Plastic Waste at a Swachhata Kendra

Processed plastic is used to make **roads, agricultural water pipes and furniture.** The initiative helps reduce the burden of plastic waste and contributes to the transformation of cities into cleaner spaces. What was once discarded therefore re-enters the economy as a useful material, bringing the idea of a **circular economy** closer to everyday waste management.

Recreate: Turning Multi-Layered Plastic into Durable Products

From chocolate wrappers and biscuit packets to chips and shampoo sachets, **Multilayered Plastics (MLPs)** are widely

used in everyday packaging. These combine layers of materials such as plastic, paper and aluminium, making them difficult to separate and recycle. For years, most of this waste had nowhere to go but landfills. Patiala, however, found a way to give this difficult-to-recycle waste a new destination through a **Plastic Recycling Facility (PRF).**

At a CSR-supported recycling facility in the city, low-value plastic waste is sorted, cleaned and shredded into flakes. Hot and cold pressing then binds these flakes into chipboard, an eco-friendly alternative to plywood. The material is strong enough for furniture, roofing and temporary shelters, while resisting water and termites. With a capacity of **10 tonnes a day**, the facility produces **75 to 100 chipboards.** The initiative gives difficult-to-recycle plastic a new purpose while supporting a **circular economy** and reducing landfill waste.

Road Ahead

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) focuses on source segregation, door-to-door collection, scientific waste processing and material recovery. These stories show how change can begin locally and how markets can change habits. As the **Swachh Bharat Mission** completes twelve years on 2 October, these stories show how local action can change the plastic journey. The units differ — kilograms, bags, pouches and chipboards but the direction is the same: turning everyday choices into lasting change.

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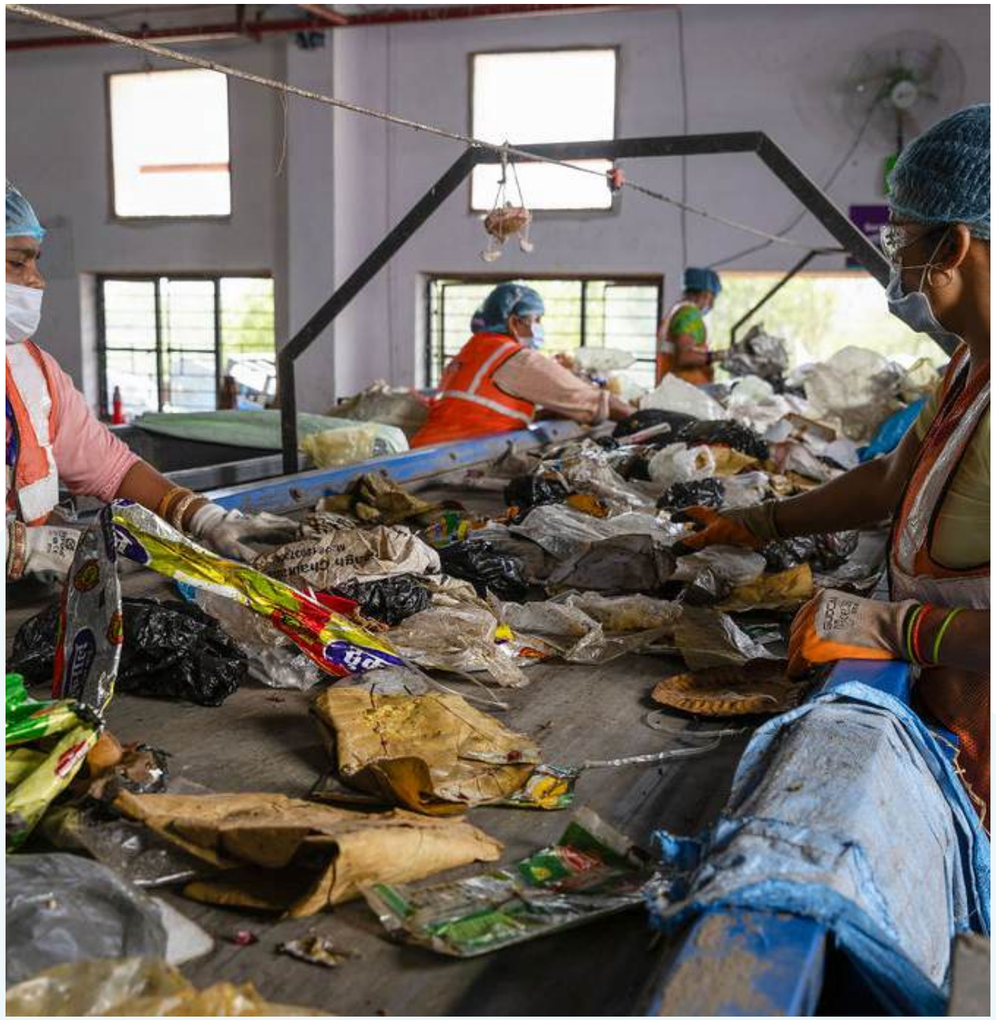

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Beyond the Fab

How Dholera Is Building the Ecosystem Around India's Semiconductor Ambition

Published on: September 28, 2026

Setting the Context

A semiconductor manufacturing facility is only one part of what it takes to build a semiconductor hub. Behind the clean rooms, advanced equipment and production lines lies a wider ecosystem of hospitals, schools, housing, emergency services and commercial infrastructure that enables companies and their workforce to operate over the long term.

At Dholera in Gujarat, this broader ecosystem is taking shape alongside the development of the semiconductor manufacturing cluster.

Gujarat has emerged as a major centre of India's semiconductor expansion, with **six of the 12 semiconductor manufacturing projects approved under Semicon India 1.0** located in the State. The projects, with cumulative investment commitments of more than ₹1.64 lakh crore nationally, span semiconductor fabrication, compound semiconductor and display technologies, and advanced packaging.

The scale of these investments is also driving a parallel development: the creation of an industrial township equipped to support the people and businesses that will become part of the semiconductor ecosystem.

During a panel discussion on Investment Facilitation and Ease of Doing Business at SEMICON India 2026, Neha Kumari, IAS, Mission Director, Gujarat State Electronics Mission (GSEM), Gandhinagar, outlined how Dholera is building this supporting infrastructure alongside the industrial cluster.

Healthcare is among the key components of this ecosystem. A 200-bed hospital is under construction at Dholera, with completion targeted by December 2026. The facility is expected to be managed by the Government of Gujarat. Alongside the physical infrastructure, work is also underway on emergency Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and coordination mechanisms with relevant agencies.

Education is another important element. A school following the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum is being developed in the township. The building is ready, with the project targeted for completion around October 2026. Discussions are also underway with private players for operating the school.

For professionals and investors working in the emerging industrial cluster, accommodation is being

developed as well. A dedicated investor accommodation facility is targeted for completion by September-end 2026, adding to the township's capacity to host people working in the region.

Other civic infrastructure is progressing in parallel. A fire station has been completed, while a food court was completed in July 2026. Residential and commercial developments are also underway, with completion projected between mid-2027 and the end of 2027.

A Tent City has been completed, with vendors in the final stages of obtaining approvals to begin operations, while a hotel is currently under construction.

From industrial project to industrial ecosystem

The developments point to a broader shift in how large industrial investments are being planned. A semiconductor facility requires not only sophisticated manufacturing infrastructure but also an environment that can support a specialised workforce and the families that accompany it.

For Dholera, this means developing the social and physical infrastructure around the industrial cluster at the same time as manufacturing capabilities are being established.

Significant activity has been taking place on the ground over the past **one-and-a-half to two years,** reflecting the pace at which Dholera's supporting infrastructure is being developed alongside the semiconductor project.

The implication of this approach extends beyond individual facilities. Hospitals provide healthcare, schools support families, accommodation serves incoming professionals and investors, while emergency and commercial infrastructure contributes to the functioning of an industrial township.

With **six semiconductor manufacturing projects** located in Gujarat, the State is becoming an important part of India's semiconductor manufacturing journey. At Dholera, that journey is being accompanied by the creation of the ecosystem around the factory floor.

The emerging model is therefore about more than building a semiconductor fab. It is about creating an integrated industrial destination - one where manufacturing, infrastructure and everyday life can develop together, providing the foundation needed to support India's semiconductor ambitions at scale.

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When Swachhata Becomes Shared Faith

From Ancient Traditions to Modern Pilgrimages, How Cleanliness Is Becoming a Collective Habit

Published on: September 29, 2026

Swachhata in Ancient India: A Practice Rooted in Everyday Life

India's association with cleanliness is older than the modern sanitation movement. The archaeological record of the **Indus Valley reveals sophisticated sanitation systems.** Cities like Lothal, in present-day Gujarat, followed planned layouts with **extensive drainage networks.** Many homes had **private toilets** connected to drains. The system also included inspection points and structures for managing solid waste. The **Vedic tradition** placed utmost importance on clean bodies and clean surroundings. Clean water, fresh air, and healthy surroundings were linked with spiritual practice. Ancient instructions also advised people to avoid defecating near rivers and other water bodies. The same connection appears in **Buddhist traditions.** Buddhist monks were instructed not to defecate or urinate in water. They were also expected to clean toilet areas for the next person. Archaeological findings support this tradition of organised sanitation. A **Gupta-period monastery in Bihar** had a dedicated toilet chamber.

These examples show an important idea. **Swachhata has always been linked with conduct, discipline, and community life in India.**

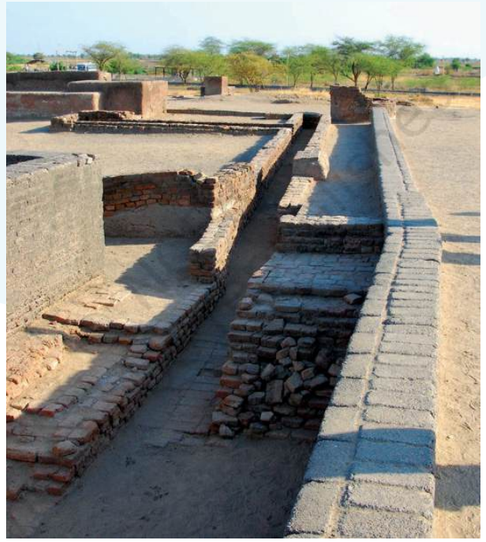

Image 1: Drainage channels brining in waste-water from households in Lothal

From Sanitation Infrastructure to Social Behaviour Change

Centuries later, however, sanitation has emerged as a challenge in modern-day India. This challenge is as much about having adequate sanitation systems as about **building habits to ensure their use and sustained maintenance.** The **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)** was launched on 2 October 2014 to address this challenge. It became one of **India's largest government-led sanitation movements.** The Mission has two components: **Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G)** and **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U). SBM-G** focuses on rural sanitation, toilet access and usage, and solid and liquid waste management. **SBM-U** focuses on urban sanitation, waste management, public spaces, and cleanliness infrastructure.

On one hand, the decade since 2014 has seen **construction of extensive sanitation infrastructure across the country** - from toilets to waste disposal and management systems. On the other hand, this journey has tackled the much more difficult task of bringing about and **sustaining behavioural change to make Swachhata part of routine behaviour.** That is the larger transformation taking place under SBM.

While permanent villages and cities have now institutionalized waste management, this behavioral shift faces its ultimate test during **massive religious gatherings,** where millions assemble in compressed timeframes.

Maha Kumbh: A Massive Gathering Becomes a Swachhata Movement

Few gatherings demonstrate this transition as clearly as **Maha Kumbh 2025.** The scale itself presented a major sanitation challenge. Millions of devotees gathered at Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. The response to this challenge combined provision of adequate sanitation infrastructure with awareness generation and public participation. More than **28,000 toilets** and **20,000 community urinals** were established across the fairgrounds. The waste system included **20,000 trash bins** for source segregation. But infrastructure was only one part of the story. The fairgrounds were designated as **plastic-free zones.**

Image 2: Dedicated Sanitation Team at Maha Kumbh 2025

Awareness campaigns were organized to encourage devotees to avoid plastic waste. Public participation was actively encouraged in ensuring swachhata. A **Swachhata Rath Yatra** moved through Prayagraj. This was a public procession that promoted cleanliness and raised public awareness about avoiding littering, using dustbins, and refraining from using single-use plastic. **Street plays** and **musical performances** explained waste segregation and disposal. **Public address systems** carried cleanliness messages across the ghats.

The approach also created space for community-led action. Women from 28 districts of Uttar Pradesh, along with artisans from several neighbouring

states, produced **sustainable products.** These products included leaf plates, kulhads, jute bags and cloth bags. Around **60 crore eco-friendly products** were produced and sold at **300 locations.** The message was not only about removing waste. It was about involving people in preventing waste. That is the essence of behaviour change.

Maha Kumbh 2025 also showed how robust public cleanliness systems can reinforce public behaviour. After major bathing dates, **rapid sanitation teams** restored the fairgrounds. They cleaned toilets and removed waste left behind by pilgrims. Disinfection and fogging were also undertaken.

Kanwar Yatra: When the Route Itself Becomes a Swachhata Space

If the river banks of Prayagraj tested massive demographic coordination, the linear routes of the Kanwar Yatra presented a different logistical puzzle. Millions of devotees travel along common routes during the pilgrimage. This creates pressure on roads, ghats, resting places and public facilities. In Delhi, a **special cleanliness campaign** was undertaken during the Yatra. **Additional sanitation workers** were deployed along major routes and resting points. **Round-the-clock sweeping and waste collection** were arranged. **Temporary toilets** were also provided. Special attention was given to wet and dry **waste segregation.** Single-use plastic was also discouraged. The campaign also addressed women pilgrims. Delhi introduced **two special pink Kanwar camps** for women managed by female volunteers. The camps included clean toilets and bathing facilities. This **connected sanitation with dignity and convenience**. More than 5 lakh devotees were also provided **steel Ganga-water containers** and **jute bags** as eco-friendly alternatives to plastic products.

Amarnath Yatra: From Faith to Responsible Action

Moving from dusty highways to the fragile ecosystem of the Kashmir Himalayas, the **Amarnath Yatra** elevates this responsibility further. More than four lakh pilgrims undertook the Yatra in 2025. **The yatra has been aligned with SBM-U 2.0.** The focus includes **scientific waste management and plastic-free practices.** The goal is a **zero-landfill** and **eco-friendly Yatra. Swachhata Executives** and other volunteers appointed by the state government supported the effort. They worked across lodgement centres, langar sites, and Yatra camps. They promoted segregation and discouraged single-use plastic. They also spread messages about sanitation and hygiene. The scale of operations was significant.

Around **11.67 metric tonnes** of waste were generated **daily.** Yet, **100% of this waste was processed**. There were **1,016 twin-bin stations** along the Yatra route for both wet and dry waste. Separate bins were placed near female toilets for sanitary waste. Around **1,300 SafaiMitras** worked at strategic locations. They supported round-the-clock cleanliness along the route.

Image 3: Sanitation workers in J&K ensuring segregation of waste using color-coded bags

Awareness efforts were made interactive. Activities included ***'Plastic Lao, Thela Lejao'*** and **'Bin It, Win It'.** These activities connected communication with participation. The IEC campaign also used signage and street plays. A **Green Pledge campaign** brought together more than 70,000 devotees. Participants committed themselves to Swachhata and sustainable practices. Social media reinforced the messageas pilgrims shared selfies and successful sanitation stories. Here, the change becomes especially visible.

Here, the pilgrim is no longer only a user of sanitation facilities. The pilgrim becomes a participant in maintaining them. Faith becomes connected with responsibility.

Image 4: Religious waste collected under Project Udvasana

When Religious Practice Itself Becomes Part of Waste Management

The movement is also reaching religious spaces outside major pilgrimages. A striking example comes from **Hyderabad.** The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation launched **Project Udvasana.** The project focuses on religious and sacred waste. Such material can include flowers, garlands, religious books, and damaged idols. The project provides **dedicated collection and scientific processing.** It began as a pilot at the ISKCON Temple in Jubilee Hills. Seven participants initially deposited

66 kilograms of religious material. The second phase collected 443 kilograms. The third phase expanded to six major temples. It involved 124 devotees. The collection reached 753.59 kilograms during this phase. The material was **segregated, documented, and recycled.** It was sent to an authorised agency for further processing. The initiative promotes **source-level segregation** and **sustainable waste management.** This is an important extension of the Swachhata journey. The focus is no longer only on cleaning public spaces. It is also on changing how religious waste is handled.

When Cleanliness Becomes Part of the Journey

India's sanitation journey has travelled a long distance. Ancient settlements developed sophisticated systems for water and sanitation. Religious traditions connected cleanliness with personal and spiritual discipline. Modern India then faced the challenge of universal sanitation access. The Swachh Bharat Mission created a massive sanitation infrastructure. But infrastructure alone could not complete the journey. The next step was to make Swachhata a habit. That required communication, participation, and repeated public action. Today, that effort is visible beyond campaign days. It is visible on pilgrimage routes and at religious gatherings. It is visible in public spaces, temples, and festival sites. **That is when Swachhata moves beyond a campaign. It becomes a habit, and when a habit becomes collective, it becomes a culture.**

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PIB Research

Care That Goes Beyond the Prescription

Affordable healthcare products for every stage of life

Published on: September 16, 2026

It takes a village to raise a child, goes the adage. But it does not say who bears the cost. A small family, familiar with its routine and planned expenses, welcomes a new life. Suddenly, everything finds a new rhythm. There are late nights, baby diapers and wipes, doctor visits, medicines, and countless little decisions that come with loving and caring for a newborn. The joy is immense. So are the responsibilities and expenses.

From baby care to post-partum care, healthcare products have become an indispensable part of family life when the nest grows. Medicines form an important part of this expenditure, but they are far from the only expense. The need for healthcare products continues when someone is recovering after surgery or when families are caring for aged parents and dependents.

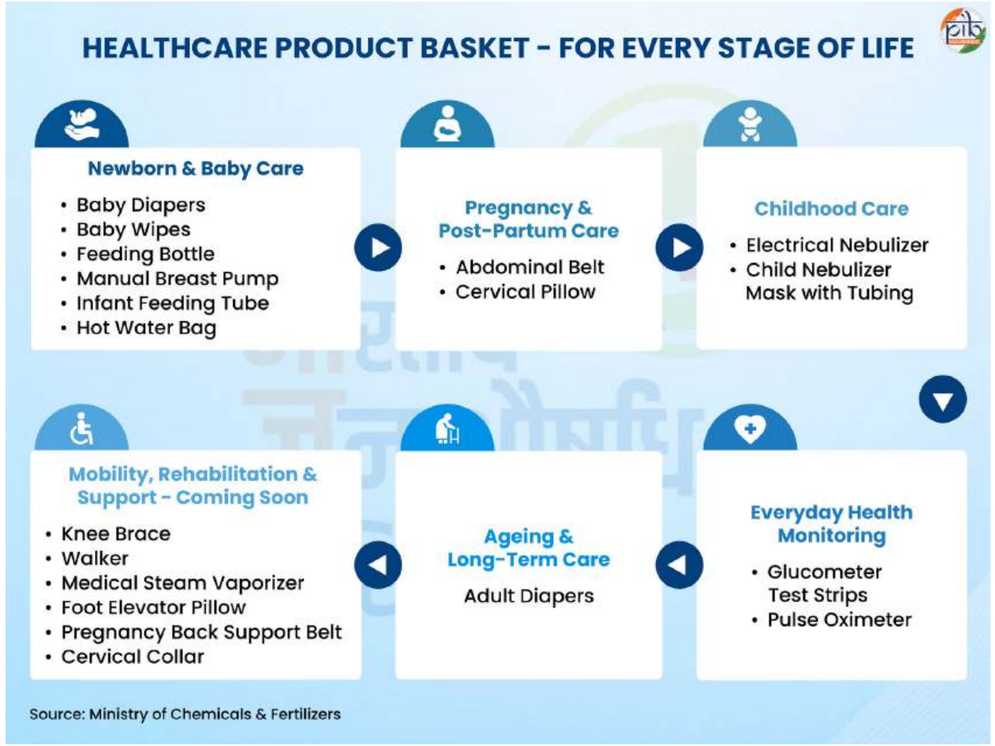
It is in this larger context of affordable healthcare beyond medicines that the Government is steadily expanding the reach of the **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).** With a network of **over 20,000 Janaushadhi Kendras** across the country, the initiative offers an **expansive range of affordable surgical and healthcare products**. This brings them closer to families and their everyday needs. Together, these products form a **healthcare basket** designed to **meet changing needs across every stage of life.**

PMBJP: Taking Affordable Medicines Closer to People

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana provides quality-assured generic medicines at **significantly lower prices**. This is enabled through an expanding network of dedicated **Jan Aushadhi Kendras (JAKs)** across the country. The initiative strengthens the affordability and access to generic pharmaceuticals.

The product basket under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojna has **2,110 medicines** and **315 surgicals, medical consumables and devices**, as of August 2026. This covers all major therapeutic groups, such as cardiovascular, anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, anti-infectives, anti-allergic and gastro-intestinal medicines and nutraceuticals.

During the last five financial years i.e. 2021-22 to 2025-26, PMBJP has made **sales of ₹7,873.85 crore** through Jan Aushadhi Kendras across the country. This has led to **savings of approximately ₹37,200 crore** to the citizens.



For a young family, the arrival of a child marks the beginning of a new set of everyday needs. Through **Janaushadhi Bachpan**, families can access essential infant-care products at affordable prices through Janaushadhi Kendras. The basket includes baby diapers in different sizes and wipes. **Baby Wipes, available in a pack of 20 at ₹45,** offer an affordable option for one of the most frequently used baby-care essentials. The basket also includes **Baby Feeding Bottles (250 ml), Manual Breast Pumps, Hot Water Bags and Infant Feeding Tubes**, etc.

But the journey of care also includes the mother. Recovery after childbirth requires adequate rest, support, and attention to physical well-being. **Abdominal Belts** are available through the Janaushadhi network to support post-delivery care. **Cervical Pillows, priced at ₹525**, offer comfort and support and can be useful during pregnancy and beyond.

As the child grows, the needs change too. A growing child may sometimes require supportive equipment at home for respiratory issues and other health conditions. Access to affordable healthcare devices can therefore

become particularly important for families.

Janaushadhi Kendras offer **Electrical Nebulizer Machines at ₹937.50** and **Nebulizer Masks with Tubing for children at ₹200**. The Janaushadhi basket is increasingly offering products that support not only treatment, but also monitoring, recovery, and day-to-day healthcare management.

Regular health monitoring can itself become part of everyday life. **Glucometer Test Strips (25 strips),** priced at **₹500**, are available through the Janaushadhi network for regular blood sugar monitoring. **Pulse Oximeters**, used to measure blood oxygen saturation, are also part of the available range of medical devices.

And as parents and other family members grow older, the responsibility of care often becomes an integral part of family life. For aged, dependent, or bedridden individuals, healthcare extends beyond treatment. **Hygiene, comfort, dignity and everyday caregiving** become equally important.

For families caring for a loved one over an extended period, such products can become recurring purchases. Even modest savings on frequently used healthcare products can therefore translate into meaningful financial relief over months and years.

Recognising this need, the Government has introduced **Jan Aushadhi Swabhiman,** a dedicated range of **adult diapers**. From the first days of parenthood to childhood, from regular health monitoring to caring for ageing loved ones, a family's healthcare journey is continuous. So are the expenses that accompany it. The **Janaushadhi basket of surgicals and consumables** aims to address these needs.

It is also set to expand further, with several healthcare and supportive-care products currently in process and in the pipeline for inclusion through the network. These include **Range of Motion-Knee Brace, Walker (Sit Assist-to-Stand Support), Medical Steam Vaporizer, Foot Elevator Pillow, Pregnancy Back Support Belt and Cervical Collar.**

The proposed expansion reflects the Government's continued efforts to broaden affordable healthcare beyond medicines and make a wider range of essential **healthcare, mobility, rehabilitation and supportive-care products** accessible to all citizens.

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PIB Research

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Union Public Service Commission

A Century of Meritocracy and Inclusion

Published on: September 30 2026

On 1 October 2026, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) completes one hundred years. Its institutional journey began on 1 October 1926, when India's first Public Service Commission was constituted - an advisory body whose Chairman and Members were appointed by the Secretary of State in London. Over the century that followed, the Commission evolved in structure, status and responsibilities, becoming what it is today - an independent constitutional body.

The Road to 1926

The principle that entry into public service should rest on merit rather than patronage took formal shape in **1855,** when the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination was instituted in London, replacing the East India Company's system of nomination with open competition. For most Indians, however, the door remained nearly impossible to open. The examination was held only in London, in English, and tested candidates on subjects such as Greek and Latin - not because these were needed to govern a district in Bengal or Punjab, but because they favoured those educated in the British system.

In **1862,** 21-year-old **Satyendranath Tagore,** elder brother of Rabindranath Tagore, sailed from Calcutta to England to sit an examination his own country would not let him take at home. He cleared it in 1863 and joined the service in 1864 - the first Indian in what the British called the "heaven-born service". He served for over thirty years in the Bombay Presidency. Six years after his success, Surendranath Banerjee, Behari Lal Gupta and Romesh Chunder Dutt followed. The maximum age for the examination was, however, progressively reduced from 23 to 19, leaving Indian candidates little time to prepare. By 1919, only **78 of the 1,255** ICS officers were Indian.

Sustained nationalist demands brought gradual change. The **Government of India Act, 1919,** enacted after the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, provided for a Public Service Commission. In **1922**, the ICS examination was held in India for the first time, at Allahabad, alongside London. In 1928 the Indian centre moved to Delhi. In **1924**, the **Lee Commission,** chaired by Arthur Hamilton Lee, recommended the immediate establishment of a statutory Public Service Commission. It also proposed that of every ten new entrants, four would be British, four Indian and two Indians promoted from the provincial services - on paper a path to parity, in practice a guaranteed 40 per cent of every intake for the British, by birth rather than by competition.

The Commission was established under the Public Service Commission (Functions) Rules, 1926, framed under Sections 96B and 96C of the 1919 Act. Sir Ross Barker, a member of the Home Civil Service of the United Kingdom, was its first Chairman, assisted by four Members, and the Commission was housed at **Metcalfe House, Delhi.** Its limited powers drew sustained criticism from leaders of the freedom movement. Yet a permanent recruiting body now existed in India, seated and staffed in India - which is why the Commission dates its history from 1926.

The Constitutional Mandate

On **22 August 1949,** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee, moved the draft articles on the Union and State Public Service Commissions in the Constituent Assembly. They became **Part XIV (Articles 315–323)** of the Constitution. In his valedictory address on 26 November 1949, Dr. Rajendra Prasad emphasised that the independence of the Public Service Commissions was essential to ensure impartiality in public appointments and to guard against jobbery, nepotism and favouritism.

Article	What it provides
315	Public Service Commissions for the Union and for the States, with provision for a Joint Commission for two or more States
316	Chairman and Members appointed by the President
317	Removal or suspension of a Member only by order of the President, after an inquiry by the Supreme Court

318	Power to make regulations on the conditions of service of Members and staff
319	Restrictions on holding office after ceasing to be a Member; the Chairman is ineligible for further employment under the Government of India or a State
320	Functions: conducting examinations for appointment to the services of the Union, and advising on methods of recruitment, promotions and disciplinary matters
321	Power of Parliament or a State Legislature to extend the Commission's functions
322	Expenses of the Commission charged on the Consolidated Fund of India
323	Annual report to the President; cases where the Commission's advice was not accepted, with reasons, laid before Parliament

What the Commission does

- **Recruitment by examination:** The Civil Services, Indian Forest Service, Engineering Services, Combined Medical Services, National Defence Academy & Naval Academy, Combined Defence Services and Central Armed Police Forces (Assistant Commandants) examinations, among others.
- **Recruitment by selection:** Interviews and recruitment tests for specialist posts requisitioned by Ministries and Departments.
- **Advice to Government:** On Recruitment Rules, promotions through Departmental Promotion Committees, induction into the All India Services and disciplinary cases. In 2023-24, it processed the records of 24,581 officers for promotion, and 532 officers were inducted into the All India Services.
- **Police leadership:** Since 2012–13, pursuant to the Supreme Court's order of 22 September 2006 in Prakash Singh vs Union of India, the Commission empanels senior IPS officers for appointment as Director General of Police/Head of Police Force in the States.

Landmark Events: 1926–2026

Foundations: 1926–1949

Year	Milestone
1935	Government of India Act, 1935 transfers the power of appointment to the Governor-General, provides for a Federal PSC and Provincial PSCs, and makes consultation with the Commission mandatory on recruitment, appointments, promotions, disciplinary cases and service rules.
1937	Renamed the Federal Public Service Commission (1 April).
1938	Combined Competitive Examinations begin for several services - the start of unified, multi-service recruitment.
1940	Indians (625) outnumber Europeans (575) in the ICS for the first time.

1947	Shri H.K. Kripalani becomes the first Indian Chairman. First examination after Independence held in December; the ICS gives way to the IAS.
1948	First batch of Indian Foreign Service officers recruited through the combined examination.

Building the Republic's Services: 1950– 1979

Year	Milestone
1950	Federal PSC becomes the Union Public Service Commission on 26 January, with Shri R.N. Banerjee as Chairman.
1950–51	First regular recruitment to the All-India Services under the Constitution: 29 candidates recommended for the IAS and 31 for the IPS.
1951	All-India Services Act enacted.
1966	Indian Forest Service constituted as the third All India Service; first selection in 1967.
1969	Eighth Schedule languages introduced as options for the Essay and General Studies papers of the Civil Services Examination.
1976	Golden Jubilee. Applications cross one lakh for the first time. The D.S. Kothari Committee proposes a three-stage examination.
1977	First Combined Medical Services Examination.
1978	Commission adopts computers to process applications, answer sheets and records.
1979	Three-stage Civil Services Examination - Preliminary, Main and Interview - introduced. Eighth Schedule languages formalised in the Main Examination; London centre discontinued.

Reform and Modernisation: 1985–2010

Year	Milestone
1985	Sanctioned strength raised to a Chairman and ten Members.

1988–89	Satish Chandra Committee recommends more centres, a 200-mark essay, negative marking in the Preliminary Examination and more marks for the interview.
1989	Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) technology introduced.
1992	Smt. Rose Millian Bathew Kharbuli becomes the first woman Chairperson.
1993	Essay paper introduced in the Civil Services (Main) Examination; interview marks raised from 250 to 300.
1994	Medical Science added as an optional subject.
2000	Online Recruitment Application (ORA) system launched, following the SAMPERA common application form (1999–2000); by 2010, applications for several examinations were fully online.
2003	First Central Police Forces (Assistant Commandants) Examination held (12 October).
2005	New office building, 'Ayog Sachivalaya', inaugurated (22 December).
2009	Foundation Day Lecture series on 'Governance and Public Service' inaugurated by President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil (12 November); Indian Corporate Law Service added to the Civil Services Examination.
2010	UPSC hosts the Conference of Chiefs of Public Service Commissions of SAARC countries (20–22 November).

Digital, Transparent and Inclusive: 2011–2026

Year	Milestone
2011	Civil Services Aptitude Test (CSAT) introduced; Single Window System (1 September).
2013	Civil Services (Main) restructured: four General Studies papers, including Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude, and one optional subject. First Computer-Based Recruitment Tests. IFoS screening through the CS (Preliminary) Examination.
2015	CSAT made a qualifying paper (33 per cent).
2017	Engineering Services Examination becomes three-stage; seven-day online window for representations on questions.
2018	Query-Based Marks Information System (1 June).
2019	Dedicated Control Room for year-round monitoring of examinations.
2021	Women admitted to the NDA & NA Examination for the first time - NDA & NA Examination (II), 2021, held on 14 November 2021.
2022	Existing four Group A Railway services under the Civil Services Examination unified as the Indian Railway Management Service.

Developments in 2025 and 2026 are listed in Section 7.

Facts and Figures

The scale of the Commission

The scale and complexity of the work handled by UPSC have increased significantly over the years, as applications across examinations and recruitment by selection grew from **42,727 in 1950-51** to a peak of **45,10,044 in 2022-23** - an increase of more than a hundredfold. In that year, the Commission conducted 15 examinations (33,51,916 applications) and received 233 requisitions for 4,411 posts under recruitment by selection (11,58,128 applications).

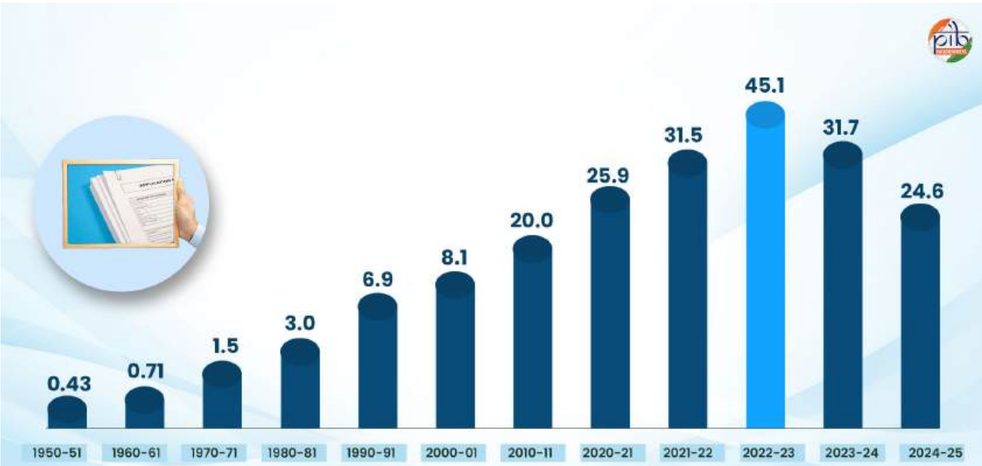

Figure 1: Applications received by UPSC (examinations and recruitment by selection), in lakh. Source: UPSC Annual Reports.

Then and Now

Indicator	Then	Now	Change
Examination centres	8 (1950)	86 (2026)	Over 10×
Women recommended in Civil Services Examination	3 of 83 (1952)	299 of 958 (2025)	About 100×
SC candidates recommended in Civil Services Examination	9 (1955)	158 (2025)	About 18×
ST candidates recommended in Civil Services Examination	2 (1956-57)	73 (2025)	About 37×
SC applicants, all examinations	1,713 (1956-57)	4,51,243 (2023-24)	About 382×
ST applicants, all examinations	82 (1956-57)	1,47,106 (2023-24)	About 1794×
PwBD candidates recommended in Civil Services Examination	3 (2002)	42 (2025)	14×
Disciplinary cases advised on	53 (1950-51)	446 (2023-24)	About 8×

Inclusion in numbers

- **Women:** Between 1949 and 1951, only one woman was selected for the Indian Foreign Service and two for the IAS. Women made up 3.6 per cent of those recommended in 1952 and 31.2 per cent in CSE 2025, when they also secured 11 of the top 25 ranks.
- **Indian languages at the interview:** in 1970-71, the Commission informed the Government that the Personality Test could be conducted only in English. The position changed in 1980-81, and candidates may now answer in an Indian language with an interpreter provided by the Commission; 803 chose to do so in 2010-11 and 307 in 2023-24.

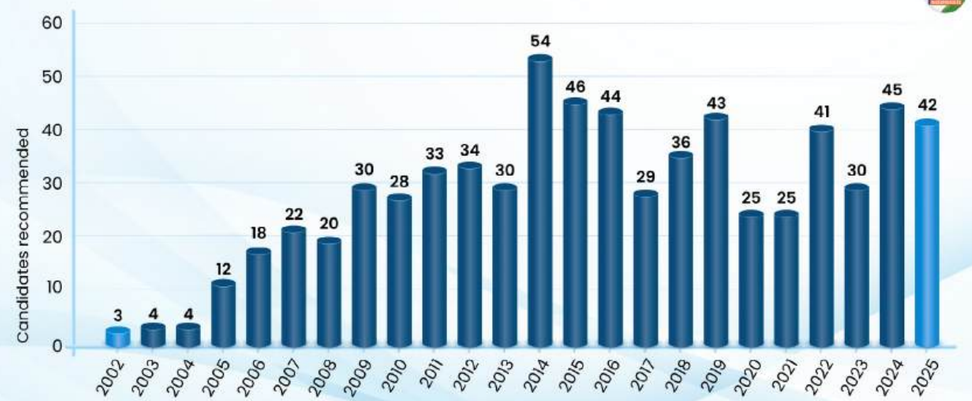

Figure 2: PwBD candidates recommended through the Civil Services Examination, 2002–2025.

Source: UPSC Annual Reports

Anecdotes

Short stories from the Commission's century.

Where the 'steel frame' speech was made

Metcalfe House, built in 1835 by Sir Thomas Metcalfe, has a second claim to history. On 21 April 1947, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressed the first batch of civil service probationers there and described the civil services as the "steel frame of India". The date is now observed every year as Civil Services Day.

A Maharaja's transit house

Dholpur House on Shahjahan Road was built in 1920 in the Art Deco style by Maharaja Rana Udaybhanu Singh of Dholpur, as his residence during visits to Delhi. After Dholpur State merged with the Union on 7 April 1949, the building became government property. Three years later, in 1952, it became the Commission's permanent headquarters.

One among eighty

In 1972, Kiran Bedi became the first woman selected by the Commission for the Indian Police Service, a service that had never had a woman officer. Of the eighty vacancies that year, she was the only woman.

Forms in the newspaper

In 1989, when slow post made it difficult for application forms to reach remote areas, the Commission printed them directly in newspapers. In 1984, when heavy snowfall cut off Kangra, it extended the application deadline by two weeks for affected aspirants.

A sun on a stamp

On 8 November 1977, the Posts and Telegraphs Department issued a 25-paise stamp for the Commission's Golden Jubilee. It showed the sun - symbolising impartiality and equal opportunity for all - with the national tricolour. For the Platinum Jubilee, inaugurated by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on 14 December 2001, the Department of Posts issued a First Day Cover.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The UPSC Museum, opened on 11 November 2016, is free and open to the public on weekdays from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm; a 360-degree virtual tour is available on the Commission's website.
- The age limit has travelled a long way. As late as 1988, an expert committee recommended keeping the Civil Services Examination age band at 21 to 26 years. The limits of 32 years for General candidates, 35 for OBC and 37 for SC and ST candidates, with up to ten years more for Persons with Disabilities, were fixed in 2014, when two extra attempts were also allowed.
- Candidates who had appeared in the Civil Services Examination 2011 were given one more attempt in CSE 2015, whatever their age or the number of attempts already used.
- The Commission has not always recruited only for the Union. In 1960-61, under Article 320, it agreed to recruit for bodies such as the Delhi Municipal Corporation, the Employees' State Insurance Corporation and the Territorial Councils of the Union Territories.
- Open competition lapsed during the Second World War. The London examination was held for the last time in 1939, officers for 1940, 1941 and 1942 were nominated directly, and recruitment through the British Civil Service Commission stopped altogether after 1943.
- In the draft Constitution, the provisions on Public Service Commissions were numbered Articles 284 and 285 when Dr. B.R. Ambedkar moved them in the Constituent Assembly.

Case Studies: How the Machinery Works

Every morning in Mumbai, around 5,000 dabbawalas collect nearly two lakh home-cooked lunches and deliver each to the right desk by lunchtime, using nothing more than a colour code chalked on the lid. The Commission solves a comparable problem every year, at far higher stakes: the right question paper must reach the right candidate at the right minute, and every answer must then be judged on merit alone. The following case studies explain how.

Case Study 1: The right paper to the right candidate

A candidate makes only one choice: the city. Within that city, the system allots the venue and the room, so that by the day of the examination every candidate has a unique address - city, venue, room, candidate - known in advance only to the system. Candidates in the same room may be writing different papers - in the Civil Services Main Examination alone, candidates choose from 48 optional subjects - so each sealed packet must carry exactly the papers needed at that venue, sorted room by room.

Case Study 2: Setting a paper no one has seen

Question papers are built from question banks prepared by academic experts who work in anonymity under a strict code of confidentiality. No single expert sets a whole paper, and no expert knows which questions will be used, or when. In constructing a paper, the Commission ensures that it covers the entire syllabus, that its difficulty is balanced, and that no question has been asked in any previous UPSC examination.

The whole apparatus rests on the principle of 'need to know': no single person - not even the Chairman - sees the full picture.

Case Study 3: Securing the examination hall

In collaboration with the National e-Governance Division, the Commission piloted **AI-enabled** facial authentication - matching a candidate's live image with the application photograph - at select centres in Gurugram during the NDA & NA (II) and CDS (II) Examinations on 14 September 2025. It was implemented at scale at the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination on 24 May 2026, where face authentication was carried out for all of about 5.50 lakh candidates through invigilators' mobile phones, taking about 6–8 seconds per candidate.

Ahead of the CS (Preliminary) Examination 2026, a scan of fifteen years of candidate data identified and rejected **569 applicants** who had furnished false information to claim extra attempts.

Case Study 4: Recruiting at the speed of need

The Commission has repeatedly scaled up when the nation required it, without lowering its standards. In July 1948, a Special Recruitment Board recruited experienced personnel aged 27 to 45 into the IAS and IPS on the basis of records and interviews. In 1956–57, a special drive screened over 22,000 candidates. In 1958, a Special Recruitment Board selected 197 scientists and technologists - including applicants from overseas - for a national Pool whose strength

rose to 500 by 1962. During the 1962 emergency, an Emergency Commission filled 1,353 defence-related posts in two months.

During COVID-19, with train services disrupted, the Commission reimbursed airfare to interview candidates as a one-time measure, requested States to let candidates with e-summon letters move through restricted zones, helped with lodging and transport, and handed each candidate a sealed kit of mask, face shield, sanitiser and gloves.

Case Study 5: Inclusion by design

Access comes first. The Commission introduced scribes for visually impaired candidates in 1994, and today the right to a scribe and extra time is an entitlement for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities, who are also allotted the centre of their choice, may bring an escort, and are assisted by a facilitator at interviews. Women candidates receive fee exemptions. Age relaxations have been extended to those whose preparation was disrupted by events beyond their control - freedom fighters of the Goa liberation (1961–62), Indians displaced by the Bangladesh Liberation War and the Uganda-Zanzibar crisis (1971–72), and Indians affected by the Gulf War (1991).

Fairness follows: an evaluation system, from written papers to the interview board, that is blind to identity. The Commission did not write the policy of reservation, but it built the national platform that implements it, including the Economically Weaker Sections category from CSE 2019 and a separate transgender category in its Online Recruitment Application form from 2020.

Case Study 6: Merit beyond the merit list: Pratibha Setu

Candidates who clear every stage of an examination but narrowly miss the final list are not lost to public service. Under the Public Disclosure Scheme, in force since 20 August 2018 and first used for the Combined Medical Services Examination, 2017, the details of such willing candidates were made available to employers. Revamped and renamed Pratibha Setu on 9 June 2025, it connects them with verified employers, including Ministries, PSUs, autonomous bodies and private organisations.

Recent Updates

When	Development	Details
May 2025	Universal Registration Number	Revamped portal at upsconline.nic.in replaces One-Time Registration; one persistent identity across all examinations; profiles can be completed in advance.
2025	Randomised interview boards	Introduced from the Combined Medical Services Examination, 2025, with software setting the calling sequence.
2025	Email alerts for institutions	Educational and professional institutions can subscribe to alerts on recruitment advertisements by writing to ra-upsc@gov.in.
From 1 Feb 2026	Candidate Helpdesk	30-channel IP-based call centre with two levels of escalation; more than 50,000 calls handled.
2026	New examination centres	Bhubaneswar (10,656 applications), Kanpur (6,938) and Meerut (5,902) added for CS (P) 2026, taking its centres from 80 to 83; Alwar, Hisar and Kinnaur added for NDA & NA (II) 2026.

2026	Provisional answer key	Provisional answer key for Civil Services (Preliminary) examination published soon after the examination; representations through the online QPRep portal.
2026	Online DPC system	Paperless platform for Departmental Promotion Committee proposals from about 101 Ministries, Departments and organisations under development.
2026	Technology and security	Officers trained in emerging technologies, including AI, through NIELIT; High-Level Network Committee constituted for IT infrastructure and cybersecurity.

The Commission Today

The Commission is headed by Chairman Dr. Ajay Kumar (since 15 May 2025). Its eight Members are Lt. Gen. Raj Shukla (Retd.), Ms. Suman Sharma, Shri Bidyut Behari Swain, Dr. Dinesh Dasa, Shri Sheel Vardhan Singh, Shri Sanjay Verma, Smt. Sujata Chaturvedi and Smt. Anuradha Prasad. Three of the eight Members are women - a composition that reflects how far the institution has travelled in a hundred years.

> "An institution that has endured for a hundred years does so not because it resists change, but because it knows what must never change."
> **— Dr. Ajay Kumar, Chairman, UPSC**

For a hundred years, the Commission has carried one of the nation's most consequential responsibilities: to recognise merit, uphold fairness and ensure that opportunity reaches beyond privilege, geography, language or circumstance. A century ago, the struggle was for the right of Indians to compete. Today, the task is to ensure that this right genuinely reaches every deserving Indian who wishes to serve the nation.

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Beyond Cleanliness: The Women and Transgender Changemakers of Swachhata

Posted On: September 30, 2026

A clean city is often noticed through what is no longer visible. Waste no longer lies on the street. Drains no longer remain clogged. Sanitation facilities are available when they are needed. But behind this visible change are journeys that deserve to be seen too. They are the **journeys of women** creating livelihoods from waste, leading cleanliness efforts in their communities and turning everyday challenges into opportunities. Alongside them are **transgender community** members finding professional roles and recognition in sanitation services. Across cities, Swachhata is becoming more than a public service. It is becoming a space for **dignity, enterprise, participation and opportunity.**

This spirit of participation finds a national platform in **Swachhata Hi Seva 2026,** launched on 17 September 2026. Every year, the campaign brings **citizens, institutions and leadership** together to strengthen **voluntarism and collective action** for Swachhata.

With the theme **"Swachhata Mein Sahbhag; Swachh Bharat, Viksit Bharat",** Swachhata Hi Seva 2026 places shared responsibility at the heart of the cleanliness movement. It underlines that the vision of a **Swachh and Viksit Bharat** calls for a **Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society approach.**

Such a collective spirit finds a meaningful expression in Loni, Uttar Pradesh, where something once treated as waste is becoming a source of livelihood.

When Waste Becomes a Livelihood

Around gaushalas and dairies, cow dung can become a difficult waste-management challenge, clogging drains and sewage channels. In Krishna Vihar Colony of Loni, however, a group of women saw a different way forward. **They began using cow dung to make incense sticks and Loban cups.**

What started with just 8-10 women grew into a livelihood opportunity for many more. A woman officer of the Loni Nagar Palika Parishad saw the potential in their work and helped connect the producers with gaushala owners for steady supply and utilization of cow dung. **A simple idea began to take root: what if something treated as waste could be given another life?**

During the summer months when incense production is at its peak, the initiative employs **around 40-50 women.** For these women, the work is more than making a product. It brings together **livelihood, dignity, and the satisfaction of turning waste into something useful.** The Nagar Palika Parishad also earns **up to 25 per cent revenue** from the sale of these products. This creates a link between waste management, local enterprise, and municipal revenue.

The products themselves carry the story of reuse. Traditionally, making incense products requires wood sawdust as the base material. Mixing around 30-35 per cent dry cow dung powder reduces the quantity of wood sawdust required. This has emerged as an environmentally sustainable solution that also ensures swachchta

What began in one colony has travelled much farther. The products are supplied to several parts of the country, including **Delhi, Mumbai, Punjab, Gujarat and Hyderabad. During the COVID period, they were** also produced for major brands, with orders reaching **Mauritius and South Africa.**

And the women are not stopping there. Plans are being explored to make **combustible wood as fuel from cow dung** for use in cremation grounds, havans, and other activities. The initiative is also exploring **cow-dung flower pots** that can eventually return to the soil as manure.

Here, the idea of cleanliness extends beyond removing waste. It means asking what else that waste can become.

From Waste Collectors to Waste Leaders

A similar spirit can be seen in Patna, Bihar, where women are **breaking old conventions and giving cleanliness a new, inclusive face.** At the city's **Pink Material Recovery Facility (MRF),** women stand at the heart of the **waste-management process.** Operated primarily by women and led by a female supervisor, the facility **processes dry and wet waste.** It can manage **2 tonnes of dry waste and 1.5 tonnes of wet waste every day.**

The idea for the Pink MRF emerged from an effort to create **opportunities for women in the waste-management sector.** The project team approached the **Patna Municipal Corporation (PMC)** with the idea of establishing a Pink MRF. PMC supported the idea, and the facility was set up in **just three months.** Its distinctive colour and design also drew the attention of local people, helping create awareness around the initiative.

The idea reaches the community through the **'Cash for Waste'** initiative. Citizens can bring dry waste and receive payment at prescribed rates. **Waste gains value, citizens gain an incentive to participate, and the city gains another set of hands in its cleanliness journey.**

Patna's Swachhta journey then takes an interesting turn. Old, unusable vehicles

have been **given a second life as mobile Pink Toilets.** What once stood as scrap now serves a vital sanitation need. It is the spirit of the 3Rs: **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle,** made visible on the streets.

Together, the Pink MRF and mobile Pink Toilets reflect **social justice, environmental awareness and economic opportunity.** Above all, they carry a simple message: **when women are given space in Swachhta, they do not merely become part of the system. They help reshape it.**

Women Who Carry Cleanliness into Their Communities

The story of women and Swachhta does not end with the waste they handle. **It grows through the communities they touch.** In Bhopal, a **group of 250 women brand ambassadors** has worked with the municipal corporation on cleanliness and waste management. The group members have also established **'Bartan Banks'** across 25 wards to eliminate the use of single-use plastic. By providing reusable utensil sets for community functions and events, these banks ensure that local gatherings are organized under zero-waste principles.

The **60-member 'Swachhata Kitty Group'** has found another way to turn togetherness into action. Each woman **contributes ₹100 every month,** creating a shared pool for community cleanliness activities. **Small contributions, carried by many hands, become a collective commitment to a cleaner neighbourhood.**

In Uttarakhand, this spirit has taken the name 'Bainni Sena '-the 'Army of Sisters'. Across 57 groups, 570 women monitor cleanliness activities in their wards. They interact with citizens, help communicate complaints, conduct awareness programmes, and support coordination between the municipal administration and sanitation workers. Their work happens where a city's cleanliness is truly decided. It takes shape **in neighbourhoods, in conversations and in the small moments when someone chooses to care.**

In Shillong, the **Iynnehskhem Self-Help Group** has found a new path to livelihood through waste. The women collect wet waste from homes and **turn biodegradable waste into compost.** Once involved in waste picking, they received training through a rehabilitation initiative and built a new livelihood around composting. Their unity earned them the affectionate name **'Meri Maidens of Marton'.**

Through their everyday efforts, the women are turning Swachhta from a responsibility into a shared culture of care.

When Inclusion Changes the Face of Sanitation

In Odisha, **transgender persons** are taking on roles that place them at the heart of urban sanitation systems. The change began in Cuttack, where the Municipal Corporation organised transgender persons into a Self-Help Group. They were trained and entrusted with the **operation and maintenance of a Septage Treatment Plant.**

It was a significant shift. A community that has often faced exclusion from formal opportunities was now taking responsibility for a technical sanitation facility.

The model subsequently expanded across Odisha. **Urban Local Bodies began partnering with Self-Help Groups** in Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) and solid waste management.

In Bhubaneswar, the **Swikruti Self-Help Group** took responsibility for operating and maintaining a 75-KLD Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) at Basuaghai. Members received orientation and technical and managerial training before taking up their responsibilities.

For Meghna Sahoo, President of Swikruti, the transformation is deeply personal. **"Now, we can proudly embrace our identity and participate in the professional space,"** she says.

She speaks of the pride she feels when members of her group explain their work to students and visitors from national and international institutions. **The significance lies not only in the job itself, but in what the job makes possible: professional identity, confidence and recognition.**

The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation has also brought transgender groups into the operation and maintenance of seven cesspool vehicles. Drivers and helpers are to be engaged with minimum applicable wages. They will also receive training on health, hygiene, personal protective equipment, and desludging protocols. Odisha's pioneering move to expand livelihood options to transgenders has won many accolades. It has set the ball rolling for others to follow, showing how inclusive participation can pave the way for better sanitation.

The Deeper Meaning of Swachhata

These stories show that Swachhata can do more than create cleaner surroundings. It can open doors to livelihoods, participation, and recognition. **The real transformation lies not only in what happens to waste, but in what becomes possible for the people who manage it.** When people once pushed to the margins find a place at the heart of Swachhata, cleanliness takes on a deeper meaning. **It becomes a shared effort, shaped by dignity, opportunity and a sense of belonging.**

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Beyond Wastewater: Turning Used Water into a Resource

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In growing cities, the water cycle does not end when water is used. What flows away from homes, businesses and neighbourhoods does not have to become waste. With the right systems, used water can be collected, treated, recycled and returned to productive use. This shift is shaping a new approach to urban sanitation under the **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U)**. At its heart is **Used Water Management (UWM)**, which focuses on treating used water, preventing untreated sewage from reaching water bodies, and enabling safe reuse. Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) are central to this process, turning wastewater management into an opportunity to protect natural resources and recover water for further use.

This approach is reinforced through the **Water Plus certification**, which provides cities with guidelines for managing wastewater generated by households and commercial establishments. It requires wastewater to meet satisfactory treatment standards before being discharged into the environment. The focus extends beyond treatment infrastructure to how cities plan and manage their water resources. **Urban Local Bodies** are being empowered to formulate long-term, city-level plans for wastewater reuse. Clearly defined responsibilities and technological advancements are helping cities improve the efficiency and effectiveness of treatment systems. The **Open Defecation Free (ODF) ++ protocols** further strengthen this approach by assessing the safe management and treatment of entire sewage, including faecal sludge and septage.

Together, these measures are laying the foundation for sustainable sanitation and a circular economy, where used water can be managed as a resource. Under SBM 2.0, projects worth **₹11,785 crore** have been approved for setting up sewage treatment plants in small cities. These projects will add **4,900 million litres per day (MLD)** of treatment capacity, expanding the infrastructure needed for effective used water management.

Where Used Water Finds a Second Life

The management of used water is evolving beyond conventional treatment and disposal. Different cities are developing approaches that match their infrastructure, water needs and local conditions. In the process, treated water is finding applications in agriculture, horticulture, industry, road cleaning and lake rejuvenation. The experiences of cities like Jaipur, Indore, Surat and Navi Mumbai highlight some of these varied approaches.

Jaipur: Engineering Water Reuse at Scale

Water Treatment at Dehlawas Plant

Built over 22.50 hectares during 2020–23, the **Dehlawas Sewage Treatment Plant (STP)** in Jaipur has the highest sewage treatment capacity in Rajasthan, at **215 MLD**. Wastewater is effectively treated and converted into a reusable resource, thereby promoting the concepts of circular economy and water conservation. This high-technology plant is fully automated through a **Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA)** system.

Jaipur STP is currently equipped with a highly efficient **Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR)**. In this process, wastewater passes through a Parshall flume, primary clarifier and basin before reaching the chlorine tank. It is then converted into clean water. Solid waste is separated using primary sludge thickeners and screw press machines. Once treated at the STP, wastewater becomes a valuable resource once again. It is being reused for irrigationand various industrial processes, a practice known as **wastewater recycling**, which is also an economically viable option.At present, a portion of the treated water is being supplied to a nearby colony for gardening and other purposes. The remaining clean water is discharged into the **Dravyavati River**, while measures are being taken to ensure that untreated wastewater does not enter the river. A green area has also been developed around the plant, with **more than 30,000 plants** adding to the greenery of the site.

The plant discharging treated water into the Dravyavati River

Indore: Leading the Water Plus Journey

Indore's transformation in used water management began with a simple goal: keep untreated wastewater out of the environment. This approach helped the city become the first to receive Water+ Certification. Its practices demonstrated how sustainable sanitation and used water management could work at the city level. The model has also encouraged several smaller cities to pursue similar approaches.

Today, no untreated wastewater flows through Indore's rivers or its natural and man-made stormwater drains. By 2020, the city had **7 decentralised STPs** alongside **3 existing centralised STPs**. It had also laid more than **200 kilometres** of piped network for carrying treated wastewater. Indore simultaneously strengthened measures for conserving both groundwater and surface water. In 2022, more than **1.25 lakh** rainwater harvesting units were installed across residential and non-residential areas. The installations were completed within a span of just four months. Treated wastewater is now used for water gardens, roadside plantations and horticulture. It is also used for washing roads and cleaning sewer machines.

Surat: Making Wastewater an Economic Resource

Surat has taken the idea of wastewater reuse further by treating it as a resource with economic value. The Surat Municipal Corporation has established four tertiary treatment plants with a combined installed capacity of **116 MLD**. The plants have helped reduce dependence on freshwater resources. Treated wastewater is reused across several non-potable applications in the city. These include industrial use, lake rejuvenation, agriculture, mass plantation, sewer cleaning, etc., through direct service lines and tanker filling stations. The city has **170 sewer-cleaning machines**, including equipment based on **Latest Advanced Robotic Technology**. These machines are used for cleaning and maintaining the sewerage system.

Water Treatment Plants in Surat

Navi Mumbai: Reuse Built into City Services

Navi Mumbai's Water+ journey has combined treatment infrastructure with extensive reuse of treated water. It is the only city in Maharashtra to achieve a **five-star rating** and Water+ Certification. The city upgraded its sewage treatment technology and designed its STPs for a population of 30 lakh. Its pumping stations were also upgraded to reduce energy costs. These stations transfer sewage generated to the STPs. Preventive maintenance of the sewer network was undertaken to avoid hotspots. Navi Mumbai has achieved **100% mechanised cleaning** of sewer lines and septic tanks. Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation centrally monitors all septic tanks through Level Transmitters installed across the city. More than **30%** of treated water is

Sewage Treatment in Navi Mumbai

reused in over 30 city gardens. It is also used to wash solid-waste vehicles, compactors and city transport buses. Sprinklers and road dividers also use treated water, reducing dependence on freshwater.

Tirupati: A Revenue Model for Treated Water

Tirupati has developed a self-sustaining model for operating a sewage treatment plant at Thukivakam. The city has also been declared Water Plus. Built at a cost of **₹19 crore**, the STP has an installed capacity of **50 MLD**. It serves **1,04,057 households** across the city. Of the treated water, **24 MLD is reused** for various purposes. The plant sells **5 MLD** of treated used water to **Srikalahasthi Pipes Ltd.** With this, the plant is able to generate a net revenue of Rs. 6 Lakhs per month. Another **18 MLD** of treated used water is supplied free of cost to farmers for agriculture. The ULB also reuses a portion for road and street cleaning. Treated water is further used for watering road medians, parks and gardens across the city. These measures help maximise the reuse of treated water. Tirupati's approach combines wastewater reuse with a revenue-generating model for sustainable STP operations.

Water Treatment Plant in Tirupati

A Shift in the Urban Water Story

The growing focus on used water management is changing how cities approach their water needs. Treatment is no longer only about preventing pollution. It is also about recovering water for productive use. Treated water is finding new uses in irrigation, industry, horticulture and everyday urban services. As more cities strengthen treatment capacity and develop reuse systems, urban water management is becoming more circular and resource-efficient. This shift helps build cleaner sanitation systems while making better use of every available water resource.

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Bankers Books Evidence Act, 2026

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The Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026 modernises India's legal system governing admissibility of banking records as evidence. It comes into force on October 1 2026, and replaces the Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 1891. The Act introduces a technology-neutral framework covering physical, electronic and digital records, with standardised provisions for their authentication and certification. It strengthens procedural safeguards governing the production of bankers' books. The Act also protects bank officials from routine appearance in proceedings, where the bank is not a party, solely for the purpose of proving/testifying the record of the bank. It enables extension of its provision to specified financial sector entities, supporting an evolving and increasingly digital financial ecosystem.

A Modern Legal Framework for Banking Records

The Government has undertaken reforms to strengthen India's banking and financial sector and improve ease of doing business. These efforts also focus on modernising laws and regulations to reflect the changing needs of the economy.

The Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026 comes into force on October 1, 2026, and replaces the Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 1891.

The Act provides clear and updated rules for admissibility of bank records as evidence in legal proceedings. It applies to court cases, inquiries, arbitrations and investigations where banking records may be required to be produced as evidence.

Breaking Down Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026

The Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026 provides a **modern framework for admissibility of banking records as evidence** in line with contemporary digital banking practices. The Act will be **used in any legal proceeding,** an arbitration and any investigation or inquiry under the **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023,** or under any other law for the time being in force, in which evidence is or may be taken. As per the Act-

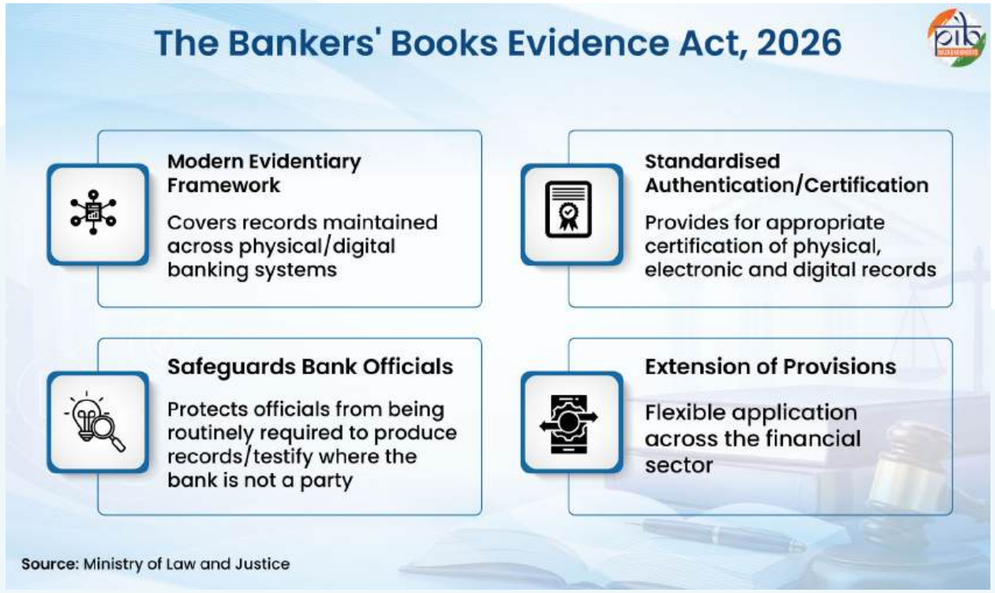
- **"Bank" and "banker"** mean any company or corporation carrying on the business of banking, any entity or class of entities operating in the financial sector (to whose books the provisions of this Act are extended), any post office savings bank or money order office.
- **"Bankers' books"** include ledgers, day-books, cash-books, account books and all other records used in the ordinary course of business of the bank. These can be kept in written or physical form or stored in any form of data storage mechanisms

Need for the Act

The Bankers' Books Evidence Act was framed in the colonial era of 1891, when banking systems were entirely paper-based. In the current times, India continues to progress in digitising its economy. **Banking and financial transactions are largely driven by digital platforms,** frequently accessible with a simple click on a mobile phone. In such a scenario, it is imperative that India's legal framework evolves to keep pace with these advancements.

Key Features

- The Act establishes a **contemporary evidentiary framework for banking records,** covering records maintained across physical and digital banking systems.
- It enables **standardised authentication and certification of bankers' books,** providing for appropriate certification of physical and electronic records.
- The Act strengthens **clarity and procedural safeguards in the production of bankers' books.** It also **protects bank officials** from being routinely required to produce



records or testify in proceedings where the bank is not a party.

- It provides a **flexible framework for extending the law across the financial sector,** as it continues to evolve in India.

The Act provides for stringent and contemporary safeguards for the secure handling and verification of electronic records as a precondition for their admissibility as evidence in legal proceedings.

Major Changes under the Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026

The 2026 Act **retains the core evidentiary framework of the 1891 law for proving banking records through certified copies of records.** It modernises and strengthens the existing framework with a technology-neutral system covering electronic and digital banking records.

- **Recognition of Electronic Records as Evidence:**

- As per the new Act, **an electronic or digital record of a banker's book will be admissible, valid, and legally enforceable as evidence,** subject to a few conditions which include-

(i) the said copy is a true copy of such entry or information, and correctly represents or is appropriately derived from such records

(ii) no unauthorised changes to data are detected

(iii) no tampering or other event affecting the integrity and accuracy of the system is detected

- This change standardises the certification process and allows authentication through manual, digital, and electronic signatures.

- **Compelling Production of Bankers' Books:**

- The Act provides that the contents of a banker's book may be proved in legal proceedings through a certified copy, without requiring production of the original banker's book.

- Accordingly, a bank officer cannot ordinarily be compelled to produce the banker's book or appear as a witness to prove the records, particularly where the bank is not a party to the proceedings.

- The Act provides that a bank officer may, however, be required to appear as a witness or produce a banker's book only pursuant to a written order of the Court recording a special cause. The Act specifies the circumstances constituting a special cause, where-

(i) accuracy or authenticity of the entry or information is uncertain.

(ii) the regularity or ordinary nature of record keeping is interrupted owing to any event.

(iii) the bank does not comply with any previous Court order about inspection or production of the certified copy of the books.

- **Extension to Other Financial Sector Entities:**

  > The 1891 Act applies to entities engaged in the business of banking and any post office savings bank or money order office. The 2026 Act also retains this clause.

  > However, it further allows the Government to **extend its provisions to any entity or class of entities operating in the financial sector,** by notification. The Government may highlight conditions, exceptions, or modifications in the notification.

Conclusion

The Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026 marks a significant step towards modernising the legal framework governing banking records. By **aligning evidentiary provisions with technological advancements and evolving economic needs,** it strengthens the efficiency, reliability, and adaptability of India's financial system. It reflects the Government's continued commitment to advancing reforms that strengthen institutions and support India's growth trajectory.

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