



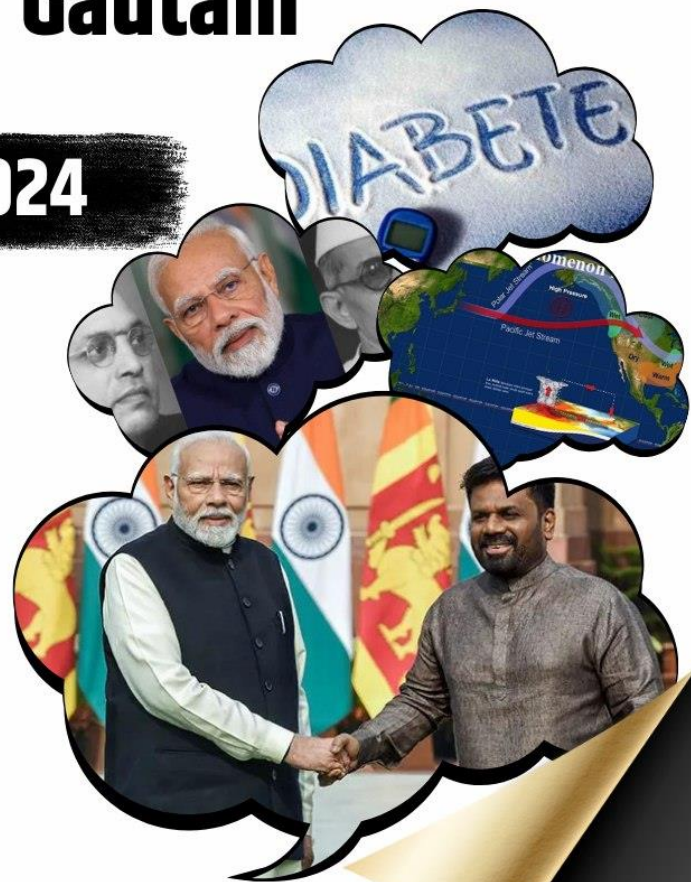
# Daily Current Affairs



## To The Point by Dhananjay Gautam

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## 1 Public Distribution System (PDS) in India: Enhancing Food Security for the Vulnerable

**Context:** The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) recently released a report on the **Performance Audit of the Supply Chain Management of Public Distribution** in Karnataka, highlighting key inefficiencies in the state's **Public Distribution System (PDS)**.

**Key Findings from the Audit:**

- 1. Use of Unauthorized Vehicles:** Passenger and light goods vehicles, instead of authorized ones, were used to transport food grains, violating established protocols.
- 2. Wholesale Depot (WSD) Mismanagement:** Poor maintenance of WSDs led to risks of **contamination** and **pest infestation**, degrading the quality of food grains.

**Understanding the Public Distribution System (PDS):****What is PDS?**

The **Public Distribution System** is a **government-led initiative** aimed at providing essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar, and kerosene to economically weaker sections at **subsidized rates**.

**Objectives of PDS:**

- **Food Security:** Ensure availability of basic food items for vulnerable populations.
- **Poverty Alleviation:** Reduce financial burdens on low-income households through subsidies.
- **Price Stabilization:** Regulate prices of essential goods to ensure affordability.

**Evolution of the Public Distribution System:**

- 1. 1940s–1950s:** Introduced during **wartime and famines**, PDS addressed food shortages.
- 2. 1960s–1970s:** With the **Green Revolution**, PDS expanded to reach more people.
- 3. 1980s:** The **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)** in 1997 aimed to better direct food assistance to the poor.
- 4. 2000s:** Adoption of **digital technologies** and electronic ration cards for transparency.
- 5. 2010s and Beyond:**
  - The **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** Enacted to provide legal entitlement to subsidized food, covering over **80 crore people**.
  - Emphasized **nutritional security** along with food security.

**Features of PDS in India:****Targeted Distribution:**

- **NFSA Coverage:** Covers **75% of rural** and **50% of urban populations** under:
  - **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY):** Poorest households entitled to **35 kg of food grains per family per month**.
  - **Priority Households:** Entitled to **5 kg per person per month**.

**Role of the Government:**

- **Central Government:** Handles **procurement, storage, transportation**, and bulk allocation through the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)**.
- **State Governments:** Distribute food grains via a network of **Fair Price Shops (FPS)** to eligible families.

**Challenges in the Public Distribution System:**

- 1. Leakages and Diversion:** Significant quantities of food grains are diverted to the open market, depriving intended beneficiaries.
- 2. Exclusion Errors:** Many of the poorest households are **left out** due to flaws in the identification process.
- 3. Quality Issues:** Poor-quality food grains reduce the system's effectiveness.
- 4. Corruption and Fraud:** Practices like **overpricing** and diversion by FPS owners persist.
- 5. Storage and Transportation:** Transporting food grains to **remote areas** remains a major challenge.



6. **Digitization Hurdles:** Despite improvements, **technical glitches** and **data inaccuracies** hinder efficiency.

### Reforms and Modernization Efforts:

1. **National Food Security Act, 2013:** Provides **legal entitlement** to subsidized food grains for two-thirds of India's population.
2. **Digital Ration Cards:** Aadhaar-based biometric authentication to eliminate **fake and duplicate cards**.
3. **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT):** In some areas, subsidies are provided directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts.
4. **End-to-End Computerization:** Full digitization aims to enhance transparency and minimize leakages.
5. **Food Quality Monitoring:** Measures to ensure better quality food grains for beneficiaries.

### Way Forward:

1. **Strengthen Accountability:** Conduct **social audits** and establish **grievance redressal mechanisms** to tackle corruption and leakages.
2. **Community Participation:** Involve **local communities** in monitoring PDS operations to ensure efficiency and fairness.
3. **Enhance Nutritional Offerings:** Expand PDS to include items like **pulses, oils, and fortified grains** for better nutritional outcomes.
4. **Raise Public Awareness:** Educate beneficiaries about their **rights and entitlements** under the PDS.

By addressing these challenges and implementing necessary reforms, the PDS can continue to play a crucial role in ensuring **food security** and reducing **poverty** in India.

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## 2 Sri Lankan President Dissanayake Meets PM Modi to Strengthen Bilateral Ties

**Context:** Sri Lankan President **Anura Kumara Dissanayake**, during his maiden bilateral visit to India, assured **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** that Sri Lanka would ensure its territory is not used in ways that could harm Indian interests. Both leaders reiterated their commitment to **strengthen cooperation** in **defence, economic growth, and regional security**, marking a new chapter in **India-Sri Lanka relations**.

**Overview of India-Sri Lanka Relations:****Historical Connections:**

The ties between India and Sri Lanka date back centuries, rooted in **shared cultural and religious traditions**, particularly through **Buddhism**. Many Sri Lankans trace their **ancestry** to India, reflecting the deep historical connections.

**Key Areas of Cooperation:**1. **Trade and Economy:**

- India is Sri Lanka's **third-largest export market**, with over **60% of exports** benefiting from the **India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISFTA)**.
- Indian **FDI in Sri Lanka** has totaled **USD 1.7 billion** from 2005-2019.

2. **Energy Collaboration:** A **multi-product petroleum pipeline** is being developed to provide Sri Lanka with **affordable energy supplies**.3. **Defence and Security:**

- Regular joint military (**Mitra Shakti**) and naval (**SLINEX**) exercises enhance defence cooperation.
- Both nations are active in **regional groupings** like **BIMSTEC** and **SAARC**, where India plays a significant role.

4. **People-to-People Ties:**

- India was the **largest source of tourists** to Sri Lanka in 2022, contributing over **100,000 visitors**.
- Initiatives like **digital payment platforms** aim to boost tourism and business exchanges.

**Geopolitical Significance:**

Sri Lanka's **strategic location** in the Indian Ocean makes it critical for India's trade and maritime security, aligning with India's vision for regional economic integration.

**Challenges in Relations:**

- Fisheries Disputes:** Frequent clashes over **Indian fishermen entering Sri Lankan waters** create tensions.
- Katchatheevu Island Dispute:** Differences persist over fishing rights near the island.
- Tamil Minority Concerns:** India continues to advocate for the rights of Sri Lanka's **Tamil minority**, emphasizing reconciliation.
- China's Growing Influence:** Increased Chinese investments, like at **Hambantota Port**, raise concerns about Sri Lanka's tilt toward China.

**Key Highlights of Sri Lankan President's Visit:****Strengthening Security Cooperation:**

- Mutual Security Assurances:** President Dissanayake committed to ensuring that Sri Lanka's territory will not be used against **India's strategic interests**.
- Defence Collaboration:**
  - Finalizing a **Defence Cooperation Agreement**.
  - Enhancing **maritime surveillance**, conducting joint exercises, and advancing defence training.



- Strengthening the **Colombo Security Conclave** for tackling maritime and cyber security threats.

### Addressing Tamil Minority Issues:

Prime Minister Modi urged for **reconciliation and reconstruction** to address the grievances of Sri Lanka's **Tamil minorities**.

- He expressed hope for the implementation of the **13th Amendment** and the **holding of provincial council elections**.
- President Dissanayake emphasized **social protection** and **unity** as priorities for development.

### Resolving Fishermen Disputes:

Both nations addressed the **livelihood challenges of fishermen**, agreeing to:

- Adopt a **humanitarian approach** to disputes.
- Avoid confrontations and focus on a **long-term solution**.
- Maintain **dialogue** for resolving issues.

### Expanding Economic and Energy Ties:

- **Investment-Led Development:** Prime Minister Modi proposed a **futuristic vision** for economic growth through **enhanced connectivity** in physical, digital, and energy sectors.
- **Key Initiatives:**
  - Supporting Sri Lanka during its **economic crisis** with a **USD 5 billion package**.
  - Advancing energy cooperation through:
    - **Electricity grid connectivity.**
    - **Multi-product petroleum pipelines.**
    - **Solar projects in Sampur.**
    - **LNG supply** for Sri Lankan power plants.
- **Digital Transformation:**
  - Accelerating the **Sri Lanka Unique Digital Identity (SLUDI)** project.
  - Integrating platforms like **UPI, Aadhaar, and DigiLocker.**
- **Tourism and Connectivity:**
  - Launching a **ferry service** between **Rameshwaram (India)** and **Talaimannar (Sri Lanka)**.
  - Promoting **Buddhist** and **Ramayana** tourism circuits.
- **Capacity Building:**

India announced scholarships and training programs for Sri Lankan students and civil servants.

### Diplomatic Agreements:

Both nations signed pacts on:

- **Avoidance of Double Taxation.**
- Capacity-building initiatives and civil service training.

President Dissanayake extended an invitation to **PM Modi** for a bilateral visit to Sri Lanka.

### Conclusion:

President Dissanayake's visit reaffirms the **robust relationship** between India and Sri Lanka, underpinned by shared goals in **security, economic cooperation, and regional development**.

While addressing key challenges like **fisheries disputes** and **ethnic concerns**, both leaders emphasized a **shared vision** for peace, prosperity, and inclusive growth. This renewed partnership aims to unlock the potential for a brighter future for both nations.

3

## PM Modi Champions UCC, Echoes Ambedkar &amp; KM Munshi's Vision from 1948

**Context:** Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has reiterated his strong support for implementing a **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)**, citing the visionary debates of **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** and **K.M. Munshi** in the Constituent Assembly.

During a special session in the Lok Sabha to reflect on the **75-year journey of the Constitution**, PM Modi highlighted the **drafters' aspirations** for a UCC to unify the nation under a common legal framework. He emphasized that the government is fully committed to establishing a **"secular civil code"** for all citizens, fulfilling the intent of the Constitution's framers.

**Understanding Uniform Civil Code (UCC):****What is UCC?**

- The **Uniform Civil Code** proposes **one set of laws** for all citizens of India, regardless of their religion, governing personal matters like **marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption**.
- It aims to replace the **personal laws** based on religious scriptures and customs with a **common legal framework** for every individual.

**Constitutional Foundation:**

- **Article 44** of the Indian Constitution, under the **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)**, mandates that the **State shall strive to secure a UCC** for all citizens.
- While DPSPs are not enforceable in a court of law, they serve as guiding principles for governance and lawmaking.

**The UCC Debate in the Constituent Assembly:**

- On **November 23, 1948**, the Constituent Assembly debated the draft **Article 35** (now Article 44), which proposed a UCC as part of the **Directive Principles of State Policy**.
- While many members supported the idea, concerns arose about its potential impact on religious communities, leading to its inclusion as a **non-binding directive** rather than enforceable law.

**Opposition to UCC:**

1. **Mohammad Ismail Sahib** (Indian Union Muslim League): Argued that imposing a UCC could disrupt harmony and interfere with personal laws.
2. **Naziruddin Ahmad**: Highlighted that personal laws are deeply intertwined with religious beliefs and should remain untouched.

**KM Munshi's Advocacy for UCC:****A Strong Defender of UCC:**

- **K.M. Munshi**, a key member of the Assembly, passionately argued in favor of the UCC, countering claims that it would infringe upon minority rights.
- He pointed out that even **progressive Muslim countries** had modernized personal laws to embrace civil codes.

**Championing Gender Equality:**

- Munshi emphasized that without a UCC, achieving **gender equality** would remain a distant dream.
- He cited the **discrimination against women** in Hindu personal laws as a compelling reason for adopting a uniform legal framework.

**National Unity Through UCC:**

- Munshi linked the UCC to **national integration**, urging communities to adopt a progressive approach.
- He argued that religion should remain confined to its **spiritual domain**, while **social and civil matters** must be regulated by a unified code to build a stronger nation.

**Ambedkar's Perspective on UCC:****Support for Article 44:**

- **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**, while not delving into the immediate merits or demerits of the UCC, staunchly defended its inclusion in the **Directive Principles of State Policy**.

**Existing Uniformity in Laws:**

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- Ambedkar refuted claims that a UCC was impractical in a diverse country, highlighting the existing **uniform legal systems** in **criminal law** through the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** and **Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)**.

**Challenging Uniformity in Muslim Personal Law:**

- He contested the notion of uniformity in **Muslim personal laws**, citing examples where **Hindu laws** governed certain areas like succession in the **North-West Frontier Province** and other regions.

**Reforming India's Social Fabric:**

- Ambedkar argued against giving religion **vast jurisdiction** over personal and civil matters. He stressed that India's **social system**, marred by **inequalities and discrimination**, needed transformative reforms.

**Legislative Power, Not Immediate Enforcement:**

- To address concerns of abrupt implementation, Ambedkar reassured members that the UCC would be legislated gradually, respecting the sentiments of diverse communities.

**Outcome of the 1948 Debate:**

- After extensive deliberations, **Article 35** was adopted and later renumbered as **Article 44** in the Constitution.
- Notably, **Article 44** uses the phrase "**the State shall endeavour**," which is less forceful compared to other Directive Principles that use terms like "**shall in particular direct its policy**."
- This phrasing reflects a relatively lower emphasis on the UCC's implementation compared to other constitutional directives.

**Conclusion:**

The **Uniform Civil Code**, rooted in the vision of India's constitutional drafters, remains a cornerstone for achieving **gender justice**, **social equality**, and **national integration**.

As PM Modi champions the UCC, quoting stalwarts like **Ambedkar and Munshi**, the debate resurfaces with renewed vigor. While challenges persist, the UCC stands as a powerful symbol of India's commitment to secularism, modernization, and justice for all.

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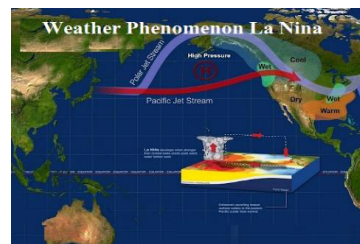
## 4 Impact of La Niña on India's Climate

**Context:** La Niña is a phase of the **El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO)** characterized by **cooler-than-average sea surface temperatures** in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean.

It is the **counterpart of El Niño**, which brings warming to the same region. Both phenomena significantly influence **global weather systems** and climate patterns.

**How Does La Niña Influence Global Weather?**

1. **India:** Results in **above-average monsoon rainfall**, boosting agricultural productivity.
2. **Africa:** Often causes **drought-like conditions** in some regions.
3. **Atlantic Ocean:** **Hurricane activity** intensifies during La Niña years.
4. **United States:** Leads to **increased rainfall** in southern states.

**La Niña's Impact on India:****Winters in India:**

- **Colder Nights:** La Niña winters tend to bring **chillier nights** across northern India, although daytime temperatures may be slightly higher.
- **Pollution Dispersal:**
  - **Higher wind speeds** improve air quality by dispersing pollutants.
  - However, a **lower Planetary Boundary Layer Height (PBLH)** may trap pollution closer to the ground, worsening air quality.

**Monsoons and Summers:**

- **Enhanced Monsoons:** La Niña years, such as **2020–2022**, have delivered **normal to above-normal rainfall**, benefiting agriculture and water resources.
- **Heatwave Relief:** Summers during La Niña tend to be **less intense**, offering relief from heatwaves typical of El Niño years.

**Contrast with El Niño:**

- **El Niño Years:** Often associated with **weaker monsoons**, drought conditions, and **higher summer temperatures**. For instance, **2023**—an El Niño year—saw **below-normal rainfall** and harsher heatwaves.

**Why is La Niña Delayed in 2024?**

Typically, **La Niña develops during the pre-monsoon or monsoon season**, but in 2024, its onset has been unusually delayed.

- The **Oceanic Niño Index (ONI)** currently hovers around **-0.3°C**, just above the threshold for La Niña (**-0.5°C or lower**).
- If La Niña materializes later this year, it could lead to:
  - **Cooler winters** in northern India.
  - **Stronger monsoons** in 2025, crucial for agriculture and water security.

**Meteorological Indicators of La Niña:**

Meteorologists use several tools to declare a La Niña event, including:

1. **Oceanic Niño Index (ONI):** Tracks anomalies in sea surface temperatures.
2. **Persistence Rule:** La Niña is confirmed when sea surface temperatures remain **below -0.5°C** for five consecutive readings.

**Climate Change and ENSO Events:**

- **Climate change** is expected to intensify **ENSO events** (both La Niña and El Niño) due to rising oceanic and atmospheric temperatures.
- **Extreme La Niña events** may cause harsher winters, intense rainfall, and other amplified impacts on India's climate.





## Importance of La Niña for India:

1. **Agriculture:** La Niña years ensure **bountiful monsoons**, boosting **crop yields** and supporting rural livelihoods.
2. **Water Resources:** Increased rainfall replenishes **reservoirs**, alleviating **water stress** in drought-prone areas.
3. **Energy Sector:** Ample rainfall improves **hydropower generation**, contributing to renewable energy goals.
4. **Heatwave Mitigation:** Summers during La Niña are **milder**, reducing the intensity of heatwaves.

## Conclusion:

The delayed arrival of **La Niña in 2024** has raised questions about its potential impact on **India's winters and upcoming monsoons**.

If La Niña develops by early 2025, it could herald a **strong monsoon season**, vital for the nation's **agriculture, water resources, and energy production**.

Careful monitoring of **ENSO patterns** is essential for mitigating risks and maximizing the benefits of these climate events.



## 5 India's First Diabetes Biobank: A Milestone in Research

**Context:** India's first diabetes biobank is a cutting-edge repository of biological samples, created to support **scientific research and advancements in diabetes care**.

**Key Features of the Biobank:**

- Collects, processes, stores, and distributes **biospecimens** for research purposes.
- Focuses on blood samples for various types of diabetes, including:
  - **Type 1 Diabetes**
  - **Type 2 Diabetes**
  - **Gestational Diabetes (GDM)**



This initiative provides a platform to facilitate **current and future studies** aimed at understanding diabetes better and developing innovative treatments.

**Understanding Diabetes:**

**Diabetes** is a **chronic health condition** that occurs when the **pancreas fails to produce insulin** or when the **body cannot utilize insulin effectively**.

**What is Insulin?**

- A hormone responsible for regulating **blood glucose levels**.
- When insulin production or usage is impaired, it leads to **hyperglycemia** (high blood sugar levels).

**Hyperglycemia**, over time, can cause severe damage to organs and tissues, resulting in:

- **Blindness**
- **Kidney failure**
- **Heart attacks**
- **Stroke**
- **Lower limb amputations**

**Epidemiological Insights on Diabetes in India**

A comprehensive study conducted between **2008 and 2020** analyzed **1.2 lakh individuals** across urban and rural India.

- Urban participants: **33,537**
- Rural participants: **79,506**
- Covered **31 states and Union Territories**.

The findings highlight the widespread prevalence of diabetes and underline the urgency for robust research and treatment strategies.

**Types of Diabetes:****1. Type 1 Diabetes**

- **What is it?** : An **autoimmune condition** where the body's immune system destroys insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas.
- **Characteristics:**
  - The body produces **little or no insulin**.
  - Requires **daily insulin injections** for glucose control.
- **Who does it affect?:** Commonly diagnosed in **children and young adults**, previously referred to as **juvenile diabetes**.
- **Symptoms:**
  - Excessive urination (**polyuria**)
  - Extreme thirst (**polydipsia**)
  - Constant hunger
  - Unexplained weight loss
  - Vision changes
  - Fatigue



## 2. Type 2 Diabetes:

- **What is it?:** A condition where the body produces insulin but **fails to use it effectively**.
- **Prevalence:** Accounts for **95% of global diabetes cases**.
- **Causes:**
  - **Excess body weight**
  - **Lack of physical activity**
- **Symptoms:** Often **less severe** than Type 1, leading to **delayed diagnosis and treatment**.

## 3. Gestational Diabetes (GDM):

- **What is it?:** A temporary condition characterized by **high blood glucose levels during pregnancy**.
- **Implications:**
  - Can lead to complications for both the **mother and the child**.
  - Increases the risk of developing **Type 2 diabetes** later in life for both mother and child.
- **Prognosis:** Usually disappears after childbirth but requires close monitoring.

## Conclusion:

The establishment of **India's first diabetes biobank** is a crucial step towards understanding the complexities of diabetes and developing better treatment protocols.

With a repository of diverse biological samples, this initiative has the potential to drive **groundbreaking research** that could improve the lives of millions living with this chronic condition.

This biobank not only reflects India's commitment to advancing medical research but also underscores the importance of addressing the **growing diabetes burden** on the nation.

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## 6 Credit Guarantee Scheme for e-NWR based pledge Financing

**Context:** The **Credit Guarantee Scheme for e-NWR Based Pledge Financing** is a transformative initiative aimed at empowering farmers and stakeholders in the agricultural value chain.

**Objective of the Scheme:**

This scheme is designed to **support small farmers** by providing them with access to credit, thereby preventing **distress selling** of their produce after harvest.

**Key Features of the Scheme****1. Financial Corpus:**

- A **Rs. 1,000-crore fund** has been established to facilitate post-harvest financing.
- Farmers can avail loans by pledging **electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (e-NWRs)** after depositing their produce in warehouses accredited by the **Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA)**.

**2. Loan Coverage:**

- **Agricultural Loans:** Up to **Rs. 75 lakhs**.
- **Non-Agricultural Loans:** Up to **Rs. 200 lakhs**.

**3. Eligible Institutions:**

- **Scheduled Banks** and **Cooperative Banks** are eligible to participate in this scheme.

**4. Eligible Beneficiaries:**

The scheme is targeted at:

- **Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs)**
- **Women Farmers**
- Farmers from **SC/ST/PwD** communities
- **Other Farmers**
- **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**
- **Traders, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and Farmer Cooperatives**

**5. Risk Coverage:**

- Covers **credit risk** and **warehouseman risk**, ensuring secure transactions for both lenders and borrowers.

**6. Guarantee Coverage:**

- **85% guarantee** for loans up to **Rs. 3 lakhs** for small and marginal farmers, women, and SC/ST/PwD beneficiaries.
- **80% guarantee** for loans between **Rs. 3 to Rs. 75 lakhs** for the same category of borrowers.
- **75% guarantee** for other borrowers.

**Benefits of the Scheme:**

1. **Boosts Financial Accessibility:** The scheme aims to improve **access to credit** for farmers and other stakeholders, ensuring they can secure financing without excessive risk.
2. **Enhances Farmer Income:** By increasing **post-harvest lending** against e-NWRs, the scheme provides farmers with better financial stability, reducing the need to sell their produce at unprofitable rates.
3. **Economic Growth Catalyst:** This initiative is expected to contribute significantly to **economic development** by supporting targeted beneficiaries like farmers, MSMEs, and FPOs.

**Conclusion**

The **Credit Guarantee Scheme for e-NWR Based Pledge Financing** is a vital step towards strengthening the **agricultural ecosystem** in India. By enhancing post-harvest financing and supporting small and marginalized farmers, it has the potential to **transform rural economies** and contribute to **sustainable economic growth**.

