

Kurukshetra

March 2026 Edition



Welcome to PadhAI

KURUKSHETRA MONTHLY COVERAGE

You are here because you understand a fundamental truth of UPSC preparation: ***it's not about reading everything – it's about reading what truly matters, in the right way, at the right time.***

Magazines like Kurukshetra offer deep insights into rural development, governance, social schemes, and grassroots policy implementation. Yet for many aspirants, the challenge lies in separating exam-relevant content from general narratives.

PadhAI's Kurukshetra coverage is designed to do exactly that - ***filter, structure, and align policy discussions with UPSC requirements.***

Why This Kurukshetra Coverage Matters

At PadhAI, we don't reproduce articles. We ***extract core themes***, map them with the syllabus, and connect them with ***Prelims and Mains PYQs***.

Every topic included here:

- carries relevance for ***GS Papers or Essay***,
- strengthens understanding of ***developmental and governance issues, and***
- builds ***analytical depth*** rather than surface-level knowledge.

Nothing is added for volume.

Everything is added for value.

Part of the PadhAI Preparation Ecosystem

This Kurukshetra coverage forms part of a larger, integrated learning system that includes:

- early and concise ***monthly magazines***,
- ***daily PIB summaries*** with exam-focused clarity,
- ***monthly compliance tracking***,
- complete ***Prelims & Mains PYQs with structured answers***,
- relevant ***news article summaries***, and
- ***personal tutor chat support*** for continuous guidance.

The aim is simple:

one trusted ecosystem instead of multiple scattered sources.

Our Guiding Philosophy

At PadhAI, everything is built around one belief:

- *Learn only what matters.*
- *Learn it the right way.*
- *Learn it at the right time.*

We don't believe in shortcuts.

We believe in clarity, consistency, and cumulative preparation.

A Final Note

UPSC preparation is demanding and often overwhelming.

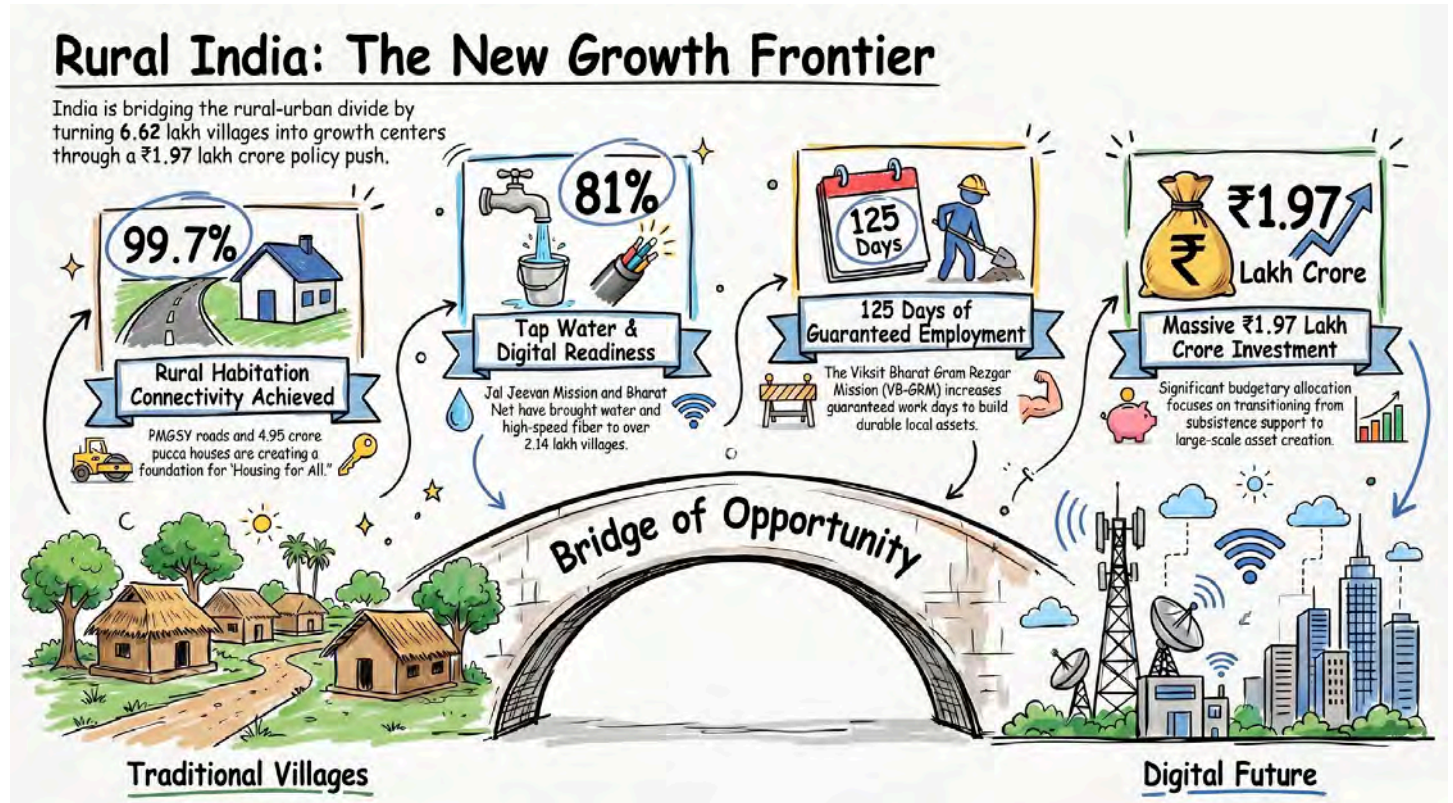
PadhAI exists to ensure you prepare with ***direction, relevance, and confidence*** — never blindly, never alone.

If this [Kurukshetra](#) coverage helps you save time, connect policy with practice, and strengthen your answers, then it has served its purpose.

Welcome to PadhAI.

A community built to prepare — not to overwhelm.

Topic 1: Accelerating Rural Transformation



Summary: India's rural transformation is driven by a sustained policy push toward creating **self-reliant and dignified village communities** in line with the **Viksit Bharat 2047** vision. By investing heavily in physical, social, and digital infrastructure, the government aims to bridge the rural-urban divide and turn villages into **economic growth centers**.

Background: Rural India is central to national growth as **54.6% of the workforce** resides in 6.62 lakh villages. Historical challenges like low per capita income and regional disparities necessitated a transition from subsistence-level support to large-scale asset creation.

Key Points:

- **Physical Infrastructure Expansion:** **PMGSY** has achieved 99.7% habitation connectivity, while **PMAY-G** aims to provide 4.95 crore pucca houses to ensure "Housing for All".
- **Social and Digital Inclusion:** The **Jal Jeevan Mission** increased tap water coverage from 17% in 2019 to **81.31%** by 2026, while **Bharat Net** has made 2.14 lakh villages service-ready for the digital economy.

- **Viksit Bharat Gram Rozgar Mission (VB-GRM):** This mission builds on MGNREGA's legacy by focusing on **durable infrastructure**, increasing employment from 100 to **125 days**, and ensuring decentralized implementation via Gram Panchayats.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

- **PMGSY-IV** targets the construction of 62,500 km of rural roads with an outlay of ₹70,125 crore.
- The **Ministry of Rural Development** received a ₹1.97 lakh crore allocation in the Union Budget 2026–27.

MCQ Practice: Q. Under the newly introduced Viksit Bharat Gram Rozgar Mission (VB-GRM), what is the proposed increase in guaranteed employment days? A) 100 to 110 days B) 100 to 125 days C) 100 to 150 days D) No change **Answer: B** (The mission expands employment from 100 to 125 days and introduces wage delay compensation.)

Topic 2: Driving Growth in Agriculture and Allied Sectors

Harvesting a High-Growth Future: The Agri-Transformation

Shift from subsistence farming → market-oriented, climate-resilient model

₹15,000 cr INVESTED

Multiplier Effect

₹27,000 cr GDP GAINS

The Investment Multiplier Effect

Every ₹15,000 crore invested generates up to ₹27,000 crore in GDP gains.

Horticulture
(33% of Agri GVA)

Fisheries
(8-9% growth)

Diversification as a Growth Engine

Critical income buffers

The Digital Agriculture Ecosystem

Bharat-VISTAAR AI platforms

Scaling to **4,000 agri-startups** by 2028

SEED

Seed Act 2026: Quality Control

Ensuring input integrity through QR-based traceability and strict penalties for seed fraud.

Summary: The Union Budget 2026–27 signals a strategic shift in agriculture from a **subsidy-driven approach** toward **productivity enhancement, diversification, and climate**

resilience. While income support continues, the focus is now on integration of technology and long-term income stabilization through durable asset creation.

Background: Agriculture employs nearly **43–45% of the workforce** but contributes only 15–16% to the GDP, indicating low productivity and disguised unemployment. Structural reforms are needed to shift from subsistence farming to high-value, market-oriented models.

Key Points:

- **Productivity and Investment Multiplier:** Agricultural GVA growth is projected at 3.5%–5% under favorable conditions, with every additional ₹15,000 crore investment potentially generating **₹24,000–27,000 crore in GDP gains.**
- **Diversification into Allied Sectors: Fisheries** (growing at 8–9%) and **Horticulture** (contributing 33% of agricultural GVA) are emerging as critical growth engines to act as buffers against crop failures.
- **Digital Agriculture Ecosystem:** AI-driven platforms like **Bharat-VISTAAR** provide real-time, location-specific advisory services, while the agri-startup ecosystem is projected to reach **4,000 enterprises by 2028.**

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

- The agricultural credit target for 2026–27 has been set at **₹22 lakh crore.**
- India is currently the world's **largest rice producer** and second-largest fish producer.

MCQ Practice: Q. Which sector contributes approximately 33% of Agricultural GVA and 38% of total output value in India? A) Livestock B) Fisheries C) Horticulture D) Cereals **Answer: C** (Horticulture is a key strategy for enhancing farmer incomes, though it faces 15–20% post-harvest losses.)

Topic 3: Building a Stronger and More Inclusive Healthcare System

NEXT-GEN HEALTHCARE: INDIA'S INCLUSIVE VISION

India's shift toward a tech-driven, resilient, universal ecosystem.



Summary: The Health Budget 2026–27 reflects a paradigm shift toward a **comprehensive, system-oriented approach**, with an allocation of **₹1,06,530.42 crore**. The strategy integrates primary care strengthening with financial protection, digital health, and industrial policy via biopharmaceutical innovation.

Background: Public health expenditure has risen by over **194% since 2014–15**. The current policy recognizes that health is influenced by a nexus of nutrition, environment, workforce, and technology.

Table-1: Allocation for Major Health and Health-Related Schemes (RE 2025-26 vs BE 2026-27)

Scheme / Programme	RE 2025-26 (₹ crore)	BE 2026-27 (₹ crore)	Absolute Change (₹ crore)	% Change
National Health Mission (NHM) & Health System Strengthening	29867	31820	1953	6.5
Ayushman Bharat – PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)	9000	9500	500	5.6
Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM)	2443	4200	1757	71.9
Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)	1500	2005	505	33.7
Human Resources for Health and Medical Education	1630	1725	95	5.8
Scheme for Allied Health Care Professionals (AHPs)	0	1000	1000	New
Saksham Anganwadi & POSHAN 2.0	20949	23100	2151	10.3
Pradhan Mantri POSHAN (School Nutrition Programme)	10600	12750	2150	20.3
Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)	11800	12200	400	3.4
National AIDS & STD Control Programme (NACO)	2662	3477	815	30.6
National AYUSH Mission	781	1300	519	66.5
Assistance to States for Public Health Infrastructure	699	4200	3501	500.9
Control of Pollution	1300	1091	-209	-16.1
Bio-Pharma SHAKTI	0	500	500	New

*RE = Revised Estimates; BE = Budget Estimates; All figures are in ₹ crore
Source: Adapted from <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/>

Key Points:

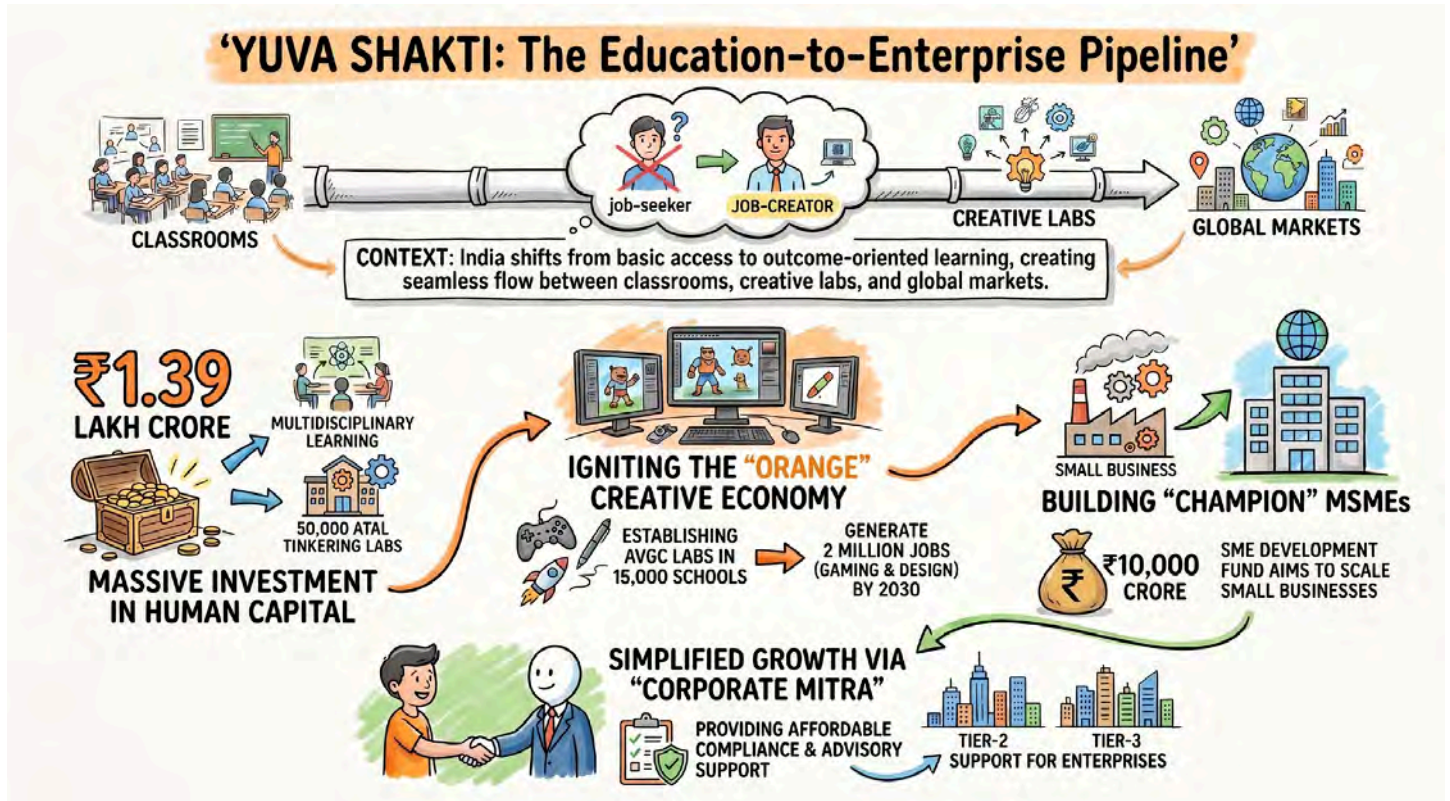
- **Universal Health Coverage (UHC): PM-JAY (Ayushman Bharat)** continues to reduce catastrophic out-of-pocket expenditure, while **NHM** (allocated ₹39,390 crore) remains the backbone for primary care and immunization.
- **Resilience and Infrastructure:** The **PM-ABHIM** scheme (up 67.66%) focuses on building critical care blocks and district laboratories to ensure emergency preparedness.
- **Bio-Pharma Shakti Initiative:** A **₹10,000 crore** investment aims to boost production of biologics and biosimilars, positioning India as a global biopharmaceutical hub.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

- The **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission** received an allocation of ₹350 crore to focus on interoperable digital health records.
- The government has provided **custom duty exemptions** on 17 life-saving drugs to improve affordability.

MCQ Practice: Q. What is the primary focus of the newly launched Bio-Pharma Shakti initiative? A) Building rural clinics B) Production of biologics and biosimilars C) Training ASHA workers D) Universal immunization **Answer: B** (The initiative integrates health policy with industrial policy to boost biologics production.)

Topic 4: Empowering Youth and Enterprise for Viksit Bharat



Summary: The 2026–27 Budget places **Yuva Shakti** and enterprise development at the heart of national development, shifting from access-driven policies to **outcome-oriented learning and job creation**. It adopts an integrated approach linking education, skills, and the digital economy.

Background: Aligned with **NEP 2020**, the strategy aims to move youth from a "job-seeking" mindset to becoming job creators for a technology-driven global economy.

Key Points:

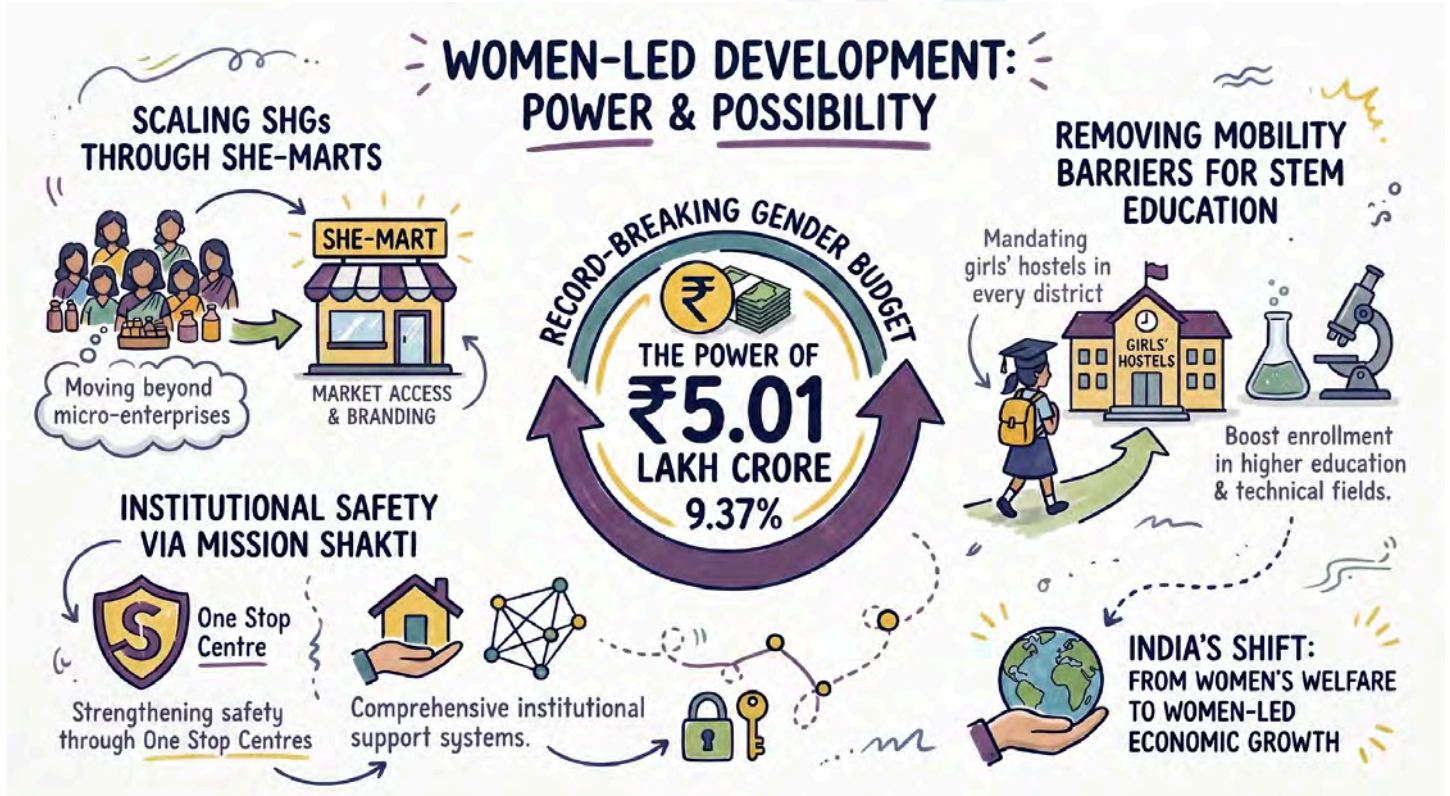
- **Human Capital Development:** An allocation of **₹1.39 lakh crore** supports multidisciplinary learning, the expansion of **Atal Tinkering Labs** (targeting 50,000), and the creation of university townships near industrial corridors.
- **The Creative (Orange) Economy:** Establishment of **AVGC labs in 15,000 schools** aims to generate 2 million jobs by 2030 in sectors like gaming, design, and content creation.
- **MSME as Growth Engine:** A **₹10,000 crore SME Development Fund** aims to build "Champion MSMEs," supported by the **Corporate Mitra** initiative for compliance assistance in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

- The **Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT)** was launched in Mumbai to lead national training in creative technologies.
- The **Atmanirbhar Bharat Fund** for MSMEs received a ₹2,000 crore infusion in the latest budget.

MCQ Practice: Q. The "Corporate Mitra" initiative is designed to provide what type of support to MSMEs? A) Direct financial grants B) Export subsidies C) Compliance and advisory support in Tier-2/3 cities D) Raw material procurement **Answer: C** (It provides affordable compliance and advisory support for enterprises in smaller cities.)

Topic 5: Women in India: Policy, Power, and Possibility



Summary: The Budget marks a systemic shift by mainstreaming gender equity across **53 ministries**, with a total Gender Budget of **₹5.01 lakh crore** (9.37% of total expenditure). It transitions from welfare-centric schemes to **capability and enterprise-led empowerment**.

Background: Gender equity is now being integrated into the state's architecture, acknowledging women as central stakeholders and growth drivers rather than mere beneficiaries.

Key Points:

- **Gender-Responsive Governance: Mission Shakti** (₹3,605 crore) provides safety mechanisms like One Stop Centres and institutional support systems.
- **Economic Empowerment Models: SHE-Marts** are being established to provide market access and branding for products made by women-led SHGs, facilitating the transition from micro-enterprises to scalable businesses.
- **Educational Access:** The Budget mandates the establishment of **girls' hostels in every district** to remove mobility and safety barriers to higher education, particularly in **STEM** fields.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

- The Gender Budget 2026–27 increased by **11.55%** compared to the previous year.
- **Lakhpati Didi** and SHG-based models are the core pillars of the women-led rural development strategy.

MCQ Practice: Q. What percentage of the total national expenditure does the Gender Budget 2026–27 represent? A) 5.25% B) 7.50% C) 9.37% D) 11.55% **Answer: C** (The ₹5.01 lakh crore allocation represents 9.37% of total expenditure.)

Topic 6: Seed Act 2026

SEED ACT 2026: SOWING TRUST & QUALITY

Replacing the outdated 1966 framework to combat substandard seeds with digital transparency & scientific accountability.

MODERNIZING A 60-YEAR-OLD LAW

Replaces the 1966 Seeds Act to better manage modern hybrid markets & global supply chains.

QR-BASED DIGITAL TRACEABILITY

Farmers can scan seed packets to instantly verify origin, quality certificates, & seller credentials.

MASSIVE PENALTIES FOR SEED FRAUD

UP TO ₹30 LAKH FINE & 3 YEARS IMPRISONMENT

Treats seed fraud as a serious economic offense.

PROTECTING TRADITIONAL FARMER RIGHTS

Explicitly legally protects the rights of farmers to save, use, exchange, and share their own seeds.

Summary: The **Seed Act 2026** is a major regulatory reform designed to replace the outdated Seeds Act of 1966. It addresses the menace of **fake and substandard seeds** by ensuring transparency, scientific validation, and strict accountability through digital traceability.

Background: The previous framework was inadequate for managing modern private seed markets, hybrid varieties, and complex global supply chains.

#SeedAct2026

A Historic Reform for India's Farmers

Nationwide Seed Traceability

- ▶ QR Codes on Every Seed Packet
- ▶ Full Details on Origin & Supply Chain

Rigorous Testing of Imports

- ▶ Enhanced Evaluation of Imported Seeds

Strict Penalties for Violations

- ▶ Fines up to ₹30 Lakh
- ▶ Up to 3 Years Imprisonment

Farmers' Rights Protected

- ▶ No Ban on Traditional Seed Saving & Exchange

Modern & Inclusive Law

- ▶ Replacing 1966 Act
- ▶ Empowering Farmers with Digital Tools

Safe, Reliable & High-Quality Seeds for Every Farmer

Key Points:

- **Digital Traceability:** The Act introduces a **QR-based seed traceability system** that allows farmers to verify the origin, quality, and credentials of sellers.
- **Accountability and Deterrence:** It mandates the registration of all seed producers and dealers, introducing strict penalties including fines up to **₹30 lakh** and imprisonment for seed fraud.
- **Protection of Farmer Rights:** While modernizing regulations, the Act specifically protects **farmers' traditional rights** to save, use, exchange, and share seeds.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

- Seed fraud is now treated as a **serious economic offence** with a maximum imprisonment of 3 years.
- **ICAR, agricultural universities, and KVKs** are given expanded roles in scientific evaluation of seed performance.

MCQ Practice: Q. Which feature of the Seed Act 2026 allows farmers to track the origin and verify the quality of their agricultural inputs? A) National Seed Registry B) QR-based traceability system C) KVK physical inspection D) Mandatory Soil Health Cards **Answer: B** (The QR system enables farmers to verify credentials and authorities to track defective batches.)