Empowering Annadatas for a Prosperous Nation

Why in News?

National Farmers' Day is observed on 23rd December.

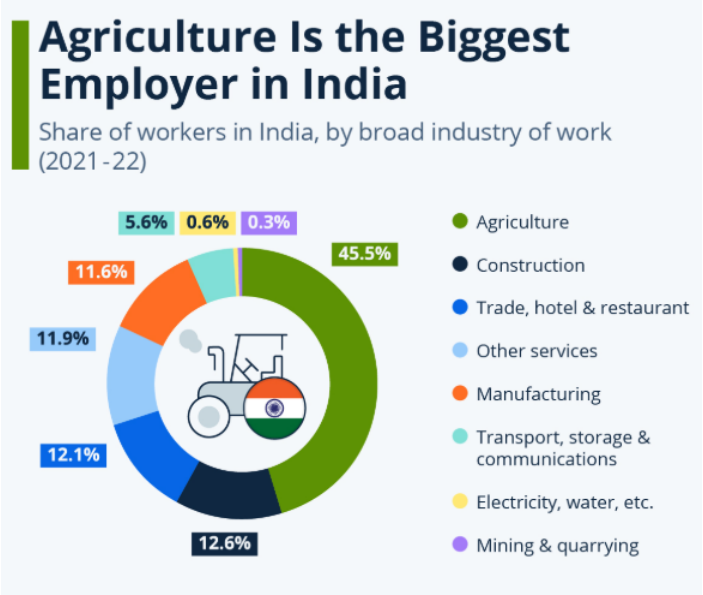
What are the contributions of Charan Singh to farmers welfare?

- **National Farmers' Day** - Birth anniversary of Shri Chaudhary Charan Singh, India's fifth Prime Minister from 1979 -80, is observed as National Farmers' Day.
- **Champion of the peasants** – He emphasised on rural development, agricultural reforms and the uplift of marginalised communities.
- **UP zamindari abolition** - As the Revenue Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 1949, he introduced the landmark Zamindari Abolition Act to dismantle feudal landholding systems and empower small farmers.
- **UP land holdings consolidation** – The law enabled every landowner in UP to have his scattered plots consolidated by swapping parcels of equivalent quality with other farmers in the same village.
- **His books :**
    - Abolition of Zamindari (1947)
    - Whither Co-operative Farming (1956)
    - Agrarian Revolution in Uttar Pradesh (1957)
    - Joint Farming X-rayed (1959)
    - India's Poverty and Its Solution (1964)
    - India's Economic Policy – The Gandhian Blueprint (1978)
    - Economic Nightmare of India: Its Cause and Cure (1981)
- **Lucknow airport** - The Government of India honoured him by naming the Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport in Lucknow.
- **Bharat Ratna** – He was awarded Bharat Ratna in 2024.

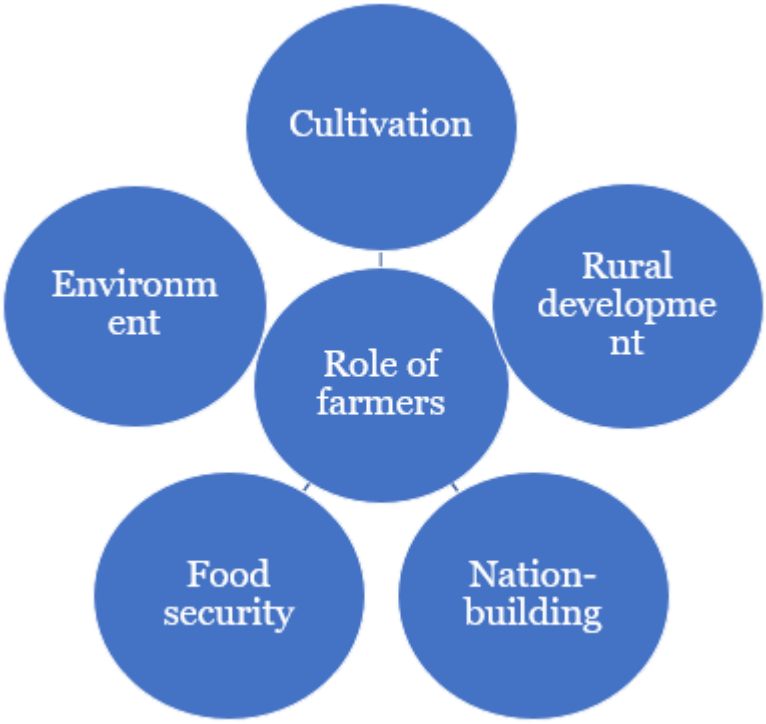
What is the role of farmers in nation building?

- **Farm land** - About 54.8% of the country's 328.7 million hectares is classified as agricultural land and a cropping intensity of 155.4% (as per the Land Use Statistics for 2021-22).
- **Agri labour force** - India's agricultural sector, employing nearly half of the nation's population, remains a cornerstone of the country's economy.

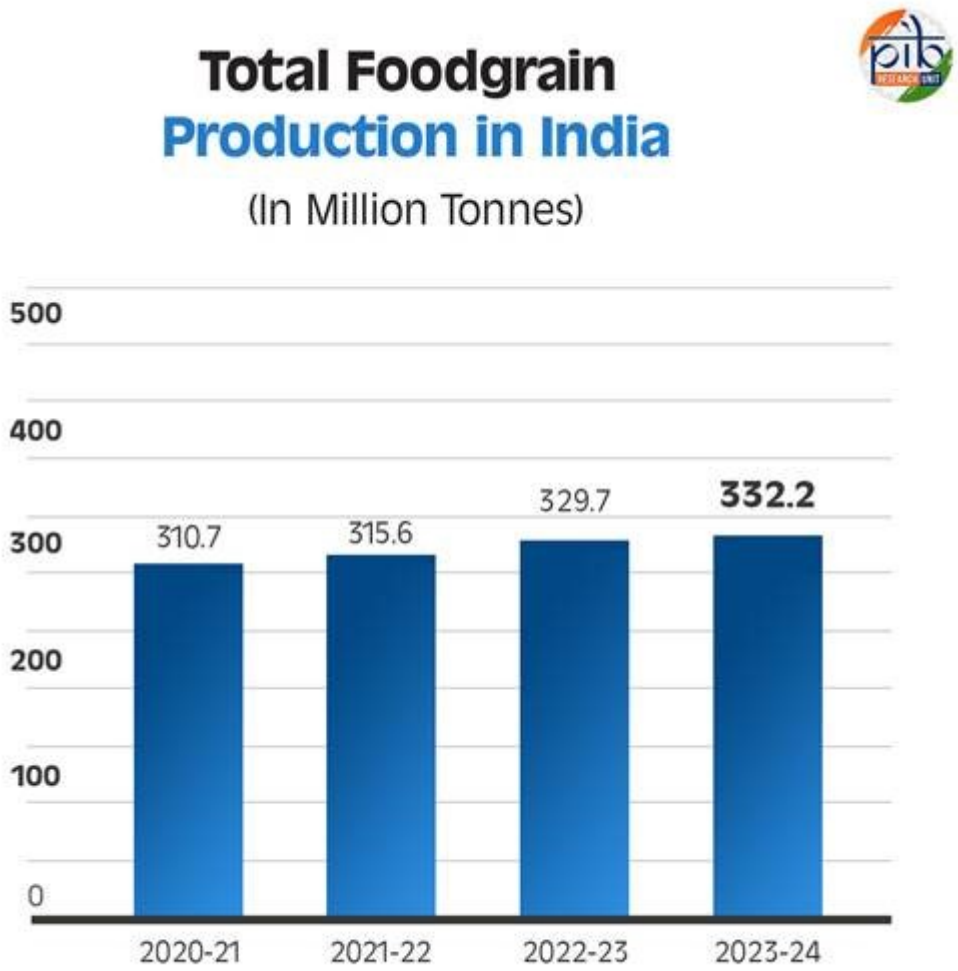
According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23 , about 45.76% of the total workforce is engaged in agriculture and allied sector during 2022-23.



- **Economic contribution** - Agriculture contributes about 14% to India's GDP.
- **Contribution to GVA** - It contributes 17.7% to the Gross Value Added (GVA) at current prices in FY 2023-24.



- **Food grain production** - In 2023-24, the country achieved a record total foodgrain production of ***332.2 million tonnes***, surpassing the previous year's output of 329.7 million tonnes.



- The success of Indian agriculture is deeply intertwined with the wellbeing of these 'Annadatas', who embody the spirit of hard work, innovation, and sacrifice.

What are the challenges faced by agriculture?

- **Global warming** - In India, temperatures have risen by 0.7 degrees Celsius compared to 1951, and precipitation (July to September) has fallen by 6 %.
- **Low agri R&D fund** - Developing climate-resilient agriculture will need more resources for agri-R&D which is currently less than 0.5 % of agri-GDP, and needs to be doubled to at least 1 per cent.
- **Indiscriminate fertilizer usage** - Urea is massively subsidised compared to other nutrients, leading to overuse of N and underuse of P, K, and other micronutrients.
- **Inadequate support of technological innovations** - Products such as nano-urea and nano-DAP, or Single or Triple Superphosphates, etc, have limited penetration in the backdrop of the highly skewed subsidy policy in favour of granular urea.

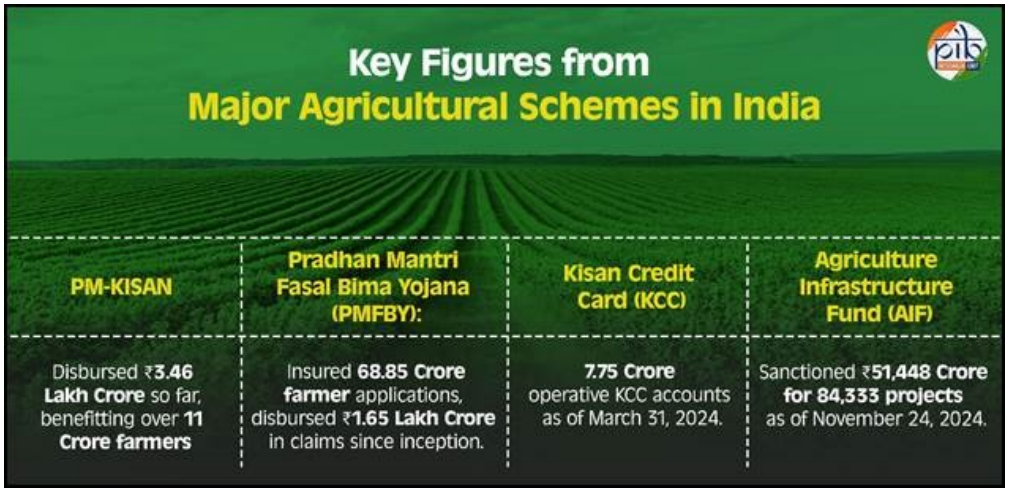
What are the initiatives by the government for farmers welfare?

- **Financial assistance** - Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi is a central sector scheme by the government of India that give farmers up to Rs.6,000 per year as minimum income support.
- **Insurance** - Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY) aims to provide a

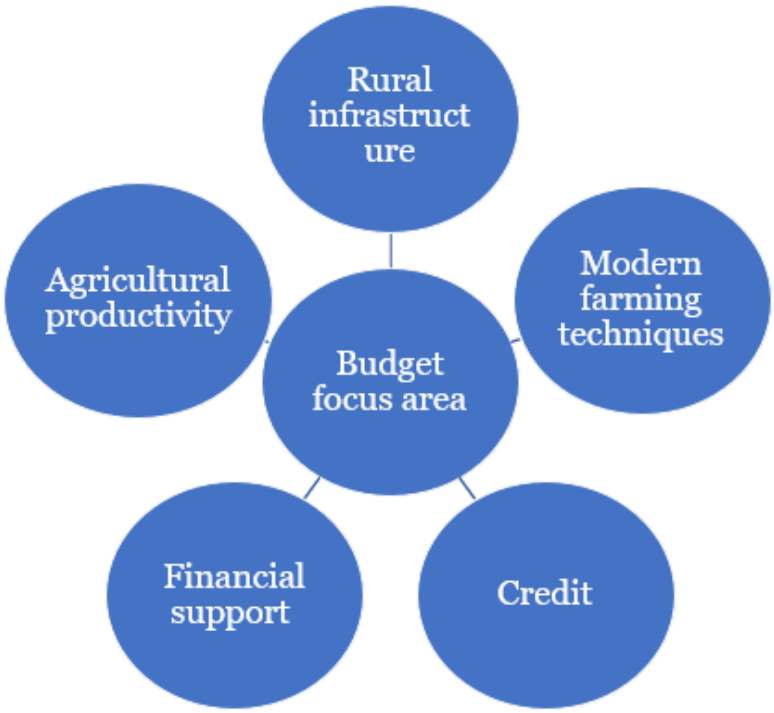
comprehensive insurance cover against failure of the crop.

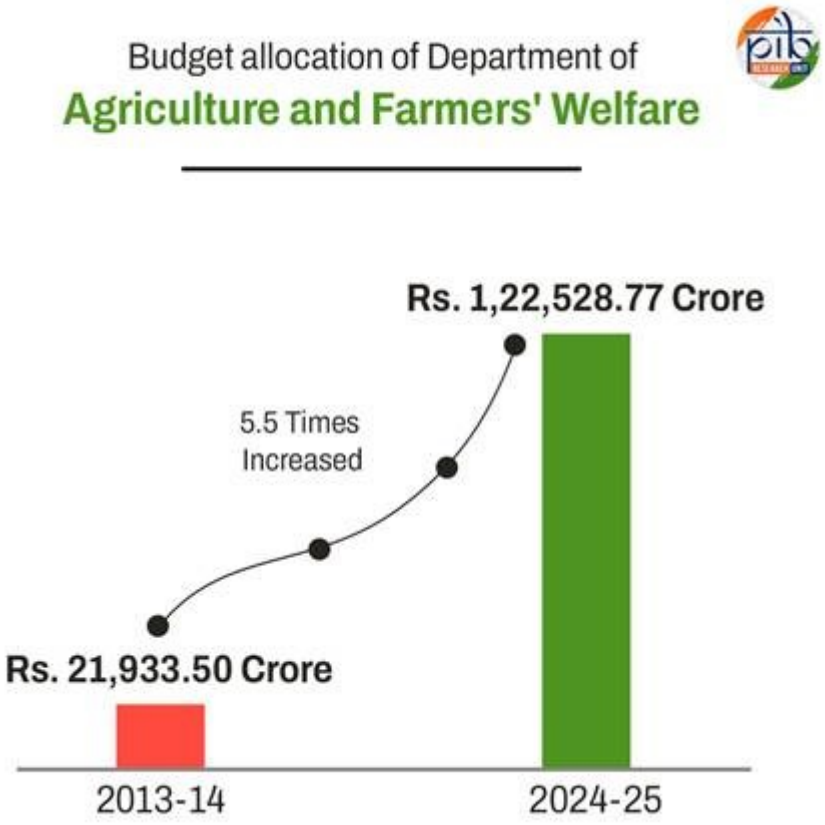
- **Social security** - Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojna (PM-KMY) provides pension for small and marginal farmers.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)	Launched on 24th February 2019, PM-KISAN aims to supplement the financial needs of landholding farmers across the country. Under this scheme, ₹6,000 is transferred directly into the bank accounts of farmers in three equal, four-monthly installments through the DBT mode. Since its inception, the Government of India has disbursed **over ₹3.46 lakh crore** in 18 installments, benefitting more than 11 crore famrmers.
Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)	Launched in 2016, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) aims to provide farmers with affordable crop insurance, covering risks from pre-sowing to post-harvest stages against natural adversities, ensuring prompt and adequate compensation. Since its inception, the scheme has insured 68.85 crore farmer applications and disbursed **₹1,65,966 crore** in claims.
Pradhan Mantri Kisan MaanDhan Yojana (PM-KMY)	Launched on 12th September 2019, PM-KMY provides security to vulnerable farmer families by offering a monthly pension. Farmers between the ages of 18 to 40 contribute monthly to the scheme, which is matched by the government. The Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) manages the pension fund. As of 25th November 2024, over 24.66 lakh farmers have enrolled in the scheme, offering a financial safeguard during their old age.
Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS)	The Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) provides concessional short-term agri-loans with a 7% interest rate on loans up to ₹3.00 lakh, plus an additional 3% subvention for timely repayment, reducing the effective rate to 4%. Since 2014-15, institutional credit flow to agriculture has nearly tripled from ₹8.5 lakh crore to **₹25.48 lakh crore** by 2023-24. The disbursement of easy and concessional crop loans has more than doubled, with the interest subsidy through KCC increasing 2.4 times to ₹14,252 crore in 2023-24.
Kisan Credit Card (KCC)	Introduced in 1998, the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme provides farmers with easy access to agricultural inputs and cash for their production needs. In February 2019, RBI extended the KCC facility to Animal Husbandry and Fisheries for their working capital requirements. As of 31st March 2024, there are **7.75 crore operative KCC accounts**.
Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)	The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) Scheme, launched in 2020 under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Package, supports sustainable agriculture by financing infrastructure projects across India. It provides loans up to ₹2 crore with a capped interest rate of 9%, along with a 3% annual interest subvention and reimbursement of credit guarantee fees for up to seven years, ensuring affordability for beneficiaries. As of 24th November 2024, ₹51,448 crore has been sanctioned for 84,333 projects under AIF.

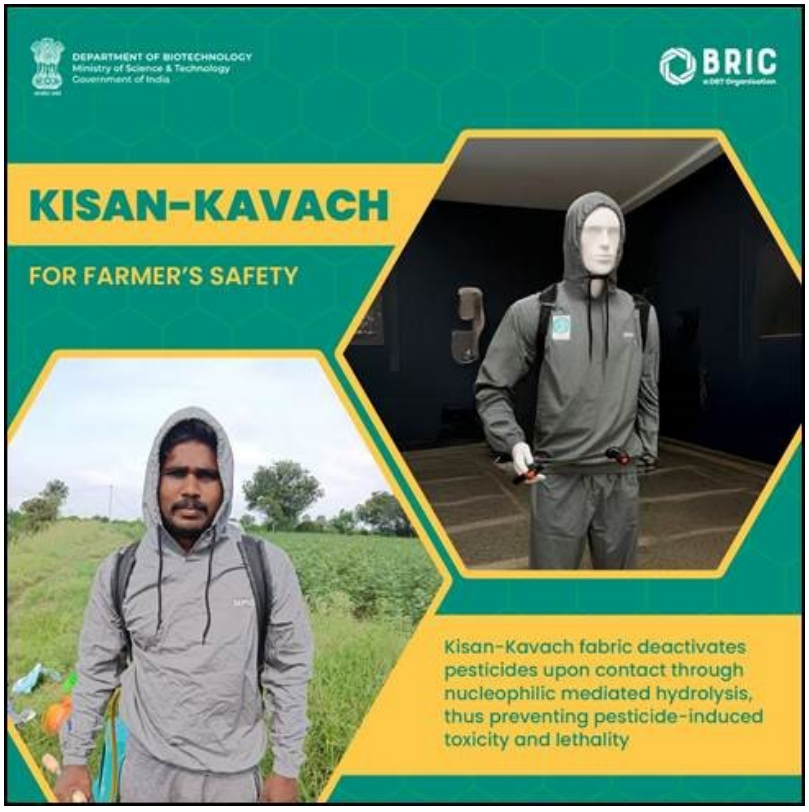


- **Increased budget allocation** – About Rs. 1.2 lakh crore has been allocated to agriculture sector for the fiscal year 2024-25.





- **Namo Drone Didi** - It aims to empower 15,000 Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by providing drones for agricultural rental services, including fertiliser and pesticide application.
- **Soil Health Card Scheme** - Launched in 2015, the scheme aims to improve soil health and promote efficient fertiliser use.
- **Formation & Promotion of 10,000 FPOs** - In 2020, the government launched the scheme to form and promote 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).
- **Kisan Kavach** - Bharat's first anti-pesticide bodysuit, designed to protect farmers from the harmful effects of pesticide exposure.
- It ensures farmer safety and empowers the agricultural community through science and technology.



- **Clean Plant Programme** – It aims to enhance the quality and productivity of horticulture crops by providing disease-free planting material, and climate-resilient varieties with yield enhancement.
- **Digital Agriculture Mission** – It is an umbrella scheme to support digital agriculture initiatives, like Digital Public Infrastructure, implementing the Digital General Crop Estimation Survey (DGCES).
- **Credit Guarantee Scheme for e-NWR** - Under this scheme, farmers can access credit by pledging the electronic negotiable warehouse receipts (e-NWRs).
- **National Mission on Edible Oils – Oilseeds** - The mission aims to boost domestic oilseed production and achieve self-reliance in edible oils, to be implemented over a seven-year period from 2024-25 to 2030-31.
- **National Mission on Natural Farming** - It focuses on promoting chemical-free, natural farming practices across the country.

What can be done to improve farming system?

- Treat agriculture as a food system, from production to marketing to consumption.
- Build value chains of agri-commodities on the lines of milk, where farmers get 75 to 80 % of what the consumer pays.
- Creating a separate board on the lines of NDDB, to bring about revolutionary changes in fruits and vegetables.

Reference

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