



**COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
REPORT OF UNION TERRITORY OF PUDUCHERRY**

YOUTH PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT FORUM

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FOREWORD

The Union Territory of Puducherry occupies an extraordinary, cosmopolitan, and spiritually vibrant position within the civilizational consciousness and developmental trajectory of India. Uniquely composed of four coastal enclaves—Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe, and Yanam—the territory seamlessly weaves French colonial architectural heritage, profound spiritual traditions, and rich maritime culture into a unified democratic ethos. Today, Puducherry is navigating a momentous transition, evolving from a traditional administrative and cultural destination into a forward-looking hub for sustainable coastal tourism, high-value manufacturing, knowledge services, and the blue economy. The Comprehensive Development Framework Report of the Union Territory of Puducherry captures the essence of this historical juncture. It maps a future where the distinct multicultural identity and geographical diversity of the enclaves are harmonized with the imperatives of proactive governance, modern infrastructure, and inclusive socio-economic development.

When we examine the evolution of statecraft and regional development, it becomes increasingly clear that effective policymaking requires far more than basic macroeconomic forecasting. True governance demands a nuanced understanding of social behavior, civic incentives, and the multi-regional continuities that define life across dispersed coastal territories.

Traditional rational choice models often fail to account for the complex realities of human decision-making and community adaptation at the grassroots level. This framework succeeds precisely because it aligns structural economic models with the lived, everyday realities of the people—from traditional coastal fishing communities and agricultural cultivators to dynamic urban service providers and industrial workforces. By focusing on equitable resource distribution, institutional capacity building, universal civic accessibility, and targeted poverty alleviation, the report offers a detailed blueprint. It bridges the critical gap between aggregate economic growth and genuine human flourishing.

At the Youth Peace and Development Forum (YPD FORUM), our core conviction is that sustainable development cannot be achieved without social cohesion and the active, structural engagement of the next generation. Peace and development are inherently mutually reinforcing concepts. Neither can endure if a society fails to integrate its youngest members into its socio-political and economic fabric.

Puducherry stands on the threshold of an expansive demographic and technological opportunity, with a highly educated, creative youth cohort positioned to drive future advancements in information technology, green logistics, regenerative tourism, and creative industries. The true test of any development framework will be its ability to translate urban renewal, port modernisation, and educational infrastructure into tangible, accessible opportunities for the youth, empowering them as the primary co-creators in the future of the Union Territory.

The Comprehensive Development Framework Report acknowledges these shifting dynamics by prioritizing human capital, skill enhancement, and environmental sustainability. It recognizes that the enduring wealth of the territory lies not merely in its picturesque boulevards or coastal corridors, but in the latent intellect, civic pride, and entrepreneurial energy of its people. The policies outlined herein reflect a deep understanding of behavioral economics, recognizing that citizens are active stakeholders whose choices must be nurtured through sound, participatory policy architecture. By mitigating risks for micro, small, and medium enterprises, incentivizing higher education, and ensuring that development reaches the most vulnerable households across all four regions, the framework creates a foundation for sustainable, long-term stability.

A crucial component of this vision is the harmonious preservation of Puducherry's exceptional architectural heritage, spiritual centers, and fragile coastal ecosystems alongside the adoption of modern urban amenities. The preservation of heritage zones, urban water bodies, and coastal wetlands alongside smart-city governance and sustainable industrialization is not a contradiction, but an essential synthesis.

Development policies must address the specific spatial and administrative dynamics of each constituent enclave, ensuring that growth is resilient, balanced, and deeply inclusive. Furthermore, we must recognize that true peace is anchored in justice, equity, administrative transparency, and shared opportunity. By enhancing institutional accountability, ease of doing business, and citizen-centric governance, this report strengthens the foundations of lasting social harmony.

This comprehensive document is a vital intervention in the ongoing discourse regarding administrative capacity, regional transformation, and balanced urban-coastal development in India. It provides policymakers, urban planners, industrial leaders, and civil society with the analytical rigor and empirical depth needed to drive transformative change. It serves as an enduring reminder that the ultimate goal of economics and political thought is the elevation of the human condition.

I commend the extensive research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and visionary effort that have gone into the creation of this document. It is my sincere hope that it will serve as a definitive, actionable guide for administrators and citizens alike. With the right policy architecture in place, we can build a resilient, prosperous, culturally vibrant, and fundamentally inclusive Puducherry for generations to come.

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This report forms part of a larger national initiative undertaken through the Council for Comprehensive Development Frameworks (CDF Council), constituted by the YPD Forum to facilitate the fast-track preparation of comprehensive development frameworks for all 28 States of India and 8 Union Territories of India. The Council represents the Forum's commitment to promoting evidence-based policymaking, strategic planning, and long-term developmental thinking across the nation.

The Forum places on record its deep appreciation to **Dheeraj GN**, Chairman of the Youth Peace and Development Forum, for his vision, leadership, and initiative in conceptualizing and guiding this ambitious project. The Forum also extends its heartfelt thanks to **Aravind Saj**, Vice Chairman of the Youth Peace and Development Forum, for his constant support and encouragement throughout the execution of this initiative.

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The Forum acknowledges the commitment, intellectual curiosity, and sense of responsibility demonstrated by each member of the Council. Through research, analysis, discussion, drafting, review, and continuous engagement with developmental issues, these members contributed significantly to the realization of the Council's objectives. Their willingness to dedicate their time and talents to a national developmental initiative reflects a commendable spirit of public service and constructive citizenship.

The Forum also recognizes that the preparation of a comprehensive development framework requires engagement with a wide range of ideas, perspectives, and sources of knowledge. Accordingly, sincere appreciation is extended to all researchers, academicians, policy experts,

development practitioners, government publications, statistical agencies, think tanks, and public institutions whose work provided valuable insights and reference material for this report. Their contributions to the broader body of knowledge on governance, economics, social development, environmental sustainability, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and public policy have enriched the quality and depth of this framework.

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The Forum further extends its appreciation to all well-wishers, supporters, advisors, and stakeholders who encouraged this initiative and contributed to its successful completion. Whether through guidance, feedback, consultation, or moral support, their contributions helped strengthen the quality and relevance of this work.

This report represents more than a policy document; it reflects a collective effort to envision a better future. It is the product of shared aspirations, collaborative research, and a common belief that informed planning and constructive dialogue can contribute to meaningful social, economic, and institutional progress. While the recommendations contained herein are intended to support the development of Nagaland, they also form part of a broader national effort to strengthen the foundations of a developed, inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous India.

As India advances towards the centenary of its independence in 2047, the Youth Peace and Development Forum remains committed to fostering research, dialogue, and innovation in support of national development. It is hoped that this report will serve as a useful resource for policymakers, administrators, researchers, civil society organizations, industry leaders, and citizens, and that it will contribute meaningfully to the ongoing pursuit of inclusive growth, good governance, and sustainable development.

With gratitude to all who contributed to this endeavour, the Youth Peace and Development Forum proudly presents this report as a modest contribution towards the shared vision of a stronger Nagaland and a developed India.

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PREFACE

Puducherry occupies a wholly distinctive and structurally unique place among the jurisdictions examined in this comprehensive development framework series. Unlike the expansive, contiguous states analyzed in companion volumes, it is not a unified landmass at all. Rather, it comprises four disparate, non-contiguous enclaves scattered across peninsular India: Puducherry district and Karaikal along the eastern Coromandel coast, Yanam in the northern deltaic belt of Andhra Pradesh, and Mahe situated hundreds of kilometers away on the western Malabar coast inside Kerala. This profound physical fragmentation was inherited directly from over two centuries of French colonial rule, under which these four separate trading posts were administered collectively as the *Établissements français dans l'Inde* until their *de jure* treaty merger with the Indian Union between 1954 and 1962 (Grokopedia, 2026a). This history has left the Union Territory with an unusual institutional inheritance: a hybrid civil jurisprudence that still retains vestiges of the French Civil Code alongside Indian statutory law, a rich multilingual fabric spanning Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, and French, and a coastal French Quarter whose neoclassical villas and grid-planned streets form an indispensable economic and tourism engine.

In absolute macroeconomic terms, Puducherry's economic footprint is modest compared to continental states, but exceptionally strong on a per capita basis. Its Gross State Domestic Product stood at approximately \$5.5 billion as of recent baseline assessments, sustained by an urbanized population and high secondary-sector concentration. Chief Minister N. Rangasamy has articulated an explicit target of expanding this figure to \$25 billion over the coming decade, a nearly fivefold increase requiring sustained capital investment and structural modernization (Abhijeet Shirke, 2025). This trajectory aligns directly with a comprehensive vision document presented to NITI Aayog's Governing Council under the national *Viksit Bharat 2047* initiative, which charts an ambitious growth pathway intended to multiply territorial output substantially by the centenary of Indian independence (Careers360, 2023).

The structural composition of Puducherry's economy reveals an unusual and sophisticated profile for an enclave territory of its size. Tertiary services dominate regional output, generating 51.03 percent of gross value added, supported by tourism, port logistics, banking, higher education, and specialized healthcare delivery. Concurrently, manufacturing and

secondary production account for an impressive 42.35 percent of output, leaving agriculture and primary activities with a relatively small direct share (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026). This pronounced secondary-sector density reflects decades of deliberate policy interventions, in which the administration capitalized on special Union Territory tax incentives and industrial concessions to attract competitive manufacturing clusters in automobile ancillaries, precision engineering, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and textiles.

This framework is composed in full recognition of the territory's formidable human capital foundation. Puducherry consistently outperforms national averages on composite human development indices, anchored by an 85.85 percent literacy rate recorded in the 2011 Census and backed by an advanced tertiary healthcare network that draws patients from across southern India. Furthermore, the administration's distinctive tax-free annual budgetary tradition, paired with a renowned cultural identity centered around spiritual centers and international communities like Auroville, establishes Puducherry as a tourism hub with few parallels in the country.

At the same time, this document is framed in rigorous confrontation with the complex administrative constraints inherent in governing an isolated, non-contiguous jurisdiction. Puducherry's constitutional status as a Union Territory with a Legislative Assembly means that its most consequential policy levers—including land governance, urban planning, internal security, and inter-state logistics—remain mediated by central oversight and the office of the Lieutenant Governor. Unlike full states such as Bihar, Punjab, or Gujarat, Puducherry does not enjoy direct constitutional access to the Finance Commission's horizontal tax devolution pool, leaving its developmental expenditure dependent on central grants-in-aid, market borrowings, and localized non-tax revenues.

Compounding these constitutional parameters is the continuous requirement of inter-state coordination. Because each of Puducherry's four enclaves is physically enclosed by a different neighboring state—Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh—every critical infrastructure policy, whether concerning water sharing, transport connectivity, power transmission, or environmental management, demands sustained bilateral engagement. Each enclave functions under distinct regional supply chains and labor markets, requiring the administration to govern multiple micro-economies simultaneously under a unified institutional umbrella.

Adhering to the Standardized Document Format applied across this series, the framework proceeds through a rigorous diagnostic sequence. It opens with an analysis of territorial demographics, evaluates public financial sustainability and fiscal transfers, details the structural performance of the economic sectors, and reviews social infrastructure, coastal ecology, and administrative capacity, culminating in a Vision 2047 roadmap. Drawing on mid-2026 data from PRS Legislative Research, territorial budget documents, NITI Aayog state indices, and peer-reviewed research cited in APA 7th edition format, this framework provides policymakers and scholars with an objective, evidence-based roadmap tailored to the distinctive constitutional character and economic potential of this enclave territory.

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Executive Summary

Puducherry presents this framework series' fourth and most structurally distinctive case: a small, non-contiguous Union Territory whose per capita development indicators compare favourably with many full Indian states, but whose absolute economic and administrative scale, and whose partial constitutional autonomy under a centrally appointed Lieutenant Governor, place real limits on how directly the state-level policy frameworks examined in the companion Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat documents can be applied.

Demographic and Territorial Profile. Puducherry's population stood at 1,247,953 as per the 2011 Census, with more recent projections placing the 2026 population between approximately 1.76 and 1.81 million depending on the specific projection methodology used (IndiaCensus.in, 2026; Puducherry & More, 2026). The territory comprises four non-contiguous districts spanning a combined area of just 490 square kilometers, with Puducherry district itself accounting for approximately 76 percent of the total population, followed by Karaikal at 16 percent, Yanam at 4 percent, and Mahe at 3 percent (Grokopedia, 2026a). This fragmentation, examined in depth in Chapter 1, means that Puducherry's administration must coordinate governance, infrastructure, and service delivery across four physically separated jurisdictions embedded within three different neighbouring states, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala respectively, a structural governance challenge without parallel among the states examined in the companion frameworks.

Economic Structure. Puducherry's Gross State Domestic Product stood at approximately \$5.5 billion as of recent estimates, with the territory's own government targeting a nearly fivefold increase to \$25 billion over the coming decade under Chief Minister Rangasamy's stated economic roadmap (Abhijeet Shirke, 2025). The territory's sectoral composition for

2024-25 shows the tertiary sector contributing 51.03 percent of gross value added at current prices, the secondary sector 42.35 percent, and the primary sector just 6.63 percent, an unusually industry-heavy composition for a territory of this population, driven substantially by automobile ancillary, textile, and chemical manufacturing established to leverage Puducherry's distinctive Union Territory tax treatment (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026). Despite this modest primary-sector output share, approximately 45 percent of Puducherry's population depends directly or indirectly on farming, and the territory ranks among India's largest producers of bananas, flowers, tapioca, coconut, groundnut, and sugarcane (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026).

Fiscal Position. Puducherry's government presented a ₹13,600 crore budget for fiscal year 2025-26, an increase from ₹12,700 crore the prior year, with own revenue receipts estimated at ₹7,641.40 crore and central assistance, including the State Disaster Relief Fund, at ₹3,432.18 crore (News on Air, 2025a). Of the total budget, committed expenditure remains substantial relative to the territory's overall size: ₹2,650 crore for salaries, ₹1,566 crore for pensions, and ₹1,867 crore for loan repayment and interest payments, alongside ₹2,546 crore for power purchase, a notably large single line item reflecting Puducherry's continued dependence on purchased rather than self-generated electricity, discussed further in Chapter 9 (News on Air, 2025a). Chief Minister Rangasamy has specifically emphasized Puducherry's budgets as "tax-free," a distinctive fiscal positioning examined in greater depth in Chapter 2 (Deccan Herald, 2025).

Human Development and Literacy. Puducherry recorded a literacy rate of 85.85 percent as of the 2011 Census, among the highest of any Indian state or Union Territory, alongside a sex ratio of 1,037 females per 1,000 males, itself a genuinely notable finding given that this figure exceeds parity, a pattern this framework has not documented for any of the three states examined in the companion frameworks (Puducherry & More, 2026). These figures suggest a Union Territory with a genuinely strong human development foundation, a finding this framework examines in greater depth across the sectoral chapters that follow.

Structure of the Framework. Following the same 21-chapter Standardized Document Format applied throughout this series, this report examines Puducherry's demographic and social profile, fiscal architecture, economic structure, investment climate, and the full range of social, infrastructure, environmental, and governance sectors, before concluding with a Vision 2047 roadmap, adapted throughout to reflect Puducherry's distinctive scale and its partial constitutional autonomy as a Union Territory. The central analytical thread running through this framework is an assessment of how effectively a small, fragmented, non-contiguous territory with strong underlying human capital indicators, high literacy and a favourable sex ratio among them, can leverage its distinctive fiscal and tax positioning, and its residual French colonial cultural and tourism assets, to achieve the kind of transformative economic scale-up its own government has explicitly targeted, while operating within the real constraints imposed by shared constitutional authority with the Union government and by its physical separation across three different states' territory.

Chapter 1: State Profile — Geography, Demography and Society

1.1 Geographic and Ecological Characteristics of the State

Puducherry is, geographically, unlike any other jurisdiction examined in this framework series: rather than occupying a single contiguous landmass, it comprises four physically separated enclaves scattered across peninsular India's east and west coasts, a direct legacy of French colonial rule. Puducherry district and Karaikal district lie along the Coromandel coast in the southeast, embedded within Tamil Nadu; Yanam lies further north along the Andhra Pradesh coastline at the mouth of the Godavari delta; and Mahe sits on the Malabar coast in the southwest, embedded within Kerala (Grokikipedia, 2026a). These four districts together span a combined area of just 490 square kilometers, making Puducherry one of the smallest Indian Union Territories by land area, with Puducherry district itself the largest of the four at 293 square kilometers (Grokikipedia, 2026a). This fragmentation means that any single Puducherry-wide infrastructure, environmental, or economic policy must, in practice, be implemented as four distinct, geographically disconnected sub-programmes, each embedded within a different neighbouring state's own administrative and physical geography, a structural feature with direct implications for nearly every sectoral chapter that follows in this framework, and one without any real parallel among the states examined in the companion Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat documents.

Puducherry and Karaikal's coastal, low-lying terrain exposes both enclaves to the cyclone and storm surge risk characteristic of India's eastern Coromandel coast, discussed further in

Chapter 14, while Mahe's location on the considerably wetter Malabar coast gives that enclave a distinctly different monsoon and ecological profile from its three sister districts. Yanam's position at the Godavari delta mouth similarly gives it a riverine and estuarine ecology distinct from the other three enclaves. This ecological diversity across just four small districts, spanning two entirely different coastlines and climatic zones, represents a further, distinctive complicating factor for any unified environmental or agricultural policy framework, discussed in Chapters 13 and 18.

1.2 Administrative Divisions: Districts, Divisions and Sub-State Units

Puducherry's four constituent regions, Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe, and Yanam, are formally organized as four separate districts, though for certain statistical and administrative purposes Mahe and Yanam are sometimes grouped under the broader Puducherry district heading given their smaller scale (Grokikipedia, 2026a). Urban local governance operates through five municipalities: Pondicherry Municipality, spanning 19.46 square kilometers with a 2011 population of 244,377 across 42 wards; Ozhukarai, or Oulgaret, Municipality, spanning 36.75 square kilometers with a 2011 population of 300,150 across 37 wards; Karaikal Municipality, with a 2011 population of 86,838 across 18 wards; Mahe Municipality, with a 2011 population of 41,816 across 15 wards; and Yanam Municipality, with a 2011 population of 55,626 across 10 wards (Wikipedia, 2026a).

Puducherry's constitutional and administrative structure is genuinely distinctive among the jurisdictions examined in this framework series. As a Union Territory with a legislature, established under the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, Puducherry's unicameral, 33-seat Legislative Assembly, of which 30 seats are elected by first-past-the-post and 3 are nominated by the Lieutenant Governor, possesses authority to legislate on State List and Concurrent List subjects to the extent they apply to the territory, including agriculture, education, health, and local governance, but bills passed by the Assembly require presentation to the Lieutenant Governor for assent, who may assent, withhold assent, or reserve the bill for the President's consideration, particularly where central interests or financial implications are involved (Grokikipedia, 2026b). This means that, unlike the full states examined in the companion frameworks, Puducherry's elected government operates with a constitutionally narrower and more conditional legislative authority, a structural constraint this framework returns to throughout, particularly in Chapter 15's treatment of administrative governance. The territory held its most recent Legislative Assembly election on April 9, 2026, with results declared shortly thereafter, and N. Rangaswamy of the All India N.R. Congress was sworn in for a fifth term as Chief Minister on May 13, 2026, leading a National Democratic Alliance coalition government under Lieutenant Governor Kuniyil Kailashnathan, who has held the post since August 2024 (Wikipedia, 2026b, 2026c).

1.3 Demographic Structure: Population, Density, Growth and Composition

Puducherry's population stood at 1,247,953 as per the 2011 Census, comprising 612,511 males and 635,442 females, a substantial increase from 974,000 recorded in the 2001 Census

(Census2011.co.in, 2026). This decadal growth rate is notably higher in proportional terms than the growth documented for several full states examined in the companion frameworks, though Puducherry's small absolute population base means the comparison should be read with appropriate caution regarding scale. More recent projections place Puducherry's 2026 population between approximately 1.76 million and 1.81 million, depending on the specific projection methodology employed by different sources, a range this framework notes explicitly given the absence of a single, authoritative, updated figure in the sources reviewed for this chapter (IndiaCensus.in, 2026; Puducherry & More, 2026). Puducherry's sex ratio of 1,037 females per 1,000 males, as documented in this framework's Executive Summary, is a genuinely notable finding: it exceeds numerical parity between the sexes, a pattern this framework has not documented for any of the three states examined in the companion Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat frameworks, each of which recorded sex ratios below 1,000 (Puducherry & More, 2026).

Puducherry's population distribution across its four districts is heavily skewed toward the Puducherry district itself, which accounts for approximately 76 percent of the territory's total population, or 950,289 residents as of the 2011 Census, followed by Karaikal at 16 percent, or 200,222 residents, Yanam at 4 percent, or 55,626 residents, and Mahe at just 3 percent, or 41,816 residents (Groklopedia, 2026a). This concentration means that policy and infrastructure planning calibrated to Puducherry district's needs specifically may not translate well to the considerably smaller Karaikal, Yanam, and especially Mahe districts, a scale mismatch this framework flags as relevant to nearly every sectoral chapter that follows.

1.4 Linguistic, Ethnic, Religious and Cultural Profile

Puducherry's linguistic profile reflects its fragmented geography directly: Tamil is the dominant language in Puducherry and Karaikal districts, Malayalam in Mahe, and Telugu in Yanam, with French and English retaining official or quasi-official status across the territory as a residual legacy of French colonial administration, discussed in this framework's Preface (Karaikal district Wikipedia entry, 2026). This means Puducherry, despite its small overall population, operates across four distinct primary vernacular languages, a linguistic diversity considerably greater in proportional terms than documented for any of the three states examined in the companion frameworks relative to population size.

On religious composition, Hindus constitute the majority religion across all four of Puducherry's districts, at 87.30 percent of the territory's total population as of the 2011 Census, with the Puducherry district specifically recording an even higher Hindu majority of 90.00 percent (Census2011.co.in, 2026). Muslims constitute the largest religious minority at 6.05 percent, or approximately 75,560 people, with Christians constituting a further significant minority, a composition this framework notes reflects some continued influence of the territory's French Catholic missionary history, particularly visible in Puducherry town's built heritage discussed further in Chapter 19 (Census2011.co.in, 2026). Puducherry additionally holds particular cultural and spiritual significance as home to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and the internationally recognized experimental township of Auroville, established in

1968 and populated by residents from dozens of countries, a genuinely distinctive cultural and demographic feature this framework has not found paralleled in any jurisdiction examined across this series, and one examined further in Chapter 19's treatment of tourism and culture.

1.5 Human Development Index: State Ranking and Trend Analysis

A comprehensive, current, specific Human Development Index figure for Puducherry was not available with confirmed precision in the sources reviewed for this chapter, reflecting a broader pattern in which India's smaller Union Territories are less consistently included in state-level HDI compilations than the major states examined in the companion frameworks. Given Puducherry's exceptionally high literacy rate of 85.85 percent, documented in this framework's Executive Summary and among the highest recorded for any Indian state or Union Territory, and its comparatively strong per capita income position implied by the sectoral and fiscal data examined in Chapters 2 and 3, this framework would expect Puducherry's HDI to sit in the high human development category, plausibly comparable to or exceeding the 0.737 to 0.738 range documented for Gujarat and Punjab in the companion frameworks, though this framework declines to assert a specific figure without direct confirmation and flags this as a priority area for further primary research through the UNDP's or NITI Aayog's own Union Territory-specific human development reporting.

1.6 Poverty, Inequality and Multidimensional Deprivation Indices

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's poverty rate and multidimensional deprivation indices, comparable to the detailed figures presented for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat in the companion frameworks, was not available with sufficient specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Given Puducherry's strong literacy indicators, its favourable sex ratio, and its comparatively industry-heavy economic structure documented in Chapter 3, this framework would expect Puducherry's poverty rate to compare favourably with national averages, plausibly in a range similar to or below the 4.26 to 9 percent range documented for Punjab and Gujarat respectively in the companion frameworks, though this represents an inference rather than a confirmed finding, and this framework flags direct NITI Aayog Multidimensional Poverty Index data specific to Puducherry as a priority area for future revision.

1.7 Intra-State Disparities: Aspirational Districts and Backward Region Identification

Puducherry's principal intra-territorial disparity is not the north-south or urban-tribal pattern documented for the full states examined in the companion frameworks, but rather the stark scale disparity among its four non-contiguous districts themselves, discussed in section 1.3: a Puducherry district of nearly a million residents alongside a Mahe district of barely 42,000. This framework was unable to confirm whether any of Puducherry's four districts hold formal NITI Aayog Aspirational District status, and given the territory's generally strong human

development indicators discussed in sections 1.5 and 1.6, this framework considers it unlikely that Puducherry features prominently within that particular national programme, though this should be verified directly against NITI Aayog's current documentation in any future revision. A more relevant disparity for Puducherry specifically concerns the differential economic integration of each enclave with its surrounding state: Puducherry and Karaikal districts, embedded within Tamil Nadu, benefit from proximity to that state's considerably larger and more industrially developed economy, while Mahe's integration with Kerala's economy and Yanam's integration with Andhra Pradesh's economy each follow a distinct pattern shaped by their respective host states' own development trajectories, a dynamic this framework examines further in Chapter 4.8's treatment of regional cooperation.

1.8 State's Position in National Rankings Across Key Development Indicators

Taken together, the indicators reviewed in this chapter position Puducherry as a Union Territory whose human capital indicators, literacy above all, are genuinely strong by national standards, and whose economic structure, unusually industry-heavy for its population scale, reflects a distinctive historical development path shaped by the territory's tax status and its residual French colonial administrative and cultural inheritance. Puducherry's most consequential structural distinction relative to the three full states examined in the companion frameworks is not any single development indicator but rather its fundamental governance architecture: a small, physically fragmented territory whose elected government operates with narrower constitutional authority than a full state, embedded within three different neighbouring states' physical and economic geography simultaneously. The chapters that follow examine how this distinctive governance and geographic structure shapes Puducherry's fiscal architecture, economic development, and social service delivery, while giving full and fair account of the territory's genuine underlying strengths in literacy, gender ratio, and industrial development documented throughout this chapter.

Chapter 2: Fiscal Architecture of the Union Territory

2.1 Revenue Framework: Own Tax Revenue, Non-Tax Revenue and Devolution

Puducherry's fiscal architecture operates under a distinctive framework not shared by any of the three full states examined in the companion frameworks: as a Union Territory, Puducherry's budget structure, presented by the Chief Minister in his capacity as Finance Minister, is formally characterized by the territory's own government as a "tax-free budget," a framing Chief Minister N. Rangasamy has emphasized across successive budget presentations, including the ₹12,700 crore budget for 2024-25 and the ₹13,600 crore budget for 2025-26 (Business Standard, 2024; News on Air, 2025a). For 2025-26, Puducherry's own revenue receipts were estimated at ₹7,641.40 crore, with central assistance, including the State Disaster Relief Fund, estimated at ₹3,432.18 crore, alongside a separate Central Road Fund allocation of ₹25 crore and ₹400 crore under Centrally Sponsored Schemes (News on

Air, 2025a). For the subsequent 2026-27 fiscal year, own tax and non-tax revenue was projected to rise to ₹7,890.41 crore, within a total budget outlay of ₹14,300 crore, an increase of ₹700 crore over the prior year (IMPRI, 2026).

Puducherry's GST performance carries a specific and significant historical caveat directly relevant to this revenue framework: independent financial reporting found that Puducherry, alongside Punjab, Nagaland, and Uttarakhand, recorded the highest GST revenue shortfall of any Indian state or Union Territory in the early post-GST implementation years, meaning Puducherry's actual GST collections fell furthest short of the 14 percent annual growth guarantee the Centre provided states during the compensation period that concluded in mid-2022 (Business Standard, 2022). This finding, that Puducherry shared its most acute GST implementation difficulty specifically with Punjab, examined in the companion framework's Chapter 2.7, where the end of GST compensation was similarly identified as a significant contributing factor to that state's fiscal strain, suggests Puducherry may face a structurally comparable, GST-driven revenue vulnerability despite its very different overall economic profile.

2.2 Expenditure Profile: Composition, Quality and Efficiency

Puducherry's expenditure profile, like Punjab's examined in the companion framework, shows a substantial committed expenditure burden relative to the territory's overall budget size. For 2025-26, of the ₹13,600 crore total budget, ₹2,650 crore was allocated for salaries, ₹1,566 crore for pensions, ₹1,867 crore for loan repayment and interest, and, in a particularly notable single line item, ₹2,546 crore for power purchase, reflecting Puducherry's continued and substantial dependence on purchased rather than self-generated electricity, examined further in Chapter 9 (News on Air, 2025a). Together, these four categories, salaries, pensions, debt servicing, and power purchase, account for approximately 8,629 crore, or nearly 63 percent of Puducherry's entire 2025-26 budget, a committed and quasi-committed expenditure share that, while not directly comparable in methodology to the specific committed-expenditure percentages calculated for Bihar and Punjab in the companion frameworks, nonetheless indicates a similarly constrained fiscal position relative to the territory's own modest revenue base documented in section 2.1.

Beyond these committed categories, Puducherry's 2025-26 budget earmarked ₹2,110 crore for major welfare schemes, including the Free Rice Scheme, farmer subsidies, old-age pensions, financial assistance to women heads of households, and LPG cylinder subsidies, alongside specific new commitments including skill development for 30,000 youth under the Chief Minister's Skill Development Programme, an enhancement of MLA Local Area Development funds to ₹3 crore, and an increase in monthly financial assistance for women heads of below-poverty-line families from ₹1,000 to ₹2,500 (News on Air, 2025a). Welfare provisions specific to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes included ₹3,000 monthly assistance for unmarried or widowed SC/ST women and a ₹5,000 crore allocation, an unusually large figure relative to the territory's overall budget size that this framework flags as warranting verification, for SC/ST orphaned children (News on Air, 2025a).

2.3 Capital Expenditure: Infrastructure Investment and Asset Creation

Puducherry's capital expenditure has shown a modest but genuine upward trajectory in both absolute and proportional terms across recent budget cycles. Capital expenditure rose from ₹1,730.20 crore in 2024-25 to ₹1,975.28 crore in 2025-26, with the Chief Minister specifically noting that the percentage of capital expenditure against total expenditure had increased to 9.80 percent in the 2025-26 budget (Deccan Herald, 2025a). For 2026-27, capital expenditure was budgeted at ₹2,185 crore against revenue expenditure of ₹12,115 crore, within the ₹14,300 crore total outlay, indicating continued, incremental growth in the capital share of Puducherry's spending (IMPRI, 2026). Among Puducherry's specific capital commitments, the 2025-26 budget allocated ₹20 crore for first-stage land acquisition to expand the runway at Puducherry Airport, a project examined further in Chapter 8.3, reflecting one of the territory's more concrete and long-standing infrastructure priorities (News on Air, 2025a).

2.4 Fiscal Deficit, Primary Deficit and Debt Sustainability

Puducherry's fiscal deficit management operates within a net borrowing ceiling explicitly approved by the central government, reflecting the territory's status as a Union Territory rather than a full state with independent constitutional borrowing authority. For 2024-25, the central government approved a net borrowing ceiling, including negotiated loans, of ₹2,066.36 crore specifically to bridge Puducherry's fiscal deficit, a figure that rose to ₹2,101.42 crore for 2025-26 (Business Standard, 2024; Deccan Herald, 2025a). This centrally approved borrowing ceiling mechanism represents a genuinely distinctive feature of Puducherry's fiscal architecture relative to the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, each of which operates under its own Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act-derived borrowing ceiling rather than a specifically Centre-approved annual figure, underscoring the closer and more direct fiscal oversight relationship between the Union government and a Union Territory administration relative to a full state government. A comprehensive, current, GSDP-relative debt sustainability assessment for Puducherry, comparable to the detailed debt-to-GSDP analyses presented for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat in the companion frameworks, was not available with sufficient specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter.

2.5 State's Borrowings, Guarantees and Off-Budget Liabilities

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's off-budget borrowing and guarantee liabilities was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Given the territory's small scale and its close, centrally overseen borrowing ceiling mechanism discussed in section 2.4, this framework would expect Puducherry's off-budget liability exposure to be considerably more constrained in absolute terms than documented for any of the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, though this represents an inference based on the territory's overall fiscal architecture rather than a directly confirmed finding.

2.6 Finance Commission Awards: Allocation and Utilisation

Puducherry's relationship with successive Finance Commissions differs structurally from that of the full states examined in the companion frameworks, since Union Territories with legislatures receive central assistance through a somewhat different institutional channel than the tax devolution formula applied to full states, reflected in the "central assistance" budget line documented in section 2.1 rather than a separate "share in central taxes" line of the kind detailed for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat. A comprehensive, current, detailed assessment of the specific Finance Commission award mechanism and formula applicable to Puducherry was not available with sufficient specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter, and represents a priority area for further primary research through the Finance Commission's own published Union Territory-specific recommendations.

2.7 GST Implementation: Revenue Impact and Compensation Status

As documented in section 2.1, Puducherry's GST implementation experience has been marked by a genuinely significant and well-documented revenue shortfall, placing the territory among the four Indian states and Union Territories, alongside Punjab, Nagaland, and Uttarakhand, that recorded the highest GST revenue shortfall relative to the Centre's guaranteed compensation formula during the initial post-2017 implementation period (Business Standard, 2022). The end of GST compensation cess collection, discussed in that same reporting as concluding on June 30, 2022, would reasonably be expected to have compounded Puducherry's fiscal strain in the years since, in a pattern directly analogous to the compensation-cliff effect documented for Punjab in the companion framework's Chapter 2.7, though a comprehensive, current, post-compensation-period reassessment of Puducherry's specific GST revenue trajectory was not available in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Puducherry's GST administration, discussed in the context of the territory's broader digital governance framework in Chapter 16, continues to target improved dealer registration, e-way bill compliance, and revenue intelligence specifically to address continued leakage concerns (IMPRI, 2026).

2.8 Public Financial Management Reforms and Audit Compliance

Puducherry's budget process, as with the full states examined in the companion frameworks, is subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General, with the Legislative Assembly's own procedural framework requiring presentation of Demands for Grants, permitting cut motions, and requiring supplementary grants for unforeseen expenditure needs, all managed within the broader constitutional oversight relationship with the Lieutenant Governor discussed in Chapter 1.2 (Grokikipedia, 2026c). A comprehensive, current, independent audit-based assessment of Puducherry's public financial management systems, comparable to the Sixteenth Finance Commission evaluations available for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat in the companion frameworks, was not available in the sources reviewed for this chapter, and represents a priority area for further primary research through the CAG's own published Union Territory-specific audit reports.

2.9 Centre-State Fiscal Relations: Trends and Themes

The central theme emerging from this chapter's review of Puducherry's fiscal architecture is one shaped fundamentally by the territory's Union Territory status: a government that raises a genuine and substantial majority of its revenue from its own sources, at approximately 69 to 70 percent of total revenue in recent budget cycles, broadly comparable in proportion to the own-revenue shares documented for Punjab and Gujarat in the companion frameworks, yet operates its borrowing and fiscal deficit management within a considerably more directly centrally supervised framework than any full state, given the explicit, annually negotiated net borrowing ceiling discussed in section 2.4. Puducherry's own government has explicitly and repeatedly credited close cooperation and coordinated efforts between the Centre and the Union Territory as enabling the continued implementation of progressive welfare schemes, particularly in education and health, a framing that stands in some contrast to the more fiscally adversarial or strained centre-state dynamic documented for Punjab specifically in the companion framework's Chapter 2.9 (Deccan Herald, 2025a). This suggests that, whatever the genuine fiscal constraints documented throughout this chapter, Puducherry's smaller scale and closer institutional integration with the Union government may afford it a somewhat smoother and less contentious central assistance relationship than either Bihar or Punjab has experienced, a distinction this framework's concluding chapter returns to when assessing Puducherry's Vision 2047 financing strategy.

Chapter 3: Economic Structure, Growth and Sectoral Performance

3.1 Gross State Domestic Product: Trends, Growth Rate and Sectoral Share

Puducherry's economic growth over the past five years has been genuinely robust by national standards. Lieutenant Governor K. Kailashnathan, addressing the Legislative Assembly's 2025 budget session, stated that Puducherry's Gross State Domestic Product had grown by 44.06 percent over the preceding five years, at an annual average growth rate of 9.56 percent (News on Air, 2025b). A separate, more recent government schemes analysis recorded UT GSDP growth of 8.12 percent for 2025-26, a somewhat more moderate figure than the five-year average cited above but still comfortably ahead of most national growth benchmarks documented across this framework series (IMPRI, 2026). Puducherry's current absolute GSDP scale, at approximately \$5.5 billion as documented in this framework's Preface and Executive Summary, remains modest relative to the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, a scale difference this framework attributes directly to Puducherry's small population base of under two million rather than to any inherent weakness in the territory's growth rate itself.

On sectoral composition, Puducherry's economy for 2024-25 was led by the tertiary sector at 51.03 percent of gross value added at current prices, followed by the secondary sector at 42.35 percent, with the primary sector contributing just 6.63 percent, as documented in this framework's Executive Summary (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026). This secondary sector share of 42.35 percent is genuinely striking for a territory of Puducherry's population scale, exceeding the equivalent industrial sector share documented for Punjab in the companion framework and approaching the industry-dominant composition documented for Gujarat, a pattern this framework attributes to Puducherry's distinctive historical development as a manufacturing location leveraging Union Territory-specific tax and regulatory treatment, discussed further in section 3.4.

3.2 Per Capita Income and Purchasing Power Analysis

A comprehensive, current, precisely confirmed per capita income figure for Puducherry was not extracted with full confidence from the sources reviewed for this chapter, though Puducherry has historically and consistently ranked among the higher per capita income Union Territories and states in national compilations, a position broadly consistent with the territory's strong literacy indicators documented in Chapter 1.5 and its industry-heavy economic structure documented in section 3.1. Given Puducherry's GSDP of approximately \$5.5 billion distributed across a population of under two million, discussed in this framework's Executive Summary, the territory's implied per capita income would place it in a comparatively favourable position relative to the states examined in the companion frameworks, though this framework declines to assert a specific confirmed figure without direct data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's Union Territory-specific per capita income series, and flags this as a priority area for future revision.

3.3 Primary Sector: Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries

Agriculture occupies a small and declining share of Puducherry's economic output, at less than 2 percent of GSDP according to the territory's own government data, even as

approximately 45 percent of Puducherry's population continues to depend directly or indirectly on farming, as documented in this framework's Executive Summary, a mismatch between output share and employment dependence broadly analogous in character, though considerably more extreme in degree, to the pattern documented for Gujarat's agricultural sector in the companion framework's Chapter 3.3 (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026). Puducherry ranks among India's largest producers of bananas, flowers, tapioca, coconut, groundnut, and sugarcane, a crop portfolio reflecting the territory's tropical coastal climate across its Coromandel and Malabar coast enclaves discussed in Chapter 1.1 (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026). The Puducherry Budget 2025-26 raised the agriculture outlay to ₹216.87 crore, introducing higher seed subsidies, Minimum Support Price implementation under the national PM AASHA scheme, full-premium crop insurance specifically for coconut, and an annual rain relief payment of ₹2,000 to affected farmers, reflecting a modest but genuine state-level agricultural support architecture proportionate to the sector's small but continuing employment significance (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026).

3.4 Secondary Sector: Industry, Manufacturing and Mining

Puducherry's manufacturing sector, contributing approximately 40 percent of the territory's GSDP according to industry analysis, has historically been anchored by automobile ancillary units, textiles, and chemicals, industries that established a presence in the territory specifically to leverage Puducherry's distinctive Union Territory tax treatment (Abhijeet Shirke, 2025). This industrial base is concentrated in a small number of established industrial estates, including Thirubuvanai and Sedarapet, both of which the territory's government has identified as requiring revitalization given aging industrial infrastructure and limited land availability for large-scale expansion, constraints the government is seeking to address through vertical industrial development and smart industrial zoning approaches designed to maximize the productive use of Puducherry's genuinely limited land area, discussed in Chapter 1.1 (Abhijeet Shirke, 2025). Union Home Minister Amit Shah, campaigning ahead of the 2026 Assembly election discussed in Chapter 1.2, specifically cited the establishment of a laptop manufacturing unit in Puducherry with an annual production capacity of three lakh units as evidence of the territory's continued industrial development under the incumbent NDA-aligned administration, a claim this framework reports as a specific political statement made in a campaign context rather than as independently verified industrial output data (News on Air, 2026a).

3.5 Tertiary Sector: Trade, Finance, Real Estate and Services

Puducherry's services sector, the largest single component of the territory's economy at 51.03 percent of gross value added as documented in section 3.1, is anchored substantially by the tourism industry discussed in depth in Chapter 19, which independent economic analysis characterizes as having "historically been Puducherry's economic mainstay, accounting for a significant share of local employment and revenue" (Abhijeet Shirke, 2025). Beyond tourism, Puducherry's territorial government has explicitly identified information technology as a priority growth sector, with former Chief Minister Rangasamy announcing plans for a

dedicated IT park to generate youth employment opportunities as part of the territory's broader Viksit Bharat 2047-aligned vision document, discussed further in Chapter 21 (Careers360, 2023).

3.6 Informal Economy: Size, Significance and Integration Challenges

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's informal economy scale was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Given the territory's youth employment data discussed in section 3.7, which found that 58.0 percent of working young people hold regular jobs while 19.7 percent work in casual employment and a further 22.4 percent are self-employed, Puducherry's informal and casual employment share appears comparatively moderate relative to the considerably higher informal employment shares documented for agriculture-dominated rural populations in Bihar and Punjab in the companion frameworks, though this comparison should be treated as directional given the differing data sources and methodologies involved (YouthPower India, 2026).

3.7 Labour Market: Employment, Unemployment and Workforce Quality

Puducherry's youth labour market data presents a genuinely favourable picture relative to national benchmarks. Youth labour force participation in Puducherry stood at 57.4 percent, with youth unemployment at 5.7 percent, figures from an independent youth employment scorecard that additionally found 58.0 percent of working young Puducherrians hold regular jobs, 22.4 percent are self-employed, and 19.7 percent work in casual employment (YouthPower India, 2026). District-level scores within this same assessment found Karaikal recording the highest youth opportunity score at 62.5 out of 100, followed by Mahe at 62.1 and Pondicherry district itself at 61.1, indicating a genuinely narrow spread across Puducherry's non-contiguous districts on this specific composite measure, in contrast to the more pronounced intra-state disparities documented for the full states examined in the companion frameworks (YouthPower India, 2026).

Separately, and in a claim this framework treats with appropriate caution given its origin in a specific campaign speech rather than an independently verifiable government statistical release, Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated during 2026 Assembly election campaigning that Puducherry's unemployment rate had fallen from 47 percent under the prior Congress-led administration to 4.3 percent under the subsequent NDA-aligned government (News on Air, 2026a). This framework flags the 47 percent figure specifically as implausibly high relative to any conventional unemployment measurement methodology reviewed elsewhere in this framework series, and treats the entire claim as a political statement requiring independent verification against MoSPI's actual Periodic Labour Force Survey data for Puducherry before being relied upon for any policy purpose, rather than reporting it as an established fact.

3.8 Inflation, Price Stability and Consumer Welfare

A comprehensive, current, Puducherry-specific consumer price inflation assessment was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Given Puducherry's

close economic and geographic integration with Tamil Nadu specifically, discussed in Chapter 1.7, the territory's inflation dynamics would reasonably be expected to track price trends in the surrounding Tamil Nadu market closely for goods and services not directly affected by Puducherry's own distinctive tax treatment, discussed in Chapter 2.1, though this represents an inference rather than a confirmed finding.

3.9 Growth Corridors: Engines of Economic Expansion

Puducherry's economic geography, given its four-district fragmentation discussed in Chapter 1.1, does not organize around growth corridors in the same sense documented for the considerably larger and more internally diverse states examined in the companion frameworks. Instead, each of Puducherry's four districts functions as something closer to an independent, self-contained micro-economy, with Puducherry district itself, encompassing the bulk of the territory's population and its established Thirubuvanaï and Sedarapet industrial estates discussed in section 3.4, serving as the primary growth engine, while Karaikal, Mahe, and Yanam each pursue development substantially shaped by integration with their respective host states, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh. Union Home Minister Shah's April 2026 campaign announcement regarding plans for a dedicated industrial corridor within Puducherry, alongside an explicit ambition to position the territory as a "Blue Economy hub," represents the most recent and concrete indication of a deliberate government strategy to develop a genuine cross-district growth corridor framework, though this framework notes this remains, as of the most recent reporting reviewed, at the stage of political announcement rather than confirmed, funded implementation (News on Air, 2026a). Separately, industry analysis has identified potential integration with the Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor as a further avenue through which Puducherry, given its direct geographic proximity to Tamil Nadu discussed in Chapter 1.1, could draw on a considerably larger regional industrial corridor initiative to support its own more modest growth ambitions (Abhijeet Shirke, 2025).

Chapter 4: Investment, Industry and Private Sector Development

4.1 Investment Climate Assessment and Ease of Doing Business

Puducherry's investment climate reform agenda has advanced substantially over the past year, most significantly through the Puducherry Legislative Assembly's passage of the Puducherry Ease of Doing Business (Service Delivery) Bill, 2025, on September 18, 2025, alongside three companion reform bills (News on Air, 2025c). This legislation mandates strict, fixed timelines for every stage of regulatory approval, provides for deemed approval where authorities fail to act within the prescribed period, and prescribes penalties for non-compliant officials, while additionally simplifying licensing procedures and relaxing land-use, building, and environmental compliance norms specifically to boost investment appeal (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026a; News on Air, 2025c). This deemed-approval and fixed-timeline mechanism closely parallels the ease of doing business reforms documented for Bihar's building plan approval consolidation and Gujarat's Jan Vishwas Act in the companion frameworks, suggesting this specific regulatory design, statutory timelines paired with a deemed-approval default, has become a genuinely common template across Indian states and Union Territories pursuing ease of doing business reform, regardless of their very different scales and administrative structures.

Building on this legislative foundation, the Puducherry administration announced plans on October 31, 2025, to construct plug-and-play industrial infrastructure alongside digital single-window-based approvals specifically for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, explicitly signalling an intent to position the territory as a genuine export hub extending beyond its traditional tourism-centered economic identity, discussed in Chapter 3.5 and Chapter 19 (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026a). On August 25, 2025, the government separately announced plans for a new 750-acre industrial estate, a substantial land commitment relative to Puducherry's genuinely limited total territorial area of just 490 square kilometers documented in Chapter 1.1, underscoring the scale of land-use tradeoff any significant industrial expansion necessarily entails for a Union Territory of this size (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026a).

4.2 Industrial Policy Framework and MSME Development

Puducherry's Industrial Policy, administered through the territory's Department of Industries and Commerce, explicitly frames the territory's development trajectory in historical terms, noting that Puducherry "has come a long way since its merger with the Union of India in 1954" and identifying specific "Priority Sectors and Thrust Areas" selected for their particular compatibility with the territory's scale and resource base (Government of Puducherry, Department of Industries and Commerce, 2026a). MSME development is supported through the standard national Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006 classification framework, with the territory's own industrial promotion architecture channeled substantially through the Puducherry Industrial Promotion, Development and Investment

Corporation, or PIPDIC, established in 1974 as the territory's dedicated industrial development corporation (Government of Puducherry, Department of Industries and Commerce, 2026b).

4.3 Large and Anchor Industries: Sectoral Analysis

Puducherry's industrial estate network, developed through PIPDIC, comprises several distinct, sector-specific zones: the Thattanchavady Industrial Estate, established in 1962 across 51 acres with 60 sheds and 49 plots, currently hosting 110 functioning units under hire-purchase and conditional assignment allotment schemes; a Growth Centre at Polagam; Integrated Infrastructural Development at Sedarapet, alongside a dedicated Export Processing Zone also located at Sedarapet; an Electronic Industrial Estate at Thirubhuvanai; and an Information Technology Park at Kalapet (Government of Puducherry, Department of Industries and Commerce, 2026c). This deliberately differentiated, sector-specific industrial estate structure, spanning electronics, export processing, and information technology zones within a territory of under two million people, represents a genuinely more granular sectoral specialization strategy than this framework has documented for any comparably small sub-region within the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, though it should be read against the aging-infrastructure and land-constraint challenges discussed in Chapter 3.4.

4.4 Special Economic Zones, Industrial Corridors and Clusters

Puducherry's Export Processing Zone at Sedarapet, discussed in section 4.3, represents the territory's most direct equivalent to the Special Economic Zone frameworks documented at considerably larger scale for Gujarat in the companion framework's Chapter 4.4. Beyond this established zone, the Karasur industrial estate development, discussed by former Chief Minister Rangasamy at the Eighth NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting, was projected to attract approximately ₹5,000 crore in private investment over five years and to benefit approximately 10,000 people either directly or indirectly, a substantial single-project investment figure relative to Puducherry's overall GSDP scale of \$5.5 billion documented in this framework's Executive Summary (Careers360, 2023). The territory's potential integration with the considerably larger Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor, discussed in Chapter 3.9, represents Puducherry's most significant potential avenue for accessing a broader regional industrial cluster and corridor framework beyond what its own small territorial scale could support independently.

4.5 Foreign Direct Investment: Inflows, Sectoral Distribution and Policy

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's foreign direct investment inflows, comparable to the detailed FDI figures documented for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat in the companion frameworks, was not available with sufficient specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter. The PY-SHORE project, discussed further in Chapter 13.6 and Chapter 19, represents a notable exception to this general data gap: a ₹1,433 crore, or

approximately \$160 million, initiative unveiled on October 23, 2024, funded 70 percent by the World Bank specifically to bolster Puducherry's blue economy through coastal protection, fisheries modernisation, eco-tourism development, and marine plastics management (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026a). This represents a genuinely significant international development finance commitment relative to Puducherry's overall economic scale, and stands as one of this framework's clearest examples of a specifically Union-Territory-scaled international financing partnership, distinct in structure from the larger, more commercially driven foreign direct investment flows documented for the three full states examined in the companion frameworks.

4.6 Public Sector Undertakings: Performance and Reform Agenda

PIPDIC, discussed in sections 4.2 and 4.3, functions as Puducherry's principal public sector industrial development entity, additionally providing equity participation and capital issue underwriting facilities to private industrial units, and has undertaken further institutional diversification through a planned Housing Finance Company subsidiary, to be co-promoted alongside the Puducherry Housing Board and the territory's government, explicitly designed to provide housing loans to the public at comparatively lower interest rates (Government of Puducherry, Department of Industries and Commerce, 2026b). A comprehensive, current, financial performance assessment of PIPDIC and Puducherry's other public sector undertakings, comparable to the Sixteenth Finance Commission evaluations available for the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, was not available in the sources reviewed for this chapter.

4.7 Public-Private Partnership Framework and Pipeline

Puducherry's most significant recent public-private partnership initiative is the October 2025 announcement to redevelop Puducherry Airport, discussed further in Chapter 8.3, under an Indo-French joint venture arrangement, a genuinely distinctive PPP structure that draws directly on Puducherry's residual French colonial institutional and cultural ties, discussed in Chapter 1.4, rather than following the more conventional domestic-investor PPP models documented for the three full states examined in the companion frameworks (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026a). The territory's ₹20,000 crore highway development plan, discussed further in Chapter 8.1, unveiled by Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on October 15, 2025, similarly reflects a substantial central-government-driven infrastructure investment commitment operating in close coordination with the territory's own government, consistent with the closer, more directly integrated Centre-Union Territory relationship discussed throughout Chapter 2 (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026a).

4.8 Regional Cooperation: Shared Region and Growth

Puducherry's regional cooperation requirements are shaped decisively by its four-enclave fragmentation, discussed in Chapter 1.1, requiring the territory to maintain functional,

ongoing cooperative relationships with three separate host states simultaneously: Tamil Nadu for Puducherry and Karaikal districts, Kerala for Mahe, and Andhra Pradesh for Yanam. This dependence is illustrated concretely by former Chief Minister Rangasamy's disclosure that the Puducherry administration had formally requested the Tamil Nadu government provide 395 acres of land specifically to expand Puducherry Airport, discussed further in Chapter 8.3, a request that underscores how even Puducherry's own core infrastructure development priorities can depend directly on a neighbouring state government's cooperation and land allocation decisions in a manner without close parallel among the full states examined in the companion frameworks, each of which controls its own land within its own contiguous territorial boundary (Careers360, 2023).

Chapter 5: Education — Access, Quality and Future Readiness

5.1 Elementary Education: Enrolment, Retention, Dropout and Learning Outcomes

Puducherry's elementary education system presents one of the strongest access profiles of any jurisdiction examined across this entire framework series. UDISE+ 2025-26 data specifically identified Puducherry, alongside Chandigarh, Goa, Delhi, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep, and Haryana, as having zero schools with zero enrollment, a striking contrast to the 4,133 zero-enrolment schools recorded in West Bengal and the considerably smaller but still non-zero figures documented for Punjab in the companion framework's Chapter 5.7 (Tribune India, 2026a). This finding, that not a single school in Puducherry currently has zero students, indicates a functional school network with genuinely complete geographic coverage relative to demand, a foundational access achievement this framework has not found matched with the same completeness in any of the three full states examined in the companion Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat documents.

This strong access performance is corroborated by Puducherry's national ranking under the Ministry of Education's Performance Grading Index 2.0 for 2025-26, which found Kerala and Puducherry jointly topped the Access domain nationally, a genuinely significant finding given that this places Puducherry ahead of every full Indian state on this specific dimension of educational performance, including Punjab, which the companion framework's Chapter 5.2 documented as leading nationally in the separate Learning Outcomes domain (ENSURE IAS, 2026). The same PGI 2.0 report found Tamil Nadu topping the Equity domain and Kerala and Lakshadweep jointly topping Teacher Education and Training, with the overall performance gap between the highest-scoring jurisdiction, Chandigarh, and the lowest-scoring, Meghalaya, narrowing from 51 percent in 2017-18 to 31.4 percent in the most recent reporting cycle, indicating a gradual, genuine national reduction in inter-state and inter-territory educational disparities (ENSURE IAS, 2026).

5.2 Secondary and Senior Secondary Education: Transition and Achievement

National UDISE+ 2025-26 data recorded continued improvement in secondary-level retention nationally, with the secondary dropout rate declining from 8.2 percent in 2024-25 to 7.0 percent in 2025-26, and preparatory-level dropout declining from 2.3 percent to 1.8 percent over the same period (Tribune India, 2026a). A comprehensive, current, Puducherry-specific secondary dropout rate figure, as distinct from the zero-enrolment-school finding documented in section 5.1, was not extracted with full precision from the sources reviewed for this chapter. However, given Puducherry's demonstrated leadership in the Access domain of PGI 2.0, discussed in section 5.1, and the territory's consistently strong literacy performance documented in Chapter 1.5, this framework would expect Puducherry's secondary retention to compare considerably more favourably to national averages than the alarmingly high dropout rate documented for Gujarat in that state's companion framework chapter, though this inference should be confirmed against Puducherry's own disaggregated UDISE+ district report in any future, more granular revision of this document.

5.3 Higher Education: Institutional Capacity, Gross Enrolment and Quality

Puducherry's higher education landscape is anchored by Pondicherry University, a central university established in October 1985 by an Act of Parliament, whose jurisdiction extends beyond Puducherry itself to encompass the Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands Union Territories as well, reflecting the university's role as a regional higher education hub for India's smaller island and coastal Union Territories collectively (Careers360, 2026). Pondicherry University holds NAAC accreditation at the 'A' grade and secured a position in the 151-200 rank band overall in the National Institutional Ranking Framework's 2025 rankings, a respectable if not top-tier national position, alongside a QS World University Ranking placement in the 1201-1400 band for 2026 (Careers360, 2026). The university's median postgraduate placement package of ₹7.5 lakh per annum for 2024, cited in recent higher education reporting, indicates a functioning and reasonably remunerative graduate placement pipeline, though this framework notes this single figure should not be read as representative of outcomes across Puducherry's broader higher education sector, which extends beyond Pondicherry University to include additional state and private institutions not examined in comparable detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter.

5.4 Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Ecosystem

Puducherry's technical and vocational education architecture, discussed in the fiscal context of Chapter 2.2, includes the Chief Minister's Skill Development Programme, which the 2025-26 budget specifically expanded to target 30,000 youth, a substantial commitment relative to Puducherry's total youth population given the territory's overall scale documented in Chapter 1.3 (News on Air, 2025a). Puducherry's Labour Department additionally operates a network of Vocational Instructors and maintains active administrative processes for their transfer, posting, and seniority management, alongside a dedicated National Career Centre for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, which conducted special coaching programmes for SC/ST job seekers in 2026, indicating an ongoing, functioning institutional infrastructure for

vocational training delivery specifically targeted at socially disadvantaged groups (Labour Department, Government of Puducherry, 2026).

5.5 Teacher Recruitment, Training and Professional Development

National UDISE+ 2025-26 data recorded teacher strength crossing 1 crore nationally for the first time, alongside improved Pupil-Teacher Ratios and stronger digital infrastructure, a national context within which Puducherry's own specific teacher strength and gender composition figures were not extracted with precision from the sources reviewed for this chapter (Vajiram and Ravi, 2026). Puducherry's joint national leadership in the PGI 2.0 Teacher Education and Training domain alongside Kerala and Lakshadweep, discussed in section 5.1, indicates that whatever Puducherry's specific teacher recruitment and training pipeline entails, it is producing outcomes that place the territory among the very strongest performers nationally on this specific dimension (ENSURE IAS, 2026).

5.6 Digital Education, EdTech Integration and ICT in Schools

National UDISE+ 2025-26 data recorded a considerable increase in school internet access nationally during the 2025-26 academic year, a national trend within which Puducherry's specific digital infrastructure figures were not extracted with precision from the sources reviewed for this chapter (Tribune India, 2026a). Given Puducherry's strong overall PGI 2.0 performance documented throughout this chapter and its comparatively strong fiscal capacity relative to its small population, discussed in Chapter 2, this framework would expect the territory's school digital infrastructure to compare favourably with national averages, broadly consistent with the strong digital infrastructure documented for Punjab in the companion framework's Chapter 5.6, though this represents an inference rather than a directly confirmed finding for Puducherry specifically.

5.7 Special Education: Children with Disabilities and Inclusive Schooling

National UDISE+ 2025-26 data recorded that 58.2 percent of schools nationally were equipped with ramps and handrails, a marginal rise from 54.9 percent in 2024-25, marking incremental progress toward inclusive education access nationally (Tribune India, 2026a). A comprehensive, current, Puducherry-specific figure for this accessibility indicator was not extracted with precision from the sources reviewed for this chapter, and this represents a priority area for further primary research consistent with the equivalent data gap identified across all three companion state frameworks in this series.

5.8 State-Specific Educational Challenges and Reform Priorities

Puducherry's education system presents this framework series' strongest overall performance profile to date on the specific dimension of educational access, reflected concretely in the territory's status as one of only seven Indian states and Union Territories with zero zero-enrolment schools and its joint national leadership in the PGI 2.0 Access domain. This access strength, combined with Puducherry's genuinely exceptional literacy rate of 85.85

percent documented in Chapter 1.5, positions the territory's core educational reform priority as being less about foundational access, where Puducherry already performs at or near the national frontier, and more about the kind of higher education quality and employment-linkage questions discussed in section 5.3, where Pondicherry University's respectable but not top-tier NIRF and QS rankings suggest continued room for improvement in translating Puducherry's strong school-level foundation into correspondingly leading higher education and graduate employment outcomes. This distinguishes Puducherry's education reform priority landscape sharply from both Bihar's foundational access and retention challenges and Gujarat's alarmingly high secondary dropout rate, documented in the companion frameworks, positioning Puducherry instead alongside Punjab as a jurisdiction whose remaining education challenge lies primarily in converting an already strong K-12 foundation into commensurately strong tertiary and labour market outcomes.

Chapter 6: Health, Nutrition and Population

6.1 Public Health Infrastructure: Facilities, Human Resources and Gaps

Puducherry's public health infrastructure is anchored by the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research, or JIPMER, a premier central government tertiary care and medical education institution located in Pondicherry town that specializes in over 824 distinct surgical procedures, treats more than 114 disease categories, and offers over 61 advanced diagnostic tests, functioning as a genuinely significant tertiary referral center not only for Puducherry itself but for the broader surrounding Tamil Nadu region as well (Drlogy, 2026a). Beyond JIPMER, Puducherry's Ayushman Bharat empanelled hospital network spans all four of the territory's districts, including the Government General Hospital Mahe, Community Health Centre Mannadipet, Rajiv Gandhi Government Women and Children Hospital, Government General Hospital Yanam, Community Health Centre Thirunallar, Indira Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute, and Indira Gandhi Government General Hospital and Post Graduate Institute, among others, indicating a functioning, geographically distributed public hospital network reaching each of Puducherry's non-contiguous enclaves discussed in Chapter 1.1 (Drlogy, 2026b).

6.2 Epidemiological Profile: Communicable and Non-Communicable Disease Burden

A comprehensive, current, Puducherry-specific epidemiological assessment covering communicable and non-communicable disease burden was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter. National context, discussed in the context of the Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission in the companion Bihar framework's Chapter 6.2, recorded an 18 percent reduction nationally in tuberculosis incidence between 2015 and 2023, more than double the global rate of reduction, alongside a 21 percent reduction in TB-related mortality over the same period, a national trend within which Puducherry's own

specific disease burden trajectory was not extracted with precision from the sources reviewed for this chapter (News on Air, 2025d).

6.3 Maternal and Child Health: MMR, IMR, Under-5 Mortality and Nutrition

Puducherry's maternal health performance represents this framework series' single most striking positive health finding to date. Lieutenant Governor K. Kailashnathan announced on September 18, 2025, that Puducherry had become the first Union Territory in India to achieve zero maternal deaths during childbirth for the entire 2024-25 fiscal year, an achievement that earned the territory a Platinum Certificate from the Union government for delivering high-quality maternity services (Medical Dialogues, 2025). This announcement was made at the inauguration of a Mega Women's Health Festival, "Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan," held at Kamban Kalai Arangam and organized by Puducherry's Department of Health and Family Welfare, at which the Lieutenant Governor additionally highlighted that the Health Department had successfully screened and treated nearly 62,000 young women for anaemia (Medical Dialogues, 2025). This zero-maternal-death achievement stands in genuinely stark and important contrast to the maternal and child health findings documented across all three companion frameworks in this series: Bihar's maternal mortality challenges discussed in that framework's Chapter 6.3, Punjab's less extensively documented but presumably more typical maternal health profile, and even Gujarat's comparatively strong but not zero infant mortality performance discussed in that framework's Chapter 6.3. A precise, current Infant Mortality Rate and Under-5 Mortality Rate figure specific to Puducherry was not extracted with confirmed precision from the sources reviewed for this chapter, and represents a priority area for further primary research, though the maternal mortality achievement documented above provides strong directional evidence of a well-functioning maternal and reproductive health system.

Chief Minister N. Rangasamy, addressing the same festival, outlined several complementary women's health and welfare initiatives, including a ₹50,000 insurance scheme payable at the birth of a girl child, a 50 percent reduction in stamp duty for property registration specifically in women's names, and an extensive neighbourhood healthcare access network, together constituting a genuinely integrated women's health and economic empowerment policy architecture (Medical Dialogues, 2025).

6.4 Universal Health Coverage: State Health Assurance Schemes

Puducherry has implemented what independent healthcare analysis characterizes as "a pioneering step in public healthcare" by extending the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana to its entire population, rather than restricting eligibility solely to families identified through the central government's Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 database, as is the standard national eligibility criterion applied in most other Indian states and Union Territories, including Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat as documented in the companion frameworks (Healthcardhospitalist.com, 2026). This means every resident family in Puducherry, regardless of income or social status, is entitled to an Ayushman Card and can

access cashless treatment worth up to ₹5 lakh per family per year at empanelled hospitals across all four of the territory's districts, a genuinely universal coverage model that this framework has not found matched in any of the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, each of which implements the scheme's standard, means-tested eligibility criteria (Healthcardhospitallist.com, 2026). This universal extension, combined with the zero-maternal-death achievement documented in section 6.3, positions Puducherry as this entire framework series' clearest example of a jurisdiction whose health system performance and coverage genuinely matches or exceeds its policy ambition, a notable contrast to the persistent gap between health policy design and delivery outcomes documented for Bihar in the companion framework's Chapter 6.8 specifically.

6.5 Mental Health Services: Availability, Access and Stigma Reduction

A comprehensive, current, Puducherry-specific assessment of mental health service availability was not available in the sources reviewed for this chapter, consistent with the equivalent data gap identified across all three companion state frameworks in this series. JIPMER's status as a major tertiary referral institution, discussed in section 6.1, suggests the territory likely has access to specialist psychiatric care at a level of quality considerably above what would be available in a comparably small population elsewhere in India lacking such an institution, though this framework notes this as an inference rather than a directly confirmed finding regarding actual service utilization or capacity.

6.6 Nutrition Programmes: ICDS, Mid-Day Meal and Poshan Abhiyan

Puducherry's nutrition programme architecture, discussed in the budget context of Chapter 3.3, includes a specific 2025-26 budget commitment to extend egg provision to school children on all school working days under the mid-day meal programme, a concrete, incremental nutrition enhancement distinct from the broader ICDS and Poshan Abhiyaan frameworks documented at the national level in the companion Bihar and Gujarat frameworks (News on Air, 2025a). The anaemia screening and treatment programme reaching nearly 62,000 young women, discussed in section 6.3, represents a further concrete nutrition intervention, and stands in useful contrast to the documented anaemia deterioration found for Gujarat's children in the companion framework's Chapter 6.3, suggesting Puducherry's nutrition programme delivery, at least with respect to this specific indicator and population, may be achieving more effective execution than documented for at least one of the considerably larger and wealthier states examined in this framework series.

6.7 Population Stabilisation and Family Planning

Puducherry's demographic transition, discussed in Chapter 1.3, appears comparatively advanced given the territory's moderate population growth trajectory and its notably favourable sex ratio of 1,037 females per 1,000 males. A comprehensive, current Total Fertility Rate figure specific to Puducherry was not extracted with precision from the sources reviewed for this chapter, though the territory's demographic indicators overall, combined

with its strong maternal health performance documented in section 6.3, suggest a family planning and reproductive health service delivery system functioning at a level considerably above that documented for Bihar in the companion framework's Chapter 6.7.

6.8 Health System Strengthening and Future Preparedness

The central health system finding to emerge from this chapter is that Puducherry represents, on the evidence reviewed across this entire framework series, the clearest example yet of a jurisdiction whose health policy design, universal Ayushman Bharat extension and comprehensive women's health programming, has translated directly into measurable, genuinely exceptional outcomes, most concretely the territory's zero maternal death achievement for 2024-25. This stands in marked contrast to the recurring pattern this framework has documented in the companion Bihar and Gujarat frameworks, where well-resourced health policies and infrastructure investments have not always translated into commensurately strong outcomes, most notably Gujarat's documented child nutrition deterioration despite substantial funding and infrastructure investment. Puducherry's small scale, its concentration of population within a manageable number of districts each served by dedicated public hospital infrastructure, and its comparatively strong fiscal capacity relative to population, discussed in Chapter 2, likely all contribute to this stronger execution capacity, though this framework notes that Puducherry's genuinely small population base means its health system does not face the same order-of-magnitude implementation challenge as a state the size of Bihar or Gujarat, a scale difference that should temper any simple conclusion that Puducherry's specific health governance model would translate with equal success if applied at full-state scale elsewhere.

Chapter 7: Social Justice, Inclusion and Community Welfare

7.1 Scheduled Castes: Demographic Profile, Deprivation and Development Programmes

A comprehensive, current, precise Scheduled Caste population percentage specific to Puducherry was not extracted with full confidence from the sources reviewed for this chapter, though Puducherry's Scheduled Caste welfare architecture operates through the Adi-Dravidar Welfare Department, designated as the nodal department for Scheduled Caste Sub Plan matters, with funding flows to the SC population formulated in accordance with Government of India guidelines requiring that fund allocation be proportionate to each state or Union Territory's Scheduled Caste population share (Planning and Research Department, Government of Puducherry, 2026). Puducherry's 2025-26 budget allocated ₹526.81 crore under the SC Sub Plan specifically to provide ₹3,000 monthly assistance to unemployed Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women who are either widowed or unmarried and above 30 years of age, with disbursement continuing until the recipient marries or gains employment, alongside a further ₹5,000 monthly assistance commitment for SC/ST orphaned children until they reach 18 years of age (The News Minute, 2025). This framework notes that this ₹526.81 crore SC Sub Plan figure, distinct from the separate ₹5,000 crore SC/ST orphaned children figure cited in Chapter 2.2's review of the same budget, suggests a possible transcription or reporting inconsistency across different journalistic sources covering the

identical budget announcement, and flags this specific figure as warranting direct verification against Puducherry's official budget documents in any future revision.

7.2 Scheduled Tribes: Rights, Forest Dwelling Communities and Welfare Measures

Puducherry's Scheduled Tribe population is minimal, consistent with the territory's small, predominantly coastal and urban geography discussed in Chapter 1.1, which lacks the forested hill tracts associated with significant tribal populations in states such as Gujarat, examined in the companion framework's Chapter 7.2. A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's Scheduled Tribe population and welfare programming was not available with sufficient specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter, and this framework notes, consistent with its treatment of Punjab's minimal Scheduled Tribe population in the companion framework, that Scheduled Tribe-specific policy analysis carries comparatively limited weight in Puducherry's social justice landscape relative to the more substantial Scheduled Caste and backward classes findings documented in this chapter.

7.3 Other Backward Classes: Identification, Reservation and Social Mobility

Puducherry's welfare architecture for backward classes operates through a dedicated Directorate for the Welfare of Backward Classes and Minorities, which administers a range of specific, targeted schemes including free supply of tools to poor backward-class washermen and barbers, free supply of tools to poor Nadaswaram and Thavil traditional musical instrument artisans, and the Karmaveerar Kamaraj Scheme providing free bicycles and raincoats to Class IX students, alongside merit-based prizes for backward-class students under the Makkal Thalaivar Thiagi V. Subbiah award programme (Government of Puducherry, 2026a). This granular, occupation-specific welfare scheme design, targeting traditional artisan and service occupations by name, represents a genuinely distinctive approach to backward classes welfare relative to the broader, less occupationally specific reservation and welfare frameworks documented for the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, though it should be read as reflecting Puducherry's smaller scale, which makes such granular, small-population-targeted scheme design administratively more feasible than it would be in a state the size of Bihar or Gujarat.

7.4 Gender Equity: Women's Participation in Education, Economy and Governance

Puducherry's gender equity indicators, discussed throughout this framework, present a genuinely strong overall profile. The territory's favourable sex ratio of 1,037 females per 1,000 males, documented in Chapter 1.3, its zero maternal death achievement documented in Chapter 6.3, and its specific women's economic empowerment initiatives, including the ₹50,000 girl-child birth insurance scheme and the 50 percent stamp duty reduction for property registration in women's names discussed in Chapter 6.3, together constitute a genuinely integrated and, on the evidence reviewed across this framework, comparatively

effective women's welfare policy architecture. The 2025-26 budget's enhancement of monthly financial assistance for women heads of below-poverty-line families from ₹1,000 to ₹2,500, discussed in Chapter 2.2, further reinforces this pattern of sustained and escalating state commitment to women's economic security specifically.

7.5 Child Rights, Protection and Development: POCSO, Child Labour and Nutrition

Puducherry's child protection and nutrition architecture operates through the national Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 framework, with data tracked through the national Poshan Tracker Portal covering Aadhaar-verified children and pregnant and lactating mothers benefiting from supplementary nutrition programming, alongside a specific complementary Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi initiative tracked separately for 2023-24 and 2024-25 (Indiastat, 2026a). A comprehensive, current, quantitative outcome assessment of these programmes' effectiveness specific to Puducherry, as distinct from their administrative tracking infrastructure, was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, though the territory's demonstrated strong performance on the related indicators of maternal mortality and anaemia screening, discussed in Chapter 6.3 and 6.6, provides some indirect, positive evidence regarding the broader functioning of Puducherry's child and maternal welfare delivery system.

7.6 Welfare of Elderly Persons: Pension, Care Infrastructure and Policy

A comprehensive, current assessment of Puducherry's elderly welfare architecture, beyond the general old-age pension schemes referenced in the territory's broader welfare budget discussed in Chapter 2.2, was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Given Puducherry's comparatively advanced demographic profile, discussed in Chapter 1.3 and Chapter 6.7, and its strong overall fiscal capacity relative to population, the territory's elderly care planning horizon and resourcing likely compare favourably to the equivalent challenges documented for the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, though this represents an inference rather than a directly confirmed finding.

7.7 Persons with Disabilities: Rights, Accessibility and Empowerment

Puducherry's social welfare data infrastructure includes a dedicated "Disabled Schemes" category tracked through the Indiastat socio-economic database alongside the territory's other welfare programme categories, indicating at minimum a functioning administrative tracking mechanism for disability-related welfare provision (Indiastat, 2026b). A comprehensive, current, substantive assessment of disability rights implementation and accessibility infrastructure specific to Puducherry, comparable to the persistent data gap identified across all three companion state frameworks in this series, was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, and this continues to represent a priority area for dedicated primary research across every jurisdiction examined in this entire framework series.

7.8 Minority Communities: Development, Representation and Welfare

Puducherry's religious minority population, discussed in Chapter 1.4, is led by the territory's Muslim community at 6.05 percent of the total population, with a further Christian minority reflecting the territory's French Catholic missionary history. Puducherry's Directorate for the Welfare of Backward Classes and Minorities, discussed in section 7.3, administers minority welfare programming alongside its backward classes portfolio, including the Thavathiru Kundrakudi Adigalar Award specifically recognizing contributions to communal harmony, a distinctive, symbolically significant welfare and recognition programme this framework has not found paralleled in the equivalent minority welfare chapters of the three companion state frameworks (Government of Puducherry, 2026a).

7.9 Social Security and Beneficiary-Linked Welfare Architecture

Puducherry's overall social security architecture, drawing together the findings of this chapter, presents a genuinely comprehensive, if administratively granular and occupation-specific, welfare delivery system spanning SC/ST assistance, backward classes and minority welfare, women's economic empowerment, and child nutrition programming, all layered atop the universal Ayushman Bharat health coverage documented in Chapter 6.4. Puducherry's most recent Legislative Assembly election, held April 9, 2026, saw N. Rangaswamy's All India N.R. Congress increase its seat count from 10 to 12 within an expanded National Democratic Alliance coalition that secured 18 of the assembly's alliance-contested seats, with voter turnout rising 6.43 percentage points to 89.87 percent, an exceptionally high turnout figure that, alongside the territory's demonstrated welfare scheme delivery capacity documented throughout this chapter, suggests a electorate genuinely engaged with, and to a meaningful degree satisfied by, the territory's governance and welfare architecture (Wikipedia, 2026d). This stands in some contrast to the more visible implementation gaps and beneficiary access challenges documented for welfare architecture in Bihar and, to a lesser extent, Punjab in the companion frameworks, reinforcing this chapter's overall assessment of Puducherry as a jurisdiction whose small scale and close central-territorial government integration appear to support comparatively more effective welfare delivery execution than documented for at least some of the larger states examined in this framework series.

Chapter 8: Transport and Connectivity Infrastructure

8.1 Road Network: National Highways, State Highways and Rural Roads

Puducherry's road network has received substantial and sustained central government investment attention over the past year, reflecting the territory's position as, in Union Minister Nitin Gadkari's own framing, "a regional hub for tourism and trade" (Construction World, 2025). On October 13, 2025, Gadkari inaugurated and laid foundation stones for three National Highway projects in Puducherry, attended by Lieutenant Governor K. Kailashnathan, Chief Minister N. Rangasamy, Union Minister L. Murugan, and senior state officials. These comprised the dedication of the completed 38-kilometre, four-lane Puducherry-Poondiyankuppam section of NH-32, built at a cost of ₹1,588 crore; the foundation stone for a 3.88-kilometre elevated corridor between Indira Gandhi Square and Rajiv Gandhi Square on NH-32, budgeted at ₹436 crore and expected to cut travel time between the two junctions from 35 minutes to just 10 minutes; and the foundation stone for improvement works along a 13.63-kilometre stretch of the East Coast Road, NH-332A,

budgeted at ₹25 crore (News on Air, 2025e; DD News, 2025). This framework notes a discrepancy across sources regarding the total value of Puducherry's highway investment commitment, with the specific October 2025 projects detailed above totaling just over ₹2,000 crore, while a separate industry compilation cited a considerably larger ₹20,000 crore figure for Puducherry's overall highway development plan, a difference this framework attributes most plausibly to the larger figure representing a longer-term, multi-phase state and national highway investment pipeline rather than the specific projects inaugurated on that single occasion, though this should be verified directly against the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways' own project documentation in any future revision (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026a; Construction World, 2025).

8.2 Railways: Existing Network, Pending Projects and Expansion Proposals

A comprehensive, current, detailed assessment of Puducherry's railway infrastructure was not available with sufficient specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Given Puducherry and Karaikal's location along Tamil Nadu's Coromandel coast rail corridor, discussed in Chapter 1.1, the territory's rail connectivity is substantially integrated with and dependent upon Southern Railway's broader Tamil Nadu network, a pattern of infrastructure dependence on a host state's railway system directly analogous to the territory's broader integration challenges discussed in Chapter 4.8, and this represents a priority area for further primary research through Southern Railway's own zone-specific planning documents.

8.3 Aviation: Airport Infrastructure and Air Connectivity

Puducherry Airport's development represents a genuinely distinctive and long-running infrastructure priority for the territory, constrained directly by the land availability challenges discussed in Chapter 1.1 and Chapter 4.8. As documented in that earlier chapter, former Chief Minister Rangasamy specifically requested that the Tamil Nadu government provide 395 acres of land to expand the airport, and the 2025-26 budget allocated ₹20 crore specifically for the first stage of this land acquisition process, as documented in Chapter 2.3 (Careers360, 2023; News on Air, 2025a). Building on this foundation, the territory's government announced plans on September 13, 2025, to redevelop Puducherry Airport under an Indo-French joint venture arrangement, a distinctive institutional structure discussed in Chapter 4.7 that draws directly on the territory's residual French colonial ties documented throughout this framework (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026a). This runway expansion and redevelopment effort has been a recurring policy priority across multiple successive Puducherry budget cycles, and its continued reliance on land acquisition from the surrounding Tamil Nadu government illustrates, in perhaps the clearest single instance identified anywhere in this framework, how even Puducherry's most basic and long-standing infrastructure ambitions remain contingent on cooperative decisions by a neighbouring state government rather than being fully within the territory's own control.

8.4 Ports, Inland Waterways and Logistics Hubs

Puducherry's port and coastal infrastructure development is examined most directly through the PY-SHORE project discussed in Chapter 4.5 and further in Chapter 13.6, a ₹1,433 crore, World-Bank-co-financed initiative explicitly targeting the territory's blue economy through coastal protection, fisheries modernisation, and marine plastics management. This blue economy focus connects to the considerably larger national port connectivity investment programme discussed by Union Minister Gadkari in September 2025, under which the central government is establishing specialized port connectivity projects spanning 2,700 kilometers at a cost of ₹1 trillion across India's coastal states, a national infrastructure programme within which Puducherry's own small-scale coastal and port development priorities operate as one comparatively minor, if locally significant, component (Business Standard, 2026a). Home Minister Amit Shah's stated ambition, discussed in Chapter 3.7 and Chapter 3.9, to position Puducherry as a "Blue Economy hub" specifically, connects this port and coastal infrastructure agenda directly to the territory's broader economic diversification strategy discussed throughout Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

8.5 Urban Mass Transit: Metro, Bus Rapid Transit and Integrated Mobility

A comprehensive, current, detailed assessment of dedicated urban mass transit infrastructure within Puducherry's municipalities was not available in the sources reviewed for this chapter. The elevated corridor project connecting Indira Gandhi Square and Rajiv Gandhi Square, discussed in section 8.1, represents Puducherry's most significant recent urban traffic management infrastructure investment, specifically designed to address urban congestion within Puducherry town itself rather than constituting a mass transit system in the conventional sense of the metro rail or bus rapid transit systems documented for the larger cities examined in the companion Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat frameworks, a scale difference consistent with Puducherry's genuinely small urban population base documented in Chapter 1.2.

8.6 Multimodal Logistics: Last-Mile Connectivity and Freight Corridors

Puducherry's multimodal logistics strategy is shaped decisively by the territory's fragmented four-district geography, discussed throughout Chapter 1, meaning that unlike the full states examined in the companion frameworks, Puducherry cannot pursue a genuinely unified, territory-wide logistics corridor strategy, and instead must integrate each of its four enclaves separately into its respective host state's own logistics infrastructure. National context, provided by Union Minister Gadkari's repeated public statements regarding India's declining logistics costs, from 16 percent of GDP toward a single-digit target by December 2025, and the doubling of national road infrastructure investment returns, with every ₹100 invested in roads and highways adding approximately ₹321 to the national economy, provides the broader policy backdrop within which Puducherry's own comparatively modest highway investments, discussed in section 8.1, are expected to generate proportionate economic returns for the territory's tourism and trade sectors specifically (DD News, 2026a; Business Standard, 2026a).

Chapter 9: Energy, Power and Renewable Transition

9.1 Power Generation: Installed Capacity, Mix and Dependence Profile

Puducherry's power sector is defined overwhelmingly by dependence on purchased rather than self-generated electricity, a structural feature directly reflected in the territory's fiscal architecture discussed in Chapter 2.2, where power purchase constituted ₹2,546 crore, one of the single largest line items in the entire 2025-26 budget. This dependence pattern is considerably more extreme than documented for any of the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, including Bihar, whose companion framework's Chapter 9.1 found

84 percent of installed capacity derived from central utilities, since Puducherry's own in-territory generation capacity is minimal given the territory's genuinely limited land area discussed in Chapter 1.1. Puducherry's government has addressed this dependence through long-term power purchase agreements rather than in-territory generation capacity expansion, signing agreements with NTPC to purchase 100 megawatts of solar power from a proposed plant at Nokh in Rajasthan, and with the Solar Energy Corporation of India to purchase 140.64 megawatts of wind power, arrangements announced by then-Lieutenant Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan during a Legislative Assembly budget session address (EQ Mag Pro, 2026a). This reliance on remote, out-of-territory renewable generation contracted through national intermediary agencies represents a genuinely distinctive power procurement model relative to the in-state generation capacity expansion documented for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat in the companion frameworks, and reflects the practical reality that a territory of Puducherry's minimal land area, discussed throughout this framework, simply cannot support utility-scale generation capacity comparable to its own electricity demand.

9.2 Transmission and Distribution: Infrastructure, Losses and Reliability

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's transmission and distribution loss rates and the Puducherry Electricity Department's financial performance was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Given the scale of the territory's power purchase expenditure documented in section 9.1 and Chapter 2.2, the Electricity Department's overall financial position appears to be substantially shaped by the cost of purchased power itself rather than by transmission and distribution loss dynamics of the kind that dominate the financial performance analyses presented for Punjab's PSPCL in the companion framework's Chapter 9.2, and this represents a priority area for further primary research through the Puducherry Electricity Department's own published annual accounts.

9.3 Rural and Household Electrification: Coverage and Quality

Puducherry's household electrification is, consistent with the territory's small, predominantly urban and peri-urban geography discussed in Chapter 1.1, effectively universal, broadly comparable to the near-complete coverage documented for Punjab and Gujarat in the companion frameworks. A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of electrification reliability and outage frequency specific to Puducherry was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter.

9.4 Renewable Energy Potential: Solar, Wind, Hydro and Biomass

Puducherry's renewable energy strategy centers substantially on distributed rooftop solar deployment rather than utility-scale in-territory generation, reflecting the land constraints discussed in section 9.1. The Puducherry Electricity Department's rooftop solar programme, launched in 2024, targets installation of rooftop solar modules on 50,000 households annually, reaching a cumulative target of 150,000 households by December 2026, with an

intended combined capacity of 225 megawatts over three years commencing in April 2024 (Energetica India, 2024; EQ Mag Pro, 2026b). Financial incentives under this programme are calibrated by project scale, with individual household projects between 1 and 3 kilowatts receiving ₹18,000 per kilowatt in central financial assistance, and larger projects up to 10 kilowatts, alongside Resident Welfare Association and Group Housing Society projects up to 500 kilowatts, receiving ₹9,000 per kilowatt (Energetica India, 2024). This programme operates within the broader context of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's national Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana initiative, which set a national target of installing rooftop solar systems on 10 million households across India (EQ Mag Pro, 2026b).

Puducherry's solar development history, however, carries a significant and instructive cautionary precedent this framework flags explicitly: a 2014 "Solar City" masterplan, followed by a formal Puducherry Solar Power Policy in 2015 targeting mainstream solar energy adoption by 2025 and 96 megawatts of installed solar capacity by fiscal year 2019, recorded only 0.03 megawatts of commissioned solar power as of the 2016-17 fiscal year, with none of even that minimal capacity commissioned during that specific year, a performance one industry assessment characterized bluntly as "disappointing" relative to the plan's stated ambitions (MYSUN, 2026). This roughly decade-long gap between Puducherry's stated solar ambition and its actual installed capacity achievement provides an important, specific precedent against which the current 2024-launched rooftop programme's 150,000-household, 225-megawatt target by December 2026 should be assessed, and this framework flags direct, independent verification of actual installations completed under the current programme, as distinct from the programme's stated targets, as a priority area for future revision, given the territory's own documented history of solar policy targets substantially exceeding delivered capacity.

9.5 Energy Efficiency, Conservation and Demand-Side Management

A comprehensive, current, Puducherry-specific assessment of energy efficiency and demand-side management programming was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Given the territory's tropical climate and documented average of over 300 sunny days annually, discussed in the context of its solar potential in section 9.4, and given the territory's high residential electricity tariffs during summer months specifically, cited by solar industry analysis as a key driver of consumer interest in rooftop solar adoption, demand-side conservation incentives in Puducherry appear to operate substantially through the price signal of high summer tariffs combined with the rooftop solar subsidy programme discussed above, rather than through a separately documented, dedicated demand-side management architecture (Bluebird Solar, 2026).

9.6 State Electricity Regulatory Framework and Tariff Policy

Puducherry's electricity regulatory framework is administered through the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission, or JERC, a genuinely distinctive institutional arrangement not paralleled in any of the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, each of

which maintains its own dedicated, single-state electricity regulatory commission. This joint commission structure, under which Puducherry shares its electricity regulator with other smaller states and Union Territories rather than maintaining a wholly independent regulatory body, reflects the territory's small scale and represents a further, specific example of the shared or centrally coordinated institutional architecture this framework has documented throughout its treatment of Puducherry's governance structure, discussed most directly in Chapter 1.2 and Chapter 2. JERC's February 2026 public hearing on Puducherry's True-Up Petition for fiscal year 2024-25, referenced in the Electricity Department's own published notification archive, indicates a functioning, active tariff regulatory process consistent with standard Indian electricity sector regulatory practice (Electricity Department, Government of Puducherry, 2026).

Chapter 10: Water, Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

10.1 Drinking Water Supply: Coverage, Quality and Infrastructure

Puducherry holds a genuinely distinctive and well-verified position among the jurisdictions examined across this framework series regarding rural drinking water supply. The territory is listed consistently across multiple independent sources as having achieved 100 percent Functional Household Tap Connection coverage under the national Jal Jeevan Mission, appearing alongside Goa, Telangana, Haryana, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and the Union Territories of Daman and Diu and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Dhyeya IAS, 2025). More significantly, and directly addressing the formal-versus-functional coverage gap this framework has flagged repeatedly across the companion Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat frameworks, Puducherry received a First Prize award at the Swachh Bharat Diwas ceremony held at Vigyan Bhavan, Delhi, on October 2, 2022, specifically in recognition of outstanding performance under the Jal Jeevan Mission for providing adequate and potable tap water supply on a regular basis in rural households, based on an independent Functionality Assessment conducted as of September 2022, in the specific category of Overall Functionality (Local Administration Department, Government of Puducherry, 2026). This represents a genuinely important and independently verified distinction from the pattern this framework documented for Gujarat in the companion framework's Chapter 10.1, where formal 100 percent connection coverage coexisted with a seven-decade-long, still-unresolved functional water access gap in specific Kutch villages: Puducherry's coverage claim is corroborated by a specific, named functionality assessment and a formal national recognition award, rather than resting on connection statistics alone.

Puducherry's Local Administration Department serves as the nodal department for Jal Jeevan Mission implementation, working through the Puducherry State Water and Sanitation Mission, a dedicated society constituted in October 2012, and has distributed 123 Field Testing Kits across the commune panchayats of both Puducherry and Karaikal districts to enable local, community-level water quality testing, directly consistent with the national mission's broader community water quality monitoring architecture discussed throughout this framework series (Local Administration Department, Government of Puducherry, 2026).

10.2 Irrigation Infrastructure: Command Area, Efficiency and Water-Use Productivity

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's irrigation command area and water-use efficiency was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Given the territory's small agricultural sector, discussed in Chapter 3.3 and Chapter 18, contributing under 2 percent of GSDP despite continuing to support an estimated 45 percent of the population directly or indirectly, and given Puducherry's genuinely limited total land area of 490 square kilometers discussed in Chapter 1.1, irrigation infrastructure in the territory operates at a scale far smaller in absolute terms than the multi-thousand-kilometer canal networks documented for Punjab and Gujarat in the companion frameworks, and this represents a priority area for further primary research through Puducherry's own Public Works Department irrigation wing.

10.3 Sanitation and Open Defecation Free Status: Post-ODF Sustainability

A comprehensive, current, Puducherry-specific assessment of Open Defecation Free Plus sustainability was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, consistent with the equivalent data limitation identified across all three companion state frameworks in this series. Given Puducherry's strong overall infrastructure and administrative execution capacity documented throughout this framework, particularly the territory's demonstrated, independently verified success on rural water functionality discussed in section 10.1, this framework would expect Puducherry's sanitation infrastructure quality to compare favourably with national averages, though this represents an inference rather than a directly confirmed finding.

10.4 Solid Waste Management: Municipal, Biomedical and Hazardous Waste

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's municipal solid waste collection and processing capacity was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Puducherry's industrial sector, discussed in Chapter 3.4 and Chapter 4.3, spans automobile ancillary, textile, and chemical manufacturing units, a sectoral mix that, while considerably smaller in absolute scale than Gujarat's dominant chemical and petrochemical industry documented in that state's companion framework, nonetheless generates hazardous industrial waste streams requiring dedicated management infrastructure distinct from conventional municipal waste, and this represents an area for further primary research through the Puducherry Pollution Control Committee.

10.5 Liquid Waste and Sewerage: Urban and Peri-Urban Treatment Infrastructure

Puducherry's liquid waste and sewerage infrastructure operates within the broader national policy framework discussed throughout this series, including the Draft Wastewater Reuse Rules, 2024, which propose that bulk users must reuse 50 percent of wastewater by 2031, and a complementary housing mandate for 2027-28 requiring large housing societies to reuse 20 percent of wastewater, national regulatory instruments that would apply directly to Puducherry's own urban housing societies and larger institutional water users, including Pondicherry University, discussed in Chapter 5.3 (Dhyeya IAS, 2025). The PY-SHORE project discussed in Chapter 4.5, Chapter 8.4, and Chapter 13.6, with its explicit marine plastics management component, represents Puducherry's most concrete and internationally co-financed liquid and solid waste management initiative specific to the territory's coastal and marine environment, distinct from conventional urban sewerage infrastructure. A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's actual sewage treatment plant capacity and coverage across its four districts was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, and represents a priority area for further primary research through the Puducherry Public Works Department's own published infrastructure inventory.

Chapter 11: Urban Development, Housing and Smart Cities

11.1 Urbanisation Trends and Urban Governance Architecture

Puducherry's urbanization rate is, consistent with the territory's small, historically French-colonial urban core discussed in Chapter 1.4, considerably higher than the national average, with Puducherry town itself, spanning just 19.46 square kilometers across 42 wards, functioning as the territory's dominant urban center within Puducherry Municipality, discussed in Chapter 1.2 (Pondicherry Smart City, 2026a). Urban governance in Puducherry operates through the Puducherry Urban Development Agency, a society registered in 1998 under the Societies Registration Act, alongside the five municipalities documented in Chapter 1.2, and the Local Administration Department, which serves as the nodal department for both the Smart Cities Mission, discussed in section 11.4, and the Jal Jeevan Mission, discussed in Chapter 10.1 (Local Administration Department, Government of Puducherry, 2026a).

11.2 Urban Local Bodies: Financial Health, Capacity and Service Delivery

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's Urban Local Body financial autonomy and own-source revenue collection was not available with sufficient specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Given the territory's overall fiscal architecture discussed in Chapter 2, in which own revenue constitutes approximately 69 to 70 percent of total government receipts, Puducherry's municipal bodies likely operate with somewhat greater own-revenue capacity relative to their scale than the near-total dependence on Finance Commission transfers documented for rural local bodies in Bihar and, to a lesser extent, Punjab in the companion frameworks, though this represents an inference rather than a directly confirmed finding specific to Puducherry's municipal, as distinct from territorial, government finances.

11.3 Housing: Demand Assessment, Affordability and Flagship Schemes

Puducherry's Smart City proposal, submitted to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on March 31, 2017, identified a specific Housing for All component costed at ₹217.88 crore, addressing a housing demand of 1,750 units for Economically Weaker Sections residents living in poor housing conditions and locations with insecure tenure, with housing projects identified across four locations specifically under the national Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana scheme to improve housing conditions and security of tenure while minimizing displacement (Pondicherry Smart City, 2026b). This scale of housing intervention, targeting 1,750 units, is modest in absolute terms relative to the housing delivery figures documented for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat in the companion frameworks, a difference this framework attributes directly to Puducherry's genuinely small overall population scale documented throughout Chapter 1, rather than to any weaker proportional commitment to housing delivery. At the

national level, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban scheme has sanctioned more than 1.18 crore housing units nationally, with over 88 lakh houses completed as of early 2026 reporting under the Prime Minister's PRAGATI accountability review mechanism, a national programme context within which Puducherry's own comparatively small-scale housing delivery operates (News on Air, 2026b).

11.4 Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT: State-Level Implementation Review

Puducherry's Smart Cities Mission implementation, managed through Pondicherry Smart City Development Limited, pursued an Area Based Development model covering approximately 1,468 acres and 23 of Puducherry Municipality's 42 wards, based on a retrofitting and redevelopment approach, with a total proposed project cost of ₹1,827.82 crore, of which ₹1,633.64 crore was allocated to the Area Based Development component specifically and ₹194.19 crore to Pan-City Solutions extending benefits across the broader municipality (Pondicherry Smart City, 2026b). The proposal itself was notable for the scale of citizen engagement undertaken in its preparation, directly engaging more than 1.67 lakh citizens and tourists through a combination of social media outreach reaching 1,08,210 people, 28,400 physical suggestion-booth responses, 12,900 offline votes, and a series of drawing, painting, essay-writing, and photography competitions attracting 9,411 total participants, a genuinely extensive citizen consultation process for a proposal covering a comparatively small geographic area (Pondicherry Smart City, 2026c).

The national Smart Cities Mission itself formally concluded on March 31, 2025, having completed 7,479 of 8,058 tendered projects nationally and utilized ₹1,500.05 billion of a total ₹1,643.68 billion allocated across all 100 participating cities (Wikipedia, 2026e). Within this national closure, Puducherry's own mission implementation continued producing concrete, verifiable infrastructure delivery into 2026: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai inaugurated three major Smart City Mission infrastructure projects in Puducherry, including a modernized mini stadium at the historic Anna Thidal playground, a site that had served local schools and residents for more than a century before its upgrade, completed at a final cost of ₹17 crore against an initial estimate of ₹12.19 crore, now featuring seating for 4,500 spectators across its main galleries plus an additional 500-spectator gallery, alongside supporting infrastructure including parking for 1,500 two-wheelers, an administrative office, a dormitory, and a multipurpose hall (Construction World, 2026a). This specific, itemized, verifiably completed project delivery, described by officials as reflecting Puducherry's "focus on inclusive urban development, resilient infrastructure and improved quality of life," provides a genuinely concrete example of Smart Cities Mission execution in Puducherry, in contrast to the more mixed completion-versus-livability picture this framework documented for Punjab's Smart Cities Mission implementation in that state's companion framework (Construction World, 2026a).

11.5 Heritage Cities, Cultural Landscapes and Urban Tourism

Puducherry's Smart City vision statement explicitly and directly ties the mission's urban development objectives to the territory's heritage and tourism identity, stating its goal as "Transforming Puducherry into a global tourism destination by leveraging its heritage, cultural, spiritual and educational advantages," a framing that connects this chapter's urban development findings directly to the territory's French colonial architectural heritage discussed in Chapter 1.4 and examined further in Chapter 19's dedicated tourism treatment (Pondicherry Smart City, 2026c). This deliberate integration of urban infrastructure investment with heritage tourism branding represents a coherent and consistently applied strategic framing this framework has found genuinely distinctive relative to the urban development chapters of the companion Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat frameworks, none of which centered their entire Smart City vision statement so explicitly around a single, unifying heritage and tourism identity.

11.6 Urban Poverty, Slum Rehabilitation and In-Situ Upgradation

The 1,750-unit Economically Weaker Sections housing demand identified under Puducherry's Smart City Housing for All component, discussed in section 11.3, represents this framework's most concrete, quantified evidence regarding the scale of urban poverty and inadequate housing specifically within Puducherry Municipality. A comprehensive, current, territory-wide assessment of urban poverty extending across all four of Puducherry's municipalities, comparable to the equivalent, similarly thin data gap identified for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat in the companion frameworks, was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, and represents a priority area for further primary research through Puducherry's Local Administration Department in any future, more granular revision of this framework.

Chapter 12: Rural Development and Decentralised Governance

12.1 Panchayati Raj Institutions: Structure, Devolution and Capacity

Puducherry's rural governance operates through commune panchayats, the territory's specific term for its local self-government units, referenced directly in the Jal Jeevan Mission context discussed in Chapter 10.1, which found Field Testing Kits distributed to commune panchayats across both Puducherry and Karaikal districts. A 2026 government communications release characterized the territorial administration as continuing to promote rural development through strengthening Panchayati Raj institutions, improving village infrastructure, and expanding access to essential public services, with a specific emphasis on capacity-building programmes for locally elected representatives and transparent governance practices (Bharat Aawaz, 2026). A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's specific Panchayati Raj Institution count, own-source revenue collection, and functional devolution status, comparable to the detailed figures presented for Bihar in the companion framework's Chapter 12.1, was not available with sufficient specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter, and given Puducherry's overwhelmingly urban population concentration discussed in Chapter 1.3 and Chapter 11.1, this framework notes that rural governance, while genuinely present and actively administered, necessarily carries less weight within Puducherry's overall governance architecture than in any of the three considerably more rural full states examined in the companion frameworks.

12.2 MGNREGA: Coverage, Wage Trends and Livelihood Outcomes

Puducherry's implementation of the national rural employment guarantee framework operates through the territory's District Rural Development Agency, which functions as the implementing agency for centrally sponsored Ministry of Rural Development schemes, and has maintained an active institutional presence through 2025 and 2026, including ongoing recruitment of retired government engineering officials to serve as consultants under PMGSY, Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin, and MPLAD schemes on a contractual basis, and an active public consultation process for the appointment of an MGNREGA Ombudsman specific to the territory (District Rural Development Agency, Government of Puducherry, 2026). As documented in the companion Punjab and Gujarat frameworks' respective Chapter

12.2 sections, the national rural employment guarantee framework itself is undergoing fundamental structural transformation through the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025, which formally replaced the legacy MGNREGA 2005 Act, increasing the statutory employment guarantee from 100 to 125 days per household while activating a national budget of ₹95,692 crore for the 2026-27 implementation cycle (MGNREGA Info, 2026). A comprehensive, current, Puducherry-specific figure for person-days generated and beneficiary count under either the legacy MGNREGA or the new VB-G RAM-G framework was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, and given Puducherry's genuinely small rural population base relative to the states examined in the companion frameworks, this framework would expect the territory's absolute scheme utilization figures to be correspondingly modest, though this represents an inference rather than a directly confirmed finding.

12.3 Rural Housing: PMAY-Gramin and State Schemes

Puducherry's rural housing needs are addressed through the national Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin framework, discussed at the national level in the companion Bihar and Gujarat frameworks, with the Rural Development Ministry reporting that 3.45 crore houses had been constructed in rural areas nationally under the housing scheme over the preceding decade as of early 2025 reporting (News on Air, 2025f). A comprehensive, current, Puducherry-specific PMAY-Gramin completion figure was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, and, consistent with the pattern discussed in section 12.2, this framework would expect the territory's absolute rural housing delivery figures to be modest in scale given its overwhelmingly urban population distribution.

12.4 Livelihood Promotion: SHGs, Cooperatives and Rural Enterprise

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's rural livelihood promotion architecture, including any territory-specific Self-Help Group federation model comparable to Bihar's JEEViKA or Gujarat's Amul cooperative structure documented in the companion frameworks, was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter. The District Rural Development Agency's continued engagement of professional staff specifically for the implementation of the National Rural Livelihood Mission within the Union Territory, referenced in its own administrative notifications, indicates a functioning, if modestly scaled, rural livelihoods programme infrastructure operating within Puducherry's small rural population base (District Rural Development Agency, Government of Puducherry, 2026).

12.5 Rural Infrastructure: PMGSY, Connectivity and Market Linkages

Puducherry's rural road connectivity, given the territory's genuinely limited total land area of 490 square kilometers discussed in Chapter 1.1, is closely integrated with the broader national highway investment documented in Chapter 8.1, with the District Rural Development Agency's continued PMGSY consultant recruitment, discussed in section 12.2,

indicating ongoing rural road development and maintenance activity specific to the territory's rural commune panchayat areas, distinct from the major National Highway projects examined in Chapter 8.1 (District Rural Development Agency, Government of Puducherry, 2026).

12.6 Community-Based Development Institutions and Participatory Planning

Puducherry's rural development architecture, drawing together the findings of this chapter, presents a genuinely functioning but proportionally modest institutional structure relative to the far larger rural development programmes documented for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat in the companion frameworks, a difference this framework attributes directly to Puducherry's overwhelmingly urban population concentration, at roughly three-quarters of the territory's total population residing in Puducherry district's urban core alone, as documented in Chapter 1.3. The territorial government's stated 2026 commitment to strengthening Panchayati Raj institutions, improving rural infrastructure, and expanding digital connectivity in rural communities, discussed in section 12.1, suggests continued institutional attention to this smaller rural population despite its modest scale relative to the territory's overall development priorities, which, as this framework has documented throughout Chapters 3, 4, and 11, are substantially weighted toward Puducherry's urban, industrial, and tourism-driven economic base.

Chapter 13: Environment and Natural Resource Governance

13.1 Forest Cover, Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation

Puducherry's forest and mangrove cover is minimal in absolute terms, consistent with the territory's small total land area discussed in Chapter 1.1, with independent environmental research characterizing Puducherry's mangrove pockets, alongside those of Daman and Diu, as "small pockets, very vulnerable, need strict local protection," in explicit contrast to the considerably more extensive mangrove ecosystems documented for Gujarat in that state's companion framework Chapter 13.1 (ClarityUPSC, 2026). Within Puducherry specifically, the maximum concentration of mangrove vegetation is found along the Ariyankuppam river banks toward its estuary, where mangrove vegetation mixes with associated coastal species along both riverbanks leading to the sea (ResearchGate, 2015). This limited mangrove ecosystem faces a documented and specific pollution pressure: Puducherry's coastal area in the vicinity of these mangroves is being polluted through the discharge of industrial, domestic, and agricultural wastes carried via small tributaries and channels directly into the Bay of Bengal, a finding this framework notes as directly analogous in mechanism, though considerably smaller in absolute scale, to the industrial effluent pollution documented for Gujarat's coastal waters in that state's companion framework Chapter 13.5 (ResearchGate, 2015).

13.2 Land Use Change, Soil Degradation and Land Resource Management

Puducherry's land degradation drivers, as documented in academic research conducted through the Association for Regional Economic Development partnership between France and India, include both natural factors, such as tsunami and flood-related erosion and tidal action, and human factors, including improper disposal of municipal and industrial waste, inadequate sewage and industrial wastewater treatment, improper agricultural practices involving excessive water, fertiliser, and pesticide use, mono-cropping that alters soil nutrient balance, and illegal and indiscriminate sand and red earth mining in specific locations (ResearchGate, 2015). The same research specifically noted that vegetal cover, both

agricultural and non-agricultural, has declined considerably in Puducherry due to rapid urbanisation, a finding directly consistent with this framework's documentation of the territory's high urbanization rate in Chapter 11.1 and its genuinely constrained total land area discussed throughout Chapter 1.

13.3 Water Bodies, Wetlands and River Ecosystem Health

Puducherry's coastal water bodies include 192 kilometers of tidally influenced waterways across the Union Territory, encompassing a wide range of coastal ecosystem types including estuaries, lagoons, mangroves, backwaters, and sandy stretches, according to the territory's own Puducherry Coastal Zone Management Authority documentation (Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Government of Puducherry, 2026a). This considerable diversity of coastal and wetland ecosystem types within a genuinely small total coastline of just 45 kilometers, discussed further in section 13.6, illustrates the ecological density and correspondingly high management complexity facing Puducherry's environmental governance institutions relative to the geographic scale involved.

13.4 Mining and Mineral Resource Governance

Puducherry possesses minimal mineral resource endowments, consistent with the territory's small coastal geography discussed throughout Chapter 1. The specific reference to illegal and indiscriminate sand and red earth mining in certain locations, discussed in section 13.2, represents the primary extractive resource governance concern this framework has identified for Puducherry, a considerably smaller-scale and more localized mining governance challenge than the mineral resource development questions examined for Bihar's pyrite and gold reserves or Gujarat's limestone and bauxite resources in the companion frameworks, and this represents an area for further primary research through Puducherry's Department of Mines and Geology in any future revision.

13.5 Pollution: Air, Water, Noise and Soil — Status and Regulatory Response

Puducherry's principal pollution regulatory body, the Puducherry Pollution Control Committee, has functioned since April 1, 1992, as a statutory body within the territory's Department of Science, Technology and Environment, with an explicit institutional mandate to protect the fragile coastal ecosystem, enforce environmental protection Rules and Acts, and encourage industry to shift from conventional technology toward Clean Development Mechanism approaches specifically to minimize greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate ongoing climate change impacts (Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Government of Puducherry, 2026b). Notably, the Committee's own stated approach explicitly combines conventional command-and-control regulatory policy with consultancy, advocacy, and best-practice technology dissemination functions, a somewhat more collaborative regulatory posture than the primarily enforcement-oriented pollution control frameworks documented for the larger states examined in the companion frameworks, though this framework notes this distinction reflects Puducherry's own stated institutional philosophy

rather than necessarily indicating superior actual enforcement outcomes, which were not independently verified in the sources reviewed for this chapter.

13.6 Coastal and Marine Resource Management (Where Applicable)

This section applies directly and substantially to Puducherry, whose 45-kilometer coastline, comprising 24 kilometers in Puducherry region proper, 20 kilometers in Karaikal, and a 1-kilometer stretch in Mahe, discussed in Chapter 1.1, faces a well-documented and academically studied coastal erosion crisis (Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Government of Puducherry, 2026a). This erosion traces directly to a specific, identifiable infrastructure cause: Puducherry has been strongly affected by severe coastal erosion following the construction of Puducherry Port in 1989, which disrupted the natural longshore sediment transport processes along the coast (Frontiers in Marine Science, 2024). Puducherry's own vulnerability assessment found that the entire coastal extent between Muthialpet and Kirumampakkam, alongside the northern part of Kalapet, constitutes a high vulnerability zone representing 50 percent of the territory's coastline, with a further 25 percent classified as medium vulnerability and the remaining 25 percent as low vulnerability, based on an assessment of coastal slope, geomorphology, elevation, shoreline change, sea level rise, and wave action (Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Government of Puducherry, 2026c). The territory's own vulnerability documentation concludes candidly that the Puducherry coast is "stabilised artificially and not all points due to shoreline change is at risk," while noting that in Karaikal specifically, protection structures are largely absent and many stretches remain vulnerable (Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Government of Puducherry, 2026c).

In direct response to this documented erosion crisis, the National Institute of Ocean Technology in Chennai partnered with the Puducherry government to implement a hybrid beach restoration strategy beginning in 2017, deploying a steel reef into the nearshore sea combined with beach nourishment processes to stabilize and restore lost beach area, at a total project cost of ₹65 crore, comprising a near-shore reef covering 28,540 square meters at 4 meters height and an offshore reef covering 4,200 square meters at the same height, with sand for both nourishment schemes dredged directly from the port mouth that originally caused the erosion problem (Puducherry Climate Change Cell, 2026; Frontiers in Marine Science, 2024). This coastal restoration effort operates alongside the PY-SHORE project discussed in Chapter 4.5 and Chapter 8.4, the World Bank-co-financed blue economy initiative, together constituting a genuinely substantial and sustained institutional and financial commitment to coastal resilience relative to Puducherry's overall scale, one this framework has not found matched in comparable depth by any equivalent coastal resource management programme documented for Gujarat, the only other coastal jurisdiction examined across this entire framework series.

Chapter 14: Climate Change and Ecological Security

14.1 State Climate Vulnerability and Risk Profile

Puducherry's climate vulnerability, given the territory's coastal geography documented in Chapter 1.1 and Chapter 13.6, centers overwhelmingly on cyclone exposure along its Bay of Bengal coastline, compounded by increasing urban heat and stormwater flooding risk. A two-day UrbanShift Geospatial Planning Lab convened in Puducherry specifically to address this compound vulnerability, bringing together 57 local government officials, planners, and community leaders to examine how urban heat, stormwater flooding, and cyclone-related storm surges manifest differently across the territory's various neighbourhoods, explicitly describing Puducherry as "increasingly facing complex and overlapping climate risks" (UrbanShift, 2026). This finding is directly consistent with the broader national pattern documented in independent climate risk analysis, which found Bay of Bengal sea level rise proceeding at 4.0 millimeters per year, marginally faster than the 3.9 millimeter per year rate documented for the Arabian Sea in the companion Gujarat framework's Chapter 14.1, alongside warming sea surface temperatures increasingly enabling rapid cyclone intensification nationally (LegacyIAS, 2026).

14.2 State Action Plan on Climate Change: Review and Second Generation Reforms

Puducherry has adapted the national eight-fold Climate Change Mission framework to its own circumstances, explicitly selecting and strategizing action across the seven of the eight

national missions judged relevant to the Union Territory's specific context, with the Coastal and Disaster Management Mission identified as a key priority mission given the coastal vulnerability documented in section 14.1 and the coastal erosion crisis examined in Chapter 13.6 (Puducherry Climate Change Cell, 2026). This deliberate, mission-by-mission adaptation of the national framework to Puducherry's specific small-territory, coastal-erosion-focused circumstances represents a genuinely tailored approach relative to the broader, more comprehensive state action plans documented for the considerably larger states examined in the companion frameworks.

14.3 Disaster Risk Profile: Hazard, Exposure and Vulnerability Mapping

Puducherry's Disaster Management Plan documents the territory's exposure to cyclone, tsunami, heavy rain, and flood hazards, alongside identification of specific low-lying areas and riverbed vulnerability zones requiring dedicated seasonal preparedness measures, particularly ahead of the North-East Monsoon season (Department of Revenue and Disaster Management, Government of Puducherry, 2026a). Puducherry's coastal community of Pillaichavady, discussed in the context of coastal protection groyne construction in Chapter 13.5, and the neighbouring community of Pillaiyarkuppam have both been specifically documented in academic disaster governance research as focal points for both hazard exposure assessment and community-based disaster preparedness modelling, with Pillaiyarkuppam specifically cited as "a model of community empowerment and disaster preparedness" (National Centre for Good Governance, 2026).

14.4 Disaster Risk Reduction: Institutional Mechanisms and Preparedness

Puducherry's Department of Revenue and Disaster Management serves as the territory's nodal disaster management department, with an institutional focus on the pre-disaster phase, encompassing prevention, mitigation, preparedness, capacity building, awareness, and community-based disaster management approaches (Department of Revenue and Disaster Management, Government of Puducherry, 2026a). This institutional preparedness has been tested directly by two major, named cyclone events in recent years. Cyclone Nivar, which struck in November 2020, brought heavy rainfall amounting to 237 millimeters in Puducherry specifically, causing significant flooding and infrastructure damage, with total regional damage across Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh estimated at \$600 million, a scale of impact that academic research characterized as highlighting the region's ongoing vulnerability to natural disasters and the corresponding importance of continued disaster management capacity enhancement (National Centre for Good Governance, 2026). More recently, Cyclone Fengal in 2024 prompted an empirical academic study specifically examining the transition "from cyclone management to community resilience" within Puducherry, indicating continued, active research and institutional learning following each major cyclone event affecting the territory (PreventionWeb, 2026a). Puducherry's Public Works Department maintains detailed, published operational protocols for cyclone response, including 24-hour Task Force deployment during cyclonic storms, continuous control room operation, rapid fallen-tree clearance procedures, and mandatory 24-hour generator backup at all pump houses

and overhead tanks to maintain uninterrupted water supply during and after cyclone flooding events (Public Works Department, Government of Puducherry, 2026).

14.5 Post-Disaster Response, Relief and Reconstruction Framework

Puducherry's post-disaster reconstruction framework, documented in the territory's District Disaster Management Plan, explicitly incorporates "Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, and Building Back Better initiatives" as a formal planning component, alongside dedicated financial arrangements for disaster response and a structured procedure for regular plan monitoring, review, and updating based on evolving risks, new technologies, and post-disaster evaluations conducted after each major event (Department of Revenue and Disaster Management, Government of Puducherry, 2026b). This continuous, evaluation-driven update cycle, evident in the specific, named academic case studies conducted following both Cyclone Nivar and Cyclone Fengal discussed in section 14.4, suggests a disaster management institutional learning process that is genuinely active and responsive to recent events, rather than existing merely as a static planning document.

14.6 Green Economy Transition: Opportunities and Structural Challenges

Puducherry's green economy transition, discussed in the renewable energy context of Chapter 9.4 and the coastal blue economy context of Chapter 4.5, Chapter 8.4, and Chapter 13.6, centers substantially on the PY-SHORE project's integration of coastal protection, eco-tourism development, and marine plastics management within a single, coherent blue economy framework. Puducherry's rooftop solar programme, discussed in Chapter 9.4, and its coastal resilience investments, discussed in Chapter 13.6, together represent the territory's most concrete green economy transition initiatives, though this framework notes, consistent with its finding in that earlier chapter, that Puducherry's own solar policy history includes a significant, decade-long gap between stated ambition and delivered capacity, a cautionary precedent this framework's concluding chapter identifies as relevant to assessing the credibility of the territory's continued green economy transition targets going forward.

Chapter 15: Administrative Governance Reform

15.1 Structure of State Administration and Inter-Departmental Coordination

Puducherry's administrative structure, discussed extensively in Chapter 1.2, operates under the direct constitutional oversight of a Lieutenant Governor appointed by the President, a structural feature that shapes inter-departmental coordination throughout the territory's governance in ways distinct from the full states examined in the companion frameworks. Police administration in Puducherry represents perhaps the clearest single illustration of this distinctive constitutional arrangement: unlike the three full states examined in this framework series, each of which maintains police as a State List subject under full territorial government control, Puducherry Police, as documented in recruitment sector compilations, functions under a governance arrangement in which law and order remains subject to central oversight through the Lieutenant Governor and Ministry of Home Affairs rather than falling wholly within the elected territorial government's own legislative competence, a structural feature this framework flagged as a defining characteristic of Puducherry's constitutional status in Chapter 1.2 (Tamil Nadu Recruitment, 2025).

15.2 Anti-Corruption Framework: Lokayukta, Vigilance and Enforcement

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's anti-corruption enforcement mechanisms, including any dedicated Lokayukta or Vigilance Commission caseload and disposal data, was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, consistent with the equivalent data gap identified across all three companion state frameworks in this series. This represents a priority area for further primary research through Puducherry's own Vigilance Department in any future, more detailed revision of this document.

15.3 Legal and Judicial Administration: Pendency, Access and Reform

Puducherry's judicial administration presents a genuinely distinctive structural feature relative to every jurisdiction examined across this entire framework series: the territory does not possess its own High Court, but instead falls under the appellate and original jurisdiction of the Madras High Court, which exercises jurisdiction over both the state of Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry jointly, consisting of 74 judges and a Chief Justice overseeing the general administration of justice across both jurisdictions (My Sarkari Naukri, 2026). This arrangement, sharing a High Court with a considerably larger neighbouring full state, parallels in structural type, though not in specific detail, the shared Punjab and Haryana High Court arrangement documented in the companion Punjab framework's Chapter 15.3, and represents a further concrete illustration of Puducherry's overall pattern of governance integration with its surrounding states discussed throughout this framework, particularly in Chapter 1.7 and Chapter 4.8. Judicial recruitment for Puducherry's subordinate judiciary is managed through a Centralised Recruitment Cell established specifically to handle recruitment of District Judges, Civil Judges, and subordinate judiciary staff members across both Tamil Nadu and Puducherry jointly, alongside separate recruitment for Madras High Court Service staff positions spanning roles from Personal Assistants to judges through to support and maintenance staff (Madras High Court, 2026a). A specific Puducherry Judicial Subordinate Service recruitment notification, requiring applications from eligible Indian citizens native to Puducherry specifically, illustrates that while judicial administration is shared with Tamil Nadu at the High Court level, Puducherry maintains its own distinct subordinate judicial service cadre with residency-based eligibility requirements (Scribd, 2026). A comprehensive, current, consolidated pendency figure specific to Puducherry cases within the broader Madras High Court caseload was not available with sufficient specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter.

15.4 Police Modernisation and Internal Security Management

Puducherry Police recruitment activity has continued at a substantial pace relative to the territory's small population, with recruitment compilations documenting over 500 vacancies advertised across multiple cycles through 2025 and into 2026 (Tamil Nadu Recruitment, 2025). A notable administrative detail documented in recruitment sector reporting is that Puducherry Police, despite the territory's status as a distinct Union Territory, is characterized

in at least one recruitment compilation as falling under the administrative umbrella of the Tamil Nadu government for certain organizational purposes, a characterization this framework flags as requiring further verification given the genuine ambiguity and complexity surrounding Puducherry's police governance arrangements discussed in section 15.1, but which is broadly consistent with this framework's repeated finding throughout this document of Puducherry's deep administrative and institutional integration with its host states (Tamil Nadu Recruitment, 2025). A comprehensive, current, consolidated assessment of Puducherry Police's sanctioned strength against actual deployed strength was not available with sufficient specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter.

15.5 Regulatory Governance: Quality, Consistency and Independence

Puducherry's regulatory governance framework, discussed throughout this document, includes sector-specific bodies such as the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission, discussed in Chapter 9.6, shared with other smaller states and Union Territories rather than operating as a wholly independent, Puducherry-specific regulator, and the Puducherry Pollution Control Committee, discussed in Chapter 13.5, which does operate as a dedicated, territory-specific statutory body. This mixed pattern, in which some of Puducherry's regulatory functions are shared with neighbouring or peer jurisdictions while others remain genuinely territory-specific, reflects the broader, pragmatic accommodation this framework has documented throughout its treatment of Puducherry's governance architecture: a small territory selectively pooling institutional capacity with larger neighbours or national frameworks where its own scale does not support a fully independent regulatory apparatus, while maintaining dedicated, local institutional capacity in domains, such as coastal pollution control, where the territory's specific circumstances warrant direct and specialized attention.

15.6 Reduction of Red-tapism: Simplification and Way Forward

Puducherry's most significant recent red tape reduction initiative, discussed extensively in Chapter 4.1, is the Puducherry Ease of Doing Business (Service Delivery) Bill, 2025, passed by the Legislative Assembly on September 18, 2025, mandating statutory approval timelines with deemed-approval defaults and penalties for non-compliant officials. This legislative reform, examined in its economic policy context in Chapter 4.1, represents Puducherry's most concrete and legally binding governance simplification measure, and this framework's assessment, drawing on the pattern documented throughout this chapter, is that such deemed-approval mechanisms are likely to prove particularly effective in a territory of Puducherry's genuinely small administrative scale, where the number of pending approvals and the corresponding implementation burden of tracking statutory timelines is considerably more manageable than in the full states examined in the companion frameworks.

15.7 Civil Service Strength: Vacancy Rates and Training Institutions

Puducherry's civil service recruitment operates through the Puducherry Public Service Commission, and while a comprehensive, current, consolidated vacancy figure across all

territorial government departments was not available with sufficient specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter, the overall pattern this chapter has documented, spanning judicial recruitment through the Madras High Court's Centralised Recruitment Cell, discussed in section 15.3, ongoing police recruitment activity discussed in section 15.4, and the territory's small overall administrative scale discussed throughout Chapter 1, suggests that Puducherry's civil service staffing challenges, while genuinely present, likely operate at a considerably smaller absolute scale than the multi-thousand-vacancy recruitment cycles documented for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat in the companion frameworks. This chapter's cumulative finding is that Puducherry's governance architecture, distinguished throughout by its close integration with neighbouring states' institutions, from its shared High Court to its shared electricity regulator, represents a genuinely distinctive and, on balance, pragmatically workable adaptation to the territory's small scale and non-contiguous geography, rather than a straightforward diminished or incomplete version of full-state governance.

Chapter 16: Technology-Enabled Service Delivery

16.1 Digital Infrastructure: Broadband, Optical Fibre and Connectivity Coverage

Puducherry's digital infrastructure development is documented through a dedicated commemorative publication, "ICT Initiatives & Services for Government of Puducherry," released jointly by the territory's Chief Secretary and the Director General of the National Informatics Centre in Delhi to mark the NIC's Golden Jubilee Celebrations, explicitly framing the territory's IT-driven governance reforms as reflecting connectivity and efficient governance reaching "every corner of Puducherry" (National Informatics Centre, 2025). This

deliberate connection between Puducherry's digital governance development and a national NIC milestone publication indicates a genuinely close institutional relationship between the territory's digital infrastructure programme and the central National Informatics Centre, consistent with the pattern of shared institutional capacity this framework has documented throughout Chapter 15 for Puducherry's judicial and regulatory architecture specifically.

16.2 e-Governance Architecture and Digital Public Infrastructure

Puducherry's most recent significant e-governance milestone is the Services Portal for the Welfare Departments and Civil Supplies Department, formally inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor K. Kailashnathan on July 8, 2025, at a ceremony attended by Ministers, Department Secretaries, the State Informatics Officer of NIC Puducherry, and Heads of Departments across multiple sectors (Informatics News, 2025). The Lieutenant Governor specifically framed this launch as reflecting the government's commitment to "leveraging technology for inclusive development and seamless public service delivery," a portal explicitly designed to simplify access to welfare schemes and civil supplies services while ensuring transparency, efficiency, and timely benefit delivery to eligible citizens (Informatics News, 2025). This welfare-and-civil-supplies-specific portal launch connects directly to the extensive welfare architecture documented in Chapter 7, providing a digital delivery mechanism for the SC/ST assistance, backward classes welfare, and women's economic empowerment schemes examined in that earlier chapter.

Puducherry's broader e-governance architecture additionally includes the e-District Mission Mode Project, implemented under the national e-Governance Plan framework and administered through the Puducherry e-Governance Society, explicitly designed to enable integrated and seamless delivery of high-volume, citizen-centric services through workflow automation, backend digitization, and cross-departmental process integration and redesign, with the project structured to progressively expand its service portfolio as demand for initially enabled services increases (Directorate of Information Technology, Government of Puducherry, 2026).

16.3 Citizen Service Delivery: CSCs, Service Portals and Mobile Governance

Puducherry maintains a consolidated Online Services portal through its official government website, providing citizens a single access point to the territory's various digital service offerings, alongside dedicated e-Office infrastructure including Web VPN request forms and user deactivation request forms supporting the territorial government's own internal digital workflow systems (Government of Puducherry, 2026b). Puducherry's participation in the national MyGov citizen engagement platform, through a dedicated Puducherry-specific portal inviting citizens to participate in groups, tasks, discussions, polls, blogs, and talks under the theme "Puducherry from the [inception of India's independence]," represents a further, distinctly participatory dimension of the territory's digital citizen engagement architecture, extending beyond transactional service delivery into genuine civic participation and feedback mechanisms (MyGov Puducherry, 2026).

16.4 Data Governance, Open Data Policy and Privacy Framework

Puducherry participates actively in India's national Open Government Data platform, with specific, publicly available datasets including detailed tracking of "citizen services available online in Puducherry," measuring the percentage of the territory's total citizen services that have been made available through digital channels, a specific, quantified open data metric this framework has not found matched with comparable public transparency and granularity in the equivalent digital governance chapters of the companion Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat frameworks (Open Government Data Platform India, 2026). Puducherry's designation of a specific Chief Data Officer, referenced in the territory's official website footer alongside its Open Government Data Puducherry portal link, further indicates a genuinely institutionalized, dedicated data governance function within the territorial administration (Government of Puducherry, 2026b).

16.5 Cybersecurity: State-Level Institutional Mechanisms

A comprehensive, current, Puducherry-specific assessment of cybersecurity institutional mechanisms was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, consistent with the equivalent data gap identified across all three companion state frameworks in this series. Given Puducherry's close institutional integration with the National Informatics Centre discussed in section 16.1, the territory's cybersecurity posture for its government digital infrastructure likely benefits from the same national NIC cybersecurity service functions documented for Bihar's State Centre in that framework's Chapter 16.5, though this represents an inference rather than a directly confirmed finding specific to Puducherry.

16.6 Emerging Technologies: AI, Geospatial Systems and Smart Governance

Puducherry's most concrete application of emerging geospatial technology to governance is the UrbanShift Geospatial Planning Lab discussed in Chapter 14.1, which brought together 57 local government officials, planners, and community leaders specifically to explore how geospatial data can inform local climate resilience solutions spanning urban heat, stormwater flooding, and cyclone-related risks. This represents Puducherry's clearest documented example of emerging technology application in governance, and stands as a genuinely concrete, climate-adaptation-focused use case rather than the more general AI ambition statements documented for the considerably larger states examined in the companion frameworks, particularly Gujarat's hyperscale AI data centre ambitions discussed in that state's companion framework Chapter 16.1. This distinction reflects, once again, the pattern this framework has identified throughout its treatment of Puducherry: a territory whose small scale allows for genuinely targeted, specific technology applications addressing well-defined local problems, rather than the broader, more diffuse digital transformation and infrastructure investment strategies pursued by the considerably larger states examined elsewhere in this framework series.

Chapter 17: Innovation, Research and Knowledge Economy

17.1 State Innovation Ecosystem: Startups and Accelerators

Puducherry's startup ecosystem operates under the territory's Startup Policy 2019, branded "Aspiring Puducherry," administered through a dedicated Puducherry Startup Cell that coordinates incubator establishment, allocates land or built-up space within the territory's

Industrial Estates and IT Parks on a preferential basis for incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, and fabrication laboratories, and supports the establishment of Atal Tinkering Laboratories specifically to cultivate scientific curiosity and innovation among young students (Startup India, 2026a, 2026b). The policy is backed by a dedicated ₹10 crore Puducherry Startup Fund, offering incubator grants of up to approximately ₹3 lakh, a modest but genuine fiscal commitment relative to the territory's overall scale documented throughout this framework (eChai Ventures, 2026).

Independent industry mapping of Puducherry's startup ecosystem found the territory lacks a large coworking market, with founders and remote workers instead distributed across a small handful of independent spaces in Puducherry town, including Seats and Space, 97Hub, L'espace, and BondState, alongside the Auromode Hive in Auroville, a converted 1975 factory offering dedicated desks and shared facilities, with a considerable amount of work additionally occurring informally from the French Quarter's cafes, discussed in Chapter 1.4 and Chapter 19, despite their comparatively slower internet connectivity relative to dedicated coworking spaces (eChai Ventures, 2026). This finding, that Puducherry's founder community works substantially from heritage cafes rather than purpose-built startup infrastructure, illustrates concretely how the territory's tourism and cultural identity, documented throughout this framework, extends even into its nascent innovation ecosystem's physical working culture.

17.2 Research and Development: Academic-Industry Linkages

Puducherry's principal technology incubator is the Atal Incubation Centre at the PEC Foundation, located on the Puducherry Technological University campus at Pillaichavady, funded through NITI Aayog's national Atal Innovation Mission and focused specifically on electronics design and manufacturing, the Internet of Things, and unmanned aircraft systems (eChai Ventures, 2026). Pondicherry University, discussed in Chapter 5.3, separately operates an MSME ASPIRE livelihood business incubator, sanctioned in 2021 under the Ministry of MSME's national ASPIRE scheme, oriented toward skilling and agriculture-based enterprise rather than deep technology, with this incubation infrastructure located on the university's Kalapet campus, which independent mapping identifies as the region's primary technology and incubation infrastructure hub feeding directly from the university's own local talent pool (eChai Ventures, 2026). This dual-incubator structure, one deep-technology-focused at the Puducherry Technological University and one livelihoods-and-agriculture-focused at Pondicherry University, represents a genuinely sensible institutional division of innovation focus for a territory of Puducherry's small scale, avoiding the kind of redundant, overlapping incubator investment that a larger state might otherwise risk.

17.3 Intellectual Property: Awareness, Registration and Commercialisation

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's patent filing volumes and intellectual property commercialization outcomes was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, consistent with the equivalent data gap identified for

the three full states examined in the companion frameworks. Given Puducherry's genuinely modest overall innovation ecosystem scale, documented throughout this chapter, this framework would expect the territory's aggregate patent filing volume to be correspondingly small in absolute terms, though potentially meaningful on a per-capita basis given the presence of genuinely research-active institutions including JIPMER, discussed in Chapter 6.1 and further below, and the territory's Atal Incubation Centre's specific technology focus areas.

17.4 Knowledge Institutions as Engines of Development

Puducherry's knowledge institution landscape is anchored by JIPMER, discussed in Chapter 6.1, which independent higher education ranking analysis confirms was ranked 4th among all Indian medical colleges in the National Institutional Ranking Framework's 2025 rankings, an institution founded in 1956 and designated an Institution of National Importance since 2008, now comprising more than 300 faculty members, over 700 resident doctors, and more than 1,600 total staff, admitting approximately 249 undergraduate students annually (eChai Ventures, 2026). This NIRF ranking places JIPMER considerably above Pondicherry University's own more modest 151-200 band NIRF ranking discussed in Chapter 5.3, indicating that Puducherry's single strongest individual knowledge institution asset is specifically medical and health sciences research and education rather than general higher education or engineering, a distinctive institutional strength profile relative to the broader, more generalist knowledge institution networks documented for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat in the companion frameworks. Puducherry's industrial estate network, discussed in Chapter 4.3, additionally hosts a cluster of World Health Organization Good Manufacturing Practice-certified pharmaceutical manufacturers, a direct and concrete academic-industry linkage between JIPMER's medical research strength and the territory's pharmaceutical manufacturing base (eChai Ventures, 2026).

17.5 Building a Youth Innovation and Research Ecosystem

Puducherry's youth innovation and scientific engagement infrastructure was demonstrated concretely through the five-day Southern India Science Fair 2025, inaugurated in the territory by Lieutenant Governor K. Kailashnathan, who described the fair as "a celebration of knowledge, innovation, and creativity" and specifically praised participating students for selecting contemporary, socially relevant exhibition topics, including the Wayanad landslide disaster, road accident prevention, and a widely reported missing-truck incident in Karnataka, while explicitly urging states and Union Territories nationally to allocate additional funding for such student exhibitions (News on Air, 2025g). This event, functioning as a regional rather than purely territory-specific science fair, illustrates Puducherry's continued role as a knowledge and educational hub for the broader southern Indian region, consistent with Pondicherry University's own regional jurisdiction extending to Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, discussed in Chapter 5.3.

17.6 Skill Development, Employability and Workforce Alignment

Puducherry's skill development architecture, discussed in the fiscal context of Chapter 2.2 and the education context of Chapter 5.4, includes the Chief Minister's Skill Development Programme targeting 30,000 youth under the 2025-26 budget, alongside Pondicherry University's specifically skilling-and-agriculture-oriented MSME ASPIRE incubator discussed in section 17.2. This framework's cumulative assessment across this chapter is that Puducherry's innovation and knowledge economy strategy, while genuinely modest in absolute scale relative to the considerably larger states examined in the companion frameworks, demonstrates a coherent and sensibly differentiated institutional structure: deep technology incubation at the Puducherry Technological University, agricultural and livelihoods incubation at Pondicherry University, and world-class medical research and training at JIPMER, together constituting a genuinely complementary rather than redundant set of knowledge economy anchors appropriately scaled to the territory's small population and land area, a coherence this framework has found more consistently achieved in Puducherry's innovation ecosystem design than in some of the larger, more geographically dispersed knowledge institution networks documented for the companion states.

Chapter 18: Agriculture, Allied Sectors and Food Security

18.1 Cropping Pattern, Agricultural Productivity and Input Use

Puducherry's agricultural sector, as documented in Chapter 3.3, focuses substantially on paddy rice cultivation, prominent particularly in areas with fertile alluvial soil where both traditional and modern farming techniques continue in practice, with the territory's overall rice production standing at approximately 61.3 thousand metric tonnes (Ministry of Food Processing Industries, 2026). Agriculture remains, as documented throughout this framework, one of the most significant occupations for Puducherry's residents, with approximately 45 percent of the total population depending directly or indirectly on farming for their livelihood (Ministry of Food Processing Industries, 2026). Puducherry's Krishi Vigyan Kendra maintains a genuinely notable record of applied agricultural research achievement specific to the territory: since its inception, the Kendra has released six distinct new paddy varieties and was identified as one of the national test centers under the All India Co-ordinated Rice Improvement Project as early as 1979-80, indicating a decades-long, sustained institutional research contribution to rice varietal development specifically relevant to Puducherry's growing conditions (Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of Puducherry, 2026).

18.2 Irrigation and Water Use Efficiency in Agriculture

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's irrigation command area and efficiency, beyond the general discussion presented in Chapter 10.2, was not available with sufficient additional detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Given the territory's paddy-dominant cropping pattern discussed in section 18.1, irrigation water management remains a central input consideration for Puducherry's agricultural sector, though the genuinely small total scale of the territory's cultivated area, discussed throughout Chapter 1 and Chapter 10.2, means irrigation infrastructure investment operates at an entirely different order of magnitude than the multi-thousand-kilometer canal networks documented for Punjab and Gujarat in the companion frameworks.

18.3 Agricultural Marketing, Price Realisation and Farmer Income

Puducherry's agricultural marketing architecture operates through the national Minimum Support Price system, with the MSP for paddy specifically rising from ₹1,868 per quintal in 2020-21 to ₹2,300 per quintal in 2024-25, a genuine and sustained increase over which period the territory's net sown area and gross cropped area also grew steadily, indicating a functioning and responsive marketing system supporting continued agricultural engagement rather than land abandonment (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026). Puducherry was additionally recognized as a designated Union Territory cluster under the national LEADS 2023 logistics performance assessment, specifically signifying the territory's focus on agricultural development within its broader logistics ecosystem (Ministry of Food Processing Industries, 2026).

18.4 Food Processing Industry and Value Chain Development

Puducherry's food processing sector, discussed in the industrial context of Chapter 3.4 and Chapter 4.3, benefits from the territory's designation under national logistics and agricultural development assessment frameworks discussed in section 18.3, alongside the WHO-GMP certified pharmaceutical manufacturing cluster documented in Chapter 17.4, which, while not itself food processing, indicates the presence of quality-certified manufacturing capacity within the territory's existing industrial estates that could plausibly extend to food processing value addition. A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's specific food processing capacity utilization was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, and represents a priority area for further primary research through the Ministry of Food Processing Industries' own published state profile documentation for the territory.

18.5 Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Poultry: Economic Contribution

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's animal husbandry, dairy, and poultry sector was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter beyond the Krishi Vigyan Kendra's training curriculum coverage of Animal Husbandry alongside its other agricultural extension subjects, discussed in section 18.1. Given the territory's genuinely small total agricultural land area, this sector likely operates at a considerably smaller absolute scale than the dairy sectors documented for Punjab and, especially, Gujarat's Amul cooperative model in the companion frameworks, though this represents an inference rather than a directly confirmed finding.

18.6 Fisheries: Inland, Marine and Aquaculture

Fisheries represents one of Puducherry's most significant and best-documented allied agricultural sectors, reflecting the territory's coastal geography discussed in Chapter 1.1 and Chapter 13.6. Puducherry's 45-kilometer coastline extends across 1,000 square kilometers of continental shelf enriched with marine fisheries potential, supporting a fishermen population of approximately 95,467, of whom 29,383 are actively engaged in fishing operations across 27 marine fishing villages and 23 inland fishing villages or hamlets distributed across the territory's four enclaves (Government of Puducherry, 2026c). Beyond marine fisheries, Puducherry is additionally endowed with 1,400 hectares of freshwater area in ponds and tanks suitable for both capture and culture fishery, alongside 800 hectares of brackish water area available for prawn culture specifically, a genuinely diverse inland and coastal aquaculture resource base for a territory of Puducherry's small overall land area (Government of Puducherry, 2026c).

Puducherry's fisheries policy has recently expanded to encompass deep sea fishing development specifically: the territory's Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare held a Joint Working Group meeting with central fisheries institutions to formulate a policy promoting deep sea fishing with a specific focus on the Andaman Sea, a genuinely ambitious extension of the territory's fisheries strategy well beyond its own coastal waters (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026). Under the national Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana,

₹6.68 crore in central share funding had been extended to 22,273 beneficiaries within the Union Territory as of the most recent reporting (Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare, Government of Puducherry, 2026). Most recently, the Department of Fisheries under the national Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying launched a significant Fisheries Infrastructure Project on September 1, 2026, held at Kamarajar Manimadapam and attended by Union Minister for Fisheries Rajiv Ranjan Singh alongside state ministers and members of parliament, explicitly featuring local fish farmers, including women involved in fishing, reflecting a community-driven implementation approach (Observer Voice, 2026). This project builds directly on Puducherry's already-upgraded Thengaithittu Fishing Harbour and a newly established Fish Landing Centre, infrastructure investments that independent reporting characterizes as positioning Puducherry as "a model for sustainable fisheries development" nationally (Observer Voice, 2026). The 2025-26 budget allocated ₹132.44 crore specifically for the Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare, a substantial commitment relative to the territory's overall ₹216.87 crore total agriculture and farmers welfare allocation discussed in Chapter 3.3, underscoring fisheries' genuinely central role within Puducherry's broader agricultural policy portfolio (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026).

18.7 Horticulture, Floriculture and Medicinal Plants

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's horticulture and floriculture sector, beyond the general crop diversity discussed in Chapter 3.3, including bananas, flowers, tapioca, coconut, groundnut, and sugarcane production, was not available with additional specificity in the sources reviewed for this chapter. Under the national Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana organic farming scheme, Puducherry has specifically targeted bringing approximately 600 hectares under organic farming cultivation during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 period, a genuine, quantified organic agriculture expansion commitment relative to the territory's overall small cultivated area (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026).

18.8 Agricultural Credit, Insurance and Risk Management

Puducherry's agricultural risk management architecture, discussed in Chapter 3.3, includes a full-premium crop insurance scheme specifically covering coconut cultivation, alongside an annual rain relief payment of ₹2,000 to affected farmers under the 2025-26 budget (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026). Under the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization, ₹7.24 crore was utilized from 2021-22 onward to benefit 440 farmers with various agricultural machinery, with a further ₹4.65 crore in mechanization interventions planned for the current fiscal year, a genuinely substantial per-farmer mechanization investment given the comparatively modest total beneficiary count involved, reflecting Puducherry's overall small farming population relative to the states examined in the companion frameworks (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026). Fishermen-specific risk management is addressed through the Central Government's Group Accident Insurance Scheme under PMMSY, extended to members of the territory's Fisheries Welfare Cooperative Prime Fishermen's Cooperative

Societies, alongside a dedicated Ban Relief assistance programme compensating fishermen for income loss during the territory's seasonal fishing ban periods, with beneficiary lists and Aadhaar-linked bank disbursement processes actively administered through 2026 (Department of Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare, Government of Puducherry, 2026).

Chapter 19: Tourism, Culture and Creative Economy

19.1 Tourism Asset Inventory: Natural, Heritage, Religious and Adventure

Puducherry's tourism asset base is organized around a genuinely distinctive fusion of French colonial heritage and Indian spiritual tradition, with the French Quarter, or White Town, its cobblestone streets, mustard-colored heritage mansions, and café culture, functioning as the territory's signature attraction and giving Puducherry its widely used nickname, the "French Riviera of the East" (Grokikipedia, 2026a). Beyond White Town, Puducherry's tourism inventory spans the Promenade Beach and its historic lighthouse, Bharathi Park, the Chunnambar Boat House and backwaters, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and a genuinely diverse religious landscape including the Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Lourds Church at Villianur, and the Manakula Vinayagar and Villianur Thirukameeswarar Hindu temples, reflecting the multi-faith religious composition documented in Chapter 1.4 (Max Holidays, 2026). Auroville, discussed in Chapter 1.4, functions as both a tourism destination and a genuinely distinctive living community: as of March 2025, the experimental township was home to approximately 3,300 residents from 61 countries, with its central Matrimandir Peace Area prohibiting vehicles entirely to maintain silence and tranquility for pedestrian and bicycle exploration only, a deliberate design choice reflecting the community's founding spiritual and ecological principles (Grokikipedia, 2026a).

19.2 Tourism Infrastructure: Hotels, Connectivity and Facilitation

Puducherry's tourism infrastructure spans a genuinely wide accommodation range, from boutique luxury beach resorts such as Palais de Mahe, featuring pools and spa services, to budget government-run tourist bungalows and hostels priced between ₹500 and ₹1,500 per night, including the Government Tourist Home near the railway station, alongside a growing Airbnb villa market particularly concentrated on Auroville's outskirts (Grokikipedia, 2026a). Heritage stays specifically within White Town command a considerable premium, commonly exceeding ₹10,000 per night during peak season, with industry guidance recommending booking 45 to 60 days in advance given that French Quarter rooms tend to sell out early during the territory's peak December-January visitor window (HappyFares, 2026). Transport connectivity, discussed in Chapter 8, remains substantially road-and-rail-dependent given Puducherry Airport's currently limited air service, with most travellers instead flying into Chennai and completing the remaining approximately 150 to 160 kilometer journey by road.

via NH32, a roughly three-hour drive, or by direct train services including the Pondicherry Express and Sapthagiri Express from Chennai (WhatMovesYou, 2026).

19.3 Domestic and International Tourist Flows: Trends and Targets

Puducherry recorded 2.092 million domestic tourist visits and 31,000 foreign visitor arrivals in 2023, figures that, while considerably smaller in absolute scale than the visitor volumes documented for Bihar and Gujarat in the companion frameworks, represent a genuinely substantial tourism flow relative to Puducherry's own small resident population of under two million discussed in Chapter 1.3, implying the territory likely receives more annual tourist visits than it has permanent residents (Grokikipedia, 2026a). Tourism Puducherry's own 2025 reporting identifies December and January as the territory's peak inbound months, together contributing 34 percent of the territory's total annual visitor arrivals, a seasonal concentration this framework notes as relevant to the tourism employment and revenue planning discussed throughout this chapter (HappyFares, 2026). Under the Union Budget 2023-24's ten-year perspective Tourism Plan specifically developed for Puducherry, the territory has set an explicit target of creating employment opportunities for 5,000 youths over five years through tourism sector development, connecting directly to the youth employment findings documented in Chapter 3.7 and Chapter 20.3 (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2026).

19.4 Cultural Heritage Preservation and Institutional Framework

Puducherry's cultural heritage preservation framework operates through a combination of religious institutions, including the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust's stewardship of the Ashram itself, and government-supported heritage tourism programming, exemplified by the annual Puducherry Heritage Festival, which specifically showcases the territory's colonial history, art, and music, and the Bastille Day celebrations held each July 14 in White Town, featuring parades and cultural events that directly draw on Puducherry's residual French institutional ties discussed throughout this framework, including in Chapter 4.7's treatment of the Indo-French airport redevelopment joint venture (TravellingCamera, 2026). The territory's Fête de Pondichéry, coinciding with school holidays, represents a further recurring cultural institution specifically timed to align with the territory's peak domestic tourism season discussed in section 19.3 (HappyFares, 2026).

19.5 Creative Industries: Handicrafts, Performing Arts and Cultural Economy

Puducherry's creative economy spans a genuinely distinctive handicraft tradition including handmade paper, terracotta, leather goods, and textiles, alongside the specifically notable Cluny Embroidery Center, producing intricate handmade embroidery on textiles, and the Auroville Market, offering eco-friendly, handmade products produced within the township's own artisan and social enterprise ecosystem (TravellingCamera, 2026). Auroville itself represents Puducherry's single most distinctive creative and social enterprise asset, discussed in Chapter 4.5's overview of the territory's economy, home to approximately 230 social enterprises employing approximately 5,000 people drawn from surrounding villages, a

genuinely substantial employment contribution given the township's own resident population of just 3,300 discussed in section 19.1, indicating that Auroville's economic footprint extends considerably beyond its own residential community into the broader surrounding local economy (eChai Ventures, 2026).

19.6 Film, Media and Content Industries as Economic Drivers

A comprehensive, current, quantitative assessment of Puducherry's film and media industry was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, consistent with the equivalent data gap identified across all three companion state frameworks in this series. Puducherry's distinctive visual character, its French colonial architecture and coastal setting discussed throughout this chapter, has made the territory a recurring filming location for Tamil and broader Indian cinema and television production, though a quantified assessment of this sector's specific economic contribution to the territory was not confirmed within the sources reviewed for this chapter, and this represents a priority area for further primary research through Puducherry's Department of Tourism and Tamil Nadu's film facilitation infrastructure, given the territory's close integration with Tamil Nadu's own considerably larger film industry discussed throughout this framework's treatment of Puducherry and Karaikal districts' relationship with their host state.

Chapter 20: Cross-Cutting Themes and Integrated Policy Imperatives

20.1 Sustainable Development Goals of the State

A comprehensive, current, Puducherry-specific NITI Aayog SDG India Index score was not available with sufficient detail in the sources reviewed for this chapter, a data gap this framework notes is consistent with the broader pattern in which smaller Union Territories receive less granular treatment in national SDG reporting compilations than the major states examined in the companion frameworks. Given Puducherry's genuinely strong performance documented throughout this framework, exceptional literacy discussed in Chapter 1.5, zero maternal deaths discussed in Chapter 6.3, universal Jal Jeevan Mission coverage with independently verified functionality discussed in Chapter 10.1, and joint national leadership in the PGI 2.0 Access domain discussed in Chapter 5.1, this framework would expect Puducherry's aggregate SDG performance to rank among the strongest of any jurisdiction examined across this entire framework series, though this framework declines to assert a specific confirmed ranking without direct index data and flags this as a priority area for future revision.

20.2 Gender Mainstreaming Across Sectors

Gender considerations recur favourably throughout this framework's treatment of Puducherry. The territory's sex ratio of 1,037 females per 1,000 males, documented in Chapter 1.3, exceeds numerical parity, a finding this framework has not documented for any of the three full states examined in the companion frameworks. This favourable demographic foundation is reinforced by the territory's zero maternal death achievement discussed in Chapter 6.3, its specific women's economic empowerment initiatives including the girl-child birth insurance scheme and stamp duty reduction for women's property registration discussed in that same chapter, and the enhanced monthly financial assistance for women heads of

below-poverty-line families discussed in Chapter 2.2. The cumulative picture across these findings positions Puducherry as this framework series' clearest example of a jurisdiction whose gender equity indicators and policy architecture align consistently in a positive direction across multiple, independently verified sectors, rather than exhibiting the more mixed, indicator-specific divergence this framework documented for Gujarat's gender profile in that state's companion framework Chapter 20.2.

20.3 Youth Policy and Demographic Dividend Realisation

Puducherry's youth policy imperative, discussed throughout Chapter 5, Chapter 17, and Chapter 19, presents a profile broadly favourable relative to the youth unemployment crises documented for Punjab in the companion framework. The territory's youth unemployment rate of 5.7 percent, discussed in Chapter 3.7, combined with its strong educational access indicators discussed in Chapter 5.1, and its specific, targeted youth employment initiatives spanning the Chief Minister's Skill Development Programme, discussed in Chapter 2.2, and the tourism sector's explicit 5,000-youth employment target, discussed in Chapter 19.3, together suggest a territory with a genuinely more manageable youth employment challenge than documented for any of the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, a difference this framework attributes in substantial part to Puducherry's smaller absolute youth population scale combined with its comparatively strong per-capita fiscal capacity for targeted programming.

20.4 Migration: Internal, Inter-State and International Dimensions

Puducherry's international migration profile represents this entire framework series' most historically distinctive and structurally unique case, rooted directly in the territory's French colonial history discussed in Chapter 1.1 and this framework's Preface. The Puducherry diaspora, a demographic group specifically originating from the territory and its constituent districts, numbers approximately 300,000 people worldwide, concentrated substantially in France itself, and in the French overseas territories of Réunion and the French Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, a migration pattern dating to indentured labour sailings from Pondicherry city and Karaikal between 1853 and 1883 (Wikipedia, 2026f). The Puducherry diaspora community in Guadeloupe alone is estimated at approximately 55,000 people within a total population of over 400,000, indicating a genuinely substantial demographic imprint of Puducherry-origin emigration on that specific French Caribbean territory (Wikipedia, 2026f).

Running in the opposite direction, Puducherry hosts a small but historically and legally distinctive resident French national population: of the 9,950 French nationals residing in India as of 2013, nearly all live within Puducherry district specifically, a concentration reflecting the territory's unique treaty-based provision guaranteeing continued French citizenship to individuals whose birth and nativity had been registered during the French India colonial regime, under the formal Treaty of Cession governing the territory's 1954 to 1962 transfer to India, discussed in Chapter 1.1 (Wikipedia, 2026g). This treaty-based dual

citizenship arrangement has itself been a source of documented local political contention: in February 2015, the Indo French Senior Citizens Association staged street protests in Pondicherry specifically protesting the denial of French nationality and voting rights that affected residents believed the Treaty of Cession had guaranteed them, illustrating that Puducherry's residual French colonial legal inheritance remains an active, contested, and unresolved dimension of the territory's citizenship and migration governance even six decades after the formal transfer of sovereignty (Wikipedia, 2026g). This bidirectional, France-specific migration relationship, a substantial outward diaspora combined with a small but legally distinctive resident French community, represents a genuinely unique cross-cutting theme this framework has not found paralleled in any form across the companion Bihar, Punjab, or Gujarat frameworks, each of whose international migration patterns, discussed in their respective Chapter 20.4 sections, follow more conventional contemporary labour migration and remittance patterns rather than this kind of multi-generational, treaty-rooted colonial migration legacy.

20.5 Science, Technology and Innovation for Development

Puducherry's science, technology, and innovation ecosystem, discussed comprehensively in Chapter 17, extends cross-sectorally into the territory's climate adaptation planning discussed in Chapter 14.1's UrbanShift Geospatial Planning Lab, its agricultural varietal research discussed in Chapter 18.1's Krishi Vigyan Kendra rice breeding programme, and its medical research strength at JIPMER discussed in Chapter 17.4. This framework's cumulative assessment is that Puducherry's innovation ecosystem, while genuinely modest in absolute scale, demonstrates a coherence and sectoral complementarity, discussed in Chapter 17.6, that the territory's small size appears to facilitate rather than constrain.

20.6 Statistical System Strengthening and Evidence-Based Policymaking

This Puducherry framework has, consistent with the practice established across all three companion documents, flagged data gaps across numerous chapters, including per capita income precision in Chapter 3.2, HDI and SDG index confirmation in Chapter 1.5 and this chapter's section 20.1, and film industry data in Chapter 19.6. Puducherry's genuinely distinctive strength on this specific dimension, however, relative to every companion framework in this series, is the territory's demonstrated capacity to produce independently verified, award-recognized functionality data specifically for its Jal Jeevan Mission performance, discussed in Chapter 10.1, a form of third-party-verified outcome data this framework has not found matched in comparable rigor for any single indicator examined across the companion Bihar, Punjab, or Gujarat frameworks. This suggests that where Puducherry's administrative scale allows for genuinely thorough, ground-level verification, discussed throughout this framework as a recurring advantage of the territory's small size, the resulting data quality can exceed that available even from considerably larger and more resourced state statistical systems.

20.7 Public Participation: Behavioural Change and Citizen Engagement

Puducherry's citizen engagement architecture, discussed in Chapter 16.3's MyGov Puducherry portal, is reinforced by the territory's exceptionally strong electoral participation: the 2026 Legislative Assembly election recorded voter turnout of 89.87 percent, the highest ever recorded for an assembly election in the Union Territory, and a figure this framework has not found matched by any comparable state-level election turnout documented across the companion Bihar, Punjab, or Gujarat frameworks (Wikipedia, 2026h). This exceptionally high civic participation rate, combined with the territory's demonstrated welfare delivery execution capacity documented throughout Chapter 7 and its independently verified public service performance documented in Chapter 10.1, together position Puducherry as this framework series' clearest example of a small, well-governed jurisdiction whose citizens engage actively with, and appear genuinely responsive to, their government's institutional performance.

Chapter 21: Union Territory Vision 2047 — Strategic Priorities and Development Roadmap

21.1 Long-Term Vision and Flagship Missions

Puducherry's long-term development vision, discussed in this framework's Preface and Executive Summary, centers on Chief Minister N. Rangasamy's explicit target of raising the territory's Gross State Domestic Product from its current approximately \$5.5 billion to \$25 billion within a decade, a nearly fivefold increase the Chief Minister has himself characterized as ambitious (Abhijeet Shirke, 2025). This territorial target operates within the broader national Viksit Bharat @2047 framework, under which NITI Aayog's own approach paper targets a \$30 trillion national economy with per capita income reaching \$18,000 to \$20,000 by the year marking the centenary of Indian independence, a framework former Chief Minister Rangasamy directly engaged with at the Eighth NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting, where he specifically discussed the Karasur industrial estate development and the territory's broader industrial diversification strategy (Viksit India, 2026; Careers360, 2023).

Puducherry's flagship missions, drawn from this framework's chapter-by-chapter review, center on three genuinely distinctive priorities not weighted identically in the companion Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat frameworks. First, blue economy development, reflecting Union Home Minister Amit Shah's explicit 2026 campaign commitment to position Puducherry as a "Blue Economy hub," building on the PY-SHORE project discussed in Chapter 4.5, Chapter

8.4, and Chapter 13.6, and the territory's substantial fisheries sector documented in Chapter 18.6. Second, heritage and cultural tourism-led growth, building on the territory's genuinely distinctive French colonial and spiritual tourism assets documented in Chapter 19, with the explicit ten-year Tourism Plan target of 5,000 youth employment opportunities discussed in that chapter. Third, targeted industrial diversification within the territory's genuine land constraints, reflected in the Viksit Gujarat-style "Choose Your Incentive" and Ease of Doing Business reforms discussed in Chapter 4.1, adapted specifically to Puducherry's small-scale, high-density industrial estate model discussed in Chapter 4.3.

21.2 Medium-Term Priority Action Plan (2025–2030)

Puducherry's medium-term priorities, drawing on this framework's cumulative findings, should center on four areas where this framework has identified genuine and specific opportunity. First, converting Puducherry's demonstrated Jal Jeevan Mission functionality success, discussed in Chapter 10.1, and its zero-maternal-death health system achievement, discussed in Chapter 6.3, into a replicable institutional model that the territory's own GRIT-equivalent monitoring mechanism, discussed further in section 21.7, should document and potentially offer as technical assistance to other, larger Indian states struggling with the formal-versus-functional coverage gaps this framework has documented extensively in the companion Bihar and Gujarat frameworks. Second, resolving the Puducherry Airport land acquisition and Indo-French redevelopment process, discussed in Chapter 8.3, which has remained a recurring, multi-budget-cycle priority without full resolution, and which this framework identifies as a specific, trackable infrastructure milestone with direct implications for the tourism growth target discussed in Chapter 19.3. Third, verifying, through independent, third-party audit, the actual installed capacity delivered under the current 2024-2026 rooftop solar programme discussed in Chapter 9.4, given the territory's own documented history of a substantial gap between 2015 solar policy targets and delivered capacity. Fourth, addressing the coastal erosion crisis documented in Chapter 13.6, building on the National Institute of Ocean Technology's hybrid reef and beach nourishment programme, given the direct threat this erosion poses to both the territory's fishing communities discussed in Chapter 18.6 and its beachfront tourism assets discussed in Chapter 19.1.

21.3 Financing Strategy: Resource Mobilisation, Revenue Enhancement and Expenditure Rationalisation

Puducherry's financing strategy for its Vision 2047 ambitions must contend with the specific fiscal architecture documented in Chapter 2, in which the territory's borrowing capacity operates within a centrally negotiated annual ceiling rather than the more autonomous Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management framework available to the full states examined in the companion frameworks. Given Puducherry's genuinely strong own-revenue share, at approximately 69 to 70 percent of total receipts, documented in Chapter 2.9, and its comparatively favourable position relative to Punjab's self-inflicted subsidy-driven fiscal crisis documented in that state's companion framework, this framework's central financing

recommendation for Puducherry is that the territory's most productive path to its \$25 billion GSDP target lies not primarily in raising additional revenue, but in the kind of high-leverage, internationally co-financed projects exemplified by the ₹1,433 crore PY-SHORE initiative discussed in Chapter 4.5, where World Bank co-financing at a 70 percent share allows Puducherry's own comparatively modest fiscal contribution to unlock a considerably larger total investment than the territory's own budget could support unilaterally. This model, leveraging international development finance and central government infrastructure investment, discussed in Chapter 8.1's ₹20,000 crore highway commitment, to supplement rather than substitute for the territory's own fiscal capacity, represents a genuinely sensible financing strategy specifically calibrated to Puducherry's small scale and close central government integration.

21.4 Centre-State Partnership: Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Special Grants

Puducherry's centre-Union-Territory partnership, discussed throughout Chapter 2 and Chapter 15, is characterized by a considerably closer and more directly integrated relationship than documented for any of the three full states examined in the companion frameworks, reflected concretely in the Indo-French airport redevelopment joint venture discussed in Chapter 8.3, the direct central ministerial involvement in the September 2026 Fisheries Infrastructure Project launch discussed in Chapter 18.6, and Union Minister Gadkari's personal inauguration of the territory's October 2025 highway projects discussed in Chapter 8.1. This pattern of direct, high-level central government engagement with Puducherry-specific infrastructure and welfare initiatives, occurring at a frequency and level of ministerial seniority this framework has not found matched in the equivalent chapters of the companion Bihar, Punjab, or Gujarat frameworks, suggests that Puducherry's Vision 2047 strategy should continue to actively cultivate and leverage this close central relationship as a genuine comparative advantage rather than treating it merely as a constraint on the territory's autonomous decision-making authority discussed in Chapter 1.2 and Chapter 15.1.

21.5 Inter-State Cooperation: Regional Development Councils and River Boards

Puducherry's inter-state cooperation requirements, discussed throughout this framework and most directly in Chapter 4.8, are structurally more extensive and more consequential for the territory's basic functioning than for any full state examined in the companion frameworks, given Puducherry's necessary, ongoing dependence on Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh for functions ranging from airport land acquisition, discussed in Chapter 8.3, to the shared Madras High Court judicial system, discussed in Chapter 15.3, to the territory's fundamental physical accessibility, discussed throughout Chapter 8. This framework's Vision 2047 recommendation is that Puducherry's government formalize this inherent, multi-state dependency through a dedicated, standing inter-governmental coordination mechanism, distinct from ad hoc, project-specific requests such as the airport land negotiation, given that the territory's four-enclave geography, discussed in Chapter 1.1, means this cooperative dependency will remain a permanent structural feature of Puducherry's governance regardless of how successfully the territory achieves its other economic and social development targets.

21.6 International Collaboration: Common Development Agenda and Global Partnership

Puducherry's international collaboration profile, discussed in Chapter 20.4, is genuinely without parallel among the jurisdictions examined across this entire framework series, anchored by the territory's distinctive, treaty-rooted, bidirectional relationship with France specifically, spanning the 300,000-strong Puducherry diaspora across France, Réunion, and the French Caribbean, the small but legally distinctive resident French national community within Puducherry itself, and the concrete, current institutional expression of this relationship in the Indo-French Puducherry Airport redevelopment joint venture discussed in Chapter 8.3.

This framework's Vision 2047 recommendation is that Puducherry's government explicitly develop this France-specific relationship into a more comprehensive economic and cultural partnership framework, potentially extending beyond aviation infrastructure into the territory's tourism, education, and knowledge economy priorities discussed in Chapter 17 and Chapter 19, given that no other Indian state or Union Territory examined across this framework series possesses a comparable historical and demographic foundation for this specific kind of bilateral relationship.

21.7 Monitoring, Evaluation and Results Framework

Puducherry's monitoring and evaluation framework should, this chapter's cumulative findings suggest, build directly on the territory's demonstrated capacity for genuinely rigorous, independently verified outcome measurement, exemplified by the Swachh Bharat Diwas functionality assessment discussed in Chapter 10.1, which represents this entire framework series' strongest single example of a formal-coverage claim being independently corroborated by a named, dated, third-party functionality evaluation. This framework's recommendation is that Puducherry extend this same rigorous, independently verified evaluation standard to its other headline Vision 2047 metrics specifically, including the rooftop solar programme's actual delivered capacity, discussed in Chapter 9.4 and section 21.2 above, and the tourism sector's progress against its 5,000-youth employment target, discussed in Chapter 19.3, rather than relying on self-reported administrative statistics alone for these politically salient commitments.

21.8 Accountability Architecture: Legislature, Civil Society and Citizens

Puducherry's accountability architecture, discussed throughout Chapter 7, Chapter 15, and Chapter 20.7, benefits from the territory's exceptionally high electoral participation, with the April 2026 Legislative Assembly election recording 89.87 percent turnout, the highest ever recorded in the Union Territory's history, and from the demonstrated, generally strong correspondence this framework has documented between Puducherry's stated policy commitments and their actual, verified delivery across health, water, and education access specifically. This framework's concluding assessment is that Puducherry, notwithstanding its narrower constitutional legislative authority relative to a full state, discussed throughout

Chapter 1.2 and Chapter 15.1, represents this entire four-jurisdiction framework series' most consistent example of a government whose policy design, execution, and independently verifiable outcomes align coherently with one another, a pattern this framework attributes to a genuine combination of factors: the territory's manageable administrative scale, its close and productive integration with central government institutions and financing, its historically strong human capital base reflected in its exceptional literacy rate, and an evidently engaged citizenry reflected in its record electoral turnout. Whether Puducherry can sustain this coherence while pursuing the genuinely ambitious fivefold economic expansion its own Chief Minister has targeted, discussed in section 21.1, while continuing to navigate its distinctive, unavoidable dependence on three separate neighbouring state governments for core infrastructure and services, discussed throughout this framework and most directly in section 21.5, represents the central open question this framework identifies for Puducherry's development trajectory through 2047, a question this small territory's history of genuine, verified delivery, documented across Chapters 6, 10, and 11 specifically, gives this framework reasonable grounds for cautious optimism in answering.

End Note

This Comprehensive Development Framework for the Union Territory of Puducherry has been compiled across 21 chapters following the same Standardized Document Format applied to the companion frameworks for Bihar, Punjab, and Gujarat, drawing on the most current publicly available data as of mid-2026, and cited throughout in APA 7th edition format. Puducherry adds a genuinely distinct fourth case to this framework series: a small, non-contiguous Union Territory whose narrower constitutional autonomy and close integration with three neighbouring states might, in principle, be expected to constrain effective governance, but which has instead demonstrated, on the evidence this framework has assembled across water access, maternal health, and educational access specifically, some of the strongest and most credibly verified development outcomes of any jurisdiction examined in this entire series. Where Puducherry-specific data was not available with

sufficient granularity or currency, this framework has said so explicitly rather than substituting plausible-sounding estimates. Readers using this framework for planning or policy purposes should treat the flagged data gaps, most notably in the territory's precise per capita income, its SDG India Index score, and its film and media industry data, as priority areas for direct primary research through the relevant Puducherry government departments before final decisions are based on this document alone.

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