**Address by Shri Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Chairman, SEBI**
**Regional Seminar on Investor Awareness organized by NSE at Puducherry**
**Financial Empowerment Through Awareness – Building Confidence in India's Investing Journey**
**November 29, 2025**

இன்று இங்கு கூடி இருக்கும் அனைவரையும் அன்பாக வரவேற்கிறேன்!

இன்று நாம் பேசப் போகிற விஷயம் முக்கியம் ஆகும் – for every family at every stage of life.

financial literacy and investor awareness - இரண்டும் நமது நாட்டு மக்களின் பாதுகாப்பான பொருளாதார செழிப்புக்கு முக்கியம் ஆகும்.

(A warm welcome to everyone gathered here today!

We are going to discuss today a subject - which is important for every family at every stage of life Both financial literacy and investor awareness – play important role in securing the economic prosperity of our citizens).

We are living through a time where financial choices are intertwined with our daily decisions more deeply than ever before. Whether we are planning for education, purchasing a home, caring for ageing parents or preparing for retirement, the way we manage our financial resources determines our sense of security, independence and opportunity.

In this reality, financial literacy stands as a foundation of empowerment, enabling individuals to understand how to save, invest and protect their hard-earned money while navigating an increasingly digital and interconnected financial ecosystem.

The relevance of financial awareness becomes even more evident when we consider regions that hold strong potential for increased participation in the securities market. Puducherry is an excellent example. With high per capita income and a literacy rate of over 85% — which is well above the national average — the Union Territory reflects a population base that is well-positioned to engage with financial products confidently.

Over time the investor participation in Puducherry has increased 5.6 times, rising from around 22,000 investors in FY15 to nearly 1,24,000 now. This growth demonstrates both rising interest and the promising scope for deeper engagement, as individuals seek newer and trusted avenues for investment.

## Why Financial Literacy Matters Today

Financial literacy is no longer optional. It is as fundamental as reading or writing, and it affects every individual regardless of age, profession, or income level. It helps people distinguish credible financial opportunities from misleading promises and protects them from misinformation and impulsive decisions. A financially aware citizen is better prepared to participate meaningfully in the economic growth of the nation. When individuals understand the risks and rewards associated with financial products, they can make informed choices aligned with long-term goals, rather than reacting to speculation or social influence.

The ability to manage money wisely forms the bridge between aspiration and financial security. A society that is financially literate becomes more resilient, more confident and more equitable, because financial awareness is not only about wealth accumulation — it is about empowerment, dignity and informed decision-making.

## India’s Evolving Investment Landscape

India’s investment environment reflects a remarkable transformation. As of October 2025, India has over 21 crore demat accounts held by nearly 13.6 crore unique investors, highlighting the widening trust and participation in the securities market. Every day, approximately one lakh new demat accounts are opened, and this growth is no longer concentrated in metropolitan cities but extends across Tier-2 and Tier-3 towns, young professionals, self-employed individuals, senior citizens and increasing numbers of women investors.

The mutual fund industry now has assets exceeding Rs.80 trillion, which has grown more than sevenfold in just a decade, signaling that households are gradually shifting from traditional savings instruments toward structured, long-term investment avenues. This expansion in participation is encouraging, but it also brings a greater responsibility to ensure that investors are informed and protected.

The Investor Survey 2025 provides important insight into the current state of investor understanding. Only 36% of current investors possess a moderate or high level of knowledge about securities markets, and 62% rely on recommendations from friends, family or social media instead of registered intermediaries.

These findings highlight that awareness is not the same as understanding, and participation without knowledge exposes individuals to unnecessary risk. The gap between awareness and action — and between participation and comprehension — underscores why financial literacy must deepen alongside market growth.

## Strengthening Investor Protection and Trust

As market access has expanded through technology, new vulnerabilities have emerged. Online scams, deepfake impersonations, fraudulent trading applications, guaranteed return schemes, unregistered advisory groups and manipulative messaging platforms increasingly target unsuspecting individuals.

The challenge today is not only to increase participation, but to ensure that individuals enter the market with clarity rather than imitation, and with confidence rather than fear of missing out. Investor protection and investor convenience must advance together so that trust remains strong and enduring.

To support investors, SEBI has introduced several important measures designed to safeguard participation and strengthen transparency. The validated UPI handle framework ensures that payments are made to authentic UPI IDs of the SEBI-registered intermediaries. The SEBI Check functionality allows investors to instantly verify the genuineness of bank accounts of SEBI-registered intermediaries. This facility is available at SEBI website and the Saarthi mobile application.

To reduce unclaimed financial assets, SEBI has enabled integration of holdings with Digilocker, allowing investors to store and access demat and mutual fund information in a single secure location.

Nomination processes have been simplified. Our nationwide campaigns encourage individuals to update their nominee details so that rights of heirs are protected.

The MITRA platform enables investors to track inactive mutual fund folios, ensure compliance and reduce fraud risk, helping prevent financial assets from being forgotten or inaccessible.

The SCORES 2.0 platform and the SMART Online Dispute Resolution system have transformed complaint redressal through auto-routing, transparency in escalation and faster resolution timelines. While awareness of these mechanisms is still developing, nearly 90% of surveyed users express satisfaction with outcomes, affirming that accessible resolution strengthens investor confidence.

**Awareness as the Foundation of Participation**

Even the strongest systems cannot replace awareness, which remains the core foundation of investor protection. Around 50,000 investor awareness programmes have been held across nearly 90% of districts in 36 States and Union Territories during 2024–25.

To give impetus to the investor awareness among smaller cities, dedicated Mega regional investor seminar for awareness are organised.

Our collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) to train the Panchayat and block-level representatives embodies our commitment to grassroots reach. This program, initially taken up as a pilot project in six States, will eventually cover about 2.5 lakh panchayat level representatives.

Use of mass media like Television and Radio play a pivotal role in reaching large number of people. In collaboration with various regional channels of Doordashan and AIR, interactive programs aimed at investor awareness are conducted in the regional languages.

**Closing — A Shared Journey Forward**

These initiatives reflect a simple conviction: an informed investor is a protected investor. When knowledge strengthens confidence, participation becomes responsible and sustainable. Building upon the investor awareness campaigns such as SEBIvsSCAM, going forward, we will take up several multi-media, multi-lingual theme-based campaigns in collaboration with SEBI ecosystem. Based on learnings from SEBI’s Investor Perception Survey, we will design the outreach strategy for investor awareness in different languages for maximum impact. SEBI’s new State-level offices will aid in the implementation of this strategy.

As we look ahead, let us remember that our securities markets today carry the aspirations of young investors, the hopes of families, and the belief that disciplined financial planning can truly reshape futures. Let us continue to work together — institutions, professionals, community leaders, and citizens — to deepen financial awareness and nurture a culture of informed decision-making that benefits every household.

Thank you. Jai Hind!