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Assessing Implementation Barriers and Beneficiaries' Suggestions under the Shakambhari Yojana in Raigarh District, Chhattisgarh

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Abstract

This study was conducted in Raigarh district, Chhattisgarh, to assess the implementation challenges of the *Shakambhari Yojana* and gather beneficiary feedback for improving the scheme's effectiveness. The findings indicate that while the scheme has contributed positively to increased crop intensity, agricultural productivity, and year-round employment, several implementation barriers continue to hinder its optimal impact. The most frequently reported issue was the non-availability of spare parts for irrigation pumps (72.50%), followed by the complexity of the benefit application process (54.16%), limited operational knowledge of pump usage (50.83%), and the lack of skilled technicians in rural areas (40.00%). In response to these challenges, beneficiaries recommended ensuring the availability of spare parts in rural areas (73.33%), simplifying the application procedure (54.16%), providing on-site technical guidance during installation (51.66%), and deploying skilled technicians to remote regions (44.16%). These insights offer valuable direction for policymakers to refine the delivery mechanisms of the *Shakambhari Yojana* and enhance its long-term sustainability and impact.

Keywords: Shakambhari Yojana, irrigation infrastructure, Chhattisgarh state

Introduction

The *Shakambhari Yojana* is a flagship initiative launched by the Government of Chhattisgarh in 2005, designed to strengthen irrigation infrastructure and promote horticulture, particularly among small and marginal farmers. The scheme aims to reduce farmers' dependency on monsoon rains by facilitating the development of self-sustained irrigation sources, thereby enhancing agricultural productivity and resilience. Special emphasis is placed on ensuring equitable access for vulnerable groups, including Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and women farmers, contributing to inclusive and sustainable rural development. Under the scheme, eligible farmers receive a 75 percent subsidy-up to ₹16,875 for Diesel/Petrol/Electric open well submersible pumps up to 5 HP (Department of Agriculture, Chhattisgarh-2025), the scheme has benefited 80,869 farmers across the state, with Raigarh district recording the highest number of beneficiaries (8,610) (State Focus Paper 2023-24). The key objectives of the scheme include increasing crop intensity, improving land and water

management, promoting year-round local employment for agricultural laborers, and ultimately enhancing the socio-economic status of the farming community. Despite these ambitious goals and tangible achievements, the implementation of the *Shakambhari Yojana* is not without its challenges. This study focuses on identifying the key problems faced by beneficiaries in Raigarh district and documenting their suggestions to improve the scheme's effectiveness. By capturing grassroots-level feedback, this research seeks to provide evidence-based insights that can inform policy adjustments, enhance implementation strategies, and ensure that the intended benefits of the scheme reach all eligible farmers effectively.

The importance of this study lies in its potential to bridge the gap between policy design and field-level realities. Understanding beneficiaries' experiences and challenges is essential for optimizing resource allocation, improving service delivery, and advancing the overall goals of sustainable and inclusive agricultural development in Chhattisgarh

Methodology

The present study was conducted in Raigarh district of Chhattisgarh, focusing on the implementation and impact of the Shakambhari Yojana. Two blocks, Pussore and Tamnar, were purposively selected based on their high concentration of beneficiaries under the scheme. Within each block, six villages were identified based on the availability and accessibility of a significant number of beneficiaries, resulting in a total of 12 villages for the study.

From each selected village, 10 respondents were chosen through random sampling, leading to a total sample size of 120 respondents. The respondents comprised small and marginal farmers who had availed benefits under the Shakambhari Yojana. Data were collected through personal interviews using a well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule, ensuring consistency and reliability in responses.

The data collection process aimed to capture both quantitative and qualitative insights related to the problems faced by beneficiaries and their suggested solutions for improving the effectiveness of the scheme.

Results and Discussion

1. Problems faced by the respondent for the implementation of Shakambhari yojana

Despite the objectives of the Shakambhari Yojana to enhance irrigation infrastructure and support horticultural development, several challenges continue to affect its successful implementation. Respondents in Raigarh district reported a range of issues related to accessibility, operation, and maintenance of the scheme's components. The following table summarizes the major problems experienced by the beneficiaries.

Table 1: Problems faced by the respondent under Shakambhari Yojana

Sl. No.	Problems	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Non-availability of spare parts for irrigation pumps in villages.	87	72.50	I
2.	The complex process of taking benefits of Shakambhari Yojana.	65	54.16	II
3.	Limited operational knowledge of irrigation pumps	61	50.83	III
4.	Non-availability of skilled technicians in the rural areas.	48	40.00	IV

*Frequency based on multiple responses

The data in Table No. 1 reveals that the non-availability of spare parts for irrigation pumps is the most pressing issue, reported by 72.50% of the respondents. This shortage affects the timely repair and functionality of the pumps, limiting the intended impact of the scheme. The second major issue is the complex process of availing benefits, cited by 54.16% of the respondents. This reflects bureaucratic hurdles and a possible lack of awareness or support during the application process.

Additionally, 50.83% of respondents reported limited operational knowledge of the irrigation equipment, highlighting the need for technical training and user guidance. Lastly, 40.00% of respondents indicated the lack of skilled technicians in rural areas as a problem, which hampers timely maintenance and effective use of the provided equipment.

These challenges emphasize the need for systemic improvements in logistical support, technical training, and administrative efficiency to enhance the effectiveness of the Shakambhari Yojana.

2. Suggestions received from the respondent to overcome the problems

To enhance the effectiveness of the Shakambhari Yojana and mitigate the challenges faced during its implementation, respondents proposed several practical and actionable suggestions. These recommendations reflect the ground-level needs and expectations of the beneficiaries, focusing on improving infrastructure, simplifying processes, and increasing technical support. The following table presents the key suggestions offered by the respondents.

Table 2: Suggestions suggested by the respondent to overcome problems

Sl. No.	Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Availability of spare parts should be made available in rural areas.	88	73.33	I
2.	The process of getting benefits of Shakambhari Yojana should be made simple and easy.	65	54.16	II
3.	Provide on-site guidance during initial pump installation and use.	62	51.66	III
4.	The availability of skilled technicians in rural areas should be insured by the government.	53	44.16	IV

*Frequency based on multiple responses

As shown in Table No. 2, the most frequently proposed suggestion, reported by 73.33% of respondents, was to ensure the availability of spare parts in rural areas. This would help reduce downtime and improve the usability of irrigation equipment, directly addressing the most reported problem under the scheme. The second major recommendation, cited by 54.16% of respondents, was that the process of availing scheme benefits should be simplified. Many respondents found the current procedure to be time-consuming and complex, indicating a need for streamlined administrative processes and better communication.

On-site guidance during the initial pump installation and usage was suggested by 51.66% of the respondents, highlighting the need for technical support to help farmers effectively operate and maintain their equipment. Finally, 44.16% of respondents emphasized the importance of ensuring the availability of skilled technicians in rural areas. This would help in timely repair and troubleshooting, thereby enhancing the long-term sustainability of the irrigation systems provided under the Shakambhari Yojana. These suggestions underscore the necessity of improving rural infrastructure, capacity building, and administrative efficiency to optimize the benefits of the Shakambhari

Yojana and enhance the overall agricultural productivity of the region.

Conclusion

The Shakambhari Yojana is a well-targeted and inclusive government initiative aimed at transforming agricultural practices among small and marginal farmers in Chhattisgarh by enhancing irrigation infrastructure and promoting horticulture. By giving priority to vulnerable groups such as Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and women farmers, the scheme not only enhances agricultural productivity but also advances the goals of social equity and rural empowerment. The provision of subsidized irrigation pumps has played a vital role in reducing dependence on monsoon rains, enabling year-round cultivation, and contributing to improved livelihoods and food security. However, as the scheme continues to progress, it is essential to regularly assess its on-ground implementation and address the practical challenges faced by its beneficiaries.

This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of the scheme's impact in Raigarh district, identifying key problems such as the non-availability of spare parts, complex benefit procedures, lack of operational knowledge, and the shortage of skilled technicians. It also captures the beneficiaries' suggestions to overcome these issues, offering evidence-based recommendations to improve the scheme's delivery mechanisms and long-term effectiveness. Ensuring timely interventions, simplifying processes, and enhancing technical support will be crucial to maximizing the potential of the Shakambhari Yojana and contributing to sustainable agricultural development across the state.

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