



CAP RAJASTHAN

Council for Advocacy and Policy Research
(A Registered Section-8 Company)



CAP Magazine

A Magazine of Ideas, Policy, and Research

Volume 02, Issue 01

2026

FROM THE EDITOR

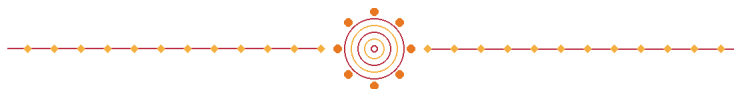
Where Policy Meets Place

Welcome to the CAP Rajasthan's magazine — a curated edition of writings by scholars, researchers, and observers who have chosen to look closely at the state we call home. The seven essays gathered here reflect the breadth of our concerns: from the constitutional debate around the Disturbed Area Act, to the slow unravelling of Jaipur's World Heritage status; from the sacred groves that sustain women and livestock in the Thar, to the competitive examination pipeline that has quietly rearranged Rajasthan's higher education landscape.

These pieces do not speak with a single voice. Some argue; some reflect; some report. What unites them is a commitment to evidence, attention, and the conviction that the questions worth asking about Rajasthan are also questions worth asking about India.

We invite you to read slowly — and to write to us when a piece moves you to think differently.

— *The Editorial Team*
CAP Rajasthan



CONTENTS

In this issue

01 ARTICLE • SOCIETY

Rajasthan Disturbed Area Act: A Protective or Divisive Act?

by **Vishnu Rankawat**

02 ARTICLE • CULTURE

Jaipur's UNESCO World Heritage Status: The Pink City in Crisis

by **Murli Manohar Dadhich**

03 ARTICLE • CULTURE

More Than Sacred Groves: How Oran Sustain Women, Livestock, and Life in Rajasthan

by **Saloni Khandelwal**

04 ARTICLE • EDUCATION

The Invisible Architecture of Every Visible Success

How Cognitive Bias, Collective Amnesia, and Institutional Worship Are Quietly Rewriting What We Call Success

by **Ramnaresh Kuri**

05 ARTICLE • ECONOMICS

The Trap of Competitive Exams

Human Capital Misallocation and Aspirational Risk in Rajasthan's Higher Education

by **Nandni Joshi**

06 ARTICLE • SOCIETY

The Quiet Life of Patriarchy

Stories, Memory, and the Moralization of Women's Suffering

by **Pratibha Kumari**

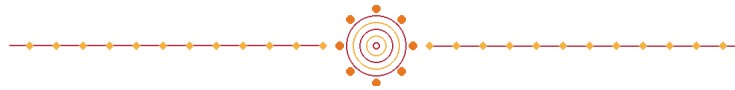
07 OPINION • AGRICULTURE

Rajasthan Agriculture Budget 2026: A New Beginning for Investment, Water Conservation, and Innovation

by **Khemraj Sharma**

Rajasthan Disturbed Area Act: A Protective or Divisive Act?

By **Vishnu Rankawat** • March 31, 2026



AUTHOR



Vishnu Rankawat

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Founder of the Centre for Accountability and Performance (CAP), Rajasthan, and a PhD scholar at the Centre for United States Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His research focuses on the use of social media in the United States Presidential Elections, exploring its impact on political communication, voter behavior, and electoral strategies. His areas of interest also include Indian and Rajasthan politics, governance, public policy, and the evolving role of digital platforms in shaping political discourse.

The Rajasthan government has passed a protective legislation officially titled "The Rajasthan Prohibition of Transfer of Immovable Property and Provision for Protection of Tenants from Eviction from Premises in Disturbed Areas Bill, 2026," commonly referred to as the "Disturbed Area Bill, 2026." The law is primarily intended to arrest demographic imbalance — a phenomenon that tends to emerge in communally sensitive areas where residents feel threatened in their personal safety, familial security, and commercial interests.

Under such circumstances, individuals are compelled to sell their property and ancestral land at prices well below prevailing market rates and relocate to areas they perceive as safer. This phenomenon, widely referred to as forced migration, can, when it occurs on a significant scale, precipitate acute demographic imbalance. The bill, however, has drawn sharp political criticism from opposition parties and other stakeholders, and has attracted considerable attention in the national media. It therefore warrants a dispassionate, scholarly examination.

IS IT UNCONSTITUTIONAL?

Rajasthan is the second state in the country to enact legislation of this nature, following Gujarat, which passed a comparable law in 1991 in response to recurring communal conflicts and riots within the state. Subsequent state governments in Gujarat, including that under Chief Minister Narendra Modi,

introduced further measures to address such social unrest. Much like the present legislation in Rajasthan, Gujarat's law also faced scrutiny from both the opposition and the judiciary. Nevertheless, it has continued to remain in force. This precedent establishes, with reasonable clarity, that legislation of this character has not been held unconstitutional by the judiciary.

WHAT IS IN THIS BILL?

At its core, the bill seeks to prevent forced migration and preserve demographic balance. Significantly, the law is not intended to be operative at all times; it may be enforced only at the discretion of the District Collector. Upon due examination of prevailing conditions in a given area and following a proper inquiry, the Collector is empowered to declare any area affected by communal tension as a "disturbed area" for a period not exceeding three years. The provisions of the law come into effect only upon such a declaration.

The bill itself defines four key terms central to its operation: distress sale, forced migration, demographic imbalance, and improper clustering. A distress sale refers to the involuntary sale of property by an individual. Forced migration denotes the relocation of an individual against their will, or movement precipitated by conditions that render continued residence in a particular locality untenable. Demographic imbalance describes a situation wherein the population of one community expands disproportionately in relation to another, at a scale significant enough to alter the character of an area. Improper clustering is closely linked to demographic imbalance and refers to the segregation or concentration of one community in a locality, often as a consequence of the forced displacement of another.

To prevent such improper clustering and forced migration, the bill introduces provisions to regulate distress sales. In areas declared as disturbed, the sale or purchase of immovable property requires the prior approval of the District Collector. During the period of such designation, no person within the area may enter into a property transaction without obtaining this approval. Violations of this provision attract penal consequences for both the buyer and the seller. These provisions apply with equal force to permanent residences and rented premises alike.

The bill also extends its protections to tenants. A landlord may not compel any tenant in a declared disturbed area to vacate the premises during the period of the designation. Furthermore, in the event of damage to the rented property during periods of conflict, the responsibility for repairs rests with the landlord, who must restore the premises within a prescribed period and at no cost to the tenant. In this manner, the legislation seeks to safeguard the interests of both permanent residents and tenants on equal terms.

IS IT DIVISIVE OR PROTECTIVE?

The answer to this question depends considerably on one's ideological vantage point — whether one's primary concern lies with the welfare of ordinary citizens, or whether one's political orientation is shaped by considerations of appeasement.

It is, by any reasonable assessment, a matter of common understanding that in the aftermath of riots, residents of affected areas experience deep insecurity. In a great many instances, individuals contemplate selling their property and relocating elsewhere, recognising that large-scale communal violence is itself evidence of sustained unrest in the area and that the prospect of enduring peace in the near term is remote. Even in localities that were previously peaceful, a recurrence of smaller or sporadic incidents following a major conflagration remains a distinct possibility. It is precisely under such circumstances that residents — particularly those with families — are most likely to consider migrating by liquidating their property.

“The sole provision introduced is that transactions of this nature shall require the approval of a competent authority, which will examine whether the transaction is being undertaken voluntarily or under conditions of coercion or distress.”

It is in this context that the bill assumes importance. The government does not seek to prohibit property transactions in such areas categorically. This provision will be operative only for a limited period and only after a careful assessment of multiple parameters. Even within a declared disturbed area, property may be bought or sold with the approval of the competent authority. It is, therefore, an oversimplification and indeed a mischaracterisation for opposition parties to assert that the bill renders private property transactions entirely illegal.

POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Communal conflicts and riots have, in several documented instances, served the interests of certain political parties and actors who possess vested interests in the perpetuation of such tensions. Religious conflicts tend to occur most frequently in areas where the population of different communities is relatively balanced, or where the numerical difference between them is not substantial. In such contexts, large-scale riots can decisively alter the political equations of a constituency and shift electoral outcomes in favour of particular parties — primarily because distress sales and forced migration generate demographic imbalance.

When an individual is compelled by fear to sell their home and relocate, they are unlikely to settle in an area dominated by the community they perceive as the source of their insecurity. This process gives rise to improper clustering — a phenomenon explicitly addressed in the bill itself as the "clustering of groups."

THE ECONOMICS BEHIND UNREST

It is well established that any episode of communal unrest generates political advantages for some actors, even as it inflicts displacement and suffering upon ordinary citizens. Religious conflicts that escalate into

riots result in damage to private and public property, economic losses, casualties, disruption to educational institutions and daily life, and grave deterioration in law and order.

However, there exists a dimension that merits closer examination — the economic benefit that certain actors may derive from riots and violence, particularly those who may have a role in instigating or sustaining such unrest. Communal violence generates panic and a pervasive sense of insecurity. In such an environment, many residents feel compelled to liquidate their property, ancestral land, and other assets at severely distressed prices in order to relocate to safer areas. This creates opportunities for individuals who are positioned to exploit precisely such circumstances.

In a well-governed and stable society, the architects of such conflicts ought to face the full force of the law. In the absence of adequate deterrence, however, social unrest can become a source of economic opportunity for certain actors — a reality that underscores the necessity of legislation such as the Disturbed Area Act.

CONCLUSION

The Disturbed Areas Act, 2026 is, in its essential character, a protective measure for the permanent residents and tenants of affected localities. It is not a legislation designed to divide communities. The very occurrence of riots is evidence of pre-existing fault lines and tensions between communities in a given area; this bill seeks to mitigate such divisions by extending legal protection to the residents concerned.

Given that a comparable law has been in operation in Gujarat for over three decades without being held unconstitutional by the judiciary, there is limited legal foundation for characterising this bill as violative of constitutional provisions. Most significantly, this legislation aims to reduce the economic and political dividends that certain parties or organised groups have historically derived from communal violence and unrest — thereby striking at one of the structural incentives that sustain such conflict.



Jaipur's UNESCO World Heritage Status: The Pink City in Crisis

By **Murli Manohar Dadhich** • March 13, 2026

Translated and adapted from the original Hindi article.



AUTHOR



**Murli Manohar
Dadhich**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A Ph.D. scholar at Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur, who has completed his M.A. and M.Phil. from the University of Rajasthan. His area of interest is Ancient Indian History. His doctoral research is titled "Various Dimensions of Femininity in the Mantras of Rigvedic Rishikas," where he explores the spiritual and cultural significance of feminine voices in the Rigveda.

Jaipur — lovingly called the "Pink City" — is not only the capital of Rajasthan but also a shining jewel of India's cultural and historical heritage. Its unique urban planning, the harmony of Vedic Vastu Shastra with Western knowledge, and the majestic pink buildings give it global recognition. On 6 July 2019, UNESCO included Jaipur's Walled City in the World Heritage List — a proud moment for India. But in less than seven years, this prestigious status is now in danger. In March 2026, UNESCO issued a serious warning that Jaipur could lose its World Heritage status. What are the reasons behind this crisis, and can it be saved?

JAIPUR'S HERITAGE STATUS: SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITERIA

To be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, a site must demonstrate "Outstanding Universal Value" (OUV). Jaipur received this status in 2019 based on three criteria: the exchange of human values in architecture and urban planning (Jaipur's grid-based plan and the blend of Vedic-Western Vastu Shastra); being an exceptional example of human history (founded by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II in the 18th century as a symbol of planned urbanisation); and its connection with cultural traditions (such as Jantar Mantar — Jaipur's scientific and cultural heritage).

Jaipur's Walled City is renowned for its wide streets, pink havelis, and historic bazaars. But today, it is fighting to preserve its identity.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CRISIS: UNESCO'S WARNINGS

2023 — First warning: UNESCO raised questions about Jaipur's conservation status. Illegal construction, commercial use of traditional havelis, and development projects without Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) were the main issues.

2024–2025: At the 47th World Heritage Committee meeting (Decision 47 COM 7B.71), UNESCO expressed concerns about the Jaipur Metro project, neglect of historic stepwells, and modern interventions. The Rajasthan government was asked to submit a "State of Conservation Report" in 2025, but it was found inadequate.

2026 — Current Final Warning: In March 2026, UNESCO gave Jaipur until December 2026 as a final opportunity to submit a corrective report. If it is found unsatisfactory, Jaipur could be placed on the "World Heritage in Danger" list or delisted altogether.

“In 1991, Jaipur had 1,200 havelis. That number has now fallen to about 800 — a 33 per cent decline.”

KEY CAUSES OF THE CRISIS

Illegal construction and loss of havelis: Illegal construction has risen rapidly in the Walled City. Traditional havelis are being demolished to build hotels and shops. Lack of maintenance, owners' neglect, and commercial pressures are the primary drivers.

Jaipur Metro Project: The metro expansion has damaged historic structures and underground water sources. Approving the project without a comprehensive HIA violates UNESCO guidelines.

Neglect of Stepwells (Baoris): Jaipur's historic baoris — part of an ancient water-management system — have fallen prey to encroachment and neglect. Their non-conservation is a major issue.

Administrative Shortcomings: A lack of coordination between urban development, the archaeology department, and the municipal corporation has weakened conservation efforts. The absence of legal protection and HIA frameworks has further worsened the situation.

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS: WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

The Rajasthan government has taken some steps, but these have proved insufficient. The 2025 State of Conservation Report mentioned action on illegal construction and funding for haveli conservation, but UNESCO considered it inadequate. A Special Area Heritage Plan is being prepared, focusing on

construction control, preservation of traditional architecture, and community participation. However, limited resources, lack of political will, and public awareness are weakening these efforts.

THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS

Cultural Loss: Jaipur losing its World Heritage status would be a major blow to India's cultural heritage. The city is a symbol of Rajasthan's identity and Indian culture. **Economic Impact:** World Heritage status boosts tourism. Jaipur attracts millions of tourists, and losing this status would affect tourism revenue, employment, and local businesses. **National Prestige:** India would, for the first time, have a World Heritage site delisted, raising questions about the country's conservation commitment.

LESSONS FROM THE WORLD

Liverpool (2021) and Dresden (2009): Both cities were delisted because of excessive development. This is a warning for Jaipur. **Taj Mahal:** Despite pollution and tourism pressure, active conservation has saved it. Jaipur can draw inspiration from this.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate steps: Strict bans on illegal construction and severe penalties for violations; a temporary moratorium on new construction in the World Heritage area; emergency funds for the repair of havelis and stepwells.

Medium-term: A dedicated heritage-preservation law; recruitment and training of conservation experts; involving the local community in conservation; digital documentation of historic structures.

Long-term strategy: A sustainable tourism model; educational programmes for heritage awareness; cooperation with other World Heritage cities.

Monitoring: An independent committee — including UNESCO experts, the Archaeological Survey of India, and the local community — should monitor conservation.

CONCLUSION: A DECISIVE MOMENT FOR JAIPUR

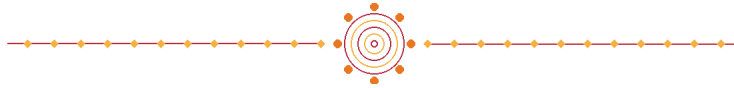
Jaipur's UNESCO World Heritage status is in crisis, and the time until December 2026 is decisive. Illegal construction, erosion of havelis, and administrative shortcomings lie at the heart of this crisis. But this crisis is also an opportunity — Jaipur can not only save its status but also become a model of sustainable development and heritage conservation.

For this, immediate action, a strong legal framework, community participation, and political will are essential. Jaipur is not just a city but a symbol of India's cultural soul. Saving it is the responsibility of us all. Will the Pink City retain its shine? The next nine months will answer.



More Than Sacred Groves: How Oran Sustain Women, Livestock, and Life in Rajasthan

By **Saloni Khandelwal** • March 5, 2026



AUTHOR



Saloni Khandelwal

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

An independent researcher who completed her Master's degree from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her research interests lie in gender and intersectional politics, focusing on questions of power, representation, and social inequality. She has prior experience working as a researcher with Please Sit Down and has published a research paper with an ISBN status, along with several opinion and analytical articles in news platforms.

Imagine this: in the desert of Rajasthan, the day begins while it's still dark. Women wake up first, with empty cans in their hands, to milk their cows and goats. The animals feed on Orans — sacred groves that have been like a mother to these communities for generations.

These groves are more than just trees. They are the heartbeat of life here. When the Orans disappear, everything starts to fall apart. The women lose their small earnings, their animals go hungry, and families have no choice but to leave the villages their ancestors called home. What's being lost isn't just land or trees — it's an entire world of memories, dignity, and a bond with the earth that has kept them alive for centuries.

“Orans are far more than sacred groves. They are living socio-ecological institutions that sustain pastoral livelihoods, support women's daily survival strategies, and maintain ecological balance in Rajasthan's fragile desert landscape.”

A LANDSCAPE LIKE NO OTHER

In Jaisalmer district, Bhadariya Oran, spread over 17,804.13 hectares, is the largest Oran in India. According to estimates, Rajasthan has over 6,00,000 hectares of Oran land, comprising nearly 25,000 Orans. Orans have traditionally been sources of fodder, fuel, timber, forest produce, roots, and medicinal herbs. They were considered symbols of prosperity for the communities that possessed them. Additionally, Orans have played a significant role in promoting livestock-based economies and supporting the development of pastoral communities in Rajasthan.

In our state, sacred groves are not only important from cultural and spiritual perspectives, but are also extremely vital for the ecological balance of the region. Think of the Orans as lush green islands in the middle of the desert sun. They aren't just trees; they're entire neighbourhoods for animals. Deer find shade here, birds like pelicans and lapwings build their nests, and even shy creatures like wild cats and jackals call these groves home. Sometimes, they become a welcome rest stop for birds traveling thousands of miles.

A 2020 report from the Indian Wildlife Institute highlighted the vulnerability of desert wildlife to high-tension electricity lines, underlining the fragility of these ecosystems.

“For rural women, Orans function as everyday support systems – providing fodder, fuelwood, shade, and access to natural resources that sustain both households and livestock.”

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION OF RURAL LIFE

And the magic of the Orans doesn't stop with the animals. Their roots hold the earth together, keeping the desert sands from spreading. Most importantly for the families living nearby, these groves are nature's own food bank. When the land outside is dry and brown, the Orans still provide greenery, making sure the goats and cows have something to eat. It's this quiet, daily gift that keeps life going for everyone – people and creatures alike.

Beyond their environmental role, Rajasthan's Orans form the economic and social foundation for rural areas. Rajasthan is the second largest livestock economy of India in which Western Rajasthan holds share, turning these landscapes into engines of autonomy and tradition. For countless families, the milk produced by livestock grazing in these groves represents the primary and often only independent income source for women. This revenue, earned from selling milk, ghee, and butter, directly fuels household needs, funds children's education, and provides a crucial measure of financial dignity.

They function as a natural desert pantry and pharmacy. Trees like the ber, amla, khejri, and sangri provide nutrient-rich fruits, pods, and seeds for daily meals. Their branches supply firewood for cooking, while the undergrowth offers medicinal herbs and plants for household remedies and rituals.

A DOUBLE BLOW

The erosion of these lands, therefore, strikes a double blow. It directly threatens milk production and the fragile economic independence of women. Simultaneously, it severs access to vital non-timber resources, depleting both nutrition and centuries of inherited knowledge on sustainable foraging and healing. In regions surrounding large groves like the Degaray Mata Oran, which sustains tens of thousands, this loss isn't an abstract ecological concern — it is the way of life and the very basis of daily survival.

When this happens, it hits families hard in their wallets. With their main source of income gone, they are forced to leave the villages their families have always lived in. They move to faraway towns and cities, searching for any odd jobs they can find. In the end, a whole way of life starts to fall apart. A community that once thrived and took care of itself in the desert is being taken apart, piece by piece. Losing the Orans means more than losing trees — it means losing everything that has held these people together for hundreds of years.

MODERN PRESSURES

The pressures threatening Orans are largely modern and external. High-tension electricity lines, solar energy projects, and corporate land acquisitions increasingly encroach upon these sacred spaces. In some areas, livestock risk injury or death from poorly planned infrastructure. While developers promise short-term employment or incentives, the long-term losses for entire communities are severe. Women, once independent earners, are often reduced to low-wage labour or domestic work in distant towns, severing the link between their labour and empowerment.

The crisis of Orans highlights a profound conflict between short-term economic development and long-term community resilience. Protecting these groves is not just an environmental imperative; it is a matter of social justice, women's empowerment, and cultural survival. Community-led conservation efforts — where villagers organize petitions, awareness campaigns, and rituals to protect Orans — offer hope, but they require support from policy and legal recognition.

WILDLIFE AT STAKE

The ecological importance of Orans extends to wildlife as well. Rajasthan's arid zones host species that are rare or even unique to the region. The state bird, the Great Indian Bustard, once numbered in the thousands, now reduced at just 120–130 individuals due to habitat loss and collisions with high-tension power lines. Other avian species, such as pelicans, social lapwings, yellow-eyed pigeons, and even the melanic variant of Little Egret, rely on the Orans for feeding and nesting.

Grazing lands and water reservoirs in these groves also support jackals, deer, wild cats, squirrels, monkeys, and reptiles. High-tension lines installed across Orans by solar energy projects are causing catastrophic bird deaths; reports suggest that in some regions, 6.25 birds per kilometre die due to high-voltage wires. These infrastructure projects, intended to "develop" the desert, are erasing the very life that has long sustained both people and wildlife.

A CASCADING CRISIS

The loss of Orans also exacerbates the environmental vulnerabilities of Rajasthan. As centuries-old trees are cleared and grasslands vanish, temperatures rise by an estimated 3–5 degrees annually, soil erosion accelerates, and desertification spreads further into human settlements. Government policies have, in many cases, worsened the problem. Much of Rajasthan's Oran land, traditionally managed and protected by communities, was recorded as state-owned land after independence. This allowed companies to acquire leases for solar and infrastructure projects, often side-lining local custodians.

“In Rajasthan's arid landscape, the survival of Orans represents more than environmental protection — it reflects the enduring power of community stewardship over land, culture, and life itself.”

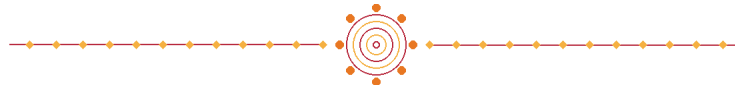
The loss of Orans is thus not a singular problem — it is a cascading crisis. Ecology, economy, and society are intertwined, and the disappearance of sacred groves threatens all three.



The Invisible Architecture of Every Visible Success

How Cognitive Bias, Collective Amnesia, and Institutional Worship Are Quietly Rewriting What We Call Success

By **Ramnaresh Kuri** • March 5, 2026



AUTHOR



Ramnaresh Kuri

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

From Rajasthan, Ramnaresh recently completed his Master's in Survey Research and Data Analytics from the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai. He is interested in population trends, social research, and using data to support public policy. He also enjoys working with statistics and data visuals to better understand social issues.

ABSTRACT

This article interrogates the deeply embedded human tendency to identify, venerate, and ultimately reduce success to a single 'supreme' individual — in sports arenas, academic institutions, corporate hierarchies, and the cultural imaginaries we inherit. Drawing on cognitive neuroscience, social psychology, and systems theory, it argues that this reductive instinct is not an innocent shortcut but a culturally conditioned bias that silently reshapes self-worth, career trajectories, migration decisions, and our capacity for empathy. It proposes a framework of structural thinking and expanded epistemological humility as correctives to this narrow and profoundly costly way of seeing.

THE HERO FACTORY: A VERY HUMAN PROBLEM

In 2002, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky's decades of work on cognitive heuristics crystallized into a Nobelist insight: the human mind does not reason from first principles — it shortcuts. It simplifies. It narrates (Kahneman, 2011). And one of its most seductive narratives — cross-cultural, cross-historical, almost axiomatic — is the story of the singular hero.

We seem constitutionally incapable of watching a cricket match and crediting the collective. We watch Virat Kohli anchor a chase under pressure, and the cultural apparatus immediately begins its rituals: the slow-motion replay, the reverential commentary, the trending hashtag. The 10 other players who set the platform, rotated strike, and held their nerve under identical pressure — they dissolve into the backdrop. This is not merely a media failure. It is a failure of cognitive architecture.

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent. — John Donne (1624). We have known this for four centuries. We just keep forgetting it.”

Psychologist Philip Zimbardo famously argued that we systematically over-attribute outcomes to individual disposition while ignoring situational and systemic factors — what social psychology calls the Fundamental Attribution Error (Ross, 1977). Applied to excellence, this error becomes a cultural institution. It does not merely distort perception; it actively manufactures scarcity in domains of human worth.

THE NEUROSCIENCE OF WORSHIP: WHY OUR BRAINS GO SIMP MODE

Let's be real with ourselves. When Rohit Sharma hits a six or Khan Sir drops a viral explainer, something lights up inside us, and it is not purely aesthetic appreciation. It is neurochemical. Functional neuroimaging studies show that observing a high-status individual succeed activates the ventral tegmental area and nucleus accumbens — the dopaminergic reward circuit that also fires during food, sex, and cocaine (Moll et al., 2006). Hero worship is, at the neurological level, an addiction. We don't just admire winners. We get high off them.

Simultaneously, the default mode network, responsible for self-referential thought, is deeply activated when we consume narratives, particularly those with a central protagonist (Mar et al., 2006). Cinematic storytelling does not merely entertain; it structurally trains the brain to search for a singular focal point of meaning in every domain of experience. This is why, after a lifetime of movies, textbooks, and LinkedIn success stories, our default cognitive mode is to scan any system — a startup, a department, a cricket team — and ask: "But who is the real hero here?"

“The brain prefers a clean story over a complicated truth. The hero format is the brain's aesthetic preference, not reality's structure.”

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1983) demonstrates that human capability is distributed across at least eight distinct domains: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. Yet, in Indian academic culture particularly, we have historically collapsed this eight-dimensional space into a single axis: entrance examination performance. This is not intellectual seriousness. It is cognitive laziness dressed in competitive clothing.

THE INSTITUTE-FICATION OF HUMAN WORTH

The Indian Institutes of Technology represent genuine excellence — technically rigorous, intellectually demanding, globally respected. Many graduates have made contributions to science, policy, and entrepreneurship that deserve unstinting admiration. But something has gone sideways in the cultural metabolism of this excellence.

In a 2019 study published in *Higher Education*, researchers found that elite institutional branding in India creates what they termed a "credential halo effect" — a phenomenon where the institutional label overrides actual competence assessment in hiring, social prestige, and even matrimonial consideration (Trivedi & Dhawan, 2019). The institution does not merely certify competence; it replaces it as the unit of measurement.

We have constructed a social architecture in which a rank determines not just your college but your social legibility. Students who display extraordinary aptitude in fine arts, social entrepreneurship, vernacular literature, or craft-based knowledge systems are quietly told — often without anyone saying it aloud — that their intelligence is decorative, not real.

“We are not producing the sharpest minds. We are producing the most efficiently optimized test-takers, which is a very different thing.”

THE MIGRATION PARADOX

India loses roughly 20,000 high-net-worth individuals annually to emigration — many of them highly educated professionals — a figure that places it among the top three nations globally for wealthy outmigration (Henley & Partners, 2023). The discourse around brain drain tends to frame this as purely economic. This framing is not wrong, but it is incomplete.

There is a subtler, more psychologically complex force at work: the desire for external validation in a society that has trained its most educated citizens to define worth through external hierarchies. In a society where IIT is the ceiling of domestic success, many graduates find that ceiling arrives too quickly. The question is not just "where will I earn more?" but "where will I be recognized as sufficient?"

The tragedy is not migration itself; human mobility is structurally legitimate and often genuinely enriching. The tragedy is migration motivated not by curiosity or opportunity, but by the psychological exhaustion of living in a culture that measures you constantly against its own extremely narrow template of supremacy.

THE INVISIBLE ARCHITECTURE

In a 2014 study analyzing 10 years of IPL cricket data, researchers from the Indian Statistical Institute found that team performance metrics explained match outcomes significantly better than individual player ratings, yet media coverage and fan discourse remained overwhelmingly player-centric (Mukerjee & Rao, 2014). The gap between what drives results and what captures attention is not accidental. It is structural.

The same structural invisibility shapes knowledge economies. Behind every IIPS or IIT professor whose breakthrough paper earns institutional glory is a network of research associates, lab technicians, administrative staff, departmental librarians, and junior researchers whose invisible labor constitutes the actual substrate of discovery. In the cultural imagination, the Principal Investigator remains the hero.

“Every visible peak is the tip of an invisible iceberg. The iceberg does not reduce the peak — it produces it.”

THE ANGER MECHANISM

Here is something most of us have experienced but few examine rigorously: the visceral fury that erupts when someone challenges our chosen hero. A critique of Dhoni's captaincy decisions, a question about Elon Musk's management style, a measured skepticism toward an IIT alumnus's research victory — these provoke reactions far exceeding what intellectual disagreement warrants.

Matthew Lieberman's work at UCLA established that social pain — including perceived threats to one's social identity and group affiliations — activates the same neural circuits as physical pain: the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex and anterior insula (Lieberman & Eisenberger, 2009). When we have emotionally fused our identity with a hero, criticism of that hero is not an intellectual event. It is, to the limbic system, an assault.

TOWARD A SYSTEMS EPISTEMOLOGY

The antidote to hero-factory thinking is not the wholesale deflation of individual achievement. That would be its own form of distortion. The antidote is depth of perception — the trained ability to see outcomes as products of systems rather than singular agents.

Donella Meadows, in her foundational text on systems thinking, described the most common cognitive failure among intelligent people not as stupidity but as "event-level thinking" — interpreting outcomes by their surface agents rather than their underlying structural dynamics (Meadows, 2008). Event-level thinking says: "Narayana Murthy built Infosys." Systems thinking says: "Narayana Murthy emerged from and helped constitute a specific institutional, regulatory, educational, and cultural ecology without which Infosys could not have been imagined, let alone built." Both statements are true. Only one is complete.

PRACTICAL RECALIBRATIONS

Expand your attribution vocabulary. When you observe success, resist the compression. Before identifying "the" cause, map the contributing causes — logistical, relational, historical, structural. This is not false modesty. It is honest accounting.

Practice the "Second Hero" inventory. Behind every person you admire, deliberately identify three to five individuals or structures without whom that admiration would not be warranted. This is not a gratitude exercise; it is a perceptual workout.

Interrogate your anger. The next time a critique of someone you admire makes you defensive, treat that defensiveness as data. Ask: have I fused my identity with this person's reputation? If so, what does that fusion protect, and what does it cost?

Diversify your criteria of respect. If you find that the overwhelming majority of people you deeply admire share the same institutional pedigree, professional domain, or measurable success metric, your respect calibration has a distribution problem. Not a moral problem — a perceptual one.

Redefine what deserves to go viral. The teammate who held the partnership together deserves a thread. The junior researcher whose methodology enabled the paper deserves a citation. The support staff whose invisible competence sustains visible performance deserves acknowledgment. Not as charity. As accuracy.

CONCLUSION: NO GENIUS IS AN ISLAND

The central argument of this piece is not anti-excellence. Excellence is real. Individual achievement is real. The capacity of certain human beings to operate at the outer edges of cognitive, physical, or creative performance is one of the genuinely astonishing features of our species.

The argument is anti-reductionism — specifically, the reductionism that mistakes visibility for causality, that confuses the face of a system for its engine, and that then organizes entire cultural and educational architectures around producing more of those visible faces while systematically under-investing in the structural conditions that make those faces possible.

“The most important shift a highly educated mind can make is from asking 'who is the best?' to asking 'what conditions produce flourishing?’”

What the research converges on, what every field from developmental psychology to organizational behavior to network science corroborates, is that human excellence is irreducibly collective. Not in a vague, inspirational sense. In a rigorously causal one. Not one hero. A network. Not one best. A distributed field of contributions. Not a ranking. A recognition.



The Trap of Competitive Exams

Human Capital Misallocation and Aspirational Risk in Rajasthan's Higher Education

By **Nandni Joshi** • February 28, 2026



AUTHOR



Nandni Joshi

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

An aspiring economist passionate about driving meaningful change through evidence-based policy. She has worked on and presented research projects on Decent Work in the Indian Economy and the Underutilization of Apprenticeship Programs among Youth as part of her early academic journey. With a keen interest in policy analysis, she explores the intersection of economics, social development, and governance. Nandni actively shares her perspectives through her Substack newsletter, Economic Lens by Nandni, where she writes on contemporary economic issues and policy debates.

It is not uncommon in Rajasthan to come across a graduate who has invested four, five, or even seven years in preparing for a competitive government examination. In urban areas such as Jaipur, Kota, and Jodhpur, whole areas are organized around coaching institutes, test series, and candidates living in shared accommodations. For many families, a government job symbolizes security, respect, and social mobility. For candidates, it symbolizes predictability in an unpredictable job market.

“The competitive examination ecosystem has the potential to create a structural misallocation of human capital.”

However, this aspiration conceals a significant economic puzzle: What are the implications when a significant proportion of educated youth dedicate several years of their productive lives to preparing for a low-probability outcome? When recruitment cycles turn irregular and job vacancies are postponed, what are the opportunity costs of waiting? And what are the implications for the overall human capital path in Rajasthan?

This article contends that the "competitive examination ecosystem" in Rajasthan, together with the absence of private sector absorption and irregular recruitment cycles, has the potential to create a structural misallocation of human capital. The problem is not about aspiration but about incentives, probabilities, and long-term economic implications.

PROBABILITY, DELAY, AND RISK

Delays in the notification, examination, or appointment process in competitive exams in Rajasthan — whether for administrative services, teaching, or clerical recruitment — are common. As a result of unpredictable recruitment cycles, the "waiting period" extends. In expected utility theory, the impact of uncertainty in timing is substantial. If the probability of selection is low and uncertain, the risk-adjusted return is reduced. Still, candidates persist. Why? The explanation is partially rooted in structural conditions in the labour market.

LABOUR MARKET STRUCTURE

The absorption capacity of the private sector in Rajasthan is not uniform over different areas. Industrial estates are present, but large numbers of graduates — especially from arts, humanities, and general degree courses — have restricted formal employment opportunities in their immediate areas. A segmented labour market is formed: a secure and prestigious public sector, and a fragmented and insecure private or informal sector.

In labour economics, when one sector provides substantially better stability and wage differentials, queuing theory applies. People are prepared to be unemployed or underemployed while waiting for entry into the public sector. This has been noticed in many developing countries, where public sector employment is a rationed good. Thus, the competitive exam ecosystem is not irrational; it is shaped by relative wage structures and labour market segmentation.

The time spent on exam preparation is not necessarily wasted. It involves learning, hard work, and mental effort. However, if the preparation takes several years without skill diversification, it may result in skill specialisation.

“Delayed entry into the labour market reduces the number of productive years and the cumulative earnings.”

The opportunity cost of preparation includes the opportunity cost of work experience, loss of income, opportunity cost of career development, and opportunity cost of skill development. Human capital theory argues that early work experience has a profound effect on lifetime earnings. If thousands of graduates delay entry into the labour market for extended periods, the overall productivity impact is decreased participation of educated youth in the labour market, skill development stagnation, and decreased entrepreneurial risk-taking.

KOTA: A MICROCOSM OF CONCENTRATED ASPIRATIONAL RISK

In Kota, Rajasthan, whole neighbourhoods are structured around aspiration. Hostels are lined up on the roads. Coaching centres occupy billboards. Libraries function late into the night. Every year, an estimated 1.5 to 2 lakh students pour into the city to prepare for competitive exams like JEE and NEET, turning Kota into what is famously known as India's largest coaching centre. Kota symbolizes more than an educational hub; it symbolizes a model of massive human capital investment.

“When the whole population has statistically insignificant probabilities of success, it leads to what economists call a lottery equilibrium.”

Unlike an industrial hub, which is known for the production of goods or technological innovation, Kota is known for the production of students for competitive exams. It is an economy that is probabilistically driven. This is not necessarily inefficient. An educational hub can lead to knowledge spillovers, peer learning, and performance discipline. But when the whole population has statistically insignificant probabilities of success, it leads to a lottery equilibrium — where many people invest heavily for a few high-reward outcomes.

BEHAVIOURAL DISTORTIONS IN DECISION-MAKING

Economic models assume that people make correct interpretations of probabilities. This is disputed by behavioural economics. Optimism Bias: Applicants tend to think they have a better chance of passing than the actual probability. Overweighting of Small Probabilities: Prospect theory shows that people give too much weight to low-probability, high-payoff options, such as lottery tickets. Sunk Cost Fallacy: Since several years of preparation have been invested, withdrawal appears as a loss, and hence continued preparation is done despite low returns.

Herd Behaviour: Since communities prepare together, social pressures continue the preparation process. Prestige Signalling: Preparation for government jobs is a signal of ambition and seriousness, and hence continued social legitimacy is maintained even if there are no jobs.

CRITIQUE BY SANJEEV SANYAL AND THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Economist Sanjeev Sanyal, part of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, has also criticized India's deep-rooted obsession with elite competitive exams. In media interactions, he has pointed out the extremely low chances of selection in exams like the UPSC Civil Services and questioned whether spending years preparing for a sub-1% success probability is an efficient utilization of national talent.

His critique is not directed at public service but is an economic commentary on allocation efficiency. As a dynamic economy increasingly values technological adaptability, risk-taking entrepreneurship, and

skill diversification, there could be opportunity costs associated with extended withdrawal from productive labor market participation.

MACROECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

When thousands are stuck in extended preparation cycles: Youth unemployment rates underestimate "waiting unemployment." The potential consumption capacity of young households remains low. Psychological distress rises because of repeated cycles of failure. Marriage and household formation are postponed.

For a state that aspires to fast-track growth, human capital must be channelled into productivity. A system that funnels excessive amounts of time into narrow public sector gateways might limit diversification. On the other hand, competitive exams have a legitimate role in governance. The public sector needs competent administrators, teachers, and bureaucrats. The problem is one of scale, transparency, and timeliness.

IS IT TRULY A TRAP?

The "trap" metaphor may be too simplistic. For most, success in competition changes family destinies. Government jobs have always facilitated social mobility, especially for first-generation university graduates. The problem arises when recruitment schedules are unpredictable, vacancy information is not transparent, skill fall-backs are not developed, and aspiration becomes the norm rather than an option among several. Then, risk becomes systemic and aspirational risk.

“Reform needs incentive realignment, not the discouragement of aspirations.”

TOWARDS INCENTIVE-COMPATIBLE REFORM

Predictable Recruitment Schedules — Statutory schedules minimize uncertainty and risks. Transparent Selection Information — Public dashboards with applicant numbers, vacancy ratios, and stage-wise filtering help informed decision-making. Skill-Integrated Coaching Ecosystems — Digital literacy, communication skills, and data competencies are integrated to ensure fall-back employability. Improving Private Sector Absorption — Industrial policies and MSME development can reduce over-reliance on government sector jobs. University-Level Career Diversification — Undergraduate universities need to increase internship opportunities and career counseling.

CONCLUSION: REBALANCING ASPIRATION AND ALLOCATION

Kota is a metaphor for aspiration. It is an indicator of the remarkable willingness of families to invest in the pursuit of success. The competitive ecosystem in Rajasthan embodies a belief in meritocratic

progress. However, economics forces a tough question: if the chances of success are extremely low and the preparation times span the best working years, then how viable is this allocation system?

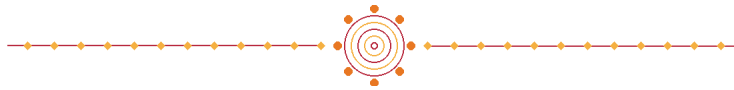
Aspiration has to continue. However, it has to be balanced with a structural framework that can minimize uncertainty, maximize choices, and shield youth from the adverse impacts of aspirational risks.



The Quiet Life of Patriarchy

Stories, Memory, and the Moralization of Women's Suffering

By **Pratibha Kumari** • February 21, 2026



AUTHOR



Pratibha Kumari

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A Research Scholar in the Department of Political Science at Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Shekhawati University, Sikar. Her doctoral research focuses on the theme: "Citizen Participation and Good Governance: A Study of the Role of the RTI Act with Special Reference to Rajasthan." This study seeks to critically examine how the Right to Information (RTI) Act has empowered citizens and enhanced transparency, accountability, and participatory governance in the context of Rajasthan.

For a long time, I believed that patriarchal thinking belonged largely to the past. With education, urbanization, and public conversations about women's rights, it seemed reasonable to assume that older ideals of female obedience and sacrifice were slowly losing their hold. However, experience has compelled me to reconsider this assumption.

At its core, this reflection is driven by a central question: if social change, education, and public discourse have expanded so significantly, why do ideals of female endurance and sacrifice continue to retain such moral authority? More specifically, how do cultural narratives — embedded in folklore, family memory, and popular media — quietly sustain patriarchal expectations by shaping how women themselves interpret duty, dignity, and self-respect? It is this tension between visible social progress and the persistence of internalized ideals that this article seeks to examine.

“Patriarchy does not survive only through laws or explicit restrictions; it endures quietly through stories, memories, and moral ideals that shape how women understand virtue and self-respect.”

Patriarchy does not survive only through laws or explicit restrictions; it often operates quietly through childhood stories, wedding songs, family advice, and inherited ideals that continue to define what a "good woman" should be. These narratives do not simply describe how women should behave; they shape how women see themselves. Many women accept these ideals, live by them, and teach them to the next generation without realizing their regulatory power. These narratives become part of women's inner moral compass: they guide behavior, shape decisions, and normalize compromise.

A CONVERSATION THAT CHANGED MY UNDERSTANDING

It was only when I met a lady in our family relations that I began to fully understand how deeply these inherited ideals continue to influence women today. A few days ago, she visited our home. It was the first time she treated me like an adult, so she openly shared her experience of an almost 50-year-long marriage. After her marriage at the age of 12, she never received any love, care, respect, support, or affection — only physical, mental, and emotional abuse. Her husband cheated on her, yet she always remained loyal to him.

Her account left me almost stunned. I found myself struggling to understand how she had endured so much without open resistance. I could not easily reconcile the extent of her sacrifices with the calmness of her tone. I asked her why she had tolerated so much and whether she ever felt that her own life had quietly slipped away in the process. My question was not merely about her marriage; it was about the ideals that had made such endurance appear meaningful.

She responded without hesitation. "It was written in my fate," she said. "It was God's will." Then she asked me, almost with surprise, "Have you never heard the story of King Mordhwaj?"

THE STORY BENEATH THE SUFFERING

The name of the story stirred something immediate within me. I had heard it many times in childhood. My grandmother used to narrate it to us in the evenings, and at one time, I had even admired it. It was the story of a princess whose father married her to a lame peacock. The marriage appeared cruel and unfortunate, yet the tale eventually transformed into one of divine reward: through devotion and endurance, the peacock became a powerful king, blessed by Lord Shiva, and the princess's suffering was justified.

As she invoked this story, I realized that she was not merely recalling a tale from folklore. She was drawing upon a moral framework that had shaped her understanding of marriage itself. Endurance was not misfortune; it was faith. Suffering was not loss; it was destiny waiting for divine recognition. In that moment, I began to see how stories heard in childhood do not simply remain stories. They become explanations. They become comfort. And, at times, they become the very language through which women make sense of their own sacrifices.

THE PATTERNS ACROSS CULTURE

The story she mentioned is not an isolated tale preserved in memory. Variations of the same moral structure continue to circulate even today. A recent Punjabi film, *Bibi Rajni*, released in 2024, follows a similar narrative arc. In the film, a princess is married to a man afflicted with leprosy. Rather than resisting her fate, she accepts her marriage with devotion and serves her husband with unwavering faith. Eventually, through divine grace associated with the sacred waters of Amritsar, he is cured. Her endurance is rewarded; her suffering becomes meaningful.

There are many stories like this. For example, in one popular Rajasthani tale, a woman silently tolerates severe hardship, including violence from her husband, while continuing her devotion to Ganesha (Binayak Ji). Her patience and faith are ultimately rewarded with immense wealth — gold, silver, and prosperity — granted through divine blessing. Again, suffering is not questioned; it is sanctified. Reward does not come through resistance but through submission and devotion.

Across these narratives — whether in cinema or folklore — the message remains consistent: a woman's virtue lies in her capacity to endure, to remain faithful, and to trust that divine justice will eventually compensate for earthly injustice. Transformation may occur; the husband may change; fortune may arrive — but only after her unquestioning acceptance. These narratives do not merely entertain or inspire faith; they create an ethical expectation.

A QUESTION THAT UNSETTLED THE STORY

I told her that I was familiar with the story. Then, perhaps more directly than I had intended, I added that such stories were also written and preserved within male-dominated traditions. If divine reward was promised to those who endured suffering, I wondered aloud why no visible grace had transformed her own circumstances. Had her entire life not passed in waiting?

For a brief moment, she did not respond. It was not a dramatic silence, but it was noticeable. I sensed that she had perhaps never been asked to examine the story in this way. The moral certainty with which she had invoked it seemed, if only slightly, unsettled.

Yet she quickly moved forward. She began to explain that she, too, had "options." She could have chosen differently, she said. She could have responded to betrayal with betrayal. But she had remained within her "maryada" — within the boundaries of dignity and restraint. As she spoke these words, I noticed something striking: there was pride in her eyes. Not regret. Not resentment. Pride.

“The deepest power of these narratives lies not in promising divine reward, but in transforming endurance itself into a source of moral pride.”

THE ARCHITECTURE OF FATALISM

As our conversation drew to a close, I found myself reflecting not only on her life but on the stories that had given it meaning. What unsettled me most was not her suffering, but the certainty with which she justified it. The narratives she had internalized had not merely taught her patience; they had shaped her understanding of virtue itself.

Stories of this kind cultivate a deeply fatalistic orientation. They encourage women to interpret hardship as destiny rather than injustice, and endurance as moral superiority rather than constrained choice. The promise of eventual divine reward replaces the possibility of present resistance. In such narratives, questioning is rarely valorized; silence is. Courage is defined not as confrontation but as tolerance.

It is striking that tales celebrating unconditional acceptance are overwhelmingly centered on women. Rarely do we encounter popular narratives in which a man silently endures humiliation, betrayal, or violence, only to be rewarded by supernatural grace for his loyalty. Female devotion is frequently elevated to sacred status, even linked to divine intervention, while male endurance is seldom romanticized in the same manner. Loyalty, in these stories, becomes a spiritual virtue for women, but not an equivalent moral demand for men.

“Social change cannot be measured only by visible reforms; it must also be examined in the stories that continue to define duty, dignity, and sacrifice for women.”

The consequence is subtle yet powerful. Such narratives do not simply entertain; they normalize asymmetry. They do not explicitly command obedience, yet they make obedience appear dignified. Over time, these ideals become internal convictions. Women defend them, embody them, and transmit them — often with pride.

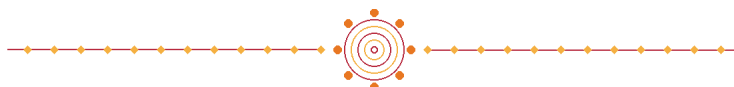
When I looked into her eyes and saw that pride, I understood that patriarchy does not survive only through coercion; it survives because it is woven into memory, faith, and moral imagination. It survives because stories are repeated, believed, and lived. Social change cannot be measured only by visible reforms; it must also be examined in the narratives that continue to define virtue, duty, and dignity for women.



Rajasthan Agriculture Budget 2026: A New Beginning for Investment, Water Conservation and Innovation

By **Khemraj Sharma** • February 21, 2026

Translated and adapted from the original Hindi. Co-authored with Dr. Vikas Kumar.



AUTHOR



Khemraj Sharma

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Currently pursuing his Ph.D. at IIIT Vadodara. He holds a Master's degree in Digital Society from the Central University of Rajasthan. Originally from Bandikui (Dausa), Rajasthan, his research and writing focus on real-life issues faced by students, the sustainable environment, and related social concerns.

The Rajasthan Agriculture Budget 2026 emerges as a visionary and inclusive initiative for the state's farmers, aimed at making agriculture more profitable, sustainable, and technology-driven. In this budget, the government has clearly prioritized the needs of small and marginal farmers — particularly in regions where water scarcity, rising production costs, and natural risks have long hindered agricultural development.

Through schemes such as micro-irrigation, farm ponds, diggis, and pipeline networks, water conservation and water management have been strengthened — extremely necessary for an arid state like Rajasthan.

MECHANISATION AND FARMER EMPOWERMENT

The expansion of agricultural mechanisation, custom hiring centres, and solar pumps will not only reduce farming costs but also improve productivity and time management. Crop diversification and nutrition security have been addressed by incentivising pulse and oilseed crops, while initiatives such as vermi-compost units and solar energy will promote environment-friendly agriculture.

Under digital agriculture, the Krishi Rajmaps App and the establishment of research institutions will connect farmers with modern information and innovation. Overall, the Rajasthan Agriculture Budget 2026 lays a strong foundation for increasing farmers' income, conserving resources, and ensuring long-term agricultural development.

“The budget focuses on security, irrigation, technology, water conservation, and digital empowerment for farmers – laying a strong foundation for self-reliant and sustainable agriculture.”

KEY SCHEMES AND ALLOCATIONS

In the Rajasthan Budget 2026, the state government has given special attention to increasing farmers' income, reducing costs, and modernising agriculture. Major investment has been announced in irrigation, agricultural mechanisation, water conservation, solar energy, digital agriculture, and crop diversification. The main aim of these initiatives is to directly benefit small and marginal farmers, tackle the water crisis, and make agriculture profitable.

Under the Collective Fencing (Samuhik Taarbandi) scheme, the number of required farmers has been reduced. Where earlier a group of 10 farmers was mandatory, now only 7 farmers can together apply. In addition, the government will provide a subsidy of up to 70 per cent under this scheme. This will increase the security of fields, reduce damage caused by wild animals and stray cattle, and keep farmers' crops safe.

MECHANISATION AND CUSTOM HIRING

To promote agricultural mechanisation, the government has announced a subsidy of ₹160 crore on farm equipment. This will make modern agricultural tools such as tractors, seed drills, sprayers, and harvesters available to farmers at lower cost – reducing labour expenses and boosting productivity.

500 Custom Hiring Centres will be set up across the state. Through these centres, farmers will be able to hire modern agricultural machines. This facility will be especially beneficial for small and poor farmers, who are unable to purchase expensive agricultural equipment.

WATER, IRRIGATION, AND DIVERSIFICATION

Under the micro-irrigation scheme, approximately 3 lakh farmers will be benefited. Drip and sprinkler irrigation will save water, provide timely irrigation to crops, and improve production. This scheme is extremely important for a water-scarce state like Rajasthan.

To promote pulses and oilseeds, ₹130 crore will be spent. This will increase the production of crops such as gram, mung, urad, mustard, and groundnut — thereby increasing farmers' income and strengthening nutrition security in the state.

A vermi-compost unit will be set up in every Gram Panchayat. This will enable the local production of organic fertiliser, reduce dependence on chemical fertilisers, and improve soil fertility. It will also create employment opportunities in rural areas.

RESEARCH AND SOLAR POWER

A National Natural Excellence Centre will be established at Jodhpur Agricultural University. This centre will be instrumental in research, innovation, and the development of modern agricultural technologies, and will provide scientific advice and training to farmers. 50,000 solar pumps will be installed in the coming year, giving farmers cheap and clean energy, reducing dependence on electricity, and lowering irrigation costs. This initiative will also aid environmental protection.

WATER CONSERVATION INFRASTRUCTURE

36,000 farm ponds will be developed in the state, enabling the collection of rainwater and providing water for irrigation during dry periods. An additional 8,000 farm ponds and 8,000 diggis will be built — a major step towards water conservation. A subsidy will be given on a 15,000-kilometre-long pipeline network. This will ensure better water supply to fields and reduce water-leakage problems. About 50,000 farmers will also receive subsidies under the fencing scheme for approximately 20,000 kilometres.

DIGITAL AGRICULTURE

For the digitalisation of agriculture, the Krishi Rajmaps App will be launched. Through this app, farmers will have access to land records, crop information, weather forecasts, scheme information, and other digital services on a single platform — improving both transparency and convenience.

CONCLUSION

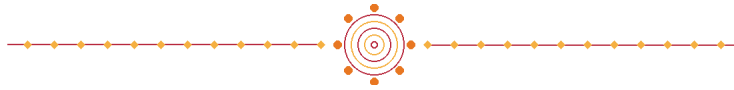
Overall, the Rajasthan Agriculture Budget 2026 focuses on security, irrigation, technology, water conservation, and digital empowerment for farmers. This budget not only addresses current challenges but, keeping future climate and resource-related problems in mind, takes a strong step towards making agriculture self-reliant and sustainable.



THANK YOU FOR READING

CAP Rajasthan

Council for Advocacy and Policy Research



Visit us online

caprajasthan.org

Mail us

contact@caprajasthan.org

contact us

+91 9549019854

*Submissions and correspondence welcome.
caprajasthan.org/submissions*