



Household Perception: Impact of Bhamashah on Digital Governance Reforms in Rajasthan

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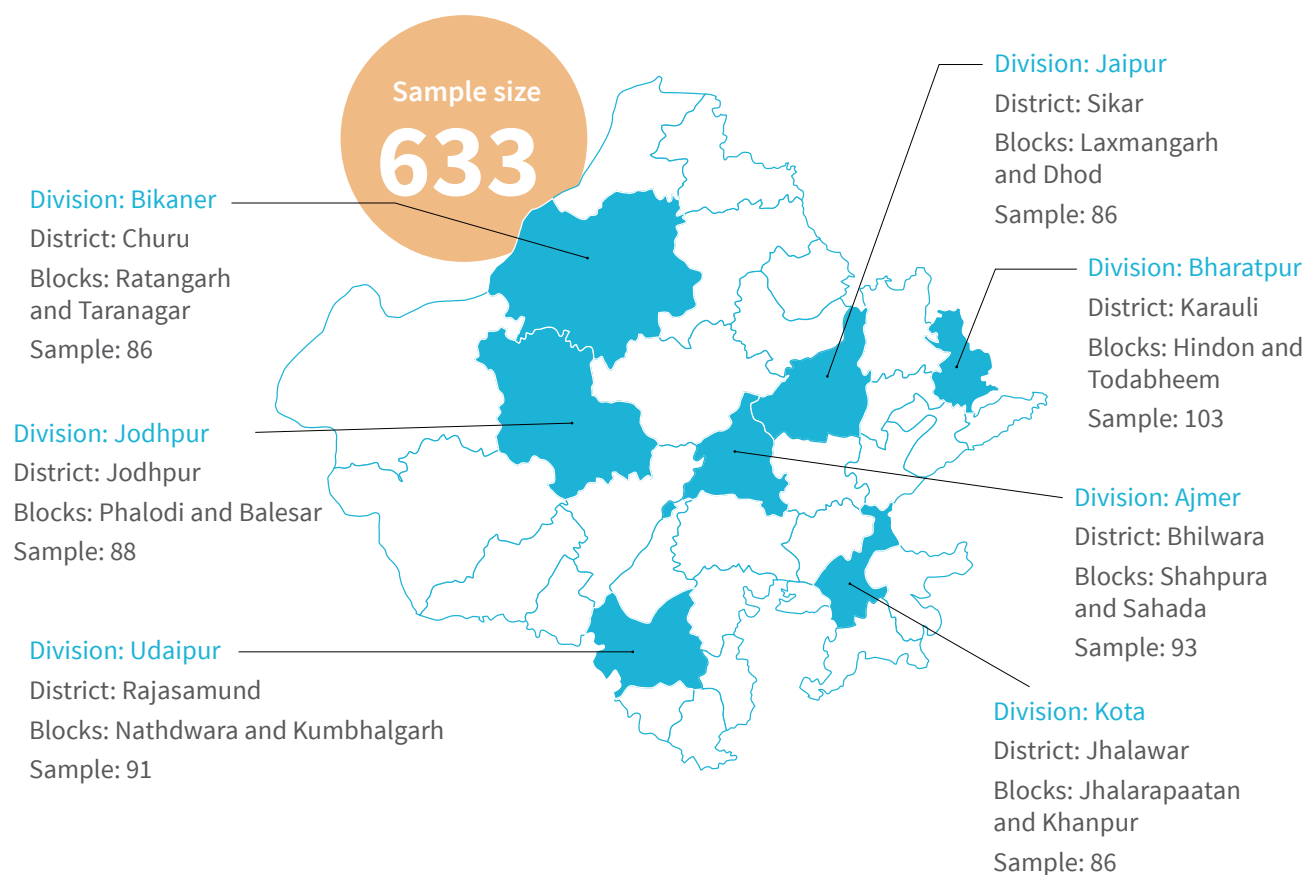
Executive Summary

The government of Rajasthan had conceptualised the Bhamashah scheme in 2008. It is the first household¹-level identity system in India. Bhamashah ensures the creation of a centralised and comprehensive dataset (with demographic and socio-economic data) for residents of Rajasthan following a principle of “one family – one identity”. The objective of the Bhamashah scheme is financial inclusion, women’s empowerment, and effective delivery of government services.

More than 50 million people (79% of Rajasthan’s population as per the census of 2011²) and 15 million households (83% of total households) have enrolled under the Bhamashah scheme. *MicroSave*³ and The Center for Global Development⁴ jointly conducted a study on the perception of households on the impact of Bhamashah on digital governance reforms in Rajasthan.

Coverage of the Study: In addition to the Bhamashah enrolment processes, the study included schemes such as Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), and Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana (BSBY).

Methodology and Sampling: The assessment used a mixed-method research, including qualitative and quantitative tools, to understand the perspectives of the implementation- and recipient-side. It provided an overall study-level estimate of the awareness, access, and perceptions of users. We conducted the study with a total of 633 households across seven divisions, one district in each division, two blocks (one urban and one rural) in each district, and five to six randomly selected villages in each block. The following table illustrates the sample break-up of the quantitative survey across Rajasthan.



1. Household or family is the unit of this survey. We surveyed 633 households or families. We use these terms interchangeably in the report.

2. Rajasthan population census data 2011

3. www.MicroSave.net

4. www.cgdev.org

The team also conducted in-depth interactions in the form of focus group discussions (FGDs) and individual interviews. We interacted with Bhamashah beneficiaries, TPDS beneficiaries, NSAP beneficiaries, Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana (BSBY) beneficiaries, fair price shop (FPS) dealers, BSBY empanelled hospitals, and government officials at the block and district levels. The adjacent table illustrates this

District	No. of FGDs/PIs	Beneficiaries strength	Stakeholder interviews
Rajsamund	9	43	7
Bhilwara	9	36	4
Jodhpur	6	36	2
Karauli	7	46	3

Key Findings

1 Bhamashah Enrolment Process and Perception

- The overall response of the beneficiaries to the new digital delivery systems has been generally positive. However, many beneficiaries still remain unaware of the policies and advantages under the Bhamashah scheme.
- Citizens perceive the Bhamashah enrolment process to be smooth and hassle-free. Yet digitisation errors, mostly in the form of manual data entry errors, during Bhamashah enrolment have inconvenienced beneficiaries. 19% of the households report paying *e-mitras* (bank agents) for Bhamashah registration. This has earned the *e-mitras* a bad reputation among beneficiaries.
- Out of the total 633 households surveyed, 81.5%, or 579 households had received their Bhamashah family card. 73% rated the Bhamashah enrolment process as 'easy or very easy' with only 5% rating it as 'difficult' or 'very difficult'.
- The communication of the Bhamashah scheme has failed to make a strong and clear impact on the perceptions of beneficiaries. Among households, 71% cited the fear of their existing scheme entitlements being denied as a significant motivator to join the Bhamashah scheme. Another 68% of households report that they enrolled only because others in the neighbourhood were enrolling in the scheme.



73%

of the households rated the Bhamashah enrolment process as 'easy or very easy'



71%

of households cited the fear of their existing scheme entitlements being denied as a significant motivator to join the Bhamashah scheme

2 Financial Inclusion

- The Bhamashah scheme has significantly boosted the financial inclusion objective of the Rajasthan government. Almost every household surveyed (633) had at least one bank account, with 85% of households having more than two bank accounts for conducting financial transactions.
- Most (92%) households that had transacted with the bank in the past six months find cash withdrawal from a bank branch 'always easy' or 'sometimes easy'. 95% of the households did not have any negative experiences with banks.
- A total of 64% (407) of surveyed households (633) have conducted at least one financial transaction in the last six months. Interestingly, out of these 407 households, 95% (386) preferred to conduct financial transactions at a bank branch despite the presence of an *e-mitra* in the vicinity



64%

A total of 64% (407) of surveyed households (633) have conducted at least one financial transaction in the last six months.

3 Gender Empowerment

- Bhamashah has made small and incremental improvements in gender empowerment. Almost all (99%) of the households surveyed (633) have women designated as the *Mukhiya* (head of the household) on the printed Bhamashah card.
- 66% of the total households that designated a female *Mukhiya* (626) received their first bank account due to the Bhamashah scheme. However, in only 18% of the cases do the female Bhamashah *Mukhiya* go by herself to the bank branch or is accompanied by another female family member. In most cases, it is a male member who conducts financial transactions for the family.
- The study suggests that proximity of the bank branches/*e-mitras* is an important factor in the uptake of financial transactions among women beneficiaries. More female Bhamashah *Mukhiyas* tend to visit a bank branch by themselves when the branch is within five kilometres from their residence. The number decreases when the bank branch is more than five kilometres away.
- The literacy rate among females in Rajasthan is at 52%, which is much lower than the male literacy rate of 79%.



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4

Role of Bhamashah in the Delivery of Government Scheme Benefits

Bhamashah has led to improvements in administrative efficiency and the decision-making capacity of the Rajasthan government.

41% of TPDS and NSAP beneficiaries prefer the new system of service delivery, as it has brought about transparency and accountability to the system.

33% of the households that receive NSAP benefits appreciate the fact that their pension is now credited on time. Further, 8% of beneficiaries reported that they started to receive their previously “stopped” pension again into their bank accounts post-digitisation. Another 17% of beneficiaries reported an increase in the pension amount they received monthly. This is possibly due to the elimination of the postman’s commission, which was prevalent in the earlier manual delivery system.

While NFSA beneficiaries appreciate the advantages of the new delivery system, factors such as a low technological expertise, low awareness of the role of Bhamashah cards in the new system of subsidy delivery, and the experience of frequent technological challenges have made them wary of accepting the new delivery system. The primary reasons beneficiaries cite for disliking the PoS method of ration distribution are connectivity and authentication failures. The research data shows that on an average, beneficiaries require two attempts of biometric authentication to access rations. However, 28% of beneficiaries require more than three attempts and for 1% of beneficiaries, the biometric authentication never works.

BSBY is an effective scheme, but its uptake suffers from low awareness among needy beneficiaries. The research data shows that only 39% of the beneficiaries are aware of BSBY. However, beneficiaries who availed BSBY services are satisfied with the hospital treatment services offered to them and the overall BSBY process.

The [Sampark Portal](#) is the online grievance registration system for government schemes and related departments in Rajasthan. However, only two of the total NFSA households (535) reported using the online *Sampark* Portal for NFSA-related complaints. Most of the households approach the local *panchayat* (28%) and block officials (12%) to get their grievances addressed.



33%

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Grievance Camps

The Bhamashah registration process was a large-scale exercise that required the orchestrated efforts of local officials and government-appointed agencies. Since large-scale registration was conducted in a relatively short period of time, manual data entry errors have made their way to the central server – Bhamashah Resident Data Hub – BRDH. This has led to instances of incorrect entry of beneficiary demographic details.

The government should set up a one-time, large-scale data correction exercise across the state (at the village- or at the *Panchayat*-level) for the beneficiaries to have their details corrected in the database. This will help the state government to further improve the data quality of BRDH and also reinstate beneficiaries' rights to scheme entitlements. The Rajasthan government can liaise with local non-government organisations to provide assistance to beneficiaries who find it difficult to navigate through the government system to make proper amendments regarding scheme entitlements.

Communication

Most of the issues faced in regards to Bhamashah enrolment are a result of low awareness among beneficiaries. The Rajasthan government must design a targeted communication strategy to promote awareness and understanding of the features of the Bhamashah scheme and its objectives across the state.

Key Recommendations

Diagnostic study to assess effectiveness of *e-mitras*

The Rajasthan government should undertake an independent assessment of challenges around the functioning and incentive structure of *e-mitras* to make evidence-based policy changes.

Monitoring of service delivery institutions

It is impossible for the government to build infrastructure to deliver all its services. Therefore, in the current scenario, a public-private-partnership is essential for effective service delivery. Institutions such as *e-mitras* (for financial inclusion) and empanelled hospitals (for BSBY) have become the face of the government while delivering specific services. To maintain its reputation, the government must adopt a periodic and independent mechanism to audit these institutions and take timely recourse to maintain the standard of service delivery.

List of Abbreviations and Definitions

<i>Aadhaar</i>	Unique biometric identity for Indian nationals
APL	Above Poverty Line
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
BCs	Business Correspondents
BDO	Block Divisional Officer
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BRDH	Bhamashah Resident Data Hub
BSBY	Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana
<i>E-mitra</i>	<i>E-mitra</i> is an ambitious e-governance initiative of the Government of Rajasthan using a public-private partnership (PPP) model to provide various government services to citizens at a single location. Most <i>e-mitras</i> also act as banking correspondent/bank agent.
FPS	Fair Price Shop
IGNDPS	Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme
Households/family	Household or family is the unit of this survey. We have surveyed 633 households or families during the current survey. We use these terms interchangeably in this report.
IGNOAPS	Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme
IGNWPS	Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme
INR	Indian National Rupee
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
MoP&NG	Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
MoRD	Ministry of Rural Development
<i>Mukhiya</i>	Head of the household
NFBS	National Family Benefit Scheme
NFSA	National Food Security Act
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NSAP	National Social Assistance Programme
PAHAL	Electronic transfer of LPG subsidy
Panchayat	Village-level committee represented by elected representatives
Patwari/Gram Sewak	Local village level officials
PMJDY	Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
PPP	Public-private partnership
Pradhan	Elected village representative
Ration card	Document identifying NFSA households
Sarpanch	Village-level elected representative
SDO/SDM	Sub Divisional Officer/Sub Divisional Magistrate
SJED	Social Justice and Empowerment Department, Rajasthan
TPDS	Targeted Public Distribution System
USD	United States Dollar



1. About Bhamashah

The Bhamashah scheme is the first household-level identity system in India. The Rajasthan government envisaged the scheme in the year 2008. The Bhamashah scheme ensures the creation of a centralised and comprehensive dataset (with demographic and socio-economic data) for residents of Rajasthan following the principle of “*one family – one identity*”. Under the scheme, a centralised data house, called the Bhamashah Resident Data Hub (BRDH), maintains the demographic information and record of entitlement of all Bhamashah cardholders.

The Bhamashah scheme database will eventually replace all other resident or beneficiary databases that other government departments in Rajasthan maintain. The database will serve as a single point to transfer all cash and non-cash benefits directly into the hands of the beneficiaries using *Aadhaar*-enabled biometric authentication. More than 50 million people (79% of the population of Rajasthan, as per Census 2011⁵) and 15 million households (83% of total households) have been enrolled under the Bhamashah scheme. Meanwhile, a total of 286 million⁶ cash and non-cash transactions were routed through the Bhamashah platform as on the date of this publication (February, 2018).

1.1 How does it work?

The objectives of the Bhamashah scheme are financial inclusion, women empowerment, and effective delivery of government benefits. Every family household receives a Bhamashah card, which uses the *Aadhaar* number. The scheme identifies a woman above the age of 21 as the *Mukhiya* or the head of the household. If a family does not have a female member above 21 years of age, the oldest male member is appointed as the Bhamashah *Mukhiya*.

5. [Rajasthan population census data 2011](#)

6. [Bhamashah transactions](#)

As illustrated in the graphic, the front of the Bhamashah card displays the unique Bhamashah family identity number, which is a unique, random, seven-digit hexadecimal number) along with a photograph, Aadhaar, and bank account details of the Mukhiya. The other side of the card displays the photograph of other family members along with their respective Aadhaar numbers. The Bhamashah card is a simple plastic card and does not hold any beneficiary information in digital form. The card itself cannot be used for any transaction.



The Bhamashah ID links to the core banking-enabled bank accounts of beneficiaries. It is used for transferring all cash benefits directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiary. All non-cash benefits of various government schemes also use the Bhamashah ID. The Bhamashah platform also ensures doorstep-delivery of banking services through business correspondents (BCs) (known as *e-mitras*) of the banks and micro-ATMs that are being established in all *Panchayats* (village councils) across Rajasthan. To encourage a high level of participation from beneficiaries, the Rajasthan government provided a one-time cash incentive of INR 2,000 (USD 30) to all below poverty line households after successful enrolment.

Under the scheme, the government also provided a cashless health insurance facility up to INR 300,000 (USD 4,615) to beneficiaries who receive a food subsidy under National Food Security Act (NFSA). A total of 1.7 million families have been paid a one-time cash incentive of INR 2,000 (USD 30) and more than 1.5 million⁷ beneficiaries have availed the health insurance facility.

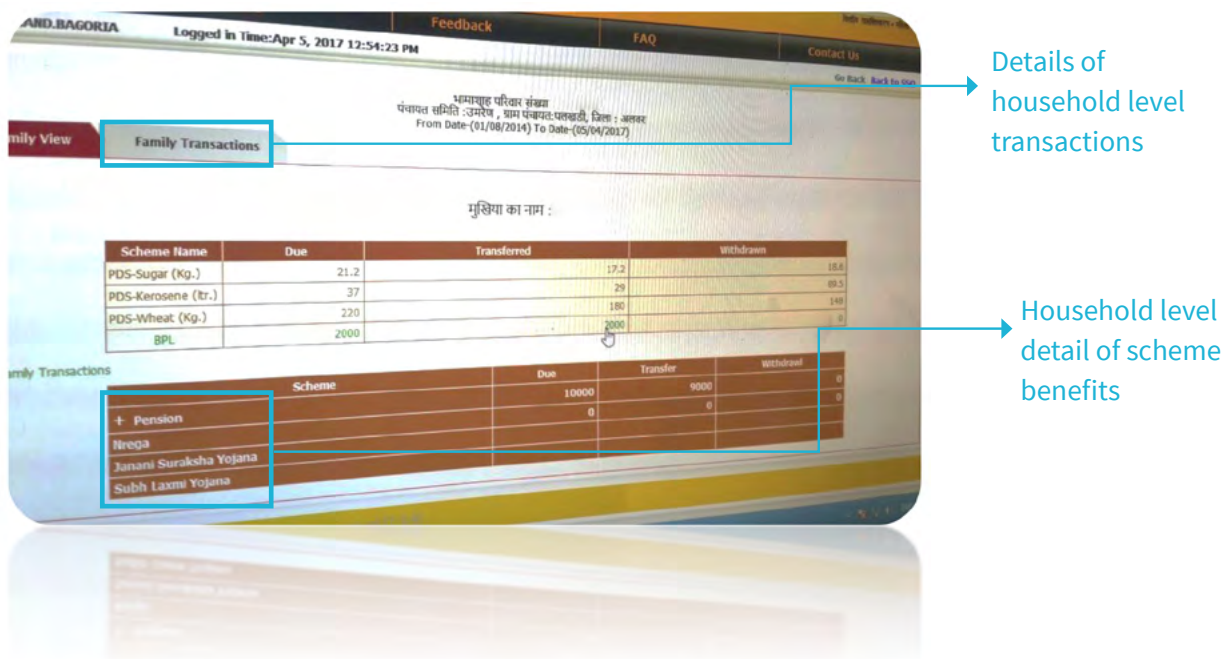
For efficient targeting, the Rajasthan government has started to integrate beneficiaries of different central and state government schemes into a common Bhamashah platform – the Bhamashah Resident Digital Hub (BRDH). The BRDH database includes all demographic and socioeconomic parameters used to make entitlement decisions under various government schemes. As the BRDH database has the complete details of socio and economic parameters of households, real-time household-level reporting of all transferred government benefits has become a reality. The platform provides detailed information on the scheme entitlement of each family member in the



7. [Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana](#)

household. The Bhamashah scheme thus hopes to bring an end to the current system where various departments use different and often contradictory databases for different schemes.

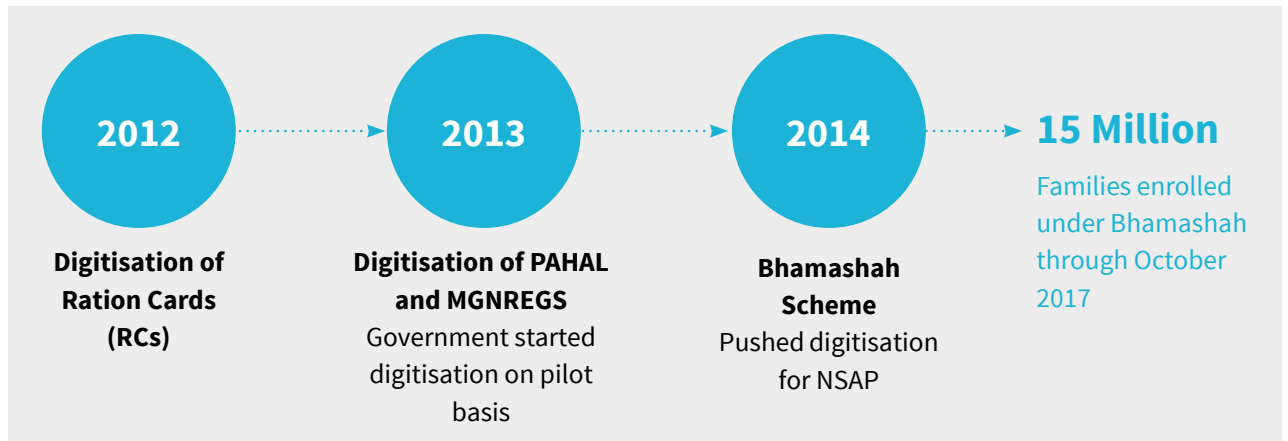
In the future, the government will create a dynamic database of residents and schemes. This dynamic database would make it possible to include or exclude beneficiaries in government schemes based on their respective birth, death, and change in socioeconomic data or other eligibility criteria. Once the dynamic database is in place, the process of identifying beneficiaries will undergo a significant procedural change. Currently, beneficiaries must submit the same documents to different government departments to prove their eligibility for various government benefits depending on the scheme. The Bhamashah dynamic database has the potential to completely eliminate the need for beneficiaries to do this.



1.2 Bhamashah vs Aadhaar

Bhamashah	Aadhaar
Household-level identity	Individual identity
Leverages Aadhaar number	Captures independent biometric details of individuals
Bank account is opened for women along with enrolment for the family	No financial inclusion objectives
Captures demographic and socio-economic parameters such as caste, marital status, relationship to other members of family, educational qualifications, occupation, income, land size, assets, mobile number scheme related information, etc. to assess eligibility under government schemes and aid beneficiary targeting	Does not capture socio-economic parameters

1.3 Bhamashah Scheme and Digitisation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes



The benefits of digitisation in Rajasthan include efficient targeting through the elimination of ghost or duplicate beneficiaries, effective service delivery, and efficient reporting and monitoring. These benefits are not solely the outcomes of the Bhamashah scheme. The Rajasthan government conceptualised the Bhamashah scheme in 2008 but implemented it after 2014.⁸ Between 2012 and 2014, the central government had already begun digitisation of centrally sponsored schemes with the help of the Rajasthan government. These centrally sponsored schemes include Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), and Liquefied Petroleum Gas subsidy (LPG subsidy).

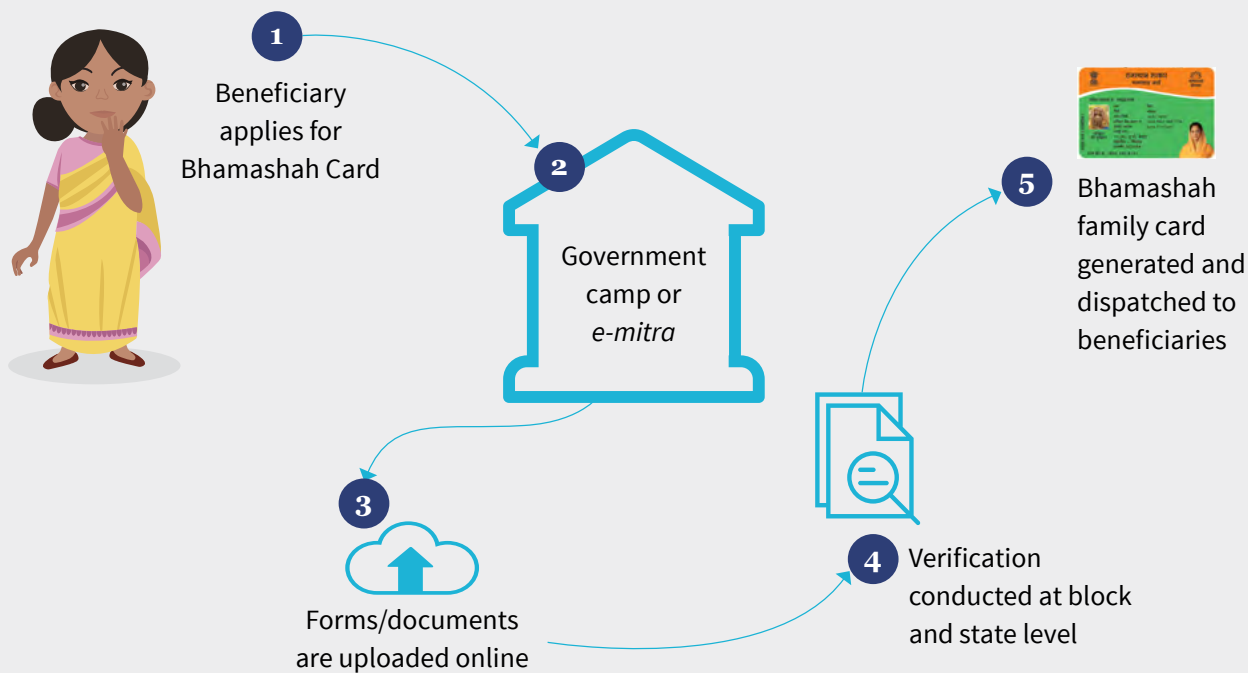
For example, the digitisation of TPDS began in 2012. As part of the process, 53 million TPDS beneficiaries have been digitised. However, as the central government had fixed the maximum number of beneficiaries under the NFSA at 44.6 million⁹, the Rajasthan government created a high-level committee to conduct a verification exercise, which eliminated 8.9 million TPDS ghost or duplicate beneficiaries. The other central ministries such as the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) had already begun collecting beneficiaries' details such as bank account, *Aadhaar* number, and other scheme-specific data to initiate electronic cash transfers directly into beneficiaries' bank accounts for the MGNREGS, NSAP, and LPG subsidy programmes.

Thus, the digitisation process started before the Bhamashah scheme. We cannot, therefore, attribute the dividends of digitisation to the launch of the Bhamashah scheme alone. Bhamashah is an administrative reorganisation of government service delivery. The challenges related to its implementation do not necessarily indicate the difficulties with the digitisation of service delivery. However, the launch of the Bhamashah scheme and Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) provided the digitisation process of centrally sponsored government schemes with much-needed momentum. It facilitated the opening of beneficiaries' bank accounts and *Aadhaar* enrolment. Through October 2017, a total of 14.7 million families had enrolled under the Bhamashah scheme.¹⁰

8. The party that conceptualised Bhamashah lost the election in 2013 and was not in power from 2008 to 2013. Implementation began when they came back to power in 2014.

9. The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) provides for all-India coverage to receive highly subsidised foodgrains for up to 75% of the rural population and up to 50% of the urban population of the country. Corresponding to above coverage, the then Planning Commission determined the India-wise coverage for receiving highly subsidised foodgrains at 810 million.

10. <http://bhamashah.rajasthan.gov.in>



2. Bhamashah Enrolment Process

Key finding #1: Beneficiaries find the Bhamashah enrolment process to be relatively smooth and hassle-free. However, a poor form verification process has led to errors and inconvenienced beneficiaries. The e-mitras have earned a bad reputation due to what beneficiaries perceive as an unfair charge for services

Organisers initiated Bhamashah enrolments through camps in each *Gram Panchayat* in rural areas and each ward in urban areas of Rajasthan. Beneficiaries who could not attend the government-organised camps for Bhamashah enrolment had the option of enrolling at government appointed e-mitras.¹¹ The enrolments are going as of the date of this publication, albeit at a reduced pace (because a bulk of the beneficiaries have been covered).

Beneficiaries need to submit a duly filled Bhamashah enrolment form, ration card, bank account information, photographs, and *Aadhaar* details of family members for successful enrolment.

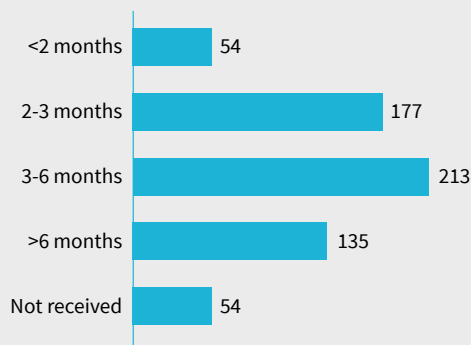
If beneficiaries do not have an *Aadhaar* or a bank account, officials immediately sign them up for both these services prior to enrolling for Bhamashah. Submitting *Aadhaar* details of each household member is not necessary. However, the *Aadhaar* details of the Mukhiya is mandatory. Households are required to have the information on their Bhamashah enrolment form verified by a local official¹² before submission to the camps/e-mitra. The documentary proof is then uploaded to the Bhamashah

“Barah mahine me teen baar to kagaaz jama kiye par card naa mila” (I have submitted documents three times in the last 12 months but I am yet to receive Bhamashah card)
Beneficiary, Rajsamund

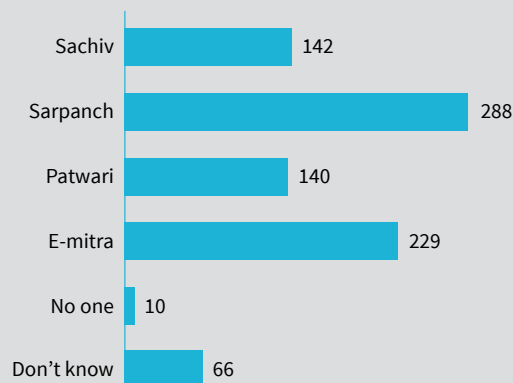
11. E-mitra is an ambitious e-governance initiative of Government of Rajasthan (GoR) using a public-private partnership (PPP) model to provide various government services to citizens at a single location.

12. [Reply filed by department of information and technology, Rajasthan in the Rajasthan Assembly](#)

Average Time To Receive Bhamashah Card is 3-6 Months (N=633)



42% of Enrolment Forms Not Verified by Local Officials? (N=633)



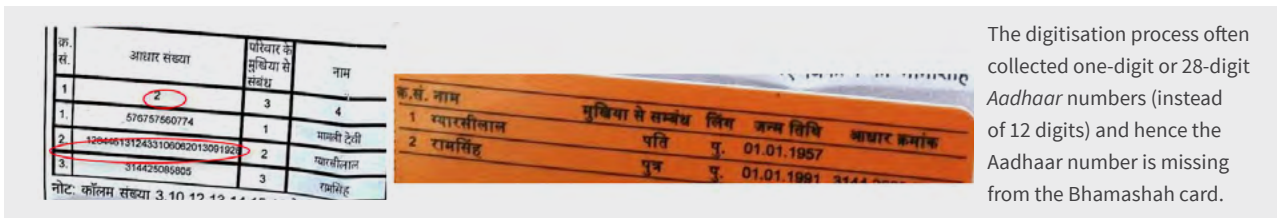
portal where it undergoes a two-step verification process. First, the Block Development Officer (BDO)/ Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) verifies the proof at the block level. Then, the government-appointed agency in Jaipur verifies the proof at the state-level. On successful verification, the appointed agency generates the Bhamashah family card and dispatches it to the family address or local panchayat by courier. The local panchayat or ward officials or the postman then distribute the cards to the beneficiaries.

Out of a total 633 surveyed households, 81.5% of the households (579) had received their Bhamashah family card. Among households, 73% who received their cards rated their Bhamashah enrolment experience as 'easy or very easy' with only 5% rating it as 'difficult' or 'very difficult'. 82% of the households made only one or a maximum of two visits to the government camp/e-mitra to complete their enrolment application. 8.5% of households are still waiting to receive their Bhamashah cards following enrolment.

The time taken to receive the Bhamashah card varies as some beneficiaries received the card within two months, while most others received after two months. On an average, respondents received their cards within 3–6 months. Of the households, 81% (633) did not have to pay to be enrolled. Beneficiaries who could not enrol in government camps went to *e-mitras* to enrol. While the Bhamashah enrolments are supposed to be free, approximately 19% of the households report paying *e-mitras* for Bhamashah registration. The average amount paid ranges from INR 50–200 (USD 0.80–3). Beneficiaries complain that overcharging by *e-mitras* is a common practice and as a result, *e-mitras* have earned an unsavoury reputation.

The Rajasthan government, it seems, is well aware of this complaint. The state government filed a reply in the Rajasthan assembly (March 2017) that it had received overcharging complaints against 206 *e-mitras* and found allegations to be true in 15 cases. The government has initiated legal action against these 15 *e-mitras*¹³. *E-mitras* with whom we interacted during the research cited the high cost of *Aadhaar* enrolment machines and the low commission structure as the reason for charging customers. They report that the Bhamashah enrolment process is impossible without *Aadhaar* enrolment, which makes it necessary to purchase an *Aadhaar* enrolment machine. Further, the commission for enrolment does not cover expenses that include rent, data connectivity charges, wages for helpers, etc. Often, the commission is credited late (on an average, agents report a delay of six months), which creates a working capital problem for the *e-mitras*.

13. Reply filed by Department of Information and Technology, Rajasthan in the Rajasthan Assembly



The digitisation process often collected one-digit or 28-digit Aadhaar numbers (instead of 12 digits) and hence the Aadhaar number is missing from the Bhamashah card.

Another problem observed during Bhamashah enrolment was the collection of incorrect data, such as date of birth/Aadhaar number and missing names of family members, among other issues. Our survey indicates that as many as 10% of the surveyed households visited e-mitras to rectify mistakes on their Bhamashah cards. It took e-mitras another 1–2 months on an average to update the data.

“Card me bahut galityan hai. Doobara theek karaya”
 (There are many mistakes in the Bhamashah card. Got it rectified again)
 Beneficiary, Rajsamund

There is a strict data verification protocol for Bhamashah enrolment, including three levels of scrutiny. First, local panchayat officials (Patwari/Gram Sewak) verify the data, followed by BDO/SDO at the block-level and then at the state-level by a government-appointed agency. However, 42% of the respondents (239) reported that local officials did not nominally verify their Bhamashah forms. Even those that officials verified, they signed the forms hastily to facilitate quick Bhamashah enrolments. Officials bypassed the second-level verification at the BDO/SDO level through an auto-approval feature built into the Bhamashah portal.



Documents that the BDO/SDOs do not verify within 15 days of uploading to the Bhamashah portal are, by default, approved and escalated to the last level of scrutiny at the state. Owing to a large volume of enrolments and pressure to complete as many as possible, e-mitras reported that BDO/SDOs conducted the second level of verification in very few cases. Thus, in cases where a camp official/e-mitra made a manual error during the enrolment process, the incorrect data makes its way to the central server (BRDH). It results in the production of Bhamashah cards with no/erroneous data.

Bhamashah card. One of the immediate repercussions of incorrect data collection, such as faulty birth dates, is the reduction or halting of pension benefits to pension beneficiaries.

Key finding #2: Beneficiaries do not understand the value proposition of owning a Bhamashah card. “Fear of losing existing government benefits” is the main driving force among beneficiaries to enrol under the Bhamashah scheme.

The Rajasthan government gave legal backing to the Bhamashah scheme through [The Rajasthan Bhamashah \(Direct Transfer of Public Welfare Benefits and Delivery of Services\) Act of 2017](#). The act [came into force on 15th August, 2017](#). The government has been making slow and steady progress toward making BRDH a common platform for all departments and Bhamashah identification number, a common identity for beneficiaries to avail benefit entitlements from the government. The Rajasthan government has [already identified a list of 161 schemes where it is mandatory to use BRDH](#) to transfer government benefits.

“Pata nahi Bhamashah card ka upyog kya hai”

(I am not sure about the use of Bhamashah card)

Beneficiary, Bhilwara

Despite its future potential, our research indicates that the government’s communication about the scheme has failed to make a strong and clear impact on the perceptions of beneficiaries. During the launch of the Bhamashah scheme, the government used its administrative machinery (panchayat and ward officials) and other regular communication methods, such as through announcements via speakers in villages to create awareness about Bhamashah enrolment and its utilities. Informal word-of-mouth communication is another source of information for beneficiaries. Such measures appear to have created more confusion and misconceptions than awareness. Our interactions with the beneficiaries highlight that beneficiaries are, at best, only partially aware of the objectives of Bhamashah. Some have no information at all.

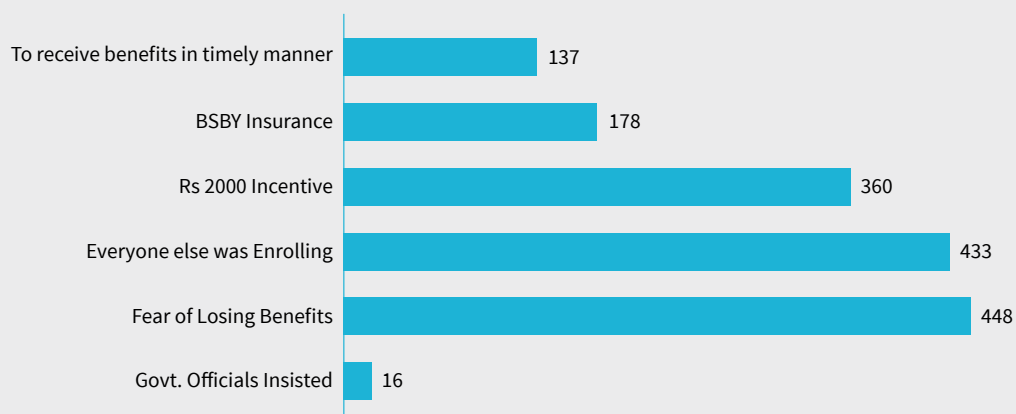
When asked about reasons to enrol for Bhamashah scheme, most respondents (71%) cite the fear of denial of their existing scheme entitlements as a significant motivator to join. The respondents report that local village officials and FPS dealers constantly warned them that failure to enrol would mean their benefits (pension, ration scholarship, etc.) would be discontinued. A ‘herd effect’ drove an almost equal number (68%) of respondents, because of which beneficiaries enrolled only because others in the neighbourhood were enrolling.

“Sab bana rahe the to humne bhi banwaya, hum anpadh hai jyada maloom nahi hai”

(I am illiterate so followed others who were enrolling)

Beneficiary, Karauli

Fear of Losing Benefits is main reason to Enrol for Bhamashah (N=633)



“Gaanv me suna ki 2,000 milenege, fir poora gaanv karwa raha tha”

(The whole village applied when they heard they will receive INR 2,000 (USD 30)





Beneficiary, Bhilwara

Announcements of cash incentives and the BSBY insurance also played a significant role with 61% of respondents citing either one as a Bhamashah enrolment incentive. However, beneficiaries were largely unaware that the cash incentive of INR 2,000 (USD 30) was only for below poverty line households. Of the total households surveyed (633), 40% (256) had BPL (Below poverty line) cards and only 40% (102) of the total BPL cardholders received the incentive of INR 2,000 (USD 30) in their accounts. Government officials were aware of this issue and

cited incorrect seeding of BPL card numbers with the Bhamashah family ID as one of the reasons for non-transfer of the one-time cash benefit to eligible beneficiaries.

Similarly, the BSBY facility is only available for National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries who have conducted at least one transaction at fair price shops (FPS) in the three months preceding enrolment. Beneficiaries who are unaware of this conditional eligibility requirement to avail BSBY are disappointed when they visit the hospital and face denial of services under the scheme. A closer scrutiny reveals that there has been a lack of proper ‘expectation-setting’ among beneficiaries due to inconsistent communication, which results in varying degrees of awareness and understanding about scheme features and benefits.

The following table summarises the various expectations of beneficiaries and their satisfaction levels.

Expectation	Satisfaction	Reasons
INR 2,000 cash incentive to everyone who enrolls for Bhamashah		Only 40% of eligible BPL and AAY ¹⁴ respondents received the cash benefit. Most people are not aware of eligibility criteria or the requirement of BPL number to be seeded for receiving incentives.
Streamlined delivery of Govt. benefits		While some services have seen improvements, beneficiaries do not associate this with Bhamashah. Repeated visits to <i>e-mitras</i> and overcharging have disappointed beneficiaries.
Access to BSBY insurance		While those who have accessed insurance are happy, they are a small minority of people. The awareness of eligibility requirements remains poor and hampers widespread uptake.
Reduction in paperwork		People are expected to maintain <i>Aadhaar</i> card, ration card, job card, labour card, voter ID, etc. This has added to the hassle.

14. AAY- Antyodaya Anna Yojana

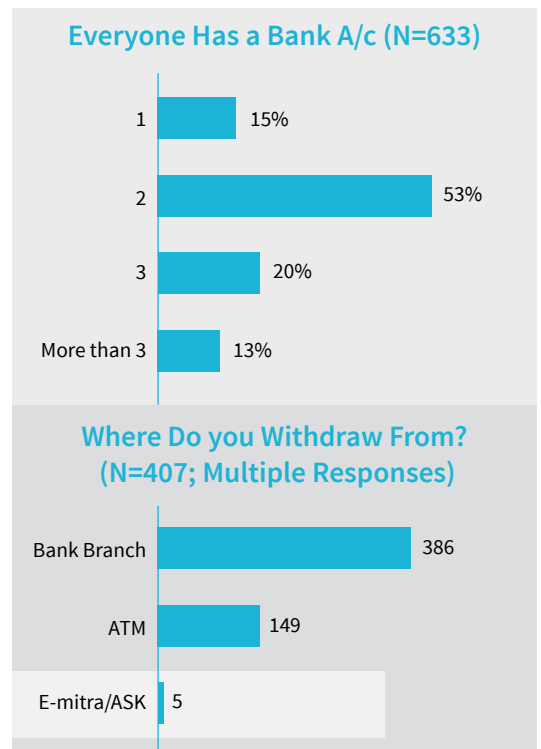


3. Financial Inclusion

Key finding #1: Bhamashah has taken financial inclusion in Rajasthan to new heights. However, despite the proliferation of *e-mitras* across the state, beneficiaries prefer to conduct transactions at bank branches, hence the challenges in accessing banking services that continue to exist.

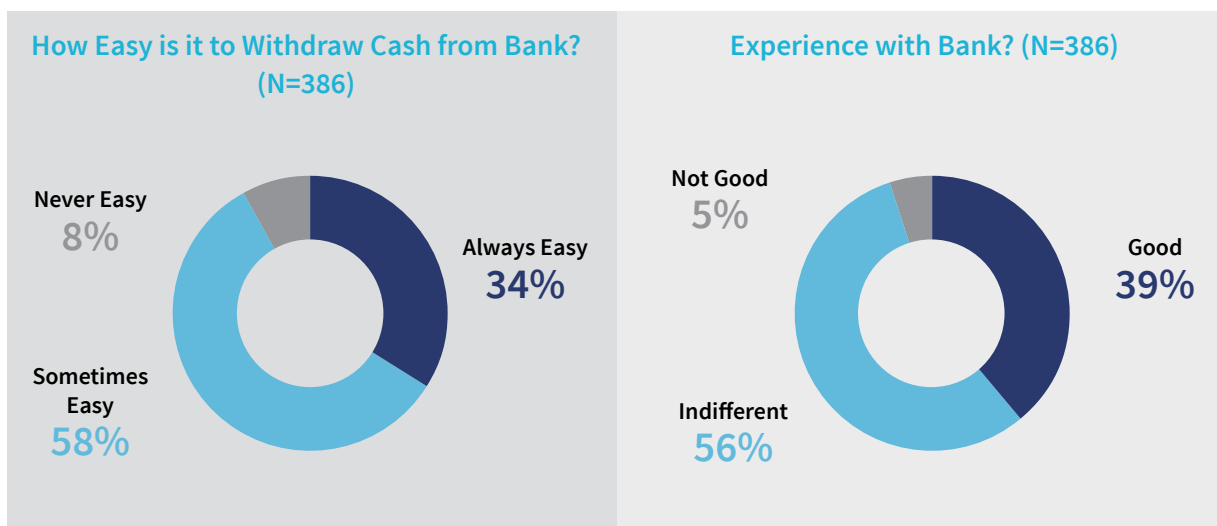
Bhamashah and PMJDY have made financial inclusion a universal phenomenon in Rajasthan. Almost every household surveyed (633) had at least one bank account, with 85% of households having more than two. This significant achievement is the result of a series of digitisation efforts led by the central and Rajasthan governments through PMJDY and the Bhamashah scheme.

A handful of fragmented efforts of central ministries such as MoRD and MoPNG¹⁵ to open bank accounts to transfer wages (MGNREGS), pension (NSAP), and LPG subsidies electronically have also contributed to large-scale financial inclusion. According to the data reported by the government of Rajasthan in the Rajasthan Assembly (March 2017), there are more than 40,000 *e-mitras* across the state and approximately



39,000 *e-mitras* were activated between 2014 and 2017. These *e-mitras* have led the effort to open bank accounts for financially excluded families in Rajasthan. It is interesting to note that India Post accounts have lost their ‘sheen’ in recent times and are no longer favoured in villages or in urban areas.

Almost 87% of the total households surveyed (633) did not have a post office accounts. Despite the presence of *e-mitras* and ATMs, banks branches are the preferred place to conduct financial transactions. A total of 64% (407) of surveyed households have conducted at least one financial transaction in the last six months preceding the survey. Interestingly, of these 407 households, 95% (386) prefer to conduct financial transactions at a bank branch. This does not augur well for the viability of *e-mitras* in the medium- to long-term.

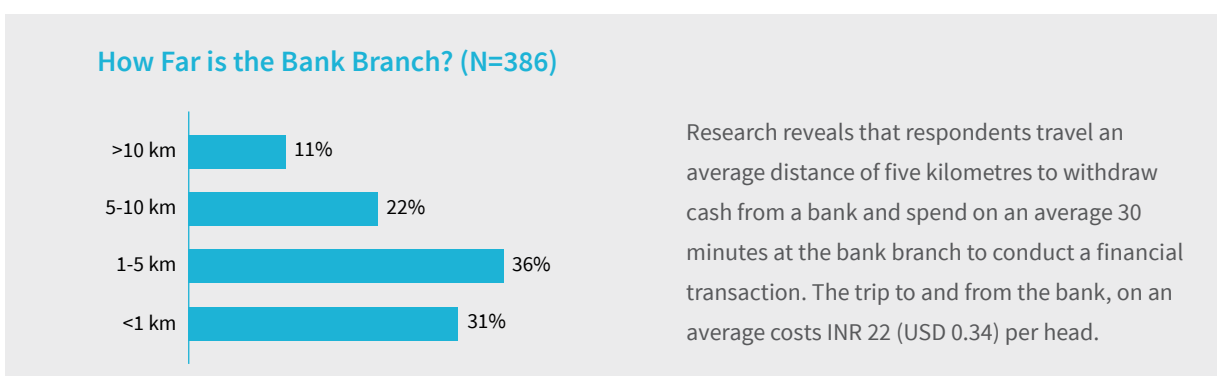


Most households (92%) find cash withdrawal from a bank branch easy or sometimes easy, while 95% did not have a negative experience with banks. These findings are encouraging for banks, but are a cause for concern for *e-mitras*. Only 1% (5) of households that conducted financial transactions in the six months preceding the survey (407) used services of *e-mitras*.

“e-mitra ke pas paise khatam ho jate hai, isliye bank jate hai.”

(e-mitras always face cash shortage, so we have to visit a bank branch.)

Beneficiary, Rajsamund

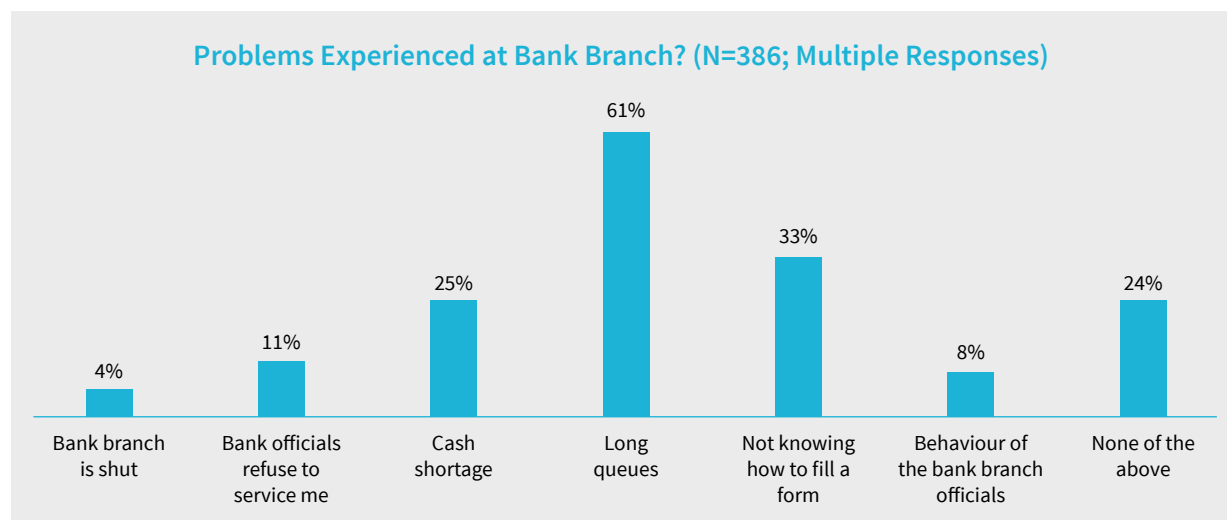


Our in-depth discussion with the beneficiaries in Bhilwara, Rajsamund, Jodhpur, and Karauli districts of Rajasthan revealed that people prefer to go to bank branches as *e-mitras* face severe liquidity issues and cannot give customers cash when they need it. In some cases, people reported that *e-mitras* only entertain customers of the bank with which the *e-mitra* is registered.

The government had appointed *e-mitras* as a conceptual solution to the perennial challenges in financial inclusion delivery of traditional banks in serving low-income customers. The challenges

include issues such as low concentration of bank branches, long queues, and improper staff behaviour, among others. The e-mitras were supposed to provide a one-stop banking solution in addition to other government-to-citizen services. However, prominent issues of overcharging, denial of banking services (specifically withdrawals), and long waiting periods have created distrust toward e-mitras. As a result, despite an increase in the presence of e-mitras, beneficiaries still prefer going to the banks as the transactional hassles at e-mitras are higher than bank branches. However, bank branches have their own set of problems.

Respondents who conducted financial transactions at a bank branch report long queues and an inability to complete complex bank forms (a pre-requisite to initiate a bank transaction) as the major inhibitors to transacting at bank branches.



Other respondents report problems such as cash shortages and the rude behaviour of bank branch officials. 59% (372) of the total surveyed respondents (633) did not have a RuPay ATM card as they were unaware of this feature during Bhamashah enrolment, or did not apply for one during the enrolment process.



4. Gender Empowerment

Key finding #1: Bhamashah has succeeded in designating women as the head of the household on official documents. However, changing the very fabric of the male-dominated social structure of Rajasthan will require more than opening a female-headed bank account.

One of the key objectives of the Bhamashah scheme is to empower the 48%¹⁶ female population of Rajasthan. To achieve this objective under the Bhamashah scheme, the bank account and Bhamashah card are in the name of the woman of the house (above 21 years of age). The intention is to make the woman a decision-maker in the family as it pertains to the utilisation of all cash and non-cash benefits under various government public welfare schemes. The research reveals that this initiative has been successful, at least on paper, as almost all (99%) households surveyed (633) have women designated as Mukhiya on the printed Bhamashah card.

The households are well-aware of the fact that the government has made it mandatory to appoint women as Mukhiya on Bhamashah card. However, sadly the respondents are not aware of the motive behind such a designation and wonder what implications this will have.

Only a select few respondents during qualitative discussions could clearly articulate that cash transfers to a woman's bank account are

Who is “Mukhia” on Bhamashah Card?
(N=633)



“Mukhiya banaya hai lekin manate nahi hai. Pati kehta hai Mukia hogi apne ghar ki”

(Although we are designated Mukhia, no one recognises us. My husband discards this fact completely)

Beneficiary, Rajsamund

Household Perception:
Impact of Bhamashah
on Digital Governance
Reforms in Rajasthan

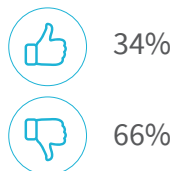
16. [Census 2011](#)

designed to enhance her participation in the financial decisions of the household. Most others were unaware of this intention or contend that designating females as Mukhiya would have little impact on changing the household dynamics. This is quite evident from the fact that almost 86% of the households surveyed said that male members make major decisions in the family.

Actual Head of the Household? (N=633)



Did Female Mukhia Have A/c Before Bhamashah? (N=626)



Another encouraging finding related to gender empowerment is the opening of first-time bank accounts by women. Prior to the Bhamashah scheme, 66% of the total female Mukhiyas did not have a bank account. These women opened their first bank accounts during Bhamashah enrolment. The remaining 34% (212) of female Mukhiya already had bank accounts, and of these approximately 27% (57) were already receiving cash transfers from various government schemes such as MGNREGS, pension (old age, disability, and widow), scholarship, etc.

However, 75% (469) of female-headed Bhamashah accounts (626) did not transact in the one month preceding the survey. When asked which family member withdraws cash, 46% of respondents said that a male member of the family does it. 35% of respondents said that while the female Bhamashah Mukhiya withdraws cash, yet a male member always accompanies her. Only 18% of the respondents said that either the female Bhamashah Mukhiya goes alone, or a female member of the household accompanies her.

The study found a strong relationship between the distance to the bank branch and the number of female Bhamashah Mukhiya that goes alone or is accompanied by a female member of the household. More women tend to go alone when a bank branch is within five kilometres but the number decreases when the bank branch is more than five kilometres. This suggests that proximity of the bank branches/ e-mitras is an important factor in the uptake of financial transactions among women beneficiaries.

The research findings show that low rates of female literacy and women's limited experience in handling financial transactions are the major reasons for the persistent male involvement. Female literacy in Rajasthan is low at 52%, which is much lower than the male literacy rate of 79%.¹⁷ Furthermore, female literacy in Rajasthan is even lower than the 65% average female literacy rate in India. Research reveals that 94% (588) of the total households with a woman as Mukhiya (626) had mobile phones, while only 20% (120) of these households had a female Mukhiya who could read text messages and make a call.

¹⁷. [Census 2011](#)



5. Role of Bhamashah in the Delivery of Government Scheme Benefits

Key finding #1: On the supply-side, Bhamashah has led to improvements in the administrative efficiency and decision-making capacity of the Rajasthan government. Beneficiaries appreciate the fact that technological changes and digitisation have led to a reduction in diversion and rent-seeking, brought about increased transparency, and streamlined the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) and Targeted Public Distribution System

Bhamashah has been fulfilling one of its key three objectives of effective service delivery – by facilitating the revamped service delivery of TPDS and NSAP. The beneficiaries of both these schemes also appreciate the change it has created. 41% of TPDS and NSAP beneficiaries prefer the new system. According to TPDS beneficiaries, the new system has brought transparency and accountability – it is now impossible to reduce or steal ration entitlements. A beneficiary is now able to receive their unclaimed rations for three months at one time, which was not possible under the prior manual system. Beneficiaries mention that since transaction details are now printed, they pay less and receive more rations than previously when the FPS dealer diverted rations.

Interestingly, 38% of the respondents like the use of new technology to deliver rations through biometric authentication. Similarly, for pension delivery, beneficiaries appreciate the increased transparency through the delivery of text messages at the time their pension is credited to their bank account. Beneficiaries also appreciate the newfound efficiency of the system that was not present previously when postmen manually delivered pensions to them.

Of the beneficiaries, 45% in TPDS and 21% in NSAP do not find any difference between the old and new systems of delivery. The perception of these beneficiaries will depend on future service delivery.

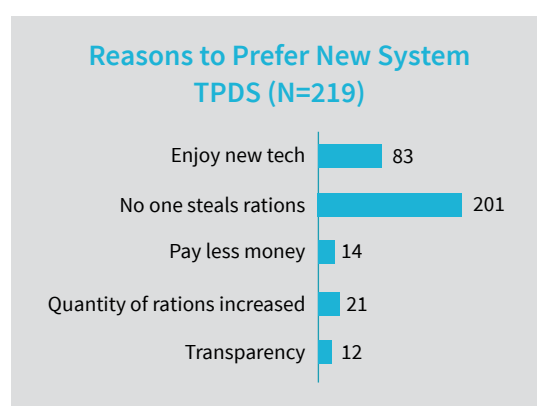
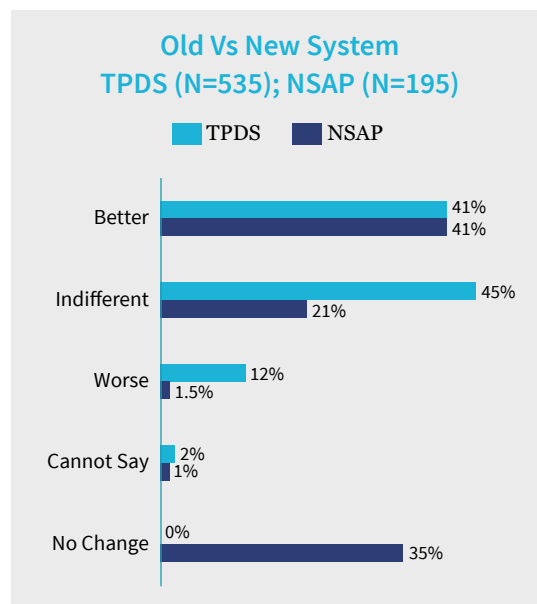
Interestingly, only 12% of the beneficiaries in TPDS and 1.5% of beneficiaries in NSAP feel that the new system is poorer than the earlier manual system. The main reason for disliking the new TPDS relates to instances of server downtime and transaction authentication failures – primarily due to poor connectivity.

One could argue that the digitisation of TPDS and NSAP had begun to occur under the direct benefit transfer (DBT) programme of the Government of India, and the value-add of Bhamashah could be questioned. However, Bhamashah aims to create a dynamic database of beneficiaries whose socio-economic information will be used to determine eligibility, as well as cross-linkages between various government schemes. We highlight some of the initial evidence from the study in the following section.

For efficient targeting, the Rajasthan government has been focused on integrating beneficiaries of different central and state government schemes on to a common Bhamashah platform – BRDH. In one of the most significant recent initiatives, the Rajasthan government decided to [integrate the Bhamashah scheme portal with the death, birth, and marriage database portal known as Pahchan.](#)

Jeevan Praman Patra (Life Certificate)

An interesting example of cross integration is evident in NSAP and TPDS databases. Earlier, pension beneficiaries had to submit a signed letter every year to prove that they were alive in order to continue receiving pension. Now, under the changed system, lifting rations through biometric authentication at FPS dealer location automatically updates the living status of the concerned beneficiary.



The integration, if completed successfully, could result in major dividends to the Rajasthan government in terms of administrative efficiency. Once the integration of Pahchan and Bhamashah portals is complete, BRDH will represent a dynamic resident scheme database. This database would lead to the automatic inclusion or exclusion of beneficiaries of government schemes based on beneficiaries' dates of birth and death. In addition, the onus

of enrolling in a particular government scheme will shift from the beneficiaries to BRDH, which will auto-update beneficiaries based on real-time data.

This process has begun and the Bhamashah portal is being designed to auto-enrol beneficiaries when they reach a certain age or become eligible for a certain benefit. It will eliminate the cumbersome application processes that can take a year or two of paperwork. In addition, various state government departments are using BRDH to clean their existing databases. This is because the Bhamashah database is of relatively better quality and has higher accuracy than other government databases.

The state departments integrated with BRDH are able to access the BRDH database through the portals of the specific department. The availability of digital data has enhanced the decision-making capacity of the government making it easier to monitor and track scheme implementation, as well as address challenges and grievances through quick retrieval of information.

Pension Grievance Mechanism

A Pradhan in Karauli was able to resolve 500-600 grievances of pension holders thanks to immediate access to information through the Bhamashah portal. Previously, finding information involved going through many files, but now the relevant data is available at the “click of a mouse”.



Bhamashah Helps to Clean Digitised Ration Cards

Bhamashah scheme collected household level data from scratch and developed a relatively clean and sanitised database of families along with ration card numbers. The state government used the Bhamashah data to match ration cards and, therefore, cleaned up errors in the digitised ration card database. In the case of database mismatches, the Bhamashah data replace the ration card data, as it was deemed to be more ‘accurate than the incorrect digitised ration card data.’

Key finding #2: National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) - Revival of “stopped” pensions, an increase in pension amount and regularity of pension delivery are the significant positive changes brought about by Bhamashah digitisation. However, digitisation errors and low levels of awareness have also led to exclusion of beneficiaries.

About NSAP: NSAP is a welfare programme administered by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India. The programme came into effect on 15th August, 1995. Currently, there are 33 million beneficiaries throughout India.¹⁸ At present, NSAP comprises of Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS), and the Annapurna scheme.

The central government contributes INR 200 (USD 3) per month per beneficiary up to 79 years, and INR 500 (USD 7.5) per month per beneficiary from 80 years onward under the IGNOAPS, while state governments may contribute over and above this amount. The central government’s contribution to the widow pension (IGNWPS) and disability pension (IGNDPS) is INR 200 (USD 3) per month per beneficiary and state governments may contribute at least an equal amount so that a beneficiary receives at least INR 400 (USD 6) per month under each scheme.¹⁹

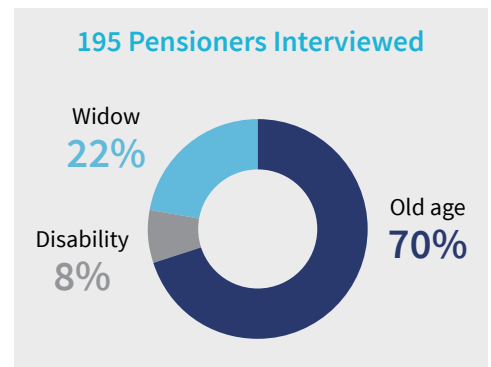
18. <http://nsap.nic.in>

19. [NSAP-frequently asked questions](http://nsap-frequently-asked-questions)

20. <http://rajssp.raj.nic.in/LoginContent/MidLogin.aspx>

The Social Justice and Empowerment Department (SJED) of Rajasthan implements social security pension schemes in Rajasthan. There are approximately 5 million, 0.4 million, and 0.9 million beneficiaries of old age pensions, disability pensions, and widow pensions in the state, respectively.²⁰

Out of 633 households surveyed, a total of 195 households are receiving social security pension assistance – the vast majority of whom are old age pension recipients (70%). 22% are widow pension recipients while 8% are disability pension recipients. Pension delivery in Rajasthan has traditionally been through money orders or directly in cash through postmen. Before digitisation, almost 50% (97) of these pensioners received their pension through post offices. While postmen provided doorstep delivery of pensions in most cases, it was fraught with challenges.



Several pension recipients faced inconveniences with the manual system for the following reasons:

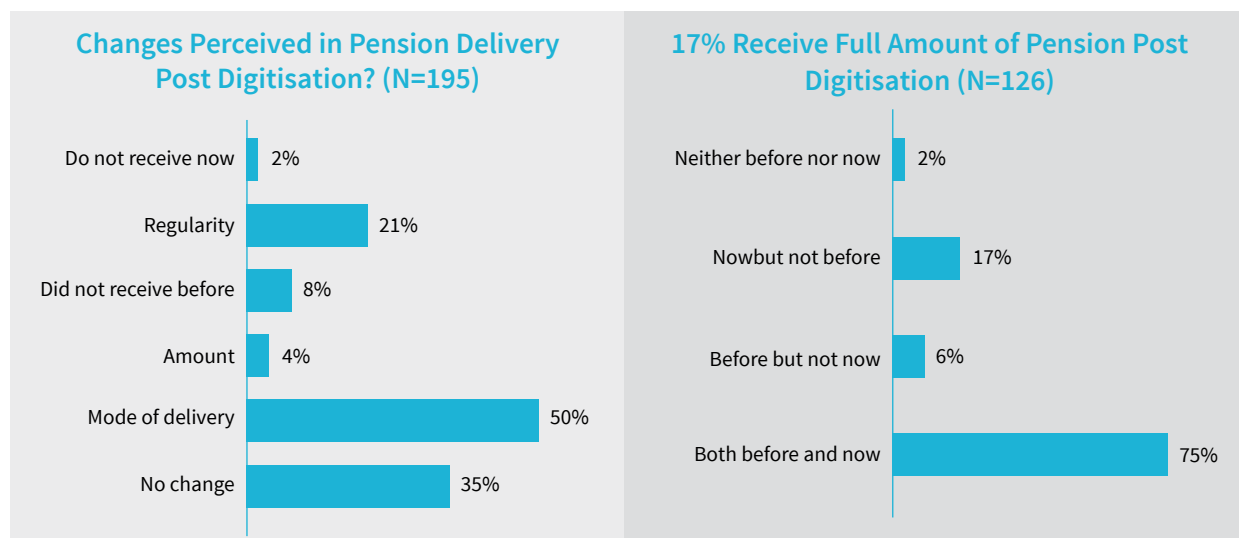
- The postman was irregular in pension delivery. He would never arrive on a consistent date and often came at times when the recipient was out of the house at work. On several occasions, the postman would never turn up all month.
- The postman often charged a commission for the delivery of pension, and would sometimes pocket an entire month's pension

“Kabhi kabhi to poore ek mahine ka paisa naa milta tha, postman ki hera pheri mein”

(Sometimes, we would not receive an entire month's pension due to postman's trickery)

Beneficiary, Rajsamund

Post-digitisation, the Rajasthan government began linking the *Aadhaar* numbers and bank accounts of all pension holders. Currently, the government has been transferring pensions directly into the bank account of the beneficiary. These details also link to the Bhamashah portal (BRDH), which has been designed to be a unified database for all welfare payments and benefits. The objective is to improve pension delivery by taking out the middleman, generate savings for the government by eliminating ghost and duplicate beneficiaries, and eradicate fraud.



20. <http://rajssp.raj.nic.in/LoginContent/MidLogin.aspx>

33% of the households who are receiving pensions perceive a positive change in the pension delivery system post-digitisation. Whereas 32% perceive no change in the system, possibly because they were enrolled after the new system had already changed. The most-cited change is the fact that the pension is credited on-time.

Other positive factors include a revival of pension delivery for 8% of the beneficiaries who previously did not receive pension benefits. Some of the beneficiaries (17%) who perceived a positive change in the delivery system (126²¹) report that they receive the full amount of pension post-digitisation likely due to the elimination of commissions and corrupt practices adopted by postmen within the traditional delivery system.

“Khet me kaam karo tab aata tha dakiya aur chala jata tha”

(The postman used to come when I was in field and return without delivering the pension)

Beneficiary, Bhilwara

Amba Devi Can Now Buy Gifts for her Granddaughter Thanks to DBT Pension

Amba Devi, a woman aged 68 years is happy getting her pension in her bank account. She recalls, *“Pehle naa pension time par milti thi, aur naa poori pension milti thi”* (The pension was neither given in time nor the full amount was ever given in the previous system). Another problem was not being at home when the postman came for delivery. Now, she can withdraw the money when she has time. She is glad to have saved in her bank account as she withdraws her pension only once in three months.

She says, *“Hath me aaya paisa kharch ho jata tha aur chori hone ka dar bhi rhta tha”* (Cash in hand has higher probability of being spent and also it brings along the risk of being stolen).

She withdraws money through the e-mitra point in her village only when she needs it and leaves rest of the money in her bank account.

With a sparkle in her eye, she narrates, *“Meri bitiya ko gudda hua to ek hazaar rupaye nikaal kar die khaate se”* (I gave INR 1,000 to my daughter when she delivered a baby).

The digitisation process inconvenienced a small percentage of households (8%) out of 126 households. These households have either stopped receiving monthly pensions altogether or are receiving lower amounts. Possible causes for this disruption in pension delivery include records of incorrect data upon digitisation, inactive bank accounts, multiple bank accounts, and a lack of awareness of the need to provide a Jeevan Praman Patra (life certificate).

Date of birth and other data-entry errors – During digitisation, many respondents were not aware of the exact dates of their birth. Consequently, the person in charge of data entry would often enter a random date of birth in the system. Our research found examples of family members (grandparents, parents, and children) having identical default dates of birth of (usually 1st January of some year).

Pension department officials state that when the pension payment order (PPO) database was synced with the Bhamashah database, the values in the database overwrote all of the birth dates. Thus, for example, for a woman who is 70 years old who receives a pension, a faulty entry in BRDH incorrectly marking her as 30 years old would cut off her pension erroneously for not being old enough.



21.A total of 61 households out of 195 households that receive pensions did not report any changes in the delivery system. However, we did not receive a response from eight households, so the total number of households that perceive a change in the pension delivery system is 126.

Incorrect records of age and date of birth are the primary reasons for people not receiving the correct amount of pension. The pension amount increases after the age of 55 with the state contribution. So, for example, an 80-year-old lady receiving INR 750 (USD 11.5) will start receiving INR 500 (USD 8) if her date of birth is erroneously entered at 65 years. Further, in some cases, e-mitras or private agencies responsible for Bhamashah enrolment had incorrectly entered the bank account details or Aadhaar information of the beneficiary. As a result, pensions have not been reaching a significant proportion of people. Notably, government officials have told us that the PPO database is no longer synced with the Bhamashah database.

Jeevan Praman Patra (life certificate): Due to lack of awareness, some pensioners have not provided proof of their living status as required each year resulting in the suspension of pensions.

Inactive and multiple bank accounts – In a few cases, the bank accounts opened by beneficiaries have become inactive or dormant and pension benefits do not reach their accounts. Also, beneficiaries have multiple accounts opened through multiple schemes. They do not know which benefits are deposited into which account.

A Case of Stopped Pensions in Karauli Block, Karauli District

According to the Pradhan of Karauli block, 1,500 pensions were stopped in the block after Bhamashah and the switch to electronic transfers. Of these, she estimated that 200–300 accounts were actually duplicate/ghost pension beneficiaries. But, for the remainder, she worked hard over the last year to restart 600–700 pensions that were stopped incorrectly. Out of the remaining 500-odd pensions, she thinks it is possible that another 400 have been incorrectly halted, yet the reasons behind such termination have not come to light. The Pradhan's own grandmother had been receiving the wrong pension because her age was incorrectly recorded on the Bhamashah card. The Pradhan had to submit all the documents again on behalf of her grandmother to get it corrected.

The lingering challenges of withdrawing from bank branches continue to hassle pension beneficiaries. We have discussed this in the financial inclusion section of this report. Many recipients, especially the elderly who live in remote areas, find it difficult to access banks. In some cases, banks are often 30–40 kilometres away from villages. In these circumstances, the cost of reaching a bank and returning may be more than the pension amount itself.

During research discussions with pension beneficiaries, a few expressed their aversion to receiving pensions in bank accounts fearing that they would lose their BPL status if their bank accounts had positive balances. According to government officials, there is a provision for old, handicapped, or single unit family members to receive their pensions manually through the postman. Unfortunately, there is a very low level of awareness of this provision.

“Anpadh log ke liye pehle hi sahi tha”

(The earlier system was better for illiterate people)

Beneficiary, Rajsamund

The Case of Shayari Devi's Stopped Pension

A frail and half-blind woman in her 80s, walking with the help of a stick, says, “*Maro pension naa aawe ab, jaane kya baat hui chhe mahine hogye ab to...*” (I don't get my pension; it has been more than six months now). She lives with her only son in a kutchra (house made from mud) house in Govindpura village in Mandalgarh block of Bhilwara. The pension of INR 750 (USD 11.5) is of utmost importance, as it is her only income.

She used to receive her pension from the postman until March 2016, but after the Rajasthan government shifted pension payments, for the next three months her pension was paid into her bank account. Thereafter, for reasons unknown to her, the postman restarted doorstep delivery of pension to her house. However, this soon stopped and she received her last pension (from the postman) in November 2016. She had no idea that her pension had stopped and she continued waiting for the postman for the first two-three months assuming that the pension was delayed.

After the long wait, she requested her son to visit the bank to enquire if the pension was being credited to her bank account. After making several rounds of visits to panchayat offices and the bank branch, Shayari Devi still has no idea whom to approach or how to restart her pension. No communication of any sort was given to her concerning the sudden stopping of pension benefits or how to solve the problem.

The *MicroSave* team took the matter to the BDO's (Block Development Officer) office in Mandalgarh and requested that they fix this case. By entering her PPO number, we became aware that her pension had been stopped. However, the portal did not provide the reasons for the cancellation. The team took the query further and discussed the matter with the District Treasury Office in Bhilwara. We discovered that her pension was being credited to another lady with a similar name, but living in a different village. Even the Treasury Officer had no clear explanation for this seeding error. We contacted the BDO to brief him about the whole matter and he assured us that he would solve the case as soon as possible.

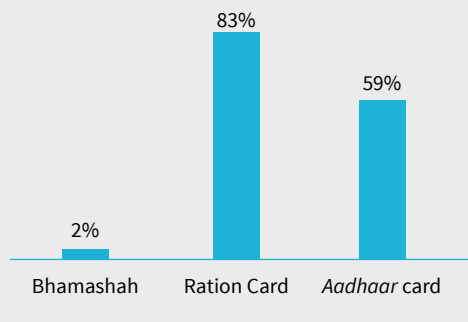
Key finding #3: Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) - While the perception of a new system of foodgrain delivery is positive, the PoS experience still needs improvement

The National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013 and TPDS: The government had designed the National Food Security Act, 2013 to ensure adequate quality and quantity of food (and thus nutritional security) at affordable prices for 75% of the rural population and up to 50% of the urban population. The eligible NFSA beneficiaries (over 800 million beneficiaries in India) are entitled to receive five kilograms of foodgrains per person per month at subsidised prices of INR 3/2/1 (USD 0.05/0.03/0.015) per kilogram for rice/wheat/coarse grains. Household under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), which constitute the poorest of the poor, receive 35 kilograms of foodgrains per household per month. Each NFSA-eligible household receives a ration card that lists the details of all family members in the household. The subsidised foodgrains are distributed through more than 500,000 registered fair price shops (FPS) located in villages across India.

Rajasthan was the first state to adopt NFSA and has over 44 million NFSA beneficiaries. The Rajasthan Food and Civil Supplies Department manages the delivery of subsidised foodgrains under NFSA. The NFSA scheme distributes five kilograms of wheat at INR 2 (USD 0.03) per kilogram to NFSA beneficiaries through 25,542 FPS dealers.²² A biometric authentication of the NFSA beneficiary facilitates the ration distribution through their *Aadhaar* number.

22. [Food and civil supplied department, Rajasthan](#)

What Card is Used to Lift Rations? (N=535)



The Rajasthan government has provided each FPS dealer with an electronic point-of-sale (PoS) machine that is capable of conducting *Aadhaar* authentication. The government has linked the Bhamashah database (BRDH) with the database of food subsidy beneficiaries. The PoS machines made available with the FPS dealers can accept any of the three IDs: Bhamashah ID, *Aadhaar* ID, or ration card ID to initiate a transaction for the NFSA beneficiary. Where the household has provided *Aadhaar* details of all family members and its record is available on the Bhamashah card, any member of the family can procure

rations from the FPS using their biometric authentication.

As stated earlier, 41% of the total households that received subsidised foodgrains (535) prefer the new and improved process to the traditional manual system of food delivery. Most beneficiaries receive text messages when rations are available and appreciate the transparency that it brings. Beneficiaries applaud the new initiative and report that the government has successfully ensured that only the person who is entitled to receive ration accesses it, leaving no room for the dealer to divert grains. Some of the beneficiaries who were aware of the Bhamashah health insurance scheme available for NFSA beneficiaries counted it as an additional benefit realised under the new system.

“Maine message dekha to pata chala dealer ne kam ration diya tha. Ab dealer chori nahi karta”

(When I saw the text message I realised the dealer had given me less than the amount to which I was entitled. I complained about this and he does not repeat the mistake now)

Beneficiary, Jodhpur

Beneficiaries appreciate the advantages of the new technology. However, factors such as low technological expertise, low levels of awareness of the utility of Bhamashah card in a new system of subsidy delivery, and frequent technological challenges make them wary of accepting the new delivery system. Due to low awareness levels, only 2% of the beneficiaries use their Bhamashah ID when taking their rations. Our research indicates that in 18% of households only a few members of the family are capable of taking rations for the family because of improper seeding of the Bhamashah ID with *Aadhaar*.

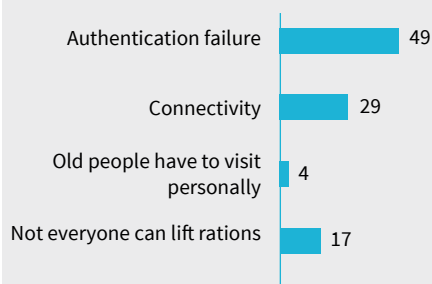
“Bhamashah ka sabse bada fayda hai ki ration surakshit hua hai aur bima free”

(The biggest benefit of Bhamashah is that the ration is secured and health insurance is free)

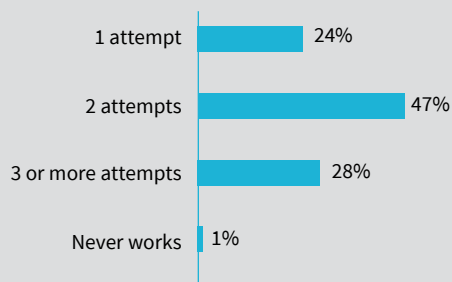
Beneficiary, Rajsamund

The primary reasons for not liking the PoS-based method of ration distribution are connectivity-related issues and authentication failures. Beneficiaries engaged in manual labour including milking of cows, farming, etc. do not have clear fingerprints. The same applies to old and sick beneficiaries. PoS machines often fail to recognise these beneficiaries in the absence of clear biometric print. This forces these people to either wait or return again over the next few days, in the hope that their fingerprint is authenticated. For the sick and the elderly beneficiaries, travelling to and from an FPS frequently is a hassle. Under the manual system, these beneficiaries could send their ration card with a trusted friend/relative to take rations on their behalf. This is no longer possible. The research data shows that on an average, two attempts of biometric authentication are required for taking rations.

Reasons For Disliking New Food Delivery System (N=65; Multiple Responses)



Authentication Attempts Required (N=535)



However, for 28% of beneficiaries, it requires more than three attempts and for 1% of beneficiaries, the biometric authentication never works.

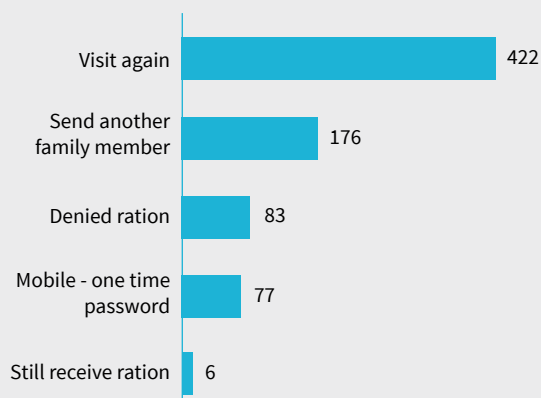
A “lack of” or no connectivity is another common grievance of the beneficiaries. Remote and rural areas barely receive any mobile signal and in some places, people return empty-handed several days in a row because of server and connectivity-related problems. The opportunity-cost of multiple visits to the retailer shops is also significant and comprises loss of daily wages, missing school, etc.

When the PoS fails to authenticate, the most common solution for beneficiaries (79% of cases) is to come again another day either in person or send another family member to authenticate and lift the ration. People use the exception management protocol²³ (a one-time password is sent to the registered mobile number of the beneficiary) only 14% of the time. This is primarily because of low levels of awareness – several retailers expressed surprise when informed

of this option. Of the respondents, 16% reported being denied rations, while only 1% said they had received rations despite PoS failure, possibly through a bypass system.

In most cases, beneficiaries who reported being denied ration faced transaction denial due to authentication failure on that particular day. Beneficiaries may be able to receive their ration the next day by retrying authentication, by sending some other member of the family for authentication, by using the exception management protocol (mobile OTP), or through the bypass system (see box below). In a few cases, neither of the mechanisms work and beneficiaries are afraid of being permanently excluded. The research found a strong relationship between beneficiaries who were “denied” and who view the new system as “worse”. Therefore it is important to have an effective exception management processes to improve the experience of beneficiaries and reduce the risk of beneficiaries forming a negative perception of digitisation processes.

What Happens When Authentication Fails? (N=535; Multiple Responses)



23. A one-time password (OTP) is sent as a text message to registered mobile number of the beneficiary. The beneficiary shares the OTP with the FPS dealer. Once the dealer correctly inserts the password, the transaction is authenticated.

What is the Bypass System?

Aadhaar was never made absolutely mandatory for PDS in Rajasthan. As of January 2016, an order was passed that a beneficiary could take rations without authentication if his/her authentication fails and mobile OTP does not work. It was called the ‘bypass method.’ However, over time, FPS dealers started to misuse it and huge numbers of ‘bypass transactions’ were reported.

In order to stop this, in March 2016, the government issued an order that to use the ‘bypass method’, the beneficiary would have to receive special permission from the SDO/BDO, and this too would represent a one-time exception for the beneficiary. Immediately, the number of transactions dropped. For example, the number of transactions dropped from 1,340 million in January to 1,120 million in March, which represents a difference of 220 million transactions. While this method curtailed fake transactions conducted by FPS dealers, many genuine beneficiaries were also inconvenienced.

In March, FPS dealers went to court against the government to limit the use of the “bypass method”. The High Court of Rajasthan stayed the government order and decreed that the government cannot deny rations to people. The research discussions show low levels of awareness of the “bypass method” among beneficiaries. The research data also shows that only 1% of beneficiaries have used this system as an extreme measure.

Dealer fraud: In qualitative discussions, several NFSA beneficiaries also complained of FPS dealer fraud. Dealer fraud, particularly related to quantity and denial of rations, was common even under the old, manual system. The dealers, it seems, have come up with innovative ways of defrauding customers and PoS has had little impact on reducing this type of fraud. In villages that the research team visited, beneficiaries complained that they were not receiving their foodgrain entitlements regularly.

In a particularly innovative case from Kishorepura in Karauli, villagers explained how the FPS dealer personally visits the houses of people with his PoS machine. He chooses the most illiterate or poor people and asks them to place their fingerprint on the machine so that he can ‘check’ if their ration quota for the month has arrived or not. Once the poor, ignorant villager has placed their fingerprint on the machine, the dealer feigns regret and tells them that their ration has not arrived. Meanwhile, as their fingerprints have been authenticated, the PoS machine records a successful purchase transaction and the dealer can divert this amount for profit.

In Umren, Alwar, the dealer used a similar tactic with poor people telling them that authentication failed even when it actually had not. Dealers respond to these allegations by saying that the quantity of foodgrains they receive is on the basis of the NFSA list. However, the actual number of beneficiaries might be significantly more due to manual identification of TPDS beneficiaries.²⁴ Therefore, they are forced to give some people less ration in order to accommodate other “genuine” beneficiaries.

It is because of these reasons that the largest group of households (45%) are indifferent to the new system. They had problems with the old method of ration distribution as well as the new method, and do not see differences as a result of the latest reforms.

Digitisation errors: The digitisation process started somewhere in 2012 when most of the ration cards were about to expire. A combination of e-mitras, Aanganwadi workers, schoolteachers, and

²⁴To deal with exclusion of genuine TPDS beneficiaries, the Rajasthan government delegated power to local panchayat officials to stamp the ration cards of beneficiaries who were incorrectly excluded after verification. These beneficiaries are not reflected in the NFSA digitisation list displayed on the PoS.

local officials assisted the government to digitise the NFSA beneficiaries. The government realised that the number of eligible beneficiaries had reached 53 million against the target of 44.6 million beneficiaries. The government suspected that this increase in the number of beneficiaries might be due to beneficiaries with duplicate ration cards who were availing rations under different food subsidy schemes at multiple locations.

The government conducted a large-scale verification exercise in parallel with the Bhamashah registration camps and eliminated approximately 9 million beneficiaries from the original list of 53 million. A lot of digitisation errors and exclusion errors prevalent in Rajasthan occurred as a result of inconsistency in the verification process or influence of local political forces during the verification process.

Grievance mechanism: Rajasthan has set up Rajasthan Sampark Portal, which is the online registration system for grievances related to certain schemes and related departments. Beneficiaries are supposed to go to e-mitras and register their grievances on this portal. However, only two of the total households (535) had used the Sampark Portal for complaints. Most of the households approach the local panchayat (28%) and block officials (12%). Surprisingly, 39% of the households have never had a complaint about an FPS dealer or the ration delivery system.

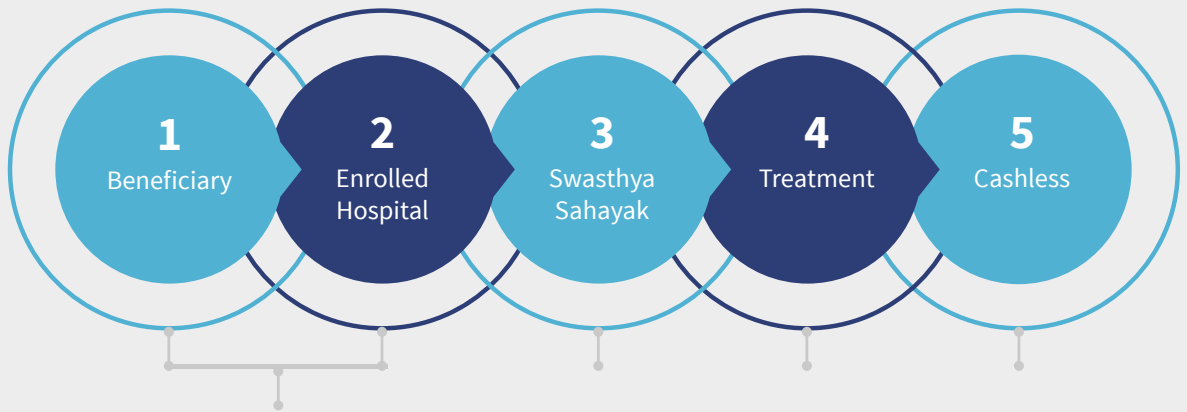
Key finding #4: Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana (BSBY) - Beneficiaries who used BSBY services rate it as an excellent scheme with great inherent value. Poor scheme communication and loose monitoring of enrolled hospitals are the major hurdles to BSBY uptake.

About BSBY: BSBY is a cashless health insurance scheme provided to the families covered under NFSA and Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana²⁵ (RSBY). The scheme is coupled with the Bhamashah scheme and provides a coverage of INR 30,000 (USD 461) for general illnesses and INR 300,000 (USD 4,615) for serious ailments. All government hospitals and a significant number of private hospitals in the state have enrolled under the scheme. Any private hospital may apply for enrolment. The BSBY scheme provides a transportation allowance of INR 100 (USD 1.5) upon the discharge of the beneficiary, with an annual ceiling of INR 500 (USD 7.5), pre-hospitalisation expenses for seven days, and post-hospitalisation expenses for 15 days.

To avail BSBY, beneficiaries must not only be eligible under NFSA but should also have taken rations at least once in the three months prior to the hospitalisation. If a medical facility is not available in a particular enrolled hospital, the hospital management is responsible to ensure that they contract such facilities so that patients can receive complete coverage under BSBY and do not need to spend out of their own pocket.

25. <http://www.rsby.gov.in>

The major steps to avail BSBY



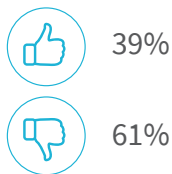
1 Beneficiary
The beneficiary has to give his Bhamashah ID and an ID proof (Hospitals prefer *Aadhaar* over other IDs because insurance companies prefer *Aadhaar* verification).

3 Swasthya Sahayak
Swasthya Sahayak (health helper) in the hospital will check if the beneficiary has coverage under NFSA and if the beneficiary has taken ration from an FPS dealer in the past three months. If yes, the Swasthya Sahayak verifies the beneficiary through *Aadhaar* by biometric authentication.

4 Treatment
Beneficiaries can now receive free treatment if their treatment requires hospitalisation for more than 24 hours. After the treatment, the beneficiary is required to fill out the feedback form. One copy of the feedback form remains with the hospital, which the hospital authorities upload to the Bhamashah portal. The feedback form accounts for details of the treatment, total expenditure, the total balance left under BSBY, and comments from the patient.

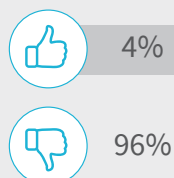
5 Cashless
The entire process is completely cashless.

Awareness of BSBY is Low (N=633)

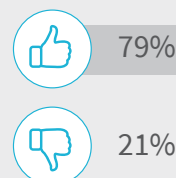


BSBY suffers from low awareness levels. The research data shows that only 39% of the beneficiaries are aware of BSBY. Even those who are aware, have limited awareness gathered through informal discussions. Far fewer know the features and benefits of BSBY. As a consequence, only 4% of households have tried to avail it.

Tried Availing BSBY? (N=633)



Successfully Covered (N=28)



Perception of BSBY Treatment (N=22)



Nonetheless, the success rate of accessing BSBY is high. Of those 28 households who tried to avail BSBY, the scheme successfully covered 79% of the households under it. These beneficiaries were satisfied with the treatment services offered to them and the overall BSBY process. Most often these beneficiaries receive minimal treatment in over-crowded government hospitals and were delighted

to have received superior quality healthcare from established providers at less or no cost. In addition, we conducted in-depth discussions in villages in Jodhpur, Rajsamund, Bhilwara, and Karauli. These discussions highlight that people who had some information about the scheme and had seen other beneficiaries successfully use BSBY services were positive about BSBY. They reported that it is a considerably helpful scheme and is the best feature of Bhamashah.

BSBY Saved Sita's Life

Sita, a young lady of age 26 years, lives in Panotiya village in Amet block, Udaipur. She was diagnosed with a hole in her heart. Her family had lost all hope as the treatment was quite expensive and beyond their means.

It was only after the family came to know about free treatment under BSBY, they saw a ray of hope. She used her Bhamashah card and went to a private hospital in Udaipur for treatment. She had to stay in the hospital for 15 days. The treatment cost came out to slightly above INR 3 lakh (USD 4,615). But all her expenses were taken care of and she had to pay for nothing but medicine, the cost of travel, and x-rays.

Sita and her family were all praise for BSBY and find it useful for the poor.

The significant problem with the uptake and popularity of BSBY is low levels of awareness. While there are some households that are aware and satisfied with BSBY services, many households are not aware of it or are ignorant of the process, eligibility requirements, and terms and conditions to avail BSBY. Due to this low level of awareness, households who attempt to receive free treatment in hospitals are either denied services or illegally charged by hospital staff. For example, beneficiaries do not know the list of treatment.

“Jaanch padtal ke bhi paise dene hai shayd par operation free hoga”

(Operation should be free but probably we will have to pay for the diagnosis)

Beneficiary, Bhilwara

Beneficiaries, for instance, do not know the list of treatment services that BSBY covers. As a result, hospitals charge patients for scans, medicines, and other treatments by falsely claiming that BSBY does not cover these services. The research team encountered cases where even hospitals were not aware of their duty under BSBY to provide coverage for such services.

“Hospital wale seedhe saade logon se paise maang lete hain, aise samay mein kaun mana karega?”

(These hospitals take money from innocent people, one cannot refuse to pay during such tough and critical times)

Beneficiary, Udaipur

In July 2016, the Rajasthan government allotted INR 25,000 (USD 385) to each District Health Committee in all 34 districts to communicate the features and benefits²⁶ of BSBY. However, the amount seems to be insufficient to cover the population of approximately 70 million throughout Rajasthan. At present, the result of these efforts to increase awareness is not encouraging

26. [Circular on BSBY communication](#)

NFSA Eligibility

One of the eligibility clauses under BSBY states that beneficiaries must have taken rations in the past three months. However, the clause unwittingly ends up excluding genuine beneficiaries. For example, Gulati, a wheat-cultivating farmer of 45, received information that he would not receive treatment as he had not taken his grain ration for the past three months. Gulati had a good crop and had enough extra grain at home for a few months, so he skipped taking rations from the dealer. To his dismay, he had to borrow INR 8,000 (USD 123) from his neighbour for the treatment. The research also encountered cases where beneficiaries had been erroneously excluded from NFSA. For example, some BPL/AAY beneficiaries had not been able to take rations because of biometric failures, digitisation errors, etc. Being excluded from BSBY services was, therefore, a double-loss for them and was not their fault.



Voices from the Field:

Following are some illustrative cases recorded during the field research that highlight beneficiary experiences around BSBY.

Case 1: Sammi Bano lives in Teonri village in Jodhpur. She had taken her husband to a nearby government hospital that offers BSBY services but was refused. She was told that particular tests were not available and she would have to go to a private hospital. She paid INR 9,000 (USD 138) at a private hospital (non-BSBY) for her husband's treatment.

Case 2: A beneficiary in Mahasation Ki Mandari village of Rajsamund with a heart complication had to first deposit INR 80,000 (USD 1,231) with the hospital under BSBY. Although the amount was refunded after the operation, the hospital refused to operate without an initial deposit despite the beneficiary being covered under BSBY (BSBY is supposed to be cashless). Another beneficiary in the same village underwent treatment costing INR 69,000 (USD 1,062) because his Bhamashah card was not accepted. Later, he realised that his ration card had not been linked to his Bhamashah ID. Once the beneficiary corrected the mistake with the help of Sarpanch, the hospital returned the entire amount to the beneficiary.

Case 3: In another case in Bhilwara, the cost of childbirth in a private hospital was INR 15,000 (USD 231). The hospital authorities told the family that the Bhamashah scheme would cover only INR 10,000 (USD 154). Later, the authorities asked the family to deposit INR 5,000 (USD 77) more. On reporting the entire incident to Sarpanch, the hospital returned INR 5,000 (USD 77) to the family.



6. Recommendations

Camps to address grievances

The Bhamashah registration process was an enormous exercise that required orchestrated efforts of local officials and government-appointed agencies. Since large-scale registration of more than 14 million families was conducted in a relatively short period of time, manual errors have made their way to the central server (BRDH). This has led to instances of incorrect entry of beneficiary demographic details.

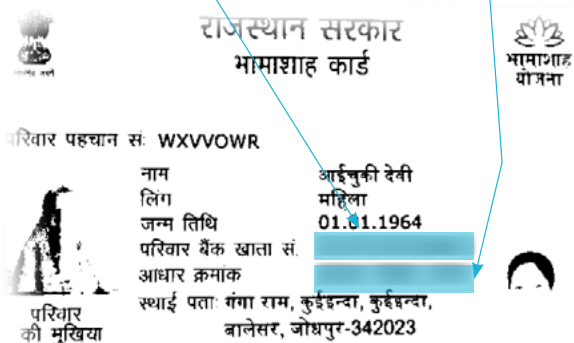
Wrong Date of Birth – Pension Stopped (Needs to be Corrected at both E-Mitra & Treasury Dept. Now)

Entire Family Not Listed – Denial of Rations


Wrong Bank A/C No – No Pension/LPG Subsidy

Wrong Aadhaar No – No Pension/Ration/LPG Subsidy

क्र.सं.	नाम	मुखिया से सम्बंध	लिंग	जन्म तिथि	आधार क्रमांक
1	गंगा राम	पति	पु	01.01.1959	
2	मदन	पुत्र	पु	20.07.1994	
3	हज़रामन राम	पुत्र	पु	10.07.1996	



Household Perception: Impact of Bhamashah on Digital Governance Reforms in Rajasthan



Incorrect beneficiary details such as wrong *Aadhaar*, date of birth, bank account leads to stoppage of benefit transfers to the beneficiary. For beneficiaries, rectifying this is a difficult task, as many don't know whom to approach or where to go. In most cases, they approach local elected officials such as the Sarpanch in the villages and the BDO/SDO in the block or division. While some beneficiaries are successful in this approach, a large number of beneficiaries do not have the capacity and bandwidth to take the time to correct their details in the system. E-mitras are costly to approach as they charge beneficiaries to initiate the correction process.

The government should set up a one-time, large-scale data correction exercise across the state (at the village- or Panchayat-level) for beneficiaries to ensure that their details are corrected in the database. This will help the state government to further improve the data quality of BRDH and also reinstate the rights of beneficiaries towards scheme entitlements. The Rajasthan government can also create an association with non-government organisations (NGOs) to help provide assistance to people who cannot navigate the system.

Communication

Most of the issues faced during the Bhamashah enrolment are due to low awareness levels among beneficiaries. The government must design a targeted communication strategy to propagate the features of the Bhamashah scheme and its objectives across the state. The communications strategy must utilise technology (mass and targeted text messages) to focus on the strengths of this scheme, such as the utility of the Bhamashah card, the aspect of gender empowerment, and the awareness levels surrounding BSBY. The strategy should aim to make people aware of the scheme's importance as a tool for effective service delivery and elimination of corruption. The strategy should focus on above-the-line (advertisements in television, radio, and newspapers) and below-the-line communication campaigns (such as street plays) as per the target geographies.

Monitoring of service delivery institutions

It is impossible for the government to build the infrastructure required to deliver all its services. Therefore, in the current scenario, public-private partnerships are essential for effective service delivery. These PPP institutions such as e-mitras (for financial inclusion), enrolled hospitals (for BSBY) become the face of the government while delivering specific services. To maintain its reputation and to ensure that it can deliver quality service to its citizens, the government must adopt a periodic and independent mechanism of monitoring. The government should use this mechanism to review, audit, and assess these institutions and take timely recourse to the main standard of service delivery.

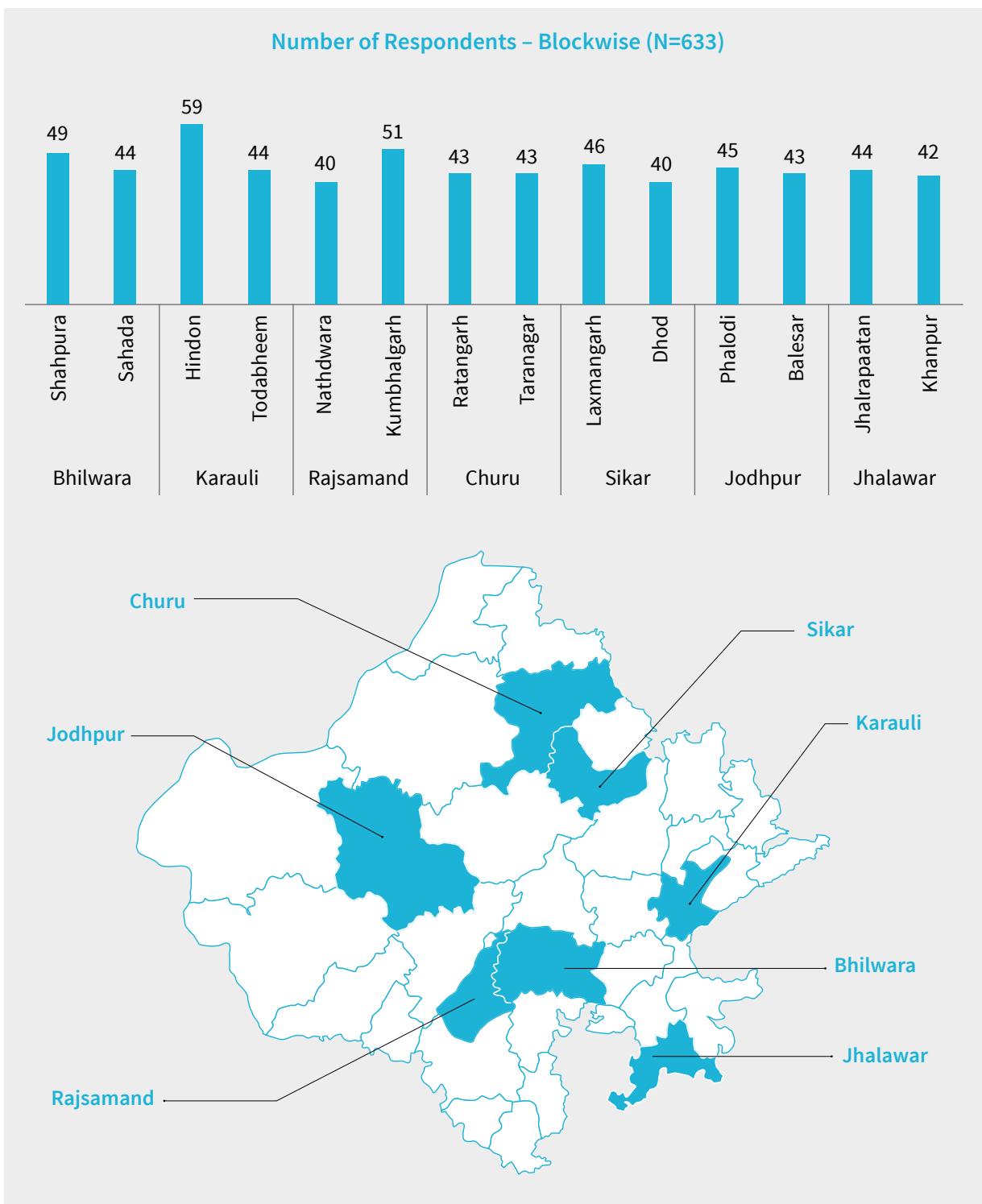
Diagnostic study to assess the efficiency of e-mitras

The e-mitras are an important but weak link between financial inclusion and the gender empowerment mechanism of the Bhamashah scheme. The Rajasthan government should undertake an independent assessment of challenges around the functioning and incentive structure of e-mitras to make evidence-based policy changes.

Annexure-I: Research Methodology and Sampling

MicroSave conducted a mixed-method dipstick assessment, which comprised both quantitative and qualitative studies. The quantitative research covered 633 respondents across different administrative divisions in the state of Rajasthan. Rajasthan is administratively divided into seven divisions, each division is further divided into districts, blocks, and village.

The study was conducted with a total of 633 households across seven different districts from seven different regions of Rajasthan. We selected two blocks (one urban and one rural) in each district and randomly covered 5 to 6 villages in each block. The following graph illustrates the sample break-up of the quantitative survey across Rajasthan.



Schemes assessed: The study assessed schemes, such as Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), and Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana (BSBY).

For the quantitative study, we selected one representative district from each of the seven administrative divisions. We selected two blocks from each of the districts and covered one urban block and one rural block. At the lowest level of administration, we selected the villages and wards (urban) on a random basis.

Stage-I: District selection: We selected the district using NFSA coverage data of Rajasthan and also with data on *Aadhaar*-seeding of NFSA cards. The sampling includes the number of NFSA beneficiaries (44 million) and does not include non-NFSA units. For a better sampling, we factored in an *Aadhaar*-seeded dataset of NFSA ration cards as a data de-duplication exercise is still going on and *Aadhaar*-seeding data will provide more precision. The districts chosen have NFSA units per capita (NFSA units/population) that are close to the average penetration of the respective division. The idea, thereby, being to select a district that best represents the overall state of affairs within the division.

Stage-II: Block selection: The challenges encountered in the process of block selection include the unavailability of *Aadhaar*-seeding and population data for blocks. The block populations are not available due to block-reorganisation in Rajasthan and the consequent mismatch between census blocks and the blocks in the NFSA data. Therefore, we used the total NFSA ration card units as the parameter for selecting blocks (rural) and wards (urban). We chose blocks that showed a minimum deviation from the mean. Apart from this, we also used another dataset in the form of NFSA DRC units to select blocks and check for any differences between the selected blocks from the two datasets (both give the same results).

Stage-III: Village and ward selection: We chose villages and wards on a random basis. Again, we could not use a proportionate population sampling method (PPS sampling) for villages due to the lack of data on the population within the wards or villages. We expect the randomised selection to be adequate for a reasonable sampling frame at that level. We have arranged the villages in selected blocks serially and subsequently selected in a random manner using the random number generator of MS Excel `randbetween()`.

The qualitative study consisted of personal interviews and focus group discussions with the beneficiaries of various government schemes covered under the assessment. The study also covered the government or institutional stakeholders involved in the implementation of these schemes. We planned the study to ensure a wide geographical coverage. We covered one district each from four different administrative divisions. In each district, we ensured that we interviewed respondents from two or more different blocks.

The table below gives district-wise information on the number of interviews conducted as part of the qualitative research. The study focused on determining the reasons behind the various perceptions that respondents had about different aspects related to the schemes implemented by the state. The government and other institutional stakeholders provided process-level information and also helped us to understand the impact of digitisation on the service providers.

27. Nagarpalikas are known as wards

District	No. of FGDs/PIs	Beneficiaries strength	Stakeholder interviews
Rajsamund	9	43	7
Bhilwara	9	36	4
Jodhpur	6	36	2
Karauli	7	46	3

Limitations in sampling frame: The sampling methodology had some inherent limitations which must be addressed. The state of Rajasthan is a large province with habitations spread across its geographical length and breadth. The lack of transport connectivity posed certain logistical challenges in terms of collecting information from beneficiaries residing in such remote locations. Apart from logistical challenges, the sampling process faced an information-gap due to the reorganisation exercise carried out by the state during the reference period of the study. This meant that new administrative blocks had been created. This means that the census data was not perfectly applicable to these blocks and, hence, we made certain changes to select the blocks from the selected districts.

We picked up the dataset of the beneficiaries from Rajasthan food and civil supplies department (<http://food.raj.nic.in/DistrictWiseCategoryDetails.aspx>). We observed that the dataset available on the above link is dynamic and a minor deviation in numbers occurs on a daily basis.

Annexure-II: Respondent Profile

Figure 1 indicates the gender profile of the respondents covered in the research. Nearly 64% of the respondents are females. The intent of interviewing a larger proportion of female respondents was to capture better information on aspects related to female empowerment, which is one of the goals of Bhamashah scheme.

Figure 2 gives the proportion of respondents based on their BPL (Below Poverty Line) status. 40% of the total respondents belong to the BPL category. The BPL segment of the population is the poorest segment and is expected to face greater challenges in availing government benefits. This makes it important to capture their perception on the digitisation efforts made by the state.

Apart from the BPL status, we consider the land ownership and the family income as important variables that are indicative of the economic profile of the respondents. Of the total respondents, an overwhelming majority (over 72%) either do not own any land or own less than 1 bigha²⁸ of land. In terms of monthly family income, we find that most respondents have incomes between INR 2,000 and INR 10,000.

Gender Profile of Respondents (N=633)



Figure 1- Gender profile of respondents

BPL and Non-BPL category (N=633)

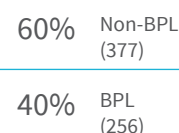
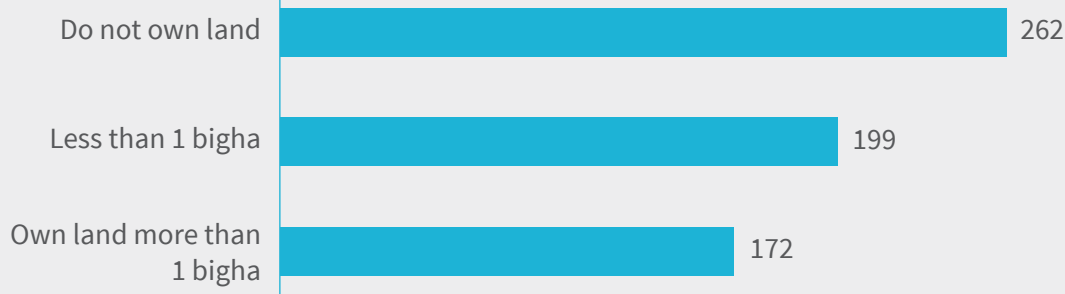
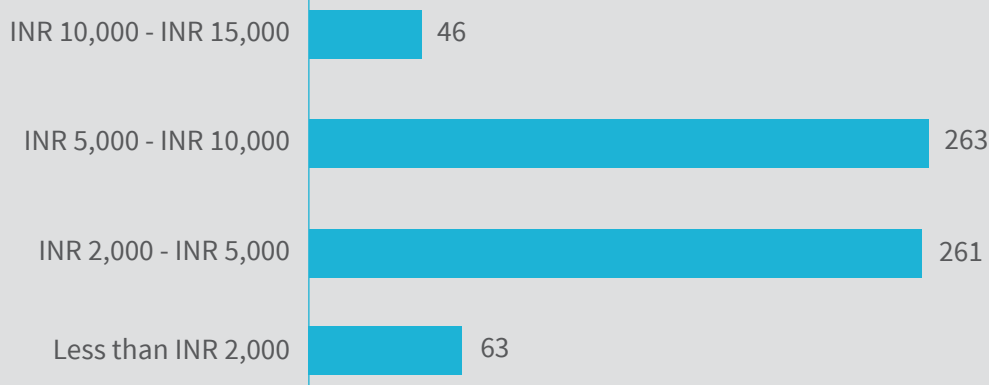


Figure 2- Proportion of BPL to Non-BPL respondents

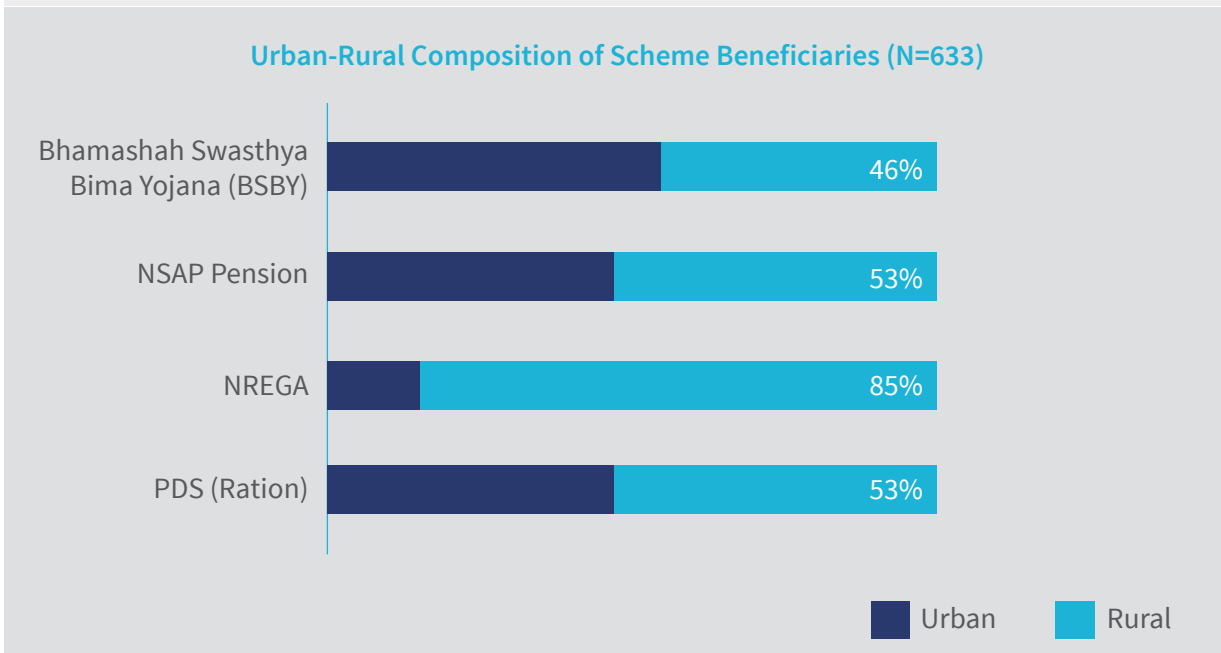
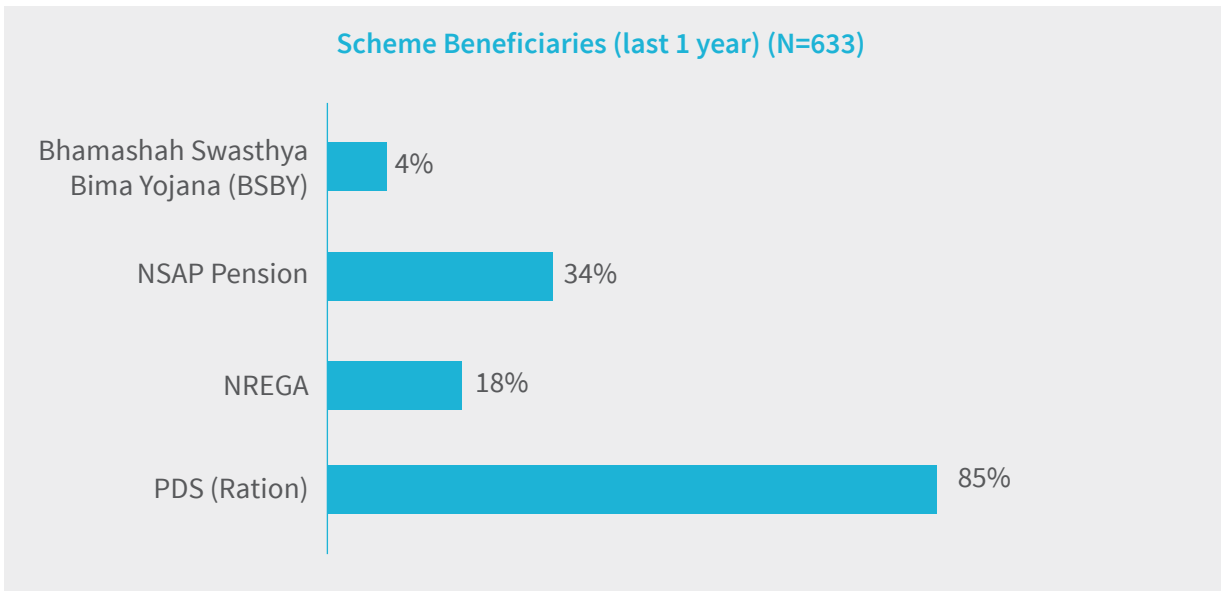
Land Ownership (% , N=633)



Monthly Family Income (% , N=633)



28. Bigha is the local unit of measurement of land. 1 Bigha = 1,618 sq metres



We can also classify the respondents based on the schemes under which they received benefits during the last one year. The quantitative data shows that most respondents received benefits under PDS scheme, followed by benefits under PAHAL scheme (LPG). A further dissection across geography reveals that most respondents who are beneficiaries of schemes such as PDS, MGNREGS, and PMUY belong to rural areas. In contrast, a majority of respondents who benefited from BSBY and PAHAL belong to urban areas. This is consistent with the design of the respective schemes.

Annexure-III: Team Members

Center for Global Development (CGD)

Alan Gelb.

Senior Fellow

Anit N. Mukherjee

Policy Fellow

MicroSave

Anurodh Giri

Senior Manager

Arshi Aadil

Assistant Manager

Mitul Thapliyal

Associate Director

Nikhil Dhanda

Assistant Manager

Ridhee Malhotra

Assistant Manager

Shoikat Roy

Assistant Manager

Vivek Khanna

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