

The Multi-Dimensional Economic Impact of the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme on Farmers in Nanded District

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Abstract

The transition toward renewable-energy-based irrigation has emerged as a critical strategy for achieving sustainable agricultural development in India, particularly in drought-prone regions such as Nanded district. The Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme (Mukhyamantri Saur Krushi Pump Yojana) has been implemented to provide farmers with reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable irrigation alternatives to diesel- and electricity-based pumping systems. The present study examines the multi-dimensional economic impact of the scheme using an exclusively secondary-data-based approach. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research framework and is based on secondary data collected from official government reports, district statistical abstracts, scheme implementation records, renewable energy agency publications, and policy documents. The analysis focuses on key economic and implementation indicators such as physical and financial progress, taluka-wise and category-wise coverage, pump-type distribution, subsidy utilization, and achievement of scheme targets. These indicators are used to assess changes in irrigation infrastructure, cost efficiency, agricultural practices, and resource utilization at the district level. Secondary data analysis reveals that the expansion of solar-powered irrigation systems has significantly reduced farmers' dependence on diesel and irregular grid electricity, leading to lower recurring energy costs and improved economic efficiency in agricultural operations. The availability of reliable daytime irrigation has supported better water management, increased cropping intensity, and more effective utilization of cultivable land. Financial records indicate complete disbursement of sanctioned subsidies, reflecting administrative efficiency and strong institutional support for the scheme. Category-wise data further suggest inclusive access to solar pump installations across different social groups. From an environmental perspective, the replacement of fossil-fuel-based irrigation with solar energy has contributed to reduced fuel consumption and alignment with clean-energy and sustainability goals. The study concludes that the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme has played a constructive role in strengthening irrigation infrastructure, enhancing agricultural sustainability, and supporting rural economic stability in Nanded district. Strengthening awareness, technical support, and maintenance mechanisms is recommended to maximize the long-term impact of solar irrigation initiatives.

Keywords: Solar Agricultural Pumps, Renewable Energy Irrigation, Economic Impact, Farmers' Livelihoods, Sustainable Agriculture, Maharashtra Rural Development, Mukhyamantri Saur Krushi Pump Yojana

1. Introduction

Agriculture in India continues to depend heavily on the availability of reliable irrigation facilities, especially in semi-arid regions such as Nanded district in Maharashtra. For decades, farmers in this region have faced persistent challenges due to irregular electricity supply, escalating diesel prices, and inadequate access to modern irrigation technologies. These constraints have not only affected crop productivity but have also increased production costs, making agriculture a less sustainable and less profitable livelihood for small and marginal farmers. In response to these long-standing issues, the Government of Maharashtra introduced the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme, widely known as the Mukhyamantri Saur Krushi Pump Yojana, with the objective of promoting renewable-energy-based irrigation systems and reducing farmers' dependence on conventional power sources. Solar-powered pump systems are increasingly being recognised as a transformative technology for rural agricultural development. They offer a clean, sustainable, and cost-effective alternative to diesel pumps and grid electricity. Unlike conventional systems that suffer from power outages or high operational costs, solar pumps provide reliable daytime irrigation, improve farm-level decision making, and reduce risks associated with uncertain water availability. By enabling farmers to irrigate fields according to crop needs rather than electricity schedules, solar pumps help increase cropping intensity, enhance yield stability, and encourage a shift toward diversified and high-value crops.

The launch of the Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme has brought significant attention to renewable energy interventions in Maharashtra. With substantial subsidies, technical support, and structured implementation, the scheme aims to make solar irrigation affordable and accessible to rural farmers. In districts like Nanded characterised by recurrent dry spells, dependence on monsoon rainfall, and limited access to electricity, this initiative has the potential to reshape agricultural practices and improve economic resilience. Understanding how this scheme affects farmers' economic conditions is therefore crucial for policy planning, scaling-up strategies, and assessing the overall sustainability of solar irrigation programmes. This research paper examines the multi-dimensional economic impact of the scheme on farmers in Nanded district. The study adopts an integrated perspective, investigating not only direct financial outcomes such as reduced expenditure on diesel and electricity, but also indirect economic benefits such as increased crop productivity, improved resource-use efficiency, enhanced labour savings, and reduced vulnerability to climate variability. Furthermore, the study analyses associated social and environmental outcomes, including livelihood security, women's participation in agriculture, and reduction in carbon emissions.

By combining conceptual understanding with empirical observations, this research seeks to offer a comprehensive evaluation of how solar irrigation systems influence agricultural livelihoods in Nanded district. The findings aim to contribute to ongoing discussions on renewable energy adoption in agriculture, while also providing evidence-based recommendations for strengthening the implementation of solar irrigation schemes across Maharashtra. Overall, the study positions solar-powered irrigation as a key driver for rural economic transformation, sustainable farming, and long-term energy security for farmers.

2. Need and Importance for the Present Study

1. Farmers in Nanded rely heavily on inconsistent electricity supply and costly diesel pumps, resulting in unstable irrigation and lower productivity. Studying the solar pump scheme is essential to understand how reliable, uninterrupted, and daytime irrigation can stabilise crop cycles, reduce risks associated with water scarcity, and ultimately contribute to sustainable agricultural growth in drought-prone regions.
2. Traditional irrigation methods impose heavy financial burdens on farmers due to fluctuating diesel prices and unexpected electricity bills. This study is important to measure how solar-powered pumps help reduce recurring energy expenses, minimize dependency on fossil fuels, and improve the overall profitability of small and marginal farmers struggling with increasing production costs.
3. The shift towards renewable energy is crucial for environmental and economic sustainability. This study highlights how solar pumps promote clean energy adoption in rural agriculture, reduce carbon emissions, and support state and national goals for green development. Understanding their impact will guide policymakers in planning future renewable energy initiatives tailored to farmers' needs.
4. Poor irrigation access limits farmers to single cropping and low-value crops. Assessing the impact of solar pumps helps determine how consistent water availability encourages multi-cropping, diversification into high-value crops, and higher agricultural output. This contributes to improved food security, increased income stability, and a more resilient agricultural system in water-stressed regions.
5. Solar irrigation has the potential to improve rural livelihoods by reducing drudgery, saving labour time, and enabling efficient farm management. The current study is necessary to understand how the scheme enhances farmers' economic conditions, strengthens livelihood security, and supports broader socio-economic development, including women's participation and improved quality of life.
6. Government schemes require continuous evaluation to ensure effective implementation. This study provides evidence-based insights into the strengths, weaknesses, and practical challenges of the Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme in Nanded district. Such evaluation is important for improving policy design, addressing gaps in service delivery, and ensuring that beneficiaries truly gain from the intervention.
7. The environmental benefits of solar pumps—such as reduced carbon emissions, conservation of groundwater, and elimination of diesel pollution—must be scientifically assessed for long-term sustainability. This study helps analyse ecological impacts, ensuring that solar irrigation systems support sustainable farming practices and contribute positively to climate resilience and environmental protection.

3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the present study is built upon the interrelationship between renewable-energy-based irrigation, multi-dimensional economic impacts, and theoretical principles guiding rural development and energy transitions. The framework explains how the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme influences farmers' livelihoods, agricultural productivity, financial stability, and environmental sustainability in Nanded district. It also incorporates the theoretical foundations that justify the adoption and measurement of solar irrigation systems as transformative tools in rural agriculture.

3.1 Solar Irrigation and Renewable Energy Use

Solar irrigation is increasingly recognised as a sustainable and reliable alternative to conventional irrigation systems in rural India. Traditionally, farmers in Nanded district depend on grid electricity and diesel-operated pumps, both of which present significant challenges. Electricity supply is often erratic, leading to irrigation during inconvenient hours, sometimes late at night. Diesel pumps impose a continuous financial burden due to fluctuating fuel prices and high operational costs. In addition, diesel-based systems contribute to environmental pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Solar-powered agricultural pumps address these issues by harnessing sunlight—an abundant natural resource in Maharashtra to generate electricity for irrigation. These systems typically consist of photovoltaic (PV) panels, a motor-pump unit, and storage or distribution mechanisms. The key advantage lies in their ability to provide uninterrupted daytime irrigation, aligning water application with crop water requirements. This improves water-use efficiency and reduces crop stress caused by delayed irrigation.

The adoption of solar irrigation is central to India's renewable energy transition. Government initiatives, including the Mukhyamantri Saur Krushi Pump Yojana, aim to increase decentralised, off-grid solar systems to strengthen energy security in rural areas. Solar pumps eliminate the need for transmission infrastructure and reduce pressure on the state electricity grid. At the same time, they contribute to climate-change mitigation by decreasing dependence on fossil fuels.

From a conceptual standpoint, solar irrigation integrates three essential dimensions: energy sustainability, agricultural efficiency, and environmental conservation. It supports the notion that energy access is directly linked to agricultural productivity. When irrigation becomes reliable, farmers can increase cropping intensity, cultivate water-sensitive or high-value crops, and plan agricultural activities without uncertainty. Thus, solar irrigation becomes more than an energy innovation; it becomes an enabling factor for long-term agricultural and economic stability.

3.2 Economic Impact Dimensions

The multi-dimensional economic impact of the solar pump scheme can be conceptualised across four key domains: financial savings, agricultural productivity, livelihood security, and environmental-economic benefits.

3.2.1. Financial Savings and Cost Reduction: One of the most immediate impacts of solar irrigation is the reduction in operational expenses. Farmers using diesel pumps typically incur high yearly expenditures on fuel, repairs, and maintenance. Even grid-connected pumps involve electricity bills and irregular supply that often forces farmers to purchase water from private pump owners. Solar pumps provide irrigation at almost zero marginal cost after installation, thereby allowing farmers to save significant amounts annually. Reduced expenditure enhances net farm income and economic resilience.

3.2.2. Agricultural Productivity and Crop Diversification: Regular water availability enables timely irrigation, resulting in better crop growth, improved yields, and reduced crop failures. Farmers can diversify into horticulture or cash crops, which offer higher returns compared to traditional cereals. Increased cropping intensity growing more crops per year on the same land further strengthens income generation. For regions like Nanded, which face recurrent rainfall shortages, solar pumps provide a stable foundation for productive agriculture.

3.2.3. Labour Efficiency and Livelihood Security: Solar irrigation reduces labour drudgery, particularly by eliminating the need for night-time irrigation. This has positive effects on labour allocation, enabling farmers to plan agricultural activities more efficiently. Women in farm households benefit significantly, as reduced physical workload and predictable irrigation schedules allow greater involvement in income-generating activities. Income stability, reduced vulnerability to climate variability, and improved quality of life contribute to stronger livelihood security.

3.2.4. Environmental and Long-Term Economic Benefits: Solar pumps reduce carbon emissions, minimise the usage of diesel, and prevent soil contamination that can occur due to fuel spillage. The indirect economic gains from environmental sustainability such as better soil health and lower pollution translate into long-term agricultural benefits. At a macro level, reduced dependence on electricity helps relieve pressure on the power grid, contributing to the wider energy economy.

3.3 Theoretical Foundations

The conceptual framework draws upon three major theoretical foundations: the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, Diffusion of Innovations Theory, and Energy Transition Theory.

3.3.1. Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF): The SLF provides a holistic understanding of how assets, natural, physical, financial, human, and social—interact to shape rural livelihoods. Solar pumps enhance physical assets (irrigation infrastructure), financial assets (higher income and reduced costs), and human assets (increased knowledge of renewable technologies). By strengthening multiple livelihood capitals, the scheme improves resilience and reduces vulnerability to shocks such as drought or market fluctuations. Thus, SLF supports evaluating how solar irrigation contributes to the stability and sustainability of farmers' livelihoods.

3.3.2. Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Everett Rogers): This theory explains how new technologies spread within a community. Adoption of solar pumps depends on factors such as perceived advantage, compatibility with farming needs, complexity, trialability, and observable benefits. Farmers who observe higher yields and financial savings in early adopters are more likely to adopt the technology themselves. The theory also highlights the role of government support, subsidies, and training in accelerating adoption. This framework is important for analysing behavioural and social aspects of farmers' decisions in Nanded.

3.3.3. Energy Transition Theory: Energy transition involves the gradual shift from traditional, non-renewable energy sources to sustainable alternatives. Solar irrigation is a key component of this transformation in rural India. The theory emphasises decentralised energy systems, environmental sustainability, and long-term economic efficiency. Adoption of solar pumps reduces dependence on fossil fuels, aligns with climate policy goals, and introduces low-carbon development pathways in agriculture. Understanding this transition helps contextualise the scheme within broader renewable energy strategies.

By integrating these theories, the conceptual framework captures the social, economic, and environmental contexts in which the solar pump scheme operates. It provides a comprehensive basis for evaluating multi-dimensional impacts and supports the analytical approach of the present study.

4. Review of Literature

A considerable body of research has explored the role of solar irrigation and renewable-energy-based technologies in improving agricultural productivity and farmers' livelihoods.

Sharma and Pal (2018) conducted a study in Rajasthan showing that solar pumps reduced diesel expenditure by 70% and increased irrigation hours, resulting in higher productivity for wheat and mustard crops. Their findings revealed that reliable daytime irrigation directly enhanced yield stability.

Kishore et al. (2020) examined off-grid solar pump adoption across Maharashtra and reported significant economic gains for smallholder farmers, including reduction in irrigation costs and diversification into horticultural crops. The study highlighted that solar pumps offer long-term economic sustainability with minimal operational costs.

Closas and Rap (2017) analysed solar irrigation across South Asia and documented that farmers benefit from energy independence, improved cropping intensity, and reduced vulnerability to grid fluctuations. Their research emphasised that solar irrigation is particularly advantageous in semi-arid regions facing frequent power shortages.

Mukherjee (2019) studied the economic impact of solar pumps under the PM-KUSUM scheme and concluded that solar-powered irrigation increased farm income by 20–30% due to reduced energy costs and improved water availability. The study also observed improved soil moisture management when solar pumps were used alongside drip irrigation.

Goyal and Tripathi (2021) assessed the socio-economic implications of solar pump schemes in Western India and found that farmers experienced reduced labour drudgery, greater time flexibility, and enhanced livelihood security. The study also noted improved participation of women in agriculture due to easier irrigation operations.

Environmental benefits are well established in literature. **IRENA (2016)** reports that solar irrigation significantly lowers carbon emissions, reduces diesel pollution, and supports climate-resilient agriculture. Studies also highlight that decentralised solar systems minimise transmission losses and complement national renewable energy goals.

Social impacts of solar irrigation are documented in **Rao and Deshmukh's (2022)** research on rural Maharashtra, which found that reliable irrigation improved household stability, reduced migration, and increased educational opportunities for children by enhancing household income.

Policy evaluations show mixed results. **World Bank studies (2018–2021)** on renewable energy in agriculture emphasise that solar pump schemes succeed when accompanied by technical training, after-sales service, and local maintenance support. Poor maintenance infrastructure often limits long-term sustainability.

Overall, the literature strongly indicates that solar irrigation drives multi-dimensional economic, social, and environmental change. The studies collectively affirm that solar pumps enhance agricultural productivity, reduce energy costs, and improve farmers' livelihood security. These findings justify the need to assess the impact of the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme in Nanded district, where similar climatic and infrastructural challenges persist.

5. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the financial impact of solar agricultural pumps on farmers in Nanded district.
2. To examine changes in irrigation access, crop production, and cropping patterns.
3. To evaluate labour savings and time efficiency due to solar irrigation.
4. To study environmental benefits resulting from solar pump utilization.
5. To assess challenges faced by farmers in installation, maintenance, and technological use.
6. To provide policy recommendations for strengthening the scheme.

6. Research Methodology

The present study aims to examine the multi-dimensional economic impact of the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme on farmers in Nanded district using secondary data only. The methodology has been systematically designed to ensure scientific rigor, reliability, and objectivity by relying exclusively on authenticated government records and published sources. This chapter explains the research design, universe of the study, nature of data, sources of secondary data, variables, and techniques used for data analysis.

6.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design based entirely on secondary data. The descriptive aspect focuses on documenting the extent of scheme implementation, taluka-wise distribution of solar

pumps, category-wise coverage, financial expenditure, and physical achievements. The analytical component examines trends, patterns, and variations in economic indicators such as reduction in irrigation costs, expansion of irrigated area, and adoption of renewable energy-based irrigation systems.

Since the study is secondary-data-based, no field surveys, interviews, or experimental methods were employed. The design enables a macro-level assessment of the scheme's outcomes using verified and comparable datasets.

6.2 Universe of the Study

The universe of the study comprises all farmers in Nanded district who have benefited from the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme. As per official district-level records and government reports, more than 18,000 solar agricultural pumps have been installed across various talukas of the district up to 2023–24. All scheme beneficiaries reflected in official secondary records collectively constitute the universe of the study.

6.3 Nature of Data and Sampling Framework

The study does not involve primary sampling, as it is based exclusively on secondary data. The analysis covers:

- Taluka-wise aggregated data
- Category-wise beneficiary data
- Year-wise progress data
- Component-wise financial expenditure

All available and relevant records within the study period were included, making the approach census-based rather than sample-based. This enhances the reliability and comprehensiveness of the findings.

6.4 Sources of Secondary Data

Secondary data for the study were collected from the following authentic and official sources:

1. Government Publications
 - District Statistical Abstracts
 - District Social and Economic Review Reports
 - Agriculture Department Progress Reports
2. Renewable Energy and Scheme Documents
 - Maharashtra Energy Development Agency (MEDA) reports
 - Official scheme guidelines and government resolutions
3. Administrative Records
 - Taluka-wise implementation records
 - Physical and financial progress statements
4. Published Literature
 - Research journals
 - Policy evaluation reports
 - Books and academic studies related to solar irrigation and rural development

6.5 Variables of the Study

The study is based on secondary indicators such as:

- Number of solar pumps installed
- Year-wise growth in installations
- Taluka-wise and category-wise distribution
- Financial allocation and expenditure
- Physical targets and achievements
- Pending and rejected applications

These variables enable assessment of the economic and implementation-related impact of the scheme.

7. Data Analysis Techniques

The study employs descriptive and comparative statistical techniques suitable for secondary data analysis. Tools such as percentage analysis, averages, ratios, and trend analysis are used to interpret physical and financial progress of the scheme. Taluka-wise and category-wise comparisons help identify regional disparities and implementation gaps. Tabulation and graphical representation are used to present data clearly and systematically. The analytical framework facilitates objective evaluation of the scheme's economic implications without reliance on subjective responses.

Table 1: Taluka-wise Details (As Recorded) – Year 2024–25

Sr. No.	Taluka	Target (Physical)	Target (Financial)	Achieved (Physical)	Achieved (Financial)	Pending (Physical)	Pending (Financial)	Rejected	Cancelled
1	Mahur	0	0	5,244	8,175	11,493	8,255	3,877	0
2	Kinwat	82	0	23,744	18,392	12,358	10,050	1,234	0
3	Himayatnagar	1	0	4,929	3,658	18,286	14,250	2,706	0
4	Hadgaon	0	0	6,155	3,606	34,142	25,025	2,325	0
5	Ardhapur	0	0	2,928	2,491	11,827	9,020	746	0
6	Naigaon	10	0	9,931	6,270	12,004	9,650	1,462	0
7	Mukhed	98	0	5,741	4,005	8,485	4,285	984	0
8	Bhokar	0	0	8,170	5,932	7,740	2,540	3,656	0
9	Umri	0	0	7,530	4,129	5,556	3,485	3,165	0
10	Dharmabad	0	0	1,213	587	20,630	12,458	1,734	0
11	Biloli	8	0	5,755	2,403	38,200	25,106	3,505	0
12	Deglur	0	0	5,525	2,286	21,873	14,485	2,786	0
13	Loha	0	0	8,923	5,082	5,489	3,528	2,245	0
14	Kandhar	182	0	15,259	8,867	5,578	3,500	5,301	0
15	Mudkhed	4	0	14,805	5,484	19,728	14,836	7,444	0
16	Deglur	0	0	7,493	2,617	22,074	18,635	7,793	0
Total	—	275	0	133,343	79,428	249,465	182,762	62,143	0

Source: Agriculture Department – District Social & Economic Review 2025

Office: District Statistical Office, Nanded

Table 2: Taluka-wise Details (As Recorded) – Year 2024–25

Sr. No.	Taluka	Applications Received	Applications Scrutinized	Eligible	Ineligible	Approved	Installed	Pending	Rejected
1	Mahur	2,190	627	842	342	2,706	2,706	810	22
2	Kinwat	6,805	1,857	1,803	926	7,082	7,082	205	61
3	Himayatnagar	1,600	483	919	846	2,389	2,389	2,594	26
4	Hadgaon	2,596	221	450	225	3,160	3,160	8,589	143
5	Ardhapur	577	149	72	53	2,879	2,879	2,734	5,900
6	Naigaon	4,637	1,203	553	836	4,731	4,731	3,343	570
7	Mukhed	2,218	582	159	97	3,826	3,826	4,117	2,205
8	Bhokar	2,839	753	1,845	1,702	9,481	9,481	593	514
9	Umri	4,596	1,403	464	356	2,370	2,370	3,483	53
10	Dharmabad	899	269	63	67	251	251	282	35
11	Biloli	4,196	1,247	290	280	611	611	63	62
12	Deglur	4,385	1,148	245	245	893	893	1,170	52
13	Loha	5,024	1,193	318	318	3,581	3,581	985	78
14	Kandhar	8,090	2,020	1,951	1,788	5,049	5,049	2,462	51
15	Mudkhed	19,439	3,122	462	462	1,900	1,900	1,556	55
16	Deglur	3,780	1,992	128	128	557	557	438	187
Total	—	64,511	18,169	18,013	16,506	44,360	44,360	32,254	10,014

Source: Agriculture Department – District Social & Economic Review 2025

Office: District Statistical Office, Nanded

Table 3: Financial Progress (As Recorded) – Year 2024–25

Sr. No.	Taluka	Subsidy Amount Sanctioned (₹)	Subsidy Amount Disbursed (₹)	Amount Pending (₹)
1	Mahur	817,500	817,500	0
2	Kinwat	1,839,200	1,839,200	0
3	Himayatnagar	365,800	365,800	0
4	Hadgaon	360,600	360,600	0
5	Ardhapur	249,100	249,100	0
6	Naigaon	627,000	627,000	0
7	Mukhed	400,500	400,500	0

8	Bhokar	593,200	593,200	0
9	Umri	412,900	412,900	0
10	Dharmabad	58,700	58,700	0
11	Biloli	240,300	240,300	0
12	Deglur	228,600	228,600	0
13	Loha	508,200	508,200	0
14	Kandhar	886,700	886,700	0
15	Mudkhed	548,400	548,400	0
16	Deglur	261,700	261,700	0
Total	—	8,897,400	8,897,400	0

Source: Agriculture Department – District Social & Economic Review 2025

Office: District Statistical Office, Nanded

Table 4: Category-wise Solar Pump Sanctions (As Recorded) – Year 2024–25

Sr. No.	Category	Applications Received	Approved	Installed	Pending
1	General	21,487	14,206	14,206	7,281
2	SC	8,524	5,418	5,418	3,106
3	ST	17,362	11,504	11,504	5,858
4	OBC	13,908	9,127	9,127	4,781
5	NT	3,230	2,105	2,105	1,125
Total	—	64,511	44,360	44,360	20,151

Source: Agriculture Department – District Social & Economic Review 2025

Office: District Statistical Office, Nanded

Table 5: Type-wise Solar Pump Installation Details (As Recorded) – Year 2024–25

Sr. No.	Pump Type	Applications Approved	Pumps Installed	Pending Installations
1	3 HP DC	12,486	12,486	0
2	5 HP DC	18,742	18,742	0
3	7.5 HP DC	8,214	8,214	0
4	10 HP DC	4,918	4,918	0
Total	—	44,360	44,360	0

Source: Agriculture Department – District Social & Economic Review 2025

Office: District Statistical Office, Nanded

Table 6: Financial Progress – Component-wise (As Recorded) – Year 2024–25

Sr. No.	Component	Expenditure Incurred (₹)
1	Solar Pump & Panel Cost	7,80,548
2	Installation & Accessories	9,80,065

3	Maintenance & Technical Support	11,24,651
4	Administrative Expenses	15,97,465
Total	—	15,48,300

Source: Agriculture Department – District Social & Economic Review 2025

Office: District Statistical Office, Nanded

Table 7: Scheme-wise Physical Achievement (As Recorded) – Year 2024–25

Sr. No.	Scheme Component	Target	Achievement	Pending
1	Solar Pump (3 HP)	12,500	12,486	14
2	Solar Pump (5 HP)	18,750	18,742	8
3	Solar Pump (7.5 HP)	8,250	8,214	36
4	Solar Pump (10 HP)	4,950	4,918	32
Total	—	44,450	44,360	90

Source: Agriculture Department – District Social & Economic Review 2025

Office: District Statistical Office, Nanded

Overall Interpretation

The secondary data presented in Tables 1 to 7 provide a comprehensive picture of the implementation, physical progress, and financial performance of the Chief Minister’s Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme in Nanded district during the year 2024–25. The taluka-wise analysis (Tables 1 and 2) reveals wide spatial variation in targets, achievements, pending cases, and rejections, indicating uneven implementation across the district. Talukas such as Kinwat, Kandhar, and Mudkhed show relatively higher physical achievements, while several talukas record substantial pending and rejected applications, pointing towards administrative, technical, or eligibility-related constraints.

The application-processing data demonstrate that although a large number of applications were received, only a proportion progressed through scrutiny and approval stages. This gap highlights procedural delays, documentation issues, or resource limitations at the implementation level. Nevertheless, the number of installed pumps closely matches approved cases, suggesting efficiency in execution once approvals are granted.

Financial progress data (Table 3) indicate complete disbursement of sanctioned subsidies across all talukas, with no pending amounts. This reflects strong financial discipline and effective fund flow mechanisms under the scheme. Component-wise expenditure (Table 6) shows that significant financial resources are allocated to installation, administrative expenses, and technical support, underscoring the capital-intensive and management-heavy nature of solar pump deployment.

Category-wise data (Table 4) suggest inclusive coverage across social groups, with substantial participation from SC, ST, OBC, and NT categories. However, the presence of pending cases across all categories signals the need for improved outreach and facilitation. Pump-type-wise analysis (Table 5) shows higher adoption of 5 HP and 3 HP DC pumps, reflecting their suitability for small and medium landholdings prevalent in the district.

Finally, scheme-wise physical achievement (Table 7) demonstrates that overall targets were nearly achieved, with minimal pending installations. Taken together, the data confirm that the scheme has made significant progress in expanding renewable irrigation infrastructure in Nanded district, while also revealing administrative and regional gaps that require corrective policy and implementation measures for enhanced effectiveness.

8. Challenges Identified in implementation of the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme in Nanded district

The implementation of the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme in Nanded district has generated significant economic and social benefits; however, the field data and farmer feedback highlight several persistent challenges that require attention for long-term sustainability. One of the primary issues is the high initial farmer contribution, which remains unaffordable for many small and marginal farmers despite substantial government subsidy. This financial burden discourages eligible beneficiaries from opting into the scheme and limits equitable adoption across rural communities.

Another challenge pertains to occasional maintenance issues. Solar pumps, although low-cost in operation, demand periodic cleaning, technical inspection, and timely repair of components such as controllers and panels. In many villages, the absence of trained technicians and delayed service responses lead to temporary pump failures, affecting irrigation schedules and crop productivity.

There is also a growing concern regarding the risk of groundwater over-extraction. Continuous access to solar-powered irrigation may encourage farmers to pump water excessively, especially in regions already facing declining groundwater levels. Without strict monitoring or water-use awareness, the sustainability of the scheme may be compromised.

The study further identifies a need for technical training, as many farmers lack adequate knowledge about pump operation, troubleshooting, and optimal irrigation management. Limited training restricts full utilisation of the technology's potential and increases dependence on external support.

Finally, lack of awareness in remote villages remains a barrier. Many farmers are unaware of the scheme's benefits, subsidy process, or technical requirements. This information gap limits the scheme's reach and prevents widespread adoption across the district.

9. Results and Discussion

The present study examines the multi-dimensional economic, social, and environmental impact of the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme in Nanded district based exclusively on secondary data obtained from official government records, district statistical reports, and scheme progress documents. The analysis of taluka-wise, category-wise, financial, and physical achievement data reveals clear evidence of improvements in irrigation infrastructure, agricultural practices, and overall livelihood conditions of beneficiary farmers at the district level.

Secondary data indicate a substantial reduction in irrigation-related expenditure following the installation of solar agricultural pumps. Prior to the scheme, farmers largely depended on diesel and grid electricity for irrigation, resulting in high and recurring operational costs. The shift to solar-powered irrigation has eliminated electricity expenses and significantly reduced dependence on diesel, leading to measurable cost savings. Financial progress tables show full disbursement of sanctioned subsidies with no pending amounts, reflecting effective financial implementation and contributing to improved farm-level economic stability.

In addition, scheme records and agricultural output indicators point toward increased crop productivity and expansion of irrigated area. Reliable daytime irrigation facilitated by solar pumps has enabled better water management and timely irrigation, which has supported higher yields and improved cropping intensity. The widespread installation of 3 HP and 5 HP pumps further suggest suitability for small and medium landholdings prevalent in the district.

The secondary evidence also highlights notable social outcomes. The availability of daytime irrigation through solar pumps has reduced farmers' dependence on erratic electricity supply, thereby lowering physical strain and stress associated with night-time irrigation. Category-wise data demonstrate inclusive participation across General, SC, ST, OBC, and NT groups, indicating that the scheme has contributed to social equity in access to renewable irrigation technology. Reduced labour intensity and improved convenience have indirectly supported better quality of life for farming households.

From an environmental perspective, the replacement of diesel pumps with solar-powered systems has contributed to reduced fossil fuel consumption and lower emissions. Official records show growing adoption of renewable energy-based irrigation, which aligns with broader sustainability goals. The scheme has also encouraged complementary practices such as micro-irrigation, thereby promoting efficient water use and supporting groundwater conservation.

Discussion

The secondary data analysis confirms that the Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme has played a significant role in strengthening agricultural sustainability and rural livelihoods in Nanded district. While high levels of achievement and financial completion reflect administrative efficiency, the presence of pending and rejected cases in some talukas indicates the need for improved procedural support and awareness. The findings reinforce the view that solar irrigation functions not only as an energy solution but also as a catalyst for economic resilience, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

10. Findings

The following findings are derived exclusively from secondary data analysis of official records, scheme reports, and district-level statistics related to the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme in Nanded district. These findings reflect documented trends and outcomes, not primary survey responses.

1. Secondary financial records indicate that the scheme has substantially reduced irrigation-related expenditure by replacing diesel- and electricity-based systems with solar-powered pumps. The elimination of recurring fuel and electricity costs has improved farm-level cost efficiency and reduced dependence on external energy sources, thereby strengthening the economic sustainability of agricultural operations.
2. District-wise and taluka-wise production data show an overall increase in agricultural output following the expansion of solar irrigation coverage. Reliable daytime water availability has supported better irrigation scheduling, contributing to higher productivity across major crops and encouraging more efficient use of agricultural inputs.
3. Implementation data reveal that solar pumps have reduced dependence on irregular electricity supply, which traditionally constrained irrigation timing. The shift to daytime irrigation has improved operational efficiency and reduced labour pressure associated with night-time irrigation practices.
4. Environmental indicators associated with renewable energy adoption suggest a significant reduction in diesel usage for irrigation. This transition has contributed to lower fossil fuel consumption and aligns with broader goals of reducing agricultural carbon emissions and promoting cleaner production systems.
5. Official scheme reports indicate a gradual increase in the adoption of complementary technologies such as drip and sprinkler irrigation systems alongside solar pumps. This trend reflects improved water-use efficiency and a move toward resource-conserving agricultural practices.
6. Land-use and cropping data point to an expansion of irrigated area and increased cropping intensity in several talukas. Assured irrigation has enabled better utilization of cultivable land and reduced dependence on monsoon rainfall, thereby enhancing agricultural resilience.
7. Financial progress statements show full utilization and disbursement of sanctioned subsidies, indicating effective fund management and administrative efficiency in scheme implementation at the district level.
8. Category-wise beneficiary data demonstrate inclusive participation across social groups, including General, SC, ST, OBC, and NT categories. This suggests that the scheme has contributed to equitable access to renewable irrigation infrastructure.
9. Overall, the combined effects of reduced irrigation costs, improved productivity indicators, expansion of irrigated area, and adoption of clean energy technology indicate that the Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme has played a constructive role in strengthening agricultural sustainability, economic stability, and environmentally responsible farming practices in Nanded district.

11. Recommendations

1. The scheme should be extended to cover all small, marginal, and tenant farmers through simplified eligibility norms. Many farmers still lack awareness or documentation required for enrollment. A district-level digital verification system can accelerate inclusion and ensure equitable access to renewable irrigation infrastructure.
2. Although solar pumps reduce recurring costs, maintenance remains crucial. Establishing village-level service centres with trained technicians will prevent breakdowns, reduce downtime, and ensure uninterrupted irrigation. Subsidised maintenance packages for the first five years can further improve pump longevity and user satisfaction.
3. Farmers should be encouraged to adopt drip and sprinkler systems along with solar pumps. Subsidy convergence between solar irrigation and micro-irrigation schemes can significantly improve water-use efficiency, crop yield, and environmental sustainability. Demonstration plots should be developed to showcase combined benefits.
4. Regular training programmes should be conducted to educate farmers on solar pump operation, troubleshooting, and efficient irrigation scheduling. Village-level Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) workshops and mobile training vans can ensure wider outreach and sustained knowledge transfer to farming communities.
5. Many farmers require loans for pipeline installation, storage tanks, or irrigation accessories. Banks and cooperative credit societies should offer low-interest credit products specifically linked to solar pump utilisation. Timely credit access will support farmers in maximising the scheme's benefits.
6. IoT-based monitoring systems can help track pump performance, panel efficiency, and water usage. Real-time data will help farmers optimise irrigation, reduce wastage, and schedule maintenance. Government agencies can also use data analytics to assess district-level impact and improve planning.
7. Solar irrigation creates opportunities for high-value crops such as vegetables, fruits, and medicinal plants. Extension departments should provide guidance on crop planning, market linkages, and value-addition opportunities. This will increase income security and reduce dependence on traditional low-yield crops.
8. FPO-led solar pump banks or shared community solar irrigation systems can support landless, marginal, and tenant farmers who cannot install individual pumps. Collective ownership reduces costs, enhances social cohesion, and ensures wider benefits across villages.
9. Awareness campaigns should highlight the environmental benefits of solar energy and responsible water use. Integrating watershed management, rainwater harvesting, and soil conservation practices will strengthen long-term sustainability and reduce excessive dependence on groundwater.
10. Long-term policy stability is essential for the success of renewable-energy initiatives. The government should ensure consistent budget allocation, timely installation procedures, and periodic policy reviews. Strengthening coordination among energy, agriculture, and rural development departments will enhance scheme effectiveness and farmer trust.

12. Conclusion

The present study, based exclusively on secondary data analysis, concludes that the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme has played a significant role in strengthening irrigation infrastructure and supporting sustainable agricultural development in Nanded district. The analysis of official records, district-level statistics, and scheme progress reports clearly indicates that the scheme has contributed to reducing farmers' dependence on diesel and irregular electricity supply by promoting solar-powered irrigation systems. This transition has lowered recurring energy-related production costs and improved the economic efficiency of farming operations.

Secondary data further reveal that the expansion of solar irrigation facilities has supported better water availability during daytime hours, enabling more effective irrigation scheduling and improved utilization of cultivable land. As reflected in physical achievement and financial progress data, the scheme has facilitated higher cropping intensity, expansion of irrigated area, and increased adoption of water-efficient practices such as drip and sprinkler irrigation. These developments collectively contribute to enhanced agricultural productivity and long-term resource sustainability.

From a social perspective, the scheme has reduced operational constraints associated with night-time irrigation and power outages, thereby easing labour pressure and improving convenience for farming households. Category-wise beneficiary data indicate inclusive participation across different social groups, suggesting that the scheme has supported equitable access to renewable irrigation technology. Improved reliability of irrigation has also strengthened farmers' confidence in crop planning and agricultural decision-making.

However, the study also highlights certain implementation-related challenges evident in secondary records, such as pending and rejected applications in specific talukas, uneven distribution of installations, and the need for continued technical and maintenance support. These observations underline the importance of strengthening institutional mechanisms, improving awareness at the grassroots level, and ensuring timely service delivery to maximize scheme effectiveness.

Overall, the Chief Minister's Solar Agricultural Pump Scheme represents a meaningful step toward clean-energy-based agriculture and environmentally responsible rural development. The study reinforces the potential of solar irrigation to enhance economic resilience, promote sustainable resource use, and support inclusive agricultural growth when supported by effective administration and long-term planning.

Declarations

Funding The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Conflicts of Interest / Competing Interests The authors declare that they have no competing interests relevant to the content of this article.

Ethics Approval Not applicable.

Consent to Participate Not applicable.

Consent for Publication Not applicable.

Availability of Data and Materials No datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

Code Availability Not applicable.

Authors' Contributions All authors contributed equally to the conception, drafting, and final approval of the manuscript.

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