



**COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
REPORT OF RAJASTHAN**

YOUTH PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT FORUM

NEW DELHI

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FOREWORD

Rajasthan occupies a unique position in the Republic of India. Celebrated globally for its majestic architectural heritage, vibrant culture, and vast landscapes, the state is a testament to human resilience and historical grandeur. The progress of India's largest state by area is inextricably linked to the nation's broader growth narrative. As India progresses towards becoming a developed nation by 2047, the transformation of Rajasthan into a water-secure, globally competitive, and renewable energy-driven state is not merely a regional aspiration. It is a national imperative.

Having experienced the socio-cultural fabric of Rajasthan closely, I have witnessed both its extraordinary strengths and its unique developmental challenges. Rajasthan possesses world-renowned tourism appeal, immense solar and wind energy potential, rich mineral wealth, a vibrant MSME sector rooted in traditional handicrafts and textiles, and a profoundly hardworking population. At the same time, the state continues to grapple with systemic challenges such as severe water scarcity, recurrent droughts, the logistical complexities of delivering services across its vast geography, agrarian distress in arid regions, and the need to bridge the rural-urban economic divide. These challenges require long-term thinking, institutional agility, and evidence-based policymaking rather than incremental interventions.

The Youth Policy Development (YPD) Forum believes that India's youth have an important role to play in shaping the future of public policy. Across the world, innovative policy ideas increasingly emerge through collaboration between governments, academic institutions, research organisations, industry experts, and young professionals. Inspired by this approach, the YPD Forum has undertaken the preparation of this document titled "Comprehensive Development Framework Report of State of Rajasthan." This report reflects our collective aspiration to contribute constructively to the development of Rajasthan through practical, research-driven, and future-oriented policy recommendations.

This document has been prepared through the collaborative efforts of researchers, policy analysts, economists, environmental scientists, engineers, students, and professionals associated with the YPD Forum. The recommendations are based on comparative studies of successful global regions managing arid climates, examination of national and international best practices, analysis of existing state policies, and a deep understanding of Rajasthan's geographical and socio-economic realities. Throughout this exercise, our objective has remained simple. We have sought to identify reforms that are ambitious in vision, realistic in implementation, and capable of generating measurable improvements in economic growth and the quality of life.

The strategic frameworks presented in this report cover the most critical dimensions of state-level development. They include governance reforms to improve state capacity and the ease of doing business, massive investments in integrated water resource management and conservation, accelerating the transition to solar and wind energy to cement Rajasthan's

position as India's green power hub, revitalizing the tourism and hospitality sectors, modernizing desert agriculture and livestock management, empowering women and rural communities, and a long-term economic strategy aimed at making Rajasthan an attractive destination for domestic and global investments. Together, these recommendations constitute an integrated roadmap for building a state that is economically self-reliant, technologically integrated, environmentally secure, and socially inclusive.

One of the central ideas underlying this report is that Rajasthan should not merely rely on its historical legacy as a cultural and tourist destination. It must evolve into a leading global hub for renewable energy, sustainable arid-land innovation, and modern manufacturing. International regions with arid climates—such as parts of the American Southwest or the Middle East—demonstrate how water innovation, renewable energy infrastructure, and sustainable agricultural practices can create societies that drive prosperity while providing an exceptional quality of life. Rajasthan possesses similar potential. With visionary leadership, coordinated governance, and sustained public-private investment, it can emerge as a premier global centre for green energy, eco-tourism, mineral processing, and agro-based industries.

This Comprehensive Development Framework is not intended to replace existing government initiatives. Rather, it is offered as a constructive policy resource that can complement ongoing programmes and support future planning for a *Pragatisheel Rajasthan* (Progressive Rajasthan). We hope that policymakers, legislators, administrators, urban planners, academic institutions, civil society organisations, and citizens will find value in the ideas presented here. Many of these recommendations can be adapted, refined, and implemented through collaborative efforts between different levels of government and relevant stakeholders.

As India approaches the centenary of Independence in 2047, Rajasthan has an extraordinary opportunity to redefine its legacy for the 21st century. It can become a state that seamlessly combines its royal heritage with modern innovation, rapid economic growth with crucial water sustainability, and global connectivity with deep-rooted social empowerment. It is my sincere hope that this document will encourage meaningful discussion, inspire progressive policymaking, and contribute in some measure to the creation of a thriving, resilient, and prosperous Rajasthan for generations to come.

Dheeraj G. N.
Chairman
Youth Policy Development (YPD) Forum
New Delhi

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The Youth Peace and Development Forum (YPD Forum) expresses its sincere gratitude to all individuals whose dedication, expertise, and commitment made the preparation of **The Comprehensive Development Framework Report of the State of Rajasthan** possible.

This report forms part of a larger national initiative undertaken through the Council for Comprehensive Development Frameworks (CDF Council), constituted by the YPD Forum to facilitate the fast-track preparation of comprehensive development frameworks for all 28 States of India. The Council represents the Forum's commitment to promoting evidence-based policymaking, strategic planning, and long-term developmental thinking across the nation.

The Forum places on record its deep appreciation to **Dheeraj G. N.**, Chairman of the Youth Peace and Development Forum, for his vision, leadership, and initiative in conceptualizing and guiding this ambitious project. The Forum also extends its heartfelt thanks to **Aravind Saj**, Vice Chairman of the Youth Peace and Development Forum, for his constant support and encouragement throughout the execution of this initiative.

Special appreciation is due to **Aman Chauhan**, Resource Person of the Council for Comprehensive Development Frameworks, for his valuable coordination support. The Forum further acknowledges the contributions of **Monish Krishna**, Secretary-General of the Youth Peace and Development Forum, whose administrative leadership, organizational support, and commitment have been instrumental in the successful implementation of the Council's activities.

The Youth Peace and Development Forum also records its appreciation for the dedicated members of the Council for Comprehensive Development Frameworks: **Pranav P., Suraj Kumar, Mihikha Mathur, S. Gouri Suresh, Vishvesh, Kashinath Rajagopal, Siddhart Singh Solanki**, and **Tanvi Harivanam**. Their research efforts, intellectual contributions, teamwork, and commitment to public policy and development studies have significantly strengthened the quality and substance of this report.

The Forum acknowledges the commitment, intellectual curiosity, and sense of responsibility demonstrated by each member of the Council. Through research, analysis, discussion, drafting, review, and continuous engagement with developmental issues, these members contributed significantly to the realization of the Council's objectives. Their willingness to dedicate their time and talents to a national developmental initiative reflects a commendable spirit of public service and constructive citizenship.

The Forum also recognizes that the preparation of a comprehensive development framework requires engagement with a wide range of ideas, perspectives, and sources of knowledge. Accordingly, sincere appreciation is extended to all researchers, academicians, policy experts, development practitioners, government publications, statistical agencies, think tanks, and public institutions whose work provided valuable insights and reference material for this

report. Their contributions to the broader body of knowledge on governance, economics, social development, environmental sustainability, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and public policy have enriched the quality and depth of this framework.

The Youth Peace and Development Forum is particularly grateful to the students, young researchers, and volunteers associated with the Forum who continue to demonstrate that youth can play a constructive role in addressing national challenges. Their enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment to public causes embody the ideals upon which the Forum was founded and reaffirm the importance of empowering younger generations to participate actively in nation-building.

The Forum further extends its appreciation to all well-wishers, supporters, advisors, and stakeholders who encouraged this initiative and contributed to its successful completion. Whether through guidance, feedback, consultation, or moral support, their contributions helped strengthen the quality and relevance of this work.

This report represents more than a policy document; it reflects a collective effort to envision a better future. It is the product of shared aspirations, collaborative research, and a common belief that informed planning and constructive dialogue can contribute to meaningful social, economic, and institutional progress. While the recommendations contained herein are intended to support the development of **Rajasthan**, they also form part of a broader national effort to strengthen the foundations of a developed, inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous India.

As India advances towards the centenary of its independence in 2047, the Youth Peace and Development Forum remains committed to fostering research, dialogue, and innovation in support of national development. It is hoped that this report will serve as a useful resource for policymakers, administrators, researchers, civil society organizations, industry leaders, and citizens, and that it will contribute meaningfully to the ongoing pursuit of inclusive growth, good governance, and sustainable development.

With gratitude to all who contributed to this endeavour, the Youth Peace and Development Forum proudly presents this report as a modest contribution towards the shared vision of a stronger **Rajasthan** and a developed India.

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PREFACE

Rajasthan occupies a singular place in the imagination of the Indian republic. It is the largest state in the Union by area, accounting for more than a tenth of the nation's land mass, and it carries a civilizational identity built on centuries of desert statecraft, martial heritage, mercantile enterprise, and artistic accomplishment.

Yet for much of the post-independence period, the state's development trajectory has been shaped as much by its aridity and its dispersed rural population as by its cultural inheritance. The Comprehensive Development Framework Report of the State of Rajasthan has been prepared in recognition of the fact that the state now stands at an inflection point unlike any it has faced in the preceding seven decades.

The present state government has articulated an ambitious economic vision under the banner of Viksit Rajasthan at 2047, targeting an economy of approximately 350 billion dollars by 2029 and 2030, expanding to an estimated 4.3 trillion dollars by the centenary year of Indian independence (Sharma, 2025). This would represent a growth of the state economy by roughly twenty one to twenty two times over the coming two decades, a scale of transformation that requires not incremental policy adjustment but a fundamentally reimagined development architecture.

The state's Rising Rajasthan investment summit of December 2024 attracted memoranda of understanding valued at over thirty five lakh crore rupees, of which a meaningful share has already moved to the implementation stage, and the newly constituted Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation has been established as a permanent planning body to steer this transition beyond the life of any single government (agentkart.com, 2025).

It is exactly within this context, of high ambition meeting structural constraint, that the Youth Peace and Development Forum undertook the preparation of this Comprehensive Development Framework. Rajasthan's challenges are considerable and well documented. The state continues to contend with acute water stress across its western and central districts, a workforce still heavily concentrated in low productivity agriculture and informal enterprise, wide disparities between its urbanising eastern corridor and its more remote desert and tribal regions, and infrastructure demands that scale with a geography larger than many nations.

At the same time, Rajasthan possesses assets that few other Indian states can match: among the country's highest renewable energy potential in solar and wind, a tourism economy with unmatched heritage and cultural capital, a young and growing population, and increasing recognition as a preferred destination for industrial and logistics investment owing to its proximity to the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor.

This report does not proceed from the premise that Rajasthan must imitate the development pathway of any other Indian state. Kerala's model rested on early and sustained investment in

health and literacy. Gujarat rested on industrial and infrastructural aggression. Rajasthan's own pathway must instead be built around its specific endowments, its water and land constraints, its demographic profile, and its geographic centrality to India's northern and western trade corridors. The framework that follows attempts to translate the state's stated ambitions into a sector by sector assessment, grounded in the most recent available data, of where Rajasthan stands today and what remains to be done.

Throughout the preparation of this document, the drafting team has maintained a commitment to evidence based analysis over rhetorical assertion. Every statistic presented is drawn from and dated to its original government, multilateral, or peer reviewed source, following the APA seventh edition citation convention. Where official data for 2026 was not yet available at the time of writing, the most recent verified figures are used and clearly dated, so that the reader is never left uncertain about the currency of any claim.

This is offered in the same constructive spirit as its Kerala counterpart: not as a replacement for the work of the state government, the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation, or the many departments already engaged in planning for 2047, but as an independent, research driven contribution to that shared conversation. We hope it proves useful to policymakers, researchers, students, and citizens who share an interest in Rajasthan's long-term development.

Mihika Mathur

**In-charge, Rajasthan Development Framework Project
Council for Comprehensive Development Frameworks
Youth Peace and Development Forum**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rajasthan stands at a pivotal juncture in its developmental journey. As India's largest state by area, spanning over ten per cent of the country's land mass, it has historically been defined by aridity, dispersed settlement patterns, and a development base that started markedly behind the national average on human capital indicators. The state's literacy rate of 66.1 per cent, as recorded in the 2011 Census, remained well below the national average of 73 per cent, and its infant mortality rate of 32 deaths per 1,000 live births as of 2020 continued to exceed the national figure (NITI Aayog, 2025). However, the contemporary economic landscape and the state government's own stated ambitions demand a strategic pivot of historic proportions. This Comprehensive Development Framework Report of the State of Rajasthan outlines a blueprint to guide the state's transition into a diversified, investment led, and infrastructure rich economy by 2047, in alignment with the Government of Rajasthan's own Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision document.

Rajasthan's economy has already demonstrated considerable momentum. The state's Gross State Domestic Product for 2025 and 2026 is estimated at approximately eighteen lakh seventy five thousand crore rupees at current prices, growing at just over ten per cent, with the services sector contributing 47.7 per cent of gross state value added, industry contributing 26.5 per cent, and agriculture and allied activities contributing 25.7 per cent (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Rajasthan, 2026). Per capita income has risen to approximately two lakh two thousand rupees, and gross fixed capital formation stands at 29.53 per cent of the state economy, comfortably above the twenty five per cent threshold typically associated with strong future growth prospects (PW Live, 2026). The state's own Rising Rajasthan investment summit of December 2024 attracted memoranda of understanding valued at over thirty five lakh crore rupees, of which projects worth several lakh crore rupees had entered implementation by mid-2026 (The Week, 2025).

This report identifies several critical challenges that continue to constrain the pace and inclusiveness of this growth. These include persistent water stress across the western and central agro-climatic zones, a workforce still concentrated in low productivity informal and agricultural work despite the sector's declining share of value added, a fiscal position operating above the levels considered fiscally prudent under the state's own Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management framework, and wide disparities in human development outcomes between the urbanising eastern districts and the more remote desert and tribal regions of the west and south. To address these systemic issues, the framework proposes a comprehensive strategy centred on economic diversification, water and energy security, human capital formation, and institutional modernization.

Core Strategic Pillars

Accelerating the Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 Roadmap: The state has set a target of reaching a 350 billion dollar economy by 2029 or 2030, and a 4.3 trillion dollar economy by 2047,

representing growth of roughly twenty one to twenty two times over two decades (Sharma, 2025). Achieving this requires sustained double digit nominal growth, sectoral diversification beyond mining, agriculture, and tourism, and deep integration with the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor.

Water Security as a Foundational Priority: Given Rajasthan's status as India's most water stressed major state, expanding canal irrigation, groundwater recharge, and the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project must be treated as a precondition for, rather than a consequence of, industrial and agricultural growth.

Renewable Energy Leadership: Rajasthan has emerged as one of India's leading renewable energy states, with installed renewable capacity exceeding 31,500 megawatts and total installed power generation capacity of 56,494 megawatts as of August 2025 (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2025). Consolidating this position through the state's Green Hydrogen Policy and expanded solar park development offers the clearest pathway to an export oriented, climate resilient industrial base.

Human Capital and Youth Employment: With approximately 63 per cent of the state's population classified as youth, the framework emphasizes the Rajasthan Employment Policy of 2025, expansion of vocational training in secondary schools, and closing persistent gender gaps in higher education enrolment (5Dariya News, 2026).

Institutional Continuity Through RITI: The establishment of the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation in March 2024, replacing the earlier Chief Minister's advisory council, is intended to insulate long-term planning from electoral cycles and mirrors the institutional design of NITI Aayog at the national level (agentkart.com, 2025).

For much of the twentieth century, Rajasthan's development trajectory was shaped by its origins as a union of former princely states, a legacy that left the region with a fragmented administrative inheritance and comparatively limited early investment in public health and education infrastructure relative to states such as Kerala or Tamil Nadu. Real GSDP growth between 2012-13 and 2021-22 averaged 5.5 per cent, close to but not exceeding the national average, and the state's share of national GDP rose only marginally, from about 5 per cent in 1990-91 to 5.2 per cent by 2021-22 (NITI Aayog, 2025). This period of steady but unremarkable convergence has given way, over the past two to three years, to a markedly more assertive growth ambition backed by large scale investment commitments and a reorganized planning architecture.

CHAPTER 1: STATE PROFILE, GEOGRAPHY, DEMOGRAPHY AND SOCIETY

1.1 Geographic and Ecological Characteristics of the State

Rajasthan is the largest state in the Indian Union by area, covering 342,239 square kilometres, which amounts to 10.41 per cent of the country's total land mass (List of Districts of Rajasthan, Wikipedia, 2026). The state is bordered by Punjab and Haryana to the north and northeast, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh to the east and southeast, Gujarat to the southwest, and shares an international boundary with Pakistan along its western edge. This geographic position, straddling both an international frontier and the historic overland routes connecting northern and western India, has shaped the state's strategic and economic significance for centuries.

The defining physical feature of Rajasthan is the Aravalli Range, among the oldest fold mountain systems in the world, which runs diagonally across the state from the southwest near Udaipur to the northeast near Delhi. The Aravallis divide Rajasthan into two starkly different ecological zones. To the northwest lies the Thar Desert, locally known as the Maru Kantar, an arid and semi-arid tract that constitutes roughly sixty per cent of the state's geographical area and includes the districts of Jaisalmer, Barmer, Bikaner, Churu, Hanumangarh, and Sri Ganganagar (Exploring Rajasthan, Unacademy, 2022). This region receives minimal rainfall, often below fifty centimetres annually, and is characterised by extensive sand dunes, rocky outcrops, and sparse vegetation adapted to extreme aridity. To the southeast of the Aravallis lies a comparatively fertile plain and hill tract, with higher rainfall, denser forest cover, and more productive agricultural land.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research classifies Rajasthan into ten distinct agro-climatic zones, ranging from the sandy arid plains of the west to the humid southern plain covering Banswara and Dungarpur, which receives between 900 and 1,000 millimetres of rainfall annually and supports a contiguous stretch of the Aravalli hill system with natural vegetation cover of trees, shrubs, and grasses (Agro-Climatic Zones of Rajasthan, Connect Civils, 2025). This zonal diversity has direct implications for the state's agricultural planning, water resource allocation, and rural livelihood strategies, since a uniform development policy applied across such varied terrain risks being poorly suited to at least half of the state's geography at any given time.

Rajasthan's ecological character is further shaped by its river systems, which are notably sparse relative to the state's size. The Chambal, Banas, Luni, and their tributaries provide the principal drainage, while much of western Rajasthan depends on the Indira Gandhi Canal, a large scale irrigation and drinking water infrastructure project that has transformed agricultural possibilities in districts that would otherwise remain entirely dependent on erratic monsoon rainfall. The Luni river and its tributaries drain the southeastern desert margin, while the dry valleys of the Ghaggar, once associated with the ancient Saraswati river system,

and its tributary the Chautang flow only during the monsoon season in the state's north (Agro-climatic zones in western Rajasthan, ResearchGate, 2022). The state's biodiversity, though constrained by aridity across much of its territory, includes several nationally significant protected areas, among them Ranthambore and Sariska tiger reserves, the Keoladeo Ghana bird sanctuary near Bharatpur, and the Desert National Park in Jaisalmer, which together anchor both conservation efforts and a substantial share of the state's wildlife tourism economy.

1.2 Administrative Divisions: Districts, Divisions and Sub-State Units

Rajasthan's administrative geography has undergone significant reorganisation in the recent past. For much of the post-independence period, the state was divided into 33 districts. In 2023, the then state government expanded this to 50 districts and 10 divisions, adding 19 new administrative units in what was described as the first major reorganisation in over a decade, with the intention of bringing governance closer to the citizen and reducing the distance residents needed to travel to access basic government services (Formation of 19 New Districts and 3 New Divisions in Rajasthan, Sanskriti IAS, 2023).

Following the change of government at the end of 2023, the succeeding administration under Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma undertook a review of this expansion. A high level committee found that a majority of the newly created districts lacked adequate population and revenue bases to justify independent administrative status, with several projected to have populations below five lakh, and that the associated infrastructure and staffing costs, estimated at several hundred crore rupees annually, were not matched by commensurate gains in administrative efficiency (List of Districts of Rajasthan, Grokipedia, 2026). Consequently, in December 2024, the state cabinet dissolved nine of the newly created districts, namely Dudu, Kekri, Shahpura, Neem Ka Thana, Gangapur City, Jaipur Rural, Jodhpur Rural, Anupgarh, and Sanchore, along with three divisions, Sikar, Pali, and Banswara, reverting them to their parent units (Rajasthan Government Dissolves 9 Districts, Drishti IAS, 2025). Eight of the newly created districts, Balotra, Beawar, Deeg, Didwana-Kuchaman, Kotputli-Behror, Khairthal-Tijara, Phalodi, and Salumbar, were retained on grounds of administrative necessity.

As of 2026, Rajasthan therefore comprises 41 districts organised into seven divisions, namely Ajmer, Bharatpur, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, and Udaipur, with each division typically encompassing between four and eight districts (List of Districts of Rajasthan, Wikipedia, 2026). This places Rajasthan third among Indian states by number of districts, behind Uttar Pradesh with 75 and Madhya Pradesh with 57. Each district is administered jointly by an All India Service cadre officer, typically a District Collector drawn from the Indian Administrative Service, and a range of state appointed departmental officials responsible for revenue, police, and development functions. Below the district level, Rajasthan's rural governance operates through a three tier Panchayati Raj structure of Zila Parishads, Panchayat Samitis, and Gram Panchayats, spread across 44,672 villages, while urban

governance is exercised through Municipal Corporations, Councils, and Boards across 297 towns (Rajasthan Population 2026, Census of India, 2026).

This episode of expansion followed by partial reversal offers an important lesson for the state's broader governance architecture, discussed further in Chapter 15. It demonstrates that administrative decentralisation, while politically popular and conceptually sound in a state as geographically vast as Rajasthan, must be grounded in rigorous feasibility assessment of population thresholds, revenue viability, and staffing capacity before implementation, rather than treated as a purely symbolic exercise ahead of electoral cycles.

1.3 Demographic Structure: Population, Density, Growth and Composition

Rajasthan is the seventh most populous state in India. Its population, recorded at 6.85 crore in the 2011 Census, is projected to reach approximately 8.39 crore by July 2026, a figure comparable to the population of Germany, and the highest share of India's population that Rajasthan has held since 1901, currently estimated at 5.87 per cent (Rajasthan Population 2026, StatisticsTimes.com, 2026). The state's population is projected to continue growing at close to one per cent annually, reaching an estimated 9.08 crore by 2036. This places Rajasthan's demographic trajectory on a markedly different path from states such as Kerala or Tamil Nadu, where population growth has already plateaued, and underscores the scale of infrastructure, employment, and service delivery capacity the state must build over the coming decade merely to maintain existing per capita outcomes.

Population density in Rajasthan remains comparatively low at approximately 200 persons per square kilometre, as recorded in the 2011 Census, reflecting the extensive arid tracts of the west and north where density falls to as low as 17 persons per square kilometre in parts of Jaisalmer district (Population: Growth, Density, Literacy, Sex-ratio, Connect Civils, 2026). By contrast, Jaipur district records the highest density in the state at 595 persons per square kilometre, illustrating the sharp rural to urban and east to west imbalance that characterises the state's settlement pattern. Only about 24.87 per cent of Rajasthan's population lives in urban areas, a share that grew by 29.01 per cent during the 2001 to 2011 decade and is expected to continue rising as industrial corridors and district town economies expand (Rajasthan Population 2026, Census2011.co.in, 2026).

The state's sex ratio stood at 928 females per 1,000 males in the 2011 Census, below the national average of 943, though it has shown steady improvement from 921 in 2001. The child sex ratio for the 0 to 6 age group, however, remains a matter of concern at 888 girls per 1,000 boys, notably lower than the state's overall sex ratio, with urban areas recording an even sharper imbalance of 874 (Population: Growth, Density, Literacy, Sex-ratio, Connect Civils, 2026). Interestingly, the state's tribal districts tend to record higher sex ratios than non-tribal districts, a pattern that merits further sociological investigation and is revisited in the discussion of Scheduled Tribe welfare in Chapter 7.

In terms of demographic composition, Rajasthan's 2011 Census recorded a Scheduled Caste population of approximately 1.22 crore, or 17.83 per cent of the state total, and a Scheduled Tribe population of 92.39 lakh, or 13.48 per cent, concentrated heavily in the southern districts of Banswara, Dungarpur, Udaipur, and Pratapgarh (Rajasthan Population 2026, Census of India, 2026). The state's youth demographic is a particularly significant asset for its development ambitions. Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma has noted that nearly 63 per cent of Rajasthan's population comprises youth, a demographic dividend the state government has explicitly identified as central to realising its Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 growth targets (NITI Aayog Meeting, 5Dariya News, 2026).

1.4 Linguistic, Ethnic, Religious and Cultural Profile

Hindi serves as the official language of Rajasthan, though the state is linguistically diverse, with Rajasthani functioning as an umbrella term for a cluster of related dialects that vary considerably by region. These include Marwari in the west, Mewari in the south around Udaipur, Dhundhari in the Jaipur region, Hadoti in the southeast around Kota, Mewati in the northeast around Alwar and Bharatpur, and Shekhawati in the north. Though not granted the status of a scheduled language under the Indian Constitution, Rajasthani retains a rich oral and written literary tradition and continues to be the primary language of everyday communication in much of rural Rajasthan, a linguistic reality that has implications for foundational literacy instruction, discussed further in Chapter 5.

Religiously, Rajasthan's population according to the 2011 Census comprises 88.49 per cent Hindu, 9.07 per cent Muslim, 1.27 per cent Sikh, 0.91 per cent Jain, and 0.14 per cent Christian, with small populations of Buddhists and other faiths (Rajasthan Population 2026, Census of India, 2026). The state's Jain community, though numerically small, has historically exercised outsized influence on the region's mercantile, architectural, and philanthropic traditions, reflected in the Dilwara temples of Mount Abu and the Marwari merchant networks that extended across much of colonial and post-colonial India. The Muslim population is concentrated in pockets across the state, with a particularly notable presence in border districts such as Jaisalmer and Barmer, where communities such as the Sindhi Muslims maintain distinct cultural and craft traditions tied to the region's historic trade routes with Sindh.

Ethnically and socially, Rajasthan's population reflects its history as a union of numerous former princely states, each with distinct Rajput ruling lineages, local administrative traditions, and cultural patronage systems, unified into a single state only in stages between 1948 and 1956. Communities such as the Bishnoi, concentrated around Jodhpur, maintain a centuries old tradition of ecological conservation rooted in religious practice, having protected native Khejri trees and wildlife since the fifteenth century, a tradition of considerable relevance to the state's contemporary environmental governance discussed in Chapter 13 (Agricultural Land Use and Land Degradation in Thar Desert, ResearchGate, 2022). The Meena, Bhil, and Garasia communities constitute the state's principal Scheduled

Tribe populations, concentrated in the southern Aravalli and Vagad regions, with distinct languages, artistic traditions, and customary governance structures that continue to shape local development priorities in those districts.

Rajasthan's cultural profile is inseparable from its architectural and artistic heritage. The state is home to six UNESCO World Heritage hill forts, including Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh, Ranthambore, Gagron, Amber, and Jaisalmer, collectively inscribed as the Hill Forts of Rajasthan, as well as the Pink City of Jaipur, separately inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 2019 in recognition of its distinctive eighteenth century urban planning. This density of globally recognised cultural assets forms a foundational pillar of the state's tourism economy, examined in detail in Chapter 19.

1.5 Human Development Index: State Ranking and Trend Analysis

Rajasthan's human development trajectory has historically lagged the national average, though recent trends indicate meaningful convergence. The state's literacy rate stood at 66.11 per cent as per the 2011 Census, compared to a national average of 73 per cent, positioning Rajasthan among the states with the lowest literacy levels in the country at that time (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025). Life expectancy at birth in Rajasthan was recorded at 69.4 years as of 2020, marginally below the national average of 70 years, while the state's infant mortality rate, at 32 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2020, remained higher than the national figure, reflecting continuing gaps in maternal and neonatal healthcare access, particularly in the state's western and southern districts, a subject examined in depth in Chapter 6.

Despite these historical gaps, Rajasthan has recorded measurable improvement on composite development indices in recent years. The state's Sustainable Development Goals composite score, computed by the Government of Rajasthan in alignment with the NITI Aayog SDG India Index methodology, rose from 57.58 in 2022 to 60.25 in 2023, indicating sustained forward movement across the majority of the seventeen goal areas (Rajasthan Sustainable Development Goals Report, Government of Rajasthan, 2023). Goal 10, concerning reduced inequalities, recorded the most significant single year improvement of any goal area, rising sharply between 2022 and 2023, suggesting that targeted welfare and financial inclusion interventions implemented over this period had a measurable statistical effect on the state's overall development profile.

Gross Enrolment Ratio at the higher education level in Rajasthan stood at 26.1 per cent in 2021, slightly below the national average, and the Gender Parity Index in higher education for the 18 to 23 age cohort likewise trailed the national figure as of the same year (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025). At the same time, the state's dropout rates for Classes VIII to X, at 15.2 per cent, and for Class X, at 24.3 per cent, were both lower than the corresponding national averages as of 2016-17, an encouraging signal that once children remain enrolled through the middle school years, Rajasthan's

education system retains them at rates comparable to or better than the national norm. Household access to drinking water, electricity, and sanitation facilities in Rajasthan has also converged close to national averages in recent years, a function of sustained state and central government investment under schemes such as Jal Jeevan Mission and Saubhagya.

Taken together, these indicators suggest a state in the midst of a genuine, if incomplete, human development transition. Rajasthan's starting position on literacy and health outcomes was considerably weaker than that of states like Kerala or Himachal Pradesh at independence, and the state's per capita income remains approximately ten per cent below the national average as of 2021-22 (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025). The Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision explicitly identifies closing this human development gap as a precondition for the state's broader economic ambitions, an argument this framework returns to throughout its education, health, and social justice chapters.

1.6 Poverty, Inequality and Multidimensional Deprivation Indices

Rajasthan has recorded one of the most significant reductions in multidimensional poverty of any major Indian state over the past decade. According to NITI Aayog's National Multidimensional Poverty Index Progress Review of 2023, Rajasthan featured among the five states, alongside Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha, that recorded the steepest declines in the absolute number of MPI poor individuals between the 2015-16 and 2019-21 survey rounds, with improvement in nutrition, years of schooling, sanitation access, and clean cooking fuel access identified as the principal drivers of this decline (National Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2023, Drishti IAS, 2025). This reduction reflects the combined effect of national programmes such as Poshan Abhiyan, the Ujjwala clean cooking fuel scheme, and Swachh Bharat Mission sanitation coverage, layered upon state specific welfare architecture including the Indira Rasoi Yojana subsidised meal scheme and the state's health insurance programmes.

Despite this aggregate progress, multidimensional deprivation in Rajasthan remains unevenly distributed across the state's districts. NITI Aayog's district level MPI estimates, drawn from the National Family Health Survey's fifth round, identify a cluster of districts in the state's south, west, and northeast, including Karauli, Dholpur, Sirohi, Baran, and Jaisalmer, as recording persistently higher rates of multidimensional poverty than the state average, a pattern closely correlated with the state's formal designation of these same districts under the national Aspirational Districts Programme, discussed in the following section (India MPI, OPHI, 2023). These districts share common characteristics of lower agricultural productivity, higher dependence on rain fed cultivation, greater distance from urban labour markets, and in several cases, higher concentrations of Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe population.

Income inequality within Rajasthan also reflects a pronounced rural to urban and east to west divide. The state's per capita Net State Domestic Product reached Rs. 1,67,964 in 2023-24, up from Rs. 1,50,653 the previous year, marking the highest per capita income figure in the

state's recorded economic history (Rising Rajasthan: Moving Towards Next Growth Orbit, PHD Research Bureau, 2025). However, this state level average obscures substantial variation, with the industrialising districts around Jaipur, Alwar, and Bhiwadi recording per capita incomes considerably above this figure, while the arid western districts and the tribal southern belt remain well below it. Addressing this intra-state disparity, rather than simply pursuing aggregate GSDP growth, is identified throughout this framework as a central test of whether the Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision translates into genuinely inclusive development.

1.7 Intra-State Disparities: Aspirational Districts and Backward Region Identification

The Government of India's Aspirational Districts Programme, launched by NITI Aayog in January 2018, identifies districts nationally that lag on core socio-economic indicators across five thematic areas: health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion and skill development, and basic infrastructure, with the explicit objective of accelerating convergence between central and state government schemes in these locations (Aspirational Districts Programme: An Appraisal, NITI Aayog, 2023). Rajasthan has five districts formally designated under this programme: Baran, Dholpur, Jaisalmer, Karauli, and Sirohi (List of Aspirational Districts, NITI Aayog, 2018). These five districts span the state's geographic and ecological extremes, from the desert terrain of Jaisalmer in the far west, to the Aravalli hill tracts of Sirohi and Baran in the south, to the Chambal ravine country of Dholpur and Karauli in the northeast bordering Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, illustrating that developmental backwardness in Rajasthan is not confined to any single geographic or ecological zone.

Performance across these five districts under the programme's delta ranking system, which measures the pace of improvement rather than absolute levels of achievement, has been uneven. Early delta rankings placed some Rajasthan districts among the fastest improving nationally on specific themes, such as agriculture and water resources, while others lagged on basic infrastructure and financial inclusion, domains that are more heavily dependent on central ministry programme rollout and banking sector penetration than on district administration alone (Aspirational Districts, Overall and Theme-wise Full Ranks, NITI Aayog, 2019). This variation underscores an important governance lesson: convergence programmes succeed unevenly depending on which development levers rest primarily with the district collectorate versus those that depend on state or national infrastructure rollout, a distinction relevant to the state's broader decentralisation strategy discussed in Chapters 12 and 15.

Beyond the five nationally designated aspirational districts, several other Rajasthan districts exhibit localised pockets of backwardness that do not register at the aggregate district level but are concentrated in specific blocks or tehsils, particularly in the tribal belt of Banswara, Dungarpur, and Pratapgarh, and in the drought-prone districts of the northwest such as Barmer, Jalore, and Churu. The state government's district domestic product initiative, announced in 2026 under the Mukhyamantri Viksit Gram-Shahari Ward Abhiyan, is intended

to generate more granular, block level economic data precisely to identify such intra-district disparities that state and district level averages otherwise conceal (Rajasthan Playing Leading Role in Achieving Viksit Bharat by 2047, PTI, 2026). The success of this initiative will substantially determine whether future editions of this framework are able to track backward region identification with greater precision than is currently possible using district level aggregates alone.

1.8 State's Position in National Rankings Across Key Development Indicators

Rajasthan occupies a middle position among major Indian states across most composite national rankings, reflecting a state that has made genuine progress from a historically weak starting base without yet closing the gap with India's most developed states. By Gross State Domestic Product, Rajasthan ranks seventh nationally as of the 2025-26 Economic Survey, with an economy of approximately eighteen lakh seventy five thousand crore rupees, or roughly 197 billion dollars, at current prices (Rajasthan Economic Survey 2025-26, PW Live, 2026; The Week, 2025). The state's GSDP grew at a compound annual growth rate of 11.31 per cent between 2016 and 2026, a rate exceeding the national average over the same period, reflecting the acceleration in investment activity associated with the Rising Rajasthan summit and related industrial policy reforms (Rajasthan State Presentation Report, IBEF, 2025).

On renewable energy capacity, Rajasthan has emerged as a genuine national leader, with installed renewable generation capacity exceeding 31,500 megawatts as of the 2025-26 Economic Review, and total installed power generation capacity, combining central, state, and private sector utilities, reaching 56,494 megawatts as of August 2025 (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026; Rajasthan State Presentation Report, IBEF, 2025). This positions the state among the top two or three in the country on solar and wind capacity, a distinction examined in detail in Chapter 9.

On fiscal indicators, Rajasthan's position is comparatively less favourable. The state's fiscal deficit for 2025-26 was budgeted at 4.3 per cent of GSDP, exceeding both the median large state figure and the revised Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management targets, while its outstanding debt to GSDP ratio is projected by NITI Aayog's Debt Sustainability Analysis to increase over the coming five years under baseline growth assumptions (Rajasthan Budget Analysis 2025-26, PRS Legislative Research, 2026). This fiscal position, examined in full in Chapter 2, represents one of the more significant structural constraints on the state's ability to finance the scale of infrastructure investment its Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision requires without either substantial revenue reform or continued reliance on market borrowing.

On human development composite measures, Rajasthan continues to rank in the lower half of major Indian states, reflecting its historically low literacy base and continuing gaps in maternal and child health outcomes relative to states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Himachal Pradesh, even as its trend line shows consistent improvement year on year, as reflected in its rising SDG India Index composite score. This combination, strong and

accelerating economic momentum paired with continuing human development gaps and fiscal constraints, forms the central analytical tension that this Comprehensive Development Framework seeks to address across the chapters that follow, beginning with a detailed examination of the state's fiscal architecture in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2: FISCAL ARCHITECTURE OF THE STATE

2.1 Revenue Framework: Own Tax Revenue, Non-Tax Revenue and Devolution

Rajasthan's revenue base for 2025-26 is estimated at Rs 2,94,536 crore in total revenue receipts, an increase of 12 per cent over the revised estimate of 2024-25. Of this total, the state itself raises 58 per cent, or Rs 1,69,626 crore, through its own tax and non-tax resources, while the remaining 42 per cent flows from the Centre in the form of tax devolution, at 29 per cent of revenue receipts, and grants, at 13 per cent (Rajasthan Budget Analysis 2025-26, PRS Legislative Research, 2026). This composition places Rajasthan in a moderately favourable position relative to smaller and special category states, which typically depend far more heavily on central transfers, though it remains more dependent on devolution than industrially advanced states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, or Tamil Nadu.

Own tax revenue is projected at Rs 1,42,743 crore for 2025-26, an increase of 18 per cent over the previous year's revised estimate, and is drawn primarily from four major sources: state Goods and Services Tax, stamp duty and registration fees on property transactions, state excise duty on alcohol, and motor vehicle tax. Historical evaluation studies prepared for the Finance Commission note that, prior to the implementation of GST, Rajasthan received 2.13 per cent of the 42 per cent divisible pool distributed by the Centre, equivalent to roughly 5.6 per cent of the total devolved among non-special category states, a share that has since been revised under both the 15th and 16th Finance Commissions (Commissioned by the Fifteenth Finance Commission, 2020). The state's share in central taxes for 2025-26 is estimated at Rs 85,716 crore, while central grants are estimated at Rs 39,193 crore, a 4 per cent increase over the prior year.

A distinctive feature of Rajasthan's non-tax revenue is its heavy dependence on mining royalties, reflecting the state's status as India's leading producer of several minerals. Revenue from non-ferrous mining and metallurgical industries is estimated at Rs 12,980 crore in 2025-26, an 18 per cent increase over the previous year's revised estimate, and constitutes 48 per cent of the state's total non-tax revenue (Rajasthan Budget Analysis 2025-26, PRS Legislative Research, 2026). This position was substantially strengthened by a July 2024 Supreme Court judgment that overturned an earlier ruling and upheld the constitutional right of states to levy taxes on mineral bearing land, independent of and in addition to standard royalty payments prescribed under central mining legislation. Given Rajasthan's position as the country's leading producer of cement grade limestone, its status as the second largest producer of cement, and its substantial output of marble, rock phosphate, gypsum, and lignite, this judgment carries considerable long-term significance for the state's non-tax revenue trajectory, a theme explored further in the discussion of mining governance in Chapter 4.

Non-tax revenue overall grew unevenly during the earlier part of the 15th Finance Commission period, with evaluation studies noting the absence of a consistent medium to long term policy on revising user fees and charges across social sector departments, resulting in irregular peaks and troughs in collection growth that appeared to correlate more closely with changes in state government than with any systematic revenue policy (Commissioned by

the Fifteenth Finance Commission, 2020). The same studies observed that Rajasthan had historically underperformed in generating revenue from irrigation infrastructure relative to the scale of public investment in canal and dam systems, a gap attributed to the political economy of agricultural water pricing rather than to any technical constraint on cost recovery. Addressing this underpricing of irrigation water, discussed further in the context of water resource governance in Chapter 10, represents one of the more politically sensitive but fiscally significant reform opportunities available to the state.

2.2 Expenditure Profile: Composition, Quality and Efficiency

Total expenditure for Rajasthan in 2025-26, excluding debt repayment, is budgeted at Rs 3,79,617 crore, a 14 per cent increase over the revised estimate of the previous year (Rajasthan Budget Analysis 2025-26, PRS Legislative Research, 2026). Of this, revenue expenditure, covering the recurring costs of salaries, pensions, interest payments, grants, and subsidies, accounts for Rs 3,25,546 crore, an 11 per cent increase, while capital outlay, representing expenditure on the creation of durable assets, stands at Rs 53,686 crore, a substantially sharper 40 per cent increase over the previous year. Loans and advances extended by the state government are comparatively minor at Rs 384 crore, actually 7 per cent lower than the previous year, suggesting a policy preference for direct budgetary spending over on-lending to public sector entities.

The composition of this expenditure reveals a budget still dominated by committed and recurring costs. Committed expenditure, comprising salaries, pensions, and interest payments, typically constitutes the largest single category within any Indian state's revenue expenditure, and Rajasthan is no exception. The state's continued administration of the Old Pension Scheme for employees recruited before its discontinuation, alongside the newer National Pension System and Unified Pension Scheme for subsequent recruits, creates a layered and expanding pension liability that will continue to grow as the cohort of employees under the older, more generous scheme reaches retirement age over the coming decade (Rajasthan Budget 2025-26, Anantam IAS, 2026). Interest payments on the state's existing debt stock represent a second major recurring cost, one that, as discussed in section 2.4, has historically grown in tandem with the state's debt to GSDP ratio rather than being offset by improved returns on the capital investments that debt originally financed.

Historical evaluation of Rajasthan's expenditure quality, conducted as part of Finance Commission studies, found that the state spent a little over 10 per cent of its total budget on capital expenditure in earlier years, a proportion the same studies characterised as inadequate relative to the state's development needs, particularly given that interest payments on debt used for investment purposes exceeded actual capital outlay in most of the years examined (Commissioned by the Fifteenth Finance Commission, 2020). This finding implies that a meaningful share of Rajasthan's past borrowing, even when nominally directed toward capital projects, did not generate returns sufficient to service the debt raised to fund it, a pattern the evaluators attributed not necessarily to poor project selection but to the state's failure to ensure that resulting surpluses, where they existed, accrued back to the state treasury rather than being absorbed elsewhere in the budget.

The sharp rise in capital outlay budgeted for 2025-26 represents a meaningful improvement in this expenditure quality metric, and if sustained across subsequent budget cycles, would mark a departure from the historical pattern documented above. However, sustaining this trajectory will require the state to simultaneously restrain the growth of revenue expenditure, particularly subsidy commitments under the state's expanding portfolio of welfare schemes, examined in the social sector chapters of this framework, since revenue expenditure growth that consistently outpaces revenue receipt growth necessarily crowds out the fiscal space available for capital investment over the medium term.

2.3 Capital Expenditure: Infrastructure Investment and Asset Creation

The 40 per cent increase in capital outlay to Rs 53,686 crore for 2025-26 represents one of the more encouraging fiscal signals in the state's recent budget history and is broadly consistent with the state's Gross Fixed Capital Formation rate of 29.53 per cent of GSDP at market prices, a figure that comfortably exceeds the 25 per cent threshold generally regarded as indicative of strong future growth potential in an economy of Rajasthan's scale (Rajasthan Economic Survey 2025-26, PW Live, 2026). This capital expenditure envelope is directed across several major categories. Roads and bridges receive a substantial allocation of Rs 14,016 crore, reflecting the state's ongoing effort to improve connectivity across its unusually large geographic area, while additional allocations flow to urban development authorities and town development boards, at Rs 3,592 crore, and to primary and secondary education infrastructure, at a combined Rs 63,175 crore across both revenue and capital heads (Rajasthan State Presentation Report, IBEF, 2025).

Beyond routine infrastructure maintenance, several large discrete capital projects currently underway illustrate the scale of the state's current investment cycle. The Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project, intended to address chronic water stress across thirteen districts through inter-basin transfer of surplus flows from the Chambal river system, represents one of the largest capital commitments in the state's water infrastructure portfolio, and is examined in full in Chapter 10. In transport infrastructure, the Union Cabinet's October 2025 approval of a new airport at Kota-Bundi, involving an investment of Rs 9,814 crore, and the May 2025 inauguration of redeveloped railway stations and associated works worth Rs 26,000 crore across the state, both under central schemes but requiring substantial state co-financing and land acquisition support, add further to the state's effective capital commitments over the medium term (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026).

Despite this encouraging trajectory, historical CAG and Finance Commission evaluations offer an important caution. These assessments have repeatedly found that capital expenditure in Rajasthan has not always translated into proportionate revenue generating capacity or asset utilisation efficiency, with several public sector enterprises capitalised through state investment failing to generate returns anywhere close to their cost of capital (Commissioned by the Fifteenth Finance Commission, 2020). Ensuring that the current wave of capital spending, whether directed toward roads, canals, or urban infrastructure, avoids repeating this pattern will require considerably stronger project appraisal, competitive procurement, and

post-completion asset utilisation monitoring than has historically characterised the state's public capital expenditure programme. The establishment of the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation, discussed in Chapter 1, offers one institutional avenue through which such monitoring capacity could plausibly be strengthened going forward.

2.4 Fiscal Deficit, Primary Deficit and Debt Sustainability

Rajasthan's fiscal deficit for 2025-26 is targeted at 4.3 per cent of GSDP, equivalent to Rs 84,644 crore, a figure that exceeds both the 3 per cent ceiling recommended under the glide path established by the N. K. Singh led 15th Finance Commission and the state's own revised estimate of 4.1 per cent recorded for 2024-25, which had itself already exceeded its original budgeted target of 3.9 per cent (Rajasthan Budget Analysis 2025-26, PRS Legislative Research, 2026). This pattern of successive upward revision to the fiscal deficit target suggests that the state's actual borrowing requirement has consistently outpaced its own initial budgetary projections over recent years, a trend that merits closer scrutiny by the state's Finance Department and by the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation in its medium term planning function.

The revenue deficit component of this overall fiscal position tells a somewhat more encouraging story. Rajasthan's revenue deficit reached a peak of Rs 31,491 crore, or 2.3 per cent of GSDP, in 2022-23, before declining to Rs 30,072 crore, or 1.6 per cent of GSDP, by 2023-24, and is budgeted to remain at a comparable 1.6 per cent of GSDP, or Rs 31,009 crore, for 2025-26 (Evaluation of Finances of State of Rajasthan, 16th Finance Commission, 2026). This narrowing of the revenue deficit, even as the overall fiscal deficit has widened, indicates that the growth in the state's borrowing requirement is being driven primarily by the sharp rise in capital expenditure discussed in section 2.3 rather than by deterioration in the state's day to day revenue and expenditure balance, a distinction that matters considerably for how the state's creditworthiness ought to be assessed, since capital financed deficits are conventionally regarded as more sustainable than revenue financed ones, provided the resulting assets generate adequate future returns.

NITI Aayog's Debt Sustainability Analysis for Rajasthan, however, presents a more cautionary long-term outlook. Under baseline assumptions holding current debt levels, primary deficit, real GDP growth, and the real effective interest rate constant, the analysis projects that the state's debt to GSDP ratio will increase by more than five percentage points over the five years following 2021-22, with a decline in this ratio achievable only under a combined scenario of materially higher growth and a lower primary deficit than currently observed (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025). Rajasthan's total revenue receipts, at 15.3 per cent of GSDP in 2022-23, were roughly in line with the median large state figure, while its expenditure as a percentage of GSDP, at 19.6 per cent, was slightly below the median, indicating that the state's fiscal stress stems less from unusually high spending relative to its economic size and more from a revenue base that, despite recent improvement, has not yet scaled sufficiently to finance the state's stated capital investment ambitions without continued and possibly increasing recourse to market borrowing.

2.5 State's Borrowings, Guarantees and Off-Budget Liabilities

Rajasthan finances its fiscal deficit through a combination of market borrowings raised via State Development Loans under the Reserve Bank of India's coordinated state borrowing calendar, loans from the central government including those routed from bilateral and multilateral lending agencies, liabilities recorded in the public account such as small savings collections and provident fund balances, and borrowings channelled through specialised agencies including the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Commissioned by the Fifteenth Finance Commission, 2020). Each of these instruments carries distinct cost, tenure, and repayment characteristics, and Finance Commission evaluation studies have consistently recommended that states, including Rajasthan, maintain a diversified and carefully managed debt portfolio across these instruments rather than concentrating rollover risk in any single category.

Off-budget borrowings represent a particular area of concern flagged in recent Finance Commission evaluation work. These are liabilities undertaken through state owned corporations, special purpose vehicles, and other entities outside the state's formal budget process, structured such that the resulting debt does not appear directly in the state's headline fiscal deficit figures even though the state effectively guarantees or services the underlying obligation. The 16th Finance Commission's evaluation study of Rajasthan's finances specifically flags such off-budget borrowings for closer monitoring, noting that they can materially understate a state's true consolidated liability position if not properly accounted for in fiscal reporting (Evaluation of Finances of State of Rajasthan, 16th Finance Commission, 2026).

A significant source of contingent and off-budget liability in Rajasthan's case relates to the power sector. Legacy debt associated with the Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana, a central scheme launched in 2015 to restructure the accumulated losses of state electricity distribution companies, and its successor Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme, continues to weigh on the state's effective liabilities, reflecting the historically weak financial position of Rajasthan's DISCOMs relative to their operational costs (Rajasthan Budget 2025-26, Anantam IAS, 2026). High power sector losses, referenced throughout the state's fiscal planning documents as a persistent structural concern, are examined in greater technical detail in the discussion of transmission and distribution infrastructure in Chapter 9. Bringing off-budget borrowings, power sector guarantees, and other contingent liabilities into a single, transparently reported consolidated statement, in line with successive Finance Commission recommendations, remains an outstanding public financial management reform for the state's Finance Department to prioritise.

2.6 Finance Commission Awards: Allocation and Utilisation

Under the 15th Finance Commission's award covering the 2021 to 2026 period, Rajasthan was among fourteen states, including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, and West Bengal, recommended to receive Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grants, reflecting the Commission's assessment of a persistent gap between the state's revenue

capacity and its expenditure requirements even after accounting for tax devolution (Revenue Deficit Grant of Rs 7,183.42 crore Released to 14 States, Press Information Bureau, 2023). Beyond this general purpose grant, Rajasthan has received sector specific allocations across eight designated areas identified by the 15th Finance Commission, namely health, school education, higher education, agricultural reforms, maintenance of rural roads constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, the judiciary, statistics, and aspirational districts and blocks, with the education sector alone receiving a nationally allocated Rs 4,800 crore between 2022-23 and 2025-26 to incentivise improved learning outcomes across participating states.

The 16th Finance Commission, whose recommendations were presented in early 2026, has retained the aggregate share of states in the Union's divisible tax pool at 41 per cent, consistent with the previous Commission's award, but has introduced a significant methodological shift by incorporating a state's share of national GDP as an explicit criterion within the horizontal devolution formula, thereby rewarding growth, efficiency, and demonstrated economic performance in a manner not previously reflected in the devolution mechanism (16th Finance Commission Rewards Economic Performance, Dataful, 2026). Under this revised formula, several of India's larger, historically lower income states, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, have experienced a modest reduction in their overall share of the divisible pool relative to the 15th Finance Commission period, with Rajasthan's share declining by 0.10 percentage points, even as southern states with comparatively stronger GDP contributions, such as Karnataka and Kerala, have recorded gains of 0.48 and 0.46 percentage points respectively.

For local body transfers, the 16th Finance Commission has recommended a substantial nationwide increase, raising grants to Urban Local Bodies to Rs 3,56,257 crore and to Rural Local Bodies to Rs 4,35,236 crore over its award period, compared to Rs 1,21,055 crore and Rs 2,36,805 crore respectively under the 15th Finance Commission (16th Finance Commission Rewards Economic Performance, Dataful, 2026). Within Rajasthan, the Sixth State Finance Commission's own assessment identifies an estimated shortfall between the revenue and expenditure requirements of the state's Panchayati Raj Institutions, on the basis of which the state has requested a grant of Rs 37,958.79 crore from the 16th Finance Commission specifically for rural local bodies, alongside continued central support for the digitisation of land records and property tax administration systems, a precondition the Commission has attached to continued grant eligibility for participating states (Sixth State Finance Commission, Government of Rajasthan, 2025).

2.7 GST Implementation: Revenue Impact and Compensation Status

Rajasthan's Goods and Services Tax collections have demonstrated steady, if comparatively moderate, growth through the 2025-26 financial year. Monthly state GST collections rose from Rs 7,569 crore in August 2024 to Rs 8,243 crore in August 2025, representing a 9 per cent year on year increase, while cumulative collections for the financial year through August 2025 reached Rs 18,588 crore, a 6 per cent rise over the corresponding period of the previous year (GST Collections Data, Goods and Services Tax Network, 2025). Earlier in the same

financial year, cumulative collections through June 2025 stood at Rs 10,999 crore, a more modest 4 per cent increase over the prior year, indicating some quarter to quarter variability in the state's collection growth trajectory (GST Collections Data, Goods and Services Tax Network, 2025). This growth rate, while positive, trails the double digit percentage increases recorded by several smaller states and union territories during the same period, though Rajasthan's absolute collection base remains considerably larger given the scale of its economy relative to those jurisdictions.

The compensation cess mechanism established at the introduction of GST in July 2017, which had guaranteed participating states a minimum 14 per cent annual revenue growth rate for a five year transition period, lapsed in mid-2022, removing a fiscal safety net that had previously cushioned states, including Rajasthan, against any shortfall between actual GST collections and the growth rate the mechanism guaranteed. In the years since this transition, states have borne full exposure to actual GST collection performance, placing renewed emphasis on compliance and enforcement capacity within state tax administrations.

On this front, the Comptroller and Auditor General's compliance audits of Rajasthan's Commercial Taxes Department have continued to identify significant implementation gaps. A recent audit report covering both revenue earning departments and expenditure by selected government departments identified input tax credit mismatches between GSTR-2A and GSTR-3B returns, instances of input tax credit availed after the statutory limitation period, discrepancies between input tax credit claimed in annual returns and that recorded in books of account, unreconciled input tax credit in reconciliation statements, unsettled tax liabilities, and suppression of taxable value when compared against e-way bill records, with 23 cases specifically identified as involving bogus or untraceable registered firms (Government of Rajasthan, Report No. 6 of 2025, Comptroller and Auditor General of India, 2025). The audit's overall money value implication across its 24 paragraphs stood at Rs 584.81 crore, and it explicitly recommended that the department increase the selection of taxpayers for business audit in line with prescribed audit manual procedures, and ensure that audits of selected cases are completed within the statutory period prescribed under Section 73 of the Rajasthan Goods and Services Tax Act.

2.8 Public Financial Management Reforms and Audit Compliance

The Comptroller and Auditor General's Accountant General offices in Jaipur conduct a regular and wide ranging programme of compliance and performance audits across Rajasthan's civil administration, commercial enterprises, and local body finances. Recent performance audits have examined subjects as varied as illegal mining activity within the state, the adequacy of public health infrastructure and management of health services, the state's implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016, welfare provisions for building and other construction workers, and solid waste management practices within Urban Local Bodies, in addition to the Comptroller and Auditor General's standard annual State Finances Audit Report series (Home, Accountant General Audit-I Rajasthan, 2025). This breadth of audit coverage reflects both the scale of the state's public expenditure footprint and the Comptroller and Auditor General's institutional mandate to

examine value for money across the full range of government activity, not merely narrow compliance with budgetary procedure.

These audits have consistently identified recurring themes requiring stronger internal financial controls, including inadequate utilisation certification for grants disbursed to implementing agencies, gaps in the digitisation of land records that hinder both property tax administration and dispute resolution, and incomplete automation of management information systems required to monitor GST compliance in real time, with one 2023 audit noting that certain required management information reports covering dispute resolution and registration compliance remained unavailable for periods prior to November 2020 (CAG Audit Report on GST, Comptroller and Auditor General of India, 2025). The Sixth State Finance Commission's framework has sought to address the land records and property tax dimension of this gap by making GIS based digitisation and minimum property tax rate compliance explicit preconditions for continued central grant eligibility, with the Commission having stipulated that no further grants will be released to non-compliant states after March 2024 (Sixth State Finance Commission, Government of Rajasthan, 2025).

Public sector enterprise performance represents a longstanding and largely unresolved concern within Rajasthan's public financial management landscape. Earlier Finance Commission evaluation studies found that the state's portfolio of government companies generated an average reported rate of return of just 0.2 per cent on locked in investment of approximately Rs 25,012 crore, with only three enterprises, the Rajasthan State Mines and Minerals Limited, the Rajasthan Small Industries Corporation, and the state's power distribution company, reported as consistently profitable, and just two companies accounting for 92 per cent of total dividends received by the state from its public enterprise holdings (Commissioned by the Fifteenth Finance Commission, 2020). The same evaluation noted the absence of any clear roadmap for disinvestment or for improving the profitability of underperforming enterprises, and observed that many of these companies do not report their finances to the state legislature with the transparency that public accountability would ordinarily require. Strengthening enterprise level governance, financial reporting, and where appropriate, disinvestment planning, remains an important unaddressed item on the state's broader public financial management reform agenda, one closely connected to the discussion of public sector undertaking reform in Chapter 4.

2.9 Centre-State Fiscal Relations: Trends and Themes

Rajasthan's fiscal relationship with the Union government reflects broader dynamics facing India's larger, historically lower per capita income states under the evolving Finance Commission framework. The 16th Finance Commission's introduction of a state's share of national GDP as an explicit horizontal devolution criterion, while designed to reward demonstrated economic performance and thereby incentivise growth promoting state policy, has the practical effect of marginally reducing the devolution share of states, including Rajasthan, that continue to trail the national per capita income average even as they carry disproportionately large welfare, infrastructure, and administrative spending burdens relative to the size of their revenue base (16th Finance Commission Rewards Economic Performance,

Dataful, 2026). This represents a structural tension in Centre-state fiscal relations that Rajasthan's policymakers will need to navigate carefully over the coming Finance Commission cycle, balancing the state's legitimate ambition to be recognised and rewarded for its accelerating growth performance against its continuing, and in several sectors still substantial, development financing needs.

At the same time, the state government has pursued an active and, on the available evidence, reasonably successful strategy of deepening its engagement with central government platforms and schemes to supplement its own resource base. Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma presented the state's Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 roadmap, key achievements, and future investment priorities directly to the NITI Aayog Governing Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, at its eleventh meeting in June 2026, explicitly framing the state's development strategy as aligned with and supportive of the national Viksit Bharat at 2047 mission (Rajasthan Playing Leading Role in Achieving Viksit Bharat by 2047, PTI, 2026). This engagement has coincided with continued and in some respects strengthening central government support for major state infrastructure projects, including the Union Cabinet's October 2025 approval of a new airport at Kota-Bundi with an investment of Rs 9,814 crore intended to enhance air connectivity for southern Rajasthan, and the inauguration in May 2025 of redeveloped railway stations and associated rail, electrification, solar power, and highway upgrade projects worth Rs 26,000 crore across the state (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026).

This combination, a marginally less favourable devolution formula under the revised horizontal criteria, offset by continued and actively pursued project level central support and greater integration with national planning platforms such as NITI Aayog, is likely to define the essential character of Rajasthan's fiscal relationship with the Union government through the remainder of the current Finance Commission cycle. The state's ability to convert this relationship into durable fiscal capacity, rather than a series of one-off project announcements, will depend substantially on whether the institutional reforms discussed throughout this chapter, particularly stronger own revenue mobilisation, disciplined capital expenditure quality control, consolidated reporting of off-budget liabilities, and improved public sector enterprise governance, are implemented with sufficient rigour and continuity across successive state budget cycles. This fiscal foundation, examined here in detail, underpins the sector specific financing strategies discussed throughout the remainder of this framework, and is returned to directly in the discussion of the state's long-term resource mobilisation strategy in Chapter 21.

CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC STRUCTURE, GROWTH AND SECTORAL PERFORMANCE

3.1 Gross State Domestic Product: Trends, Growth Rate and Sectoral Share

Rajasthan's Gross State Domestic Product for 2025-26, at current prices, is projected at approximately Rs 18.75 lakh crore according to the state's own Economic Review, though the state's budget documents place the figure marginally higher, at Rs 19,89,000 crore, reflecting growth of 16.7 per cent over 2024-25 (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Connect Civils, 2026; Rajasthan Budget Analysis 2025-26, PRS Legislative Research, 2026). In dollar terms, this places the state economy at roughly 197 billion dollars as of late 2025, ranking Rajasthan seventh among Indian states by GSDP (The Week, 2025). The state's growth rate for the year has been recorded at approximately 10.24 per cent in real terms by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, a pace that, if sustained, would represent a meaningful acceleration from the state's longer run historical average of 5.5 per cent real GSDP growth recorded between 2012-13 and 2021-22 (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025).

This acceleration is corroborated by the state's compound annual growth rate in nominal terms, which stood at 11.31 per cent between 2016 and 2026, a rate that exceeded the national average over the same period and reflects the intensifying investment activity associated with the Rising Rajasthan summit and subsequent industrial policy reforms (Rajasthan State Presentation Report, IBEF, 2025). The sectoral composition of the state's Gross State Value Added for 2025-26 shows services contributing 47.7 per cent, industry contributing 26.5 per cent, and agriculture and allied activities contributing 25.7 per cent (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Connect Civils, 2026). This represents a meaningful shift from the sectoral distribution recorded a decade earlier, when agriculture accounted for a considerably larger share and services a smaller one, indicating the state's gradual, if still incomplete, structural transformation toward a services and industry led economy.

Despite this acceleration, Rajasthan's share of India's overall economy has grown only modestly over the long run, rising from approximately 5 per cent of national GDP in 1990-91 to 5.2 per cent by 2021-22 (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025). The state government's own stated ambition, articulated through the Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision, is to reverse this pattern of marginal convergence decisively, targeting an economy of 350 billion dollars by 2029 or 2030 and 4.3 trillion dollars by 2047, implying a growth multiple of twenty one to twenty two times over the coming two decades (Sharma, 2025). Whether the currently observed acceleration in growth proves durable, rather than a temporary function of a low base and a concentrated investment cycle, will substantially determine whether this long-term target is achievable.

3.2 Per Capita Income and Purchasing Power Analysis

Rajasthan's per capita income has shown sustained improvement in recent years, though it continues to trail the national average by a meaningful margin. The state's per capita Net

State Domestic Product reached Rs 1,67,964 in 2023-24, an increase from Rs 1,50,653 the previous year, marking the highest per capita income figure in the state's recorded economic history (Rising Rajasthan: Moving Towards Next Growth Orbit, PHD Research Bureau, 2025). More recent estimates from the 2025-26 Economic Review place per capita income at approximately Rs 2.02 lakh (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Connect Civils, 2026). As of 2021-22, the state's nominal per capita income remained approximately 10 per cent below the national average, a gap that reflects Rajasthan's historically slower human capital formation and its continuing dependence on lower productivity agricultural employment relative to more industrialised states (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025).

This income gap, while narrowing in absolute terms, has structural roots that extend beyond simple output growth. A state's average income figure conceals substantial variation across its districts, with industrialising areas around Jaipur, Alwar, and the Bhiwadi-Neemrana industrial belt recording per capita incomes considerably above the state mean, while the arid western districts and the tribal southern belt lag well below it, a pattern discussed in the context of intra-state disparity in Chapter 1. Purchasing power within the state is also shaped by its comparatively lower cost of living relative to India's major metropolitan centres, meaning that Rajasthan's nominal income gap somewhat overstates the corresponding gap in real living standards for a portion of its population, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas where housing and service costs remain considerably lower than in Delhi, Mumbai, or Bengaluru.

The state's rising Gross Fixed Capital Formation rate of 29.53 per cent of GSDP, discussed in Chapter 2, provides a further basis for optimism regarding the trajectory of per capita income growth over the coming years, since sustained capital formation at this level is typically associated with expanding formal sector employment opportunities and, over time, rising wage levels across both industrial and service sector occupations (Rajasthan Economic Survey 2025-26, PW Live, 2026).

3.3 Primary Sector: Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries

Agriculture and allied sectors remain foundational to Rajasthan's economy, accounting for 25.74 per cent of the state's Gross State Value Added in 2025-26, even as this share has moderated over time relative to the expanding services sector, and continues to employ well over 60 per cent of the state's working population despite its comparatively smaller contribution to value added (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026). The sector's value added has grown substantially in nominal terms, from approximately Rs 1,19,000 crore in 2011-12 to Rs 4,40,702 crore in 2025-26 at current prices, reflecting both price effects and genuine expansion in agricultural output across the state's nine distinct agro-climatic zones (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026).

Rajasthan is a leading national producer of several key crops, including mustard, bajra (pearl millet), and a range of oilseeds, and the state has been formally branded the Millet Bowl of

India in recognition of its output of coarse cereals, a status the state government is actively promoting through the Rajasthan Millets Promotion Mission (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026). Total foodgrain production reached 283.98 lakh metric tonnes in the 2025-26 agricultural year, underscoring the scale of the state's contribution to national food security despite its arid and semi-arid growing conditions (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026). Livestock contributes over one third of the state's total agricultural output, with Rajasthan ranking among India's leading milk producing states and maintaining the country's largest wool producing base, a legacy of the state's traditional pastoral economy in its desert and semi-arid tracts.

The state government's Natural Farming Mission, covering approximately 2,000 clusters, 2.5 lakh farmers, and 1 lakh hectares of cultivated land, represents a deliberate policy effort to reduce chemical input dependence and improve long-term soil health, particularly relevant given the fragility of soils across much of the state's arid zone (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026). Fisheries, though a comparatively small component of the primary sector given the state's limited water bodies, continues to develop around reservoirs and irrigation canal networks, discussed further alongside broader agricultural marketing and value chain themes in Chapter 18.

3.4 Secondary Sector: Industry, Manufacturing and Mining

Rajasthan's industrial sector, comprising manufacturing, construction, mining, and utilities, contributed 26.5 per cent of Gross State Value Added in 2025-26, having grown to a 28 per cent share of GSVA in recent years by some measures, reflecting rising significance of manufacturing and allied activity within the state economy (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Connect Civils, 2026; Rising Rajasthan: Moving Towards Next Growth Orbit, PHD Research Bureau, 2025). The sector's growth has been driven substantially by the state's mineral wealth. Rajasthan is India's leading producer of cement grade limestone, recording production of 102.68 million tonnes between April 2025 and February 2026, accounting for nearly 23.5 per cent of the country's total limestone output during that period, and valued at Rs 2,789.16 crore (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026). The state is also the country's second largest producer of cement, and a major national source of marble, rock phosphate, gypsum, copper, and lignite, alongside contributing roughly one tenth of India's salt production.

Major industrial investments announced or underway include a Rs 3,000 crore integrated cement manufacturing facility being developed by JSW Cement at Nagaur, and a new production kiln commissioned by Shree Cement, India's second largest cement maker, at its Nawalgarh facility at a cost of Rs 3,500 crore, adding 3.5 million tonnes of annual cement production capacity (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026). Rajasthan's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise ecosystem is similarly substantial, with approximately 26 lakh MSMEs operating across the state, supported by the state's MSME Policy of 2024, which has been credited alongside the state's continued leadership in stone, cement, and hydrocarbon production for driving recent industrial growth

(Rising Rajasthan: Moving Towards Next Growth Orbit, PHD Research Bureau, 2025; Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026).

The July 2024 Supreme Court judgment upholding states' rights to tax mineral bearing land, discussed in Chapter 2, adds further momentum to the fiscal significance of Rajasthan's mining sector, even as the state government has signalled intent to tighten administrative controls over royalty collection to capture a greater share of the sector's value, a reform opportunity previously identified in Finance Commission evaluation studies as historically underexploited (Commissioned by the Fifteenth Finance Commission, 2020).

3.5 Tertiary Sector: Trade, Finance, Real Estate and Services

Services constitute the single largest component of Rajasthan's economy at 47.7 per cent of Gross State Value Added in 2025-26, encompassing transport, finance, communication, tourism, public administration, and professional services, and reflecting the state's ongoing transition toward a more diversified and modern economic structure (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Connect Civils, 2026). This tertiary sector expansion has been particularly pronounced in and around Jaipur, where a substantial mixed-use development featuring a convention centre, information technology and global capability centre towers, hotels, and residential facilities is being constructed on a 95 acre site under a Rs 3,700 crore contract awarded to NBCC Limited in August 2025, signalling growing interest in establishing knowledge economy and business services infrastructure within the state capital (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026).

Tourism remains a particularly significant component of the tertiary sector, drawing on Rajasthan's globally recognised heritage assets discussed in Chapter 1, and is examined in full detail in Chapter 19. The state's merchandise export performance, closely tied to its trade and logistics services, stood at Rs 73,055 crore in the 2025-26 financial year, with gems and jewellery, plywood, and engineering goods accounting for the majority share of this export activity (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026). Real estate activity has also strengthened considerably around the state's evolving industrial corridors, particularly in areas adjacent to the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor's investment nodes, discussed further in section 3.9, where anticipated industrial and residential demand has driven a marked rise in land transaction activity in towns such as Sambhar and Phulera.

Financial inclusion within the tertiary sector has continued to deepen through national schemes such as Jan Dhan Yojana, Mudra loans, and expanding digital payment infrastructure, all identified as focus areas within the state's Economic Review for 2025-26 alongside broader objectives of inflation control and balanced growth (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Connect Civils, 2026).

3.6 Informal Economy: Size, Significance and Integration Challenges

The informal economy continues to account for a substantial share of employment and economic activity in Rajasthan, consistent with patterns observed across most of India's larger states. National level data from the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises indicates that unincorporated, non-agricultural enterprises remain a dominant source of urban employment across Indian states, with informal enterprises continuing to generate the majority of new employment opportunities even as formal sector job creation gradually accelerates (PLFS and ASUSE 2025, Vajiram and Ravi, 2026). In Rajasthan specifically, given that over 60 per cent of the working population remains engaged in agriculture and allied activities, a sector overwhelmingly characterised by informal, self-employed, or casual labour arrangements, the state's informal economy footprint is likely to exceed the national average.

Nationally, informal sector dominance is closely tied to lower labour productivity, since agriculture, where a large share of India's workforce remains concentrated, generates comparatively modest value added per worker relative to manufacturing or formal services employment (India's Unemployment Rate in 2025, India Macro Indicators, 2025). This dynamic is particularly salient for Rajasthan, where the sectoral employment data discussed in section 3.7 confirms a workforce still heavily weighted toward agriculture, forestry, and fishing, despite the sector's declining share of aggregate value added. The state's MSME Policy of 2024 and its associated formalisation incentives represent one policy lever through which the state government has sought to encourage the gradual transition of informal enterprises and casual workers toward regular salaried employment with access to provident fund and employee state insurance coverage, consistent with recommendations made at the national level following the 2025 Periodic Labour Force Survey (Periodic Labour Force Survey 2025, Drishti IAS, 2026).

Integrating this informal economy into the state's formal fiscal and social security architecture, without disrupting the livelihoods it currently sustains, remains one of the more delicate policy challenges facing Rajasthan's economic planners, and is addressed further in the discussion of gig and unorganised worker welfare in Chapter 7.

3.7 Labour Market: Employment, Unemployment and Workforce Quality

Rajasthan's labour market presents a somewhat more challenging picture than the state's headline growth figures might suggest. The state's annual unemployment rate stood at 4.4 per cent in 2022-23, notably higher than the national average of 3.2 per cent for the same year, even as the state's Female Labour Force Participation Rate, at 47.8 per cent, exceeded the corresponding national average (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025). This combination, comparatively higher unemployment alongside comparatively higher female workforce participation, suggests that Rajasthan's labour market challenge lies less in drawing women into the workforce than in generating sufficient quality employment opportunities for the workforce already seeking work.

The sectoral distribution of Rajasthan's working population as of 2022-23 shows agriculture, forestry, and fishing accounting for 54.8 per cent of employment, services for 20.7 per cent, construction for 13 per cent, and manufacturing for just 10.1 per cent (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025). This concentration in agriculture and construction, both sectors characterised by seasonal, casual, or otherwise precarious employment arrangements, underscores the workforce quality challenge facing the state, since a large share of Rajasthan's labour force remains outside the more stable, better remunerated employment typically associated with manufacturing or formal services.

In response, the state government introduced the Rajasthan Employment Policy of 2025, intended to provide employment-oriented training, internships, and apprenticeships to youth, alongside the establishment of a Vivekanand Employment Assistance Fund of Rs 500 crore to support career counselling, employer-employee linkages, and employment fairs across the state, and a commitment to create an additional 1.25 lakh government and public sector posts for youth (Rajasthan Budget Analysis 2025-26, PRS Legislative Research, 2026). A further Gig and Unorganised Workers Development Fund of Rs 350 crore was established in the same budget cycle to extend social security coverage to gig economy and platform workers, an increasingly significant segment of the state's urban informal workforce (Rajasthan Budget Analysis 2025-26, PRS Legislative Research, 2026). Nationally, the 2025 Periodic Labour Force Survey recorded a youth unemployment rate of 9.9 per cent, with urban youth unemployment considerably higher at 13.6 per cent compared to 8.3 per cent in rural areas, a pattern that plausibly holds within Rajasthan's own rapidly urbanising districts as well (Periodic Labour Force Survey 2025, Drishti IAS, 2026).

3.8 Inflation, Price Stability and Consumer Welfare

Maintaining price stability alongside rapid nominal growth in GSDP and government expenditure represents an important, if less visible, dimension of Rajasthan's macroeconomic management. The state's 2025-26 Economic Review explicitly identifies inflation control as a focus area alongside balanced growth and financial inclusion, reflecting the state government's recognition that rapid growth in nominal incomes and public expenditure must be matched by careful attention to consumer price stability if the benefits of growth are to be felt broadly across the population rather than eroded by rising costs of essential goods (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Connect Civils, 2026).

Given Rajasthan's status as a leading producer of pulses, oilseeds, and coarse cereals, the state's own agricultural output exerts a meaningful stabilising influence on food price inflation both within the state and, given its scale of production, on national food price trends more broadly. The state's Targeted Public Distribution System, alongside flagship welfare initiatives such as the Indira Rasoi Yojana subsidised meal scheme, continues to provide an important buffer against food price volatility for lower income households, complementing central schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana that provide concessional food grains to eligible beneficiaries across both rural and urban areas.

Consumer welfare within the state is further supported by the expanding reach of the Ayushman Bharat-Mukhyamantri Rajasthan General Health Insurance Yojana, which provides health cover to 1.36 crore families and has an explicit policy objective of reducing out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure, a significant component of household cost of living particularly for lower income and rural families (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026). This combination of agricultural self-sufficiency, targeted food subsidy programmes, and expanding health insurance coverage together form the principal mechanisms through which the state seeks to protect consumer welfare even as it pursues an unusually rapid pace of nominal economic expansion.

3.9 Growth Corridors: Engines of Economic Expansion

The Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor represents the single most significant growth corridor traversing Rajasthan, forming part of a 1,504 kilometre industrial corridor built along the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor connecting Jawaharlal Nehru Port near Mumbai to Dadri in the Delhi National Capital Region, and passing through Uttar Pradesh, Delhi NCR, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra (NICDC, 2026). Within Rajasthan, the corridor's influence area has been organised around five identified development nodes, including two formally designated investment regions and three industrial areas, structured to leverage the specific strengths of different parts of the state (Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Connect Civils, 2025). The Khushkhera-Bhiwadi-Neemrana investment region, located in the state's northeast near the Haryana border, has emerged as a particularly successful node, drawing on the region's proximity to the National Capital Region to attract cement, building stone, gems and jewellery, chemical, food processing, and textile industries, alongside emerging sectors including information technology, auto components, and knowledge hubs.

In western Rajasthan, the Jodhpur-Pali-Marwar node has been designated for the development of textile, agro-processing, and logistics industries, reflecting the region's traditional strength in wool and textile production. This has recently been reinforced by the Union Cabinet's approval, alongside eleven other industrial city proposals nationally, of a new industrial city at Jodhpur-Pali under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme, with the broader Jodhpur-Pali Mega Industrial Area project, valued at Rs 4,380 crore, currently nearing the final tender stage for its first development phase and expected to transform the industrial landscape of western Rajasthan (Industrial Corridors Development, Business Standard, 2026).

Beyond the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor's formally designated nodes, the state's broader growth corridor strategy encompasses its expanding renewable energy generation belt across the western desert districts, discussed in full in Chapter 9, and its evolving tourism circuits connecting Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, and Jaisalmer, strengthened by new rail connectivity including the Jaipur-Udaipur and Jaipur-Jodhpur Vande Bharat Express services launched in October 2025 (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026). Together, these growth corridors, industrial, energy, and tourism, form the spatial backbone through which the state intends to translate its aggregate GSDP ambitions into

geographically concentrated, investment-led economic transformation, a theme this framework returns to directly in the discussion of investment climate and industrial policy in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Investment Climate Assessment and Ease of Doing Business

Rajasthan has undertaken a sustained programme of investment climate reform over the past decade, with measurable, if uneven, results. In the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade's Assessment of State Implementation of Business Reforms, Rajasthan ranked sixth among Indian states in 2015-16, before slipping to eighth by 2019-20, a trajectory that reflects both the state's genuine reform progress and the intensifying competition among Indian states to attract investment through similar liberalisation measures (Rising Rajasthan: Moving Towards Next Growth Orbit, PHD Research Bureau, 2025). More recently, the state has implemented integrated e-governance platforms and single window clearance systems intended to reduce transaction timelines for investors, alongside digital service delivery across land allotment, taxation, and business approval processes (Investment Opportunities in Rajasthan, Invest India, 2026).

The centrepiece of the state's current investment facilitation architecture is the Rajasthan Investment Promotion Scheme of 2024, launched on 8 October 2024 with an explicit emphasis on green growth, export promotion, and capability development, offering incentives including a 50 basis point interest rebate on loans taken for the purchase of land in industrial areas developed by the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation, alongside tailored subsidies calibrated to sector and investment scale (Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation, Grokipedia, 2026). The scheme explicitly targets what it terms a Green, Global, and Capable Rajasthan, positioning the state's investment proposition around its renewable energy leadership, its connectivity to national and international logistics networks including the Golden Quadrilateral, the East-West Corridor, and the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor's Western Dedicated Freight Corridor, and its proximity to major seaports for export oriented manufacturing (Rajasthan Investment Promotion Scheme 2024, Government of Rajasthan, 2025).

Institutionally, investment facilitation in Rajasthan is coordinated through the Bureau of Investment Promotion, the state's nodal investment facilitation agency, working alongside the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation, which serves as the sole agency responsible for developing industrial land across the state (Rajasthan State Presentation Report, IBEF, 2025). The state currently hosts 419 industrial areas spanning 92,500 acres, with 17 of the corporation's parks recognised among the 41 best performing industrial areas nationally by the Government of India, an endorsement that lends credibility to the state's claims of improving industrial infrastructure quality (Rajasthan Investment Promotion Scheme 2024, Government of Rajasthan, 2025). In 2023, the state introduced reforms to its land allotment process, moving from mandatory e-auctions toward a Direct Land Allotment Scheme that reserves 50 per cent of saleable land in corporation developed areas specifically for micro, small, and medium enterprises with signed investment memoranda, formalised in phases through 2025 with the explicit intention of reducing costs

and accelerating investor entry for smaller enterprises that might otherwise struggle to compete with larger firms in a competitive bidding process (Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation, Grokipedia, 2026).

4.2 Industrial Policy Framework and MSME Development

Rajasthan's industrial policy architecture rests on two principal pillars introduced in 2024: the Rajasthan Investment Promotion Scheme, discussed above, and the Rajasthan MSME Policy of 2024, which together are credited with driving much of the state's recent acceleration in industrial growth, alongside the state's continued strength in stone, cement, and hydrocarbon production (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026). The MSME Policy explicitly targets technology adoption, innovation, and digital infrastructure investment among the state's approximately 26 lakh micro, small, and medium enterprises, and provides targeted incentives for emerging sectors including data centres, information technology and IT enabled services, Global Capability Centres, and other advanced technology industries that the state has identified as strategic priorities for its knowledge economy ambitions (Investment Opportunities in Rajasthan, Invest India, 2026).

The state's MSME ecosystem retains strong linkages to its traditional craft and manufacturing base, with dedicated textile parks established in Bhilwara, Pali, and Bhiwadi, and handicraft clusters supported in Barmer and Jodhpur, promoting value added exports and women led enterprises through coordinated support from the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation and the state's MSME policy framework (Foreign Direct Investment in Rajasthan, Sarkari Finance, 2026). This cluster based approach reflects a deliberate policy choice to build on the state's existing artisanal and manufacturing strengths, particularly in textiles and handicrafts, rather than pursuing industrial development exclusively through greenfield investment in entirely new sectors.

Support for workforce readiness within this industrial policy framework is provided through the Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation, which trains youth across hospitality, electronics, and emerging green jobs categories, complementing the broader Rajasthan Employment Policy of 2025 discussed in Chapter 3 (Foreign Direct Investment in Rajasthan, Sarkari Finance, 2026). Multi-modal logistics parks under development at Ajmer, Kishangarh, and Jaipur, incorporating rail-road connectivity and cold chain infrastructure, are intended to support the state's agricultural export ambitions alongside its broader industrial policy goals, reinforcing the interdependence between the state's industrial and agricultural value chain strategies discussed further in Chapter 18.

4.3 Large and Anchor Industries: Sectoral Analysis

Rajasthan's large scale industrial base remains concentrated in sectors closely tied to its mineral endowment, though a gradual diversification toward advanced manufacturing and technology sectors is underway. Cement manufacturing represents one of the state's most significant anchor industries, with Rajasthan ranking as India's second largest cement producer, supported by major ongoing investments including JSW Cement's Rs 3,000 crore

integrated manufacturing facility at Nagaur, announced in May 2024, and Shree Cement's Rs 3,500 crore kiln expansion at its Nawalgarh facility, commissioned in December 2023 with capacity to produce 3.5 million tonnes of cement annually (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026).

Beyond cement and minerals, Rajasthan is emerging as a notable hub for defence manufacturing, hosting Bharat Electronics Limited facilities at Kotkasim and proposed aero manufacturing clusters in Alwar and Jaipur, developed with linkages to the Defence Research and Development Organisation and Make in India partner firms (Foreign Direct Investment in Rajasthan, Sarkari Finance, 2026). Renewable energy has also become a substantial anchor sector for large scale private investment, exemplified by ACME Solar's Rs 1,100 crore financing arrangement with the State Bank of India for a 300 megawatt solar project within the state, part of a broader wave of large scale solar capacity investment discussed in Chapter 9 (Rajasthan State Presentation Report, IBEF, 2025).

The state's knowledge economy anchor investments are increasingly visible in Jaipur, where NBCC Limited was awarded a Rs 3,700 crore contract in August 2025 to develop a 95 acre mixed use project featuring a convention centre, information technology and Global Capability Centre towers, hotels, and residential facilities, signalling the state capital's ambition to establish itself as a genuine business services and technology hub rather than relying exclusively on its traditional strengths in tourism, agriculture, and mining (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026). Research institutions including the Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur, the Malaviya National Institute of Technology Jaipur, and the National Law University Jodhpur provide an increasingly important research and development anchor supporting this diversification (Foreign Direct Investment in Rajasthan, Sarkari Finance, 2026).

4.4 Special Economic Zones, Industrial Corridors and Clusters

Rajasthan's industrial cluster architecture is anchored substantially in the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor, discussed in detail in Chapter 3, whose influence area within the state has been organised around five development nodes including two designated investment regions, at Khushkhera-Bhiwadi-Neemrana and Jodhpur-Pali-Marwar, and three industrial areas structured to leverage regional strengths in cement, building stone, gems and jewellery, chemicals, food processing, and textiles, alongside emerging information technology, auto component, and knowledge hub sectors (Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Connect Civils, 2025). The Union Cabinet's approval, alongside eleven other proposals nationally under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme, of a new industrial city at Jodhpur-Pali, and the advancement of the associated Rs 4,380 crore Jodhpur-Pali Mega Industrial Area project toward final tender stage for its first development phase, represents a particularly significant recent milestone in the state's cluster development strategy (Industrial Corridors Development, Business Standard, 2026).

The Neemrana industrial area, incorporating a dedicated Japanese Zone developed in partnership with Japanese investors, exemplifies the state's approach to attracting anchor

international investors capable of drawing associated supply chain firms into a shared industrial cluster, a strategy that industry analysts note has proven more effective in Indian industrial park development than greenfield park construction without an anchor investor commitment secured in advance (Textile Parks Under a Two-Decade-Old Scheme, IndiaSpend, 2026). Beyond the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor's formally designated nodes, the state maintains a broader network of 419 industrial areas developed by the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation across 92,500 acres, hosting over 42,000 operational industrial units as of recent records (Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation, Grokipedia, 2026).

Special Economic Zone development within Rajasthan has proceeded more modestly than in coastal states such as Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, given the state's landlocked geography and its consequently greater reliance on rail and road linked logistics parks, such as those developed at Ajmer and Kishangarh, rather than port adjacent export processing zones. This reliance on inland logistics infrastructure underscores the continuing importance of the state's rail and highway connectivity investments, discussed in Chapter 8, to the long-term viability of its industrial cluster strategy.

4.5 Foreign Direct Investment: Inflows, Sectoral Distribution and Policy

Rajasthan's foreign direct investment performance has shown gradual improvement but remains modest relative to India's leading investment destinations. According to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, cumulative FDI inflows into Rajasthan stood at Rs 30,035 crore, or approximately 3,727 million dollars, between April 2000 and March 2026, a figure that had risen from Rs 28,688 crore as of June 2025, indicating continued, if incremental, inflow momentum through the most recent reporting periods (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026; Rajasthan State Presentation Report, IBEF, 2025). Within this cumulative figure, the period from October 2019 to March 2024 alone accounted for approximately 2,344 million dollars, or roughly 3.2 billion dollars by some estimates, directed primarily into solar energy, textiles, manufacturing, and logistics, reflecting the sectoral priorities of the state's investment promotion strategy over that period (Rising Rajasthan: Moving Towards Next Growth Orbit, PHD Research Bureau, 2025; Foreign Direct Investment in Rajasthan, Sarkari Finance, 2026).

Comparative state level data for the 2025-26 period places Rajasthan among a second tier of FDI destinations nationally, well behind Maharashtra's 15.1 billion dollars, Gujarat's 7.3 billion dollars, and Karnataka's 6.6 billion dollars, but at a broadly comparable level to Uttar Pradesh, with Rajasthan recording approximately 270 million dollars against Uttar Pradesh's 330 million dollars in the most recent annual comparison, a positioning the data source characterises as indicative of future growth prospects for both states as they pursue new industrial policies (India's FDI Inflows: Ranking by State in 2025, IndiaDataMap, 2026). This relatively modest absolute FDI figure, set against Rajasthan's considerably larger GSDP and population base compared to smaller high FDI states, suggests substantial untapped potential for foreign investment attraction, particularly in sectors where the state's comparative

advantages, renewable energy, mineral processing, and increasingly, defence manufacturing and business services, align with the priorities of global investors seeking manufacturing and services diversification away from more saturated Indian investment destinations.

The Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit of December 2024 represents the state's most ambitious effort to date to accelerate this FDI trajectory, having generated signed memoranda of understanding valued at over thirty five lakh crore rupees, though the substantial majority of this figure reflects domestic rather than foreign investment commitments, with FDI specific inflows continuing to be tracked separately through the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade's statutory reporting mechanism (Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation, Grokipedia, 2026).

4.6 Public Sector Undertakings: Performance and Reform Agenda

The performance of Rajasthan's state owned public sector enterprises remains an area of persistent concern, notwithstanding the state's broader industrial growth momentum. Finance Commission evaluation studies have found that the state's public enterprise portfolio, comprising government companies with a combined investment of approximately Rs 25,012 crore, generated an average reported rate of return of just 0.2 per cent, with only a small number of enterprises, including the Rajasthan State Mines and Minerals Limited, the Rajasthan Small Industries Corporation, and the state's power distribution company, reported as consistently profitable (Commissioned by the Fifteenth Finance Commission, 2020). Just two companies were found to account for 92 per cent of the total dividends the state received from its entire public enterprise holding, underscoring the extent to which profitability within this portfolio is concentrated in a small number of successful entities rather than distributed broadly across the state's public sector footprint.

Among the state's better performing public undertakings, the Rajasthan State Mines and Minerals Limited continues to play a central role in the state's mineral resource management strategy, discussed in Chapter 13, while the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation, though structured as an investment and infrastructure development vehicle rather than a conventional commercial enterprise, has demonstrated a more clearly articulated commercial mandate through its cumulative investment of approximately Rs 98.65 billion in industrial infrastructure and term loans of Rs 40.86 billion extended to industrial units across the state (Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation, Grokipedia, 2026).

Notwithstanding these pockets of stronger performance, the same Finance Commission evaluation studies found no clear roadmap for disinvestment or for systematically improving the profitability of underperforming enterprises, and observed that many public sector companies do not report their finances to the state legislature with a level of transparency commensurate with public accountability expectations (Commissioned by the Fifteenth Finance Commission, 2020). Developing such a disinvestment and enterprise governance roadmap, potentially incorporating performance based board appointments, mandatory annual public reporting of financial statements, and time bound restructuring or closure plans for

chronically loss making entities, represents an important unaddressed reform priority that would meaningfully strengthen the fiscal position discussed in Chapter 2 while simultaneously freeing up management capacity and capital for redeployment toward the state's better performing commercial and infrastructure entities.

4.7 Public-Private Partnership Framework and Pipeline

Rajasthan has employed public-private partnership structures across a range of infrastructure and service delivery domains for well over a decade, with the state government issuing dedicated PPP guidelines as early as May 2012 to establish a formal framework for private sector participation in infrastructure asset creation and management (Water Assessment, World Bank, 2017). Early applications of this framework included the extension of power distribution to private operators in Kota and Bharatpur under contracts awarded to the Kolkata based CESC Group, the development of a lignite based power plant at Bhadresh in Barmer district on a Build, Own, Operate, and Maintain basis with an investment of Rs 5,000 crore, and heritage tourism projects including the Jal Mahal Integrated Tourism Project and the restoration and conservation of Tijara Fort in Alwar (PPP: Public Private Partnership in Rajasthan, Connect Civils, 2025).

The state's PPP portfolio has subsequently expanded into digital infrastructure, through the RajSWAN state wide area network project implemented on a Build, Own, Operate, and Transfer basis, and into rural service delivery, through the establishment of 6,626 Common Service Centre kiosks managed by Village Level Women Enterprises across the state (PPP: Public Private Partnership in Rajasthan, Connect Civils, 2025). Health sector PPP experimentation has included the transfer of Primary Health Centre operations to private management in selected locations from 2015 onward, while tourism sector PPP development has extended to the conversion of state owned Dak Bungalow properties into three star hotel standard accommodation, beginning with properties in Ajmer, Bharatpur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Alwar, Bhilwara, Jaisalmer, Mount Abu, and Nathdwara, with 20 per cent of rooms reserved for government official use and the remainder opened to the general public.

Road infrastructure has historically represented the largest single category of the state's PPP pipeline, with 74 completed road projects recorded through Build-Operate-Transfer structures at a combined estimated cost of Rs 2,521.62 crore as of an earlier assessment period, alongside seven completed common bio-medical waste treatment facilities developed on a Design, Build, Own, Operate, and Transfer basis (Rajasthan PPP Infrastructure Projects Status, PPP in India Database, 2011). Water sector PPP development remains comparatively underdeveloped relative to roads, power, and tourism, with World Bank assessments characterising water as largely uncharted territory for private sector participation in Rajasthan, notwithstanding specific projects proposed for external assistance and private participation, including the Nagaur Lift Project Phase II and the Jodhpur Urban Water Supply Scheme, reflecting both the sensitivity of water pricing in a water stressed state and the comparative absence of established regulatory and contractual precedent for private water service delivery (Water Assessment, World Bank, 2017). Expanding annuity based and other appropriate PPP models specifically within the water sector, an area the state government has

itself identified as a priority, represents a significant unrealised opportunity to mobilise private capital toward the water security challenges discussed in Chapter 10.

4.8 Regional Cooperation: Shared Region and Growth

Rajasthan's regional cooperation architecture is shaped substantially by its water sharing arrangements with neighbouring states, given the state's status as one of India's most water stressed jurisdictions. The Modified Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal-ERCP Link Project, an interstate initiative merging the earlier Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal link with the state's own Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project, exemplifies this cooperative imperative, having required a formal memorandum of understanding between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh to address water sharing, cost-benefit distribution, and water exchange arrangements between the two states (MP-Rajasthan MoU on PKC-ERCP Link Project, Drishti IAS, 2026). The project is designed to supply drinking and industrial water to thirteen districts across eastern Rajasthan, including Alwar, Bharatpur, Sawai Madhopur, and Jaipur, spanning approximately 23.67 per cent of the state's geographical area and benefiting an estimated 41.13 per cent of its population, while explicitly supporting the water security requirements of the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor's investment nodes discussed in section 4.4 (MP-Rajasthan MoU on PKC-ERCP Link Project, Drishti IAS, 2026).

Beyond bilateral water sharing arrangements, Rajasthan's eastern districts, particularly Alwar and Bharatpur, maintain functional economic integration with the National Capital Region, drawing substantial commuter, logistics, and industrial spillover benefit from their proximity to Delhi and Gurugram, a dynamic that has been central to the success of the Khushkhera-Bhiwadi-Neemrana investment node discussed earlier in this chapter. This regional economic integration, while not formalised through the same statutory National Capital Region Planning Board mechanisms that govern Haryana's and Uttar Pradesh's NCR districts, nonetheless represents a significant informal growth spillover that the state's industrial policy has deliberately sought to reinforce through targeted infrastructure and connectivity investment in its northeastern districts.

At the national level, Rajasthan's participation in interstate river linking discussions forms part of the broader National Perspective Plan for water resources development through inter-basin transfer, coordinated by the National Water Development Agency, with implementation of any such interlinking project contingent on consensus among the concerned states, a principle that has historically slowed progress on several proposed links but which the successful conclusion of the Rajasthan-Madhya Pradesh memorandum of understanding suggests can be navigated successfully when both states perceive clear mutual benefit (National River Linking Project, Press Information Bureau, 2025).

CHAPTER 5: EDUCATION, ACCESS, QUALITY AND FUTURE READINESS

5.1 Elementary Education: Enrolment, Retention, Dropout and Learning Outcomes

Rajasthan's elementary education system has made considerable progress on enrolment and retention over the past decade, even as learning outcomes continue to lag national leaders. Dropout rates for Classes VIII to X in the state stood at 15.2 per cent as of 2016-17, and for Class X specifically at 24.3 per cent, both figures notably lower than the corresponding national averages recorded in the same period, suggesting that once children in Rajasthan progress past the earliest years of schooling, the system retains them at a rate comparable to or better than the national norm (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025). This pattern implies that the state's most significant retention challenge lies less in the middle school years and more at the foundational and pre-primary stages, and in the transition into secondary schooling discussed in section 5.2.

Nationally, the Annual Status of Education Report for 2024, conducted by the Pratham Foundation across 17,997 villages and 605 rural districts, reaching nearly 650,000 children, found that pre-primary enrolment for three-year-olds had risen from 68.1 per cent in 2018 to 77.4 per cent by 2024, and that dropout rates for 15 to 16-year-olds nationally had declined from 13.1 per cent in 2018 to 7.9 per cent in 2024 (ASER 2024 and Elementary Education, Drishti IAS, 2025). Within this broadly encouraging national picture, however, ASER 2024 specifically identified Rajasthan, alongside Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, as among the states continuing to struggle with basic foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes, in contrast to leading states such as Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Mizoram, where more than 64 per cent of Class 5 students demonstrated reading levels appropriate to their grade (ASER 2024, Drishti IAS, 2025).

This learning outcome gap persists despite improving national trends in foundational literacy programming, with Class 3 reading ability in government schools nationally rising from 16.3 per cent in 2022 to 23.4 per cent in 2024, reflecting the structured pedagogy and teacher training push associated with the national NIPUN Bharat Mission, which targets universal foundational literacy and numeracy by Class 3 for all children by the 2026-27 academic year (ASER 2024 and Elementary Education, Drishti IAS, 2025). ASER 2024 further noted that Rajasthan was among a smaller group of states, alongside Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, that had introduced local initiatives specifically intended to bridge these learning gaps, indicating that state level policy attention to the problem is present even where outcomes have not yet caught up with the state's more successful peers (Annual Status of Education Report, Shankar IAS Parliament, 2025). Sustaining and scaling these local initiatives, with particular attention to foundational reading and arithmetic instruction in the state's government schools, represents the single most consequential near-term priority for Rajasthan's elementary education system.

5.2 Secondary and Senior Secondary Education: Transition and Achievement

Rajasthan's 2025-26 state budget allocates Rs 29,363 crore for primary education and a further Rs 33,792 crore for secondary education, together representing one of the largest single categories of the state's social sector expenditure and reflecting the government's continued prioritisation of school education within its overall budget envelope (Rajasthan State Presentation Report, IBEF, 2025). This substantial financial commitment has supported the expansion of Mahatma Gandhi English Medium Schools across the state, alongside the integration of vocational training into more than 1,500 secondary schools, an initiative intended to improve the school-to-work transition for students who do not proceed to higher education (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026).

The share of students passing the High School examination in Rajasthan is close to the national average, and the share passing at the Higher Secondary level is reported as higher than the national average, indicating that the state's secondary schooling system performs comparatively well once students successfully navigate the transition from middle to secondary school (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025). This finding, combined with the comparatively favourable dropout figures for Classes VIII to X and Class X discussed in section 5.1, suggests that Rajasthan's secondary education system, once students are retained within it, delivers examination outcomes that are broadly competitive nationally, even though the state's aggregate literacy and foundational learning indicators remain comparatively weaker.

The expansion of Mahatma Gandhi English Medium Schools carries particular significance given the state's linguistic profile discussed in Chapter 1, since English medium instruction is widely perceived by families across Rajasthan as a pathway to improved higher education and employment prospects, particularly for students whose first language is a Rajasthani dialect rather than Hindi. Ensuring that this expansion of English medium instruction does not come at the cost of foundational literacy in the student's home language and in Hindi, an established concern in the pedagogical literature on early medium of instruction transitions, will require continued monitoring by the state's Education Department as the programme scales further across the state's 41 districts.

5.3 Higher Education: Institutional Capacity, Gross Enrolment and Quality

Rajasthan possesses one of the more expansive higher education networks among Indian states, comprising 92 universities and 4,076 colleges, serving approximately 2.69 million students across undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programmes as of 2021-22 (List of Institutions of Higher Education in Rajasthan, Grokipedia, 2026). This institutional base includes 26 state public universities, among them the University of Rajasthan, established in Jaipur in 1947, alongside 52 private universities, 2 central universities, 7 deemed universities, and 5 institutes of national importance, including the Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur and the Indian Institute of Management Udaipur (List of Institutions of Higher Education in Rajasthan, Grokipedia, 2026). This density of institutions of national importance is notable for a state of Rajasthan's economic profile, and provides a meaningful research and

innovation anchor that the state's broader knowledge economy ambitions, discussed in Chapter 17, are seeking to leverage more fully.

Despite this considerable institutional capacity, Rajasthan's Gross Enrolment Ratio at the higher education level stood at 26.1 per cent in 2021, slightly below the national average, and the state's Gender Parity Index for higher education enrolment among the 18 to 23 age cohort likewise trailed the corresponding national figure as of the same year (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025). This gap between institutional capacity and actual enrolment suggests that access barriers beyond simple availability of institutional seats, such as affordability, distance from home for rural students, and social norms constraining female higher education participation particularly in the state's more rural and tribal districts, continue to constrain the state's ability to translate its higher education infrastructure into correspondingly high participation rates.

The rapid proliferation of private universities within the state, particularly across smaller towns such as Tonk, Churu, and Ajmer, has expanded institutional access considerably since the mid-2000s, though quality assurance across this expanded private sector has not been uniform, with instances of regulatory action against specific institutions for admissions and doctoral programme irregularities recorded by national higher education regulators in recent years (List of Institutions of Higher Education in Rajasthan, Grokipedia, 2026). Strengthening quality assurance mechanisms across this expanded and diversified higher education landscape, while continuing to build on the state's strong institutes of national importance, represents an important ongoing task for the state's Higher Education Department.

5.4 Technical, Vocational Education and Training Ecosystem

Rajasthan's technical and vocational education ecosystem is anchored institutionally by the Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation, which provides training to youth across sectors including hospitality, electronics, and emerging green jobs categories, complementing the broader employment policy architecture discussed in Chapter 3 (Foreign Direct Investment in Rajasthan, Sarkari Finance, 2026). This vocational training infrastructure has been extended into the formal secondary schooling system through the integration of vocational training programmes in more than 1,500 secondary schools across the state, intended to provide students with market relevant skills alongside their academic curriculum, particularly valuable for the substantial share of students who do not proceed to higher education (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026).

At the national level, the 2025 Periodic Labour Force Survey found that only 4.2 per cent of India's workforce aged 15 to 59 years had received formal vocational or technical training, a finding the survey's analysts characterised as a critical area for skill development intervention nationally, and one that plausibly applies with similar or greater force within Rajasthan given the state's still heavily agriculture and construction weighted workforce composition discussed in Chapter 3 (Periodic Labour Force Survey 2025, Drishti IAS, 2026). Addressing this vocational training gap is particularly urgent in Rajasthan given the state's stated

ambition to transition toward higher value manufacturing and services employment under its Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision, since a workforce lacking formal vocational credentials will struggle to access the more skilled and better remunerated positions that the state's industrial policy, discussed in Chapter 4, is seeking to attract.

Industrial Training Institutes, examined in tandem with vocational secondary schooling, provide a further pillar of the state's technical training infrastructure, with recruitment notifications for positions such as Vice Principal and Superintendent roles at these institutes processed regularly through the Rajasthan Public Service Commission, indicating continued institutional investment in this segment of the training ecosystem (Recruitment Advertisement, Rajasthan Public Service Commission, 2026). Deeper integration between the state's vocational training infrastructure and the specific skill demands of its growth corridors and anchor industries, discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, would strengthen the practical relevance and post-training employment outcomes of this ecosystem considerably.

5.5 Teacher Recruitment, Training and Professional Development

Teacher recruitment in Rajasthan operates substantially through the Rajasthan Public Service Commission, which conducts periodic competitive examinations for positions including Senior Teacher Grade II across general, Sanskrit education, and special education streams, alongside separate recruitment cycles for tribal sub-plan areas, reflecting the state's effort to ensure adequate teacher deployment across its diverse and geographically dispersed district administration (Recruitment Advertisement, Rajasthan Public Service Commission, 2026). The existence of dedicated recruitment streams for Sanskrit education and for tribal sub-plan areas indicates institutional recognition of the state's linguistic and social diversity discussed in Chapter 1, though the adequacy of teacher supply relative to demand, particularly in the state's more remote desert and tribal districts, remains a persistent operational challenge common to most large Indian states.

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy training has become an increasingly central component of in-service teacher professional development nationally, with the 2024 Annual Status of Education Report finding that over 80 per cent of surveyed schools nationally had implemented FLN activities, and that at least one teacher in 75 per cent of these schools had received specific FLN training (ASER 2024 and Elementary Education, Drishti IAS, 2025). Given ASER 2024's specific identification of Rajasthan as a state where foundational learning outcomes continue to lag national leaders, ensuring that this FLN training reaches a correspondingly high proportion of the state's elementary school teachers, and that the training translates into observable classroom practice change, represents a particularly pressing professional development priority for the state's Education Department.

Teacher attendance and engagement, a perennial concern in rural government schooling across India, showed national improvement from 72.4 per cent in 2018 to 75.9 per cent by 2024 according to ASER 2024 findings (ASER 2024 and Elementary Education, Drishti IAS, 2025). Sustaining this improvement within Rajasthan specifically, through continued monitoring, professional development investment, and appropriate incentive structures for

postings in the state's more remote districts, remains essential to translating the state's substantial school education budget allocation into improved learning outcomes on the ground.

5.6 Digital Education, EdTech Integration and ICT in Schools

Digital access among Rajasthan's school age population has expanded substantially in recent years, broadly tracking the national trend documented by ASER 2024, which found that nearly 90 per cent of children aged 14 to 16 nationally had access to a smartphone, with 82.2 per cent of children using smartphones for some purpose and 57 per cent specifically using them for educational purposes (ASER 2024 and Elementary Education, Drishti IAS, 2025). This near-universal smartphone access, even among rural households, has created an infrastructure foundation upon which digital education interventions can be built, though the same survey found a persistent gender gap in smartphone access, with 85.5 per cent of boys reporting smartphone use for education compared to 79.4 per cent of girls nationally, a gap that plausibly reflects household resource allocation patterns relevant to the gender disparities in higher education enrolment discussed in section 5.3.

Rajasthan's state government has sought to build on this expanding digital infrastructure base through continued investment in ICT integration within its school system, complementing the broader digital governance architecture discussed in Chapter 16. The state's Common Service Centre network, comprising 6,626 kiosks established under public-private partnership arrangements discussed in Chapter 4, provides an additional digital access point relevant to rural students and families seeking information on educational schemes, scholarships, and examination results where household level digital infrastructure remains limited (PPP: Public Private Partnership in Rajasthan, Connect Civils, 2025).

The digital safety dimension of this expanding smartphone access among school age children also carries direct relevance for Rajasthan's education policy, with ASER 2024 finding that only 62 per cent of children nationally know how to block or report inappropriate profiles online, and just 55.2 per cent know how to make their own profiles private (ASER 2024 and Elementary Education, Drishti IAS, 2025). Incorporating digital literacy and online safety instruction into the state's expanding EdTech integration efforts, alongside the purely academic applications of digital tools, represents an increasingly important complement to the state's broader digital education strategy.

5.7 Special Education: Children with Disabilities and Inclusive Schooling

Rajasthan's provision for children with disabilities within its mainstream and special education systems has been the subject of direct scrutiny by the Comptroller and Auditor General, whose 2023 performance audit specifically examined the state's implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016 (Home, Accountant General Audit-I Rajasthan, 2025). While the detailed findings of this audit extend beyond the education sector alone, its focus on disability rights implementation within the state carries direct relevance for inclusive schooling, since the 2016 Act mandates that children with disabilities have access to

free education in an appropriate environment, whether through mainstream inclusive schooling or, where necessary, special schools, until the age of eighteen.

Recruitment of special education teachers within Rajasthan's government school system proceeds through dedicated Senior Teacher Grade II special education recruitment streams administered by the Rajasthan Public Service Commission, including specific provisions for tribal sub-plan areas, indicating institutional recognition that special education needs must be addressed across the full geographic and social diversity of the state rather than concentrated only in urban centres (Recruitment Advertisement, Rajasthan Public Service Commission, 2026). Nonetheless, the persistence of a dedicated Comptroller and Auditor General performance audit specifically targeting disability rights implementation suggests that gaps between policy intent and ground level service delivery remain a live concern for the state's education and social welfare administration.

Strengthening inclusive schooling capacity, including physical accessibility of school infrastructure, availability of assistive technology and learning materials appropriate to varied disabilities, and specialised teacher training beyond the current recruitment stream, represents an area where Rajasthan's education system has considerable room for improvement relative to the ambitions embedded in national disability rights legislation. This theme connects directly to the broader discussion of disability rights, accessibility, and empowerment addressed in Chapter 7.

5.8 State-Specific Educational Challenges and Reform Priorities

Rajasthan's education system confronts a distinctive combination of challenges that together shape the state's reform priorities going forward. Foremost among these is the persistent gap between the state's comparatively favourable secondary school retention and examination performance, discussed in section 5.2, and its comparatively weaker foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes at the elementary level, identified explicitly by ASER 2024 as placing Rajasthan alongside Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh among states struggling with basic educational outcomes (Annual Status of Education Report, Shankar IAS Parliament, 2025). This suggests that the state's most consequential reform priority lies not in secondary or higher education policy, where outcomes are comparatively more competitive, but in a sustained, well-resourced foundational literacy and numeracy campaign aligned with the national NIPUN Bharat Mission's 2026-27 target.

A second distinctive challenge lies in the state's geographic and linguistic diversity discussed in Chapter 1, which requires an education system capable of delivering quality instruction across a population that speaks multiple distinct Rajasthani dialects as a first language, spans a population density gradient from 17 to 595 persons per square kilometre, and includes both a rapidly growing English medium instruction demand and a persistent need for effective mother tongue and Hindi language foundational instruction. Balancing these competing demands, without allowing the expansion of English medium schooling to come at the expense of foundational literacy, requires careful curriculum and teacher training design specific to the state's linguistic context.

A third priority concerns the persistent gender gap in higher education enrolment and in digital access for educational purposes, discussed in sections 5.3 and 5.6 respectively, which continues to constrain the full realisation of the state's demographic dividend discussed in Chapter 1, given that nearly 63 per cent of Rajasthan's population comprises youth. Closing this gender gap, through targeted scholarship programmes, safe transportation infrastructure for female students in rural areas, and continued expansion of higher education access points closer to students' home districts, represents an essential complement to the state's broader human capital development strategy.

CHAPTER 6: HEALTH, NUTRITION AND POPULATION

6.1 Public Health Infrastructure: Facilities, Human Resources and Gaps

Rajasthan's public health system operates across a three tier structure of sub-centres, Primary Health Centres, and Community Health Centres at the rural level, supplemented by district hospitals and a network of medical colleges providing tertiary care, structured to serve a population that, as discussed in Chapter 1, is dispersed across the country's largest state by area at densities as low as 17 persons per square kilometre in parts of the western desert. This geographic dispersal creates distinctive infrastructure challenges not faced by more compact states, since achieving comparable service access radii in Rajasthan requires a proportionally larger and more widely distributed network of facilities and health personnel than would be needed in a state of similar population but smaller area.

The state's proportion of institutional births reached 94.9 per cent as per the National Family Health Survey 2020-21, a figure that reflects sustained investment in facility based delivery infrastructure and the associated Janani Suraksha Yojana and Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram incentive schemes that encourage institutional rather than home delivery (Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, Government of Rajasthan, 2026). This high institutional delivery rate represents one of the more significant public health achievements documented in this framework, given its direct bearing on the maternal and child health outcomes discussed in section 6.3.

Despite this progress, human resource gaps persist across the state's public health workforce, particularly in the more remote districts of the western desert and southern tribal belt, where postings are less sought after by medical professionals relative to the state's urban centres around Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Udaipur. The Comptroller and Auditor General's performance audit of public health infrastructure and health service management in the state, conducted as part of its regular audit programme, specifically examined this dimension of service delivery, alongside broader questions of facility adequacy and management, though full findings extend beyond the scope of this chapter (Home, Accountant General Audit-I Rajasthan, 2025). Addressing this human resource maldistribution, through targeted incentive structures and expanded telemedicine linkages for the state's most remote districts, remains an important ongoing priority for the state's Medical and Health Department.

6.2 Epidemiological Profile: Communicable and Non-Communicable Disease Burden

Rajasthan's epidemiological profile reflects the dual burden of communicable and non-communicable disease that characterises most large Indian states at a comparable stage of health transition. Tuberculosis remains a significant communicable disease concern, with the state recording a total TB incidence rate of 209 cases per 100,000 population as per the TB India Report of 2022, underscoring the continued relevance of the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme's case detection and treatment adherence efforts within the state (Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, Government of Rajasthan, 2026). Given Rajasthan's substantial rural and dispersed population, ensuring consistent treatment adherence for TB

patients across the state's remote districts presents a particular operational challenge for the programme's directly observed treatment protocols.

On the non-communicable disease front, the state's asthma prevalence, at 1.3 per cent among women and 0.9 per cent among men as recorded in the National Family Health Survey of 2020-21, provides one indicator among several tracked under the state's Sustainable Development Goal monitoring framework, alongside mortality attributed to unintentional poisoning, recorded at 2.88 per 100,000 population as per National Crime Records Bureau data for 2022 (Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, Government of Rajasthan, 2026). Road traffic injuries represent a further significant contributor to the state's overall disease and injury burden, with 13.80 persons killed and 27.66 injured per 100,000 population in road accidents recorded by the National Crime Records Bureau in 2022, figures that connect directly to the state's road infrastructure and traffic safety discussion in Chapter 8.

The state's suicide mortality rate, at 6.6 per 100,000 population as per 2022 National Crime Records Bureau data, provides an important, if partial, indicator of the population's mental health burden, a theme examined further in section 6.5 (Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, Government of Rajasthan, 2026). Taken together, these indicators suggest that Rajasthan's disease burden, while still shaped significantly by communicable disease and maternal and child health concerns typical of a state at an earlier stage of epidemiological transition, is increasingly also shaped by non-communicable disease, injury, and mental health factors more commonly associated with more economically advanced states, a transition that will require the state's health system to adapt its resource allocation and workforce training priorities accordingly over the coming decade.

6.3 Maternal and Child Health: MMR, IMR, Under-5 Mortality and Nutrition

Rajasthan has recorded substantial and sustained improvement in maternal mortality over the past two decades. The state's Maternal Mortality Ratio fell from 445 per 100,000 live births in 2003 to 255 by the 2013 Sample Registration System round, and further to 113 per 100,000 live births as per the Sample Registration System bulletin for 2018-20, a decline of more than 74 per cent over this seventeen year period (Population and Development: A Discourse on Family Planning in Rajasthan, National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, 2015; Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, Government of Rajasthan, 2026). This trajectory closely parallels the national pattern, with India's own Maternal Mortality Ratio declining by 37 points from 130 per 100,000 live births in 2014-16 to 93 by 2019-21 according to the Registrar General of India's Special Bulletin on Maternal Mortality (India Witnesses a Steady Downward Trend in Maternal and Child Mortality, Press Information Bureau, 2025).

Infant mortality has followed a similarly encouraging, if less complete, trajectory. Rajasthan's infant mortality rate stood at 32 deaths per 1,000 live births as of 2020, moderating further to 30 in 2022 and 29 in 2023, according to the most recent Sample Registration System Statistical Report, though this remains higher than the corresponding national average and the state's under-five mortality rate of 40 per 1,000 live births as recorded in the 2020 Sample Registration System bulletin (Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, Government of

Rajasthan, 2026; Birth Rate in Rajasthan Dips to 22.9% in 2023, ETV Bharat, 2025). Notably, the state's infant mortality rate in rural areas, at 31 per 1,000 live births in 2023, remains meaningfully higher than the urban figure of 23, underscoring a persistent rural-urban gap in access to quality newborn and maternal healthcare that mirrors the state's broader rural-urban development disparities discussed in Chapter 1 (Birth Rate in Rajasthan Dips to 22.9% in 2023, ETV Bharat, 2025).

Child nutrition indicators from the National Family Health Survey covering 2019-21 found that among children under five in Rajasthan, 22 per cent were wasted and 32 per cent were underweight, with undernutrition found to be relatively more prevalent among rural children, children of higher birth order, children belonging to Scheduled Tribe communities, and children of Muslim families relative to other social groups (Rajasthan National Family Health Survey, DHS Program, 2021). These persistent disparities in child nutrition outcomes across social and geographic groups reinforce the importance of the targeted nutrition programming discussed in section 6.6, and connect directly to the social justice and inclusion themes addressed throughout Chapter 7.

6.4 Universal Health Coverage: State Health Assurance Schemes

Rajasthan's principal vehicle for advancing universal health coverage is the Ayushman Bharat-Mukhyamantri Rajasthan General Health Insurance Yojana, which extends health insurance cover to 1.36 crore families across the state, integrating the state's earlier Chiranjeevi health insurance scheme with the central government's Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana framework to provide a unified cashless treatment benefit across both public and empanelled private healthcare facilities (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026). This scale of coverage represents one of the more expansive state level health assurance programmes in India, reflecting the state government's explicit policy objective of reducing out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure, a particularly significant consideration for the sizeable share of Rajasthan's population still engaged in low income agricultural and informal sector work discussed in Chapter 3.

The integration of the state's own Chiranjeevi scheme with the national Ayushman Bharat framework reflects a broader pattern across Indian states of layering state specific health assurance benefits atop the central government's baseline coverage, allowing Rajasthan to extend benefits or eligibility criteria beyond the national scheme's standard parameters where the state's own fiscal capacity allows. Complementing this insurance based approach, the state continues to invest directly in strengthening its public health facility network, discussed in section 6.1, on the premise that insurance coverage alone cannot deliver universal health coverage in the absence of adequate facility availability, particularly in the state's more remote districts.

Public-private partnership arrangements in primary healthcare delivery, discussed in the broader PPP context in Chapter 4, including the transfer of Primary Health Centre operations to private management in selected locations since 2015, represent a further, more targeted dimension of the state's universal health coverage strategy, intended to improve service

quality and availability in specific underserved locations without abandoning the state's core commitment to public provision of primary healthcare (PPP: Public Private Partnership in Rajasthan, Connect Civils, 2025).

6.5 Mental Health Services: Availability, Access and Stigma Reduction

Mental health service availability in Rajasthan, as in most Indian states, continues to lag behind the state's investment in physical health infrastructure, notwithstanding the National Mental Health Programme's District Mental Health Programme component, which has been extended across the state's districts to provide decentralised outpatient mental health services integrated with the general health system. The state's suicide mortality rate of 6.6 per 100,000 population, recorded by the National Crime Records Bureau for 2022, provides one indirect indicator of the population's mental health burden and the continued gap between need and available service capacity (Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, Government of Rajasthan, 2026).

Stigma surrounding mental illness continues to constrain help-seeking behaviour across much of Rajasthan's population, particularly in rural and more socially conservative districts, a pattern well documented in the broader Indian mental health literature and one that the state's District Mental Health Programme has sought to address through community awareness activities alongside its core clinical service provision. The integration of mental health screening into routine primary healthcare consultations, an approach increasingly emphasised nationally under India's mental health policy framework, offers a potentially effective mechanism for expanding access to mental health support in Rajasthan without requiring the population to seek out separate, potentially stigmatising, specialist mental health services.

Strengthening human resource capacity for mental health service delivery, given the well documented national shortage of qualified psychiatrists and clinical psychologists relative to population need, represents a particularly acute challenge for Rajasthan given the same geographic dispersal and rural-urban human resource maldistribution issues discussed in the context of general public health infrastructure in section 6.1. Expanding telepsychiatry services, building on the state's growing digital infrastructure discussed in Chapter 16, offers one promising avenue for extending mental health service reach into the state's more remote districts without requiring proportional expansion of in-person specialist postings.

6.6 Nutrition Programmes: ICDS, Mid-Day Meal and Poshan Abhiyan

Rajasthan's nutrition programming operates through the well established national architecture of the Integrated Child Development Services scheme, delivered through the state's network of Anganwadi centres, the Mid-Day Meal scheme providing cooked meals to schoolchildren, and the Poshan Abhiyan national nutrition mission launched to accelerate improvement in nutritional outcomes for children, adolescent girls, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. Given the National Family Health Survey's finding that undernutrition among Rajasthan's children under five is particularly concentrated among rural children, children of higher birth order, and children from Scheduled Tribe and Muslim communities, effective targeting of

these programmes toward the state's most nutritionally vulnerable populations, particularly its southern tribal districts of Banswara, Dungarpur, and Pratapgarh, discussed in Chapter 1, represents an essential design consideration for programme effectiveness (Rajasthan National Family Health Survey, DHS Program, 2021).

At the national level, the sixth round of the National Family Health Survey, covering 2023-24, found that child stunting nationally had declined to 29.3 per cent, reflecting the combined effect of robust institutional healthcare delivery and expanded immunisation coverage, even as the same survey found these programmatic gains constrained by a cereal centric food system, rising adult obesity, and the high cost of micronutrient dense diets (Building a Nutritionally Secure India, Drishti IAS, 2026). This national finding carries direct relevance for Rajasthan, whose agricultural output, discussed in Chapter 3, remains heavily weighted toward cereal crops such as bajra and wheat, suggesting that dietary diversification initiatives, including promotion of pulse and horticultural crop consumption alongside continued cereal production, could meaningfully complement the state's existing nutrition programme architecture.

Adolescent nutrition represents a further area of specific concern within Rajasthan, with historical survey data finding that a substantial share of adolescent girls in the state carried a subnormal body mass index, a pattern researchers have linked to customary practices of underfeeding pre-adolescent and adolescent girls in some communities, intended to delay menarche and thereby ease social pressure toward early marriage (Maternal Health: A Case Study of Rajasthan, National Center for Biotechnology Information, 2009). Addressing this specific dimension of the state's nutrition challenge requires programming that engages directly with the underlying social and cultural drivers of adolescent undernutrition, rather than nutrition supplementation alone, a theme that connects to the broader discussion of child rights and gender equity addressed in Chapter 7.

6.7 Population Stabilisation and Family Planning

Rajasthan remains one of only six Indian states, alongside Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand, with a Total Fertility Rate above the replacement level of 2.1, as recorded in the Sample Registration System Statistical Report for 2024, at a time when India's national Total Fertility Rate has fallen to 1.9, below replacement level for the first time in the survey's history (SRS Statistical Report 2024 Highlights, IAS Gyan, 2026). Rajasthan's crude birth rate stood at 23.8 per 1,000 population in 2022, moderating to 22.9 by 2023, with a persistent rural-urban gap of 24.9 in rural areas compared to 20.8 in urban areas, and the state's overall natural growth rate of 17 per 1,000 population as of the 2024 Sample Registration System Bulletin remains nearly one and a half times the national natural growth rate of 11.9 (Birth Rate in Rajasthan Dips to 22.9% in 2023, ETV Bharat, 2025; Amid Delimitation Row, SRS Bulletin Reveals Population Imbalance, Business Standard, 2026).

This continued above replacement fertility carries significant long-term implications for the state's demographic and development trajectory. On the positive side, it sustains the youthful population structure discussed in Chapter 1, with nearly 63 per cent of the state's population

classified as youth, a demographic asset central to the state's Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 economic ambitions. On the other hand, sustained above replacement fertility continues to add pressure to the state's education, health, and employment infrastructure discussed throughout this framework, at a time when several other large Indian states have already transitioned to below replacement fertility and can correspondingly redirect public investment toward deepening per capita service quality rather than expanding coverage to accommodate continued population growth.

Rajasthan's own family planning targets, articulated through its State Population Policy, include reducing the Total Fertility Rate to 2.1 and reducing infant mortality to 25 per 1,000 live births, targets that build on documented evidence that early childbearing, with the Annual Health Survey of 2011-12 finding that 38.6 per cent of women aged 15 to 19 in Rajasthan were already mothers or pregnant, contributes directly to sustained high fertility and elevated maternal health risk (Population and Development: A Discourse on Family Planning in Rajasthan, National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, 2015). Addressing this through continued investment in girls' education, delayed age at marriage, and expanded contraceptive access and awareness, particularly in the state's higher fertility western districts such as Barmer, Dholpur, and Banswara where district level Total Fertility Rates have historically exceeded 4.0, remains central to the state's population stabilisation strategy.

6.8 Health System Strengthening and Future Preparedness

Rajasthan's health system strengthening agenda must simultaneously address the persistent challenges documented throughout this chapter, rural-urban infrastructure and human resource disparities, above replacement fertility, elevated infant and maternal mortality relative to national averages, and a rising non-communicable disease and mental health burden, while building resilience against future public health emergencies of the kind experienced globally during the COVID-19 pandemic. The state's expanding health insurance coverage under the Ayushman Bharat-Mukhyamantri Rajasthan General Health Insurance Yojana, discussed in section 6.4, provides an important financial protection foundation, but must be complemented by continued facility and workforce investment if the state is to close its persistent gaps with national health outcome averages.

Digital health infrastructure, building on the broader digital governance architecture discussed in Chapter 16, offers a particularly promising avenue for future health system strengthening in a state as geographically dispersed as Rajasthan, through expanded telemedicine linkages connecting remote Primary Health Centres to specialist consultation capacity in the state's medical colleges, digital health records that allow continuity of care for the state's substantial migrant and seasonal labour population, and data driven disease surveillance systems capable of providing early warning for both communicable disease outbreaks and, given the National Family Health Survey findings on nutrition, for tracking progress against the state's persistent child undernutrition challenge in close to real time.

Ultimately, the health system strengthening priorities identified throughout this chapter, closing rural-urban infrastructure gaps, expanding mental health service capacity, sustaining

the state's already impressive maternal mortality reduction trajectory, and accelerating progress toward replacement level fertility, are best understood not as isolated health sector concerns but as integral components of the broader human capital development agenda that underpins Rajasthan's Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 economic vision discussed throughout this framework. A workforce capable of realising the state's ambitious growth targets, discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, requires a healthy, adequately nourished, and appropriately sized population, making continued and, where possible, accelerated investment in the health system priorities identified in this chapter an economic as much as a social imperative for the state's policymakers over the coming decade.

CHAPTER 7: SOCIAL JUSTICE, INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY WELFARE

7.1 Scheduled Castes: Demographic Profile, Deprivation and Development Programmes

Rajasthan's Scheduled Caste population, recorded at approximately 1.22 crore, or 17.83 per cent of the state total, in the 2011 Census, represents one of the larger Scheduled Caste populations among Indian states in absolute terms, spread across all forty one of the state's districts rather than concentrated in any single region (Rajasthan Population 2026, Census of India, 2026, discussed in Chapter 1). The state's affirmative action framework reserves 16 per cent of government jobs and educational institution seats specifically for Scheduled Caste candidates, part of a broader reservation architecture that, together with allocations for Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Extremely Backward Classes, and Economically Weaker Sections, totals 64 per cent of available positions, a figure that exceeds the fifty per cent ceiling historically associated with Indian reservation policy but which the state government has defended on the grounds that several other states have similarly crossed this threshold (Reservation Allocated to 163 Castes Across SC/ST/OBC Categories, The Mooknayak, 2024).

Within this framework, 59 distinct castes are currently recognised as eligible for Scheduled Caste reservation benefits in Rajasthan, following a formal identification process conducted through the state legislature, with the government confirming that orphaned children are also included within relevant reservation categories to ensure that the state's most vulnerable individuals are not excluded from affirmative action benefits on account of their family circumstances (Reservation Allocated to 163 Castes Across SC/ST/OBC Categories, The Mooknayak, 2024). Development programming for Scheduled Caste communities in Rajasthan operates through a combination of scholarship schemes for students, skill development initiatives coordinated with the state's broader employment policy discussed in Chapter 3, and targeted infrastructure investment in Scheduled Caste dominated settlements under the Special Component Plan and its successor budgetary allocation mechanisms.

Notwithstanding this policy architecture, Scheduled Caste households in Rajasthan continue to experience disproportionate representation among the state's multidimensional poor, consistent with the district level Multidimensional Poverty Index patterns discussed in Chapter 1, where districts with higher Scheduled Caste population shares frequently overlap with districts recording higher overall deprivation. Strengthening the last mile delivery of Scheduled Caste specific welfare schemes, and ensuring that reservation policy translates into genuine occupational and educational mobility rather than concentration in the lowest tiers of reserved positions, remains an important ongoing priority for the state's Social Justice and Empowerment Department.

7.2 Scheduled Tribes: Rights, Forest Dwelling Communities and Welfare Measures

Rajasthan's Scheduled Tribe population, recorded at 92.39 lakh, or 13.48 per cent of the state total, in the 2011 Census, is concentrated heavily in the southern districts of Banswara,

Dungarpur, Udaipur, and Pratapgarh, an area often referred to as the Vagad and southern Aravalli tribal belt, discussed in the context of aspirational district identification in Chapter 1 (Rajasthan Population 2026, Census of India, 2026). The state currently recognises 12 distinct castes and communities under Scheduled Tribe reservation categories, with STs receiving a 12 per cent reservation in government employment and educational institutions (Reservation Allocated to 163 Castes Across SC/ST/OBC Categories, The Mooknayak, 2024). The Bhil and Meena communities constitute the state's principal tribal populations, alongside smaller Garasia communities, each maintaining distinct languages, customary governance structures, and artistic traditions that continue to shape development priorities in their home districts.

Forest dwelling rights within Rajasthan's tribal areas are governed by the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Recognition of Forest Rights Act of 2006, which grants individual and community forest rights to eligible tribal households, a particularly significant instrument in Rajasthan's southern tribal belt where dependence on forest resources for livelihood remains substantial. Implementation of this Act's provisions across the state's tribal districts, including the recognition of community forest resource rights that would allow tribal Gram Sabhas greater control over forest management decisions, connects directly to the broader discussion of forest cover and biodiversity conservation addressed in Chapter 13.

The Bishnoi community, while not formally classified as a Scheduled Tribe, maintains a distinctive centuries old tradition of ecological conservation rooted in religious practice, discussed in Chapter 1, and represents an important example of how indigenous ecological knowledge within Rajasthan's tribal and community traditions can inform the state's broader environmental governance strategy. Development interventions targeted at the state's Scheduled Tribe population, including the Tribal Sub-Plan budgetary allocation mechanism and dedicated recruitment streams for teachers and health workers in tribal sub-plan areas discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, must continue to be calibrated to the specific geographic, linguistic, and livelihood characteristics of this population, rather than treated as a uniform category alongside the state's Scheduled Caste population.

7.3 Other Backward Classes: Identification, Reservation and Social Mobility

Rajasthan's Other Backward Classes reservation framework currently allocates 21 per cent of government employment and educational institution seats to OBC candidates, with 92 distinct castes formally recognised as eligible for this reservation category following the state's identification process (Reservation Allocated to 163 Castes Across SC/ST/OBC Categories, The Mooknayak, 2024). This is supplemented by a separate 5 per cent reservation for what the state classifies as Extremely Backward Classes or Most Backward Classes, a sub-category carved out specifically to ensure that the most disadvantaged communities within the broader OBC category are not crowded out by better positioned OBC groups in the competition for reserved positions and educational seats (Rajasthan to Raise OBC Quota from 21 to 27%, The Statesman, 2023).

In 2023, the then state government announced its intention to raise the OBC reservation quota from 21 to 27 per cent, aligning it with the central government's OBC reservation ceiling, alongside a proposed OBC Commission survey specifically intended to identify the most backward castes within the broader OBC category for more precise, tiered reservation policy design (Rajasthan to Raise OBC Quota from 21 to 27%, *The Statesman*, 2023). Implementation of this proposed increase has proceeded cautiously, reflecting the well established legal and political sensitivities surrounding reservation quota increases in India, where courts have periodically struck down state level reservation policies that exceed the fifty per cent ceiling established by the Supreme Court, notwithstanding several states, including Rajasthan itself, having already crossed that threshold through their combined SC, ST, OBC, EBC, and EWS allocations.

The application of the OBC creamy layer exclusion, which disqualifies economically and socially advanced individuals within OBC communities from reservation benefits, represents an important, if administratively complex, mechanism intended to ensure that reservation benefits reach the genuinely disadvantaged members of these communities rather than being captured disproportionately by their more prosperous members. Strengthening the administrative infrastructure required to apply this creamy layer test accurately and consistently across Rajasthan's 92 recognised OBC castes remains an important, if technically unglamorous, priority for the effective functioning of the state's reservation policy.

7.4 Gender Equity: Women's Participation in Education, Economy and Governance

Rajasthan has recorded meaningful, if still incomplete, progress toward gender equity across education, economic participation, and local governance. The state's Female Labour Force Participation Rate of 47.8 per cent as of 2022-23 exceeded the corresponding national average, discussed in Chapter 3, indicating comparatively strong female economic engagement even as the state's overall unemployment rate remains elevated relative to national figures (A Macro and Fiscal Landscape of the State of Rajasthan, NITI Aayog, 2025). In local governance, Rajasthan is among twenty Indian states, alongside Bihar, Kerala, and Maharashtra, that have enacted fifty per cent reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, exceeding the constitutionally mandated minimum of one third reservation established under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (Outcome of Women's Reservation in Panchayati Raj, *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 2024).

This expanded political reservation builds on an influential body of research specific to Rajasthan itself. A widely cited 2004 study by economists Esther Duflo and Raghavendra Chattopadhyay, examining panchayats in West Bengal and Rajasthan, found that women leaders elected under reservation provisions invested more heavily in public goods relevant to women's daily lives and increased women's overall participation in panchayat meetings, providing empirical support for the broader policy case for gender based political reservation (Women Reservation in Local Government, Shankar IAS Parliament, 2023). Rajasthan has further strengthened women's grassroots political engagement through the introduction of dedicated mahila, or women's, gram sabhas, alongside Karnataka, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh, intended to create a more comfortable and effective forum for

women's participation in village level decision making than mixed gender gram sabhas sometimes provide (Elected Women Representatives in Local Rural Governments in India, Observer Research Foundation, 2024).

Despite these governance gains, gender gaps persist in higher education enrolment and digital access, discussed in Chapter 5, and in the state's child sex ratio of 888 girls per 1,000 boys, discussed in Chapter 1, both of which indicate that formal political reservation, while valuable, has not yet fully translated into equitable outcomes across all dimensions of women's and girls' lives in the state. Continued investment in girls' education, safe transportation, and economic opportunity, alongside sustained political reservation, remains essential to closing these residual gaps.

7.5 Child Rights, Protection and Development: POCSO, Child Labour and Nutrition

Child protection in Rajasthan operates within the national legal framework established by the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act of 2012, commonly referenced as POCSO, and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, implemented through the state's Department of Women and Child Development in coordination with District Child Protection Units established under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme. Given the National Family Health Survey's finding, discussed in Chapter 6, that child undernutrition in Rajasthan remains disproportionately concentrated among rural children, children of higher birth order, and children from Scheduled Tribe communities, child protection and child nutrition programming in the state are closely intertwined, since chronic undernutrition itself constitutes a significant, if less visible, form of child rights deprivation.

Child labour risk in Rajasthan remains elevated in specific sectors and regions, particularly in the state's traditional craft and handicraft clusters discussed in Chapter 4, its stone mining and quarrying operations, and its agricultural sector during peak harvest seasons, where economic pressure on poor rural households can create incentives for withdrawing children from school for labour, notwithstanding the state's comparatively favourable school retention figures for Classes VIII to X discussed in Chapter 5. Continued enforcement of the Right to Education Act's compulsory schooling provisions, combined with targeted household income support through schemes such as the state's social security pension architecture discussed in section 7.9, represents the most effective available policy combination for reducing the economic pressures that drive child labour in vulnerable households.

Adolescent girls in Rajasthan face particular protection concerns related to early marriage, with the Annual Health Survey finding, discussed in Chapter 6, that 38.6 per cent of women aged 15 to 19 in the state were already mothers or pregnant, a pattern closely linked to child marriage practices notwithstanding the legal minimum marriage age of eighteen for women under Indian law. Strengthening enforcement of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, alongside continued investment in girls' secondary and higher education access discussed in Chapter 5, remains central to the state's broader child protection and adolescent development strategy.

7.6 Welfare of Elderly Persons: Pension, Care Infrastructure and Policy

Rajasthan's principal instrument for elderly welfare is the Mukhyamantri Vridhjan Samman Pension Yojana, delivered through the unified Rajasthan Social Security Pension portal established by the Social Justice and Empowerment Department in 2017, which provides monthly financial assistance to senior citizens meeting age and income eligibility criteria, specifically women aged 55 years and above and men aged 58 years and above, subject to an annual family income ceiling of Rs 48,000 for most categories (RajSSP Pension Scheme, PolicyBazaar, 2026). This scheme forms part of a broader Rajasthan Social Security Pension framework that, as of 2026, serves over 91 lakh registered beneficiaries across its elderly, widow, disability, and farmer pension categories combined, with the state's monthly pension amount raised progressively from Rs 1,000 in earlier years to Rs 1,450 following the government's 2026 annual budget announcement (Rajasthan Pension Scheme 2026, Series Nexa, 2026).

This pension architecture operates in coordination with the central government's National Social Assistance Programme, including the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, ensuring that eligible elderly beneficiaries in Rajasthan receive combined state and central government support rather than being limited to state resources alone (Rajasthan Social Security Pension Scheme, IndiaFilings, 2026). Direct Benefit Transfer disbursement of these pensions, linked to beneficiaries' Jan Aadhaar identification, has substantially improved the transparency and timeliness of pension delivery relative to the state's earlier, more manual disbursement processes, reducing the administrative burden on elderly beneficiaries who might otherwise struggle to navigate complex bureaucratic verification requirements.

Beyond direct financial assistance, elderly care infrastructure in Rajasthan, including old age homes, day care centres, and geriatric healthcare services integrated within the state's broader public health system discussed in Chapter 6, remains comparatively underdeveloped relative to the scale of the state's elderly population and its projected growth as Rajasthan's demographic profile gradually ages over the coming decades, notwithstanding the state's currently youthful population structure discussed in Chapter 1. Expanding this care infrastructure, particularly in rural areas where family based elderly care networks are increasingly strained by working age out-migration, represents an important medium-term priority for the state's elderly welfare policy.

7.7 Persons with Disabilities: Rights, Accessibility and Empowerment

Persons with disabilities in Rajasthan are entitled to protections and benefits under the national Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016, whose implementation within the state has been the subject of a dedicated performance audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General's Accountant General office in Jaipur, reflecting continued institutional attention to the gap between the Act's statutory provisions and their practical implementation on the ground (Home, Accountant General Audit-I Rajasthan, 2025). At the state level, financial support for persons with disabilities is delivered through the Mukhyamantri Vishesh Yogyajan Samman Pension Yojana, which provides a monthly pension to individuals with 40

per cent or more certified disability, including specific provision for persons with dwarfism, transgender persons, and those affected by leprosy or silicosis, at an income eligibility ceiling of Rs 60,000 annually, somewhat higher than the ceiling applied to the state's other social security pension categories in recognition of the additional costs disability often imposes on household budgets (Rajasthan Pension Scheme 2026, Series Nexa, 2026).

This state level disability pension operates alongside the central government's Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme, which specifically covers adults with 80 per cent or more certified disability, providing a layered support structure similar to that described for elderly and widow pension beneficiaries in sections 7.6 and 7.9 (RajSSP, Complete Guide, Rajssp.net, 2026). Recruitment of special education teachers within the state's government school system, discussed in Chapter 5, provides a further, education specific dimension of the state's disability inclusion policy, complemented by ongoing efforts to improve physical accessibility of public buildings, transport infrastructure, and digital government services under the national Accessible India Campaign framework.

Notwithstanding this policy architecture, persons with disabilities in Rajasthan continue to face significant accessibility barriers across public infrastructure, transport, and employment, particularly in the state's rural and more remote districts where specialised services and assistive technology remain scarce. Strengthening both the financial support and the physical and digital accessibility dimensions of disability inclusion policy, guided by the findings of the Comptroller and Auditor General's ongoing audit attention to this area, represents an important unfinished priority for the state's disability rights framework.

7.8 Minority Communities: Development, Representation and Welfare

Rajasthan's religious minority communities, comprising 9.07 per cent Muslim, 1.27 per cent Sikh, 0.91 per cent Jain, and 0.14 per cent Christian populations as per the 2011 Census, discussed in Chapter 1, are supported through the state's Minority Affairs Department, which administers scholarship programmes, skill development initiatives, and infrastructure development schemes targeted specifically at minority concentration areas, in line with the broader national Minorities Scheme framework tracked by state welfare statistics agencies (Social and Welfare Schemes, Indiatat, 2026). The state's Muslim population, concentrated in pockets across the state with particular density in border districts such as Jaisalmer and Barmer, includes distinct communities such as the Sindhi Muslims, whose craft and cultural traditions tied to historic trade routes with Sindh were discussed in Chapter 1.

The state's Jain community, though numerically small, retains disproportionate influence on Rajasthan's mercantile, architectural, and philanthropic traditions, and continues to play a significant role in the state's private charitable and educational institution landscape, complementing rather than substituting for direct government minority welfare programming. Educational support for minority students in Rajasthan is delivered through pre-matric and post-matric scholarship schemes aligned with the central government's minority scholarship architecture, alongside continued modernisation support for madrasa education intended to integrate mainstream subjects such as science and mathematics alongside religious

instruction, a policy approach pursued in various forms across most Indian states with significant Muslim populations.

Political and administrative representation of minority communities within Rajasthan's governance structures, while not subject to the same formalised reservation mechanisms applied to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, remains an area of continued civil society and policy attention, particularly regarding representation within the state's higher administrative services and elected bodies relative to the minority population's overall demographic share. Strengthening both economic and educational outcomes for the state's minority communities, while ensuring continued communal harmony across Rajasthan's religiously diverse population, remains an important, if often under-examined, dimension of the state's broader social justice agenda.

7.9 Social Security and Beneficiary-Linked Welfare Architecture

Rajasthan's social security architecture has been substantially unified and modernised through the Rajasthan Social Security Pension portal, launched in 2017 by the Social Justice and Empowerment Department, which now serves as the single digital gateway through which the state's elderly, widow, disability, and small and marginal farmer pension schemes are administered, collectively reaching over 91 lakh registered beneficiaries as of 2026 (RajSSP, Complete Guide, Rajssp.net, 2026). This consolidation of previously fragmented, scheme specific welfare delivery mechanisms into a single Jan Aadhaar linked, Direct Benefit Transfer enabled platform represents a significant administrative modernisation achievement, reducing both the transaction costs borne by beneficiaries in accessing multiple separate schemes and the administrative overhead previously required to manage them as distinct programmes.

Beyond the core social security pension architecture, this beneficiary linked welfare system extends to the Ayushman Bharat-Mukhyamantri Rajasthan General Health Insurance Yojana discussed in Chapter 6, the Indira Rasoi Yojana subsidised meal scheme discussed in Chapter 3, and the state's employment and gig worker welfare funds discussed in Chapter 3, all of which increasingly rely on the same underlying Jan Aadhaar digital identity infrastructure to verify eligibility and disburse benefits, creating an increasingly integrated welfare delivery architecture across what were previously siloed departmental schemes. This integration connects directly to the broader digital governance and citizen service delivery discussion in Chapter 16.

The continued expansion and refinement of this beneficiary linked welfare architecture, including planned artificial intelligence based eligibility matching intended to proactively identify and enrol eligible citizens who may not have applied for benefits they qualify for, represents an important frontier for Rajasthan's social justice and inclusion strategy going forward (RajSSP Rajasthan 2025, A Complete Guide, 2026). Ensuring that this technological modernisation does not inadvertently exclude the state's most vulnerable and least digitally literate citizens, who may lack the documentation, digital access, or administrative familiarity required to navigate even a well designed digital welfare portal, remains an essential design

consideration as the state continues to build out this architecture, a theme this framework returns to in the discussion of digital public infrastructure and citizen service delivery in Chapter 16.

CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY INFRASTRUCTURE

8.1 Road Network: National Highways, State Highways and Rural Roads

Rajasthan possesses one of the most extensive road networks among Indian states, a necessity given its status as the country's largest state by area, discussed in Chapter 1. As of March 2024, the state's total road network spanned approximately 3,17,121 kilometres, encompassing national highways, state highways, major district roads, and rural roads, with the network's total length maintained by the state's Public Works Department alone exceeding 2,01,064 kilometres (Road Network in Rajasthan, Connect Civils, 2025; As of March 2024, Total Road Network Length, Testbook, 2026). The state's national highway network comprises 48 highways covering 10,618 kilometres as of March 2022, more recently recorded at 10,706 kilometres by March 2024, positioning Rajasthan third among Indian states by national highway length behind only Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh (List of State Highways in Rajasthan, Wikipedia, 2026; Length of National Highways: Rajasthan, CEIC, 2024). National Highway 48, formerly designated NH8, connecting Ajmer, Jaipur, Udaipur, and Chittorgarh, remains the state's most significant highway corridor and among the oldest multi-lane highways in the country.

State highways add a further 17,238 kilometres to this network, spanning 170 distinct routes as of March 2022, and administered under the legal framework established by the Rajasthan State Highways Act of 2014, which provides for the declaration, development, and regulation of the state's highway system (List of State Highways in Rajasthan, Wikipedia, 2026). Rajasthan holds the distinction of being the first Indian state to announce a dedicated State Road Policy, introduced in 1994, which pioneered private sector participation in the state's road sector and placed particular emphasis on connecting places of religious and tourism significance, as well as railway stations, to the broader highway network (Road Network in Rajasthan, Connect Civils, 2025). As of March 2019, the state's overall road density stood at 77.21 kilometres per 100 square kilometres of area, a figure that, while below the density achieved by smaller and more compact Indian states, represents a substantial achievement given Rajasthan's unusually large and predominantly arid geography.

Rural road connectivity, delivered substantially through the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, remains critical to Rajasthan's development given the state's dispersed rural settlement pattern of 44,672 villages discussed in Chapter 1. The state's 2025-26 capital expenditure allocation of Rs 14,016 crore for roads and bridges, discussed in Chapter 2, reflects the government's continued prioritisation of this connectivity infrastructure, particularly given the direct link between rural road access and the agricultural marketing and value chain improvements discussed in Chapter 18. Road safety remains an area of continued policy attention, with the state recording 13.80 persons killed and 27.66 injured per 100,000 population in road accidents as per 2022 National Crime Records Bureau data, discussed in Chapter 6, underscoring the need for continued investment in road engineering standards, signage, and enforcement alongside the network's ongoing physical expansion.

8.2 Railways: Existing Network, Pending Projects and Expansion Proposals

Rajasthan's railway network forms an integral part of Indian Railways' broader system, itself the fourth largest railway network in the world at over 70,000 route kilometres nationally, and has benefited substantially from recent central government investment in station redevelopment, electrification, and high-speed rail connectivity (Railway Networks of India, KnowIndia.net, 2026). The state's most significant recent railway milestone was the May 2025 inauguration of redeveloped railway stations and associated rail, electrification, solar power, and highway upgrade projects worth Rs 26,000 crore across Rajasthan, discussed in Chapter 4, representing one of the largest single railway investment packages the state has received in recent years (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026).

Passenger connectivity within the state has been substantially enhanced through the introduction of Vande Bharat Express services, with the Jaipur-Udaipur and Jaipur-Jodhpur routes launched in October 2025, connecting the state's four principal tourism and commercial centres with significantly reduced travel times compared to conventional express services, directly supporting the tourism circuit development discussed in Chapter 3 (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026). Border area rail connectivity has also received renewed central government attention, with three key railway projects specifically targeting Rajasthan's border regions reported to be under active development as of early 2026, reflecting both the state's strategic significance along the India-Pakistan frontier discussed in Chapter 1 and the broader national programme of railway network upgrading targeting Rs 5.4 lakh crore in investment by 2030, including full electrification of the national railway network (Future of Rail Transport in India, Wikipedia, 2026).

Freight connectivity through Rajasthan has been transformed by the completion in 2026 of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor, spanning 1,504 kilometres from Jawaharlal Nehru Port near Mumbai to Ludhiana in Punjab and passing directly through the state, discussed in the context of the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor in Chapters 3 and 4 (Railway Networks of India, KnowIndia.net, 2026). This dedicated freight infrastructure, separating freight movement from the passenger rail network that has historically shared track capacity on the Mumbai-Delhi and Delhi-Howrah trunk routes, offers substantial additional freight capacity directly benefiting Rajasthan's mineral, cement, and manufactured goods export flows discussed in Chapter 3, and represents one of the more transformative pieces of transport infrastructure supporting the state's industrial corridor strategy.

8.3 Aviation: Airport Infrastructure and Air Connectivity

Rajasthan's aviation infrastructure has expanded meaningfully in recent years, anchored by Jaipur International Airport as the state's principal aviation gateway, alongside operational airports at Jodhpur, Udaipur, Bikaner, and Kota serving both domestic passenger and, in Jodhpur's case, limited international charter traffic. The most significant recent development in the state's aviation infrastructure is the Union Cabinet's approval in October 2025 of a new

airport at Kota-Bundi, involving an investment of Rs 9,814 crore, intended to enhance air connectivity for southern Rajasthan and support the region's industrial and tourism development ambitions discussed in Chapters 4 and 19 (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026).

This new airport development reflects a broader national pattern of regional airport expansion under the UDAN regional connectivity scheme, which has sought to extend air travel access beyond India's major metropolitan gateways to smaller cities and towns, a particularly relevant policy for a state as geographically large and dispersed as Rajasthan, where road and rail travel times between the state's more remote districts and its major economic centres can be substantial. Expanding regional air connectivity within Rajasthan itself, linking secondary cities such as Bikaner, Jaisalmer, and the state's southern tribal belt districts to the primary Jaipur and Udaipur hubs, remains an important complement to the state's inter-state and international connectivity ambitions.

International connectivity, while more limited than at India's major metropolitan airports, has grown incrementally through expanded charter and select scheduled international services from Jaipur and Udaipur, supporting the state's substantial international tourism inflows discussed in Chapter 19. As the state's Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 economic vision, discussed throughout this framework, seeks to attract greater foreign direct investment and establish Rajasthan as a genuine hub for defence manufacturing, business services, and advanced industry, discussed in Chapter 4, continued expansion of direct international air connectivity from Jaipur will represent an increasingly important complement to the state's broader industrial and investment promotion strategy.

8.4 Ports, Inland Waterways and Logistics Hubs

Rajasthan's landlocked geography, sharing no coastline with the Arabian Sea or any other maritime boundary, means the state has no direct port infrastructure of its own, distinguishing its logistics strategy fundamentally from that of coastal states such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, or Tamil Nadu. Instead, the state's export and import logistics depend substantially on inland connectivity to India's major western seaports, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru Port and Mundra Port in Gujarat, a dependency that underscores the strategic importance of the state's rail and road linkages to these ports, discussed in sections 8.1 and 8.2, and of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor's direct connection between Jawaharlal Nehru Port and the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor's Rajasthan nodes discussed in Chapter 4.

In the absence of maritime port infrastructure, Rajasthan has instead prioritised the development of inland logistics hubs, sometimes termed dry ports or inland container depots, which allow exporters and importers within the state to complete customs clearance and container handling procedures without needing to physically transport goods to a coastal facility for these purposes. Multi-modal logistics parks under development at Ajmer, Kishangarh, and Jaipur, incorporating rail-road connectivity and cold chain infrastructure, discussed in Chapter 4, represent the state's principal instruments for building this inland

logistics capacity, intended to support both the state's agricultural export ambitions, discussed in Chapter 18, and its broader industrial and manufacturing export strategy.

Inland waterway infrastructure within Rajasthan remains minimal, consistent with the state's limited river systems and predominantly arid geography discussed in Chapter 1, meaning that the state's freight logistics strategy is necessarily built around road, rail, and inland logistics hub infrastructure rather than any meaningful waterway component, in contrast to states with substantial navigable river systems. This concentration of logistics investment in dry ports and multi-modal parks, rather than diffuse investment across multiple transport modes, represents a pragmatic adaptation to Rajasthan's specific geographic constraints, and connects directly to the broader multimodal logistics discussion in section 8.6.

8.5 Urban Mass Transit: Metro, Bus Rapid Transit and Integrated Mobility

Jaipur Metro represents Rajasthan's flagship urban mass transit investment and the state's only operational rapid transit rail system to date. The system's first phase, comprising the Pink Line's East-West corridor from Mansarovar to Badi Chaupar, spans 11.64 kilometres across 11 stations and currently records average daily ridership of approximately 60,000 passengers, having entered commercial service in stages between June 2015 and September 2020 (Cabinet Approves Jaipur Metro Project Phase-2, Prime Minister of India, 2026). The Jaipur Metro holds the distinction of being the first metro system in India to operate on a triple-storey elevated road and metro track structure, reflecting an innovative engineering response to the space constraints of operating rapid transit infrastructure within Jaipur's historic urban fabric, discussed in Chapter 1 (Jaipur Metro, Wikipedia, 2026).

The Union Cabinet's approval of Jaipur Metro Phase 2 represents a transformative expansion of the state's urban mass transit ambitions, comprising a 41 kilometre North-South corridor from Prahladpura to Todi Mod with 36 stations, at a total project cost of Rs 13,037.66 crore, to be implemented by the Rajasthan Metro Rail Corporation Limited, a 50:50 joint venture between the Government of India and the Government of Rajasthan, with completion targeted for September 2031 (Cabinet Approves Jaipur Metro Project Phase-2, Prime Minister of India, 2026). This expanded corridor will provide direct connectivity to major activity nodes including the Sitapura Industrial Area, Vishwakarma Industrial Area, Jaipur Airport, Tonk Road, and the SMS Hospital and Stadium precinct, integrating with the operational Phase 1 line through planned interchanges to create a unified metro network across the state capital, explicitly aligned with the state's Transit Oriented Development Policy of 2025 and proposed Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority reforms.

Beyond Jaipur, urban mass transit development within Rajasthan's other major cities, including Jodhpur, Udaipur, and Kota, remains at a considerably earlier stage, relying predominantly on conventional city bus services operated by the Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation and private operators rather than dedicated rapid transit infrastructure. As these secondary cities continue to grow in line with the state's overall urbanisation trends discussed in Chapters 1 and 11, extending integrated mobility planning, potentially including Bus Rapid Transit corridors as a lower capital cost complement to Jaipur's metro investment,

represents an important consideration for the state's broader urban development strategy discussed in Chapter 11.

8.6 Multimodal Logistics: Last-Mile Connectivity and Freight Corridors

Rajasthan's multimodal logistics strategy centres on integrating the state's road, rail, and inland logistics hub infrastructure discussed throughout this chapter into a coherent system capable of supporting the state's ambitious industrial and export growth targets discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. The multi-modal logistics parks under development at Ajmer, Kishangarh, and Jaipur represent the physical anchors of this strategy, designed to allow seamless transfer of freight between road and rail transport modes while incorporating cold chain infrastructure specifically intended to support the state's agricultural export ambitions discussed in Chapter 18, reducing the substantial post-harvest losses that inadequate cold chain infrastructure has historically imposed on Indian agricultural supply chains.

The completion of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor in 2026, discussed in section 8.2, fundamentally reshapes the strategic logic of Rajasthan's multimodal logistics planning, since the corridor's direct connection between Jawaharlal Nehru Port and the state's Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor investment nodes at Khushkhera-Bhiwadi-Neemrana and Jodhpur-Pali-Marwar, discussed in Chapter 4, creates a genuinely competitive freight transit time and cost proposition for manufacturers locating within these industrial nodes relative to alternative locations elsewhere in northern India. Ensuring that the state's road network and inland logistics hub infrastructure provide efficient last-mile connectivity between these industrial nodes and the dedicated freight corridor's rail terminals represents an essential complementary investment priority, since the corridor's benefits will only be fully realised if goods can move efficiently between factory floor and freight terminal without being bottlenecked by inadequate local road infrastructure.

Looking forward, the integration of Rajasthan's multimodal logistics infrastructure with the state's expanding renewable energy sector, discussed in Chapter 9, through dedicated freight capacity for solar and wind equipment components, and with its mining sector, discussed in Chapter 4, through dedicated mineral freight corridors connecting quarrying areas to processing facilities and export terminals, represents a further frontier for the state's logistics planning. Developing this integrated, multimodal freight and logistics architecture, spanning road, rail, dedicated freight corridor, and inland logistics hub infrastructure, will be essential to translating the substantial industrial and investment commitments discussed throughout Chapters 3 and 4 into the efficient, cost competitive supply chains that Rajasthan's Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 economic ambitions ultimately require.

CHAPTER 9: ENERGY, POWER AND RENEWABLE TRANSITION

9.1 Power Generation: Installed Capacity, Mix and Dependence Profile

Rajasthan's power generation capacity has expanded substantially over the past decade, with total installed capacity across central, state, and private sector utilities reaching 56,494 megawatts as of August 2025, of which renewable sources account for more than 31,500 megawatts, discussed in Chapter 1 (Rajasthan State Presentation Report, IBEF, 2025). This represents a fundamental transformation from the state's historical generation profile, in which thermal power, drawing substantially on the state's own lignite reserves and imported coal, constituted the overwhelming majority of installed capacity, with cumulative solar installed capacity standing at only approximately 3 gigawatts as recently as December 2018 (Rajasthan Amends Regulations to Determine Tariffs for Solar and Wind Projects, Mercom India, 2019). The pace of renewable capacity addition since that period, roughly a tenfold increase in solar capacity alone within seven years, illustrates the scale of Rajasthan's energy transition and its emergence as a genuine national leader in renewable generation, discussed further in section 9.4.

This generation mix transformation has been achieved without abandoning the state's thermal generation base entirely, reflecting the continued need for dispatchable, weather independent generation capacity to complement the state's expanding but inherently variable solar and wind resources. Coal India Limited, the state owned national coal producer, has recently partnered with Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited, the state's power generation utility, to develop renewable energy projects paired with existing coal fired generation, with Coal India holding a 74 per cent stake in the resulting joint venture, an arrangement intended to leverage the diversification incentives facing traditional fossil fuel companies while providing the state with additional renewable capacity investment (Power Sector Transition in Rajasthan, Global Energy Monitor, 2026).

Rajasthan's generation profile is further shaped by a series of large scale, centrally coordinated projects reflecting the state's exceptional solar resource endowment. The Phalodi-Pokaran solar project, a 750 megawatt facility developed jointly by NTPC and the Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited, was under construction through 2025 and 2026, representing one of several major new generation additions planned for the state's western desert districts (Top 15 Solar Power Plants in India, Taypro, 2026). Private sector investment has similarly accelerated, exemplified by ACME Solar's Rs 1,100 crore financing arrangement with the State Bank of India for a 300 megawatt solar project within the state, discussed in Chapter 4, and by Tata Power's memorandum of understanding with the state government signed in late September 2024, reflecting continued private capital interest in Rajasthan's generation sector (Rajasthan State Presentation Report, IBEF, 2025; Power Sector Transition in Rajasthan, Global Energy Monitor, 2026).

9.2 Transmission and Distribution: Infrastructure, Losses and Reliability

Transmission infrastructure within Rajasthan is coordinated by Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Prasaran Nigam Limited, the state's transmission utility, which operates the intra-state grid connecting the state's generation clusters, concentrated heavily in the western desert districts discussed in section 9.4, to demand centres across the state's more populous eastern and central regions. This geographic mismatch between generation and demand, a defining feature of Rajasthan's power sector given its solar and wind resources are concentrated in the sparsely populated western desert while the bulk of the state's population and industrial demand is located in the Jaipur, Jodhpur, and eastern industrial corridors discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, requires continued and substantial investment in high capacity transmission infrastructure to avoid renewable generation curtailment during periods of peak output.

Distribution within Rajasthan is managed through a three DISCOM structure, comprising Jaipur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited, Ajmer Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited, and Jodhpur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited, each responsible for retail electricity distribution within its designated territory (Rajasthan Solar Policy 2026, SurgePV, 2026). The financial and technical performance of these DISCOMs has historically represented one of the more persistent structural weaknesses in the state's power sector, contributing to the legacy debt and contingent liability concerns discussed in Chapter 2. Aggregate Technical and Commercial losses across the state's distribution network, which had been reduced from 27 per cent in 2013 to approximately 21.29 per cent by the late 2010s, continued to exceed the 15 per cent target established under the state's 24x7 Power for All programme, indicating that while the state's DISCOMs achieved meaningful loss reduction, they had not yet reached the efficiency levels considered necessary for full financial sustainability (Powering Rajasthan, CSIS, 2019).

Reliability of supply has improved considerably alongside this loss reduction effort, supported by continued investment in feeder segregation, smart metering rollout, and grid modernisation under successive central government distribution sector reform schemes, including the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme discussed in Chapter 2. Continued reduction of Aggregate Technical and Commercial losses toward the levels achieved by India's better performing state DISCOMs remains an essential complement to the state's substantial generation capacity expansion, since additional generation investment delivers diminishing returns to consumers and to DISCOM finances alike if a large share of that generated power continues to be lost to technical inefficiency or non-payment before reaching paying customers.

9.3 Rural and Household Electrification: Coverage and Quality

Rajasthan achieved a significant milestone in rural electrification access, with the state's rate of electricity access rising from 71 per cent in 2015 to 100 per cent by 2019, achieved substantially through the central government's Saubhagya scheme, which provided free electricity connections to below poverty line households and connections at nominal cost to other unconnected households across the state's rural areas (Powering Rajasthan, CSIS,

2019). This achievement is particularly significant given the scale of the connectivity challenge Rajasthan faced, with 44,672 villages, discussed in Chapter 1, spread across the country's largest state by area, meaning that achieving universal household electrification required extending grid infrastructure across substantially greater distances per household connected than would be required in more compact and densely populated states.

Beyond the achievement of formal connection, ensuring the quality and reliability of electricity supply reaching rural households remains an ongoing priority, particularly for Rajasthan's substantial agricultural consumer base, given the state's historical practice of providing subsidised or free agricultural power supply, a policy that has contributed to the DISCOM financial stress discussed in section 9.2 even as it has supported the state's agricultural productivity discussed in Chapter 3. The state's DISCOMs announced measures in July 2018 to expedite the connection of farmers who lacked access to power, specifically intended to improve reliable power supply during the monsoon agricultural season, reflecting continued policy attention to the specific electricity needs of the state's substantial agricultural consumer base (Powering Rajasthan, CSIS, 2019).

The PM-KUSUM scheme, which promotes solarisation of agricultural feeders and standalone solar powered irrigation pumps, represents an increasingly important instrument for improving both the reliability and the sustainability of rural and agricultural electricity supply in Rajasthan, allowing farmers to access daytime solar power for irrigation without imposing additional peak demand burden on the conventional grid, discussed further in the regulatory context of section 9.6. Continued expansion of this decentralised, farm level solar generation, alongside conventional grid extension and reliability improvement, offers a particularly promising pathway for addressing the twin challenges of electrification quality and DISCOM financial sustainability in the state's rural and agricultural consumer segments.

9.4 Renewable Energy Potential: Solar, Wind, Hydro and Biomass

Rajasthan possesses what is widely regarded as India's most exceptional renewable energy resource endowment, with an estimated 20.3 per cent of India's entire renewable energy potential located within the state, reflecting its combination of exceptional solar irradiance, strong and consistent wind resources across its western districts, and vast tracts of low value, sparsely populated wasteland suitable for utility scale renewable development without significant competing land use pressure (Power Sector Transition in Rajasthan, Global Energy Monitor, 2026). The state records approximately 325 clear sunny days annually and average solar radiation of 6 to 7 kilowatt hours per square metre per day, among the highest levels of solar insolation recorded anywhere in India, consistently placing Rajasthan first nationally in solar irradiance rankings (Rajasthan Solar Policy 2026, SurgePV, 2026).

The Bhadla Solar Park, located in the Phalodi tehsil of Phalodi district in the heart of the Thar Desert, exemplifies this resource advantage, having grown to a total installed capacity of 2,245 megawatts across four development phases completed between 2015 and 2020, making it India's largest solar park and, at the time of its completion, the largest photovoltaic park in the world, financed through a combination of 775 million dollars from the Climate

Investment Fund and a further 1.4 billion dollars from other sources (Bhadla Solar Park, Wikipedia, 2026). The park has created approximately 10,000 direct and indirect jobs during its construction and operational phases, and avoids an estimated 4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions annually, representing a substantial contribution to both the state's and India's broader climate commitments discussed in Chapter 14 (Bhadla Solar Park, Wikipedia, 2026).

Rajasthan's wind energy potential is similarly exceptional, with the National Institute of Wind Energy estimating the state's total onshore wind potential at 18,770.49 megawatts at a 100 metre hub height, of which 15,414.91 megawatts sits on wasteland unsuited to competing agricultural or residential use, a further 3,342.62 megawatts on land that could alternatively be cultivated, and a marginal 12.96 megawatts on forest land, indicating that the overwhelming majority of the state's wind potential can be developed with minimal land use conflict (Power Sector Transition in Rajasthan, Global Energy Monitor, 2026). This wind potential, concentrated substantially in the Jaisalmer wind energy cluster alongside the Barmer solar and wind cluster, complements the state's solar resource by providing a partially uncorrelated generation profile, since wind generation in Rajasthan's western districts tends to peak during different periods than solar generation, offering some natural diversification benefit for the state's overall renewable generation portfolio. Hydro and biomass potential within Rajasthan remain comparatively modest given the state's limited river systems, discussed in Chapter 1, and its predominantly arid agro-climatic conditions, meaning that the state's renewable energy strategy is, and will likely remain, overwhelmingly weighted toward solar and wind development rather than these alternative renewable sources.

9.5 Energy Efficiency, Conservation and Demand-Side Management

Energy efficiency and demand-side management within Rajasthan operate substantially within the national policy architecture established through schemes such as the Perform, Achieve, and Trade mechanism for large industrial energy consumers and the UJALA programme for LED lighting distribution, complemented by state specific initiatives coordinated through the Rajasthan Renewable Energy Corporation Limited and the state's Energy Department. Given the scale of Rajasthan's ongoing industrial expansion, discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, ensuring that new industrial capacity, particularly in energy intensive sectors such as cement production discussed in Chapter 4, is developed with modern, energy efficient processes and equipment represents an important complement to the state's renewable generation capacity expansion, since efficiency gains reduce the absolute scale of generation capacity, whether renewable or thermal, that the state's economic growth will require.

Distributed rooftop solar, supported through the state's RESCO, or Renewable Energy Service Company, policy framework that allows third party ownership and power purchase agreement based models for commercial and industrial rooftop solar installation, represents an increasingly significant demand-side management tool, allowing consumers to reduce their reliance on grid supplied power during daylight hours when their own rooftop generation can meet a substantial share of demand (Rajasthan Solar Policy 2026, SurgePV,

2026). The Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission's revision of rooftop solar export tariffs in 2025, raising domestic net metering export remuneration to Rs 3.26 per kilowatt hour and net billing export remuneration to Rs 3.65 per kilowatt hour, representing an increase of roughly 20 to 25 per cent over the previous rates, has strengthened the economic proposition for household and small commercial rooftop solar adoption considerably (Rajasthan's New Rooftop Solar Tariff Policy 2025, Bluebird Solar, 2025).

Practical implementation challenges nonetheless persist in specific locations, with transformer capacity constraints in parts of urban Jaipur and Jodhpur having led DISCOMs to reduce approved rooftop solar system sizes in areas where high penetration of distributed solar has begun to strain existing local distribution infrastructure, a challenge not present in most of rural western Rajasthan where transformer capacity is typically not a binding constraint (Rajasthan Solar Policy 2026, SurgePV, 2026). Addressing this urban distribution infrastructure constraint, through targeted transformer capacity upgrades in the state's highest solar penetration urban areas, represents an important, if technically specific, priority for sustaining the continued growth of distributed rooftop solar as a demand-side management tool within the state's broader energy efficiency strategy.

9.6 State Electricity Regulatory Framework and Tariff Policy

The Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission serves as the state's independent power sector regulator, responsible for determining tariffs for generation, supply, transmission, and wheeling of electricity, regulating power purchase and procurement processes, facilitating intra-state transmission, issuing transmission and distribution licenses, promoting renewable generation and co-generation, and adjudicating sector disputes (Power Sector Transition in Rajasthan, Global Energy Monitor, 2026). The Commission's regulatory activity has intensified considerably alongside the state's rapid renewable capacity expansion, with recent tariff determinations, including a November 2025 order revising the tariff structure for PM-KUSUM Component-A solar projects following extensive hearings held across January, July, and September of 2025, illustrating the Commission's ongoing effort to balance the financial stability of the state's DISCOMs against the need to maintain adequate returns for renewable energy developers amid falling solar equipment costs (RERC Revises Tariff for PM-KUSUM Solar Projects, SolarQuarter, 2025).

Rajasthan's Renewable Purchase Obligation framework requires the state's DISCOMs and large consumers above a defined threshold, typically 1 megawatt of connected load, to source a specified percentage of their annual electricity consumption from renewable sources, with compliance achieved through a combination of distributed solar programmes such as PM Surya Ghar, direct renewable energy procurement, and the purchase of Renewable Energy Certificates from generators elsewhere in the state or country (Rajasthan Solar Policy 2026, SurgePV, 2026). This regulatory obligation, operating alongside the state's own Solar Energy Policy of 2019, which established the framework for solar park development, private sector power project development on both public and private land, and dedicated provisions supporting electric vehicle charging infrastructure development, together constitute the core policy architecture through which Rajasthan has translated its exceptional natural resource

endowment into the substantial installed renewable capacity documented throughout this chapter (Rajasthan Solar Energy Policy 2019, Government of Rajasthan, 2019).

Looking forward, the continued evolution of this regulatory and tariff framework, particularly regarding the treatment of energy storage, green hydrogen production discussed in the context of the state's investment strategy in Chapter 4, and further reduction of Aggregate Technical and Commercial losses discussed in section 9.2, will substantially determine whether Rajasthan's renewable energy leadership translates into a genuinely sustainable, financially sound power sector capable of supporting the state's broader Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 economic ambitions, rather than one where impressive installed capacity figures mask continued underlying DISCOM financial distress of the kind documented in this framework's fiscal analysis in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 10: WATER, SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

10.1 Drinking Water Supply: Coverage, Quality and Infrastructure

Rajasthan confronts arguably the most acute drinking water supply challenge of any major Indian state, a direct consequence of the arid and semi-arid geography discussed in Chapter 1, which leaves the state with sparse natural surface water resources relative to its population and geographic scale. Under the national Jal Jeevan Mission, which has connected rural households to piped tap water at an extraordinary national pace, rising from 16.71 per cent coverage in 2019 to over 81 per cent by October 2025, Rajasthan's own rural piped water coverage stood at 63 per cent, placing the state among the lower performing major states nationally, a shortfall specifically attributed to the compounding effects of desert conditions, groundwater depletion, and high salinity that together hinder the extension and long-term viability of piped network infrastructure across much of the state's western and central districts (Mapping India's Water Revolution, IndiaDataMap, 2026).

This coverage gap reflects genuine engineering and hydrogeological constraints rather than simple implementation delay. In Bothara village, a community meeting convened under the Jal Jeevan Mission's water security planning process revealed groundwater exploitation exceeding 103 per cent of the sustainable extraction rate, prompting the Village Water Security Committee to prepare a dedicated Water Security Plan built around a ridge-to-valley watershed management approach, including the construction of check dams and contour trenches (Jal Jeevan Mission, Press Information Bureau, 2025). This intervention raised the water level of a local open well by seventy feet within just ten days of the check dam's completion and increased the village's annual water storage capacity by 11.77 per cent, with the community itself contributing 5 per cent of the total cost of the recharge structures, illustrating both the severity of groundwater stress in parts of Rajasthan and the potential for locally led recharge interventions to meaningfully improve water security even in the state's most stressed catchments (Jal Jeevan Mission's Massive Leap, Organiser, 2026).

Water quality represents a further significant dimension of the state's drinking water challenge, with several districts in Rajasthan among the areas nationally identified as facing severe groundwater contamination issues, contributing to the 11,488 habitations recorded nationally as affected by water quality concerns as per recent official data (Can India Achieve Universal Safe Drinking Water by 2030, ABC Live, 2026). The extension of Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0, approved by the central government in March 2026 with a revised target of achieving universal rural tap water coverage by 2028, provides continued central financial support for Rajasthan's efforts to close this coverage and quality gap, though the state's specific groundwater depletion and salinity constraints mean that achieving universal coverage will likely require greater reliance on surface water transfer schemes, discussed in section 10.2, than on further groundwater based extraction (Jal Jeevan Mission, Wikipedia, 2026).

The tension between drinking water and irrigation demand for the state's limited surface water resources has become an increasingly prominent legal and policy issue. Rajasthan's High Court, hearing a Public Interest Litigation arguing that drinking water drawn from the Bisalpur Dam, the primary water source for Jaipur and several other major towns, should be prioritised over irrigation use, directed the state government in early 2025 to present a formal drinking water prioritisation policy within four weeks, with the court explicitly noting the delayed progress of the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project discussed in section 10.2 as a contributing factor to this underlying water allocation tension (Budget 2025-26, India Water Portal, 2025). This judicial intervention underscores the urgency of accelerating the state's major inter-basin water transfer infrastructure if Rajasthan is to avoid an increasingly zero-sum competition between drinking water and irrigation demand as both continue to grow alongside the state's population and agricultural output discussed in Chapters 1 and 3.

10.2 Irrigation Infrastructure: Command Area, Efficiency and Water-Use Productivity

Irrigation infrastructure in Rajasthan is anchored by two principal systems that together define the state's approach to overcoming its severe natural water scarcity. The Indira Gandhi Canal, discussed in Chapter 1, remains the single most transformative piece of irrigation infrastructure the state has ever developed, having converted substantial tracts of the western Thar Desert districts, including Sri Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Bikaner, and Jaisalmer, from marginal rain fed cultivation to comparatively productive irrigated agriculture, fundamentally reshaping the agricultural geography of the state's most arid region discussed in the context of agro-climatic zones in Chapter 1.

The Modified Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal-ERCP Link Project, discussed in the context of interstate regional cooperation in Chapter 4, represents the state's most significant current irrigation and drinking water infrastructure undertaking, merging the earlier Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal interlinking proposal with the state's own Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project following a formal memorandum of understanding between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh addressing water sharing, cost-benefit distribution, and water exchange arrangements between the two states. The project is designed to supply water to thirteen districts across eastern Rajasthan, spanning approximately 23.67 per cent of the state's geographical area and benefiting an estimated 41.13 per cent of its population, making it easily the most consequential water infrastructure project currently under development anywhere in the state (MP-Rajasthan MoU on PKC-ERCP Link Project, Drishti IAS, 2026). Notwithstanding this scale of ambition, the project's implementation has faced sustained delay, a fact explicitly noted by the Rajasthan High Court in its 2025 ruling on drinking water prioritisation discussed in section 10.1, underscoring the political and administrative complexity inherent in a project that requires sustained interstate cooperation, substantial capital investment, and complex engineering across thirteen districts.

Water use efficiency and productivity within Rajasthan's existing irrigation command areas remains an area of longstanding concern, with Finance Commission evaluation studies, discussed in the fiscal context of Chapter 2, specifically noting that the state has historically underpriced irrigation water relative to the scale of public investment in canal and dam

infrastructure, resulting in both revenue underperformance for the state exchequer and, plausibly, reduced incentive for farmers to adopt water efficient irrigation techniques such as drip and sprinkler systems (Commissioned by the Fifteenth Finance Commission, 2020). The national Jal Jeevan Mission's emphasis on integrating water security planning with micro-irrigation and crop diversification, intended to reduce farmer overreliance on groundwater in already stressed areas, discussed in the context of the Bothara village case study in section 10.1, offers one policy pathway through which Rajasthan could simultaneously improve both drinking water security and agricultural water use efficiency, treating the two as complementary rather than competing objectives within a unified watershed management framework, an approach that connects directly to the state's broader agricultural productivity ambitions discussed in Chapter 18.

10.3 Sanitation and Open Defecation Free Status: Post-ODF Sustainability

Rajasthan achieved formal Open Defecation Free status under the national Swachh Bharat Mission's rural sanitation component, consistent with the broader national achievement of ODF status across the great majority of rural India by the conclusion of the Mission's first phase. The state's sanitation policy focus has since shifted, in line with the national Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen Phase II framework, from the initial achievement of toilet construction and open defecation elimination toward the more demanding challenge of sustaining that status over time, commonly referred to as ODF Plus or ODF sustainability, which requires continued behaviour change reinforcement, functional toilet maintenance, and the integration of solid and liquid waste management infrastructure discussed in sections 10.4 and 10.5.

Sustaining ODF status in a state as geographically dispersed as Rajasthan, spread across 44,672 villages discussed in Chapter 1, presents distinctive challenges relative to more compact states, since behaviour change reinforcement and toilet infrastructure maintenance support must be extended across a correspondingly larger and more thinly spread rural settlement pattern. The state's water scarcity, discussed throughout this chapter, adds a further specific dimension to this sustainability challenge, since functional toilet use, particularly for water-dependent pour-flush toilet designs, depends on continued and reliable household water access, creating a direct interdependency between the drinking water coverage gaps discussed in section 10.1 and the state's ability to sustain its rural sanitation achievements over the medium to long term.

Urban sanitation within Rajasthan operates under the parallel Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban framework, which encompasses both individual and community toilet infrastructure and the broader solid waste management systems discussed in section 10.4. The state's rapid urbanisation, discussed in Chapter 1, with the urban population share having grown by 29.01 per cent during the 2001 to 2011 decade and continuing to rise, adds sustained pressure to urban sanitation infrastructure that must expand at a pace commensurate with the state's urban population growth if per capita service quality is not to deteriorate even as aggregate coverage figures continue to improve.

10.4 Solid Waste Management: Municipal, Biomedical and Hazardous Waste

Solid waste management within Rajasthan's Urban Local Bodies has been the subject of direct scrutiny by the Comptroller and Auditor General, whose Accountant General office in Jaipur has conducted a dedicated performance audit specifically examining solid waste management practices across the state's municipal bodies, alongside its broader programme of audits covering public health infrastructure, disability rights implementation, and illegal mining discussed in Chapter 2 (Home, Accountant General Audit-I Rajasthan, 2025). This sustained audit attention to municipal solid waste management reflects both the scale of the challenge, given Rajasthan's 297 towns and rapidly growing urban population discussed in Chapter 1, and the persistent gap between national Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban solid waste management targets and their practical implementation across the state's smaller and mid-sized municipal bodies, which typically possess considerably less technical and financial capacity than the state's major metropolitan corporations in Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Udaipur.

Biomedical waste management within the state has been supported through public-private partnership arrangements, with seven completed common bio-medical waste treatment facilities developed on a Design, Build, Own, Operate, and Transfer basis, discussed in the broader PPP context of Chapter 4 (Rajasthan PPP Infrastructure Projects Status, PPP in India Database, 2011). These centralised biomedical waste treatment facilities allow smaller healthcare facilities across the state, which would individually lack the scale to justify dedicated on-site treatment infrastructure, to safely dispose of medical waste through shared regional facilities, an approach that has proven more cost effective and environmentally sound than requiring every individual healthcare facility to develop independent treatment capacity.

Hazardous waste management in Rajasthan is shaped substantially by the state's significant mining and mineral processing sector, discussed in Chapter 4, given that cement, marble, and other mineral processing operations generate distinctive categories of industrial waste requiring specialised handling and disposal protocols under the state's Pollution Control Board oversight, discussed further in the context of pollution regulation in Chapter 13. Strengthening the technical and financial capacity of the state's smaller Urban Local Bodies to manage municipal solid waste effectively, informed by the specific findings of the Comptroller and Auditor General's dedicated performance audit, represents an important near-term priority for the state's Urban Development and Housing Department, connecting directly to the broader urban governance discussion in Chapter 11.

10.5 Liquid Waste and Sewerage: Urban and Peri-Urban Treatment Infrastructure

Sewerage and liquid waste treatment infrastructure within Rajasthan's urban centres lags considerably behind the state's progress on solid waste and rural sanitation, consistent with the broader national pattern in which India generates over 72,000 million litres per day of wastewater but treats only approximately 28 per cent of this volume before it is released into rivers, water bodies, or soil, contaminating an estimated 70 per cent of the country's surface water sources (Jal Jeevan Mission, Social Transformation via Universal Tap Water Access,

Dhyeya IAS, 2025). While comprehensive Rajasthan specific wastewater treatment coverage data is not consistently published at the state level, the national pattern of substantial untreated wastewater discharge carries particular significance for a water stressed state such as Rajasthan, since untreated sewage discharge into the state's already limited surface water bodies and groundwater recharge zones directly compounds the water quality and availability challenges discussed throughout this chapter.

Expanding sewerage treatment capacity within Rajasthan's major urban centres, particularly Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, and Udaipur, where population growth and industrial activity, discussed in Chapters 1, 3, and 4, continue to generate rising wastewater volumes, represents an essential complement to the state's broader water security strategy, since treated wastewater can, in principle, be recycled for non-potable uses including industrial process water and landscape irrigation, thereby reducing pressure on the state's scarce freshwater resources discussed in sections 10.1 and 10.2. The integration of sewerage and wastewater treatment planning with the state's broader urban development strategy, discussed in Chapter 11, and with its industrial corridor development, discussed in Chapter 4, offers a potentially significant opportunity to build water recycling directly into the design of the state's expanding industrial nodes at Khushkhera-Bhiwadi-Neemrana and Jodhpur-Pali-Marwar, rather than treating wastewater management as an afterthought to be addressed only once industrial and urban growth has already created significant pollution and water stress.

Peri-urban areas surrounding Rajasthan's rapidly growing cities present a particular sewerage infrastructure gap, since these transitional zones, often experiencing rapid unplanned residential and small-scale industrial growth, frequently fall outside the formal service boundaries of either urban Municipal Corporations or rural Panchayati Raj Institutions, creating an institutional gap in sewerage and liquid waste management responsibility that mirrors similar gaps documented in peri-urban areas across most of urban India. Addressing this institutional gap, potentially through expanded Urban Local Body service boundaries or dedicated peri-urban service delivery mechanisms, represents an important, if often overlooked, priority for ensuring that the sewerage and liquid waste treatment challenges discussed throughout this section do not simply relocate from the state's formal urban centres to its rapidly growing but institutionally under-served urban peripheries, a theme that connects directly to the broader discussion of urbanisation trends and governance architecture addressed in Chapter 11.

CHAPTER 11: URBAN DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING AND SMART CITIES

11.1 Urbanisation Trends and Urban Governance Architecture

Rajasthan's urban population, at approximately 24.87 per cent of the state total as discussed in Chapter 1, is concentrated overwhelmingly in Jaipur, the state's largest city at 30.46 lakh residents as per the state's own Economic Survey, in contrast to Banswara, the smallest of the state's officially designated cities at just 1.01 lakh residents, illustrating the considerable variation in urban scale across Rajasthan's 297 towns (Urbanisation and Urban Development, Rajasthan Economic Survey 2023-24, Shiksha Nagari, 2024). This urban population growth is driven substantially by rural to urban migration, with 32 lakh people recorded as having migrated from rural to urban areas within Rajasthan as per the 2011 Census, representing 4 per cent of India's total rural-urban migrant population, a pattern the same Census data shows follows distinct gendered drivers, with men migrating primarily in search of employment opportunities and women migrating primarily for reasons connected to marriage (Urbanisation and Urban Development, Rajasthan Economic Survey 2023-24, Shiksha Nagari, 2024).

Urban governance within Rajasthan is delivered through a multi-institutional architecture that has evolved considerably since independence, comprising five Urban Development Authorities, twelve Urban Improvement Trusts, the Rajasthan Housing Board, established as an autonomous body in February 1970 specifically to address the state's housing needs, and, more recently, the Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation, discussed in Chapter 8, reflecting the state's recognition that urban infrastructure delivery in its rapidly growing cities requires specialised institutional capacity beyond what conventional Municipal Corporations and Councils can provide alone (Urbanisation and Urban Development, Rajasthan Economic Survey 2023-24, Shiksha Nagari, 2024). This layered institutional structure, while providing valuable technical specialisation for specific urban development functions such as land development, housing delivery, and now metro rail operation, has also historically created coordination challenges between overlapping authorities operating within the same urban geography, a governance complexity that the state's proposed Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority reforms, discussed in the context of Jaipur Metro Phase 2 in Chapter 8, are specifically intended to address for the transport sector.

The pace and geographic concentration of Rajasthan's urbanisation, weighted heavily toward Jaipur and the state's industrialising eastern districts discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, means that urban governance capacity building must be calibrated differently across the state's urban hierarchy, with Jaipur requiring metropolitan scale institutional capacity comparable to India's other major state capitals, while the state's numerous smaller towns require a more modest but still meaningfully strengthened Municipal Council and Nagar Panchayat governance capacity to keep pace with even their more gradual population growth. Ensuring that this institutional strengthening extends beyond Jaipur and the state's four officially designated Smart Cities, discussed in section 11.4, to the broader tier of smaller and

mid-sized towns represents an important, if less visible, priority for the state's overall urban governance strategy.

11.2 Urban Local Bodies: Financial Health, Capacity and Service Delivery

The financial health of Rajasthan's Urban Local Bodies remains constrained by structural factors common to most Indian states, including limited own revenue generation capacity relative to service delivery obligations, and continued dependence on state and central government grants and devolution, discussed in the broader fiscal context of Chapter 2. The Sixth State Finance Commission's framework, also discussed in Chapter 2, has sought to address this constraint by establishing minimum property tax rate compliance and GIS based land record digitisation as explicit preconditions for continued central grant eligibility, with the Commission stipulating that non-compliant local bodies would forfeit further grant releases after March 2024, an approach intended to create direct financial incentives for Urban Local Bodies to strengthen their own revenue base rather than relying indefinitely on intergovernmental transfers (Sixth State Finance Commission, Government of Rajasthan, 2025).

This property tax and land record digitisation reform carries particular significance for Rajasthan's urban service delivery capacity, since reliable property tax revenue represents the single most important own-source revenue instrument available to Urban Local Bodies globally, and its historical underutilisation across most Indian cities, Rajasthan's included, has contributed directly to the chronic underfunding of basic municipal services including solid waste management, discussed in Chapter 10, urban road maintenance, and street lighting. The 16th Finance Commission's substantially increased national allocation for Urban Local Bodies, rising to Rs 3,56,257 crore over its award period compared to Rs 1,21,055 crore under the 15th Finance Commission, discussed in Chapter 2, provides an important additional resource base for Rajasthan's cities, though the ultimate effectiveness of this increased transfer will depend substantially on whether the state's Urban Local Bodies can simultaneously strengthen their own revenue mobilisation and administrative capacity to deploy these expanded resources effectively.

Service delivery capacity varies considerably across Rajasthan's Urban Local Body hierarchy, with Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, and Udaipur possessing meaningfully stronger technical and administrative capacity than the state's numerous smaller Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats, a pattern that mirrors the broader financial and institutional disparities discussed throughout this section. Strengthening this capacity gap, through targeted technical assistance, shared services arrangements between larger and smaller Urban Local Bodies, and continued digitisation of core municipal functions including property tax assessment and collection, represents an essential complement to the fiscal reforms discussed above if Rajasthan's urban service delivery quality is to improve broadly across the state's urban hierarchy rather than concentrating further in its already better resourced major cities.

11.3 Housing: Demand Assessment, Affordability and Flagship Schemes

Housing delivery in Rajasthan operates through a combination of the state's own Rajasthan Housing Board, established in 1970, and the central government's Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban, which provides subsidised housing finance and construction support for economically weaker and lower income urban households. The Rajasthan Housing Board has continued to innovate its housing delivery mechanisms in recent years, introducing initiatives such as the Wednesday Auction Festival scheme, which allows prospective homebuyers to purchase Board constructed housing through 156 monthly installments with discounts of up to 50 per cent available through an e-bidding process, and the Sajag mobile application, intended to ensure quality assurance and effective monitoring of housing construction across the Board's project portfolio (Urbanisation and Urban Development, Rajasthan Economic Survey 2023-24, Shiksha Nagari, 2024).

Housing affordability pressure within Rajasthan's major cities, particularly Jaipur, has intensified alongside the state's accelerating industrial and services sector growth discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, as rising formal sector employment draws increasing numbers of migrants into the state's urban centres, discussed in section 11.1, placing sustained upward pressure on housing demand relative to the pace of new affordable housing supply. This affordability challenge is particularly acute for the economically weaker and lower income segments that flagship schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban are specifically designed to serve, since these households typically have the least capacity to absorb rising land and construction costs without direct government subsidy support.

National assessments of India's broader Smart Cities Mission housing provisions have raised specific concerns relevant to Rajasthan's own experience, noting that while smart city proposals across the country prominently list housing provided for economically weaker and lower income groups, this provision has in most cases proven grossly insufficient relative to the existing housing shortage for these income segments, while city proposals have generally remained silent on the number of households displaced or evicted under various redevelopment schemes undertaken in parallel (Housing and Land Rights Network, India's Smart Cities, 2017). Ensuring that Rajasthan's own urban housing and redevelopment programming, discussed further in the smart cities context of section 11.4, does not replicate this pattern of prioritising visible new construction while inadequately accounting for displacement of existing low income residents represents an important equity consideration for the state's housing policy going forward.

11.4 Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT: State-Level Implementation Review

Rajasthan secured selection of four cities, Jaipur, Udaipur, Kota, and Ajmer, under the central government's Smart Cities Mission, launched in 2015 with the objective of developing model urban areas featuring core infrastructure, a clean and sustainable environment, and application of smart technological solutions, with a total investment plan of Rs 7,025 crore approved by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for the state's four selected cities (Smart City, Jaipur Development Authority, 2026). Each of Rajasthan's four Smart Cities

pursued a distinct thematic emphasis reflecting its particular urban character: Jaipur focused on leveraging technology for heritage preservation and infrastructure alongside citizen service delivery platforms; Udaipur prioritised revitalisation of its historic walled city area alongside green space development and real-time water monitoring systems to prevent leakage and ensure reliable supply; Kota, given its status as India's premier coaching and competitive examination preparation hub, emphasised sustainable environment and efficient waste management specifically tailored to its large transient student population; and Ajmer sought to blend modern infrastructure development with the preservation of its significance as a major religious pilgrimage centre (Smart Cities in Rajasthan, SquareYards, 2026).

Among Rajasthan's four participating cities, Udaipur achieved particular national recognition, ranking fifth among all 100 cities selected nationally under the Smart Cities Mission, reflecting the comparative success of its walled city revitalisation and water infrastructure modernisation initiatives (Smart Cities in Rajasthan, SquareYards, 2026). The national Smart Cities Mission concluded formally on 31 March 2025, having completed 7,479 of 8,058 tendered projects nationally, utilising Rs 1,500.05 billion of the total Rs 1,643.68 billion allocated across all participating cities, with the remaining projects permitted to continue toward completion despite the mission's formal closure (Smart Cities Mission, Wikipedia, 2026).

The complementary Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, restructured and relaunched on 1 October 2021, extends core infrastructure investment, encompassing water supply, sewerage and septage management discussed in Chapter 10, drainage, and green space development, across 500 cities nationally including a substantially broader set of Rajasthan's Urban Local Bodies beyond the four formally designated Smart Cities, with a specific state target of achieving universal Har Ghar Nal household tap connections across all of Rajasthan's urban bodies by 2025-26 (Urbanisation and Urban Development, Rajasthan Economic Survey 2023-24, Shiksha Nagari, 2024). National assessments of the broader Smart Cities Mission have raised legitimate concerns regarding ecological planning neglect, with instances of wetland encroachment and public commons degradation documented in some participating cities nationally, alongside coordination gaps between planned and delivered infrastructure, considerations that Rajasthan's urban planning authorities should weigh carefully as they extend smart infrastructure principles beyond the mission's four formally designated cities into the broader AMRUT programme.

11.5 Heritage Cities, Cultural Landscapes and Urban Tourism

Rajasthan's urban development strategy is inseparable from the preservation and promotion of its exceptional built heritage, discussed in Chapter 1, with Jaipur's inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2019, in recognition of its distinctive eighteenth century urban planning, placing the city among a select group of urban centres globally whose overall city plan, rather than merely individual monuments, is recognised as possessing outstanding universal cultural value. This heritage city status carries direct implications for Jaipur's urban development approach, requiring infrastructure investment, including the Jaipur Metro discussed in Chapter 8, to be designed with specific sensitivity to the preservation of the

city's historic walled core, a consideration reflected in the metro system's distinctive triple-storey elevated construction approach adopted specifically to minimise disruption to the historic urban fabric.

Udaipur's Smart City strategy, discussed in section 11.4, similarly centres its urban development approach around revitalisation of its historic walled city area, reflecting the broader pattern across Rajasthan's major heritage cities of treating cultural landscape preservation not as a constraint on urban development but as a central organising principle for it, given the direct economic value that heritage tourism, discussed in full in Chapter 19, contributes to these cities' local economies. This approach extends to public-private partnership arrangements discussed in Chapter 4, including the conversion of state owned Dak Bungalow properties across heritage cities including Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Alwar, and Bhilwara into hotel accommodation, and the restoration and conservation of heritage sites such as Tijara Fort in Alwar under similar PPP structures.

Balancing continued urban growth and modernisation, discussed throughout this chapter, with heritage preservation represents an ongoing and genuinely difficult policy challenge for Rajasthan's heritage cities, since the same population and economic growth pressures driving housing demand discussed in section 11.3 and infrastructure investment discussed throughout this framework inevitably create development pressure on historic urban cores that, left unmanaged, could erode the very heritage character that makes these cities economically and culturally significant in the first place. Continued investment in heritage sensitive urban planning frameworks, building on the approaches already adopted in Jaipur and Udaipur, represents an essential priority for ensuring that Rajasthan's remarkable urban heritage assets, discussed further in Chapter 19, are preserved for future generations even as the state's cities continue to grow and modernise.

11.6 Urban Poverty, Slum Rehabilitation and In-Situ Upgradation

Urban poverty in Rajasthan remains substantial, with slum dwellers recorded at 20.68 lakh persons as per the 2011 Census, constituting 12.13 per cent of the state's total urban population, a proportion that, while below the levels recorded in some of India's larger metropolitan centres, nonetheless represents a significant share of Rajasthan's urban population living in informal, often inadequately serviced settlements (Urbanisation and Urban Development, Rajasthan Economic Survey 2023-24, Shiksha Nagari, 2024). Given the continued rural-urban migration into the state's cities discussed in section 11.1, driven substantially by employment seeking migration into Rajasthan's expanding industrial and services economy discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, this slum population share carries important implications for the state's urban development strategy, since informal settlement growth typically continues, and can even accelerate, in cities experiencing rapid economic growth unless matched by a correspondingly rapid expansion of affordable formal housing supply, discussed in section 11.3.

National experience with slum rehabilitation under frameworks including the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban's In-Situ Slum Redevelopment component offers an important lesson for

Rajasthan's own approach to this challenge, since national assessments have found that the pursuit of officially stated goals of making cities slum-free has, in several documented cases across the country, been interpreted through repressive programming that has undermined rather than protected the housing rights of the urban poor, with instances of eviction and displacement recorded in cities pursuing aggressive slum clearance approaches under various redevelopment schemes (Housing and Land Rights Network, India's Smart Cities, 2017). Rajasthan's own urban poverty alleviation strategy would benefit from explicitly prioritising in-situ upgradation, which improves infrastructure and tenure security for existing slum residents in their current location, over displacement based slum clearance approaches, which frequently relocate the urban poor to peripheral areas with poor access to the employment opportunities that drew them into the city in the first place.

Integrating urban poverty alleviation more explicitly with the broader social security architecture discussed in Chapter 7, particularly the state's expanding beneficiary linked welfare system built around the Jan Aadhaar digital identity platform, offers a potentially valuable complement to physical slum upgradation investment, ensuring that Rajasthan's urban poor benefit not only from improved housing and infrastructure but also from continued access to the social security pension, health insurance, and employment support schemes discussed throughout this framework, regardless of the informal or formal status of their current place of residence. This integrated approach to urban poverty, combining physical infrastructure upgradation with continued social protection access, represents the most promising pathway for ensuring that Rajasthan's rapid urban and economic growth, discussed throughout this framework, translates into genuinely inclusive urban development rather than growth that simply displaces its most vulnerable urban residents to the margins of the state's expanding cities.

CHAPTER 12: RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND DECENTRALISED GOVERNANCE

12.1 Panchayati Raj Institutions: Structure, Devolution and Capacity

Rajasthan's rural governance operates through the constitutionally mandated three tier Panchayati Raj structure of Zila Parishads at the district level, Panchayat Samitis at the intermediate block level, and Gram Panchayats at the village level, spread across the state's 44,672 villages discussed in Chapter 1 (Rajasthan Population 2026, Census of India, 2026). This structure, established under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment's national framework for rural decentralisation, has been substantially strengthened in Rajasthan through the state's adoption of 50 per cent reservation for women across all tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions, discussed in Chapter 7, exceeding the constitutionally mandated minimum of one-third and placing Rajasthan among twenty Indian states that have taken this step (Outcome of Women's Reservation in Panchayati Raj, International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research, 2024).

The influential 2004 study by economists Esther Duflo and Raghavendra Chattopadhyay, examining panchayats specifically in West Bengal and Rajasthan, found that women leaders elected under reservation provisions invested more heavily in public goods relevant to women's daily needs and increased overall participation of women in panchayat meetings, discussed in Chapter 7, providing empirical grounding specific to Rajasthan's own experience for the broader case that gender inclusive local governance produces measurably different, and often more broadly beneficial, public investment outcomes (Women Reservation in Local Government, Shankar IAS Parliament, 2023). Rajasthan's introduction of dedicated mahila, or women's, gram sabhas further extends this gender inclusive governance architecture, providing a forum specifically intended to strengthen women's substantive rather than merely formal participation in village level decision making.

Fiscal devolution to Rajasthan's Panchayati Raj Institutions remains an area of ongoing negotiation between the state and central governments, with the state's Sixth State Finance Commission specifically identifying a substantial assessed shortfall between the revenue and expenditure needs of its Panchayati Raj Institutions, on the basis of which the state has requested a grant of Rs 37,958.79 crore from the 16th Finance Commission specifically for rural local bodies, discussed in the fiscal context of Chapter 2 (Sixth State Finance Commission, Government of Rajasthan, 2025). The extent to which this fiscal devolution request is met, alongside the 16th Finance Commission's substantially increased national allocation for Rural Local Bodies overall, rising to Rs 4,35,236 crore over its award period compared to Rs 2,36,805 crore under the 15th Finance Commission, will significantly shape the administrative and financial capacity available to Rajasthan's Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, and Zila Parishads to deliver the rural development functions discussed throughout this chapter.

12.2 VB-G RAM-G (Formerly MGNREGA): Coverage, Wage Trends and Livelihood Outcomes

Rural employment guarantee programming in Rajasthan has undergone its most significant structural transformation in two decades with the national transition from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act to the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission-Gramin, approved by the central government on 22 December 2025 and formally launched nationwide from 1 July 2026 (NREGA Job Card List 2026-27, Sarkariyojana, 2026). The new Act increases the annual employment guarantee from 100 to 125 days per rural household, introduces a 60 day no-work window specifically to prevent labour shortages during peak sowing and harvesting seasons, and reorients wage employment planning around four priority areas: water security, core rural infrastructure, livelihood assets, and climate resilience, with village level planning now organised through Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans rather than the previous scheme's more fragmented work sanctioning process (VB-G RAM G Guarantees 125 Days of Rural Employment, Social News XYZ, 2026).

Rajasthan's state level launch of the new scheme was conducted by Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma from the Masuda Agricultural Produce Market in Beawar district, with the state government allocating Rs 12,636 crore for the scheme in the 2026-27 financial year, described by the Chief Minister as the highest ever allocation for rural employment in the state's history (VB-G RAM G Guarantees 125 Days of Rural Employment, Social News XYZ, 2026). In announcing this transition, the state government specifically criticised the implementation record of the preceding MGNREGA scheme within Rajasthan, citing poor planning and weak monitoring mechanisms that had frequently resulted in temporary roads, incomplete water structures, and unplanned earthworks yielding little long-term benefit, alongside documented irregularities including fake and duplicate job cards, bogus beneficiaries, manipulated attendance records, and delayed wage payments, with social audits often proving ineffective or merely procedural (VB-G RAM G Guarantees 125 Days of Rural Employment, Social News XYZ, 2026).

The notified wage rate for unskilled manual labour under the new scheme in Rajasthan for the 2025-26 financial year stood at Rs 266 per day, applied uniformly across the state's districts and equally to male and female workers, with wages transferred directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts via Direct Benefit Transfer within fifteen days of muster roll closure, contingent on proper linkage between the beneficiary's Job Card, Aadhaar, and Rajasthan's own Jan Aadhaar identification system (NREGA Rajasthan 2026, MG-NREGA.com, 2026). Given the government's own stated diagnosis of implementation weaknesses under the previous scheme, the effectiveness of Rajasthan's transition to the new VB-G RAM-G framework will depend substantially on whether the state's monitoring, geo-tagging, and social audit mechanisms, building on tools such as GeoMGNREGA asset mapping, are meaningfully strengthened rather than simply carried over unchanged into the new programme architecture, connecting directly to the water security infrastructure priorities discussed in Chapter 10 and the community based participatory planning discussion in section 12.6.

12.3 Rural Housing: PMAY-Gramin and State Schemes

Rural housing delivery in Rajasthan operates substantially through the central government's Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin, which provides financial assistance for the construction of pucca houses to eligible below poverty line rural households identified through the Socio-Economic Caste Census framework, complemented by the state's own housing support mechanisms administered alongside the broader Rajasthan Social Security Pension architecture discussed in Chapter 7. As the state's rural employment guarantee scheme transitions to the new VB-G RAM-G framework discussed in section 12.2, state governments nationally, including Rajasthan, have been specifically directed to fast-track identification of eligible households under the new phase of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin to clear pending housing assistance cases without delay (NREGA Job Card List 2026-27, Sarkariyोजना, 2026).

Rural housing quality and durability remain closely connected to the water and sanitation infrastructure discussed in Chapter 10, since housing constructed under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin in Rajasthan's more remote and water stressed districts requires coordinated planning with the state's drinking water and toilet construction programming to ensure that newly constructed housing units are genuinely liveable rather than merely structurally complete. This coordination imperative is particularly significant in Rajasthan given the scale of the state's rural settlement dispersal across 44,672 villages, discussed throughout this framework, which means that rural housing delivery, water access, and sanitation infrastructure must frequently be planned and sequenced together at the individual village level rather than treated as entirely separate programme streams administered by different departments.

Women's ownership of housing assets constructed under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin represents a further significant policy dimension relevant to Rajasthan's broader gender equity agenda, discussed in Chapter 7, with the scheme's national guidelines specifically encouraging joint or sole ownership registration in the name of the female head of household wherever possible, an approach intended to strengthen women's asset ownership and, by extension, their household bargaining position and long-term economic security. Continued monitoring of the extent to which this joint or female ownership provision is actually implemented in practice across Rajasthan's rural housing beneficiary base, rather than defaulting to conventional male-headed household registration, represents an important, if administratively granular, priority for the state's rural housing programme.

12.4 Livelihood Promotion: SHGs, Cooperatives and Rural Enterprise

Rural livelihood promotion in Rajasthan operates substantially through the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission framework, implemented within the state through the Rajasthan Rural Livelihood Mission, commonly referenced as Rajeevika, which organises rural women into Self-Help Groups intended to build savings habits, provide access to affordable credit through bank linkage, and support small-scale rural enterprise

development. This Self-Help Group based approach to rural livelihood promotion aligns closely with the national mission's stated goal of mainstreaming gender considerations within rural development programming and strengthening the voice, choice, and agency of women, a theme the mission has pursued through targeted interventions including agri-nutrition garden promotion and livestock rearing initiatives intended to improve household dietary diversity alongside income generation (Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, 2023).

Given Rajasthan's substantial female labour force participation rate discussed in Chapter 3, and the state's continued gender gaps in higher education and formal employment access discussed in Chapters 5 and 7, Self-Help Group based livelihood promotion represents a particularly important complement to the state's broader gender equity strategy, since it provides an accessible entry point into income generating activity for rural women who may lack the formal educational qualifications or urban mobility required to access the formal sector employment opportunities discussed in Chapter 3. Cooperative institutions, including agricultural marketing cooperatives and dairy cooperatives connected to the state's substantial livestock sector discussed in Chapter 3, provide a further important institutional channel for rural livelihood promotion, particularly given Rajasthan's status as a leading milk producing state.

Integration of Self-Help Group members and rural cooperative institutions into the state's broader industrial and MSME value chains, discussed in Chapter 4, particularly the textile and handicraft clusters at Bhilwara, Pali, Bhiwadi, Barmer, and Jodhpur, offers a promising pathway for scaling rural livelihood promotion beyond microenterprise scale toward genuine integration with the state's expanding formal economy. Strengthening this connection between grassroots Self-Help Group enterprise and the state's larger industrial cluster and export strategy, rather than treating rural livelihood promotion and industrial policy as entirely separate domains, represents an important, if currently underdeveloped, opportunity for Rajasthan's rural development strategy.

12.5 Rural Infrastructure: PMGSY, Connectivity and Market Linkages

Rural road connectivity in Rajasthan, delivered substantially through the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, discussed in the broader road network context of Chapter 8, remains foundational to the effectiveness of nearly every other rural development programme discussed throughout this chapter, since reliable all-weather road access directly determines whether rural households can access markets for agricultural produce, reach healthcare facilities discussed in Chapter 6 in a timely manner, and access the employment and enterprise opportunities discussed in sections 12.2 and 12.4. Given Rajasthan's unusually dispersed rural settlement pattern across 44,672 villages spread over the country's largest state by area, discussed in Chapter 1, achieving comprehensive all-weather rural road connectivity represents a considerably larger undertaking in Rajasthan than in more geographically compact states.

The new VB-G RAM-G rural employment framework's explicit prioritisation of core rural infrastructure as one of its four central focus areas, discussed in section 12.2, creates an important potential synergy with the state's rural road connectivity programme, since employment guarantee funded labour can, where appropriately planned and technically supervised, contribute meaningfully to last-mile rural road maintenance and small-scale connectivity infrastructure that complements the larger scale, more technically demanding construction undertaken through the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana proper. Realising this synergy will require precisely the kind of improved planning, monitoring, and technical supervision that the state government has itself identified as having been lacking under the previous MGNREGA implementation, discussed in section 12.2.

Market linkage infrastructure, including rural haats, agricultural produce market yards, and the multi-modal logistics parks discussed in Chapters 4 and 8, represents a further essential complement to basic road connectivity, since improved road access alone does not guarantee that farmers and rural enterprises can capture fair value for their produce without correspondingly accessible and well-functioning market infrastructure. Continued integration of rural road connectivity investment with agricultural marketing infrastructure development, discussed further in Chapter 18, remains essential to ensuring that Rajasthan's substantial rural infrastructure investment translates into genuine improvement in rural household incomes rather than merely improved physical access without corresponding economic opportunity.

12.6 Community-Based Development Institutions and Participatory Planning

Participatory planning represents an increasingly central organising principle for rural development in Rajasthan, reflected most clearly in the new VB-G RAM-G framework's reorientation of rural employment planning around Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans, discussed in section 12.2, which are intended to replace the more fragmented, top-down work sanctioning process that characterised the previous MGNREGA implementation with a more integrated, village level planning process directly involving Gram Panchayats and, by extension, the Gram Sabhas and mahila gram sabhas discussed in section 12.1 and Chapter 7. This shift toward genuinely participatory village level planning, if implemented with the rigour the state government's own critique of the previous scheme's weak monitoring suggests is necessary, offers a meaningful opportunity to improve both the technical quality and the community relevance of rural infrastructure and livelihood investment across the state.

Self-Help Groups organised under the Rajeevika mission, discussed in section 12.4, alongside Water Security Committees formed under the Jal Jeevan Mission's water security planning process, discussed in the specific case of Bothara village in Chapter 10, together constitute an increasingly dense network of community-based development institutions operating alongside the formal Panchayati Raj structure discussed in section 12.1. This layered institutional ecosystem, spanning formal elected Panchayati Raj bodies, women's Self-Help Groups, and issue-specific community committees such as Water Security Committees, provides multiple, mutually reinforcing channels through which rural communities in

Rajasthan can participate in shaping the development interventions that affect their villages, rather than depending on any single institutional channel alone.

Strengthening the coordination and information flow between these multiple community-based institutions, ensuring that the priorities articulated through mahila gram sabhas, Self-Help Group meetings, and Water Security Committee deliberations are genuinely reflected in the formal Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans and other village level development planning documents that determine actual resource allocation, represents an important frontier for Rajasthan's decentralised governance architecture. Achieving this genuine, rather than merely procedural, integration of community voice into formal rural development planning is essential if the state's substantial and growing rural development investment, spanning employment guarantee programming, housing, livelihood promotion, and infrastructure discussed throughout this chapter, is to translate into development outcomes that rural communities themselves recognise as responsive to their actual priorities and needs.

CHAPTER 13: ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

13.1 Forest Cover, Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation

Rajasthan's forest cover remains exceptionally low relative to national averages, a direct consequence of the state's predominantly arid and semi-arid climate discussed throughout this framework. According to the state Forest Department's own assessment, the combined forest and tree cover of Rajasthan stands at just 7.11 per cent of the state's geographical area, comprising 4.69 per cent forest cover and 2.42 per cent tree cover, far below the national average of 23.4 per cent, with open forest, the lowest density forest classification, accounting for as much as 71.8 per cent of the state's total forest area (Project Objective, Rajasthan Forest Department, 2026). The India State of Forest Report 2019 recorded a broadly consistent figure of 16,629.51 square kilometres of forest cover, equivalent to 4.86 per cent of the state's geographical area, comprising 77.81 square kilometres of Very Dense Forest, 4,341.90 square kilometres of Moderately Dense Forest, and 12,209.80 square kilometres of Open Forest, representing a modest increase of 57.51 square kilometres compared to the previous 2017 assessment (Rajasthan, Forest Survey of India, 2019).

In recognition of this constrained forest base, the state government's Rajasthan State Forest Policy of 2010 established an explicit target of achieving more than 20 per cent vegetal cover, identifying a gap of approximately 45,000 square kilometres of additional afforestation and pasture development required to reach this target within a reasonable timeframe (Project Objective, Rajasthan Forest Department, 2026). Given the average rainfall across Rajasthan of just 531 millimetres, less than half the national average of 1,200 millimetres, and the state's access to only 1.16 per cent of India's total surface water resources, discussed further in the context of water security in Chapter 10, achieving this afforestation target requires species selection and water management approaches specifically adapted to the state's severe aridity, rather than conventional afforestation techniques suited to wetter regions of the country (Project Objective, Rajasthan Forest Department, 2026).

Rajasthan's protected area network, comprising three tiger reserves at Ranthambore, Sariska, and Mukundra Hills, alongside two Ramsar designated wetlands of international importance at the Keoladeo Ghana Sanctuary and Sambhar Lake, discussed further in section 13.3, anchors the state's wildlife conservation strategy (Rajasthan, Forest Survey of India, 2019). The state's most critically endangered species, the Great Indian Bustard, has seen its population dwindle to just 50 of the 249 individuals recorded nationally as per the International Union for Conservation of Nature's 2021 assessment, placing the species at severe risk of extirpation from the state despite its historical status as one of Rajasthan's most iconic desert birds (Major Environmental Issues, Connect Civils, 2025). Climate driven shifts in desert flora and fauna composition, including the expansion of the nilgai antelope population alongside increased agricultural vegetation, and the reduction of desert fox populations alongside the expansion of jungle cats, illustrate the ongoing ecological

transformation occurring across Rajasthan's desert ecosystem, connecting directly to the land use and desertification pressures discussed in section 13.2.

13.2 Land Use Change, Soil Degradation and Land Resource Management

Land degradation and desertification represent among the most severe environmental challenges facing Rajasthan, with assessments varying somewhat by methodology but consistently indicating that a substantial majority of the state's land area is affected. The state's Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas, based on 2018-19 satellite assessment, found that 62.06 per cent of Rajasthan's total geographical area, equivalent to 21.23 million hectares, was affected by desertification or land degradation, while separate academic assessment places the affected share as high as 67 per cent of the state's area (Major Environmental Issues, Connect Civils, 2025; Land Degradation and Sustainable Agriculture in Rajasthan, ICONTROLPollution, 2026). Wind erosion constitutes the dominant driver of this degradation, accounting for approximately 44.2 to 56 per cent of degraded land depending on the specific assessment consulted, particularly severe across western Rajasthan's Thar Desert districts, followed by water erosion, vegetal degradation, and soil salinisation as secondary contributing factors (Land Degradation and Desertification in India, Dalvoy UPSC, 2025).

The Thar Desert's documented eastward expansion represents a particularly consequential dimension of this land degradation challenge, with research indicating that sandstorms originating in the desert's expanding margins have the potential to reach as far as the National Capital Region, illustrating that desertification in western Rajasthan carries consequences extending well beyond the state's own boundaries (Land Degradation and Desertification in India, Dalvoy UPSC, 2025). The Chambal region, spanning parts of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, presents a contrasting but equally severe form of land degradation, where intensive water erosion has created extensive badlands and ravines that have rendered vast tracts of formerly productive land unusable, compounding the socio-economic challenges facing communities in this border region (Land Degradation and Desertification in India, Dalvoy UPSC, 2025).

Paradoxically, Rajasthan's major irrigation success, the Indira Gandhi Canal discussed in Chapter 10, has itself generated a distinct form of land degradation in its command area, where improper irrigation management and inadequate drainage infrastructure have led to widespread waterlogging and secondary salinisation or alkalinisation of soils, substantially reducing agricultural productivity across lands that were originally converted from desert to irrigated cultivation specifically to increase productivity (Land Degradation and Desertification in India, Dalvoy UPSC, 2025). This finding underscores an important lesson for the state's ongoing and planned irrigation expansion, including the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project discussed in Chapter 10, namely that large scale surface irrigation infrastructure must be accompanied by equally rigorous drainage and water table management if it is not to eventually recreate, through waterlogging and salinisation, precisely the agricultural productivity losses it was designed to prevent through desert reclamation.

13.3 Water Bodies, Wetlands and River Ecosystem Health

Rajasthan's two Ramsar Convention designated wetlands of international importance, the Keoladeo Ghana Sanctuary near Bharatpur and Sambhar Lake, represent the state's most significant formally protected water body ecosystems, though both face substantial ongoing degradation pressure (Rajasthan, Forest Survey of India, 2019). Sambhar Lake, India's largest inland saline lake and a critical wintering ground for migratory flamingos and other waterbirds, has experienced dramatic wetland loss over the past several decades, with geospatial modelling covering a 96-year period from 1963 to 2059 finding that the lake's wetland area declined from 30.7 per cent to just 3.4 per cent of the site at a consistent rate of 4.23 per cent annually, with this lost wetland area converting substantially to saline soil, which itself increased by 9.3 per cent, alongside corresponding increases in barren land, salt pans, and settlement encroachment (Spatio-Temporal Modelling for the Evaluation of an Altered Indian Saline Ramsar Site, National Center for Biotechnology Information, 2021).

This dramatic decline in one of Rajasthan's two internationally recognised wetlands illustrates the severity of the pressure facing the state's already limited water body resources, discussed throughout Chapter 10, from a combination of salt extraction industry activity, given Sambhar Lake's historical role as a major source of the state's substantial salt production discussed in Chapter 4, upstream water diversion for agricultural and drinking water use, and encroaching settlement expansion. The Keoladeo Ghana Sanctuary, discussed in the tourism context of Chapter 19, faces related though distinct pressures, given its status as an artificially maintained wetland ecosystem historically dependent on managed water inflow from the Bharatpur region's broader water infrastructure, meaning that its ecological health remains directly linked to the drinking water and irrigation allocation decisions discussed in Chapter 10.

River ecosystem health across Rajasthan's limited river network, comprising the Chambal, Banas, and Luni systems discussed in Chapter 1, faces cumulative pressure from agricultural runoff, industrial effluent from the state's expanding manufacturing base discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, and the broader water extraction pressures documented throughout this framework's water security discussion in Chapter 10. Strengthening river basin management planning that explicitly accounts for ecological flow requirements, alongside the drinking water and irrigation demands that have historically dominated the state's water allocation decisions, discussed in the Bisalpur Dam prioritisation dispute in Chapter 10, represents an important unaddressed priority for Rajasthan's broader water and ecosystem governance architecture.

13.4 Mining and Mineral Resource Governance

Rajasthan's substantial mineral wealth, discussed extensively in the economic context of Chapters 3 and 4, including its position as India's leading producer of cement grade limestone, its status as the country's second largest cement producer, and its significant output of marble, rock phosphate, gypsum, copper, and lignite, creates a distinctive and consequential dimension of the state's natural resource governance challenge, since mineral

extraction inherently generates land disturbance, water resource impact, and air quality effects that must be balanced against the substantial fiscal and economic contribution mining makes to the state, discussed in Chapters 2 and 4. The July 2024 Supreme Court judgment upholding states' constitutional right to tax mineral bearing land, discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, while primarily a fiscal decision, carries important natural resource governance implications as well, since it strengthens the state's fiscal incentive to expand mineral extraction activity, making robust environmental regulation of that expanding activity correspondingly more important.

Illegal mining represents a specific and persistent natural resource governance concern within Rajasthan, sufficiently significant to have been selected as a dedicated subject for performance audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General's Accountant General office in Jaipur, alongside its audits of public health infrastructure, disability rights implementation, and solid waste management discussed in Chapters 2, 6, and 10 (Home, Accountant General Audit-I Rajasthan, 2025). The persistence of illegal mining activity, notwithstanding the state's formal regulatory framework administered through the Department of Mines and Geology, reflects the well documented challenge across mineral rich Indian states of balancing the substantial revenue potential of mineral extraction against the capacity constraints facing state regulatory and enforcement agencies tasked with policing an activity that, in Rajasthan's case, spans a vast and often remote geographic area.

Reclamation and rehabilitation of land disturbed by both legal and illegal mining activity represents a further important, though frequently under-prioritised, dimension of the state's mineral resource governance framework, particularly given the connection between abandoned or poorly reclaimed mining sites and the broader land degradation challenges discussed in section 13.2. Strengthening mine closure planning and reclamation bond requirements, ensuring that mining companies operating within Rajasthan bear the genuine cost of land restoration rather than externalising this cost onto the state and affected local communities, represents an important governance reform opportunity closely connected to the broader public sector enterprise and regulatory governance themes discussed in Chapters 4 and 15.

13.5 Pollution: Air, Water, Noise and Soil, Status and Regulatory Response

Air quality across Rajasthan's major urban centres, particularly Jaipur, Jodhpur, and the industrial belt around Bhiwadi and Neemrana discussed in Chapters 4 and 11, faces mounting pressure from the combined effects of vehicular emissions, construction dust associated with the state's rapid urban and industrial growth, and industrial emissions from cement, mining, and manufacturing operations discussed in section 13.4 and Chapter 4. This air quality challenge is compounded by the state's natural dust exposure from the Thar Desert, discussed in section 13.2, meaning that particulate matter pollution in western Rajasthan reflects a combination of anthropogenic emission sources layered atop a naturally high background dust environment, a distinctive regulatory challenge not faced by urban centres in less arid parts of India.

Water pollution regulation within Rajasthan is coordinated through the Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board, established in 1975 under the national Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, with its regulatory mandate subsequently expanded under the Environment (Protection) Act of 1986 to encompass a broader range of environmental protection functions (Major Environmental Issues, Connect Civils, 2025). Industrial effluent discharge from the state's expanding manufacturing and mineral processing base, discussed in Chapters 4 and 13.4, represents a primary water pollution concern requiring continued and strengthened Board oversight, particularly given the direct connection between industrial water pollution and the already severe water scarcity challenges discussed throughout Chapter 10, since polluted water sources effectively reduce the state's already limited usable water supply even where the physical volume of water itself remains present.

The state's regulatory response to emerging pollution challenges has included the establishment of a dedicated e-waste management policy in 2023, addressing a pollution category of growing significance given the state's expanding digital economy and electronics consumption discussed in Chapter 16, and a 2022 ban on single-use plastics within government offices, an initial and relatively limited regulatory step that could plausibly be expanded to broader single-use plastic restrictions across the state's economy over time (Major Environmental Issues, Connect Civils, 2025). Strengthening enforcement capacity across all pollution categories, air, water, noise, and soil, remains an important complement to this evolving regulatory framework, particularly as the state's industrial base, discussed throughout Chapters 3 and 4, continues to expand at the accelerated pace the Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision anticipates.

13.6 Coastal and Marine Resource Management (Where Applicable)

Rajasthan's entirely landlocked geography, discussed in Chapters 1 and 8, means the state possesses no coastline, maritime boundary, or coastal ecosystem, and consequently no direct application for coastal and marine resource management policy of the kind relevant to India's coastal states such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, or Tamil Nadu. This section is included in the standardised chapter structure of this framework, consistent with the Kerala reference document's own structure, but is not substantively applicable to Rajasthan's specific geographic circumstances, discussed in the logistics context of Chapter 8, where the state's absence of maritime infrastructure was noted as a defining feature of its inland logistics strategy.

While Rajasthan possesses no coastal or marine resources in the conventional sense, the state's saline lake ecosystems, particularly Sambhar Lake discussed in section 13.3, represent a distinct category of saline aquatic ecosystem that shares certain ecological management characteristics with coastal saline environments, including salt extraction industry pressure, waterbird habitat conservation requirements, and the general challenge of balancing economic salt production activity against wetland ecosystem preservation.

CHAPTER 14: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

14.1 State Climate Vulnerability and Risk Profile

Rajasthan occupies a distinctive and severe position within India's climate vulnerability landscape, with early state level climate assessment work finding that the state falls within areas of greatest climate sensitivity, maximum vulnerability, and lowest adaptive capacity nationally, a combination attributable to its already scarce and highly unevenly distributed water resources, discussed throughout Chapter 10, and its status as the state with the highest probability of drought occurrence in the country (Rajasthan State Action Plan on Climate Change, India Environment Portal, 2011). This baseline vulnerability has intensified substantially over the past two decades, with research commissioned by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water finding that Rajasthan has experienced a six-fold increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme drought events since 2000, a four-fold increase in extreme flood events since 2010, and a corresponding four-fold increase in extreme cyclone related impacts within the state (How can India Re-calibrate its Climate Change Action Policy, CEEW, 2024).

The scale of this vulnerability is illustrated starkly by the finding that approximately 88 per cent of Rajasthan's districts, home to an estimated 68.6 million people, are currently exposed to drought or drought-like conditions, while a separate 27 per cent of the state's districts face exposure to extreme flood risk, with the same research documenting the particularly complex and destabilising pattern of multiple districts swapping between historically drought-prone and increasingly flood-prone classifications, undermining the reliability of historical hazard mapping as a guide to future risk (How can India Re-calibrate its Climate Change Action Policy, CEEW, 2024). This swap pattern, in which districts historically planned around chronic water scarcity now face episodic but severe flooding, and vice versa, creates a particularly acute institutional challenge for the state's disaster management and water infrastructure planning, discussed further in sections 14.3 and 14.4, since infrastructure and preparedness investment calibrated to a district's historical hazard profile may prove poorly matched to its emerging climate reality.

Rajasthan's exposure extends across nearly the full spectrum of major natural hazards recognised nationally, with the state vulnerable to drought, flood, cyclone related impacts, cold wave, and earthquake risk, a breadth of hazard exposure exceeded among Indian states only by those additionally exposed to tsunami and coastal hazard risk, from which Rajasthan's landlocked geography, discussed in Chapters 1, 8, and 13, provides the state's only meaningful hazard exemption (Action Plan on Climate Change and Human Health, National Centre for Disease Control, 2025). The economic and human cost of inadequate climate action at the national level provides an important quantitative benchmark against which Rajasthan's own climate investment priorities should be weighed, with United Nations estimates placing the direct costs of India's climate action shortfall over the preceding two decades at approximately Rs 13.14 lakh crore, or 179.5 billion dollars nationally, underscoring that continued underinvestment in climate adaptation and resilience carries

substantial, quantifiable economic cost rather than representing a purely precautionary expenditure (How can India Re-calibrate its Climate Change Action Policy, CEEW, 2024).

14.2 State Action Plan on Climate Change: Review and Second Generation Reforms

Rajasthan's formal climate policy architecture originated with its initial State Action Plan on Climate Change, prepared following the Prime Minister's 2009 directive to all state governments to develop comprehensive, state-specific climate plans aligned with the National Action Plan on Climate Change, a plan that, consistent with the broader national pattern across most Indian states, emphasised adaptation measures over greenhouse gas mitigation, reflecting both Rajasthan's comparatively low historical per capita emissions and its acute exposure to climate driven physical risk (State Action Plan on Climate Change, GIZ SCOPE, 2025). This original plan has since been substantially superseded by more recent institutional and policy developments, most significantly the state government's establishment of a dedicated Department for Climate Change in 2022, a step that elevated climate policy coordination to a distinct departmental structure rather than treating it as a subsidiary function within the state's broader Environment Department (National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health, National Centre for Disease Control, 2025).

Since the Department's establishment, Rajasthan has implemented several notable second-generation climate adaptation initiatives, most prominently South Asia's first heat-health action plan incorporating a dedicated early warning system, an intervention of particular significance given the state's exposure to extreme summer temperatures across its arid western districts and the documented health risks of extreme heat exposure discussed further in the context of the state's climate and human health action plan (National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health, National Centre for Disease Control, 2025). This early warning system represents a genuinely pioneering regional achievement, positioning Rajasthan as a reference case for heat adaptation policy not only within India but across South Asia more broadly, a distinction that reflects positively on the state's institutional seriousness in addressing climate risk even as the broader challenges documented throughout this chapter remain substantial.

The Chief Minister's Rajasthan Economic Transformation Advisory Council, the state's earlier long-term planning body subsequently succeeded by the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation discussed in Chapter 1, commissioned a dedicated scoping study from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water specifically examining how the state's institutions governing disaster management, agriculture, and water resources needed to be recalibrated to respond effectively to the state's evolving climate risk profile discussed in section 14.1 (How can India Re-calibrate its Climate Change Action Policy, CEEW, 2024). This study's four-step consultation process, engaging officials across the relevant state departments to assess existing institutional capacity, identify specific capacity gaps, and prioritise a phased reform roadmap, offers a valuable, evidence based foundation for the continued evolution of Rajasthan's climate governance architecture under the successor Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation, ensuring that the institutional lessons

generated under the state's earlier advisory structure are not lost in the transition to the new planning body.

14.3 Disaster Risk Profile: Hazard, Exposure and Vulnerability Mapping

Rajasthan's Disaster Management and Relief Department maintains detailed hazard mapping across the state's principal risk categories, including district-wise drought frequency and intensity records spanning the 1901 to 2002 period, wind damage risk zone classification distinguishing high and moderate risk areas, and flood prone area mapping identifying the specific districts most exposed to riverine and flash flood risk (Rajasthan State Action Plan on Climate Change, Environment Rajasthan, 2012). This flood prone district mapping identifies sixteen districts, Ajmer, Alwar, Bharatpur, Baran, Bundi, Barmer, Chittorgarh, Jalore, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Jhalawar, Pali, Sirohi, Nagaur, Udaipur, and Hanumangarh, as falling within the state's principal flood risk zones, a geographically dispersed set of districts spanning both the state's more humid southeastern regions and, notably, the historically drought-classified western district of Barmer, illustrating the drought-flood risk swap pattern discussed in section 14.1 (Action Plan on Climate Change and Human Health, National Centre for Disease Control, 2025).

Rajasthan's flood risk, while less frequent than its chronic drought exposure, has produced some of the state's most severe historical disaster events. In August 2006, the usually drought-prone district of Barmer was struck by unprecedented flash flooding that killed approximately 1,200 people, representing one of the deadliest single disaster events in the state's modern history and a stark illustration of the vulnerability created when infrastructure and community preparedness, calibrated to a district's historical classification as drought-prone, prove entirely inadequate to a sudden and severe flood event (Rajasthan State Action Plan on Climate Change, Environment Rajasthan, 2012). River flooding along the Chambal has similarly produced severe historical impacts, with Dholpur experiencing catastrophic flooding in August 1982 when water levels on the Chambal exceeded the danger mark by 14.21 metres, among the most severe river flood deviations recorded anywhere in the state's flood history (Rajasthan State Action Plan on Climate Change, Environment Rajasthan, 2012).

Beyond drought and flood, Rajasthan's hazard exposure encompasses cold wave risk, with the state recognised as one of India's cold wave prone states notwithstanding its predominantly arid, hot climate reputation, a seasonal risk whose frequency has shifted over time in ways that require continued monitoring and adaptation of the state's cold wave preparedness protocols (Action Plan on Climate Change and Human Health, National Centre for Disease Control, 2025). This combination of drought, flood, cyclone related, cold wave, and earthquake exposure, discussed in section 14.1, requires Rajasthan's disaster risk mapping to remain a genuinely multi-hazard exercise rather than one narrowly focused on the state's most historically prominent drought risk alone, an approach the Disaster Management and Relief Department's existing mapping infrastructure appears well positioned to support, provided it continues to be updated to reflect the evolving climate risk patterns documented throughout this chapter.

14.4 Disaster Risk Reduction: Institutional Mechanisms and Preparedness

Institutional responsibility for disaster risk reduction and preparedness in Rajasthan rests primarily with the state's Disaster Management and Relief Department, which maintains the hazard mapping infrastructure discussed in section 14.3 and coordinates the state's broader disaster preparedness and response architecture in line with the national Disaster Management Act of 2005 framework applicable across all Indian states. The establishment of Rajasthan's dedicated Department for Climate Change in 2022, discussed in section 14.2, has created an important complementary institutional structure specifically focused on climate driven risk, working alongside rather than replacing the Disaster Management and Relief Department's broader all-hazards mandate, a division of institutional responsibility that requires continued close coordination between the two departments given the substantial and growing overlap between climate driven and conventional natural hazard risk documented throughout this chapter.

The South Asia first heat-health action plan and early warning system, discussed in section 14.2, exemplifies the kind of hazard-specific institutional preparedness mechanism that Rajasthan has begun to build, extending beyond generic disaster preparedness toward interventions specifically tailored to the state's particular risk profile, in this case extreme heat exposure across its arid districts. Extending this hazard-specific, early warning system based approach to the state's other principal risk categories, particularly flood risk given the documented drought-flood swap pattern discussed in section 14.1, and cold wave risk given its documented but under-studied frequency shifts, represents an important priority for strengthening Rajasthan's overall disaster risk reduction preparedness beyond its current, more advanced heat adaptation capability.

Community level disaster preparedness, building on the community-based development institutions discussed in Chapter 12, including Water Security Committees and Self-Help Groups, offers an important complementary channel for extending disaster risk reduction capacity beyond formal government institutions alone, particularly in Rajasthan's more remote and dispersed rural districts where formal Disaster Management and Relief Department response capacity may take considerable time to reach following a disaster event, discussed further in the context of the Barmer flash flood tragedy in section 14.3. Strengthening this community based preparedness capacity, through training, resource pre-positioning, and clear communication protocols linking village level committees to the state's formal early warning systems, represents an essential, cost-effective complement to the state's more centralised institutional disaster risk reduction architecture.

14.5 Post-Disaster Response, Relief and Reconstruction Framework

Rajasthan's post-disaster response and relief framework operates through the Disaster Management and Relief Department in coordination with the National Disaster Response Force and, where relevant, the Indian Army and Air Force, consistent with the standard national disaster response architecture applicable across Indian states following major disaster events such as the catastrophic 2006 Barmer flash floods discussed in section 14.3.

The scale of that event's human toll, approximately 1,200 deaths in a district with no prior modern history of severe flooding, underscores the critical importance of ensuring that the state's disaster response framework maintains genuinely flexible, rapidly deployable capacity capable of responding to disaster events outside a district's historical hazard classification, rather than concentrating response resources disproportionately in districts with an established history of the specific hazard type that has actually occurred.

Reconstruction following major disaster events in Rajasthan has historically proceeded through a combination of state government relief funding, central government National Disaster Response Fund support, and, for the most severe events, dedicated central assistance packages, consistent with the standard national disaster relief financing architecture. Given the documented increase in extreme drought, flood, and cyclone related event frequency discussed in section 14.1, ensuring that this reconstruction financing architecture is calibrated to a genuinely elevated baseline of disaster frequency, rather than the historically lower frequency baseline that shaped the state's disaster relief institutional design in earlier decades, represents an important forward-looking consideration for the state's Finance Department, connecting directly to the broader fiscal sustainability discussion in Chapter 2.

Building back better principles, which emphasise reconstruction that incorporates improved resilience against future disaster events rather than simple restoration of pre-disaster infrastructure and housing, represent an important and increasingly internationally recognised standard that Rajasthan's post-disaster reconstruction framework should explicitly incorporate, particularly given the drought-flood risk swap pattern documented in section 14.1, which means that infrastructure rebuilt following a flood event in a historically drought-classified district should be designed with genuine flood resilience in mind, rather than simply restored to its pre-disaster specification calibrated to the district's outdated historical hazard classification.

14.6 Green Economy Transition: Opportunities and Structural Challenges

Rajasthan's green economy transition is anchored substantially in the state's exceptional renewable energy resource endowment, discussed in detail in Chapter 9, which positions the state to pursue a distinctive climate response strategy combining defensive adaptation to its severe and worsening physical climate risk, discussed throughout this chapter, with an offensive economic opportunity built around its solar and wind resource leadership. This dual positioning, simultaneously among India's most climate vulnerable states and among its most significant renewable energy resource holders, creates a coherent strategic logic for Rajasthan to pursue green economic development not merely as an environmental obligation but as a genuine economic development strategy in its own right, discussed in the investment and industrial policy context of Chapters 4 and 9.

The state's emerging green hydrogen ambitions, referenced in the context of the state's investment promotion strategy in Chapter 4, represent a particularly significant frontier for this green economy transition, offering a pathway to convert Rajasthan's abundant renewable electricity generation capacity into a exportable, storable energy commodity capable of

supporting both domestic industrial decarbonisation, particularly relevant to the state's substantial cement and mineral processing sector discussed in Chapters 4 and 13, and international export given India's broader national green hydrogen mission ambitions. Realising this green hydrogen opportunity at meaningful scale will require continued investment in the transmission infrastructure discussed in Chapter 9 and in electrolyser manufacturing capacity, potentially integrated with the state's broader industrial corridor development discussed in Chapter 4.

Air quality challenges documented across Rajasthan's major urban centres, with Alwar, Jaipur, Kota, Udaipur, and Jodhpur all formally designated as non-attainment cities under the National Clean Air Programme and population weighted mean ambient PM_{2.5} concentrations ranging from 40 to 103 micrograms per cubic metre, discussed in the pollution context of Chapter 13, represent an important reminder that Rajasthan's green economy transition must extend beyond electricity generation decarbonisation to encompass genuine air quality improvement across the state's rapidly growing urban and industrial centres (National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health, National Centre for Disease Control, 2025). Ensuring that the state's continued industrial and urban growth, discussed throughout this framework, is genuinely decoupled from worsening air quality, rather than treating renewable electricity generation and urban air pollution as separate policy domains, represents the ultimate test of whether Rajasthan's green economy transition delivers genuinely comprehensive environmental and public health benefit alongside its substantial economic opportunity.

CHAPTER 15: ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNANCE REFORM

15.1 Structure of State Administration and Inter-Departmental Coordination

Rajasthan's state administration operates through a Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister, supported by a civil service apparatus staffed substantially through the Indian Administrative Service, the Indian Police Service, and the state's own Rajasthan Administrative Service, deployed across the 41 districts and seven divisions discussed in Chapter 1. This administrative structure has itself been the subject of significant recent reform, most notably the 2023 expansion to 50 districts followed by the December 2024 partial reversal to the current 41 district structure, discussed in detail in Chapter 1, an episode that illustrated both the state's willingness to experiment with administrative decentralisation and its capacity to course-correct when feasibility assessment revealed the initial reform had outpaced the state's actual administrative and revenue capacity to support it.

Inter-departmental coordination at the state level has been substantially strengthened through the establishment of the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation in March 2024, discussed in Chapter 1, which succeeded the earlier Chief Minister's Rajasthan Economic Transformation Advisory Council and now serves as the state's principal cross-departmental planning and coordination body, mirroring the institutional design of NITI Aayog at the national level. This institute's role in commissioning cross-sectoral studies, such as the Council on Energy, Environment and Water's scoping study on climate governance recalibration across the disaster management, agriculture, and water departments discussed in Chapter 14, illustrates the kind of coordinated, evidence based policy development that a dedicated cross-departmental planning body can enable, in contrast to the more siloed departmental decision making that has historically characterised much of Indian state administration.

Coordination between the state's numerous specialised implementing agencies, including the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation discussed in Chapter 4, the Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation and Rajasthan Metro Rail Corporation Limited discussed in Chapter 8, and the Rajasthan Renewable Energy Corporation Limited discussed in Chapter 9, alongside conventional line departments, represents an ongoing administrative challenge common to most large Indian states pursuing rapid infrastructure and industrial expansion. Strengthening formal coordination mechanisms between these specialised agencies and the state's core administrative departments, potentially through expanded use of the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation's convening authority, would help ensure that the substantial sectoral investments documented throughout this framework are implemented in a genuinely integrated rather than fragmented manner.

15.2 Anti-Corruption Framework: Lokayukta, Vigilance and Enforcement

Rajasthan's anti-corruption institutional architecture is anchored by the Rajasthan Lokayukta, established under the Rajasthan Lokayukta and Up-Lokayuktas Act of 1973, which came into force on 3 February 1973, making Rajasthan one of the earliest Indian states to operationalise

an independent ombudsman institution for scrutiny of public functionaries, predating the central Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act by more than four decades (Rajasthan Lokayukta, Wikipedia, 2026). The Lokayukta, appointed by the Governor of Rajasthan typically from among retired High Court judges for a non-extendable five year term or until age 70, whichever occurs first, is empowered to investigate allegations of corruption, misuse of office, and administrative inefficiency against ministers, public servants, and officials across state institutions and autonomous bodies, operating with the autonomy to conduct preliminary inquiries and investigations without requiring prior government approval to initiate a probe (Rajasthan Lokayukta, Grokipedia, 2026). Justice Pratap Krishna Lohra, a former judge of the Rajasthan High Court, currently serves as the Lokayukta, with all proceedings before the institution treated as judicial proceedings under the Indian Penal Code framework, and with the Act specifically prohibiting disclosure of the identity of both the complainant and the accused functionary during the course of proceedings, an important procedural safeguard intended to protect complainants from retaliation while investigations remain ongoing (Rajasthan Lokayukta, Wikipedia, 2026).

Complementing the Lokayukta's ombudsman function, the Anti-Corruption Bureau Rajasthan operates as the state's principal investigative and prosecutorial agency specifically responsible for the detection, investigation, and prosecution of corruption cases involving public servants, functioning under the state's broader Vigilance Department architecture (Anti Corruption Bureau Rajasthan, Rajasthan Direct, 2025). This dual structure, an independent judicial ombudsman institution operating alongside a dedicated police-style investigative bureau, mirrors the anti-corruption architecture adopted by several other Indian states, and offers complementary strengths, with the Lokayukta providing independent, judicially led scrutiny particularly suited to allegations against senior ministers and officials, while the Anti-Corruption Bureau provides the specialised investigative and evidence-gathering capacity necessary for successful criminal prosecution of corruption cases at all levels of the state administration.

Experience from other Indian states offers an important cautionary note for Rajasthan's continued anti-corruption institutional development, with judicial observations in at least one other state highlighting the risk that establishing new anti-corruption bodies without ensuring adequate staffing of existing institutions can create overlapping, under-resourced anti-corruption architecture that ultimately serves complainants less effectively than a smaller number of properly staffed institutions (Why Create Anti-Corruption Bureau, Deccan Herald, 2016). Ensuring that both the Rajasthan Lokayukta and the Anti-Corruption Bureau remain adequately staffed and resourced, with complaint processing timelines that do not allow the state's own anti-corruption institutions to become bottlenecked by their own case backlogs, represents an important ongoing priority connected to the broader civil service capacity discussion in section 15.7.

15.3 Legal and Judicial Administration: Pendency, Access and Reform

Rajasthan's judicial administration operates under the Rajasthan High Court, headquartered in Jodhpur with a permanent bench in Jaipur, alongside a network of district and subordinate

courts extending across the state's 41 districts discussed in Chapter 1. As with most Indian states, case pendency represents a persistent and significant challenge for Rajasthan's judicial administration, reflecting the broader national pattern in which caseload growth has consistently outpaced the expansion of judicial capacity, a dynamic driven by factors including population growth discussed in Chapter 1, rising economic activity and associated commercial disputes discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, and increasing public awareness of legal remedies for grievances that in earlier decades might have gone unlitigated.

Access to justice across Rajasthan's dispersed rural population, spread across 44,672 villages discussed in Chapter 1, presents a distinctive challenge given the physical distance many rural litigants must travel to reach district courts, a challenge the state has sought to address through Lok Adalats, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and legal aid services coordinated through the Rajasthan State Legal Services Authority, which provides free legal assistance to economically weaker sections, women, children, and other categories of persons entitled to such assistance under the Legal Services Authorities Act of 1987. Strengthening the reach and effectiveness of these alternative dispute resolution and legal aid mechanisms, particularly for the state's Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and economically disadvantaged populations discussed in Chapter 7, who may face particular barriers to accessing formal judicial remedies, represents an important complement to conventional court capacity expansion.

Judicial reform priorities for Rajasthan going forward include continued expansion of court infrastructure and judicial staffing commensurate with the state's population growth, discussed in Chapter 1, greater adoption of digital case management and virtual hearing systems building on the broader digital governance infrastructure discussed in Chapter 16, and continued strengthening of the fast track court mechanisms established for specific categories of cases including those under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act discussed in Chapter 7. These reforms, pursued in a coordinated rather than piecemeal fashion, offer the most promising pathway for Rajasthan to reduce its judicial pendency backlog while simultaneously improving genuine access to justice for the state's most vulnerable populations.

15.4 Police Modernisation and Internal Security Management

Rajasthan's internal security architecture carries distinctive strategic significance given the state's status as the only Indian state, alongside Punjab and Gujarat, sharing a direct international border with Pakistan, discussed in Chapter 1, a geography that requires close coordination between the state police, the Border Security Force, and central intelligence agencies in managing both conventional law and order functions and border security concerns specific to the state's western frontier districts of Jaisalmer, Barmer, Sri Ganganagar, and Bikaner. This border security dimension adds a layer of institutional complexity to Rajasthan's policing architecture not faced by most Indian states, requiring the state police to maintain specialised capacity for border area policing alongside its conventional urban and rural law enforcement functions.

Recruitment to the Rajasthan Police continues at a substantial pace, with the Rajasthan Public Service Commission's 2025 and 2026 recruitment cycles including significant numbers of Police Sub Inspector and constable level positions alongside recruitment for the broader Rajasthan Police Service under the Rajasthan Administrative Service examination framework, discussed further in section 15.7 (RPSC Recruitment 2025, Testbook, 2026). Police modernisation efforts within the state have increasingly emphasised technology integration, including expanded use of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems database for inter-state and inter-agency information sharing, and continued investment in forensic science laboratory capacity to support more effective criminal investigation and prosecution, complementing the judicial reform priorities discussed in section 15.3.

Internal security management within Rajasthan also encompasses the state's response to communal tension risk given its religiously diverse population discussed in Chapter 1, and to organised crime concerns connected to the state's mining sector discussed in Chapter 13, where illegal mining activity has necessitated coordinated response between the state police, the Anti-Corruption Bureau discussed in section 15.2, and the Department of Mines and Geology. Continued investment in police modernisation, encompassing both technological capacity and community policing approaches that build trust between the police and the state's diverse communities, remains essential to Rajasthan's broader governance reform agenda, particularly given the state's rapid urbanisation and industrial growth discussed throughout this framework, both of which typically bring evolving law and order challenges that require correspondingly evolving policing approaches.

15.5 Regulatory Governance: Quality, Consistency and Independence

Regulatory governance within Rajasthan spans a range of sector-specific regulatory bodies discussed throughout this framework, including the Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission governing the power sector discussed in Chapter 9, the Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board governing environmental regulation discussed in Chapter 13, and the state's investment facilitation and single window clearance architecture discussed in Chapter 4. The quality and consistency of regulatory decision making across these bodies carries direct significance for the state's investment climate, discussed in Chapter 4, since investors and businesses operating across multiple regulatory domains, energy, environment, land, and taxation, require reasonable predictability and consistency in how these different regulatory bodies interpret and apply their respective mandates.

Regulatory independence, meaning the capacity of bodies such as the Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission to make tariff and licensing decisions based on technical and economic merit rather than short-term political pressure, represents an important structural safeguard for long-term policy credibility, particularly relevant given the Commission's role in balancing DISCOM financial sustainability against renewable energy developer returns, discussed in Chapter 9. Strengthening the technical capacity and institutional independence of Rajasthan's various sectoral regulators, through measures such as fixed, non-renewable appointment terms, transparent public consultation processes for major regulatory decisions,

and adequate dedicated technical staffing independent of the regulated line departments, represents an important governance reform priority that would benefit the state's overall investment climate and public service delivery quality alike.

Coordination between Rajasthan's various sectoral regulators and the state's central planning function, exercised through the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation discussed in section 15.1, offers an opportunity to ensure that individual regulatory decisions remain aligned with the state's broader Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 development objectives discussed throughout this framework, without compromising the case-by-case technical independence that effective sectoral regulation requires. Achieving this balance, between coordinated strategic direction and preserved regulatory independence, represents a genuinely difficult governance design challenge that Rajasthan's continued institutional evolution will need to navigate carefully.

15.6 Reduction of Red-Tapism: Simplification and Way Forward

Rajasthan has pursued a sustained programme of administrative simplification and red tape reduction over the past decade, discussed substantially in the investment climate context of Chapter 4, including the establishment of integrated single window clearance systems for business approvals, the Bureau of Investment Promotion's role in coordinating investor facilitation across multiple departments, and the state's 2023 shift from mandatory e-auctions toward a Direct Land Allotment Scheme intended to reduce transaction costs and accelerate investor entry for smaller enterprises. These reforms reflect a genuine and sustained policy commitment to reducing administrative friction, even as the state's ranking on the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade's Assessment of State Implementation of Business Reforms fluctuated between sixth and eighth position over the 2015 to 2020 period, discussed in Chapter 4, indicating that Rajasthan's reform pace, while genuine, has not always kept ahead of the equally intensifying reform efforts of competing Indian states.

Digital service delivery represents an increasingly important vehicle for red tape reduction beyond the investment and business registration domain specifically, with the state's expanding digital governance infrastructure, discussed in full in Chapter 16, including the Jan Aadhaar digital identity platform underpinning the beneficiary linked welfare architecture discussed in Chapter 7, and the RajSSP social security pension portal, offering models for how digitisation can reduce the bureaucratic burden citizens face in accessing government services and entitlements across domains well beyond business regulation alone. Extending this digital simplification approach systematically across the full range of citizen facing government services, rather than concentrating primarily on investor facing business regulation, represents an important next frontier for the state's red tape reduction agenda.

Sustained red tape reduction ultimately requires not only new digital tools and simplified procedures but also a shift in administrative culture toward genuine service orientation, a change that is inherently more difficult to achieve than technical process redesign alone, since it requires sustained leadership commitment, performance incentive alignment, and continuous monitoring of actual citizen and business experience with government services

rather than reliance on self-reported departmental compliance metrics. Building robust, independent feedback mechanisms that allow citizens and businesses to flag persistent bureaucratic friction points, and ensuring that this feedback translates into genuine procedural reform rather than being absorbed without consequence into the state's administrative machinery, represents an essential complement to the state's continued technical simplification efforts.

15.7 Civil Service Strength: Vacancy Rates and Training Institutions

Recruitment to Rajasthan's civil service continues at a substantial and sustained pace, with the Rajasthan Public Service Commission's 2026 Rajasthan Administrative Service recruitment cycle alone announcing 607 vacancies spanning State and Subordinate Services, open to candidates with a bachelor's degree through a three-stage selection process of Preliminary examination, Main examination, and Interview, conducted via the state's SSO Rajasthan digital portal (RPSC RAS Vacancy 2026, PW Live, 2026). This recruitment gateway serves as the entry point not only to the Rajasthan Administrative Service itself but also to the Rajasthan Police Service and a range of other allied state and subordinate services, making it the single most significant instrument through which the state renews and expands its administrative workforce across multiple departments simultaneously.

Beyond this flagship Rajasthan Administrative Service recruitment, the Rajasthan Public Service Commission and the Rajasthan Subordinate and Ministerial Services Selection Board jointly coordinate recruitment across thousands of positions annually spanning Rajasthan Police, junior accountants, Trained Graduate Teachers and Post Graduate Teachers discussed in Chapter 5, Assistant Engineers, and numerous other technical and administrative cadres, reflecting the scale of the state's overall civil service recruitment requirement given its large and growing population discussed in Chapter 1 (RPSC Recruitment 2025, Testbook, 2026). Sustaining this recruitment pace at a level commensurate with both natural attrition through retirement and the state's continued population and economic growth, discussed throughout this framework, represents an ongoing structural challenge, particularly given the multi-stage, multi-month selection processes that necessarily govern recruitment to positions requiring the competitive examination rigour appropriate to public administration roles.

Training institutions supporting this civil service workforce, most prominently the Rajasthan Administrative Training Institute, referenced within the broader Standardised Document Format's civil service strength framework, play an essential role in ensuring that newly recruited officers, particularly those entering through the Rajasthan Administrative Service and Rajasthan Police Service examination gateways, are equipped with the administrative, legal, and increasingly digital governance competencies necessary to serve effectively across the state's diverse district administrations discussed in Chapter 1. Strengthening the capacity and curriculum currency of this training infrastructure, ensuring it reflects the evolving demands of the state's rapidly modernising governance architecture documented throughout this framework, from digital public infrastructure discussed in Chapter 16 to the sector specific regulatory competencies discussed in section 15.5, represents an essential, if often

under-resourced, complement to the state's substantial ongoing civil service recruitment effort.

CHAPTER 16: TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED SERVICE DELIVERY

16.1 Digital Infrastructure: Broadband, Optical Fibre and Connectivity Coverage

Rajasthan's digital infrastructure has expanded substantially in recent years, building on the national BharatNet programme, which by January 2026 had connected more than 2.15 lakh Gram Panchayats, approximately 97 per cent of its targeted villages nationally, through nearly seven lakh kilometres of optical fibre cable, dramatically improving rural internet access and narrowing the urban-rural digital divide across India, including within Rajasthan's own dispersed rural settlement pattern of 44,672 villages discussed in Chapter 1 (From Aadhaar to UPI, Organiser, 2026). This national rural connectivity backbone has been complemented by state specific digital infrastructure investment, with Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma reporting at the 29th National Conference on e-Governance, hosted at the Rajasthan International Centre in Jaipur, that 1,686 kilometres of optical fibre network expansion had successfully linked thousands of government buildings across the state, alongside the deployment of high-speed internet connections across 12,500 locations spanning more than 3,200 Gram Panchayats (Technology Must Drive Social Inclusion, Big News Network, 2026).

This expanding physical connectivity infrastructure underpins the Rajasthan State Data Centre, currently undergoing Phase III and IV upgradation in Jaipur alongside a dedicated Disaster Recovery Site in Jodhpur, providing the core computing and storage infrastructure on which the state's growing portfolio of digital government services depends (RAJASTHAN Documents List, National e-Governance Division, 2025). The geographic separation of the primary data centre in Jaipur from its disaster recovery counterpart in Jodhpur reflects an appropriate business continuity design principle, ensuring that a single localised disruption, whether from infrastructure failure, natural disaster discussed in Chapter 14, or cyberattack discussed in section 16.5, does not result in complete loss of the state's digital government service capability.

Nationally, broadband subscriber numbers reached over 106.58 crore by March 2026, reflecting the scale of India's overall digital infrastructure expansion, a trend that Rajasthan's own connectivity investment, discussed above, is positioning the state to fully participate in and benefit from (From Aadhaar to UPI, Organiser, 2026). Continued extension of this connectivity infrastructure into the state's more remote western desert and southern tribal districts, discussed in Chapter 1, where population density and commercial viability considerations have historically slowed private telecommunications infrastructure investment, remains an important priority if the digital service delivery improvements discussed throughout this chapter are to reach Rajasthan's population as comprehensively as the state's more urbanised and economically developed districts.

16.2 e-Governance Architecture and Digital Public Infrastructure

Rajasthan's e-governance architecture is built around the Jan Aadhaar Yojana, the state's dedicated resident data repository programme administered by the Department of Information

Technology and Communication, which serves as the foundational digital identity layer underpinning the beneficiary linked welfare architecture discussed in Chapter 7, the RajSSP social security pension portal discussed in Chapter 7, and the state's health insurance and other citizen entitlement programmes discussed throughout this framework (RAJASTHAN Documents List, National e-Governance Division, 2025). This state specific digital identity layer operates in close integration with the national Aadhaar programme, which had crossed 144 crore enrolments by March 2026 and now supports authentication for more than 3,100 welfare schemes and over 360 public services nationally, with more than 98 per cent of Public Distribution System transactions now Aadhaar authenticated (From Aadhaar to UPI, Organiser, 2026).

The Rajasthan Single Sign-On portal, developed under the state's broader Digital Rajasthan programme, provides citizens, businesses, and government employees with a single unified digital identity credential granting access to more than 100 distinct state and central government services, spanning the e-Mitra citizen service platform discussed in section 16.3, the Rajasthan Public Service Commission and Rajasthan Subordinate and Ministerial Services Selection Board recruitment portals discussed in Chapter 15, scholarship applications, and Jan Aadhaar linked welfare services, eliminating the need for citizens to register separately with each individual government department (SSO ID Rajasthan 2026, Login Registration and OTR Guide, 2026). This consolidation of what would otherwise be dozens of separate departmental digital credentials into a single unified sign-on system represents a significant simplification of the citizen's digital interaction with the state government, directly supporting the red tape reduction agenda discussed in Chapter 15.

The success of the underlying national JAM Trinity architecture, combining Jan Dhan bank accounts, Aadhaar digital identity, and mobile connectivity, has enabled Direct Benefit Transfers worth more than Rs 51 lakh crore to be credited directly into beneficiary bank accounts nationally as of June 2026, substantially reducing leakages and strengthening accountability in welfare programme delivery, a national achievement that Rajasthan's own state specific digital public infrastructure, layered atop this national foundation through the Jan Aadhaar and SSO systems discussed above, has been specifically designed to leverage and extend for the state's own welfare and citizen service programmes (From Aadhaar to UPI, Organiser, 2026).

16.3 Citizen Service Delivery: CSCs, Service Portals and Mobile Governance

Citizen facing service delivery in Rajasthan is anchored by the state's e-Mitra kiosk network, which has grown to over 79,000 kiosks delivering more than 900 distinct public services across the state, representing one of the most extensive Common Service Centre style citizen service delivery networks operating in any Indian state (Technology Must Drive Social Inclusion, Big News Network, 2026). This network builds on the earlier Common Service Centre infrastructure of 6,626 kiosks established under public-private partnership arrangements and managed substantially by Village Level Women Enterprises, discussed in Chapter 4, indicating that the e-Mitra network has expanded considerably beyond this

original PPP-based foundation to become a genuinely comprehensive statewide citizen service delivery channel spanning both urban and rural areas.

The breadth of services available through this e-Mitra network, spanning bill payments, certificate issuance, scholarship applications, recruitment form submission, and Jan Aadhaar linked welfare service access, all accessible through the unified SSO digital identity discussed in section 16.2, provides particularly important value for Rajasthan's rural and lower income citizens who may lack personal computer or reliable home internet access, allowing them to access the full range of digital government services through a physical kiosk staffed by a local operator familiar with the specific documentation and procedural requirements of each service. This hybrid model, combining digital backend infrastructure with a physical, locally accessible front-end service point, represents a particularly well-suited design for a state as geographically dispersed and digitally unevenly connected as Rajasthan, discussed in section 16.1.

Mobile governance applications, including the official Rajasthan SSO mobile application supporting biometric login and available exclusively through the official Google Play Store listing, with explicit государство guidance warning citizens against installing SSO applications from third-party sites or unofficial application files due to credential theft risk, reflect the state's growing recognition that mobile-first service delivery channels are becoming increasingly important as smartphone penetration continues to rise across Rajasthan's population, discussed in the specific context of school age children's smartphone access in Chapter 5 (SSO ID Rajasthan 2026, Login Registration and OTR Guide, 2026). Continued investment in both the e-Mitra physical kiosk network and mobile digital service channels, rather than treating these as competing rather than complementary service delivery modes, offers the most inclusive pathway for extending citizen service delivery improvements across Rajasthan's full demographic and geographic range.

16.4 Data Governance, Open Data Policy and Privacy Framework

Data governance within Rajasthan's expanding digital public infrastructure operates within the broader national legal framework established by the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, which UIDAI's own Aadhaar Vision 2032 framework, unveiled in November 2025, has explicitly cited as a compliance benchmark guiding the future evolution of India's core digital identity infrastructure, incorporating artificial intelligence, blockchain, and advanced encryption technologies while maintaining the Act's data protection standards (UIDAI Unveils Aadhaar Vision 2032 Framework, News on Air, 2025). Given the extensive integration of Rajasthan's own Jan Aadhaar resident data repository and SSO digital identity system with this national Aadhaar infrastructure, discussed in section 16.2, the state's data governance practices must remain closely aligned with these evolving national data protection standards to ensure that the substantial volume of citizen data flowing through the state's welfare, health, and other digital service systems discussed throughout this framework is handled with appropriate privacy safeguards.

The scale of personal data now consolidated within Rajasthan's Jan Aadhaar and SSO systems, spanning welfare eligibility, health insurance enrolment discussed in Chapter 6, educational scholarship records discussed in Chapter 5, and employment history discussed in Chapter 3, creates a data governance responsibility of considerable weight, since a security breach or data misuse incident affecting this consolidated citizen data repository would carry consequences extending across nearly every dimension of a citizen's interaction with the state government, in contrast to the more limited exposure risk associated with a breach of any single, narrower departmental database under the state's previous, more fragmented digital architecture. Ensuring that access controls, audit logging, and data minimisation principles are rigorously applied across this consolidated data infrastructure represents an essential complement to the substantial efficiency and convenience benefits that the state's unified digital identity architecture, discussed in section 16.2, provides to citizens.

Open data policy within Rajasthan, allowing researchers, journalists, and civil society organisations appropriate access to anonymised or aggregated government data for public interest research and accountability purposes, remains a comparatively less developed dimension of the state's data governance framework relative to its citizen service delivery and welfare administration systems. Developing a more structured open data policy, balancing the genuine public interest value of expanded data access for research and accountability purposes against the privacy protection imperatives discussed above, represents an important, if currently underdeveloped, priority for the continued maturation of Rajasthan's data governance architecture.

16.5 Cybersecurity: State-Level Institutional Mechanisms

Cybersecurity has become an increasingly central priority within Rajasthan's digital governance strategy, reflecting the growing sophistication and frequency of cyber threats facing government digital infrastructure nationally as digital service delivery, discussed throughout this chapter, expands to encompass an ever larger share of citizens' interactions with the state government. Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma specifically highlighted at the 29th National Conference on e-Governance that advanced cyber labs and cyber range platforms have been established within the state specifically to combat online fraud, alongside the integration of artificial intelligence based photo verification and e-KYC protocols intended to maintain absolute transparency and prevent impersonation fraud during the state's substantial ongoing recruitment drives discussed in Chapter 15 (Technology Must Drive Social Inclusion, Big News Network, 2026).

The state's cybersecurity institutional architecture is further supported by a Security Operations Centre undergoing active upgradation, as reflected in recent procurement documentation from the state's Department of Information Technology and Communication, providing centralised monitoring and threat detection capability across the state's expanding portfolio of digital government systems, including the Rajasthan State Data Centre and its Jodhpur based disaster recovery facility discussed in section 16.1 (RAJASTHAN Documents List, National e-Governance Division, 2025). Given the consolidation of extensive citizen data within the state's Jan Aadhaar and SSO systems discussed in sections 16.2 and 16.4,

robust Security Operations Centre capability represents an essential safeguard against the elevated single point of failure risk that such data consolidation inherently creates, since a successful cyberattack against these central systems could potentially compromise citizen data across the state's entire digital service portfolio simultaneously rather than being contained to a single, narrower system.

Building sustained cybersecurity workforce capacity to staff these cyber labs, cyber range platforms, and Security Operations Centre facilities represents an ongoing challenge given the broader national shortage of qualified cybersecurity professionals relative to demand, a challenge Rajasthan's Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation, discussed in Chapter 5, could plausibly address through dedicated cybersecurity training and certification pathways integrated with the state's broader technical and vocational education strategy, connecting the state's cybersecurity institutional needs directly to its human capital development agenda.

16.6 Emerging Technologies: AI, Geospatial Systems and Smart Governance

Rajasthan has moved decisively to establish a policy foundation for artificial intelligence adoption in governance through the newly implemented Rajasthan AI-ML Policy of 2026, which Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma has described as setting the foundation for administrative reforms across education, health, agriculture, and industries, positioning artificial intelligence and machine learning not as a narrow technology initiative but as a cross-cutting instrument for improving service delivery and decision making across nearly every sector discussed throughout this framework (Technology Must Drive Social Inclusion, Big News Network, 2026). This policy complements the state's separately established AVGC and Extended Reality Policy, which is specifically intended to drive new career avenues for youth in animation, visual effects, gaming, comics, and extended reality technologies, connecting the state's emerging technology strategy directly to the youth employment priorities discussed in Chapter 3 and the knowledge economy ambitions discussed in Chapter 17.

Geospatial technology adoption within Rajasthan's governance architecture is already substantially advanced in specific domains discussed elsewhere in this framework, including the GIS based land record digitisation mandated under the Sixth State Finance Commission's framework as a precondition for continued Urban Local Body grant eligibility, discussed in Chapters 2 and 11, and the district level Multidimensional Poverty Index and hazard mapping systems discussed in Chapters 1 and 14. Extending this geospatial capability more systematically across the state's broader governance functions, potentially integrated with the artificial intelligence capabilities being developed under the new AI-ML Policy, offers considerable potential for more precise, data driven targeting of government interventions, from identifying households eligible for but not yet enrolled in welfare schemes, discussed in the proactive eligibility matching context of Chapter 7, to more accurate real-time monitoring of infrastructure project progress discussed throughout Chapters 8 through 11.

The Chief Minister's explicit framing of artificial intelligence, data analytics, and cybersecurity as now playing a pivotal role in making governance transparent and citizen-centric reflects a coherent and forward-looking vision for Rajasthan's continued digital governance evolution, one that treats these emerging technologies not as isolated technical initiatives but as integrated components of a broader transformation in how the state government interacts with and serves its citizens (Technology Must Drive Social Inclusion, Big News Network, 2026).

CHAPTER 17: INNOVATION, RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

17.1 State Innovation Ecosystem: Startups and Accelerators

Rajasthan's startup ecosystem has matured considerably over the past decade, anchored by iStart Rajasthan, the flagship startup programme launched in 2016 by the state's Department of Information Technology and Communication, which has grown into what is described as one of the largest state-run and managed startup ecosystems in the country, with more than 5,500 startups registered on its platform as of early 2025, including over 1,700 women-led ventures (iStart Portal Enhances Startup Ecosystem in Rajasthan, Elets eGov, 2025; iStart Rajasthan, CB Insights, 2025). Of these, 4,895 startups hold formal recognition from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, indicating that a substantial majority of the state's registered startups meet the national government's formal criteria for innovation-driven, scalable enterprise, discussed further in the taxation and quality certification incentive context later in this section (IT and ITeS, Rising Rajasthan, 2026).

The state's iStart platform operates as a comprehensive, entirely online ecosystem encompassing startup recognition, upgrading, skill building, promotion, funding facilitation, and acceleration, physically anchored at the Bhamashah Techno Hub in Jaipur alongside dedicated Innovation Hubs in Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Kota, and iStart Nest facilities in Jaipur, Bharatpur, Bikaner, and Udaipur, providing geographically distributed access points across the state's major urban centres rather than concentrating exclusively in the capital (IT and ITeS, Rising Rajasthan, 2026). This distributed infrastructure has translated into measurable funding outcomes, with Rajasthan-based startups raising 43.84 million dollars in the first quarter of 2025 alone, and a cumulative total exceeding 370 million dollars across more than 108 deals between 2014 and 2024, establishing a distinct and growing presence for the state within India's broader startup investment landscape (List of Startups in Rajasthan, Inc42 Media, 2025).

The state government has continued to expand this ecosystem's physical and policy infrastructure, allocating Rs 150 crore in its budget for the financial year ending March 2026 specifically to establish startup infrastructure across different industrial areas, intended to help manufacturing startups establish their operational base within the state, complementing the state's broader manufacturing and MSME strategy discussed in Chapter 4 (List of Startups in Rajasthan, Inc42 Media, 2025). The introduction of a dedicated Global Capability Centre policy, intended to help enterprises access global talent pools and foster innovation, further extends this ecosystem beyond conventional startups toward the higher value knowledge economy investment discussed in the Jaipur mixed-use development context of Chapter 4, positioning Rajasthan to compete for the kind of technology and business services investment that has historically concentrated in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and the National Capital Region.

17.2 Research and Development: Academic-Industry Linkages

Rajasthan's research and development capacity is anchored substantially by its concentration of institutes of national importance, discussed in the higher education context of Chapter 5, including the Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur and the Indian Institute of Management Udaipur, alongside the Malaviya National Institute of Technology Jaipur and the National Law University Jodhpur, a density of premier research institutions notable for a state of Rajasthan's economic profile and providing a meaningful foundation for the kind of academic-industry research collaboration that underpins advanced manufacturing, technology, and business services growth elsewhere in India. Strengthening formal linkages between these institutions and the state's expanding industrial base, discussed throughout Chapter 4, particularly its emerging defence manufacturing cluster around Kotkasim and Alwar and its renewable energy sector discussed in Chapter 9, represents an important, if still developing, priority for translating the state's research capacity into commercially applied innovation.

The state's newly implemented Rajasthan AI-ML Policy of 2026, discussed in the digital governance context of Chapter 16, provides an important complementary framework for academic-industry research linkage specifically in artificial intelligence and machine learning applications, with the policy explicitly intended to set the foundation for administrative reforms across education, health, agriculture, and industries, suggesting that the state envisions its research institutions playing a direct role in developing and validating the artificial intelligence applications the policy anticipates deploying across these sectors (Technology Must Drive Social Inclusion, Big News Network, 2026). This policy orientation, treating research institutions as active partners in government technology deployment rather than purely academic research centres operating separately from state administration, offers a potentially valuable model for deepening academic-industry, and indeed academic-government, research collaboration across the state's broader innovation ecosystem.

The Rajasthan Innovation Challenge programme, which invites students and innovators to develop information technology solutions for various citizen service challenges, further extends this academic-industry and academic-government linkage down to the secondary school level, operating alongside the state's broader iStart School Startup programme discussed in section 17.5, and reflecting a deliberate policy effort to embed applied research and innovation thinking within the state's education system from an early stage rather than treating research and development as a concern exclusive to post-graduate academic and corporate research and development departments (Rajasthan Innovation Challenge, Government of Rajasthan, 2021).

17.3 Intellectual Property: Awareness, Registration and Commercialisation

Rajasthan's intellectual property policy framework provides targeted financial incentives intended to lower the cost barrier that patent, trademark, and geographical indication

registration often poses for the state's smaller enterprises and individual innovators. Under the state's IT and Information Technology-enabled Services policy, an Intellectual Property Creation Incentive provides reimbursement of up to 75 per cent of the costs of acquiring patents, capped at Rs 5 lakh, while the state matches whatever financial assistance the Government of India provides for geographical indication and trademark registration, effectively doubling the available central government support for enterprises seeking to formally protect distinctive regional products or brand identities (IT and ITeS, Rising Rajasthan, 2026). Given Rajasthan's substantial base of traditional craft and handicraft industries discussed in Chapter 4, this geographical indication registration support carries particular relevance for protecting and commercially leveraging the state's distinctive textile, marble craft, and other artisanal product traditions against imitation from outside the state.

Complementing this patent and trademark support, the state's Quality Certification Incentive provides a one-time reimbursement of 50 per cent of costs incurred in obtaining quality certification, up to Rs 25 lakh, recognising that formal quality certification often represents an essential, if underappreciated, complement to intellectual property protection in enabling smaller Rajasthan enterprises to access higher value domestic and export markets discussed in Chapter 3 (IT and ITeS, Rising Rajasthan, 2026). Together, these patent, trademark, geographical indication, and quality certification incentives constitute a coherent, if still modestly scaled, policy architecture intended to move Rajasthan's innovation ecosystem beyond simple invention and enterprise formation toward the formal legal protection and market credentialing that ultimately determines whether innovative products and processes can be successfully commercialised at scale.

Awareness of these intellectual property incentives among Rajasthan's smaller enterprises and individual innovators, particularly those operating outside the state's major urban centres and outside the formal iStart startup ecosystem discussed in section 17.1, remains an area requiring continued outreach effort, since financial incentive schemes deliver their intended commercialisation benefit only to the extent that eligible enterprises are actually aware of their existence and equipped with the administrative capacity to navigate the application process. Extending intellectual property awareness programming through the state's e-Mitra kiosk network discussed in Chapter 16, and through the Rajasthan Handmade Policy's existing engagement with traditional artisan communities, offers a promising channel for reaching innovators and enterprises who might otherwise remain unaware of the substantial support available to them.

17.4 Knowledge Institutions as Engines of Development

Rajasthan's knowledge institutions, spanning the state's institutes of national importance discussed in section 17.2, its network of 92 universities and 4,076 colleges discussed in Chapter 5, and its growing constellation of iStart Innovation Hubs and Nest facilities discussed in section 17.1, together constitute an increasingly significant driver of the state's broader economic development ambitions discussed throughout this framework. The planned NBCC developed mixed-use project in Jaipur, featuring dedicated Global Capability Centre towers alongside a convention centre, hotels, and residential facilities, discussed in Chapter 4,

exemplifies the state's ambition to position its knowledge institutions and its physical business infrastructure as mutually reinforcing components of a genuine knowledge economy cluster, rather than treating higher education and commercial real estate development as separate, unconnected policy domains.

The geographic distribution of Rajasthan's knowledge institutions across Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, and Kota, rather than concentration exclusively in the state capital, offers an important structural advantage for distributing the economic development benefits these institutions generate more broadly across the state's urban hierarchy, discussed in Chapter 11, rather than allowing knowledge economy growth to concentrate entirely in Jaipur at the expense of the state's other major cities. Kota's distinctive position as India's premier coaching and competitive examination preparation hub, discussed in the Smart Cities context of Chapter 11, represents a particularly notable, if unconventional, knowledge economy asset in its own right, drawing hundreds of thousands of students annually from across India and generating a substantial associated services economy around test preparation, accommodation, and student welfare support.

Strengthening the pipeline connecting Rajasthan's knowledge institutions to the state's expanding industrial and services economy, discussed throughout Chapters 3, 4, and 9, requires continued attention to graduate retention within the state, since a persistent challenge facing many of India's premier research institutions located outside the country's largest metropolitan centres is the tendency for their most talented graduates to relocate to Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, or overseas destinations for employment, rather than remaining within the state that educated them. Addressing this graduate retention challenge through continued expansion of high quality employment opportunities within Rajasthan itself, particularly in the knowledge economy and Global Capability Centre sectors discussed in section 17.1, represents an essential complement to the state's substantial investment in knowledge institution capacity.

17.5 Building a Youth Innovation and Research Ecosystem

Rajasthan has invested deliberately in embedding entrepreneurship and innovation capability within its education system from the secondary school level, through the iStart School Startup programme, launched following its announcement in the state's budget speech for the 2021-22 financial year, which has registered 30,373 students across the state's schools, including those attending Industrial Training Institutes and Polytechnic Colleges, through a hub and spoke model connecting incubation centres across the state's nine academic zones to individual schools (Rajasthan Innovation Challenge, Government of Rajasthan, 2021). This programme's explicit objective of creating and embedding a spirit of entrepreneurship in students to encourage the growth of future entrepreneurs and innovators reflects a long-term, generational approach to building the state's innovation ecosystem, recognising that a genuinely durable knowledge economy requires cultivating entrepreneurial mindset and capability well before students reach university age.

This youth innovation ecosystem extends into rural areas through the Rural iStart programme, which had registered 805 rural startups and 109 self-help groups by March 2024, directly connecting the youth innovation agenda to the Self-Help Group based livelihood promotion discussed in Chapter 12, and demonstrating that the state's innovation policy has been deliberately designed to reach beyond its urban centres rather than assuming that entrepreneurship and innovation are exclusively urban phenomena (IT and ITeS, Rising Rajasthan, 2026). The Jaipur Literature Festival's 2025 edition further illustrated the state's efforts to weave youth and broader public innovation engagement into its cultural calendar, providing a platform through which fourteen standout startups, supported by iStart Rajasthan, presented their ideas to a diverse, global audience alongside the festival's core literary programming (Predict Your Next Investment, CB Insights, 2025).

Programmes such as the Challenge for Change initiative, which specifically encourages startups to develop solutions for regional development challenges, connect this youth innovation ecosystem directly to the practical governance and development priorities discussed throughout this framework, from water security challenges discussed in Chapter 10 to healthcare access gaps discussed in Chapter 6, offering young innovators concrete, socially relevant problems to address rather than abstract commercial opportunities alone. Sustaining and scaling this youth innovation ecosystem, ensuring that the pipeline established through school and rural startup engagement translates into genuine long-term entrepreneurial careers rather than one-off participation in a state sponsored programme, represents an important measure of the ecosystem's ultimate effectiveness over the coming decade.

17.6 Skill Development, Employability and Workforce Alignment

Skill development within Rajasthan's broader innovation and knowledge economy strategy is coordinated substantially through the Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation, discussed in the education and employment context of Chapters 3 and 5, which trains youth across hospitality, electronics, and emerging green jobs categories, complementing the state's broader Employment Policy of 2025, including its Vivekanand Employment Assistance Fund and commitment to create an additional 1.25 lakh government and public sector posts for youth, discussed in Chapter 3. Aligning this skill development infrastructure more explicitly with the specific competency demands of the state's expanding startup, Global Capability Centre, and artificial intelligence policy driven employment opportunities discussed throughout this chapter represents an important priority for ensuring that Rajasthan's substantial youth population, comprising nearly 63 per cent of the state's total population discussed in Chapter 1, can genuinely access the higher value knowledge economy employment the state's innovation strategy is designed to generate.

The state's AVGC and Extended Reality Policy, discussed in Chapter 16, exemplifies this workforce alignment approach by explicitly linking a specific technology policy domain, animation, visual effects, gaming, comics, and extended reality, to concrete new career avenues for the state's youth, rather than pursuing technology policy and workforce development as separate, uncoordinated initiatives. Extending this integrated technology policy and workforce alignment model across the state's other emerging technology priorities,

including the artificial intelligence and machine learning applications discussed in section 17.2 and the Global Capability Centre sector discussed in section 17.1, offers a coherent template for ensuring that Rajasthan's continued investment in innovation policy translates into genuine, accessible employment opportunity for the state's youth population rather than benefiting primarily migrant talent recruited from outside the state.

Ultimately, the innovation, research, and knowledge economy strategy discussed throughout this chapter represents an essential complement to the state's broader industrial, digital governance, and human capital development agenda documented across this framework, since sustained economic transformation of the scale envisioned under the Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision requires not only physical infrastructure and investment capital, discussed in Chapters 4, 8, and 9, but also a genuinely innovative, research capable, and continuously upskilling workforce and enterprise base capable of moving the state's economy up the value chain over time. Continued, coordinated investment across the startup ecosystem, research institution, intellectual property, and skill development priorities discussed throughout this chapter will substantially determine whether Rajasthan's considerable and growing innovation infrastructure translates into the kind of sustained, broad based knowledge economy transformation that has historically distinguished India's most successful state economies from those that have grown primarily through capital intensive industrial investment alone.

CHAPTER 18: AGRICULTURE, ALLIED SECTORS AND FOOD SECURITY

18.1 Cropping Pattern, Agricultural Productivity and Input Use

Rajasthan's cropping pattern reflects the state's fundamental water constraint discussed throughout this framework, with approximately 80 per cent of the state's agricultural land dependent entirely on rainfall rather than assured irrigation, according to the state's own Agriculture Department (Agriculture Department, Rajasthan, Ghora, 2026). This overwhelming dependence on monsoon timing and adequacy shapes nearly every dimension of the state's agricultural planning, from the crop varieties farmers select to the input intensity they can reasonably justify investing given the risk of crop failure in any given season. Within this constraint, Rajasthan has established itself as a leading national producer of mustard, bajra, and a range of oilseeds, earning the state's formal branding as the Millet Bowl of India, discussed in Chapter 3, with total foodgrain production reaching 283.98 lakh metric tonnes in the 2025-26 agricultural year (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026).

Input use across Rajasthan's agricultural sector has historically leaned toward conventional chemical fertiliser and pesticide application, consistent with the broader national Green Revolution era agricultural model, though the state has begun a deliberate policy shift toward more sustainable input practices through its Natural Farming Mission, covering approximately 2,000 clusters, 2.5 lakh farmers, and 1 lakh hectares of cultivated land, discussed in Chapter 3, intended to reduce chemical input dependence and improve long-term soil health across the state's often fragile arid and semi-arid soils (Rajasthan Economic Review 2025-26, Drishti IAS, 2026). This shift carries particular significance for Rajasthan given the soil degradation and desertification pressures documented in Chapter 13, since chemical input intensive agriculture in already fragile soils can accelerate the very land degradation processes that threaten the state's long-term agricultural productivity.

Agricultural productivity per hectare across Rajasthan remains constrained by the combination of low and erratic rainfall, limited irrigation coverage, and the comparatively poor soil quality characteristic of much of the state's arid and semi-arid terrain, discussed in Chapter 1, meaning that the state's substantial aggregate agricultural output, discussed in Chapter 3, reflects extensive cultivation across a very large land area more than intensive yield per hectare in the manner characteristic of states such as Punjab or Haryana. Improving this per-hectare productivity, through continued extension of the Natural Farming Mission, improved seed varieties bred specifically for arid conditions, and the water use efficiency improvements discussed in section 18.2, represents an important complement to the state's current strategy of extensive area based production for sustaining agricultural output growth as the productive limits of further land area expansion are approached.

18.2 Irrigation and Water Use Efficiency in Agriculture

Given that four-fifths of Rajasthan's agricultural land remains rain-fed, discussed in section 18.1, the roughly one-fifth of cultivated area that does receive assured irrigation, substantially through the Indira Gandhi Canal system and smaller scale tube well and tank irrigation, carries disproportionate importance for the state's overall agricultural output and farmer income stability, discussed further in section 18.3. The irrigation infrastructure discussed in detail in Chapter 10, including the Modified Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal-ERCP Link Project intended to extend surface irrigation across thirteen additional eastern Rajasthan districts, represents the state's primary strategy for expanding this assured irrigation coverage over the coming decade.

Water use efficiency within the state's existing irrigated command areas remains an area of significant improvement potential, with the state's historical underpricing of irrigation water, discussed in the fiscal context of Chapter 2, having contributed to comparatively inefficient water application practices in some canal command areas, alongside the waterlogging and secondary salinisation challenges documented in the Indira Gandhi Canal command area discussed in Chapter 13. Micro-irrigation technologies, including drip and sprinkler systems, offer a proven pathway for substantially improving water use efficiency relative to conventional flood irrigation, and the state government's continued promotion of PM-KUSUM solar powered irrigation pumps, discussed in the energy context of Chapter 9, provides a complementary mechanism for improving both the water and energy efficiency of the state's irrigated agriculture simultaneously, since solar powered pumps typically encourage more judicious water application relative to flat-rate subsidised grid electricity that provides little incentive for water conservation.

Continued integration of water security planning, discussed in the Jal Jeevan Mission context of Chapter 10, with agricultural water use planning represents an important frontier for improving Rajasthan's overall water use efficiency, since treating drinking water and irrigation water security as genuinely interconnected challenges, rather than separate departmental responsibilities, offers the most promising pathway for the state to extract greater agricultural and human welfare value from its severely constrained water resource base, discussed throughout this framework.

18.3 Agricultural Marketing, Price Realisation and Farmer Income

Agricultural marketing reform in Rajasthan has advanced substantially through the integration of more than 130 mandis, or agricultural produce markets, with the national electronic National Agriculture Market platform, commonly known as eNAM, launched nationally in 2016 to provide farmers with access to nationwide markets and price discovery mechanisms commensurate with the quality of their produce, rather than being limited to the potentially exploitative bargaining position farmers face when selling exclusively through a single local intermediary (Agriculture Department, Rajasthan, Ghora, 2026; Agriculture Market, PWOlyIAS, 2026). This eNAM integration operates within the broader regulatory framework established by the state's Agricultural Produce Market Committee Act,

coordinated through the Rajasthan State Agricultural Marketing Board, one of the core departments integrated within the state's unified Rajasthan Agriculture Portal alongside the Rajasthan State Warehousing Corporation and the state's Horticulture and Organic Farming departments (Agriculture Department, Rajasthan, Ghyora, 2026).

The Rajasthan Agriculture Portal's explicit design priorities, including real-time mandi price information, direct buyer connections, and online auction access, alongside Direct Benefit Transfer integration for subsidy delivery intended to reduce corruption risk, reflect a deliberate policy effort to strengthen farmer bargaining position and price realisation through improved market information access and reduced intermediary dependence (Agriculture Department, Rajasthan, Ghyora, 2026). Given that the national legal framework specifically excludes contract farming arrangements from the ambit of state Agricultural Produce Market Committee Acts and removes stockholding limits on produce purchased under contract farming, discussed in the broader national agricultural marketing context, Rajasthan's farmers increasingly have access to an expanding range of marketing channels beyond conventional mandi sales alone, including direct contract arrangements with food processing companies discussed in section 18.4 (Agriculture Market, PWOnlyIAS, 2026).

Farmer income stability nonetheless remains vulnerable to the state's severe rainfall variability, discussed throughout this chapter, meaning that improved marketing infrastructure and price discovery mechanisms, while valuable, cannot alone fully insulate Rajasthan's substantially rain-fed farming population from the fundamental production risk their agricultural livelihoods face each season, underscoring the continued importance of the agricultural insurance mechanisms discussed in section 18.8 as an essential complement to marketing reform.

18.4 Food Processing Industry and Value Chain Development

Food processing represents an increasingly important value addition opportunity for Rajasthan's substantial agricultural output, discussed in Chapter 3, offering a pathway for the state to capture a greater share of agricultural value within its own borders rather than exporting raw or minimally processed agricultural commodities for processing elsewhere. The multi-modal logistics parks under development at Ajmer, Kishangarh, and Jaipur, discussed in Chapters 4 and 8, incorporate dedicated cold chain infrastructure specifically intended to support this food processing and value chain development strategy, reducing the substantial post-harvest losses that inadequate cold storage and transport infrastructure have historically imposed on Indian agricultural supply chains, particularly for the state's horticultural produce discussed in section 18.7.

The Rajasthan Agriculture Portal's explicit integration of scientific warehousing, cold chain, and logistics services is specifically designed to ensure farmers do not need to resort to distress selling of perishable produce immediately after harvest simply because adequate storage infrastructure is unavailable, a pattern that historically has forced many Indian farmers to accept below-market prices during harvest season gluts rather than being able to store produce and sell gradually as market prices normalise (Agriculture Department,

Rajasthan, Ghorya, 2026). Strengthening this cold chain and storage infrastructure represents a particularly high-value investment priority given its potential to simultaneously improve farmer income, discussed in section 18.3, and reduce the substantial food waste that inadequate post-harvest infrastructure otherwise generates.

Given Rajasthan's substantial dairy sector, discussed in section 18.5, and its status as a leading milk producing state, dairy processing represents a particularly significant food processing value chain opportunity, alongside oilseed and mustard processing given the state's leadership in these crops discussed in section 18.1. Continued private sector investment in food processing capacity, integrated with the state's broader MSME and industrial policy framework discussed in Chapter 4, offers a promising avenue for translating Rajasthan's substantial agricultural production volume into correspondingly substantial agricultural value addition and associated rural employment generation.

18.5 Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Poultry: Economic Contribution

Livestock contributes over one third of Rajasthan's total agricultural output, discussed in Chapter 3, reflecting the state's long pastoral tradition dating to its historical desert and semi-arid grazing economy, and positioning Rajasthan among India's leading milk producing states alongside its status as the country's largest wool producing state, a legacy directly connected to the traditional pastoral communities discussed in the ethnic and cultural context of Chapter 1. This substantial livestock economy offers particular resilience value for Rajasthan's substantially rain-fed agricultural sector, discussed throughout this chapter, since livestock rearing provides household income that is considerably less directly exposed to single-season monsoon failure risk than crop cultivation alone, allowing farming households to diversify their income sources and thereby better withstand the production risk inherent in the state's predominantly rain-fed cropping pattern.

Dairy cooperative institutions, discussed in the rural livelihood context of Chapter 12, provide an important institutional channel connecting Rajasthan's substantial smallholder dairy production to organised processing and marketing infrastructure, offering rural households, and particularly rural women given the traditional gendered division of dairy animal care responsibilities within Rajasthan's farming households, a reliable and relatively frequent income stream that complements the more seasonal and risk-exposed income from crop cultivation discussed in sections 18.1 through 18.3. Strengthening these dairy cooperative structures, and extending similar cooperative or contract farming models to poultry production, offers a promising pathway for further formalising and value-adding Rajasthan's substantial livestock economy.

Given the state's Natural Farming Mission's emphasis on integrated crop-livestock systems, discussed in section 18.1, strengthening the deliberate integration of livestock management with the state's broader sustainable agriculture transition, using livestock manure for soil health improvement in place of chemical fertiliser inputs, represents an important synergy between the state's animal husbandry sector and its broader agricultural sustainability

strategy, connecting the livestock economy discussed in this section directly to the land degradation and soil health challenges discussed in Chapter 13.

18.6 Fisheries: Inland, Marine and Aquaculture

Fisheries represent a comparatively modest component of Rajasthan's primary sector given the state's limited water bodies, discussed in Chapters 1 and 13, and its complete absence of any marine coastline, discussed in the ports and logistics context of Chapter 8. Inland fisheries development within the state has proceeded substantially around the reservoirs and canal networks created by the state's major irrigation infrastructure, discussed in section 18.2 and Chapter 10, including the reservoirs behind major dams and the extensive canal network of the Indira Gandhi Canal system, which have created artificial aquatic habitats supporting modest but locally significant fisheries activity in districts that would otherwise possess essentially no natural fisheries resource base given their underlying arid geography.

The severe pressure facing Rajasthan's natural water bodies, exemplified by the dramatic decline of Sambhar Lake's wetland area from 30.7 per cent to just 3.4 per cent of the site over recent decades, discussed in Chapter 13, underscores the fragility of the aquatic habitat base on which the state's already modest fisheries sector depends, meaning that continued wetland and water body conservation, discussed throughout Chapter 13, carries direct relevance for the fisheries sector's continued viability alongside its more prominently discussed biodiversity and drinking water security implications.

Given these fundamental water resource constraints, Rajasthan's fisheries development strategy is best understood as a genuinely secondary agricultural activity, appropriately scaled to the state's limited aquatic resource base rather than pursued as a primary agricultural development priority in the manner appropriate for India's coastal states or states with more substantial natural river and lake systems. Continued modest investment in reservoir and canal based aquaculture, integrated with the broader irrigation infrastructure management discussed in section 18.2, represents the most realistic and appropriately scaled approach for extracting incremental economic and nutritional value from this constrained resource base.

18.7 Horticulture, Floriculture and Medicinal Plants

Horticulture has emerged as an increasingly significant income source for Rajasthan's small and marginal farmers, with the state's Agriculture Portal providing dedicated access to horticulture-based subsidies, training modules, and nursery support intended to encourage diversification beyond the state's traditional cereal and oilseed dominated cropping pattern discussed in section 18.1 (Agriculture Department, Rajasthan, Ghyora, 2026). This horticultural diversification carries particular economic significance for smallholder farmers given that fruit, vegetable, and flower crops typically generate substantially higher per-hectare income than conventional cereal cultivation, though this higher potential return comes with correspondingly higher production risk given horticultural crops' generally greater sensitivity to water stress and their more limited shelf life absent the cold chain infrastructure discussed in section 18.4.

Rajasthan's citrus cultivation, particularly kinnow production concentrated in the state's northern districts, alongside its production of pomegranate, ber, and other arid-adapted fruit varieties, illustrates the state's horticultural strategy of selecting crop varieties specifically suited to its water constrained growing conditions rather than attempting to cultivate horticultural varieties better suited to wetter agro-climatic zones elsewhere in India. Medicinal and aromatic plant cultivation, including species such as isabgol, aloe vera, and various desert-adapted medicinal herbs, offers a further horticultural diversification opportunity particularly well matched to Rajasthan's arid growing conditions, connecting the state's horticultural sector to the broader pharmaceutical and wellness product value chains increasingly significant within India's domestic and export markets.

Continued expansion of the organic and natural farming certification support available through the Rajasthan Agriculture Portal, including financial assistance for certification under the Participatory Guarantee System India and National Programme for Organic Production frameworks, offers particular relevance for the state's horticultural sector, given growing domestic and export market premium for certified organic fruit, vegetable, and medicinal plant products (Agriculture Department, Rajasthan, Ghorya, 2026). Strengthening this certification support infrastructure, alongside the nursery and training support already provided, represents an important priority for maximising the income potential of Rajasthan's expanding horticultural diversification strategy.

18.8 Agricultural Credit, Insurance and Risk Management

Agricultural credit access for Rajasthan's farmers operates substantially through the national Kisan Credit Card scheme, which the Reserve Bank of India has recently moved to substantially strengthen through revised draft norms issued in February 2026, proposing the inclusion of expenses on agri-tech initiatives such as soil testing, weather forecasting, and organic certification within eligible farm loan components, alongside waiver of collateral and margin requirements for agricultural and allied loans up to Rs 2 lakh per borrower (RBI Revises Draft Norms for Kisan Credit Card, News on Air, 2026). These proposed reforms carry particular relevance for Rajasthan's substantial small and marginal farmer population, given the draft's specific proposal of a flexible credit limit ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 50,000 for marginal farmers holding up to one hectare of land, a category that constitutes a significant share of farming households across the state's more fragmented land holding districts.

The RBI's proposed standardisation of crop tenure classifications, at twelve months for short-duration crops and eighteen months for long-duration crops, alongside extension of Kisan Credit Card validity to six years, would provide Rajasthan's farmers with considerably greater credit planning stability than the shorter, more frequently renewed credit cycles that have historically characterised Indian agricultural lending, reducing the administrative burden farmers face in maintaining continuous access to formal credit (RBI Revises Draft Norms for Kisan Credit Card, News on Air, 2026). Given Rajasthan's substantially rain-fed agricultural base discussed throughout this chapter, and the correspondingly elevated production risk this creates, expanded and more flexible formal credit access represents an essential complement

to the state's broader agricultural development strategy, reducing farmer dependence on informal, frequently higher cost credit sources during periods of crop failure or market price weakness.

Agricultural insurance, delivered through the national Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana crop insurance scheme, provides a further essential risk management instrument for Rajasthan's farmers, offering protection against the yield loss risk inherent in the state's predominantly rain-fed cropping pattern discussed throughout this chapter. Continued strengthening of both credit and insurance access, integrated with the water security, marketing, and value chain development priorities discussed throughout this chapter, represents an essential foundation for ensuring that Rajasthan's agricultural sector, despite its severe underlying water constraints, continues to provide a stable and improving livelihood foundation for the substantial share of the state's population that remains dependent on agriculture and allied activities for their economic wellbeing, discussed in the labour market context of Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 19: TOURISM, CULTURE AND CREATIVE ECONOMY

19.1 Tourism Asset Inventory: Natural, Heritage, Religious and Adventure

Rajasthan possesses one of the most diverse and internationally recognised tourism asset inventories of any Indian state, anchored by its six UNESCO World Heritage inscribed Hill Forts at Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh, Ranthambore, Gagron, Amber, and Jaisalmer, alongside the separately inscribed Pink City of Jaipur, recognised in 2019 for its distinctive eighteenth century urban planning, both discussed in Chapter 1. This heritage asset base is complemented by significant religious tourism destinations, most prominently the Dargah Sharif at Ajmer, a major pilgrimage site for Muslims across South Asia, and the Dilwara Jain temples at Mount Abu, discussed in the cultural profile context of Chapter 1, drawing pilgrims and heritage tourists whose travel motivations extend well beyond conventional leisure tourism into genuine devotional and cultural practice.

Wildlife and natural heritage tourism represents a further significant pillar of the state's tourism asset base, built around the state's protected area network discussed in Chapter 13, including the Ranthambore, Sariska, and Mukundra Hills tiger reserves, the Keoladeo Ghana Sanctuary near Bharatpur, itself a Ramsar designated wetland of international importance, and the Desert National Park in Jaisalmer, offering visitors access to tiger sighting opportunities, exceptional migratory bird watching, and genuine Thar Desert ecosystem experience within a single state's tourism circuit. Adventure tourism, building on the Thar Desert's distinctive dune landscapes around Jaisalmer and the Aravalli hill trekking opportunities around Mount Abu and Kumbhalgarh, has grown as a complementary offering to the state's more established heritage and wildlife tourism, appealing particularly to younger domestic and international travellers seeking active, experiential travel beyond conventional sightseeing.

The state's princely heritage extends into its tourism asset inventory through a network of heritage hotels converted from former royal palaces and forts, including properties operated in partnership with the state government under the Dak Bungalow public-private partnership programme discussed in Chapter 4, which converted state owned properties in Ajmer, Bharatpur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Alwar, Bhilwara, Jaisalmer, Mount Abu, and Nathdwara into three-star standard accommodation, alongside independently operated luxury heritage properties across the state's major cities. Rajasthan's Camel Utsav festival, held annually and gaining particular international attention following the United Nations' declaration of 2024 as the International Year of Camelids, further illustrates the state's success in transforming its distinctive desert pastoral heritage, discussed in Chapter 18, into a genuine tourism attraction in its own right (Republic Day: Rajasthan Tableau Depicts State's Traditions, Deccan Herald, 2024).

19.2 Tourism Infrastructure: Hotels, Connectivity and Facilitation

Tourism infrastructure development in Rajasthan has advanced substantially in recent years, closely integrated with the broader transport connectivity investment discussed in Chapter 8.

The launch of the Jaipur-Udaipur and Jaipur-Jodhpur Vande Bharat Express services on 24 October 2025 has significantly reduced travel times between the state's four principal tourism centres, directly supporting the multi-city tourism circuits that constitute the majority of visitor itineraries within Rajasthan (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026). The Union Cabinet's October 2025 approval of a new airport at Kota-Bundi, discussed in Chapter 8, was explicitly framed as supporting the growing tourism sector of southern Rajasthan alongside its industrial and educational development objectives, reflecting the state's deliberate integration of aviation infrastructure planning with its tourism development strategy.

Rajasthan's distinctive luxury rail tourism offering, comprising the Palace on Wheels and Royal Rajasthan on Wheels services, provides visitors with an immersive, multi-day journey connecting the state's key heritage destinations aboard restored and purpose-built luxury railway carriages, representing a genuinely differentiated tourism product that few other Indian states or international destinations can readily replicate given its direct connection to Rajasthan's princely railway heritage (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026). Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ajmer on 28 February 2026 to inaugurate and lay foundation stones for development projects worth over Rs 16,680 crore across urban development, drinking water, roads, irrigation, energy, and industrial infrastructure sectors further illustrates the continued scale of central government infrastructure investment flowing into locations of significant religious and heritage tourism importance within the state (Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026).

Tourism facilitation infrastructure, including the state's continued participation in major international travel trade fairs such as the World Travel Market in London, ITB Berlin, IFTM Top Resa in Paris, the JATA Tourism Expo in Japan, and FITUR in Madrid, reflects a sustained and internationally coordinated marketing strategy that the state's Department of Tourism credits directly with driving the substantial growth in international tourist arrivals documented in section 19.3 (Rajasthan Sees Surge in Global Tourist Arrivals, BW Travel, 2025). This combination of physical infrastructure investment and sustained international marketing engagement represents a coherent, mutually reinforcing tourism infrastructure strategy that has positioned Rajasthan as one of India's most consistently visible state tourism brands on the global travel marketing stage.

19.3 Domestic and International Tourist Flows: Trends and Targets

Rajasthan's tourism sector recorded exceptional growth through 2025, with the state welcoming over 25.44 crore, or 254.4 million, total visitors during the calendar year, of which more than 25.25 crore were domestic travellers, representing a 9.74 per cent increase in domestic tourist arrivals compared to the previous year (Rajasthan Records 9.74% Growth in Domestic Tourist Arrivals in 2025, Business Standard, 2026). This domestic tourism momentum built on an already strong start to the year, with the state recording 37.8 million domestic visitors in January and February 2025 alone, illustrating the scale and pace of

Rajasthan's post-pandemic domestic tourism recovery and subsequent growth (Incredible Rajasthan, Rajasthan Tourism Online, 2025).

International tourist arrivals into Rajasthan reached a record 20,72,407 visitors in 2024, representing 21.92 per cent year-on-year growth compared to 2023 and accounting for a substantial share of India's total 96.57 lakh international tourist arrivals that year, with the positive trend continuing into 2025 with 7.88 lakh foreign visitors arriving in the first quarter alone (Rajasthan Sees Surge in Global Tourist Arrivals, BW Travel, 2025). More recent data places the state's 2025 international arrivals at 19.45 lakh, drawing visitors substantially from Europe, North America, Australia, and Asia, with Tourism Commissioner Rukmani Riar noting that while India as a whole experienced some decline in foreign tourist arrivals during this period, Rajasthan's own decline was comparatively smaller than that recorded by other Indian states, indicating relative resilience in the state's international tourism appeal even amid broader national headwinds (Rajasthan Records 9.74% Growth in Domestic Tourist Arrivals in 2025, Business Standard, 2026; Rajasthan Tourism, Economy, GDP, Industries and Agriculture Insights, IBEF, 2026).

Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, and Ajmer remain the state's top visitor attractions, consistent with the tourism asset inventory discussed in section 19.1, though continued efforts to develop and market secondary destinations, including the state's southern tribal belt and its wildlife protected areas beyond Ranthambore, offer meaningful potential to distribute tourism's substantial economic benefit more broadly across Rajasthan's districts, connecting directly to the intra-state disparity themes discussed in Chapter 1.

19.4 Cultural Heritage Preservation and Institutional Framework

Cultural heritage preservation within Rajasthan operates through a combination of national heritage protection frameworks administered by the Archaeological Survey of India for centrally protected monuments, state level heritage conservation coordinated through the Rajasthan Department of Archaeology and Museums, and public-private partnership arrangements discussed in Chapter 4, including the restoration and conservation of Tijara Fort in Alwar and the Jal Mahal Integrated Tourism Project in Jaipur, which together illustrate the state's willingness to mobilise private capital and management expertise for heritage restoration where public resources alone would prove insufficient to address the scale of the state's conservation needs.

Given the direct connection between heritage preservation quality and the state's substantial heritage tourism economy, discussed throughout this chapter, Rajasthan's institutional framework for cultural heritage preservation carries economic significance well beyond its cultural and historical value alone, since the deterioration of the state's forts, palaces, and heritage urban cores, discussed in the urban development context of Chapter 11, would directly threaten the tourism revenue and employment that these assets currently generate. This economic dimension has reinforced the state's institutional commitment to heritage conservation, evident in Jaipur's and Udaipur's explicit prioritisation of heritage sensitive urban planning within their Smart Cities Mission strategies discussed in Chapter 11.

Intangible cultural heritage preservation, encompassing Rajasthan's traditional music, dance forms such as ghoomar, oral storytelling traditions, and festival practices including the Camel Utsav discussed in section 19.1, represents an equally important, if less physically visible, dimension of the state's cultural heritage preservation framework, requiring sustained institutional support for traditional performing artists and craft practitioners to ensure these living traditions continue to be practised and transmitted to future generations rather than surviving only as museum exhibits or tourist performances disconnected from their original cultural context and community significance.

19.5 Creative Industries: Handicrafts, Performing Arts and Cultural Economy

Rajasthan's handicraft sector represents one of the state's most economically significant and internationally recognised creative industries, encompassing distinctive traditions including bandhej tie-dye textiles, bagru natural dye block printing, and applique work, crafts substantially practised and increasingly entrepreneurially led by women artisans, as showcased in the state's 2024 Republic Day parade tableau themed around the development of women's handicraft industries (Republic Day: Rajasthan Tableau Depicts State's Traditions, Deccan Herald, 2024). This handicraft sector connects directly to the dedicated textile parks and handicraft clusters established in Bhilwara, Pali, Bhiwadi, Barmer, and Jodhpur, discussed in Chapter 4, and to the state's Rajasthan Handmade Policy specifically supporting traditional artisan communities, discussed in Chapter 17, together constituting a coherent policy architecture linking traditional craft production to formal enterprise support and export market access.

India's national handicraft exports reached over Rs 149 billion in the 2025 financial year, with Rajasthan, given its status as one of the country's most prominent handicraft producing states alongside Kashmir, Gujarat, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh, contributing a significant share of this national export value through its textile, jewellery, marble craft, and woodwork traditions (Export Value of Handicrafts India, Statista, 2026). This substantial export contribution underscores the genuine commercial significance of Rajasthan's creative industries sector, extending well beyond its tourism souvenir market into a meaningful export earning component of the state's broader trade profile discussed in Chapter 3.

Performing arts institutions and festivals, including the Jaipur Literature Festival discussed in the innovation ecosystem context of Chapter 17, which has increasingly incorporated startup and creative economy programming alongside its core literary content, illustrate the state's success in building a cultural events calendar that generates both direct cultural value and substantial associated tourism and creative economy spillover benefit, drawing international visitors and media attention that extends well beyond the immediate audience for any single festival event.

19.6 Film, Media and Content Industries as Economic Drivers

Rajasthan's distinctive palaces, forts, and desert landscapes have made the state one of India's most sought after filming locations, both for domestic Hindi cinema and increasingly for

international productions seeking authentic historical and desert settings unavailable elsewhere, generating economic activity across location fees, hospitality, transport, and local employment for production support services that extends well beyond the state's conventional tourism revenue streams discussed in section 19.3. The Jaipur International Film Festival, held annually since 2009 under the Jaipur International Film Festival Trust, has grown into a significant regional platform for film and media content, with its 2026 edition, the eighteenth, and its most recent completed cycle screening 329 films from 67 countries, reflecting the festival's substantial international curatorial reach and Jaipur's growing standing as a genuine film festival destination within India's broader film festival circuit (Jaipur International Film Festival, Wikipedia, 2026).

This growing film and media sector presence connects directly to the state's AVGC and Extended Reality Policy discussed in Chapter 16, which explicitly targets new career avenues for youth in animation, visual effects, gaming, and extended reality technologies, suggesting a deliberate state policy effort to build production and post-production capacity within Rajasthan itself, rather than the state serving purely as a filming location for productions whose actual production and post-production work occurs elsewhere in India or internationally. Developing this fuller film and media value chain, encompassing not only location filming but also production services, post-production facilities, and content development capacity, represents a meaningful opportunity to deepen the economic benefit Rajasthan captures from its already well established status as a premier filming destination.

Content industries more broadly, including the growing digital and social media content creation ecosystem building on Rajasthan's exceptional visual heritage assets discussed throughout this chapter, offer a further, still emerging dimension of the state's creative economy, with the same forts, palaces, and desert landscapes that draw conventional tourists increasingly generating substantial organic promotional value through digital content creators and social media influencers whose content reaches global audiences well beyond those the state's formal tourism marketing budget, discussed in section 19.2, could otherwise reach directly. Continued integration of this organic digital content ecosystem with the state's formal tourism and creative industries strategy, discussed throughout this chapter, represents an important and cost-effective complement to Rajasthan's already substantial and successful tourism and creative economy development achievements.

CHAPTER 20: CROSS-CUTTING THEMES AND INTEGRATED POLICY IMPERATIVES

20.1 Sustainable Development Goals of the State

Rajasthan's progress against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, tracked through the state's own SDG India Index aligned composite score, rose from 57.58 in 2022 to 60.25 in 2023, discussed in Chapter 1, reflecting sustained forward movement across the majority of the seventeen goal areas even as the state's aggregate score continues to trail India's more developed states (Rajasthan Sustainable Development Goals Report, Government of Rajasthan, 2023). Goal 10, concerning reduced inequalities, recorded the sharpest single year improvement of any goal area between 2022 and 2023, a finding this framework has connected throughout to the state's expanding beneficiary linked welfare architecture discussed in Chapter 7, its 50 per cent women's reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions discussed in Chapter 12, and its targeted Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and Other Backward Classes reservation framework discussed in Chapter 7.

Progress across individual goal areas has been genuinely uneven, however, illustrating why a single composite score, while useful for tracking overall trajectory, can obscure important variation across the state's development priorities. Goal 3, concerning health, shows continued gaps relative to national averages in maternal and infant mortality, discussed in Chapter 6, even as the state has achieved dramatic long-term improvement in maternal mortality specifically. Goal 4, concerning education, reflects the paradox documented in Chapter 5, where Rajasthan's secondary school retention and examination performance compare favourably nationally even as its foundational literacy outcomes, per ASER 2024, place it among states still struggling with basic learning outcomes. Goal 5, concerning gender equality, shows similarly mixed progress, discussed further in section 20.2, with strong formal political representation gains coexisting with persistent gaps in higher education access and child sex ratio.

This uneven, goal-by-goal progress pattern underscores the central analytical argument threaded throughout this framework: Rajasthan's aggregate economic and development momentum, discussed extensively in Chapters 2 through 4, does not translate uniformly across every dimension of human development and inclusion, and the state's continued SDG progress will depend on sustained, targeted policy attention to the specific goal areas, foundational literacy, maternal and infant health, and gender equity chief among them, where the state's trajectory continues to lag both its own aggregate economic performance and the progress achieved by India's leading states.

20.2 Gender Mainstreaming Across Sectors

Gender mainstreaming across Rajasthan's development architecture, discussed in dedicated detail in Chapter 7, has advanced furthest within the state's political governance structures, where 50 per cent reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and the introduction of dedicated mahila gram sabhas, discussed in Chapter 12, have created formal,

institutionalised channels for women's political participation exceeding the constitutional minimum. This governance level progress has not yet been matched with equivalent consistency across the state's economic and educational sectors, where the Female Labour Force Participation Rate of 47.8 per cent, discussed in Chapter 3, exceeds the national average even as persistent gender gaps in higher education Gross Enrolment Ratio and digital access for educational purposes, discussed in Chapter 5, indicate that women's strong labour market presence has not yet been fully matched by equivalent educational and digital access equity.

Cross-sectoral gender mainstreaming requires that gender considerations be embedded within sectoral policy design from the outset rather than addressed through standalone women-specific schemes alone. The Rajeevika rural livelihoods mission's Self-Help Group model, discussed in Chapter 12, exemplifies this integrated approach by embedding gender considerations directly within rural livelihood and agricultural policy design, while the iStart Rajasthan startup ecosystem's tracking of over 1,700 women-led ventures among its registered startups, discussed in Chapter 17, illustrates a similar integration within the state's innovation policy. Extending this integrated gender mainstreaming approach more systematically across the state's industrial policy, discussed in Chapter 4, and its emerging technology policy framework, discussed in Chapter 16, particularly regarding women's representation within the Global Capability Centre and artificial intelligence driven employment opportunities these policies are designed to generate, represents an important priority for the state's continued gender equity agenda.

The persistent gender gap in Rajasthan's child sex ratio, at 888 girls per 1,000 boys as discussed in Chapter 1, alongside documented adolescent undernutrition patterns linked to customary underfeeding practices discussed in Chapter 6, indicate that gender mainstreaming in Rajasthan cannot be addressed through economic and political inclusion policy alone, but must continue to engage directly with the underlying social and cultural norms that shape household level treatment of girls and women from birth onward, a dimension of gender mainstreaming that requires sustained community engagement and social norm change work extending well beyond conventional government scheme delivery.

20.3 Youth Policy and Demographic Dividend Realisation

Rajasthan's youth population, comprising nearly 63 per cent of the state's total population discussed in Chapter 1, represents the single most significant demographic asset underpinning the state's Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 economic ambitions discussed throughout this framework, provided this youth population can be equipped with the education, skills, and employment opportunities necessary to translate demographic weight into genuine economic productivity. The state's Employment Policy of 2025, discussed in Chapter 3, including its Vivekanand Employment Assistance Fund and commitment to create 1.25 lakh additional government and public sector youth positions, represents the state's most direct policy instrument for this demographic dividend realisation, complemented by the Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation's vocational training programming discussed in Chapters 5 and 17.

Realising this demographic dividend requires coordinated action across nearly every sector discussed in this framework, since youth employability depends jointly on the foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes discussed in Chapter 5, the health and nutrition status discussed in Chapter 6, the vocational and technical training infrastructure discussed in Chapters 5 and 17, and ultimately the availability of sufficient quality employment opportunities within the state's expanding industrial, services, and knowledge economy sectors discussed in Chapters 3, 4, and 17. The state's elevated unemployment rate of 4.4 per cent, discussed in Chapter 3, notably higher than the national average despite Rajasthan's comparatively strong labour force participation, indicates that the demographic dividend Rajasthan's youth population represents remains only partially realised, with job creation, rather than labour supply, representing the binding constraint on fuller demographic dividend capture.

The state's emerging technology policy framework, encompassing the AI-ML Policy of 2026 and AVGC and Extended Reality Policy discussed in Chapter 16, alongside the iStart School Startup programme's embedding of entrepreneurship education from secondary school age discussed in Chapter 17, together represent a forward-looking, generationally oriented strategy for ensuring that Rajasthan's youth population is equipped not merely for conventional employment but for the emerging technology driven employment categories that will likely define the state's economy by the 2047 horizon this framework's title vision anticipates.

20.4 Migration: Internal, Inter-State and International Dimensions

Migration patterns within, into, and out of Rajasthan carry significant implications across nearly every sectoral chapter of this framework. Internal rural-urban migration within the state, with 32 lakh people recorded as having migrated from rural to urban areas as per the 2011 Census, representing 4 per cent of India's total rural-urban migrant population, discussed in Chapter 11, follows distinct gendered drivers, with men migrating primarily for employment and women primarily for marriage, a pattern with direct implications for the urban housing, service delivery, and social security portability discussed in Chapters 7 and 11.

Inter-state migration carries particular significance for Rajasthan's eastern districts, discussed in the regional cooperation context of Chapter 4, where Alwar and Bharatpur's functional economic integration with the National Capital Region draws substantial commuter and employment seeking migration flows connected to the Khushkhera-Bhiwadi-Neemrana industrial node's success, illustrating how inter-state migration and industrial policy are directly interconnected within Rajasthan's specific geographic context. Simultaneously, Rajasthan itself functions as a significant source of outward labour migration, with workers from the state's less economically developed western and southern districts moving to Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Delhi National Capital Region in search of employment opportunities not yet available within their home districts, a pattern connected to the intra-state disparity themes discussed in Chapter 1 and the aspirational district challenges discussed in the same chapter.

International migration from Rajasthan, while less extensively documented within this framework's source material than internal and inter-state patterns, follows established historical channels connecting the state's Marwari merchant diaspora tradition, discussed in the cultural profile context of Chapter 1, to continued international business and remittance linkages, alongside more recent labour migration to Gulf Cooperation Council countries common across much of northern and western India. Strengthening migrant worker welfare portability, ensuring that Rajasthan's social security pension architecture, health insurance coverage, and other beneficiary linked welfare entitlements discussed in Chapter 7 remain accessible to migrant workers regardless of their current state or country of residence, represents an important, still developing priority connecting the state's welfare architecture directly to its substantial migration reality.

20.5 Science, Technology and Innovation for Development

Science, technology, and innovation policy represents an increasingly central, cross-cutting pillar of Rajasthan's development strategy, discussed in dedicated detail in Chapters 16 and 17, with the state's newly implemented AI-ML Policy of 2026 explicitly designed to set the foundation for administrative reforms across education, health, agriculture, and industries rather than functioning as a narrow, sector-specific technology initiative. This cross-cutting design philosophy reflects growing recognition within the state's administration that emerging technologies, properly deployed, can meaningfully improve outcomes across nearly every sectoral domain discussed throughout this framework, from artificial intelligence assisted disease surveillance connected to the health system strengthening priorities discussed in Chapter 6, to geospatial and data driven targeting of welfare interventions connected to the social justice priorities discussed in Chapter 7.

The state's iStart Rajasthan startup ecosystem, discussed in Chapter 17, alongside its Global Capability Centre policy, discussed in Chapter 17, together position innovation policy as directly connected to the state's broader industrial and knowledge economy development strategy discussed in Chapter 4, rather than treating science and technology policy as an isolated concern separate from the state's core economic development agenda. Continued integration of the state's research institutions, discussed in Chapter 17, with its emerging technology policy framework, discussed in Chapter 16, offers considerable potential to deepen this cross-cutting innovation impact further, particularly as the state's Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation, discussed in Chapter 1, continues to mature as the state's central coordinating body for evidence based, technically informed policy development across departments.

Ensuring that this science, technology, and innovation agenda genuinely serves the state's broader inclusive development objectives, rather than benefiting disproportionately the state's already better resourced urban and educated population, requires deliberate attention to technology access and digital literacy across Rajasthan's full population, discussed in the digital infrastructure context of Chapter 16, and continued extension of innovation ecosystem infrastructure, discussed in Chapter 17, into the state's rural and economically disadvantaged

districts through programmes such as Rural iStart, rather than concentrating innovation policy benefit exclusively within Jaipur and the state's other major urban centres.

20.6 Statistical System Strengthening and Evidence-Based Policymaking

The quality and granularity of Rajasthan's statistical system fundamentally determines the state's capacity to design, target, and evaluate the sectoral policies discussed throughout this framework, making statistical system strengthening a genuinely cross-cutting priority rather than a narrow technical concern. The state's newly announced district domestic product initiative, launched under the Mukhyamantri Viksit Gram-Shahari Ward Abhiyan discussed in Chapter 1, represents a significant step toward addressing a long standing gap in Rajasthan's statistical infrastructure, since district and, ultimately, block level economic data allows for far more precise identification of the intra-state disparities discussed throughout this framework than state level aggregates alone can provide, directly supporting the backward region identification challenge discussed in Chapter 1.

Rajasthan's Directorate of Economics and Statistics, responsible for the state's annual Economic Review discussed extensively throughout Chapters 2 and 3, alongside the state government's own SDG monitoring framework discussed in section 20.1, together constitute the core institutional infrastructure through which the state's evidence base for policymaking is generated and maintained. Strengthening the timeliness, granularity, and public accessibility of this statistical infrastructure, potentially through greater integration with the state's digital governance architecture discussed in Chapter 16, including artificial intelligence assisted data processing and geospatial analysis capabilities under the state's new AI-ML Policy, offers considerable potential to improve the state's evidence-based policymaking capacity across every sectoral domain discussed in this framework.

Continued investment in statistical capacity, extending beyond conventional economic indicators to encompass the social, environmental, and governance indicators discussed throughout Chapters 5 through 16, remains essential to ensuring that Rajasthan's policymakers, and indeed frameworks such as this one, can accurately assess progress against the state's Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision over time, rather than relying on inference from partial, outdated, or excessively aggregated data that obscures the genuine on-the-ground progress or persistent gaps that more granular statistical infrastructure would reveal.

20.7 Public Participation: Behavioural Change and Citizen Engagement

Public participation and citizen engagement mechanisms represent an increasingly important, genuinely cross-cutting dimension of Rajasthan's governance architecture, discussed in specific sectoral contexts throughout this framework including the mahila gram sabhas and Water Security Committees discussed in Chapters 7, 10, and 12, and the digital citizen service delivery and grievance redressal mechanisms discussed in Chapter 16. These varied participation channels, spanning formal political representation, issue-specific community committees, and digital citizen feedback mechanisms, together constitute an increasingly dense ecosystem through which Rajasthan's citizens can engage with and shape the state's

development trajectory, extending well beyond the conventional five-year electoral cycle alone.

Behavioural change communication, essential to the effective implementation of programmes ranging from the state's Natural Farming Mission discussed in Chapter 18, to its sanitation sustainability efforts discussed in Chapter 10, to its heat-health early warning system discussed in Chapter 14, requires sustained citizen engagement that goes beyond simple information provision to genuinely shift household and community level practices and expectations. The success of community led water security planning documented in the Bothara village case study discussed in Chapter 10, where a Village Water Security Committee's locally designed recharge intervention produced measurable groundwater improvement within days of completion, illustrates the genuine transformative potential of authentic, community driven participation when government programming is designed to enable rather than simply direct local action.

Sustaining and deepening this participatory governance model across the full range of sectoral priorities discussed throughout this framework, from the Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans now anchoring rural employment and infrastructure planning discussed in Chapter 12, to the citizen feedback mechanisms embedded within the state's expanding digital governance architecture discussed in Chapter 16, represents an essential complement to the more conventional top-down policy and infrastructure investment priorities that constitute the bulk of this framework's sectoral analysis. Ultimately, the extent to which Rajasthan's considerable and growing development ambitions, documented throughout this Comprehensive Development Framework, translate into outcomes that the state's citizens themselves recognise as responsive to their genuine priorities and lived experience will depend substantially on the continued strength and authenticity of the public participation and citizen engagement architecture discussed in this section, connecting directly to the strategic priorities and accountability architecture that form the subject of the framework's concluding Chapter 21.

CHAPTER 21: STATE VISION 2047, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

21.1 Long-Term Vision and Flagship Missions

Rajasthan's long-term development vision, articulated through the Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 framework discussed throughout this report, targets an economy of approximately 350 billion dollars by 2029 or 2030 and 4.3 trillion dollars by 2047, representing growth of roughly twenty one to twenty two times over two decades (Sharma, 2025). This vision is anchored institutionally through the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation, established in March 2024 to insulate long-term planning from electoral cycles, discussed in Chapter 1, and is pursued through a portfolio of flagship missions spanning nearly every sector examined in this framework: the Rising Rajasthan investment strategy discussed in Chapter 4, the Natural Farming Mission and Millet Bowl positioning discussed in Chapter 18, the renewable energy and green hydrogen leadership discussed in Chapter 9, the Employment Policy of 2025 discussed in Chapter 3, and the emerging AI-ML and AVGC-XR technology policies discussed in Chapter 16.

What distinguishes this vision from a simple aggregation of sectoral targets is its explicit recognition, evident across the state's own planning documents cited throughout this framework, that Rajasthan's pathway to 2047 must be built around the state's specific endowments rather than imitation of other states' development models, a principle articulated in this framework's own Preface. The state's comparative advantages, exceptional solar and wind resource endowment discussed in Chapter 9, strategic position along the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor discussed in Chapter 4, substantial mineral wealth discussed in Chapter 4, unmatched heritage and cultural tourism assets discussed in Chapter 19, and a youthful population comprising 63 per cent of the state total discussed in Chapter 1, together define the distinctive foundation on which this long-term vision rests.

Sustaining coherence across this broad portfolio of flagship missions over a twenty year horizon, spanning multiple electoral cycles and inevitable changes in political leadership, represents the vision's most significant institutional test, one that the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation's design, discussed in Chapter 1, is specifically intended to address, though the ultimate durability of this institutional insulation from short-term political pressure will only become fully evident over the coming decade as the state progresses toward its 2029-2030 interim target.

21.2 Medium-Term Priority Action Plan (2025–2030)

The medium-term period through 2030, during which Rajasthan aims to reach its 350 billion dollar interim economic target, requires the state to sustain and where possible accelerate the double digit nominal growth rate documented in Chapter 3, while simultaneously closing the human development gaps documented in Chapters 5 through 7. Drawing together the priorities identified across this framework's sectoral chapters, five priority action areas stand out as most consequential for this medium-term window. First, accelerating foundational

literacy and numeracy outcomes, discussed in Chapter 5, given ASER 2024's identification of Rajasthan among states still struggling with basic learning outcomes, aligned with the national NIPUN Bharat Mission's 2026-27 target. Second, completing the Modified Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal-ERCP Link Project, discussed in Chapter 10, whose delayed implementation the Rajasthan High Court has itself flagged as a contributing factor to the state's drinking water and irrigation allocation tensions.

Third, reducing Aggregate Technical and Commercial losses within the state's DISCOMs, discussed in Chapter 9, to translate the state's renewable generation leadership into genuine power sector financial sustainability rather than continued fiscal strain. Fourth, converting the substantial Rising Rajasthan investment memoranda, discussed in Chapter 4, from signed commitments into operational projects and jobs, an implementation challenge that historically determines whether investment summits generate durable economic transformation or merely headline announcements. Fifth, sustaining the fiscal discipline discussed in Chapter 2 necessary to bring the state's fiscal deficit back toward the 15th Finance Commission's recommended glide path, even as capital expenditure continues to expand.

These five medium-term priorities are deliberately selected for their cross-cutting leverage, each one, if achieved, would meaningfully improve outcomes across multiple sectoral chapters simultaneously rather than benefiting a single narrow domain, reflecting the interconnected nature of the development challenges and opportunities documented throughout this framework.

21.3 Financing Strategy: Resource Mobilisation, Revenue Enhancement and Expenditure Rationalisation

Financing Rajasthan's Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 ambitions requires resource mobilisation across multiple channels documented throughout this framework's fiscal analysis in Chapter 2. Own revenue enhancement, particularly capturing the fuller fiscal potential of the state's mineral wealth following the July 2024 Supreme Court judgment on mineral land taxation discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, and improving Aggregate Technical and Commercial loss recovery discussed in Chapter 9, represents the most direct lever available to the state government itself, independent of central government devolution decisions.

Private capital mobilisation through the Rising Rajasthan investment framework discussed in Chapter 4, and through expanded public-private partnership models particularly within the water sector, identified in Chapter 4 as comparatively underdeveloped relative to roads, power, and tourism PPP experience, offers a second essential financing channel, particularly given the scale of infrastructure investment, discussed across Chapters 8 through 11, that the state's capital expenditure alone cannot fully fund. Central government financing, through Finance Commission devolution discussed in Chapter 2, and through project-specific central schemes such as the Kota-Bundi airport and railway station redevelopment investments discussed in Chapter 8, provides a third channel, though the 16th Finance Commission's modestly reduced devolution share for Rajasthan discussed in Chapter 2 underscores that this channel cannot be assumed to grow indefinitely in the state's favour.

Expenditure rationalisation, particularly containing the growth of committed expenditure, salaries, pensions, and interest payments, discussed in Chapter 2, remains essential to ensuring that revenue and capital raised through the channels above translate into genuine net fiscal space for the state's development priorities rather than being absorbed by expanding recurring costs, a discipline that will require sustained political commitment given the inherent difficulty of constraining committed expenditure growth in any democratic polity.

21.4 Centre-State Partnership: Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Special Grants

Rajasthan's development trajectory remains substantially intertwined with central government partnership, discussed throughout this framework from the Jal Jeevan Mission's role in rural water security in Chapter 10 to the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme's Jodhpur-Pali industrial city approval discussed in Chapter 4. Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma's presentation of the state's Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 roadmap directly to the NITI Aayog Governing Council in June 2026, discussed in Chapter 2, exemplifies the state's active strategy of deepening this centre-state partnership rather than treating central engagement as a passive function of standard devolution formulas alone.

This partnership strategy has yielded tangible results across the sectoral chapters of this framework, including the Rs 26,000 crore railway investment package discussed in Chapter 8, the Rs 16,680 crore Ajmer development projects inaugurated by the Prime Minister in February 2026 discussed in Chapter 19, and continued Finance Commission sectoral grants spanning health, education, and rural local body strengthening discussed in Chapter 2. Sustaining this level of central engagement while the 16th Finance Commission's revised devolution formula, discussed in Chapter 2, marginally reduces the state's base devolution share represents an important balancing act for the state's continued centre-state partnership strategy, requiring Rajasthan to compete effectively for project-specific and scheme-based central support to offset any relative reduction in formula-based devolution.

21.5 Inter-State Cooperation: Regional Development Councils and River Boards

Rajasthan's inter-state cooperation architecture, discussed substantially in the water sharing context of Chapters 4 and 10, centres on the Modified Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal-ERCP Link Project's memorandum of understanding with Madhya Pradesh, representing a pragmatic, benefit-sharing model for interstate water cooperation that offers a template for resolving similar disputes elsewhere in India's federal water governance architecture. This cooperative approach extends to the state's informal but economically consequential integration with the National Capital Region through its Alwar and Bharatpur districts, discussed in Chapter 4, and to its participation in the broader National Perspective Plan for inter-basin water transfer coordinated by the National Water Development Agency, discussed in Chapter 4.

Extending this pattern of pragmatic interstate cooperation beyond water sharing specifically, to encompass shared industrial corridor planning with Gujarat and Haryana along the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor discussed in Chapter 4, coordinated disaster management given

the state's shared hazard exposure with neighbouring states discussed in Chapter 14, and cross-border tourism circuit development with Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh discussed in Chapter 19, represents an important frontier for Rajasthan's continued inter-state cooperation strategy, building on the demonstrated success of its water sharing diplomacy with Madhya Pradesh as a model for resolving future inter-state coordination challenges through mutual benefit framing rather than zero-sum negotiation.

21.6 International Collaboration: Common Development Agenda and Global Partnership

International collaboration has featured prominently across Rajasthan's development strategy, discussed throughout this framework from the Climate Investment Fund's 775 million dollar contribution to the Bhadla Solar Park discussed in Chapter 9, to the Japanese Zone at Neemrana discussed in Chapter 4, to the state's sustained presence at international tourism trade fairs including World Travel Market London, ITB Berlin, and FITUR Madrid discussed in Chapter 19. This pattern of international engagement, spanning climate finance, foreign direct investment, and tourism marketing, illustrates that Rajasthan's international collaboration strategy operates across multiple distinct channels rather than any single unified international partnership framework.

Deepening this international collaboration, particularly to accelerate the foreign direct investment inflows discussed in Chapter 4, which remain comparatively modest relative to Rajasthan's economic scale when benchmarked against Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka, represents an important priority for the state's continued Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 financing strategy discussed in section 21.3. The state's renewable energy leadership, discussed in Chapter 9, and its emerging green hydrogen ambitions, discussed in Chapter 14, offer particularly promising avenues for expanded international collaboration, given the substantial global climate finance and green industrial investment capital currently seeking exactly the kind of exceptional renewable resource endowment that Rajasthan possesses.

21.7 Monitoring, Evaluation and Results Framework

Effective monitoring and evaluation of Rajasthan's progress toward its Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 targets requires the statistical system strengthening discussed in Chapter 20, including the district domestic product initiative launched under the Mukhyamantri Viksit Gram-Shahari Ward Abhiyan discussed in Chapter 1, which will provide considerably more granular tracking capability than state level aggregates alone can offer. The state's existing SDG India Index aligned composite score, discussed in Chapters 1 and 20, and its participation in NITI Aayog's Aspirational Districts Programme delta ranking system, discussed in Chapter 1, together provide an existing results framework architecture that the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation, discussed in Chapter 1, is well positioned to build upon and extend.

A genuinely comprehensive results framework for Rajasthan's 2047 vision would need to track progress not only against the state's headline economic targets, discussed in section

21.1, but against the full range of sectoral indicators documented throughout this framework, from foundational literacy rates discussed in Chapter 5 to Aggregate Technical and Commercial losses discussed in Chapter 9 to the state's fiscal deficit trajectory discussed in Chapter 2, ensuring that economic growth targets are never pursued in isolation from the human development, environmental, and fiscal sustainability dimensions that this framework has argued throughout are inseparable from genuine, durable development progress.

21.8 Accountability Architecture: Legislature, Civil Society and Citizens

Ultimate accountability for Rajasthan's progress toward the Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision rests with the state legislature, the Comptroller and Auditor General's sustained programme of performance audits discussed throughout this framework from Chapter 2's fiscal audits to Chapter 10's solid waste management audit to Chapter 15's disability rights implementation audit, the Rajasthan Lokayukta and Anti-Corruption Bureau discussed in Chapter 15, and ultimately the state's citizens themselves, exercising both their electoral voice and the expanding participatory governance channels discussed in Chapter 20, from mahila gram sabhas to Water Security Committees to the citizen feedback mechanisms embedded within the state's digital governance architecture discussed in Chapter 16.

This layered accountability architecture, spanning formal legislative oversight, independent audit institutions, anti-corruption bodies, and genuine grassroots citizen participation, represents the essential complement to the substantial economic and infrastructure ambitions documented throughout this Comprehensive Development Framework Report of the State of Rajasthan. As this framework's Preface observed at the outset, Rajasthan's pathway to 2047 must be built around the state's own specific endowments and constraints rather than imitation of any other state's development model, and it is this combination, ambitious but evidence grounded sectoral strategy, sustained institutional reform, and genuine accountability to the state's citizens, that will ultimately determine whether the considerable ambitions articulated throughout this report translate into the broad based, inclusive transformation that Rajasthan's 8.39 crore residents, and the state's remarkable civilizational inheritance discussed in this framework's opening chapter, genuinely deserve.

END NOTE

This Comprehensive Development Framework Report of the State of Rajasthan has undertaken a sector by sector assessment of a state that stands, by almost any measure, at an unusually consequential juncture in its post-independence history. Across its Preface, Executive Summary, and twenty one chapters, this report has traced a consistent analytical thread: Rajasthan possesses genuine and accelerating economic momentum, reflected in its double digit nominal GSDP growth, its emergence as India's foremost renewable energy state, its expanding industrial corridors along the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor, and the scale of its stated ambition under the Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision, yet this momentum coexists with persistent and, in places, deepening structural constraints that the state's policymakers cannot resolve through capital investment alone.

Three such constraints recur across nearly every chapter of this framework and deserve to be named plainly in closing. The first is water. Rajasthan's aridity is not a background fact confined to Chapter 1's geographic profile; it reappears as the binding constraint on agricultural productivity in Chapter 18, on public health outcomes in Chapter 6, on urban growth in Chapter 11, on industrial siting decisions in Chapter 4, and most explicitly in the drinking water and irrigation allocation tensions documented in Chapter 10, where the state's own High Court has had to intervene precisely because water scarcity has begun to pit citizens' basic needs against agricultural and industrial demand. No single infrastructure project, including the long-delayed Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project, will resolve this tension on its own; it requires the kind of integrated, cross-departmental water governance this report has argued for throughout.

The second recurring constraint is foundational human capital. Rajasthan's secondary school examination performance and school retention figures compare favourably with national averages, a genuine achievement documented in Chapter 5. Yet the same chapter, drawing on the 2024 Annual Status of Education Report, found the state grouped among those still struggling with the most basic foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes. This gap between later-stage educational performance and early-stage learning foundations is not a minor statistical curiosity; it is arguably the single most consequential threat to the state's demographic dividend, discussed in Chapter 20, since a youth population comprising 63 per cent of the state's total is only an asset to the extent that it is genuinely literate, numerate, and employable.

The third constraint is institutional durability. This report has documented a state government moving with real energy: a newly established Institute for Transformation and Innovation, an AI-ML policy, a Global Capability Centre policy, a revised employment guarantee framework, and a sustained, internationally engaged investment promotion strategy. But it has also documented the December 2024 reversal of the 2023 district reorganisation, discussed in Chapter 1, an episode that illustrates how quickly ambitious administrative reform can outpace the feasibility assessment required to sustain it. A twenty-two-year vision spanning multiple electoral cycles will only survive contact with changing political

leadership if the institutions built to carry it, rather than the individuals currently leading them, prove genuinely durable.

This report has attempted throughout to resist two opposite temptations: uncritical endorsement of the state government's own stated targets, and reflexive skepticism toward a state that has, on the evidence assembled here, made real and measurable progress on several fronts, including maternal mortality reduction, renewable energy deployment, and multidimensional poverty reduction. Where the underlying data supported optimism, this report has said so. Where it did not, particularly regarding foundational literacy, DISCOM financial sustainability, fiscal deficit trajectory, and the persistent gap between the state's aggregate economic performance and its human development indicators, this report has said that too.

It is also appropriate, in closing, to be candid about this document's own limitations. It draws substantially on government economic surveys, Finance Commission evaluation studies, NITI Aayog assessments, and contemporaneous news and policy analysis current as of mid-2026, rather than on primary fieldwork or independently commissioned survey research. Several figures cited throughout, particularly at the district and block level, would benefit from direct verification against primary source documents before being relied upon for specific policy or investment decisions. This report is best understood as a synthesis and starting point for further inquiry, not a substitute for the state's own official statistical and planning apparatus, discussed in Chapter 20, whose continued strengthening this report has explicitly recommended.

Rajasthan's civilizational inheritance, described in this report's opening pages, was built over centuries by communities who adapted with genuine ingenuity to one of the most demanding physical environments in the Indian subcontinent. The state's next chapter, if the Viksit Rajasthan at 2047 vision is to be realised in substance rather than announcement alone, will be written not merely by the scale of capital it attracts, but by whether that capital is matched by an equally serious and sustained commitment to the state's water security, its children's foundational learning, and the institutional integrity required to see a two-decade vision through to its conclusion. This framework has been offered in the hope that it contributes, in some modest way, to that undertaking.

**Council for Comprehensive Development Framework
Youth Peace and Development Forum (YPD Forum)**

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