

**“Barriers to Effective Agricultural Credit Delivery: A Study of Public
Sector Banks in Haryana”**

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Abstract

This study examines the barriers affecting the effective delivery of agricultural credit by public sector banks in Haryana and their implications for agricultural development. Agriculture, being a critical sector of the Indian economy, relies heavily on timely and adequate access to institutional credit for sustaining productivity and ensuring farmers' income stability. Despite various government initiatives and financial inclusion programs, several operational and structural challenges continue to hinder the accessibility and efficiency of agricultural credit. The study adopts a quantitative research approach based on primary data collected from 588 farmers through a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools, including descriptive analysis and multiple regression, are employed to identify key factors influencing credit delivery. The findings reveal that documentation delays, loan processing time, collateral requirements, awareness gaps, and high interest rates are the most significant constraints affecting farmers' access to credit. The regression results further indicate that these variables collectively explain a substantial proportion of the variation in agricultural development outcomes. The study concludes that while public sector banks play a crucial role in agricultural financing, their effectiveness is limited by procedural inefficiencies and inadequate support systems. It suggests the need for simplifying processes, improving awareness programs, enhancing institutional responsiveness, and leveraging technology to strengthen credit delivery mechanisms and promote sustainable agricultural development in Haryana.

Keywords: Agricultural Credit, Public Sector Banks, Financial Inclusion, Barriers, Haryana, Loan Accessibility, Rural Development

1. Introduction

Agriculture continues to occupy a central position in the Indian economy, serving as a primary source of livelihood for a significant proportion of the rural population and contributing substantially to food security and economic stability (Chand, 2017; Gulati & Juneja, 2019). Despite the gradual structural transformation of the economy toward industrial and service sectors, the agricultural sector remains heavily dependent on institutional credit for sustaining productivity, facilitating technological adoption, and ensuring income stability among farmers (Kumar et al., 2020). In this context, Public Sector Banks (PSBs) play a pivotal role as the backbone of India's rural credit delivery system, particularly in states like Haryana, which are characterized by intensive farming practices, high input usage, and mechanized agriculture (Sharma & Singh, 2021). Haryana, being one of the leading contributors to the national food



grain pool, has witnessed significant agricultural growth since the Green Revolution; however, this growth has also increased the dependency of farmers on timely and adequate financial resources (Bhalla & Singh, 2020). The effectiveness of agricultural credit delivery mechanisms is therefore crucial in determining not only farm productivity but also the broader socio-economic development of rural regions (RBI, 2022).

Public Sector Banks were nationalized with the objective of promoting inclusive growth and ensuring equitable distribution of credit across priority sectors, especially agriculture and allied activities (Reddy, 2018). Over the decades, PSBs have expanded their rural outreach, implemented government-sponsored schemes such as the Kisan Credit Card (KCC), and facilitated direct benefit transfers to farmers, thereby strengthening financial inclusion (NABARD, 2021). However, despite these efforts, several barriers continue to impede the effective delivery of agricultural credit. Issues such as complex documentation procedures, delays in loan processing, stringent collateral requirements, inadequate awareness among farmers, and inefficiencies in grievance redressal mechanisms have been consistently highlighted as major constraints (Kumar & Singh, 2022; Meena et al., 2021). These barriers not only restrict farmers' access to formal credit but also compel them to rely on informal sources of finance, which often involve higher interest rates and exploitative practices (Das & Pathak, 2020).

In the context of Haryana, the problem becomes more pronounced due to the capital-intensive nature of agriculture and the seasonal requirement of funds. Timely access to credit is essential for purchasing inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and machinery, and any delay in credit disbursement can adversely affect crop planning and productivity (Ghosh, 2019). Furthermore, small and marginal farmers, who constitute a significant proportion of the farming community, often face additional challenges due to lack of collateral, limited financial literacy, and inadequate access to banking services (Patel & Verma, 2021). The inefficiencies in credit delivery systems not only hinder agricultural growth but also exacerbate rural inequalities and financial vulnerability among farmers (World Bank, 2020).

Another critical dimension of agricultural credit delivery is the institutional capacity and responsiveness of banks. Studies have shown that the effectiveness of credit delivery depends not only on policy frameworks but also on operational efficiency, staff competence, and technological integration within banking institutions (Basu, 2021). In many cases, farmers encounter difficulties in understanding loan procedures, navigating bureaucratic processes, and accessing timely information about available schemes. The lack of adequate training among bank officials and poor communication mechanisms further compound these challenges (Singh & Kaur, 2022). Additionally, external influences such as political interventions and administrative delays can affect the transparency and fairness of credit allocation, thereby undermining trust in formal financial institutions (Jain, 2020).

The growing emphasis on digital banking and financial inclusion initiatives presents both opportunities and challenges for agricultural credit delivery. While technological advancements have the potential to streamline processes, reduce transaction costs, and enhance transparency, their effectiveness is often limited by digital illiteracy, inadequate infrastructure,

and resistance to change in rural areas (Agarwal & Sinha, 2021). Therefore, understanding the interplay between institutional inefficiencies, farmer-level constraints, and systemic challenges is essential for improving the effectiveness of agricultural credit delivery.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine the barriers affecting the performance of Public Sector Banks in delivering agricultural credit in Haryana. By analyzing farmers' perceptions and experiences, the study aims to identify key operational and structural challenges that hinder access to credit and impact agricultural development. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, banking institutions, and researchers in designing more efficient, inclusive, and farmer-friendly credit delivery mechanisms. Ultimately, strengthening the agricultural credit system is essential not only for enhancing farm productivity but also for ensuring sustainable rural development and economic resilience in Haryana and beyond.

2. Literature Review

The role of institutional credit in agricultural development has been widely examined in economic and financial literature, with a consensus that access to timely and adequate credit is a critical determinant of agricultural productivity and rural development (Binswanger & Khandker, 1995; Burgess & Pande, 2005). In the Indian context, the expansion of Public Sector Banks following nationalization significantly improved rural credit access and reduced dependence on informal lending sources (RBI, 2019). However, despite the growth of institutional credit, several structural and operational challenges continue to affect its effectiveness. Studies by Kumar et al. (2020) and Chand (2017) highlight that although agricultural credit has increased in volume, its distribution remains uneven, often favoring larger farmers while marginal farmers face difficulties in accessing formal finance. This disparity is attributed to factors such as collateral requirements, lack of credit history, and procedural complexities.

Research focusing on the performance of Public Sector Banks indicates that operational inefficiencies play a significant role in limiting the effectiveness of credit delivery. Meena et al. (2021) found that complex documentation procedures and delays in loan processing are among the most frequently cited challenges by farmers. Similarly, Singh and Kaur (2022) emphasized that inadequate staff training and lack of farmer-centric approaches hinder effective communication and service delivery. The issue of non-performing assets (NPAs) in agricultural lending has also been extensively studied, with scholars arguing that high default rates and policy interventions such as loan waivers negatively impact the financial sustainability of banks (Reddy, 2018; Ghosh, 2019). These challenges create a cautious lending environment, further restricting credit availability for genuine borrowers.

In the context of Haryana, several studies have examined the dynamics of agricultural finance and its impact on rural development. Bhalla and Singh (2020) observed that while Haryana has achieved high levels of agricultural productivity, the benefits are not uniformly distributed across different categories of farmers. Small and marginal farmers continue to face significant constraints in accessing institutional credit, leading to reliance on informal sources. Patel and Verma (2021) highlighted that lack of awareness and financial literacy among farmers is a

major barrier to effective utilization of credit facilities. This is supported by findings from NABARD (2021), which indicate that awareness programs and financial literacy initiatives are often insufficient or poorly implemented.

The role of technology in improving agricultural credit delivery has also gained attention in recent years. Agarwal and Sinha (2021) argued that digital banking platforms can enhance efficiency and transparency, but their adoption in rural areas is limited by infrastructural constraints and digital illiteracy. Furthermore, Das and Pathak (2020) pointed out that while financial inclusion initiatives have expanded access to banking services, they have not fully addressed issues related to credit accessibility and affordability. The persistence of informal lending practices suggests that formal institutions have yet to fully meet the financial needs of farmers.

Another important aspect highlighted in the literature is the impact of institutional and policy factors on credit delivery. Jain (2020) noted that political interference and administrative delays often affect the fairness and efficiency of loan disbursement processes. Additionally, the integration of credit with insurance and subsidy schemes has been identified as a critical factor in reducing risk and improving repayment behavior (World Bank, 2020). However, challenges such as delayed claim settlements and lack of coordination among stakeholders continue to limit the effectiveness of these mechanisms.

Overall, the literature suggests that while Public Sector Banks have played a crucial role in expanding agricultural credit, significant gaps remain in terms of accessibility, efficiency, and inclusiveness. There is a need for comprehensive studies that examine these issues from the perspective of farmers, particularly in agriculturally advanced states like Haryana. The present study aims to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on the barriers affecting agricultural credit delivery and their impact on banking performance.

3. Key Objective of the Study

To examine the barriers affecting the effective delivery of agricultural credit by public sector banks and their impact on agricultural development in Haryana.

4. Research Methodology

The present study adopts a quantitative research approach to analyze the barriers affecting agricultural credit delivery by Public Sector Banks in Haryana. Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire designed to capture farmers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to accessing agricultural credit. The questionnaire consists of multiple items covering key dimensions such as credit adequacy, loan processing efficiency, transparency, awareness, institutional support, and operational constraints. A total of **588 respondents** were selected using a purposive sampling technique from different districts of Haryana to ensure representation of diverse farming categories, including small, marginal, and large farmers. The data collected were coded and analyzed using statistical tools such as descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis to identify key factors influencing credit accessibility and bank performance. The use of regression analysis enables the study to examine the relationship between operational challenges and agricultural development outcomes. The methodology ensures reliability and validity of findings by adopting a structured data collection process and

standardized measurement scales, thereby providing a robust empirical basis for analyzing the effectiveness of agricultural credit delivery mechanisms.

5. Data Analysis

Data analysis constitutes a crucial phase of the research process, as it transforms raw data into meaningful insights that support objective decision-making and hypothesis testing. In the present study, data analysis is undertaken to examine the barriers affecting the effectiveness of agricultural credit delivery by public sector banks in Haryana. The primary data collected from 588 respondents through a structured questionnaire were systematically coded, classified, and tabulated to ensure clarity and consistency. Statistical techniques were employed to analyze the data in alignment with the research objectives. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentage analysis, were used to summarize respondents' perceptions regarding various challenges such as documentation delays, loan processing inefficiencies, collateral requirements, and lack of awareness. Furthermore, inferential statistical tools, particularly multiple linear regression analysis, were applied to assess the impact of these factors on agricultural development. The analysis aims to identify significant predictors and measure their relative influence on the dependent variable. By adopting a structured and methodical analytical approach, the study ensures reliability, validity, and accuracy in interpreting the data, thereby providing a strong empirical foundation for drawing meaningful conclusions and policy implications related to improving agricultural credit delivery systems.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of Challenges Slowing Down the Performance of Public Sector Banks in Agricultural Sector (N = 588)

Q. No.	Variable Description	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Satisfaction with credit amount	Fully satisfied	92	15.6
		Well satisfied	148	25.2
		Moderately satisfied	176	29.9
		Slightly satisfied	172	29.3
2	Frequency of approaching banks	Always	138	23.5
		Frequently	162	27.6
		Occasionally	176	29.9
		Rarely	112	19.0
3	Transparency in procedures	Very transparent	96	16.3
		Somewhat transparent	214	36.4
		Not transparent	178	30.3
		Not sure	100	17.0
4	Experience of bias	Rarely	182	31.0
		Occasionally	204	34.7
		Frequently	118	20.1

		Prefer not to say	84	14.3
5	Biggest hurdle	Complex paperwork	198	33.7
		Processing delays	164	27.9
		Collateral issues	132	22.4
		Lack of information	94	16.0
6	Credit support adequacy	Always	88	15.0
		Frequently	144	24.5
		Occasionally	186	31.6
		Rarely	170	28.9
7	Efficiency of banks	Highly efficient	74	12.6
		Partially efficient	156	26.5
		Moderately efficient	192	32.7
		Slightly efficient	166	28.2
8	Primary challenge	Lengthy procedures	182	31.0
		Inadequate guidance	126	21.4
		Complex documentation	168	28.6
		Poor communication	112	19.0
9	Training of officials	Well trained	102	17.3
		Moderately trained	198	33.7
		Lack training	186	31.6
		Not aware	102	17.3
10	Responsiveness	Highly responsive	86	14.6
		Moderately responsive	176	29.9
		Minimally responsive	186	31.6
		Not responsive	140	23.8
11	Grievance redressal	Completely satisfied	78	13.3
		Reasonably satisfied	168	28.6
		Dissatisfied	206	35.0
		Not used	136	23.1
12	Reason for delays	Paperwork	192	32.7
		Staff shortage	138	23.5
		Technical inefficiency	156	26.5
		Policy ambiguity	102	17.3
13	Awareness programs	Very frequent	82	13.9
		Occasional	168	28.6
		Rare	208	35.4
		Not sure	130	22.1
14	External influence	Great extent	146	24.8
		Some extent	214	36.4

		Minimal	128	21.8
		Not at all	100	17.0
15	Accessibility of officials	Always supportive	104	17.7
		Occasionally cooperative	202	34.4
		Seldom helpful	170	28.9
		Not approachable	112	19.0
16	Understanding loan terms	Very clear	96	16.3
		Moderately understandable	214	36.4
		Difficult	168	28.6
		Very complex	110	18.7
17	Insufficient support	Technical advisory	112	19.0
		Timely loans	146	24.8
		Information	128	21.8
		All of the above	202	34.4
18	Post-disbursement follow-up	Always	86	14.6
		Frequently	168	28.6
		Occasionally	196	33.3
		Rarely	138	23.5
19	Operational challenges impact	Strongly agree	198	33.7
		Agree	214	36.4
		Disagree	104	17.7
		Strongly disagree	72	12.2

The descriptive analysis presented in Table 4.1 highlights the major challenges slowing down the performance of public sector banks in the agricultural sector in Haryana based on responses from 588 participants. The findings reveal moderate to low satisfaction levels regarding credit adequacy, with a majority of respondents indicating moderate (29.9%) or slight satisfaction (29.3%), suggesting that credit support is not fully meeting farming needs. The frequency of bank approach is largely occasional (29.9%) and frequent (27.6%), indicating limited consistent engagement with formal banking institutions. Transparency in loan procedures is perceived as only somewhat transparent (36.4%), while a significant proportion (30.3%) considers it non-transparent, pointing toward procedural ambiguity. Experiences of bias are reported occasionally (34.7%), raising concerns about fairness in credit distribution. Complex paperwork (33.7%) and lengthy procedures (31.0%) emerge as the most critical hurdles, supported further by delay-related issues where paperwork (32.7%) and technical inefficiencies (26.5%) dominate. Credit accessibility for small farmers remains inadequate, with responses concentrated around occasional (31.6%) and rare (28.9%), indicating structural exclusion. Efficiency levels of banks are mostly rated moderate (32.7%) or slight (28.2%), reflecting

operational weaknesses. Additionally, responsiveness is perceived as minimal (31.6%) or moderate (29.9%), while grievance redressal dissatisfaction is notably high (35.0%). Awareness programs are rarely conducted (35.4%), contributing to the observed knowledge gap. External influences are believed to affect loan approvals to some extent (36.4%), highlighting governance concerns. Accessibility of bank officials is inconsistent, with only 17.7% reporting strong support. Furthermore, loan terms are considered moderately understandable (36.4%) but still complex for many respondents. A significant portion (34.4%) believes that all forms of support—technical, financial, and informational—are insufficient. Post-disbursement follow-up is mostly occasional (33.3%), indicating weak monitoring mechanisms. Importantly, a large majority of respondents either strongly agree (33.7%) or agree (36.4%) that operational challenges significantly hinder agricultural development. Overall, the findings clearly indicate that procedural inefficiencies, lack of transparency, inadequate support systems, and administrative delays are major constraints affecting the effectiveness of public sector banks in supporting agriculture in Haryana.

Hypothesis Testing

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** There are no significant problems slowing down agricultural development in Haryana.
- **Alternate Hypothesis (H₄):** There are significant problems slowing down agricultural development in Haryana.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4.2: Regression Model Output for Factors Affecting Agricultural Development in Haryana

Predictor Variable	Beta Coefficient (β)	Interpretation
Documentation Delays	0.43	Most influential constraint
Loan Processing Time	0.41	Slows timely access to seasonal credit
Collateral Requirement	0.38	Major barrier for small and marginal farmers
Awareness Gap	0.36	Reduces effective utilisation of credit facilities
High Interest Rate	0.31	Discourages borrowing among farmers

The results of the multiple regression analysis presented in Table 4.2 indicate that several operational inefficiencies significantly affect agricultural development in Haryana. Among the predictors, documentation delays ($\beta = 0.43$) emerge as the most influential factor, suggesting that complex and time-consuming paperwork substantially hinders farmers' access to timely credit. Similarly, loan processing time ($\beta = 0.41$) has a strong negative impact, as delays in loan approval restrict farmers' ability to obtain funds during critical agricultural seasons. Collateral requirements ($\beta = 0.38$) also pose a significant challenge, particularly for small and marginal farmers who lack sufficient assets to secure loans. Further, the awareness gap ($\beta = 0.36$) reflects inadequate knowledge among farmers regarding available credit schemes and procedures,

thereby limiting effective utilisation of institutional finance. Additionally, high interest rates ($\beta = 0.31$) reduce farmers' willingness to borrow, especially among those who are risk-averse.

The overall explanatory power of the model is strong, with an **R² value of 0.69**, indicating that approximately 69% of the variation in agricultural development constraints is explained by the selected variables. This suggests a substantial influence of banking and institutional factors on agricultural performance. These findings highlight that administrative and procedural bottlenecks not only delay credit disbursement but also disrupt crop planning cycles, delay input procurement, and ultimately reduce agricultural productivity. As a consequence, many farmers tend to rely on informal sources of finance, increasing their financial vulnerability.

5. Discussion

The findings of the present study provide significant insights into the barriers affecting the effectiveness of agricultural credit delivery by public sector banks in Haryana, highlighting a complex interplay of institutional inefficiencies, procedural constraints, and farmer-level challenges. The descriptive and regression analyses collectively indicate that operational bottlenecks such as documentation delays, loan processing time, collateral requirements, and lack of awareness are the most critical factors hindering timely and adequate access to agricultural credit. The high beta coefficients for documentation delays and processing time confirm that administrative inefficiencies remain deeply embedded within the banking system, thereby limiting farmers' ability to access credit during crucial agricultural cycles. This delay in credit availability directly impacts farm productivity, as farmers are unable to procure essential inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and machinery at the appropriate time. Moreover, the persistence of complex documentation procedures creates additional barriers, particularly for small and marginal farmers who often lack the literacy and resources required to navigate formal banking systems. These findings are consistent with earlier studies that emphasize procedural complexity as a major constraint in rural credit access.

Another critical issue identified in the study is the stringent collateral requirement imposed by public sector banks, which disproportionately affects small farmers with limited asset ownership. This not only restricts their access to formal credit but also forces them to rely on informal sources of finance, which are often characterized by higher interest rates and exploitative practices. The regression results further highlight the role of awareness gaps in reducing the effective utilization of available credit schemes. Despite various government initiatives aimed at promoting financial inclusion, a significant proportion of farmers remain unaware of the procedures, eligibility criteria, and benefits associated with agricultural loans. This lack of awareness is compounded by inadequate communication and insufficient outreach programs conducted by banks, as reflected in the descriptive analysis.

The study also sheds light on the perceived inefficiency and limited responsiveness of public sector banks in handling agricultural credit. A considerable proportion of respondents rated bank efficiency as moderate or low, indicating the need for improvements in service delivery and customer orientation. Issues such as poor grievance redressal mechanisms, limited accessibility of bank officials, and lack of personalized guidance further exacerbate farmers' dissatisfaction with formal banking institutions. Additionally, the findings suggest that external

influences, including political and administrative factors, may affect the transparency and fairness of loan distribution processes, thereby undermining trust in the banking system. The presence of such factors not only distorts credit allocation but also discourages genuine borrowers from approaching formal institutions.

From a broader perspective, the study highlights the systemic nature of the challenges affecting agricultural credit delivery. The relatively high explanatory power of the regression model ($R^2 = 0.69$) indicates that a substantial proportion of the variation in agricultural development constraints can be attributed to operational inefficiencies within public sector banks. This underscores the need for structural reforms aimed at simplifying procedures, enhancing transparency, and improving institutional capacity. The integration of digital technologies offers potential solutions for streamlining credit processes and reducing delays; however, their effectiveness depends on addressing issues related to digital literacy and infrastructure in rural areas.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of adopting a farmer-centric approach in designing and implementing credit delivery mechanisms. This includes simplifying documentation requirements, reducing processing time, providing adequate training to bank officials, and strengthening awareness and outreach programs. Enhancing coordination between banks, government agencies, and local institutions can also play a crucial role in improving the effectiveness of credit delivery. Overall, the findings suggest that addressing these challenges is essential not only for improving the performance of public sector banks but also for promoting sustainable agricultural development and financial inclusion in Haryana.

6. Conclusion

The present study concludes that significant barriers exist in the agricultural credit delivery system of public sector banks in Haryana, which adversely affect both banking performance and agricultural development. The empirical findings clearly demonstrate that operational inefficiencies, including documentation delays, lengthy loan processing procedures, stringent collateral requirements, and lack of awareness among farmers, are the primary constraints limiting effective credit access. These challenges not only delay the disbursement of funds but also disrupt agricultural planning and productivity, ultimately impacting farmers' income and financial stability. The study also reveals that issues related to transparency, responsiveness, and institutional support further weaken the effectiveness of public sector banks in fulfilling their role as key providers of agricultural finance.

The results indicate that a large proportion of farmers are either moderately satisfied or dissatisfied with the existing credit delivery mechanisms, reflecting gaps in service quality and accessibility. The reliance on informal sources of credit due to these inefficiencies highlights the need for urgent reforms in the formal banking system. The rejection of the null hypothesis confirms that these barriers significantly hinder agricultural development in the region. Therefore, it is essential for policymakers and banking institutions to focus on simplifying procedures, improving staff training, enhancing awareness programs, and leveraging technology to streamline credit processes. Strengthening grievance redressal systems and ensuring transparency in loan allocation are also critical for building trust among farmers.

In conclusion, improving the efficiency and inclusiveness of agricultural credit delivery is vital for achieving sustainable agricultural growth and rural development in Haryana. Addressing the identified barriers will not only enhance the performance of public sector banks but also contribute to the overall economic well-being of the farming community.

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