Reinstatement Status of Farmers in the Rythu Bharosa Scheme: A Study on ABPS Compliance

LibTech India **March 9, 2024**

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Background: The Rythu Bharosa cash transfer scheme, crucial for supporting farmers, utilizes the Aadhaar-based payment system (ABPS) for fund transfer. During initial years, farmers who are not ABPS compliant are provided with an opportunity to rectify this and receive their Rythu Bharosa annual entitlements. To illustrate, a farmer who was non-compliant in 2020 but rectifies the issue during the last installment transfer for the year would receive the full amount in a single payment. Those who fail to do so risk losing their entitlements for that year, but they can still be considered for the next year. However, in the Rythu Bharosa 2021-22, the state decided to remove ABPS non-compliant farmers from the program altogether.

During the second installment of Rythu Bharosa cash transfers for the fiscal year 2021-22 in all 6 Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) areas pertaining to 36 mandals, a total of 13913 farmers faced removal due to ineligibility under the Aadhaar-based Payment System (ABPS).

LibTech India took proactive measures to address this issue by bringing it to the attention of officials and publishing an Op-Ed in 'The Hindu' newspaper on January 5, 2022. This Op-Ed was based on examining the data and also extensive fieldwork conducted by LibTech India, expressing concerns about the removal of farmers from the Rythu Bharosa list.

In response to the issue of removal internally by officials and the article, the government stated that farmers who are not ABPS compliant should first become compliant and then enroll as new farmers in the scheme. Additionally, in March 2022, the government introduced a Grievance Module, allowing removed farmers to reinstate their names in the Rythu Bharosa list through a streamlined process.

In this context, LibTech India examined the status of farmers removed from rolls in 2021-22 due to ABPS ineligibility in All 6 ITDA's, to determine how many of them have made it back to the rolls and how many are actually receiving entitlements. We additionally carried out field studies to authenticate the accuracy of the data and to investigate the underlying reasons behind the current situation.

Analysis of Farmer Status: Deleted farmers and Reinstatement Metrics:

Farmers removed from rolls as on 10/10/2021	Farmers reinstated as on 31/03/2023	Farmers pending reinstatement (31/03/2023)	Farmers pending reinstatement (04/03/2024)	Estimated loss of money for farmers (INR)
13913	7804	6901	5580	12.6 Cr - 22.6 Cr[1]

Table 1-Status of Farmer Reinstatement: Comparison Over Time

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[1] Assuming all the farmers are Revenue farmers- 5580 farmers*3 years* 7500/- , If we assume all the farmers are ROFR farmers -5580 farmers*3 years*13,500/-

Table 1 illustrates as of October 10, 2021, 13913 farmers were removed from the program due to ABPS ineligibility. While progress has been made with 7804 farmers reinstated by April 1, 2023, 6901 farmers remain for pending reinstatement as of that date, reflecting the ongoing challenges. Encouragingly, the number of pending reinstatements further decreases to 5580 by March 4,2024 from 7804 by March 31, 2023.

1. **Reasons for Limited Reinstatements:**

We conducted field studies (Refer Annexure for case studies) in three Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs), met with 40 farmers removed from rolls, 10 VAAs, and interviewed 3 MAOs to assess the situation. Here are our observations.

- There is a notable lack of awareness among farmers regarding their deletion status from the program.
- Officials often fail to inform farmers about these deletions, exacerbating the issue.
- Farmers demonstrate limited knowledge about the issue resolution process with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) at the bank.
- Officials themselves lack understanding regarding the reasons behind deletions and the necessary steps for resolution.
- Adding to the complexity, bank officials are often unaware of the distinction between Aadhaar linking and NPCI mapping.
- Ignorance about the opening of the registration portal appears to add to the challenges faced by the farmers.
- Issues with registration in the GSWS database further compound the complexities encountered in the successful execution of the program.

2. Recommendations:

1. Educate farmers who are removed from Rythu Bharosa rolls due to ABPS ineligibility on resolution process through Village Agriculture Assistants (VAAs) and village volunteers.
2. Provide comprehensive training programs for program officials, including administrative staff and bank officials, to enhance their understanding of NPCI mapping and resolution steps. Utilize comprehensive guidelines on ABPS issues resolution developed by LibTech India to aid officials in this process.
3. Prepare for new registrations expected post-April 2024 by addressing ABPS related issues promptly and ensuring the enrollment of all eligible farmers.
4. Offer support services such as helplines or dedicated assistance centers to assist farmers in the reinstatement process and address their queries. Collaborate with LibTech to design and implement such support systems effectively.
5. Provide assistance to farmers needing support in registering in the GSWS database.

Implementation of these recommendations is expected to address the challenges associated with limited reinstatements, thus ensuring greater participation and benefit delivery to farmers under the Rythu Bharosa scheme.

6. **Enclosures:**

-Guidelines for resolving ABPS eligibility issues
-Article 'Eligible denied benefits' published in 'The Hindu'
-Case studies

Annexure

Case Study 1:

Marri Sundara Rao in ASR District holds a ROFR patta, but since the inception of the Rythu Bharosa (RB) scheme, he has not received his entitlements. Despite the state's attempts to transfer funds into his bank account, the payments were not deposited due to ABPS non-compliance(Figure 1). He couldn't resolve the problem as he and also local officials were not aware of the problem and the solution. Following the state's new policy post-October 2021, his name was removed from the RB rolls(Figure 2). Our investigation revealed a lack of initiative by local officials to reinstate him, and notably, neither the local village secretariat nor the village volunteer is cognizant of Sundara Rao's deletion from the RB rolls.

Figure 1-Rythu Bharosa Status as on 21st May 2021

● The status on the Rythu Bharosa portal still appears as depicted in the image below:
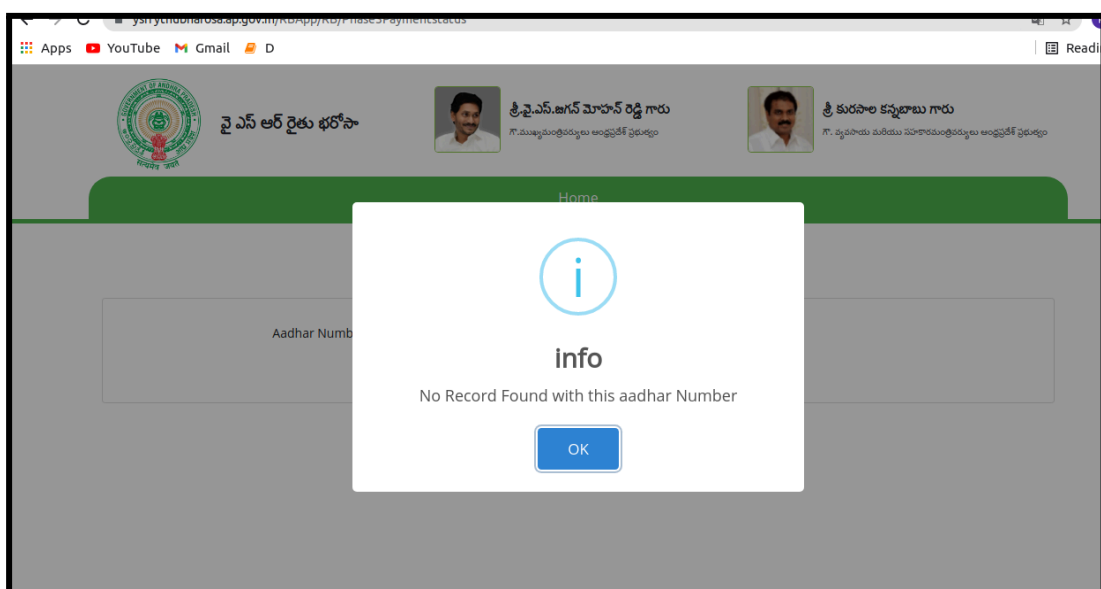
We found that Marri Sundara Rao owns ROFR land as per Giri Bhoomi and was registered in Grama Sachivalayam & Ward Sachivalayam Database in the same village and Sundara Rao had no clue why he was deleted from Rythu Bharosa database. In fact the volunteers and the village secretariat staff were not helpful in resolving his issue to ensure Rythu Bharosa entitlements.

Farmer name	: Marri Sundara Rao
Aadhaar number	: XXXXXXXX8622
Last Rythu Bharosa Status with ABPS issue	: May 2021
Last Rythu Bharosa deletion status due to NPCI ISSUE	: Oct 2021
Rythu Bharosa Status with no data found	: Dec 2021 to till today

Case Study 2: **Deleted Revenue Farmer from Rythu Bharosa Database**

Vanthala Rambabu, a resident of ASR District holds a Revenue patta but has not received Rythu Bharosa entitlements since the inception of the scheme due to ABPS non-compliance. In October 2021, we discovered that his record had been deleted from the Rythu Bharosa database, as indicated below.

Figure 3: Rythu Bharosa as on 25th Oct 2021

- The status on the Rythu Bharosa portal still appears as depicted in the image below:
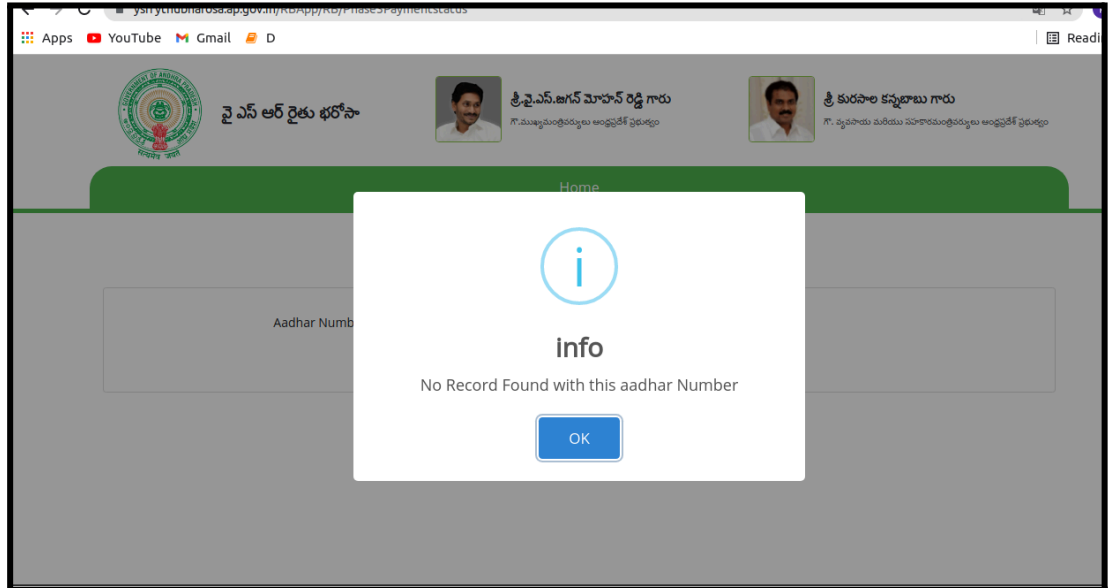

Figure 4 - Rythu Bharosa Status as on 9th March 2024

Case Study 3: We found that Vanthala Raju owns Revenue land as per MeeBhumi and wasn't registered in Grama Sachivalayam & Ward Sachivalayam Database as shown in the below image which lead to rejection at the time of registration as a new farmer to Rythu Bharosa list in VAA login through grievance module when attempt was made to register again.Pusapati Venkatapathi Raju has to enter his details in another system i.e GSWS which is new to the farmer and difficult to access.

Note: A farmer is eligible to enroll in the Rythu Bharosa list as a new farmer only after his information has been recorded in the GSWS database.

⊕ gramawardsachivalayam.ap.gov.in

Your Aadhar is not enumerated through GSWS.Please raise the
grevinance by entering details in below form.your local volunteer will
contact you to get your household details enumerated on to the
system. !!!

OK

Farmer name	: Vanthala Raju
Aadhaar number	: XXXXXXXX3644
Last Rythu Bharosa Status with ABPS issue	: May 2021
Last Rythu Bharosa deletion status due to NPCI ISSUE	: Oct 2021
Rythu Bharosa Status with no data found	: Dec 2021 to till today

Periodic review of removed farmers Status: (10th Oct 2021 - 4th Mar 2024)

13913 Deleted Farmers (As on 10th oct 2021

As on 31st Mar 2023

7804 Farmers are reinstated

6109 Farmers are pending for reinstate

As on 4th Mar 2024

529 farmers are reinstated

5580 farmers are pending for reinstate