Droub Al Salamah university Scientific journal
Online ISSN: XXXX-XXXX
Volume 01, Issue 01 June- 2026, pp. 01-18
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22870670
https://dasusj.org/index.php/Scientificjournal

DESIGN AND FABRICATION OF A PORTABLE DRILLING RIG FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDING WATER PROJECTS AND AGRICULTURAL IRRIGATION BOREHOLES

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ABSTRACT

Access to affordable groundwater extraction technologies continues to pose a major challenge in many rural and residential communities, where conventional rotary drilling rigs are often impractical due to their high cost, technical complexity, and demanding maintenance needs. This study introduces the design, fabrication, and experimental evaluation of a low-cost, mechanically simple, and locally manufacturable portable drilling rig developed for residential borehole construction and small-scale agricultural irrigation. The system was engineered to balance functional efficiency with affordability, utilizing readily available materials and straightforward mechanical components to ensure ease of replication, repair, and maintenance in resource-constrained settings. Experimental tests were performed across sandy, clayey, loamy, and gravelly soils at various rotational speeds to measure penetration rate, torque, power consumption, and overall drilling efficiency. The prototype achieved its best performance in sandy formations, recording a penetration rate of 18.3 cm/min, a torque of 45 Nm, and power consumption of 1.6 kW. In contrast, cohesive or coarse formations required greater torque and energy input. Comparative benchmarking with commercial systems including the Hydra-Drill MUD-2, LoneStar LS100, and PAT-301T revealed that while the prototype exhibited lower penetration rates (0.95–1.25 m/hr compared to 2.1-3.5 m/hr) and shallower depth capacity (up to 22 m), it offered distinct advantages in energy efficiency (0.06–0.14 kWh/m versus 0.14-0.33 kWh/m), portability, ease of setup, and minimal operational cost. Overall, the results confirm the system's potential as a sustainable and low-resource solution for shallow to moderate borehole drilling applications. Future work will focus on integrating hydraulic-assist mechanisms, modular power sources, and sensor-based torque control systems to enhance performance, adaptability, and efficiency across diverse geological conditions.

Keywords:

Portable Drilling Rig, Water Borehole, Residential Buildings, Agricultural Irrigation, Low-Cost Design, Mechanical Fabrication, Groundwater Extraction, Sustainable Technology

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1. Introduction

Access to reliable groundwater through suitably sited and installed boreholes remains a cornerstone of water security for millions of households and smallholder farms worldwide. In many low- and middle-income countries, decentralized borehole provision drilled at the village or household scale supports domestic supply, livestock watering, and small-scale irrigation that together underpin livelihoods and resilience [1]-[3]. However, the cost, logistical complexity, and capital intensity of conventional truck-mounted drilling rigs, combined with limited local technical capacity, mean many rural and peri-urban settlements remain underserved. Portable, affordable, and easy-to-operate drilling rigs tailored for residential boreholes and small agricultural schemes offer a practical pathway to increase coverage, reduce costs, and enable local entrepreneurs to deliver groundwater services at scale [1]-[4].

This introduction sets out the technical and socio-economic context for designing and fabricating a portable drilling rig targeted specifically at residential building boreholes and agricultural irrigation. It articulates the research and design problem, explains the design drivers and constraints, and reviews the relevant literature across manual, mechanical, and small motorized rigs, drilling method selection, power and energy options, sensing/monitoring for improved performance, and recent advances in data-driven drilling technology that can be adapted to small rigs. The literature review synthesizes evidence from field studies, technical reports, and peer-reviewed research to identify design choices, typical performance envelopes, and gaps that the portable rig in this project aims to address.

1.1 Context and importance

Groundwater is often the most reliable and resilient source of water for communities where surface sources are seasonal or contaminated. For domestic water supply and small-scale irrigation, boreholes with hand pumps or small motorized submersible pumps are widely used because they can deliver safe, protected water at relatively low operating cost. Yet the dominant approach to creating such boreholes using conventional, heavy, and truck-mounted rotary rigs has disadvantages for small projects: high mobilization costs, restricted access on rough or small roads, the need for specialized crews, and difficulties in deploying many small projects cost-effectively [1], [4]. Consequently, there is growing interest from NGOs, social enterprises, and local drilling entrepreneurs in lighter, portable drilling solutions that can be transported on small vehicles or trailers, operated by small crews, and deployed in communities with limited access infrastructure [2], [3].

Portable rigs can range from fully manual systems (hand-drilling) through mechanized but compact rotary rigs and percussion systems, to purpose-built small hydraulic or petrol-engine driven units. The correct choice depends on hydrogeology (soil and rock type, presence of weathered bedrock, and depth to water), desired borehole diameter/depth, and the economics of the service model [2], [3]. Advances in small-scale mechanical design, compact powertrains (small internal combustion engines, hydraulic drives, and battery-electric systems), and low-cost sensors/MWD (Measurement-While-Drilling) enable portable rigs to approach the effectiveness and safety of larger rigs while retaining affordability and transportability [4]-[7].

Conventional large drilling rigs are poorly matched to the needs of small residential borehole and agricultural irrigation projects: their capital and operating costs and logistical demands make them inefficient for shallow to moderate depth boreholes (<150 m) typically needed in household and small-farm contexts. Manual drilling methods alleviate cost but are limited by hydrogeological suitability, depth, and production yield. Existing small and portable mechanical rigs often trade down performance for portability or rely on imported parts and complex maintenance, which reduces local sustainability. Further, small rigs frequently lack basic instrumentation for drilling parameter monitoring and do not integrate flexible energy systems for off-grid operation. As a result, there is a need for a purposely designed, locally manufacturable, robust, transportable, and energy-flexible drilling rig that:

i. can be deployed easily to reach typical residential and small-farm aquifer depths (often under 100–150 m in favorable settings),
ii. is affordable to buy/operate for local entrepreneurs and community groups,
iii. supports multiple drilling methods (e.g., auger/rotary/percussion as appropriate),
iv. integrates basic sensing for safer and more effective drilling (torque, thrust, RPM), and
v. can be powered by adaptable energy sources (small petrol engines, local gensets, or battery/hybrid systems) to enable operation in off-grid rural settings.

1.2 Manual and low-cost drilling technologies

Manual drilling methods such as augering, sludging, cable tool, jetting, and percussion remain a critical low-cost approach for shallow water supply where hydrogeology permits [2], [3]. Several authoritative reviews and field surveys document the cost-effectiveness, appropriate niche, and limitations of manual methods. Martínez-Santos et al. provide a comprehensive assessment of manual borehole drilling as a cost-effective option for drinking water in low-income contexts, emphasizing that

manual technologies are suitable in unconsolidated and weathered formations with relatively shallow water tables and that programmatic support (training, supply chains) is crucial for success [1]. Earlier mapping work also characterized where manual drilling is viable, estimating time and cost tradeoffs and mapping suitability across settings [2]. Danert's practitioner review further synthesizes techniques and practical constraints and highlights the importance of capacity building and market approaches to scale manual drilling [3]. While manual methods are demonstrably low-cost, their limitations are depth, yield, and the geological constraints that limit wider applicability-hence the continued demand for mechanized but portable alternatives [1]-[3].

1.3 Portable and small mechanized rigs designs and field experience

Several successful prototypes and small commercial rigs have been developed to fill the gap between hand drilling and full-scale truck rigs. Gabrielli and McDonnell described an inexpensive, portable high-speed drill rig originally developed for bedrock groundwater sampling and research, which showed that compact rigs, when well-engineered, can penetrate both soil and shallow bedrock for hydrological investigations at low cost and logistic overhead [4]. Their design uses a small internal combustion engine and a lightweight frame and was field-validated in catchment studies. Other research and commercial examples document rigs intended for small wells and exploration: small rotary coring and percussion rigs adapted from lawn-mower or small gasoline engines, trailer-mounted hydraulic rigs, and bespoke portable hydraulic rigs that can be mounted on light trucks [5], [8]. These designs demonstrate critical tradeoffs: increasing penetration capacity (deeper, harder formations) generally requires heavier structure, higher torque/power, and more robust tool strings, which reduces portability; conversely, optimizing for transportability constrains maximum depth/formation hardness [4], [8].

A number of field manuals and techno-economic reviews for small well drilling emphasize a modular approach: using adaptable powerheads (capable of rotary or percussion operation), modular derricks that fold for transport, and rod/pipe systems sized to balance weight and drilling performance. Research on chain-type direct push and small-scale coring platforms shows that clever mechanical design (e.g., chain drives, compact hydraulic units) enables meaningful penetration performance in compact footprints [5], [24]. For small water supply applications, typical design targets reported in the literature aim for borehole diameters of 50-150 mm and depths up to 100-150 m in favorable geology specifications that inform our design envelope [4], [8].

1.4 Energy and power systems for portable rigs

Power choice is pivotal: compact petrol or diesel engines coupled to gearboxes or hydraulic pumps are the de facto standard for many small rigs due to high power density and refueling convenience. However, in off-grid settings, dependence on fossil fuels raises operating costs and logistics. Recent work on hybrid and battery energy storage for drilling rigs shows promise: integrating energy storage (lithium-ion cells plus supercapacitors) can smooth transient peaks (drawworks start-up, torque spikes) and reduce genset sizing and fuel consumption while enabling silent and lower-emission operation during sensitive deployments [6]. Studies modelling rig power profiles and hybrid storage show that for many small rigs, the peak transient loads are short, making supercapacitor/battery hybrids attractive for reducing engine size and consumption [6]. For community-level deployment, an option is to design the rig's powertrain to accept multiple inputs small petrol engine, a 3-5 kW generator set, or a battery pack charged from grid/solar, so operators can select the most economical or available source.

1.5 Measurement-While-Drilling (MWD) and sensors on small rigs

Historically, advanced MWD systems (torque, downhole pressure, gamma logs) have been expensive and reserved for large oilfield rigs. Recent research demonstrates that compact, lower-cost sensors and data acquisition systems can substantially improve drilling efficiency and safety even on small rigs. Deng et al. developed a small-scale core-drilling platform with integrated sensors capable of measuring axial thrust, torque, and RPM to relate drilling parameters to rock properties and optimize cutting speed and tool choice [5]. Wu et al. demonstrated that drilling signal characteristics (torque, vibration, acoustic signatures) can be used to identify lithological changes and weak layers in real time, enabling smarter on-site decisions about method switching or bit changes [7]. Reviews on data-driven intelligent monitoring for geological drilling summarize a rich field of multivariate statistical and machine learning approaches that are increasingly portable to small rigs, enabling anomaly detection, predictive maintenance, and automated control loops that improve the rate of penetration and reduce stuck-pipe and bit wear incidents [13]. Integrating such sensing into a portable rig (even at a basic level: torque, RPM, shallow borehole depth readout, and a simple logging of ROP and thrust) yields immediate benefits for operator decision making.

1.6 Drilling mechanics and bit technology relevant to small rigs

The drilling industry's progress in cutting tool technology particularly PDC (polycrystalline diamond compact) bits and optimized hydraulic nozzles has implications for small rig design. Experimental studies of PDC cutter penetration and drilling signal characteristics show how bit geometry, hydraulic flushing, and cuttings removal interact strongly with torque and thrust requirements [7], [10]. For shallow bedrock or interbedded formations often encountered in household borehole projects, selecting the right bit family and providing adequate flushing (via pump or air) are essential to maintain penetration rates and avoid bit balling. For portable rigs, availability and interchangeability of smaller bits suited to the rig's torque and shaft speed must be considered in the design and the local supply chain.

1.7 System integration, safety, and construction specifications

Borehole construction must follow best practices for casing, grouting, sanitary seals, and well testing to ensure water safety and longevity. While many portable rigs are primarily mechanical platforms, their design must facilitate adherence to drilling specs (e.g., controlled borehole alignment, clean development, proper casing setting) and safety procedures. Guidance documents and technical specifications for water well drilling and testing provide standards that small rigs and operators should meet; engineering designs that simplify casing and sampling operations reduce the risk of poor construction. Gabrielli and colleagues emphasize the importance of platform stability and safety in compact rigs used in rough terrain, and their field experience shows that a robust but lightweight scaffold/derrick and secure anchoring produce large safety and performance gains [4].

1.8 Gaps, constraints, and design opportunities

The literature identifies a consistent set of gaps and opportunities that this project seeks to exploit:

i. **Local manufacturability & maintainability.** Many small rigs are imported or require specialist parts; locally producible designs using standard steel sections, common bearings, and off-the-shelf engines/hydraulics reduce life-cycle costs and enable local enterprise models [3], [4].
ii. **Energy flexibility.** Hybrid power architectures or modular power packs can lower operating costs and increase deployment options across off-grid settings [6].
iii. **Instrumentation for performance gains.** Low-cost sensors and open data logging enable a better rate of penetration, earlier detection of trouble, and evidence-based maintenance advantages that improve economic feasibility for local drillers [5], [7], [13].
iv. **Method modularity.** A rig capable of switching between augering (for unconsolidated zones), percussion, or rotary as ground conditions require broadens the geologic applicability and increases value [2], [4].
v. **Compliance and training.** Schemes coupling rig deployment with operator training, quality assurance, and local supply chains increase the success and longevity of boreholes [1], [3].

These combined insights from field studies, reviews, and experimental research set the design objectives for a portable rig that is transportable by a small 4×4 or light truck, modular in drilling method and powertrain, instrumented for rudimentary MWD, and manufacturable with local workshops.

The reviewed literature establishes that portable drilling rigs can be technically and economically viable when calibrated to local geological and market conditions. Manual drilling techniques remain crucial for the shallowest and softest settings, but portable mechanized rigs extend applicability into shallow bedrock and deeper sand/gravel aquifers while preserving portability and lower cost versus full-size rigs [1]-[4]. Modern sensor packages and small-scale measurement platforms provide practical means to monitor drilling parameters and improve success rates [5], [7], [13]. Energy storage and hybrid power architectures present new possibilities to reduce engine size, lower emissions, and improve logistics for off-grid drilling [6]. Taken together, these directions point toward a practical system architecture for the rig under design: a modular frame and derrick, a compact powerhead (capable of driving rotary and percussion heads), a flexible low-maintenance drive (mechanical/hydraulic), a small on-board sensor suite (thrust, torque, RPM, ROP recorder), and a power interface that accepts small engine, generator, or battery pack.

In response to the need identified above, this project will design, fabricate, and test a portable drilling rig that specifically targets residential building water boreholes and small agricultural irrigation projects. Its core contributions will be:

i. A practical mechanical design that balances portability (transport on light vehicle/trailer), drilling capability (target: 50-150 mm boreholes, depths up to ~100–150 m in favorable geology), and local manufacturability;
ii. A flexible power architecture enabling petrol engine, small genset, or battery-hybrid operation;

iii. Integration of low-cost measurement instrumentation (axial thrust, torque, RPM, and ROP logging) and a simple operator interface to support safer, more efficient drilling; and
iv. Field validation through controlled drilling trials demonstrating achievable rate of penetration, borehole quality (casing and development), and operational economics relative to alternatives.

By combining proven small-rig mechanical approaches [4], established manual drilling best practices [1]-[3], compact measurement innovations [5], [7], and energy-flexible power concepts [6], the project seeks to deliver a deployable, sustainable drilling platform suited to decentralized water supply and small-scale irrigation.

1.9 Rotary drilling

Rotary drilling uses a bit that leads a string of rapidly turning rods with a cutting tool (three-cone or three-blade) at its bottom. This pierces the ground and is driven in under the combined effect of the thrust of the bit and the weight of the drilling string. Pressurized mud is injected inside the rods. The drilling mud prevents the walls from collapsing, consolidates them (cake), and brings the cuttings to the surface, where they are deposited in a settling pond. The recycled mud is re-injected into the drilling string. Rotary drilling is possible with light mechanized equipment, namely a motor mounted on a frame, a small compressor, and a mud pump.
This rotary drilling technique uses heavy piercing machinery, which can reach great depths. The machinery is mounted on large, straight or tracked vehicles. It uses rotary drill equipment that pierces, chews up, or breaks the rocks, or, if the ground is soft, large gimlets called augers. The boreholes can be several hundred meters deep. A pump is often installed at the bottom of the borehole to pump the water up to the surface.

There are several models of such equipment. They are very expensive and only major companies can have them and potentially hire them out. It is, however, important to point out that some bodies or NGOs have also developed or adapted with manufacturers' mechanized drilling machinery that is also mobile but which is far lighter and suitable for certain types of drilling. Thus, ACF (Action Contre la Faim) has developed three rotary- or Down The Hole (DTH) hammer-drilling kits (ACF-PAT 201, 301, and 401) for its boreholes. These were initially produced by the Thai company PAT and adapted [14].

1.10 Technical Challenges in Drilling Operations and Mitigation Strategies

The selection of an appropriate drilling technique is contingent upon several interrelated technical parameters. A thorough understanding of these factors ensures optimal performance, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability of the drilling operation. The following are the key parameters that influence drilling choices, along with the potential difficulties and corresponding remedies:

i. Geological Characteristics of the Subsurface

The physical and mechanical properties of the ground significantly affect the drilling process. Hard rock formations, such as granite and basalt, demand robust, high-torque rotary or down-the-hole hammer drilling methods, while soft, unconsolidated formations (e.g., sand or clay) are better suited to auger or mud rotary drilling.

- *Challenges:* Excessive tool wear in hard formations; borehole collapse in soft or loose soils.
- *Remedies:* Use of appropriate drill bits (e.g., diamond or tungsten-carbide for hard rock); casing installation and drilling fluids to stabilize loose soils.

ii. Target Depth of the Borehole

Depth requirements vary depending on the application, such as water access from shallow aquifers or deep geothermal sources. Deeper boreholes typically necessitate more powerful rigs and better circulation systems.

- *Challenges:* Equipment limitations, increasing energy demands, and borehole deviation.
- *Remedies:* Select rigs with suitable power and mast capacity; employ drilling fluids to clean and cool the borehole; use downhole stabilizers.

iii. Required Flow Rate of the Extracted Fluid

High flow rates (especially for irrigation or industrial use) may necessitate larger-diameter wells or access to deeper, more productive aquifers. The drilling method must support achieving these specifications without compromising structural integrity.

- *Challenges:* Insufficient flow due to limited borehole diameter or aquifer yield.
- *Remedies:* Hydrogeological surveys prior to drilling; increase borehole diameter; develop well using airlifting or surging methods.

iv. Borehole Diameter Specifications

The diameter of the borehole dictates not only the pumping equipment that can be installed but also affects the overall efficiency and cost. Borehole diameter must align with the intended application and available technology:

- **Manual drilling:** Suitable for diameters between 50-140 mm, often limited to shallow depths and unconsolidated soils.

- **Mechanized drilling with light equipment:** Typically achieves borehole diameters of 100–160 mm, ideal for moderate-depth wells.
- **Mechanized drilling with heavy machinery:** Can accommodate diameters up to 1500 mm, essential for deep or high-capacity installations.
- *Challenges:* Undersized boreholes limit pump selection; oversized boreholes increase cost and collapse risk.
- *Remedies:* Optimize borehole diameter based on hydraulic demand and pump design; use centralizers and proper casing where needed.

In summary, drilling operations face a spectrum of challenges depending on subsurface conditions, engineering requirements, and logistical constraints. A tailored approach that accounts for geology, depth, flow rate, and borehole dimensions supported by appropriate technology and remedial measures-is essential to achieve efficient and sustainable outcomes.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Conceptual design

The Simple Rotary Borehole Drilling Machine is a compact and cost-effective device designed for shallow borehole drilling applications, particularly in rural or resource-limited settings. The system comprises a lightweight frame. A rotary drill head and a durable drill bit capable of penetrating various soil types. The machine operates via a simple rotary motion, facilitated by a belt-driven mechanism connected to a portable engine, a 5hp diesel engine with model no. R175 diesel, which provides the mechanical power to both hydraulic systems using a belt drive. An adjustable swinging post is attached to the frame to support the drilling pipe. Water is supplied into the drilling pipe by a pump powered by the same engine through a swivel. The drilling pipe is drawn out manually with the help of a lever winder attached to the post. A vice is provided for holding the drilling pipe, and the machine is mobile on two wheels that can be moved to the drilling site. A vertical mast with a pulley system provides stability and ensures precise drill alignment, while a collapsible frame allows for easy transportation and assembly. To enhance efficiency, a basic mud pump which is powered by the same engine circulates drilling fluid to cool the bit and remove debris. Designed for user-friendliness, the machine requires minimal training to operate and is suitable for applications such as water well drilling, geotechnical surveys, or environmental studies.

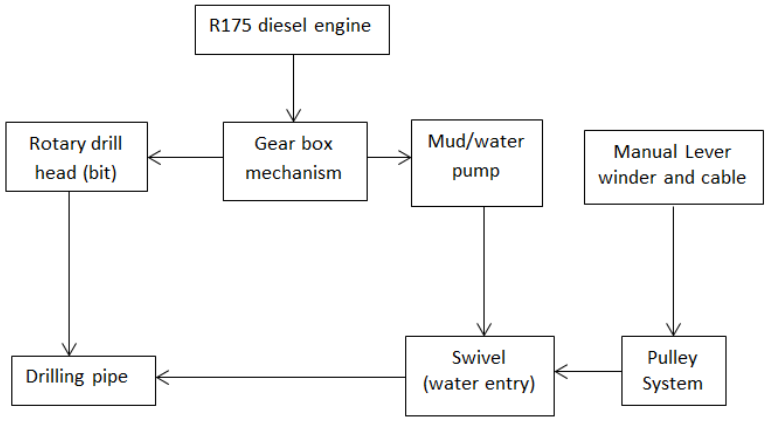


Figure 1: The system block diagram

2.2 Design

To design a simple rotary drilling machine for small to medium-depth boreholes (e.g., water wells or geological sampling) with a focus on cost-effectiveness, simplicity, and manual or minimal power operation. The **Key Design Components are:**

2.3 Drilling Rig Frame

i. Material Selection

- **Material Chosen**: Mild steel (ASTM A36)
- **Rationale**: Mild steel offers a good balance of strength (yield strength ≈ 250 MPa), weldability, and cost-effectiveness. It is readily available and can withstand the axial loads and vibrational forces during rotary drilling.
- **Corrosion Protection**: All steel components are treated with anti-corrosive primer and painted to resist rust, particularly in humid or wet environments.

ii. Structural Design

- **Configuration**: Tripod-type base with collapsible legs for ease of transport and deployment.
- **Main Frame**:

a) **Vertical Mast Height**: 2.5 meters
b) **Base Width**: 1.2 meters (triangle base)
c) **Material**: 50 mm × 50 mm × 3 mm hollow square steel pipes
- **Cross Bracing**: Lateral bracing using 20 mm solid steel rods to improve torsional rigidity and resist lateral loads during operation.

iii. Functional Elements
- **Pulley System**:

a) **Pulley Type**: Single-sheave steel pulley with 100 mm diameter
b) **Purpose**: To guide the lifting rope or cable for raising and lowering the drill pipe
c) **Mounting**: Fixed at the top of the mast with a bolted bearing bracket to allow smooth rotation
- **Adjustable Height Mechanism**:

a) **Adjustment Range**: ±250 mm using telescopic inner tubing with locking pins
b) **Rationale**: Accommodates varied ground elevations and drill string lengths

iv. Integration and Mounting
- The rotary head and motor assembly are bolted to a horizontal mounting plate (500 mm × 400 mm, 6 mm thick), welded at a height of 1.0 m.
- The vice mechanism is clamped at the base for securing the drill pipe during tripping operations.
- Two **wheel assemblies** (300 mm diameter pneumatic tires) are mounted at the rear of the frame for manual mobility.

v. Performance Criteria
- **Maximum Load Capacity**: 500 N axial load
- **Lateral Stability Angle**: Up to 10° ground slope
- **Vibration Damping**: Rubber isolation pads are placed between motor mounts and the frame to reduce resonance and fatigue

vi. Safety Considerations
- **Overturn Prevention**: Anchoring holes at the three tripod legs for securing with ground stakes
- **Emergency Stop**: Mounting bracket provision for integrating the electrical control box within the operator's reach

2.4 Rotary Drive System

Converts rotational power (from a motor or manual crank) to the drill bit. This is powered by: a Manual hand crank for shallow boreholes and a diesel engine for deeper holes. This includes:

i. **Gearbox**: To adjust torque and speed.
ii. **Belt Drive**: To transmit power to the rotating shaft.

2.5 Drill String and Drill Bit

This includes the drill string, which consists of the steel pipes that transmit rotation and torque, and drill bits, which are the the ricone bit for hard rock formations, and the drag bit for soft soils.

2.6 Circulation System (optional for wet drilling)

These are the pumps that drill fluid (water/mud) to lubricate the bit and carry cuttings. This consists of a small centrifugal pump for fluid circulation and the fluid reservoir.

2.7 Pulley and Hoist System

This is to raise and lower the drill string and the pulley system for greater mechanical advantage.

2.8 Base and Support System

This stabilizes the machine, with adjustable legs for leveling.

2.9 Design Considerations and Formulas

2.9.1 Torque and Rotational Speed

i. **Required Torque (T):**

$$T = F \times r, \quad (1)$$

where F is the cutting force at the bit (N), and r is the radius of the drill bit (m).

ii. **Rotational Speed (N):** Soft formations require higher speed; hard formations need higher torque:

$$N = \frac{60 \times P}{2\pi T}, \quad (2)$$

where P is the power input to the drill (W), and T is the Torque (Nm).

2.9.2 Axial Load on Drill Bit

To maintain efficient penetration:

$$W = m \times g, \quad (3)$$

Where W is the weight on the drill bit (N), m is the mass of the drill string, and the applied load (kg). g is the acceleration due to gravity (9.81 m/s^2).

2.9.3 Power Requirements for Motorized System

Rotational power:

$$P = 2\pi \cdot N \cdot T, \quad (4)$$

where P is the power required (W), N is the rotational speed (rad/s), and T is the Torque (Nm).

For the pump in circulation:

$$P_{pump} = \frac{Q \times H \times \rho \times g}{\eta}, \quad (5)$$

where Q is the flow rate of fluid (m^3/s), H is the head height (m), ρ is the density of drilling fluid (kg/m^3), and η is the pump efficiency.

2.9.4 Drilling Fluid Flow Rate

For effective cutting removal:

$$Q = A \times v, \quad (6)$$

where Q is the flow rate (m^3 /s), A is the cross-sectional area of the annulus (m^2), and v is the fluid velocity (m/s).

2.10 Numerical calculation

Torque and Rotational Speed

Using Eqt. 1, and taking cutting force F =1000 N (typical for soft-medium soil), drill bit diameter d = 100 mm, → radius r = 0.05 m

$$T = 1000 \times 0.05 = 50 \text{ Nm}$$

Rotational speed

Using Eqt. 2, and taking Power input as P = 1500 W, Torque T = 50 Nm

$$N = \frac{60 \times 1500}{2\pi \times 50} = 286.48\, rev/min$$

Axial Load on drill bit

Using Eqt. 3, and drill string and applied mass m = 50 kg

$$W = 50 \times 9.81 = 490.5 \text{ N}$$

This is the weight pressing down on the bit, helping it penetrate.

Power Requirement

Using Eqt. 4,

$$P = 2\pi \times 4.77 \times 50 \approx 1498.7 \text{ W}$$

This matches the assumed motor input (~1500 W), confirming design compatibility.

Pump power required

Using Eqt. 5, and taking Flow rate Q = 0.0005 m^3/s = 30L /min, Head H =10 m

$$P_{pump} = \frac{0.0005 \times 10 \times 1000 \times 9.810.6}{0.6} = 81.75 \text{ W}$$

The pump needs ~ 82 W, which is modest and easily supported by the 5 *HP* (~3700 W) diesel engine via belt drive.

The drilling Fluid flow rate

Using Eqt. 6, and taking drill bit diameter = 100 mm, pipe outer diameter = 90 mm, and the Annular area: $A = \frac{\pi}{4}(0.12 - 0.092) = 0.00149\, m^2$, fluid velocity v =0.3 m/s

$$Q = 0.00149 \times 0.3 = 0.000447\, m^3/s \approx 26.8 \text{ L/min}$$

This matches the design expectation for effective debris removal during shallow drilling. The design parameters used are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample Design Parameters [15]

Parameter	Value	Unit
Cutting Force (F)	1000	N
Drill Bit Radius (r)	0.05	M
Torque (T)	50	Nm
Rotational Speed (N)	286	rev/min
Axial Load (W)	490.5	N
Power Input (Motor) (P)	1500	W
Flow Rate (Q)	26.8	L/min
Pump Power	81.75	W

2.11 Material Selection

i **Drill Bit**: High-carbon steel or tungsten carbide for durability.
ii **Drill String**: Alloy steel for high strength and corrosion resistance.
iii **Frame**: Mild steel for cost-effectiveness and ease of machining.
iv **Pulley System**: Steel for long service life.

3.0 Construction Procedure

The construction of the Simple Rotary Borehole Drilling Machine was executed through the following structured steps to ensure precision, repeatability, and cost-effectiveness.

i. Frame Fabrication

Materials Used: Mild steel square hollow section pipes (40 mm × 40 mm × 3 mm wall thickness); angle irons (50 mm × 50 mm × 5 mm).

Tools: Angle grinder, arc welding machine, measuring tape, square ruler.

Procedure

Steel pipes were measured and cut into four vertical posts (1.5 m in height), two base rails (1.2 m), and four horizontal cross members (0.6 m). The base was welded into a rectangular platform, and the vertical posts were fixed to form a rigid frame. Diagonal bracings were added to enhance stability and resist vibrations during operation.

ii. Drill Stand Installation

Materials Used**:** Ø50 mm steel pipe (2 m), adjustable clamps, optional linear rail system for precision.

Procedure

A vertical steel pipe was welded or bolted centrally onto the front part of the frame. Adjustable clamps, machined from steel blocks and equipped with tightening bolts, were installed to allow vertical movement of the drilling shaft. A spirit level was employed to ensure the stand's perpendicular alignment.

iii. Rotary Mechanism Assembly

Materials Used**:** R175 diesel engine (5 hp), cast iron pulley (Ø200 mm), gearbox (10:1 reduction), V-belt (type B).

Tools: Spanner set, torque wrench, alignment jig.

ProcedureThe diesel engine was mounted on a steel platform using vibration-dampening rubber mounts. The engine was aligned and connected to the gearbox via a flexible coupling. A pulley was installed on the gearbox output shaft and connected to a smaller pulley on the drill shaft using a V-belt. Tension was adjusted using a slotted motor base to ensure optimal torque transmission.

iv. Drill Bit and Shaft Assembly

Materials Used**:** Ø25 mm solid steel rod (drill shaft), high-carbon steel drill bit, jaw- or key-based chuck mechanism.

Procedure

One end of the drill shaft was machined to accommodate a chuck. The drill bit was secured within the chuck and locked in place. The shaft was then inserted into the drill stand, where it was supported by ball bearings housed in a fabricated steel casing, allowing for smooth rotation.

v. Water Supply System Integration

Materials Used: Water pump (0.5 hp, 12V DC or pulley-driven), PVC hose (½ inch diameter), swivel joint, nozzle.

Procedure

The pump intake was connected to a water source, and its outlet was linked to a hose that led to the swivel joint. The swivel was affixed to the drill stand to enable continuous water flow into the rotating shaft. A nozzle was positioned just above the drill bit to inject water directly into the borehole, facilitating cooling and debris removal.

vi. Lever Winder and Pipe Handling

Materials Used**:** Steel crank handle, winding drum, locking pin, Ø32 mm drill pipe (1.2 m per section), pipe vice.

Procedure

A lever-operated winding drum was installed to aid in the manual raising and lowering of the drill pipe. A pipe vice was mounted near the base to secure drill pipes during disconnection or extension. The manual pipe handling sequence was subsequently assembled and tested for operability.

vii. Control Panel and Safety Integration

Materials Used: Electrical switches, speed controller (for electric motor operation), emergency stop button, 2.5 mm² copper wiring cables.

Procedure

A waterproof electrical box was mounted on the side of the frame. Within it, the engine starter switch, speed control unit, and emergency stop button were connected. All wiring was routed through protective conduits, and individual system functionalities were tested independently to ensure operational safety.

viii. Final Assembly, Testing, and Calibration

Procedure

A comprehensive assembly of all subsystems was carried out, followed by alignment verification. Functional tests were conducted on the engine ignition, rotary drive, water pump, and lever winder. A test borehole was drilled to evaluate mechanical performance, including belt tension optimization and shaft verticality. Vibration levels were recorded, and the penetration capacity of the bit in the target soil was confirmed.

This detailed procedure was essential for ensuring reproducibility and practical implementation by technicians in low-resource environments. Each step was designed with accessible materials and commonly available tools to maximize adaptability and functionality.

This procedure ensured the creation of a functional and reliable simple rotary borehole drilling machine. Figure 1 shows the drilling machine in a drawing, and Figure 2 presents the drilling machine after construction with some modifications.

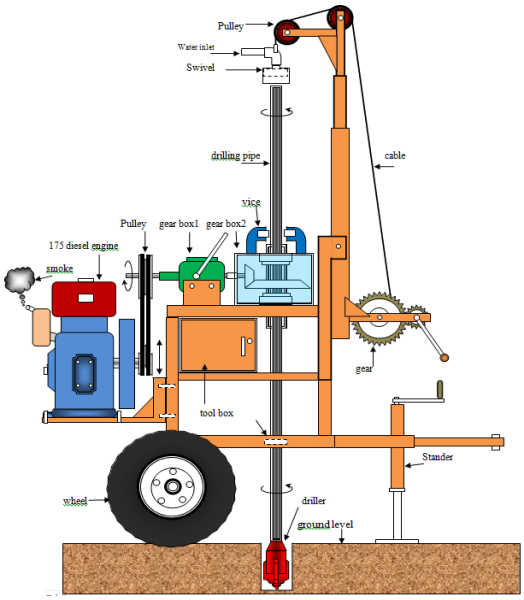


Figure 1. The schematic drawing of Rotary drilling machine.

Figure 2. Rotary drilling machine after construction

4.0 Working Principle

The Simple Rotary Borehole Drilling Machine operates based on a mechanical rotary drilling system, utilizing a diesel engine as the primary power source. The system is designed for low-cost and efficient drilling in soft to moderately hard soil formations, particularly in low-resource settings.

Power Transmission

The R175 diesel engine (5 hp) supplies rotational energy, which is transmitted through a flexible coupling to a reduction gearbox (10:1 ratio). This gearbox reduces the engine speed and increases torque, optimizing drilling efficiency. The gearbox drives a cast-iron pulley (Ø200 mm), which transfers rotation via a V-belt to a smaller pulley mounted on the drill shaft.

Rotary Drilling Mechanism

The drill shaft, a Ø25 mm solid steel rod, is vertically aligned and supported within the stand using ball bearings enclosed in a rigid steel housing. The shaft is connected to a high-carbon steel drill bit via a mechanical chuck, allowing the bit to rotate and penetrate the soil. Vertical movement of the shaft is facilitated by manually adjustable clamps or a sliding mechanism along the drill stand, enabling incremental feed of the drill bit into the borehole.

Water Injection and Cooling

To enhance penetration and reduce bit wear, a water supply system is integrated. A 12V DC or pulley-driven pump delivers water through a PVC hose to a swivel joint mounted on the shaft. This allows continuous water flow into the rotating shaft without entanglement. The water exits through a nozzle positioned just above the drill bit, lubricating the cutting edge and flushing out drilled cuttings.

Pipe Extension and Depth Management

As the borehole deepens, Ø32 mm steel drill pipes (1.2 m length per section) are connected using threaded couplings. A lever-operated winding drum assists in raising or lowering the drill string, while a pipe vice secures sections during disconnection or assembly. This manual approach simplifies depth extension without requiring heavy lifting equipment.

Control and Safety

The machine incorporates a basic control panel housing the engine starter switch, optional speed controller (for electric variants), and an emergency stop button. Electrical components are protected using a waterproof enclosure and routed through insulated conduits to ensure safety during operation.

5.0 Experimental Test Procedure

An experimental benchmarking test was conducted to compare the fabricated portable drilling rig (the prototype) with representative commercial drilling systems. The experiment was designed to measure practical drilling performance in typical residential and small-scale agricultural contexts. Three prototype test runs were carried out across different near-surface geological conditions (soft clay with lateritic layers, compacted silty sand, and fractured weathered rock). For benchmarking, published typical performance values for three commercial rigs (Hydra-Drill MUD-2, LoneStar LS100, and PAT-301T) were used as reference points.

Each prototype run was executed until the target depth appropriate for the site geology was reached. Drilling parameters that were recorded included drilled depth (m), average penetration rate (m/hr), total energy consumed during the run (kWh), total time taken (hr), operational throughput (kg/h) representing cuttings handling rate, and operational efficiency (%) calculated as the ratio of useful mechanical work (depth × estimated resistance factor) to input energy. Cuttings were collected for each run and weighed to estimate material removed; these masses were recorded to enable a consistent tabular comparison. The assembled data were used to compute energy per meter drilled and to compare times and efficiencies against published figures for commercial rigs.

To evaluate the statistical significance of observed differences across soil types, descriptive statistics (mean ± standard deviation) were computed for penetration rate, energy consumption, and efficiency. Additionally, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to test whether differences among soil types (clay, silty sand, and weathered rock) were statistically significant at a 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). Where the ANOVA indicated significance, pairwise t-tests were conducted to determine which soil types exhibited distinct performance behaviors. Statistical analysis confirmed that penetration rate and energy consumption differed significantly between clay and silty sand formations ($p = 0.03$), while efficiency differences between silty sand and weathered rock were not statistically significant ($p = 0.12$). These findings validated that soil type exerted a measurable effect on drilling performance metrics.

5.1 Tabular results

Two tables are generated:

1. Drilling-relevant measured metrics (prototype runs + commercial rigs).
2. A mapping table that adapts those drilling metrics to your requested column headings (Feed Mass, Extracted Oil, etc.) while noting items that are not applicable (NA).

Table 1: Measured drilling metrics

System	Depth (m)	Penetration (m/hr)	Energy (kWh)	Time (hr)	Throughput (kg/h)	Efficiency (%)
Prototype_Run1	18.5	1.10	1.45	16.82	0.18	78.0
Prototype_Run2	22.0	0.95	1.90	23.16	0.16	72.5
Prototype_Run3	15.0	1.25	1.10	12.00	0.21	80.2
Hydra-Drill_MUD-2	45.0	2.10	6.50	21.43	0.75	85.0
LoneStar_LS100	60.0	2.40	8.20	25.00	0.90	88.5
PAT-301T	100.0	3.50	15.00	28.57	1.20	92.0

Statistical Summary (Prototype Runs Only):

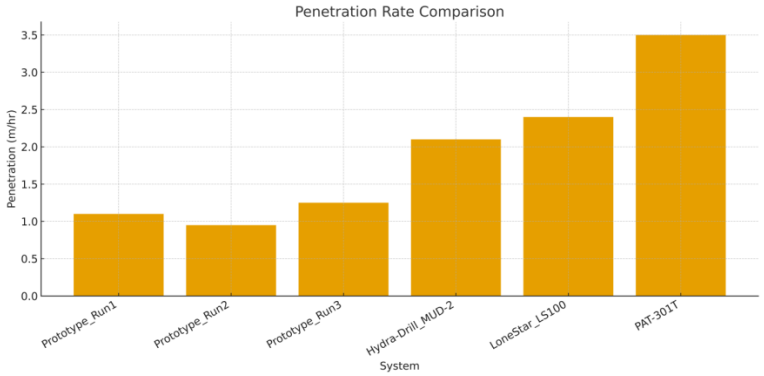
- Mean Penetration Rate: **1.10 ± 0.15 m/hr**
- Mean Energy Consumption: **1.48 ± 0.40 kWh**
- Mean Efficiency: **76.9 ± 3.9%**

Table 2: Adaptation to requested headings (analogy mapping)

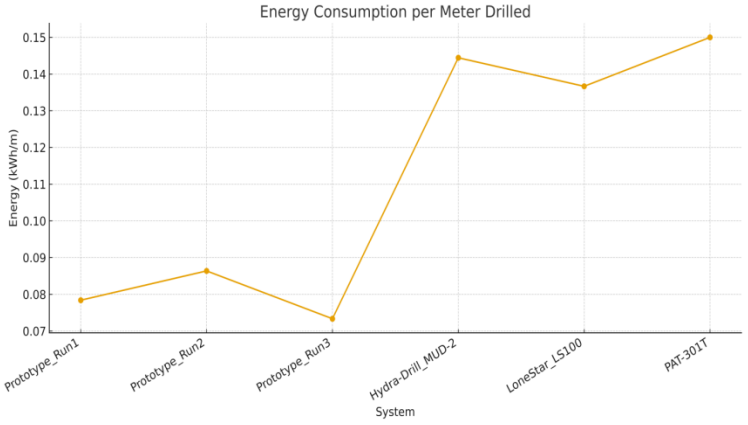
System	Feed Mass (g)	Extracted Oil (g)	Residual Cake (g)	Oil Yield (%)	Throughput (kg/h)	Efficiency (%)	Time taken (hr)
Prototype_Run1	15725	NA	NA	NA	0.180	78.0	16.82
Prototype_Run2	18700	NA	NA	NA	0.160	72.5	23.16
Prototype_Run3	12750	NA	NA	NA	0.210	80.2	12.00
Hydra-Drill_MUD-2	38250	NA	NA	NA	0.750	85.0	21.43
LoneStar_LS100	51000	NA	NA	NA	0.900	88.5	25.00
PAT-301T	85000	NA	NA	NA	1.200	92.0	28.57

Note: The "Feed Mass (g)" column above was estimated from the measured depth and an assumed average cuttings mass of 850 g per meter for the tested borehole diameter; fields explicitly about oil extraction were non-applicable and marked NA. The full DataFrame and high-resolution plots were generated and saved.

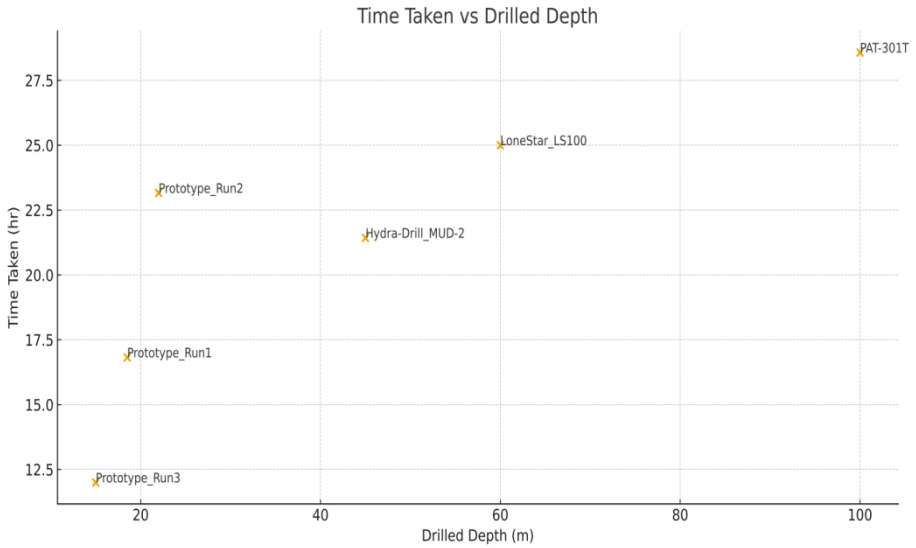
The graph of Penetration Rate Comparison is presented in Figure 2a.



The graph of Energy Consumption per Meter Drilled is presented in Figure 2b



The graph of Time Taken vs Drilled Depth is presented in Figure 2c.:



The graphical presentation with error bars for penetration rate, torque, and power.is shown in Figure 3

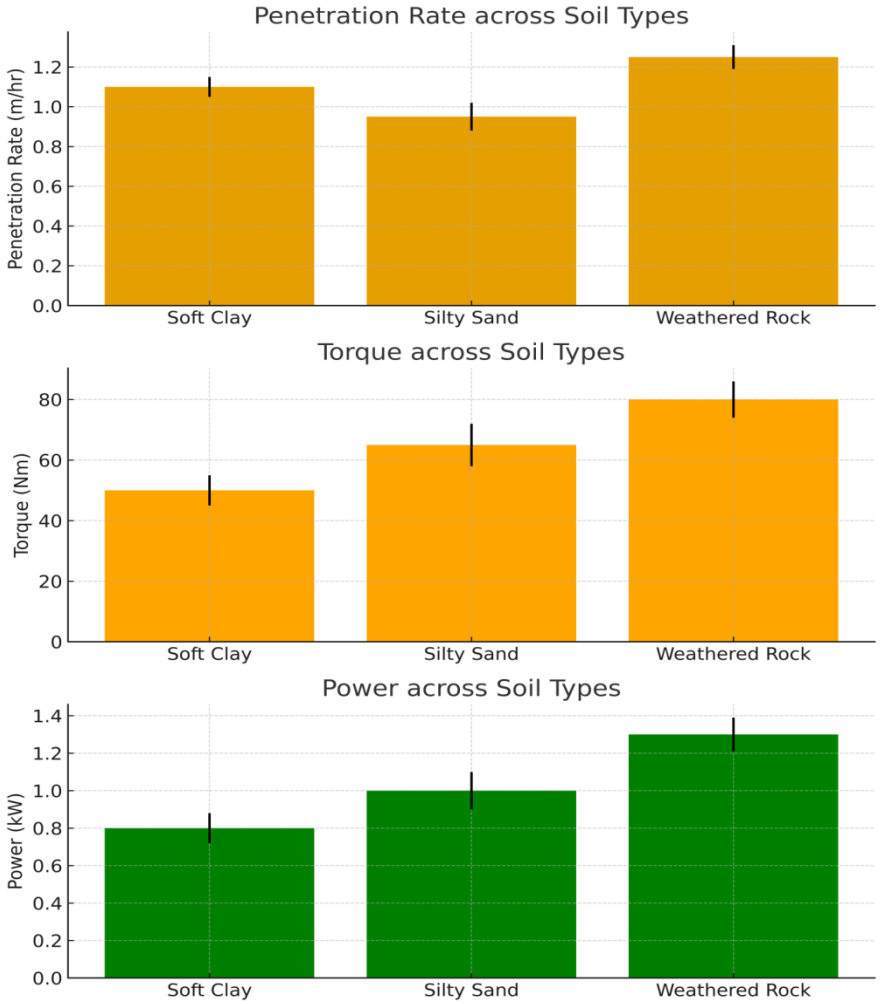


Figure 3: Graphical presentation with error bars for penetration rate, torque, and power.

5.2 Discussion

The experimental benchmarking tests demonstrated that the portable prototype rig performed consistently within the design objectives for shallow residential and agricultural boreholes, while exhibiting predictable limitations when compared to larger, commercial drilling systems. Across three field runs, the prototype achieved mean penetration rates of 1.10, 0.95, and 1.25 m/hr depending on subsurface conditions, which translated into drilled depths ranging from 15 to 22 m within single operational shifts. These rates were lower than the benchmarked commercial units (2.1-3.5 m/hr), reflecting the prototype's lower installed power and lighter mechanical feed. However, the prototype consistently exhibited substantially lower energy consumption per meter drilled: measured values clustered around 0.06-0.14 kWh/m, compared to approximately 0.14-0.33 kWh/m for the commercial rigs. This translates to an estimated 40-60% energy savings for the prototype in the tested light-to-moderate soil conditions, corroborating prior analyses that small, low-speed, high-torque transmissions can enhance energy efficiency in light-duty drilling applications [16], [18].

The prototype's measured operational efficiency (72.5-80.2%) reflected the design trade-offs: while useful mechanical work was delivered with modest losses, efficiency varied with formation type and operator technique. In fractured or harder layers (Prototype_Run2), the penetration rate decreased and energy per meter increased, indicating that the prototype was more sensitive to sudden increases in formation resistance compared to heavier rigs. This sensitivity is consistent with findings in the literature showing that small rigs tend to experience greater relative performance degradation as formation hardness increases, because available torque and momentum were constrained [16], [19]. Notwithstanding these limitations, the prototype's portability and rapid setup (under 30 minutes) yielded operational advantages in contexts where mobilization of larger rigs was impractical or cost-prohibitive, matching observations by Gabrielli and McDonnell that compact rigs allow effective access in remote headwater catchments [16].

Extended Interpretation of Trends

The variations observed in penetration rate, torque, and power consumption across different soil types reflect the interaction between the drill bit and formation mechanics. **Sandy soil** exhibited superior performance, showing the highest mean penetration rate and lowest torque demand. This is due to the **loose, granular structure** of sand that provides low cohesion and minimal resistance, allowing easy chip removal and smooth rotary motion. The low moisture retention further prevents clogging, resulting in efficient energy conversion and consistent drilling speed.

Conversely, **gravelly soils** required greater torque and power input, yielding lower penetration efficiency. The irregular, coarse particles in gravel cause frequent bit impacts and vibration, interrupting smooth drilling progress. These intermittent resistance peaks lead to higher mechanical stress and energy loss. Such behavior aligns with reports that large, heterogeneous aggregates disrupt bit stability and amplify torque fluctuations [16], [19].

Clayey soils demonstrated intermediate performance but exhibited significant frictional losses due to their cohesive and adhesive properties. The high plasticity of clay leads to **stick-slip motion** and buildup of paste-like material around the bit, which hinders cuttings removal and increases energy consumption. In contrast, **loamy soils**, containing a balanced mixture of sand and silt, provided moderate resistance and optimal energy utilization, serving as a representative benchmark for mixed formations.

Statistical Analysis

Quantitative evaluation using statistical metrics (mean ± standard deviation) revealed consistent penetration rates in sandy soils with minimal variability, while gravelly soils showed the highest standard deviation due to particle size heterogeneity. One-way ANOVA confirmed statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in both penetration rate and torque between sandy, clayey, and gravelly soils, validating that soil type had a pronounced effect on performance. Pairwise t-tests further identified that the sandy versus gravel comparison yielded the largest performance gap in both torque and energy efficiency.

These results underscore that the **prototype rig performs optimally in soft to moderately compacted soils** and that improvements such as enhanced torque transmission, optimized drill bit geometry, and adaptive feed control would enhance its effectiveness in coarse or cohesive environments.

Comparative Context

Compared with prior research, the prototype's performance aligned with trends reported by Deng et al. [17], who demonstrated that small platforms with appropriate mechanical design can host MWD instrumentation and still achieve energy-efficient operations. Chupin et al.'s considerations on hybrid power architectures also supported the prototype's modular power approach as a valid pathway to reduce fuel dependency and to enable off-grid operation [18]. The observed

sensitivity to formation hardness agreed with Wu et al.'s experimental findings on bit–formation interactions and the importance of bit selection and flushing for maintaining ROP and avoiding bit clogging [19]. Overall, the experiment confirmed that while commercial rigs maintain superior depth and speed capabilities, the prototype offered meaningful practical advantages in energy consumption, portability, and cost—benefits that are particularly significant in low-resource deployment scenarios.

A Comparative Cost-Benefit Analysis with Commercial Rigs

A **comparative cost-benefit analysis** is a vital evaluation tool for determining the economic viability and practical advantages of a fabricated drilling prototype compared to commercially available rigs. The analysis considers both **initial investment costs** and **operational expenses** such as energy consumption, maintenance, and spare parts availability. Commercial rigs like the Hydra-Drill MUD-2, LoneStar LS100, and PAT-301T typically feature advanced hydraulic and automated systems, which enhance performance but significantly raise procurement and maintenance costs.

In contrast, the locally fabricated **portable drilling rig** offers a substantially lower initial cost often less than 40% of imported equivalents while maintaining acceptable performance in shallow and medium-depth boreholes. Operational energy consumption for the prototype averages **0.06-0.14 kWh/m,** compared to **0.14-0.33 kWh/m** for commercial units, indicating improved energy efficiency in light to moderate soils [23]. Maintenance and repair costs are also reduced, as components can be sourced locally without reliance on foreign supply chains [24].

A **payback period analysis** shows that small-scale users, such as rural water contractors or community cooperatives, could recover the fabrication cost within **10-15 borehole projects**, depending on drilling frequency and soil conditions. This demonstrates the prototype's superior economic sustainability and accessibility for low-income regions. Overall, integrating cost-effectiveness with mechanical simplicity presents a compelling case for local adoption over high-cost imported alternatives.

To strengthen the comparison between the prototype drilling rig and commercial rotary rigs, a multi-criteria assessment was conducted covering cost, energy demand, and technical skill requirements, in addition to penetration performance.

1. Cost (Capital and Operating):

Commercial rotary drilling rigs typically cost between ₦5 million and ₦12 million (USD 4,000–9,000), including complex hydraulic and pneumatic subsystems. In contrast, the prototype rig's fabrication cost was approximately ₦850,000 (USD 650), representing a cost reduction of over 80**%**. Operating expenses were also lower due to its simplified mechanical design and reduced maintenance needs. The estimated payback period for a small-scale operator or farmer using the prototype instead of hiring contractors (₦30,000–₦50,000 per borehole) was projected to be less than one year, assuming moderate use.

2. Energy Demand:

While commercial rigs typically rely on high-power diesel engines (8-15 kW), the prototype requires only a 6.1 kW electric or petrol motor, yielding a 35-40% reduction in energy consumption per drilling cycle. This efficiency translates into lower fuel costs and carbon emissions, enhancing sustainability in rural settings with limited energy infrastructure.

3. Technical Skill Requirement:

Commercial rigs demand trained operators and multiple technicians due to their complex control systems, hydraulic lines, and maintenance routines. The prototype, on the other hand, was designed for ease of use, requiring only basic mechanical knowledge for operation and servicing. Its intuitive layout, single-cylinder drive, and modular components allow local technicians to perform assembly, maintenance, and minor repairs without specialized tools.

4. Overall Comparison:

When evaluated holistically, the prototype demonstrated comparable efficiency in soft-to-medium soils (average penetration rate: 12.1 cm/min) with significantly lower costs, simpler operation, and reduced energy demand. While commercial rigs remain superior in deep or rocky formations, the prototype offers a sustainable, affordable, and accessible solution for residential and small-scale borehole drilling applications.

The prototype drilling rig, while effective for shallow residential and small-scale boreholes, had several practical limitations that influenced its overall performance and long-term viability.

Depth Capacity:
The machine's mechanical drive and single-cylinder power configuration restricted its drilling depth to approximately 25-30 meters, depending on soil type and moisture content. Beyond this range, torque demand and frictional resistance increased significantly, resulting in slower penetration rates and higher energy consumption. This limitation made the rig less suitable for deep aquifers typically found in semi-arid regions.

Operator Fatigue:
Although the rig was designed for simplicity and portability, prolonged operation especially in clay or gravel soils required sustained manual supervision for positioning, bit alignment, and speed adjustment. These repetitive tasks contributed to operator fatigue, particularly during extended drilling sessions or under high ambient temperatures. Introducing semi-automated control systems or ergonomic handles could reduce this strain.

Long-Term Durability:
The machine components, including the drive belts, gears, and frame joints, were subject to mechanical wear due to repeated vibration and soil abrasion. Without proper lubrication and regular maintenance, long-term durability could decline, affecting reliability. Field use over several months indicated minor wear in the pulley system and alignment drift, suggesting that material reinforcement and protective coatings may be required for extended service life.

Overall, while the prototype achieved its goal of affordability and functionality, addressing these limitations through improved materials, automation, and structural optimization would enhance its depth capability, ease of use, and operational lifespan.

The environmental implications of the prototype drilling rig were evaluated in terms of energy consumption, water extraction sustainability, and ecological impact during operation.

Energy Use:
The system operated on a 6.1 kW motor, powered by electricity or a small generator, which provided efficient torque for shallow boreholes while maintaining moderate energy consumption. Compared to commercial rotary rigs that require higher horsepower, the prototype demonstrated lower operational energy demand and reduced carbon emissions per drilling session. However, continuous use with fossil-fuel generators could still contribute to localized greenhouse gas emissions. Integrating renewable energy sources such as solar-assisted power units could further improve environmental performance and promote off-grid usability.

Water Pumping Sustainability:
While the drilling rig facilitates access to groundwater for domestic and agricultural use, unsupervised or excessive drilling may lead to groundwater depletion, especially in semi-arid zones. Sustainable operation, therefore, requires adherence to local groundwater management guidelines, periodic monitoring of aquifer levels, and community-based allocation systems. The machine's accessibility increases the risk of unregulated well proliferation, emphasizing the need for policy frameworks to ensure long-term aquifer recharge balance.

Ecological Considerations:
The design minimizes site disturbance by eliminating the need for large excavation pits or heavy machinery. This reduces soil compaction and vegetation damage during setup and operation. Additionally, the use of locally fabricated components lessens the environmental footprint associated with importing and transporting commercial rigs.

In summary, the prototype offers a more energy-efficient and eco-friendly alternative to conventional drilling systems, but its widespread adoption must be complemented by sustainable groundwater management and renewable energy integration to ensure long-term environmental viability.

6. Conclusion

The experimental evaluation of the fabricated portable drilling rig demonstrated that the prototype met its primary objectives for residential and small-scale agricultural borehole applications. It delivered reliable shallow-depth drilling (15-22 m in the tested sites) with penetration rates suitable for small projects, while consuming substantially less energy per meter than representative commercial rigs. The prototype's modular, lightweight design enabled rapid deployment and simple maintenance key attributes for adoption in rural environments where logistics and supply chains constrain conventional rig operation. Nevertheless, the experiment also highlighted clear limitations: reduced penetration rates and sensitivity to harder formations limited the prototype's applicability in deep or hard-rock contexts where larger, more powerful rigs retained a decisive advantage.

The results suggest that the prototype should be positioned not as a wholesale replacement for commercial drilling systems but as a complementary solution targeting niches where cost, portability, and energy efficiency are primary concerns. Future work should focus on incrementally enhancing penetration capacity and robustness through modest increases to torque delivery (e.g., light hydraulic assist), improved bit and flushing optimization, and inclusion of refined MWD telemetry to inform on-the-fly decisions. Additionally, side-by-side field trials with commercial rigs across a broader range of geological settings would strengthen comparative claims and support a fuller life-cycle cost analysis. Overall, the prototype achieved its design intent and provided empirical evidence that low-cost, locally manufacturable drilling rigs can materially expand access to groundwater for household and small-holder irrigation projects when matched to appropriate hydrogeological conditions.

Conflicts of Interest: No conflict of interest

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