



Kerala Leads Nation in NH Land Acquisition Contributions

For Prelims: [Land Acquisition](#), [National Highways Authority of India \(NHAI\)](#), [Bharatmala Pariyojana](#)

For Mains: Role of Bharatmala Pariyojana in Exemption from Sharing the Land Acquisition Cost.

Source: [TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry for Road Transport and Highways (MoRT&H)** presented a document in Parliament which shows that **Kerala** has the highest amount of financial Burden followed by **Haryana** and **Uttar Pradesh**.

- The reason is being norms like state to bear **25%** of the [land acquisition cost](#) for national highway development.

What are the Key Highlights of the Document?

- The [National Highways Authority of India \(NHAI\)](#) has spent the highest share on land acquisition and related activities in **Maharashtra** in the past five years followed by **Uttar Pradesh**, and **Kerala**.
- The Kerala has submitted a proposal for waiver of the **25% share** for **land acquisition** for two projects of the **NHAI- Ernakulam bypass** and **Kollam-Shenkottai stretch** and exemption from sharing the **land acquisition cost** of the **Outer Ring Road project** by listing the project under the [Bharatmala Pariyojana](#).
- According to documents **Haryana** and **Uttar Pradesh** have to pay **Rs. 3,114 crore** and **Rs. 2,301 crore** respectively.
- **Key Facts About Road Network in India**
 - India's road density at **1,926.02 per 1,000 sq.km** of area in **2018-19** was higher than that of many developed countries though surfaced/paved road constituting **64.7 %** of the total road length is comparatively lower than that of developed countries.
 - **National Highways** constituted **2.09%** of the total road length of the country in **2019**.
 - The balance road networks comprise of **State Highways (2.9%)**, **District Roads (9.6%)**, **Rural Roads (7.1%)**, **Urban Roads (8.5%)** and **Project Roads (5.4%)**.

What are the Challenges Related to Land Acquisition in India?

- **High Financial Cost:** The financial cost of land acquisition in India has increased significantly due to the amended **Land Acquisition Act of 2013**, which provides **higher compensation** and **consent requirements** for land owners.

- **Environmental Clearance:** Delays and uncertainties in obtaining environmental clearance and **land acquisition** notifications, which affect the project timelines and costs.
- **Conflicts and Protests:** Affected communities oppose projects on the grounds of **environmental, social, or cultural impacts**.
- **Lack of Transparency and Accountability in Land Acquisition Process:** As many landowners are not aware of their rights and entitlements and coerced to sell their land at low prices.
 - Government agencies engaged in land acquisition have been observed to exhibit actions that may seem occasionally deviate from the principles of natural justice and fair compensation.
- **Inadequate Legal Framework and Enforcement Mechanism for Land Acquisition:** The existing laws governing land acquisition are outdated and complex, creating confusion and uncertainty for both the government and the landowners. The laws also lack clarity on various aspects of land acquisition, such as **financial cost , environmental clearance, dispute resolution mechanisms etc.**

What are the Initiatives taken by the Government to Reform the Land Acquisition Process?

- The [Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013](#) (LARR Act of 2013) replaced the **Land Acquisition Act of 1894** and introduced new provisions for **compensation, consent, social impact assessment**, and rehabilitation and resettlement of affected persons.
- The [SVAMITVA scheme](#) was launched in **2020** to provide **property cards** to **rural landowners** and enable them to use their land as a financial asset.
- The [Special Economic Zones \(SEZs\) Act, 2005](#) was enacted to facilitate the establishment of **SEZs** in India and provide incentives and exemptions for the development of **export-oriented industries**.
- The [Bhoomi Rashi Portal](#) is an **e-Governance initiative** of the **Ministry of Road Transport & Highways**. The portal intends to expedite the process of **land acquisition for National Highways**. It has fully digitised and automated the entire process of land acquisition.
- [PM Gati Shakti Scheme](#)
- [Bharatmala scheme](#)

Way forward

- Improving Transparency and Accountability in the land acquisition process by adopting best practices such as **online mapping systems, public hearings, social impact assessments, grievance redressal mechanisms**, etc.
- Ensuring **fair compensation and rehabilitation** for the affected people by adopting criteria such as **market value, alternative sites, livelihood support, social security**, etc.
- **Minimising environmental impacts** of land acquisition by adopting measures such as **environmental clearance, environmental impact assessment, mitigation measures, monitoring mechanisms**, etc.
- **Reforming the legal framework** for land acquisition by adopting measures such as **simplifying laws, updating laws, harmonizing laws, strengthening enforcement mechanisms**, etc.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q1. With reference to 'National Investment and Infrastructure Fund', which of the following statements is/are correct? (2017)

1. It is an organ of NITI Aayog.
2. It has a corpus of `4,00,000 crore at present.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (d)

- The NIIF (National Investment and Infrastructure Fund) is overseen by the Investment Division of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- The NIIF is currently managing three funds which are registered as an Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) under the SEBI Regulations. Those three funds are Master Fund, Strategic Fund and Fund of Funds and the proposed corpus of NIIF is `40,000 crore and not 4,00,000 crore. Hence, statement 2 is not correct. Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.

Mains

Q. "Investment in infrastructure is essential for more rapid and inclusive economic growth." Discuss in the light of India's experience. **(2021)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/kerala-leads-nation-in-nh-land-acquisition-contributions>

