



Digitisation of Land Records

This editorial is based on [Digitisation of land records is hugely beneficial](#) which was published in The Hindu Business line on 17/05/2023. It talks about importance of digitization of land records and their potential benefits.

For Prelims: [Special Economic Zones \(SEZs\)](#), [National Land Record Modernization Programme \(NLRMP\)](#), [Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme \(DILRMP\)](#)

For Mains: Digitization of Land Records, DILRMP Scheme: Benefits, Challenges and Way Forward

Land is a precious asset for any country, and more so for India where more than 50% of the working population is engaged in agriculture. It is, therefore, all the more important to develop a modern, comprehensive and transparent land record management system.

Keeping this in view, the government revamped the existing National Land Record Modernization Programme (NLRMP) by bringing into force, the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) in 2016.

What is the Significance of Land?

- **Source of Livelihood:** Land provides habitation and sustenance to a wide variety of flora and fauna, including human beings. More than 50% of the working population in India is engaged in agriculture, which depends on land as a primary resource.
 - Land is also used for forestry, mining, and other activities that generate income and employment.
- **Economy:** Land is a valuable asset that can attract investment, promote industrialization, and boost growth. [Special Economic Zones \(SEZs\)](#) are examples of land-based initiatives that aim to create hyper-liberalized enclaves for export-oriented production.
 - Land can also generate long-term capital gains when transferred, subject to certain conditions and exemptions.
- **Natural Resources:** Land contains a variety of natural resources, including minerals, water, and forests. These resources are essential for human industry and commerce.
- **Culture and Identity:** Land can be a source of identity and belonging for people. It can be associated with a particular culture or community, and it can play a role in religious and spiritual practices.

Why is a Digitization of Land Record Management System needed in India?

- **Reduce Litigation:** Land-related disputes account for a large proportion of pending court cases in India, which take a long time and cost to resolve. A comprehensive and transparent land record

management system can reduce the scope and frequency of such disputes by providing clear and secure ownership rights that are backed by the government.

- **Improve Transparency:** Land records in India are often inaccurate, outdated, and fragmented across different departments and levels of government. A comprehensive and transparent land record management system can improve the quality and accessibility of land records by digitizing them and linking them to spatial data and other databases such as Aadhaar, tax records, etc.
- **Promote Development:** Land is a valuable asset that can attract investment, promote industrialization, and boost growth. A comprehensive and transparent land record management system can create a conducive environment for land markets and transactions by reducing transaction costs, risks, and uncertainties. It can also enable landowners to access credit, insurance, and markets by using their land titles as collateral.
- **Ensure Equity:** A comprehensive and transparent land record management system can support the implementation of land reforms that aim to redistribute land among the landless and marginalized sections of society. It can also empower women and other vulnerable groups by recognizing their land rights and enhancing their access to land-related services.

What is National Land Record Modernization Programme (NLRMP)?

The **National Land Record Modernization Programme (NLRMP)** was a [centrally sponsored scheme](#) that was launched by the Government of India in 2008 with the aim to modernize the land records system in the country and implement the conclusive land-titling system with title guarantee. The **NLRMP was later revamped and renamed as the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) in 2016 as a central sector scheme with 100% funding by the Centre.**

Salient features of DILRMP:

- A [Unique Land Parcel Identification Number \(ULPIN\)](#) or **Bhu-Aadhaar number** has been assigned for a land parcel, which is a **14 digit alphanumeric** unique ID based on geo-coordinates which will serve as a pan-India number for obtaining ownership details of a plot along with its size and geolocation.
- A uniform system called [National Generic Document Registration System \(NGDRS\)](#) has been developed for addressing the diversity prevailing across States with regards to registration of deeds/documents.
- The **Records of Rights have been transliterated in all the 22 scheduled languages** mentioned in the Constitution to address the problem of linguistic barriers in land governance in the country.
- The DILRMP scheme will also facilitate various services such as providing caste, income and domicile certificates, and online information on crop profile, crop insurance and e-linkages to credit facilities/banks.
- A comprehensive land record management system will also help resolve long pending arbitration cases and boundary-related disputes amicably, thus reducing the burden on the judiciary and the administration.

How can DILRMP (Digitisation of Land Records) be beneficial?

- **Improve the Quality and Accessibility of Land Records:**
 - The DILRMP aims to digitize and update the textual and spatial records of land ownership and transactions, such as sale deeds, inheritance records, mortgage and lease documents, cadastral maps, etc.
 - These records are made available online to the public and are updated regularly. This helps to reduce errors, inconsistencies, and gaps in land data, and make them more reliable and transparent.
- **Reduce Litigation and Frauds:**
 - The DILRMP aims to implement the conclusive land-titling system with title guarantee, which means that the land records provide a conclusive proof of ownership of land and are backed by the government.

- The title holder is protected from any challenge or dispute by other claimants and is indemnified by the government in case of any loss arising from any defect in the title.
- This helps to reduce the scope and frequency of land-related disputes and frauds, which account for a large proportion of pending court cases in India.
- **Promote Development and Growth:**
 - The DILRMP aims to create a conducive environment for land markets and transactions by reducing transaction costs, risks, and uncertainties.
 - It also enables landowners to access credit, insurance, and markets by using their land titles as collateral.
 - This helps to attract investment, promote industrialization, and boost growth in various sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, housing, etc.
- **Ensure Equity and Empowerment:**
 - The DILRMP aims to support the implementation of land reforms that aim to redistribute land among the landless and marginalized sections of society.
 - It also empowers women and other vulnerable groups by recognizing their land rights and enhancing their access to land-related services.
 - This helps to improve their livelihoods, dignity, and social status.

What are the Challenges associated with Land Record Digitisation?

- **Lack of Coordination and Cooperation among States:**
 - Land is a state subject and the implementation of DILRMP depends on the willingness and cooperation of the state governments.
 - However, some states are reluctant or slow to adopt the DILRMP due to various reasons such as political, administrative, legal, or technical constraints.
 - There is also a lack of coordination and standardization among states in terms of land laws, policies, procedures, and systems.
- **Inadequate resources and capacity:**
 - The DILRMP requires adequate financial, human, and technical resources and capacity to carry out the massive task of modernizing the land records system in the country.
 - However, there is a shortage of funds, staff, equipment, and infrastructure at various levels of implementation.
 - There is also a need for training and capacity building of the concerned officials and functionaries on the use of modern technology and tools for land record management.
- **Lack of awareness and participation among stakeholders:**
 - The DILRMP requires the active involvement and participation of various stakeholders such as landowners, buyers, sellers, tenants, intermediaries, etc., who are directly affected by the changes in the land records system.
 - However, there is a lack of awareness and sensitization among them about the benefits and procedures of DILRMP.

What should be the Way Forward?

- **Enhancing the Coordination and Cooperation Among States:**
 - The central and state governments need to work together to overcome the challenges and issues faced by the DILRMP.
 - They need to harmonize and streamline the land laws, policies, procedures, and systems across the states. They also need to share the best practices and experiences of the DILRMP among themselves.
- **Maintaining Transparency:**
 - The central and state governments need to take strict action against any sabotage or manipulation of the DILRMP.
 - They need to ensure transparency and accountability in the process of land survey, digitization, verification, and titling.
 - They also need to create a grievance redressal mechanism for resolving any disputes or complaints arising from the DILRMP.
- **Mobilizing Adequate Resources and Capacity:**
 - The central and state governments need to allocate sufficient funds, staff, equipment, and infrastructure for the implementation of DILRMP.

- They also need to provide training and capacity building to the concerned officials and functionaries on the use of modern technology and tools for land record management.
- They may also leverage the public-private partnership (PPP) mode of service delivery for enhancing efficiency and convenience.
- **Creating awareness and participation among stakeholders:**
 - The central and state governments need to create awareness and sensitization among the various stakeholders about the benefits and procedures of DILRMP.
 - They need to address their apprehensions or misconceptions about the DILRMP by providing clear and accurate information.
 - They also need to encourage their involvement and participation in the process of land record management.

Drishti Mains Question

The Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) was launched by the government to develop a transparent land record system. What are the benefits and challenges of the scheme, and what measures can be taken as way forward?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. With reference to land reforms in independent India, which one of the following statements is correct? (2019)

- (a) The ceiling laws were aimed at family holdings and not individual holdings.
- (b) The major aim of land reforms was providing agricultural land to all the landless.
- (c) It resulted in cultivation of cash crops as a predominant form of cultivation.
- (d) Land reforms permitted no exemptions to the ceiling limits.

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. Discuss the role of land reforms in agricultural development Identify the factors that were responsible for the success of land reforms in India. (2016)