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## The Big Picture: Distribution of e-Property Cards under 'Swamitva' Scheme

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<https://youtu.be/Hy9SxDtwYZQ>

### Why in News

The Prime Minister of India has launched the distribution of e-property cards under the **SWAMITVA Scheme** on **National Panchayati Raj Day** through video conferencing.

### Key Points

- **Distribution of e-Property Cards:** 4.09 lakh property owners were given their e-property cards on this occasion, which also marked the rolling out of the SWAMITVA scheme for implementation across the country.

- **Coverage:** The Scheme will cover around 6.62 Lakh villages of the entire country during 2021-2025.

The scheme is for the unsurveyed abadi areas. It is also applicable for the surveyed areas where the states are willing to replace the earlier record like in the states of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Odisha.

- **Drone Servicing:** The scheme is currently implemented in about 50,000 villages, out of which in around 32000 villages, the drone servicing has been completed and in almost 29000 villages, drone data has been processed.
- **Signing of MoUs:** The states have been requested to sign the MoU with the **Survey of India** and change the state laws wherever needed.
  - Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Orissa have signed their MoU.
  - In addition to the six states where the pilot project was started, the implementation of the SWAMITVA has also started in Punjab and Rajasthan.
- **For Northeast Indian States and Sixth Scheduled Areas:** For the NE states and **scheduled areas**, the ownership patterns of properties may be different but there will still be habitations.

The habitations pockets must be found in these areas, and if the proportion of these habitations to the entire area is of the same order of magnitude as it is for the abadi areas against the entire area in other states, then the MoU will be suitably modified to adapt to their needs.

## SWAMITVA Scheme

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- **About:**

It is a Central Sector Scheme aimed at “providing ‘record of rights’ to village household owners possessing houses in inhabited rural areas in villages and issuance of property cards to the property owners.”

- **Coverage:**

The pilot phase of the Scheme was implemented during 2020–2021 in the States of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and select villages of Punjab and Rajasthan.

- **Nomenclature for Property Cards:**

Property Cards are known as ‘**Title deed**’ in Haryana, ‘**Rural Property Ownership Records (RPOR)**’ in Karnataka, ‘**Adhikar Abhilekh**’ in Madhya Pradesh, ‘**Sannad**’ in Maharashtra, ‘**Svमितva Abhilekh**’ in Uttarakhand, ‘**Gharauni**’ in Uttar Pradesh.

- **Drones and CORS:**

- It will map the land parcels in rural inhabited areas using **drone technology** and **Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS)** and prepare **GIS based maps** for each village.
- The CORS provides 5 cm accuracy on 1:500 scale maps.
- Now with the **new map policy**, the data is free for Indian entities to access.

## Generation of SWAMITVA e-Property Cards

- The multi-stage process of generating a property card begins with the **signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between Survey of India (Sol) and respective state governments.
- Once the MOU is done, a **Continuously Operating Reference System (CORS) is established** which provides a virtual base station that allows access to long-range high-accuracy Network RTK (Real-Time Kinematic) corrections.

The CORS network supports in establishing ground control points, which is an important activity for accurate Geo-referencing, ground truthing and demarcation of lands.
- Further, the villages are identified for survey and the **abadi areas of the village are demarcated.**

Then, drones are used for mapping of abadi areas based on which a GIS database on 1:500 scale, and village maps are drawn.
- Further, the inquiry/objection process and **dispute resolution is completed after which final Property Cards are generated.**

These cards are available on digital platforms or as hard copies to the village household owners.

## Benefits of the Scheme

- **Centre-State Collaboration:** It is a government model that needs to be emulated in other sectors of the economy.

The model has a structure where the centre takes the responsibility of being the nodal authority and then functions after consultation with the revenue departments of the state governments taking the help of the state panchayati raj depts.
- **The spin-off Benefits:** This kind of land record compilation will see a spin-off benefit for many municipalities and gram panchayats in terms of **property tax collections** as the property cards will also be used to determine the same; major financial benefit.

Since it has got a GIS map, a number of **natural calamities will be monitored through this data processing** which will rest with both the states and centre and will help in a quicker response time to these calamities and quicker remedial actions.
- **Property as a Financial Asset:** It paves the way for using the property as a financial asset by villagers for availing loans and other financial benefits.
- **Land Records and Planning:** It is also set to change how the land records are maintained across the entire country.

It would provide people with an accurate map for planning proposals to reimagine the whole landscape.

## Challenges

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- **Access to Data:** To what extent the data collected will be shared with various layers of government and state departments.
  - To what extent the data will be monetised or should be monetised.
  - The private sector companies that are offering the drones for surveillance and data collection, will the data be shared with these companies too or not.
- **Data Protection:** India, still as a country is far away from having a proper fool-proof data protection laws and without such law in place, collection of data and its misuse will always remain a challenge for such an ambitious scheme.
- **Bringing Maximum Villages under Surveillance Within Projected Time:** Issues with bringing the villages under surveillance is a challenge as the pace of bringing villages under coverage cannot be pushed to increase after a certain point.
 

Moreover, different places have different acts and rules and the notice period varies from state to state from a minimum of 10 days in Uttarakhand to a maximum of 9 months for Punjab.

## Way Forward

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- **Role of States:** Owner of the data is going to be the state and there is no centralisation of data and the state will be the repository of all the concerned information.
 

Being the owner of the data and land being the state subject, the States must utilise data in welfare policies.
- **Effective Implementation:** There shall be an undivided focus on the effective implementation of the scheme throughout the country.
 

Creation of survey infrastructure and GIS maps that can be leveraged by any department for their use is going to be the key to successful implementation.
- **Benefits to Other Sectors:** The drone industry is also boosted due to this scheme as 2000 drones will be needed to survey this entire area.
 

It will also boost the employment sector as drone pilots will be needed and other team based work would also require human resources.

## Conclusion

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The scheme would provide immense benefits to the village households, the gram panchayats, the states, and other sectors of economy provided a dedicated center-state collaboration is done and the scheme is implemented effectively throughout the nation.