# Google Street View: National Geospatial Policy

**For Prelims:** Geospatial sector of India, Remote Sensing, GIS (Geographic Information System), GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System), 3D modelling, New guidelines for the Geo-Spatial Sector in India

**For Mains:** Geospatial sector of India - Challenges and Opportunities, Significance of Liberalisation in the Geospatial Sector

## Why in News?

Google Street View is launched in ten cities of India under the Guidelines of the **National Geospatial Policy (NGP), 2021.**

- NGP 2021 lets Indian companies collect map data and license it to others.

## What is Google Street View?

- **About:**
  - Google Street View is **an immersive 360-degree view of a location captured using special cameras mounted on vehicles or on backpacks** by data collectors moving around the city streets.
  - The images are then **patched together to create 360-degree view which users** can swipe through to get a detailed view of the location.
    - It is available to view on Android and iOS using the app, or as a web viewer.
- **Restrictions:**
  - Street View in India is **not allowed for restricted areas like government properties, defence establishments and military areas.**
  - This means in a place like Delhi, the cantonment area will be out of bounds for Street View.
- **Issues with Street View:**
  - Over the years a lot of privacy and **other issues have been raised regarding Street View.**
  - A lot of these stem from people's faces and other identifiable aspects, like car **number plates and house numbers, being captured by the camera and being misused** in different ways.
  - There have also been **security concerns about this kind of view being available, especially for sensitive locations.**
  - Along with India, **Google has had issues with the local authorities** in countries like Austria, Australia and Germany, though it has come back in most of these locations.

## What is National Geospatial Policy 2021?

- **About:**
  - The National Geospatial Policy, 2021 liberalises the geospatial sector and democratises the **datasets generated by use of public funds.**
  - The Policy seeks **to empower citizens and enterprises to create, access and use**

geospatial data **and information for addressing developmental** needs of the country while also **safeguarding its security interests.**
    - It provides for **augmenting the** geospatial ecosystem **in the country,** as well as globally, by encouraging **geospatial knowledge generation**, skill sets and expertise etc.
- **Key Features:**
    - The Survey of India topographic data **will be made widely and easily accessible.**
    - **Geospatial data** and information produced using public funds **will be shared as per the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (2012).**
    - Efforts will be made to **standardise the storage formats of geospatial data** so that it becomes available in an interoperable machine-readable form.
    - A standardised **curriculum will be developed for geospatial data education.**
    - A **certifying body will be constituted to review the practices of professionals** such as surveyors, and certify individuals on the completion of courses in geospatial education.
- **Need:**
    - Different government agencies often digitise and store geospatial data. There is **often a duplication of efforts when multiple agencies store** such data leading to a wastage of resources.
    - There is a need to reduce this wastage by standardising the formats of geospatial data storage and dissemination
    - Although geospatial education is provided in around 200 universities/institutions, there is **no standardisation in its curriculum.**
    - Access to geospatial data by non-governmental entities including both businesses and individuals is restricted.
    - The data shared by the government is often not machine-readable.

## What is the State of Geospatial Ecosystem in India?

- **Statistics:**
    - The Indian geospatial economy is currently valued at **Rs 38,972 crore and employs approximately 4.7 lakh people.**
    - In 2021, the geospatial market **was dominated by defence and intelligence (14.05 %), urban development (12.93 %) and utilities (11 %) segments,** cumulatively accounting for 37.98% of the total geospatial market.
- **Significance of the Sector:**
    - **A Potential Sector:** The sector has potential to grow to Rs 63,100 crore at 12.8% by the end of 2025 as per India Geospatial Artha Report 2021.
    - **Employment:** Private Companies like Amazon, Zomato etc. use this technology to smoothly conduct their delivery operations which supports livelihood generation.
    - **Implementation of Schemes:** The schemes like the **Gati Shakti program** can be smoothly implemented using geospatial technology.
    - **Make in India:** Focusing on the sector allows Indian companies to develop indigenous apps like an Indian version of google maps.
    - **Management of Land records:** Using the technology, the data related to a large number of landholdings can be appropriately tagged and digitised.
        - It will not only help better targeting but also reduce the quantum of land disputes in courts.
    - **Crisis Management:** Technology and logistics were perfectly supported through the use of geospatial technology during the Covid-19 vaccination drive.
    - **Intelligent Maps and Models:** Geospatial technology may be used to create intelligent maps and models that may be interactively queried to get the desired results in a STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) application or may be used to advocate social investigations and policy-based research.

**Source: IE**