



**IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY OF DIGITAL
INDIA LAND RECORD MODERNIZATION
PROGRAMME IN**

MIZORAM

**B. N. Yugandhar Centre for Rural Studies
Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration
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**Impact Assessment Study of Digital India Land Records Modernization
Programme (DILRMP) in Mizoram**

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MIZORAM OUR HOMELAND

*It is not given or gotten as a gift;
It is not acquired by privilege or political contracts;
It is not bought with gold or held by force
NO,
It is made with the sweat of the brow,
It is the historic creation*

*And the collective enterprise of the people,
The fruit of its labor,
Bodily, Spiritual and Moral
Over a span of generations.*

.....People of Mizoram

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Land Ownership, Land Relationship and Land Records are the important “Socio-economic” phenomenon because in all societies land is one of the dominant means of production. Since all the societies including Indian society have structures of inequality, the system of land relationship must have transparency. Such transparency minimizes all forms of land relationship based ambiguities and social tensions including conflict socio-economic nature. Land Records Modernization Programme is one of the institutional efforts of the State to regulate and to keep watch on the records of the land. History of India also reveals various efforts to keep the records of land and of land revenue so that social category of peasants could lead a cordial life¹. When someone goes into the details of the book (Land Revenue in India: Historical studies by Ram Sharan Sharma, 1971), it can be also be said that National Land Record Modernization Programme can play significant roles in ‘Land reforms’. Digital India Land Record Modernization Programme (DILRMP) perspective invites our attention on two important issues namely, ‘digital literacy’ based understanding about property of land and related developmental dynamics and expansion of consciousness with reasons and social survival linked enlightenment. The proper land record will lead to culture of tolerance and of coordination also. Thus DILRMP, if implemented objectively, will make transformative impact in rural, urban and tribal India.

To keep all forms of document intact is one of the essentialities of smooth operation of formal institutions in general and bureaucracy in particular. In fact proper documentations establish functional relationship between state (agencies) and society (formal and informal groups) because proper documentation helps in reducing intra-group and inter-group conflicts. The records related to health, education, land and marriage, birth and death are useful in making social life balanced. Land relation in this context possesses multi-faceted significance because land plays important role in family affairs, urbanization, industrial modernization and other developmental activities where land related displacement and related rehabilitation become focal issues. Keeping these aspects in mind, Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development Government of India in the year 2008 decided to merge two schemes namely the computerization of land Records (CLR) and strengthening of Revenue Administration and updating of Land Records (SRA & ULR) and introduced National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP). Now it is known as Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP). In a wider frame, it can also be argued that DILRMP is a methodological device to understand the structures and nature of Indian Society. Proper land records management contributes to reducing legal complexities in the form of court cases. Land possession and land title also provides or helps in providing land ownership based hierarchies. From local, regional and national administration view point, recording of land rights, computerization of various records related to land, digitized mapping, continuous surveys and resurveys and later on facilitating conclusive titling can be identified as objectives of DILRMP. Thus DILRMP is one of the efforts to bring transparency, efficiency and effective and meaningful governance in the areas of land records (steps towards Digital India making). In short, the map/survey should mirror the true picture of the land including its ownership, extent

¹ Land Revenue in India: Historical studies by Ram Sharan Sharma, 1971

and value; the land records should automatically mutate after registration to curtail the past and depict the correct title holder's name thereby obviating any requirement of producing complicated documents to prove ownership; and lastly, the title holder would be insured against any loss on account of any defect in the records.

Mizoram- the twenty third state of India is one the spatial structures with strategic importance due to closeness with Myanmar and Bangladesh. More than sixty percent population of Mizoram is engaged with land based occupational activities. More than ninety percent geographical area of Mizoram is under forest cover that expresses the presence of diversity of natural and biological wealth. Because of land based occupational dominance, the roles of authorities related to DILRMP become significant in Mizoram. The effective and transparent functioning of DILRMP can become role model for rest of India.

The Study

Impact Assessment study is generally used to evaluate objectively and critically the impact of multiple nature of developmental programmes in related areas. These studies are conducted generally by independent organization so that government could know the results of programmes and could frame future improvement and interventions accordingly.

The Impact Assessment Study of DILRMP was commissioned to Centre for Development Communication and Studies, Jaipur to evaluate and examine the consequences of implementation of DILRMP in the state of Mizoram. The impact assessment study has been carried out on the bases of discussions with various groups and authorities and on the bases of terms of reference in order to have critical and evaluative understanding of structure and Functioning of the DILRMP. The objectives of the study were:

- a) To assess the performance of various activities taken up under the erstwhile NLRMP and present DILRMP,
- b) To identify constraints in the implementation of various components of the programme,
- c) To identify good practices and the gaps in achieving objectives of the programme, and
- d) To suggest appropriate changes in the guidelines/ instructions or other-wise to improve the effectiveness of DILRMP.

Methodology, Approach and Sampling

The method of Impact Assessment study comprises Quantitative and Qualitative techniques so that phenomenon is studied with concern and variation. By using such method, a possible relation between large entities and small entities can be drawn. Observation, Exploration, Check-lists, questionnaire, unstructured interviews, group discussions and focused conversations are some of the techniques of qualitative and quantitative nature which have been used in this Impact Assessment Study. The evaluation and analysis are based on development theory and empowerment theory centric arguments.

As far as study areas are concerned, Aizawl district (area associated with capital Mizoram) and Serchhip district (DILRMP has been implemented effectively) have been selected. The findings of these two areas may be used as guiding post for other districts and may contribute in preparing integrated Land Information Management System for Mizoram that comprises eleven districts. In state of Mizoram, district is the smallest unit of revenue. For effective micro studies total six Community Development Blocks from Serchhip and Aizawl districts. By studying these six blocks 'the deep structured realities' associated with DILRMP have been located. By using stratified random sampling technique one thousand land parcels from each district have been selected. Out of one thousand land parcels hundred land parcels have been selected intentionally. These one hundred land parcels are updated as well as are prepared within the span of last two years. To understand information intensively and extensively, questions through questionnaire/ Interview have been asked. There are two sets of questionnaire (IIA – Questionnaire for Land owners and II B – Questionnaire for Land owners who have transacted their land records in last two years) used which is prepared by BNYCRS-LBSNAA. The set of questions associated with II A has been used on 1944 respondents (one thousand nine hundred forty four) while set known as II B has been applied on fifty seven respondents. The set of II B has been used on those land owners who have transacted their land records recently. The target associated with set of II B was of two hundred samples but in sample district updation of two hundred land owners was not found, secondly due to Covid-19 pandemic sample units did not turn up in adequate number. The target (overall) was two thousand but one more person did appear and made replies. Thus overall sample units are now two thousand and one. Thus methodological applications in the field are different from pre-field methodological constructions. The related reasons are beyond control of the 'field workers'. Methodological dimensions enter into the sphere of appropriateness when field situations are faced key finding and recommendations.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Key Findings

On the bases of description and assessment of primary and secondary data, the following 'Key' findings can be presented which also encourages the 'team' to construct suggestions/ recommendations so that programme becomes more effective, useful and people interest centric:

State of Mizoram is engaged in implementing DILRMP with the values of commitment and professional integrity as a result 'steady progress' of DILRMP is observable to all stakeholders. In fact the implementation of DILRMP in itself can be treated as source of learning for planning setting systems & sub-systems processes and management.

The computerization of land records is a well structured reality in each district which contributes to E-Governance, efficiency and transparency.

The district centric data reveal that in Aizawl district out of 152 villages, 122 villages have complete computerization of land records, whereas in Serchhip district, all the 52 villages are covered under computerized land records. On the bases of these findings the claim of the state of Mizoram that out of total 641 villages, the computerization of land record data is complete in 495 villages may be accepted to the larger extent.

Total numbers of maps which have been reported are 137560. These maps (Cadastral/FMBs/Tippans) are in good condition. Out of 137560 maps, 118128 maps (85.87%) are digitized, rest of the total maps i.e. 19432 (14.13%) are yet to be digitized.

The citizens are still not benefitted much by digitization process. They are unable to access the computerized copy of Records of Rights. They still receive manually patta/ LSC from District Settlement office.

In terms of management and control over land and revenue, the State of Mizoram has established a full-fledged office has been set-up for DILRMP in the state in the office of Director, Land Revenue and Settlement Department. The expert agency of country's National Informatics' Centre has been roped in for undertaking the responsibility of setting-up the structure, system and overall management of computerized system in the state in the software named E-RAM. As per interactions with NIC officials, the software is ready to be rolled out and it would begin soon with Serchhip district where the data is almost in the final stages. Also, a full time Director, Land Revenue and Settlement is posted, who is supported by Deputy Director, Assistant Director, and Surveyors. Under NLRMP/DILRMP, state has a set of dedicated cell with consultants of GIS, Survey, Revenue and Information Technology etc. who are taking care of implementation of NLRMP/DILRMP in the State.

The State has developed functional software for land and revenue system named E-RAM. For registration, the software named NGDRS is in use in pilot district, Aizawl. It has been reported by the state Directorate of Land Revenue and Settlement that the state is in process for scaling of NGDRS in all the district of the state. Also, the state is working towards major shift in terms of having updated and transparent land records and making them available online through the E-RAM software. In order to increase the access of land related services, the services of Common Service Centres (CSCs) are widespread in the state. The land owners/ citizens can take a print of land RoR from these CSCs after the launch of the online E-RAM software, which is situated largely at accessible distance i.e. in villages/ towns.

In the sample district, many achievements can also be appreciated namely, Land Record Computerization cell is functional for updation of data related to Mutation/ sale/ Mortgage, etc. but not online. In both the sample districts Land Record Centre has been set-up for DILRMP and the functionaries related to GIS and Revenue and settlement are posted. The latter have been observed to be undertaking their role properly and proactively. But the major hurdle reported by the District Settlement Office and State Land Revenue and Settlement Directorate was that only when the finalization of software is done, the whole system can be made online. The Modern Record Room (MRRs) have been reported under process of setting-up in all the 02 sample districts. It has been an issue that out of 13 sanctioned MRRs only 09 were reported as complete.

The impact of computerization of land records is reported meaningful for the citizens when the system is made online in the software. In the sample villages, it has been reported that the major reason for record updation reported by 17.5 % sample respondents, followed by 8.8 % sample respondents opted for partition, 19.3 % sample respondents opted for succession, 8.8 % sample respondents opted for mortgage, and

45.6 % sample respondents opted for others as a reason behind record updation viz. change of name, renewal of periodic patta and village pass.

Although, the process of record updation was not online, but it was reported manually i.e. computerized at the district settlement office. 36.8 % sample respondents reported that time taken to complete the entire process of record updation was less than a week followed by one week reported by 22.8 % sample respondents, 2 to 3 weeks was reported by 12.3 % sample respondents, one month was reported by 7 % sample respondents and more than one month was reported by 19.3 % sample respondents. Thus, 59.6 % sample respondents reported that time taken to complete entire process of record updation is either less than a week or one week. Certainly, the issue needs urgent attention as the state is proceeding for cent % online system. There is need to pay attention to the issue of how the online land record management system may be introduced which should reduce time in a way the land owners/ farmers can be saved from harassment in terms of putting more time and money.

Also, in terms of cost incurred by the respondents on record updation varies from Rs.100-8000. In total, 40.4 % sample respondents reported that the real cost involved for record updation from the office was upto or less than Rs.1000, 17.5 % sample respondents reported their expenses for land record updation between for Rs. 1001 to Rs. 2000, 21.1 % sample respondents reported reported their expenses on land record updation between Rs. 2001 to Rs. 4000, 12.3 % sample respondents reported their expenses on land record updation between Rs.4001-8000 and 8.8 % sample respondents opted more than Rs. 8000.

There has been reported culture of paying extra cost in the offices by the citizens for updating their land records in the sample districts. In total, 19.3 % sample respondents reported that they had paid extra cost in the office for updating their land records, whereas 80.7 % sample respondents reported that they did not pay extra cost in the office for updating their land records.

The findings related to time and cost associated with land record updation in the sample district shows the loss of time and money in getting the land titles by the farmers/ land owners in due course of time. It clearly reflects that under the present circumstances the system of online record management and updation would play an instrumental role in giving relief in terms of time, cost and harassment physically. It requires online support as per requirement under DILRMP.

The initial projected time for completion of the project was June, 2016 which was delayed due to lack of manpower and ongoing changes in the laws and rules of the Department.

The major focus of the DILRMP - the textual data in the RoR should match with the spatial data and should reflect the ground reality. The progress of State shows that the survey and resurvey is yet to be initiated in all the 09 districts. The process is delayed as the same where initiated but have not been completed as state has been short of funds and they are waiting for the funds to be released from Department of Land Resources, Government of India. Similarly, the cadastral survey is yet to be initiated in 146 villages. Yet 02 districts are to be included in the process of survey, CLR and digitization of maps. Also, the survey and resurvey is yet to be taken up in 146 (22.77 %) villages. In

495 villages in the state, final promulgation has been done. The auto-mutation in online system is yet to be done in the state. It has also been reported that Directorate of Land Revenue and Settlement is not confident with NIC Mizoram as they are not giving time in finalization of software and land records.

The capacity building and training was found as an important element which is very much required for effective and efficient execution of DILRMP. It should be a regular process and should be taken in the form of different capsules for different levels of officials and functionaries so that it should be really meaningful in quality execution of DILRMP. The state is yet to take up the process of capacity building and trainings of revenue officials and functionaries.

Issuance of digitally signed RoR and the system of RoR linkage with Aadhaar is yet to be initiated in the state. Also, issuance of digitally signed RoR was not reported in any of 02 sample districts. It will be only possible when the whole data and maps will be run on E-RAM software. Bhu Naksha used for cadastral maps was not reported in both the sample districts. The records are not online because districts are still looking at state office of Land revenue and Settlement, Govt. of Mizoram to initiate the entry into E-RAM software.

Initiation of modern survey viz. Pure Ground Method (by Electronic Total Station [ETS] & Global Positioning System [GPS] / Hybrid method (Satellite images with ETS, GPS) / Aerial Photography was reported in sample districts but it needs to be made online. Moreover, the requirement of Modern survey, data generation/ map updation, textual RoR data linked to spatial data via GIS platform should be initiated at the district level. Also, linking of registration department with others viz. banking institutions/ revenue courts/civil courts should be started at the district level. There is greater need for integration of district office with revenue records and the records of urban areas.

Moreover, the State Government needs to initiate the online system of land record updation on the specified software called E-RAM. This involves, statutory provisions need to be made for mandatory recording of certain pertinent data which are currently not recorded. This includes encumbrances other than mortgages (such as ongoing litigation), easement rights, land-use changes, land-use restrictions, and transfer restrictions (such as for land owned by Scheduled Tribes).

Moreover, the state needs to ensure that the DILRMP core focus is on conclusive titling based on four basic principles - single agency, mirror, curtain and title insurance which need to be ensured in real sense in order to provide relief to the citizens by providing conclusive titles. This will certainly improve the 'rural economy' by making a clearer land titling system. There have been instances in the sample districts, where citizens still have only village passes issued before 1990.

DILRMP so far has been focusing on the aspect of computerization of land records i.e. textual data. But the pace of computerization was reported slowly. The related activities and processes such as surveys and re-surveys, which would help to update the spatial records which have been going on at a slow pace and yet the whole initiative is not completed. Hence, the system is still going on manually. The integration process is still lagging in terms of computerization of land records, spatial map and computerization of registration. Mizoram has a different land holding system therefore, Land Settlement

Certificate, House Pass and Periodic Patta, etc., are issued. Record of Rights is still issued to the citizens manually. Though, the main aim and objective of DILRMP is the "Issuance of digitally signed RoR". In addition, there are several rules which are being used by the Department need to be amended, for which proposal was reported in progress with State Government.

Until and unless these revenue rules are not amended, the issuance of RoR cannot be implemented successfully due to hindrance in the developing and designing of software to be used for this programme. The collected survey data is also in the process of being scrutinized for necessary correction and to be imported into the software.

However, in the state the pace of modernization of records and bringing them to an online platform has been slow. But in terms of expenditure, the state has made an expenditure of 62.2 % of the funds sanctioned under DILRMP and about 83.49 % of the released amount by the Department of Land Resource, Government of India. It is high time for the state to act in terms of undertaking the required inputs of DILRMP, look for its efficient and effective execution, and use the sanctioned amount for the purpose. It needs to capacitate the officials and functionaries, to make established modern record room operational and address the grievances of the district on regular basis. Also, there is greater need to build faith and trust on NIC Mizoram or to go for strong alternative system/mechanism which the state may be thinking could be best option. Finally, it requires support in devising a system to work on solution basis. Also, the State has to work in more planned manner so that the work of computerization and digitization completed in the districts should be uploaded on the designed software of E-RAM or any other software and gradually updating and uploading of other completed district data should be made online within the given timeframe.

ABOUT THE B. N. YUGANDHAR CENTRE FOR RURAL STUDIES

The B. N. Yugandhar Centre for Rural Studies (BNYCRS) is a Research Centre of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie. It was set up in the year 1989 by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, with a multifaceted agenda that includes the contemporaneous evaluation of the ever-unfolding ground realities pertaining to the Land Administration and Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India. Sensitization of the officer trainees of the Indian Administrative Service in the process of evaluating the land administration/management and poverty alleviation programmes through exposing them to ground realities; setting up a forum for regular exchange of views on land reforms, socio-economic development and poverty alleviation amid academicians, administrators, activists, planners, stakeholders and concerned citizens and creating awareness amongst the public about the various programmes initiated by the Government of India through non-governmental organizations are also important objectives of the B. N. Yugandhar Centre for Rural Studies. A large number of books, reports related to land reforms, poverty alleviation programmes, rural socio-economic problems etc. published both externally and internally bear testimony to the excellent quality of the Centre. Over the years, the Centre has widened its activities involving conducting research studies, training programmes and workshops/ seminars and provide policy suggestions.

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