

Participatory Mapping as a Smart Survey Technique to Support Land Rights for All: Experiences and Expectations (Nepal)

Raja Ram Chhatkuli, Janak Raj Joshi, Jagat Deuja and Uma Shankar Panday (Nepal)

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SUMMARY

Although Nepal has an established land administration system, almost 25% of land holdings are still out of the formal cadastre. Study shows some 1.3 Million families with almost 10 Million physical parcels on the ground having unsecured rights over their land. Successive Governments after the political change of 1951 have advocated pro-poor land reforms and after the adoption of new Constitution in 2015 serious attempts have been made in this direction. The National Land Policy (NLUP) adopted in 2019 stresses on a Living No One Behind principle in support of land rights of women and vulnerable groups, rehabilitation of the landless squatters and informal tenure-holders, access to land and security of tenure for all. A Fit-For-Purpose Land Administration (FFPLA) approach provides a blueprint for a fast, economic and good enough solution as advocated in the Country Level Implementation Strategy for Nepal.

To implement the land tenure security provisions of the NLUP, Nepal adopted 8th Amendment to the Lands Act, 1964 which provides for land title to the landless and regularization of informal tenure up-to a designated size. While land to the landless is provided free of cost, regularization of land holding to informal tenure-holders having some title elsewhere is undertaken by levying payment based on different factors like their economic condition and size/ value etc of land under consideration. Furthermore, land under informal tenure in designated areas would be vacated. As such the surveying and mapping for the purpose is more than a geomatic activity and entails additional factors like social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects. Land Issues Resolving Commission (LIRC) has been established and is mandated to undertake this colossal task within a period of 3 to 5 years. LIRC has made MOUs with the local municipalities to undertake surveying and mapping for identification, verification and recordation (IVR) of the person and land, and the person to land relations in line with the federal structure of the country. The local municipalities are devoid of necessary human, technical and other resources and lack capacity to adopt conventional

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techniques under the timeframe. Participatory mapping and application of FFP tools is considered a smart answer.

The paper explains the lessons learnt from the piloting of participatory mapping and application of FFP approach in the IVR of the person and land, and the person to land relations conducted in Belaka municipality and provides some thoughts on fulfilling the desired expectations.

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