

The **SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages Abadi and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas)** scheme is a central sector initiative launched by the Government of India in April 2020. The goal of the scheme is to provide rural citizens with documented ownership of residential land in inhabited areas (abadi areas) by leveraging modern technology such as drones and GIS-based mapping. This initiative is implemented by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, in collaboration with the Survey of India and State Governments.

Under the SVAMITVA scheme, drone-based surveys are conducted to create accurate land parcel maps of the inhabited village areas. These maps are then used to issue legal ownership records (property cards or "ownership certificates") to the rightful residents. The process is meant to reduce land disputes, increase access to financial services (by enabling property-based loans), and promote transparency in property ownership in rural India.

As of 2024, the scheme has covered over 1.2 lakh villages, benefiting millions of rural citizens across several states, including Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka. The states are responsible for implementing the scheme locally, and special training is provided to surveyors and gram panchayat officials.

A key feature of SVAMITVA is the integration with digital governance. The maps generated through drone surveys are digitized and made available through a centralized GIS platform. These digital assets are expected to be interoperable with other government databases like eGramSwaraj, PMAY-G, and property tax systems, thereby laying the foundation for rural spatial planning and e-governance.

The project is divided into two phases: the pilot phase (2020–2021), and the implementation phase (2021 onwards). During the pilot phase, the scheme was tested in selected villages across nine states. Learnings from this phase informed the nationwide rollout.

In addition to providing ownership documents, SVAMITVA has also indirectly contributed to economic empowerment and gender equity. Property cards issued in the name of female family members have helped improve their social standing. Furthermore, by unlocking access to formal credit and reducing dependence on informal lending, the scheme is driving rural economic development.

SVAMITVA's success is being closely monitored by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj through a dedicated portal that provides real-time dashboards on village surveys, drone operations, and property card issuance. Data accuracy, local coordination, and timely grievance redressal remain critical success factors for this ambitious initiative.

In summary, SVAMITVA is not just a mapping exercise but a transformative rural empowerment initiative. By using drones, digital maps, and integrated governance, it aims to bring about long-term socio-economic benefits for rural India. It marks a significant step forward in the modernization of rural property records and the empowerment of India's village communities.