

## **Automated Tool for Names Collection: Facilitating Correct Place Names Capturing in Local Vernacular and Overcoming Past Challenges**

Good morning/ afternoon

Dear Chair and the esteemed experts

- This slide highlights the pivotal role of the Survey of India in managing and standardizing geographical names across the country.
- As per the National Geospatial Policy, 2022, the Survey of India has been entrusted with the responsibility for implementation and management of the Fundamental Data Theme of Geographical Names.
- The traditional method of place name collections included:
  - a. Collection of the Geographical Names by the field surveyor in the vernacular script of the concerned area after by way of listening to the pronunciation of the corresponding place name by the local community.
  - b. The names, in vernacular script were transliterated and authenticated by a local government official.
  - c. The Camp officer of the field teams then converted the names from vernacular to Roman and Devanagari scripts, which were further checked and confirmed by the Officer-in-charge of the field unit.
  - d. The final names were then published as part of the topographical maps of the SoI.
- Currently, SoI holds an extensive repository of over 1.4 million ground-verified geographical names encompassing the entire expanse of the country.
- The traditional method, though went through checks at various levels and yielded authoritative geographical names, but also had certain challenges, such as:
  - a. The non-comprehension of the local language/script by the field surveyor which may lead to human error in the collection.
  - b. Loss of phonetics in successive transliteration as there was no record of the local pronunciation
  - c. No consultations with linguistic experts involved for the transliteration and verification of the spelling.
- To address the above challenges, a system for collection and transliteration of geographical names based on the audio files has been initiated by Survey of India.
- This process is facilitated through mobile applications equipped with linguistic expert interface and integrated into a centralized server-based system.

- This is a collaborative effort with the Village Level Entrepreneurs with an aim to leverage their capabilities for the collection of the audio files, which will aid in identifying local speakers with native pronunciations thus ensuring capturing authentic pronunciation of geographical names.
- The geographical names thus collected based on the crowd sourced audio files and transliterated based on automated tools after the consultation with the linguistic experts, will subsequently contribute to the development of the National Geographical Name Information System of India.

Thank you, Chair, and esteemed experts, for your kind attention and patient listening.