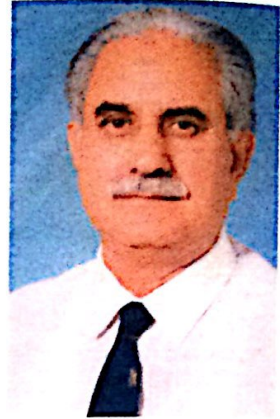


Need for introducing Geospatial Technology in 'patwari' system



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Our land registration system, run by famous or infamous officials 'Patwaris' of the land revenue department, is based on mixture of what local set up already existed on the sub-continent and what English people practiced in

their own country when the British took over. It is a simple system and can work wonders provided it is run by the "book". Over the years with degradations of morals of the society; corruption and cheating creped in and the

system went to the 'dogs' as they say. Poor people lost land and those with power / muscles and money got whatever they wanted. The situation is in shambles and shameful, although Government of Punjab is trying its best to put the system back on tracks and introduce some discipline into the system.

What we have learnt from the electronic and printed media basically they are simply computerizing the land records from big registers to computer hard disks. We need to do lot more than this simple exercise transferring data from registers to electronic medium i.e. computers.

In 2000 the renowned Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto, globally recognized for his work on the informal economy and an evangelist of property rights, published a book titled The Mystery of the Capital. In his book, he outlines the struggle of poor people in developing countries to obtain legal titles to property. De Soto, who Time magazine named as one of the 100 most influential people in the world, considers land titling as a fundamental factor in shaping household capital for people living in poverty. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan praised him for his new insights into how we capture economic growth and development [Wim van Wegen].

Geospatial technology has advanced a lot over the past couple of decades and is fully and effectively being used for land registration purposes. It is practiced even in some of the developing countries of Africa and South America; among those who have recently introduced modern cadastral system are Chile, Ghana, Jamaica, Mongolia, Namibia and Nigeria.

The rate of progress in GPS technology is so fast that in a matter of few years our mobile phones will give us GPS derived coordinates accurate to a decimeter. We need to prepare our land registration system based on coordinates of the landed property. Minimum information / data desired relating to a land parcel in a genuine computerized system is list hereunder:

Owner's name including picture & CNIC number.

GPS derived coordinates of the land corners and dimensions of the parcel of land.

Satellite image of the parcel of land.

FBR Income Tax number if listed as tax payer.

"Patwaris" need to be put through GIS training with particular reference to application of Geospatial technology to land registration.

Countries are beginning to embrace the potential of geospatial technology and information in order to develop their economies. This is particularly so in fields such as land administration and real estate.

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