

DRAFT REGISTRATION BILL 2025: POLITY

NEWS: What new Registration Bill says, why it was introduced

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

The draft Registration Bill 2025 aims to modernize India's land document registration by introducing digital processes, new administrative roles, and stricter checks, while raising concerns about cybersecurity and delegation of sensitive tasks. It replaces the 117-year-old Registration Act of 1908 to enhance transparency and citizen convenience.

Introduction and Background

- The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) has released the new draft Registration Bill 2025 for public feedback and suggestions.
- The bill aims to replace the 117-year-old Registration Act of 1908, which governs the registration of property and land-related documents in India.

Purpose of the Bill

- The primary goal is to create a modern, citizen-centric framework for the registration of land and property documents.
- The bill seeks to introduce a system that is more transparent, technology-driven, and easier for citizens to access.
- It aims to digitise property document registration, ensuring permanent digital records that reduce paperwork and chances of fraud.

Key Features of the Draft Bill

- **Dual Mode Registration:** Citizens can register documents through both online and offline processes, offering flexibility.
- **Identity Verification:** Registration will require Aadhaar-based or alternative identity verification to ensure authenticity and prevent fraud.
- **Expanded List of Compulsory Documents:** The bill includes sale agreements, company merger documents, and other commercial transactions in the list of documents that must be registered, widening the scope compared to the old law.
- **Simplified Optional Registration:** It introduces the option for simplified registration of certain documents; however, the bill currently lacks detailed clarity on these provisions.
- **New Administrative Roles:** Positions like Additional Inspector General and Assistant Inspector General of Registration are created to assist the Inspector General, potentially improving administrative capacity and efficiency.
- **Powers to Cancel Registrations:** The Inspector General is empowered to cancel registrations obtained through false or illegal means. Citizens affected by such cancellations can appeal within 30 days, ensuring a legal remedy.

- **Reduced Penalties:** The bill proposes reducing the maximum imprisonment penalty for certain violations from seven years (under the old act) to three years, while also imposing monetary fines.

Issues and Challenges Identified

- **Cybersecurity Concerns:** As the bill promotes digitisation, experts have highlighted the need for robust cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive digital records and e-signature data from misuse or hacking.
- **Delegation to CSCs:** The bill proposes involving Common Services Centres (CSCs) in handling key tasks like stamp duty valuation and title transfer. Critics fear this could lead to gaps in procedure, given the legally sensitive nature of such functions.

Other Related Government Initiatives

- **Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP):**
 - Revamped in 2016 as a 100% centrally funded scheme.
 - Aims to build a modern, integrated, and transparent land records system.
 - Improves real-time land data access, helps optimize land use, reduces disputes and fraud, minimizes the need for citizens to visit physical offices, and supports cross-department data sharing.
- **SVAMITVA Scheme:**
 - Launched on April 24, 2020, to empower rural property owners by providing them with legal ownership certificates (Record of Rights) for their homes in village Abadi areas.
 - Uses drone and GIS technology for precise land demarcation.
 - Enables property monetisation, eases access to loans, reduces disputes over property, and supports effective village-level planning—strengthening the vision of Atma-nirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India).
- **NAKSHA Programme:**
 - A technological initiative by the Department of Land Resources, Survey of India, and other partners.
 - Focuses on updating and modernising urban land records, addressing challenges in rapidly growing urban areas.
 - Ensures reliable, verifiable, and accessible land records, which are crucial for resolving urban property disputes and planning infrastructure.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-law/draft-registration-bill-10079810/>