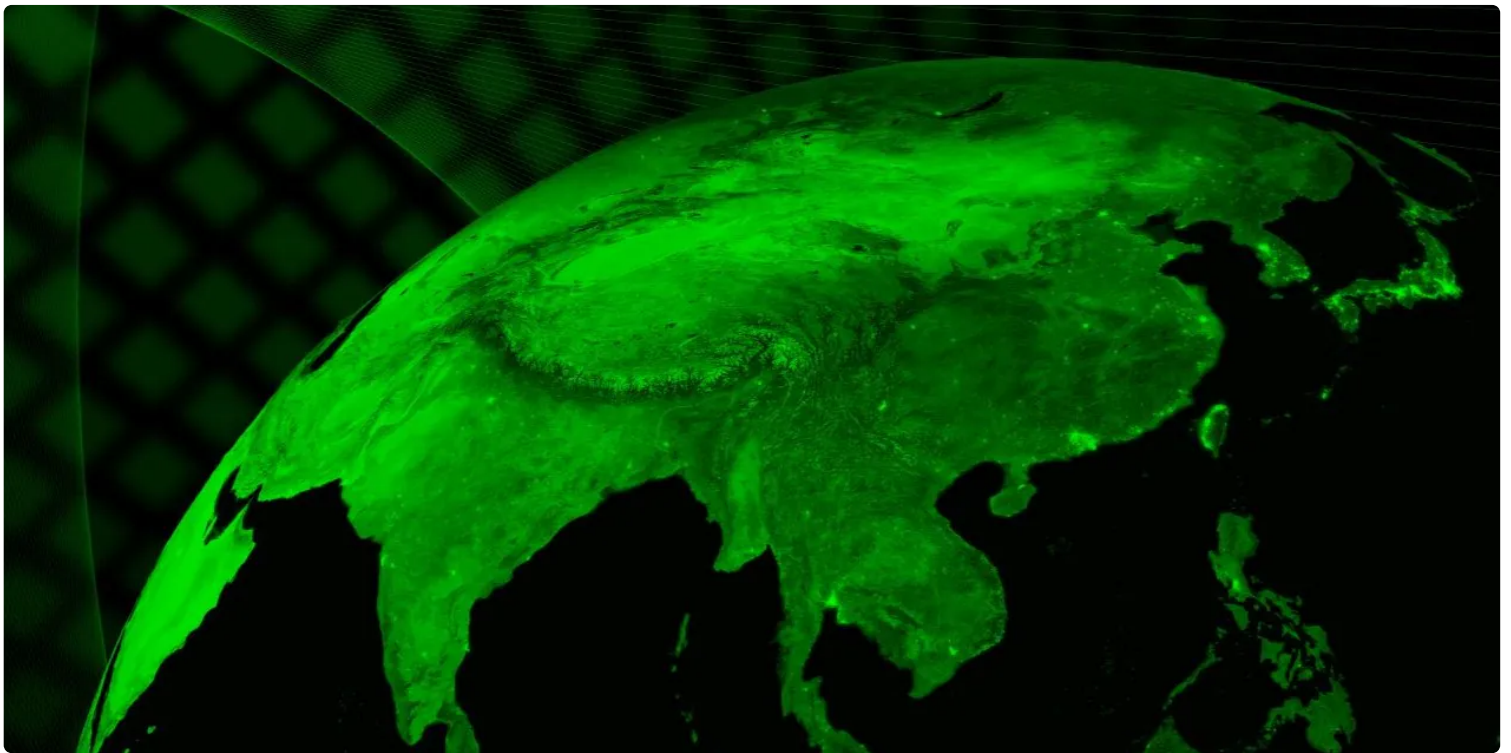


# India: AI, Geospatial Tools Boost Forest Rights Act Implementation

Agentic AI • 📅 3 January, 2026



In line with its vision to enhance the implementation and monitoring of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) is advancing the development of an integrated digital platform designed to digitise records, support geospatial integration and provide decision-support tools for effective FRA governance.

As part of this effort, the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell launched the 8th edition of the Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2025, a national initiative aimed at leveraging student innovation to address complex governance challenges through technology.

Under the Software category, MoTA presented a problem statement for the creation of an AI-powered FRA Atlas and a WebGIS-based Decision Support System (DSS) to facilitate integrated monitoring of Individual Forest Rights (IFR), Community Rights (CR) and Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights, reflecting the Ministry's roadmap for digitisation and convergence of FRA records.

To translate these digital solutions into field-ready applications, a post-Hackathon engagement session was conducted on 2 January 2026 at the Collector's Office, Nashik. The meeting convened officials from MoTA, the Maharashtra State Tribal Development Department and SIH student teams from Pune, Kurnool and Indore.

The State Government showcased the Maharashtra FRA Portal, detailing its functional architecture, practical utility and best practices, including success stories of recognised patta holders and the overall status of FRA implementation across Maharashtra.

Further strengthening the initiative, the participating student teams will undertake a two-day field visit to selected FRA-implemented villages in Nashik district. The exercise will involve direct interaction with Gram Sabha members and district-level functionaries, enabling the collection of ground-level data, workflows and implementation challenges.

These insights will inform the refinement of the AI-enabled FRA Atlas and WebGIS-based DSS, ensuring alignment with statutory processes and on-the-ground realities. The exercise will also help identify practical challenges and opportunities for improving user experience and operational efficiency across the platform.

Following the field visits, the teams will continue to New Delhi for a two-day Hackathon at the National Tribal Research Institute (NTRI), where they will finalise the functional design and features of the FRA web portal under the guidance of the Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Additionally, according to recent Devdiscourse coverage, MoTA's post-Hackathon engagement programme has been structured to move these initiatives beyond ideation. The Nashik meeting highlighted Maharashtra's leadership in digitised FRA processes, with demonstrations of real-time monitoring, integrative workflows and success stories of patta holders.

The subsequent two-day field visit will enable student teams to interact with Gram Sabhas, patta holders and district officials to collect ground-level data and observe administrative workflows. These insights will refine the AI-enabled FRA Atlas and WebGIS DSS.

For more information on the FRA Atlas and DSS, visit <https://open.gov>



This engagement demonstrates MoTA's commitment to turning policy decisions on FRA digitisation into actionable, field-validated digital solutions. The initiative reflects the broader vision of inclusive growth and empowered tribal communities.

India is deploying technology and digital solutions to empower tribal communities, strengthening rights recognition, transparency and inclusive development across the country.

AIIMS Jodhpur has launched free telemedicine services at CHC Abu Road in Sirohi, providing both speciality and super-speciality consultations to tribal and local patients. The flexible, patient-driven model maximises consultant efficiency and a dedicated Tribal Sirohi module is planned to enable secure data management, online consultations and prescription services.

These initiatives highlight India's commitment to using technology to empower tribal communities, strengthen governance and deliver transparent, inclusive and sustainable development, demonstrating how innovation and collaboration translate policy into real-world impact.

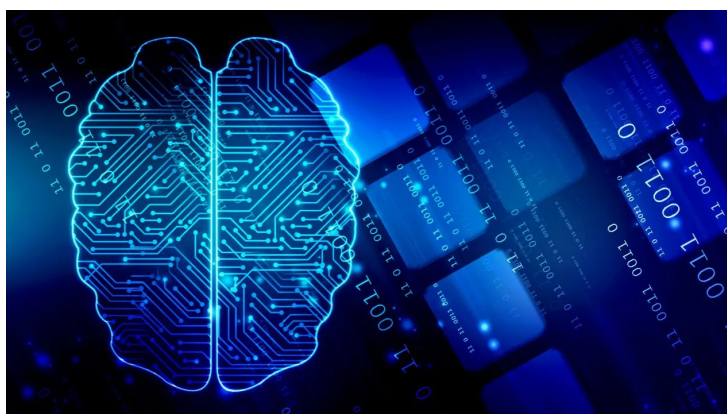
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