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“PERSISTENT GAPS BETWEEN LAND LAW AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION: COMPARISON STUDY BETWEEN INDIA & FINLAND”

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I. ABSTRACT

This research paper compares and analyses the implementation of land law in India and Finland by majorly highlighting the persistent gaps between legal frameworks and practices. India face challenges with inconsistent enforcements, lack of transparency, weak rehabilitation, and colonial legacies, while Finland faces multi-level governance complexities, legal rigidity and climate adaption needs. By analysing the historical evolution of land laws, the governance structure and various case studies, this paper evaluates how legal culture, institutions and the stakeholder engagement shape the land governance outcomes. This research aims to highlight the importance of aligning with legal intent with ground reality, fostering inclusive land management practices, promoting institutional accountability and offering lessons to policymakers, legal scholars and development practitioners about the importance and need for context sensitive reforms and cross-national learnings in order to bridge the persistence gap between law and its implications.

II. INTRODUCTION

Land is a foundation for identity, livelihood, development and governance and thus is not merely a physical asset. Land laws are enacted to regulate ownership, usage, acquisition and transfer of land, across the globe, with an aim to balance private rights with that of the public rights. However, the effectiveness of these laws is often undermined by the gaps in its implications and thus leading to legal disputes, socio-economic disparities and failure in governance. India having a populous and diverse democracy with a federal structure has a deep and vast history related to land legislations since colonial frameworks. The nation continues to face challenges in enforcement especially in rural and tribal areas, bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption and lack of transparency, despite certain reforms such as the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (LARR), 2013. Finland is a Nordic welfare state popularly known for its strong legal institution, participatory planning processes and transparent governance. the nation has high level of legal compliance and institutional efficiency but still faces challenges in adapting land use policies to climate change, demographic shifts and urbanization. Therefore, this research paper aims to explore the persistent gaps between land law and its implementations in both the nations in order to understand the nature of the gaps present and also to uncover the socio-legal, administrative and cultural factors that are causing them.

III. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITRATURE

A. Land Law and Implementation in India

The land law of India is vast, multifaceted and is shaped by colonial legacies, state specific reforms and constitutional mandates. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (LARR), 2013 is one of the landmark reforms that mandates the rehabilitation provisions, consents from affected parties and social impact assessments. The State-specific Land Reforms Acts imposed land limits on to the land ceiling, protected the tenant rights and abolished the intermediary systems like Zamindari. The Forest Rights Act, 2006 integrated environmental conservation with land governance and recognised the rights of forest dwelling communities. The Transfer of Property Act, 1882 and the Registration Act, 1908 ensure legal clarity and governs the property transactions. The implementations of the same remains uneven despite the existence of these reforms. A study by

Wankhede et al highlights and emphasizes the need for participatory land management and pinpointed the successful models in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra contrasting them with weaker central acquisition policies.

B. Land Law and Implementation in Finland

The land law of Finland is inserted within the Land Use and Building Act (LUBA), which focuses on the democratic planning, citizen participation and municipal autonomy. The study of Päivi Rannila explains how the local government bypassed the legal procedures that lead to appeals in Administrative Courts. The concept of “boomerang planning” states how the decisions being made are with expectation of legal challenges, undermining the spirit of the law. Horelli and Wallin discussed the renewal of LUBA and addressed the emerging trends and challenges such as climate change, eco-social planning and digital empowerment. The reforms however, has been criticized for its vague definitions and limited recognition of self-organised urban development. These studies suggests that the implementations of the legal frameworks of Finland is confined by structural inequalities, limited access to legal recourse and insufficient integration of civil society in planning processes.

C. Comparative Insights and Theoretical Perspectives

India face challenges with centralized control and fragmented enforcements while Finland struggles in translating the participatory ideals into practices. The study of Antonia Layard on public land introduced the concept of “property as authorized” which highlights the role of the state in regulating use of land for public interest. This theory is important for analysing how both countries balance the private rights with that of collective rights.

IV. RESEARCH GAP

Key gaps persist in the comparative study of India and Finland, despite having extensive and vast literature on land law and its governance. The existing research largely examines nation specific laws or reforms in isolations with very limited cross-national analysis of how different legal traditions (the common law of India and Nordic civil law of Finland) affects it implications. Most of the studies are focused on the legislation rather than enforcement, thus leaving the administrative challenges, judicial role and stakeholder participation unexplored. Moreover, the integrated frameworks that connect with governance, planning and sustainability are lacking in addressing contemporary issues like climate change, digital transformation and urbanization.

V. HISTORICAL & LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF LAND LAW

A. India

- Colonial legacy: The Land Acquisition Act, 1894

The Land Acquisition Act, 1894 (LAA 1894) was a statute of colonial-era which provided a central framework for the state to compulsorily acquire private land for “public purposes” or for “companies”. It provides with procedural steps for inquiry, notification, declaration of acquisition and award of compensation.¹

The importance of this stature is that it prioritizes state objectives such as infrastructure, revenue projects and companies over individuals and community livelihood protections. Over time the narrow notion of ‘public purpose’ was stretched to include private commercial projects which was implemented via public-private partnership that resulted in generation of conflicts.

However, the statute faced challenges relating to compensation and rehabilitation. Compensation under the act was frequently criticized as formulaic and focused on market/colonial-era valuation and failed to account for livelihood loss, non-economic values and resettlement costs (community and ancestral land). The act also faces issues like process deficits as there are limited requirements for consultation, delays and enforcement issues produced displacement without adequate safeguards and weak social or environment impact assessment.²

- Constitutional framework: right to property and state powers

The right to property once was a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(f) and Article 31 but later got reduced to a constitutional right by the 44th Amendment (1978) and now is protected under Article 300A, which bars deprivation without any legal authority. The honourable courts have played a key role in balancing land reforms and public interest with that of private rights. This upholds the state powers while ensuring due process and fair compensation as stated in K.T. Plantation v. State of Karnataka.

¹ Ministry of Road Transport & Highways

² Ministry of Road Transport & Highways

- Post-colonial land reform (state-level): abolition of intermediaries & ceilings

Post independence, the land reforms majorly focused on protecting tenants, abolishing zamindari and enforcing land ceilings to redistribute land. However, the implementations differed as per the states, among which West Bengal and Kereka saw major success while others lagged and therefore led to mixed outcomes. Because land is a matter of state subject, diverse state laws created a patchwork of rights and enforced practices which often caused legal and administrative friction.³

- Evolution to the RFCTLARR Act, 2013 (commonly “LARR 2013”) — what changed

Decades of criticisms over the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 over issues such as inadequate compensations, lack of transparency and poor rehabilitation along with political mobilization by farmers, civil societies and tribal groups led to the enactment of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 (LARR 2013).

The new act provided higher compensation standards with new compensation formula (market value based with multipliers in rural/urban areas), mandatory Social Impact Assessments (SIA), public hearings before any acquisitions, enhanced Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) entitlements allowing specified benefits for displaced families, requirement of consent for acquisition for private/public-private projects, safeguarding guidelines for Scheduled Areas and Tribal lands and also provided certain limitations on acquisition of agricultural lands.⁴

B. Finland

- The Land Use and Building Act (1999) — core features & planning framework

The Land Use and Building Act, 1999 (LUBA) of Finland provides framework for building permits, land use planning and integration of planning with sustainable developments aiming to emphasise in quality living environment, public participation in planning and municipal autonomy for the same. Its hierarchical system shifts from national objectives to regional & municipal matters and detailed local plans with that of municipalities holding primary responsibilities and also ensuring transparency at each stage.⁵

- Historical development of municipal & regional planning systems

The planning system of Finland evolved post WWII urbanization and welfare expansion which gradually shifted from central control to municipal led planning under national guidance. The act of 1999 highlighted public participation, environmental protection and integrated land water planning, while flexible, negotiated and sometimes soft planning instrument emerged in the Finnish practices.⁶ The Municipal autonomy remains strong but the national guidance and regional councils aimed to secure coherence across the commuter regions, environmental systems and housing which are the defining traits of the Finnish model.⁷

- Recent reforms — Building Act / reform in 2025 and digitalisation / sustainability focus

Finland restructured its land use laws, from January 2025, by separating the construction rules into a new Building Act and thus updating related legislations on permits, qualifications and digitalisation. The reforms promote a unified and simplified permit system, stronger sustainability and climate objectives, streamlined digital processes and an efficient and clear role for the municipal and regional authorities.⁸ The key practical changes include separation of land use and building regulations into a clearer statute, greater emphasis on climate and circular economy objects and single building permit model with clarified thresholds for when permits are required.⁹

³ Wikipedia

⁴ iPleaders

⁵ FAOLEX

⁶ MDPI

⁷ FAOLEX

⁸ Castrén & Snellman

⁹ Lieke

VI. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK & GOVERNANCE

A. India

1. Central vs. State Jurisdiction in Land Matters

India operates under a quasi-federal structure where land acts as a state subject as per Entry 18 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. However, the centre also has a role in certain aspects of land governance such as the Entry 42 of the Union List which covers land acquisitions for central purposes and the Entry 20 of the Concurrent List which allows both centre and state to legislate on economic and social planning which includes land reforms.¹⁰

The key constitutional Articles include Article 245-255 which states distribution of legislative powers, Article 254 which states that in case of conflict the central law prevails over the state laws in the concurrent list matters,¹¹ and Article 131 which states that the Supreme court has the exclusive jurisdiction in disputes between central and state.¹²

2. Role of Revenue Departments, Forest Departments, and Panchayats

The revenue department manages land records, surveys, registrations and also enforce tenancy, land ceiling and acquisition laws. The Forest Department under the Indian Forest Act 1927 and the Forest Act 2006 focuses on forest conservations. Classifications and community forest management such as the Van Panchayat in Uttarakhand.¹³ ¹⁴ Empowered by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the Panchayat handles the local land use planning, limited revenue collection and implementation of Government schemes.¹⁵¹⁶

3. Judicial Interventions and Public Interest Litigations (PILs)

Judicial activism in India has expanded access to justice through Public Interest Litigations (PIL) particularly in Land and Environmental matters. Landmark cases like M.C. Mehta v. Union of India are a case on environmental protection & S.P. Gupta v. Union of India which expanded locus standi¹⁷, both the cases exemplify this trend.

The courts of India have actively intervened in matters such as slum evictions, forest rights violations & illegal land acquisitions using PIL's as a key mechanism for upholding social justice. While PIL's have enhanced the access to justice, they have also raised concerns about the Judicial overreach persistence¹⁸.

B. Finland: Institutional Framework and Governance in Land Law

1. Ministry of the Environment and Regional Councils

The Ministry of environment effectively coordinates with other ministries and environmental institutions of Finnish for strategic planning¹⁹ and also oversees the national guidelines on land views, sustainability goals and climate legislation²⁰.

The regional councils act as a statutory body which is responsible for coordination between municipality and central government²¹, developmental strategies and regional land usage plans. The regional plans guide municipal planning to ensure alignment with the goals of national sustainability is an example of the same.²²

¹⁰ Centre State Relations in India - Drishti Judiciary

¹¹ Distribution of Legislative Powers - LawBhoomi

¹² Article 131 of the Indian Constitution - Legal Services India

¹³ Community Forest Management in the Nakina Van Panchayat (India)

¹⁴ Forest governance and implementation of REDD+ in India

¹⁵ The gram panchayat's role in sustainable rural development

¹⁶ How Panchayats Falter in Collecting Revenue

¹⁷ Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in India: History, Evolution, Features ... , Judicial Activism Through Public Interest Litigation: An Indian Perspective

¹⁸ Evolution of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in India: A ... - IJRTI , PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION IN INDIA: EVOLUTION, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND ...

¹⁹ Development Perspectives for Land Use in Finland - Ministry of the ...

²⁰ Land use planning - Ministry of the Environment , Climate legislation - Ministry of the Environment

²¹ Regional development and regional councils - Ministry of Economic ...

²² Regional land use plans - Ministry of the Environment

2. Municipal Autonomy in Land Use Planning

Under the Land Use and Building Act, the municipalities have planning monopoly and they mainly focus on preparing detailed plans, local masterplans and land policy strategies.²³

The public land development model encourages the municipalities to acquire land, sell or lease plots and develop infrastructure for the use of both green field and brown field redevelopment²⁴. The case study on Penttilänranta redevelopment in Joensuu highlights the importance as to how municipalities lead urban renewal by using public land development²⁵.

3. Integration of Environmental and Climate Goals in Land Law

The Climate Act 2022 mainly focuses on carbon neutrality by 2035 and also includes climate plan for the Land Use Sectors which is majorly focusing on Wet lands, Afforestation and Carbon sinks. This land consolidation project aims to provide sustainability in planning by improving biodiversity reducing emissions and enhancing water management²⁶. The key legal frameworks integrated for sustainability into planning are Environmental Protection Act, Natural Conservation Act and revised Land Use Act 2025²⁷.

VII. KEY IMPLEMENTATION GAPS

A. India

1. Ambiguity in Defining "Public Purpose"

The term public purpose was historically vague under the Land Acquisition Act 1894 and enabled acquisition for almost any state/ private interest.²⁸ The LARR ACT aimed to clarify this under section 2(1) and listed specific purposes like housing for the poor, infrastructure and national security.²⁹ Despite these reforms the challenges remained such as Judicial scrutiny that had been inconsistent and often deferred to Government decisions³⁰, allowed discretionary interpretation by authorities and would justify acquisition for private enterprises under the guise of public benefit such as Industrial corridors and SEZs.³¹ For example, the Singur and Nandigram protest in West Bengal showed the misuse of 'public purpose' for corporate interests.

2. Uneven Implementation Across States

Since land is a state subject in India the interpretation and enforcement of central laws such as the LARR Act vary widely across different states.³² For instance, industries are permitted to purchase land directly in Karnataka by bypassing acquisition norms, while Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have diluted consent and Social Impact Assessment requirements.³³ These differences led to consequences like uneven compensation and rehabilitation, fragmented land records compounded by limited digitalization and legal uncertainty for both investors and the communities that are affected in many states.³⁴

²³ Land Use Planning and Transport Systems - Kainuun liitto

²⁴ Land Policy in Finland: Public Land Development Still Standing Strong ...

²⁵ Land Policy in Finland: Public Land Development Still Standing Strong ...

²⁶ Climate plan for the land use sector - Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö

²⁷ Environmental Law 2024 - Finland | Global Practice Guides | Chambers ...

²⁸ SCOPE OF PUBLIC PURPOSE IN LAND ACQUISITION LAW

²⁹ Public Purpose in Land Acquisition: Legal Meaning under Section 2 of ...

³⁰ Public Purpose in Land Acquisition: Insights from Bhagwat ... - CaseMine

³¹ Land Acquisition for 'public purpose': Time to Amend ... - CBGA India

³² Land Reforms in India - Objectives, Impact, Need

³³ The land beneath our laws: From 1894 to 2025! - Times of India

³⁴ Land Reforms in India - PWOnlyIAS

3. Inadequate Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R)

The LARR Act mandates rehabilitation and resettlement under Section 30-32m and thus covers provisions such as employment, housing & infrastructure for the affected communities.³⁵ However, in practice R&R implementation often shortfall with delays, incomplete packages, weak monitoring and enforcement mechanisms and inadequate livelihood restoration particularly for forest dwelling communities³⁶, limits the effectiveness of these provisions. The Judicial observations have highlighted the importance and need for fair compensation however the enforcement of the same remains ineffectiveness and weak.³⁷

4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency

Land governance in India faces significant issues and challenges which includes, bribery in registration and mutation processes, OPAQUE acquisition procedures³⁸ and nepotism in land allotments. To address these issues, initiatives such as Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) and SVAMITVA Scheme have been introduced to improve record keeping and transparency by making use of drones for mapping.³⁹

However, the implementation hurdles still exist such as low public awareness, incomplete digitalization and resistance from vested interests⁴⁰. India ranks 93rd out of 180 in the 2023 Corruption Perception Index with rupees 30 lakh crore estimation in black money linked to land transactions.

B. Finland

1. Complexity in Multi-Level Planning

The planning system of Finland involves regional plans by regional Councils, national guidelines and municipal master and detailed plans⁴¹. However, this face challenges such as stakeholder's fatigue because of prolonged consultation processes, overlapping jurisdictions with slow coordination and the overriding effect of legal hierarchy over local plans reduce in flexibility⁴². The Helsinki light project faced issues of continuous delays due to conflict in municipal and regional priorities.⁴³

2. Challenges in Adapting to Climate Change and Urbanization

Finland not only faces rapid urbanisation specially in southern regions but also faces climate change which brings risk of flood, heatwaves and biodiversity laws.⁴⁴ For such issues Finland has adopted certain plans such as Climate Plan for the Land Use Sector 2022 and National Adaption Plan 2030.⁴⁵ Limited capacity in small municipalities, slow integration in climate goals into local planning and high ecological footprint despite strong sustainability rankings are certain existing gaps which are needed to be taken into consideration.⁴⁶

3. Legal Rigidity vs. Local Flexibility

The Land Use Act establishes strict procedures for planning and construction with an aim to ensure compliance and uniformity development. These rigid frameworks often result in limiting local innovations and the administrative courts keeps over turning municipal decisions because of procedural errors.⁴⁷ This has resulted in "boomerang planning" where decisions are made with a motive to test legal boundaries which result in appeals and reversals. This highlights

³⁵ Determination of Compensation and Rehabilitation and Resettlement of ...

³⁶ Resettlement and Rehabilitation in India: Issues ... - IJARST

³⁷ Equity in Land Acquisition: Impact of India's LARR Act 2013 on ...

³⁸ Corruption in India: Causes, Effects, Laws & Solutions | In-depth Blog

⁴⁰ LAND RECORDS DIGITIZATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: A STUDY OF TRANSPARENCY ...

⁴¹ Land use planning - Ministry of the Environment

⁴² Finland | Platform of Experts in Planning Law

⁴³ Empowered by planning law: unintended outcomes in the Helsinki region

⁴⁴ Key adaptation challenges in Finland | Climateguide

⁴⁵ Government Report on Finland's National Climate Change Adaptation Plan ...

⁴⁶ Finland | Europe's environment 2025 - European Environment Agency

⁴⁷ Relationality of the Law: On the Legal Collisions in the Finnish ...

the need for reform which will emphasise greater spatio legal flexibility, recognition of local context and citizen led initiatives in order to make planning more adaptive and effective.⁴⁸

VIII. POLICY INNOVATIONS & REFORMS

A. India

- Digital Land Records and GIS Mapping

India has made major progress in digitalizing land records through the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP). Currently over 95% of land records have been computerised covering areas across 6.26 lakh villages. About 68.02% of cadastral maps have been digitalized nationally and 87% of sub-registrar offices are now connected with digital land records for improving access and transparency. The technologies used for the same includes drones Drone Surveys which is used in the SVAMITVA & NAKSHA projects for mapping with high resolution, GIS mapping which enables precise boundary delineation and spatial analysis, ULPIN (Unique Land Parcel Identification Number) which links and connects ownership with parcel maps. The NAKSHA project covers 152 cities across 26 states and 3 UT by using Web-GIS platforms for urban land records.⁴⁹ These technologies have enhanced access to credit and subsidiaries, reduced disputes and fraud and improved tax collection.

- Social Impact Assessments (SIAs)

It is introduced under the LARR Act 2013 and are mandatory for land acquisition. The main purpose of SIA is to assess livelihood loss, displacement and environmental impact with ensuring community consent specially in scheduled areas. The gram-panchayat meetings are necessary for consent in tribal areas. Section 4 to 9 to the Act highlights timelines for SIS studies and expert appraisal. However, despite having reforms the act faces challenges like delay in issuing preliminary notifications and incomplete assessments. 43% of the cases in Orissa lacked proper Gram Sabha consent.⁵⁰ SIAs assist in balancing development with social justice and it promotes transparency by enhancing participatory decision making.⁵¹

- E-Governance in Land Administration

E-Governance initiatives in India aims to modernize and update land reforms and administrations. The key projects for the same include registration bill 2025 which proposes end to end online property registration,⁵² DILRMP which centralises digital land registration and State Level Innovations like paperless registration in Haryana, Revenue Court Case Management System and WhatsApp Chat Bots.

These projects use technologies such as Blockchain Pilots which is used for secure land transactions, AI & ML which is used for fraud detection, automated mapping and Common service Centres which bridges digital device in rural areas. However, despite of such digital technologies E-Governance still faces issues with data privacy, staff training, inefficient infrastructure and digital device in rural areas. The vision of e-governance is to place India as a global leader in digital public infrastructure.

B. Finland

- Sustainable Development and Biodiversity Integration

Finland infused sustainability in land law and planning by introducing the National Biodiversity Strategy 2030. This strategy aims to terminate biodiversity laws by the year 2030 and also reverse the trends by 2035 by aligning with UN SDGs and EU Biodiversity Strategy. The key legal instruments include Environmental Protection Act, Nature Conservation Act and Land Use and Building Act these acts incorporates Sámi traditional knowledge in biodiversity protection.⁵³ However there exists an implementation gap such as only 10% of measures lead to clear improvements and there is a need for ambitious and measurable actions.

⁴⁸ The Renewal of the Finnish Planning Legislation as a Strategy of Urban ...

⁴⁹ GIS Enabling Land Record Digitization in India

⁵⁰ Acquisition of Land: Social Impact Assessment and Conduct of Gram Sabha ...

⁵¹ Understanding the Critical Role of Social Impact Assessment in India , Social Impact Assessment in Land Acquisition: Mandatory Under 2013 Act

⁵² Digital Governance: India's Shift Towards E-Services

⁵³ National Biodiversity Policy - Ministry of the Environment

- Participatory Planning Processes

Finland highlights collaborative and transparent planning and the legal framework for the same are, Land Use and Building Act (1999 and revised in 2013) which mandates participation⁵⁴ along with Section 63 which requires Participation and Assessment Scheme for every plan. These frameworks encourage online planning forums and Public Participation GIS tools and allows cities like Lahti to use over 200 geographical data layers from that of citizens. However, it faces issues such as limitation of civil society engagement by the strong municipal autonomy and participations is limited at the level of “informing unless it is actively enhanced”.

- Maritime Spatial Planning and Climate Resilience

The Maritime Spatial Plan 2030 of Finland covers the terrestrial waters and EEZ up to 69,897 km².⁵⁵ It mainly focuses on eleven maritime themes such as aqua culture, energy and conservation. The planning structure of it is divided into three regional plans which are coordinated by Ministry of Environment and Coastal Regional Councils. It aligns with EU Climate Goals, Baltic Sea Strategy and National Energy Strategy and thus promotes sustainable tourism, marine biodiversity and blue economy. According to the Stakeholder engagement perspective, integration plan of 2024 to 2027 ensures collaborative planning and also includes public consultations along with strategic environmental assessments.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Harmonization of Legal Framework with Ground Realities

India

An amendment in the LARR Act will provide an accurate and contextually appropriate definition of public purpose and thus will any misuse for private gain. The recognition and codification of tribal and community land practices specifically in Scheduled Areas would ensure legal protection and cultural continuity. By encouraging state-specific land policies and reforms which reflects regional socio-economic and ecological conditions will maintain national standards.

Finland

In climate-sensitive zones, reforming the rigid planning laws and introducing flexible legal instruments would allow local experimentations and enhance adaptive governance. There is a need for strengthening the legal recognition and integration of Sámi customary land use which would ensure their participations in spatial planning strategies and national biodiversity.

2. Strengthening Institutional Capacity

India

There is a need for capacity building in revenue department which can be executed by investing in the training, staffing and digitalization in order to improve land record management and reduce corruptions. An inter-agency coordination would establish land governance councils at state and district levels to have effective coordination between Forest, Revenue, Panchayat departments and Urban Development. By creating an independent monitoring and evaluation units, there will be an effective audit in rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) outcomes and would ensure compliance with the SIA norms.

Finland

A support for small Municipalities can be delivered by providing technical and financial assistance to rural municipalities for implementing climate persistent and participatory planning. Enhancing and empowering the role of Regional Council would be helpful in assisting and coordinating multi-level planning and integrating EU directives with local needs.

3. Promoting Legal Literacy & Participatory Governance

India

It is important to focus on strengthening community capacity and institutional mechanisms by promoting community legal education through targeted literacy campaigns in rural as well as tribal areas in order to raise awareness of land rights, forest rights and available grievance redressal mechanisms. The Gram Sabhas must be empowered with the required legal and technical supports in order to ensure their active participation in the land acquisition processes and

⁵⁴ Finland – Context for Participatory Planning – Participatory Tools

⁵⁵ Maritime Spatial Plan MSP

local developmental plannings. The digital inclusion through accessible e-governance platforms such as via mobile app, Common Service Centres (CSC) and multilingual interfaces would enhance accountability, participation and transparency in land governance.

Finland

Expanded use of PPGIS (Public Participation GIS) and online forums would engage citizens in spatial planning. The involvement of Sámi youth, local communities and indigenous engagement in biodiversity and maritime planning through cultural mapping and educational programs would be helpful.

4. Cross-Country Legal Learning & Cooperation

India–Finland Collaboration

In order to ensure cross-country learning, enhanced India-Finland collaboration is recommended through joint research platforms between leading universities, comparative legal studies involving scholar/ student exchanges and bilateral policy exchange forums. Such corporation can foster knowledge on land governance, climate resilience and indigenous rights. The expertise in maritime spatial planning and climate adaptation of Finland can guide coastal management of India and the experience of India in community led forest governance offers valuable lessons in participatory conservations.

