



FES

FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

So that no one is 'left behind'

A Case Study on GIS-Enabled Entitlement Tracking: GEET

GIS-Enabled Entitlement Tracking (GEET), a system designed and developed by the Foundation for Ecological Security, helps in creating awareness among underprivileged rural communities about government welfare programmes, while allowing administrators to track and review the reach, response and progress of these social security schemes.





One of the many challenges encountered by underprivileged communities in India is availing the benefits of scores of social welfare programmes run by both state and central governments. In the absence of proper information, or clarity regarding eligibility, a large part of the population, especially communities based in rural and remote areas, is literally 'left out'. While men and women miss out on employment and health benefits, children miss out on nutrition and the elderly on their monthly pension entitlement. In such a scenario, a system like GEET (GIS-Enabled Entitlement Tracking) becomes critical for good governance.

The GIS supported system has been designed and developed by the Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) to build awareness on entitlements for marginalised communities, ensure access to benefits under government schemes, track eligibility at the household level through entitlement cards issued by village institutions and visually represent the entitlement information on a GIS-enabled dashboard that can be accessed by officials to record information and monitor progress.

"The core objective behind developing GEET was to make sure that no one is left out or left behind. Not only does this system help the underprivileged, it also aids development organisations and government departments in tracing and tracking the beneficiaries and helping them exercise their rights," says Ashok Jani, General Manager (Programmes), FES. GEET was developed by FES with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2017 and was first introduced in Jharkhand a year later. *"The best part about GEET is that the department responsible for implementation can actually configure welfare schemes and map the beneficiaries. This makes the entire process both transparent and efficient,"* adds Jani.



Currently, GEET is being used in Jharkhand and Odisha, with Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS) and Odisha Livelihoods Mission (OLM) acting as the implementing authorities. FES has also recently introduced the system in its project areas in Rajasthan and Karnataka. *"Apart from other important features, GEET allows its users to register their grievance directly with the government authorities through the app. So far, we have mapped 18 welfare schemes for the people of Jharkhand,"* says Suvakanta Nayak, State Programme Coordinator, JSLPS, which comes under the Jharkhand Rural Development Department. Incidentally, Nayak was with UNDP when GEET was conceptualised.

Easy to use

To start with, a user has to select the state that he/she belongs to in order to view the schemes run by the state and central governments in the region. Once that is done, schemes can be viewed based on some very basic criteria such as age, gender, marital status, disability, caste and economic benchmark. A person can also look for schemes by using the advanced search option and further customising his/her search criteria. Another option that the user can exercise is to look for schemes through the 'Entitlement Card ID' option. This pulls up a category wise list of schemes that he/she can avail.

"Thanks to this tool, I got to know from the enumerator that I can get a house under the Ambedkar Awas Yojana," says 82-year-old widow Ghurni Devi, a resident of Tirra village under Palkot block in Jharkhand.

Advanced search also includes a 'Scheme Search' and 'Scheme Information' option. The first allows the user to fill category wise eligibility criteria to narrow down search results. And the second includes further details on the programme such as the required eligibility criteria and a list of benefits. *"This is an excellent digital system for the development sector staff and government agencies. It allows effective tracking of entitlements without wasting time and resources. You do not need to indulge in lengthy paperwork to know the beneficiaries, track them and identify those who have not been covered under a welfare programme,"* highlights Shashi Sudhir, a Development Consultant who worked as a Programme Analyst with UNDP in 2016, when discussions to develop GEET were initiated.

Easy Access

GEET can be accessed by logging on to <https://geet.observatory.org.in/> or by downloading the application. The system is currently available in English, Hindi, Odia and Kannada. *"We are working on making GEET available in other languages so that people from other states who are not proficient in English and Hindi are also able to use it,"* explains Jani.

The 'Settings' option in the GEET app allows the user to 'Get Data', 'Change Language' and "Change Region. The user needs to connect to the internet in order to 'Get Data' and 'Change Region'. Once online, all the information related to schemes of the selected state is obtained from the GEET server. This data gets saved on the device and can be retrieved and used efficiently even without internet access. Every time the device reconnects, the 'Get Data' option updates the latest changes made to scheme related information on the server and on the device.

The currently selected region is also displayed clearly below the title of the screen and when a user changes his/her region, the app downloads all the information on relevant schemes for the area from the GEET server.

Search Eligibility Login

Find schemes you are eligible for by entering the following basic details.

State:

Age:

Caste:

Gender: Male Female Transgender

BPL: Yes No

Marital status:

Pregnant/Lactating: Yes No

Disability: Yes No

[Advanced Search](#) [Search using entitlement card number](#)

"This system developed by FES is widely used by our staff to check if the benefits of government schemes are being equally distributed among the rural communities," adds Nayak.

Once downloaded, the user does not need an active internet connection to access the information, making it handy in the most remote locations. In addition to this, the user can toggle between languages using the 'Change Language' option which does not require internet access.

No wonder then that GEET is only growing in popularity with time. *"We want GEET to be used for the betterment of more communities. We provide financial support to development organisations and would like to see more such organisations use GEET,"* says Naveen Das, General Manager (Programs) at Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives.



"In our country, both state and the Centre have social welfare programs for marginalised communities. But unfortunately, these initiatives do not always benefit the remote and rural communities, resulting in wastage or inefficient utilisation of government funds. A major reason for this problem is the widespread lack of awareness on entitlements. And that is why we need systems like GEET," concludes Nayak.

GEET has been developed by India Observatory (IO), the technology arm of the Foundation for Ecological Security, which aims to enable end users take informed decisions by making available spatial and temporal data on India's social, ecological and economic parameters to restore degraded ecosystems and improve economic opportunities in rural areas.

By collaborating with various organisations and initiatives, the India Observatory

- brings together data, analytics and tools,
- contextualizes them and lastly
- takes them to supplement the decision making of village people, NGOs and local government officials

India Observatory helps address the 'last mile deficit' and extends available spatial and temporal knowledge to ground level action. It also nudges end users to factor ecological considerations in their pursuit of economic progress.

At another level, India Observatory promotes a culture of data sharing and collaborative action to address pressing problems facing the planet and people.

GEET contributes towards the following SDGs on the basis of number of schemes and type of schemes configured in the system



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