Mapping Administrative Units into Assembly and Parliamentary Constituencies in Chhattisgarh

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CBGA

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I. Rationale for the Initiative

This exercise entails mapping administrative units of a State into its Assembly Constituencies (ACs) and Parliamentary Constituencies (PCs). The objective of this exercise is to bring coherence between administrative and electoral boundaries, thereby facilitating public engagement with fiscal governance issues at the grassroots level. The significance of such an exercise draws from the following four points:

1. Public availability of granular fiscal information on various development schemes can increase engagement of the citizens and the elected representatives, and potentially improve their implementation and outcomes. The present situation is uneven across the schemes and the States.

2. Even in case of the development schemes for which granular fiscal data is available publicly, it's organized by the administrative units only—namely, districts, blocks, gram panchayats (GPs) and urban local bodies (ULBs). The data is not presented by electoral constituencies, thus limiting an effective engagement of the elected representatives and the citizens.

3. For an effective data representation, both fiscal and outcome information should be organized by ACs and PCs, and made available in the public domain.

4. However, there is no comprehensive and up-to-date database yet that maps administrative units into ACs and PCs.

II. Profile of the State: Chhattisgarh

As per the Fourth Delimitation Commission, under the 2002 Delimitation Commission Act, the State of Chhattisgarh is divided into 11 PCs and 90 ACs[1]. Delimitation of the number of constituencies within a district is done by considering population figures and its composition as per the Census 2001.

On an average, one PC in Chhattisgarh constitutes 8 to 9 ACs. The Tehsils (located within different Sub-Divisions of the State) were used as the primary territorial divisions to delimit ACs in the State. Patwari Circles for rural areas and wards for urban areas have been used as the lowest mentioned units to delimit ACs. Table 1 provides a brief account of the administrative and electoral divisions for Chhattisgarh on the basis of which Geo-files have been prepared for the State.
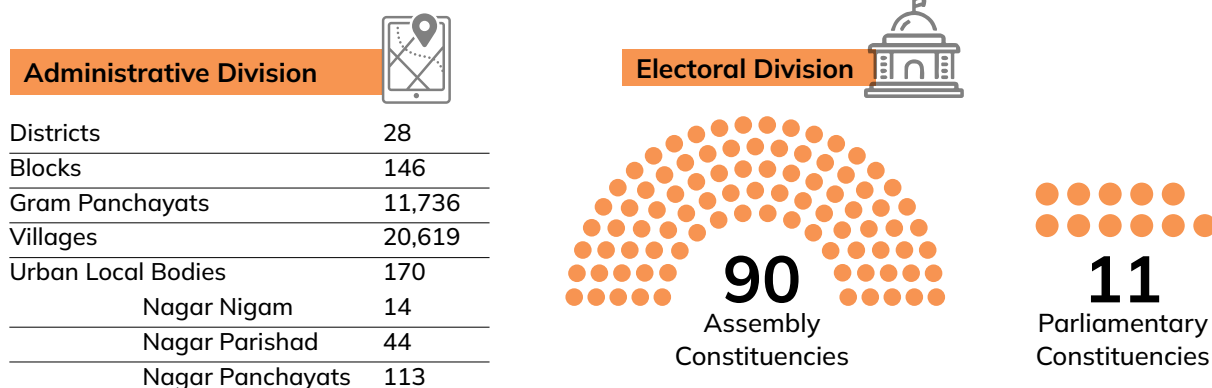
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1   In reference to the territorial division as on the 15th day of February, 2004.

Table 2 documents the spread of ACs and PCs across the rural and urban areas of Chhattisgarh. Around 6.7 per cent of ACs (6 out of 84 ACs) completely comprise of rural areas, while 8.9 per cent of ACs completely comprise urban areas. Further, 5 ACs are split across two districts and 1 AC across three districts. In the case of PCs, 3 PCs are spread over a single district, 4 PCs across two districts, and 3 PCs across three or more districts. About 66 per cent of blocks in Chhattisgarh are completely mapped over an AC, 30 per cent are split across two ACs, and the remaining 4 per cent are split across three ACs or more (Table 2).

Table 1: Details of Administrative and Electoral Divisions of Chhattisgarh

Administrative Division	
Districts	28
Blocks	146
Gram Panchayats	11,736
Villages	20,619
Urban Local Bodies	170
Nagar Nigam	14
Nagar Parishad	44
Nagar Panchayats	113

Electoral Division

90 Assembly Constituencies

11 Parliamentary Constituencies

Source: Compiled by CBGA from the Local Government Directory (LGD)- Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India: https://lgdirectory.gov.in/

Table2: Spread of ACs / PCs across Rural / Urban Areas and Districts in Chhattisgarh

	In Number	In Percentage	
Complete ACs			
Completely urban ACs	8	8.9	
Completely rural ACs	6	6.7	
ACs and Districts			
ACs completely mapped over a district	84	93.3	
ACs spread over 2 districts	5	5.6	
ACs spread over 3 districts	1	1.1	
Complete PCs			
Completely urban PCs	0	0.0	
Completely rural PCs	0	0.0	
PCs and Districts			
PCs spread over entire district	1	9.1	
PCs spread over single district, but not representing the entire district	3	27.3	
PCs spread over 2 districts	4	36.4	
PCs spread over 3 Districts or more	3	27.3	
Blocks and ACs			
Blocks completely mapped over an AC	97	66.4	
Blocks spread over 2 ACs	44	30.1	
Blocks spread over 3 ACs or more	5	3.4	

Note: Percentages might not add up to 100 due to rounding off.   Source: Compiled by CBGA from the Geo-files of the State

III. Construction of Geo-Files for Chhattisgarh

Step 1: First round of mapping of administrative units into Electoral Units

- Thoroughly reviewed the Delimitation Commission's Report (2008) for preliminary mapping of administrative units into ACs and PCs. This was done to understand how ACs and PCs have been constructed for Chhattisgarh.

- Reviewed the websites of the Election Commission of India, Chief Electoral Officer of Chhattisgarh and Booth Level Office (BLO) lists to map new administrative units into the constituencies.

Step 2: Updating and refining geo-files

- Reviewed the website of the Local Government Directory (LGD) created post the Delimitation Commission 2008, to list additional rural local bodies (RLBs) and map them to their constituencies.

- Reviewed the information related to the administrative units available on:

  - the ebsites of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC)

  - the website of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India (GoI)

  - the website of the Department of Urban Development and Housing, Government of Chhattisgarh

  - the website of the Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of Chhattisgarh

  - the website of the Urban Livelihood Mission, GoI

  - the website of the Urban Livelihood Mission, Government of Chhattisgarh

  - the latest scheme database / MIS / dashboard (of MGNREGS, NSAP, PMAY-G and SBM-G) for block-wise sorting of GPs

- Updated and refined the preliminary mapping of the administrative units into ACs and PCs using the sources/information mentioned above.

Step 3: Further refinement of geo-files

- Conducted 'fuzzy matching' between the latest available MIS of four schemes (MGNREGS, NSAP, PMAY-G and SBM-G) and the refined geo-files, and bucketed them into ACs and PCs.

- Referred to the media reports and government orders for the latest additions of the administrative units.

- Identified and documented additional RLBs (created post Delimitation Commission 2008) by referring to various Chhattisgarh district websites.

- Referred to the listing of ULBs provided in the latest scheme datasets (for example, NSAP) to further refine ULB names across Districts of Chhattisgarh.

- Ensured uniformity in spellings / names for RLBs and ULBs that have been modified post Delimitation Commission Report (2008).

Step 4: Validation of geo-lists through multiple sources

Validation of the mapping was done through multiple sources:

- Referred to the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) database, which has recently started providing information on the constituencies.

- Referred to the Local Government Directory (LGD), which too has started providing information on how RLBs and ULBs (in select States) correspond to the constituencies.

- Checked with government officials and elected representatives to ascertain the accuracy of geo-listing for doubtful cases.

We have analysed and thoroughly reviewed different sources of information for listing and aligning administrative units across ACs and PCs of Chhattisgarh. Cross-checking of information through multiple sources has been done to ensure maximum possible accuracy in the alignment and validation of the geo-listing. Further, using the data/information sources mentioned above, we prepared the listing of all administrative units (GPs and ULBs up to the ward level) and aligned them with their respective constituencies so that it is possible to obtain a complete territorial arrangement of a particular electoral division for Chhattisgarh.

Similarly, differences in names or spellings of Districts, Blocks and local bodies were common and needed to be cross-checked to maintain consistency. In order to validate the listing of geo files, we referred to the data presented in MIS of schemes and information available on Chhattisgarh's official websites and the Election Commission's websites. The district websites were helpful regarding the changes in the district and block names, whereas the latest scheme database was used primarily to update spellings of the local bodies.

IV. Challenges Faced

These are some challenges faced while preparing geo-file for Chhattisgarh.

i. No data source has complete and up-to-date information for such mapping: While the Delimitation Commission report provides detailed information on the constituencies, administrative units used by the Commission are not up to date. Newly-formed administrative units were compiled based on data available across MIS of schemes, programme documents and other possible sources. This necessitated referring to the multiple sources to complete the listing appropriately and make the geo-files up to date and relevant. Information on the local bodies (both rural and urban) formed since 2008 was scattered, making it challenging to compile a comprehensive and accurate geo-file.

ii. Inconsistencies across different sources of information: Names/ numbers/ spellings of the administrative units have been updated from time to time, and therefore needed to be cross-checked with the latest source of information. There is a lack of consistency in the information provided by different

official sources, making it essential to cross-validate information from multiple sources manually. This was a time-taking process.

iii. Mismatches of categories over time: Types of local bodies have also changed over time. For example, Panchayats progressing to become towns and upgraded as ULBs. Similarly, lower levels of ULBs being upgraded to higher tiers. This created difficulties in aligning them.

iv. Information on local bodies presented in regional languages: Sometimes, Hindi words presented with English alphabets created confusion when referring to multiple sources.

V. How We Addressed Those Challenges

The following steps were taken to overcome the above-mentioned challenges.

i. Cross validation by referring to multiple official sources: Mismatches in spellings of names, number and type of administrative units, across different sources, have been addressed by referring to the government websites that provide the latest information. It has been assumed that the number/names/spelling that appear similar on more than one government website is appropriate.

ii. Consultations with frontline government staff: Cases of local bodies for which constituencies remained unidentified have been resolved with references received from local government and frontline officials (mostly school teachers, Anganwadi workers and NGO personnel). We have consulted resource persons/experts in the field to resolve these cases.

VI. Key Takeaways

Through this exercise, we have developed a rigorous methodology to map administrative units of a State into its constituencies, and created complete and up-to-date geo-files for it. These can be used for policy research and analysis. The geo-file for Chhattisgarh as a final output would enable researchers, policy analysts and policy practitioners to understand the association between electoral and administrative

divisions in a coherent manner, and generate constituency-level estimates from the data available at different geographical levels. It is imperative that the geo-files be integrated into the most-relevant MISs providing fiscal and physical information of State schemes in the public domain and facilitate application programming interface (API) integration following the standards National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) guidelines.

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About the Methodology Notes

These State-wise notes document the methodology used for mapping administrative boundaries (Rural Local Bodies, Urban Local Bodies and Districts) into the electoral boundaries (Assembly and Parliamentary Constituencies) in the selected States. These notes also highlight the challenges faced in the mapping exercise as well as the steps taken to overcome those.

About the Initiative

The overarching objective of this initiative is to explore how fiscal information available to the citizens can be made more relevant locally in order to create spaces for strengthening political accountability for public financial management (PFM). Guided by such a vision, the initiative set out to - bring coherence between administrative and electoral boundaries by mapping and aligning the administrative boundaries (Gram Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies) with the boundaries of Assembly Constituencies (ACs) and Parliamentary Constituencies (PCs); collect, verify, organize and map disaggregated fiscal information on major development schemes to ACs and PCs; and create analytics and visualizations with the AC-wise and PC-wise fiscal information to facilitate the uptake of such information by different actors in the PFM landscape.

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