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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal provided dedicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

# **“BUILT TO MOVE, NOWHERE TO BELONG: THE LEGAL VACUUM AROUND MOBILE HOMES IN INDIA”**

AUTHORED BY - SAARA GAUR\*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Mobile Homes, residential units built on wheels but often used as permanent dwellings, are slowly gaining ground in India and represent an evolving response to India’s deepening housing crisis. This phenomenon, however, sits uneasily with India’s legal architecture. Should it be governed as a “vehicle” under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter, ‘MVA’), or as a “building” under the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act 2016<sup>2</sup> (hereinafter, ‘RERA’), and municipal building codes? The Indian legal system remains silent.

This blog exposes the legal vacuum around the same. It examines how mobile homeowners are denied civil entitlements due to unstable addresses, excluded from housing finance, and penalised for non-transport rules under the MVA. Drawing on international models, the blog proposes a new legal category of “Portable Residential Units” (hereinafter, ‘PRU’) and specific amendments to MVA, RERA, and Municipal By-laws to ensure legal recognition, regulatory clarity, and constitutional protection for mobile homeowners.

## **STATUTORY LACUNA OF HYBRID FUNCTION MOBILE HOMES APPLICABILITY OF THE MOTOR VEHICLES ACT, 1998**

A “Motor Vehicle” under Section 2(28) of the MVA has been defined as under:

*“Any mechanically propelled vehicle adapted for use upon roads, whether the power of propulsion is transmitted thereto from an external or internal source, and includes a chassis to which a body has not been attached and a trailer...”<sup>3</sup>*

In light of this definition, mobile homes could legally be treated as vehicles if mounted on a chassis or towable. Once treated under this statutory umbrella, they become subject to the whole landscape of transport-related obligations, which include, but not limited to, registration under Section 39, issuance of a certificate of fitness under Section 56, pollution control

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<sup>1</sup> Motor Vehicles Act 1988, s 2(28).

<sup>2</sup> Real Estates (Regulation and Development) Act 2016, s 2(j).

<sup>3</sup> Motor Vehicles Act 1988, s 2(28).

compliance under Rule 115 of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, and road tax liability under state-level Motor Vehicles Taxation Acts.<sup>4</sup>

This assumption breaks down in practice. These structures, though movable in design, many are intended primarily for stationary and long-term residential use, retrofitted for residential use.<sup>5</sup> Like any traditional home setting, they are equipped with electrical systems, plumbing, insulation, furniture, and often remain immobile once parked. These features create a divergence from transport utility to a housing facility that Indian law fails to realise.

The Supreme Court of India in *Commissioner of Central Excise, Chennai v Hindustan Lever Limited* held that the statutory classification must be based on the dominant purpose of the item:<sup>6</sup>

*“What is more relevant is the purpose for which the product is used, namely, functional test.”* As per the Road Transport Yearbook (2019-20) published by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in 2022, over 11.9 million trailers and semi-trailers were registered in India by 2020.<sup>7</sup> While not all are residential, anecdotal evidence, including rising use of modified caravans in tourism circuits like Goa, Himachal Pradesh, and Ladakh, and economically feasible trailer conversions on city peripheries, suggests an emerging trend of the rise of mobile homes.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, the owners of such structures are penalised under vehicle laws, while simultaneously excluded from the rights, protections, and entitlements attached to residential property under the RERA. To illustrate, Section 69 of the MVA states that any vehicle used for a purpose other than what it is registered for is liable for seizure or fine.<sup>9</sup> Thus, a registered trailer used as a stationary home is penalised for ‘misuse’ even if it remains immobile.

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<sup>4</sup> Motor Vehicles Act 1988, ss 39, 56; Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989, r 115; eg, Maharashtra Motor Vehicles Tax Act 1958.

<sup>5</sup> The New Indian Express, ‘Important Things Everyone Should Know About Mobile Homes’ (The New Indian Express, 21 February 2020) <[www.newindianexpress.com/business/marketing/2020/Feb/21/important-things-everyone-should-know-about-mobile-homes-2106575.html#:~:text=What%20is%20a%20mobile%20home,comparable%20with%20site%2Dbuilt%20homes](http://www.newindianexpress.com/business/marketing/2020/Feb/21/important-things-everyone-should-know-about-mobile-homes-2106575.html#:~:text=What%20is%20a%20mobile%20home,comparable%20with%20site%2Dbuilt%20homes)>

<sup>6</sup> *Commissioner of Central Excise, Chennai v Hindustan Lever Ltd* (2006) 197 ELT 414 (SC).

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, *Road Transport Yearbook 2019–20* (Govt of India 2022).

<sup>8</sup> Sanghamitra Chatterjee, ‘Freedom to roam: Caravan tourism fast emerging as a sought-after travel trend’ (The Telegraph, 27 June 2025) <[www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/events/caravan-tourism-fast-emerging-as-a-sought-after-travel-trend-photogallery-print/cid/2110191#:~:text=Caravan%20tourism%20is%20fast%20emerging,number%20of%20hotels%20and%20accommodations](http://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/events/caravan-tourism-fast-emerging-as-a-sought-after-travel-trend-photogallery-print/cid/2110191#:~:text=Caravan%20tourism%20is%20fast%20emerging,number%20of%20hotels%20and%20accommodations)>

<sup>9</sup> Motor Vehicles Act 1988, s 69.

This legal incongruity not only creates a structural vulnerability for residents, leading to denial of utility connections and exclusion from property tax records, but also paves the way for practical disenfranchisement.

## **EXCLUSION FROM HOUSING AND REAL ESTATE REGULATIONS**

Although mobile homes must adhere to transport regulations, they are also exempt from laws about housing and property. For instance, RERA does not cover mobile homes since it only applies to real estate projects built on fixed property.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, only "immovable property" may be leased, sold, mortgaged, or transferred, excluding mobile homes, according to the Transfer of Property Act of 1882 and the Registration Act of 1908.<sup>11</sup>

This legal gap has consequences:

- Mobile home owners cannot register their dwellings as residential property.
- They become ineligible for occupancy certificates
- They cannot avail of housing loans or mortgages, as lending requires land-based collateral
- Further, they are ineligible for municipal building plan approval.

As of 2025, India's housing policy under the MoHUA has made no provision for legalising mobile homes. The National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy, 2007, and the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) (hereinafter, 'PMAY-U') guidelines require beneficiaries to have land tenure, which excludes mobile home residents.<sup>12</sup> The PMAY-U Performance Assessment Report of 2022 notes that over 96% of constructed units are on permanent land parcels. Mobile dwellings do not qualify.<sup>13</sup>

This legal blind spot persists despite a known housing shortage. According to the Technical Group on Urban Housing Shortage (2012–17) report by MoHUA, India faced an urban housing deficit of 18.78 million units, 95% among Economically Weaker Sections and Low-Income Groups.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act 2016, s 2(zn).

<sup>11</sup> Transfer of Property Act 1882, s 3; Registration Act 1908, s 17.

<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, *National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy 2007* (MoHUA) para 3.3.

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, *PMAY-U Performance Assessment Report 2022* (MoHUA, 2022) 24.

<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, *Report of the Technical Group on Urban Housing Shortage (2012–17)* (MoHUA, 2012).

## CONSEQUENCE OF CLASSIFICATION: REGULATORY AND TAXATION CONFLICTS

### DISJOINED TAXATION FRAMEWORK

The suitable taxation regime depends on whether a house on wheels is classified as a vehicle or a residence. The implications are not merely administrative but economic. It affects the initial acquisition costs, annual liabilities, resale procedures, and legal recognition.

If classified as a vehicle, the owner will be liable to pay road tax under the State Motor Vehicles Taxation Acts, registration charges under the MVA, annual fitness certification fees, and compulsory insurance premiums.<sup>15</sup> Many Indian states levy road tax at the time of registration, with the rates depending on unladen weight, fuel type, engine capacity, and vehicle use. As per the Delhi Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1962, the Territory charges between 4% and 12.5%, while Karnataka charges up to 18% for larger personal vehicles.<sup>16</sup>

A different tax system is triggered if treated as a dwelling or a residential unit. The buyer is liable for stamp duty under the Indian Stamp Act, 1899 (typically 5–7% of the property value), registration charges (often 1%), and annual property tax under the local municipal corporation.<sup>17</sup> A study by the Credit Rating Information Services of India Limited reveals that the cumulative stamp duty and registration fees add 5% to 7% to the total cost of acquiring immovable property in urban India, with variation by state.<sup>18</sup>

These conflicting tax treatments create a strong urge for classification manipulation. A tug of war situation might arise where the buyers argue that their mobile home is a “vehicle” to avoid the higher burden of property-linked tax. In contrast, the state revenue authorities may say the opposite, seeking to minimise stamp duty collections. Moreover, there is a lack of a national policy guiding how or when a mobile structure transitions from “vehicle” to a “residence.” This vacuum in definitional clarity increases litigation risk. For example, under Section 3 of the Indian Stamp Act, 1899, stamp duty is levied on instruments involving “immovable property,” but if the structure is not affixed to land, it could be excluded from this definition.<sup>19</sup> Yet, where

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<sup>15</sup> Motor Vehicles Act 1988, ss 39, 56; Motor Vehicles (Third-Party Insurance) Rules 2022, r 3.

<sup>16</sup> Delhi Motor Vehicles Taxation Act 1962, Schedule I; Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation Act 1957, Schedule I.

<sup>17</sup> Indian Stamp Act 1899, ss 3, 27; Registration Act 1908, s 17; see also respective municipal corporation acts, eg, Delhi Municipal Corporation Act 1957, s 113.

<sup>18</sup> CRISIL, *Urban Infrastructure: CRISIL Opinion on Real Estate Cost Composition in India* (CRISIL, 2021).

<sup>19</sup> Indian Stamp Act 1899, s 3.

land is leased and a mobile home is stationed on it for years, authorities may argue that a constructive fixture exists and demand duties retrospectively, raising compliance costs and legal exposure.

This uncertainty is compounded by the lack of harmonisation between central and state definitions of “movable” and “immovable” property. While the General Clauses Act, 1987, under Section 3(26) states that ‘immovable property shall include land, benefits arising out of land, and things attached to the earth’<sup>20</sup>, Section 2(c)(ii) of the Telangana Urban Areas (development) Act, 1975, defines building as a ‘structure on wheels or simply resting on the ground without foundations... a ship, vessel, boat, tent, van and any other structure used for human habitation’.<sup>21</sup> This discrepancy leads to divergent standards.

## **GST CLASSIFICATION AND REVENUE DISPUTES**

Under the Harmonised System of Nomenclature (hereinafter, ‘HSN’), the Goods and Services Tax (hereinafter, ‘GST’), which is regulated by the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 (hereinafter, ‘CGST’), distinguishes its operations. Under HSN Code 9406, mobile or modular homes are usually categorised as "Prefabricated buildings."<sup>22</sup> This attracts 12% to 28% GST depending on the specifications, inputs, and ultimate use.

GST law hinges on the definition of “supply of goods” under Section 7 of the CGST Act, and whether a particular structure is movable at the time of supply. Suppose the prefabricated structure is attached to land in a manner that makes it immovable property. In that case, it may be excluded from GST under Schedule III, which covers transactions that are “neither goods nor services”, including the sale of land or buildings post completion.<sup>23</sup>

Various rulings on the detachable vs immovable nature of prefabricated constructions have emerged in multiple cases. For instance, Telangana AAR in a shed-building case ruled that a prefabricated structure, even if assembled with bolts and nuts, was functionally used for the beneficial enjoyment of the underlying land would qualify as immovable property, and input

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<sup>20</sup> General Clauses Act 1897, s 3(26).

<sup>21</sup> Telangana Urban Areas (Development) Act 1975, s 2(c)(ii).

<sup>22</sup> Central Goods and Services Tax Act 2017; GST Council, HSN Code 9406: Prefabricated Buildings.

<sup>23</sup> Central Goods and Services Tax Act 2017, ss 7, Sch III.

tax credit was not allowed under Section 17(5)(d) of the CGST Act.<sup>24</sup>

Conversely, in *Tata Projects Ltd. v AAR Maharashtra*, prefabricated site offices temporarily anchored were treated as movable “goods,” attracting GST liability. No exemption was granted based on immovability, even if the structure remained in place for several months.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, in *NBCC (India) Ltd. v. AAR New Delhi*, modular units fixed on leased land for prolonged use were held to qualify as immovable property and not “goods” under GST, thus excluded from tax under Schedule III of the CGST Act.<sup>26</sup>

These inconsistent rulings do not provide clear guidance for houses on wheels. GST authorities have not issued a consolidated ruling for this hybrid state. Buyers and manufacturers face uncertainty over their classification at the point of supply.

If later reclassified as immovable property, manufacturers and purchasers risk retrospective tax demands, penalties under Section 122, and denial of ITC under Section 17, even if GST was paid upfront under HSN Code 9406.<sup>27</sup>

Without a central notification or guidance note from the GST Council, mobile home transactions live in a legal twilight zone, neither definitively exempt as housing nor consistently classified as goods. This ambiguity jeopardises investor confidence, innovation, and affordability for low-income consumers exploring modular or transported residential alternatives.

## **DENIAL OF CIVIC RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION**

Perhaps the most serious consequence of the legal vacuum is the systemic exclusion of mobile homeowners from civic entitlements and constitutional safeguards.

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<sup>24</sup> In re M/s Sanghi Enterprises, Telangana Authority for Advance Rulings, Order No 04/2023 (12 April 2023) (prefabricated shed with RCC foundation qualifies as immovable property; ITC blocked under ss 17(5)(c) & (d), CGST Act).

<sup>25</sup> In re Tata Projects Ltd, Maharashtra Authority for Advance Ruling.

<sup>26</sup> In re NBCC (India) Ltd, Delhi Authority for Advance Ruling, 07/DAAR/2018, 5 October 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Central Goods and Services Tax Act 2017, ss 17, 122.

## RESIDENCE AS A PRECONDITION FOR CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS

Proof of a fixed, verifiable address is a prerequisite for access to basic entitlements in all Indian administrative systems. A utility bill or registered property deed to prove residency is usually required for Aadhaar enrolment<sup>28</sup>, voter registration<sup>29</sup>, ration cards<sup>30</sup>, bank KYC<sup>31</sup>, and school admissions. Houses on wheels are viewed as movable assets and typically cannot be linked to a formal postal address or property registry.

Although the Aadhaar ecosystem recognises frequent enrolment issues when the address is deemed "unstable or unverifiable", a category that probably includes residents of mobile or non-fixed dwellings, the Unique Identification Authority of India's 2022–23 Annual Report does not provide precise rejection statistics for unstable address cases.<sup>32</sup> The absence of a recognised postal address effectively renders such residents invisible within India's digital governance systems.

## THE RIGHT TO SHELTER AND JUDICIAL INTERPRETATION

Indian courts interpreting the right to shelter as part of Article 21 have treated housing as a basic necessity integral to life and dignity.<sup>33</sup> In *Shantistar Builders v. Narayan Khimalal Totame* (1990), the Supreme Court declared:

*"The basic needs of man have traditionally been accepted as three: food, clothing, and shelter. ... For a human being, it has to be a suitable accommodation allowing him to grow in every aspect."*<sup>34</sup>

Yet, case law continues to assume housing as land-based, permanent, and registered, leaving mobile homes conceptually and legally orphaned. The question of whether a house on wheels could qualify as "shelter" under Article 21 has not been tested.

Nor has Article 19(1)(e), the right to reside and settle anywhere in India, been interpreted to include alternative housing models like mobile dwellings.<sup>35</sup> Judicial discourse remains silent on whether a movable but long-term residence qualifies as a "settled" domicile for this right.

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<sup>28</sup> Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), Aadhaar Enrolment and Update Regulation 2016, reg 4(1)(c).

<sup>29</sup> Registration of Electors Rules 1960, r 13.

<sup>30</sup> National Food Security Act 2013, s 10.

<sup>31</sup> Reserve Bank of India, Master Direction – Know Your Customer (KYC) Directions 2016, para 3(a) <[www.rbi.org.in/scripts/BS\\_ViewMasDirections.aspx?id=11566](http://www.rbi.org.in/scripts/BS_ViewMasDirections.aspx?id=11566)>.

<sup>32</sup> Unique Identification Authority of India, *Annual Report 2022–23* (UIDAI 2023).

<sup>33</sup> Constitution of India, art 21.

<sup>34</sup> *Shantistar Builders v Narayan Khimalal Totame* (1990) 1 SCC 520.

<sup>35</sup> Constitution of India, art 19(1)(a).

Recognition of mobile homes under constitutional protections could strengthen claims grounded in Directive Principles such as Article 38 and Article 39, which emphasise equitable access to housing and elimination of disparities in living standards.<sup>36</sup>

## **COMPARATIVE RECOGNITION OF MOBILE DWELLINGS ABROAD**

### **UNITED STATES**

Various U.S. jurisdictions classify mobile homes based on size, mobility, foundation status, and applicable zoning laws:

- In Humboldt County, California, Movable Tiny Homes constructed on a chassis to the American National Standards Institute for Recreational Vehicles (hereinafter, 'ANSI/RV') are permitted as an Accessory Dwelling Unit (hereinafter, 'ADU') in single-family zones if used year-round.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, a Tiny House on Foundation is treated like a standard small house, provided it meets state building code standards.
- City of San Diego and Los Angeles allow movable tiny homes as ADUs in zoning districts where residential use is permitted, provided they meet ANSI/RV 119.5 (for chassis-based units) or Title 24 of the California Building Code for site-built units.<sup>38</sup>
- If a tiny house is permanently affixed to a foundation, utilities are connected, and local building codes are met, it is treated as real property. It may be subject to property tax, not vehicle registration or personal property tax.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, tiny homes in California may legally qualify as RVs (Taxed as vehicles) or as ADUs (taxed as real property), depending on their foundation and construction.

### **AUSTRALIA**

- Local councils may issue temporary occupancy permits for mobile homes, provided they meet specific sanitation, structural safety, and zoning requirements.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Constitution of India, arts 38, 39.

<sup>37</sup> Humboldt County Planning and Building Department, Tiny House Fact Sheet (2020) <https://humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/71398/Tiny-House-Fact-Sheet> accessed 6 July 2025.

<sup>38</sup> City of San Diego Development Services Department, IB-403: Movable Tiny Houses as Accessory Dwelling Units (2021) <[www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/dsdb403.pdf](http://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/dsdb403.pdf)> accessed 6 July 2025; House California Building Standards Commission, California Building Code, Title 24 (2022 edn).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Local Government Act 1993 (NSW), ss 68, 124.

- Furthermore, they should comply with separate building codes like caravan parks or movable dwelling standards, and utilities must be handled per local council licensing.<sup>41</sup>

While each state's rules differ, the legal framework explicitly recognises non-fixed residential units, allows permitting, and subjects them to tailored infrastructure standards.

## GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS

- In Germany, certain "Wagenparkplätze" or trailer parks allow long-term habitation in certified trailer units, regulated by planning authorities and insurance rules. Structures may be taxed and insured as "mobile homes" in designated zones.<sup>42</sup>
- The Netherlands allows temporary residential plots, also known as "groene camping" (green camping sites), where certified trailers or temporary housing structures meet zoning, fire, and sanitation regulations; their use is officially recognised and controlled.<sup>43</sup>

Even without being permanently attached to land, these systems provide organised access to civic services, utilities, and legal residency status.

In sum, Jurisdictions abroad offer clear legal pathways. India's framework, by contrast, provides no hybrid classification. The absence of policy or legal recognition excludes potential mobile homeowners from basic housing infrastructure and rights, especially in affordable, transitional, or disaster-response housing.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

India urgently requires a third legal category to bridge the gap between vehicle and real estate classifications. A unified statutory and regulatory framework would enable residential legitimacy, taxation consistency, and citizen protections.

## LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

### 1. Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988

Introducing an explicit statutory exemption for units built to Bureau of India Standards (hereinafter, 'BIS')-certified residential standards and remaining stationary on a leased parcel for a defined period. Owners should not be penalised under Section 66 for non-

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<sup>41</sup> Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2021 (NSW) pts 3–5.

<sup>42</sup> Baugesetzbuch (Federal Building Code), s 30.

<sup>43</sup> Besluit omgevingsrecht (Dutch Environmental Permitting Decree) 2010, arts 5.6, 5.17; Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, Beleidsregels Tijdelijk Wonen op Groene Kampeerterreinen (2021).

vehicle use if the dominant residential use is demonstrable.<sup>44</sup>

## **2. Revise Municipal Building Bye-Laws**

Central Model Bye-Laws and state-level Municipal acts should include PRUs under a dedicated category. This would allow issuance of temporary habitation certificates, enable property-levy assessment, utility hookups, and establish safety checks without the assumption of land fixedness.

## **3. Amend Real Estate & Property Legislation**

Modify RERA, the Transfer of Property Act, and the Registration Act to allow limited tenure registration (e.g., lease-like title rights) for mobile homes meeting prescribed structural and safety standards. This would enable users to open bank accounts, obtain ration cards, and have formal civic recognition, granting them access to legal remedies.

## **STANDARDS & CERTIFICATIONS**

### **4. BIS Model Code & Technical Certifications**

The Bureau of Indian Standards should create a dedicated standard, analogous to the U.S. Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974, defining structural design, readiness for mobility, and anchoring thresholds.<sup>45</sup> BIS certification would become a prerequisite for legal recognition under the new legal category.

### **5. National Housing Bank Certification (hereinafter, 'NHB') & Financing Pathways**

NHB could anchor a certification mechanism, enabling mobile dwellings to qualify for priority sector lending or subsidised credit, especially under PMAY's affordable housing stream. Certified units could be eligible for Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme benefits, provided they comply with approved safety and utility standards.

## **FISCAL HARMONISATION**

### **6. Uniform Taxation Regime**

State Finance Acts can be amended to adopt this model, eliminating classification-driven disputes and tax arbitrage between state transport authorities and revenue/municipal departments.

### **7. GST Clarification Notification**

The GST Council should issue a ruling: certified portable dwelling units are treated as goods at the point of sale (HSN -9406) unless permanently affixed by design. This eliminates ambiguity over retrospective reclassification, penal interest, or denial of

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<sup>44</sup> Motor Vehicles Act 1988, s 66.

<sup>45</sup> Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act 1974 (US), 42 USC §§ 5401–5426.

input tax credits.

India's 30-million-unit housing shortfall demands faster, cheaper solutions, and portable homes fit that need.<sup>46</sup> With a prefab market exceeding ₹29,000 crore in 2024 and growing, legal ambiguity blocks scale.<sup>47</sup> Those living in legal but non-traditional housing will have their civic rights extended, tax conflicts will be resolved, and financing will be made possible by recognising mobile homes as a third housing category. This reform aligns with affordability, sustainability, and constitutional dignity and is modelled after international norms such as the U.S. code.<sup>48</sup> Simply put, it's time the law caught up with how people live.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the country's housing and vehicle laws do not adequately cover mobile homes in India, creating a glaring legal void. The study emphasises how legal ambiguity results in regulatory conflict, denial of civic rights, and exclusion from financial systems. It restates its central thesis: India needs to adopt a third legal classification for mobile homes. It presents a strong argument for immediate legal reforms by referencing domestic and international data. Acknowledging mobile homes is a constitutional requirement based on housing justice, inclusion, and dignity, not just a policy change.

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<sup>46</sup> Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Report of the Technical Group on Urban Housing Shortage 2012–17 (MoHUA 2012).

<sup>47</sup> IMARC Group, *India Prefabricated Buildings Market: Industry Trends, Share, Size, Growth, Opportunity and Forecast 2024–2032* (2024).

<sup>48</sup> Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act 1974 (US), 42 USC §§ 5401–5426.