

Design of E-governance projects for Accountability: The Indian Context

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Introduction

- E-governance: 'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent' (SMART) governance

Accountability
answerability
enforcement
responsiveness

Social Accountability

- Important objective of e-governance
- Civic engagement
- Strengthening voice and capacity of citizens

- Focus so far, on accountability in service delivery
- Accountability has to be built into the design
- Accountability- for whom? Need for holistic approach in devising technology-based solutions

Problem statement

How can accountability be built into the design of e-governance projects?

Methodology

- Secondary sources & data from past research
- Study of 'Bhoomi', land records computerization project



Courtesy: <http://www.bhoomi.karnataka.gov.in/>

Bhoomi

- Mission mode project started in 2001 in Karnataka state, India
- 20 million records of land ownership of 6.7 million farmers
- Being replicated by other states in India
- Several awards; Stockholm challenge finalist

- Target beneficiaries: farmers, land owners

- **Services offered:**

RTC – Record of

‘Rights, Tenancy and Crops’

Mutation- land sale / transfer

- Crucial for crop subsidies, bank loan entitlement

Summary of findings

- Heterogeneity of beneficiary groups not addressed
 - Real-life contestations and constraints (e.g., caste, gender, feudalism and traditional exercises of power)
 - Dependencies not fully analysed
- Indicative that design was based on 'partial knowledge' of requirements
 - **Detached intimacy** – ambiguity in accountability

Key recommendations for design policy

Theoretical lens used: Located accountability

Boundary crossing approach

Involve the Demand-side in the design process
(consider heterogeneity of target group)

Evaluate the service delivery time

Understand the extended networks of socio-material
relationships - Look for unintended effects

Identify and reduce scope for tampering

Conclusion

Located accountability:

One should be aware of the limitation of one's 'partial perspective' and hence be more responsible towards the system in which they are located

- Strengthens the idea of social accountability
- Enables a holistic design ensuring identification of various target groups

Thank you