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

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<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Social Accountability</th>
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<td>answerability</td>
<td>• Important objective of e-governance</td>
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<td>enforcement</td>
<td>• Civic engagement</td>
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<td>responsiveness</td>
<td>• Strengthening voice and capacity of citizens</td>
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• 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

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<th>Recommendation</th>
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<td>Boundary crossing approach</td>
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<td>Involve the Demand-side in the design process</td>
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<td>(consider heterogeneity of target group)</td>
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<td>Evaluate the service delivery time</td>
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<td>Understand the extended networks of socio-material relationships - Look for unintended effects</td>
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<td>Identify and reduce scope for tampering</td>
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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