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E. Sridharan

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# Cross-state learning and service delivery in India's federal system

E. Sridharan

University of Pennsylvania Institute for the Advanced Study of India, New Delhi, India


## ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to place the issue of cross-state learning and borrowing experiences in service delivery in India in the specific context of political incentives in India's federal democracy as well relating it to the findings of the comparative literature on subnational policy diffusion in federal systems. It presents four types of borrowing experiences from a selection of six case studies of the past few years, and point towards ways in which learning/borrowing across states can be usefully incorporated into policy.

**KEYWORDS** Learning; borrowing; drivers; incentives; ICT; generic laws

## Economic performance, voting behaviour and incentives for cross-state learning and borrowing in India's federal democracy

There is a vast literature, almost entirely based on developed-country experience, on the relationship between economics and voting behaviour.<sup>1</sup> The overall finding is not straightforward. While voters tend to reward incumbents for economic performance the evidence is not overwhelming and elections are found to be multi-factoral in their outcomes (Anderson, 2007). One problem is that voters face informational and cognitive barriers in assessing economic performance.<sup>2</sup> Pacek and Radcliff (1995) indicate that voters tend to punish incumbents when the economy worsens but do not necessarily reward good economic performance. This would indicate that what matters is not just performance on economy and related governance issues but, in the Indian context of a less educated and information-poor electorate, the formation of perceptions. Vaishnav and Swanson (2015) show that, for India, there do seem to be increasing electoral returns at the state level since 2000 for governments that deliver increased economic growth rates and argue that there has been a significant shift in voter behaviour. It would appear that there has been a gradual shift away from the politics of patronage and clientelism to the politics of performance and growth and that this has changed policymaker incentives.

**CONTACT** E. Sridharan  [e.sridharan@upiasl.org](mailto:e.sridharan@upiasl.org); [esridharan@yahoo.co.in](mailto:esridharan@yahoo.co.in)

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We could hypothesise that incumbents would have an incentive to improve performance most of all in programmes that have a broad citizen interface so as to impact perceptions and reap electoral rewards. Derivatively, we could hypothesise that cross-state (and cross-national) learning as well as actual borrowing of programmes/best practices to improve/innovate on government programmes and service delivery would be incentivised for incumbent state-level political leaderships. The fact of inter-state competition for private investment in an increasingly private investment-led economy, and the fact that better governance and infrastructural performance is a significant determinant of investment decisions would only add to such incentives for cross-state learning for best practices and adoption of innovative programmes.

The comparative literature on subnational policy diffusion across states/provinces in federal systems throws additional light on incentives for and drivers of such diffusion. Sugiyama (2008) argues that in the case of social sector policies in Brazil electoral competition does not explain diffusion so much as leftist ideological factors and public officials following professional norms. Segatto (2018) on the diffusion of education policies across states in Brazil finds that the movement of ideas and people were key. Wallner (2017) finds that horizontal diffusion of education policies in Canada was driven by the interaction of institutional and ideational conditions, although no single factor was necessary and sufficient. Niedzwiecki (2016), analysing social policy implementation in Argentina and Brazil found that co-partisanship helps while opposition party-led state governments tend to hinder implementation of social policies if policies carry the clear attribution of responsibility. The literature in summary yields three important possible drivers of cross-state policy learning/borrowing in India – co-partisanship, professional networks of public officials, and ideological/ideational factors – besides electoral incentives. While taking these three factors from the comparative literature into account in the Indian context, our starting point is how electoral incentives are potentially reshaping policy behaviour in India from competitive patronage to better performance in service delivery.

### **Incumbency, performance and re-election in Indian states: political incentives for improvements in governance and service delivery**

The historical backdrop to the issue of cross-state learning and borrowing in service delivery is the changing patterns of electoral politics in India, particularly at the state level and the incentives that it creates for state behaviour in governance and service delivery. I hypothesise that changing electoral patterns at the state level since 2004 have created incentives for better performance in governance and service delivery by state governments and ruling

parties rather than resorting to populist patronage politics or identity politics around religion and caste. The evolution of electoral patterns at the state level is as follows.

Before the 2000s, there was a pronounced tendency towards anti-incumbency in state assembly elections in India. However, Yadav and Palshikar (2009) have shown that state governments are being increasingly frequently re-elected since the early 2000s. Gupta et al. (2013) point out that the percentage of state assembly elections in various periods of India's electoral history won by incumbent parties declined from 85 per cent (1951–1966), 54 per cent (1967–1979), 51 per cent (1980–1988) to a low of only 27 per cent (1989–1998), recovering to 39 per cent (1999–2003). The last two periods characterised by a transition to multi-party competition nationally lead to a new conventional wisdom that Indian state elections are exemplified by the anti-incumbency sentiments of an impatient and demanding electorate faced with poorly performing state governments, or what Ravishankar (2009) calls the 'costs of ruling'. However, since 2004, there seems to have been a reversal with 54 per cent of incumbents re-elected over 2004–2012 (Gupta et al., 2013). From 2013 to 2019, 41 per cent of incumbents got re-elected.

Is this reversal of anti-incumbency linked to electorate perceptions of performance and to actual economic performance? Gupta et al. (2013) demonstrate that in 74 per cent of the cases (23 of the 31 cases of re-election in the period 2002–2012) there was a correlation between people's satisfaction with government performance (measured by a net score defined as the percentage of responses saying 'fully or somewhat satisfied' minus the percentage of responses saying 'fully or somewhat dissatisfied') and its being voted back to power. There was also a correlation between actual development (measured by a composite of the real growth rate of Gross State Domestic Product of the state and the percentage improvement in the Human Development Index score) and net satisfaction score in 12 of 20 cases (Gupta et al., 2013). Now, while elections are about many factors including identity politics, leadership and other intangibles, this does give us some basis for linking performance (on the development and governance), electorate satisfaction and re-election. Hence, it would appear that there are clear political incentives for improved delivery of public services, more so for those services that have the broadest citizen interface with the delivery programme.

There is also some evidence that good economic performance has begun weighing larger in the thinking of voters in recent years compared to identity politics (caste, religion, tribe, regional/linguistic identity) and patronage/clientelist politics that were said to dominate electoral mobilisation and political alliances at the state and national levels from the late 1980s to the 2000s by several scholars (Chandra, 2004 on caste, religion and patronage; Keefer & Khemani, 2004 on clientelism and patronage). An earlier study (Khemani,

2001) found that there was a positive relationship between state-level average growth over the term and re-election even before 2000 (for 1960-1992). In this context, we could hypothesise that incumbent governments have an incentive to improve economic and governance performance, particularly in delivery of important public services, and move away from 'patronage democracy' (Chandra, 2004) or competitive populism in government patronage to getting re-elected through better performance in service delivery and its knock-on effects including attracting greater investment in the context of inter-state competition for the same.

### **Cross-state learning incentives, drivers and facilitating features at the political and bureaucratic levels**

The above logic could be expected to hold at the level of incumbent state-level political leaderships. This seems to have started under the Congress party while in opposition in the early 2000s with sharing of experiences on programme implementation across states (among political discussions) by Congress Chief Ministers in conferences held in November 2001, April 2002 (during which the decision to introduce rural employment guarantee if in power was made), November 2002 and November 2003. This sharing went on until Congress Chief Ministers' conferences in February and September 2006 after which it petered out.<sup>3</sup>

Subsequently, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) while in opposition took cross-state sharing of experiences on programme implementation and service delivery further. Chief ministers of BJP-ruled states have been getting time slots to share experiences, innovations and best practices at meetings of the BJP National Executive, usually held three times a year, since 2006, showcasing successful programme innovations.<sup>4</sup> When Nitin Gadkari took over as party president in 2010, a Good Governance Cell was established in the party in April-May 2010 with former Goa chief minister Manohar Parrikar as the convenor. A National Convention on Good Governance (Su-raj Sankalp Sammelan) was organised in June 2010 at the BJP's training centre, the Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini in Mumbai, with the participation of all BJP chief ministers and as many as 55 state-level ministers holding important portfolios. Subsequently, while this major convention was not institutionalised, periodic meetings were held from then on up to the 2014 general election, of the BJP's state-level ministers for finance, education, agriculture and food/civil supplies, water, and tribal welfare. They have met – in separate groups at various times – to compare notes and learn best practices. These are sure indications that the party considered improved governance and service delivery as important for electorate perceptions of good performance and key to increasing the party's future electoral strength, and implicitly, a recognition that performance and not identity politics alone is key to

improved electoral strength. The driver has clearly been a political push from the party leaderships in response to the perceived electoral incentives outlined in the last section.

What of the bureaucratic level? Do civil servants have similar incentives and/or are such imperatives built into their training? One can hypothesise that civil servants will be sensitive to the requirements of their political masters.<sup>5</sup> As far as their training is concerned, the information available on cross-state learning and borrowing processes is as follows. Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers go through three phases of mid-career training, lasting five to eight weeks, held in recent years at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) in Mussoorie. Phase III training is for officers of 7–9 years' service, Phase IV for officers of 14–16 years' service, and Phase V for officers of 26–28 years' service. A perusal of the topics of such training programmes show that the sessions are either sectoral or on specific issues/topics, but there is nothing explicitly on cross-state learning/borrowing.<sup>6</sup> Only one out of 61 topics listed in the Phase V training programmes are explicitly on comparing state experiences and this was on a session on strengthening public health systems.<sup>7</sup> The same is the pattern revealed by the training programmes conducted by the Department of Personnel and Training.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, since all sessions are attended by officers belonging to a range of state cadres, there are examples and experiences from states that are widely shared, including exposure to innovations and best practices. However, this constitutes what can be called informal or tacit learning processes, and whether the lessons picked up are actually borrowed and implemented in another state depends entirely – and this is my key finding – on state-level incentives and the driver of a political push from the top.<sup>9</sup>

As far as cross-state learning and borrowing in Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) are concerned, particularly in the major national missions like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), National Rural Health Mission, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Prime Minister's Gram Sadak Yojana, etc., there is considerable cross-state learning and transfer of best practices.<sup>10</sup> National missions have among their stated objectives that of sharing of experiences in programme implementation among the states.<sup>11</sup> The National Informatics Centre (NIC) also promotes cross-state learning in national missions.<sup>12</sup> However, the Centre is only a facilitator and funder in CSS and national missions. A great deal depends on the initiatives of the minister concerned at the Centre, and on the initiatives of ministers and bureaucrats at the state level who are in charge of implementation of CSS.<sup>13</sup> The Centre acts as a clearing house and the extent to which the states pick up best practices and implement them depends on them. To this extent, cross-state learning and borrowing continues to be informal, tacit and dependent on individual initiatives at the

political and bureaucratic levels in the states, and hence, on political and systemic incentives to do so.

Another important incentive-shaping issue in CSS is the fact that the Centre's and hence states' approach to CSS is input/disbursement oriented and not outcome-oriented.<sup>14</sup> There is a need to incentivise performance and this is not helped by a systemic distrust of states with untied funds; the latter would help to incentivise and promote innovation suited to local needs rather than carry out pre-fabricated programmes. Since the input-orientation of CSS does not make outcomes important let alone critical, the state-level which receives the funds has no incentive to innovate programmatically, technically or organisationally. The challenge is how to transition CSS to outcome-orientation mode. In recent years, the Planning Commission has also tended to identify and publicise best practices (for example, the *Mid-term Appraisal of the Eleventh Five Year Plan, 2007–2012*, has boxes showing best practices in CSS) but ultimately their adoption and cross-state borrowing depends on the initiatives at the state level or at least a push from the Central ministry concerned (Planning Commission, 2012).

On features that facilitate cross-state borrowing – two important features that facilitate the ease of borrowing are: first, the presence of a generic law that can be adopted by another state with suitable modifications; second: an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) package that can be easily adopted and tweaked by the borrowing state.

Finally, coming to the difficulties in borrowing, these derive from state-specific conditions that need major changes in order to adopt a borrowed innovation, or cannot easily be changed, including the presence of entrenched vested interests.

## **A framework and a typology**

### ***Types of learning/borrowing, drivers, mechanisms and types of diffusion***

I develop the following framework of cross-state learning, borrowing and adaptation in a federation, in which I situate my cases, as follows.

#### ***Learning, borrowing, adaptation and leapfrogging***

Cross-state learning can be limited just to learning based on studying another state's experience through exploratory visits or inquiries or exposure to the key actors in another state's service delivery programmes. It can go from learning to borrowing another state's programmes and innovations by adopting and implementing such programmes/innovations in one's own state with or without minor adaptations. It can go beyond borrowing to (significant) adaptation to one's own state's circumstances by tweaking the borrowed

programme appropriately. It can go still further beyond adaptation to leapfrogging, that is, to learning from another state but jumping altogether ahead by a further innovation that achieves more than the programme from which learning took place or inspiration was derived.

*Drivers.* When it comes to the drivers of learning, borrowing and adaptation, there can be three main ones, which are all processes, not discrete events: a CSS that promotes diffusion; networks within political parties, particularly, networking among state-level political leaders; networks within the bureaucracy across states including exposure to other-state experiences during formal training programmes. Such processes can also initiate learning/borrowing.

*Facilitating Features.* When it comes to features that, when present, facilitate borrowing and adaptation, there are two principal features: generic laws that can be borrowed, tweaked and enacted by another state; ICT packages that can, likewise, be borrowed and tweaked to suit another state's circumstances.

*Types of Diffusion.* The types of diffusion of service delivery experiences across states in a federation can be classified as: (a) bilateral, when a state borrows from another state; (b) multi-state, when several states borrow and adapt from the original state (including, for example, in CSS, though multi-state diffusion can occur outside CSS too). Bilateral borrowing or diffusion can take place as a chain in which a state borrows and adapts from the original state and then other states borrow and adapt from the borrowing state one by one in a chain that might include adaptation/innovation including cases of leapfrogging the original innovator altogether. Such innovations/adaptations, including leapfrogging, can also punctuate multi-state diffusion when a state adapts/leapfrogs and then such innovations diffuse multi-state in a further round of diffusion in or without a CSS.

## A four-fold typology of the six cases

Using this framework for classifying cross-state learning, borrowing, adaptation and diffusion of service delivery programmes, I situate the six cases in this paper in the following four-fold typology, to bring out specific features when I discuss the cases in the following and concluding sections. This four-fold typology was derived by classifying the empirical material available, that is, the actual case studies and their characteristics.

**Type I:** These are cases of bilateral borrowing of programmes in which there are popularity incentives for the political leadership in case service delivery/governance improves, due to either a broad public interface or a significant mass signalling effect that the leadership is serious about good governance.

**Type II:** This is a case of large-scale and rapid (within three/four years), multi-state diffusion by borrowing from the originating state but without



the driver of a Central programme, and is characterised by (i) a programme with a broad citizen interface and hence, popularity incentives; (ii) a generic law and/or ICT package that lends itself to borrowing and tweaking. This case also contains within it, a case of (significant) adaptation by a state, followed by further multi-state diffusion of that state's adaptations.

**Type III:** This is also a case of large-scale and rapid (within three/four years), multi-state diffusion by borrowing from the originating state and includes two instances of leapfrogging over the original programme – and is characterised by (i) the origins as well as subsequent multi-state diffusion lying in Central programmes; (ii) a broad citizen interface hence, popularity incentives; (iii) a generic law and/or ICT package that lends itself to borrowing and tweaking. The two instances of leapfrogging further led to further rounds of rapid, multi-state diffusion, due to a Central programme.

**Type IV:** A case of cross-state learning and borrowing characterised by difficulties where (i) state-specific conditions including entrenched vested interests slow the process of adoption, and hence, mixed incentives; (ii) there is no generic law or ICT package.

### **Selected cases of cross-state learning/borrowing**

In this section, I try to trace the process of six selected cases of cross-state learning/borrowing including one sub-case of significant adaptation and two sub-cases of leapfrogging in a chain of borrowing from a particular original programme, which I have classified as sub-cases rather than distinct cases in themselves because they were part of a chain of borrowing, adaptation and subsequent diffusion. The selection of these cases was based on an information availability basis, given that there is no documented database of such cases since this is not a systematically explored area of investigation in the government or research community. The availability of information was gleaned from discussions with bureaucrats, journalists and some politicians. The methodology was one of focused interviews with persons who had been or were currently actively involved with each of the cases. There were twenty-two interviews, of which twelve people have been referred to in the endnotes and another ten, mostly serving bureaucrats, chose anonymity. I lead into each case from the typology above, and at the end of each case, I analyse the case in terms of the framework.

#### ***Type I, case I: bilateral borrowing driven by popularity incentives***

##### ***Samadhan online, a public grievances redressal system in Madhya Pradesh borrowed from Gujarat***

This is a case of bilateral borrowing of a public grievance redressal system, which by its very nature has a broad public interface and hence major

popularity incentives for the political leadership if grievance redressal is made quick and fair. Madhya Pradesh borrowed and modified an online public grievance redressal system pioneered by Gujarat called Swagat Online, calling it Samadhan Online.<sup>15</sup> Gujarat, on the initiative of its then Chief Minister Narendra Modi, started an online grievances redressal system called Swagat Online in 2003.<sup>16</sup> It was designed to enable direct communication between citizens and the CM on the fourth Thursday of every month, called Swagat (Welcome) day. It is meant to enable citizens to get pending grievances redressed once a month. Gujarat has a three-tier grievance redressal system at the Taluka, District and State levels respectively. The way the system works is that grievances are entered, transmitted and made available to officers concerned online on that day, reviewed by the CM and senior officers and response formulated and sent out within four hours. The CM holds a video conference with all districts at 3 pm and examines each complaint and attempts are made to send out a reasonable and acceptable solution within the day, with no complainant left without a firm reply. District and sub-district officers attend the programme through video conferencing.

The Swagat Online system builds on the state's information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, particularly the Gujarat State Wide Area Network (SWAN), commissioned in 2001. This network connects the State Secretariat in Gandhinagar with all central ministries and departments and with all the district headquarters and hundreds of district-level offices (the state government's second tier), and all 225 taluka headquarters (the state government's third tier). Clearly, the Swagat Online system was an innovation that quickly exploited the ICT network then set up for a broad-spectrum citizen interface programme of grievance redressal by an enterprising CM.

This system was borrowed by Madhya Pradesh and called Samadhan Online in February 2006.<sup>17</sup> The initiative had political origins in that the chief ministers of Gujarat (then Narendra Modi) and Madhya Pradesh used to interact regularly and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan asked district officers to look at Gujarat's online grievance system after a presentation on the system was made to him. Like in Gujarat, all department and district level officials are asked to remain in office during the process of grievance redressal on that day, with the district officials participating through the video-conferencing facility maintained by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) while the departmental secretaries participate from the Secretariat's video-conferencing facility. An application fee for complaints for which a receipt is given incentivises operators of the system to be responsive to citizens. The system keeps the bureaucracy on its toes like in Gujarat, and has resulted in an increase in the disposal of grievance cases since the officers know that the CM is personally involved.

This case of learning and borrowing from another state's programme originated at and was driven by the political (CM) level due to interaction between the CMs of two states ruled by the same party. It involves adoption and minor adaptation of a programme with potential political rewards both for the party and the CM personally due to its broad citizen interface with government and the creation of an image of a responsive leadership. A facilitating feature for this case of bilateral diffusion was the presence of an adaptable ICT package.

### ***Type I, case II: bilateral borrowing driven by popularity incentives***

#### ***MPOnline – Madhya Pradesh's online public services provision system borrowed from Andhra Pradesh***

This is a case of bilateral borrowing, with some modification and expansion, of an online public services provision system, which by its very nature has a broad public interface and hence popularity incentives for the leadership. Madhya Pradesh borrowed the concept of an online public service provision portal, now called MPOne, initially for provision of enrolment and examination forms, birth certificates, online counselling and other such citizen services, from Andhra Pradesh's APOne which also offered a limited range of services.<sup>18</sup> The initial push again came from Chief Minister Chauhan who was keen to improve public service delivery and the administrative follow-up was undertaken by the then IT Secretary Anurag Jain.<sup>19</sup> However, the borrowed concept underwent significant modifications right from the beginning, being set up as a joint venture company between the Madhya Pradesh government and the information technology company Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in 2006.

The second key decision, apart from adopting a joint venture format with TCS, was the integration of the existing 9232 Citizen Service Centres (CSCs) that offered government-to-citizen services in rural areas. MPOne and the CSCs were integrated to make the latter extensions of the former, thus building on an existing service provision network but making it IT-enabled. Jain changed the concept of CSC to a one-time membership fee, for operators, of Rs. 1000. Scaling up was easy as TCS had the necessary human resources and implementation capabilities and sent software development personnel on deputation to MPOne. In three years, revenues grew 300 times to Rs. 400 million.

MPOne is a case of borrowing and adaptation, in a bilateral type of diffusion, of a state-level innovation for service delivery with a broad citizen interface, and hence the associated popularity incentives, the process being facilitated by a push from the CM supported by innovative bureaucrats, the feature facilitating it being an easily modifiable and scalable ICT package, its spread being further facilitated by the participation of a leading private sector IT firm TCS as well as being able to leverage the existing service delivery network of CSCs.

***Type I, case III: bilateral borrowing of an institutional innovation with a mass signalling effect and hence popularity incentives***

***Bihar Special Courts Act borrowed from Orissa – with further borrowing by Madhya Pradesh***

This is a case of two bilateral borrowings, in a simple three-state, two-step chain, of an institutional innovation that does not have a broad citizen interface but nevertheless has popularity incentives for political leaderships due to its mass signalling effect that the government is serious about tackling corruption. It had a domino effect in that Bihar's innovation was further borrowed by Madhya Pradesh due essentially to the same political incentives. Bihar took a legal initiative in attempting to swiftly bring corrupt officials to book in enacting the Bihar Special Courts Act 2009 under the Janata Dal (United)-BJP coalition government led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. The Bihar Special Courts Act of 2009 allows confiscation of the immovable and moveable properties of corrupt public servants including ministers, MPs, MLAs and bureaucrats who are charged with corruption even while they are being tried.<sup>20</sup> The Act sets up Special Courts to try cases of offences specified under Art. 13(1)(e) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, which is about possessing assets disproportionate to known sources of income. The Act also sets a one-year time limit for the trial to be completed in a corruption case in a Special Court. The Act came into effect from March 2010. The Bihar Act was modelled on the earlier Orissa Special Courts Act of 2006 but with the difference that the Bihar Act is more comprehensive in coverage and applies to all sections of government employees while the Orissa Act applies only to Class I officers. The Bihar Act follows the Orissa Act almost clause by clause.

In turn, the Bihar Act has been adopted almost exactly by Madhya Pradesh with the passing of the Madhya Pradesh Special Courts Act in 2011 coming into force in February 2012. Like in Bihar, disproportionate assets can be confiscated even while the trial is under way and again like in Bihar the government can use them as public assets as, for example, houses being converted to schools or dispensaries. Likewise, there is a one-year time limit for trials. The driver of borrowing was an initiative at the highest level by Chief Minister Chauhan and due to exchange of ideas with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi.<sup>21</sup>

Although Special Courts are not characterised by the incentives of a mass contact programme with a broad citizen interface, the motivation for such borrowing is probably the political need to demonstrate that state government is serious about tackling corruption, particularly in the context of exposure of major corruption in the media at the national level from 2010 onwards. This case of bilateral borrowing and further borrowing was facilitated by the feature of a tweakable Act although no ICT package was involved.

## **Type II, case I: multi-state diffusion of a service delivery innovation due to popularity incentives**

### ***Madhya Pradesh Public Services Guarantee Act 2010, borrowed by Bihar and other states, and modified by Karnataka with further multi-state diffusion downstream***

This is a case of simultaneous multi-state diffusion, without a Central programme driving it, of a service delivery innovation with a broad public interface, due to popularity incentives. It led to a further innovation in one of the borrowing states, Karnataka, which led to further multi-state diffusion downstream of that adaptation.

Twenty states have so far emulated, with some modifications, the Madhya Pradesh Public Services Guarantee Act of 2010, the first of its kind in India, and others are in the process of adopting it.<sup>22</sup> This is a case of rapid and bunched – within four years – multi-state diffusion. Madhya Pradesh initially supplied copies of the software that underpins the system. This in itself makes the MP PSG Act 2010 an interesting case. The Act covers as many as 52 services that are the responsibility of 16 government departments.

Applicants for services submit applications at any of the 336 Public Service Centres (PSCs, or Lok Seva Kendras) in the state, operated by a PSC operator who registers the application online after seeking details and documents, which are scanned and uploaded with the application. The PSC operator gets Rs. 25 of the Rs. 30 application fee, with Rs. 5 going to the District E-Governance Society managed by the state government. Complete applications are forwarded to designated officers for processing and response within prescribed time limits failing which the officer concerned will be fined. This is the ‘guarantee’ part of the Act. When an applicant appeals, the PSC operator brings the case to the notice of the First Appellate Authority, and if there is no response again within a time limit, to the Second Appellate Authority, and likewise to the Third Appellate Authority. The Second and Third Appellate Officers have been empowered to *suo motu* call for cases pending beyond the time limit and take action on them. Over 12.5 million applications were received in the first two years and 99 per cent of them serviced. However, the shortcoming is that a large part of the public is not aware of the Act and hence, their rights under it.

The Act had its origins again at the political leadership level, when, in October 2009, Chief Minister Chauhan asked his officers about putting *patwaris* (land records officers), who were recalcitrant in service delivery at the village level, in their place.<sup>23</sup> His then Secretary, Anurag Jain, and another bureaucrat Manohar Dubey who was later involved in drafting the Act, suggested enactment of a Citizen’s Charter.<sup>24</sup> This was approved at a two-day brainstorming forum, called Manthan, of politicians and district officers. All ministers and departmental secretaries accepted it. The Act

was put in place to enforce the Citizen's Charter, with the notification listing the services covered, which have now grown to 101 services covering nearly all departments. The Act focused on entitlement-based services, e.g. birth, death, caste, domicile certificates, khasra (land record) copies and mutation copies rather than allocation-based services, except tap water supply connection, at least initially. Bureaucrats commented that politicians accept good ideas that they feel will bring them popularity, a comment encountered across states and cases.

While the Act got favourable media publicity, the diffusion of the right to public services by borrowing to a range of other states ruled by a variety of parties, which enacted their own Acts, happened crucially because of political interest in adoption at the top in those states supplemented by able bureaucrats. Two prominent examples are Bihar and Karnataka.

The Bihar Act was passed in May 2011. It originated with the M.P. Chief Minister writing to all other chief ministers.<sup>25</sup> In the Bihar case, it was adopted for reasons of the perceived political popularity of improved governance by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and what was done was that the services chosen to be guaranteed in the Act's notification listing the services were a selection of those that were being delivered anyway, the difference being that these were now to be delivered within a time limit, there was to be an appellate process, and responsibility for delivery could be fixed on an individual officer. We analyse the case in the light of our framework after the next sub-case.

In Karnataka, an innovation took place on the original borrowing, which attracted attention and further multi-state borrowing downstream. A similar Act was enacted in Karnataka in 2011 and it was the initiative of the BJP Chief Minister D. V. Sadananda Gowda after a meeting with other chief ministers to improve his government's image.<sup>26</sup> The Mysore Administrative Training Institute created a training module which was more service-oriented than technical, relying on the software created by NIC as well relying on an innovative portal for public interface for service delivery created by the programme, not the Institute. The basic challenge was to change the mind-set of bureaucrats in service delivery to one of responsiveness. An E-conclave or meeting of E-governance cells of the BJP units of different states towards the end of 2012, pushed the process of using information technology for public services guarantees. Karnataka's innovations of the training module and the portal, despite starting later than some other states, were in turn borrowed from states that had started earlier such as M. P., Bihar and Punjab, and also by Kerala, Jharkhand and Odisha. There has even been international interest from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, particularly in the NIC-developed portal for Karnataka, which can be easily tweaked, and the Mysore Administrative Training Institute's training module.

Taking stock of the above case of Right to Public Service legislation adopted by Bihar and twenty other states from the original M.P. model, including the sub-case of Karnataka's adaptation of developing a training module and associated portal and its further multi-state diffusion downstream, the role of the state-level political leadership has been the key driver of the spread of the right to public services. This driver is rooted in perceived political popularity for the government, ruling party as well as the individual Chief Minister.<sup>27</sup> In the case of the Karnataka adaptation, the role of intra-party networking, that is, of the E-governance cells of BJP state units, as a driver was also important. As far as the facilitating features are concerned, the fact that the M.P. Act was generic and could be tweaked for each state, and that the NIC-developed software package could also be tweaked and translated fairly easily to suit the needs of different states, helped diffusion. A later political incentive as the process gathered momentum, has been that imposing delivery time limits and an appellate process also helps the chief minister control his bureaucracy down the line, this being a result of the process after implementation rather than a political driver at the outset.<sup>28</sup> A lesser point that emerged is that competition for recognition like UN Public Services Awards also make states look at what other states are doing and helps cross-state learning/borrowing.<sup>29</sup> The spread of the right to public services has been a case of multi-state diffusion of the original M. P. model as well further multi-state diffusion of a downstream adaptation by Karnataka.

### ***Type III, case I: multi-state diffusion driven by central programmes and popularity incentives at the state level***

#### ***Online delivery of land records: Karnataka's Bhoomi programme borrowed by other states- with leapfrogging innovations by Gujarat and Maharashtra***

This case is one of both a central programme as well as popularity incentives from good governance driving innovations and multi-state diffusion in a broad public interface governance and service delivery programme. It is also one with two important sub-cases of leapfrogging innovations that were further diffused, multi-state, due to both another Central programme as well state-level popularity incentives.

Karnataka's Bhoomi (land) project of online delivery of land records has been a pioneer in land records computerisation and management, including continual updating. It has been replicated in almost all states by now, and with important modifications to suit local needs. It originated in a central programme, Computerisation of Land Records (CLR) in 1988-1989. Land records digitisation and management is critical for farmers as the basis for ownership, sale and inheritance claims, and for securing loans against

collateral, as well as for social justice programmes and for the government getting its due returns, besides being critical for attracting investment.<sup>30</sup>

The origins of the project lay in the 1985 conference of the revenue ministers of states which led to a centrally sponsored pilot scheme on Computerisation of Land Records (CLR) in eight districts across states in 1988–1989, extended in 1991–1992 to 24 districts, after which little progress was made till 1998 due to the lack of skilled manpower (Chawla & Bhatnagar, 2004, pp. 16–17). A decision was made then that the district was not the appropriate level and that this was the subdistrict or taluka. Karnataka took the lead from then on with Bhoomi. By 1996, computerisation projects were sanctioned for all districts in the state, and the Bhoomi programme was launched by the state government which mandated the completion of computerisation of land records in all talukas by 2002. The system depended on the development of a comprehensive data entry software system called Bhoomi to record legacy data records from the manual registers of Village Accountants numbering about 20 million records. Bhoomi has revolutionised land records management, empowered farmers and the general public, enhanced revenue, enabled better planning and programme implementation and loan recovery by banks, and eased one hurdle in the investment climate. Currently, the system is searchable by as many as 47 information ‘fields’ such as owners, tenants, crops, yield, mortgage details, bank loans, etc. The incidence of mutation has increased three-fold and land-based litigation has been reduced. The Bhoomi system is being extended to urban land records management via the municipalities.

In Karnataka, while the chief minister and revenue minister fully backed the project, the initiative and driving forces were civil servants, a pattern common to other e-governance initiatives in the state in a bottom-up way deriving from the need to tackle problems at the ground level. As the key change agent at the bureaucratic level put it, ‘Perhaps a desire to project a pro-poor image of the Government led the politicians to lend full support to the project’ (Chawla & Bhatnagar, 2004, p. 18). However, there were also external change agents including the central government which provided critical funding and also the World Bank which provided a Structural Adjustment Loan and was supportive of e-governance programmes.

Bhoomi was declared to be the national model for replication by the Ministry of Information Technology of the central government and initial funds provided for this, with almost all states taking up replication, with modifications and innovations. Two interesting developments that built ultimately on the borrowing from Bhoomi but leapfrogged well beyond it are what we classify as the sub-cases of digitisation of land records management and cadastral mapping in Gujarat, and e-Registration in Maharashtra. We discuss the Gujarat and Maharashtra sub-cases of leapfrogging before a case analysis.



Gujarat leapfrogged well beyond a Bhoomi-type programme by undertaking a comprehensive preservation and computerisation of land records by digitisation of village-level cadastral maps.<sup>31</sup> This was a massive preservation exercise of the vulnerable manual records. Manual Record of Rights stopped being issued from 2004–2006 with a switch to fully electronic records including those related to mutations. Land records were integrated since 2010 under the Integrated Land Records (e-Jamin) programme run by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), converted to centralised format and put on central servers at the State Data Centre (SDC). New software was developed by which automatic mutation gets registered for agricultural land when property transactions take place. The access of banks and Land Acquiring Authorities to the Record of Rights data support market development including expediting bank loan processing.

More importantly, with current and forward implications for land records management and the development of land and property markets, from 2005–2006 a massive digitisation of all cadastral maps in the state was undertaken, the maps being digitised up to land parcels and geo-referenced on satellite images and scanned. This exercise covered all 18,352 villages and 24,500 map sheets, with the data being made available to all government departments on GSWAN (Gujarat State Wide Area Network), and copies of the digitised maps are available to all. A central programme, the National Land Records Modernisation Programme (NLRMP), launched in August 2008, was based on ICTs of the much earlier Central programme for Computerisation of Land Records (CLR) from which Karnataka's Bhoomi originated; the major difference is what is possible with modern ICTs which have evolved generations since the pre-internet 1980s and early 1990s.

Gujarat has been considered a leader in implementation of the NLRMP and has attracted visits from officials of other states to study its experience as part of the cross-state learning and adoption of best practices that is promoted in central programmes. Teams from as many as nine states ruled by diverse political parties, sometimes repeat visits, have taken place.

Maharashtra, another sub-case of leapfrogging, leapfrogged from computerisation of land records to e-registration or online registration of land and property transactions and hence continual updating of the system, conducting to the emergence of a system without intermediaries, corruption, wastage of time and money, inaccuracies and non-transparency.<sup>32</sup> The process of registration of property documents was earlier manual, as were land records, and governed by the (Central) Registration Act, 1908, and the Maharashtra Stamp Act and administered by over 500 Sub-Registrar Offices (SROs), state-wide, coming under the Department of Registration and Stamps. The idea was to set up an online system that allowed people to do the entire registration process online without having to go to an SRO and was initially inspired by an early experiment in Andhra Pradesh in 1996.<sup>33</sup>

The process of computerisation, and moving out of manual mode, began in 2002 with the launch of the i-SARITA (Stamp and Registration Information Technology Application) project. This transitioned from standalone computerisation to web-based centralised system from 2012, developed by NIC, and finally to a fully online e-Registration system from 2014. The application software was developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Pune, and the project was implemented on a PPP (private-public partnership) basis with private partners appointed by the Department on a BOT (build-operate-transfer) basis for hardware, software and consumables support.

This system also helps to develop property markets and hence conduces to supporting market-oriented reforms by protecting the property of citizens by helping prevent three widely prevalent types of fraudulent transactions from occurring. The three major types of property-related fraud are (1) multiple transactions of the same property; (2) impersonation of the owner in a fraudulent transaction; (3) property transfers by persons who have disputed titles.<sup>34</sup> The i-SARITA system's centralised database and most recently the advent of e-Registration help to pre-empt all three types of frauds.

To take stock of the above cases of cross-state borrowing and multi-state diffusion – Karnataka's Bhoomi and the Gujarat and Maharashtra leapfrogging innovations sub-cases – the digitalisation of land records management and its spread across states and innovations at the state level had several process drivers. Initially, while the computerisation of land records was a CSS (CLR), the success in Karnataka came from a political push, as did the innovations in cadastral mapping in Gujarat, and the adoption of i-SARITA and e-Registration in Maharashtra.<sup>35</sup> In Maharashtra, there was full political backing for the introduction of i-SARITA in the assembly at the time of introduction as it was a high revenue-earning department, next only to sales tax. Here the political incentive can be traced not only to popularity in a broad citizen interface programme but also to revenue considerations.

It must be noted though, that borrowing from Bhoomi meant the borrowing of ideas not replication of the software module, whereas the spread of innovations like cadastral mapping and e-Registration to other states is facilitated by the replicability of the software module. Several states including Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, U.P. and Odisha, have followed Maharashtra's example, and have, with its permission, borrowed and built on its software module. However, apparently the NIC state units are not good at sharing best practices across states within sectors; another hurdle is that registration departments in many states are not manned by IAS officers and therefore are not part of the informal IAS networking. Yet reforms spread because while there was no formal coordination for state registration departments at the central level, exchange of ideas took place through the Finance Ministry's quarterly meeting of IGs of Registration. However, cross-state learning and

adoption was promoted and took place as part of the process of spreading best practices at the level of the bureaucracy in CSSs, also due to cases being discussed in sectoral training programmes, and to individual bureaucrats' initiatives in the states. In addition, the technological push factor that operated over the past decade of rapid spread of web-based ICTs across India in general made it easier to develop public service delivery innovations.

Digitalisation of land and property records management is a story of multi-state learning and diffusion due to the role played by a CSS both earlier in the form of the CLR and recently in the form of the NLRMP, in contrast to stand-alone bilateral cases of learning, as well as a certain central facilitation and technology push also linked to a central agency like NIC due to the replicability and modifiability of the requisite software. Repeated central meetings of state level officials in charge of these programmes helped the process of learning, borrowing and multi-state diffusion a part of the NLRMP, a process helped by highly motivated and dynamic bureaucrats in key positions. However, what is interesting and noteworthy is that a central push does not necessarily mean uniformity; it can help diffuse quite diverse innovations originating from the state level.

#### ***Type IV, case I: difficulties in borrowing due to vested interests against change***

##### ***Bihar borrowing from Chhattisgarh's experience in grain procurement and public distribution system (PDS) reform***

This is a case of attempted borrowing, driven by potential popularity incentives in broad public interface institutional innovations, that ran into difficulties due mainly to vested interests against change and due to the state-specificity of the original programme sought to be borrowed and adapted.

As many as ten states had sent officials to Chhattisgarh to study its PDS reforms and their necessary precursor, grain procurement reforms, which are seen to be effective in checking waste and corruption.<sup>36</sup> At one time, Kerala and Tamil Nadu were generally held to be leaders in PDS operations but Chhattisgarh has over the past few years been considered a model. Before 2004, the PDS distribution outlets were in the hands of private traders.<sup>37</sup> In response to a mobilisation on Right to Food from 2003–2006 de-privatisation started in early 2005 and shops were given to panchayats and cooperatives and the number of shops doubled. PDS reform took about four years of continuous work. Procurement reforms had started earlier in 2002 with decentralised procurement by farmers' cooperatives almost from farmers' doorsteps (within 10 kms), and direct transport to millers from procurement centres and quick milling, all saving on wastage of grain, time and money, all information being put on the web for transparency.

In July and again October–November 2010, a team of bureaucrats led by Tripurari Sharan, then Principal Secretary, Food and Consumer Protection, went from Bihar to Chhattisgarh to study its procurement and PDS models and pick up lessons.<sup>38</sup> The main learning from the Chhattisgarh model was decentralised procurement by farmers' cooperatives which would save on wastage of grain, time and money by enabling quick milling. Earlier, in Bihar there were two government agencies involved, the Food Corporation of India (FCI), with a limited number of centres in the state, and which would procure grain directly from farmers, and the Bihar State Food Corporation (BSFC) with more centres, working with block level officers, which would also procure grain from farmers. By contrast, in Chhattisgarh, the Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACs), controlled by farmers, would do the procurement operations in a completely decentralised manner. There were a far larger number of PACs in Chhattisgarh than there were centres of government agencies in Bihar where there were no PACs equivalents doing procurement.

This system was sought to be adopted in Bihar with modifications. In Bihar, after reform, the BSFC is the nodal agency for procurement through its purchase centres in each block in the state for purchase from farmers.<sup>39</sup> However, PACs like in Chhattisgarh were also created in parallel to BSFC to procure from farmers directly, but these function through the BSFC. The BSFC will thus acquire grain directly from farmers as well as the grain procured by the PACs and deliver this to the FCI. The new system is now said to be in full swing except for limitations which arise from the absence of other components of procurement and PDS reform that are prerequisites for the success of the Chhattisgarh system. These are the need for seamless integration between on-the-ground procurement and milling and storage infrastructure of the state food corporation, which means the required storage capacity has to be available. The Bihar State Food Corporation is the repository and has a shortage of storage capacity. Also, electronic tracking of grain movements has not been streamlined as in Chhattisgarh, making it harder to check the diversion of food-grains at different stages of the delivery chain. However, procurement decentralising reform is only the necessary step for the crucial next step which is issue of food-grains from the repository to PDS dealers. In Chhattisgarh, there has been investment in the delivery infrastructure and the very same PACs that were the procurement agencies were the PDS dealers, whereas in Bihar the PDS dealers are private traders and they resist the equivalent of PACs becoming dealers as it is loss of legitimate and corrupt incomes for them. The popularity incentive for the reform lies in the reform of the PDS to reduce leakages and ensure that the poor get their rations, not so much the decentralisation of procurement which is only the precursor to PDS reform. The Bihar case of borrowing from the Chhattisgarh model of procurement and PDS reform can be said to be only a partial success due to the resistance of the vested interests of PDS shop owners. As a Chhattisgarh bureaucrat

said, his state's model needs legal and process reforms that need two to three years preparation for successful implementation given that there are entrenched vested interests like PDS dealers and state procurement agencies to be dealt with as part of the reform.<sup>40</sup>

This is a case of bilateral borrowing with political incentives as reform of PDS, dependent on upstream reform of procurement, can be politically popular among poor voters. The initiative for this attempted borrowing was also initially political and at the chief minister level though the states were ruled by different leading parties (although the BJP was a coalition partner of the JD(U) in Bihar) but both parties were keen on performance on development after fifteen years of rule by the Rashtriya Janata Dal which prioritised caste identity politics at the expense of development and governance.<sup>41</sup> There were no facilitating features such as a generic law or ICT package involved, and the structure of agrarian and commercial interests are highly state-specific, not conducive to easy adoption of another state's reforms in this policy and institutional sphere, besides leading to mixed incentives because of the contradiction between potential future popularity if the reforms succeed versus the expenditure of political capital in confronting powerful vested interests.

## **Cross-state learning/borrowing: incentives, drivers, facilitating features, diffusion, and looking ahead**

### ***Incentives, drivers, facilitating features and types of diffusion***

From the six selected cases – in our four Types – of cross-state learning/borrowing in public service delivery that have been outlined in capsule form in this paper, what can we conclude about the incentives, drivers, facilitating features, and types of diffusion of such learning/borrowing?

First, as regards incentives, in line with my hypothesis stated at the outset about the perceived electoral importance of better governance and service delivery, four of the five successful cases of cross-state borrowing are in service delivery programmes with a broad citizen interface such as online grievance systems, online service delivery for common services, right to public service delivery, and land and property records reform, etc., where the popularity impact of perceived improvement in service delivery would be maximum. An exception would be special courts which I have put in Type I, but such courts, though they do not deliver mass services, have a signalling impact on the electorate at large and hence a potential popularity dividend.

Second, as regards the driving forces that initiated, facilitated or propelled all the cases of borrowing across states – except partly the Type III case and sub-cases that originated in and were diffused partly by central programmes – the initiatives came from a political push from the state political leadership and by political support to key bureaucrats in charge of such programmes. Even in the

Type III case and sub-cases, the innovations in Karnataka and by leapfrogging in Gujarat and Maharashtra were owing to state political leadership. While several of these have happened in BJP-ruled states, singly or in coalition as with the JD (U) in Bihar, with the BJP in recent years prioritising better governance and learning of cross-state lessons in formal political interaction of chief ministers and functional ministers, such learning/borrowing has also taken place across states ruled by different parties such as in Maharashtra or from Andhra Pradesh or Odisha. That is, while co-partisanship – and implicitly, the ideological and ideational factors – is an important facilitator as per the comparative literature's findings, it does not exclude borrowings from states ruled by different parties. An additional political incentive in public service guarantee programmes is tighter control of the bureaucracy by the political leadership as a result of implementation of the programme. However, a lot of cross-state learning is tacit and informal, aided by informal networking among IAS officers as well as formal mid-career training programmes albeit sector/issue-focused. These cases support the comparative literature's findings about the importance of professional networks of public officials.

Third, as regards features that facilitate borrowing, two are key – a generic law that is modifiable by other states and/or a modifiable ICT package. A lot of cross-state learning takes place in CSS, particularly in national missions, and is also promoted by the NIC as far as ICT applications go, and at the initiative of bureaucrats, particularly in implementation.

Fourth, as regards the types of diffusion, those that do not originate in Central programmes are typically bilateral, while those that originate in Central programmes tend to be multi-state, an exception being the multi-state diffusion of the right to public services, which did not have a central programme origin. Adaptation and leapfrogging in diffusion processes can be seen both in non-central programme-origin borrowing (Karnataka's training module and portal in right to public service) and in those originating in central programmes (cadastral mapping in Gujarat, E-registration in Maharashtra), such adaptation and leapfrogging being unpredictable events governed by specific – including technological – circumstances.

### ***Looking ahead***

Following this analysis, the question that then arises is: can cross-state learning/borrowing in service delivery, for which there is clearly an electoral incentive, be more formalised and institutionalised to contribute to development through the quicker spread of innovations and best practices? What are the possible institutions and processes for this?

One possible institutionalised process is to formalise cross-state learning/borrowing in the mid-career training programmes of IAS officers (Phases III, IV and V) conducted at the LBSNAA, Mussoorie.

A second possible institutionalised process is to incentivise, at the technical level, the NIC to transfer lessons and applications, and their modifications across states. As of now, NIC personnel doing ICT development work for states' service delivery programmes work in silos unless modification by a borrowing state or in the context of a CSS demands a change in orientation.

A third possible institution is the NITI Aayog, the successor institution of the Planning Commission abolished in 2014. Its agenda and structure are still evolving and being defined but early statements indicate that it seeks greater involvement of the states and a move away from a top-down model. The formal acceptance by the government of the recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission, to increase the states' share of the divisible pool of central tax revenues from 32 per cent to 42 per cent, the biggest ever one-time jump, would have precisely this effect, making for greater state autonomy and experimentation with projects and programmes tailored to the particular needs of individual states in tandem with the announced whittling down of CSS. This could yield a crop of successful experiments in service delivery that could be adopted by other states as best practices. However, smooth and effective adoption would require some sort of institutionalised cross-state learning mechanism. NITI Aayog's mandate states that it will provide 'strategic and technical advice to the states'. This mandate and declared intentions would seem to allow scope for institutionalisation of cross-state learning processes and promotion of adoption and adaptation of best practices across states and also from international experience to take what has so far been informal and tacit learning to a more systemic and systematic level. Although later in Modi's first and early second term there have been mixed signals on state autonomy, with the Finance Ministry directly negotiating with states since the Planning Commission mechanism has been replaced by a NITI Aayog without that mandate, there appears to be growing scope for experimentation in inter-state learning processes.

The larger goal would be to create a virtuous cycle, in the macro-political economy, of competing for electoral success on the basis of performance in governance and service delivery, more broadly, developmental outcomes rather than patronage/clientelist politics, or identity politics, with cross-state learning processes, as well as international learning processes, incentivised and institutionalised as part of the effort to deliver better outcomes.

## Notes

1. For a somewhat dated survey article of this vast literature, see Lewis-Back and Stegmaier (2000).

2. In the Indian case, voters might not be clear about what level of government, Centre or State, and hence which party, is responsible for what policies and programmes.
3. Interview with Jairam Ramesh, former Union Minister of State for Rural Development, January 26, 2015 in which he also shared the fact about employment guarantee in the last sentence.
4. This paragraph is based on an interview with the then BJP Vice-President Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, also head of the Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini, Mumbai, and of the party's Public Policy Research Centre, Jan. 23, 2015, and materials provided by him. And on Mishra (2011).
5. A point agreed to by a wide range of serving bureaucrats interviewed and in informal conversations.
6. Phase III, Phase IV and Phase V Course Handbooks, including timetables and listings of strategy topics, from LBSNAA website, for 2012 and 2013 training programmes. Earlier listings are not on the site. Discussions with officers at the LBSNAA, April 15–16, 2015, confirmed that while cross-state experiences are commonly shared as part of sectoral or issue-focused programmes, cross-state learning is not considered a topic in itself.
7. Ibid.
8. Listed on Department of Personnel and Training website.
9. This is the general view of a wide range of serving bureaucrats.
10. The CSS are centrally funded welfare and development programmes with some degree of matching participation by state governments. Interview with K. P. Krishnan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, January 30, 2015, and Narendra Jadhav, former Member, Planning Commission, January 30, 2015.
11. Interviews with Jairam Ramesh, former Union Minister of State for Rural Development, January 26, 2015, and Narendra Jadhav, former Member, Planning Commission, January 30, 2015.
12. Interview with K. P. Krishnan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, January 30, 2015.
13. Interviews with Jairam Ramesh, former Union Minister of State for Rural Development, January 26, 2015, and Narendra Jadhav, former Member, Planning Commission, January 30, 2015.
14. A point made by a very senior serving bureaucrat in a state government.
15. Interview with Anurag Jain, Joint Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, former Secretary to Chief Minister and Secretary, Information Technology, in Madhya Pradesh, January 19, 2015.
16. Swagat.gujarat.gov.in; also see <http://www.narendramodi.in/swagat-online-grievances-redressal-program-provides-satisfactory-solutions-to-people%E2%80%99s-problems/>. For Samadhan Online, see <http://www.mpsamadhan.org> and <http://www.nic.in/projects/samadhan-line-public-grievances-redressal>
17. Interview with Anurag Jain, Joint Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, former Secretary to Chief Minister and Secretary, Information Technology, in Madhya Pradesh, January 19, 2015.
18. See MPOnline Limited website (<http://www.mponline.gov.in/>) for a full description and its functioning and services.
19. Interview with Anurag Jain, Joint Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, former Secretary to Chief Minister and Secretary, Information Technology, in Madhya Pradesh, January 19, 2015.



20. See Bihar Special Courts Act, 2009 (<http://vigilance.bih.nic.in/Acts/Vigilance-Special-Court-Act-2009.pdf>).
21. Anonymous bureaucrats.
22. See Public Services Delivery Guarantee Act 2010 in 'Important Schemes – Govt. of MP India' ([mp.gov.in/en/impschemes](http://mp.gov.in/en/impschemes)) for a description.
23. Interview with Anurag Jain, Joint Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, former Secretary to Chief Minister and Secretary, Information Technology, in Madhya Pradesh, January 19, 2015.
24. Detailed phone interview with Manohar Dubey, IAS, Madhya Pradesh, May 6, 2015.
25. Detailed interviews on the Bihar case with B. Muralidharan, a former UN official who worked in Bihar on the public service guarantee, May 5, 2015, and with Deepak Kumar, IAS, Bihar, who handled the matter in 2011, June 26, 2015.
26. Detailed phone interview on the Karnataka case with Shalini Rajneesh, IAS, Karnataka, May 6, 2015.
27. This is corroborated by key officials implementing public service guarantee in M. P., Bihar and Karnataka.
28. Detailed interview with B. Muralidharan, a former UN official who worked in Bihar on the public service guarantee, May 5, 2015.
29. Detailed interview with B. Muralidharan, a former UN official who worked in Bihar on the public service guarantee, May 5, 2015.
30. A McKinsey study estimated that India loses a potential 1.3% growth due to poorly maintained land records (cited in Chawla & Bhatnagar, 2004, p. 1).
31. Interview with K. P. Krishnan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, January 30, 2015 on cross-state borrowings and innovations in land records management. For details of the National Land Records Management Programme, see <http://nlrmp.nic.in>. For the following description of the Gujarat case, see 'Best Practices in Land Records: Gujarat State', Presentation by Manoj Aggarwal, Settlement Commissioner and Director of Land Records, Gujarat, National Workshop on NLRMP, Western and Northeastern Regional Meeting, September 2014. Also, see the description of Integrated Land Records (e-Jamin) (<http://www.nic.in/projects/integrated-land-records-e-jamin>).
32. For a historical and internationally comparative overview of the evolution and debate on land titling, see Chockalingam, et al. (n. d.); and for the evolution of Maharashtra's system of e-Registration described in the following paragraphs, see Srinivas and Ghatge (2014).
33. Detailed phone Interview, S. Chockalingam, IAS, former Inspector-General, Registration, Maharashtra, February 28, 2015.
34. For the three main types of frauds that are possible, see Chockalingam (2013).
35. Anonymous bureaucrats and detailed phone Interview, S. Chockalingam, IAS, former Inspector-General, Registration, Maharashtra, February 28, 2015.
36. Detailed phone interview with Tripurari Sharan, IAS, former Food Secretary, Bihar, January 28, 2015. For a detailed account of Chhattisgarh's rice procurement and public food distribution system and its evolution and reforms, see Garg (2013).
37. See Garg (2013), for the following description of the Chhattisgarh procurement and PDS reforms.
38. Detailed phone interview with Tripurari Sharan, IAS, former Food Secretary, Bihar, January 28, 2015.

39. See <http://sfc.bihar.gov.in/login.htm> for an account of the BSFC and its operations.
40. Detailed phone interview with N. Bajendra Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Chhattisgarh, January 15, 2015.
41. Anonymous bureaucrats.

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