



## Land records and use of technology

Theme/ Sub Theme: Technology and Innovations  
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Despite wide recognition of the link between poverty and landlessness in India, the country has the largest number of landless persons (over 500 million) in the world. Fifty-six per cent (101.4 million) of rural households do not have a permanent homestead while 30 per cent (53.7 million) households consist of landless labourer, who face the worst deprivation. In fact, research has shown that landlessness is the best predictor of poverty in India – a better predictor than illiteracy or the membership in a schedule caste or scheduled tribe.

Although the situation varies by state, the general state of land records in India is inadequate. The vast majority of rural households – and virtually all poor households — have problems with their land records or documentation causing a variety of negative impacts. Textual records are often of low quality and limited coverage and spatial records are often outdated. Inadequate land records are a significant source of land tenure security – certainly for the poor, but also much more broadly. Inadequate land records also facilitate corruption, contribute to the high and costly incidence of land disputes, reduce the government's ability to conduct effective planning and raise revenue, and generally limit the capacity for good land governance.

There is an urgent need to learn from recent experience within India in modernizing land information systems to develop viable and replicable models for improving and maintaining both textual and spatial records. The process of digitalizing textual records in various Indian states has pointed to several best practice principles, making the process transparent and results broadly accessible. The state of Andhra Pradesh for example is now using the blockchain technology to make land records tamper-proof. Another important best practice is the use of communityled, multi-sourced inventory processes to correct the mistakes in the manual records before they are computerized.

