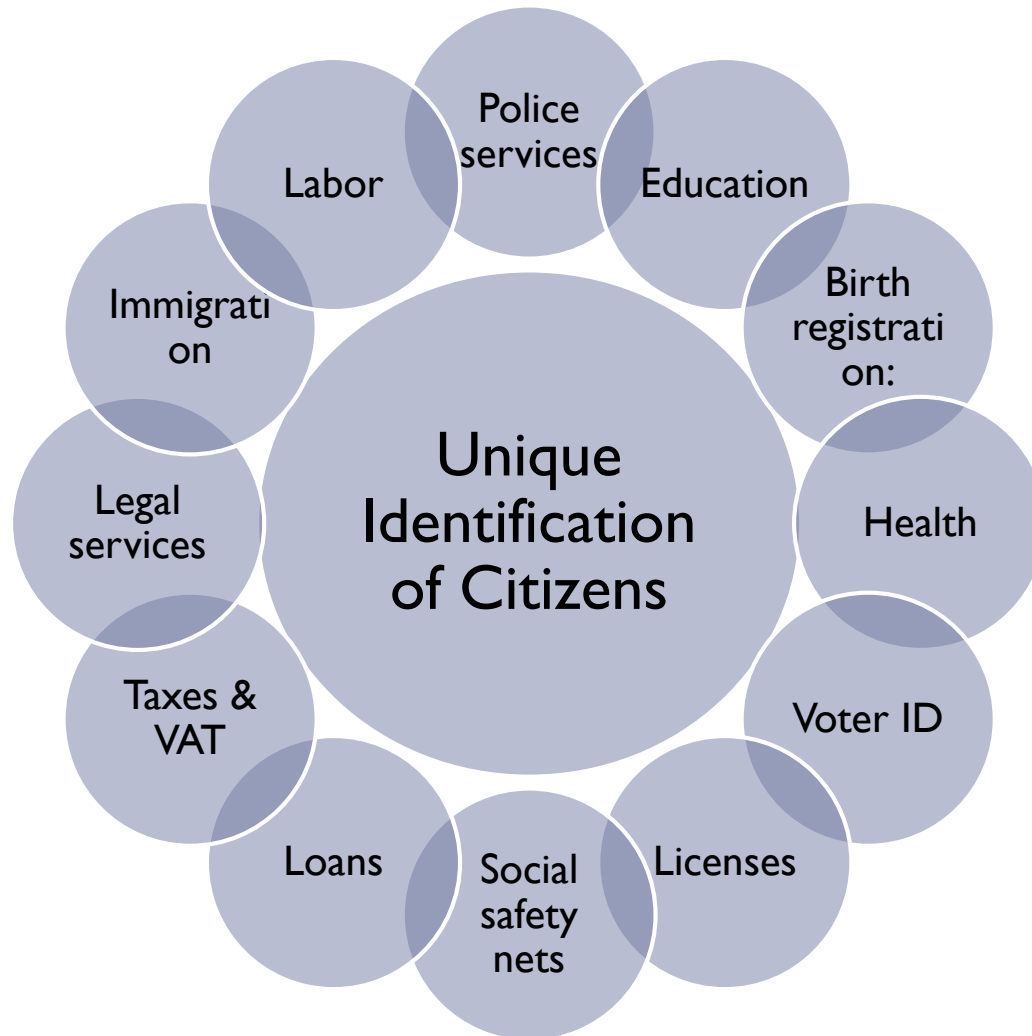# National Identity Policies: Bangladesh Experience

**Anir Chowdhury, Policy Advisor**
**Access to Information Programme, Prime Minister's Office**
**Md. Mokhlesur Rahman, Additional Secretary**
**Election Commission Secretariat, Bangladesh**
**September 24, 2014**

# Need Unique ID for Service Delivery, Especially Electronically

Police services

Labor

Education

Immigration

Birth registration:

Legal services

Unique Identification of Citizens

Health

Taxes & VAT

Voter ID

Loans

Social safety nets

Licenses

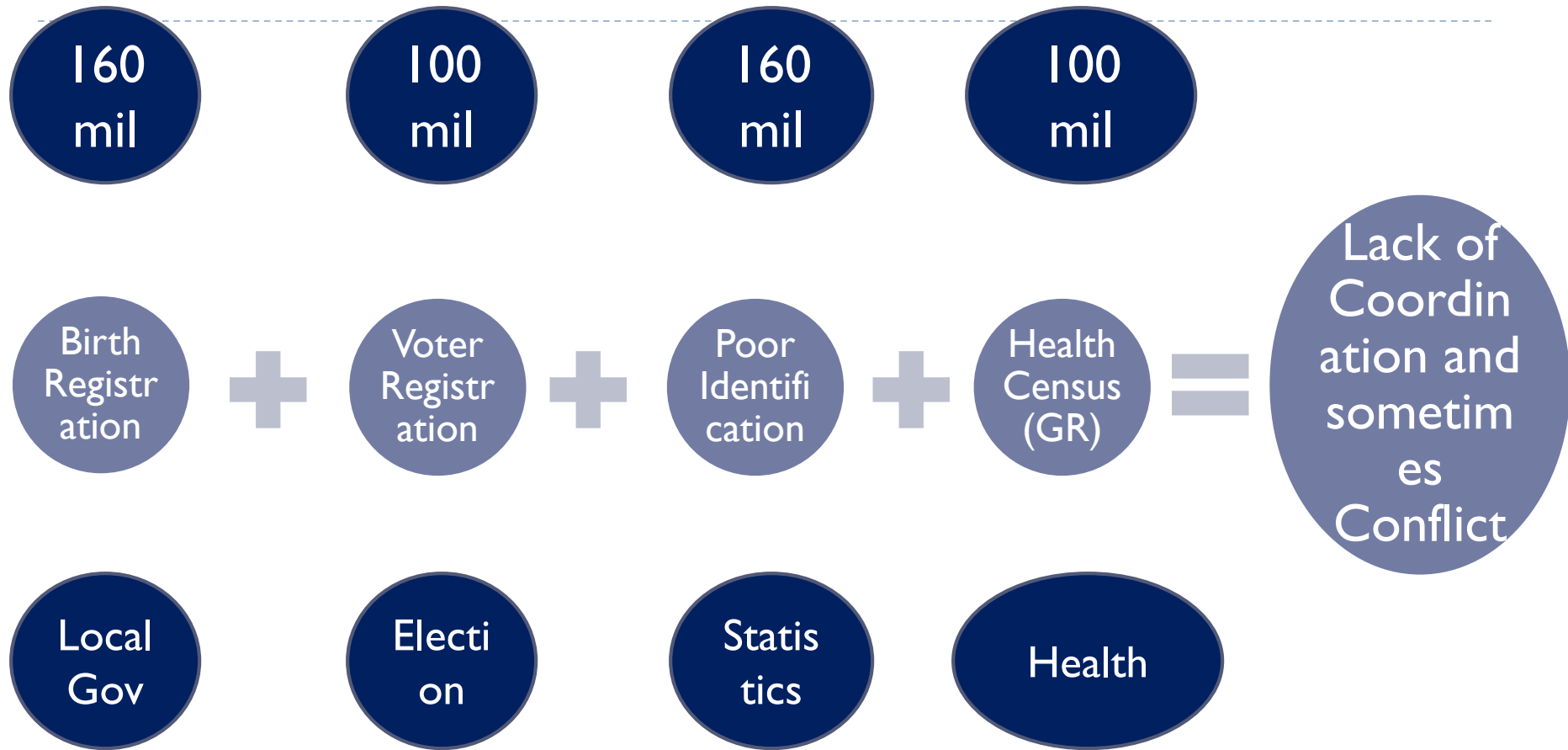# How Do You Identify Someone Uniquely?

**NID problems**
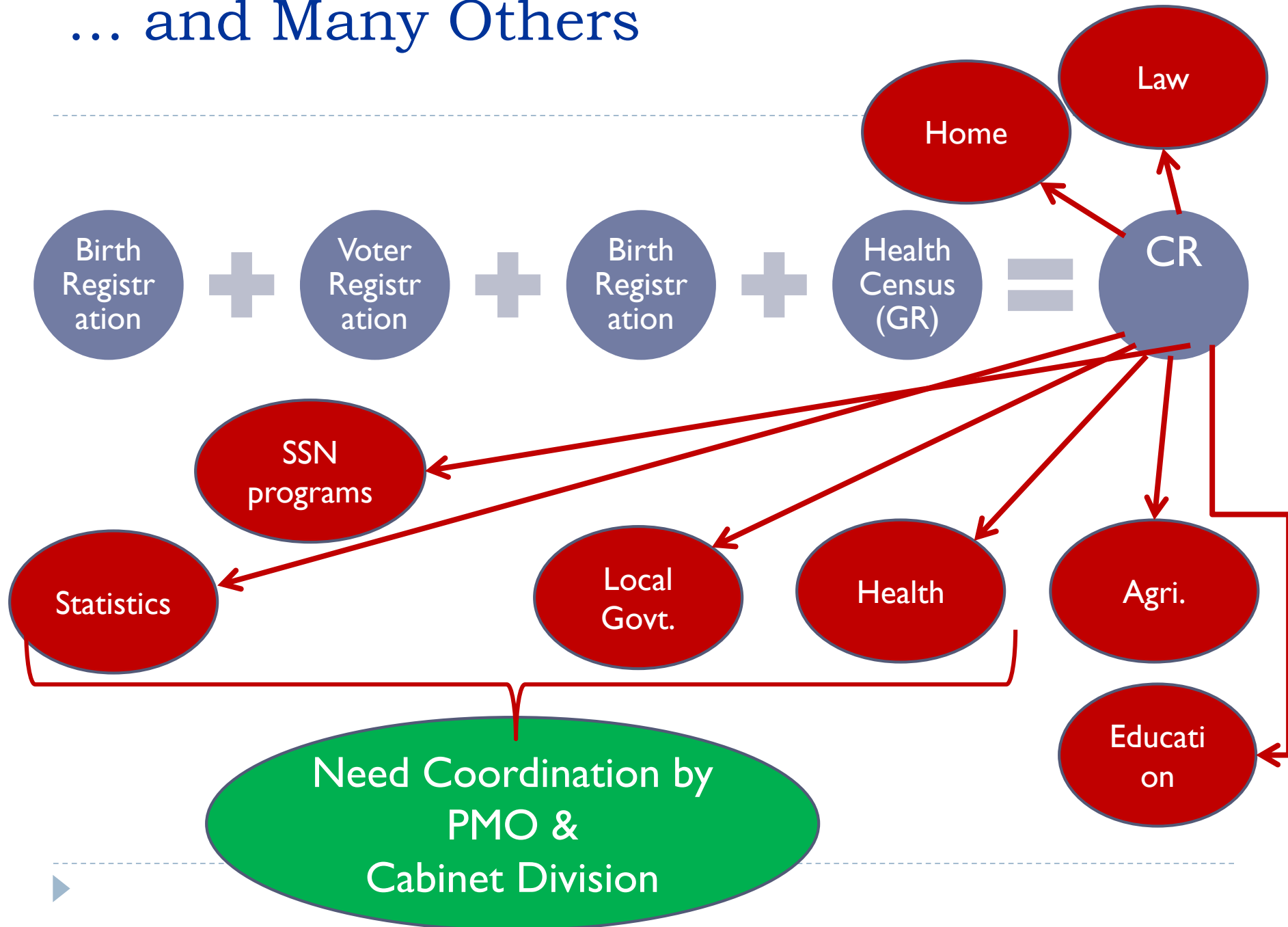
**No ID**

**> 1 ID**

Bigger problem because:
1. Strong multiple ownership of different citizens ID systems creates conflicts between organizations
2. Duplication of efforts in terms of data collection and maintenance by different organizations causes wastage of money and resources
3. Divergent systems make it difficult to share data and hence, the government doesn't know who is getting what services

# Bangladesh: Major Stakeholders of Citizens' Databases

| 160 mil | 100 mil | 160 mil | 100 mil |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|

Birth Registration + Voter Registration + Poor Identification + Health Census (GR) = Lack of Coordination and sometimes Conflict

| Local Gov | Election | Statistics | Health |
|-----------|----------|------------|--------|

These 2 have strong IDs

… and Many Others

# Major Policy Considerations

1. Massive <u>coordination</u> from the Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet Division still retaining ownership control of the ministries

2. Effective <u>linkages to service delivery</u> from birth to death of a citizen so that incentives to use the standardized ID is built into the system, and information update is also as spontaneous as possible

3. Selection of <u>strong biometrics</u> that are feasible and cost effective in the socioeconomic context of a resource-strapped country like Bangladesh

4. Addressing of recently emerging <u>information security and personal privacy</u> issues
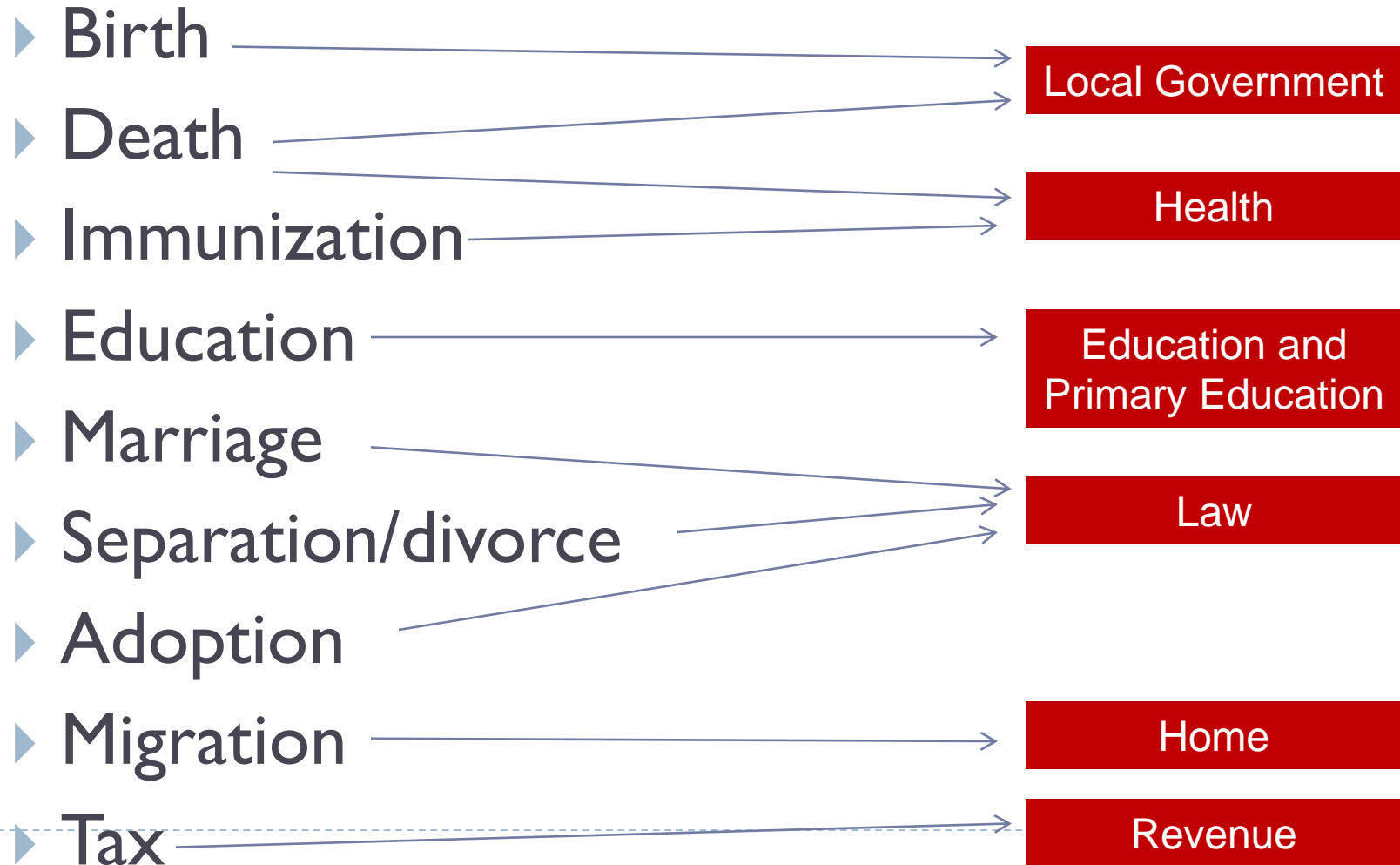
# Utilizing Opportunities for Coordination

1. Digital Bangladesh whole-of-government agenda
   - Coordination by the PMO (political head) and Cabinet Division (bureaucratic head)
   - Alignment of the existing citizens databases

2. Plain land facilitating rapid connectivity expansion
   - Virtually 100% 2G coverage, and rapid 3G, WiMax and fibre expansion

3. Organizational maturity and grassroots work-force
   - Nearly 6,000 Local Government Institutions (urban and rural)
   - 75,000 Health workers and 13,000 Community Clinics

4. Supportive policies
   - NID Act, Birth and Death Act, Health Policy, Statistics Act

# Linking to Life Events and Service Delivery

▶ Vital life events including but not limited to

  ▶ Birth
  ▶ Death
  ▶ Immunization
  ▶ Education
  ▶ Marriage
  ▶ Separation/divorce
  ▶ Adoption
  ▶ Migration
  ▶ Tax

| Local Government |
| Health |
| Education and Primary Education |
| Law |
| Home |
| Revenue |

# Selecting the Right Biometrics
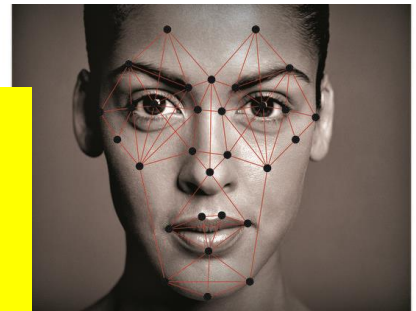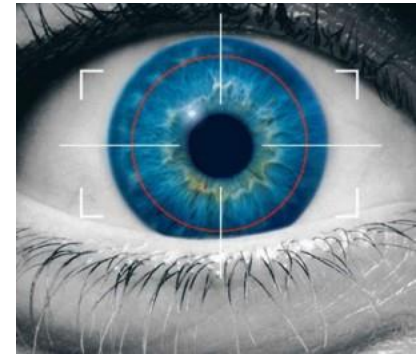
1. **Biometrics necessary for unique ID**
   - Identification of otherwise unclaimed dead bodies
   - Falsification of identify for child marriage, jobs, migration

2. **Reducing duplication, wastage, inaccuracies, inconsistencies**
   - Nearly $100 million spent on citizens surveys across Health, Local Government, Agriculture, Education, Primary Education, Election Commission, Statistics and for various social safety net programs. Some yearly.

Must be cost-effective, low-maintenance and usable by grass-roots workers with low ICT skills and low-speed connectivity

# Addressing Info Security and Personal Privacy

- Information Security is an emerging field globally
  - Some security organizations from Army, Police, telecom regulator and academia
  - Weak local expertise against strong global threat
  - No comprehensive approach or expertise overall

- Personal privacy concerns being expressed at the highest levels of government and civil society
  - National ID online, Shared health records, Criminal databases, etc.
  - Need deep understanding of cultural and societal practices
  - Need adequate policy support
  - Need appropriate technical solutions

- Need international advice for both issues

# Thanks