

# SyRI (System Risk Indicator)

June 29, 2020

In a first anywhere in the world, a court in the Netherlands recently stopped a digital identification scheme for reasons of exclusion

## Impact of the move

This has a context for similar artificial intelligence systems worldwide, especially at a time when identity, citizenship and privacy are pertinent questions in India.

## Why did the court rule against it?

- The Dutch district court ruled against an identification mechanism called SyRI (System Risk Indicator), because of data privacy and human rights concerns.
- While The Hague district court found using new technology to control fraud was acceptable, **it held that SyRI was too invasive and violative of the privacy guarantees given by European Human Rights Law as well as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation.**
- The court found that opaque algorithmic decision-making puts citizens at a disadvantage to challenge the resulting risk scores

## About the digital identification scheme-SyRI(System Risk Indicator)

- The Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs developed SyRI in 2014 to weed out those who are most likely to commit fraud and receive government benefits.
- A Dutch law allowed government agencies to share 17 categories of data about welfare recipients such as taxes, land registries, employment records, and vehicle registrations with a private company.
- **The tool is armed with big data analytics and uses**

**individuals' private data on consumption and other significant activities to rank them and create risk profiles that authorities can use in the detection of fraud.**

- For instance, SyRI allegedly helped Dutch authorities spy on people in poor neighborhoods only based on algorithmic evidence and no other proof.