150 operators blacklisted for malpractice in issuing Aadhaar cards

Some offered 'home delivery' services, collected money

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BENGALURU: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has blacklisted and penalised about 150 operators issuing Aadhaar cards for indulging in malpractice in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in the last three months.

These operators functioning under 11 agencies, who have the contract to issue Aadhaar cards were taking bribes from individuals to issue fresh cards, though it should be provided free of cost.

The UIDAI has specified that the operators can visit houses to issue Aadhaar card only if the physically challenged individuals are unable to visit the Aadhaar enrolment centres. However, some of these operators ran 'home delivery' services and collected money for their work. In one case, a police case was registered against an operator in Hubballi for the malpractice.

Sources in the UIDAI said these operators were trapped when the UIDAI officials made surprise visits to Aadhaar enrolment centres, sent decoy clients and made phone calls to the individuals to know whether they were charged for issuing Aadhaar cards.

A source in the UIDAI (Southern Region) said, "Aadhaar card is issued free of cost. A nominal fee is collected to rectify or make changes in the Aadhaar card. But these operators were collecting fee for issuing the cards."

Sources said that in some cases Aadhaar cards were issued based on incorrect and inadequate documents.

The agencies, which appoint operators to issue Aadhaar cards, are fined Rs 10,000 in addition to cancellation and blacklisting of each operator. Thus, these 11 operators had to cough up Rs 15 lakh in just three months. Sources clarified that none of the Aadhaar holders were bogus or fake but the documents that were submitted were fake.

The sources rejected the charges that there were any bogus Aadhaar cards involved in the PDS scam as mentioned in a section of media.

"We investigated the case and came to know that some random Aadhaar numbers were given to siphon off benefits meant to sustain the economically weaker section. At the time of enrolling the beneficiaries of PDS, no proper filtration was carried out. Later, the state government officials found out that the fictitious Aadhaar numbers were given," the officer said.

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