OPINION

5 questions for the anti-Aadhaar brigade

Ritesh Dwivedy, 8 MAY 2017

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Aadhaar is a unique indigenous innovation that empowers every Indian by providing them with a secure and verifiable identity. Aadhaar is going to be the backbone of India becoming a developed country, and is receiving global acclaim from entities like Bill Gates, *The Economist*, the World Bank, Raoul Pal, and others.

And yet, we hear so much anti-Aadhaar news. So why would anyone oppose Aadhaar? There are people with vested interests or extreme ideology – they do not want corruption to go away, they are middlemen who have been making crores through corrupt practices, or they believe in extreme anti-state ideologies.

A long road to development and progress. (Image: ShutterStock)

Given all the benefits of Aadhaar, it's difficult to understand their thinking! Here are 5 questions for the anti-Aadhaar brigade:

India has the tag of developing nation for decades now. Everyone acknowledges that India has potential. For one reason or another, we have not reached that potential. Even Sri Lanka is all set to become a developed country very soon. This should be a wake-up call for us.

India cannot become developed without taking along the lowest strata of its citizens. Only 20 percent of government aid actually reaches them. Aadhaar helps 100 percent of the aid reach the right person through Direct Benefit Transfer, removing any scope for corruption at various levels. And this is just one aspect of the benefits of Aadhaar.

Hence the question to the anti-Aadhaar brigade, how many more years do you want India to remain a 'developing' nation?

Why are you silent on all the benefits we are seeing as a result of Aadhaar?

The rural women in Rajasthan are asking for Aadhaar. Aadhaar is saving the taxpayers crores of rupees. Aadhar is helping lost children get reunited with their kin. Banking facilities are reaching remote villages. Loans can be offered to people in minutes, saving them from the exorbitant rates of the local money lender. Opening bank accounts and getting SIM cards has become instantaneous and cheap. Why are you silent on all these benefits?

Why are you misleading the Indian public about Aadhaar through fear-mongering and sensationalism?

All sorts of extreme arguments around security are being made to oppose Aadhaar. However, the fact remains that Aadhaar, due to its biometric authentication, is more secure than other forms of identity, including the Social Security Number used in the United States.

People may have been alarmed by the fear-mongering and sensational reporting around some Aadhaar 'data leaks' or more accurately, 'data disclosures'. In fact, people's digital identity remains secure!

The data disclosures reveal Aadhaar numbers and demographic information. This alone cannot be used to steal your digital identity. Just as someone knowing your bank account number or debit card number, does not mean they can steal your money. And the fact remains, not a single leak of Aadhaar biometric information has been reported till date!

Why are you willing to give biometrics to foreign govts and corporations, but not to your own govt?

In today's age, giving biometrics is a standard part of visa applications and unlocking modern smartphones! This data resides with foreign governments and corporations, Indian citizens have no control over its usage.
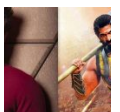
On the other hand, biometric information in India is only stored with UIDAI with strict protection of the law. So why is it that the anti-Aadhaar brigade is ready to give biometrics to foreign governments and corporations without any control on their use, while opposed to providing the same to the Indian government for development of the nation?

Why are you opposed to using technology to benefit the nation?

Bank account data, PAN data, credit card information, and user information from online accounts, etc. have all been leaked in the past or have seen frauds, yet we have not stopped using online banking, abolished the PAN system, dismantled credit cards, or disconnected from the internet.

So let us stop opposing the use of technology when it benefits the nation. Instead, let us make constructive arguments and support all efforts to improve the Aadhaar system.

(Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of YourStory.)

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