

Aadhaar helps track UP PDS scamsters

TNN | Aug 29, 2018, 04:19 AM IST



NEW DELHI: Tracking of Aadhaar IDs used fraudulently in the Uttar Pradesh PDS scam has led to strong proof against the wrong doers as their biometrics have provided police with incontrovertible evidence of their involvement in siphoning funds.

The scam involved substitution of names of genuine PDS beneficiaries with fraudulent ones through the connivance of district officials who later restored the original names. The scam involved dozens of PDS food grain withdrawals by each fraudulent claimant using his Aadhaar ID for verification.

While this worked for a while, the scam disclosure has seen the Unique Identification Authority of India numbers pinpoint those involved as well as the specific public distribution service centres. "The Aadhaar identities have nailed the guilty which would have been much more difficult in the case of registers and manipulated data entries as was the case earlier," UIDAI CEO Ajay Bhushan Pandey.

Fraudulent withdrawals of welfare benefits has been a deep-rooted scam in most states, with some recording as much as 50% diversion. Aadhaar linkage has reduced leakages through de-duplication but local officials, keen to continue scamming the system, looked to substitute Aadhaar IDs.

For full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

However, the system now requires biometric authentication and this said Pandey was as good as leaving a fingerprint at the scene of the crime. "It was not possible to get hundreds of fraudulent beneficiaries so one person did multiple withdrawals," said Pandey.

Now, the UIDAI is set to advice states to take a few precautionary measures. Aadhaar provides a verified digital signature for all transactions and state governments can regularly match names of those withdrawing benefits with its lists. They can also track suspicious multiple withdrawals by particular IDs.

Pandey stressed that Aadhaar only verifies a "yes or no" and does not record the nature of a transaction. But states can do so and use the biometric system to detect and stamp out frauds like the UP PDS fiddle.

A scam in Telanagana saw the yes-no verification being manipulated while data operators changing a "no" to a "yes". Here again UIDAI has suggested that the original Aadhaar server digital response is recorded by state departments and these should be checked with the final transaction through appropriate software.

The change in Aadhaar IDs was carried out with the connivance of junior officials responsible for seeding PDS accounts with UID numbers. UP police has registered 107 FIRs in connection with the cases.