

As Aadhaar Act takes effect, State govt. cautions against excluding beneficiaries

Departments told to come up with alternative documents for identification in case beneficiary has no Aadhaar number

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Several State-funded schemes are set to have mandatory Aadhaar linkages as the Karnataka Aadhaar Act will come into force from August 1.

However, the government has cautioned departments to have beneficiaries as the primary focus and not exclude them from any scheme citing absence of Aadhaar identity. In fact, in a first, the government has asked departments to identify whether there is a need to introduce Aadhaar in schemes being implemented and if its introduction would ease processes.

The Karnataka Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Bill 2018,

About the Act

Karnataka Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act 2018 comes into force from August 1

Section 57 of the Central Aadhaar Act necessitates a State Aadhaar Act

According to the Direct Beneficiary Transfer, Karnataka portal, 134 schemes from 28 ministries/departments – both Centrally sponsored and State – are being implemented in the State.

The National DBT portal says over 440 schemes from over 60 ministries/ departments are in

the DBT schemes/services of the Union government across the country.

Once Karnataka Aadhaar Act comes into force, departments have to notify their respective schemes under the Act for Aadhaar-linked direct beneficiary transfer

State government issues detailed circular to all departments/organisations on how to implement Act

Departments told not to exclude beneficiaries for want of Aadhaar. Alternative documents to be allowed.

which was passed in the 2018 budget session, has received Governor's assent. While

schemes funded by the Union government have already been notified for mandatory

Aadhaar implementation, the State Act will now enable departments to make Aadhaar mandatory for delivery of State-funded services, benefits, and subsidies. Initially, DPAR officials believe 15 to 20 services/ schemes can be brought under the Aadhaar linkage.

"We have asked departments not to trouble people as we want to be careful about its implementation. We do not want to repeat mistakes made over Aadhaar in other States and hence, a detailed circular has been issued to departments," said Rajeev Chawla, Additional Chief Secretary, e-Governance. "There could be circumstances where Aadhaar may not be required at all. So, departments should

first convince itself whether there is a need to have it," he said.

While new schemes would require permission for Aadhaar implementation, schemes that have been linked for Aadhaar identification will be reviewed for their efficacy. "In some cases, problems by introduction of Aadhaar has become more than the benefits perceived," Mr. Chawla said.

While Aadhaar could be made mandatory, the State government, in a circular, has also asked departments to come up with alternative documents for identification in case the beneficiary has no assigned Aadhaar number. It has asked departments to identify authorities responsi-

ble for certifying these documents.

"Aadhaar authentication may fail owing to changes in biometrics or due to network failure. This does not mean that beneficiaries are excluded. The primary focus should be to bring beneficiaries into the system and not exclusion," Mr. Chawla said.

In a bid to avoid confusion or inconvenience to beneficiaries, departments have been asked first to seek clearance from the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms before Aadhaar is made mandatory for respective schemes. An expert committee will vet the departments' proposal before giving permission to ensure uniformity and avoid confusion.