Boost Aadhaar use for good governance, PM tells states

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NEW DELHI: States should maximise the use of Aadhaar in the interest of good governance to allow better percolation of benefits and plug leakages, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday.

Modi, who also praised the Supreme Court for its recent judgment on Aadhaar, was speaking at his first interaction here with bureaucrats, including the chief secretaries of 30 states and Union Territories.

Modi also asked them to list the best practices in their states. The NITI Aayog, which organised the day-long conference, will compile these practices and study them, Aayog vice chairman Arvind Panagariya said later.

NITI AAYOG V-C SAYS BIGGEST ECONOMIC CHALLENGE INDIA FACES IS UNDEREMPLOYMENT

"The Prime Minister stressed on competitive federalism among states," he said.

Panagariya said underemployment is probably the biggest economic challenge that India faces right now and added that rapid growth can be achieved by moving workers out of agriculture to industry and from smaller enterprises to bigger ones.

Panagariya's remarks come at a time when the three-year-old government is facing a barrage of criticism on jobless growth. Last month, Panagariya, in defence of the government, said the claims were "somewhat bogus".

"Underemployment is probably the biggest economic challenge we face... as many as 44.2 crore workers or 91.2% of the total were employed in agriculture or enterprises with nine or fewer workers," he said.

Panagariya said that excessive employment in agriculture (46.9%) with lower output (18%) was slowing growth, and tackling that is the way to achieving growth.

"At the aggregate macro level, bringing about rapid growth is most critical — no major success in poverty alleviation is likely without it," the economist said.

"If we set the output per worker in agriculture equal to one, then output per worker in industry is five and that in services 3.8," he said.