

Claims of Aadhaar depriving poor are baseless: UIDAI

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New Delhi: A day after information activists cited information from RTI applications as well as real-life cases of the poor being deprived of social benefits due to mandatory linking with Aadhaar, UIDAI CEO Ajay Bhushan Pandey said the claims “arise from a skewed approach” and misinterpretations.

Calling the allegations an “unsubstantiated attack” on the Aadhaar scheme, Pandey said, “Aadhaar is a technology of people’s empowerment and not a tool of exclusion or denial as claimed by some activists.” The UIDAI chief said Aadhaar is a digital platform of delivery of services and benefits and “has never claimed to be a panacea for all ills and dishonesty or acts of unscrupulous elements”.

Countering claims that mandating Aadhaar in schemes like PDS and job cards has resulted in denial of benefits to vulnerable sections, he said, “An impression

is sought to be created that Aadhaar is responsible for exclusion of such beneficiaries and therefore is anti-poor and should be discarded. This is a skewed presentation. Till now, more than 116 crore people have Aadhaar and almost 99 % adults have it.”

Pandey said sections of the Aadhaar Act mandate no person can be denied benefits for the lack of Aadhaar. “In spite of this, if a person is denied because he does not have Aadhaar or he is unable to biometrically authenticate, it is undisputedly a violation of instructions issued by the government and such violators have to be punished. But, to claim that Aadhaar is responsible for denial is a misconstrued fact presented with malafide intent,” he added.

“... Everyone involved in the delivery system is subject to a greater accountability and on the other hand, citizen is empowered because it is harder for anyone else to impersonate him and deny his rights,” Pandey added.