

Indian expats not eligible for Aadhaar cards: UIDAI chief

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Indian expats on a vacation in their home country don't need Aadhaar identity cards to get work done. That's because they are not eligible to obtain them in the first place and it is open only to long-term residents of the country, which they are not.

"Non Resident Indians (NRI) are exempt from obtaining Aadhaar cards. These are only for Indians residing in the country and not those living abroad," clarified Ajay Bhushan Pandey, the CEO of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).

The confusion over biometric identity cards for NRIs is unwarranted because resident Indians are considered as those living at a stay in the country for 182 days, or six months of the year, said the official. Circulars have been sent to all government departments, banks and education institutions, that NRIs are exempt. Moreover, the Aadhaar charter refers to 'resident Indians', not expats. "Officials in departments in India should be aware of the rules and read the charter to spare us the confusion with their irresponsible statements", said Pandey.

Indian expats on vacation had contacted Khaleej Times saying they were put to hardship as officials were demanding the Aadhaar card for filing tax returns (if they earn income from property) and for other work. Some even claimed the card was sought for school and college admissions for their kids.

But the citizens' charter of the Aadhaar Act of 2016 is clear. It refers only to citizens who have "resided in India for a period or periods amounting in all to 182 days or more in the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application for enrollment". This means if an NRI has been living in India for six months, he or she must apply for an Aadhaar for banking and other work. Those Indians on short vacation in their home country do not need a card.

Residents must state in disclosure clause 3(2) of the form that they have been living in the country without a break for six months, which again rules out NRIs. Unfortunately, there have been reports that don't paint the real picture. It's important that Indian expats read the form in print and understand that NRIs cannot fill out these forms. If they do, they will be making a false entry, which is illegal.