

Schools cannot deny admission for lack of Aadhaar: UIDAI

Government agency **UIDAI** Wednesday asked schools not to refuse admission to students for lack of Aadhaar and said such denials are "**invalid**" and "**not permitted under the law**". Taking a stern view of cases where few schools had denied admission to children in absence of Aadhaar, the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** said "*it must be ensured that no children are deprived/denied of their due benefits or rights for want of Aadhaar*".

The move by the UIDAI is expected to offer relief to parents and students who are left in a lurch when schools insist on Aadhaar number at the time of admission. For children who are not yet assigned an Aadhaar number or those whose biometrics are not updated in the database, the UIDAI has asserted that under Aadhaar rules it will be the "**responsibility**" of schools to arrange for enrolments and biometric update facility for such students.

The nodal body for Aadhaar has also exhorted schools to co-ordinate with local banks, post offices, state education department and district administration, to facilitate special camps for such enrolment and updation to take place. In fact, the Aadhaar-issuing body has said that it is "**obligatory**" on the states to arrange - through its education department and district administration - the Aadhaar enrolment camp in all schools at least twice a year. A roster should be drawn up for this, it added.

In a statement, **UIDAI CEO Ajay Bhushan Pandey** said that it is the responsibility of the schools to hold special camps in coordination with local banks, post offices, state education department and district administration to facilitate the entire process. A UIDAI circular addressed to Chief Secretaries of States/Lt Governor of UTs said: "*Some instances have come to our notice that few schools are denying admission to children for want of Aadhaar. Such denials are invalid and not permitted under the law.*" **It instructed schools to ensure that no child is denied admission and other facilities for lack of Aadhaar.**

The UIDAI said since the 12-digit identifier is being sought from school children for admission, obtaining scholarships and attending boards, competitive and others examinations, it is the important that schools provide Aadhaar enrolment and biometric update facility to students, so they do not face any difficulty.

Also, mandatory update of biometrics in Aadhaar is required for children on attaining the age of 5-15 years to ascertain validity of their Aadhaar number assigned earlier, said the circular seen by PTI. "*Till Aadhaar number is assigned or biometrics are updated for such students all facilities should be extended through alternate means of identification...*," the UIDAI has said.

To ensure that children do not run into any problem in availing the benefits in case they do not have an Aadhaar, UIDAI said *"it is obligatory on State Government/s to arrange through its education department and district administration to organise Aadhaar enrolment camp in all the schools at least twice a year by making school-wise roster for the same"*.

"In order to augment the state effort in organising enrolment camp, the State/s may also co-ordinate with banks and post offices either to organise camp in nearby schools or children may be arranged to be taken to Aadhaar enrolment and update centres located at nearby banks/post office," it said.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Supreme Court has reserved its judgement on a clutch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of Aadhaar Act.