

INTERNATIONAL

Aadhaar critical step in enabling fairer access: U.N.



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World body says the unique identification programme has “tremendous potential” for fostering inclusion

India’s unique identification programme Aadhaar is a “critical” step in enabling fairer access to government services and has “tremendous potential” for fostering inclusion, according to a United Nations report.

“The decision of India in 2010 to launch the Aadhaar programme to enrol the biometric identifying data of all its 1.2 billion citizens was a critical step in enabling fairer access of the people to government benefits and services,” the 2016 Report on the World Social Situation, released by the U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, said.

The report, released on Wednesday said, programmes such as Aadhaar have “tremendous potential to foster inclusion” by giving all people, including the poorest and most

marginalised, an official identity.

Important for inclusivism

“Fair and robust systems of legal identity and birth registration are recognised in the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an important foundation for promoting inclusive societies,” it said.

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has already issued more than 108.27 crore Aadhaar numbers to the residents of India.

The report includes key new findings about persisting inequalities in education and economic opportunity and, challenges the international community to work harder to break down barriers to participation. It said global social progress, while unprecedented, has not been evenly experienced.

Lack of access to education

Some 40 per cent of the world’s population does not have access to education in a language they understand.

Children of ethnic minorities and those who are disabled are much less likely to finish their primary and secondary educations, it added.

The theme of this year’s report is ‘Leaving No One Behind – The Imperative of Inclusive Development.’ It examines key causes of social exclusion and identifies social, economic and political disadvantages that some groups face as a result.

The report concludes with concrete policy recommendations that are central to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Development based on social justice

“The Sustainable Development Goals recognise that development will only be sustainable if it is inclusive,” said Wu Hongbo, the U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Development, adding: “Pursuing development grounded in social justice will be fundamental to achieving a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable future for everyone.”

The report adds that in order to promote social inclusion, barriers to participation must be broken down by revising laws, policies, institutional practices, discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, and taking steps to ensure that participation is easier.

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