

PDS to follow LPG pattern for Aadhaar-linked subsidy

Saurabh Kumar
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THE food ministry is likely to follow the template used by the ministry of petroleum and natural gas in making Aadhaar virtually mandatory for availing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) subsidy. On Thursday, food secretary Preeti Sudan at a conference in New Delhi had said the government was close to making Aadhaar mandatory for receiving subsidised foodgrains under the the public distribution system (PDS).

“That(LPG order) isthetemplate that will be used for PDS order by making contextual changes,” said a government official requesting anonymity, adding that the LPG order conformstothesection7of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016.

The Supreme Court, in a October 2015 order had only allowed voluntary use of Aadhaar for providing certain subsidies including LPG and PDS. However, the Lower House of Parliament in March 2015 passed the Aadhaar Bill to provide legal backing to the unique identity.



The LPG order had said individuals who desire to avail subsidy will have to provide proof of possession of Aadhaar or enrol for Aadhaar. It added that till the time a person who has enrolled but has not received the unique number will continue to receive benefit through bank photo passbook and Aadhaar enrolment slip or an alternative means of identification—such as voter identification card, ration card, kisan photo passbook, driving licence or passport—along with a copy of request for Aadhaar enrolment.

About 15.96 crore LPG connections are seeded with Aadhaar across the three PSU oil marketing companies. So far, 16.5 crore ration cards have been seeded with Aadhaar.

An individual will have to forgo the benefit if he or she has in principle objection to getting enrolled with Aadhaar, said the government official.

The official clarified that if one does not have Aadhaar because no enrolment drive has been organised in the area, the individual can give it in writing to the authority and the individual will not be denied benefits. “A drive by the concerned authority will be organised,” added the official.

FE earlier reported that all schemes which are funded out of the Consolidated Fund of India will soon necessarily require Aadhaar and apart from LPG, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has also already made Aadhaar mandatory.