

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2917
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19.03.2020

SAFETY OF BIOMETRIC DATA

2917. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO:

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is confident about the safety of biometric data of people secured while collecting Aadhaar data;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is a fact that several States are sharing Aadhaar data with private companies for identification of beneficiaries under various welfare schemes implemented by them; and
- (d) whether Government has imposed any restrictions on sharing of Aadhaar data with private companies managing data of Government welfare schemes?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE)

(a) and (b): Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) data is fully secured/ encrypted at all times i.e. at rest, in transit and in storage. UIDAI has a well-designed, multi-layer robust security system in place and the same is being constantly upgraded to maintain highest level of data security and integrity. The architecture of Aadhaar ecosystem has been designed to ensure security and privacy which is an integral part of the system from the initial design to the final stage.

Comprehensive Information Security Policy and Procedures are in place which are reviewed and updated regularly, ensuring appropriate monitoring and control on movement of people, material and data in and out of UIDAI premises, particularly the data centres. Security audits are conducted on regular basis.

There are multiple layers of security at physical level in UIDAI Data Centres which is being managed by armed CISF personnel round the clock.

The security assurance of Aadhaar ecosystem has been strengthened with enactment of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 and subsequently the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Act, 2019, which has stringent penalties/punishments for offenders.

UIDAI has been declared ISO 27001:2013 certified with respect to information security which has added another layer of IT security assurance. In pursuance of sub-section (1) of Section 70 of the IT Act 2000, UIDAI has also been declared as Protected System by National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre.

(c): No such instance has come to the notice of UIDAI.

(d): As per Regulation 14 (1) (m) of the Aadhaar (Authentication) Regulations, 2016, the requesting entity shall be responsible for the authentication operations and results, even if it subcontracts parts of its operations to third parties. Further, as per Regulation 17 (1)(d) of the Aadhaar (Authentication) Regulations, 2016, a requesting entity shall ensure that the identity information received during authentication is only used for the purpose specified to the Aadhaar number holder at the time of authentication, and shall not be disclosed further, except with the prior consent of the Aadhaar number holder to whom such information matters.

Further, Clause 6 of Aadhaar (Sharing of Information) Regulations, 2016 particularly deals with restrictions on sharing, circulating or publishing of Aadhaar number. It states that:

(1) The Aadhaar number of an individual shall not be published, displayed or posted publicly by any person or entity or agency.

(2) Any individual, entity or agency, which is in possession of Aadhaar number(s) of Aadhaar number holders, shall ensure security and confidentiality of the Aadhaar numbers and of any record or database containing the Aadhaar numbers.

(3) No entity, including a requesting entity, shall retain Aadhaar numbers or any document or database containing Aadhaar numbers for longer than is necessary for the purpose specified to the Aadhaar number holder at the time of obtaining consent.
