

National Identification Authority of India Bill, 2013

The Bill, listed for introduction in current session of Parliament proposes to constitute a statutory authority to be called the National Identification Authority of India for the purpose of issuing identification numbers to individuals residing in India and to certain other classes of individuals and manner of authentication of such individuals to facilitate access to benefits and services to such individuals to which they are entitled consideration. It will also lay down the powers and functions of the Authority, the framework for issuing **Aadhaar**, the unique identification number, defines offences and penalties and matters incidental thereto through an Act of Parliament. The number shall be linked to a resident's demographic and biometric information.

The Union Cabinet has already approved the proposal submitted by the Ministry of Planning for moving official amendments to the Bill. The National Identification Authority of India Bill, 2010 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 3rd December. The Speaker, Lok Sabha in consultation with the Chairman, Rajya Sabha referred the Bill to the Standing Committee on Finance. The Standing Committee presented the Report to the Lok Sabha and laid it in Rajya Sabha on 13th December 2011. In the meantime, the UIDAI (Unique Identification Authority of India) has been functioning under an executive order issued by the Government in January 2009, establishing it as an Attached Office of the Planning Commission.

As of now enrolment for Aadhaar is entirely voluntary and the Aadhaar number is already used as a Proof of Identify or Proof of Address or both by several programmes and schemes run by Central and State Governments. A number of regulatory authorities such as Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA), Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) have declared Aadhaar number as a valid 'know your customer' (KYC) and 'electronically know your customer' (eKYC) for purposes under their respective domains. This has led to Aadhaar being leveraged not only as a tool for financial inclusion and empowerment, but also as a major convenience for Aadhaar number holders in their dealings with banks, insurance companies, and other providers of financial services.

Important feature of the bill.

- For issue of Aadhaar numbers to every resident by the Authority on providing his demographic information and biometric information to it in such manner as may be specified by regulations;
- For authentication of the Aadhaar number of an Aadhaar number holder in relation to his biometric information and demographic information subject to such

conditions and on payment of such fees as may be specified by regulations;

- The aadhaar number or the authentication thereof shall not, by itself, confer any right of or be proof of citizenship or domicile in respect of an aadhaar number holder.
- It prohibits the Authority from requiring any individual to give information pertaining to his race, religion, caste, tribe, ethnicity, language, income or health.
- It also empowers the Authority to take special measures to issue aadhaar number to women, children, senior citizen, persons with disability, migrant and unorganised workers, nomadic tribe etc.
- For establishment of the National Identification Authority of India consisting of a Chairperson and two part-time Members;
- The information collected shall be stored in the Central Identities Data Repository.
- The Bill also establishes an Identity Review Committee which shall monitor the usage patterns of Aadhaar numbers.

The Aadhaar ID is valid throughout the country and is thus very convenient and useful for people moving from say rural India to urban India.
