

Citizens Question UID Number/ Aadhaar Initiative

Coorganised by

**Deccan Development Society
National Alliance of People's Movements
&
Human Rights Law Network**

Hyderabad Declaration for Boycott of UID/Adhaar

Meeting at Hyderabad on July 30, 2011, we the citizens of Hyderabad join citizens from other parts of India in voicing our loudest protest against UID/Aadhaar Number and demand its scrapping, since we view it as one of the most intrusive, coercive and anti democratic acts of the Government of India. We believe that the UID Aadhaar heralds the emergence of a surveillance state and goes against the very grain of the largest democracy in the world.

We underline several of the intimidative aspects of the current UID/Aadhaar initiative.

Firstly Aadhaar was billed as a totally voluntary provision. But it has ceased to be anything but voluntary. Today we confront the fact that whether we want to buy a cooking gas or purchase our PDS grains, Aadhaar becomes the basis for us to access them. If we are to work under the NREGA scheme as wage labour, we have to prove our identity through Aadhaar. All other state provided identity proofs such as our Voter Cards, Ration Cards, Passport, Driving License etc become null and void and Aadhaar becomes the overriding identity proof for all of us. This is an insult to the very state which gave us all these other identities and to the citizens who have been using them.

Secondly Aadhaar is based on biometric and retinal profile procured from people. This is the most repulsive aspect of UID/Aadhaar project. Any biometric profile directly violates the very dignity and privacy of Indian citizens which is guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. What is normally used for terrorists and criminals is now sought to be used against the common citizens of this country. Does it mean that like the Brechtian parody, the state has lost confidence in its people and wants a criminal profile of all its citizens? Can there be a more shameful aspect of the state intrusion into individual privacy?

We recall here the protest of Mahatma Gandhi against identification based on biometric data in his days of struggle in South Africa as far back as the early part of last century. We also take into cognizance the statement of concern on Unique Identity (UID) Number/ Aadhaar Number project and its inter-linkages with the proposed legislations and institutional machinery expressed by several eminent citizens led by former

Supreme Court Justice Shri V R Krishna Iyer. We have taken into consideration the National Identification Authority of India Bill, 2010, World Bank's Transformational Government Initiative, the Legal Notice issued to Unique Identification Authority of India and the Planning Commission, Supreme Court's judgement in Ram Jethmalani vs Union of India dated July 4, 2011 upholding Right to Privacy as Right to Life. We have studied of a similar project in countries like the UK and its abandonment by their governments in the face of immense pressure from their citizens. In consonance with all these concerns we join the appeal to the residents and citizens of Andhra Pradesh to boycott the UID Number project. Our specific objections and demands are listed below:

- UID project is against all accepted norms of Rule of Law and fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India;
- UID Number project is in violation of Right to Life and Personal Liberty as guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India;
- The collection of sensitive Biometric and personal data of the citizens of India by a number of private organizations is an assault on civil liberty and must be immediately halted;
- The Memorandum of Understanding signed by the AP Government with the UID Authority had no prior consultation with the citizens of AP and was done in the most non transparent manner. This must be immediately cancelled.
- UIDAI must also cancel the MOUs it has entered with all other government agencies besides the contracts that has been entered into and the appointments of companies, societies, trusts and organizations as Registrars for UID/Aadhaar Number Project.
- We are alarmed that UIDAI has entered into contracts with companies like Accenture and L 1 Identity solutions, companies that are providing similar services to US Department of Defense and Intelligence. This has dangerous possibilities.
- The project does not have any constitutional, legal or democratic basis. Therefore, we appeal to all citizens of AP and India to join civil disobedience movement against the Unique Identification / Aadhar Number project and protect individual liberty and dignity of the citizens of this country.

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