

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION. NO. 3193
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 19.03.2025

IRIS BIOMETRICS EXEMPTION FOR PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

3193. SHRI DURAI VAIKO:

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

- (a) whether the 'Biometric Exception Enrolment Guidelines' for Aadhaar card enrolment currently exempts persons with mental illness/neurodivergent disorders (especially children with autistic spectrum) from mandatorily providing iris biometrics as this might intimidate and cause mental/physical uneasiness including claustrophobia, short of breathness, etc. among such persons;
- (b) if so, the mechanism followed by the Ministry to ensure the employees involved in the Aadhaar Card enrolment process are fully sensitised about the biometric exception guidelines regarding iris biometrics and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) whether the Government is planning to exempt persons with mental disability from providing mandatory iris biometrics and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (c): In line with Government's commitment to ensure inclusion for digitally enabled access to benefits and services, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has made special provision in its regulations, namely, Aadhaar (Enrolment and Update) Regulations, 2016, and issued Biometric Exception Enrolment Guidelines, laying down the procedure for enrolling persons who have missing fingers, the biometrics of whose fingers, irises, or both fingers and irises cannot be captured due to any reason. An eligible person unable to provide fingerprints may enrol using only iris scan. Similarly, an eligible person whose biometrics of irises cannot be captured due to any reason may enrol using only her/his fingerprint. Further, an eligible person who is unable to provide both finger and iris biometrics may enrol without submitting any of the two and the supervisor of the Aadhaar enrolment centre is to validate such enrolment as an exceptional enrolment. In addition to above, in case any eligible person who is not able to provide biometrics due to mental illness /neurodivergent disorders (including children with autistic spectrum), there is a provision of whitelisted enrolment, where Aadhaar enrolment is carried out in the presence of a designated UIDAI official. Thus, every eligible person who undergoes the enrolment process by submitting the required information may be issued an Aadhaar number, irrespective of any inability to provide biometrics.

In order to ensure that the Aadhaar enrolment operators are aware of how persons with disability who may be unable to provide any biometric information enabled to get an Aadhaar number issued, UIDAI has incorporated exception enrolment procedure in its online handbook for persons undergoing certification as Aadhaar enrolment operators as well as in the examination structure for the testing and certification by the UIDAI-engaged testing and certification agency. UIDAI has also issued an advisory dated 8.12.2023 to all registrars and enrolling agencies, asking them to ensure that all Aadhaar enrolment operators are made aware of the exception enrolment procedure, follow the same and render the persons undergoing such enrolment necessary assistance and advised them to conduct regular trainings of operators in this regard.
