Centre to state: Get runaway kids enrolled for Aadhaar

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Bengaluru: Having found success in tracing tens of missing or runaway children using Aadhaar, the Centre has now put in place a standard operating procedure (SOP) to be used by state authorities when they find such kids.

As per the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)'s recent addendum, states must add kids in orphanages and other childcare (shelter) homes to the Aadhaar database.

As per the SOP issued for missing children, those in orphanages and other institutions may be enrolled for Aadhaar at the nearest enrolment centre. "If a child had an Aadhaar prior to being lost, then the new enrolment will be rejected. Based on the details, the child can be identified and reunited with his/her guardian," reads the SOP.
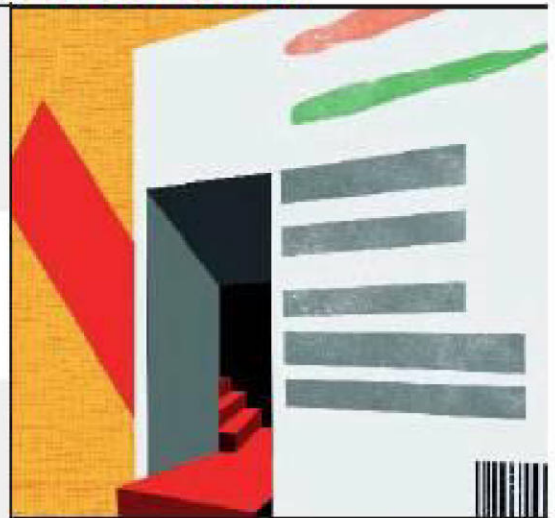
Aadhaar verification of children must be ensured by the Child Welfare Committee (CWC). However, in case Aadhaar details of a child are not available, CWC should get him/her enrolled.

An Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) official said among 75 boys and girls in childcare institutions, only 20% to 25% are from Karnataka.

"With the help of Aadha-

HOW THE MOVE WILL HELP

- If authorities find a child, he/she will be taken to get enrolled for Aadhaar
- If child already has an Aadhaar, system will not create a new one
- All details of child – address, name, date of birth — will be accessible through old Aadhaar
- New Aadhaar number will help keep track of child in future

ar, we have sent several of these children back home. Now, we have only 10 to 15 children under our care pursuing studies," the official said. Aadhaar is especially useful when they deal with mentally challenged children, the official added.

Anjali Ramanna, chairperson, CWC Bengaluru, is optimistic about the procedure being effective. "We found a runaway girl and when we got her biometrics and address verified, we realised the people she ran away from were not her biological parents. The girl was separated from her biological parents when she was a baby and her relatives had taken her away, but she had no memory of that," Anjali explained.

It was later found that her biological parents were now dead. Anjali thinks the move will help reunite children with parents who run away from home or deliberately hide their real identities.

To make it easier for a childcare agency like CWC to hand over a child to his/her parents, Anjali has been proposing a uniform ID code for all children in the country or at least the state. Like the UIDAI, Anjali suggests every child – from a newborn up to the age of 18 – have a uniform ID proof. "This will help check trafficking, child labour and beggary. If a child already has an Aadhaar, adults who steal children will find it difficult to create another biometric ID for the child," she added.