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States Act on Aadhaar, Link it to Local Schemes

Govt confident Aadhaar Act will pass scrutiny of SC as it has tough provisions on privacy

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New Delhi: Amidst the debate on privacy and Aadhaar after the Supreme Court judgement, five BJP states have passed own Aadhaar acts while 15 more have told the Centre they have kick-started the process to do the same in order to make Aadhaar a pre-requisite for getting benefits under state schemes.

This follows a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June on expanding the Aadhaar-Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) project after which cabinet secretary PK Sinha wrote to all state chief secretaries suggesting to them to pass their own Aadhaar Act so that they can cut down on leakages in the state-run schemes through adoption of Aadhaar-based DBT, senior government officials in Delhi told ET. "The states were suggested two options – either pass their own Aadhaar Act as per Section 57 of Central Aadhaar Act or do the same through executive orders. While Bihar has recently passed executive orders to extend Aadhaar to its state-run schemes, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Jharkhand have passed their own state acts," a top government official has told ET, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

15 more states, including Congress-ruled Karnataka, Odisha and Himachal Pradesh and the new BJP government in Uttar Pradesh have told the Centre that they are in the process of doing the same, the official said. While nine other states, includ-



6 States which have passed their own Aadhaar Acts:

Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Haryana and Jharkhand

Bihar has passed executive orders to adopt Aadhaar for state schemes

States Joining in Big Numbers

PM held meeting in June exploring how Aadhaar-DBT can be expanded

Cabinet Secretary wrote to state chief secretaries suggesting states can pass executive orders or their own Aadhaar Act to extend Aadhaar-DBT to their state-run schemes

Estimated 3,000 schemes run by all states for paying benefits/subsidies worth ₹3 lakh cr

15 states in the process of passing Aadhaar Acts/executive orders:

Andhra Pradesh, UP, Karnataka, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Meghalaya, Manipur, Sikkim, Goa & J&K

ing Delhi, Kerala and Punjab have still not initiated any action in this regard post the cabinet secretary's letter, Mamta Bannerjee's West Bengal is the only state which has so far not shown any positivity to this, another official said. "22 states have set up state DBT portals and eight more states are working on the same. But West Bengal has not come on board," an official told ET. The Central Aadhaar Act only applies to central schemes funded from Consolidated Fund of India. The Centre has already extended DBT to over 250 central schemes and aims to cover over 500 central schemes by March, 2018.

While the central payout to citizens is in the range of ₹3 lakh cr annually, the Centre's estimate is that a similar amount is paid out by all states combined under their own schemes.

"There are roughly 3000 subsidy/benefit schemes being run by various states. By passing their own Aadhaar acts and linking their schemes to DBT, they stand to save money too as the Centre does by weeding out fake beneficiaries. The cabinet secretary's letter stressed that DBT is a process reform which all states can adopt at their level," a senior official said. The six states which have adopted Aadhaar for their state schemes have already decided to cover 137 of such schemes, another official told ET. The Centre is confident that the Aadhaar Act will pass the scrutiny of Supreme Court on aspect of privacy as it has tough provisions to ensure the same.

The Centre says it saved over ₹57,000 cr through Aadhaar-based DBT in central schemes. It plans to soon cover the entire food subsidy and fertilizer subsidy by the Aadhaar-based DBT.

Mamata's Bengal is the only state that has so far not shown any movement on Aadhaar