

Aadhaar linkage brings down fake enrolments

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The linking of Aadhaar cards with mid-day meals has resulted in a steep fall in fake enrolments in government schools across the country, according to officials of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).

In Haryana, the enrolment of students from class I to VIII has gone down by 16 per cent in the last two fiscals. In 2014-15, total enrolment for students from class I to VIII in the state was 19.58 lakh which went down by 3.26 lakh in 2015-16 when as many enrolments were found to be bogus.

The state government was thus able to save lakhs of rupees on providing free uniforms, books, mid day meals, etc, to those students who



apparently existed only on paper.

Recently, in Jharkhand, when a report was sought by the government on the total enrolment of students across 40,000 primary and upper primary schools, it was revealed that in 2016-17, 48 lakh students were enrolled while in 2015-16, 50.42 lakh students were enrolled.

Officials confirmed that more than 2.5 lakh enrolments were bogus or in many cases, duplicates, as many students were

found to be enrolled in more than one school to gain maximum benefits.

Data with The Statesman reveals that in Maharashtra, about 14-15 per cent fake enrolments were found across the state after a robust database was created to gauge the impact of the mid-day meal scheme.

In Jalgaon district of the state, a random survey in three primary schools threw up interesting statistics.

It was found that every

school had on an average 30-70 students who existed only on paper but the schools were still siphoning off Rs 900 per student from the government as subsidy for ensuring books, uniforms, etc.

UIDAI sources said linking of Aadhaar with student enrolments across the country has benefitted the students and the states equally "There is much more transparency and accountability now and the benefits of the student-oriented scheme are reaching in a more efficient way," it said.

In Kerala, Aadhaar linkage has led to optimisation of the student-teacher ratio. Thanks to this exercise, no new posts have been sanctioned in the state for the past two years. This has led to the state exchequer saving approximately Rs 540

crore annually.

Even in Kerala, a whopping five lakh students were found to be fake enrolments. In 2010-11, the total number of students enrolled in schools across Kerala was 39 lakh and by 2014-15, the number reduced to 34 lakh after the details of the students were seeded with Aadhaar database.

In 2014, the department decided to take another look at the number of teachers to be appointed and leveraged the benefits of Aadhaar. A government order was issued, asking schools to collect the Aadhaar numbers of every student.

As per estimates by the state government, the reduction in the number of students has led to a potential decrease in the number of teachers by around 12,000.