

Aadhaar - Mobile Linkage

Why in news?

\n\n

\n

- The Supreme Court recently declared that privacy is a fundamental right.
- But most telecom operators continue to pressure their users for mandatory Aadhar linkage - thereby violating individual privacy.

\n

\n\n

What is the linking process?

\n\n

\n

- Re-verification requires a user to visit a telecom service centre and undergo a biometric (fingerprint) authentication.
- The fingerprints are then matched with the Aadhaar database to establish authenticity.
- The messages and calls for Aadhaar linking have only increased in frequency with time.
- Some operators have even issued threats of disconnection if linkage doesn't happen within a specified time.

\n

\n\n

What are the legal issues?

\n\n

\n

- **The Framework** - The Centre is the custodian of the airwaves.
- It issues licences to private companies for providing mobile voice and data services.

\n

- \n
- Telecom operators are governed by regulations by the Department of Telecommunications (DOT).
- \n
- This includes clauses for subscriber verification.
- \n
- **Aadhaar Issue** - A series of circulars issued by the DOT from March 2017 onwards.
- \n
- These directed the telecom operators to re-verify their existing subscribers through Aadhaar authentication by February 2018.
- \n
- **Court orders** - Courts have limited the Aadhaar programme to a voluntary program restricted to specific services.
- \n
- The government instead is pushing for its use in mandatory re-verification.
- \n
- Even when viewed independent of court orders, the DOT circulars stands no grounding in law.
- \n

\n\n

What lies ahead?

\n\n

- \n
- Irrespective of legality, the aggressive push for Aadhaar linking continues to instil fear in people that their mobile phone connections will be disconnected.
- \n
- This is especially problematic, as the Supreme Court has indicated that the pending Aadhaar litigations will be heard in November.
- \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express

\n