The "Aadhaar" Dare

What is the issue?

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- In an attempt to demonstrate that the campaign against Aadhaar is hollow, TRAI chairman RS Sharma uploaded his Aadhaar online.
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- Further, in what created an online sensation, he openly challenged critics to extract private information about him with it.
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What is the basic purpose of Aadhaar?

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- Aadhaar helps one establish his/her identity through its online platform.
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- Hence, the platform as such is empowering people to secure their deserved money (or services) from fraudsters who were siphoning them off before.
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- Notably, wage, subsidy and pension disposals by the government have got more streamlined after being associated with Aadhaar.
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What did Mr. Sharma give out an online dare?

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- Mr. Sharma was closely associated with the Aadhaar project for long and strongly believes in the robustness of its design.
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- But some have been portraying Aadhaar as a dangerous artefact, which is hindering people to share Aadhaar details even for legitimate services.
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- As a vociferous campaign against Aadhaar has been built by fear mongering,

he sought to counter it with his dare online foray.

- He stresses that Aadhaar does not contribute to increasing any of the other digital vulnerabilities that are already plaguing the society.

How does Mr. Sharma account for the various leaks linked to Aadhaar?

- He states that Aadhaar is being blamed for vulnerabilities of other systems.
- Recently, a leak in the EPFO database was associated with Aadhaar merely because EPFO beneficiaries had their Aadhaar numbers linked to the data.

- **What -** Mr. Sharma stresses that "demographic data" linked to an Aadhaar Number is not secretive, and that it is only the biometrics that is the secret key.
- In fact, one's personal biometric data is needed to gain access to his bank accounts and other secured details and not merely his Aadhaar Number.
- Aadhaar provides only authentication services and in doing so, the UIDAI does not know where it is linked to, in a federated data model.
- **Twisting -** Critics have been portraying vulnerabilities of the data domains (to which Aadhaar provides service) as vulnerabilities of Aadhaar itself.
- Widespread adoption of Aadhaar has started affecting those who want to game the system for tax evasion, benami properties and other such activities.
- By creating a scare, their objective is to discourage people from sharing the Aadhaar number, which will help them avert scrutiny by the government.

How did the critics respond to Mr. Sharma's dare?

- Many online hawks uploaded details like "Pan Card, Bank account, Driving Licence" etc... of Mr. Sharma.
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- But Mr. Sharma and UIDAI have iterated that these details were available online and could've been obtained even without Aadhaar.
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- Some are said to have tried to hack Mr. Sharma's e-mail, which was thwarted by demands for OTPs that were send to the registered mobile numbers.
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- One user even used UPI as a platform to deposit Rs. 1 into Mr. Sharma's account as proof that his account has been breached.
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- Ironically, if someone can only deposit money on hacking an account, then many would want their accounts to be hacked.
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- Mr. Sharma has stated that he is currently experiencing a little turbulence due to repeated attempts to gain access to his private accounts online.
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- But nonetheless, he has reiterated that Aadhaar's framework has stood the test and has declared that he has won the challenge.
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Source: Indian Express

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