



# drishti

## Privacy Concern Over Aarogya Setu App

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### Why in News

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Recently, legal experts raised concerns over the privacy policy of **Aarogya Setu app**, launched by the government, to allow people to assess if they are at a risk of contracting **Covid-19**.

They are of the view that there is a need for clarity on how the data collected by the app be stored and used by the government.

### Aarogya Setu App

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- Aarogya Setu app has been launched by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**.
- It will help people in **identifying the risk of getting affected by the CoronaVirus**.
- It will calculate risk based on the **user's interaction with others**, using cutting edge **Bluetooth technology, algorithms and artificial intelligence**.
- Once installed in a smartphone, the app detects other nearby devices with Aarogya Setu installed.
- The App will help the Government take necessary timely steps for assessing risk of spread of COVID-19 infection, and ensuring isolation where required.

### Key Issues

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- The key issue is there is not enough information available on **what data will be collected, how long will it be stored and what uses it will be put to**.
- No specification on the issue of **how the government will use data if the data gets shared with the government of India**.
- On the data retention part, the app's privacy policy specifies only the data available on the app and does not specify for **how long the Government of India will retain server side data**.

- Additionally, there was also a **question of proportionality** with the app and whether it will be as effective as envisaged in containing the Covid-19 outbreak.
  - India's situation is different from countries like Singapore, where a good number of people have smartphones.
  - In India compared to its population, smartphone users are very less which means very few people will be able to download the app.

## Way Forward

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- The app privacy policy needs detailed clarification on data collection, its storage and uses.
- The Government of India must specify how it will deal with the app's data and how long it will retain the server side data.
- According to the Supreme Court in the **Puttaswamy judgement (2017)**, the right to privacy is a **fundamental right** and it is necessary to protect personal data as an essential facet of informational privacy.

**Source: IE**