



## Aadhaar Services Outages

**For Prelims:** Aadhaar Services Outages, [Unique Identification Authority of India \(UIDAI\)](#), One-Time Passcodes, Management of Aadhaar services.

**For Mains:** Aadhaar Services Outages, Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, the [Unique Identification Authority of India \(UIDAI\)](#) has revealed that there was significant outage in Aadhaar authentication services in 2023, raising concerns about the reliability of Aadhaar services.

- There were **delays in sending one-time passcodes by SMS**, and 'intermittent' and 'minor fluctuations' in authentication were faced by **Aadhaar servers for hours-long periods** throughout the year till September 2023, amounting to 54 hours and 33 minutes of disruptions.

### What is Aadhaar Authentication?

- **About:**
  - Aadhaar Authentication is **a process by which the Aadhaar number along with demographic information** (such as name, date of birth, gender etc) or biometric information (Fingerprint or Iris) of an individual is submitted to UIDAI's Central Identities Data Repository (CIDR) for its verification and UIDAI verifies the correctness of the details submitted, or the lack thereof, on the basis of information available with it.
    - Aadhaar authentication is fundamental to accessing services, requiring individuals to **use their fingerprints or SMS passcodes to verify their identity** for tasks such as accessing rations and government services.
- **Concern:**
  - The prolonged and repeated outages in 2023 raise questions about the overall reliability of Aadhaar services, especially as they have processed over 100 billion authentications since the platform's launch in 2009.
- **Implications of the Outage in Recent Aadhaar Authentication:**
  - Access to Essential Services: Aadhaar authentication is **integral to accessing a wide range of essential services**, including government welfare programs, rations, and other entitlements. The outage may have resulted in individuals being denied timely access to these services, leading to potential hardships.
  - **Impact on Government Programs:** Government initiatives often rely on Aadhaar authentication to streamline service delivery and prevent leakages. Outages can disrupt the smooth functioning of these programs, affecting the targeted beneficiaries and the overall efficacy of welfare schemes.
  - **Financial Transactions:** Aadhaar-enabled services, **such as ATM transactions**, depend

on authentication. The disruption may have hindered individuals' ability to conduct financial transactions, impacting their day-to-day financial activities and access to banking services.

- **Public Trust and Confidence:** Repeated outages can erode public trust in the reliability of Aadhaar services. Citizens depend on Aadhaar for various aspects of their lives, and interruptions may **lead to a loss of confidence in the system's ability** to securely manage personal information and facilitate smooth service delivery.

## What is Aadhaar?

- Aadhaar is a **12-digit individual identification number** issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India on behalf of the Government of India. The number serves as proof of identity and address, anywhere in India.
- The Aadhaar number is unique for each individual and will remain valid for life time.
- Aadhaar number will help the residents to avail various services provided by banking, mobile phone connections and other Govt and Non-Govt services in due course.
- Establishes identity of individuals on the basis of demographic and biometric information.
- It is a voluntary service that **every resident can avail irrespective of present documentation.**

## Way Forward

- The need for enhanced transparency and accountability in the management of Aadhaar services is critical.
- Transparency is closely tied to public awareness. Individuals have a right to be informed about service disruptions, especially when their access to essential services is affected. Lack of information may impede public participation in addressing and mitigating such challenges.
- The outage highlights the importance of strengthening the technical infrastructure of Aadhaar to ensure its long-term systemic resilience. This involves not only addressing immediate issues but also proactively investing in technology, cybersecurity, and continuous monitoring to prevent future disruptions.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. Aadhaar card can be used as a proof of citizenship or domicile.
2. Once issued, Aadhaar number cannot be deactivated or omitted by the Issuing Authority.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (d)**

**Exp:**

- The Aadhaar platform helps service providers authenticate identity of residents electronically, in a safe and quick manner, making service delivery more cost effective and efficient. According to the GoI and UIDAI, Aadhaar is not proof of citizenship.
- However, UIDAI has also published a set of contingencies when the Aadhaar issued by it is liable

for rejection. An Aadhaar with mixed or anomalous biometric information or multiple names in a single name (like Urf or Alias) can be deactivated. Aadhaar can also get deactivated upon non-usage of the same for three consecutive years.

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/aadhaar-services-outages>

