Privacy and non-state actors

What is the issue?

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- Privacy must not be discussed only in the context of Government and Aadhaar.
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- It must be extended to non-state sector too.
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How the non-state actors intrude the privacy?

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- **Media -**Many persons are affected by intrusive or false reporting by the print and digital media.
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- Media houses photograph or videograph people for their stories, sometimes covertly and access private documents which may also constitute an intrusion into privacy.
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- **Private businesses -**The online businesses, private establishments, technology companies, and social media deal routinely with people and sensitive data.
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- Many shops, malls, jewellers and super markets use CCTV cameras for surveillance.
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- Mobile numbers are almost being used like identity numbers and, worse, shared casually.
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- **Electronic devices -** Some cell phones use biometric access with the data stored abroad.
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- Uploading ones digital photo makes them susceptible to facial recognition and tracking.
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- **Web browsing -**E-commerce sites insist on registration before their services are used, most web browsers and search engines are actually programmed to rememberusers' actions.
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- When one click the 'I agree' or 'remember password' button on a screen there can be consequences for their privacy.
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- **International travel -** When one travel abroad they are routinely allowed to make use of their biometrics for visas.
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How photos are vulnerable over biometrics?

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- Photographs have been used for ages to identify, name and track individuals.
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- Many allow their friends to tag their faces quite voluntarily using the face tagging feature on social media
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- After all, a fingerprint needs an expert to decode it whereas a photo can be taken without the subject even being aware of it and used to identify individuals with accuracy.
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- In comparison to fingerprints, photos are so much more potent and liable for misuse that every photograph that is taken and shared.
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Way forward

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- Under a 'privacy law', the media also have to deal with the vulnerability of personal data and should bring in strong opinions on the matter of privacy.
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- Aadhaar as more possible security features (like locking the Aadhaar number by the user), when compared with the above mentioned Non-state actors.
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- Thus breach of privacy is not only possible with Aadhaar it is possible everywhere, the users must be aware of their data.
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Source: Business Line

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