Privacy in Public Domain

What is the issue?

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- Many of the contemporary discussions on privacy are related to technological developments.
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- So the question of privacy should be rethought in the context of these technologies.
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How to understand the ‘concept of Privacy’?

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- The notions of privacy are based on the need for security and protection.
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- e.g we believe that our bank balance must be private.
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- We do not want to divulge certain things about our wealth or life practices since they may be used by others to potentially harm us.
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- So privacy becomes a way of protecting individuals or groups.
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- Contemporary technology has made possible many new innovations that have changed the very meaning and significance of privacy.
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- In any discussion on privacy, there is a deep suspicion of the government and state.
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- But this suspicion does not extend to technology and its private agents, those that are responsible for the breakdown of the value of privacy in many cases.
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How private sector affects privacy?

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- The greatest challenge to privacy comes from the private sector.
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- It also stems from an indifference to our own privacy.
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- Social experiments have shown that people are willing to have private information about themselves made public if they receive some monetary advantage.
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- e.g When we search for a book or a ticket, we start getting advertisements related to these searches in our supposedly private emails.
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- Everything is tracked and rerouted.
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- We have no clue to the amount of information about our private lives that is out in the Web.
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- Private companies often have rules that protect them from being transparent in hiring policies.
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- Private groups realise that the greatest market that is perennially available to them is the market of trading information on privacy.
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What should be done?

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- Privacy is not only open to manipulation by the government but even more so by the private sector.
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- Information about individuals is arguably much more in the private domain today than it is within various governments.
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- Moreover, the mining of this information is taken up far more tirelessly by the private compared to government institutions.
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- So any law dealing with Privacy must be wholesome and visionary.
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Source: The Hindu

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