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.
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- He stresses that Aadhaar does not contribute to increasing any of the other digital vulnerabilities that are already plaguing the society.
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How does Mr. Sharma account for the various leaks linked to Aadhaar?

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- He states that Aadhaar is being blamed for vulnerabilities of other systems.
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- Recently, a leak in the EPFO database was associated with Aadhaar merely because EPFO beneficiaries had their Aadhaar numbers linked to the data.
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- **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.
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- 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.
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- Aadhaar provides only authentication services and in doing so, the UIDAI does not know where it is linked to, in a federated data model.
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- **Twisting -** Critics have been portraying vulnerabilities of the data domains (to which Aadhaar provides service) as vulnerabilities of Aadhaar itself.
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- Widespread adoption of Aadhaar has started affecting those who want to game the system for tax evasion, benami properties and other such activities.
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- By creating a scare, their objective is to discourage people from sharing the Aadhaar number, which will help them avert scrutiny by the government.
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How did the critics respond to Mr. Sharma’s dare?

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- 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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