VIDs – Introducing a Two Layer Security for Aadhar

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n
- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has been facing a lot of criticism over privacy violations.
\n
- Hence, to reinforce privacy protection, UIDAI has proposed the Virtual Ids, which would be a two-layer security system.
\n

\n\n

Why Virtual IDs?

\n\n

\n
- Allegations of access to personal information by random entities, without the consent of individual Aadhaar holders were rampant.
\n
- The widespread fear of misuse of demographic data is also heightened by the fact that India still does not have a data-protection law.
\n
- To address this, UDIAI unveiled the concept of Virtual Ids, which is one of the most significant changes since its inception eight years ago.
\n
- This is a concept of two-layer security system that prevents the possibility of the numbers being stored in many databases.
\n
- Notably, “Virtual Id Numbers” are envisioned to be substituted in all places that require one to give out their unique ID (Aadhaar number).
\n

\n\n

How does Virtual Ids (VID) work?

\n\n

\n

- The VID will be a 16-digit random number, which an Aadhaar-holder can generate and use in place of his UID (Aadhar Number).
  \n
- This will ensure that the Aadhaar number is no longer shared, thus obviating any chance of it being leaked.
  \n
- What makes the VID user-friendly is that it is linked to the Aadhaar number and there can only be one VID at any point in time for a particular number.
  \n
- Moreover, only the Aadhaar-holder will be able to generate the VID and it will be a temporary number, unlike Aadhaar, which stays the same forever.
  \n
- Hence, it is pointless to hold on to someone's VID as it is merely a temporary number like banking "One Time Passwords" (OTPs).
  \n

\n\n

What are the other supporting Changes brought in?

\n\n

\n
- UIDAI has also changed the Aadhar based e-KYC norms, which is the norm for service providers for identifying their customer and maintaining uniqueness.
  \n
- Just like how UID was replaced by VID on the Aadhar holder's side, UID has been replaced by a UID token on the service provider's side.
  \n
- UID token is a 72-character alphanumeric string that is meant only for system use and acts as a unique-identification serial for a particular customer.
  \n
- This prevents the service provider from knowing their consumer's Aadhar Number either directly from them or through the verification data base.
  \n
- Most Authentication User Agencies (AUAs) are expected to only use the UID token, instead of the Aadhaar number.
  \n
- Such AUAs will be called local AUAs, while the few that continue to use the Aadhaar number will be called global AUAs.
  \n
- This structure will ensure that even if a local AUAs database is hacked, the Aadhaar number of customers will not be threatened.
  \n

\n\n

What is the way forward?

\n\n

\n
- Both the VID and new e-KYC norms significantly address privacy concerns by protect the Aadhaar number from being exposed in day-to-day transactions.
\n
- But privacy experts and activists say that there is a lot more to be done to ensure foolproof security for critical personal information.
\n
- Notably, Aadhaar seeding with all existing databases should be revoked.
\n
- Also, the new VID system should ensure that it doesn’t become too difficult for the poor and illiterate masses will to engage with.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Business Standard

\n

