

Centre defends Aadhaar Act

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Centre on Friday stoutly defended provisions of the Aadhaar Act, 2016, in the Supreme Court, saying 115.15 crore people had already embraced the “socio-political tool” to avail benefits of various schemes.

It maintained that the fundamental right of identity and various e-governance initiatives of the government to provide food security, livelihood, jobs and health to the teeming masses cannot be sacrificed at the altar of the right to privacy of an elite few, who do not want Aadhaar.

The Centre filed an affidavit in response to a batch of PILs filed by former National Commission for Protection of Child Rights chairperson Shanta Sinha and others, challenging the validity of as many as 17 government notifications making Aadhaar mandatory to access welfare schemes and benefits after June 30, 2017.

“This is a classic case where a handful of individuals who are not aggrieved by the Aadhaar Act are questioning its vires and consequently, the benefits it gives the poor,” the government said.

Claiming that the petitioners do not represent the larger population, the government said, “This is demonstrated by the fact that more than 115.15 crore residents of India, which is equal to 95.10% of the entire population, have already been enrolled and allocated Aadhaar number.”