

Aadhaar must for students to get scholarship, community benefits

Move to help govt identify proportion of each community availing benefits of various schemes

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AADHAAR has now been made mandatory for students availing scholarships and benefits from the Backward Class, Most Backward Class and Minorities department, said a G.O. issued recently. The exercise, aimed at ensuring benefits to reach the intended recipients, will also allow the state to gather the population of caste or specific clauses, according to research scholars.

The national population census scheduled for 2021 has not been conducted yet, and the details of the socio-economic caste census taken in 2011 have not been disclosed to the public. Officials claim that introducing Aadhaar will help the government identify the proportion of each community receiving benefits under various schemes in the long term. Similar changes were recently



Won't deny kids benefits for not submitting ID

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implemented for SC/ST students applying for scholarships online.

However, the G.O. emphasised that children cannot be denied benefits for not submitting Aadhaar under any circumstances. Currently, the BC, MBC & minority departments provide annual scholarships to

nearly 7.5 lakh students a year from Class 10 to UG and diploma courses.

In 2019, the state education department made linking Aadhaar with the Educational Management Information System (EMIS), a master database of the state, mandatory for government and government-aided schools. This move was aimed at monitoring the distribution of various benefits such as free bicycles, laptops, nutritional meal schemes among students from different sections. Aadhaar has since been extended to private school students as well, in order to eliminate duplication and errors in hall tickets during public exams.

Currently, nine lakh students write SSLC exams and 8.5 lakh students appear for Class 12 exams every year in the state. The records of these students, classified by community, have al-

ready been linked to Aadhaar.

Additionally, 44.72 lakh students benefit from the MGR Nutritious Meal Programme every day, and their community details are also linked to EMIS along with Aadhaar. "Based on the Aadhaar of students whose names are enrolled in family ration cards and other schemes, with the support of Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency (TNeGA), the government has obtained a tentative caste-wise population of families," said a research scholar from University of Madras.

A retired bureaucrat said, "Scholarships linked to Aadhaar for BC/MBC/SC/ST students will further strengthen the scientific breakdown of the state's population based on communities. Without these details, the implementation of Kalainger Mahalir Urimai Thogai scheme would have been nearly impossible."