

Aadhaar, 10 Years On: 10 highlights from the largest survey on India's unique digital identity

The State of Aadhaar 2019 report is based on a nation-wide study that captures the experiences and perspectives of over 167,000 households across 28 states and union territories, making it the largest primary dataset on the use of Aadhaar and more broadly, the use of national digital ID in the world.

NOVEMBER 25TH, 2019, New Delhi, India: Dalberg, a leading social impact advisory group released the *State of Aadhaar: A People's Perspective* report today, showing insights that can help drive a data-driven discourse on Aadhaar.

The study reveals how people experience Aadhaar, a universal identity program for all residents in India — how they get it, update it, and use it across various public and private services, as well as their broader sentiments and trust in its use. Additionally, the data show which aspects of Aadhaar are working and which are not.

The research is premised on the principle that the daily users of Aadhaar are best positioned to provide valuable feedback about their lived experience - and therefore practical adjustments needed to improve Aadhaar's functioning.

The aim of this study is to augment efforts to move towards a more effective digital identity for all residents of India who desire it.

10 Key Findings

1. **Aadhaar is becoming ubiquitous in India.** 95% of adults and 75% of children have Aadhaar.
2. **A notable minority still does not have Aadhaar.** An estimated 28 million adults do not have Aadhaar, mostly in Assam and Meghalaya where enrolment has been slow due to questions about legal residency amongst others. Among vulnerable groups, a higher share of third-gender residents (30%) and people who are homeless (27%) do not have the ID.
3. **Updating is the hardest part of the Aadhaar process.** One in five people who tried to update their Aadhaar did not succeed. 4% of Aadhaar cards currently have errors.
4. **Aadhaar has supported inclusion.** 49% of people used Aadhaar to access one or more services like food rations, bank accounts, and social pensions for the first time. For 8% of people, Aadhaar was their first ever ID.
5. **Problems with Aadhaar sometimes led to denial of welfare services.** 0.8% of people experienced exclusion due to Aadhaar-related reasons from a key welfare service (PDS rations, MGNREGS, social pensions) that they had earlier received (versus 3.3% due to non-Aadhaar factors).
6. **Aadhaar has improved service delivery.** 80% feel that Aadhaar has made PDS rations, MGNREGS, or social pensions more reliable. Using Aadhaar, residents were 40% more likely to obtain a new SIM card within one day, compared to using other forms of ID.
7. **Despite the Supreme Court ruling, many people find Aadhaar to be *de facto* mandatory for bank accounts, SIM cards, and school enrolment.** More than half

of those who used Aadhaar to get a SIM card or bank account said that the service provider accepted only Aadhaar for identification purposes. 0.5% of 6 to 14 year olds could not enrol in school due to Aadhaar-related reasons.

8. **Most people appreciate Aadhaar's universal acceptance; some have concerns.** 72% appreciate that it is a convenient, universal ID; nearly half of those also worry about linking it to too many services.
9. **Most residents are satisfied and trust Aadhaar.** 92% of people are satisfied with Aadhaar. 67% of people who have been excluded from a service due to problems with Aadhaar still say they are satisfied. 90% say it keeps their data safe, while 61% say it prevents others from accessing their benefits. 8% worry about its misuse.
10. **Newer digital features are yet to be embraced.** 77% have never used features such as mAadhaar, QR code, virtual Aadhaar or masked Aadhaar. Only 39% of residents have the correct mobile phone number linked to their Aadhaar.

The full report can be downloaded at www.stateofaadhaar.in.

"The research is not an attempt to adjudicate the ultimate merits of Aadhaar. It is about taking residents' perspectives into account to help better design and implement Aadhaar. We believe Aadhaar's success will ultimately depend on how well the program can learn from the experiences and concerns of those who use or are not yet able to use Aadhaar in their daily lives," said Gaurav Gupta, Dalberg's Partner and Asia Regional Director.

The report was released at an event attended by Mr. R.S. Sharma (Chairman, TRAI), Justice B.N. Srikrishna (former Supreme Court judge), Ms. Dipa Sinha (Convenor, Right to Food Campaign), and noted journalist Shankkar Aiyar.

Roopa Kudva, Managing Director of Omidyar Network India, which funded the research and the report, said, *"We believe that technology, used responsibly, is a powerful force for inclusion. We actively support high quality research as a vital component of system level impact – to help creation and continuous improvement of technology solutions for inclusion. As the report shows, Aadhaar has been a game-changer, touching nearly 1.2 billion people and is a significant feature in their lives. It has enabled inclusion for India's most vulnerable; at the same time the main unfinished agenda lies with this very segment. The rich dataset underlying this large survey is being made public, for the benefit of all stakeholders."*

For more information or requests for interview, please contact: info@stateofaadhaar.in

Notes to Editors

Highlights on the methodology

- The report is based on two surveys: a pulse survey of 147,868 households across 28 states and union territories, and in-depth interviews with 19,209 households in 16 states and 1 union territory. It is also informed by insights gathered from over 100 ethnographic interviews using human-centred design research conducted in four states spanning Maharashtra, Bihar, Karnataka and Assam.
- This research project is led by a multidisciplinary team from Dalberg with members from across its advisory, research and design businesses. The team was assisted by two expert panels, technical and advisory, that gave guidance on aspects of the research design, analyses, and the framing of the findings.
- The Technical Panel comprised [Dr Sonalde Desai \(NCAER\)](#), [Dr Rinku Murgai \(World Bank India\)](#), [Dr Shamika Ravi \(Brookings India\)](#), and [Dr Pronab Sen \(IGC, former Chief Statistician of India\)](#).

- The Advisory Panel included Yamini Aiyar (Centre for Policy Research), Dr Subhashis Banerjee (IIT Delhi), Rahul Matthan (Trilegal), Dr. Anit N Mukherjee (Center for Global Development), and Ananth Padmanabhan (Sai University).
- This survey is not comparable to the 2018 State of Aadhaar survey because the latter was conducted in only three states. The methodology for this year's study has also been updated to reflect feedback from last year's survey.

Access to the dataset

The entire dataset is freely available on www.stateofaadhaar.in, along with an interactive data dashboard that provides granular insights on specific states and demographic groups.

About Dalberg

Dalberg is a world leading social impact advisory group that brings together - strategy consulting, design thinking, big data analytics, and research to address complex social and environmental challenges. We work collaboratively with communities, institutions, governments, and corporations to develop solutions that create impact at scale.