- NDTV
- Business
- Hindi
- Movies
- Cricket
- Health
- Food
- Tech
- Auto
- Apps
- Prime
- Art
- Weddings

How Aadhaar Card Helped Reunite Missing Children With Their Families

During a drive to get Aadhaar cards for children in orphanages in Bengaluru, it was found that three children already had cards issued in their names.

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BENGALURU: There may have been many debates about the value of Aadhaar cards, but for three children separated from their families and consigned to an orphanage in Bengaluru, it was the biometric data from India's flagship universal identity scheme that played the critical role of scripting a happy reunion.

During a drive to get Aadhaar cards for children in orphanages in Bengaluru WHEN, it was found that three children already had cards issued in their names.

The three children - all with special needs - were brought to these orphanages after they WERE separated from their parents. One of them, Monu, has been living in an orphanage on Hosur Road since May. It was found that Monu's biometric details matched with a child named Narendra, a resident of Madhya Pradesh. When contacted, Naresh's parents confirmed that he was indeed missing.

Ramesh spoke to Monu on the phone and realised he was speaking to his son. "I don't have a phone but my neighbour has one. The neighbour told me that they received a call from Bhopal and that my Monu has been found. Next morning, I went to them and got the contact number. I was still doubtful but when I finally got to talk with him, I was relieved and overjoyed. I thanked god and it was because of his grace that we found him," Ramesh said while narrating his experience.

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"We were distressed and tried looking for him but without success. He was lost from home. Now after two years, I found him and I am so happy," he added.

Om Prakash's family was tracked down in a similar way. His Aadhaar card was rejected because the biometrics matched that of a resident (named Om Prakash) from Jharkhand.

With his son back with him, Om Prakash's father Jagadish Prajapati's faith in Aadhaar has only increased. "Aadhaar card is essential. Therefore, everyone of all age group, from a child to an adult should get one. Because we had an Aadhaar card we benefitted," a joyful Jagadish Prajapati said.

Similarly, Neelakanta's family was tracked to Tirupati.

Divya Narayanappa , Child Protection Officer narrated the process followed in the case. "On verification we came to know that these children's fingerprints were already there - and they were matching with the family. They verified police records whether complaint has been filed or not so accordingly they traced the families," she said.

Re-uniting families may not have been the primary aim of Aadhaar - but it has certainly been a happy side-effect.