

Abstract

The Unique Identity Project set up in the year 2009 by the former UPA – II government was sold on the premise of making every ‘resident visible to the state’ to enable direct transfer of cash and welfare services to eliminate loopholes in distribution and eradicate corruption. Based on the façade of ‘development’, this project cloaks the potential nature of a mega-surveillance project along with the NPR, NATGRID and NCTC projects in line for implementation. Furthermore emphasizing benefits of ‘financial inclusion’, the UID project attempts to facilitate the mobility of ‘financial capital’ into previously untouched sectors of the Indian society in accordance to global demands of capital i.e. the ‘informal’ sector. The presence of refugee and migrant workers in this sector necessitate the discourse of ‘residents’ for the purpose of enrolment. This paper attempts to address the underlying nature of the UID and argues that mobility in financial capital will be achieved through the twin processes of ‘financial inclusion’ and ‘surveillance’. The refugee problematic and the question of a national ID card has as its point of reference the North Eastern State of Tripura which has witnessed high rates of enrolment for the UID card and hosts a large refugee population. Lastly the study also highlights the possible future of the national ID card project under the new BJP led NDA regime.