

Aadhaar's Biometric Exception Handling — UIDAI's Iris-Scan Fallback When Fingerprints Fail

Digital Inclusion · Good practice · India

Quality score: 88/100

Evidence strength: Strong

Summary

India's 1.3-billion-enrolment Aadhaar ID leans on fingerprint checks that degrade for manual labourers and the elderly. UIDAI's iris-scan fallback catches many failures, but reporting through 2025 documents continuing wrongful exclusions, including after cataract surgery.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Innovation level	2/5
Sustainability (ongoing)	1/1
Evaluation evidence	1/1
Demonstrated reach	1/1
Documented learning	1/1

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-09-01

[Unique Identification Authority of India \(UIDAI\)](#) — accessed 2026-09-01

[Policy Circle: Aadhaar authentication failures trigger an invisible exclusion crisis](#) — accessed 2026-09-01

[The Wire: Digital Exclusion — Poor, Elderly Face the Brunt of Aadhaar-Based Authentication Errors](#) — accessed 2026-09-01

[Biometric Update: High rates of Aadhaar biometric verification failure leads to UIDAI scrutiny](#) — accessed 2026-09-01

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