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NATIONAL ID CARDS

After the September 11 incident, the world woke up to the reality of terrorism, everything changed. The tragedy not only shocked the world, it also revealed the loop hole in the security system that a country of the stature of United State can have. The government everywhere started taking precautions to prevent such incidents from happening again. In their enthusiasm to tighten security, the authorities in fact reacted so excessively that as a result, the common people began to feel harassed. Passing though airports and seaports became a nightmare. Even small personal items like nail cutters were banned from the personal luggage the travelers carried.

As a fall-out of this fear factor, many countries, along with Philippines and U.K, started thinking of introducing a national ID system. It was named the 'Smart Card'. This card will integrate all the functions of different government IDs, such as licenses, immigration documents along with social security cards, taxpayer's ID etc. This smart card will contain a microchip which will hold all the data about the card holder. Physical data like the DNA, eye retina patterns and also fingerprints will be stored in the microchip. The smart card will have a connection to the government's database, through which all the data of the owner can be accessed instantly. Lot more information can be kept on adding to the smart card from time to time. You will need only one card for all use.

The proposal of a single nationalized ID system was opposed by many forums. The arguments against this proposal was that the privacy of the individual will be infringed by hackers who might get into the government's data base and gain access to individual database and misuse the data or commit fraud with it or may even alter the data according to their evil intentions. The campaign against national ID system gained momentum as the logic was put forward that how such a system could prevent terrorism. On the other hand individuals will get too open to the elements. The argument was put forward that the terrorists could not be pointed out as there was no record of previous criminal activity of the terrorist, and thus they cannot be filtered out with the national ID system.

On the other hand the national ID system will expose the individuals to all kind of embarrassing situations. Suppose, you are stopped for speeding, you will have to present your smart card to the police officer. Since all your information is contained in the smart card, if the office swipes the card, it will reveal everything about you. If you had any previous police record that too will be revealed, this will lead to humiliation and the officer may be prejudiced against you. Information about your income, tax return and even details of your family, like your wife's name, and details of your children will come out. So much information coming out with just a swipe of your smart card, may not be something you would like to let others know.