

Accessible India Campaign - Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan

Government schemes are an important part of the UPSC syllabus. Every year, questions are asked based on recent government schemes both in the [IAS prelims](#) and mains exams. In this article, you can read all about the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan, a government scheme for the differently-abled community in India.

What is the Accessible India Campaign?

- The government launched the “Accessible India Campaign” (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) which seeks to make at least 50 percent of all government buildings in the national capital and all state capitals “fully accessible” for the disabled by July 2018. Similar deadlines have been set to make airports and railway stations accessible to the disabled.
- It aims to enable persons with disabilities to gain universal access, equal opportunity for development, independent living and participation in all aspects of life in an inclusive society.
- The campaign targets three separate verticals for achieving universal accessibility namely the built up environment, transportation eco-system and information & communication ecosystem.
- The campaign has ambitious targets with defined timelines and will use IT and social media for spreading awareness about the campaign and seeking commitment / engagement of various stakeholders.
- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), has asked various State Govts. to identify about 50 to 100 public buildings in big cities and also identify citizen centric public websites, which if made fully accessible would have the highest impact on the lives of PwDs. Once identified, “Access Audit” of these buildings and websites will be conducted by professional agencies. As per the audit findings, retrofitting and conversion of buildings, transport and websites would be undertaken by various government departments. This will be supported by the Scheme of Implementation of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA), an umbrella scheme run by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) for implementing various initiatives for social and economic empowerment of PwDs.
- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities is collaborating with the Ministry of Home, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Tourism for creating ‘Accessible police stations’, “Accessible hospitals’ and ‘Accessible tourism’ respectively across the country. The Department is also coordinating with the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting for enhancing accessibility of Television programmes by incorporating features like captioning, text to speech and audio description.

- DEPWD is also in the process of creating a mobile app, along with a web portal for crowd sourcing the requests regarding inaccessible places.
- As per campaign drafted by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, at least 10 percent of the government owned public transport carriers in the country will be converted into fully accessible carriers for these persons by March 2018.
- It will also be targeted that at least 50 percent of all public documents issued by the Central Government and the State Governments meet accessibility standards for persons with disabilities by March 2018.

Why was the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan launched?

- India is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Article 9 of UNCRPD casts an obligation on all the signatory governments to take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.
- Subsequently, governments of the ESCAP region gathered in Incheon, Republic of Korea from 29.10.2012 to 02.11.2012 and adopted the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Rights Real” for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. The Incheon Strategy builds on the UNCRPD and provides the first regionally agreed disability inclusive “Development Goals”.
- Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995 under Section 44, 45 and 46 also categorically provides for non-discrimination in participation, non-discrimination of the roads and built up environment. As per Section 46 of the PwD Act, the States are required to provide for :
 1. Ramps in public buildings
 2. Provision of toilets for wheelchair users
 3. Braille symbols and auditory signals in elevators or lift.
 4. Ramps in hospitals, primary health centers and other rehabilitation centers.

Targets under the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyaan campaign

- Three verticals i.e., built-up environment, transportation ecosystem, information & communication ecosystem are targeted in the first phase of the campaign.
- Making international airports, category A1, A & B railway stations, completely accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Convert at least 10% of the public carriers owned by the Government of India into disabled friendly carriers by March 2018.
- By March 2018, at least 50% of the public documents issued by the state and the central government to meet accessibility standards pertaining to persons with disabilities.

- Social media and Information Technology to be effectively used to create awareness among people.
- A subsidiary scheme under DEPwD, Scheme of Implementation of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA) is to monitor and support the selection of public buildings and shortlist public websites that need conversion and upgradation in order to make them disabled friendly.

For more UPSC related preparation materials and articles, visit the links given in the table below:

Related Links

[UPSC Books](#)

[UPSC Monthly Current Affairs Magazine](#)

[NCERT Notes For UPSC](#)

[Capital of Magadha](#)

[RSTV News](#)

[Result of Revolt of 1857](#)

[RAS Syllabus in Hindi](#)

[Power and Function of Prime minister](#)

[Lowest Rainfall in India](#)