

AIR Spotlight - Social Empowerment of Divyang and Weaker Sections

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in the [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the discussion is on the Social Empowerment of Divyang and Weaker Sections.

Context:

“People with disabilities” or “people with severe disabilities” should receive emotional, financial and physical support from society. Instead of feeling sorry for them, we should all work to combat discrimination against people with disabilities. Everyone on earth deserves the same respect. As for disabled children, parents and other members of society should be able to acknowledge their position in society.

Following are some steps taken by the government for “People with disabilities”.

Right of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016

- **Right of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD) 2016** simply known as the **RPWD Act**, promotes and protects the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities in the educational, social, legal, economic, cultural and political spheres. The RPWD Act of 2016 was enacted in 2016 and came into effect in 2017. The law was enacted to implement the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) and related matters.
- The law gives governments the responsibility to take action and ensure that people with disabilities enjoy the same rights.
- The number of disability types has been increased from 7 to 21. The central government will have the power to add other types of disability.
- The 21 disabilities are listed below:
 1. Blindness
 2. Low-vision
 3. Leprosy Cured persons
 4. Hearing Impairment (deaf and hard of hearing)
 5. Locomotor Disability
 6. Dwarfism
 7. Intellectual Disability
 8. Mental Illness
 9. Autism Spectrum Disorder
 10. Cerebral Palsy
 11. Muscular Dystrophy
 12. Chronic Neurological conditions
 13. Specific Learning Disabilities
 14. Multiple Sclerosis
 15. Speech and Language disability
 16. Thalassemia

17. Haemophilia
18. Sickle Cell disease
19. Multiple Disabilities including deaf blindness
20. Acid Attack victim
21. Parkinson's disease

- Disability has been defined on the basis of a dynamic and evolving concept.
- Additional benefits were provided for individuals with referral disabilities and individuals with high support needs.
- All children with disabilities between the ages of 6 and 18 have the right to free education.
- The law increased the baseline disability reserve from 3% to 4% in government agencies and from 3% to 5% in institutions of higher education.
- Together with the Campaign for Accessible India, emphasis was placed on ensuring accessibility in public buildings within a prescribed period of time.

Accessible India Campaign – Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan

- The government launched a virtual mobile crowdsourcing application “Sugamya Bharat App” and a manual “Access The Photo Digest” in March 2021 to improve accessibility.
- The government has launched the “Campaign for Accessible India” (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan), which aims to make at least 50 per cent of all government buildings in the state capitals fully accessible for people with disabilities and aims to make airports and train stations accessible to people with disabilities.
- Aims to provide people with disabilities with universal access, equal development opportunities, independent life and participation in all aspects of life in an inclusive society.
- The campaign targets three separate vertical areas to achieve universal accessibility, namely the built environment, the transportation ecosystem, and the information and communication ecosystem.
- The campaign has ambitious time-bound goals and will use IT and social media to publicize the campaign and engage multiple stakeholders.

Know more about the [Accessible India Campaign – Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan](#).

Sign Language Day

- On September 23, Sign Language Day is celebrated.
- The [United Nations General Assembly](#) has declared September 23 as International Sign Language Day to raise awareness about the importance of sign language for the full realization of the human rights of deaf people.
- The theme for 2021 is “We sign for human rights”, declared by the World Association of the Deaf.
- The first International Sign Language Day was celebrated around the world on September 23, 2018.
- International Week of the Deaf was celebrated for the first time in September 1958 and has since grown into a global movement.

Indian Sign Language (ISL)

- Indian Sign Language denotes unity in diversity, which is explained through the hands and understood through the eyes.
- Connects all people with hearing disabilities in our country with each other.
- NCERT educational books and materials will be available in the Indian Sign Language.
- Sign language is a series of facial and hand gestures used to communicate, most commonly used by people with hearing and speech disabilities.
- It has its own regional grammar, syntax, and “dialects,” essentially different gestures for the same word or sentiment.
- The main difference from spoken languages is the form: sign languages are visual, spoken languages are auditory.
- Sign language is recognized as an official language in many countries around the world, such as the United States.

Read about more [Persons with Disabilities](#) in the linked article.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is a skills certification system that aims to encourage the country’s youth population to take industry-relevant training and incorporate it into skills development. The program was created with the aim of providing training participants with a secure livelihood. PMKVY will also certify people’s prior learning experiences or skills as part of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- [Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana \(PMKVY\)](#) is managed and implemented by the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- In addition, training providers affiliated with the state or central government also offer training under the program.
- Training providers must register on the Skill Management & Accreditation of Training Centre (SMART) portal in order to participate in the program and offer training.
- The PMKVY training is under scrutiny from Sector Skills Councils and state governments.
- The Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 3.0 to teach young people in India practical skills by providing more than 300 skills courses.
- PMKVY 3.0 will focus on new age and COVID-related skills and provide training for 8 lakh candidates over the program period from 2020 to 2021.
- In order to build a strong pool of trained professionals, 729 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKK), established non-PMKK training centres and more than 200 ITIs under [Skill India](#) will present PMKVY 3.0 training courses.
- The ministry has enhanced the most recent version of the program based on the lessons learned from PMKVY 1.0 and PMKVY 2.0 to align it with current political doctrine and strengthen the skills ecosystem affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.