

AIR Spotlight: International Day of Persons with Disabilities

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 [IAS exam](#) preparation.

This article is about the discussion on “**International Day of Persons with Disabilities and Governments Initiatives for the Empowerment and Welfare of Persons with Disabilities**”.

Participants:

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Introduction

- Every year since 1992, the [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) (IDPD) has been annually observed around the world on December 3. The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons was proclaimed in 1992 by United Nations General Assembly resolution 47/3.
- It aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.
- In 2006, the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) was adopted which has further advanced the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international development frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, the New Urban Agenda, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development.

Facts and Figures:

- The world population is over 8 billion people and more than 1 billion people (approximately 15 % of the population) live with some form of disability.
- 80% of the disabled live in developing countries.
- More than 100 million disabled persons are children.
- 50% of disabled persons cannot afford health care.
- 18% of countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 (RPwD-2016)

- The Act replaces the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995. It fulfils the obligations to the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), to which India is a signatory.
- According to the Act, enacted in December 2016 and came into force on April 2017, 'disability' has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.
- A person with a disability means a person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which hinders his full and effective participation in society.
- A person with benchmark disability means a person with not less than 40% of a specified disability where the specified disability has not been defined in measurable terms and includes a person with a disability where the specified disability has been defined in measurable terms, as certified by the certifying authority.
- A person with a high support disability means intensive support - physical, psychological and otherwise, which may be required by a person with a benchmark disability for daily activities.
- As per RPwD Act - 2016, the types of disabilities have been increased from 7 to 21 and the Central Government will have the power to add more disabilities.

The 21 disabilities are -

- Blindness
- Low-vision
- Leprosy Cured persons
- Hearing Impairment (deaf and hard of hearing)
- Locomotor Disability
- Dwarfism
- Intellectual Disability
- Mental Illness
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Cerebral Palsy
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Chronic Neurological conditions
- Specific Learning Disabilities
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Speech and Language disability
- Thalassemia
- Haemophilia
- Sickle Cell Disease
- Multiple Disabilities including deaf blindness
- Acid Attack victim
- Parkinson's disease

More on the [Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016](#) in the linked article.

Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)

- The Accessible India Campaign is in line with Article 9 of UNCRPD to which India has been a signatory since 2007.
- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) has launched the Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) as a nationwide campaign for achieving universal accessibility for [Persons with Disabilities](#) (PwDs). It has three important components:
 - Built Environment Accessibility
 - Transportation System Accessibility
 - Information and Communication Ecosystem Accessibility

Read more about the [Accessible India Campaign](#) in the linked article.

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)

- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment was set up in May 2012 with the aim to facilitate empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities. It acts as a nodal agency to look after all development agendas of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan).
- Over a period of time, National Institutes (NIs) in the field of disability have been set up under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
 - NIs are in the nature of autonomous bodies established under the Society Registration Act focusing on specific types of disabilities. These Institutes are primarily engaged in Human Resources Development in the field of disability by conducting various courses, providing rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities (PwDs) and promoting Research and Development efforts in the field. There are nine National Institutes.
- There are 21 CRCs (Composite Regional Centres) in the country.
 - These CRCs provide rehabilitation services to all categories of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), train rehabilitation professionals, workers and functionaries, undertake programmes of education and skill development for PwDs and create awareness among parents and the community regarding the needs and rights of PwDs.

Unique Disability Identity Card (UDID)

The “Unique ID for Persons with Disabilities” project is being implemented with a view of creating a National Database for PwDs, and issuing a Unique Disability Identity Card to each person with disabilities. The project will not only encourage transparency, efficiency and ease of delivering government benefits to the person with disabilities but also ensure uniformity. The project will also help in streamlining the tracking of the physical and financial progress of beneficiaries at all levels of the hierarchy of implementation – from village level, block level, district level, state level and national level.