



Harmonized Guidelines and Space Standards for Universal Accessibility in India

Why in News?

[Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for Universal Accessibility in India-2021](#) prepared by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has been amended in **RPwD (Amendment) Rules, 2023**.

What are Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for Universal Accessibility in India-2021?

- It is a set of rules and standards for making the **physical environment, transportation, information and communication, and other facilities and services accessible for [persons with disabilities \(PwDs\)](#) in India.**
 - The guidelines are a revision of the Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for **Barrier-Free Built Environment for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Persons released in 2016**.
 - Earlier, the guidelines were for creating a **barrier-free environment, but now, the focus is on universal accessibility**.
- The guidelines are not just for **Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)**, but also for those involved **in planning projects**, from the construction of government buildings to master-planning cities.
- The nodal ministry for the implementation of the guidelines is the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.

What is the Legislative Framework Related to PwDs in India?

- India ratified the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) in 2007 and passed the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act in December 2016** which came into effect in 2017.
 - As per the RPwD Act 2016 - **21 types of disabilities have been recognized**.
- As per **Section 40 of RPwD Act 2016**, the Central Govt in consultation with the **Chief Commissioner (for PwDs)** formulate rules for persons with disabilities laying down the **standards of accessibility for the physical environment, transportation, information and communication**, including appropriate technologies and systems and other facilities and services provided to the public in urban and rural areas.
 - Under this, many initiatives, such as **“Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan”** ([Accessible India Campaign](#)), are being taken up.
- **Other Initiatives:**
 - [Unique Disability Identification Portal](#)
 - [Accessible India Campaign](#)
 - [DeenDayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme](#)
 - [Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/fitting of Aids and Appliances](#)
 - [National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities](#)



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. India is home to lakhs of persons with disabilities. What are the benefits available to them under the law? (2011)

1. Free schooling till the age of 18 years in government run schools.
2. Preferential allotment of land for setting up business.
3. Ramps in public buildings.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. Does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensure effective mechanism for empowerment and inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in the society? Discuss. (2017)

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