

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ACCESSIBILITY: AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF DISABILITY POLICIES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Health is a significant indicator of the development of any country and disability plays an important role. India with more than 26 million people with disabilities has acknowledged that accessibility is the key to inclusion and the accessible barrier-free environment is the first step towards empowerment of people with disabilities. The accessible environment includes accessibility of physical infrastructure as well as equal access to knowledge, information and communication technologies. To achieve universal accessibility, Government of India has launched a nation-wide flagship “Accessible India Campaign” (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) that enables persons with disabilities to gain access to equal opportunities, to live independently and to participate fully in all aspects of community life.

This research paper endeavors to review these key policy initiatives and tries to examine the challenges and future possibilities in the context of persons with disabilities in India. Finally, this paper concludes by suggesting the ways to achieve the goal of inclusive and accessible India through collective efforts at the government, non-government, community and individual level.

KEYWORDS: *Accessibility, Disability, Empowerment, Inclusion, Persons with Disabilities*