

**BLOCK 5**  
**GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND  
BARRIER-FREE ENVIRONMENT FOR  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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## BLOCK 5 INTRODUCTION

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All over the world, persons with disabilities and their family members along with professionals, government agencies and other representatives, are influencing and bringing about positive changes in the way the rights and needs of persons with disabilities are being protected in national and international laws. Significant legislations have been passed in our country to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities. In this Block, you will read the highlights of these legislations.

You will also become aware of the roles and responsibilities that citizens without disabilities need to play to ensure that the interests and rights of persons with disabilities are protected and promoted.

This information is vital not only for you to complete this Course but even later on. Often, persons with disabilities and their family members may not be aware of the numerous central and state government supported schemes, concessions, benefits and other allowances relevant for them. You can help to spread awareness and to facilitate persons with disabilities and their family members to apply for appropriate benefits.

In addition to legal and governmental provisions, it is essential to recognize the environmental barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating in society. These barriers—whether physical, social, or psychological—restrict access to common spaces such as schools, hospitals, parks, and public transportation.

Understanding and addressing these barriers is crucial to creating inclusive, barrier-free environments that ensure equal participation for all. Through universal design principles, we can create spaces that cater to diverse needs, promoting accessibility and independence for persons with disabilities in various aspects of life.

**Unit 20** gives an overview of the national legislations and Acts that directly affect persons with disabilities. These are the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992, Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, National Trust Act, 1999, Right to Education Act, 2009 and Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Under the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992, you will understand how the government attempts to create a pool of trained, qualified and recognized human resource to work in the disability sector and under the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016 you will learn various rights and provisions for persons with disabilities to ensure their full participation and inclusion in society.

**Unit 21** lists the major schemes, concessions, and benefits available for children with disabilities and their family members and the agencies to contact to apply for these. You are not expected to memorize the objectives or the provisions of the various schemes.

However, you should be aware of the broad emphasis areas of the schemes.

**Unit 22** discusses the concepts of access, accessibility, and the barriers that prevent individuals, especially person with disabilities, from fully participating in their environment. While many people can move around freely, some individuals face environmental barriers that limit their access to common spaces, such as schools, hospitals, and parks. These barriers, whether physical, social, psychological or print, restrict participation and affect overall development, particularly for those with disabilities. The Unit emphasizes the importance of creating accessible environments and introduces the concept of universal design, which promotes inclusivity by addressing the needs of all individuals. You will learn about different principles of universal design of learning (UDL) which includes providing multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement to accommodate diverse learners, needs and preferences.

**Unit 23** discusses the importance of removing barriers in buildings (architectural barriers) and hence making public buildings, homes, and schools accessible to persons with disabilities. It describes solutions such as ramps, wider doorways, leveled floors, and adapted toilets. It describes home adaptations like modified kitchens and beds to promote independence. Schools should incorporate ramps, handrails, and seating arrangements to accommodate students with disabilities.

Overall, the unit emphasizes the need for universal design to ensure inclusivity and equal access for everyone in various environments.

Most of us are able to move around in our community fairly easily. We can go to park nearby hospital, cinema hall, religious places and markets. We take this freedom and choice for granted. Little do we realize, that for some people the environment itself becomes a barrier in accomplishing various activities. In the case of many persons with disabilities, it is the environment – not the disability – that prevents access to certain areas and comes in the way of their moving around freely.

**Unit 24** emphasizes on creating barrier-free environments in parks, public transport, and roads. Additionally, the unit highlights the significance of public awareness campaigns to foster inclusivity and implement signages as per universal design.



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## **UNIT 20 EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, LEGISLATIONS, PROGRAMMES AND SCHEMES OF THE GOVERNMENT**

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### **Structure**

- 20.1 Introduction
- 20.2 The Constitution of India
- 20.3 Schemes and Programmes for Implementation of Integrated Education
- 20.4 Schemes and Programmes for Implementation of Inclusive Education
- 20.5 Legislations and Acts Related to Persons with Disabilities
  - 20.5.1 The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992
  - 20.5.2 Persons with Disability Act, 1995
  - 20.5.3 The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities, Act, 1999
  - 20.5.4 Right to Education Act, 2009
  - 20.5.5 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
- 20.6 Policies for Persons with Disabilities
  - 20.6.1 National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006
  - 20.6.2 National Education Policy 2020
- 20.7 Summing Up
- 20.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

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### **20.1 INTRODUCTION**

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This Unit describes some of the measures taken at the national level to promote full participation of persons with disabilities in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the society. Persons with disabilities are an integral part of the society and enjoy all the rights of citizenship, just as the citizens without disabilities.

According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2023 estimates, approximately 16% of the world's population is currently grappling with various forms of disability. In India, as per the 2011 Census, the proportion of persons with disabilities is recorded at 2.21% of the total population. The Survey of Persons with Disabilities in India, conducted during the 76<sup>th</sup> round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) from July to December 2018, indicates that persons with disabilities make up 2.2% of the overall Indian population. Meeting the needs of such large numbers requires large financial resources, political will and a positive change in the society's attitude, policies and systems. Constitutional provisions, policies and legislation can play a major role in increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in education, employment, recreation, health, transportation and travel and can also help in reducing discrimination and barriers.

The Government of India, to further reaffirm its commitment, has formulated various Policies, Legislations, Programmes and Schemes which have

changed and influenced the life of persons with disabilities by empowering them to participate in different spheres of life.

The key Policies and Legislations enacted by the Government of India directly affecting persons with disabilities are described in the sections below in the chronological order in which these came into being:

### **Objectives**

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- to examine the constitutional provisions ensuring the rights and access to education for children with disabilities;
- to understand the significance and implementation strategies of programmes designed for integrated education and inclusive education, ensuring the participation of children with disabilities in educational settings;
- to explore the key legislations and acts such as Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992, Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, National Trust Act, 1999, Right to Education Act, 2009 and Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016 focusing on their implications for educational practices and rights of children with disabilities;
- to critically examine the National Education Policy 2020 and its strategies for addressing the needs and challenges of children with disabilities in the education system; and
- to synthesize the various policies, acts and schemes discussed and their collective impact on promoting inclusive education and rights of children with disabilities.

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## **20.2 CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS**

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The Indian Constitution was adopted on 26 November, 1949 by the Constituent Assembly. The Fundamental Rights and the Directives Principles constitute the core of the Constitution. These reflect the basic principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Constitution of India applies uniformly to all Indian citizens. The Constitution of India gives equal respect, dignity, rights, responsibilities and status to all citizens of the country, irrespective of their caste, creed, gender, religion, language, economic status, disability and any other differences.

**Under the Constitution of India, people with disabilities have been guaranteed all fundamental rights as an equal with other citizens of the country.** Specifically, the following Fundamental Rights are clearly very relevant for people with disabilities:

- **Article 15** gives all citizens of India equal right to use public facilities such as shops, public restaurants, places of public entertainment or public utilities such as wells, bathing ghats, roads and places of public interest. The Constitutions further emphasizes that governments will take necessary steps to ensure that marginalized groups such as women, children and people with disabilities do not face any barriers and participate equally in the use of facilities, as stated above.

- All citizens are guaranteed their right to live and personal freedom under **Article 21**. This is further emphasized for persons with disabilities in the various legislations enacted by the Government of India.
- Amendments to the Constitution wherein free and compulsory education for all children from age six to fourteen years has been made a fundamental right as **Article 21A**, is equally significant for children with disabilities. This Act has been discussed in detail further.

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## 20.3 SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED EDUCATION

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The following two initiatives by the Government have contributed to integrated education in the country.

### a) Project for Integrated Education Development (PIED) and Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC)

In 1986, Government of India launched the Project for Integrated Education Development with the support from UNICEF. Initially, this project was implemented in 10 sites in rural and urban areas to integrate children with moderate disabilities in regular schools. Though this project was aimed at children with moderate disabilities, but children with multiple and severe disabilities children were also included in PIED due to shortage of special schools and also to fulfil the objective of universalizing elementary education (UEE). This Project was successful and many children with disabilities continued with their education, leading to high retention rates of children with disabilities in schools. Seeing the success of this project, MHRD in 1992 named this project as Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) Scheme. Following opportunities were provided under this programme:

- Children with disabilities were provided educational facilities in normal schools.
- Financial assistance was given to States for salaries of special teachers.
- Supply of aids and appliances for children with disabilities.
- Training facilities were provided for special teachers.
- Removal of infrastructural barriers in the schools.
- Resource support in terms of teaching-learning materials, assistive devices.
- Scope for pre-school education for children with disabilities.
- Counselling for parents of children with disabilities.
- Early detection of children with disabilities.

Through this programme pedagogical approaches to meet the needs of children with disabilities were implemented and evaluation of the Programme revealed that both enrolment and retention of children with disabilities in schools had increased. This programme created awareness

in regular schools about the education of children with disabilities. Of course, as explained in the model of integrated education above, for some classes/ subjects children with disabilities studied with children without disabilities in the regular classroom and for some subjects/ areas they were taken out of the class to a separate resource room for specific teaching.

**b) District Primary Education Project (DPEP)**

In 1994 DPEP was implemented by the Government of India with the assistance from the World Bank. DPEP focused on districts where female literacy rate was below average. 176 districts of 15 States were covered under this programme. 60% of the child population of the country got benefit from this programme. In 1997 Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) was formally merged into DPEP. Main objectives of DPEP were as follows:

- Increase the enrolment and retention of children between 6-14 years.
- Quality improvement in primary education.
- Ensuring improvements in classroom process.
- Provision of decentralized academic support.
- Capacity building of institutions.
- Development of skills and competencies amongst teachers.

To facilitate the integration of children with disabilities in regular schools, the DPEP included the following provisions on a large scale, i.e.

- In-service training of general teachers for early detection of children with disabilities; early assessment of children with disabilities; for using aids meant for children with disabilities.
- Developing and providing appropriate infrastructural facilities in schools.
- Opening new schools wherever necessary.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

- 1) Fill in the Blanks with appropriate words.
  - a) In 1986, the Government of India launched the ..... development with the support from UNICEF.
  - b) The success for project for integrated education, lead to high ..... rates of children with disabilities in schools.
  - c) The IEDC project was converted into a scheme by MHRD,in .....
  - d) In 1994, the Government of India implemented the ..... with assistance from the .....
- 2) What were the four steps taken under the DPEP project to integrate children with disabilities in regular schools?

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## 20.4 SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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The Government through its programmes, policies and Acts has shifted its focus to inclusive education. The Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan and the IEDSS scheme are two such programmes discussed below. Subsequently with the adoption of the Right to Education Act, 2009, the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 and the National Education Policy, 2020 the Government has fully committed itself to inclusive education. These Acts and Policies have been discussed further in this Unit.

- **Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**

This flagship programme of the Government of India was launched in 2002 with the aim of achieving the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education. A zero-rejection policy was adopted under SSA. In zero rejection policy no child is denied enrolment in any school by authorities due to any condition including disability. This ensured that every Child with Special Needs (CWSN), irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, would be provided meaningful and quality education. **The SSA promoted the concept of inclusive education for the first time in the schools and the general teachers were supported by resource (special) teachers and resource materials in the regular classroom to cater the needs of children with special needs.**

- **Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS), 2009**

Because SSA was concerned with education up to the 8<sup>th</sup> standard, there was a need to provide for education of children with disabilities in the secondary classes. The Scheme of Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) was launched from the year 2009-10. This Scheme replaced the earlier scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) and provided assistance like resource materials, transportation facilities for the inclusive education of the disabled children in classes IX-XII. This scheme is now subsumed under the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) from 2013.

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## 20.5 LEGISLATIONS AND ACTS RELATED TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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The following legislations have been enacted by the Government of India for the benefit of persons with disabilities.

### 20.5.1 The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992

The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) was set up as a registered society in 1986. On September, 1992 the RCI Act was enacted by Parliament and the Council became a Statutory Body on 22 June 1993. The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act was amended in 2000. The Act came into force in

response to the need to have uniformity and ensure minimum standards and quality of education and training in the field of disability. The objective of RCI Act is to regulate the training policies and programmes in the field of disability and rehabilitation and prescribe minimum standards of education and training of various categories of professional dealing with persons with disabilities.

The Rehabilitation Council of India is entrusted with the responsibility to develop standardized syllabi for various rehabilitation courses, and to regulate and monitor services given to persons with disabilities. The training institutions offering disability and rehabilitation programmes needs recognition from RCI for offering programmes.

The Rehabilitation Council of India also aims to maintain a Central Rehabilitation Register of all qualified professionals and personnel working in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education. Under the Act, action can be taken against unqualified persons delivering services to persons with disabilities. Thus, the Act responds to human resource development needs in the sector of disability. It is mandatory for all professionals who pass out from RCI recognized training centres to register in RCI in order to practice in the field.

Thus, The Rehabilitation Council of India Act has the twin responsibilities/ aims of

- Standardizing and regulating the training of personnel and professionals in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education.
- Maintaining a Central Rehabilitation Register for registration of professionals and personnel working in the field.

### **Recognition of Courses and Personnel**

Various Universities, Training Institutes and NGOs that conduct training programmes are recognized by the Rehabilitation Council of India. These training courses range from Awareness-cum-Training Programmes to Foundation Courses, Certificate, Course, Diploma, Degree and Post Graduate Diploma courses. Training Courses are launched by both distance education and face to face modes. Learners successfully completing courses are eligible to register in the Central Rehabilitation Register maintained by the RCI. Successful learners are registered either under the 'Personnel' or the 'Professional' category depending upon the nature of training they have undergone. Professionals and personnel must also at specific times undergo refresher training by attending various training courses in order to renew their registration.

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

- 1) Fill in the Blanks
  - a) The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act came into force on .....
  - b) The RCI Act responds to the ..... needs in the area of disability

c) Persons who undergo a course recognized by RCI are registered as ..... or ..... in the Central Rehabilitation Register.

2) What are the two main responsibilities of RCI?

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3) Write in your own words the main objectives of RCI.

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### **20.5.2 Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights, and Full Participations) Act, 1995**

This was the first Act that was enacted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. This Act addressed seven conditions of disabilities, which were blindness, low vision, leprosy-cured, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental retardation, and mental illness. The Act focused on education of children with disabilities and stated that it is mandatory to provide free education to children with disabilities in an appropriate environment, until the age of 18 years. An appropriate learning environment is one which offers education to the child in accordance with her/ his abilities. Further such an environment provides a mentally and physically safe platform for learners, which is essential to enable the learners to succeed academically. The goal was to integrate of students with disabilities in the regular school as well as provide special schools for those in need of special education. The aim was to provide an opportunity for schooling for all across the country.

In addition, the Act provided for the following:

- Conducting part-time classes in respect of children with disabilities who having completed education up to class fifth and could not continue their studies on a whole-time basis; Conducting special part-time classes for providing functional literacy for children in the age group of sixteen and above;

- Imparting non-formal education for children with disabilities in rural areas;
- Imparting education through open schools or open universities;
- Conducting class and discussions through interactive electronic or other media;
- Providing every child with disability free of cost special books and equipment's needed for his education.

This Act is now no longer functional as it has been replaced by the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

### **20.5.3 The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities, Act, 1999**

The “National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities” Act, was enacted in 1999. Persons with these disabilities require higher level of supports, long term care and assistance. The National Trust was enacted to protect the rights and create an environment where persons with intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, autism and multiple disabilities and their family members lead a life of care, independence and dignity in their everyday life. The primary objective of the National Trust Act is to enable persons with disabilities to live as independently and as fully as possible within the family, and as close to the family and community, to which they belong. Since persons with these disabilities (autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities) may have complex long-term needs that require multiple interventions, the families may require additional support in order to provide these interventions. It focuses on strengthening the facilities for supporting the persons with disabilities within their own families. This Act has provisions and schemes for persons with disabilities and their family members to get benefits which address these needs and concerns.

The registered organizations that provide need-based support services to persons with disabilities and their families are provided with financial assistance. The Act also has provision for the care and protection of persons with disabilities in the event of death of their parents or guardian.

Two main provisions under the National Trust Act are:

#### **i) Local Level Committees**

The National Trust Act gives guidelines for setting up Local Level Committees (LLC) in the districts of the country. These LLCs are statutory bodies comprising three members – District Magistrate, one representative from a registered organization and a person with disability. The LLC is entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the various provision sand benefits as given by the National Trust Act at the district level. They act as a link between persons with disabilities at the grassroots level and the implementation of the provisions included in the National Trust.

An updated list of the Local Level Committees, details of their representatives and contact details is available in the National Trust website. Details about member in LLCs, schedule of their meetings, contact details of members is available in office of the District Magistrate of respective districts.

**ii) Appointment of Guardians for Persons with Disabilities**

This provision is a milestone for persons with mental retardation, cerebral palsy, autism and multiple disabilities and their family members. Under this provision, a legal guardian may be appointed for a person with disability. The legal guardian may be a member of the family, a relative or another person known to the persons with disability or a registered organization working in the area and known to the person with disability. The application for legal guardianship is submitted to the Local Level Committee of the area. The LLC examines thoroughly all issues pertaining to the application before it grants the guardianship status. The guardian is responsible for the care and maintenance of the person with disability. An appointed guardian can also be removed if he or she is found to neglect the person for whom he is appointed as a guardian or misuses the powers of being a guardian.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

1) Fill in the Blanks

- a) The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act came into force on .....
- b) Persons who undergo a course recognized by RCI are registered as ..... or ..... in the Central Rehabilitation Register.

2) What are the two main responsibilities of RCI?

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3) Mark the following sentences as True (T) and False (F):

- a) The National Trust Act has provisions for appointing legal guardians for persons with disabilities. ( )
- b) Legal guardians once appointed cannot be removed. ( )
- c) Local level committees are responsible for granting legal guardianship. ( )
- d) Only registered organizations can avail various benefits of the schemes supported by National Trust. ( )

## 20.5.4 Right to Education Act, 2009

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, (RTE Act) 2009 is an act of Parliament of India enacted on 04<sup>th</sup> August, 2009. The Act says that every child between six to fourteen years of age will get free and compulsory education at a neighbourhood school. The Act lays down guidelines for bringing about positive changes in the education system that will enable all children who remain excluded from schools (such as poor children, street children, migrant children, children with disabilities and girl child) to be an equal part of the school system and receive quality education. It reaffirms that the system will make necessary changes, adaptations and create support systems that will welcome all children into schools.

Through this Act, inclusive education for children with disabilities has received the much needed attention, resources and opportunities. It promotes inclusive education for children with disabilities. It reaffirms the commitment to provide good quality education, with the appropriate levels of support by skilled teachers in a healthy school environment situated close to a child's house.

The Act has also put the onus of ensuring enrolment, attendance and completion of education on the Government. Both government and non-government agencies will work in close coordination to ensure that provisions under the Act, reach everyone between 6 to 14 years of age, right through the States to the districts, blocks and villages of India.

**Here are some key aspects of the rights of children with disabilities as per the RTE Act 2009:**

### **Non-Discrimination:**

Section 3 (2) of the RTE Act emphasizes the importance of providing elementary education to children with disabilities. The 2012 Amendment further stipulates that a child with multiple and/or severe disabilities is entitled to choose home-based education. The RTE Act 2009 prohibits discrimination against children with disabilities in admission, participation, and completion of education. It ensures that children with disabilities have equal opportunities for education without any discrimination based on their disability. No child is denied admission because of lack of age proof. It prohibits taking of capitation fee and screening procedures for granting admission.

**Preschool Education:** Section 11 of the RTE Act permits the appropriate government to undertake necessary measures to provide free education for children above three years old, aiming to adequately prepare them for elementary school education. The purpose of this provision is to ensure that children in this age group receive the necessary educational preparation before they formally enter elementary school. By offering free education to children above the age of three, the government aims to facilitate their transition into the formal education system and enhance their readiness for elementary school. This initiative aligns with the broader objectives of the RTE Act, which seeks to promote universal access to quality education for all children in India.

**Free Education:** The Act mandates that children with disabilities have the right to receive free education. It prohibits the collection of any kind of fees or charges that may prevent or hinder children with disabilities from accessing education, in a neighbourhood school up to the age of 18 years. There is provision for children with Intellectual Disabilities to complete elementary education even after fourteen years of age. It prohibits use of physical punishment and mental harassment of children. It upholds the right of child to seek transfer to any other school. It prohibits holding back the child in the same class after one academic year and expulsion of child from school.

**Inclusive Education:** The RTE Act 2009 emphasizes the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools. It promotes the concept of inclusive education, where children with disabilities learn and grow alongside their peers without disabilities in mainstream schools.

**Reasonable Accommodations:** The Act requires schools to provide reasonable accommodations and support to children with disabilities. This includes provisions for assistive devices, modifications in teaching methods, curriculum adaptations, and other necessary support services to ensure that children with disabilities can participate and learn effectively.

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** The RTE Act 2009 recognizes the need for individualized education plans for children with disabilities. It promotes the development and implementation of IEPs, which outline specific goals, strategies, and support mechanisms tailored to meet the unique needs of each child with disability.

**Special Training:** The Act emphasizes the importance of providing special training and support services to children with disabilities. It mandates that schools and local authorities take necessary steps to ensure that children with disabilities receive appropriate training, therapies, and interventions to facilitate their educational progress.

**Qualified Teachers:** The Act mandates filling up of vacancies of teachers, in order to maintain pupil-teacher ratio as specified. The Act also emphasizes on the need to train teachers who will be competent to manage a wide range of needs of children coming from diverse backgrounds. The RTE Act 2012 highlights the need for qualified and trained teachers to cater to the educational needs of children with disabilities. It emphasizes the provision of specialized teacher training programs to build the capacity of educators in addressing the diverse needs of children with disabilities. It prohibits deployment of teachers for non-educational purposes. It also lays down terms and conditions of service of teachers.

**Accessibility:** The Act emphasizes the importance of ensuring physical and environmental accessibility in schools for children with disabilities. It mandates that schools be equipped with barrier-free infrastructure, assistive devices, and other necessary facilities to facilitate the accessibility and mobility of children with disabilities. It states that children with disabilities will receive adequate and appropriate support that will enable them to move around, gather information, make friends, learn from a curriculum that

responds to their needs, read and write and take examinations, participate in social and extracurricular activities at school.

**Monitoring and Grievance Redressal:** The RTE Act 2009 establishes mechanisms for monitoring and grievance redressal related to the rights of children with disabilities. It provides avenues for parents, guardians, or organizations to lodge complaints regarding any violation of the rights of children with disabilities and ensures timely resolution of such issues.

By recognizing and addressing the rights of children with disabilities, the RTE Act 2009 aims to create an inclusive and equitable educational system that empowers every child, regardless of their disability, to access quality education and reach their full potential. It is essential for schools, educational authorities, parents, and the community to work together to ensure the effective implementation of these provisions and promote an inclusive educational environment for all children.

### **20.5.5 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD Act), was enacted by the Parliament and implemented in December, 2016 in order to fulfill its commitment and international obligation arising out of India signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Act adopts a social and human rights-based approach to disability and recognizes that persons with disabilities have equal human rights and fundamental freedom just as others in the society.

The RPwD Act, 2016 has listed and recognized 21 conditions as specified disabilities.

#### **Important Provisions of the Act for Education**

The RPwD Act, 2016 has clearly focused on inclusive education where students with and without disabilities learn together in the same learning environment and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities. Such inclusive nature of education not only provide opportunity to children with disabilities for better learning rather gives a strong base for their overall development, life skill and positive attitude towards self and society.

The Act states that right to education is an integral part of the guarantee of equal rights for children with disabilities, and that this education must be provided in an inclusive setting. Earlier inclusive education as a system was restricted to primary government and government aided schools covered under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA). But with the RPwD Act, 2016 no school can deny admission to the child on the basis of disability.

The Act states that:

- i) institutions funded or recognized the government have to admit children with disabilities without discrimination and provide education and opportunities for sports and recreation activities equally with others. In other words, all schools have to provide inclusive education (Section 16).

- ii) Children who have benchmark disability (i.e. more than 40% disability) between the age of six to eighteen years have the right to free education in a neighbourhood school (regular school), or in a special school, as per the choice of the child and the family (Section 31).
- iii) Higher education institutions run by the government another higher education institutions receiving aid from the government have to reserve not less than five per cent seats for students with disabilities and in (Section 32).

The Act emphasize upon inclusive education as appropriate authorities needs to develop and provide facilities to create an inclusive environment and inclusive nature of education so that all children with disabilities could get education irrespective of the nature and type of disabilities in the same school with other students. states that it is the role of school to identify the educational need of each child with disability and provide the required facilities to fulfill the need. Towards this end the educational institutions have to

- iii) make building, campus and various facilities accessible;
- iv) make curriculum modifications based on need identification of children, build teacher capacity, adapt their teaching strategy according to the individual's requirements as well as modify evaluation pattern;
- v) provide necessary support, assistive devices and appropriate technology-based tools, as well as adequate and language-appropriate teaching-learning materials (e.g., textbooks in accessible formats such as large print and Braille);
- vi) detect specific learning disabilities in children at the earliest and take suitable pedagogical and other measures to overcome them;
- vii) monitor participation, progress in terms of attainment levels and completion of education in respect of every student with disability;
- viii) provide transportation facilities to the children with disabilities and also attendant for children with disabilities having high support needs.

The Act also states that the government will establish adequate number of resource centres, with special educators and specially designed teaching-learning materials, to support educational institutions at all levels of school education to meet the learning needs of children with disabilities. This means that the special educators who will be present at the resource centres will provide assistance and guidance to the regular teachers to provide appropriate and meaningful education to children with disabilities in their classrooms. The governments will also train professionals and staff of regular schools to support inclusive education at all levels of school education.

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## **20.6 POLICIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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Two policies pertaining to persons with disabilities are discussed further:

### **20.6.1 National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006**

The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities was released in February 2006. The policy was developed in response to the need to have a comprehensive document that will form the basis of all our decisions and actions in relation to provisions for persons with disabilities.

**The National Policy recognizes that persons with disabilities are valuable human resource for the country and seeks to create an environment that provides them equal opportunities, protection of their rights and full participation in society.**

The policy focusses on early identification, education, rehabilitation programmes, employment, social security, barrier free environment, trained human resources, recreation and cultural options, and access to appropriate aids and appliances.

The policy emphasizes that **children will receive education from pre-school years to primary education, secondary, post secondary and vocational training**. This education will be provided through a continuum of educational options ranging from regular schools, community based rehabilitation programmes. It also ensures home-based programmes for children with severe disabilities, who choose to receive education in this mode. Education will be always provided by trained and qualified persons.

The policy makes a special mention of **protecting the rights of young children with disabilities to access care, protection and security**. It also highlights the need to ensure that children with all levels of ability are included in accessing education, recreation, rehabilitation, health and other specialized services.

**Women with disabilities get a special recognition in this policy.** The policy focuses on supporting programmes which will provide education, employment and rehabilitation, developed for the unique needs of women with disabilities. The policy also highlights the need to protect women with disabilities against abuse and exploitation.

**The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the nodal agency to implement the provisions included in the National Policy.** The Ministry coordinates the implementation of the policy in collaboration with many agencies including other related government agencies, disabled people's organizations, NGOs working in the area of disability, representatives of family or parent associations and experts and professionals in the field.

**The full copy of the National Policy is available at:**  
**[www.socialjustice.nic.in](http://www.socialjustice.nic.in)**

### **20.6.2 National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)**

Government of India has formulated National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in a very democratic way to realize the spirit of the Constitution for providing equal educational opportunities to all. The National Education Policy intends to provide quality education to all and for realizing this, many initiatives have

been outlined for providing opportunities to various students at various levels to enter the education system, sustain there, learn from it and subsequently, excel in their life. If we see this Policy from a lense of inclusion of students with disabilities, we will find that the entire Policy is articulating the concepts that have been emphasized by the special educators; we can say that it is speaking the language that special educators speak. In this sense this Policy is a landmark for providing inclusive education to persons with disabilities.

The aim of NEP, 2020 is to produce engaged, productive and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive and plural society. The five pillars of NEP are access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability and all of these have been integral part of inclusive education.

This Policy has made a paradigm shift for the entire education system that will now enable the students to learn how to think instead of telling them what to think. The special educators do the same thing with a special student while teaching different concepts at various levels.

### **Fundamental Principles of NEP Suitable for Inclusion of Students with Disabilities**

The following fundamental principles stated in the NEP, 2020 will promote inclusive education and therefore these are beneficial for students with disabilities, as well.

- a) Recognizing, identifying and fostering the unique capabilities of each student by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres.
- b) Highest priority to achieving fundamental literacy and numeracy by all students.
- c) Flexibility so that learners have the ability to choose their learning trajectories and programmes.
- d) No hard separation between arts and science, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, vocational and academic streams.
- e) Multidisciplinary and a holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities and sports.
- f) Emphases on conceptual understanding.
- g) Emphases on creativity and critical thinking
- h) Emphases on Life skills such as communication, cooperation, team work and resilience.
- i) Focus on regular formative assessment for learning.
- j) Use of technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for Divyang students and educational planning and management.
- k) Respect for diversity.
- l) Full equity and inclusion.
- m) Synergy in curriculum across all level of education.

The professionals working in disability and rehabilitation sector will undoubtedly agree that the above-mentioned fundamental principles of the National Educational Policy, 2020 have been integral part of special education and rehabilitation. Most of the time the special educators focus their lesson plans and teaching for realizing these principles. They try to provide competency and need-based education to students with disabilities. While implementing NEP the strategies needs to be planned carefully to suit the needs of Students with Disabilities.

### **Approaches and Strategies for Education of Children with Disabilities in NEP, 2020 – Opportunities and Challenges**

NEP, 2020 has identified many provisions for ensuring inclusive education. **It has recognized all the three options for education of children with disabilities made under the earlier two acts** i.e. (Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (“RtE Act”) and Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (“RPwD Act”) which are:

- i) **Special Schools** (stated in RPwD Act, 2016)
- ii) **Neighbourhood Schools/Inclusive Schools** (stated in RPwD Act, 2016 & RtE Act, 2009)
- iii) **Home-based Education** (for children with severe and profound disabilities who are unable to go to schools) (stated in RtE Act, 2009)

**In addition to the above provisions, the NEP 2020 has adopted the concept of School Complex (SC)** which was first given in the report of Kothari Commission 1964-66, which was hailed as an innovation in School Education at that time. ‘School Complex’ refers to a network of a group of Elementary Schools, Secondary Schools and Senior Secondary Schools which are located in the same neighbourhood area and the idea is that these schools form a School Complex will share resources amongst each other. So, for example, with reference to education of children with disabilities in regular school, the special educator will not be appointed full-time in one particular school. Instead, the special educator will be appointed at the level of the School Complex and she/ he will visit the various schools that come under the School Complex on a rotation basis and give support and guidance to the class teachers and parents during her /his visit. In this way, this special educator (also called resource teacher) serves three to four schools (or more) in an area. If she has four schools under her, in a month of 24 working days, she may be able to visit each school six times. The advantage of this model is that it is cost-effective. But it has the challenge that the resource teacher is not available on a daily basis in a school and this can impact the quality of education being received by the children with disabilities in the school. How often a teacher will be able to visit a school in the School Complex, depends upon the number of schools that come under the School Complex, the location of these schools and how far these are from each other. In places where the schools are spread far away or where the geographical terrain is difficult and transportation is a problem, the visits of the special educator to the school become lesser, affecting the quality of education.

### Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words.
  - a) The RPwD Act, 2016 has recognized ..... conditions as specified disabilities.
  - b) Children with benchmark disability are those who have more than ....% disability.
  - c) Higher education institutions run by the government and other higher education institutions receiving aid from the government have to reserve not less than ..... seats for students with disabilities, as per Section 32.
  - d) RPwD Act, 2016 mandates that children with disabilities have the right to receive free education in a neighbourhood school up to the age of ..... years.
  - e) Five pillars of NEP are....., ....., ..... and .....
- 2) State whether the following statements are True or False
  - 1) The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to provide quality education to all students, regardless of their background or abilities. ( )
  - 2) NEP 2020 emphasizes a shift towards telling students what to think rather than teaching them how to think. ( )
  - 3) NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of fundamental literacy and numeracy as the highest priority for all students. ( )
  - 4) According to NEP 2020, special educators will be appointed full-time in individual schools to support children with disabilities. ( )
  - 5) NEP 2020 promotes the concept of School Complex, where a group of schools share resources including special educators, to support inclusive education. ( )

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## 20.7 SUMMING UP

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- National measures aim for full participation of persons with disabilities. Globally, approximately 16% have disabilities; in India, it's 2.21%.

### Constitutional Provisions:

- The Constitution of India guarantees persons with disabilities all civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights as an equal with other citizens of the country.
- Article 21A guarantees children with disabilities the fundamental rights for free and compulsory education from age six to fourteen years.

### Schemes and Programs for Integrated Education:

- Project for Integrated Education Development (PIED) and Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) aimed at inclusion.
- PIED successfully integrated children with disabilities into regular schools.

- District Primary Education Project (DPEP) focused on primary education quality and enrollment.

**Programs for Inclusive Education:**

- Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) promotes universal elementary education.
- Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) extends support to secondary classes.
- Both programs aim for inclusive education and support services.

**Legislations and Acts:**

- The important legislations enacted for persons with disabilities are RCI Act, 1992, Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, National Trust Act, 1999, The National Trust Act and Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities was enacted on 30 December, 1999 and RPwD Act, 2016.
- The National Trust Act makes provision to appoint legal guardians for persons with disabilities. The legal guardian may be a member of the family, a relative or another person known to the person with disability or a registered organization working in the area and known to the person with disability.
- The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act came into force on 22 June, 1993 and was amended in 2000. RCI ensures uniformity and minimum standards and quality of education and training in the disability field.
- Learners undergoing RCI recognized course can register either under the 'Personnel' or the 'Professional' category. Top of Form

**Right to Education Act (RtE) 2009:**

- Enacted on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, ensuring free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14.
- Aims to include marginalized groups like poor children, street children, migrants, and those with disabilities.
- Focuses on inclusive education for children with disabilities, prohibiting discrimination in admission and ensuring free education.
- Emphasizes reasonable accommodations, individualized education plans (IEPs), and specialized teacher training.
- Mandates physical and environmental accessibility in schools and establishes monitoring and grievance redressal mechanisms.

**Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD) 2016:**

- Enacted in December 2016, adopts a human rights-based approach to disability, recognizing equal rights and freedoms.
- Lists 21 specified disabilities and promotes inclusive education, prohibiting discrimination in admission.
- Guarantees free education for children with benchmark disabilities (more than 40%) up to 18 years.
- Requires government higher education institutions to reserve at least 5% of seats for students with disabilities.

### **National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006:**

- Released in February 2006, aims for equal opportunities, rights protection, and full participation in society for persons with disabilities.
- Emphasizes early identification, education, rehabilitation, employment, social security, and barrier-free environments.
- Highlights the protection of rights and inclusion of children with disabilities in education, recreation, and specialized services.

### **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:**

- Aims for quality education for all, emphasizing access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability.
- Promotes inclusive education by recognizing and fostering the unique capabilities of each student.
- Supports fundamental literacy and numeracy, flexibility in learning trajectories, and multidisciplinary education.
- Highlights the use of technology, respect for diversity, and full equity and inclusion.
- Adopts the concept of School Complex to share resources among neighbouring schools, including support for children with disabilities but faces challenges in ensuring consistent support due to resource allocation and geographical factors.

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## **20.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES**

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### **Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

- 1) a) Project for integrated education  
b) Retention  
c) 1992  
d) District Primary Education Project (DPEP), World Bank
- 2) DPEP included provisions such as in-service training of general teachers for early detection of children with disabilities, developing and providing appropriate infrastructural facilities in schools, and opening new schools wherever necessary.

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

- 1) a) 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 1993  
b) Personnel or Professional
- 2) i) Standardizing and regulating the training of personnel and professionals in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education.  
ii) Maintaining a Central Rehabilitation Register for registration of professionals and personnel working in the field.
- 3) a) (T)  
b) (F)

**Government Support  
and Barrier-Free  
Environment for  
Persons with  
Disabilities**

c) (T)

d) (T)

**Check Your Progress Exercise 3**

- 1)
  - a) 21
  - b) Section 31
  - c) five per cent
  - d) 18
  - e) Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability
- 2)
  - 1) True
  - 2) False
  - 3) True
  - 4) False
  - 5) True



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# UNIT 21 GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED SCHEMES, CONCESSION AND ENTITLEMENTS

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### 21.5 Summing Up

### 21.6 Answer to Check Your Progress Exercises

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## 21.1 INTRODUCTION

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Though a number of concessions and schemes have been introduced by the Government of India for persons with disabilities, lack of awareness about these schemes and facilities is a major challenge in their utilization by persons with disabilities. Lately, the Central and State Governments, through their own networks and with the active participation of NGOs, are trying to reach persons with disabilities in the smaller cities and rural areas.

Through this Unit, you will become aware of the major concessions, schemes, and facilities available for persons with disabilities.

### Objectives

- after reading this Unit, you will become aware about the benefits and concessions available for the persons with disabilities in the country;
- discuss in brief about national institutes set up by ministry of social justice and empowerment; and
- know about the schemes for the persons with disabilities in the country.

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## 21.2 SCHEMES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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### 21.2.1 Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

#### 21.2.1.1 Scheme for Providing Employment in the Private Sector

The Government has launched the scheme of providing incentives to the employers in the private sector to employ persons with disabilities. Under this scheme, the employer's contribution to the Employees' Provident Fund and Employees' State Insurance for the first three years is paid by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. This covers all employees with disabilities working in private sector with a monthly salary upto Rs.25,000/- per month.

#### 21.2.1.2 Scheme of Assistance to Persons with Disabilities for Purchase/ Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP Scheme)

The main objective of this scheme is to provide durable, sophisticated, scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances to persons with disabilities that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation. The person needs to have a valid disability certificate, to access the appliances. Wherever needed, corrective surgeries are also conducted before providing the assistive device.

This scheme is implemented through Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), National Institutes, Composite Regional Centres, District Disability Rehabilitation Centres, State Handicapped Development Corporations and specific NGOs.

### 21.2.1.3 Schemes of National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation

National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC) supports persons with disabilities for self-employment by providing loans, supporting them to gain education and training after completion of schooling, providing opportunities for upgradation of technical and entrepreneurial skills, providing guidance for proper and efficient management of their production units. NHFDC also helps persons with disabilities in marketing their finished goods and assists in procurement of raw material. Some of the schemes of this Corporation are the following:

#### a) Divyangjan Swavalamban Yojana

- The main objective of the Scheme is to assist the persons with disabilities by providing concessional loan for starting any activity contributing directly or indirectly to income generation.
- Financial support is provided for pursuing higher education after class 12<sup>th</sup> (UG, PG, Professional courses and other courses approved by UGC/AICTE/ICAR/Government etc.) or for pursuing vocational or skill development (ITI, Diploma any other course leading to enhancement of employment or self-employment).
- Financial support is provided for purchase and/or fitment of any assistive device(s)/customization/retrofitting or conversion of available machine, equipment, vehicle to disabled-friendly mode.

#### b) Vishesh Microfinance Yojana

The objective of the scheme is to provide prompt and need-based finance at reasonable rate of interest to persons with disabilities to pursue small/micro business and developmental activities.

#### c) National Scholarship for Persons with Disabilities

Scholarships are provided to enable persons with disabilities to pursue education at various levels. Detailed information is available on the web link [www.scholarships.gov.in](http://www.scholarships.gov.in). Brief description of each of the scholarships is given below:

#### d) Pre-matric and Post-matric Scholarship Scheme

Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to the students with disabilities for studying at the pre-matric level (Class IX and X) and Post Matric level (Class XI, XII and upto Graduation Degree / Diploma level). The financial assistance includes scholarship, book grant, escort / reader allowance, etc.

#### e) Top Class Education from Institutes of Excellence

Under this scheme scholarships are provided for pursuing Graduate, Postgraduate and Diploma level programmes from notified institutes of excellence. Fifty per cent scholarships are reserved for girl candidates with disabilities. Scholarship includes tuition fees, maintenance, books and stationery, aids and appliances.

**f) National Overseas Scholarships**

This scheme provides financial assistance to students with disabilities for pursuing Master Degree and Ph.D. abroad. The scholarship amount includes maintenance allowance, contingency allowance, tuition fees and cost of air tickets etc.

**g) National Fellowship for M.Phil and Ph.D.**

The National Fellowship Scheme supports students with disabilities to pursue higher education leading to degrees such as M. Phil and Ph.D. in any university recognized by UGC. Under the Scheme, 200 Fellowships per year are granted to students with disabilities. In case of non-availability of adequate number of students with disabilities, the number of fellowships not availed during a year may be carried forward to the next academic session.

**h) Free Coaching for Recruitment and Entrance Examinations**

Free coaching is provided to students with disabilities to appear in competitive examinations conducted by the Union/ State Public Service Commissions for Class A and B Government jobs and admission to technical and professional courses. The coaching classes are run by reputed coaching institutes/centres of Central/State Governments and Universities, as well as registered private institutions/NGOs.

**i) Saksham Scholarship Scheme**

The Scheme supports students with disabilities to pursue technical education.

**21.2.1.4 Scheme for Providing Financial Assistance under National Fund for Persons with Disabilities**

This scheme supports the following components.

- Exhibitions/workshops to showcase the products including paintings, handicraft etc made by persons with disabilities.
- Support to persons with benchmark disabilities who have excelled in sports/fine arts/music/dance/film/theatre/literature at the State level to participate in the National and International events.
- Support certain exclusive needs of persons with high support needs as recommended by the Assessment Boards on specific recommendation by the States on a case-to- case basis.

**21.2.1.5 Scheme on “Research on Disability-related Technology, Products and Issues”**

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched a scheme on “Research on Disability-related Technology, Products and Issues”. The objective of the scheme is to promote research on

- service models and programmes on the basis of life cycle needs
- holistic development of the individuals and their families
- creating an enabling environment for the empowerment of the persons with disabilities

- prevention and prevalence of disability and
- application of science and technology for the development of indigenous, appropriate aids and appliances.

The scheme has following 2 components:

- Research and development of assistive technology and product development devices.
- Scheme for study/research/survey/internship and periodical collection of data related to disability.

#### 21.2.1.6 Schemes of the National Trust

The National Trust is a statutory body of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. It was set up under the “National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities” Act, 1999. The primary objective of the National Trust is to enable persons with disabilities to live as independently as possible within, and as close to the family and community, to which they belong. Towards this end, the National Trust aims to provide support to the family as well as persons with disabilities to live within their own families.

Since persons with these core disabilities (autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities) may have complex long-term needs that require multiple interventions, the families may require additional support in order to provide these interventions. The National Trust has some schemes which address these needs and concerns. Given below are brief details of the ongoing schemes supported by the National Trust.

##### a) DISHA (Early Intervention and School Readiness Scheme)

This is an early intervention and school readiness scheme for children of age with disabilities upto 10 years. This scheme aims at setting up DISHA centres for early intervention for children with disabilities. Early intervention programmes, therapies, training and counseling support are provided in these centres.



*Children engaged in action the special educator engaging children with disabilities in play-based activities to promote their all round development*

**b) VIKAAS (Day Care)**

This is a daycare scheme for persons with autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability and multiple disabilities, above 10 years of age for enhancing interpersonal and vocational skills. This scheme helps in supporting family members of persons with disabilities to get some time for themselves during the day to fulfill other responsibilities, as their child with disability will be taken care of children for at least six hours in a day by the daycare centre staff. At the daycare various age-specific activities are organized for children's growth and development.



*Daycare centre for children with disabilities: Specialized seating arrangements, enable children with cerebral palsy to participate in activities*

**c) SAMARTH (Respite Care)**

This scheme aims to provide residential facilities – both short-term (respite care) and long term (prolonged care) to person with disabilities. Organizations/associations registered with the National Trust are eligible to apply for this scheme. To implement this scheme, the Organization must function within the same community as the persons with disabilities it aims to reach out to.

**d) GHARAUNDA (Group Home for Adults)**

This scheme provides lifelong shelter and care to persons with disabilities in group homes. This scheme is in response to a common concern of parents of children with disabilities about the care and protection of their child with disability after their death. The scheme aims to provide minimum quality, lifelong care for persons with autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual impairment and multiple disabilities at an affordable price.

**e) NIRAMAYA (Health Insurance Scheme)**

This scheme has been developed in response to the urgent need to provide health insurance cover for persons with disabilities, especially

persons with developmental disabilities. In the typical health insurance sector, persons with disabilities and their family members find it difficult to access health insurance products. And when insurance is available, the costs are very high for the person and his/her family. The Niramaya scheme is a health insurance scheme for persons with disabilities covered under the National Trust Act, who are below the poverty line. All persons with disabilities will be eligible and included in this scheme. The scheme covers many health-related aspects, namely regular medical checkups, hospitalization, therapeutic services, corrective surgery, transportation, conditions requiring repetitive medical intervention and hospitalization, and so on.

**f) SAHYOGI (Caregiver Training Scheme)**

Under this scheme, known as Caregiver's Scheme or Sahayogi scheme, persons wanting to train as a Caregiver can receive training at two levels. The basic level, Level 1 comprises of 25 days of classroom training followed by 4 months of on-the-job training. Caregivers keen to pursue further learning can do the Level 2 course which takes over 5 months. Under this scheme a Caregiver's Cell (CGC) is established in each selected NGO. The role of Caregiver's Cell is to carry out caregiver training, to facilitate employment of Caregivers, to register Care-seekers i.e. persons with disabilities and their families who wish to seek the assistance of caregivers.

**g) GYAN PRABHA (Educational Support)**

This is a scholarship scheme for persons with autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual impairment and multiple disabilities. The scheme aims to encourage them to pursue vocational training/professional course after their schooling which will enable them to develop their skills and obtain meaningful employment and lead a life with dignity.

**h) PRERNA (Marketing Assistance)**

PRERNA is a marketing assistance scheme to create viable and widespread channels for sale of products and services produced by persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities. This scheme aims at providing funds to participate in events such as exhibitions, *meals*, fairs etc. to sell the products made by persons with disabilities.

**i) SAMBHAV (Aids and Assistive Devices)**

This is a scheme to set up additional resource centres in each city, to collate and collect the aids, software and other forms of assistive devices useful for persons with disabilities. These aids, software and assistive devices are displayed in these centres with a facility for demonstration so that persons with disabilities can have an idea about these. It is expected that the resource centre should construct a bedroom, kitchen and a model bathroom set up which is accessible for person with disabilities and have the assistive devices which are useful to improve the quality of life of person with disabilities.

**j) BADHTE KADAM (Awareness, Community Interaction and Innovative Project)**

This scheme supports registered organisations of the National Trust to carry out activities for increasing the awareness of the disabilities covered by the National Trust. The objective of this scheme is to raise awareness in the public regarding persons with disabilities and encourage their inclusion in the society, promote social integration and participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life. The scheme aims to disseminate information on preventive strategies for persons with disabilities, sensitize stakeholders and publicize the benefits of National Trust Schemes in the community.

**k) ASPIRATION**

Under this scheme, a Play School is established for children with disabilities between the age group of 3-6 years. The play school functions for at least 4 hours and prepares children with disabilities to attend school – either mainstream or special schools. It also carries out an early intervention programme for children with developmental disabilities in the age group of 0-6 years.

**l) ARUNIM**

ARUNIM or Association for Rehabilitation under National Trust Initiative of Marketing is a marketing federation for the welfare of persons with autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual impairment and multiple disabilities. ARUNIM is established as a non-profit society, under the Societies Registration Act of India, to support its members by taking initiatives for marketing the products made by persons with disabilities.

**21.2.1.7 National Action Plan for Skill Development**

The Government has launched the National Action Plan for Skill Development with the aim of covering 2.5 million persons with disabilities by the year 2022 through various stakeholders.

The Skill Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPwD) has been set up in the year 2015 to offer persons with disabilities meaningful, industry relevant, skill-based training. This Council was promoted by the Confederation of Indian Industries under the aegis of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. It targets skill development of persons with disabilities as per industry needs, which can help them to be gainfully employed and contribute to India's growing economy. SCPwD aims to formulate local and national-level strategies for shaping the future of persons with disabilities in India.

**21.2.1.8 National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities**

Every year on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities i.e. 3<sup>rd</sup> December, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment confers National Awards on persons with disabilities, individuals, institutions, districts for outstanding work done by them in the field of empowerment of persons with disabilities.

## 21.2.2 Ministry of Education

### 21.2.2.1 Samagra Shiksha Scheme

The Samagra Shiksha Scheme aims to ensure that all children have access to quality education with an equitable and inclusive classroom environment which should take care of their diverse background, multilingual needs, different academic abilities and make them active participants in the learning process. It supports new pedagogical and curricular structure of school education (5+3+3+4).

The Scheme covers 1.16 million schools, over 156 million students and 5.7 million Teachers of Government and Aided schools (from pre-primary to senior secondary level) by involving all stakeholders of the school ecosystem i.e. teachers, teacher educators, students, parents, community, school management committees, SCERTs, DIETs, BITEs, Block resource Persons, Cluster resource persons, volunteers for providing quality, inclusive and equitable education.

The objectives of this scheme are to Implementing the recommendation of NEP 2020; Support the States and UTs in implementing RTE Act, 2009; Focus on Early Childhood Care and Education; Emphasis on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy; Thrust on Holistic, Integrated, Inclusive and activity based Curriculum and Pedagogy; Provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students; Bridging Social and Gender Gaps in School Education; Ensuring equity and inclusion at all levels of school education; Strengthening and up-gradation of SCERTs/SIE and DIETs; Ensuring safe, secure and conducive learning environment and minimum standards in schooling provisions and Promoting vocationalisation of education.

#### 21.2.2.2 Scheme of Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS)

The Scheme of Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) was launched in the year 2009-10. This Scheme has replaced the earlier scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC). It provides assistance for the inclusive education of children with disabilities studying in tenth and twelfth classes. From the year 2013 this scheme has been subsumed under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA).

The aim of this scheme is to enable all students with disabilities, to pursue further four years of secondary schooling after completing eight years of elementary schooling in an inclusive and enabling environment.

The scheme covers all children with disabilities studying at the secondary stage in Government, local body and Government-aided schools. Girls with the disabilities have received a special focus in this scheme so that they have access to secondary schools and get guidance for developing their potential. Setting up of Model inclusive schools in every State is also envisaged under this scheme.

Under this scheme medical and educational assessments are done and the books and stationery, uniforms, transport allowance, reader allowance, stipend for girls, support services, assistive devices, boarding the lodging

facility, therapeutic services, teaching learning materials, etc. are provided to students with disabilities. The scheme also focuses on appointment of special education teachers, allowances for general teachers for teaching such children, teacher training, orientation of school administrators, establishment of resource room, providing barrier free environment, etc. In this scheme 100 per cent assistance from central Government is provided for all items covered in the scheme. The State governments are only required to make provisions for scholarship of Rs. 600/- per child with disabilities per annum.

### **21.2.2.3 Higher Education for Persons with Special Needs (HEPSN) Scheme**

This scheme has three components:

- Establishment of Enabling Units in colleges to facilitate admissions, provide guidance and counseling, to create awareness about the needs of persons with disabilities and to assist them to get employment.
- Providing access to students with disabilities in the college campus.
- Providing Special Equipment to facilitate education of Persons with disabilities: The colleges are provided onetime grant upto Rs.1.5 lakh to procure devices to help students with disabilities enrolled for higher education.

### **21.2.3 Ministry of Labour and Employment**

#### **21.2.3.1 Vocational Rehabilitation Centres**

Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India has set up 21 Vocational Rehabilitation Centres (VRCs) in the country at Agartala, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Delhi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kolkata, Ludhiana, Mumbai, Patna, Puducherry, Ranchi, Srinagar, Thiruvananthapuram, Una, and Vadodara. VRC at Vadodara is exclusively for the women with disabilities.

Services provided to the persons with disabilities by the VRCs are as follows:

Assessing the capacities, attributes, and functional skills of different categories of persons with disabilities.

- Testing of the persons with disabilities on the job capabilities in different trades sanctioned under VRC's programmes such as Electronics, Electrical, General Mechanic, Radio and TV Repair, Commercial Practice, Air-conditioning and Refrigeration, Automobile, Cutting and Tailoring, Computer Applications, Wood Work and Chair Canning, Arts and Crafts, Screen Printing, Photography, Metal Trades, Secretarial Practice, Painting, etc.
- Imparting workshop training to develop vocational adjustment in respect of their work habits to enhance on the job sustainability.
- Providing assistance to persons with disabilities for preparing their vocational plan, for enhancing their level of knowledge and skills suited to local job market needs, and also assisting, guiding and motivating them towards self-employment.

- Imparting non formal in-plant training and tailor made module-based vocational training to persons with disabilities for skill building and making them employable.
- Sponsoring and assisting the persons with disabilities to utilize the facilities of reservations in various educational/training institutions.
- Sponsoring the persons with disabilities to the employers and taking follow-up action.
- Recommending the persons with disabilities for grant of loans by various financial institutions.



*With the support provided at Vocational Rehabilitation Centres, person with visual impairment can learn computers and become self reliant*



*A woman with visual impairment being trained in providing massage therapy*

### **21.2.3.2 Special Employment Exchanges**

At all-India level, 51 Special Employment Exchanges have been set up where the persons with disabilities can register themselves to find an employment. Apart from these special exchanges, the regular exchanges also register job-seekers under the category of 'persons with disabilities'. Special Cells have been created in these regular exchanges to cater to the special employment needs of persons with disabilities who have registered here.

### **21.2.4 Ministry of Health**

Ministry of Health takes care of health concerns and needs of persons with disabilities through various scheme supported by it. National Rural Health Mission takes care of implementation of various health related schemes. Some of the national level programme that support the prevention of disabilities are listed below:

- National Leprosy Eradication Programme
- Universal Immunisation Programme including Pulse Polio Programme
- National Tuberculosis Control Programme
- National Programme of Blindness Control
- National AIDS Control Programme
- Reproductive and Child Health Programme
- National Iodine Deficiency Disorder Control Programme
- National Mental Health Programme
- National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP)
- National Programme for Prevention and Control of Fluorosis (NPPCF)

#### **Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

##### **Fill in the Blanks**

- a) Two schemes of NHFDC are .....
- b) IEDSS scheme covers the students studying at ..... level schools.
- c) Scheme on research on disability related technology, products and issues is launched by Ministry of .....
- d) Gharaunda is a scheme of .....

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## **21.3 NATIONAL INSTITUTES**

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The Government of India has established 09 National Institutes in different areas of disabilities. These National Institutes serve as the apex bodies for research, training, documentation and model programmes in their respective areas of disability. The objectives of these National Institutes are to conduct and promote research in all aspects related to education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. They support human resource development related activities for trainees and teachers, employment officers, psychologies, vocational counselors, parents, community and other professionals. The

following national institutes have been setup under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

- i) National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (**NIEPVD**), Dehradun
- ii) Ali Yavar Jung National Institute of Speech and Hearing Disabilities (**AYJNISHD**), Mumbai
- iii) National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (**NIEPID**), Secunderabad
- iv) National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (**NIEPMD**), Chennai
- v) Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya National Institute for Persons with Physical Disabilities (**PDUNIPPD**), New Delhi
- vi) Swami Vivekanand National Institute of the Rehabilitation Training and Research (**SVNIRTAR**), Cuttack
- vii) National Institute for Locomotor Disabilities (**NILD**), Kolkata
- viii) Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre (**ISLRTC**), New Delhi
- ix) National Institute of Mental Health and Rehabilitation (**NIMHR**), Sehore

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## **21.4 BENEFITS AND CONCESSIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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There are two important prerequisites for a person with disability for availing concessions and benefits across almost all the Government schemes and programmes:

- The person must either have a disability certificate issued by authorized medical board or have a Unique Disability ID (UDID) issued by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MSJ&E). Disability Certificate can be obtained from the district hospitals/authorized hospitals having medical board by submitting the requisite information.
- To get the benefit of any scheme or concession of the Government, the person must have a minimum of 40% or more disability (benchmark disability).

### **21.4.1 Reservation in Admission for Education**

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD), 2016, under Section 31 provides free school education for every child with benchmark disability (i.e. 40% disability certified by a medical board) from age of 6 to 18 years. Therefore, no school can deny admission to a child with benchmark disability as per RPwD Act, 2016.

Further, as per Section 32 (1) of the RPwD Act, 2016, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and those receiving grants shall reserve a minimum of 5 per cent seats for persons with benchmark disabilities. There is also a provision of 5 years relaxation in age limit for admission, if specified by HEI.

## 21.4.2 Concessions during Examinations

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & empowerment, Government of India has issued “Guidelines for conducting written examinations for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities 2018”, on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2018. All schools, universities, competitive examination bodies etc. have to comply with these guidelines. These guidelines apply equally to regular and competitive examinations. The main provisions of these guidelines are as follows:

- The facility of Scribe/Reader/Lab Assistant should be allowed to any person with benchmark disability.
- Persons with benchmark disabilities should be given, as far as possible, the option of choosing the mode for taking the examinations, i.e., in Braille or on the computer or in large print or even by recording the answers, as the examining bodies can easily make use of technology to convert the question paper into large print, e-text or Braille and can also convert Braille text in English or regional languages.
- In case the persons with benchmark disabilities are allowed to take examination on the computer system, they should be allowed to check the computer system one day in advance so that the problems, if any, in the software/system could be rectified. Use of own computer/laptop should not be allowed for taking examination. However, enabling accessories for the computer-based examination such as keyboard, customized mouse etc., should be allowed.
- The examining body should ensure availability of question papers in the format opted for by the candidate.
- A compensatory time of 20 minutes per hour should be provided to the persons with disabilities. The time of giving the question papers should be marked accurately and timely supply of supplementary papers should be ensured.
- The candidates should be allowed to use assistive devices like talking calculator (in cases where calculators are allowed for giving exams), tailor frame, Braille slate, abacus, geometry kit, Braille measuring tape and augmentative communication devices like communication chart and electronic devices.
- Proper seating arrangement (preferably on the ground floor) should be made prior to the commencement of examination to avoid confusion or distraction during the day of the examination. As far as possible, the examination for persons with disabilities should be held at the ground floor. The examination centres should be accessible for persons with disabilities.

## 21.4.3 Reservation of Jobs

RPwD Act, 2016 under Section 34(1) provides 4% reservation in government jobs for persons with benchmark disabilities as per following break-up:

<b>Type of Disability</b>	<b>Percentage of Reservation</b>
Blindness and low vision	1%
Deaf and hard of hearing	1%
Locomotor disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy-cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy	1%
Autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disability and mental illness	1%
Multiple disabilities (more than one of the above specified disabilities)	

#### **21.4.4 Income Tax Concessions**

Under the Income Tax Act of India, persons with disabilities or their family members can avail income tax concessions as per the following sections:

##### **Section 80 DD**

This section provides for a deduction in respect of the expenditure incurred by an individual or Hindu undivided family (HUF) resident in India on the medical treatment (including nursing), training and rehabilitation etc. of a dependent being a person with disability. The limit of deduction for an individual having 40% disability is Rs.75,000/-, and in case of individual having 80% or more disability, the limit of deduction is Rs.1,25,000/-

##### **Section 80U**

Under this section, the tax payer (who is a person with disability) herself or himself can avail a rebate of Rs.75,000/- for 40% disability, and Rs.1,25,000/- for 80% and above disability.

#### **21.4.5 Travel Concessions**

##### **a) Air**

- Air India provides concession of 50% of basic fare of Economy class for persons who are totally blind and those who have 80% or above locomotor disability, which includes cases of paraplegia, hemiplegia, cerebral palsy, severe cases of poliomyelitis, kyphosis, muscular dystrophies, and amputees. The person should have a valid disability certificate. This concession cannot be combined with any other concessional fare. To avail the concession for travel by air, the person should be resident of India.
- Further, Air India offers a concession of 50% of basic fare on selected classes to war-disabled officers and their family members travelling at their own expense. For the purpose of concession, the family includes spouse, dependent children between 02 and 26 years of age, and dependent parents. Married children are not considered as part of family.
- Wheelchairs, modified toilets, ramps, lifts etc. are commonly available at the airports. Facilities such as hydraulic lifts for lifting the person with

disability with the wheelchair is available at major airports with certain airlines.

**b) Railway**

- Facilities and concessions for persons with disabilities provided by Indian Railways are as follows.
- To avail the concession of journey by train, a valid disability certificate should be produced by the passenger while travelling. Otherwise he/she will be treated as travelling without ticket.
- ‘Completely Blind’ persons are eligible for concession from a station to any station. Blind person may take one escort also in the same class on 50% or 75% concession.
- Orthopedically handicapped persons who cannot travel without escort are eligible for concession from any station to any station. Escort of orthopedically handicapped person is also given the same concession.

The percentage of travel concession to persons with disabilities is as follows:

Sl. No.	Type of disability	AC Ist Class/ AC two Tier	AC chair car/AC three Tier (Rajdhani/Shatabdi Express)	Second/Sleeper Class	1 <sup>st</sup> AC Chair Car/AC three tier	Seasonal Ticket
1	Blind	50%	25%	75%	75%	50%
2	Person who is Orthopedic Handicapped and Paraplegic	50%	25%	75%	75%	50%
3	Deaf Person	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
4	Person with Intellectual Disability	50%	25%	75%	75%	50%

**c) Bus Concession**

While some states issue free bus passes to the persons with disabilities with escorts for journey in the city and in the suburban areas in State Government run buses, other States allow them to travel free on production of a valid certificate.

**21.4.6 Reservation in Dealership Agencies**

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has reserved 7.5% of all types of dealership agencies of the public sector oil companies for persons with disabilities /government personnel (other than defence personnel), disabled on duty/widows of government personnel (other than defence personnel) who die in the course of duty.

### **21.4.7 Concessional Telephone Connection**

Concessional telephone connection with rental rebate of 50% of the normal rental is provided by MTNL and BSNL to the persons with blindness.

### **21.4.8 Postage Concession**

Payment of postage, both inland and foreign, for transmission by post of literature packets is exempted if sent by surface route only. If packets are to be sent by air, prescribed air mail charges should be paid.

### **21.4.9 Custom Concession**

The Central Government exempts specified goods such as Braille writers and Braille writing equipments, canes, clocks and watches, wheelchair, hearing aids, etc. when imported into India by a person with disability for personal use.

### **21.4.10 Provisions for Employees with Disabilities**

12 days casual leave in a year, special allowance of Rs.1000/- per month for child care, higher transport allowance at double the rates, double education allowance for Government employees having children with disabilities are some of the facilities.

### **21.4.11 Grievance Redressal**

A grievance redressal officer may be appointed in every government establishment as per the section 19 of RPwD Act, 2016. Any person aggrieved with the non-compliance of the provisions of the Act may file a complaint with the Grievance Redressal Officer, who shall investigate it and shall take up the matter with the establishment for corrective action.

In compliance with the provisions of RPwD Act, 2016, IGNOU has appointed a grievance redressal officer.

### **21.4.12 Equal Opportunity Cell at Higher Education Institutions**

Equal Opportunity Cells have been created at Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to implement the provisions of the UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2012, and further amendments from time to time. The objectives of the Equal Opportunity Cell are to safeguard the interests of all the students without any prejudice to their caste, creed, religion, language, ethnicity, gender and disability, so that the equality is promoted among all the sections of the students without prejudice to their belonging to any social group. The Equal Opportunity Cell oversees the effective implementation of policies and programmes for disadvantaged groups, provides guidance and counselling with respect to academic, financial, social and other matters and enhances the diversity within the HEIs.

IGNOU has also set up an equal opportunity cell at its headquarter at Delhi.

## **Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

### **Fill in the Blanks**

- a) Five per cent reservation is given to students with disabilities in admission at .....
- b) Persons with disabilities are provided ..... Per cent reservation in jobs.
- c) Section 80U of Income Tax Act provides for a rebate of Rs. .... for 40 per cent disability and Rs. .... for 80 per cent and above disability to persons with disabilities.
- d) Air India provides ..... Per cent concession in basic fare to persons with disabilities for economy class air travel.

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## **21.5 SUMMING UP**

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This Unit has familiarized you with some of the important schemes that cover various aspects of life of persons with disabilities and these can certainly make a difference to their lives and well-being. We discussed various facilities, benefits and concessions provided by the government and other agencies for persons with disabilities. The unit has briefly discussed about the various national institutes set up by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for facilitating persons with disabilities.

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## **21.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES**

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### **Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

- a) Divyangjan Swavalamban Yojna and Vishesh Micro Finance Yojna
- b) Secondary
- c) Social Justice and Empowerment
- d) National Trust

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

- a) Higher Education Institutes
- b) Four
- c) 75,000/- (40% disability) and 1,25,000/- (80% and above)
- d) Fifty

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## UNIT 22 UNDERSTANDING ACCESS, ACCESSIBILITY AND BARRIERS

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### Structure

- 22.1 Introduction
- 22.2 Meaning of Access, Accessibility and Barriers
  - 22.2.1 Access and Accessibility
  - 22.2.2 Barriers
- 22.3 Universal Design
  - 22.3.1 Universal Design in Infrastructure
  - 22.3.2 Universal Design for Learning
- 22.4 Summing Up
- 22.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

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### 22.1 INTRODUCTION

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Most of us are able to move around in our community. We can go to our school, a nearby hospital, park, cinema hall, religious places and markets. We take this freedom and choice for granted. Little do we realize that for some the environment itself becomes a barrier in accomplishing various activities. In the case of many persons with disabilities, it is the environment, and not the disability, that prevents access to certain areas and comes in the way of their moving around freely in these environments.

There are many kinds of barriers in our environment that 'disable' many individuals by making them dependent on other for moving around, restricting their participation in the community and hampering their overall development. In this Unit, **we will understand the meaning of access and accessibility and discuss some of the difficulties faced by persons with disabilities due to various kinds of 'barriers' existing in our environment. In the next two units, we will read about possible ways of removing them,** so as to make the environment disabled-friendly. This Unit will sensitize you towards the need for making the environment accessible to persons with disabilities.

#### Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of the terms 'access' 'accessibility' and 'universal design';
- describe the various barriers in the environment which hamper access and accessibility;
- state the concept of Universal Design; and
- understand universal design for learning and its principles to create more inclusive learning environment.

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## 22.2 MEANING OF ACCESS, ACCESSIBILITY AND BARRIERS

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Let us first understand what we mean by the terms ‘access’, ‘accessibility’ and barriers.

### 22.2.1 Access and Accessibility

In simple terms, ‘**access**’ means available for use. **Accessibility** means ‘being able to reach to and use something’. For example, a toddler may have **access** to a number of toys — i.e., there may be a number of toys in her home; however, that does not necessarily mean that they are ‘**accessible**’. In other words, she may not be able to use them. This could be due to various reasons — for example, these may be high up on a shelf where she cannot reach, or these may be kept in a cupboard which is locked.

**Access and accessibility are some of the major concerns in the area of disability.** One may think that a person with locomotor disability can access most places in the environment since, it seems to us that, by the use of crutches or on her wheelchair she can go anywhere she wants to. For example, a folding wheelchair can be kept in a car or a bus. But then wait! Are things so simple? Let us read the situations described below:

#### Situation 1

*Rahul, and his friend Khan, made a plan to go to the local cinema together. Rahul uses a wheelchair. The friends reached the cinema place, but discovered that there were a few steps at the entrance then another flight of stairs to reach inside the auditorium. Do you think Rahul could manage to get into the auditorium?*

Write down your thoughts about this situation in the space given below and then read further.

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Rahul’s wheelchair has helped him to be mobile. He has ‘**access**’ to the cinema hall – i.e., the cinema hall is available for Rahul to use. But, the cinema hall is not ‘**accessible**’ for Rahul, since he cannot actually ‘use’ it.

Let us take another example to understand the difference between ‘**access**’ and ‘**accessibility**’.

## Situation 2

*Ramola wanted to go shopping. She uses a rolator to walk. She had planned to take a bus to reach the shopping complex, but at the time of boarding the bus, she realized that the steps were too high for her. She could not lift her leg to that height to climb the steps. Do you think she could use the bus to reach the shopping complex? No! She had to use the more expensive means of transport – taxi or autorickshaw.*

These two situations highlight difficulties faced by persons with physical limitations when the physical environment is not adapted to their needs. But this should not lead you to think that accessibility is a concern only for those who have physical difficulty or that it is only about the physical environment.

**Accessibility is also related to the social environment.** When a teacher does not include a child with disability in the school's annual performance because she feels that a child with a wheel chair will look 'strange' on the stage, then the child has lost an opportunity not because of the physical environment but because of the teacher's attitude – in other words, because of the social environment.

**Thus, we see that 'access' to places/ facilities does not automatically imply that the place is 'accessible'. Accessibility is an important concern for any person with disability – whether the disability is physical, cognitive or sensory. It is also a concern for senior citizens.**

### 22.2.2 Barriers

The word 'barrier' means 'hurdle, hindrance or obstruction'. **Hence, anything that stops the person from doing what she wants to do, can be a barrier.** In the above section you have read that places were not accessible to the person because of **physical barriers**. But barriers can also be **psychological** or **social** in nature as brought out by the teacher's attitudes in the example above. You have read about social barriers in Unit 13. In this Unit, we will briefly discuss about the social and psychological barriers so as to help you recall what you have read earlier. We will read in detail about the physical barriers and how to remove them in the next two Units.

- 1) **Social barriers:** By 'social' barriers we mean the negative attitudes and prejudices that exist in the minds of the people towards persons with disabilities. These reduce the interaction of persons with disabilities within the community. These can also be referred to as 'attitudinal barriers'. You have read about these in Unit 13. But how do these attitudinal barriers originate?

In many cases, when a person has a disability, he/she stands out from the rest and is seen as being 'different'. Each one of us reacts differently towards this difference – some with understanding, some with sympathy, some with indifference and some even with disgust. How we react people around us.

As we have said in Unit 13, negative attitudes need to be changed. An attitude of understanding and empathy is what we must have towards children and adults with disabilities. A person with such an attitude

believes that just as each person has his or her strengths and limitations, so does a person with disability. One's effort must be to build on the person's strengths and help her to overcome her difficulty.

- 2) **Psychological Barriers:** These emerge from the state of mind of a person with disability, i.e., her own belief in her abilities, self-confidence and self-esteem. These are largely formed as a result of what others around the person tell her about herself.

A child with a disability may be able to do some things just as well as other child, others she can do reasonably competently. There may also be some things which will be extremely difficult for her to accomplish. The child certainly feels different from the other.

**How the child reacts to her disability will depend, to a large extent, on how the significant people in her life** (parents, brothers, and sisters, friends and other relatives) **interact with her**. If others talk about the person in a negative manner frequently telling that she is so good, then that is the image that the person will form about herself. She will begin to think that she can do things as well as others and began to develop a poor self-image. She may begin to develop feelings of inferiority and avoid meeting people becoming shy and withdrawn. This psychological barrier comes in way of her development.

- 3) **Physical Barriers:** This refers to the restrictions imposed upon the person with disability due to physical structures. There could be man-made structures such as buildings, roads, public transports, is parks and so on, they could also be natural structures like un even terrain. The existence of certain physical features in the above-mentioned structures - act as barriers.

For example, Fig. 1 shows that even though the person can be mobile on a wheelchair, the barrier in the physical environment (in this case, stairs) prevents him from being able to access the building and participate in many activities.



**Fig. 1: Barriers in the physical environment (in this case, stairs) prevent the person from fully using the facilities in the building; even though he is mobile on a wheelchair.**

#### 4) Print related barriers

Print barriers refer to obstacles that arise from the use of printed materials, such as books, documents, and educational resources, which may not be accessible to children with certain disabilities.

- **Visual Impairment**

For children with visual impairments, accessing printed materials in standard formats can be challenging or impossible. Traditional print materials rely on visual cues, making them inaccessible to those who are blind or have low vision.

Examples of print barriers for children with visual impairments include:

- **Lack of materials available in braille:** Braille is a tactile writing system used by individuals with visual impairment to read and write. Without access to braille versions of textbooks, storybooks, and other educational resources, children with visual impairment may struggle to engage with written content.
- **Small font sizes and poor contrast:** Printed materials with small font sizes or low contrast between text and background are difficult for individuals with low vision to read.
- **Complex layouts and diagrams:** Complex layouts, intricate diagrams, and visual graphics present in textbooks and educational materials can be challenging for children with visual impairment to interpret.

- **Learning Disabilities**

Children with dyslexia or other learning disabilities may encounter difficulties with traditional printed materials due to issues such as text comprehension, decoding, and visual processing.

Examples of print barriers for children with learning disabilities include:

- **Dense text and lack of white space:** Materials with dense text and minimal white space can overwhelm children with dyslexia, making it difficult for them to focus and comprehend the content.
- **Standardized font styles:** Fonts that are difficult to read or lack distinct letter shapes can increase the reading difficulties for children with dyslexia.
- **Absence of multimedia support:** Printed materials that lack multimedia elements, such as audio recordings or interactive features, may not adequately support the diverse learning needs of children with learning disabilities.

By addressing print barriers through the implementation of alternative formats and assistive technologies, educators and publishers can ensure that children with disabilities have equitable access to educational materials and opportunities for learning. You will further read about it in Course 2 – BCD -102.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

1) Explain the following terms

a) Accessibility

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b) Barriers

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2) Give examples of the following

a) Physical barriers

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b) Social barriers

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c) Psychological barriers

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## 22.3 UNIVERSAL DESIGN

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### 22.3.1 Universal Design in Infrastructure

While considering how to make the physical environment barrier-free, do not limit yourself to thinking about only a certain group of individuals. **The design of the environment, buildings, transport and products should be such that it considers the needs of the widest array of users.** This is because all people — whether disabled or not — have varying abilities and the various features in our environment should be accessible to all. This concept is referred to by various terms such as “**universal design**”, “**design for all**” or “**inclusive design**”.

What exactly does Universal Design mean? **Universal Design** implies a barrier-free environment beneficial for not only persons with disabilities but all individuals. Universal Design means a design that meets the needs of diverse users.

**The features of a universal design are as follows:**

- **Accessibility:** This means that facilities in a building **can be accessed without assistance and without many difficulties.** For example, There is provision of ramps/lifts and handrails to ensure access by those with physical impairment. Doors have sensory and auditory signals to enable independent usage by individuals with special sensory needs.
- **Reachability:** This ensures **maximum number of places and facilities** in the building are adapted to ensure easy reach ability with minimum effort. For example, if a ramp is built, attempt should be made to connect all the floors of the building and not just a few.
- **Usability:** The environment should be so designed that it can be used by persons with diverse abilities. For example, there should be use of contrasting colours and textures, Braille boards and supplementary visual information to aid identification of passage ways, doors or steps to ensure easy usage by all.
- **Safety:** The environment is designed to **minimize hazards to health.** For example, use of non-slippery floors for smooth and safe mobility. Avoidance of sharp turns, projections or edges is an application of this principle.
- **Workability:** The environment **supports full participation of children and adults** in schools, classrooms and work places. Appropriate size furniture, special seating arrangements and use of wall insulations to help those with sensory deficit are ways in which the environment can be made workable for all.

It is important to mention that designing a building as per universal design need not be an expensive effort always. In the following section you will read about some ways in which simple adaptations can be made to create a barrier free environment for person with disabilities as well as all other users.

### 22.3.2 Universal Design for Learning

**Universal Design for Learning** is an approach or framework to curriculum design that helps teachers to develop a teaching learning environment where needs and abilities of all learners are accommodated and they are provided equal opportunity for learning, by eliminating various barriers.

To understand universal design for learning, let us understand how different individuals learn and differ in their comfort of learning in different ways.

**Visual learning:** Many learners are more comfortable in learning from visual representation of things example poster, pictures, models, charts, maps, sign and symbols, videos etc. Such learners enjoy learning from these means and these visual materials make learning quick and easy for them.

**Auditory/ Aural Learning:** Many of us are more comfortable learning from hearing and listening to audios such as lecture, audio books, music, story, narration, group discussions, debates etc. These learners find audio material very useful in learning.

**Reading/ Writing Learning:** Many learners find reading material more useful in learning. They prefer reading books, articles, essay, written documents, critiques etc. and writing down their ideas or understanding on paper for better learning.

**Kinaesthetic / Tactile Learning:** Learners of this kind prefer physical touch or experience of the materials regarding which they are supposed to learn. They prefer practicals and experiential learning to be very useful in the process of learning. *For example, suppose a preschool child who prefers to learn using the sense of touch (tactile learning) and has to be told about the concept of light and heavy. An activity could be done to help the child understand this. Take water in a big bowl. Arrange small round stones (as heavy objects) and bits of paper (as light material) beside the bowl. Ask the child to put stones in water bowl and then the paper bits. As the child places stone in the bowl of water, it sinks to bottom and when she places paper bits, they float. You will find her playing with the materials such as trying to sink the paper which again comes up. Or trying to hold stone above water but on leaving it, it sinks being heavy. So, this little practical experience makes the child understand very well the concept that some materials are heavy and some are light.*

As we know that learners can have different preferences regarding how they learn. In a similar way children with disabilities also face barriers in some ways of learning and are more comfortable in other ways of learning. *For example, a child with low vision may find tough to read written information on board or a model being shown in a classroom but she may prefer an audio explanation and verbal discussion of the topic. We may remove the barriers by use of magnifying glasses and other technology but it could be that the child prefers audio learning or tactile learning more in comparison to visual*

*learning*. Thus, this brings in the importance of universal learning design where every child would have an opportunity to learn in his/her preferred way of obtaining information without barriers. Thus, in universal design of learning, the information is presented in different forms and ways so that it is assessable to all. It also includes follow-up that after learning to find out whether the child had learned or not. So, to assess that we will ask child to express his/her learning as well. The universal design of learning is not limited to presentation of information but also in the ways of expressing the learning by child. The child or learner should have various options for expression as well in which he/ she is comfortable.

**Principles of Universal Design for learning:** To make learning environment assessable to all irrespective of their age, gender, abilities, disabilities, cultural background, linguistic background, physiological stage etc. there are three principles of UDL. These three principles of UDL bring flexibility and variedness in representation, expression and engagement of information for the process of learning.

Three principles are:

### 1) **Multiple means of representation**

Under this principle, the information or learning content is presented in various forms or means. As we have discussed above, that the information can be presented in audio form, visual form, tactile form, reading/ writing form. Under this principle the teacher has to try using multiple ways of presenting the information. For example, if a teacher is introducing a seasonal fruit mango to preschoolers, then the teacher can show a picture of mango, give a verbal description of mango about its appearance, shape, colour, flavour, nutrients etc., and also bring a real mango for students to touch, smell, taste (eat) etc.

### 2) **Multiple means of action and expression**

Under this principle, learners are given options to express their knowledge and understanding through whichever means they prefer. For example, a child may draw and colour mango to express his/her understanding, a child may narrate a story of a mango plant or describe the characteristics of mango; a child may enact the role of mango in a play on a theme related to fruits. The children should have different means to express their understanding as per their comfort and preference. Other examples of providing children multiple means of action and expression could be giving learners the choice during assessment to give the answer in writing or orally, using one's preferred language; providing and explaining instructions multiple times for the child's better understanding etc.

### 3) Multiple means of engagement

Under this principle, the teacher takes effort in motivating the child to learn through different contents and tools to enhance motivation and engagement in learning. For example, the learner should be aware about the various options for learning as through story-telling, exercises, group discussion, role play, different simulations etc. This will motivate the child to be engaged in the process of learning by providing multiple engaging activities.

Adopting these principles of universal design of learning, the learning environment becomes more inclusive and useful for all.

#### Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Define universal design for learning.

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- 2) List three principles of universal design of learning.

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## 22.4 SUMMING UP

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- ‘Access’ and ‘accessibility’ are major concerns which need to be addressed in the area of disability. ‘Access’ means available for use and ‘accessibility’ means being able to reach to and use something. A person may have access to something, but that does not mean that it is also accessible to him/her.
- Social, psychological and physical barriers come in the way of persons with disabilities and prevent them from participating in various activities.
- The physical barriers can be in the form of architectural/building related barriers, barriers in the community such as those in parks, playgrounds, schools, workplace, public transport and road-related barriers.
- Universal Design for Learning is an approach or framework to curriculum design that helps teachers to develop a teaching learning environment where needs and ability of all learners is accommodated and are provided equal opportunity for learning by eliminating various barriers. The three principles: multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression and multiple means of engagement helps

a teacher to create and maintain a learning environment where irrespective of individual differences the learner have choice of preferences in medium of the presented learning material, choice in assessment or expression of knowledge by the learner in which they are comfortable and variety of learning experiences that motivate and engage in learning.

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## 22.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) a) Accessibility means being able to reach to and use something. For example, to be able use the stairs to climb up, to be able to use the computer to read the daily news. It is to be differentiated from 'access' which means available for use. Something may be available for use but the person may not be able to use it. This means it is not 'accessible'. Give on example to explain your amuser.  
b) Barriers mean 'hurdle or obstruction'. Anything that stops the person from doing what she wants to do can be a barrier. Barriers can be social, psychological or physical. For example, stairs can be a barrier for a person on a wheelchair who wishes to reach the first floor of a building. The newspaper, which is not printed in braille, a barrier for a visually impaired person to know of the news.
- 2) a) Physical barriers — uneven roads; no signage's in print or pictures in public places such as bus stands and railway stations; narrow doors; no railing along the staircases; no tactile landmarks for persons with visual impairments to find out directions.  
b) Social barriers — negative attitudes, prejudices, superstitions, pity and fear that exist in the minds of the people towards persons with disabilities  
c) Psychological barriers — disbelief in one's own abilities, lack of self-confidence and self-esteem, poor body image.

### Check Your Progress Exercise 2

#### 1) Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning is an approach or framework to curriculum design that helps teachers to develop a teaching learning environment where needs and ability of all learners is accommodated and are provided equal opportunity for learning by eliminating various barriers.

- 2) The three principles for UDL are:
  - Multiple means of representation
  - Multiple means of action and expression
  - Multiple means of engagement.

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## UNIT 23 REMOVING BARRIERS IN BUILDINGS (ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS)

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### Structure

#### 23.1 Introduction

#### 23.2 Towards Universal Design in Public Buildings

##### 23.2.1 Approaches and Pathways to the Building

##### 23.2.2 Entrance to the Building

##### 23.2.3 Inside the Building

##### 23.2.4 Other Aspects in the Building

#### 23.3 Adaptations in the Home

##### 23.3.1 Kitchen Area

##### 23.3.2 Bed

#### 23.4 Adaptations in the School

#### 23.5 Summing Up

#### 23.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

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### 23.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this Unit, you will read about some possible physical barriers in public buildings, homes, schools, and workplaces and ways of removing them.

#### Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- state some ways of making the buildings in the community barrier-free;
- describe some adaptations that can be made in the home; and
- state the adaptations that can be made in the school.

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### 23.2 TOWARDS UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS

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**Architectural barriers are those barriers which are present in the design and structure of the buildings that prevent them from being disabled-friendly.** i.e., being used by persons with disabilities. Homes and public buildings such as offices, schools, colleges, hotels, markets, places of worship and cinema halls should have entrances and exits accessible to the person with disability. The inside of the building should be so designed as to facilitate free movement for the person within the building. However, often this is not the case. For instance, homes, cinema halls, and many other buildings have more than one level which requires steps. These steps pose problems for not only persons with physical disabilities who use mobility devices like wheelchairs or rotators, but also for the visually impaired.

So how can one make the entry into a home or building disabled-friendly, as well as make the interior comfortable for moving around in it? Listed below are some suggestions:

### 23.2.1 Approaches and Pathways to the Building

- The approach or pathway leading to the building must be usable by all persons with disabilities — its surface should be smooth and leveled, whether cemented or of mud.
- The edges of the pathway, if present, should be identifiable by a person with low vision, by using contrasting colour or design.
- There should be clear signs in both words and symbols along the pathway, so that persons with hearing loss and intellectual impairment can follow these to find their way.
- The pathway and approach should be wide enough to enable use of a wheelchair.

### 23.2.2 Entrance to the Building

- The entrance to the building must be wide enough for a wheelchair to go in. It should be leveled. This means it should be at the same level as the road so that the wheelchair can move on it easily.
- The door should avoid glare, if made of glass. Its handle must be at such a height so that a wheelchair user can open it.
- If the entrance to a building has stairs, then a part of the stairs can be covered with a ramp, to enable a wheelchair user to enter the building, as shown in Fig. 1



**Fig 1. A ramp over the stairs at the entrance makes the building accessible to wheelchair users**

### 23.2.3 Inside the Building

#### Pathways and Corridors

- The pathways and corridors inside the building should be wide enough for wheel chair users (minimum 160 cm for one wheelchair).
- The pathway and corridors in the building should be leveled.
- The pathways should be non-slippery as well. One easy way of ensuring this is to drill grooves in the floor, as shown in Fig. 2.
- There should be no sharp objects jutting out in the way.
- There should be clear head room inside the building – i.e. no protrusion on top — in order to avoid accidents.
- The furniture and bins inside the building should be located on one side of the pathway. The colour of these furniture and bins should be prominent enough to be visible from a distance.



Fig. 2: Grooves drilled in the floor help to make it non-slippery

#### Provision of Ramps

- **Ramps are an excellent way of enabling wheelchair users to go to different floor levels**, specially when there is no lift inside the building. The gradual slope of the ramp makes it convenient for persons with mobility aids (such as wheelchair users or those using rolators) or those with visual impairment to walk on it. The wheelchair can also be pushed up the ramp, if the user is not able to move it herself. Fig. 3 shows a ramp inside the building which enables the person to reach different floors.



Fig. 3: A ramp with a gradual slope and hand rails at two levels

- There should be a level area of at least 125-150 cms at the top and bottom of the ramp to provide enough space to turn a wheelchair. Generally, the ramp should be 1 metre wide, so that the wheelchair can pass easily.
- There should be hand rails on both sides of the ramp which the user can hold for support and protection, as shown in Fig. 3.
- The hand rails must be provided at two levels-one for children and one for adult height, as shown in Fig. 3.
- The slope of the ramp can vary, depending upon its length and area available. If less area is available, the ramp would become steep. A steep ramp will not only be very tiring but dangerous as well. There is danger of the wheelchair or rolator tipping or slipping backwards.
- The ramps and the landing surface should be slip-resistant.

### Stairs in the Building

Many individuals with disabilities (other than wheelchair users) can use stairs, provided they are suitably designed. **One can make stairs more user-friendly by making the following adaptations:**

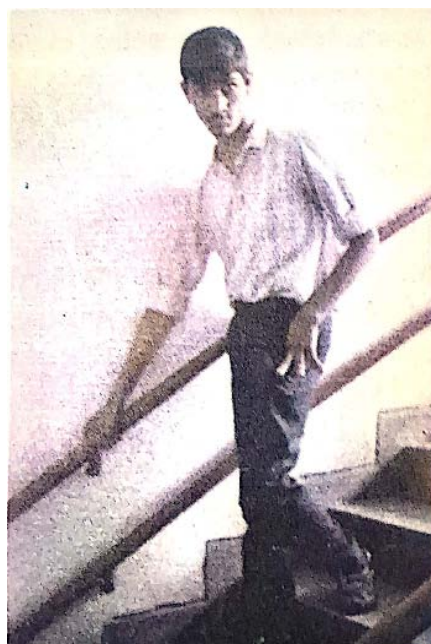
- Stairs should be adequately illuminated (lighted).
- There should be a sound cue at the beginning and the end of the flight of stairs, which will help the person with visual impairment to know that the staircase has ended/begun.
- The width of each step should not be less than 30 cms and height of each step should not be more than 15 cms.
- Stairs edges should be in bright contrasting colours. There should be touch (tactile) indicators at the beginning and end of the staircase. Thus, when the person's foot touches the first step, it can give a sound and similarly, at the last step, so that the person understands that no more climbing is necessary.

- The base of the stairs should be covered with a soft rubber mat. This provides a cue to persons with visual impairment that the stairs have ended / begun.
- There should be a hand rail all along the staircase to provide support to the person, as shown in Figs. 4(a) & 4(b). The handrail should
  - Extend beyond the top and bottom of the stairs.
  - Either have wood or nylon covering to prevent the person's hand from slipping or hurting due to the metal.
  - be in a colour that contrasts sharply with the surrounding areas.

Two hand rails should be provided – one at the child's height and the other at adult height, as shown in Fig. 4.



**Fig. 4(a): Stairs with hand rails at three different levels**



**Fig. 4(b): Hand rail helps the person to use the stairs**

## Doors

Another type of architectural barrier is the door of a building. Often, doorways are not wide enough to let the person on wheelchair to pass through. Often, doors do not swing freely and, therefore, require effort to push or pull them. This makes opening/closing the door more challenging for a person with physical disability. Many doors have knobs which are small, making it difficult to hold them. A person with poor hand coordination, as happens when the person has cerebral palsy, will face problems in rotating the knob to open the door. The door knobs are sometimes at a height which is unreachable by a person on a wheelchair. **The following adaptations in the door can reduce the barriers:**

- Double swing doors can help to reduce the architectural barrier caused by ordinary doors to some extent, since they can be pushed open by a push chair and are easy to use by the visually impaired as well. They should stay open at 160 cms; should be easily opened with one hand and should have no springs, as this can cause the door to close as soon as the force pushing the door is removed, causing accidents.
- The door should swing freely with very less effort. The hinges should be oiled regularly, so that the door does not feel heavy. The bottom of the door must not scrape the floor.
- If there is a double door, then least one side should have a minimum of 160 cms opening width to allow the wheelchair to pass through, leaving some space for the person's hands resting on the rim of the wheels, as shown in Fig. 5.
- Revolving doors should be avoided, as they increase the difficulty for persons using mobility aids as well as for persons with visual impairment. When revolving doors are used, an alternative entrance, accessible by the wheelchair, must also be provided.
- Raised thresholds and floor level changes at doorways should be leveled off with a slope on each side of the threshold. The slope may be a simple (even portable) wooden ramp.



**Fig. 5:** The door should be wide enough to let a wheelchair pass through. Floor level changes at the doorway should be avoided. If present, they should be leveled.

- Small and round door knobs, which are difficult to hold, can be made 'friendly' by fixing a handle to the round knob, which can be easily turned by a person with poor hand function.
- If there are glass doors in the building, they must have a bright band or large sign on them, so that persons with poor eyesight do not walk into them.
- In case of other doors, they should be of a colour which contrasts with the colour of the wall, so that the person with low vision can spot them easily. This will help them to identify where to go.

### Lifts

- Lifts should be provided in a building where there are many floors.
- Persons with wheelchairs need a lift for moving from one level to another in a building, especially in the absence of a ramp. Lifts should have doors wide enough for the wheelchair to pass through.
- Call buttons in lifts should be at a height that is within the reach of, and can be used by, wheelchair users.
- Lifts should have raised numbers and tactile signs at the controls, so that those with visual impairment can feel and read them. A voice indicator should be installed in the lift to announce floor levels.
- Persons with hearing impairment, on the other hand, need visual cues. Therefore, the lifts must have light indicators at the control panel so that when the lift stops at a particular floor, the concerned number lights up.

### Bathroom and Toilets

With simple adaptations, bathrooms and toilets in any building or the house can be made disabled-friendly. A person who uses a mobility aid needs to hold on to something once she leaves the aid to seat herself on the toilet seat. Similarly, she needs something to hold on to, as she shifts from the wheelchair to the toilet seat. A person with visual impairment requires these grab bars not only as a support but also for trailing (trailing means moving forward while touching the grab bars with the back of the hand, which helps to identify obstacles). **However, most bathrooms/toilets lack these handrails or grab bars.**

In many buildings, even if there is something to hold on to in the toilets and bathrooms, **it is not at an appropriate height and, therefore, one cannot reach it.**

**Electric sockets and towel hooks in the bathrooms are sometimes not at a reachable height** and, therefore, the person has to make an extra effort to use them.

**To make the toilet disabled-friendly, one can make following adaptations:**

- The doorway of the toilet/bathroom should be wide enough to let a wheelchair pass (minimum 160 cm to enable one wheelchair to pass).
- Inside the toilets, there should be enough space for a wheelchair to turn around and approach the toilet seat.

- The wheelchair user needs space (a little more than the width of the wheel chair) on one side of the toilet seat, as the person has to slide sideways on to the toilet seat from wheelchair seat, in order to use the toilet.
- There should be a hand rail near the toilet seat, so that the person can hold it while transferring herself from the wheelchair to the toilet seat. This will also help those who use mobility aids (crutches, rolators and tetra pods) and those who are visually impaired.
- If the person can stand and use the toilet, then hand rails can be fixed around the toilet seat, so that the person can use the toilet in the standing position, as shown in Fig. 6.



**Fig. 6: Hand rails around the toilet seat help the person with disability to use it while standing**

- The toilet seat should be the same height from the ground as the average wheelchair seat (about 47 cm), so that person can slide herself from the wheelchair to the toilet seat.
- An Indian style commode can pose difficulties for individuals who have difficulty in squatting. Hence, a stable stool or a chair (again preferably with handles on the sides) with a hole in the center can be provided. This can be placed over the low toilets or an Indian style (squatting type) w.c. The person can sit on the stool placed over the toilet and then use it. Figs. 7(a) & (b) shows chairs and stools at two different heights. A person who can sit at a low height can use the adaptation shown in Fig. 7(b)

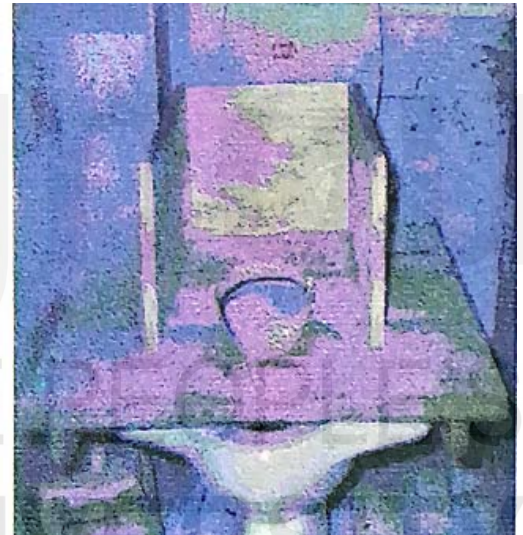


**Figs. 7(a) & (b):** Chairs and stools of varying heights can be placed over the Indian style toilet to enable the person to use it.

- Two adaptations for the Western style toilet are shown in Figs. 8(a) & 8(b).



**Figs 8(a):** An extra wide wooden seat with side and back supports is placed over the commode



**Fig. 8(b) :** A raised chair with a hole carved out is placed over the Commode. This helps the person who finds it difficult to sit at a lower level or get up from a lower level

- The toilet seat should have bright coloured edges so as to ensure visibility and safety.
- A wheelchair with removable armrests makes it easier for the person to transfer on to the toilet seat.
- Grab bars, towel hooks, hand rails and switches should be within reach. The most suitable height is between 50 cm to 1 m above the ground. They should be fixed all along the bathroom/toilet wall, so as to enable persons using crutches and those with visual impairment to use them, to guide themselves in and out of the bathroom.
- Emergency buttons or any other emergency signal devices should be fixed at a height and position that is easily reachable by the person with disability at the time of emergency. Doors should be such that they can be opened from outside at the time of emergency, so that the person who is locked inside can be helped.

- The floor of the bathroom/toilet should be kept dry, non-slippery and clean with proper water drainage, so as to prevent accidents due to slipping. The bathing stool should be of the same height as the wheelchair, so that transferring oneself onto it is easy. Use a plastic stool for bathing.
- The wash basin should be fixed at a height which is convenient for a standard wheelchair user — it should be just above the knees of the wheelchair user. The area beneath the basin should be obstruction free.
- Basins should have lever taps which are easy to use rather than round taps — lever taps have a long handle which has to be moved up and down to operate them. This is easier for persons with limited hand function to operate as compared to round taps, which have to be turned.
- Mirrors above the basin should be fixed at a height where the person using the wheelchair can see herself.
- In case there is a difference in level between the toilet and the outside area, it should be leveled off with a gradual slope ramp, as shown in Fig. 9. The door of the toilet should open outside and not inward, as shown in Fig. 9, otherwise it would limit the free space in the bathroom.



**Fig. 9: Wide enough door; leveled floor; door opens outwards- adaptations helpful for a wheelchair user**

- The male and female toilets in public buildings should be clearly designated. Besides words, pictures and symbols should be used to

signify these signs, so that people who do not read can understand as well. Signage for toilets should be in braille as well. The words should be written in a colour contrasting with the door, so that people with low vision can read them easily. The toilets should be well-lighted and ventilated.

### 23.2.4 Other Aspects in the Building

#### Lighting in the building

- Adequate glare-free lighting in the rooms is important for persons with low vision. It is also important for hearing impaired people who rely on lip reading and observing facial expressions in order to communicate. Good lighting is important for people with low vision as well.
- **Signage** (any information provided in and outside the building) **should be clearly displayed, have distinct contrast and illumination**, so that it can be easily read by persons with low vision. Additionally, the information should also be provided in braille and through standard signs and symbols, which the persons with hearing impairment and mental retardation can understand.

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## 23.3 ADAPTATIONS IN THE HOME

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**The home environment should be so planned so as to allow the child or the adult with disability optimum independence in the home.** The kinds of adaptations made would be influenced by many factors like the location, culture, customs of the family and style of the house. Many of the provisions stated in the Unit till now are applicable in the home situation as well. **Some more adaptations specific to the home setting are stated below:**

- If the house is on the ground floor but has 2-3 steps at the entrance, a wide plank can be placed over the steps which will serve as a ramp. The ramp can be made of wood/mud/ rocks covered with a thin layer of cement.
- Door knobs should be such that they are easy to turn. They can be adapted, depending on the ability of the child/adult who needs to use them.
- A lot of furniture in the house will pose difficulty for wheelchair users as well as for persons with visual impairment, since it hinders movement and may lead to accidents. Hence, keep only as much furniture as required and arrange it appropriately, so that there is sufficient space for movement.
- Do not change the arrangement of the furniture often or without telling the person with visual impairment about the new arrangement.
- The shelves of the wardrobe, as well as the toy and book shelf can be lowered to enable easy reach. The child will be able to take out her things herself, which will give her a sense of independence.
- Remember to keep objects which are unsafe, like those with sharp edges or tiny objects such as beads, out of reach of the child.

### 23.3.1 Kitchen/Dining Area

- If a wheelchair user needs to work in the kitchen, then the work areas such as gas burners, shelves, tables and sinks should be at a height low enough for a wheelchair user to work on them or use things placed on them. At the same time, the work area should be high enough so that the wheelchair can fit comfortably under them.

If the family eats on the dining table, a high chair for a small child enables her to join the family. Where eating at ground level is the custom, a floor chair and table is recommended for the child in case she cannot sit independently.

### 23.3.2 Bed

- **The bed should be of the same height as the wheelchair for easy transfer.** In case the bed is lower, then the level could be raised by placing wooden blocks or bricks under it.
- **Bars or other form of support next to the bed may help the child or adult to transfer from the wheelchair to the bed. It could also provide support while sitting on the bed.**

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## 23.4 ADAPTATIONS IN THE SCHOOL

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If the school and the classroom pose difficulties in terms of accessibility, it is likely to hinder the child's participation in various activities. Therefore, adaptations in the school as well as classrooms are essential. Many of the adaptations suggested till now are applicable to the school as well.

**Some additional modifications are as follows:**

- In addition to the staircase, there should be a ramp with a railing or a lift for children with disabilities to reach different floors.
- The edges of tables and chairs, as well as the corners of windows, doors and almirah in the classroom should be coloured, so that a child with low vision can identify them.
- The arrangement of the furniture in the classroom could also be arranged to accommodate a wheelchair user.
- The extra (unwanted) furniture should be removed to make the classroom as obstruction-free as possible.
- Seating arrangement is an important aspect which needs attention. For children with visual impairment, seat the child close to the board and ensure proper lighting. The seating of a child with hearing impairment should be such that she can hear the teacher as well as see her lip movement, as she might be relying on lip reading.
- Assistive devices, like aids for reading and writing, should be kept in the classroom so that they can be used whenever required.
- The school should provide wheelchairs for the children to use inside the school premises, as it is difficult to transport personal wheelchairs to school and back home everyday.

- Play materials should be placed on low shelves so that the child can take them easily, as shown in Fig. 10.



**Fig. 10: The child can take the play materials independently when they are placed on low open shelves**

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

- 1) Fill in the blanks
  - a) ..... is the principle in which buildings, transport and products are designed and built in such a manner that it considers the needs of the widest array of users.
  - b) .....barriers are those barriers which are present in the design and structure of the buildings that prevent them from being disabled-friendly.
  - c) ..... are an excellent way of enabling wheelchair users to go to different floor levels.
  - d) Stairs edges should be in ..... and ..... colours.
  - e) Revolving doors should be ....., as they increase the difficulty for persons using mobility aids as well as for visually impaired persons.
- 2) What adaptations will you make in the home environment to make it accessible for a young child of 6 years?  
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- 3) How will the preschool environment become accessible for all children, including children with disabilities?

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## 23.5 SUMMING UP

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- The physical barriers can be in the form of architectural/building related barriers in the community homes, schools and workplace.
- In this Unit, we have described many ways of overcoming physical barriers and making the environment disabled-friendly. This includes making the approaches, pathways and entrance to the building accessible as well as making many adaptations inside the building in terms of corridors, doorways, toilets, lighting, signage.
- In the home context adaptations need to be also made to the kitchen area and the bed.
- Adaptations in the schools include accessible placement of play material and seating arrangement.

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## 23.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Fill in the blanks
- a) universal design
  - b) architectural
  - c) ramps
  - d) bright and contrasting
  - e) avoided.
- 2) The adaptations would be influenced by many factors like the location, culture, customs of the family and style of the house.
- A wide plank can be used as a ramp over the steps for the child to get in and out of the house.
  - Door knobs should be such that are easy to turn.
  - Keep only as much furniture as required and arrange it appropriately in fixed places so that there is sufficient space for movement and no threat to fall and get hurt.
  - The shelves of the wardrobe, as well as the toy and book shelf should be lowered to enable easy reach.
  - Keep objects which are unsafe, like those with sharp edges or tiny objects such as beads, out of reach of the child.

- Lower the wash basin to suit the height of the child.
- If the family eats on the dining table, a high chair for a small child enables her to join the family.
- The bed should be of the same height as the wheelchair for easy transfer. Bars or other form of support next to the bed may help the child to transfer from the wheelchair to the bed.

3) In the preschool, the adaptations will be as follows:

- In addition to the staircase, there should be a ramp with a railing or a lift for children with disabilities to reach different floors.
- The edges of tables and chairs, as well as the corners of windows, doors and almirah in the classroom should be coloured, so that a child with low vision can identify them.
- The arrangement of the furniture in the classroom could also be arranged to accommodate a wheelchair user.
- The extra furniture should be removed to make space in the classroom.
- For children with visual impairment, seat the child close to the board and ensure proper lighting.
- The seating of a child with hearing impairment should be such that she can hear the teacher as well as see her lip movement, as she might be relying on lip reading.
- Assistive devices, like aids for reading and writing, should be kept in the classroom.
- Have wheelchairs for the children to use inside the school premises.
- Play materials should be placed on low shelves so that the child can take them easily.

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## UNIT 24 MAKING COMMUNITY SPACES ACCESSIBLE

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### Structure

- 24.1 Introduction
- 24.2 Adaptations in the Playground
- 24.3 Public Transport and Road-related Barriers
  - 24.3.1 Public Transport – Bus, Train, Aircrafts
  - 24.3.2 Roads and Pathways
  - 24.3.3 General Features in the Community to Make it Barrier-Free
- 24.4 Generating Public Awareness
- 24.5 Summing Up
- 24.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

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### 24.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this Unit, you will read about some possible physical barriers in parks, public transport and roads and ways of removing them.

#### Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- explain the adaptations to be made in the playground and public transport;
- state how signages can be made more effective to help persons with disabilities; and
- generate awareness in the community regarding the need for and ways of making the environment barrier free.

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### 24.2 ADAPTATIONS IN THE PLAYGROUND

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All children love to play in the park /playground and children with disabilities are no exception. Yet, often the design of the playground and play equipment prevents children with disabilities from using it.

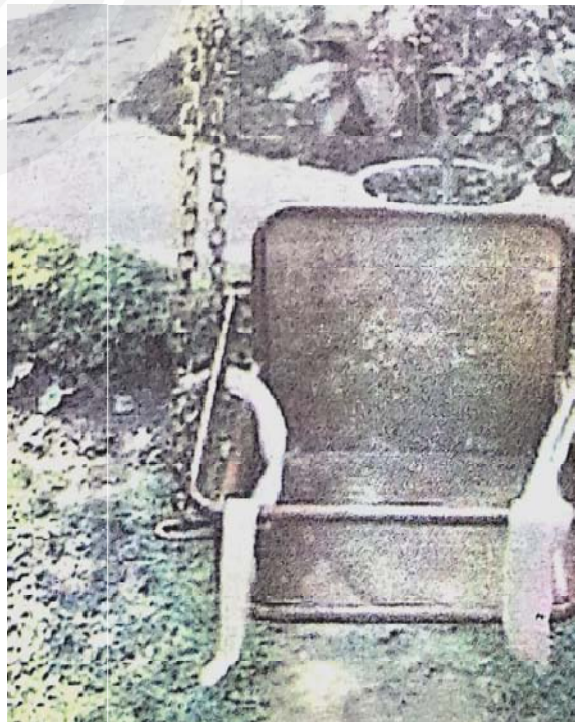
**The following adaptations will make the playground safe and disabled-friendly:**

- The playground should be accessible to wheelchair users and those using other mobility aids like rotators and crutches. A ramp is an easy way of ensuring access, as shown in Fig. 1.



**Fig. 1: Adding a small ramp can make the playground accessible**

- Back rests and straps should be provided on the seat of the swings, as shown in Figs. 2(a) & (b). The child can be strapped on to the seat of the swing. This will ensure safety of the child while swinging.
- To avoid the child from falling in the front as the swing moves, a plastic/wooden/iron bar can be provided in the front which can be used as a support to hold on as shown in Figs. 2(a) & (b). It could be locked to prevent the child from falling. The handle can be made safe and non-slippery by pasting rubber strips.



**(a)**



(b)

**Figs. 2 (a) & (b) : A swing with back rest, straps and a bar in front for support helps the child with disability to enjoy a ride**

- The area around the swings and slides should be sandy to prevent the children from hurting themselves in case they fall.
- Merry-go-rounds can be custom-made for wheelchair users, so that the wheelchair can go in and fit into the swing. This would be useful for those severely disabled children who cannot sit/stand on their own. One such specially designed merry-go-round, is shown in Figs. 3(a) & (b)



**Fig. 3(a): One side of this specially designed merry-go-round can be lowered, which forms a ramp to move the wheelchair into it**



**Fig. 3(b): Once the wheelchair is inside, the side can be lifted up and bolted**

- A hammock can be suspended from the ceiling in such a way that it forms a cradle and this can be used as a swing, as shown in Figs. 4(a) & (b). The hammock can be covered with a soft sheet or bedcover for comfort.



**Fig. 4(a): A swing made from an old tyre.  
It is covered with cloth for comfort**



Fig. 4(b): A child enjoying in this home-made swing

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## 24.3 PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ROAD-RELATED BARRIERS

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Everyone needs to move out for various purposes – for shopping, for going to school, college, hospital, cinema, temple, and workplace and so on. Many of us are dependent on public transport to accomplish the above tasks. However, public transport systems like auto rickshaws, buses, trains and aircrafts are not always disabled-friendly. The steps are higher; the individuals have to stand in case the bus or train is crowded; sudden jerks can lead to persons falling over each other; and people have to get down and board the bus in a crowd and in a short time. Not only persons with disabilities, but elderly people also find it difficult to use public transport. The following suggestions can help public transport systems to be disabled-friendly:

### 24.3.1 Public Transport – Bus, Train, Aircrafts

- Drivers and conductors should be sensitized to the needs of the persons with disabilities.
- The person should be given time to get on/off the bus. The bus should not move till the individual has boarded the bus or the properly disembarked from the bus. Apart from this, conductors should guide the person with disability in boarding and getting down.
- A handrail, footlight and non-slippery floor should be provided at the door of the bus.
- Apparatus such as lift or ramp should be installed in the doorway for use by wheelchair users. Fig. 5 shows a ramp which has been placed next to

the door of the van — this helps the wheelchair to come at level with the floor of the van, making it easier for the person to be transferred from the wheelchair to the van.



**Fig. 5: Using a portable ramp to get the wheelchair at a level which makes it easier for the child to be transferred inside the van**

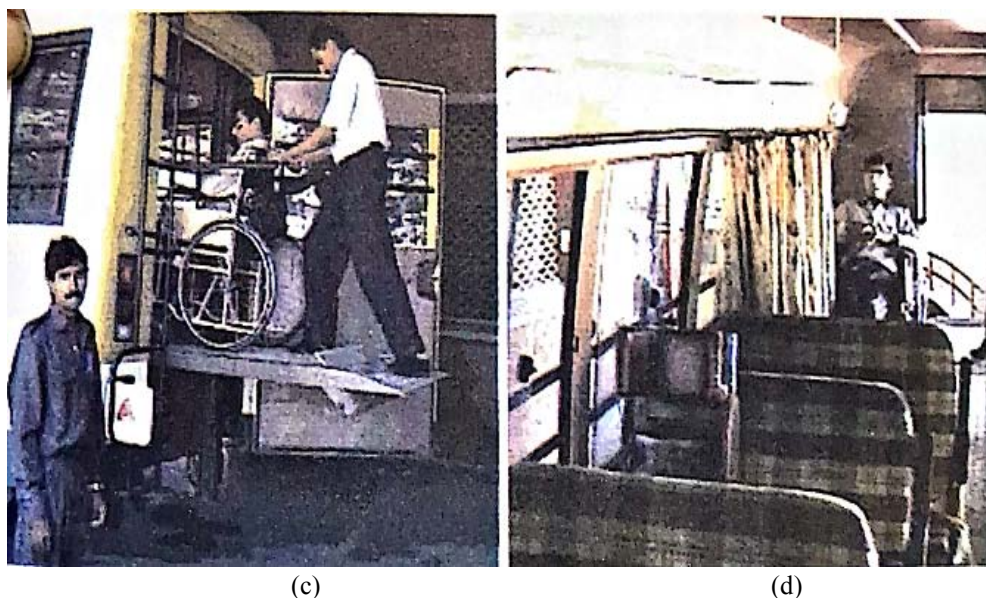
- Figs. 6(a), (b) & (c) show a hydraulic lift being used to get the wheelchair into the bus. In this way, the entire wheelchair gets lifted into the bus. For this, the bus doors need to be wide enough for the wheelchair to get into the bus. There should be space inside the bus to accommodate the wheel chair, as shown in Fig. 6(d). The space should have wheel stoppers or safety belts, so that the wheelchair does not slide as the bus moves.



(a)



(b)



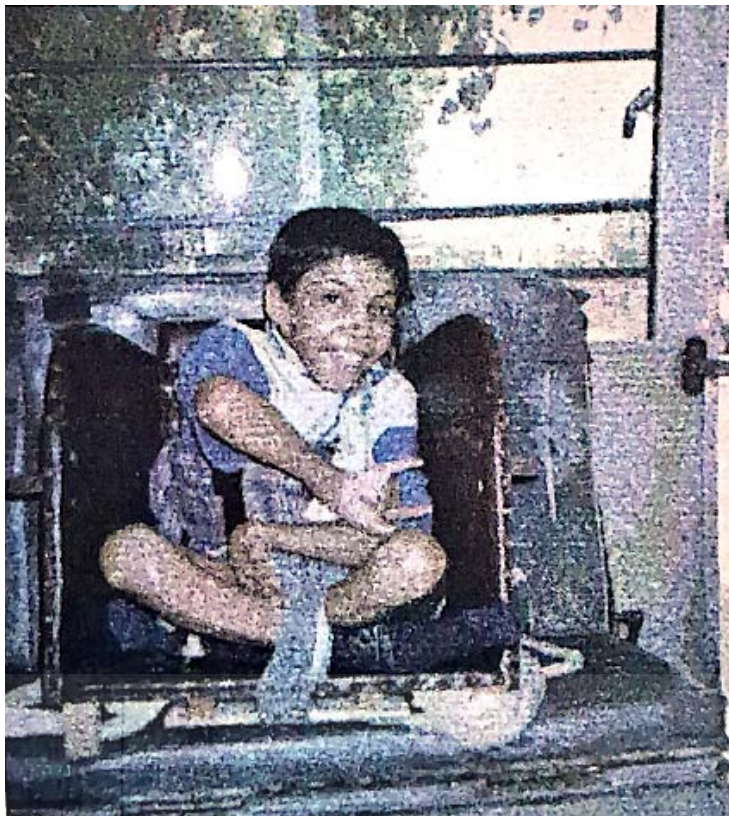
**Figs. 6(a), (b), (c) & (d) : The first three pictures show a hydraulic lift being used to get the wheelchair into the bus. The fourth picture shows the space provided inside the bus to accommodate the wheelchair**

- A low level step, with side railings, should be installed at the door, as shown in Fig. 7, for those needing support for getting on or off the bus.



**Fig. 7: Wheel able/portable steps, with side railings, provide support to the child to get inside the bus**

- Seats should be designated for persons with disabilities/elderly people near the entrance.
- Special seats can be installed in buses for those who cannot sit on the ordinary seats without support, as shown in Fig. 8.



**Fig. 8: A specially designed corner seat has been installed in the bus for a child who has difficulty in sitting without support. The seat can be removed easily when not in use**

- Information about the route number and final destination should be clearly displayed at the front and back of the bus, as well as inside the bus, in large text and should also be announced verbally when the bus halts at any bus stop.
- The labels and numbers of trains and buses should be clearly designated, in bold and contrasting colour, and at more than 2-3 places, so that the person with low vision can read it.
- Railway stations and airports should be accessible, i.e., provided with lifts/ ramps, wheelchairs and leveled floors. Toilets at the station and airports should follow guidelines mentioned earlier.

### **24.3.2 Roads and Pathways**

- There should be symbols in bright, contrasting colours on road signs to alert the persons with low vision, who find it difficult to read written warnings or road notices.
- Lamp posts and other obstructions should be indicated in contrast colours.
- Low branches of trees coming on to the road can be dangerous for blind persons and should be trimmed.
- The pathways through the village or the neighbourhood should be smooth, hard-packed pathways so that crutches/rolators users, wheelchair users and people with visual impairment can move around without tripping over. It will also help them in reaching play areas, bathing and washing areas and farms. The pathways need not be cemented. Clay and

crowding can be used to make smooth packed surfaces. Community work parties can help in developing such pathways in the community. Hand rails or ropes may be fitted along the pathway, particularly when the pathway has a slope, so that those who are blind or have balance problems or have difficulty in walking, can hold these for support.

### 24.3.3 General Features in the Community to Make it Barrier-Free

- In some communities, particularly in rural areas and urban slums, water facilities and toilet facilities are community amenities used by all. If this is the case, they should be planned keeping the person with disabilities in mind. For example, the village well should have a brightly coloured wall so that it is visible from far.
- There should be no open drains. The man holes/ditch covers should not have large gaps in them — so as not to risk canes/ crutches getting stuck in them.
- Patterns in the paving will make entrances to buildings easy to distinguish.
- Windows and doors opening outwards on to the pavement or the road are dangerous for people walking outside whose vision is poor and, therefore, should be avoided.

Remember to regularly review your home, neighbourhood and community to see if some barriers have re-surfaced in the form of trees which have grown higher, signs which have become unreadable, passages and pathways that have worn out due to use and so on.




#### Signage


Signage for individuals with hearing impairments is crucial for ensuring accessibility and safety in various environments. Here are some considerations for creating effective signage for person with disability:

- 1) **Visual Signage:** Utilize visual cues such as symbols, images, and written text to convey information. These should be clear, easy to understand, and prominently displayed in areas where they can be easily seen.
- 2) **Clear and Simple Language:** Use simple language and concise messaging to ensure comprehension. Avoid complex wording or jargon that may be difficult to understand, especially for individuals with limited English proficiency or cognitive disabilities.
- 3) **Contrast and Visibility:** Ensure that signage has high contrast between text and background colors to improve visibility, especially for individuals with low vision or color blindness. Choose colors that stand out and use large, bold fonts for better readability.
- 4) **Universal Symbols:** Incorporate internationally recognized symbols and icons to convey information universally, regardless of language or literacy level. For example, use symbols for restrooms, exits, elevators, and emergency procedures.

- 5) **Directional Signage:** Provide clear directional signage to guide individuals to important locations such as entrances, exits, stairwells, elevators, and emergency exits. Use arrows or directional indicators to indicate pathways.
- 6) **Tactile Signage:** Consider implementing tactile signage with raised letters, Braille, or tactile symbols for individuals who are blind or have low vision. Tactile signage should be placed at accessible heights and accompanied by visual information.
- 7) **Digital Signage:** Utilize digital displays or screens to present dynamic information such as announcements, schedules, and emergency alerts. Ensure that visual information is accompanied by captions or subtitles for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- 8) **Emergency Notifications:** Include visual alerts such as flashing lights or strobes to supplement auditory alarms in emergency situations. These visual alerts can help individuals with hearing impairments quickly recognize and respond to emergency situations.

By incorporating these considerations into signage design, you can help create environments that are more inclusive and accessible for individuals with disability and people finding language barriers.

<b>EXAMPLES OF SIGNAGES</b>	
<p><b>Visual Signage:</b> A sign indicating “No Smoking” with a universal symbol of a cigarette crossed out in red, along with text stating "No Smoking" in large, bold letters.</p>	
<p><b>Clear and Simple Language:</b> A sign near an elevator with the message “Elevator - Press button to call” accompanied by a large arrow pointing towards the elevator button.</p>	
<p><b>Contrast and Visibility:</b> A restroom sign with high contrast colors (e.g., white text on a blue background) and large, bold letters indicating “Restroom” along with the corresponding universal symbol for restrooms.</p>	

<p><b>Universal Symbols:</b> An emergency exit sign with a green symbol of a running figure and an arrow pointing towards the exit, accompanied by the text “Emergency Exit” in clear, readable font.</p>	
<p><b>Directional Signage:</b> A series of directional signs with arrows indicating the route to important locations such as “Entrance”, “Exit”, “Stairs,” and “Elevator,” accompanied by clear text and symbols</p>	 <p><a href="http://enabled.in">Universal Design in the Built environments — enabled.in</a></p>
<p><b>Tactile Signage:</b> Consider implementing tactile signage with raised letters, Braille, or tactile symbols for individuals who are blind or have low vision in addition to hearing impairment.</p>	 <p>Tactile and Braille Signage</p>

## 24.4 GENERATING PUBLIC AWARENESS

The removal of barriers, whether attitudinal or physical is the responsibility of the whole community. The environment should be so planned as to allow persons with disabilities, and the elderly, optimum independence. The non-disabled people have to be educated and sensitized to the needs of the persons with disabilities. **Persons with disabilities themselves, their families and the community must be involved in a common effort to provide need-based services.**

The Government, the local authorities and various organizations can help in reducing all forms of barriers **by spreading awareness regarding disability**

**and the importance of a barrier-free environment.** The support of local leaders, such as the panchayat members and respected village elders is important. Awareness programs through traditional folk songs, street plays, puppet shows and other entertainment media are good ways of creating community awareness regarding disability and provide support to the disabled. These will help to reduce social barriers we have discussed earlier.

**The RPwD Act, 2016 has the following provisions with respect to provisions for barrier-free environment in unit 8.**

- *Public buildings, rail compartments, buses, ships and aircraft will be designed to give easy access to disabled people.*
- *Waiting rooms and toilets of all public places shall be wheelchair accessible.*
- *Braille and sound signals are to be provided in lifts in public places.*
- *All places of public utility shall be made barrier-free by providing ramps.*
- *An environment that is free from physical and organisational barriers is safe and convenient for all, including those who have disabilities. Such environments provide persons with disabilities with independence and opportunities as well as help them to live with dignity.*

#### **What can you do**

You do not have to wait for the government or a voluntary organization to take action. You, as an individual, can do many things. Try out the following activities:

##### **Activity 1**

Talk to some people in your neighbourhood. What are their attitudes or feelings about persons with disabilities? What can you do to change their attitude?

##### **Activity 2**

Survey your neighbourhood. Do you think it is disabled-friendly in terms of accessibility, reach and usage? What are the barriers and how can they be reduced/ removed?

- You could identify persons with disabilities in your community and form them into self-help groups. Such groups can advocate for a barrier-free environment and demonstrate the practical difficulties they face in day-to-day living.
- You could help in forming local level self-help groups with builders, architects, lawyers, primary health centre officers, doctors, local business people, local education authorities, prospective employers, local government authorities and others with interest in making the environment accessible for persons with disabilities.
- The self-help group can conduct short duration workshops where disability-simulation exercises can be carried out to sensitize the non-disabled people and the local press.

- You could collect information and materials on ways to promote accessibility.
- You could identify priority issues in your locality and develop a communication strategy to make people aware of them.
- The self-help groups could meet members of the local authorities and could discuss ways and means of removing barriers.
- Subsequently, you could plan group action with definite targets in mind. For example, your target may be to ensure that the school authorities build a ramp in the building within the next six months.
- Remember to monitor progress regularly and do not let the effort slow down or get ineffective.

### Activity 3

If you see/hear about any proposed construction in the neighbourhood — find out if its design is disabled-friendly. If not, disseminate information about how to make it so.

### Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) State three ways in which you can make the playground accessible to children with disabilities.

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- 2) State three ways to make public transport accessible to persons with disabilities.

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- 3) State five features of effective signage.

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- 4) What are the ways in which you can make communities, particularly in rural areas and urban slums, barrier free.

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## 24.5 SUMMING UP

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In this Unit, you have read about how to make playgrounds, public transport and community spaces barrier-free.

Some of the ways in which this can be done is as follows:

### Playgrounds

- use of ramps at entrance
- use of back rest on seats of the swings and other equipment
- straps to hold the child to prevent from falling
- rods for the child to hold on to
- sandy area around the swings.

### Transport

- Sensitization of drivers and conductors to the needs of the persons with disabilities.
- The person should be given time to get on/off the bus
- Provision of a handrail, footlight and non-slippery floor should be provided at the door of the bus.
- Lift or ramp to be installed in the doorway for use by wheelchair users.
- Designated seats and adapted seats for persons with disabilities.

### General Features in the Community

- The village well should have a brightly coloured wall so that it is visible from far.
- There should be no open drains.
- Patterns in the paving will make entrances to buildings easy to distinguish.
- Windows and doors opening outwards on to the pavement or the road are dangerous for people walking outside whose vision is poor and, therefore, should be avoided.

Remember to regularly review the home, neighbourhood and community to see if some barriers have re-surfaced in the form of trees which have grown higher, signs which have become unreadable, passages and pathways that have worn out due to use and so on.

The Government, the local authorities, various organizations and you yourself can help in reducing all forms of barriers by spreading awareness regarding disability and the importance of a barrier-free environment.

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## 24.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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- 1) The playground can be adapted in the following ways:
  - Add a ramp at the entrance of the park.
  - Provide back rest and strap on seats of swings
  - Provide a bar which the child can hold to support self
  - Area around swings should be sandy
  - Merry-go-round can be adapted so that wheelchair can be moved into the seat.
- 2) The public transport can be adapted by
  - Special seats
  - Designated seats for persons with disabilities
  - Display information about route number and stops verbally and by writing
  - Lift and ramp can be installed in the doorway for use by wheelchair users.
- 3) Features of effective signage are as follows:
  - Display signage prominently
  - Ensure that signage has high contrast between text and background
  - Use simple language and concise messaging
  - Provide clear directional signage to guide individuals to important locations
  - Tactile signage should be placed at accessible heights and accompanied by visual information.
- 4) In communities, particularly in rural areas and urban slums the common adaptations to make them barrier-free are:
  - The village well should have a brightly coloured wall so that it is visible from far.
  - There should be no open drains. The man holes/ditch covers should not have large gaps in them — so as not to risk canes/ crutches getting stuck in them.
  - Patterns and tactile marks in the footpath will make entrances to buildings easy to distinguish.
  - Windows and doors opening outwards to the pavement or the road are dangerous for visually impaired people walking outside and should be avoided.
  - Regularly review the home, neighbourhood and community to see if some barriers have come up in the form of trees which have grown higher, signs which have become unreadable, passages and pathways that have broken down due to use and so on.