

Assessment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 in India: A Comprehensive Study on Implementation and Impact

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Abstract

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, represents a transformative milestone in India's journey towards disability inclusion, aligning national policies with global standards such as the UNCRPD. This position paper critically examines the Act's implementation, highlighting its significant achievements in expanding disability definitions, mandating accessibility, and increasing job and educational reservations. Despite these advancements, persistent challenges, including limited stakeholder awareness, insufficient funding, and gaps in accessibility, hinder the Act's full realization. The paper emphasizes the need for targeted interventions, enhanced budgetary allocations, and inclusive governance to bridge regional disparities and address intersectional vulnerabilities. By leveraging emerging technologies and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, the RPwD Act has the potential to reshape societal perceptions and advance the rights, dignity, and inclusion of persons with disabilities in India.

Keywords: Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, RPwD 2016, disability inclusion, UNCRPD, accessibility, inclusive governance, disability rights in India, intersectional challenges, accessibility standards, stakeholder collaboration

Executive Summary

The Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, stands as a monumental piece of legislation aimed at ensuring equality, inclusion, and dignity for individuals with disabilities in our society. This position paper unequivocally supports the Act's core principles while offering constructive insights into its implementation and potential enhancements. (1)

This position paper calls upon stakeholders, including government bodies, civil society organizations, and the private sector, to collaborate in a concerted effort to fully realize the Act's potential. By fostering a culture of inclusion, we believe that society can benefit from the vast untapped potential of persons with disabilities and truly uphold the principles of equality and social justice as enshrined in the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.(2)

In conclusion, this position paper advocates for the continued support and strengthening of the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, to ensure that access to education, employment opportunities, healthcare services, and social integration remains uneven, and there is a need to assess the effectiveness of the Act in achieving its objectives and it remains a beacon of progress and inclusivity, setting a benchmark for disability rights legislation.(1)

Introduction and Its Significance

Persons with disabilities comprise an estimated 15 per cent of the world's population, or one billion people, of whom 80 per cent live in developing countries and are overrepresented among those living in absolute poverty. Persons with disabilities often encounter discrimination and exclusion on a daily basis. This means, in particular, pervasive exclusion from development programmes and funds, as well as all areas of economic, political, social, civil and cultural life, employment, education and healthcare.(3)

Persons with disabilities were not referenced in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and as a result, were excluded from many important development initiatives and funding streams around the world. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes persons with disabilities and has thus opened doors for their participation and recognition as active contributing members of society: **who must not face any discrimination or be left out or behind**. Persons with disabilities should be recognized as equal partners, and be consulted by Governments, the system, civil society and other stakeholders. Out of the 169 targets across the 17 Goals, seven explicitly reference persons with disabilities. Further, all Goals and targets are applicable to persons with disabilities by simple virtue of universality, which applies to all persons, and the overarching principle of "leave no one behind."(3)

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016, has been a significant step toward ensuring the rights, dignity, and inclusion of persons with disabilities in India. One of its key achievements is the expanded definition of disability, covering 21 conditions, including intellectual, developmental, and psychosocial disabilities. The Act increased job reservations for persons with benchmark disabilities from 3% to 4% and mandated inclusive education, accessible skill development programs, and safeguards against discrimination. Accessibility provisions were strengthened to ensure barrier-free access to physical environments, transport, and information and communication technologies, while the introduction of penal provisions ensures accountability for non-compliance.

Despite these achievements, implementation challenges persist. Limited awareness among stakeholders, inadequate budget allocation, and gaps in accessibility continue to hinder progress. Many public spaces, transportation systems, and ICT platforms remain inaccessible, while a lack of trained personnel affects education and workplace inclusion. Weak enforcement mechanisms at state and local levels, coupled with delays in grievance redressal, further impede the Act's impact. Additionally, intersectional challenges disproportionately affect women with disabilities and those in rural areas, highlighting the need for targeted interventions. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the RPWD Act to fully realize its transformative potential.

Persons with disabilities strongly believe that only by utilizing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as a guiding framework in implementing the SDGs, will it be ensured that exclusion and inequality are not created or perpetuated. This includes institutional, attitudinal, physical and legal barriers, and barriers to information and communication, among other such barriers. The Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, of 2016, heralded a watershed moment in the history of disability rights in India. With its enactment, India took a significant step towards realizing the

fundamental principles of equality, inclusion, and empowerment for persons with disabilities. This legislation was not just a legal document; it represented a profound societal shift towards recognizing the rights and potential of millions of individuals who had, for far too long, been marginalized and excluded.(4)

The Act emerged as a critical response to the changing global discourse on disability rights, aligning India with its international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), to which it is a signatory since 2007. The Act was not merely a statutory requirement; it was a moral and ethical imperative to provide persons with disabilities the same opportunities, protections, and dignity that every citizen of India deserves.(2)

Rationale:

In India, disability certificates are issued **at the district level** by the medical authorities to individuals with disabilities. These certificates are crucial for individuals to avail themselves of various benefits, reservations, and facilities provided under the Disability Act and other government schemes. This paper enhances access to the Implementation and Impact of the act in the facility.

Background

Global Situation:

The global perspective on disability rights has evolved significantly in recent years, with a growing recognition of the need to ensure equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and full participation for persons with disabilities (PWDs). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), adopted in 2006, has played a pivotal role in shaping international standards and principles for the rights of PWDs. It emphasizes the importance of inclusion, accessibility, and the elimination of barriers to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by PWDs. Various countries have made strides in implementing the UNCRPD, although challenges persist in achieving its goals.(5)

National Level:

- India enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD Act) in 2016, replacing the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995. This legislation marked a significant shift in India's approach to disability rights, aligning it more closely with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The RPwD Act recognizes various categories of disabilities, introduces new rights and entitlements for PWDs including patient with mental illness, and mandates accessibility measures in various sectors. It seeks to address the unique challenges faced by PWDs in education, employment, healthcare, and social inclusion. (1)

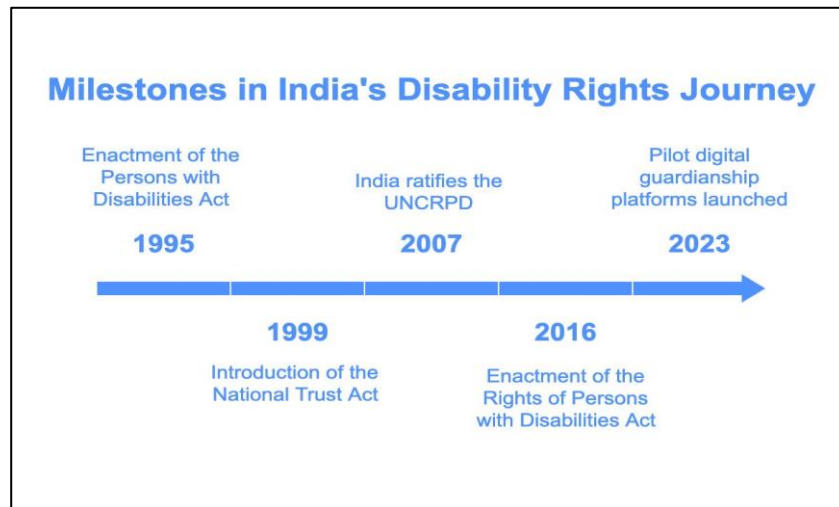


Fig 1. Showing milestones in India

- Despite the progressive nature of the RPwD Act, there are challenges in its implementation, and the impact on the lives of PWDs varies across different states and regions in India. Access to education, employment opportunities, healthcare services, and social integration remains uneven, and there is a need to assess the effectiveness of the Act in achieving its objectives.
- The act emphasizes principles such as dignity, autonomy, and independence for persons with disabilities.
- It focuses on non-discrimination, full participation, and inclusion in society, recognizing disabilities as part of human diversity. The legislation signifies a shift from viewing disability as a social welfare concern to a human rights issue.
- The primary objective of the act is to ensure equal opportunities, protection of rights, and full participation for persons with disabilities in various aspects of life, including education, employment, healthcare, transportation, and social and political activities.

Budget Trends in Disability-Inclusive Policies

Since the enactment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, India has experienced fluctuating trends in budget allocations for disability welfare. In 2022, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment allocated ₹1,450 crore to disability welfare programs. However, this accounted for less than 0.05% of the GDP, significantly lagging behind countries like Sweden (0.5%) and Australia (0.3%). To address this disparity, a focused increase in budgetary support is crucial.

For the fiscal year 2024-2025, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities has been allocated ₹1,225.27 crore, reflecting a marginal increase of 0.02% from the revised estimate of ₹1,225.01 crore in the previous year. The budget underscores the government's commitment to sustaining and expanding initiatives aimed at improving the lives of persons with disabilities through various schemes and projects.

A notable highlight is the allocation of ₹615.33 crore to the National Program for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities, a significant rise from ₹502 crore in the 2023-2024 revised budget. This increase highlights the government's focus on strengthening programs and services dedicated to the welfare of persons with disabilities

Significance of the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

Legal Framework for Rights: The Act granted persons with disabilities an explicit legal framework that recognized their rights in various spheres of life, including education, employment, accessibility, and social inclusion.

Anti-Discrimination: It introduced measures to combat discrimination, ensuring that persons with disabilities are not denied opportunities or subjected to unequal treatment based on their disabilities.

Accessibility: The Act placed a strong emphasis on accessibility, both physical and digital, making public spaces, infrastructure, and information more inclusive for persons with disabilities.

Reservation in Education and Employment: The Act expanded the reservation quota for persons with disabilities in educational institutions and government jobs, enhancing their access to quality education and employment opportunities.

National Commission: The establishment of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities under the Act aimed at addressing grievances and ensuring the Act's effective implementation.

Promotion of Inclusive Development: It promoted the concept of inclusive development, emphasizing the importance of mainstreaming disability considerations in policymaking and planning.

Harmonization with International Standards: By aligning with the UNCRPD, the Act positioned India on the global stage as a nation committed to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities in line with international standards.

Leveraging Technology for Inclusion: Emerging technologies have transformed accessibility for persons with disabilities. Initiatives such as:

- **Assistive Technologies:** Tools like screen readers for visually impaired users, AI-powered learning platforms for children with developmental disabilities, and mobility devices for physically disabled individuals are becoming game-changers.
- **Digital Accessibility:** Despite progress, a 2023 audit revealed that only 42% of government websites comply with WCAG standards. A nationwide initiative to train IT teams in creating accessible digital infrastructure is recommended.

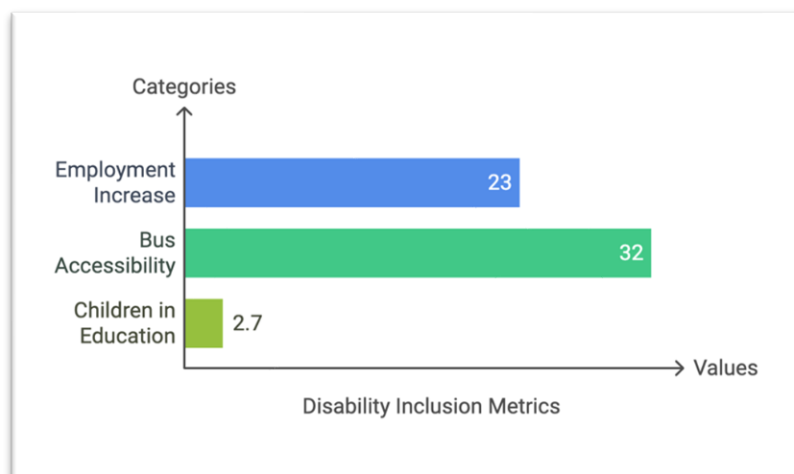


Fig 1. Showing progress in Disability Inclusion

In the years since its enactment, the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, has provided a robust legal framework for advancing the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in India. It has not only transformed the way society perceives and interacts with persons with disabilities but has also set the

stage for a more equitable and inclusive India where everyone, regardless of their abilities, can live with dignity and participate fully in all aspects of life.(6)

Purpose of the Position Paper:

This position paper aims to advocate for improved policies and practices regarding health and disability certificates within the framework of the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in India. This document aims to highlight the critical role that health and disability certificates play in the lives of persons with disabilities, emphasizing the need for a streamlined and inclusive approach to their issuance and utilization. By addressing the challenges and gaps in the current system and proposing constructive solutions, this position paper seeks to promote better healthcare access and support for individuals with disabilities.

Perspective in Terms of Health and Disability Certificates:

Our perspective on health and disability certificates, as informed by the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, is rooted in the fundamental principles of equity, dignity, and inclusion. We believe that health and disability certificates serve as pivotal instruments for individuals with disabilities, enabling them to access essential services, rights, and accommodations. Our perspective can be summarized as follows:

Ensuring Accessibility: Health and disability certificates must be accessible to all, including individuals with various types and degrees of disabilities. These certificates should be available in multiple formats, ensuring that information is comprehensible and usable for everyone.

Streamlined Application Process: The application process for health and disability certificates should be simplified and made more user-friendly. This includes providing clear guidelines, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and ensuring timely issuance.

Medical Assessment Standards: The process of medical assessment for disability certification should adhere to standardized, evidence-based criteria. Healthcare professionals involved in assessments should receive appropriate training to ensure accurate evaluations.

Comprehensive Coverage: Health and disability certificates should cover a wide range of disabilities, both visible and invisible, to accommodate the diverse needs of individuals. These certificates should also acknowledge the evolving nature of disabilities.

Privacy and Confidentiality: The privacy and confidentiality of individuals undergoing assessment for health and disability certificates must be strictly maintained, respecting their autonomy and dignity.

Awareness and Outreach: There is a pressing need for awareness campaigns to educate both healthcare providers and the public about the importance of health and disability certificates. This will reduce stigma and discrimination associated with disabilities.

Integration with Rights: Health and disability certificates should be seamlessly integrated with the rights and entitlements provided by the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. They should serve as gateways to accessing various support systems, including education, employment, and social welfare.

Regular Review and Updates: The system for issuing health and disability certificates should undergo regular reviews and updates to reflect advances in medical knowledge, changes in the understanding of disabilities, and the evolving needs of persons with disabilities.

Proposed Metrics for Success: To evaluate the implementation of the Act effectively, key performance indicators (KPIs) should include:

- The percentage of disability certificates issued annually across states.

- The proportion of public transport that complies with accessibility standards (currently only 27% of railway stations as of 2023).
- An annual audit of school enrollments for children with disabilities, which stood at 2.7 million in 2023 according to UDISE+.

Monitoring Mechanism

A National Disability Compliance Authority (NDCA) can be established to audit infrastructure, handle grievances, and report progress annually to Parliament and further, a similar system can be deployed at the state level. By advocating for these perspectives in the context of health and disability certificates, we aim to contribute to the overarching goal of the Right to Persons with Disabilities Act, of 2016, which is to create an inclusive and equitable society where individuals with disabilities can lead lives of dignity, independence, and full participation.

Potential Benefits and Impacts

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act of 2016 offers numerous benefits and has a far-reaching impact on the lives of people with disabilities in India. It significantly enhances social inclusion by legally addressing various forms of discrimination, ensuring that persons with disabilities (PWDs) are integrated into key areas such as education, employment, and public life. Economic empowerment is a key benefit, as the Act's provisions for reservations in educational institutions and government jobs enable PWDs to access better opportunities, contributing to their financial independence and reducing poverty. The Act also improves access to healthcare by simplifying the process for obtaining health and disability certificates, removing bureaucratic barriers, and promoting equal access to essential services. Furthermore, it provides robust legal protection, safeguarding PWDs from discrimination and ensuring equal treatment in various sectors. By aligning with international standards like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), India is recognized as a global advocate for disability rights. Additionally, the Act promotes awareness and advocacy, helping to reduce societal stigma and fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for persons with disabilities. Overall, the RPwD Act has the potential to reshape societal perceptions, empower individuals with disabilities, and build a more equitable and inclusive India.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016, has been a transformative step toward ensuring the rights, dignity, and inclusion of persons with disabilities in India. One of its key achievements is the expanded definition of disability, covering 21 conditions, including intellectual, developmental, and psychosocial disabilities. This inclusivity has allowed millions more individuals to benefit from its provisions. The Act raised job reservations for persons with benchmark disabilities from 3% to 4%, leading to an increase in employment opportunities. For instance, as per a report by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, government employment of persons with disabilities rose by 23% between 2016 and 2021.

Additionally, the Act mandates inclusive education, resulting in the enrollment of over 2.7 million children with disabilities in mainstream schools as of 2023, as reported by the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+).

The RPWD Act has positively impacted individual lives and communities. For example, in Kerala, the Act facilitated the implementation of the “Accessible India Campaign,” which made over 1,000 public buildings wheelchair-friendly and improved access to public transport. Similarly, in Rajasthan, the state government introduced a scholarship program for students with disabilities, resulting in a 15% increase in

school retention rates among this demographic in 2022. In healthcare, the Act's provisions for accessible medical services have led to the establishment of disability-friendly healthcare facilities in states like Tamil Nadu, improving access to essential services for thousands.

However, challenges remain in its implementation. Limited awareness among stakeholders, inadequate budget allocation, and gaps in accessibility hinder its full potential. For example, while the Act mandates accessibility in transport, a survey conducted by the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) in 2023 revealed that only 27% of railway stations and 32% of buses nationwide were fully accessible. Additionally, delays in grievance redressal and weak enforcement mechanisms at the state level impede effective action. Intersectional challenges, such as the exclusion faced by women with disabilities and those in rural areas, further exacerbate disparities. Addressing these gaps, coupled with stronger monitoring and targeted initiatives, is essential to fully realize the transformative promise of the RPWD Act. Addressing these gaps through improved interdepartmental coordination, increased funding for disability programs, and strengthened legal and grievance redressal mechanisms is essential to ensure that the Act delivers on its promise of inclusion.

Concrete recommendations, such as enhanced budget allocation, a centralized monitoring body, and a focus on accessibility in public infrastructure, would help address the disparities and challenges faced by persons with disabilities. These measures should be coupled with stronger capacity-building initiatives and public awareness campaigns to foster a culture of inclusivity across the nation. Ultimately, realizing the full potential of the RPWD Act requires a multi-pronged approach, combining better resource allocation, effective governance, and robust community engagement. The active involvement of all stakeholders, including government bodies, local authorities, civil society, and the private sector, will be crucial to ensuring that persons with disabilities can fully participate in society, enjoy their rights, and lead independent, dignified lives. By implementing these recommendations, India can move closer to building an inclusive society where persons with disabilities are valued, empowered, and provided with equal opportunities in education, employment, healthcare, and beyond.

The successful implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016, hinges on the active participation and collaboration of various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society, the private sector, and individuals with disabilities. Each of these stakeholders has a distinct but interconnected role in ensuring that the provisions of the Act are effectively executed, leading to a more inclusive society.

Addressing Rural and Gender Disparities

Rural Challenges

In rural India, only 18% of people with disabilities have access to accessible healthcare facilities. Programs like mobile clinics can bring healthcare to remote regions. Similarly, vocational training centers in rural areas can promote economic independence.

Women with disabilities face compounded challenges, including access to healthcare and safety. Programs addressing these include:

- Reserved employment quotas for women with disabilities.
- Gender-specific scholarships for higher education.
- Nationwide awareness campaigns to combat stigma.

Government Agencies Government agencies at both the central and state levels play a pivotal role in implementing the RPWD Act by formulating policies, allocating resources, and ensuring legal compliance. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, along with other relevant ministries (such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs), must oversee the execution of the Act's provisions, monitor progress, and address barriers. These agencies are responsible for setting up accessible infrastructure, ensuring disability-inclusive education, and enforcing employment quotas in the public sector. Additionally, local governments have a responsibility to ensure that services and facilities are accessible at the grassroots level. They must also create grievance redressal mechanisms to resolve issues faced by persons with disabilities promptly.

Civil Society

Civil society organizations (CSOs), including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), advocacy groups, and disability rights organizations, are instrumental in raising awareness about the RPWD Act, advocating for policy changes, and holding government agencies accountable. These groups play a crucial role in providing services such as skill development, legal support, and community integration programs for persons with disabilities. They also help monitor the implementation of the Act, report non-compliance, and assist individuals in navigating legal and administrative processes. By conducting outreach and awareness campaigns, CSOs ensure that individuals with disabilities and their families are informed of their rights under the RPWD Act, empowering them to demand better services and support.

Training for Stakeholders

Capacity-building programs for teachers, healthcare workers, and government officials are crucial. A 2022 pilot in Tamil Nadu trained over 500 educators in inclusive teaching methods, leading to a 10% increase in school retention among children with disabilities. Additionally, National Institutes and Composite Regional Centres (CRCs) has been set up two national institutes, namely Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for Speech & Hearing Disabilities (AYJNISHD) and Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre (ISLRTC) which focus on hearing and speech disabilities. Along with that, 25 Composite Regional Centres (CRCs) have been approved as outreach centers providing rehabilitation services, training professionals, and creating awareness about the needs and rights of PwDs.

Private Sector

The private sector has a critical role to play in supporting the objectives of the RPWD Act, particularly in employment, accessibility, and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Employers in both the formal and informal sectors must ensure compliance with the Act's employment provisions, which include reserving jobs for persons with disabilities and creating inclusive workplaces. Companies can also invest in accessibility solutions, such as making their buildings, websites, and customer service more disability-friendly. Furthermore, private enterprises can partner with government and civil society to fund disability-related initiatives, whether through CSR programs or by providing innovative solutions in areas like assistive technology, transport, and education. By fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce, the private sector can play a key role in breaking down social stigmas and enhancing economic opportunities for persons with disabilities. Private companies exceeding the mandatory 4% employment quota for persons with disabilities could receive tax benefits. Similarly, investments in accessibility technologies should qualify for corporate tax deductions.

Discussion

Individuals with disabilities are not only the primary beneficiaries of the RPWD Act but also vital actors in its successful implementation. They play an essential role by actively participating in the advocacy, monitoring, and evaluation processes. Persons with disabilities must be empowered to exercise their rights under the Act, which includes demanding accessible services, engaging in educational and employment opportunities, and seeking redress for grievances. By advocating for their own rights, individuals can influence policy decisions and inspire others in the disability community to do the same. Furthermore, individuals with disabilities, in collaboration with family members and caregivers, contribute to raising awareness about the barriers they face, which can drive further reforms and improvements.

The successful implementation of the RPWD Act, 2016, is hindered by several systemic and bureaucratic challenges, including a lack of interdepartmental coordination, insufficient funding, weak enforcement mechanisms, and limited awareness among key stakeholders. These issues often lead to delays and inefficiencies in implementing the Act's provisions, such as inaccessible infrastructure, inadequate employment opportunities, and gaps in education and healthcare for persons with disabilities. Moreover, the slow grievance redressal process and undertrained personnel further exacerbate the problem. To address these challenges, coordinated efforts across ministries, increased funding, and improved awareness and training are necessary to ensure the Act's provisions are effectively implemented nationwide. Regional disparities also play a significant role in the Act's uneven success across India. States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have made notable progress by prioritizing disability rights, investing in accessible infrastructure, and promoting inclusive education and employment. In contrast, states such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar face challenges due to limited resources, weak enforcement, and socio-cultural attitudes toward disability. These regional differences highlight the need for targeted interventions, with stronger political will, better financial allocations, and improved infrastructure in lagging regions. By addressing these systemic and regional barriers, India can fully realize the potential of the RPWD Act, fostering an inclusive society where persons with disabilities have equal opportunities to thrive.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act of 2016 marks a significant milestone in advancing disability rights in India. It embodies a crucial shift in societal perspectives, recognizing disability not merely as a social welfare concern, but as a human rights issue that requires legal protection and proactive measures to ensure equality and dignity for all. The Act's comprehensive provisions on accessibility, anti-discrimination, and economic empowerment reflect a holistic approach to addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by persons with disabilities. By ensuring access to education, employment, healthcare, and public spaces, the Act seeks to dismantle the barriers that have historically marginalized individuals with disabilities and restricted their participation in society.

However, while the RPwD Act provides a robust legal framework, the impact of its implementation is still uneven across various regions in India. There is a pressing need for stronger enforcement mechanisms, better coordination between government agencies, and enhanced awareness among stakeholders to ensure that the Act's benefits reach all persons with disabilities, regardless of where they live or the type of disability they have. Continued collaboration between government bodies, civil society organizations, and the private sector is essential to achieving the full potential of the legislation. This would not only improve

the quality of life for individuals with disabilities but also unlock their untapped potential, contributing to the nation's overall social and economic development.

The RPwD Act aligns India with global standards, especially the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), showcasing India's commitment to advancing disability rights on the international stage. India can enhance its leadership in disability advocacy by:

- Hosting an *International Disability Summit* to exchange best practices.
- Establishing a South Asia Coalition on Disability Rights to promote regional collaboration.

As such, it remains a beacon of progress, setting a benchmark for future policies and legislation. For India to truly embody the principles of equality, inclusion, and justice enshrined in the Act, there must be ongoing efforts to monitor its effectiveness, address implementation challenges, and engage persons with disabilities in the policy-making process. Ultimately, the success of the RPwD Act will not only be measured by legal provisions but by the lived experiences of those it seeks to protect and empower, ensuring that no one is left behind

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