

## CORPORATE OFFICE

### Delhi Office

706 Ground Floor Dr. Mukherjee  
Nagar Near Batra Cinema Delhi -  
110009

### Noida Office

Basement C-32 Noida Sector-2  
Uttar Pradesh 201301

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

**Date:** 8 January 2024

## PRITHVI VIGYAN SCHEME

This article covers ' Daily Current Affairs ' and the content details of ' PRITHvi Vlgyan Scheme ' This content is applicable in the "Science & Technology " section of the UPSC CSE exam.  
UPSC Mains **GS3** Syllabus : Science and technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

### Why in the News?

The Union Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister, has approved the "Prithvi Vigyan (Prithvi)" scheme, an important Ministry of Earth Sciences' project.

The initiative has a budget of Rs 4,797 crore and is scheduled to run from 2021 to 2026.

### About PRITHvi Vlgyan (PRITHVI) Scheme :

The scheme includes five ongoing sub-schemes, which are as follows:

- 1) ACROSS :** Atmosphere and Climate Research-Modeling Observing Systems and Services. It focuses on long-term data as well as advanced weather and climate modelling systems. The primary goals of ACROSS are to improve the accuracy and reliability of weather and climate predictions, to understand the underlying mechanisms of climate variability and change, to monitor and evaluate air quality and its consequences on health and the environment, and to develop and deploy cutting-edge atmospheric research observing systems.
- 2) O-SMART :** Ocean Services, Modelling Application, Resources, and Technology. It aims for long-term exploration and utilisation of marine resources through the application of cutting-edge technology.  
O-SMART's main goals are to provide reliable and precise ocean information and advisory services for a variety of sectors such as fisheries, navigation, coastal management, disaster management, and security, to explore and harness ocean resources such as minerals, energy, and biotechnology, to develop and deploy cutting-edge ocean technology for observation, exploration, and exploitation, and to improve human resource development and international cooperation in the ocean.
- 3) PACER :** Polar Science and Cryosphere Research.  
It seeks to unravel the secrets of the Earth's poles and glacial regions, hence contributing to a better understanding of global climate change.  
It monitors and predicts changes in the cryosphere and their impact on water supplies and sea level rise, as well as participates in international scientific collaborations and polar regions' management.

- 4) **SAGE** : Seismology and Geosciences. It works to improve earthquake monitoring and research on the solid components of the Earth. It attempts to comprehend the seismicity and tectonics of the Indian subcontinent and its surrounding region, try to figure out the possibility of earthquakes and threat to various regions of India, and to raise the public's awareness about earthquake safety.
- 5) **REACHOUT** : research, education, training, and outreach. It promotes growth of talents and makes sure that the research is effectively translated into services that benefit society. Its objective is to improve the quality and quantity of earth science human resources by various schemes such as grants, financial aid, internships, training programmes, and so on, as well as to foster an environment of innovation and entrepreneurship in earth sciences through multiple channels such as incubation centres, hackathons, challenges, and so on.

#### **Major objectives of the Scheme are -**

- Long-term observations of the atmosphere, ocean, geosphere, cryosphere, and solid earth to record the vital signals of the Earth System and change.
- Developing Modelling systems for understanding and predicting weather, ocean, and climate risks, as well as understanding the science of climate change.
- Exploration of the Earth's polar and high seas regions in search of new phenomena and resources.
- Technology development for the investigation and sustainable utilisation of oceanic resources for societal purposes.
- Knowledge and ideas from Earth systems science are translated into services for societal, environmental, and economic benefit.

#### **Significance :**

These integrated research and development efforts will assist in the study of the earth system sciences through all five components of the earth system (weather, climate, ocean, cryosphere, and seismological science).

- Analyse the living and non-living resources for their long-term utilisation.
- It would enable the development of integrated multidisciplinary earth science research and innovative programmes across various MoES institutes.
- The research programme intends to help a variety of industries, from environmental conservation and resource management.
- PRITHVI's focus encompasses the Earth's different dynamic systems, from atmospheric conditions to seismic activity.

#### **Ministry of Earth Sciences :**

- It is responsible for transforming science into societal services, by giving services in the climate, weather, ocean and coastal state, hydrology, seismic research, and disasters.
- It also examines and utilises marine resources in a sustainable manner, as well as exploring the Arctic, Antarctic, and Himalayan poles.
- MoES provides meteorological forecasts, natural disaster warnings, tsunami alarms, and earthquake surveillance.
- These services are used efficiently by organisations and state governments to protect lives while minimising property damage caused by disasters.

### Conclusion :

PRITHVI is an ambitious initiative that would boost India's skills in Earth systems science while also providing vital contributions for policy development, planning, and development. It will also aid in global efforts to address climate change and natural disasters.

### Mains practice question :

Q1) How will the Ministry of Earth Sciences' PRITHvi Vlgyan (PRITHVI) initiative aid in the nation's efforts to mitigate climate change while boosting environmental resilience?

Himanshu Mishra

## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: WELFARE AND EMPOWERMENT

Source - 'The Hindu'

General Studies: Social Justice, Government Welfare Schemes



### WHY IN DISCUSSION / NEWS?

- Recently, Ms. Heba Hagra of Egypt has been appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council as the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from 1 November 2023. Ms. Heba Hagra is renowned worldwide as a sociologist, a lawyer, an international disability consultant and a researcher. She has also worked as a representative for the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, with extensive experience in Egypt, the Arab region, and around the world. Between 2015 and 2020, Ms. Hagra worked in Egypt as a Member of Parliament, promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in legislative reforms and as Secretary General of the National Council for Disability Affairs. She has also been a founding member of the Arab Organization of People with Disabilities, where she was active between 1998 and 2008, including as head of the Women's Affairs Committee.

- The theme of World Day with Disabilities in the year 2022 was – “Transformative solutions for inclusive development”.
- In 1992, the United Nations declared 3 December as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD). This day is celebrated every year across the world with the intention of promoting the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities by raising awareness about the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.
- In India, every year on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, National Awards are presented to certain individuals/institutions/States/Districts for outstanding achievements in empowerment of persons with disabilities. These awards are given under the following 14 categories:-
  - (i) Best employee/disabled person self-employed.
  - (ii) (a) Best employer (b) Best placement officer or agency.
  - (iii) (a) Best individual or (b) Best institution working for the disabled.
  - (iv) Role Model (1) Best applied research or innovation or product development aimed at improving the lives of persons with disabilities.
  - (v) Excellent work in creating a barrier free environment for persons with disabilities.
  - (vi) Providing best rehabilitation services.
  - (vii) Best State Channelizing Agency of National Disabled Association Development Corporation.
  - (viii) Outstanding Creative Adult with Disability and Best Creative Child with Disability.
  - (ix) Best Braille Press.
  - (x) Best’ accessible website.
  - (xi) Best State in promoting empowerment of persons with disabilities and implementation of Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan and
  - (xii) Best Disabled Sportsperson.

**There are many causes of disability** – some of which are known and some of which are difficult to diagnose. In case of known causes, preventive measures can help reduce the incidence of both congenital and acquired disabilities. In the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept. The Act enumerates 21 types of disabilities instead of the earlier seven types and empowers the Central Government to modify the list from time to time. It replaced the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, which fulfills obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), to which India is a signatory.

#### **MEANING AND DEFINITION OF DISABILITY :**

- A person may be disabled in one particular environment but may not be disabled in many places. Disability is often defined as a defect, disturbance, or impairment in the normal functioning of physical, mental, or psychological processes, or as having difficulty learning or adjusting socially, which interferes with normal growth and development. . In the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWD Act), persons with disabilities, persons with benchmark disabilities, and persons with disabilities with high support needs have the following meanings:-



- Disabled person – A person with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, which hinders his or her interaction with others and his or her full and effective participation in society on an equal basis is called a person with a disability.
- Benchmark person with disability – A person with at least 40 per cent of the specified disability where the specified disability is not defined in measurable terms and includes a person with a disability where the specified disability is defined in measurable terms, as Has been certified by the certification authority.

### **PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES REQUIRING HIGH SUPPORT -**

- A person with benchmark disability requiring a high level of support certified under clause (a) of sub-section (2) of section 58 of the Persons with Disabilities Act. According to the 2011 census, the estimated number of persons with disabilities in India is 2.68 crore (2.21 percent of the total population of India). Out of the total population of these disabled people, approximately 1.50 crore are men and 1.18 crore are women. These include persons with visual, hearing, speech and mobility impairments, mental illness, mental retardation (intellectual disability), multiple disabilities and other disabilities. According to the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, about 36 percent of persons with disabilities are working (men – 47 percent and women – 23 percent). Among disabled workers, 31 percent are agricultural labourers. 50 percent of disabled children in the age group of 15-59 years are employed, while 4 percent of disabled children in the age group below 14 years are employed.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS :**

- The Constitution of India, through its Preamble, inter alia, seeks to secure to all its citizens; justice, social, economic and political; Freedom of thought, expression, faith, belief and worship; Equality of status and opportunity. The relevant extracts from the Eleventh Schedule (Article 243-G) ensure social welfare including the welfare of persons with disabilities and the mentally retarded (Entry No. 26), and the Twelfth Schedule (Article 243-W) provides for the welfare of the vulnerable, persons with disabilities and the mentally retarded in society. It has been said to protect the interests of all sections of society (Entry No. 09).

### **LAWS RELATED TO PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES :**

The following laws related to the protection and welfare of persons with disabilities currently exist in India –

1. [Indian Rehabilitation Council Act, 1992](#)
  2. [Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016](#)
  3. [National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999](#)
  4. [Mental Health Care Act, 2017](#)
- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, looks after the functions related to the first three laws. The fourth Mental Health Care Act, 2017 legislation belongs to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
  - Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992: This Act provides for the constitution of the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) to regulate the training of rehabilitation professionals and

the maintenance of a Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR) and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. Around 750 teacher training institutes and 14 State Open Universities across the country are running RCI approved courses. They offer certification for M.Phil-level courses. At present, 60 courses covering all 16 categories of professionals/personnel allotted to RCI are operational through regular mode.

- National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999: The Government of India has enacted this Act with the objective of providing for the welfare of persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities and persons connected therewith or connected therewith. A body is to be constituted for the welfare of individuals at the national level for incidental matters. The objective of the Trust is to provide complete care to persons with mental retardation and cerebral palsy and also to manage the properties given to the Trust.
- Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act – 2016: This Act gives effect to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The responsibility is placed on the appropriate governments to take effective measures to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others. Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.
- Mental Health Care Act – 2017: The objective of the Mental Health Care Act, 2017 is to ensure mental health care and services for persons with mental illness and to protect the rights of such persons during the delivery of mental health care and services and in matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. To protect, promote and fulfill them.

#### **NATIONAL POLICY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN INDIA:**

- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Government of India has decided to review the existing National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006 and take into account the provisions of the RPWD Act, 2016, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and global best practices in the management of disability. A committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of Secretary, DEPWD to suggest a new policy document.

#### **IMPORTANT RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE IN INDIA :**

##### **RIGHT TO EDUCATION :**

- The Right to Education Act promises new incentives for the education of children with special needs (CSWN) in an enabling inclusive environment, irrespective of the category and degree of disability. The teacher qualifications notified by NCTE under Section 23 of the RTE Act recognize persons with special education (D.Ed and B.Ed special education) as teachers at par with other teachers and the deployment of such teachers in general schools is a positive .

##### **RIGHT TO ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION :**

- As per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, all institutions of higher education receiving government aid must reserve at least 5 per cent of seats for persons with benchmark disabilities and allow them a minimum age relaxation of five years for admission. Will happen.

##### **RIGHT TO EMPLOYMENT :**

- The Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India, issued a circular to all Ministries and Departments on January 15, 2018, specifying 4 percent reservation for persons

with benchmark disabilities in specified government jobs under Section 34 of the RPWD Act, 2016.

#### **RIGHT OF LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP :**

- Persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities are in a special situation because even after attaining the age of 18 years, they are not always able to manage their own lives or take legal decisions for their own betterment. Can happen. Therefore, they may need someone to represent their interests in legal areas throughout their lives. Under Section 14 of the National Trust Act, a local level committee headed by the District Collector is empowered to receive applications and appoint persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities. It also provides mechanisms to monitor and protect their interests including their properties.

#### **RIGHT OF ACCESS :**

- To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, on an equal basis with others, including the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, information and communication technologies and systems. Appropriate measures are required to ensure access to, and other facilities and services which are open or provided to the public. These measures include identification and elimination of barriers to access.

#### **RIGHT TO DISABILITY CERTIFICATE :**

- A person with disability, who wishes to avail benefits under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, must obtain a disability certificate from the medical authority notified for the purpose. The certificates are issued on the basis of guidelines prepared by the Department of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. It is the responsibility of the State Governments to issue disability certificates on the basis of applications received from the disabled. They are required to have a medical report explaining the type of disability, and the minimum degree of disability should be 40 percent. The certification process starts with the person with disability or the parents contacting the nearest district hospital to obtain the disability certificate through the medical board. The Medical Board then forwards the cases to specialized medical sub-committees for different types of disabilities.
- Nodal Agency for Ensuring Rights of Persons with Disabilities: To focus on policy issues and give meaningful emphasis to activities aimed at the welfare and empowerment of persons with disabilities, a separate Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) has been established from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. Was created. The Department acts as a nodal agency for matters related to disability and PWDs including effecting close coordination among various stakeholders.
- Institutional framework for empowerment of persons with disabilities: Apart from the legal framework, extensive infrastructure has been developed by the Central Government. The Government of India has established 13 National Institutes under various Ministries for the empowerment of persons with disabilities. Apart from the national institutions, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has also established 20 Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centers (CRCs) and about 200 District Disability Rehabilitation Centers (DDRCs) for skill development, rehabilitation and empowerment of persons with disabilities (Divyangjan). In addition, 750 private institutions are conducting training courses for rehabilitation professionals.

## **THE LIST OF NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH AND CARE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN INDIA ARE :-**

Institute for Physically Handicapped, New Delhi

National Institute for Visually Disabled, Dehradun

National Institute of Orthopedic Disabilities, Kolkata.

National Institute for Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad.

National Institute for Hearing Handicapped, Mumbai

National Institute of Rehabilitation and Research, Cuttack.

National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities, Chennai.

## **STATUTORY BODIES ENSURING RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:**

- Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD): The office of the CCPD comes under section 74(1) of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Empowered Chief Commissioner of PWD to review the safeguards provided by or under this Act or any other law for the time being in force for the protection of rights of persons with disabilities and to recommend measures for their effective implementation. Has gone. These include a review by the Chief Commissioner of the factors that impede the benefits of the rights of persons with disabilities. Chief – Commissioner, on his own motion or on the application of any aggrieved person or otherwise, prohibiting the deprivation or non-implementation of rights of persons with disabilities or rules, bye-laws, regulations made or issued for the welfare and protection of rights of PWDs, Can look into complaints related to executive orders, guidelines or instructions and take up the matter with the concerned authorities. The Chief Commissioner of PWD has been entrusted with some of the powers of a civil court for effective discharge of functions.
- National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities: The National Trust is a statutory body established under the National Trust Act 1999. The National Trust has been established to discharge two basic duties. Legal duties are discharged through local level committee and welfare duties are discharged through various schemes implemented by registered organizations. The activities of the National Trust inter alia include training, awareness and capacity-building programs and shelter, care and empowerment. The National Trust is committed to equal opportunities, protect the rights and facilitate full participation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) covered under the Act.

## **REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA (RCI) :**

- The Rehabilitation Council of India has been given statutory status by an Act of Parliament, namely, the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992. The Council is mandated to regulate and monitor training programs for professionals and personnel in the field of rehabilitation and special education and to promote research in rehabilitation and special education and maintain a central rehabilitation register.

## **SKILL COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (SCPWD) :**

- A separate Sector Skill Council for Persons with Disabilities has been set up by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship with a Chairman and a full-time CEO from the private sector. The Council has various members representing government and private sector stakeholders and NGOs working for persons with disabilities.



**The following measures/provisions have been made by the Government of India for the empowerment of persons with disabilities –**

- The Government of India notified the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules on June 15, 2017. These rules also specify accessibility standards for the built environment, passenger bus transport and websites, as well as the procedure for applying for and granting disability certificates, publication of an equal opportunities policy, methods of utilization and management of the National Fund, etc. .
- The Government of India notified guidelines for assessment of specified disability status of an individual on January 04, 2018. These guidelines provide a detailed process of assessment as well as the structure of the competent medical authority to issue disability certificates for different categories.
- Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Government of India notified the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Amendment) Rules on March 08, 2019, specifying an assessment board, the composition of such boards, the manner of assessment of benchmark persons with disabilities demanding high support needs Was.
- States have been advised from time to time to make rules as per Section 101 of the Act. As of March 31, 2020, 31 States/UTs have notified rules under the said Act.
- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Government of India has constituted the Central Advisory Board on Disability vide notification dated November 08, 2017. The Central Advisory Board has met four times so far.



**CHALLENGES :**

- The biggest challenge in India is to bring about a change in the perception of the general public towards the disabled. Therefore, creating awareness towards persons with disabilities is important not only among the general public but also to change the mindset of persons with disabilities and to increase their self-confidence at the planning and execution level for the state governments and local bodies to create a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities. There is a strong need for cultural assimilation of accessibility standards.
- An estimated 1.3 billion people experience significant disability. That's 16% of the world's population, or 1 in 6 people, who has a disability.
- Some people with disabilities die 20 years earlier than people without disabilities.
- People with disabilities have double the risk of developing conditions such as depression, asthma, diabetes, stroke, obesity or poor oral health.

- Persons with disabilities face many health inequalities.
- People with disabilities face 15 times more difficulty finding inaccessible and ineffective transportation than people without disabilities.
- Health disparities stem from the unfair conditions faced by persons with disabilities, including stigma, discrimination, poverty, exclusion from education and employment, and barriers to access to the health system.
- Social exclusion for persons with disabilities and barriers to access to the health system are common in India.

### **STRUCTURAL FACTORS :**

- People with disabilities experience ableism, stigma and discrimination in all aspects of life, which impacts their physical and mental health. Laws and policies can deprive them of their decision-making rights and allow many harmful practices in the health sector, such as forced sterilization, involuntary admissions and treatment, and even institutionalization.

### **SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH :**

Poverty, exclusion from education and employment, and poor living conditions all increase the risk of poor health and unmet health care needs among persons with disabilities. Gaps in formal social support mechanisms mean that persons with disabilities are dependent on the support of family members to engage in health and community activities, putting not only them at a disadvantage but also their caregivers (who are mostly women and girls).

### **RISK FACTOR :**

- Persons with disabilities are more likely to have risk factors for non-communicable diseases such as smoking, poor diet, alcohol consumption and lack of physical activity. A major reason for this is that they are often deprived of public health interventions.

### **HEALTH SYSTEM :**

- Persons with disabilities face barriers in all aspects of the health system. For example, lack of knowledge, negative attitudes and discriminatory practices among health workers; inaccessible health facilities and information; and lack of information or data collection and analysis on disability, all contribute to the health disparities faced by this group.
- WHO works to ensure that persons with disabilities have equitable access to effective health services, to achieve the highest attainable standard of health and to access emergency inter-regional public health preparedness and public health interventions

### **TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL, THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) DOES THE FOLLOWING:**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) guides and supports Member States on disability inclusion in health system governance and planning.
- Facilitates the collection and dissemination of data and information related to disability.
- Develops standard tools, including guidelines, to strengthen disability inclusion in the health sector.
- Builds capacity between health policy makers and service providers.

- It promotes strategies to ensure that people with disabilities have information about their health conditions, and that health care workers support and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.
- Contributes to the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) to promote “sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the UN’s work”.
- Provides updated evidence, analysis and recommendations related to disability inclusion in the health sector to **Member States and development partners**.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM:**

**Q.1. Match the list of national institutions and places with states for the treatment and care of persons with disabilities in India.**

**Institute**

- (1) National Institute for Visually Disabled Persons
- (2) National Institute for Mentally Handicapped
- (3). National Institute of Hearing Handicapped
- (4) National Institute for Empowerment of Multiple Disabilities

**Location**

- (a) Dehradun.
- (b) Secunderabad.
- (c) Chandigarh.
- (d) Patna.

**Which of the above statement /statements is correct?**

- (A) Only 1, 2 and 3
- (B) Only 1, 3 and 4
- (C) Only 1 and 2
- (D) None of these.

**Answer – (c)**

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM:**

**Q.1. How are all the fundamental rights of India protected in the lives of persons with disabilities? To what extent has the ‘Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act’ 2016 contributed in eliminating various factors associated with disability in India?**

**Akhilesh kumar shrivastav**