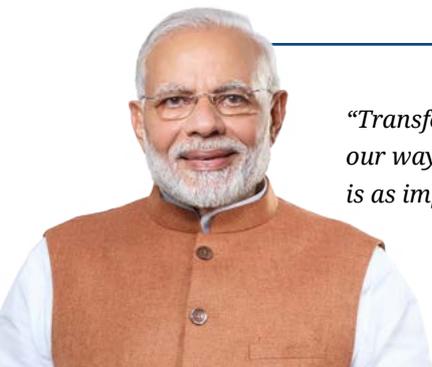


Making rural toilets accessible for Divyangjan



“Transformation of our nation begins when we change our way of life. Keeping our city and surroundings clean is as important as building modern infrastructure.”

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 defines a person with disability (PwD) as a ‘a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with barriers, hinders full and effective participation in society equally with others’ and lists 21 types of disabilities.

- According to Census 2011, 2.21% (26.81 million) of India’s population are persons with disabilities. However, the actual number would be much higher, since this did not cover the additional categories of disabilities added in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
- World Bank estimates between 40 to 90 million persons with disabilities in India

The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, envisages equitable and inclusive access to sanitation facilities for Persons with Disabilities, as an integral aspect of their empowerment to lead a life with dignity. Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen guidelines state that ‘Inclusive planning of water and sanitation services benefits the larger community and therefore provision of accessible sanitary facilities, shall be made during the construction of toilets.’



Initiatives for accessible sanitation under Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen

12 lakh accessible individual household latrines constructed across India, as on September 8, 2019

Handbook on Accessible Sanitation for Persons with Disabilities (2015) provides various technical design options and models

SAN-Sadhan Hackathon (2019) organised jointly with Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, NITI Aayog and other actors to promote and showcase innovative and affordable solutions

Other measures by some states include: Policy initiatives for inclusion of PwDs in sanitation programs and for provision of accessible toilets; demonstration of accessible toilets in select districts; provision of additional incentives for accessible household toilets; mobilisation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds for accessible sanitation etc.

Accessible India Campaign, launched by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment envisages an inclusive society with equal opportunities provided for growth and development of PwDs. Built environment accessibility is an important component under this program.



Suggestions for design considerations/solutions for accessible sanitation*

Type of disability	Identified difficulties faced in accessing/using toilets	Examples of design considerations/solutions being envisaged
Physical disability/mobility impairments (such as Cerebral Palsy, Locomotor Disability, Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties in maintaining balance Difficulties in squatting, getting up and/or turning Difficulty in finding and/or holding objects such as doorknob, water container etc. Extreme pain while movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Path leading to toilet smooth and free of barriers Handrail along path for support Ramps with adequate slope Floor made of non-slippery material Toilet entrance adequate for a wheelchair to enter Toilet cubicle space adequate for a person with a wheelchair to move and close door comfortably Handrail/grab bar inside toilet cubicle Raised seat Height/level of fixtures adjusted as per requirement Modifications in the door to ensure privacy and ease of use
Vision impairments (blindness or low vision)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty in finding path Difficulty in maintaining balance Difficulty in finding and/or holding objects such as door knob, water container etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landmark posts/guide strings along the path leading to toilet Handrail/grab bar inside toilet cubicle Floor made of non-slippery material Toilet and area outside toilet well illuminated Adequate colour/tonal contrast between walls, floor and fixtures
Intellectual disabilities or sensory impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitivity to sight/smell Fear in dark/closed space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate space and ventilation in toilets Toilet and area outside the toilet well illuminated

Elderly persons also face similar barriers and difficulties, for which suitable design/modification of toilets is advised. Short-term arrangements can also be made for enhancing accessibility for pregnant women.

*This list does not cover all types of disabilities and specific challenges.

Sanitation facilities for persons with disabilities should be free of barriers and ensure their safety, privacy and dignity

Accessible individual household latrines (IHHLs)	Accessible toilets at public places, school, anganwadis, health care facilities etc.
To be designed/modified based on assessment of needs and challenges of the specific person(s)	To be designed/modified as per universal accessible design considerations, such that it can be accessed and used by persons with all types of disabilities/difficulties

Strategy for inclusive and accessible sanitation: Guidance for states and districts

- State level policy/guidelines and arrangement of adequate funds for making toilets accessible
- Development of communication materials and tools for all stakeholders
- Awareness/sensitisation campaigns on challenges faced by persons with disabilities; and addressing myths and taboos associated with disabilities, for actors such as: state and district officials, Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) leaders, family members of PwDs, community, civil society organisations and other actors
- Orientation of gram panchayat representatives for need of intervention at community level
- Orientation of staff/workers at schools, anganwadi centres, healthcare facilities for interventions in institutions
- Capacity building of engineers and masons on accessible toilet designs and necessary modifications required for different types of disabilities
- Efforts at gram panchayat level for identification of households with persons with disabilities
- Ensuring effective participation of PwD users in the process of planning of construction/modification of the toilet, to ensure that their needs and challenges are considered
- Providing additional financial support to households for making necessary design modifications and for assistive devices
- Ensuring local availability of necessary materials and supplies, including assistive devices
- Drive for modifications in existing toilets, or construction of accessible toilets, at household, community and institutional levels, led by gram panchayat and/or related agencies

Possible sources of funding support

- Finance Commission (Central and State) funds
- Schemes by National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, and their state counterparts
- Convergence with other government programmes
- District specific sources such as District Mineral Foundation
- Participation of self-help groups
- Corporate Social Responsibility funds





Enhancing self-reliance of PwDs

“There was no toilet in our house,” says Vidya Devi from Uttar Pradesh, mother of a 17 year-old boy with locomotor disability and deformity in limbs. She used to carry him to the field, around 500 metres away. Sometimes, when she had to prioritise other household tasks, her son would soil himself. In 2018, the family constructed a toilet with a raised seat using the SBM incentive, with additional financial top-up from an NGO. He can now access and use the toilet in his own premises.

State-level initiatives for accessible sanitation

An accessible sanitation initiative was launched by Chhattisgarh state in 2018, with technical support from WaterAid India and UNICEF. Following a stakeholder consultation, a need assessment was held in 100 gram panchayats of 10 districts, and different accessible household and community toilet designs were developed by experts in consultation with PwDs. Training of engineers and masons, and demonstration of accessible sanitation are being rolled out in 3 districts. In addition to SBM-G funds, South Eastern Coalfields Ltd provided CSR funds as well. A strategy document and a scaling up framework based on this experience are being prepared.

Further Reading

1. **Handbook on Accessible Sanitation for Persons with Disabilities (2015)**, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti: <https://swachhbharatmission.gov.in/sbmcms/writereaddata/images/pdf/technical-notes-manuals/PWD-Guidelines.pdf>
2. **Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for Barrier-free Environment for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Persons (2016)**, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs: http://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Harmonised%20guidelinesd%20released%20on%2023rd%20March%202016_compressed.pdf
3. **Accessible WASH in Public Spaces and Schools: Practitioner’s Manual (2015)**, Department of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment: <http://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/WASH%20Practitioners%20Manual-Samarthy.pdf>



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