



Mains Practice Question

Q. Inclusivity is a theme in India's G20 presidency. Discuss the challenges and opportunities for making urban centres more disabled-friendly in India. (150 words)

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Approach:

- **Introduction:** Start your answer by explaining the theme of India's G20 presidency and its relevance to inclusivity.
- **Body:** Identify the main challenges and opportunities for making urban centres more disabled-friendly in India, with supporting facts and examples
- **Conclusion:** Conclude with a forward-looking approach

Introduction:

Inclusivity is a theme in India's G20 presidency, which reflects the country's aspiration to lead with inclusivity and creativity. India's G20 presidency also affirms the value of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam or One Earth, One Family, One Future, emphasizing collective efforts for global good.

Making urban centres more disabled-friendly in India is a challenge as well as an opportunity for achieving this vision of inclusivity. According to the 2011 Census, roughly 8 million people with disabilities already live in cities. Only 3% buildings are accessible for the physically challenged.

Body:

Some of the challenges for making urban centres more disabled-friendly:

- **Lack of awareness and sensitivity** among various stakeholders about the rights and needs of persons with disabilities.
- **Lack of adequate data and disaggregated information** on the number, types and conditions of persons with disabilities in urban areas.
- **Lack of coordination and convergence** among different ministries, departments and agencies involved in urban planning, development and service delivery.
- **Lack of adequate financial resources and technical expertise** for designing, implementing and monitoring accessibility standards and guidelines.
- **Lack of participation and representation of persons** with disabilities and their organizations in decision-making processes and governance structures.

Some of the opportunities for making urban centres more disabled-friendly:

- Leveraging **technology and ICT** to create an enabling environment and improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities. For example, using digital platforms to deliver benefits and services, providing assistive devices and apps, installing audio-visual signals and signage, etc.
- Investing in **accessible infrastructure** that allows persons with disabilities to move independently and access places of work, education, sports and culture. For example, building ramps, lifts, toilets, pathways, etc. that are compatible with different types of disabilities.

- Fostering **behavioural changes and capacity building** among various stakeholders to promote awareness, sensitivity and respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. For example, conducting training programs, campaigns, workshops, etc. to sensitize officials, service providers, employers, educators, etc.
- Implementing **inclusive policies and legal frameworks** that protect and empower persons with disabilities and ensure their participation in decision-making processes. For example, enforcing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, which mandates accessibility standards for public buildings and transport.
- Harnessing the potential and contribution of persons with disabilities as agents of change and development in various sectors and domains.

Conclusion:

Creating a fully inclusive and accessible India will require collaborative action from all levels of government, civil society, private sector and international partners. This will help inform policies and systems for the country's progress towards an equitable urban future.

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