



Autism Spectrum Disorder

Why in News

Recently, a 12-year-old Maharashtra girl with **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** successfully swam across the Arabian Sea from Bandra-Worli Sea Link to Gateway of India in Mumbai.

Key Points

▪ About:

- ASD refers to a range of conditions characterised by some degree of **impaired social behaviour, communication and language**, and a narrow range of interests and activities that are both unique to the individual and carried out repetitively.
- It is a complex brain development disability which makes itself visible during the first 3 years of a person's life.
- It is **not mental retardation** as people with autism may show excellent skills in spheres like art, music, writing etc. The level of intellectual functioning in individuals with ASDs is **extremely variable**, extending from profound impairment to superior levels.

▪ Causes:

- There are probably many factors that make a child more likely to have an ASD, including **environmental and genetic factors**.

▪ Signs and Symptoms:

- Difficulty with social communication and interaction, restricted interests, and repetitive behaviors.

▪ Cure:

- Although autism is **not curable**, its symptoms can be addressed with appropriate interventions like evidence-based psychosocial interventions, behavioural treatment and skills training programmes for parents and other caregivers, health promotion, care, rehabilitation services, etc.

▪ Global & National Initiatives to Raise Awareness on ASD:

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UNCRPD\)](#), [Sustainable Development Goals](#) deal with rights of people with disabilities including autism.
- The [Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016](#) increased the types of disabilities **from 7 to 21**. It also added **autism spectrum disorder** among others, which were largely ignored in earlier Act.
- In 2014, the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) adopted a resolution entitled "Comprehensive and coordinated efforts for the management of autism spectrum disorders (ASD)," which was supported by more than 60 countries.
- In 2008, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously declared 2nd April as [World Autism Awareness Day](#).

[Source: PIB](#)

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