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India's first Parliamentary Handbook on Disability launches in Delhi

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To capture all 21 categories of disabilities with improved and accurate data marking a crucial step toward inclusive policymaking



Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Ramdas Athawale described the upcoming Census 2027, the first after the enactment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, as a historic national opportunity to recognise all 21 categories of disabilities through trained enumeration and vastly improved data collection.

Speaking at the launch of India's first-ever handbook on disability for parliamentarians titled 'Beyond the Visible: A Handbook on Disability Inclusion for Parliamentarians,' prepared by the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP), the Minister said accurate and disaggregated data will enable the government to design far more targeted and effective interventions for persons with disabilities across the country.

Athawale highlighted the decisive steps taken by the Government of India under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 was a landmark reform that expanded recognition to 21 disabilities, shifted from a welfare-based to a rights-based approach, and aligned India with the UNCRPD. For the first time, the law explicitly recognised political barriers as a major obstacle for persons with disabilities.

The Minister pointed to several flagship initiatives of the Modi Government including the Accessible India Campaign, the Unique Disability ID (UDID) portal, skill development programmes under PM-DAKSH, and focused efforts under Ayushman Bharat, that are steadily mainstreaming persons with disabilities in the national development journey.

Athawale added that the launch of the handbook and today's roundtable discussion will further mainstream the discourse on disability rights and inclusive policymaking in Parliament and public life, making this event an important milestone in India's journey towards an inclusive and Viksit Bharat. Reaffirming the government's vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas", the Minister assured that every initiative will continue to ensure no citizen is left behind.