

Brief Note of Sugamya Bharat APP And Access- The Photo Digest

Sugamya Bharat APP — a Crowdsourcing Mobile Application is a means for sensitising and enhancing accessibility in the built environment, transportation sector and ICT ecosystem in India. The vision and direction for this crowdsourcing App based on Jan-Bhagidari was given by Hon'ble Prime Minister for improving accessibility in our country. This App would enable Divyangjan and general public to bring to notice accessibility-related issues that require redressal.

2. The Sugamya Bharat App is a simple to use Mobile App with an easy registration process, requiring only 3 mandatory fields, namely, Name, Mobile number and Email-id. The App can be downloaded from both Playstore and iOS platforms.

3. The Sugamya Bharat App has been provided with several user-friendly features. The App has easy drop-down menus and is provided with videos in Hindi and English demonstrating the process of registration and uploading complaints with photographs by the users. The App is made accessible for ease of use for persons with disabilities with features such as font size adjustment, color contrasting option, text to speech, and having an integrated screen reader in Hindi and English. It is available in 10 languages. The App also has provision of easy photo uploads with geotagging option of the premise where accessibility intervention is required. The App has provision for providing notifications to the users at the time of registration, forwarding of the complaint to the appropriate authorities, status updates as well as at the time of resolution and closure of the complaint.

4. To complement the intention of the App and objectives of the Accessible India Campaign, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) has also prepared a book named as *Access- The Photo Digest*. This Book is envisaged as a tool to sensitise stakeholders about 10 basic features of accessibility and related good-bad practices in easy to understand pictorial form. Volume-I of the book related to public-centric buildings will be launched along with the Sugamya Bharat App. It will be distributed amongst concerned officers across the country and its electronic version will also be uploaded on the App for mass awareness generation. In addition to the book, provision has also been made to sensitise the app users by educating them about accessibility with an introduction of *Do you Know?* pop-up features in the complaint form itself. The App has also been loaded with official guidelines related to accessibility as issued by concerned Ministries/Departments.

5. In view of the COVID19 pandemic, a special feature of issues faced by Divyangjan has been included in the App.

6. While this initiative to ensure accessibility has been taken by DEPwD, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the actual implementation and ensuring accessibility rests with the concerned Ministries/Departments of Central

Government, States and UTs. In order to facilitate the resolution of complaints, nodal officers have been appointed at both Central and State level.

7. The process of taking action on the complaints received through the App will be as below:

- (i) Upon receipt of complaints through the App, the complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate authority by the dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU) after screening the complaint.
- (ii) The appropriate authorities will be made responsible for taking action on the complaint. These could be at the Central Government Ministries/Departments level or States/UTs level.
- (iii) District Magistrate/Collector will be made nodal officers and will be forwarded issues related to Government Owned Buildings in the Districts and Executive Head of ULB will be made the nodal officers for Private Buildings or any other building that comes under the jurisdiction of the ULB. For infrastructure/services related to Central Government, the nodal officer of the concerned Ministry/Department/Regulator will be forwarded the complaint by the PMU. Reasonable timeframe will be provided to the appropriate authorities for the redressal of the complaint.
- (iv) Nodal officers will be required to take up the issues with the owners of the premises/services (whether government or private) in order to ensure compliance and achieve resolution of the issue. All Central Government Ministries/Departments and States/UTs have been requested to appoint such nodal officers and inform them about the Sugamya Bharat APP so that once this APP gets launched, they should be in a state of preparedness to take action for resolving the issues when the complaints are forwarded to them.
- (v) If the Appropriate Authority at the Centre or State/UT level does not take action within a time bound manner despite reminders, the complaint will be escalated to the next higher authority. At the State/UT level, Principal Secretary/Head of the regulating authority will be the nodal officer for complaints escalated for their respective Departments. For the Central Government Ministry/Department, the next higher authority will be approached for taking appropriate action for the redressal of the grievance.
- (vi) Quarterly reports of the complaints received/resolved/pending for concerned Ministries/Departments at the Central level will be sent to the concerned Secretaries and for States to the Chief Secretaries.
- (vii) The Complaint will be followed up by the PMU team till its resolution and the Complainant shall be kept informed at every stage.

8. The Sugamya Bharat APP is envisaged not only as a tool to help improve accessibility of the public infrastructure and services across India but also to act as a nudge campaign to sensitise people about the importance of *Sugamyata* in all walks of life. This Mobile App is an endeavour and a step towards achieving universal accessibility as mandated in Sections 40-46 of the RPwD Act, 2016.
