

Right to Walk on Footpath a Fundamental Right

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Why in News?

Recently, The Supreme Court of India declared the freedom to walk on demarcated and well-maintained footpaths a fundamental right.

Constitutional Basis

- **Article 21 - Right to Life and Personal Liberty.**
- Walking safely is part of the simplest human activity, directly connected to life.
- **Article 19(1)(a), Article 19(1)(b) and Article 19 (1)(c)** - Walking embodies *expressional, congregational, and associational rights.*

- **19(1)(a)** - Freedom of Speech and Expression
- **19(1)(b)** - Freedom of Assembly,
- **19(1)(c)** - Freedom of Association

- **Article 14 - Right to Equality.**
- Common spaces must not be monopolised by motorised vehicles; pedestrians deserve equal protection.

Court's Observations

- **Historical Role of Walking** - Walking powered India's freedom struggle, politics, and social reforms.
- **Urbanisation** - Governments focused on urbanisation and motorisation, built wide roads and expressways but neglected footpaths, treating walkers as inconvenience.
- **Minimum Duty of Authorities** - Providing footpaths is the basic duty of municipal bodies.

Statutory Concerns

- **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988** - The Act focused only on vehicles and ignored walkers' rights.
- **Supreme Court Directions** - Court asked government to frame a *statutory framework* recognising the right to walk, fixing responsibility, and giving remedies.
- **Regulatory Body Suggestion** - Court suggested creating a *regulatory body* to enforce and implement pedestrian rights.

Reference

[The Hindu | Right to walk](#)

