

basin–South Asia

Regional Knowledge Platform

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Universal Access

LAURIE BAKER
1915-2007

The light is not dead...

Through out his life "Laurie Baker sought to enrich the culture in which he participated by promoting simplicity and 'home-grown' quality in his buildings. Seeing so many people living in poverty in the region and throughout India served to amplify his emphasis on cost-conscious construction, one that encouraged local participation in development and craftsmanship - an ideal that the Mahatma expressed as the only means to revitalize and liberate an impoverished India."

The light that was Laurie Baker will lead us on and inspire all future generations.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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Editorial

Creating "Non-handicapping Physical Environments" for persons with reduced mobility and disabilities

- *Anjlee Agarwal and Mona Chhabra Anand*

Mainstream building practice, particularly in rural areas addresses the needs of able-bodied; unless the building in question is "meant to be used by" a person with limited physical ability. In that sense, "handicaps" are created when a certain group of people with their individualized needs are denied access to and/or use of a facility. Another important aspect of accessibility is usability and affordability by "everyone", including the fast emerging aging population. With improved medical facilities that have contributed to longevity of life, age related disability is a question that stares us in the face.

The National Sample Survey Organization of India, (2002) estimates that the disabled population in rural India is 3.2 times higher than in urban India. Of the total population of disabled persons in Bangladesh, 87 percent live in rural areas. The situation for other South Asian countries is not any different. In this context, it is ironic that most of our efforts in design of buildings/ dwellings, community spaces and even transportation infrastructure in rural areas still addresses the needs of the so called able-bodied. Whatever efforts are made towards this end are mostly limited to urban areas and that too in the direction of rehabilitation rather than enabling Universal Access for all.

This issue of the **basin-SA** newsletter is a result of a Focus Group Discussion organized by Samarthya, National Centre for Promotion of Barrier-free Environment for Disabled Persons in collaboration with **basin-SA**, in Delhi on 19th Feb.'07 with support from the Poorest Areas Civil Society Program. The discussion focused on identifying key points that will be proposed to the Ministry of Rural Development for promoting Universal Design in the proposed National Rural Habitat Policy for India.

For our readers, we have managed to gather thoughts and insights of some of our key speakers at the discussion. This is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. If we are to realize a future in which disabled persons participate fully in mainstream activities and enjoy equality of opportunity in education, employment, at home and leisure; it is first necessary to break down the barriers between "general" and "specialized" design and create a new inclusive design language i.e. "Universal Design or Design for All".

Anjlee Agarwal is Executive Director and Access Advisor, Samarthya

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A Barrier - free Environment for all

- C. Mahesh

Creating an accessible/ barrier free environment starts with the belief that everyone in this world has something to contribute for the growth of our country.

In this article, I am sharing my personal experience as a case study illustrating the benefits of creating equal access to water and sanitation. Although the practical issues and the ways of overcoming barriers could be perceived as unique, never the less creating equitable access to water and sanitation should not in any way discount the needs of disabled persons, the elderly and members from other vulnerable groups who include children, disabled children and adults, elderly people, people living with HIV/AIDS and ethnically marginalized groups. However, this is a subject that is most often neglected or forgotten.

The general feeling is, people from the vulnerable groups mentioned above are not considered to be productive citizens and hence most often there are either no provisions or investments made to ensure universal access.

On the contrary, investments made to build inclusive access to water and sanitation facilities promotes self-reliance, enhances the self-confidence of people especially from the vulnerable groups, reduces the physical strain and the demand of time of the caregivers, promotes an environment that is safe, respects differences and creates space for greater productivity amongst the individual, family and the community.

I am 37 years, married and have a son who is 8 years. I belong to a middle class family. I had to relocate to Bangalore city, Karnataka, India as I found a suitable job there.

I have a walking disability and use a pair of elbow crutches to walk short distances or use a wheelchair. One of the main challenges I face is standing up from any chair/ seat. I can stand up if the chair is 6 to 8 inches more than the standard height of the chair which is usually around 17 inches. In the absence of this high chair I need physical assistance.

With a lot of scouting around I was lucky to find a rented house that fits my budget, near my place of work and most importantly a house that is fairly accessible in the ground floor.

However, the major challenge that I had to face was in adapting the house to meet my needs, especially creating independent access to water and sanitation. As it was a rented house, the structural adjustments had to be limited.

The Challenges were many but the most critical was the toilet that was small, a step lower from the ground level and had an Indian seat. But through simple modifications such challenge were overcome. A toilet commode seat was suitably designed so that the seat was extra high to compensate the depth in the toilet and this height enabled me to sit and stand independently. Hand rails were nailed on the wall that helped in giving greater support to cross this narrow passage to the toilet. To increase the accessibility in the bathroom a simple hose was attached to the tap that assisted to wash and flush water in the desired direction. A bathing chair in the bathroom, the height of which could be adjusted, enabled me to sit and get up without assistance. The grab bars on the walls were fixed at appropriate height to prevent slipping on a wet floor when I entered or left the bathroom.

There are benefits of such simple modifications. The simple and low-cost adaptations have enabled me to be independent in my house self-reliant especially in the areas of managing my activities of daily living. This has also given me the freedom to the members of my family and they are free from the thoughts of taking care of me at all times. These investments have given me the confidence to advocate similar changes outside my home at my work place and with the communities with whom we work with.

Lack of proper access or denial of access to water and sanitation is a violation of the right to human dignity. We have not found a drug to stop ageing, illness or accidents that could lead to temporary or long term functional limitation. Let us accept diversity without prejudice and promote the concept of 'universal design' in all our projects/ constructions be an apartment or a pavement or a bus-stand or a toilet in the community.

C. Mahesh works for CBR Forum, as the Advocacy Coordinator in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities through 87 of their community based rehabilitation programmes across the country. In addition he is actively involved with the Office of the Commissioner (Disabilities), Karnataka and other networks in promoting 'barrier-free' environment and advocating for the effective implementation of The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act.



Toilet before modification



Toilet after modification



A simple hose attached to the tap.



Hand rails nailed on the wall



Bathing chair in the bathroom

A perspective on inclusion of disability in rural habitat

- Roma Bhagat

The concept of Universal Design is based on the realization that environments are commonly ordered so as to suit the majority and if the disabled are to be mainstreamed then reasonable accommodations in the form of modifications need to be made in that environment. As a first step in this realization, alterations in the built environment to provide access as well as the freedom of independent mobility to persons with disability are gradually becoming visible. However, since these concepts are in their infancy, we usually find that they are restricted in their radius and encompass only certain physical aids to locomotive access, a lot of which are today standardized. These include ramps, wider doors that take in wheelchairs, providing turning radius for wheelchair users, grab rails in toilets and so on. Though these are good first steps, they are a very minuscule part of the entire gamut of mainstreaming disability.

To contextualize Universal Design into habitat it is important to recognize that habitat is a conglomerate that is dependent upon the needs of the people who inhabit it while at the same time ordering the environment in which they exist. In short, it is a unique combination between man and his environment where both are interchangeably the 'creator and the created.' However, when we talk of Universal Design, usually the tendency is to view it as a standardized incorporation rather than a process catering to needs which are unique based on culture, gender, economic capacity, age and so on. In a sense the first prerequisite of mature Universal Design is its flexibility which allows it to cater to the uniqueness of the individuals and the communities these individuals belong to, while guaranteeing basic facilities, just as we instinctively order habitat while catering to non disabled people. In short while addressing the needs of disabled people it is important to address them as individuals in communities with certain needs and aspirations arising out of that identity and not only view them as disabled.

The other important facet of the correlation between disability and habitat is the need to understand the requirements of disabled

persons in the context of habitat as a lifestyle and not simply as a physical entity. Dynamic Universal Design therefore has to incorporate an understanding of the emotional hierarchy of needs arising out of the interpersonal dynamics of disabled people with the family, the community and available resources for education, livelihood, recreation, health care and the like. It would also have to clearly take into account a respect for the topography, attitudes, general development and societal structure of the area. It would be useless to provide a rocket age fully developed Universal Design showcase in a manner that would alienate the disabled people for whose convenience the design is incorporated in the first instance, from their community. This leads to the most neglected principle of Universal Design, i.e. the first rights holder. Usually in some sort of a limited fashion, most disabled people do create a radius of integration and mobility. The object of Universal Design should be to create a reverse osmosis between needs and possibilities in order to arrive at a consensus of a widening of the radius that is within the bounds of possibility and also emotionally acceptable to the end user. Sometimes hard though it is, this requires acceptance that one may not be providing maximum facility and independence.

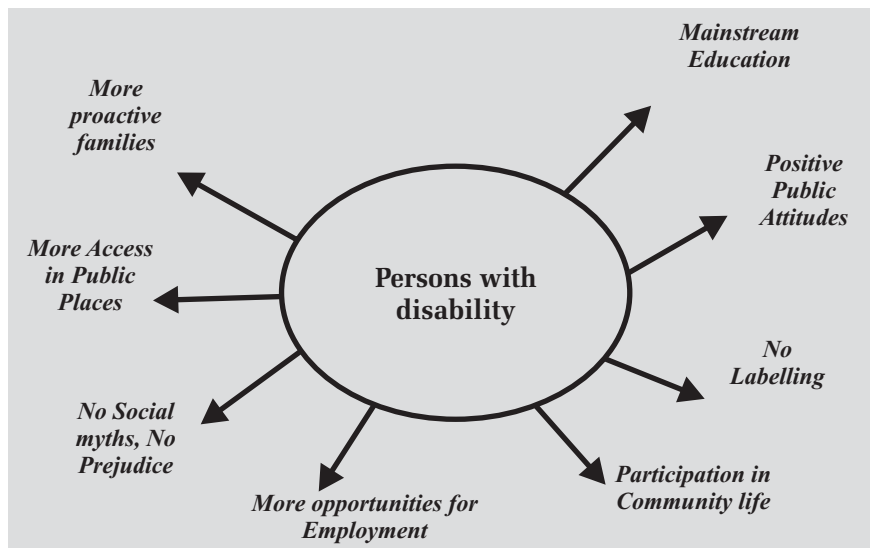
Another often ignored area of concern is the imaginative substitution and use of local materials in order to make the design user friendly and create familiarity. The matrix of the divergent concepts of providing the best technologically and recognizing the ultimate supremacy of the first rights holder to reject it and settle for something less than the best introduces a new component that is training. This component helps realign attitudes of the disabled as well as the non-disabled community leading to a harmonious upgradation of infrastructure and the attitudes that perceive the necessity and use of that infrastructure.

If we view habitat as a lifestyle option that has to provide adequately for the needs of all its constituent users, then two very important user groups would be those with intellectual disabilities and mental illness. The needs and requirements of these two groups would be more in direction to a supported lifestyle wherein the habitat could be ordered to cater to safety along with independence. The habitat must provide for the same basic needs of safety, security and independence in mobility for these two groups particularly in areas like livelihood, recreation and independent living.

In conclusion, Universal Design is a concept that needs to be a self defining prophecy. It has to become so dynamic, diverse and all encompassing that there is no other design option to juxtapose with it. The day Universal Design is understood without definition of contrasts and oppositions is the clear start of a mainstream design for all.

Roma Bhagat is a lawyer by training. She runs her private practice and has worked in areas of land and disability. She is also a trustee for Special Olympics in India and executive committee member of Muskaan.

The Social Model of Disability



Contributed by : *Aloka Guha, Advisor, Rehabilitation Council of India. She was formerly Director, Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu and Chair person of the National Trust for the Welfare of persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities.*

Creating Spaces for All

- Geeta Sharma and Arun Kumar

Muliben Jivabhai Parmar lives with her husband and two sons in Kutch district in Gujarat. She was paralysed from waist-down, when a wall of her house fell on her during the earthquake in 2001, which affected thousands of people. This was followed by a long period of uncertainty, regarding her ability to conduct her household chores and live independently - for her and her family.

Help for Muliben started coming from several NGOs who addressed a wide range of her rehabilitation needs. It was during this process that her need for mobility and regaining her independent lifestyle was identified as a priority. Hunarshala Foundation, under the NGO collective Abhiyan, stepped in as they were facilitating the rebuilding of homes of over 50 paraplegics in Kutch, using basic designs that would enable them to move around with ease, safety and independence. Most of them being women, the aim was also to restore their dignity and prevent further discrimination and disadvantage owing to their disability. As a result of this intervention, many women were not only able to resume their routine functions but were also able to exercise diverse home-based livelihood options for economic sustenance.

With simple incorporations in her home, such as a railing alongside the entire compound wall and inside the rooms, wide doorways and a western style toilet with grab bars, accessible fittings and counters in all work spaces, a ramp with railings and assistive devices, Muliben could conduct her chores with ease. Considering the prevalent culture of resilience and tolerance, particularly within the marginalised sections of the society - who rarely raise demands; active engagement, during the rebuilding process, with Muliben and her family went a long way in generating and sustaining their interest and contribution in the rehabilitation.

Shouldn't restoration to normalcy be an integral part of every rehabilitation effort, be it in response to a disaster situation or otherwise? The reality is however different. Today there are numerous people with disabilities who are unable to carry out basic tasks due to lack of appropriate assistive devices and absence of simple design features in their environment.

The design features used in Muliben's house are not 'special' in themselves but require a 'sensitivity' on the designer's part a recognition of the diverse needs of different groups and an effort to include them and make it possible for them to function independently - with safety and dignity. These diverse groups include, apart from people with disabilities (who happen to be one of the most visible section demanding and using such features), the elderly, children, pregnant women, people with reduced mobility and the temporarily disabled.

Designing spaces such that they are 'accessible for all' is commonly understood as Universal Design. Such design permits access, promotes independence for people with disabilities and democratises our spaces - by rendering them 'inclusive' - both in the physical and meta-physical sense. Such a human centric approach works within a framework for design of places, things, information, communication and policy to be usable by the widest range of people operating in the widest range of situations without special or separate design. In this it is important to recognize that what works for a person with disability will work for anyone else. For example, while good signages in a public building may be useful for a person with hearing impairment, it would equally benefit almost everyone else.



Presently, much of the work on creating accessibility is limited to the urban areas. Efforts in the rural areas are fewer and have been in response to emergency situations or to individual needs. There has been little effort to study and understand issues of accessibility in rural areas. Differences in the accessibility needs in rural areas are a result of the diverse forms of terrain, larger population of socio-economically disadvantaged, availability of basic facilities such as water, sanitation at the community

level rather than at household level, insufficient attention to infrastructural facilities, including transport, negligible incorporation of universal design in public buildings and spaces etc. Hence, despite lack of accessibility, some people function, as best as they can, while others stay restricted to their homes. There is an urgent need, therefore to understand and appreciate these differences, contextualize the designs and integrate them with the social and occupational structures.

Hunarshala's intervention has demonstrated that whatever be the nature of these differences, simple design solutions can go a long way in equipping people with opportunities and entitlements to participate and contribute, even though that may be, to begin with, confined to their immediate habitat/ environment. Considering factors such as local resources, cultural practices, local facilities etc. while designing can make accessibility creation doable and affordable.

The need, however, to upscale the initiatives for creation of accessibility cannot be undermined. There is a need to create opportunities and platforms for recognition of the potential and abilities of the excluded groups, for interaction between them and the designers and to organise them to articulate their demands. Simultaneously, creating awareness of universal design among the civil society and the state agencies using integrated communication; promoting universal design as integral to access to basic services among the policy makers and implementers; advocating for making accessibility mandatory through legislation, documenting and sharing successful attempts and strengthening knowledge platforms between the civil society and public institutions - are some of the suggestive strategies that can create spaces for all.

Much of the article has not dealt with the 'politics of spatial design', which has done little to promote inclusion and thereby, mainstream people with disabilities. While there has been some progress in the form of scattered attempts at creating models and training the designers, it has failed to scale into an institutional response. It is time that we adopt a more humanist approach to those living, and often literally so - on the margins of our societies and spaces.

It is after all, not so much a matter of technicality as it is of a mindset!

Geeta Sharma is Programme Executive and Arun Kumar is Programme Officer in UNNATI Organisation for Development Education, Ahmedabad.

Inputs for this article have been received from Mahavir Acharya, Hunarshala Foundation, Kutch and Shailesh Rathod, UNNATI.

Accessibility in Rural Areas

- Anjlee Agarwal and Sanjeev Sachdeva

Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in rural areas, like their urban counterparts, have a wide range of housing and habitat needs. Persons with disabilities need accessibility features to facilitate independent living, persons with ailments/diseases (permanent or temporary) requiring regular treatment/therapy for their condition need suitable access to a treatment facility and frail elderly persons may require modifications to their existing homes to suit their reduced mobility needs. Others may prefer group housing or assisted living situations.

However, planning for a barrier free environment in rural areas has its own set of difficulties and challenges. Though the norms and the standards for it remain broadly the same both for cities and villages, however considerations have to be made in terms of life style, available infrastructure, financial constraints, availability of local material and general reluctance to spend except for most essential items etc.

While several basic amenities such as piped water supply, sanitation, toilets, access to the mass media (e.g., radio and television), modern public facilities for education, training, employment and self-employment, as well as entertainment are available to urban residents, the rural built environment includes standpipes and wells, village dispensaries, primary schools, community toilets and water tanks, village markets, agricultural extension centers and village or district administrative institutions. These facilities have an impact on the daily lives of people in the rural areas. The extent to which these facilities are accessible and usable by persons with disabilities and other vulnerable sections of the society, determine their integration into rural community life. To be precise, how the disabled people are integrated into the rural community life has to do with how much the rural built environment is accessible to them.

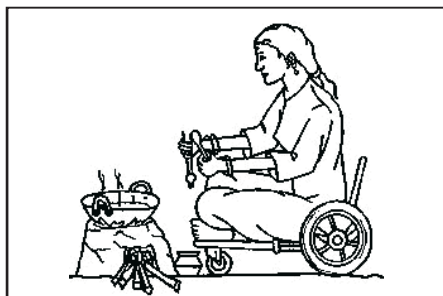
Poverty and disability are interrelated. Poor access to the built environment is one of the characteristics of rural poverty. Poor people are more likely to feel "disabled" because of the conditions in which they live. Disability is likely to make people poorer because of limited opportunities and discrimination. Non-accessible paths, roads without pavements, non-accessible houses, toilets or latrines and kitchen, inaccessibility of services like clean

water and sanitation, employment and income security and transport problems are day to day difficulties faced by rural disabled people.

Applied research and experimentation in the use of appropriate technology for the development of barrier-free design for the rural built environment are urgently needed. Governments, local authorities like Zila and Gram Panchayats, Community-based rehabilitation (CBR) workers and others, have a responsibility to improve the understanding of issues concerning barrier-free environments in rural communities. This is particularly so in the case of remote rural areas where there is lack of development assistance even from non-governmental organizations and the communities have limited access to the mass media.

Planning and design for the rural areas should take into consideration the options presented by local solutions; using locally available materials. For example, locally available cement checkered tiles may be used as guiding and warning blocks. The design should be made usable by all people without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Incorporation of access needs of persons with disabilities is a comparatively new issue, especially in developing countries, and has not figured as an area of priority attention in development plans at different levels. Creating a barrier free environment requires people from various walks of life getting together, working out strategies, and implementing them. These include policy makers and the government, architects and builders, law enforcement and town planning officials, people with expertise in disability issues, and, most importantly, people with disabilities themselves.

Access and Access Related Possible Interventions



(at ground level using a ground mobility device)



with ramp (front view)



Kitchen



Toilet

Anjlee Agarwal is Executive Director & Access Advisor of Samarthya and member of Working Group on Empowering the Disabled (Barrier Free Environment and Social Awareness), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India; for the XI Five Year Plan.

Sanjeev Sachdeva is Founder of Samarthya and is also member of Working Group on Empowering the Disabled (Barrier Free Environment and Social Awareness), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India; for the XI Five Year Plan.

Why we need an Institution of Universal Accessibility and Design

- Sarbjit Arjan Singh

There is little doubt that India is on the move. The signs are everywhere. The increasingly prosperous middle class and their cars have taken over the streets of quiet neighbourhoods, which are now flooded with shoppers visiting malls and eateries. Conversely, is this also true of rural areas? I do not think so. Like every thing else in the country there is a divide: an urban India, which is annually growing at 9% and rural Bharat stagnating at less than 2%. Even as urban India consumes more and more the farmers of debt burdened rural Bharat find themselves having less and less to go on and their growing insolvency force many to suicide.

However, the political class has woken up to the escalating anger of the countryside. The rural poor are no more willing to be outside the development processes. They want to own the process and make it address their needs quickly. For the first time the budget put rural India in the centre. The finance minister has urged industries to go and reach out to rural India, not out of charity alone, but because market is vast and there is money to be made. This new development thrust has increased the sums being spent and will be spent in raising levels of education, health and rural development. The Bharat Nirman programme linked with the rural employment scheme is building infrastructure.

How does this have anything to do with accessibility for persons with disabilities (PwD)? I would say everything. The question of immediate importance to any PwD is will I be able to use the new environment on an equal footing. This is where PwD have to impress upon their associations to engage with the political establishment to embed in the rural development programmes the needs of PwD. No programme, no design, should be approved that is not based around the principles of universal design. One might ask "why universal design?" The answer is simple; the alternative method of adding on disabled friendly features does not work in practice. In theory, it is fine. If a ramp is

provided to PwD and stairs to the able bodied, what happens in reality is that since PwD are fewer and the ramp away from the main entrance, it is not used by the able-bodied and is taken over by others; for example by those using bicycles who then find it to be a convenient parking place. The only practical answer to this problem is ensuring that PwD and the able-bodied use the same entrance, the same ramp. This is the essential philosophy of universal design.

Universal design does not use the standard of a narrowly defined average person for designing the environment but the principle that every thing should be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. The standard design must accommodate varying capabilities without having to add on specialised features exclusively for PwD. True, in practice this may be difficult to do. However, that does not mean that the principle be given the go by. In fact adopting the principle with wisdom will bring out its strengths in integrating society. For example, a standard door is not accessible to everyone. If the shutter is large, the door becomes accessible to more people, including some wheelchair users. However, applying universal design principles could lead to the installation of sensors that signal the door to open when anyone approaches, making the building accessible to everyone—a small child, a man carrying a large box, an elderly woman, a person using a walker or wheelchair. All that the principle says is that wisdom lies in making things usable by as large a number of persons as possible without special adaptation.

This brings us to the question of how to make decision makers and designers accept universal design as the guiding philosophy for all projects. It also raises the parallel issue of educating sufficient designers knowledgeable in universal design. If we fail to find a satisfactory answer to these challenges, we are likely to end up with a rural infrastructure built around conventional

thinking and PwD will once again be unable to participate in the new opportunities, which may have bettered their lives.

The only way I can think of in bringing this about is to create a platform where persons and organisations involved in accessibility can meet, discuss, and share their experience, not only among themselves, but also with researchers in the field of universal design. Such a platform could be an Institution representing professionals, researchers and practitioner in Accessibility and Universal Design. This Institution can be the pivot for advancing Universal Design in India by bringing together NGOs, teaching institutions, individuals and other interested persons, including Panchyati Raj Institutions (PRI) since in the new scheme of things infrastructure is to be built by them. It would be the professional voice of the field of accessibility and universal design. Its publications would have the stamp of professional authority and would thus serve to disseminate the best thinking in the art and science of the subject. As a certifying Institution, it would charter professionals in the field thus enabling them to certify building plans for conformance to accessibility requirements. In time, the Institution would also develop as the reference centre for information on accessibility and universal design.

The easiest way of establishing such an institution could be to collaborate with an existing international institution and persuade those working in rural infrastructure and accessibility to become members. Perhaps basin-South Asia could take an initiative in organising a conference in taking this idea forward. The basin-SA platform which has engaged with both the government policy makers as well as grass roots institutions in its present efforts to influence the design for the First National Rural Housing and Habitat Policy for India, should ensure that the concerns of Universal Accessibility is taken forward and incorporated in the policy.

Sarbjit Arjan Singh is a wheelchair user and deeply committed towards building a barrier free environment. He was founder member of the Disabled Rights Group (DRG) and also part of the drafting committee of the Persons with Disabilities Equal Opportunities Act, 1995. He was an officer of the Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers and retired from the position of General Manager. After retirement he was appointed as Member of the Principal Bench of the Central Administrative Tribunal. Presently he works as a consultant for the World Bank on public policy issues and accessibility.

Accessibility Check List

The checklist given below is a tool for measuring the accessibility of services and facilities and helps in identifying barriers that need to be removed.

1. Local Government action on access

- Has your local body set an example for the community by providing physical access for everyone to all public buildings and facilities?
- Have building code specifications concerning access been fulfilled?
- Is there an action plan and budget provided by your municipal authority to remove identified barriers?

2. Public facilities in the municipality

- Are the following public facilities barrier-free eg Police stations, Post Offices, Social service buildings, Health centers, Libraries?
- Can persons using wheelchairs access public telephones?
- Are public telephones amplified for persons with hearing impairments?
- Are public signs large and clear in the community?

3. Access for pedestrians with disabilities

- Can pedestrians with disabilities easily use pavements?
- Are there audible traffic signals installed at pedestrian crossings for the safety of people with visual impairments?

4. Regular transportation system

- Are there adequate assistive features to increase access on buses?
- Are the following transportation services barrier-free and accessible to persons with disabilities? Mini-buses/vans, Trains, Ferries, Ships,
- Are the following locations barrier-free: Bus stops, train stations etc?
- Is there any disability awareness training for drivers and conductors on the public transport system?

5. Housing

- Are there laws and regulations that ensure access to new government sponsored housing?
- Are there laws and regulations ensuring and funding modification of existing housing?
- Are there laws and regulations ensuring barrier-free private housing?
- Is barrier-free design information readily available?
- Does the community support accessible housing through the provision of services such as cleaning maintenance?

6. Accessible schools

- Are all schools accessible for students and/or staff with disabilities?
- Are there any regulations to ensure the accessibility of new schools?
- Are all facilities, such as gymnasiums and science laboratories, inside local schools barrier-free?
- Are there barrier-free toilets on each floor in all schools in the locality?

(Extracted from **Access for all: Training manual to promote 'barrier-free environment'** Produced by the Rehabilitation Council of India. Details available at: www.rehabcouncil.nic.in)

Corrigendum

The cover photo for **basin-SA Newsletter.No.7** was wrongly credited to Unnati instead of Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan and Hunnarshala, although the inset on the cover was courtesy Development Alternatives. The authors of the Focus feature 'Post-disaster Rehabilitation: deepening people's participation' also gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan and Hunnarshala for developing the article.

The errors are regretted.
- Editors



Regional Knowledge Platform

South Asia



Auroville Earth Institute aims to research, develop, promote and transfer earth-based technologies which are cost and energy effective.



Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, Pakistan works to improve the built environment through the provision of technical assistance and construction management services.



Centre for Ecocentric Development and People's Action is a non-profit, non-governmental organization working for "People Centered, Eco-Centric Development."



Coastal Area Disaster Mitigation Efforts is a network of twenty voluntary organizations working for disaster preparedness of fishing communities in India.



Exnora International works as a catalyst in bringing about local initiative and community participation in overall improvement in quality of life.



Grambangla Unnayan Committee, Bangladesh is a non-profit, non-governmental organization working for people affected by extreme poverty, exclusion and disease.



Orissa Development Technocrats' Forum works to facilitate an effective rural housing delivery system through appropriate technologies and sustainable livelihoods.



Trust for Village Self Governance is a charitable trust focusing on local self governance in villages for creating sustainable employment through habitat development.



Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Swiss Foreign Ministry.

Secretariat



Development Alternatives is a not-for-profit sustainable development enterprise that promotes programmes and products which contribute to the enrichment of human life.



Gram Vikas is a rural development organization, working with poor and marginalized communities of Orissa since for making sustainable improvements in the quality of life.



Unnati is a non-governmental organization working for "civic leadership promotion and strengthening local self governance."

basin-South Asia Regional Knowledge Platform (basin-SA) is committed to "developing knowledge systems and promoting collaborative action within South Asia to enable access by the poor to sustainable habitat and livelihoods."