



N VIEWS W S



A Forum for Inclusive Expression

*THE INAUGURAL ISSUE
OCTOBER 2012*



We have tried to make this newsletter as accessible as possible in terms of use of font, spacing and alignment.

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This newsletter is an endeavor to share the different views of people touched by disability whether as a person with a disability, a caregiver, a professional, a policymaker, a friend, a volunteer or just anyone touched by disability; and the news that affects the daily life of a person with disability.

This newsletter provides an equal platform for all of us to express ourselves and raise issues that concern our lives.

While working together on this issue of News & Views we discovered the satisfaction in realizing our own abilities both individually & collectively. It called for all of us to work with new team members, appreciate each other's skills, learn to apply our own skills onto newer areas of work such as conceptualizing, editing, translations and designing. We learnt and we grew together. As this is a forum to learn from each others experiences, an active participation from our readers will help us find a voice and achieve the goal in making this world a better place.

The importance of being visible

- By Amrit Hallan



The accessibility problems vis-a-vis various disabilities are universal but they are especially more dire in India where ignorance and inaccessible public and private places go hand-in-hand.

To be frank it is not disability-specific; ignorance towards fellow human beings is in the DNA of the social fabric of our country.

Nonetheless, accessibility cannot be left to serendipity just because there is all pervasive apathy in urban and rural populations. Lots of this apathy originates from lack of visibility. You don't see many people with disabilities on the roads, on the streets or in the villages. They are either tucked away or they themselves prefer to remain inside.

You want accessible places? Start being at places that are not accessible and let people know what needless trouble you have to go through.

Yes, there is no accessible transport, but then the problem doesn't begin and stop with public transport. What about your relatives and friends? How accessible are their homes and localities? How accessible is YOUR home?

Suppose you are able to find an accessible vehicle but still upon reaching the place you find that the entire surrounding is inaccessible? After dismounting the bus you cannot cross the road because there is a big divider bang in the middle of the road. Or maybe the pavement is all broken. Even if you are able to somehow enter the lane the person you have come to meet lives on the first floor. Even if he lives on the ground

floor maybe you have to climb a few stairs. So problems could be interminable. How do you deal with them?

There is no easy solution, but you can begin with being more visible. Go out more, at least to places you can go to. Be a part of the social milieu. It might be difficult but it is not impossible. Once you start going out, once you start encountering problems and you begin to find yourself in unforeseen circumstances, you will come up with new solutions. And this is not hypothetical; I have had first-hand experience devising or stumbling upon ways to reach places. By merely staying at home I could have never imagined myself tackling those situations.

You want accessible places? Start being at places that are not accessible and let people know what trouble you have to go through. Among

hundreds of people witnessing your struggle, a few will think, "What the heck? Why can't we have a ramp instead of these broken steps?" This is how an accessible world will begin to take shape.

So get out of the house even if it means just going across the service road. Become visible.

Once you start going out, once you start encountering problems and find yourself in unforeseen circumstances, you will come up with new solutions.



Our cities need to have accessible transport

THE AADI JOURNEY

Our VISION: “A world in which people with disability are an integral part of society with equitable access to opportunities and services, enabling them to participate fully in the community and live life to the fullest.

Policy Framework and implications on our work

The ratification of UNCRPD by India implies that all persons with disability have a right to live with dignity. All persons with disability have a right to make decisions about their lives, live within the community, marry, raise families and have access to education, health, recreation, work and employment. The Right To Free and Compulsory Education opens up avenues for Inclusive Education for children with Disabilities.

The main focus of our work in the current paradigm is:

Urban and Rural Community Based Programme

The focus of the programmes is to work on the Habilitation and Rehabilitation needs and rights of people with disability. While the rural programme works from Ballabgarh Block in Faridabad District of Haryana, the urban community programme is initiated from Chattarpur area of South Delhi.

At a community level our efforts are to organize, strengthen and extend services, particularly in health, education, employment and social services, as close to the communities' that the persons with disability live in.

At an individual level our efforts are to attain and maintain maximum independence, full physical, mental, social and vocational ability and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life.

- Our efforts with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi are towards systemic changes to provide quality education to all including children with disability.

Over the past thirty-four years, at AADI, we have moulded our work according to the needs of the person with disability and have grown from strength to strength.

- In the rural areas of Alwar, Rajasthan our work with Bodh Shiksha Sansthan is to establish good education practices that promote inclusive education and provide individual support to children with disability.

Capacity Building Programme

It is with the belief that all service providers, be it teachers, doctors, lawyers engineers or architects, will be accessed by people with disability and that people with disability also require professionals for specific impairment related services, that a multi-tiered workforce is envisaged to address the human resource requirement under the new paradigm. We have initiated the process of training people with disability, professionals and parents on operationalizing a rights paradigm.

Sambhav – Making Inclusion Possible

The project based at AADI aims to evolve processes that will ensure safety, wellbeing and permanence in fulfilling the needs of people with disability and their caregivers who come to AADI. Here too, we work across all ages and across all impairments. The National Resource Centre, in collaboration with National Trust, showcases accessible environments for home, office, education, communication, mobility and leisure. It serves as an exhibition –cum- demonstration and training ground. Individuals and families can access the walk-in services/internships for individualised assessments, support and future plans. Our work with the individual include areas of shelter ; livelihood and occupation; health; education; relationships; leisure; identity; and protection from abuse, neglect and maltreatment.

The process of ensuring that people with disabilities enjoy their human rights is slow and uneven. But it is taking place, in all economic and social systems. It is inspired by the values that underpin human rights: the inestimable dignity of each and every human being, the concept of autonomy or self-determination that demands that the person be placed at the centre of all decisions affecting him/her, the inherent equality of all regardless of difference, and the ethic of solidarity that requires society to sustain the freedom of the person with appropriate social supports.

Disability and Human Rights - United Nations

Gerard Quinn and Theresia Degener

CITY BARRIERS

- By Jyotika Kumar

OVERVIEW: Cities and towns, are meant to be well planned and equipped to provide opportunities for a variety of experiences like education, career, recreation, health and mobility. But are our cities and towns built in a manner that is inclusive and facilitate access for persons with disabilities? Are residents with disabilities assured of a safe and hassle free journey through them so that they too can savour each experience? Are they able to confidently venture out and feel a sense of belonging to the communities they live in? Here's an account by a person with disability. She gives a comparative insight into her experiences of living - as both a child and an adult-in two different countries.



Are our cities and towns built in a manner that is inclusive and facilitate access for persons with disabilities?



2012: Jyotika's visit to a local market in Greater Kailash, Delhi.

I currently live at a house with my family in Greater Kailash (G.K.) a colony in South Delhi. On Sunday the 29th July, I went for a walk in my wheelchair in our area. The roads in G.K. are very uneven and very bumpy in places with speed breakers, potholes and natural manholes on the roads and are generally in a rough condition in India in comparison with England.

1990s - Jyotika's visit to Wilton Park, England

When entering the Wilton Park, one is engulfed by tall and high conifer trees. The car park leads directly to the children's playing area, that has got a tarmac slope which is a non-slippery slope and it is accessible for pushchairs as well as wheelchairs. The children's playing area, which has equipment like swings, a slide, and a climbing frame is covered with a wooden chip surface material, which ensures the safety of children while they are playing. I used to especially enjoy going on the swings, the slide and having a ride on one of the horses with my parents, at Wilton Park. I used to love sitting at the top of the slide, and sliding down at a fast speed and waiting to hit the floor at the end of the slide.

SPOT SIX THINGS THAT DEPICT INCLUSION IN THIS CANTEEN



Answers on last page

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITES (UNCRPD)

The purpose of the Convention is to **promote, protect and ensure** the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on thirteenth December 2006, and ratified by India on first October, 2007.

The Convention is both a development and a human rights instrument. It is a policy instrument, which is cross-disability, cross-sectoral and legally binding. The Convention marks a 'paradigm shift' in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are not viewed as "objects" of charity, medical treatment and social protection; rather as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society. The Convention gives universal recognition to the dignity of persons with disabilities.

Disability is an evolving concept, and results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'

The Convention does *not* explicitly define disability. Preamble of Convention states, "Disability is an evolving concept, and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'. Article one of the Convention states: 'Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may



disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities

The different Articles of the Convention are:

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose• Definitions• General principles• General obligations• Equality and non-discrimination• Women with disabilities• Children with disabilities• Awareness-raising• Accessibility• Right to life• Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies• Equal recognition before the law• Access to justice• Liberty and security of the person• Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment• Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse• Protecting the integrity of the person• Liberty of movement and nationality | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Living independently and being included in the community• Personal mobility• Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information• Respect for privacy• Respect for home and the family• Education• Health• Habilitation and rehabilitation• Work and employment• Adequate standard of living and social protection• Participation in political and public life• Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport• Statistics and data collection• International cooperation• National implementation and monitoring• International monitoring mechanism |
|--|--|

You can read more about the Convention by clicking on 'Convention' in the following link:

www.un.org/disabilities

You can also browse through www.uncrpdindia.org

This site is an initiative by the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP), for spreading awareness of the UNCRPD in India and has links to the UNCRPD in different Indian languages.

Watch out for details on each of these articles in subsequent issues!

A WINDOW OF HAPPINESS

- By Vinayna Khurana



Just opposite my bed
Painted with color red
There is a window of
happiness
With a pinch of sadness
I can see the sky
Blue and white
With a beam of sunlight
Clouds as white a snow

As the cold wind blows
Little birds tweet
Songs so sweet
Rain darkens the sky
As birds fly by
The rain cleans
The garden so green
The leaves dance
By the strike of rain

And relives all the pain
When it grows dark
Dogs start to bark
Little stars glow above the sky
And twinkle, as moon flows by
This window, my window
Is like a small world
A world of happiness
Through which I stand by

THE STRUGGLE TO WORK

- By Rahul Sharma



I am twenty-three. I graduated with a first class in a B.Sc. (Bio. Tech). I am physically handicapped.

Disabled people are backward in fields of education and occupation due to lack of awareness and lack of governmental support.

There is a law - Act 1995 that protects the rights and duties of the disabled, but it is not enforced seriously. Because of this, society continues to pity people with disabilities and their rights are violated. I have been personally affected by these problems. I completed my graduation two years back but continue to be unemployed because of the job market's narrow perception that considers disabled people incapable of working. Despite notifying the district administration and the Haryana government, of my unemployed status they choose to remain silent. When I met the authorities they said that they cannot coerce private companies to employ disabled people and

“I continue to be unemployed because of the job market’s narrow perception that considers disabled incapable of working.”

The disabled should strive to unite nation-wide to effectively impress upon the government their views and influence their policies.

disabled people do not have a right to employment. This is why disabled people remain unemployed. When employed the gesture reeks of pity. My personal experience shows that although the government gives loans to disabled people for higher education and employment, the disabled fall prey to high interest rates. This leads to economic exploitation. I had filed for an RTI in this matter. Despite detailed disclosures an

enquiry is yet to be made. In the process, the concerned officers will get reprieve and the disabled will sit aside, their energies exhausted!

Disabled people will have to protect their rights and duties by being aware themselves. It is imperative that disabled people avail all government schemes for their benefit and strongly protest against their misuse.

In order to raise awareness on issues faced by disabled people, the government should introduce a chapter on persons with disabilities in the N.C.E.R.T. syllabus of class sixth to tenth. This can ensure that society does not, in the future, view them as objects of pity.

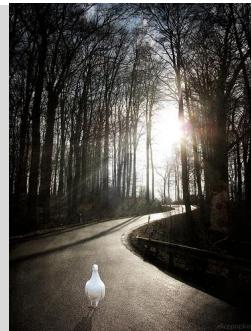
The disabled will have to protect their rights and duties by being aware themselves.



In my view, the disabled should strive to unite nation-wide to effectively impress upon the government their views and influence their policies. Organizations working in this field should coordinate and support this action and turn it into a movement.

**I have a disability.
Yes that's true.
But all that **really** means is
I may have to take a
slightly different
path than you.**

-Robert. M. Hensel



The Economics of Disability

- Darsana Khir

Money plays very important role any person's life. But for a disabled person, the importance of money increases many-fold.

A person, who wishes to live independently, will require money to hire a person for physical support, which costs lot of money. We need money to fulfill our rights and rights at home often lie in the small things - like what I want to wear and what food I want to eat? Money is even required for our entertainment and travel.

As a person grows the medical needs also grows. The person cannot be dependent on the family or siblings for their medical needs. There are other needs also like housing and marriage. If one has enough financial security then one can live comfortably without being a burden on the family.



Some insights during a visit to Dayalpur

- Pankaj Kapoor

I was in Dayalpur to see the community work on sixteenth and twenty third August 2012. I saw that there was a cemented ramp, which had been made by the Panchayat after several discussions. But I saw that there was no facility of toilets, so the mothers carried children on their laps or took them outside. At the schools, the toilets were not well equipped for the wheel-chair users. I suggested that the door could be widened for the wheel chair to pass through. The village has transportation problem due to which people have to walk a lot. What I think is that we need to talk to Haryana transport authority so that all the buses, tempos, rickshaws and autos should be fitted with ramps.



THOUGHTS ON THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

- By Sheetal Batra

After the implementation of the Right to Free & Compulsory Education Act 2009, I have had the opportunity to interact with parents of children with autism studying in the regular school system. I also have observed classes and interacted with teachers.

All this has raised several thoughts & questions in my mind.

Learning, studying & moving ahead in life is the right of every child including children with impairments. Do people other than parents of children with impairment truly understand that?

Every child has the potential to learn, and express their feelings & thoughts. But the potential can be realized only when they are given the opportunity to take up the challenge.

Due to Right to Education somehow children with impairment have been admitted in schools. But does a child with autism really belong?

After getting into the schools, children have made an identity for themselves; they have made friends, played in the grounds & had fun in the canteen.

Do parents of children with autism get to have a sigh of relief after sending their child to school each day or do they keep worrying about what new complaint would come from the teacher?



Learning, studying & moving ahead in life is the right of every child including children with impairments.

Even so, why is it that the child with autism carries the label of being naughty & so is held back in class during other activities like assembly? Despite having friends, why does the child with autism get beaten up and

bullied? Is it just because he is unable to convey this to the teacher?

Why does the mother of a child with autism always worry at the end of the day while asking the teacher how her child did? Do parents of children with autism get to heave a sigh of relief after sending their child to school each day or do they keep worrying about what new complaint would come from the teacher?

A child with autism too wishes to build an identity and be treated with respect & dignity. There should be someone who accepts him as a person and understands his non-verbal communication. People should listen to him; give him time & space to express in any way- words, actions or gestures.

I also understand that it is difficult for teachers to teach a diverse group together because it's the first time for them too. In my view, only a few things are required to make inclusion possible for all. These include having patience, an open mind, meticulous planning & a sincere belief. And all this should not be a one day affair but continuous in nature.

So a sincere request to all teachers to try & follow these suggestions as the child with autism is your student too. Provide him with opportunities to prove his potential.

Answers to picture on page 7:

1. The door is wide enough for a wheelchair to go through.
2. Two people are having a conversation in sign language.
3. The counter height is lower so that a person on a wheelchair can reach it.
4. There is a braille menu.
5. People with visual impairment are using the canteen.
6. There is a person using a motorized wheelchair at one of the tables and the height of the table is appropriate for him.

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