

ACCESSIBLE AUROVILLE

Accessible Auroville began with the 3 days workshop in 2009 held by Samarthyam, National Centre for Accessible Environment from Delhi, followed by a second one in 2011 always with Samarthyam to make people aware of the aspects of accessibility particularly public buildings and places in Auroville and to give training to become access auditors. In 2012 Accessible Auroville won the second price at the We care filmfest” from Delhi with the documentary “ Sometimes I can fly” showing the few accessible places and the architectonic barriers In Auroville .The documentary was screened all over India, included at Pondicherry University, and abroad.

Ensuring access to the built environment is a crucial element in reducing the vulnerability and isolation of persons with disabilities: Architectural accessibility facilitates, amongst other, the chances to find employment, to gain education and access public services, to participate in social and recreational activities and hence, to play an active role in society both economically and socially.

Access and Accessible refer to the freedom of choice to enter approach, communicate or make use of a situation or environment without assistance and undue difficulties.

A building or environment which does not enable, fails in its purpose.

Only if a building provides for full range of potential users can claim to fulfill its purpose. If the needs of a group of people are not considered in the design of a building or environment, then that group is denied equality .There is no principle that would defend the denial of rights because the owner, designer, contractor or manager of a building simply

hadn't considered those rights mistakenly, thinking that is too difficult or expensive to provide for them.

The cost of making a building accessible is 1 – 2 % of the total project amount.

The cost is insignificant if the access standards are added in the planning stage.

It is possible to combine the taste of beauty with the accessibility.

The accessibility does not destroy any ancient buildings and places, sometimes it makes them more pleasant !

Accessibility means to create an inclusive community: to embrace the ideals of all people living together harmoniously in a barrier – free world without fear of exclusion and discrimination.

Accessibility is for all : wheel –chair users, old people, children, blind,deaf,limping,pregnant women, mothers with children, mothers with buggy, people with temporary reduced mobility, people carrying Luggage. There are disabilities which are not visible such as asthma or heart disease, there are so many other disabilities which we are not aware of their existence.

Everyone experiences disability. Everyone is disable by the environment at some stage in their life.

An elderly person or someone who is short in breath or has a broken ankle or a painful back will find stair difficult or impossible.

Young children often cannot reach door-handles and light switches.

With a sprained wrist it is impossible to turn most taps.

High curbs are difficult to negotiate with a child in a buggy.

The examples are endless.

Disability is part of everyday experience.

Universal Rights of Access and United Nations guidelines should be adopted.

This way of thinking benefits everybody not just those with impairments, buildings and places for everyone.

If we believe in “building for everyone”, then it is unacceptable that a woman suffers disadvantage because she is pregnant, or a child because he is small or older people simply because they are elderly.

It is equally unacceptable that people are disadvantaged because of their impaired sight, hearing or mobility. It is particularly unacceptable when the disadvantage suffered is the result of carelessness or thoughtlessness.

It is entirely avoidable.

There is a substantial and ever-changing Indian Statute Law which bears on the commissioning design, construction and management of the built environment.

This includes legislations on planning and development, construction standards, health and safety, equality of status and opportunity, transport, sustainability, conservation and environment protection.

Nowadays in all countries the accessibility has become compulsory.

Auroville as a City of Human unity has to become Accessible to All, a shining example of Accessibility not only for India but for the whole world.

As Auroville is an international City we warmly wish that the booklet 'Just ... Follow Me' launched on 21st December 2015 will take a long journey to many countries...

Accessible Auroville also wish that the architects, urban planners,contractors,transport service, cycle paths team, road service here in Auroville start working keeping in mind to create an inclusive society without discrimination.

Accessible Auroville is ready to work with all the groups and residents to create an inclusive community here in Auroville

Susmita for Accessible Auroville