

Creating barrier free environment



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Many times in our life, from our mind and our thoughts, very simple yet very important issues gets a narrow escape. One of them is about creating a barrier free environment for people with disability. Everyday in our life we see disabled people struggling with their daily activities to get it done which otherwise seems very easy to be done. Negotiating dense traffic and hazardous street infrastructure adds an extra exponent to the difficulty level of disabled people. It is observed that the same conditions exist in public places, schools, railway stations even at home environment.

Samarthyam , National centre for accessible environment and The central road research institute; Govt. of India, conducted a research study to understand traffic and mobility constraints faced by disabled people. It flashed on various barriers in environment and gave suggestions which can make a disabled friendly environment if applied. Some of the suggestions are-step free entrances, wider doors and corridors, ramps with handrails, modified toilets etc. Despite these suggestions, its implementation is not satisfactory in our country till date.

Our constitution has made various acts and schemes for disabled people like PWDact, National trust act, Sarva siksha abhiyan- education for all. But the focus on implementation is very poor. Our ministry is making laws which seems to help disabled people on one hand but on other hand applies 30-40 percent tax on import of wheelchair parts which instead of helping disabled people imparting additional barrier on them. Before 2001 census population with disability even had no place in the documentation.

These type of contradictory policies brings out the reality of myths about creating barrier free environment. But there is always 2 sides of a coin. The positive side throws light on personalities like Mrs. Uma Tuli, founder of Amarjyoti school in Delhi who is giving emphasis on inclusive education, where normal and disabled children get education together under same roof without any environmental constraints. In Ahmedabad Designmade company is run by Capt. Kamaljeet Singh Brar, where about 70 percent employees are disabled but are working efficiently without any environmental barrier.

There are people like Javed Abidi and Dr. Rajendra Johar who are struggling and helping to remove barriers for disabled people. All these people are common people who are trying to make environment barrier free for disabled people. As a conclusion it comes into enlightenment that main barrier lies in our minds, once it gets cleared out everyone will try to clear the actual barrier existing in environment. And the myth which only says “ appropriate actions are being taken to create barrier free environment for disabled” will become the actual reality.