

## Safe and Barrier free Sidewalks a Crucial aspect of Transportation Systems and Tourist Experience

### Presentation abstract

Safe and Barrier free Sidewalks- a Crucial aspect of Transportation Systems and Tourist Experience

Ever more mobile, despite age, ability or disability people around the world today are undertaking domestic as well overseas travel with unparalleled enthusiasm. With almost 50% of the world population residing in cities, (Source-World Urbanization Prospects by UN DESA) ensuring urban sustainability in cities needs to develop a new culture and spatial planning based on a new ecosystem approach that takes into account a holistic view of the area under consideration. Urban mobility is acquiring more and more central role in planning. With 1.8 billion tourists forecast for 2020, travel both within and into and out of the region needs to be taken into account for visitors & tourists alike while providing seamless access that is barrier free and accessible to all.

The Transport –Tourism –Territory (T3) this interwoven phenomenon needs to be addressed, as it is a challenge for balanced and sustainable development.

In the recent 2030 Agenda for Global Action containing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2015), Goal 11 focuses on principles to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. This goal captures tourism and recreation through its call for the provisions of universal design for accessible and sustainable transport systems, inclusive urbanization, and access to green and public spaces.

Travel within a city for tourists involves walking, as it provides an up-close insight about the place and makes for a great experience. Any tourist friendly place around the world has an extensive network of sidewalks that makes for easy access to different places and is also the backbone of transport system of that city. Delhi is waking up to this crucial missing link that ensures mobility alongside strengthening public modes of transport that are safe and accessible.

Inadequate space for pedestrians, missing sidewalks, inappropriate kerb height, sidewalks encroached by utilities/signage foot-over bridges, billboards, police-booths etc. coupled by inadequate amenities all have a direct bearing on the safety of the users as well as their overall experience of the place they are visiting.

At 2103 km of road length per 100 km<sup>2</sup>, Delhi has one of the highest road densities in India. For 31373 km of roads in Delhi 725 Signalized intersections ,893 Zebra Crossings, 83 Foot over Bridges, sprinkling of underpasses. (Source: Delhi Government>wcm>connect.chapter 2). 40% of Delhi Roads have no sidewalks (Source: Rites Transport Demand Forecast Study May 2008 )

Today developing safe accessible sidewalks is becoming an important aspect of transport ecosystem. Bringing about a change in the outlook of people at the helm of affairs (policy makers as well as agencies involved in developing transport infrastructure in the city) was achieved by hosting a series of workshops to sensitise them. The direct outcome of these interventions was setting up of a committee, which was responsible for undertaking, audits and providing technical inputs to the civic agencies involved in developing the related infrastructure.

Way finding was yet another area that needed urgent intervention as many a times a host of signs (traffic, directional & public conveniences) clustered together more often confused the users rather

than help them. Incorporating tactile pavers in outdoor environment helps the visually impaired orient and negotiate their way hence its proper laying was stressed upon.

Equitable Street Design should be the guiding principle to meet the varied needs of a diverse population.

Sidewalks provide safe access to all places including places of tourist interest monuments as well as public transport. Upgrading the sidewalks in Delhi is an ambitious project and developing safe, accessible and barrier free sidewalks is the priority that is being reflected in the new projects that are being rolled out by Delhi government. This will make negotiating the way around more pleasurable and safe in Delhi and in turn make it a preferred destination to the tourists and visitors alike.

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**Biography :** Abha Negi is a sociologist by education, with more than twenty years of cross industry experience in marketing communications. She set up Global Forum for Empowerment to promote accessibility in built environment-places of leisure, tourist interests and monuments, undertake research in the field of transport, road safety and safe pedestrian infrastructure as well as advocacy for equitable access to public resources and opportunities. Engaging with various stakeholders-end users, policy makers and government agencies involved in developing and maintaining public infrastructure in India, she has lead delegations to the United Nations. She is an international member of Standing Committee on Accessible Transport and Mobility (T R B- USA), is a member of Board of Directors of OneWorld Foundation India and an Expert on the Public Works Department Committee.

**2nd speaker :**

**Organisation :**

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**Biography :**