



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Ministry of Social Justice, DEPwD Selected Participants Complete Transformative Training on Accessibility Through Universal Design.

**New Delhi, India – August 13, 2024** – The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD), in partnership with Enable Me Access (EMA), concluded a five-day training programme on Universal Design and Accessibility in the Built Environment for CPWD architects and Ministry of Social Justice Accessibility Auditors. This initiative supports the government's Accessible India Campaign.

The expansive training program aimed to deepen participants' understanding, initiate a dialogue about the importance of reaching out to those stakeholders who are not PwD. It also had a strong practical component of accessibility standards, which saw enthusiastic engagement from the participants. The curriculum covered Universal Design principles, legal frameworks, and practical accessibility features, creating a dynamic learning environment that blended theoretical knowledge with interactive sessions.

#### Key highlights of the training included:

- **Interactive Learning:** Participants engaged in hands-on activities, including a design challenge to create accessible models and a treasure hunt to identify accessibility gaps in existing buildings.
- **Expert Insights:** Renowned professionals shared perspectives on policy-making, implementation, and stakeholder roles in creating inclusive cities. Discussions covered integrating standards and codes, user experience in policy, and measuring progress. The need for collaboration, capacity building, and sensitisation at all levels was emphasised.

- **Creative Expression:** A theatrical performance fostered empathy and understanding by highlighting real-life experiences of people with disabilities. This underscored the importance of considering diverse perspectives in design and policy-making.

**Participant feedback underscored the programme's effectiveness:**

*"The training was very practical and hands-on. I found the design challenge particularly interesting."* - Shiva Mohan Rao, CBM India Trust

*"We are talking about the physical accessibility of everyone... I am sure this group has really given you insight into this" - ([this group - Enable Me Access](#)).* Shri Rajesh Agrawal, CCPwD/Secretary for MoSJE

The training culminated in a collaborative atmosphere, with participants sharing innovative ideas and best practices. The final day featured a panel discussion and a powerful theatre program. This powerfully highlighted the importance of incorporating accessibility into the built environment allowing participants to apply their learnings in practical scenarios.

Two proposals were made to the participants. The first, *"Walk the Talk"*, emphasises the importance of leading by example and ensuring that stakeholders uphold the same standards they expect from others.

The second, *"Ownership"* underscores the need to move beyond simply identifying problems and instead focus on contributing tangible solutions and efforts towards resolving those issues.

The partnership between the DEPwD and EMA signifies a crucial step towards creating a more accessible and inclusive India. By empowering Ministry staff, the program lays a strong foundation for future initiatives prioritising accessibility.

**About the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)**

The DEPwD is committed to empowering persons with disabilities through policies, programmes, and awareness, ensuring equal opportunities and full participation. This programme directly supports the department's Accessible India Campaign.

**About Enable Me Access (EMA)**

Enable Me Access is an organisation dedicated to promoting accessibility and Universal Design. Through training, advocacy, capacity building of key stakeholders, and innovative technological solutions, EMA strives to create a world where everyone can fully participate and access the built environment.

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