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All Aboard – Towards Sentient Mobility Systems

for Customers with Disabilities

The digital version of the report is accessible for persons with vision impairment and low vision.

Scan the QR code or tap on the below link to listen to the zines, featuring current and reimagined scenarios through an accessible audio experience for persons with vision impairment and low vision.
https://q.me-qr.com/l/PurpleEconomyZines

Foreword



Dipesh Sutariya
Co-Founder, Chairman & Managing Director, EnAble India

Every economy is built on movement.

The ability of people to travel, access services, reach workplaces, and participate in daily life is not incidental — it is foundational. Yet today, mobility systems across the world are not designed for everyone. And when people cannot move, economies do not perform at their full potential.

This is not a social gap. It is an economic inefficiency.

Purple Mobility reframes this challenge. It positions accessibility not as an add-on, but as infrastructure for participation — enabling more people to engage as workers, consumers, and contributors to economic growth.

When mobility systems are designed for persons with disabilities, they become more intuitive, reliable, and efficient for everyone — from ageing populations to families, to global travellers seeking seamless experiences. What begins as inclusion quickly becomes system advantage.

This is the central idea of the Purple Economy: inclusion is not a constraint — it is a multiplier.

Across sectors, we are beginning to see this shift. Accessible systems drive higher usage, expand markets, and unlock new forms of innovation. They connect people to opportunity and, in doing so, strengthen the economic fabric of cities and nations.

Purple Mobility is a critical entry point into this transformation.

It sits at the intersection of urban infrastructure, digital platforms, and everyday access — making it one of the most powerful levers for enabling participation at scale. When mobility works, everything else begins to work better.

Scan the QR code or tap on the below link to listen to the Pathfinder comic through an accessible audio experience for persons with vision impairment and low vision.
https://q.me-qr.com/l/PurpleEconomyPathfinder

At EnAble India, our journey has been rooted in enabling persons with disabilities to participate in the economy. Through the Purple Economy Movement, we are extending this thinking beyond individuals to systems — working with governments, industry, and ecosystem partners to redesign how markets function.

This report is not just a body of research. It is a call to action. While we have currently worked closely on cab and auto travel, we wish to extend this to other forms of travel such as air, metro, etc.

The question before us is simple:
Will we continue to build systems that exclude and then attempt to correct them?
Or will we design economies that are inclusive from the start — and therefore stronger, more competitive, and future-ready?

The answer will define the next generation of economic growth.

Foreword



Gp. Capt Chandrashekar Sreenivas VSM (Retd), Senior Vice President– Daily Operations & Customer Experience, Kempegowda International Airport Limited, Bengaluru.

For an airport, mobility is not an abstract concept. It is the foundation of every journey. It begins with the confidence to leave home, the reliability of the chosen mode of transport, the dignity with which assistance is provided, and the assurance that every link in the travel chain will work seamlessly.

Mobility is freedom. It enables access to education, employment, healthcare, family, tourism, and economic opportunity. When mobility works, people participate fully in society. For persons with disabilities, inclusion often begins long before they arrive at the airport. While aircraft, terminals, and airport services may be designed to be accessible, the journey to and from the airport must be equally dependable. When transportation is safe, affordable, predictable, and does not require repeated explanations or special arrangements, mobility becomes a true enabler of independence and participation.

This is why the Purple Rides initiative is so important

It demonstrates that accessibility is not a niche service or a charitable intervention. It is a practical, scalable solution that creates value for customers, drivers, service providers, and society. The evidence presented in this report is compelling. Thousands of completed journeys, growing adoption by persons with disabilities, meaningful livelihood opportunities for drivers, and increasing user confidence all demonstrate that inclusive mobility is both a social imperative and a significant economic opportunity.

For Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), these insights are particularly relevant. Airports are gateways to the world, but accessibility cannot begin or end at the terminal. A truly inclusive travel experience depends on reliable and accessible connections across the entire journey, including ride-hailing services, public transport, digital platforms, information systems, trained personnel, and assistance networks.

Purple Rides offers a practical roadmap for building such an ecosystem. More importantly, it challenges us to move beyond individual acts of goodwill and towards predictable, scalable, and dependable systems that uphold dignity, independence, and choice for every traveller.

I congratulate EnAble India and all its partners for championing this important initiative. This report is both an evidence-based study and a call to action. It reminds us that accessibility is not simply about removing barriers; it is about expanding participation, unlocking economic potential, and ensuring that every person can travel with dignity, confidence, and independence.

As we work to build transportation systems that serve everyone, initiatives like Purple Rides demonstrate that inclusive mobility is not merely a social responsibility, it is a prerequisite for creating truly connected, equitable, and prosperous societies where no one is left behind.'

Gp. Capt Chandrashekar Sreenivas VSM (Retd),
Senior Vice President– Daily Operations & Customer Experience,
Kempegowda International Airport Limited, Bengaluru.

DANIELLA LEVINE CAVA
MAYOR
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

FOREWORD

Accessibility is more than a goal – it is a commitment to ensuring that every resident and visitor can move through Miami-Dade County with confidence. As one of the world's busiest international gateways, Miami International Airport (MIA) and our Miami-Dade Aviation Department (MDAD) have the opportunity and responsibility to lead by example in creating an inclusive travel experience for everyone.

In recognition of its commitment to "prioritizing and ensuring an accessible, safe, and inclusive traveling experience for passengers with disabilities," MIA was accredited by the Airports Council International (ACI) Accessibility Enhancement Accreditation (AEA) program in 2023. The AEA program was created by ACI in September 2022 based on existing international best practices and recommendations, including those in the ACI Airport and Persons with Disability Handbook, and with input from global airport members, industry partners, and accessibility advocacy groups.

MIA earned the three-year accreditation by completing a detailed questionnaire developed with the support of the ACI Accessibility Advisory Group, which includes representatives from member airports, training providers, consultants, and accessibility organizations. Independent subject matter experts then performed an online validation interview with MIA representatives to evaluate the questionnaire.

Within the last 10 years, MIA's MyMIAccess program has launched a diverse menu of accessibility services, including: the MIAair tour program, which allows passengers with disabilities the opportunity to practice the travel experience in a safe and controlled environment; wheelchair charging stations at 10 convenient locations; sunflower lanyards free of charge to travelers with hidden disabilities; multi-sensory rooms in its North and South terminals, where young passengers with cognitive and developmental disabilities can find a calming place to relax during the travel experience; the Aira Airport Network, a free mobile service that allows blind or low-vision travelers to receive navigation assistance at MIA; and seven service animal relief areas with indoor and outdoor locations.

The ACI accreditation is one of many accolades MIA has received for its accessibility services. In July 2022, MIA received the Civil Rights Advocate and Partner Award from the Federal Aviation Administration, which honors ADA coordinators and airport sponsors who have demonstrated excellence in meeting the letter and the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

I am proud of the work being done to strengthen accessibility throughout our county. Together, we are ensuring MIA reflects the values of Miami-Dade County as a community that embraces diversity and welcomes the world.

Sincerely,

Daniella Levine Cava

Daniella Levine Cava
Mayor, Miami-Dade County

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This paper is researched and authored by Gomathy Balasubramaniam (Research Lead – Disability, Pacta), Vinishya Noel (Research Lead, Pacta) and Bency Ramakrishna (Lead – Legal, Pacta) under the guidance of Nivedita Krishna (Founder – Director, Pacta), Shanti Raghavan (Founder and Chief Enabler, EnAble India) and Reena Kuttan (Associate Director, EnAble India), with research assistance from members of the Pacta team: Prachi Purohit (Research Associate – Policy, Pacta), Shreya Koner (Data Analyst, Pacta), Lathangi Giridhar (Legal and Policy Associate, Pacta) and several interns from Pacta—Shaima Zainab, Prashasti Shetty, Nivedita Krishnakumar, Shreyas Talaka, and Tanya Ravinder. We are deeply grateful to the participants who contributed to this research by sharing their insights and reflections, which shaped the direction of the study and informed its recommendations. We acknowledge their time, expertise, and trust, which grounded this report in lived realities. The report is designed by Sudeshna Bose (Senior Graphic Designer, Pacta), with copyediting inputs from Susan Job (Communications Associate, Pacta) and infographic design inputs from Bhavitraa Thilagar (Communications Design Associate, Pacta). The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors.

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We are grateful to the individuals who generously shared their experiences, perspectives, and expertise. Their contributions shaped this study and helped ensure that its findings and recommendations reflect lived realities.

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Executive Summary

Customers with disabilities include students, parents, employees, sportspersons, entrepreneurs and artists. They use metro trains and airplanes for commuting to college or work, visiting doctors, leisure, and meeting friends, often travelling with family members as companions or caregivers. Mobility is a determinant of freedom, dignity and economic participation. Inaccessible mobility constrains human capabilities, limits India's human development and GDP potential. We estimate that air travel and last-mile travel in India, if made accessible, could unlock annual revenues of approximately ₹1.78 lakh crore and ₹2.7 lakh crore, respectively. Namma Yatri's Purple Rides (which have generated ₹8.5 crore in driver earnings for 2 lakh sensitised drivers to date) show that inclusive mobility generates value for both users and providers. Customers with disabilities present a critical but untapped opportunity for contributing towards the vision of India's $10 trillion GDP.

Initiatives for making travel accessible in India are being proactively implemented. Delhi and Chennai Metro stations and coaches feature tactile paving, lifts with audio/braille, wide automatic fare collection (AFC) gates, accessible ticketing,and semi-formal escort systems. Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru secured a Level-3 ACI Accessibility Enhancement Accreditation, making it one of fewer than five airports in the world to secure this. It is also a forerunner in initiatives such as the Sunflower Lanyard Scheme, a sensory room at the airport, and an accessibility committee to prioritise the needs of its users with disabilities. Innovations in assistive devices (Neofly, Rayban Meta, etc.) and processes (Namma Yatri's Purple Rides) are gaining traction and market value.

Accessible mobility is recognised as a constitutional and statutory obligation under the RPwD Act, 2016, Harmonised Guidelines 2021, and reiterated by the Supreme Court's 2024 judgement in Rajive Raturi vs. Union of India, which affirms accessibility as indispensable to fundamental rights.

Despite them being paying customers (sometimes even paying a premium), affirmations of rights and immensely profound (but isolated) breakthroughs for accessibility in action, qualitative narratives from commuters with disabilities highlight that they secure a subpar mobility experience, than customers without disabilities. Customers with disabilities face unpredictability across airport and metro journeys (locked gates, inconsistent signage, inaccessible counters and broken paths), encounter dependence on individual goodwill of staff and strangers, which is unreliable and can be humiliating.

The subpar experience is not attributable to a malice to exclude or humiliate persons with disabilities. It results from the simple fact that customers with disabilities have not yet been thought of as an important segment, and has resulted in gaps in processes, staff competence and coordination, which render even state-of-the-art infrastructure (lifts, apps, escorts, signage) ineffective. Limited awareness of both legal obligations and the economic potential of inclusive mobility, combined with limited state accountability, contributes to inhibiting systemic goodwill and respect for commuters with disabilities.

The EnAble India LIMEJOOS framework ©, engineered by EnAble India and successfully piloted in Namma Yatri, provides a cutting-edge framework for the future of mobility systems. Derived from the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, the model recognises that the shift towards accessible solutions means that systems are respectful and embody goodwill towards users. At the heart of the model is partnering equally with persons with disabilities—listening empathically, immersing experientially, co-creating and co-designing infrastructure and human systems to be responsive to diversity, engaging, maintaining and advancing the system, being available in the here and now, and being open.

If the EnAble India LIMEJOOS framework © is paired with a rounded governmental response of implementing the law and policy, through adequate budgetary and administrative attention, India can easily emerge as a world leader in inclusive systems, just as it has in Digital Public infrastructure (DPI).

The Promise and Potential of Inclusive Mobility Solutions

This section frames inclusive mobility as essential public infrastructure that enables participation, dignity, and economic contribution. It positions accessibility as a design and governance choice that strengthens mobility systems for a wide range of users, while unlocking social and economic value.



The Promise and Potential of Inclusive Mobility Solutions

Mobility – a Harbinger of Freedom and Economic Development

Freedom is an intrinsic human right, and we experience freedom through mobility. Mobility must, therefore, be accessible for the diverse customers of various mobility systems. Our capacity to move freely limits the worlds we can touch: the schools we attend, the work we pursue, the care we receive, and the moments we share with others. Without freedom to move, many doors remain closed, opportunities drift away, and isolation grows.

Mobility is more than motion: it is the lifeline to inclusion, dignity, and the full embrace of life's possibilities. Customers with disabilities experience freedom and dignity while travelling. This dignity and freedom is possible when mobility is accessible across dimensions of - physical, sensorial and communications. (Eichhorn & Buhalis, 2010)

Inclusive systems benefit everyone. In reality, customers without disabilities are the exception, in that disability as a condition is universal at one time or another. Those who are experiencing temporary and permanent ill-health (mental and physical), caregivers,and commuters with luggage benefit from inclusive mobility systems. Acknowledging broad-based inclusion gains, ADB, a key funder of large-scale infrastructural development, defines inclusion broadly to include the poor, elderly, women, children, transgender and persons with disabilities, and concludes that 70% of the global population of people with disabilities (690 million) are in Asia Pacific region. (ADB, 2025)

Box 1: Curb Cut Effect

Barrier-free designs like curb ramps originally meant for wheelchair users, enhance accessibility for all, including people with strollers, luggage, or temporary mobility challenges. Such inclusive measures raise our collective expectations from institutions: when we expect better, we demand more. And without such demand, we risk complicity in systemic inequality (Chandrachud, 2025).

Universal design and barrier-free principles (See box 1) in infrastructure and service provision create mobility systems that cater to diverse customers, adding to ease of use and increasing the number of users. Inclusive and accessible solutions also tend to be creative and innovative (Observer Research Foundation, 2024). Measures such as disability sensitisation and representation within institutions improve trust, goodwill and performance of institutions. They do more than support persons with disabilities; they strengthen the experience of justice and equity and increase overall productivity ***("Curb Cut Effect" - See Box 1)***.

Accessible and inclusive mobility is not just an act of compassion but makes sound economic sense. If mobility creates the experience of freedom, the converse is also true: the absence of accessible mobility constrains the freedom and liberties of customers with disabilities, thus diminishing the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Achieving full potential is intrinsic for India's development (Sen, 1999). Amartya Sen postulated that when every person's capability increases and is engaged, the country grows economically. Sen's human development theory acknowledges development indicators of well-being and justice by focusing on what people are actually able to be and do—their "functionings" and "capabilities".

Since accessible mobility expands people's real freedoms and capabilities to be and do what they have reason to value, rather than merely providing nominal resources or infrastructure they cannot truly use, the provision of accessible mobility for customers with disabilities will invariably contribute to India's GDP (in Section 4, we quantify the economic opportunity of serving customers with disabilities in instances of air travel and last-mile mobility).

India has embraced the Universal Design Principles via Harmonised Guidelines[1], and Indian law and courts recognise that barrier-free accessibility is an inherent right of customers with disabilities. This is evidenced by the latest Supreme Court judgement in Rajive Raturi vs. Union of India.

[1] *https://divyangjan.depwd.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/2262.pdf*

The Promise and Potential of Inclusive Mobility Solutions

Framed this way, accessibility in mobility is not a peripheral add-on to infrastructure but a foundational public commitment to equalise real choices and life chances, and a key contributor in India's vision for a $10 trillion economy (The Economic Times, 2025).

The Supreme Court, in Rajive Raturi vs. Union of India (delivered on 8th November 2024), clarified that accessibility is an indispensable component of constitutional guarantees, and that the accessibility mandates flow directly from the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD Act), 2016. Accessibility is a precondition to full inclusion, and the failure to provide accessible infrastructure constitutes a denial of rights.

The sections of the report explore various aspects of the consumer experience in mobility systems, including metros, and airlines. The report is structured as follows:

Section 1: Outlines the study design and methodology
Section 2: Focuses on grounding the approach of the report in the lived realities of customers with disabilities
Section 3: Introduces key principles for new-generation mobility systems, moving from exclusion, fragmentation, and unpredictability towards inclusive, free, and seamless movement.
Section 4: Answers why there is now an imperative for accessible mobility systems
Section 5: Demonstrates the profitability of adopting universal design principles
Section 6: Examines the legal imperative of ensuring barrier-free access for customers with disabilities
Section 7: Summarises best practices (National and Global) in the standardisation of universal design and barrier-free access
Section 8: Identifies key stakeholders and their roles in building pathways for enhanced accessibility in mobility solutions
Section 9: Recommends actions based on the EnAble India LIMEJOOS framework © focused on process engineering of mobility systems and policy-relevant guidance for government.

Section 1

Study Objectives & Methodology

This section sets out the objectives and scope of the study and explains the research approach adopted. It outlines how lived experiences, stakeholder inputs, legal analysis, and economic assessment were brought together to examine accessible mobility in India.



Section 1

Study Objectives & Methodology

Objectives of the Study

Our enquiry identifies critical levers for accessible public mobility for persons with disabilities, with a specific focus on metros and airlines): individual freedom, economic equality, human rights, and creative potential. We identify pathways for achieving systemic accessible mobility, emphasising real-time, contextual, and inclusive solutions aimed at reducing friction and ensuring seamless mobility for diverse customers of various mobility systems. Shifts in behaviours and attitudes of the people in these systems are the first step towards the adoption of responsive and progressive solutions.

We situate the findings and recommendations in the lived experiences of persons with disabilities who navigate sub-optimal mobility systems. For this, we use primary and secondary data. Our report concludes with a framework for building, scaling and sustaining accessibility.

Research Methods

This research report drew from both primary and secondary data.

Primary Data Collection

Primary data for this report was gathered through qualitative interviews and conversations with key stakeholders and individuals who live with disability in some way or the other. These included:

- 20+ ground-level stories documented by EnAble India, capturing the everyday mobility challenges and enabling factors encountered by persons with disabilities in Bengaluru.
- 7 interviews conducted by Pacta with individuals who work at a private company with locomotor disabilities and blindness or low vision, focusing particularly on their experiences using the metro and airport.
- 2 key respondent interviews with stakeholders who specialise in the provision of disability services.

Secondary Literature Review

An extensive desk review was undertaken. This focused on the following aspects:

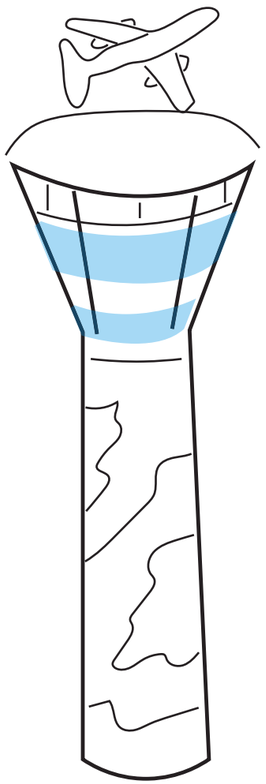
- National and international literature on disability and mobility
- Relevant laws, policies, and guidelines, primarily those applicable in the Indian metro and airline mobility systems
- Global frameworks and best practices
- Case studies, reports, and working papers on the economics of mobility systems
- Existing progressive market solutions and assistive technologies

Data Analysis

The qualitative data sets were analysed using content analysis and triangulation to identify key findings, insights and thematics.

Report Writing

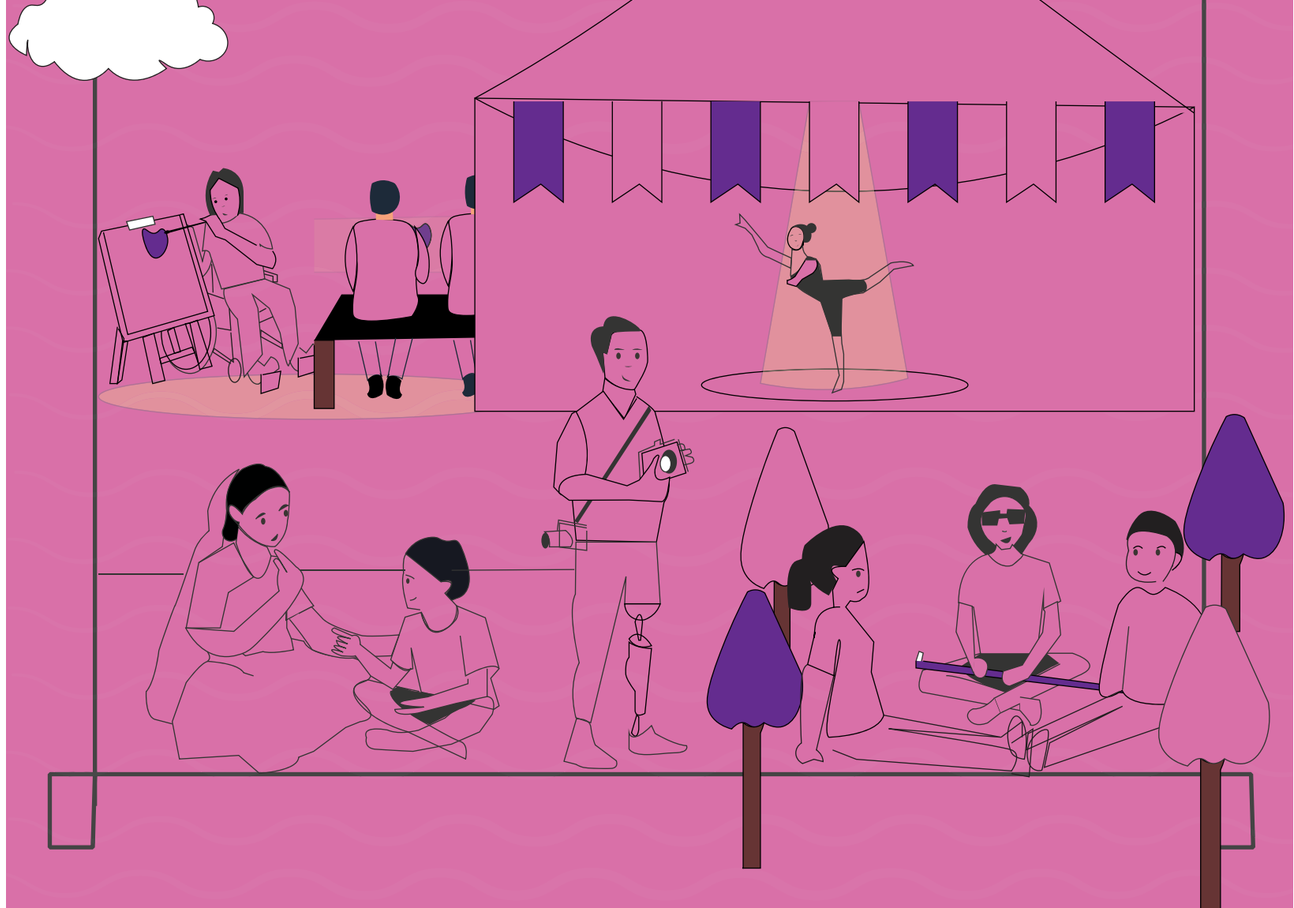
Drafts of the report were shared with EnAble India leadership to gain insights, fill in missing elements and reorganise the report. The final report was edited by senior members of the team to incorporate all changes.



Section 2

Mobility Systems: Lived Experiences of Customers with Disabilities

This section centres the everyday mobility experiences of customers with disabilities to understand how mobility systems are encountered in practice. It highlights patterns of decision-making, planning, and adaptation that emerge when services operate without consistent design assumptions. These insights inform the shift towards more predictable and respectful systems.



Section 2

Mobility Systems: Lived Experiences of Customers with Disabilities

The lived experiences of commuters with disabilities reveal a stark contrast between the realities of commuting within current mobility systems, and the promise of the law combined with the economic and societal gains of inclusive mobility.

Across disabilities and mobility systems, the common thread is clear: commuters with disabilities feel incredibly empowered by the potential of independent mobility. However, they are constantly required to compensate for systemic shortcomings through personal resilience, workarounds, and the goodwill of family members, friends and strangers. While inclusion and accessibility measures exist within various mobility systems, they are uneven, unpredictable, and rarely designed to address the full spectrum of needs of diverse users. For commuters with disabilities, mobility is experienced as a state of perpetual and uncertain waiting for competent assistance, often evoking feelings of shame and humiliation when such assistance is not forthcoming, and reinforcing dependence on the goodwill of dear ones and strangers to move safely and comfortably.

Conversations with customers with disabilities (***See Annexure 2*** for the profiles of the individuals whose voices are represented in this section) about their diverse experiences navigating metro and air travel indicate some themes for us to consider.

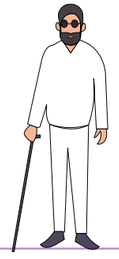
1. Mobility as an enabler of freedom and autonomy

Commuters with disabilities derive a sense of freedom from travelling on their own and view mobility as an enabler to contribute to society in all ways—as a student, parent, employee or entrepreneur. They do not wish to be a burden on their dear ones or on others. Asking for assistance, particularly physical help, often evokes shame arising from cultural segregation/stigma around disability. Moreover, requesting assistance often draws unwanted attention that many would rather avoid. People living with disabilities often experience intrusive gazes and actions that impede their freedoms.



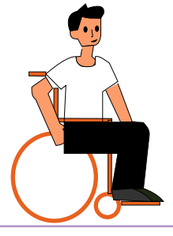
"I experience a sense of independence when I travel alone.

- Aishwarya, Entrepreneur,
a person with low vision



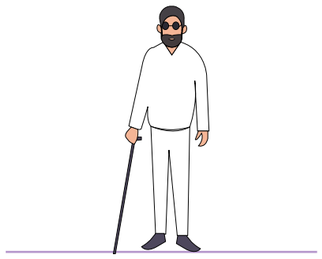
"I now fly regularly independently. My first experience of flying was in 2011, when I was completely dependent on others. I started booking my own tickets in 2013, and even started helping several other friends with blindness to book their tickets free of charge. At first I used to book tickets on Goibibo as it was partially accessible. Later, I found MakeMyTrip to be fully accessible and it is my go-to booking platform. Yet, there are times when some pages become inaccessible, and I still need help from sighted friends.

- John, Associate Manager,
a person with blindness



"I purchase my tickets for Bengaluru metro through Paytm, since ticket counters in stations are too high for me to reach from my wheelchair.

- Arman, Senior Executive,
a wheelchair user

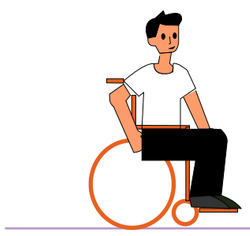


> Air Asia has introduced in-flight safety manuals in Braille. This is a positive measure. I hope there is a policy where airline staff allow persons with vision impairment to touch and feel the safety jacket. Then, they know exactly how to use it in an emergency. But this must be done without focusing embarrassing attention on persons with vision impairment.

- John, Associate Manager,
a person with blindness

2. Inconsistent accessibility leads to unpredictable journeys

The inconsistent availability of inclusive mobility solutions continues to hinder independent and free movement. Respect for commuters' time remains a central concern. The absence of systemic forethought often translates into experiences that undermine the dignity of commuters.

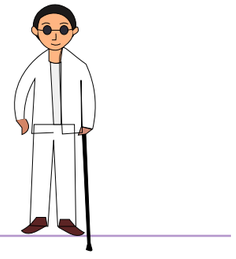


> In one instance, I was travelling from Bengaluru to Mumbai by flight. I was able to board the flight smoothly in Bengaluru. But I waited for half an hour in Mumbai for the airline's staff to make arrangements for me to deboard the flight and exit the airport. There are no ramps or hydraulic lifts. They finally carried me down the stairs on my wheel chair because they could not find a better solution.

- Arman, Senior Executive,
a wheelchair user

Travelling is becoming increasingly complex, involving interactions with multiple physical, electronic and human systems, and navigating this complexity means unpredictable small and big challenges that squander customers' time. Standardisation of signage, location of essential facilities, multi-sensory communication methods,and user-friendly infrastructural and digital interfaces all play a role in seamless mobility. Thus, the degree of unpredictability in travel increases multifold when there is a lack of uniformity in accessing mobility systems interfaces (human, infrastructural and digital).

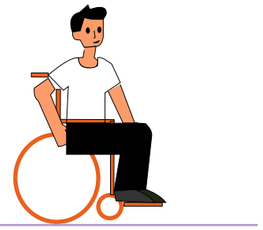
Mobility Systems: Lived Experiences of Customers with Disabilities



> I find the font size of the signage at the Bengaluru airport relatively easy to read, when compared to other airports, such as at Mumbai. I find it difficult to navigate airports like Mumbai independently. I struggle to locate essential areas such as the washroom, baggage counters, and other services because of inadequate signage and limited staff assistance. Booking a flight online is also time-consuming because I find it hard to identify available seats.

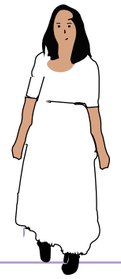
- Raju, Senior Manager,
a person with low vision and congenital hand anomalies

Commuters also point out that the lack of overall uniformity in accessing metro station facilities means that commuters have to learn various complex station layouts to navigate their paths. The information about these layouts are often not multi-sensorial (such as usage of braille in instruction manuals, tokens, colour contrast signages, audio instructions). Signage, locations of various facilities such as lifts and elevators, and placement of coaches, etc. all vary, making the navigation of complex mobility systems such as the metro challenging. Simple solutions like audio announcements in elevators, platforms and metro trains too are not consistently available. The infrastructure (such as aircraft seats and ticket counter tops) is often inaccessible, making exclusion inevitable. Finally, there are unpredictable barriers such as broken paths, ramps, free-standing obstacles, etc.



> I find Bengaluru metro stations to be quite accessible in general, and I can generally travel independently. However, there are some challenges that I do face. One issue is that the gates used to allow entry and exit to wheel chair users are usually kept locked during non-peak usage hours. Often the metro staff do not know who has the key. I end up waiting for about 15 to 20 minutes, while the staff scramble to find the key.

- Arman, Senior Executive,
a wheelchair user



"To book a cab through most ride-hailing apps, drivers usually call the passenger to confirm the pickup location or to explain where they are waiting. These interactions happen almost entirely through phone calls, which creates a significant accessibility barrier for Deaf people. Since we cannot easily participate in these conversations, it becomes difficult to coordinate with the driver or locate them. Often, we have to ask strangers or passersby to speak to the driver on our behalf just to find out where they are waiting. This reliance on others compromises both independence and privacy.

- Reshma, Researcher,
a deaf person with neurodivergence



"At airports, most announcements are made only through audio. Important information such as boarding, gate updates, or baggage belt number are via oral announcements and I rely on repeatedly checking screens to find out those updates. This constant need to monitor visual displays places an additional burden on Deaf travellers.

- Hakim, Mission Leader,
a deaf person

3. Individual goodwill has not scaled to systemic goodwill

A key need for commuters with disabilities is for solutions that enable them to travel without feeling like they are a burden to others. Most persons with disabilities can recall instances of kindness and sensitivity from family, friends and strangers that made their journeys just a little bit easier.



"My experience of commuting in the city has been good. I can recall several instances of the kindness and sensitivity of strangers. This is quite different from my experiences in my hometown.

- Arman, Senior Executive,
a wheelchair user



"I have not felt ill-dignified or made to feel awkward by my fellow passengers while commuting in the Bengaluru metro.

- Raju, Senior Manager,
a person with low vision and congenital hand anomalies

But assistance based on individual goodwill is unpredictable, ranging from sincere goodness to outright disrespect. The assistance provided is sometimes more about the provider's perceptions (based on their own sense of benevolence, inclinations and preferences) rather than the commuter's needs. Service providers may assume what users need rather than actually ask them.



"Sometimes, metro staff in their zeal to show their accessibility policies can be patronising and overprotective, which may become annoying. Sometimes they almost try to force me to take a seat, even when I don't want or need one.

- Raju, Senior Manager,
a person with low vision and congenital hand anomalies



"As a wheelchair user I do not always need someone to steer my wheelchair. I can use it on my own, except during specific functions. Asking for what support I need makes me feel more independent and prevents unnecessary assistance.

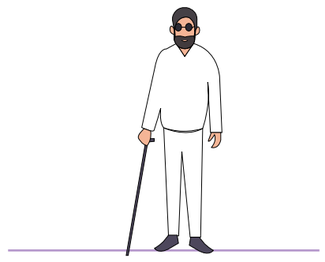
- Harun, Associate Director,
a wheelchair user with dyslexia

Finding timely and competent assistance (for instance, the ability to load and unload wheelchairs into vehicles) is expensive, and such service providers often expect additional considerations. When competent assistance is missing, commuters with disabilities often feel helpless, shameful, anxious and frustrated. Effective assistance depends on the training of the staff providing it, both in physical care and in the use of various mobility devices. Competence in providing assistance comes from an innate sense of respect for the persons with reduced mobility and attention to their specific needs.



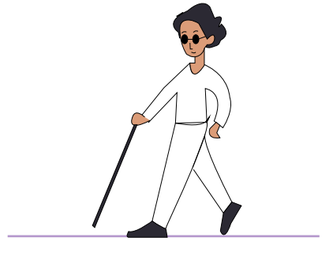
"(When travelling by flight) My main challenge is the number of times I have to shift in and out of my wheel chair to sit in cab seats, cabin seats, etc. Each time I do so, I am in pain. Further, the assistants are often men, who though are kind and well-intentioned, don't know how to assist me physically. Their discomfort adds to mine. My caregiver and I have to explain how to do these procedures to various assistants, who are often ill-equipped to understand these instructions, resulting in confusion and waste of time. Several solutions (strap and lift mechanisms, automated airline seats) are available on popular e-commerce sites or are easy to produce. But there has to be some training by rehabilitation experts on how to use these devices.

- Priyarshi, Associate Manager,
a wheelchair user



"I hesitate to take help from the cabin crew to use the washroom as they are often women. In airport restaurants, I have to take the assistance of the servers. But I feel awkward asking them to read the entire menu. So I end up asking them for specific items such as sandwiches, samosas etc. to spare them the trouble.

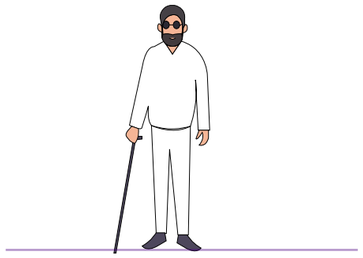
- John, Associate Manager,
a person with blindness



"Airline assistants often leave me at the gate once the check-in procedure is completed. They promise that they will return to help me board. But sometimes, they do not turn up and I feel helpless. I have to call out loudly for help. One time, I heard the call that I had to board immediately. Every other passenger had boarded. I felt guilty about making other passengers wait, even though it was not my fault. Another time, I did not receive assistance at the destination because there was no coordination between the departure and arrival staff. I felt completely helpless as they tried to find a solution. When assistance finally arrived, I felt both angry and relieved.

Saraf, Senior Executive,
a person with blindness

Often, systemic design uses stereotypical views of disability and fails to be truly thoughtful.



"While booking tickets online, airlines mainly provide wheelchair assistance for persons with locomotor disabilities. There are no options to book assistance on their web pages for persons with other kinds of disabilities. Do they assume that such people do not travel alone? I have to physically identify the help kiosk in the airport to seek assistance. Also, since it is not pre-booked assistance, I end up waiting for a long time for help to arrive. However, when assistance does arrive, people are friendly and helpful.

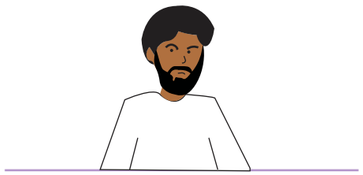
John, Associate Manager,
a person with blindness

Finally, it depends on the systematic nurturance of the culture of good will amongst the staff to comply with inclusive policies.



"Often support staff to provide assistance are not there at the right time. This is because I do not have the contact number of the designated support staff who is to provide me help. On the ground, there is poor communication between the airline and airport staff. When the flight onboarding details (gate, time) are changed, the appropriate support staff designated to provide assistance are not informed. I end up becoming anxious and rushing around to find out what is happening. If the airline shares their contact details, I can reach out for timely assistance and reduce the stress caused by last minute changes.

- Harun, Associate Director,
a wheelchair user with dyslexia



"I get very nervous during the security check because my bag may be taken away, and then I have to open everything and show it. I start feeling sweaty and anxious. It would help if I'm given enough time to take out all my things at my own pace. I just need a little more time.

- Santosh,
a young adult with Down syndrome

4. Customers with disabilities demonstrate a striking willingness to co-create solutions

Travel depends on both the intentions of service providers and their competence, often requiring consumers with disabilities to invest additional time and money. Commuters with disabilities show an inspiring degree of commitment to travelling independently. They have developed personal strategies and coping mechanisms to navigate transport systems. Many individuals take time to understand the layout of stations, bus stops, and airports through repeated visits.



"While I travel via the metro independently, having a sighted person with me when I visit a station for the first time is helpful to memorise the layout.

- Raju, Senior Manager,
a person with low vision and congenital hand anomalies



"Standing in long ticket lines is really hard for me. I start feeling tired and anxious, and when I finally reach the security check, I need a little more time to take things out of my bag without rushing. It would help so much if people like me, including those with Autism or similar difficulties, could go a little earlier in the queue—just like older people do. And if I'm simply given a bit more time at security, it makes the whole process much easier and less stressful.

- Tara,
a young adult with autism

Mobility Systems: Lived Experiences of Customers with Disabilities

They often put in extra time, effort and money to reduce the inconvenience caused in their mobility systems. For instance, they often start their journeys earlier to account for delays or to navigate inaccessible infrastructure.



"Before my first flight, I watched YouTube videos on airport navigation and asked friends about their experiences.

- Harun, Associate Director,
a wheelchair user with dyslexia



"I leave home 30 minutes early just to make sure I can find the right platform and coach.

- Saraf, Senior Executive,
a person with blindness



"Travel for me is more expensive when compared to others. Even Purple Rides tend to be expensive, and drivers often ask for an extra tip. This is also true for outstation travel. For instance, I spent around ₹75,000 for domestic air travel, which becomes ₹1.5 lakhs, because my wife accompanies me to provide the assistance I need.

- Arman, Senior Executive,
a wheelchair user

Commuters use technology creatively to navigate complex mobility landscapes, such as using their mobile phones to zoom in on signs, take photos of notice boards, or use screen readers.



"I usually travel quite independently using different mobility solutions. I take a picture of the notice boards inside the airport to read the information using my phone's zoom function. Job Access With Speech (JAWS) helps me read laptop screens with text-to-speech or Braille displays.

- Raju, Senior Manager,
a person with low vision and congenital hand anomalies

Often many commuters rely on their existing social support, such as requesting their family members and friends to assist their travel, learn aspects of various mobility systems, and gain confidence.



"I always make sure to travel with someone who can assist me.

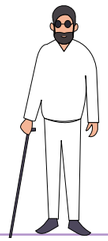
- Priyarshi, Associate Manager,
a wheelchair user

In unfamiliar environments, they often used various kinds of workarounds to navigate them.



"I use a diaper during long train journeys because the washrooms are not accessible.

- Priyarshi, Associate Manager,
a wheelchair user



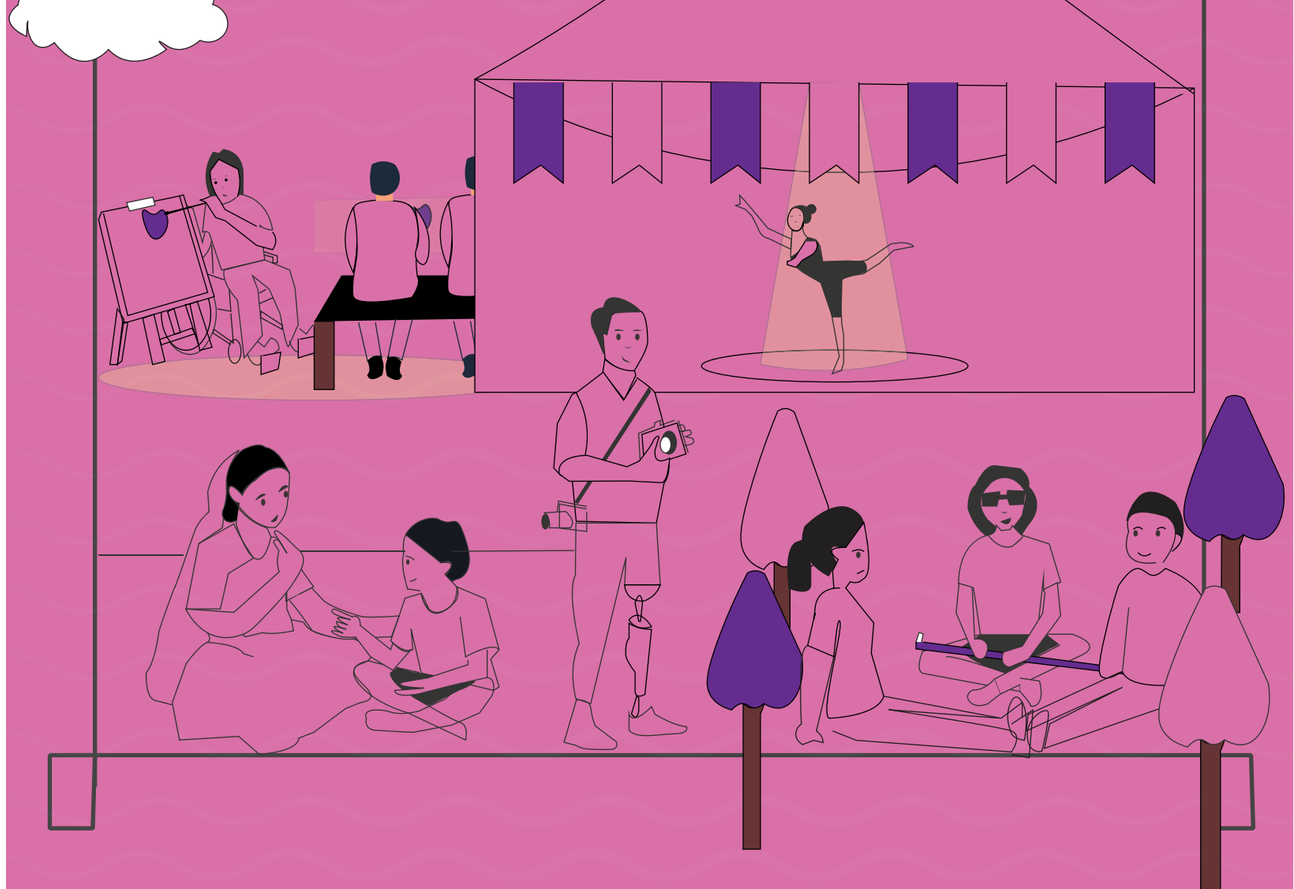
"I learned to ask the driver to honk twice when approaching the bus station.

- John, Associate Manager,
a person with blindness

Section 3

Towards Systemic Mobility Systems for Customers with Disabilities

This section introduces systemic respect as an organising principle for inclusive mobility. It shifts the focus from reactive responses to intentional design, where dignity, autonomy, and participation are built into everyday operations.



Section 3

Towards Systemic Mobility Systems for Customers with Disabilities

For consumers with disabilities, mobility cycles involve several steps, both physical and digital. These include pre-trip movements, station or terminal entry, ticketing, security checks, boarding, transfer within the vehicle, and exit. For such consumers, any journey involves detailed planning to ensure that the transit is both timely and comfortable. Accessible digital flows are now an integral part of any commute, including multi-sensory journey planners with step-free routes and lift status, simple-language modes, screen-reader labels, voice prompts, and Indian language support. Various technical systems and social institutions (visible and invisible) are part of this cycle.

To some extent, digitisation and advanced communication media have reduced the dependence of people with reduced mobility on the goodwill of others. Seamless mobility for diverse consumers from planning to boarding to arrival requires thoughtful institutional and individual action: respecting the personhood and time of consumers with disabilities. However, the availability of mobility for customers with disabilities is inconsistent and hinders independent and free movement. Even though there are experiences of individual goodwill, and generosity, systems continue to treat commuters with disabilities with disrespect, because of a lack of consistent and standardised service provisioning. Narrative after narrative illustrates the unpredictability that people with disabilities face while they wait for assistance of various kinds—wheelchairs, lifts, ground staff—arising from a partial or fragmented understanding of disabilities and poor communication.

When systemic disrespect occurs (rising not from intentional malice but by human idiosyncrasies) towards the customer with disabilities and their time, even state-of-the-art physical and digital infrastructure fails, as commuters with disabilities end up spending considerable amounts of time for the right equipment and assistance to arrive. The translation of individual goodwill into systemic respect and competence remains the foremost challenge for mobility systems providers (metro/ airport authorities) to solve.

Key Principles for Systemic Respect for Customers with Disabilities

Principle 1: Adopt Universal Design Principles Profitably

Disability is stereotypically associated with poverty. Not only are persons with disabilities engaged in employment, teaching, providing for their families and other productive activities, but they are also a robust consumer group for various mobility systems ***(Section 5)***. Further, most of us experience some form of disability at some point in our lives. Solutions for customers with disabilities are forerunners in physical infrastructure, technology and public systems, contributing to new-generation systems thinking and technology based on Universal Design Principles (for example, iPhone speech-to-text function and Ray-Ban Meta).

New-generation thinking and practice behind Universal Design radically shift mobility systems from mechanical, closed principles to open, complex ones. It cannot be sufficiently addressed by any single actor. Governments, transport operators, technology providers, civil society, and organisations of persons with disabilities must therefore collaborate across mandates and sectors, guided by mutual accountability and respect for lived experience as expertise.

Principle 2: Build on Strengths and Focus on Abundance Rather than Gaps

Disability studies and organisations working with disabilities have generated a wealth of knowledge and practice on what works and what does not, not just for themselves but for everyone else as well. Effective systems recognise disability not as a deficit to be corrected, but as a form of human diversity that, when supported through accessible design and enabling technologies, can thrive and contribute fully to society.

Lasting accessibility emerges when systems replace scarcity thinking with an abundance mindset. That is, instead of focusing on resources not available for inclusion (technical, financial, and human resources), focus on recognising solutions already available (everyday acts of individual goodwill). This attitude will reduce friction for inclusion, enable defaulting to inclusive design/ infrastructure, and allow timely disability solutions to emerge.

Principle 3: Collaborate from a Spirit of Solidarity

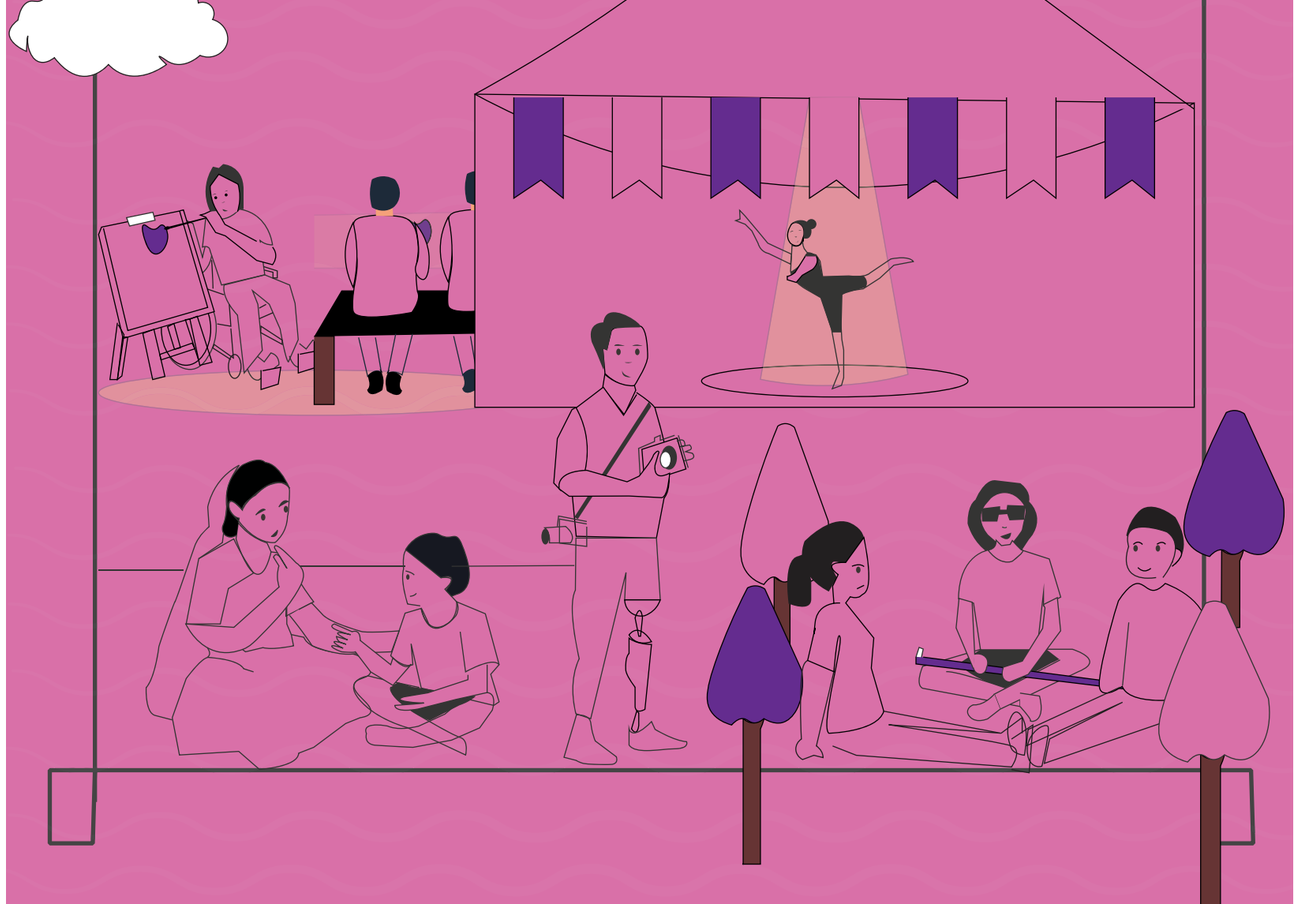
Rapid technological progress including innovations driven by artificial intelligence, offers expanding possibilities for functional autonomy, much as corrective lenses once did for vision impairment. This technological capability can serve persons with disabilities, provided there is systemic solidarity with customers with disabilities, their needs and priorities. A solidarity-based approach to collaboration keeps customers with disabilities at the centre, and moves beyond consultation towards co-creation and shared ownership of solutions. It acknowledges that customers with disabilities present a valuable opportunity, and values their autonomy, dignity, and time.

Meaningful solutions serving persons with disabilities traverse beyond direct contact to a deep systems consciousness. A solidarity based approach creates this consciousness of value for universal autonomy, dignity and time shifting isolated and sporadic individual goodwill and charity to extend across families, communities, service institutions, public agencies and profitable enterprises, to serve customers with disabilities consistently and sustainably.

Section 4

Why Must India Act on Accessible Mobility Now?

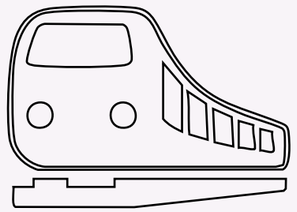
This section situates accessible mobility within India's current phase of infrastructure expansion, urbanisation, and demographic change. It highlights the opportunity to integrate inclusive design at scale, shaping future-ready mobility systems.



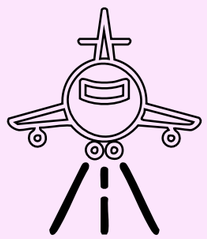
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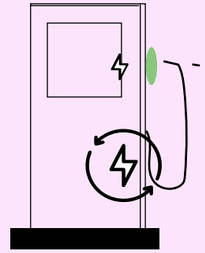
India is at an unprecedented moment in the mobility infrastructure evolution – constructing thousands of kilometers of metro rails, tens of new airports, manufacturing new-age and tech-defined electric vehicles that cater to diverse mobility needs of its citizens.



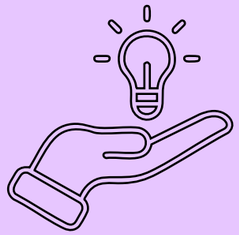
India's metro network has expanded dramatically, growing from **248 km across five cities in 2014 to over 1,000 km spanning 23 cities by 2025, with an additional 579 km currently under construction.**



New airports, designed on universal and barrier-free principles, are coming alive, and **Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru has recently become India's first to achieve Level-3 Accessibility Enhancement Accreditation from ACI,** setting a benchmark for inclusive aviation infrastructure.



The electric vehicle (EV) wave is sweeping over the country - **EV sales in Financial Year (FY) 2025 reached about 1.97 million units, growing nearly 17% over the previous year.**



With all these concurrent developments, now is an opportune time to rigorously examine how Indian transport systems can be designed, built, audited, and sustained to ensure accessibility for all.

Why Must India Act on Accessible Mobility Now?

Box 2: Universal Design Principles

Universal Design Principles are introducing new-generation systems thinking based on the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, where customers with disabilities are not anomalies to be accommodated for appearance's sake, but forerunners in systems design that express good will and respect for all its customers.

Mobility systems based on Universal Design Principles are not beyond imagination. India's legal framework – the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD Act, 2016), Harmonised Guidelines for Universal Accessibility (2021), and the Supreme Court's Rajive Raturi judgement (2024) establishing accessibility as a constitutional right is sufficiently comprehensive. The Harmonised Guidelines clearly outline the objective and subjective aspects of Universal Design Principles: the design of infrastructure and technology (providing detailed recommendations for various elements of built spaces, including size, texture, material, etc., for elements such as ramps, paths, doors, and toilets for persons with disabilities) and the people-centric concerns around diversity and inclusion.

L.Mace, the pioneer in Universal Design Principles and architecture defined Universal Design as follows:

> ***"The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.***

Mace's seven principles centre around the use of similar technology that prevents segregation or stigmatisation, flexible methods allowing a wide variety of free choice, simple and intuitive use, multi-sensory information channels, tolerance for error (including management of hazardous elements), appropriate physical effort, and size and space for approach and use. While Mace's work focused on the objective aspects of universal design (structure and technology), the Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (University of Buffalo) focused on the subjective aspects of universal design: processes and people.

> ***"Universal Design as a process that enables and empowers a diverse population by improving human performance, health and wellness, and social participation. (Steinfeld and Maisel, 2012)***

The Centre outlined eight goals of universal design including subjective aspects such as body fit, comfort, awareness, understanding, wellness, social integration, personalisation and cultural appropriateness.

The Universal Indian Design Principles focus on context-specific ones that are responsive to diversity in age, gender, disability, caste, class, religion, and socio-economic backgrounds: Samaan (equality, respect), Sahaj (ease of use), Sanskritik (culturally appropriate), Sasta (cost effective) and Sundar (aesthetically appealing).

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Section 5

The Economic Case for Accessible Mobility

This section presents accessible mobility as a growth opportunity across transport and technology sectors. It demonstrates how inclusive design can expand markets, generate livelihoods, and support innovation while improving system efficiency.



Section 5

The Economic Case for Accessible Mobility

The Purple Economy is a new economic lens that positions inclusion as a driver of growth — not a matter of welfare. It unlocks an opportunity of approximately ₹1.78 lakh crore from air travel ***(See table2)*** and ₹2.7 lakh crore from last mile mobility ***(See Table 3).***

Persons with disabilities are increasingly recognised worldwide as a significant but underserved consumer segment in the mobility and travel market. Their spending power is substantial, yet far from fully tapped, making accessible mobility a major growth opportunity for businesses.

> Travellers with disabilities often seek "white glove service" – service marked by high levels of care, attention to detail, and personalised support.
>
> **- Miriam Eljas, Co-Founder,**
> AccessibleGo[2]

> While the social impact of accessible tourism is undeniable, its commercial potential is equally significant.
>
> **- Laurent Roffé,**
> Principal of Accessio Consulting[3]

Nearly one in three Indians, about 486 million people, experience reduced mobility due to age, disability, illness, or injury. Including families and caregivers, this figure exceeds 700 million. One estimate of the economic opportunity in transport annually in India is **₹10.57 lakh crore** ($125 billion). In tourism, better accessibility is estimated to unlock an additional **₹14.19 thousand crore (**$16.6 billion**)** in annual revenue, as **travellers with mobility challenges typically spend 23% more per trip**. (KPMG & Svayam, 2025).

The India mobility aid medical devices market reached **₹3,588 crore (**$429.8 million) in 2025[4], and is projected to grow by 8-9% (CAGR)[5]. In the United States, the accessible mobility market is estimated at $58 billion **(₹5.47 lakh crore)** annually[6]. The United Kingdom values this market at about £14.6 billion **(₹1.58 lakh crore)** per year[7].

2(Girma, 2024)
3(Girma, 2024)
4India Mobility Aid Medical Devices Market Size, Share, Trends and Forecast by Product, End User, and Region, 2026-2034, n.d.
5India Personal Mobility Devices Market Size, Share, Trends and Forecasts 2031, 2025
6Research by MMGY Global and Open Doors Organization
7VisitBritain's work on the "Purple Pound" – the term used for the spending power of persons with disabilities

The Economic Case for Accessible Mobility

It is estimated that annual transport expenses for customers with disabilities in India (Tamil Nadu) range from ₹16,800 to ₹5,01,600, per person, depending on their disability types, support requirements, and travel patterns (CIP & Balasubramanian, 2024).

Care giving for customers with disabilities is also an emerging market opportunity, with demand for concierges, escorts, personal attendants, and respite caregivers growing with India's expanding geriatric market, valued at ₹2.1 lakh crore ($25.7 billion) in 2025.[8]

1. Economic Value Unlocked From Accessible Air Travel

By making air travel inclusive, a market segment worth ₹7,686 crore opens up (Table 1)

Flight fare (median of inter-metropolitan fares) (IATA, 2025)	**₹5,165**
Less: Taxes, surcharges, and fees[9] (Air India, 2024)	**₹1,265**
Base Fare	**₹5,165 - ₹1,265 = ₹3,900**
50% *Concession (50% of base fare)[10]*	**₹1,950** (50% of ₹3900)
Adding Surcharges, and fees (no concession) (Air India, 2024)	**₹1,000**
GST *GST at 5% on the base fare*	**₹98** (5% of ₹1950)
Total fare with GST	**₹3,048 ~₹3,050**

Table 1: Estimating Average Air Fare for a Customer with Disability in India

[8] *https://www.einpresswire.com/article/825825879/india-geriatric-care-services-market-projected-to-witness-massive-growth-2025-2032-piramal-swasthya-jeevan-suraksha*
[9] *Taxes & Surcharges: Include YM (Development Fee), P2 (Airport Security Fee), YR (Regional Connectivity Fee), WO (Passenger Service Fee), IN (User Development Fee), CUTE charges*
GST: 5% applicable only on base fare component, not on taxes/fees
[10] *Currently, only Air India offers fare concessions to persons with disabilities, (and commands 21% of India's domestic aviation market (IATA, 2025)). Affordable fare policies would directly increase travel among persons with disabilities, as expensive travel deters disabled customers from flying, resulting in lost trips and foregone revenue for airlines (Floyd, 2024).*

Estimated Air Travel Revenue Opportunity from the Purple Economy	
Total persons with disabilities in India (KPMG & Svayam, 2025)	**486 million**
Potential air-travelling population of persons with disabilities	**486 million × 12%**[11] **= 58.32 million**
One-way air fare (concession for persons with disabilities) Table 1	**₹3,050**
Total potential air travel revenue (single round trip)	**58.32 million × ₹3050 = ₹1.78 lakh crore**

Table 2: Estimated Air Travel Revenue Opportunity from the Purple Economy

2. Ride-hailing and Accessible Cab Market Potential

Ride-hailing transport, such as auto rickshaws and cabs, is the key to last-mile connectivity in urban travel to public transport services and hubs between home and metros, railway stations, bus stations, and airports. However, these vehicles must be fitted with equipment suited for universal access and depend critically on the goodwill and competence of the owners and drivers. There is a compelling financial argument i.e., a revenue potential of ₹2.7 lakh crore (₹2.7 trillion) ***(See table 3)*** to invest in this effort. Namma Yatri in Bengaluru has demonstrated the purple economy in action. ***(See box 3)***

[11] *Percentage of Indian population that traveled in 2024 was 174 million out of 1.45 billion i.e 12% (IATA, 2025)*

The Economic Case for Accessible Mobility

> While Metros themselves are being designed to be accessible for persons with disabilities, access to metro stations itself is often lacking. In order for the persons with disabilities to use the metro system, they need to be able to get to and exit from metro stations seamlessly. This includes the need for services such as buses, autos etc. to be accessible as well. That is what true multi-modal transit means. Inaccessible public and private transportation options defeats the very idea of multi-modal transport and impose costs at both individual and societal levels. What's worrying is that digital environments and access seem to be going the same way even though laws are clear and tools are easily accessible.
>
> **- Shashaank Awasthi, Co-founder v-shesh**

Box 3: Purple Rides in Namma Yatri - Generated ₹8.5 Crore in Driver Earnings

Purple Rides was launched in October 2023 by Namma Yatri in collaboration with EnAble India as a knowledge partner. It is designed to make travel safe, comfortable, and accessible for people with mobility, visual and hearing impairments. As per data from (as of October 2025), Namma Yatri drivers have earned ₹8.5 crore of revenue[12] from Purple Rides. With over 2 lakh sensitised drivers and in revenue , the initiative has shifted the brand from a driver-first platform to India's leading inclusive ride-hailing service.

Parameter	Value / Assumption
Customers with disabilities needing ride-hailing transport (See Table 2)	**58.3 million users**
Average weekly rides per user (3 days round trip)	**6 rides**
Average fare per ride	**₹150**
Annual ride frequency	**6 rides × 52 weeks = 312 rides per user**
Estimated annual market size	**58.3 million users × 312 rides × ₹150 = ₹2.7 lakh crore or ₹2.7 trillion**

Table 3: Projected Potential of Making Last Mile Service Accessible for Customers with Disabilities

[12] *(ANI, 2025)*

3. Assistive Tech Potential

Assistive technology (AT) as innovative mobility solutions directly enables travel, independence, and social participation for customers with disabilities (Van Dam, K. et al, 2023). Global data show a large unmet need for AT and large returns on investments in assistive devices and systems (WHO & UNICEF, 2022). National policy and infrastructure that acknowledge disability access produce outsized social and economic benefits. Governments and transport agencies that pair hardware (wheelchairs, ramps, vehicle adaptations) with digital services (real-time accessibility data, navigation aids) and ecosystem supports (maintenance, training, procurement standards) report higher sustained uptake and better user outcomes (ibid.).

The India mobility aid medical devices market size reached **₹4,056.39 crore (**$429.8 million) in 2025. The market is expected to reach **₹7,541.20 crore (**$903.2 million) by 2034, exhibiting a growth rate (CAGR) of 8.60% during 2026-2034. Within this, the demand for smart mobility devices such as electric wheelchairs, intelligent canes, and powered scooters is rising, driven by an expanding geriatric population, more people with mobility impairments (including arthritis, spinal cord injuries, and neuromuscular disorders), and improving affordability in urban India. The global smart mobility market size reached **₹6.4 lakh crore (**$68.5 billion) in 2024 and is expected to reach **₹22.02 lakh crore (**$233.6 billion) by 2033. (India Mobility Aid Medical Devices Market Size, Share, Trends and Forecast by Product, End User, and Region, 2026-2034, n.d.)

The range of AT that integrates with various mobility systems has increased exponentially in the last few decades. Many of these are forerunners in new kinds of products that are truly inclusive. Below is a non-exhaustive taxonomy of assistive technology solutions that integrate well with metro, railway and air mobility, with representative Indian and international examples.

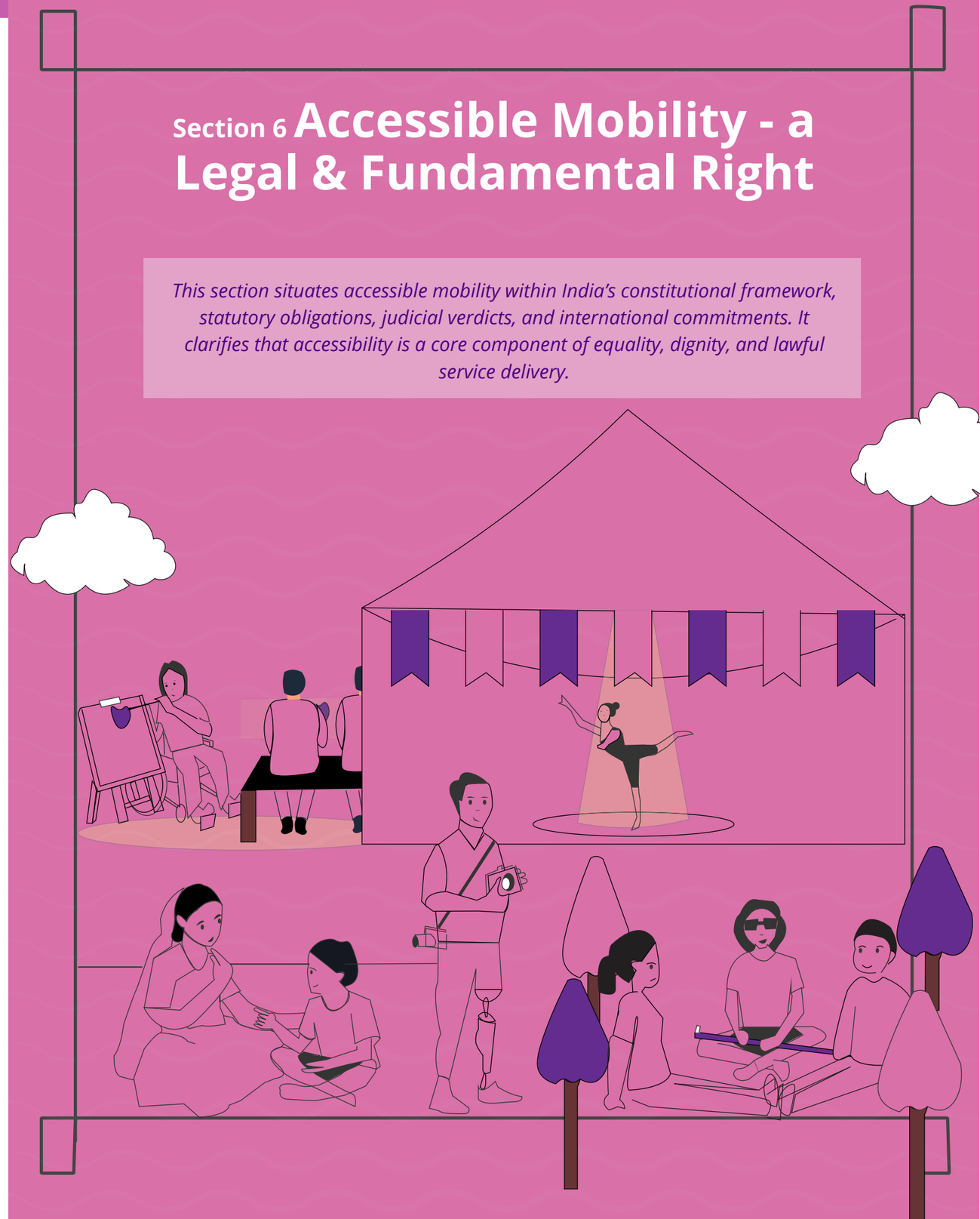
Kind Of Assistance	Assistive Device	Examples
Personal mobility hardware	Manual & powered wheelchairs, standing wheelchairs, gait trainers, and lightweight frames	• NeoMotion's NeoFly • Thryv Mobility's YD One (R2D2/ IIT-incubated)
Vehicle adaptations & transport-entry devices	Swivel car seats, vehicle ramps, low-floor bus lifts, and wheelchair-driven EVs	• TurnPlus (swivel seat), • Yali Mobility EV • Humming Bird / Elektra low-floor vans • Ezy Mov
Stations & built-environment adaptations	Tactile paving, platform gap fillers, elevators, accessible signage, and universal design retrofits	• SignXpress India and Eminent Tactiles • Prosafe Living • RampMyCity
Digital navigation, Wayfinding & information systems	Bus identification; accessibility maps; Application Programming Interfaces(APIs) for escalator/ elevator outages; and audible announcements & induction loops	• OnBoard developed by IIT Delhi • Namma Nakshe • BillionAbles • Real time data feed on elevator/ escalator outages in New York MTA
Wearables & AI-assisted perception	Integration with smart phones, visual and aural devices (object recognition, zooming, and multi-sensorial communication)	• iPhone • OrCam • Ray-Ban Meta • Be My Eyes
Last Mile Connectivity and Ground Staff	Accessible and cost effective ride-hailing modes, on-demand online and in-person assistance interfaces	• Namma Yatri Purple Rides • Buddy Mobility Care • Ability on Wheels • KickStart Cabs

Table 4: Taxonomy of Assistive Technology

India has a growing, heterogeneous AT ecosystem driven by research labs, incubators, social enterprises and private firms. These would need to be effectively integrated into the public mobility systems in order to unlock the full economic potential of mobility and achieve meaningful adoption and seamless mobility for persons with disabilities.

Section 6 Accessible Mobility - a Legal & Fundamental Right

This section situates accessible mobility within India's constitutional framework, statutory obligations, judicial verdicts, and international commitments. It clarifies that accessibility is a core component of equality, dignity, and lawful service delivery.



Section 6

Accessible Mobility - a Legal & Fundamental Right

The UNCRPD stipulates measures to be taken by the States to ensure personal mobility with the greatest possible independence for persons with disabilities (Article 20). The spirit of the UNCRPD is fully embodied by India's disability rights legislation in the RPwD Act, 2016 and RPwD Rules, 2017.

Several international standards and conventions recognise mobility as intrinsic to equality ***(Annexure 1)***. The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, (UNCRPD) was ratified by India in 2007 and marks a watershed landmark in international and national legislation.

In India, flowing from the RPwD Act, 2016, several policies and guidelines recognise the criticality of accessible mobility, including the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, 2015), Guidelines for Accessibility Standards in Port Sector (Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, 2023), Accessibility Standards and Guidelines for Civil Aviation (Ministry of Civil Aviation, 2022), Guidelines on Accessibility of Indian Railway Stations and Facilities at Stations for Differently Abled Persons (Divyangjan) and Passengers with Reduced Mobility (Ministry of Railways, 2023), Harmonised Guidelines and Standards for Universal Accessibility in India (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 2021), Accessibility for ICT Products and Services (Bureau of Indian Standards, 2021), and Accessibility Standards for Bus Body Code (Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways, 2016).

While India's laws and policies embody the criticality of accessible mobility and have laid out sound principles and standards for action on the ground, the lived reality is starkly different ***(Section 2)***. Commuters with disabilities face harassment, delays, confusion, and anxiety, ranging from the very minor challenges(such as broken tiles) to serious such as the loss of their assistive devices.

The poor implementation of the rights framework has sparked significant litigation across consumer forums, High Courts and even the Supreme Court, leading to several landmark pronouncements ***(See Box 4)***. Though the Constitution of India makes no explicit acknowledgement of non-discrimination on the grounds of disability, courts have held that accessible mobility is a fundamental human right, deeply tied to principles of equality and dignity.

Box 4: Some Landmark Judgements Recognising the Right to Accessible Mobility

Jeeja Ghosh & Anr. vs. Union of India & Ors., 2016

Ms. Jeeja Ghosh was forcefully de-boarded from a SpiceJet airplane flying between Kolkata to Goa. The Supreme Court judgement observed that the airline had violated the Aircraft Rules of 1937 and the Civil Aviation Requirements (Carriage by Air of Persons with Disability and/or Persons with Reduced Mobility, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), 2008) .

The Supreme Court also issued a slew of directions to the several respondents, including the Union of India, the DGCA and Spicejet, to ensure that such an incident is not repeated. In addition to mandating compliance to pre-existing laws like the Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR), it directed the implementation of the Ashok Kumar Committee's recommendations (Report of the Ashok Kumar Committee for the Review of the Civil Aviation Requirements for Persons with Disabilities, 2012). These recommendations focused specifically on the human elements of accessibility: mandatory, regular sensitivity training for airline and security staff to accommodate passengers with disabilities, the establishment of Complaints Resolution Officers at all major airports, and accessible telephonic help desks.

The Manager. vs Dr. S J Rajalakshmi, 2020

Dr Rajalakshmi and her senior-citizen mother were travelling together. The doctor's customised wheelchair was not loaded on their Air India flight to London with serious consequences. Besides the immediate and severe inconvenience to her, their Europe tour was disrupted, and her mother developed serious complications.

Dr Rajalakshmi sought refund for the tour, ticket costs, reimbursement of medical expenses and compensation for the violation of their rights as persons with disabilities. The Karnataka High Court (Division Bench) upheld the Single Judge's order awarding ₹10,00,000 each to the two petitioners, over and above ₹5,00,000 already paid. It held that Air India's failure to provide the customised wheelchair at disembarkation amounted to deficiency of service and a violation of Section 44 of the RPwD Act, 2016, Civil Aviation Requirements issued by the DGCA, and Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution. The Court emphasised that human dignity, particularly of persons with disabilities and senior citizens, is a paramount constitutional value. It dismissed the airline's appeal, holding that Writ jurisdiction could be invoked where fundamental rights are violated.

> Just implement the provisions of the RPwD Act, 2016, that itself is of great service to us.
>
> **- Dr.Viswesh Sekhar,** Lawyer with locomotor disability

Ironically, despite laws, policies and a plethora of judicial pronouncements, accessibility requirements were wrongly interpreted as optional. Finally, the Supreme Court, in Rajive Raturi vs. Union of India (delivered on 8th November 2024), had to clarify that fulfilling the Rights of Persons of Disability were never optional. It reinforced that accessibility is an indispensable component of constitutional guarantees, and that the accessibility mandates flow directly from the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD Act), 2016. Accessibility is a precondition to full inclusion, and the failure to provide accessible infrastructure constitutes a denial of rights.

In the Rajive Raturi decision, the Supreme Court ordered that the Union Government frame principle-based, binding and enforceable accessibility rules (rather than voluntary guidelines, to replace the recommendatory provisions of the RPwD Rules, 2017) so that customers with disabilities genuinely benefit from India's urban mobility revolution. This directive resulted in public consultations to frame Accessibility Standards in 2025, based on which draft rules have been released (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, 2025). These rules intend to remedy inconsistencies and technical ambiguities across various sectoral guidelines (including mobility systems) and to institute uniform, baseline requirements that ensure universally accessible public and private spaces ***(See Box 5)***.

Box 5: Summary of Draft Rules On Accessible Mobility for Customers with Disabilities

Draft Non-negotiable Rules for Products for Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD, 2025) establishes non-negotiable rules for the design, development, and distribution of accessible products for persons with disabilities. The Rules integrate nationally and globally recognised key accessibility standards to ensure inclusivity and enforceability.

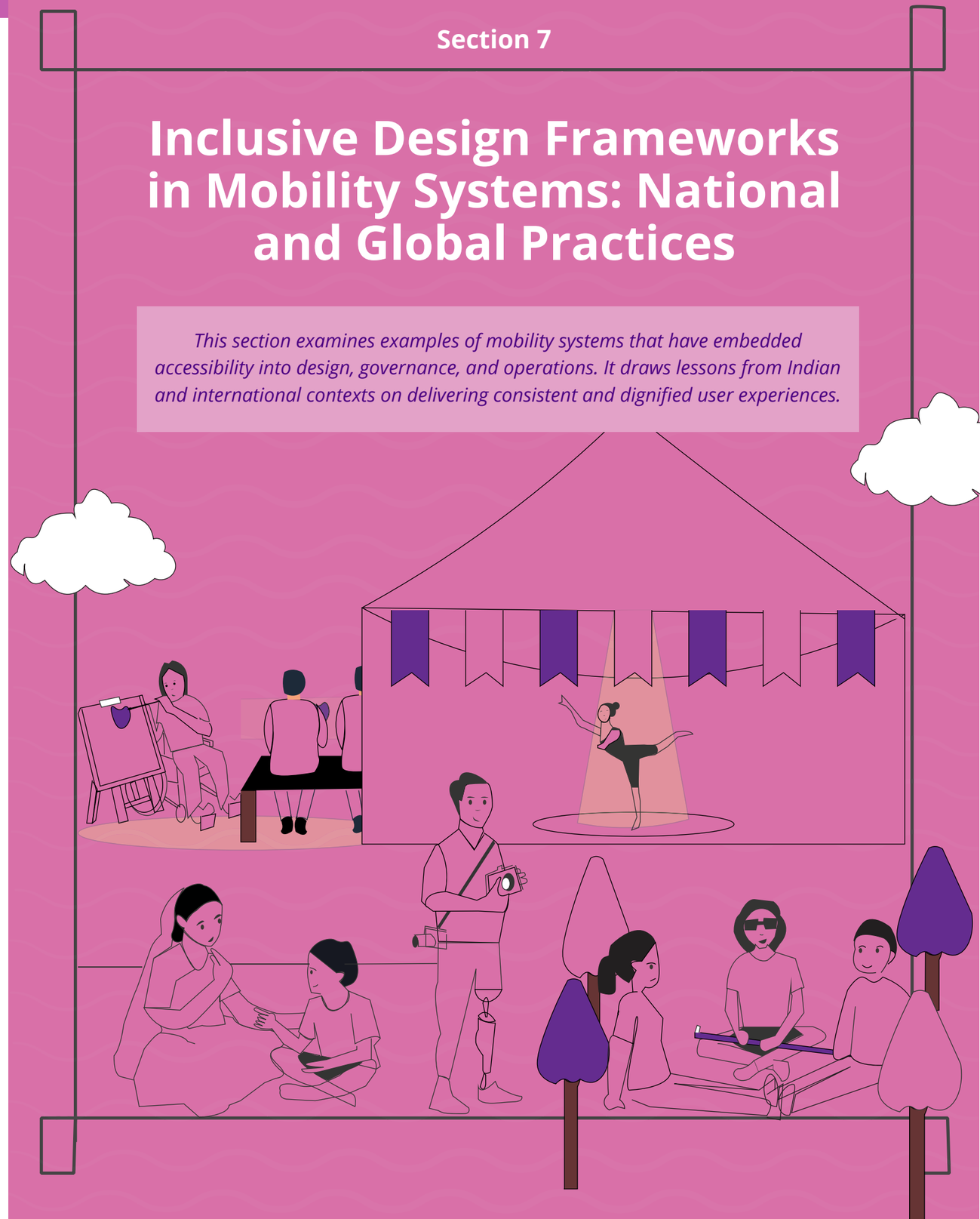
Draft Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment Sector (DEPwD, 2025) aims to integrate the (a) National Building Code of India, Bureau of Indian Standards and (b) Indian Road Congress, to achieve the mandate of establishing uniform and universally applicable standards with respect to the Built Environment.

Draft Accessibility Standards for the Transport & Mobility Sector (DEPwD, 2025) identifies non-negotiable rules to strengthen the creation of barrier-free environments in accordance with the RPwD Act, 2016.

Section 7

Inclusive Design Frameworks in Mobility Systems: National and Global Practices

This section examines examples of mobility systems that have embedded accessibility into design, governance, and operations. It draws lessons from Indian and international contexts on delivering consistent and dignified user experiences.



Section 7

Inclusive Design Frameworks in Mobility Systems: National and Global Practices

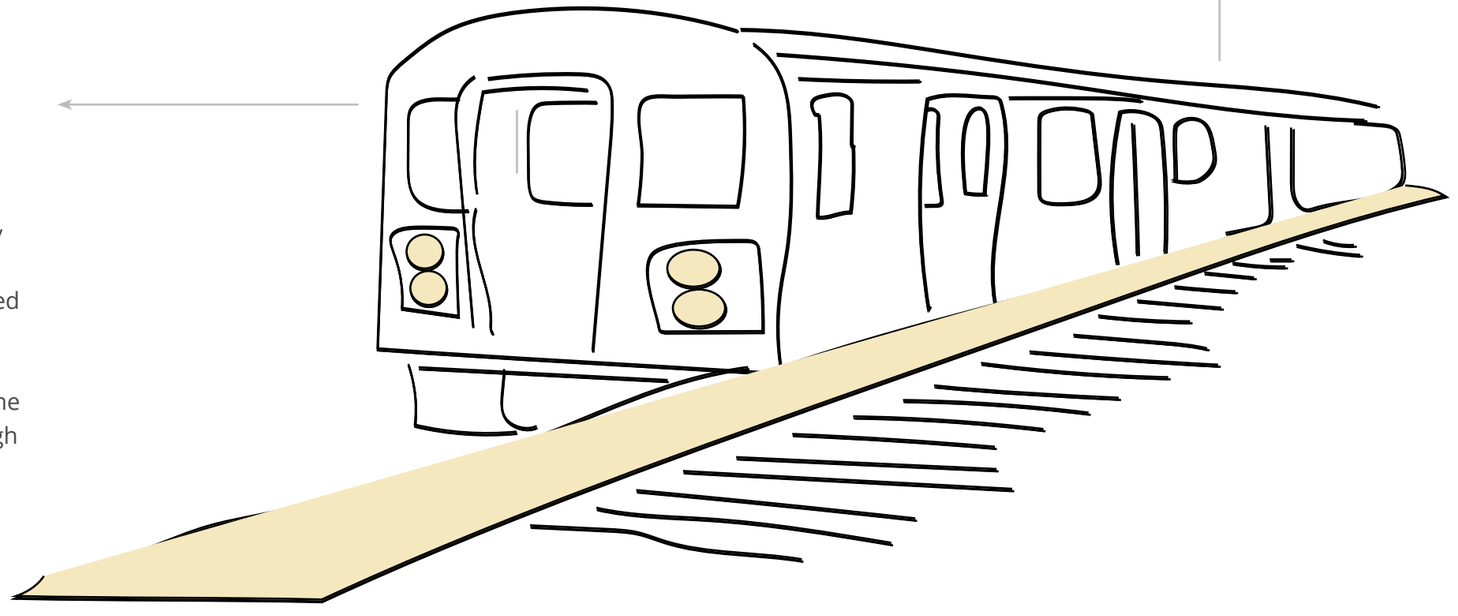
This section outlines a few instances of best practices that illustrate universal design and barrier-free principles of mobility. Cutting-edge work on the systemic principles of mobility systems in the current context is evident in metro and airline transit systems.

Best Practice 1. The Indian Metros

Metros remain at the cutting-edge of scientific technology in current times. Their ridership and patronage in overcrowded cities is being quickly established. In India, where metros are emerging in all major cities, there is a concerted investment of large resources to meet international standards of cutting-edge design in mobility infrastructure and services.

i) Systematising Goodwill

The escort service provided by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) is a notable practice. Delhi metro has a semi-formal assistance system. People with disabilities can seek assistance at customer care booths, where staff accompany them from entry to destination (Raghupathy & Shreyas, 2018). The coach reserved for persons with disabilities is closest to the train operator, who is informed of their presence in the coach and their exit needs through the open channel. This seating underlines DMRC's emphasis on safety and quick assistance in emergencies for customers with disabilities.



ii) Universal Design

Central to the Delhi Metro's accessibility design are its lifts, tactile pathways, multi-purpose toilets, and dedicated seating areas. The underlying principles of universal design are aligned with the Harmonised Guidelines. Stations have passenger elevators equipped with Braille buttons, handrails, audio prompts, and emergency intercoms. Tactile paving using embossed tiles with directional and warning markers connects key movement areas such as entrances, elevators, platforms, and ticket counters, providing navigational support to commuters with vision impairment. Extra-wide Automated Fare Collection (AFC) gates ensure unhindered entry and exit for wheelchair users. Quick repair of lifts, regular cleanliness checks, and infrastructure audits ensure sustained accessibility.

In addition, the Metro has integrated barrier-free toilets and ramps across stations, ensuring accessibility at multiple levels of the journey from concourse to platform. The first/ladies coach is equipped with a space for a wheelchair and a guardrail for support.

iii) Accessible Ticketing

In Chennai Metro, the Information and customer care counters are maintained at accessible heights and appropriately illuminated. Signage throughout the stations is bilingual, high-contrast, and often supported by Braille plates, ensuring easy navigation (Bhola & Singh, 2022). Ticket vending machines include voice guidance, audio prompts, and user-friendly operating heights. The Chennai Metro has also conducted an accessibility audit to ensure that Metro stations are accessible for persons with disabilities.

Best Practice 2. Integrating Innovative Technology by the New York Subway System

The New York Subway system is New York City's nervous system, which runs on 100 year old technology. Only 25% of this system is universally accessible. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) aims to make this subway system barrier-free entirely by 2034. It has undertaken several pioneering steps to realise this goal.

MTA's accessibility strategy of Universal Design Principles for infrastructure in the transit system, is visible or achieved through: stair-free paths from street level to train platforms and into coaches; innovative design to safely onboard consumers with mobility challenges; visual markers such as bright blue floor decals and ceiling signs; no gap principle for transit between coaches and platforms; and extensive tactile warning systems for platform edges, stairway tops and underfoot hazards.

The centrality given to the integration of these horizontal and vertical measures to ensure free mobility is evidenced by the designated zones for customers with disabilities. Coaches and stations include redesigned priority seating areas. In one of every two cars, there are two areas with three flip-up seats instead of traditional bench seats, providing additional flexibility to accommodate mobility devices. These priority seating areas are in the centre of the train and platform. On the platform, these zones are typically located at the centre near the conductor's position and are marked with bright yellow seats and floor graphics. Infrastructural modifications reduce the vertical and horizontal gaps between trains, station platforms and egress points.These waiting areas are in full view of the conductor, who ensures that the train stops for long enough for the customers to board comfortably.

Many of these measures use cutting-edge innovation that pay detailed attention to the lived experiences of persons with disabilities. One such instance is pioneering tactile guideways that enable people with low vision to navigate complex stations freely. These include different textured and colour-contrast aesthetics to demarcate the various zones of the station: floors, walls and rails; intersections and transits. Blue-colored guideways stand out visually for those with low vision, while also providing tactile information for cane users. Accompanying Braille signage offers additional support at decision points throughout the stations. Smartphone apps that give customers tools like audio navigation, high-contrast maps, and a step-by-step breakdown of the experience of riding the subway are also available. A comprehensive elevator and escalator status tool allows customers to check equipment status in real time.

Inclusive Design Frameworks in Mobility Systems: National and Global Practices

Regular public communication for best practices is maintained, including practice of caution in transit in and out of trains, use of wheelchair brakes and handles, and ensuring that there is no obstruction to doors. This is in addition to the regular announcements about upcoming stops and stations, the accessibility of the station, and the location of elevators.

Best Practice 3. Standards of Excellence for Civil Aviation

Airports Council International's (ACI) Accessibility Enhancement Accreditation(AEA) ranks airports based on compliance with its standards of excellence. Airports across the world submit evidence and undergo rigorous validation to procure the accreditation, which is valid for three years.

3.1 Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru

Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, became the first Indian airport to achieve Level 3 ACI's AEA in November 2025. This distinction is internationally recognised as a benchmark for accessible operations and inclusive passenger experience. Level 3 accreditation requires demonstration of proven partnership and innovation, embedding digital access, universal design, and fostering a deeply inclusive culture for all passengers.

Some of the key features incorporated by the airport are:

Sunflower Lanyard Scheme:
a discreet support system for hidden disabilities providing tailored assistance.

Accessibility Committee:
Institutional mechanisms for ongoing improvements.

Sensory Room:
India's first effort at an airport to provide undisturbed environments for neurodivergent passengers.

Regular Training:
Mandatory sensitisation programmes for all staff to respond competently to customers with disabilities.passengers.

Comprehensive Accessibility Policy:
Prioritisation of accessibility in strategy, planning, and day-to-day management.

3.2 Miami International Airport (MIA)

Level 3 accreditation was also achieved by Miami International Airport, USA, in July 2024, and Aeropuerto Internacional El Dorado, Colombia, in November 2024.

Miami International Airport (MIA) has emerged as a global model for accessible aviation through its landmark myMIAccess program, launched in 2020 to embed accessibility into every aspect of airport operations. It was the first in the country to install wheelchair charging stations across all terminals for motorised mobility devices. It also introduced two multi-sensory rooms within the terminal that serve travellers with cognitive and developmental disabilities by creating a calm and supportive environment. It also uses the Sunflower Lanyard scheme for passengers with hidden disabilities, reflecting its commitment to inclusive, dignified travel experiences.

Mobility assistance is a major component of MIA's services. Wheelchair assistance is airline-coordinated, with staging areas monitored by dedicated staff who provide personal support at every step, including boarding and security checkpoints. Accessibility extends beyond air travel and includes wheelchair-accessible taxis, rental car coordination, and Miami-Dade's specialised Special Transportation Service (STS) that offer seamless last-mile connectivity. The Dolphin and Flamingo parking garages feature accessible layouts, and free parking for vehicles modified for disability access. Throughout the airport, restrooms include accessible stalls and unisex family rooms for passengers requiring caregiver assistance, while seven animal relief areas support service and psychiatric service animals.

Beyond mobility and infrastructure, MIA provides innovative digital and communication accessibility. The Aira visual assistance app connects passengers with vision impairment and low vision with remote agents for real-time guidance, while virtual sign language interpreters and visual paging systems enhance access for deaf travellers. The airport's website integrates the Recite Me accessibility toolbar, ensuring text-to-speech conversion, translation, and visual adjustments for diverse needs. With these initiatives, MIA continues to demonstrate how accessibility can evolve from compliance to culture, anchoring dignity, autonomy, and independence as integral to every passenger's journey.

Section 8

User-centric Stakeholder Mapping for Mobility Systems

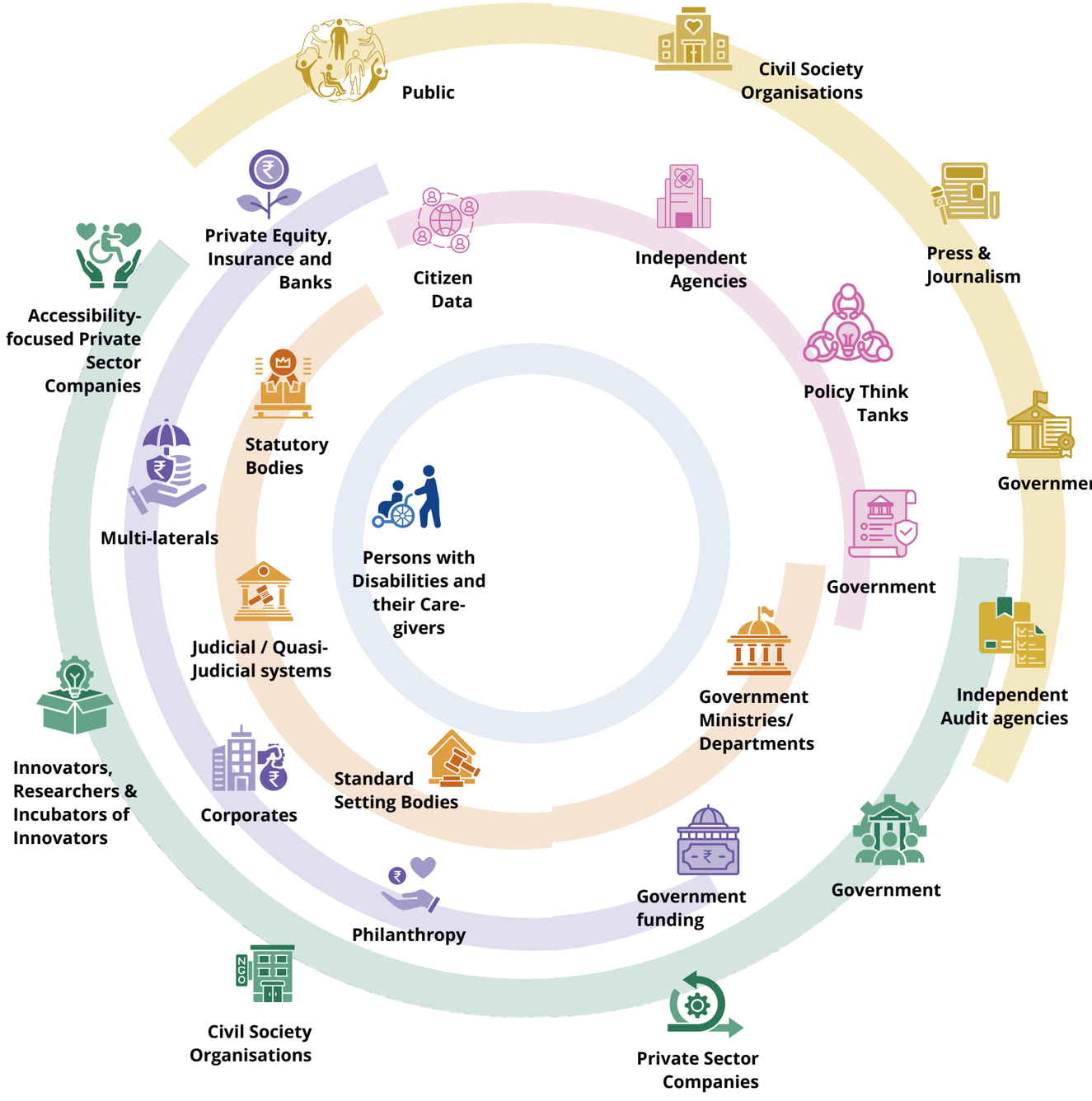
This section maps the ecosystem of stakeholders involved in advancing accessible mobility, using a concentric circle framework, illustrating how different roles interact to translate intent into impact.



User-centric Stakeholder Mapping for Mobility Systems

The stakeholders are mapped using a concentric circle framework, illustrating how different roles interact to translate intent into impact. Each concentric circle reflects a specific role that stakeholders play, which are detailed in the legend on the right.

- ***We have placed lived experiences at the centre of the concentric circles to ground projects in the realities of persons with disabilities and their caregivers.***
- ***Standards and rules follow to ensure these experiences are interpreted and translated within clear and enforceable frameworks.***
- ***Evidence, data, and research are positioned in the next layer, to surface gaps and inform decision-making within these frameworks.***
- ***Funding is placed thereafter to reflect its role in shaping scope, scale, and implementation,***
- ***Followed by stakeholders who will translate ideas into on-ground action.***
- ***The outermost layer is to highlight the role of building accountability and narrative, to support awareness creation, reflection, and course correction over time.***



- Customers
- Stakeholders drafting / upholding / driving the implementation of standards and rules
- Stakeholders providing evidence, research and data
- Stakeholders funding the projects
- Stakeholders providing infrastructure / product / service
- Stakeholders working on accountability, awareness & narrative building

Section 9

Pathways for Strengthening Mobility Systems

This section translates insights from across the report into actionable recommendations. It outlines pathways to embed respect, predictability, and inclusion into mobility systems through governance, design, and innovation.



Section 9

Pathways for Strengthening Mobility Systems

Lived experiences offer opportunities for new-generation systems thinking, including practical and innovative solutions, thoughtful design principles, and a strong call for sensitised, well-coordinated systems that embody goodwill and respect. Mobility is not merely about moving through physical spaces: it is about being able to do so with freedom and dignity. A shift towards systemic sentience – one that recognises and responds to the nuanced realities of disability – remains central to realising the inclusive future we envision. When this is combined with technical, and financial resources, the potential of inclusive, accessible, and equal societies become a little more possible. This shift is not possible without the participation of consumers with disabilities.

From Individual Kindness and Charity To Systemic Goodwill and Respect

Any ecosystem is said to be accessible if it fulfils access across three dimensions: physical, sensory, and communications (Eichhorn & Buhalis, 2010).

India's legal framework, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD Act, 2016), Harmonised Guidelines for Universal Accessibility (2021), and the Supreme Court's Rajive Raturi judgement (2024) establishing accessibility as a constitutional right, is sufficiently comprehensive. However, the translation of these ideals to implementation is currently dependent on individual goodwill, which is disparate and fragmented.

Reasons for sporadic implementation of accessible mobility by policymakers, service providers, and the private sector is a combination of real and perceived factors:

- Viewing disability as a minority/"other" experience
- Inadequate awareness about accessibility as a core legal right
- Inadequate awareness of economic potential of accessible and inclusive mobility
- Perception that inclusive solutions are expensive, complex and out of reach
- Difficulty in changing the design of infrastructure, services and solutions already built
- Fragmented state-driven implementation and prioritisation of persons with disabilities

Pathways for Strengthening Mobility Systems

Achieving universal accessibility in public transport requires the transformation not only of infrastructure design and regulations, but of institutional and societal mindsets.

With the adoption of the Harmonised Guidelines, infrastructure policies of mobility systems are already moving beyond a welfarist framing of disability towards one that recognises the freedoms of diverse persons (including those with disabilities) and their contributions to national economic growth and social development.

Rapid technological progress including innovations driven by artificial intelligence offers expanding possibilities for functional autonomy, much as corrective lenses once did for vision impairment. Harnessing such technologies within a rights-based framework can help diverse commuters experience cost-effective and comfortable mobility, achieve their potential, and contribute meaningfully to the economy. However, this potential can only be realised when people developing and providing these technologies are truly accepting and empathic of all kinds of diverse lived realities.

Process Engineering for Systemic Respect and Goodwill

Mobility cycles for customers with disabilities include several steps, transcending physical, digital and human aspects. These include pre-trip movements, station/terminal entry, ticketing, security checks, boarding, in-vehicle interchange, and exit.

Advanced thinking in Universal Design Principles point to the importance of process – the wisdom in the experiences of living with disability. Any journey involves detailed planning to ensure that the transit is both timely and comfortable. Accessible digital flows are now an integral part of any commute, including multi-sensory journey planners with step-free routes and lift status, simple-language modes, screen-reader labels, voice prompts, and Indian language support.

Scholars working on accessible mobility recommend that system responsiveness must account for the user experience pre, during and post-transit. Such responsive solutions must also acknowledge that there are different interactions between the actors in the service experience. Some directly contact the consumer (eg., ticket counter, assistant who welcomes the passenger and helps them get into the metro train). Other aspects of the service are invisible to the user but nevertheless play a critical role in seamless and comfortable transit (eg., back office, cleaning/ maintenance operations, procurement) (Nanchen et al, 2022).

A consciousness of universal freedom, respect and goodwill must be cultivated as a foundational element of system design and service delivery. This begins with individual awareness and extends through families, communities, service institutions, public agencies and profitable enterprises. Embedding this awareness across levels of governance will lead to responsive and empathetic systems: those capable of perceiving, anticipating, and addressing diverse access needs as a matter of routine governance rather than exceptions or add-ons.

The EnAble India LIMEJOOS framework © - A New Generation Model

The EnAble India LIMEJOOS framework © of Disability Solutioning developed by EnAble India is derived from lived experiences of persons with disabilities, and is an eight-step, context-independent process to guide system designers and managers generate systems based on universal design and barrier-free access. It was used to launch the Purple Rides feature of the Namma Yatri platform.

The framework has eight steps: Listen, Immerse, Make, Engage, Just in time product, Ongoing feedback, Open Network, Sustain *(See Figure 1)*. The model results in sentient systems and processes that are consistent, complex, co-creative, and open. It uses cutting-edge technology in behavioural sciences to shift systems design thinking from mechanistic to intuitive methods of knowledge and practice. It aims to embody barrier-free accessibility in everyday system operations rather than as one-time retrofits or random acts of charity. The model points to the future integrating various open networks in infrastructure, digital resources, multi-sensorial communication and communities of users, stakeholders, and service providers in mobility systems.

Pathways for Strengthening Mobility Systems

Journey to Accessibility - The EnAble India LIMEJOOS framework ©

Eight-step process

Embody empathy, keep the customer at the centre, and foster solidarity with customers with disabilities for framework influencing transport and mobility decisions of consumers with disabilities.

LISTEN
(Voice of customers with disabilities)

IMMERSE
(Product team into customers with disabilities landscape)

Use sensory experiences and immersion techniques to innovate and validate accessibility features before scaling or city-wide deployment.

Co-design, co-create and prototype various products and services including built environment (such as pilot hubs with last-mile connectivity), operating protocols and playbooks, barrier-free digital integration and signages, last-mile connectivity maps, local language support from the location of universal freedom, for universal design and barrier-free mobility.

MAKE
(Co-create product features with customers with disabilities)

ENGAGE
(Delivery partners/ drivers to deal with customers with disabilities)

Engage with all stakeholders ***(Section 8)*** to offer a consistent, good quality, profitable disability responsive experience with creativity, respect and goodwill.

Ensure that the product/ service reaches the user in time to meet their needs.

JUST IN TIME PRODUCT

ONGOING FEEDBACK
(from customers with disabilities/ driver partners)

Keep a pulse on the experience of inclusive mobility.

Recognise that sentient, cutting-edge systems are also complex and open rather than closed, mechanical ones.

OPEN NETWORK

SUSTAIN
(have structure to sustain)

Shift the discourse on disability from one of add-ons, charity and tokenism to one of freedom, dignity and creativity.

Figure 1: The EnAble India - framework ©: Creating Disability-Responsive Public Mobility Services

Pathways for Strengthening Mobility Systems

Government-facing Recommendations

Implementation of inclusive mobility solutions whether privately run or publicly operated need scaffolding from the State. Accordingly, we lay out the following recommendations for implementation by the government from a governance, infrastructure and financial point of view:

1. **Mainstream accessibility into procurement, and design processes** of core public sector infrastructure by mandating the integration of Harmonised Guidelines, and RPwD Rules(2017)-based accessibility checklists into all government procurement (GeM) of public works like airports, metros, railways, buses and public buildings boosted by clear budget allocations for accessible design, retro fits and audits. Additionally adoption of the LIMEJOOS framework © will help to create and maintain inclusive mobility systems.

2. **Mainstream accessibility into certification protocols** as a pre-condition for issue of occupancy and completion certificate of built government and private infrastructure in compliance with Harmonised Guidelines and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) using DePWD empanelled accessibility auditors[13] and accessibility audit tools such as Satya for Digital Accessibility[14] and Yes To Access for building accessibility[15].

3. **Strengthen and operationalise Sugamya Bharat App**[16] as a one stop grievance reporting mechanism for all concerns of accessibility pertaining to infrastructure, transport and digital systems.

4. **Institutionalise disability-focused social audits** similar to social audit initiatives in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, MNREGA, and National Health Mission and use audit findings to inform budget revisions, scheme redesign, and future allocations.

5. **Implement Public Accessibility Scorecards** for services and infrastructure to benchmark performance on audits and fulfilment of process indicators such as staff training, assistive technology adoption, complaint handling speed, and feedback integration based on checklists.

6. **Mainstream Disability in Mobility DPI** States in India (Delhi[17]/Kerala[18]/ Karnataka[19]) are developing mobility/ transport stacks as digital public infrastructure for the rest of the world. Including the disability lens via the LIMEJOOS framework would help to make new solutions built on these DPIs inclusive by design.

7. **Embed disability competence and pedagogy into professional education** imparted by institutions recognised by All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) (engineering), Council for Architecture (architecture), Bar Council of India (law and legal rights), National Council of Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) must embed disability accessibility into course design and pedagogy to create a cadre of technicians, care providers, specialised in disability services and assistive technology solutions.

8. **Collect and report robust disability disaggregated and open data** in generic and mobility specific surveys by the government and private players such as Air Sewa Statistics, DGCA Air Transport Data Statistics, NSSO Domestic Tourism Survey, International Air Transport Association, Namma Yatri dashboard, and several others will help to visibilise experiences and usage by customers with disabilities, and responsive programming.

9. **Expand insurance coverage** for assistive devices by working with public and private insurers to recognise assistive devices and related services as insurable healthcare and mobility assets.

10. **Stimulate innovation in accessible mobility solutions** through programmes such as #StartUpIndia, #MakeInIndia and Atal Innovation Mission by providing financial, research and other institutional support for assistive technology and mobility, and by conducting mobility innovation hackathons to attract startups and social enterprises developing context-specific solutions.

[13] *https://depwd.gov.in/en/list-of-empanelled-web-accessibility-auditors-with-the-department-of-empowerment-of-persons-with-disabilities/*
[14] *https://chromewebstore.google.com/detail/satya-smart-accessibility/fcnoiiboceamkmiedeonedolgophnlgi?hl=en&authuser=0&pli=1*
[15] *https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.yes2accessapp&hl=en_IN*
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[17] *https://www.jica.go.jp/english/about/dx/dpi_dpg/dpi_dpg.html*
[18] *https://www.ondc.org/blog/ondc-and-kerala-govt-collaborate-to-extend-open-mobility-network/*
[19] *https://www.jica.go.jp/english/about/dx/project/detail/1569318_68029.html*

Way Forward

Mobility is more than just movement. For customers with disabilities, it allows dignity, autonomy, and the freedom to participate fully in the world around them. Persons with disabilities are earning members of families, participants in the workforce, and innovators in their own right, not a “burden” on systems and societies.

The purpose of this study has been to demonstrate that accessible mobility is an inherent freedom, a rights-based imperative and an unmissable economic opportunity. When customers with disabilities can move independently, so do many others. Moreover, most of us fall into this category at some or the other point in our lives. In fact, persons with disabilities are forerunners in new advances in physical infrastructure and public systems. Public systems that are designed on universal and barrier-free accessibility have the potential to leverage the intersecting levers of economic opportunity, human development, and rights-based governance to promote inclusion. The benefits ripple across the economy, leading to higher workforce participation, cutting-edge innovation, stronger markets for services, and joyful systems that work better for everyone.

The report has deliberately carried a forward-looking lens, prioritising solutions, good practices, and emerging opportunities for accessibility. As a result, it steers away from elaborate accounts of challenges faced by persons with disabilities in mobility contexts. This approach aligns with the authors’ intent to inform and inspire actionable change among relevant stakeholders.

While frameworks, technical standards, checklists, financial budgets, and human sensitisation will accelerate the adoption of solutions, the beginning of inclusion lies in a simple consciousness of the opportunity that inclusion unlocks. Recognising accessibility as an enabler of productivity and participation strengthens both social justice and national development outcomes.

Annexures

Annexure 1 - International Convention for Inclusive Mobility

(Disclaimer: The content has been reproduced from original documents and may not adhere to current standards of sensitive and disability-inclusive language.)

#	Treaty/ Convention	Provisions	Mandates
1	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)	Article 20: Personal Mobility	Article 20: • Ensure persons with disabilities can move freely with the greatest possible independence. • Facilitate mobility in the manner and at the time of the individual's choosing. • Ensure mobility options and services are available at an affordable cost. • Provide access to quality mobility aids, devices, assistive technologies, and live assistance. • Offer training in mobility skills to both persons with disabilities and the staff working with them. • Encourage manufacturers to produce aids and devices that account for diverse mobility needs.
2	International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO): Annex 9 - Facilitation of the Chicago Convention	Chapter 8: Two Standards and fifteen Recommended Practices that address accessibility to all elements of the air transport chain for persons with disabilities.	Standard 8.27: • When travelling, persons with disabilities should be provided with special assistance in order to ensure that they receive services customarily available to the general public. • Contracting States should take the necessary steps with aircraft, airport and ground handling operators to establish and publish minimum uniform standards of accessibility with respect to transportation services for persons with disabilities, from arrival at the airport of departure to leaving the airport of destination. • Ensure that persons with disabilities are given the information they need, in formats that are accessible to those with cognitive or sensory disabilities. • Ensure that airlines, airports and ground handling operators are in a position to give those passengers the assistance necessary for them, depending on their needs, to help them in their travel. • Coordinate training programmes to ensure that trained personnel are available to assist persons with disabilities.
			• Ensure that lifting systems or any other appropriate devices are made available in order to facilitate the movement of persons with disabilities between the aircraft and the terminal on both arrival and departure as required, where telescopic passageways are not used. • Measures should be taken to ensure that the hearing- and vision-impaired are able to obtain flight service-related information in accessible formats. • Designated points for the pick-up and drop-off of persons with disabilities at a terminal building should be located as close as possible to main entrances and/or exits. To facilitate movement within the airport, access routes should be free of obstacles and be accessible.
3	ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Transportation Vehicles, 1991 & 2016 Updated Year: 1991/2016		Subpart B: Buses, Vans, and Systems • Applies to new, used, or remanufactured buses and vans • Vehicles must have a lift or ramp and sufficient clearance for wheelchairs to reach a securement location. • Vehicles over 22 feet must have at least two securement locations; smaller vehicles must have at least one. • Doors must have minimum clear width and height. Steps and thresholds must be slip-resistant with contrasting color bands. • Signs must designate seats for persons with disabilities (including the elderly) • Handrails and stanchions must be provided to assist with maneuvering and standing. • Stop Request Controls must be within reach (15-48 inches high) and operable without tight grasping/ pinching. Subpart C: Rapid Rail Vehicles and Systems • Applies to rapid rail vehicles. • Doorways Must have a minimum clear width of 32 inches, with audible and visual warning signals required for closing doors. • Coordination between vehicle floor and station platform is required to minimize vertical and horizontal gaps (typically max 3-inch horizontal gap) • Signs must designate priority seating for persons with disabilities. • Handrails and stanchions must be provided for passenger safety and assistance. • Between-Car Barriers: Suitable barriers must be provided between cars to prevent passengers from falling into the gap.

#	Treaty/ Convention	Provisions	Mandates
4	Beijing Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the New Millennium, 2000 Year: 2000		• The central mandate is to strive for the adoption of a legally binding international convention on the rights of all people with disabilities. • Guarantee full participation and equality in society for all persons with disabilities through the elimination of discriminatory attitudes and practices, as well as information, legal and infrastructural barriers. • The declaration emphasizes moving past "expert conferences" and political initiatives that yield no real progress, focusing instead on tangible action against discrimination. • Increased allocations of resources to ensure the equal participation of people with disabilities.
5	Biwako Millenium Framework for Action 2nd Asian-Pacific Decade for Disabled Persons, 2003 to 2012 Year: 2002	Access to Built Environments and Public Transport	• The core mandate is to ensure persons with disabilities can move freely with maximum independence, allowing them to choose the time and manner of travel at an affordable cost. • Transportation systems must adhere to strict accessibility guidelines, including low-floor designs, ramps, lifts, securement bays, clear audio-visual information, etc. • Policy must move from a charity model to a rights-based approach, requiring the adoption of binding national laws and international conventions that explicitly protect against discrimination. • Accessibility requires more than just vehicles. It mandates access to quality mobility aids, assistive technology (ICT), and rigorous training for staff to provide dignified assistance. • Governments are mandated to create comprehensive national action plans and collect disability data, while ensuring persons with disabilities actively participate in decision-making processes.

#	Treaty/ Convention	Provisions	Mandates
6	Improving transport accessibility for all (ECMT, 2006) Year: 2006		ECMT (2006) lists various measures to assist ambulant disabled people on buses: • For people with impaired sight: • Clear marking of the edge of any steps (contrasting band on leading edge of steps) • Colour contrasted handrails and stanchions; • Colour contrasted bell pushes; • Audible announcements • Audible announcements at bus stops of service number/destination of next bus • Adequate space in the priority seating for guide dog. For hearing impaired people: • Visual display bus stopping • Visual display of name of next stop
7	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design Year: 2010	2010 standards for public accommodations and commercial facilities: Title III	• 28 CFR part 36, subpart D – New Construction and Alterations • (d)(2)(ii) - A terminal, depot, or other station used for specified public transportation, or an airport passenger terminal. In such a facility, any area housing passenger services, including boarding and debarking, loading and unloading, baggage claim, dining facilities, and other common areas open to the public, must be on an accessible route from an accessible entrance. • (g)(2) - In choosing which accessible elements to provide, priority should be given to those elements that will provide the greatest access, in the following order: (i) An accessible entrance; (ii) An accessible route to the altered area; (iii) At least one accessible restroom for each sex or a single unisex restroom; (iv) Accessible telephones; (v) Accessible drinking fountains; and (vi) When possible, additional accessible elements such as parking, storage, and alarms.

#	Treaty/ Convention	Provisions	Mandates
8	A Review of International Best Practice in Accessible Public Transportation for Persons with Disabilities published by UNDP, 2010 Year: 2010 Year: 2010	4.1 Design and operation of buses	• Bells should be at a height where seated passengers can reach them without moving (improving safety). • Ensure route numbers and destinations on the exterior are clearly legible, especially for night travel. • Smooth acceleration and deceleration of buses are critical to prevent falls and injury. • Prioritize low-floor buses with ramps or high-floor buses with raised platforms (level boarding). • Manual ramps hinged at the doorway are often the most reliable and cost-effective solution for low-floor buses. • Provide designated bays so users can travel without leaving their wheelchairs.
9	Manual on Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities (Doc 9984) - Published by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), 2013 Year: 2013		• Assistance for disability-related needs must be provided without charge to the person with disabilities. • The assistance provided should be seamless and uninterrupted, ensuring a comfortable and safe journey. It must also be provided in a timely manner so that passengers can make their flights. • Airports and aircraft operators should provide information on services and facilities in accessible formats and technologies. They must also ensure that airport facilities, such as check-in kiosks, information desks, and seating, are accessible. Public announcements should be made both verbally and visually. • Airports and aircraft operators should provide wheelchairs upon request. • They should not impose charges for transporting service animals and must provide sufficient space for them on board the aircraft. In the event of a lost, damaged, or delayed mobility aid, a temporary replacement should be provided at no extra charge.

Annexure 2: Profiles of Voices from the Ground

(Names of the individuals featured in these case profiles have been changed to maintain confidentiality)

Arman became a wheelchair user during college following a road accident that caused a spinal cord injury. He works as a senior executive in an NGO focused on advancing disability rights. Arman is married, and his wife assists him during long-distance travel by train and flight (approximately 8-10 times a year, mostly to visit his hometown). He has been based in Bengaluru since 2021 and travels independently using his Neobolt. He also uses the Bengaluru Metro a few times every month for leisure rides.

Hakim is a Deaf professional based in Bangalore, India, who has been traveling since the age of three. He navigates his daily commute using ride-hailing services. A passionate traveler, he is drawn to journeys that take him across mountains and oceans.

Harun is a wheelchair user with dyslexia who loves traveling. He is a frequent national and international air traveler, having taken over 200 flights, both domestic (26 states in India) and international (9 countries).

John is a person with blindness, moved to Bengaluru for job training offered by an NPO in 2011. He worked in a company for eight years before returning to the NPO as an employee. Until his marriage in 2023, he lived in paying guest accommodation. John travels, 2-4 times a year for personal purposes. He notes: “While I travel via the metro independently, having a sighted person with me when I visit a station for the first time is helpful to memorise the layout.”

Priyarshi is a wheelchair user who was affected by polio at a young age, resulting in limited strength in her hands and feet. She uses her wheelchair for mobility and lives in Bengaluru with her long-term caregiver, who has supported her for the past ten years.

Raju is a person with low vision and congenital hand anomalies. He works as a Senior Manager in an NGO focused on disability and has over a decade of experience, including representing India internationally, such as at the Workability Asia Conference in Manila, Philippines. Raju recalls, “Growing up, studying was difficult for me because the advances in digital and AI tools did not exist. I could not read regular text, and I had not been trained in Braille. I relied on audio cassettes provided by NGOs, and when these were unavailable, I depended on friends and family to read materials aloud. In college, it was much harder as any change in syllabus meant that I did not have required study materials at the right time to keep pace with my peers. But I overcame these struggles, I shifted from my rural town to Bengaluru a decade ago, learned to use computers, got a job and I train other people now.”

Reshma is a Deaf and neurodivergent professional based in Bangalore, India. She regularly commutes between her residence and workplace and is an avid solo traveler, frequently exploring different parts of India.

Santosh is an independent young adult with Down Syndrome and a strong self-advocate who dreams to open a gym. He is skilled in computer applications and wants to support his family.

Saraf, originally from Kashmir, became visually impaired in 2014 following a life-altering event that initially caused deep emotional distress, despite a childhood marked by independence and early work from the age of 13. With the support of friends and adjustment training, he rebuilt his confidence, resumed his education, and developed strong mobility and daily living skills. Today, Saraf travels extensively and independently across India for work and volunteering, using buses, trains, and flights.

Tara is a young adult with autism who has completed two successful internships with a leading multinational corporation. She strives hard to achieve her goal of being an independent person supporting her family. She is a strong willed individual and is a strong advocate for Neurodivergent individuals

Annexure 3 - Examples of Stakeholders based on their role

Stakeholders based on their Role(s)	Type of Stakeholder	Examples of stakeholders
Stakeholders drafting / upholding / driving the implementation of standards and rules	Government Ministries / Departments	Ministry of Civil Aviation - Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA); Airport Authority of India (AAI); Ministry of Railways/Metro Rail Corporations; Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment - Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD); Ministry of Road Transport & Highways; Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs implementing mobility projects
	Standard Setting Bodies	Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Quality Council of India (QCI)
	Statutory Bodies	Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD), State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD), Public Works Departments (PWD), Metro & Airports Authorities
	Judicial / Quasi-judicial Systems	High Court, Supreme Court, District Courts, Chief Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities
Stakeholders providing evidence, data and research	Policy Think Tanks	Pacta, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People, Centre for Disability Studies, NALSAR, Disability Rights India Foundation
	Independent Agencies	Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Sightsavers India, Namma Yatri, Open Data Institute, World Resources Institute India
	Government	Data.gov.in, city corporations, metro rail companies, airports authorities
	Citizen Data	Civic Data Labs, Samaaj Data, Yes to Access by Association of Persons with Disabilities, https://opencity.in/

Stakeholders based on their Role(s)	Type of Stakeholder	Examples of stakeholders
Stakeholders funding the projects	Multi laterals	World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF
	Corporates	MPhasis, LTIMindtree, Tech Mahindra, Siemens
	Philanthropy	Tata Trusts, Azim Premji Foundation, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies
	Private Equity, Insurance and Banks	All private equity firms, banks, insurance companies
	Government	City corporations, metro rail companies, airports authorities, public works departments, city transport corporations, Bharat Taxi
Stakeholders providing infrastructure / product / service	Innovators, Researchers & Incubators of Innovators	AssisTech Foundation (ATF), TTK Centre for Rehabilitation Research and Device Development (R2D2), IIT-Madras
	Private Sector creating Inclusive Products/ Experiences	Meta, Ray-Ban, iPhone, Namma Yatri, Uber, Incluzza
	Accessibility-focused Private Sector Companies	Neo-Motion, Ramp My City, V-Shesh
	Civil Society Organisations	Purple Movement, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP)
	Government, Collaboratives & Public-private Partnerships	The Ability Network (TAN) - Tech Mahindra Foundation, the Disability NGOs Alliance (DNA), Chennai Metro X v-shesh, TN Govt X NeoMotion
Stakeholders working on accountability, awareness & narrative building	Civil Society Organisations	Enable India, Association for Persons with Disabilities, Pacta
	Independent Audit agencies	V-Shesh, CABE Foundation, Atypical Advantage
	Government	DePWD, MSJE
	Press and Journalism	India Development Review, Mainstream newspapers, TV channels and Social Media handles
	Public	Members of the public and persons with disabilities

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25 Years

EnAble India

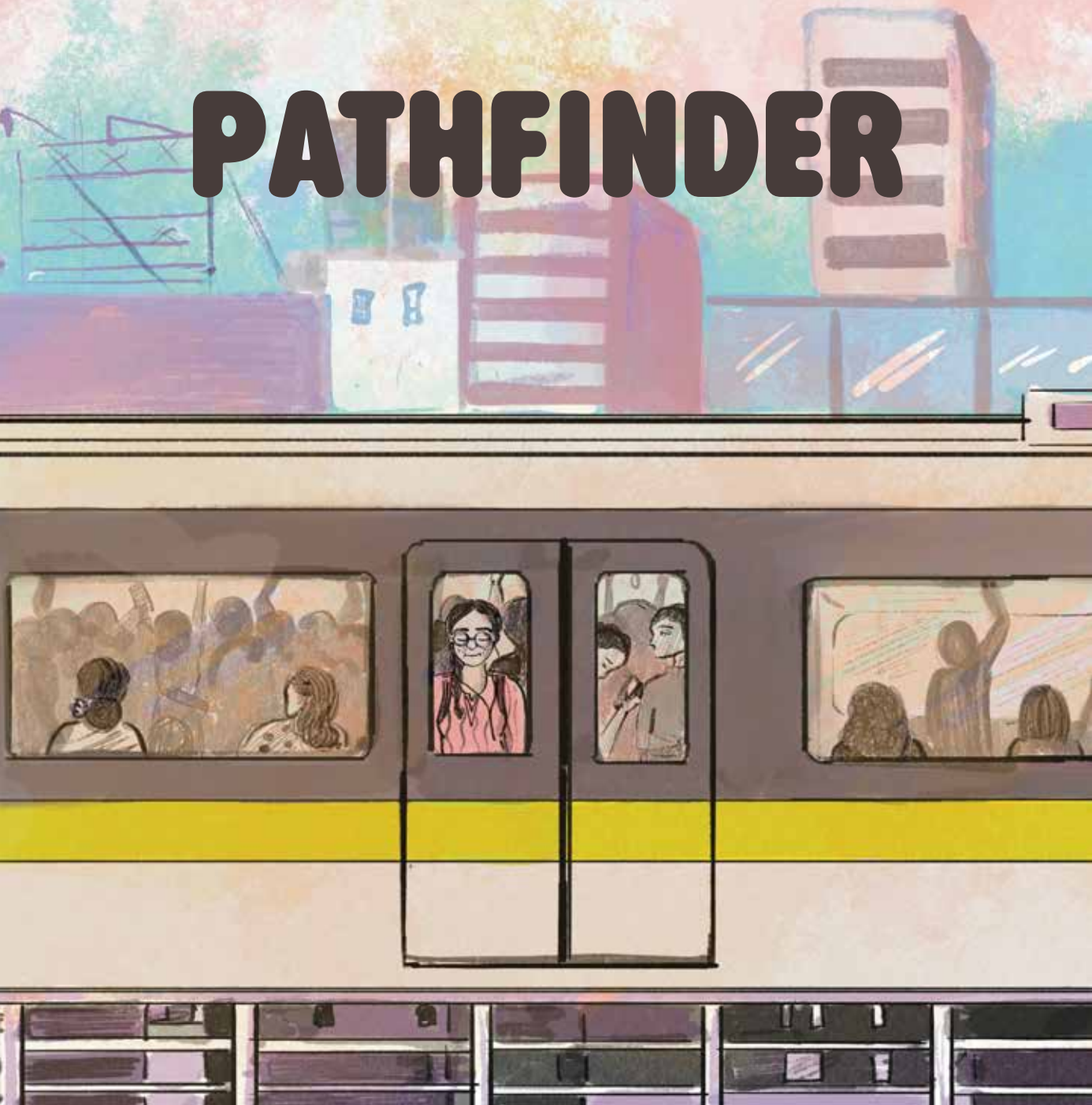
Celebration of Human Spirit

EnAble India is a pioneering organization that has played the role of a systems orchestrator—shifting the narrative around persons with disabilities from a lens of limitation to one of value and contribution.

25 Years
EnAble India
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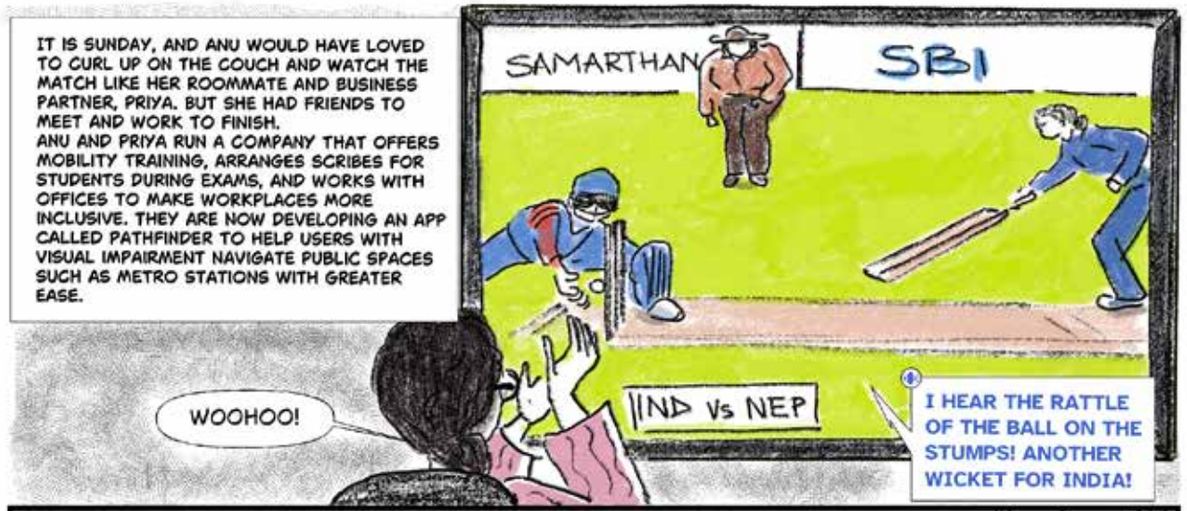


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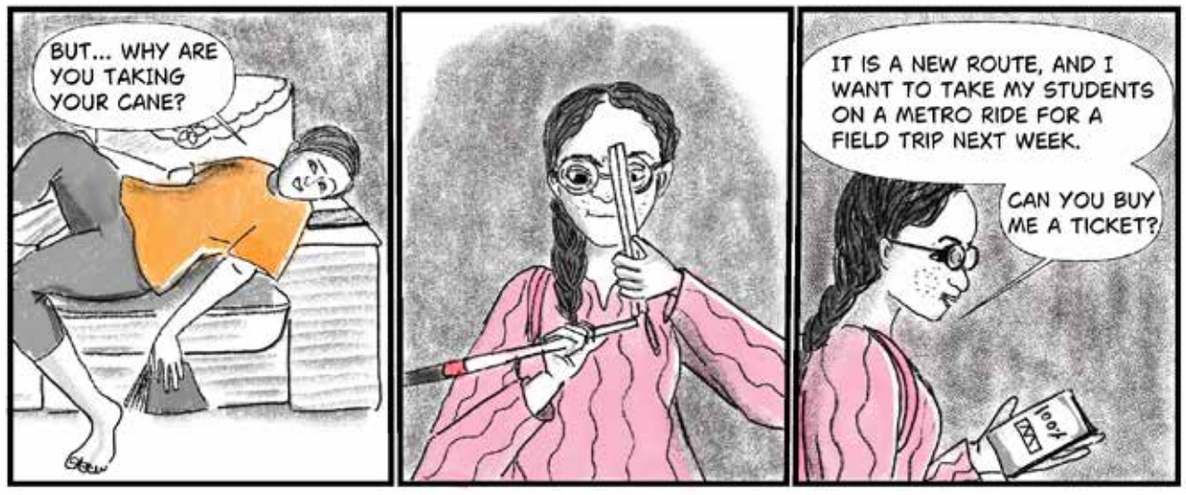
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Saisudha Acharya

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IT IS SUNDAY, AND ANU WOULD HAVE LOVED TO CURL UP ON THE COUCH AND WATCH THE MATCH LIKE HER ROOMMATE AND BUSINESS PARTNER, PRIYA. BUT SHE HAD FRIENDS TO MEET AND WORK TO FINISH.
ANU AND PRIYA RUN A COMPANY THAT OFFERS MOBILITY TRAINING, ARRANGES SCRIBES FOR STUDENTS DURING EXAMS, AND WORKS WITH OFFICES TO MAKE WORKPLACES MORE INCLUSIVE. THEY ARE NOW DEVELOPING AN APP CALLED PATHFINDER TO HELP USERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT NAVIGATE PUBLIC SPACES SUCH AS METRO STATIONS WITH GREATER EASE.







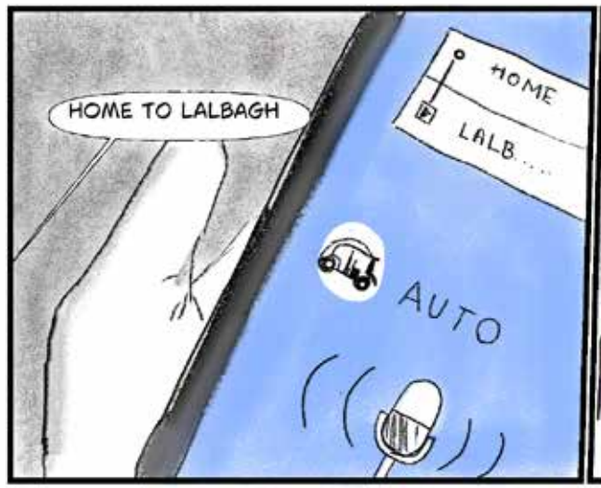




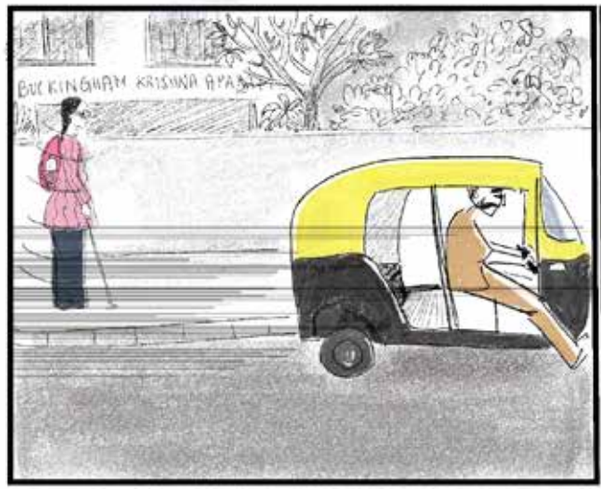




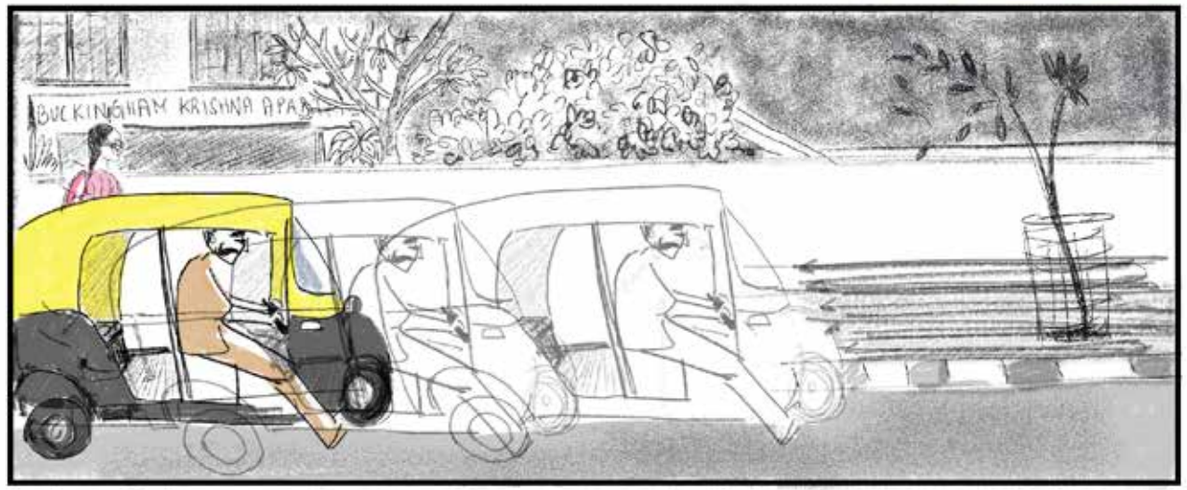
*BUN CONGRESS IS A POPULAR BAKERY ITEM AVAILABLE NEAR LALBAGH











IND Vs NEP
LIVE AUDIO CAB!

MADAM, DO YOU TAKE THE METRO REGULARLY?

YES! IT'S EASIER THAN TAKING THE BUS FOR ME.

DO YOU TAKE AUTOS TO GET TO THE STATIONS?

YES! BUT SOMETIMES THEY CANCEL WHEN THEY SEE ME!

CALL ME WHEN YOU ARE IN THIS AREA, MADAM! I AM 'NO CANCEL NAGARAJ'!

HEHE! THANK YOU!

HERE WE ARE!

ಸ್ಯಾಂಡಲ್ ಸೋಪ್ ಫ್ಯಾಕ್ಟರಿ
SANDAL SOAP FACTORY

401K

GOLD LOANS

KA-00

OOPS, WHY DID THE TACTILE TRACK END SUDDENLY?

LIF

EXCUSE ME! WHERE IS THE LIFT?

THERE! TO YOUR RIGHT...

WHY IS IT SO DARK HERE?

I CAN'T SEE AT ALL!

OUR APP COULD MAKE IT SO MUCH EASIER TO FIND THE LIFT OR RESTROOM AND READ SIGNS!

Notes for Priya

LIFT

THE LIFT IS 5 STEPS TO YOUR RIGHT

W

YOU HAVE ARRIVED AT THE WOMEN'S RESTROOM

SILK 1 INSTITUTE

TRAIN TO SILK INSTITUTE ARRIVES AT PLATFORM 1, TAKE THE ELEVATOR TO YOUR LEFT

KEEP WALKING STRAIGHT TO THE SECURITY GATE

ALMOST TRIPPED OVER THIS PIECE OF PAPER! THE TACTILE TRACK WOULD FEEL SAFER IF IT WERE ALONG A WALL!

THE QR TICKET IS GOING TO MAKE THE GATE A BREEZE!

EXCUSE ME!

CLINK! CLINK

THAT'S MY BAG!

I WAS TRYING TO HELP YOU! I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO SEE IT, SO I PICKED IT UP FOR YOU!

OH, YOU DIDN'T NEED TO. IT HAS A BELL.

CLINK!

THAT IS A REALLY GOOD IDEA!

SHARING LIVE LOCATION

SEND PRIYA MY LIVE LOCATION

PRIYA

THE SIGNAGE IS SO BLURRY! WISH IT HAD HIGHER CONTRAST!!

MADAM, WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?

LALBAGH

I'LL SHOW YOU THE WAY TO THE LIFT

THANKS!

1 ವಾಗಸಂದ್ರ ಕಡೆಗೆ

Nagasandra

ಕಡೆಗೆ

Silk Institute

THE SECURITY GUARD HELPED ME JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT... SHE DIDN'T OVERSTEP. HELP LIKE THAT IS ALWAYS WELCOME!

GASP!

DON'T WORRY, MA, I WILL TAKE YOU. WHICH PLATFORM?

PLEASE STEP BACK, I CAN GO ON MY OWN

IF I NEED HELP, I WILL ASK

↓ LIFT

ANU STAYS ON THE TACTILE FLOORING AND FOLLOWS THE SOUND TO WHERE MOST PEOPLE ARE STANDING. GUARDS TEND TO STAND NEAR THE CROWD, AND IT IS SAFER FOR ANU THERE.

IS THE LADIES' COACH FAR FROM HERE?

YES, IT IS A LONG WALK... LET'S GO TOGETHER

KEEP OFF

IT WOULD BE NICE IF OUR APP MENTIONED THE TRAIN TIMINGS AND THE DISTANCE TO THE LADIES' COACH.

Notes for Priya

2 MIN

ANOTHER 10M TO THE LADIES COACH

LADIES

TRAIN TO SILK INSTITUTE ARRIVES IN 2 MINS

PRIORITY COACH.

IT WOULD BE GREAT IF THE PRIORITY COACH CAME TO A STOP RIGHT OUTSIDE THE LIFT.
IT WOULD MEAN WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO MAKE OUR WAY THROUGH THE CROWD.
WE COULD STEP OUT OF THE LIFT, WALK UP TO THE PLATFORM AND WAIT THERE FOR OUR TRAIN.

SHOULD WE START A PETITION?

CAN YOU HOLD THE DOOR A LITTLE LONGER?

I'LL TAKE CARE MADAM!

UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, METRO STAFF CAN MANUALLY OVERRIDE THE DOOR CLOSING TIME.

MIND THE GAP

WHERE IS THE RESERVED SEATING?

PRIORITY SEATING

EXCUSE ME, THAT IS RESERVED FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

SORRY!

SHHH.. DON'T BE NOSEY!

IS THAT YOUR MAGIC WAND?

YES. I CAN TURN YOU INTO A LITTLE PUMPKIN WITH THIS

THAT HAPPENS ONLY IN FAIRY TALES!

HAHA, YOU ARE RIGHT, SMARTYPANTS. I CAN'T SEE CLEARLY, AND THE CANE HELPS ME FIND MY WAY IN UNFAMILIAR PLACES.

OH, I SHOULD BUY ONE FOR MY FATHER. HE CAN'T SEE TOO WELL. DO YOU KNOW HOW HE CAN LEARN TO USE IT?

WE RUN MOBILITY CLASSES AND WE DO HAVE SOME SENIORS WHO JOIN US

OH, I DIDN'T EVEN THINK OF THAT AS AN OPTION. THANK YOU!

HERE IS OUR CARD!

ALSO, HOW MANY STOPS TO LALBAGH?

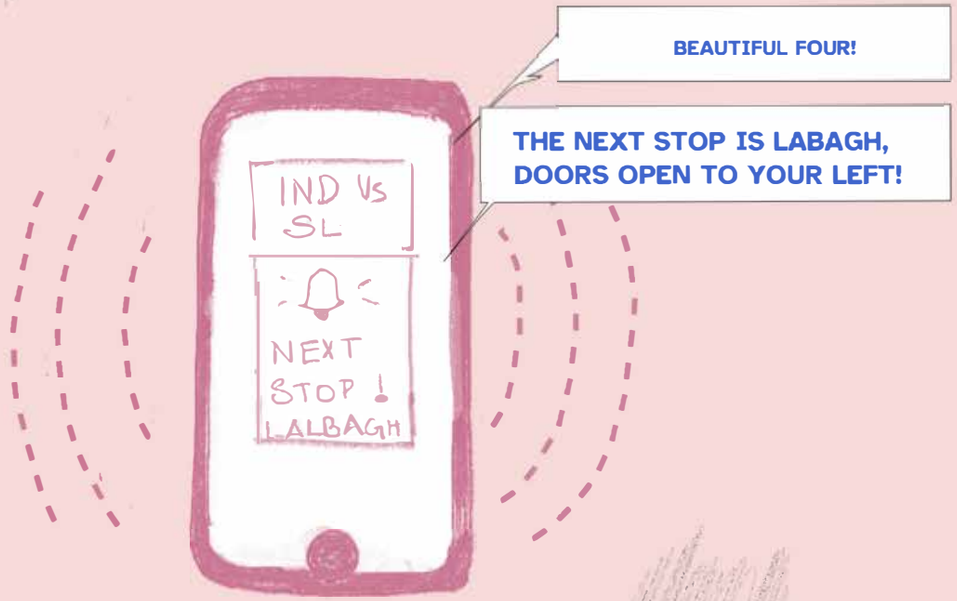
WE'RE GETTING OFF THERE TOO, I'LL TELL YOU ONE STOP BEFORE

IND Vs NEPAL

CABI

LIVE











** THAATHA IS THE TAMIL WORD FOR GRANDFATHER*



*BUN CONGRESS IS A POPULAR BAKERY ITEM AVAILABLE NEAR LALBAGH

A Note of Thanks

A big thank you to Sushant Gajula, a bright young law graduate passionate about accessibility and disability rights, who took the time to speak with us about his experiences navigating the metro. The rich insights he shared shaped the core of this comic.

We would like to acknowledge the Reframing Disability newsletter run by Preeti Salian, which offers nuanced first-hand accounts by persons with disabilities.

This comic was also informed by "Study of Challenges Faced by Visually Impaired Persons in Accessing Bangalore Metro Service", a study conducted by Samarthanam Trust and Namma Metro to understand the challenges faced by persons with visual impairment in accessing Bangalore Metro services.

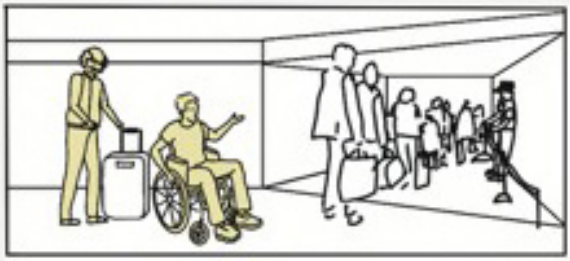
Several interview transcripts of persons with visual impairment from Pacta's archives further contributed to this work.



Arjun takes his father on an airplane

(Current)







Hello Mr. Arjun. I am Vivek, here to assist you with boarding the flight today.





Oh this is some efficient assistance. You sent a message on that WhatsApp group thing didn't you?

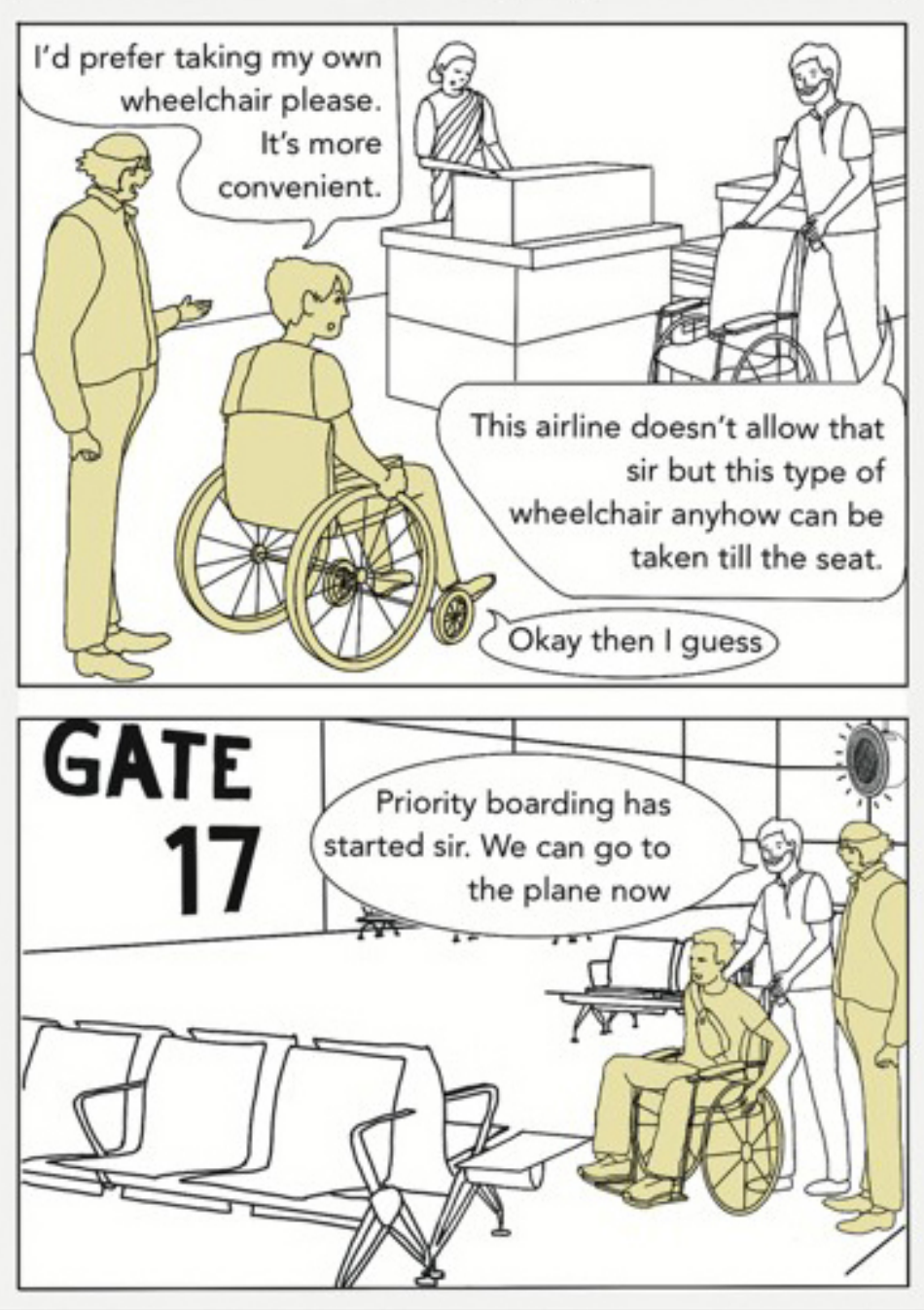
Haha yes pa. Feels like a secret access doesn't it? But there are already some systems in place for assistance. Just that not everyone knows about it.

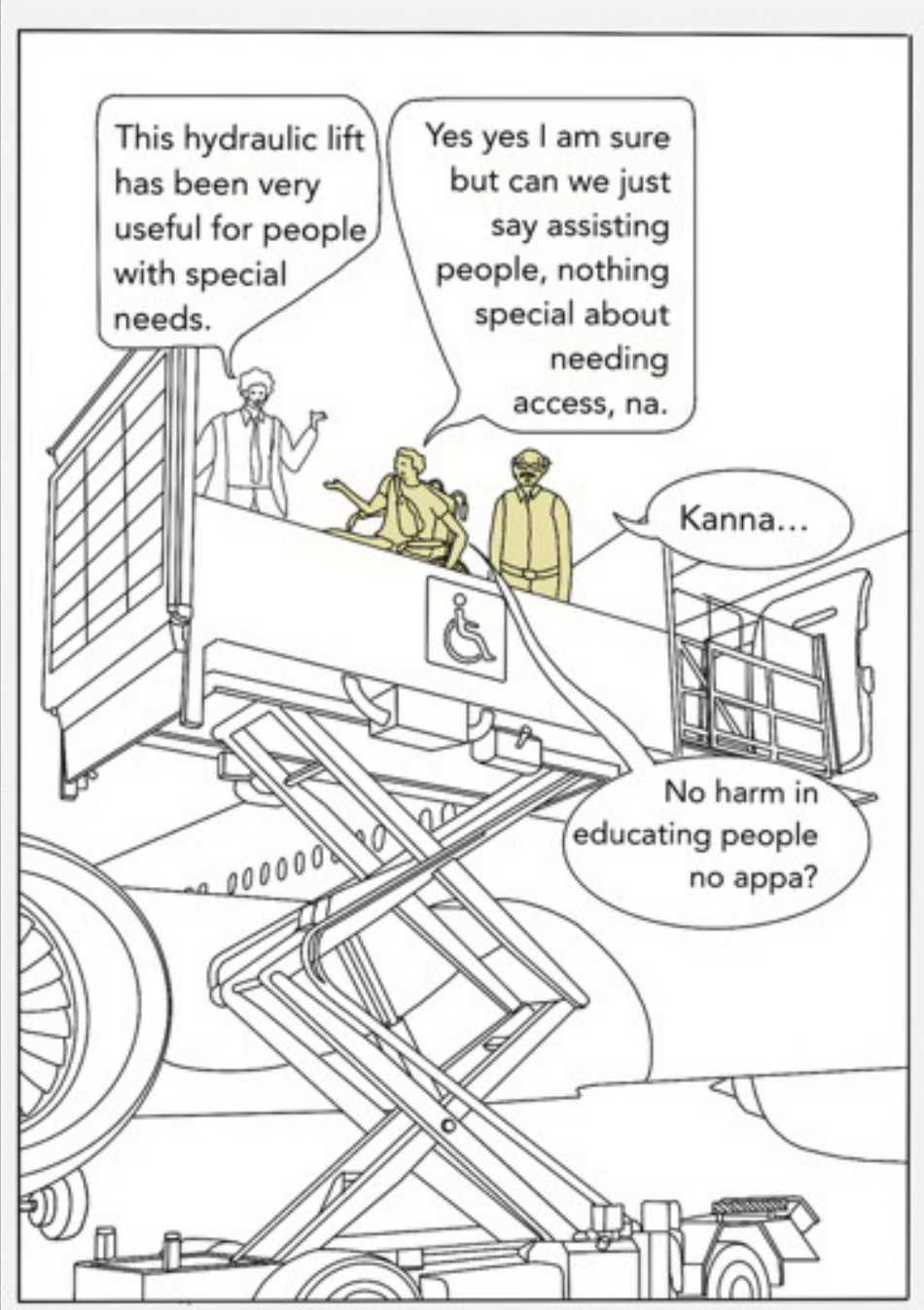


Bags are checked-in sir.

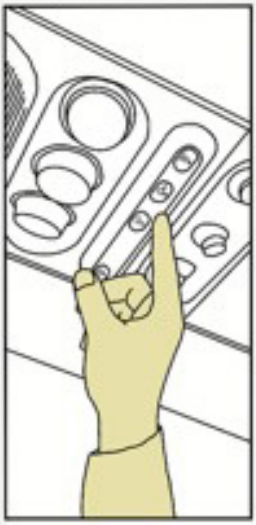


You'll have to check-in your wheelchair as well here and can take the airlines's wheelchair. You can collect it back from baggage once you land.


I'd prefer taking my own wheelchair please. It's more convenient.
This airline doesn't allow that sir but this type of wheelchair anyhow can be taken till the seat.
Okay then I guess
GATE 17
Priority boarding has started sir. We can go to the plane now


This hydraulic lift has been very useful for people with special needs.
Yes yes I am sure but can we just say assisting people, nothing special about needing access, na.
Kanna...
No harm in educating people no appa?

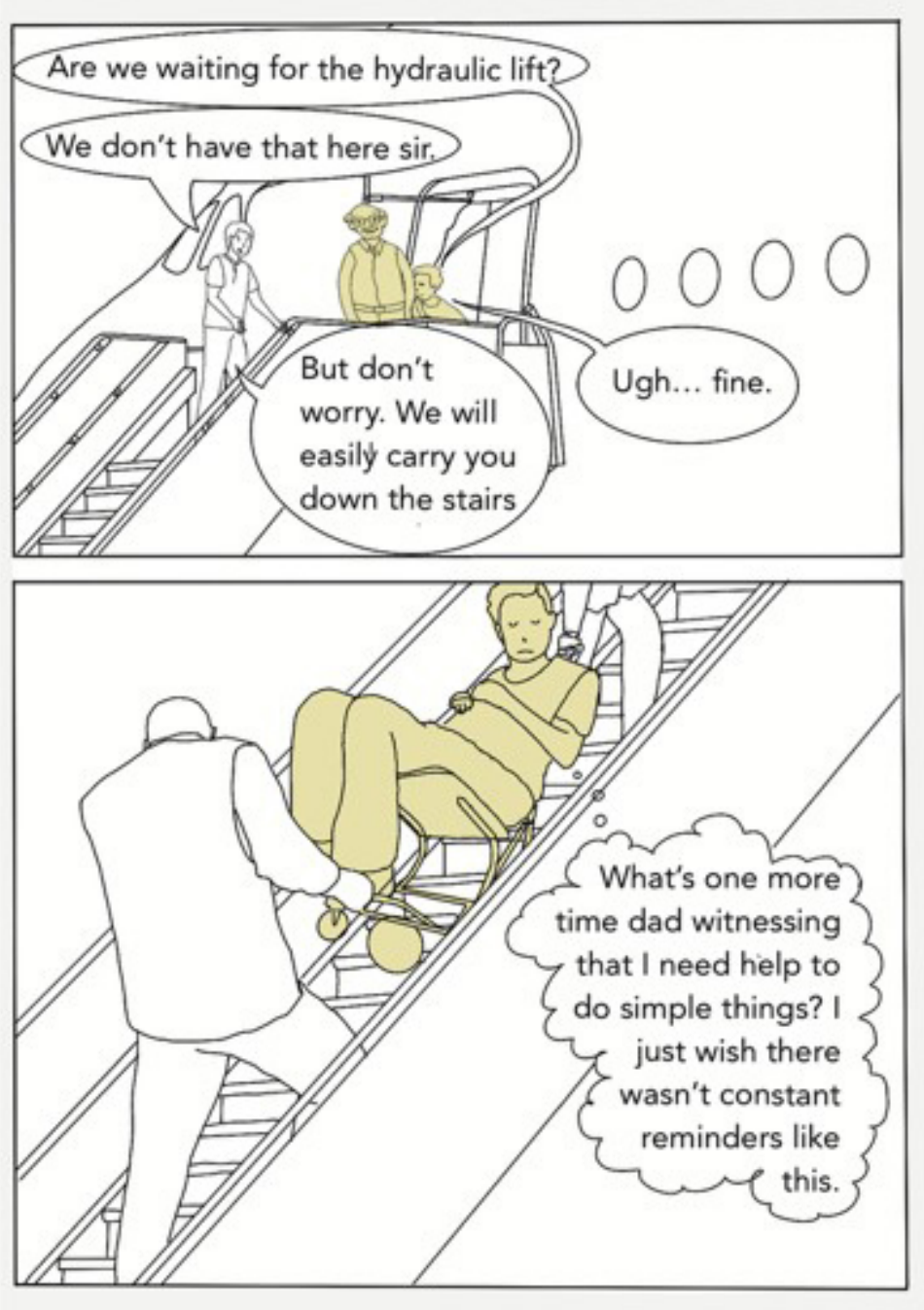

How can there be no better way to do this still??
I'm fine pa, it is not that big a deal
I can't reach the flight attendant button, can you press it for me please?




What could you have done if I wasn't here?
I manage to get help now and then. It's chill pa, haha.



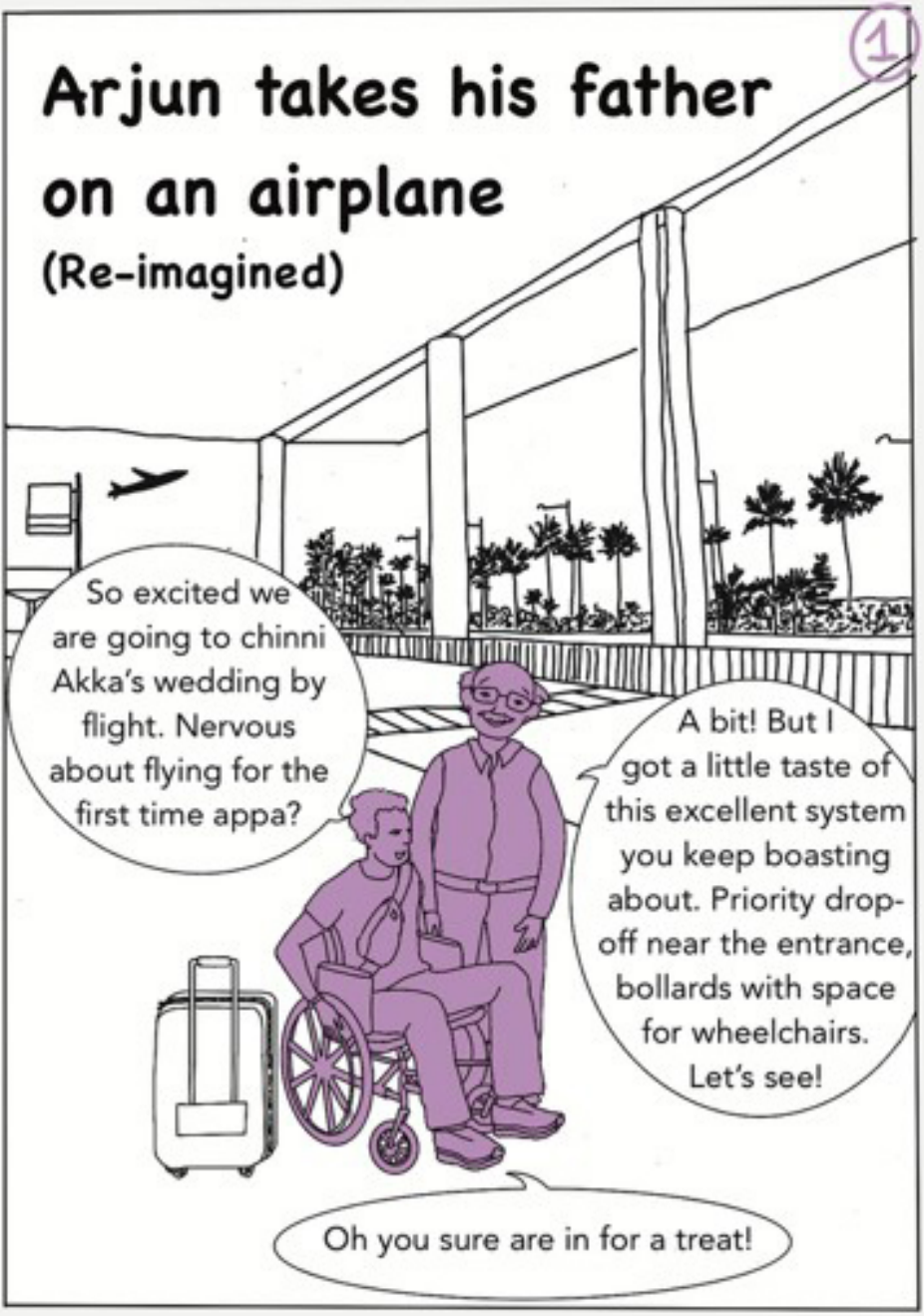

Sir if you could just step into the wheelchair please.
How can you ask such a thing to someone who can't even move their legs!?.
Appa it's okay, calm down. I am sure they don't mean to be insensitive.
And sir can you please call one more person so the two of you can help me transfer to the wheelchair?


Are we waiting for the hydraulic lift?
We don't have that here sir.
But don't worry. We will easily carry you down the stairs
Ugh... fine.
What's one more time dad witnessing that I need help to do simple things? I just wish there wasn't constant reminders like this.


agagge
The in-flight one isn't accessible, I'll use the one here before leaving. You won't believe it, my friend doesn't drink water at all while travelling and even wears diapers because of this.
Hey you didn't use the restroom in the flight too, don't you need to go?
I am informing atthai that we won't be there in time for the muhurtham
Sit down for a bit pa, sometimes it takes 30-45 mins to get my wheelchair back. Hopefully it's not damaged like the last time.
Is this how it is for you every time you take a flight?
Mmm.. have seen better and worse.
Look appa, I know there were some issues today but I am managing aren't I?

Arjun takes his father on an airplane

(Re-imagined)



Oh don't you have to message that exclusive group chat for assistance?

Nope! You can now book for assistance right from their usual helpline & website.

This way it's easy access for everyone. And can book for specific mobility needs.

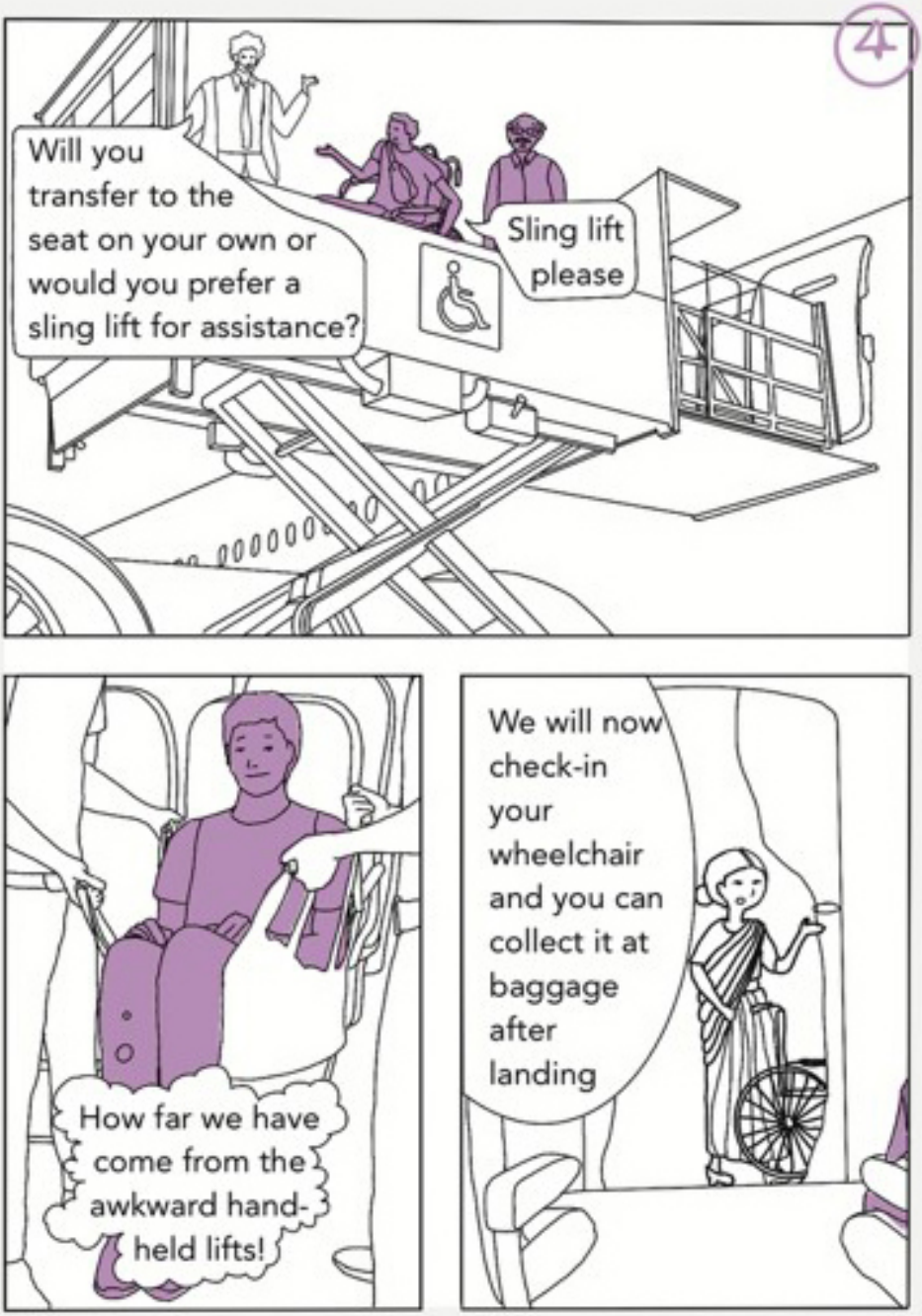


Hello sir, the bags are checked in.

Would you like to use your own wheelchair till the seat or switch to our airline's wheelchair?

I'd like to use my own and check that in later please.

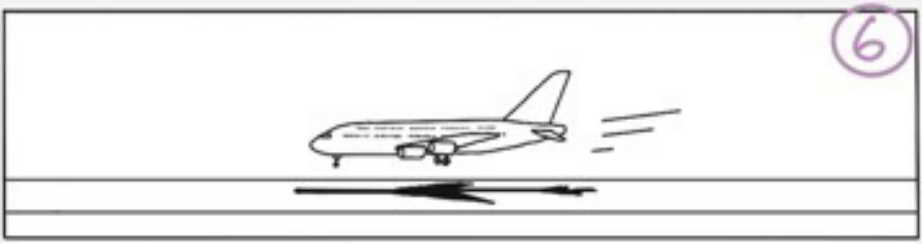

GATE 17
Sir they are starting priority boarding now but we still have time to make a restroom stop on the way if you want to
Yes please. Thanks for asking.
Them asking first sure does make it easier for me to take up their time.


4
Will you transfer to the seat on your own or would you prefer a sling lift for assistance?
Sling lift please
How far we have come from the awkward hand-held lifts!
We will now check-in your wheelchair and you can collect it at baggage after landing


Let me double-check your belt.


Oh oh!
And I can request for some nice refreshments for you, thanks to this remote bell. A simple solution without any changes to the aircraft!


Feels good to be able take care of him like he has done for me all these years!




Ready to go sir? We'll transfer you to our wheelchair for now.


Oh they made the main exit only into a ramp!


This makes it easier for everyone including elderly people and for t. taking carry-on luggage with wheels.


agagge
Here you go sir. Your personal wheelchair.
Wow. That was quick!
Smooth sailing from start to finish!

If the traffic gods shine down on us like the airport gods did, we should have no problem making it well before the muhurtham time.

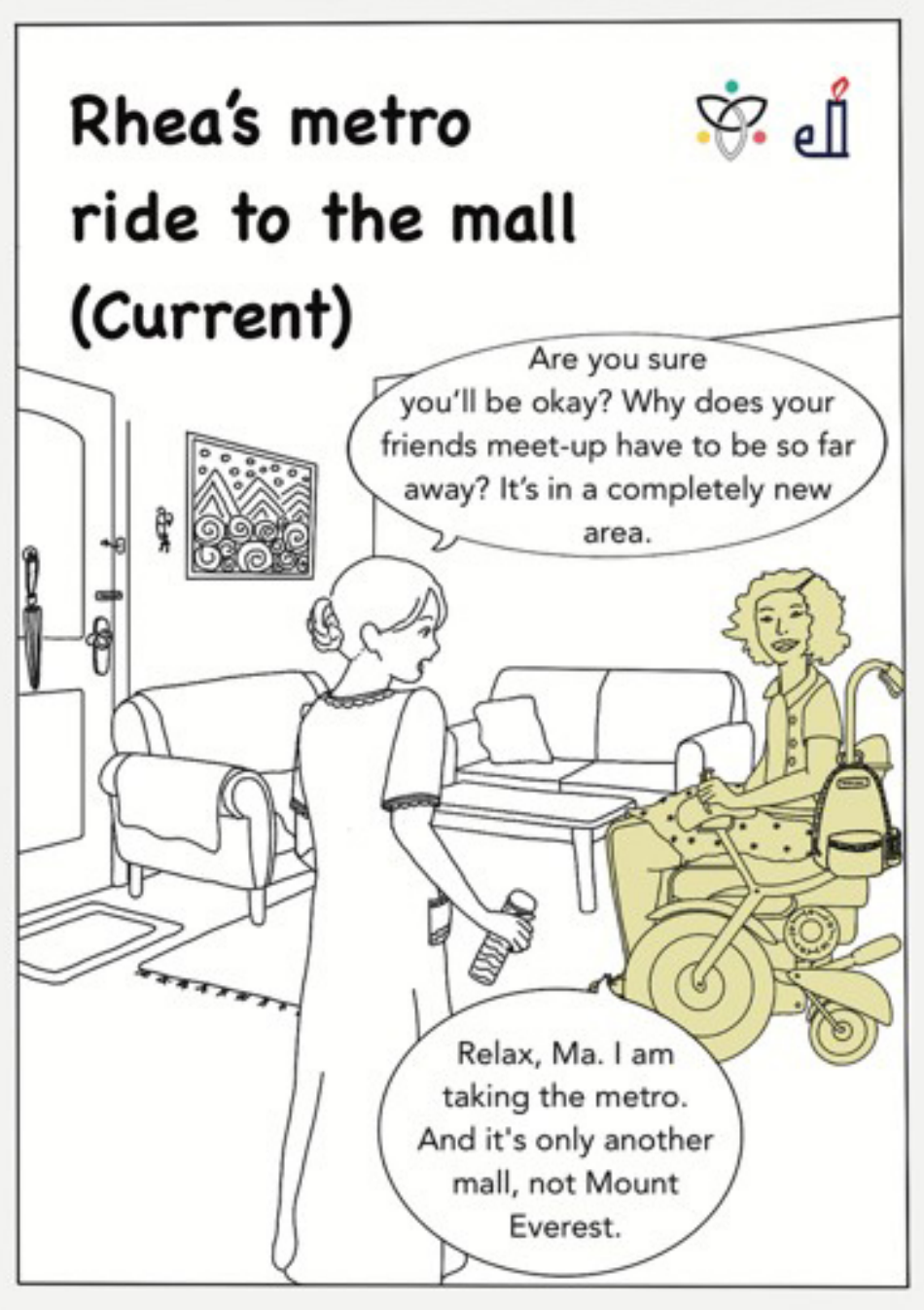
Now that you have seen the service, we can bring Amma next time? What do you say?

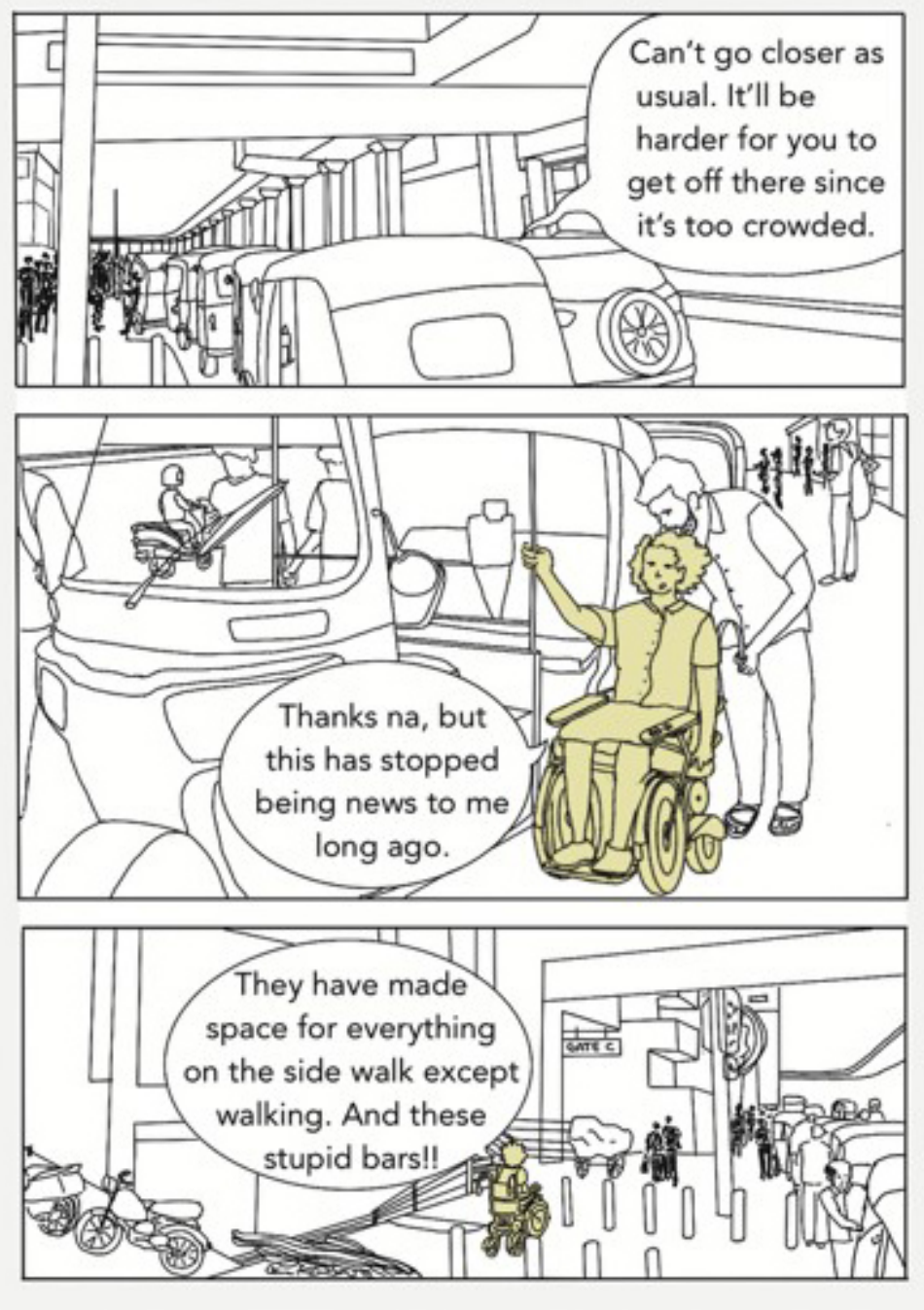
Haha poda*. I am actually thinking where I can take her next by myself, now that I know I will have the support I need incase I am unable to tend to her!



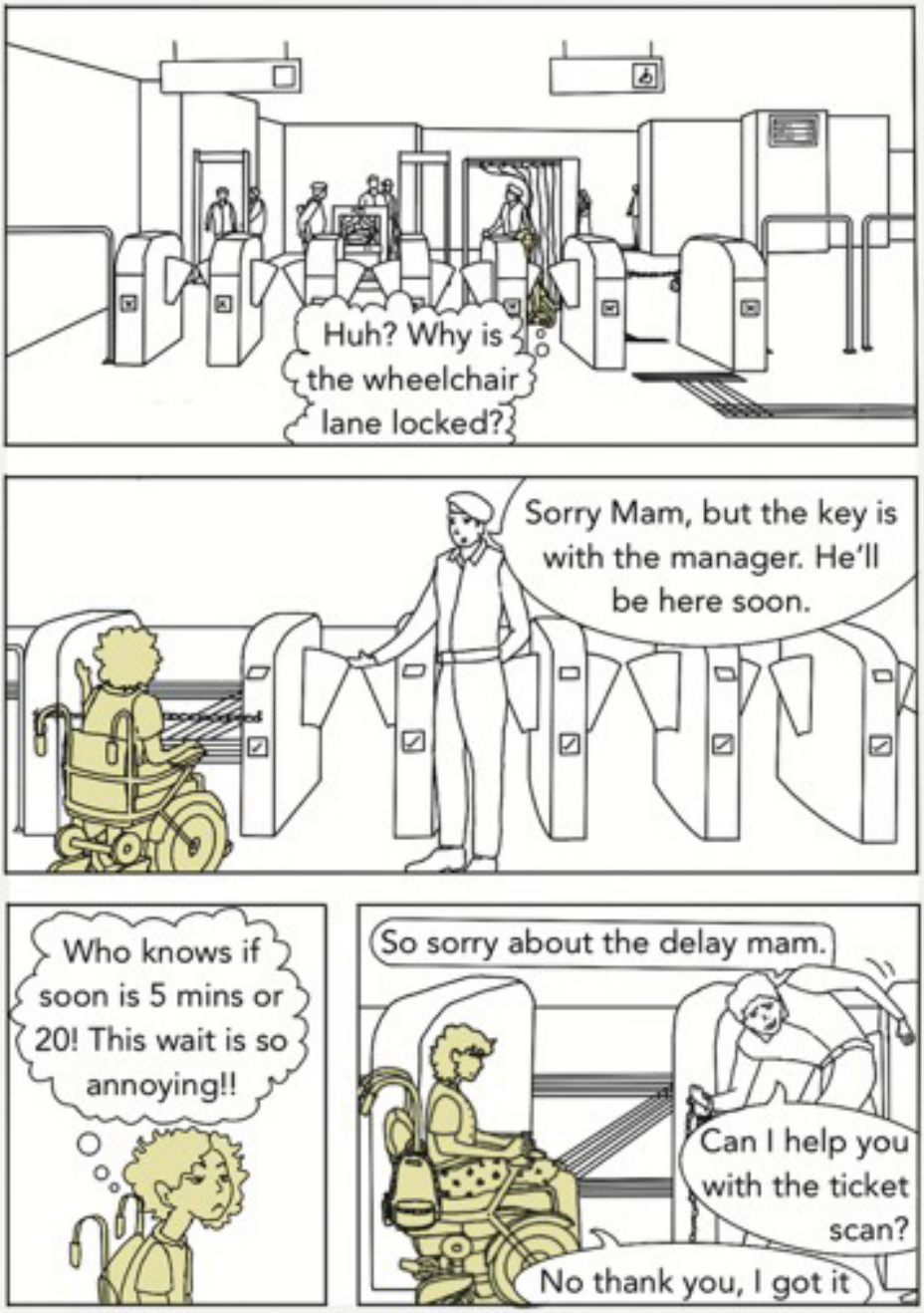
*An endearing way of saying buzz off in Tamil

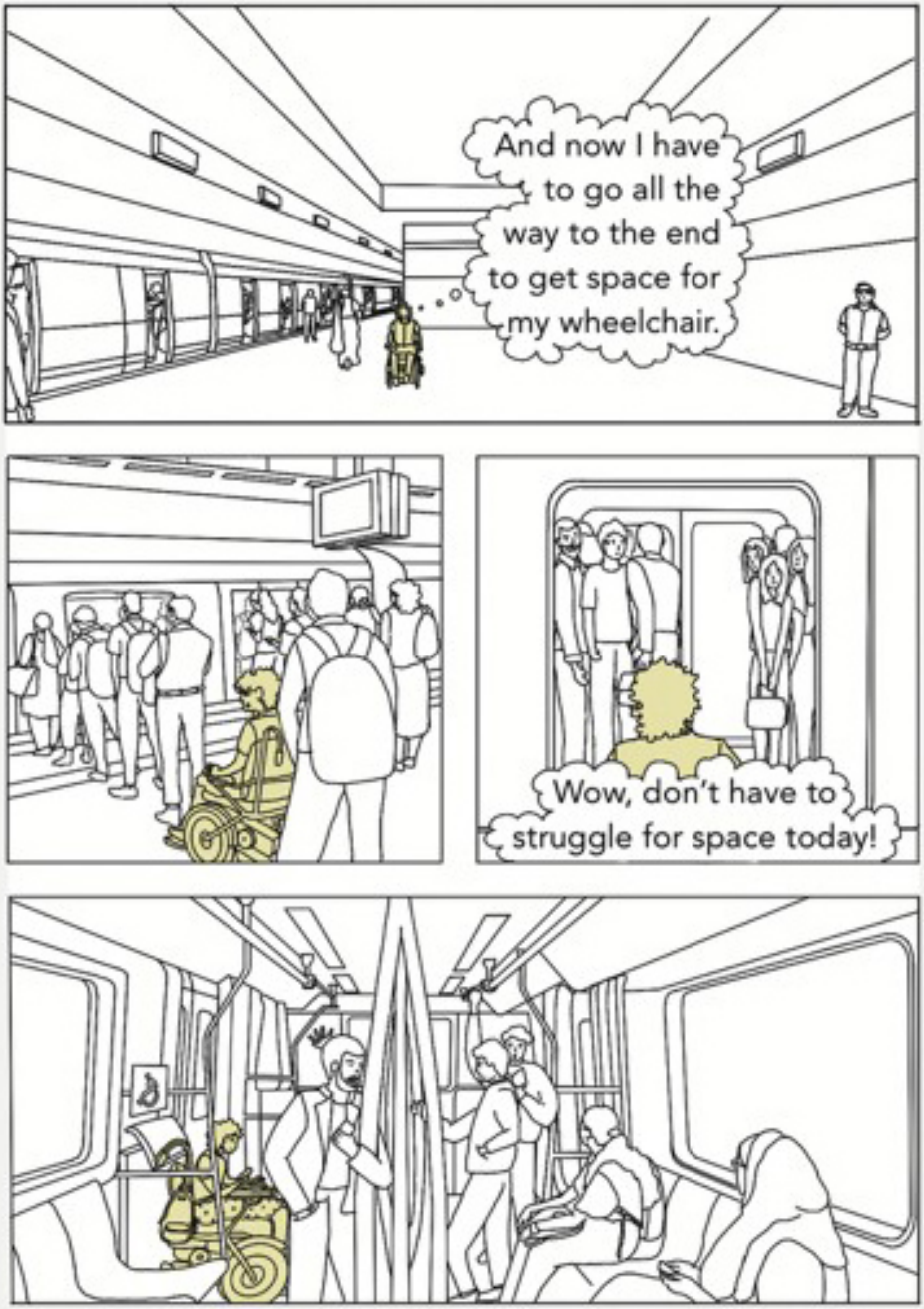
Rhea's metro ride to the mall (Current)

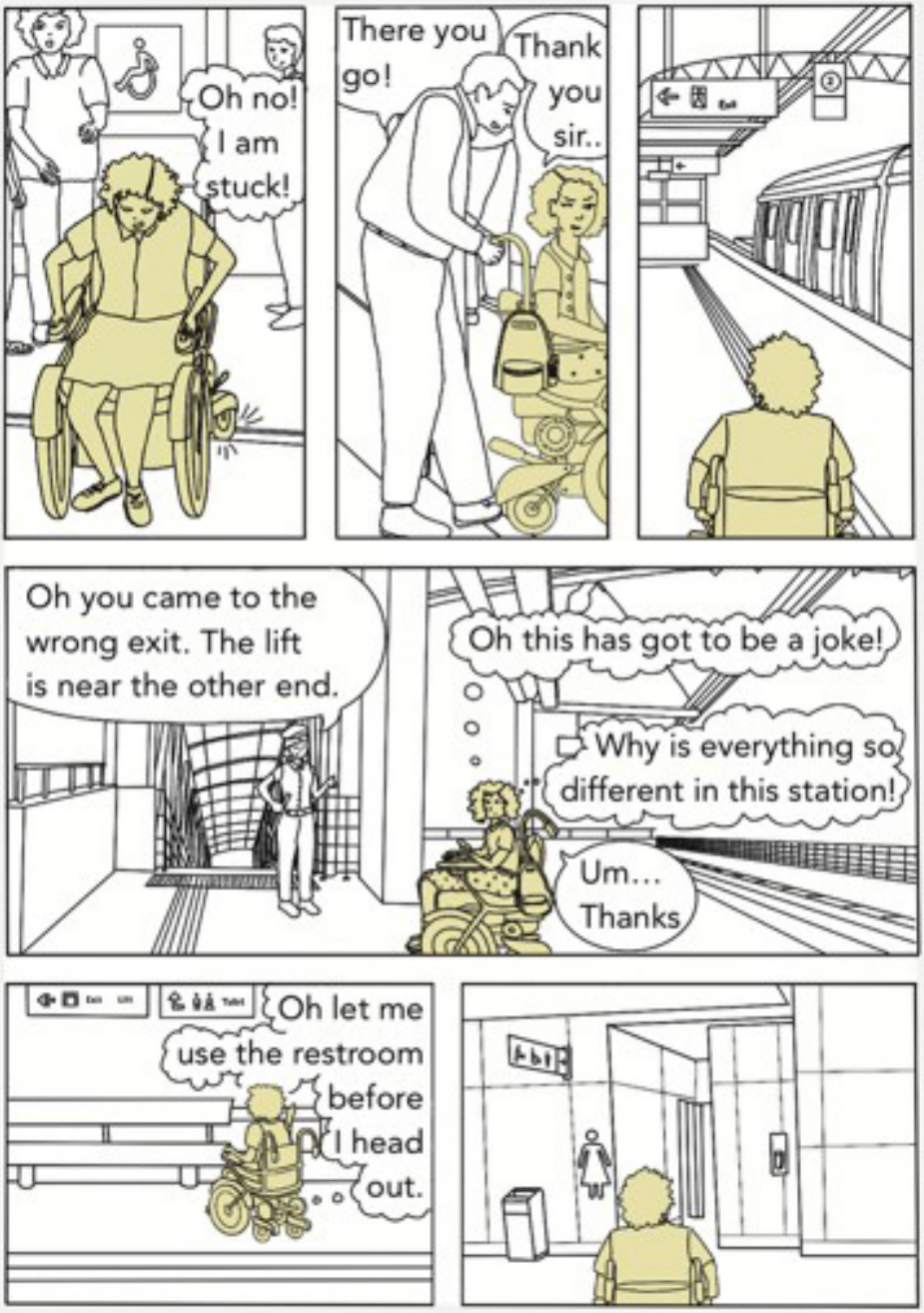



Can't go closer as usual. It'll be harder for you to get off there since it's too crowded.
Thanks na, but this has stopped being news to me long ago.
They have made space for everything on the side walk except walking. And these stupid bars!!
GATE C

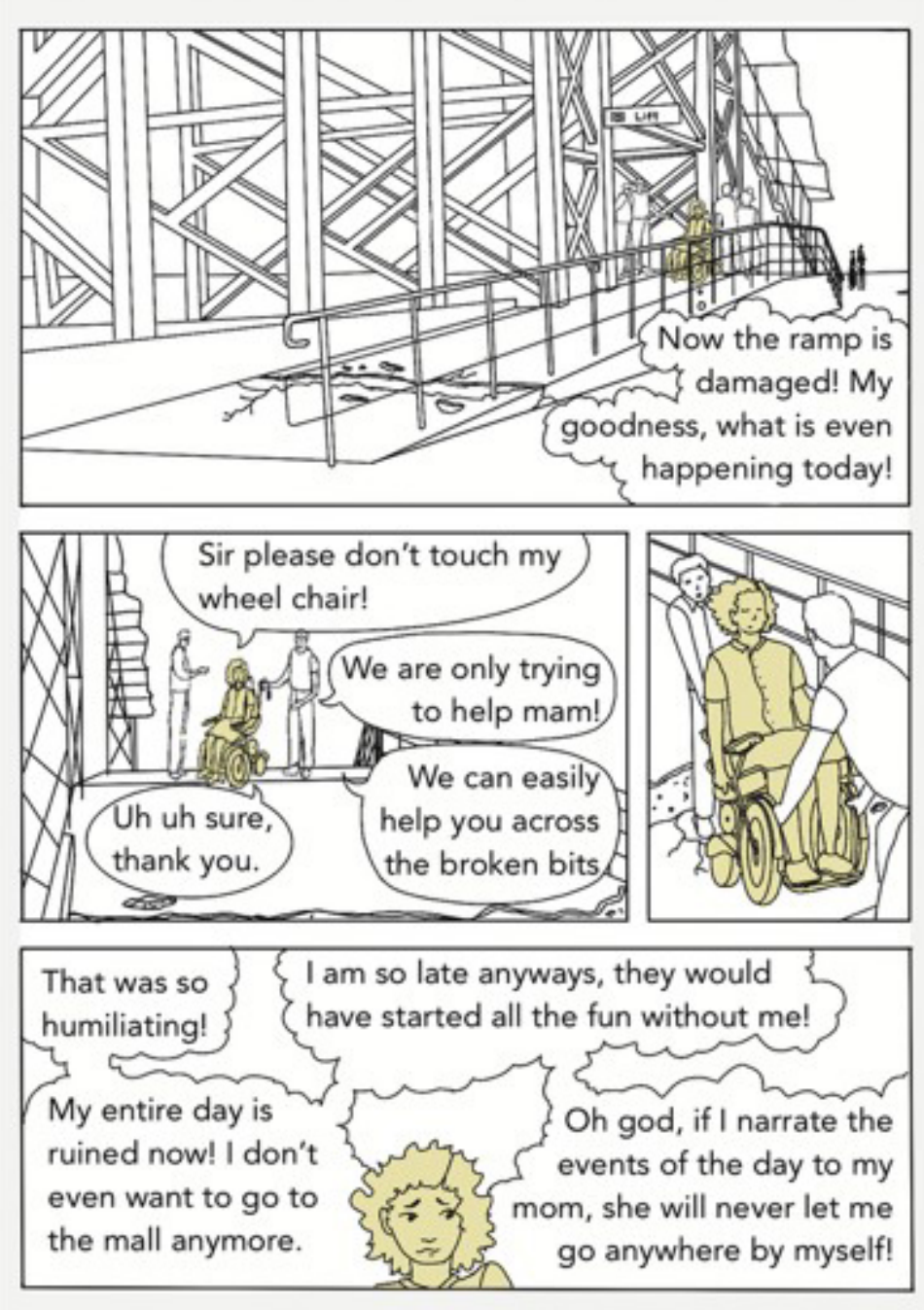

Rhea tries reaching for the lift buttons but they are placed too high!
Ugghhh!!
Umm...
Sigh
Good thing I know not to trust the system and keep my handy stick.


Huh? Why is the wheelchair lane locked?
Sorry Mam, but the key is with the manager. He'll be here soon.
Who knows if soon is 5 mins or 20! This wait is so annoying!!
So sorry about the delay mam.
Can I help you with the ticket scan?
No thank you, I got it


And now I have to go all the way to the end to get space for my wheelchair.
Wow, don't have to struggle for space today!

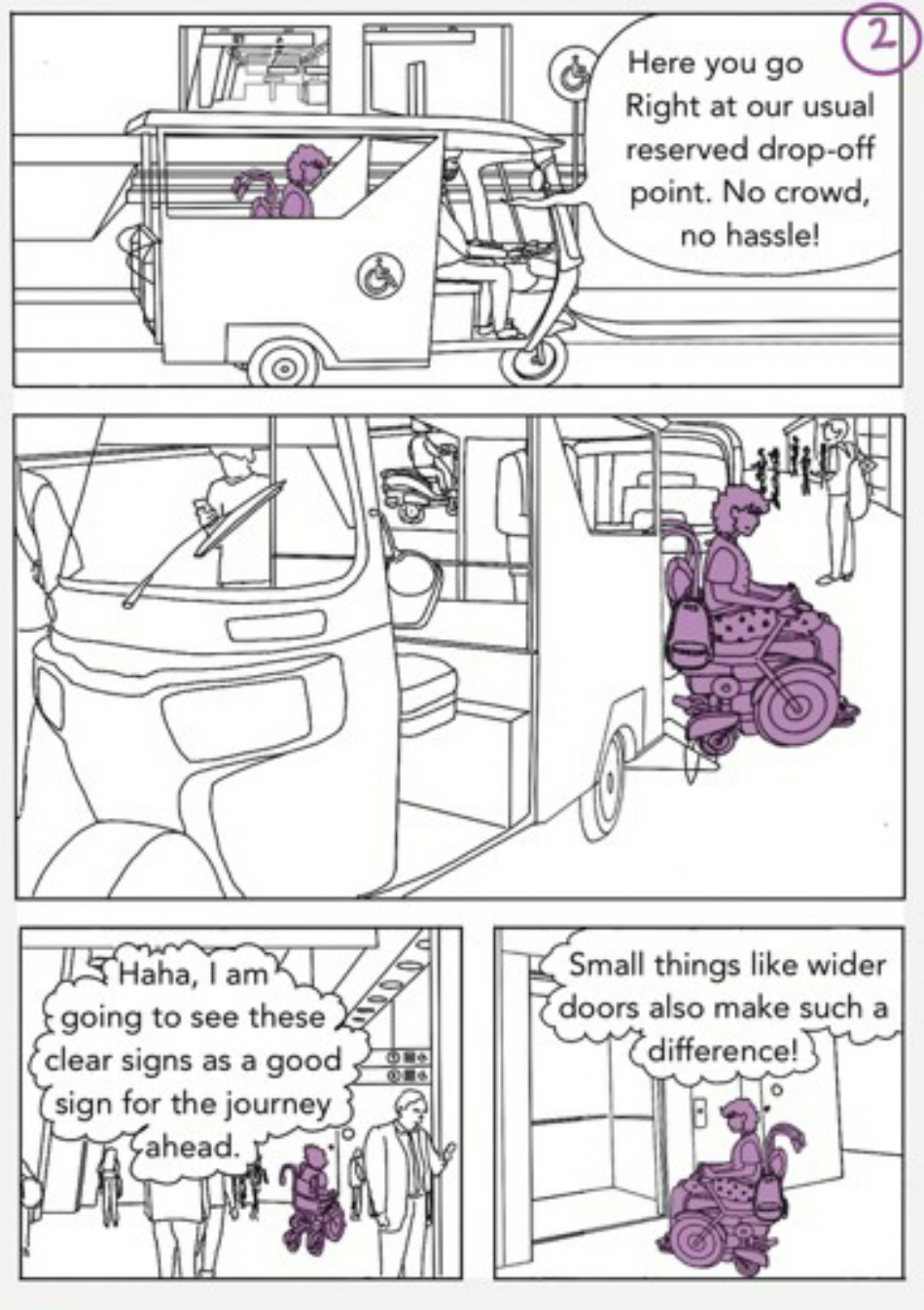

Oh no! I am stuck!
There you go!
Thank you sir..
Oh you came to the wrong exit. The lift is near the other end.
Oh this has got to be a joke!
Why is everything so different in this station!
Um… Thanks
Oh let me use the restroom before I head out.

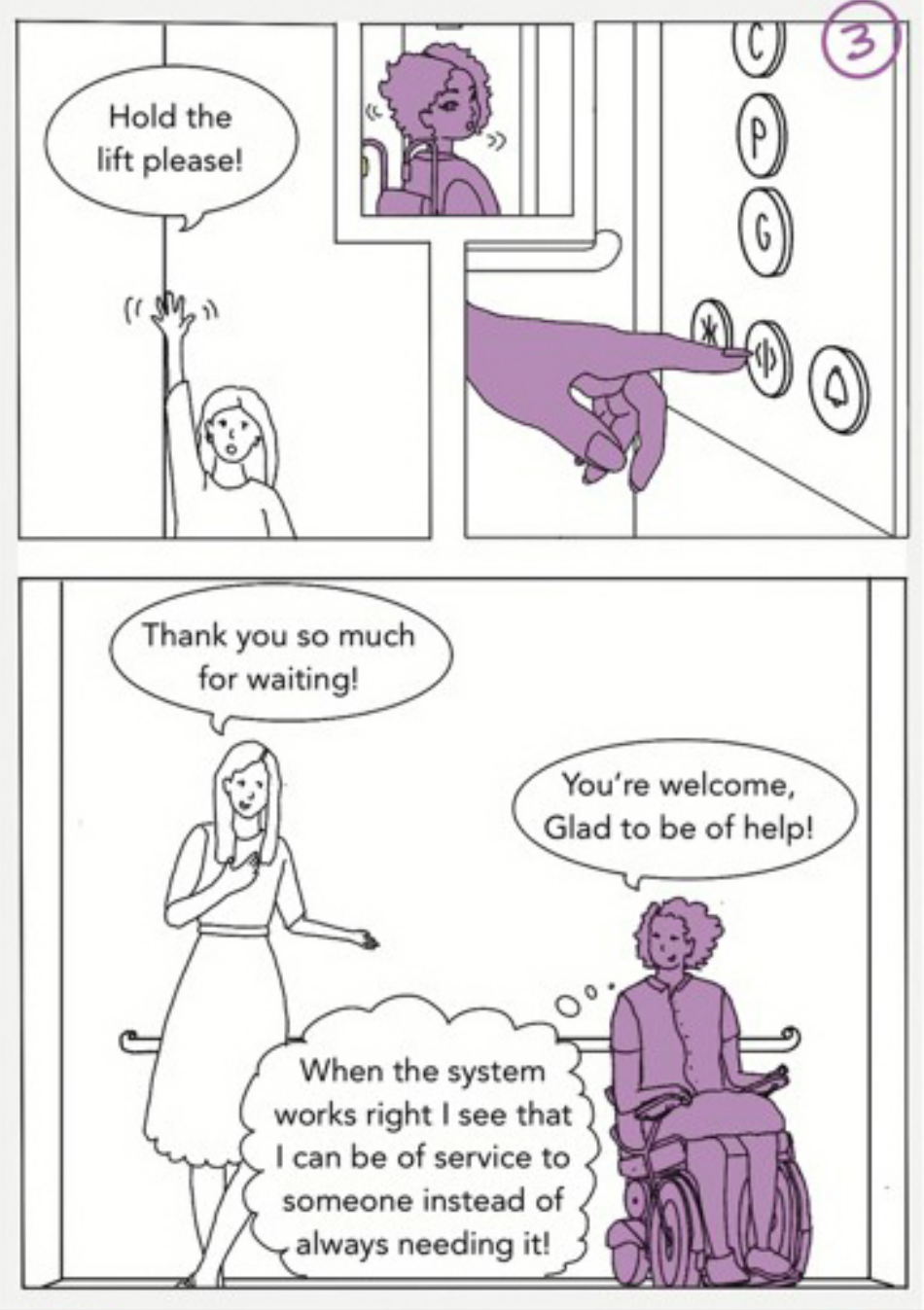

Noooo! The door is too narrow for me to close the door with the wheelchair!
Uhh... I can stand guard for you.
That's okay thank you but I'll try elsewhere
Privacy apparently not included in accessibility.


Now the ramp is damaged! My goodness, what is even happening today!
Sir please don't touch my wheel chair!
We are only trying to help mam!
We can easily help you across the broken bits
Uh uh sure, thank you.
That was so humiliating!
I am so late anyways, they would have started all the fun without me!
My entire day is ruined now! I don't even want to go to the mall anymore.
Oh god, if I narrate the events of the day to my mom, she will never let me go anywhere by myself!

Rhea's metro ride to the mall (Re-imagined)

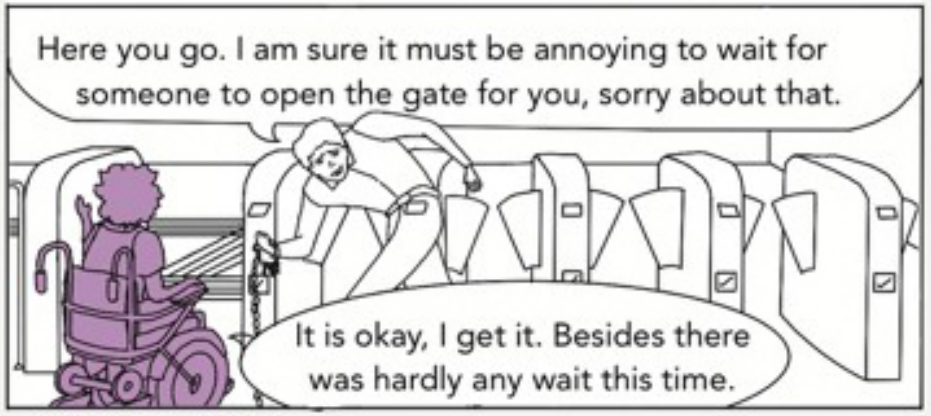



2
Here you go Right at our usual reserved drop-off point. No crowd, no hassle!
Haha, I am going to see these clear signs as a good sign for the journey ahead.
Small things like wider doors also make such a difference!


3
Hold the lift please!
C
P
G
Thank you so much for waiting!
You're welcome, Glad to be of help!
When the system works right I see that I can be of service to someone instead of always needing it!


Huh? Why is the wheelchair lane locked?


Ah there is someone needing to use the wheelchair lane.

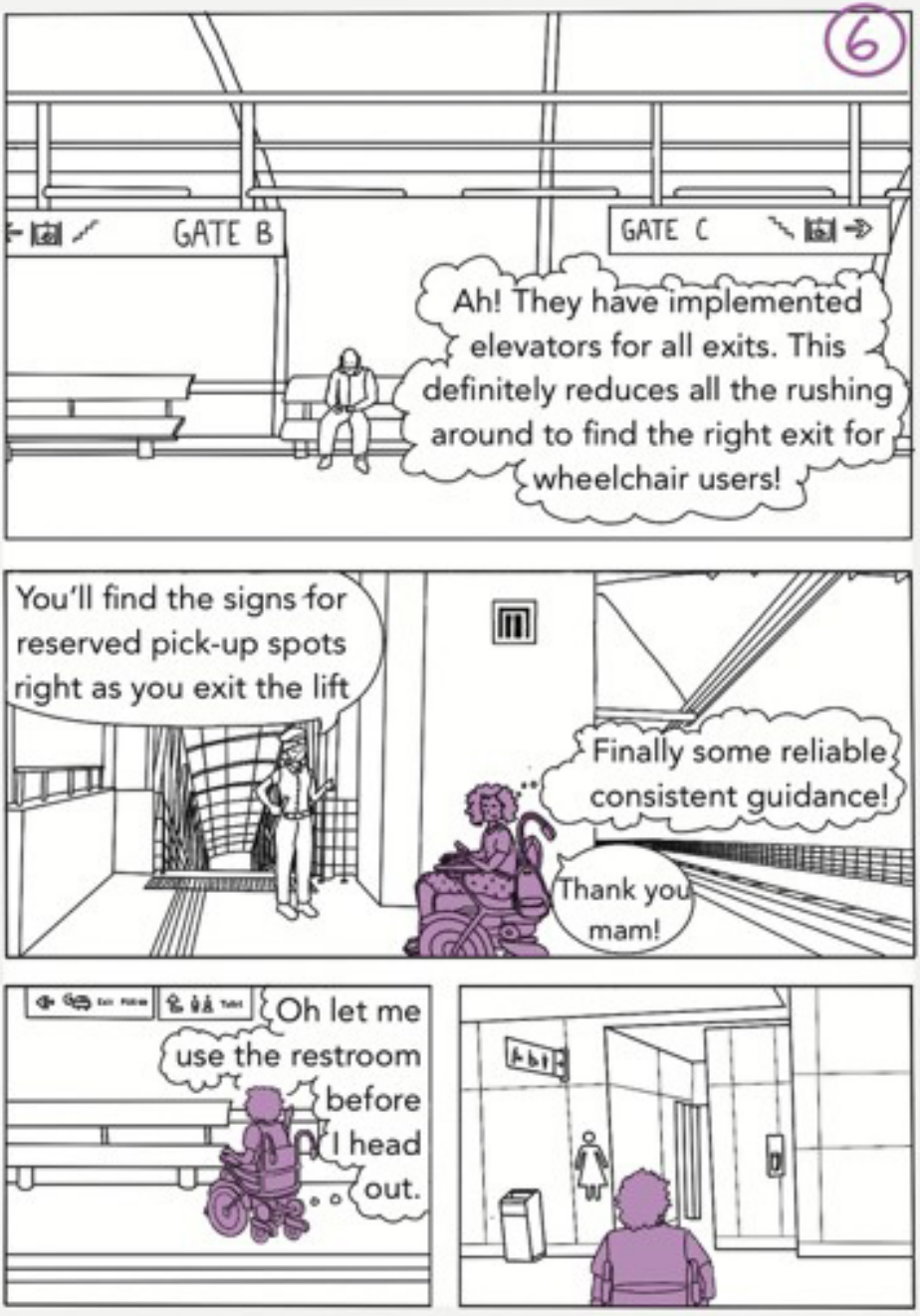

Here you go. I am sure it must be annoying to wait for someone to open the gate for you, sorry about that.
It is okay, I get it. Besides there was hardly any wait this time.

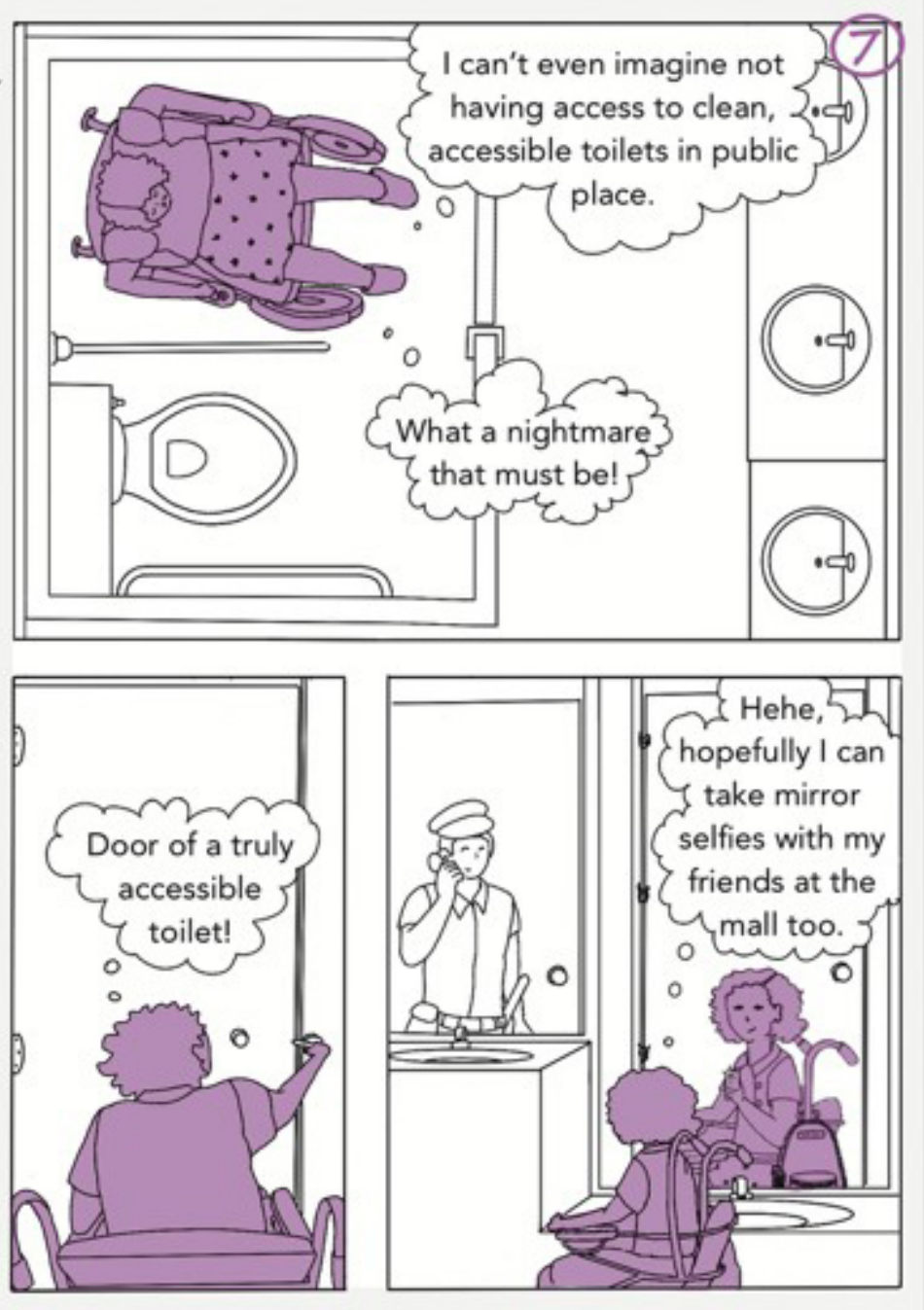

Wow the priority bogey for persons with disabilities is so close to the lift!

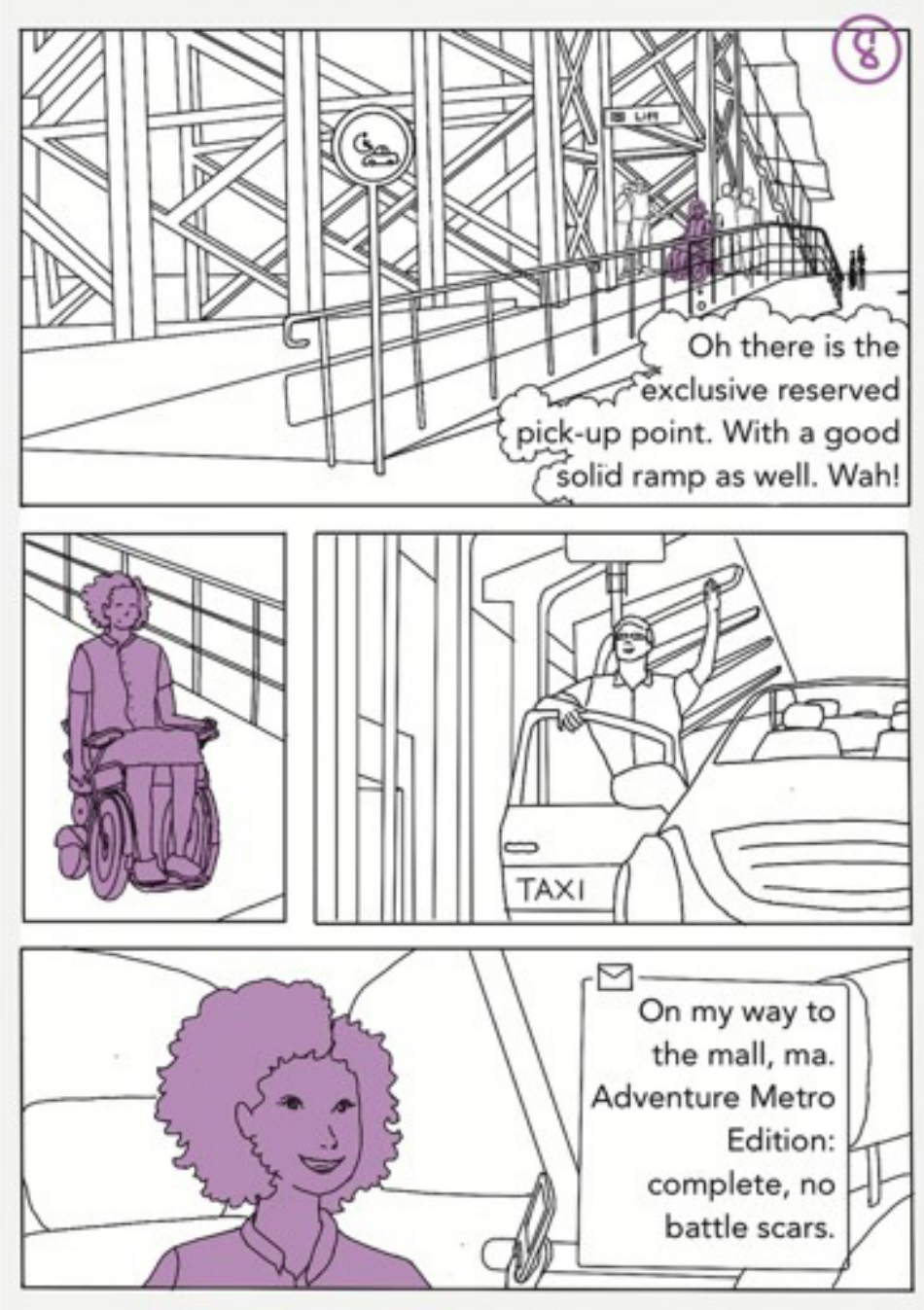



And people are also respectful of the priority boarding policy!



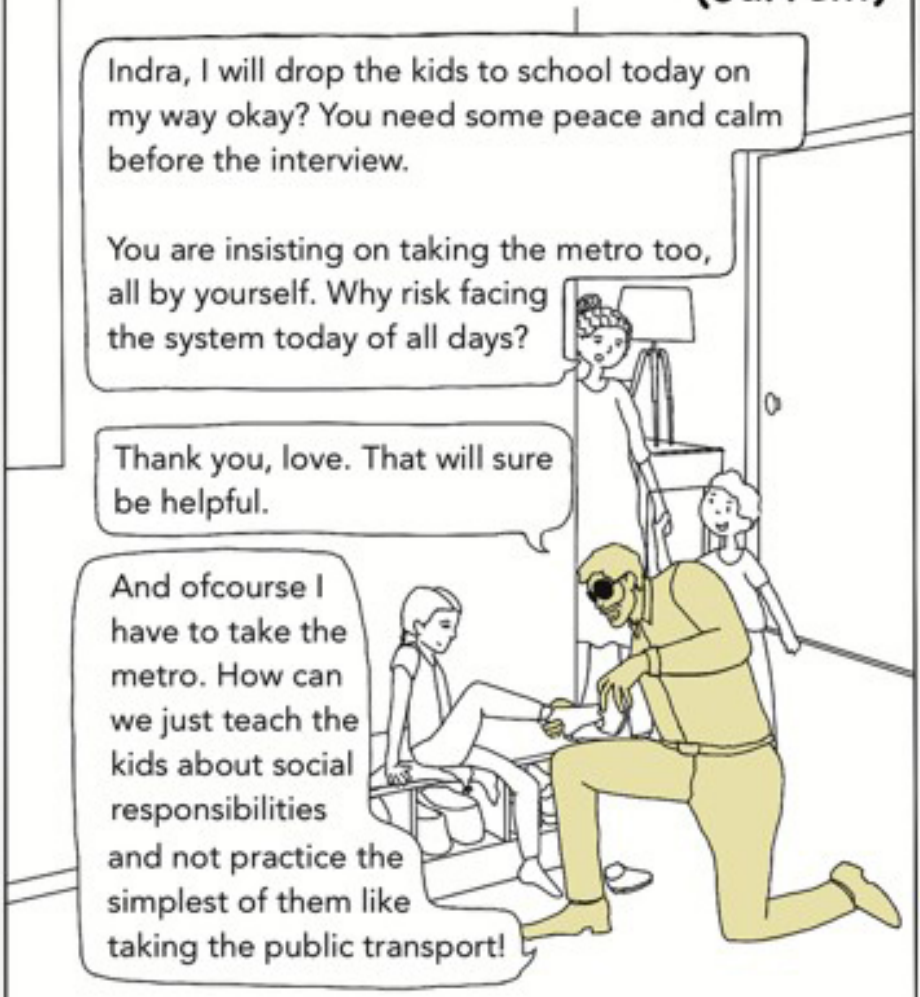

6
GATE B
GATE C
Ah! They have implemented elevators for all exits. This definitely reduces all the rushing around to find the right exit for wheelchair users!
You'll find the signs for reserved pick-up spots right as you exit the lift
Finally some reliable consistent guidance!
Thank you mam!
Oh let me use the restroom before I head out.


7
I can't even imagine not having access to clean, accessible toilets in public place.
What a nightmare that must be!
Door of a truly accessible toilet!
Hehe, hopefully I can take mirror selfies with my friends at the mall too.


Oh there is the exclusive reserved pick-up point. With a good solid ramp as well. Wah!
TAXI
On my way to the mall, ma. Adventure Metro Edition: complete, no battle scars.

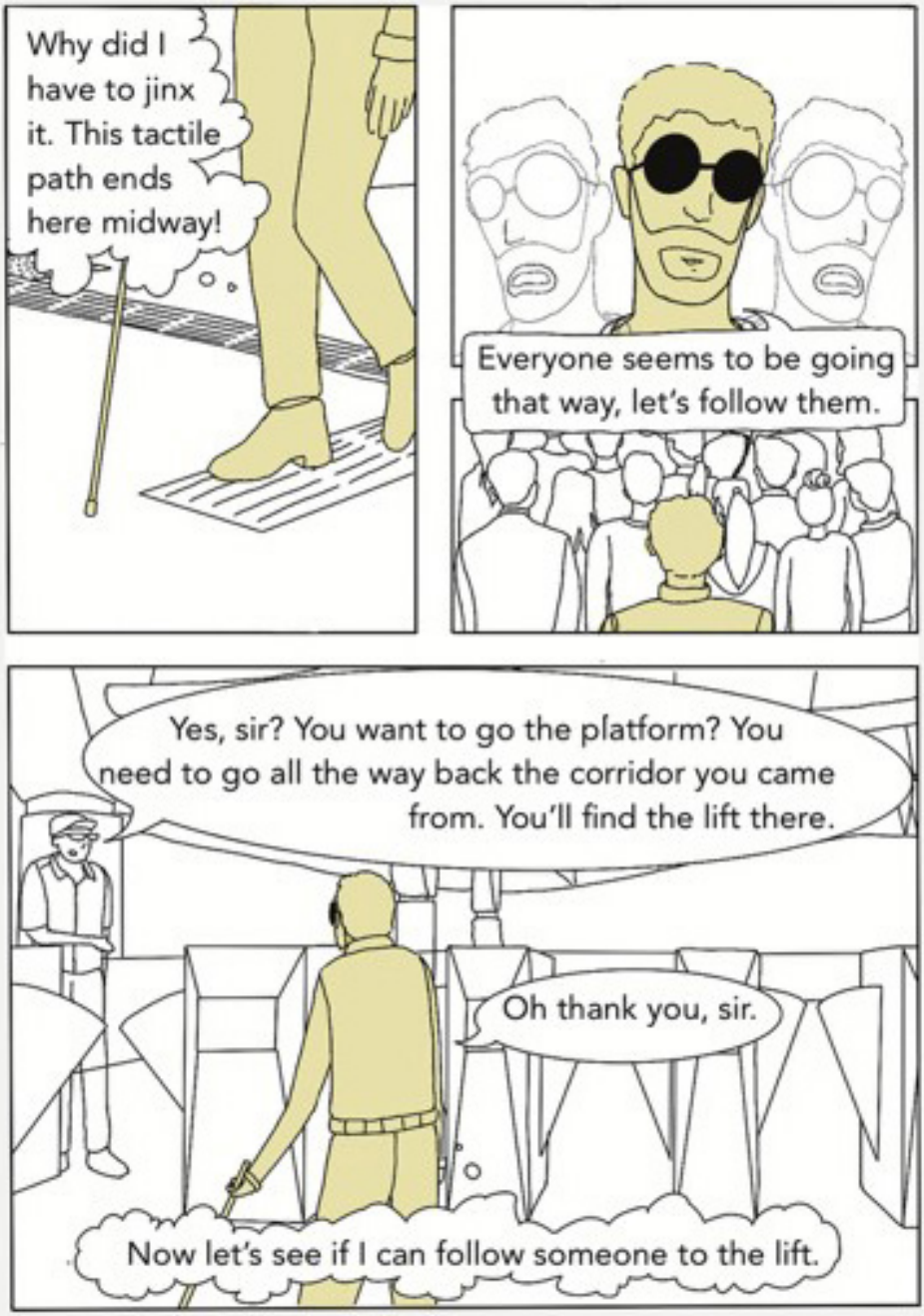
Indra takes the metro to his interview

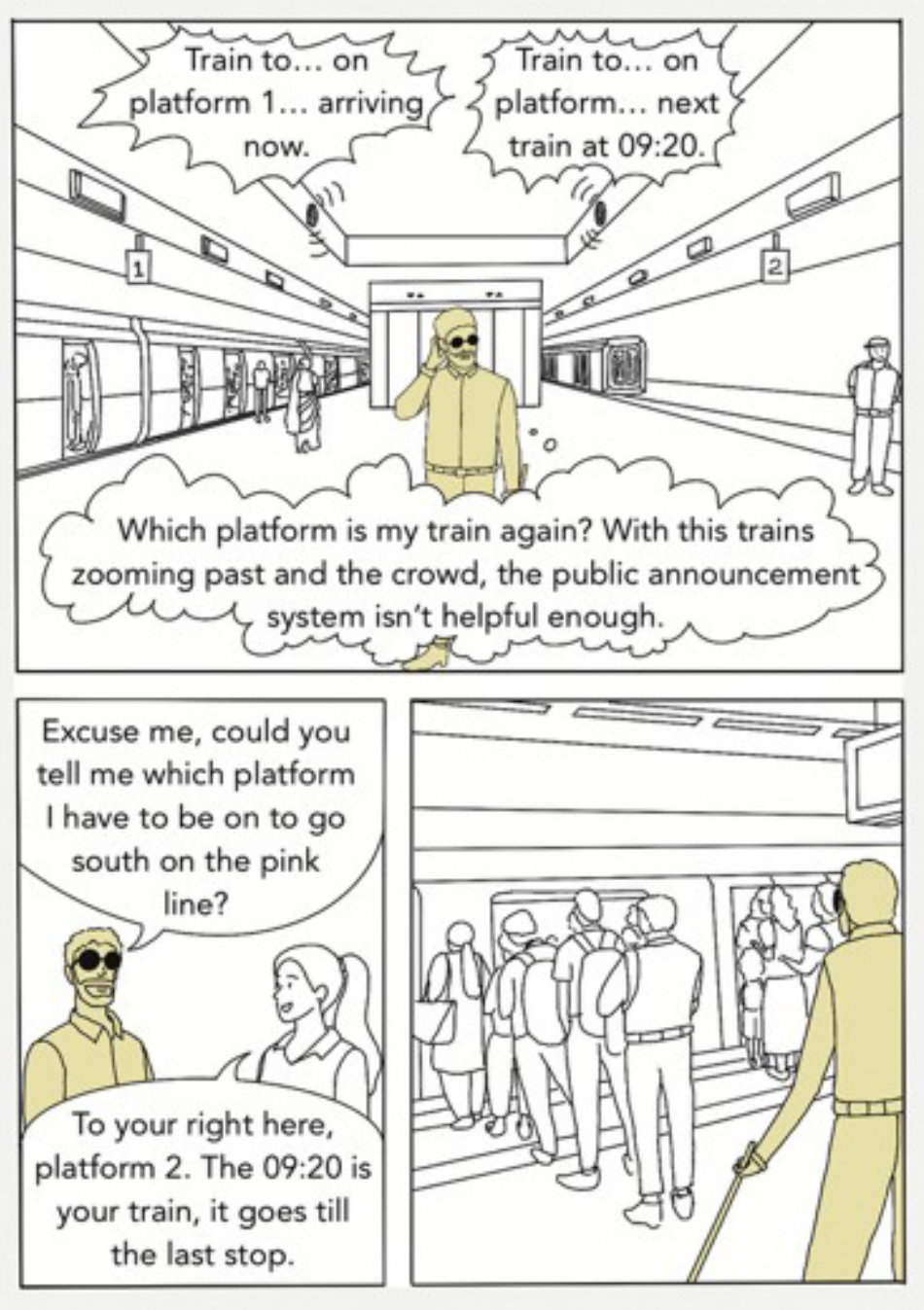
(Current)

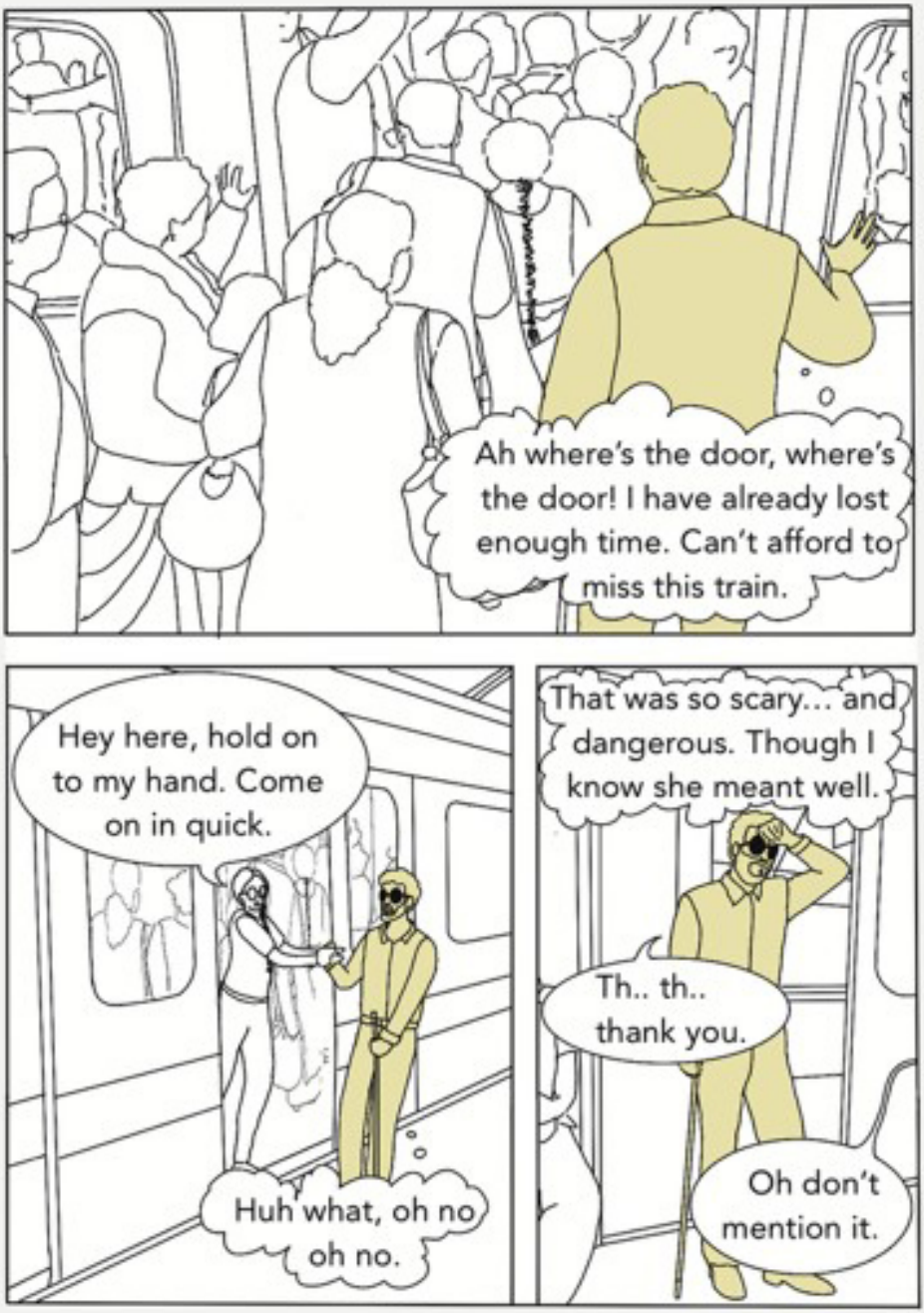



Time - 08:30 am
Sir it's too crowded near the entrance, do you mind getting down here?
Forget tactile paving, there isn't even a walkable footpath in the first place. Feels more like an obstacle race.
GATE C
Oh the metro seems to have incorporated tactile paving well though.
I don't even remember how much amount is remaining in the card. Will have to check.

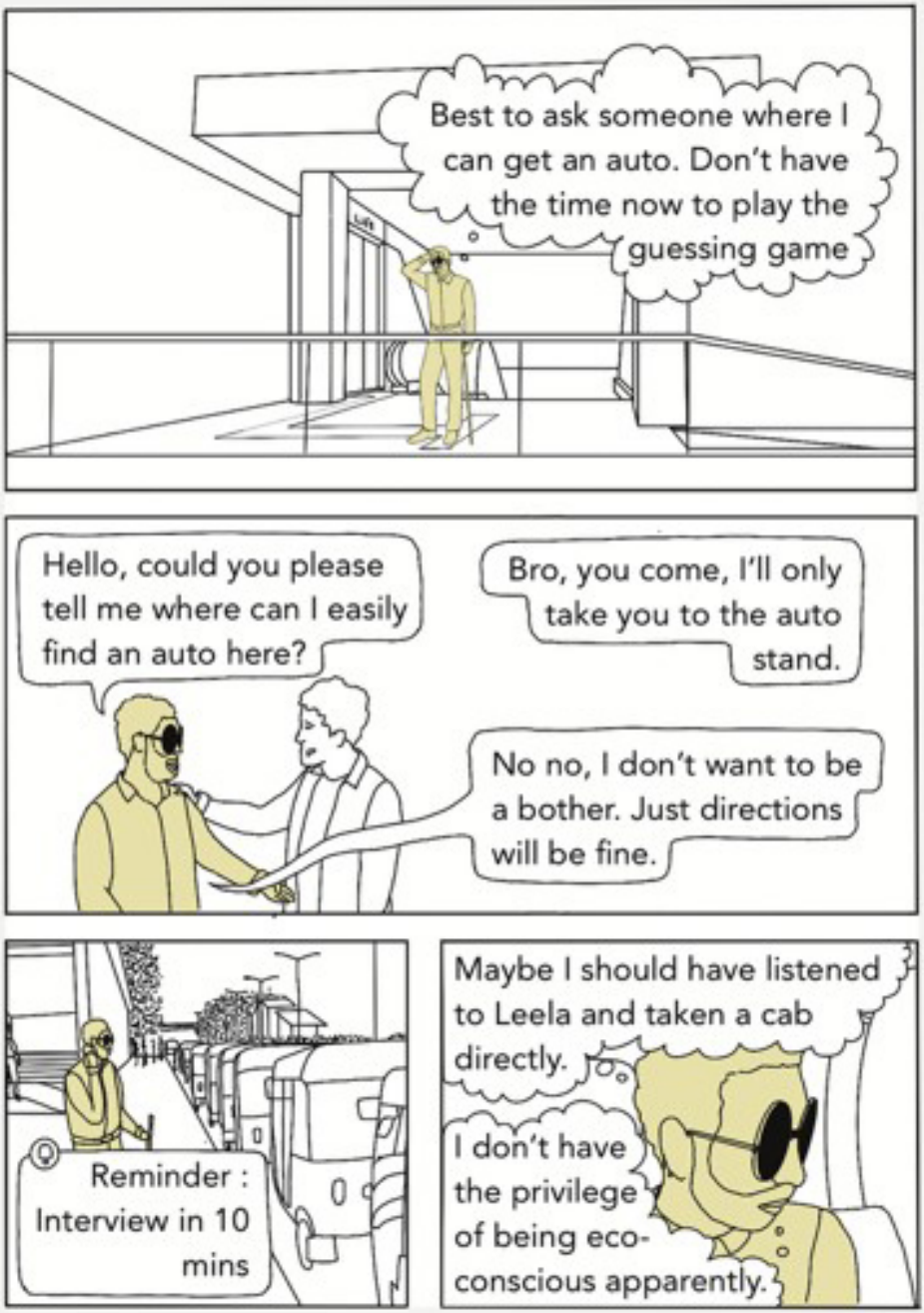

Ah, this is why I don't use this annoying machine. Fully digital, fully inaccessible.
Back to our trustworthy recharge via WhatsApp it is.
Then I can just validate the top-up on the machine.
Sir that's the women's line. Come this way please
Yes sir, that way around the barricade.
What is this way, that way! Oh god, no one knows to give directions only these days seems like


Why did I have to jinx it. This tactile path ends here midway!
Everyone seems to be going that way, let's follow them.
Yes, sir? You want to go the platform? You need to go all the way back the corridor you came from. You'll find the lift there.
Oh thank you, sir.
Now let's see if I can follow someone to the lift.


Train to... on platform 1... arriving now.
Train to... on platform... next train at 09:20.
1
2
Which platform is my train again? With this trains zooming past and the crowd, the public announcement system isn't helpful enough.
Excuse me, could you tell me which platform I have to be on to go south on the pink line?
To your right here, platform 2. The 09:20 is your train, it goes till the last stop.


Ah where's the door, where's the door! I have already lost enough time. Can't afford to miss this train.
Hey here, hold on to my hand. Come on in quick.
Huh what, oh no oh no.
That was so scary... and dangerous. Though I know she meant well.
Th.. th.. thank you.
Oh don't mention it.


Hello, is this a reserved seat?
Oh yes, so sorry didn't notice you there. Please sit.
I am glad I got over my awkwardness in asking for a reserved seat.
Exit →
Lift →

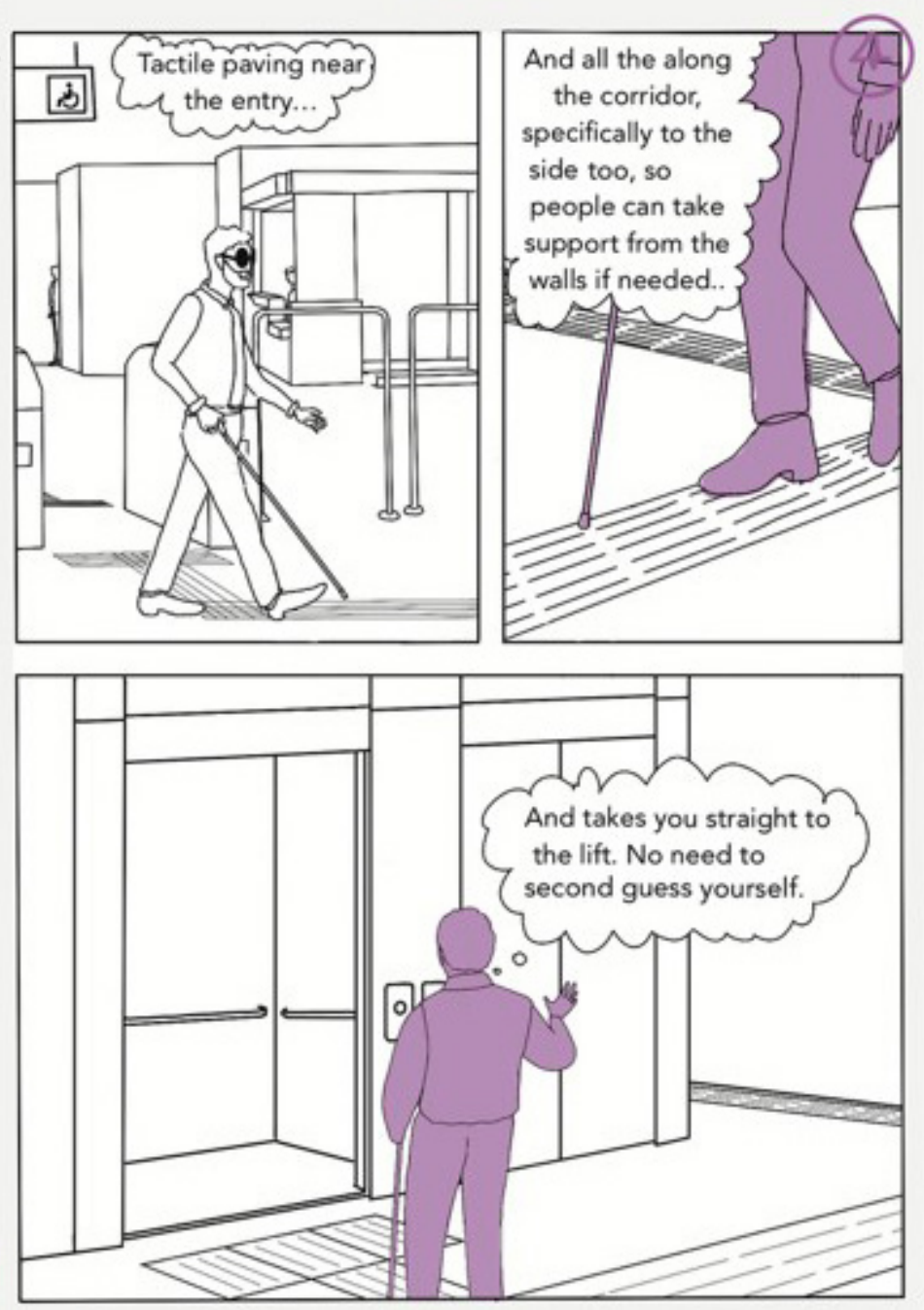

Best to ask someone where I can get an auto. Don't have the time now to play the guessing game
Hello, could you please tell me where can I easily find an auto here?
Bro, you come, I'll only take you to the auto stand.
No no, I don't want to be a bother. Just directions will be fine.
Reminder : Interview in 10 mins
Maybe I should have listened to Leela and taken a cab directly.
I don't have the privilege of being eco-conscious apparently.

Indra takes the metro to his interview (re-imagined)




Time - 08:30 am
2
Sir, two minutes, we are in a bit of traffic. Once this clears, I will take us to your drop location.
Here we are sir, at the reserved drop-off point. The tactile paving goes straight to the entrance.
This will be a breeze thanks to all the accessibility features in the metro now
Oh ho, I had to top-up the card. Okay let's do it at the machine here


Who knew a few tactile buttons and a basic audio feedback is enough to make a simple machine accessible!
Use the buttons to navigate between the different amount options for recharging and choose one to proceed.
Sir please take three steps to your right and keep walking ahead to the checking scanner..
We do priority checking too now, so no wait time
Wow this will certainly reduce the time related anxiety for people and give them the space to calmly locate spaces in the station

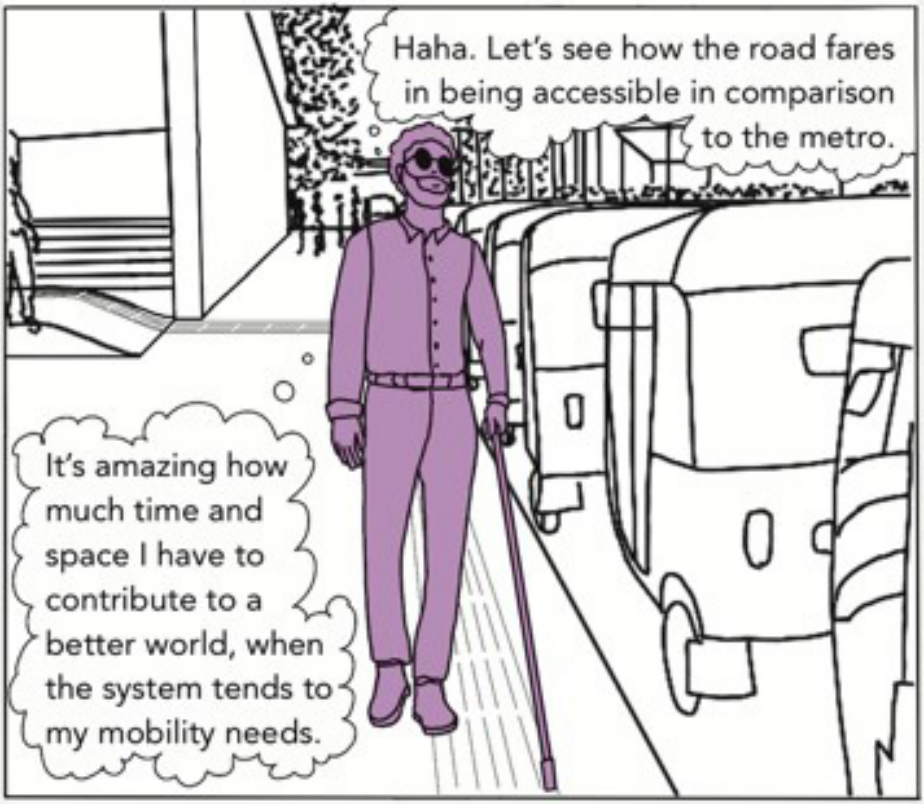

Tactile paving near the entry...
And all the along the corridor, specifically to the side too, so people can take support from the walls if needed..
And takes you straight to the lift. No need to second guess yourself.


5
Train to... will arrive on platform 1 to your right in 2 mins
Train to... will arrive on platform 2 to your left in 6 mins
1
2
Oh my train is in six minutes, enough time for me to comfortably pick a spot to get on, near one of those priority boarding compartments.
Oh there is still a long line here as well.
Please go ahead sir.
System and people working in perfect sync


The train is arriving now, door will open to your left
The audio announcements are a great initiative.
The priority boarding sure does help me avoid bumping into people trying to get on!

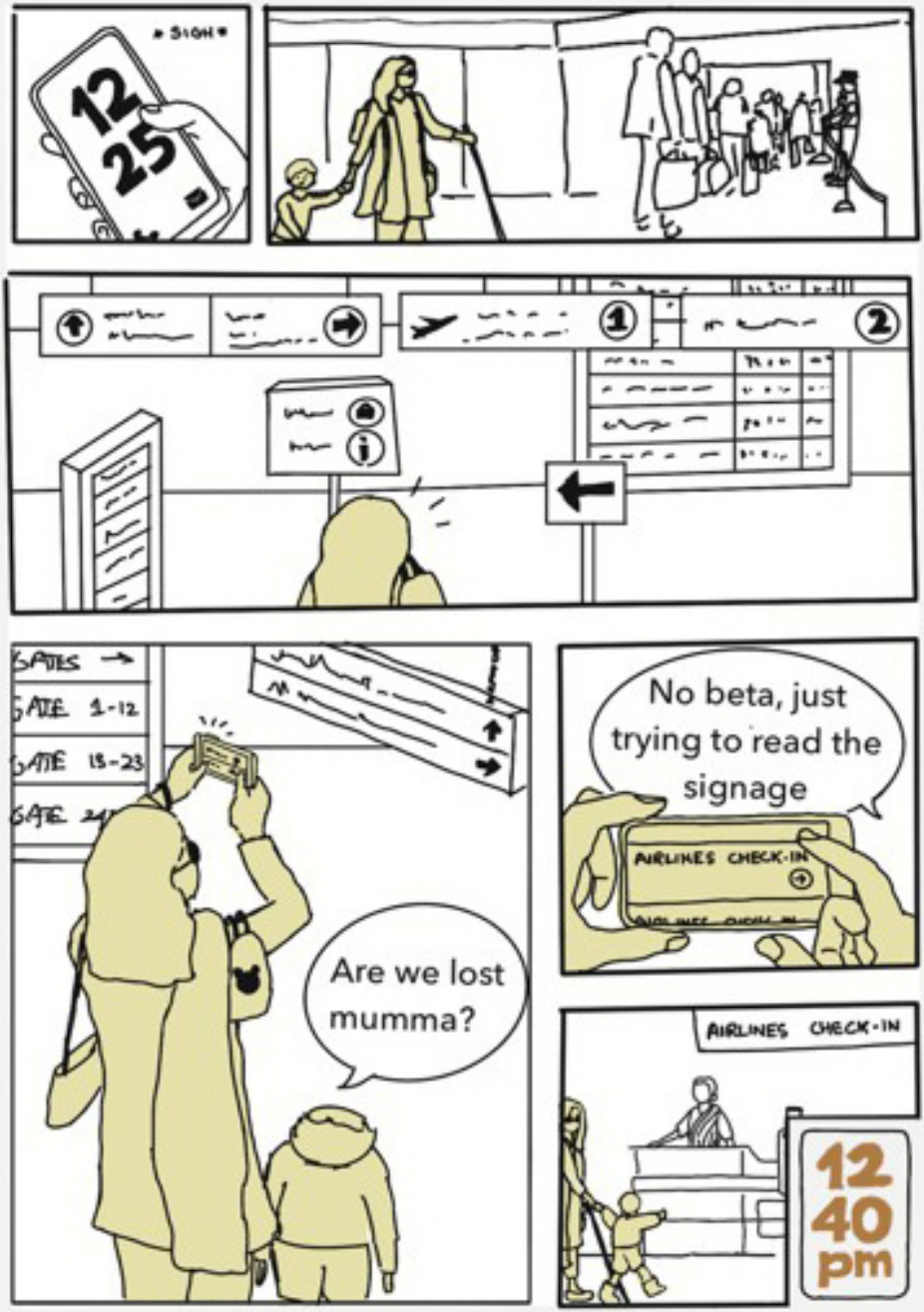

7
Ah, here they are. Reserved seats just like in every metro. 6 seats on the right side of the second door in every compartment. Just knowing what to expect reduces so much mental strain.
Next stop is...
Oh that's my stop. Let me get to the door.
Good thing I had an option to ask for assistance, since I am unfamiliar with this station, it really helps
Exit
Lift

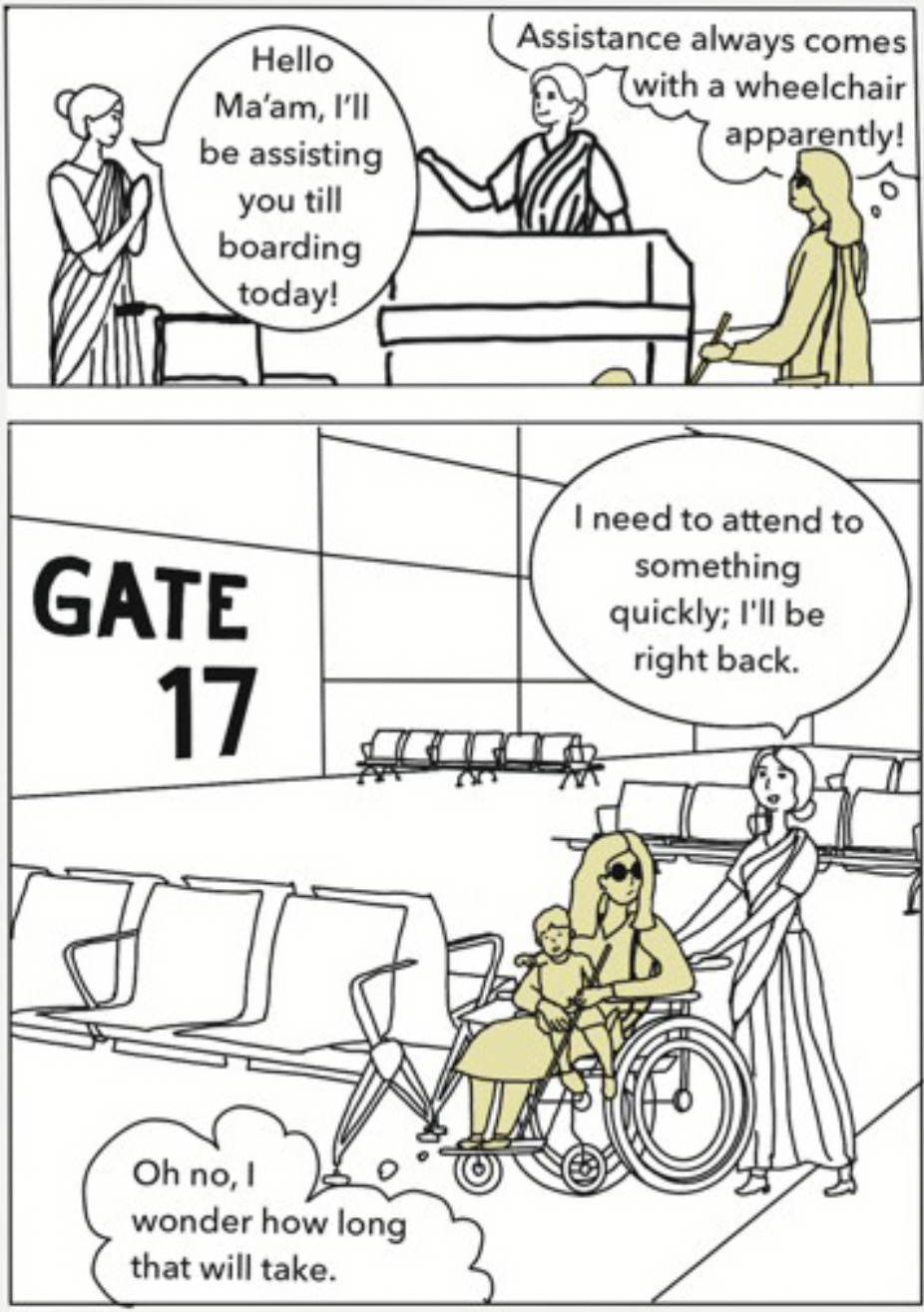

Thank you for your assistance today Zakhir!
You're welcome sir. Have a good day!
Wow. I have reached even earlier than I had anticipated. Let me actually just walk to the office rather than take an auto.


Haha. Let's see how the road fares in being accessible in comparison to the metro.
It's amazing how much time and space I have to contribute to a better world, when the system tends to my mobility needs.

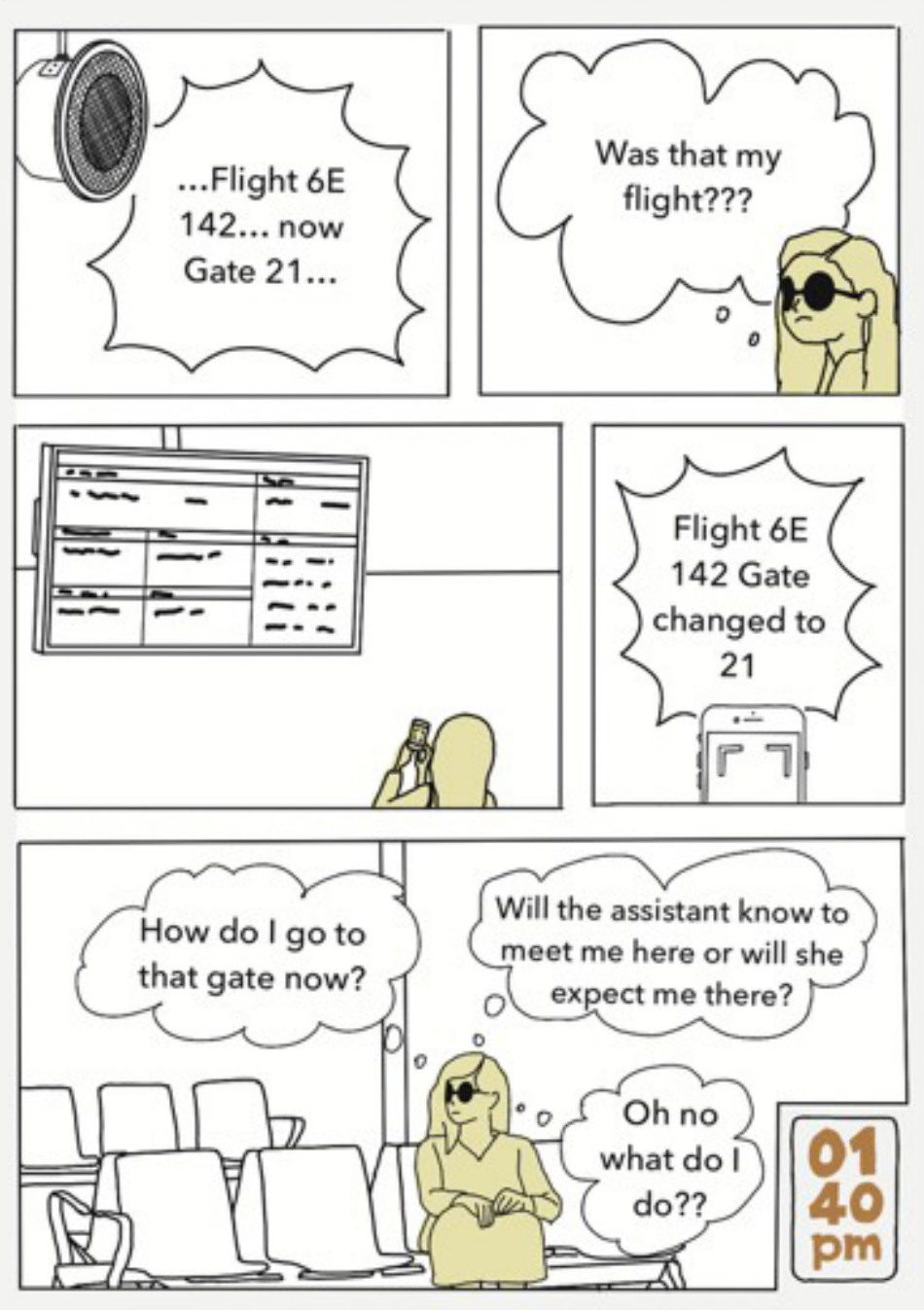

11 00 am
Farah's Flight with her son
(Current)
Madam I'll drop you at the departure gate?
Haan yes, that's okay
Hopefully the assistant will meet me near the entrance and I won't have to worry about navigating around.


12
10
pm
I wonder how long that will be now!
Excuse me! I'd booked assistance.
Yes ma'am, someone will come to get you


SIGH
12
25
1
2
GATES →
GATE 1-12
GATE 13-23
Are we lost mumma?
No beta, just trying to read the signage
AIRLINES CHECK-IN
AIRLINES CHECK-IN
12
40
pm


Hello Ma'am, I'll be assisting you till boarding today!
Assistance always comes with a wheelchair apparently!
GATE 17
I need to attend to something quickly; I'll be right back.
Oh no, I wonder how long that will take.


17
...Haan yaar, I spent half an hour trying to pick a seat online
The site works fine but the contrast is terrible to know which seats are actually available. I had to zoom in till the browser begged for mercy
...Let's just say an option for auto-fill for payment would've been a blessing


...Flight 6E 142... now Gate 21...
Was that my flight???
Flight 6E 142 Gate changed to 21
How do I go to that gate now?
Will the assistant know to meet me here or will she expect me there?
Oh no what do I do??
01 40 pm


02
10
pm
PRIORITY BOARDING FOR FLIGHT 6E 142 STARTING NOW
Should I ask someone for help??
Sorry about the delay, ma'am. Please come, I'll help you board.
Oh , I was getting so worried, thank god you came back.


Someone will help you after landing
Uhh... okay thanks
04 30 pm
Mumma, nobody else is here, come let's go. Come, come
We can go only when someone comes to take us to the gate beta, please wait
How many times will I be stranded like this?
05 20 pm

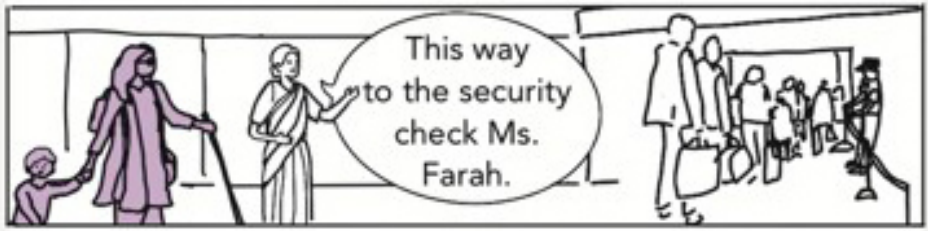


Farah's Flight with her son

(Re-imagined)




12
10
pm
2
Good morning Ms. Khan. I am Meera. I'll be assisting you today with getting around.
Please do let me know if you need any particular assistance at anytime.
Thank you Meera. I'll mostly need help just with directions but you won't need to hold my hands though.


This way to the security check Ms. Farah.




Wow we got done with the check-in so quickly. Seems like I'll have a smooth boarding today
12
25


3
GATE 17
We can sit right here by the boarding gate. I'll wait with you till boarding. Would you like to do some shopping here?
Haha no, Last time I really spent too much money.
Ah! Got it, but let me know if you need anything else though.
I think he needs to use the restroom. Can you guide us?
Oh sure, please come with me
RESTROOM
12 40 pm


17
Hey hi, yeah we are here early. No, wasn't a hassle at all. I can really feel the change this time…
Actually, guess what? I booked tickets last night, no drama this time… Yeah, better contrast, clear seat map, even auto-fill. I can't tell you how excited I was about doing it all myself…
…Arrey no problem, I can talk. This time I haven't drained my phone battery by using it as my personal assistant to navigate about..


There has been a 20 minutes delay in Flight 6E 142. The gate has been changed to 21. The assisting staff have been notified to help with the changes.
Only a slight delay ma'am. And would you like to move closer to the new gate now or later?
Thank you for the clarification Meera. We can go now and wait there, that way it'll be less stressful.
Departures Gates 21-40
Departures Gates 1-20

02
10
pm

PRIORITY BOARDING FOR FLIGHT 6E 142 STARTING NOW











Things have been great till now, I hope we won't have to wait for too long. Will they know what time to come there?






04
30
pm
8
Hi Ms. Khan. Hope you had a good flight. We'll leave now? Do you have bags checked-in?
Hi Ramesh. Just the carry on bags. We can go straight to exit.
04
50
pm
Feels so good when the co-ordinated efforts actually takes-off.
EXIT
SHOPS
FOOD
CABS
Since we have some free time now, how about we get some donuts for nana and nani?
Yay!!