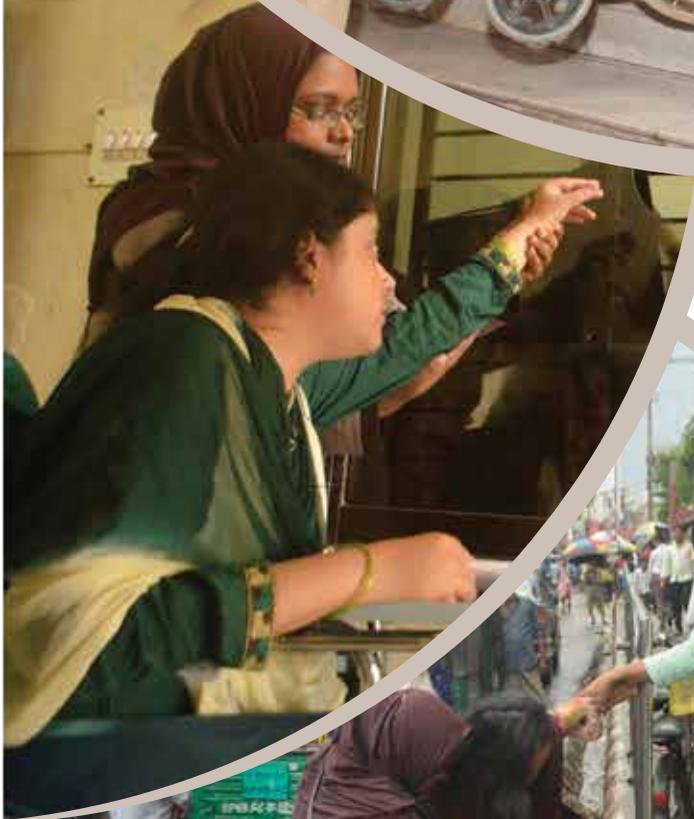




Accessibility
Audit Report 2014

Public Places & Buildings for Persons with Disabilities in Bangladesh





Accessibility Audit Report 2014 Public Places & Buildings for Persons with Disabilities in Bangladesh

Study Conducted and Published by



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the Change and Advocacy
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Acknowledgement

B-SCAN has been working to establish the rights of persons with disabilities since 2009. We felt the lack of situation analysis regarding universal accessibility in Bangladesh and therefore have undertaken the accessibility audit on twenty important public buildings and places for the first time in Bangladesh. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of WaterAid Bangladesh. We would like to convey our gratitude to Population Services & Training Center (PSTC), Sajida Foundation Impact and also to Shamim Ahmed, Mahfuj-ur Rahman and Babul Bala of Equity Inclusion Team of WaterAid without whom this research could not have been possible. We also want to thank Society of the Deaf and Sign Language users (SDSL), Bangladesh Visually Impaired Peoples Society (BVIPS), Center for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) for their technical support, invaluable assistance and patience during the field audit, project conceptualization and final report.

We would also like to recognize the individuals within these and other organizations whose opinions have helped us to develop the output of this research in a useful manner. Especially we are grateful to Mr. Rafiq Zaman, Treasurer of SDSL and Director of Protibondhi Nagorik Shangathaner Parishad (PNSP) for his continuous support and guidance to comprise this comprehensive study. We also acknowledge the swift cooperation of the building's authority those have cooperated us to execute the field audit smoothly.

We are also very grateful to our volunteers and audit members who were with us through the audit period whole-heartedly. Without the assistance from any of them we could not have completed this audit. We hope our cooperation has staged a unique example and go through in future to establish the rights of persons with disabilities.

Message



Sabrina Sultana



We have conducted the accessibility audit during closing period of MDG and finalization period of SDG. We all know that the development issue for persons with disabilities are ignored in MDG which brought out our greatest achievement of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). That's why in SDG goals, targets and indicators going to include persons with disabilities as an integral part of it. Accessibility is one of the core issue for persons with disabilities which hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Bangladesh government has taken initiative to make infrastructures accessible through Building Construction Rules 2008. Moreover they have been updating the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) which B-SCAN has been involved as a stakeholder. So proceeding with the scenario of accessibility in urban area is important to analysis the current practices and future actions.

B-SCAN has taken initiative to conduct an access audit through persons with disabilities including architect and civil engineers. For the first time this sort of study has been operated in Bangladesh involving different types of persons with disabilities. So we are thankful to WaterAid Bangladesh to put their trust on us and their assistance to conduct such study. We hope this study will give us a sample evidence to take advocacy measures and feedback among the policy makers as well as the academia to inform about the scenario of universal design in Bangladesh. The DPOs and NGOs can make this report as an advocacy tools to contribute to build the accessible Bangladesh.

Finally we seek apology to publish such important document after a long time. But the importance of this study insists us to publish it even after such interval. We are really thankful again to WaterAid Bangladesh to come forward to publish this audit report. This signify the strong relation between WaterAid Bangladesh and B-SCAN as well as their commitment for the rights of persons with disabilities. I want to acknowledge the courageous and relentless effort from our colleagues, without their continuous effort we couldn't have complete this study. I am also thankful to the Audit Team, Focal Points of different government services and authorities who helped us by providing data and information in this study.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S.S.' or similar initials.

**President
B-SCAN**

Message



Dr. Khairul Islam



I am delighted to learn that B-SCAN is publishing the Audit Report on Accessibility of Public Places and Buildings for Persons with Disabilities in Bangladesh.

Despite progress on many fronts, Bangladesh continues to lag behind in terms of ensuring accessibility to persons with disabilities. This not only limits the immense academic and professional potential of persons with disabilities, but also impedes their access to vital public services and meaningful participation in society. It is concerning to note that the right to accessibility in buildings and public spaces continues to be largely ignored in clear violation of existing rules and laws. If major establishments in Dhaka and Chittagong are ill-equipped to cater to persons with disabilities, as illustrated through this audit, one can surely gauge the extent of the problem elsewhere in the country.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls for the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers. This audit report provides a snapshot of the various obstacles and barriers in major public establishments in Dhaka and Chittagong. It is our hope that the findings of the report will stimulate further work necessary to eliminate these obstacles and barriers in ensuring an inclusive and enabling environment for persons with disabilities.

B-SCAN's accessibility audit, the first of its kind in Bangladesh, is thus a timely initiative that lays the crucial groundwork to stimulate much-needed action to ensure the right to accessibility. WaterAid Bangladesh is proud to support this initiative as part of our integrated approach to contribute to lasting social change. Together with our partners, we aim to move towards our vision of a world where no one is left behind.



**Country Director
WaterAid**



Research Team

The research team is comprised of development activists and professionals, persons with disabilities, civil engineer and architect. Team members are selected in a way so that they can contribute in their specific field of expertise and provide opinion to enrich the study.

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Salma Mahbub

General Secretary of women led DPO named B-SCAN and also a wheelchair user. She is one of the key member of the audit team and participated in questionnaire design, organizing audit, report writing and presenting reports in the dissemination program and also participated in the field visit and report writing.

Iftekhar Mahmud

Coordinator of Protibondhi Nagorik Shangathaner Parishad (PNSP) and a person with low vision. He is one of the key contributors of questionnaire designing, planning, taking interviews and also participated in the field visit and report writing.

Shamim Ahmed

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Shegufta Newaz

Architect, BUET. She contributed as an audit member and also in the field visit and report writing.

Kaniz Fatema

Coordinator, 13th ASCoN, CRP and volunteer of B-SCAN. She contributed in report writing.



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| | |
|--|--|
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Introduction

An accessible environment has been recognized as a core element of an inclusive society. An accessible environment provides citizens independence and the means to pursue an active social and economic life. The present situation of accessibility for persons with disabilities in Bangladesh is not hidden from anyone. But, Government, Private and NGOs have been taken very nominal initiative to promote accessibility for the persons with disabilities. However, there is no accessibility audit has been conducted by the persons with disabilities to identify the barriers and recommendations for the safe and independent movement of themselves. By realizing this context B-SCAN is keen to do this job as a Disabled People's Organization (DPO) and create tools for the evidence based advocacy along with other DPOs and NGOs. Thus the accessibility rights of persons with disabilities can be informed to the policy makers and duty bearers which will make easier to continue our advocacy. The accessibility of the public places & buildings audit means, identify the structural and servicing barriers of a public place or building and provide recommendations to improve accessibility for the persons with disabilities.

Background

Many people with disabilities in Bangladesh face barriers that exclude them from participating as equal citizens. These barriers can be attitudinal and societal as well as physical and affect people with different disabilities at different times of their lives. The case for making our society more accessible is a compelling one on many fronts. It is not only an issue of justice but it makes good business and social sense. According to the World Health Organization 15% of any particular population is person with disabilities. And they are the most vulnerable as well as deprived population in any aspect. General Assembly of United Nations has passed a convention for persons with disabilities named Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006 and entrée into force in 2008. Bangladesh government has signed as 91 and ratified as 8th country in this convention. Moreover Bangladesh government has enacted a new right based law "Persons with Disability Rights and Protection Act-2013" and accessibility features has included in "Dhaka & Chittagong Building Construction Rules 2008". But the accessibility features are not yet been ensured in public buildings. So participation of persons with disabilities is still hindered in regular life. It is government's duty to build or make reasonable accommodation in the public buildings to make it accessible for all. But their steps are stuck into policy making. There are no authorities to supervise the implementation of the policies, even the DPOs cannot perform as pressure group or right defenders. So besides all the positive initiative from the government the situations of accessibility of persons with disabilities have not improved. Therefore education, health, employment, recreation and social participation are still in marginalized level. So mainstreaming of persons with disabilities has become enormous challenge. Most of the time people think that accessibility is expensive, but some reasonable accommodation in the design of the buildings such as ramp in a building or footpath, tactile blocks for persons with visual disability, elevator floor announcement, Braille button, use of some colour for persons with low vision and picture and signage or map inside a building for persons with hearing disability could make their life easy. In addition to contributing to the development of a more inclusive and equal society an accessible environment increases the pool of potential new workers that an employer can tap into. It also helps organizations retain existing employees who may acquire a disability. An accessible building enables more people with disabilities to enter the premises and/or use the services. Government has Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) where it says accessibility needs to ensure. But very few people know about it and they are not punished if the accessibility is overlooked. This audit will make them think about their buildings and at the same time it will show the pictures of the situations of public important buildings accessibility and it will be a continuous process. So we want to build a barrier free inclusive society where persons with disabilities can have equal opportunity and live with dignity. We also want to aware the civil society as well as the government officials to ensure and support a barrier free inclusive society for all persons with disabilities.

Executive Summary

In June, 2014 Bangladesh Society for the Change and Advocacy Nexus (B-SCAN) had taken a step to perform an audit of the government public buildings and places for persons with disabilities. This was for the first time in Bangladesh an accessibility audit has conducted by a team comprising different types of persons with disabilities, architect and civil engineer. This audit was done with the technical support of five Disabled People's Organizations (DPO) and NGOs and the financial support of WaterAid Bangladesh, Population Services and Training Centers (PSTC) and Sajida Foundation Impact. Five different kinds of persons with disabilities has done the audit in 20 building and places in Dhaka and Chittagong within 2 months in total. We have also done a press conference in Chittagong on 15 July, 2014 and a roundtable meeting with some related authorities of the audited building and places of Dhaka in 22 November, 2014 with The Daily Star.

The main aspire of this study is to illustrate the picture of the condition of universal accessibility of persons with disabilities in the country. The audit finds that in different service providing buildings and places does not have much accessibility like ramp, toilets, tactiles, lift etc. though Dhaka & Chittagong Building Construction Rules 2008 clearly specified to ensure these facilities. Persons with physical, visual, hearing disability all together conducted the audit from their own constraint. Technical experts, civil engineer and architect were among the team also.

Out of 20 buildings we have found only 5 ramps and among those only 1 was in accurate measurement. Maximum buildings had no lifts and stairs riser was too high. Tactile could be hardly seen at the corridors or beginning and the end of the stairs and also was not in accordance to the rules. There was no Braille button or floor announcement in the lifts. Beside that there was hardly any place to turn around the wheelchair. Colour contrast was not appropriate in wall, doors and furniture for including persons with low vision and all. Information desks were high for the persons in wheelchairs. It was hard to find an accessible toilet in different establishments for a wheelchair person which is very important to stay for a longer period of time in a building. There was only one accessible toilet and also one fire escape was found out of 20 buildings. Though in any building persons with disabilities remain in high risk in an emergency situation.

Need of persons with hearing and speech disability are totally ignored in an infrastructure. There was no sign language support. Information Notice board or Citizen's Charter, Location map or specific signage etc. were not available everywhere. No SMS, MMS services were available either.

In this world, persons with disabilities are the biggest marginalized group though they are the most unheard. They are 10 million (according to WHO report 2011) in number in the world, it is 15% of total population of the world. According to our Ministry of Social Welfare survey report of persons with disabilities 2014-15 shows that there are 17 lac 37 thousand 9 hundred and 5 persons among them 12 lac 85 thousand 6 hundred 56 persons has been identified. The survey is an ongoing process.

Persons with disabilities are part of human diversity and they are deprived from the active participation in full and equal basis due to mostly for structural barriers. After 20 years of International Standard Rules and eight years of completion of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) still universal accessibility is the main barrier.

Philosophy of universal accessibility says, every service should be accessible equally for all people. Universal design does not focus only on a specific disability; rather it is a system that is useful for everyone regarding the difference of age, disability, mobility, visual, hearing, speech or mental situation.

The impact of universal access is in the whole life of a human or it could be said that it touches the need of each field of life.

The initiative of this study was taken on the context of universal accessibility to identify different barriers with specific recommendations so that it could qualify as national and international authentic document for advocacy and implementation.

1

Selection of Buildings and Places

1.1 Building Types

B-SCAN has chosen total 20 public buildings and places of the most densely populated and largest city of Dhaka and Chittagong through consultation with the organizations and the persons with disabilities working in different sectors. We focused where the persons with disabilities usually go to fill up their basic needs in their citizen life.

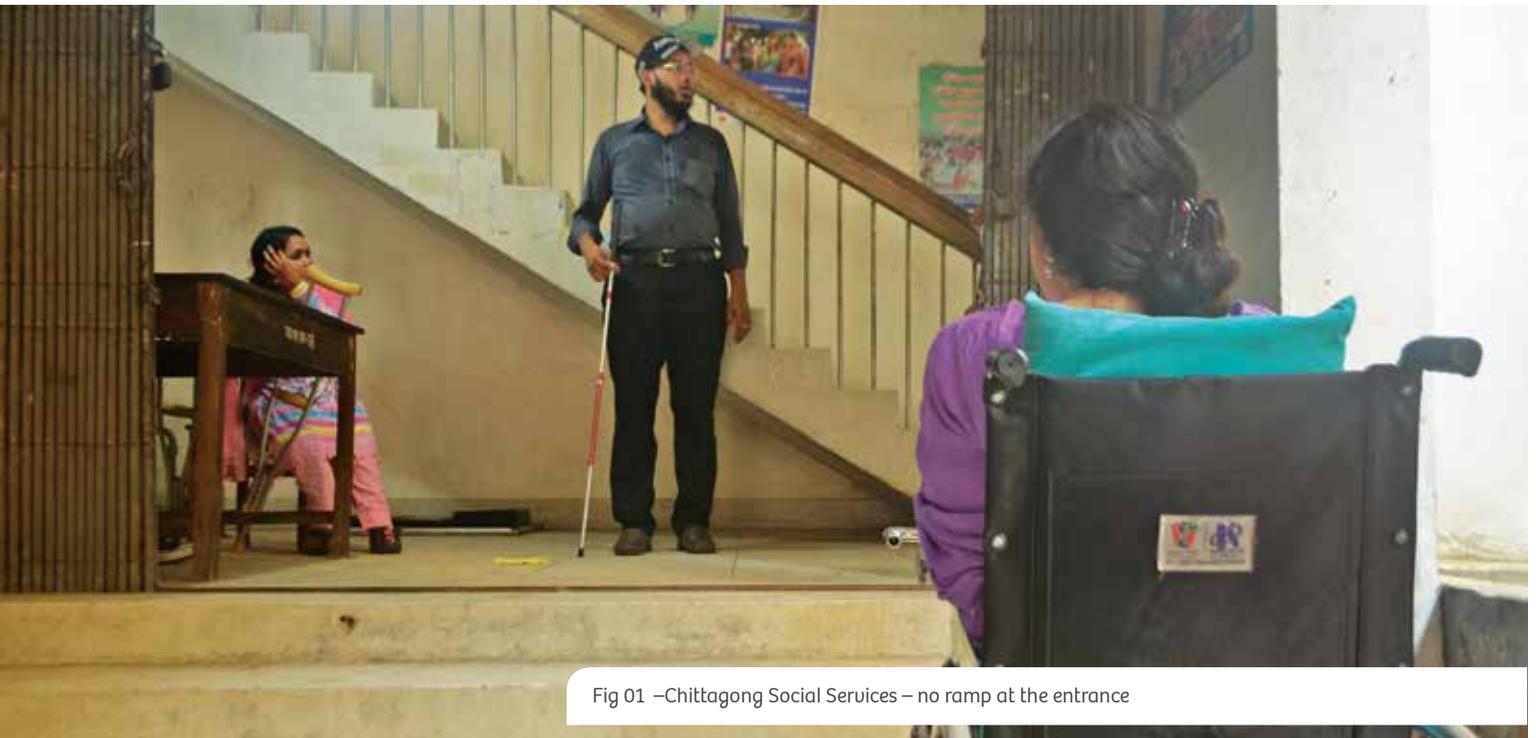


Fig 01 –Chittagong Social Services – no ramp at the entrance

1.2 User of the Buildings

These public buildings are generally used by the mass people to communicate in their daily life, claim their citizen services, legal protection or health and education. Persons with disabilities are not out of them.

1.3 Selection of Area

To select the area of the audit we considered mainly following three issues, 1) Geographical Importance, 2) Financial importance, 3) Population density of a particular area or city. So, considering these we selected Dhaka the capital city of Bangladesh and Chittagong the financial capital & the largest port city of Bangladesh as our area of the audit. The buildings & places selected aimed to identify the accessibility of persons with disabilities on the basis of the following sectors:

- Institutions
- Education
- Health Services
- Transportation
- Safety & Justice

1.4 List of Buildings and Places

| SL | Category | Building/Places of Dhaka | Building /Places of Chittagong |
|----|--------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Institutions | District Social Services Office | District Social Services Office |
| | | Nagar Bhaban, South City Corporation | Chittagong City Corporation Building |
| | | Dhaka WASA Building | Chittagong WASA Bhaban |
| | | | Chittagong Development Authority Building |
| 2 | Education | Dhaka University – Register Building | Chittagong Education Board |
| 3 | Public Place | New Market, Dhaka | New Market, Chittagong |
| 4 | Safety and Justice | Tejgaon Police Station | Doublmouring Police Station |
| | | Victim Support Center | |
| 5 | Transportation | Gabtoli Bus Terminal | Bohoddarhat Bus Terminal |
| | | Kamalapur Railway Station | Chittagong Railway Station |
| 6 | Health Service | Dhaka Medical College Hospital (outdoor) | Chittagong Medical College Hospital (outdoor) |

2

Audit Details

2.1 Audit Objectives

The aim of the study is to build a barrier free inclusive society for persons with disabilities for full and effective participation in socio economic activities through ensuring their accessibility in public buildings and aware about the rights of accessibility among the stakeholders. Moreover to establish how well a particular building or environment performs in terms of access and ease of use by a wide range of potential users, including persons with disabilities and to recommend access improvements.



Fig 02 – Orientation Meeting of Dhaka

2.2 Audit Methodology

This research has used the following methodology with consultation of partner organizations, DPOs & external consultant:

- Assumed a brief literature review and analysis of the accessibility of persons with disabilities on the following issues like: transport, public places and local government authorities.
- Formed working groups in the selected cities including the representative from local person with disability groups to find out the places and services to be audited.
- Developed an audit tool to measure the level of the physical accessibility of the premises through orientation meetings in each cities.
- Used the audit tool in Dhaka and Chittagong that undertook 20 audits across the Dhaka and Chittagong city. These premises audited according to the accessibility of the persons with disabilities on the following sectors like: Education, Health, Communication, Entertainment, Rights and Protection and Government's Local and Central Authorities.
- Filled questioners by the persons with disabilities from 20 premises (buildings & places) to determine what accessibilities already have in these premises & what improvement they need.
- Undertook individual interviews of the users like general persons and persons with disabilities of the selected buildings and places as well as the key role players in the design and implementation.

The audit is a descriptive research & conducted in a qualitative research approach. The following tools & method used for the audit:

- Questioners
- Visit and survey the buildings with the question papers
- Interview
- Observation



Fig 03 – Orientation Meeting of Chittagong



Fig 04 – Field work of Audit Team in Dhaka

2.3 Audit Duration

The audit work has been started from Chittagong. Three days audit has been done on 16, 17 & 18 June, 2014 and the work in Dhaka was done between 23-25 June, 2014. Total process completed between 1 June to 8 July, 2014.



2.4 Key Terms

Definition of Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Universal Accessibility means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal design" shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed;



Fig 05 – Field work of Audit Team in Chittagong WASA Bhaban



Fig 6 – Tejgaon Police Station

3

Observation and Recommendations

3.1 Entrance

Findings

Access to building from alighting and boarding point is hindered due to variation of level, lack of visual, acoustic and tactile guidance. We found that only 1 out of 20 buildings & places has a ramp with the standard slope ratio at entrance. These buildings do not have any curb ramp from vehicle pull-up space to access aisle. However, there are ramps at the entrance of the railway stations and medical college hospitals for pulling the trolleys or goods, also used by motorcycle users, which are not appropriate



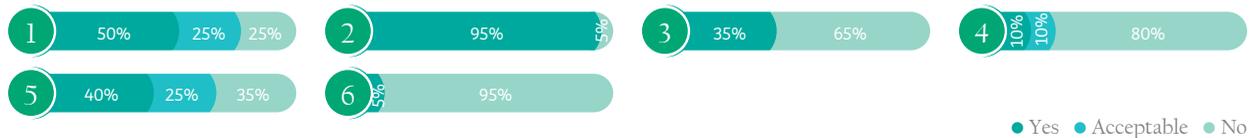
Fig 07 – Kamalapur Railway Station – entrance

for wheelchair users. The entrance path is found to be slip resistant, firm and wide enough in most cases. Other facilities like floor guidance, handrails, directional and informational signage, use of colour contrast to ensure accessibility for all were absent in general.

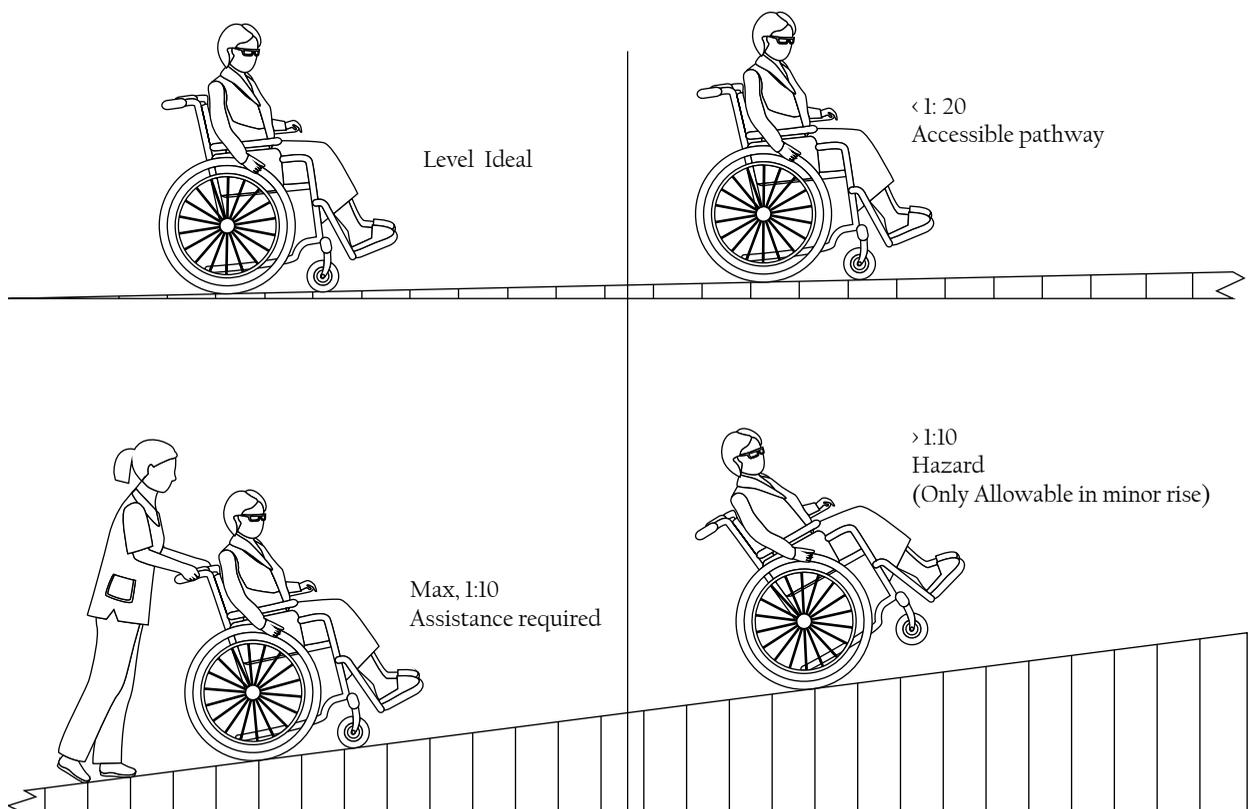
Accessibility Analysis

1. Path to building entrance from boarding point stable, firm and slip resistant.
2. Path to building entrance wide enough for wheelchair users.
3. Ramp at the entrance of the building.
4. Visual and tactile guidance at entrance.
5. Lighting level adequate and well positioned.
6. Directional signage denoting accessible route.

Recommendations



- In public buildings there need to be a person with orientation on basic sign language to assist persons with disability.
- Floor guidance, handrails, directional and informational signage and colour contrast need to be used to facilitate person with visual disability.
- Direction and informational signage need to be provided to indicate accessible route.



3.2 Information Desk

Findings

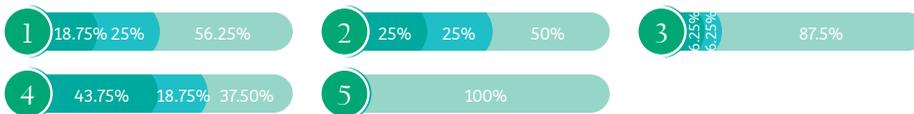
Due to height of the information counter, it is often difficult for a person sitting on a wheelchair to communicate with information provider. The lighting and noise level of the information counter are often unfavorable for persons with hearing and visual disability. In most cases there are no location maps, tactile maps or audio transcription system for effective communication with persons with disability. Sadly, the “District Social Service office” in Dhaka and Chittagong was totally inaccessible which makes it difficult for persons with disability to take services regarding different allowance, registration, loan and so on. We also found that the government offices and service providing departments do not have any person or system to have a minimum level of communication with persons with disability to provide the service.



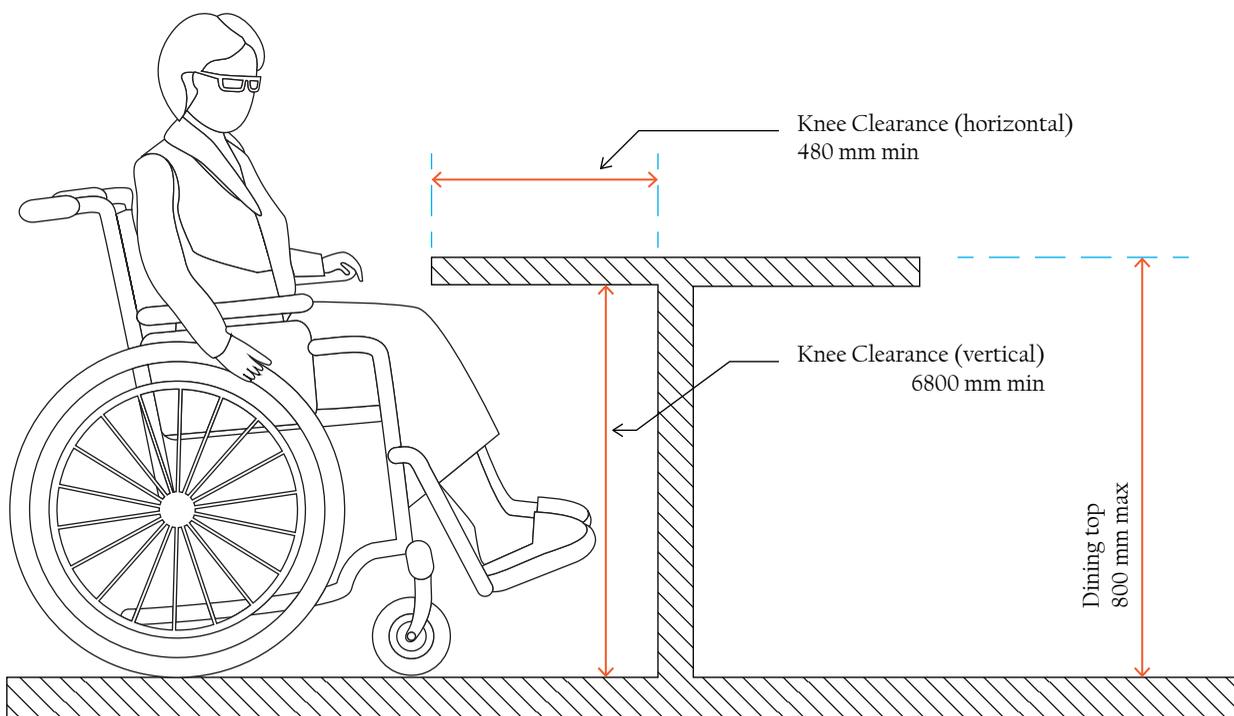
Fig 08 – Register building – University of Dhaka information desk

Accessibility Analysis

1. Person sitting in a wheelchair can see over the desk comfortably.
2. Level of lighting adequate and well positioned.
3. Location map of the Building at the reception.
4. Information desk located in a quiet place.
5. Directional signage to denote different functional spaces.



● Yes ● Acceptable ● No





Recommendations

- Information desk need to be in a suitable height (800 mm) with adequate knee clearance (680 mm) for wheelchair users.
- Tactile layouts of the floor plans/location map need to be provided for way finding in a building for persons with visual disability.
- Directional and informational signage need to be provided to denote different facilities for persons with hearing, intellectual disabilities.
- Text version of audio information need to be provided. 'audio transcription' and assistive technology for persons with hearing disability need to be there for effective communication.
- In public buildings there need to be a person with orientation on basic sign language to assist persons with disability.



Fig 09 – Dhaka Social Services Office – no sign language support for persons with hearing disability



Fig 10 – Chittagong Medical College and Hospital – outdoor information desk

3.3 Corridor

Findings

Even though corridors are wide enough in most buildings, the accessibility is often limited by the bottom track of the collapsible gate, placement of furniture, and plantation box and storage material in corridor. We find bottom track of collapsible gate up to 25mm high in the transition points of the corridor, which limits the accessibility of the wheelchair users and causes tripping up of persons with visual disability. In markets corridors are often narrowed down as the vendors and shopkeepers use it for displaying their products. Floor guidance, handrails, directional or informational signage are not used anywhere to facilitate persons with disability. In many buildings the arrangement of artificial lighting is absent.



Fig 11 – Dhaka New Market passage between the shops

Accessibility Analysis

1. Corridor wide enough for wheelchair movement.
2. Floor surface slip resistance and stable.
3. Colour contrast between wall surface and doors/fixtures.
4. Lighting level adequate and well positioned.
5. Level change has ramp in corridor.
6. Tactile indicator in corridor (wall/path).
7. Signage to denote different facilities.

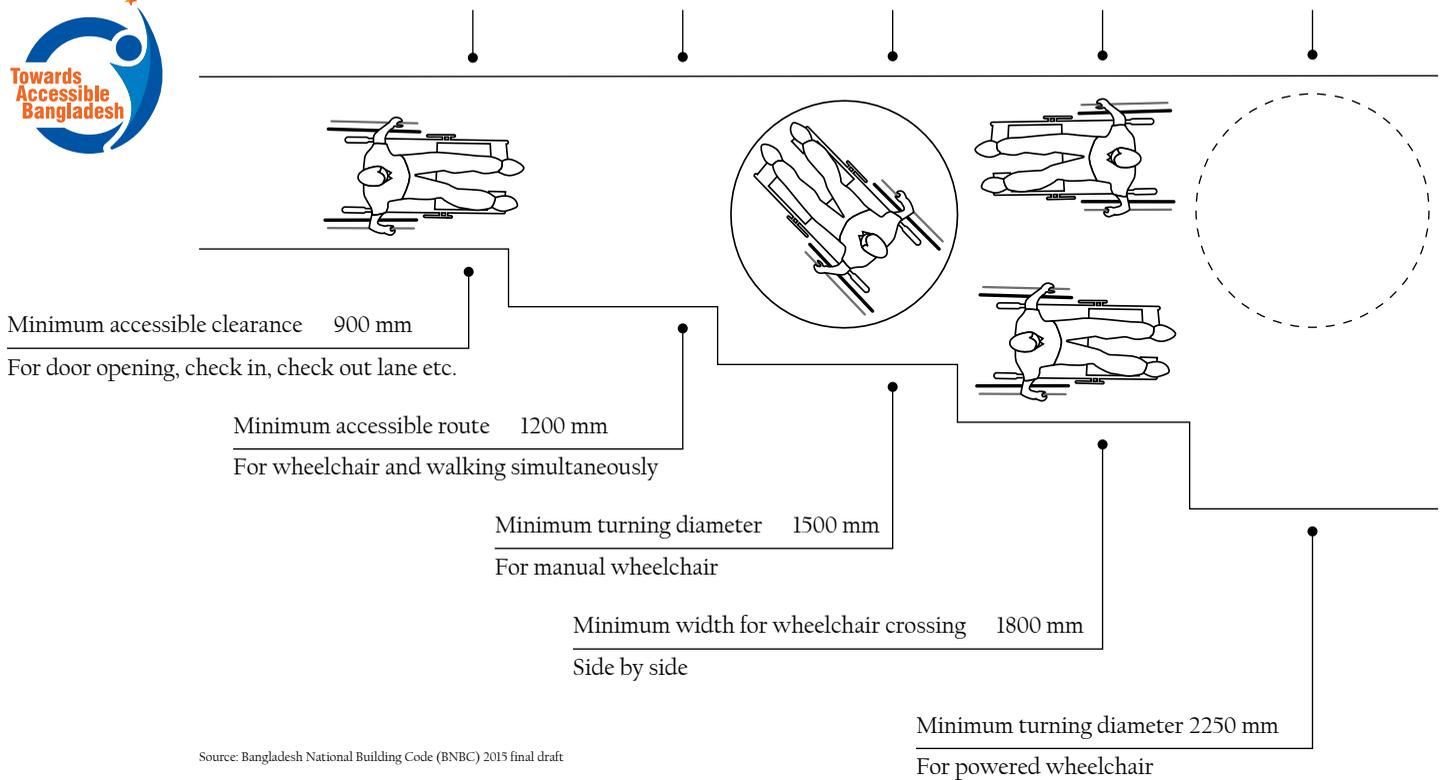


Recommendations

- Corridors must be unobstructed and without level variation. Ramp will be needed in case of short rise.
- Continuous tactile guidance on the floor to the functional areas need to be provided.
- Directional and informational signage with pictograms need to be provided to indicate different facilities and directions.
- Colour contrast between floor and wall, door and adjacent surface need to be used.
- Sharp edges need to be avoided in the corner of the wall.



Fig 12 – University of Dhaka – Register Building – goods are stacked at corridor



3.4 Vertical Circulation

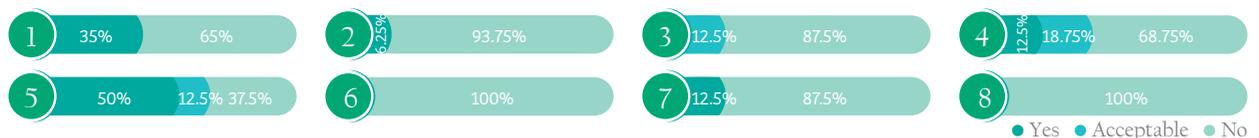
Findings

Stair is the only means of vertical circulation in 65% of the buildings which limits the access of wheelchair users to the functional spaces and facilities. These stairs often lack tactile indication, appropriate handrail, proper nosing and colour contrast of stairs which help persons with disabilities to use it comfortably. Most of the stairs have handrail in one side only. These handrails are not slip resistant and often not comfortable for gripping, which makes it difficult for the person with disability to keep balance.

Lifts and accessible routes are not denoted with directional and informational signage. Even though we found lifts to be wide enough in most cases, but these lack other accessible facilities like audible door opening and braille lettering which helps person with visual disability to use lifts independently.

Accessibility Analysis

1. Ramp/Elevator/Lift for all level.
2. Tactile and visual information to indicate different level.
3. Detectable tactile warning at the top, bottom and intermediate landing of the stairs.
4. Ramp and stairs have handrails in both side.
5. Doors of lifts wide enough for wheelchair users.
6. Audible door opening/closing and door indicators are in lift.
7. Lift control switches have braille to aid persons with visual disability.
8. Signage to denote accessible means of vertical circulation and floor level.

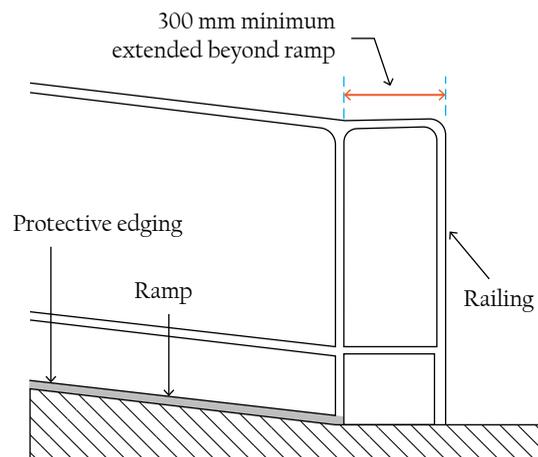
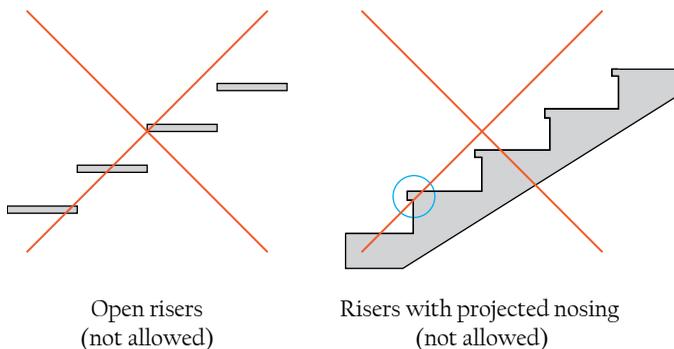
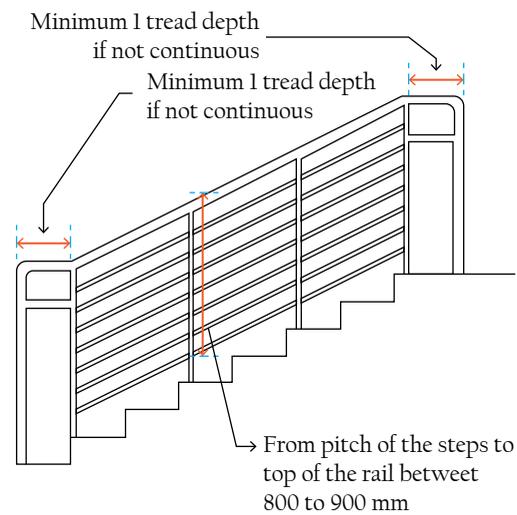
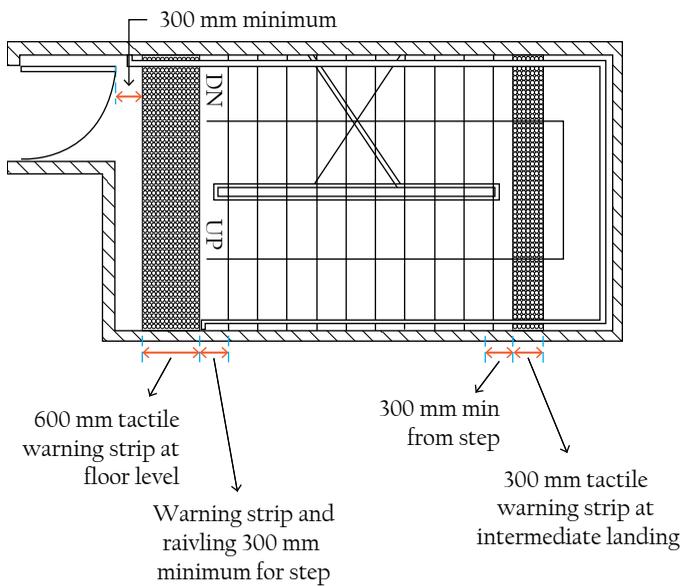


Recommendations

- Lift or elevator is must in public buildings. Old buildings without lifts need to arrange platform lift or manual lift.
- Tactile indicator need to be provided at top, bottom, intermediate landing of the stair, lift lobby. Colour contrast need to be used at the nosing of the steps of the stairs for persons with low vision.
- In public building tread need to be wider (least 300 mm) to facilitate the crutch and stick users. The risers need to follow the minimum standard of 125mm height.
- There need to be handrail in both sides of the stair/ramp. It needs to be easily grabble, round shaped (35 to 45 mm in diameter) and slip resistant.



Fig 13 – University of Dhaka – Register Building – stairs are the only way used for vertical circulation



Source: Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) 2015 final draft

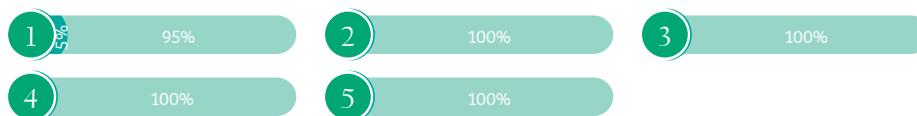
3.5 Emergency Evacuation

Findings

Emergency escape is absent in 95% of the buildings, let alone the facilities for person with disability. The door of the escape stair of Dhaka WASA building is locked with a collapsible gate at ground level. It lacks proper lighting and blocked with storage material. The emergency alarm is not accompanied with visual alarm which makes it ineffective for persons with hearing disability. In case of any incidence persons with disability would be the worst victims, as there is no specific policy for the person with disability to evacuate in emergency situation.

Accessibility Analysis

1. There is an Emergency Evacuation path.
2. Emergency exit clearly marked with proper signage.
3. Emergency Exit clear of all obstructions.
4. Audible alarms supplemented by visual alarms.
5. Ground level exit accessible for wheelchair users.



● Yes ● Acceptable ● No

Recommendations

- Escape routes need to be made accessible for all.
- Fire proof waiting areas need to be provided where people can stay before rescuing.
- For safety measures visual alarm need to be communicated with light signals for persons with hearing disability.
- Acoustic information or audible alarm need to be used for persons with visual disability such as audio signal in the direction to escape routes.
- Tactile mapping need to be provided in the escape route.



Fig 14 – Dhaka WASA Bhaban – emergency stair is locked



Fig 15 – Chittagong Development Authority – lift is too small for wheelchair users

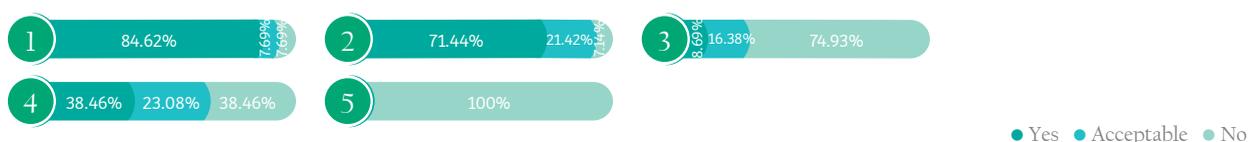
3.6 Doors

Findings

Width of the doors in public buildings are acceptable in most cases. Use of heavy glass door at entrance is seen in many buildings, which are hard to operate for persons with disability. And also, there is no safety marking on glass doors which may cause accidents. Door controls, locks are not in proper height to be operated from sitting position.

Accessibility Analysis

1. Door wide enough for wheelchair users.
2. Door/door frame colors are different from the adjoining wall.
3. Door control operable from both standing and sitting in a wheelchair position.
4. Door is easy to operate with one hand.
5. Clear safety marking on the glass doors.



Recommendations

- Doors need to be with minimum clearance of 900 mm.
- Doors need to be double way swing and light weights so that it can be easily operated.
- Door control need to be in a height of 900 mm to 1100mm from the floor.
- Door handle need to be grab door handle or lever type handle. Door knob should not be used as it cannot be operated by the persons with hand function disability.
- Colour contrast needs to be used in door control, door lock, doorbell etc.
- Glass door must have safety marking to avoid accidents. For the person with low vision glass door is a potential threat to safety.



Fig 16 – Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Toilet – too narrow door



Fig 17 – Chittagong New Market –toilet door is high from the floor level

3.7 Meeting Room

Findings

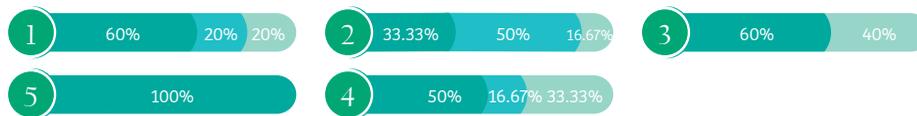
Meetings rooms are often in upper floors of building which makes it inaccessible as the buildings themselves are not accessible. There is no special arrangement for the person with disability. The tables in meeting rooms are inappropriate for wheelchair users. Stages in auditoriums and seminar rooms are also not accessible for persons with disability.



Fig 18 – Tejgaon Police Station – meeting room

Accessibility Analysis

1. Meeting room accessible from entrance of the building (free of steps and corridor obstructions).
2. Meeting room have sufficient space for wheelchair users.
3. Meeting table suitable for wheelchair users.
4. Lighting level adequate and well positioned.
5. Colour contrast to distinguish between surface and fittings/fixtures.



● Yes ● Acceptable ● No

Recommendations

- Meeting rooms need to have special arrangements for person with disability. Wheelchair accessible table in a height of max 800mm with sufficient knee clearance of min 680 mm need to be provided.



Fig 19 – Conference Room of Dhaka South City Corporation

- In auditoriums, cinemas, theatres wheelchair spaces need to be provided alongside the fixed chairs to sit with others, preferably in front row.
- Access to the stage must be step-free. If necessary, arrangement for portable ramps or lifting systems need to be available.
- Tactile direction strips in door and colour contrast in furniture and fixtures need to be used to facilitate persons with visual disability.
- Bangla Sign language interpreter and audio transcription equipment need to be provided for the person with hearing disability.
- Direction and informational signage with pictograms need to be provided to direct person with disabilities to relevant facilities.

3.8 Toilet

Findings

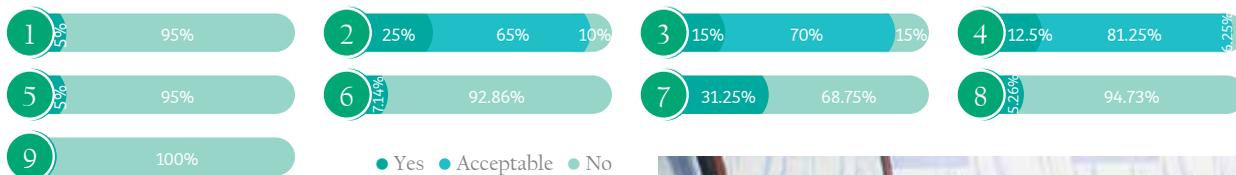
Total toilets of public buildings 95% of those are neither accessible nor usable, because of lack of space for wheelchair, floor curb, inappropriate door width, low level of lighting, absence of grab bars, absence of high commode and inaccessible placement of washroom accessories. Most of the toilets are obstructed by the floor curb. None of the facilities are provided in proper height for person with disability. Only in Gabtoli bus terminal we found an accessible toilet.



Fig 20 – University of Dhaka – Register Building – toilet

Accessibility Analysis

1. Toilet accessible for Wheelchair (free of steps and corridor obstructions) users.
2. Toilets have high commode.
3. Door of the toilet wide enough for wheelchair user.
4. Sufficient space inside the toilet cubicle for wheelchair user to be able to enter and use the facilities.
5. Place for safe disposal of sanitary napkins in the cubicle that can be used by a wheelchair user also.
6. Slip resistant handrails with commode, basin and other wash facilities.
7. Toilet cubicle free of obstacles and door curb which can cause a person with visual disability to trip up.
8. Door control, lock and light switch, mirror placed in appropriate height and within the reach of wheelchair user to be easily operated.
9. Tactile signage to identify toilets and wash facilities for persons with visual and hearing disability.



Recommendations

- At least one washroom for persons with disability needs to be designed in both male and female toilet cluster.
- Height of the top of the water closet needs to be between 450mm to 480mm from the floor.
- Mirror needs to be placed at a height of 1000 mm from the bottom of the mirror to floor.
- Wash basins needs to have a free knee space of at least 680 mm high.
- Washroom accessories, operable parts and controls need to be in colour contrast with the adjacent wall and be positioned in proper height so that wheelchair users can operate and use.



Fig 21– Gabtoli Bus Terminal – only accessible toilet among the audited places & buildings

- The width of the door need to be of minimum 900 mm.
- Movable grab bars need to be provided.
- Emergency call button needs to be installed.
- Signage and pictograms need to be provided to convey information.

3.9 Water Point

Findings

Only four public buildings have water point among twenty buildings that have been surveyed. In Dhaka railway station the water point for persons with disability itself is not usable by the wheelchair user or persons with visual disability. In Chittagong railway station the water point does not have enough space for wheelchair user. Also, the basins are not in appropriate height to be used by all.

Accessibility Analysis

1. Water point in the building/place?
2. Sufficient space for a wheelchair user or crutch users to reach and use the water point.
3. Tactile direction of the water point for persons with visual disability.



● Yes ● Acceptable ● No

Recommendations

- Water Point needs to be at the front of a building/place.
- Sufficient space need to be ensured for wheelchair or crutch users.
- Tactile guidance need to be ensured for persons with visual disability.
- Tap needs to be lever type for persons with finger mobility.



Fig 22 – Kamalapur Railway Station – tap is out of reach for wheelchair user at the water point



Fig 23 – Gabtoli Bus Terminal – flat surface under the water point splashes the water into body

3.10 Parking

Findings

Parking space allocated for the person with disability is mentioned in Dhaka & Chittagong Building Construction Rules 2008. But no practical implication of the act is seen in public buildings. The car parking space is the important part of a building or place. Only 35% of the building has allocated parking space but there is no reserve parking for persons with disabilities. Moreover 50% parking are in open space and 15% are road side parking. Most of the cases there is no way to go to the upper floor through parking area except the stairs. Only DSCC has a lift in parking area but it is not working. Most of the car parking spaces are not accessible for persons with disabilities. The amount of light is inadequate for the person with low vision in the car parking space.

Accessibility Analysis

1. Reserve parking place for persons with disabilities.
2. Parking located in the immediate floor of the ground floor.
3. Lighting adequate and well positioned.
4. Ramp or lift to enter into the main building from parking.
5. Reserved parking indicated with proper signage.



Recommendations

- 5% of the total parking of a building or a place needed to be reserved for persons with disabilities
- Parking lots for person with disability need to have dimensions of 4800 mm by 3600 mm.
- Signage need to be used to indicate the reserved parking space for persons with disabilities.



Fig 24 – Chittagong District Social Service Office – parking



Fig 25 – Dhaka WASA Bhaban – parking

3.11 Medical Facility

Doctors' Chamber

Findings

Rooms are accessible as the doors are wide enough and there is no level variation. The level of light is acceptable in 20%. In 5% of cases beds are easy transfer for wheelchair users.

Recommendation

- Medical facilities need to be accessible and functional for the persons with disability.
- Adjustable and portable examination equipment need to be provided.



Fig 26 – Dhaka Medical College and Hospital – outdoor

Pathology

Findings

The entry door of the pathology room is wide enough for wheelchair users' 42%. But the doors are heavy and not suitable for the person who has disability in hand function to operate. In 4% of the cases the examination equipment are adjustable for the person with disability. Height of the bed is acceptable in 4% of the building.

Recommendation

- Medical facilities need to be accessible and functional for the persons with disability.
- Adjustable and portable examination equipment and beds should be provided.



Fig 27 – Dhaka Medical College and Hospital – X ray machine



Fig 28 – Dhaka Medical College and Hospital – waiting room

Visitors' Room

Findings

We surveyed two medical hospitals, one is Dhaka Medical College & Hospital and another is Chittagong Medical College & Hospital. There is no reserve space for persons with disability in visitors' room. But the visitors' rooms are accessible as there is no level variation, and also doors are wide enough for wheelchair users. But there is no directional signage with pictograms to indicate the room, only written information is available. The level of light is acceptable in 22%.

Recommendation

- There needs to be designated space for persons with disability in the visitors' room.
- Signage and pictogram needs to be used to indicate the designated space within the visitors' room.
- Fixture and furniture need to be in colour contrast with the adjacent wall.



Fig 29 – Chittagong Medical College & Hospital – steep ramp



Fig 30 – Chittagong Medical College and Hospital – hard to communicate with doctors for persons with hearing disability

3.12 Transportation

Findings

We have inspected two bus stations and two railway stations of Dhaka and Chittagong. No bus or train compartments are accessible for wheelchair users and it is also very difficult to ride those for persons with physical and visual disability. There is a big gap between the Platform and Train, stairs are also very steep and doors are narrow for a wheelchair user. Passage between the two rows of seats both buses and trains are narrow for wheelchair users and stairs are big barrier to ride a bus or train for them also. There is no accessible toilet in the train also. Bus or train does not have any ramp and designated place for wheelchair user and no reserve seats for other persons with disabilities.



Fig 31 – Kamalapur Railway Station – no ramp to get on and off the train

Recommendations

- Footpath need to be constructed to ride on and off bus directly.
- There need to be ramp to ride on and off the buses and trains for wheelchair/crutch etc. users.
- Reserve seats need to be kept for all types of persons with disabilities.
- Compartment need to be accessible for wheelchair users.
- Designated space should be incorporated in Bus and Train for wheelchair users.
- Accessible toilet need to be made in trains.



Fig 32 – Chittagong Railway Station – ticket counter's height is too high for wheelchair user



Fig 33 – Chittagong Bohoddar Hut Bus Terminal – place is muddy due to rain

4

External Views

To explore the experience of relevant academia, Professionals government officials on the learning, practices and implementation of accessibility for persons with disabilities in Bangladesh, we have taken some interview. The identity is being anonymous because of their professional duty. The summary of their opinion is given below.



Fig 34 – Audit Team of Dhaka

The research team has conducted 7 Key Informant Interviews (KII) with two academia of Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology, a top most high official from the Department of Architecture, a high official of Housing & Building Research Institute, a high official of WASA Chittagong, a high official of Education Engineering Department, Chittagong and Ex-president, Institute of Architect of Bangladesh.

The academicians of BUET have stated that basically, knowledge about ‘universal accessibility’ and lack of necessary information are the prime causes of the neglecting attitude towards accessibility for persons with disabilities in the infrastructures. People involved in monitoring do not have any necessary training or education on universal accessibility. Trainings are absolutely necessary because, those will do better monitoring who knows better what they need to monitor. Actually there is no monitoring on universal accessibility. The Ministry of Housing and Public Works plays the key role of monitoring Building Code in different capacities through its organizations. However, monitoring responsibilities and working mechanisms are not clearly defined for the national organizations. In many cases, there are interdependency and overlapping of responsibilities, which make implementation of codes more complex. Now two things are needed to be done. Firstly, persons with disabilities have to come forward to sanitize the organizations and raise awareness. Secondly, we have to keep in mind ‘universal accessibility’ in every aspect of researching, legislating and designing.

Architect from the Department of Architecture acknowledged the limitations of universal accessibility in building construction considering the persons with disabilities. We have constructed some buildings considering only wheelchair accessibility but ignore others. Generally, we do not consider the accessibility issues of the persons with hearing or visual disabilities in designing and construction of a building. However, the government has prepared the new version of Bangladesh National Building Code. BNBC has articulated the universal accessibility holistically. After publication this will be available for all. Ensuring accessibility we have to follow this policy.

A renowned architect (Ex-President, Institute of Architect of Bangladesh) has expressed his hope regarding the new steps by the government. He added that Government is aware now. They are impelling to take occupancy certificate and trying to make links. To take the occupancy certificate, one needs to pass the plan. Then the authority comes to check whether the plan accords with the conditions of passing if there is any deviation – the passed plan with a ramp design is still there or turned into a parking lot. If everything is according to the passed plan and BNBC then the occupancy certificate will be given.

An engineer of Education Engineering Department, Chittagong Division told that they got 130 projects those passed having designed for universal accessibility (ramp for bumpy areas, wheelchair accessible toilets etc.) in 2011-12 fiscal year only in Chittagong district. Some projects are already finished; some are going on.

A senior official of WASA, Chittagong acknowledged that he used to think accessibility is so costly. But experience taught him different. He said, suppose construction of a building may worth five crores BDT. It can easily made it accessible for the persons with disabilities if can be spent just one lac more. Persons with disabilities are also consumers. They have to come to WASA as well.



Fig 35 – Audit Team of Chittagong

5

Challenges

As a Disabled Peoples Organization B-SCAN have the limited financial and human resources. So it was a huge challenge for us to complete this audit successfully. The time constrain is one of the major limitations for us to perform this audit fruitfully. Because we were able to finish the audit of 20 buildings & places among 30 which we had selected. But the dedication from the team members helped us to overcome this limitation. We felt that one building should need at least half a day to audit as a team and in a participatory way. Lack of literature and policy review is one of the key things we find out.



Fig 36 – Chittagong New Market – high foot path and drain make difficulties for persons with mobility disability

6

Concluding Remarks

The knowledge about accessibility of persons with disabilities is still limited. However, the positive thing is in 2015-16 budget 10 million taka has been allocated in this sector. Although, we do not know how and where the money has been spent. The new revised Bangladesh National Building Code is yet to be published. Different departments of Government have become interested in working on this issue and in many cases steps are being taken to implement the accessibility. But we still see the lack of mentality of working including people with disabilities or their organizations.



**Nothing
Will Happen
Until We
Unlock
Our Mind**

7

Follow up in Dhaka

7.1 Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC)

After submission of our recommendation to the CEO of DSCC in 2015 the lift of the underground parking has been active immediately and that lift is still running smoothly and it is designated for the persons with disability with signage. Beside this no other changes were made in the building but a good relation has developed with DSCC. They took the consultation of B-SCAN to construct tactile tiles on pavement, which is implementing for the first time



Fig 37 – Meeting with the CEO Mr. Ansar Ali Khan of DSCC

in Bangladesh in 2017 for persons with visual disability. Not only that the tactile tiles have been introduced to the country but also it has started manufacture here for the first time. There are two types of tiles is used for the persons with visual disability, one is for warning and the other one is directional tiles. In Bangladesh only warning tiles were available. But now both the tiles are produced here. B-SCAN found out the proper tiles manufacturer and connect them with DSCC. But they were not producing the indicator tiles. Hence, B-SCAN guide them and after revision of the sample production of indicator tiles for several times we got the proper indicator tiles.

7.2 Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC)

Tactile tiles were also introduced by the DNCC. As there was no connection with B-SCAN or any other DPO who could guide them to set the proper tiles they started the work only with warning tiles and no colour contrast. Still it can be seen on the pavements of gulshan main roads. B-SCAN took the initiative to meet the CEO of DNCC and they took our suggestion seriously. After the discussion the project engineer communicate with our referenced vendor. They took the design and produced the indicator tiles and set into the other pavements of DNCC. This things are not costly and it can be replicated in the other city corporations and municipalities of Bangladesh.



Fig 38 – Meeting with the Chief Engineer Brig. Gen. Sayeed Anwarul Islam of DNCC

7.3 University of Dhaka

After submission of our recommendations to the Vice Chancellor of University of Dhaka on 13 Nov, 2016, steps has been taken to renovate 2 accessible toilets, ramp and a wheelchair lift in Register Building. Beside this Chief Engineer of University of Dhaka had adopted the current works of separate toilets for men and women at Arts Faculty (Kola Bhaban) had renovated under the supervision of B-SCAN and design of toilets, ramp and lift design were provided by our volunteer Architect Zakir Ahmed Apu, Identity Bangladesh and Amar Source.

7.4 Roundtable Discussion in Dhaka

“Accessibility audit to ensure WASH services and rights of the person with disabilities” jointly organized by B-SCAN and WaterAid Bangladesh on 22 November, 2014 at The Daily Star Centre. Renowned academia, representatives from government and non-government organizations and policy makers were present at the discussion and shared their valuable knowledge and experience shared on the presentation that were shown on the findings of the B-SCAN audit along with recommendations and strategic plan to overcome the problems.



Fig 39 – Roundtable Discussion at Daily Star

8

Follow up in Chittagong

8.1 Chittagong Railway Station

By the recommendation of B-SCAN Chittagong Railway Station now have tactile blocks for persons with visual disability from entrance to platform and also the Ramp has been reconstructed.



Fig 40 – Press Conference at Chittagong

8.2 Press Conference at Chittagong

A press conference was held on 15 July 2014 at the Chittagong Press Club to disseminate the findings of the accessibility audit of the 20 buildings and places of Dhaka and Chittagong.

8.3 Chittagong WASA Bhaban

Chittagong WASA Bhaban made a new ramp at their office after our access audit and the recommendations submitted to the Managing Director.



Fig 41 – New Ramp at Chittagong Railway Station



Fig 42 – Tactile at Chittagong Rail Station

Scope of Work

The hospitals can be hugely renovated for all persons with disabilities along with elderly and pregnant women. Especially in the water points and toilets.
Renovation and building new Public toilets of municipalities and other city corporations.
Accessible markets and shopping centers both the government and private owned.
Victim Support Center under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
Model Police Stations under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
Accessible Stations under Bangladesh Railway.
Accessible bus stoppages in Dhaka and Major Cities of Bangladesh.



Fig 43 – Dhaka New Market Water Point – seats are barrier for wheelchair

New Access Audit

In the continuation of this study B-SCAN motivated into new effort to build an accessible Bangladesh. Currently we have completed a similar access audit in May, 2018 and in May, 2019 by the support of PLAN International Bangladesh to understanding the existing situation of different public transportation, government services infrastructures, public infrastructures and service systems which need to be adapted and made accessible for all persons with disabilities, especially for the women with disabilities. These study comes out from the learning of the access audit of 2014.



Abbreviation and Acronym

| | |
|--------------|---|
| ASCoN | Asian Spinal Cord Network |
| BNBC | Bangladesh National Building Code |
| BVIPS | Bangladesh Visually Impaired Peoples Society |
| BUET | Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology |
| CDDA | Chittagong Deaf Development Association (CDDA) |
| CRPD | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| CRP | Center for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed |
| CUET | Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology |
| DPO | Disabled People's Organization |
| DSCC | Dhaka South City Corporation |
| DNCC | Dhaka North City Corporation |
| DSS | Department of Social Services |
| DU | University of Dhaka |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| KII | Key Informant Interview |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| PNSP | Protibondhi Nagorik Shangathaner Parishad |
| PSTC | Population Services & Training Center |
| RCD | Rehabilitation Center for the Disabled |
| SDSL | Society of the Deaf and Sign Language users |
| WASA | Water Supply and Sewerage Authority |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

Reference Standards

- https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf
- <http://www.rajukdhaka.gov.bd/rajuk/page/web/devcontrol/DhakaImaratNirmanBidhimala-2008.pdf>
- <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>
- <https://bit.ly/2MOixOc>
- [http://www.apscl.com/download/Bangladesh%20National%20Building%20Code-2015%20Vol_1_3%20\(Draft\).pdf](http://www.apscl.com/download/Bangladesh%20National%20Building%20Code-2015%20Vol_1_3%20(Draft).pdf)
- <http://www.blog.kgwedi.com/2016/01/>

