

Access=Ability: Catalyst of Social Change

Written by Nidhi Arora

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AccessAbility is a leading Universal Design and Disability Employment Specialist, providing integrated solutions and delivering value by catalysing social change. AccessAbility aims to unlock opportunities for people with disabilities by facilitating accessibility in the built environment, promoting employment opportunities and providing adequate training.

With their motto 'Access = Ability', the company strongly believes that an inclusive environment significantly contributes towards making a better tomorrow for all. Company aims is to provide the corporate world simple end-to-end employment and environmental solutions to 'access the ability' within the persons with disabilities.

Founders of AccessAbility

Shivani Gupta

With a double graduation in Hotel Management and Architecture, and a PG degree in Inclusive Environments from UK under her belt, Shivani Gupta is a well known Access Consultant in India. In the last eight years of her work, Shivani has authored several books on accessibility which are widely used as resource manuals by the practicing architects and designers. She is regularly nominated by the Government of India as a subject expert to advise on issues and policies relating to accessibility, and has been a recipient of several awards such as the Helen Keller Award (2008), Cavinkare Ability Mastery Award (2008), National (Role Model) Award given by the President of India (2004), and Sulabh International Women of the Year Award (1996) for her consistent inputs towards promotion of inclusive environments. She presently chairs AccessAbility.

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Vikas Sharma

Vikas Sharma, an Occupational Therapist with a post-graduation in Inclusive Environments from UK, is a specialist in Assistive Technology, Ergonomics, Manual Handling and Universal Design. With over 8 years of professional experience as an access consultant, he has held various advisory, trainer, lecturer and membership positions both nationally and internationally.

Sachin Verma

Sachin Verma, a post graduate in Information Technology from Australia, is a person dedicated to bring positive change. His specialty includes Business Development and enabling access to Information Technology for persons with disabilities. He has gained valuable insight on the needs of persons with disabilities through his experience working in the corporate social responsibility sector in India.

AccessAbility is a social entrepreneurship that was formed in 2006. Disappointed by the charitable approach taken towards disability by the society, these youngsters, equipped with higher education in the subject set out to do things differently.

AccessAbility, registered under the Indian Partnership Act, is a completely self funded entrepreneurship where no grants or donations are accepted. The Company believes that responsible service providers and employers will recognise the long term social, ethical and business mileage in valuing their differently abled clients and employees, and should therefore be willing to invest in making provisions for them. AccessAbility provides professional services of being a one stop interface for the corporate sector to include people with different abilities as contributing clients and employees.

By facilitating the industry in mainstreaming people with disabilities in their functioning, Accessability hopes to be able to Include, Enable & Empower people with different abilities.

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The mission of AccessAbility is to provide a platform for mainstreaming of people with disabilities by including them in all our environments, enabling them to be contributing members of society and empowering them with information that will give them an opportunity to be out and about.

The company offers many services that emphasise on giving a people with disabilities a great push in achieving their goals through asking the service providers and employers to make their premises and policies inclusive for people with disabilities. Some of their services are:

Access Appraisal

Review of the architectural layouts and plans of the proposed buildings to incorporate access features for differently abled people at the planning stage itself.

Access Auditing

An extensive physical Audit of the existing built environment and services to determine feasibility of use for differently abled people who may be employees, members of the public, clients or visitors, and recommend improvements.

Accessible Signage Design

We provide signage design consultancy to ensure that signage are accessible for all users and to develop a way-finding system that enables persons with vision impairments and cognitive disabilities.

Policy Audit

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A policy audit is a good way to ensure that all policies -- may be Governmental or of some company include people with different abilities.

Disability Awareness & Sensitisation Trainings

Disability awareness and sensitisation is a key to good client/guest experience. These trainings are tailor made for industry type.

Research

Research of various technical as well as policy related topics related to disability.

Diversity Recruitment | Enabling people with disabilities.

Company provides a virtual platform where employers can link to perspective job seekers with different abilities. AccessAbility Job Portal is one of the most cherished projects undertaken by AccessAbility, initiated with the aim of providing an easy to use web based platform for both the differently abled job seekers and equal opportunities employers.

In India there are 70 million differently abled people with 99.86 % of them currently unemployed in spite of them being capable enough to perform jobs as independent productive members of the society. People with different abilities too have the latent potential to contribute effectively to the mainstream of society, thus further adding to our nation's economic growth. If jobs are provided to them, they won't remain a substantial underutilisation of the nation's potential.

Free2Wheel:

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Free2Wheel, a first of its kind information service in India, by AccessAbility endeavors to encourage people using wheelchairs in getting out and about. This web site has over 1900 listings of places of interest in Delhi and NCR like budget and star hotels, shopping malls, historical monuments etc Each listing is accompanied with an accessibility overview of the site.

Clients of Accessibility

AccessAbility has got a huge list of clients in its fold. They are: ITC, Welcomegroup, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland, Indian School Of Business Hyderabad, Mothers Pride Schools, Delhi, Jamia Milia University, National Institute Of Visually Handicapped, Dehradun, IBM Daksh, Office of commissioner of people with disabilities, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy Of Administration, VFS India Private Limited, Shishu Sarothi, Fortis Healthcare Limited, and Tata Teleservices Limited.