

Development of Guidelines to Improve the Infrastructure to Address the Mobility of Blind and Visually Impaired Self Employed People of Sri Lanka

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Sight loss can affect a person's independence more than any disability. Unsurprisingly many people who lose their sight never go out unaccompanied again. Those that do overcome enormous difficulties to do so. These difficulties are very often magnified by undeveloped road infrastructure and public transport facilities. Encouraging greater access to transport and public transport can substantially transform the livelihoods of blind and visually impaired people and their family. Lack of Accessibility and mobility can make these people to find employment, to gain an education; access to health services and also this limit their social and recreational activities. Therefore these people should be able to travel independently within locally or within urban and suburban areas at least for their needs using public transport. Though Sri Lanka has developed specifications for road infrastructure and public transport, those are not adequately address the requirements of blind and visually impaired people. The number of blind and visually impaired people has considerably increased due to thirty years civil war.

Therefore study the need of blind and visually impaired people is an urgent requirement. Once the requirements of blind and visually impaired people are identified it is necessary to provide solutions for them. The development of tactile paving guideline and road infrastructure development guidelines will address these issues. Mainly four different methodologies were used for this research. Initially literature was reviewed. Standard guidelines of developed countries, laws and regulations in our country, previous research papers, websites related to this and relevant publications referred .After that a case study was done on the tactile guide way to identify the practical issues of existing tactile guide way and to study response by blind and visually impaired people. Three blind persons were used for this study. Then a questionnaire survey was done for selected blind and visually impaired people to identify their issues and get their suggestions and clarify issues noticed during the case study. Then the second questionnaire survey was done by giving options which were identified in first questionnaire survey. Therefore second questionnaire survey done after the analysis of data collected from first questionnaire survey.

Finally I interviewed an expert who has experience on this subject. Based on results and decisions made by all these methodologies, our own guidelines and specifications have been developed.

Key Words:

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