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KUSOM POLICY LAB

Nepali Case Study Series

Case 3

Case Title:

**Disability-Friendly Infrastructure in
Pokhara: A Quest for Inclusivity**

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Case 3

Disability-Friendly Infrastructure in Pokhara: A Quest for Inclusivity

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Tale of Discontent and Negligence

The state of public facilities, from transportation systems to public restrooms, often falls short of meeting established accessibility standards, thereby restricting individuals with disabilities from fully participating in public life. In Ward No. 9 of Pokhara, a public toilet built at a cost of Rs 1 crore saw a grand inauguration on October 13. Despite a joint venture involving 60% investment from NRN (Non-Resident Nepali) and 40% from the metropolis, the facility lacks features that would make it accessible to people with disabilities. While Nepal has signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 and has anti-discrimination clauses in its constitution, the metropolis's efforts at inclusivity lack collaboration with organizations dedicated to disability issues. This has led to infrastructure that does not meet required standards.

Problem

Inadequate disability-friendly infrastructure in Pokhara.

Solution


Collaboration among local government, private sector, and disability advocates.

Outcome

Incremental but incomplete improvements in accessibility features.

Hem Gurung: The Advocate and His Concerns


Hem Gurung, a wheelchair user and the president of Swabalamban Jeevan Paddhati Kendra (Self-reliant Livelihood Society) Pokhara, has been a vocal advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. He raised issues about the facility's lack of handicap-friendly features. Despite improvements in some areas, there still exists a disconnect between policy formulation and implementation, particularly when it comes to established standards. Hem Gurung believes that achieving true inclusivity requires efforts from both the public and private sectors. In Pokhara's bustling New Road area, people often have to hurry to reach ATM (Automated Teller Machine) booths. The majority of these banks are located on the second or third floors, lacking accessible structures. There is a noticeable absence of provisions for easy access to ATM booths.



However, tactile blocks have been installed on the main square footpath of the Pokhara metropolis to assist visually impaired individuals. Ramps have been constructed in several government offices, and some public toilets are disability-friendly. While these are commendable attempts, they have not completely resolved the challenges faced by people with disabilities.

Lessons Learned: A Call for Adherence and Collaboration

In spite of the existence of national policies aimed at promoting inclusivity, the implementation mechanisms suffer from a lack of coherence and effective cross-sectoral collaboration among governmental agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders engaged in disability advocacy. Khomraj Sharma, President of the Disabled Federation of Gandaki, stresses that adherence to standards is crucial when constructing disability-friendly structures. He also points out that the efforts will only become effective when there is proper coordination with the end-users, i.e., people with disabilities. The two stories above highlight the pivotal role that both government and private sectors can play in creating a more inclusive society. While improvements are being made, there is a discernible gap between policy and practice. For Nepal to fulfill its commitment to Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in terms of accessible physical environments, collaboration and strict adherence to standards are imperative.





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नेपाली उदाहरण अध्ययन शृंखला

अध्ययन ३

उदाहरण शीर्षक:

पोखरामा अपाङ्गता मैत्री पूर्वाधार: समावेशीताको खोजी

अध्ययन ३

पोखरामा अपाङ्गता मैत्री पूर्वाधार: समावेशीताको खोजी

असन्तुष्टि र लापरवाहीको कथा

सार्वजनिक सुविधा, यातायात प्रणालीदेखि सार्वजनिक शौचालयसम्म, प्रायः अपाङ्गतामैत्री मापदण्डहरू पूरा गर्न असफल छन्, जसले गर्दा अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूलाई सार्वजनिक जीवनमा पूर्णरूपमा सहभागी हुनमा समस्या खडा गरिएको छ। पोखराको वडा नं ९ मा १ करोडको लागतमा बनेको सार्वजनिक शौचालयको असोज १३ गते भव्य उद्घाटन गरिएको थियो। एनआरएन (गैरआवासीय नेपाली)को ६० प्रतिशत र महानगरको ४० प्रतिशत लगानी रहेको संयुक्त लगानीमा बनेको शौचालयमा भने अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूलाई पहुँचयोग्य बनाउने सुविधाहरूको अभाव छ। सन् २००६ मा अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूको अधिकारसम्बन्धी संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघको महासन्धिमा हस्ताक्षर गरेको नेपालको संविधानमा भेदभाव विरोधी दफाहरू छन्। तरपनि, समावेशीताका लागि महानगरका प्रयासहरूमा अपाङ्गतासम्बन्धी मुद्दाहरूमा समर्पित संस्थाहरूसँगको सहकार्यको कमी छ। यसले अपाङ्गतामैत्री पूर्वाधारहरूमा कमी देखिएको छ।

समस्या

पोखरामा अपाङ्गतामैत्री पूर्वाधार अपर्याप्त छ।

समाधान

स्थानीय सरकार, निजी क्षेत्र, र फरक क्षमताका व्यक्तिबीचको सहकार्य।

नतिजा

पहुँच सुविधाहरूमा वृद्धिशील तर अपूर्ण सुधारहरू।

हेम गुरुडः अभियन्ता र उनका सरोकारहरू

हवीलचेयर प्रयोगकर्ता तथा स्वाबलम्बन जीवन पद्धति केन्द्र (आत्मनिर्भर जीविकोपार्जन समाज) पोखराका अध्यक्ष हेम गुरुड अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिको अधिकारका लागि वकालत गर्दै आएका छन् । उनले अपाङ्गतामैत्री पूर्वाधार अभाव समस्याको विषयमा आवाज उठाए । कतिपय क्षेत्रमा सुधार भएतापनि नीति निर्माण र कार्यान्वयनको बीचमा अझै पनि खाडल रहेको छ, विशेष गरी अपाङ्गतामैत्री मापदण्डहरूको कुरा गर्दा । हेम गुरुडले प्रभावकारी समावेशीता हासिल गर्न सार्वजनिक र निजी दुवै क्षेत्रको प्रयास आवश्यक रहेको विश्वास व्यक्त गर्नुभयो । पोखराको भीडभाड न्यूरोड क्षेत्रमा एटिएम (अटोमेटेड टेलर मेसिन) बुथमा पुग्न अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिले समस्या सामना गर्नुपरेको उहाँको गुनासो छ । यी अधिकांश बैंकहरू दोस्रो वा तेस्रो तलामा अवस्थित छन्, अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिका लागि बैंकसम्म पुग्ने पहुँचयोग्य संरचनाहरू छैनन् । एटिएम बुथहरूमा सजिलो पहुँचको लागि संरचनाको उल्लेखनीय अभाव छ ।

यता, दृष्टिविहीन व्यक्तिलाई सहयोग गर्न पोखरा महानगरपालिकाको मुख्य चोकका फुटपाथमा ट्याक्टाइल ब्लक जडान गरिएको छ । धेरै सरकारी कार्यालयहरूमा च्याम्पहरू निर्माण गरिएका छन्, र केही सार्वजनिक शौचालयहरू अपाङ्गतामैत्री छन् । यी सराहनीय प्रयासहरू भए पनि अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूले सामना गर्ने चुनौतीहरूलाई पूर्ण रूपमा समाधान गर्न सकेका छैनन् ।

सिकेका पाठहरू: पालन र सहयोगको लागि अपिल

समावेशीता प्रवर्धन गर्ने उद्देश्यले राष्ट्रिय नीति भएपनि, कार्यान्वयन संयन्त्रहरू, सरकारी निकायहरू, गैर-सरकारी संस्थाहरू (एनजीओहरू) र अपांगताको वकालतमा संलग्न अन्य सरोकारवालाहरूबीच समन्वय र प्रभावकारी सहकार्यको अभाव छ । गण्डकी अपाङ्गता महासंघका अध्यक्ष खेमराज शर्मा अपाङ्गतामैत्री संरचना निर्माण गर्दा मापदण्डको पालना जरुरी रहेको बताउँछन् । अन्तिम प्रयोगकर्ता अर्थात् अपाङ्गता भएका व्यक्तिहरूसँग उचित समन्वय हुँदा मात्रै प्रयासहरू प्रभावकारी हुने उनको भनाइ छ । माथिका दुई कथाहरूले थप समावेशी समाज निर्माणमा सरकारी र निजी क्षेत्र दुवैले खेल्न सक्ने निर्णायक भूमिकालाई प्रकाश पार्छन् । सुधारहरू भइरहेपनि नीति र अभ्यासबीच स्पष्ट अन्तर छ । नेपालले दिगो विकास लक्ष्यहरू, विशेष गरी पहुँचयोग्य भौतिक वातावरणको सन्दर्भमा आफ्नो प्रतिबद्धता पूरा गर्न, सहकार्य र मापदण्डहरूको कडा पालना अनिवार्य छ ।



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