

Knowledge Partners



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The Indian Institute of Architects



Walk for ARCAUSE™ 4.0
our responsibility

Universal Design and Accessibility Walk for Arcause 4.0



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INTRODUCTION

The 'Universal Design and Accessibility Walk for Arcause 4.0' is a part of Project UDita (Universal Design is the answer) to spread awareness, educate and ideate on Universal Design and Inclusion. This 335-kilometre journey on foot from Chennai to Bengaluru, is spearheaded by architect Gita Balakrishnan. This initiative marks the fourth edition of a series of explorative walks and is aimed at raising awareness about creating inclusive environments for individuals of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. The earlier campaigns in 2022 - walks from Kolkata to Delhi (1700 km, on Power of Design), Kolkata to Dhaka (306 km, on Building bridges through Design) and Konark-Puri-Bhubaneswar (195 km, a walking studio on traditional wisdom) reinforced my commitment to promoting the transformative impact of good designs on individuals' lives.

Building on the success of previous campaigns in 2022 and 2023 where we focussed on the Power of Good Design and By engaging communities along the route, the walk aimed to emphasise the importance of architectural social responsibility and inspire positive change.

The flag-off ceremony, held at the Museum of Possibilities (MoP), was honoured by the presence of Jayashree Muralidharan, IAS, Secretary for the Department of Welfare for the Differently Abled in Chennai. The initiative is supported by esteemed organisations such as the Council of Architecture India, the Indian Institute of Architects, the Indian Institute of Interior Designers, and the National Association for Students of Architecture, Vidya Sagar, Samarthyam, Wheeling Happiness, SPA Bhopal and BVDU, Pune



ENGAGEMENTS

During the Universal Design and Accessibility Walk, presentations were delivered that emphasised the importance of accessible spaces for everyone.

Architects and architecture students were educated about legal frameworks like Sections 40 and 44 of the RPWD Act, urging them to integrate accessibility into designs. Examples and case studies were showcased that deliberated on practical implementation strategies, stressing architects' role in creating inclusive environments.

Interactions with **NGOs** highlighted their vital advocacy role. Collaborative strategies between NGOs and architects were explored to ensure effective representation of individuals with disabilities in design processes and infrastructure planning.

For **laypersons**, flashcards were created, offering simple explanations on universal design and accessibility. These cards covered the rights of persons with disabilities, the importance of accessible infrastructure, and tips for inclusive environments, aiming to raise awareness and empower advocacy in communities.

Overall, these efforts aimed to foster understanding of universal design principles and promote inclusivity across society, enabling everyone to participate fully and thrive.



TOOLS TO EMPATHISE

The flashcards, designed for laypersons, utilised simple photo interactions to engage users in understanding good and intuitive design practices. Through visually appealing images, they conveyed key concepts related to universal design and accessibility. The topics covered during the interactions included the rights of persons with disabilities, the significance of accessible infrastructure, and practical tips for fostering inclusive environments. By employing this interactive approach, the flashcards aimed to not only raise awareness about the importance of accessibility but also empower individuals to advocate for change in their communities.



THE JOURNEY

3

States

335

Kilometers

507989

Steps

800

Students

22

Days

1

Cause- UDita (Universal Design is the answer)



FROM GITA'S DESK

Day 1- 7th Jan 2024
Flag-off ceremony

Organisation visited: Museum of Possibilities (MoP)

From MOP to Saligramam

The flag-off ceremony at the Museum of Possibilities (MoP) was a pivotal moment for promoting Universal Design and accessibility. Flagged off by Jayashree Muralidharan, Secretary for the Department of Welfare for the Differently Abled, Chennai, it united representatives from NGOs, architects, students, and people from diverse backgrounds. MoP's focus on Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities aligned with the Walk's goal of raising awareness on universal design. The event emphasised collaborative efforts, highlighting governmental support and community engagement in creating inclusive environments. Overall, it catalysed efforts toward fostering inclusivity and commitment to accessible spaces for all.

Interactions with
NGOS PWD Students



Day 3 – 9th Jan 2024
From Nazarathpettai to Thiruvallur
Covered 17.4 kms
Organisation visited: NIEPVD

I had the opportunity to observe the diverse range of courses available for individuals with acquired blindness, pr blindness from birth which included hose with partial or complete blindness. Additionally, I learned about the printing process at the regional braille printing press, where academic books, novels, and short stories are provided to schools at subsidised or no cost, enhancing access to education for visually impaired individuals. We also interacted with Mr Livingston from Vasantam.

Interactions with
NGOS PWD



Interactions with
NGOS PWD Students



Day 2- 8th Jan 2024

From Saligramam to Nazarathpettai

Covered 14.1 kms

Organisation visited: Vidya Sagar

Vidya Sagar's workshop on universal design and accessibility fostered awareness by engaging students in a collaborative exploration of inclusive and accessible design principles. Students from four institutions of architecture in Chennai and surrounding regions gathered with enthusiasm at the Government Girls High School in Walajabad to engage in a collective painting endeavour, driven by a shared cause.

Interactions with
NGOS PWD Students



Day 4 – 10th Jan 2024

From Thiruvallur to Manavur

Covered 17.7 kms

Organisation visited: Anabalaya Foundation

At the Anabalaya Foundation, I experienced a transformative encounter where meaningful interactions promoted inclusivity and empowered individuals with visual impairments to excel in various educational and vocational endeavors. Students from the Anbalaya school impressed with their talents, showcasing their skills in singing, dancing, and expressing themselves artistically, captivating the audience with their remarkable abilities.

300+

Day 5 – 11th Jan 2024

From Manavur to Arakkonam Foundation

Covered 16.8 kms

Organisation visited: Government Girls High School in Walajabad

"Paint in Good Light" is a campaign spearheaded by the Ethos Foundation and this edition was in collaboration with Nippon Paint, aiming to raise awareness about design and its profound social impact through sensory stimulation. The morning commenced with an engaging session led by me, shedding light on how good design enhances lives and exploring diverse career opportunities within the field of design. This interactive discussion set the stage for the unveiling of meticulously curated artwork, emphasising the transformative power of design in enriching our experiences and shaping our environments for the better.



Interactions with PWD Students

1

50+



Day 6 – 12th Jan 2024

From Arakkonam Foundation TO Perumalrajpet

Covered 15.9 kms

Organisation visited: SNV Matriculation School

At SNV Matriculation School, students from 8th to 12th grade attended a dynamic session. They learned about creating inclusive environments and were inspired to champion diversity. The interactive dialogue sparked a collective understanding, encouraging students to embrace design solutions catering to all needs.

Day 7 – 13th Jan 2024

From Perumalrajpet to Sholinghur

Covered 16.6 kms

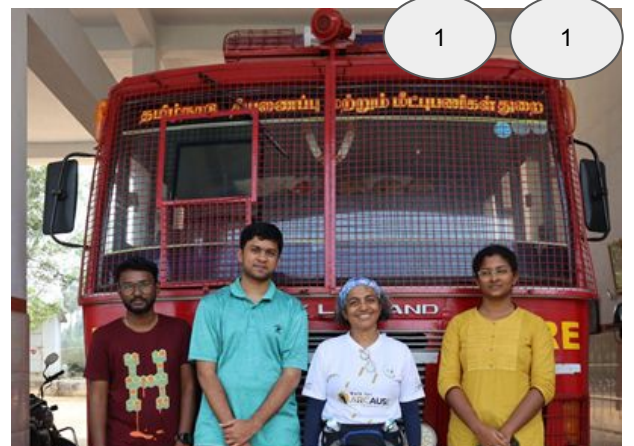
Organisation visited: Fire Station

During the visit to the fire station in Sholinghur, I had the opportunity to meet with firefighters who generously shared their expertise on fire safety. What stood out was their dedication to ensuring the safety of all individuals, including those with disabilities. We discussed adapting emergency preparedness measures to cater to the needs of PWDs to cater to evacuation measures. This holistic approach not only enhances the safety of the community but also reinforces the importance of accommodating everyone's needs in emergency situations.

Interactions with NGOS PWD

1

1



Interactions with NGO Students PWD

3

60+

1



Day 8 – 14th Jan 2024

From Sholinghur to Seyyur

Pongal Celebrations at Sheyyur Village, hosted by MSAJ Academy of Architecture, Chennai, were a vibrant affair. The day began with Tirupaavai closing *pooja* at Perumal Temple. A *rangoli* competition at the Government Middle School, accompanied by a cultural program, added to the festivities. The day concluded with a farm visit and a delicious lunch at Kanniamman Temple, Avinachi Kandigai Village.

Day 9 – 15th Jan 2024
From Sholinghur to Ponnai
Covered 19.3 kms

Organisation visited: SCHIEFFELIN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH – RESEARCH & LEPROSY CENTRE, KARIGIRI

Crossing the Tamil Nadu border into Andhra Pradesh marked the beginning of an exciting journey filled with new landscapes and diverse experiences. At the Karigiri leprosy center, I participated in a block printing workshop and delivered a brief presentation to the NGO and students. The day concluded with a visit to Shanthi Gramam, a rehabilitation settlement for leprosy survivors, offering a glimpse into their lives and challenges.

Interactions with
 NGOS PWD Students

1

3

40



Interactions with
 PWD

1



Day 10 – 16th Jan 2024

From Ponnai to Chittoor

Covered 18.9 kms

Visited: Chittoor Railway Station

At Chittoor Railway Station, I had the pleasure of meeting Subramaniam, who recently obtained a Divyang certificate. Our conversation revolved around the facilities provided for physically abled individuals in railways.

Interactions with
 Students

40+



Day 11 – 17th Jan 2024

From: Chittoor to Gundla Katta Manchi

Covered 17.2 kms

During my interaction with local communities organised by DRIK Patashala in Chittoor, I had the opportunity to interact with students about the motive behind the walk and the significance of universal design. We discussed the importance of creating environments that are accessible to everyone, regardless of their abilities. It was a valuable exchange that highlighted the importance of inclusivity in our communities.

Interactions with
 Students

30+



Day 12 – 18th Jan 2024

From: Gundla Kattamanchi To Mogili

Covered 17.9 kms

Organisation Visited: Rishi Valley School

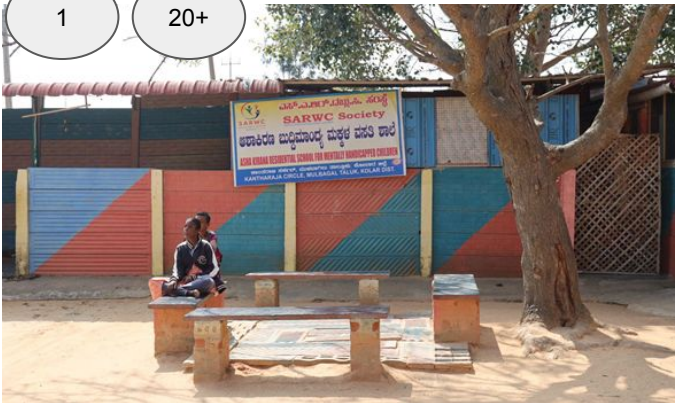
Inspired by the walk and its cause, a local YouTube channel in Palamaner interviewed me, discussing my experiences and insights. Later, I visited the Rishi Valley School, renowned for its alternative teaching philosophy. I engaged with students from classes 8 and 9, sharing stories from my exploratory journeys and emphasising the importance of inclusivity. The interactive session sparked a flurry of questions from the curious students, further enriching the exchange of ideas and perspectives.

Day 13 – 19th Jan 2024
From Mogilii to Palamaner
Covered 15.4 kms

It was a day filled with spontaneous interactions as we journeyed along, engaging with vendors, pilgrimage walkers, and school students. From lively conversations with vendors about their trade to insightful exchanges with pilgrimage walkers about their experiences, each interaction added a unique flavor to our journey. The highlight was interacting with enthusiastic school students, exchanging stories and perspectives, and fostering a sense of connection and camaraderie along the way.



Interactions with
 NGOS PWD



Day 14 – 20th Jan 2024
From Palamaner to Karnataka Border
Covered 18 kms

Organisation visited: SARWC Society, Mulbagal

During my visit to SARWC society in Mulbagal, a non-profit meant to support mentally disabled rural women and children, I was dismayed to find inconsistencies with good practices and lack of empathy on the part of the organisation. This stark reality underscores the urgent need for advocacy and intervention to uphold the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their abilities.

Interactions with
 NGOS PWD



Day 15 – 21st Jan 2024
From Karnataka Border To Mulbagal
Covered 16 kms

Organisation visited: Antharaganga Vidya samsthe

During my visit to Antharaganga Vidya Samsthe, I had the honour of meeting Mr. Shankar, the visionary founder of the organisation. As we toured the campus, Mr. Shankar graciously shared insights into the specific design needs of the individuals under their care. It was evident that the organisation's core mission is to offer not just education but also comprehensive support, including training and rehabilitation, to children facing disabilities. Their dedication to providing these services free of charge, particularly to orphans and economically disadvantaged children, reflects their commitment to inclusivity and accessibility in education.



Day 16– 22nd Jan 2024
From Mulbagal to Kamadati Kamanur
Covered 15 kms

As I journeyed, I witnessed the celebrations reverberating across temples nationwide coinciding with the inauguration of the Ram Temple.

Amidst the festivities, I had the privilege of crossing paths with migrant labourers from Bihar while walking through Kolar. Their resilience and determination left a profound impression on me, underscoring the diverse tapestry of stories and experiences that enrich the fabric of our nation.

Day 17 – 23rd Jan 2024
From Kamadati Kamanur to Kolar
Covered 15.3 kms

I met Manohar, a BA graduate who faced paralysis during his Class 7, leaving his right hand and leg affected. While his leg has shown some improvement, his right hand remains a struggle. Despite these challenges, he now works as a crop surveyor with the Kolar Block Development Office, showcasing his resilience and determination. During my journey, I also came across government school students on their way to a four-day educational trip organised by the government. Their excitement for learning outside the classroom emphasised the significance of providing such opportunities for educational enrichment.

Interactions with Students



40+

Day 19 – 25th Jan 2024
From Narasapura to Hoskote
Covered 16 kms
Organisation visited: Fourth Wave Foundation, Studio Ochre 369, Mitti Cafe

Fourth Wave Foundation, an NGO based in Bangalore, launched the "Nangu shale" initiative, also known as "schools where all belong," to provide education to children with disabilities in regular government schools. The aim is to offer these children a happy childhood and hope for their future. During our visit, we learned about the challenges they encounter and explored opportunities for collaboration. Additionally, students from Arcause clubs member colleges in Bangalore visited the office to engage with the initiative.

Two villas in Cloud 9 Villas in Bommasandra were studied; one inaccessible to wheelchair users and the other exclusively designed for them. The latter villa addresses the challenges faced by a client who has been in a wheelchair for some time. It exemplifies inclusive design with features like wider doorways, ramps, and accessible bathrooms, promoting independence and inclusion.

Ethos Foundation organised a sign language workshop at Mitti Cafe, a workplace employing individuals with disabilities. The workshop aimed to promote communication accessibility and inclusivity. Ten architects, 5 students and many more cafe visitors participated, highlighting the significance of incorporating sign language and accessibility in design practices.

Interactions with PWD Students

1 40+



Day 18 – 24th Jan 2024
From Kolar to Narsapura
Covered 17 kms
Organisation visited: Shree Aditya Degree College, Hoskote

Visited Shree Aditya Degree College in Hoskote to interact with college students. Had a session with students in their 2nd academic year. I shared about my journey, learning and findings highlighting the importance of design in day to day life for all.

Interactions with NGOS PWD Students

3 12 50+



Interactions with Students



50+

Day 20 – 26th Jan 2024
From Hoskote to Indiranagar
Covered 18 kms

Organisation visited: Government School, Kumbala Hally

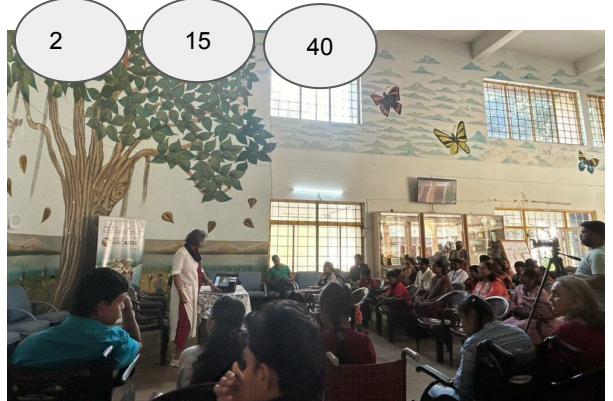
IIA organised for us to participate at the Republic Day celebration at a Government School in Kumbala Hally, near Hoskote, featuring remarkable performances by school students. The event showcased the talents and patriotism of the young participants, fostering a sense of pride and unity within the community.

Day 21 – 27th Jan 2024
From Indiranagar to Spastics Society Karnataka
Covered 15.8 kms

Organisation visited: Spastics Society, Indiranagar and workshop by Ekansh Trust

The Spastics Society Karnataka, Indiranagar, serves as a center for developmental disabilities. Following a brief walk through the campus, I shared insights and takeaways from my journey. The session was followed by a QnA from children with disabilities present, fostering interactive engagement and mutual learning.

Interactions with
 NGOS PWD Students



2

15

40

Interactions with
 NGOS PWD Students



15

60

50+

Day 22 – 28th Jan 2024
From Spastics Society to MAP
Covered 6.1 kms

Organisation visited: Spastics Society, Indiranagar and Museum of Art and Photography

On January 28th, the final leg of this remarkable journey unfolded from a significant location – The Spastics Society of Karnataka. This nonprofit organisation, formed by passionate members dedicated to the well-being and advancement of individuals with developmental disabilities, served as the starting point. Accompanied by a group of enthusiastic runners and supporters, I completed the last 5 kilometers of this journey, culminating at Bangalore's iconic Cubbon Park. From there, a commemorative walk commenced, marking the conclusion of this impactful journey with a celebration of unity and inclusivity.

The culmination event at the Museum of Art and Photography commenced with an invocation by children from the Spastics Society of Karnataka. Following this, Mr. Srikanth Karra, Chief Administrative Officer of Mphasis, addressed the audience, followed by AVAS trustee, Anita Reddy and I shared insights on the intent, learnings, and findings from the initiative. The discussions that ensued were enriched by a dance performance by Saisha of the Spastics Society of Karnataka, a recitation by children of Samarthanam, and a song by a group from AVAS, adding a touch of vibrancy and inclusivity to the event.



IN THE NEWS

The Walk for Arcause 4.0 campaign has been extensively covered in various news and publication media that have garnered immense attention.

- 28 January 2024: [The South First](#)
- 27 January 2024: [Deccan Herald](#)
- 28 January 2024: [News Patrolling](#)
- 28 January 2024: [City Today](#)
- January 2024: [News Insight](#)
- 28 January 2024: [The Hindu](#)
- 29 January 2024: [Deccan Herald](#)
- 29 January 2024: [Disability Insider](#)
- 09 January 2024: [Navjeevan Express](#)
- 29 January 2024: [Times of India](#)
- 29 January 2024: [News India Express](#)
- 29 January : [The Hindu](#)
- 6 February 2024: [The Hindu](#)

From Chennai to B'loru on foot, architect bats for inclusive spaces

Yashaswini.Sri
@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: Architect and educator Gita Balakrishnan, 55, on Sunday completed her 335km journey on foot from Chennai to Bengaluru to create awareness about making spaces accessible for everyone.

Gita said her walk — 17-21km daily — is for the cause of universal design and accessibility. "It is to raise awareness about creating inclusive environments with no barriers of age, ability and background. Our environments and infrastructure are rarely conducive to persons with disabilities. Coming together and building a society that enables persons with disabilities to live an independent life, have access and enjoy spaces equally is at the core of this initiative."

Gita started from Chennai on Jan 7, ended the walk Sunday at Spastics Society in Indiranagar, Bengaluru. Later she arrived at



ALL SUPPORT: A group at Cubbon Park joins hands with Gita Balakrishnan

Cubbon Park, where others, including Arman Ali, executive director, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People, and Raghavendra, the first Indian para-fencer to bag a medal at Commonwealth Fencing Championships, joined her.

Students with disabilities from Samarthanam Trust, employees of Mitti Cafe, the Fourth Wave Foundation and EKanksh Trust joined Gita from Cubbon Park and so did many onlookers. They walked till Museum of Art and Photography

(MAP) on Kasturba Road.

"It's time designers and architects realised there's no 'one-size-that-fits-all' while creating buildings and spaces. We can start with having ramps beside stairways, or doors wide enough for a wheelchair. As a community, we should focus on breaking the barriers of age, class and gender. We need to talk more about universal designing at the curriculum-level for architecture students and others to understand the need for inclusive spaces," Gita said.

Walking for a cause with Gita Balakrishnan

She founded Ethos, a platform that aims to bridge the gap between students and professionals from the ACED fraternity

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

Gita Balakrishnan recalls a conversation she had at a fire station she visited along the route of her recent 300-km-long walk, Walk for Arcause 4.0, from Chennai to Bengaluru. "We were talking about saving (the lives) of people with disabilities," she says. For a person with visual impairments, for instance, it would be hard to make their way to a fire escape in a building which did not have tactile markers on the wall or floor, while someone who was hard of hearing may not even hear a fire alarm, she points out. Similarly, a wheelchair-bound person or even an elderly one would struggle to use the fire escape or staircase in case there is an accident in a high-rise.

adds Gita, who ended her walk in the city on January 28 at the Museum of Art and Photography in the city. "If they had to escape, how would they?" asks Gita, who did the walk specifically to address issues such as this one, hoping to raise awareness about creating inclusive and accessible environments for all through this endeavour. "You may design a basic space for everyone, but you need to look at it from a 360-degree perspective," she firmly believes.

A need for design literacy
This is the fourth year of such walks. Gita, 55, who is a professional architect, started in 2022. The idea was to bridge the gap between students and professionals from the ACED fraternity (Architecture, Construction, Engineering and Design). The idea



Gita Balakrishnan with a group of people. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

for Ethos began with a quiz, she remembers. "I was sitting at Jadavpur University, thinking about what I would like to do with my life here, and was waiting to meet the head of the department to see if there was any role that I could play," says the Kolkata-based Gita. It was there, in the library of the university, that the idea of having a quiz on architecture struck her. "I walked out and started building my dream around that quiz," she says.

After the first quiz, she found that students of architecture began writing back to her, making her realise the "power of the student community." Ethos was born from that experience. "We realised that there was a need to create a platform where young architects could talk to each other and discover that there was a world beyond



their college ecosystem," she says. "Otherwise, you don't even know where you stand."
Ethos also began conducting design competitions, getting students to look at design problems that may not necessarily be thought of in classes, she says. "We had very senior people adjudicating at these competitions, getting the best out of the community," says Gita, adding that Ethos has been conducting annual contests since 2005, without a break, except during the COVID years. In 2008, Ethos launched an online learning portal on design. "The objective was to reach that last student in class, someone who wasn't motivated for different reasons, and also for them to find themselves," she says.

Walking for a cause
Then, around COVID, she realised that simply engaging with the community wasn't enough. "We need to meet and engage with people outside the architectural verticals of Ethos, is defined on the Ethos Empowers website as a "platform for acknowledging, enlisting, and actualising social responsibilities of architects, designers, engineers, and others associated with the construction field (ACED Community)."

In early 2022, to mark 20 years of Ethos, Gita set off on her first long walk, covering the 1,700 km long

distance between Kolkata and Delhi on foot, interacting with communities she passed. Terming it "both an inward and outward journey," Gita hopes that her walks will help sensitise the design community. "Design can be elitist...making it accessible is something we need to look at."

She chased this walk up with three others—Kolkata to Dhaka, Kolkata to Bhubaneswar and the most recent, Chennai to Bengaluru, all with the aim of raising awareness about the profound influence of well-crafted design on people's lives.

Talking about her recent walk, supported by Mphasis in collaboration with AVAS Trust, she says, "I was surprised at the numbers of people with disabilities) that I met. It was very powerful meeting these people. How do you design spaces for them?"

Gita, a 4-time marathoner, began training for this walk around two months earlier, slowly building up tolerance for these distances. Having said that, "nothing prepares you for what would be the state of your body," she admits ruefully. "You discover pains you never had before, say Gita, who stretches, foam rolls, uses compression socks and is mindful of her nutrition on these long walks. "This walk, however, I sailed through."

So, why walking? "If you get out of a car, you are considered a little different from everyone else," she says. Walking, on the other hand, is like an equaliser, a leveller, believes Gita, recalling meeting women who have asked her for help in carrying a load of sticks and offered her a lift in the Matador, which was taking them to the fields, almost as if she belonged with them. It is also a great way to kickstart a dialogue.

"I would shamelessly say that I am walking because I would ask me why, and then that conversation would start."

Architect ends walk with 'purple hiring' plea

BENGALURU, DHNS

The final lap of Gita Balakrishnan's universal accessibility walk, Mphasis AVAS Walk for Arcause 4.0, spanning 335 km, ended on Sunday morning with the last 5 km stretch from Karnataka Spastics Society to Cubbon Park.

Balakrishnan, a 55-year-old architect, walked for the cause of inclusivity from Chennai to Bengaluru, accompanied by delegates from the field of architecture, institutes, students, and NGOs working towards the cause, as well as other avid runners from Bengaluru.

All those who participated in the walk gathered at the Museum of Art and Photography,



Gita Balakrishnan, a 55-year-old architect, walked for the cause of inclusivity from Chennai to Bengaluru, accompanied by other activists. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

a space designed for universal accessibility, for an interaction with Balakrishnan. The event began with song and dance performances and culminated in serious discussions on making the world more inclusive and accessible for all, especially

persons with disabilities. She mentioned that even though public places are becoming more inclusive in terms of accessibility, workplaces and organizations have a significant role to play in creating more inclusive spaces.

She advocated for concepts like 'purple hiring' (creating roles exclusively for persons with disabilities) to become the norm rather than an exception. Delegates and experts from the architectural field also suggested that parks and playing areas should become more inclusive.

Balakrishnan emphasised how our society has failed in designing inclusive spaces that are accessible to people with disabilities, hearing impairments, and visual impairments. During her presentation of the journey, she shared her experiences of walking through rain, sunshine, and both good and bad roads, which introduced her to places and people who showed an abundance of warmth and love.

LONG ROAD

Architect walks for 335 km from Chennai to B'loru, creates awareness on universal design

PURAN CHOUDHARY @Bengaluru

GITA Balakrishnan, a 55-year-old architect, researcher, and educator, walked alone for 335 km from Chennai to Bengaluru for the cause of Universal Design and Accessibility — focusing on raising awareness about creating inclusive environments for individuals of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

This was her fourth walk since she started it in February 2022. As she neared Bengaluru, the last 5 km lap was from the Spastics Society of Karnataka, an NGO that works for individuals with developmental disabilities, to Cubbon Park. From there, a commemorative walk was held with several disabled individuals to the Museum of Art and Photogra-

phy (MAP), which is accessible for people with disabilities.

Gita told TNEI that after the first walk, her learning was consolidated into six broad areas, which she now works on: Design and accessibility, awareness of construction workers — acknowledging them, making design accessible to rural areas, environment and infrastructure — impact on pedestrians, traditional wisdom and empowering architects all over India.

Highlighting the reduced visibility of Bengaluru, she explained that she has lived in the city for quite a long time and that post 9.30 pm, it is "quite impossible to walk comfortably." She added that traffic and different construction works have hampered pedestrian wellbeing. "It is difficult



Gita Balakrishnan at an event at the Museum of Art and Photography on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

to find continuous pathways. There are also bollards on footpaths to stop bikers from riding on footpaths which end up restricting wheelchairs." She

asserted that a balance to be found to address challenges and added that city's happiness quotient is correctly defined not only pedestrian well-being.

Gita not only walks but creates content on the basis of design and architecture. She aims to imbibe inclusivity into their designs. "We are doing programme in Mahara where we are getting content workers to be instructed through a video series of architecture or construction sites, explaining how a window should be or how flooring tiles should be fixed," Gita adds. She makes it a point to hold both formal and informal discussions on her walks to create awareness of the issue.

Awareness walk from Chennai to Bengaluru

Chennai: A 320-kms walk from Chennai to Bengaluru to raise awareness about creating inclusive environments for individuals of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, was flagged off over the weekend.

The walk aims to highlight the importance of architectural social responsibility, engaging communities, and inspiring positive change along the route. Jayashree Muralidharan, Secretary, Welfare for the Differently Aabled in Chennai, was present at the flag-off ceremony held at the Museum.

The initiative is supported by the Council of Architecture, India, the Indian Institute of Architects, the Indian Institute of Interior Designers, Vidya Sagar and National Association for Students of Architecture.

Gita Balakrishnan, Trustee, AVAS and Ethos Foundation said, "As architects, we have a responsibility to shape environments that embrace everyone, regardless of their abilities. The Universal Design and Accessibility Walk for Arcause is not just a journey on foot; it's a stride towards creating a world where inclusivity is embedded in every structure and space."

SOCIAL MEDIA

Impressions



The founder of Ethos, Ar. Gita Balakrishnan ...

Gita Balakrishnan • You

Walk alone. Walk together. Walk for others. Walk for change. It...

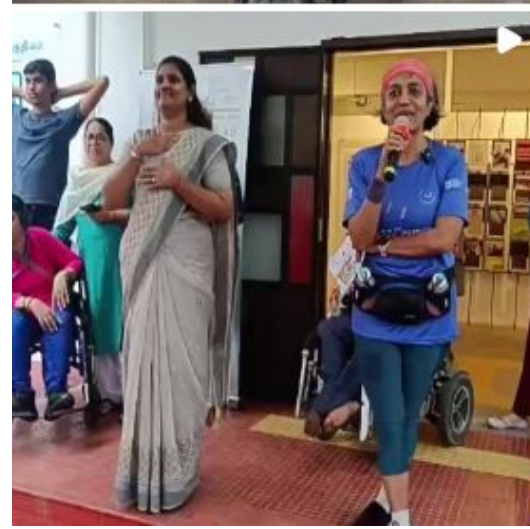
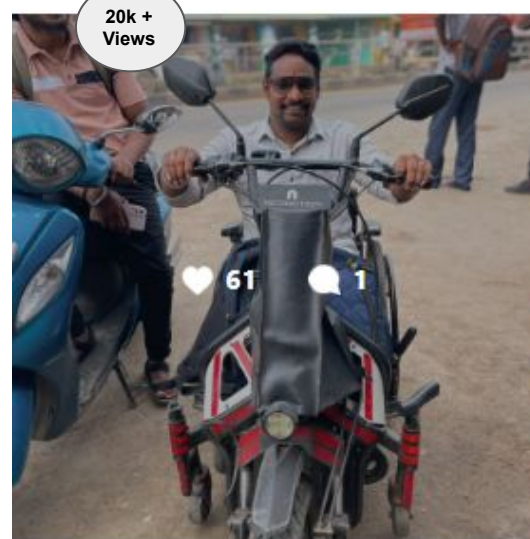
Day 1 - 7th Jan 2024 • Flag-off



Impressions



Impressions



Impressions

24000+



THE IMPACT

The impact of the entire 22-day walk is multifaceted and profound,

Awareness: The walk raised significant awareness about the importance of accessibility and inclusivity in various aspects of society, including education, infrastructure, and employment.

Advocacy: By engaging with stakeholders such as architects, NGOs, government officials, and the general public, the walk advocated for policy changes and initiatives to promote universal design and accessibility mandates.

Empowerment: Individuals with disabilities were empowered through interactions, workshops, and educational sessions, fostering a sense of agency and self-advocacy.

Collaboration: Collaborations were forged between different organisations, communities, and individuals, fostering collective efforts towards creating more accessible environments and opportunities for everyone.

Community Engagement: Communities along the route were engaged and sensitised to the needs and challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, promoting empathy and understanding.

Celebration of Diversity: The walk celebrated the diversity and resilience of individuals with disabilities, showcasing their talents, capabilities, and contributions to society.

Inspiration: By sharing stories, experiences, and insights, the walk inspired others to take action towards creating a more inclusive and accessible world.

Overall, the impact of the 22-day walk extends beyond the physical journey, leaving a lasting impression on individuals, communities, and institutions paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable society.

List of organisations visited:

- **Inclusive Play Spaces Design- Kilikili Organisation**
- **Ability Foundation**
- **Karna Vidya Foundation**
- **MOP- Museum of possibilities**
- **Walajabad Girls School**
- **SNV Matric School**
- **Fire Station Sholingur**
- **Drik Pathshala**
- **Rishi Valley School**
- **RTO office**
- **Vishranthi trust, Aditya College**
- **Hoskote School**
- **MAP- Museum of Art and Photography**
- **Anabalaya Foundation**
- **Vidya Sagar**
- **NIEPVD**
- **Schieffelin Institute of Health- Research & Leprosy Center, Karigari**
- **SARWC society**
- **Antharganga Vidya Samsthe,**
- **Sai Jyothi old age home**
- **Fourth Wave Foundation**
- **Mitti cafe**
- **369 Ochre Studio**
- **Spastics Society, Karnataka**
- **Ekansh Trust**

Interactions with

NGOS

PWD

Students

Laypersons

30+

240+

800+

10000+



Contact us



Please write to us at gita@ethosempowers.com. We can also be reached by phone at 9831175272.
To stay connected with our latest initiatives and updates, please visit www.ethosempowers.com/arcause
Our social media handles have been shared below -



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