ABSTRACT

Designed built environments are often full of latent uncertainties, hidden anxieties and potential dangers for 'Disabled' group of people. The present research attempts to eradicate the prejudices and discrimination against disabled people. It challenges the stigma associated with them and focuses on the architectural and attitudinal barriers.

A figurative and literal extension of the definition of the term barrier has been considered here. Through extensive interviews and behavior mapping the researcher has been able to document various types of psycho – physical barriers within railway stations in Indian context. These barriers have been rated by the respondents based on the intensity of stress induced by them and a weighted check list has been prepared. A standard five - point likert type scale has been used with reasonable assumption that the data obtained possess the characteristics of an interval scale. The study has also succeeded in establishing a pattern between these environmental and attitudinal barriers and to categorize them. SPSS software has been used and the statistical techniques adopted are preparation of correlation matrix and Factor Analysis (incorporating varimax rotation of principal factors).

Behavior of an individual is a function of personal and environmental components Analyses have been done to explore the effect of various personal identity factors like economic status, age and degree of disability on perception of psycho – physical stress. Significant effect of age and degree of disability have been observed on perception of stress along with some interaction effect in many cases. Two – way ANOVA has been conducted to establish necessary statistical significances at required levels.

In this thesis, psychosocially supportive components for Physically Disabled People with Impaired Mobility (PDIM) are identified in the context of Railway Stations. Various behavioral and environmental assessment techniques are investigated to develop a multi – dimensional model for evaluation of these psychosocial components. This model operates on the basis of scores obtained by different alternatives against a set of pre – defined and pre – weighted criteria. This research has considered the measurement of individual benefit as a yardstick for environmental assessment. Extensive surveys have been conducted with the target population to obtain feedback on effectivity of various proposed remedial measures against the above mentioned criteria. A performance matrix have been constructed which indicates the cumulative benefit as expected from each remedial measure. This reflects the preference of the respondents towards various barrier free alternatives and significance of the same has been statistically established by conducting a one – way ANOVA. Based on these analyses, recommendations which include design level interventions have been proposed. Discussion on the scope for future study draws the conclusion of the research.