

Sandhya Sanwardhan Sanstha

Proposal for wheel chair accessible special bus for mentally challenged:

Problem: In our special school and vocational training section we have certain class of students who have multiple disabilities, as a result their independent mobility is restricted i.e. they cannot move on their own and thus are on the wheel chair. While they are in our campus which is barrier free, they can move anywhere without any difficulty. These students come to the campus by our school buses. Though these school buses are fit and compatible for physically normal students; these buses do not have access to wheel chair. Thus every time when a student has to board or alight from the bus, we have to physically lift the student which is not only inconvenient but also looks most undignified way. It becomes more cumbersome for the students who are physically grown up and practically it becomes impossible for one attendant to manage. Further, in case of a teen age girl student it is very embarrassing for the staff also.

Proposed solution:

It is thus desirable to have a bus which has access to wheel chair itself. This will not only make the student comfortable, also, it is easy for the staff to manage the concerned student. Further we will be able to maintain the human dignity as well which is very important for us. It should be further noted that since mentally challenged are not self advocates, they themselves cannot plead for the dignity we are referring to. It is thus our moral responsibility to provide them a dignified commuting means. The bus which we are proposing will not only have access through hydraulic in built lift to hoist the wheel chair inside but it will also get fixed in the bus with locking arrangement. Thus we can accommodate in one bus about 12 to 14 wheel chairs and additionally it will have 4 normal seats for the attendants as well. This arrangement will further eliminate the parent's problem of bringing the ward to the pickup point and back to home in the evening.

Cost of such proposed bus:

While exploring the availability and cost of such bus, we find such buses are manufactured in US & Europe. If bought from overseas manufacturer, the cost of the new bus is prohibitive. Thus we explored the possibility of having a rebuilt bus

and this is also costing about **Rs.65 to 75 lacks**. Which is still quite expensive and not in the affordable range.

The third option is to buy bus chassis in India, and build the bus body as per our requirement. There are professional bus body builders available in India. The cost of this option is about Rs.35 lacks tentatively. We currently do not have confirmed quotations but we can have those once the funds are arranged. This cost is almost half of the even rebuild bus.

I thus request Asha for their financial support for this special bus for special children. While I thank Asha for their consistent support since last ten years to Sandhya, we look forward to your favorable response to this request which will not only help Sandhya students but will help changing the approach of the domestic service providers towards disability in general.

Navin Deshpande
Secretary,
Sandhya Sanwardhan Sanstha.