

CONFLUENCE



DIALOGUES ON INCLUSIVE
URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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"Cities are not merely built of stone, steel, and glass.
They are composed of footsteps and stories, of silences and aspirations."

Cities grow where conversations take root.

There are moments when a campus becomes more than a place of learning; it becomes a meeting ground of ideas, aspirations, and shared purpose. Day-01 of the International Conference on Art, Architecture & Urban Studies (ICAAUS 2025) with the theme of Inclusive Environments for Growing Cities was one such moment. The corridors resonated with conversation, the library with conviction, and the spaces in between with quiet reflection. Scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and visionaries gathered not only to speak, but to listen, to question, and to collectively imagine more inclusive urban futures.

Prof. (Dr.) Pooja Lalit Kumar







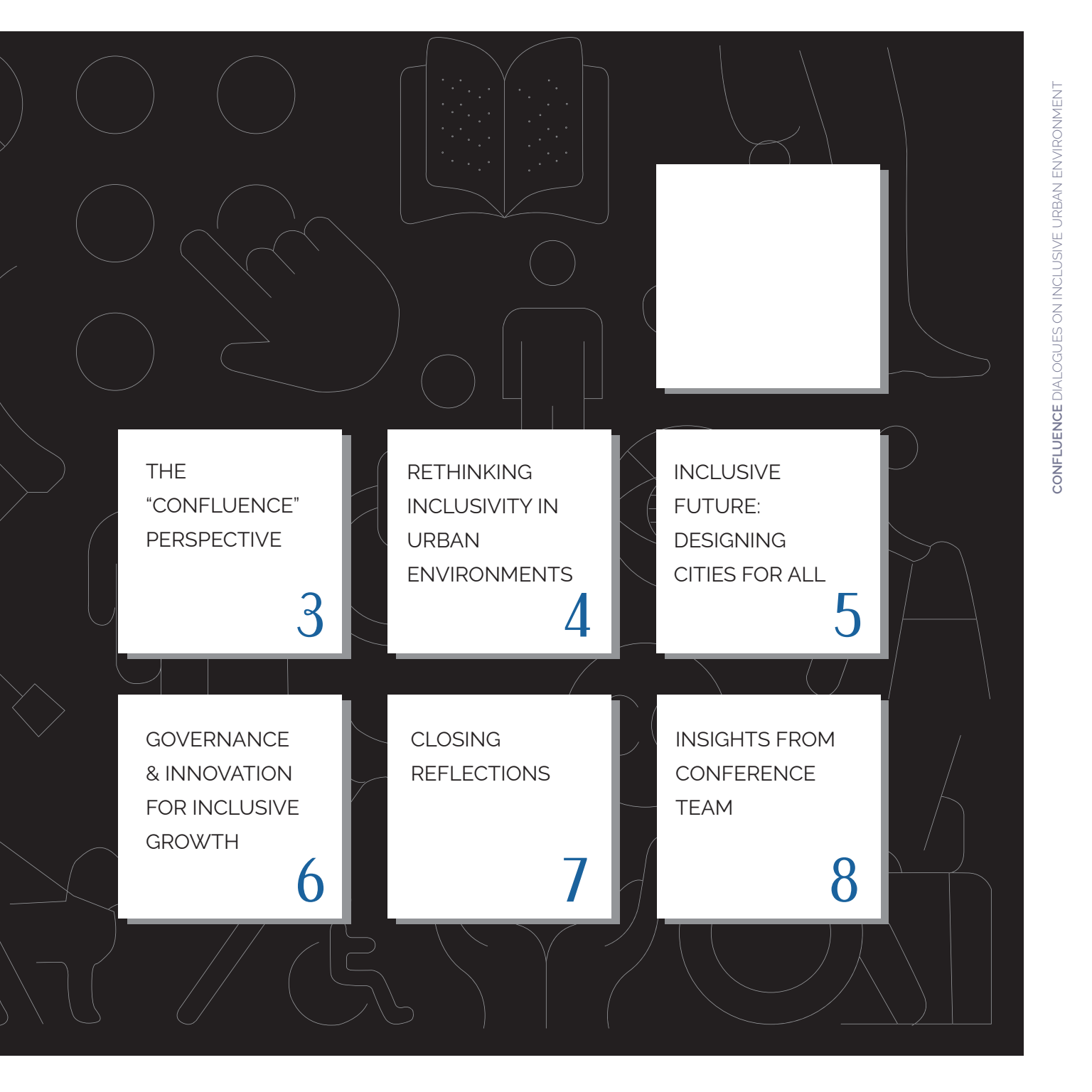
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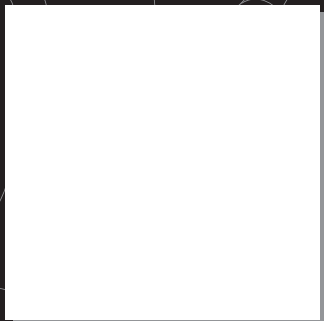
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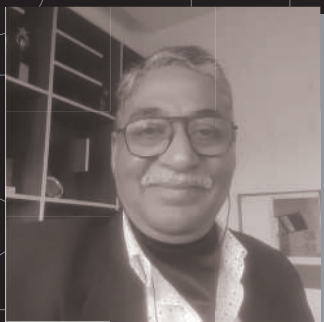
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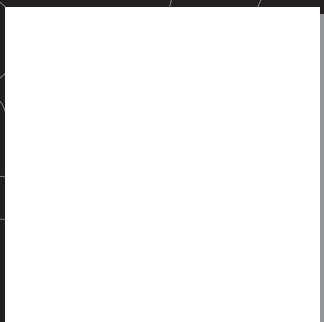
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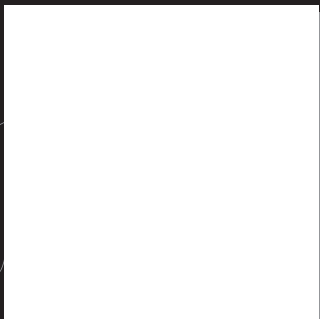
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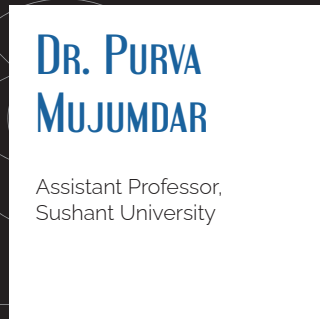
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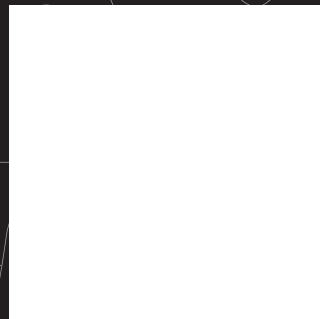
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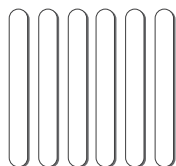
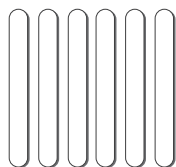
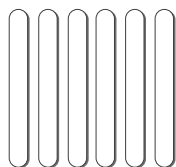
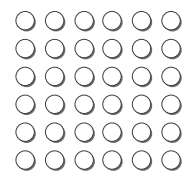
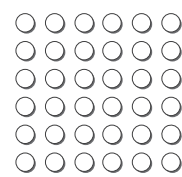
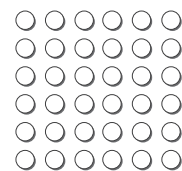
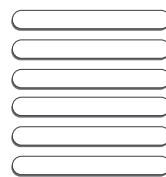
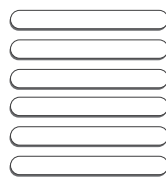
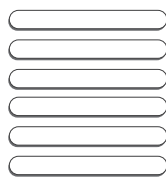
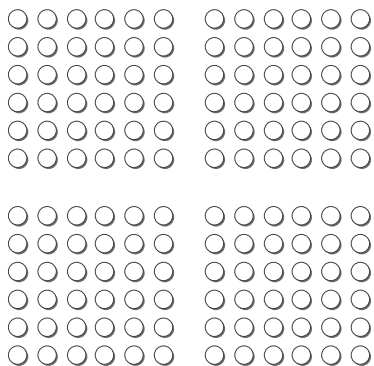
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FOREWORD



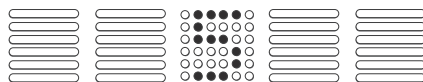
SOARING HIGH : A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Cities are among the most profound expressions of human aspiration. They embody our ambitions for progress, innovation, and collective well-being. Yet, as our cities expand and evolve at an unprecedented pace, an important question must guide our journey forward: who are our cities truly designed for? The answer to this question will shape not only the future of urban development but also the character of our societies.

The first International Conference on Art, Architecture and Urban Studies (ICAAUS 2025) with focus on Inclusive Environments for Growing Cities represents a meaningful step toward addressing this challenge. It creates a vital platform where scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and visionaries come together to reflect on the responsibilities that accompany urban growth. Inclusion, accessibility, and equity must no

longer be peripheral considerations; they must form the very foundation of how we imagine and build our urban environments.

Confluence: Dialogues on Inclusive Urban Environment beautifully captures the spirit of the inaugural day of this important conference. The book is not merely a record of proceedings; it is a reflection of ideas, perspectives, and dialogues that emerged when diverse minds gathered with a shared commitment to shaping cities that are humane, equitable, and resilient. Through its pages, we witness the power of intellectual exchange and the transformative potential of collaborative thinking. At Sushant University, our guiding vision of "Soaring High" reflects a commitment to excellence that is both ambitious and responsible. To soar high is not only to achieve academic distinction but also to rise with purpose but



to ensure that innovation, research, and design contribute meaningfully to society. Initiatives such as ICAAUS embody this philosophy by encouraging dialogue that bridges disciplines, institutions, and perspectives in pursuit of inclusive and sustainable urban futures.

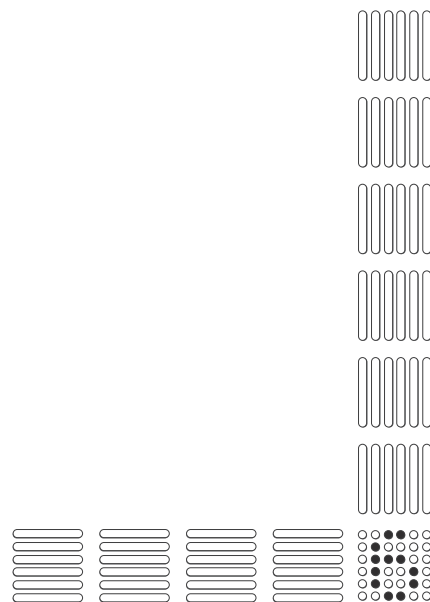
I commend the ICAAUS Convener and the entire organising team for their dedication in conceptualising and hosting this conference and for curating this publication that preserves the essence of the conversations that unfolded. Their efforts demonstrate how academic institutions can serve as catalysts for critical dialogue and progressive thought.

As we turn the pages of this volume, may it inspire us to think more deeply about the environments we create and the communities we serve. If our cities are to truly soar in the decades ahead, they must rise on the principles of accessibility, inclusivity, and shared opportunity. I hope this publication will continue to spark conversations, inspire new ideas, and encourage collabora-

tive efforts toward building urban environments that enable every individual to participate, contribute, and thrive.

Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Ranjan

Vice Chancellor
Sushant University



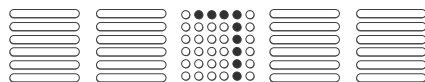
SUGAMYA BHARAT : INCLUSIVE FUTURES

It is a matter of great satisfaction to present Confluence: Dialogues for Inclusive Environments, a coffee table book that emerges from the collective intellectual and experiential engagements initiated during the 1st International Conference on Art, Architecture & Urban Studies (ICAAUS 2025), organized by the School of Art and Architecture, Sushant University. This volume extends beyond the temporal bounds of the conference, carrying forward its discussions into a reflective and enduring format that invites continued engagement.

Anchored in the theme of "Inclusive Environments for Growing Cities," the book responds to the pressing realities of contemporary urbanization. Cities are expanding at an unprecedented pace, often outstripping the capacities of planning systems and governance structures. Within this context, the task

is not simply to manage growth, but to guide it with intention and responsibility. Equity, accessibility, and sustainability must be treated not as supplementary concerns, but as foundational principles shaping the future of urban environments. The ideas brought together in this volume reflect a sustained engagement with these concerns, offering perspectives that are grounded in both critical inquiry and practical application.

In alignment with national initiatives such as the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Accessible India Campaign), this publication underscores the importance of universal accessibility as an integral component of inclusive development. It advocates for a shift from compliance-driven approaches to more thoughtful and empathetic design practices; approaches that recognize accessibility as essential to enabling



participation, preserving dignity, and ensuring independence for all individuals.

The notion of confluence in this volume may be understood through a quieter, less visible analogy; that of roots beneath the ground. Much like root systems that remain unseen yet sustain and stabilize the life above them, the ideas, dialogues, and collaborations represented here operate beneath the surface of visible outcomes. They form the underlying support structures that nourish and hold together the larger ecosystem of inclusive urban development. Drawing from diverse voices of academicians, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers, this book assembles a network of thought that, while not always immediately apparent, is fundamental to shaping resilient and life-affirming environments. These contributions do not claim finality; rather, they strengthen the intellectual ground from which future work can grow.

The significance of this compilation lies not only in the documentation of ideas

but in its ability to create continuity. It connects present reflections with future directions, encouraging readers to critically engage with the material and consider its implications within their own contexts. In doing so, it functions both as a repository of knowledge and as an impetus for further exploration and action.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the organizing team, contributors, and collaborators whose commitment and effort have made this publication possible. It is my hope that Confluence will continue to nurture meaningful discourse and sustained engagement, contributing to the creation of urban environments that are not only resilient and adaptive, but deeply inclusive in both spirit and practice.

Prof. (Col.) Virendra Kumar Malik

**Professor Emeritus & Former Dean
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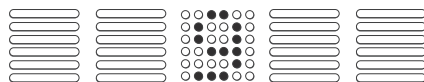
VIKSIT BHARAT : FOUNDATION OF SOCIAL COHESION

I am delighted to write this foreword for the coffee table book *Confluence: Dialogues on Inclusive Urban Environment*, which derives from the first-of-its-kind International Conference on Art, Architecture and Urban Studies (ICAAUS 2025) organized by the School of Art and Architecture, Sushant University. This publication reflects the spirit of inquiry and collaboration that defined the conference and its commitment to addressing the evolving challenges of contemporary urban environments.

The central theme of the conference - *Inclusive Environments in Growing Cities* raises several critical questions for our time. How can inclusivity shape the future of urban transformation? In what ways can cities empower communities and build resilience in a rapidly changing world? How can economic growth strengthen social cohesion rather than

deepen inequalities? And how can governance and technology work together to create cities that are not only advanced but also just, accessible, and humane? The discussions explored diverse yet interconnected themes such as inclusive growth, universal accessibility, heritage-led development, sustainable urban futures, and community participation. Such conversations are particularly relevant today as India moves forward with the vision of "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) by 2047, where development must be guided by principles of equity, responsibility, and sustainability.

As one of the country's established institutions in architectural education, the School of Art and Architecture recognizes its responsibility to encourage dialogue on critical issues such as gender equity, human values, professional ethics, and environmental steward-



ship. Under the leadership of Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Sushant University, this international conference marks an important step in strengthening academic and professional engagement in the fields of planning, architecture, and design.

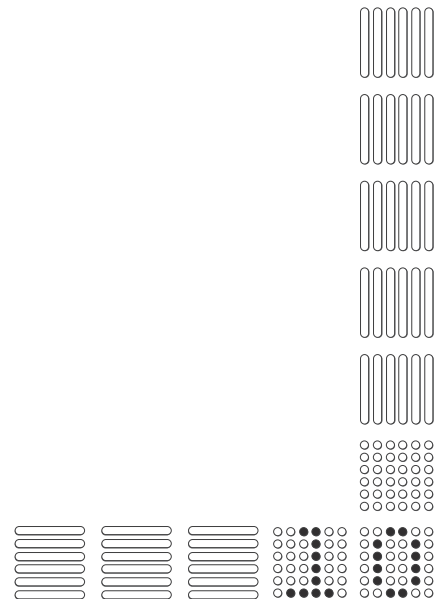
What further strengthens this publication is its ability to bring together diverse perspectives and translate complex ideas into meaningful discourse. The contributions reflect not only academic rigor but also a deep sensitivity toward lived experiences, reminding us that inclusivity is not merely a theoretical construct but a fundamental aspect of everyday urban life. As cities continue to evolve, it becomes increasingly important for professionals and institutions to adopt approaches that are empathetic, context-responsive, and participatory. In this regard, Confluence stands as both a reflection and a catalyst encouraging us to rethink conventional practices and move towards more equitable and human-centered urban futures.

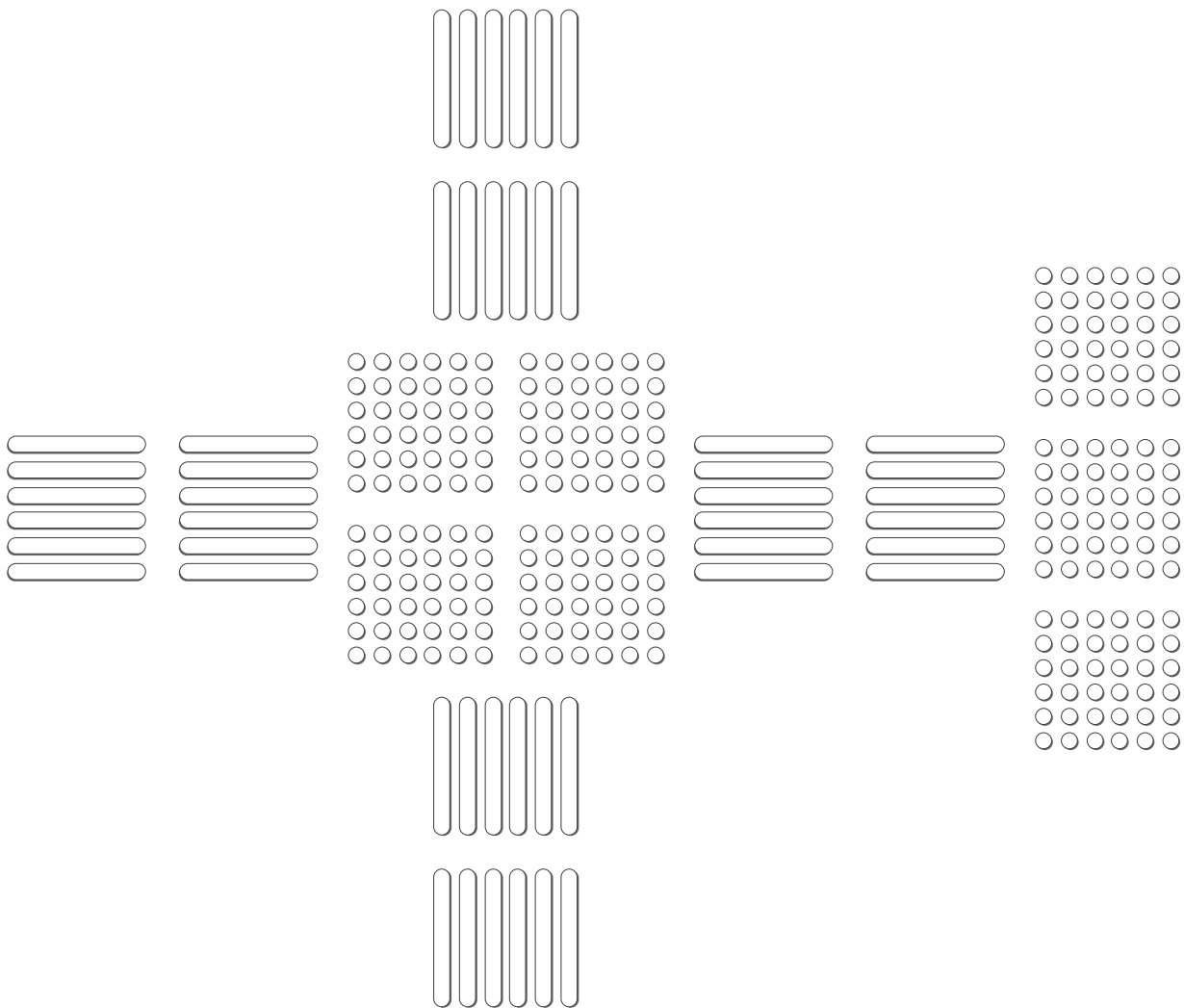
I hope this publication continues to in-

spire thoughtful dialogue and meaningful action towards building more inclusive urban futures.

Prof. (Dr.) Navin Piplani

Director and Dean,
School of Art and Architecture,
Sushant University





PREFACE

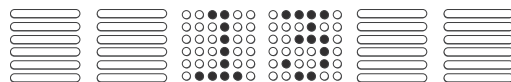
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CONFLUENCE : ESSENCE & EXPRESSION

Cities, much like rivers, are shaped by the streams that flow into them. As the proverb reminds us, "**Many streams make a mighty river.**" This book embodies that philosophy. It brings together diverse voices; architects, planners, policymakers, scholars, and visionaries, whose ideas converged to shape a meaningful dialogue on inclusion in our rapidly growing cities.

The inaugural day of ICAAUS 2025 unfolded as a tapestry of keynote reflections, critical debates, spontaneous exchanges, and shared commitments. Eminent personalities graced the occasion not merely as speakers, but as participants in an evolving conversation about equity, accessibility, resilience, and belonging. What emerged was not a singular narrative but a layered and dynamic discourse rooted in research, enriched by experience, and driven by a shared responsibility towards more equitable urban environments.

This coffee table book does not seek to replicate the conference proceedings in their entirety. Instead, it captures the essence; the pauses between arguments, the expressions that accompanied insight, and the atmosphere of engagement that transformed dialogue into possibility. Through curated excerpts, visual documentation, and reflective highlights, it seeks to preserve the intellectual energy and human connection that defined the day. The title Confluence symbolises more than convergence; it represents an alignment of intent. It reflects our institutional commitment to nurture platforms where ideas intersect and disciplines collaborate. Inclusion, in this context, extends beyond physical accessibility. It is an ethos that embraces diversity of thought, identity, and lived experience. As an academic and as Conference Convener, I believe that meaningful urban transformation begins with conversation critical yet



compassionate, rigorous yet reflective. When we listen across disciplines and differences, we begin to imagine cities that are not only efficient but empathetic; not only innovative but just.

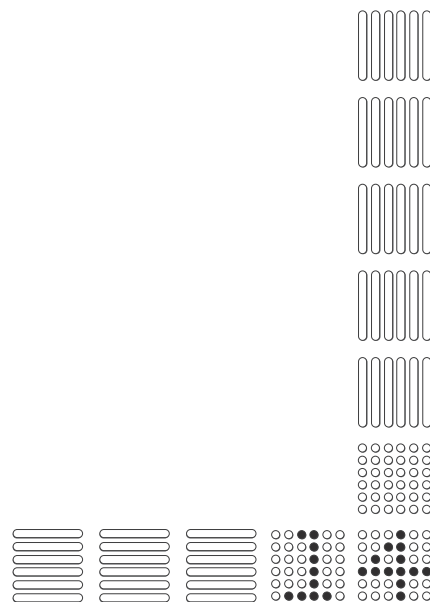
I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the distinguished speakers, delegates, institutional leaders, and members of the organising team whose participation and commitment made this gathering possible. I offer my sincere appreciation to our Honourable Vice Chancellor, Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Ranjan, the Registrar, Prof. (Dr.) Sanjeev Sharma, and the then Dean of the School of Architecture, Col. V. K. Malik, whose encouragement and steadfast support were instrumental in bringing this initiative to fruition. Their guidance and belief in this endeavour transformed the conference into a true confluence of ideas, dialogue, and shared purpose. I also acknowledge with gratitude the support of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, whose commitment to equity and inclusion echoes the very spirit of this initiative.

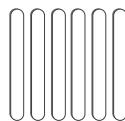
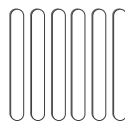
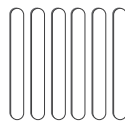
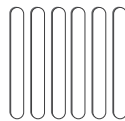
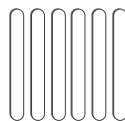
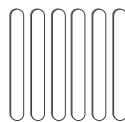
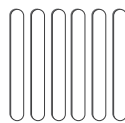
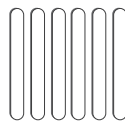
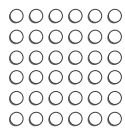
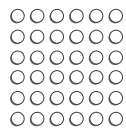
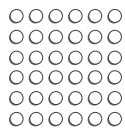
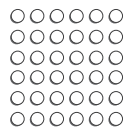
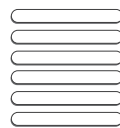
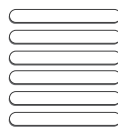
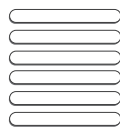
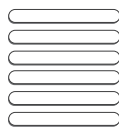
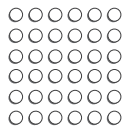
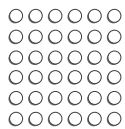
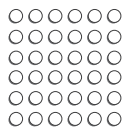
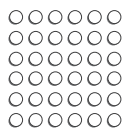
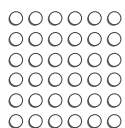
May this book serve not only as documentation, but as inspiration. May it

remind us that the future of our cities depends upon our ability to come together across boundaries and perspectives to imagine environments that are inclusive in design and generous in spirit.

Prof. (Dr.) Pooja Lalit Kumar

Executive Editor & Curator





THE “CONFLUENCE” PERSPECTIVE



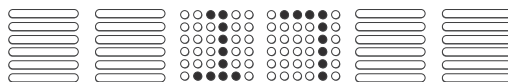
MERGING CURRENTS

"Confluence: Dialogues on Inclusive Urban Environment" emerged with a shared concern that many of us have often encountered in our work as educators and practitioners in architecture and urban studies. Cities today are expanding at an extraordinary pace. Technological innovation, infrastructural growth, and new urban aspirations promise opportunity and progress. Yet, alongside this transformation, we continue to witness barriers physical, social, and systemic that limit the ability of many individuals to fully participate in urban life.

These reflections, shaped by our own experiences of teaching, research, and practice, gradually evolved into the idea of Confluence. For us, it was not just an academic concept but a response to an urgent need. We felt there was a need for a platform where conversations about cities could move beyond isolated disciplinary perspectives and engage more deeply with the idea

of inclusive urban environments. This vision took shape through the International Conference on Art, Architecture and Urban Studies (ICAAUS), organised and hosted by the School of Art and Architecture at Sushant University. When the team first began conceptualising the conference, the intention was not simply to organise another academic event. Rather, to initiate a dialogue one that would bring together architects, planners, policymakers, researchers, and practitioners who are all, in different ways, engaged with the evolving realities of our cities.

The word "Confluence" felt particularly meaningful in this context. It evokes the image of rivers meeting, distinct currents merging to form something stronger and more expansive. In many ways, this is how we view the challenge of creating inclusive urban environments. No single discipline holds all the answers. Architects shape spatial experiences, planners structure urban



systems, policymakers frame regulatory environments, and researchers bring critical insights into social realities. The conference therefore sought to encourage conversations that moved across disciplinary boundaries and allowed new ideas, collaborations, and perspectives to emerge.

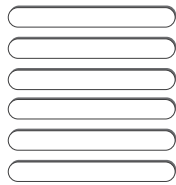
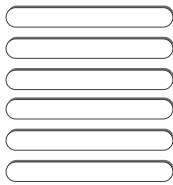
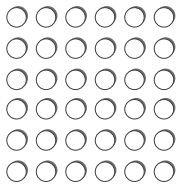
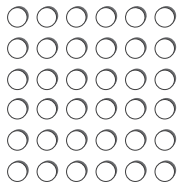
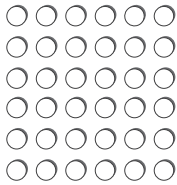
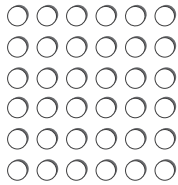
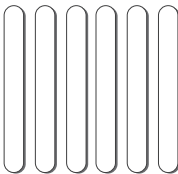
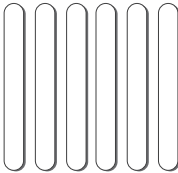
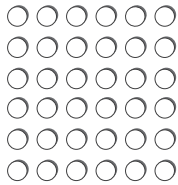
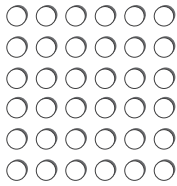
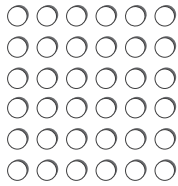
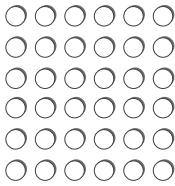
What unfolded during the conference was both inspiring and thought provoking. Participants brought with them diverse perspectives shaped by their own contexts and practices. Some spoke through theoretical frameworks, others through case studies and lived experiences of working with communities and institutions. Yet across these varied discussions, there was a shared recognition that the question of inclusivity in cities is both complex and deeply human. As editors, we were struck by the richness of these exchanges and by the collective willingness to rethink how cities can be designed and governed in ways that respond more sensitively to human diversity. This book emerged from that moment of shared dialogue. However, our intention in compiling this volume was never simply to produce a record of conference proceedings. Conferences often capture important ideas, but they can also be fleeting. What we hoped to preserve was the

spirit of the conversations that unfolded during ICAAUS - The curiosity, the critical questioning, and the commitment to imagining more inclusive urban futures. The chapters included in this book therefore reflect not only the scholarship presented at the conference but also the broader concerns and aspirations that shaped those discussions. As editors, we view this book not as the conclusion of a conversation but as its continuation. Inclusive urbanism is not a destination that can be achieved through a single intervention or policy framework. It is an evolving process, one that requires continuous dialogue, reflection, and collaboration across disciplines. Through *Confluence: Dialogues on Inclusive Urban Environment*, we hope to contribute to this ongoing conversation. More importantly, we hope the ideas presented here encourage students, scholars, practitioners, and policymakers alike to imagine cities where accessibility, equity, and inclusion are not treated as afterthoughts, but as fundamental principles shaping the urban environments of the future.

Dr. Purva Mujumdar
Prerana Hazarika

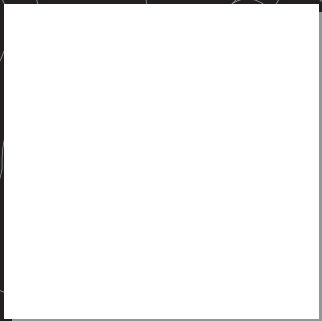
Authors & Editors





RETHINKING INCLUSIVITY IN URBAN ENVIRONMENT





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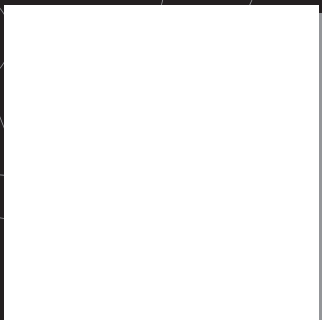
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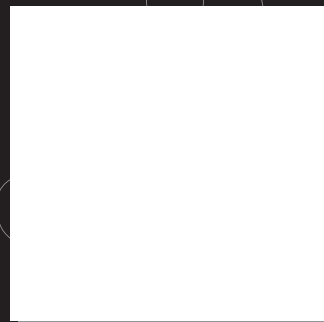
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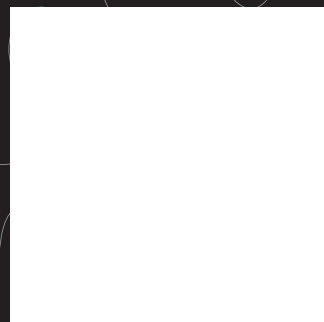
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Cities are growing visibly and are changing rapidly. Skylines are rising, infrastructure is expanding, and investments are transforming entire urban areas. Yet, this progress raises an important question: Who are we actually building our cities for? While growth is often seen as a sign of success, it demands a closer look at fairness, access, and representation. The International Conference on Art, Architecture and Urban Studies (ICAAUS), centered on the theme, Inclusive Environment in Growing Cities (IEGC), was conceived as a platform to address this urgent global priority.

The discussions repeatedly highlighted this key issue, framing inclusivity not just as a goal but as a basic duty that should guide planning, design, and governance from the beginning. There was a focus on how everyday urban systems, like streets, public transport, housing types, institutional buildings, and digital services can unintentionally leave some people out. Exclusion often happens subtly, rooted in standards, designs, technologies, and policies that favor efficiency over fairness. Therefore, barrier free access, safe mobility, and easy communication were positioned as essential parts of a fair and functional city, not just "nice to have" features.

Among the most profound moments of the day was a personal story from a parent in the community. A parent from the community shared her lived experience of raising a daughter who uses a wheelchair. Her words shifted the conversation from theory to reality, from guidelines to lived truth. Suddenly, inclusivity was no longer an abstract concept : It was personal. Her story shifted the focus to the real experiences of navigating the city as both a caregiver and a child seeking independence and dignity. Her account highlighted how poor urban infrastructure turns routine tasks into complicated challenges. Poorly designed streets, uneven pavements, and the absence of ramps transforms routine tasks into exhausting efforts. Public spaces intended to be for all, such as shopping malls, parks and recreational areas, often lack adequate room to maneuver or basic accessible features. These oversights, though seemingly minor, where children with disabilities do not merely face inconvenience, they experience exclusion.

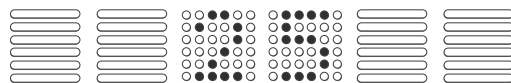
Her testimony illuminated a quiet truth that exclusion is not always dramatic or obvious, it lives in the ordinary details of design. A missing ramp, a narrow doorway, or a discontinuous pathway; each becomes a silent reminder that





the built environment does not fully recognize different bodies and abilities. Beyond physical barriers, such spaces can weaken the sense of belonging, suggesting that accessibility is an afterthought rather than a fundamental right. This personal narrative emphasized the larger discourse on inclusive cities. Accessibility is not solely a technical provision, it is about dignity, participation, and fairness. Placing inclusivity at the core of planning and design is not optional. It is essential for creating cities that truly serve everyone. A student installation was also a part of the conference, adding a hands on and

experiential aspect to its exploration of inclusive environments. Titled Haath Se Pehchan, the project was developed by Bachelor of Fine Arts students. It looked into themes of touch, materiality, and bodily expression through a series of collaboratively created clay tiles. The installation featured tiles imprinted with hand marks, facial impressions, and gentle gestures pressed directly into the clay. A key goal of Haath Se Pehchan was to make art more than just a visual experience. By inviting viewers to touch and interact physically with the tiles, the installation challenged traditional rules about handling





artworks. For many, the shape of a palm or the imprint of a cheek became a source of recognition and empathy, reinforcing the idea that art can be felt as well as seen. The collaborative process added further depth to the installation's meaning. Each student contributed a unique imprint, yet together these gestures formed a shared record of human presence. This blend of individuality and togetherness reflected principles of inclusivity and participation. Situated within the ICAUS framework, the installation supported the conference's focus on community based and experiential practices, showing how hands on



interaction and collaborative creation can broaden the ways art is produced and perceived.

A Nukkad Naatak introduced a theatrical dimension to the conference, adding a powerful performative layer to the exploration of inclusive environments. Titled "Aaina: Inclusivity Ki Pehchaan," the street theatre performance reflected on the meaning of inclusivity through a socially engaged narrative. Using the metaphor of a mirror, the play encouraged audiences to confront how societal attitudes continue to marginalize individuals, even in a time





marked by legal reforms and institutional progress. The performance unfolded through three interconnected scenes that illustrated lived experiences of exclusion. They first depicted the emotional and social challenges faced by an acid attack survivor navigating stigma and prejudice in public spaces.

The second focused on a young individual subjected to ridicule and misunderstanding for gender expression, highlighting the pressures imposed by rigid social expectations. The final scene explored the internal struggle of an adolescent grappling with body image and the search for self-acceptance in a judgmental environment. Together, these narratives revealed how exclusion operates subtly yet persistently in everyday social life. Drawing upon the traditional form of street theatre, the performance incorporated chorus, rhythm, and direct engagement with the audience. Beyond its dramatic presentation, *Aaina: Inclusivity Ki Pehchaan* emphasized that inclusivity cannot be realized through policy statements alone. Meaningful inclusion requires a deeper transformation in social attitudes, empathy, and everyday behavior. By presenting narratives rooted in lived experience, the performance invited audiences to question

ingrained biases and to recognize inclusivity as a collective responsibility. In doing so, the naatak echoed the broader conference message that creating inclusive environments demands not only institutional change but also a conscious cultural shift toward a society grounded in dignity, respect, and equality for all.

Riwayat, the Publication Society of the School of Art and Architecture curated an engaging exhibition that brought together creative and critical works of students. The showcase reflected the society's vision of making academic expression more accessible, while giving a platform to ideas that question, provoke, and inspire. The highlight of the exhibition was a unique living infographic. It engaged viewers by posing a core question: How social are our social spaces?

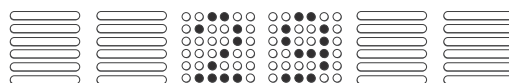
The exhibit went beyond conventional visual representation, encouraging participants to reflect on how people occupy, share, and experience spaces in everyday life. By visualizing patterns of social interactions, inclusions, and exclusions within built environments, the infographic became both an inquiry and a mirror of spatial realities.



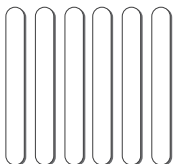
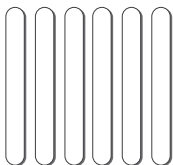
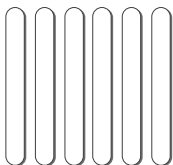
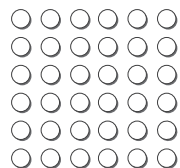
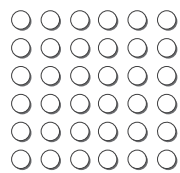
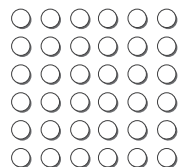
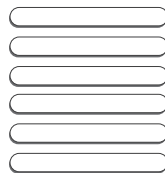
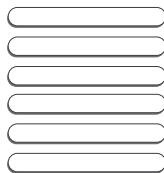
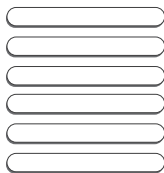
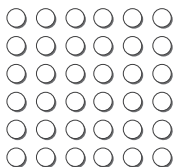
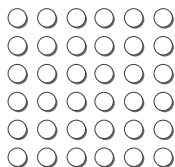
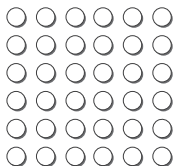
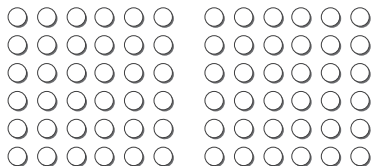


The discussions that followed highlighted that while national initiatives and global development agendas offer important frameworks, their real value comes from effective implementation. The focus consistently returned to putting principles into action, ensuring enforcement, accountability, and, most importantly, being responsive to people's experiences instead of relying only on policy statements. Inclusion was described in broad terms, going well beyond physical accessibility. It includes economic fairness, planning that considers gender, acknowledgment of social diversity, and fair access

to technology. The dialogue pointed out that universal design, participatory planning, and community based resilience are practical ways to create inclusive urban environments. These methods stress the importance of empathy and understanding the specific context in planning and design. The overall sentiment was clear: urban development must benefit real people across differences in age, ability, income, and identity. Ultimately, the future of cities will depend not just on how much they grow, but on how well they create environments that are fair, responsive, and fundamentally human.







INCLUSIVE FUTURE:
DESIGNING CITIES
FOR ALL

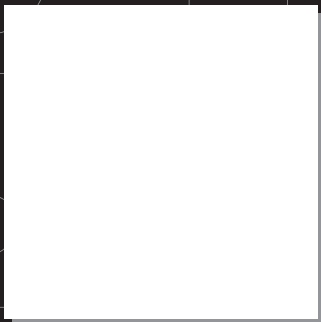
5



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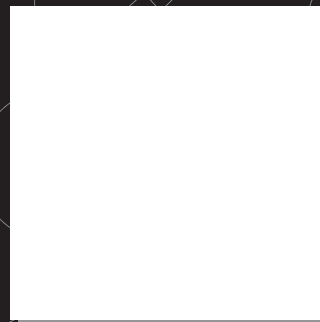
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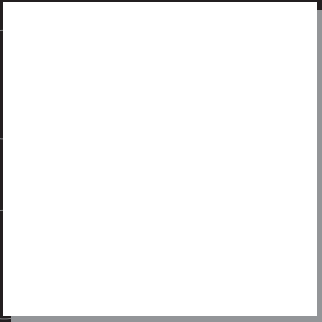


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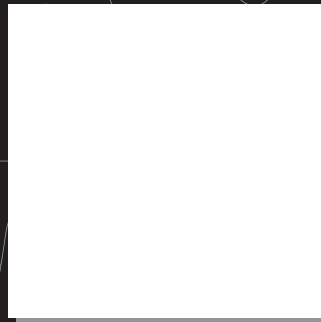
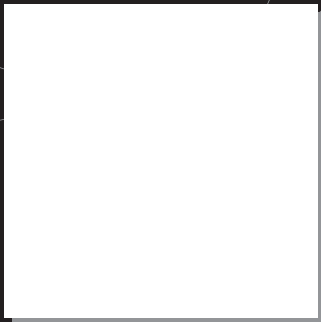
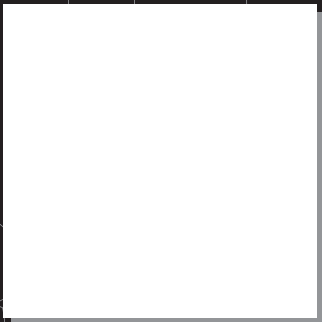
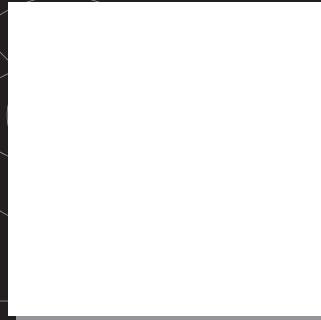
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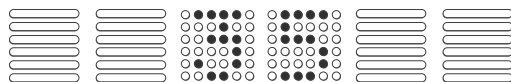
PROF. ANAND KHATRI

Former UVCT & Director
AITSAP

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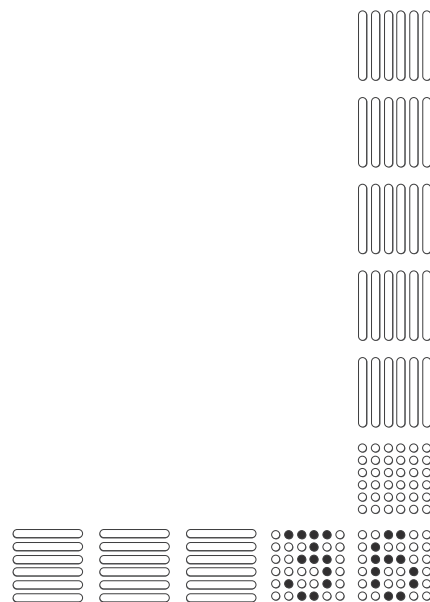
CONTEXT, INCLUSION, AND THE FUTURE OF URBAN LIVING



Gurugram represents rapid growth, upward expansion, and social-economic differences. In such settings, the word "IF" becomes a term of possibilities, inviting us to rethink architectural and urban practices beyond traditional limits. Yet, discussions about urban issues often stay on the drawing board. Professional talks usually focus on looks, shape, and feedback from others, rather than on real-life experiences. This shows what could be seen as a cultural shortcoming. The saying "culture eats strategy for breakfast" highlights that societal attitudes often overshadow good intentions.

Work from initiatives like the Lab of Inclusive Design at IIT Roorkee shows the range of inclusive research. The focus areas include assistive technologies, information systems design, health and wellbeing, public spaces, rural innovation, education, mobility, and sanitation. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) created in this field help spread knowledge about inclusive practices. Accessibility is recognized as a basic right. However, poverty and uneven economic distribution still shape urban life. With a population over 1.42

billion, designing for diversity is essential. "One size fits all" solutions do not work in a society marked by inequality.

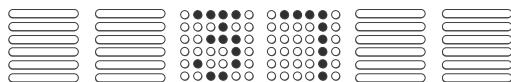




REAL ESTATE, GROWTH & URBAN CONTRADICTIONS

The rapid urbanization of cities such as Chennai and Gurugram reveals stark contrasts - luxury developments alongside informal settlements, high rise towers casting shadows over communities deprived of sunlight and open space. Tiny cubicles labeled as economic housing raise concerns regarding dignity and practicality.

The distinction between growth and development is critical. While economic expansion appears unstoppable, development must be evaluated through the lenses of shelter, mobility, health-care, recreation, and equitable access. The shifting population pyramid with a declining youth base and increasing elderly population demands sensitive and adaptive planning.

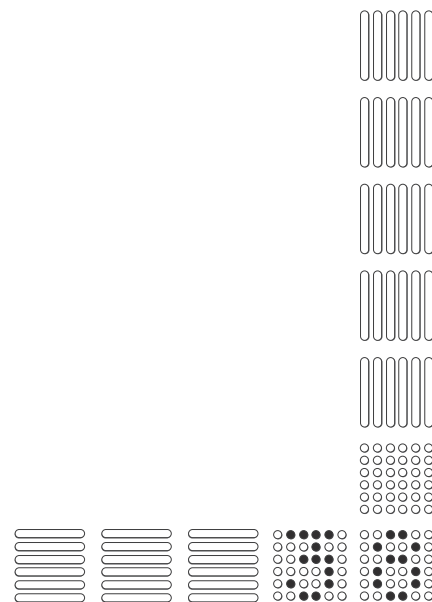


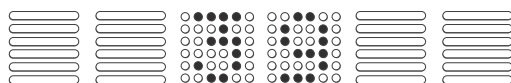
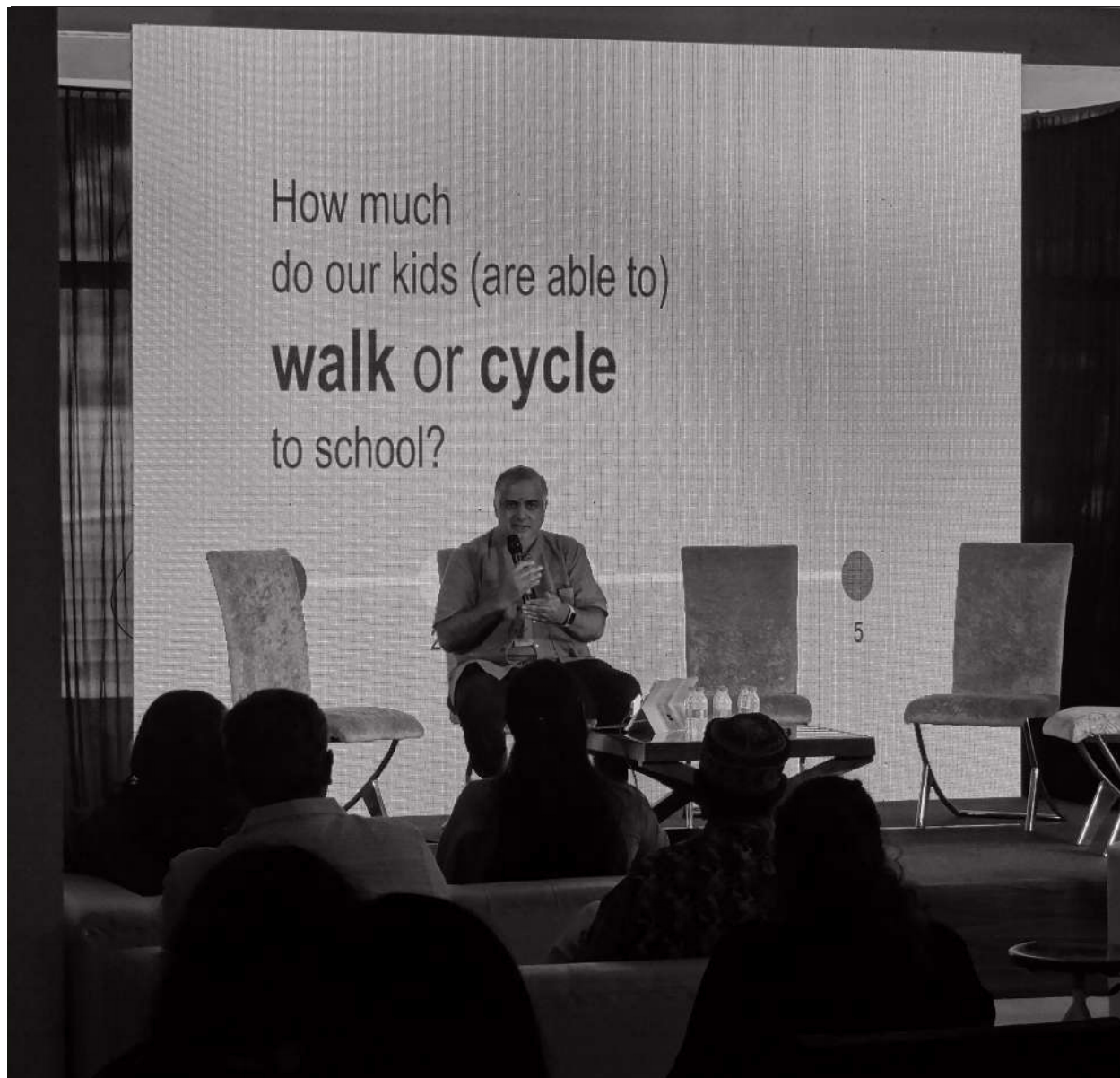
Contemporary urban life is shaped by immediacy. Ten-minute deliveries, algorithm-driven services, and heavy reliance on technology reflect a culture focused on speed. This quick pace often brings social and environmental costs. Service providers feel increasing pressure, and anxiety in cities grows. Cities might be judged not by their fastest services but by the wellbeing of their most vulnerable members. Safe access to schools, walkable neighborhoods, and inclusive public spaces are signs of a healthy urban environment. The “fast food” metaphor applies beyond food to lifestyles that value convenience over quality.

Global platforms like the World Economic Forum and the Sustainable Development Goals focus on inclusivity. National initiatives, such as accessible public streets and kerb free pathways, show a commitment to this goal. International examples, including accessible sky bridges and universally designed libraries, demonstrate how to incorporate inclusivity effectively.

On the other hand, well-known buildings that do not provide universal access reveal ongoing issues. The Pre-

amble of the Constitution establishes equality and justice. Still, access is not equal, especially for economically weaker groups and people with disabilities. Empathy and democracy should connect in architectural practice.



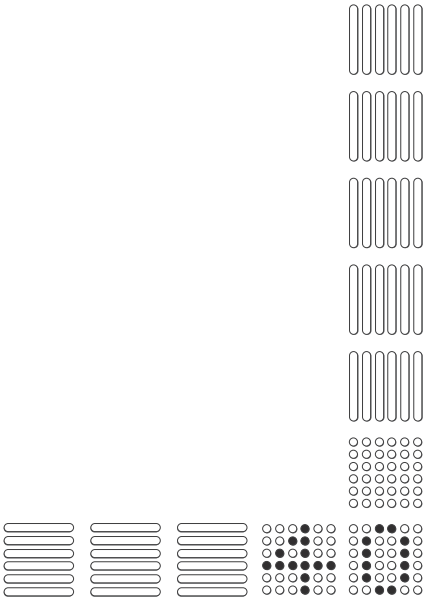


RETHINKING PROFESSIONAL RELEVANCE

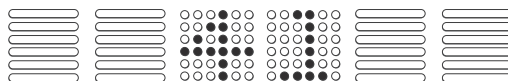
Concerns about the decline of the profession often miss an important point. Architecture often does not consider those who cannot pay for professional services. Design outcomes are greatly influenced by investments and market forces, while users have little say. Unlike consumer goods, buildings do not come with a return policy if they do not meet human needs.

In a time influenced by artificial intelligence, architects must focus on designing in a way that is inclusive, ethical, and context-sensitive. The future of urban areas relies on combining technology, policy, enforcement, and structural implementation to create environments that support people instead of hindering them. India's urban story is one of coexistence. It features slums and skyscrapers, speed and exclusion, aspiration and inequality. Planning for the future requires inclusive development strategies, not just intuitive ones. We must see diversity as a strength, not

a hassle. The key question is whether current urban systems allow for participation and dignity for everyone, or if they continue to promote exclusion. The answer will shape whether growth leads to true development.



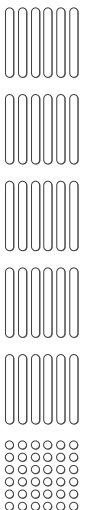
REIMAGINING INCLUSIVITY IN CITIES: BEYOND POLICY AND DESIGN



Inclusivity in cities should focus on the needs of everyday users. It is not just about meeting technical requirements or following rules. It includes values like dignity, independence, and a real sense of belonging. Urban spaces should enable everyone to join in community activities, regardless of their physical, cognitive, or sensory differences.

Everyday places, like public restrooms that are only for men and women, show flaws in inclusive thinking. This is especially true for caregivers who assist children while trying to maintain dignity. Designing specialized health-care spaces illustrates how difficult it can be to find professionals who understand the unique needs of users. Inclusion isn't only about physical access. It's also about creating spaces that respect various human conditions. Invisible disabilities, lack of awareness, and social stigma continue to isolate individuals and families.

The absence of play areas, recreational facilities, and community support for neurodiverse individuals highlights how exclusion quietly and deeply affects cities.



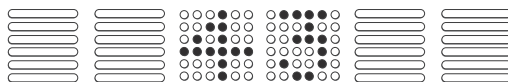


WHO IS LEFT OUT?

RETHINKING EVERYDAY EXCLUSION

A powerful perspective has emerged: Exclusion is everywhere. Students carry heavy schoolbags, citizens cope with poor infrastructure, and communities deal with strict cultural demands. These issues show a common discomfort. Societal expectations often lead people to accept environments that hurt their wellbeing. Tragic events related to feelings of isolation underline the urgent need for awareness and acceptance.

The future of inclusivity must tackle the increasing overlaps between urban and rural areas. Villages try to imitate cities but still experience exclusion from urban planning. Exclusion typically begins at the planning stage, where zoning, setbacks, and rules determine who belongs. Informal settlements and urban villages serve as economic buffers, yet they are still left out of official plans.



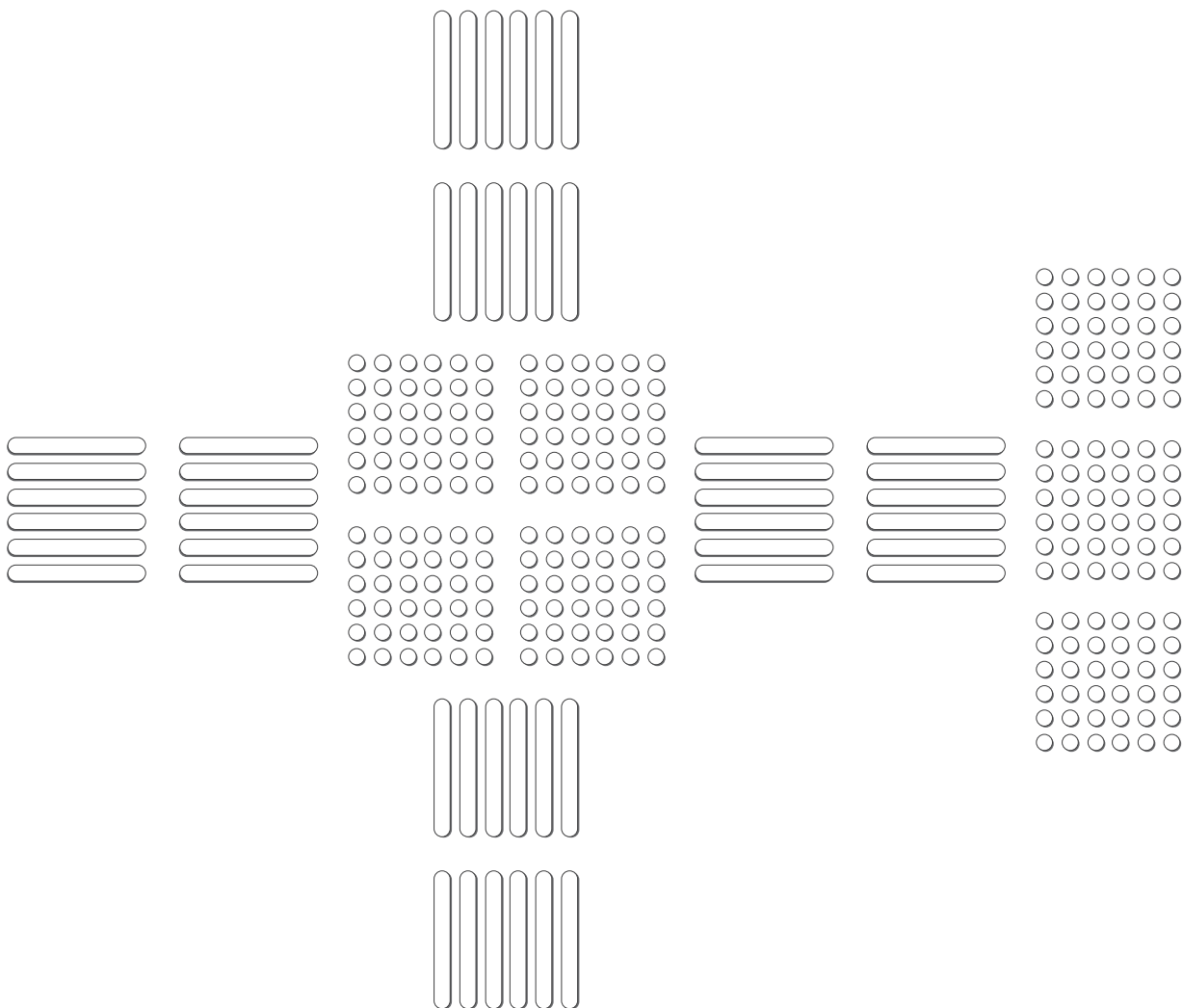
FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE -TOWARDS INCLUSIVE FUTURES

While there are policies and guidelines about accessibility, implementation is still lacking. Knowledge of local planning processes is limited. Pedestrianization or inclusive design often becomes just a checklist item instead of a real goal. Inclusivity is not merely a design problem; it also involves governance, education, affordability, and social attitudes. The roles of educators, students, and practitioners extend beyond following rules; they should

also focus on innovation. Accessibility should not be viewed as an expensive add-on or an afterthought; it needs to be seen as a basic right.

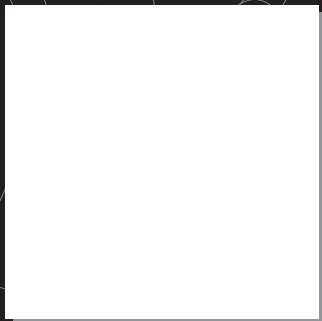
Cities must push beyond practical limits and encourage imagination, fairness, and responsibility. Creating inclusive urban futures requires a strong commitment to ensure that no person, community, or situation is overlooked in the design process.





GOVERNANCE &
INNOVATION FOR
INCLUSIVE GROWTH





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(EMA)

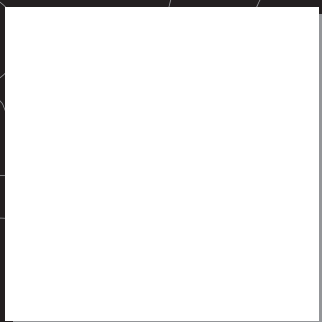
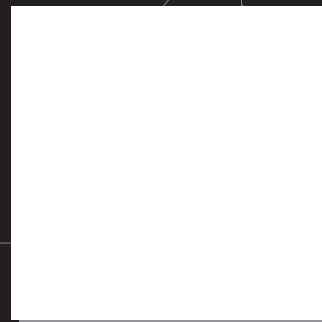
PANELIST



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Co-founder, Raahgiri
Foundation

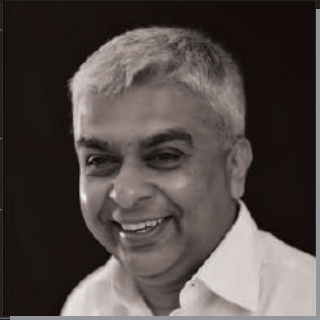
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Mr. SUBHASH VASHISHT

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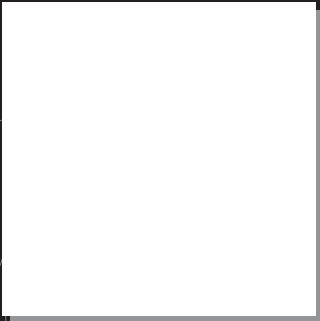
PANELIST



MR. GEORGE ABRAHAM

Chairman- World Blind Cricket
Association

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



MS. SONALI VYAS

Director, Programs & Opera-
tions, Safetipin

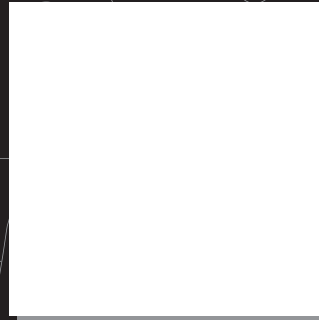
PANELIST



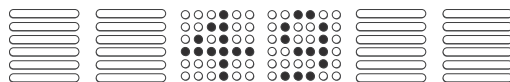
MR. VIVEK GUPTA

Principal Architect, Arvind
Vivek Associates

PANELIST



TECHNOLOGY, ASPIRATION, AND THE PARADOX OF PROGRESS



Inclusive growth requires innovation and governance to evolve together. We need to ensure that technological progress does not marginalize vulnerable communities. The story of aspiration, seen in the discipline and determination of competitive sports, reflects the greater goals of a rapidly modernizing nation.

However, we must examine progress critically. Everyday experiences show that systemic exclusions exist in our current infrastructure. For example, the shift to touchscreen payment systems has created barriers for visually impaired users. Although digital transformation represents a significant step forward for the country, a lack of focus on accessibility risks leaving out a large part of the population. Earlier design strategies, like varying the sizes of currency notes for tactile identification, show that thoughtful innovation can empower people instead of alienating them.

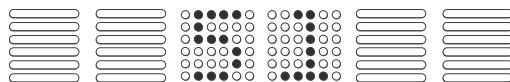
The question is whether digital changes have maintained the same principles of inclusivity.

MOBILITY, INFRA- STRUCTURE, AND THE ACCESSIBILITY GAP

Urban mobility systems show clear problems in implementation. Public buses that only slow down at stops without ensuring safe boarding leave out people with disabilities. Pavements are often poorly designed, tactile indicators are inconsistent, and building complexes are hard to navigate.

Accessibility measures often serve as symbols instead of providing real help. Some systems have taken a more complete approach. The Delhi Metro, for instance, combines tactile guidance with human assistance, highlighting the need for layered accessibility. App-based transport services have also provided more mobility options for visually impaired users by offering easier payment methods and more independence. However, these isolated successes do not make up for the larger issues in infrastructure across streets, buildings, and public institutions.





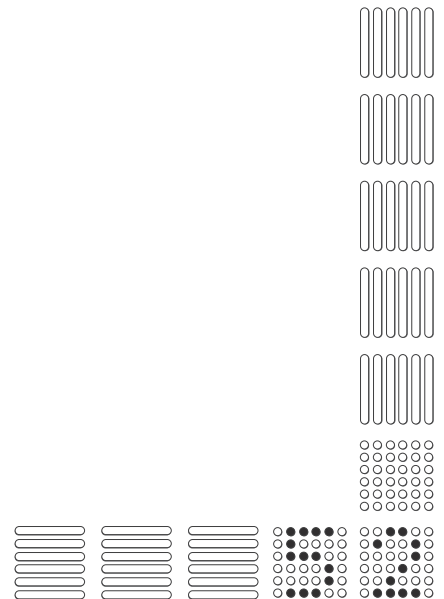
GOVERNANCE, PERCEPTION, AND THE NEED FOR CONSCIOUS DESIGN

Persistent misconceptions depict people with disabilities as lacking technological skills, even though many skilled professionals exist in various fields.

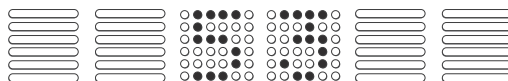
Government websites, policy portals, and even sites focused on disability advocacy often do not meet accessibility standards. These gaps show the divide between what laws aim to achieve and what really happens. Inclusive governance needs to change how we see disability. It should be recognized as part of shared citizenship. Accessibility should be integrated during the design phase instead of added later. Projects that claim to be disability-friendly, like railway stations with Braille and tactile markings, often miss the mark because of poor upkeep, awkward designs, or insufficient user feedback.

Thoughtful design requires engaging with real users and ongoing commitment from all parties involved. Inclusive growth will remain an unreachable

goal unless governance structures, technology, and design approaches work together to create spaces that allow everyone to participate fully.



CITIZEN AWARENESS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP IN INCLUSIVE URBANISM

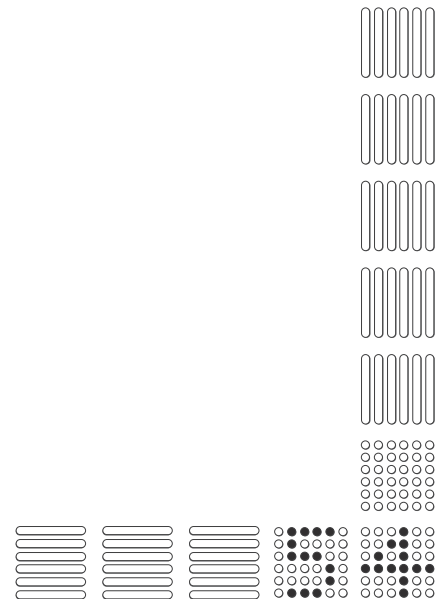


FROM LEGISLATION TO LIVED REALITY

The translation of policy into practice remains one of the biggest challenges in promoting inclusive urban development. While there are laws that address accessibility and universal design, implementation often falls short due to low public awareness and disjointed administrative processes. When policies move from central to state and local levels, gaps in coordination weaken the original intent. Inclusivity often becomes theoretical, reduced to checklists instead of driving real change.

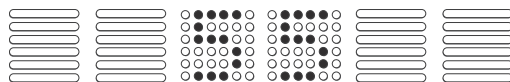
Universal Design, when viewed as a basic principle rather than an added feature, benefits all users. Ramps, accessible circulation systems, and gender-neutral facilities serve a wider population beyond those with disabilities. However, a common tendency to design for the “able-bodied male” continues to influence infrastructure, leaving out diverse user groups. Disparate development plans, fewer child-friendly environments, and decreased pedes-

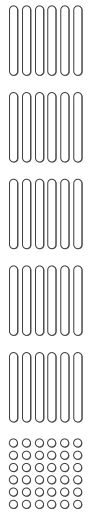
trian safety show systemic neglect. Professionals in architecture and planning are often left out of early policy discussions, yet they face the effects of poor execution.

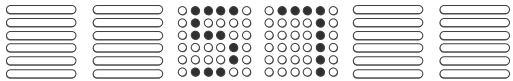


URBAN MOBILITY, SAFETY, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Urban streets show deeper structural biases. Pedestrians are often overlooked in planning, while vehicle movement takes priority in design. Poorly planned roads, lack of walkable areas, and limited use of public transport worsen exclusion. Women's work patterns are affected by transport routes, and the lack of safe, accessible public spaces limits involvement in civic life. Surveillance technologies do not guarantee safety on their own. Inclusive planning requires involving women, people with disabilities, and marginalized groups in decision-making. Invisible disabilities highlight the gaps in awareness. Accessibility issues in buildings, such as lift access and digital platforms, emphasize the need for sensitivity and accountability. Although there are penalties for not following the rules, uniform enforcement of these penalties is lacking. Ignoring pedestrian needs in economic metrics further marginalizes those who don't use cars.







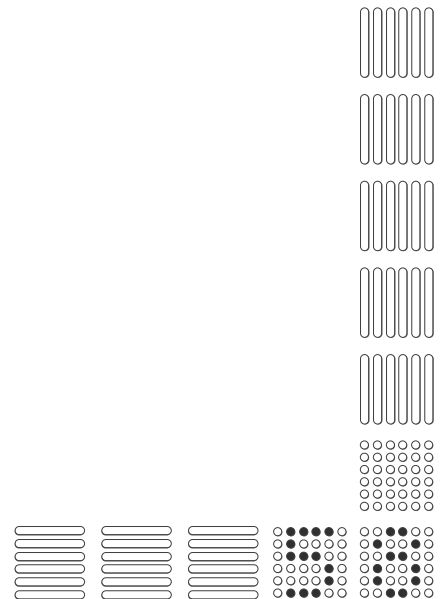
EDUCATION, ENFORCEMENT, AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

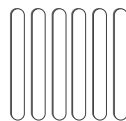
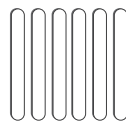
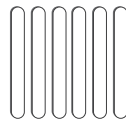
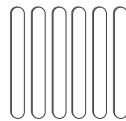
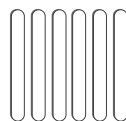
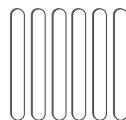
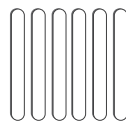
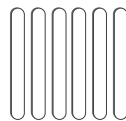
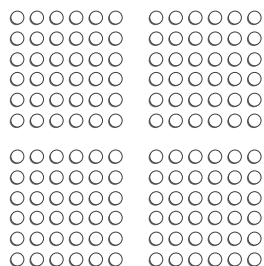
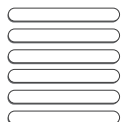
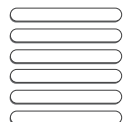
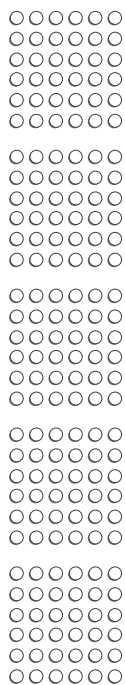
Embedding inclusivity requires changes in education, governance, and community engagement. Teaching disability law, design principles for mobility, and accessibility codes in academic programs can improve professional skills.

Advocacy and sensitivity training are equally important to build empathy in design. Enforcing existing regulations more strictly, along with grassroots participation, can close implementation gaps. Streets, like buildings, must follow accessibility standards. This is especially important since many disabilities result from road-related incidents. Reclaiming public spaces for pedestrians, encouraging community ownership, and promoting mobility systems focused on people are vital steps towards inclusive growth.

Inclusivity suffers not just from policy gaps but also from changing societal aspirations and deep-rooted cultural

exclusions. Tackling these issues require coordinated efforts across governance, professional practice, and community awareness to make sure inclusive urbanism leads to real change, not just talk.





CLOSING REFLECTIONS





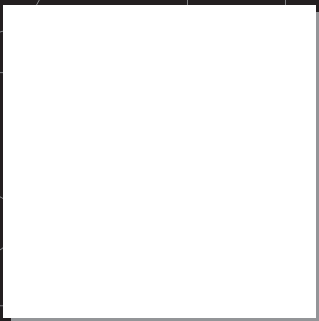
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Associate Professor, Faculty of Architecture and Ekistics
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PRIYANJALI
PRABHAKARAN**

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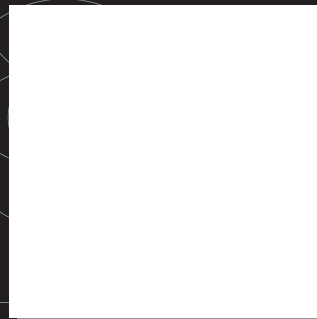
**PROF. (DR.)
ANYA SIROTA**

Associate Dean of Academic
Initiatives at Taubman
College of Architecture and
Urban Planning, and found-
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**MR. RAJNEESH
SAREEN**

Director, Sustainable Habi-
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Science and Environment



**AR. ANKITA
KAPOOR**

Senior Program Manager,
Safetipin



**MS. SREEJATA
ROY**

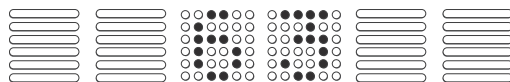
Visual Artist and Communi-
ty Art Practitioner, Co-found-
er, Revue



The discussions at the conference highlighted an important truth: urban growth without inclusion makes inequality worse. Throughout keynote speeches and panel conversations, a common theme emerged. Cities are not just physical structures made of glass, steel, and roads; they are places shaped by the daily experiences of people.

As cities expand and digital systems grow, a key question remains: **who benefits from these changes?** The talks questioned the common belief that development equals economic growth. Participants argued that growth should not be measured solely by investment, density, or technology. Instead, we should think about development in terms of dignity, accessibility, and participation. Framing inclusivity as a responsibility rather than a goal changed the conversation from mere symbolism to a genuine commitment. Accessible roads, safe transportation, fair housing, and inclusive digital platforms are foundational to urban justice, not just optional add ons.

A major issue brought up was the disconnect between policy and practice.



National policies and global initiatives guide us, but actual implementation can be inconsistent. Inclusivity often fades during execution, becoming just a list of compliance requirements rather than a core part of the design. The discussions pointed out that exclusion frequently starts quietly through zoning laws, infrastructure choices, technology access, and economic models that favor efficiency over fairness. The lack of representation for certain user groups in planning shows deeper biases that need to be actively addressed.

Governance and innovation are key to closing these gaps. While technology can change environments dramatically, it can unintentionally leave people out if accessibility is not built into the design from the start. The paradox of digital growth emphasizes the importance of inclusive design thinking across services and infrastructure. Examples of accessible transportation and public areas showed that real inclusion is possible when policy goals match careful planning and user involvement. Cultural attitudes and societal awareness were also important topics. Inclusion is not just about physical design; it also involves economic fairness, gender

sensitivity, disability rights, and social diversity. Urban systems should view vulnerability as a normal condition in diverse populations. Recognizing that exclusion impacts various groups across age, income, ability, and location shifted the conversation from individual solutions to broader systemic change.

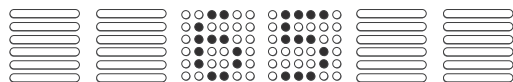
The conversations pushed for deeper professional reflection. Architecture and planning cannot stay limited to formal experiments or solely business-driven projects. In a world influenced by artificial intelligence and fast urban growth, design fields must focus on empathy, context, and ethical responsibility. Prioritizing the needs of underrepresented groups in the market should be a core part of the profession's mission.

In conclusion, the conference stressed that building inclusive urban futures requires coordinated efforts across government, education, professional practice, and community involvement. Cities should be judged not just by how quickly they deliver services or how tall their buildings are, but by how well they support participation and dignity



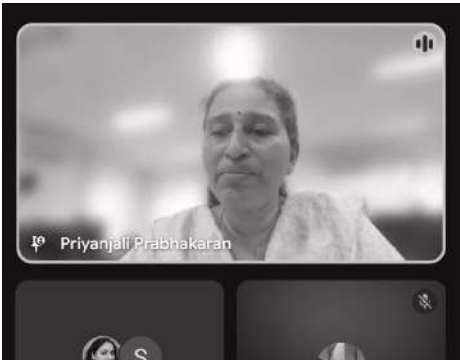
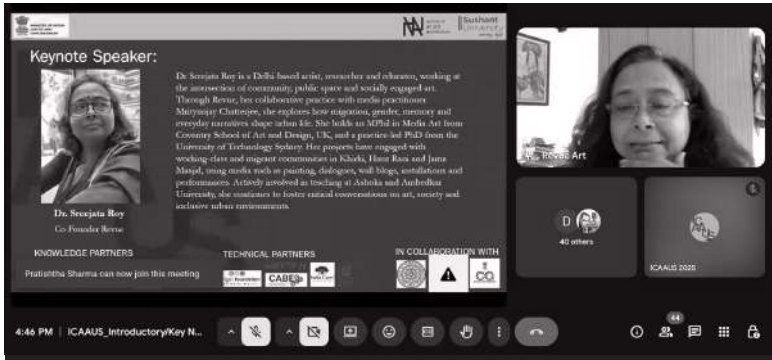
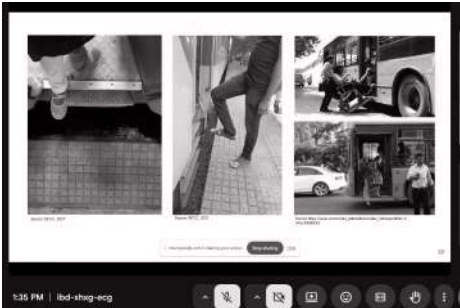
for all residents. The overall message is clear. We cannot delay inclusion in the development process. It must be integrated from the start within policy,

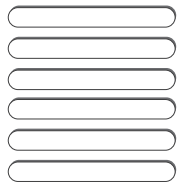
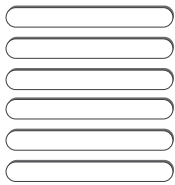
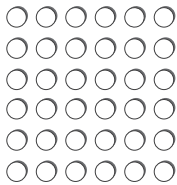
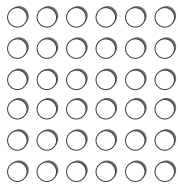
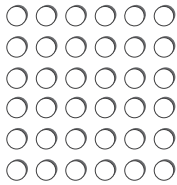
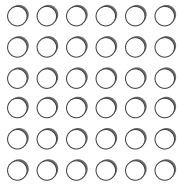
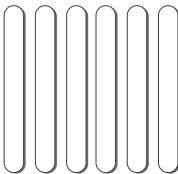
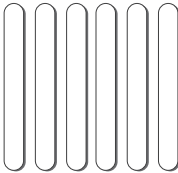
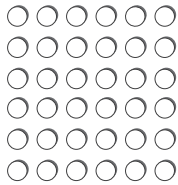
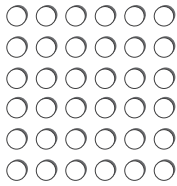
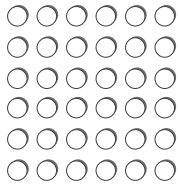
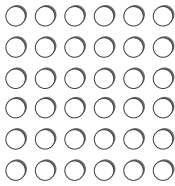
design, and execution so that growth becomes equitable and humane progress rather than just expansion.



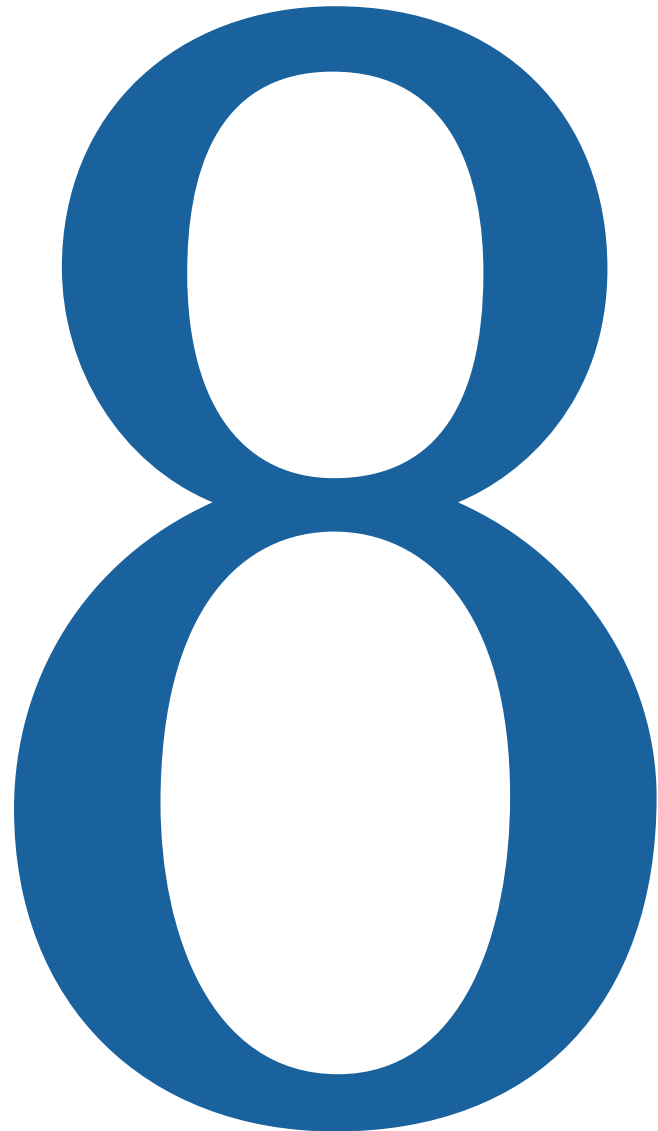








INSIGHTS FROM
CONFERENCE TEAM



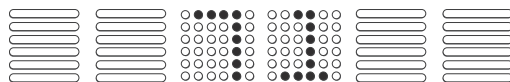
POOJA LALIT KUMAR

CONVENER



The journey of ICAAUS began with a quiet discomfort, one that grew gradually over years of teaching, practice, and engagement with the built environment.

In academic studios and professional forums alike, I often heard the word inclusive invoked with confidence. It appeared in policies, proposals, and presentations with reassuring frequency. Yet, somewhere between articulation and implementation, the meaning seemed to blur. Inclusion, I began to realise, had slowly become a comfortable word, sometimes even a decorative one. Many environments we described as inclusive continued to function within systems that were, consciously or unconsciously, exclusive. It was within this unease that the idea of ICAAUS first began to take shape. For me, accessibility has never been merely a technical checklist or a regulatory obligation. It is, fundamentally, a responsibility. A responsibility to anticipate difference. A responsibility to design for dignity. A responsibility to recognise that the built environment carries quiet but profound power it can invite participation, or it can invisibly deny it. When cities expand with-

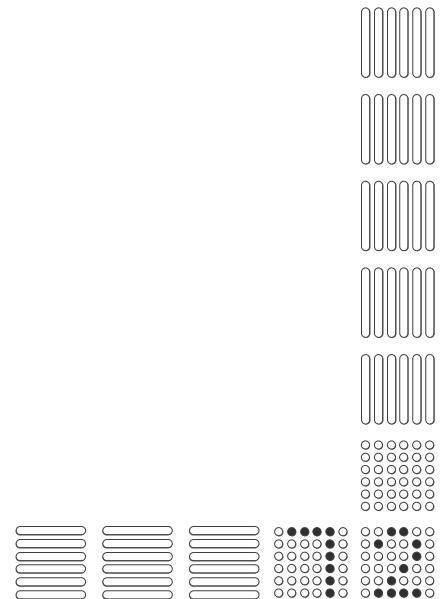


out this ethical grounding, growth risks amplifying disparity rather than bridging it.

The vision for ICAAUS 2025, centred on Inclusive Environments for Growing Cities, emerged from a desire to shift the conversation from accessibility as compliance to accessibility as collective accountability. I hoped to create a platform where architects, planners, policymakers, scholars, and social thinkers could come together not simply to present ideas, but to question assumptions and re-examine the depth and sincerity of our commitment to inclusion. The journey from idea to reality was both demanding and deeply rewarding. Like most meaningful endeavours, it evolved through dialogue, collaboration, and perseverance. The organising team carried this vision forward with remarkable dedication working quietly behind the scenes, often beyond visible hours, united by the shared aspiration of making this platform genuinely accessible in spirit and intent. Together, we sought to create a space where conversations could move freely across disciplinary boundaries and where new perspectives could emerge.

In many ways, ICAAUS 2025 itself became a reflection of the very principles it sought to explore: dialogue, openness, and collective engagement. What began as a thought gradually transformed into a shared intellectual landscape, where ideas met, questioned one another, and moved forward together.

As these conversations continue to unfold, one conviction remains clear in my mind: inclusion is not an act of generosity; it is an obligation. And accessibility is not a choice; it is our responsibility in shaping cities that are equitable, humane, just and truly open to all.



SHANU AGARWAL

CO-CONVENER

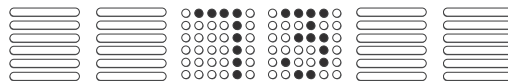


"Serving as the Co-Convenor of the International Conference on Art, Architecture and Urban Studies (ICAAUS) has been an immensely enriching and insightful journey. The process of con-

ceptualizing, planning, and executing the conference provided an opportunity to engage deeply with the evolving discourse on accessibility, inclusivity, and universal design within the built environment.

One of the most valuable aspects of this experience was the opportunity to interact with a wide range of stakeholders working towards inclusive and accessible urban environments. Engaging with officials from the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) during the process of applying for the conference grant offered important insights into national priorities, policy frameworks, and the institutional support systems that are shaping accessibility initiatives in India. These interactions strengthened the understanding of how academic efforts can align with governmental goals to promote inclusive development.

The conference preparation also cre-

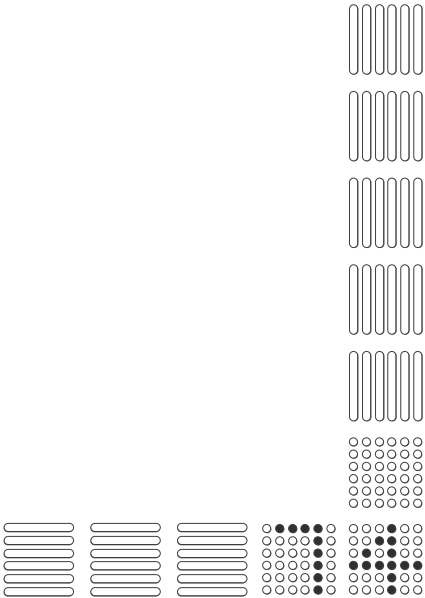


ated meaningful opportunities to connect with professionals from industry, researchers, practitioners, and advocates who are actively working in the field of accessible design and inclusive urbanism. These conversations highlighted the interdisciplinary nature of accessibility and reinforced the importance of collaboration between academia, practice, government bodies, and civil society.

Being closely involved in identifying and coordinating keynote speakers was another significant learning experience. It allowed careful consideration of voices that could bring diverse perspectives and global insights to the conference. In addition, reviewing abstracts and chapters submitted under various themes provided exposure to a wide range of emerging research, innovative design strategies, and case studies addressing accessibility across architectural and urban contexts.

Participating in the numerous meetings and discussions that shaped the conference also offered valuable insights into the collaborative effort required to organize an international academic platform. Overall, the experience has

been intellectually rewarding and professionally enriching, reaffirming the critical role of dialogue, research, and shared knowledge in advancing inclusive and accessible environments."



RIA KAPOOR:

CO-CONVENER

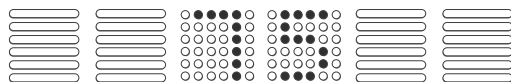


Serving as the Co-Convenor of ICAAUS 2025 has been a significant academic and professional responsibility. As a strong advocate of inclusive design and equitable spatial practices, I found

the journey from conceptualisation to planning and final execution both intellectually rigorous and deeply meaningful. From the initial stages, the intent was to position inclusion as a fundamental design ethic rather than a supplementary concern.

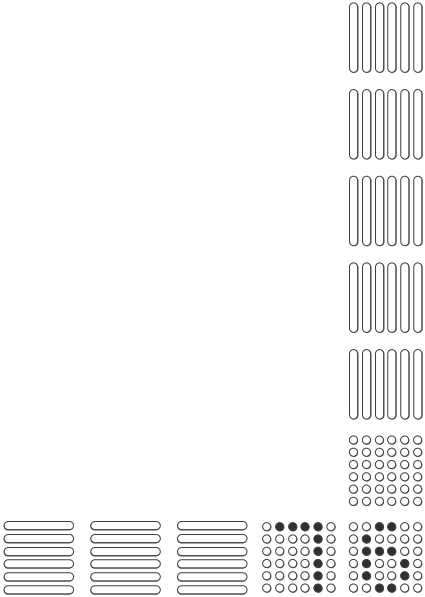
The thematic framework of the conference was carefully aligned with national mandates such as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and international commitments including Sustainable Development Goal 11, which emphasises inclusive and sustainable cities. This alignment ensured that the deliberations were grounded in both policy relevance and contemporary urban realities.

The conference brought together scholars, practitioners, and researchers from across the country who presented diverse and evidence-based work. Discussions on accessible mobility systems, gender-responsive pub-



lic spaces, child-friendly neighbourhoods, and adaptive reuse of heritage environments reflected the expanding scope of inclusive design within architecture and urban planning. The depth of research and field engagement shared by the speakers reinforced the idea that inclusion is increasingly embedded in professional discourse and practice.

What I found most encouraging was the collective seriousness with which participants engaged with the subject. The exchange of ideas demonstrated that inclusive design is gradually becoming intrinsic to our way of thinking and working. ICA AUS 2025 was not merely an academic event, but a reaffirmation that inclusive spaces are essential to building just, responsive, and sustainable cities for the future.



DEEPAK KUMAR:

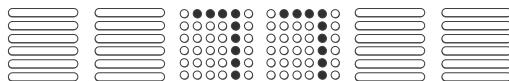
TREASURER



Serving as Treasurer for the International Conference on Art, Architecture, and Urban Studies (ICAAUS 2025), conducted from 17–19 September 2025 at Sushant University, was a significant

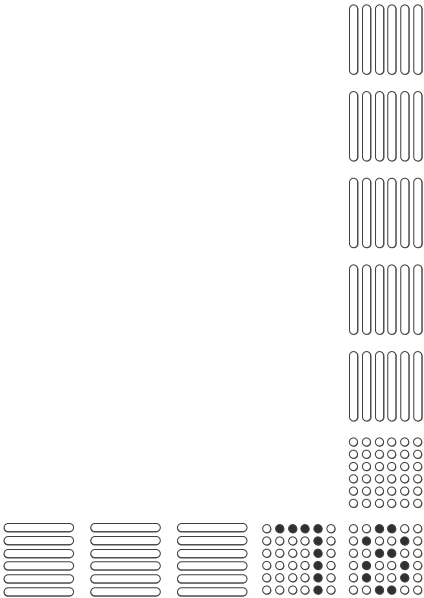
professional responsibility that demanded careful financial stewardship and strategic coordination.

Entrusted with overseeing the fiscal management of an international academic platform centered on the theme “Inclusive Environments for Growing Cities,” I was responsible for budgeting, fund allocation, compliance, and financial reporting. The role required precision, accountability, and proactive problem-solving to ensure that financial resources were optimally utilized throughout the three-day conference. The successful execution of the conference was the result of strong synergy within the core organizing committee. I worked in close coordination with the convenor, Prof. Pooja Lalit Kumar, under the mentorship and guidance of Dean Col. V. K. Malik. This collaborative framework ensured that all financial decisions aligned with institutional norms and upheld the professional standards of the School of Art and Architecture.



Continuous consultation and transparent processes enabled us to efficiently manage expenditures while accommodating the dynamic requirements of hosting international speakers, academicians, and delegates.

Beyond financial management, contributing as an editor for one of the conference volumes further enriched my involvement in the academic dimension of ICAAUS 2025. This dual responsibility strengthened my understanding of both administrative and scholarly aspects of conference organization. The collective commitment, integrity, and perseverance demonstrated by the organizing team and student volunteers were instrumental in delivering a seamless event. The appreciation extended by the vice chancellor, director of human resources, accounts and finance officer, and the dean's office was both encouraging and reaffirming.



KEERTI MISHRA:

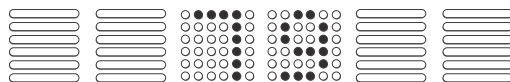
GRAPHICS HEAD



Serving as the Graphics Head and Editor for one of the conference volumes for the International Conference on Art, Architecture, and Urban Studies (ICAAUS 2025), hosted at Sushant

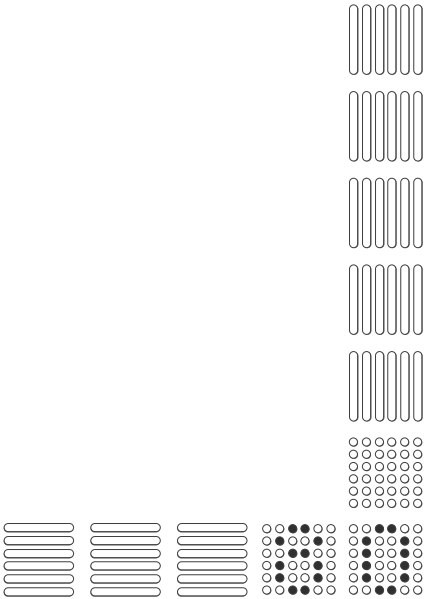
University, was less about balancing spreadsheets and more about balancing fonts, formats, feelings and the occasional last-minute PDF panic. While others kept an eye on budgets and logistics, I kept a hawk's eye on margins, mood boards, and the mysterious ways in which images shift by 0.2 mm right before printing.

Entrusted with shaping the visual and editorial identity of a conference centred on "Inclusive Environments for Growing Cities," I found myself design. My role demanded equal parts creativity and composure: ensuring design consistency, maintaining editorial accuracy, coordinating with authors for revisions, and persuading PowerPoint slides everywhere to align gracefully. Working closely with the convenor, Prof. Pooja Lalit Kumar, and under the encouraging guidance of Col. V. K. Malik, I navigated the vibrant intersection of academic rigour and aesthetic storytelling.



Also, as Editor for one of the conference volumes, my desk became a cross-roads of disciplines urban theorists, policy researchers, architects, and designers all converging into a cohesive manuscript. My task was to preserve that individuality while harmonising tone, structure, and formatting. There is something profoundly satisfying about watching scattered documents evolve into a polished, ISBN-ready volume that reflects both scholarship and design integrity.

What made the journey truly memorable was the synergy of the organising team and the infectious enthusiasm of student volunteers. The appreciation extended by the university leadership and administrative offices was both humbling and affirming it reminded me that design and editorial work, though often behind the scenes, are central to shaping institutional identity. As I look ahead, I carry forward a renewed confidence in crafting publications that are not only academically sound but visually engaging.



PURVA MUJUMDAR:

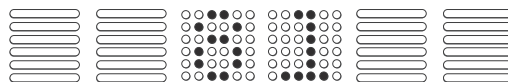
PUBLICATION HEAD



Serving as the Publication Head for ICAAUS 2025 was both an honour and a transformative professional experience. Hosted at the School of Art and Architecture, Sushant University, the

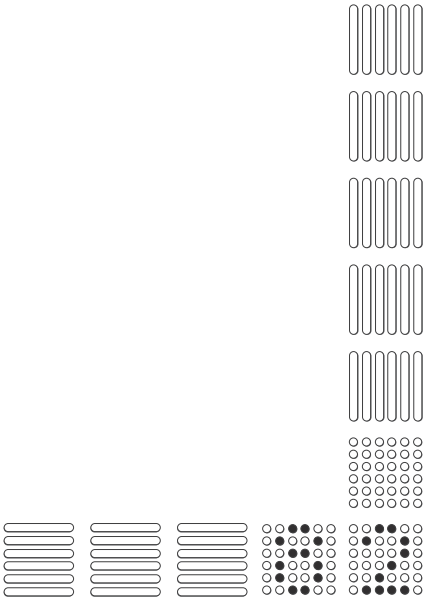
conference brought together scholars, industry practitioners, and thought leaders to deliberate on inclusive environments in growing cities.

My most intensive engagement unfolded through the Publication Committee. The responsibility extended far beyond documentation; it involved shaping the intellectual record of the conference. From reviewing abstracts and full-length papers to curating and structuring the Book of Abstracts, I gained first-hand exposure to the intricacies of academic publishing. Each submission required careful evaluation, balancing thematic relevance, scholarly rigor, and clarity of communication. Coordinating timelines, corresponding with authors, standardizing templates, and ensuring consistency across submissions sharpened my organizational discipline and attention to detail. The process deepened my understanding of how research is framed, presented, and preserved within academic dis-



course. It also reaffirmed the importance of publication as a bridge between ideas and impact.

ICAAUS 2025 has contributed significantly to my growth as an educator and researcher. It not only enhanced my editorial and leadership skills but also reinforced my commitment to fostering platforms that encourage meaningful dialogue and scholarly exchange. The journey was demanding, enriching, and profoundly fulfilling.



KIRAN SINGH:

COMMUNICATION HEAD

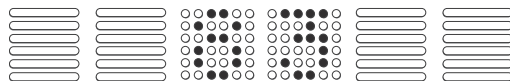


The International Conference on Art, Architecture and Urban Studies (ICAAUS 2025), held from September 17–19, 2025, was a landmark event for Sushant University. As the Communi-

cation Head, my journey was defined by precise and constant coordination to bring diverse global perspectives together. My role served as the vital link between the organizing committee, faculty, and participants, ensuring the conference's vision was clearly articulated across all platforms.

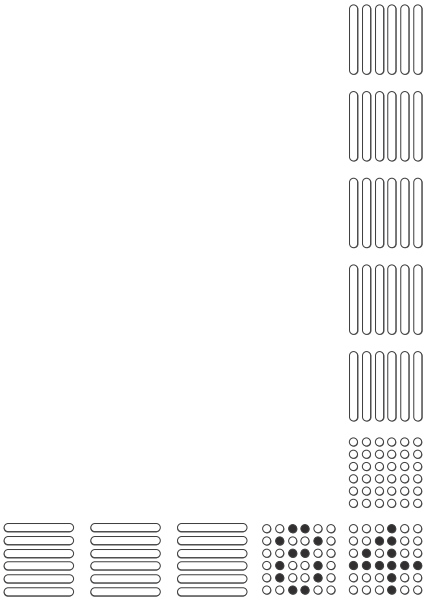
I worked closely with Convenor Prof. Pooja Lalit Kumar and Co-Convenors Shanu Agarwal and Ria Kapoor to align our messaging with the event's high academic standards. Operating as a synchronized team allowed us to overcome the complexities of hosting an international-scale event on its scheduled dates.

Beyond the core committee, I managed communications with the wider faculty and a dedicated group of student volunteers, whose "hard work and perseverance" were central to the event's smooth execution. This internal bonding and "honest effort" resulted in

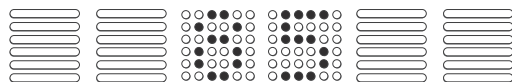


a significant achievement that the university administration has urged us to carry forward into future semesters.

Serving in this leadership capacity has strengthened my professional ties within the Sushant School of Art and Architecture and provided a blueprint for managing large-scale academic dialogues. I look forward to applying these insights as we take on the “next challenge” in our academic calendar.



THE CONFLUENCE COLLECTIVE





INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR GROWING CITIES

– A TRILOGY

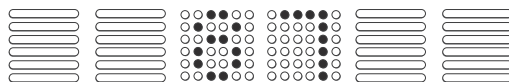
Inclusive Environments for Growing Cities is an interdisciplinary book series that explores the evolving dimensions of inclusion in contemporary urban environments. As cities expand and transform, questions of accessibility, equity, cultural identity, governance, and resilience become central to shaping sustainable urban futures.

Bringing together contributions from architects, planners, scholars, policy-makers, and researchers, the series examines how inclusive principles can inform the design, planning, and governance of cities. Through theoretical inquiry, empirical research, and design explorations, the volumes collectively address the spatial, social, and systemic challenges of building cities that serve diverse populations. Emerging from the academic dialogue of the International Conference on Inclusive Environments in Growing Cities (ICAAUS 2025), this series aims to contribute to

global conversations on urban equity and responsible development. It invites readers to rethink cities not merely as physical infrastructures, but as dynamic environments where access, belonging, and resilience shape the foundations of inclusive urban life.

Volume I: Universal Design and Accessibility in Urban Environments

This volume foregrounds universal design and accessibility as fundamental principles in shaping inclusive urban environments. Through research, case studies, and design perspectives, the chapters explore how cities can remove barriers and enable equitable access to public spaces, mobility systems, housing, and institutional environments. By reframing accessibility as a catalyst for innovation rather than compliance, the volume advocates for cities where movement, participation, and opportunity are open to all.



Volume II: Socio-Cultural and Cognitive Equity in Cities

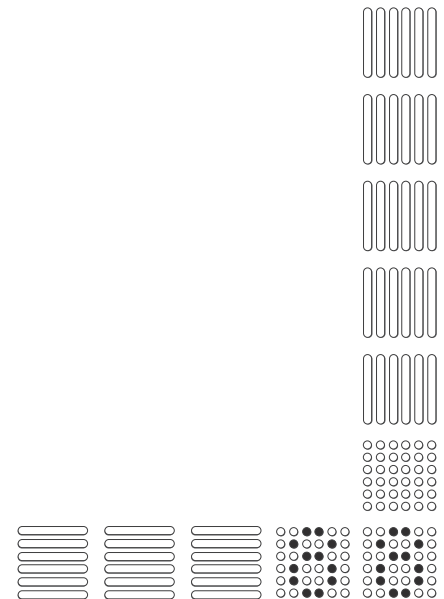
Focusing on the social and cultural dimensions of urban life, this volume examines how identity, perception, participation, and collective memory shape experiences of the city. Drawing from architecture, sociology, psychology, and heritage studies, the contributions explore themes such as cultural landscapes, gendered spaces, community engagement, and mental well-being. The volume positions the city as a human mosaic, where inclusive urban development must nurture belonging alongside growth.

Volume III: Resilient Growth, Heritage, Governance and Urban Innovation

This volume addresses the complex transitions shaping contemporary cities. Through discussions on heritage conservation, governance frameworks, climate-responsive planning, and technological innovation, the contributions explore how cities can evolve while preserving cultural memory and ensuring social equity. The volume highlights the importance of interdisciplinary approaches that balance re-

silience, innovation, and responsible urban transformation.

Prof. (Dr.) Pooja Lalit Kumar
Series Editor
Inclusive Environments for Growing
Cities

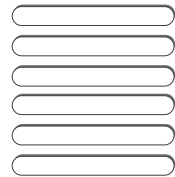
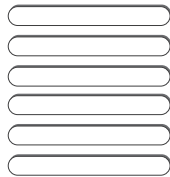
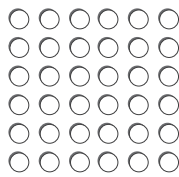
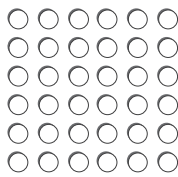
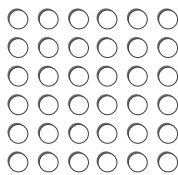


ABOUT THE BOOK

Confluence: Dialogues on Inclusive Urban Environment emerges from the International Conference on Art, Architecture and Urban Studies (ICAAUS), centered on the theme Inclusive Environment in Growing Cities (IEGC). At a time when cities across the world are expanding at an unprecedented pace, the book invites readers to pause and reconsider a critical question: Who are our cities truly being built for? While skylines rise and infrastructure grows, the deeper concerns of access, equity, and representation often remain overlooked.

The volume explores how everyday urban systems like streets, transportation networks, housing, institutional buildings, and digital platforms can unintentionally exclude sections of society. Through narratives and case reflections, it argues that accessibility, safe mobility, and equitable access to services are not optional features but essential components of just and humane cities. The contributions highlight that exclusion frequently resides in the ordinary details of design: a missing ramp, an uneven pavement, an inaccessible digital interface, or a public space that overlooks diverse bodies and abilities.

Beyond theoretical discourse, Confluence foregrounds lived experiences and creative engagements that deepen the understanding of inclusivity. This book positions inclusivity not as a distant aspiration but as a fundamental responsibility in shaping urban futures. By bringing together voices from academia, practice, art, and community engagement, Confluence advocates for cities that prioritize dignity, participation, and belonging. It calls upon planners, designers, policymakers, and citizens alike to reimagine urban growth as a process that embraces diversity and ensures that the evolving city remains responsive to all who inhabit it.



THE TACTILE PATH THAT RUNS THROUGH THIS BOOK DRAWS FROM THE LANGUAGE OF ACCESSIBLE URBAN DESIGN. IN CITIES, SUCH PATHS ENABLE INDEPENDENT NAVIGATION AND AFFIRM THE RIGHT TO MOVEMENT. WITHIN THIS PUBLICATION, IT BECOMES BOTH A GUIDE AND A METAPHOR TRACING THE JOURNEY OF IDEAS, CONVERSATIONS, AND SHARED REFLECTIONS ON INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS. AS IT SHIFTS, INTERSECTS, AND CONTINUES ACROSS PAGES, IT REMINDS US THAT INCLUSION IS NOT A DESTINATION, BUT A PATH WE MUST CONSCIOUSLY DESIGN AND SUSTAIN.

