

Visakhapatnam's park for differently abled

Summary:

The 'All Abilities Park' in Visakhapatnam is a neighbourhood level park, especially designed for differently abled children. Opened in 2018 and spanning 2156 sqm, the park is an example of open spaces that engage the users, is interactive and enhances visitor experience.

Objectives and rationale:

- To provide suitable infrastructure and services accessible to all citizens and every section of the society.
- The main goal was to ensure that the differently abled do not feel discriminated against in terms of entertainment avenues.

Key stakeholders:

- Greater Visakhapatnam Smart City Corporation Limited

Implementation strategy:

- The 'All Abilities Park' services the needs of the differently abled children without segregating them from the rest of the community. Built at a cost of Rs. 3.5 Cr, the park is equipped with sensory experiences including tactile pavements and textured walls.
- The park targets all types of differently abled users, including visually impaired, hearing impaired, those with physical disabilities.
- With the complete play equipment imported from Singapore which is mostly made of rubber makes it a safe design and also solves the problem of rusting and damage. Also, the park is constructed in such a manner that a person in a wheelchair can cover every corner of the park with ease. The park overlooks the Vizag coastline.
- To provide knowledge about plants, tire planting, a technique of growing plants in tires, has been incorporated at the park. The park gives an opportunity for children to express themselves on the large blackboard that has been incorporated on one side.

Resource utilisation:

This unique park has been built at a cost of around Rs. 3.5 crores through SCM funds.

Impact:

- The shortcomings in the existing park became the objectives of this intervention. Like lack of innovative and stimulating play spaces, reinforcing play areas with planting designs.
- Citizens' patronage to the park has been on the rise since 2018. Schools dedicated to differently abled students regularly ensure a visit to this park.
- This project showcases the city's strong emphasis on enhancing the social infrastructure in an equitable manner. Further, the park provides good quality open spaces and encourages citizens to spend more time outdoors, thereby aiding physical activity and healthy living.
- The 'All Abilities Park' seeks to balance the needs of the differently abled without isolating them from the rest of the community.

Key Challenges and Lessons Learnt:

- Small scale but impactful projects that promote equity, add value to the quality of life of citizens. Such projects are easily replicable.
- The major focus lies on 3 factors – Approachability, accessibility and usability of space.
- The project has aimed at exhibiting the city's strong emphasis on upgrading the social infrastructure which will also improve health of all its citizens.



Source: (Smart City Mission, n.d.) (Vizag City Magazine, 2018) (Urban update , 2017)

Replicability and sustainability:

Visakhapatnam smart city could become a trend-setter by introducing such an initiative. While several cities have built smart parks, this unique 'All-abilities park' has demonstrated an equitable and inclusive use of open spaces. Government officials from other states have now requested civic bodies from across the country to look into creating something similar for differently abled citizens.

Fact Sheet:

Thematic area	Public and open spaces, spaces for differently abled
First-year of the program	2018
Responsible Institution	Greater Visakhapatnam Smart City Ltd.
Target audience	Differently abled persons, children and the elderly
Coverage	Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh