

Are we an accessible society for all?

Malaysiakini.com

Apr 28, 2008

Mohana Priya

We often see signs on public transport showing 'seats for handicapped'. For example, we can see these at the train stations and on the trains. This is fine. The question now is, how will people with disabilities get to the train stations in the first place?

MCPX

We do not see lifts or escalators for people with disabilities, say perhaps those on wheelchairs. We know of limited number of train stations which provide lifts or escalators to assist passengers or commuters with disabilities.

For example, the KTM Komuter stations at Klang, Teluk Gadung and Bukit Badak do not have facilities to assist the accessibility of people with physical disabilities for example. We are aware that there are many kinds of disabilities such as those related to vision and hearing. But the stations mentioned above do not have any facilities at all to assist people with any form of disability.

In Japan, their JR line (network of railways) provides facilities for the disabled such as lifts, escalators, phones, paths, ramps visual aids etc. Even the smallest station accommodates such facilities.

The transport system in Malaysia should be planned in such a way that it caters for people at all levels of society and with different abilities. All of us have the right to access basic needs and in the modern and urban context, this includes public transport.

Not many people with disabilities have the luxury to own vehicles since most of them have difficulty earning a decent or sustained income. There are 197,519 Malaysian citizens registered as disabled or OKU (Orang Kurang Upaya) and the rapid pace of development in the country may or has already marginalised them.

If this is the case, then we have failed to tap into a valuable human resources and have lost out on the opportunity to enhance the quality of lives of all Malaysians.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.

Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news//82029>