



...taking India towards Inclusion

UNIVERSAL DESIGN INDIA PRINCIPLES[©]

Authors: Abir Mullick, Anjlee Agarwal, S. Balaram, Debkumar Chakravarty, Gaurav Raheja, Haimanti Banerjee, Rachna Khare, Ravi Shankar and Shivani Gupta.

*“The problem is not how to wipe out all differences, but how to unite with all differences intact.”
- RabindraNath Tagore*

Samarthyam spearheaded development of universal design principles for India with other experts from the field of design and accessibility. These principles have a vast scope of application ranging from product/industrial/communication design to built environments and human interfaces, from design education to policy making, from social to national integration. These principles will help us relook the Indian consumer (the common man) and determine through a series of investigations the choices one has to the choices one makes in one’s life in the given Indian context. These principles would help strategize design activity for the present and future populations of India as a step towards inclusion.

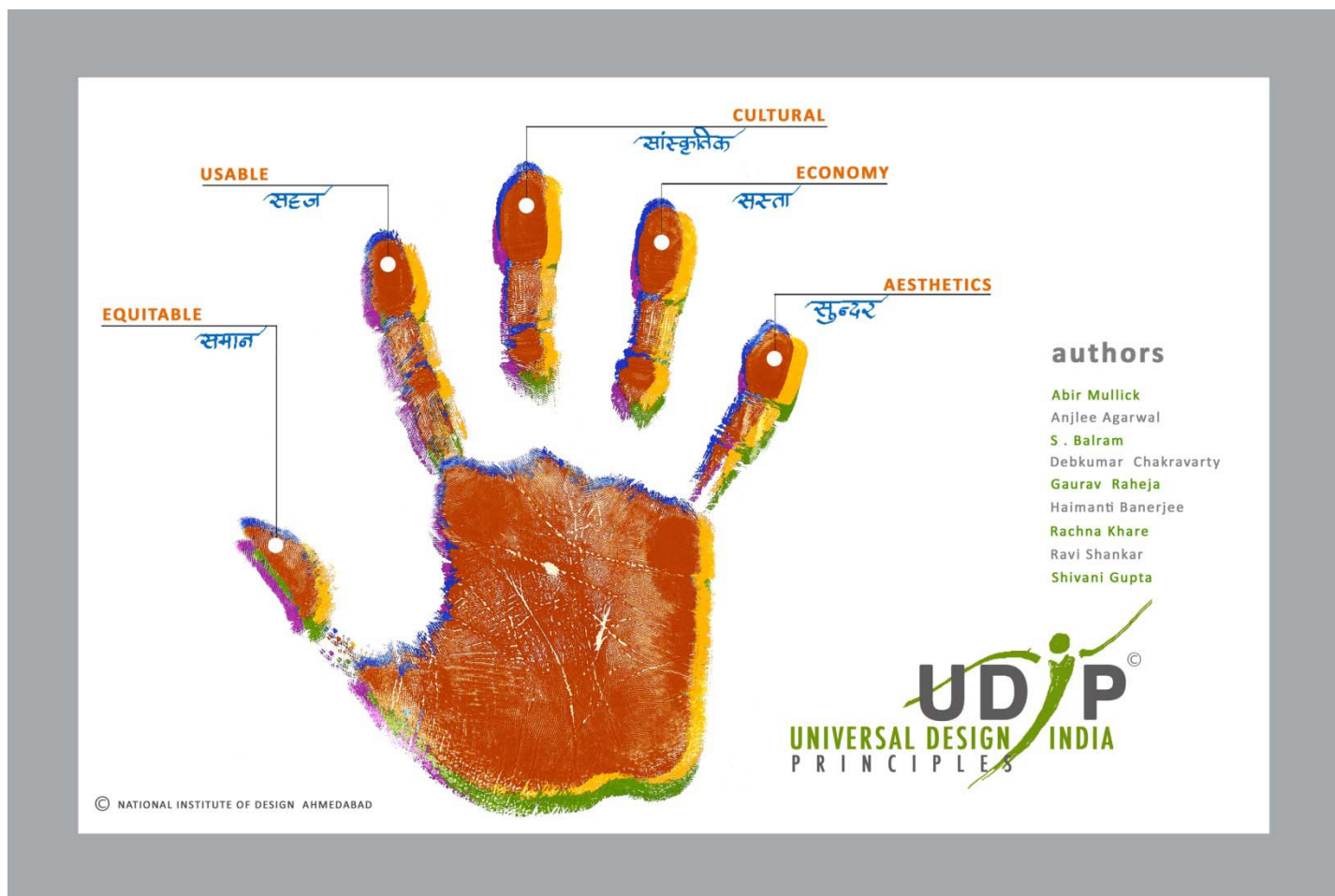
Universal design involves a fundamental shift in thinking about design, particularly with regard to designing to address social difference. Developed in USA as a Civil Rights Issue and equal opportunity for those with and without disabilities, the democratic values of universal design are grounded in self reliance, social empowerment and personal choice. Universal design is based on the premise that buildings and products must be designed to be usable by all intended users and offer greater independence, safety and usability by everyone. As a design approach, universal design requires incorporating flexibility, adaptability and modularity to achieve best fit and mass customization for everyone. Example of universal design includes an office chair that through its many adjustments provide many opportunities for customization.

At the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University a group of experts established seven principles of universal design to provide guidance in the design of products and environments (1997). When universal design principles are applied, products and environments meet the needs of potential users with a wide variety of characteristics.

Universal Design India embodies the democratic values of equal opportunity for all and seeks to address social and cultural diversity fundamental that is due differences in languages, cultures, economics and regions. Example of universal design India includes a saree or a dhoti. They offer

many draping possibilities to provide many cultural and social identities, and depending of body type, size and social practices allow mass customization to address regional and personal needs.

The five principles of Universal Design India add to the universal design principles developed by the Center for Universal design. Developed at the National Institute of Design and co-authored by 9 Indian experts, these principles are different from the seven principles and employ usability, culture, economics and aesthetics to provide choices and further the social and equitable agenda of universal design. Furthermore the principles are also translated in Hindi, National language of India so that an understanding on the UDIP can be generated all over the nation.



Anjlee Agarwal
Executive Director

Samarthyam, National Centre for Accessible Environments

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•B-181, Mansarovar Garden, New Delhi-110015, India

•Telefax: +91-11-41019389

•Email: samarthyaindia@yahoo.com •Website: www.samarthyam.org

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