

Fleet for disabled rolls out

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Bangalore: Close to World Disability Day (December 3), KickStart, a fleet of three disabled-friendly cabs, hit the road on Thursday, Nov. 29, 2013.

It's designed to provide accessibility to persons with disabilities and senior citizens, and aims at making Bangalore transportation-friendly for all. The fleet comprises three cars re-modelled for the differently-abled.



"The concept is constructive and a much-required service which provides freedom, mobility and dignity to those who need support. Such an initiative will surely make the city more inclusive," said KS Rajanna, state disability commissioner. The service providers plan to create employment for women and transgenders as cab drivers. Apart from training drivers to be sensitive to passengers, vehicles are being fitted with a GPS-tracking system. "Over the next five years, we expect to reach out to 5,000 persons with disabilities and the elderly. Though three is a very small number, it's not bad for a start. We hope to gradually scale up our fleet," said Vidya Kalyani Ramasubban, director, Wheels of Change.

It's an initiative of Mphasis with Wheels of Change (an NGO) as the partner.

The three vehicles:

* First cab: Swivel-chair model where the front passenger seat comes halfway out of the door. This enables the passenger using crutches/ walking stick to stand up and sit down as in a regular chair. Transfer from seat and vice-versa is simple with this adaptation for wheelchair users too

* Second cab: Has ramp that opens out of the vehicle door, enabling the wheelchair user to get in through the ramp. Wheelchair is locked in the vehicle for a safe ride

* Third cab: Front passenger turns out like the first model. The wheelchair frame can be attached to the bottom of the turned-out seat. The whole seat can be brought out of the car and the car seat becomes a wheelchair as it comes out



Who benefits:

According to the 2001 census, there are 6 lakh persons with disabilities and 7 lakh senior citizens in Bangalore. * Assuming about 10% of this population are potential cab-users, that number is 1.3 lakh

* 96% of people with disabilities who responded to a survey spoke about their need for accessible transport service

* To book a KickStart cab, call 8105600445 in Bangalore