

Social Exclusion of Disabled Public Transport Users: Insights from Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

by

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**10th Urban Mobility India Conference & Expo 2017 / Codatu XVII
Hyderabad, India
4-6th November 2017**

Introduction

Papua New Guinea (PNG);

- Lower-middle income country Gross National Income (GNI) 2014 ~ USD 2,160

(LMI countries GNI per capita between \$1,026 and \$4,035)

- World Region: Asia-Pacific
- Population ~ 8 million
- Capital: Port Moresby



Social Exclusion & Disability

“The denial of access, to an individual or group, to the opportunity to participate in the social and political life of the community; resulting not only in diminished material and non-material quality of life, but also in tempered life chances, choices and reduced citizenship.” (Kenyon et al, 2002)

“Persons with Disabilities (PWD) include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.” (UN General Assembly, 2006)



Research Framework, Objectives & Tools

- Human Rights-based Conceptual Framework
- Mixed-method research design that sought to:
 1. *Highlight the travel experiences of PWD*
 2. *Identify factors contributing to transport-related social exclusion of PWD*
 3. *Recommend interventions that may enable a more socially inclusive public transport system*
- Research Tools consisted of:
 1. *Literature identification, collection and review*
 2. *Focus Group (FG) discussions*
 3. *One-to-one interviews with key informants from public and private institutional role players*



Disability in PNG

- 791,092 Persons with a Disability (PWD) in 2015 (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP))
- PWD ~ 13.4% of PNG's population
- 4th highest proportion in the 58-nation Asia-Pacific region
- Localised estimates of PWD and types of disability not known



Port Moresby

- Capital city and administrative centre of PNG
- Approximate land area of 240km² (~ 93 square miles).
- Population 364,125 persons (2011)
- Home to ~5% of PNG's total population
- Governed by the National Capital District Commission (NCDC).



Public Transport in Port Moresby

- Public Motor Vehicle/minibus (PMV) 15-seater and Toyota Coaster 25-seater
- 6 Comeng/Volvo Buses 44-seater (Women only)
- 19 Ashok Leyland Buses 50-seater (2015)
- 25 official PMV routes (2015)
- 800 PMVs (licensed to operate) (2015)
- 970 Taxis (officially registered) (2015)
- PMVs privately owned and operated
- No public transport vehicles are disabled friendly



Public Transport in Port Moresby



Public Transport Use by PWD in Port Moresby

- Majority PWD use PMVs
- Majority PWD do not use PMVs on a daily basis
- PWD often travel with a companion (family member or friend) who do not require payment
- Majority PWD resided in homes not close to public transport



One of the few passenger vehicles that has been retrofitted for exclusive use by PWD

Public Transport Use by PWD in Port Moresby

- PWD paid the same fare as other passengers using PMVs
- Must compete with able bodied passengers to get a seat
- PWD in wheelchairs may be required to pay for an extra seat
- Solo PWD may not receive assistance with boarding or alighting



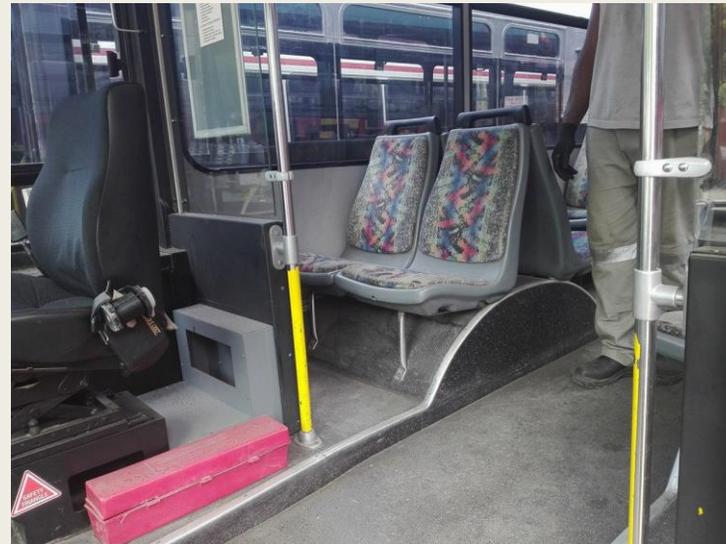
Taxi Use by PWD in Port Moresby

- Private taxis used if funds available
- Some taxi operators charge PWD more to recoup lost revenue
- No taxis are disabled friendly
- Shared taxis if requested may not stop for PWD



Public Transport Social Exclusion - Physical

- Multiple steps to board/alight from vehicle
- Overloaded PMVs especially during peak times
- Lack of priority or preferential seating
- Narrow aisles in conventional buses & PMVs
- Some boarding locations impossible to reach during inclement weather



Public Transport Social Exclusion – Economic

- Payment often required for travel companion
- Price/fare gouging potential victim
- Payment sometimes required for petrol/gasoline
- Lack of regular employment results in high unemployment
- Time is money, PMV operators often don't stop to pick up PWD



Public Transport Social Exclusion – Fear/ Psychological

- Fellow passengers stare or are hostile
- Intimidation by PMV operators and crew
- If travelling solo no assistance may be offered
- Fear of rejection by PMV or taxi operator or passengers
- Intimidation by PMV or taxi operator or passengers



Public Transport Social Exclusion – Time/ Temporal

- Reaching boarding places takes time
- Boarding/alighting vehicles take time
- Finding/leaving a seat takes time
- Travel during peak periods challenging if not impossible
- May have to wait for long periods to secure safe travel



Public Transport Social Exclusion – Institutional

- Legislation for disabled-friendly public transport legislation not in-force
- PMV/taxi operators not complying to existing operating regulations
- Ineffective or non-existent enforcement of PMV operations by relevant state agencies
- Sporadic enforcement and control often results in abuse of PWD in their use of public transport



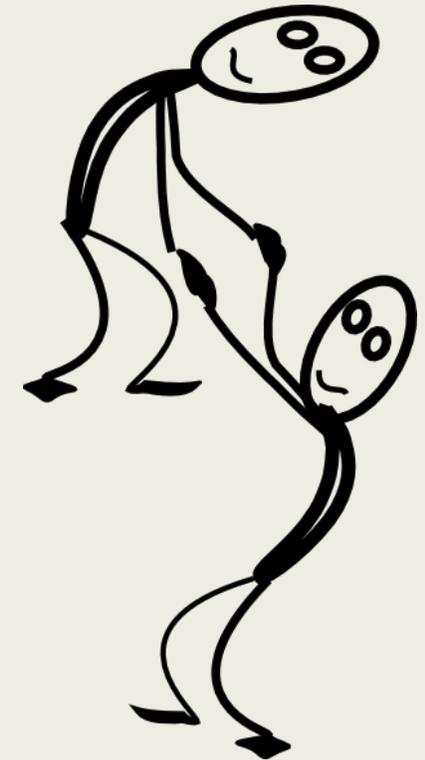
Outcomes of Transport Related Social Exclusion

- Nervousness, stigmatism and low self-esteem
- Unwanted pity from others and personal dignity crushed
- Trip-chaining impossible
- Restrict travel outside home
- Independent travel may not be feasible
- Limited or missed opportunities to participate fully in social, economic and community activities



Existing Community Initiatives Reducing Social Exclusion

- Travel Companion (at no cost to PWD)
- Disabled-friendly PMV/bus stops
- Disabled-friendly PMV/taxi operators
- Wantok or 'One Talk' social support system



Focus Group Recommendations

- Dedicated space in PMVs to place and secure wheelchairs
- Bus stop decks raised to the level of the PMV/bus door
- Wider aisles and access/exit doors in PMV and buses
- Government to retake ownership and operation of conventional buses
- Desire shared facilities - separating PWD and the able-bodied increases differences and perpetuates negative perceptions about PWD



Study Recommendations

- Revisit the design of public transport infrastructure, facilities and PMV operating practices
- Establishment of an Advocacy Group for PWD public transport users
- Development and adoption of an inclusive citywide public transport plan
- Experiment with formal social protection schemes



Study Limitations

- Small-scale exploratory study
- Financial Constraints
- Sourcing historical documents
- Purposive sampling

Conclusions

- Identified transport-related social exclusion and travel experiences affecting PWD
- Research effort advocates the need to ‘holistically’ improve public transport service provision for the benefit of all users



Acknowledgements

- PNG Assembly of Disabled People (PNGADP)
- National Road Traffic Authority (NRTA)
- Cheshire disAbility Services
- Participants of Focus Groups and Key Informants
- Images of PWD courtesy of:
 - *Cheshire disAbility Services*
 - *Department for Community Development and Religion*
- GIS Mapping courtesy of Elton Powe



Thank You/Tenkyu

Any Questions?



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