

ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN: ROLE OF INDIAN YOUTH RED CROSS SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT:

With millions of lives endangered worldwide, Road Traffic Accidents (RTA) rank alarmingly high in the recent trends of pressing social issues. Despite the innumerable road safety campaigns and awareness drives, India still ranks first in the number of road accident deaths across 199 countries and accounts for almost 11% of all accident-related deaths in the world. Despite global stagnancy and uncertainty owing to the Covid 19 pandemic and consequent lockdown, road accidents have managed to claim 29,415 lives just between March and June, with an additional 51970 casualties. Clearly, road safety continues to be a major developmental and public health concern, acting as a leading cause of death and injuries worldwide. Recognizing road accidents as a leading cause of death in the country, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India has called for a joint effort of the state and central government to facilitate the improvement of road and safety infrastructure and to reduce casualties and mortality.

Introduction:

The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) was established in 1920 under the Indian Red Cross Society Act and incorporated under the Parliament Act XV of 1920 (as Amended by Act No. 22 of 1956 and the Adaptation of Laws (No 4) order of 1957 and the Act. No. 14 of 1992). It is a member of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and is recognized by the International Committee of the Red Cross. In accordance

with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, namely: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity, and Universality the Indian Red Cross Society acts as an auxiliary to the state in the carrying out of humanitarian activities. It also provides a range of services, including disaster relief, health and social welfare programmes in the country. During wartime, the society works as auxiliary to the armed forces medical services and also assists the affected civilian as per the Geneva Conventions.

Mission – The Indian Red Cross Society aims to inspire, encourage and initiate at all times, all forms of humanitarian activities so that human suffering can be minimized, alleviated and even prevented, thus contribute to creating a more congenial climate for peace.

Road Safety Campaign

Road traffic today is inherently dangerous. In fact, in contrast to other modes of transport such as railways and air traffic, the road traffic system was not designed with safety as a jumping-off point. Consequently, in road traffic it is us humans who make the difference between hazard and safety, with little keeping us from harm should we make a mistake. Differently put, unlike other modes of transport that have procedures, safeguards or fall backs to limit both the occurrence and impact of human error, road traffic relies more heavily on its users to keep accidents from occurring. Given that humans are almost inadvertently prone to make mistakes and commit violations, human behaviour is of particular interest for most road safety professionals. That is where road safety campaigns come in. Together with other 'behavioural' measures (e.g., law enforcement, education, training, and even infrastructure to some extent) road safety campaigns are used as a means of influencing the public to behave more safely in traffic. Road safety campaigns can be defined as purposeful attempts to inform, persuade, and motivate a population (or sub-group of a population) to change its attitudes and/or behaviours to improve road safety, using organised communications involving specific media channels within a given time period. It can have many and multiple purposes, such as informing the public of new or little known traffic rules, increasing problem awareness or convincing people to refrain from hazardous behaviours and adopting safe ones instead.

Youth volunteers play an important role in preventing these tragedies, for example by being role models, talking with their peers, and advocating for improved road safety wherever they are. Use roads sensibly, whether on foot, bicycle or scooter or car. Model good and safe behaviour. Be aware of your surroundings; don't impede awareness by wearing headphones/ear buds and listening to music while using a road. Remember you are just one part of an equation called safety, and you can never assume that everyone else will play their part or make up for the lack of awareness of you or anyone else. Be aware. Stay safe. Pass the message on.