ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS: A GRAVE CONCERN IN INDIA

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Road Safety today is one of the greatest concern of the world. Numerous persons lost their lives every year because of the fatality arising due to road accidents. Road safety cannot be undermined if the world wants to achieve goals of development, prosperity and growth.

Road Safety refers to the safety of the user while using the road. It is mandatory to abide by them to ensure a safe transit. Traffic signals, foot paths, sign boards, security cameras, dividers etc. are some of the tools to ensure Road Safety.

The UN general assembly has declared 2011-2020 as the "Decade of Action for Road Safety". The declaration holds significance because **Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs)** have become a major cause of morbidity and mortality, especially among the adults and middle aged individuals who constitute economically most productive age groups of society. The importance of knowledge and practice of road safety measures needs to be emphasized in the prevention of RTAs.

Data reveal that approximately 1.5 million lives are lost every year through out the world due to road accidents; more than 90% of the accidents occur in developing or under developed nations. More than half of the figure constitutes of the vulnerable road users like pedestrians, bikers and cyclists.

Apathy toward road safety causes the death of maximum numbers of children and youth than by any other cause. Apart from it nearly 20 to 50 million people suffer non fatal injuries, often resulting in a permanent disability.

Importance of Road Safety

The importance of Road Safety cannot be undermined if the issues of sustainable development are to be met. A fatal road accident results in a trauma not only for the victim, but also for his dependants and loved ones. Besides this road accidents in most of the countries cost 35 of their overall GDP. If a victim of a fatal accident is lucky to survive, he is most likely to have any kind of disability. Thus a road accident is not only a strain but also the victim's financial resources but also on the nation's as well; not to mention the emotional trauma to the dependents.

Therefore appropriate measures must be taken to implement road safety and to ensure safe transit for every road user. Ensuring road safety is very important and must be prioritized by the governments as well as individuals.

India has the second leading road networks globally that make vital contribution to the country's economy. India has worst road facilities leading to the increasing numbers of road crashes.

Road safety is a major issue in India. As per the statistics, India accounted for at least 4, 80, 652 accidents in 2016 causing 1, 50,785 deaths. The data suggests that every day around 413 people die in 1,317 road crashes. The speed of the vehicle besides the use of mobile phones while driving is the chief cause of accidents.

As per the WHO survey, 1.2 million people are killed due to road accidents and many more are injured across the globe. The death rate is higher in the underdeveloped and developing countries like India where safety norms are not efficiently applied.

India accounts for 10% road fatalities globally. It is estimated that every year around 1,275,000 people are seriously injured due to road crashes. Annually, the social cost of road accidents has been predicted around 11,000$. Responsible driving culture is lacking in India and the percentage of untrained drivers is rising.

Ministry of Road Transport and Highway on Road Safety

Various policy measures are propagated by National Road Safety like spreading awareness, motivating safe road infrastructure, creating road safety data base and implementing safety laws, etc. the road safety strategy

is based on multiple aspects such as education, engineering, enforcement and Emergency care. The national road safety council has also been formed to take important decisions of road safety.

Motor vehicle bill 2016 The Ministry comprised of the ministers group from across the states to present strategies for decreasing road disasters and to propose measures for its effective implementation. The motor vehicle bill 2016 was introduce on 9th August 2016. The bill addressed various road safety crisis imparting strict penalties, sanctioning electronic enforcement, licensing regime, improving fitness certification and other legislative provisions and acknowledgement of IT enabled enforcement systems. The bill also encourages the improvisation of public transport. It contains the terms for treatment of the victims of road accidents.

Modification of black spots on National Highways is given top priorty and several measures have been adopted for improving vehicle safety in India.

The road safety is also being promoted through media campaigns. Several other models and systems have been launched and implemented for road safety in India.

On the basis of **National Road Safety Policy** following steps have been taken;

Road safety audit of selected National Highways has been conducted.

Government focusing on training of drivers and better licensing systems.

Ministry has decided to set up 25 Regional Driving Centres.

Efforts have been made to change the behavior of thr drivers.

Focus on problems of drunken driving, absence of seat belt use, over speeding and use of mobiles while driving.

Latest data reveal that drivers are responsible for 77% of the accidents.

Under the **National Highway Accident Relief Service Scheme** cranes and ambulances to various State Governments will be provided.

NHAI also provides ambulances at a distance of 50 kms on each completed National Highway.

Guidelines on Good Samaritans issued to protect them from harassment, from authorities while trying to save life of road accident victims.