

Everyday - the Road Accidents

Historically road accidents had a simultaneous growth with construction and expansion of road network and increase in vehicular traffic. During the last one century there has been a remarkable improvement in the designing, construction and maintenance of roads including freeways, intercity or the approach roads within the city including construction of tunnels, fly overs and in signalling of traffic. Simultaneously the number and type of vehicles as also the number of road users has multiplied many a time resulting in enormous increase in road accidents many of them proving to be fatal for the drivers and the other road users. Several agencies conducting studies on cause and effect of the road accidents have concluded that a large number of road accidents are not ACCIDENTAL but are known to have happened as a result of faulty driving skills, disobedience of traffic rules, and unworthiness of the motor vehicle, defective road conditions and inadequate signalling equipment.

In the light of these observations, a well-coordinated and sustained effort on behalf of the state government department of road construction and maintenance, traffic police department, department of vehicular registration and licencing as also department of education is needed. Victorian government has made substantial headway in studying the phenomenon of road accidents and adopted both an educational and

punitive approach in controlling the number of road accidents. In the progressively designed approach some of the following factors need to be given more and more emphasis.

1. Physical and Mental Fitness of the Drivers

Drivers role being crucial, his age, physical and mental fitness should be checked not only at the time of issuing the driving licence but more often because there number is ever increasing and it should not be taken for granted that the driver has retained his normal eye sight and hearing ability or the mental balance without it being disturbed by use of alcohol, drugs or distraction. In fact the drivers should be made to feel their own responsibility in controlling the mishaps to protect their own lives as also other innocent people.

2. Adequacy of Needed Acquired Knowledge and Skills

Levels of literacy have no doubt improved but a large number of drivers since belonging to different countries and regions do not speak and read the same language. Imparting of detailed knowledge and acquiring of needed skills in driving and at times communicating with people on the road or other drivers being important, efforts should be made so that the fundamentals of road safety are imbibed in the English language. Regional languages seem to leave a scope of misinterpretation at times.

3. Fitness Check-up of the Vehicle and Operational Familiarity

The types of vehicles, their models with increased addition of elec-



Photo source: PTI

trical and mechanical gadgets are making the physical and operational check-up somewhat complicated. The drivers are therefore required to check up their use and ensure if the vehicle is driven on petrol, diesel or LPG. A news item telecast during March, 2013 revealed that one of the vehicles under use by the USA President had once stopped because of wrong fuel use. The adequacy of the fuel should also be ensured before the commencement of the journey. A timely look at the air pressure in tyres as also the fitness of the spare wheel can also be useful to avoid accidents. Checking up the lights, dippers, indicators, brakes, rear view mirrors, the front and the rear screens and the seat

belts may also be advantageous. In certain cases advance familiarity of the road route has also been a factor in reducing the accidents. Drivers are further required to be vigilant over the prohibited use of mobile telephones, over speeding and other sources of distraction and elements of personal fatigue during the course of long journeys.

4. Educating the Masses

In todays world of scientific advancement an "ACCIDENT" at best can be considered as an human error caused under "FAULTY" circumstances. All efforts to minimise the road accidents or the death of the passengers/ road users have therefore to be sincere and comprehensive in educating the large number

of drivers including the "LEARNERS OR THE PROBATIONERS" and the people at large. In these efforts the staff of the state governments, local bodies, the manufacturers and service agencies of the automobile industry will also have to be included. Contribution of each category is important but it is the drivers of the vehicles who have a maximum responsibility in reducing the number of road accidents. By way of quality training their confidence and skill will have to be enriched. They would need to be vigilant at all times as otherwise the accidents will happen at ANY TIME at ANY PLACE and with ANY BODY causing huge damage to property and human lives.

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