



INAUGURATION BY CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL NADU - UYIR (LIFE)- A VOLUNTARY MOVEMENT TO MINIMIZE ROAD ACCIDENTS

DRK's News Letter



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Saving Precious Lives on Roads - Utmost Priority!

Next to creating a life, the finest
thing a man can do is save one
- Abraham Lincoln

I am deeply concerned with the
loss of valuable lives everyday
due to accidents on the roads.

I am shocked to learn that in
survey after survey, people
report that the greatest dangers
they face are, in this order:
terrorist attacks, plane crashes
and nuclear accidents. This,
despite the fact that these three
combined have killed fewer
people in the past half-century
than road accidents do in any
given year. With a little more
care on the part of all road users
the loss of precious lives could be
minimized, if not totally

avoided. Hence this newsletter is
devoted to this critical problem.

A road accident refers to any
accident involving at least one
road vehicle, occurring on a road
open to public circulation, and in
which at least one person is
injured or killed. Intentional acts
(murder, suicide) and natural
disasters are excluded. As road
crashes are complex events that
occur due to varied interactions
in different road environments,
it is crucial to
identify the
determinants of the
crashes to evolve
safety programmes.
As road traffic
injuries are
multifactorial in
nature, the solutions
need to be
intersectoral and
multiple in nature.

India - Road Traffic Accidents status (RTA):

In India, every four minutes one
person gets killed on the roads.
16 Children die every day in India
for the same reason. During the
calendar year of 2016, the total
number of road accidents is
reported to be nearly 4,81,000
causing injuries to 5,00,000
persons and claiming 1,50,000
lives in the country. This would
translate, on an average, into



Ambulance control HQ - GVK EMRI 108, Ahmedabad



1317 accidents and 413 accident deaths taking place on Indian roads every day; or 55 accidents and 17 deaths every hour. These figures are many times more than the annual death toll caused from acts of terrorism and natural calamities.

- Among the vehicle categories, two wheelers accounted for the highest share in total number of road accidents (34 per cent) in 2016, followed by cars, jeeps and taxis (24 per cent), trucks, tempos, tractors and other articulated vehicles (21.0 per cent), buses (8 per cent), auto - rickshaws (7 per cent) and other motor vehicles (3 per cent) approximately.

- National highways constitute only 2 per cent of the road network but they account for 30% of road accidents and 35 % of road accident deaths. The state highways constitute 25 per cent accidents and 28 percent of people killed.

- Traffic junctions are the points of conflict and one-third of the accidents take place at cross roads.

- Every fifth death amongst the 2-wheelers are due to the lack of a helmet.

- Driver's fault is the single most important factor responsible for road traffic accidents. Exceeding speed limit caused 67 per cent accidents.

- Drunken driving, use of mobile phones while driving and overloaded vehicles were the other causes identified.

- Poor visibility on Indian roads has been recognised as an important contributing factor as nearly one third of road deaths take place during night times. Tamil Nadu topped in terms of number of accidents while the maximum number of road traffic accident deaths were reported from Uttar Pradesh.

- Chennai and Delhi are the two cities which had the maximum number of accidents amongst the cities with fifty million population cities category.

- Higher accident rates are observed during the hours, 15:00 to 18:00 (18 per cent) and 18:00 to 21:00 (18 per cent) of the day.

- Estimating the burden of injuries is crucial for understanding the magnitude of the problem, developing mechanisms for intervention, allocating physical, human, financial resources for control of the problem, and for reducing

the burden of injuries in the coming years.

- A review of Indian studies and observations by other agencies indicate the ratio of deaths to serious injuries needing hospitalization to minor injuries as 1:20:50.

- This is expected to escalate to one death every three minutes by 2020

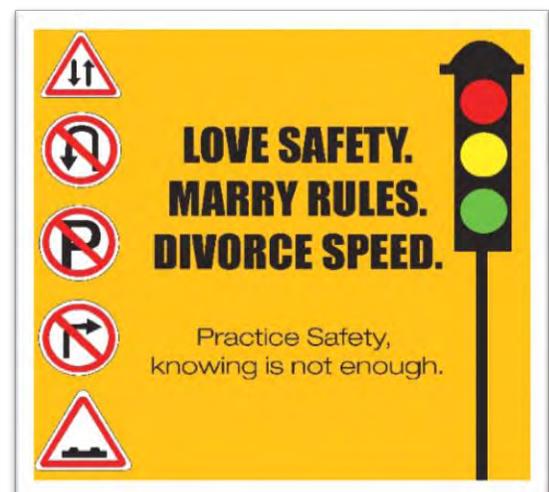
- Many road traffic deaths in rural areas are not recorded. Similarly, accidents which result in late deaths after the discharge from hospital due to the effects of morbidity also are not recorded.

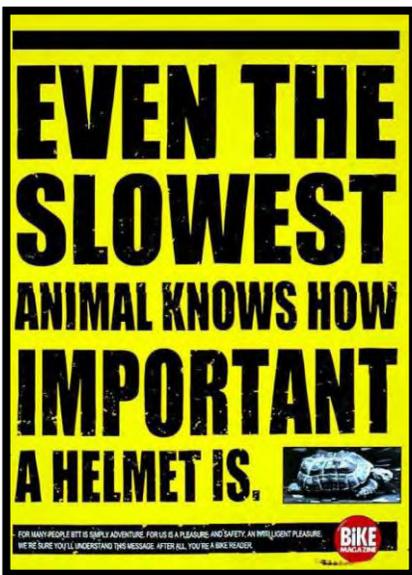
- India accounts for 10% of road accident deaths worldwide, although the registered motor vehicles are only one per cent.

- Currently the number of deaths in India are three times that of developed nations.

Serious socio-economical implications due to RTA:

- RTA fatalities and serious injuries place a huge strain on the economic and social fabric of





the family and the society at large. The affected family may lose their source of income in addition to their loved one. Searching for a new source of income is a challenging task and is fraught with uncertainty and exploitation. The larger ramifications of this include children dropping out from school for employment and the elderly being forced to work.

- Physical disability resulting from RTAs also hugely impacts society. For example, spinal cord injuries permanently disable the patient, resulting in him/her being confined to a wheel chair or bed for the rest of their life. The plight of their family is similar to, if not worse, than those of the fatally injured. The costs of rehabilitating the spinally injured patient is enormous, with little help provided from the government.

- Most of these patients are employed at the time of injury and the injury changes their lives forever. Spinally injured patients, depending on their

level of injury need assistance in feeding, personal hygiene and basic mobility.

- In addition, they are highly susceptible to a variety of complications such as bed sores, pneumonia, urinary infections, respiratory distress and sepsis. These complications require frequent hospital visits and involve huge costs.

- In addition to losing the financial productivity of the patient, another person needs to stay back with the patient to take care of him/her. Thus the



family loses the financial productivity of two persons in addition to incurring enormous medical expenses.

- Economic loss due to road crashes is estimated to be \$550 billion (INR 55,000 crores) or 3% of GDP every year.

- Down To Earth had published a cover story in 2015 and found that road accident victims are more often pedestrians, cyclists, people from the lower middleclass and the economically

poor. Most of the victims were from the poor strata of society. A research done in 2004 for the non-profit Global Road Safety Partnership in Bengaluru highlighted this fact.

- This research had concluded that relatives of victims often borrow money, sell assets, give up studies or take up extra work just to survive.

- The research concluded that 71 per cent of the urban poor and 53 per cent of the rural poor bereaved households were not poor before the accident.

TAMILNADU STATISTICS:

RTA

Tamil Nadu records the highest road accidents for a decade and its capital Chennai has more accidents than any other city in India. In New Delhi, the capital of India, the frequency of traffic collisions is 40 times higher than that of London, the capital of the United Kingdom.

- Review of road crashes in 2017 in Tamil Nadu reveal that the state has topped the list of road traffic accidents in India and has the maximum number of people injured in road accidents in the entire country.





Coimbatore establishes a role model – UYIR (LIFE)

A unique Citizen's Movement – UYIR – meaning Life, was inaugurated by Mr. Edappadi Palaniswami, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu at Coimbatore on 27th October 2018, before a huge gathering.

A band of prominent and concerned citizens, led by the world renowned Orthopedic and Spine Surgeon Dr. Rajasekaran of Ganga Hospital, make up a forum conceived to considerably reduce the loss of precious lives due to road accidents.

The objective is to promote awareness in all sections of society and imbibe self-initiative on the part of drivers, pedestrians and all road users as well as to ensure the law makers and law enforcers follow the laws, rules and ethics while using the roads.

A Memorandum of Understanding-MOU was signed between the Government of Tamil Nadu and the Forum consisting of many prominent and philanthropic citizens of Coimbatore.

Foundation "UYIR" has developed various innovative

projects and roadmaps to create awareness on road safety measures. 'Kutty Cops' is one such initiative designed to create awareness among school and college students and shape them as the driving force to remind their parents, families, and friends to adhere to the rules and regulations of road safety mechanisms.

Following the signing of the MOU, all the leading social awareness groups, industries, institutions, corporates, hospitals including spiritual institutions took an oath, pledging to save and protect the lives of people to create an accident-free zone in Coimbatore.

The Chief Minister commended the initiative of the Forum to prevent road accidents and save precious lives and called the initiative a role model for the whole nation to emulate.

During the Annual Conference of Indian Orthopedic Association, a confluence of 4000+ Orthopedic surgeons from across the world, the organising chairman Dr. Rajasekaran planned a 5 kilometer marathon run led by the fastest Indian Formula 1 Driver, Narain Karthikeyan, on the 1st of December in Coimbatore. Thousands, including 600 orthopedic surgeons participated to create awareness on the best practices for road safety. www.gangahospital.com

GVK EMRI Model of services for vehicular trauma emergencies:

108 GVK EMRI has been involved in the emergency management of road traffic accident victims in India for more than a decade now. As of the 1st of December 2018, GVK EMRI has attended to 87 Lakh vehicular trauma victims through 108 Emergency Response Service ambulances in 16 states and 2 union territories, under the Public-Private Partnership. On average, about 3000 road traffic accident victims are being attended to everyday, across the country. Out of all the emergencies handled by GVK EMRI nearly 20% of the cases account for RTA beneficiaries. In addition to RTA victims, an equal number of non-vehicular trauma, such as falls and assault victims are also attended in 108 ambulances on a regular basis.

GVK EMRI is also actively involved in the training of professionals for attending to road accidents as well as other emergencies efficiently. Research activities at GVK EMRI help itself and policy makers in taking a proactive approach to saving more lives. GVK EMRI also runs Emergency



Oath taking for Road Safety



Stabilization Centers in TN and Goa, close to the accident spots, so that the critically injured can be stabilized using advanced life support interventions and then be transferred to appropriate tertiary care centres or trauma centres for definitive treatment.

The Active Bleeding Control (ABC) project in Hyderabad is training 1000 auto-drivers, police and shop keepers, and recruiting them as ABC volunteers who address active bleeding using first aids kits with pressure bandages or tourniquets in road traffic victims. This initiative is by GVK EMRI, in partnership with national and international organisations.

Gujarat Operations of GVK EMRI is carrying out a unique activity to create awareness of road safety amongst school students in partnership with The Departments of Transport and Education, called the Traffic Education And Awareness Mobile (TEAM) Vans. Road safety programmes are organized for school children with the help of TEAM vans. At each school, a half a day video-based education is provided by trained coordinators. On weekends, road safety activities

with TEAM vans are carried out with the local communities. So far, over 17,000 events were conducted with the help of 11 TEAM vans and over 55 Lakh students were given a road safety orientation.

Dr. Haren Joshi, Trauma and Vascular Surgeon, USA – who is with me as part of the Gujarat State GVK EMRI 108 Advisory Board says, “In India RTA have the highest mortality due to the lack of emergency services. Doctors who treat patients in hospitals are not trained to treat RTA patients. In the USA you cannot treat trauma patients unless you are ATLS certified (advances trauma life support course). To improve EMS (emergency medical service), EMS laws should be passed in all states. In 2007, EMS laws were passed in Gujarat. It is the only state which has this law, but it is still not fully implemented. There is a need for comprehensive EMS laws to be enacted and enforced all over India”. www.emri.in

Rehabilitation Most important

The post-surgical treatment of severely injured accident victims is of utmost importance to restore near normalcy in their lives.

One such rare, fully equipped centre in India is in Coimbatore. The [Ganga Spine Injury Rehabilitation](#)

[Centre](#) is dedicated to the rehabilitation of such spinal cord injury patients, who are provided rehabilitation, advanced physiotherapy and occupational therapy as per the need. Comprehensive medical care is provided by a specialist team, comprising of orthopedic surgeons, spinal surgeons, neurosurgeons, physiatrists, urologists and specially trained physios and occupational therapists. All orthotics that are required for the patients are provided, including imported wheelchairs which will help attain mobility without the risk of pressure source. The highly expensive therapy is provided at a subsidised rate with the support of the Rotary movement. Such centres are required to be established in at least all the major cities of the country.

At Ganga Hospital, I met the CRPF Commandant Chetan Kumar Cheetah, who had lost one eye and suffered damage to both his hands and internal organs due to receiving nine bullets from terrorists whilst fighting terrorism in Kashmir. He told me that even though the Union Home Minister told him that he can go anywhere in the



CRPF Commandant Chetan Kumar Cheetah



With CRPF Commandant Chetan and Dr. Rajasekaran

world for treatment, at the Government's expense, he chose to come to Ganga Hospital as both the experts in USA and the AIIMS Delhi advised him that this is the best place for further treatment/surgery and rehabilitation. I was moved when this gallant officer told me that he is keen on resuming his duties and fighting terrorism as soon as he is declared medically fit. His young wife and children were all praise for the care with which he was treated by Dr. Rajasekaran and his brother Dr. Raja Sabapathy.

Dr. Rajasekaran has also established a fully equipped rehabilitation centre to prepare seriously incapacitated victims of road accidents to take care of themselves to a large extent.

Urgent Need for Strict Regulation of Driving License:

India is on the path to issuing uniform licenses starting in 2019. But the real bigger concern that needs fixing is how drivers procure a driving license in the first place. Since a majority of drivers have never taken a

driving test, they are big threat on the roads. And with over a quarter having a second license, in the case of an event where a license is impounded, these people can soon get back behind the wheel using their other license.

Piyush Tewari, CEO of Save Life Foundation, says, "Uniform licensing is a progressive step, primarily because it will ensure a lot more transparency and robustness in the licensing system, but we need to do a lot more in fixing how to get a license." According to Amar Shrivastava, founder of the Indian Road Safety Campaign, Solve, "What we also need is uniformity in procuring license in the first place. There have been recommendations from transport ministry regarding a written and practical test for driving license, but they aren't followed across all regional transport offices (RTOs) in the country.

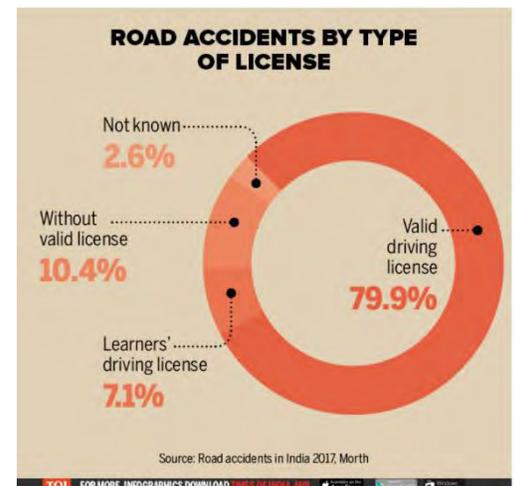
" As per a road perception survey, a whopping 59 per cent of driving license holders in India have never taken a competency test. Besides discrepancies prevalent at RTOs, illegal channels like agents are also responsible for this. It is easy to procure a license without undergoing any assessment for a measly sum of Rs 3,000-4,000. **And a vehicle in the hands of untrained drivers is no less dangerous than a deadly weapon.** In fact, untrained drivers are one of the biggest threats to road safety. In 2017, a

staggering 80 per cent of all road accidents were caused by those who possessed valid driving licenses.

According to the Save Life Foundation, about 32,000 driving licenses are issued daily in India. Road safety advocates insist on license Seva Kendras on the lines of Passport Seva Kendras, to deal with the problem plaguing the procurement of licenses. "We need the same steps taken for the Regional Passport Offices, which were replaced by Passport Seva Kendras, ushering in a transparent system of issuing passports. The license Kendras can operate in private public partnership (PPP) or by government alone."

Right of way for emergency vehicles

Traffic conditions on Indian roads sometimes delay the emergency response. The Government has been promoting giving priority passage to emergency vehicles for some time now, which has resulted in better awareness. There are a few examples of the





At Ganga Rehabilitation Centre

creation of a green passage for ambulances transporting human organs for donation. Traffic signal systems coordinated with the movement of ambulances can be tried. All new highways, or expansion of highways should be mandated with dedicated emergency lanes.



Good Samaritan Law:

Even the most sophisticated and well-equipped pre-hospital trauma care systems can do little if bystanders fail to recognise the seriousness of a situation, call for help and provide basic care until help arrives. Bystanders must feel both empowered to act, and confident that they will not suffer adverse consequences, such as legal liability, as a result of aiding someone who has been injured. Hence, involvement of bystanders is a must in the context of the reduction of

Indian Road Traffic Accident related deaths.

Good Samaritan laws offer legal protection to people who give reasonable assistance to those who are, or who they believe to be, injured, ill, in peril, or otherwise incapacitated. In essence, these laws protect the "Good Samaritan" from liability if unintended consequences result from their assistance.

Extraordinary Gazette Notification No. 126, published by the authority of the Government of India, on May 13th 2015, highlights that, Central Government considers it necessary to protect the Good Samaritans from harassment on the actions being taken by them to save the life of the road accident victims and, therefore, the Central Government issued guidelines to be followed by hospitals, police and all other authorities for the protection of Good Samaritans. In conclusion, Good Samaritan Law is an important milestone in India, through which, citizens can help the road traffic victims and people in emergency without any fear and seek satisfaction of giving back to the society.

Need for Trauma Centres along Highways

The Emergency Stabilization Centre has the ability to provide a level of stabilisation that would immediately address airway, breathing & circulation (ABC) preventing hypoxia & hypotension, thus increasing the window of the golden hour for better outcomes at higher centres, which are ideally located in pockets with a high incidence of Trauma and devoid of stabilisation facilities.

Need for co-ordinated effort between Transport and Health Departments

National Highways being under the jurisdiction of the National Transport Ministry, it has created a parallel road accident management system for national highways. There is a need to have an integrated system instead of duplicating the efforts. State health departments are better suited for managing Emergency Services in the state particularly when most states have well developed and efficiently managed 108 Emergency Response Services. It would be in the best interests of road traffic

Road Safety Slogans

- You can't get home, unless you are safe.
- Alert today - Alive tomorrow.
- Leave sooner, drive slower, live longer.
- Night doubles traffic troubles.
- Stop accidents before they stop you.
- Better to arrive late than never.
- Speed Thrills But Kills.



Rehabilitation of Seriously incapacitated victims

accident victims if national health and highway authorities pool their resources with State Health and Transport departments who can take the responsibility of implementing and managing Emergency Response services in the entire state including national highways.

Road Safety Measures in India

The National Road Safety Policy is the joint effort/responsibility of State and Central

Governments. The focus of Road Safety policy should be on:

- Raising awareness on road safety issues
- Establishing a road safety information data base
- Ensuring Road safety infrastructure
- Making safer vehicles
- Creating safer drivers
- Safety of vulnerable road users
- Road safety education and training
- Enforcement of safety laws
- Emergency medical services for road accidents
- Research and development on all aspects of road safety
- Strengthening and enabling the legal, institutional and financial environment for road safety

- Identifying Black spots along all the national highways of fatal road traffic accidents

- Cashless schemes for treatment of victims
- Organizing road safety weeks

In summary, Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Emergency Care are the major approaches to address the road traffic accidents in India. Civil society and every citizen should contribute towards making India achieve the reduction of deaths and injuries due to road traffic accidents and making our roads much safer.

At the end of the day, the goals are simple: safety and security.

10 facts about Road Safety updated by WHO...

1. Road Traffic injuries is a public health problem
2. Vulnerable road users account for half of road traffic death victims globally
3. Controlling speed reduces road traffic injuries
4. Drinking alcohol and driving increases risk of death
5. Wearing a good quality helmet reduce the risk of death from road traffic crash
6. Wearing a seat belt reduce the risk of death of front seat and rear seat passengers
7. The use of child restraints reduces considerably the risk of serious injury in children
8. Access to timely and emergency care after the road traffic crash saves lives and reduces the disability amongst the injured
9. Vehicles sold in 80% of the world fail to meet the basic safety standards.
10. Unsafe infrastructure increases the risk of crash

Global Road Accidents Status

World Health Organisation has identified road accidents as the leading cause of death across the world. Every 25 seconds someone dies because of road traffic accident globally. Road traffic crashes are the leading cause of death among those aged 15-29 years. Although low and middle-income countries account for only 54% of the world's vehicles, they account for 90% of road traffic deaths. Approximately 1.25 million people die every year on the world's roads as a result of road traffic crashes.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes an ambitious target to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by 50% by 2020. Changing road user behaviour is a critical component of the holistic "Safe Systems" approach advocated. WHO initiated "Save LIVES" provides an evidence-based inventory of priority interventions to be implemented towards achieving the SDG targets. The core components of Save LIVES are -

- Speed management,
- Leadership on road safety,
- Infrastructure design and improvement,
- Vehicle safety standards,
- Enforcement of traffic laws and
- Survival after a crash.



The Oath Administered by me and taken by the vast gathering including Mr. Edappadi K. Palaniswami, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu at Coimbatore–

Oath to be taken by every citizen

- I understand that every citizen's life is precious and important to our nation/planet earth.
- I understand that death of one person on the road will destroy his entire family – lost to the society.
- I am aware non-adherence to traffic rules and regulations is the major cause for accident on the road.
- I believe that road traffic errors committed knowingly or unknowingly, are the cause of destroying the peace of many people and their families.
- I fully believe that rules and regulations on the road are for the benefit of myself, my family and the society.
- I am fully aware that by strict adherence to road rules and regulations, we can save the 'light of life' of many families.
- I make total commitment to adhere to road regulations strictly and advice everyone to do so.