

Article on Road Accidents

Road Accidents and fatalities has become a core issue in India. It is not simply the issue of the victims. The valuable wealth of the nation is lost. The lives of the deceased cannot be brought back and the loss of life is immeasurable. According to the Annual Report on Accidents for the year 2020 released by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, the total number of accidents are 3,66,138 and fatalities are 1,31,714 in the year 2020. The National Highways constitutes only 2.06% of the total road net work in India. But 36.6% of the accidents occurred on National Highways. The deaths on National Highways constitutes 35.7% The State Highways constitutes 2.8% of the total road network in India. They constitute 24.8% of the total accidents. That means National Highways and State Highways together constitutes 60.8% of the total accidents. It is the time to study and analyse the real causes for this menace and what are the rectification measures to be taken is the primary task in reducing the road accidents. The first and foremost attempt in this direction should focus on National Highways.

Causes: The construction of the National Highways in India is very much defective in most of the cases. For example, as per the international standards the National Highways should not pass through Villages and towns. But in India, it is grossly violated. Secondly, there should be no provision to take right turn on National Highways except in Junctions. But at hundreds of places such provision is given while constructing the roads. If at all such provision is warranted, precautionary measures like erection of sign boards, putting speed breakers etc are essential. But in practice they are grossly violated. Third major factor is that all types of vehicles right from two wheelers to heavy vehicles have to pass on the roads. There is no segregation of roads according to the speed of the vehicles. These three major factors are causing the highest number of road accidents and fatalities.

Solutions: Defects in road construction are to be rectified with immediate effect. It should be *considered as non bailable offence and the concerned contractors are to be punished severely and they shall be black listed*. Black spots are identified in each state to some extent. But the rectification of the black spots is ignored. As far as segregation of roads is concerned, it is neither costly nor not impossible. This can be done either by markings or display of sign boards on the roads and creating awareness among the drivers. Provision for rest to the drivers is utmost important on national Highways. Parking places

are to be provided for the vehicles at some points with all the amenities such as toilets, refreshments, fuel top up etc. Ambulance with all facilities is to be provided for every 100 kms on National Highways. Road Safety subject should be incorporated in the curriculum from 05th class.

What is happening now? If an accident takes place, immediately the driver is booked. There is no mechanism of accident investigation. A team with experts from Transport Technical, medical and legal should be constituted to study and analyse the causes.

The license issuing system is to be changed. The aspirants should be trained well, screened and then only license is to be issued without any scope for malpractices. In most of the countries in the world the above mentioned issues are addressed well and getting a driving license is a difficult task.

Simply conducting Road Safety week once in a year ritually and attributing the fault to the drivers will not help to reduce the accidents. The past so many years of experience proves this. Action is the need of the hour rather statements.