

A Report on Road Safety Week (7th to 13th January 2002)

Road Accident Scenario- Rajasthan

The fact that almost everyday there is a fatal accident or two somewhere in the country is no secret. Infact this is a common feature in almost all daily newspapers and there are very few days in a year, where newspaper do not carry any news on accidents. Even this could perhaps be attributed to the late flow of information to the press.

In the past few years, the number of registered vehicles, road accidents vis-a-vis the casualties and injuries to people have created a history in the State, with 1999 recording an abnormally large number of accidents. An overview of the accidents in numbers, during is as below:

Year	Registered Vehicles	Accidents	Casualties	Injured
1998	23,82,241	20,798	5,622	26,881
1999	26,47,979	21,132	6,010	26,545
2000	28,88,060	19,932	5,388	25,433

(Rajasthan Patrika 08.04.01)

With this background, issue of 'road safety' becomes intensely important. In fact there is a great need to inform common people, the 'road users', whether pedestrians, drivers-two wheeler or four wheeler, Light Motor Vehicle or Heavy Motor Vehicle, etc. about the measures of road safety.

As a consumer organisation, CUTS made observance of the week through various programmes. Road Safety Week (7th to 13th January of every year) has been recognised by Ministry of Surface Transport, Government of India.

Programmes

Road-Side Play

Volunteers associated with CUTS presented 'Nukkad Natak' i.e street/ road-side plays on one of the busiest crossing of the street. The theme was on general traffic rules. The target audience was the passersby.

Similar play was also presented at the Sindhi Camp, the city Bus Stand, with bus drivers and helpers of the State Roadways, as the target audience. The objective was to sensitise them towards the safety and comfort of passengers.

Symposium on ‘Road Accident Victims – What Should the Doctors Do?’

Another issue associated with road safety is the ‘after accident scenario’. From the above scenario of road accidents and thereby death and injuries, a large number of road accident victims can be saved, if only they receive succor immediately. To our pity, many of them do not, many of them get it, but by the time, it may be too late.

With the theme of sensitising private medical practitioners towards road accident victims, CUTS also organised a symposium titled ‘Road Accident Victims – What should be Done’. It involved participation from private medical doctors of the city, representative from Traffic Police, NGO’s and media.

Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Shashi Panicker, Secretary, Private Medical Practitioners Association, said that doctors deny treatment to road accident victims, because they fear from legal procedures, which are to be followed by medico-legal cases. This may include repeated police investigations, witnessing, and summons at the court.

Ashok Patni, Additional Superintendent of Police, Traffic Police expressed the view that even doctors need to understand the procedures better in order to co-operate with the law and order.

Dr M.R. Goyal, Medical Jurisprudent, Government of Rajasthan the verdict of the Supreme Court of India, mentioning doctor’s responsibility to treat accident victim with prime importance, which were discussed at length.

The symposium emerged with a need for sensitisation of the society, as a whole towards road accident victims.

The common people, passersby, traffic police, etc. can play a great role in saving the life of a victim, provided they are trained regarding safe handling and transferring of the victim from the place of the accident to the doctor.

The event recommended a better co-ordination among the law makers, maintainers, and doctors to provide immediate care to the road accident victim. The consensus was that fatal accidents could be reduced only through co-operative efforts of doctors, the police and the traffic police.

Other Activities

Hoardings are also displayed at two of the busy road crossing, (Narayan Singh Circle and Government Hostel Circle) depicting road safety issues in catchy manner. One of the issues is importance of helmet for the riders of two wheelers, the main and the pillion. The other is overloading of the school auto-rickshaws, which poses threat to the lives of children.

Volunteers also distributed leaflets to passersby, on almost all the road-junctions around the city. The leaflets carry message of general traffic rules for children, narrated in a rhyme with interesting visuals.

CUTS CAMPAIGN ON ROAD SAFETY DURING ROAD SAFETY WEEK
(from 6th January to 13th January'02)

Identified Issues:

In the Indian perspective, CUTS has decided to work on few identified activities pertaining to road safety during Road Safety Week, these are:

- ◆ To sensitise, expose and educate all pillion riders to wear helmets mandatory in the city of Jaipur, as they also have equal risk to their lives when they are on roads. This will minimise the rate of accident deaths.
- ◆ To lobby with the government to coordinate between the police, private medical practitioners and other law enforcing agencies to provide immediate relief to the succors of the road accident victims by sensitising private medical practitioners to admit accident victims in the nearest private or government hospitals.
- ◆ To sensitise citizens residing in Jaipur City regarding general traffic rules.

Methodology:

1. Campaigns at Road Junctions

By *distributing pamphlets* to two wheeler riders. with the help of traffic wardens, traffic police and local volunteers on the issue of “Helmets for Pillion Riders”.

2. Awareness Camps

Awareness camp *by way of organising a meeting (open house meet)* in Jaipur involving local citizens, local medical associations like Private Medical Practitioners' Associations etc etc, the State Road Transport Deptt. and Traffic Police of Jaipur etc. on the issue of **providing immediate relief to the succors of the road accident victims in the nearest private hospital.**

3. Awareness through Hoardings.

To sensitise public by way of *displaying general traffic rules* at the major road junctions of Jaipur.

4. By staging a Nukkad Natak (Street Play) at Badi Chopar or any other place on general road safety rules.
5. By distributing posters on the issue of private medical practitioners.

Estimated Budget

1. Pamphlets 20,000 copies @ 20 p.	=	4,000.00
2. Hoarding Minimum two numbers @ 10,000 per hoarding	=	20,000.00
3. Nukkad Natak Lumpsum	=	5,000.00
4. Open House discussion With representatives from private hospitals and nursing home society and citizens. At SMS hospital Auditorium (around 100 participants	=	12,000.00

Total		41,000.00
5. Posters 1000 numbers at the rate of Rs.15/- per posters	=	15,000.00
5. Lamination and framing of posters 200 numbers at the rate of 200/- per poster	=	4,000.00

Grand Total		60,000.00

- Note: 1. Posters have to be printed minimum of one thousand copies
2. We can alternatively think of calendars.
3. Two Hundred posters are to be framed for distributing to private medical practitioners.
4. We shall try to get sponsorship for hoardings from institutions like Banks, LIC etc.for increasing the number of hoardings to five.

HN/DS
29th Dec., 2001

Cc: PSM/.BC.

Agenda

- Introduction:*** By Mr Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General, on CUTS brief and role in Road Safety issues.
- Speech:*** By SP Traffic, Shri V.K.Singh or representative on general Road Safety rules
- Speech:*** By The Secretary, Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Society, Dr S.Panicker on overall scenario of accident victims and role of private medical practitioners.
- Speech:*** By Transport Commissioner (Mrs. Asha Singh) or representative on general administrative problems and the role of government.
- Speech:*** By Medical Jurisprudence (Dr Goyal) on government's
- Question-Answer session.***
- Dinner.***

Estimated participants: 100 .

Estimated Cost : Rs. 12, 000.00

Symposium
13th January, 2002
Road Accident Victims: What should the doctors do?

Agenda

1.00pm-2.00pm	Lunch	
2.00pm-2.30pm	Introduction of CUTS, role of CUTS in Road Safety Programmes and the importance of the issue.	Mr. Pradeep Singh Mehta Secretary General of CUTS
2.30pm-2.45pm	General Traffic Rules and role of Traffic Department.	Mr. V.K.Singh S.P.Traffic, Jaipur
2.45pm-3.00pm	Overall scenario of road accident victims and role of private medical practitioners.	Dr. Shashi Panicker Secretary, Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Society, Jaipur.
3.00pm-3.15pm	Role of Government	Mrs Asha Singh Transport Commissioner, Govt. of Rajasthan or representative.
3.15pm-3.30pm	Government's stand on road accident victims.	Dr. Goyal Medical Jurisprudence, Govt. of Rajasthan.
3.30pm-3.45pm	Views/case study	Participants or any representative of road accident victims.
3.45pm-4.00pm	Questions and answers	Open discussion
4.00pm-4.10pm	Recommendations and Conclusion	By forum
4.10pm-4.15pm	Vote of thanks	Mr. H. Neogi Director, CUTS

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Dear

Right to life and safety is a fundamental right of any citizen. This is guaranteed under the constitutions of every country in the world including India. Any thing, which is hazardous to human, violates the right to life, and road safety is as much on the agenda as any other area, which may be accident-prone. Road fatalities now leads the list of accidental deaths in India much more than any other accidental deaths such as by drowning, fire, rail or air mishaps etc.

Road fatalities are due to a number of reasons, primary among them are faulty road and traffic policies, poor implementation of various laws governing road safety issues and last but not the least, the faulty engineering of road mechanics, may it be road design or traffic lighting etc.

Furthermore, lack of awareness of road safety issues amongst the masses, low apathy of the policy makers and implementers' etc add to the increasing problem of road safety. As far as the role of medical professionals are concerned, in the year 1989, Supreme Court of India in a judgement ruled that every medical doctor is bound to save the life of an accident victim. 'It is his supreme responsibility even if the victim is that of a criminal assault', said the order.

*In view of this, CUTS (Consumer Unity & Trust Society), a registered, recognised, non-partisan, non-profit and non-government organisation pursuing social justice, in order to commemorate **Road Safety Week** during the second week of January, has decided to hold a symposium in association with **Private Hospitals & Nursing Homes Society** on **13th January, 02 at 1.00 pm onwards at the SMS Auditorium, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, Behind SMS Hospital, Jaipur.***

You are requested to kindly attend the symposium and participate in the discussion to make it worth valuable. A tentative agenda and a brief on "About CUTS" is enclosed for your perusal.

We look forward to have a positive response and fruitful participation from your side,

Yours sincerely,

H. Neogi
Director