

Essay on Road Accidents: Bangladesh Perspective

Hints: Introduction, National Statistical Trends in Road Accidents in Bangladesh, Causes of Road Accidents in Bangladesh, Measures to Prevent Rampant Road Accidents, Conclusion.

Introduction

Road accidents in Bangladesh today have gotten to the stage where it seems to be an epidemic. In most regions of the world, this epidemic of road traffic injuries is still increasing. Low income and middle-income countries have the highest-burden to road traffic death rate. The problem is acute in Bangladesh, which has one of the highest fatality rates in the world. According to official statistics, every year about 10,000 people are killed in road accidents in the country. In financial terms, accidents inflict severe damage of no less than Tk. 5,000 crore annually, about 2% of the total GDP.

National Statistical Trends in Road Accidents in Bangladesh

Approximately 13 million people die each year and nearly people die on the world's roads every day. Tens of millions of people are injured or disabled every year and between 20 and 50 million sustain non-fatal injuries.

Reported Road Accident trends in Bangladesh (2007-2011):

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Source: Police FIR

Accident Type in Bangladesh: Nearly 22% of all fatalities in Bangladesh are 2.5 times higher than those in industrialized countries.

Grievous 16%

Simple 3%

Simple collision type 4%

Causes of Road Accidents in Bangladesh

Typically road accidents are blamed mostly on engineering fault and badly maintained roads, bad weather, faulty vehicles, or disregard for traffic rules. But inexperienced drivers are the main cause of road accidents in Bangladesh. If the statistics of recent accidents in Bangladesh are checked, the major reason is always the drivers' error. From the death of 44 school children into a pond in south-east Bangladesh to recent tragic death of two icons, renowned filmmaker Tareque Masud and versatile media personnel Mishuk Munir, it is learned that inexperienced, unlicensed or uninsured driving were the main reason behind it. However, remarkable causes of road accidents are:

- unskilled and less educated drivers,
- reckless driving,
- over-speeding,
- over-loading,
- vehicular defects,
- lack of knowledge and consciousness of the road users,
- hazardous roads and road environments,
- lack of training of the drivers and maintenance of vehicles,
- poor implementation of traffic rules and regulations, 10. driving

under influence of alcohol drugs,
poor utilization of helmets and seat belts,
tendency to walk on the roads instead of using footpaths and less
interest to use foot-over bridges,
overtaking attitudes of drivers,
improper road design and construction and
insufficient road safety measures.

Again, in Bangladesh, many private bus owners are dependent on bank loans. They manage their business with a minimum number of vehicles as well as drivers. In order to pay back the loan while trying to maximize their profit, they always compete with each other. This covetous business policy is liable for any accidents.

Measures to Prevent Rampant Road Accidents

Driving a vehicle without proper training and test must be avoided. A driver must be able to control direction, acceleration, and deceleration. Besides technical and mechanical knowledge of the vehicle's, he has to have the ability to make good decisions based on the factors such as ongoing road and traffic conditions. He must consciously choose every move.

Then comes the question of road safety. On 11-12 May 2011, Bangladesh observed the first "United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety" along with other member countries of UN to ensure a world free of high-risk roads. A move has been signed between Chief Engineer, Roads and Highways Department and Regional Director IRAP Asia Pacific for implementing IRAP on major highways in Bangladesh. UNESCAP will help to develop national road safety goals. Meanwhile government has incorporated a chapter on road safety and road use in primary and secondary textbooks next year to raise awareness about it. No doubt, all these attempts will bring more awareness about road safety, but

it will be absolutely wrongdoing, if the government issues more driving licence without any test. A person with a gun may kill one or two, but a person without proper adequate driving training test may kill hundreds or thousands of lives.

Government should not only impose rigorous test for each and every new driving licence seeker but also should introduce periodical defensive driving test, vision test and drug test to all existing driving licence holders to further renew their licence. Accidents can still happen, but by getting adequate driving training can reduce the probability of an accident drastically.

Other important measures that can play an essential role to reduce rampant road accidents are:

- road development,
- highway management development,
- imposing strict rules to give licence,
- recovery of fake licence,
- to stop driving by helper,
- to stop mobile talk while driving,
- to build four-lane-highway,
- monitoring speed control,
- introduction of death sentence as capital punishment for careless and irresponsible driving which causes unexpected, serious and massive accident and
- the imposing of financial penalty upon the reckless drivers

Conclusion

With the process of rapid economic growth together with increasing motorization and urbanization the situation of road safety problem has been worsening in many developing countries. The road traffic

accidents and injury statistics have also revealed a deteriorating safety situation in Bangladesh. Addressing road safety problem is a considerable challenge to the transport and road safety professionals. There remains much scope for improving road safety and for that known and proven interventions need to be implemented with due urgency ranging from education, engineering and enforcement. Important initiatives to improve the conditions require renewed governmental commitment and considerable resources particularly trained local personnel safety specialists and researchers to build up indigenous capacity and attain sustainability of effective road safety programs. For furthering this movement all should join the “We Want Safe Road” movement launching with the direction of the film star Ilias Kanchan. We want to see the fulfilment of the desire of ABM Musa, a reputed journalist who sought for a guarantee of natural death.