CHAPTER III

REPORT OF ALL INDIA SAFETY
PROGRAMME COMMITTEE
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IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

India is a very large country spread over an area of 3.30 million sq. km. With population exceeding one billion. Its entire road network has a length of nearly 3.70 million km. and the vehicular population has already crossed the 55 million mark. More than 2.5 million vehicles are added on our roads every year. In 1951, we had only 3,00,000 vehicles on the road network of 4,00,000 km. While the grown in autos is nearly 170 times during the period 1951-2000 and the goods traffic and passenger traffic have gone up by more than 110 times, the road infrastructure could not be expanded beyond 9 times, thus creating huge gaps between demand and supply and the demand continues to rise at a galloping pace.

Though the length of national highways is only about 57737 km (nearly 1.5 % of the total road network of our country), it is forced to carry more than 40 % of the total traffic. Unfortunately, 12 % of our national highways have only single lane width.

This disparity is not only causing serious traffic congestion, wastage of fuel and the resultant pollution, but it also responsible for the
buried road accident scenario in our country.

More than 75,000 persons are killed and nearly 3,50,000 are injured on our roads every year. The total economic loss on account of these accidents is estimated at over Rs. 5,000 crore per annum, which does not include the social costs, especially in terms of loss of a bread winner or continued personal injury and trauma.

The studies have revealed that our National Highways comprising only 1.5% of the entire country’s network account for as high as 25% of accidents and 34% of fatalities. Nearly 50% of all the accidents take place in the 40 metropolitan cities of India. The probability of accident at night is 8 times higher than in day. A two-wheeler rider is 5 times more likely to be killed in an accident than a car or a bus traveler. The young children in the age group of 9--15 years are the most vulnerable users. Road accidents do not happen; they are caused. Studies have confirmed that most accidents are the result of human error, although the condition of vehicle and road also play an important role.
Alarmed by this gloomy scenario, which is worsening every day, in sharp contrast to the advanced countries like U.S., Europe and Japan, where the accident rate has declined phenomenal increase in road travel, the Ministry of Surface Transport (Road Safety Cell), Govt. of India, set up "Road Safety Programme Implementation Committee", under the Chairmanship of Dr. P.S. Parsricha on 12th September 2000, to evolve and recommend various strategies in abating this problem.

The Committee’s main focus has been only those recommendations that are easily implementable and do not entail large outlay of funds.

Following are some of the major recommendations:

(1) It is necessary to introduce the concept of container traffic for the carriage of goods in secured and safe conditions. It should be made mandatory for all goods carriages playing on national permits.

(2) The use of helmets by all motorcycle riders should be made compulsory throughout the country.
(3) No tractor should be permitted to pull more than one trailer on any public road. It must be fitted with reflectors must also display the registrations number.

(4) It should be made obligatory for the drivers of hazardous goods carriers to keep protective clothing along with emergency kit in the vehicle so as to enable him to take emergency actions.

ENGINEERING MEASURES:

(1) Compulsory barricading of all construction/maintenance sites, whether on roads or foot paths, and installation of warning signs and lights.

(2) Strengthening of highway shoulders and painting of continuous yellow single/double yellow lines along the edge of the carriageway. It will enable cyclists, pedestrians etc. to move in a safe area, besides providing adequate space for emergency vehicle repairs.

(3) Widening of bridge and culverts, so that their width is the same as that of the meeting arms of roads at either end, Parapet walls and iron railings should also be constructed.
(4) Compulsory provision of lay-byes for all bus stops on highways, so that the normal traffic is not hampered and passenger safety is not jeopardized.

(5) Provision of adequate parking space for trucks at all octroi nakas, away from highways.

(6) Speed breakers must be discouraged on national and state highways, unless absolutely necessary. Whenever required they must conform to IRC specifications and should be painted. Warning signs to be provided on either side, about 75 meters in advance.

(7) No statue should be permitted on any highway, especially at intersections.

(8) At every intersection of the National Highway, Information Sign Boards should be installed to indicate the location of the nearest village, police station, hospital, petrol pump, traffic aid post, parking facility, etc.

(9) The Ministry should encourage fitment of reflective devices such as delineators, cats’ eyes, pale studs, lighted traffic bollards, etc.
on the curb side, ends of central dividers and intersection island etc.

(10) All traffic signs and road markings must conform to I.R.C. specifications. The Ministry must encourage the use of retro reflective sign boards and thermo-plastic road markings so as to command better respect of the road user, besides ensuring longer life of these two must cost-effective traffic control devices. Since the required raw material is not indigenously available, if it recommended that the Ministry of Finance should be moved to exempt the raw materials from the levy of excise/custom duty so as to make their use affordable to the various local bodies and State Public Works Department.

: DRIVING LICENCE SYSTEM : 

(1) need for incorporating the requirement of minimum education (7th Standard) for all drivers of transport vehicles. This provision should apply only to the new applicants.

(2) Eye tests should be made compulsory for all drivers at the time of issue of license, and subsequent renewal.
(3) The Government has, since done away with the requirement of medical certificate in case of applicants of non-transport vehicle category. This exemption needs to be reconsidered, as anyone suffering from serious disease like epilepsy or disability may endanger other road users.

(4) Introduction of smart card driving license system and strict action against habitual traffic offenders.

(5) Close monitoring and strict control over the driving schools.

(6) All school buses should be painted in a distinctive yellow colour with proper warning signs. They should also be fitted with flashing lights that should automatically operate at the time of boarding and alighting of children.

: INSTITUTION BUILDING :

(1) It is very necessary to enact 'Road Safety Act' to cover all road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorized vehicles. This Act should also enable prosecuting of engineering service, road engineering, road maintenance agencies etc. For any negligence to provide necessary traffic control devices and to
ensuring safety on the roads and footpaths. The Act may provide for action against open manholes, unprotected excavations, obstructing hearings, letting loose cattle on roads etc.

(2) It is equally essential to formulate a "National Accident Policy" to provide direction for dealing with this serious problem and suggesting specific time bound measures to reduce road accidents. The policy should also injury mitigation measures, compensation of accident victims, the associated trauma and relief rehabilitation guidelines, role of NGOS, insurance companies, medical aid and trauma care centers, etc.

(3) Road safety audit should form an integral part of any Highway Construction and Road Safety Management right from the stage of road design process, so that all safety aspects are systematically checked before opening a public road to normal traffic.

(4) It is necessary to set up an All India Road Safety Research Center
(5) Traffic-aid-posts should be established every 50 km along national highways and every 100 km along state highways. Each traffic aid post on highways must be manned in three shifts.

(6) It is essential to build a cadre of traffic engineers in P.W.D. So that their expertise and experience are taken full advantage of. The existing policy of tenure and transfer from traffic engineering to other non-traffic function must change.

(7) It is equally essential to establish a 'Department of Road Safety' within the Ministry. This Department must have staff who are professionally qualified and specifically trained on road safety issues. This department must be empowered to have its recommendations implemented throughout the country. The Department should also be responsible for funding programmes on research and development in the area of road safety.

(8) Trauma Care Centers with proper Communications facilities should be set up with the active participation of oil companies, insurance companies, auto manufactures and NGOS. Primary
Health Centers located on the highways need to be upgraded with proper equipments for trauma care management.

(9) With a view to provide training facility for the transport drivers, especially those of hazardous carriers. It is necessary to set up small institutions with proper infrastructure at various strategic locations, mainly on the national highways, so that drivers are encouraged to avail of this useful facility. These can be funded by the automobile manufacturers, oil and insurance companies, who are found too willing to provide the support.

(10) The 'Motor Accident Claims Tribunals' were set up with the main objective of settling the claims with promptness. However, as pressures on such tribunals have been constantly increasing, the settlement is taking a long time, sometimes 5 years and even more. The committee feels that 'Claim Settlements Boards' need to be set up on the lines of Lok Adalat for the speedy disposal of undisputed claim cases. The board may comprise a judge, an advocate of proven integrity and a social worker, preferably associated with road safety work.
(11) It is essential to review the Insurance Policy and introduce incentive/disincentive Schemes, so that drivers with clean safety record are required to pay much less than those who have accident history.

:ENFORCEMENT:

(1) Strict enforcement is absolutely imperative to check illicit transport of passengers in overloaded conditions, which is one of the primary causes of road accidents. Many private vehicles are being misused all over the country. Punishments for this offence should be imprisonment up to six months and maximum fine up to Rs. 10,000 (but not less than Rs. 5,000).

(2) All liquor shops along the national highways must be immediately shifted and special guidelines need to be given for future locations.

(3) Since our roads are open to all categories of vehicles, it is necessary to ensure that all vehicles are fitted with reflectors of good quality. Assistance of Gram Panchayats, Zilla Parishads, Industries and Mills must be taken fitting reflectors on bullock-carts, trolleys (attached to tractors) as well.
(4) Fitting of special reflecting material on the spikes of the wheels and paintings of rear mudguard of a bicycle with yellow fluorescent paint by the manufactures must be made mandatory

**TRAFFIC EDUCATION:**

(1) Traffic education should be made an integral part of the school children right from the Kindergarten (KG) level. A chapter on traffic discipline and road safety should be incorporated. No exams need be taken so as to add additional pressure on the already overburdened children.

(2) RSP activities should be promoted in all the schools of major cities (Population exceeding 2 Lakh) and should be made compulsory for children in the age group of 9—14, Special marks may be given to them as is applicable to the Scouts, Guides and NCC cadets. Unless the RSP is considered at par with Scouts and Guides, not many would be encouraged to join this movement.

The Committee recommends that the Central Government and State Governments formulate a definite time-bound “Action Plan” to
implement the proposals put forth in this report. It will be desirable to set up a Monitoring Committee for follow-up action.

No progress can be achieved without the active association of our own people. Community participation is the pivot on which the platform of change and reform rests. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to create mass awareness throughout the country and make the citizen aware of their role and responsibilities in achieving this arduous task. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that the year 2002 be declared as the "Road Safety Year".