

DEPARTMENT OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

(Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways)

Draft National Road Safety Policy

Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport & Highways, Department of Road Transport & Highways have formulated a draft National Road Safety Policy in consultation with road safety experts and other departments. The same was placed before the National Road Safety Council, an apex Body, constituted under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

It has been decided to place the National Road Safety Policy on the website of this Ministry for inviting comments/ suggestions.

This department has received comments/ suggestions on the draft. These are under examination.

PREAMBLE

The rapid development and expansion of the road network and the increase in number of motor vehicles have led to a substantial rise in levels of both passenger and freight movement. Concomitantly safety related issues have emerged.

The number of road accidents and fatalities has been growing in recent years, which call for concerted and multi-disciplinary preventive and remedial efforts.

As road accidents involve roads, motor vehicles as also the human being, the National Road Safety Policy needs to address on a holistic basis, issues covering road engineering, signage, vehicle design, education of road users and enforcement of traffic safety measures. It is also recognized that regardless of jurisdictions, the Central and State Govts have a joint responsibility in making a dent on the incidence of road accidents and fatalities.

In the light of this, the Govt of India has considered it relevant to frame a draft National Policy on Road Safety covering both preventive and post-accident aspects of Road Safety encompassing initiatives of public policy as well as implementation aspects, as also the responsibilities of various stakeholders.

1. RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT ROAD SAFETY ISSUES

Current Status

It has been experienced all over the world that the countries which are undergoing increasing and rapid motorisation face proportionately higher number of road accidents.

At the earliest stages of road safety development, little or no safety awareness may exist and efforts will first need to be made to enhance the awareness of key decision-makers to the scale and nature of the problem and the actions that are necessary to alleviate the situation.

The situation in India is somewhat better than a country, which may be at the earliest stage of safety development but still far less satisfactory than those countries, which have proven records of road safety improvements.

However, in India the situation varies from state to state and within a state from district to district and within a district from one department to another and within a department from one office to another.

Policy Statement

The government will make increased efforts to promote awareness about the seriousness of the road accident problem, its social and economic implications and the necessity to curb the rising menace of road accidents. This will facilitate various stakeholders to play their rightful role in promoting road safety.

Strategies to Implement Policy

1. Raising awareness among key decision-makers, stakeholders and **NGOs** to facilitate them for planning and promoting road safety.
- 1.2 Raising awareness about the gravity of road safety issues amongst all citizens of the country and particularly the young, elderly and the infirm.
- 1.3 To enlighten various road user groups with respect to their roles and responsibilities.

2. PROVIDING ENABLING LEGAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ROAD SAFETY

Current Status

Road Safety is a complex process involving different sectors and various elements of the society. The responsibility for improving the safety on the

roads and reducing accidents is shared by many governmental departments and public and private agencies at National, State and Local levels.

To function smoothly there must be proper legal, institutional and financial environments.

The authority, responsibility and accountability of various stakeholders must be made clear and proper coordination between agencies should be developed at National, Regional and Local levels.

Road safety is a highly cost effective activity involving the saving of human lives and the reduction of economic losses.

Policy Statement

The government will spell out the institutional responsibilities of the various stakeholders of road safety and take appropriate measures to ensure that the required legal, institutional and financial environment for road safety is put in place. The reforms in these areas would take into account an active and extensive participation of the community at large and of private and business sector as well as of NGOs for raising awareness about the road safety issues like behavioral pattern, the human factor, issues of risk perception as also building up of an environment for a minimum acceptable level of safe behavior on roads etc .

Strategies to Implement Policy

- 2.1 To strengthen the legal framework for road safety at various levels.
- 2.2 To strengthen the institutional framework for managing road safety.
- 2.3 To strengthen the financial framework for road safety.

3. ROAD SAFETY INFORMATION DATABASE

Current Status

Detailed analyses of road accidents are essential if the causes of the accidents are to be fully understood. At the present time the police prepare a report for the accidents that they are aware of. The accident report requires the precise location of the accident, details of the people involved in the accident, details of vehicles involved in the accident, details of the road network at and near to the location of the accident, conditions at the time of the accident e.g.: weather, road surface.

This daunting task would be that much easier if the details of the vehicles stored on the vehicle register, details of the drivers stored on the license

register and road details stored on digital plans and maps were readily accessible.

If these basic data could be brought together in a comprehensive database, the police report could give more attention to the causes of the accident.

Policy Statement

The government will significantly increase help and assistance to enhance data collection and analysis systems in states, union territories, districts, metropolitan cities as the components of a national road safety information system.

Strategies to Implement Policy

- 3.1 Improve the reporting of important details at the scene of accident shortly after the occurrence of the accident.
- 3.2 Improve the storage and accessibility of all data relevant to an accident such as vehicles involved, road environment etc.
- 3.3 Development of a comprehensive road safety information database needed for operating effective safety management systems/programmes at National, State and City levels.

4. SAFER ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Status

Road infrastructure has a strong influence on the perception of drivers, including their understanding of the way the road operates and consequently their behavior. Depending on its design a road may encourage people to drive too fast or without the driver being consciously aware of it, cause him to drive slowly.

In India traffic engineering measures are often haphazard and inadequate and thus not effective in tackling road safety problems. Road markings and traffic signage are often not properly implemented and usually are not properly maintained.

With present emphasis placed on the development of transportation by both central and state governments, with the construction of road networks and highways, it becomes imperative that the safety of road infrastructure is not compromised for the sake of quantity.

Policy Statement

The government will undertake additional steps to promote road safety practices at national, state and local levels. Safety conscious planning and design of roads and road networks will be encouraged whilst undertaking new as well as upgradation and rehabilitation road schemes through application of road safety audits. Continuing application of ITS to achieve safe and efficient transport system will be encouraged.

Strategies to Implement Policy

- 4.1 Require all proposed new and rehabilitation road schemes to be checked from a safety perspective for all types of road users during the planning and designing stages through Road Safety Audit and adopt accident reduction strategies for existing roads through black spot improvement programmes.
- 4.2 Review design standards, codes, guidelines, recommended practices, access control and development control procedures to ensure best global practices for road safety are incorporated wherever appropriate.
- 4.3 To facilitate quality improvement of practicing highway engineers on various road safety aspects through training and dissemination of appropriate road safety knowledge.

5. SAFER VEHICLES

Current Status

During the last 25 years, numerous improvements to vehicle safety have been made as a result of research. Without vehicle construction regulations governing safety standards for systems such as braking, lightening, signaling there can be little control over the general safety of country's vehicle fleet.

In India, vehicle safety standards are specified in Rules 93 to 127 of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules (1989) but these norms are hardly followed.

Old vehicles, which have low safety standards, continue to be used.

For many vehicle owners the statutory periodic inspection is considered a troublesome imposition rather than an important "health", check on their vehicles. Furthermore the State Road Transport Authorities lack manpower and equipment to undertake task of vehicle inspection in a comprehensive way.

Policy Statement

The government will take steps to strengthen the system to ensure that safety aspects are built in at the stage of design, manufacture, usage, operation and maintenance of vehicles in line with prevailing international standards in order to minimize adverse safety and environmental effects of vehicle operation on road users and infrastructure.

Strategies to Implement Policy

- 5.1 To promote safety conscious design of vehicles to ensure safe transport for passengers, drivers and other road users.
- 5.2 To promote the statutory periodic inspection as an essential check on the road worthiness of vehicles.
- 5.3 To minimize impact of vehicle operation on roads.

6. SAFER DRIVERS

Current Status

Motor vehicles should be driven only by those people who have appropriate license. Driving licenses can be issued only to people who have reached prescribed age, are physically and psychologically able to drive a motor vehicle, have gone through the prescribed education and training, have demonstrated ability to drive motor vehicles and have fulfilled other conditions as prescribed for driving particular groups or types of motor vehicles. The driver licensing laws are not uniform and in many instances they are quite lenient. No rigorous standard driving test is given. At present often less than five minutes are devoted to test the ability of a driver.

Lack of lane discipline and consideration for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users, violation of traffic rules and regulation are just some of the faulty driving traits of many Indian drivers today.

Policy Statement

The government will strengthen the system of driver licensing and training to improve the competence and capability of drivers.

Strategies to Implement Policy

- 6.1 To facilitate the development of systems which ensure that trained and competent new drivers are permitted to come on the roads.
- 6.2 To improve the manpower both quantitatively and qualitatively, to test and evaluate the driving ability of all license applicants. This would be done by a system of accreditation of the quality of testing and evaluation of drivers.
- 6.3 To assist and encourage setting up of model driving schools with adequate infrastructure and tools in partnership with automobile manufacturers, other private sector participants and NGOs.

7. SAFETY FOR VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

Current Status

The road users found most vulnerable on Indian roads from a road safety point of view are pedestrians, bicyclists and motorized two wheelers. Special provisions for people on foot include regulations for pedestrian crossings which give legal precedence to pedestrians. However, it is the pedestrians seeking to protect their lives, who almost invariably give way to motor vehicles.

Another set of vulnerable road users are the non-motorized handcarts, cycle rickshaws, animal drawn carts etc. In India, there is high degree of heterogeneity of traffic and no segregation of motorised and non-motorised traffic on roads. This often leads to increased conflicts between them and thus reduced safety.

There is no appropriate legislation to govern the behavior of pedestrians and non-motorised traffic on the roads.

Policy Statement

The design and construction of all road facilities will take into account the needs of vulnerable and physically disadvantaged in an appropriate manner. The government will seek to disseminate 'best practices' in this regard to town planners, architects, highway and traffic engineers

Strategies to Implement Policy

- 7.1 Recognize Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs) as being equally important as the motorized vehicle, in the planning, designing, construction and operation of roads and to provide for their special needs and requirements.
- 7.2 To update existing and develop new standards, guidelines and recommended practices in line with accepted international practices to facilitate safe accommodation of VRUs.

- 7.3 To encourage NGOs to work with Vulnerable Road Users, to increase their awareness of the dangers.

8. ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Current Status

In India, like in many developing countries, the lack of knowledge of road safety rules among the population at large is a major factor contributing to the non-observance of such rules in practice. This in turn leads to unsafe road user behavior and habits.

In many areas road safety education and training facilities are not satisfactory. There are some private organizations with the association of voluntary organizations are imparting such training to their employees.

The school curriculum in India hardly includes a section on road safety. It is only in recent times that the traffic police personnel of some cities have been assigned the job for imparting road safety education to children.

Policy Statement

Road safety knowledge and awareness will be created amongst the population through education, training and publicity campaigns. Road safety education will also focus on school children and college going students, while road safety publicity campaigns will be used to propagate good road safety practice among the community. The government will encourage all professionals undertaking road design, road construction, road network management, traffic management and law enforcement to attain adequate knowledge of road safety issues.

Strategies to Implement Policy

- 8.1 Encourage inclusion of road safety awareness as part of educational curriculum for students of various age groups.
- 8.2 To develop and implement road safety publicity campaigns by using the creative resources of both Government and, professional agencies **and NGOs** for various target groups as per their respective requirements.
- 8.3 Also Planning and implementing community based road safety programmes to engage local as well as non-governmental partners in the areas of road traffic safety that most affect their daily lives.
- 8.4 Planning, designing and implementing training programmes for various specific groups involved in road safety management tasks e.g. Traffic Personnel, Highway Engineers, School Teachers, Town Planners, NGOs etc.

9. TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

Current Status

Enforcement of traffic legislation is aimed at controlling road user behavior by preventive, persuasive and punitive methods in order to effect the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. The primary objective of traffic law enforcement is the creating of a deterrent to violators and potential violators of traffic laws and to raise the level of compliance among all drivers and road users. In recent years the amount of traffic has increase substantially but the number of traffic police and regional transport officers has not increased proportionately. The consequences are that the quality of enforcement has deteriorated.

The enforcement agencies face many practical problems like low priorities being assigned to traffic police departments, inadequacy of funds and lack of coordination among different supporting agencies

Policy Statement

The government will take appropriate measures to assist various state and other governments to improve the quality of their enforcement agencies. Government will actively encourage the establishment and strengthening of Highway Patrolling on National and State Highways taking the help of the State Government and Union Territories as appropriate.

Strategies to Implement Policy

- 9.1 To take appropriate measures to improve the capacity of concerned state agencies, to affect improvement in their driver testing and vehicle testing to the required standards.
- 9.2 To take appropriate steps to ensure that the enforcement authorities are adequately manned, trained, and equipped **and empowered** to carry out their function ensuring safe road use and orderly traffic flow including the traffic situation, land use and road network planning etc.
- 9.3 To setup a national level Traffic Police Training Institute to serve, motivate and provide incentive and necessary help to each State to set up modern police training schools within their jurisdiction.

10. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FOR ROAD ACCIDENTS

Current Status

In the more developed countries the response time of ambulances and the like to reach the scene of an accident are short and many lives are saved as a result.

In India, the average response time is much longer with the consequence that some lives are lost that with a quicker response time might have been saved.

However response time is not the only important factor. The quality of post-accident treatment also has a bearing on whether or not an accident victim lives or dies. In some areas, Highway Patrol and Traffic Aid Posts have been introduced to improve response time and quality of treatment.

To achieve quick response time and prompt high quality medical attention requires a higher degree of co-ordination between the many agencies involved.

Policy Statement

The Government will strive to achieve its target that all persons involved in road accidents benefit from speedy and effective trauma care and health management. The essential functions of such a service would include the provision of rescue operation and administration of first aid at the site of an accident, the transport of the victim from accident site to an appropriate nearby hospital.

Strategies to Implement Policy

- 10.1 To improve communication system available with police and other emergency services as a means to reduce response times and to assist in planning and implementation of Traffic Aid Post Scheme.
- 10.2 To train police, fire and other emergency service personnel such as those on ambulances and paramedics in basic first aid for road crash victims.
- 10.3 To develop local and regional trauma plans based on study of post-accident assistance and consequences for road traffic accident casualties.

11. HRD & RESEARCH FOR ROAD SAFETY

Current Status

Road Safety research is needed to clarify the current situation in terms of priorities and problem areas.

Accurate and comprehensive accident data is required to provide a base comparison for identifying problems evaluating changes and asserting the effectiveness of any countermeasures adopted.

A particular deficiency is the lack of research in the field of the development and monitoring of low cost engineering measures. With such developments immediate improvements can be implemented at the known hazardous locations.

The dissemination of information on road safety matters amongst professionals and others in the field is very poor.

Policy Statement

Government will encourage the current road research activities and programmes of road safety research. Priority areas will be encouraged by increased funding. Government will facilitate dissemination of the result of research and identified examples of good practice through publication, training, conferences, workshops and websites.

Strategies to Implement Policy

- 11.1 To set up a system for identifying new areas for research and for extension to ongoing research projects that are likely to be most rewarding **with a special attention to safety of the vulnerable road users.**
- 11.2 To develop arrangements for the allocation of funds for research projects to be carried out by Research Institutes, Universities, NGOs.
- 11.3 To consolidate the results already available from research projects and resource material for widespread dissemination among road safety professionals.