

RRSMP (Rajasthan Road Sector Modernization Project): Road Safety Education and Awareness Program

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Abstract

India which has a dubious distinction of being at the top for road crashes has observed certain initiatives in recent times to curb the growing menace on roads. To this effect, Rajasthan has initiated a comprehensive program to curb road crashes and resulting fatalities and injuries. The Rajasthan Road Sector Modernization Project (RRSMP), funded by the World Bank, is underway with the objectives of improving road connectivity, enhance road safety, and strengthen road sector management capacity. The road safety component is primarily focused on reducing the number of road fatalities and injuries through capacity building in road safety management.

Background

Deaths due to ‘Road Accidents’ in the country have seen an increasing trend with 1,46,133 fatalities in 2015 over 2013 (1,37,423). **Rajasthan is ranked 5th in overall road traffic fatalities** amongst all the states of India (NCRB, 2014). Devising a statewide continuous program on road safety awareness and education looking at the rising road fatalities and injuries was felt as the need of the hour. Therefore, to address this issue, Public Works Department (PWD) Rajasthan with financial support from The World Bank is executing this project under RRSMP. The major reasons behind road accidents as compiled by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH), Government of India (GOI), 2015 was found to be the fault of the road user (Figure 1). Hence, this project was devised to create a massive road safety campaign targeting the road user specifically at the rural level looking at the fact that 54.7% of road accidents were reported in rural areas (2,46,768 cases) during 2014 (NCRB, 2014).

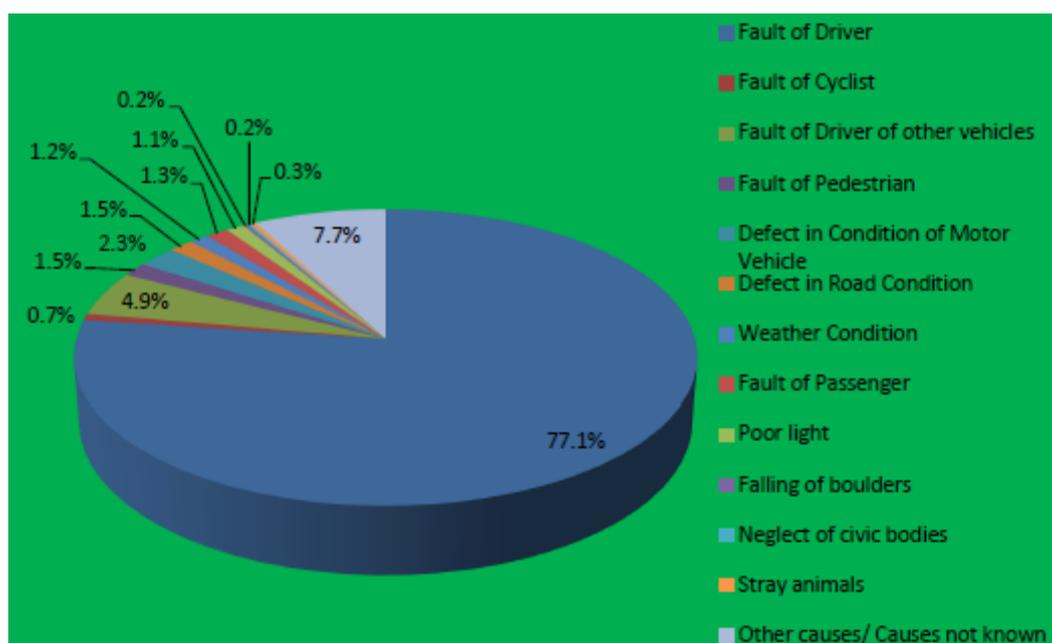


Figure 1: Causes of road accidents - 2015
(Source: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Govt.of India, 2015)

Methodology

The program has been designed to reach out to the grassroots since 75% of the state's population is rural, and requires education and awareness about road safety. Through this initiative, one day awareness program in all the 9896 Gram panchayats of 33 districts of the State, road safety training at 700 Schools and half day training for Truck and Bus drivers at various locations will be conducted. Therefore, this program focusses on creating road safety awareness amongst three targeted groups in the entire State of Rajasthan, namely the rural and semi-urban population, school children, truck/bus drivers. The awareness program also focusses on capacity building of six different NGOs engaged for seven zones of Rajasthan for the implementation of this program.

Initially a pilot program was conducted by each NGO under the supervision of Public Works Department (PWD) and Project management consultant (PMC) at their respective zones to identify the challenges and modification required if any in preparation of the Model Awareness program. Based on the feedback, the Information, education and communication material (IEC) was mutually prepared by the NGO's and standardized by the PMC and PWD. This includes audio/visual presentation on various aspects of road safety, First Aid Trauma Care, Golden Hour and Good Samaritan practices. Documentary on road accident victim families and a road safety film produced for this purpose is also shown.

Conclusion

One of the significant aspects of the campaign is the selection and training of at least 10-15 volunteers in each Gram Panchayat for the sustainability of this program resulting in overall more than 1 lakh volunteers.

This program which was initiated in April 2016 aims to conclude by December 2018 and is a part of the goal to be attained by the Indian government, i.e. to bring down the road accidents by 50% till 2020 (PTI, 2015) . The concern of the government is appreciable and brings in a new zest and enthusiasm with Road Safety Education and Awareness Program of this enormous magnitude which has not been attempted anywhere in the country so far.

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