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Mass Awareness is a Must for Ensuring the Road Safety

NUR MOHAMMAD MAZUMDER



Transportation is now an essential component of every human being in the modern world. Eventually in some way or another, everyone uses the

roads as favorable mode of transport. Although the current transportation system has reduced travel times, it has also increased the chance of fatalities due to the lack of mass awareness in large scale. With the increase in motor vehicles & road network as well as overall development of the country, road crashes have become a huge problem in Bangladesh.

Road safety refers to the concept of planning and strategies to keep people safe using the roads from getting hurt or be killed in motor vehicle crashes. Road users include pedestrians, bicycles riders, rickshaw or vans pullers, and the public transportation like bus users. The main causes of road crashes in Bangladesh are careless driving, over speeding, overloading, overtaking, violating laws, illegal and dangerous competition, long-time driving without break, use of drug and alcohol, lack of safety measures, lack of awareness among the people, presence of market near busy highways and plying of three wheeler-vehicles, motorcycles and locally-made mechanized vehicles. Unregulated movement of non-motorized vehicles along with motorized vehicles on the same route is also one of the major causes of road crashes. Lack of awareness and reckless driving also result in frequent crashes claiming lives and causing anguish and grief to the affected families. Hence, road safety education is as essential as any other basic skills of survival.

Massive public awareness, regular training for drivers and necessary infrastructure are the prime prerequisites for alleviating the chances of road crash. There is no more effective way to reduce traffic crashes, which is a serious concern at

present time, than to increase public awareness. Road crashes have adverse impacts on a huge number of road users in the country each year, therefore there is an urgent need to prevent them. This includes broadening public awareness and stringent enforcement of traffic laws. Along with the responsibility of the drivers to follow the rules and to be cautious as well. Passengers of the motor vehicles also need to keep the road safety in mind and be cautious of

of road crashes could be reduced to a greater extent.

Lastly, the road crashes are identified as one of the major obstacles to sustainable development in the context of Bangladesh. Notable fatality and injury rates on Bangladesh's roads are undermining the remarkable progress that this South Asian nation has made on boosting economic growth and reducing poverty. Likewise improving road safety in Bangladesh is vital

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following traffic laws while driving a car or motorcycle, following the speed limits and taking all safety precautions.

Basically the concept of the road safety should be adopted as a holistic approach. If the drivers, helpers, members of the law and enforcement agencies and most importantly the pedestrians obey the traffic rules properly in discharging their duties from their respective sides many road crashes could have been avoided. The passengers also insist drivers sometimes to use wrong lane as well as in the cities they try to ride on buses desperately, risking their own lives. While owners ask drivers of their vehicles to drive fast to make more trips, resulting more money, people also sometimes ask drivers to drive fast. There have also been cases of underage driving, which the owners should stop. Cases are not also rare in which owners force drivers to work beyond working hours, which entails high risk of crashes mostly because of sleep deprivation. Therefore, if the drivers drive their vehicles carefully the existing number

to national health, well-being, and economic growth as Road crash fatalities and injuries predominantly affect the young people in Bangladesh and the working-age population more broadly. Consequently, countries like Bangladesh could have significant increases in economic growth and national income with long-term reductions in crash fatalities and injuries, while also seeing significant improvements in public wellbeing. The simultaneous exposure of children to traffic crashes undercuts efforts to enhance children's health and educational outcomes, which are crucial factors in the development of human capital.

Bangladesh has considerable potential to improve its road safety performance over the coming decade and signs of progress are emerging. The Road Transport Act 2018, which was approved in October 2018, replaces the Motor Vehicle Ordinance of 1983 and the Road Transport Rules which is published in 2022 are the two key tools for ensuring the proper enforcement of the

legislation regarding road safety on roads. Hence, the 9th National Road Safety Strategic Action Plan 2021-2024 also the major key tools for ensuring the road safety. This action plan has retained ten individual sectors to address the road safety issues in Bangladesh. The sectors are (i) Planning, Management and Co-Ordination of Road Safety; (ii) Road Traffic Crash Data System; (iii) Road Safety Engineering; (iv) Road and Traffic Legislation; (v) Traffic Enforcement; (vi) Driver Training and Testing; (vii) Vehicle Safety; (viii) Road Safety Education and Publicity; (ix) Medical Services for Road Traffic Crash Victims and (x) Digital Technology. Bangladesh also has aligned with United Nation's Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030. This plan has a vision of achieving a 50 percent reduction in road crash fatalities. However, there are still significant scopes to improvise the country's strategic and legislative response concerning vehicle safety, road user safety regulations, and post-crash response services.

The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, as well as the government is taking up the driver's education programs and public awareness campaigns to avoid many of the crashes that usually take place with the intention of continuing the efforts round-the-year for years. The fundamental aim is to provide key behavioral risk factors for road safety to the citizens of Bangladesh to encourage safer behavior while using the road among current and prospective road users and reduce the number of people killed and injured on our roads every year. Along with the Bangladesh Government different non government organizations like Dhaka Ahsania Mission, BRAC, National Heart Foundation, Center for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh and many more are working for ensuring the road safety.

The writer is Chairman, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA)



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Mass awareness is a must for ensuring road safety



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Transportation is now an essential component of every human being in the modern world. Eventually in some way or another, everyone uses the roads as favourable mode of transport. Although the current transportation system has reduced travel times, it has also increased the chance of fatalities due to the lack of mass awareness in large scale. With the increase in motor vehicles & road network as well as overall development of the country, road crashes have become a huge concern in Bangladesh.

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ing economic growth and reducing poverty. Likewise improving road safety in Bangladesh is vital to national health, well-being, and economic growth as Road crash fatalities and injuries predominantly affect the young people in Bangladesh and the working-age population more broadly. Consequently, countries like Bangladesh could have significant increases in economic growth and national income with long-term reductions in crash fatalities and injuries, while also seeing significant improvements in public wellbeing. The simultaneous exposure of children to traffic crashes undercuts efforts to enhance children's health and educational outcomes, which are crucial factors in the development of human capital.

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চার দিক

নির্বিঘ্ন ও নিরাপদ হোক ঈদযাত্রা

ঈদের ছুটিতে ঘরমুখো মানুষ তুলনামূলকভাবে স্বস্তিতে বাড়ি ফিরতে পারলেও দুর্ঘটনা যেন কিছুতেই পিছু ছাড়ে না। প্রতিবছর ঈদের ছুটিতে সড়ক দুর্ঘটনায় মৃত্যুর সংখ্যা বেড়ে যায়। গত রোজার ঈদেও তার ব্যতিক্রম হয়নি। ঈদের ছুটিতে মহাসড়কে ছিল মৃত্যুর মিছিল। গত ঈদে পাঁচ দিনের ছুটিতে সড়কে প্রাণ যায় অন্তত ৬৫ জনের। সবচেয়ে বেশি সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা হয় ঈদের পরের দিন। ওইদিন দুর্ঘটনায় সারা দেশে কমপক্ষে ২৩ জনের মৃত্যু হয়।

পরিসংখ্যান বলছে, চলতি বছর মার্চে দেশে সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা ঘটেছে ৪৮৬টি। এর মধ্যে নিহত ৫৬৪ এবং আহত ১ হাজার ৯৭ জন। নিহতের মধ্যে নারী ৮৮, শিশু ৭৩।

সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা সবার কাছে এক আতঙ্কের নাম। সড়কের মড়কে খালি হচ্ছে হাজারো মায়ের কোল। সরকারের একার পক্ষে সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা প্রতিরোধ করা সম্ভব নয়। তবে এক্যবদ্ধ প্রচেষ্টায় সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা নিয়ন্ত্রণে রাখা সম্ভব। গণমাধ্যম, সুশীল সমাজ, বিভিন্ন সংগঠন, এনজিও, ছাত্রসমাজ, যাত্রী, চালক, পথচারীসহ সবাইকে সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা প্রতিরোধে এগিয়ে আসতে হবে। তবে সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা প্রতিরোধে সবচেয়ে কার্যকর উদ্যোগ সরকারই নিতে

সবার সচেতনতা এবং

সংশ্লিষ্ট সবার সক্রিয়তায়

এবার ঈদে বন্ধ হোক

সড়কে মৃত্যুর মিছিল।

পিচঢালা পথ যেন

রক্তাক্ত না হয়। নির্বিঘ্ন ও

নিরাপদ হোক ঈদযাত্রা

পারে। সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা প্রতিরোধে সরকার নতুন আইন করেছে। এ আইন কার্যকর করার ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের আরও কর্তোর হওয়া উচিত। এসব দুর্ঘটনার কারণগুলো হচ্ছে— সচেতনতার অভাব, অদক্ষ ও অশিক্ষিত চালক, ফিটনেসবিহীন গাড়ি, চালকদের প্রশিক্ষণের অভাব, যাত্রী ও পথচারীদের অসচেতনতা, দুর্নীতি, চলন্ত অবস্থায় চালকের মোবাইল ফোন ব্যবহার, অপরিষ্কৃত ও ভঙ্গুর সড়ক, ওভারক্রসিং, অতিরিক্ত গতি, মাদকাসক্ত হয়ে গাড়ি চালানো, ট্রাফিক আইন অমান্য করা, ট্রাফিক পুলিশের গাফিলতি, অনিয়ম, লাইসেন্সবিহীন গাড়ি ও চালক এবং

বেপরোয়া গাড়ি চালানো। সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা প্রতিরোধে গণমাধ্যম গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করতে পারে। গণমাধ্যম এ বিষয়ে সহায়ক ও ইতিবাচক ভূমিকা পালন করে আসছে।

দেশে সড়ক দুর্ঘটনার হার অনেক উঁচু। এক পরিসংখ্যানে দেখা যায়, শতকরা ৮০ ভাগ সড়ক দুর্ঘটনা ঘটে থাকে বিরামহীন গাড়ি চালানো, অত্যধিক গতিতে গাড়ি চালানো এবং চালকের অসাবধানতার কারণে। একজন চালক একটানা চার-পাঁচ ঘণ্টা গাড়ি চালানোর পর বিশ্রাম নিয়ে পুনরায় গাড়ি চালানো, এটাই নিয়ম। কিন্তু দেশের কোনো চালকই এ নিয়ম পালন করেন না। ফলে একজন ক্লান্ত-পরিশ্রান্ত চালক যখন গাড়ি চালান, তখন স্বভাবতই দুর্ঘটনার আশঙ্কা থাকে বেশি। এ জন্য মূলত বাসমালিকদের অত্যধিক ব্যবসায়িক মনোভাবই দায়ী। এ প্রবণতা রোধে সরকারের কর্তোর নজরদারি প্রয়োজন। সড়কের নিরাপত্তা একটি অতি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ জাতীয় ইস্যু। অথচ সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যক্তিদের কাছে বিষয়টি তেমন গুরুত্বই পাচ্ছে না, যে কারণে দুর্ঘটনার মিছিল কিছুতেই কমছে না। ভুক্তভোগীদের দাবি হচ্ছে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর ছয় দফা নির্দেশনা, সড়ক পরিবহন সেক্টরে শৃঙ্খলা ফিরিয়ে আনা এবং দুর্ঘটনা নিয়ন্ত্রণে এ-সংক্রান্ত কমিটির ১১১ সুপারিশের দ্রুত বাস্তবায়ন করা। সবার সচেতনতা এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট সবার সক্রিয়তায় এবার ঈদে বন্ধ হোক সড়কে মৃত্যুর মিছিল। পিচঢালা পথ যেন রক্তাক্ত না হয়। নির্বিঘ্ন ও নিরাপদ হোক ঈদযাত্রা। সবার ঈদ হোক আনন্দের।

তরিকুল ইসলাম, অ্যাডভোকেসি অফিসার (কমিউনিকেশন)
রোড সেফটি প্রকল্প, ঢাকা আহুহানিয়া মিশন