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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.

Road safety refers to the concept of planning and strategies to keep people

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, passengers should be cautious as well. Passengers of the motor vehicles also need to keep the road safety in mind and be cautious of 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 respec-

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.

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 the crashes. The fundamental aim is to provide key behavioural risk factors for road safety to the citizens of Bangladesh. Along with the Bangladesh Government different non government organizations like Dhaka Ahsania Mission, BRAC, National Heart Foundation, Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh and many more are working for ensuring the road safety.

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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 results 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.

tive 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 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 boost-