

Road Safety and Urban Traffic Management

Inaugural Speech by Hon'ble Chief Minister - 30.11.2009

I am happy to inaugurate the National Seminar on Road Safety and Urban Traffic Management. The seminar has been programmed at an appropriate moment. In our country, more persons die due to road accidents than terrorism. It has become a threat in the urban context. Therefore, I consider that the scheduling of this seminar is timely and appropriate.

Tamil Nadu Police is completing the 150th year of its existence. As and when the D.M.K. has been in power, the State Government has been giving priority to the welfare of the police personnel. To improve the working condition of the Police personnel and to provide more facilities three Police Commissions were set up by the DMK Government. Based on the recommendations of these commissions, several welfare measures have been implemented and the department has also been modernised. Women police personnel were inducted into the Tamil Nadu Police in 1973 by our Government.

The State-of-the-art Police Academy, the biggest Police Training Institution in India was opened by me in March 2008 to impart highest level of training to the Tamil Nadu Police.

To-day, I have highlighted a few important achievements of the D.M.K. Govt., which are milestones in the 150 year history of Tamil Nadu Police. When we are celebrating the 150th year, all these achievements must be documented and highlighted for the benefit of posterity. Those who try to hide these facts are liars.

Realising the importance of Road Safety, Tamil Nadu Government has accorded highest priority for urban traffic management. Mobility versus safety is indeed a challenge to be addressed by any City Planner.

It is estimated that nearly 80 per cent of the fatalities on the road involve pedestrians. In big cities, the homeless people who sleep on the road form a vulnerable group. Any traffic management scheme for the growing cities must invariably take care of these potential victims.

The growth of vehicle population over the years, irrespective of the increase in the road length, is another cause for concern. In Chennai City, for example, the road length has more or less remained static. However, the vehicle population has almost tripled in the past 15 years. The share of two-wheelers in this growth is substantial. It has contributed to the increasing trend of accidents in the city.

The economic development of a locality has its own impact on the road safety. Due to industrial development, Chennai City is witnessing a rapid

increase in the movement of commercial Container Lorries. Hence a comprehensive review of traffic management in the urban sector is essential.

I am really concerned at the increasing number of casualties in road accidents. I am pained to learn that in our country 13 people die in road accidents every hour and that the country reports the highest rate of fatalities in the world. Tamil Nadu has realised the seriousness of the situation. In order to ensure the 'Golden Hour' treatment to the victims of road accidents, the Emergency Management Services (EMS) launched by me last year has been designed to cater for such cases. In fact, 32 per cent, the highest percentage of calls, attended to by this Service relate to accidents on the roads.

Road Safety and Traffic Management are not the sole responsibility of the Police Department and the Government Authorities alone. All the stake holders have to contribute to make the roads safer for everyone. Road Safety and Traffic Management must become part of the curriculum right from the school level. Children should be sensitised towards these aspects by developing special package of games and leisure time activities.

Realisation and sensitivity towards the importance of road safety should be inculcated right from the cutting edge of the enforcement machinery. The Policemen on the road must not stop with the role of being the symbol of State's Authority and must realise his role as a problem solver responsible for safety and well being of all the road users. They must also be involved and encouraged to take active part while developing localised response for challenging traffic problems.

In traffic management, we need to assign maximum importance to road engineering aspects. Simple and time honoured techniques of traffic design and road lay-outs can offer effective solutions.

For a developing economy, roads are the lifeline for prosperity. We have to ensure safe and steady journey for every citizen. I welcome the experts from all over the country who have come here to deliberate on the important issues concerning road safety and urban traffic management. I have no doubt that your collective deliberations will result in appropriate and actionable solutions for the betterment of one and all. I wish the seminar a grand success.

Thank you,

வணக்கம்.

வெளியீடு, இயக்குநர் * * *
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