

Minutes of the Meeting of Environment Help Line held on 17th October, 2015

The 2nd meeting of the Environment Help line was held on 17th October, 2015 at NCHSE. The Agenda of the Meeting was discussed on the topic “Road Safety Traffic Management”.

The meeting was chaired by Mrs. Nirmala Buch, Chairperson of NCHSE. Senior officials of government agencies, former bureaucrats, environmentalists, sector specialists, Senior Journalists, officials of NCHSE and Mahila Chetna Manch and a few citizens of Bhopal participated in the meeting. The list of participants is at Annex I.

After introductory remarks by Mr. Narendra Prasad, Former DGP, Madhya Pradesh, the officials of Madhya Pradesh Traffic Police comprising of Ms Shalini Dixit, Superintendent of Police(Traffic), Mr. Mahendra Jain, DSP (Traffic) and Mr. Ajay Mishra, Inspector, Traffic Training Institute made presentation on the topic, which followed discussions. Points emerged from the discussion are as follows:

1. Status:

- i. About 3.5 per cent of road accidents in India occur in Madhya Pradesh, which is quite high.
- ii. At present, Bhopal city has more than 11 lakh motor vehicles, which is growing at a rate of 7 per cent per year and, therefore, there is increase incidence of traffic accidents.
- iii. There are only 400 police personnel in Bhopal for traffic management.
- iv. After the operation of BRTS, traffic accidents have reduced.
- v. There is lack of coordination amongst various departments such as – Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC), PWD, CPA, BDA, Housing Board, MPMKVVCL, RTO, etc which often leads to traffic problems.

2. Reasons of traffic accidents/violations of traffic rules:

- i. Over speeding and drunken driving are the two major causes of traffic accidents;
- ii. Non- compliance of specifications of Indian Road Congress in road construction, badly designed rotaries and barriers, lack of pavements, cuts and U-turns on the road dividers without consideration of conflict of interest, poor maintenance of roads, unplanned electric poles, etc. often cause traffic congestion, traffic violations and accidents;
- iii. Road diggings without precautionary measures;
- iv. Talking on mobile phones while driving;
- v. Dimension (Over sized) of transport vehicles;
- vi. Construction of road side religious establishments;

- vii. Putting up of hoardings/bill board without assessing their potential hazards;
- viii. Improper maintenance of avenue plantations, which obstruct the traffic signals;
- ix. Driving geared motorbikes and speeding by under aged students, which is not given due attention by parents, school authorities, traffic police resulting in increase of accidents.
- x. Due to bad roads, no check on polluting vehicles and congestion at strategic locations, the air pollution and noise levels are usually quite high, affecting the health of the general public.

3. Successful initiatives to curb traffic accidents:

- i. Traffic Police have taken several initiatives to minimize violations of traffic rules. Consequently, traffic road accidents are reducing since 2012. The Police have the target of reducing road accidents and the incidents of violation of traffic rules by 30 per cent within a couple of years.
- ii. CCTV have been installed in 162 squares to monitor traffic violations;
- iii. Breath analyzers are being used to detect drunken driving;
- iv. E challans have been introduced for charging fine in a transparent manner;
- v. Wayside facilities on the highways for convenience and educating transporters have been introduced;
- vi. As per directives of the Supreme Court, the State Government has constituted three high level committees to advise and monitor the enforcement of implementation plans regarding road safety;
- vii. MP traffic Police is developing strategies to reduce traffic violations as per directives of the Supreme Court and the High Court;
- viii. The Supreme Court has ruled that all the doctors/hospitals (both government and private) has to attend to the accident victims immediately on arrival to save their life;
- ix. Bhopal Traffic Police launched an awareness programme in all the 12 traffic sectors of Bhopal, wherein defaulters/violators were shown documentary film on safe driving. The emphasis of the programme was on awareness rather than punishment. About 34.5 per cent road users were educated through this programme;
- x. Citizen Pressure groups have been successful in some states in facilitating the authorities take adequate measures to curb traffic accidents and reducing vehicular pollution.

4. Suggested action:

- i. Everyone is equal before the law. Therefore, rules to be enforced with zero tolerance against the violators. Problems arising out of enforcement of rules are fought with consequences detrimental to the carriers of Police personnel, especially while dealing with VIPs. Here we have to see that no one is punished or harassed in the hands of VIPs while performing their duties;
- ii. Encourage traffic police to bring to notice of such instances where they are threatened with dire consequences for checking VIPs violating rules;
- iii. 5Es, i.e. Engineering, Enactment, Education, Enforcement and Etiquette are the essence of proper traffic management. Therefore, all the concerned Authorities/agencies like CPWD, PWD, CPA, Housing Board, BDA, RTO, BMC, MPVVCL, etc. should take appropriate action under their domain in coordination with other agencies to facilitate implementation of road safety plans and to reduce traffic problems;
- iv. Development agencies/ public service providers should follow the road safety guidelines for construction and maintenance of roads, rotaries, dividers, road shoulders, lay byes, locating electric poles, trees, etc. to reduce traffic accidents.
- v. Locations of roadside religious places, which cause traffic problems should be reviewed by the Trained Engineers to find solution;
- vi. There is need for creating awareness about the ill effects of speeding and drunken driving and encourage volunteers to come forward and report such incidents to help the authorities to take action against the violators;
- vii. There should be road safety audit as per norm;
- viii. GIS and GPS technology may be adopted by the authorities for tracking traffic violators and effective traffic management;
- ix. PIL may be filed against the agencies executing development works without precautionary measures that cause accidents, to make them pay compensation to the victims;
- x. Talking on mobile phones while driving is an offence. This should be strictly prohibited;
- xi. Mandatory fitness test and speed governors for school buses, reflective tapes on all 3 and 4 wheelers;
- xii. BMC and development agencies like PWD and CPA should review the situation at regular intervals and take appropriate action for shifting of obstructing advertisements or pruning of avenue trees as the case may be;

- xiii. Public transport system should be citizen friendly. BMC should ensure the last minute connectivity from all residential areas to the main transport corridors within the city limits;
- xiv. Unmanaged parking of vehicles and unmanaged solid waste spread over the road cause a lot of inconvenience to the public. BMC should identify problem areas and implement plans to address the problems;
- xv. Owners often let their non-milking cows and aged cattle to roam on the streets which cause traffic problems. In such cases the owners should be punished.
- xvi. There should be an advisory to the schools to identify the students driving geared vehicles and advise such students to adhere to traffic rules.
- xvii. Authorities must take action against the vehicles which fails emission test. Government may also consider options like introduction of CNG/battery operated auto/public transport vehicles and a system to allow plying even or odd numbered private vehicles on a particular day and in the long run may consider declaring car free day in a month/ fortnight/week to reduce vehicular pollution.

5. Role of Environment Helpline:

Environment Helpline would be happy to provide/extend technical support to the ULBs, development agencies and public service providers on matters related to Road Safety and proper traffic Management. Some of the specific suggestions are as follows:

- i. A pressure group will be created to handle various traffic problems which are brought to the notice of Helpline by approaching the concerned authorities. The Pressure Group will meet periodically with Traffic Police Officers and also others in public to find out their problems and see to it that the problems are sorted out.
- ii. A special Group within the Help Line will identify the traffic related issues and make endeavor to address the same. The Group will meet time to time as the need arise and deliberate on the identified issues and follow up with the concerned authorities for action.
- iii. Organize awareness programme on road safety and traffic rules for various target groups, such as general public, School Principals/teacher; students, Drivers, etc. so that they follow road safety and traffic rules.
- iv. Organize workshops on specific issues, where necessary, in partnership the Madhya Pradesh Police for sharing information with the citizen to motivate them to become volunteers and take initiative to address the issues in their areas.
- v. Help Traffic Police to organize training for volunteers on traffic management and provide them badges to enable them to conduct their duties.
- vi. Volunteers will also visit schools time to time to find out users of geared motorbikes, if any, and if necessary advice the school principals to stop the practice.

- vii. Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) is developing plans for making Bhopal a smart city. Since it concerns well being and aspirations of the citizens of Bhopal, it is imperative that stakeholders' consultations are organized for sharing of knowledge and experience, and for involvement of traffic police in developing smart city development plan. Environment Helpline members have experience and expertise on related issue. Hence it is imperative that we take part in such consultations and share its knowledge and expertise to help BMC in developing an acceptable Smart City Plan. This will be taken up with BMC and other concerned authorities.
- viii. In order to improve traffic management, NCHSE may provide technical support for mapping road network, identification of traffic congestion at strategic locations and creating topology of road network. NCHSE has special knowledge and also imparting training on GPS/GIS application. It will provide assistance to the concerned authorities on appropriate payment.

The meeting was ended with a vote of thanks to all.

Annex -I

List of participants of the meeting on Environment Help Line held on 17th October 2015

So.no.	Name	Topic of interest
1.	Mrs. Nirmala Buch, Chairperson, NCHSE, Bhopal	Education/Empowerment of women
2.	Mr. Narendra Prasad, Former DGP, MP	Traffic
3.	Mr. Arun Gurtoo, Former DGP, MP	Legal matters
4.	Mr. L.S. Hardenia, Senior journalist; Bhopal	Journalism
5.	Mr. Chandra Kant Naidu, Sr Journalist, Bhopal	Information dissemination
6.	Prof. Uday Jain, Advisor, MCM	Environmental behaviour
7.	Prof. Savita Raje, School of Planning & Architecture, Bhopal	Planning & Architecture
8.	Ms. Shalini Dixit, Superintendent of Police (Traffic)	Traffic Management
9.	Mr. Mahendra Jain, DSP (Traffic)	Traffic Management
10.	Mr. Sunil Sharma, DSP (Traffic)	Traffic Management
11.	Mr. Sushil Tiwari, DSP (Traffic)	Traffic Management
12.	Mr. Ajay Mishra, Inspector, Police Traffic Training	Traffic Management
13.	Ms. Neelam Lakchakar, Subedar (Traffic)	Traffic Management
14.	Mr. Sunil Rathore	Traffic Management
15.	Mr. K.G.Vyas	Water Conservation
16.	Mr. Sunil Deshpande, Director, Institute of Quality Management & Research	Lake Conservation
17.	Prof. Vasant Nirgune	Environmental Conservation
18.	Ms. Rashmi Saraswat, General Secretary, MCM, Bhopal	Gender mainstreaming
19.	Mr. Raghuraj Singh, Incharge- Communication & Microfinance, MCM, Bhopal	Communication
20.	Dr Ashok Gupta, Director General, NCHSE	Natural Resource Management
21.	Mr. Ramesh Chandra, Director, DCIC, NCHSE	Consumer Grievances redressal
22.	Dr D. D. Banerjee, Director, NCHSE	Public Awareness
23.	Dr Pradip Nandi, Sr. Fellow, NCHSE, Bhopal	Water Conservation
24.	Mr. Praveen Sharma, Dy Director, NCHSE	GIS application
25.	Mr. Avinash Shrivastava, Dy Director, NCHSE	Information Technology
26.	Mr. Neelesh Dubey, MCM	Micro-Finance