ACTION PLAN FOR ROAD SAFETY IN KERALA 2011-2020

Kerala was having one of the highest incidents of motor crashes among all the States in the country. Compared to the population and the geographical area the number of accidents was very high. A table on the accidents that took place in Kerala from 1991 to 2005 will show (Annexure-I to III) the rising graph of the number of accidents, the number of injured and the number of persons who died as well as the number of vehicles registered in Kerala. From 2005-2006 onwards a concerted effort was initiated. To co-ordinate the activities of various departments and to have a clear-cut policy planning and concentrated well directed plans implemented, to bring down the road crashes, the Kerala Road Safety Authority Act was enacted in the year 2007. After formation of the Kerala Road Safety Authority the road safety work in Kerala are planned and supervised by the Road Safety Authority.

A copy of the Kerala Road Safety Authority Act and Rules are also attached herewith (Annexure IV & V). It will give the salient features of its multi departmental structures, functions, funding and powers.

Since the United Nations initiated programme of Road Safety Decade from 01-01-2011, the Kerala Road Safety Authority also declared the decade from 2011 to 2020 as the Road Safety Decade. It has also adopted various measures suggested by Road Safety Action Plan prepared by National Transportation, Planning and Research Centre and also the recommendation of the Road Safety Mission report prepared as part of Kerala State Transport Project.

ROAD SAFETY DECADE 2011 TO 2020

The United Nations have initiated programme of road safety decade from 01-01-2011 for the next decade. Government of India have fixed a target to reduce the accidents in India by 50% by the end of 2012. In view of this, especially programmes
are to be charted for the long term, medium term and short term planning and implementation. The long term plan involves the creation of a proper attitude among all road users and proper infrastructure development and enforcement of safety norms strictly. In the long term the further development of roads should include provision of proper bus bays, stands for auto rickshaws and other heavy vehicles and subways for crossing in all important junctions. When a road is developed it is easier to make subways or over bridges. Therefore, it is highly necessary to plan road development along with requirements of parking bus bays, and subway systems and over bridges. The development should also cater to physically handicapped persons also. In the next few years rules regarding roads and road safety measures to be included in curriculum, so that new generation will come out from schools with adequate basic knowledge of proper use of road. Parking is a big problem which affects even the few developed roads. Strict measures are required for ensuring parking spaces not to be converted in building and a proper policy by the concerned road authority and local self government to provide multi layer parking and parking fees are charged.

As a decade programme, ensuring ABS, seat belts and air bags in 4 wheeler vehicles can improve safety among 4 wheelers. The vehicle safety as per international standards is to be implemented. In all driver licensing places technically qualified and improved testing are to be developed, so that only qualified persons get licences. Driver training institutes to cater to in-service training of drivers and correcting bad habits of already licensed driver are to be set up. All vehicles with a particular age have to be taken out of road by law. Testing of vehicles is to be improved with better vehicle testing modern stations. Targets are to be fixed each year to reduce road accidents casualties in such a way that by 2020 the accident rates are to be comparable with that of the developed countries. Proper planning is to be prepared to reward activities oriented to traffic safety efforts taken by individuals, organizations and government sector.
In the long term programmes everything has to start from a proper sustainable use of strict enforcement of traffic laws. Red light violations, over speeding, rash driving, drunken driving are to be controlled by better enforcement. Model roads have to be developed in cities first and emulated elsewhere. All identified black spots are to be cured during a period of maximum of two years. By taking priority based activities most vulnerable sections of motor accidents like pedestrians and two wheeler categories are to be specially targeted for awareness campaign and enforcement. Lane driving has to be made scientifically enforceable. Post accident medical care to be improved with more ambulance services and trauma care units.

During the ten year period there is every chance that the total number of registered vehicles will be more than doubled. There will be a huge change in the fuel technology. In view of this, the enforcement departments of motor vehicles and police will have to be given special training.

Every long term programme is comprising of several short terms with a plan for 2020 and a target of a much lower rate of accidents comparable to any other developed country.

The activities of the Road Safety Authority included the following:-
(1) Identification of accident prone areas, black spots and curation;
(2) Model road concepts;
(3) Road safety awareness campaigns;
(4) Road Safety Clubs in schools and colleges;
(5) Road safety projects and research by National Transportation, Planning and Research Centre;
(6) Trauma care help.
(7) Automated enforcement, including camera, Alcometer, Speed Radars etc.
(8) Road safety was included as curriculum for the standards III, V, VI, VII and VIII of the schools.
Removal of advertising boards and other hazards.

Once Road Safety Decade Action Plan was adopted by the Kerala Road Safety Authority after receiving proposals from all stake holding departments, we are now allotting funds to the stake holding departments and non-governmental organizations on the basis of each year. For the first year 2011-2012 a total amount of Rs.54 crores has been allotted to various departments. Among this, an amount of Rs.19 crores was allotted to the Public Works Department for curation of black spots, safety measures near school zones, construction of bus shelters and foot overbridges, skywalk etc. For the Police Department for the purchase of interceptor Rs.4 crores, for equipping police stations with alcometers (2 crores) and for training of policemen on trauma care Rs.2.25 lakhs and for Motor Vehicles Department for awareness campaigns, training of all professional drivers to improve learners’ test and training and automated enforcement Rs.15.6 crores. For National Transportation, planning and Research Centre for a detailed study on road safety, awareness campaigns and research Rs.58 lakhs and for Kerala State Eelectronics Development Corporation for the implementation of automated enforcement system Rs.6.1 crores was allocated. Moreover, the only four lane road in Kerala between Cherthala and Mannuthy spanning about 110 kilometers is declared as a model road to be specially attended by the Motor Vehicles Department, so as to develop a disciplined safe driving habits and automated enforcement system which can lead to an accident free road corridor. All District Road Safety Councils are also provided with funds.

Besides these, there are other projects like automated enforcement system being provided to the Motor Vehicles Department with active support from IT Mission of Government of Kerala and Government of India which will be concentrated in 3 cities of Kochi, Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram.

The Police Department has got a separate highway alert system covering highways with 42 highway patrol teams working 24 hours. They also use Road Safety
Management Systems (RSMS) for collecting Road Crash related data. The police have also recently developed a Student Police Cadet on the lines of NCC which has become a big hit in the Kerala school going children. The Kerala Road Safety Authority provides them with funds and literature to make them aware of the road rules and practices. They are also being exposed to traffic regulations and very well planned scheme is there for expanding to all the schools in the State.

The Public Works Department also has got a road safety cell which is now functioning under a Superintending Engineer. Matters relating to road, construction are taken up by them. It is also decided to have a thorough enquiry by a team of officers of Police Department, Public Works Department and Motor Vehicles Department on every accident where more than 2 persons are killed.

The road safety decade action plan 2011-2020 by the Motor Vehicles Department is planned by the Research and Development Team of the Motor Vehicles Department. The road safety publicity campaign includes road safety messages through the FM Radio, television channel, print media and through cinema theatres. Celebraties are also used to promote road safety messages. Motor Vehicles Department and NATPAC gave training to tipper lorry drivers and educational institution bus drivers on a priority basis. This has resulted substantial reduction in the accidents caused by tipper lorries.

**Education and Training**

Motor Vehicles Department, NATPAC and other agencies including police have prepared various CDs on road safety measures. These are being exhibited and there is also plan to supply sufficient number of books in Malayalam and English for school children of all the schools in Kerala. All the schools will be provided with CDs on ‘Dos’ and ‘Don’ts’ of Road Safety. The Motor Vehicles Department has also got trainers training programme to train all officers and also train students, drivers and public. “A good driver can come from a good Driving School”. With this view we are giving
training to all driver school instructors providing them with CDs and reading materials for pre learners’ training course and it has also been made compulsory that before conducting a driving test for licence, all pre learners are to attend a road safety class organized by the Motor Vehicles Department. The Students’ Road Safety Club by the Police Department and the Motor Vehicles Department are being expanded to more and more schools and colleges. There is a campaign to train teachers of these institutes.

The National Transportation Planning and Research Centre (NATPAC) has made valuable contribution in road safety field during past three decades. Right from it inception, NATPAC which is an autonomous government research institute has been showing deep concern for the road safety aspect and has carried out several studies on the subject, which were sponsored by various agencies. NATPAC’s committed philosophy towards safety has prompted it to take up several studies and programmes on this aspect by mobilizing its own resources towards the task. The activities of NATPAC in the field of road safety can be broadly classified under the following categories:

i) Epidemiological Studies
ii) Traffic Engineering and Management
iii) Accident Analysis
iv) Road User Studies
v) Development of Standards and Specifications
vi) Road Safety Education
vii) Traffic Enforcement and Regulation
viii) Road Safety Auditing and
ix) Experts Group Meeting and Seminar

Some of the important programmes undertaken by the NATPAC in the recent past are:

i) Driver Protection Strategies.
ii) Identification and improvement of accident-prone locations.
iii) Safe Road to School Programme
iv) Preparation and publication of road safety training material.
v) Preparation and publication of road safety education material
vi) Accident database, analysis and causative factors.
vii) Safe Community Programme for Panchayat.

ACCIDENT REDUCTION FROM KSRTC AFTER 2007

In the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation accidents were 0.36 per lakh kilometer in 2005-06 was reduced to 0.18 per lakh kilometer by 2010. In the KSRTC an accident monitoring and control system was introduced and all the drivers were given 4 days course on safe driving and fuel efficiency driving. Due to this training, fuel efficiency could be improved by 0.45 by kilometer per liter of diesel and accidents reduced by more than 50% even though the numbers of schedules were increased by 1100. Rewards were also given to best drivers to make them more enthusiastic about road safety and fuel efficiency.

From 2007 onwards a marked decline took place in the number of road accidents reported in the State. The following figures and graphs will show the trends in the road crashes in Kerala from 2007 onwards (Annexure-VI). This has to be compared with the increase in the vehicle population which almost got doubled. Had there been no co-ordinated effort to reduce road crashes with increase in the number of vehicles, the number of accidents would have been above 75,000.

Even though the trend of increasing road crashes could be controlled and in fact it could be reduced, the death from road crashes continues to be high. More measures including better awareness campaigns, better training to professional drivers, awareness campaigns for 2 wheelers and pedestrians, improving public transport and thereby reducing congestion on the roads, safer road crossings and footpath for pedestrians, educating school children and college students and making it mass
programme and finally a strict automated enforcement system is expected to bring down the accidents substantially.

We cannot afford to wait till excellent roads and vehicles are made available. Awareness training and automated and manual enforcement with stress on rule of law for all can bring down road crashes substantially.
**STATISTICS SHOWING THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES AND ROAD ACCIDENTS DURING THE PERIOD FROM 1991 TO 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of vehicles</th>
<th>No. of accidents</th>
<th>No. of persons died</th>
<th>No. of persons injured</th>
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