**How Can Youth Change The Scenario Of Road Safety In India?**

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Road accidents have become a part and parcel of our lives. Everyday a thousand people lose their lives in road accidents and many others are injured seriously. Some are directly hit and some who lose their loved ones are indirectly hit by these accidents. The most vulnerable are the children and young adults.

**Some figures**-According to the data collected by the Transport Research Wing(TRW) of Ministry of Road Transport and Highway under the UN-ESCAP’s project- Asia Pacific Road Accident data (APRAD), approximately 2061 people in the age group of 15-29 years died in road accidents in 2014 in India, with ~82% of the fatalities being males. Moreover, due to the large number of road accidents, this decade 2011-2020 has been declared as the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety.

**Indian issues related to road safety**- Everyday many Indians put their lives at stake by making several kinds of adjustments in order to reach their respective destinies. One such adjustment is the ‘tripsy ride’ where in three people squeeze themselves onto one bike. Similar adjustments can be witnessed in public buses where people hold on to the entrance side handles with half of their bodies dangling outside. We Indians hate wearing helmets and seat belts but love taking selfies while driving, as per our Central Minister for Road Transportation Nitin Gadkari’s statement 50% of the selfie related accidents occur in India. Encroachments and parking on the footpath force the pedestrians to walk on the side of the road making them vulnerable to road accidents. We people also have road etiquette issues- ambulances are rarely given way to go, drivers recklessly switch lanes without indications and the list continues. These issues are complex and different from each other and it is expected from the young people to contribute their part and improve this scenario of road safety in India.

**Instances of youth changing the scenario of road safety-**

1. Kruzr, the brainchild of two IITians graduates- Pallav Singh(IIT Bombay), and Dinesh Fatehpuria(Birla Institute) is a mobile app that assist in safe driving. The software of the app with the help of gyro sensors installed in the smartphones detects a person’s motion when driving and locks the screen of the phone, thereon it automatically self handles all the calls and messages via a ‘smart chatbox’ and informs the callers and message senders that the person is driving. It has additional features in case of important calls but a call can only be made when the vehicle stops. Also, if the user meets with an accident, the software sends the person’s location to the ambulance services and the police.
2. Some young national political leaders have come forward and supported road safety issues promoted by NGOs, sending a positive message to the country. One such example is the signing of the “ ARRIVE SAFE, Make Roads Safe- Decade of Action for Road Safety” pledge by Rajeev Satav(President, Indian Youth Congress), Ravneet Singh Bittu( MP, Anandpur Sahib) and Mr. Vijay Inder Singla(MP, Sangrur). They have promised to include road safety in their national agenda.
3. According to the Report Road Accidents in India 2015, drunk driving accidents accounted 3.3% of all road accidents and 4.6% of all deaths from road accidents. To deal with this issue three guys- Ankur Vaid, Saurabh Shah, and Mishal Raheja founded a company called ‘Party Hard Drivers’ to provide reliable chauffers to partygoers so that they don’t have to get behind the wheel after drinking.

**Other initiatives that can be experimented with-**

1. Youth icons like Virat Kohli, Alia Bhatt, Varun Dhawan etc. should convey positive messages and spread awareness about road safety through advertisements and social media as the young population connect with them very quickly, given their similar age group.
2. Young students can organize themselves into pressure groups to influence the authority to improve road infrastructure and for proper implementation of road safety rules.
3. Awareness programmes about road safety and traffic rules should be conducted in school and colleges by the students themselves through skits and plays, help from NGOs serving the same purpose can be taken to guide the students for spreading awareness.
4. Young adults of the family should guide their younger siblings in matter of road safety and traffic rules as they seem to have a better influence on them as compared to the adukts of the family.
5. Students should be encouraged to develop and use more apps and technology related to road safety. For instance, the sign boards indicating speed limits have become outdated new technology should be encouraged to detect cars that cross the specified speed limits or are driven recklessly and inform the authorities immediately. There are many ongoing nascent projects on these ideas, these should be encouraged.

These simple steps of involving the future adults of the country in improving the scenario of road safety in India is a very good initiative because today’s investment will give good returns in the future and the present will also improve.