



Discipline

The Way to the Goal

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Kerala historically depended much on its rivers and backwaters, as far as surface transport is concerned. Various types of boats used to be widely used for transportation of goods and people. The Boat Houses, Chundan Vallams etc. remind us of our rich 'boat' past. Iruttukuthi vallams were used by the kings to fight the war even in the darkness of night. Being a very narrow strip of land, with western ghats on the east and Arabian sea on the west, no wonder that the rich waters were used for transport. Thus one of the major kingdoms of Kerala, the Travancore, rightly earned its name 'Vanchinadu', the

boat country!. But as time passed, Kerala started using roads increasingly for surface transport. Being a faster means, the road transport made water transport, a glory of the past. However the House boats are very popular with tourists and a few boats owned by the Water Transport Department are popular for travel in Vaikom, Kuttanadu and Payyannur.

Across the world, traffic planning to improve transportation facilities as well as safety of passengers is a major concern. Kerala is the most populous state of India. Road accidents is a major safety concern of the State and traffic accidents account for a major portion of Crime Statistics in Kerala. Overpopulation of vehicles, road engineering defects, road



conditions and driving defects together contribute to accidents which take away around 4000 lives every year, apart from injuring more than 40,000 people in this small state. Skills, attitudes and

behaviour of drivers and the nature of enforcement of traffic rules and regulations are very important in determining the number of accidents.

Apart from the high density of population, the undulating topography, thick vegetation, contiguous habitation and roads strait-jacketed with buildings on either sides are major reasons for the increased rate of accidents in the state of Kerala. Apart from road engineering problems, inadequate road signs, poor condition of roads, drunken driving and inadequate road sense of drivers and road users are major concerns as far as road safety is concerned. Facilities of Ambulance and hospitals throughout the State is a golden line in the darkness. However Trauma Care Special Units need to be developed in all the hospitals, so as to save more lives in accidents. Awareness on how to attend and save lives is a major

Kerala Government is planning to start an Institution of Drivers Training and Research.

With the help of various Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations, various road safety programmes are being organised in Kerala to make roads safer. Street shows and other awareness programmes, through audiovisual and print media are organised. A street show by the Thiruvananthapuram City Traffic Police is worth mentioning here. It is attracting big crowd

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help of police in many cities.

Various steps to enhance road safety such as Zebra Line and other road markings and road safety audit are being undertaken now, apart from tightening of safety standard of vehicles. Provision of cranes and ambulances owned by the Government and NGOs are available under the National Highway Accident Relief Service Scheme, ALERT Service, etc. Widening of National Highways from two lanes to four lanes and six lanes is taking place in many areas.

and conveys good message to the public. Traffic warden system involving school children is introduced in some areas. Pamphlets on road safety are printed and distributed by various agencies. Kochi City Police recently released a Traffic Guide for the benefit of road users in Kochi City. Complaint Card System is used by many District Police Traffic Units for receiving complaints of public against traffic law violation, misbehaviour while using public

In 2006, 1020 two wheeler drivers were killed and 17091 two wheeler drivers were injured in accidents. The recent High Court Order has urged many a citizen to use helmet while driving two wheelers. Two-wheeler driving safety can be enhanced by using quality helmets. Enforcement of traffic laws, especially regarding over speed, drunken driving etc. by using modern equipments like Speed Governors, Breath Analyzers etc. helps to reduce accidents. Speed governors fitted to the heavy vehicles also help to reduce the number of accidents. Time punching system is helpful to regulate the speed of buses. However it may be noted here that the amount of fine, punishment etc. are not deterrent enough to create much psychological impact on drivers as the monetary loss / punitive measures are not too harsh as in many advanced countries. Improving road discipline and civic sense are extremely important in such circumstances. Including traffic education in school syllabus and arranging awareness programmes among public etc. along with strong enforcement measures as well as long term plans to improve road traffic and alternative methods of means of transport such as revival of water transport, construction of metro rail etc. are required to improve transport facilities of Kerala.

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task to be undertaken seriously by NGOs, hospitals and other agencies in tandem with each other. Those individuals and organisations involved in saving lives from accident scenes need to be encouraged by the society.

Trained drivers who are sensitised over traffic regulations tend to drive safely. With the above dictum in mind the

transport etc. Recently the Highway Police Units of Kerala were revamped with new vehicles. The Highway Police help can be sought by the public from the telephone number 9846100100. Highway Police is arranging awareness programmes for school children, drivers etc in many districts. Prepaid autorikshaw and taxi facilities are arranged with the