



FICCI'S - PLEDGE FOR ROAD SAFETY

An Awareness Program in Association With
INDIAN EXPRESS



REPORT

FICCI Tamil Nadu State Council along with the Tamil Nadu State Government (Highways Department) organized an awareness program **Pledge for Road Safety** on **31st July 2018** at **Hotel Raintree, Chennai** in association with **The New Indian Express**

In this context, FICCI **brought together the various Departments and Stakeholders of the State such as** Ministry of Road, Transport & Highways, State Transport Departments, State Police Forces, National Health Mission, Leading Corporates, Road Safety Experts and NGOs.

Thiru. Rajeev Ranjan, I.A.S., Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Highways & Minor Ports Dept., Government of Tamilnadu was the **Chief Guest** and **delivered the Inaugural address**.

The programme discussed about the role of corporates, industries, government and public in road safety. Tamil Nadu loses nearly Rs. 61 crore every day due to road fatalities alone, said **Mr. Rajeev Ranjan**. "If grievous injuries are added to the above figure, the loss increases to around Rs. 131 crore per day which is around 3.5 percent of the state's GDP," he said, adding that as most accidents happen to people in the working age group, families are often pushed to poverty.

"Tamil Nadu is not only very well governed, it is also the second largest growing economy in the country which means that more people are using private transport," he said referring to the drastic increase in the number of vehicles on the road. Although Tamil Nadu has roads that are much better than roads in other states, the number of road-related accidents and deaths are still high, he said.

"Countries like Oman and other western countries have shown that it's possible to have good roads, high vehicular movement and still have fewer fatalities," he said. To improve the existing system, he said that the state has invested RS. 1,360 crores on road safety alone and will be

investing up to 250 crores in the coming year. "With these funds, we have identified over 5,000 blind spots and fixed them in the state, thus drastically reducing the incidence of fatalities," he assured.

Chairman of FICCI, Mr. Arun addressed the gathering on the importance of Road Safety and illustrated the road safety initiatives undertaken by government bodies, corporates and individuals. He said that FICCI is committed to having a long-term conversation on road safety and promised that its member will take part actively in various technological advancements that will increase safety on roads.

To acclaim the exemplary effort of the Doctors and Police Officers of our State in achieving reduced accident rates, FICCI presented the Road Safety Awards to **Thiru. K. Shankar, I.P.S., Commissioner of Police, Salem City, Mr. S. Jeyakumar, Superintendent of Police, Villupuram District and Dr. R. Jayanthi., Dean, Madras Medical College** to honour their Meritorious work in their respective fields.

Fatigue and awareness of consequences will go a long way in improving road safety, said **Mr.Venkatesh Balasubramanian**, professor of Engineering Design, IIT Madras, speaking at 'Pledge for Road Safety', an awareness programme organised jointly by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and The New Indian Express, on Tuesday.

Discussing the role of corporate and industry in road safety, he said that simple improvement in technology and awareness increases safety on roads significantly. "For example, when a person doesn't wear a helmet, instead of just charging a fine, we must make them watch videos in which they see the consequences. We did an internal study, in which this exposure dramatically changed their perception," he said.

He added that IIT Madras and Parveen Travels together implemented a technology called 'intelliseat' which can detect the fatigue levels based on body movements, and alert both the driver and the fleet manager if he's a bus driver. "This would use auditory and even tactile methods to prevent drivers from dozing off on road, he said. Speaking at the event, Mohammed A Afzal, chairman of Parveen Travels, said that government should push for more passenger vehicles like buses and encourage limited use of personal vehicles. He insisted that the blinkers behind vehicles must be made mandatory when vehicles face a breakdown. "When vehicles are parked after a breakdown, these blinkers will avert run-in accidents, particularly in the night," he said.

The average response time for '108' ambulance to reach the accident spots has reduced from over 16 minutes last year to under eight minutes in the same time this year, said **Ms.Shoba Santhana**, programme manager, TamilNadu Accident and Emergency Care Initiative (TAEI), speaking at the 'Pledge for Road Safety' event.

Shoba said that this was possible only because of the interdepartmental co-ordination between transport, highways and health department. "The highways and transport department helped us collect data on black spots in the city. We then stationed ambulances close to these black spots," she said, claiming that this drastically reduced the response time, and thus, saving more patients in the golden hour after the incident.

She also spoke about the role of government officials in preventing road accident fatalities. **Mr.S. Krishnan**, assistant director of statistics at the Transport Commissioner's office said that the average response time used to be over 30 minutes until a few years ago. He added that this has brought a seven per cent decline in grievous injuries, and 23 per cent drop in the number of fatalities. The total number of recorded accident fatalities has reduced from 8,452 in 2017 to 6,510 this year, she said.

Krishnan, however, added that changing the logistics of ambulances alone will not make a difference. "Although in nearly 70 per cent of cases, the fault lay on the driver, mapping accidents on Geographic Information System showed that the number of fatalities increased with size of the roads," he claimed, adding that speed breakers were introduced at places where highspeed accidents were more prevalent. To understand the situation better, the entire state was divided into 4 sq. km grids. Grids with high density of accident fatalities were earmarked to be worked. According to data produced by TAEI, only six of the top 100 accident grids were in Chennai. **Dr. S Satheesh**, joint director of the Highways Department also spoke at the session.

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On this day, A pledge was taken by FICCI and all its participants that, we solemnly affirm to dedicate ourselves to the cause of road safety and will do our best to observe the rules, regulations. and promise to achieve safer roads. We will do everything possible for the

prevention of accidents and we promise to involve ourselves to achieve accident-free state and country.

The inaugural session was addressed by other eminent speakers from different walks of lives including **Mr. J. Vignesh Kumar**, Senior Vice President (Marketing), The New Indian Express, **Mr. Mohammed A. Afzal**, Chairman & Managing Director, Parveen Travels Pvt. Ltd., **Dr. S. Krishnan**, Assistant Director of Statistics, Statistics Unit, Transport Commissioner's Office, **Mrs. Shoba Santhana**, State Programme Manager, Tamil Nadu Accident and Emergency Care Initiative (TAEI), **Er. S. Satheesh**, Joint Director, Highways Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, **Ms. Gautami Tadimalla**, Actress, Chennai, **Dr. Dhavapalani**, The Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, **Ms. Kala Balasundaram**, Founder and President, ALERT - NGO, **Prof. Venkatesh Balasubramanian**, Department of Engineering Design, IIT Madras, Chennai, **Mr. R. M. Senthil Kumar**, General Manager, Group Head- Health & Safety, Hyundai Motors, **Mr. Rajaram Venkataraman**, Chief Executive Officer, Veltech Technology Business Incubator.



(L-R) Mr. Ruban Hobday, Head FICCI TNSC, Mr. Ar Rm Arun, Chairman FICCI TNSC; Thiru Rajeev Ranjan Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Highways & Minor Ports Dept., Government of Tamil Nadu, gave the Best Road Safety Awards to Mr. S. Jeyakumar, Superintendent of Police, Villupuram; Dr. R. Jayanthi, Dean Madras Medical College; Mr. T.R. Thangadurai, Deputy Commissioner, Salem in the presence of Mr. J. Vignesh Kumar, The New Indian Express and Mr. Sabari Girish, Maruti Suzuki.