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Safety Measures and Compensation of Road Accidents in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

In this article, we have discussed safety measures and compensation for road accidents in Tamilnadu. Transport is over whelming mechanical nowadays. India has one of the largest road networks in the world. Road network in India is inadequate, in comparison to the passengers and traffic handled by them. 43% of the roads are unsurfaced. The Ministry of road transport & highways is expected to award road projects with a total length of around 4,500 km worth Rs.50,000 crore in 2020.

Keywords: Road accidents, Safety measures, Compensation, Government initiatives, Achievements and Accidents.

Introduction

Transport is the bloodstream of a nation's economy. The traffic is a service or facility which creates time and place utility through the physical transfer of persons or goods from one location to another. Moreover, it is an organized industry designed to satisfy the basic needs of society. Modern people with their sophisticated and complex, political, and economic systems need various modes of transportation (Road, Water, Rail, Air) that are regular, certain, and efficient. Traffic creates wealth, enhances living standards, and contributes materially to the general welfare. This paper deals with only road Transport in India an overview.

Road Transport in India

The number of trucks and minor vehicles on the roads has multiplied many times since 1950-51, a little more than 3million in 1950-51, all registered cars on roads rose to over 30 million in 1994-1995. During the same period, the number of buses went up from 34,000 to 5,00,000, and the number of trucks increased from 82,000 to nearly 1.8 million. The expansion in road transport, however, has been restricted by the high rate of taxation and the huge like in oil prices. According to an unofficial estimate, the burden of taxation on vehicles plying in India is perhaps the highest in the world today. Both the center and the states have viewed each other to impose fresh taxes on motor vehicles. Still, they have failed miserably to provide necessary facilities for the construction and maintenance of roads.

Nationalization of Road Transport

Road transport is now undertaken by the State Governments, private operators, and co-operative agencies. Since independence, most of the State Governments have nationalized the bus transport system completely or partially.

Taking all the states together, nationalized bus services now account for about 40 percent. The State Governments have been continuously attempting to nationalize more and more road routes.

There are currently 60 State Road Transport Undertakings (SRTUS) with a total fleet of over 1, 00,000 buses (at the end of March 1994) with a total investment of over Rs.5000 crores and direct employment of over 1.5 million, and they carry 45 million passengers every day.

The physical and operating efficiency of State Road Transport Undertaking as a whole is low. Many of the State Road Transport Undertakings' buses and the services provided to the general public a disgrace. The overall financial results of State Road Transport Undertakings are disappointing, and the total accumulated losses are over Rs.2500 crores. The major causes of these losses are gross inefficiency, extensive pilferage of stores. Poor maintenance of buses' absence of a cost-based fare structure and lack of timely adjustment of fares in response to a change in input prices, operation of non-viable routes for social reasons, and the like.

While private operators are flourishing, most of the State Road Transport Undertakings are poorly administered. They are accumulating huge losses year after year and making the general tax payers bear. Then there is a strong public feeling that State Governments, by and large, are unfit to run bus services efficiently and so they should hand them over to private operators.

The Indian transport sector, since independence, has been organized along with a mixed pattern of public and private sector ownership, with constitutional responsibilities for the provision of transport services resting on both Central and the State Governments. While the Central Government is responsible for the development of the Railways, National Highways, Civil Aviation, International Shipping, as well as Major Ports, Coastal Shipping, Inland water transport, and urban transport.

Government Initiatives

Some of the recent government initiatives are as follows:

- The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways is expected to award road projects with a total length of around 4,500 km worth Rs 50,000 crore (US$ 7.15 billion) in 2020.
- To widen and revamp 1.25-lakh km of roads government of India has approved the launch of Phase-III of its rural road program Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).
- Under the Union Budget 2019-20, the Government of India has allocated Rs 1.12 trillion (US$ 15.48 billion) under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- 30,000 km of PMGSY roads have been built using Green Technology, Waste Plastic, and Cold Mix Technology, thereby reducing the carbon footprint.
- The Government of India has set a target to complete one road project every two days as a part of a 100-day plan.
- As of October 2018, the total length of projects awarded was 6,400 km under Bharatmala Pariyojana (including residual NHDP works).
- As of August 2018, a total length of 34,800 km road projects has been proposed to be constructed, under Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I.
- As of August 2018, the Government of India has approved highway projects worth Rs 2 billion (US$ 29.83 million) to improve connectivity among Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Diu.

Achievements

Following are the achievements of the government in the past four years:

- As of November 2019, there were 9,242 PPP projects in India, of which 2,864 were related to roads and bridges.
- A total of 65,000 km of roads and highways are to be constructed under Bharatmala Pariyojana.
- In December 2018, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MRTH) touched a record 31.87 kilometer per day average of national highway construction.
- The total national highways length increased to 122,434 km in FY18 from 92,851 km in FY14.
- The length of national highways awarded increased to 51,073 km between FY15-FY18 from 25,158 km in FY11-FY14.

- The construction of national highways increased to 28,531 km between FY15-FY18 from 16,505 km between FY11-FY14.
- The construction of national highway per day increased to 26.9 km per day in FY18 from 11.6 km per day in FY14.

Road Ahead

The government, through a series of initiatives, is working on policies to attract significant investor interest. A total of 200,000 km of national highways is expected to be completed by 2022.

In the next five years, the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) will able to generate Rs 1 lakh crore (US$ 14.30 billion) annually from toll and other sources. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has fixed an overall target to award 15,000 km projects and construction of 10,000 km national highways in FY19. A total of about 295 major projects, including bridges and roads, are expected to be completed during the same period.

Growth of Vehicles Population

Naturally, transport helps human beings in removing the unwarranted barriers of physical separation and enables a given flow of resources to produce good results. It is the pressing motivating factor for the final invention and introduction of motor vehicles, Tamil Nadu ranks second in India, next to Maharashtra in vehicle population. But in respect of two-wheelers, Tamil Nadu tops the list. The table displays details about the growth of the vehicle population.

Table 1: Growth of Vehicle Population

Year	Transport Vehicles	Non-transport Vehicles		Total Vehicles
		Two Wheelers	Others	
2000-01	4,21,365 (82)	41,63,002 (80.6)	5,77,715 (11.2)	51,62,082 (100)
2001-02	4,32,106 (7.6)	46,00,565 (81.3)	6,25,426 (11.1)	56,58,097 (100)
2002-03	4,57,448 (7.4)	50,73,643 (81.7)	6,77,946 (10.9)	62,09,037 (100)
2003-04	4,72,172 (7.0)	55,47,755 (82.2)	7,32,546 (10.8)	67,52,473 (100)
2004-05	4,93,926 (6.7)	61,06,057 (82.5)	8,03,761 (10.8)	74,03,744 (100)
2005-06	5,81,106 (7.1)	67,50,328 (82.1)	8,90,296 (10.8)	82,21,730 (100)
2006-07	6,08,325 (6.7)	75,03,426 (82.4)	9,91,869 (10.9)	91,03,620 (100)
2007-08	7,06,869 (7.0)	82,60,019 (82.0)	11,02,122 (11.0)	1,00,69,010 (100)
2008-09	7,84,714 (7.1)	90,36,783 (81.9)	12,18,872 (11.0)	1,10,40,369 (100)
2009-10	8,33,948 (6.9)	99,69,598 (82.0)	13,53415 (11.1)	1,21,56,961 (100)
2010-11	9,28,539 (6.8)	1,12,07,338 (82.0)	15,24,840 (11.2)	1,36,60,717 (100)
2011-12	10,01,025 (6.5)	1,26,59,928 (82.4)	17,07,672 (11.1)	1,53,68,625 (100)
2012-13	10,42,642 (6.1)	1,41,50,373 (82.8)	18,98,753 (11.1)	1,70,91,768 (100)
2013-14	11,36,040 (6.0)	1,55,95,140 (82.9)	20,77,919 (11.0)	1,88,09,099 (100)
2014-15	11,82,530 (5.8)	1,69,91,527 (83.2)	22,44,961 (11.0)	2,04,19,018 (100)
2015-16	12,13,620 (5.5)	1,84,00,635 (83.5)	24,20,138 (11.0)	2,20,34,393 (100)
2016-17	12,34,360 (5.2)	1,99,87,302 (83.8)	26,23,402 (11.0)	2,38,45,064 (100)
2017-18	12,28,550 (4.8)	2,15,86,210 (84.1)	28,47,087 (11.1)	2,56,61,847 (100)
2018-19	12,60,339 (4.6)	2,31,87,880 (84.3)	30,57,450 (11.1)	2,75,05,669 (100)

Source: Regional Transport Department, Chennai Annual Reports 2000-01 to 2018-19.

The above table exhibits that transport and non-transport vehicles. During 2000-01, the number of transport vehicles was 4,21,365, which were increased to 8,33,948 in 2009-10. The two-wheelers in 2000-01 were 41,63,002, and in 2009-10 were raised to 99,69,598. The total number of vehicles was 51,62,082 in 2000-01, whereas, in 2018-19, this was raised to 2,31,87,880. From that, it is clear that people purchase vehicles when the need arises.

Road Accidents

Accidents-free record of performance of minibus services is a contributory factor for their good reputation. Accidents may occur due to the failure of a machine or man. In the case of mini-bus, their regular maintenance is taken care of by the operators. The failure of man is the other element that needs to be probed. In this context, the role of the driver of the bus assumes importance. In many situations, he can keep the services accident free. Normally over speeding and drunken driving are the main causes of road accidents. The drivers of mini-bus in general have not faced such change.

No. of Accidents & persons involved in Tamilnadu

Transport is a crucial component of the infrastructure. The demand for transport is likely to go up with a rapid population increase and climbing economic growth. It is coupled with increasing urbanization. An accident can occur at any time. Even the best of preparations and precautions cannot predict them. Table illustrates this fact.

Table 2: Accident Details in Tamilnadu

Year	Fatal		Grievous Injury		Minor Injury		Non-Injury	Total Accidents	Total No. of persons involved
	N.A	N.P.K	N.A	N.P.I	N.A	N.P.I	N.A		
1993	6528 (18.69)	7349 (18.52)	3562 (10.19)	5100 (12.85)	17957 (51.41)	27226 (77.95)	6878 (19.69)	34925 (100)	39675 (100)
1994	7027 (18.97)	7798 (18.27)	4199 (11.33)	6091 (14.27)	18950 (51.16)	28789 (67.45)	6861 (18.52)	37037 (100)	42678 (100)
1995	7974 (19.12)	8773 (18.63)	4440 (10.65)	6380 (13.55)	21661 (51.96)	31922 (67.81)	7610 (18.25)	41685 (100)	47075 (100)
1996	8079 (19.14)	9028 (18.96)	4474 (10.60)	7383 (15.50)	22151 (52.49)	31198 (65.52)	7493 (15.73)	42197 (100)	47609 (100)
1997	7947 (17.97)	8755 (17.74)	4542 (10.27)	6567 (13.31)	23362 (52.85)	34010 (68.94)	8352 (18.89)	44203 (100)	49332 (100)
1998	8510 (18.21)	9801 (18.74)	6562 (14.04)	8525 (16.30)	23862 (51.07)	33970 (64.95)	7789 (16.67)	46723 (100)	52296 (100)
1999	8734 (18.16)	9653 (18.89)	5276 (10.97)	7287 (14.26)	27231 (56.62)	34157 (66.84)	6845 (14.23)	48086 (100)	51097 (100)
2000	8269 (16.90)	9300 (14.83)	5278 (10.78)	8496 (13.54)	29137 (59.55)	44910 (71.61)	6239 (12.75)	48923 (100)	62706 (100)
2001	8579 (16.50)	9571 (14.98)	5442 (10.46)	8354 (13.08)	30963 (59.56)	45928 (72.23)	6994 (13.45)	51978 (100)	63853 (100)
2002	9012 (16.84)	9939 (15.27)	5830 (10.89)	8697 (13.36)	32183 (60.15)	46433 (71.35)	6478 (12.10)	53503 (100)	65069 (100)
2003	8393 (16.44)	9275 (14.37)	5163 (10.11)	8557 13.26)	31600 (61.93)	46685 (72.36)	5869 (11.50)	51025 (100)	64517 (100)
2004	8733 (16.63)	9507 (14.23)	4875 (9.28)	7642 (11.44)	33222 (63.27)	49641 (74.32)	5678 (10.81)	52508 (100)	66790 (100)
2005	8844 (16.41)	9760 (13.60)	5214 (9.67)	7815 (10.89)	34669 (64.34)	54512 (75.49)	5151 (9.56)	53878 (100)	71727 (100)
2006	10055 (18.23)	11009 (14.61)	4630 (8.39)	6833 (9.06)	36262 (65.75)	57508 (76.32)	4198 (7.61)	55145 (100)	75350 (100)
2007	11034 (18.65)	12036 (14.47)	4498 (7.60)	6873 (8.26)	39494 (66.78)	64226 (77.25)	4114 (6.95)	59140 (100)	83135 (100)
2008	11813 (19.55)	12784 (15.39)	4426 (7.32)	6696 (8.06)	39193 (64.87)	63555 (76.54)	4977 (8.23)	60409 (100)	83035 (100)

2009	12727 (20.93)	13746 (16.31)	4448 (7.31)	6721 (7.97)	39676 (65.26)	63783 (75.70)	3943 (6.48)	60794 (100)	84250 (100)
2010	14241 (21.91)	15409 (17.01)	4613 (7.09)	6844 (7.53)	42320 (65.11)	68601 (75.50)	3822 (5.88)	64996 (100)	90854 (100)
2013	14504 (21.90)	15563 (17.06)	4715 (7.12)	6513 (7.14)	44158 (66.67)	69168 (75.81)	2861 (4.32)	66238 (100)	91244 (100)
2016	16092 (22.53)	17218 (17.33)	6262 (8.77)	8421 (8.47)	46908 (65.67)	73742 (74.20)	2169 (3.04)	71431 (100)	99381 (100)
2017	15061 (22.97)	16157 (17.81)	5005 (7.63)	6588 (7.26)	43856 (66.89)	67984 (74.93)	1640 (2.50)	65562 (100)	90729 (100)
2018	11375 (17.80)	12216 (14.08)	4724 (7.39)	5999 (6.92)	46610 (72.92)	68538 (79.00)	1211 (1.89)	63920 (100)	86753 (100)
2019	1714 (17.27)	1849 (13.78)	716 (7.22)	876 (6.53)	7354 (74.12)	10689 (79.69)	138 (1.39)	9922 (100)	13414 (100)

Figures in brackets indicate percentage to the total; NA - No. of Accidents; NPK – No. of persons killed
NPI – No. of persons injured

Table 2 mentioned the road accident details in Tamilnadu. There were 8393 persons met with accidents during 2003, and 14,241 persons met with accidents in the year 2010. A study of accidents up to 2019 shows that accidents showed a decreasing trend when compared to the previous year except in the year 2005, 2009, 2010, 2013 & 2016 in previously injured. Likewise, minor injured nature of accidents up to 2019, the number of accidents was increasing trend except 2013, 2016 & 2018, and the non-injured nature of accidents gradually decreased for all years except during 2010, 2013, 2016, 2017 & 2018.

A notable attribute in this table is that during 2019, the total number of accidents and persons involved increased due to some different causes. Hence, the Government has to take necessary steps to reduce the accidents.

Road Safety

It is an endeavor of the Government to substantially reduce and prevent accidents and to create awareness and educate the public about road safety. In the year 2019, the Government of TamilNadu instituted a road safety fund, keeping in mind the importance of road safety activities. From this fund, several schemes are implemented, such as improvement of road junctions, creating traffic signals, establishing new boards, and so on. Training is imparted for drivers to prevent accidents as a part of road safety measures, general health, and so on.

Specific Measures for Road Safety

To prevent road accidents and to save precious lives involved in the accidents, the Government has taken the following road safety measures.

- The Government has made it compulsory for the driver. The person is occupying the front seat and the person seated in the front-facing rear seats of the motor vehicle to wear seat belts while the car is in motion.
- The Government made in the wearing of helmets compulsory for all the two-wheeler drivers and pillion riders. Subsequently, on representations from the public, the Government has exempted members of the Meivazhi Sabha, women pillion riders and children pillion riders from the compulsory wearing of helmets.
- By the existing provisions of Rule100(2) of Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, the use of black films in the wind screen glass and rear window of the vehicles prohibited.

The government considers the safety of school children and college students as an important aspect of road safety, and to alert the drivers of other vehicles to drive cautiously, the government has prescribed that buses of Educational Institutions should be painted in “Yellow color” to differentiate these buses from other motor vehicles.

Road Safety Activities

These are several types of activities regarding

road safety such as collection and analysis of statistics relating to road accidents, identifying causes for the accident and suggesting remedial measures to the relevant agency to improve the road conditions, considering better methods of training and testing of drivers and preparing schemes relating to the road safety education campaigns and disseminating the message relating to the road safety measures to people and finally co-coordinating the activities or NGO's, Tamil Nadu pollution control board, police, and transport department in the matter of controlling vehicular pollution and also creating awareness among the general public. The enforcement officials have been strictly endorsing road safety rules. The awareness campaign and other programmers on road safety are conducted in co-ordination with various Government departments. These are all vital road safety activities to prevent road accidents.

Road Safety Fund

The Government has created a road safety fund to finance road safety programs. Allocation is being made to form the budget allotment every year out of the amount collected, such as compounding fees and spot fines by transport and police departments. The fund is administrated by an interdepartmental committee headed by the Home Secretary.

Table 3: Road Safety Fund

Year	Amount (Rs in crores)
2001-02	3.75
2002-03	5.00
2003-04	5.00
2004-05	5.00
2005-06	6.00
2006-07	6.00
2007-08	6.00
2008-09	16.80
2009-10	15.00
2010-11	40.00
2011-12	40.00
2012-13	65.00
2013-14	65.00
2014-15	65.00
2015-16	65.00
2016-17	65.00
2017-18	65.00
2018-19	65.00

Table 3 displays that the road safety fund for road safety improvement works to create road safety awareness among school/college students and the public. Cultural programmers are organized—sand eye testing in done to drivers. The road safety week is in the 1st week of January every year for which the amount is released from road safety fund.

Funds are also provided from road safety funds for the display of road slogans on the realm side of buses operated in Tamilnadu and neighboring states. The allocations made to this fund by the government were Rs 3.75 crores in 2001-2002, Rs 5 crores in 2002-03 to 2004-2005, Rs 6 crores Form 2005-06 to 2007-2008, Rs.16.80 crores on 2008-2009, Rs.15 crore on 2009-2010, Rs.40 crores from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 and Rs.65 crores from 2012-2013 to 2018-2019.

Emergency Accident Relief Centers (EARC)

Considering the phenomenal increase in vehicular population contributing to increase in road accidents, 100 Emergency accident Relief center's have been established on all important National and State Highways, to give first aid to the accident victims within the "golden hour" and to arrange for further treatment through the near hospitals as per the choice of the victim. Each center has an ambulance to respond to the accident with essential drugs, paramedical staff, and drivers available round the clock. The public can easily access these centers through the toll-free phone number 1073.

Out of the 100 centers's presently functioning, 66 centers are fully sponsored by private hospitals, institutions, and non-government organizations, and 34 centers are partially funded by them with the balance financial assistance is up to a maximum of Rs.40000/- per month for a center. An amount of Rs 1.63 crores has been allotted for running these 34 partially sponsored Emergency accidents Relief center's, and due to the timely assistance rendered by these emergency accident relief centers, precious lives have been saved.

The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 provides for payment of compensation to the victims of road

accidents concerning the age earning capacity and the cause of the accident. The Act also provides a minimum amount of compensation irrespective of the fact that it is at fault. Further, financial assistance is paid by the revenue divisional officers for the following scale under the Chief Ministers accident fund to the victims of the road accidents.

Table 4: Compensation to Accident Victims

S. No	Nature of Loss	Compensation amount (Rs)
1.	Death	5,00,000
2.	Total Disability	50,000
3.	Loss of one eye or one limb	44,000
4.	Other cases (Minor Injuries)	25,000

Table 4 displays that compensation is paid according to the nature of the loss. In case of death, compensation is Rs.5,00,000 for total disability. The settlement is Rs.50,000, loss of one eye or one limb. The salary is Rs.44,000, and for other cases(minor injuries), the payment is Rs.25,000. Besides, financial assistance for the victims and bereaved persons involved in the road accident is sanctioned from the Chief Ministers' public Relief Fund based on the orders of honorable Chief Minister. Families of those killed in accidents involving State Transport Corporation buses and deserving cases involving other vehicles get Rs.50,000 and seriously injured Rs.15,000.

Conclusion

Transportation in India is a vast and varied sector of the economy. It plays a predominant role not only in economic development but also in the social emancipation of the people. Transport has considerably broadened. The outlook of the people promoted culture and intelligence and made emigration possible. The growth of transportation paved the way for trade and commerce. For the advancement of civilization, the contribution of the transport industry in the movement of men and materials is immense.

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