

Wither Road Sense!

Adherence to traffic rules coupled with sense of social responsibility helps reducing traffic woes, feels **P Malarvizhi**

SOcial responsibility is largely shaped by personality of an individual or group of individuals. It is this individual/group behaviour that shapes culture of a society. Rules, regulations, legal framework, etc come in to check erratic and unacceptable individual behaviour. Let us examine if the self-imposed responsible behaviour can work on the road.

What if the socially responsible behaviour takes the precedence over the need for legally imposed traffic rules and regulations. Does this idea give us a peace of mind? Or are we skeptical as to how society could function without a legal framework? Why this skepticism? It is because we are so tuned to public display of irresponsible behaviour that we don't tend to listen to the voice of our conscience. The irony here is that we feel secure only when we are bound by laws. Lest we feel we will miss our path back home like Hansel and Gretel. For example, electronic signal posts regulate traffic for our safe journey. Due to our pathetic road sense we generate duplication of the same work by additional traffic policemen as well at major intersections. Why the same policemen can't be deployed for some constructive work.

Who is responsible for bringing a change in the society? The system? What is the system by the way? Is it some alien that has descended from Mars or Venus? We tend to drown our individual responsibility into a common pool called system. Dependence on the system is so much that it ensures no societal improvement; rather it results in sharp deterioration in our quality of life. Only a sense of social responsibility can fill the vacuum. Shouldn't we be individually responsible in making our commuting time on road a hassle free experience? Let us quickly run through a series of harrowing experiences we all go through in our day-to-day life.

Pedestrians make use of our roads beyond what is permissible, walking, strolling, jogging, jay walking, etc, weaving through the traffic, while being fully aware of their wild ways. Probably, we as pedestrians do not want to jam

public parks with these health related activities. Teenagers glued to their mobile phones or savouring the taste of ice cream or other snacks cross the road with gay abandon. Such behavior is the root cause of traffic congestion.



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Pedestrians love to walk with friends/family together, on the road, forming a straight horizontal line, thereby blocking the entire traffic. Why should others pay for their reckless behaviour does not occur to them. Such pedestrians not only put their own life at risk but also that of other commuters. If pedestrians are found not using the footpath/subway/zebra crossing, they must be sent to a nearby government hospital, to serve for a day, in the burns and accidents ward of general OPD.

For auto drivers, in my opinion, individual responsibility on the road is a utopian concept which does not apply to them. There ought to be some unwritten rule among auto drivers to drive three-fourth of their auto in the speeding lane and rest one fourth in the middle lane, travelling at a speed of 15-20 kms/hr. They are notorious in blocking the traffic. As roadizen (like netizen, citizen) we not only tolerate this lack of road sense, but also become immune to such insalubrious act. Thus auto drivers have mastered the art of muddling

the traffic. So much so that autos on road and sensible driving seem to be mutually exclusive concepts. If autos do not ply in the auto lane, they must be confiscated for a day or two. This might possibly put a check on their wayward ways.

Destiny of commuters on Delhi roads is determined by bus drivers. Rash and reckless driving is common among bus drivers. Persistent use of air-horn, clogging traffic, road rage etc have become part of bus drivers' routine. Government must prescribe class XII, as minimum educational qualification for driving license (two wheeler/LCV/HCV). This could ensure a more humane outlook among drivers towards life. Legal implications of civil and criminal offences committed on road may be taught as a value addition course from class X to class XII level. This awareness would go a long way in ensuring road safety and curbing road rage.

Easy maneuverability of motor cycles could be a value addition for bikers but hazardous for other roadizens if not handled carefully. Frequent switching of lanes and zigzagging can cause fatal accidents as a result of its cascading effect. Most often motor cyclists zoom in from nowhere and create irreversible havoc vehicles behind them. They glide away merrily without being bothered about the threat caused to others. Such negligent drivers' license should be instantly confiscated.

While strict adherence to traffic rules with a sense of social responsibility goes a long way in getting over all our traffic woes, some road mysteries remain unsolved. Why people always alight from their vehicle right in front of offices, schools, colleges, banks, hospitals, temples, shops, airport, railway station etc is one. Why autos are always parked blocking free left turn? Why panic when traffic lights are not working? Why do we risk our lives and others to avoid a pit/hole on the road? Why do we park our chauffeur driven car with the chauffeur, in no parking zone?

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