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INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

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Why Should We Be Concerned ?

“...too often, road safety is treated as a transportation issue, not a public health issue, and road-traffic injuries are called accidents, though most could be prevented. As a result, many countries put far less effort into understanding and preventing road-traffic injuries than they do into understanding and preventing diseases that do less harm.”

– Dr. LEE Jong-wook,
Director-General, World Health Organization



Source: World Health Organization. “Road Safety is No Accident: A Brochure for World Health Day 7 April 2004.” Geneva. 2004.

Road Safety is a Serious Public Health Issue...

Disease burden for 10 leading causes

1998 Disease or Injury	2020 Disease or Injury
1. Lower respiratory infections	1. Ischaemic heart disease
2. HIV/AIDS	2. Unipolar major depression
3. Perinatal conditions	3. Road traffic Injuries
4. Diarrhoeal diseases	4. Cerebrovascular disease
5. Unipolar major depression	5. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
6. Ischaemic heart disease	6. Lower respiratory infections
7. Cerebrovascular disease	7. Tuberculosis
8. Malaria	8. War
9. Road traffic Injuries	9. Diarrhoeal diseases
10. Chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases	10. HIV/AIDS

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION APPROACH

- Following the First World Conference on Accident and Injury Prevention held in Stockholm in 1989, a manifesto for safe communities was prepared.
- In Australia and New Zealand, local governments have taken an increasing interest in community road safety (CRS), particularly since they are responsible for managing 80% of the road network.
- Following similar RSE schemes in the UK ('Let's decide – walk wise'), the TRL implemented tailor – made programmes for the local school curriculum in Ghana. Safe Ways, the training manual used to teach road safety issues to 10 and 11 years olds (the final year of primary education), included information about walking safely, observing the road environment, using protected crossings and choosing safe routes to school. The programme continues to be supported by the National Road Safety Council (NRSC) and the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP).

- A RSE programme (called 'safe feet') was developed for India by TRL and evaluated in the state of Maharashtra.
- IRTE initiated a road safety 'literacy programme' aimed at villages situated on major highways in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- Bangladesh is the first country in which the World Bank has established a collaboration with NGOs in the field of road safety, as they are currently better equipped to reach to most important target group, that is, road users. Following a seminar on the role of NGOs in road safety held in 1996 by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), it was judged that a cycle of information – education – motivation was the best method of achieving road safety awareness. This example of a partnership between government and NGOs demonstrated that road safety activities can evolve from conceptualization to 'local' implementation.

Methodology for Community Participation

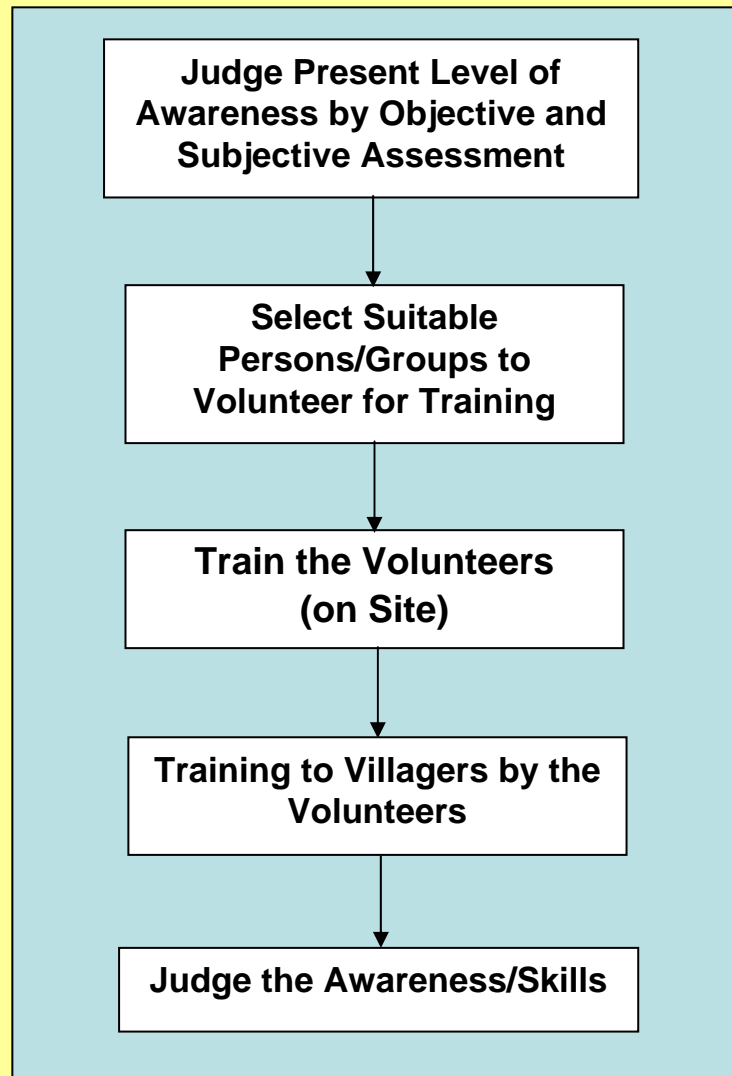


Fig. 1: Methodology Adopted



Photo 1 : Community Road Safety Training Program in Progress



Photo 2 : Campaign for Road Safety (Haridwar)



Photo 3 : School Children Participating in Training Program



Photo 4 : Evaluation of Competency After Training Program

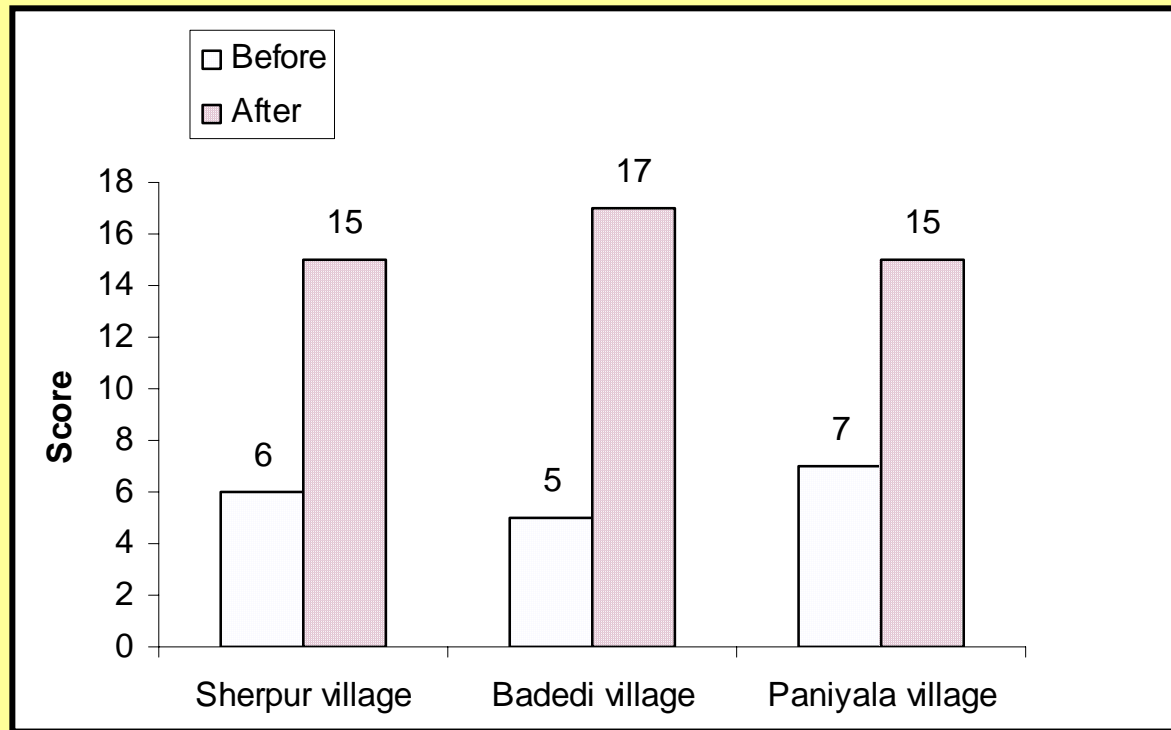


Fig. 2. Result of Assessment of Safety Awareness Before and After Training

ORGANISATIONS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- ***Government and Public Sector*** - The government and the public sector can provide leadership and a technical and administrative framework for implementation of the schemes. Both the public sector and the government have huge experience of managing large programmes with the optimum use of resources. They can provide funds-a vital resource for any project. The funds can be repaid in terms of collection or local taxes levied on use of the facility.
- ***Local and Regional Government Bodies*** - Municipal cooperations, city authorities , regional administrative bodies and Village Panchayats can coordinate with the relevant agencies, and community groups within each particular area can supply the main project leader with vital data for effective implementation of the programme. Such organisations can ensure the proper planning of local facilities, as they are better informed about the local problems and behaviour pattern of the community in question. Regional government can provide funds on a small scale in the interests if the area is under their jurisdiction.

- ***Police and Enforcement Agencies*** - The police can help to improve road users' behaviour by a 'reward and punishment' approach. They are the first to know about any accident or deficiency of a facility and so can provide researchers and users with valuable first-hand feedback about the performance of a facility.
- ***Health Agencies*** - A study conducted infers that RTA fatalities could be reduced by about 38% if emergency health services were made available in time. Health agencies could coordinate with the police and aim to provide better and faster emergency services to the victims. They could train the police to provide first aid to the victims until emergency medical help arrives. A team of volunteers could be trained to provide first aid to the accident victims along highways and specifically near areas of high accident frequency. Health practitioners could give feedback to vehicle manufacturers for safer automobile design.

- ***Insurance Agencies*** - These agencies are one of the direct beneficiaries of improved road safety. Resources in terms of manpower and funds are required to address the issue of road safety. While manpower can be drawn from society, acquiring funds presents a problem. However, the insurance industry could supply funds in terms of research sponsorship or by providing money for arranging seminars, talks, road shows and other awareness programmes at local level. An indirect contribution could be by way of rebate in premium for rewarding safer behaviour.
- ***Researchers/Universities-*** University Professors and Teachers command respect in Indian society. The academicians can join hands with the other groups to put forward an easily understandable formula for ways to reduce RTAs. The reverence the teaching community commands can be harnessed to ensure young students obey traffic rules and follow safe practices on the road.

- ***Community and Cultural Organisations*** - Community and cultural organisations can provide leadership and support for the road safety campaign and advertisements. Cultural groups enjoy intimacy with society and this can be positively harnessed to convey the message of safety.
- ***Religious Groups*** - Religious and religious groups are an inseparable part of Indian society, speedily and without the need for any modern mass-communication aid. The message would be conveyed through religious discourse and at times in the form of parables from the scriptures. They have audiences from all age groups of society and the message thus communicated is received and obeyed without question or suspicion. Such groups are considered to be the well-wishers of the family and individuals and hence can spread the safety message efficiently.

- ***Media*** - Media can bring to society an awareness and understanding of road safety. They can support safety initiatives through responsible and objective reporting, and serve as a link between various groups working on the issue.
- ***Other Groups*** - Groups from the private sector, NGOs hotels and the hospitality industry, women's organisations, etc. can contribute in their own way to boost road safety awareness.

ACTION PLAN AND PROGRAMME

Activities can be undertaken in three phases.

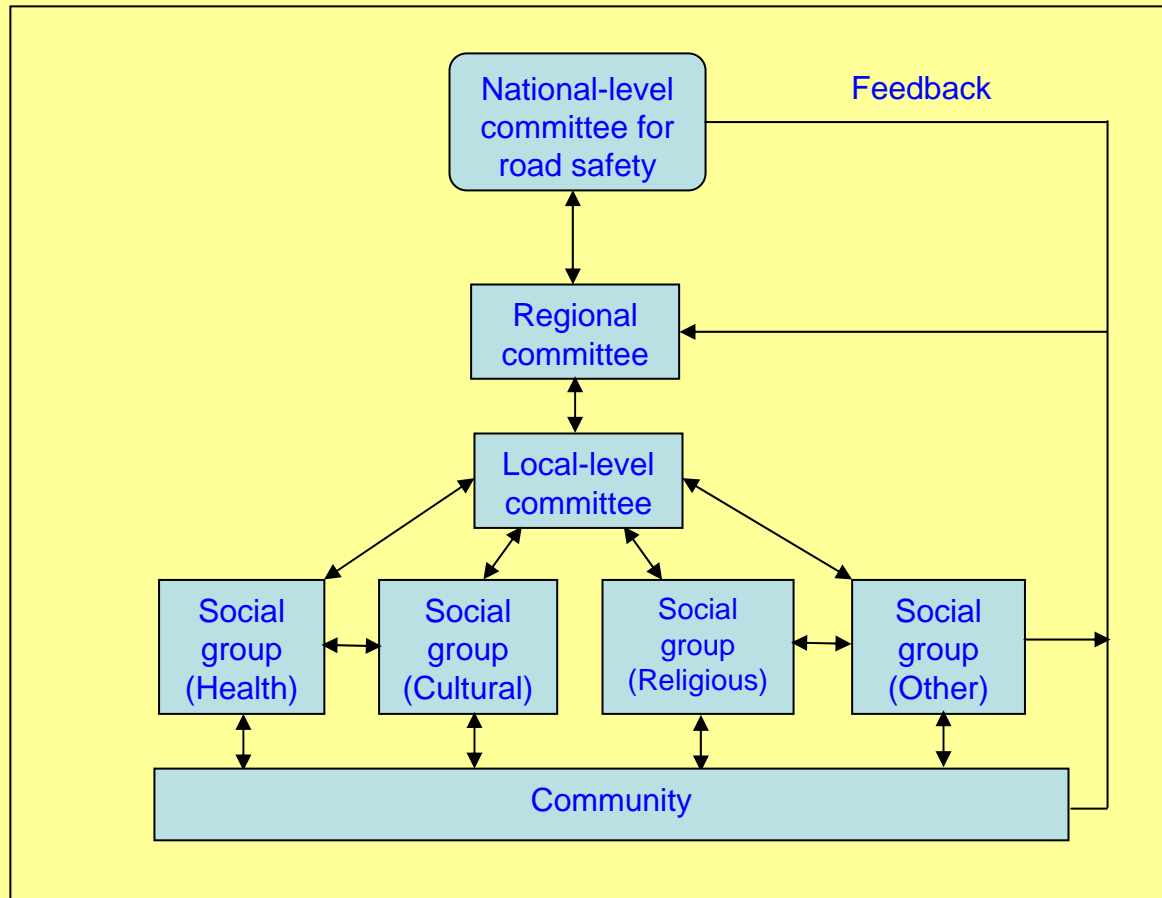


Fig. 3: Road Safety Organisation Structure

Phase I

- **Establishing interim working groups among the identified individuals / groups**
- **Integrating interlinking networks**

Phase II

- **Arranging seminars and conferences, inviting participation from the identified groups at state level; the topic of seminar should encourage participation from technical as well as non-technical people**
- **Integrating hierarchy and coordination**
- **identifying and involving active researchers for technical input, senior administrative staff from government for patronage, religious groups, etc.**

Phase III

- **Developing an overall strategy for road safety improvement in the country, with community participation**
- **Identifying the most important area to be addressed**
- **Bringing out a small newsletter to be circulated among the groups; the newsletter must acknowledge notable contributions and publish articles on the issue written by the participating groups**
- **Conducting social / religious / technical functions at national, regional and local level to air the safety awareness message**
- **Acknowledging noteworthy contributions to the mission.**

CONCLUSIONS

- Drawing community support for a cause such as road safety requires identification of groups from among society and integrating them through strong links. Arranging cultural and social programmes and using the platform to bring about awareness can prove effective.
- Road safety is a social as well as an economic issue. Being multidisciplinary in nature, there can be no single cause nor a single solution to the problem. The solution has to be holistic.
- The local community has huge potential to contribute to the alleviation of the problem provided the potential is groomed and harnessed effectively.
- While NGOs can play a vital role for implementing community involvement strategy, their activities can be coordinated by a road safety office at District level.